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## You Owe Me, My Love Chapter 91 - 95

He had already tossed her on the bed when she realized what was happening.

The man looked down upon the blushing girl, and he smiled. "Thanks for coming to me, Rong."

Bai Rong felt sad.

"I am a very jealous person, but I will trust you this time. If there comes a day where you cheat on me, I will never be with you." Bai Rong said, her eyes red.

"Sure." Gu Mingchen answered. He went down and kissed her. From there he worked his way down to her soft, delicate collarbone.

Bai Rong moaned gently. Her eyes were becoming more unfocused as he went on.

He held her up and put her astride on his lap.

As she faced him, they started the procession of becoming one.

Bai Rong met his fiery, passionate gaze, while he gazed into her, as if he wanted to melt her.

The shy girl turned her head aside in embarrassment, while he smiled. He loved being with her just like that. He kept on kissing her, as if each kiss was his silent confession of his love for her.

As love and lust entwined in the air, it condensed and was almost palpable.

In the end, Bai Rong tensed up, while Gu Mingchen panted heavily. He came a moment later, while saying, "I like you, Rong."

Something stirred within Bai Rong. How she hoped he would like her forever.

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Gu Mingchen lay down on the bed with her in his arms.

Bai Rong was lying down in front of him as they calmed their breaths down. Both of them did not move.

“Is there anything I can help you with on this matter?” Bai Rong asked.

“I’ve been to the scene. The culprit didn’t use a professional gun, but an improvised one. A very advanced drone-controlled gun.”

“Then the guy is not a professional killer. He has knowledge on weapons, but he’s not a pro user. I thought the prosecutor’s office has surveillance cameras? How could the drone-controlled gun get past them?” Bai Rong was perplexed.

“He came as a courier. The camera didn’t get his face. The guy isn’t tall, nor is he fat. He was wearing a coat, and there were a lot of smoke bombs in the parcel which were remote-controlled. There was a camera on the drone, so it got the governor accurately,” Gu Mingchen said.

“He sent smoke bombs, not actual bombs. In other words, the culprit didn’t want to hurt any civilians. His target was only the governor. And his anti-espionage skills are off the charts. If the cameras didn’t even get him, he might have done his recon job around the court to familiarize himself with the surroundings. Also, if it’s remote-controlled, the remote shouldn’t have been far away.” Bai Rong analyzed.

Gu Mingchen looked at her and smiled, then gripped her waist tighter. “Your analysis is exactly the same as mine. You are a smart woman, Bai Rong, so don’t say you’re not worthy of me anymore. I do not think you are unworthy, okay?” He raised the pitch of his voice, but it was gentle, charming, and beautiful.

Bai Rong started to waver, then she looked at him. “There are a lot of smart people in the world, but not enough loyal ones.”

“Why don’t you bear a child for me, then?” Gu Mingchen said helplessly, but the passion in his gaze was genuine.

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The light in Bai Rong's eyes dimmed, then she seemed to tear up. "I don't want to hold you down with a kid."

"Ah, it's the other way around," Gu Mingchen said.

Bai Rong looked at him, stupefied.

"You keep on breaking up with me, then you dwell on unnecessary things not long after we get back together. All of it just because you think you are not worthy of me. Because of this, I have to keep on worrying about you," Gu Mingchen said softly. Then he kissed her.

Bai Rong understood what he was trying to say, but she didn't trust him, and she wasn't confident. "Let's get back to the matter in hand. Do you know what you should do now?" Bai Rong changed the topic.

Gu Mingchen looked at her helplessly. I have a strange feeling that she is going to leave again. "I do, but I have a few questions that remain unanswered. That guy seems to be on a path of vengeance, if we take it at face value. But the governor had gone into the prosecutor's office, so why did he choose to do it at that kind of time?"

"Either someone is worried that the governor might leak the secret, or something triggered that guy to do it at that exact moment." Bai Rong quipped.

"Jun Hao gave me footage. After the governor had gone in, there was a mention of a horrifying case." Gu Mingchen started becoming serious.

"What is it?" Bai Rong asked.

"Have you ever heard of the disappearance of the thirty families at Tangqian Village?" Gu Mingchen asked.

"Yeah. It happened five years ago. That case shocked a lot of people, but the police couldn't find any issues with it. In the end, no one was caught."

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“The governor used to be a mayor there. He said that the villagers committed collective suicide because they were infected by some unknown disease. He ordered for the mass burial of the villagers as he feared that chaos would ensue if others got to know about it. The weird thing here is that someone sent him a hundred gold bars using the villagers’ name. Every bar weighs 500 grams. If we go by the market price now, it’ll cost 15 and a half million.” Gu Mingchen explained.

“Maybe the governor is using this as a defense for his corruption.” Bai Rong said.

“Nobody managed to find who gave him the gold bars, since everything was just bizarre. An employee from the prosecutor’s office accidentally leaked out the story and was overheard by a reporter. That was how the news made its way online.”

“So you’re suspecting that the culprit has something to do with the Tangqian Village incident.”

“I will go to the village tomorrow. Since it’s an unofficial investigation, it’ll be a bit secretive. Wait for me.” Gu Mingchen caressed her face gently

When Bai Rong didn’t refuse his touch, the man smiled. “After the investigation is done and the culprit is caught, I’ll marry you.”

“Huh?”

“Dad and mom have agreed. If I manage to find out who the culprit is, they won’t object to us dating.” Gu Mingchen said gently and genuinely.

Bai Rong had fallen for his genuine love. She was touched by all the efforts Gu Mingchen had put in for her, even though she still had her walls up.

“I’ll go with you, since I still have some annual leave left. If I apply for a day of additional leave, I’ll have eight days to go together with you.” Bai Rong had decided.

Gu Mingchen was also worried for Bai Rong to stay back here alone. It’s going to be troublesome if Su Xuyan comes for her again. It’s better if she follows me. At least I can

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protect her. He turned around and pressed down on her. "I'll call the hospital to tell them about this. Then we can go together."

"Sure," Bai Rong replied.

He closed his eyes and kissed her. Bai Rong opened her mouth to allow a French kiss from him. She closed her eyes too as they slowly went for the climax. She didn't forget to take her pills though. Not going to repeat what happened three years ago...

## You Owe Me, My Love Chapter 92

Gu Mingchen drove for safety purposes. Aside from Bai Rong, he only brought a follower called Chen Zhi.

Tangqian Village was farther than he had anticipated. Gu Mingchen didn't ask Bai Rong to drive. The man only asked her to sleep in the backseat.

After switching shifts with Chen Zhi and driving for half a day, they finally reached the mountain area and it was no longer possible for them to continue travelling by car.

The GPS signal was lost. Even their phones had lost their network signals too.

Gu Mingchen stopped the car and looked at the mountain range around them. He frowned. "I thought they cleared the road. Was the governor reporting fake results?" Gu Mingchen was angered, while Chen Zhi hung his head low and said nothing.

Bai Rong came out and went up to Gu Mingchen. She held his hand and calmed him down, "It's commonplace. When the hospital organized a group to provide free checkups for the people in the slums last year, they said the roads are there. But when we got there, not only were there no roads, we didn't even have electricity."

Gu Mingchen calmed down slightly after Bai Rong spoke. He didn't want to get worked up before her, so he said, "We are the military. Can't interfere with the administration."

"We are humans after all. Not gods." Bai Rong smiled.

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Gu Mingchen looked at her gently before telling Chen Zhi, "Tangqian Village is under Zhenghai Town's jurisdiction. You should go to town and get a guide. We'll catch up in a bit."

"Yes." Chen Zhi drove back to the town.

"May I suggest something? Since it's getting late, why don't we stay in town for the day? We can go around and get some news from the locals. We may even get a clue." Bai Rong said.

"Sure."

They came back to town after half an hour's drive. Gu Mingchen and Bai Rong stayed in one room using fake identification. On the other hand, Chen Zhi stayed in a room by himself.

They went to the small restaurant beside the hotel to have a meal after settling down. The lady boss there kept smiling at them warmly.

"Can I ask you something about Tangqian Village, ma'am?" Bai Rong asked gently.

The lady boss' smile froze at the mention of Tangqian Village. She glanced outside before lowering her voice, "You sure are not a local, miss. We don't talk about that thing easily here."

"Why?" Bai Rong was perplexed.

"Since the disappearance of all 108 villagers five years ago, that place has become haunted. Someone even saw ghosts flying around there. It's terrifying."

Gu Mingchen looked at the lady boss calmly. He didn't believe in ghosts. "Do you know why they disappeared?" He asked.

"They said the villagers were consumed by ghosts. Since then, none of the locals dares go into that place." The lady boss shivered. She didn't want to talk about this anymore, so the woman went back to the kitchen.

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“Chen Zhi.” Gu Mingchen called.

Chen Zhi looked at him and listened closely.

“Go to the local government tomorrow and check the resident record of Tangqian Village. See if there’s anyone studying or working in a different place.” Gu Mingchen said.

“Yes.”

“I think this whole thing reeks of suspicion. What do you think?” Gu Mingchen looked at Bai Rong.

“Ghosts are just psychological offshoots. I think there are still people there in the village, so someone thought they met a ghost. I suggest we do not get a guide this time. Just get a map and go there on our own.” Bai Rong suggested.

“Alright, cancel the plan tomorrow, Chen Zhi. Do it tonight, but don’t let anyone see you. Get a map too.” Gu Mingchen made another order.

“Yes, sir.”

Gu Mingchen and Bai Rong went around for a stroll after their meal. They were going to get some fruits and some info.

Zhenghai Town’s roads were in disrepair. Many places needed to be refurbished, but none took the job. All the shops here closed their doors early. The only places that were open were those that sold supper.

Not even the town had streetlamps, let alone the village.

Bai Rong noticed a fruit shop across from them restocking, so she quickly went ahead. However, the woman stepped into a pit and almost fell. Gu Mingchen quickly held her waist and pulled her to him. “Did you sprain your ankle?” He asked worriedly.

“I didn’t. When was the last time they repaired the road here?” Bai Rong asked.

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“Not sure. I’ll get someone to check.”

“Let’s ask the locals.” Bai Rong took Gu Mingchen to the fruit stall.

Gu Mingchen’s eyes dimmed, but he followed Bai Rong to the stall. The woman bought a lot of fruits from the stall owner, then she asked, seemingly casual, “When was the last time the roads here got repaired, sir?”

“Huh? Ten years ago, I think.” The owner replied.

“Ten years ago? The road is in disrepair. If it wasn’t a jerry-built project, then it must have been caused by heavy trucks frequently passing by, right?” Bai Rong peeled a lime and had a slice, then peeled another in half before giving it to Gu Mingchen.

She gave him a weird look, while the man frowned. He hated limes since they were sour. However, since this was given by her, he took a slice and popped it in his mouth. After chewing it once, he gulped it down.

Even though he only chewed once, it was sour enough to torture him. The man stopped eating and held the lime in his hand.

Bai Rong looked at him again, this time with a smile. He had an urge to kiss her. She gave me something sour on purpose. Gu Mingchen wanted to do it, but he held back his desire.

The stall owner explained, “The town next door has a cement factory, so their trucks would pass by occasionally.”

“Oh, right. I heard that the eerie Tangqian Village is in this town.” Bai Rong said.

The stall owner’s expression darkened. “That place is haunted. People disappeared without a trace there. It’s a scary place.”

“There’s been super-hot news floating around lately, stating that the villagers killed themselves because they got infected by something. The previous mayor buried them, and someone even gave him gold for it.” Bai Rong smiled.

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"I call bull. That's nonsense. None of us believe it. I'll tell you this. The official record was that all villagers committed suicide, and the place was sealed off. Actually..." The owner looked around him before continuing, "I have a friend who lives in that village. Not only is he not dead, the guy's still alive until this day."

Gu Mingchen and Bai Rong looked at one another. "Can you tell me where your friend lives?" Bai Rong asked.

The owner looked at them both in alarm. "I don't think that's too nice."

Gu Mingchen handed him a one thousand note and the owner scribbled down his friend's address happily.

Bai Rong was speechless.

As the night went on, the couple found themselves wide awake. While Bai Rong tossed and turned around thinking about the case, Gu Mingchen pinned her down suddenly.

"What is it?" Bai Rong asked huskily.

"Wanna do it?" Gu Mingchen kissed her.

"Wear a condom." Bai Rong took the box from the bedside cabinet.

But Gu Mingchen didn't like condoms. He took the box from her and tossed it on the cabinet.

## You Owe Me, My Love Chapter 93

"I won't cum inside. And you shouldn't take the pill. It harms the body. If you get pregnant, just carry it to term. I'll marry you anyway." Gu Mingchen said with confidence before he kissed her.

Bai Rong was on guard against a matter like this. "Then let's wait until we're married."

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“Fine.” Gu Mingchen noticed her insistence. For her body’s sake, he took the condom from the cabinet.

Bai Rong was touched by how caring he was, so she made a move herself. The woman held his sturdy waist with her legs and pulled him closer.

Gu Mingchen wasn’t someone who only cared about his own fun. The man would observe all her changes in expression. After they came together, he kissed her, almost melting her in his own charm.

They woke up early next morning and had breakfast in the restaurant beside them.

“I managed to steal Tangqian Village’s records last night, chief. They did have 108 villagers.” Chen Zhi reported.

“Either the casualty was fake, or someone isn’t a local of Tangqian Village. Now that we know someone is still alive, let’s go there after breakfast to do a recce of the place first,” Gu Mingchen said.

The group of three went to the village right after breakfast. When their car couldn’t proceed any further, they walked down the path.

Gu Mingchen and Chen Zhi had one big backpack each, while Bai Rong carried her own. She had put on a pair of sport shoes today and followed them to the village.

The path ended not long after. What stood before them was a big mountain. Once again, Gu Mingchen consulted the map.

“What’s wrong?” Bai Rong asked worriedly.

Gu Mingchen frowned. “The map doesn’t show this mountain here.”

“If the local government can even fake the map, they can doctor everything.” Bai Rong said helplessly.

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“Let’s get through this mountain first.” Gu Mingchen turned around. “Get back to the car with Chen Zhi, Rong. I’ll go alone.”

“Don’t worry about me. I went around doing outdoor activities a lot. Although it is not possible for me to be on par with you two, I don’t think there would be any problem for me to get through this.” Bai Rong wanted to go with him.

“Sure, let’s go then.”

The mountain was taller than they had thought. Right after they got through one, another one waited for them. Only after they finished hiking three mountains did they see the village sleeping in the mountains.

“Is that Tangqian Village?” Bai Rong looked at the village not far from them.

“I don’t know. The map doesn’t say. Let’s check it out.” Gu Mingchen said.

Then they came down from the mountain.

“This place is cut off from the rest of the world. Nobody can come in and it’s near impossible for the villagers to go out. If a breakout did happen here, it wouldn’t get past these mountains.” Bai Rong looked around her.

Gu Mingchen stepped on an already rotting piece of wood that had the name ‘Tangqian Village’ on it.

“We’re here.” Gu Mingchen looked around him.

Thanks to the years of neglect, the farms were now overgrown with weeds. Even the houses had weeds in them. The whole village was eerily silent.

“You wouldn’t think anyone is living here from the looks of it. Where did they bury the villagers?” Chen Zhi asked with doubt.

Bai Rong pointed at the base of the mountain and Chen Zhi looked in that direction.

“They don’t have their own individual graves. Someone probably dug a mass grave and

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burned them in one place. There isn't even one tombstone here." Bai Rong explained with sorrow.

"How did you know they're buried at the base? Are you familiar with feng shui?" Chen Zhi asked.

"I'm not, but my mom loves this kind of stuff. She would often ask me to read her the Book of Changes. This village is surrounded by mountains and situated in the East. After the villagers had committed suicide, those who handled their bodies wouldn't choose the graves for them, so they would choose the nearest place for the mass grave. But they might be worried that the villagers might linger on and become vicious spirits, so they wouldn't choose to bury them in a place too inauspicious. The spot must be facing South, since the bodies would be facing a pool of water, and the mountain would be behind them." Bai Rong pointed at a lake. "The grave must be there. The mountain is in its North, while the lake is in its South."

A chill ran down Chen Zhi's spine. When something creaked, he shivered before noticing that Gu Mingchen was entering a home.

"At least warn us before you go in. That shocked me." Chen Zhi followed him inside.

The first thing that greeted them was the smell of mold from the years of neglect. The house had a creepy feeling to it.

Bai Rong looked at the table. There was a pot of tea and a few teacups on it. One of them had some tea in it.

Chen Zhi was trembling in fear, then he pointed at the cup on the table. "How can there still be any tea in that cup? It should have dried up after a week. This place is haunted."

Bai Rong thought about the story of the ghost ship. Legend had it that one day, many ships suddenly appeared on the ocean, floating around aimlessly. They looked dilapidated, as if they had been there for centuries. But when the sailors boarded the ship, they saw a cup of freshly brewed, steaming coffee on the table. They then went on to say that the ship's crew still lingered on. Since then, everyone said that those were the ghost ships.

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This village was radiating the same vibe as the ghost ship did.

When Gu Mingchen opened the pot's lid, he noticed there was water inside it.

"Chen Zhi, take a look in the kitchen and see if there's any food." Gu Mingchen told him, while he went into the bedroom with Bai Rong.

There was a blanket on the bed, and it was neatly folded.

Gu Mingchen found a strand of hair on the pillow. When Chen Zhi came in a moment later, his face was deathly pale. "There's a bowl of porridge in the kitchen. And there's also some rice in the barrel. This place is haunted..."

"Get a grip, Chen Zhi. This place isn't haunted. Someone lives here and it's a woman." Gu Mingchen analyzed calmly.

"Maybe this is why people say that this place is haunted." Bai Rong agreed with him.

"How can you guys be sure it's a human and not a ghost? This place is remote. Nobody's living here." Chen Zhi said with panic.

"This place is undeveloped, and the road is unpaved. Nobody comes here a lot, so the footprints on the ground are obvious. Ghosts don't have footprints."

After Gu Mingchen's analysis, Chen Zhi saw that there were a lot of petite footprints on the floors.

"Go to the grave and see if there's any clue, Chen Zhi. And be safe." Gu Mingchen said.

"Yes, sir." Chen Zhi headed to the lake with a pale face. As he was a member of the Special Forces, he could not tell Gu Mingchen that he was actually scared of going.

The couple resumed their investigation in the room.

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Suddenly, Gu Mingchen saw something flash by. He quickly opened the window and saw a woman going past him. He had a shocked expression on his face and a sharp glint appeared in his eyes. Without much hesitation, the man jumped out of the window.

When Bai Rong rushed to the window, Gu Mingchen was already gone. What did he see?

## You Owe Me, My Love Chapter 94

Bai Rong did not wish to be a burden to the investigation process and wanted to make some contributions. Even though the men were not around, she continued searching the room for clues. When she didn't find anything weird with the room, she searched the bedroom again. She crouched down to look underneath the bed but couldn't see anything as it was too dark. Bai Rong flashed the torchlight at the dark space and noticed that there was a floorboard under it.

She knocked on it and it sounded hollow. Bai Rong felt excited. There's a tunnel down there. Maybe there's something in it.

After prying the floorboard open, she noticed that there was a ladder leading downward. She didn't dare to go down, for fear that there might be something down there that would harm her. The woman wanted to wait for Gu Mingchen and Chen Zhi to come back before going in there.

After ten minutes or so, someone jumped out of the tunnel. It was a woman.

The woman frowned at Bai Rong, then she looked at the tunnel again. "Get in." She ordered.

Bai Rong didn't want to, but the woman took out a gun. "I don't want to hurt you, but if this misfires, don't blame me."

Bai Rong took a look at the gun which was pointing at her and had no choice but to get in.

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The woman snatched Bai Rong's phone and placed it in her bag. She then tied Bai Rong to a wooden pillar and sealed her mouth with a black tape. A moment later, the woman started packing her things up.

Bai Rong saw that there were a few hundred thousand in cash in her bag, as well as some guns and simple clothing.

After the woman slung her bag over her back, she looked at Bai Rong. "Judging from your clothing, the way you behave and the way you look, you are not a soldier."

Bai Rong looked at her quietly.

The woman smiled. "When I came here four years ago, I met Tang Xiaojiu. He's the village head's son, and the only survivor here. Coincidentally, on the day that murder happened, a little girl from another village came here to visit her grandfather, so the murderers were not aware that there was a survivor in this village."

Murder? Bai Rong frowned in shock. Since her mouth was sealed, she couldn't speak.

"Don't worry. I'll tell you everything I know. The villagers here are really simple people. They dug up a chest one day, and there were a thousand gold bars inside."

A thousand? Gu Mingchen said there were only a hundred.

"The internet says the governor had a hundred of them. That wasn't all he took. He must have given some away and wouldn't have more than two hundred bars in his possession." She continued.

Bai Rong looked at the woman in disbelief.

The woman smiled at her as if she had seen through Bai Rong. "You must be wondering about the whereabouts of the rest of the bars."

Bai Rong nodded.

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"I don't know either. Tang Xiaojiu's father went to see the mayor back then. He must have brought someone here. I can tell you that this genocide couldn't have been done by Governor Cheng alone. In other words, he was not the only culprit. According to the ratio of the gold that was split, there were at least five of them. And there must be those who were more powerful than Governor Cheng. Oh right, there was also a treasure map along with the chest. They said the gold bars were just a tiny fraction of the real treasure."

Bai Rong was even more shocked. But when she thought about it, that wasn't impossible. The village was surrounded by mountains, so news couldn't travel as fast. Governor Cheng must have been overcome by greed when he saw the gold bars. Since a tiny fraction of it was already hundreds of millions, the real treasure would be worth much more.

"Xiaojiu didn't know about the genocide at first. He only found out when Governor Cheng's scandal was exposed that the guy was one of the culprits." The woman sighed, looking like she was hurt.

Bai Rong saw that there was a look of pity in her eyes. She didn't think someone who could empathize with another would be too bad.

"OK, enough of that. Gu Mingchen is hunting me, so I can't waste any more time. When he finds you, tell him I am innocent. I will get the evidence to prove it. Tell him to let me off the hook for now." The woman then went out of the underground cellar and closed the floorboard, leaving the cellar in complete darkness.

"Mmphh." Bai Rong tried to make some sound. She trusted that Gu Mingchen would be able to find her.

The moment the woman emerged from the cellar, she bumped into Gu Mingchen. "Come with me, Xia He." The man said sternly.

Xia He smiled and mocked, "I'll be dead if I follow you back. With the power you have now, sentencing me to treason is easy."

"Everyone must take responsibility for their crimes. Including you and I." Gu Mingchen wasn't about to show mercy.

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"You won't believe me no matter what I say, will you?" Xia He gritted her teeth, anger flaring in her eyes.

"I only believe what I see and hear." Gu Mingchen said with determination.

"Is that so?" Xia He snorted, cruelty flashing in her eyes. "Gu Mingchen, do you only like Hailan and not me?"

"Yes. I have never led you on." Gu Mingchen said conclusively.

"You told me you won't fall for anyone aside from Hailan. Is that also true?" Xia He asked sharply as she tossed the phone to him.

Gu Mingchen panicked when he saw that it was Bai Rong's phone. "What did you do to her?"

"That girl looks clean and beautiful. And she looks like Hailan. Do you like her?" Xia He smiled, but there was mockery in it.

Bai Rong looked ahead into the darkness but saw nothing. She could still hear what was happening up there and was also waiting for Gu Mingchen's answer.

From their conversation, she figured out that Gu Mingchen really liked that woman called Hailan. He was around five years older than her and it was normal for a man around his mid-twenties to have dated someone before.

She used to love Su Xuyan too, but not anymore. It wasn't the case for Gu Mingchen though. It was not that he had stopped loving the woman, but that the woman was dead.

Bai Rong did not mind any of that as it was already in the past and hers was even worse than his.

Since she wasn't perfect, she couldn't expect that of someone else. It did not matter to Bai Rong how he treated other women before her. All she wanted was for him to treat her well now. She wanted to be the only one he loved.

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"You have killed Hailan, Xia He. Don't drag anyone else into this." Gu Mingchen said sternly. He glared at Xia He sharply. If looks could kill, the woman would have been dead by now.

Bai Rong's heart sank. Is he unwilling to admit that he loves me? Or is he worried that the woman called Xia He would hurt me? No, I shouldn't overthink.

## You Owe Me, My Love Chapter 95

"Being the cause of Hailan's death has already made it impossible for you to forgive me. You will kill me if you have the chance, so what's the difference if I kill another person?"

Gu Mingchen glared murderously at Xia He. Right then, Xia He took out her gun and pointed it at his head. "Search for that woman. If you can't find her in half an hour, she will die."

"I will hunt you to the ends of earth if you hurt her." Gu Mingchen said hatefully.

"Hah, you'll regret it, Gu Mingchen." Xia He felt sad for one moment, and then she opened the window and jumped out.

Gu Mingchen hurled the phone to the ground angrily. He shouldn't have left Bai Rong alone and put her in danger.

"Bai Rong. Bai Rong!" Gu Mingchen yelled.

Bai Rong looked down and leaned against the wooden pillar as she kicked the table in the cellar. The porcelain cup fell to the ground and broke apart.

Gu Mingchen heard it, so he lied against the ground to hear the sounds from the underground. "Can you hear me, Rong?"

Bai Rong kicked the table again, and Gu Mingchen quickly knocked on the floor. When he noticed the floorboard beneath the bed, he flung it open before jumping down.

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After turning on his flashlight, the man saw Bai Rong. A moment later, he quickly untied her and ripped the tape off her lips. "Sorry, Rong. I shouldn't have left you alone."

"It's fine. I understand. Let's go up now." Bai Rong said gently. She was extraordinarily calm. The woman didn't even feel afraid when she faced three dastardly villains, so being tied up was nothing for her.

The moment they got out, Bai Rong said, "I know who the killer is, Gu Mingchen."

"Xia He? Doesn't seem like it." Gu Mingchen replied.

"No, it's Tang Xiaojiu, the only survivor. They dug out a thousand gold bars. Governor Cheng didn't take all of them. There were other people involved. The villagers didn't die of disease. A genocide happened. Tang Xiaojiu is the village head's son, so he wants revenge. I suspect that he's the one who drank with the fruit stall owner." Bai Rong guessed.

"Did Xia He tell you this?" Gu Mingchen said nonchalantly.

"She wanted me to tell you that she was framed. Now she's trying to prove her innocence and wants you to stop hunting for her." Bai Rong replied.

"Do you believe her? She wouldn't be hiding here if she's trying to get evidence. I did not accuse her wrongly. Only she, Hailan, and I knew about the plan, but what happened? Our operation was exposed, while Xia He disappeared. Hailan was burned to death in the end. If she wasn't the one who leaked it, who else could it be? Me?" Gu Mingchen said coldly. He then stood up and turned his head aside.

Bai Rong could see that he was trying to calm down.

"Did anyone overhear you when you reported this to your superior?" Bai Rong's womanly instincts told her that Xia He was telling the truth.

"There was no superior. We were the only ones who knew. I don't want to talk about this. Let's end this here." Gu Mingchen went out of the room.

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Chen Zhi came over to report, "I found a grave at the lake, Chief, exactly like how we have discussed. All the corpses were there. What weird is that someone was paying them tribute. There are apples, bananas, and even pears. They're all fresh, so the one who paid this tribute must have come over this morning."

"Tang Xiaojiu came to pay tribute to his fellow villagers after killing Mr. Cheng." Bai Rong said gently.

"Let's go back," Gu Mingchen said coldly.

Bai Rong felt heavy as she looked at him. A feeling of unease crept up on her. "Are you going to arrest Tang Xiaojiu?" She asked.

"A life for a life. He must be punished for his crime." Gu Mingchen looked ahead sharply.

"What about the truth? Are you going to announce it or hide it?" Bai Rong asked, but Gu Mingchen said nothing.

He was almost certain that the relevant authorities would hide it. They would be worried that the public might lose confidence in them, and they would be pressurized. Also, the sheer gore in this matter would cause an international uproar, and they wouldn't want to alert the culprit.

Bai Rong was frustrated when Gu Mingchen didn't answer her. "I think Xia He is innocent. If she was the whistleblower, she didn't have to live her life this way. That woman could have gone overseas to lead a better life. Besides, Tang Xiaojiu is just a son of a villager. He is uncultured and uneducated, nor does he know about explosives and firearms. I believe Xia He taught him that. From the fact that the two didn't harm any civilians out of the sense of justice she has, I think she wasn't lying." Bai Rong analyzed.

"Enough. You are not a soldier, nor are you a police. And you can't represent the government. Stop talking about it." Gu Mingchen raised his voice.

Bai Rong caught the flash of frustration and distaste, and she kept quiet. If he didn't want to listen to what she had to say, he wouldn't believe it no matter how logical it was.

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There is no need to say anything further. It serves no purpose. Bai Rong said nothing and carried on hiking.

Gu Mingchen regretted it right after lashing out at her. He shouldn't have snapped at her even if he wasn't in a great mood. She was not his soldier, nor was she someone whom he could vent his frustrations at.

"Sorry." Gu Mingchen apologized.

Bai Rong smiled, but she didn't reply. The woman quickly hiked the mountain, for she didn't want to slow down everyone's progress.

It was already 4 p.m. when they returned to the car. None of them had lunch.

Bai Rong looked outside the window, while Gu Mingchen frowned as he looked at her. "I wasn't venting on purpose. Meeting Xia He here was unexpected. My temper went out of control. I'll keep it in check next time."

Bai Rong said nothing. She closed her eyes and pretended to sleep. What is love? Is it to care, listen, admire, and care about your other half? Is it staying together forever? Or is it just a way to fill in the gap of a partner and take the responsibility of reproducing?

If it was the former, Gu Mingchen would listen to her no matter what she said. If it was the latter, he would refuse to listen to her, perhaps even feel frustrated and disgusted.

Is it still love if I don't want to continue anymore? Or maybe I just don't love him enough. After all, it had only been a month and might not be enough time for her to love wholeheartedly.

Her heart was sensitive and brittle, and yet it was resilient. She had always been a passive person. Bai Rong wasn't a simple woman. Thanks to society's lessons, she learned to be selfish and scheming.

She would repay someone's kindness multiple times through, no matter how much was needed of her. But if they were unkind to her, she would slowly close her heart to them.

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Gu Mingchen rested her head on his shoulder. Bai Rong wasn't ready to be intimate with him after they had just fought. She needed time to be alone. The woman opened her eyes and leaned against the chair before her, her head against her arm.

Gu Mingchen felt something tugging at his heart and it was aching.

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