

Stealing Your Heart Chapter 203

“You are...”

“Master Cheng, we’re here to learn how to make tea silk from you,” Bai Yinning explained.

The old man’s gaze swept across the group of them standing in his yard. His wrinkled eyes squinted for a second, before he turned around and entered the house. “Follow me.”

The living room of the house was rather small, so their bodyguards stayed outside.

Even so, there wasn’t enough space for everyone.

The furniture in the house were very simple as well – eight stools, a couple of paintings on the wall, as well as a bunch of bamboo baskets resting on the floor, looking slightly out of place. There was a tea table in the middle of the room, and the old man sat down near it.

He lit a cigarette and asked, “So which one of you guys want to learn...?”

Lin Xinyan stepped forward while holding Lin Xichen’s hand. “I would like to learn how to make tea silk from you, if you are willing to teach me. I would also like to invite you to help me out at my shop, and the wages are your call.”

The old man sucked in a deep breath, before spitting out a huge cloud of smoke. The smell in the room was interesting, rather than the suffocating smell of smoke from commercial cigarettes, the smell that permeated the room had faintly resembled some kind of herb.

Zong Jinghao furrowed his brows. If not for Lin Xinyan, he would never have thought of coming to this place.

The old man studied Lin Xinyan from head to toe, his gaze finally coming to rest on the jade bangle on her wrist. His eyes flitted towards Bai Yinning, who gave him a reassuring nod.

The old man pulled back his gaze and said, "I can teach you, but I won't leave this place."

Their interaction seemed cryptic, yet Zong Jinghao could see everything clearly, though he pretended not to care.

The corners of his lips curved upwards.

He wanted to see why Bai Yinning tricked Lin Xinyan into coming here.

His face remained stoic, as though he was not meant to participate in the action at all.

"Sure," Lin Xinyan said.

"You're going to have a tough time. Are you up to it?" The old man asked.

"Ms. Lin, what about me learning it?" Qin Ya asked. "You have to take care of two kids and your shop, so how about you leave this to me?" Suddenly, she realized how suspicious that sounded, and she hurriedly explained, "I won't take advantage of this knowledge..."

"I know."

Lin Xinyan trusted her wholly.

The old man, however, ignored Qin Ya completely and said, "I'm only going to teach her and her alone."

The whole room went silent at the sound of that.

"You're only going to accept only one student?" Su Zhan asked. It's not like they're in the ancient times where a martial arts master could only take in one student in their whole life, not to mention that the old man was merely a tailor.

He even chose Lin Xinyan personally. Did he think that Lin Xinyan had some kind of talent?

The old man was calm, and he ignored Su Zhan completely while focusing his gaze on Lin Xinyan instead. "If you want to learn the art of tea silk weaving from me, you have to make me your master."

Lin Xinyan was more than happy to do so, yet she struggled to understand why he picked her specifically.

That made her surprised.

She felt uneasy about this, so she didn't agree to it immediately.

"What do you see in my wife? Why did you pick her?" A low voice rumbled from the back of the living room. Zong Jinghao didn't lift his gaze from his daughter whom he was playing with, as though nothing in this world was worth his attention besides his daughter.

The old man looked at him. The sunlight shone through the windows, its rays illuminating the grains of dust floating through the air. He squinted just a little bit as he studied the well-chiseled face in front of him. His hand that was holding onto the cigarette trembled a little, and he said calmly, "She has the talent."

"Really?" Zong Jinghao asked, finally looking up to meet the old man's gaze. The latter was slightly taken aback by this sudden movement.

He pretended to cough to avoid Zong Jinghao's gaze.

"Y'all don't seem to trust me, and I don't bother teaching anyone who isn't honest. Please leave," the old man said, before getting up and opening a side door.

"Wait!" Lin Xinyan yelled after him. Maybe all art practitioners had the same weird temper, she figured.

As a fashion designer, she didn't want to perfect only the designs of her clothes, but also the materials used to make her clothes.

If she managed to master this art, it would be a great help to her business.

Lin Xichen and Lin Ruixi were comfortable with Zong Jinghao, and his fortune would be able to provide for both kids with much to spare, so she no longer needed to plan for her kids' future like she did before. However, she didn't want to give up her dream just because she was together with Zong Jinghao.

Only with hard work can she be worthy of the title of "Zong Jinghao's wife", and the last thing she wanted to become was a burden to him.

She wasn't a vine that needed support to grow, and she won't flaunt the riches that belonged to him. Furthermore, she won't agree to submit herself to him just because she gave birth to two children for him.

She remained Lin Xinyan, and she refused to follow her mother's footsteps and became reliant on another man. No hobbies, no job, and no socializing led to her living in poverty after being abandoned.

The pain and suffering she went through as a kid remained fresh in her memory, even after her life improved under the protection of Zong Jinghao.

"Please be my master."

The old man froze for a moment, before turning around to face her. "Are you sure?"

"Yes, I am," she answered without looking at Zong Jinghao.

This was something she could deal with herself.

The man's gaze moved past her to look at the looming figure behind her, before saying, "You'll have to stay here for a couple of weeks if you truly want to learn the skill from me. Are you sure?"

Lin Xinyan was fine with staying, but she couldn't help but hesitate when she thought about her two children.

"If you're so hesitant, then forget it. It's not that easy to learn tea silk weaving anyway, and not many could survive the ordeal," the old man sneered at Lin Xinyan. He felt that it was ridiculous for someone to want to learn tea silk weaving but not willing to do the dirty work.

She probably didn't want to commit because of that.

Qin Ya was annoyed, and she stepped forward to reason with the old man.

Lin Xinyan grabbed her and pulled her back to stop her from doing anything rash. "I'm fine with that," she told the old man.

The old man's expression froze for a second. "Settle what you need to settle then come and find me."

After that, he disappeared into a room.

The door closed behind him, blocking out the noise outside.

Bai Yinning moved himself closer to Lin Xinyan on his wheelchair. "That's his temper for you. I took a really long time to convince him to make me that piece of tea silk I requested last time."

"President Bai, this is really meticulous of you," Zong Jinghao said, standing up with Lin Ruixi in his hands. "What exactly is your plan?"

Bai Yinning's smile was unwavering. "What are you talking about, President Zong? I'm just introducing Ms. Lin to a skilled master. What else can I be doing?"

Zong Jinghao huffed, his dominant aura almost visible with the naked eye. "No one who tried to plot against me escaped unscathed. I'm sure your motives behind bringing us here aren't as simple as just visiting a master, President Bai."

After that, he took Lin Xinyan by her hand and led her out of the wooden house.

Lin Xinyan followed him out obediently. After all, she have something to say to him.

They stood by the bridge over the river, and Lin Xinyan spoke up first. "Are you angry?"

"If you need money, I can give it to you," Zong Jinghao said coldly.

"Your money is yours, none of that belongs to me," Lin Xinyan said, cutting him off a bit too abruptly. She knew exactly what he wanted to say next. "Are you going to say that you can provide for me no matter what, and that I shouldn't worry about money at all?"

Zong Jinghao stared at her straight in the eye.

That was indeed what he had been thinking.

Money, accolades, honor...he could give her anything she wanted.

Lin Xinyan smiled. "I have my own dreams too. I could survive on my own before I met you. Now that we're together, I want to stay that way. To be honest, I don't feel secure about the things you gave me. I've always feared that it was merely an illusion that will disappear one day."

She looked at the endless grapevines stretching into the distance. "I've lived in poverty and shame, and I know perfectly well how it feels to be helpless and isolated..."

If she was capable then, her brother wouldn't have left her. She feared the day where history would repeat itself, yet she could only stand by and watch helplessly.

Zong Jinghao gritted his teeth. "Can't you tell that the master and Bai Yinning are plotting something?"