

All around laughed and mocked, but all I hear in my ears is a faint but growing ringing sound. My mind was completely blank, and I couldn't even think.

Lin Fang was once engaged to Chen Yuzhou? She never once told me anything like that.

I've always thought that she was tricked, and that she no longer had feelings for him since a long time ago, but to think that they were that close, close enough to be engaged...

Lin Fang, she had been lying to me all this time...

No, no, that's not possible...

I said to her, "Fangfang, say something..."

But she won't. No matter how I was laughed at, no matter how others mocked me, she simply kept her head down and refused to say even a word for me.

Something swelled up inside my chest, like a rock, blocking my throat, almost choking me. It was as clear as day to me now... she knew about this, all along...

But I still didn't want to give up. Gritting my teeth hard, I asked, "Fangfang was my girlfriend. Chen Yuzhou, what did you do to her?"

Other than being forced and threatened, I couldn't think of any other possibility. But just what did Lin Fang went through? Why wouldn't she tell me? More than anything else, I wished that I could just have a moment alone with her, to ask her just what is going on, without all the prying eyes and ears all around us.

Chen Yuzhou said, his voice growing more and more confident with each word, "What I did to her? That's ridiculous, so ridiculous that I'm not even going to dignify that outrageous claim with an answer. Just look at yourself, how could Fangfang ever be your girlfriend? Dream on, loser."

All around us, it was as if everyone had just heard the funniest thing in the entire world, and laughter roared.

"Oh, my, God! He actually believes that!"

"Zhang Chao, I never know that you're such a dreamer! Fangfang was so beautiful, the most beautiful girl that we know, how delusional do

you have to be to even think that she was your girlfriend?”

“Well, let’s not be so harsh on him. No one could say for certain what the future will be. Who knows, maybe he’ll have that tiny sliver of chance, next live that is.”

“Hah, you got that right!” Laughter roared, and continued to roar.

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Their words stabbed and pierced my heart like needles and knives. My breaths grew short, and faint. I couldn't say anything, because the moment I did I was afraid that my tears would break free and fall. Even in the thickets of blazing fire and bullets, I have never shed even one drop of tear, and if it was ever possible, I didn't want to start now.

I lowered my head, and let my hair fall over my eyes, and in the split instant I blinked away the little droplet of tear that gathered at the corner of my eyes. Looking up again, I called out to her once again, “Fangfang, say something.”

Lin Fang tensed up again. Grabbing the napkin tight in her hands, she looked first at Chen

Yuzhou, then at me.

Chu Xiaoxiao couldn't bear it anymore. She urged her on, "Lin Fang, just say something God damn it! No matter who threatened you, you don't have to be scared. Just speak your heart, and I can guarantee that it will be the best thing that will ever happen to you! Just let it go and say it all out! I promise, after this, you'll never have to be afraid of Chen Yuzhou ever again."

Chu Xiaoxiao hinted at her, almost telling her everything short of letting my secret out completely, but Lin Fang shook her head instead.

"Zhang Chao, I know you liked me, but between us, it was simply impossible. Don't force it on me any longer. Zhou and I, we were good together, we still are. I respect you as one of my past classmates, but please, don't try to come in between Zhou and I anymore."

"Lin Fang, what nonsense are you spouting!? How could you do this!? You said it yourself that you loved Zhang Chao, and the two of you had been together for so many months already. Every single person in the company can even testify on that! If not for you, why would Zhang

Chao ever cross Chen Yuzhou in the first place? If not for you, why would the two of them be at each other's throats!? Stop with all this nonsense already, you're going to regret it!"

"Xiaoxiao, I know that you had always been better than me. But now I'm with Zhou, and your family on the other hand isn't doing so well. I know it must be hard for you to accept, but that's alright, we'll still be friends. But even though we're friends, I won't allow you to twist the truth like you did. I have never been together with Zhang Chao,"

Zhang Chao was beyond anger. She pointed her finger shakily at Lin Fang, but was unable to say even a word. If there was anyone disappointed at Lin Fang right now, anyone other than me, it'd be her. Throughout everything that happened in these few months, she had been nothing but a loyal friend to Lin Fang. And yet, what Lin Fang said to her just then was so hurtful that even I felt the impact. If this had been anyone else, anyone else other than Lin Fang, Chu Xiaoxiao would have dumped an entire bucket of hot boiling water on them already.

Lin Fang turned to me again, "I know, that for the sake of helping me, you borrowed 300

thousands for me from your friend. For that, I thank you, and I will return that money to you tomorrow. But, I won't let you hold that against me and make me stay with you because of it."

Hearing that, I breathed in sharply, and forcibly held on to the tears that swelled up again at the corner of my eyes.

Looking at her right in the eyes, I asked, "Have I ever?"

For things to have gone this far out of my expectations, I no longer knew what to say or ask her anymore. Those three words, were all that I have left for her. When Lin Fang's eyes met mine, a flash of horror and guilt shot through her, and she stammered, "Y..you did."

With her final word dissipating into the silence that fell all around, I laughed. I laughed, and looked up into the ceiling as two thin strands of tears fell from my eyes.

Chen Yuzhou hugged Lin Fang's shoulder, "I knew you had been eyeing my girlfriend all along. I just didn't want to have to deal with such a poor loser like you. You have nothing to begin with anyway, it'd be ungentleman of me to even take you half seriously. Isn't it right,

everyone?”

Everyone followed in behind him, “Of course, we all know what a nice person Zhou is.”

“If anyone were to as much as looked at my girlfriend the wrong way, I’d have smashed his face in already.”

I squeezed my hands, then let go. Smashing his face in? That sounds about like what I wanted to do right now. But, looking at him and his hand that hugged around Lin Fang’s shoulders, I couldn’t even summon enough strength in me to do even that. I lost already, utterly and completely. If I hit him now, it’d only make me even less of a man than I already am.

Chen Yuzhou continued, “Wake up and open your eyes already. Just what do you even see in yourself that could possibly be worthy of Fangfang? If the two of you walk down the street together, any passerby with half a brain would call the cops immediately for suspecting you of abducting her. You’re nothing but a soldier, a dumb soldier. You have no money, and probably nothing down below too. So what if you have a good looking face? Can you give Fangfang the happiness she deserves?”