

Stealing Your Heart Chapter 926

After a brief hesitation, Zong Yanxi caved in and told Tian Qifeng to head back to the company.

She decided that Gu Xian and Guan Jing could meet anytime, but Jiang Mohan was the reason for her revenge.

If he sensed something was amiss, her previous arrangements would be in vain.

When she returned to Hengkang Group, Jiang Mohan was waiting for her by the road. A strong sense of foreboding nagged at her.

Soon, the car came to a stop, and she alighted from the car.

“President Jiang-”

Before she could greet him, Jiang Mohan gripped her hand tightly.

“What are you doing?” Zong Yanxi frowned and demanded. “You can tell me what the loopholes are. I can fix them.”

Ignoring her, Jiang Mohan pulled her to his car.

At that moment, Tian Qifeng immediately knew something was off. He got off the car at once and stood in Jiang Mohan’s way. “Please let her go.”

Meanwhile, Zong Yanxi was struggling to free herself.

Jiang Mohan’s gaze darkened. “I need to talk to Ms. Lin, so you better stay out of this.”

“I’m Ms. Lin’s bodyguard. Since you’re harming her, I have to step in.” Tian Qifeng raised both his arms.

“Ms. Lin, if you still want to collaborate with me, tell him to leave.” Jiang Mohan didn’t seem like he was going to release her soon. He looked at her directly and said, “I want to talk to you in private. Why are you so wary of me?”

Nevertheless, Zong Yanxi refused to give in. “We’re at your company. It’s better for us to talk here, right?”

“I don’t want to do it here,” uttered Jiang Mohan in his deep voice. It might be just his guess, but now he was 70% sure that she was Zong Yanxi.

Otherwise, she wouldn’t be so against the idea of talking to him outside of work.

It was getting late, but the both of them stubbornly stood their ground.

In the end, Jiang Mohan released his grip and announced, “Since you refused to trust me, our partnership will come to an end.”

“We’ve signed a contract. Hence, you’ll need to pay a fine for breaching the contract.”

“That fine is nothing to me.”

Hearing that, Zong Yanxi was rendered speechless.

Indeed, that amount was nothing to him.

“Okay, then, let’s talk in private,” she changed her mind and declared.

“But-” Tian Qifeng was about to stop her because Jiang Mohan obviously had an ulterior motive. He was worried that man might harm Zong Yanxi.

Zong Yanxi merely interrupted. “I’ll be fine. You can leave now. President Jiang and I need to work.”

She met Jiang Mohan’s gaze and said, “Let’s go.”

Jiang Mohan cast a glance at her before heading to his car. Looking at the unmoving Tian Qifeng, Zong Yanxi repeated, “You can leave now.”

She then entered Jiang Mohan’s car.

“President Jiang, you’re so persistent about talking to me in private. I don’t understand your intention.”

Jiang Mohan glanced at her through the rearview mirror. “You’ll find out soon enough.”

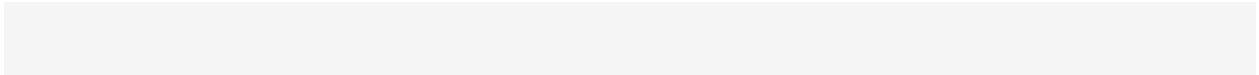
The vehicle exited the city after half an hour. As it was peak hour, it took over an hour for them to arrive at their destination – Repulse Marina.

As it was nighttime, they could not see the blue hue of the ocean clearly. Walking down the brightly lit path, rows of yachts floating near the dock.

“President Jiang, why are you bringing me here late at night?” Zong Yanxi wrung her hands together anxiously.

This place held too much of their past.

After the car came to a halt, Jiang Mohan got down and opened the door for her. “We’re here, Ms. Lin.”



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Zong Yanxi hesitated before forcing herself to smile calmly. "President Jiang, what a surprise. Are we here to talk about work?"

Jiang Mohan said nothing as he gestured for her to go ahead, and she stepped out of the car.

After that, Jiang Mohan led the way. But since there was no one here at night, the only sound that could be heard was the waves crashing against the shore.

They reached the ramp, and he stretched his hand out while saying, "There's a slight slope here. Let me hold you."

Zong Yanxi was familiar with this place, so it didn't really pose a risk to her. But she was pretending to be Lin Ruixi, who was here for the first time. Hence, she acted all curious and looked around before declining him politely. "Thank you for your concern. I'll be careful. My boyfriend gets jealous easily. He'll get upset if he knows that I held another man's hand."

Every time Jiang Mohan heard her mention "boyfriend", his chest would feel stuffy.

With that, he retracted his hand.

After walking over the ramp, Jiang Mohan unlocked the door of the yacht.

The interior of the yacht was luxuriously decorated.

"Ms. Lin, please make yourself at home." Jiang Mohan headed toward the wine cabinet.

Zong Yanxi glanced around the yacht as her blood boiled.

She tried hard to appear as composed as possible, ignoring the discomfort within.

“President Jiang, is this your private yacht?” She sat on the sofa, pretending to glance around curiously. Deep down, her heart was in turmoil.

Jiang Mohan poured two glasses of liquor and came to her. Then, he took the seat opposite her and handed her one glass.

“This isn’t mine. To be exact, it belongs to my ex-wife,” Jiang Mohan explained, his gaze fixated on her.

Zong Yanxi let out a chuckle. “Really? Your ex-wife must be really happy.”

Jiang Mohan took a sip on his liquor and glanced around the interior. He pointed at a painting on the wall and said, “I gifted her this yacht. She hung the paintings up because she said it was too empty in here.”

“President Jiang, let’s get back to work. You said there’s a loophole in my proposal. Can I know what it is?” Zong Yanxi wanted to finish the discussion as soon as possible and leave.

“Ms. Lin, do you know no matter how detailed your plan is, something unexpected might happen?” Jiang Mohan was insinuating something.

Zong Yanxi knew what he hinting at, but he hadn’t suspected her at all after signing the contract. Hence, she was confident he knew nothing.

“Oh? Please enlighten me, President Jiang.”

Jiang Mohan was disappointed as she remained unfazed. If she is indeed Zong Yanxi, is she unfazed because she’s heartbroken?

After that, he removed a cloth covering a photo frame. It was their wedding photo.

In the photo, Zong Yanxi was holding his arm as they stood in front of the Eiffel Tower. She was wearing an ivory white wedding dress while he was dressed smartly in a suit.

When Zong Yanxi spotted the photo, her fingers twitched instinctively. Her slight movement was caught by Jiang Mohan’s eyes.

He was now certain she was Zong Yanxi.

“She said P City is the most romantic city in the world. We took our wedding photos and had our honeymoon-”

“President Jiang!” Zong Yanxi cut him off rudely and shot him a forced smile. “I’m here to work, not to listen to your past with your ex-wife. I’m really busy, so please, can we go straight to the topic?”

A smile flitted across Jiang Mohan’s lips. She can’t keep pretending, right?

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"Yanxi, do you know why I said that to you?" Jiang Mohan gazed at her.

Zong Yanxi was taken aback. She regained her composure almost immediately and replied, "You're mistaken. I'm not Yanxi. I am Lin Ruixi."

"I'm sorry. I thought you were my ex-wife. After all, you resemble her a lot." Jiang Mohan was staring at her greedily. "You remind me of her."

Hearing that, Zong Yanxi turned away. "President Jiang, you're drunk."

"It will be great if I'm actually drunk." Jiang Mohan chuckled deeply.

He then stood up and went to the window, staring at the pitch darkness outside. "We fell in love with each other, and she loved me deeply. Do you know that she gave herself to me here."

Zong Yanxi bit her lip so she wouldn't lose control. She was afraid she'd demand an answer as to why he harmed her.

Although it took her some time, she finally resisted the urge to do so.

"President Jiang, are you done?"

"She loved to give me back hugs by wrapping her arm around my neck and kissing my cheek. She often snuggled in my arms, telling me how much she loves me." Suddenly, he spun around to look at her. "Will she fall out of love with me one day?"

Zong Yanxi pursed her lips. She used to love giving him back hugs because she realized he liked to be alone when he was troubled. Thus, she wanted to cheer him up by surprising him with a back hug and asking cheekily, "Guess who?"

Every time, he'd expose her without hesitation like the boring man he was.

However, she wouldn't mind and would always say, "Congratulations, you're correct! As a reward, I'll give you a kiss!"

She knew Jiang Mohan's parents didn't love him, so she was always expressive. As his wife, she wanted him to know there was still someone who loved him, even though his parents didn't care for him at all.

However, Jiang Mohan had lied to her. She had no idea his mother was actually his stepmother.

Back then, she wanted to shower him with love so he'd know what having a family was like.

In the end, he was the one who crushed all her affections.

"If you didn't do her any wrong, I believe your ex-wife would be happy no matter where she is. On the other hand, if you treated her shabbily, she might curse you to go to hell."

Jiang Mohan's grip tightened on his glass as his heart clenched in pain. "Will she?"

Zong Yanxi grinned. "You seemed in love with her, so I don't think you've done something to make her despise you."

The moment she said that, Jiang Mohan's expression soured.

I've hurt her. Deeply.

Does she still hate me?

Zong Yanxi glanced at her watch. "President Jiang, it's late. Shall we talk about work?"

Jiang Mohan was still gripping his glass tightly. "I'm not satisfied with your proposal, Ms. Lin."

"Why?" Zong Yanxi got to her feet.

"The first round of budget is too high."

Jiang Mohan was picking on her deliberately. The proposal was perfect – in fact, it was too perfect to be true.

Thus, he was purposely finding fault to spend more time with her.

"President Jiang, don't make me question your professionalism. The first round of budget is the lowest I can come up with. Now, you're telling me it's too high?"

"You can doubt me. However, you should know that I am suspicious of you, too," came his reply.

"Why would you be suspicious of me?" Zong Yanxi was nervous.

He seems to be insinuating something, but I can't figure out what it is.

Jiang Mohan strode forward abruptly. At his advance, Zong Yanxi staggered back to keep a distance from him. However, he grabbed her arm and pulled her toward him.

"Ah!" Zong Yanxi shrieked in fear at his sudden action. "W-What are you doing?"

Smirking, Jiang Mohan answered, "I can approve your proposal under one condition."

"What is it?"

Leaning down, Jiang Mohan met her gaze and spoke in his deep voice. "Be my girlfriend."

Zong Yanxi dug her nails into her palms. How heartless. I've been dead for a year. Ling Wei was with him the whole time. Now that she's in jail, he's finding another woman?

"I have a boyfriend, so please show some respect." She tried to break free from his grip. But the more she struggled, the tighter his grip was. He even clamped an arm around her waist to lock her in his embrace.

"Let me go!" Zong Yanxi was shocked.

Despite that, Jiang Mohan refused to let her go, no matter how hard she struggled. "Ms. Lin, you seem excited. Do you want something to happen to us?"

Zong Yanxi was shocked into silence.

"Y-You're a scum! If my boyfriend finds out, he'll come for you!"

"Oh? Does he like you that much?"

"Yes, he does! He adores me!"

"Then do you like him?" Jiang Mohan whispered right by her ear. Back then, Zong Yanxi was very sensitive. Every time he did this to her, she would blush at once.

Even though they slept together every night, she was still shy around him.

At that point of time, Zong Yanxi was trying hard to be patient. Her body was trembling as she was tensed up. "Of course, I love my boyfriend."

"Hmm... So you like younger men. I believe you're older than your boyfriend, right?"

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“Does love have anything to do with age?” Zong Yanxi asked him instead with a tough attitude. “If you don’t let me go, President Jiang, I’ll sue you for harassment.”

Jiang Mohan let out a throaty chuckle. “You resemble her with your silver tongue.”

Zong Yanxi turned her head away in a panic. “You look like a gentleman, but it turns out you’re a hypocrite who bullies a woman!”

Jiang Mohan leaned in to press his lips against her ear. The moment their skin touched, Zong Yanxi widened her eyes as goosebumps ran through her skin.

Smirking, he said in an alluring voice, “Ms. Lin, you have to make some sacrifices if you want to achieve your goals. If you can be my girlfriend, I’ll gladly give you what you want.”

Zong Yanxi refused firmly, “I’ll never betray my boyfriend!”

“I don’t believe you.”

After speaking, he let go of Zong Yanxi.

He was certain that she would definitely go to him.

Zong Yanxi shot him a fierce glare. “Shameless!”

“Since you think so, I won’t refute it.” Jiang Mohan sat on the sofa and poured himself a glass of wine.

He tilted his head back and downed it. When he put down the glass, he added, “I look forward to your new proposal, Ms. Lin.”

Clenching her fists tightly in anger, Zong Yanxi replied coldly, "I'll definitely come up with a proposal that you're satisfied with, President Jiang!"

After that, she strode out of the cabin and went down the ramp. Tian Qifeng was seen leaning on the lamppost, seemingly waiting for her.

"Didn't I tell you to leave? Why are you still here?" Zong Yanxi frowned.

"I'm responsible for protecting you. Although you ask me to leave, I can't actually leave. Let's get in the car. I'll take you back to the hotel." Unlocking the car, Tian Qifeng walked toward the car and opened the door.

Zong Yanxi walked over and got into the car. Suddenly remembering that she had to arrange for Guan Jing to meet Gu Xian today, she asked, "What time is it?"

"Nine o'clock," replied Tian Qifeng as he started the car.

He checked the time a moment ago as he was planning to go inside to find Zong Yanxi if she still did not come out.

"It's nine o'clock?" Zong Yanxi hurriedly took out her phone. She was worried that Gu Xian would be anxious as they were supposed to meet Guan Jing for dinner.

"Are you calling Mr. Guan?" Tian Qifeng looked at her from the rearview mirror. "If so, I can only tell you that he's already left. He couldn't reach you on your phone, so he asked me to pass you the message."

"What? He's left?" She took out her phone, but the screen wouldn't light up as it had turned off automatically when it ran out of battery.

No wonder I didn't receive Gu Xian's call, either.

I promised to let him meet Guan Jing but I stood him up. He must be worried now that he can't get in touch with me.

She told Tian Qifeng Gu Xian's address; she wanted to find him first.

However, Gu Xian was not home when she reached his place. And given it was long past working hours, there was also no one was in his office except for security guards.

“Why don’t you explain to him tomorrow?” Tian Qifeng suggested.

Having no other options, Zong Yanxi could only return to the hotel first and have her phone charged before she called him.

The car soon arrived at the main entrance of the hotel. When she got off the car, she saw Gu Xian sitting by the fountain at the hotel entrance, looking dejected.

She hurried over to him.

“Gu Xian.”

As Gu Xian looked up and saw her, he stood up in surprise but fury soon took over his face. “Zong Yanxi, what are you trying to do? You’ve promised to let me meet him. I started preparing in the afternoon, deciding on the clothes to wear and thinking of what to say. Although I was nervous and hesitant, I still wanted to see him and talk to him. But when it was time, I couldn’t reach you at all. If you don’t want me to meet him, you can just tell me directly. Why lie to me again and again?”

When he could not find her, he was worried sick that she might be in danger.

Yet, when he saw her standing before him perfectly fine, he thought of how insignificant he was to her.

She had known that person from the beginning, but she did not tell him. When she later explained herself to him, he expressed his understanding.

What about this time round?

Does she have my interests at heart?

“I treat you sincerely as my friend, but you’ve deceived me again and again!”

“I’m sorry. I didn’t mean it. I was caught in something unexpected.” It was her fault that she messed up. “I’m sorry, Gu Xian. I’m really sorry.”

Since she apologized, Gu Xian did not think he should continue berating her. However, he was still displeased deep down as he felt that she did not care about him.

"I'll give you a chance to make up for it. I want to meet him at noon tomorrow."

"Gu Xian..." Zong Yanxi really felt bad for him. "He has already left, so you won't be able to see him tomorrow..."

"Zong Yanxi!" Gu Xian was truly angry at her now. "Are you messing with me?"

"No, no." Zong Yanxi stepped forward and took his hand while she explained, "I really didn't mean it. I was delayed by Jiang Mohan who found fault with me."

Gu Xian looked at her. "What did he find fault with?"

"My proposal."

Gu Xian knitted his brows. "Isn't that proposal done perfectly?"

He knew the significance of that proposal, as well as the fact that Zong Yanxi was trying to set up Jiang Mohan.

"Did he become suspicious?" Gu Xian asked.

Zong Yanxi did not know, either. What happened tonight seemed very unusual, yet she could not tell whether he knew it or not.

She shook her head. "I have no idea what he's up to as well."

"He's a tough nut to crack. Maybe he's plotting something in secret." Gu Xian knew Jiang Mohan's character—it was widely rumored that the latter was extremely ruthless. Considering that he could get to where he was today on his own, his ability could not be underestimated.

"Let's go up." Zong Yanxi was feeling a growing sense of uneasiness because of what happened tonight.

Gu Xian followed her upstairs.

After entering the room, Zong Yanxi sat on the sofa, feeling down and restless. If Jiang Mohan realized that this was actually a trap, he definitely would not jump right in, and her plan would amount to nothing.

She didn't want to rely on her parents, but she couldn't get anything done on her own.

Gu Xian was angry initially. Seeing her like this, he put away his anger and comforted her. "If he knows something, he will definitely stop collaborating with you and won't bother to nitpick on your proposal. There may be some details that we've missed out on. We can just redo it."

Zong Yanxi rested her head on Gu Xian's shoulder. "You know, Gu Xian, I really hate him."

Gu Xian's body stiffened as he slowly turned his head to look at her. At such a close distance, he could smell her fragrance.

He raised his arm wanting to wrap it around her shoulder, but paused mid-air. After hesitating for a long time, he still didn't dare to put his arm on her shoulder. He quietly withdrew it instead.

"I will help you, so just tell me if you need me."

"Why are you so good to me when I couldn't help you at all?" Zong Yanxi looked up at him. "Gu Xian, I'll definitely arrange for you to meet him."

"Alas." Gu Xian heaved a sigh. "Forget it. Maybe it's not the time yet, which is why it hasn't worked out. I won't blame you anymore, and..."

He cast his eyes down to conceal some of his emotions as he went on, "We're friends, so of course I have to be good to you."

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Zong Yanxi let out a sigh. "You have a lot on your plate, and yet you still show concern for me."

Suddenly, she looked up at him. "You don't have a crush on me, do you?"

Zong Yanxi teased him on purpose in an attempt to release her pent-up feelings.

Gu Xian evaded eye contact with her as he replied with a smile, "I like young girls, not older women."

Zong Yanxi was rendered speechless.

"I don't look old, do I?"

"But you don't look young, either."

Pretending to be angry, Zong Yanxi retorted, "Don't walk next to me from now on, just in case others mistake me for your aunt."

Gu Xian chortled. "Are you angry?"

"Will you be happy if I say that you look like an old man?" Zong Yanxi asked rhetorically.

"I really want to be an old man, but do you think I can hide my youth and beauty?"

Gu Xian had once again left her speechless.

"What a narcissist," Zong Yanxi couldn't help but roast him.

Grinning, Gu Xian turned her head to face him. "Tell me honestly, am I handsome?"

Zong Yanxi slapped his hand away. "If you want to speak, go ahead. Don't touch me."

It was Gu Xian's turn to be at a loss for words.

"It's getting late. You should go back," declared Zong Yanxi as she rose to her feet. She wanted to be alone to clear her head.

Gu Xian glanced at her and replied, "Okay, I'll leave first then. Feel free to call me if you need me."

"Okay," Zong Yanxi agreed.

After Gu Xian left, she lay on the bed without washing up. After a long while of tossing and turning, she was still unable to fall asleep, so she got up to revise the proposal.

Zong Yanxi had started working on this proposal even before she came back. It was deemed a flawless proposal after numerous revisions and confirmations. Any further revision meant that she would have to give up on her original plan and redo the proposal from a new perspective.

Time seemed to pass quickly when she was drowned in work.

She did not even know when the sun was up, and grew so drowsy that she fell asleep at the table in the end.

When it was almost noon, her phone rang and woke her up. Feeling groggy, she felt for her phone and glanced at the screen. It was an MMS. She clicked on it and saw a photo from Zhuang Jiawen.

Seeing the people in the photo, she instantly became awake. Rubbing her eyes, she studied the photo carefully.

The photo was taken at the dining table with four people in it: Zhuang Jiawen, Shen Xinyao, and her own parents who were sitting together at the head of the table.

In the photo, Lin Xinyan was dressed in a traditional Thai costume. Lin Xinyan had not liked to wear makeup since young. Her habit remained and she still had her fair skin today, with the only change being the appearance of some fine lines around her eyes.

Her eyes told of her own story, but there was no sign of aging on her face. This was all because Zong Jinghao had given her a comfortable life.

When Zong Yanxi was ten years old, Lin Xinyan had an unplanned pregnancy. As her health had been negatively impacted when she gave birth to Zhuang Jiawen, the doctor said that she could not have any more children.

Zong Jinghao didn't want her to go through the pain of labor again so he had been using contraception, but he still impregnated her by accident.

Women are emotional beings. Knowing that the fetus was normal and healthy, Lin Xinyan couldn't give it up so easily.

However, Zong Jinghao stood firm and brought her to the hospital despite her refusal. Before going onto the operating table, she cried and took Zong Jinghao's hand. "Doesn't your heart ache giving up your own child?"

It agonized her because she was the mother. But Zong Jinghao was the father who had to sign the consent form personally to end his child's life, so of course his heart ached as well.

It was equally painful for him, but Lin Xinyan's health condition did not allow her to go through another pregnancy as it was too risky.

Therefore, Zong Jinghao didn't yield to her pleading.

In the end, Lin Xinyan made a request, which was for him to watch her by the side during the operation.

She wanted him to watch it with his own eyes.

While lying on the operating table, Lin Xinyan said to him, "I may blame you for this for the rest of my life."

As soon as she finished speaking, she closed her eyes and did not look at him again.

After this incident, Lin Xinyan kept blaming herself for killing her own child. Consumed by guilt, she was in failing health.

After Zong Yanxi and Zong Yanchen reached adulthood, and Zhuang Jiawen went off to C City, Zong Jinghao took Lin Xinyan to Thailand.

Thailand had a tropical climate with an average daily temperature of 24°C to 30°C. Even on a cool day it never dipped below 18°C.

Zong Jinghao bought a house in Chiang Mai as he wanted to settle down there. Chiang Mai had the best climate with comfortable weather all year round. More importantly, it was good for Lin Xinyan's health. After going through labor and abortion, she was prone to feeling cold and often had icy hands and feet during winter.

Zong Jinghao had long wanted to take her there to live a simple life, but he had to wait for their children to grow up first.

After they became adults, he went there with Lin Xinyan and rarely came back.

Looking at the photo, Zong Yanxi thought of the days she spent there. Their house exemplified traditional Thai architecture— with a two-story compound in the center flanked by a glasshouse and a wooden building on each side. Ornamental trees surrounded the house, and workers were hired to prune the plants. The garden was therefore well-maintained and was full of life.

That place had a relaxing ambience.

Filled with a deep sense of nostalgia, Zong Yanxi put away her phone and went to wash up in the bathroom.

After taking a shower, she felt a lot more at ease. As she was starving, she went to the hotel restaurant to eat something, but then Tian Qifeng came.

He told her that Ling Wei's sentence was officially handed down. As the evidence was conclusive, she was sentenced to life imprisonment for intentional homicide.

Zong Yanxi did not show much emotion. Ling Wei brought this onto herself.

"Have you eaten?" Zong Yanxi asked.

"Do you mean breakfast or lunch?" Tian Qifeng asked.

It was now too late for breakfast, but a little too early for lunch.

“Treat it as lunch then.” Zong Yanxi pressed the elevator call button.

Tian Qifeng followed her as he replied, “Sure, as you wish.”

After a brief pause, he asked, “By the way, have you read the news today?”

Zong Yanxi turned to look at him. Apart from Ling Wei’s sentence, what news is there?