

Stealing Your Heart Chapter 691

Su Zhan was staring anxiously at his phone when Shen Peichuan suddenly came close to him. Startled, Su Zhan looked up and leaned back instinctively. The small bench shook unsteadily, tipping Su Zhan onto the floor.

A second passed and Su Zhan asked with wide eyes, "What are you up to, Shen Peichuan?"

Shen Peichuan towered over him, glaring down at Su Zhan. "What did you do wrong this time? What else could have scared you into such a state?"

"You're the one who did something wrong!" Su Zhan shot him a glare in return as he climbed to his feet, dusted himself off, and picked up the bench. However, he did not sit down on it again. The bench was short, so a tall person like Su Zhan did not find it comfortable as he would need to bend his legs at an odd angle to sit steadily.

Sang Yu poured him a glass of water. "Have a drink and calm down."

Su Zhan reached out to take the glass but did not drink it. "If Shen Peichuan teased you, would you be angry? Would you ignore him?" he asked her.

Sang Yu blinked. "Is he the type of person to tease people?"

Su Zhan had no response.

She's right. A block of wood like Shen Peichuan has no sense of humor.

"Did you poke fun at your girlfriend so that she's ignoring you now?" Sang Yu made a guess of Su Zhan's troubled expression.

Su Zhan chuckled. "We get on great. She must be too busy to reply."

He did not want to expose to others the balance of power in his relationship.

"You look really anxious," Sang Yu pointed out. *If he weren't so engrossed in checking his phone, Shen Peichuan wouldn't have been able to scare him so easily.*

"Anxious? Do I seem anxious?" Su Zhan asked, immediately hanging a mask of nonchalance over his true feelings.

He looks so funny when he's trying to act casually. How cute.

Sang Yu fought to keep herself from smiling as she shook her head. "Not anxious; more like restless."

Restless because his girlfriend isn't replying to him.

Su Zhan smiled briefly. *I guess I can't hide my true feelings completely.* He pointed at Shen Peichuan and Sang Yu. "Today, the two of you shall entertain me. Let me just step out to make a call first."

Su Zhan walked out of the house and called Qin Ya. They overcame numerous obstacles and finally managed to be together again. Because he was terrified of losing her a second time, even a hint of strange behavior from her would alarm him.

Frankly, Qin Ya was not ignoring him on purpose. A customer had entered the store and she rushed off to serve him, leaving her phone in the office. By the time she was finished with the customer, her phone had already accumulated two missed calls and a third call had just come in. She picked it up.

"Qin Ya!"

Qin Ya frowned. "Yes, it's me."

"What were you doing? Why didn't you reply? Why didn't you pick up your phone? You scared me to death!" Su Zhan babbled.

"I was with a customer. Why did you call me so many times?"

"I was worried because you didn't pick up." Su Zhan smiled in relief.

From the house, Sang Yu could only see Su Zhan's expression but could not hear what he was saying. *It looks like his girlfriend finally picked up.*

"Su Zhan must be head over heels for his girlfriend, isn't he?" *It was just a small matter but he is so worked up.*

Shen Peichuan nodded. "Yes. The two of them went through a lot to finally reunite."

His words piqued Sang Yu's interest. "Tell me about it."

"Their story is too long to be summarized neatly. Basically, their relationship was filled with trials and tribulations. You wouldn't believe it even if I told you." Shen Peichuan could understand why Su Zhan reacted the way he did.

Sang Yu leaned her head towards Shen Peichuan. "Do the two of you have many stories between you?"

Shen Peichuan nodded. "I guess there's a fair number."

Sang Yu's gaze fell. "Go chat with your friend. I'll start preparing lunch."

She could not help but feel disappointed. *I'm such a small part of his life.*

Su Zhan was still on the phone. He had probably tried to escape the heat and was currently sitting in his car with windows rolled up and air-conditioning turned on.

Shen Peichuan did not interrupt his call with Qin Ya. Instead, he trailed behind Sang Yu. "I'll help you," he offered.

"No need," Sang Yu replied curtly.

It did not take a genius to realize that Sang Yu was upset. "What's wrong? Did I say something wrong again?"

"No. I was just thinking I know so little about you," she said, raising her head to meet his eyes.

She did not actually want to pry into his past or infringe on his privacy. *It's just that I know too little of him as well as those around him.*

This is the man I have feelings for. Of course I want to be a part of his world and meet his friends.

I don't want to feel like an outsider when we're together.

Shen Peichuan was serious and direct. "I'll tell you anything you want to know."

A smile spread across Sang Yu's face. "I want to hear your stories for the rest of my life. As long as you don't abandon me, I promise to listen until the end."

Sounds of muffled laughter came from behind Shen Peichuan and Sang Yu. At some point during their interaction, Su Zhan had ended his call and had walked into the house to hear what Sang Yu just said. "It's obvious you come from a reputable school; even your sweet nothings sound lyrical."

Sang Yu tried to hide her embarrassment with a smile as she changed the subject. "Have you made up with your girlfriend?"

"Our relationship is better than ever. She's not mad at me at all." Su Zhan switched back to his usual childish demeanor as he huffed, "I'm the one who should be angry at her."

Sang Yu did not know Su Zhan that well, but Shen Peichuan did. *I've lost count of the number of times he fell into the pits of despair before Qin Ya finally decided to take him back.*

"Can I tell Qin Ya what you just said?" Shen Peichuan's tone was calm, but Su Zhan could tell that it carried a warning.

Su Zhan immediately straightened his posture. "Must you be so annoying? When did you learn to be a tattletale? Were you influenced by your child of a girlfriend?"

Shen Peichuan had refused to accept his feelings due to the age difference between himself and Sang Yu. Hearing Su Zhan refer to her as a child made his skin crawl. It gave him a guilty feeling, as though he had done something he shouldn't have.

He stared sternly at Su Zhan. "Who's older between us?"

"You." Su Zhan immediately read between the lines. "It's not like you're married yet. Once you are married... I won't be able to address her," he muttered under his breath.

She's just a child.

"But you can say it to Lin Xinyan?" When Lin Xinyan and Zong Jinghao first met, she was even younger than Sang Yu.

"It's not the same," Su Zhan whined.

“How is it not the same?” Shen Peichuan asked.

Su Zhan scratched his head. “Because... Because Lin Xinyan and Jinghao aren’t officially married. Moreover, Lin Xinyan is close to Ya.”

Shen Peichuan couldn’t care less about Su Zhan’s thought process. “The point is, you’re the youngest. I can’t be bothered with you now, but when we’re married, you’ll have to address Sang Yu similarly—yes, in that proper manner.”

Su Zhan was speechless.

He blinked and threw a look toward Sang Yu. “We’ll talk when you guys actually get married.”

Su Zhan started to walk out of the room. “I’m off to enjoy the beautiful scenery.”

Sang Yu had picked up on some information from their conversation. Zong Jinghao had made an unforgettable impression in her mind. After all, he was a powerful boss of a company and had a commanding presence at all times.

“Is your friend’s wife young as well?” Sang Yu asked.

Shen Peichuan answered honestly as he nodded. “Yes. I’ll introduce you to her when we return.”

Sang Yu nodded. “How old is Su Zhan’s girlfriend?” she asked.

For some reason, she let out an internal breath of relief. She was afraid she wouldn’t be able to assimilate into Shen Peichuan’s group of friends, but it now seemed like she’s not the unusual one. *Now I can relax, knowing that his friend’s wife is young, too.*

Faced with Sang Yu’s question, a realization dawned upon Shen Peichuan: all three of them had girlfriends who were significantly younger than they were.

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“Why aren’t you saying anything?” Sang Yu asked Shen Peichuan, who was clearly deep in thought.

“Nothing. I just thought of something,” Shen Peichuan quickly answered.

Sang Yu did not pursue the matter. She smiled faintly.

She had bought groceries that day. Now that Shen Peichuan’s friend had come to visit, Sang Yu planned to cook a few more dishes for him.

Shen Peichuan was used to a solitary lifestyle. He rarely cooked for himself and his diet consisted mainly of instant noodles. With limited cooking experience, he could only help Sang Yu wash the ingredients while she handled the rest.

It was a scorching day so Su Zhan did not walk far. He circled the area before finally stopping at the school. Seeing the children’s innocent faces, he was reminded of the sorrowful fact that he and Qin Ya would never be able to have children of their own.

It was a regret both of them would carry for the rest of their lives.

Children are supposedly the proof of their parents’ love for each other. Without children, does it mean that our love merely flowered without bearing fruit?

When he was with Qin Ya, he fought to keep his love for children under wraps because he was terrified of breaking her heart even further.

She’s even more crushed than I am, for not being able to have children.

His eyes clouded over and he took out his phone to text Qin Ya: *Ya, I miss you terribly.*

Su Zhan was speaking from his heart.

C City.

Shao Yun brought Qin Ya to a fancy restaurant for lunch. “You should come here with Su Zhan. It’s a pity that he doesn’t know C City well and can’t take you to the good restaurants, unlike me. This place has amazing lamb chops. I guarantee it’ll have you hankering for a second helping,” he said, beaming.

Qin Ya smiled back at him. “Uncle, you should find yourself a girlfriend. It must be lonely having to go through life by yourself.”

“I feel much more carefree being on my own. I can be with whichever woman I fancy at the moment. If I were exclusive with someone, she would be trying to control my life every day, and I’ll eventually be driven mad.” Shao Yun was used to his way of life. He was a man with needs as well as the financial means to get any woman he desired.

This way, I won’t be bringing any burden upon myself. I also won’t run the risk of letting anyone down or betraying their trust.

“Let’s sit here.” Shao Yun pulled out a chair for Qin Ya.

“There’s no need to stand on ceremony with me.” Shao Yun took a seat opposite her.

The waiter approached them. Shao Yun was familiar with the menu and ordered a few of the dishes he knew was delicious.

“Do you want a drink? I have kept a great bottle of red wine at this place. Would you like to try?” Shao Yun asked.

“Sure. Being treated to a meal along with great wine——what could be better?”
Qin Ya grinned.

Shao Yun gave Qin Ya a thumbs-up. “I like your style. But is it a good idea to be apart from Su Zhan so soon after getting back together?”

Qin Ya lowered her eyes. “We might be back together but that doesn’t mean that the rest of our path will be smooth.”

Su Zhan is an orphan. The only family she has left is his grandmother who desperately wishes for a grandchild. If I can’t give them one, I’ll be ending their family line. I can’t imagine what kind of reaction she’ll have when she finds out about my condition.

Will she be against our relationship? Or will she insist we go for surrogacy?

Forget it. I can’t let myself dwell on it, or else I’ll end up spiraling into sadness.

“You’re right. If the two of you are going to spend the rest of your lives together, you’ll need to overcome challenges.” Shao Yun muttered, “I think Su Zhan is a good guy. The two of you seem compatible.”

At this moment, the waiter came over to serve their food and wine. He opened the wine bottle and poured a glass for Qin Ya.

Qin Ya lifted the wine glass and was about to taste the wine when her mobile phone buzzed in her bag. She took it out and saw Su Zhan’s name on the screen. She opened the message.

Her gaze darkened and she quickly typed her reply: *Come see me then.*

Su Zhan was just called to return by Shen Peichuan. Taking a seat at the table, he saw that Sang Yu had prepared multiple scrumptious dishes. When he heard the sound of an incoming message on his phone, he immediately opened it up to take a read and broke into a wide grin after realizing it was Qin Ya’s reply.

“Why are you so happy?” Sang Yu placed a bowl in front of him.

Shen Peichuan cut in, “When he has an expression like this, it usually means that Qin Ya has called for him. Nothing gives him more joy.”

Su Zhan was momentarily rendered speechless.

“Why does it feel as though you’re chastising me?” Su Zhan frowned in spite of his elation. *Since she asked me to go to her, it must mean that she’s thinking about me, right?*

“Let’s dig in.” Su Zhan started to shovel food into his mouth. He suddenly realized how ravenous he was. Although the dishes were nothing fancy, they tasted nice. Su Zhan had just placed more food in his mouth when he said, “You definitely found yourself the right woman. She can cook; you’re a lucky man.”

Shen Peichuan glanced at him. “Just eat your food. Hopefully, it’ll plug your nonsense.”

“I’m complimenting your taste,” Su Zhan swallowed the food in his mouth. “Peichuan, I’m leaving this afternoon. If you have any requests, let me know soon.”

Shen Peichuan’s reply was straightforward. “I only need money, nothing else.”

Su Zhan blinked. “You’re penniless and living off Sang Yu?”

Shen Peichuan did not bother to reply. *I don’t even have a mobile phone, much less a wallet. I should be grateful that I’m even alive.*

“I don’t have a lot of cash on me. Here, I’ll leave you with my card.” Su Zhan was in a hurry to see Qin Ya so he practically swallowed the rest of his meal without chewing. He chose a card from his wallet and passed it to Shen Peichuan.

Shen Peichuan took it from him. "I'll pay you back."

"Don't waste your breath saying such crap." Su Zhan wiped his mouth. "I'm not going back to B City. I'm going to C City instead. I return to B City directly from C City and won't be coming back here. When you have time, go get yourself a mobile phone so we can at least communicate with each other."

Shen Peichuan agreed.

Su Zhan left after lunch.

B City.

The Song family.

Shen Peichuan had been missing for a week. Other than Mrs. Song and Captain Song, the rest of the family was starting to believe that Shen Peichuan was already dead.

The situation had been extremely dangerous, after all. Besides, search efforts had not turned up anything even after six days.

"Yaxin, you should just give up." Mrs. Song sighed as she tried to comfort her daughter. "Fate is just against the two of you. The first time was you rejecting him, and now he's missing. You're clearly not fated. If you were, you would have gotten together the first time. You should start looking for another partner."

Song Yaxin was very irritated. "Mom, can you just drop it?"

"I was just trying to do what's best for you..."

"I don't need you to do that." Song Yaxin rose to her feet, slung her bag over her shoulder, and stomped out.

“Yaxin...”

“Just let her be. You’ve been nagging at her since the moment she came home. Even I would be annoyed.” Captain Song was not feeling well.

Mrs. Song disagreed. “I was just looking out for her.”

“Okay, okay. Enough.” Captain Song pinched his nose bridge. He was overwhelmed by exhaustion and could not bear to hear another word.

“Where do you think she’s going?” Mrs. Song asked worriedly.

“She’s an adult. There’s no need for you to be so concerned. The more you try to control her, the more unhappy she’ll be. You should just leave her alone to do what she wants.” Captain Song urged her earnestly.

The affairs of children will always be the business of their parents. It doesn't matter if she's an adult or not. Mrs. Song was about to speak when Captain Song halted her. “If you say another word, I’ll kick you out.”

His patience had reached its limit.

Mrs. Song pressed her lips tightly as she fought off her tears.

Captain Song walked into the house in frustration. If he did not see her, he would not have to deal with her.

After leaving home, Song Yaxin made her way to the villa.

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Song Yaxin parked the car by the roadside upon reaching the entrance of the villa. She did not get out of the car right away. Winding down the window, she glanced in the direction of the villa. She noticed that Su Zhan was not in B City and Zong Jinghao was not as nervous as before.

Has he given up, or is there more to this?

Her grip on the steering wheel tightened as she contemplated the endless possibilities.

In the end, she still could not figure out the core of the problem. She decided to look for Lin Xinyan and Zong Jinghao instead. After turning off the engine, she threw the car keys into her bag, got off, and headed toward the villa.

She rang the doorbell.

Aunt Yu answered the door not long after. "Who are you looking for?" she asked.

"I'm looking for Mr. Zong and his wife. Are they around?" Song Yaxin asked.

"Please wait here. I'll go notify them." Aunt Yu did not let her in since she had never seen Song Yaxin before. Besides, Zong Jinghao had clearly instructed her not to let strangers into the house.

Zong Yanxi had not fully recovered from the traumatic incident, and Zong Jinghao was afraid that her emotions might be affected by the presence of strangers in the house.

"Sure, could you please hurry up? It's quite hot outside," Song Yaxin said.

Aunt Yu nodded. Before closing the door, she asked, "How do I address you, Miss?"

"My last name is Song. I'm Song Yaxin."

"Okay." Aunt Yu closed the door and headed upstairs.

Only Lin Xinyan and Zong Yanxi were home. Zong Qifeng and Cheng Yuwen had brought Zong Yanchen out, while Zong Jinghao was away to tend to Aunt Wang's matters as she had gotten hurt while on the job.

Inside the bedroom, Zong Yanxi did not say anything when she burrowed herself in Lin Xinyan's embrace. She clutched at Lin Xinyan's collar as if she were afraid that Lin Xinyan might disappear.

She would clutch onto Lin Xinyan after she had fallen asleep; even then, she would wake up from her sleep multiple times at night.

The little girl was plagued by anxiety.

Aunt Yu opened the door gently as she was afraid of waking the little one. She whispered, "Has Ruixi fallen asleep?"

Lin Xinyan answered, "No."

Aunt Yu whispered again, "A lady with the surname Song is waiting for you downstairs. Do you know her? Should I let her in?"

Lin Xinyan had been feeling quite sluggish these days. First, she was worried about Shen Peichuan's safety. Now, she was also worried that Zong Yanxi might not be able to move on from the traumatic incident. Besides, it was only normal for her to feel tired easily as she had entered her last trimester.

The surname, Song, did not ring a bell to Lin Xinyan. She lay in bed with her arm feeling quite numb as Zong Yanxi was leaning on it. She adjusted her body a little as she asked, “Did she mention why she’s here?”

Aunt Yu shook her head. “She only mentioned that she’s here to meet the two of you.”

“Just say that it’s inconvenient for me to receive guests right now.”

“Okay. I will ask her to leave,” Aunt Yu replied.

Lin Xinyan nodded. When Aunt Yu was about to head out of the room, Lin Xinyan asked, “Did she mention her name?”

“Her name is Song Yaxin.”

Song Yaxin? Isn't she Shen Peichuan's girlfriend? Lin Xinyan massaged her temples. Why is she here, though?

It's not so nice to ask Shen Peichuan's girlfriend to leave.

“Aunt Yu, let her in.”

Lin Xinyan sat up on the bed. Aunt Yu noticed that it was quite a struggle for her to pick up Zong Yanxi, so she stepped forward to offer a helping hand. However, Zong Yanxi circled her arms around Lin Xinyan’s neck as soon as Aunt Yu touched her, evidently afraid that Lin Xinyan would let her go.

Lin Xinyan patted her daughter’s back and soothed her. “Good girl, Mommy is not leaving. Could you loosen your grip? It’s hard for Mommy to breathe.”

Zong Yanxi let go a little but edged herself even closer to Lin Xinyan. She was afraid that Aunt Yu might pick her up.

Lin Xinyan ran her fingers through her daughter's hair. She knew her daughter was just trying to protect herself and it was imperative for her to make her daughter feel safe. "Aunt Yu, why don't you head downstairs first? I'll go downstairs later."

Aunt Yu nodded.

Lin Xinyan patted her daughter on her back. "It's all over now. Nothing bad is going to happen again."

Zong Yanxi did not reply and continued to wrap her arms around her mother's neck. Lin Xinyan kissed her forehead. "There's a guest downstairs. Do you want Mommy to take you downstairs?"

Zong Yanxi kept mum and stayed still in her mother's arms.

Lin Xinyan patted her daughter's head. She picked up her daughter by circling around her waist. As she rose, Lin Xinyan realized that her daughter had gained considerable weight. She supported her belly as she walked toward the stairs. Afraid that she might lose her balance, she put one hand around her daughter's waist as she placed her other hand on the handrail.

Song Yaxin was already inside the house. She approached Lin Xinyan to help when she noticed that the latter was struggling. "Ruixi, your mommy is pregnant and it's not so convenient for her to carry you. Why don't you let me carry you?"

As she reached out to take Zong Yanxi, Lin Xinyan said, "It's okay. She doesn't like being hugged by anyone else..."

Zong Yanxi had already burst into tears before she could finish her sentence.

Song Yaxin retracted her hands right away.

Aunt Yu was in the kitchen preparing a drink for Song Yaxin. When she heard the noise, she rushed out of the kitchen. "What's the matter?"

Song Yaxin felt rather awkward. She just wanted to help Lin Xinyan.

“I didn’t know she would cry,” Song Yaxin explained.

Aunt Yu cast a glance at her. She reached out to steady Lin Xinyan, “You’d better be careful.”

Lin Xinyan patted her daughter and comforted Song Yaxin at the same time, “She is in shock and doesn’t want others to touch her.”

“I see.” Song Yaxin followed Lin Xinyan to the sofa.

Lin Xinyan placed her daughter on her lap and looked in Song Yaxin’s direction. “What brings you here today?”

“I haven’t seen Su Zhan these two days. I wonder where he’s been?” Song Yaxin asked.

When Su Zhan went to meet Shen Peichuan, he had already mentioned that he did not tell the Song family he had found Shen Peichuan. Su Zhan had also asked Lin Xinyan and Zong Jinghao not to say anything.

Su Zhan said Song Yaxin and Shen Peichuan were not a good match for each other.

While Lin Xinyan felt quite bad for hiding the truth from Song Yaxin, she had a hunch that Su Zhan had his reasons for doing so. If Song Yaxin truly loved Shen Peichuan, she would be able to wait for him for a month or two.

I think Su Zhan wants to test Song Yaxin’s sincerity toward Shen Peichuan.

Lin Xinyan felt a pang of guilt for lying to Song Yaxin. However, she could not break her promise to Su Zhan.

“Didn’t he go looking for Shen Peichuan?” Lin Xinyan lowered her gaze when she spoke.

She patted her daughter as a way of escaping Song Yaxin’s scrutinizing gaze.

Su Zhan went looking for Shen Peichuan?

So my guess is wrong? Are they still looking for Shen Peichuan? Are they just widening the area of their search? Is that why I cannot find Su Zhan?

But why does Lin Xinyan seem like she’s avoiding me?

What is there to hide if Su Zhan is indeed looking for Shen Peichuan?

Song Yaxin lowered her head. “I know you guys must be thinking that I’m not a good match for Shen Peichuan. I know it’s because I’ve been married, but I really do like him. I’ve made a mistake in the past because I’ve been blinded. It’s really a pleasant surprise when he could still accept me for who I am. I really can’t sleep well now that I have no idea where he is. I think you are well aware of what kind of person Peichuan is.”

“I know. He’s really a dependable person,” Lin Xinyan replied.

“Now I’m really lost. I don’t know what to do. Could you give me an idea on what to do?” Song Yaxin grabbed Lin Xinyan’s hands. “My mother asks me to give him up but I really don’t want to. Whether he’s alive or dead, I want to see him.”

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Lin Xinyan could not fully comprehend Song Yaxin's feelings right now.

However, she still did not disclose Shen Peichuan's whereabouts.

She was struggling with guilt.

"How can I help you?" Lin Xinyan asked.

Song Yaxin rose from the sofa and sat back down slowly. "There's nothing you could do, I guess. I have to deal with this on my own. Just in case you have Peichuan's news, could you promise to notify me right away?"

Lin Xinyan's grip tightened. "Of course."

Fortunately, her hand was concealed underneath Zong Yanxi's skirt so her guilty gesture went unnoticed.

Song Yaxin pursed her lips and tried to sound Lin Xinyan out. "Do you think I'm not a good match for Peichuan, too?"

"Why care about what others say if you're really sincere toward him?" Song Yaxin's attempt of trying to sound Lin Xinyan out somehow annoyed the latter. "Nobody could interfere in others' relationship matters, and that includes even your closest friends. It's all good as long as the two of you are comfortable with each other's company. Why bother with others' opinions?"

Song Yaxin sensed that Lin Xinyan was a little irritated. She did not intend to annoy anybody. It was just that she was well aware of how much Su Zhan disliked her, and was worried that he would badmouth her in front of Lin Xinyan and Zong Jinghao.

“I’m just worried about others saying that...”

“Listen to your heart and stay true to your conscience. Don’t bother with others’ opinions and words.” Lin Xinyan interrupted Song Yaxin’s attempt to explain herself. There was nothing to be explained.

However, this exchange made Lin Xinyan realize that Song Yaxin was not as innocent as she seemed.

She’s harboring quite a few thoughts in her head.

Song Yaxin was starting to regret her visit. Lin Xinyan looked quite young but she was not one to go easy on her words. *She’s a woman with strong opinions.*

Well, a woman whom Zong Jinghao likes would definitely have her quirks. What kind of women hasn’t he seen?

There must be something extraordinary about her. That’s why she stood out among all the women and became Mrs. Zong.

“Did I upset you?” Song Yaxin felt like there was no point to keep beating around the bush since Lin Xinyan had seen right through her.

Lin Xinyan smiled. “It’s nothing.”

I’ve also done something wrong by lying to her.

“I’m afraid I’ll have to face the music once I get home. Could I stay for dinner at your place? Frankly, I want to get to know you guys better since Peichuan is close to you. You wouldn’t mind, right?” Song Yaxin thought it was better to show all her cards on the table since she was going to be seen right through anyway.

Lin Xinyan found herself unable to say no to the blunt request.

“Stay, then.” She turned around to look at Aunt Yu. “Prepare more for dinner tonight.”

“Okay.”

“Sorry for troubling you,” Song Yaxin said to Aunt Yu.

Aunt Yu smiled and replied politely, “No problem at all.” *This woman looks quite smart. Why can't she read the room?*

Lin Xinyan was pregnant and Zong Yanxi was clinging onto her 24/7. If Song Yaxin were to stay for dinner, Lin Xinyan would have to entertain the former and give up on her own rest time.

Aunt Yu felt rather annoyed.

This woman is so selfish.

“Where did Su Zhan go for the search?” Song Yaxin was not trying to sound out Lin Xinyan this time. She was merely looking for a topic to talk about. It was rather awkward with the silence stretching between them.

Lin Xinyan was stumped for a moment. She was trying to come up with a viable explanation. Afraid of blowing her own cover, she fumbled for a reply, “He...”

The main door was pushed open at this moment. Zong Jinghao was back. Song Yaxin stood up to greet him. “Mr. Zong.”

Zong Jinghao nodded slightly to acknowledge her. He walked over to Lin Xinyan's side. “Were you hugging her all day today, too?”

Lin Xinyan nodded. “It's not like you don't know that she refuses to be with anyone else these days.”

Zong Jinghao reached out to carry his daughter. The little girl had fallen asleep while Lin Xinyan was talking to Song Yaxin, only to be awakened when Zong Jinghao touched her.

“It’s Daddy. Let me carry you.” Zong Jinghao said gently. Zong Yanxi noticed that it was her father and did not resist.

Zong Jinghao picked her up and patted her back lightly. “We’ll go take a nap upstairs.”

He took Zong Yanxi’s silence as a sign of acknowledgement.

Lin Xinyan massaged her arm which had become sore from her daughter leaning against it. Song Yaxin approached her, “Do you need help with that?”

While heading upstairs, Zong Jinghao heard Song Yaxin’s question and cast a gloomy glance at the woman. He soon retracted his gaze and paid no more attention to her.

“It’s okay. There’s no need to trouble you,” Lin Xinyan said.

Song Yaxin’s courtesy made her uncomfortable.

We’ve met only once before this. How could I accept her offer to massage my arms?

Song Yaxin took her seat and glanced in the direction of the second floor. “Mr. Zong really does love his daughter.”

Lin Xinyan traced her gaze. As Zong Jinghao had taken Zong Yanxi into the bedroom, there was no one at the stairs anymore.

“Girls are more charming.”

“They say that daughters are a father’s lovers in his past life. I think this is quite true for Mr. Zong,” Song Yaxin said with a smile.

Lin Xinyan lowered her gaze. “I think it’s just a joke. We all have but one life.”

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“True. I don’t believe in such things, either,” Song Yaxin smiled.

“Mrs. Zong.” Aunt Yu approached the two. “Where did you keep ingredients for making soup? I can’t seem to find it.”

Lin Xinyan had not been using the kitchen for some time and she had never made any soup, either. However, noticing Aunt Yu’s glance, she came to a realization and answered, “Okay, let me help you.”

She rose and said to Song Yaxin, “Please excuse me. I need to help her find the ingredients.”

Song Yaxin nodded but could not help to look down on Lin Xinyan in her mind. *That woman is just a maid. Is it really necessary to treat her like your family? Are you trying to show how kind you are?*

Lin Xinyan headed toward the kitchen and did not notice Song Yaxin’s scornful looks. However, Aunt Yu spotted it. She lowered her head and followed behind Lin Xinyan.

Lin Xinyan only asked Aunt Yu after they were in the kitchen, “What’s the matter, Aunt Yu?”

Aunt Yu did not reply and grabbed a chair from outside the kitchen. Lin Xinyan was perplexed by her move.

“Aunt Yu...”

“Mrs. Zong.” Aunt Yu helped Lin Xinyan to the chair. Smiling, Lin Xinyan asked, “Aunt Yu, what’s the matter?”

Aunt Yu stole a glance outside and whispered, "That Ms. Song outside, who is she?"

"She's Peichuan's girlfriend," Lin Xinyan replied.

Aunt Yu's eyes widened in disbelief. "What? Peichuan's girlfriend?"

She gasped out of shock. Realizing that she was being quite loud, Aunt Yu quickly covered her mouth.

Lin Xinyan could not comprehend her surprise. "Yes, what's the matter? Why do you look so surprised?"

Aunt Yu crossed her arms. "How is she a good match for Peichuan?"

Lin Xinyan chuckled. "Why is she not a good match for him?"

Aunt Yu tried to explain herself, "Peichuan is such a gentleman. One look at this woman and I just know that she's a schemer. Besides, you're pregnant and need to take care of Ruixi at the same time. If she could read the room she should have left you alone, but she's bugging you and not letting you rest instead. I asked you to come here because she's really getting on my nerves."

Lin Xinyan sighed. "Don't mention this to anyone else. Peichuan has formally introduced her to us all anyway. We have to respect his decision, so we need to treat her with courtesy."

To be frank, Lin Xinyan also felt uncomfortable having Song Yaxin around. It was not because Song Yaxin was being inconsiderate; rather, it was because the woman did not seem as troubled at the mention of Peichuan as she claimed.

If Zong Jinghao's life was at stake, I wouldn't be in the mood to visit other people's homes, let alone requesting to stay for dinner.

Lin Xinyan sighed. "Peichuan is only in danger because of us. Aunt Yu, could you be more amiable toward her for his sake?"

"I understand. I wouldn't let her notice that I don't like her. I just feel it's such a pity that Shen Peichuan has gotten together with that kind of woman." Aunt Yu washed her hands and continued to chop her vegetables.

Aunt Yu had known Shen Peichuan way before Lin Xinyan did, via Zong Jinghao. Hence, it was not an overstatement to say that she knew Shen Peichuan well.

"I thought he would find a decent girl someday. Who knows that he would like this kind of girl... Well, I'd have to say she's quite pretty. It's just that she's not leaving a good impression." Aunt Yu was still adamant that she was not a good match for Shen Peichuan.

Lin Xinyan glanced at Aunt Yu's back while she worked on the vegetables. Her lips curled helplessly. *If she knows that Song Yaxin was once married, surely it would cement her thoughts about Song Yaxin.*

"Aunt Yu, could you prepare some chicken soup?" Zong Jinghao had been busy these few days and Lin Xinyan noticed that he had not been sleeping well. She was hoping that chicken soup would help to invigorate him.

"Okay."

Lin Xinyan stood up.

Aunt Yu turned around. "Are you heading out?"

"It's not nice to leave her alone in the living room." Lin Xinyan tapped lightly on Aunt Yu's shoulders. "Not very polite of us, isn't it?"

Aunt Yu agreed. "It's going to be hard on you. Awkward talks are no fun."

Lin Xinyan chuckled helplessly. *Aunt Yu is right on point.*

Chatting with Song Yaxin is indeed no fun.

She walked out of the kitchen. Song Yaxin was not sitting on the sofa. Instead, she was looking at the wine collection before the wine cabinet. While Lin Xinyan had zero knowledge about wine, it seemed like Song Yaxin knew a thing or two about those bottles. Lin Xinyan approached her and asked, “Do you enjoy red wine?”

Song Yaxin was holding a bottle of red wine in her hands. Lin Xinyan could not recognize it, nor did she know how the wine tasted.

Noticing that Lin Xinyan was back, Song Yaxin put the wine back into the cabinet. “So you’ve found it?”

Lin Xinyan nodded. She took the wine that Song Yaxin had taken out previously. “You know a lot about red wine?”

“A little. This is a limited edition from the Bordeaux Manor of F Nation. It’s won a lot of competitions thanks to its well-balanced medium body. It always leaves people wanting more of it.”

Even though Lin Xinyan had occasional sips of wine, she did not grow to appreciate its taste. After getting pregnant, she had stopped drinking altogether.

She found Song Yaxin’s comments on the wine incomprehensible. When she was about to put it back inside the wine cabinet, Song Yaxin asked, “Is this part of Mr. Zong’s collection?”

The wine cabinet had been housing a variety of wine for as long as she could remember. Zong Jinghao did not drink much, at least not since getting together with her, and she seldom saw him drinking alone at home.

I guess he must have a liking for these wines since he's got a customized cabinet to house them. It's just like his garage, which is full of luxury cars. It's not like he could drive every single one of them every day. Men sure fancy cars and wine.

"It's for our guests. I don't think this is considered a collection, though." Lin Xinyan did not relate her reply to Zong Jinghao.

Song Yaxin merely smiled.

"Are you thirsty?" Lin Xinyan asked.

"Not really."

"The interior design here is really classy. Every piece of decoration is tasteful. Did you decorate the place?" Song Yaxin commented as she admired the villa.

"An interior designer worked on it." Even though the furnishings were ready by the time Lin Xinyan moved in, she assumed that Zong Jinghao did not have the time to work on the design and furnishing himself.

"Mrs. Zong, dinner is ready," Aunt Yu announced.

Lin Xinyan nodded. "Please show Ms. Song the way to the washroom."

"Ms. Song, this way please." Aunt Yu gestured.

Song Yaxin followed Aunt Yu to the washroom.

Lin Xinyan breathed a sigh of relief. She went upstairs and pushed the bedroom door open. The sight of Zong Jinghao reading *The Snoring Little Pig* to their daughter greeted her.

Zong Yanxi blinked her eyes, her long eyelashes fluttering along. She seemed like she was immersed in her father's storytelling.

Lin Xinyan felt calm at the sight before her. Her lips curled into a smile. "Dinner time."

Zong Jinghao lifted his head and there stood Lin Xinyan. He put down the storybook in his hand and planted a kiss on his daughter's cheek. "Let's go downstairs for dinner."

Zong Yanxi nodded.

"Do you want to walk, or do you want daddy to carry you?" Zong Jinghao pinched her cheeks.

Zong Yanxi reached out her hands, signaling for her father to carry her. Zong Jinghao hugged his daughter and said, "Daddy could hug you, but could you promise me that you will not ask Mommy to carry you?"

Zong Yanxi kept mum as she burrowed herself in his arms.

"Since you're not saying anything, I take it that you have promised me." Zong Jinghao carried her and approached Lin Xinyan, focusing on her protruding belly. Caressing her belly, he said, "Don't carry her anymore."

Now that Lin Xinyan was in her last trimester, he was afraid that carrying Zong Yanxi might strain her body.

Lin Xinyan brushed off his hand and reminded him, "We have a guest."

Zong Jinghao frowned. "She hasn't left yet?"

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Lin Xinyan nodded.

Zong Jinghao's frown deepened. He asked, "What is she doing here?"

"She found out that Su Zhan's not around. I thought she's here to pay a visit, to tell me that she's worried about Peichuan, but I don't think she's here purely for him," Lin Xinyan said in frustration.

She was worried that Shen Peichuan and Song Yaxin would have conflicts if they were to get together in the future.

Zong Jinghao said, "Don't worry."

They did not have much rest when Shen Peichuan went missing for a few days. And with Zong Yanxi suffering from the trauma, Lin Xinyan had become doubly worn out. Zong Jinghao did not want her to worry about the affairs of others.

"Peichuan is an adult, so he should be able to handle it. There's no need for us to interfere," Zong Jinghao said dully. However, he had secretly investigated her.

"By the way, why didn't Su Zhan want Peichuan to be back? What is he trying to do? And where is Peichuan right now? Is he hurt?" He thought back to the time when Su Zhan deliberately hid the truth about the Song family. Back then, Su Zhan did not provide an explanation so Zong Jinghao did not question further. He still had no clue what Su Zhan was up to, and he was curious.

At that time, Zong Jinghao had no idea. But today, Su Zhan sent him a text message to inform him about Shen Peichuan's current situation and his ties with Sang Yu. Su Zhan specifically told Zong Jinghao not to tell Song Yaxin that Shen

Peichuan was alright. He also explained that Shen Peichuan himself knew about this.

“I’ll tell you tonight.”

After all, now was not the time to discuss this topic, as Song Yaxin was downstairs.

Lin Xinyan nodded and did not question further. Together, they went back downstairs. Song Yaxin, who was seated at the dining table, quickly got up from her chair. She said, “I’m sorry for taking your time today.”

Lin Xinyan smiled and said, “Not at all. Have a seat, please.”

Zong Jinghao carried his daughter in his arms and sat at the head of the table. Lin Xinyan took her seat next to him.

She smiled at Song Yaxin and said, “Make yourself at home.”

Song Yaxin smiled and sat back down. She looked at Zong Jinghao and asked, “Should Ruixi see a psychologist?”

Zong Jinghao did not answer.

Lin Xinyan quickly broke the silence by saying, “She did, and she just needs some time to recover from the trauma. Ms. Song, would you like to have a glass of red wine?”

Song Yaxin smiled and said, “No, thank you.”

“Oh, my bad. How can we eat and drink in peace when we don’t even know Peichuan’s whereabouts?” Lin Xinyan turned and asked Aunt Yu, “Is the herbal soup ready?”

Aunt Yu replied, "It'll be ready soon."

Lin Xinyan nodded, "Please serve Ms. Song a bowl of soup later on. I'm sure she hasn't had enough rest these few days."

Aunt Yu glanced at Song Yaxin, studying her face. She didn't look like she had not been sleeping well. Feeling a little annoyed, Aunt Yu mumbled a response, turned around, and went back into the kitchen.

Song Yaxin realized that she might have been too enthusiastic and seemed less concerned about Shen Peichuan. *Did Lin Xinyan purposely make that statement to test me?*

Her heart skipped a beat.

Aunt Yu had amazing cooking skills. The dishes she served were mouth-watering and smelled delicious.

But Song Yaxin lost her appetite.

Aunt Yu served a bowl to Lin Xinyan first. Then, she reluctantly served a bowl to Song Yaxin and said, "Be careful, it's hot."

Song Yaxin lowered her head in awkwardness and said, "Thank you."

"You're welcome," Aunt Yu responded in a cold tone.

Lin Xinyan felt her head throbbing but didn't bother to say anything. *A smart person like Song Yaxin should be able to feel Aunt Yu's dislike for her.*

However, it was difficult to force a person to like someone they already disliked.

Lin Xinyan took the bowl of soup served by Aunt Yu and placed it in front of Zong Jinghao. "Drink this. You haven't slept well for the past few nights."

Zong Jinghao looked up and asked, "Did I wake you?"

He had not slept well because he was worried about Zong Yanxi.

And he woke up several times in the night to check on his daughter.

Lin Xinyan answered, "No."

Zong Jinghao frowned. *Do you think I'm a fool? If you're asleep, how would you know that I woke up in the middle of the night?*

It was then that Lin Xinyan realized she did not sound convincing at all.

Song Yaxin lowered her head, feeling awkward and uncomfortable.

"Mrs. Zong," Song Yaxin said suddenly, "I don't have the appetite to eat. I shall take my leave now. Thank you for your hospitality."

She then rose to her feet.

Lin Xinyan stood up as well and asked, "Is Peichuan's matter causing you to lose your appetite?"

"Yes. We don't even know if he's dead or alive, so how could I have the appetite to eat?" Song Yaxin appeared uncomfortable.

Lin Xinyan said, "Well then, I won't force you."

Song Yaxin got up from her seat and Lin Xinyan walked her to the door.

"Do you want me to get my driver to send you home?" Lin Xinyan asked politely.

Song Yaxin waved her hand and said, "That's not necessary. I drove here myself. You should go back inside."

After watching her leave, Lin Xinyan closed the door and went back in. She sat down at the dining table and said, "What's with that attitude earlier? It's impolite to ignore someone when they are talking to you. No matter what, she's still Peichuan's girlfriend. And I notice that neither you nor Su Zhan like her."

Zong Jinghao looked at her and asked, "You like her?"

Lin Xinyan replied honestly. It was not that she didn't like her, but she felt that Song Yaxin was not as innocent as she seemed.

Zong Jinghao had secretly investigated her and found out that she had married two times. She was also the person who had once rejected Shen Peichuan.

What he had discovered during the investigation could even be unknown to Shen Peichuan.

He looked up and said, "She's not suitable for Peichuan."

Then, he placed the phone in front of Lin Xinyan, "Have a look yourself."

Lin Xinyan picked up the phone with curiosity and swiped to unlock the screen.

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Zong Jinghao reminded, "The email inbox."

After scrolling through the tabs and locating the inbox, she clicked on it and asked, "The first email?"

"Yes", replied Zong Jinghao.

The email did not have a subject. Lin Xinyan clicked on it and started scanning through it.

It was about Song Yaxin visiting the gynecology department. Even the time, location, and name of the doctor she consulted were specified.

Initially, she was not too bothered by it. However, when she scrolled down further, she saw some medical records. Every patient in the hospital would have their records, and Song Yaxin's record showed that she had an abortion.

Lin Xinyan frowned. "She had a child with her ex-husband, but she's divorced?"

Zong Jinghao gestured for her to continue reading.

Lin Xinyan felt even more uneasy. *Didn't Shen Peichuan say that Song Yaxin didn't have a child with her ex-husband and that she divorced him because he cheated on her?*

The abortion was dated not long ago; it was only two months earlier.

The more Lin Xinyan scrolled down, the greater her shock.

As she read, she widened her eyes in disbelief. The bottom of the email included proof of Song Yaxin cheating on her husband. There were records of her checking in and out of a hotel with her lover. *So, Song Yaxin was being unfaithful during her marriage?*

Didn't her ex-husband cheat on her instead?

She raised her head and looked at Zong Jinghao. "Is this real?"

"It is. Guan Jing investigated it personally. The only thing unclear now is how she managed to make her husband the scapegoat. Even her parents are kept in the dark."

Lin Xinyan was astounded. Although she did not really like Song Yaxin, she did not expect her to lie to others about these things.

It's obvious that she's a person with horrible values.

Isn't she lying to Shen Peichuan?

Lin Xinyan was appalled by Song Yaxin's lack of morals.

She has gone too far! She even lied to her parents.

Despite being surprised, Lin Xinyan also started to worry about Shen Peichuan. After all, he personally introduced Song Yaxin to them as his girlfriend.

How will Shen Peichuan react if he finds out about this?

What should he do?

Zong Jinghao took a deep breath, knowing that she was overthinking things. Grabbing his phone, he found the message and photo Su Zhan sent him. It was

a photo featuring Sang Yu cooking and Shen Peichuan helping her out. Su Zhan had taken the photo from the entrance of the kitchen.

“Look at it.” Lin Xinyan casually took his phone and immediately spotted the photo.

Who’s that girl?

She read Su Zhan’s message and realized that Shen Peichuan was actually dating that girl. Once again, Lin Xinyan was astonished.

Never in her wildest dreams would she expect Shen Peichuan to be a two-timer. Even though he had not ended things with Song Yaxin, he was already dating another girl.

After reading through all the messages, Lin Xinyan understood the complete picture. The girl Shen Peichuan actually liked was the one he was currently dating.

He refused to return and lied to Song Yaxin because he wanted her to give up on him.

Lin Xinyan passed the phone back to Zong Jinghao. “I didn’t expect Shen Peichuan to actually know what’s going on.”

She had only heard Su Zhan mention Sang Yu’s name. Now, she had finally seen what the girl looked like.

“I think that Peichuan’s actions are quite inappropriate. Isn’t he just wasting Song Yaxin’s time? He should come back and clarify things with her.”

If Song Yaxin still doesn’t give up after two months, what should Shen Peichuan do?

How could he take responsibility for that?

After all, he's the one who agreed at the start.

“Do you think he can come up with such an idea on his own? Judging from his personality, he should've returned a long time ago to deal with this. Su Zhan probably planted this idea in his mind.” Zong Jinghao understood their characters well.

Lin Xinyan agreed as well. *It must be Su Zhan who came up with that idea. With his forthcoming personality, Shen Peichuan would definitely return immediately to clarify things with Song Yaxin.*

“Will you tell Peichuan what you discovered?” asked Lin Xinyan.

She thought that Shen Peichuan deserved to know; this information would also be useful to help end his relationship with Song Yaxin.

Zong Jinghao nodded. “I'll inform him, but he'll need to decide how he wants to deal with this.”

Lin Xinyan nodded, thinking this was the most appropriate action to take.

After Zong Jinghao finished his soup, Lin Xinyan asked, “Do you still want more?”

He shook his head. “It's enough.”

Lin Xinyan took a few moments to think before she asked, “Do you like to collect red wine?”

Zong Jinghao frowned. *What is she talking about?*

Pouting, Lin Xinyan gestured towards the wine cabinets. “Did you collect all these bottles?”

“No. A lot of them are gifts from others. Why?” Zong Jinghao felt uneasy by her question. *The wine has always been there, but she has never asked about them before. Why is she acting so strange today?*

Lin Xinyan smiled. “It’s nothing. I’m just suddenly curious. Well, I’ll go upstairs first.”

She placed her chopsticks down and stood up.

These days, Zong Yanxi slept with Lin Xinyan in the same room. Lin Xinyan was going to bathe first so that after Yanxi finished bathing, she could hug her daughter to sleep.

After bathing, Lin Xinyan changed into some loose pajamas. Lying on the bed, she grabbed her phone. Sometimes, she would chat with Qin Ya about their shop.

Qin Ya was the one running the shop now. The business was growing so she had to recruit a couple more designers. With the help of Shao Yun, she managed to find some skilled seamstresses and embroidery workers.

Making tailor-made clothes required the seamstress to be extremely skilled. The average seamstress would not be able to complete some of the unique designs.

Although she sent Qin Ya a message, she did not receive a reply at all.

Qin Ya’s probably busy. Hence, Lin Xinyan put down her phone. She was about to lie down fully when Zong Jinghao carried Zong Yanxi in. Having just finished her bath, she was wearing her pink silk pajamas—a short-sleeved shirt and a pair of shorts with lace edge. After Zong Jinghao placed her onto the bed, she quickly crawled into Lin Xinyan’s arms. He stood beside the bed and gazed at his daughter, wondering when she would get better.

She was so clingy that she wouldn’t give her mother a break.

Lin Xinyan glanced at him. “Why are you standing there? Aren’t you going to bathe?”

With one hand, Zong Jinghao unbuttoned his shirt and said, “I’ll bring her to the office tomorrow.”

That way, Lin Xinyan could finally rest.

When he was not at home, Lin Xinyan was the only one carrying Zong Yanxi around.

He was already feeling worried. Zong Yanxi was about to attend primary school. Furthermore, she had grown a lot in terms of height and weight, so it was tiring to keep carrying her around.

In view of Zong Yanxi’s current condition, he thought it would be better if he brought her to the office.

Lin Xinyan was speechless. “Why are you bringing her there?”

Zong Jinghao replied, “It’ll help with her recovery if she can meet more people.”

Zong Yanxi blinked her eyes at Zong Jinghao. She spun around and buried her face against Lin Xinyan’s chest, showing her resistance to his suggestion.

Pretending not to have seen it, Zong Jinghao turned around and entered the bathroom.

Lin Xinyan lay down, hugged her daughter tighter, and patted her back. “Are you tired?”

Zong Yanxi shook her head.

Lin Xinyan grabbed the storybook called *The Snoring Little Pig*. "Let me read you a story."

Zong Yanxi nodded.

Lowering her head, Lin Xinyan kissed her daughter's forehead. Zong Yanxi used to be so playful and lively, but she had become so quiet now. Lin Xinyan could not help but feel worried.

By the time Zong Jinghao finished bathing, Zong Yanxi was still not asleep. Lin Xinyan shifted to the side of the bed and freed up some space for him. He walked towards the bed, sat down at the edge, and took the book from Lin Xinyan's hands. "I'll read to her."

As Lin Xinyan was already feeling exhausted, she nodded. Zong Jinghao took the girl into his arms and hugged her. Although he knew where Lin Xinyan stopped, he deliberately asked Zong Yanxi, "Where did Mommy stop?"

Zong Yanxi pointed at the sentence Lin Yanxi had just read.

In a gentle tone, Zong Jinghao coaxed, "Yanxi, tell me where Mommy stopped. I want to hear you speak."

However, Zong Yanxi only snuggled further in his arms and remained silent.

Stroking her head, Zong Jinghao sighed and continued narrating the story to her.

By the time Zong Yanxi finally fell asleep while listening to the story, two hours had already passed. Lin Xinyan had also fallen asleep, too. Zong Jinghao placed the book down and turned off the bedside lamp.

In the middle of the night, he could vaguely hear Lin Xinyan's voice.

"Ouch. It hurts..."

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Is she in labor?

Instantly, Zong Jinghao's sleepiness disappeared. Turning on the bedside lamp, he gazed at her nervously. "Does your stomach hurt?"

Lin Xinyan frowned, looking extremely uncomfortable. Without bothering to wear his shoes, Zong Jinghao stood up from the bed and rushed to her side. "I'll send you to the hospital."

As he spoke, he bent down and prepared to carry her. However, Lin Xinyan grabbed his hands and shook her head. "No. It isn't my stomach that's hurting."

Remaining motionless, her body became very stiff. It turned out her leg had suddenly cramped.

"My legs... I've got a cramp," muttered Lin Xinyan in agony.

Zong Jinghao flipped her blanket aside and scrutinized her legs under the dim lamp light. Her pants were rolled up, revealing her two fair and thin legs. "Which leg?"

"The left one." Her brows furrowed further. The cramp hurt terribly, and it felt like there was a muscle knot in her leg. Grabbing the blanket, she moaned, "Ouch... It hurts."

Zong Jinghao massaged her cramped leg with a grim expression. He did not know any technique, but all he wanted to do was to alleviate her pain.

After a while, the pain subsided. Lin Xinyan raised her head and said, "You can go back to sleep. It feels much better now."

However, Zong Jinghao sat on the edge of the bed, placed her legs onto his lap, and continued massaging them.

“Let’s visit the hospital tomorrow.”

Lin Xinyan replied, “This is normal. It’s a common symptom that occurs during the later stages of pregnancy.”

Pursing his lips, Zong Jinghao remained silent. As he could not endure the pain on her behalf, the only thing he could do was to alleviate her discomfort as much as possible.

Lin Xinyan moved her legs slightly and said coquettishly, “Is your heart aching for me?”

Zong Jinghao patted her legs lightly. “Not at all.”

Pulling her legs away, Lin Xinyan whined, “Go away. I won’t let you massage me anymore.”

However, Zong Jinghao grabbed her ankles and coaxed, “Be a good girl and don’t kick up a fuss. Your legs will not hurt anymore after I massage them for you.”

“Your heart doesn’t even ache for me, so I won’t let you massage me.” Bending her legs, Lin Xinyan tried to release herself from his grip and stop him from touching her.

Zong Jinghao chuckled. “How willful!”

Lin Xinyan pouted. “Well, I’m a willful person. I still intend on making you support me in the future.”

“I will.” Zong Jinghao pinched her thigh affectionately, causing Lin Xinyan to whine cutely, “It hurts!”

Zong Jinghao asked, “Where?”

Lin Xinyan pointed at her leg.

When Zong Jinghao bent down, she realized that he was going to kiss her. Hence, she quickly withdrew her legs and chided him softly, “Zong Jinghao!”

“Are you scared that I will kiss you?” Zong Jinghao gazed at her face under the faint lamp light with a serious expression. “If he’s a son, why don’t we send him to C City?”

Lin Xinyan was rendered speechless. *Huh?*

She had no clue what he was saying.

“What if the child’s a girl?” asked Lin Xinyan.

“I’ll definitely keep her by my side.”

Sitting up, Lin Xinyan asked in agitation, “What do you mean? Are you saying that you don’t want a son? Are you so reluctant to have a son?”

“Of course I want my child.” Zong Jinghao sat closer to her and pulled her into his arms. “Well, this is what I’m thinking. If the child’s a boy, he’ll take your surname. Just take it as continuing your father’s bloodline. After all, you didn’t actually change your last name.”

Since Zong Jinghao had mentioned this before, Lin Xinyan understood.

But how are the child’s family name and sex related?

“If the baby’s a girl, why can’t she take my last name?” However, Lin Xinyan soon remembered Zong Jinghao saying that he preferred daughters more.

She could not help but pout. “Others are biased towards boys. Why are you biased towards girls?”

At this moment, Lin Xinyan’s phone buzzed.

Zong Jinghao grabbed it and saw a message from an unsaved contact.

“Who’s that? Is it Qin Ya?” Lin Xinyan took the phone. “I sent her a message before I slept, but she didn’t reply to me.”

As she spoke, she clicked on the message.

Zong Jinghao did not know what the message was about. Before he could read the message, Lin Xinyan had already snatched the phone away.

At that moment, Zong Yanxi moved. As if she could sense that no one was lying beside her, her eyelashes fluttered, looking like she was on the verge of waking up. Zong Jinghao flipped over Lin Xinyan’s body, hugged Zong Yanxi, and patted her back gently. “Daddy’s here.”

Zong Yanxi reached out her hand to touch him. After confirming that it was really her father, she snuggled into his arms and continued sleeping.

Lin Xinyan stared at her phone, her eyes narrowing.

Your husband was wearing a light grey suit, a white dress shirt, and a black tie today. Men in formal suits look so charismatic.

“Who sent that?” asked Zong Jinghao when he raised his head and noticed Lin Xinyan reading the text attentively.

She deleted the message, treating it as a prank. Then, she replied indifferently, "It's nothing. Just some spam."

Lying down on her side, she placed her leg on Zong Jinghao's body. Starting the third trimester, even sleeping felt uncomfortable. If she lay on her back, her heart would feel some pressure. Hence, she had to sleep on her side with her legs elevated to feel somewhat comfortable. "I'm tired."

Zong Jinghao placed a hand on her leg and coaxed, "Go to sleep now."

"Okay," mumbled Lin Xinyan softly before closing her eyes. She was not too bothered by the text. After all, there were a lot of people who could see what he was wearing. Shifting her body to a comfortable posture, she soon fell into a deep sleep.

When Zong Jinghao woke up in the morning, Lin Xinyan and Zong Yanxi were still sleeping. Hence, he got up quietly, afraid that he would wake them up.

When he was about to head to the bathroom, his phone buzzed on the table. Ever since Zong Yanxi's fright, he would switch his phone to silent mode at night, just in case it would ring in the middle of the night.

The phone screen did not display any names; instead, it merely showed a string of numbers. After hesitating for a while, he walked outside and accepted the call.

He placed the phone beside his ear and walked downstairs in his slippers.

"Hello?"

"It's me." The first thing Shen Peichuan did after buying a phone was to contact Zong Jinghao.

"I'm fine. Everything's alright, so you don't have to worry about me. It's just that I can't return for the time being."

Zong Jinghao walked to the table and poured himself a cup of water. “Is this your phone?”

“Yes,” replied Shen Peichuan.

“I’ll send you something later, then you decide if you’ll return.” Zong Jinghao picked up a cup and took a sip of water from it.

“What is it?”

Zong Jinghao answered, “You’ll see for yourself.”

Then, he hung up the call and sent to Shen Peichuan the information Guan Jing had uncovered.

Shen Peichuan himself shall decide the next course of action.

At that moment, Shen Peichuan was sitting under a tree. After the call ended, he glanced at his phone and soon received an email. He clicked on it and started scrolling through it.

As he read, his frown deepened.

He actually had a fairly good impression of Song Yaxin. Although he did not like her, he did not loathe her, either.

Subconsciously, he assumed that since Captain Song was such a nice person, his daughter would be a decent person, too.

Yet, never in his wildest dreams would he expect her to...

Captain Song is such a righteous person. Why is his daughter harming others so selfishly?

She's the one at fault, but she pushed all the blame on her ex-husband.

And as she made her ex-husband the target of everyone's condemnation, she pretended to be the victim.

What kind of person is she?

If someone else sent him that email, he would not believe it. However, since it was from Zong Jinghao, it meant that he had conducted a thorough investigation. Otherwise, considering Zong Jinghao's personality, he would not dare to reveal such information.

"What are you reading?" Sang Yu hugged his neck from behind and leaned against his back. Resting her chin on his shoulder, she peered at his phone. However, Shen Peichuan quickly pressed the "home" button.

Sang Yu whispered beside his ears. "What is it that you're so afraid to show me?"

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Shen Peichuan turned around and said, "It's nothing. I'll deal with it. Let's go back, Sang Yu."

Sang Yu's expression stiffened. However, she quickly squeezed out a smile and said, "Sure, whatever you say."

She stood up from Shen Peichuan's back. "Let me pack our stuff and bid farewell to the kids. Oh, right. I'm here to call you for breakfast."

Shen Peichuan stood up from the bench. Stuffing his phone into his pocket, he followed her into the house.

Sang Yu's voice sounded from within. "I can't bear to part with these kids."

"You can still visit them in the future," consoled Shen Peichuan.

"Don't forget that you promised to help them."

He assured, "I won't forget."

Back in B City, Zong Jinghao was already gone when Lin Xinyan woke up.

Zong Yanxi was still soundly sleeping. Lin Xinyan got up and washed up in the bathroom. When she headed downstairs, she was surprised to see Zong Jinghao in the living room; she assumed that he had already gone to the office.

She walked down and hugged his slender waist from the back. "Why are you up so early?"

Zong Jinghao put down the empty cup of water and turned around to look at her. "Why didn't you sleep in a bit longer?"

Pressing against his back, Lin Xinyan muttered, "I can't fall asleep."

Zong Jinghao glanced at Aunt Yu, who was cleaning the wine cabinets. After ensuring that she would not look over, he spun around, pulled Lin Xinyan into his arms, and kissed her lips. Lin Xinyan flinched a little; she was afraid Aunt Yu would see them.

However, Zong Jinghao refused to let her leave. With a hand clasped behind her head, he pulled her closer to him.

Knowing that she could not resist him, Lin Xinyan responded to his kiss.

After Zong Jinghao released her, she continued hugging his neck and biting his shoulder. She bit with more force because she knew that as Aunt Yu was around, he would not dare to make any noise even if it hurt.

Only when she saw Zong Jinghao's pained expression did she release him in satisfaction.

Zong Jinghao gave his collar a tug and glanced at his shoulder. There were obvious bite marks left by Lin Xinyan, and that spot on his skin was almost bleeding.

He blinked. "Are you trying to murder your husband?"

Lin Xinyan said skeptically, "I didn't even use that much force."

"What would happen if you actually did?" Zong Jinghao could barely believe his ears. *Do I have to bleed before it's considered forceful?*

Seeing that he was actually in pain, Lin Xinyan pulled his collar aside. Not only were the bite marks on his shoulder quite deep, but they also looked like they were bleeding. She did not know that she had exerted so much force, either.

“I’m sorry, I didn’t do that on purpose. I’ll get the first-aid kit for you...”

Zong Jinghao held her back. “There’s no need for that.”

As Lin Xinyan did not intend to injure him, she felt guilty for not controlling her force well. “Does it hurt?”

“I’m fine. I’ll just take it as a mark you left for me. I’ll leave one for you in the future...”

“I don’t want it.” Lin Xinyan was not foolish, of course. Since it hurt so much to be bitten, she would not want a mark left on her body.

“You can’t refuse.” Hugging her, Zong Jinghao deliberately pulled her collar aside and pretended to bite her as a joke.

Tickled, Lin Xinyan burst out laughing.

When Aunt Yu overheard the commotion, she walked over to take a look. However, upon seeing Zong Jinghao hugging Lin Xinyan so intimately, she spun around quickly. Perhaps because she was panicking or was moving too quickly, she dropped an unopened bottle of red wine on the ground. With a loud crash, the bottle shattered into smithereens as red liquid splashed onto the floor.

The mild fragrance of red wine permeated the room.

Zong Jinghao and Lin Xinyan glanced over simultaneously. Standing rooted to the ground, Aunt Yu let out an awkward laugh. “You guys continue. I didn’t see anything. I’ll clean this up immediately.”

Blushing, Lin Xinyan shoved Zong Jinghao away and walked towards Aunt Yu. When she saw that the broken bottle of red wine was the one Song Yaxin complimented, she could not help but lament, “It’s a pity that such a good bottle of wine is gone.”

Zong Jinghao glanced at her. “You know what wine it is?”

If he recalled correctly, Lin Xinyan was not very knowledgeable about wine.

Even though these bottles of wine had been displayed there for a long time, she had never paid particular attention to them. At the very most, she could only recognize the more famous local wines.

“Song Yaxin told me. She’s quite knowledgeable about red wine,” explained Lin Xinyan. However, when she recalled how Song Yaxin kept mentioning Zong Jinghao, she felt uneasy.

Zong Jinghao snorted coldly. It was evident that he did not have a good impression of that woman—he probably even despised her.

Wrapping a muscular arm around Lin Xinyan, he went upstairs with her. “If she visits the next time, just come up with an excuse to stop her from entering. Otherwise, she’ll disturb your rest.”

Lin Xinyan replied, “Okay.”

“But she probably doesn’t have a chance to visit anymore. I told Shen Peichuan everything. With his personality, he’ll definitely return to clarify things with Song Yaxin.”

Lin Xinyan nodded, thinking that it was the right decision for Shen Peichuan to come back and deal with the issue. Otherwise, if he kept delaying it, things would become even more complex.

When Shen Peichuan broke off all ties with her, she would naturally stop visiting the villa.

Lin Xinyan raised her head and glanced at Zong Jinghao. His profile was well-defined with his neck forming an elegant curvature. He was very fair, and from the side, his nose bridge looked very tall. Even his eyelashes were enviably long. Pouting, Lin Xinyan asked, "Are there any women in your company who have a crush on you?"

Zong Jinghao suddenly looked at her, feeling surprised by her sudden question. "Why did you ask that?"

Remembering the message from last night, she said, "Someone complimented you for being charismatic. Stay away from other women when you're working."

Zong Jinghao chuckled. "Are you jealous?"

Shooting him a look, Lin Xinyan remained silent.

Zong Jinghao stopped smiling. He was about to ask her who said that when Zong Yanxi woke up. When the girl realized that there was no one beside her, her face scrunched up and she looked like she was on the verge of tears. Lin Xinyan was about to carry her when Zong Jinghao offered, "Let me carry her."

As Zong Yanxi had just woken up, she was very still very lethargic. Lying against Zong Jinghao's shoulder, she rubbed her eyes.

Lin Xinyan rummaged through Zong Yanxi's closet to find some clothes.

While Zong Jinghao carried Zong Yanxi to the bathroom to wash up, Lin Xinyan spread her daughter's clothes on the bed. At that moment, her phone on the bedside table buzzed. She picked it up.

It was a message from the same number last night.

Frowning, she clicked on it.

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Good morning!

Lin Xinyan stared at the two words. *If the message from last night is a prank by someone, or simply a casual text, why is there another message this morning?*

After helping Zong Yanxi wash up, Zong Jinghao walked out and saw Lin Xinyan looking at the phone beside the bed. Even when he was standing behind her, Lin Xinyan was too engrossed in her thoughts that she did not even notice him. Needless to say, she was taken aback when she heard Zong Jinghao ask her who had sent that message.

“Why do you walk so quietly?” Lin Xinyan clutched her chest, her heart pounding frantically.

Zong Jinghao looked at her. “It’s not because I walked too quietly, but that you were too engrossed. Who sent you that message?”

The good morning message?

Who sent it?

Is it Bai Yinning?

Is he still unwilling to give up on Lin Xinyan?

Sitting by the bed, Lin Xinyan raised her head and looked at him.

Meeting her gaze, Zong Jinghao asked, “Why are you not saying anything?”

Lin Xinyan scrolled up to the earlier message and pursed her lips. “This is very strange. I’ve been receiving weird texts since last night. What is this person trying to say or do?”

Zong Jinghao grabbed her phone. After reading the messages, he frowned in surprise.

“Did you flirt around with other women outside?” Lin Xinyan raised her eyebrows. She was not suspecting him; she just could not figure out who would do this, or why someone would possibly do such a thing.

Glancing at her, Zong Jinghao remained silent. He saved the number of the sender on his phone. “I’ll investigate it. Don’t think too much about it.”

Lin Xinyan lowered her gaze. “I’m not overthinking. I just feel a bit uneasy. Who would do such a thing?”

“I’ll find out.” Zong Jinghao’s tone was cold, with an unnoticeable hint of anger creeping into his voice.

Lin Xinyan was initially in a good mood, but after this incident, she could not keep calm anymore.

She was afraid that something bad would happen again. What happened to Shen Peichuan was already a close shave. What about the next time?

“What happened to Gu Bei?” asked Lin Xinyan.

It was him the previous time.

“He’s been sentenced to jail.” Gu Bei was doomed. He had a chance to go overseas and avoid prison, but now that he was seeking his own demise, no one could save him.

Lin Xinyan looked down. "Then it can't be him."

Zong Jinghao wanted her to stop thinking about it. "I'll investigate it. Yanxi's hungry, so let's go down and eat."

Lin Xinyan nodded and stroked her daughter's face. "Let Yanchen come back today and play with her. The house will be very empty if no one's here."

Initially, Qin Ya, Zong Qifeng, and Cheng Yuwen were there. Now that they had all left, the villa had become very quiet and lifeless.

Initially, Zong Jinghao intended to bring Zong Yanxi to the office. If she met more people, it might aid in her recovery. However, after knowing about those messages, he gave up on his plan to bring her to his office.

Now, the priority was to investigate who sent those absurd messages to Lin Xinyan's phone.

"I'll pick him up after eating," said Zong Jinghao.

Lin Xinyan nodded.

Aunt Yu had already cleaned the house, but there was still the faint fragrance of wine lingering in the air. Hence, Zong Jinghao told Aunt Yu to open the windows for ventilation.

Aunt Yu said, "I've already opened the windows, but the smell won't disappear so quickly."

"If you're unused to the smell, you can stay in your room upstairs." Zong Jinghao glanced at Lin Xinyan.

Lin Xinyan did not have much of an appetite and was merely shoving food into her mouth robotically.

Perhaps because she was engrossed in her thoughts, she did not hear Zong Jinghao's words or respond to him.

Zong Jinghao continued looking at her.

He knew that although she promised to not overthink, she was actually running all sorts of scenarios through her mind.

He sighed. "Why can't you be more obedient?"

"Huh?"

Lin Xinyan returned to her senses but did not catch what he had said earlier.

Zong Jinghao lost his appetite, too. After Lin Xinyan finished her food, he left Zong Yanxi in her care.

Then, he left the villa to pick up Zong Yanchen.

He also drove Zong Qifeng and Cheng Yuwen over to the villa. With more people at home, they could help Lin Xinyan look after Zong Yanxi. Now that Zong Yanxi was even reluctant to stick with Aunt Yu, only Lin Xinyan could care for her when he was not at home. However, it was tough on her, especially since she was pregnant.

At nine, Zong Jinghao returned home with the rest.

"Mommy!" Zong Yanchen ran over, sprawled on her lap, and gazed at his little sister. "She hasn't recovered yet?"

Lin Xinyan stroked his head. "Yeah, that's why I called you over to play with her."

Zong Yanchen had always been a sensible child. He nodded firmly before chatting with Yanxi, “Yanxi, I have something for you. Do you want to take a look at it?”

Blinking, Zong Yanxi looked at him without saying a single word.

Not discouraged yet, Zong Yanchen continued to urge her to speak up. “You really don’t want to take a look at it? Fine, I’ll give it to someone else.”

Zong Yanxi remained quiet.

Since she was not tempted by that toy, Zong Yanchen decided to play house with her instead.

Actually, even if Zong Jinghao did not drop by the family residence to pick them up, they still intended to visit. They had specially bought these toys yesterday for her to play house.

In the past, Zong Yanxi kept insisting on playing house. As Zong Yanchen found the game childish, he always refused.

Now that Yanxi was traumatized, he decided to go all out for her sake. As long as she could recover quickly, he was willing to do anything.

Zong Qifeng walked over. “Little girl, let me hug you.”

Zong Yanxi snuggled further in Lin Xinyan’s arms, showing her reluctance.

“Grandpa, come here and let’s play house.” Zong Yanchen dragged Zong Qifeng over and sat on the carpet. With Baymax tagging along, Cheng Yuwen also joined them.

Zong Yanxi stared at the visitors and blinked while Zong Yanchen set up the toys. It was a comprehensive kitchen set that included all sorts of food ingredients and

cooking tools. There was also a princess castle with a princess doll inside. Zong Yanxi had always wanted to play with it.

After a while, she took the initiative to leave Lin Xinyan's arms and join the rest.

Lin Xinyan heaved a sigh of relief.

She's finally getting better. Although she's still silent, she's willing to play with the others.

Meanwhile, Zong Jinghao entered the office and immediately made an internal call. "Tell Guan Jing to come to my office."

"Understood, Mr. Zong."

Zong Jinghao unbuttoned his suit and sat in front of his desk.

After receiving the secretary's call, Guan Jing entered Zong Jinghao's office. Instead of knocking instantly, he stood outside for a while before doing so.

Zong Jinghao's voice quickly rang out and Guan Jing entered the office.

"Help me investigate this number."

Zong Jinghao gave Guan Jing the number of the person who sent strange messages to Lin Xinyan.

Taking it, Guan Jing lowered his head and said, "Okay."

"Wait a moment..."

Just as Guan Jing was about to leave, Zong Jinghao called after him. "Are you very tired recently?"

It was unusual to see Guan Jing look so lethargic.

He shook his head. “Nope.”

“I’ll give you an additional week for your annual leave,” said Zong Jinghao as he flipped open the documents on his table that required his signature.

Despite having the urge to say something, he did not know how to bring it up. Eventually, he merely said, “Thank you, Mr. Zong.”