

Stealing Your Heart Chapter 391

The little girl nuzzled her face against his chest and called out to him affectionately.

Zong Jinghao was helplessly enjoying spoiling her.

Lin Xichen stood at the door and watched his father and sister in the living room. He had wanted to say something but decided not to, turning and going out of the room.

He had put together the puzzle pieces from his *Secret Base* book. It consisted of several thousand pieces of small bits, and it had taken him one and a half days to complete it. He had wanted to call them to come and take a look at it. But in the end, he decided against it.

“Xichen, have you completed your *Secret Base*?” Lin Ruixi shouted when she caught sight of her brother’s back.

Lin Xichen answered moodily, “Yes.”

“Can Daddy and I take a look at it?”

Lin Xichen stiffened and paused his steps. “Of course.”

Lin Ruixi pulled Zong Jinghao and walked over. The assembled pieces of *Secret Base* had taken up a big part of the room.

Every piece had been put together with diligence.

“Wow.” The little girl’s eyes widened in amazement. She had not expected it to be this spectacular.

The small pieces of plastics were pieced together into an amazing assembly; it looked just like the scene that was being shown on the TV.

She couldn’t help but exclaim in admiration.

Upon seeing his sister in awe, Lin Xichen lifted his chin in pride. He felt proud of his handiwork.

“Xichen, you did a great job.” Lin Ruixi hugged Lin Xichen and kissed him. “How come you are so good in this?”

Lin Xichen laughed at her show of admiration before he said, “It’s actually very simple. I can teach you next time.”

“Thank you, Xichen.” Lin Ruixi smiled and turned around to study the *Secret Base*. She reached out her small hand to touch a few of the pieces, feeling that her brother was awesome.

She was amazed at how quickly he had put together this pile of plastic pieces.

Zong Jinghao stood in front of the *Secret Base* with one hand in his pocket, and the other hand touching his son’s piece of work. An adult would need at least two days to complete this. He was completely amazed at his son’s speed.

Unconsciously, the corners of his lips curled into a smile as he glanced at his son’s face. His heart burst with pride at how clever his son was.

How can I not be proud of him?

On the other side of things, Lin Xinyan sent Zhuang Zijin back to prison. If she were to be diagnosed with an illness, she would be allowed to come out for

treatment. But before that, she was not allowed to be outside. It would look bad on Shen Peichuan if they took too long to return to prison. After all, he was the one who had arranged for all of these.

“Mom, I’ll come and visit you more often,” Lin Xinyan said hoarsely.

She thought she was strong enough not to show any emotions in front of Zhuang Zijin, but she was wrong.

It was hard for her to conceal her emotions.

Especially when she had to watch her own mother go to prison.

Her grief was a heavy load to bear.

She couldn’t mask the sorrow on her face.

Zhuang Zijin stroked her daughter’s hair and said softly, “I’m happy to see you doing well. Don’t feel sad for me. This is the path I’ve chosen, so this is the consequence I have to bear. It was selfish of me to not consider your feelings.”

Lin Xinyan turned her head, not daring to look at her mother as she was afraid she might cry.

“Yan, can you promise me one thing?”

Lin Xinyan lowered her head and wiped the corner of her eyes before lifting her head. “What’s that?”

“Live a happy life with Zong Jinghao and raise the two children well. I’m at ease upon seeing how well he treats you.”

Lin Xinyan sniffled. “I will.”

Zong Jinghao did treat her well. Her current life was something she had never thought of before.

She had never thought that she would fall in love with a man one day.

One of the surprises in life was that you never knew the kind of person you will meet in your future.

“Give me a call whenever you want to come over,” Shen Peichuan said.

A country had its state laws; a family also needed family rules.

All he could do was to take good care of Zhuang Zijin. That would make things easier for Lin Xinyan.

Lin Xinyan nodded.

Zhuang Zijin bid farewell to Lin Xinyan and said, “Don’t worry, I’ll be fine here. I’ll feel uneasy if I were to be out there.”

Lin Xinyan did not move as she watched her mother being taken away.

As she walked along the corridor, Zhuang Zijin’s back looked thin. The setting sun cast a shadow on her frail figure through the windows.

Lin Xinyan watched her mother disappear little by little out of her sight.

It was as though she may never see Zhuang Zijin again if the woman were to disappear.

Lin Xinyan suddenly shouted, “Mom!”

Zhuang Zijin turned around and smiled at her.

Lin Xinyan pursed her lips and said, "Take care of yourself. I'll come and see you often."

Zhuang Zijin responded, "Okay."

Shen Peichuan then guided Zhuang Zijin back in and arranged for someone to look after her.

He walked out after the arrangements were done and saw Lin Xinyan still standing in the hall. She was leaning against the wall with her head bowed, looking dejected. Shen Peichuan quickly walked over to her.

He did not know how to comfort her, so he asked, "Are you okay?"

Lin Xinyan lifted her head. "Do you have time? Care to join me for a drink?"

Shen Peichuan thought for a second and answered, "Sure."

She was heavy-hearted, thinking she might feel better if she were to get drunk and sleep it off. It was better than keeping it inside.

Shen Peichuan said, "I'll drive."

Lin Xinyan passed him the car keys, and both of them walked out.

Shen Peichuan opened the car door for Lin Xinyan. Once she got into the car, he walked over to the other side and got into the driver's seat. He started the car before he turned to her.

"Where are we going?" Shen Peichuan asked.

Lin Xinyan leaned her head on the window with her eyes half-closed, feeling glum. "I'll let you choose a place, preferably somewhere quiet."

“Alright.” Shen Peichuan had a quiet place in mind.

He drove steadily, and after about ten minutes, the car stopped outside of a bar.

Shen Peichuan often visited this bar, and this place definitely met Lin Xinyan’s requirement for a quiet place.

He led Lin Xinyan into the bar and asked for a bottle of wine that he had opened earlier.

Once he had arranged for Lin Xinyan to be seated, he excused himself to go to the washroom. Then, he walked out of the door and took out his phone. He hesitated for a while, wondering if he should give Zong Jinghao a call.

He thought of informing Zong Jinghao that Lin Xinyan was feeling down and that he should come to take her home.

But he was worried that Lin Xinyan might not be happy if he were to tattletale to Zong Jinghao.

After much deliberation, he decided to call Zong Jinghao and inform him. Otherwise, he would not know how to explain to Zong Jinghao if she were to drink too much.

He swiped his phone’s screen to find Zong Jinghao’s number. Just as he was about to make the call, he heard someone calling his name.

“Peichuan?”

Shen Peichuan lifted his head and saw Su Zhan walking towards him.

“It’s really you. And here I thought I saw the wrong person. Are you here for a drink?” Su Zhan was holding a document folder in his hand. He had not taken up lawsuits for quite some time. But since Qin Ya left, he had started to take up

lawsuits again. Apart from working in the company, he stayed home to take care of his grandmother. Sometimes he would come out for a drink when he was missing Qin Ya.

Coincidentally, today was the day he had decided to come here for a drink.

He put his arm around Shen Peichuan's neck and said, "Come on, let's have a drink together."

Shen Peichuan looked at him. "I'm afraid we can't do that."

Su Zhan's eyes widened. "Who else is here?"

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Shen Peichuan peered at him with a mysterious look on his face. "Take a guess."

Su Zhan gazed at Shen Peichuan for a long while before replying smilingly, "Did you get a new girlfriend? Did you come here with her today?"

Shen Peichuan's face clouded over in an instant. If Su Zhan had joked about something else, he wouldn't have gotten so angry. However, Lin Xinyan was inside the room right now, and they couldn't crack a joke like this lest she overheard their conversation.

Su Zhan blinked. "If you don't want me to crack a joke like this, I won't! Why do you have to get mad at me?"

Shen Peichuan glanced at him and said huffily, "Xinyan's inside."

Su Zhan's expression instantly changed. Every time he heard Lin Xinyan's name, he couldn't help but think of Qin Ya.

Looking down at the floor sheepishly, he mumbled, "Then I'll take my leave first."

After Qin Ya left, Su Zhan had drowned himself in work in order to forget her. When he had free time, he stayed at home to accompany his elderly grandmother. After bumping into Lin Xinyan at the airport the other day, he hadn't seen her again.

Lin Xinyan and Qin Ya were bosom friends. When he saw Qin Ya, Su Zhan couldn't help but be reminded of Qin Ya too.

Shen Peichuan shot him a look. "Haven't you gotten over that woman already?"

Why does Su Zhan still look as though he's holding a horrible grudge against Lin Xinyan?

“No, I...”

“Alright, alright. Everyone's just trying to help you out. Come with me and say hello to Xinyan.” As he spoke, Shen Peichuan threw his arm around Su Zhan and practically dragged him into the room.

After being interrupted by Su Zhan, Shen Peichuan had completely forgotten about giving Zong Jinghao a call.

Lin Xinyan was the only person in the room when they went in. She was barefoot and curled up in a corner of the sofa, nursing the glass of wine in her hand.

The two men exchanged a glance. Their gaze fell on Lin Xinyan, and they scurried to sit down on the sofa.

Su Zhan spoke first. “Hello, Xinyan.”

Lin Xinyan looked up and finally noticed that two other people had entered the room. “Did Peichuan tell you to come?”

Su Zhan sat down on the sofa next to hers. “No, we bumped into each other at the front door.”

Lin Xinyan hummed in acknowledgment but didn't ask why the both of them had bumped into each other at the front door.

Shen Peichuan had told her that he was going to the toilet. If that were true, he wouldn't have passed by the front door at all. However, there was a more pressing matter on Lin Xinyan's mind, so she didn't realize that there was something fishy about the men's story.

Shen Peichuan looked at Su Zhan and stayed silent.

Su Zhan's mind was preoccupied as well. After Qin Ya left, he had been living in guilt. Because of his ineptitude, he had caused her to miscarry and lose their baby.

He picked up the wine bottle and refilled Lin Xinyan's glass. The wine trickled out, striking the sides of the glass with a soft splash that was reminiscent of quiet sobbing.

Lin Xinyan gazed at the brimming glass of wine but didn't reach out to take it from Su Zhan. Instead, she said plainly, "Qin Ya is doing very well now. Don't worry about her."

Su Zhan lowered his head. When he finally spoke, his voice sounded a little hoarse. "Knowing that she's doing well makes me feel much more at peace."

Lin Xinyan didn't say anything. *This entire experience has probably made him much more mature than he was.*

"I drink to your health." Su Zhan turned to her and raised his glass.

Lin Xinyan raised her glass as well and clinked it against Su Zhan's. The loud *clink* the glasses made resonated through the silent room.

Su Zhan downed the entire glass of wine in one shot.

Seeing this, Lin Xinyan's plans to down half the glass flew right out of the window. Enduring the burning sensation as the wine fizzled down her throat, she forced down the entire glass in one go.

She felt as though her entire gullet was on fire.

Lin Xinyan frowned in discomfort.

From her anguished expression, Su Zhan finally realized that there was something wrong with her.

Cautiously, he ventured, “Xinyan, are you okay?”

With a long face, Lin Xinyan turned her head and gazed at the flickering candlelight. Yes, he was right—she did feel horrible. She had watched as Zhuang Zijin entered prison, becoming skinnier by the day. Upon looking at her paper-thin, sickly mother, Lin Xinyan’s heart ached.

As Zhuang Zijin’s daughter, Lin Xinyan had neglected her mother. After giving birth to her two children, Lin Xinyan had been completely occupied with taking care of her kids and advancing her career. She hadn’t had time to check in on Zhuang Zijin as much.

Lin Xinyan had always thought that her mother was young enough to forget about her grudge against the past once she recovered from her illness.

However, she was wrong. Zhuang Zijin seemed fine on the outside, but Lin Guoan had caused her so much mental and emotional anguish that it would be very difficult for her to recover completely.

If Lin Xinyan had spent more time caring for her mother, she would have realized Zhuang Zijin still bore scars from her traumatic past. If she had given her mother the medical attention she required in a timely fashion, Zhuang Zijin would never have gone down this path of no return.

Lin Xinyan had failed her as a daughter.

“Is it because of Jinghao?” Su Zhan thought she had gotten into another fight with the man.

Shen Peichuan looked at him scornfully. “Do you think everyone is as hung up on the past as you?”

Su Zhan was instantly annoyed. Why did Shen Peichuan have to attack him like that?

Su Zhan lost his lover and his child. Wasn't that horrible enough?

"Hey, can you stop trying to get a rise out of me?" Su Zhan pleaded.

He couldn't stand it when people made fun of his attachment to the past.

Shen Peichuan poured himself another glass of wine. "I'll down a glass as punishment."

He emptied the entire glass in one shot.

Just as he set down his glass, Su Zhan refilled his. "Don't you know how this works? If you're punishing yourself, you need to down three glasses instead of one."

Shen Peichuan was speechless.

Can I refuse to drink?

"If you don't drink this, let's just stop being friends," Su Zhan said stubbornly.

Su Zhan yanked his top button open irritably. "Alright. Isn't it just three glasses? That won't make me drunk."

Su Zhan shifted closer to him and poured himself a glass. "As your friend, I'll take this shot with you. Is that good enough for you?"

Shen Peichuan shoved the glass towards him. "Stop talking gibberish. Drink up."

Lin Xinyan looked at them. Shen Peichuan and Su Zhan frequently butted heads, but they had a very good relationship.

Suddenly, her stomach started churning from all the wine she had drunk. Clamping a hand over her mouth, she stood up and walked briskly towards the door.

Su Zhan and Shen Peichuan stopped bantering with each other.

“Xinyan, are you alright?”

Lin Xinyan didn’t want to spoil their mood. Shaking her head, she said, “I’m going to the washroom. Have fun, boys.”

After she spoke, she quickly dashed out of the room.

She made it to the sink before emptying the contents of her stomach into the basin.

After throwing up everything, her stomach felt much better. Even her head felt a little less foggy.

She turned on the tap, reaching out for water to wash out her mouth and her face.

She looked up at her reflection in the mirror, and a smile crept onto her face. Silently, she told herself that she still had many years ahead of her. She needed to take care of herself if she wanted to take good care of Zhuang Zijin and her two children.

She wiped her face dry. When she got back, she decided to tell Su Zhan and Shen Peichuan that she had to leave.

As she walked briskly along the corridor, a man wearing a duckbill cap suddenly appeared at the other end of the corridor. As he walked towards her, he said in a low, frightening voice, “Yan...”

Lin Xinyan looked up at him. Under the dim lighting, she could barely make out the shape of a familiar-looking man walking towards her.

As he got closer to her, the temperature in the narrow corridor seemed to drop by a few degrees.

Lin Xinyan stumbled backward in panic. "Who are you?"

The man wore his cap low over his face, such that she couldn't make out his features at all.

"Who the hell are you?" Lin Xinyan's voice took on a steely tone.

"Don't you remember me?" As he spoke, the man took off his cap and revealed his face to her. His cold, calculating eyes were glittering with malice.

Lin Xinyan's eyes widened in fear. "It's you!"

She looked at him warily. *Shouldn't he be in jail right now? What's he doing outside?*

He walked slowly towards her. "Aren't you surprised at how I managed to appear here? Didn't you think I was locked up in jail?"

Lin Xinyan forced down her rising panic. "Don't come any nearer!"

Haha...

A loud guffaw resonated through the corridor, sending her hairs standing on end.

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However, He Ruize didn't stop. Instead, he continued walking towards her.

Lin Xinyan continued backing away. She was so frightened that her face had lost its color completely, and it now looked like a blank piece of paper.

How did he manage to get out?

She suddenly felt a scream rise to her throat. It was getting harder and harder for her to breathe.

“Are you surprised to see me?” He Ruize asked, giggling maniacally.

He Ruize was much scarier now than he had been when he kidnapped her.

Lin Xinyan forced herself to calm down. Trying to keep her composure, she warned, “Don't you dare come over. If you take one more step towards me, I'm going to scream for someone!”

“Haha!” He Ruize burst into laughter, as though he was trying to tell her that he wasn't scared of anyone.

When he wasn't paying attention to her, Lin Xinyan groped around her pockets and realized that she had left her phone in the room. There was only the toilet behind her—she had no way of escape now.

She gazed at He Ruize. “What do you want to do to me?”

He Ruize laughed again. “Do you know something? He Ruilin is dead.”

The last time Lin Xinyan heard of her, He Ruilin had been locked up in prison.

How could she have died?

“Zong Jinghao framed her for killing someone and got her locked up. Unable to stand life without her freedom, she committed suicide in jail.” He Ruize gritted his teeth, a look of anger flashing across his brutal face. “Because of my sister and I, the entire He family got implicated and lost our repute. We became the laughing stock of the entire B City! Awful, isn’t it!”

“You brought this upon yourself! Nobody made you do it—those who live by the sword die by the sword! You know that perfectly well!” Lin Xinyan retorted as she glanced around frantically, trying to find something she could protect herself with. Other than the flower pot by the wall, there was nothing else on the corridor.

“Yan, you’re very cruel to me. Do you really think you had no part to play in this?” He Ruize walked even closer to her. “If you got together with me instead of flirting with Zong Jinghao, he would have gotten married to my sister, and we would all have gotten our happy endings! But being the wretch you are, you had to go and flirt with another man—my sister’s man! You threw a wrench in my plans and caused our happy ending to turn into this tragedy. It’s all your fault!”

He was only two steps away from her now.

Lin Xinyan couldn’t sit still and wait for someone to rescue her any longer. She tried to escape through the gap between He Ruize and the wall. However, the moment she moved, He Ruize shot forward and pounced onto her.

Lin Xinyan screamed, “Shen Pei... Ahh!”

Just as she wanted to yell for help, He Ruize clamped his hand over her mouth.

Lin Xinyan’s eyes were wide with fear.

“Why are you so scared?” He Ruize whispered into her ear. “I won’t hurt you, so why are you so scared of me?”

Lin Xinyan shivered uncontrollably.

With He Ruize’s arm still clamped over her mouth, she prayed he would let her off.

He pressed a kiss to her neck. Lin Xinyan froze in horror—her entire stomach started churning again, and she suddenly felt the overwhelming desire to throw up.

“Ahh!” she tried to scream.

He Ruize looked furious. “Does my touch disgust you that much?”

Lin Xinyan’s voice sounded through a crack in his fingers. “Yes, you disgust me!”

He Ruize went even further, grabbing hold of her face and pressing kisses all over it. Lin Xinyan struggled, but he was much stronger than her; she couldn’t shake herself free at all.

As she struggled, she suddenly realized that there was something hanging from He Ruize’s waist.

She grasped at it wildly and saw that it was a gun.

She grabbed the gun and pressed it against He Ruize’s stomach. “Let go of me right now, or I’ll fire.”

He Ruize froze for a second before laughing. “You don’t have the guts to do that.”

He continued pulling at her clothes.

In her frenzied state, Lin Xinyan's mind was completely blank. There was only one thought in her mind—she couldn't let He Ruize touch her as he pleased!

Bang!

With a loud crack, she fired a bullet into his stomach.

However, He Ruize didn't look surprised. He looked down and saw a huge red stain spreading over the thin fabric of his shirt.

He looked at Lin Xinyan and smiled cruelly. "I know where your kids' kindergarten is. I'll kidnap and torture them."

He Ruize had crossed the line when he brought her children into this matter. Lin Xinyan would never allow anyone to hurt them.

"How dare you!"

"You dare fire my own gun at me. Who's to say I won't dare to kidnap them?" He Ruize pressed a hand to his injury. His brows were covered in sweat, and there was a tremor in his voice that wasn't there a minute ago.

Lin Xinyan looked at him with red eyes. She continued pointing the gun at him but refused to pull the trigger.

Just then, the door to her room swung open. The gunshot had alerted Shen Peichuan and Su Zhan, and they quickly dashed out of the room to see what was going on. Seeing the gun in Lin Xinyan's hand, they knew that something was terribly wrong and ran up to her immediately.

"Xinyan..."

At that moment, He Ruize flung himself upon Lin Xinyan. Grabbing her arm, he pointed the gun at himself and fired it twice.

“Ah!”

“A murder has happened!”

He Ruize looked at Lin Xinyan and laughed. His legs finally gave way, and he collapsed onto the floor.

A pool of blood started forming under him.

Lin Xinyan was still in a daze. She held on to the gun, her hands trembling.

“He Ruize?” Seeing the man on the floor, Shen Peichuan felt that something was amiss. He Ruize had been locked up in jail with Shen Peichuan’s men guarding him day and night. There was no way he could’ve escaped. If he managed this escape, it must mean that he was being backed by someone of great power.

“Something’s wrong. Su Zhan, take Xinyan and leave immediately.”

Shen Peichuan had his suspicions that this whole thing had been a setup. Someone had been plotting against Lin Xinyan.

Su Zhan nodded. Stepping over He Ruize’s corpse, he grabbed Lin Xinyan’s arm and said, “Xinyan, let’s go.”

Just as they were about to leave by the front door, a group of policemen rushed through the door and secured the entire area.

The head of the police stepped forward and announced, “We’ve received a call informing us that there has been a murder here.”

Shen Peichuan narrowed his eyes. It had been barely a few minutes since Lin Xinyan fired the gun—even if someone had called the police, there was no way they would be able to arrive so quickly.

If he had his suspicions just now, Shen Peichuan was now certain that this whole thing had been a setup for Lin Xinyan.

Thinking quickly, he tried to understand why He Ruize had forced Lin Xinyan's hand and made her shoot him.

What was his motive? Was it to frame Lin Xinyan for his murder?

As he thought of this possibility, Shen Peichuan realized that the gun would be evidence of her guilt. He needed to snatch the gun away from Lin Xinyan and destroy it right away. Just as he made a move to walk towards her, someone stopped him.

"Captain Shen, this is my case, so I'm the one calling the shots here." The policeman was very firm on the matter. Besides, he seemed to have pre-empted Shen Peichuan's move towards Lin Xinyan. Evidently, this had all been planned beforehand.

The head of the police waved his hand. "Take the suspect away."

Su Zhan jumped in front of Lin Xinyan. "Don't you dare touch her!"

The head of the police walked over to him and spat, "I'm upholding the law here! What do you think you're doing? I'll charge you for hindering official duties if you don't get out of our way now."

Su Zhan wasn't scared of the law. Even if he faced court charges, there was no way he was going to let them take Lin Xinyan away.

Shen Peichuan shot him a look. There was no way they would be able to sneak Lin Xinyan away under the watchful gaze of these policemen. They would have to cause a diversion somehow. Shen Peichuan decided to stay and keep the attention of the police on himself long enough for Su Zhan to slip away with Lin Xinyan.

“Hello, Captain Chen.” Shen Peichuan knew this man vaguely. He had just been promoted and had gained a reputation as a tough and hard-headed officer.

Now, it seemed as though his ascension through the ranks hadn't been a coincidence.

Someone important had backed his promotion.

Everyone at the police station knew of Shen Peichuan's relationship with Zong Jinghao. However, these policemen were insistent on giving him a hard time now. They definitely had the backing of someone incredibly powerful.

Shen Peichuan tried to shift the blame onto himself. “The person who died was one of my criminals. He escaped prison, and I shot him to stop him from escaping. Is there something wrong with that?”

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However, the newly-appointed Captain Chen wasn't so easily convinced. Shooting a glance at Lin Xinyan, who looked as though she just had her wits frightened out of her, he barked with laughter and said, "Captain Shen, do you take me for a fool? If you shot him to death, how did the gun turn up in her hands?"

"She picked it up." Shen Peichuan argued, trying to deflect the blame away from Lin Xinyan.

"She picked it up? Even better! The law will prove her innocence." Here, he paused for effect before continuing, "Hopefully, your fingerprints will show up on the gun, so you'll be implicated instead of her."

Turning around, he barked to his subordinates, "Take her away."

Shen Peichuan and Su Zhan exchanged a look. Instinctively knowing what the other was thinking, they jumped right into action. As Shen Peichuan knocked the policemen aside, Su Zhan grabbed hold of Lin Xinyan and tried to dash out of the room.

Unfortunately, Captain Chen seemed to have anticipated this. As soon as Shen Peichuan and Su Zhan tried to escape, more reinforcements flooded in through the door, completely blocking their path of escape through the corridor.

There was no way Su Zhan was going to be able to escape with Lin Xinyan.

Lin Xinyan still felt rather dazed. She was still processing the fear she had felt when He Ruize grabbed her hand and shot himself with the gun.

She wasn't an easily frightened person, but when she saw He Ruize's bloodied corpse lying on the floor, she had been frightened out of her wits.

When she finally snapped out of it, the gun in her hand clattered onto the floor with a loud bang, which woke her up to her situation completely.

Now thoroughly awake, she could guess what was happening to her.

Captain Chen ordered again, "Take her away!"

To stop Shen Peichuan and Su Zhan from jumping to her defense again, a few policemen promptly surrounded them.

Captain Chen bent down to pick up the gun with his gloved hands before carefully securing it in a zip lock bag.

He shot a withering look at Shen Peichuan, who was struggling vainly to free himself from the policemen's grip. Waving the zip lock bag at him, Captain Chen said, "By the way, here's the evidence."

Shen Peichuan's eyes narrowed into a slit. Since they had failed to talk their way out of this situation, it was time to fight their way out forcefully.

Lin Xinyan, who had sensed his thoughts, shook her head at him almost imperceptibly. This was an almost perfect setup. If Shen Peichuan and Su Zhan tried to force their way out, they would be arrested by the policemen, too. They would have no hope of rescuing Lin Xinyan then.

Calmly, she said to Shen Peichuan, "Give him a call."

Shen Peichuan immediately took out his phone and started to call someone. Captain Chen looked extremely chagrined. He could arrest Lin Xinyan, but he couldn't stop Shen Peichuan from calling for backup. He had to find a way to get Lin Xinyan back to the station now.

In the Zong family home, Li Zhan paced around the living room, shooting occasional glances at Lin Xichen and Lin Ruixi, who were seated on the sofa.

He mumbled, “How have I not realized this before?”

These two had turned out to be Zong Jinghao’s kids!

After knowing Lin Xinyan and Zong Jinghao’s relationship, he couldn’t sit quietly at home after finding out about this. Li Zhan had rushed down to the Zong family home at once to confirm his suspicions.

They had proven to be true.

“Teacher, are you alright?” Lin Xichen looked puzzledly at him. It had been thirty minutes since Li Zhan arrived at their house, and he had spent the whole time gawking at the two siblings. Occasionally, he mumbled anxiously to himself, looking as though he was possessed.

Li Zhan sat down in front of the boy. “Young man, tell me honestly—have you been hiding this from me?”

Li Xichen looked at him and replied honestly, “Nope.”

“Really?” Li Zhan looked at him, his expression full of doubt.

“Teacher, you’ve taught us that we should never lie. I’m telling you the truth.”

Li Zhan was quite confident in the boy’s honesty.

“I believe you. In the future, I’ll protect you, alright?” Li Zhan threw his arms around Lin Xichen like a good friend. “I want to see your room. Give me a tour, will you?”

Cheng Yuxiu was already preparing dinner. In the past, Li Zhan would never have stepped foot into this house. If Zong Jinghao hadn't moved in eventually, he would have gone the rest of his life without venturing near the house ever again.

Out of politeness, Cheng Yuxiu asked, "Would you like to stay and have dinner with us?"

Li Zhan ignored her.

In the past, Zong Jinghao had shared an extremely tense relationship with his stepmother. The relationship between Wen Qing and Cheng Yuxiu was even worse—they habitually fought like cats and dogs. Hence, Li Zhan felt rather inclined to behave icily towards the woman.

Li Ruixi had gotten closer to her grandmother over the past few weeks. Seeing Li Zhan's frigid attitude towards her, she slipped off the sofa and ran to her grandmother. Throwing her arms around Cheng Yuxiu's legs, she exclaimed, "Grandmother, are you going to make me anything to eat?"

Cheng Yuxiu swooped her up from the floor. "What do you want to eat? I'll make it for you."

Lin Ruixi cocked her head to the side as she pondered. However, she didn't seem to have an answer right away.

Cheng Yuxiu set her down gently on the sofa. "Take your time to think about it slowly."

In his study, Zong Jinghao was tidying up some documents Guan Jing had delivered to him. After glancing over at the clock, he picked up his phone and called Lin Xinyan. A whole day had elapsed since she headed out that morning to send Zhuang Zijin off.

Why isn't she back yet?

Before he could dial her number, however, he received a call from Shen Peichuan.

As soon as Zong Jinghao picked up the phone, he heard Shen Peichuan say in a panicked voice, “Bad news. Xinyan has been arrested and taken to the police station.”

Zong Jinghao’s grip around his phone tightened. “What’s going on?”

Shen Peichuan thought it would be too difficult to relay everything to him over the phone. Instead of replying to his question, he said, “I’ll see you at the police station.”

Zong Jinghao hung up on the call. He picked up his coat from the chair and hurried towards the front door.

As Zong Jinghao zipped past her, Lin Ruixi asked, “Daddy, are you going out?”

Zong Jinghao paused for a second to look at his daughter. A strained smile spreading over his face, he said, “Daddy has something to attend to. I’ll come back really quickly, alright?”

The little girl nodded, looking like a pigeon as she flashed a smile back at him.

Upon seeing her smiling face, Zong Jinghao’s heart melted. He dashed over and planted a kiss on his daughter’s forehead, ruffling her fleecy hair affectionately.

Cheng Yuxiu glanced at the clock. It was nearing dinnertime. “Are you coming back for dinner?”

However, Zong Jinghao had already shot out of the door. Without hearing Cheng Yuxiu’s question, he jumped into his car and sped off in the direction of the police station.

He drove quickly and arrived at the police station in a flash.

Su Zhan and Shen Peichuan were pacing back and forth at the entrance, looking extremely worried. Seeing Zong Jinghao pull up in his car, they dashed up to him immediately.

Zong Jinghao pushed the car door open and stepped out of the vehicle. He was wearing a white dress shirt; the sleeves pulled up to reveal his muscular forearms. The fabric was rumpled at the front and the back. The wrinkles at the back had been caused by the back of his office chair, while those at the front had been made by his daughter when she squirmed against him.

In a low voice, he asked, "What's going on?"

Su Zhan didn't dare speak.

This was no small matter.

"It was our fault," Su Zhan said, his head bowed in apology.

They hadn't been able to protect her.

An impatient look flashed across Zong Jinghao's face. Raising his voice slightly, "I'm asking you who took her away!"

Right now, punishing the person at fault was the furthest thing from his mind. Zong Jinghao wanted to know what exactly had happened.

Shen Peichuan walked up to him and cleared his throat. "The people in the police station."

Zong Jinghao's patience was running out. His veins were throbbing in anger as he snapped, "Tell me what happened!"

Shen Peichuan finally summoned up the courage to speak. “Xinyan sent Zhuang Zijin off this morning. She must have been feeling a little morose after that, so she asked me to accompany her for a drink. I agreed, so we arrived at a relatively quiet bar. Halfway through, she said she needed to go to the toilet. A while later, Su Zhan and I heard a gunshot coming from the direction of the toilet. When we ran out of the room, we saw He Ruize jump onto her. Before we could stop him, he made Xinyan point the gun at him. He then shot himself to death. He Ruize died, and everyone saw the gun in Xinyan’s hand...”

He Ruize?

Zong Jinghao interrupted him. “Didn’t you send your men to guard him in jail? How did he manage to get out?”

Shen Peichuan continued, “A few minutes later, a whole lot of policemen arrived at the scene. I believe they had planned everything—it would’ve been impossible for them to arrive so quickly otherwise. As for He Ruize, he must’ve had the backing of someone powerful if he could escape from jail so easily.”

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Whoever that was, his connections ran deep. He would have to be someone with many men working under him.

There was only one person who could have facilitated He Ruize's escape from jail.

Zong Jinghao's eyes narrowed into slits. He could already guess who that was, but...

He shut his eyes, trying to calm himself down before walking into the police station. He had to see her first. He had to know, at the very least, that she was perfectly fine, that she wasn't scared to death.

Shen Peichuan followed after him. "We might not be able to see her today."

He hadn't been able to interfere in the case at all.

Zong Jinghao stopped dead in his tracks. "Who's in charge of Xinyan's case?"

Before he could finish speaking, Captain Chen had walked over to him.

He didn't seem surprised to see Zong Jinghao at the police station. "Mr. Zong, you won't be able to see her now. If you want to see her, you'll need to visit the Wen family."

Shen Peichuan's eyes widened. Beside him, Su Zhan looked flabbergasted.

Did this whole thing have something to do with the Wen family?

Zong Jinghao pursed his lips and tried to force down his rising panic.

Whoever set this up had done a really good job of it. It would be extremely difficult for them to get the police station to release Lin Xinyan now.

“The both of you should go and investigate...” Zong Jinghao’s voice trailed off. It would be too late for him to send Shen Peichuan and Su Zhan back to the bar to conduct their own investigations. Since this whole thing was a setup, the person behind it would have ensured that all the evidence incriminated Lin Xinyan.

His chest rose and fell in uneven breaths. “Try and get them to let us see Xinyan.”

With that, he turned and went back to his car.

The more they delayed getting her out of there, the more dangerous it would be for Lin Xinyan.

He had to go and meet Wen Qing immediately.

As he watched Zong Jinghao speed off in his car, Su Zhan was confused as to how Wen Qing was involved in this whole situation.

After all, Wen Qing and Zong Jinghao were on good terms with each other.

Su Zhan had no idea what was going on, but Shen Peichuan knew. The last time Zong Jinghao asked him to investigate Wen Qing’s movements, he had mentioned that Wen Qing knew about the relationship between Lin Xinyan and Cheng Yuxiu.

Wen Qing hated Cheng Yuxiu with every fiber of his being.

The closer Lin Xinyan got to her, the more unhappy Wen Qing would be. However, no matter how unhappy he was, would he really have done this to Lin Xinyan?

Something was amiss here, and he didn't know what.

Zong Jinghao's car screeched to a halt in front of the Wen family home. He got out of the car and walked through the gates, which were already open in anticipation of his arrival.

Wen Qing and Chen Qing were playing chess in the living room. Chen Shihan sat next to them, chatting happily.

Zong Jinghao walked into the battlefield armed only with his wits, but his aura was enough to send his enemies running away in fear. The three people in the living turned to look at him as though his presence was a net that captured all their attention. Ignoring Li Jing, who said hello to him, he made his way over to Wen Qing.

"You're here..."

Before Wen Qing could finish speaking, Zong Jinghao interrupted him. "What do you want?"

Wen Qing gazed placidly at Zong Jinghao, whose face was steely with rage. "I'm your uncle."

He didn't want Lin Xinyan's life. All he wanted to do was see how important that woman was to Zong Jinghao.

Has he forgotten about Wen Xian because of this woman?

The tension in the room reached a freezing point. Li Jing tried to counsel him. "Jinghao, don't blame your uncle. He's doing this for your own good..."

“What do you want?” Zong Jinghao asked again.

Wen Qing was starting to feel a little angry. He hadn't expected Zong Jinghao to get so worked up over this.

Is that woman really so important to him?

For the sake of that woman, he would accept Cheng Yuxiu into his life and forget how Wen Xian died?

The more he thought about it, the angrier Wen Qing got. His muscles were so tensed that they reminded one of ice in the winter—cold and rock solid.

“Alright, alright!” Wen Qing snapped. “She doesn't suit you at all! If you agree to divorce her and take Shihan as your wife, I'll let Lin Xinyan go.”

Zong Jinghao's eyes were bloodshot like a vampire's. “And if I don't agree to those terms?”

“She has pulled the wool over your eyes! Even if I sacrifice the entire Wen family, I must let you know what kind of person she is!”

He looked at Zong Jinghao. “Back then, I adored your mother, and now I'm lavishing that same amount of care on you. Aside from giving you children, what has that woman ever done for you? She's ganging up with that wretched Cheng Yuxiu for God knows what!”

Wen Qing had no reason to hide what he knew from Zong Jinghao any longer.

“Tea Silk is the ancestral business of the Cheng family. That woman picked it up from Cheng Yuxiu, and now she wants to start her own business with it? What kind of awkward position do you think you'll end up in?”

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Wen Qing tried persuading Zong Jinghao. "I've told you my stance. There's no reason for me to harm you," Wen Qing stated convincingly.

Zong Jinghao knitted his brows, and his pupils glowed warily as he peered at Wen Qing in suspicion.

"I don't need any help. I will not allow anyone to touch my loved ones, especially not someone who claims to do it for my own good," Zong Jinghao pronounced firmly.

"So you're not gonna change your mind?" Wen Qing asked, cracking his knuckles.

Zong Jinghao glared at him. "I've always respected you, and I still do. If you spare my wife, I'm willing to bury the hatchet. But if you refuse to relent, don't say I didn't warn you later on."

Wen Qing pressed his hand against his chest in disbelief. "This is outrageous! I can't believe you're threatening me because of a woman!" he exclaimed with great difficulty.

"She is my wife!" Zong Jinghao growled.

"She is your wife, but the both of you are not in the same boat! This is the reality!" Wen Qing yelled at him.

"I'm totally aware of the reality. I know full well what I'm doing," Zong Jinghao persisted. His handsome face hardened as he took a last look at Wen Qing before turning to leave.

“You won’t be able to save her. All the evidence will be against her!” Wen Qing roared behind him.

Zong Jinghao’s steps halted.

“If you agree to divorce her, nothing will happen. Shihan is more suitable for you. Her family matches up to ours. She’s a better candidate. I’m doing this for your own sake, and I don’t care if you will hate me for it. I can’t watch you spiral down the wrong path because of this woman!” Wen Qing’s voice blasted loudly in a long harangue.

However, Zong Jinghao only tilted his head and looked at him calmly.

Wen Qing could feel a storm brewing behind the man’s calm facade.

Zong Jinghao strode towards his car without another word, and the car sped off.

Wen Qing’s steps faltered, and he fell back on the chair as he watched the other man leave in such a determined way.

Wen Qing knew that gaze.

He gripped the chair handle tightly as a voice rang out from over his shoulder.

“Are you afraid?” Chen Qing patted him on the shoulder.

“I’m afraid he might do something drastic this time,” Wen Qing said in a worried tone.

“You’re afraid he will take your life?” Chen Qing asked.

Wen Qing admitted his fear with a slight nod.

He simply wanted Zong Jinghao to give up on Lin Xinyan; it was never his intention to make an enemy out of him.

“Well, if he really cares for that woman, he will budge,” Chen Qing assured him.

Wen Qing’s mind raced through all the possibilities. *True, Zong Jinghao was able to get to where he is today because of me. He is nothing if I’m no longer on his side.*

The same goes for Shen Peichuan. I’m the reason why everything has been going on smoothly for him.

Zong Jinghao won’t be able to save her no matter how many tricks he has up his sleeves.

“There is nothing you need to be afraid of. You can always count on me,” Chen Qing said confidently.

The Wen, Chen, and He family were the most influential families in B city. No one could stand in their way if the three families worked together.

They would make sure she pays with her life.

Zong Jinghao would not be able to get her out safely. The evidence would work against her, and he would find himself fighting the most powerful families.

On the other side, Chen Shihan stared at the courtyard blankly as she sat alone.

She knew she had fallen for Zong Jinghao. She loved his fortitude in the face of adversity; she loved how he was able to remain unfazed and unwavering under pressure.

He was on the losing side, yet he showed no fear. The resilience and tenacity in his eyes shone like diamonds in the dark—he was all a woman ever wanted.

But Chen Shihan knew from the very beginning that she would never have his love even if Zong Jinghao agreed to marry her. He only had eyes for Lin Xinyan.

“Dad, you know I’ll never have a place in his heart,” Chen Shihan said, turning towards Chen Qing.

“You don’t have to worry about it. Uncle Wen and I will take care of everything,” her father replied softly as he looked at her tenderly.

“But...”

“It’s time we go home,” Chen Qing interjected before his daughter could speak any further.

He did not want Chen Shihan to say anything that might sway Wen Qing, who was still recovering from the shock of having offended Zong Jinghao.

“See you around. I won’t be sending you off,” Wen Qing said weakly from his chair as he saw them gesturing to leave.

“Rest well, mate. Don’t be such a chicken; you’re seen worse!” Chen Qing reminded him.

He and Wen Qing had been in the army for most of their lives. Chen Qing was already in his fifties, but he still looked healthy and muscular in his uniform.

Wen Qing let out a sigh. If he was honest, he was not afraid of what might happen. He just did not want to lose Zong Jinghao.

“He’s Wen Xian’s only child,” he mumbled.

For a moment, that name caused ripples of emotion in Chen Qing’s heart. But he quickly composed himself and gave Wen Qing a sturdy pat on the shoulder

before making his way out. "Call me if you need anything," he said and left the Wen family with Chen Shihan.

The adjutant opened the door for Chen Qing and closed the door after Chen Shihan.

"Let's go," Chen Qing ordered.

The car drove away immediately.

"Daddy, why did you stop me just now?" Chen Shihan asked Chen Qing. She knew her dad had done it on purpose.

Chen Qing sighed and rested his head against the headrest. He closed his eyes and said, "What did you want to say? You wanted to say you didn't want to marry him anymore?"

Chen Shihan lowered her gaze and replied, "I can tell he loves his wife deeply. Even if we force him to marry me, he will never love me."

"Love grows over time. Are you worried that he won't fall for you eventually?" Chen Qing asked as he opened his eyes slightly.

"Well..." Chen Shihan did not answer. She really did not believe she could make her way into his heart.

This was not the first time she met an attractive man, but she had never met someone like him.

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She adored Zong Jinghao, but she was also afraid of him.

Chen Qing stroked her hand and said gently, “Don’t worry, Daddy will always support you.”

“Dad, do you really want me to marry Zong Jinghao?” Chen Shihan asked.

She also had her own dignity and ego. Besides, Zong Jinghao might hate her if he was forced to marry her.

Rather than telling her his personal opinion, Chen Qing cleared his throat and started dissecting the pros and cons of the whole situation.

“Why did the Zong family and the Wen family intermarry? Wen Xian and Zong Qifeng married because it was in the best interest of the two families. One controls the army; the other controls the economy. What do you think is the outcome of such a marriage?” Chen Qing asked his daughter.

“Each family gets to consolidate and extend its power,” she replied.

When two prominent families worked together, they complemented each other and further reinforced their own power.

“These two families are so influential – everyone is afraid of them. Look at the He family. They were once a noble family, but what’s left of them now? Thanks to Zong Jinghao, only one out of the three kids made it till now.” Chen Qing pointed out with a scoff.

He looked at his daughter and continued, “If he’s able to join our family, we will be stronger.”

Chen Shihan understood where her dad was coming from. She wanted to help him too, but Zong Jinghao terrified her.

“You don’t have to worry about a single thing. I will make sure everything turns out well. You’ve got much more than this, be confident!” Chen Qing encouraged her.

Chen Shihan looked at her dad shyly and admitted, “He’s the most charismatic man I’ve ever met, and I really wish to marry him.”

I wish he can love me one day.

“You will,” Chen Qing stated as he stroke his daughter’s cheeks.

His eyes were full of affection as if there was another person in his eyes. “Never give up on the person you love, or you’ll end up regretting your whole life.”

Chen Shihan looked at her dad. She was a little taken aback. “Do you have any regrets, Daddy?” she asked curiously.

Her dad was usually a severe and stern man since he had been in the army for such a long time.

This was the first time Chen Shihan saw another side of her dad.

Chen Qing collected himself before he said calmly, “Life is not perfect. It’s impossible for one to not have regrets.”

Chen Shihan held his arm and probed, “I bet you loved someone when you were young too.”

She knew her dad had met her mom through a matchmaker. Her mom was a soft-spoken woman, so their marriage life was harmonious and uneventful. But Chen Shihan knew that there was no love in their marriage.

Her mom used to tell her that there was someone in her dad's heart.

She wondered if he had gotten emotional because he had suddenly thought of that woman.

"You're just a kid. You won't understand," her dad said.

"But, dad..."

"Try to stay home more these days," Chen Qing cut her off.

He did not want to risk any scandals about his daughter during this critical time. It was difficult to predict what Zong Jinghao would do next.

Chen Shihan nodded silently.

Over at the police station, Lin Xinyan was being interrogated in an enclosed room without any windows.

Under the only pendant light that lit the room poorly, two policemen sat on one side of a rectangle table, glaring at her.

"What's your name?" they asked the woman sitting across them.

Lin Xinyan shifted her gaze from her handcuffs and looked up.

"I'm Lin Xinyan," she replied calmly, trying to appear as composed as possible.

"Alright. Before we start, let me remind you that anything you say may be used against you in the court of law." One of them gave her the Miranda warning.

"Why did you kill He Ruize?" another police asked.

“I didn’t kill him,” she answered, tightening her fist.

“Witnesses have attested to seeing you point a gun at him. What do you have to say to that?” the police questioned.

“I didn’t kill him,” Lin Xinyan reiterated.

She really could not explain why the gun was in her hand at that time; neither could she explain how He Ruize had died from a gunshot.

“Please consider everything carefully. It’s better to plead guilty for a reduced sentence. However, if you insist on denying, you might end up getting a heavier sentence if all the evidence work against you. If the fingerprint examination shows your fingerprint on the gun, you’re done for,” one of the policemen reminded her.

Lin Xinyan looked at the police officer penning down her statement and asked, “Since all of you have already planned this out, why do you still need to write down my statement?”

The officer cocked his head and looked at her condescendingly. “I don’t know what you’re talking about. This is the standard operating procedure. When we question a suspect, everything goes into our record.”

The officer emphasized the word “suspect” as he spoke.

That word buzzed in Lin Xinyan’s ears like a vexing bee. Her vision turned blurry, and she felt faint. She tried keeping her eyes open as she breathed heavily.

“I told you it was self-defense!” she cried out.

“But if you didn’t kill him, why did you point the gun at him?” they probed.

“I was defending myself,” she said again.

“According to what we know, He Ruize was found guilty of kidnapping. And you were the victim, is that true?” they asked.

“Yes.”

“It’s completely possible that you held a grudge against him and decided to kill him,” the police speculated.

A stuffy sensation spread across Lin Xinyan’s chest, and she felt nauseous. But she shook the feeling off and said, “No, I never wanted to kill him.”

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“Stop putting up a show. All the evidence points to you. We won’t let you leave before we are done with the investigation,” the police remarked, thinking she was trying to fake illness to get bailed out. “It’s impossible to be released on bail given your circumstance,” he added.

Lin Xinyan did not bother answering. She was feeling very uncomfortable.

The officer recording the statement nudged the officer beside him and said, “I think we should probably resume later. Let’s send her to the medical room first.”

Just as the police were deciding whether they should let the doctor attend to her, a commotion rumbled outside, and a sharp voice rang through the door. “We’re questioning the suspect. You can’t go in!” someone shouted at Shen Peichuan.

He had broken into the police station with a gun in his hand.

“Shen Peichuan, do you know what you’re doing?” the police in charge of questioning the suspect roared.

Shen Peichuan looked at him from the corner of his eyes coldly. He knew full well the consequences of his action—but he did not care. As long as he did not hurt anyone, the worst that could happen to him was losing his job. It was not a big deal anymore at this point.

His gaze landed on Lin Xinyan, and he cried out, “Xinyan, are you okay?”

Lin Xinyan nodded her head weakly, trying to assure him that everything was alright.

Shen Peichuan realized something was off and rushed over quickly. "What's wrong?" he asked, trying to support her with his arms.

Lin Xinyan shook her head slightly. She was not sure if she was feeling unwell because she had drunk yesterday. All she knew was that the abdominal pain she felt was intensifying as time passed.

"Let's get you to the hospital," Shen Peichuan held her in his arms. However, Captain Chen got in the way and stopped him.

"Ms. Lin is now a suspect; you cannot bring her anywhere," he warned.

"Get out of the way, or I'll blow your head up!" Shen Peichuan shouted as he pointed the gun at Captain Chen.

The captain did not relent. He took a few steps forward and placed his head right in front of the muzzle. He knew Shen Peichuan would never fire.

"Chief Shen, Ms. Lin is now being charged with murder. The investigation is still ongoing. Things won't look nice for her if she leaves now. You might not care about yourself, but what about her?" the captain asked.

Lin Xinyan grabbed Shen Peichuan's arm and pushed his gun away. She did not want to get him involved.

"I'm alright. It's just an investigation. I won't die because of it. You can leave," she told him firmly.

"Xinyan!" Shen Peichuan yelled.

"I said, leave! You won't be of any help here," Lin Xinyan repeated.

She knew everything had been set up. They were just waiting for her to fall into their trap.

Shen Peichuan would not be able to do anything.

It was useless even if she got out of the police station.

As long as no evidence proved her innocence, she would never be able to get away.

“But you’re not feeling well,” Shen Peichuan commented anxiously.

Cold sweat was already rolling down her forehead, and her lips looked chapped. If not for Shen Peichuan, she would have collapsed to the ground already.

“Hand her over. We will send her to the hospital ourselves,” Captain Chen ordered. He was in charge of the case, and he knew the importance of making sure the suspect was in her best condition.

Shen Peichuan looked at the captain, considering what he should do.

“The trial has not taken place, so Ms. Lin is not convicted yet. Understandably, she needs medical care if she’s feeling unwell, and we will make sure she is well taken care of. If you choose to contend, you’re only delaying the time of her treatment,” the captain continued.

Shen Peichuan knew that Captain Chen was right.

He knew he would not be able to take her away just like this. Even if he did, this was an ongoing case. The police could still come and apprehend her anytime.

Just as he was about to give in, Lin Xinyan dropped to the ground as her legs gave way.

Shen Peichuan reflexively crossed his arm around her waist and carried her in his arms.

He looked at Captain Chen and said, "I'll accompany her to the hospital under your supervision."

The captain gave his consent and quickly added, "I'll drive."

Over at the gate, Su Zhan was pacing up and down waiting for news. Unlike Shen Peichuan, who was a law enforcement personnel, Su Zhan could not barge into the police station as he liked because he was just a common civilian. He would be offending the law if he did so.

He had agreed to would wait outside while Shen Peichuan would go in and rescue Lin Xinyan.

It had been some time since Shen Peichuan went into the police station, and Su Zhan was getting anxious.

But just as he was about to rush into the police station himself, he saw Shen Peichuan running out, carrying Lin Xinyan in his arms.

What is going on?

He dashed towards Shen Peichuan and asked nervously, "What's wrong with Xinyan?"

"Let's get her to the hospital first!" Shen Peichuan urged.

"Get in the car!" Su Zhan cried out, reaching for the car door.

But Captain Chen followed after them and said, "We should go in my car."

Su Zhan held him by his collar and glared at him, wanting to give the captain a punch in the face.

Yet Shen Peichuan stopped him before he could do anything. “We need to get her to the hospital now.”

Su Zhan finally let go of Captain Chen unwillingly and got into the police car’s driver seat.

Shen Peichuan carried Lin Xinyan into the backseat, and Captain Chen sat beside the driver’s seat.

“How’s he?” Lin Xinyan asked softly. She was still thinking about Zong Jinghao at this moment.

“He went to the Wen family. We believe Wen Qing definitely had something to do with what happened,” Shen Peichuan said, holding her in his arms as he tried to adjust his position so she could rest more comfortably.

Shen Peichuan knew Zong Jinghao’s relationship with Wen Qing. He knew things would turn ugly this time.

Lin Xinyan was totally aware of that as well. Her lashes quivered in pain and fear as she tried to hold her tears in.

Her voice cracked as she said, “Things must have been difficult for him.”

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Shen Peichuan knew things would be difficult. However, he also knew that Zong Jinghao would not let this go so easily.

“Don’t worry about it,” Shen Peichuan said. He did not know what to say to make her feel better.

Lin Xinyan turned and stared at the fleeting scene passing by briskly outside the window. Her head was all over the place as she thought about Zong Jinghao and what the future held for them.

“Xinyan, I’m not sure if I should tell you this, but I think you shouldn’t get too close to Cheng Yuxiu.” Shen Peichuan broke the silence.

This was probably the reason why Wen Qing was infuriated.

Shen Peichuan did not understand. Lin Xinyan was streetwise; she would not do something that would put Zong Jinghao in a tight spot. But the reality was that Zong Jinghao was now on the verge of getting on Wen Qing’s bad side.

Lin Xinyan knew what he was thinking, but she did not explain herself because she had promised Cheng Yuxiu not to say a word.

“Is it really painful?” Shen Peichuan was getting stressed out when he realized that her whole body was wet in sweat.

She looked at his worried face and shook her head lightly. Although the pain was excruciating, it came in waves. At times it was still bearable.

They reached the hospital in no time. Shen Peichuan rushed her into the hospital without losing a moment. He carried her to the ER, and the doctors requested him to leave after he placed her on a hospital bed.

It wasn't until he placed her on the bed that he realized his hands were all wet. He looked at his hands and was confounded. There was blood all over—it was not sweat.

He turned around and looked at Lin Xinyan and saw her lower body drenched in blood.

What... What is going on...

The doctor and nurses busied themselves around Lin Xinyan, getting ready for surgery. "Please wait outside," the doctor told Shen Peichuan as he stood there, stupefied.

Captain Chen pulled him out of the ER, and they were met with Su Zhan, who ran into the hospital after parking the car.

"Don't talk to me," Shen Peichuan said to Su Zhan before the latter could say anything. He needed to think. *Why is she bleeding?*

He crouched at the corner, staring at the bloodstain in his hands. He swallowed hard, and his breathing became rapid. Shen Peichuan had never had a girlfriend. But he knew there was only one reason why a woman would bleed like this.

Just as he was trying to process what just happened, his phone rang.

It was Zong Jinghao.

Shen Peichuan did not have the courage to pick up his call.

His uncertain eyes wandered around before he finally took the call. “We’re at the hospital.”

“What?” Zong Jinghao questioned instantly.

“Xinyan is not feeling well,” he replied curtly.

“Which hospital?” the voice on the other side asked curtly.

Shen Peichuan’s shoulders tensed as he struggled to mumble something over the phone. “I’m sorry,” he muttered in a hoarse and shaky voice.

“I’m so sorry,” Shen Peichuan repeated as he crossed his arms above his knees and dropped his head low.

Guilt ate him up, and he kept apologizing to Zong Jinghao. He felt as if he had let the man down—he felt that he should have done more to keep her safe.

“Which hospital is it?”

Zong Jinghao was growing impatient.

From a distance, Su Zhan realized something was wrong with Shen Peichuan. He came over, picked up the phone Shen Peichuan had dropped beside his feet, and updated Zong Jinghao on their whereabouts.

“What’s wrong with you? Is her condition that bad?” Su Zhan asked after ending the call.

Shen Peichuan clenched his fists and said, “Don’t talk to me, I need to calm down.”

Su Zhan raised his brows and stuffed Shen Peichuan’s phone back into his pocket and stood near another corner.

It was not long before a familiar face appeared at the hospital, and the whole atmosphere chilled. Zong Jinghao surveyed everyone as anger blazed in his dark eyes. He located Su Zhan and strode down the corridor towards him.

By passers warily stood aside and distanced themselves from Zong Jinghao.

Su Zhan felt someone staring him down and looked up.

“What’s happening?” Zong Jinghao interrogated.

Shen Peichuan recognized his voice immediately, but he did not move a muscle.

He continued looking at the ground until he saw a pair of shiny leather shoes appear before his gaze.

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Shen Peichuan was about to stand up but his knees felt unusually weak. He was not sure if it was because he had squat down for too long, or if it was because he was still recovering from the shock. But regardless, he held on to the wall and stood up before Zong Jinghao, who was staring at him intensely.

“They were questioning Xinyan, and she felt ill all of a sudden,” Shen Peichuan narrated without looking at Zong Jinghao in the eyes.

“Look at me!” Zong Jinghao shouted.

His voice echoed throughout the corridor, and Shen Peichuan jerked in shock.

“Shen Peichuan broke into the prison with a gun, risking his own life and his job. I think we have all done our best!” Su Zhan defended him as he walked towards Shen Peichuan.

Shen Peichuan knew Zong Jinghao had seen the blood on his hands; he knew that that was why he was furious.

However, before he could explain himself, the ER door glided open, and a doctor came out. He took off his mask and asked, “The patient’s family?”

Zong Jinghao hurried over. Captain Chen and Su Zhan followed after him. “I’m here,” Zong Jinghao said.

Shen Peichuan stayed right where he was without moving an inch—he could not bear to hear any bad news.

“The patient is very weak. Although the baby is safe now, there’s still a high chance of miscarriage in the future. We suggest for her to rest in bed for three

months. We have to make sure the baby is completely okay before the patient starts moving around,” the doctor explained.

Zong Jinghao widened his eyes in disbelief. He could not believe that Lin Xinyan was pregnant.

Emotions came rushing in, and his veins pulsated fiercely beneath his skin. Zong Jinghao was blown away despite there being no emotion on his face.

Captain Chen, on the other hand, stepped aside and called Wen Qing.

“Can I see her now?” Zong Jinghao finally said something.

“She will be out in a moment,” the doctor replied as the door behind him slid open again.

Lin Xinyan was pushed out of the ER, but she was still not fully conscious.

Zong Jinghao rushed towards her and held her hand. She was cold and pale. He kissed her gently on her hands, trying to warm her up and let her know that he was there.

Lin Xinyan struggled to fix her gaze on him as she felt a familiar touch. She could not see him clearly—but she knew that it must be him.

“I didn’t kill him,” Lin Xinyan whispered frailly.

Zong Jinghao fondled her hair and stroked her forehead, saying softly, “I know.”

Tears welled up in her eyes and rolled down her pale cheeks. She did not care if other people thought she was guilty—his trust was all she needed.

Zong Jinghao bent over and kissed her eyes, drying her tears away as he reassured her.

Now that she had finally seen him, Lin Xinyan gave in to the beckoning lethargy and fell into a deep sleep.

Over at the other corner, Shen Peichuan could finally sigh in relief after hearing both Lin Xinyan and the child were okay.

If not, Zong Jinghao would never forgive him.

“Send her to the ward. She needs to rest. We need to put her under observation for the next week. She can go home and rest if there is no more bleeding,” the doctor said.

Su Zhan went ahead and arranged for a VIP ward while Zong Jinghao stayed by Lin Xinyan’s side.

Once the room was available, Zong Jinghao carried her in his arms and transferred her to the new bed.

After checking her condition, the doctor looked at Zong Jinghao and asked, “Are you her husband?”

He nodded.

“Her first pregnancy was too taxing for her body. She is not in her best health for the next baby. We’re lucky nothing happened this time. Things would have been totally different if she arrived any later. We need to ensure that the room is well-ventilated and that she is not under stress throughout her period of recuperation. Make sure she’s feeling well emotionally. This will help tremendously with her recovery. And most importantly, no sex for the next three months,” the doctor advised.

Zong Jinghao took a look at Lin Xinyan before he said, “Alright, noted.”

“Great, let me know if you need anything,” the doctor added before leaving the room.

Over at the counter, Su Zhan spotted Shen Peichuan standing in front of the washroom after he settled the medical bill.

He walked over and saw the bloodstain on his hands. He finally understood why Shen Peichuan had been so scared back there.

“Everything’s okay now,” Su Zhan assured.

Shen Peichuan turned the water tap and started washing his hands. It was traumatizing to see Lin Xinyan trembling in pain as she bled.

He lowered his gaze and tried to appear calm. “I’ll be okay,” he told Su Zhan.

“Get some rest. The war has yet to come,” Su Zhan stated. As a lawyer, he was aware that Lin Xinyan’s pregnancy would make things easier for them, but just for a while.

She was still a criminal homicide suspect, and all the evidence was not in her favor.

Gun homicide was a serious crime.

Even if she could escape a death sentence, she would still need to face a heavy penalty.

Since time was on their side now, they should start working on collecting evidence that could prove her innocence.