

Stealing Your Heart Chapter 776

After the kids returned home from school, they insisted on dropping by the ward to visit their mother since it was Friday.

“Grandma!” Zong Yanxi rushed over to her grandmother’s side. Zhuang Zijin instructed her granddaughter to slow down, but she behaved as though she wasn’t aware of her words.

In the end, she stretched her arm to welcome her granddaughter, who had pounced on her without holding back. Consequently, she staggered and leaned backward as she almost fell to the ground.

“You’re such a naughty girl,” Zhuang Zijin reprimanded her granddaughter.

Zong Yanxi wrapped her arms around her neck and said,

“I missed you, Grandma! Can’t you allow me to hug you for a few seconds?”

In spite of feeling irritated, Zhuang Zijin found her granddaughter hilarious. She caressed her back and said, “You have to take care good care of me in the future, okay?”

“Of course!” Zong Yanxi replied without a second thought. As a result, her grandmother had a bright grin on her face; she was touched deep down when she heard her reply.

“Let’s head inside.” Zhuang Zijin lifted Zong Yanxi in between her arms and exclaimed, “Holy moly! You’re so heavy! I can barely lift you!”

They returned to the ward, where Lin Xinyan was nowhere to be found. Zong Yanchen immediately asked, “Where’s Mommy?”

Zhuang Zijin was taken aback for a few seconds, but she decided to tell them the truth. She told them that Lin Xinyan was under the caregiver's care as of now.

"Why is she under someone else's care now? Has she given birth to our baby sister or brother?" Zong Yanxi interrupted their conversation; she couldn't hold back her excitement anymore.

Zhuang Zijin, their grandmother, nodded in return.

"Wow! I'm officially an older sister!"

She ran over and held her brother in between her arms to express her excitement. "Yanchen! You're officially an older brother!"

"Excuse me? I have always been your older brother," Zong Yanchen replied nonchalantly.

His sister was rendered by his indifferent reply.

In return, Zong Qifeng asked, "Is everything alright?"

Zhuang Zijin snuck a peek at the kids and decided to keep her answer short and simple. "It was a close call, but thank God; everything is fine as of now."

"Has Mommy given birth to a baby brother or a baby sister?" Zong Yanxi questioned cutely.

Zhuang Zijin's tapped her head lightly at that question. She had completely forgotten to inquire about the gender of Lin Xinyan's newborn infant.

"How could I forget about such a thing? Actually, I have no idea because the doctor didn't mention anything about it. I have forgotten to bring it up as well."

Their minds had all over the place during the perilous operation, which was why they felt as though a boulder had been lifted off their shoulders when they heard the news that everything had gone well. Therefore, no one could have been bothered by everything else, including the gender of the baby.

“Can we drop by and visit the baby? Let’s head over and ask the doctor if the baby is a boy or a girl!” Zong Yanchen suggested.

His grandmother told him that it would be impossible for them to visit the baby, but they could drop by the doctor’s office and inquire on the gender of the baby.

“Shall we pay the doctor a visit?” Zhuang Zijin counter-offered.

“Okay! I can’t wait to figure out if we have a baby brother or sister!” Zong Yanxi expressed her excitement.

Thus, Zong Qifeng and Zhuang Zijin brought the kids along with them as they headed over to the doctors’ office.

They were told that Lin Xinyan had given birth to a lovely baby boy.

“We have a baby brother!” Zong Yanxi exclaimed. “Can we drop by and visit him?”

Unfortunately, the doctor turned the little girl down. “I’m afraid that’s impossible because he isn’t in his prime as of now.”

Zong Yanxi pouted her lips in disappointment.

In the meantime, Zong Yanchen asked the doctor, “Is my doing mother fine?”

Touched by his concern, the doctor beamed his reply because of the little boy’s mature demeanor. “She’s fine. You’ll be able to visit her after twenty-four hours.”

“Thank you so much, Doctor!” Zong Yanchen expressed his gratitude.

“You’re welcome. It’s one of our duties to take care of the patient as a doctor.”

Nevertheless, Zong Yanchen repeated his thanks. He knew the doctors had done a great job in protecting his mother and brother.

Once they walked out of the doctors’ office, Zong Yanchen asked, “Where’s Daddy?”

Where’s Daddy? Shouldn’t he be by Mommy’s side during such a critical moment?

Zhuang Zijin told her grandson, “Your father is currently away to tend to something, but I believe he’ll be back soon.”

“What’s so important? How could he leave Mommy alone when she needed him the most?” Zong Yanchen snapped.

“Your father has been staying by your mother’s side throughout the operation. He just left about half an hour ago,” Zhuang Zijin explained.

Zong Yanchen heaved a long sigh of despair because he didn’t get to see his mother, neither did he get to visit his brother.

After a week, Lin Xinyan was no longer in a critical condition. Similarly, her son’s body had recovered to the condition of an ordinary baby.

Lin Xinyan was transferred to the ward. When she returned to the room, she caught a glimpse of the corridor that had been decorated by all sorts of flowers.

Zong Jinghao’s friends from the corporate world had delivered the flowers to congratulate him once they heard the news of his newborn son.

The moment Shao Yun heard the news of Lin Xinyan's labor, he rushed over from C City with a gift. He couldn't wait to visit the woman.

Coincidentally, Shen Peichuan and Sang Yu had made their way over to the hospital on the same day Su Zhan and Qin Ya decided to visit Lin Xinyan.

It was a lively scene in the ward as many guests were present.

Zhuang Zijin was the most occupied one in the ward. She had to serve their guests their drinks and get the fruits served.

Meanwhile, Shao Yun, who was in the ward, was about to hand over the gift he had brought along with him to Lin Xinyan.

After a few days' rest, Lin Xinyan finally recovered from the fatigue that had built up during her labor, regaining the capability to get out of bed.

She looked at the things Shao Yun had brought along with him and asked, "What is all this?"

"Why don't you check it out for yourself?" Shao Yun asked rhetorically and handed over the folder he had with him to her.

Lin Xinyan was certain that the folder contained the thing Shao Yun had previously intended to hand over to her. "I told you, I—"

"If you don't want it, hand it over to your son. Otherwise, he may get into a fight for the family heirloom with your eldest son in the future," Shao Yun teased Lin Xinyan.

Consequently, Lin Xinyan smiled.

"You should keep this," Shao Yun insisted.

Lin Xinyan took it; she couldn't turn him down anymore. "However, you still have to be in charge of the daily operation."

"Of course! I'm still young! Let's talk about it when I'm no longer capable of managing the company." Shao Yun was aware of Lin Xinyan's concerns because he would indeed be extremely occupied.

Suddenly, Zong Jinghao showed up and approached his wife.

Shao Yun asked, "Have you guys named your son?"

"Speaking of which, we haven't. Why don't you go ahead and give him a name?" Lin Xinyan suggested.

Shao Yun refused to give in to her suggestion. Instead, he turned around and took a peek at Zong Jinghao. After all, they were talking about their son. Thus, he would have to acquire his parent's consent.

Zong Jinghao said, "Uncle, why don't you name our son as Yan suggests? We'll definitely respect Yan's decision."

Huh? Are they acting all lovey-dovey in front of me?

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Nevertheless, Shao Yun wasn't particularly against the idea of the affectionate duo being lovey-dovey in front of him because he had always wanted her to live a happy life.

Since Zong Jinghao had agreed, Shao Yun asked once more to verify. "Seriously? Are you sure it's okay for me to name your son?"

"Yes, Uncle," Lin Xinyan beamed her reply and stared at Zong Jinghao in the eyes after she finished her sentence.

Her husband had his eyes glued to her in a similar manner. Caressing her forehead, he said, "Let's have him take the surname of Zhuang."

Shao Yun, who had a hard time figuring out a suitable name for the little boy, got up from the chair the moment he heard Zong Jinghao's words.

Staring at Zong Jinghao in the eyes, Shao Yun stuttered, "H-He's your son..."

"He's also Yan's son," Zong Jinghao assured Shao Yun.

Once again, Shao Yun's eyes gleamed. He was certain that Wen Xian had made the proper arrangement; she had found her daughter a reliable, capable, and loving husband.

"I'm not a civilized man, okay? You're not allowed to blame me if the name doesn't sound great," Shao Yun teased them in return.

"We won't blame you, but please don't name him after something odd. Otherwise, I'm afraid our son will hold a grudge against us in the future," Lin Xinyan teased with a bright grin.

Shao Yun remarked, "You should be grateful I'm not going to name him after the historical figures of the nation!"

Lin Xinyan was rendered speechless by her uncle's reply.

On the other hand, Shao Yun had given it a thought about after he figured out Lin Xinyan had given birth to a boy. He secretly hoped that Lin Xinyan would name the child after his brother's surname.

Since Lin Xinyan refused to take the surname of his brother, he didn't want his brother to be the last generation of the family.

Nevertheless, he wouldn't have brought up such an absurd request if Lin Xinyan weren't the one who had suggested ahead of him.

Truth be told, he had long procured someone else's service to name the boy. He had been playing hard to get because he simply wanted to tease Lin Xinyan.

"Since he's the third, shall we name him the millennial's way? What about Tristan Zhuang?"

Lin Xinyan was at a loss for words when she heard the seemingly odd name suggested by her uncle. Such a name would make her youngest son stand out amongst her children.

"Alright. That's merely a joke, albeit a bad one." Shao Yun put on a stern front and suggested in a serious manner, "What about Zhuang Jiawen?"

The tentative name of the little boy contained characters of Zhuang Ziyi and Wen Xian's names.

He had provided the characters of their names to the professional he had hired and requested him to name the boy accordingly.

Although it was a meaningful name, there wasn't anything else special about it. If Lin Xinyan were aware that he had paid a fortune to hire someone else to name her son, she would have reprimanded him for wasting money again.

Shao Yun felt uneasy upon seeing Lin Xinyan and Zong Jinghao fall silent after they heard his suggestion. The man probed further, "What do you guys think?"

"I like it!" Lin Xinyan assured her uncle.

From the moment Lin Xinyan agreed to accept her uncle's proposal, she knew that her newborn son would have to take a different path as compared to his elder siblings.

In the future, Zhuang Jiawen would be the inheritor of Wen Xian and Zhuang Zijin's inheritance. Therefore, he needed a name that would befit his identity.

She also wanted a name that could allow her family to commemorate their existence.

"Thanks, Uncle," Lin Xinyan enunciated.

"I'm glad to be of help!" Shao Yun waved at her in return.

Holding on to her hand, he stated, "Since we have everything sorted out, I'll drop by and visit the little boy. Please take good care of yourself."

As the newborn had been delivered ahead of his estimated date of delivery and spent an extensive period in his mother's abdomen, he would have to spend the upcoming month in the open crib before he could be discharged. Therefore, the visitors could only catch mere glimpses of the baby from afar.

Since they hadn't gotten to see the baby, those who were outside the suite decided to tag along when they noticed someone making a trip to visit the child.

Within a few seconds, the ward was emptied once again.

Zhuang Zijin served Lin Xinyan bowl of soup carefully. She was grateful that her daughter had managed to make it out of the operating theater alive, but she was aware that her daughter had critically damaged her body as a result.

Lin Xinyan wouldn't be able to produce any offspring anymore because her uterus had been severely damaged.

"I don't feel like finishing the soup." Lin Xinyan turned her mother down. She had been consuming at least three servings per day for the past three days.

Since she couldn't finish the soup, Zong Jinghao suggested, "Mom, why don't you place it here for the time being?"

So, Zhuang Zijin placed the bowl of soup on the table as instructed. She urged her daughter, "Even though it tastes awful, you have to finish it for the sake of your body."

"I know, Mom," Lin Xinyan replied.

"Does it still hurt?" Zhuang Zijin wondered.

Her daughter nodded in return. She had started producing breast milk after she gave birth to her son, but the baby had been sent to the neonatal care unit right after he was born. She couldn't breastfeed him. As a result, she had engorged breasts.

"If it hurts a lot, why don't you try using the breast pump?"

"It's fine." Lin Xinyan turned down her mother's suggestion because the doctor had advised her to prevent breastfeeding at all costs.

Firstly, it was due to her condition. Secondly, there were residues of drugs that had been administered throughout the operation. The doctor was afraid the residues would be incorporated into the milk produced. Therefore, it wouldn't be suitable for a baby's consumption.

She had to bear with the pain because her breasts would return to their ordinary condition after the engorgement reached a certain extent.

Zhuang Zijin let out a long sigh. "If that's the case, you should take a break. The guests will be back to visit you once they're done visiting the baby."

Her daughter nodded in return.

Making her way out of the room after she finished her sentence, Zhuang Zijin closed the door.

Meanwhile, Zong Jinghao reached for the bowl of soup and took a seat on the bed. "You should finish this. Otherwise, it'll get cold soon."

To prevent his wife from catching a cold during her confinement, the air-conditioner wasn't turned on. Similarly, Zhuang Zijin had prevented Lin Xinyan from taking showers.

Lin Xinyan was certain that she would be drenched in sweat once again if she consumed such a bowl of hot soup in such a stuffed environment. Therefore, she refused to consume the bowl of hot soup as she had enough of being drenched.

"I'll finish it later on." Lin Xinyan lay on the bed statically.

"Are you not feeling well?" Zong Jinghao placed the bowl of soup on the nightstand and asked.

"What do you think?" Lin Xinyan looked at her husband in the eyes and directed a rhetorical question at him.

Zong Jinghao tried to persuade his wife. “You have to bear with it for the time being. Let’s have you finish this bowl of soup. Once you’re done, I’ll wipe your body clean and get you changed into another new set of clothes. I’m sure that’ll make you feel a tad bit better.”

Lin Xinyan was tempted because she could settle for less and have her body wiped cleaned. Therefore, she sat upright immediately.

Her husband was about to feed her, but she stopped him and took over the bowl of soup. “I’ll finish it in one go.”

She gulped down the entire bowl of hot soup and immediately started feeling the heat within her system once more. She quickly asked him to hand her a piece of tissue as beads of sweat streamed down her forehead.

Zong Jinghao took the bowl out and drew the curtain once he returned. He brought a pail of hot water with him and placed it on the chair. Once he soaked the towel, he instructed, “You should remove your clothes.”

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Lin Xinyan started undressing as instructed. "Can you please get me another set of clothes?"

Her husband raised his head and stared at her. She didn't have anything else under the hospital gown she had put on. As soon as she unbuttoned the gown, her porcelain-like skin came into view.

The moment she noticed her husband had his eyes glued to her, she covered her chest and asked, "What are you looking at?"

"What else could I be looking away? You, of course," Zong Jinghao replied in a nonchalant manner.

Lin Xinyan uttered chidingly, "Hey!"

"Sorry, what did you say?" Zong Jinghao asked as he didn't hear his wife's reply.

"It's nothing! Can you please go get me another set of clothes?" Lin Xinyan urged in return.

Her husband did as instructed and brought her a new set of clothes.

Lin Xinyan told him to place it on the bed and asked him to leave her alone.

Nevertheless, Zong Jinghao had no intention to leave at all. He twisted the towel dry and said, "If you're not going to undress, I'm going to do it on your behalf."

Lin Xinyan had completely unbuttoned the gown, but she refused to undress in front of Zong Jinghao as she was embarrassed by the way she currently looked.

She raised her head and asked, "Don't you think I smell?" He ran his fingers through her unkempt hair and assured her, "I have always found your scent pleasant."

"Liar," Lin Xinyan rebuked her husband's absurd statement.

Since she had been producing breast milk over the past few days, her entire gown was drenched in milk. Therefore, it must stink really badly.

Leaning over, Zong Jinghao said, "Others will be back before we know it if you don't hurry up." As soon as he finished his sentence, he reached over and started undressing his wife. Consequently, Lin Xinyan turned around and avoided his gaze.

He whispered, "You smell great. The fragrance of milk is all over you."

Flushing, Lin Xinyan pushed her husband away.

"Hey! Stop teasing me!"

Zong Jinghao chuckled in return and brought the dampened towel over to wipe her clean.

Both her breasts were completely engorged as though she had undergone a breast implant before. Zong Jinghao exercised caution, but the moment he accidentally touched her breast, she shrieked, not being able to bear the pain.

Immediately after he accidentally caused her pain, Zong Jinghao stopped all actions and moved away from her.

Lin Xinyan snatched the towel and yelped, "I'll do it myself!"

"I'll be careful. You can't possibly reach your back now, can you?" Zong Jinghao said.

Glaring at him in the eyes, Lin Xinyan bellowed, “Just hand it over to me and leave me alone. Go get some fresh air outside or something.”

It had been some time since they last had an intimate session together. She was aware that he could barely resist the urge as a man.

Although Lin Xinyan had no intention to blame her husband, she wasn't in the condition for such an intense session because the doctor told them that they would have to restrain themselves for three months.

Standing right by her side, Zong Jinghao stared at her.

Lin Xinyan wanted to cover her bare body using the blanket, but he got in her way and removed the blanket.

“What do you want?” Lin Xinyan bellowed yet once again. She wanted her husband to stop fooling around.

“I'm sure you're aware of the things I want, right?” Zong Jinghao asked rhetorically.

“I-I...”

Halfway through her sentence, Zong Jinghao grabbed her hand and placed it on his pelvic area. Consequently, Lin Xinyan flushed embarrassedly as her mind flew all over the place.

“Y-You...”

“I know you're not able to do it, but you can always help me get rid of my urge by using your hand, right?” Zong Jinghao kissed her on the lips and suggested.

His wife couldn't believe he had the guts to bring up such an absurd request when they were in the hospital.

“We’re still in the hospital, and Mom is right outside!”

Zong Jinghao ignored her words and started pleasuring himself with her hand.

She panicked because she couldn’t believe her husband had the audacity to let loose of himself in the ward.

However, Zong Jinghao held onto her firmly and kissed her as he continued pleasuring himself. “Mom won’t make her way in.”

“Hurry up!” Lin Xinyan clenched her teeth and made up her mind.

Zong Jinghao stopped replying as he started panting unwittingly with a weary face, enjoying the session. Initially, Lin Xinyan avoided her husband’s gaze, but halfway through the session, she found it exciting as she had never done it in such a setting before.

Nevertheless, she couldn’t fully indulge herself in the sensation as she felt uneasy. “H-Hurry up!”

He sucked on her earlobes with his lips and chuckled, “You’re flushing.”

“You’re such a shameless man!” She glared at him in the eyes.

He smirked in return because he was proud to have gotten the better of his wife.

Suddenly, Zhuang Zijin knocked on the door and asked, “Yan, have you got changed? Can you please hand over the contaminated clothes to me? I have to do the laundry.”

Lin Xinyan tried to push Zong Jinghao away, but he simply held onto her hand firmly, continuing to pleasure himself.

Consequently, she started sweating profusely as her mother knocked on the door once again. “Yan...”

“I-I’m not done yet!” She had no choice but to reply to her mother’s query.

Thereafter, Zhuang Zijin stopped knocking. She seemed to have heard her daughter’s reply.

Lin Xinyan couldn’t take it anymore. In order to express her frustration, she bellowed with her cheeks reddened, “Zong Jinghao!”

“Are you trying to beg me for something?” Her husband teased her yet again.

Lin Xinyan pursed her lips and gritted her teeth. She then made up her mind and decided to play along with him. Otherwise, she would have to waste her time with him.

She sped up and interrupted his pace. In the end, she detected a warm sensation flowing down her hand as her husband moaned out loud. It lasted for at least ten seconds.

Zong Jinghao, who had rid of his physiological needs, kissed her on the lips.

His wife pushed him away and reached for the towel, but he stopped her and said, “I’ll wipe it clean on your behalf.”

After he wiped himself clean, he sat on the bed and wiped the slender hand of his wife clean. He ran the towel across every single finger of her wife in a gentle manner. Once he was done, he kissed the back of her hand and denoted, “Thanks for your hard work.”

She shrugged him off and moved away from him. The man simply smiled in return and got her another pail of water to wipe the sweat off her body. After they had gotten everything done, Lin Xinyan got changed into a new set of clothes while Zong Jinghao headed over to get rid of the pail of water.

The entire space was illuminated by natural light the moment he drew the curtain.

He went and unlocked the door. Zhuang Zijin noticed his presence and asked with a smile, "Has Yan got changed?"

"Mhmm. Can you please change the linen into a new set of linen?" Zong Jinghao requested.

"Sure, but I'll need you to carry her out for the time being," Zhuang Zijin said.

Thus, Zong Jinghao returned and was about to bring his wife out of the ward, but she turned him down and insisted on making her way out on her own.

"Your wounds have yet to heal, don't they?" Zhuang Zijin showed up at the entrance with a new set of linen and asked.

"The doctor told me to walk around for my own sake." Lin Xinyan sat upright and turned around. Seeing that, Zong Jinghao brought her a pair of indoor sandals immediately. He leaned over and placed them in front of his wife. "Let me help you."

In order to vent her frustration, she attempted to kick her husband, but he got ahead of her and stopped her in the nick of time, gripping her ankle. "Listen to me for the time being. I'll allow you to kick me to your heart's content once you're completely healed."

Zhuang Zijin was confused by the scene before her because she wasn't aware of the incident that had just occurred. She decided to take Zong Jinghao's side. "Yan, you should behave yourself. Jinghao has been taking care of you all this while."

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Lin Xinyan kept her head low as she shot him a sidelong glare.

Zong Jinghao responded with a soft chuckle.

As they made their way out of the ward, they were met by the group that came back from visiting the baby earlier.

“Congratulations on your new baby boy.” The voices of both Shen Peichuan and Su Zhan echoed simultaneously. It was an unexpected synchrony. They exchanged a disdainful glance before they turned their backs against each other.

Su Zhan seemed to have recovered from his injury. The bandage on his head earlier had been removed.

The man’s previous hairstyle had been sacrificed in the process. Nevertheless, he hadn’t lost his charm.

Meanwhile, Sang Yu and Qin Ya instinctively walked over to Lin Xinyan’s sides. “Let us do it,” Qin Ya said to Zong Jinghao as the duo supported Lin Xinyan on her feet.

“Be careful, you two,” Zong Jinghao instructed as he made way for them.

“Tsk tsk,” Qin Ya muttered under her breath. *What’s with that arrogance?* A passing thought crossed her mind upon Zong Jinghao’s authoritative tone. On the other hand, she could empathize with how he felt. It’s only understandable that he was so immersed in the pride and happiness of having fathered a newborn son.

Wary of Lin Xinyan's postpartum condition, Qin Ya shifted her focus back onto providing support while being as careful as possible.

Lin Xinyan glanced at Sang Yu and then at Qin Ya, noticing how different each of them looked. Sang Yu appeared somewhat healthier and more radiant than before. Qin Ya, on the other hand, didn't look too well.

Lin Xinyan held onto Qin Ya's arm as she slowly lowered herself onto the couch. Conscious of the fresh stitches on her abdomen, she leaned back further to prop herself up against the cushioned backrest.

"Is there something on your mind?" Lin Xinyan looked at Qin Ya worryingly.

Qin Ya lowered her eyelids. "It's nothing," she replied, her voice devoid of emotion.

The past few days had been tormenting. However, Qin Ya did not want to ruin the atmosphere. That was why she decided to keep those feelings of distress to herself.

Ever since Su Zhan recovered, Grandma Su had been urging them both to undergo a test in the hospital.

The results that came weren't pleasant. The report showed that she had poor ova quality and was required to give herself six injections daily. The numerous needle marks left on her waist and arm looked just as miserable as how she felt.

Qin Ya had only made it through the first three days. It was just the beginning, but the days ahead seemed as if they'd only be getting more and more difficult. It took such a huge toll on her body and mind.

"What's wrong? Did you have an argument with Su Zhan?" Sang Yu asked.

Before Qin Ya managed to answer, Su Zhan intervened, “What are you talking about? If any argument happened, it’d be between you and Shen Peichuan. Don’t you start cursing us!”

Sang Yu shot him an angry glare. “What’s gotten into you? There’s no need to be so offended. You could’ve simply said a ‘no.’“

“Looks like you’ve improved a lot on your arguing skills these days. Haven’t you learned anything good ever since being together with Shen Peichuan?”

“You’re one to talk. Haven’t you been bullying Peichuan every time you’re with him?”

“You...”

Before Su Zhan could retaliate further, Shen Peichuan cut his sentence off. “What’s the fuss about?” He jabbed an elbow at Su Zhan, who stood near him. The wounds on Su Zhan’s body no longer hurt much, but he acted as if he was still in a lot of pain. “Ouch! Shen Peichuan, are you trying to get me hospitalized again?”

Shen Peichuan looked at him, unamused. “Don’t snap at me. Aren’t you pretty much recovered already?”

“Who told you I’ve recovered completely? Whatever. You’ll have to pay for that!”

“What am I supposed to do?” Shen Peichuan maintained a cold attitude towards his acting.

Su Zhan answered without thinking, “You’re going to give me a huge sum of red packet money.”

“In your dreams!” Shen Peichuan replied dismissively. He then wrapped an arm around Su Zhan’s shoulder. With a taunting grin, he spoke in his ear, “I’ll give you a big one on the day you have a son.”

He gestured in the air with his hands as if outlining the image of a huge money sack.

Su Zhan was rendered speechless.

He immediately regretted his answer earlier. Of all things, the topic of having a child hit him the hardest.

Grandma Su had been giving him a lot of pressure on this matter. It hurt him to see Qin Ya suffer because of this too.

He was so torn in between.

Lin Xinyan's voice broke the momentary silence. "I'm getting tired. Ya, can you help me into the room?"

"Sure." Qin Ya immediately offered the woman a hand.

Lin Xinyan wasn't exactly tired. She could see that Qin Ya was troubled, and she wanted to have a word with her.

Qin Ya kept silent as she helped Lin Xinyan walk.

"Close the door," Lin Xinyan requested once they entered.

In a swift and nimble motion, Qin Ya swung the door shut with one hand. As Lin Xinyan settled onto her bed, she motioned for Qin Ya to sit beside her.

"Something is definitely troubling you. Can't you tell me about it?"

Qin Ya let out a helpless sigh. "It's not that I don't want to talk about it. I just don't know where to start..."

Lin Xinyan frowned as she waited for Qin Ya to continue.

“I went for a test recently, and it turns out that my eggs are of poor quality. I’ve been on medication and injections every day since, and I’ll have to go for a follow-up at the hospital again in a month’s time. I’m so stressed... I’m really scared about this. I know it’s just the beginning, but I feel like giving up already...”

Qin Ya’s voice trailed off as she looked out the bedside window. She had been wrestling with her inner thoughts. She had never felt so lost in her life before.

Ever since she remarried Su Zhan, there wasn’t a single day where her heart felt at peace.

Lin Xinyan placed her hand on Qin Ya’s as she listened to her story. The former didn’t know what best to say to comfort her.

“Are you looking for a surrogate?” she asked. It would be impossible for Qin Ya to bear a child without a uterus.

Qin Ya nodded. “We’ve already found a suitable candidate.”

Lin Xinyan’s eyes widened in surprise. “That was faster than I thought!”

Qin Ya gave another helpless nod. “Grandma Su’s been really desperate,” she replied and looked up at Lin Xinyan. “She’s been making me drink these weird concoctions every day... I have no idea where she has gotten such recipes from. She claimed that they’re herbal supplements for my body, but the ingredients she used were ridiculous. You wouldn’t believe what she’s actually put into those so-called herbal soups...”

Qin Ya’s face turned pale as she explained. Lin Xinyan held onto her hands firmly. There had been times she felt tempted to advise Qin Ya to give up, but she had held her tongue each time nonetheless.

Grandma Su wasn’t a bad person. She was indeed known to be staunch, however, whenever it involved her old-fashioned mentality or personal interests.

If Lin Xinyan were to tell Qin Ya to give up, how would her friend survive being a part of the Su family in the days to come?

Lin Xinyan teared up with regret. "I'm so sorry... I shouldn't have helped Su Zhan convince you to reconcile with him. Su Zhan's a good person who's matured a lot after that incident. I also understand that it's difficult for him to disobey his grandma. She's the one who raised him, after all. I should've known better back then... I didn't realize these would all be so unfair to you..."

"Don't put the blame on yourself. It has nothing to do with you." Qin Ya knew she shouldn't make anyone responsible for her own decisions. If she herself wasn't so softhearted back then, nobody could've convinced her either way.

It was heartbreaking for Lin Xinyan to see Qin Ya pale so much that her face began to turn yellow. Lin Xinyan reached out a hand and gently caressed her cheek. "Oh, dear... I can't imagine how will it be like for you from now on..."

"I can only hope that everything eventually gets better," Qin Ya replied blankly.

Lin Xinyan nodded. Perhaps this would be the last hurdle she had to endure before her painful ordeal comes to an end. Perhaps the rainbow would finally appear after this one last storm.

"Feel free to tell me if there's anything you need," Lin Xinyan murmured. She wished so much to help ease Qin Ya's burdens. Yet again, she realized that there was nothing she could do.

Qin Ya put on a weary smile. "You shouldn't be worrying about me in your current state. Rest up as much as possible and focus on your own recovery first."

Her facade didn't make Lin Xinyan worry any less. "Who's the surrogate? What kind of a person is she?" the latter probed further.

She had to make sure that the surrogate was chosen carefully. If something were to go wrong with the childbearing process, Qin Ya's future could be at stake.

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Qin Ya replied, "We found her through an agency. Su Zhan and I looked through her profile together. She looks decent in the photo and is apparently quite highly educated as well..."

According to the agent who gave them the recommendation, the candidate in question possessed a Master's degree. It was difficult for many to imagine someone so well-educated to be involved in the surrogacy trade.

However, it wasn't totally unbelievable. That's how far some people would go for money.

"Is it a reliable source?" Lin Xinyan asked.

"It shouldn't be a problem," Qin Ya explained. "The agreed sum is one and a half million. We're only required to pay a hundred thousand as a deposit for now; the remaining balance won't be released until the surrogacy is successful. Besides, Su Zhan's and my personal details are kept confidential, so we don't foresee any serious trouble in the future."

Qin Ya sounded quite confident. The agency seemed professional. Su Zhan and herself had also made sure that they would verify the biological identity of the baby before settling up the remaining payment. There shouldn't be a need to worry about things like having their real child swapped with or replaced by a different child.

Lin Xinyan nodded. "Alright. You both must remain careful throughout."

"Okay..."

In that instant, there came a knock on the door. Qin Ya hushed herself immediately.

“Come in,” Lin Xinyan called out to the visitor. As the door creaked open, there stood Shao Yun. Tactful enough to not step into the room, he smiled as he remained in the doorway.

“What are you two whispering about in here?” he asked as soon as he noticed Qin Ya’s presence.

Lin Xinyan replied with a smile, “We’re just chatting away, uncle. Have you seen the baby?”

“Yes,” Shao Yun answered. “He looks a lot like you.”

“Oh, uncle... Aren’t you good at joking...” Lin Xinyan let out a curt laugh. How could it be possible for someone to determine a newborn baby’s resemblance to either of his parents? The child’s still so tiny!

“By the way, Yan, I’ll be heading back to C City soon.”

“Why the hurry?” Lin Xinyan was hoping for him to stay longer since the man had come all the way here.

“I’d love to spend more time here, but that Cheng fella’s been pestering me to return,” Shao Yun snickered. “The company’s in a busy period these days, so at least one of us has to stay behind. He would have been happy to come along otherwise. We had a rock-paper-scissors and I won, so I got to come here first. It’ll be his turn to come and visit the baby when I go back.”

Qin Ya couldn’t hide her amusement. “This is so hilarious! Deciding things by rock-paper-scissors even at this age? You both are so childish!”

“You won’t understand. It’s a de-stressing entertainment for us guys,” Shao Yun retorted as he looked towards Qin Ya.

“It’s a form of entertainment for immature guys. Grown-ups who’re mature wouldn’t do a game like this on something important,” Qin Ya added.

Amidst the lighthearted chatter, a sudden look of realization flickered briefly in Shao Yun’s eyes. “Ya, you look skinnier than before...” He glanced back and forth at both Qin Ya and Lin Xinyan. The latter actually seemed healthier and filled with luster despite having gone through a recent surgery. On the contrary, Qin Ya looked unwell.

“Well, I guess I’ve always been skinny...” Qin Ya smiled awkwardly.

“Are you sure Su Zhan’s been taking good care of you?” Shao Yun asked out of concern. “Look, you and Yan are both equally important to me. You have to tell me if anyone mistreats you, alright? I’ll make that person pay.”

“Alright, alright. I know that already,” Qin Ya reassured in a cheerful tone. She has always been grateful that Shao Yun had always treated her and his own niece as equals. He had shown just as much care towards herself as he did towards Lin Xinyan.

Moments later, Zong Jinghao came in and invited Shao Yun for dinner together with the others. He had to show some courtesy as it was a rare opportunity for Shao Yun to visit, after all. There was a decent canteen in the hospital, albeit with limited choices of food. In the end, the group decided to dine out for the evening.

Lin Xinyan had to stay behind, though.

In the meantime, Zhuang Zijin came to keep her daughter company as the rest left the hospital for their meal.

After finishing their food, the group parted ways. Zong Jinghao arranged a hotel for Shao Yun to stay the night in.

Su Zhan returned home with Qin Ya to find his grandma seated in the living room. She was watching the television while Chen Xue was busy peeling some

fruits by her side. "Su Zhan, Qin Ya, you're both back!" Chen Xue stood up and greeted them as soon as they entered the house.

She was still getting used to addressing Su Zhan and Qin Ya in this manner. Grandma Su had instructed her a few days ago, "Since you call me 'grandma', you should address them as if they're your older brother and sister."

She obeyed the woman's without question.

Grandma Su had decided that there was nothing inappropriate with how Chen Xue addressed them. She's still young after all. Su Zhan and Qin Ya had no preference either.

"Mm," Qin Ya gave a curt response to the greeting.

"Have you had dinner, Qin Ya? Would you like me to make something to eat?" Chen Xue smiled politely.

"No, it's fine. We ate out just now," Qin Ya replied.

Grandma Su waved a hand at them. "Come sit here with me."

Su Zhan walked ahead as Qin Ya followed him. "Is something the matter, Grandma?" he asked.

"It's nothing! Can't you both accompany me here even for a while?" Grandma Su was slightly upset. Her grandson hadn't paid her much attention ever since he got back together with Qin Ya. She felt neglected somewhat as if Qin Ya was the only person he cared for.

It was obvious that Grandma Su wasn't very happy. Though she was exhausted, Qin Ya tried to pull herself together and approached the old lady with a smile. "Are you upset, Grandma? I'm sorry if Su Zhan and I haven't been spending much time with you these days," she comforted.

Grandma Su reached out her hands and grabbed onto Qin Ya's. "You're such a sweetheart. You know me best."

Qin Ya looked down without a word.

"Xue, bring the herbal soup over for Ya," Grandma Su instructed Chen Xue.

The helper stood up obediently and went into the kitchen. Qin Ya shuddered as soon as she heard the word "soup."

She looked up with a glint of fear in her eyes. "Grandma... Is it alright if I pass on it today?"

"No," Grandma Su replied firmly.

Chen Xue soon returned from the kitchen, carefully holding a bowl of warm soup in her hands.

"Bring the soup into the room," Su Zhan instructed.

He knew Qin Ya was repelled by the liquid. *At least*, he thought, *she can secretly throw it away if she drinks it in the room...*

Grandma Su was aggravated. "What are you trying to do?" She glared at Su Zhan.

"I don't mean anything, grandma. We just had dinner a short while ago. It may be difficult for Ya to drink the soup right now. Give her some time to digest what she ate; she can have it later," Su Zhan appeased.

"No. She has to drink it now while it's warm." Grandma Su was determined to see Qin Ya drink the soup with her own eyes. She gestured for Chen Xue to hand the bowl over.

Qin Ya reluctantly took the bowl in her hands. She had no choice.

A sudden wave of nausea hit her. She breathed in slowly, fighting against a strong urge to vomit.

An intense stench emitted from the soup just as when she first started sipping the drink. In the beginning, she had thought that the unpleasant smell was just something she merely had to get used to. Until that one day, she saw Grandma Su return home with a bag filled with something that looked damp. It reeked of stale blood and rotting flesh.

When she asked about the bag's contents, Grandma Su had told her plainly that it was a Chinese medicine to make her herbal supplement. She refused to explain what exactly it was.

Qin Ya had thus waited for an opportunity when Grandma Su wasn't looking to sneakily take a photo of the contents. She looked the image up on the Internet, curious to find out about the ingredient that looked and smelled so obnoxious. When the search results appeared, she gasped in horror at what she saw on the screen...