

Stealing Your Heart Chapter 551

He didn't need Lin Xinyan to tell him that as he would do anything to get Qin Ya out for the sake of Su Zhan.

Zong Jinghao reached out to place a strand of hair behind her ear and said softly, "Can you treat me like this in the future too?"

Lin Xinyan wrapped her arms around his waist and leaned against his chest. "I'll treat you better in the future."

Because I want to give you a loving family.

Their family might feel incomplete, but at least they got to be with their children.

Soon, she pulled back from his embrace and urged him, "You should get going now. They're still waiting for you downstairs."

They had all the time in the world to be together in the time to come, but they couldn't waste another second when it came to Qin Ya.

Zong Jinghao kissed her forehead and consoled, "Don't worry."

Lin Xinyan mumbled a response, and they walked out of the wardrobe together. Zong Jinghao saw Shen Peichuan and Su Zhan waiting for him the moment he came downstairs. He glanced at Su Zhan before saying, "You should head back first."

Su Zhan was indeed feeling tired after a night without rest. He replied as he got up, "I'll head back and get some rest, then. I should visit my grandmother too."

Zong Jinghao hummed a reply. Shen Peichuan only asked when Su Zhan left, “Does Su Zhan not know about Qin Ya?”

Fortunately, he didn’t say anything about it earlier because Su Zhan seemed really relaxed.

“No. It’ll do us no good if he knows.” Su Zhan was a rash person; he wouldn’t be of much help in rescuing Qin Ya. He would only cause them more trouble.

“Gu Bei is such a coward. What did he think he would accomplish by kidnapping a woman? Come at us if he’s that great!” Shen Peichuan sneered.

“Let’s go.” Zong Jinghao took the lead, and Shen Peichuan followed behind him without any questions. The latter knew he must’ve had contacted Gu Bei about Qin Ya.

They didn’t bring a driver with them – Zong Jinghao personally drove them there. Since it wasn’t rush hour, they soon arrived at Central Avenue. The nightclub that was originally full of excitement was now filled with silence instead.

Both of them got down from the car once the car was parked. They weren’t met with a heated crowd like the last time. It was as if everyone was now exhausted from a night of partying.

Originally, the manager was supposed to overlook the place. But now that the manager had gone in, Number Four was the second-in-command.

Besides Gu Bei, he was the other person responsible. At the sight of the two men, Number Four went over to them with a grin on his face. “Are you here for Mr. Gu?”

“Where is he?” Shen Peichuan asked, his face devoid of any expression. He wasn’t intimidated by Number Four’s frivolous attitude at all.

“Mr. Gu is an extremely busy man. But he did instruct me to arrange a meeting with him when Mr. Zong arrives. He will be out to meet you soon.” Number Four made a gesture to welcome them in, but it lacked respect and was rather frivolous, so it looked more insulting than welcoming.

If Su Zhan were around, he would have insulted him by saying, “Who do you think you are? You’re nothing but a lackey standing by Gu Bei. Do you think you’re anything without Gu Bei?”

However, Zong Jinghao and Shen Peichuan weren’t the types of people to take offense at a disdainful scoundrel’s acts.

Zong Jinghao nodded slightly and said indifferently, “Since Mr. Gu made the arrangement, we’ll do whatever is needed.”

Number Four became angry upon hearing his words.

He suppressed his anger and told them to follow him before finally walking towards a corridor.

Shen Peichuan caught a glimpse at the back of the furious Number Four and whispered to Zong Jinghao, “This person doesn’t seem as staid as the manager.”

Zong Jinghao’s lips twitched, but he didn’t reply. He followed after Number Four instead.

The latter opened up the door to the same private room they had used the last time. He stood by the door and said, “Please wait here for a moment. Mr. Gu will be here soon.”

Zong Jinghao and Shen Peichuan walked into the room without glancing at him. Then, Number Four left them after closing the door.

Shen Peichuan smiled. “This person’s interesting.”

How did he become Gu Bei's henchman when he doesn't even know how to restrain his temper?

Zong Jinghao scanned the private room. "If nothing happened to the manager, it isn't his position to do anything. But someone like him could benefit us."

Then, he whispered to Shen Peichuan, "Have someone secretly follow him. With how he acted earlier, he must be giddy with delight for being able to be by Gu Bei's side. Without anything to keep him grounded, he will obviously let his guard down. He will definitely slip up at a time like this."

"What if Gu Bei knows what kind of person he is and therefore didn't tell him the place Qin Ya is hidden?" They could easily tell what kind of person Number Four was, so how could Gu Bei not know?

Zong Jinghao unbuttoned the cuffs of his sleeves as he said, "A person like him would do anything to stay alive. He would obviously betray someone to do so too."

Shen Peichuan immediately understood what he meant. *If I don't get anything when following him, my men can capture him and torture him. He'd certainly talk by then.*

Zong Jinghao sat down on the couch and looked up at the ceiling lazily. He said flatly to Shen Peichuan, "Just wait."

Gu Bei was obviously trying to put on airs and graces. He wouldn't be there in at least half an hour.

Shen Peichuan took a seat too and poured themselves a cup of water each. He put a cup in front of Zong Jinghao and said, "I feel so sorry for Su Zhan."

If I had gone to C City previously, this wouldn't have happened.

Zong Jinghao said nothing as he massaged his forehead. He was feeling exhausted since he didn't get a good rest the night before.

Shen Peichuan said nothing at the sight of the former's exhaustion. He quickly sent a message to his subordinates to follow Number Four.

He only kept his phone when he received a reply. He then informed Zong Jinghao that the arrangements had been made. "Do you want to rest? Go ahead, I'll wake you up when he comes. I'm sure he won't be returning so soon."

Zong Jinghao answered with a quiet, "Okay."

Shen Peichuan unbuttoned his cuffs and took a sip of water as he prepared for the long wait ahead.

Minutes ticked by. Shen Peichuan took a look at the time and realized that two hours had passed. He folded his arms across his chest and continued to wait.

After another hour, there was finally a sound of the doorknob rattling.

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Shen Peichuan straightened his back and saw Gu Bei walking in. “He’s here.”

Gu Bei’s fake laughter sounded right away. “So sorry, I was delayed. Did you guys wait long?”

“We understand that Mr. Gu is a busy man. Moreover, unlike the olden days, it’s no longer common for people these days to pay attention to the way we treat our guests.” Shen Peichuan was clearly insinuating something else in his speech – that Gu Bei was ill-mannered to treat his guests that way while they were magnanimous enough to let it slide.

Gu Bei’s face darkened, but he managed to force a wry smile. “Chief Shen, not only are you rising quickly in the ranks, but you’re also becoming a smooth talker.”

“You flatter me, Mr. Gu. I’m just a small fry. I’m still a far cry from Mr. Gu,” Shen Peichuan smiled mirthlessly.

Well, I’ll act along if he wants to continue being so hypocritical.

Gu Bei changed the topic as he looked towards Zong Jinghao. “Did President Zong fall asleep while waiting for me?”

Just as Shen Peichuan was about to answer, Zong Jinghao opened his eyes. He did not look as sleepy as before. In fact, he seemed to be rather alert. “It looks like Mr. Gu’s place has some special powers, it feels hypnotic to be here.”

Gu Bei laughed heartily and replied, “That’s needless to say, if this is not a special plot of land, it wouldn’t be possible for us to remain strong during such trying times.”

It's not the environment that has special powers, but it's me who's powerful. Not to mention the strong backing I have. That was the obvious message the man was trying to convey to Zong Jinghao.

Gu Bei sat down on the couch and stretched out his arms lazily. "President Zong, it isn't too great of you to not introduce your pretty girlfriend to me. Are you afraid that I'll snatch her away from you?"

Zong Jinghao squinted as a hint of darkness surged in his eyes.

Keeping a cool front, he smiled. "I'm sure Mr. Gu has seen your fair share of really gorgeous women. My girlfriend is at most considered average-looking as compared to the pretty ladies whom Mr. Gu is acquainted with."

"You're too modest, President Zong. If I remember correctly, her name is..." Gu Bei pretended to have a hard time recalling the woman's name. He had on a frustrated expression as he reached for his forehead, appearing to be deep in thought. Suddenly, he slapped his thigh and exclaimed, "Oh right! Her name is Lin Xinyan! I met her once in C City and was rather fond of her too. If President Zong gets sick of that woman one day, please let me have her."

Zong Jinghao grabbed Gu Bei's collar as flames of fury burned in his eyes. Rage pulsed through his veins as he tightened his grip, so much that Gu Bei had difficulty breathing. Although Gu Bei's face was flushed bright red, the man managed to force a smile while gasping for air. He challenged Zong Jinghao, "President Zong, why are you so angry? Do you really care so much about that woman? Ah, I almost forgot that you even took pains to hide her in C City. You must really care a lot about her. Let me guess, is she very good in bed? Is that why she's able to capture President Zong's heart..."

"You must have a death wish!" *Crash!* Suddenly, the shattering of glass was heard. No one noticed Zong Jinghao grab a wine bottle. The man smashed it against the table and pointed the broken bottle at Gu Bei's chin. Traces of blood then appeared on Gu Bei's skin as the sharp edges of the bottle brushed against it.

The strong aroma of red wine, which was splattered on the floor, permeated the room. However, it was still overpowered by the soul-stirring, horrifying atmosphere.

Gu Bei frowned when he felt the pain from the cut. At that moment, he had lost all the cockiness which he had displayed earlier on when he saw the dangerous glint in Zong Jinghao's eyes.

Shen Peichuan, who had witnessed the unfolding of the events, was completely stunned. As far as he could remember, he had never seen Zong Jinghao behaving so aggressively and looking so cold.

Zong Jinghao had always been the calmest and stoic one among them. It was the first time he had displayed that other side of him, just like a dangerous animal, ready to kill.

"You... you... don't forget, that woman, Qin Ya, is still in my hands. If you kill me, she would also have to die. Besides, my dad will definitely go after you and make you pay for it!"

Gu Bei was his dad's only son; Old Master Gu had fathered him in his autumn years. As such, if Gu Bei were dead, the Gu family would certainly avenge him at all costs.

Shen Peichuan snapped out of his shock when he heard what Gu Bei said. "Be patient. We will have plenty of opportunities to get him next time," he whispered to Zong Jinghao.

No matter what, as long as Qin Ya was still in Gu Bei's hands, Shen Peichuan and Zong Jinghao would be at the losing end. They had to rescue Qin Ya as soon as possible before settling scores with Gu Bei.

With both hands held up, Gu Bei said, "Calm down, President Zong. Let's talk civilly. First, I'll apologize for what I said just now. I'm really sorry, I mean it..."

As Gu Bei spoke, he inched backward. Zong Jinghao noticed it but did not mention anything about it.

After all, that man still had Qin Ya. That reason alone left Zong Jinghao with no other choice but to relent for the time being.

When Gu Bei judged that the distance between Zong Jinghao and himself was wide enough for him to be safe, he jumped off the couch and stood at the side. Gu Bei wiped his neck with his hand and shuddered when he saw it smeared with blood. *If he had used slightly more force, today could have been my death anniversary!*

At once, Gu Bei's temper sparked, and he glared at Zong Jinghao with bloodshot eyes. "Are you out of your mind?" he yelled.

Zong Jinghao smoothed out his sleeves casually as he replied, "I was just fooling around. Don't take it too seriously, Mr. Gu."

"Look at the blood on my hands! Fooling around? More like you're taking me for a fool!" Gu Bei was breathless with anger and nearly flipped the table in rage.

"I can't be serious about harming you, right, Mr. Gu?" Zong Jinghao looked at Gu Bei in the eye and continued, "The purpose of our visit today is not to create bad blood with you, Mr. Gu. It wouldn't be beneficial to either of us if you insist on making things worse."

Gu Bei narrowed his eyes and replied, "The feud between you and Wen Qing is really none of my business. Why did you have to drag me into it? Do I look like a pushover to you?"

I have a temper too, you know!

Gu Bei felt that his reputation would be ruined if he simply let the matter slide without doing anything about it.

“State your condition. What do you want from us for you to release Qin Ya?” As Zong Jinghao stood up and walked towards Gu Bei, Gu Bei retreated a few steps and warned, “Don’t come any further!”

He was already deeply traumatized by Zong Jinghao’s actions. *What a scary man!*

Zong Jinghao stopped in his tracks and laughed, “Did I frighten Mr. Gu just now? Sorry, I wasn’t able to control my foul temper. I hope you don’t take it to heart.”

He considers this just a foul temper? Gu Bei was grumbling silently inside his heart.

“Will you agree to any condition I state?” Gu Bei was trying to gauge how important Qin Ya was to Zong Jinghao, as he planned to obtain the maximum benefit he could from that guy.

Well, he has to pay the price for making use of me!

“Is Mr. Gu joking with me? Agreeing to any condition? I can’t possibly give you the moon!” Zong Jinghao flicked away a wine droplet on his collar before adding, “As long as it is within my means, I’ll agree to anything Mr. Gu asks for.”

“Let me think about it then.” Gu Bei held Qin Ya hostage because he could not stomach the thought of being made use of and cheated by Zong Jinghao. He wanted a proper explanation from him. In fact, it seemed from the present situation that enmity had already been formed between both men.

If that were the case, all the more reason why Gu Bei would not let that woman go so easily. Otherwise, he would lose the only hold he had over Zong Jinghao.

The best strategy Gu Bei could think of was to stall for time while planning his next move.

“It’s not very honorable for Mr. Gu to use a woman as a stake to solve the problems between us men. Aren’t you worried that it would give you a bad reputation if word got out?” Shen Peichuan questioned.

“Just cut the crap,” Gu Bei sneered while pressing a hand on his neck. “I’m injured and need to go to the hospital now. Let’s talk about releasing that woman some other time.”

He left immediately after he finished speaking.

While Gu Bei was walking out of the room, he could feel a slightly wet and sticky sensation on his hand. After taking a look at his hand and seeing blood on it, he bellowed, “Number Four!”

One of Gu Bei’s lackeys in the nightclub rushed over. “Master Four already left.”

Gu Bei cursed angrily under his breath before yelling, “Get the car ready; I’m going to the hospital now!”

“OK! I’ll do that right away!” The lackey dashed towards the car park immediately.

Gu Bei got a checkup done after the lackey dropped him at the hospital. He was informed by the doctor that he had only gotten a minor abrasion – the injury was nothing serious. The wound was a little deep, causing blood to trickle out, but no major arteries were damaged.

The doctor told Gu Bei after disinfecting his wound, “It’s better not to wrap it with gauze in such hot weather as the humidity would slow down the healing of the wound. You should try to keep it dry so that it recovers faster.”

“I’ll take note of that, doctor,” Gu Bei said and left the consultation room. When he was on his way out of the hospital, he bumped into Su Zhan.

Su Zhan was accompanying his grandma for her medical checkup at the hospital and was heading towards the outpatient consultation area with the results of the medical examinations.

Both men saw each other, but Gu Bei did not intend to talk to Su Zhan. Zong Jinghao had just wounded him, and he was still angry about it. As such, he felt a flash of irritation towards anyone who was connected to that man.

Gu Bei let out a cold snort as he brushed shoulders with Su Zhan.

“Mr. Gu, are you injured?” Su Zhan was not someone who would be taken advantage of. He could also feel the anger building in the other man after being knocked in the shoulder by Gu Bei.

“I hope your neck injury isn’t life-threatening,” Su Zhan said coldly.

Gu Bei gritted his teeth and pointed his finger at Su Zhan. “I’m not going to argue with you in the hospital. Just pass a message to Zong Jinghao. Tell him that if he wants to save that woman, he has to apologize to me personally!”

Su Zhan was startled for a moment. *Woman? Which woman?*

Lin Xinyan has just returned to B City. Could something have happened to her already?

“Woman? Which woman are you talking about?”

Gu Bei scoffed, “I thought you were close friends with Zong Jinghao. How can you not know about it?”

Gu Bei had assumed that Su Zhan was feigning ignorance. He could not be bothered to waste time answering him. Just as he turned around and walked away, Su Zhan caught up and grabbed his arm. “What are you talking about? What woman?”

Gu Bei shook off Su Zhan's hand and roared, "Who else could it be other than that woman called Qin Ya? I have captured her from C City!"

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Su Zhan's expression changed suddenly as his eyes widened in disbelief. "W-what did you say? You captured Qin Ya?"

A confused expression appeared on Gu Bei's face as he asked, "Do you really not know about it?"

Su Zhan clenched his fists and was about to swing a punch at Gu Bei when the latter pushed him away just in time. "You and your friends are all crazy!"

Why do these people all have such violent tendencies!

Gu Bei decided that it was only wise for him to leave this place at once.

"Stay where you are!" Su Zhan chased after Gu Bei immediately when he realized that the man was trying to escape. Gu Bei started running faster after noticing Su Zhan was on his heels. He was confident of winning Su Zhan in a fight, but it was obvious that the other man wasn't his usual self. Gu Bei was quite sure that he wouldn't be able to defeat a madman.

A lunatic was capable of doing anything, even at the cost of his life. Upon knowing that, Gu Bei rushed away, not wanting to die just yet.

"Gu Bei!"

Even though Su Zhan was sprinting after Gu Bei, the latter was also pumping his legs as fast as they could go. As such, Su Zhan was not able to catch up with him. "Go, go!" Gu Bei hopped into the car and instructed his lackey.

The lackey did not understand the reason behind Gu Bei's fluster, but he followed his instructions and started the engine. When Su Zhan was approaching the car,

Gu Bei locked the car doors immediately. “Gu Bei, get out right now!” Su Zhan banged on the car windows furiously.

Su Zhan’s breathing grew rapid and he burned with so much anger that even the veins on his neck were popping out. It was a rather horrifying scene.

Gu Bei swallowed instinctively as he stared at the windows that looked like they were going to shatter anytime. *No wonder those two people are friends... They’re both crazy!*

“Damn it, hurry up! Drive!” Gu Bei lashed out at his lackey while cursing inwardly.

The lackey had already warmed up the car engine, so he slammed on the accelerator when Gu Bei yelled. The car sped away like a rocket, and Gu Bei was rammed against the back of the car seat. Fortunately, he did not sustain any further injuries as the seat was soft enough to cushion the impact. However, he did look rather miserable.

“F*ck! Is it your first time driving?” Gu Bei rubbed the back of his head while straightening his back.

Just as the lackey was about to explain himself, he found Gu Bei stretched out against the rear windshield, looking outside intently.

The lackey heaved a sigh of relief and focused on the road.

As for Su Zhan, he could no longer be bothered to go for the doctor’s appointment and obtain the review of his grandma’s medical checkup results. He got into his car in a hurry, driving straight towards Zong Jinghao’s house. He was dying to know what happened. *How did Qin Ya land in Gu Bei’s hands?*

Su Zhan seemed to have understood why Zong Jinghao rushed back from Baicheng. No wonder it felt like that guy was keeping something from him because that was indeed the case!

Su Zhan sped all the way to Zong Jinghao's villa. He hopped off the car immediately after parking and took large strides into the house. Inside the villa, Lin Xinyan and the two kids were asleep as they had not rested much the previous night.

Lin Xinyan wasn't initially sleepy, and she intended to stay awake to wait for Zong Jinghao. However, she got drowsy while waiting and dozed off.

Meanwhile, Aunt Yu was on the balcony downstairs hanging the clothes the kids had changed out of earlier on.

With that little bit of sense left in him, Su Zhan managed to exercise some self-control. He did not rush upstairs to confront Lin Xinyan straight away.

Suppressing his turbulent emotions, he asked, "Aunt Yu, could I trouble you to get Xinyan to come down, please? I have something to ask her urgently."

Aunt Yu could tell that Su Zhan was in a state of fluster, but she still replied, "She's sleeping now. Can you wait for a while?"

Aunt Yu was merely concerned about Lin Xinyan's health and did not want her rest to be affected. After all, the woman was already heavily pregnant and felt tired easily.

"It's extremely urgent!" Su Zhan's breathed heavily.

Upon hearing that, Aunt Yu put down the clothes and headed upstairs to get Lin Xinyan.

She called Lin Xinyan's name softly after entering the room. However, Lin Xinyan was sleeping very soundly and was not roused.

As such, Aunt Yu proceeded to call her name two more times in a louder voice. Only then did Lin Xinyan wake up. The moment she opened her eyes, she asked, "Is he back? Is anyone else with him?"

What Lin Xinyan wanted to know was whether Zong Jinghao had managed to rescue Qin Ya successfully.

Aunt Yu did not know what the woman was talking about and had a confused expression as she answered, "Su Zhan is here. He came alone."

"Su Zhan?" Lin Xinyan frowned.

"Yup, he seems quite disoriented and concerned about something. I told him you were sleeping, but he insisted that I wake you up," Aunt Yu answered truthfully.

Lin Xinyan rubbed her eyes and sat up. Feeling a lot more awake, she figured that Su Zhan must have found out about Qin Ya and was anxious to know the details.

She put on her slippers and climbed out of bed before asking Aunt Yu about the kids. After Aunt Yu told her that the kids were still sleeping, Lin Xinyan nodded and proceeded to head downstairs.

Su Zhan was pacing nervously in the living room when he spotted Lin Xinyan walking down the stairs. "Xinyan..." He called out to her at once and walked over.

"Let's talk in the study."

Su Zhan suppressed his impatience and followed Lin Xinyan to the study.

Once they entered the room, Su Zhan, who was hardly able to wait any longer, asked at once, "What on Earth happened? Why did Gu Bei capture Qin Ya?"

"I'm not too sure of the details, but don't worry, Jinghao and Peichuan are already working on rescuing her." The reason they kept it from Su Zhan was exactly because they were afraid that he would be too agitated and end up doing something foolish with irreversible consequences.

“How can I not worry? We all know Gu Bei isn’t a gentleman!” Su Zhan cried out in a rough voice and continued, “How could you guys keep such a serious matter from me? What will I do if... if something happens to her?”

Lin Xinyan was at a loss for words; she did not know how to comfort the man. She glanced at the clock and realized that it was already past noon, but there was still no news from Zong Jinghao. She could not help but wonder how their talk went.

“I’ll go look for Gu Bei now!” Su Zhan could not stand waiting and not doing anything.

No matter what it took, he was determined to rescue Qin Ya from Gu Bei’s hands.

“Calm down!” Lin Xinyan berated him for acting rashly.

Su Zhan himself had said that Gu Bei was no gentleman. If that were the case, he should know better that it wouldn’t be an easy task to get Gu Bei to release Qin Ya.

“How do you expect me to calm down!” Su Zhan bellowed. A second later, he was suddenly aware that he might be overreacting as he registered that he was not the only worried person.

“Sorry... “

“You don’t have to apologize. I understand how you’re feeling. Let me give Jinghao a call to find out if he has any updates,” Lin Xinyan said and shouted for Aunt Yu to retrieve her phone from her room upstairs.

“Just use mine,” Su Zhan offered his phone to Lin Xinyan.

He had come to Lin Xinyan instead of Zong Jinghao because he was afraid that the man would not be honest with him.

Lin Xinyan looked at Su Zhan before taking his already unlocked phone from him. She then proceeded to look for Zong Jinghao's number in the contact list and dialed it.

At that time, Zong Jinghao and Shen Peichuan were already almost reaching the villa.

Shen Peichuan, who was at the wheel, turned around and took a glance at Zong Jinghao, "It's not your fault. The way Gu Bei spoke was too much. It's normal for you to flare up. Most people would have reacted the same way."

A deep crease appeared between Zong Jinghao's eyebrows. From the way he was stalling for time, it seemed extremely unlikely that Gu Bei would agree to an exchange of terms.

Zong Jinghao decided that he should not place his hopes on Gu Bei and asked Shen Peichuan, "Have your men managed to track Number Four?"

"I'll give them a call to check," Shen Peichuan replied.

In fact, while Zong Jinghao was talking to him just now, Shen Peichuan had already texted his subordinates to ask about their progress but had not received a reply yet.

While Su Zhan made the call to his subordinates, Zong Jinghao's phone rang as well. After seeing Su Zhan's name on his caller ID, Zong Jinghao frowned even more deeply and hesitated for a long while before picking up.

"Hello." It was a female voice.

Zong Jinghao took the phone away from his ear, looking at the display screen to confirm that it was Su Zhan's number. *Why is it Lin Xinyan's voice?*

He placed the phone back to his ear and asked, "Why are you using Su Zhan's phone to call? Is he with you now?"

“Yup,” Lin Xinyan answered. “He already knows about it. What’s the situation over at your side?”

Zong Jinghao had promised Lin Xinyan that he would bring Qin Ya back, but not only did he fail to do so, but his relationship with Gu Bei had also soured further.

Just when Zong Jinghao was trying to come up with an answer, Shen Peichuan turned around and informed, “My men have reported that Number Four is at Nanshan Temple. They are following him now.”

“Nanshan Temple?”

“Yeah, it’s strange, though. That guy doesn’t seem like a religious person. Why would he go to a temple...”

Zong Jinghao and Shen Peichuan exchanged a meaningful glance as they suspected the same thing. *Could there be where he’s hiding Qin Ya?*

“What is it about Nanshan Temple?” Lin Xinyan asked when she overheard the men’s conversation.

“Ask Su Zhan to come to the door,” Zong Jinghao instructed.

“Sure,” Lin Xinyan answered and hung up.

Then, she returned the phone to Su Zhan and conveyed Zong Jinghao’s message to him.

Su Zhan walked out of the door immediately after he got his phone back.

When he reached the main gate of the villa, Shen Peichuan drove in and stopped the car next to Su Zhan. He rolled down the car windows and demanded, “Hop in.”

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Su Zhan got into the car. “What happened? Why did Gu Bei take Qin Ya? How is she? Did he hurt her?”

Shen Peichuan took a glance at Su Zhan and scolded, “Can you calm down first?”

“How can I?” There was no way he could when he had no idea what happened to Qin Ya.

“Just calm down and listen! We have a lead and we’re heading there now. If you’re going to act like this the whole way, I’ll have to kick you out!” Shen Peichuan immediately stopped the car by the road.

Su Zhan turned to look at Zong Jinghao, then back at Shen Peichuan. “I’ll keep quiet.”

“I don’t want you to keep your mouth shut! I want you to calm down!” Shen Peichuan corrected.

“I-I’ll do that.” The idea of being chased out of the car terrified Su Zhan as he had to save Qin Ya.

Shen Peichuan glanced at the worried man and sighed before driving again.

Nanshan Temple was situated on the mountain. Even though the mountain road was wide, there were a lot of twists and turns, which made it impossible to drive fast.

After Number Four had taken them to the private room and had a few drinks, he left the nightclub and headed to Nanshan Temple as well.

The temple was indeed the place where Qin Ya was held at. Gu Bei was being extra vigilant because he didn't want Zong Jinghao to find out where Qin Ya was.

After having a few drinks, Number Four, now intoxicated, was hungry for women and went to the temple behind Gu Bei's back.

Gu Bei's order was clear. Not a single soul, except for himself, was allowed to enter the temple. Unfortunately for him, his henchman was completely unaware of his intention. Number Four thought that even if he had fun with Qin Ya, Gu Bei would never punish him for it.

After parking outside the temple, Number Four walked into the temple with a huge grin on his face. Past the door was the garden of the temple with a huge square-shaped fountain in the middle. The water in the fountain was crystal clear and Kois were swimming in it. The middle of the fountain was an exquisite statue of Guanyin.

Number Four went past the fountain, up the stairs, and walked around the Golden Hall.

Nanshan Temple was situated on the highest mountain south to B City. A monk used to live in said temple. Unlike any other monks, he did not shave his head bald and had a wife and children.

Gu Bei's henchman headed to the storeroom, which was constructed at the back of the temple by the premise wall, a place where people would rarely come by. Two guards stood outside the storeroom to prevent anyone from going in and take care of Qin Ya's meals.

Number Four opened the door and the first thing he saw were beer bottles and cigarette butts scattered all across the floor.

The two guards immediately got up and greeted with smiles on their faces. "Sir!"

Ever since Number Four became Gu Bei's right-hand man, everyone had to address him with honor, something that he was delighted to hear. "Leave me. I need to check on the girl."

The two guards looked at each other and one asked, "I thought Mr. Gu's order was for no one to visit her?"

Number Four raised a brow. "And it's the same Mr. Gu who ordered me to check on her. Why don't you call him to confirm?"

"That won't be necessary," the guard smiled apologetically. "We'll take our leave then."

"Close the door when you leave!" Number Four ordered.

The two guards looked at each other again before glancing at Number Four. They could guess what the man was about to do to the woman in the storeroom, but they couldn't do anything about it. Letting out a sigh, they left the room and stood guard outside the door.

Number Four licked his lips as he approached another door. As it creaked open, it woke Qin Ya, who was tied to the chair. Ever since she was kidnapped, she never dared to close her eyes, but she couldn't beat the drowsiness and passed out. Since she was only in a light sleep, any slight movement could wake her up. She was now staring at the door cautiously.

When she saw it was the man who'd kidnapped her, her heart skipped a beat. The man walked toward her and began to inspect her from top to bottom.

On the day she was kidnapped, she'd just finish her shower and was wearing her night robe. Before she could get onto her bed, Number Four and a few other men broke into her house and searched for something. When they failed to find the thing they were looking for, they took her with them instead.

Qin Ya was wearing a purple silk robe, but the belt had already come off during her struggle on the way to the temple. The robe was now falling off her shoulder and her pale fair skin was visible to Number Four.

He looked at her ankles and crept his sight up to her thighs, then to her slim waist. Number Four could feel his thing pushing against his pants just by staring at her and he gulped, "Damn! What a fine body."

Qin Ya's eyes budged with fear. She could tell what he was planning to do, but she was tied to the chair and could not defend herself.

Knowing that it was impossible for her to escape in her current situation, she quickly devised a plan, one where she had to gain Number Four's trust and let him untie her willingly.

Number Four reached out to touch her silky smooth skin and his heart raced immediately. Without giving a care in the world, he lunged himself at her like a tiger hunting its prey and kissed all over her body.

Amidst the disgust and terror in her heart, Qin Ya did not fight back. She pretended to savor the moment as she let out a seductive moan.

The sexy sound only stimulated Number Four even further. He quickly stripped himself naked and stood in front of her. Even though Qin Ya was so disgusted by the sight, she maintained her act.

"Mmph mmph!" Since her mouth was taped, all she could do was twist her body and stare at Number Four to let him know she had something to say.

The man froze for a moment before asking, "Wait, you want to do it with me too?"

Qin Ya nodded.

Number Four quickly ripped the tape off her mouth and laughed. "Looks like you've fallen for my charm!"

Qin Ya forced herself to smile as she gently touched him with her toes. "You're the sexiest man I've ever seen."

He stared at beautiful legs before reaching into her gown. She immediately tightened her fists out of disgust but still pretended to enjoy it. "Hey, why don't you untie me so that I can do the moving?"

"But this is more stimulating," Number Four chuckled as he pushed her down to the floor.

Qin Ya twisted her body as he lay on top of her. "The rope is digging into me. Can't you untie it? We'll both be more comfortable like that."

Drunk by his lust, Number Four didn't even think twice as he untied the knot that was binding Qin Ya down. After throwing the rope to the side, he spread her legs wide open.

Stealing Your Heart Chapter 555

As Number Four thought he was about to have a blast, his eyes widened in disbelief. “You...”

Qin Ya was holding a candlestick in her hand, which she used to stab the man on her in his back.

“You f**king b*tch!” Number Four immediately tightened his grip around Qin Ya’s neck, trying to suffocate her.

Gasping for breath, she knew she could not give up just yet. She wanted to live. She wanted to live without getting humiliated. With all her might, she repeatedly stabbed him all around his body.

“Argh!” Number Four’s yelling alerted the two guards outside, but none of them bothered to check as they thought he was having fun with the lady inside.

Little did they know that the needle on the candlestick had pierced through Number Four’s aorta on his neck. He was crying in pain as he thought he was going to die.

Qin Ya got up calmly and located the stool next to her. Without any hesitation, she grabbed the stool and brought it down on Number Four’s head, knocking him out cold instantly.

The guards finally realized something was off, but they were still reluctant to barge in. “Sir?”

Qin Ya was tying her robe back when she heard the guard asked and paused before yelling, “Shut up! Don’t spoil our fun!”

The two guards were surprised by her scream and clicked their tongues. “What a whore.”

Qin Ya stared at the door nervously until she heard their leaving footsteps and let out a sigh of relief. She braced herself by the wall as she gasped for air. Tears of helplessness rolled down her face.

No! It's not the time to cry! I have to escape!

After being locked up in the storeroom for two days, she was familiar with her surroundings. Even though there wasn't any window in the room, she had spotted a vent on the wall. She quickly stacked two stools together by the wall and climbed up carefully. The vent was built around the same height as the outer wall, and she could easily climb out of the temple grounds.

Grabbing the railing of the vent, she realized her feet were nowhere near the floor. After taking a deep breath, she let go. Lucky for her, the ground was covered in dirt and she didn't suffer any injury from the fall. It was then a commotion was heard from inside the temple as the guards finally realized she had escaped.

Without any hesitation, Qin Ya turned and ran. Her only goal was to escape. She ran down the hill barefooted with all her might. If she were to get caught again, it would be the end for her.

Even when she stepped on a thorn, she only flinched but did not stop running.

At the same time, Shen Peichuan's subordinate who was following Number Four had reported back that the henchman had gone into the storeroom at the back of the temple. When they spotted the two guards outside the room, they were certain that there was where Qin Ya was being held at.

They waited for a chance and took down the two guards. Su Zhan was the first to dive into the bare room.

Shen Peichuan and Zong Jinghao followed closely behind him. Judging from the surrounding, they could tell someone had been living here. As they looked around, a door in the far back of the room caught their eyes. Su Zhan tried to push it open but failed as Number Four had locked the door when he entered.

Not knowing what he would find behind the door, Su Zhan raised his leg and kicked the door, but to no avail. The lock was made with hard iron. Shen Peichuan quickly joined him, and with their joint effort, they managed to break the door open.

The two were immediately shocked by what they saw inside. Number Four was lying naked on the floor, covered in blood. There weren't any major wounds on him. However, he was losing a lot of blood after being stabbed twice in the aorta.

Shen Peichuan didn't even bother to check if Number Four was still alive. Judging from his appearance, the officer could deduce what he was trying to do to Qin Ya.

Su Zhan had a different reaction. His body was trembling in anger and they could clearly see the veins on his neck. Before Shen Peichuan could stop him, Su Zhan grabbed a stool and hit Number Four with all his might. The sound of bones cracking echoed throughout the windowless room.

Shen Peichuan quickly pulled Su Zhan back, not because he was pitying Number Four, but because dying was the easy way out for the henchman. They had their priority, and that was to find Qin Ya.

“Calm the f**k down! Qin Ya must've escaped! Look at the chairs over there by the vent! We have to find her first!”

Su Zhan looked at where Shen Peichuan was pointing and quickly darted out of the room.

Zong Jinghao only took a glance inside the room and his expression darkened as he told Shen Peichuan, “Call the boys in.”

Zong Jinghao then called Guan Jing to get a few reporters to Nanshan Temple as Shen Peichuan went to look for Qin Ya in the mountain with Su Zhan.

The mountain was filled with vines that were scattered all across the ground, covering any tracks that were made in the past.

Su Zhan had been shouting Qin Ya's name for quite a while. The deeper he got into the forest, the darker it got.

"Qin Ya!" Su Zhan yelled as he wiped the tears off his face. He kept on shouting and searching until he spotted a broken tree branch. Upon inspection, he noticed the fresh blood on it and deduced that Qin Ya had passed through here.

He followed her trail. All he had in his mind was finding the girl. The man had no idea how much time had passed, but he would not give up just yet, not when he finally found hope.

Su Zhan turned around to look behind him and realized he was very deep in the forest. Sunlight barely reached him.

"Qin Ya!" Su Zhan's voice echoed throughout the forest.

He took another step forward, only to step into a hole in front of him.

Accompanied by his scream, he fell down the slide-like deep hole.

As Su Zhan struggled to get up, he realized he wasn't alone in the darkness.

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Su Zhan squinted and was sure that there was someone in there with him. He slowly moved forward as his heart raced until he finally saw the person's face. Without any warning, he grabbed the person's hand and exclaimed, "Qin Ya!"

"Don't touch me!" She pushed Su Zhan away. She was still in complete shock from what had just happened to her. Even a single movement would make her jump in fear. The sight of men reminded her of the henchman who almost raped her.

Su Zhan fell butt first to the floor. He could feel her fear and it pained his heart. Seeing her attire, he clenched his fist tightly as he cursed Number Four in his head.

"Qin Ya..." Su Zhan gently called out. "It's me, Su Zhan."

Qin Ya slowly turned around and their eyes finally met. "S-Su Zhan? Why are you here?"

Her carelessness landed her in the pit. She only thought of escaping and ignored what was in front of her. She couldn't help but wonder why Su Zhan was now in the pit with her as well.

"I'm here to save you..."

Qin Ya stared at the man for a few seconds before mumbling, "Thank you."

She was thankful that he actually came to save her.

“You don’t have to thank me. I would do anything for you.” Su Zhan meant what he said. All he wanted to do was to mend her broken soul and protect her. “Can you give me a chance? If you still don’t like me in the end, I’ll leave you alone.”

Qin Ya moved further into the corner and shivered when she touched the icy wall. “It’s better if you think of a way for us to get out.”

She never answered his question. After experiencing such a trauma, all she wished for was to live a simple life without the restriction of being in a relationship.

He did not force her to answer him either, as he believed his action would prove his sincerity to her in the end. *She’s right. We have to look for a way out first.*

He looked around and spotted another hole near to them. It was big enough for a grown man to pass through. He slowly peeked his head out and quickly pulled himself back as there was nothing past the hole, not even a footing. Su Zhan took a peek down for a second and realized he could not see the bottom, while the wall beneath the hole was slippery and impossible to grab onto.

He then turned to look at the hole he came down from. He tried climbing up but realized the wall was slippery as well.

Just as he was running out of choices, he suddenly thought of his phone and quickly touched his pocket. Lucky for him, the phone did not drop out of his pocket when he fell into the pit. “Qin Ya, look! I still have my phone with me! We can call for help!”

He quickly dialed Shen Peichuan’s number, but the call did not go through. He then tried calling Zong Jinghao and his lawyer, but came back with the same result.

“Is there no signal here?” Su Zhan frowned and checked, only to find that there wasn’t even a single line of signal inside the pit.

What now?

With no choices left, Su Zhan stood up and shouted toward the pit he came in from. He shouted and shouted until his voice turned hoarse, but there was no response.

He could feel his strength left his body as he sat back down on the floor. "They'll definitely find us."

Qin Ya did not move from her spot. All she did was peek through the other hole and looked into the complete darkness.

She felt as if she were staring at a bottomless pit, something that she'd only read in books. To her, the pit looked like an enormous monster with its mouth wide open, ready to swallow anything that found its way down there.

She gasped in awe at how wonderful nature could be. The inescapable state they were in terrified her.

Will I die here? Why is it so hard to live a normal life?

Su Zhan wanted to move closer to Qin Ya, but he was also afraid that his action might terrify her. In the end, he settled down a few feet away from her and asked, "How are you feeling?"

"I'm fine," Qin Ya turned to him and replied.

Su Zhan really wanted to keep the conversation alive, but he couldn't find anything to talk about. As they sat quietly in the pit, he could feel the surrounding getting colder and colder. The pit was well-ventilated with the two holes.

When he shivered to the dropping temperature wearing a shirt and jeans, he realized Qin Ya must be freezing. As he didn't want her to catch a cold, he quickly unbuttoned his shirt.

Qin Ya scooted back. "What are you doing?"

Su Zhan immediately explained, "Wait, I'm just afraid that you might catch a cold."

"I'm fine!"

"But..."

"I said I'm fine!" Qin Ya insisted.

Su Zhan looked at Qin Ya with his heart broken. "Do you hate me that much?"

She averted her gaze. "I can't bear the sight of a naked man."

He looked at himself and realized that he wasn't wearing anything beneath his shirt. Just as Qin Ya stated, if he really took his shirt off, he would be half-naked. The man quickly buttoned his shirt back on and apologized, "I'm sorry... I didn't know..."

Since Qin Ya did not respond, the atmosphere turned awkward again. For the next few minutes, they sat quietly until the pit turned into complete darkness.

Now that the only light source was gone, they finally heard a lot of things, mostly bugs, moving around them.

Su Zhan quickly took his phone out and switched the flashlight on as he thought Qin Ya would be scared of the dark.

He held the phone to her and noticed that her legs were bleeding. She also wasn't wearing any shoes. He was going to reach for her but quickly pulled his hand back as he was afraid she would react in the same way again.

"You're hurt."

“It’s just a few scratches.” Qin Ya shrugged. She could not feel the pain anymore.

Su Zhan could not even imagine what it felt like to run in the forest barefooted. “I always thought I had the power to change the world. I was always proud of that. But now... I finally realize how useless I am. I couldn’t even keep my promise of protecting you.”

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“You don’t have to blame yourself. Even if you do, I wouldn’t care less,” Qin Ya replied in her usual indifferent tone.

Su Zhan stared at her for a long time before he spoke. “I don’t really care. I’m just doing what I think is right.”

Qin Ya looked at him and quickly turned away.

Even though light could not reach the pit they were in, it was still evening outside and the sun was just beginning to set.

After hours of searching, Shen Peichuan and Zong Jinghao still could not find either Qin Ya or Su Zhan.

“There’s no way the two of us can search the entire mountain. They should be able to hear us by now. Did they get into trouble or something?” Shen Peichuan asked worriedly.

They had no idea if there were any beasts that roamed the forest. Since they were only minutes behind Su Zhan, the latter should be able to hear them.

Yet, all they got was the quietness from the forest and nothing else. It worried Shen Peichuan even further.

Zong Jinghao could recognize his friend’s worried face. “I heard there are no wild beasts in this forest, so they’ll be found. Get someone out here to help us search.”

It would be dangerous for them to continue the search alone in the dark. They tried calling Su Zhan when they were in the forest, but since there was no signal, the call did not go through.

Now that they were out of the forest, they tried calling him twice again, only to get the same result. Shen Peichuan let out a deep sigh and ordered his fellow policemen to help search for Su Zhan and Qin Ya, preferably before it got completely dark.

After issuing his order, he turned to Zong Jinghao and suggested, "Why don't you head back first? I'll coordinate the search here."

Zong Jinghao checked the time and shook his head. "I'll wait for a little longer."

With both Qin Ya and Su Zhan missing, Zong Jinghao had no idea how to explain it to Lin Xinyan once he got back.

It took the search team, which consisted of a dozen people in military uniforms, a whole hour to arrive. After checking their gears, they switched on their powerful flashlights and headed into the forest with Shen Peichuan guiding them.

As soon as they stepped into the forest, the birds that were resting on the trees swiftly flapped their wings and flew away.

The search team was divided into six groups with two men in each group. Shen Peichuan joined the leader of the search team and they began their search. As they got deeper into the mountain, the leader suddenly said, "It'll be challenging to locate them in this darkness. There are also traps all around this place. If my guess is right, the people you're looking for must've fallen into one of those traps."

"Wait, there are traps in this forest?" Shen Peichuan asked as he moved a twig that was in his face away.

"Yes. Some residents here set them up to capture wild animals."

Shen Peichuan frowned. He paid attention to where he was stepping next, worrying that he might step into a bear trap or something of a similar nature.

“Don’t tell me you’re afraid of these things?” the leader joked. “Did you lose your courage after getting promoted?”

“There’s no fault in being vigilant.” Shen Peichuan laughed. “Haven’t you heard of the saying? ‘With great power comes great responsibility.’”

“From what I can tell, Captain Song intends to make you his successor after his retirement. There’s speculation that you’ll marry his daughter as well. Please tell me that’s true.”

“Cut the crap!” Shen Peichuan scolded. “Don’t ever bring this up again.”

All Shen Peichuan had for Captain Song was respect, nothing else. He never thought of anything other than fulfilling the duties that came with his responsibilities. He didn’t mind such a scandal since he was a man, but he didn’t want it to affect the captain’s daughter.

The leader could see the change in Shen Peichuan’s expression and quickly apologized, “I’m sorry. I’ll just keep my mouth shut.”

The latter ignored the man and continued their search. As time went on, he became even more worried. Three hours had passed since the sunset, but they could find not even a single clue.

The search team retreated to where they started and met up with Zong Jinghao to report the situation.

“It’s almost impossible to launch a well-coordinated search during night time. There’s not enough light in there and we have to watch our own steps along the way,” Shen Peichuan said. “I think you should head back first. I’ll contact you when I find something. Oh, my men already took Number Four back with them. You should be able to see him in the news tomorrow. Go home. Get some rest

and be ready. Gu Bei will have no choice but to contact you tomorrow. Just leave the search to me and I'll leave dealing Gu Bei to you."

The reason they called in the reporters was to spread the news to the public. The more people knew about what went down at Nanshan Temple, the more commotion it would cause. When that happened, the police had no choice but to deal with it publicly. It would give them a reason to open an investigation on Gu Bei.

Zong Jinghao pondered and finally nodded. "Alright. Be careful."

Shen Peichuan nodded and saw him off.

When Zong Jinghao got back to his mansion, it was already half passed ten. The first thing he saw when he opened the door was his wife waiting for him.

Lin Xinyan had been waiting for his return the whole night. When she noticed his car in the driveway, she quickly got up to meet him at the door. "Are you alone?"

Zong Jinghao was about to hug her when he remembered he had been hiking on the mountain. He quickly pulled his arms back since he didn't want to dirty his wife. "Let's talk inside."

Lin Xinyan was disappointed. She thought since Qin Ya did not have a place to stay in B City, she would come over to stay for the night. She deduced that Qin Ya did not follow Zong Jinghao back because they couldn't find her friend.

"Qin Ya got away from Gu Bei's men, but she's on the run and we don't know where she went." Zong Jinghao only told Lin Xinyan half of the story, as he did not want to worry her. "As long as she isn't in Gu Bei's hands, she won't be in danger. All we have to do is locate her."

"Really?" Lin Xinyan stared at her husband to see if he was lying or not.

Zong Jinghao met her gaze and nodded. "Why would I lie about it? The reason I came back so late is that I was looking for her. I think she's hiding because she's still afraid that Gu Bei might find her. I think she's actually safer this way."

Lin Xinyan nodded, but deep down she was still worried. "Part of the reason Qin Ya got caught by Gu Bei was because of me. I'm his real target. I think he kidnapped her because I wasn't here that night."

Lin Xinyan had been thinking about it at home. It was too much of a coincidence for Qin Ya to get kidnapped after the photos were sent to her.

If anything bad were to happen to Qin Ya because of her, Lin Xinyan would blame herself until the day she died.

Zong Jinghao understood what was going on in his wife's head, but he could not make any promises. If something bad really happened, it would only torment her even more. He quickly changed the topic. "Is there anything to eat? I'm famished."

"Wait, have you eaten anything today?"

Zong Jinghao shook his head.

"I'll make something right away. What do you want to eat?"

"Noodles," Zong Jinghao replied. "With tomato egg sauce."

It was the first dish Lin Xinyan had ever made for him, and he suddenly yearned for it.

"Alright. Wait for a moment."

"Thanks."

“Is...”

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Lin Xinyan suddenly stopped Zong Jinghao. She wanted to ask about Su Zhan, but she decided not to.

“Hmm?” Zong Jinghao turned back to look at her.

“Nothing. Go get changed.” Lin Xinyan smiled.

He could guess what she wanted to ask. Yet, he didn't expose her as he didn't want to talk about a person who was also missing.

While Zong Jinghao was cleaning himself up on the second floor, Lin Xinyan opened the fully stocked fridge. Since the kids and she were now back, Aunt Yu took the chance to stock up in case they were hungry. She scanned through everything in the fridge and took out the ingredients.

While waiting for the water to boil, she cut the meat into slices and marinated with cornstarch and eggs, which would tenderize the meat. She then cut the peppers and tomatoes into cubes and washed the vegetables.

On the second floor, Zong Jinghao had changed into his pajamas. Since the clothes were made from silk, he didn't feel hot even when they were long-sleeved. He put on his white indoor slippers and went to check on the twins, who were already sound asleep. The whole mansion was quiet, except for the sounds coming from the kitchen.

The man stood in the dining, in a corner where he could watch his woman cooking him a meal in the kitchen. He watched her quietly, something that he was fond of as it could warm his heart.

All Zong Jinghao wanted was to live a simple life with his wife and children by his side. All he ever asked for was a person who would love him and make him a simple bowl of noodles from time to time.

As Lin Xinyan was about to cook the noodles, he hugged her from behind. The woman jumped in surprised and turned around, brushing her nose across Zong Jinghao's cheek. She could smell the shampoo from his body, and it was a pleasant smell.

"I'll be done soon."

Instead of letting go, Zong Jinghao moved his hands to her belly and gently touched it. He then rested his head on her shoulder as he watched her cook. "Then, I'll wait here."

"How am I supposed to cook like this?" Lin Xinyan turned to glare at him.

"I don't care." All he wanted was to hug her.

Lin Xinyan let out a sigh as she couldn't win over an argument against him. "It's not as good as Aunt Yu's, but it should satisfy your stomach."

"Anything you make is a delicacy to me." Zong Jinghao smiled and kissed her on her cheek.

She didn't have the leisure to chat with him and put the last ingredient in. her husband was still hugging her, locking her on the spot. "Let me go and wait outside?"

Zong Jinghao finally let go of her, but he didn't leave. Instead, he pulled her aside and said, "I'll plate it."

He then opened the cabinet and took a small bowl out. Lin Xinyan raised a brow and asked, "Are you sure you're going to use that bowl?"

Zong Jinghao looked at his bowl and found nothing weird. “Why? We usually use this bowl, right?”

Lin Xinyan deeply sighed and took the bowl from him. “This, is a rice bowl. You need a bigger one for noodles. You can’t leave the noodles in the pot for too long either since it will get soggy.”

She put the small bowl back and took a bigger one out.

Zong Jinghao received the bowl with a grin and plated the noodles.

Lin Xinyan went into the dining room and sat down while he sat across her. “Do you want some?”

She shook her head. After trials and errors, Zong Jinghao finally learned the correct way to eat a bowl of noodles with tomato egg sauce. All he had to do was pour the sauce over the noodles and mix them together.

“Why can’t you cook the tomatoes with the noodles? Wouldn’t it save more time?” Zong Jinghao couldn’t help but ask.

“You sure? Then I’ll do it that way for you next time,” Lin Xinyan replied as she rested her head on her palm.

For this particular dish, the tomatoes had to be stir-fried in order to extract the sauce out of them. It would cause a richer and deeper-colored sauce. If the tomatoes were added together with the noodle into the boiling water, it would overcook the tomatoes and the flavor would not be as sweet as the authentic method.

Zong Jinghao took a bite of the meat. To his surprise, the bloody stench that usually came with such meat wasn’t present, and the meat was tender. “Did you learn to cook somewhere?”

Lin Xinyan nodded. "I've known how to do this dish way before the kids were born. And after I have them, I would take some time to learn new dishes and cook for them."

She never had the interest in cooking until she had her own children. Being able to prepare all three meals for the twins made her happy. Since she had to work, she could only prepare their meals when she had the spare time.

Zong Jinghao couldn't help but feel depressed when he thought about the fact that he wasn't a part of their lives for the past six years. Looking at the clock, he asked, "Are you tired?"

Lin Xinyan was indeed tired as she stayed awake after Aunt Yu woke her up.

"Why don't you head to bed first?" suggested Zong Jinghao.

Lin Xinyan pondered before getting up. "Alright. Remember to put the dishes in the sink after you're finished."

"I will. Go."

Since Lin Xinyan had already showered, she fell asleep as soon as she went back into the bedroom. She didn't even notice Zong Jinghao coming in, but she felt someone hugging her from behind. Knowing who it was, she didn't even bother to wake up and continued to sleep peacefully.

Shen Peichuan and the search team looked throughout the whole midnight but still could not find Su Zhan and Qin Ya. The pit they fell into was deep and well-hidden. The victims would never hear a thing from outside unless there was a huge commotion.

Su Zhan's phone was out of juice after hours had passed. The two spent the rest of the night in total darkness and silence. When the sun finally rose and penetrated into the pit, he turned to check on Qin Ya. The woman was leaning

against the wall with her eyes closed, causing him to think that she was fast asleep.

He moved quietly, worried that he might wake her up, only to realize something was off when he noticed Qin Ya showed no sign of moving or waking up hours later.

“Qin Ya,” whispered Su Zhan.

There was no response.

“Qin Ya?” Su Zhan raised his volume, but still no response from the woman.

His brows formed a frown, and he reached out to touch her. The moment their skins touched, he could tell she was burning up and quickly reached for her forehead. He didn't need a thermometer to know she was having a high fever.

Qin Ya's lips were so dry that skin fell off. Su Zhan quickly pulled her into his arms and gently tapped her cheek. No matter how he called out to her or tried to wake her out, she remained unconscious. He quickly turned and shouted towards the hole he fell through, hoping to get someone's attention.

He kept shouting and shouting, until his throat ran dry and his voice turned hoarse, but to no avail. Qin Ya could faintly hear the man's voice in her deep sleep. She tried to open her eyes, but her strength failed her. All she felt was her thirst and cold.

“W-Water...” she mumbled weakly. Su Zhan could not hear what she was saying and had to lean in.

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However, there was no water here. He looked around and only saw stones, dry leaves, and twigs.

She was running a temperature, so if they couldn't leave soon... Su Zhan didn't even dare think about the possible consequences.

He didn't know when they would be saved. As Qin Ya was sick, he couldn't afford to wait here and do nothing. Hence, he lay Qin Ya down carefully and went to look at the opening above the pit. The opening wasn't straight, so he couldn't see the sky. The only light source in the pit was from that one opening.

He stared at Qin Ya before muttering to himself, "You'll make it out alive. I'll make sure it happens."

He wasn't afraid of death, but Qin Ya couldn't die.

Su Zhan took off his shirt and shoes. He wanted to climb up, so taking off his clothes would allow his skin to create more friction with the rocks and allow him to climb easily. He scanned the exit and estimated the distance before bending down to grab the rocks and climbed up.

But after carrying out his plan, he realized the gaps between the rocks weren't the same. The further he went, the bigger the gaps were. His legs couldn't stretch that far, even though he had tried his best.

He hadn't eaten for over 24 hours, so he couldn't hang on to the rocks and fell weakly. However, he never gave up. He kept trying, but he slipped every single time.

Qin Ya was in a daze when she saw someone trying to climb up the pit's opening. That person would climb up and fall onto the ground again and again. She wanted to tell him to stop exhausting his energy, but she was too weak to say so.

When she was locked up, she didn't eat anything lest her kidnapper fed her ecstasy or some other drug. Besides, she had caught a fever now, so she couldn't summon any energy.

Su Zhan finally exhausted his energy after multiple tries. In the end, he could only look up dejectedly.

I can die, but what about Qin Ya?

She's barely escaped death. To survive, she changed her looks and voice. Is she going to die here?

Something rolled down from the corner of his eyes. He didn't know if it was his sweat or tears.

What should I do?

He turned to look at Qin Ya, whose eyes were half-closed. She couldn't see Su Zhan clearly as her vision was blurred.

She saw the figure crawling toward her before brushing her fringe away. A voice sounded hoarse, "Actually, I'm not afraid of death. I think it's great to die together with you. However, I don't want you to die."

Qin Ya stared at the man who was sobbing like a baby.

"I know you blame me for not telling you about my parents. But that wasn't because I don't trust or love you, it was because... Every time I think about them, they will haunt my dreams. But I've decided to tell you now. I'm afraid I won't be

having nightmares anymore and have another chance to confess my feelings to you.”

He wiped his face tiredly. “I’ve forgotten how old I was when it happened. Perhaps I deliberately forgot about the details and my past self.”

“My mom cheated on my dad. I saw her bringing her lover back and enter their bedroom. They were…”

Su Zhan had his head lowered, so Qin Ya couldn’t see his expression. She could only imagine how helpless and hateful he was feeling at that moment.

Perhaps he felt helpless because that person was his mom, and he hated her for being so shameless.

Su Zhan had never revealed this piece of information to anyone. Even Shen Peichuan and Zong Jinghao had no idea about his past.

They knew he had been brought up by his grandma when his parents passed away when he was a child.

“I saw them together many times. It went on for around six months. I was full of resentment for having a mom like her. However, I couldn’t choose my mother. I knew someone would find out about her affair, but I didn’t know that day would arrive so soon. It caught me by surprise and turned my world upside down. I only found out later that my dad canceled his outstation trip last minute and returned home to catch my mom and her lover in the act. He must’ve been too mad because he stabbed them in a fit of rage.”

“When I came home from school, I saw him with a knife on his neck. The moment he saw me, he wailed and apologized to me. I could only watch as he committed suicide right in front of me. He had stabbed them on impulse because he was hurt deeply, but when he finally regained his senses, it was too late.”

He continued solemnly, "I've only ever told Liu Feifei about this. I was in love with her back then. But, she left me without hesitation ten years ago. I thought I couldn't forget her, but it turns out I didn't really love her. My feelings had turned to indignant and frustration! I couldn't accept the fact that she had left without saying goodbye."

"When I met her again, my frustration had faded into thin air. I had imagined questioning her or reprimanding her for being irresponsible, but in reality, I did nothing of that kind. That was because my last shred of feelings for her had disappeared after I met you."

"I was really happy and relaxed when I was around you. To be honest, I thought about revealing my secret to you, but I was afraid that you might find me disgusting. I was afraid to reveal my horrible past. I thought Liu Feifei left without saying goodbye because she was disgusted with me, so I dared not tell you about it. I didn't want you to leave."

"Well, I don't regret revealing my deepest, darkest secret to you. My world is just too gloomy."

Su Zhan had decided to reveal it to her because they might die here. He wanted to tell her everything before that happened.

He thought Qin Ya had already lost consciousness, so she wouldn't be able to hear what he had just said.

Su Zhan pulled the unconscious Qin Ya into his arms and brushed a kiss on her forehead gently. He smiled. "I am truly blessed. You won't forgive me, but we're going to die together."

Bang!

Suddenly, a commotion sounded from the opening before someone fell into the pit.

Su Zhan's eyes grew wide when he saw a man in camouflage uniform falling onto the ground.

He quickly snapped back to reality; he knew that this man was his last hope.

"Are you here for us?" Su Zhan inquired excitedly.

The man massaged his waist and turned. Upon spotting Su Zhan, he nodded. "We're from the rescue team. Are you Su Zhan?"

Su Zhan replied earnestly, "Yes, I am. Hurry, she has caught a fever and needs to be sent to the hospital right now. She's already unconscious."

The man looked around the pit before replying slowly, "No worries. My partner will send someone to help us."

"She's unconscious! Of course I'm worried!" Su Zhan roared.

The man cowered back in shock. *Why is he so irritated?*

He questioned calmly, "Is it possible to climb up?"

Su Zhan glared at him. "If I could climb up, I wouldn't have to wait to be rescued!"

"Exactly, so we can only wait for someone to rescue us. There's no use urging me." He took a bottle of water out from his backpack and handed it to Su Zhan. "Feed her some water. My partner should be here to help us soon."

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Su Zhan immediately took the water and uncapped it before giving it to Qin Ya. He urged her in a low voice, “Qin Ya, wake up. Have some water.”

Qin Ya didn’t respond at all. No matter how many times Su Zhan shook her or called her name, she didn’t utter a word.

The man in camouflage uniform reminded him. “Pinch her philtrum.”

Su Zhan shifted the water bottle before pinching that exact body part.

Soon, Qin Ya stirred awake. She still seemed weak, as if she would faint anytime. Su Zhan handed her the water and whispered, “Have some water.”

Qin Ya’s lips were so wrinkly and dry that blood started trickling down the corner of her lips when she parted her mouth. She felt so thirsty – her throat was literally burning and sucking up all the liquid in her body. The moment her lips touched the water bottle, she immediately gulped down the water greedily.

The half-filled water bottle couldn’t satisfy her need, but at least she felt better now.

“We searched in pairs, so my partner was right beside me when I fell. He must be calling for help now. Don’t worry,” the man explained.

Upon hearing a stranger’s voice, Qin Ya swiveled her head around before realizing someone else had arrived. *Oh, so he was the one who gave us the water.*

“We will be saved. Hang on,” Su Zhan declared happily.

Qin Ya blinked, her long lashes fluttering slightly. She could see how excited Su Zhan was through the dim sunlight that filtered through the opening above the pit.

Upon recalling what he had just revealed to her, she lowered her gaze.

Right then, someone shouted above them, “Is there anyone in the pit?”

The newcomer stood up promptly and gave an affirmative yell. A rope was then flung down the opening, and instructions were given to them. They were told to give the rope a slight tug when it reached the ground. That was how the people above them would know when to stop.

The man waited at the opening for the rope to reach them. When everything was ready, he looked at Su Zhan and said, “You can leave now.”

Su Zhan took off his shirt and wrapped it around Qin Ya. He tidied her up before striding to the opening with the woman in his arms. The man grabbed the end of the rope and headed to Su Zhan. He glanced at Qin Ya before suggesting, “She seems alright, but I don’t think she can take care of herself when she’s pulled up. Why don’t both of you head up together?”

Su Zhan nodded.

The man tied the rope to his waist and informed him, “Press your body to the wall and place her in front of you so she won’t get hurt.”

There were wounds all around Qin Ya’s thighs and calves – she was frail and weak. Su Zhan had to pay extra attention to her lest her condition worsen.

Su Zhan nodded in response. Hence, the man tugged at the rope to inform the people above that they were ready.

Only three people were tugging on the rope, but they soon realized there was more than one person tied to the rope, so they hurriedly asked two more people to join in.

Su Zhan's upper body was naked, so his skin scraped against the rock wall. It was bearable at first, but he soon felt as if his entire back was burning.

He frowned slightly and ignored the pain. His only wish was to escort Qin Ya up safely and send her to the hospital.

After some time, the people above the pit saw them and pulled the rope to the middle of the opening so Su Zhan's skin wouldn't be scraping against the rocks. Shen Peichuan stood there and watched as they got pulled up. He then bent down and reached out. "Give her to me."

Su Zhan looked up and passed the woman in his arms to him.

With the help of the others, Su Zhan was rescued. Once his feet touched the ground, he immediately tried to untie the knot around his waist. The leader told him, "I'll do it. You can't untie it."

Ordinary citizens wouldn't be able to untie specialized knots like this one.

Su Zhan urged, "Please hurry up."

The leader said nothing as his fingers picked up the pace. Soon, the knot was untied. Su Zhan walked over to Shen Peichuan and stretched out his hands. "I'll take her."

Shen Peichuan glanced at him. He wasn't in a good state, so Shen Peichuan was afraid he'd collapse before bringing her out of the woods.

"I can do it," Su Zhan assured him.

Shen Peichuan couldn't say anything to refute him. He knew it was the best time for his friend to show his concern. When he was about to hand Qin Ya to Su Zhan, she parted her lips and whispered, "Can you bring me out?"

She was looking at Shen Peichuan.

Shen Peichuan instantly looked at Su Zhan. He had helped take Qin Ya from Su Zhan because there was no stretcher here. Besides, someone had to carry Qin Ya out of the pit.

He was certain Su Zhan wouldn't let other men touch her, so he had stepped forward to do it.

But now, as Qin Ya refused to let Su Zhan hold her, he was afraid the latter might misunderstand.

Su Zhan pursed his lips and remained silent.

"Is that alright?" Qin Ya looked at Shen Peichuan and asked again.

She was too weak to leave the woods alone, so she had to rely on someone else's help.

Qin Ya knew Su Zhan must've gotten hurt when they were pulled up from the pit. She didn't want to owe him anything. Even though he had revealed his darkest secret to her, she never wanted to reconcile with him.

The past should stay in the past.

Besides, my body...

"Since you won't help me, let me down. I can walk out myself," Qin Ya said stubbornly.

"You should take her out," Su Zhan cut in before Shen Peichuan could react.

Shen Peichuan pursed his lips as he glanced at Su Zhan. He knew the man was worried about Qin Ya. As they both were hurt, he didn't want to delay any longer. Turning to the leader, he ordered, "You're in charge now."

With that, he swiveled around and left with Qin Ya in his arms.

Su Zhan was afraid the branches would slow Shen Peichuan down and scrape Qin Ya, so he hurried ahead and cleared the path for them.

Qin Ya leaned on Shen Peichuan's shoulders, her eyes half-closed. As Su Zhan was ahead of them, she could see the wounds on his back, either bleeding or swollen.

Her heart ached slightly for the man, but it wasn't enough for her to soften and reconcile with him.

She would never get back together with him again.

Hence, she closed her eyes and stopped staring at him.

The journey wasn't long, but the path was steep as they were above a mountain. It took them over an hour to walk out of the mountain.

Knowing which car belonged to Shen Peichuan, Su Zhan scurried over to open the door, allowing Qin Ya to enter the car easily.

Shen Peichuan was about to put her down when Su Zhan said, "Give me the car keys. I'll drive."

He was afraid Qin Ya would refuse to be with him, and he didn't want to waste time.

Shen Peichuan placed Qin Ya in the back seat and handed the car keys to Su Zhan, who entered the driver's seat promptly.

Meanwhile, Shen Peichuan entered the back seat to take care of Qin Ya. He took out two bottles of water from the back pocket and gave one to Su Zhan. "Drink some water."

Su Zhan didn't even bother looking back as he replied, "Give it to Qin Ya."

Shen Peichuan extended his hand. "I have more here."

The two of them had been stuck in the pit for some time; Su Zhan should be extremely thirsty by now.

Su Zhan took the water from him after knowing there was more. He downed the bottle of water in one go. Then, he flung the empty bottle out before starting the car.

Shen Peichuan handed the other bottle to Qin Ya. "You should drink some water too."

Qin Ya stretched out her arm to take the water bottle from him.

Meanwhile, at the villa, Lin Xinyan woke up late.

She didn't know whether it was because of her pregnancy, or whether it was because she had always slept soundly when she was with Zong Jinghao.

When she woke up, Zong Jinghao had already left. After breakfast, Zong Yanxi began complaining, saying that Baymax's fur was dirty. Hence, she asked Aunt Yu to bathe Baymax in the courtyard together. She also wanted Aunt Yu to bring her out to buy some dog food.

Aunt Yu smiled and agreed to all her requests.

Lin Xinyan stood in front of the window, smiling at the sight of Aunt Yu bathing the dog with her kids.

She took out her phone and was about to call Shao Yun when she noticed the TV on. She picked up the remote control to switch it off, only to realize that the person in the news seemed familiar to her.