

Stealing Your Heart Chapter 856

The sky was dark when Shen Peichuan drove to Lin Xinyan's place.

Sang Yu was playing with the baby in the living room, and the first thing Shen Peichuan did was ask her what happened that day.

"Don't you already know everything? It's just like what I said earlier," replied Sang Yu.

Shen Peichuan reached out to play with the baby too, but Sang Yu slapped his hands away and demanded, "Have you washed your hands?"

Shen Peichuan had no answer to that.

"You must wash your hands before playing with the baby," insisted Sang Yu.

"Never mind then, I won't play with the baby."

Shen Peichuan sat on the sofa, and Sang Yu inched toward him. She said, "I freaked out when I saw that box of money. I thought that I had gotten you in trouble. Fortunately, Xinyan helped me out and came up with a solution. Who knows what would happen if she hadn't?"

Sang Yu had her eyes on Shen Peichuan as she asked, "Did you piss someone off?"

Why else would someone go through all that to hurt us?

Shen Peichuan answered nonchalantly, "I'll deal with it."

Sang Yu replied, "Okay, I'm glad you have a plan. Oh, by the way, remember to thank Xinyan when we have dinner together, okay? I couldn't reach your phone at the time and was completely out of my wits. If Xinyan hadn't taught me what to do, things would've spiraled out of control."

Shen Peichuan nodded.

Creak!

The door to the bedroom opened. Zong Yanxi and Zong Yanchen stood on either side of Zong Qifeng to support him in. Zong Qifeng's health was deteriorating every day, and he had so much trouble walking that he needed others' help.

Shen Peichuan saw that the kids weren't able to help Zong Qifeng properly, so he got up to help the elderly man. "Here, let me help you to the sofa," offered Shen Peichuan.

Zong Qifeng nodded.

Zong Qifeng couldn't sit for long, either. He became worn out soon, so Shen Peichuan later helped the former back to the bedroom.

When it was time for dinner, Lin Xinyan put the food on the tray and brought it into the room.

Zong Qifeng didn't have any appetite, and he seemed uncomfortable while lying on the bed. Lin Xinyan quickly placed the tray on the table and suggested, "Let me get the doctor over."

Zong Qifeng replied weakly, "It's fine. Y-You can go."

That was not the first time Lin Xinyan saw Zong Qifeng being tortured by his illness. That pain was not something others could take away, and her heart ached to watch him like that.

Zhuang Zijin and Aunt Yu were there to deal with dinner, so Lin Xinyan wasn't needed. Lin Xinyan got out of the room and secretly called the doctor over.

She hung up after she heard the doctor say that he would hurry over.

Lin Xinyan was sorrowful and scared when she saw Zong Qifeng's condition worsening. She tilted her head up and stared at the stars dotting the night sky.

"Why are you sitting here?"

Zong Jinghao had just gotten home at the time. Lin Xinyan turned around and saw him there, so she stood up and walked to him before whispering, "I called Dr. Jiang over because I saw dad in pain."

Zong Jinghao stroked her arm and replied, "I understand. Let's head in. It's cold out here."

Lin Xinyan nodded and walked into the house with Zong Jinghao. The latter headed to Zong Qifeng's room immediately after.

Zong Qifeng would never call out to anyone in the house despite being in pain. He didn't want anyone to see him in a weakened state, including Zong Jinghao.

Lin Xinyan didn't have any appetite, but she acted like everything was fine. She sat at the dining table and got her kids some vegetables before telling them to eat more.

Shen Peichuan said, "I heard from Sang Yu that you helped us out today. Thank you."

Lin Xinyan drank some water before waving dismissively and saying, "Nah, I didn't do much. Besides, you don't need to be so polite with me."

Shen Peichuan had a grim expression on. He explained, "Things would not have gone that smoothly if Sang Yu hadn't shown up in time."

It would be bad if he had been suspended. The investigation wouldn't have been a mere procedural one under those circumstances.

"Just be careful, okay? This isn't a one-off thing, is it?"

Even Sang Yu could tell that something was off, so Lin Xinyan, who was older and had more experience, could see that it was a set-up as well.

Shen Peichuan replied, "Yeah. I'll deal with it as soon as possible."

The doctor dropped by soon after and prescribed some painkillers for Zong Qifeng. Zong Jinghao stood guard beside the bed the entire time. Before Shen Peichuan left, he went into the room to exchange some pleasantries with Zong Qifeng and Zong Jinghao.

On the day before the mid-autumn festival, a commotion arose in the police station.

The computer showed that an e-mail was sent by Wang Dui. He had shared a video with all of his colleagues, and the video was the footage that Shen Peichuan secretly took. It showed everyone what Wang Dui and Song Yaxin talked about the other day.

The bribing incident involving Shen Peichuan was a hot topic within the station, but everyone had since turned their focus to Wang Dui.

Wang Dui was stumped as well.

He never sent any e-mails, so how was the video shared from his account?

Wang Dui cursed, "I'm a f*cking idiot! Why did I get myself involved in this shit in the first place?"

Who hacked into my account and shared that video? Was it Song Yaxin? Or maybe Shen Peichuan?

Wang Dui could only come up with two suspects because those two were the only ones who were directly involved in the incident. The footage being leaked would not benefit Song Yaxin at all. It would even drag her father's good name down with it. The culprit probably isn't her.

All that was left on the list was Shen Peichuan.

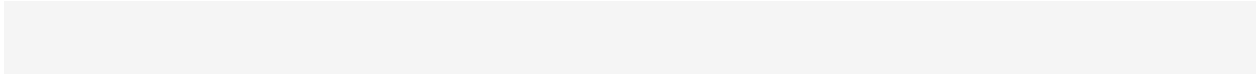
After all, the footage proved that Shen Peichuan was framed.

But... How did he get his hands on this footage? Did someone catch me and Song Yaxin talking and send him the footage to earn a favor from him? Or did he discover it all on his own?

Wang Dui's mind was in a mess. He couldn't tell for sure what had happened.

Regardless, the truth being exposed like that was bad for him.

"Wang Dui," said Chen while walking over. "Chief Shen asked you to go to his office."



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Wang Dui forced himself to be calm. He adjusted his tie and asked, "Why was I called over by Chief Shen?"

Chen replied, "I'm not sure. You'll find out after you meet him."

Wang Dui stopped asking. It was probably about the footage. Shen Peichuan has evidence of my dirt now, so what else could it be? He must be asking me over to torture me.

Wang Dui took a deep breath before knocking on the door to the chief's office.

A voice rang out from inside the office.

Wang Dui opened the door and entered.

Shen Peichuan was on the phone at the time, and when he saw Wang Dui there, the former gestured for the latter to take a seat.

Wang Dui pulled up a chair and sat in front of Shen Peichuan's desk. He was nervous, but he didn't show anything on his face.

An old wives' tale said that a superior, even if he were only one rank higher, could kill his subordinate. Things were grave for Wang Dui because Shen Peichuan was a few ranks higher than him. It was bad enough that Wang Dui had publicly gone against Shen Peichuan, but being caught red-handed? That left Wang Dui with nothing to defend himself.

"I got it," replied Shen Peichuan before hanging the phone up.

"I have nothing to say. Just punish me as you see fit," said Wang Dui as soon as Shen Peichuan put the phone down.

Wang Dui was exuding a prideful aura, and it was clear that he refused to back down.

Shen Peichuan leaned back and stared calmly at him. "Naturally, a punishment is inevitable," said Shen Peichuan. But then he continued, "Didn't you say that you want to take over case number 218? You can have it. I want it solved within ten days!"

"T-This is the punishment?" blurted Wang Dui, as his eyes bulged in disbelief.

"Yes, it is," answered Shen Peichuan.

Wang Dui paused before saying, "Don't try to be nice to me. I won't buy it. Just deal out your punishment." Wang Dui was still reluctant to accept anything from Shen Peichuan.

"That is my punishment to you. If you think it is too lenient, then I will shorten the deadline. You now have five days to solve the case," said Shen Peichuan.

He then picked up the mug from the table and took a sip of the tea inside. It seemed that the tea was too hot because Shen Peichuan put it back down after only a sip.

Wang Dui was proud, but he was a capable man, after all. That was why he was displeased when Shen Peichuan was promoted to deputy chief. The former always thought that Shen Peichuan only got promoted because Captain Song favored him. He was basically in denial and refused to accept that he wasn't as capable as Shen Peichuan.

Shen Peichuan had used Wang Dui's account to share that video because he wanted to cut off Wang Dui's means of escape.

Song Yaxin must think that Wang Dui has betrayed her. It is likely that she now sees Wang Dui as an enemy and will never cooperate with him again.

"Don't try to win me over," insisted Wang Dui.

Shen Peichuan chuckled. "Why would I need to win you over? I am just using fully utilizing my resources and my people to get the best results. If you fail to crack the case, I will punish you accordingly as well. Alright then, get to work."

Wang Dui couldn't make head nor tail of what Shen Peichuan was doing. The former asked, "Aren't you angry?"

"Of course I am," confessed Shen Peichuan. "I almost got suspended, so why wouldn't I be mad? However, I have never committed any sins, and I trust my people to clear my good name. I believe in the system and in my comrades. As for you... Well, I don't think that you're evil. You're only after me because you think you're just as capable as me but you're not being appreciated or recognized for your skills."

Shen Peichuan's gaze suddenly turned sharp before pointing out, "But have you ever considered that your lack of promotion had nothing to do with your skills? Have you given it a thought that perhaps the problem lies within you?"

Wang Dui didn't respond.

"Your attitude, for starters, needs to change. That's all I'm going to say," said Shen Peichuan, who didn't further reprimand him nor risk making things worse. "Go on then. I'm busy, so you can leave now."

Wang Dui shot a look at Shen Peichuan before standing up and leaving.

A single question kept circling in Wang Dui's mind. Is there really something wrong with my attitude?

Shen Peichuan breathed a sigh of relief after the door was closed. He picked up his hat and put it on before heading out of the office.

The call he had just received was from Captain Song, who had invited him to meet up.

It was likely that Captain Song had learned about what happened that day.

Shen Peichuan got out of the police station and drove to Captain Song's house.

It has been a while since I came here. I'm guessing that today's visit will be my last visit as well.

When Shen Peichuan reached the front door, he knocked on it.

The door was opened soon after. Captain Song and Song Yaxin were the only ones at home. Captain Song had gotten Mrs. Song out of the house because he knew that his wife was stubborn. She would try to defend Song Yaxin if she were around.

"Come in," said Captain Song.

Shen Peichuan entered with a grim expression.

Captain Song closed the door and got two glasses of water over. One glass was placed in front of Shen Peichuan.

He sat down and said, "I heard about it."

Shen Peichuan didn't respond because he knew that Captain Song hadn't finished speaking yet. There must be more the man wanted to say.

As expected, Captain Song continued, "I am partially responsible for this. I didn't teach my daughter well."

"Song Yaxin!" Captain Song called out.

Song Yaxin walked over.

"Apologize to Peichuan!"

Song Yaxin stubbornly said, "No, I..."

Slap!

Captain Song slapped Song Yaxin as soon as she spoke. He reprimanded angrily, "You embarrassed me! How could you do something so despicable? And you have the audacity to complain after that? How dare you?"

Shen Peichuan acted as if he didn't see a thing. He simply picked up his glass and sipped some water.

Song Yaxin had her hand over her face. Tears welled up in her eyes as she glared at Captain Song in disbelief. She muttered, "Dad, how could you lay a hand on me?"

He had never hit me before, regardless of how I acted up in the past. Yet, he slapped me today!

"I'm your daughter!" reminded Song Yaxin with reddened eyes.

"That is precisely why I slapped you. I regret not slapping you sooner. If I had, you wouldn't have turned out this way."

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Captain Song was so angry that his face turned red.

Song Yaxin couldn't stand it anymore.

"Dad, I'm your daughter! How could you protect someone else instead? I'm your flesh and blood, not him!" screamed Song Yaxin as she pointed at Shen Peichuan. She still didn't understand why her father did what he did.

Captain Song had his hand over his chest. He had never been that furious before. *Why is she so stupid and stubborn?*

"Are you trying to get my blood pressure so high that I die?" asked Captain Song between pants.

Tears fell from Song Yaxin's eyes. "You have always protected him, but you have never been that attentive to me, your own daughter, before. Growing up, have you ever paid any attention to me? Isn't it too late to teach me a lesson now?"

Captain Song stumbled backward and fell onto the sofa. He couldn't deny it. He had always been busy, so his wife was the one who raised their daughter. As such, Song Yaxin's attitude and beliefs were as unreasonable as his wife's.

"This is my fault. This is all my fault," murmured Captain Song with a broken heart.

He didn't have the time to teach his daughter right from wrong when she was a kid, and everything was too late now because she had already grown up.

Captain Song regretted his decision.

He regretted not spending time with his daughter.

"Dad!" called Song Yaxin. She hurried over to stroke his back and soothe his breathing. Captain Song looked terrible, and it seemed like he might pass away at any given moment.

Captain Song was getting too old. He had been a police chief for years and had always been a responsible boss. As such, everyone respected him. His former subordinates would greet him warmly even after he had retired. However...

My daughter turns out to be so despicable, and I am ashamed of it!

Captain Song panted as he stared at his daughter. He agreed with her earlier words. "You are right. I am your father, but I have never taught you right from wrong. You have made a mistake, and that is all my fault. I am wrong."

He continued, "I am your father, so I am partially responsible for your mistake. You won't apologize for it, so I will do it in your place!" He turned to Shen Peichuan. "I didn't teach her well..."

"Don't apologize to him, Dad. He thinks he can disrespect you just because he got promoted at work? You helped him grow to be the man he is today, but he is so petty and goes up against you for something so minor! That proves that he does not know how to be grateful and is not an honorable man," replied Song Yaxin.

"You..." muttered Captain Song. He was so angry that his features distorted, and he looked like he was on the verge of fainting.

Shen Peichuan sighed internally. He couldn't be mean to his superior, who once helped him out. *I hate that man's daughter so much that my very soul burns, but I can't let him suffer in her place.*

"Captain Song, I'm not angry."

Captain Song reached out to hold Shen Peichuan's hand. The former's breathing remained uneven. He took some time before he could say, "I'm so sorry. I wronged you."

Captain Song knew that his daughter had made more than one mistake.

"Yaxin, we have to be reasonable. Be honest. When has Shen Peichuan ever wronged you? He can't help it, nor can he force it, if he doesn't love you. You've made so many mistakes, but I've always been reluctant to scold you. It's like you said. I never paid much attention to you, so I have no right to scold you. I have pampered you too much and turned a blind eye to all your mistakes," said Captain Song.

Captain Song then panted and stroked his chest to even his breathing.

He added, "They say that spoiling a child is equivalent to killing the child. The saying is true, and I was wrong. I should never have spoiled you." He had always seemed strong and could handle any hardship, but now he had gotten to the point where he teared up. That showed just how heartbroken he was.

Song Yaxin was stunned. She had always seen her father as a powerful figure, but he had fallen to the point where he cried in front of the man who used to be his subordinate. The strong stance and aura he once exuded were long gone, and he no longer cared about his pride. Looking at Captain Song in that state, Song Yaxin's heart shattered. She hugged her father and cried in his arms before she admitted, "I was wrong, Dad."

Captain Song stroked his daughter's head and said, "If you're a good person, others will see that sooner or later. Likewise, if you're evil, others will eventually figure that out too. You should lead a life as honorably as you can. Think back to your past. How many mistakes have you made since your divorce? Given Peichuan's character, he would've done right by you if you had stayed loyal to him back then. You made a mistake and didn't treasure what you had. You can't blame others for that."

Song Yaxin couldn't refute that. Perhaps she had decided to finally listen to her father's words.

Captain Song sighed and turned to Shen Peichuan. The former said, "If I have any credibility left at all, I'd like to cash it all in and ask that you do this old man a favor. Please forgive her this one last time. I promise that she will not come after you again."

Captain Song had already lowered himself to that extent, so Shen Peichuan couldn't be mean either. The latter promised, "I won't go after her for this. I was at fault, too. I made a promise and backed out of it afterward. That is my fault. I'm sorry, Yaxin."

Song Yaxin had made a lot of mistakes, and that was an undeniable fact. However, Shen Peichuan wasn't completely innocent either. He admitted his mistake and hoped that Song

Yaxin could learn from the whole ordeal. He hoped that she would stop focusing on others' shortcomings and see that she was not perfect either.

In short, Shen Peichuan wished that Song Yaxin could see her own faults and learn to see the good in others.

Song Yaxin kept crying in her father's arms. Between sobs, she replied, "I don't need an apology from you. Leave, and never show up in front of me again!"

Sigh!

Captain Song sighed once more. "I suppose it's true that children truly reflect their parents' sins."

Shen Peichuan stood up and said, "Take care, Captain Song. No one will spread any news about this. Please know that I am only doing this for your sake. I would not have been that merciful to others. After all, this incident truly affected me. The report came so soon after I got my promotion, and there are many who are making fun of me and questioning my authority."

Shen Peichuan had given his promise because he respected Captain Song. That was also his way of showing Song Yaxin that he held no grudge against her. However, his words were clear. He had a limit, and the consequences would be dire if she crossed that line again.

Captain Song was a smart man, so naturally, he got Shen Peichuan's implied message. The former promised, "Don't worry..."

"We're even now and we won't ever have any interaction from now on! Go live your life, and I'll live mine," interrupted Song Yaxin, who cut her father's words short. She glared at Shen Peichuan and shouted, "You're not the only man in this world! In fact, you are nothing! There are plenty of better and more capable men out there."

Shen Peichuan's expression remained grim. He stared calmly at her and replied, "I truly wish you the best. After all, we've known each other for a long time, and I have always respected you."

Song Yaxin was stunned. Compared to the calm and serenity in Shen Peichuan's eyes, her screams seemed ridiculous and unreasonable. She couldn't speak for a moment there.

"I'll leave now. Take care, Captain Song," said Shen Peichuan before he turned around and left.

A few minutes later, Shen Peichuan got out of the elevator and took a deep breath of the fresh air at the entrance. He exhaled and let go of all the stress and pressure on him while standing up straight. Then he took a step forward and walked away.

On the day of the mid-autumn festival, Shen Peichuan brought Sang Yu to the supermarket to buy a ton of stuff. That included the festival snack – mooncake.

They didn't get it for themselves, though. They bought it as a gift because the festival was all about being close to family. There was no point in the two of them celebrating since they were the only ones at home. Hence, they brought the gift to Lin Xinyan's.

Shen Peichuan and Sang Yu had just arrived at the entrance when they saw Dr. Jiang there. For some reason, the doctor had a grim expression on his face.

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Shen Peichuan approached the doctor and asked about Zong Qifeng's deteriorating condition.

Dr. Jiang nodded grimly. "I'm afraid tonight may be his last. His condition is deteriorating quickly."

When Sang Yu heard Dr. Jiang's words, she anxiously tightened her grip on Shen Peichuan's hand. She could imagine how solemn the atmosphere was in the house.

Shen Peichuan maintained his composure as he held onto Sang Yu's hands. "Once you enter the house, act as if you don't know about it. Just do whatever that's expected of you."

During such times, the more careful one was the more sensitive it became.

Sang Yu nodded.

Shen Peichuan brought out the mooncakes and presents that he bought from the trunk. After all, today was a festive celebration, and it wouldn't be right to arrive empty-handed.

With the gifts in his hands, he asked, "Dr. Jiang, aren't you going in?"

Dr. Jiang replied, "I'm getting some fresh hair. I'll return in a while."

Shen Peichuan nodded before entering together with Sang Yu.

Zhuang Zijin was holding the baby in the hall, while Yanchen and Yanxi were in Zong Qifeng's room. She had folded many paper cranes and hung them all over the house with Cheng Yuwen's help.

Today, Zong Qifeng requested to have dumplings with spicy beef stuffing.

Cheng Yuxiu loved to make them during every festival. Despite feeling ambivalent about it, he always ate a lot in the end. Today, he felt like having them for some inexplicable reason.

While Lin Xinyan made the noodles, Zong Jinghao cut the chili. By the time her noodles were done, Zong Jinghao was still cutting. She took over the knife. "Let me do it. You should chop up the meat."

Chopping the meat didn't require much skill. After washing the meat, Lin Xinyan placed it on the chopping board and handed Zong Jinghao the cleaver. As he accepted it grimly, he began smashing the cleaver down again and again.

His movements were very dramatic.

Lin Xinyan gave him a look but didn't comment. All she did was continue dicing the chili into little pieces.

After half an hour, the meat was finally minced. Lin Xinyan got him to wash his hands. "I'll marinate it."

"Let me do it. Just tell me what to add." Zong Jinghao took out a big transparent glass bowl from the cupboard and place the minced meat into it. After that, Lin Xinyan passed him the pepper juice that she had boiled earlier. "There's half a bowl of juice here. Mixed them into the minced meat three separate times. Every time, stir them till they have been absorbed by the meat."

Zong Jinghao did as he was instructed.

While he was marinating the stuffing, Lin Xinyan began to roll the dumpling skin.

While rolling it, she watched Zong Jinghao and gave him further instructions. "Green onion, ginger, salt... lastly, add the diced chili and stir well."

Zong Jinghao did exactly as he was told.

Meanwhile, Lin Xinyan was done with her dumpling skin and she taught Zong Jinghao how to fold them. Although he didn't manage to fold them perfectly, it was still enough to do the job.

“Just like that.” While Lin Xinyan left him to fold the dumplings, she began to flatten the noodles.

No one else entered the kitchen as it may be Zong Qifeng’s last meal. So everyone gave the two of them their last opportunity to perform a filial act.

As night fell, they managed to prepare the dumplings after two hours.

While Lin Xinyan boiled the water, Zong Jinghao put the dumplings into the wok to cook them.

After about ten minutes, the dumplings were ready. Lin Xinyan fished them out and plated them. Then, she took out a tray from the cupboard and placed the plate on it. Furthermore, she prepared some vinaigrette as dipping sauce before adding some minced garlic.

“Take this up.”

Zong Jinghao lifted his gaze towards her. Lin Xinyan repeated, “Go.”

Straightening his posture, he turned and walked out of the kitchen.

After cleaning up, Lin Xinyan saw that Shen Peichuan and Sang Yu were there. She asked, “When did you arrive?”

Sang Yu approached her. “We’ve been here a while.”

She reached out to hug Lin Xinyan. “Tonight, Peichuan and I will stay and accompany you.”

Lin Xinyan nodded. With a hoarse voice, she instructed, “If anything happens, please look after the children for me.”

Sang Yu replied, “Don’t worry, we will take care of them.”

Sitting down on the sofa, Lin Xinyan pulled Zong Yanxi into her embrace. Today, she had been good as she snuggled up in her mother’s arms.

The baby had also slept. Hence, Zhuang Zijin stood up and brought the baby into the room.

Meanwhile, Zong Qifeng's room door opened and Zong Jinghao walked out with an empty plate. Looking at Lin Xinyan, he whispered. "Another plate please."

Lin Xinyan was stunned briefly before placing her daughter onto the sofa. She stood up and headed into the kitchen.

Zong Jinghao followed her.

She turned on the stove to boil more water. "Did he finish everything?"

Recently, Zong Qifeng ate very little during mealtimes. As the plate contained a lot of dumplings, they expected him to only finish half of it. Now that he ate everything and still wanted more, it caused her to worry.

"Eating too much..."

"He said that it tasted the same as mom's and wanted more. So, just let him have it."

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After turning on the stove, Lin Xinyan prepared another bowl for Zong Jinghao to serve.

In the afternoon, Aunt Yu and Zhuang Zijin had prepared a feast for dinner. However, the food was barely touched as no one had any appetite.

This time, Zong Qifeng only ate two of the dumplings that Zong Jinghao brought in. He requested, "Ask... Yuwen to come in."

Zong Jinghao told Cheng Yuwen that his father wanted to see him.

With reddened and misty eyes, Cheng Yuwen sat by the bedside. "Whatever instructions you have, just tell me."

Zong Qifeng said, "I have something to tell you... once I'm gone, you will have to take care of them."

Cheng Yuwen knew who he was talking about and replied, "Don't worry. After all, isn't your son Yuxiu's son too? Your daughter-in-law and her children are also my relatives. As long as I'm around, I will definitely watch over them for you."

Zong Qifeng nodded slightly to signal his satisfaction.

"I... am likely going to see her soon."

His voice had lost its strength.

Cheng Yuwen held his hand. For some unknown reason, he began to tremble and seemed to have something to say. However, tears flowed in place of his words.

Zong Qifeng smiled faintly. "What are you crying for?"

Cheng Yuwen wiped his face. Despite his advanced age, he still wasn't able to control his emotions. He replied, "I don't want to but I just can't help myself."

Zong Qifeng could feel it coming and he was ready. "Won't everyone reach this stage one day?"

Life and death is part of nature. No one can change it.

As his breathing became heavy and his gaze turned cloudy, his mind was still fully present. He mumbled, "Jinghao..."

Cheng Yuwen immediately understood and quickly called Zong Jinghao over.

When Zong Jinghao approached him, Zong Qifeng seemed to be in a daze. He asked, "Am I feeling tired?"

He mumbled without any reason.

Zong Jinghao didn't answer and he watched his father's eyes gradually become bloodshot.

Ever since Cheng Yuxiu came back, his relationship with Zong Qifeng began to deteriorate. After he left home, he seldom returned and both father and son rarely spent time together.

Throughout his life, it was filled with hatred, which was what broke his heart the most.

Furthermore, he felt that had missed out on a lot. Too much in fact.

"I know that you're lonely..." Suddenly, Zong Qifeng raised his hand while his fingers seem to be grabbing something. Zong Jinghao bent down, caught his hand, and held it tight.

Zong Qifeng continued in a soft and broken voice. "It was my fault that your childhood wasn't happy. I shouldn't have kept the secret from you and caused you to miss out on so much, especially the warmth of a happy family."

If I told him about the truth from the very beginning, wouldn't it be nice for the three of us to live together as a family?

It was my fault for causing both Cheng Yuxiu and Zong Jinghao to have regrets.

I too have my regrets.

Letting out a gentle sigh, he was overwhelmed with sadness.

Zong Jinghao could feel the tightness in his throat.

Zong Qifeng blinked and waved his hand. "Tell Yan to come. I have something to say to her."

Zong Jinghao called for Lin Xinyan to enter.

When he saw Lin Xinyan, Zong Qifeng smiled. He liked her as a daughter-in-law a lot and was confident in her. "Yan, you have to take care of Jinghao."

Standing beside Zong Jinghao, she nodded. "I will."

"You're very responsible which puts my mind at ease. It's just that I regret not giving him a happy family before he married you..."

In a blink of an eye, Lin Xinyan's tears gushed out. Wiping them quickly, she looked at Zong Jinghao and replied, "He is my husband and the father of my children. We are a family. I will care for him and provide him with a family to rely on."

'Good, very good...' Zong Qifeng looked as if he was breathless. When he began to heave, Lin Xinyan feared for the worst. "Dad..."

She thought she had managed to maintain her composure. However, she choked the moment she tried to say something.

Although Zong Jinghao wasn't feeling as emotional as Lin Xinyan, his body still trembled nervously.

After two minutes of catching his breath, Zong Qifeng reassured them, "I'm alright..."

"Where's Ruixi and Xichen? Why aren't they here?" One of his regrets relates to his three grandchildren.

They were young, energetic, and loved to accompany him. When Zong Jinghao was little, they were never close. Hence, he tried to make up for the lost opportunity in Zong Jinghao's childhood through his grandchildren instead.

Given how Zong Yanchen resembled Zong Jinghao when he was young, Zong Qifeng loved him as a young Zong Jinghao and tried to redeem himself for his past mistakes.

Lin Xinyan called the children over. She knelt beside them and instructed. "Grandpa wants to see both of you. Whatever Grandpa says later, you must agree to it, understand?"

Zong Yanchen was cognizant of what was expected of him. While Zong Yanxi who became especially sensible under the grim atmosphere nodded obediently.

Lin Xinyan stood up and led the children into the room. After which, she put them by the bed.

When he saw the two children, Zong Qifeng's eyes lit up.

"Xichen."

He reached out to caress Zong Yanchen's forehead and remarked, "You resemble your father."

Zong Yanchen sprawled himself on the bed. "I also look like you."

Zong Qifeng grinned in response.

Zong Yanxi too lay on the bed and put Grandpa's hand on her face. "Grandpa, I look like you too."

Zong Qifeng replied, "Both of you are my grandchildren.... naturally, you will resemble me."

She reached out her hand to touch Grandpa's face. However, all she felt were bones as he lost a lot of weight when he was sick.

"You have to study hard and always obey Mom and Dad."

"We will," Both children answered at the same time.