

CHAPTER 71.

Only after hearing an inviting answer did she push open the door.

In the spacious and unique office, there was a rectangle desk in the middle. On both of its sides were mannequins that wore all sorts of beautiful formal attires. There was an elegant elderly woman sitting in the front. Her white hair was in a bun, and she wore a suit.

She had a pearl necklace around her neck, and each pearl, translucent, matched in sizes. It matched perfectly with her pearl earrings, and it made the elderly woman look elegant.

“Sit.” In Mrs. William’s hand was an exquisite box. She kept caressing it lovingly.

Lin Xinyan looked at it and sat down. “Mrs. William, is there anything you need?”

Mrs. William placed the box on the table, but her hand never left the box. She simply said, “I’m planning to open a store in B City of Country Z. You’ll manage it.”

There was only one store of LEO since the start of its business. That was the rule. There were no other branches in any country.

And this primary store was taking in orders from all over the world.

Their service was personalized. Each formal attire and wedding dress that left the store were unique. There was only one piece each of the garment in the world.

That was why LEO was popular amongst women i.e. celebrities who walked the red carpet, women who were marrying. Their attires were vital to the occasions. Therefore, bespoke attire was their primary option.

“Wasn’t it a rule that LEO would never have branches?” Lin Xinyan did not understand.

Furthermore, she was surprised that the location was in B city in Country Z.

That was the place she rejected the most. She would never hesitate to take up the job should it be any other country.

Mrs. William sighed, and said, “No pain, no gain.”

Mrs. William was the founder of LEO. She must be the one who had set the rule.

Mrs. William was ninety. Her rules had been around for at least sixty years. Why would she break the rule so easily?

“Mrs. William, are there some difficulties you’re facing?” Lin Xinyan stared at the box that Mrs. William had been caressing as if it was filled with something precious.

Mrs. William did not seem interested to further discuss. “I’ve decided.” She said.

Lin Xinyan knew that there must be something unusual going on. This decision came too sudden.

The chosen location was too much of a coincidence.

She did not believe this was just a coincidence.

If it was not, who was the one who wanted her to go back?

“Lin, if you don’t agree to this, no other company would take you in.” Mrs. William could see the unwillingness on her face. She sighed, and said, “This might not be a bad thing. After all, that is where your home is.”

Lin Xinyan lowered her head. She felt conflicted. “Mrs. William, can you tell me why you’ve decided on this?”

“Because of this.” Mrs. William held the ornate box. “I’ve always knew who had this. Yet no matter how much I offered, that person would not sell it—”

Yesterday afternoon, she met Mr. Zong from Country Z.

He made a deal with her with this box.

His request was for her to open a branch at Country Z’s B City, with Lin Xinyan as the person-in-charge.

He also asked to warn Lin Xinyan that if she tried to leave LEO, she and her career would be blocked and blacklisted in any way she could ever imagined.

Even if she was unwilling, she still had to go back!

Lin Xinyan pursed her lips, and she seemed to understand what had happened. “Someone gave you what you wanted, but it came with a condition which was for you to open a branch in B City in Country Z, with me as the person in charge.” She blurted out her guess.

Mrs. William shook her head, not because she denied her words, but she did not like Lin to guess correctly.

“Woman has to be not so smart to look adorable. I think the man who came to me should like you very much.” Mrs. William still liked Lin Xinyan very much. She reached out to pat her on the shoulders. “Running away doesn’t solve the problem. Only when you can face it calmly, then you will be free. The fact that you cared so much simply meant you had not let go.”

Lin Xinyan denied. "I had let it go."

"If that's the case, what are you afraid of?"

Lin Xinyan shrugged. She did not want to go back to that place which was full of memories of the past.

They were all not so beautiful past.

"I've decided. You can go now. Just think about it." Mrs. William took the ornate box, placed it in her hands and stared at it as if she could see someone through the box.

Lin Xinyan stood up and left.

Qin Ya had been standing by the door waiting for her. Now that she saw her coming out, she walked over to her. "What are you going to do?"

Qin Ya was a citizen of Country Z. She had entered the company two years after Lin Xinyan. At that time, she was not selected as she did not graduate with a related degree. It was Lin Xinyan who wanted her and mentored her in LEO.

They had known each other for a while, so Qin Ya somewhat knew Lin Xinyan's past.

Lin Xinyan smiled bitterly. "I have no choice."

Mrs. William's words were clear. If she rejected her, no other company in the same industry would ever take her in.

Mrs. William had a reputation in the industry. Her words were important, and others would listen to them with respect.

"Do you know what in Mrs. William's box is?" Lin Xinyan was curious. What was the thing that made her break her own rule?

Qin Ya shook her head. "I don't know."

Lin Xinyan sighed. Although she was curious, her head was filled with frustration as she had to return to that place.

She returned to the office with her documents. She read through it and after understanding what her client wanted, she took out her drawing paper and pencil. However, she could not calm the thoughts in her mind. The pencil remained in air, and the paper was blank.

She rubbed her face, and asked Qin Ya to make a cup of coffee with sugar.

"Did you not rest well last night? You don't look too good." Qin Ya asked, concerned.

Lin Xinyan took a sip from the coffee. Not only did she not rest well, she did not even sleep a wink.

“This isn’t urgent. Why don’t you go back and rest?” Qin Ya suggested.

“I can’t sleep at this time anyway. Go ahead and do your things.” She took a deep breath. “Life still has to go on.”

She could not rest, especially not now.

Her children needed her.

“Alright.”

Qin Ya walked out of the office and closed the door behind her. Before the door was fully closed, it was stopped by a large hand. Qin Ya turned around and saw a tall man. “You—”

“Shh!” “I’m looking for her.” Zong Jinghao lowered his voice.

Qin Ya still remembered that other day when he suddenly dragged Lin Xinyan away. They knew each other, and they were more than acquaintances.

Qin Ya nodded understandingly and left the room.

Zong Jinghao closed the door and walked in.

Lin Xinyan finally had a peace of mind and was focusing on her sketch.

The client had requested for a tight top for the dress, with a mermaid skirt. Only someone with a good figure could wear the dress well.

Zong Jinghao stood behind her and watched her work diligently. This was the first time he saw her draw.

It was just a simple pencil, but it was as if the tip of the pencil had magic in it. With a few strokes, and the general idea of the dress had appeared on the blank paper.

Lin Xinyan sensed someone behind her, but she never said anything as she thought it was Qin Ya, who had a habit of watching her draw. “Ya, do you have the details of the client’s height and weight?”

She wanted to design the bottom part based on the client’s figure.

When she did not hear a response, she turned around. “Ya—”

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When she did not hear a response, she turned around. “Ya—”

However, the person behind her was not the one she was expecting. In fact, it was someone she never expected.

“Why are you here?” Lin Xinyan unconsciously curled her fingers and tightened her grip on the pencil.

Zong Jinghao looked around the room. It was white-themed and minimalistic.

“Is this where you work?” He walked to the French windows and looked out.

Lin Xinyan put down the pencil and stood up. “I’m talking to you.”

Zong Jinghao turned around, looked at her, and laughed lightly. “I’m here for you, obviously.”

Lin Xinyan’s hands gripped onto the edge of the table behind. She stared at him, hoping to see his true intentions.

What did he want?

Yet she could not sense anything.

“You’ve seen Mrs. William, haven’t you?” She asked, albeit more like saying a statement.

She could not think of anyone else who would force her to go back there.

Zong Jinghao walked over, pulled out the chair behind her, and sat down. “Yes,” he answered honestly.

“Why?” Lin Xinyan almost shouted.

She could not understand why he wanted to do this.

“There’s no why.” Zong Jinghao grabbed on her wrist and pulled her towards him until she sat on his legs. Lin Xinyan was unwilling, and she struggled to get out of him.

“I’m injured.”

“What does that have to do with me?” Lin Xinyan said.

Zong Jinghao sighed. “Aren’t you curious about what I gave to Mrs. William?”

Lin Xinyan was curious. What kind of item was it that made Mrs. William breaks her own rule?

“What did you give her?” Lin Xinyan asked.

“You’re in LEO. You should have heard about her husband—Mr. William.” Zong Jinghao caressed her back, trying to appease her.

Lin Xinyan nodded. “I’ve heard of it. It seemed like they were a loving couple. Unfortunately Mr. William passed away at young age, and she never married anyone else.”

“Do you know what her husband, Mr. William had been doing?” Zong Jinghao had already successfully diverted her attention.

Lin Xinyan really had no idea. She shook her head.

Zong Jinghao hugged her waist and made her sit. Lin Xinyan struggled, unwillingly. “I’m injured, can you just sit still?” Zong Jinghao said with a low voice.

Lin Xinyan felt upset. Did he not know that this was inappropriate?

That this action was intimate?

Why did he do this every time?

“Mr. William was a jewelry designer.” Zong Jinghao said.

Lin Xinyan raised her eyebrow in surprise. Mr. William was a jewelry designer!

“What did this have to do with the thing you gave Mrs. William?” Lin Xinyan could not understand what connections they could have.

“When Mrs. William met Mr. William, she was still an unknown fashion designer. It was during the first time that Mrs. William’s designs went on stage at that fashion conference. Coincidentally, Mr. William also attended the event...”

“So, they met?” Lin Xinyan could imagine the scene. “It should have been romantic.”

There was a hint of jealousy that flashed under her eyes. Once upon a time, she had wanted love, but she had lost the opportunity and rights to it.

She was just a single mother at this moment.

Zong Jinghao saw the jealousy that flashed across her eyes. He tightened his hold on her waist. “They did meet, but it wasn’t romantic. In fact, you could describe it as embarrassing—”

Lin Xinyan frowned. "What happened?"

"It was reported that Mrs. William stole someone else's design."

"Impossible!" Lin Xinyan believed in Mrs. William and her skills.

She would never plagiarize.

Zong Jinghao looked at her agitated expression. "We're not talking about you, why are you so agitated?"

Lin Xinyan also realized that she had been too agitated. She calmed herself, and said, "I just don't believe that Mrs. William would plagiarize."

"She did..." Zong Jinghao watched her secretly. Her eyebrows were furrowed, and her breathing was rapid. She looked like she was about to have an outburst.

"The name of her design had clashed with that of a popular necklace's. Mrs. William had not known about that necklace. Coincidentally, both her design and the said necklace shared the same name and the same inspiration except the item designed was different." He twirled a strand of hair near Lin Xinyan's ear. His voice was deep as he said, "Do you think it's fate?"

Indeed, it was an unbelievable coincidence.

Yet what Lin Xinyan was not clear about was how they knew that their inspiration was the same.

"Silly." Zong Jinghao pinched her cheek. "Since the designs were the same, investigations would have been made. The two met and found out that their inspirations were from the same source. That's why they named their designs the same." Lin Xinyan said in realization.

"Not too dumb." Zong Jinghao smiled faintly.

Lin Xinyan's face turned grim. Did he just say she was dumb?

"So, what you've given to Mrs. William was that necklace?" Lin Xinyan guessed.

Zong Jinghao nodded.

"How did you get that necklace?"

At that time, the necklace was bided by a man, who bought it for his wife.

That man was a smart businessman, and he was never short in money.

So after Mr. William's death, Mrs. William had been looking for that necklace. Although she had found out that it was with that family, they did not want to sell it regardless of how much she offered.

However, so happen that Zong Jinghao had business relationships with this man.

Lin Xinyan finally knew what was going on. Zong Jinghao had given Mrs. William what she had wanted, that was why she agreed to open a branch.

Lin Xinyan suddenly realized she had been dragged off topic.

What she felt confused about was not what he gave Mrs. William.

It was why he had wanted her to return to that country.

What will he get?

What did he really want?

Lin Xinyan just realized that she had been sitting on his lap while talking to him.

She quickly stood up and looked at him. "What is it that you want?"

He felt unused to the sudden loss of cuddle. He looked at Lin Xinyan. "What else except you?"

"Me what?"

"Why don't you want to go back?" Zong Jinghao changed his gentle tone to a sharp one. "Is there something that is making you sad there?"

"No" Lin Xinyan denied instinctively.

"Then why are you so afraid of going back?"

"Who's afraid?"

Zong Jinghao smiled in satisfaction. "If you're not afraid, why are you so agitated?"

Lin Xinyan realized that she lost all her mind when she was in front of him.

She would never admit that this man always had the power to disrupt her thoughts.

She pretended to be casual. "Which eye of yours saw me being agitated?"

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Zong Jinghao's expression returned to normal. "If there is nothing bothering you, just go back."

She clenched her fists. She was conflicted. "Could you tell me why you are doing this?"

Did he know that acting like that meant he loved her?

Deep in her heart, she did not believe that Zong Jinghao would fall in love with a woman like her yet she could not understand his behavior.

She could not find any other explanations.

Zong Jinghao stood up.

Why?

He only knew that he wanted this woman to return to her original status. "You're the wife my mother arranged for me. Naturally, I want to live up to her wishes."

Lin Xinyan wanted to laugh, but she could not.

She did not know what expression she should be showing—happy or sad?

"It's only because of your mother's arrangement, that's why you want me to go back?" Lin Xinyan felt conflicted and lost. She did not know why she had her hopes up even when he said no.

Zong Jinghao turned around with his back facing her. The expression on his face was hidden in the light. He gave a faint hum.

This should have been the expected answer.

She was disappointed.

She smiled bitterly and said, "Do you think I'm still suitable to be in that position? Aren't you about to engage with He Ruilin? Is it fun making a fool out of me here?"

His face tensed, like a pulled bowstring.

He had been trying to ignore the fact that Lin Xinyan once had someone else and had a child.

This was what he did not wish to think about nor mention. Now that she had said it out, he had to face it.

“I won’t marry He Ruilin. It’s also not unsuitable for you to be in that position.” He said quietly.

Lin Xinyan squeezed out a smile. “Are you being serious?”

Through the dim light, Zong Jinghao turned around and looked at the woman facing him. “You’re not any virgin, nor am I a righteous man. We’re pot and kettle, so don’t make any comparisons.”

She knew it, but she still felt disappointed when those words came out from his mouth.

He was a normal man. It would be strange if nothing had happened between He Ruilin and him. After all, she had been with him for quite a while.

She knew that.

She understood it.

Her chest still felt tight whenever she thought about him sleeping with other women.

“I’m going back today.” He came today to tell her about this.

“Mmm.” Lin Xinyan turned her head away to not look at him.

She pretended that she was calm.

Buzz—

The phone that Lin Xinyan had placed on the table suddenly vibrated. She saw that it was her son’s name on the screen and reached out to pick up the call.

“Xichen.”

“Mommy, can you pick me up from school today?” Lin Xichen asked.

“Of course.” Nothing was more important than her son. She took a glance at the clock on the table. “What time do you want me to be there?”

“Can you come over now?”

“...Of course.”

“I’ll wait for you.”

“Alright.”

She waited until her son ended the call before she put her phone down. She closed her folder and kept her drawing papers. She was about to leave when she saw Zong Jinghao, who was standing behind her. It was then she remembered, someone else others than her was still here.

“Going out?”

“Yes.”

Lin Xinyan pursed her lips. “My son wants me to pick him up.”

Zong Jinghao had heard it. He thought about the look that the boy had gave him, and he couldn't help but asked, “Did you say anything bad about me to him?”

Lin Xinyan was confused. “Why is that so?”

“If you didn't, why is the boy so hostile to me?”

This time, Lin Xinyan understood what he meant.

Instead of answering, she changed the topic. “You're rushing for the plane. I'll also be leaving.”

She could not tell him that it was because Lin Xichen saw him kissing her forcefully. That was why her son hated him.

When she walked to the door, she turned around to look at him. “Are you not leaving?”

It was obvious that she was changing the topic, but Zong Jinghao said nothing about it. Instead, he continued with the change of the topic. “Which school is your son in?”

“AC.”

AC?

The corner of his eye twitched. He knew that the child was smart. He could see that the child had his own ideas from the last time he framed him into kidnapping him. This boy knew how to utilize the fact that he was an innocent child to make others lower their guard, to achieve his goals.

Not many five-year-old could be that smart.

He knew that he was smart, but he never expected him to enter AC at this age.

Lin Xinyan was proud talking about her son. “He's very smart. Sometimes he'll act like an adult and take care of his younger sister.”

Her face lit up as she talked.

She was proud of her son.

Zong Jinghao snorted coldly and walked towards his car.

It would be a lie to say that he felt nothing.

He was in his thirties. Many people at his age already had children.

Now, he had to listen to this lady bragging about how smart and how obedient her son whom she had with another man was. It was impossible for him to feel happy.

Lin Xinyan just felt he was being ridiculous.

Like many of the things he did, she could not see what his aim was.

Lin Xinyan gave no further thoughts and walked towards her car.

It was not long before she reached her son's school. Lin Xichen was already out of class, and he was waiting at the school gate.

Lin Xinyan parked, then came off her car. She walked towards him.

"Mommy." Lin Xichen called her excitedly when he saw Lin Xinyan walking over.

The guard opened the gate to let Lin Xichen out when he saw Lin Xinyan walking over.

Lin Xinyan reached out for him. "Why are you in school today?"

Although he had passed the entrance test, he only had three days of class because of his young age. He had classes on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. It was Tuesday today.

"I had some questions to ask my teacher." Lin Xichen said seriously.

"I'll need to invite your teacher for a lunch when I'm free. He's being so nice to you." Lin Xinyan thought, why don't I call him today, and ask if he is free for a lunch?

"Is your teacher still in school?" Lin Xinyan asked.

"No, he left because he had things to do."

Lin Xinyan gave up on the idea. She carried her son into the car and buckled up his safety belt.

When they reached home, they met Zhuang Zijin and Lin Ruixi who just came home from the supermarket.

She hurried down the car to take the grocery in Zhuang Zijin's hands.

“Mommy, mommy!” Lin Ruixi was excited. Her hands reached upwards, wanting a hug from Lin Xinyan.

“I’ll hug you in the house.”

“I want it now.” Lin Ruixi grabbed onto Lin Xinyan’s leg, not letting her go until she carried her.

Zhuang Zijin shook her head, smiling. “Just carry her.”

She took back the groceries.

“Our Ruixi is heartless. There’s no grandma in her eyes, just mommy.”

“Grandma has me.” Lin Xichen reached out to hold Zhuang Zijin’s hand.

“Our Xichen is the most sensible boy.” Zhuang Zijin laughed.

Lin Ruixi did not care. She happily sprawled on Lin Xinyan’s shoulder, enjoying the hug from her mother.

Entering the house, Zhuang Zijin went to the kitchen to arrange her groceries. Lin Xinyan went to wash her daughter’s hands.

There were germs outside.

“Mommy, I want to eat pudding.” Lin Ruixi raised her head, widened her big clear eyes, and acted cute in her mother’s embrace.

“Alright.” Lin Xinyan laughed as she answered.

After washing her daughter’s hands, Lin Xinyan carried her to living room and took the pudding from the fridge.

Lin Ruixi was a little glutton. She stayed quiet when she had something to eat.

Lin Xinyan told Lin Xichen to take care of his sister, then went into the kitchen to help Zhuang Zijin with dinner.

“Mom, why did Mrs. Zong and you arrange that marriage back then?”

This was what she had always been curious about but had no opportunity to ask.

Now that it was mentioned by Zong Jinghao again, Lin Xinyan’s curiosity was piqued again.

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Zhuang Zijin was washing the vegetables. Upon her daughter's question, she stopped. "Why did you suddenly think of this?"

Lin Xinyan lowered her head. "I just wanted to know. After all, when we were engaged, I was just two. Why did you..."

"I don't remember the past well." Zhuang Zijin did not seem to want to talk about the past. She placed the washed vegetables into the fridge drawer. She looked at her daughter, then saw her expression. "Tell me, what happened?"

Lin Xinyan could see that Zhuang Zijin did not want to talk about it, and so she did not persist. Instead, she took the opportunity and asked, "Mrs. William wants to open a branch and let me be in charge—"

"This is good news." Zhuang Zijin answered.

She pushed her daughter aside. "I'll cut the vegetables."

Lin Xinyan moved aside and leaned against the stove. "The branch is at—"

"What?"

Before Lin Xinyan could finish her sentence, Zhuang Zijin interrupted her. She also knew about LEO's rule—they would not have any branches.

Why did Mrs. William want to open branches now?

Zhuang Zijin frowned. The recent events had been unusual. She put down her knife, wiped her hands on the apron, and held onto her daughter's arm. "Tell me honestly. Is this related to him?"

She could not hide this. If she were to go back, Zhuang Zijin would know it eventually.

"Yes." Lin Xinyan admitted.

"What were you thinking?" Zhuang Zijin was furious as she glared at her. How could she have forgotten about it?

"Tell me, what situation you were in? When you were experiencing your worst moments in life, where was he? If it was not for Doctor He, you would not be here now. How could you not know who is good and who is bad?"

Lin Xinyan turned her head away. That was true, she did not want to return—partially because of her past, and partially because of Zong Jinghao.

She knew it was a deal, and yet when he mentioned the divorce, she was still sad.

The accident that came afterwards made her even more tired, physically and mentally.

That was why she did not want to return to that place where everything happened.

“Mrs. William was determined. If I don’t go back, I might lose my job.” She was the only breadwinner in the family. This job was important to her.

Zhuang Zijin picked the knife back up and sliced the potato. She was quiet for moment before answering. “It’s not that you can’t go back.”

Lin Xinyan was surprised that Zhuang Zijin would let her go.

“But I have a condition.”

Lin Xinyan sighed; she knew that she would not have easily agreed.

“If you promise to marry Doctor He, I’ll let you go.” Zhuang Zijin said.

In comparison with Zong Jinghao, she had better impression of He Ruize, who had always been helping Lin Xinyan.

“Mom—”

“This is not up for discussion. If you want to jump off the cliff, I can’t be the one pushing you. You’re my daughter and I only want the best for you. What’s bad about Doctor He? He has good looks and capability. Most importantly, he likes you. How many men could wait for six years—” Zhuang Zijin looked at her daughter. “Is your heart made of stone? Could you not see his efforts?”

It was true. He Ruize was great. In her most difficult moments, he was beside her. He helped with her family and he took care of her.

She knew.

“If he minded you being pregnant, would he have waited for you so long?” Zhuang Zijin was worried that He Ruize might mind about Lin Xinyan’s pregnancy. However, his actions change her mind.

If he minded, he would not have stayed beside her for so long.

Lin Xinyan was still young, she could not stay single for the rest of her life. In Zhuang Zijin’s eyes, He Ruize was the best choice.

He was much better than that man who knew Lin Xinyan was pregnant, and yet agreed to only have a one-month marriage just to fulfil the engagement promise.

Lin Xinyan looked down at her toes. She knew that Zhuang Zijin's words were right.

Zhuang Zijin however did not know that He Ruize's mother had looked for her.

She was human, and her heart was not made of stone. She had once thought about being with He Ruize.

After all, he did treat her well.

However, Lin Xinyan did not want to tell Zhuang Zijin about this matter. Zhuang Zijin had been worried about her future. She was worried that her daughter would not be able to find another suitable man now that she had children.

If she told Zhuang Zijin that He Ruize's mother had looked for her and told her that she did not want her to marry He Ruize, her mother would be upset. Zhuang Zijin would worry even more about her future.

"Mom, I won't be happy marrying someone I don't love."

"He likes you, and he's nice to you. Isn't that enough? Feelings can grow. When you're married and living together, you will feel something for him eventually." Zhuang Zijin tried her best to advise Lin Xinyan.

Lin Xinyan felt at a loss. She lowered her head and rubbed her forehead, feeling an unprecedented exhaustion.

Zong Jinghao's coercion. Zhuang Zijin's incomprehension.

It made her feel powerless.

"Mommy."

Lin Xichen stood at the entrance of the kitchen. He was small, but he stood straight. He was eavesdropping on Lin Xinyan and Zhuang Zijin's conversation earlier, and he knew what they were talking about.

"Mommy, we were born in Country Z. Ruixi and I have never been to mommy's hometown. Now that we're going back, isn't it something good?" Lin Xichen asked with a naive look on his face.

"You're a kid, what do you know?" Zhuang Zijin waved her hand, signaling him to watch his sister in the living room.

“Although I’m still young, I have rights to choose. I agree with mommy going back.” Lin Xichen had a serious look on his face. “Mommy gave birth to me, and I’m also a citizen of Country Z. I’ll have to go back.”

Lin Xinyan and Zhuang Zijin looked at each other. They had never mentioned anything about their father.

Lin Xinyan had only mentioned the results of He Ruize’s investigation once. Their father was likely from Country A. However, her children looked like Lin Xinyan which was why they looked like they were from Country Z with no hints of Country A genes.

That was also something Lin Xinyan felt relieved about. Her children had the same skin color and facial features as her instead of having blond hair and blue eyes.

“Xichen.” Lin Xinyan called her son.

“Mommy, let’s go back. I want to see how mommy’s hometown looks like.” Lin Xichen blinked, and watched her with hopeful eyes.

Lin Xinyan walked over and hugged her son tightly. She felt her throat tightened, and she did not dare to speak.

Zhuang Zijin did not bear to say anything else, but her attitude held firm. “Think about what I told you.”

“Grandma, if mommy doesn’t like uncle, why do you want them to be together?” Lin Xichen had a matured look on him. “My mommy needs someone more suitable.”

Zhuang Zijin huffed with a smile on her face. What did he know at age five?

“Tell me, who do you think is suitable for mommy?”

Lin Xichen raised his head. “I’m not telling you.”

He was still looking for it.

He had asked his teacher about this. His teacher had told him that for his mother’s situation, she had to look for a man who was more handsome and richer than her ex-husband. That was how she could make her heartless ex-husband regret.

Let him know it was his loss to abandon mommy!

He had already found out that Zong Jinghao was at Country Z. That was why he wanted to go back.

His teacher had told him that knowing the enemy well will win him the battle.

Not only did he want to look for a better man for mommy, he also wanted to take revenge on that heartless man!

He Ruize did not fit into his ideal requirement. He was better than the average person, but he was still much behind from Zong Jinghao.

His mommy could not marry a man worse than Zong Jinghao.

She had to marry someone even better than him!

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It was not a large house, but the decoration was homely. There was a rectangle table in the dining room where a family of four were seated.

The atmosphere at the table was suffocating as Zhuang Zijin did not agree with Lin Xinyan's return. If she were to return, she had to marry He Ruize.

Only naive little Lin Ruixi knew nothing about anything. She sat on Lin Xinyan's lap and wanted her mother to feed her.

"Mommy, I want egg custard." Lin Ruixi said, pointing her little finger at the smooth egg custard.

Lin Xinyan scooped it with a spoon and fed it into her mouth.

Like a frustrated adult, Lin Xichen looked at his naive sister and sighed.

Lin Xinyan picked some vegetables for him. "No frowning for kids."

Lin Xichen sighed again.

Why did this boy sigh even more after telling him not to?

"Lin Xichen, please behave." Although her words were reprimanding, she did not have a serious look. She could not bear to scold him or reprimand him harshly.

"You still have the mood for food?" Lin Xichen retorted.

"What are you going to do about your work if you don't convince grandma?" Lin Xichen was worrying more than Lin Xinyan.

“Children should not be worrying about adult matters. Eat and study well. That’s what you should be doing.” Zhuang Zijin poured a bowl of soup. “Eat your food. Don’t butt into adult matters.”

Lin Xichen did not agree with her words. “I’m part of this family; I have the right to talk. Grandma, mommy, let’s raise hands to vote.”

“Who do you think this boy had been learning all these talks from?” Zhuang Zijin did not know whether to cry or laugh.

He had lots of ideas in his little head.

“Raise your hand to vote.” Lin Xichen repeated determinedly.

“You really want to go back?” Lin Xinyan realized that her son seemed to be insisting on going back.

She thought her children had gotten used to the routine here and would not want to change places. Lin Xichen’s attitude surprised her.

“Mommy’s hometown is also my hometown. I just want to see how mommy’s hometown looks like.” Lin Xichen said with a serious face.

Although Lin Xinyan wanted to say yes, she had thought about what Zhuang Zijin would feel. Therefore, she did not.

Lin Xichen was smart. He knew that Lin Xinyan wanted to be respectful to Zhuang Zijin. Zhuang Zijin still had the final say for this matter.

He put down his spoon and ran beside Zhuang Zijin. He pulled on her sleeve and lightly shook it. “Grandma, my amazing grandma, just say yes.”

Zhuang Zijin did not.

Lin Xichen continued to act cute. With a soft and cute tone, he begged, “Grandma, grandma, my amazing grandma.”

“Grandma, grandma, my amazing grandma.” Lin Ruixi followed her brother.

The voices of Lin Xichen and Lin Ruixi were soft and cute like babies. They sounded sweet.

Zhuang Zijin’s heart melted from their voices.

If she did not say yes, it felt like she would be sorry to the children.

Therefore she said, “We’ll vote by raising hands.”

Lin Xichen raised his hand first. “Hands up for those who want to return.”

“Mommy.” Lin Xinyan did not move and Lin Xichen winked at her. She looked at Zhuang Zijin, who did not seem angry, then raised her hand.

“Ruixi—”

“No bribing.” Zhuang Zijin interrupted Lin Xichen.

Lin Xichen pouted, and looked at his sister’s raised hand.

Lin Ruixi had seen it as a game. As mommy and Xichen had raised their hands, she also wanted to raise hers.

Three against one.

Zhuang Zijin had lost.

She was not angry. Instead, she said solemnly, “I really don’t know if this is the right choice.”

“Don’t worry, grandma, I’ll protect my mommy.” Lin Xichen guaranteed as he patted his chest.

Zhuang Zijin caressed her grandson’s head and sighed. He was still a child after all, what did he really know?

Yet he was a filial son, and that was worth treasuring. “The risk that your mommy went through giving birth to both of you was worth it.”

Lin Xichen blinked. He had heard uncle mentioned that his mother went through a lot to give birth to him and his sister.

“I won’t let anyone bully my mommy.” As if he had decided on something, Lin Xichen was determined.

Zhuang Zijin felt that she had said too much. He was just a child. She carried him into her lap and said, “Xichen is the man of our family.”

“Of course.” Lin Xichen raised his chin and said proudly.

After convincing Zhuang Zijin, the atmosphere at the table had lightened up. Lin Ruixi curled in Lin Xinyan’s embrace sleepily, her head drooping every moment. Lin Xinyan carried her up and away from the dinner table. The little girl seemed to sense that Lin Xinyan was leaving, and she opened her eyes. “I want to eat.”

Lin Xinyan was speechless.

This girl was already sleepy, yet she could not give up on her food.

Lin Xinyan could only sit back down. After a few mouths, the girl fell asleep.

Zhuang Zijin told her daughter to bring the girl to rest while she cleaned up the table.

Lin Xinyan nodded. Lin Ruixi had not showered yet. It was better that she took care of her, in case the girl woke up and made a fuss while showering.

It seemed like Lin Ruixi had not slept during the day. She was now in a deep sleep. Lin Xinyan had washed her face, hands, and legs, yet she had no signs of waking up.

“Mommy, I think Ruixi was born in the year of pig.” Lin Xichen lamented.

She could eat well and sleep well.

Lin Xinyan rolled her eyes. “What are you talking about? If your sister is a pig, so are you. Don’t forget that you share the same womb.”

Lin Xichen sat by the bedside and took out his tablet to play a puzzle game. He lowered his head as he said, “I’m born in the year of snake. My teacher said snakes are cold-blooded animals.”

Lin Xinyan turned her head over and looked at her son’s delicate features. His head was bowed as he focused on his game. She felt grateful towards his teacher although some things that Lin Xichen learnt was too mature for his age.

“Do you like your teacher very much?” Lin Xinyan asked.

“Of course.” Lin Xichen answered without a moment of hesitation.

Lin Xinyan patted him on his head.

At this moment, her phone on the bedside table rang. Lin Xichen was close to the phone, so he took the phone and handed it to Lin Xinyan. “Mommy, you have a call.”

Lin Xinyan reached out and took the phone. On the screen was LEO’s number.

It could only be Mrs. William.

Back then, Mrs. William had been great to Lin Xinyan.

Although she had her graduation certificate, she did not have any working experience. She would not have been taken into a company like LEO.

Mrs. William had said she saw the younger version of herself in Lin Xinyan, and that was why she took her in.

And it was because of this that she had the chance to be here today.

She felt the utmost respect to Mrs. William.

“I’ve already arranged for Qin Ya to return first. She will arrange everything there for you. You’ll just need to go back.”

“I understand.”

Lin Xinyan tucked the blankets for her children and walked towards the window. It was pitched black outside the window.

Yet it was bright in her heart.

Like what Zong Jinghao had said, what did she have to be afraid of if she had already let it go?

She straightened her back. She had a career. Her children were growing well. Zhuang Zijin’s mental illness was well controlled. Everything was going on fine. Living at another place would be the same after all.

“Lin, do you hate me?” Mrs. William asked after a long silence.

“No.” Lin Xinyan answered honestly.

She had never been discontented. She was just confused at the start as to why she would break the rule. Yet after she knew about her story with William...

It became impossible to feel discontented.

Mrs. William sighed, as if she wanted to say something else. She did not. She hung up the phone.

CHAPTER 76.

After the call ended, Lin Xinyan stood by the window, stoning. She continued to look out the window, even when she could not see anything.

“Mommy.” Lin Xichen called for her.

Lin Xinyan turned and looked at her son’s flawless face. She smiled as she said, “Yes?”

Lin Xichen put down his tablet, ran over, and hugged her leg. “Mommy, Ruixi have already fallen asleep. Can you accompany me in shower today?”

She squeezed her son’s cheek and said lovingly, “Sure.”

Lin Xichen grinned happily as he pulled onto Lin Xinyan's shirt. He felt excited; he could finally spend time with mommy now that his clingy sister was sleeping.

If his sister was awake, she would be fussing to cling onto mommy again. He did not have any time to spend with mommy alone.

Lin Xinyan turned on the bathroom lights and the heater switch. She filled the tub with hot water.

Lin Xichen had already taken off his clothes, and he was now butt-naked. "The water is done—" Lin Xinyan turned around to find that her son had already taken off his clothes, her gaze swiping across his smooth skin.

Lin Xichen noticed her gaze. He hurriedly covered what was between his legs, and his face turned red. "Mommy."

Lin Xinyan deliberately poked fun at him. "So my son knows how to be shy?"

Lin Xichen lowered his head to hide his bright red face.

He was embarrassed.

Lin Xinyan did not continue to make fun of him. He carried him into the tub. Lin Xichen hid in the water, only his head was visible. Lin Xinyan squeezed the shampoo onto his head and gently massaged.

Lin Xichen was sitting quietly in the tub as Lin Xinyan washed his head. He looked at his mother's gentle face and said, "Mommy."

"Yes?"

Lin Xichen smiled but said nothing else.

He told himself that he had to look for a good man to take care of his mother.

Lin Xinyan deliberately wiped some foam on his nose and thought that he was just being cheeky by calling her and not saying anything else. She did not know that he was quietly deciding to look for a good man for her.

Good men were not easy to find.

On the last day of July, Lin Xinyan went back with her children.

She only brought her children and some clothes, as there was someone to arrange her matters back in Country Z.

Lin Xichen was calm, unlike Lin Ruixi, whose feelings were all written in face. Lin Ruixi was excited. This was her second time on the plane. Her first was when she was three, and she remembered nothing of it.

Children were curious. They would touch everything they could see.

Lin Xinyan had no way of stopping her.

She could only let her fidget in her lap. Fortunately, the people beside her were Zhuang Zijin and Lin Xichen, and not strangers whom she would have disturbed.

“Mommy, I want juice.” Lin Ruixi reached out her hand as she asked. She had seen the air stewardess giving other passengers juice.

Lin Ruixi was wearing a pale blue dress today. Her skin was fair, and her black hair was tied into two braids. Her eyes were bright, as if they could talk.

“What juice would you want?” The air stewardess gently asked as she bent down and asked the cute little girl.

Lin Ruixi blinked and pointed to the green cup.

“This is kiwi juice, so it might be a little sour!” The air stewardess introduced.

Lin Ruixi did not seem to be afraid, and she nodded her head.

The air stewardess handed the kiwi juice to her. Perhaps she looked too cute, and the air stewardess asked, “What’s your name?”

Lin Ruixi opened her mouth and showed her pearly white teeth. “My name is Lin Ruixi. My mommy and grandma call me Ruixi.”

“What a nice name.” The air stewardess praised.

Lin Xinyan caressed her daughter’s hair.

“Your daughter is very pretty.” The air stewardess smiled as she said.

“Thank you.” Lin Xinyan nodded to her politely.

Lin Xichen took a look at his sister and turned to look out the window. He disliked this kind of conversation.

Not long after the air stewardess pushed the cart away, the captain’s voice appeared. “Passengers to Country Z’s B City please be prepared. We’ll be arriving at Dongchen International Airport in ten minutes.”

Ten minutes later.

The plane landed. Lin Xinyan carried Lin Ruixi who was sleeping. Zhuang Zijin held onto Lin Xichen, and they came down from the plane. The moment he came off the plane, he was looking around the place.

This was where mommy was born, he thought.

“I’ll go get the luggage.” Zhuang Zijin let go of Lin Xichen’s hand. “Follow your mommy to the exit and wait for me there.”

“Okay.” Lin Xichen was a sensible boy.

“Yan.” He Ruize walked towards them, and beside him was Qin Ya.

They were here to pick Lin Xinyan up.

He Ruize did not return to Country A. He had stayed here to take care of his sister, who had her marriage engagement cancelled.

He had found out that Lin Xinyan was going to return through a phone call.

That was why he was here together with Qin Ya to pick her up.

“Are you tired? I can carry her for you.” He Ruize reached out to carry the child in her arms.

Lin Xinyan shook her head. “No need, I’m not tired. Let’s go.”

He Ruize looked at Lin Xinyan before his hand retracted. Ever since he knew Lin Xinyan was coming back, he had not smiled.

For as long as she was staying in Country A, she never mentioned about returning here. She did not even entertain the idea of coming back here.

Yet after meeting Zong Jinghao, she came back.

She said she hated that man, yet her actions proofed otherwise.

Zong Jinghao had also canceled the engagement with He Ruilin.

He did not believe that there was nothing going on.

He was afraid.

His gaze landed onto the two children.

The hands on his side tightened.

If Lin Xinyan knew about him hiding the truth at that time, would she hate him?

The conflict and guilt in him grew as the children grew up.

The two children were too cute that no one would dislike them.

If he had not told that lie, perhaps Zong Jinghao would have been with Lin Xinyan because of the children.

He definitely would be.

He had canceled the engagement after meeting Lin Xinyan.

It was obvious that he felt something for Lin Xinyan.

If he did not hide the truth at that time, the children would have had a complete family.

“Uncle, what are you thinking about?” Lin Xichen raised his head to look at He Ruize, who was in a trance, and pulled his shirt.

He Ruize’s focus returned and he quickly answered, “Nothing.”

He looked down at Lin Xichen and held onto his hand. “Let’s go.”

Lin Xichen took out his hand. “I can walk by myself.”

He did not hate He Ruize, but he did not like him either.

He Ruize rubbed his fingers in awkwardness.

“Lin Xichen!” Lin Xinyan called to him when she saw his actions. “You should be polite. Uncle is just concerned about you.”

“I know.” Lin Xichen lowered his eyes.

He just did not like He Ruize to hold his hand.

“It’s alright, now is not the time to talk. Let’s go.” He Ruize took the luggage from Zhuang Zijin.

“How are you?” Zhuang Zijin smiled.

“Fine.”

Zhuang Zijin liked He Ruize very much.

He Ruize pulled the luggage and the group left the airport. Lin Xinyan went into He Ruize’s car, while Zhuang Zijin and Lin Xichen sat in Qin Ya’s car.

He Ruize looked at Lin Xinyan through the rearview mirror. She was looking at her sleeping daughter and her expression was gentle.

He Ruize tightened his hold on the steering wheel. He wanted to say something, but he did not.

Lin Xinyan's living arrangements were made by Qin Ya. It was near the store, so it would be convenient for her to go to work.

After reaching the house and bringing the luggage in, He Ruize told them that he had booked a spot in a restaurant. Everything in the house was new, and so they could not cook.

Before Lin Xinyan could answer, Zhuang Zijin had accepted the offer.

Lin Xinyan could not reject him after that.

The group went into the car again to go to the restaurant that He Ruize had booked.

He Ruize had booked a spacious room, and the six of them still had space in between their seats.

"I want to go to the bathroom." Lin Xichen slid off the chair.

"I'll go with you." Zhuang Zijin was afraid that he would get lost.

"No need, I know the way." Lin Xichen waved his hand and went out by himself.

He asked the waiter the way, and he found the bathroom quickly.

After entering the bathroom, he realized that there was no urinal for children. The adult's urinal was too high.

He frowned in frustration.

"Boy." A teasing voice came from behind him.

CHAPTER 77.

Lin Xichen looked behind him.

And saw the man who stood beside the sink. He was wiping his hands elegantly, and he looked up lazily. "Not tall enough?"

Lin Xichen tilted his head upwards. He lost in the comparison at height, but he could not lose in having a strong presence.

"I'm not peeing." He would not admit in front of this heartless man that he was not tall enough to pee.

Zong Jinghao threw the paper towel he was wiping his hands with into the trash can and looked at the boy. "Are you sure you don't need my help?"

"No." Lin Xichen said with his head held high.

"Sure." Zong Jinghao folded his sleeve up, showing his muscular upper arm, and one of his hands was stuffed in his pocket. He looked at the urinal, then back at Lin Xichen's height. "You're stubborn."

Lin Xichen pursed his lips. His forehead was filled with sweat, and he trembled.

He could not hold it in for much longer.

Yet in front of this heartless man, he could not admit defeat nor request for his help.

He clenched his tiny fists, and he tried his best to endure it.

Zong Jinghao raised his brow and leaned on the mirror by his side. He wanted to see how long this boy could stand.

He definitely had a determined personality in this tiny body.

"Can you tell me why you're hostile to me?"

Lin Xichen became angrier. This man did not want his mommy, and yet he still kissed her.

He had no right. He wanted to look for a man much better than him for mommy.

"You bullied my mommy; don't think I didn't see it." Lin Xichen glared at him.

If looks could kill, he would be dead.

"I bullied her?" The words rolled around in his head as he wondered when did the boy saw him bullying Lin Xinyan.

They only met twice.

The first time he had given him a big "surprise".

He narrowed his eyes. Could he have seen him dragging Lin Xinyan away and kissing her at the staircase in LEO? That's why—

Hah!

Zong Jinghao straightened himself, walked forward and crouched in front of Lin Xichen. He looked at his eyes on equal level and gave a glance at his crossed legs. "I did. What can you do about it?" He mocked.

Lin Xichen's glared harder. He wanted to gobble him up like a tiger.

His body trembled, but it was difficult to discern if it was from holding back his urge to pee or it was because he was angry.

"Beg me, and I'll help you. How about that?" Zong Jinghao stood up and brushed his unwrinkled shirt. "If you don't need me, I'll leave now."

He was about to pee.

Lin Xichen's tears was about to come out. "Don't— Don't go. I need—"

"Who did you come with?"

"My mommy, grandma— I'm about to pee." Lin Xichen eyes were red, and he looked pitiful.

Zong Jinghao did not continue to tease him. He walked in front of him and said, "Take off your pants by yourself."

Lin Xichen's actions were swift, and his pants were off in a second.

Zong Jinghao carried him up from behind to a height suitable for him and walked towards the urinal.

"Thank you." Lin Xichen said after peeing.

Zong Jinghao was stunned. He never thought that the boy would say thanks.

Lin Xichen wore his pants and looked at Zong Jinghao. "I'm good with differentiating grudges and gratitude. Your help to me does not mean that I'll forgive you."

Zong Jinghao was speechless.

Forgive him?

Did he do anything that needs his pardon?

Walking out of the bathroom, Zong Jinghao looked downwards at him. "Which room are you in?"

Lin Xichen's gears in his head turned. Why was he asking this? Was he going to bully mommy again?

"Six."

Zong Jinghao's footsteps faltered, and he looked at him. This boy was cautious.

"I should be going." Lin Xichen sensed that he saw through his lie, and he ran off.

It was such a misfortune to meet with this heartless man the moment they came back.

He made sure that no one had followed him before he leaned against the wall. He raised his hand and he used his smart watch to call his teacher for help.

In a moment, the call went through.

"Teacher, I saw that heartless man again."

"Mmm."

He explained to his teacher what had happened during his meeting with Zong Jinghao.

"We're at the restaurant now. How can I embarrass him in public?" Lin Xichen wiped his face.

The other end was silent for a minute before he asked, "Do you have money?"

"Yes."

"Go to a pharmacy, and buy a box called Durex. If the pharmacy employees asked about it, just tell them you're buying it for your father. If there are no pharmacies nearby, you can buy it from the supermarket. After buying, you—"

"I understand."

After listening to his teacher, Lin Xichen ran to the reception and asked, "Are there any pharmacies or supermarkets nearby?"

"Turn right. There's a supermarket nearby."

"Thank you."

Following his teacher's instructions, he managed to buy a box of Durex. He opened it and threw away the box. He wondered what it was.

He touched it, and wanted to open one to see, but his teacher had told him not to open it.

He was obedient. He bore with the curiosity and went back to the restaurant.

Back at the restaurant, he asked the reception. "Miss, is there a customer with the last name Zong here?"

Lin Xichen had big, dark eyes that sparkled, a high nose, and a delicate face. He looked like a gentleman as he stood there straight.

He had good looks, and people always liked beautiful things.

The receptionist was enthusiastic, and she pointed towards Room 6. "There, Room 6."

Room 6?

Lin Xichen blinked. No wonder his lie was instantly found out.

He was at Room 6.

"Thank you, miss." Lin Xichen ran towards Room 6.

He reached out to turn the knob and opened the room door.

There were only four men in the spacious room. The table was full of dishes, but it looked untouched. In front of them were wine glasses, and they were drinking.

The door was suddenly opened, and eight pair of eyes looked towards the door.

After all, the servers would have knocked before entering.

Why was it a kid?

He should be at the wrong room.

However, Guan Jing turned to look at Zong Jinghao, because he knew this boy.

He had seen his photo when he was investigating Lin Xinyan.

"Are you at the wrong room?" Mr. Li from Shengda looked at Lin Xichen and asked.

Lin Xichen shook his head and pointed at Zong Jinghao. "No, I'm looking for him."

So he was not at the wrong room.

Everyone's gazes turned towards Zong Jinghao, the gears in their head spinning. Guan Jing, on the other hand, wanted to look at the boy's expression.

What's the relationship between this boy with Zong Jinghao? Mr. Li thought.

Under everyone's watch, Lin Xichen walked in and took out the Durex from his pocket to hand it to Zong Jinghao. "Uncle, you dropped this at the bathroom just now. I'm here to return it to you."

What was dropped? Everyone leaned to look at the thing on Lin Xichen's hand.

And when they saw it—

Guan Jing was speechless.

So was Mr. Li.

Zong Jinghao frowned as he stared at Lin Xichen who had a naive look on his face. Where did he get this from?

Did he know what was this for?

His?

"Interesting, Mr. Zong. You're bringing this everywhere in case of emergencies?" Mr. Li nearly spat out the wine he just drank.

Zong Jinghao, Young Master Zong, The CEO of Wanyue, the one who seemed cold-blooded and indifferent all the time had the habit of carrying condoms around? Him? The one who frequented economy channels?

Haha.

What did he just find out?

He looked dignified in public.

Mr. Li felt that his impression of Zong Jinghao had to be erased and remade.

Guan Jing quietly looked up at the ceiling. When did Zong Jinghao started having this habit?

Lin Xichen was only five and looked naive. Combined with the fact that Zong Jinghao did went to the bathroom earlier, the rest believed that the condom was indeed Zong Jinghao's.

A five-year-old would not know what this was.

Naturally, they would believe in Lin Xichen's words.

Zong Jinghao's expression was grim. He looked at the Durex in his hand. "Are you sure this is mine?"

Lin Xichen knew that his plan was working when he saw everyone's expression. He nodded his head. "You dropped it and I picked it up for you. Of course it's yours."

CHAPTER 78.

Everyone was watching how Zong Jinghao was going to react. Was he going to admit it, or not?

If he admitted, it would be extremely embarrassing. to bring that around. Was he preparing to have sex around?

Mr. Li's lips trembled. He wanted to laugh, but he should not, so he had to hold it in.

Beside him, his assistant took out his phone and took a photo. Guan Jing stood up, about to intervene. If this photo went out, it would be disastrous for Zong Jinghao's reputation.

And yet, just as he moved an inch, he was grabbed by Zong Jinghao. "Sit down."

He reached out to take the Durex from Lin Xichen's hand. He looked at in for a second before putting it into his pocket. "Thank you."

Lin Xichen was speechless.

He felt strange. Why was he not getting angry?

It was obvious that the other uncles were laughing at him.

As if he sensed his confusion, Zong Jinghao lowered himself to the boy's ear.

"Someone will pay it back for you."

Lin Xichen glared at him. What did he mean?

Unfortunately, Zong Jinghao did not seem to be interested in explaining to him. Instead of being moody from Lin Xichen's framing, he seemed to remain in a good mood.

He took the wine that Mr. Li had just poured for him and drank it.

Guan Jing was stunned.

On the side, Mr. Li was also confused. For these kinds of embarrassing matters, should he not be trying to cover up?

Why did he just admit?

Was this a cover up or was it really not his?

Mr. Li could not understand, nor could he ask. Instead he looked at Lin Xichen and asked as he smiled. "Little boy, do you want to have dinner here?"

Lin Xichen shook his head and took a look at Zong Jinghao. There were many questions in his heart. Why was he not angry?

He could not comprehend, so all he could do was to turn and leave. At the room.

"Xichen—"

When Lin Xichen did not come back quickly, Lin Xinyan went out to look for him.

When he left the room, Lin Xichen saw Lin Xinyan's frantic voice. He hurriedly ran over. "Mommy."

Lin Xinyan turned around when she heard his voice. She looked at her son who was running towards her and sighed in relief. She crouched down to welcome her son, and Lin Xichen ran into her arms.

"Where have you been?" Lin Xinyan had a serious look on her face.

What if he had gotten lost?

Lin Xichen lowered his head and said softly, "It's too big in here. I lost my way."

Lin Xinyan did not believe in his words. He had great memory; how could he have lost his way.

"Tell mommy the truth." Lin Xinyan held his head and made him look at her.

"There's no children urinal in the bathroom. I couldn't pee until an uncle came in and helped me. That's why I'm late."

"Then why didn't you tell me the truth from the start?"

"It's not like it's anything good." Lin Xichen pouted.

He looked a little shy.

That was his personality.

Lin Xinyan stood up and held his hand. "Let's go back for food."

The dishes had been served early on.

Lin Xichen was spacing out. He was still thinking about Zong Jinghao's words.

Someone will pay it back for him?

Who will be that person?

After food, Zhuang Zijin brought the children home first. After the long flight, they had to go back to shower and rest.

“I’ll send them first and pick you up in a moment.” Qin Ya said.

“It’s alright, go straight to the store. I’ll go to the store by myself later.” There were many matters to settle for LEO’s branch opening.

She was the person-in-charge; there were many things she needed to decide on.

“Alright.” Qin Ya went into the car.

Lin Xichen sat in the car and sighed when he saw Lin Xinyan standing beside He Ruize.

If only He Ruize was richer and more good-looking than Zong Jinghao.

“Is there anything you want to tell me?” Lin Xinyan looked at the car driving away.

“Let’s walk and talk.” He Ruize reached out and wanted to hold her hand. Halfway through, he put his hand back down.

He felt guilty. He knew that the He Ruilin had caused the accident.

He felt apologetic to her.

“Do you have anything on your mind?” He had been hesitating when they were in the car, and he had been absent-minded during the meal. It was obvious that he had something on his mind.

He Ruize laughed. On one side was the woman he loved, on the other was his sister. The conflict in him could not be merely described as “something on his mind”.

“Yan, am I nice to you?” He Ruize looked at the road in front.

“Yes.” Lin Xinyan said sincerely.

He Ruize was nice to her. She never had second thoughts about this.

He Ruize was silent for moment. “What if. I’m talking about what if.”

Lin Xinyan smiled. She rarely saw He Ruize like this. “Just tell me.”

He Ruize contemplated on how to tell her. “What if, you found out that I’m not that nice, will you hate me?”

“How could that be?” Lin Xinyan did not realize that he was testing waters.

“Perhaps it’s just me.” He laughed bitterly. “What could I do to make you fall in love with me?”

Lin Xinyan lowered her head and bit her lips. It had been six years. Six years was not a short time.

This man was no longer the young man in his twenties.

It really had been a long time that he had waited for her.

Although there was no love, perhaps, she should not let down this man who was nice to her.

Zhuang Zijin was also particularly worried about her marriage.

“...Let me think about it.” She still could not accept it right away.

He Ruize stopped. “What did you say?”

He looked at Lin Xinyan, surprised.

Is— Is she saying yes?

Lin Xinyan looked at the parasol trees on the side of the road, and said peacefully, “I know that you’re nice to me, and my mom hopes that we can be together. I... I don’t want to let you down.”

It was not love nor like. When she looked at him, she felt nothing.

It was only because this man was beside her for too long, that was why she felt that if she were to reject him, it would seem as if she was heartless.

If she was not destined for love in this life, she should not let this faithful man down.

Allowing him to be happy was a kind of paying back, was it not?

If he was at Country A, He Ruize would be happy. However, he felt his heart sunk.

He could sense that Lin Xinyan said yes was not because that she liked him, but because he had taken care of her for many years.

She was just repaying him.

The more she acted this way, the more he felt stressful. After all, he had lied to her.

What would happen if she found out about the truth?

He did not dare to think about it.

“Yan.”

“Yes?”

Lin Xinyan turned. Before she could see his face clearly, she was hugged by him.

Tightly.

As if he was going to lose her anytime.

Lin Xinyan did not move, nor reject him. She just stood there quietly. She could feel He Ruize’s conflict and anxiety.

She only thought it was because of her, so she reached out to hug him and patted his back. “I’ll try to be nice to you from now on.”

She would think about how to deal with his mother next time.

He Ruize stiffened.

Nice to him?

He buried his head into her neck. “I’m afraid of you being nice to me.”

After knowing the truth, the nicer she was to him now, the more hate she would feel about him in the future.

“Do you want me to send you to the store?”

“No need. I want to look around. I’ll go over by myself.” Lin Xinyan said quietly.

Her words were true. This place was not a good dream to her.

And yet she still felt something for it.

“Alright. Send me an invitation when your store is opened.”

“Okay.” Lin Xinyan smiled.

Watching He Ruize going up his car, Lin Xinyan took a deep breath. She walked at the side of the road. It was the beginning of August; it was still hot and there were sweat on her forehead.

“Do you want a ride?” A cab driver stopped by her side, trying to get a passenger.

Lin Xinyan turned her head over. Her expression changed when she saw the cab driver's face. Was he not—

CHAPTER 79.

A face alike this man's flashed across her mind. It was a face like this that had drove towards her during her accident.

She was frightened at that time, and still felt the lingering fear until now. She remembered the face clearly.

The conclusion from the police investigation was that it was a machinery error that had caused the accident.

The cab driver had died, and she was hurt.

The truck driver was determined to be not the main cause of the accident, but he still had to bear responsibility.

He Ruize had brought her out of the country because of her injuries. She was unclear on what happened afterwards.

Although it was said that the brake had malfunctioned, but as a driver, he had driven his truck towards another car instead of trying to minimize the damage.

And that was the weird part.

She felt odd. Could this kind of driver still drive a cab?

"Miss, are you not going to take a ride?" The man asked again, seemingly not recognizing Lin Xinyan.

Lin Xinyan face was grim as she asked coldly, "You're still allowed to drive a cab?"

"Hey, what do you mean?" Yu Doudou felt odd; he was just trying to get a passenger. If she did not want to, did she have to be so harsh?

Lin Xinyan did not want to care about her past, as she and her kids were fine. However, she still hated this kind of people.

She gave no further response and walked away.

Yu Doudou angrily followed after her in his car. "Hey, what did you mean just now? Explain yourself. I don't even know you. Don't you think you're being rude commenting on other people just like that?"

Lin Xinyan frowned. She was not going to fuss about the matter, but he seemed like he wanted to.

She stopped. "I'm not going to mention about the past. Please stop following me, okay?"

Lin Xinyan continued on and walked even faster.

Yu Doudou had his foot on the brake as he looked Lin Xinyan walked away, stunned.

She seemed to know him, from the way she had talked, and yet he did not know her.

Her attitude and anger. It meant that she knew him.

Perhaps she knew his dead brother.

Yu Doudou gritted his teeth, and slowly followed after Lin Xinyan in his car.

He wanted to know what was going on.

Halfway, Lin Xinyan took a cab to her store.

She did not notice that someone was following her.

Lin Xinyan had seen the plans for the decoration and renovations in the store. All she had to do was to check it personally. It was almost done.

"Miss. Lin." Qin Ya walked over and showed her the interior blueprints.

The location of the store was at B City's metropolitan area. Although Mrs. William had only opened the branch because of an exchange, it was still her blood and sweat, so she was still meticulous.

From choosing the location to decorating the interior, it was all carefully chosen after investigating the market.

"All the things are custom made, so it might take a while. Although, it won't take too long. It should come in a week's time." Qin Ya said.

Lin Xinyan nodded. "It's been tough for you."

These matters were mostly managed by Qin Ya.

"It's alright." Qin Ya smiled.

She only had the chance to work in LEO because of Lin Xinyan, who had taken her in when LEO first rejected her.

Although she was Lin Xinyan's assistant, she had learned many things.

Lin Xinyan was very nice to her. She was not stingy with sharing her experience, which helped her a lot.

"I'll be here. You've taken a long flight; you must be tired. Go back and rest, I'll take note of the progress here."

Lin Xinyan thought about it. "Alright, then I'll go back first. Call me if there's anything."

The two children had just come to a new, unfamiliar place. She wondered if they felt unused to the place.

Lin Xinyan walked out of the store. She had just come back here and had no car. She could only call for cabs for now. She stood by the side of road, waiting for a cab.

Yu Doudou, who had been following her, saw her standing by the side of the road. He drove his car over and stopped in front of her.

"Miss, do you know my brother?"

When Lin Xinyan saw it was him again, her face turned gloomy. This person was following her?

"What are you talking about?" Lin Xinyan had a displeased tone.

It was unfortunate to meet a person who made her unhappy just as she came back. And that person just stalked her.

How could she be having a good mood?

Yu Doudou was not angry with Lin Xinyan's attitude. He explained patiently, "You looked as if you know me, but I'm sure I've never seen you before today. The person you're talking about is definitely not me. It might be my brother, who died six years ago. They said he committed suicide, but I found out that it wasn't."

Lin Xinyan took a step back. "Your brother?"

She felt confused.

Dead?

The driver who had crashed into her was dead?

As if afraid that she would not believe him, Yu Doudou took out his wallet, which had a photo of his brother and him. He handed it to Lin Xinyan, and said, "Look, the one on the right is me, and the one on the left is my brother."

Lin Xinyan reached out for it, looked at the picture, then back at Yu Doudou. They did look alike.

He and his brother looked very similar. Now that she thought about it, the one who drove the truck looked more like his brother.

"Your brother is dead?" Lin Xinyan asked in disbelief.

His look turned serious when his dead brother was mentioned. He nodded his head solemnly. "He had uremia, and the treatment costed a lot. Our family was not well off, so it was a hopeless case. However, he suddenly posted on his social media saying that he was rich. A person like that suddenly committing suicide, don't you think it's odd?"

This was the question in his heart. He had been investigating, but he could not find any evidence.

Lin Xinyan's reaction made him felt like she was a clue.

"The fact that he posted saying he was rich, then committed suicide is indeed odd." Logically, if he was rich he would be able to treat his illness. He would have had hope for living. Why would he choose suicide?

This was confusing.

However, this had nothing to do with her. She handed Yu Doudou his photo back. "I'm sorry; this has nothing to do with me."

Yu Doudou took the photo and kept it back into his wallet. He knew that he could not rush this. "Do you want to take a ride? I'll send you to your destination."

"No need." Lin Xinyan rejected.

"Aren't you standing at the side of the road waiting for a cab?"

Lin Xinyan stood still.

"I'm not a bad guy, and I won't cheat you on the fare." Yu Doudou said sincerely.

Lin Xinyan hesitated, and sat into his car. He did not look like a bad person.

Yu Doudou asked, "Where to?"

"Golden Harbor." Lin Xinyan replied.

Yu Doudou did not mention about his brother anymore. Instead, he introduced himself. "I'm Yu Doudou. You can call me Doudou."

Lin Xinyan did not answer him. She felt that he was too enthusiastic.

"Am I being too sudden?" After finishing then did he realize it that he had been revealing too much for the first meeting. He wanted to leave a good impression for Lin Xinyan, so that he could find out what relationship did she have with his brother, and why was she so angry.

The two places were close to each other. It was just a six minute ride.

When they reached, Lin Xinyan paid for the fare and got down the car.

Yu Doudou called out to her. "Can I be friends with you?"

"I'm not familiar with you, and I don't like to make friends. I'm sorry." Lin Xinyan rejected him.

Yu Doudou did not give up. He got down the car and was about to chase Lin Xinyan when he was blocked by someone. "What are you doing? Do you know who she is?"

"Who are you?" Yu Doudou looked at the man who had just blocked him.

"It doesn't matter who I am, what matters is that can't have any thoughts about her. Can you remember this?" Guan Jing warned.

Lin Xinyan turned around when she heard Guan Jing's voice, and her expression turned even gloomier.

"Miss. Lin." Guan Jing changed his attitude quick. He smiled and walked over to her. "Mr. Zong wants to see you."

CHAPTER 80.

Lin Xinyan was not surprised that Guan Jing was here. He was the one who forced her to come back. He would have known where she stayed.

It was good timing as she had something to tell him too.

"Let's go." Lin Xinyan walked towards Guan Jing's car.

Guan Jing did not leave immediately. Instead, he looked at Yu Doudou. "You're not allowed to disturb her. The next time I see it, I won't be as nice as now."

Guan Jing went into his car after warning the man.

Lin Xinyan was quiet, and she asked nothing. She just looked out the window with indifferent eyes.

Guan Jing looked back at her, then focused on driving. The scenery at the side of the road became more and more familiar, as if unchanged in six years. This was the road to the villa.

Lin Xinyan frowned.

Although she had not lived here for long, she still remembered everything that had happened here clearly.

Soon, the car stopped, and Lin Xinyan sighed. When she felt calm, then she opened the car to come down from the car.

Guan Jing did not seem to be going in. Instead, he said, "Mr. Zong is waiting for you inside. You'll be going in yourself."

Lin Xinyan took a look at him. "Do you know why he's looking for me?"

"I'm not clear on my boss' private matters."

Lin Xinyan laughed. This was Zong Jinghao's man. If there was anything against her, he would not say anything.

Her question was useless.

She walked to the door, took a deep breath, and opened it.

The living room was spacious, bright, and clean. On the right was the piano that Lin Guoan had sent over. It was still at the same position, as if it was never touched over the years.

After her accident, she had left the country quickly, and did not bring any of her things along. She had not taken her clothes, not to mention her piano.

She walked over.

The place seemed unchanged. It still looked the same as when she had left.

"Do you still remember this place?"

On the second floor, there was a man dressed in black shirt. His sleeves were folded up, showing his muscular forearm. He had one hand in his pocket, and the other was holding a glass of red liquid. The liquid in the glass swayed with his movements, as if it was alive.

Lin Xinyan raised her head up and gave a faint smile. "Mr. Zong."

Zong Jinghao's expression froze. Mr. Zong?

She used to be the first one to call him by this way, but after she had called him by his name, he had disliked this old title.

It felt foreign and distant.

He preferred her calling him by his name.

"Are you still familiar with this place?" He strode down the stairs.

"It's been too long. I don't remember all the details." Lin Xinyan did not want to admit it.

She rejected all her memories involving him, including her feelings.

"Is there something you want to tell me? You were the one to call me here after all." Lin Xinyan sat at the couch, her legs crossed elegantly and she placed her arm by the armrest. "It was good timing. I had something to tell Mr. Zong too."

She had something to tell him?

This was a little surprising for Zong Jinghao.

He placed the red wine in front of Lin Xinyan. "For you."

Lin Xinyan politely replied, "Thank you."

Zong Jinghao raised his eyebrow. This tone and this look. Was she really going to treat him like a stranger?

He held back his unhappy feelings and sat opposite her.

"What do you want to tell me?"

Lin Xinyan's hands were clasped tightly. "Six years ago, we were supposed to divorce as per the deal. However, it was because of me that the divorce papers were not signed. It had been an inconvenience for you. I apologize. This time, I'm here to sign the divorce—"

"This is what you want to tell me?" Zong Jinghao interrupted.

He had told her that he canceled the marriage with He Ruilin. Now she was here, telling him about this?

Was he not clear the last time?

His expression turned grim.

“Yes, I have thought about Mr. Zong’s words. Even if you could accept it, I could not. So that’s why, as per Mr. Zong’s words, and as per our deal, let’s divorce.”

Her hands were clammy when she finished her words.

Zong Jinghao sneered.

His slim body leaned back on the couch and looked at her casually.

His gaze made her feel threatened, as if there was a knife on her back.

She found her voice after a long while. “If you’re free, we can do it today...”

As if she had thought of something funny, Lin Xinyan laughed mockingly. “How could I forget about this? Mr. Zong doesn’t do these things himself; you just need to tell Guan Jing, the assistant.”

Zong Jinghao frowned.

“Are you done?”

Lin Xinyan nodded, and sat straight. She was prepared to hear him tell her the reason he was looking for her.

Instead of speaking, he looked up a news article on his phone and handed her the phone.

Lin Xinyan felt confused and looked over with curious eyes. She felt herself tensed when she saw the photo, and she took the phone immediately. In the photo was her son, and the background looked like a room in a restaurant. In Lin Xichen’s hand was something, and Zong Jinghao was also clearly in the photo.

“What is this?”

“When I was discussing business with Mr. Li from Shengda Group, your son barged in with that thing in his hand. He said it was mine in front of the people. Someone took a photo of that scene and uploaded it on the net.” He unbuttons his collar with his slender fingers, and said with a casual look, “This news had already spread out. Do you know what the others have been saying about me?”

What Lin Xinyan was shocked about was not that Lin Xichen had found trouble with Zong Jinghao, but where Lin Xichen could have gotten his hands on that thing.

He was five.

“I’m sorry, I’ll definitely teach him—” That was not right; Lin Xichen would never be able to get something like that. What if he really had dropped it?

“It’s not mine.” Zong Jinghao’s voice was low.

He realized what Lin Xinyan was thinking about. If it was not for his rationality, he would have grabbed the woman's collar and shouted at her. He had no habit of bringing that everywhere!

Lin Xinyan sneered. "My son is still young. I doubt he knows what that is. Why would he give it to you and not anyone else?"

Lin Xinyan still believed in her son.

He was a little cunning, but he would never think of using this to frame him.

Hah.

Fine.

Zong Jinghao stood up, his fingers unbuttoning the buttons on his shirt one by one. He looked at her from above; his condescending gaze was wicked and wild.

Lin Xinyan subconsciously moved backwards and watched with wary eyes. "What are you doing?"

Zong Jinghao smiled. "I'm going to prove to you that I don't have the habit of using those things."

Lin Xinyan was speechless.

"I'll ask him when I go home. I'm ending the conversation for today." She stood up and was prepared to leave.

However, her wrist was grabbed by Zong Jinghao. "The end of this conversation is not for you to decide."

Lin Xinyan only felt her heart about burst out. She was terrified, and she did not dare to turn her head to look at him. "I'll do a thorough check. I'll definitely apologize if Mr. Zong was wronged."

"Rather than letting you off to check, I'd prefer to show it to you now." He pushed, and Lin Xinyan's body fell backwards into the couch. Zong Jinghao came onto her—