

Stealing Your Heart Chapter 991

Not wanting to argue further, Zong Yanxi reminded, "Please remember our deal. Once you have said your piece, never ever appear in front of me again."

Lowering his gaze to hide his disappointment, Jiang Mohan grunted in agreement. "Let's go."

Zong Yanxi followed him in silence.

Jiang Mohan walked into a Chinese restaurant. However, Zong Yanxi remained expressionless and maintained her cool facade.

Coincidentally, Tawan was meeting a friend there. He was about to leave when he bumped into them.

At that moment, Jiang Mohan saw him too and both men stopped in their tracks.

Zong Yanxi was visibly surprised. Just when she was about to greet Tawan, Tawan spoke first. But, his words were directed at Jiang Mohan. "I didn't expect you to join us."

Just as he spoke, he pulled Zong Yanxi to his side.

Zong Yanxi reacted quickly. Holding onto his arm, she lifted her chin and smiled. In a familiar tone, she pretended as if she knew Tawan would be there. "Is this the restaurant where you mentioned you would be having dinner with your friends?"

She was just guessing or perhaps even pretending in front of Jiang Mohan. She wanted to show him how close she was to Tawan.

The truth was Tawan was indeed there to meet his friends. Nevertheless, he knew Zong Yanxi was acting. Hence, he added, "We're done."

"Mr. Jiang is treating me to dinner, so why don't you come with me?" Zong Yanxi suggested as she looked at him.

Tawan nodded immediately as he looked at Jiang Mohan. "Mr. Jiang, it seems you haven't given up on my girlfriend."

Jiang Mohan shifted his gaze from Zong Yanxi holding Tawan's arm to Tawan himself. Staring at each other, he didn't believe Tawan was her boyfriend despite both of them claiming it to be true.

Without uttering another word, he walked into a private room. Once they took their seats, he motioned to the waiter to hand Tawan the menu. "Mr. Thitipoom, you're a guest who has come from afar. Hence, the honor to order is yours."

In Thailand, Jiang Mohan had done a thorough background check on Tawan. Previously, he did worry due to how exceptional Tawan was. However, he still believed in Zong Yanxi. Even if she hated him, she would not fall in love again so easily.

The waiter handed Tawan the menu. Despite how well he spoke Mandarin, he was unable to read any of it. As there were no pictures on the menu, he couldn't decipher what was available.

As he frowned slightly, Zong Yanxi leaned over and offered, "Let me help you."

"Why don't we order these two? It's their specialty and we can't get it anywhere else."

Tawan nodded in agreement. Taking into consideration Tawan was Thai, she ordered a few more local dishes for him to try. "These are a few dishes that are famous locally. Why don't you give them a try? If you like them, we can come back here later on."

When Jiang Mohan heard what she said, he clenched his fists under the table.

Tawan lowered his eyes as Zong Yanxi leaned closer. He could smell the fragrance of her perfume which had a faint yet refreshing scent. He pointed at a dish containing golden silkworm pupae. "What is that?"

Zong Yanxi was caught by surprise. "Those are silkworm pupae."

The waiter explained, "They have a high nutritional content. The silkworm pupae are filled with amino acids and vitamins, which are all great for health. Why don't you try some."

Realizing it was a nutritious dish, he suggested to Zong Yanxi, "Why don't we try one?"

She nodded and instructed the waiter, "We'll have it. But, please make it more appetizing. I don't want to see them in their original form."

Zong Yanxi was worried Tawan couldn't stomach it if it weren't cooked in a more palatable style.

The silkworm pupae were not considered ugly or frightening, it was just that she didn't like the way they looked.

The waiter smiled. "I understand. You're not the first guest to make such a request."

After the orders were complete, the waiter asked, "Is there anything else?"

Jiang Mohan added another dish which was one of Zong Yanxi's favorites. He concluded, "That's all."

Zong Yanxi pretended not to have heard and chatted with Tawan on purpose. "Let's go see my parents later at night."

Tawan's heart began to palpitate suddenly. But, when he realized that Zong Yanxi was saying that to spite Jiang Mohan, he quickly calmed down. For a brief moment, he thought she meant it. Luckily, he still had his wits with him and replied, "Sure."

Zong Yanxi smiled as she was amused by Tawan's reaction. It was silly yet adorable at the same time.

When one saw one's beloved with someone else and one was powerless to stop it, it literally felt like hell on earth.

After a while, the food began to arrive. The waiter who took orders earlier put everything that Jiang Mohan ordered in front of him.

"These are for Ms. Zong. Please put them in front of her."

The waiter nodded and moved the food accordingly. However, Zong Yanxi stopped him. "My tastes have changed. Please return them to him."

Tawan looked at Zong Yanxi immediately when he realized that he didn't know what she liked to eat.

Zong Yanxi turned her attention to Tawan. "I like Thai food. You should cook for me next time."

Tawan nodded at once. "Sure."

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When all the dishes were served, the waiter left the room. Zong Yanxi started the ball rolling. "Mr. Jiang, say whatever you wanted to say."

Jiang Mohan didn't look up. "I told you that I wanted to speak to you privately."

He was upset to see how close Zong Yanxi was to Tawan.

"But I don't want to meet with my ex-husband alone behind my boyfriend's back. Please speak your mind in front of him. I want to avoid any misunderstanding in the future because he means a lot to me."

Having said that, her eyes fell upon Tawan as she declared affectionately, "I used to be blinded by love. But now, I'm glad that I had the chance to meet him."

It was obvious to everyone present that her words were a jibe at Jiang Mohan.

At that moment, Tawan added what he sincerely felt. "Fate keeps its own time."

He was trying to hint that he didn't mind the fact that Zong Yanxi was married before.

Knowing that Tawan was serious, Zong Yanxi quickly averted her gaze from him.

The dinner no longer felt like one as everyone was distracted by their own thoughts and hardly focused on the food.

Tawan picked up one of the silkworm pupae recommended by the waiter earlier. After being cooked in a different manner by the chef, the silkworm pupae were no longer recognizable. The chef had prepared it meticulously so that it looked tantalizing to everyone. He then served Zong Yanxi some. "You're too thin."

The waiter had mentioned it was a nutritious dish, so he thought it was a good idea for her to have some.

“She can’t eat that. The protein content is too high and will cause her to have an allergic reaction,” Jiang Mohan reminded.

When Tawan was about to take it back, Zong Yanxi stopped him. She retorted, “That was then. I’m no longer allergic now.”

Just as she spoke, she put it in her mouth and swallowed it. After that, she looked at Jiang Mohan and declared. “Don’t think that you know me that well. I’m no longer the same person I was.”

With that, she put another piece into her mouth.

Jiang Mohan watched in silence. “Is it worth sacrificing your health to prove a point?”

“If you stay away from me, my health will never be better,” Zong Yanxi countered frostily.

Jiang Mohan stared at her for a few seconds. “Let’s meet privately another time.”

With that, he stood up and walked out of the room.

Zong Yanxi yelled at him, “I really don’t want to see you again.”

Jiang Mohan stopped in his tracks briefly before striding away.

Meanwhile, Zong Yanxi and Tawan were left in the room. After a short silence, Tawan apologized, “I didn’t know...”

“It doesn’t matter. Let’s go.” Zong Yanxi pretended as if it were nothing while all Tawan could do was nod.

Jiang Mohan had taken care of the bill. The moment they walked out of the restaurant, Tawan looked around but couldn’t find a pharmacy. “I’ll send you home.”

Zong Yanxi shook her head. “I’ll return by myself.”

There were a lot of people at home. If Tawan sent her back, it might create the wrong impression.

However, she didn't know that Tawan and Zong Jinghao had met.

Tawan hailed a taxi and both of them got in. But instead of instructing the driver to head to her home, he requested him to take them to the nearest pharmacy.

The driver replied, "I know of one nearby."

"Thanks," Tawan replied.

Inside the car, Zong Yanxi started to have an allergic reaction as her face and body itched. Luckily, the cab had arrived at the pharmacy. After paying the driver, Tawan helped Zong Yanxi out of the car and helped her to a bench nearby.

Zong Yanxi nodded.

Tawan hurried into the pharmacy and bought her medication together with some water. After which, he handed them to her.

Zong Yanxi put it in her mouth and drank a mouthful of water to swallow the pill.

Meanwhile, Tawan sat down beside her and both of them waited in silence.

After a while, Zong Yanxi finally felt her allergy subside. When she stood up, Tawan asked, "Do you feel better?"

Zong Yanxi replied, "I'm fine now."

As both of them strolled down the street, Tawan pondered a while before asking, "Did he leave on purpose just now?"

Zong Yanxi looked at him. "Who do you mean?"

"Mr. Jiang." Tawan couldn't deny that Jiang Mohan knew Zong Yanxi better than him. After all, they were married for three years and understood each other's living habits well. Hence, he felt utterly disappointed when he realized he didn't know enough about Zong Yanxi.

“He knows that you were doing it on purpose to spite him and you would have an allergic reaction. Given how stubborn you were, he chose to leave out of concern for you. Your allergy hasn’t gone away at all.”

Zong Yanxi plainly replied. “That’s all in the past.”

The allergy didn’t mean anything anyway.

“I want to thank you for today.” Zong Yanxi stopped in her tracks. “I’ll walk you back to the hotel.”

“Don’t keep thanking me.” Tawan glanced at the unfamiliar city. “Why don’t you show me around?”

Zong Yanxi replied, “Sure, there are many interesting places here to visit.”

She brought him to an old building that the government had revamped. When turned on at night, the lights showcased the outline of the building which was a sight to behold.

At night, one couldn’t see the building’s original appearance from a distance as the colorful lights had overshadowed it.

The street where the entrance was located was bustling with people. There were also many vendors selling all sorts of things.

As they entered the building, they passed by a plaque, which caught Tawan’s attention.

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On the plaque, he saw some words written in black and embossed in gold. The writing conveyed a sense of power and magnificence.

"What's written here?" Tawan asked.

Zong Yanxi looked up as saw the words 'Phoenix Pavilion' written in Mandarin. She explained to Tawan, "Legend has it that a queen used to live here. That's why it's named as Phoenix Pavilion."

Tawan blinked as he pondered about the meaning of her words.

Zong Yanxi asked, "Do you get it?"

After a pause, she continued, "The queen is the wife of the emperor in ancient days while the phoenix is the king of birds in our nation. To reflect the majestic nature of the queen, she was thus referred to as the phoenix."

"Your country does have a unique culture. Everything needs to be expressed indirectly." Tawan seemed to have understood.

Zong Yanxi smiled, "You are learning fast."

"Come, let's take a look inside," Zong Yanxi suggested.

Tawan followed her. "Can you teach me how to write in Mandarin?"

"If you want me to be your teacher, you will have to pay for it." Zong Yanxi looked at him and joked, "Since you're so rich, I should charge you ten thousand an hour."

Tawan replied, "Of course."

Zong Yanxi laughed. "I'm just kidding."

"Ten thousand for an hour. You will be my teacher," Tawan repeated.

Zong Yanxi was speechless.

Is he serious? Despite joking initially, she relented after she saw Tawan's earnest expression. There was no way she could abandon her student now.

Whatever.

"Alright, looks like I'm forced to take you in as my student." Zong Yanxi walked towards one of the vendors who was selling antique fans. They were made of satin and had exquisite motifs embroidered on top. At the bottom, there was a red ribbon tied to it. As she picked one up for a closer look, Tawan picked one up himself. However, the one he took had landscape embroidered on it instead of still life. Furthermore, there was a poem inscribed.

He showed it to Zong Yanxi. "What's written here?"

Zong Yanxi glanced over and saw 'Love brings with it shared sorrow; it is undying and lingers in the heart'.

She then replied, "It's rubbish."

The vendor was upset when he heard her. "Haven't you ever gone to school? This is a poem by Li Qingzhao. How can you say that it's rubbish?"

Zong Yanxi looked at the owner of the stall. Since when have stall vendors become so cultured?

The vendor wanted Tawan to buy his fans and said, "This is a poem written by a famous poet in our country. He talks about love here and I think it suits you."

Zong Yanxi almost burst into laughter. How does the fan suit Tawan? He was about eight feet tall and had masculine features. The thought of him holding the fan was ridiculously funny.

The vendor was so desperate to sell his wares that he lied through his teeth by making such an absurd comment.

Tawan quickly put it down and shook his head. "I don't want it."

When Zong Yanxi saw how persistent the vendor was, she asked, "How much for one?"

"Fifteen."

"I'll take one." Zong Yanxi began to fiddle through her purse but Tawan stopped her.

"Let me pay."

When the vendor realized Zong Yanxi liked it and Tawan was paying, he regretted not asking for more. After all, a man like Tawan wasn't going to ask for a discount in front of his girlfriend.

After Tawan paid, the vendor kept the money and commented, "Your girlfriend is really pretty."

However, he lamented in his heart. This damn foreigner has taken another beautiful girl from our country.

Holding the fan in her hand, Zong Yanxi glanced at the vendor and quipped, "We're just friends."

"It's my mistake." The vendor smiled awkwardly when he realized he misunderstood.

He was relieved that a pretty girl like Zong Yanxi wasn't taken by a foreigner.

As it was almost ten, Zong Yanxi felt like going home as she hadn't had much opportunity to spend time with her parents. Since she was out the whole day, she didn't want to return home too late.

Tawan suggested, "I'll send you."

"You don't have to. Why don't we each head back by ourselves?" Zong Yanxi replied.

Tawan didn't insist and agreed, "Sure."

After both of them went their separate ways, Tawan took a cab back to his hotel and was surprised to see Jiang Mohan there.

Standing in front of the elevator, he was giving Nan Cheng instructions and didn't notice Tawan's presence. Tawan approached. "Mr. Jiang."

Nan Cheng turned towards him.

Jiang Mohan looked at him and grunted, "What is it?"

"Can we talk?" Tawan asked.

Nan Cheng's expression darkened as he didn't forget what Tawan did to Jiang Mohan in Thailand. "Mr. Thitipoom, I applaud your methods but do you think it's enough to stop us?"

Jiang Mohan frowned slightly. "Nan Cheng, you should head back first."

"But..."

When Jiang Mohan shot him a glance, Nan Cheng swallowed his words and headed into the elevator reluctantly.

"I know someplace quiet." Jiang Mohan led the way while Tawan followed behind. Both of them went to the business lounge on the top floor. The hotel's business lounge had a human-centric design. It provided a quiet and private environment that was conducive for conducting business.

Obviously, Jiang Mohan was very familiar with C City. After having a quick discussion with the hotel manager, they were given the best private room there.

A waiter brought in some tea and left, closing the door behind him.

"What you do want to talk about?"

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Tawan poured two cups of tea. He placed one in front of Jiang Mohan and drank from the other. After putting the teacup down, he related, "When I was eight, my Grandpa gave me replica pistol. I liked it very much and it became my favorite toy. However, I lost it by accident after some time and couldn't find it no matter how hard I tried. Until one day, I saw another kid holding it. He too treasured it as his favorite toy. From that moment on, I knew I had lost it and it wasn't coming back to me. With that realization, I learned how to let go."

He looked up at Jiang Mohan. "Do you think I should ask the child for the gun back? Or should I just let it go?"

Jiang Mohan's expression was cool. "If I were you, I would ask the gun which owner it preferred."

"But I feel that since I've lost it, I no longer deserve to own it. What do you think?"

Tawan leaned in, "Why did I lose it? Because I didn't have the ability to protect it. Hence, it left me."

"In that case, what made you so sure that the new owner wouldn't lose it?" Jiang Mohan stared intently at him. "Mr. Thitipoom, can I ask you a question?"

"Go ahead."

"How long have you owned the gun?"

"Eight till twelve years old. Four years."

“Four years? If the gun had a soul and feelings, how long do you think it would take to forget its previous owner?” Jiang Mohan looked at Tawan. “Do you know how long I have known my ex-wife?”

Before Tawan could answer, he replied, “I was just nine the first time I met her.”

He had never forgotten the impression he had of her then.

Tawan was silent.

Jiang Mohan had never lowered himself in front of anyone else before. Regardless of the circumstances, he never begged anyone. He asserted to Tawan, “I don’t know what kind of family you grew up in. But, I just want to tell you that she taught me how to love. Perhaps, you may not understand what it feels like.”

Tawan quipped, “But you hurt her.”

“That’s why I want to make it up to her.”

“Do you think that’s what she wants?” Tawan stood up. “She will stay in the country until her brother’s wedding is over. During this period, if she still loves you or if you manage to win her heart, I will give her my blessings. However, if she refuses to return to your side, I will do my best to win her heart.”

With that, Tawan took his leave.

However, Jiang Mohan remained motionless.

Meanwhile, Zong Yanxi had just returned home. Everyone was still awake and gathered in the living hall.

“It’s pretty late,” Qin Ya remarked when she saw Zong Yanxi.

“Yanxi went to meet a friend,” Before Zong Yanxi could reply, Shen Xinyao pre-empted her.

Zong Yanxi smiled as she walked past. “Looks like no one is sleeping yet.”

“Come with me.” Zong Jinghao stood up and headed to the study.

Zong Yanxi greeted him and followed. After they entered the study, Zong Jinghao got her to close the door behind her.

"Dad, what do you want to talk to me about?" Zong Yanxi approached.

"Have you heard about the company called Luoda?" Zong Jinghao sat at his desk and handed her some documents.

Zong Yanxi shook her head.

"Take a look at the documents," Zong Jinghao instructed.

Zong Yanxi quickly skimmed through. "Is it a Thai company?"

"Mmm-hmm." Zong Jinghao looked at his daughter. "Once your brother's wedding is over, your Mom and I will head back there. I want you to stay by our side so I found you a job."

Zong Yanxi wanted to be near her parents so that she could take care of them. Hence, she nodded. "I'll take it."

She readily agreed before even asking what the role was.

"Don't you have any other questions for me?" Zong Jinghao looked at her.

Zong Yanxi circled the table towards him and hugged his neck from behind. She teased in a childish tone, "You're not going to trick me, are you?"

Zong Jinghao patted her hands. Even though he was her father, he knew he could no longer lecture her as if she was still a child. She was now a full-grown adult who had been through a marriage. Hence, he had to be more mindful of how he wanted to express himself.

However, he believed that she had matured after what had happened.

"Your Mom is in the room. You should go see her." Zong Yanxi pleaded in a childish tone, "Come with me."

"What are you afraid of? She doesn't bite," Zong Jinghao teased. "I'm not afraid, I just want you to come along. Don't you miss me after not seeing me for a year?" In her father's eyes, Zong Yanxi would always be a child.

Zong Jinghao pretended to be stern. "How old are you to still be acting like a child?"

"Your child."

Zong Jinghao was speechless.

After that, both of them entered the room together and saw Lin Xinyan busy writing. A mischievous idea came to Zong Yanxi's mind as she shushed Zong Jinghao. She then crept up behind Lin Xinyan and looked over her shoulder to see what she was writing.

As her son was getting married, there were a lot of things she needed to prepare for them. Hence, she was making a list so that she wouldn't forget when the time came.

"Wow, you're being very generous," Zong Yanxi's exclaimed when she saw Lin Xinyan's gift list. "Are you planning to spend all your money on your youngest son? What about your eldest son?"

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When Lin Xinyan saw that it was Zong Yanxi, she put down her pen and stood up, allowing Zong Yanxi to sit.

However, Zong Yanxi didn't understand what she was trying to do and asked, "What are you doing?"

"I'll dictate and you'll write," Lin Xinyan instructed.

Zong Yanxi sighed and made a face. "Now that I'm divorced, why don't you show some concern?"

Everyone avoided mentioning the divorce and anything related to Jiang Mohan as they were worried they might touch a sore spot. However, she had gotten over it.

Lin Xinyan's gaze changed while Zong Jinghao turned to look at her immediately.

Zong Yanxi glanced at her father before turning her attention to Lin Xinyan. She reached out to hold her mother's hand. "Mom, I'm fine now as I have gotten over it. You don't have to worry about me anymore. The more sensitive you are over it, the more pressured I feel. Just be yourself. If I did something wrong, go ahead and reprimand me as you see fit."

When Lin Xinyan saw how well Zong Yanxi was dealing with the past, it put her mind at ease. She pretended to be angry, "I just want you to help me write a gift list. Why do you have so many complaints? Just get it done quickly."

"Yes, Mom. Your wish is my command." Zong Yanxi picked up the pen. "You really love your son."

She wasn't jealous. In fact, she was glad.

As her brother was the youngest at home, he was the last to leave their parents. Therefore, it fell upon him to shoulder the responsibility that wasn't supposed to be his. It was unlike herself and Yanchen who had the luxury of walking their own path and doing whatever they wanted.

At a very young age, Zhuang Jiawen had taken over the family business. Although everyone was equally busy, he lost a lot of his freedom to work. Despite appearing young and immature still, his responsibilities had molded him into someone strong and experienced.

Or else, he wouldn't be able to command the respect of his subordinates.

Hence, she would never be jealous of the huge number of gifts Jiawen was to receive as she knew he deserved it. In a certain sense, he had shouldered the responsibility that she and Yanchen were supposed to carry. If he wasn't in C City, perhaps Yanchen might return. After all, Uncle Shao had died of sickness. The assets left belonged to their maternal grandfather and had to be protected. Furthermore, Great-uncle's health was deteriorating and Jiawen would likely have to take over the textile factory too.

"Mom, I want to give the ring you gave me to Yao. We are so lucky that she is willing to marry Baby." Despite teasing Lin Xinyan for being too generous a while ago, Zong Yanxi now wanted to give them what was most precious to her.

"You should keep it as it doesn't suit her. Anyway, I have something else in mind already." Lin Xinyan showed her a jade bracelet. She planned to give the bracelet to Shen Xinyao. It was previously given to her by Cheng Yuxiu and was considered a heirloom of the Cheng family.

The jade bracelet was a symbolic gift. Since Zhuang Jiawen was her son and Shen Xinyao her daughter-in-law, both of them would be taking over the textile factory in the future. Hence, it was a declaration of their inheritance of the Cheng family business.

Zong Yanxi pouted. "What about Yanchen?"

"He too will get married someday. What are you going to give his wife?"

Before Lin Xinyan could answer, Zong Yanxi interrupted. "I'm sure Yanchen doesn't mind or even care about it. But his wife may not feel the same way. As parents, you have to strike a balance."

"Don't you have the pink diamond ring? Can't you give that to your future sister-in-law?"

"I don't want to because Dad gave it to me." Zong Yanxi became upset.

"He won't care about all these and the woman he likes won't care about his money either. I'm sure she will love him for who he is."

Lin Xinyan was confident in Zong Yanchen. She was sure that he wouldn't fall for someone materialistic.

Furthermore, in the environment he was living in, money wasn't important to him at all.

Besides, he was already a high-ranking officer and there was no need for her to worry anyway.

"Will he be able to make it for Baby's wedding? Even I..." Zong Yanxi lifted her head as she counted how much time had passed since she last saw him. "It's been almost two years now, isn't it?"

"Your Uncle says he is on a mission and may not make it back in time. Moreover, there's no way of contacting him. I'm sure you're aware of the specialized nature of his mission. Hence, we should be understanding of his circumstances."

Zong Yanxi understood. "Nevertheless, it's still regrettable."

After the gift list was completed, she returned to her room. At that moment, the hall was empty as everyone had gone to bed.

Lin Xinyan closed the door and informed Zong Jinghao. "Tomorrow, let's go to B City together."

She had begun to miss Zong Yanchen. Ever since he joined the army, he seldom returned home. She was hoping that he could make it back for Zhuang Jiawen's wedding so that the whole family could gather.

Now that Zong Yanxi had put her failed marriage behind her and Zhuang Jiawen was getting married, it was going to be a happy occasion. If Zong Yanchen could join them, it would then be perfect. It would also put her mind at ease by the time she returned to Thailand.

Zong Jinghao knew what she was thinking about and grunted in acknowledgment. "Sure, coincidentally I have some matters to attend to."

“What matters?” Lin Xinyan suddenly thought about Jiang Mohan. “We no longer have any connections to him and there’s no need to see him.”

The thought of Jiang Mohan still caused her to become emotional.

Zong Jinghao helped her settle down. “I’m not going to see him. Besides, he’s not in B City.”

“How do you know?” She turned towards Zong Jinghao. “Are you hiding something from me?”