"I didn't meet with him. It's just that I have men watching and protecting Yanxi in the shadows. Hence, I know that he went to Thailand and isn't in B City."

Zong Jinghao hid the fact that Jiang Mohan was in C City from her.

"What is he doing in Thailand?" Lin Xinyan sneered. "Is he not afraid of bumping into me?"

"So what if you see him? You stopped me when I wanted to send men to have him beaten."

Lin Xinyan changed the topic. "Time to wash up and go to bed."

Although she did hate Jiang Mohan, it was just that beating him up wouldn't make her feel any better. All she knew was that they had to stay away from him and never ever see him again.

As she wanted to get some water, Zong Jinghao stopped her by holding her by her waist. "Let me do it."

After giving it some thought, Lin Xinyan commented, "Do you think Yanxi has really gotten over it? After all, she really liked Jiang Mohan. Do you still remember how she argued with us then?"

"She will get over it." Zong Jinghao reassured her. "Going forward, something like that will never happen again. Don't worry."

"Children will always be their parents' burden. We will always worry for them no matter what. It's just not possible not to." Just as she spoke, she seemed to have recalled something. Forgetting to wash up, she lay down on the bed.

Zong Jinghao who was on his way to get some water stopped in his tracks and turned to look at her. Realizing that she had thought of something, he lowered his gaze and didn't utter a word. He continued to the bathroom to get some water.

Coming out with a basin full of water, he placed it by the bed. "Wash up before you sleep."

Despite having heard him, Lin Xinyan feigned ignorance and pretended to sleep.

Zong Jinghao pulled the blanket aside and lifted her legs.

Lin Xinyan tucked them in. "Don't touch me."

Zong Jinghao leaned closer and lifted her chin so that she could see him. "We're no longer young. Aren't you worried about embarrassing ourselves in front of the children?"

"Am I old?" Lin Xinyan stared at him with her eyes widened.

Zong Jinghao smiled, "Not at all. To me, you're always eighteen."

Lin Xinyan was both angry and amused as she pushed him away. "Get up and stop deluding yourself."

"You're not old so naturally I'm still young." Zong Jinghao stood up and placed her foot in the basin.

Meanwhile, on the second floor, Shen Xinyao was sitting in front of the computer hugging Dudu. When she saw the dialogue that continuously popped up on the screen, she laughed heartily.

Dudu was her pet kitten. It wasn't of any particular breed, but a stray which she found and adopted.

When Zhuang Jiawen entered the room, he saw her laughing in front of the computer. Curious, he asked, "What are you watching?"

"I'm watching others chatting." Shen Xinyao turned around waved at him. "Come over."

Zhuang Jiawen walked over.

"Look at this dialogue." Shen Xinyao motioned for him to look at the screen.

Zhuang Jiawen leaned in and skimmed through it quickly. He frowned slightly. "Are you watching others chat?"

Shen Xinyao explained, "Remember the app that our company just launched? It provides single men and women a platform to interact. It's currently at the beta testing stage. Our boss wants us to monitor the topics that they talk about and write a report on it."

"Therefore, aren't you invading the privacy of others?" Zhuang Jiawen highlighted the seriousness of the matter but not in an accusing way. He was well aware that it was part of her work and her company would not reveal the conversations. Nevertheless, the users who had their dialogue recorded were not aware that they were being watched.

"The boss wants us to do it. As employees, we don't have much of a choice." She put Dudu on the table and turned to hug him by the waist. She looked up and suggested coquettishly, "If you think my job is bad, how about I quit and you take care of me?"

Zhuang Jiawen lifted her chin with his fingers, "If I take care of you, what will be my reward?"

Shen Xinyao's shifted her eyes in thought before she replied, "I'll cover you with a warm duvet in winter and fan you in the summer. In autumn, I'll provide you with an extra layer of clothes."

"What about spring?" Zhuang Jiawen leaned closer as their eyes locked.

"Since spring is no longer as cold, I'll remind you to wear less?"

Zhuang Jiawen was visibly dissatisfied with the answer. "It doesn't suit the season."

Shen Xinyao was speechless.

"Why don't I accompany you on a trip in spring?"

"Heine once said, 'If seeds are not planted in spring, they will not grow in summer. There will be no harvest in autumn; and nothing to eat in winter.' So what do you think spring is for?"

"Planting seeds..." Just as she spoke, Shen Xinyao got it. She lowered her chest. "You're being naughty."

Zhuang Jiawen laughed. "Is planting seeds considered naughty?"

The more he laughed the more mischievous he got. "Aren't you having naughty thoughts?"

"Zhuang Jiawen!" Shen Xinyao was both embarrassed and angry. "Leave my room at once. I still have work to do."

"But why are you blushing?" Zhuang Jiawen caught her hands that were pushing him and rubbed her palms with his fingers. "You weren't having naughty thoughts. It's me that's being naughty, so don't be angry. You don't look pretty when you're angry."

He leaned forward to kiss her lips.

However, Shen Xinyao turned away. She was no longer angry, but still felt embarrassed.

Zhuang Jiawen hugged her as she sat back in front of the computer where the dialogue continued to populate the screen.

After reading further, he didn't find it humorous.

"This isn't even funny at all. So what were you laughing at?"

Shen Xinyao moved her mouse. "You'll see in a while."

As Zhuang Jiawen waited, he stabbed his fork on a piece of apple and put it into his mouth. As he chewed, he watched the chat window that she had brought up.

Having heard the crunch of the apple, Shen Xinyao added, "I want some too."

Her gaze was still fixed on the screen as she used her mouse to adjust the position of the chat windows.

Zhuang Jiawen turned his attention to the fruit platter and sneaked a glance at her. When he realized that she was staring intently at the computer screen, he suddenly had an idea. After stabbing his fork on another piece of apple and holding half of it in his mouth, he leaned in towards Shen Xinyao.

He grunted with a throaty voice. "Open up."

At that moment, Shen Xinyao had arranged four chat windows side by side on her screen. As Zhuang Jiawen was very close to her, the apple brushed past her cheeks. They were so close that all she needed to do was to open her mouth and she could bite the apple.

When she saw him with the apple in his mouth, her eyebrows furrowed slightly in surprise.

Zhuang Jiawen reached his hand behind her head and passed the apple straight into her mouth.

The portion in his mouth was already warm. Hence, Shen Xinyao was reluctant to accept it. "Your saliva is all over the apple."

"But, I'm not dirty." Zhuang Jiawen asked with a smile. "Is it delicious?"

Shen Xinyao ignored him. She continued to chew on the apple while watching the screen. "I must report this situation to the company. Look at this person with the handle called 'I'm a queen'. She is chatting simultaneously with four other guys using different identities. She's the mistress of a rich man, nurse, flight attendant, and a boss too."

She pointed at one of the chat windows. "When they exchanged pictures, she randomly sent him a picture of a pretty girl and claimed that it was her. Perhaps she thought her counterpart was handsome, so she claimed that she was a boss. I was shocked when I realized that the person she was chatting with actually believed it."

"Maybe she really is a boss."

Shen Xinyao let out a cold snort. "How can she be one when she has time to chat with four guys simultaneously? With different identities too. I just think she's a b*tch."

Zhuang Jiawen looked at Shen Xinyao. "How can you be sure she's even female? She may be a man who has registered his account as a woman. He may not even be a b*tch."

Shen Xinyao was dumbfounded as she had nothing to rebut him with. Zhuang Jiawen was right.

"Do you think he is a scammer? Perhaps he is trying to cheat them?" Shen Xinyao speculated.

"You can program a code that prevents users from being scammed. The best way is not to allow them to switch between user accounts and forbid monetary transactions. Since it's a chat platform, most people will not use their real identities. Hence, you should require them to register their accounts with either their handphone number or social media accounts. That way, you can determine the authenticity of the users at registration."

Picking up a piece of apple with the fork, Shen Xinyao fed Zhuang Jiawen and suggested, "Why don't you help me write it?"

"Are you trying to bribe me with just a piece of apple?" Zhuang Jiawen refused to open his mouth.

Shen Xinyao ate it herself instead. "I'm going to be yours soon. What else do I still have to offer?"

Zhuang Jiawen's heart couldn't help but soften at her words. He pulled her away from her computer before sitting in front of it and wrote the code for her.

Furthermore, he corrected all the flaws she noticed in the app's processes.

To him, it was a piece of cake.

All he needed was a couple of minutes to clean it up.

He turned to look at Shen Xinyao with a serious expression. "Yao, do you like your job?"

Shen Xinyao stared at him as she understood the intention behind his words. "I like it. But after we're married, I'll quit."

She explained in earnest, "Now that it's online, I'm less busy with work. Compared to when we just started, we had to work overtime a lot then. I'm sure you remember that I used to finish work late. However, I'm still a software developer and no matter how successful my work is, there will always be a new project. Hence, I'll be stuck in a similar cycle where I'll be alternating between a busy period and rest days all the time."

"However, I'm aware that you are even busier. If both of us are engrossed in work even after marriage, there will be no one to take care of the family," she continued.

"Now that Great-uncle's health isn't good, you may need to take over the textile factory. When the time comes, you will be even busier. As I want to take good care of you, I will have to guit my job so that you can focus on yours," she added.

Zhuang Jiawen didn't expect her to have put so much thought into the matter. After all, he was only asking her casually about it. All he wanted was for both of them not to be too caught up with work even after marriage.

However, he didn't expect her to have made the decision to forgo her job.

Feeling grateful, he pulled her into his arms for a hug.

"You're still so young. If you don't work, you might lose touch with society."

Shen Xinyao rubbed her face in his chest. "Didn't you take up your responsibilities early on? After getting married, my responsibility will be to take care of the family so that you can focus on your career. Furthermore, your burden is a lot heavier than mine. From the moment Uncle Shao gave you this name, it's obvious that your responsibilities are different from those of your siblings."

She raised her head. "When you come home every day, I will be waiting for you with dinner ready."

Zhuang Jiawen didn't say a word. All he did was to hug her tightly.

He wanted to thank her for her understanding and sacrifice.

"Thank you."

"Going forward, we will be facing everything in life together. Hence, no thanks are needed." Shen Xinyao smiled at him. "Don't be sentimental, it doesn't suit your character."

Zhuang Jiawen squinted his eyes and beamed. He then kissed her on her forehead. "I won't disappoint you."

"I believe in you." Shen Xinyao smiled back at him. Suddenly, she recalled what happened at the mall. "Today, when I went to the mall with your sister, I think I saw Jiang Mohan."

Although she didn't get a clear look at his face, she could recognize the man as Jiang Mohan from his silhouette.

Zhuang Jiawen furrowed his eyebrows. "Are you sure?"

Shen Xinyao shook her head. "I didn't see his face so I can't say so for sure. If it was really him, what do you think he is doing in C City?"

"How dare he even be here," Zhuang Jiawen seethed. Shen Xinyao quickly caught his hand as she was worried he might act rashly. "Didn't mom say not to get involved with him anymore? You should not act impulsively. If Mom finds out, she might be angry. Anyway, isn't this for the better?"

The one who almost killed Zong Yanxi wasn't Jiang Mohan. Therefore, he shouldn't be paying for his life. However, the incident was still caused by their divorce. Hence, he was partially responsible for it.

The best thing for them was not to keep any form of contact with each other. Whenever they saw him, they would be reminded of the unpleasant past.

Therefore, treating him like a stranger was the best course of action.

At least that was what she felt.

Zhuang Jiawen replied. "I understand."

He patted Shen Xinyao. "Why don't you sleep early? I'm going back to my room."

Just as he spoke, he had already stood up. However, Shen Xinyao tugged at him. "Be more discreet so as to not let anyone know."

Zhuang Jiawen was stunned but broke out into a smile. "How do you know what I'm going to do?"

"Of course I know. You still have the network Uncle Shao left you. I figured you would get someone to give Jiang Mohan a good beating. However, you don't consider yourself disobeying your Mom because you aren't going to show your face. Am I right?"

"How do you know me so well?" Zhuang Jiawen wondered aloud.

"Of course. If I don't, how would I be worthy of being your wife? Besides..."

She knelt on the sofa and hugged his arm. "I support what you're intending to do. He almost got Yanxi killed. Giving him a beating is just a small payback for what he did. Don't worry, I'll help keep it a secret."

Zhuang Jiawen could feel his heart warm as he circled his arms around her waist. When he picked her up, half her pajamas had shifted upwards, exposing her fair and slender waist. Zhuang Jiawen put her on the bed and straightened her pajamas. After tucking her in, he remarked, "Sleep tight and wait for the good news."

Shen Xinyao nodded.

Zhuang Jiawen tempered his excitement as his gaze deepened. He wanted to quickly be done with their wedding so that he could hug her to sleep.

However, he still couldn't do it now. After he left her room, he returned to his and made a call. First, he had to check the hotel's guest list to confirm if Jiang Mohan was really in C City.

The next day during breakfast, Zong Jinghao told everyone that he was making a trip to B City.

"Is something wrong?" Su Zhan asked.

"I'm planning to visit Xiaoji," Lin Xinyan replied honestly.

Everyone was aware of Wen Xiaoji's relationship with Lin Xinyan.

Hence, Su Zhan didn't have any more questions.

"I'll book flight tickets for both of you." Just as he spoke, Zhuang Jiawen went to look for his phone. However, Lin Xinyan stopped him. "Your Dad has made the reservations."

Zhuang Jiawen went back to his seat. "You should have told me earlier so that I can help you do it."

Lin Xinyan poured a glass of milk for him.

In her heart, she was biased towards her elder son and also felt sorry for him. Zong Yanchen was the first who left her side. Therefore, she felt that she didn't have the opportunity to fulfill all her responsibilities towards him.

"You're really busy. Besides, this is simple enough for us to take care of." Her gaze fell upon Shen Xinyao and asked, "Is there anything that you like? I'll bring it back for you."

Shen Xinyao shook her head. "Nothing, I'm not lacking for anything."

Zong Yanxi was silent throughout. When they brought up B City, it would always remind her of the unpleasant memories there.

After breakfast, Zhuang Jiawen sent them to the airport.

Their flight was scheduled for nine in the morning.

When they arrived, Wen Xiaoji was there to pick them up.

As they didn't plan to stay for long, they hardly brought any luggage other than a small bag. Inside, there was just a change of clothes.

Wen Xiaoji took over their bag and greeted them with a smile. "When I heard that you were coming, I could hardly sleep last night. Anyway, the car is outside."

He walked in front to lead the way.

As Lin Xinyan looked around, she felt a sense of nostalgia. After all, she hadn't returned in a long time.

Meanwhile, there was a military Jeep with a driver waiting for them outside.

Now, Wen Xiaoji was also a high ranking officer.

Nevertheless, he was just as respectful to Lin Xinyan and Zong Jinghao. Hence, he came to pick them up personally.

They got into the car and headed for Wen Residence. After lunch, the three of them went into the study to talk.

"Xiaoji, the purpose of our visit is to ask you something," Lin Xinyan broached the topic. "You keep saying that Yanchen is on a special mission. I do understand the nature of his job, but it's been four months since we last heard from him. Therefore, I want to ask you if his special mission has been completed?"

The moment Wen Xiaoji heard about Zong Yanchen, his expression became awkward. However, he quickly smiled. "Not yet, I'm afraid it might be half a year more."

Just as he spoke, he turned away to get some water so that he could avert Lin Xinyan's gaze.

Meanwhile, Zong Jinghao had noticed the minute change in Wen Xiaoji's expression. However, he didn't probe further in front of Lin Xinyan.

"In the beginning, it was you who put him on this path. Of course, it's what he wanted after all and we didn't object. However, now I'm starting to regret my decision."

She was worried. Ever since Zong Yanchen joined the army, the number of times she saw him could be counted on her fingers.

"Have a glass of water and don't worry. After all, it's a covert mission where the higher-ups give him direct orders. The lesser people who know about it, the safer it is for him. Hence, there are few who know of his movements. Anyway, once he is done, he will definitely inform you. As for Jiawen's wedding, he will definitely come back for it once he hears about it. Anyway, he is still in the middle of his mission and even I can't get in touch with him."

Lin Xinyan accepted the water and held it in her hand. She looked at Wen Xiaoji. "Alright, if you hear anything, please let me know immediately so that I can stop worrying."

"I understand." Wen Xiaoji forced an awkward smile.

After asking about Yanchen, Lin Xinyan inquired about Wen Xiaoji's son. "Why didn't we see Zinuo at the table just now?"

"Sigh." To him, it would have been better if his son weren't mentioned. "When he wasn't willing to join the army, he insisted on doing whatever he fancied. But up to now, I've not seen him produce any concrete results. He must have been spoiled by his Mom."

"Is he not your son too?" Chen Shihan heard Wen Xiaoji's remarks just as she entered with a plate of fruits. She couldn't help but retort, "It's all my fault but did you do anything to help?"

"Wasn't I busy with work?" Wen Xiaoji rebutted meekly.

"You ignored him because you were busy and yet you complain that I spoil him. It's hard being in my place." Chen Shihan put the plate of fruits down on the table. Looking at Lin Xinyan, she explained with a smile, "Zinuo is just as rebellious as Xiaoji was when he was young. They're both unwilling to accept the path their parents laid out for them. Instead, they enjoy finding their own way."

Lin Xinyan laughed. "Sons usually take after their fathers."

Wen Xiaoji was speechless as he was indeed at constant loggerheads with his father when he was young.

"It's in the genes. His character has been inherited by his son," Chen Shihan asserted.

"By the way, there's something I would like to discuss with you," Chen Shihan suggested as she looked at Lin Xinyan.

Lin Xinyan nodded.

"Let's talk about it outside." Chen Shihan walked over and both of them headed out.

Once the study room's door was closed, Lin Xinyan asked, "What is it?"

"Erm, since Jiawen is getting married, should I be preparing one or two presents? Also, what should I get?" Chen Shihan kept in touch with Shen Peichuan in recent years although it was mostly because of Zong Jinghao. Now that their daughter was getting married, she wondered if she should also prepare a gift for them.

As for Zhuang Jiawen, it went without saying that a gift was obligated. However, she pondered on what she should get for Shen Xinyao.

"One will do." Lin Xinyan couldn't care less about such matters.

"That won't do." Chen Shihan felt that two presents were appropriate. After all, she knew both the groom and the bride's families.

Lin Xinyan smiled. "Based on what you're saying, even I have to prepare a gift for Sang Yu because her daughter is getting married?"

Chen Shihan laughed. "That seems to be the case. They too are obligated to get you a gift because your son is getting married."

"Wouldn't it be a mess later?" Lin Xinyan poured a glass of water to drink.

In the study.

Wen Xiaoji wanted to go out too. "Why don't we go for a walk?"

It was better with Lin Xinyan around as he felt less guilty. To face Zong Jinghao alone was a stressful situation despite his advanced age.

Zong Jinghao went straight to the point. "Tell me, what happened?"

Wen Xiaoji continued to play dumb. "What are you getting at? I don't understand."

"Is Yanchen in some sort of danger?" Zong Jinghao stood up and approached Wen Xiaoji. "Of course I hope my son is safe. But I still want to know the truth so please don't hide it from me."

Wen Xiaoji had no choice. "I'm just don't want you to worry. Given Yanxi's matter had just blown over, I didn't even know how to tell you."

Zong Jinghao's expression tensed up briefly. Despite being concerned for his son, he kept his composure. "Go ahead, I'll keep it to myself."

He promised he wasn't going to tell Lin Xinyan.

Wen Xiaoji pursed his lips. "During his mission, he tried to save his comrade..."

He didn't dare continue.

Zong Jinghao closed his eyes and tried his best to suppress his emotions. He prodded in a deep voice, "Go on!"

Shaken, Wen Xiaoji continued, "We have lost contact with Yanchen and are still searching for him. Once we have any information, you will be the first to know."

Zong Jinghao gradually clenched his fist while his tone was grim. "How long has it been?"

"It's been... half a month." Wen Xiaoji averted his gaze.

Zong Jinghao felt a gut-wrenching pain in his heart but he didn't show it on his face. He was worried that his anxiety would reveal the news to Lin Xinyan which would make things worse. Given Lin Xinyan's current health, she might fall sick from the shock.

"You have to keep mum, even from family." He was suggesting that Wen Xiaoji not tell Chen Shihan about it, for fear that she would accidentally spill the beans to Lin Xinyan.

"I understand. I didn't tell anyone else other than you." Wen Xiaoji felt guilty over the matter.

"Was he in a dangerous situation?" Zong Jinghao wanted to know more.

"I heard it was but he wasn't alone. The whole squad was ambushed." Wen Xiaoji wasn't there and only heard the reports from those that returned alive.

Zong Jinghao suggested, "Tonight, we will stay at the hotel."

"There's plenty of space here," Wen Xiaoji quickly suggested. "Your room is already prepared."

"You can't even hide it from me, so what if she finds out? I'm sure you're aware that she can't take the shock given the state of her health." Zong Jinghao's decision was firm.

Wen Xiaoji was speechless. He acknowledged he couldn't maintain his composure well enough and failed to hide the fact from Zong Jinghao. Nevertheless, it was almost impossible to hide something from him in the first place.

He seemed to know everything.

"You have a point. But how are you going to explain the sudden change of plans?" Wen Xiaoji asked in concern.

"I have my ways. So don't worry," Zong Jinghao replied grimly.

Since Zong Jinghao had a plan, Wen Xiaoji didn't protest any further. After all, he was indeed afraid to face Lin Xinyan. In the event she became suspicious, he really didn't know how to break it to her.

By staying at the hotel, he wouldn't have to worry about her questioning him about Zong Yanchen.

Zong Jinghao finally got up after a long while in the room. Meanwhile, Chen Shihan and Lin Xinyan were still chatting in the living hall.

"Time to go," Zong Jinghao remarked.

"Didn't you say you would be staying the night?" Chen Shihan asked before Lin Xinyan could respond.

"It's been a long time since we last came. Hence, there are some other places I still need to visit," Zong Jinghao explained. Wen Xiaoji added, "They have not visited in a long time. I'm sure there are other places where they need to be."

Chen Shihan stopped asking, but Lin Xinyan stood up and looked at Zong Jinghao. "Where are we going? Why didn't you mention it before?"

Zong Jinghao replied plainly, "I just didn't let you know in advance. Let's go."

"Alright." Lin Xinyan acknowledged without suspecting anything.

After they left the Wen residence, Lin Xinyan waited for Wen Xiaoji and Chen Shihan to be out of earshot before asking, "Why do I get the feeling something isn't right with you?"

Zong Jinghao kept looking ahead. "What's not right?"

"Didn't we agree to stay there? And why did we have to leave in such a hurry? Did something unpleasant happen when you talked to Xiaoji? Did he get on your nerves?" Lin Xinyan asked.

However, when she thought back to the moment he left the study, both of them didn't seem to be on bad terms.

Zong Jinghao held her hand. "I just want to spend some time with you. It's a little awkward with them around."

Lin Xinyan had a sudden realization. She surmised that he might be feeling sentimental after returning to B City. She asked, "Is it because you feel that time just flew by? In a blink of an eye, the children are adults while both of us are old. To be strolling on the streets of this familiar city sure brings back a lot of memories."

Both of them walked on without any destination in particular.

Zong Jinghao remarked calmly, "With you by my side, everything else is the same to me."

Lin Xinyan teased him for being romantic.

After a while, Lin Xinyan began to tire. "I'm exhausted. Where should we go to rest?"

Zong Jinghao replied, "I've booked a hotel."

"Let's head there then," she replied.

Zong Jinghao agreed and hailed a cab to the hotel.

By the time they were preparing for bed, Lin Xinyan remarked that she was thirsty. Hence, Zong Jinghao poured her a glass of water. However, he spaced out while doing so and the water overflowed from the glass. Lin Xinyan quickly came over and took away the jug he was holding. "What are you thinking about? Even the water has spilled out."

It was something that would have never happened before. However, now that he was older, he still had the capacity to withstand the stress but not the ability to handle it well.

With his son missing for half a month, there was no way he could stay calm. It was difficult to pretend that nothing happened and would inadvertently make some mistakes to give it away.

Luckily, it didn't raise Lin Xinyan's suspicions as she assumed that he wasn't feeling well. "What's wrong?"

Just as she spoke, she reached out to feel his forehead.

Zong Jinghao replied, "I'm fine."

Lin Xinyan got him into bed first while she wiped the table dry with a towel.

Meanwhile at C City.

Zong Yanxi heard that Tawan was leaving so she went to send him off.

After all, Tawan came to the country for her. Now that he was leaving, she was obligated to send him off.

However, Tawan declined her offer as he was aware of the reason she wanted to do so.

He didn't like forcing others against their will or let them feel as if they were in his debt.

Actually, Zong Yanxi didn't owe him anything. When she agreed to come back together with him, it was of her own volition.

Nevertheless, Zong Yanxi insisted on sending him to the airport still. On the way back, she bumped into Jiang Mohan. However, this coincidence was deliberate, as Jiang Mohan had the intention to talk to her.