

Chapter 221

However, Gu Mingchen didn't take the hint.

Bai Rong didn't answer his question directly. Instead, she gestured toward the couple.

Furrowing his eyebrows slightly, he pulled Bai Rong closer to him and was about to kiss her when she moved away from him. "No. That was not what I meant."

"Then what do you mean?" asked Gu Mingchen.

"Do you know why it's easier for university students to show physical affection in public?" asked Bai Rong.

She's evading my question!

Gu Mingchen's expression turned cold. "Spill."

Irritated by her response, he gave a curt reply.

Bai Rong ignored his gloomy face and proceeded to analyze the couple's public display of affection professionally. "Firstly, it's because of the atmosphere. University students are no strangers to cuddling and kissing in public, so they don't find these behaviors embarrassing at all.

"The second factor is their age. Young adults get turned on easily because of their hormones, and they are influenced by their primitive impulses, of which sexual impulse is the strongest.

"Thirdly, they are young and inexperienced. They haven't experienced major setbacks in life, so they don't have the foresight of consequences. At the moment, they simply don't care about how others view them, so they just do whatever they want."

"Why are you telling me this? Is this relevant to me?" Gu Mingchen was sulking as he glared at her in subtle anger.

Without uttering a word, Bai Rong looked into his eyes.

Gu Mingchen actually knew what she was trying to tell him. "Bai Rong, I realized you always speak in a subtle way so that I have to guess the meaning behind your words."

Bai Rong smiled slightly. "You get what I'm saying, don't you? Using euphemism can avoid unnecessary conflicts."

He pressed the back of her head and kissed her.

To his surprise, she didn't resist this time.

Pressing his mouth to hers, Gu Mingchen dipped his tongue past her lips, invading her mouth in a way that she could never have imagined.

When the lady boss approached their table and served their dishes, he finally let go of Bai Rong, whose face was flushing red by then.

Gu Mingchen curled his lips into a smirk. “Firstly, the atmosphere is good indeed. Secondly, age doesn’t really matter when it comes to sexual impulses. The partner matters instead. Thirdly, kissing you was my deliberate decision.”

Hearing his words, Bai Rong turned her face away. She was still overwhelmed by his passionate kiss. For a moment, she had the feeling of first love, and she couldn’t focus on anything else but Gu Mingchen. Her face flushed red as she recalled their kiss in public.

However, it wasn’t something unusual to the lady boss. She smiled at Bai Rong. “Here are your drinks. Please enjoy your pot-roast chicken and braised pork with preserved vegetables. It’ll take another twenty minutes to prepare the other two dishes. They’ll be served in a while.”

“Thank you,” said Bai Rong.

Gu Mingchen took the drinks over and poured some into her glass. “How did you feel when I kissed you?”

Bai Rong lowered her head without answering him.

Too shy to talk about it, she took a big sip from her glass.

“It felt good to me. I enjoyed it very much.” Gu Mingchen lifted his glass and took a sip.

Bai Rong raised her head and looked at him.

Right then, he was looking at her affectionately. His gentle gaze was filled with fondness. She couldn't help but stare into his dark eyes, unable to avert her gaze.

Suddenly, the crowd cheered loudly.

Feeling awkward, Bai Rong quickly looked away from him and turned to the television, which showed the Lakers scoring one point.

“Do you like watching basketball games?” Gu Mingchen asked.

“I watched a few games back when I stayed in the United States,” Bai Rong casually replied while focusing on the television.

“Which team is your favorite?” Gu Mingchen asked.

“Well, I don't really have one. I watched the game between the Lakers and the Clippers. The Lakers won. I just wanted to feel the atmosphere of watching the live game and observe the players' expressions,” Bai Rong explained.

“For assignments? Then did you make any discoveries after watching the game?” Gu Mingchen probed.

Bai Rong cast a smile and looked at him. "I did. I wrote and published a paper. Not only was I paid well, but my lecturer also praised me for the good work. After that, I received many job offers and earned a killing."

Gu Mingchen was mesmerized as a smile of confidence crept up her face, which lit up his mood instantly. "How did you earn from that? I'm curious," he asked.

"Actually, that has pretty much to do with a country's openness and culture. In our country, many people still have a myopic attitude toward mental illnesses. Some people are aware of their poor mental health, but they don't take the initiative to receive treatment. The same goes for those who suffer from depression.

"On the other hand, it's very common to consult a psychologist in foreign countries, so you can find a lot of psychological clinics there. After my paper was published, many marketing companies invited me to give talks on microexpressions and consumer behaviors.

"After I built up my reputation, FBI invited me to be their consultant. My reputation soared after I helped them solve a few cold cases. Soon after, many reputable figures came to me," Bai Rong briefly introduced her background.

"You're a very capable woman. You deserve what you've got," said Gu Mingchen. Meanwhile, a sense of regret filled his heart. How he wished he was there throughout her exciting journey.

He took a bite out of the braised pork.

Bai Rong scrutinized his expression, yet she couldn't tell whether he liked the taste.

Psychological theories were applicable to the majority of people but not everyone. Some people were just too difficult to understand.

Bai Rong lowered her head to continue eating. Perhaps because she hadn't had a proper meal in the past few days or she was nostalgic for the familiar taste, she finished a bowl of rice before the other dishes were served.

She then finished another bowl of rice after all the dishes were served.

Happy to see her enjoying the meal, Gu Mingchen also finished two big bowls of rice.

"I saw many hotels and motels along the way. Let's stay here tonight." Gu Mingchen wasn't asking.

Bai Rong would've choked on the rice upon hearing that if she hadn't finished eating. "Are we staying here?"

"I'm tired." Gu Mingchen gave a direct reply.

"I can drive if you don't mind," Bai Rong said tentatively.

"Sitting in the car is tiring too."

Bai Rong was speechless at his words.

It was Saturday, so there were many rooms available.

Gu Mingchen took her to a motel.

At the reception desk, he displayed his identity card instead of his military ID.

The lady at the reception desk took a look at his identity card, then at his face.

After that, she looked at Bai Rong's identity card and cast a glance at her. The receptionist seemed puzzled, but she quickly finished the check-in procedure and handed them the key.

"Her expression seemed a bit weird. What's wrong?" Gu Mingchen asked.

"Well, she knew we're not students. I guess she was having some weird thoughts," Bai Rong said.

"What do you mean?" Gu Mingchen stared at her. He pretended to be calm but was actually feeling guilty.

Was it that obvious?

"She might think that we're having an affair," Bai Rong explained.

She then stepped into the elevator.

Gu Mingchen frowned slightly as he held Bai Rong's waist and pulled her closer. "Can't we be one of the students' parents?"

After all, they were lawful husband and wife, so it was a matter of course that he wanted her.

Bai Rong chuckled. "We're too young to be the parents of a university student."

"A student's elder brother and sister-in-law then. Is this all right?"

"The address on my identity card's not far from here, yet we're staying here in a motel instead of heading home, so of course she would get the wrong idea."

Gu Mingchen turned around and pressed her body against the wall. "Then let's do something, shall we?"

"My wounds haven't recovered yet," Bai Rong rejected tactfully.

"I won't hurt you," Gu Mingchen said in his deep voice.

Those words brought a blush to Bai Rong's face, which spread to her ears.

Without waiting for her response, Gu Mingchen carried her in his arms swiftly before he entered the room and went straight to the bathroom.

"The wounds have already scarred. I can do it myself." Bai Rong struggled to get on her feet.

"It's not like I haven't seen you naked before. Let me help you. Can you take a bath?" Gu Mingchen put her down.

Bai Rong shook her head. "I'd better not take a bath before the scar falls off. Just a quick shower will do."

"Alright." Gu Mingchen proceeded to take off her clothes.

Most of her wounds had scarred, except the one on her chest.

He caressed the deep wound. "How did you get hurt?"

"When I found out that you went to see Hailan, I was so pissed that I smashed everything in your room. Then I accidentally tripped and fell right onto the glass shards. But I guess I got what I deserved," Bai Rong burst into chuckles and mocked herself.

However, her heart still ached when she recalled the incident.

She had been in a romantic relationship twice, but things didn't end well both times. Thus, she was very paranoid due to her lack of self-confidence, and she knew she was the problem.

"No. I was at fault too. I was shocked when I found out that Hailan was still alive, so I went to see her. But I realized that she changed a lot. She had been imprisoned by the enemy for several years, and half of her body was severely burned. She has been receiving treatment after she was rescued, but her mental condition was pretty unstable.

"I was afraid that you would get mad at me, so I kept it from you. Besides, Hailan was in bad shape and could flip out at any time, so I couldn't leave before she fell asleep. And honestly, I didn't know that you hurt yourself because of me. I'm sorry," Gu Mingchen sincerely apologized to Bai Rong.

Upon hearing that, her eyes reddened slightly.

"I should feel relieved to know that Hailan's still alive," Bai Rong said.

"What?" Gu Mingchen was confused.

She just smiled at him, then put her arms around his neck and kissed him with her soft lips.

It was rare that she took the initiative to be intimate with him.

Gu Mingchen grabbed her waist and pressed her body against his. As he deepened the kiss, their breathing quickened.

While they hugged each other tightly, she could feel his body responding to her.

With her eyes closed, Bai Rong drew a deep, staggered breath in response to the wave of heat she felt flushing through her. Only when she was almost out of breath did he finally loosen his hug.

After they took a shower together, he carried her to the bed.

Bai Rong thought he would be rough as usual since he was a domineering man and always did things the way he wanted.

However, he was different this time, gently placing his hand on her knee.

Feeling shy, Bai Rong turned her face away. She had butterflies in her stomach when he touched her. Unwittingly, she clenched her hands into fists.

Gu Mingchen then kissed her wound.

When Bai Rong turned to look at him, Gu Mingchen gave her a soft smile while caressing her cheek. "I don't know how you fell in love with me. I may be domineering and bossy, but I promise I'll always listen to you and take all your words to heart. I'll also try my best to fulfill your needs. You can pick a bone with me or throw tantrums all you want, but there's no way I'll divorce you because we're married. Do you understand?"

Hearing his words, Bai Rong's eyes glistened with tears.

He had once said that to her before he lost his memory.

Right then, the man before her overlapped with the man in her memories whom she loved.

“Thank you for tolerating me despite my stubbornness,” she said with her choking voice.

Gu Mingchen gently kissed her. “I should thank you for giving me a chance.”

He was referring to their marriage.

However, Bai Rong didn't feel the same way about her destiny. After all, she had been through a lot. Hence, she held on tightly to every bit of happiness in her life.

Women were such conflicting creatures.

Eventually, her overflowing emotions won the battle against her rational mind.

As he began moving downward, his kisses landed on her clavicle, wound, and abdomen before continuing down south.

It had been a while since they had intercourse, so she was extremely sensitive.

As soon as he touched her, she got turned on and unwittingly pushed his shoulders. With her hands intertwined with his, he deepened the kiss.

The room was filled with an air of romance.

Gu Mingchen took it slow and patiently waited for her to be ready.

Afraid that he might hurt her wound, he had her sit on him and supported her with his arms.

At first, he wanted to ejaculate inside as he wanted to have a child of their own.

When Bai Rong sensed his intention, she quickly pushed him away.

Gu Mingchen was disappointed with her rejection. "What's wrong?"

"We're not using any contraceptives." Seeing his dimmed eyes, Bai Rong explained, "I'm taking medication, so it's not a good time for me to be pregnant now because the baby may be born with birth defects."

Hearing her words, Gu Mingchen finally understood the reason behind her actions. He wanted a child so badly that he didn't think it through.

After that, he kissed her on her lips and laid her down on the bed. He hugged her waist with one hand while propping his head with the other, gazing at her affectionately.

Bai Rong felt uneasy at the intense passion in his eyes.

Recalling what they did just now, an indescribable feeling surged within her.

"Are you heading back to the military base tomorrow morning?" Bai Rong changed the topic.

“No. I have a meeting in the evening. I will depart to the military base after lunch.”

“I see. Then I’ll sleep first. I’m getting sleepy.” Bai Rong turned her back to him and closed her eyes.

Without saying anything, he hugged her from behind and pulled her closer.

Right then, his phone rang.

Seeing that it was from Song Xiyu, he rejected the call straightaway.

Lieutenant Song called him up again, but he didn’t intend to answer the call since he knew what it was about.

Bai Rong turned to look at him.

Just when Gu Mingchen was about to mute his phone, the orderly called him.

“It’s okay. Just answer the call,” Bai Rong said softly.

With that, Gu Mingchen answered the call.

“Chief, Zhou Hailan tried to kill herself,” the orderly reported.

“Has she been sent to the hospital?”

“Yes. But she’s emotionally unstable, and she wants to see you.”

Gu Mingchen frowned upon hearing that. “There’s nothing I can do for her.”

Bai Rong was moved when she heard his rejection because she knew that he really took her words to heart, and that was more than enough for her.

She did not want him to turn into a merciless man because of her.

“Mingchen, you can go. It’s okay,” Bai Rong said.

Puzzled, Gu Mingchen stared at her silently.

With a smile, Bai Rong caressed his face. “I trust you.”

Gu Mingchen held her hand tightly. Her trust strengthened his determination to cherish her, and he didn’t want to see the woman he loved get hurt anymore.

“Let’s go together.”

Bai Rong followed Gu Mingchen out of the room. When they were checking out at the reception desk, the receptionist shot them a weird glance again.

Bai Rong's face flushed in an instant as she hurriedly left the hotel.

The napkins were scattered all over the room, but she didn't have time to clean it up before they left. Because of that, she felt guilty as though she had done something wrong although she hadn't.

She tried to calm herself down. We are husband and wife, so there isn't anything wrong with what we did, right?

"We're a married couple," explained Gu Mingchen before he walked away from the reception desk.

The receptionist was speechless.

Having said that, Gu Mingchen walked toward the car.

He opened the passenger side door for Bai Rong and closed it once she got in.

Then, he walked to the other side of the car and got in the driver's seat.

Seeing that Bai Rong had already fastened her seat belt, Gu Mingchen drove away.

Bai Rong stared at him as she asked, "Can you tell me more about Hailan? I'm trying to come up with an effective treatment for her."

"She's an orphan who joined the military at a very young age. Not only was she hard-working, but her performance was also very outstanding. We carried out a few missions together, which were all completed successfully.

"A few years ago, we received a mission to rescue a prominent politician, but there was a rat among us. As a result, eight of us died in the mission while the politician, Hailan, and I were trapped in a fire. In the end, she helped the two of us to get out first.

"I went back for her after I brought the politician to a safe place. But then, everything in the building was burnt into ashes. All I found there was a body with a ring on its finger. It was the ring I gave her.

"But it turned out that she wasn't dead but was kidnapped by the enemy instead, and they tortured her in an inhumane way. Because of that, she was no longer her usual self when she was rescued. She broke down due to all her suffering. Since then, she has been receiving treatment in the laboratory," Gu Mingchen briefly told her about Hailan.

However, Bai Rong had already known all that.

That was not what she was asking about.

“Hailan has been locked up and treated for three years. Why is she only looking for you now?” Bai Rong expressed her doubt.

“She has just returned to her normal state. Coincidentally, a fire broke out in the laboratory, so she made her escape in the midst of chaos,” Gu Mingchen explained.

Upon hearing that, Bai Rong fell silent.

She knew Xia He, one of their comrades who carried out the mission with them and also the so-called spy Gu Mingchen mentioned earlier.

The reason Gu Mingchen suspected Xia He was that he and she were the only survivors.

However, Bai Rong had a gut feeling that Xia He was not the spy.

Now that there are three survivors, could it be that Hailan was the spy instead?

But Bai Rong didn't voice out her thought.

If she did, the others would think that she was only saying that out of jealousy. Besides, it was just her baseless assumption, so no one would believe her.

After making a call to confirm that Hailan was sent to the hospital at the military base, Gu Mingchen headed there with Bai Rong.

When they arrived at the ward, Hailan had fallen asleep. Her wrists were wrapped with bandages, and she was put on an intravenous drip.

Song Xiyu and two nurses were taking care of her.

When Song Xiyu saw Bai Rong, her face darkened as she turned to Gu Mingchen. “Hailan attempted to take her own life because you didn’t go back to her, and now you’re bringing Bai Rong here? Aren’t you afraid that Hailan might break down again?”

“Bai Rong is my wife, and she’s a psychologist. So she can help Hailan,” Gu Mingchen explained.

“Do you think she wants to see Bai Rong? I don’t trust her. You should’ve come alone,” Song Xiyu said harshly.

Gu Mingchen’s face turned grim upon hearing that. “So are you saying that I should just do nothing and take care of Hailan for the rest of my life? Do you seriously want that?” he retorted.

Song Xiyu paused for a few seconds before she turned to Bai Rong. “Hailan is emotionally unstable now. Please leave, Ms. Bai.”

From the fact that she addressed Bai Rong as Ms. Bai, it was obvious that she didn’t recognize the latter as her daughter-in-law.

Hearing that, Bai Rong decided to address Song Xiyu formally too.

“Mrs. Gu, may I know why she’s emotionally unstable?” Bai Rong asked calmly.

Song Xiyu was pissed by her question. "You should know that better than anyone else. She loves Mingchen with all her heart, yet you purposely came over with him. Are you trying to break her? You just want to see her suffer, don't you?"

"So, are you saying that I should leave Mingchen and let the two of them be together?" Bai Rong asked.

Song Xiyu furrowed her eyebrows and kept silent.

Curling her lips into a smirk, Bai Rong continued with sarcasm.

"When kids ask for sweets, they make a scene so that their parents give them what they want. If that's the case, kids can get sweets whenever they want. All they need to do is throw a tantrum. However, they'll suffer from a toothache because of all the sweets they get from their parents.

"As an adult, we should be able to judge rationally before making decisions. Throwing a tantrum or committing suicide won't be able to solve any problems. These behaviors only serve to worsen the situation. In the end, the situation will get out of control, and there will be no winner," Bai Rong analyzed objectively.

Song Xiyu scowled. "You're such a cruel woman! You made my son turn his back on Hailan. If anything bad happens to Hailan, Mingchen will feel guilty until his last breath. Bai Rong, if you truly love Mingchen, you should let him go. Stop putting him in a tight spot!"

Right then, Gu Mingchen interrupted Song Xiyu, "You are the one who put me in a tight spot, not her." He held Bai Rong's hand tightly as he said that.

Song Xiyu stared at Gu Mingchen in shock. "Hailan would've been dead if I hadn't saved her. How could you forget what she did for you? Didn't I educate you that we must appreciate people who have helped us?"

"I'm sorry, but I don't love Hailan. Besides, I don't want to let Bai Rong down," Gu Mingchen replied indifferently.

Bai Rong's heart pounded rapidly upon hearing his words. Tears slowly welled up in her eyes.

She held his hand tightly. "We're trying to explore a more effective way to help Hailan."

"To me, the only effective cure for Hailan's condition is Mingchen. Therefore, Mingchen, you should come back to Hailan and take care of her if you really mean to help her."

"I'm sorry. Mingchen and I are married, and divorce is not an option for a military marriage. You should know that better than anyone else," answered Bai Rong firmly.

"It can be arranged. If you agree to divorce each other, I'll sort things out."

"I'll never divorce her," Gu Mingchen replied.

Song Xiyu blocked the entrance of the ward. "Hailan is so pitiful. She lost her mind when she couldn't find you and has only recovered now. Mingchen, I'm not asking you to be sympathetic to her, but at least don't hurt her."

"We're not hurting her. On the contrary, we're trying to help her," Bai Rong answered.

“But what you’re doing is hurting her. Please leave now. We’ll discuss further when she wakes up,” Song Xiyu said in an icy tone.

Gu Mingchen lowered his gaze and looked at Bai Rong.

The latter gave a nod and said, “We should leave first.”

Song Xiyu clenched her fists as she glared at Bai Rong with rage.

After he nodded in agreement, Gu Mingchen left the ward with Bai Rong.

Once they had gotten into the car, he comforted her, “You don’t have to mind my mom’s attitude. We haven’t been on good terms for the past three years.”

“It’s alright. I understand her because I’ve seen her dark side. Not only does she dislike me, but she also fears me. Besides, she doesn’t understand why she can’t make me do as she says nowadays, unlike how she had me under her thumb three years ago. Your mom’s not mean. She just loves you so much, so it’s only natural that she worries about your future,” Bai Rong explained to him.

Gu Mingchen held her hand and smiled at her. “No matter what happens, we’ll be together forever.”

She was touched because he was willing to bring her here and stand by her before his mother.

Besides, his words were engraved on her heart.

You are the one who put me in a tight spot, not her.

I don't love Hailan. Besides, I don't want to let Bai Rong down.

I'll never divorce her.

She remembered asking Gu Mingchen a long time ago if he loved her.

At that time, Gu Mingchen replied that he didn't wish to engage in empty talk but would prove it with his actions.

Now, he had finally walked the talk, proving that he wasn't making empty promises.

"I'm sorry for misunderstanding you in the past," Bai Rong apologized.

“What did you misunderstand?” Gu Mingchen asked.

“I saw you carrying Hailan into the hotel because I stayed in the room in front of hers. I also know that you ordered supper for her and only left late at night. That was why I was upset since then,” Bai Rong lowered her head as she replied. Her heart wrenched as she recalled that night.

“Well, I only carried her into the hotel because she fainted, and I ordered supper for her because she hadn’t had any food for a few days. Moreover, she was terrified and had a mental breakdown, so I had no choice but to leave late. Anyway, it was still my fault because I didn’t consider my actions beforehand. Hence, I should be the one apologizing instead.”

As Bai Rong lowered her head, she tried to put herself in his shoes. She would probably be sympathetic toward a man who was in despair as well if he had rescued her before. Moreover, she might even decide to stay and keep him company.

Despite that reasoning, she still felt rather uncomfortable about it.

Never mind!

After giving it some thought, she decided that the only thing that mattered was that he only loved her and didn’t have affairs with other women.

Since he lowered his ego and even apologized, she didn’t want to be pushy and put him in a difficult situation.

“Since both of us were in the wrong, let bygones be bygones. Our new life begins today.” Bai Rong put her hand on his and continued, “After all, a married couple can only overcome obstacles together if they are like-minded.”

Gu Mingchen's lips quirked up.

Deep in his heart, he thanked God that they got married by chance.

Because of that, they had the opportunity to deal with their conflict constructively.

Knowing that a single possibility could change everything, he was determined to cherish what he possessed now.

"Are we going to the military base or Blue Sky Apartment to get some rest?" Gu Mingchen asked.

"Since it will take a lot of time for us to return now, I would suggest staying in a hotel. Besides, I think Hailan would want to see you once she wakes up. So, it will be convenient for us to meet her," Zhou Hailan proposed after analyzing the situation.

Gu Mingchen fell silent for a while as he pondered over her suggestion. Then, he replied seriously, "I think she needs a doctor the most instead of me. You're right. Once I show up, she will think that making a scene would work. If I don't show up this time, she will eventually realize that committing suicide is not going to change anything."

"Have you really thought it through?" Bai Rong asked.

"I will give her the best environment for her treatment and won't restrict her freedom. If it's necessary, I'll also invite a psychiatrist to check up on her. Didn't you say that you have an outstanding senior? I'm thinking about hiring him," Gu Mingchen said after giving it some thought.

“Don’t rush into a decision first because there are many factors influencing you now. Think about it again tomorrow morning, as that will be the time when you can think rationally and comprehensively. Tell me again once you’ve really made up your mind,” Bai Rong suggested gently.

“Alright.” Gu Mingchen started the car and drove away.

He heeded Bai Rong’s advice and looked for a nearby hotel.

Bai Rong’s guess was right. They only had a five-hour sleep that night. At about 5 a.m., Zhou Hailan called him once she was awake.

“Chen, where are you? I’m so scared now, and I missed you so much. I passed out yesterday due to excessive bleeding. Also, I heard from your mom that you purposely came to visit me. Were you really here? Why did you leave since you were already here?” Zhou Hailan said sobbingly.

Gu Mingchen furrowed his brows and kept silent.

After a while, Bai Rong grabbed the phone from him and said gently, “Zhou Hailan, since it’s still early, why don’t you get some rest? Gu Mingchen and I will come to the hospital to pay you a visit in the morning.”

“Who are you? I don’t need you to come and visit me. All I want is Chen.” Zhou Hailan raised her voice.

“I’m Gu Mingchen’s wife. Rest assured that Gu Mingchen and I will take care of you.”

“When did I ever ask you to take care of me? Gu Mingchen is mine, and I’m his fiancée. Who do you think you are? Excuse me. Have you heard of first come, first served? I said yes to Chen’s proposal before something happened to me. Get him on the phone! Let him speak!” Zhou Hailan yelled.

“I’m sorry, but he’s sleeping now.” Bai Rong hung up the phone once she finished.

“I think I need to break up with her face to face,” Gu Mingchen said in a deep voice.

Noticing the hesitation and melancholy in his eyes, she suggested, “It would be harsh to her if you break up with her now. Why don’t we take care of her for now? Let me buy some breakfast and bring it to her later.”

She got out of the bed once she finished.

The next moment, Gu Mingchen hugged her from behind and said, “Thank you for your consideration and kindness.”

She grabbed his hand and said, “Don’t mention it. You’re not doing anything wrong but repaying your debt. I’ll be fine as long as I’m the only one you love.” Bai Rong paused for a while and said, “One day, if you realize that Zhou Hailan is your true love, I hope that you will let me go.”

“If I don’t love you, I wouldn’t have registered our marriage at the Civil Affairs Bureau in the first place. I know who I truly love, and it will never change for the rest of my life,” he assured her.

Her eyes reddened with tears as memories flashed across her mind.

It took her a total of six years before she could finally be with him. Hence, she felt that the numerous challenges that they went through finally came to fruition.

Perhaps their ups and downs encapsulated life—it was full of surprises, helplessness, sadness, heartbreaking moments, sorrows, happiness, excitement, and hopes.

As she was lost in thought, tears unknowingly streamed down her face.

Gu Mingchen wiped away her tears and asked, “Silly girl, why are you crying?”

“In the past, I cried when I was sad and thought about leaving you when I was pissed off. Also, I thought about living alone to be freed from all troubles. However, whenever I calmed down, I would begin to miss you. Well, freedom and loneliness are two sides of the same coin. I guess I have never let go of you,” Bai Rong confessed her inner feelings.

“I know that. In fact, I went to the United States and saw you several times. You would be in a daze every time you saw someone in a military outfit. Back then, I wondered if you were thinking about me,” he added gently.

Upon hearing that, Bai Rong burst into tears.

Indeed, she missed him very much but chose to behave coldly and kept a distance from him to conceal her feelings for him.

“We’ll have a happy life from now on,” she said sobbingly.

Gu Mingchen kissed her forehead gently and replied confidently, “Yes, we’ll have a happy life from now on.”

As Bai Rong lowered her eyes, she made a decision deep in her heart.

Both Bai Rong and Gu Mingchen loved children. Furthermore, she felt that a family is only complete with children.

Given that he was thirty-three and she was twenty-eight, the timing was right for them to have babies.

She thought that she ought to stop taking contraceptive pills to prepare for pregnancy.

Chapter 225

Gu Mingchen and Bai Rong went downstairs to have breakfast.

She bought some buns and soy milk. Thinking that the food was probably not enough, she decided to get more buns and some dumplings.

“Why did you buy so much food?” he asked bewilderedly.

“Well, your mom might still be here. Since we bought breakfast for Zhou Hailan, I thought we should buy some for your mom too,” she explained gently.

Touched, he looked at her lovingly.

“You are indeed gentle, considerate, and generous. If my mom isn’t prejudiced against you, I’m sure both of you will get along well.” Gu Mingchen heaved a sigh once he finished.

“Perhaps everything is fated. Anyway, I’ll still do what I should do. It’s up to her to accept me or otherwise. Let’s go, or else breakfast will get cold.” She walked toward the door.

As Gu Mingchen focused on the road, she was rather tensed up on the way to the hospital.

Time flew by, and they soon arrived at the door of the ward.

Gu Mingchen knocked on the door before he opened it.

Zhou Hailan was lost in thought as she squatted on the bed. Once she saw Gu Mingchen, she hastily got down from the bed. Barefooted, she ran toward him and said pitifully as though she was about to cry, “Chen, you’re finally here. I’ve been waiting for you for a long time.”

Meanwhile, Bai Rong entered the ward after taking a deep breath and stood next to him.

When Zhou Hailan saw Bai Rong, she stared at her with widened eyes and said furiously, "Why are you here too? You're not welcome here."

The next moment, she pushed Bai Rong away forcefully.

As Bai Rong lost her balance and was about to fall backward, Gu Mingchen swiftly hugged her by her waist. Then, he stood before her to ward Zhou Hailan off and said, "I brought Bai Rong along. If she has to leave, I'll leave as well."

Zhou Hailan was heartbroken once she heard it. She looked at Gu Mingchen in disbelief and pursed her lips in indignation.

Meanwhile, Song Xiyu, who happened to arrive at the ward, overheard their conversation. She grabbed Zhou Hailan's hand and scolded Gu Mingchen, "How could you say that? You don't have to be here anymore if you insist on bringing her along. Get out."

Gu Mingchen stared at Song Xiyu with an icy expression. Almost immediately, he made up his mind and took Bai Rong's hand to leave the ward.

"Don't go," Zhou Hailan suddenly begged him.

Gu Mingchen stopped in his tracks and glanced at her.

"I'll die if you leave," Zhou Hailan said pitifully.

Upon hearing that, Gu Mingchen fell silent.

On the other hand, Bai Rong asked, "If you die now, you'll have nothing, including your loved one. Are you sure you want to die?"

Once she finished, Song Xiyu glared at her and berated, "Shut up! You've no right to speak here."

Irritated by Song Xiyu's attitude, Gu Mingchen held Bai Rong's hand and was about to leave, but suddenly, Zhou Hailan sprang forward and wrapped her arms around his waist.

"It's okay. I don't mind if you bring anyone here. I know that I don't deserve to be with you because I look ugly now. However, please don't leave me. I beg you."

Gu Mingchen said without even turning around to look at her, "Bai Rong and I are married."

"I know that you guys are married," She leaned her face against his back as she said sobbingly, "You can treat me as your sister and cure me. Perhaps I will be able to pursue my own happiness after I've recovered and returned to my old self."

Gu Mingchen turned his head toward her.

However, Zhou Hailan couldn't see his reaction because she was standing behind him.

She continued, "But please don't leave nor abandon me now. I promise to undergo treatment. Besides, I don't ask for much. I hope you can visit me every day, but it'll be enough even if you only visit me three times a week."

“Hailan, you don’t have to do this,” Song Xiyu said in a deep voice.

After a while, Zhou Hailan let go of Gu Mingchen and gazed at the bandage on her wrist. “Gu Mingchen got married while I disappeared for eight years and ended up like this. To make matters worse, I can’t even take care of myself now, so I can understand that he doesn’t want me. I can only blame my circumstances on fate.”

“Ms. Bai, can’t you at least give them some time to talk to each other? After all, Hailan already gave in and agreed to end her relationship with Mingchen,” Song Xiyu asked Bai Rong in disdain.

Bai Rong shifted her gaze to Gu Mingchen and said, “I’ll wait outside.”

Having said that, she turned around and left after putting down the breakfast on the table.

Furrowing his brows, Gu Mingchen felt apologetic and guilty as he watched Bai Rong leaving the ward.

He remembered her saying that she got jealous easily.

Just when Gu Mingchen wanted to follow Bai Rong, Song Xiyu stood in his way and said earnestly, “Now that Hailan is willing to give both of you her blessing, do you really have to be that heartless? I know you love Bai Rong with all your heart, but can’t you be considerate toward Zhou Hailan at the very least? Besides, she didn’t do you wrong in any way.”

“It’s okay, Aunt Gu. Just let him go,” Zhou Hailan suddenly interrupted.

Gu Mingchen glanced at Zhou Hailan for a moment before he walked toward the door.

Nonetheless, right after he turned around, Zhou Hailan suddenly closed her eyes and staggered as though she went weak at her knees.

“Hailan!” Song Xiyu screamed panickedly.

When Gu Mingchen instinctively turned around, Zhou Hailan fainted and fell into his arms.

He furrowed his brows and said to Song Xiyu, “Get a doctor now.”

Song Xiyu immediately left the ward.

Nonetheless, she didn’t get a doctor but called Bai Rong instead, “Where are you?”

Bai Rong knew that Song Xiyu wouldn’t call her purposely to say nice words to her. “Do my whereabouts have anything to do with you?”

“Bai Rong, why are you so wicked? I mean, Mingchen’s dad and I’ve always wanted Zhou Hailan to be our daughter-in-law. Besides, as long as you’re not with him, he will definitely fall in love with Zhou Hailan again. In that case, why must you separate the true lovers?” Song Xiyu asked coldly.

“Mrs. Gu, do you know what love really is?” Bai Rong asked.

Song Xiyu paused for a while and retorted, “I’m far more experienced than you. So, you’re not qualified to teach me about love.”

However, Bai Rong ignored her and continued, "To you, love is about whether the others think that the couple is really meant to be together.

"However, in reality, you're looking for a woman with a similar social status as Gu Mingchen to be his wife so that she could help him in his career.

"What if Gu Mingchen becomes a successful man in the end but realizes that he doesn't love his wife? By then, he can't leave his wife because of his social status and fame. As such, he'll never experience true love in his life and has to leave the world with regrets. Are you sure this is what you want for your son?

"Moreover, there's something that I've to remind you—a man who achieves success with a woman's help will be wary of her power and can never truly be free. On the other hand, a man who succeeds by relying on his own capabilities won't have to be controlled or manipulated by anyone.

"I understand that you love your son. Because of that, I don't want to be rude to you. No offense, but I think your world view is a little skewed. You should understand that apart from social status, true love can also bring happiness.

Bai Rong laid out her viewpoint respectfully but confidently.

On the other hand, Song Xiyu fell into a daze.

Her expressions changed subtly as she thought about Gu Tianhang.

Bai Rong's words touched her sore spot—Gu Tianhang married her not because he loved her but because he believed that she was the most suitable candidate to be his wife.

It was only natural for women to long for love, and she was no exception.

Chapter 226

Do I really want my son to follow his footsteps?

Will a marriage without love bring true happiness?

Am I happy?

Unfortunately, all Song Xiyu felt was despondency about her marriage and life.

Now, she suddenly had doubts about her views after hearing what Bai Rong said. A moment later, she hung up the phone and went to find the doctor.

Then, she followed the doctor into the ward.

Once the doctor opened Zhou Hailan's eyelid, she woke up and grabbed Gu Mingchen's hand, pleading in a feeble voice, "Don't go."

The doctor gazed at him as he explained, "The patient is in bad condition now because she had an excessive loss of blood, low blood sugar level, and a mental illness. As such, please avoid triggering her emotions."

Gu Mingchen shifted his gaze to Zhou Hailan at the doctor's words.

With her lips curled up, Zhou Hailan said, "I'm sorry to make you worry. Well, I'm a little hungry now. What breakfast did you and your wife bring for me? Can I have it now?"

Gu Mingchen untied the plastic bag and took out a box of buns. Then, he passed a set of cutlery to Zhou Hailan.

"Why did you buy so much food? Do I look like a glutton to you?" Zhou Hailan smiled wryly.

"Rong bought breakfast for my mom as well," Gu Mingchen replied in a deep voice. Then, he lifted her bed so that she could sit while eating.

"Rong is really considerate," she commended gently.

"She's rather mature even though she's younger than you," he replied when he was putting the box of buns on the dining board.

Meanwhile, Song Xiyu knitted her brows and lowered her gaze.

Gu Mingchen handed over a fork and a spoon to Song Xiyu and said, "Come and have some food too. You must be hungry by now because you've been busy since yesterday."

Song Xiyu grabbed a chair and sat in front of the cupboard before she started eating.

While Zhou Hailan ate the buns in silence, she glanced at Gu Mingchen from time to time, feeling insecure and helpless. At the same time, she behaved carefully to avoid irritating Gu Mingchen.

As they were eating, Gu Mingchen grabbed his phone and checked the time. Then, he turned around and walked toward the door.

Zhou Hailan's fingers that were holding her cutlery immediately stiffened while a menacing look flashed across her eyes.

Deep in her heart, she knew that the situation was already out of her control.

Once Gu Mingchen left the ward, he called Bai Rong and asked gently, "Where are you?"

"I'm strolling around the garden at the back of the hospital," Bai Rong answered smilingly.

"I'm coming to meet you now." Gu Mingchen then hung up the phone and strode toward the elevator.

Meanwhile, Bai Rong sat on the bench alone in the garden, pondering over problems related to mental illness.

As far as she knew, most patients with mental illness weren't aware that they had it. Even if some were aware of their own condition, they couldn't control themselves during the outbursts. For instance, Bai Rong herself would only be aware of it after her outburst.

However, Zhou Hailan was seemingly different as she clearly knew what she was doing and her motive behind every action. Moreover, her thoughts seemed to be well organized as she knew when to compromise and the right words to say. Apparently, she could control her emotions very well.

In other words, she could change her behavior effortlessly based on the situation. On the other hand, a patient with mental illness wouldn't be able to do this under normal circumstances.

Not only was she not mentally ill, but she was also very smart to be able to fool the others with her act.

Bai Rong closed her eyes and imagined herself as Zhou Hailan.

To Zhou Hailan, her most important person was Gu Mingchen.

She loved him deeply and couldn't live without him.

Since she was overly dependent on him, she always felt inferior and worried that she would be abandoned.

As such, she would be wary of all women around Gu Mingchen.

Logically, she would have a mental breakdown and show abnormal behavior once another woman showed up.

For instance, she would lose her mind and act aggressively once she was triggered. Also, she would not be able to control herself when she had an outburst.

Nonetheless, Zhou Hailan didn't exhibit any of these symptoms when Bai Rong showed up.

If she were indeed a patient with mental illness, she would have committed suicide in the middle of the night when Gu Mingchen didn't meet her.

However, once she heard that Gu Mingchen was married and would leave with Bai Rong, she acted pitifully, saying that she was willing to give them her blessings and receive treatment. Such behaviors weren't in line with the usual symptoms shown by a psychiatric patient.

Therefore, she suspected that Zhou Hailan only pretended to have a mental illness. In fact, she also had a gut feeling that the latter was the spy who sabotaged Gu Mingchen's mission.

Come to think of it, Gu Mingchen cleared her name, saying that they worked together several times and succeeded in their missions. In that case, what actually went wrong?

As she was contemplating it, a shadow suddenly appeared before Bai Rong.

She looked up and saw Gu Mingchen.

“What are you thinking about? You seem to be deep in thought,” Gu Mingchen asked and sat beside her.

“Just having some random thoughts because I’m free. How’s Zhou Hailan?” She asked him.

“She’s fine. She fainted just now but woke up shortly. I left when she was having breakfast. I think she’s emotionally stable now.” Gu Mingchen heaved a sigh of relief.

Bai Rong flashed him a smile and changed the subject. “By the way, do you remember the prominent politician whom you rescued? Who was he?”

“Long story short, he was like an envoy from S City who brought some important resources to A City. If something happened to him in A City, S City would lose the resources and misunderstand A City for scheming against them. Hence, the terrorist group captured him to induce conflicts between the two cities and constrain A City’s development,” he explained.

“In that case, why didn’t the terrorist group kill the politician but gave you the time to rescue him instead?” Bai Rong voiced her doubts.

“I guess they wanted to obtain S City’s resources, so they didn’t kill the politician at once. However, since our mission was to rescue him, we didn’t ask too much about it. Speaking of which, I’m thinking about visiting Old General Cai.”

“Who is he?” Bai Rong asked as she had never heard of him before.

“He used to be my Chief. Since I lost part of my memory, I can’t completely recall my mission. I probably slept with you because I was doped during the mission. So, if

someone knew about the incident, I think he or she will have information about our kid as well.”

Jadeborough, which was Old General Cai’s hometown, wasn’t far from Jin Yang City, and they would only need a two-hour drive to reach the city.

“Jadeborough?” Bai Rong’s heart skipped a beat.

Back then, Gu Mingchen got into trouble when he was in Jadeborough.

A thought suddenly flashed across her mind. “Did you have the same Chief as Zhou Hailan back then?”

“Yes. Zhou Hailan, Su Haoran, and I are all from the same military base,” Gu Mingchen explained.

“Can you bring me along to visit Old General Cai?” she requested.

He held her hand and asked, “Do you wish to go there too?”

She nodded in response and asserted, “Yes. I’m available during weekends as I don’t have to go to Lu Xingzhou’s house for tutoring.”

“Alright. I’ll pick you up to go to Jadeborough together.” His lips curled into a smile as he took her into his arms.

Leaning on him, she looked up at the blue sky.

Hopefully, we can find our child this time. Who knows? Gu Mingchen's parents might not oppose our marriage anymore for the sake of our child.

Instead of worrying about his parents opposing their marriage, she was more concerned that Gu Mingchen would be put in an awkward position.

Chapter 227

At 9 a.m., Gu Mingchen returned to the military base after much coaxing from Bai Rong.

It was still early when she arrived at the agreed-upon location, so she took out her pen and started drafting psychological tests.

Right then, her phone started to ring.

It was an unknown number. She noticed from the area code that it was coming from the United States.

She picked up the call warily and answered, "Hello. Who is this?"

“Is this the psychologist Ms. Bai? I’m Ni Er’s assistant. She has some issues and would like to consult you. You’ll be paid according to the conversation time,” explained Ni Er’s assistant.

Bai Rong had heard of the actress Ni Er. She was a controversial figure due to her attractive looks and good family background but lack of talent.

“Sure. Please pass the phone to her,” replied Bai Rong.

“Hello, doctor. It’s Ni Er here. I think I’m on the verge of breaking down, and I need your help,” said Ni Er in an upset tone.

“I’m happy to help. What’s troubling you?” Bai Rong asked politely.

“I have a new TV show that’s been out for a week, and the response has been fine. But many people are hurling insults at me in the comment section. They say that they want to stop watching the show because of me and that my acting is lousy. They even called me a home-wrecker when I’m only spending time with my co-star because of the movie. We’re not actually together.

“Although this show has topped the charts and my acting skills have been lauded by many professionals, they continue to attack me on the internet nonetheless. In fact, they want me to leave the entertainment industry, and some of them even egged my house. It’s really bothersome, and I have no idea what to do about it,” rambled Ni Er in despair.

“I remember that you once made an account just to retort the haters, but you were exposed, and your reputation suffered because of it,” replied Bai Rong good-naturedly.

“It’s because I was playing the role of a drug addict. But they started attacking me and said that I was a deplorable prostitute who was sleeping my way to fame. I was furious but couldn’t defend myself directly, so I could only create an account to vent my anger. I think I’m losing my mind. I don’t know how much longer I can hold on as I haven’t been able to sleep, and because of that, my hair has been falling out and I can’t think straight. Moreover, I’m terrified of going out and filming. I even contemplated suicide. Worried about my condition, a friend introduced you to me, saying that you could help,” said Ni Er sobbingly.

“Before I help you, let’s talk about the development of the entertainment industry. Long ago, television didn’t exist. Hence, many people learned about scripts through stage plays. The actors earned a measly living through selling tickets and tips from the audience. Moreover, only the rich could afford to buy tickets.

“However, many actors craved a luxurious lifestyle, so they offered themselves to the wealthy. In other words, they sold their bodies. Some of these wealthy men were married while others were playboys. Even so, all they needed to deal with was their own emotional turmoil as public pressure did not exist back then, and these illicit affairs went unnoticed.

“After some time, television was created, as was the newspaper. Actors became household names, and all their actions were scrutinized. If they did something wrong, such as breaking up a family or using drugs, they would be crucified by the public. After that, the phone was invented, along with the internet and social media. As a result, celebrities became headline material, and they now earn a thousand times more than they used to.

“However, if they’re seen doing anything as trivially wrong as smoking, the issue would be blown out of proportion, and they would be seen as a degenerate. If they secretly create another social media account, they’re deemed shady. If they pick their noses,

they lack decorum. If they get into a relationship, they might as well have committed a crime. Do you agree with what I've said?" Bai Rong asked gently.

"You're absolutely right. When I hit back at a hater, they insulted me by saying that I was shameless. They called me crazy, so I asked them to mind their manners. In the end, this exchange was posted on the internet, and it spread like wildfire, making me a public target. However, everyone sided with the haters. I was so angry that I didn't sleep the entire night," cried Ni Er.

"Where are these attackers of yours? How old are they? Are they aggressive people by nature? Could they be mentally ill? You don't know anything about them. Are they really worth getting angry over?"

"I'm just angry that they're spouting nonsense despite not knowing the truth. All they do is eschew the facts and attack me. I'm worried that it'll affect my fans. What if no one likes me anymore? If they stop watching the show because of me, investors will start rejecting me. I'll also feel guilty about ruining a good show," wailed Ni Er.

"Firstly, your worries are unnecessary because there will always be opposing opinions. Remember how I said that the more famous actors are, the more pressure they feel from the public. For example, if the boss of a company chooses to give resources to a particular employee, that employee would think that the boss is great. On the other hand, the other employees who didn't get the resources would think otherwise. "You're in the same situation now. You have tens of millions of fans, and each of them belongs to a different milieu. When some of them suppress their negative emotions in their daily lives, they don't have an outlet to vent their pent-up frustrations except on the internet, where they can remain anonymous. That's why they'll zero in on any mistake you make and start hurling verbal attacks at you.

"You can tell what kind of people they are from the way they completely disregard others. So why are you wasting your tears on these rude and ill-mannered people? It's normal to have a few thousand haters amongst your tens of millions of fans. Most people are still clear-headed. Besides, the good viewership ratings reflect this," comforted Bai Rong.

“I’m more worried that my fans will believe the haters,” said Ni Er anxiously.

“You don’t need to be worried. Let me put it this way, if people who are in the same situation as you overhear what I’m saying, they might find it useful. Good-natured people might also think so. However, there could be some who will start screaming insults. However, you can’t tell these people not to attack you or change who they are. All you can do is work hard on the things that are in your control. After all, most fans who are rational will be able to see your growth and effort. As for the small number of naysayers, perhaps they were sent by your rivals?” said Bai Rong with a smile.

Chapter 228

“Are you talking about my co-star?”

“I don’t know. Some of them could be your rivals, while others might be your haters. Most importantly, you’ve never offended these haters, right?” asked Bai Rong.

“I’ve never crossed paths with them. Besides, I’m so busy filming every day that I don’t even have time for myself. How is it possible for me to offend them? I have no idea why they hate me so much.” Ni Er drew her brows together tightly.

“Perhaps they’re just jealous of your fame, or you might be dating a male celebrity they like. Who knows? Maybe you have stolen a role from a female celebrity that they like. If that’s the case, it’s only natural for them to hate you. A portion of them might just be ill-mannered. Let’s say life is a movie. Do you think that the female lead will burst out in rage and try to sabotage others just because of some trivial matters?” asked Bai Rong softly.

“Of course not. That’s the typical behavior of nobodies like the minor supporting roles in movies. Why would you, the lead, care about these unimportant characters? Even without your interference, life will punish them. So why waste time caring about what these insignificant people say?”

Realization dawned on Ni Er. “So, should I just treat them like noxious air?”

“Noxious air pollutes your environment, and you can’t do anything about that. So you should just focus on improving yourself as well as train your patience and rational thinking skills. Noxious gases will eventually dissipate, after all. Those people won’t be happy if they aren’t dragging someone down, but they’ll get what they deserve eventually. So what’s the point in you hating them? Besides, they’re definitely not living as well as you. So you should forget about them and free yourself. Staying open-minded will bring joy to you and the people around you. You’ll only be happy when the people around you like you, right?” Bai Rong said patiently.

By then, Ni Er had calmed down, listening intently to Bai Rong. “You must be living well, right?”

Bai Rong smiled and answered honestly, “We are usually calm when handling the affairs of others. It’s easy to be clear-headed and do the right things in such a situation. On the other hand, we tend to become more emotional when it comes to our own

affairs. Blood rushes to our heads, which prevents us from thinking logically. This causes us to make mistakes. Most people don't judge a situation objectively. Instead, they make decisions based on what they want.

"For example, if two celebrities are shipped together on a reality show, their fans might start looking out for evidence to prove that they are really dating. On the other hand, those who don't want them to be together will look for evidence to prove the opposite. People usually become too emotionally invested when handling their own affairs, which prevents them from thinking rationally. Thus, they are likely to make the wrong decisions. I'm no exception. There are times when I need to consult a psychologist myself because I need an objective opinion from someone else too, but it's not embarrassing at all. After all, it's better to avoid making mistakes, right?"

"I'm really happy to have talked to you. You just helped to solve my problem and enlightened me with your wise words. My friend was right to introduce you to me. To show my appreciation, I'll transfer you the money soon at the rate of ten thousand per hour together with a little bonus. It's just a small gesture. Thanks for your help," said Ni Er sincerely.

"Who's your friend?" Bai Rong asked suspiciously as she only charged Lu Xingzhou the rate of ten thousand per hour.

"Cheng Jinrong. He said that you treated him once. All you did was talk to him, and he was cured just like that. I feel much better now, ready to get back to work. That would be all for today. Goodbye, and thank you once again." Having said that, Ni Er hung up the phone.

Right then, a dark shadow fell on Bai Rong, which prompted her to raise her head.

Before her, Cheng Jinrong smiled and said politely, "I didn't expect to see you here so early. It's only 10 a.m. Can I sit?"

Bai Rong gestured at the seat in front of her.

After sitting down, Cheng Jinrong pressed the button on the table to summon the waiter. "I wanted to ask. Are you playing mind games with my friend by icing him out?"

"Firstly, if someone else could handle his son, it wouldn't still remain an issue now. Secondly, judging from his current approach, there is no doubt that his son's condition will only worsen. Thirdly, this is his only son whom he cherishes more than his life, so no matter how much my consultation costs, he'll still come to me one day. Besides, I'm not playing mind games. I'm just confident in my analysis. Lastly, lowering my fee will just make me seem unprofessional. He knows that those who are overly courteous to him are just trying to rip him off, so he scorns those people. On the contrary, he trusts people who give him an attitude," Bai Rong explained.

"What if you can't cure him after three months?" Cheng Jinrong was slightly worried about Bai Rong.

"Don't you have faith in me?" Bai Rong asked confidently.

At that moment, Cheng Jinrong's phone started to ring.

Seeing that it was a call from United States, he picked up the call.

"Cheng Jinrong, your friend is amazing. I feel better immediately after talking to her. I'm in a great mood now, and my appetite is raging. I wasn't even angry when someone sprayed paint on my car," praised Ni Er.

"If you have any friends with psychological problems, you can recommend them to her. We're all friends, so we should help each other out," Cheng Jinrong replied.

Bai Rong gulped down a mouthful of coffee.

She had a good impression of Cheng Jinrong. He was magnanimous, responsible, and career-minded. Although he used to have obsessive-compulsive disorder, he seemed to have gotten better.

The speed of recovery for psychiatric patients was largely dependent on their own comprehensive ability.

“What time are you leaving?” Bai Rong asked.

“My main purpose of coming here is to escort Governor Lu. Once your discussion has finished, my job should be done.”

Right then, the waiter walked toward them.

“One mocha please,” requested Cheng Jinrong politely.

“Do you have a project with Governor Lu?” Bai Rong guessed.

“How do you know?” Cheng Jinrong was stunned.

“I can tell from the way you behave around Lu Xingzhou. You’re patronizing and mindful. Moreover, you do whatever he wants. You once said that you own a company. Thus, if he isn’t your subordinate, then he has to be your project partner,” analyzed Bai Rong.

“You’re too smart. There’s an excellent piece of land in Jadeborough that has come on the market. Unfortunately, I’m facing competition from Xingzheng Construction Company. If Governor Lu helps me, it’s highly likely that I’ll get that land.”

Bai Rong frowned doubtfully. “What makes that piece of land so valuable?”

However, a troubled expression crept up Cheng Jinrong’s face upon hearing her question.

Sensing his hesitation, Bai Rong said, “You don’t have to tell me if you don’t want to.”

“I’m afraid of putting you in danger if I tell you,” said Cheng Jinrong apologetically.

Chapter 229

Bai Rong chuckled. “I knew you would say that. Are you some sort of spy?”

Instead of responding directly, he flashed her a wry smile that was tinged with wariness.

Bai Rong knew that she was not going to get an answer, so she did not pursue the matter. Lowering her head, she sipped on her coffee.

With that, the atmosphere grew awkward, as though time stood still.

Cheng Jinrong cleared his throat. "Have you studied history before?"

"I did attend a history class when I studied psychology abroad. It was mainly about using history to predict human behavior and our predestined paths. Why do you ask? Are you interested in history?" Bai Rong asked offhandedly.

"My ex-girlfriend's father is obsessed with it. He's an expert in the field, specializing in ancient geography. He even has ancient maps and knows where the wars and important events took place," explained Cheng Jinrong.

An image of a map she had procured in Tangqian Village appeared in her mind right then. His ex-girlfriend's father might also know a thing or two about it.

Wait, Cheng Jinrong and Lu Xingzhou know each other. Lu Xingzhou must have a copy of that map. It's possible that he knows Cheng Jinrong's ex-girlfriend's father.

So could it be that Cheng Jinrong wants to buy that piece of land because that's where the treasure is?

Bai Rong was excited by the idea, and she wanted to tell Gu Mingchen about her hypothesis immediately.

The coffee cup in her hand started to tremble, but she willed herself to calm down. "There's an expert in every field. I remember that there was a show that appraised antiques. Many people brought their antiques to be appraised and verified. Those appraisers seemed very confident and could see through counterfeits in no time. They were very impressive," Bai Rong said with awe.

"Silly girl. Those were all exaggerated for the sake of the dramatic effect. The experts had actually studied the antiques for days before they appeared on the show." Cheng Jinrong chuckled.

"It's still praise-worthy since they managed to figure out which era the item belongs to. Maybe these experts could even produce a passable counterfeit," Bai Rong made idle conversation as she wanted to lull him into lowering his guard.

"Many of the authentic antiques are sealed away. The ones on display in museums and exhibitions are counterfeits made by experts. However, many techniques are lost in the mists of time. A counterfeit will never be replicated perfectly."

Bai Rong drank her coffee and asked, "Do you research this field? Are you interested in antiques?"

"I am. I think it's fascinating. Antiques can make you feel like you're transported back in time. You can imagine that you were the one who owned these antiques in the past and think about where you would have placed them as well as their uses. Why did you choose to bury them with you? What makes them meaningful?" Cheng Jinrong went with the flow of the conversation.

"What kind of antiques do you like? It doesn't sound like you were talking about ceramics," Bai Rong asked tentatively.

"I like unique pieces." Cheng Jinrong fished out a jade pendant and placed it on the table. "Do you know who used to own this?"

The jade pendant was exquisite and had an unusual engraving. "Who?" asked Bai Rong.

"The most famous poet in history," revealed Cheng Jinrong confidently.

Bai Rong smiled. "The person you're referring to was a traitor. He was punished for his crime. There's no way something as valuable as this was buried with him. Someone lied to you."

"You might not be aware of this, but he was a charismatic and talented man with good taste. He also had many friends and loved to shop around. One day, he bought this jade pendant and kept it by his side at all times. However, he was involved in a heinous plot, so he sent the jade pendant to a nobleman who was a good friend of his. Eventually, the nobleman saved him, and the jade pendant stayed with the nobleman," explained Cheng Jinrong.

Bai Rong shrugged. It was difficult to ascertain who the antique belonged to if it had not been buried in a crypt. But Cheng Jinrong seemed so certain about it that if she disagreed with him, he might get upset. "Have you ever imagined yourself as the poet?"

Cheng Jinrong looked rather embarrassed. "I think he was wronged. The records state that his looks were non-peril, but he was an impetuous bootlicker, which is inaccurate."

Bai Rong nodded. "I agree with your opinion. He had the foresight to remove himself from the situation. This proves that the poet was not impetuous. Additionally, his mother was very ill. When he resigned from his governmental job, he said that there was no point in owning riches if he couldn't take care of his mother. He was initially known as one of the most filial men in history, but his name was struck off later on.

“Moreover, he had a wife who died of illness when he was only thirty-two years old. He was in the prime of his life and had a good governmental job, yet he did not remarry. He never even had another lover and chose to remain single for eighteen years instead. This indicates that he was a very loyal man, which was rare.”

Cheng Jinrong clapped, feeling as if he had found someone on the same wavelength as him. “You share the exact same sentiments as me. However, due to his status as a traitor, the emperor could not portray him in a good light. In fact, the emperor did not even want the poet to be recorded in history, so he erased the poet’s name from the list of the most filial people. Nonetheless, the poet’s reputation was too great, and his legacy was passed down by word of mouth. In fact, they all described him as near-perfect. Hence, the emperor had no choice but to include his name in the records, albeit only granting him a few lines to prevent discrepancies.”

“That’s how it always goes. If you’re successful, you’ll be lauded. If you’re a failure, you’ll get criticized. There are many proverbs about the emperor. After he became the emperor, those who knew him in the past sought refuge with him. If someone spoke up about how they suffered together, they would be executed. On the other hand, if they talked about how impressive he was, they would be promoted,” said Bai Rong as she finished the rest of her coffee.

Cheng Jinrong looked at Bai Rong with an odd expression that was a mixture of joy and excitement. It was as though he had finally found a woman who understood him, someone he would never tire of.

“How are you and your husband?” Cheng Jinrong asked out of concern.

“We’re pretty good,” Bai Rong answered simply.

She had ranted to a stranger back then because they had no ties to each other.

But if the stranger tried to interfere with her life, she would be annoyed.

Bai Rong glanced at her phone and changed the topic. "It looks like I've set too late of a time."

"Rong, as your friend, I want to remind you to be careful when you go to Governor Lu's house. Don't meddle in affairs that don't concern you," urged Cheng Jinrong.

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After listening to Cheng Jinrong, Bai Rong realized he was in the know.

"I'm only doing my job," said Bai Rong with a smirk.

"Good. I suddenly regret introducing him to you," replied Cheng Jinrong. It seemed like he was insinuating something.

Bai Rong didn't press on, but she guessed her previous prediction was correct.

Lu Xingzhou arrived after eleven o'clock. He was all smiles and polite to Bai Rong now. "I'm sorry for showing up late. I met up with a friend earlier and got stuck in traffic on the way here."

“Let’s get to the point,” came Bai Rong’s curt reply.

“I agree. May I know when you will be able to head to Jadeborough?” asked Lu Xingzhou politely.

“You’re from Jadeborough?” Bai Rong was stunned to learn that fact. After all, Jadeborough wasn’t a provincial capital.

“Jadeborough’s my hometown. My wife and children are there. Normally, I’ll spend my weekends there. But if it’s a routine check, I might stay there for a longer period,” explained Lu Xingzhou.

“Got it. I can leave by tomorrow. I’ll draw up a contract at the research institute later. Please wait for me. I hope you can transfer the first payment before I depart.” Bai Rong stated her requests clearly.

Lu Xingzhou gave her a nod and smiled. “Sure. We can head there now.”

Bai Rong eyed Lu Xingzhou doubtfully.

He’s a totally different man today. Why isn’t he asking about the details? This is strange.

Is there another reason for him to be so easygoing?

Soon, Bai Rong and Lu Xingzhou arrived at her research institute.

She decided to bring him here to show him that the research institute was legal and legit, so he would put his guard down.

Lu Xingzhou simply stayed in his car and waited for Bai Rong.

After printing out the agreement in her office, Bai Rong brought it to him.

Lu Xingzhou penned his signature without hesitation.

After signing the document, he extended an invitation. "Do you want to have lunch together?"

"No need. I'll be at Jadeborough tomorrow, so we'll have plenty of chances to eat together. I need to head home and pack up now. Thanks, though." Bai Rong was polite but distant.

"Right. I'll see you in Jadeborough, then. The money will be transferred to your account later." With that, Lu Xingzhou wound up his car window and drove away.

After he left, Bai Rong was about to drive the car which Gu Mingchen left behind to the military base when her phone rang.

It was a call from an unknown number. She answered it and inquired, "Hello? Who is this?"

“Hello, Bai Rong. This is Zhou Hailan. Can you come to the hospital this afternoon? I want to talk to you,” Zhou Hailan spoke over the line gently.

Bai Rong curled her lips. “Sure. See you later.”

Well, well. I wonder why she wants to see me.

Don’t tell me she’s targeting me.

When she arrived at the hospital, Song Xiyu wasn’t there. There were two caregivers by Zhou Hailan’s bed.

“Help me buy some food.” Zhou Hailan told the caregivers, sending them away on purpose.

They filed out obediently.

“Have a seat.” Zhou Hailan gestured.

Bai Rong sat down without a word.

Studying Bai Rong carefully, Zhou Hailan revealed, “When I was locked up, I wondered if Chen would forget about me and fall for another woman. Looks like my intuition were right. You’re younger, prettier, curvier, and smarter than me. I accept defeat.”

“Don’t overthink things. You need to focus on your recovery. Everything will be fine.”

“I need your help. I can’t think of anyone else who can help me.” Zhou Hailan lowered her head.

Bai Rong gazed at her wordlessly.

I don’t think I can help her. Unless it’s about her mental health, of course.

She instinctively put her guard up against Zhou Hailan.

Seeing that Bai Rong said nothing, Zhou Hailan shot her a worried glance. “Can you promise to keep this a secret?”

Bai Rong nodded. “Go ahead.”

“When I was locked up, my captors gang-raped me until I got pregnant.” She paused. “They allowed me to give birth to the child and ran a DNA test to find out who’s the child’s father.”

“Where’s the child now?” Bai Rong inquired, her brows furrowed up.

“The child was rescued together with me. I don’t know where he is now. I kept it a secret because I can’t afford to bring him up. It’s also embarrassing. I dare not let Chen know I once gave birth to a child under those circumstances.”

“So, why do you need my help?” Bai Rong gazed at her suspiciously.

“I need you to help me locate my son and adopt him. After spending time with you, I think you’re a reasonable person. He’ll grow up to be an excellent person under your

guide. And please, don't tell him I'm his mother." Zhou Hailan lowered her gaze again.

Bai Rong narrowed her eyes. Hmm, Zhou Hailan is indeed unpredictable.

Why would she tell me about her secret?

"Got it. I'll try to find out where he is," she replied.

"Thank you. Can you keep this a secret from the others?" pleaded Zhou Hailan.

Bai Rong nodded. "Don't worry."

Zhou Hailan stood up and bowed to her in gratitude. "Thank you for not holding any grudges and agreeing to help me. I can breathe a sigh of relief now that my son is in your hands. I swear I won't stand between you and Chen."

"Get up. You should rest well." Bai Rong helped her up and watched as she returned to her bed. "I'm going to Jadeborough on a work trip for around three months. I'll come and visit you again after that."

Zhou Hailan nodded. "Thank you."

With that, Bai Rong spun on her heels and headed to the door. Suddenly, she turned at her shoulder to gaze at Zhou Hailan.

Zhou Hailan froze. "What's wrong?"

Bai Rong simply shook her head and left the ward.

If I wasn't mistaken, Zhou Hailan was glaring at my back...

When I suddenly turned, she was stunned and didn't have time to change her expression.

Well, since the matter with her son is a trap, I'll ignore it for now and see how things go.

Zhou Hailan frowned. After Bai Rong's departure, she got off her bed and made sure no one was around before making a call. "Bai Rong is a psychologist. She's meticulous and good at analyzing others. It's hard to lie to her. Besides, Gu Mingchen listens to her well. She's a difficult target," she declared angrily.

"You want to give up? I can arrange for you to leave now if that's the case. I don't need useless team members."

"Of course not. It's just that I've been away for some time, so please give me more time," Zhou Hailan requested.

"Bai Rong will be going to Jadeborough tomorrow for three months. Think about your next step carefully. Also, don't contact me unless I order you to do so. I'm hanging up now."

After the call ended, she deleted the call record irritably.

After Bai Rong entered her car, she called Gu Mingchen.

The man answered her call.

She didn't mention her meeting with Zhou Hailan. After all, she was waiting for her enemy to make the first move.

“Gu Mingchen, I talked to Cheng Jinrong today and found out about something important.”

“Who is Cheng Jinrong? Is he a man?” Gu Mingchen demanded, his voice full of jealousy.