

Stealing Your Heart Chapter 581

Lin Xinyan was surprised to see Zhou Chunchun standing at the door. She did not expect to see her here in the morning.

“Good morning, Xinyan.” Zhou Chunchun greeted.

Lin Xinyan smiled and replied, “What are you doing here so early in the morning? Is anything wrong?”

Zhou Chunchun nodded her head in honesty. “Yinning called you several times, but you did not answer, so I had to make a trip down here.”

Recalling the call she received in the morning, Lin Xinyan realized that it was from Yinning. She stepped aside to let Zhou Chunchun in. “Let’s continue our conversation inside.”

Zhou Chunchun shook her head and rejected, “It’s fine. I’ll get straight to the point.” Then, she pointed to a black car with tinted windows parked outside. One could not see the car interior at all.

Earlier at four, Gu Bei ordered someone to send Number Four to the Zhou family. Bai Yinning also made preparations last night and got Gao Yuan to prepare a car to escort Number Four.

After Number Four arrived, they did not send him to Baicheng immediately. Bai Yinning called Lin Xinyan first, but since the latter did not answer, he sent Zhou Chunchun here instead.

Though this was a chance for him to see Lin Xinyan, after consulting with Zhou Chunchun, he tried his best to resist his urge to meet her in person.

“There is someone in the car, and Yinning requested me to send him over to you,” Zhou Chunchun stated.

Lin Xinyan thought he misheard her and asked, “There is someone in the car?”

Zhou Chunchun confirmed, “Yes, there is someone inside that Yinning said would be of use to you.”

As though she could guess what she meant, Lin Xinyan requested, “Bring me to the person in the car.”

Zhou Chunchun replied, “Sure.” She then proceeded to lead Lin Xinyan to the car parked outside. Seeing that they were approaching, Gao Yuan got off the car.

“Show Xinyan who he is,” Zhou Chunchun gave Gao Yuan the order.

Right away, Gao Yuan opened the passenger door and revealed Number Four, dressed in sick wear, who was unconscious in the back seat.

Bai Yinning injected Number Four with anesthesia as soon as they caught him. Therefore, Number Four was unconscious.

Immediately, Lin Xinyan could recognize Number Four’s face. He was not blurred out in the news of the temples. She thought about how he may have bullied Qin Ya, and it sent chills down her spine. All she wanted to do was to slap him, but she knew that it was not the time to let her emotions get the better of her.

Zong Jinghao had been looking for Number Four for a long time, yet, Number Four ended up in Bai Yinning’s hands! She wanted to know why Number Four was with Bai Yinning. “Where is Bai Yinning?”

“Yinning said that you would not want to see him, so he did not want to make you unhappy and thus did not come.” Zhou Chunchun replied.

Bai Yinning instructed Zhou Chunchun to relay that.

Lin Xinyan thought that Bai Yinning had finally thought it through and wished that he would treat Zhou Chunchun well in the future. She said, "Please let him know that I appreciate it."

Zhou Chunchun responded, "Don't worry about it. Yinning did express that he did it on his own will."

Pretending not to understand that sentence, Lin Xinyan ignored it and continued, "Please give me some time. I need to head back in for a while."

They could not bring Number Four into the house, so she had to let Zong Jinghao know, such that he could make the necessary arrangements.

Zhou Chunchun agreed.

Back in the villa, Zong Jinghao came down the stairs neatly dressed. As he did not see Lin Xinyan around, he asked Aunt Yu, "Where is she?"

"Someone rang the doorbell earlier. Is there no one at the door?" Aunt Yu stated.

Zong Jinghao was about to head out when Lin Xinyan walked in.

"Bai Yinning sent someone here," She immediately exclaimed when she saw him. "He is outside now."

Zong Jinghao walked towards her and ordered, "Stay in the house, and let me handle it."

Lin Xinyan nodded.

Under Gao Yuan's lead, Zong Jinghao saw an unconscious Number Four. Then, he called Shen Peichuan to send someone over to escort Number Four away.

For the past few days, Su Zhan and Shen Peichuan were looking for Number Four and were determined to catch the man who bullied Qin Ya. Therefore, when they knew that Number Four had been captured, they headed to the villa together.

To prevent Number Four from waking up and escaping, Shen Peichuan tied him up and transferred him into a sack. Next, they threw him in the trunk. If Shen Peichuan did not stop Su Zhan, the latter would have killed Number Four there and then. Fuming, he sat in the car, waiting to bring Number Four to a deserted place so that they could kill him.

Zong Jinghao instructed Gao Yuan to relay a message to Bai Yinning, "Let Mr. Bai know that I owe him one."

No matter how much he disliked Bai Yinning, he appreciated this gesture of sending Number Four over to him.

Gao Yuan said, "I will let him know." Next, he opened the door for Zhou Chunchun and suggested, "Let's go."

Zhou Chunchun got into the car to leave with Gao Yuan.

After Lin Xinyan changed out of her pajamas into proper attire, she walked out of the villa to see Gao Yuan driving away, and she knew that Zhou Chunchun had left with him.

"Will you like to head out with me?" Seeing that she was dressed up, Zong Jinghao asked.

"Yes, I want to know what he did to Qin Ya," Lin Xinyan replied coldly.

Zong Jinghao did not tell her otherwise since he would stay by her side all the time. "Take my car."

While Shen Peichuan and Su Zhan drove the car that Number Four was in, Zong Jinghao drove his car behind them.

Shen Peichuan chose the interrogation room in the institute instead of the suburbs to take care of Number Four.

Since he was now the deputy chief, he had more power and did not require as much effort to get something done like the past.

Besides, he had spies and was not afraid of any nonsense that others might spread.

They did not expect the dosage of the anesthesia injected by Bai Yinning to be so high. Even after they threw Number Four onto the ground, the latter did not wake up and only did after Shen Peichuan got someone to pour cold water over him.

Still injured, Number Four was confused when they suddenly jolted him awake. He could not grasp the situation.

He studied his surroundings and wanted to ask if they had arrived at Baicheng since Gu Bei told him they would hide him there. They said they would send him there as they were afraid that Zong Jinghao would find him. However, he saw three men before him.

He widened his eyes in shock. *Am I not heading to Baicheng? What am I doing here?*

“You...I...” He incoherently muttered.

Before he could react to what was happening, Su Zhan kicked him onto the ground. Number Four felt like his ribs were broken and he clutched onto his abdomen in pain. He did not get up for a long time.

Then, Su Zhan grabbed his collar, and with lasers shooting out of his eyes, he questioned, “What did you do to Qin Ya?”

Number Four stared at the monster-like glare and instinctively shrank. “I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

By now, he was wide awake and knew who Su Zhan was referring to. However, he did not dare to admit it because they would kill him if he did. Even if they did not kill him, he would end up crippled.

Su Zhan scoffed, “Are you sure you don’t know?”

Within the next second, a punch landed on Number Four’s face. *Bang!* He croaked, and blood flowed out from the corner of his mouth. Flustered, he asked frantically, “How did you find me?”

Su Zhan was only interested in what he did to Qin Ya and was not bothered to reply to his question. He sneered, “Stop spouting nonsense. I asked, what on earth did you do to Qin Ya?”

Lin Xinyan was in a separate room with multiple screens that displayed everything happening in the other room.

Zong Jinghao and Shen Peichuan were bystanders.

“I did nothing,” Number Four refused to admit. Su Zhan was furious. *He was naked, and Qin Ya was disheveled, yet, he dared to deny it?*

“Regardless of what you did, since you are already here, you will not be able to get out of here alive today,” Although he was livid, Su Zhan calmly announced. He looked at Number Four condescendingly and unbuttoned his suit with one hand. Then, he took off his jacket and threw it onto the ground.

Terrified, Number Four tried to back away. “Don’t come any closer!”

Su Zhan snorted, “You piece of shit, why don’t you admit to what you have done? Do you think you can get away with it if you deny everything? If I don’t force a confession from you, I will not be Su Zhan, but a piece of trash.”

Desperate, Number Four pleaded Zong Jinghao and Shen Peichuan, “Please stop him! It is a crime to kill me!”

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“Did anyone see that?” Shen Peichuan questioned.

Immediately, Number Four’s face turned as white as a sheet. He swallowed his saliva in a reflex, and begged, “I’ll spill everything. P-P-Please don’t hurt me.”

At this, Su Zhan constrained himself, waited for Number Four’s answer, and raised a smirk on his face, “Talk. But make sure you come clean. Otherwise, you’ll suffer a painful death.”

Without further ado, Number Four replied, “I’ll be completely honest. I won’t leave out a single detail. But will you promise to let me go if you say it?”

“I’ll let you out from here.” Su Zhan stated.

As long as I can get out of here, I will still survive somehow. These people are nuts. God knows what will happen if I stay here any longer. At last, Number Four heaved a sigh of relief and started to confess without delay, “I was attracted by her beauty and had planned to do her. At first, she was quite passionate and open about the idea, so I thought she was willing to sleep with me. But she hit me with a candle holder right after I untied her. All these wounds were the result of it. Hence, I failed to have my way with her. Now that I’ve told you everything, you will let me go this instance, right?”

Su Zhan let out a sardonic laugh, “You attempted to screw her but expect me to let you go? Are you high?”

He had already prepared for the worst. Even if this bastard deflowered Qin Ya, he would never disdain her or throw her a cold shoulder. Instead, he would take care of her with all his heart. Still, he had a huge relief after knowing that her chastity was not lost.

After all, if Number Four violated her, it would cause a fatal blow to her mental and emotional wellbeing. If that happened to someone with weak mental strength, it would inevitably lead to a terrible ending.

Number Four widened his eyes in disbelief and shouted, "How can you go back on your words? You've promised me to let me go if I told you the truth!"

Right then, Su Zhan bent down, pinched his chin, and sneered, "Is Gu Bei blind? Why would he put a fool like you in an important position? While it's true that I said I'd let you go, but did I ever mention if I'll release you alive?"

Number Four was scared out of wits at his words. In a split second, he got on his knees and prostrated himself to the ground, "Please spare my life! I know I was wrong! I promise I'll never do it again!"

Number Four was already a docile man with no principles, then to top it all off, he was a spineless coward. If Gu Bei's right-hand man didn't take the blame for him, that coward would never have the chance to be promoted. His boss only favored a man without any strong points like him because of his bootlicking skills. Yet, a disappointment like him had messed up his once-in-a-lifetime opportunity in only a few days.

Su Zhan rolled up his sleeves and demanded, "Tell me. Which hand did you use to touch her?"

Realized that he had pushed his luck in thinking his imploration would work, he retracted his right hand, kept his hands in his arms, and wailed, "I'm sorry! Please forgive me! I will be your slave!"

"I see. Right hand it is." After that, Su Zhan pulled the man's hair backward and inquired, "Will you stretch it out by yourself or let me do it?"

His crying face was filled with snot, which further degraded his almost non-existent masculinity. At this point, he was just a cowardly and timid degenerate.

At that sight, Su Zhan exclaimed, "Wimp!" Immediately after, he pulled the man's hair upwards and slammed the latter against the wall a few times, causing the second-mentioned to squeak in agony. As Shen Peichuan couldn't bear with the screech, he looked for duct tape and handed it to Su Zhan.

"Isn't the interrogation room well soundproofed?" Su Zhan didn't understand his intention.

Shen Peichuan refused to look at Number Four. To the former, a wimpish, effeminate person like the latter didn't deserve to call himself a man.

"His voice is too much to bear!"

At his words, Su Zhan took the duct tape, while Number Four crawled toward a corner, "Boohoo, please forgive me!"

"Restrain him." Su Zhan signaled to Shen Peichuan.

Seeing that Shen Peichuan was walking toward him, Number Four tried to run for his life. Nevertheless, the latter was kicked to the ground after taking the second step. Then his hands were pulled to the back by the former to help Su Zhan seal his mouth.

Su Zhan wrapped the tape around his mouth a few times and covered part of his face in the process. After that, Su Zhan put the duct tape aside and said to Shen Peichuan, "Pull his right hand out."

In a flash, Shen Peichuan pressed Number Four's right hand on the floor. Following that, Su Zhan patted the wimpish man's face and declared, "I won't call myself a man if I failed to destroy you today!"

Number Four was at a loss for words, his face turned ashen, and he gawked at Su Zhan's leg that was stepping on his hand, but he couldn't break free of it.

Suddenly, a sound of bone cracking came from Number Four's right hand, and his face was twisted with pain.

Su Zhan squashed Number Four's fingers with the heel of his leather shoes until they were deformed. A while later, Shen Peichuan released the latter and stood aside.

Number Four was trembling uncontrollably, and he wetted his pants from a while ago.

Disgusted by the horrendous sight, Su Zhan stepped on his face and chided, "Damn it! This is the first time I've ever seen a grown man wetted his pants in real life. You're a disgrace of men! How unsightly!"

At this, Shen Peichuan exhorted, "Don't kill him. We still have a use for him."

He is Gu Bei's subordinates. It goes without saying that he knew certain things about his boss. We'll give him a nice beating first, then take our own sweet time to interrogate him.

Su Zhan didn't respond to Shen Peichuan because he had a strong urge to finish Number Four off right away.

Seeing that he remained silent, Shen Peichuan tapped on his shoulder and persuaded, "It isn't worth to dirty our own hands by killing a scumbag like him. Besides, we don't have to do it by ourselves."

To which Su Zhan agreed reluctantly.

Later on, Shen Peichuan walked toward Zong Jinghao and whispered, "Let's wait outside."

After agreeing, Zong Jinghao exited the room first and entered the next room where Lin Xinyan was at.

As she watched Su Zhan from her chair, she could feel his rage that stemmed from his deep love and care for Qin Ya.

There's nothing an outsider like me can do in this situation. Still, I'm so glad that this scumbag didn't have his way on her.

“Are you going back now?” Zong Jinghao came over and asked. Then Lin Xinyan lifted her head to look at him and shook her head, “In a while.”

Shen Peichuan questioned, “Staying behind to see how Su Zhan teaches him a lesson?”

But Lin Xinyan changed the topic, “Peichuan, you got promoted?”

The question took Shen Peichuan by surprise, and he stared at her blankly for a while before replying, “Yes.”

“I will hold a banquet to celebrate your promotion at the villa tonight. Come with Su Zhan.” Lin Xinyan informed.

“I don't deserve it.”

“How could you not deserve this? Promotion is the proof and acknowledgment of your capability. Besides, we're all happy for you. I didn't mention it earlier because we haven't caught this man prior to this. It's a problem solved now that we've apprehended him. Although the matter with Gu Bei remained unresolved, we still have time for a meal.”

“As you wish. I will accept your kind offering. Thanks, Xinyan.” Shen Peichuan expressed his gratitude sincerely.

“Don't sweat it. If there's nothing else, you may head there first.” Lin Xinyan said with a smile, but there was a double entendre in her words. Nonetheless, Shen Peichuan didn't understand her true intention and replied, “Okay.”

“I’ll take my leave now.” After Lin Xinyan spoke, she stood up but was stopped by Zong Jinghao, who placed his hand on her shoulder and said, “I need to have a word with Peichuan. Please wait for me outside.”

Lin Xinyan nodded, “Alright.”

Then she walked out of the room.

At a later time, Zong Jinghao discussed their next step with Shen Peichuan. For starters, keeping Number Four alive was so that they could dig up proof of Gu Bei’s crimes. Furthermore, the detainee of theirs didn’t worth them soiling their own hands. Even if they wanted him eliminated, someone else would do the dirty work in their stead.

Leaving that aside, once they got hold of Gu Bei’s criminal evidence, it wouldn’t matter whether he’d spill out the much-needed information or not. If they so much as to brand him as the traitor, the person of interest would take him out without their intervention.

Shen Peichuan said, “Got it. Leave it to me.”

Zong Jinghao glanced at the screen and saw Number Four writhed in agony on the ground while Su Zhan continued to pound and stomp on the former as though his anger didn’t subside at all. Then, a while later, he looked away and left the room.

Once they were in the car, Lin Xinyan expressed her wish to go home, but he convinced her to follow him back to the office instead.

“Let’s have lunch together. I’ll drive you home afterward.” Zong Jinghao buckled her seatbelt.

When Zong Jinghao started the car, he added, “Are you trying to get Su Zhan and Qin Ya together?”

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Lin Xinyan turned to gape at him speedily and asked, “Was it that obvious?”

“No, your intention was perfectly disguised. It’s just that I know you too well.”
Zong Jinghao grinned from ear to ear and continued, “Perhaps we’re connected spiritually?”

Lin Xinyan was rendered speechless.

A few moments later, she regained her composure and commented, “I can tell that Su Zhan still has feelings for Qin Ya.”

“His heart has remained loyal to her since the beginning. He did a mistake in the past, that’s all.” Zong Jinghao spoke up for his buddy and carried on, “Please talk to Qin Ya.”

“I can’t see through her.” Lin Xinyan answered plainly. *Honestly speaking, I’ve wished that someone could take care of Qin Ya for a lifetime, and Su Zhan just happened to be the ideal candidate. Even though he made some mistakes previously, he has learned his lesson already. However, she was too frigid towards him, and it doesn’t seem like she’s gonna give him any chance. Also, it’s not like I lied about wanting to celebrate Shen Peichuan’s promotion. He performed well enough to be qualified for this position. Thus, I took this chance to invite them to the villa. Ahem... To create an opportunity for Su Zhan and Qin Ya.*

“Everyone has their own path. You don’t have to worry too much.” Zong Jinghao didn’t want her to be too absorbed into the lives of others.

Lin Xinyan understood his intention, “I won’t meddle too much. I’ll just do whatever little things I can to create a chance for them. If they managed to rekindle their relationship, that’s for the best. Or else, we can only say that they’re

not meant to be together. I won't say anything to Qin Ya. If she still has feelings for him, she'll see the good in him somehow. Otherwise, there's nothing we can do about it."

"I'm glad you understand." Zong Jinghao agreed with her totally.

He didn't like to get involved in other people's relationships, so he hoped that Lin Xinyan wouldn't interfere too much either, as they were all adults with their own thoughts. It was fine if what she did was just a little push, but shoving her ideas down their throats was unacceptable for him.

The car arrived in the underground parking lot of the office as they talked. After Zong Jinghao parked the car, he got out of the vehicle and walked towards Lin Xinyan's door. Meanwhile, she had already exited the car by herself. So he took her hand as they headed toward the elevator.

Lin Xinyan struggled, "Won't it be bad for us?"

After all, there was a rumor about them that went viral online before, and there was a heated discussion that she was some unpopular celebrity. As much as she couldn't care less, being criticized and faced with public backlash wasn't exactly a pleasant feeling.

Zong Jinghao eyes met with hers, "What's so bad about it?"

In the first place, they were legitimate husband and wife. Neither was Lin Xinyan having an affair with him nor was he her secret lover. If they were open about their relationship, it'd be harder for people to make false accusations.

Lin Xinyan could never dissuade him, so she allowed him to hold her hand as they entered the elevator willingly.

After the rumor went viral, the company staff greeted them more passionately than before whenever they were seen together.

When the elevator reached the destination floor, they exited together after the door slid open. As Zong Jinghao passed by the secretary's seat, he asked, "Are you thirsty?"

Lin Xinyan nodded, "I'm famished."

Her stomach was rumbling with hunger as she had eaten nothing since morning.

"What would you like to eat? I'll have the secretary to get it for you."

"Crispy fried pumpkin with salted egg, Sachertorte, caramel custard, and Dorayaki." Lin Xinyan named a few sweet snacks. *Oh, snap! I'm drooling just by thinking of them!*

Zong Jinghao turned to stare at the woman who requested nothing but sweet stuff. *I guess I've got no choice since she likes them.*

Without any delay, he ordered his secretary, "Get a cup of fresh juice as well." Then, he added, "Fresh orange." *Sweet food can feel greasy if eaten too much. The sourness of oranges is a great help to balance the taste.*

At once, the secretary responded, "I'm on it. By the way, the Chief of Public Relations came looking for you this morning and asked me to ping her when you arrive. Should I summon her now?"

Zong Jinghao murmured a short reply, "Okay."

Immediately after, he held her hand while entering his office, and his secretary noticed his gentleness toward her. *To think that those netizens were spouting nonsense they knew nothing about was so laughable.*

When they were in the office, Lin Xinyan informed, "Do whatever you need to do. I'll be waiting for you at the lounge."

Since Zong Jinghao had a few tasks to accomplish, he agreed to let her wait, “You may take a short nap on the sofa if you’re feeling tired.”

Although Lin Xinyan acknowledged, she was reluctant to do so, seeing that it was an inappropriate sight. Hence, she took a book to read while chilling on the couch.

After some time, someone knocked on the office door, so Zong Jinghao lifted his head from the documents he was reading and ordered, “Come in.”

In no time, the Chief of Public Relations came in after pushing the door open, and then she caught sight of Lin Xinyan, who was sitting on the sofa. With a smile on her face, she greeted, “Nice to meet you, Mrs. Zong.”

As Lin Xinyan wasn’t used to this title, she hurriedly forced a stiff smile and nodded lightly in response.

“What’s the matter?” Zong Jinghao put down the documents in his hands and leaned his back against the chair.

“Have you heard about the news regarding yourself lately?” She started the conversation without beating around the bush.

Zong Jinghao responded in agreement.

“Our official account has been flooded with questions. I think you might need to explain yourself.” She remarked.

Zong Jinghao frowned at her remark. *What does the official account have to do with me? Besides, it’s the account of the company, not my personal one.*

“What’s wrong?”

She explained, "Are you aware that the amount of our official account's followers has reached seventy million?"

As Zong Jinghao leaned against the chair casually, he commented, "Isn't that the job of your department?"

She answered with a smile, "Indeed, that's our responsibility. However, a company can hardly attract so much attention in such a short time frame."

"What's your point?"

"To gain more followers, we'll usually post photos of the company's boss." She clarified truthfully. "Needless to say, these followers aren't following our account for more contents of the company but the person behind it. Following the news updates of what we do here is just the icing on the cake."

Zong Jinghao threw a glance at her. *Hmm... Indeed, I seldom pay attention to her department, seeing that she's a capable woman. I do visit our Weibo official account occasionally, but it's always the usual stuff.*

After hearing her clarification, he scrolled through some of the latest posts on the official account and was shocked to see nothing but his photos.

"Your pictures are more attractive than the news of our projects. So please treat them as a means to advertise our company." She assuaged.

Zong Jinghao rubbed his brows at the sudden revelation, "So, you're responsible for my recent troubles?"

Yet, she replied calmly, "Certainly not. I just think that this might be the perfect opportunity to reveal the identity of your wife. When that happens, our staff will finally have the chance to attend your wedding."

Zong Jinghao raised his head to look down while uttering in a sarcastic tone, yet there was a bright smile on his face, "Are you listening to yourself? Or should I give you thanks?"

"If you feel that I've been a great help, please distribute red packets to us during your wedding day." As an observant person like her, she had noticed that Zong Jinghao wasn't angry at her. Hence, she continued, "You were a bachelor then. Thus, a sudden announcement of you having a wife would naturally attract much attention. However, there have been many negative comments about Mrs. Zong's identity seeing that the public has heard no news of your wedding before. Of course, there are some positive views, but the bad ones are really harsh. So I think it's time you give your wife a proper standing."

The last part of her words was told from a woman's perspective. Although she could tell that Zong Jinghao had been treating Lin Xinyan well, speculations were inevitable without a rightful identity.

In fact, all that she said had been troubling his mind for the longest. *Yeah, I think it's about the right time too. But too many things have happened until now, and she's in the middle of pregnancy. Hmm...*

"I got what you said. You may go back to work now." Zong Jinghao said, clearly accepted her opinion.

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The Chief of Public Relations left the office and closed the door.

Zong Jinghao walked over to her. "I think she has a point. Why don't we take this opportunity—"

"Is now a good time?" Lin Xinyan cut him off. "Don't even bring up the fact that you still have so much to take care of; I can't put on a wedding dress with this belly of mine."

"I'll get them to make a bigger dress. Besides, getting Gu Bei punished by the law doesn't mean we can't hold our wedding, right?" Zong Jinghao had made up his mind. He didn't want anyone else to misunderstand, and he wanted to give her and the children their rightful place.

The children would be attending elementary school soon. There'd be speculation if their identities were unclear.

"But—"

"Listen to me this time." The man was unusually adamant and didn't take no for an answer. "You may not care what others think of you, but you'll have to consider the kids. They need to face everyone with a clear identity."

Lin Xinyan looked down. She understood Zong Jinghao's intentions, but Qin Ya was still in the process of recovering, and they hadn't taken care of the matter involving Gu Bei. It really didn't seem like the right time to hold a wedding now.

Still, Zong Jinghao had a point. The children needed a solid identity and place. She didn't mind people saying things about her, but talking about her children was unacceptable.

This would only bring suffering to the kids and affect them psychologically.

She lowered her gaze. "I'll leave everything to you."

"Okay," Zong Jinghao replied gently while twirling a strand of her hair. "I'll get my dad to pick a good date for us."

Lin Xinyan's parents were gone, and Zong Jinghao only had his father. A wedding would only appear official with a senior around, and the wedding date was crucial too. The man didn't believe in superstitions, but he still wanted to pick an auspicious day for the wedding that he had wanted to hold for Lin Xinyan for so long.

He silently considered the best venue to hold the wedding.

However, Lin Xinyan didn't seem particularly thrilled.

Zong Jinghao couldn't help but feel slightly depressed. *Doesn't every girl look forward to her own wedding?*

Why does she seem uninterested?

"Don't you have any ideas in mind?"

Lin Xinyan pushed his hand away, hoping he would behave more appropriately in case the secretary were to walk in. "I did, but that was last time. I'm already used to being with you by now."

She already saw Zong Jinghao as her husband even if they didn't hold a wedding.

When Lin Xinyan was younger, she had certainly fantasized about meeting her Prince Charming and walking down the aisle with her hand in his.

Then, they would have children and live normal lives. Unfortunately, life was always full of surprises. She ended up betraying herself, getting pregnant, then marrying him.

Lin Xinyan had long shattered all the dreams she once had, feeling like she no longer had the right to experience love.

After giving birth, she supported her family on her own, never bringing any of her emotions home lest she made Zhuang Zijin worry.

The woman often cried silently in the dead of night.

She was only in her twenties, but her experiences were akin to those of someone who had already lived half their life.

The most challenging times had passed, and Lin Xinyan no longer had the urge to live a glamorous life. Her mind was now in a state of peace—a feeling that people usually experienced only when they were in their forties or fifties.

Having understood life, she knew that any love, no matter how passionate at first, would eventually dwindle.

Being able to stay in love while living a normal life was the most precious thing.

“Not long after arriving at C City, I met a beggar on the streets. His clothes were so dirty that I couldn’t tell how they originally looked, and who knows how long he had worn them for. His hair was stiff and tangled like hay, and his face was full of wrinkles. He always sat in the same spot, sometimes laughing, and sometimes weeping into his pillow. Those who lived nearby often took turns giving him food. I initially thought he was a lunatic. Then, I eventually found out from those living nearby that he was mentally unstable.”

Lin Xinyan turned to her husband. “He ended up that way because his wife had died while giving birth. Both she and the child didn’t make it, so the man went crazy.”

The street that the beggar used to sit on was nearby the embroidery studio that Shao Yun had rented for her. Every time she walked to the studio, she would surely pass by that street and see the beggar sitting there. But one day, the beggar disappeared. According to Shao Yun, he had died of cancer.

At that moment, Lin Xinyan lamented over how cruel fate was to let a person suffer all their life.

Hence, what she wanted most was for everyone she cared for—along with herself—to be safe and healthy. “I don’t wish to lose anyone I love, nor do I wish for anyone I love to lose me.”

For a moment, Zong Jinghao couldn’t respond to her sudden burst of emotions.

“I won’t go crazy. You won’t leave me either,” he finally said, pulling her into his arms and pinching her cheek. “What’s with that brain of yours, thinking of such things all day?”

Lin Xinyan slapped his hand. “It hurts.”

Zong Jinghao huffed coldly. “I’m glad you know it hurts. If you start thinking about such nonsense again, I’ll—”

“You’ll what?” Lin Xinyan grabbed his necktie and pulled him toward her. Zong Jinghao was sitting upright and steadily, so he didn’t lose his balance. The woman stopped tugging at his tie. “You’re bullying me already? You should get someone else to be your bride then,” she said coquettishly.

Zong Jinghao laughed in exasperation at how unreasonable she was being. “How am I the bully? You’re the one trying to strangle me.”

Feeling uncomfortable in her current position, Lin Xinyan slid down and lay on the couch, using the man’s thigh as her pillow. “Of course you’re the bully. You’re so much bigger and taller than me. There’s no way I could ever beat you,” she whined while playing with his necktie.

Zong Jinghao smiled and said in a deep voice, "Then I'll let you do whatever you want."

Lin Xinyan perked up. "So you'll never fight back?"

"That's not it."

Lin Xinyan looked into the man's pitch-black eyes. "Then what is it?"

He chuckled. "I'll let you be on top."

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“On top of what?” Lin Xinyan asked in confusion.

“My body,” he responded with a grin.

Lin Xinyan was speechless.

“To other people, you may seem like someone with a godlike presence who’s not interested in women, but I know that’s not true,” Lin Xinyan said.

The more cold and aloof someone looked, the crazier they actually were when no one was watching.

He might have said some unbelievable things before, and Lin Xinyan was shocked that she had not noticed it earlier.

Zong Jinghao leaned forward and rested his lips against the tip of her nose. “So...what kind of person am I?”

Lin Xinyan avoided his gaze, only for him to grab her chin and force her to look at him. “Look at me!”

Seeing the mockery in his eyes, Lin Xinyan decided to take the initiative. Instead of turning away, she stared straight into his eyes and grabbed his tie, pulling it until it came loose. She proceeded to pull apart the top button on his shirt and finger his neck.

She watched as his Adam’s apple bobbed in his throat. “Want to try it now?” he asked.

Lin Xinyan's petal-like lips curled into a shy smile. "You sure?"

I'm sure he won't say no!

He's just a man, after all.

Of course he'll agree to it!

Lin Xinyan got up from the sofa and gestured at it. "Lie down."

Zong Jinghao stared at her in disbelief. *Since when was she so eager about this?*

"Hurry up!" she growled, pushing him onto the sofa roughly.

She pulled her skirt up to reveal her pale, slender legs, and proceeded to rub them against the most sensitive parts of his body. Leaning forward, she smiled at him amorously, her fingers tracing his ribs as she whispered into his ear, "Close your eyes. I'll be very embarrassed if you kept staring at me like that."

A stray strand of hair descended upon his face when she leaned forward. It was as though she was tickling his heart with a feather, and it made his insides heat up considerably.

Lin Xinyan's enthusiasm was like a drug to him.

He had never felt so anxious in front of her.

Lin Xinyan pecked him on his eyelid. "I'm going to take my clothes off. Don't open your eyes until I tell you to."

"Alright," Zong Jinghao said obediently. He could tell that she was just messing around with him, but he decided to play along.

After all, it was rare to see her act like that.

He wanted to believe her, but the rational part of his mind reminded him that she was bluffing him the moment she told him not to open his eyes.

Lin Xinyan snickered as she tiptoed away and walked out of the office. *There's no way I'll be doing that with him in broad daylight! Especially not here!*

Just as she was about to close the door, she caught sight of the secretary walking over with a few boxes of food in tow. She made a shushing gesture at the secretary, who understood what she meant immediately and handed her the food without a word.

"Tell him I'm gone," Lin Xinyan whispered.

However, what she did not know was that the man she had been messing around with was already standing behind her with his shirt buttoned up and tie fixed.

The secretary raised her hand to greet him, but Zong Jinghao gestured for her to put her hand down. *Let's see when you're going to realize that your plan has been foiled!*

On the other hand, the secretary was utterly confused. *What are these two up to?*

Why are they acting so weird?

She stood rooted to the ground in bewilderment.

Later on, Lin Xinyan returned to the villa, lugging her things along. She bumped into Guan Jing at the entrance.

"Ma'am," Guan Jing greeted, thinking that Zong Jinghao must have informed her about the maids.

Noticing that he was empty-handed, Lin Xinyan stared at him in confusion. “What are you doing here?”

“Don’t you know?” he asked, puzzled.

Lin Xinyan frowned. “What?”

“Mr. Zong told me to send the maid over today. Please inform me if you’re not satisfied with them,” Guan Jing replied.

Oh, I almost forgot about it... “Alright, thanks.”

“I’ll head back to the office now,” Guan Jing said.

“Alright,” Lin Xinyan replied.

When she walked into the house, Aunt Yu was already briefing the maid on her daily duties and the rules.

Noticing Lin Xinyan’s presence, Aunt Yu hurried over to her and said, “Everyone, this is Mrs. Zong.”

The maid turned around and greeted her. “Nice to meet you, Mrs. Zong.”

Lin Xinyan studied the maid from head to toe. She was a young woman who looked like she was in her thirties, and her hair was pulled back into a bun. Clad in a simple checkered shirt and black pants, she looked like any other woman on the street. Lin Xinyan also noticed how nervous the maid seemed as she stood before her.

Aunt Yu noticed her anxiety and said, “No need to be nervous, girl. Mrs. Zong is a kind soul. As long as you carry out your duties, she’ll treat you well. Why don’t you tell her your background?”

There was a need for her to be transparent about her past, especially since she would be staying with them permanently.

“My name is Wang Xinhua, and I am 36 years old,” the maid said. “I’m divorced, and my husband has custody of our son. I live alone.”

Lin Xinyan smiled. “Welcome to the family. I hope you won’t be bothered about taking care of the kids.”

“Of course not!” Wang Xinhua said, waving her hand. “Aunt Yu told me all about them. I’d been a housewife ever since my son was born, so I’ll do my best to take care of the children and the chores.”

Lin Xinyan figured that Guan Jing must have done a background check prior to this, so she decided to leave the rest to Aunt Yu.

“Aunt Yu, can you get some groceries from the supermarket later? We have guests coming over tonight,” Lin Xinyan said.

Aunt Yu nodded, and Lin Xinyan reminded her to take Wang Xinhua on a tour around the area. “I’ll stay at home,” she added.

After they left, Lin Xinyan headed over to Qin Ya’s room, where Zong Yanchen and Zong Yanxi were at. The moment she entered the room, Zong Yanxi got up from her seat and headed out with Baymax in tow. “Let’s go, Baymax.”

Looks like she’s still mad at me...

Lin Xinyan reached out and blocked her daughter’s way. “Will you cheer up if I brought you there tomorrow?”

“Really?” Zong Yanxi asked, looking up.

“Yeah, of course,” Lin Xinyan said.

She had wanted to ask Zong Jinghao to take Zong Yanxi there, but he seemed too busy to do so.

Zong Yanxi grinned, and Lin Xinyan heaved a huge sigh of relief.

I miss how clingy she used to be...

“Let’s go and play Gomoku!” Zong Yanchen offered, walking up to his sister.

Zong Yanxi nodded, and the kids ran off to their own room with Baymax. “Take care of your sister!” Lin Xinyan yelled after Zong Yanchen.

“Understood!” Zong Yanchen yelled back.

All he had to do was to let his sister win.

As easy as ABC!

After the kids left, Lin Xinyan closed the door and asked Qin Ya, “Feeling better?”

Qin Ya seemed energetic enough to talk. “I can’t walk yet, but my fever seems to have come down.”

Lin Xinyan poured her a glass of water and sat down by the side of her bed, thinking about how she should inform Qin Ya about their guests that evening.

“Peichuan got a promotion, so we’re having a celebration tonight,” she said vaguely.

What she had actually meant to say was, “Su Zhan will be coming over tonight, since there’s no way he’ll skip his best friend’s celebratory dinner.”

Qin Ya understood what she meant, but she remained calm. “That’s great. I’m happy for him.”

Just like Lin Xinyan, Shen Peichuan's promotion did not come as a surprise.

Lin Xinyan, however, was confused by her lack of reaction. *Did she get over him already?*

"We managed to catch the man in the temple. Su Zhan was the one who interrogated him," Lin Xinyan added, hoping to make her less critical of Su Zhan.

All she wanted to do was to inform Qin Ya that Su Zhan was a better person than she thought.

Qin Ya clenched her fists under her blanket as the doctor's words flooded back in her mind. She relaxed after a second and smiled. "I know what you mean. As for Su Zhan..."

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She looked at Lin Xinyan with a serious expression. "It's over between us. I'll look for someone else to spend the rest of my life with."

Her mind was clear and her tone was determined. She knew that Su Zhan was not a good match for her, but she did not give up hope in love.

In fact, it was clear that she had pondered over it for a long time. Lin Xinyan realized that there was nothing more she could say to convince her otherwise, so she squeezed Qin Ya's hand and said, "I'll support you no matter what."

That was probably the only thing she could do.

"After I recover, I want to go back to C City. Uncle Er's taking care of the factory now, but I don't think I should leave the store unmanned for too long," she said. "There's nothing left for me to do at B City, so I'd rather go back to my business."

"I'll go back with you," Lin Xinyan said. Cloud Corporation was her life force, and she could not leave it unattended for too long. After all, Zong Jinghao would be able to take care of things in B City, and there was nothing else she needed to do.

She did not want to lose her career because of marriage, and neither did she want to become a housewife for life.

Qin Ya nodded. "I know you're happily married to Mr. Zong, but you can't just depend on him for everything."

"It's no wonder we get along. We think the exact same way," Lin Xinyan remarked with a laugh. "Get some rest. Wear something pretty tonight."

“Will there be any hot guys?” Qin Ya joked.

“Yes,” Lin Xinyan responded while giving her a pat before getting up. “I’m going to take a nap. I have to prepare dinner when Aunt Yu comes back.”

Qin Ya shrugged. “I can’t help you. All I can do is eat.”

“You’ll be helping me by getting well,” Lin Xinyan replied, beaming. After leaving the room, she went to check on the kids. The little ones were still playing Gomoku so intently that they didn’t notice the door being pushed open. With a smile, she closed the door and headed upstairs to rest.

Despite feeling tired, she couldn’t seem to fall asleep. Aunt Yu and the new maid returned from the supermarket two hours later with a whole bunch of goods. Hearing the noise, Lin Xinyan got up and went downstairs.

“What did you buy?” Lin Xinyan walked over and asked.

“Didn’t you say that there’s going to be guests? I bought everything we will need,” Aunt Yu answered, setting the shopping bags on the kitchen counter and unpacking them.

“By the way, I bought a salted goose on the way home,” Aunt Yu added. “I heard that it’s amazing. I’ll make a soup with it later, and you can have some of it. Don’t eat too much though, it’s not good for the baby.”

Lin Xinyan smiled. *Aunt Yu is so caring!*

“Alright. I’ll help you,” Lin Xinyan offered, only to be pushed out of the kitchen by Aunt Yu, who told her to take a nap.

Lin Xinyan insisted, and Aunt Yu gave in after a while. She went through the groceries one by one and came up with a dinner plan.

Afterward, Lin Xinyan spent the whole afternoon in the kitchen with them, preparing dinner for their guests.

At around 7 p.m., the three men came back together.

Zong Jinghao headed upstairs to get changed, whereas Shen Peichuan and Su Zhan played with the children in the living room.

Su Zhan tried his best to glean information about Qin Ya from the kids by asking cryptic questions, but Zong Yanchen saw through his plans immediately.

“Aunt Yanyan is in that room,” he said, pointing at Qin Ya’s room.

Su Zhan glanced at it and smiled. “Great to know that she’s doing well.”

He decided not to go and visit her, lest she felt uncomfortable.

Zong Yanchen shook his head and sighed in frustration. “You adults are so difficult.”

“What are you thinking about all day?” Shen Peichuan asked, caressing the boy’s head. “You’ll age quickly if you keep that up.”

Zong Yanchen looked up. “What about you, Uncle Shen? Uncle Su might have gone through a lot, but at least he’s been in love with someone before!”

She Peichuan glared at him wordlessly.

“How pure do you think he is? He’s gotten himself someone long ago,” Su Zhan chimed in and nudged Shen Peichuan with his shoulder. “Why didn’t you ask Sang Yu to come?”

“Who’s Sang Yu?” Zong Yanchen stared at Su Zhan with his large eyes.

“She’s Uncle Shen’s girlfriend, of course,” Su Zhan answered.

“Wow! Uncle Shen is attached?” Zong Yanchen yelled in excitement.

Meanwhile, Aunt Yu came out of the kitchen to set the table for dinner while Lin Xinyan carried the wine bottles to the table. She heard her son’s excited yelps from the living room the moment she stepped out of the kitchen. “What? Who’s attached?”

“It’s Shen Peichuan, of course! The star of tonight,” Su Zhan said.

Lin Xinyan stopped dead in her tracks and stared at Shen Peichuan. “You have a girlfriend?”

“No, of course not!” Shen Peichuan protested. “I don’t know what he’s saying!”

“He’s trying to hide it!” Su Zhan said. “I wonder who had a whole kissing session in front of the school gates...mmph!”

Before Su Zhan could finish his sentence, Shen Peichuan rushed forward and clamped his hand over Su Zhan’s mouth. “Shut up!”

Lin Xinyan laughed. “Why are you hiding it?”

“It’s nothing! She’s a university student, so she’s too young for me,” Shen Peichuan explained. *I would have considered confessing to her if she weren’t a university freshman...*

He was too self-conscious of their age gap, and he figured that Sang Yu would not be interested in him in the first place.

Besides, Su Zhan’s big mouth could potentially cause trouble to her, and that was the last thing She Peichuan wanted.

Su Zhan shoved Shen Peichuan's hand away and scoffed, "So what if she's too young? Don't you know how many people are dying to get a young and pretty girlfriend?"

Shen Peichuan resisted the urge to punch Su Zhan in the face.

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Taking in the enraged look on Shen Peichuan's face, Su Zhan hurriedly hid behind Lin Xinyan. "I'm telling the truth! You're just in denial. I'm certain that Sang Yu has feelings for you. Why else would she have been so worried when you were in trouble last time? Truthfully, age really isn't a problem. Look at Xinyan and Jinghao! There's an eight-year gap between them but that isn't affecting their relationship at all!"

Lin Xinyan twisted her head to eye Su Zhan. "Hey, pick on Peichuan all you want but don't drag us into this!"

She hated it when people brought up the past.

After all, she really was relatively young back then. She had only been eighteen years old- still in university- when she had married Zong Jinghao.

Shen Peichuan sniped, "Hasn't he always been as such? A leopard can't change its spots."

Su Zhan glared at the other man, growling, "Stop bullying me whenever you get the chance to. I might not be able to win in a fight against you but I'm smart enough to get backups!"

Lin Xinyan smacked Su Zhan's shoulder and reminded him, "Keep it down! Qin Ya might be able to hear everything from inside the house, you know."

She wondered if he would still act like that if he knew what Qin Ya had said earlier.

The mention of Qin Ya instantly silenced Su Zhan.

“Oh, so there’s still someone who you’re afraid of?” Shen Peichuan teased.

“Get lost!” Su Zhan plonked himself down on the couch, refusing to talk anymore.

Lin Xinyan, who had gone off somewhere, returned with two bottles of wine.

“Time to eat.”

Placing the bottles down on the table, she headed for Qin Ya’s room. She helped the other woman to dress and clean herself before guiding her out of the room. Qin Ya was walking on the balls of her feet to prevent her injuries from touching the floor. With Lin Xinyan’s support, she arrived at the living room. Su Zhan instantly stood up to help Nonetheless, when Qin Ya did not even shoot a glance at him, he stopped himself. He did not want her to find him annoying.

Lin Xinyan brought Qin Ya over to the dining table. Zong Yanchen ran over and thoughtfully pulled out a chair for her. “Aunt Qin, be careful!”

Smiling, Qin Ya rubbed the little boy’s head affectionately. “You’re so sweet! You’re definitely going to attract a lot of girls to you when you’re older.”

Zong Yanchen waved his hands around as he protested, “One is more than enough! Women are so troublesome. I’m scared of what might happen if I get more than one.”

Amused laughter greeted his words. Lin Xinyan pinched her son’s cheek as she uttered fondly, “You and your nonsense.”

“No, it’s the truth!” Feeling aggrieved, he muttered to himself, “You and Daddy are always squabbling with each other. It takes days for you two to get on good terms again.”

“What was that?” Lin Xinyan had not heard him clearly as his voice had been too soft.

He shook his head and replied innocently, "I said I got it. I won't say such nonsense again in the future."

Right then, Aunt Yu walked over with the cutlery and dishes. Lin Xinyan helped her to set the table before calling out, "Everybody, time to eat!"

Shen Peichuan and Su Zhan came over upon hearing her words.

"Wow, what a lavish meal!" The table was filled with a veritable feast, comparable to those of buffets at restaurants.

"Thanks for your effort, Xinyan. It must have been tiring for you to prepare all this," Shen Peichuan commented with a grin.

Lin Xinyan placed the last of the chopsticks down before looking at him. "Well, it's a celebration of your promotion. Preparing this is nothing when compared to that."

Embarrassment swept through Shen Peichuan. It was not like he was being promoted to the position of the chief of police; he was merely a deputy chief!

It was only after everyone had sat down that Zong Jinghao came downstairs and sat at the head of the table. Lin Xinyan opened up a bottle of wine, playing the hostess. "The first glass of the night goes to Peichuan."

Shen Peichuan hurriedly stood up and took the bottle from her. "I'll do it."

As if I allow her to pour me a glass!

Lin Xinyan did not argue as she sat back down. A smile tugged at her lips as she questioned, "Peichuan, be serious now. Who is Sang Yu?"

She had interrupted the earlier discussion, which was the reason that she was asking of it now. She was very curious about who this "Sang Yu" woman was.

Shen Peichuan is a mature and steady man. Whoever this woman is, they must really have some sort of history between them. After all, he's not exactly a casual person.

Shen Peichuan was struck speechless. *Why can't they let this matter go?*

Su Zhan placed his wine glass before Shen Peichuan, obviously intending for the other man to pour him some wine. "Perhaps I should bring her here?"

"Could you stop sticking your nose in other people's business?" Shen Peichuan scowled at him. "Can't you just sit there and be quiet? Don't you see Qin Ya sitting across from you?"

Su Zhan fell silent.

Zong Yanxi and Zong Yanchen covered their mouths and giggled.

Uncle Su has gotten humiliated again. This is so funny!

Filling up Zong Jinghao's glass as well, Shen Peichuan put the bottle back down before he explained, "I admit that I really want to settle down and have a family soon too. After all, I'm not getting any younger. However, what's going on between me and Sang Yu is truly just a misunderstanding. She's too young for me and we're not suited for each other."

Qin Ya spoke up, "Mr. Shen has always been a reliable man. I'm sure that you'll be able to find an outstanding woman soon."

Chuckling, Shen Peichuan responded, "I hope you're right."

She sighed. "It's the truth. I know that I don't stand a chance. Otherwise, I would have tried my hand at wooing you." Qin Ya had a pitiful expression on her face. She did not seem to notice the change in the atmosphere around the table. Either that, or she was aware and was pretending she was not. "I remember hearing that getting married is like a woman's second rebirth. The first time, she

doesn't get a chance. However, the second time, she has to be careful about choosing her husband. She will suffer for the rest of her life if she chooses a jerk. I firmly believe that to be true. Nevertheless, I'm sure that Mr. Shen is definitely not a jerk."

Almost instinctively, Shen Peichuan glanced over at Su Zhan.

Su Zhan's gaze was locked on Qin Ya. *How could she totally ignore our whereabouts and injure my pride like that?*

Shen Peichuan opened his mouth, wanting to say something. Unfortunately, no words escaped him.

In truth, Su Zhan was responsible for Qin Ya getting hurt. There was nothing that Shen Peichuan could say to justify that. In the end, he decided that he might as well distance himself from the issue entirely. "Don't drag me into your mess. I don't want any misunderstandings to form. I know better than to hit on my friend's wife."

Qin Ya smiled. "Look at you, getting all terrified at the notion of me courting you. Don't worry. I know better than to try."

"That's not what I meant!" Shen Peichuan hastily replied.

He had not said that because he looked down on her or thought of her as dirty.

"Then what do you mean? Don't tell me that you like me too?" she countered.

Shen Peichuan was beginning to regret his decision in coming here. It seemed as though everything he said was wrong in some way.

Lin Xinyan swatted Qin Ya and warned, "That's enough."

The smile never left Qin Ya's face as she answered, "I know. I couldn't help but tease Mr. Shen because he's just so oblivious."

Schooling his expression into a stern look, Shen Peichuan stated, "Don't joke about things like that in the future please."

This topic was just too sensitive. Anyone who did not know him well would have gotten the wrong idea about his relationship with Qin Ya.

"Alright, dig in!" Lin Xinyan swiftly ended things before the situation escalated further. She gestured to the pot in the middle of the table and introduced, "That pot contains stewed salted goose. Aunt Yu says that it tastes absolutely divine. Everyone, try it out!"

Salted goose was usually made by curing the meat with salt in winter. After a few days, the meat was washed and chopped into small pieces. It was then added into a pot with ginseng, wolfberry, and mushrooms. Soon after, it would be stewed for two hours on a low fire. The bitterness of the ginseng blended with the saltiness of the goose perfectly.

Lin Xinyan took a piece of goose for her son.

"I want to eat too!" Zong Yanxi complained. She thought that she had been forgotten in favor of her brother.

Truthfully, Lin Xinyan had not forgotten about her. It was just that her son was sitting closer to her. Hence, she served him first. Besides, her chopsticks could only hold one piece at a time.

Zong Jinghao placed a goose wing on top of his daughter's plate. The little girl blinked her dainty eyes at him and grinned. "Daddy loves me more! Mommy only cares about Yanchen now!"

"Can your Mommy's chopsticks hold two pieces of meat at once?" Zong Jinghao asked his daughter in a gentle tone.

Zong Yanxi shook her head. “No.”

A beat later, she understood. “Okay, I know now! I know Mommy still loves me. She said that she would take me to the pet shop too!”

With that said, she used her hands to pick up the wing as she bit into it with relish. The meat was incredibly tender and filled with the flavor of ginseng. She smacked her lips happily. “It’s so tasty!”

“Aunt Qin, you should have some too! It’s really yummy!” Zong Yanchen mumbled through a mouthful of goose.

Qin Ya grinned. “How nice of you not to forget about me no matter what you’re doing. Alright, seeing how you seem to be enjoying it so much, I’ll try some too.”

Taking a piece for herself, she took a bite and hummed in delight. “It really is delicious!”

The presence of the two kids always served to liven up the atmosphere.

Everyone was in high spirits as they continued their meal. The only exception was Su Zhan, who was feeling rather down. Contrary to his usual talkative self, he was incredibly quiet tonight as he drunk more and more wine.

Halfway through the meal, the doorbell rang. Aunt Yu got up to open the door but Lin Xinyan stopped her. Lin Xinyan told her to get some rest since she must have been exhausted from cooking their dinner. “I’ll go.”

The new maid volunteered, “I’ll get it!”

Lin Xinyan nodded but did not move to sit back down. Instead, she remained standing as she stared at the front door. *Everyone whom we’ve invited is already here. I wonder who it is.*

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The maid opened the door to see two women standing there. They seemed to be a mother and daughter pair. “May I ask who you’re looking for?”

“Is Xinyan here?” Zhou Chunchun asked.

“You are?”

“I’m Zhou Chunchun. Please let her know, thank you,” Zhou Chunchun replied politely.

The maid turned to look at Lin Xinyan and reported, “It’s a Ms. Zhou.”

Lin Xinyan approached the front door and was surprised to see Gu Huixin and Zhou Chunchun.

“Xinyan, Yinning is missing!” Zhou Chunchun sniffled.

Bewildered, Lin Xinyan asked, “What do you mean he’s missing?”

Gu Huixin queried, “Chunchun told me that Bai Yinning sent someone here?”

Zhou Chunchun might have been unaware of what was happening but Gu Huixin was very much in the know.

It was no secret that Gu Bei and Zong Jinghao were enemies. Now that the man whom Gu Bei had been trying so hard to keep hidden had just suddenly disappeared from right under his nose, he was incensed. It was likely that he had found out about how Bai Yinning was involved in this incident. Hence, that was why he had kidnapped Bai Yinning and was now demanding that man in return.

Back then, Gu Huixin had agreed to help Gu Bei in hiding that man. Now that he was missing, she would have to bear responsibility for it. She knew that her only option now was to find that missing man. Only then would she be able to get Bai Yinning back.

Bai Yinning had actually instructed Zhou Chunchun not to tell anyone that he was bringing that man here. However, she panicked badly when she discovered that he was missing. Gu Huixin had also deliberately phrased her questions so that Zhou Chunchun would reveal that information. That was how she found out that the missing man was here with Zong Jinghao.

By then, Zong Jinghao had neared them. He had overheard their conversation and he already had a rough idea of what was going on. "Tell me what you want."

Gu Huixin went straight to the point, "Gu Bei entrusted me to hide that man. Originally, I didn't want to involve myself in this matter. However, Yinning told me that he had a place in mind to hide him. Thus, I agreed. I had not expected him to hand the man over to you. I'm guessing that Gu Bei kidnapped Yinning because he's furious with him. My reason for being here is simple. Return that man to me so that I may get Yinning back."

In the end, this had only happened due to her own negligence. She was aware that Bai Yinning and Zong Jinghao knew each other. Bai Yinning had also told her that they were friends. What she had not expected was that they were such close friends.

"That man is a vile criminal! If anything, we should be handing him over to the police so that he may be tried for his crimes! Why should we give him to Gu Bei? Mrs. Zhou, you should know better than anyone that criminals need to be tried in court. Your husband is a civil servant! Are you seriously going to flaunt the laws in spite of that? Are you going to ruin your husband's reputation like that?" Su Zhan commented coldly.

Back then, if it had not been for Shen Peichuan holding him back, he would have beat that criminal to death! Now, he was worried Zong Jinghao would actually give him to Gu Huixin.

Gu Huixin was really regretting her decision to involve herself with Gu Bei. However, she could not focus on that fact now. At this moment in time, all she wanted was to get Bai Yinning back from her brother. After that, she would cut off all ties with him.

“Yinning thinks of you as friends! Now that he’s been kidnapped, aren’t you going to save him?” *Why does it sound like they’re unwilling to give up the man?*

“Sorry to break it to you but we’re not that close with him. In fact, we’re not even friends. The only reason he brought the man to us was that his intentions were less than noble-”

“Su Zhan,” Lin Xinyan cut him off sharply. Zhou Chunchun was standing right there. Now that Bai Yinning was married, it should not matter what his reason was for giving them the man. Either way, it was not wise for them to talk about him in front of his family like that. Not only would that hurt Zhou Chunchun, rather, but it would also damage his relationship with the Zhou family as well.

She looked at Zong Jinghao. “What shall we do?”

He moved aside to let her enter the house. “Stay here. I’ll go out with them and discuss this matter.”

Nodding, she reminded him, “It doesn’t matter what you decide. Call me to let me know.”

“Got it.” *Tonight was supposed to be a celebratory dinner for Shen Peichuan. Now, this issue with Bai Yinning has popped up, successfully ruining the mood.*

“Let’s talk somewhere else,” he suggested. He was only dressed in casual clothing so he had no intention of walking far. He just did not want to have this discussion in the house.

In the end, they sat down in several rattan chairs in the courtyard.

Zong Jinghao called Shen Peichuan aside and murmured, "Has the man been interrogated yet?"

"Su Zhan went a little overboard with him. He's still unconscious."

"Find a way to wake him up and interrogate him through the night." *It doesn't matter if Number Four knows about what Gu Bei had done or not. We still have to interrogate him since he might know of some secrets.*

"I'll get to it right away," Shen Peichuan promised. The words had barely left his lips when he spun around and left.

As of now, they had managed to gather some evidence against Gu Bei. However, the Gu family was merely too powerful as their connections spanned out mostly everywhere. If what they had was not enough to irrefutably condemn him, they could not take any action just yet. Doing so would only lead to them losing control of the situation.

Old Master Gu was not yet retired, while a few of Gu Bei's sisters had married into prominent families. Gu Huixin was one such example. Her husband, Zhou Huaihou, was extremely influential. Although he was an honest and just man, his wife was still from the Gu family.

If Gu Bei were really in deep trouble, they would definitely band together to save him.

Zong Jinghao went back to where Gu Huixin and Zhou Chunchun were waiting, saying, "I'll give you the man tomorrow."

Gu Huixin could not bear to wait that long. She was rather worried that Bai Yinning would suffer in Gu Bei's hands.

"Can't you hand him over to us today?" she asked anxiously.

“Aren’t you Gu Bei’s older sister? Can’t you say something to him? After all, he’s kidnapped your son-in-law! Instead of taking it up with him, you’re here demanding that we release that man to you! So in the end, you’re still helping your brother?” Su Zhan questioned scornfully.

She’s such a pretentious woman! All she cares about is looking out for her own brother!

Unbeknownst to him, Gu Bei did not care that she was his sister at all. He was well aware of who Bai Yinning was, yet he had still kidnapped the latter.

Gu Huixin had certainly tried to reason with him.

Unfortunately, he had completely disregarded their blood relation. “You want me to give him back? Then bring me Number Four. You promised me that you would hide him and ensure that nobody found him. Yet, less than a day later, he’s disappeared. This is all your fault and you need to make up for your mistake. Otherwise, I won’t guarantee the safety of your son-in-law.”

Gu Huixin’s expression darkened at Su Zhan’s words. “I’m sure that all of you are aware that we, the children of the Gu family, were not raised with our parents. That means that we’re not exactly close with each other. Normally, I wouldn’t have bothered myself with him. However, this time he came to ask me for help personally. Now, he’s ignoring our familial connection and demanding that I bring that man back to him, in exchange for Yinning. Yinning had brought that man to you. Are you really not going to help him, now that he’s in trouble? How could you be so heartless?”

Gu Huixin had assumed that they were all friends. Yet, it was starting to seem like she had been mistaken.

“Do you have any idea of what that man has done?” Just the thought of Number Four being released back to Gu Bei had anger boiling in Su Zhan. “I really hope that your daughter can remain safe and healthy for the rest of her life. Pray that nothing’ll happen to her.”

Gu Huixin frowned. "What do you mean?"

Rubbing his throbbing temples, Zong Jinghao intoned, "Su Zhan, go back home."

"But-"

"Go home. I'll handle this. Your impulsiveness will only serve to make things worse," Zong Jinghao stated firmly.

Su Zhan got up and grudgingly departed.

"Go to the police station tomorrow morning to pick up the man." Zong Jinghao would not refuse to release the man. He did not want anything to happen to Bai Yinning either. Bai Yinning might have truly handed them the man, solely because of Lin Xinyan.

However, whether that was true or not did not matter. If anything happened to him because of this, Lin Xinyan would be traumatized by it. That was not something that Zong Jinghao wanted to see.

Besides, they had already planned everything out. Even if Number Four returned to Gu Bei, there was still a chance that he might not actually live.

Gu Huixin mulled over Zong Jinghao's words, ultimately replying, "Fine. Morning time is just a little more than ten hours away anyway."

They would wait.

"Chunchun, let's go."

Gu Huixin tugged on her daughter's arm.

Zhou Chunchun shook her head. "Mom, you should head back home first. I'd like to speak to Xinyan."

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Gu Huixin stared at her daughter. "It's already so late. It's not proper for you to stay here."

Now, she finally had confirmation that Bai Yinning and these men were not on good terms. Otherwise, they would not have been so calm, especially upon knowing that he had been kidnapped.

"Mom, I wouldn't be able to sleep even if I go back now. I'm too worried about Yinning." While Zhou Chunchun did not know what Lin Xinyan had felt toward Bai Yinning, she knew that the other woman would not wish him any harm.

"Chunchun," Gu Huixin pleaded. Knowing that her daughter was rather innocent in nature, Gu Huixin was worried that she would be bullied if she remained.

"Mom, go home." Taking in the determined expression on Zhou Chunchun's face, Gu Huixin had no choice but to acquiesce to her words. "I'll come over tomorrow morning to fetch you."

"Okay," Zhou Chunchun immediately agreed.

Zong Jinghao's brows furrowed. It was evident that he felt rather reluctant to let Zhou Chunchun stay the night. He did not want her to take up more of Lin Xinyan's time. "It's very late so both of you should go. I'll hand the man over to you tomorrow."

"Please tell Xinyan that I want to meet her." She knew that he did not want her to stay there. However, her worry for Bai Yinning was trumping her apprehension at offending Zong Jinghao. There was no way that she could leave if Lin Xinyan were able to truly help her.

“Chunchun-” Gu Huixin started in exasperation.

Zhou Chunchun cut her off, “Mom, leave me alone.”

“Are you stupid? Can’t you see that he doesn’t want you here?” Annoyed at her daughter’s stubbornness, the words slipped out before Gu Huixin could stop them. She instantly regretted opening her mouth.

“Chunchun, I’m so sorry. I didn’t mean that.”

“It’s fine. It’s just the truth anyway.” Tears gathered in Zhou Chunchun’s eyes as sadness swelled within her. Truthfully, she would not have minded it if anyone else had said that. Nonetheless, coming from her own mother, it really hurt.

Abruptly, a voice called out, “Come in then.”

It was Lin Xinyan. She had been standing at the door and she had overheard the entire conversation.

Zhou Chunchun’s head whipped around and she spotted Lin Xinyan watching her. She jogged over to stand before Lin Xinyan and wiped at the tears trickling down her face. Plastering a smile on her face, she urged, “Xinyan, I’m sorry to disturb you when it’s already so late. It’s just... I’m so worried about Yinning that I can’t sleep. I don’t have any friends to talk to either...”

Lin Xinyan knew that the other woman had a pure and simple soul. Thus, she snagged Zhou Chunchun’s hand and reassured her, “It’s fine. We’re friends, aren’t we? I’ll look after you.”

With that said, she focused her attention on Gu Huixin, who was standing nearby watching her daughter with blatant worry. Although their first meeting had been less than pleasant, she was willing to forgive the older woman for Zhou Chunchun’s sake. Thinking on it further, she could understand that Gu Huixin was simply concerned for her daughter.

All parents only want the best for their children.

“I’ll take care of her,” she promised Gu Huixin.

The older woman nodded. “Thank you. I’d like to apologize for what I’ve done previously.”

“I’ve already forgotten about that. Chunchun will be fine here. Don’t worry.”

Gu Huixin thanked Lin Xinyan again, reassured by the younger woman’s sincere attitude. Turning to her daughter, she uttered, “Chunchun, I’ll be going then.”

Zhou Chunchun nodded and answered, “Okay. I’ll get back home myself in the morning.”

Gu Huixin was speechless at Zhou Chunchun’s words. *How is she going to hail a taxi here?*

As if sensing her thoughts, Lin Xinyan piped up, “I’ll have the chauffeur send her back.”

“Thanks,” Gu Huixin expressed gratefully.

Lin Xinyan dragged Zhou Chunchun into the house with a gentle smile. Qin Ya was sitting on the couch in the living room so Lin Xinyan recounted what had happened to her.

“Tell Mr. Zong that he can release that man.” Qin Ya did not want to make things difficult for everyone. She also refused to allow Lin Xinyan to continue owing Bai Yinning a favor. After all, all of them were aware of Bai Yinning’s feelings toward Lin Xinyan.

Lin Xinyan stated, “He’ll deal with this matter, don’t worry. Come, let me take you back to your room.”

“Xinyan, let me help you! You’re pregnant and you shouldn’t be overexerting yourself.” Zhou Chunchun had noticed the bandages on Qin Ya’s legs and feet. Hence, she reached out to grab the injured woman’s arm to support her.

Qin Ya glanced over at Lin Xinyan, her expression evident in asking who the other woman was.

Lin Xinyan introduced, “She’s Bai Yinning’s new wife, Zhou Chunchun. She’s a sweet woman.”

Qin Ya nodded in agreement. “She does look like a good woman.”

She looks very innocent.

Upon returning to Qin Ya’s room, Lin Xinyan poured her a glass of water. “It’s time to take your medicine.”

Qin Ya accepted the glass and popped the pills into her mouth. “Alright, you guys don’t have to stay here. I’m going to sleep.”

“Holler if you need me.”

“As if I would dare shout for you! I’m scared that Mr. Zong will murder me. I’ll call for Aunt Yu or that new maid.” Qin Ya pursed her lips and continued, “Your husband loves you so much that anyone who even looks at you wrong will probably suffer his wrath. I’m most definitely not going to order you around like a servant.”

In response, Lin Xinyan glared at her. “Go to sleep. You’re always running your mouth! You’re exactly like Su Zhan!”

The moment Su Zhan’s name left her lips, Qin Ya’s expression chilled. “I’m sleeping.”

Tucking Qin Ya under the sheets, Lin Xinyan muttered an apology, "I didn't mean to bring him up."

"I know. You should rest early too. I don't want my godson to be too tired." Qin Ya was not actually angry. She was just deeply unhappy at hearing Su Zhan's name.

Grinning, Lin Xinyan made a sound of acknowledgment.

She waited till Zhou Chunchun had exited the room before she shut the door. "Have you eaten your dinner yet?"

Zhou Chunchun shook her head. "No. I couldn't eat with Yinning gone."

"You need to eat so that you can have the energy to wait for him. There's still some food here. Eat something." Lin Xinyan shouted for Aunt Yu, "Please bring me a clean plate."

Aunt Yu came out with the requested plate and lamented, "It was so rare for everyone to come together to have dinner. It is such a pity that it was interrupted. Look at all these leftover food!"

Zhou Chunchun bowed her head in guilt, murmuring, "I'm sorry."

"It's not your fault. Aunt Yu didn't mean to accuse you," Lin Xinyan comforted. Truthfully, Aunt Yu was not actually targeting Zhou Chunchun specifically. She was merely expressing her regrets over the ruined dinner.

Pushing Zhou Chunchun into a seat, Lin Xinyan took some vegetables for her. "Eat something or Bai Yinning would be upset. He wouldn't have wanted you to starve yourself."

Zhou Chunchun acted obediently to her orders.

She did not want Bai Yinning to worry or be upset on her behalf. It was already bad enough that he was unable to be with the person he loved.

“Xinyan, Yinning loves you, doesn’t he?”

Lin Xinyan tensed up as she tried to explain, “Chunchun-”

“Xinyan,” Zhou Chunchun interrupted her. Raising her head, she locked gazes with Lin Xinyan and uttered, “You don’t have to explain; I understand. I don’t hate you, you know. You’re beautiful, smart, and kind. It’s normal that he would like you. However, he’s already promised me that he would try to get over you and learn to love me. I really want to become the woman that puts a shine in his eyes and a smile on his face.”

Lin Xinyan fell silent, unsure of what to say to that. She could merely stare back at the other woman, mutely.

“Xinyan, I don’t have any siblings. Is it alright if I treat you as my sister in the future?” Zhou Chunchun lowered her eyes shamefully. “I don’t have any friends because I’m not very smart. You and Yinning were the only ones who had never scorned me for it.”

Lin Xinyan reached out to tuck a loose strand of hair behind the younger woman’s ear. “You’re very kind and smart too. Nobody will scorn you for that. You wanna know something? I like you a lot. What anybody else thinks is unimportant. Remember, you’re supposed to live your life the way you want it to be. There’s only one you in the entire world so what you say or do is your business, not anyone else’s. What’s most important is that you’re happy. Think about this- would anyone be able to replace you if you were to fall sick one day?”

Zhou Chunchun shook her head. “No.”

“Exactly! It’s not worth it to be hurt by what others say. Nobody will be able to feel it no matter how much you hurt. That’s why no matter what they say, you need to focus on living your own life.”

Zhou Chunchun stared at Lin Xinyan. Mom used to tell me to think before I speak. She also advised me not to speak if I was unsure whether I should, lest others laugh at the stupid things I say. I must always appear to be prim and proper. I must never do anything that would humiliate myself.

Yet, Lin Xinyan was telling her to be herself.

She found herself agreeing with Lin Xinyan. She could not allow others to dictate how she lived her life.

After all, I'm the only one who'll suffer if I am unhappy. Nobody will know. Nobody can bear it for me either.

Thus, she nodded her head fervently. "I understand now, Xinyan. Thank you so much!" She tossed her arms around Lin Xinyan and hugged her tightly.

Lin Xinyan patted her back comfortingly. "Don't worry. Bai Yinning will be fine."

"Yeah." Zhou Chunchun nodded.

Time flew by as the two women chatted. Lin Xinyan spent quite a while counseling the younger woman, trying to allay her fears.

Eventually, it got too late to continue their talk.

Since they had a new maid now, they did not have any empty rooms available on the first floor. Lin Xinyan had Zong Jinghao carry the two kids upstairs into the master bedroom. Zhou Chunchun would stay the night in the kids' room.

The children were so deeply asleep that they did not even stir when Zong Jinghao picked them up.

Exhausted, Lin Xinyan settled down beside the children. She did not even have the energy to take a shower.

Zong Jinghao came over with a basin full of hot water. “C’mon, at least wash your feet before you sleep.”

Sitting up, Lin Xinyan placed her feet into the water. She questioned, “Are you going to release that man?”

Zong Jinghao crouched down to wash her feet for her. Her legs were slender and pale, leading her to have a pair of small feet. He rubbed her soles before moving on to massage her calves. “Are your legs swollen?”

Lin Xinyan felt her legs and replied, “No.”

“The books I’ve read tell me that pregnant women get swollen feet easily.”

“That only happens around the seventh or eighth month.”

Zong Jinghao had a surprised look on his face. “Oh, is that so?”

She kicked him. “Hey, I see what you’ve done there! Don’t try and change the subject. Are you going to release the man?”

It was only then that she realized that he had deliberately diverted her attention away from the topic. It was clear that he did not want to talk about Bai Yinning.

He swiftly grabbed the foot that had swung out at him. “You’re probably wondering why I hate Bai Yinning so much, right? I’m really tempted to let Gu Bei kill him, you know. At least then he won’t appear in front of me again. It’ll certainly save me the trouble of having to deal with him.”

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Lin Xinyan was amused at his words that were almost childlike.

“I really want to put a mirror before you so you can see just how unkind you look right now.”

Zong Jinghao snorted in response. He took a towel and dried her feet with it.

She cocked her head to the side and asked, “Are you angry?”

Why isn't he talking?

He suddenly tossed the towel aside and grabbed her ankles. Moving them onto the bed, he pinned her down with his weight. Lin Xinyan struggled while whispering furiously, “What are you doing? The kids are right here! Don't wake them up!”

He raised a brow at her even as a wicked smirk curled his lips. His voice was low as he murmured, “They won't wake up if you can be a little softer.”

Struck dumb by his words, it took Lin Xinyan a moment to start struggling again. “Why are you getting more and more shameless?” She was honestly worried that he would be controlled by his lust and actually do that, right beside the children.

Zong Jinghao bent his knees and used them to push her legs open wider. Now, she would be unable to close them. He was not overwhelmed by his desire just yet. Even if he were, he would not be so rash as to do something like that with his children right there.

He gazed down at her, taking in her beauty. She was not very old and her delicate features only made her seem that much younger. The skin of her face

was like white porcelain, pale and smooth to the touch. He stroked her cheek gently as he muttered, "Yan, I really don't like how he thinks of you."

It was impossible for him to feel any shred of forgiveness for anyone who had dared to desire his wife.

"I'm still just an ordinary man. My woman can only belong to me and me alone. Nobody else is allowed to even think of you."

Lin Xinyan could understand where he was coming from. If another woman had such thoughts about Zong Jinghao, she would be very unhappy too.

This man can be rather petty at times. I'd better explain myself before he overthinks things. "I know. I only love you. All I feel for him is a moral obligation."

Pausing, a bubble of laughter escaped her lips. "The more I interact with you, the more I realize just how different you are at home compared to outside."

"Hmm? In what ways? Do tell." He flipped over onto his side, careful to avoid pressing down on her abdomen.

"Let go of my legs first."

He refused. "Not until you tell me."

She twisted her head to look at him. "Your employees have probably never seen this shameless side of you, have they?"

"I'm only ever shameless before my wifey. They're not worthy enough to see this side of me," he justified calmly. He did not find anything wrong with his statements at all.

She sighed. "So you're human after all."

He took her hand in his and ordered, "Touch me."

Her eyebrows shot up to her hairline in shock while her eyes rounded to the size of dinner plates. She gaped at him, stuttering, "W-what are you t-trying to do?"

"I want you to touch my body and feel if it's hot. Feel my heart and see if it beats. My body is not made of metal or steel. It's a flesh and blood body with emotions and thoughts. Like everyone else, I can't escape death. I'm just a human. You can't expect me to be like an emotionless robot all the time." Taking in the crimson flush that had yet to recede from Lin Xinyan's face, he chuckled. "Your mind was in the gutter earlier, wasn't it?"

Lin Xinyan coughed lightly while trying to force herself to sound calm, "No."

My mind was most definitely not in the gutter! Nope! Even if it were, it's not like I can just outrightly admit to it. Damn it, this man has corrupted me! I've lost all sense of shame because of him.

"What was that saying again? Ah! Birds of a feather flock together."

"Are you trying to imply something here?" He arched an eyebrow at her.

"What are you guys talking about?" Zong Yanxi rubbed her bleary eyes, unable to get used to the bright lights so soon after waking up.

"Nothing. Go to sleep," Lin Xinyan urged. She moved over to wrap an arm around the little girl, patting her back lightly to coax her to sleep.

"Mommy, don't forget that you've promised to take me to the pet shop tomorrow." Going to the pet shop was quickly becoming the girl's obsession.

She's not even fully awake yet she still remembers to remind me about that!

Lin Xinyan soothed, "Alright, we'll go tomorrow. Now, sleep."

“It’s been so long since Mommy’s hugged me while sleeping. Your hug is still as warm as I’d remembered,” Zong Yanxi mumbled while snuggling further into her mother’s embrace.

Guilt swamped Lin Xinyan. The moment they moved here to C City, she had sent them off to pre-school while she busied herself with setting up Cloud Corporation. She had been so occupied with ensuring that Tea Silk was known to the public again that she had neglected her children.

During this time, they had grown a lot. They had learned how to sleep alone and to dress. They no longer needed anyone to supervise them as they cleaned themselves either. In fact, they had become so independent that they could look after themselves for most of the daily tasks.

“Mommy will spend more time with both of you from now on,” Lin Xinyan promised. She bent down to press a kiss on her daughter’s forehead.

Zong Jinghao turned off the light and lay down behind Lin Xinyan. Curling his arms around her waist, he whispered, “I’ll go with you tomorrow.”

She hummed in reply, not wanting to think about whether he had the time or not. She did not want to disappoint the kids.

The next morning, Lin Xinyan woke up very early. She did not want to appear rude by getting out of bed later than her guest.

Just as Lin Xinyan started down the stairs, she saw Zhou Chunchun exiting Qin Ya’s room. She asked in a puzzled tone, “Weren’t you sleeping in that room?”

She pointed at the children’s room.

“I did. I heard Qin Ya calling for Aunt Yu but Aunt Yu was busy with making breakfast. So I went in to help her. She needed to go to the bathroom,” Zhou Chunchun clarified.

Lin Xinyan finished descending the stairs. Shooting a smile at the other woman, she asked, “Did you sleep well last night?”

“It took me a while to fall asleep. I woke up around five and I couldn’t get back to sleep though.”

Lin Xinyan knew that the younger woman was only having insomnia due to her worry. She gripped Zhou Chunchun’s shoulder in support.

“How did she injure her legs?” Zhou Chunchun gestured to Qin Ya.

Lin Xinyan pursed her lips. She really should not tell Zhou Chunchun about what had happened. After all, the younger woman was still relatively innocent to the evil nature of humans.

However, at the end of the day, the Gu family and the Zhou family were still connected. While she did not know whether they were actually on good terms, she hoped to get through to Gu Huixin through her daughter. She wanted the older woman to know that Gu Bei was an immoral man with no qualms about doing anything evil. That was why they had to distance themselves from him as soon as possible.

“Do you remember the man who Bai Yinning asked you to bring here?”

Zhou Chunchun nodded. “Yes.”

“We wanted to arrest him because he’d done a lot of bad things.” Lin Xinyan did not elaborate any further than that. She hoped that this would be enough.

Thankfully, Zhou Chunchun understood her implications. *The man I sent here was the one who injured that woman. That’s why Xinyan wants to capture him.*

“I think that once Yinning returns, we’ll still get the chance to arrest him. Although I really hate bad men, I just can’t disregard Yinning’s safety either. I’m sorry, Xinyan.”

“Silly, this has nothing to do with you. It’s not like all this is your fault. As you said, we’ll still get another chance later on to capture him. Evil will always be punished eventually. It’s only a matter of time.”

Gu Huixin came to pick up her daughter surprisingly early. Lin Xinyan had initially intended on having Zhou Chunchun finish breakfast before she had the driver send her back.

“We want to get to the police station as soon as possible.” Gu Huixin had clearly not been able to sleep well due to her concern for Bai Yinning too.

“I’ll be taking my leave then, Xinyan.” Zhou Chunchun waved goodbye to Lin Xinyan.

“Okay, bye!”

After Zhou Chunchun got in the car, Gu Huixin turned to Lin Xinyan. “Thank you for looking after my daughter.”

“She was very well-behaved. I didn’t do anything much.”

“Others find her not very smart and that’s why she doesn’t have a lot of friends. It is rare for anyone to actually want to spend time with her. Other than Yinning, you’re the first to do so.” Gu Huixin would be eternally grateful to Lin Xinyan for not looking down on her daughter.

She hated it when others glanced at her daughter with scorn or derision.

“We’ll be leaving then. Do come over and visit us sometime,” she invited sincerely.

Smiling slightly, Lin Xinyan agreed, “Sure.”

Gu Huixin entered the car and waved at Lin Xinyan. After that, she ordered the chauffeur to drive.

It was still relatively early in the morning so there were not a lot of cars on the roads. In little to no time at all, they arrived at the police station.

As agreed, Shen Peichuan handed Number Four over to Gu Huixin.

Number Four was completely covered in blood, making it hard to tell where he was actually injured. Upon spotting Gu Huixin, he lunged toward her and grabbed her arm. "Please help me!"

Zhou Chunchun forcefully dragged Number Four away before ordering the chauffeur to toss him in the car.

Gu Huixin stared at her daughter in shock. *She's always been very gentle and timid. What's with the sudden change in attitude?*

"Chunchun, you—"

"Mom, do you have any idea what sort of person he is?"