

## Chapter 101

She was like a fragrant chrysanthemum flower, looking cold and aloof on the surface; but after knowing her deeper, it felt relaxed and refreshing to be with her.

“I’m sorry. If we are just a regular family, we would be happy to have you as our daughter-in-law. But we can’t afford to make any mistakes given our current status.” Song Xiyu sighed as she turned around and left.

As the door slammed shut, tears started streaming down Bai Rong’s cheeks.

This was the outcome she had expected.

The reason Cinderella could marry the prince was because she had three sets of gorgeous gowns and the only pair of crystal shoes in the world.

If Cinderella was just an ordinary peasant woman without a prominent family background, she could never be with the prince.

Bai Rong was hurt as though a hole was pierced in her heart.

Only those who had experienced warmth would know how cold felt like.

She had harbored hopes previously, that was why she was feeling such despair at the rejection.

The woman cried for a long time and fell asleep on the sofa after she got exhausted from crying.

Bai Rong was awoken by the ringtone of her phone.

She opened her eyes and saw that it was Liu Yan who was calling. "What's the matter, Yan?" She answered.

"Have you seen the news on the internet? The murderer of Governor Cheng has been caught and the murder process was described in the news. The police have also located the rental apartment of the murderer near the prosecutor's office. It was reported that Governor Cheng had received money from the killer but did not deliver the agreed task and the man killed him in a fit of anger. I feel that the murderer was just plain stupid. Governor Cheng has already been detained by the prosecutors and would receive his sentence sooner or later. There was no need for the murderer to do anything. What an idiot, right?" Liu Yan expressed her views.

Bai Rong did not say anything.

The official reports didn't mention anything about the gold bars or the massacre of the village.

How much truths were actually buried in this cruel reality?

Even if she wanted to help Tang Xiaojie by finding other culprits, there was nothing she could do.

"Rong, what's going on? Are you still there?" Liu Yan was worried that she was not getting any response from her friend.

"Yup, I'm here. I just woke up so I'm feeling a bit groggy. I'm going out to find some food now. Let's talk again tonight." Bai Rong replied.

“OK. It’s already 3 p.m. and you haven’t eaten anything. You should hurry up and get some food. I’ll see you later.” Liu Yan said and hung up the phone.

Bai Rong went to the bathroom to wash up and saw that her eyes were swollen. She stopped to think for a moment.

She could not just sit and wait. The woman let out a sigh to release her pent-up frustration and proceeded to call Xing Bachuan.

Seeing that it was a number he could not recognize, the man answered suspiciously, “Who’s this?”

“Dad, I am Bai Rong. I want to go home.” She went straight to the point.

“What are you talking about?” Xing Bachuan said in a sharp and unfeeling voice. “You are not my daughter.”

“Are you sure I am not your daughter?” A faint smile appeared on Bai Rong’s face and she continued, “After my mom gave birth to me, you secretly spiked her food with drugs that induced psychosis, and divorced her subsequently. Mom had no choice but to be alone and even suffered from mental illness since then. But don’t forget, it is a fact that I am your biological daughter and this can be easily proven through DNA testing.”

A deep crease appeared between Xing Bachuan’s brows. “What do you want from me?” He shouted over the phone, feeling flustered.

“Dad, you must have offended more than a few people in your political undertakings. If your daughter is the one who testifies against you, how much credibility do you think it will have? Do you think you can still remain in your position?” Bai Rong asked nonchalantly.

“You are ingrate! I am your dad. How can you set me up!” The man was losing his calmness.

“You are right. You’re my dad. Why would I want to see your downfall? I only want to go home. If I have nowhere to go, I cannot guarantee that I won’t do any crazy things. After all, I have a mom who has mental illness. If I end up saying anything that inconveniences you, please forgive me and I hope you can understand that it is because I am homeless and have no other choice.” Bai Rong’s eyes reddened as she spoke.

“You haven’t been in contact all these while. Why do you suddenly want to come back?” Xing Bachuan asked dubiously, lowering his voice. He was already smoldering with resentment.

The woman’s lips curved slightly upwards.

In the past when she only had herself, she could take care of her mom with her own abilities.

Bai Rong would not have wanted to talk to the man who wished that she and her mother were both dead.

But now that she was not able to be the woman under Gu Mingchen’s protection, she wanted to do all she could to protect him instead.

Loving someone did not necessarily mean she had to be together with him. She would be content as long as he could lead a good life.

“Dad, I am not coping well. I miss you.” Bai Rong said unemotionally.

“Aren’t you doing well at the hospital? Even though Su Xuyan had divorced you, you are a free woman now. Besides, the woman he loves has always been Jinnian.”

“If dad doesn’t want me home, I guess I’ll have to seek refuge with your political rivals then. I believe I will be able to strike a good deal with them.” Bai Rong said calmly.

“Don’t you dare!” Xing Bachuan threatened.

“Dad, actually I’m your daughter too, your flesh and blood. Xing Jinnian and I are your only two daughters. Jinnian has been the apple of your eye and was spoiled since young. She is hot-tempered, willful, unable to suffer any hardships, and lack both IQ and EQ. She will never be able to accomplish great things. Don’t you also wish to have someone by your side who is able to help you?” The woman tried her best to convince her father.

“Will you really help me?” Xing Bachuan was skeptical as he was aware how badly he had treated Bai Rong and her mother.

“Blood is thicker than water. Honestly, I think dad is the only person who can help me. If you prosper, it would be better for me as well.” Bai Rong said coldly.

“I need to think about it. You know your stepmom’s background. I cannot decide on this alone. Besides, there is a high chance that Su Xuyan would become your sister’s husband. If you come back, Jinnian is going to hate me to the core.” Xing Bachuan spoke cautiously.

“Why are you so sure that Su Xuyan will marry Xing Jinnian? I shall send dad a video clip later. Maybe you will have a better idea after watching it.” The woman hung up after saying that.

She took a deep breath. Talking to someone like her dad really required both wits and courage.

Bai Rong had to start planning each step carefully from now onward.

With a strong determination, she called Su Xuyan.

“Why are you calling me?” He asked curiously.

“Meet me at the Jindu Club two hours later. I booked a private room there. Are you free? I have something to tell you.” Bai Rong said secretively.

“OK. See you two hours later at Jindu Club.” Su Xuyan hung up, feeling suspicious.

She made a reservation for the private room and installed a spy camera in the room.

Then, Bai Rong went to the nearby mall and bought a deep v satin silk embroidered dress.

Even though she had never slept with Su Xuyan, they did spend four years together. As such, she was still quite familiar with his taste in women.

Those women who had affairs with him more or less fell into the same category—sexy, enchanting, well-endowed, easy to get and easy to get rid of.

Bai Rong changed into the dress she bought and her cleavage was faintly discernible.

The design of the dress was such that the hemline was higher on one side, perfectly showcasing her slender long legs.

She then proceeded to the cosmetics department to buy a set of makeup and got a makeover done by the makeup artist.

The battle had just begun.

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Su Xuyan was already there when Bai Rong reached the Jindu Club.

When he saw her, he was stunned.

This was a woman who did not usually put on any makeup. Even the way she dressed was very plain. He had never seen her wear anything like that before.

She looked so sexy, enchanting, presentable, noble and pure. No woman he had ever come across was more beautiful than how Bai Rong looked tonight.

Besides, she was already a natural beauty.

Xing Bachuan married Bai Bing for her stunning good looks.

It seemed like Bai Rong had inherited all the good genes from her parents.

She sat down opposite Su Xuyan.

A devilish smile appeared on the man's face. He poured her some red wine and said, "I was surprised that you would ask me out."

Bai Rong downcast her eyes. "Why not? We never had any deep grudge against each other anyway."

Su Xuyan let out a laugh and leaned casually against the chair. "Just come clean. What do you need my help with?"

The woman remained silent. She swirled her wine glass and a layer of mist formed on her eyes. The world she saw through the wine glass seemed distorted.

The more Bai Rong kept quiet, the more unfathomable she seemed to Su Xuyan, and he found it very attractive.

He grabbed her hand. Seeing that she didn't resist, he sat next to her.

Bai Rong looked at him. The look in her eyes was still as cold as it used to be, but there was an allure that wasn't there before.

That was a kind of charm only Bai Rong had and was what the man had been searching for all along.

Emotions surged through his heart and Su Xuyan leaned in to kiss her on her lips.



Before he could do that, Bai Rong put a finger on his lips and said, "I do have something important to tell you tonight."

"What is it?" He stared at her intoxicatedly. "Do you know how charming you look right now? I can't believe I have neglected such a precious treasure all these while. Is it too late for me to regret it now?"

"I am going home." She said unemotionally.

"Home? Whose home? My home? You know you are always welcomed." Su Xuyan said with a bewitching smile.

"Not your house. I mean Xing Bachuan's house. I am going to take back everything that belongs to me." Bai Rong said resolutely.

Su Xuyan felt dubious. "You have never identified yourself as the Governor's daughter previously. You didn't even mention anything about it to Liu Yan. But you are actually thinking of going back to Xing Bachuan now? Why?"

"I finally learned the hard truths of life. Will you help me?" The woman asked.

He leaned closer to her. Gazing at her red and moist lips, he said in an intimate tone, "What are you going to give me in return?"

"What do you want from me? You know I don't have anything. If I wasn't desperate enough, I wouldn't even remember that the Governor is my father." Bai Rong self-deprecated.

“Bai Rong, I realized I am liking you more and more. Be my woman.” Su Xuyan’s breathing grew heavier as he leaned forward to kiss her.

Bai Rong stood up and looked at him coldly.

When he was chasing her, that was what he said to her too. What happened after that?

“I want to be recognized as Xing Bachuan’s daughter and that makes you my future brother-in-law. It’s more appropriate for us to keep some distance. For me to enter the Xing Family, Xing Jinnian would be a big obstacle. I need your help to persuade her.”

Su Xuyan’s expression hardened.

The man did not like to be rejected by women. He lifted his glass and gulped down in one go before he said in a threatening tone, “I can help you, but what about what I want?”

“Mr. Su does not lack women.” Bai Rong rejected him flatly.

He stood up as well and sized her up. “Gu Mingchen and Su Wanning are getting married soon. Are you still harboring hopes about being with him?”

“I know very well who is worth waiting for, protecting and worthy of my love. President Su does not have to worry about this. I shall go and get the bill now.” Bai Rong said as she walked towards the door.

The man grabbed her arm and said, “Why are you in a hurry? We only sat down for half an hour. We still have two and a half hours more. Stay and have a good meal together.”

The woman sat down reluctantly.

While Su Xuyan was ordering food, Bai Rong checked the video taken by the surveillance camera that was sent to her phone. It should be enough to convince Xing Bachuan that it wasn't a done deal that Xing Jinnian would marry this man.

"Where have you been these few days?" Su Xuyan asked.

"I don't have to report to you." Bai Rong turned off the surveillance camera and put her phone in her bag.

"Let me guess. Gu Mingchen brought you to Tangqian Village and found Tang Xiaojiu there." Su Xuyan said and let out a laugh.

"How did you know that?" Bai Rong looked at him in shock with a flash of doubt in her eyes.

"Gu Mingchen's parents might not want him to find the killer. As for the person who killed Tang Xiaojiu, who do you think it was? Gu Tianhang? Or Su Zheng?" He let out another laugh.

"I think it could be you too."

Keeping his poise, the man poured himself more red wine and said, "If it was me, I would have killed Gu Mingchen directly. If I were to commit a murder, it wouldn't make a difference who I kill anyway."

What he said made sense to Bai Rong.

Just then, her phone rang. She saw that it was Gu Mingchen and her eyes darkened, unable to conceal her sadness.

Su Xuyan narrowed his eyes and looked at Bai Rong coldly.

She did not pick up the call and straight away cancelled it.

The corners of Su Xuyan's mouth twitched and he said, "I remember telling you not to get involved with Gu Mingchen. He is not someone you can handle. His family will never accept you. Why are you inviting humiliation on your own?"

The woman lifted her glass and bottomed up the red wine.

Then, she saw a message from Gu Mingchen and she opened it.

He texted: Is everything OK? Are you at home? I'll be there in ten minutes.

As Bai Rong stood up, Su Xuyan blocked her way and looked at her menacingly. "You're not allowed to leave."

"I need to talk to him. I can't keep avoiding it." She said as her eyes turned red.

"OK. Make it clear with him." He stood aside to let her pass.

After the woman walked out, Su Xuyan gritted his teeth and called Xing Jinnian. "Come to Jindu Club."

When Bai Rong reached home, Gu Mingchen was already standing at her door, smiling at her.

She could feel her heart aching.

He was so good, so good, so good...

She walked up to him, put her arms around his waist and nuzzled her head in the man's chest, feeling his warmth.

Bai Rong recalled the first time they met, Gu Mingchen also hugged her this way and told her he would protect her.

He kept that promise and protected her time after time.

She never used to like remembering the past, as all she had were bad memories that only made her grow more despondent.

However, she loved reminiscing now. Those cherished memories would carry her through difficult times ahead.

"Are we going to continue standing here?" Gu Mingchen said gently and broke her thoughts.

"I want to keep hugging you like this." Bai Rong softly replied.

"What happened? Where did you go today? Why are you dressed like that?" He asked.

She snapped out of her trance and opened the door.

“I just wanted a makeover, so I went out and bought some cosmetics.” The woman said, as she walked into the bathroom.

Gu Mingchen followed her in and beamed at her. “You are beautiful even without makeup. I have seen you at your worst. Are you still worried that I would despise you?”

Bai Rong could feel tears welling up in her eyes. She closed her eyes and splashed her face with cold water.

The man passed her a towel and said, “Things went smoothly on my side today. I want to bring you home this week. Let’s fix a day for our marriage soon.”

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She took over the towel and replied, “I don’t want to get married.

“Huh?” Gu Mingchen paused before saying, “Oh right.”

He took out a jewelry box from his pocket and went down on one knee. Then, he opened the box that contained a diamond ring.

“Bai Rong, will you marry me?” The man said sincerely.

The light from the ceiling casted a faint glow upon his face that created a mesmerizing halo effect.

The diamond ring was also shining brightly in the light.

Bai Rong clenched her fists to stop herself from taking the ring that she really wanted. She squatted down on the floor to face Gu Mingchen.

“Did anything happen?” He realized something was not right.

“Gu Mingchen, I feel that we are progressing too quickly. One month is not enough for us to fully understand each other. Besides, whenever I think about Tang Xiaojiu’s death, I can’t help but feel that we are partially responsible for it. I want to find the culprit behind the massacre before thinking about our marriage.”

The man’s eyes darkened. “Is it because you want to find the murderer first or is it because you don’t like me?”

His question was straight to the point. Bai Rong’s eyes glistened with tears as she looked towards the floor.

She could not tell him that she liked him as it would bring him harm. But it would hurt him more if she said that she did not like him.

Not getting a response from the woman, Gu Mingchen’s face turned cold. “If I say, I will have to marry someone else if we can’t get married. Will your decision still be the same?”

Bai Rong creased her brows.

She knew very well what he meant.

The reason he was in a rush to finalize their marriage was to dash the Su Family's hopes. He was prepared to bear any consequences.

If Gu Mingchen did not get married, he might not be able to handle the subsequent events.

He would be burning his own bridge.

Bai Rong did not want him to do that. "It's too fast."

The man gritted his teeth. He had never thought that she would be so unfeeling.

"I understand now." He stood up and walked towards the door.

Bai Rong choked up with all the unsaid words as she watched him leave.

"Gu Mingchen, I love you." She mouthed the words as he walked away.

After he left, she felt chilled to the bone.

When Liu Yan got back after work, she saw Bai Rong sitting in a daze on the sofa. There was a sense of stillness in the air.

"What happened?" She asked worriedly.



“I am just thinking about the past. When I was in my freshman year of college, there was a pageant competition in school. The winner would get two thousand and a chance to shoot an advertisement. I really wanted the prize money. To become the winner of the pageant, I did many things such as perform, dance, stand-up comedy, sing, cheerleading, etc.” Bai Rong recalled.

“I can’t tell that you had crazy times too.” Her friend smiled and replied.

“Yeah. I desperately wanted to win the prize money.” Bai Rong let out a wry laugh.

“What happened in the end?” Liu Yan was curious.

“Someone cheated and I did not even get into the top ten.” The woman drank some water to flush the bitterness out of her heart. “Because I tried too hard, I became a thorn in my competitors’ flesh and was pranked several times by them.” She continued.

“Sounds like an awful memory. Don’t think about it anymore. Don’t be bothered by those pretentious things.” Liu Yan tried to comfort her.

“I think I was being overconfident. Since those that I coveted were not mine in the first place, I only created problems for myself.” Bai Rong shared her thoughts and took a deep breath.

“Did you fight with Gu Mingchen again?” Liu Yan read in between the lines.

Bai Rong shook her head and said, “Yan, I am moving out a few days later.”

“Why? Oh right! We are going to the military base soon. But we still need a place to stay when we are on festive breaks or holidays.” Liu Yan reminded her.

As Bai Rong did not want her friend to worry, she did not tell her the real reason.

She went back to her room and locked the door before sending Xing Bachuan the video that was recorded in the private room of the Jindu Club just now.

Ten minutes later, Xing Bachuan called her and started yelling over the phone. “How can you be so despicable? Su Xuyan is your future brother-in-law. Do you call yourself a human to seduce your sister’s future husband?”

“If the purpose of your call is to scold me, I don’t have anything more to say to you. I will have a good talk with your rivals instead.” Bai Rong said coldly.

“Why do I have such an ingrate as my daughter. I should have asked your mother to abort you if I knew this would happen.” Her father was stomping with rage.

“Don’t you think it’s too late to say all these? I want to go home within two days. I guess it would not be difficult for you to arrange a position at the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection for me?” Bai Rong continued talking unemotionally.

“You think the CCDI belongs to me? You have to take an examination and pass the entrance interview.”

“I will be registering for the exam. As for the interview, I hope that dad can make some special arrangements for me. But of course, I believe your rivals would be capable of making such arrangements too.” A detached smile appeared on the woman’s face as she said that.

“I really don’t know why you are doing this. I am warning you. If you come back, don’t do anything to ruin your sister’s happiness, understand?” Xing Bachuan gave his daughter a stern warning.

“Don’t worry. I am not the least bit interested in Su Xuyan. To me, he is worse than a beast. I’ll wait for your good news then.” Bai Rong hung up.

She lied down on the bed and closed her eyes.

But instead of sleeping, the woman was planning the moves that she had to make from now onward.

In order to protect someone else, she had to rise up stronger than before.

It was already past 10 p.m. when Bai Rong heard someone knocking on the door outside.

Then, she heard Liu Yan’s voice. “Chief Gu?”

At once, Bai Rong jumped off the bed and opened her door.

Gu Mingchen looked towards her with a strange blush of red appearing on his face.

“I am playing cards with my friends tonight.” Liu Yan said and rushed off.

Bai Rong walked towards the man.

He smelt of alcohol. It seemed like he had quite a bit to drink.

“I’ll make some honey water for you.” As Bai Rong turned around to take a mug, Gu Mingchen grabbed her arm and looked at her with his deep eyes.

“Bai Rong, you will grow to like me, right?” He asked.

“You’re drunk.” Bai Rong wanted to push his hand away but was pulled into his arms instead. He held her in a tight embrace and closed his eyes. “Just let me hold you for a while.” The man said.

Her heart was aching badly but she didn’t move away.

“My heart is unwell. It is aching as though a heavy weight is pressing on it. Bai Rong, what should I do?” Gu Mingchen asked. His breathing grew heavier and Bai Rong could smell alcohol in his breath.

She could not bear to see him in this state.

She turned around, tiptoed and kissed him on his lips.

The man froze for a moment and fixed his deep gaze on her.

“I like you so much.” Bai Rong finally said.

Once that was said, there was no more room for regrets.

That sentence alone was enough to create waves in Gu Mingchen's heart.

He kissed her back passionately.

The woman closed her eyes and enjoyed the moment.

Then, he pinned her onto the sofa and removed her clothes.

Bai Rong was tight when Gu Mingchen entered her impatiently. As the light shone upon her eyes, she fell into a trance and a sinful thought fell upon her.

Maybe I can be his secret lover.

When she finally cum, she bit the man's shoulder hard.

The person she had become was starting to feel unfamiliar to herself.

Bai Rong had always thought of herself as someone with firm boundaries. But that was before she met the person whom she was willing to lose all of that for.

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It was midnight when Gu Mingchen woke up at the sound of his phone ringing and he took a glance at Bai Rong, who was sleeping soundly next to him. He stepped out of the room and answered the phone. "What's the matter?"

"Mingchen, something happened. Are you at Bai Rong's place now?" Song Xiyu asked urgently.

"Yeah. Why?" Gu Mingchen was puzzled.

"Return to the military base immediately. Someone from the CCDI is on the way to Bai Rong's house to look for you now. If they find out that you are sleeping with Bai Rong, there is no way you can explain your way out."

"What's wrong if I am sleeping with her? She's my girlfriend." Gu Mingchen felt dubious.

"Bai Rong and Su Xuyan have not divorced. It's a disguise to set you up. You have to leave immediately. We can talk about this later." His mother said.

He would never believe that Bai Rong would set a trap for him. However, he suspected that Bai Rong might have been duped. "I have a clear conscience. There is no need for me to run."

"Mingchen, please. It is a crucial period for us right now. If you get into trouble, our whole family will be doomed. No one else can help us."

"OK. I understand." Gu Mingchen hung up and went back to the room.

Bai Rong was already awake when his phone rang. She asked worriedly when she saw his glum face, "What happened?"

“The men from CCDI are coming here to look for me. My mom told me that you and Su Xuyan are not yet divorced and told me to not let those people find me here.”

“How is that possible? We are already divorced.” The woman was very sure.

She took out her marriage and divorce certificates from the bottom of the drawer and handed them over to Gu Mingchen.

His face darkened. “The seal is fake.”

“What?” Bai Rong was shocked.

Just then, they heard people knocking at the door.

There was no time for her to process that new information.

If the certificates were forged, Gu Mingchen could not be seen here. If he was caught, his future would be ruined.

“Hurry leave!” Bai Rong panicked as she opened the windows and saw that there was no one downstairs.

Gu Mingchen was not someone to get flustered in an emergency like that. “I will contact you later.” He said to her calmly.

“OK.”

The man tied together some sheets and slid down through the open window with the support of the water pipes.

Bai Rong threw the rest of the covers and blanket out of the window. She thought for a moment and decided to throw her sleeping gown out as well.

She knew Gu Mingchen would have his way of handling it.

Then, she quickly took out new sheets and changed into a new set of pajamas.

Suddenly, the door outside was kicked open.

Bai Rong opened her room door and said in a harsh tone, "Who are you?"

"Search the entire area." A man in a neatly pressed suit gave out stern orders.

"Do you have a search warrant? If not, this is considered illegal trespassing." The woman said defensively.

That man, who seemed to be the leader of the group, showed her the document and said, "You must be Bai Rong. Please assist us with the investigation."

Bai Rong saw that the men had even emptied the trash and was secretly glad that she and Gu Mingchen had not used a condom just now but had gone into the bathroom instead when they were finishing.



The men shook their heads at the leader when they could not find anyone else in the room.

“Take away her blanket, curtains and sheets.” The leader of the group commanded.

“I need to get changed.” Bai Rong frowned as she made the request.

The leader nodded his head and said, “You have two minutes.”

She grabbed her clothes and entered the bathroom.

As she was afraid that there might be bodily fluids left inside her that could be used as evidence against them, she opened the cabinet under the sink.

The previous time when Liu Yan had that encounter with Shen Yiyan, she was worried that she might contract STD and had bought a few bottles of feminine wash.

Bai Rong quickly opened up a bottle.

Just then, someone knocked on the bathroom door. “Are you ready? It’s already been three minutes.”

“Give me a while more.” She had already used up more than half a bottle and felt that it should be safe. She got dressed, washed her underwear and threw it into a basin.

After that, the woman opened the door and walked out.

The leader of the group signaled to his subordinates who then put the clothes Bai Rong just changed out of into a plastic bag.

“What are you doing this for?” Bai Rong had her guard up.

“It is our job to investigate and gather evidence. You just need to cooperate.” The leader replied sternly.

And she was taken away in their car.

She looked out of the window, but it was all dark outside, exactly like her mood at that moment.

Bai Rong recalled the day she negotiated the divorce with Su Xuyan. He was unwilling at first but had suddenly changed his mind.

Could that sudden change be a trap?

Also, she was sure that the staff who assisted them that day was not very friendly towards Su Xuyan. It did not seem very possible that they were in cahoots.

Could it be that both herself and Su Xuyan were set up against?

It was not evident from his behavior during this period of time that he knew their marriage was not real.

But who else could be behind the sudden finalization of their divorce?

The many unanswered questions felt as though a dagger was hidden within a fog.

Who else was hiding behind the fog? Who was the person who killed Tang Xiaojiu?

Bai Rong was confused.

She was sent directly to the hospital and a gynecologist did a thorough examination on her.

She was glad that she had taken care to wash herself up just now.

Otherwise, there would be irrefutable evidence against Gu Mingchen.

After the examination, the woman was taken to a small dark room.

A man and a woman sat opposite her with a serious look on their faces. She did not recognize either of them.

The four corners of the room were fitted with surveillance cameras that led Bai Rong to think that there were other people watching her from the outside.

“What’s your relationship with Gu Mingchen from the Special Forces?” The man asked in a stern voice.

“We don’t have any kind of relationship.” Bai Rong answered calmly.

“If there is no relationship, why would you be seen dining together at a restaurant?” The man sounded her out.

“There was an operation previously where they had to save a hostage – a pregnant lady. I assisted in that operation and it was Chief Gu who saved me from danger, so I bought him a meal to express my gratitude. I have had meals with a lot of other people. Have you always eaten alone?” She threw the question back to him.

“There was someone else who saw the both of you staying together in a room. How do you explain that?” The man asked sharply.

Bai Rong was not sure if it was a trick question and replied, “Someone? Who is that someone?”

“Stop denying. We already have evidence to prove that. I am just giving you a chance to confess and receive leniency.” The man threatened and slammed his hand on the table.

Bai Rong’s mouth curved into a smile. “I think you should arrest that someone instead. He is framing an innocent person. I want to sue him for defamation.”

“Is that so?” Then may I ask where you were last night?”

The woman’s eyes turned cold. She fixed her gaze on the man and repeated her question. “Who exactly is that someone?”

“You have no right to know that. You only need to answer our questions.”

“The night before I was at Tangqian Village with Chief Gu to investigate a case. We found the killer, Tang Xiaojiu, but he was shot by a sniper. I suspect that the ‘someone’ you are referring to might be the sniper.” Bai Rong said gravely.

“Don’t change the topic. We will convey what you said to the higher ups; but now, let’s go back to your question instead.”

“I don’t have any questions.” Bai Rong retorted straight away.

“When you were at Tangqian Village, did you stay together with Gu Mingchen and did anything you shouldn’t have? We would advise you to be honest as we do have evidence.”

Bai Rong suddenly recalled that they had used a condom that night and had thrown it into the garbage bin.

## **Chapter 105**

Many different versions of answers flashed through her mind.

For example, she could tell them about her forged marriage with Su Xuyan.

Regardless of whether they believed her or not, it would still not change the fact that she was a married woman.

Bai Rong wasn’t afraid of tarnishing her reputation. She had nothing to lose anyway. She was just worried about getting Gu Mingchen into trouble.

“The purpose of our visit was to secretly investigate the case on Governor Cheng. We pretended to be a couple because Gu Mingchen detected that there were people following us. It was to distract them.” Bai Rong said calmly and looked straight into the eyes of the person who asked the question.

“Why were you asked to assist in the investigation of Governor Cheng? Didn’t you claim that you do not have any relationship with Gu Mingchen?”

“I have liked reading Sherlock Holmes since I was young and my idol is Arthur Conan Doyle. Besides, I am also a doctor and have almost gone into forensic medicine. Chief Gu briefly discussed the case with me and he thought that I have some problem-solving capabilities. As it was a secret investigation, he thought that having an unfamiliar face could be useful.” Bai Rong explained.

Song Xiyu was watching Bai Rong through the screen and her eyes darkened. “Actually, I quite like this girl. She is very strong mentally, is able to deal with things calmly and is graceful and presentable. Most importantly, she really loves our son. Why don’t we just approve of their relationship?”

“You are so soft-hearted and gullible. Didn’t you forget that she promised you not to continue seeing Mingchen when you spoke to her in the day? But look what happened? Our son ended up sleeping at her place. This woman is very cunning. She lied through her teeth. How can she be any good?” Gu Tianhang said in disdain.

“Even if she lied to me, she did that to protect Mingchen. I don’t think she should be blamed for that. Besides, she grew up all alone in the orphanage and has experienced the vicissitudes of life. She’s not a hothouse flower and it’s natural that she learned to protect herself and be independent. Do you think Su Wanning would be able to do that? She relies on her dad for everything.” Song Xiyu refuted.

“So, you are aware that Su Zheng would always stand up for her daughter? Su Xuyan has the support of the commander-in-chief and our son has already offended Su Xuyan. The commander-in-chief had his qualms about the Gu Family all along. It was Su Zheng who has been helping to mediate in between us to avoid any problems. If the commander-in-chief has Su Zheng’s help, our family will be doomed.” Gu Tianhang’s temper sparked.

Song Xiyu folded her arms in front of her chest and turned to face the side. “I think the commander-in-chief would not dare to do anything to us. After all, Mingchen is the chief in the special forces. You secretly swopped out Bai Rong’s marriage and divorce certificates but she will know the truth eventually once she questions Su Xuyan about it.”

“That’s why we have to force a confession out of her now.”

“Even if we managed to do that, our son still wouldn’t fall in love with Su Wanning.” Song Xiyu stared at her husband.

“Then we will hand the woman over to Su Zheng. We will ask Su Zheng to force Mingchen to marry Su Wanning in order to exchange for Bai Rong’s release.” Anger poured through Gu Tianhang.

“But she is innocent. Don’t you think you are going overboard? First, you swopped out her certificates, then you got people to pretend to be from the CCDI and brought her here. Now, you are even thinking of kidnapping her? Don’t continue to go down the wrong path!” Song Xiyu hollered at the man.

“Am I really making a mistake? I am doing this to save our family.” Gu Tianhang said as he pointed at Song Xiyu.

“But you can’t do that at the expense of others.” The woman slapped away her husband’s hand.

"I am not causing her any harm. In fact, she is the one who is causing us harm. I am not asking for her life; I only need her to leave Mingchen so that Mingchen can marry Su Wanning. That's the original plan. I am going to give Su Zheng a call now to get his assistance." Gu Tianhang said, as he took out his phone.

"That's enough!" Song Xiyu snatched his phone away and said, "You are just creating evidence for others to use against your son. I think you are getting old and muddle-headed. Just leave this matter to me."

"You are the one who keeps making me angry." Gu Tianhang yelled and walked out of the surveillance control room.

"You guys, stop recording and switch that off now." Song Xiyu was feeling frustrated.

She took a deep breath and walked out of the control room into the small dark room.

Bai Rong was stunned for a moment when she saw the woman, but quickly understood what was going on. Her eyes darkened into an endless depth of ink, sorrow, and pain.

"You can all leave now." Song Xiyu instructed the other people in the room.

"Yes, ma'am." The two people who were interrogating Bai Rong walked out.

Bai Rong pursed her lips into a thin line and looked at the older woman.

Song Xiyu sat down on a chair and was quiet for a moment before saying, "Can you tell me why you were together with Mingchen tonight when you have already agreed to leave him?"



Bai Rong creased her brows slightly and her eyes turned misty. "So, those people are not from the CCDI. They are your people instead?"

"You were the one who failed to keep your promise first."

"I needed some time. I have already rejected Gu Mingchen's marriage proposal. You are not only hurting me, you are hurting your son as well." Bai Rong was getting upset.

"We are trying to save everyone."

"Saving everyone means you have to kill Tang Xiaojiu? Saving everyone means you have to keep tabs on me and forge my divorce with Su Xuyan? Let me tell you, your son and I have already slept together. What you just did could throw him into danger! I am just a nobody and have nothing to lose. If our extramarital affair is exposed, I can just move to another place and start all over again. But your son? You will destroy him!" Bai Rong stood up agitatedly and broke the table lamp.

"We did not keep tabs on you. Your divorce with Su Xuyan was official but we swapped out your real certificate with a forged one. Also, not only did we not kill Tang Xiaojiu, we have cleared all tracks that you and Mingchen left behind. Tang Xiaojiu might be killed by Su Zheng's men. In fact, we are also looking for the killer so that we can have a hold on him. Bai Rong, if you truly love Mingchen, please help us." Song Xiyu clenched her fists while she explained.

"How can I help you? You want me to admit that Gu Mingchen and I had an affair while I was still married? A truly good parent would never hurt her child like that." Bai Rong looked at the older woman with bloodshot eyes.

“I will bring you to a place for the next few days. When you return, Mingchen would have already married Su Wanning. But I need your cooperation. Do you have any token that you always carry with you?” Song Xiyu asked with glistening eyes.

“Staging a kidnap?” Bai Rong understood Song Xiyu’s intentions at once.

“I’m sorry, but both you and I want Mingchen to have a smooth future, right?”

Bai Rong turned her face away while tears started streaming down her cheeks. “There is nothing symbolic that I carry with me.”

“If she doesn’t have anything, then cut off her finger; If a finger is not enough, then take her hand; If her hand is not enough, then we’ll take her leg as well.” Gu Tianhang said ruthlessly as he pushed the door open. He did not sound like he was joking.

“I have not done you any disservice. Why are you doing this to me?!” Bai Rong stared at the man in disbelief.

“I will handle this. Take her away.” Gu Tianhang said impatiently.

Song Xiyu had a bad hunch. She grabbed her husband’s arm and said, “Tianhang, leave this to me. Don’t hurt her.”

“She never should have gotten involved with Mingchen in the first place. We can’t afford to be indecisive at this juncture. Otherwise, more trouble might follow. Just keep out of this.” Gu Tianhang shook off the woman’s hand and walked out.

## Chapter 106

“If you dare to hurt her, I am going to divorce you. I mean it!” Song Xiyu shouted towards the door.

Bai Rong turned around as she heard that. She saw Song Xiyu with her eyes red and fists clenched tight. Instead of anger and hatred, it was a look of helplessness and pity in the older woman’s eyes.

Then, the door was shut and Gu Tianhang’s men covered her eyes.

All she could see was pitch black.

As she was unable to see anything, she could only be dragged along by the men.

Bai Rong stayed calm and did not struggle nor make any noise, because she knew it would be futile doing all those. It would just speed up her end.

Two hours later, the blindfold on her eyes was removed.

The woman realized she was surrounded by only four walls and a metal gate.

There was no bed, no toilet and not even a bottle of water. She was left with only a table and a chair, and dim light coming from a lamp hanging from the ceiling.

“If you want to keep your life, copy what is written on the paper.” A man wearing a mask placed a few pieces of paper on the table and instructed her.

Bai Rong knew what was going on.

Gu Tianhang had kidnapped her.

After his goal was achieved, he wouldn't let her live to see the next morning.

"I want to meet Gu Mingchen's mother. Otherwise, I won't do anything you ask me to." Bai Rong was determined.

"You are asking for trouble." The leader of the pack gave her a tight slap on her face.

She was slapped so hard that she almost fell over. The corners of her mouth twitched as she looked coldly at the masked man. "Do you think I will be allowed to live? Since I have to die anyway, there is nothing I am afraid of."

The same man gave her another slap across her face but Bai Rong did not make a single sound.

The man was burning with anger. He took out a knife and pinned her right hand on the table. "Are you writing or not?" He threatened.

Bai Rong looked at the man with a penetrating gaze and pursed her lips. Her eyes were filled with resolute and hatred.

Her sharp gaze sent chills down the man's spine. He lifted the knife and chopped off the woman's pinkie finger.

Bai Rong felt a sharp pain sear through her. She pressed on the open wound of her little finger and turned pale while remained her piercing gaze.

The man was shocked by her imposing manner.

He could not believe that she did not even utter a sound.

While the man went out to make a call to report the situation, Bai Rong laid her head down on the table. Her forehead was filled with beads of perspiration and she stared at the bloodstains on the table.

She had two relationships altogether.

The first one, her husband cast her aside like an old shoe and pierced a thousand holes in her heart.

The other was a man she loved deeply but they had no choice but to separate. Her life was even hanging on a thread and she might not be able to die peacefully.

It was all because she was too weak and was disregarded and not respected. As such, she was like a carp on the chopping board with no mercy over her fate.

If she could survive this ordeal, she would definitely become stronger.

Just then, the leader of the group walked in with two other people in white coats and also wearing masks.

They stanchied the blood from Bai Rong's wound, gave her transfusion and performed emergency medical treatment.

"Madam Song will be here shortly." The leader said fiercely.

Two hours later, Song Xiyu walked in. Bai Rong was passed out on the chair.

She took a glance at the woman's right hand and noticed that her pinkie finger was already gone. It had been treated and bandaged and she was undergoing transfusion.

"You guys are too much! Prepare a bed for her and get her some water immediately. Also, she needs round-the-clock medical attention." Song Xiyu dictated.

"Yes, ma'am." The leader walked out.

Bai Rong was in a daze when she opened her eyes. As she was running a fever, her face was flushed and her lips were chapped. She looked piteous.

Song Xiyu's eyes reddened as she held Bai Rong's hand and apologized. "Sorry, Tianhang is obsessed. I have never imagined that he would really chop off your fingers."

The younger woman let out a snort as she pulled out her hand. She leaned against the chair and said unemotionally. "You and your husband are the same. One coaxes and the other coerces. If you really wanted to save me, there were so many things you could have done. Stop crying crocodile tears."

Song Xiyu creased her brows. There was nothing she could say to defend herself.

"No matter what, damage has already been done. I hope to make it up to you," she said.

"You don't have to make anything up to me. I only hope that I can leave this place alive." Bai Rong said coldly while observing Song Xiyu's expression.

“Don’t worry about this. I will make sure that you stay alive. But can you guarantee that you won’t rat on us?” The older woman was worried.

A wry smile appeared on Bai Rong’s face as she said sarcastically, “Do you really think Gu Mingchen won’t know that his parents are behind this?”

“I know he will definitely find out, but he will understand our reasons for doing this. I don’t believe he will turn against us.” Song Xiyu was very certain of it.

“That’s why even if I said anything, no one would believe me and Gu Mingchen would also not take action against you. As for me, I would be silenced. So, you see, there’s no benefit or meaning for me to say anything.” Bai Rong said despondently.

“Just copy what is on the paper and I guarantee that you can leave this place alive.” Song Xiyu promised.

Bai Rong fixed her gaze on Song Xiyu and said, “I believe that Mrs. Gu is also an emotional person. You should understand that if I die because of Gu Mingchen, he will never be able to forget me for the rest of his life. Even if he does not take action against you, he will never forgive you. But it’s a different story if I live. There is always a chance that our relationship might take a bad turn due to the realities of life, quarrels, disagreements, etc.”

“I will let you live.” Song Xiyu said resolutely.

When Bai Rong was satisfied that she had said everything she could, she picked up the pen.

As her hand was shaking, her handwriting was all over the place. There was no way she could write properly.

“This won’t do.” Song Xiyu stood up and made a call to Gu Tianhang. Her anger flared as she said, “Look at what you have done. You want her to write those words but you chopped off her finger. How do you expect her to be able to write? Even if she manages to, her handwriting would not be the same as her usual handwriting. How can you be so stupid?”

“I was not the one who chopped off her finger. Then get her to record a video instead. She can just read out the words on the paper.” Gu Tianhang was irritated.

After Song Xiyu hung up the phone, she looked at Bai Rong. “I will record a video of you. After Mingchen gets married, I will send you back.”

Bai Rong read through the contents on the paper and the corners of her mouth twitched. She could taste the saltiness of her own tears. With a look of determination, she said, “Let’s start.”

The older woman could not bear to see her in this state and felt pained. “I’m sorry.”

After apologizing, she took out her phone and started recording.

Bai Rong looked at the camera and said calmly, “Gu Mingchen, I don’t want to die.” Then, she raised up her injured hand and continued saying, “Just do as they say, please save me. They said that as long as you don’t agree, they will chop off one of my fingers each day until you agree. If my fingers are not enough, they will take my toes, limbs, eyes, nose, ears and mouth.”

A deep crease appeared between Song Xiyu’s brows as she turned her face away.

Bai Rong kept silent for ten seconds as her tears flowed endlessly down her cheeks. “Please, let me go.”



After Song Xiyu stopped the recording, she said, "You are a good woman, but Mingchen is not the right person for you. You will find someone who is more suitable for you next time. If you need help, feel free to look for me."

Bai Rong shut her eyes. Her head felt heavy and she rested on her arms.

Once again, she felt small, helpless and despondent, as though she had fallen into the depths of the darkness...

## **Chapter 107**

When Bai Rong was awake, she borrowed a clock from Song Xiyu, which was placed on the table.

She knew she had been trapped in this small dark room for seven days.

During these seven days, she had never spoken a single word.

On the morning of the eighth day, she was being blindfolded again and taken onto a van with no license plate.

The van made many turns and she had changed several vehicles en route.

Three hours later, she was thrown out of the van.

When she removed her blindfold, the morning sun blinded her.

She was not able to keep her eyes opened, so she closed her eyes again and opened them slowly.

The first thing she saw was a water fountain.

In the middle of the fountain was a statue of a woman holding her child.

It seemed like an irony to Bai Rong.

She also saw green trees and grass, as well as red flowers.

She was still alive.

Bai Rong knew that she was near a park. She walked towards the roadside and hailed a cab.

“Sir, I don’t have any money. Can you make a call for me? I will get someone to pick me up.” Bai Rong said softly.

The driver was startled to see Bai Rong looking as pale as a ghost and was wearing a creased blue skirt stained with blood.

Her hand was also bandaged.

“Did you get robbed or kidnapped? Do you need to call the police?” The driver kindly offered.

Bai Rong shook her head and her eyes were red-rimmed. "There is no use even if I call the police," she said.

"What is the number you want to call? You can make the call yourself." The driver said as he passed the woman his phone.

"Thank you so much." Bai Rong keyed in Liu Yan's number and the call got through.

"Yan, I am Bai Rong. I am on my way home now but I have no money. Can you pay the cab fare when I reach?" Bai Rong said softly.

"Rong!" Liu Yan was thrilled to hear her friend's voice. "Where have you been? I looked everywhere for you and have even called the police! Do you want to scare me to death?"

"I'm alright. You should cancel the police report first. I will be back soon. I'm using the driver's phone so I am hanging up now." Bai Rong hung up without giving Liu Yan more time to question her.

When she reached her apartment half an hour later, Liu Yan was already waiting at the gate.

She alighted from the cab as Liu Yan paid her cab fare. Liu Yan noticed the bandage on her hand and widened her eyes in worry. "What happened to your hand? What happened during this period of time? You were kidnapped right? Was it Su Xuyan?"

Liu Yan got very agitated and said, "I am going to kill him."

“Yan, it’s not him. I want to take a shower now. I haven’t showered for seven days. I must be stinking now.” Bai Rong smiled.

It was such a miserable smile.

“Who did it?” Liu Yan held Bai Rong by the shoulders and tears started streaming down her cheeks. She raised her voice and said, “Who are those people?! Bai Rong, you can’t just take it lying down. I will help you. We can’t let them get away with this.”

Bai Rong was calm and looked indifferent. “Let this matter pass. If you are my friend, don’t ask me about it anymore.” She said and walked towards the elevator.

However, Liu Yan was not able to stay calm and said as she followed behind Bai Rong, “Don’t tell me it was Su Wanning? So much has happened these few days. Gu Mingchen and Su Wanning got engaged. Has your disappearance got to do with it?”

“Engaged? Aren’t they supposed to get married?” Bai Rong took a glance at Liu Yan.

Liu Yan kicked the garbage bin in rage as she said, “Gu Mingchen should be ashamed of himself. While you were kidnapped, he got happily engaged to another woman. Do you not mean anything to him?”

Bai Rong downcast her eyes and waited silently for the lift.

“Hang on. Did they hold you in captive to threaten Gu Mingchen to get married? It had to be Su Wanning. Even if she succeeds in marrying him, she will never have his heart.”

“I told you I don’t want to talk about it anymore.” Bai Rong’s tone grew harsher.

“Now that you are back, you can press charges against her. Tell everyone the truth. You have Gu Mingchen’s support, there is nothing to fear. Fight it out with that woman.”

“I said stop!” Bai Rong raised her voice and said sternly.

Liu Yan was momentarily stunned by her tone. She looked at Bai Rong in shock.

Bai Rong knew she shouldn’t have gotten mad at Liu Yan.

Her friend only wanted to help her.

“I know what I should do. Don’t worry.” Bai Rong softened her tone.

Liu Yan burst into tears and hugged her tightly. “Why does life treat you so badly? The pain that Su Xuyan caused you was already too much; now it’s Gu Mingchen’s turn.” She said, feeling pained.

“It is my own fault. I was too greedy for those that never belonged to me in the first place.” Bai Rong patted Liu Yan on her back and looked into space in stillness, as though she was glad to receive a new lease of life. “My days can only get better from now onward.”

“Yes, definitely.”

After Bai Rong returned to her room, she took her clothes and went into the bathroom.

“Do you want me to help you?” Liu Yan was worried.

Bai Rong shook her head and said, “The wound is already scarring. Everything that needs to be healed is in the process of doing so. I am a doctor too; I know what needs to be done. Don’t worry, I’m fine.”

The woman finished washing up and as she was getting dressed, she heard someone pounding urgently at the door outside.

Liu Yan opened the door and Gu Mingchen dashed in. Feeling emotional, he choked up while he asked, “Where is Bai Rong?”

“Haven’t you given her enough trouble?” Liu Yan tried to push the man away as a swell of rage rose in her but she wasn’t strong enough to do so.

When Bai Rong walked out of the bathroom, Gu Mingchen looked at her as tears filled his deep-set eyes.

He was unable to contain the surge of emotions he felt in his heart and pulled her into a tight embrace. “I am so happy you are safe. Sorry, I failed to protect you.”

The woman’s hands hung by her side. She did not hug him back. She was misty-eyed and stared straight ahead.

Her heart was already numbed from the extreme pain she felt.

Gu Mingchen had lost a lot of weight.

The man had almost lost his mind when he saw Bai Rong's video and did not manage to sleep at all during the past seven days.

He searched everywhere like a madman, and even felt like killing Su Wanning. He created chaos in Gu Tianhang's office and smashed all the furniture in the Gu family's villa.

When Gu Mingchen saw that Bai Rong had lost one of her fingers, he chopped off his pinkie finger as well.

Both his parents and Su Zheng forced him to marry Su Wanning. In fact, everyone around him were forcing him to do that.

It was a tough battle of wits and courage for him that he fought hard to stay sane every day.

He was so afraid that he would see another finger missing from the woman's hand.

Gu Mingchen had told everyone that he would chop off one of his own fingers for each finger chopped off from Bai Rong's hand.

He fell into even deeper despair when he found out that his parents were behind Bai Rong's kidnapping.

While he was trapped in anguish and distress, he thought of an idea.

He was only willing to get engaged to Su Wanning if his parents freed Bai Rong. If Bai Rong did not manage to survive, he would end his life too.

At last, he managed to negotiate successfully.

Bai Rong was released after his engagement ceremony yesterday.

“Gu Mingchen, don’t look for me again.” Bai Rong said softly.

The man clenched his fist and the veins on his neck protruded.

He understood that if he continued seeing her, it would eventually land her in danger again.

He needed to become the strongest in order to protect her.

“OK.” Gu Mingchen choked as he forced the word out of his throat.

If he had a choice, he would never have agreed to that.



## Chapter 108

Bai Rong kept gazing ahead and did not move. A glint of sorrow flashed past her indifferent eyes that encompassed all the hurt and unjust she had experienced, and darkness ensued.

However, as Gu Mingchen was hugging her, he could not see her pain.

He released his embrace and looked at her. It was a look of love, helplessness, apology and pain.

“Sorry.” He said, choking up.

Bai Rong downcast her eyes and her long lashes covered the windows to her soul.

“I won’t forgive you.” She replied softly.

Gu Mingchen was stunned for a moment. It was a bitter pill to swallow.

He was willing to bear her hatred and grievances. “OK, my life is yours. You can claim it anytime.”

“Leave.” Bai Rong said unfeelingly.

The man creased his brows tightly and remained on the spot without moving a single step.

“Leave.” Bai Rong repeated. This time, she lifted her head and looked at him.

The look of her eyes was resolute and chilled to the bone.

There was nothing else Gu Mingchen could say. He turned around and left.

“Rong, did you see that? His left pinkie finger was also gone. He must have done it to himself for you.” Liu Yan said as she choked up.

How could Bai Rong not have seen it?

She noticed it the moment he walked in.

But what could she do?

She knew the both of them had experienced hell for the past seven days.

Gu Mingchen had successfully negotiated for an engagement instead of marriage.

She did not blame him as that was the best he could have done.

She could only blame the fact that the both of them were still too weak.

When Bai Rong said that she would not forgive Gu Mingchen, it also acted as a reminder for the both of them.

She was not willing to sacrifice their love in exchange for their safety, so she needed to become stronger.

“I have a plan for the future.” Bai Rong said with certainty.

“Is there really nothing you can do?” Liu Yan felt unjust for them. “I think Gu Mingchen really likes you.”

“There is.” Bai Rong said, and looked at Liu Yan with a look of determination in her eyes. “I am signing up for this year’s entrance examination to enter the CCDI. I will become an authoritative figure in the cabinet.”

She left the apartment after saying that.

Liu Yan followed her immediately as she was worried about her friend.

Bai Rong purchased a new phone and went through some procedures at the telco in order to use back the same phone number.

After everything was done, she called Xing Bachuan. “I’m Bai Rong. Have you decided?”

“Why didn’t you answer when I called you previously?” Xing Bachuan raised his voice and reprimanded his daughter.

“Whether I answered or not wouldn’t have impacted your decision. So, what is your answer?” Bai Rong replied coldly.

“Let’s meet up to talk. Where are you now? I have some time in the afternoon.” The man said.

“We can just meet at your office, dad.” Bai Rong said and hung up.

Liu Yan looked at her friend worriedly.

She was aware that Bai Rong had a mother who was mentally ill and was staying at the psychiatric hospital.

She also knew that Bai Rong did not share a good relationship with her dad. Unless Bai Rong brought it up on her own accord, she would never probe.

“Rong, what are you intending to do? Don’t scare me. If you need my help, feel free to say. You are my best friend and I will brave any storm for you.” Liu Yan was very worried.

“I will be going back to that home. Yan, thank you, I am alright. I already said that things can only get better from now onward.” Bai Rong smiled faintly.

She looked beautiful when she smiled, but Liu Yan knew that there was a hole in her heart.

And it could only be filled by Gu Mingchen.

“I can go back with you. If you are bullied, I will help you.” Liu Yan offered as she patted her chest.

“If someone accompanies me, it will only show that I am weak. I will be invincible even if it’s only myself. Don’t worry, if I need any help, I will definitely let you know.” Bai Rong took Liu Yan’s hand in hers.

Only then Liu Yan realized that Bai Rong’s hands were freezing.

She held on tightly to her friend's hands, hoping to transmit some warmth to her.

Just then, Bai Rong's phone started to ping with the previously undelivered messages. She glanced through them and they were from Liu Yan, Xing Bachuan, Su Xuyan and Gu Mingchen.

When she saw Gu Mingchen's name, a flicker of pain flashed in her eyes.

Without opening any of those messages, she deleted all of them. She did not bother to return their calls as well.

Bai Rong specially made herself up to meet Xing Bachuan. She bunned up her hair and it gave her a very professional look.

Liu Yan, who was leaning against the door, looked at her friend.

She noticed that Bai Rong seemed like a completely different person.

In the past, she used to be cool, nonchalant and led a simple lifestyle.

While the others fooled around, she would at most watch on, and sometimes, let out a quiet smile.

Bai Rong was peaceful and serene. Even after getting hurt by Su Xuyan, she just protected herself like how a porcupine would, shielding herself with quills from the outside.

However, the woman she had become was bodacious and as sharp as a dagger that could cut through anything. Even her gaze was piercing.

“It’s good to fight for what you deserve, but don’t let yourself get hurt.” Liu Yan said in concern.

Bai Rong looked at her own reflection in the mirror.

“I don’t want to hurt them. I will only get what I want.” She said resolutely.

“Is Gu Mingchen what you want?” Liu Yan asked knowingly.

Bai Rong took a side glance at her friend.

“Actually, we would only know our heart’s greatest desires when life is unfair to us. At least, I have a direction to work towards. Don’t worry about me, I will be very well. I have nothing to lose, remember?” Bai Rong beamed.

Liu Yan looked at the space where Bai Rong’s pinkie finger used to occupy.

Needless to say, Bai Rong must have gone through inhumane treatment.

“Anyway, I just want you to know that I am always by your side, supporting you.” Liu Yan said with her eyes reddened.

Bai Rong nodded her head.

She was grateful to those people for taking Gu Mingchen away from her. That was the only way she could become invincible.

She took a cab to Xing Bachuan's office. Bai Rong approached the reception with a smile when she reached.

"Hi, my name is Bai Rong. I have an appointment with Governor Xing." The woman said steadily.

"OK. Let me check." The receptionist proceeded to call Xing Bachuan's secretary.

Shortly after, his secretary arrived at the lobby to receive Bai Rong.

"The Governor has been waiting for you." She said respectfully.

From the secretary's tone, Bai Rong already knew what Xing Bachuan's final decision was.

She followed the secretary and walked towards the elevator.

When the elevator opened, Su Xuyan walked out and was shocked to see Bai Rong.

"Where have you been? I have been calling you these few days but there was no answer. You went back on your word." Su Xuyan looked at Bai Rong coldly.

"I am sorry, things happened that were not within my control. If Mr. Su doesn't mind waiting for me for a while, I will buy you coffee later." Bai Rong said flatly.

Su Xuyan felt that there was a subtle change in her.

“Are you aware that Gu Mingchen and Su Wanning got engaged?” Su Xuyan pressed on.

“I have got to be living under a rock to not know about such big news.” Bai Rong said unemotionally.

Suddenly, Su Xuyan felt this wasn't the Bai Rong he knew anymore.

## **Chapter 109**

His gaze landed on her injured hand. Taking her hands in his, the man's pupils constricted as he blurted in shock, “What happened to your hand? Where's your pinky?”

Bai Rong withdrew her hand calmly, “Paid for a mistake of mine. A pinky for waking me up towards the harsh reality; that's worth it.”

“Was it Gu Tianhang? Su Zheng? Or Su Wanning? Who did it?” Su Xuyan guessed.

“No matter who did it, what's done cannot be undone. I have matters to settle now. We'll talk later.” Bai Rong walked past Su Xuyan and entered the lift.

As the lift closed before him, an expression of pain flashed across his usually cunning eyes.



He was married to Bai Rong for the past 3 years. At that time, all he could think of were different ways to harm her and pain her. Seeing her falling in despair gave him an elated sense of ecstasy, all because she was Xing Bachuan's daughter.

But now, seeing how badly wounded she was, vexation began to surge within him.

He wanted to catch the culprit behind her injuries and chop off all ten of that person's fingers.

To Su Xuyan, he was the only one with the right to do anything towards Bai Rong.

On the other hand, Bai Rong had arrived at Xing Bachuan's office.

The man glared at his daughter with his hostile gaze while remaining on his seat and nudged at the seat opposite him with his chin.

Bai Rong went over to her seat coolly and sat across her father.

"So, you're playing psychological warfare with me huh?" Xing Bachuan interrogated broodingly as he tried to read his daughter's face.

Bai Rong smiled back bitterly. She was supposed to answer her father in two days' time, but she happened to be kidnapped this week.

Throughout the two days, Xing Bachuan had guessed and calculated all sorts of possibilities and the ways to counter them. After all, he had no intention to recognize this illegitimate daughter of his.

But then, Bai Rong disappeared all of a sudden. No one could contact her, and no one knew where she was.

Being the suspicious man he was, Xing Bachuan was very worried that his daughter would end up working with his rivals.

The politician had many rivals throughout his career, hence he turned to spend most of his time figuring out who Bai Rong would likely go over to, and the possible outcomes of it.

His mind had run over so many types of scenarios and possibilities, especially when he recalled all his wrongdoings in the past. All these mind-boggling thoughts haunted him badly as fear and insecurity slowly ate up on him.

He had suffered from insomnia throughout those 7 days Bai Rong was missing.

After so many rounds of consideration, Xing Bachuan had finally reached the conclusion to have a strong partner rather than having a strong enemy.

“Then what’s the result of the battles in your mind?” Bai Rong asked back instead.

“I want to know your intentions of coming back. How do I know that you’ll not harm me, since I’m the one who harmed your mother last time?” Xing Bachuan stared at his daughter defensively.

“Bai Bing is my mother, and you’re my father. Both of you are my family. You may have harmed her, but she harmed me before too. If it weren’t for our neighbor, I would be murdered by Bai Bing back then. Life has been tough for me throughout the past few years. I’m crushed by the

pressure from my work, my life, and also my unhappy marriage. I could hardly breathe under so much pressure! That's why I crave for a better life. After much thinking, you're the only one who can provide me that, so why will I harm you? I'm not foolish. Harming you is equivalent to harming myself. Not only will I not harm you, I will even try my best to help you. Dad, Jinnian is your daughter. So am I." Bai Rong's tone softened in the end.

"Fine." Xing Bachuan was convinced now. "Your Aunt Chang has agreed to let you come back. But if you want to work in the CCDI then you have to pass the written test yourself. As for the face-to-face interview, I'll put in a good word for you."

"I will do my best to win this position." Bai Rong stood up to take her leave.

"I'm warning you; don't try to play tricks with me. I can provide you a good life, but I can destroy it as well." Xing Bachuan warned.

"I'm going back to pack now. See you tonight, dad." Bai Rong turned her back on her father coldly.

When she came out of the lift, she was surprised to see Su Xuyan still waiting for her. The girl approached him incredulously.

"Who chopped off your finger?" Su Xuyan asked sternly.

Bai Rong looked up at her serious looking ex-husband. She could see her reflection in his dark pupils.

"You want to avenge for me?" Bai Rong asked back.

Su Xuyan curled his lips into a dangerous smirk. "What do you think? No one can simply touch a single hair of my ex-wife."

"Heh!" Bai Rong scoffed. She found it hard to believe that a man like him would avenge for her. Those were just sweet words to trick those naïve little girls. Unfortunately for him, she no longer belonged to that category.

"Su Wanning." Bai Rong spat out the name and turned towards the main door.

"Didn't you promise to treat me to a cup of coffee?" Su Xuyan yelled at her departing figure.

However, Bai Rong did not turn around to answer him.

Su Xuyan ran up to her and grabbed her arms in frustration. "You owe me 6 hours now. I demand that you have coffee with me."

"Since when did I owe you 6 hours?" Bai Rong crossed her arms in reply.

The man frowned at her words; his eyes filled with displeasure. "Bai Rong, what do you mean by that? Are you trying to be forgetful?"

"Mr. Su, I don't think I want to obey our verbal agreement now. I suddenly found it unnecessary for me to do so." Bai Rong replied lazily.

"Aren't you afraid that I'll distribute Liu Yan's video?" Su Xuyan warned as he eyed her with his sharp gaze.

Bai Rong merely shrugged in response.

“Do it then. Distribute to anywhere you want. Who knows if Liu Yan will end up as Mr. Shen’s wife? What a great honor for me to have a friend who’s the daughter-in-law of the commander-in-chief.” Bai Rong grinned proudly instead.

“Shen Yiyao flirted with many women out there. You really want to push your friend into such hell?” Su Xuyan stared at Bai Rong anxiously. To him, Bai Rong was like a thorny rose. Beautiful and alluring, yet cuttngly edgy.

“And you think other men are not bearers of living hell?” Bai Rong retorted.

“Instead of going after men whose hearts always change with time, why not go after the unchanging power of control? You’re free to distribute the video.” Bai Rong said while getting closer to Su Xuyan.

The man couldn’t help but back off slightly from her. She was too cutting and thorny for him to be near her.

“Yan is a person who greatly detest evildoers. She may let you go if she ends up having a good life. However...” Bai Rong’s gaze turned sharp as she locked eyes with her ex-husband’s, “If her life turns out to be a disaster.... the commander-in-chief only has one son. Hence Liu Yan will be the First Lady of the nation sooner or later. Guess how she will revenge against you for all your wrongdoings?”

Su Xuyan went quiet at her words. He was no stranger to his ex-wife’s eloquence. Back then, he had always been greatly vexed and rendered speechless by her arguments.

But the Bai Rong before him now was not just eloquent. Despite her sharp and edgy words, the girl's every gaze, expression and movement were mysteriously attractive and alluring to him now. The man was already drowned in her glistening orbs with no way to save himself.

Seeing that her ex-husband was not going to speak further, the girl turned around to leave. "I wish you good luck, Mr. Su."

Su Xuyan stood rooted to the ground as the girl left. What should he do now? He was already regretting their divorce.

Bai Rong returned to Liu Yan's house. The girl was still sitting on her sofa while staring ahead blankly.

The moment she saw her friend, the girl stood up and looked at Bai Rong worriedly.

Bai Rong was betting that Su Xuyan would not distribute Liu Yan's recording. However, she had no idea what the outcome would be and how it would affect Liu Yan later on. She must stay away from her friend now to avoid getting her into trouble.

"I'm leaving." Bai Rong uttered.

With reddened eyes, Liu Yan nodded. "Please be fine."

## Chapter 110

Dragging her luggage, Bai Rong had arrived at Xing Bachuan's house. The main door was tightly closed. The girl proceeded to knock on it.

A maid came over to open the door, only to see Bai Rong standing outside. The maid looked at her awkwardly before turning around to report respectfully, "Madam, Young Mistress. Ms. Bai is here."

"Close the door. Let her come in from the back door." Xing Jinnian replied coldly.

"OK." The maid turned to Bai Rong apologetically. "I'm sorry. Young Mistress wants you to come in from the back door."

Once she finished her orders, the maid closed the door immediately.

Bai Rong's lips curled in disdain. She had expected this before she arrived. However, coming back to the Xing Family was just the first of her plans. She must bear the unbearable in order to achieve the impossible.

Bai Rong dragged her luggage all the way to the back door obediently. The loud sounds of friction of the wheels on the rough ground had covered the sound of her footsteps. However, the girl was totally at peace and not the least bit annoyed.

Once again, she knocked on the back door. This time, it was the butler who opened the door.

The girl carried her luggage in and went past the garden to the back entrance of the villa.

Xing Jinnian was already there with her arms crossed and lips curled. "I'm sorry, we don't welcome you. If by all means you must stay here, you can sleep at the storeroom behind you."

"Is dad aware about this arrangement?" Bai Rong asked icily.

"Don't try to threaten me with dad. His success was all thanks to grandma's support. And I'm sorry to say that you're not even related to her at all to threaten me." Xing Jinnian replied smugly.

Bai Rong fished out her phone and took a picture of the storeroom. Then, she sent the picture to Xing Bachuan.

Her father called back immediately. "What do you mean by this?"

"Nian said I'm going to live in that storeroom from now on. Was it your idea?" Bai Rong asked directly.

"Rong, you should know by now that our family doesn't welcome you. Must you force yourself into our place?" Xing Bachuan replied out of frustration.

"I want to help you. If I were to stay elsewhere, I'm afraid that you'll forget about me. I think we had a pleasant conversation this afternoon. Do you think it'll be appropriate to let your own daughter stay in a storeroom? For me it's fine, since I even lived under the bridge before. But I wonder how your friends and colleagues will think about this?" The smart girl retorted steadily.

Xing Bachuan was really frightened by Bai Rong's reminder.



“I’ll call them now.” The man hung up on her.

Bai Rong curled her lips smugly in turn.

Xing Jinnian was furious at the call, “Bai Rong, what’re you trying to do? You have no place in this house!” Xing Jinnian reprimanded in disgust.

“Status and place are earned, not given out for free. I’m back now, Xing Jinnian. Don’t tell me you’re afraid?” Bai Rong retorted.

“What should I be afraid of? I have the love of my parents. Oh, and also a boyfriend, who was your ex-husband. He too loves me wholeheartedly. Now that I’m working with him, I get to see him everyday and every moment I wish. I’m basically showered with all the happiness in this world.” Xing Jinnian replied, showing off her perfect life.

“Aren’t you afraid that Su Xuyan may get tired of you? From what I know of him, he never sticks to a woman for long.” Bai Rong reminded her stepsister.

“That’s to other mediocre women. All these while, Xuyan has been waiting for me. He told me that I’m the only woman he loves and that he had never touched you at all.” Xing Jinnian retorted arrogantly.

“Then I hope you can hold on to the same confidence you have now for as long as you can.” Bai Rong replied flatly and looked behind her stepsister.

Chang Ruyan walked towards them, her tone as disgusting as her daughter’s. “Come in. Bachuan has called and asked me to arrange a proper room for you.”

“Mum! Didn’t we discuss and decide to give her that storeroom?” Xing Jinnian stomped her feet in frustration.

“Enough of that. It’s your father’s orders. We have no say against that.” Chang Ruyan turned around with a downcast expression.

With her luggage, Bai Rong walked past her stepsister and followed her stepmother.

“Let me remind you something. The rooms upstairs belong to Bachuan, me and Nian. You’re not allowed to go up the second floor.” Chang Ruyan said while opening the door of a room at the very end. “This is your room then.”

“Mum, isn’t this room haunted?” Xing Jinnian said on purpose while winking at her mother.

Bai Rong curled her lips at her stepsister’s stupid statement. Xing Bachuan would never continue staying in this villa if any of its rooms was haunted. She was very clear of Xing Jinnian’s sinister intentions.

“Well, someone is hell-bent on squeezing in the house, so we couldn’t do anything about it.” Chang Ruyan replied, her tone full of despise.

Bai Rong ignored them and entered the room before closing the door. After that, she eyed the door lock, trying to estimate its measurements. Since she was going to stay in this room, she wouldn’t want anyone to enter her room freely. She must change her lock then.

Other than the lock, those furniture in the room like bedsheets, blankets and pillows, all had to be changed.

After putting down her luggage, the girl went out to do her shopping.

Xing Jinnian stared at her stepsister maliciously. "Mum, why is dad letting her stay with us? She is not even part of our family."

"You think your dad wants her to stay here? That girl happened to know some top secret of your father and threatened him with it. Hence, he has no choice but to let her in. Anyway, we can just give her a cold shoulder and ignore her presence." Chang Ruyan patted her daughter's hands as she comforted her.

"Ignore her? No, I can't let her get away so easily! I plan to invite Xuyan to our house and let him stay the night." The girl requested while shaking her mother's hands with a pouty expression.

"Oh my dear, how can you simply let a man stay the night with you? Anyway, since you and Xuyan have slept together, both of you should consider fixing the date for your marriage. You're not pregnant, right?" Chang Ruyan glanced at Xing Jinnian's tummy.

"No. Then... help me to persuade Xuyan at dinner later. Just the right chance to upset Bai Rong." Xing Jinnian said with a mean smile.

Bai Rong had bought a lot of furniture, which was sent to her place by a lorry.

It happened that Su Xuyan had arrived at the same time when she returned to Xing Bachuan's home from her shopping.

Their eyes met across the distance. Su Xuyan was looking at his ex-wife curiously, while Bai Rong merely averted her gaze emotionlessly, as though he was just a stranger.

The workmen moved all her new furniture into the room and even helped her change the lock.

“I’ve no idea why she is here, but now she’s already taking this place as her own home. What a thick skin she has.” Xing Jinnian muttered loudly.

After sending off the workmen, Bai Rong went back to her new room.

“What a weird lady. I’m seriously worried that she will get up and stab us when we’re asleep at night. I’m really scared, Mum. You kept all the keys with you, right? Remember to lock the door before bedtime.” Xing Jinnian said cautiously.

“Yes, all safe with me. Let me call your dad and ask him to come back for dinner.” Chang Ruyan went off to call her husband.

From her room, Bai Rong side-eyed Xing Jinnian with a wicked smile, like a hunter in the dark waiting to pounce on her prey.

Xing Jinnian felt her heart drop in fear. She must think of a way to get rid of her stepsister.

Bai Rong returned to her room and switched on her laptop. After some research on the internet, she finally found the current address of that person...