

Stealing Your Heart Chapter 651

“Just a lady,” replied the girl.

“A lady?” repeated Qin Ya. She was curious as she was well aware of all of Lin Xinyan’s close contacts. So, she racked her brains trying to figure out who else hadn’t shown up yet.

“Did she say what her name was?” asked Lin Xinyan. The dress wasn’t convenient to move around in, but she could hear the commotion from where she sat.

She knew that all her invited friends had shown up, and she had received well-wishes from the ones who couldn’t make it. Nobody said anything about delivering a gift like this, though.

For this unknown person to attempt something like this, she had to be quite vigilant indeed.

The hotel staff member shook her head, “She never gave me a name. Only a request that I deliver this to you.”

“And where did this exchange take place?” queried Shen Peichuan.

As long as she was able to provide more information, they could check surveillance tapes to figure out her identity.

The staff member blinked, sensing that something was off. They seemed awfully jumpy as if she’d just delivered a bomb to them.

Wait, it isn’t a bomb, right?

The very thought made her hands tremble.

She gulped audibly. “The northern entrance. She looked quite beautiful and claimed to be a friend of the bride. I’m only doing as she asked.”

Hearing that, Shen Peichuan immediately issued an order to check the surveillance cameras. He then hung up and received the box from the staff.

“You may leave,” he said curtly.

The staff was not about to be told twice. She left immediately, fearing that she would get mixed up in their affairs if she lingered.

Shen Peichuan untied the ribbon on the package, only to be stopped by Qin Ya. “What are you doing?” she asked.

Shen Peichuan replied, “I need to verify the contents. We don’t know who sent this! What if it’s dangerous?”

If the contents were dangerous, then there was no way he’d be able to explain if Lin Xinyan got hurt. Zong Jinghao had entrusted her safety to him and he was not going to let Zong Jinghao down.

His concerns were reasonable, but Qin Ya reached out for the package and held it close to her. “Since it’s dangerous, then you shouldn’t open it. Let me do it instead.”

Shen Peichuan was taken aback for a moment and quickly retorted, “Wait, what makes you think *you* should open it?”

“Look, I’m already miserable enough at the moment. I think my bad luck should have run its course by now, so nothing bad will happen to me. It’s probably better that I do it instead,” said Qin Ya.

Qin Ya was about to open it, but she was stopped by Lin Xinyan.

“Hang on, Ya. How is it appropriate for the both of you to open a gift meant for me?” Lin Xinyan walked over and disregarded the inconvenience posed by her wedding dress. “Hand it over,” she said, her hands stretched outward.

Qin Ya shook her head. “Absolutely not! What if it’s a bomb?”

“If it is a bomb, are you going to disarm it? Hand it over,” said Lin Xinyan insistently.

Qin Ya still refused and pressed the parcel closer to her chest.

With outstretched hands, Lin Xinyan tried again. “Come on.”

Qin Ya looked pleadingly at Shen Peichuan to intervene.

Before Shen Peichuan could say anything, Lin Xinyan interrupted him first. “The gift is mine. Nobody can keep that from me.”

Lin Xinyan took the box from Qin Ya and sat down on the sofa. As Lin Xinyan took a deep breath and prepared to open it, Qin Ya hurriedly said, “Why don’t we wait till after the wedding to open this?”

Meeting Qin Ya’s gaze, Lin Xinyan replied, “If I don’t do this now, I won’t be at ease.”

Qin Ya had a mind to further persuade Lin Xinyan to wait, but she was stopped. Lin Xinyan had already opened the box.

There was a layer of exquisite wrapping paper and a greeting card. Lin Xinyan picked it up and opened it. The card only said ‘Congratulations!’

Qin Ya stood beside her and angled her head for a better view.

“Whose lovely writing is this?” she asked in a puzzled tone.

Wordlessly, Lin Xinyan took apart the tissue paper to reveal the gift that was inside.

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Qin Ya was more anxious than Lin Xinyan. She clenched her fists, fretting over the possibly dangerous item in the box.

The tissue paper was removed, revealing a very sensual lingerie set in bright pink.

Shen Peichuan turned away immediately after noticing what it was. Qin Ya, on the other hand, was still worried about the possibility of a concealed bomb. She checked the contents of the box thoroughly, only for her search to come up empty.

With furrowed brows, Qin Ya asked, "Who sent this?"

Lin Xinyan didn't know either. Why else would she be this worried otherwise? Putting the lingerie back into its box, she said, "Don't tell Jinghao yet."

She didn't want to trouble him at this time. Instead, she opted to wait till after the wedding to tell him.

"Are you sure that's a good idea?" asked Shen Peichuan. He was worried that something bad would happen. If that were the case, how would he explain himself to Zong Jinghao?

"What's wrong with waiting? I'm worried we're making a fuss over nothing. Wouldn't it look ridiculous if it turns out to be someone we know after all?" queried Lin Xinyan.

She had made her decision. Lin Xinyan would inform Zong Jinghao herself after the wedding.

She wasn't really hiding it, anyway. Truthfully, she just wanted the wedding to be over and done with first before bringing it up.

Just then, the makeup artist knocked at the door. "It's almost time! Let me touch up your makeup!"

Glancing at Shen Peichuan and Qin Ya, Lin Xinyan said, "That's sorted then. We should cheer up since it is my wedding day after all!"

Qin Ya nodded and gestured for the makeup artist to be allowed inside. She picked up the bouquet on the table and gave it to Lin Xinyan, saying, "I'll go check on the kids."

Lin Xinyan nodded.

When it was almost three o'clock, Lin Xinyan stood outside the entrance, awaiting her cue to enter.

Qin Ya and the staff fussed over her wedding gown, while Zong Yanchen and Zong Yanxi stood next to her.

Her late father might not have been able to walk her down the aisle, but at least she had her kids.

They seemed to be obedient, sensible kids, having been made aware of the importance of this task. Both kids stood there with their heads held high.

At exactly three o'clock, the doors opened. Spotlights shone at the entrance, illuminating Lin Xinyan and her two kids.

All eyes were on them immediately.

The hall was packed with guests on both sides of the room. The Zong family might be small in number, but there were plenty of business partners and other affiliates in attendance.

A red carpet lay out the path she had to take. The aisle was decorated with flowers on each side, and the decorations gave the room a romantic and dreamy air, very much like a fairytale wedding.

Lin Xinyan clutched the hands of both kids tightly and stepped in. Right on cue, the wedding march began to play.

The hall burst into thunderous applause as she made her way to the stage.

In addition to a few media outlets, the public relations department of Wanyue Group tweeted pictures of the event with the following caption: *It's our President's wedding day! Let's wish the couple a blissful marriage!*

It was either the music or the heady atmosphere that suddenly reinforced Lin Xinyan's desire to be married.

She stared at the man waiting for her at the end as she approached him a little at a time.

Zong Jinghao was also observing her. She was on her own for now, with nobody to rely on but her kids as she slowly advanced toward him.

The sight both moved him and caused his heart to ache a little.

During the days without him, this woman gave birth to his kids alone, raised them, and had to suffer through the stigma of being a single mother.

He marveled at how brave and strong-willed she was.

"Stop," said Zong Jinghao abruptly.

Everyone was confused, wondering what was going to happen next. Wasn't the groom supposed to wait for her at the stage?

Lin Xinyan stood perfectly still. She didn't understand what he meant but chose to obey anyway.

Just as the room was afire with gossip and curiosity, Zong Jinghao said, "I'll walk the rest of the way. Just stand there and wait for me."

Having said that, he made his way toward her.

She had been alone for so long and had suffered so much in his absence. It would do her justice for him to walk toward her instead.

The gesture might have gone against tradition, but symbolically it made for a touching scene.

Marriage was work. It was the joint efforts of two people in equal measure working together. How could one wait at the end and do nothing while his significant other toiled away to reach him?

As Zong Jinghao came toward Lin Xinyan, he offered her a hand.

Lin Xinyan looked up at him.

His lips curved into a gentle smile. In a low voice, he said, "Let's walk the rest of our lives together."

Lin Xinyan's lips trembled and a sudden ache filled her chest. Her eyes were blurry with emotion.

In spite of the tears that threatened to fall, she smiled faintly at him.

Slowly, she placed her palm in his outstretched hand.

Zong Jinghao encased her hand in his and slowly guided her the rest of the way toward the stage.

A warm round of applause filled the room.

It truly was a heartwarming scene that made people feel envy and longing for a love like that.

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The wedding march was replaced by a different song after they reached the stage.

A soothing opening note was heard, followed by a gentle voice.

Wen Xiaoji stood at the entrance and walked over steadily with a microphone in hand.

Now, he was no longer Li Zhan, but Wen Xiaoji- Wen Qing's son and a member of the Wen family. He had been a celebrity in the past and was blessed with good looks and a good voice.

In his rich baritone voice, Wen Xiaoji performed the popular wedding song 'For You'.

He will be your bridegroom, your companion for life hereafter

He will be bound to you, for better or for worse

She will be your bride, entrusted to you

Your life will be shared by two, all burdens and joy to be borne together

Fate must have smiled upon you, to have joined you both thus

However much he loves you, you must return that happiness twofold

From now on, you're no longer alone, you have each other to think about

However much you give, you'll receive twofold in love

Fate must have smiled upon you, to have joined you both thus...

Wen Xiaoji sang passionately while walking toward them.

Lin Xinyan didn't want to cry at the wedding, but she truly couldn't help herself.

Her tears refused to stop flowing, like pearls slipping off a string.

She tried her dandiest to ignore it and refused to admit it. But no matter what, she could not ignore their kinship.

Although they seemed distant to each other on the surface, she still yearned to be a family with him.

Wen Xiaoji finished performing and looked at Lin Xinyan through red-rimmed eyes. In a voice brimming with emotion, he said, "Xinyan, my sister."

With all the grudges and grievances of the past now set aside, nothing had changed.

He still regarded Zong Jinghao as a brother and acknowledged Lin Xinyan as his sister-in-law. But Wen Xiaoji's conscious decision to call her his sister bore a deeper meaning. It showed that he offered her the desire for reconciliation and the respect she deserved.

With this simple gesture, he managed to set aside so much hatred and animosity.

As Lin Xinyan choked back tears and walked toward him, Wen Xiaoji ran across the room and hugged her.

At this moment, there were no words to express the emotions they felt. They stood there in an embrace, letting that heal the hurt that had transpired.

Zong Jinghao let go of his resentment toward the Wen family as well. He had done everything that needed to be done. What was left was the simple hope that Lin Xinyan had a family to rely on.

She had done more than enough for herself. Now it was time for him to return the favor.

Lin Xinyan would no longer be alone.

Wen Qing watched the moving display tearfully. Li Jing hugged him and patted him on the back. Even Zhuang Zijin was brought to attend the wedding and she struggled to hold back her tears.

She could finally see her daughter married off and reunited with her relatives.

This was the hope she had and the only blessing she wanted to offer her daughter.

“It’s your wedding today. Don’t cry!” Wen Xiaoji wiped away Lin Xinyan’s tears and escorted her back to Zong Jinghao. He placed her hand in Zong Jinghao’s palm and backed away with a deep bow. “Thank you.”

This word of thanks from Wen Xiaoji was for Zong Jinghao’s clemency toward Wen Qing and for forgiving them.

Zong Jinghao helped Wen Xiaoji up from his bow.

Lin Xinyan hadn’t expected Zong Jinghao to let them attend the wedding, but she was pleasantly surprised and touched.

She gazed deeply into his eyes and said, “I want to thank you too.”

Zong Jinghao gently wiped away the tears from the corners of her eyes. “I should be thanking you.”

He took the microphone and used this opportunity to reveal the identities of the two kids to everyone present.

“Seven years ago, she and I were secretly married. At the time, I didn’t know how to appreciate her. I hurt her and abandoned her... But she still gave birth to my offspring despite all this. The very thought of my past actions brings me deep shame, but I am also very moved by her perseverance. Today in front of all of you, I’d like to introduce you to my wife and my two kids.”

Several media outlets were floored by this revelation, and the internet was abuzz.

Now, the whole affair was being referred to as ‘the wedding of the century’ by netizens.

For Lin Xinyan, it was truly an unforgettable wedding. She was so immersed in her surroundings that all unpleasantness over the gift earlier was forgotten.

The time soon came for the couple to exchange their rings. Qin Ya had given both kids each a ring to bear.

Given Zong Jinghao’s previous experiences, the rings he prepared this time were more low-key in design but still high in value.

He wanted to give her all the good things in life.

The simple and tastefully designed ring was a four-pronged diamond solitaire.

The ceremony was not held in a church, nor was there a solemn declaration of oaths to each other. New beginnings warranted a new method, and therefore they chose to be blessed by a master of ceremonies.

The master of ceremonies skillfully proclaimed his well-wishes for the couple, “Love now has a home to return to, may your hearts never be lonely. Through the warmth of your hands, may you grow old together. Blessed be your love like a May garden in full bloom, and may happiness and joy be with you forevermore.”

This was followed by the exchanging of rings. Thus concluded the wedding ceremony.

The music started to play again as Zong Jinghao carefully supported Lin Xinyan off the stage.

Shen Peichuan and Guan Jing then carried both kids down. Su Zhan had been sitting away from them this whole time. The unsightly injury on his face prevented him from fetching the bride with the rest of them earlier.

He hadn't even shown up to offer assistance to Zong Jinghao over other matters.

Honestly, he was simply unfit to be appearing in public like that. After all, it wasn't proper to ruin a special occasion by showing up with a bruised face.

He had even worn large black sunglasses to hide his injuries.

When the couple arrived at the lounge, Qin Ya came over to help Lin Xinyan change for the wedding reception.

"Before that, I need to have a word with Jinghao in private," said Lin Xinyan.

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Qin Ya nodded and left the room, closing the door behind her.

Zong Jinghao helped Lin Xinyan to adjust her train before she could sit. "What did you need to tell me?"

Lin Xinyan wrapped her arms around him and turned him to face her.

Having closed the distance between them, their noses were almost touching. Zong Jinghao wrapped his arms around her waist, and his eyes sparkled. He slowly pressed his lips to her ear and asked again, "What did you want to tell me?"

Lin Xinyan felt her face flush with heat. She was just about to speak when he swiftly captured her lips in a kiss.

She closed her eyes slowly, her lashes fluttering against his face. Without moving, she could feel his breathing as she surrendered herself to the warmth of his lips.

She leaned against him in silence, savoring the moment. After a while, Zong Jinghao finally let go, only to meet her sheepish grin as she wiped lipstick off his lips. "I'm very happy today," she replied.

"Because you married me?" asked Zong Jinghao, feigning ignorance. He knew she was referring to the Wen family.

Knowing that he did it on purpose, she pushed a finger down on his lips. "Don't flatter yourself! I couldn't care less about marrying you!" she retorted playfully.

Before she could finish speaking, Zong Jinghao had her pinned beneath him. He was still careful enough not to put any weight on her belly. With raised eyebrows, he asked, “Is that so? Who would you rather marry then?”

Lin Xinyan didn’t bother dodging the question. Instead, she batted her eyelids and looked him in the eye, saying, “I want to marry the father of my child. I want to marry someone who can surprise me at my wedding. I want to marry a man named Zong Jinghao!”

Zong Jinghao smirked and pinched her nose playfully. “It’s not even nighttime, and you’re already seducing me?”

“Who—”

Lin Xinyan was interrupted by a loud knock at the door. “Someone’s here.”

Zong Jinghao let go of her and helped tidy up her dress to look presentable again. He then kissed her swiftly on the forehead before answering the door.

Shen Peichuan stood there, waiting. As soon as Zong Jinghao opened the door, Shen Peichuan took a glance inside.

“What is it?” asked Zong Jinghao. He could sense that Shen Peichuan had something to say to Lin Xinyan and not him. “What, you can’t tell me?”

Shen Peichuan shook his head. “No, I’m here for you, actually. Everyone is waiting.”

The heads of several foreign branches were here for his wedding, yet Zong Jinghao hadn’t gone out to greet them yet.

Zong Jinghao nodded and turned around to bid Lin Xinyan goodbye.

Lin Xinyan said, “Go on, don’t let me keep you.”

When Zong Jinghao left, Shen Peichuan entered the room. He already had the camera footage checked and discovered the identity of the mysterious woman. He did not mention that to Lin Xinyan though. All he said was, "We never identified who gave you the gift, but it should just be a normal item."

Lin Xinyan nodded. After all, it was harmless, so she did not take it to heart.

"I'll be off then." With that, Shen Peichuan left.

Qin Ya came over to help Lin Xinyan change her clothes.

Lin Xinyan's evening gown was a crimson, ankle-length dress that had been tailor-made to suit her figure. It was not as long as her wedding dress, so heels weren't necessary. It was also so much easier to move around in.

After Lin Xinyan changed her clothes, Qin Ya helped her remove the veil. Her hairstyle had to match her dress and give her a completely different look from her earlier getup. In any case, she still looked exceptionally beautiful.

"Where are the kids?" asked Lin Xinyan.

Qin Ya replied, "They're in the room next to ours."

Lin Xinyan nodded. "I want you to walk around with me later."

"Later? But your husband will be introducing you to a lot of important people. My presence would be inappropriate."

Qin Ya was well aware of decorum and rules, for it was a large and important wedding after all. Earlier on, Qin Ya had noticed Zong Jinghao speaking to scores of people, all of whom were eager to meet Lin Xinyan. Her being around the couple would be seen as inappropriate for sure.

“What’s inappropriate about having my friend with me?” asked Lin Xinyan. She clearly had other plans in store for Qin Ya.

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Qin Ya still wanted to refuse, but Lin Xinyan held her hand tightly.

Su Zhan didn't show up throughout the whole ceremony, likely due to the injuries he sustained on his face. He probably wanted to avoid Qin Ya as well. But surely he wouldn't hide during the banquet too?

A meal would still be waiting for him.

Lin Xinyan effectively wanted Qin Ya to know how Su Zhan felt about her.

She could tell that Su Zhan was sad.

Qin Ya pursed her lips and said nothing. She noticed that given the nature of the relationship between Su Zhan and Zong Jinghao, there was no way he'd miss the wedding. The fact that he was missing in action at all was strange.

I wonder why Lin Xinyan wants me to come with her. Does it have to do with Su Zhan? wondered Qin Ya.

Since there was no mention of this person, Qin Ya decided not to ask.

Lin Xinyan patted her hand. "You're coming with me then."

Qin Ya lowered her head and agreed.

Another knock was heard at the door. This time, it was a staff member who had come over to inform Lin Xinyan to get ready. The banquet had already begun.

Qin Ya confirmed that she was aware of this and shut the door.

The wedding banquet was well underway when suddenly the lounge door was pushed open. Zong Jinghao strolled in.

Lin Xinyan asked, "Why are you here?"

Zong Jinghao mentioned that he wanted to introduce Lin Xinyan to some of the foreign branch operatives from earlier on.

He wrapped an arm around her waist and carefully helped her up from the sofa, asking, "Are you tired?"

Lin Xinyan nodded.

She was prone to bouts of physical weakness which were likely caused by her pregnancy.

"I'll bring you around to meet some people, then take you back to your room to rest," said Zong Jinghao. Lin Xinyan could not avoid socializing today as he wanted to introduce her to his circle.

Qin Ya accompanied them from behind as they walked to the wedding reception together.

Zong Jinghao first took Lin Xinyan to meet the other people he worked with. Apart from Shen Peichuan and Su Zhan, the company also had a cadre of talented professionals who were very capable at their jobs.

"How could they delay the announcement of the identity of those kids until now? They're already so big!" As Zong Jinghao brought Lin Xinyan to this table, they overheard some of the guests discussing the revelation from earlier.

It wasn't just them, but plenty of the other attendees had been surprised and slightly unhappy as well. They never anticipated Zong Jinghao to already have kids, let alone kids of this age. There was plenty of gossip about how he managed to keep such a big secret under wraps as well.

On such a joyous occasion, it was only natural that the guests would propose toasts to celebrate the happy couple. Under normal circumstances, they would have been obligated to accept, but Zong Jinghao had been diligently drinking on Lin Xinyan's behalf. Nobody could say anything, of course. It was unreasonable to expect a pregnant woman to participate in something like this.

Zong Jinghao did not linger and promptly went to greet other guests, flitting from table to table. Soon enough, he came to the table shared by both Tang Che and his brother-in-law, Li Qirui.

Li Qirui stood up with a glass of wine in his hands. With a smile, he said, "You sly old fox, no wonder you've kept her tucked away! If I have a wife as lovely as her, I'd keep her hidden away too!"

"Congratulations to you both!" piped up Tang Che as well, and the three men clinked glasses.

"We'll catch up another day." Tang Che knew that they still had many guests to entertain and decided not to take up too much of their time.

"Of course, I'll make arrangements," replied Zong Jinghao.

Other guests had come to greet them and make idle chit-chat too. They were important people, so the couple could not just brush them off.

"Say, Mrs. Zong, would you be interested in joining our club?" asked one of the wealthy ladies whose surname was Wang. This club was meant to be a gathering place for the richer ladies who whiled away their time playing cards, gossiping, and building connections. Networking made for good business, after all.

While the men were hard at work providing a glamorous lifestyle for their wives, the women did what they could to help out from behind the scenes as well.

Lin Xinyan tactfully refused. "I apologize, but I have two kids to care for. I fear I may not have the time!"

Although the other party had been relatively indirect about what it was they did, Lin Xinyan knew exactly what went on in those social circles.

Obviously, Zong Jinghao didn't need her help where his business was concerned, while she was not remotely interested in doing anything that would cause him trouble.

Mrs. Wang had been implying that if they fostered a good relationship, then Lin Xinyan would be helping her husband expand his business more.

"You should employ a nanny, then you needn't worry about lifting a finger! You're such a delicate and beautiful woman, surely Mr. Zong can't bear to see you slave away like that!"

Lin Xinyan was a very strong-willed person, but she did look a little reedy due to her pregnancy and pale complexion. Mrs. Wang must have had thought she looked 'delicate' due to her younger age as well.

Zong Jinghao wanted to speak up for Lin Xinyan, but she squeezed his hand in warning, telling him that she was perfectly capable of handling this. She looked Mrs. Wang square in the eye and said, "I'm a bit more traditional, Mrs. Wang. I think it's my responsibility to serve my husband and my kids on my own. Don't you think it's better my husband go to work without needing to worry about anything at home?"

This was a very adamant refusal from Lin Xinyan. Before Mrs. Wang could respond, she was pulled aside by her husband. "My wife has always been a blabbermouth, so please pay her no mind, Mr. Zong," said Mr. Wang as he hastily moved her away.

Zong Jinghao wasn't sure what Mrs. Wang's motives were, but he was thankful that Lin Xinyan saw right through the other's intentions.

Mrs. Wang remained unconvinced. *Are we still stuck in the stone age? Serving your husband and son? That sounds like complete bullsh*t!*

“Forgive me if I’ve spoken out of turn, Mrs. Wang. I’m still young after all.” Lin Xinyan noticed the look on Mrs. Wang’s face, which stemmed from her inability to recruit Lin Xinyan. She beamed and ignored the ugly look that came her way.

“Oh no, not at all,” answered Mr. Wang in his wife’s stead.

After socializing a bit more, Lin Xinyan pulled Zong Jinghao aside urgently. In a low voice, she asked, “Where is Su Zhan?”

She had specifically intended for Qin Ya to meet him, but he wasn’t found at Shen Peichuan and Guan Jing’s table.

“I don’t know. Hiding in a corner somewhere, perhaps?” replied Zong Jinghao. There were too many people present in the crowd, so finding Su Zhan would be a challenge.

“Well, I want you to call him up and ask him why he’s not here for our wedding? I am not happy about this at all. I haven’t seen hide nor hair of him all day!” said Lin Xinyan indignantly.

Zong Jinghao stole a glance at Qin Ya. Lin Xinyan’s intentions were too obvious.

It’s her own wedding and she’s still worrying about other people!

Zong Jinghao had an idea. He leaned in and whispered something in Lin Xinyan’s ear.

After hearing his explanation, Lin Xinyan felt that it was feasible enough. Meeting up like this was not going to undo the kinks in their relationship. Only if Su Zhan knew of Qin Ya’s physical condition could the matter be resolved in its entirety.

She looked at Qin Ya. “You must be starving! Go grab something to eat. Just meet me back at the lounge later as I’ve got something to tell you.”

Qin Ya nodded. "Alright."

With that, she made her way toward the table where Shen Peichuan sat.

At last, the couple arrived at the Wen family table where Zong Qifeng was seated. Shao Yun and Zhuang Zijin were here too. Both men were elders as well as the people involved in what happened in the past.

After everything had unfolded, it was time to bury the hatchet and put the past behind them. It was only right that they made peace for the happiness and prosperity of future generations.

Wen Qing was so excited to see Li Xinyan. He initially had a lot of things he wanted to express, but he didn't know where to start.

Instead, he opted to start with a solemn apology for all that he had done.

"It's okay. The past is in the past, and we need to let go. We're going to be a family now!" Lin Xinyan's throat constricted with emotion, but she did not cry.

"Xinyan?" Wen Xiaoji walked up to her, followed by a woman. She was not a stranger though, but a familiar face that everyone recognized.

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Lin Xinyan was so flabbergasted that she was lost in thought.

Meanwhile, Wen Xiaoji introduced Chen Shihan to Lin Xinyan. "This is my girlfriend."

Chen Shihan seemed rather uneasy to be there, considering that she had had a fall-out with Lin Xinyan before. Now, meeting Lin Xinyan again as Wen Xiaoji's girlfriend only made things even more awkward.

"Congratulations on your wedding day and best wishes for a happy life together!" Chen Shihan put on a stiff smile as she wished Lin Xinyan.

Chen Shihan had a similar background as Wen Xiaoji. Both of them were born in rich families but had come down in the world. In order to make a living on her own, she went on to join the army together with Wen Xiaoji, instead of following what had been arranged by her father, Chen Qing.

Chen Shihan and Wen Xiaoji knew each other very well as they grew up together. Because of that, they had never thought of getting involved with each other romantically before.

However, the days they had spent with each other at the military camp made them realize their feelings for each other.

Wen Xiaoji explained it in a joking tone, "I have decided to subdue the demon in her before she went on to wreak havoc."

Annoyed by how he talked bad about her, Chen Shihan nudged him with her elbow.

Lin Xinyan was not a petty person who dwelled on her past. Therefore, she decided to let the bygones be bygones and greet them with a pleasant smile. "I'm very happy to have you guys here."

Chen Shihan bit her lips guiltily. "Thank you."

Having learnt her mistake, Chen Shihan was very apologetic to what she had done to Lin Xinyan and Zong Jinghao before. She just realized how forgiving and generous Lin Xinyan was, as she did not ask her to leave right away.

At the thought of all the things she had done to Lin Xinyan back then, she couldn't help but feel ashamed.

Zhuang Zijin stood up and pulled out a chair at the table for Lin Xinyan. "Come over here and grab a bite."

She knew Lin Xinyan must have been too busy to have time to eat that entire day.

Then, she turned to look at Zong Jinghao, "Why don't you sit down with Yan and eat something too?"

Zong Jinghao sat down and placed an arm around Lin Xinyan's waist. Everyone sitting at the table was their family members and close relatives. The atmosphere was fairly pleasant, especially after all the misunderstandings between them had been cleared up. In the meantime, Wen Xiaoji and Chen Shihan took a seat next to Wen Qing.

Wen Qing tried to strike up a conversation with Lin Xinyan many times, but he had no idea what to say to her. Just as no one at the table was talking, Shao Yun proposed, "Jinghao, let's have a drink."

Zong Jinghao filled up his glass with wine and downed it at one go. "Are you reaching your limit?" Shao Yun asked.

Shao Yun saw him dropping by every table just now to have a toast with the guests.

In fact, Zong Jinghao could still go a long way as long as he was careful enough to stick to only one type of alcohol. "So, are you trying to say you want more?"

Then, Zong Jinghao refilled Shao Yun's glass.

Shao Yun chuckled, "How can I stop at just one glass at your wedding ceremony with Yan?"

After they finished their second glass of wine, Wen Qing finally spoke up, "Yan..."

He had been looking for a chance to talk to Lin Xinyan the whole night. Seeing that she was about to finish her meal, he knew it would be too late if he waited any longer.

Although Lin Xinyan had no problem getting along with Wen Xiaoji, she was not so sure when it came to Wen Qing.

Wen Qing did not require Lin Xinyan to address him as her uncle right away, knowing she had yet to accept their relationship.

"I have a gift for you."

He took out a box from Li Jing's bag and handed it to Lin Xinyan.

Lin Xinyan had no idea what could be inside the box. After some hesitation, she took it over. "Thanks."

"You don't have to stand on ceremony. Didn't you say before that we are a family?" Wen Qing's eyes became red-rimmed when he mentioned that. As he got older, he started yearning for kinships and enjoying the company of his family more.

Lin Xinyan placed the gift box on her lap, at a loss of what to say to him.

“I’m very happy to see Jinghao and you getting married, and I really wish the two of you a happy life ahead. Jinghao really cares about you a lot as he’s willing to forgive me for your sake. So, please treat him well too.”

Keeping her eyes downcast, Lin Xinyan responded, “I will.”

She would prefer not to reveal her emotional side to the others at the table.

When the ceremony came to an end, Zong Qifeng helped the newlywed to walk the guests out of the ballroom. Meanwhile, Li Jing made use of the chance to have a chat with Lin Xinyan. “Please come visit us whenever you’re free.”

Li Jing understood her husband very well. Although Wen Qing did not invite Lin Xinyan to visit him just now, deep down inside he wished she could come very fervently.

Lin Xinyan agreed.

She would go visit them when she was emotionally ready.

One of Shen Peichuan’s subordinates was entrusted with the task of sending Zhuang Zijin back. Before she left with him, Zhuang Zijin said to Lin Xinyan, “I’ll be released right before your due date. So, I can take care of you after you give birth to your baby.”

Lin Xinyan drew her to her embrace and asked her to take good care of herself.

Zhuang Zijin promised she would do so.

After sending some of their close ones off, Zong Jinghao asked Lin Xinyan whether she was tired; she responded with a nod.

“Let me handle Su Zhan’s matter next time.”

Lin Xinyan had totally forgotten about that matter. Shaking her head, she insisted, “Let’s get it over and done with tonight.”

To stop Zong Jinghao from trying to dissuade her, she added, “I’m fine. I’m just feeling tired because my bulging belly is getting heavier and it makes it harder for me to move around. I won’t be at ease if I don’t settle that matter tonight. Yes, I promised Qin Ya that I wouldn’t tell Su Zhan about it. Yet, Su Zhan found that out himself by chance, so I didn’t break my promise.”

She was determined to help Su Zhan, as her heart went out for him who had been going through quite a challenging time lately. Also, she could tell Qin Ya still had feelings for him though she always treated him quite harshly.

Then, they started executing their plan. Firstly, Zong Jinghao asked Qin Ya to send Lin Xinyan back to the lounge by using the excuse that he needed to attend to some emergency.

According to his plan, Lin Xinyan would then ask Qin Ya some questions about Su Zhan in the lounge. Meanwhile, he would lure Su Zhan to stand outside the lounge with some excuse so that he could be there to hear what Qin Ya had to say about him.

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Qin Ya appeared somewhat distracted and listless because she was worried about Su Zhan, who was not seen at the wedding ceremony.

Sitting next to Qin Ya, who was not uttering a word, Lin Xinyan could tell that she was in low spirits.

“It must be a tiring day for you.” Lin Xinyan poured her a glass of water.

Qin Ya took a sip of water before answering, “I’m fine. By the way, I notice that Su Zhan isn’t here tonight. Did anything happen to him?”

At last, she couldn’t resist but ask about Su Zhan’s whereabouts.

It was obvious to Lin Xinyan that Qin Ya had yet to move on from Su Zhan.

Pouring herself a glass of water too, Lin Xinyan swirled it as she asked, “Why’re you asking me that? Is it because you still care about him?”

“I am not,” Qin Ya denied it right away before she clarified, “Is it normal for him to be absent at your wedding ceremony with Zong Jinghao?”

Lin Xinyan did not answer her right away. Instead, she took two sips of water first before slowly speaking, “He’s been here all the time; he just didn’t show up in front of the guests.”

“Why?” Qin Ya pressed on.

Lin Xinyan put down the glass of water and stared at Qin Ya without responding to her. She was sure Qin Ya cared about Su Zhan a lot, judging from how eager

she was to find out what happened to him. She blurted that question out of her instinct and there was no way she could fake it.

Soon, it dawned upon Qin Ya that her reaction had sold herself. She tried to justify but failed to come up with a valid reason. All at once, she appeared flustered and restless.

Lin Xinyan cast a glance at the door and checked the time on her watch. *I suppose Zong Jinghao has tricked Su Zhan into coming here already?*

With that thought in mind, she decided to get straight to the point. “Ya, it’s very obvious you care about Su Zhan.”

“I don’t.” This time, there was a diffidence in Qin Ya’s soft voice.

At first, she tried to hold back the urge to ask about Su Zhan so as not to reveal her feelings. However, her effort was in vain now that Lin Xinyan already saw her through.

Instead of probing her for answers, Lin Xinyan gave her time to sort out her thoughts.

Meanwhile, Shen Peichuan was meeting Zong Jinghao in the room next door. Shen Peichuan had found out the sender of the gift Lin Xin received before the ceremony. However, he did not share the information with her because it was sent by someone from the Gu family. In order not to make Lin Xinyan worry, he lied to her and decided to tell Zong Jinghao about it after the wedding ceremony.

Seeing Su Zhan standing at the door to the lounge where Lin Xinyan was resting, Shen Peichuan asked, “Su Zhan’s been avoiding people the whole night. How come he’s standing outside the lounge now? Why doesn’t he just enter the room?”

Zong Jinghao, who was sitting with his back leaning on the sofa, adjusted the collar of his shirt as he responded, “That’s part of my plan.”

Zong Jinghao told Su Zhan to meet him at the lounge as he had something to tell him. When Su Zhan reached the lounge, it naturally followed that he would catch the conversation between Lin Xinyan and Qin Ya.

At first, Su Zhan intended to leave the moment he heard Qin Ya was inside. However, Zong Jinghao made him stay there without telling him the reason.

Just as Su Zhan was puzzled by his action, he heard Lin Xinyan saying, “Ya, it’s very obvious you care about Su Zhan.”

For some reason, he had a burning desire to hear Qin Ya’s answer and to see whether she still cared about him.

He was fine even if she no longer loved him. As long as she cared about him, it showed that she still had feelings for him.

Perhaps in that way, he would not feel that his feelings for her were worthless.

When Shen Peichuan came to meet Zong Jinghao, he saw Su Zhan straining his ears trying to catch Qin Ya’s response.

“Why did you make him stand there?” Shen Peichuan was puzzled. *Was it because Zong Jinghao wanted Su Zhan to eavesdrop on the conversation of the people inside the room?*

As quick-witted as Shen Peichuan, it took him a very short time to come to the conclusion that Qin Ya must be inside that room too. “I’m impressed by how kind Xinyan and you are by putting in so much effort to help Su Zhan, even though the two of you are already exhausted after the ceremony.”

Not wanting to continue the discussion on Su Zhan, Zong Jinghao cut him off by asking, “What is it that you need to tell me?”

Shen Peichuan’s face turned solemn at once. “Xinyan received a gift before the ceremony.”

Although Zong Jinghao was not drunk, he was feeling slightly tipsy. Thus, he appeared unperturbed in response to what Shen Peichuan said, because he did not think there was anything fishy with Lin Xinyan receiving a wedding gift from her friends.

“The gift’s from Gu Huiyuan.” With that, Shen Peichuan fished out his phone to show Zong Jinghao the picture he took of the woman who appeared in the CCTV footage.

“That woman sent her gift to Xinyan through one of the staff members just now. Although what she gave Xinyan isn’t something dangerous or life-threatening, I still have a feeling that she’s up to no good.”

Zong Jinghao narrowed his eyes contemplatively. In fact, he had been keeping an eye on the Gu family all this while too. Although they were a huge family, not only were they divided and disunited, but they also had more enemies than friends.

To make things worse, Gu Bei had offended plenty of people himself because of his previous ruthless behavior too. This time, it was unlikely that Gu Bei and his father would be able to turn the table.

Therefore, Zong Jinghao had been focusing his attention on Gu Bei’s elder sisters who were all married instead. So far, they had been behaving themselves. Zong Jinghao understood that he must know the ins and outs of the Gu family before plotting anything against them, so he did manage to gather some information on Gu Huiyuan too.

However, he was taken by surprise to see Gu Huiyuan making her move.

“What’s the gift she gave Xinyan?” Zong Jinghao queried.

“I didn’t see it clearly, but I can be sure it’s nothing dangerous. What are you going to do about it?” Shen Peichuan asked.

“Did you tell Xinyan that the gift was sent by Gu Huiyuan?” Zong Jinghao was worried about Lin Xinyan’s reaction when she was made aware of that. The last thing he wanted was to see her worry about such a matter.

“Nope. I told her I couldn’t find out anything about the sender. Luckily, she didn’t probe into it,” Shen Peichuan replied.

“Get someone to keep an eye on Gu Huiyuan.” Zong Jinghao had no time to handle that for the time being. After the wedding ceremony, he intended to keep Lin Xinyan company for two days. Also, Lin Xinyan had a pregnancy checkup scheduled the day after tomorrow and he wanted to be there with her.

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Shen Peichuan answered, "Okay, I'll get my men to do it."

"Just ring me if you've got any lead." Zong Jinghao took a sip of water before leaning his back against the sofa.

Seeing that, Shen Peichuan had the gumption to keep his mouth shut so as not to disturb him.

In the room next door, Qin Ya took a long time mulling over Lin Xinyan's question before answering her. She rose to her feet and stood at the window where she stared into the distance.

"I don't care about him. It's just that... I'm feeling guilty for not telling him the true reason behind our breakup."

She did not tell him the truth because it was also something she dreaded to face.

"It pains me to see him unable to buck up and move on because of me."

The decision to break up with him would be beneficial for both of them.

Just like a phone which could no longer be used to make a call, she was an abnormal existence which was not acceptable by other people.

"Do you know why Su Zhan chose not to show up just now?" Lin Xinyan knew Qin Ya had been trying to avoid Su Zhan due to her sense of inferiority. However, Lin Xinyan did not think being sterile meant the end of the world for Qin Ya. In fact, there was a possibility that Su Zhan might not even mind that.

Why doesn't Qin Ya give herself and Su Zhan a chance?

Why doesn't she give it a try to see whether both of them can actually work it out?

“He got involved in a brawl at a bar and his face was covered with bruises. That’s why he chose not to show face at the ceremony just now.”

He got involved in a brawl?

“Was he injured very seriously?” Qin Ya whirled around to face Lin Xinyan.

Staring at her, Lin Xinyan answered, “Since you aren’t related to him anymore now, why do you even care about his injuries?”

Lin Xinyan wanted Qin Ya to stop lying to herself and everyone else. Obviously, she cared a lot about Su Zhan, but she just refused to admit it.

“I’m going to get him here so that you can ask him yourself.” Lin Xinyan rose to her feet and looked ready to head for the door. Yet, Qin Ya quickly dashed over to stop her. “Don’t do it. I don’t feel like meeting him.”

“Why don’t you feel like meeting me?” All of a sudden, the door to the lounge was pushed open. Standing at the door, Su Zhan removed his sunglasses to reveal the blue and black around his eyes. He stared at Qin Ya unflinchingly as he confronted her, “What’s the true reason behind our breakup that you decided not to tell me?”

At the sight of Su Zhan, Lin Xinyan grabbed Qin Ya’s shoulder encouragingly. “I think you should tell him the truth. Even though you guys are still going to break up with each other, he deserves to know the real reason.”

Then, Lin Xinyan walked out of the room to give them space.

Holding her head low, Qin Ya wanted to leave the room too. However, just as she reached the door, Su Zhan seized her by her wrist and hauled her back into the room. Then, he locked the door.

“You have to tell me the truth or I won’t let you walk out of this room.” Su Zhan sounded very firm and resolute.

Qin Ya looked uneasy and insecure with her arms wrapped around herself.

She did not even dare to look right into his eyes. “I’m not hiding anything from you.”

“Is that so?” Su Zhan was obviously unconvinced.

“Has Shao Yun got something to do with this?” Su Zhan seized her by her shoulder to make her look into his eyes.

Qin Ya quickly shook her head and clarified, “He’s got nothing to do with this.”

As Shao Yun was kind enough to help her out, she did not want Su Zhan to misunderstand him and add to his trouble.

“If he has nothing to do with this, who then?”

“Stop bombarding me with your questions. Since we’ve broken up with each other, please go and don’t ever disturb me again,” Qin Ya growled, trying hard to free herself from Su Zhan.

Su Zhan tightened his grip on her shoulder and gazed at her for several seconds in silence. “Fine, since you’re unwilling to talk, I’ll go and ask Xinyan. I’m sure there must be someone who knows the truth.”

With that, he spun around and walked out of the room.

“Su Zhan!”

Qin Ya shouted to stop him from going. “Please calm yourself down.”

It was Lin Xinyan’s wedding ceremony and she should enjoy the happiest moment of her life without being disturbed. Qin Ya would feel bad if she allowed Su Zhan to go and pester Lin Xinyan about the affair which should stay between the two of them.

Also, she did not want to burden Lin Xinyan with her problem.

“I won’t give up if I can’t get to the bottom of this by today.”

Su Zhan knew Qin Ya would not want him to pester Lin Xinyan about their matter. Therefore, he was threatening her with it to make her talk.

All of a sudden, Qin Ya chuckled, “Do you really want to know the truth?”

Su Zhan responded without hesitation, “Yes.”

“Great.” Qin Ya sat down on the sofa and snorted icily. “Ms. Lin has been urging me to tell you the truth all this while too. Well, I guess I’m going to do that now.”

Seeing Qin Ya getting apprehensive and restless, Su Zhan had a bad premonition.

He tried hard to look calm as he stared at Qin Ya.

Slowly, she looked up at him and announced, “I...will never be able to have a child in the rest of my life. That’s the secret that I’ve been keeping from you. Are you happy now?”

Su Zhan thought he heard her wrongly. “W-What do you mean?”

The next moment, Qin Ya experienced an emotional outburst. Holding her head up, she started laughing so hard that tears started trickling down her face. “What do I mean? I mean, I can never be a mother in my entire life. I’m an incomplete woman. Are you satisfied to finally know the truth now?”

Su Zhan felt as though he was just struck by lightning and he refused to believe what she said. “You must be lying. You were pregnant with my child before! How can you never be a mother...”

“Yes, you’re right. I was pregnant once before,” Qin Ya cut him off suddenly. She got to her feet, staggered her way to Su Zhan, and pulled his hand to place it on her belly. “In order to stay alive, my womb had to be removed. So, I can never have a child ever again. I lack the most important thing in a woman’s body, do you understand?”

Shaking his head, Su Zhan took several steps backward. “You’re lying to me. You must be. How can you...”

“I might not have been able to survive if I didn’t get it removed. So, I chose to stay alive without it. It’s as straightforward and simple as that.”

Wiping the tears away from her face, she asked, “Now that you already know the truth, do you still want to patch things up with me?”

Su Zhan was completely gob smacked and his head was ringing. Tossing his hair with both hands, he refused to believe what Qin Ya just said.

The truth was as harsh and cruel to Qin Ya as to him.

Suddenly, he looked up at Qin Ya and confronted her, “This isn’t true. You made it up just to make me give up on you, didn’t you?”

Qin Ya returned to the sofa and sat down with her back facing Su Zhan. Resting her chin on her hands, she allowed tears to slowly stream down her face. In fact, telling him the truth was not as hard and miserable as she had thought before.

She stopped yelling and spoke in a level voice, "I'm not lying to you. Now that you've known everything, it's time for you to go now."

There was no way Su Zhan could leave in this state. Kneeling down on one knee in front of Qin Ya, he grabbed her hand although she tried hard to wiggle it away from him. Then, he croaked, "Is that your reason for breaking up with me?"

"Nope," Qin Ya denied right away and said mercilessly, "I broke up with you because I don't love you anymore."

"I don't believe it!" Su Zhan pulled her hand toward his lips and planted kisses on it. "I don't mind it at all! I'm serious! So what if we can't have kids in the future? Having you in my life is more than enough for me. You should have faith in me and you shouldn't have kept it as a secret."

Sniffing, his face was blurry in her vision because her eyes were misty. "Is the truth not enough to convince you to let me go?"

Su Zhan shook his head and buried his face into her arms. "I'll always love you and my feelings will never change no matter how differently you've become."

Biting her lips, Qin Ya tried hard to hold back the tears in her eyes. "You don't mind it, but what about your grandmother?"

Su Zhan stiffened in response as reality hit hard.

"We can just adopt one and tell her the kid is our own. I'm sure there are ways to solve that issue."

"What about you? Don't you want a child of your own?"

Su Zhan looked up and gazed right into her eyes in order to make her see his sincerity. Putting emphasis on each and every word of his sentence, he said, "You're all I need in my life."

“I’m afraid I don’t believe you.” Qin Ya cowered, still dreaded to face the truth that they would not be able to have their own children.

“What do you want me to do to prove myself?” Su Zhan gave his surroundings a scan and spotted a fruit knife on the table. He picked it up and asked, “Is it enough if I kill myself?”

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“What’re you doing!” Qin Ya tried to snatch the knife from him, but he dodged her just in time and lifted the knife out of her reach. “I’m willing to offer you my life in order to prove myself. After all, I did let you down and hurt you before...”

“Don’t be crazy!” Qin Ya cut him off by yelling at him, “Put the knife down!”

Staring at her, Su Zhan refused to do as she said. “No, I have to prove myself to you.”

“I don’t need you to do that!” Qin Ya went panic-stricken, worried that he might hurt himself in his agitation. “Fine, I believe you. Just put the knife down.”

“Really?” Su Zhan pretended to look incredulous, but deep down inside he was elated to see how much Qin Ya cared about him. If she no longer cared about him, why would she even be bothered whether he was hurt or not?

He stared at her solemnly and apologized, “Ya, I’m sorry.”

Qin Ya averted her head away from him with tears falling uncontrollably down her face. Su Zhan put the knife down and drew her toward his embrace. Resting his head on her shoulder, he whispered next to her ear, “Ya, please forgive me. I’ve learnt my mistake.”

Qin Ya cried harder after hearing what he said and she did not even know why. Perhaps, she was feeling sorry for herself after suffering all the hardships, or maybe she was lamenting her life which was full of misfortunes.

Her tears made Su Zhan’s eyes red-rimmed too. He knew Qin Ya had gone through a lot of challenges ever since she met him.

Now, she was even deprived of the right to be a mother because of him.

How cruel must that be for her?

With that thought in mind, he wrapped his arms around her even tighter. “Ya, I promise there wouldn’t be any occasion for me to say sorry to you in the future.”

He would prove his love for her through his actions.

He would make sure she would not be harmed or hurt ever again.

“Are you sure this is what you want?” Qin Ya still harbored some reservations.

She believed in Su Zhan’s feelings for her, but her condition was going to affect their life.

In ancient times, sterility was deemed to be a sin as that would mean the end of the bloodline.

“Surrogacy is out of the question.” Although her remark seemed premature, she saw the need to make sure Su Zhan knew things that were out of bounds for her.

If he could not be on the same page with her, he should let her go right away.

“Of course. I won’t allow any other woman to give birth to my child.” Su Zhan pecked one of her cheeks and promised, “Please believe me.”

Qin Ya closed her eyes and lamented, “You must have been predestined to be the trouble of my life.”

That must be the reason why it’s so hard to get rid of you.

She had always considered herself as a tough person. Yet, she just realized that she had overestimated her level of resilience.

Because of Su Zhan's attitude, not only did she feel a whole lot less awful than before, but she also even felt warmth in her heart.

Indeed, it was easier to handle the harsh truth together with him than to do it alone. When she revealed the truth to him, it was actually not as bad as she had imagined.

She actually felt so much more relieved after coming clean with him.

Sitting on the sofa with his arms wrapped around her, Su Zhan asked, "So, did you do the story of you being together with Shao Yun just to convince me to give up on you?"

Qin Ya held her head low and affirmed his question with silence.

He sighed, "I nearly believed that to be true. If I didn't catch your conversation with Xinyan just now, I would have missed out on you. So, please promise me you wouldn't hide anything from me again no matter what happens in the future, okay?"

Qin Ya was still not uttering a word. Her throat was so parched that she was worried that her voice might come out croaky.

Patting her back soothingly, Su Zhan said, "I'll take your silence as consent then."

"Why did you fight at the bar?"

Examining the scars and bruises on his face, Qin Ya felt like reaching out to touch them, but she was worried that she might hurt him.

Su Zhan held her hand and placed it on his face. "I didn't think my life was worth living anymore after you dumped me. So, I went to the bar and created a scene to provoke those guys to beat me up."

Qin Ya went speechless.

Meanwhile in the adjacent room, Lin Xinyan was sitting on the sofa with her body leaning on the armrest and her face resting on her hands. "I wonder how their talk is going."

Zong Jinghao lifted her off the sofa by her wrists. "Come on, let's get you back to the hotel. You've done your part in helping them. So, please stop worrying about them and let them handle the rest."

Lin Xinyan went along with his movement and stood up. "Aren't we going back to the villa?"

"Nope. It's too crowded for you to take a good rest there. So, we will stay at a hotel for the next two days." In response, Lin Xinyan cast a disappointed glance at him and grumbled, "It's going to be so boring staying at the hotel by myself."

"I'll keep you company." Zong Jinghao edged closer to her and whispered next to her ear.

Lin Xinyan shifted away quickly. "Don't you need to work? Don't forget that you're responsible of putting food on the table for our family."

Zong Jinghao chortled, "I can do that."

He booked a presidential suite in the hotel. As Su Zhan was busy with his own affair, he reckoned Shen Peichuan would not insist on visiting them. In that way, they could enjoy each other's company at the hotel without being disturbed by anyone. However, when they arrived at their room, they saw Zhou Chunchun standing at the door. The sight of the woman reminded Zong Jinghao of Bai Yinning, and that thought made the smile on his face vanish.

"Chunchun." Lin Xinyan was pleased to see her. She found the kind-hearted and simple girl quite likeable.

Zhou Chunchun scurried over and passed a gift box to her. “Xinyan, this is a wedding gift for you.”

Lin Xinyan reached out for it. She wondered what was inside as it actually felt rather heavy. With a smile, she thanked her.

“You’re welcome and congratulations on your marriage! I’m afraid I’ve got to run as Yinning is waiting for me in the lobby.” With that, Zhou Chunchun scuttled off.

Zong Jinghao cast a glimpse at the gift box in Lin Xinyan’s hands, slightly annoyed. He always felt uncomfortable and irritated when he thought of Bai Yinning.

Every time Bai Yinning showed up or was just mentioned by someone, Zong Jinghao would think about how sly and cunning a person he was. He couldn’t help but think that the gift from Zhou Chunchun was suspicious, as she could have been instructed by Bai Yinning to prepare the gift.

When they entered the presidential suite, Lin Xinyan found a pile of gifts stacked on the coffee table in the living room.

While removing his tie, Zong Jinghao explained, “I have them moved here.”

As they had received quite an amount of gifts, he had no choice but to have them moved to the hotel room, so that Lin Xinyan could look through them when she was free. She could keep those she fancied and move the rest to the storeroom.

Lin Xinyan nodded at him as she sat down on the sofa and started unwrapping the gift box from Zhou Chunchun. At first, Zong Jinghao intended to go and take a shower. However, his curiosity was piqued when he saw Lin Xinyan opening the box.

He could easily tell whether the gift was prepared by Zhou Chunchun or Bai Yinning according to what was inside the box.

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Lin Xinyan opened the box and found a round-shaped fish tank made of glass inside. There was a plastic bag pumped with oxygen inside of which two fishes of vibrant colors were swimming inside. The fishes were rare and not commonly seen on the market.

They were different from those she received from Bai Yinning at his place last time. Yet, the sight of the fishes still couldn't help but remind Lin Xinyan of the incident that had taken place in Baicheng back then.

Meanwhile, Zong Jinghao unbuttoned his shirt and made his way to the bathroom. This time, his prediction turned out to be wrong. He supposed the gift was from Zhou Chunchun as she was the only one who could think of sending fishes as a wedding gift.

It was unbeknownst to him that the fishes were actually from Bai Yinning.

Just like Su Zhan, Bai Yinning stayed low profile throughout the wedding ceremony too.

Lin Xinyan cast a glance at Zong Jinghao, then let out a sigh of relief.

At first, she was worried that the gift might upset him. However, it seemed like he couldn't tell the gift was from Bai Yinning, or he would have been jealous of him again.

She opened the plastic packaging and poured everything into the fish tank.

When she threw the packaging and the box into the dustbin, a card fell off from the box. She picked it up and opened it to find Bai Yinning's handwriting on it. *Although we don't get to see each other every day, that doesn't mean we'll start*

to forget each other. We may live in two different cities, that doesn't mean we'll stop missing each other. Nothing will come between us as long as our bond is strong. You have my best wishes, and I hope your life will be full of happiness.

Keeping her eyes fixed on the card, Lin Xinyan's eyelashes fluttered slightly to fight off the tears that were threatening to fall from her eyes. At the same time, a faint smile emerged on her face. Although Bai Yinning did not write much on the letter, it embodied his feelings as well as his wishes for her. It was a sign that he had started to move on and let everything go.

She genuinely hoped that he could lead a happy life together with Zhou Chunchun.

At last, she closed up the card and put it back on the coffee table, thinking that Zong Jinghao wouldn't be able to notice its existence among the pile of gifts. Then, she spotted Wen Qing's gift in the middle of the pile. Reaching for it, she unpacked it to find a photo album inside.

After some hesitation, she flicked it open and was greeted by a family photo affixed on the first page. There was a couple whom she had never met before in the photo – her grandfather and grandmother. They were sitting on chairs while Wen Qing and Wen Xian stood behind them. Both Wen Qing and Wen Xian looked very young in the photo.

She continued the flip through the album, which mainly consisted of Wen Xian's photos – some of them were her portraits while some of them were taken together with Wen Qing. They were casual snapshots of their daily lives which were so vivid that she could almost feel their emotions through them.

Wen Xian and Wen Qing were the only two children of their parents. As their parents loved each other very much, their affection influenced their kids deeply and was the main reason behind their close relationship. In the photos, Wen Qing was sometimes caught staring at his younger sister with his eyes brimming with caring love.

There was a time Wen Qing had been having a hard time trying to move on after Wen Xian's death. As he loved her too much, he was so devastated that he started doing a string of outrageous stuff.

Lin Xinyan let out a forlorn sigh and closed the album. Leaning against the sofa, she was glad now that things were finally going in the right direction.

Zong Jinghao was still taking a shower. Suddenly, a wave of fatigue hit her as she had never taken a proper rest the entire day. Feeling too tired to move her ass off the sofa, she decided to close her eyes and rest while waiting for Zong Jinghao to come out from the bathroom. Little did she know, she dozed off very quickly.

Zong Jinghao saw her snoozing on the sofa when he was done. When he made his way over to carry her to the bedroom, he spotted the album she was holding. He flipped it open and took a glance at the photos inside. He was familiar with the people in the photos because they were a bunch of people who used to shower him with much love back then.

He had enjoyed everything that was supposed to belong to Lin Xinyan. Calmly, he closed the album. The moment he decided to forgive them, he had pledged not to dwell on the things in the past. Now, all he wanted was to lead a simple life.

Then, he placed one arm below Lin Xinyan's waist and legs to carry her to the bedroom.

Gently, he placed her onto the bed. Zong Jinghao decided to help her peel the wedding gown off, thinking it would be uncomfortable for her to sleep in that outfit. Firstly, he flipped her body to reveal her back to him, then reached for the zip which he pulled all the way down. Although he had tried his best to be gentle, he still failed to avoid waking her up as her body started writhing uncomfortably. She opened her eyes and was stunned to find Zong Jinghao trying to strip the dress off her. In no time, she came to her senses and shoved him away. "I'm too tired for this."

Zong Jinghao did not move his hands away from her. "I know."

Biting her lips, she tried to wiggle her body away from his hands. "Why're you still doing this then?"

Zong Jinghao's hands froze at once. Slowly, he moved his eyes to her face and asked, "What nasty idea are you actually thinking?"

Her expression looked like she was desperate for him to pounce on her right away.

Zong Jinghao clapped a hand to his forehead and chuckled, "Indeed, I should be doing something to you as this is our first night of marriage. But then again, I just can't make myself do anything to you, seeing how drained you are."

Lin Xinyan beamed at him in response and pleaded in a coquettish tone, "Please help me change into my pajamas then."

"Is this piece okay?"

There was an exquisite-looking gift box placed on the bedside table. It was a gift from Qin Ya and inside of the box was an alluring, black-colored lace nightdress.

Lin Xinyan shook her head decisively after taking one glance at the nightdress. "Not that one."

"So, you prefer to be naked?"

Lin Xinyan was speechless.

"Just because I don't want to wear that piece doesn't mean I want to be naked." She glared at him, she was not amused.

Zong Jinghao pinched her cheeks playfully. "Aren't you going to at least remove your makeup?"

He reckoned it would be uncomfortable to sleep with makeup on her face.

Lying on the bed, Lin Xinyan answered in a lazy voice, "I don't feel like moving."

She did not feel like doing anything as she was too exhausted.

"Let me help you remove your makeup." Zong Jinghao removed the gown from her and tossed it on the ottoman chair. Then, he pulled the blanket over her. "I'm going to fill up the bathtub with warm water so that you can take a bath before you sleep. I bet you'll feel a lot better after that."

Lin Xinyan grunted her acknowledgment. Beautiful patterns were embroidered on the bright red blanket which was made of silk. She wrapped herself in the blanket like a cocoon, revealing only her head as she watched Zong Jinghao filling up the bathtub for her.

After a while, Zong Jinghao made it back and pulled the blanket away from her. As she was wearing nothing except her underwear, she flinched a little, not ready to fully expose herself to him.

"You aren't allowed to peek or laugh at me."

Zong Jing was at a loss for words.

"That's simply too demanding of me. Mind you, you're legally my wife now and you belong to me. As your husband, I have the right to peek as much as I want."

Lin Xinyan was left stumped.

Making use of her distraction, Zong Jinghao carried her to the bathroom. The round-shaped bathtub was filled with warm water with pink rose petals scattered

on the surface. Lin Xinyan turned to look at Zong Jinghao and wondered since when he became such a romantic man.

While unhooking her bra, Zong Jinghao asked, "Why're you staring at me like that?"

"Did you prepare the petals?" Lin Xinyan wondered.

In response, Zong Jinghao pointed at the various bottles placed on the wall shelves. They consisted of all sorts of personal care products and there was a glass jar filled with flower petals.

"The staff here are certainly very thoughtful." As soon as she sensed that her chest was bare, she instinctively wrapped both arms around herself protectively to shield the tempting sight from Zong Jinghao's vision.

"Get out now. I can handle the rest on my own," she said while trying to avoid his eyes.

However, he offered in a very gentle voice, "Let me help you with the bath."

"No way." She turned him down.