

"You're... serious?" Lin Fang asked suspiciously, "Then what are you going to do next?"

I drove and parked the car into the restaurant car park. Stopping the engine, I yawned and stretched, "First thing, find myself a job that pays good enough so I can look after you for the rest of my life."

Lin Fang lowered her eyes, "Sorry Zhang Chao, if it weren't for me, you won't be in this mess in the first place. But now, where are you going to get a job? It won't be easy, trying to find a job in Tong City for you now."

"Just you relax. I'll have a job soon enough."

Lin Fang couldn't understand my confidence, which was understandable. She had no idea as to who I actually am. I don't blame her for that. Or rather, knowing that

she fell in love with me despite that brought a warmth to my heart like nothing else. I silently reaffirmed my resolve that I must treat her even better in the days to come.

At the restaurant, Lin Fan also called a few of my old friends, including Xia Genghuai. I never knew that Lin Fang knew that much about me before.

“Not bad, Zhang Chao, not bad at all. You even got our childhood goddess handled! Drink!” Xia Genghuai shoved a cup at my face and made me drink.

Apart from our physique, my times in the forces also trained my guts and my ability to hold alcohol. But even then, it was still no easy task when each of them decided to drink with me. After a whole round of drinks, I excused myself for a restroom break.

Not too long after I walked out, Lin Fang followed me outside.

"What's wrong? You looked concerned." Lin Fang asked.

I encircled my arms around her, "With you around, what could I possibly be concerned about?"

"I thought you might be worried about what Chen Yuzhou or the rest of the Chen's would do. Don't worry, they really got scared this time. I don't think they would do pull anything on us anymore. At least for now."

I shook my head, "I just feel a bit odd that Xiaoxiao isn't here."

I was going to thank Chu Xiaoxiao for doing such a big favor for me. But as Lin Fang's best friend and someone who went through this ordeal together with us, it just seemed odd that she wasn't here

right now.

Lin Fang averted her gaze, "Xiaoxiao said that she made her father angry by helping us, and that she didn't want to see us anymore."

I could tell from Lin Fang's expression that she was hiding something, but I didn't point that out. I couldn't understand why she would lie about something like this.

Since she doesn't want to say it, I won't be a bother and bug her about it. I could always ask Chu Xiaoxiao myself.

And even if Chu Xiaoxiao didn't want to see me, I still need to thank her for all that she has done.

Then a bold laughter roared, "Brother! Didn't expect to see you here!" Cutting through our chat was a loud and familiar voice from a distance.

I turned my head and saw a large man like a walking mountain of flesh quickening his steps to me. The back of his hair was tied into a tiny pigtail, like a comedy singer on variety shows. He came over to me in obvious excitement.

“Big Chou!”

“Little Zhang!”

I never thought that I’d see Chou again so soon. This man that I met in the prison was a surprisingly nice guy.

A group of people followed behind Chou. They asked Chou who I was.

“Everyone, he is also our brother! He is Zhang Chao, the one that made the Chen’s slip up so badly at court a few days ago! That’s how good my brother is! He didn’t even need to lift a little finger to put the Chen’s in their place!”

These people were obviously Chou's people. When they heard that, every one of them rushed around me to shake my hand and call me brother, all the while Lin Fang stared wide eyed at what was happening.

"Big Chou, here, let me introduce you. My girlfriend, Lin Fang."

"My brother sure is lucky, to be able to have such a pretty girl like you. Pretty and elegant!"

In front of someone as pretty as Lin Fang, even street thugs like them kept their swearing and vulgar words down a notch. Their praises made Lin Fang's pretty little face blush, and she looked admiringly at me in her excitement.

"Chou Laogou, you're here today too?"

Another voice cut in curtly as we

chatted.

I turned around, and saw a sharp eyed young man wearing a baseball cap standing behind me. He looked up and down at me in contempt, "Your brother? More like your wiener."

Chou Laogou shoved at him, but somehow this thin looking young man simply shifted his stance and shrugged it off, and stood his ground as stable as a daruma doll.

I've dabbled a little in martial arts as well in close quarter combat training while I was in the forces. But I must say, I've never seen anyone brush off an attack that fluently and skillfully.

Almost all who practiced martial arts regularly were reasonably strong. Of course, not all of them have bulking muscles, but none of them are weak.

But this young man was so thin that it almost seemed as if it was some kind of sickness.

He didn't fight back as Chou Laogou came at him. Like a blade of leaf dancing in the winds, he kept floating around and away from Chou Laogou's hands as Chou Laogou waved his arms and tried to catch him, and never once did Chou Laogou's hands land on him.

I stared speechless at him.

When I came to, he already went inside one of the dining rooms.

"Who is he?"

Chou Laogou said, a touch of exasperation in his eyes, "Everyone called him Baldie. That guy's eyes were grown on the top of his head, just because he knows some sort of kung fu and fights better than anyone else. Just ignore whatever

he says.”

“Brother, let me tell you, last fight when us Red Lanterns took over the Black Alley, it was Baldie and Meng who took the lead alongside with Boss. Meng was alright, but Baldie, he said to Boss that we don’t deserve our share of the cut, because we didn’t go. But back then, Chou was still behind bars, and it was all for the Red Lantern no less! We’re all in this together for the Red Lantern, so how could he even try kicking us out when it was time to share the cut!?”

“You shut that trap of yours. He may say whatever he wants, that’s his business. But do you think that Boss would be swayed just like that? Have some faith in Boss.”

Big Chou said that, but I could see his eyes drifting to the room that Baldie went into involuntarily, so I told him to never mind about me

and hurry inside. We parted ways soon after.

Lin Fang asked, "Since when did you come to know so many people?"

Thinking about it, I actually didn't know when I befriended so many powerful people. They all just happened naturally.

After the meal, I took Lin Fang and drove to the Mr. Lu's advertisement company. Seeing that I had drove us here, Lin Fang looked at me in surprise and asked me what I wanted to do here.

"Didn't I say before? I need a job so I can feed you."

"How would he hire you again? He was nice enough to us already by not firing me as well."

I smiled at her, but didn't say

anything else. I took her hand and went inside the building.

However I was immediately stopped at the front desk before I was even able to see Mr. Lu.

“Zhang Chao! Who told you to come again? Mr. Lu already specifically said that you of all people are banned from entering this place ever again!”

Lin Fang said, “Qingqing, please, just let Zhang Chao in to see Mr. Lu.”

Qingqing laughed and snorted, “You think I’m like one of those useless men that just let you walk all over them because you had ‘asked so nicely’, Lin Fang? Let me tell you, it may work on Mr. Lu, but it won’t work on me. Just get out of here already. I don’t want either of your poor man’s bad luck rubbing off in this place.”

Just because she said those terrible things to Lin Fang, I'll make her pay.



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Wait! I Have Something to Say!



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I stopped Lin Fang from begging this Qingqing further.

“No need to ask her.”

Qingqing flipped her eyes at me, “Listen to you, if I didn’t know better I’d say you almost looked like some spoiled rich boy. Except, you’re not.”

That made Lin Fang mad and she began to say something, but I stopped her again.

“Why didn’t you let me at her? She is just a front desk, not Mr. Lu himself. She is just riding on his coat!”

I wiped off the tears at the edge of her eyes and comforted her, “There, there. See? Even you know that she is nothing but a front desk right? We don’t need to go through her at all. We’ll go directly to Mr. Lu.”

And that made Lin Fang even more frustrated, “How are we going to

see Mr. Lu now? How about if I go and talk to Mr. Lu for you?"

I gave her a smile, "That could work. You've always been a good employ here, maybe Mr. Lu will be willing to listen to you."

Lin Fang went inside alone, and of course Qingqing couldn't do anything to stop her.

So instead, she flipped her eyes at me again, "Spineless leech."

I touched my face briefly and smiled, "Are you saying I was good looking enough for that?"

"Do you even have a pair down under? You had the face to leech off the money that Lin Fang made by seeing another man?"

She could say whatever she wants about me, but I won't tolerate anyone badmouthing Lin Fang.

“Look, you seem like a decent enough human being, it really doesn’t pay to have such a foul mouth like that.”

Qingqing snorted, “So I should be praising you for being such an understanding boyfriend instead? Just the other day I saw Lin Fang going into a luxury car right outside the door over there, and she went inside with a rose bouquet no less.”

This startled me, and I wanted to ask when that happened, before I caught myself. If I asked just like that, I’d be doing exactly what Qingqing wanted. What if she said that just out of spite wanting to separate us?

And Lin Fang wasn’t like that.

If she really was after my money, she wouldn’t be together with me in the first place. The Porsche that I drove was somebody else’s, Lin

Fang knew that, and she also didn't know who I really am. So, I had faith that Lin Fang wasn't a person like that.

So I ignored Qingqing and walked aside, and made a call to Han Kun.

"My dear Master Zhang, so you finally came out? You know, this time you really did something remarkable. Right now, your name was even more well known than the Junran Group on the internet."

I laughed dryly, "Come on, Uncle Han, no need for that. It just sort of got... out of hand a little bit."

"Now that was a pretty good move you made. With the eyes of the entire country on him, it was impossible for Chen Ruhai to pull anything on you now."

"I was actually rather disappointed by how it turned out. I actually

wanted Chen Ruhai to throw everything he had at me like he was going to kill me.”

Han Kun fell silent for a few seconds, and chuckled, “A contest between two master strategists are either decided right on the first move, or else a battle of attrition that’d go on to last for decades. You want a fool to surface up in the Chen’s instead.”

“I knew that Uncle Han could understand me. It was rather lucky of me that the Chen’s have an idiot in the scene right now.” I didn’t want to risk being eavesdropped, so I ended that topic and went into what I called him for, “Uncle Han, can you contact Mr. Zhao the manager of the finance department for me? I want him to contact Lutong Advertisements for me.”

Han Kun didn’t ask what I want to do. As the company lawyer, though

he was like a dear uncle to me, he was also my subordinate.

Seeing that I hadn't left yet, Qingqing finally stood up and walked over to shoo me away.

"What are you still doing lounging around for? We have a business to run. Stop being a nuisance and get out!"

"Su Qingqing, what do you think you're doing!?"

Mr. Lu's burst out of his office and ran to us, with his face as red as a ripe apple. He ran to us, sweating and panting, and stopped Su Qingqing. Then he took my hands, and held it firmly.

"So, so you came. Please! Have a seat inside!"

He was sweating profusely, which made sense since he just made a

mad dash out of his office to us with his large and rounded body.

In Su Qingqing's startled stare, Mr. Lu invited me into his office.

Lin Fang stood by Mr. Lu's office, just as surprised as Su Qingqing at how earnestly Mr. Lu invited me in.

"Fangfang, give me a moment with Mr. Lu here, we have some business to discuss."

Mr. Lu looked at Lin Fang, then at me, completely clueless as to what I had to discuss with him. But then again, he didn't dare do anything against my wish, so he asked Lin Fang to go out and get some coffee for us.

Though Lin Fang didn't say anything, but her eyes were filled with doubt and suspicion as she looked at me and Mr. Lu.

Ushering Mr. Lu inside and closing the door, I listened for a while to make sure that no one else was listening at the door, then turned around and pulled out the chair behind his desk, and sat. I propped one of my legs on my knee, and nodded to Mr. Lu.

Mr. Lu looked completely clueless, probably wondering just what was going on, and how some little security guard like me would dare do something as bold as what I'm doing now.

"Sit." I smiled at him.

Mr. Lu swiped off his sweat, and sat down gingerly. Just as he seemed like he was going to talk, he stopped as if he had just remembered something, and turned around and reached for his tea pot to pour a cup of tea for me.

"Not bad, Mr. Lu, very nice tea."

I pretended to taste the tea as I took a small sip. In actuality, I didn't understand anything about tea at all. After so many years of training in the forces, I could drink just about anything that isn't straight up poison.

"Come on, little Zhang, stop kidding around with me now. I'll be frank, Junran's Head of Finance Department just called me, saying that Junran wants to invest in our business. Is that for real!?"

Looking at his bursting excitement, I knew I made the right move.

When I worked here, I could already tell, that what this company needed the most now was cash.

"More specifically, invest in your stocks. Junran will pitch in five million, and hold 60 percent of the total share, with the rest of the 40 in your hands. Effectively meaning,

that your capital just doubled, and more.”

Who could resist such a good offer?

This company never had more than two million of capital ever since it was founded. Which also means that, the two million worth of shares in Mr. Lu's hands effectively doubled in value as well.

And what's more is that after Junran's investment, they'll have Junran as their back up. This was something that even the Chu Enterprise wasn't able to have!

Mr. Lu was so happy that his face was stuck in a permanent smile, “R..really!? But... do you really represent Junran?”

“What did the old man Zhao say to you just then?”

“The old man... oh, you mean Mr.

Zhao, so that's what you call him?" Mr. Lu was so shocked that he left his tongue hanging for a while, and then recovered, "Look, little Zhang, you used to be one of us for a while, just stop playing with me already. What's going on?"

I said, "I need a job, but I'd catch too much attention elsewhere, so I bought this place so I can go to work here."

I took another sip from the tea, and drank in Mr. Lu's shocked expressions on his face.

After a long silence, when I was already on my fifth cup of tea, he finally came to, "You mean... you, you and Junran... you're Junran's... you're not kidding me, are you?"

"Zhao is on his way here already. Get the documentations ready, and the money should be in the company account by tomorrow. As

to the details of how we would cooperate, Junran should have people onto it in a few days. Of course, you're welcome to supervise over everything if there's anything you're worried about."

"I... umm, I..."

"Mr. Lu, no need to be so nervous. I still need to be your driver and your security guard."

Mr. Lu's face was red with nervousness again, "Little Zhang... no, umm, Mr. Zhang... yes. Mr. Zhang, just who are you to Junran?"



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Wait! I Have Something to Say!



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"I'm Junran's biggest shareholder. And in a few more minutes, your biggest shareholder. You may call me Master Zhang."

Now I finally understood why Han Kun insisted on calling me Master Zhang all this time. It just felt too good saying that.

Mr. Lu muttered, "Master Zhang..."

"Come now, Mr. Lu, don't be such a stranger. Please, do keep my identity a secret. In front of others, remember to keep calling me Little Zhang. After all, I'm still your driver."

Knock knock.

Mr. Lu immediately raised his voice nervously, "Who is it!?"

"Mr. Lu, I'm Lin Fang. I got the coffee you wanted."

Mr. Lu looked at me, and I closed

my eyes and shook my head at him in silence, letting him know that I don't want Lin Fang to know about any of this.

I walked over to the door and opened it for her, and saw that she came back with quite a bit more than a few cups of coffee. I immediately helped her with them.

"Mr. Lu, I'm sorry, but I bought a few more cups of coffee because I saw Junran's Head of Finance on my way out. I saw him once when I went to present a proposal at Junran. What's he doing at our company?"

Mr. Lu jumped and popped up from the sofa, and landed on the floor like a heavyweight bomber. He put his hands together and muttered as if he was praying.

"Mr. Lu, I see you have a guest, I shall not hold you up more than

this.”

“Wait, Mas... little Zhang, don't leave just yet.”

The fact that Junran's Head of Finance appeared here proved that what I said was all true. Knowing that, there was no way that he could afford to let me go.

“Little Zhang...?”

Qingqing came in, bringing Zhao behind her. Of course, Zhao knew me, and that I didn't want to expose my identity. He only gave me an eye as an acknowledgement.

My presence seemed to annoy Qingqing still, but she didn't dare say anything in front of all the important people here.

Mr. Lu had no choice but to say, “Remember, little Zhang, come to the company tomorrow alright?”

Remember to come!”

Qingqing and Lin Fang’s eyes opened so wide that their eyeballs might fall out. I smiled and nodded at Mr. Lu to acknowledge him.

Walking out, I stopped briefly beside Qingqing and whispered, “Well, looks like I’m back. How’s that?”

Qingqing almost burst into anger, but there wasn’t anything she could do about me. She could never understand just how someone who had offended so many people, and was in fact fired off already, could come back to the company just like that.

I walked out with Lin Fang, and Qingqing also came out and closed the door behind her, leaving Mr. Lu and Mr. Zhao alone in the office by themselves. As soon as we came out, all eyes in the floor were on us. They would never understand just

why Mr. Lu would have me back.

Lin Fang exclaimed, "How did you convince Mr. Lu? And he was so nice to you too! Oh thank goodness, you finally have a job again!"

She danced around me and chirped on. Rather than irritated, I felt happier than anything else.

"What, worried that I don't have a paying job to feed you?"

"I don't need anyone feeding me. I have my own job." Lin Fang said, but the look on her face was pure happiness.

But somehow, something stuck with me like a little thorn. It was something that Qingqing said. She said that Lin Fang had went inside some luxury car, with a rose bouquet in her hand.

I didn't want to care about it, but it

was like a thorn that was stuck and pricked at my heart at every second thoughts.

I just couldn't bring myself to ask Lin Fang about it. Though I guess I could try asking Chu Xiaoxiao, if she knew anything about it.

But for some reason, Chu Xiaoxiao had been avoiding me. She won't see me, and she won't take my call either. That was odd. Really odd.

Junran's people would take care of the investment process. I wasn't needed at all.

Of course, if I just wanted Lutong Advertisements, I never needed to appear in the first place. Junran's people are capable enough to handle just about anything I could throw at them. But, I need to let Mr. Lu know about me and my relationship with Junran, to make things easier for me in the future.

Also, the reason why I'm buying this company was partly because of Chu Xiaoxiao too.

Chu Xiaoxiao was going to start up her own advertisement company, but I ruined that. And now, because she helped me, she had a huge fight with her father. I couldn't just let her deal with it herself after all that she had done for me.

I asked Lin Fang again, if she could find some time to come with me to see Chu Xiaoxiao, since she was her best friend. But Lin Fang said that she had no time, and needed to look after her father after his operation at the hospital, and that it would have to wait until her father recovered enough.

"Alright, then, go back to work first. I have a few more things to pick up from the police department."

Lin Fang said, "Look, Zhang Chao,

don't go bothering Xiaoxiao. If you go see her now, it'd only cause her trouble."

"Don't worry, I know. I'd never go see another woman behind your back."

Now, why would Lin Fang want to stop me from contacting Chu Xiaoxiao?

As I drove, my mind raced, but I just couldn't understand. They were such close friends. And now something so big happened to Chu Xiaoxiao, why didn't Lin Fang go see her?

I gave Xia Genghuai a call, and asked him to get the things I left behind at the police department.

"Hey bro, where are you now? It was all over the internet!"

"What's all over the internet?"

“Someone’s digging your things on the internet! Get on and see it for yourself, I’ll send you the link.”

As soon as I parked the car at the side of the street, Xia Genghuai’s message came. It was an internet link to an obscure gossip forum.

Most people these days use social network apps on phones, and old discussion forums like that had been out of the popular scenes for years. Apparently Xia Genghuai only saw it because someone forwarded the address to him on his phone.

It was a thread posted by someone who called themselves “Rumor”. A woman, from the way that the texts were written. In the thread, it detailed everything from the time I was a baby all the way to just before I joined the military.

It talked about how I bullied people when I was a five years old, to how I

was bullied in school, being as insulting and humiliating in the writings as possible.

I swiped down and read the entire thing, for more than 20 minutes. It was as if my blood had stopped flowing. My whole body felt cold.

This person even posted photos, one of which was my aunt shoving my head inside the toilet bowl, captioned "caught stealing and being disciplined".

Even I didn't know that photo even existed!

It must be my aunt!

Who else but her would have that photo!? She did something as cruel as that to me and she even took a photo of it!? Did she hate me that much!? I wasn't the one who killed her husband!

My hand tightened around my phone, and I felt my eyes water. Immediately, I slapped myself hard across the face, and knocked myself out of it.

With how big everything was blown up all over the media, of course my aunt would know that I was back. I even saw her at my hearing. Back then, when I saw her, I already had a bad feeling that something bad is definitely going to happen.

I laughed, bitter and dry. I had been naive after all, to even think that maybe my aunt would be kind enough to let me off the hook. Of course, since I was seven to the day I left my home when I turned seventeen, for the entire ten years she never forgave me. She hated me for all of her life. How would she let this perfect opportunity slip through her fingers to kick me when I'm dead on the ground?

I threw my phone aside. No matter what people would say on the internet, I would never see her again. Whatever she should choose to do or say, has nothing to do with me.

I didn't know where Chu Xiaoxiao lived, so I called Han Kun and asked him.

"Master Zhang, I think you might be too afraid to even want to set foot in that place."



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Wait! I Have Something to Say!



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"Uncle Han, I've literally been through hell through the years that I served in the military, what place in Tong City could possibly make me afraid?"

Han Kun sighed, "Well... actually, Master Zhang, you didn't have to go there personally. I can have Junran make up to Chu Xiaoxiao in your place."

"I don't want to expose my relationship with Junran yet. If Junran suddenly turn around and extend a friendly hand to the Chu's, anyone with half a brain would begin to suspect that there's something going on between me and Junran. Just tell me where she lives, Uncle Han, you're making me curious."

"Fine, if you insist. Her address is 12th Yulong Bay Minor District."

"What...!?" It was as though a

lightning hit me, "But... this place..."

"Yes. It was the same neighborhood your parents lived. Where you lived. Your aunt is still living in that place."

Now I finally understood what people mean when they say that when it rains, it pours. There were things in life that you just couldn't run away from no matter how much you wanted to.

The Yulong Bay Minor District was a rather wealthy neighborhood. When my parents were alive, they saved up and bought a place there, and we've lived there since. All our neighbors were either rich businessmen or intellectuals.

But since I turned seven after my parents passed away, I became extremely shut in. I was too afraid to even go outside, so I never knew who were my neighbors. But my aunt on the other hand, over the

years she had come to know many powerful figures in Tong City.

Her son, Su Dawei, was a useless trash of the society. He never even went to high school. My aunt pulled her connections and got him accepted into some obscure institute or college, but that had been a few years ago already, so he should probably have graduated by now and doing gods knows what some place.

My old address was the 42th, quite a distance away from Chu Xiaoxiao's home. There was quite a separation between each individual household in that neighborhood. Judging by the plate number, even if I were to drive, it'd take roughly 10 minutes for me to drive from my address to hers.

I didn't want to attract too much attention by driving the Porsche. So instead, I went and rented a cheap

little BYD.

But unexpectedly, I was stopped and pulled over by the neighborhood guards because of that.

"This is an entry by invitation only area. State your business and with whom you have an appointment for."

If I said it directly that I was looking for Chu Xiaoxiao, she probably won't see me anyway. And, I don't think that Chu Huairen would let me in either.

"Su Dawei, he lives on the 42th. I'm his friend, called Liu Chen."

Somewhere in my memories I seemed to remember that he had a friend called that. I didn't know if they had remained in contact after all these years, but then again I didn't have any other better ideas

either.

The guard called Su Dawei's phone, but no one answered.

"Look, I'm kind of in a hurry. Can you do me a favor and just let me go on my way?"

"Then... then tell me who else lived in this Su Dawei's family. And if you really know this Su Dawei, I'll let you in. I couldn't just let any random strangers inside the community you know."

I chuckled, "Mister, how did you even get past your orientation training anyway? All these authorizing and authentications and such, are you really saying that I couldn't come in here as the owner of the house while my tenants can?"

He eyed me up and down suspiciously and snorted, "Who do

you think you are? Before you spout all that nonsense, why don't you buy yourself a mirror and see if you're even worth stepping inside this neighborhood."

I reached into my pocket and threw my identification card into his face, "Why don't you go and look up the name of the owner of the 42th."

He picked up my identification and looked at it suspiciously, but seeing my confidence, he finally decided that he couldn't take the risk.

"I'm warning you right here. If I found out that this was all a sham, I'm going to call the cops on you for trespassing of private properties."

He took my identification and went back to check it against the neighborhood registries.

Ever since my parents passed away, the legal owner of the house had

always been me, though my aunt simply kicked me out and took it for her own since then.

And as expected, as soon as he got to the appropriate page on the registry, sweat formed and fell from his forehead, and he ran back to me with my identification as fast as he could.

"I'm sorry, I'm so sorry. Please forgive me for that minor slip up. Pl...please, go on in and take your time."

It has been five years since I last saw this place. Finally seeing it again, though I still remember all the places, something about everything just felt different.

This neighborhood was becoming one of the oldest neighborhoods in Tong City, though its house prices never once dropped and it was still one of the richest neighborhoods.

Pulling up in front of Chu Xiaoxiao's house, I stared at it with gaping jaws. In the beginning, I thought that there must be 30 odd households between the 42th and 12th, but as it turned out, they were right opposite to each other on either sides of the street.

Now I was really praying that my aunt wasn't home to see me. That crazed woman, who knew what she would be capable of if she actually saw my face...

"Who are you looking for?"

Seeing that I parked my car in front of their house, a maidservant came out to me and asked me with suspicious and critical eyes.

As I hesitated whether or not I should tell her the truth and risk Chu Xiaoxiao refusing to see me, I heard her voice, "Oh, Zhang Chao? Why did you come?"

Chu Xiaoxiao was wearing a short skirt, pale yellow. She was used to staying abroad. Though what she wore covered all the parts that needs to be covered, they still nevertheless showed a lot of skin. Looking at her in her skimpy outfit, I was dazed for a moment before I quickly closed my eyes and gave my head a firm shake.

I cleared my throat, "I came to see how you were doing. Are you alright?"

Though as soon as I saw her, I really didn't have to ask her that anymore. The scar and bruises on her face hadn't faded yet. This Chu Huaien really was quite some character, taking his frustration and failures in his business out on his own daughter at home.

Chu Xiaoxiao told the maidservant to go back inside, and turned back to face me. Though it was obvious

that she wasn't about to let me inside.

"I'm fine, Zhang Chao. Don't come see me again."

Then she turned around and began heading back inside.

This startled me. Have I done something or wronged her in any way?

Something about her just doesn't seem right. I chased after her and stopped her just as she was about to close the door on me. I reached and grabbed her wrist, "Wait, just hold on, what's going on?"

"Look, Zhang Chao, really, don't come see me anymore. Lin Fang was a good friend, and you're a good person. I don't know what to say, but I don't want to see either of you ever again."

“Just what happened?”

Obviously, there was something else in Chu Xiaoxiao's words, but for some reason, she doesn't seem willing to say it out loud. Now that was odd, really odd. That wasn't like her at all.

I said, “Just hear me out first. I came to see you partly because I want to make up to you. You know, from before, how I meddled with your contract with Junran and soured it up? I want to make it up to you by giving you an advertisement company. What do you think?”

I really didn't know what had happened that made her Chu Xiaoxiao dislike me so much to refuse to even see me. Nevertheless, she went out of her way and helped me, and I must return the favor.

Chu Xiaoxiao was first startled. She

stared at me, and then after a short pause, she began to shut the door on me again.

“Just what’s going on here!?” This time, I really couldn’t hold my frustration in anymore, and kicked and jammed my foot between the door and its frame, “I’m not leaving until you tell me about it!”

I must had been too hard with my grip, because Chu Xiaoxiao’s face reddened with pain, or anger. She gritted her teeth, “Don’t ask me. Ask Lin Fang yourself. I can’t say it. I won’t say it. I never want to see her again.”

Lin Fang? What does any of this has to do with Lin Fang?

Chu Xiaoxiao confused me completely. What happened between her and Lin Fang?

“Let go of me first. You’re hurting

me.”

The maidservant came back, and pushed at me, “You! You let go of Xiaoxiao now, or I’m calling the police!”

I let go of her hand, “Xiaoxiao, just tell me what happened. Lin Fang said that you hated me for ruining your career, and that you hated me for making you fight with your father, and that’s why you didn’t want to see us again. What does any of this have to do with Lin Fang?”

Chu Xiaoxiao’s eyes widened, “... she said that?”

“Yeah, that’s right. I called you, because I wanted to apologize, but you won’t take my call. I wanted to give you an advertisement company to make it up to you, so... here I am.”

“I don’t hate you, and I’m not mad at

you. And it has... nothing to do with Lin Fang. Lin Fang was right, I just didn't want to see the two of you again. She wouldn't want to see me either. So just go. I don't want that company either."

With that, she slammed the door on me, almost hitting me on the nose. I knocked and slapped at the door and called her name, but she wouldn't answer. A while later, the door opened again, though this time with the chain on, it was the maidservant telling me to go back.

Just what was going on?

I did feel that Lin Fang wasn't telling me everything when she spoke to me before, but after hearing what Chu Xiaoxiao said, it was a lot more serious than what Lin Fang told me. But... just which one of them was telling the truth?



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Wait! I Have Something to Say!



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Since Chu Xiaoxiao wouldn't see me, I moved my BYD to a more obscure place and staked out by her house. She must leave her house at some point eventually. I was a soldier, I was trained to wait.

I really should be thankful that my BYD was really inconspicuous. No one even gave it a second glance, even Chu Xiaoxiao.

When it was about night time, a Mini Cooper drove out of her driveway. Chu Xiaoxiao was the driver, and she drove out alone.

After she drove some distance away, I started my BYD and followed behind her.

Chu Xiaoxiao never once noticed that she was followed at all. Once again, I thanked the past me for his foresight for renting out this cheap little BYD. If I had came in my Porsche, she would have noticed

me miles away.

Around half an hour later, Chu Xiaoxiao's car drove into the carpark of a plaza. I found a park near her, and immediately tailed behind her a little distance away. I followed her into a building, and saw her go inside the elevator. I waited until the elevator door closed completely, then went to the front of the elevator to see which floors it stopped on. The 8th, 10th, and 17th floors. Immediately, I called for the elevator and went to those floors.

Tailing someone was a piece of cake for a recon specialist like me, especially with an unsuspecting civilian like Chu Xiaoxiao as the target. Very soon after, I found her again sitting inside a cafe by herself on the 10th floor.

It looked like Chu Xiaoxiao was waiting for someone. Keeping a low

profile, I entered the cafe as well and found a seat not too far away from hers. There was an ornamental decoration between us, so we won't be able to see each other, but I'll hear what she says loud and clear.

Not too long after I sat down on my seat, Lin Fang came through the entrance. What was going on? Why was she here?

"Xiaoxiao, what did you want to see me about?"

"Lin Fang, you and I had been friends for so many years already. For old time's sake, just give me one word. Are you serious about Zhang Chao?"

"Of course I am. I like Zhang Chao, a lot. So please don't tell Zhang Chao about that."

Now this had me really confused.

Just what could they be talking about?

Chu Xiaoxiao said, "I won't talk, but I won't lie either. Zhang Chao came to me today, but I didn't tell him anything. But, if he should come to me and ask me again... I can't lie for you. I never lie. Not to my friends."

Lin Fang immediately reached out and held Chu Xiaoxiao's hand, "Please Xiaoxiao, you've always had everything, you don't understand what it's like."

Could it be, that Chu Xiaoxiao was talking about Lin Fang going into someone's luxury car?

But if it was money that Lin Fang was after, why did she choose to be with me? None of this made any sense.

Chu Xiaoxiao's voice gradually became more heated, "If I didn't

understand, I wouldn't have covered for you all this time! But Lin Fang, don't you think that you really went too far with that? What happened to you? What happened to your pride and dignity!?"

Chu Xiaoxiao's voice became louder as she spoke, and drew a lot of attention. Lin Fang couldn't take it, and her voice became laced with sobs.

I was confused, and irritated. I couldn't understand what they were talking about at all.

Lin Fang sobbed, "Chu Xiaoxiao, I know what you're thinking. But, I like Zhang Chao, and I'll never allow you to break up our relationship. If you're really going to do that... then I wished that I never had a friend like you in the first place!"

"What's going on? Two girls fighting over a man?"

"Looks that way. So who's this Zhang Chao character? Having two gorgeous girls fall for him at the same time, what a stud!"

"Zhang Chao... Zhang Chao... that kind of rings a bell... it wouldn't be that Zhang Chao that was all over the internet these days would it? That guy was something, I'll give him that, even Chen Yuzhou couldn't handle him."

"I don't think it could be him. That Zhang Chao was a huge loser. Didn't you see what they said about him on the internet? He was a piss poor pauper! Though his looks is... not too bad I guess, but was that enough to make these to stunningly beautiful girls fall in love with him at the same time?"

People murmured all around, guessing what might have happened.

Perhaps she had enough of being the subject to the gossips around her, Chu Xiaoxiao swung her bag over her shoulder and stood up, "If you truly like him, then be true to him. Don't ever let me find out that you were unfaithful to him in any way, or you can bet that I won't let you off for that. I'm leaving, and I'll never see the two of you ever again. Make sure you tell Zhang Chao that too, don't come to see me anymore."

At that, I stood up and walked to them. When Lin Fang saw me, even her face went blue.

Chu Xiaoxiao explained to Lin Fang, "I didn't tell him to come."

Lin Fang simply bit her lips. Obviously, she didn't believe Chu Xiaoxiao at all.

I said, "Fangfang, don't go blaming the wrong person now. Chu

Xiaoxiao never made me come. Instead, I just tailed her and followed her to this place. I heard all of those just then. What's going on?"

Lin Fang hung her head low, like a little girl that knew that she had done something wrong.

By now, everyone was watching us. I really didn't want to be even more famous than I already am, so I sat down at their table and motioned the waiter over to pull down the blinds all around us.

After it all settled down, Chu Xiaoxiao began, "I already promised Lin Fang that I won't talk, so ask her yourself, Zhang Chao. I'm not good at lying, and I don't want to lie."

"Then why don't you tell me the truth?"

Chu Xiaoxiao simply shook her

head in refusal.

I really couldn't understand just what happened that turned these two best friends into bitter quarrels. By Chu Xiaoxiao's personality, even if Lin Fang really did go for some other person, she'd probably urge Lin Fang to dump me clean off and go for the other guy.

I said, "Either way, I'll have the answer from both of you today. If you won't say anything, I'll piece it together myself. I was a recon specialist, there's nothing that I couldn't find out."

Lin Fang sighed. She took a sip of her water, and tears fell from her eyes.

I looked at her, and my heart sank. Did she really deceive me and like Chu Xiaoxiao said she had?

She was the first woman that I fell

in love with. If she really had done that... I don't even want to think about it.

I gripped my fist tighter, until my nails were digging in hard into my palm, as anger and frustration built up inside of me.

"You say it, Fangfang."

I said to her, my voice colder than I had intended. Lin Fang raised her eyes to me, with a hopelessness behind them.

"Chu Xiaoxiao also likes you, but I didn't want to tell you, because I didn't want to lose you. But I never would have thought that you had so little faith in me."

Now this came completely as a surprise to me. At that, Chu Xiaoxiao said nothing, and she simply took her bag and left.

“Chu Xiaoxiao!”

I yelled and chased after her, but Lin Fang’s voice sounded from behind and stopped me, “Zhang Chao, are you really going to leave me for Chu Xiaoxiao?”

I hurriedly turned back to her and said, “No! I’ve liked you ever since I saw you in high school. Nothing that would happen could change that!”

Lin Fang cried and threw herself into my arms.

I was mad enough at myself to slug myself one in the head for making the woman I loved cry like that. How could I even call myself a man?

“Xiaoxiao told me that she liked you too, and that she wanted a fair competition between us. I begged her not to do that, because I knew that I could never win against her.”

My head was a complete mess. I had absolutely no clue as to how I could have messed up so badly. I must have done something, or somehow given Chu Xiaoxiao the wrong message that caused this misunderstanding.

“Fangfang, you’re the most perfect girl in my heart.”

Lin Fang cried on, and sobbed between breaths, “Xiaoxiao said that, if she sees you again, she wouldn’t be able to stop herself from making advances on you. She said that she never wanted to see any of us again. Can you promise me that you won’t see her again? I don’t want to lose you.”

I never thought that Lin Fang treasured me that much. I hugged her, as tightly as I can, but I just couldn’t bring myself to say yes to that request, for Lin Fang’s sake, and my own.

“Fangfang, trust me, no matter what happens, I’ll never be unfaithful to you. But I must clear this up between me and Chu Xiaoxiao. She was your friend. I don’t want your friendship with her to break just because of me.”

A month ago, even I wouldn’t believe that I would one day say something ridiculous as this.

Lin Fang and Chu Xiaoxiao, back in my days in high school, one was the undisputed prettiest girl of the year, and the other was the most talented and proudest girl of the entire school. Back then, none of them would even bat an eye at me, but as life would have it, now it seemed that I must choose between one of the two.

Of course, it was never really a choice, since my heart had been Lin Fang’s from the very beginning. But what I owed Chu Xiaoxiao, I must

make it up to her, or else it just won't sit right within me.



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Wait! I Have Something to Say!



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“Please, don’t leave me!”

“Just wait for me here, I’ll clear this up with Chu Xiaoxiao. You can count on me, I’ll never betray your trust.”

I had no choice but to gently, but firmly, pry open Lin Fang’s hand from mine. The way she looked at me as I did, made my heart ache like nothing else.

Steeling myself, I turned around and ran after Chu Xiaoxiao. By now, it’ll be too late if I were to take the elevator down. So instead, I ran down the stairway as fast as I could.

Coming out into the car park of the shopping plaza, Chu Xiaoxiao was already in her car, driving towards the exit. I ran to the front of her car and tried to stop her, but she only gave me a glare, and instead of stopping, she accelerated.

Of all things I thought she might do, I didn't expect she'd do that! Out of other options, I slapped my hands down on the front of her car and jumped with all I had as her car rammed at me, and somehow managed to get myself onto her engine cover. If I had been any other untrained person, that would have hit me head on. Though by the speed that she drove, it couldn't have either killed me or crippled me, but if it really did hit me, I'd still be in a world of pain.

Since she drove with her windows open, before she could react, I climbed in through her window. When she finally screamed from the shock, I already reached over and forcibly took control of the steering wheel and turned it to one side as hard as I could. Her car swerved and turned, and was now headed straight for the wall. Finally, she let go of the accelerator and slammed the brakes before it hit the wall.

I reached over and took her key out of the ignition, "Oh, so the brakes on your car is still functional. If I didn't know any better, I could have sworn that you were trying to run into me just then."

Chu Xiaoxiao snapped her head to look in the other direction, "And it would have been worth it, if not for the fact that you're probably too poor to afford the repairs on my car."

I chuckled, "Spoken like a rich girl through and through. Lin Fang said that you liked me, but somehow I just couldn't see it."

Chu Xiaoxiao didn't even look at me, "I'm... no, I don't want to lie. Don't ask me anything."

A chill ran down my spine. When Lin Fang told me just then, I didn't quite believe what she said, but now that I caught up to Chu Xiaoxiao, the first

thing she said to me was that she didn't want to lie...

For all of my life, I never knew how to deal with women. Right now, I felt like a homeless bum who just picked up a winning lottery ticket from the neighborhood trash dump. It was only a few weeks ago that I had began to talk with a girl, and now all of a sudden I had two...

Honestly, put any men in my shoes, if any one of them said that their heart never wavered even once, I'd call them a straight up liar. Chu Xiaoxiao really was that beautiful of a woman. No one could resist her charms as if they were nothing.

I couldn't help but let my mind wander, that if both of them were mine...

Immediately I shook my head and got rid of that thought. I'm already thankful that Lin Fang was willing to

have me. I couldn't do this to myself, and to her.

I sighed, long and hard, "I really like Lin Fang, a lot. To you, the only thing I can say is, I'm sorry."

Chu Xiaoxiao looked intently at me, "You really do like her? Really really like her? You won't leave her no matter what?"

It would be better for both of us if I get it cleared up between us, sooner rather than later. I nodded intently.

Unexpectedly, Chu Xiaoxiao laughed instead, "Good. Then, the two of you have my blessings. Zhang Chao, just let me go home. I really don't want to see either of you right now."

"Wait, this is about the advertisement company that I wanted to..."

Chu Xiaoxiao still shook her head,

"There's no need. Really, we shouldn't see each other again. Especially after this. Please, get off of my car and let me go home."

"But..."

Before I finished, I saw from the corner of my sight that a car was coming towards us at an alarming speed.

"Look out!" I yelled, and threw myself at Chu Xiaoxiao in an attempt to cushion her from the impact.

Then the car hit us, and I blacked out.

"... Zhang Chao, Zhang Chao! Zhang Chao are you alright!?"

When I opened my eyes, the world was slightly tinted with pink. I guess that would be my blood, dripping from my forehead into my eyes.

Chu Xiaoxiao's car was hit and was completely deformed, likely beyond repair, though Chu Xiaoxiao herself seemed fine. In my arms, she looked at me with worried eyes. It seemed that I was able to shield her from the danger in time.

"Thank goodness you're awake! How do you... how do you feel? Just hold on for a little bit longer, they're doing all they can do to get us out of here."

"You're hurt." I moved, struggled, and wiped at the droplets of blood on her face with my fingers. My hand felt heavier than usual.

Chu Xiaoxiao suddenly teared up, "Those aren't my blood. It's yours. You're hurt, because you protected me."

Her car was severely deformed. I tried moving around, only to find that my left foot has been lodged in

place by the deformed steel plates.

Then I looked down at myself. Another steel plate protruded inside the car at a sharp angle, and cut deeply into my belly, though it seems like I was lucky enough that the steel plate was also lodged inside the wound, so it didn't bleed much at all.

This all happened in the car park of a populated shopping plaza, so help came very promptly. Right now, the rescue team outside were discussing how to cut the car open to get us out of here.

"Our people are already on their way to get the metal cutter, and the doctors are coming as soon as they can. Just hold on, and remember, whatever you do, don't fall asleep!"

"Zhang Chao, did you hear that, don't fall asleep. Talk to me."

I nodded, but already my sight was becoming blurry, and all the voices around me began muddling into a drone. I knew this feeling well, severe lack of blood, if I sleep now, I might not wake up again...

"Zhang Chao... Zhang Chao, Zhang Chao!"

Then I felt it on my face, twice. Chu Xiaoxiao slapped me across my face. It almost made me want to swear at her. Doesn't she know what I've just done for her? Couldn't she have done it in a gentler way?

"Look here, sister, I just saved your life back then, and this is how you repay me?"

"Don't sleep! If you're going to sleep again, I'll hit you even harder! Zhang Chao, please... I'm begging you, don't sleep..."

I tried to keep awake, but it really

wasn't up to me to decide. My eyelids felt heavier and heavier, as if they had been injected with lead, and so was my brain...

"I'm not... sleeping, just... resting my eyes for a bit..."

I leaned my head on her shoulder, and then I felt her nudging at me, but I was already too tired to respond to her.

Then suddenly, Chu Xiaoxiao grabbed my hand, and pressed it against herself. Subconsciously, I squeezed a little, and immediately realized just what was it that she was letting my hand hold.

Though I was still unable to push myself off her, what she did worked wonders. The soft yet firm feel on my hand kept me wide awake all throughout. I really didn't know what I should say to her at all. This woman really was something.

About 20 minutes later, the rescue team managed to get us out. As soon as they pried me out of the car, they put me into an ambulance and took us straight to the hospital. As for Chu Xiaoxiao, though she wasn't visibly hurt, the doctors also ran a complete check up on her as well, just in case.

I passed out the moment they put me on the ambulance. By the time I woke up, it was three days later already. When I opened my eyes, the first thing that came into my eyes was Chu Xiaoxiao, sitting beside me, looking at me with unblinking eyes. When she saw that I had woken up, she jumped and yelped like a rabbit, not even giving me any time to ask her for a cup of water.

"You really are a lucky one. That steel plate that cut into you, it missed your liver just by a tiny fraction, so none of your organs

were hurt. Young man, be thankful that Lady Luck is on your side today.”

After the doctor examined me, he instructed me to get some rests in, and that I was not walk about freely on my own, so as to not leave any permanent injuries.

After the doctor left, I took a look at my ward, and couldn't help but feel a strong and growing disappointment.

“Fangfang was upstairs looking after her father. Don't blame her. She couldn't handle looking after both of you at the same time.” Chu Xiaoxiao said.

I scratched my nose awkwardly at that. I didn't think that Chu Xiaoxiao could see through even my little selfish resentments.

“Of course, I know that. Thanks for

looking after me these few days.”

“What are you even thanking me for? I should be the one thanking you. You really are a good person, though your appearance doesn’t look so.” Chu Xiaoxiao muttered, “The police came sometime ago, they said that the one who hit us was a drunk driver, and that he had been arrested already.”

“Drunk driving?” I subconsciously tightened my grip, “Who are they even trying to fool? Who could possibly be drunk driving inside a car park of a shopping plaza? And with that speed, that car was headed straight for us right from the very beginning. It was meant for us.”



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Wait! I Have Something to Say!



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"You mean, that car was out to get us all along? But who would... Chen Yuzhou?" Chu Xiaoxiao's face turned blue with shock.

"Who else but him?" I could almost say for sure that the polices' investigations would yield nothing useful on this supposed drunk driver. Chen Ruhai must be the one behind this attack. They got guts, if nothing else. With all the media attention and public eyes on them, for a while, they won't be able to do anything on the surface, but it looks like they weren't beyond arranging "accidents" for their adversaries.

Chu Xiaoxiao was frightened, "Chen Yuzhou hit my car, this one was directed at me, though you were in the car as well, but the driver... he wouldn't know that. If this... if this really was Chen Yuzhou's doing, then the one that he wanted to kill this time, is me."

Chu Xiaoxiao assessment of the events seemed plausible, but why in the world would Chen Yuzhou target her? If it was an act of grudge or vengeance, it would be directed at me, his number one arch nemesis, and not Chu Xiaoxiao.

Suddenly, Chu Xiaoxiao jumped, "Oh no, if Chen Yuzhou wants to kill me, do you think... maybe he would eventually... to Lin Fang too...?"

My heart skipped a beat. That wasn't entirely impossible.

"How was Chen Yuzhou to Lin Fang in the past?"

Chu Xiaoxiao said, "I once thought that there could be no better boyfriends in the world than him, especially seeing how he used to seem to care and pamper Lin Fang. It's only now that I came to know that it was all fake. I've heard about he threatened Lin Fang with her

father's life, but I never thought that he would go as far as to hire a killer to abduct Lin Fang, and I certainly never thought that he would hire someone to kill me. My past me must have been blind to mistake him for friend-worthy materials."

I comforted her, though my voice was also cold, "All these years you have spent abroad. You didn't know half of the things that he had done. He was no stranger to these things. In the past, he once drugged and raped a girl. Afterwards, this girl became pregnant, and sued him for drugging her and raping her. Later on, he had this girl killed on the delivery table when she was giving birth to the child."

"Oh dear God...!" For a while, Chu Xiaoxiao couldn't even find her words.

"You and Lin Fang need to be careful. Though he should be after

and not the two of you, from now on until I make him disappear, both of you need to keep your distance from me.”

Perhaps out of shock, but Chu Xiaoxiao fell silent.

And it irritated me, “Don’t tell Lin Fang about this just yet. I don’t want her to worry.”

Chu Xiaoxiao sighed, “You’re so good to Lin Fang. You really do like her a lot.”

Then, I remember what Lin Fang told me, about how Chu Xiaoxiao liked me too. Did... what I just said hurt her? Or was it all in my head? For a while, I couldn’t think of what to say to her.

“Alright, seeing that you liked Lin Fang so much, let me give you a hand to get rid of this Chen Yuzhou as soon as possible.” Completely

out of the blues, Chu Xiaoxiao squeezed her fist, and seemed determined all of a sudden.

Wait, how does any of that look like she liked me at all? But then again, I never was able to understand women, so I guess that it was only natural that I couldn't understand her now.

"You? Giving me a hand? Stop playing around, this isn't a game, go home. Don't stick your nose into this boiling pot."

Chu Xiaoxiao jumped in furious rage, "Are you looking down on me? I'll have you know that back then, I was the Big Sis of Tong City. I'll admit that I was probably maybe a little frightened a while ago, but now, I just want to get rid of Chen Yuzhou. Zhang Chao, I know you have a way."

I gave her a resigned chuckle, "If I

had my ways, I wouldn't be the one lying here on the sickbed like someone that just came back from the dead. Look, just go home first."

"If I'm gone, who is going to look after you? Besides, I just saved your life, is this how you repay me? Talk about what a man of little dignity you are."

Then she flipped her eyes at me.

I was so angry that I could have a heart attack, "Whoa whoa whoa, just who's saving who here? Why don't you elaborate on how you saved..."

I was only saying it for the sake of argument, but as soon as I opened my mouth, I saw Chu Xiaoxiao's face turn bright red, and an awkward silence fell between us.

How could I forget, she must be referring to when she kept me

awake by letting me touch her... on that place.

At that thought, my eyes drifted to her torso, and lingered a few seconds too long. I won't lie, that's how much, or how little, of a gentleman I am when I'm around pretty women. I couldn't control my eyes just yet.

When Chu Xiaoxiao saw that my eyes had lowered from her face, she immediately crossed her arms in front of her chest, then pulled a pillow from right under my head and smacked it onto my face, "You dirty ratbag!"

Then Chu Xiaoxiao stomped off, and almost ran into Lin Fang as she was coming in.

"What happened to Xiaoxiao? Her face was all red, you didn't do anything mean to her did you?"
Looking at Chu Xiaoxiao stomping

off to a distance, Lin Fang asked.

Finally being able to see Lin Fang, I felt much better. I struggled to sit up, and Lin Fang hurried to my side and slid a few pillows behind my back for support.

“Are you alright? You made me worried.”

“Relax, I’ve got a long life ahead of me yet. With such a pretty girlfriend like you, I can’t afford to die just yet.”

I put my arm around Lin Fang’s waist and held her. Her scent drifted into my nose, and my heart fluttered inside. I slid my hand up and down gently, but surely, over Lin Fang’s waist. Lin Fang obviously felt it, because she suddenly tensed up under my hand, but she didn’t move away from me. Seeing her letting me do to her as I will, made my inside flutter even more, so much

that I'd give anything in the world to drag her into my bed right now...

".....!" A sharp pain tore and flashed across my wound.

"Look at you. Be careful, don't make your injuries even worse than it already is. Don't just think about... 'those' things all the time, especially now that you're injured."

Lin Fang gave me an eye, and quickly slipped out of my arms, and instructed me to lie down like a good boy.

Right now, I really wanted to kick my past self for not being able to avoid being injured. I have such a pretty girlfriend, right here and right now, but I couldn't even do anything. The more I thought about it, the more frustrated I become, "Then give me a kiss. If you kiss it, it'll make it better sooner."

Lin Fang's face was blushing bright red, and stifled a giggle, "And here I used to think that you're some kind of saint. So you're just like other men, always thinking about doing... those things all the times."

I felt as if there was an itch in my heart that I just can't seem to scratch. Taking her hand into mine, I gave the back of her hand a brief kiss, "I only think about those things with you. Will you... cooperate with me?"

Lin Fang lowered her head to hide her blush, and then flipped her eyes at me. But I wouldn't stop asking, so she said reluctantly, "I think... you should focus on getting well first..."

"And when I'm well, you will do... those things with me?"

"Oh you." Lin Fang finally laughed, like a mother to her spoiled child, "Put that aside for now, what were

you talking to Chu Xiaoxiao about just then?"

"What could we be talking about?" I was confused.

"No need to pretend. Chu Xiaoxiao, she... she likes you. What could the two of you be talking about alone? Did she say anything strange to you?"

To be honest, I think Lin Fang was being strange enough as she is now. If both Lin Fang and Chu Xiaoxiao knew that I knew that Chu Xiaoxiao liked me, then what else could she talk to me about?

It could just be my imagination, but I couldn't help but feel that perhaps Lin Fang was testing me about some other things.

"She told me... some things. Incidentally, there is something I want to talk to you about." I replied.

"What... do you want to talk to me about?"

Lin Fang tried her best to maintain her usual expression, and she would have fooled me if I hadn't been trained to spot lies and anxiety. I could tell, that she was suddenly very nervous.

"Qingqing told me. She said that while I was confined, she saw you entering a man's car."

Lin Fang looked at me, with surprise in her eyes, "So this is what you wanted to say?"

Suddenly, she drew a distance away and sat up, with her back straightened into an impeccable posture, and her face as chilly as winter ice, "Zhang Chao, if you have something you wanted to say, say it out loud. Are you suggesting that I had been unfaithful to you?"

“I didn’t mean it like that...”

“Then what else could you possibly mean!? When you got thrown in there, I went around to all the people I knew, asking them, begging them, seeing if any of them could help me get you out. Yes, I did go inside a rich man’s car, and who do you think I did it for? I did it for you! How could you be as heartless as to hold that against me!?”



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Wait! I Have Something to Say!



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In my head, I had a little if-then scenario worked out, that if she says this then I would say that, and so on and so forth. I wanted to see if I can find out a little more about this supposed "rich man" whose car she went inside. But, as soon as her tears began falling, all my plans went to pieces.

"Fangfang, I... I don't know what came over me, I'm... I'm an idiot. That's not what I mean, I just..."

"If you don't like me, just say it out loud as it is. I swear, I'm not the type of undignified woman that would cling to you like some stray tramps. I gave up Chen Yuzhou for you. For your sake, I even went as far as to make an enemy of my childhood friend. Do you think I'm the type of woman that just take any other men? And which men out there could possibly be better than Chen Yuzhou..."

But he was never faithful to you, I muttered inside me. But, Lin Fang was right. From her perspective, if she was in it for the money, she wouldn't need me at all, and she wouldn't have to give up Chen Yuzhou either.

She began to walk away towards the door, and I began to panic. I didn't want her to misunderstand me like that. So I reached for her with my hand, and I reached her, but something got caught, and another intense pain shot through my body.

".....!"

"Don't get up, quick, lie back down onto the bed!" Lin Fang looked terrified, and immediately came back to my side to give me a hand.

"Fangfang, please, listen to me. I'm not doubting you. I was wrong. Hit me."

Lin Fang looked at me for a while, then finally a smile bloomed and came back to her face. Lowering her face to mine, I felt the softness of her lips pressing lightly into my cheek, "Oh, Zhang Chao, how could you be so silly?"

I regretted it. I regretted pressing her about this. It looked like what that Qingqing said wasn't to be completely trusted either. Actually, it made sense, since it does seem that she had always been rather jealous of the attention that Lin Fang had been receiving. It wasn't all that far fetched that perhaps she'd use this chance to humiliate Lin Fang in front of others.

But from this exchange, judging from how Lin Fang had acted, this wasn't what she was worried that Chu Xiaoxiao might say either. So, just what was going on between Chu Xiaoxiao and her? But in any case, it does look like I'll have a

better chance of getting some useful answer if I asked Chu Xiaoxiao instead.

Days went by rather quickly while I lounged around on the hospital bed. Every day, there was nothing I need to do except for eating and drinking and sleeping. I wasn't actually hurt that badly. In the doctor's words, Death came at my direction in full speed with his culling scythe drawn in full swing, only to rush right past me onto whichever poor sob that was his actual target. Though I had a huge cut on my stomach area, but that cut miraculously didn't harm any of my internal organs. So right now, all that was needed for me was to wait until the cut heals, and then I'll be able to be out of this place.

My body had always been strong, and I recovered quicker than most people. Truthfully, it was actually rather boring lying in bed all day,

especially since Lin Fang couldn't come visit me everyday. Though, I wouldn't want her to even if she could. Before I put Chen Yuzhou away for good, I don't want to see her too much. I don't want to risk her being harmed on my account.

Chu Xiaoxiao on the other hand, visited me frequently. Every time she comes, she almost always had some sort of soup with her.

According to herself, those soups supposedly had various kinds of "medicinal" properties that were meant to "boost and assist" my recovery. Whether or not they actually worked aside, she was a terrible cook. I am a man who had spent years serving my country on the battlefield, and those soups tasted horrible even to me

When Han Kun caught winds that I had been injured, and was potentially fatal, the first thing he did was giving Big Lon a good

talking to, until that poor man's face was blue with fear. Then he said that he will be booking flights to come back from Denmark as soon as he can so he could take care of this for me. It took a lot of convincing, but in the end, I was finally able to talk him out of it. But he made me promise that I must wrap up this thing I had going with Chen Yuzhou as soon as possible, and as clean as possible. And that if I can't, he'll personally come back and get rid of the Chen's himself.

One day, I lay on my bed by myself in boredom, without anything to do on my hands. A few days ago, I could still struggle to lay on my sides to join the other patients in my ward in a few games of cards. But, as soon as they finally realized that I was The Famous Zhang Chao that was all over the news and media, none of them would play with me, or even talk to me again for that matter.

So, without anything better to do, I took my phone and opened it to the same discussion thread that Xia Genghuai gave me last time.

Since the day of the accident, I haven't visited that site again. It has been a few days already, so I wondered how that discussion thread had grown.

But unexpectedly, that thread was gone completely. At first, I thought that it might have been pushed down the list as newer discussion threads were created, but after searching around with all the keywords that I could think of, there was no trace of that thread to be found at all.

Just as I began feeling irritated at not being able to see the direction that thread took, on the front page, a new thread titled "ZHANG CHAO'S SECRETS, HIGHER POWER AT WORK? SILENCING COMMON

FOLK'S ONLINE PRESENCE WITH A FINGER SWIPE!" written in capitals, and was flashing red.

I felt my scalp tightening.

At times like this, discussion threads of this type was very detrimental to me. If the majority of the populace on the internet feel that I'm a good for nothing filthy rich boy, they wouldn't be inclined to stand on my side.

This thread was probably planted by Chen Ruhai's people. The fact that the title was flashing red in the discussion forum means that it was a very active discussion thread, which means that, whatever its content was and whether they were true or not, its ideas had already been seeded firmly into people's mind. Even if I could delete this thread as I willed, it would do nothing to lessen the impact that it has already achieved.

More than a little vexed, I tapped the thread open to see just what it said about me, and whether or not Chen Ruhai really was as good as he said he is as to being able to dig out my true identity.

And as expected, this was simply another fake thread that Chen Ruhai built around rumors that he cooked up himself. It was completely inaccurate as far as the truths surrounded me go. There were many claims without proof, and some were simply downright lies. The entire discussion that followed all commented on how fake and made up they were. It went on for quite a few more pages, and as I was just about to write it off as having wasted my entire afternoon, one particular reply popped up.

'..... isn't this Zhang Jun's little boy?'

Someone wrote on it, and this person knows my father.

Immediately I opened up this person's information page.

Account Name: 138****213

Judging from the user name, this was obviously only a temporary account. And when the information page came up, as expected, there was no useful information on it.

Not many people knew my father, and even fewer knew that Zhang Jun was my father. And from the tone of the text, it was rather unlikely that this person was my aunt, or anyone of the Junran Group, or Han Kun, or Zhao Gongming. Just who is this person?

Scrolling down, all the way to the bottom, I didn't see anyone else mention my father's name. I felt a little disappointed, but then I realized it, even if no one asked, I could ask myself.

I registered a temporary account, and immediately made a reply to that comment.

*****: How did you know? Are you one of Zhang Chao's family or something?

As soon as I replied, I regretted sending it out. It was too abrupt and too upfront. I might have ended up scaring that person away.

Just as I was thinking of deleting that reply and rewrite another one, that person replied.

138****213: We used to be in the same company. Zhang Jun was my boss.

This man really was one of my father's old acquaintances.

I contemplated on the idea of perhaps asking this person to meet up with me in person. If I wanted to

know more from this person, I'll have to think about how to reply him carefully.

But as I took my time considering, that reply was immediately buried under a mountain of replies.

Anonymous User: Boss? So that Zhang Chao really was one of those rich boys.

Rainbow Jade: Didn't they all say that the Zhang's were a piss poor bunch? Say, does anyone have any info on how to go about applying to become one of the Chen's "online workers"?

138***213: Zhang Jun was murdered some ten years ago. From what I heard then, his little boy has lived a pretty rough life ever since....

Though it was quiet all around, when I saw that reply, I felt as if a

bomb had been set off inside my head. My hand shook, and my phone fell through my stiffened fingers.

I reached and grabbed, over a few times, before I was finally able to pick it up. I wanted to reply to that thread again, but as I went into it again, suddenly, it brought me to a blank page instead, telling me that the entire discussion thread has been axed.

But I remembered that last bit well, that person said that Zhang Jun was murdered some ten year ago.

Murdered!

So what happened to my parents was never an accident. I knew it! Just like I had thought! And it must be related to that Jiang Ming somehow!

Then my phone rang.

I took the call by reflex. It was only after I took the call that I found that it was Han Kun who called me.

“Chao, what are you doing now?”

Most of the time, Han Kun had always referred to me as Master Zhang. It wasn't often that he called me directly by my name. I felt a little odd.

“I was sleeping just then.”

“Oh, I see. I didn't disturb you from your rest did I?”

“It's alright, I was already awake when you called.”

“I see. That's fine. Say, have you been on the internet much these days?”

I took a silent breath, “Not recently, why?”

“Nothing. It’s just that, there were quite a few bad rumors about you circulating around the internet. I don’t want you wasting your mind on those trivial matters. Definitely not good for your recovery. For now, focus on getting back into shape first.”

“Alright.”

From how timely he had called, Han Kun must have been the one who took that thread down, or pulled strings to have it pulled down. Which means, that Han Kun also knew that what happened to my parents wasn’t an accident at all. He knew that they were murdered! So why hasn’t he look into it!?

I couldn’t just sit around and wait anymore. I need to know, right now, just who this Jiang Ming character is. I must, and I will, get to the bottom of my parents’ death! And if this Jiang Ming had a hand in it...

I kicked off my bed cover and jumped out of bed. My wound has mostly healed up, I just had to refrain from making any sudden and strenuous movements, like walking too hard and too fast.

“Where are you going? You should be resting!” Before I reached the door, the door opened by itself and revealed a Chu Xiaoxiao behind it, along with a bowl of soup in her hands.



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Wait! I Have Something to Say!



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Seeing that I got out of bed, Chu Xiaoxiao stood and blocked the entrance with her body, "Your wounds aren't healed yet. You're not going anywhere."

"Out of my way."

"If you go out like this, your wounds are going to open, and do you think I want even more work on my hand looking after you?"

"Get out, of my way! This is my business, and mine alone. It has nothing to do with you!"

Though Chu Xiaoxiao was frightened by my tone of voice, she held her ground and refused to move out of the way.

"I won't... I won't! You said that you're going to give me an advertisement company. If you go out like this and just upped and died, who am I going to see to be

able to get my company? No, I will not allow you to go.”

She blocked the doorway with defiant eyes, as if even Death himself couldn't make her give way. If it had been any other times, I'd be able to simply pick her up and tie her onto the bed and be on my way, but with how my body is at this moment, I don't even have the strength to push past her.

I didn't have a choice but to ask her to let me go, “Please, sister, miss, lady? Just what do you want? Can you please step aside and let me pass? I really do have something important that I must do.”

“You're not going anywhere unless you tell me what you're going to do.”

I said, “I... I need to hurry up and take care of this Chen Yuzhou business, otherwise Lin Fang will never be safe.”

Of course I wouldn't just tell her about my family matters. About my identity, the less people knew about it, the better.

Hearing my answer, Chu Xiaoxiao thinned her lips, "Well aren't you just the perfect lover. You really liked Lin Fang that much?"

"Move."

I really didn't want to say anything more. If she was determined to keep standing in my way after this, I'll shove past her even if it means tearing up my freshly healed wounds.

"Alright, fine, I get it, no need to flaunt your love for your woman in front of a single girl who doesn't have a boyfriend yet. Fine, you can go, but tell me where you're headed, and I'll drive you there. Seeing you like you are now, you yourself should know better than anyone

else that you won't be able to walk far in that body of yours, let alone driving yourself."

What Chu Xiaoxiao said was completely reasonable. I would prefer to do this on my own but my current physical condition isn't going to give me any advantage when it comes to arguing with her.

She walked me to the car park and helped me into the car, then sat herself down on the driver's seat.

"So, where are you going?"

Now that I think about it, I don't actually know where I want to go.

"You didn't know where you're headed? Then why did you even slip out of the hospital in the first place!?" Chu Xiaoxiao stared at me, like I was some kind of imbecile.

"Hush, let me make a call." Taking

out my phone, I dialed a number that I thought I would never call again.

I called Zhao Zichen. Now that it has come to this, I had no one else but him to turn to.

Han Kun forbade me from looking into this, which means that, if I do this through my usual connections, Han Kun would know about it in a heartbeat, and he will definitely think of some way to sabotage me.

Of course, I could also get Cai to look into it for me, but his current duties lie with the investigation of the cross border firearm smuggling trades. What I was about to ask from him, should I decide to ask him for help, was no small matter. Besides, throughout all of this, I won't be able to help at all with this body of mine, so in the very least, I don't want to have to trouble him unless I really had no other choices

available..

So, by the process of elimination, Zhao Zichen was the only one that I could ask this of.

Surprisingly, when he took my call, he didn't waste time with pleasantries at all. It was as if he had been expecting my call all along, and simply asked me where we'll be meeting.

"Are you in the hospital now? I'm here in the Tong City Hospital." I asked.

"I heard what happened, a shame." Zhao Zichen's voice sounded far away and absent minded, as if he was working on something else at the moment.

Chu Xiaoxiao was right beside me, and heard the voice that came out of my phone loud and clear. She said, with disgust, "Who's this

snobby brat on the other side of the phone? Does he even know how to speak at all? What does he mean by 'a shame' anyway?"

Zhao Zichen said, "Exactly what I mean. I have a patient right here, she needs a heart transplant, but she had been on the waiting list forever looking for a heart that matches hers. And what do you know, that day when you were sent in, I took the liberty of taking a sample of your blood to test it against her, and voila! Perfect match!"

In my heart, I cursed him and his ancestors that had the misfortune of having someone like him in their lineage, but I have use for him just yet, so I held it in and didn't let my inner thoughts surface up...

"You little twerp, what did you just say!?" Though I held it in, Chu Xiaoxiao didn't. She yelled back into

my phone in my place.

I hurriedly changed the topic, because I had a feeling that if I didn't, these two may just began fighting hurling insults at each other through the phone. "Where are you now?"

"Who? Me? I'm stealing corpses right now. Or more specifically, parts of the corpse. You see, since you obviously won't be donating your heart anytime soon, I don't think she is going to make it after all, but I did notice that she had a rather perfect set of cornea, so... ouch! Hey, stop, stop hitting me, it's me...! Ah, anyway, I'll talk to you later, got a bit of a situation here."

And then he hung up the phone. I had no idea just what he was playing at over there at his end.

"So, this is the man that you're going to ask help from? Are you

sure that he is even sane?"

Chu Xiaoxiao muttered, and seeing that I didn't speak, she started the car and began driving heading out of the hospital car park.

But suddenly, four blue Buicks drove in from the entrance, all business models, the types that could seat 7-8 people. They drove in, parallel to each other, taking up the space of the driveway completely, blocking the path.

Seeing that the exit was being blocked, Chu Xiaoxiao pulled her car to the side to wait for them to pass.

"Something isn't right." I thinned my eyes, and got Chu Xiaoxiao to stop her engine for now.

Since she had just been through a car accident, Chu Xiaoxiao was a little overly sensitive towards cars

that just suddenly appeared from nowhere. She did as I instructed immediately, and stopped her engine.

And sure enough, these Buicks wandered in and parked themselves randomly. Then their door opened and groups and groups of men came down, all wearing hoodies. A few of the leader-looking people even communicated with each other using hand signs.

“They’re... these people definitely didn’t come here for the doctors.”

Even Chu Xiaoxiao could tell, that none of these people looked a little bit sick at all.

“Don’t make a sound. They got blades on them.”

I pointed to let Chu Xiaoxiao see. Around their waists, they all had an unnatural bulge, which they covered

up with their jackets, but sometimes as they moved, the hilts of their knives still peeked out.

“Then what do we do? Try to run away?”

“They might not have come for us. It’s obvious that with a group this big, they’re either Black Dragons or Red Lanterns. If it’s the Red Lanterns, then we have nothing to fear. But if they’re Black Dragons, we can’t hide from them.”

When Chu Xiaoxiao was in high school, she walked her share of the hoods and made somewhat of a name for herself in the hoods, so she was a little knowledgeable about the situation of the gangs and mafia in Tong City. But of course, what she had done back then was nothing short of little child’s play in the eyes of real gangs. If I told her that flaky doctor that I just call was a mafia boss of

one of Tong City's two largest gangs, it will probably frighten her to bit.

Chu Xiaoxiao's mindset switched immediately, "Yes, you're right, we can't hide from them. If they, if those people really had came for us, then Lin Fang is in danger!"

"Wait for me in the car." I said.

And immediately Chu Xiaoxiao reached and grabbed me, but she hadn't realized that the place she grabbed was right over where my wound is. An intense pain shot through me, hurting me so much that my eyes blacked out momentarily.

"You're not going alone. I'm... I'm coming with you."

I grabbed her hand and pulled it away from my wound, "If I bring you along, you'd be the end of me

before they even get to me.”

Finally realizing what she had done, Chu Xiaoxiao smiled awkwardly at me and got out of the car, then came over to my side to help me out of her car.

“No need, I can do this myself.”

Though my wound hurts, I’ve been through worse. This wasn’t anything serious in comparison.

Getting out of the car, I took off my coat and wrapped it around my waist over my wounds, then pulled it in tight and tied a knot with it to secure it in place. My face whitened from the pain, but I regained mobility. Chu Xiaoxiao stared at all of this with her eyes wide in surprise.

“Are all soldiers as tough and hardy as you?”

"This is nothing. Once I had a mission around the border at the southwest, one of my squad members stepped on a landmine, and the shrapnels tore a hole through his stomach. He simply looked at it, then stuffed his intestines back inside the hole, then went outside and killed some more enemies before he finally went down himself."

Chu Xiaoxiao was at a loss for words, "You soldier types really are tough. Although, I didn't know that you've been through so much in your life."

I was simply stating a fact just then, and I didn't mean to boast at all. But hearing the admiration and concern in her voice, I regretted it a little. Lin Fang said that Chu Xiaoxiao have feelings for me, and since I don't plan to reciprocate her feelings, I should watch what I say around her so as to not give her any wrong

ideas.

Pulling my thoughts in, I said to her, "Alright, follow behind me, and don't make a sound."

There wasn't a lot of people in the car park. The group of hooded men sticks out like a sore thumb, and everyone who walked by went around them, avoiding to make eye contacts with them. We went and mingled in with the crowd, and followed behind them quietly from a little distance.

I secretly messaged Xia Genghuai, telling him to bring a group of people he can trust to the Tong City Hospital. Judging from how things looked, it's quite likely that a fight would soon break out here. I also told him to go about doing this discreetly, and keep it secret from their superiors, in case that they were in it together with the Chen's.

The hooded group went all the way into the hospital lobby, and looked around. They talked amongst themselves, muttering about something.

Then suddenly, they fell quiet and gave each other a look. Then all of a sudden, they sprung into action and began shoving and kicking people all around them. It immediately caused panics and uproars in the crowds.

“Tear this place down!”

They all drew their weapon, and began slashing and smacking things. They didn't use their weapons on people, but they smashed up everything else they could see. Chairs, tables, plants, counters, windows... everything in sight.

People scattered about in terror, and even the hospital security

guards froze in fear.



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Wait! I Have Something to Say!



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“Zhao Zichen! Get your scrawny butt out here! You think you can hide in this hole forever!?”

As it turned out, they had come for Zhao Zichen. In that case, this lot probably belonged to the Black Dragon.

“Relax, these people didn’t come for us. We don’t need to worry about this at all.”

I reassured Chu Xiaoxiao, who only nodded with a dumbfounded expression behind me.

It wasn’t as if I was so heartless as to leave Zhao Zichen to fend for himself, but he was a mafia boss, the leader of the Red Lanterns. Surely he could handle something as small as this on his own.

The head of the hospital security finally squeezed through the terrified crowd with a riot fork in his

hands. Before he even said anything, however, the blond in the lead lunged at him and slashed at his riot fork. The two weapons clashed and locked, bringing about an uncomfortable noise.

“Ye Debiao, what are you trying to pull here? If you even as much as touch me with that thing, tomorrow I’ll bring my lot over to yours and do your wife in, and your daughter too!”

This blonde was even more ferocious than the security guard captain. The captain was barely able to defend himself from the blade with his riot fork, but he could only smile and plead reluctantly.

“Please, Blonde, just calm down. Let’s talk this out. Let me get Director Zhao for you.”

“Director!? Director your stinking butt! I heard from my men, a few days ago those Red Lantern dogs

tricked and robbed our territory, and that yapping puppy Zhao Zichen acted as their bait! You Tong City Hospital sure got guts, thinking that you could defy us Black Dragons!?”

As soon as the crowd heard that these people belonged to the Black Dragon, silence fell everywhere and people distanced themselves away from them as much as they could. A few of those who are a little further away from the scene simply disappeared and fled the scene.

“What’s going on? They have a doctor here that runs with the gangs?” Chu Xiaoxiao asked, her curiosity kicking in, driving away her fear from moments ago.

No, he doesn’t run with the gangs, he leads them. There is a qualitative difference here. I muttered quietly to myself.

Then from the top of the stairs

came a faint set of footsteps. It was quiet all around, so I was able to hear it. Secretly, I glanced around and searched for its source, and found that those footsteps belonged to Zhao Gongming. He appeared upstairs, with a worried look on his face.

Nobody else in the lobby noticed him. He lowered his head and gave a few instructions to his assistance, who nodded calmly and left.

I looked closer at his face. Though he looked worried, there was no surprise in his expression at all. Alright, I get it now, this old fox already knew everything about his son and his true identity!

Realizing that, anger rose within me. They played me, Zhao Gongming and Zhao Zichen too. Even if I could help them before, I won't now. I'll just see how these two weasels can squirm out of this

one.

“Give way! Give way! We have a woman here and her water just broke! Please! Coming through!”

Then suddenly, the door of the lobby opened and a doctor came in with a few paramedics carrying a woman in on a stretcher, who was writhing and groaning in pain.

Seeing that, Blonde simply walked up to the doctor in the lead and kicked him, sending the poor doctor crashing into the wall. Some of his men then moved to take the pregnant woman hostage, and formed a wall of people around her.

“Please, Blonde, this woman was about to give birth. Please find it in your heart and let her go, she has nothing to do with any of this.” The security captain, Ye Debiao, begged and pleaded with Blonde.

Blonde only gave him a sideway glance, then grabbed the steel trash bin lying at his foot, and smashed it over Ye Debiao's head.

"You think you can make demands of me!? I said, get your stinking Zhao Zichen out here! If you don't, people will start dying. One? A hundred? Ten thousand? I don't give a bloody damn!"

"Arrgh... the pain... please... I beg you, please... my baby... he's about to..."

But no matter how the woman begged, the blonde simply ignored her. The woman's husband was so worried that he was pulling his hair out, but that blonde won't even give them an eye.

Then suddenly, the woman's husband jumped out, and threw himself in front of the blonde, and begged him on his knees, "Please, I

beg you, leave us common folks out of this. Please let my wife go!" He begged, knocking his forehead on the ground as he did, and before long, the ground beneath him reddened with blood, dripping down from his forehead.

Anger finally took over and overwhelmed the crowd over their fears of the Black Dragons.

"Do you even have a heart!? Is that how you Black Dragon do things, taking your anger out on an innocent pregnant woman!?"

"This is against the law! We're calling the police!"

At this, the Blonde snorted coldly at the woman's husband, who was still begging at his feet, "Alright, I get now, get up already."

"Oh, thank you, thank you, thank..."

Thinking that the blond would finally let them go, he began to stand up, still thanking the blonde, but before he even go back up on his feet, the blonde raised his foot and planted into the woman's husband's chest, sending him flying backwards. His head crashed into a table edge, and a pool of blood quickly formed beneath him where he fell.

"Who's the one that said you're calling the cops!? Get your sorry ass out of here right now!" The blonde pointed the machete in his hand at the crowd.

Their face whitened and fell back into silence again. Their lips trembled, but no one dared to make a noise.

"Who's the one that said that!? Come out here and call the stinking cops! I dare you!"

I don't think anyone would respond.

It would be suicide if they did.

"I can't stand it anymore!" Before I could react, Chu Xiaoxiao already jumped out, "I'll do it!"

I wanted to stop her, but she acted before she said those words. I screamed at her inside, how could this woman be so rash!?

Immediately, she dialed on her phone, and glared at the blonde, "You said it yourself, so I did. That's what you get for thinking yourself above the law here in Tong City!"

In case the blonde gets physical on her, I quickly stepped in and stood between the blonde and Chu Xiaoxiao, shielding her from his sight.

The blonde, looked my up and down, then his beady little eyes suddenly opened wide like a little bean, and laughed condescendingly,

“Well well, who do we have here, if it isn’t Zhang Chao the little hero of Tong City.”

Then the people behind the blonde roared with laughter, as if it was some kind of hilarious joke.

I kept my eyes on the blonde, “Look, blondie, you’re a Black Dragon. If you claim that you walk the jianghu, then at least do this the jianghu way. Leave this innocent woman out of this. Let her go, and I’ll make Zhao Zichen come out.”

“Oh, let’s not get ahead of ourselves.” The blonde wiped at the tear at the corner of his eyes, from laughing too hard, “Why don’t we let this woman behind you call the cops first.”

Chu Xiaoxiao’s call went through at this instant, “Hello, police? Yes, I want to report a case. We’re at the Tong City Hospital, and some gang

members abducted a pregnant woman. There's a lot of them here. They claimed that they're from the Black Dragon... hello? Hello? Hello!? What's... what's happening? Did they just... hang up?"

The blonde snorted, and tapped his hand at the pregnant woman's belly, "So what if I hurt a woman or two? I do whatever I wish to." Then he slapped the woman's belly hard.

"Are you even human!?"

Ye Debiao roared with rage, and rammed his riot fork at the blonde. It seemed like the blonde never expected any resistance from anyone, and got caught in surprise. Ye Debiao shoved the riot fork at the blonde's neck.

Caught by surprise, the blonde got pinned onto the ground. But though he was down, he soon yelled.

“How dare you actually...! Take him down!”

On the ground, the blonde's hands went around his neck, trying to fend off the riot fork. Bloodshots filled his eyes, as he screamed at Ye Debiao in anger.

On Ye Debiao's face right now, was pure astonishment and fear. When he finally snapped out of this rage, he found himself pinning the blonde onto the ground, and though he wanted to retract his riot fork, his hands refused to let go as though his hands weren't actually his.

Number wise, there were quite a lot of security guards at the hospital. If they stand together against this group of Black Dragons, they actually have a fair chance of driving them out.

But the Black Dragons were a vicious bunch that won't even bat

an eyelid when they kill people. Compared to them, the security guards at the hospital were simply normal people trying to make a living. None of them had the guts to step out and stand together with their captain. Soon, Blonde's men had him surrounded.

But no one laid judgemental eyes on the hospital security guards. After all, they all saw with their own eyes just then, that even the police refused to step in when it comes to the Black Dragons.

They came at him, and Ye Debiao quickly fell to their numbers. They kicked his riot fork away, and had him pinned on the ground. Then the blonde stood up, walked over to him, and kicked and stamped at his face. Before long, Ye Debiao's face immediately swelled, as blood dripped from his face and the corner of his mouth.

A few faint hearted ones from the crowd even fainted and vomited.

“Giving up already? Why don’t you call the cops again? Maybe they’ll take your call this time.” The blonde taunted at Chu Xiaoxiao and me.

As bold and daring as Chu Xiaoxiao, this was way out of her understanding. Who would have thought that even the police are afraid of the Black Dragons?



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Wait! I Have Something to Say!



Send a Gift to the Writer!

“Call the cops! I dare you! All of you! Call the stinking cops again one more time!”

No one answered. No one even dared to move, or make a sound, much less actually taking their phone out to call the police.

“How dare you! How dare any one of you even mention the cops in front of my face!” The blonde snorted, “Bloody hilarious! I’ll see just which one of them puny cops dare to show their face when I’m around.”

Seeing my anger, the blonde picked up the riot fork on the ground and tapped my face with it.

“So, Zhang Chao is it? I heard that Chen Yuzhou was in pretty bad shape because of you. Think you’re so great and smart? Didn’t you know that Chen Yuzhou was under us Black Dragon’s protection!?”

Actually, now that I think about it, I might just take one of your arms for this offense. You gave him a hard time, we take one of your arms. Fair is fair right?"

"Big Blonde, we don't want his hand. We want his girl!"

My heart burned with silent rage. These lowlifes actually had the gall to even think about touching Chu Xiaoxiao!?

The blonde laughed, and the group behind him all leered and ogled at Chu Xiaoxiao, and licked their lips.

"So, you're Chu Huaien's little girl. We heard that your father owed a lot of people money. Why don't you spend a few nights of us, and we can see if we can sort something out for your father?" The blonde laughed lecherously.

Chu Xiaoxiao glared at them, losing

her words in anger, "You...! You... scum!"

The angrier she become, the more the blonde taunted at her. He even tried to flip Chu Xiaoxiao's skirt with the riot fork in his hands.

"Well, seeing how the hospital is taking their time giving us the people we want, we have a lot of time on our hands. Yes, a lot of time, enough for you to get around all of us for a round or two!"

"You...!" Tears fell from Chu Xiaoxiao's face in both fear and rage.

The blonde seemed intent to carry out his threat. He motioned with his head, and two men behind him stepped forward and came at us.

"Hiding? Think you can hide from me? Don't be such an ungrateful woman. You should be honored that

you even had the honor and fortune to be my plaything!”

Then his riot fork in his hand froze in place.

The blonde had all of his attention on Chu Xiaoxiao, and didn't notice that I already had one of my hands on the riot fork.

He tried to pull the riot fork back, but it simply remained in place like it was glued to my hand.

The blonde lifted his eyes to meet mine. In his eyes, I saw both hatred and madness.

“You really want to piece of this?”
The blonde ground his teeth together, and threatened.

“Don't take this too far. Even if you walked the jianghu, even the jianghu has its rules.”

He sniggered, "In Tong City, we the Black Dragons are the ones in control. We make the rules. We are the rules. Who do you even think you are? Let go!"

If possible, I didn't want to offend the Black Dragons directly just yet. I know how widespread their influence are, and how cruel their people can be. Knocking Chen Yuzhou around is one thing, but offending the Black Dragons openly is quite another.

I said, "Look, blondie, none of this had anything to do with any of us. Zhao Zichen is the one that you want right? Leave us innocent people out of this."

Jin was also a Black Dragon, but this blonde's attitude was a lot more arrogant than even him!

There is honor even among thieves. Even the mafia, especially the well

established ones, they don't simply go around the streets and knock innocent people left and right with no good reasons.

All that was here in the hospital are either the weak or the old, or both. If words got out, they'd be the laughingstock among all who walked the jianghu. Plus, usually they valued their face and dignity above all else, so why would they do something as shameful and meaningless as this? Could their real motive be something else entirely?

The blonde laughed viciously, "Too bad for you, this is exactly why I came today. Just remember, you're all innocent people, and everything that happened to you today is because of Zhao Zichen! That little whining brat had the gall to play us the Black Dragons for the Red Lanterns! All of you are hurt because of him!"

As expected, they came prepared.

I cursed under my breath, and said, "So the police are already in the knows, that a huge fight is going to take place here, and was instructed to leave this place alone?"

The blonde laughed, "Oh, lookie, some here actually has a brain."

I took a deep breath, trying to appease the growing feeling of anger and disappointment inside.

I think most of the crowd right now would be feeling the same helplessness as I did right now, at the Black Dragon's arrogance, and at our own misery of having to submit under such tyranny.

I let go of my hand, and the blonde snapped the riot fork back away from my hand. He spat on the ground, "Scared now that you finally know who you're messing with? You

just sit your ass tight here, Zhang Chao, my men told me that you were there that day too. After I'm done with Zhao Zichen, you're next!"

Chu Xiaoxiao asked me, worried, "What are we going to do? Zhang Chao, quick, think of something!"

The blonde waved the riot fork around like a certain mythical monkey, like he owned this place.

"Zhao Gongming! Get your brat of a bastard son out here! He crossed the Black Dragons, and we're not going to leave without one of his arms!"

Something snapped inside of me. I couldn't believe that, while my comrades and I fought and died on the battlefield for my people's and my country's sake, the government allowed scumbags like these to trash my home, my city, and my fellow people.

I breathed out, heavily, "Blondie, when you die, there will be a spot in hell reserved just for you.

I said quietly, and calmly. The blonde didn't catch what I said, and only dismissed me passingly.

And before he could react, I already closed in and took his left arm into mine, and bent it as I had done so many times in trainings and on the battlefield. There was a clean snapping sound. I snapped and folded his arm, in the opposite direction.

Nobody in the crowd even realized what had just happened.

"Aaarrgh!" It was only when the blonde screamed in pain that his people finally came to.

Then chaos ensued. Those who wanted to run ran away and escaped the scene as fast as they

could, while the blonde's men came and surrounded me. They have a much bigger problem to worry about than the people who are trying to run away.

"Hurry! Get that woman to safety!"

I saw that Chu Xiaoxiao running to to my side, so I yelled at her. When she heard me, she first ran to the woman, but then stopped to look at me again, then at the women, then at me again. After hesitation, she gritted her teeth and did as I told her to, and went to the pregnant woman.

I let go of my hands and took a step back. I sighed. The frustration and anger that burned inside of me lessened not even a little bit, but grew instead.

"Argh! My arm! Doctors!"

The blonde's arm hung useless on

his shoulder, and limped about unnaturally. His elbow swelled, and waved about in an odd manner.

A person's arm usually don't break easily, but once they are, it would hurt more than anything else in the world.

Of course, I wouldn't fault the blonde for chickening out at all, because the pain was quite literally out of this world. He stared at me, unbelievably, at the fact that while he was armed with a riot fork, an unarmed person like me just closed in and disarmed him, and snapped his arm like a twig.

But no matter how hard he screamed and rolled around in pain, no doctors stepped forward to help him.

One of the blonde's men stripped off his top and ripped it into strips, and secured the blonde's arm in

place.

The blonde was in so much pain that he had tears and snots all over his face. He screamed at me, "I'll kill...!"

I didn't wait for him to finish his threat, "Just you hold on, before you speak, have some respect for karma. See? You came in here and insulted the doctors, and now, look at you, which doctors would even want to help you?"

I poured salt into his open wound.

"You...!"

"You know, some wise people once said to me, like doctors like parents. See now? You're even worse than orphans. All those doctors, and none of them wants to even look at you. What a wretched person you are, don't you think?"



Rate the Translation to Get 2 Pearls.



Wait! I Have Something to Say!



Send a Gift to the Writer!

The blonde's men surrounded me, but none of them came at me. I can see it in their eyes. They were scared. If they weren't they would have come at me like they did to the security captain.

"Zhang Chao! I swear! I swear I won't let you walk out of this hospital alive!"

The blonde brought quite a number with him today. If this had been any other day, I have enough faith in my abilities that I could take care of all of them at the same time. But not today. The faint but growing pain at my waist reminded me that I won't be able to keep this up for much longer.

I was usually more of a person of action than words. The reason why I dragged it on and taunted him was that I was buying time for myself, until Xia Genghua comes. Though for some reason, he was still

nowhere to be found.

It looked like Xia Genghuai won't be able to make it in time. The blonde's men had already begun closing in around me.

"Oh really? Why don't we make a bet then, if I walk out of that door safely today, you'll call me 'daddy' from now on. Deal?"

"Screw you! Everyone, get him! Kill him!"

All of a sudden, I yelled over their screams, "Wait!"

They startled and halted midway, surprised by my sudden outburst.

I said, "Didn't you say just then that you people answer to nobody in Tong City? Let me make a phone call."

"You think I'm some kind of dumb

three year olds silly enough to let you call for help?”

“Unless you admit that what you just said was nothing but empty talks.”

The blonde cursed at me, “Fine! Make your damned call. Let’s see what you can still pull out of that ass of your!”

I took out my phone and found Zhao Zichen’s name, and called him. The moment my call was picked up, I yelled into my phone in anger, “What the hell are you still playing at!? Get you people and your butt down here right now!”

The hospital lobby was in a state of complete chaos. Here, I was surrounded by a sea of thugs, while this guy was hiding somewhere safe and sound doing God knows what.

“My, aren’t we in a foul mood today.”
From my phone came Zhao Zichen’s relaxed and lazy voice, “There’s just so many people out there, you know? I’m a little too shy for that. Plus, if I go out now with all of my men, people will find out that I’m Red Lantern’s master. Now why would I do such a thing to myself?”

Listening to him, my brain pulsed with pain, and rage. That bastard, just wait until I see him again, I’ll make him vomit hell.

“Get your sorry ass out here now. If you don’t, I’ll lead those Black Dragons to your bloody door!”

“Alright already. Geez, is that how you speak to your brothers? Talk about having bad manners.” He had the decency to give me a sigh.

“Brothers your foot!”

I yelled into my phone, but he

already hung up. Seeing the look on my face, the blonde laughed coldly, "So, where is your help?"

Help? What help? There wasn't even one single Red Lantern around here.

Well, that was awkward. I put on this grand show and made such a big scene, and that bastard stood me up.

The blonde was in tears now, this time from laughter, "Oh, boy, Zhang Chao, what a comedian."

That bastard, played me like a fool, stood me up in front of all these people, and now I don't even have the chance to run away.

The blonde was probably accustomed to the pain in his arm. He said, "Actually, now that we have Zhang Chao in our hands, let's call a special someone here and let him in on the fun."

The blonde said, and one of his men took out his phone and called Chen Yuzhou, and put it through video call.

“Chen Yuzhou, look who I got in my hand right now.”

On the phone screen, a swollen pig face appeared. Or rather, a human face swollen so much that it looked like a pig’s face. I really got him good last time, it would seem, since it has been quite some time already, and yet he hasn’t shown much of a sign of recovery. He looked tired on the phone, but as soon as he saw me, he immediately sat up.

“Big Blonde! Hit him! Hit him good!”

“But of course. Didn’t I call you so you could enjoy the show as well? Live action, Zhang Chao the whipping boy, streaming live for free. Remember to share and like!”

“Be careful, Big Blonde, he is especially difficult to deal with.”

The blonde's face twitched. Chen Yuzhou's warning came way too late.

“Screw this. That aside, there is only one of him here. With so many of us, he won't be able to deal with all of us at the same time. Everyone, blades out! We'll butcher this bastard good!”

I spat and took my stance. It looked like I'm on my own today.

These people surrounded me, all I saw around me was layers after layers of people. There doesn't seem to be any place that was easier than others to break through in particular.

The blonde instructed his people to come at me together on his command. If they came at me one

at a time, it'll give me the chance to deal with each attack separately. They must all come together at me at the same time, to be able to overwhelm me. I heard him say.

And just as the blonde was about to give his signal, suddenly someone called his phone, and a name popped out.

So that he could show Chen Yuzhou when his men beat me, the blonde had his phone turned to me. Thanks to that, I was able to see what was on his phone rather clearly. Big Bro Ming, it says.

Big Bro Ming? Jiang Ming!?

The character "Ming" was used very commonly in Chinese names. A lot of people I knew also have the character "Ming" in their names, so that alone wasn't enough for me to connect this Big Bro Ming to Jiang Ming beyond doubt. But also, the

fact that the blonde referred to him as Big Bro also means that this person must be a person of some importance in the Black Dragon, and Jiang Ming is the leader of the Black Dragon...

When the blonde realized who called him, he immediately did away with the arrogant tone and attitude and took the call. If I didn't know any better, I never would have thought that the blonde who was talking like a meek little schoolboy to his headmaster was the same blonde that was yelling and screaming only moments ago. He was so nervous that he had forgotten that he had put his phone on speakerphone.

This Big Bro Ming sounded like a man in his middle ages, probably in his 50's. He sounded a little melancholic.

"Where are you?"

“Big Bro Ming, me and my boys are at the Tong City Hospital. Just last time, some brat pulled a fast one on us Black Dragons, so I came to straighten things out here. Big Bro Ming, what can I do for you?:”

“Hmmm, drop whatever you’re doing over there. The Red Lanterns have occupied another one of our territories again. The location is Changlong Street. Get your people there now.”

“What!?”

This Big Bro Ming sounded calm, as if he was simply stating a matter of fact, but the blonde jumped as if it was the end of the world.

The blonde realized how serious it was, and kept his voice low, “When did it happen?”

“Your territory, and here you’re asking me when it happened? Our

spot on Changlong Street is one of our important gathering points. Are you going to lose it again like we lost the Black Alleys last time? We may be big enough to not need these spots to survive, but if I've just about had enough with you imbeciles losing faces everywhere."

His voice was completely level, as if he was simply stating something unimportant and unrelated to him. But when the blonde heard them, his feet wobbled, and his phone trembled in his hands.

"Big Bro Ming, I... I... I apologize. Before we came a few minutes ago, we were just at Changlong Street, and everything was still fine then. Did their people move in as soon as we came? But this is under broad daylight! The cops...! It was me... I was the one who told Old Liao to ignore all of the calls to the police station from around this area... shit! I'll get right on it! I'll give Old Liao a

call right after this, and get him to send cops there!”

Finally, this Big Bro Ming's level voice became slightly tinted with irritation, "Was your brain simply a giant tumor or some fancy decoration? Did you understand nothing of what told you? Get yourself back to Changlong Street, right now, and don't do anything unnecessary. Don't get the cops involved in this at all. Take all of your people with you. If you should see the Red Lanterns who are stupid enough to remain there, you know what to do."

At this Big Bro Ming's words, the blonde was reduced to nothing more than a little yesman.

After Big Bro Ming hung up the phone, the blonde spat and snorted at me, "You got the luck of the devil himself. Brothers! Moving out!"

Though reluctant, the order from above came already, and the blonde had no choice but to retreat back to Changlong Street.

Looking at the blonde making out of this place with his people, the only thought that occupied my mind was whether this Big Bro Ming was actually Jiang Ming, or not.

If it is, then this would be my first contact with him.

Though Jiang Ming may not realize, but his old enemy's son was right here at the other side of the phone just then.

And even if he isn't Jiang Ming, he must still be a person of great importance in Black Dragon. The way he speaks and his tone practically screamed that this person was on a much higher spot in the commanding chain than that blonde.

Though this blonde may be more arrogant and rude than Jin, he was more useless than Jin. All brawn and no brain, he'd only make a hitman at best, and an incompetent one at that.



Rate the Translation to Get 2 Pearls.



Wait! I Have Something to Say!



Send a Gift to the Writer!

I used to think that gang wars and mob fights are not too different from what was portrayed in movies, a bunch of hot blooded youngsters swinging pipes and knives at each other causing mayhem and chaos. But this, with what was going on between the Black Dragons and Red Lanterns, really opened my eyes to some realistic aspects of the mafia mobs that the movies couldn't capture.

Take the Red Lanterns for example, though Zhao Zichen was young, that slithering bastard was as slippery than the devil himself, a wolf guised and hidden underneath layers and layers of sheep skins.

These Black Dragon simpletons never had any chance against him from the very beginning.

Smart bastard, that Zhao Zichen, too smart. And that father of his, now I'm certain that he had his own

agenda in all this, getting me involved and making me protect his son. There must be more that he isn't saying to me. I swear, I will get to the bottom of this in time.

After the Black Dragons left, under Ye Debiao, the security guards regained functions once more, and began restoring order to the hospital.

Zhao Gongming summoned Ye Debiao over, and commended him for his bravery, embarrassing and making the big man blush in bashful pride.

When they finished, I started towards Zhao Gongming, to drag him somewhere to ask just what his real intentions are with this whole bodyguard thing, but a voice called me out from behind.

"Savior!"

I stopped and turned to the direction of the voice, and there was a man kneeling on the ground, thanking me and almost worshiping me. This really caught me off my guard, and for a while it was all I could do just standing there and accept his thanks in stunned astonishment. Only when he stood up, did I realize that he was the husband of the pregnant woman just then.

"Please, there is no need for this. It wasn't me who saved your wife, it's that security captain over there. You should thank him instead."

"You both are our saviors! If weren't for you, my wife would never have been able to get help in time! Just then, she had finished delivering the child, a baby boy. On behalf of my entire family, I thank you from the bottom of my heart!"

"That soon?" It didn't feel like too

much time has passed.

Zhao Gongming came over, "When the woman was finally able to get inside the delivery ward, the baby had already began to come out. Before she came, her water broke already, and that little episode agitated her, putting her into a state of stress, so the child came out a lot sooner than expected. You and Ye Debiao did well."

Ye Debiao was as simple and honest as he appeared to be. Hearing that Zhao Gongming's praises again, he blushed and stammered, "I, umm, no, it was... umm, I mean, I was just doing my job, but this man, he is a real hero, stepping in and risked his life for that poor woman."

I never thought of myself as a bashful person before, but with so many people singing my praises left and right all around me, very soon

my face also became just as red as Ye Debiao's is.

Zhao Gongming gave me an encouraging look, and then announced, "Everyone, give this old man a few minutes and hear me out. Look at him closely, does his face ring a bell? His name is Zhang Chao. I'm sure that you must have heard his name sometimes somewhere these few days, remember?"

I wasn't sure exactly where Zhao Gongming was going with this. I was usually not in the habit of putting myself under the spotlight in front of all these people.

"Zhang Chao? That name does ring a bell somewhere. Was he that boy who gave that Chen Yuzhou a huge blunder some times back?"

"Yes, now that you mentioned it, I remember now. Everyone was

talking about him on the internet, and all those terrible things that he did...”

“He looks like a good enough sort to me, seeing him up close in person. Those people on the internet are probably wrong.”

“And none of them mentioned how cute and good looking he is. I must take more photos...”

.....

I was speechless.

Zhao Gongming chuckled, and continued, “Zhang Chao is one of my good friend’s little boy, God rests his soul in heaven. Over these few days, I believe that most of you must have already knew about all those terrible rumors about him that were circulating on the internet. It pains my heart every time when I see those terrible lies. But what can

I do? I'm nothing than a lonely old man. When I saw those things, I don't even know where I could even begin to help my friend's boy. Zhang Chao had always been a good boy. His parents died young, but he didn't fall into self pity or hatred. He worked hard, hard enough to get himself into the forces. For over five years, by his sweat and blood, he fought for our country, for our people. He isn't the type of person that those people on the internet said he was. You saw with your own eyes today. So please, if you see those terrible things about him on the internet again, please help him out and put in a few good words for him."

"Alright, this does it! Zhang Chao, we won't believe those things again."

"That's right! We believe in you!"

"Though we can't do much, but our

hearts are with you. Drag that Chen Yuzhou down from his tall seat and give him a good whipping!”

Emotions swelled up within me. I never needed anyone's support or recognition, but seeing and hearing so many people encouraging me on still moved me and filled my heart with warmth and gladness. Anyone would, if they were in my shoes.

With so many people behind me, Chen Yuzhou is nothing!

But Zhao Gongming, this old fox, what could he possibly be plotting about this time? Was he really just doing this to right what was wronged against me? Or was there something else that he was after?

He had me fooled so utterly and completely last time. This time too, something just doesn't feel right about all of this.

I turned back again to talk to him, only to find that he had already slipped away unnoticed.

Zhao Gongming returned to his office, and instructed his secretary to close the door behind her.

"Director, I thought you would at least have a few words with him."

Zhao Gongming sighed, "He is no fool. He should have begun to see the oddities now. In time, when he realized a few more things, he'll come. But before then, I'd rather not invite troubles myself. It's alright, Chi, just let me have some moments to myself, and if he comes looking for me later, just tell him that I'm not here."

"Of course..."

On her way out, as soon as Secretary Chi opened the door, I stood right outside the office door

and greeted her with a smile. She laughed awkwardly, and began to say something to cover up her nervousness.

“It’s alright, save your excuses. I already heard everything. Go on and give me some alone time with Uncle Zhao now, we have some catching up to do.”

Ignoring his secretary’s unwillingness, I shoved past her and closed the door on her, and locked it.

“Zhang, Zhang! Don’t, you can’t...!” She began banging and slapping the door outside.

“Don’t be so worried, I won’t be rough with him or anything.”

Turning back around with a smile, Zhao Gongming awkwardly, and reluctantly, motioned with his hand to tell me to take a seat, doing his

best to act the part of a kind uncle still.

“Uncle Zhao, let’s do away with all the lies and disguises. What’s going on?”

I sat myself squarely down on the sofa. Zhao Gongming began tentatively.

“You know, your Uncle Zhao...”

“Uncle Zhao, before you say anything, I should let you know that I’ve been a recon specialist for five years. In the special ops, I’ve learned... all kinds of things. If you lie to me, I’d know.”

I took a worn looking teacup off a display shelf at the side, and tossed and played with it in my hand. For some reason, after people became a little richer than the average population, they all liked to put fragile things like artworks and

antiques on display, to show off their wealth. To be honest, I had no idea how valuable this teacup in my hand was, but as I tossed and juggled it, the look on Zhao Gongming's face told me that this wasn't just any random old teacup.

So I caught the teacup, and waved it at him. Zhao Gongming smiled stiffly, "Careful with it, it's a little pricey..."

I steeled my grip, and that teacup crumbled into pieces in the palm of my hand.

"Uncle Zhao, I believe I asked you a question."

With a pained look, Zhao Gongming began to say something, but didn't. The look on his face switched back and forth between anger and fear and regret.

After a while, he sighed in

resignation, "Zhang, let Uncle Zhao be frank with you. Ever since Zichen got himself mixed up with the Red Lanterns, I was worried sick about him, day after day after day. With that mouth of his, I have no doubt that he'll be able to talk down any one of them in a verbal dispute, but those people, they fight for real, with fists and knives and guns! I'm afraid that one day, he just might not come back again, if he goes on like he is now."



Rate the Translation to Get 2 Pearls.



Wait! I Have Something to Say!



Send a Gift to the Writer!

Zhao Gongming continued, "That's why I asked you for help. I wanted the Black Dragons to know that he has someone tough like you watching over him, so that maybe they'll think twice when they go to him looking for trouble, but... I never thought that he'd be able to cause this much trouble! No doubts the Chen's will definitely go to town with what happened today. I was thinking that perhaps I could put Zichen down to be a candidate for the next Cardiology Department Head, but I guess it won't be happening anytime soon."

This surprised me. Zhao Gongming didn't know Zhao Zichen's real identity.

And what's more surprising was that Zhao Gongming thought that Zhao Zichen couldn't handle himself in a fight. Just how much of a failure of a father is he, misunderstanding his own son that

much?

“And these people today, they came to sabotage Zhao Zichen’s reputation specifically. Haven’t you noticed? They didn’t actually do anything apart from yelling his name and hacking and smashing things all around.”

“That they did. Thank goodness they left all of a sudden, otherwise I really wouldn’t know what to do. Thank you for that, my boy Zhang. You won’t hold it against your Uncle Zhao for this will you?”

I wasn’t paying attention to Zhao Gongming. Something else caught my mind.

That blonde didn’t just leave all by himself. He was called away because his turf was invaded by the Red Lanterns.

And, the Red Lanterns won’t move a

muscle without Zhao Zichen's nod. So rather than the Red Lanterns, it was Zhao Zichen who did this.

As soon as Blondie brought his people out of Changlong Street, the Red Lantern moved in and occupied it. And that Blondie even made arrangements himself with the local law enforcements to ignore all of the calls around the vicinity at that time, and that provided the best cover up for the Red Lanterns as they took over Changlong Street.

It seemed like a timely coincidence then, but taking a step back and putting all that happened together, it all fit in too well to be just a coincidence.

And if it was planned, then whoever that orchestrated this whole thing really is too smart, frighteningly smart.

I shivered at the thought, and finally,

Zhao Gongming's voice trailed back inside my ears, "... Chao, you won't hold this against your Uncle Zhao will you?"

I came back to my senses, "You already knew that I won't really hold it against you, that's why you went ahead and did this in the first place isn't it? Enough about that. You managed to raise that sly fox of a son, I'd be a fool to believe that you're so stupid as to not know what's really going on. Uncle Zhao, let's lay it all out in the open. I want to know about Jiang Ming, you're going to tell me about him, and you're not going to let Uncle Han know that you've told me about him."

The way to deal with those smart types was to simply be as straight to the point as you can. Playing their games and somehow thinking that you can beat them at their own games was nothing but a waste of

time.

The expression on his face changed, "And what are you going to do after you know about him?"

"To tell you the truth, I suspect that Jiang Ming had a hand in my father's death."

As soon as I said that, Zhao Gongming sprung to his feet, so suddenly and forcefully that his golden framed glasses almost slid off.

He stared at me, the usual glimmer of intelligence in his eyes replaced with vicious violence. I was startled, not because I thought he might hit me, but at what could have made him so angry as to lose his demeanor like that.

Zhao Gongming didn't say anything, and simply looked at me. Then after a while, he walked back to his desk,

opened a drawer, and took out an ashtray from it and set it down violently on his desk.

“Help yourself.”

Zhao Gongming tossed me a joint. I took it in my hand, and sniffed it briefly. I asked, “Uncle Zhao, I’m right aren’t I? Jiang Ming really is involved in my father’s death isn’t he?”

He snorted, but without his usual confidence, “Bullshit.”

“Look at this cigarette, it was so old that it even began to grow mold. I know my cigarettes, and I know just how good this is, and yet you simply kept it inside your drawers? How many years has it been since you quit smoking? And if I really had been wrong, why would what I said made you anxious to the point that you broke out the smokes? All I’m saying, is that, I’ve been a recon

specialist in the special ops for five years, and you're not fooling my eyes. I did my part and helped Zhao Zichen once, and it's time that you return the favor."

Reluctantly, Zhao Gongming ripped the cigarette away from his mouth, and stuffed the ashtray back inside his drawers.

"I don't know." Zhao Gongming said, "Chao, I really am telling the truth. None of us knew whether or not it was the truth."

"What do you mean?"

"Both Han Kun and I had the exact same suspicion back then. It was all too sudden. The official police report wrote that your father was driving under the influence of alcohol at the time of the accident, but all of us who knew your father knew that your father never drank alcohol. Not even one drop. He

couldn't have been driving drunk.”

Realizing that I've been clenching my fists hard, I made a point to relax it and set it back down onto my knees. Closing my eyes and opening it again, I nodded.

“So after his funeral, both Han Kun and I felt that something was amiss, and we both went to the police department and requested a look at the autopsy report.”

“And what did it say?” I asked, a little too quickly.

Typically, these reports don't lie. Because they had no need to. At the end of the day, whether to close a case or not was up to the investigating officer's decision, and the forensics team operates independently of them. These two units answer to different people, and neither should be able to influence the other.

Which is to say, if this person was somehow able to influence the investigating officer to close the case, there would be no need for him to also buy the silence of the forensics team as well.

Zhao Gongming breathed out heavily, in vexed exasperation, "Nothing."

"It said nothing? That's impossible."

"No, nothing, as in, there never was any autopsy reports in the first place. When Han Kun and I caught winds that your parents passed away, the police already cremated your parents' corpses. When we got there as soon as we can, they only gave us your parents' ashes. Then we requested to see the investigation report, and did you know what they say? They had the guts to tell me that they had somehow 'lost' the report..."

I was speechless.

If it was really a simple traffic accident as people have claimed all these years, why go to such lengths to hide it?

One of my greatest regrets in my life since I was young was that I was never able to see my parents one last time, but I would never have thought, that this was something that someone had intentionally caused.

Zhao Gongming's eyes reddened, and croaked, "If it really was a simple drink drive accident, why are they in such a hurry to get rid of the bodies? None of it made any sense!"

I tried to swallow, but found that there was nothing in my mouth to swallow. My throat was dry, as if a fire was burning inside my chest.

I continued to ask, "Then what happened after that?"

"After that, I wanted to get to the bottom of this. The first one that Han Kun and I suspected was Jiang Ming. Back then, your father and Jiang Ming had a personal grudge. Your mother used to be Jiang Ming's fiancée, but then your father came and she married him instead. Jiang Ming valued his face above all else, and swore in open public that he'll make your father pay. After that, every time those two meets, fights ensued, both verbal and physical. In the beginning, there was nothing your father could do against him, but as years went by, your parents started a business together, and it grew stronger and more secure than ever, until there isn't anything Jiang Ming can do to harass your parents anymore. Until the day your parents passed away, it almost seemed like Jiang Ming was cursed with bad luck, both in

his career and in his life. Once, his own father even disciplined him in front of everyone in public.”

I said, “So you suspected that Jiang Ming staged this to have my father killed out of spite?”

This isn't hard to imagine.

Between Chen Yuzhou and I, there was never really any substantial hatreds and grudges in the past. At least, not to the point where we wanted the other to die. But now, over Lin Fang, things quickly developed and escalated to where we are now.

And what my father did, was literally ripping his fiancée away from him for his own. There was no way that Jiang Ming wouldn't hold it against him.

“That was what Han Kun and I thought. We both worked together

and tried to investigate the truths behind this. But back then, I was nothing more than a little no name doctor, and Han Kun also wasn't yet the master lawyer that he is now. Without your father's guidance and protection, there was very little what we could do. We sought and searched for clues or hints everywhere, though more often than not what we faced was disappointments after disappointments, but I never gave up wanting to get to the bottom of this."

I didn't believe that, "Really? From what I can see, you've given up already."

Zhao Gongming exclaimed heatedly, "It wasn't me! It's Han Kun! I've always done all I could digging up everything I can find about that night. I always believed that report must still be hidden away somewhere out there, and I did all I

could to try to get my hands on it! But one day, Han Kun suddenly called me, and told me that we couldn't go on looking into this anymore, and that neither of us had what it takes to go deeper down this rabbit hole!"



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Wait! I Have Something to Say!



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At least Zhao Gongming wasn't lying to me about that. Somehow, even I could feel that Han Kun was unwilling to let me look into my father's death.

But Han Kun had always been so good to me, and my family. He practically raised and nurtured Junran into the giant that it is today, single handedly no less, and he didn't hesitate even one bit when he returned it to me after I reached adulthood. As a friend, and as a human being, I would trust him with my life.

"Uncle Zhao, why did Uncle Han stop you? What do you think could be the reason?"

Zhao Gongming shook his head in resignation, "I don't know, I couldn't say, but I've never known him to be someone who would run away in cowardice. Back then, he was the most passionate one out of all of us

in trying to find out what happened, but one day, it was as if he turned into a completely different person, and he never mentioned a word about the investigation to any of us again. Not too long after that, Jiang Ming's family relocated him to somewhere else in the country, and without Han Kun, none of us knew even where to begin looking for his whereabouts."

"You're the Tong City Hospital Director, are you saying that there are things that were impossible to find out even for you and your connections?"

Zhao Gongming smiled, but it was a bitter smile, "Don't you be thinking that I was who I am now. Ten years ago, here in this hospital, I was nothing more than a small no name doctor. Chen Ruhai's wife, incidentally also a Chen, she has an entire family tree of relatives of doctors, it wasn't an overstatement

to say that the Tong City Hospital was more or less the Chen's family business. Look, though it pains me to admit, but I'm not like Han Kun. He is capable, smart, well connected, and your father taught him in the ways of business himself. The only reason why I became the director of this hospital was also thanks to him. And now, I'm old and almost ready to be retired, and already the Chen's grew restless once more, thinking to claim this hospital for their own again. I just wish that, Zichen won't be so helpless and alone in the hospital after I'm gone." Zhao Gongming sighed.

Hearing him, I really couldn't hold it in anymore, "Old man Zhao, you really don't know who Zhao Zichen is?"

"What do you mean who? He's my son. And though I knew he had quite a mouth on him, but deep

down, I knew that he was still a simple doctor earning an honest day's living."

It really looked as though Zhao Gongming didn't know about it, but I've learned enough to be too trusting of their "reactions". The two of them, Zhao Zichen and his father too, they're just too good of an actor. You never know if they're really being completely truthful.

"Yeah right, old man, if he really is just a simple doctor, then I'll... then I'll book an appointment to become a girl tomorrow."

Zhao Gongming finally admitted, unwillingly, "Alright, so maybe he had some tiny little bit of connection with the gangs, but it was all because his good for nothing 'friends' got him into it!"

Priceless, the perfect picture of the naive and concerned parents, if it

was really how he feels.

Zhao Gongming added, "You mustn't tell Han Kun what I've told you, and stay off trying to investigate Jiang Ming on your own. If Han Kun didn't want you to find out about something, nothing you could do can amount to anything but an utter waste of time and effort."

I nodded, in defeat. Knowing how capable Han Kun is, if he really doesn't want me to look into it, then he could make it seem as if it never existed in my world in the first place.

He is that capable and powerful. I believe it. I know it. But what I couldn't understand, is why. He was like a brother to my father, and a good friend! How could he simply let it go like that!?

Just what was Han Kun thinking?

After our talk, Zhao Gongming said that with my wound half healed as it is, it was crucial that I don't move around unnecessarily like I did, and sent for a few nurses to come and take me back to my ward. When Lin Fang came to visit, I told her about what happened, and she was so afraid that she began shivering. As she leaned against my chest for support, I held her and caressed her hair, and comforted her.

Lin Fang was sure that Chen Yuzhou was the one behind what happened today, and tried to convince me with all she could to leave good enough as it is and stay off Chen Yuzhou's case from now on. No matter how much I guaranteed her that it had nothing to do with Chen Yuzhou whatsoever, she won't believe me at all. In the end, she even got desperate to the point that she blurted out if I would be as cruel as to make her a widow for the rest of her life.

At which point I could think no more. Did I really just hear what I heard? Was Lin Fang really considering marrying me? Even in my wildest dreams I wouldn't dare to imagine even the possibility of it ever happening. I was already happy enough as it is, knowing that she would be my girlfriend, and now, even marrying her? For real? Am I really sure that I didn't just imagined what she said?

After staying a while in my ward, Lin Fang went back up to her father's ward to look after him. These days, Chu Xiaoxiao had been avoiding Lin Fang, so when Lin Fang was in my ward, Chu Xiaoxiao never showed up. Though after Lin Fang left, an unexpected guest showed up through the door.

"Brother, you saved my life again. How could I ever even begin to repay you?"

He said, but that uncaring smile on his face clearly betrayed that he meant none of it. He didn't even try to look it. Seeing his face, I grabbed the nearest object I could find and threw it at that shameless face of his. A shame that the only projectile I could find are the pillows behind my back.

"Come now, don't be all hypocritical with me. I knew you had it all planned right from the very beginning."

"Hey, don't be like that. Though there really was one thing that I hadn't expected. That Blondie, he got himself arrested."

"Arrested? Weren't the cops warned to stay out of it?"

"A little cop called Xia Genghuai brought a squad with him. I looked him up, one of your high school friends. Usually, types like him with

no backgrounds to even speak of would patrol the same meager rounds day after day until the day he retires from the job, but somehow he was recently promoted to an inspector and was made vice captain of his squad. Got the luck of the devil himself, that one."

I had actually forgotten about Xia Genghuai completely. Though like Zhao Zichen said, he really is one hell of a lucky bastard, and it looked like he just got lucky again!

"Now that I think about it, I remembered giving him a message telling him to come and bring a few of the people he can trust, but he sure took his time. Things are already finished so long ago that I actually had forgotten that I've messaged him at all."

"Didn't you know? It's a part of their job description, that cops must only

show up after everything was well finished. But in honesty, he wasn't all that late. As far as I'm concerned, he actually came at just the right time. He busted in and arrested Blondie, just as I got the last of my men evacuated from the vicinity. With all the recent media coverage, even the cops that they bought wouldn't dare to let them out too quickly. Which means, that he probably reached his quota for promotion again. By the time we see him again in the future, maybe he'd already been made captain of his squad already."

"Heh, those Black Dragons really got played this time round. And then? What are you going to do next?"

"The Black Dragon is the cancer of Tong City. We must strike the iron while it's still hot! You and I, we have a common enemy, and you are what they say about your enemy's

enemy. Join me. Together, we can do this!”

I really have to hand it to him. A mere turf war between two mafia mobs, but somehow through his mouth he managed to make it sound as if it was a sacred battle for truth and righteousness. With that mouth of his, you'd think that he is running an election campaign and not a mafia group.

I shook my head, “You may have the upperhand now, but the Black Dragons are still stronger right? In an honest fight, if you pit the two against each other, the Red Lantern wouldn't stand a chance.”

Zhao Zichen made no comments, but simply juggled an apple he took from the fruits basket beside my bed.

I continued, “Unlike the Black Dragons, who is powerful to operate

in broad daylight, your Red Lantern can only afford to operate in the dark, secretly. You aren't as powerful as they are, strengths wise, and connection wise too. I was behind bars for a time, and almost all of the inmates there are Red Lanterns. They have people everywhere, both on the scene and behind the scene. You simply bettered them in a few little street fights, don't begin thinking that you can swallow that entire elephant whole now."

The Red Lantern took the Black Dragon by surprise a few times, and by now, the higher ups in the Black Dragon have already taken notice. If Zhao Zichen were to continue riding on the coat tail of the Red Lantern's recent victories and push the Black Dragon even further, they just might get desperate enough and wage an all out war against them. Normally, I couldn't care less how much the mafia mobs fight amongst

themselves, since they'd be doing the society a favor if they would just annihilate themselves in the process, but Zhao Zichen was Zhao Gongming's one and only son after all, so I couldn't help but remind him to remain vigilant.

"And here I thought you were one of the more gutsy types. Turns out, you're no different than them common cowards."

"Heh, I'm a man who had experienced hell at the frontlines. A coward you say? You're absolutely right. I'm most certainly not one of those brave types who can shove their heads straight into gunpoints. My brain ain't bulletproof after all. Incidentally, I also know that I'm no match for the Black Dragons myself. Zhao Zichen, I'll keep your identity a secret, but that's as far as I'll go for you. Working together? No way in hell."

I'm a proud soldier. No matter what happens, I would never stoop as low as to work with those who disrespects the justice that both I and my fellow soldiers fought and died to protect. I won't agree to such an offer, none of my squad would, and the Old Man definitely wouldn't either. In fact, if one day I should give in to the temptation, he'd be the first one to appear to give me a whipping.

"Too bad then. I was thinking that I'd share half of the Tong City with you, but looks like you're too chicken for this."

Unable to convince me, Zhao Zichen didn't stay too long. After some mindless banter, he stood up to take his leave.

"Well, I do realize that you have a point in all those things that you said, so I'll make sure to heed your advice. But, are you sure you could

do this alone without my Red Lantern, going up against Jiang Ming?”

He snapped his hand out and caught the apple he was juggling in midair, then shoved it into my hands. Giving my shoulder a pat, he turned and walked away.



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Wait! I Have Something to Say!



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“Hold it! What do you know of it!?”

Why did he bring up Jiang Ming?
How did he know that I was
investigating Jiang Ming? Even I
wasn't so sure about whether Jiang
Ming really was my parents' killer,
how could he be so sure?

Capable as Zhao Zichen is, this is
too much of a coincidence to be a
random guess.

But he didn't answer me, and simply
walked out. I flipped out of my bed
and yelled after him, but he simply
ignored me.

Though I knew that he was simply
playing hard to get, I had no choice
but to take the bait in his hand.
Hopping after him, I gave chase. I
couldn't help it. That bait in his hand
turned out to be exactly the one
thing that I needed the most.

If it weren't for that car accident, or

if that bastard weren't Zhao Gongming's son, I could have broken his legs already, with the teacup in my hand no less.

"Stop."

In merely few seconds after he went out the door, Chu Xiaoxiao's voice sounded from outside the door.

And against my expectations, Zhao Zichen backed into my ward slowly, with both of his hands raised high in the air. He was... intimidated by Chu Xiaoxiao?

"Go back in, and sit down." In Chu Xiaoxiao's hand was her phone, still in "record" mode. She waved it slightly at Zhao Zichen, "Behave yourself now."

Zhao Zichen tilted his head and thinned his eyes dangerously, "Girl, you knew who I am, and still you

dare to threaten me with this? You know, one of these days, I just might remember what happened today and decide to return the favor.”

Chu Xiaoxiao tossed me her phone nervously. Judging from the timer displayed on her phone, she must have began recording not too long after Zhao Zichen came in.

Chu Xiaoxiao shivered in fear, but stood her ground, “You do that, and I’ll make sure that the entire world knows about your identity.”

Zhao Zichen’s eyes gleamed with cold ruthlessness, “Empty threat. Behind that heavy door, your phone probably didn’t pick up anything anyway. And if that’s the case, I’ll make arrangements for your father to pick up your corpse at the morgue tomorrow.”

Zhao Zichen was all smiles and

jokes a few moments ago, but now, when he became serious, the coldness in his tone showed that he was no stranger to the darker side of things. That image of the young playful doctor was gone in a flash.

Zhao Zichen turned to look at me, all friendly smiles again, "Zhang Chao, you don't want to make an enemy of me. Give me the phone, and let me delete it. Whether you have recorded anything or not, I'll treat it as if this had never happened before."

Keeping a firm grip on the phone, I showed him the timer, still ticking away in record mode, "Then sit, and begin talking about Jiang Ming."

His intention was all too clear. He wanted to use Jiang Ming as the bait to make me join his Red Lantern. But with or without his help, I would never do that. I would never bring disgrace to the uniform

that I've worn with pride.

In all his fights, Zhao Zichen had always been the hunter, setting up traps and ploys and lying in wait as his prey took bait and fell into his traps. But it seemed today, that the hunter has turned hunted.

"You think you can threaten me with a measly recording!? Are you mad or are you tired of living!?"

Tossing the phone back to Chu Xiaoxiao, I walked over to him and looked at him in the eye, "Careful with what you choose to say with that mouth of yours here." I cracked my knuckles.

Immediately, Zhao Zichen flinched, and when he looked up again, it was all smiles again, "Come on, Chao, my brother, we're all friends here right? Even our fathers are good friends too. There's no need to be like this. If there's anything you want

to know, all you have to do is ask. I'm sure we could work something out between us."

It turned out that Zhao Zichen actually didn't know much about Jiang Ming personally. They are each the leader of the two biggest mafia mobs in Tong City, but they have never once seen the other face to face.

Before Jiang Ming, the person who used to be in charge of Black Dragon was someone called Ge Yunfei. He was a businessman who ran a freight company that operates on an international level with many cruise ships under his business. Though he had no special backgrounds to speak of, all others in Black Dragon honored and respected him. He was a man of his words, and a brother to all who are in need. For as long as he had breath, for as long as his company stood, he never once let his people

and those who sought him for help go hungry.

“Ge Yunfei’s freight business took flight and he became rich. And slowly, he got many of the Black Dragons into the ships business as well. The majority of them were almost always away at sea, doing business in trades and transport, and only a few who couldn’t take the harshness of the sea stayed behind in Tong City, looking after their turf in their absence. Back then, the Black Dragon was rich, and they never used to care much for such insignificant protection fees before. In fact, they only maintained their territory and accepted protection fees from the people so that they would still remember that the Black Dragons are still around, and that they still had their back just like before.”

I commented, “The way you speak about him, he sounds like quite a

good guy.”

Zhan Zichen continued. Back then, almost the entire Tong City respected Black Dragon. Even the governing authorities. Ge Yunfei was a charismatic character, and he made friends everywhere. He even knew many members of the government on a personal level. In their eyes, he was doing them a huge favor already just by keeping those street thugs in line and setting them into proper jobs and making them work for an honest earnings.

After that, Zhao Zichen's face darkened. He procured a cigarette pack and took a joint out, holding it between his teeth and struck the lighter a few times. It didn't lit, but he suddenly remembered that smoking is forbidden inside hospital wards, and put them away reluctantly.

I asked, breaking the silence, "So, is this Ge Yunfei still in charge of the Black Dragon these days?"

Zhao Zichen chuckled, bitterly, "He hasn't been for a long time."

"Where did he go?" From what I heard, his reputation far exceeds that of Jiang Ming's, and it sounded like even Zhao Zichen himself greatly respected him. Surely he wouldn't just hand over the Black Dragon to someone like shady character like Jiang Ming.

"He's dead."

I frowned at the unexpected answer.

After a moment of silence, Zhao Zichen went on, "He died, three years ago. After that, the Black Dragon was split in two. Some of them grouped together and renounced Black Dragon and

became what you see as the Red Lantern today, and the rest of them stayed. The Old Boss, they all said that he died of a car accident, driving drunk into a running river and drowning himself to death. But I knew for a fact that it was all lies. He couldn't have been driving drunk. He had a weak liver, and he hadn't touched alcohol in years. I would know. I am the doctor who did his autopsy. Strangulation by force. He... he was murdered."

Chu Xiaoxiao gasped, and after that, silence fell around the room.

Zhao Zichen's eyes reddened, and the muscles on his face twitched as he tried all he could holding back on the frustration and sadness. He clenched his jaws tight in silence.

Drink drive. Another drink drive accident. Like my father, yet another drink drive accident while they themselves couldn't or wouldn't

touch even a drop of alcohol. There were too many similarities.

It was as if there was a rock choked inside my throat, but I forced myself and croaked, "Jaing Ming, again?"

"I don't know." Zhao Zichen sighed, in pain and resentment, as he stared blankly at the ceiling, "My autopsy was rejected. Those bastard cops said that my report was not up to standard, and requested for the body to be taken away to another doctor for autopsy. When I received the new report, it was three days later already, and it said that the cause of his death was drowning. I knew that the report was forged, and moved that the body be examined again by a trusted third party, but those bastards...! They... they told me that the body was already cremated."

"Son of a...! They did the same to my father!"

Unable to hold back myself, I gave the cabinet beside my bed a kick. The sudden noise made Chu Xiaoxiao jump in fear. I hurriedly apologized to her.

Chu Xiaoxiao said, "The police would do something so blatantly against the law?"

Zhao Zichen laughed and croaked dryly, "You two must be thinking me out of my minds, wonder what such a young and promising upstart doctor like me could possibly be doing with getting myself tangled up in all this mafia business. It's simple, really, like a great man once said, medicine cannot cure Tong City fools. Think about it, as a doctor, what can I possibly do in all of this? All I can do is wait in helplessness while the man that I respected the most was murdered in cold blood while the government let the murderer get away with it. I couldn't even...! Couldn't even..."

He stopped, unable to continue. Swallowing his tears back down, he breathed deeply, in and out, and waited in silence as his emotions calmed.

"So Jiang Ming did him in?" I asked, after he calmed down.

Zhao Zichen shook his head, "I don't know for sure, but ever since Old Boss died, they left that seat empty. Rumor has it that they left it empty for Jiang Ming, waiting for him to come back. Ever since the Red Lantern came out from the Black Dragon, there has been continued wars and conflicts between the two. And now, Jiang Ming is finally coming back. He is one who would benefit the most from Old Boss's death. It must be him!"

I would never have thought that Red Lantern and Black Dragon had this piece of history between them. It does look like Zhao Zichen had a

great deal of respect for this Ge Yunfei, so I can understand why he wanted to take revenge. Him and I, we might not be so different in this respect.

Zhao Zichen offered again, "Zhang Chao, Jiang Ming is your enemy, and he is my enemy too. I'm serious, why don't we work together in this?"



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Wait! I Have Something to Say!



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And once again, I declined his offer, "I will never work together with you. No matter what happens, nothing will change the fact that I was once a proud soldier of the country. I will never work with people who hold themselves above the laws that we protect. I owe them my second life, I will never do anything that would disgrace them."

"Stubborn old fart." Zhao Zichen flipped his eyes and snorted, "By yourself, you'll never be able to match up to Jiang Ming in strength! As soon as Jiang Ming noticed you, you're dead! He is a snake, a viper, our only chance against him is to kill him before he even realizes our existence."

I said, with a smile, "I won't change my mind."

He will never be able to convince me. Seeing that I wouldn't reconsider, he finally gave up trying.

I motioned Chu Xiaoxiao over, and got her to delete the recording right in front of him, and then swore that we would never tell anyone else about Zhao Zichen's identity.

"I sincerely hope that you would change your mind."

"Maybe if one day I had amnesia and forgot who I am." I replied.

After Zhao Zichen left, Chu Xiaoxiao finally breathed out in relief. Looks like what just took place really gave her a fright.

"He really is the head of them Red Lanterns? I couldn't tell at all!"

"He's a crafty one, you never know if he was being truthful with you, or if it was simply another one of his acts." I don't want to stay on this topic too long with Chu Xiaoxiao. The more she knew, the more danger she'd be in. I eyed the box in

her hand, and lamented, "You got me another serving of poison today?"

"How rude, that's no way to talk to someone who was only being nice to you. Are you eating it or what? If you don't want it I'll just throw it to the dogs."

"I don't want it."

"I don't care whether you wanted it or not. You will eat it if it's the last thing you do!"

I already knew what's going to happen, so contrary to what I said, I already accepted her box over. I've done my time in the military serving in the frontlines, I've had worse before, so this is nothing in comparison, most of the times.

As I sat on the chair and ate, Chu Xiaoxiao sat on my bed and suddenly lowered her voice, all

secretive, "Let me tell you something good. Chen Yuzhou just got hit again."

"What happened?"

"His father found out that he hired someone to ram you with their car. His father was in a meeting with their stockholders then, and he just called Chen Yuzhou out to the company out of the blues, and slapped him a good one in public, one across each side of his face. He just got sent to the hospital down below for ruptured eardrums." She sighed, "With that, it should be clear to the entire world just what kind of person Chen Yuzhou is. Even Lin Fang should be able to choose you over him now."

That last bit got my attention. Setting the spoon down, I asked.

"What do you mean?"

Wasn't it over already between Lin Fang and Chen Yuzhou? Why would Chu Xiaoxiao say that?

Chu Xiaoxiao wasn't slow either. She immediately realized that she had made a slip of the tongue.

"It's... it's nothing. Don't look at me like that."

"You're hiding something from me. Both you and Lin Fang have been hiding things from me haven't you? If you won't tell me, then I'll go ask Lin Fang."

"Argh!" Chu Xiaoxiao exclaimed, in vexed exasperation, then glared at me.

Seeing my eyes meeting her glare, she sighed in defeat, "It wasn't anything big. The few nights you were put in jail, Lin Fang and Chen Yuzhou met up."

My heart skipped a beat, and immediately remembered what Qingqing said back at Lutong, "Lin Fang went into Chen Yuzhou's car? And he got her flowers and roses?"

"Seems like that."

So it was all true. Why would Lin Fang lie to me like that? When I was taken away and thrown into the jail cells, she went behind my back and got together with Chen Yuzhou. Was her love that fickle and untrustworthy?

I felt no anger, but only sadness. My eyes reddened, as I lost all my words. I guess, it was only natural. On the surface, Chen Yuzhou did appear to be richer and more powerful than I am. She only made a choice that she deemed that would benefit her more.

Chu Xiaoxiao muttered, gingerly, "Come on, Zhang Chao, don't be like

that..."

I said in self pity, "Heh, it's fine... it's fine. She wanted to be with Chen Yuzhou. It was her choice, and I respect that. But she shouldn't lie to me... and you shouldn't lie to me for her either. I'm unworthy of her after all. She simply chose a richer man to be with. It makes sense. I get it..."

"Enough! Just listen to yourself, do you even realize what you're saying!? You were put in jail. In jail! And Fangfang had no idea then that I would change my testimonial again at the last minute, it's only natural that she would be afraid! Besides, just because she met up with Chen Yuzhou it doesn't mean that she had been unfaithful with you. Back then, we asked around everyone we knew, seeing if we could somehow get you out of there. Fangfang may have met up with Chen Yuzhou just to beg him to let you out. Back then, Chen Yuzhou

threatened her with her father's life, and you were in jail, who do you think she could turn to!? What else could she have done!?"

Chu Xiaoxiao's words woke me up. Yes, back then, in Lin Fang's shoe, it would seem to her that she was completely on her own. Of course it would be frightening. What I should be doing is making sure that the same thing won't happen to her again, ever.

"It was wrong of me. I shouldn't doubt her like this."

"If you liked her, then you should trust her. And if you can't trust her anymore, you should just break up with her."

I was startled when I heard Chu Xiaoxiao. Why would she say the same thing twice, once positive and once again negative no less? Was there some hidden meanings in her

words?

"I like her. Really, I do. And... I was wondering if you could help me out with something."

Chu Xiaoxiao visibly relaxed, and lowered her head to avert my eyes, "What is it?"

"I haven't confessed with Lin Fang yet. Can you... like, maybe... teach me how to confess my feelings to a girl? I liked Lin Fang, and I want her to have all the good things that she deserves."

Chu Xiaoxiao's jaws dropped wide open, and she exclaimed, "You haven't confessed to anyone before!?"

Already I began to regret my decision. Seriously, what was I even thinking asking a girl about something like this, and this particular girl no less! I lied back

down onto my bed and pulled the sheet over my head, "Never mind, forget about it."

But Chu Xiaoxiao wouldn't let up. She pulled the sheet down and flipped me over to face her.

She laughed, "And let me guess, you've also never been with a girl before haven't you, little virgin?"

"Virgin my butt. You're the virgin." I didn't even know how to make a more threatening come back.

"You ain't fooling me. I'll bet that you've never even kissed before have you?"

"I so have kissed before!"

"And yet you didn't deny the virgin bit." By now, Chu Xiaoxiao was laughing so hard that tears began forming at the corner of her eyes. She bumped her chest and

guaranteed, "Just you relax. If you truly liked Lin Fang, I'll definitely help you pull off the best and most perfect confession!"

She laughed, but after she finished, she suddenly frowned at me and asked, "Zhang Chao, you are really sure that you really liked Lin Fang?"

What's going on? Why did she keep on asking me that?

"Pretty much, at least now I do."

I said in intentional vagueness, just to see what her response would be.

This got Chu Xiaoxiao worried immediately, "If you didn't like her all that much, then you should think twice about it and reconsider."

"How would I not like Lin Fang? Just what's going on? Why are you asking me the same question over and over again?"

For some reason, there seemed to be something more in Chu Xiaoxiao's words. In everything she said, she seemed to suggest that I should reconsider how I feel about Lin Fang.

She was against me and Lin Fang at first. Back then, she looked down on me, thinking that I'm unworthy of Lin Fang. But now, what I felt from her was completely different, as if she was somehow more unsatisfied with Lin Fang.

I asked her again, but still she refused to answer. I tried asking in a few different ways, but she saw through them and refused to say anything more. In the end, she threw a "I don't care about you anymore!" and ran off.

I slapped my forehead in realization, as I remembered what Lin Fang told me before. She said that Chu Xiaoxiao liked me. If it had been

anyone else who told me about this, I wouldn't have believed them. But if anyone's words can be trusted, it would be Lin Fang's.



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Wait! I Have Something to Say!



Send a Gift to the Writer!

Suddenly, it all dawned on me. Of course Chu Xiaoxiao wouldn't want Lin Fang and I to be together. She liked me, but at the same time, she was also Lin Fang's best friend, and she would never do anything that would hurt her friends.

I sighed, at how dumb and insensitive I had been, pressing Chu Xiaoxiao over this issue over and over.

Originally, I should still be hospitalized for one more week, but after lying in bed for an entire day, I really couldn't stay in bed anymore. During the hospital staff break time, I slipped out of the hospital without anyone noticing.

After slipping outside, I called a cab home, but it was only after I reached my place that I remembered that my landlord had threw me out already.

“Shoot!”

As I was about to leave, I suddenly remembered something very important that I had forgotten all this time.

That gun that Chun Tang swiped off that Thai assassin, it was still inside the house.

Back then, Chun Tang gave me the killer's gun. It was too dangerous to just leave it lying around the house in the open, so I had it locked up inside a safe that I hid in the house. When the landlord came and threw out my things, he must have missed it. Otherwise, I don't think someone like him would be kind enough to return the things in the safe to me.

But this in itself would cause complications. If the landlord found out one day, he would definitely report it to the police. Alerting the police is fine. I could get the police

off my back easily enough, but this might also alert the firearm smugglers, and compromise the operation altogether. I must get that gun back at all costs.

I considered simply breaking in, but there were alarms installed on the door. Even if I were to manage to get in, triggering the alarm in the process would defeat the purpose of doing it in the first place.

Without better options, I had no choice but to call the landlord. Seeing my number, the landlord hung up my call without even picking it up.

Fine, be like that, it wasn't as if I don't know how to deal with these types.

I called the number again, and again, and again, and again...

After perhaps the 20th time, the

landlord finally couldn't take it anymore, and took my call reluctantly. When I told her that I left something in the house, she gave me only two words, "Get lost." Then hung up on me again.

I called back again, and that bastard actually turned off her phone. She took the Black Dragon's money and threw me out without even giving me any prior notice, and now, she wouldn't even let me back inside to take what was rightfully mine.

That just went too far!

She really think that I was someone that she could write off that easily?

I thought about it for a while, and decided to give her one final call before getting Junran to step in. With the public phone downstairs, I gave her one last call.

"Hello, Zhang Chao here."

"You again!? Just how annoying can you be? I told you, over and over again, that house no longer belonged to you anymore, and so was whatever that was in it then. I have new tenants living in it now, I couldn't possibly let you in."

If she was standing in front of me right now, I'm confident that I would definitely smash her face in. She was so obnoxious that I could almost forget having ever sworn to never hit women. But now, with she on the other side of the phone, I could do nothing but bear with the rising urge to do so.

"It's just one thing from the safe. The new tenants can even watch me while I do it. I would never take something that didn't belong to me."

"Whoa, whoa, and just what does any of it has to do with me? Just listen, like, really really carefully. You are no longer the tenant of the

house, you had your chance to take your things then. And, guess what, you can't anymore. You no longer have any rights to any of the things there anymore."

I could barely contain my anger, "Bullshit. I still have the lease contract that says that I'm the rightful tenant of that house until the contract is up. Plus, you're the one who threw me out against the lease contract. You're the one who threw all my belongings out onto the street, without even refunding my rent!"

And she had the gall to speak rules and legalities with me!? I've never seen anyone as shameless as that woman before in my entire life.

"So what if I did? What can you even do to me? Like I said, get lost, I don't want your business. No one in Tong City wants any of your business."

“Look, is being a decent human being too much for you to handle? We got no grudges between us. I had always paid my rent on time. I get it that you no longer want to rent me the place, but if this is all because of Chen Yuzhou, don’t you think that you’re going too far?”

“As I give a rat’s ass what you think.” Then she hung my call again.

This woman, seeing how I don’t seem to be as powerful as Chen Yuzhou, she scorned and humiliated me, thinking that I wouldn’t be able to even fight back with Chen Yuzhou on my back.

So I walked over to the next public phone and called her again. When she realized that it was me again, she was going to hang the call on me again, but I simply said coldly into the phone, “Just a second.”

“What else do you have to say? For

the last time, I won't rent my house to your kinds, so do both of us a favor, and buzz off. If you call me one more time, I'm calling the cops on you."

"Just one thing." I said, "Just telling you, don't come crawling to me later."

Then I hung the call on her, and gave Junran's Administration Section a call.

"This is Zhang Chao. I need you to do something for me..."

I briefly described the situation to the section manager, and he immediately got to work.

"As you requested, we will get right on it. Though, I do wonder, why didn't you tell her who you are? If you did, I'm sure that she would be more than cooperative with your requests."

“I was just about to tell you. My identity must never be made known.”

“Understood.”

Junran’s section heads and managers are all professionals. They all knew to refrain from asking too many questions.

After the call, I waited outside my door. The gun inside that safe was just too important. Before I could get my hands on it again, I couldn’t afford to even move away from this spot.

Not that I had anything else to do anyway. Besides, as a soldier, waiting and staking out are like a walk in the park for me.

So I simply waited, and about half an hour later, the elevator stopped on this floor. As far as I know, only two people lived on this floor. One

was me, and the other was Lin Fang. So when the elevator door opened on this floor, I was curious as to who would come out. And as I looked, out came a furious Chu Xiaoxiao. Seeing me waiting beside my door, she quickened her steps into a run towards me.

“So this is where you are! Zhang Chao, why have you run off out of the hospital again? What are you even doing here? Fangfang couldn’t find you, and she was so worried that she might cry! You’re coming back to the hospital with me right now! No, actually, what are you even doing just waiting here? Standing out here in the cold is not good for your wound! Quick, get inside first and warm yourself up, I’ll call Fangfang to tell her not to worry...”

I chuckled weakly, “Look here, sister, you just went on nonstop like a machine gun, will you just stop for a second and let me say something? I

can't get into the house. My landlord kicked me out and refused to let me live here anymore."

"What!? How could she!? Your lease isn't up yet is it? Give me her number, let me give her a call!"

I smiled, "No need, she'll be coming here to apologize to us soon enough."

Chu Xiaoxiao looked at me, her eyes full of doubts. I told her to wait patiently, and that in just a few moments that landlord would come crawling back to me and beg me move back in.

"I call bullshit. I don't believe you." Chu Xiaoxiao said.

"Then how about we bet something on it?" I said, "Just saying, you're definitely going to lose."

"Your butt. I'm the gambler queen of

Tong City, the Lady Luck herself.
What are you betting?"

"If you lose, you tell me what Lin Fang wouldn't let you tell me."

Chu Xiaoxiao's face changed color, and she ignored me and stomped away to the side.

"Chickening out?"

"You're not worth my time. I'm going to win this anyone, and I don't think you have anything valuable enough to make this bet with me."

From her tone, I could see that she really didn't want to say it. In other words, what she was keeping a secret from me was definitely not that she had hidden feelings for me like Lin Fang had said, or that Lin Fang had been in close contact with other men like what she had let slip before.



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Wait! I Have Something to Say!



Send a Gift to the Writer!

I racked my brains, but try as I might, I couldn't think of anything that Lin Fang would be so afraid to let me know that she even made Chu Xiaoxiao promise her to keep it a secret from me. Whatever it is, it was going to be even more outrageous than Chu Xiaoxiao secretly liking me, and it would hurt me more than knowing that Lin Fang had seen other men behind my back.

This really had me worried. I swear, I must find some opportunity to fish this bit of information out of Chu Xiaoxiao one day.

So as to keep her from getting suspicious, I put on a smile, "You're the one that's going to lose. Just you wait until the landlord gets here."

Just as I finished speaking, the door to the stairways burst open, and out came a panting and wheezing

landlord.

She was a little plump. Climbing up to the seventh floor from ground up took just about everything she had, and more.

"The... elevator... won't come... I was... in... a rush... so I... took the stairs. Zhang Chao... I didn't make... you wait... too long... did I? Here... let me... open the door... for you..."

The landlord was sweating like a pig, but instead of wiping her sweat away, she rushed to open the door for me. Then she rushed to get slippers for both Chu Xiaoxiao and I, acting completely differently to the person that was on the phone with me half an hour ago.

Chu Xiaoxiao was speechless. She blinked, and blinked, and then suddenly she pinched my arm hard. I yelped and asked her what she was doing.

“Just checking if I was in a dream. I heard from my father that you made an enemy of the Chen’s, and that it’d be hard for you to even find a roof over your head in Tong City. So why is your landlord so nice to you now?”

Nice? The landlord’s attitude now was much more than just nice.

She invited us in, and as soon as I sat down on the chair, she suddenly dropped to her knees and cried, “Zhang Chao, I was wrong, please forgive me. This place, you can have it for as long as you want. I won’t even charge you rent.”

“I just came back to take something from this place. I won’t trouble you further after that. I’m no longer a tenant here, and I would never want to move back here again.”

“Please, I’m begging you, just come back! I didn’t know better before, I

apologize for what I've done. Please forgive me!"

The landlord crawled over, and poured a cup of water for me. But as she did, her hands shook and trembled from her nervousness, and splashed all over the place.

"Come on, stand up already, don't be like that. We won't hurt you. Zhang Chao isn't that type of person."

But the landlord refused. She stayed on her knees and looked up at me.

"Zhang Chao, what's going on?" Chu Xiaoxiao looked at me, with doubt written all over her face, and a hint of disdain. Knowing her, she probably thought that I had done as Chen Yuzhou had, taking out my anger and frustration on innocent bystanders.

“Look, sister, if you have something to say, say it properly. I really did just come to get something that I left here, nothing more.”

When the landlord finally realized that I was being serious, she got off her knees and ginger took a seat, with her feet together and her hands on the top of her knees like an attentive student.

Chu Xiaoxiao shoved me, “Just what did you do to her? There’s no need to humiliate someone to that extent at all.”

I was beyond confused, “Look, I also didn’t know what’s going on with her. I swear, on my honor, I only know that they’d make her change her mind, but I also have no idea just how they did that either.”

I was also curious about just what the people at Junran said or did to her to have her frightened to this

extent. Unlike the Chen's, Junran had no connections with any mafia groups whatsoever. Junran wouldn't stoop down to their level.

The landlord kept saying that she was sorry and begged me to forgive her, but she wouldn't tell me just what was going on. Out of better options, I threatened to simply leave her to her own devices if she won't say anything useful.

"Don't! I'll talk! Zhang Chao, those false receipts really weren't from me! It's our manager, he's the one who did it. He was my superior, and I had no choice but to do as he said. I didn't even get a cent of that \$4'000'000!"

"The person who called you found out that you issued false receipts?"

She was so desperate that her entire head went red, "It really wasn't me! I was forced, he used

me! Zhang Chao, please don't tell the cops about this, please!"

The level of Junran's employee's competence frightens even me! To be able to investigate this person to this detail in such a short amount of time, whichever team that did this was more frightening than any intelligence groups I know!

"Zhang Chao, please, I'm begging you! I still got mouths to feed! My children, and my parents, they all depend on me. I can't get caught! You can live here, I won't take your rent. Please!"

I remained cold, "Then what would that make me? Your accomplice? Besides, I wasn't the one who discovered this. Whoever that called you, they're the one who found out. You should be begging them, not me."

I only knew that Junran definitely

has what it takes to deal with this woman, but I didn't expect that they would be so efficient about it. Before such frightening investigative capabilities, it was as though the entire world was transparent for them to see and scrutinize.

Which means, that if I ever do something to investigate Jiang Ming, Han Kun would know about it almost as soon as I had done it, and he would stop me dead on my tracks. But why, just why? Didn't Han Kun want to find out what happened to my father!?

Hearing that there are crimes involved, Chu Xiaoxiao quieted down and simply sat and waited at the side for me to make a decision. Dealing in that large amount of money, that alone would be enough to put that landlord behind bars for the rest of her life.

"I knew I was wrong! I shouldn't have done that, I know. But it was my manager who made me do it. I didn't get even a cent of it! Zhang Chao, you can't send me off to jail!"

Once again, the landlord began pleading like her life depended on it. Finally, Chu Xiaoxiao couldn't take it anymore, "Who is this manager of yours? We can't simply knowingly cover up a crime. You have to tell us who made you do it."

"I'm... working at Juen, and my boss... is Chen Yuzhou..."

That was... interesting, to think that Chen Yuzhou was actually stealing from his own company. But fortunately, or unfortunately for him, Juey Group is exactly that, a group. Even if Chen Ruhai was the head of the group, and Chen Yuzhou was his son and a branch manager, that still didn't give him any rights to take from the company funds.

This is enough to send Chen Yuzhou into jail. I've been waiting for something like this forever.

Chu Xiaoxiao exclaimed, "Finally! We can finally send Chen Yuzhou to jail!"

The landlord's face changed color, and threw herself at Chu Xiaoxiao's feet, "No! If you do that, I'm finished too! Here in Tong City, who would dare to even touch Chen Yuzhou? Who would dare to meddle in his business? In Tong City, the Chen's are the laws themselves! Zhang Chao, don't challenge the Chen's anymore, please, for your own good..."

I despise types like her the most. Their principle was that they had no principles. They are so used to being oppressed that they had forgotten how to live without an oppressor. Though she was oppressed by Chen Yuzhou, but she

herself oppresses others in Chen Yuzhou's name. She may be begging me now, but with types like her, if you give them even only a tiny opening, she would do even worse to me than ever before!

I didn't say anything, and simply turned around and walked out to my bedroom. Opening up the safe, the gun was still there, evidence that this house never had any new tenants since I was thrown out. Otherwise, they would definitely have discovered the gun already.

With the gun back in my possession, I motioned to Chu Xiaoxiao that we're leaving.

The landlord threw herself at me feet, and begged me to promise her to let her off.

Sometimes, in desperation, human beings had been known to be able to exert much greater strength than

they could typically. I tried to shake her off a few times, but to no avail. Besides, I couldn't bring myself to actually being rough with her just to break free of her.

The landlord was lamenting and wailing so much that even Chu Xiaoxiao couldn't stand how pitiful she was. She pulled on her a few times, and finding out that she wouldn't let get, Chu Xiaoxiao sighed.



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Wait! I Have Something to Say!



Send a Gift to the Writer!

Just when I thought that she was going to plead mercy for that woman, suddenly Chu Xiaoxiao pointed at the woman's face, "And how is that any of our business? What are you crying to us for anyway?"

"Please, you look like a good girl, please go easy on me! I was wrong! Please, tell Zhang Chao, he can keep living here for as long as he wants!"

Chu Xiaoxiao said, "No, I won't. If you did what you did, then you deserve whatever punishments that you got."

The landlord said hurriedly, "It wasn't me, it's Chen Yuzhou!"

"Then that's even simpler. Since Chen Yuzhou got you into this mess, all you need to do is to testify against him in court. I don't believe that someone like you will be as

stupid as to not keep something on him as leverage."

The landlord was getting desperate, "You think it's as simple as that? If I do that, they may have me killed! Please! If you won't... if you really force me to go through with this... I'll... I'll...!"

Her expression grew more and more vicious, as she clenched her teeth harder.

Chu Xiaoxiao said, frightened, "What are you doing!?"

The landlord got off her knees, and mopped the tears off her face with her hand in one rough motion, "Zhang Chao, you don't want to do this. If you press me too hard, I bite too."

I already had a foot out of the door, but hearing that, I retracted my footsteps and stepped in between

Chu Xiaoxiao and the landlord. I looked at the landlord with unblinking eyes.

The landlord continued, "This is Tong City. I don't know how you came to know about the false receipts that I issued, but I do know that something like this could only be known by someone inside the company. And you know what, as soon as I get back, I'll have whoever that leaked the information to you ratted out immediately!"

"Are you seriously threatening us over the very crimes that you yourself committed!?" Chu Xiaoxiao said, eyes wide with anger.

Seeing that I won't give in to her anyway, the landlord cast off all pretense.

She laughed, viciously, "I say we each take a step back, or if I go down, I'll make damned sure that

you go down with me. Just put it out there, I can't afford to offend the Chen's. If you push me too hard, I'll resist and bite you back with everything I've got!"

When she finished her words, I already reached inside my pocket and pulled out the gun, and had the gun pointed against her skull. Immediately, all was quiet and still, as if time itself had froze.

The landlord began to tremble, and then raised her hands gingerly. Her eyes squinted cross eyed at the gun. Her legs weakened and wobbled, but she dared not to move even a muscle.

Chu Xiaoxiao was surprised that I had a gun with me, but she stifled her gasp with a hand over her mouth very quickly.

I said, "Oh, don't mind me, do continue."

“I... no, I... ”

I made a motion as if to lift the gun a little, and she immediately began backing away, but I followed her with the gun. She was almost in tears again. She tried to push the gunpoint away from her face with her hands, but every time, I would move the gun back to her forehead again. No matter how much you are trained, with a gun pointed at you at point blank, anyone would feel pressured.

“You cannot afford to offend the Chen’s.” I said.

The landlord nodded frantically, with gushing tears, “Y...y...yes, I can’t... I re...really can’t...”

I laughed, “Remember this also from now on, you cannot afford to offend me either.”

Slowly, I squeezed my finger over

the trigger. The landlord screamed in fear, her voice echoing through the entire apartment complex. Her legs finally gave way as she slumped to the ground, though she does have excellent bladder control, I'll give her that.

A few seconds later, the landlord felt her head all over with her hands, only to find that there was no blood and everything was still as they were, and finally realized that there was no gunshot. I didn't shoot.

I turned and motioned to Chu Xiaoxiao that we're leaving. I still need to find a place to stay for the night.

Chu Xiaoxiao followed me into the elevator, and then she stared at my face. I said in pretend alarm, "What are you looking at? I'm your best friend's boyfriend. I'm off limits to you."

And immediately Chu Xiaoxiao gave my shoulder a punch, "Dream on, as if I'd ever be into you. But that was so totally awesome back there! You looked just like in the movies! Oh, come to think of it, why did you have a gun?"

There wasn't any need for me to keep what happened with the Thai assassin a secret from her, so I told her. In fact, it was probably better that I keep her informed, for her safety and awareness, since Chu Xiaoxiao had been hanging around me more often as of late.

Chu Xiaoxiao said, vexed, "Chen Yuzhou has gone too far! After Chun Tang, he hired yet another killer after you!? I never knew that he was someone like that...! That landlord, you don't think that she would tell Chen Yuzhou that we knew about the false receipts?"

"Of course she would. She said it

herself. She couldn't afford to offend Chen Yuzhou."

"Then what will we do? If Chen Yuzhou knows that you know about it, he'll come after you again."

I smiled and didn't answer her question. Instead, I asked her, "Give me a straight answer, Lin Fang said that you liked me. Is this true or is this false?"

From Chu Xiaoxiao's tone of voice, she didn't seem to have any particular feelings for me.

Chu Xiaoxiao was startled for a second, and then fell silent. She turned away and simply looked at the descending number on the elevator panel, and refused to answer.

I said, "So it's true?"

"Bullshit. Who do you think I am?"

I'm not someone who'd fall for my best friend's boyfriend."

"Which means, that it must be something else that you and Lin Fang are hiding from me."

As soon as I said that, Chu Xiaoxiao pinched my arm hard, "You tricked me into saying that!"

"Ouch, that hurts! Please, stop it, spare me! Have some pity for the homeless will you? I probably have to sleep out here in the streets tonight."

Chu Xiaoxiao let go of my arm and flipped her eyes at me, then said to me after a moment of thought, "Then, how about you come to my place?"

Now I was really startled. I pointed at myself with my finger, then pointed at her, and looked at her as if she was mad.

Chu Xiaoxiao added, "Relax, you won't be bothering anyone. There's currently no one else in my house right now. My father won't be coming home this month, so it'll just be the two of us."

I was speechless. Did this girl even realize just how wrong what she said sounded?

After a while, I laughed, "Now I'm really wondering if Lin Fang was right after all. Are you just lulling me into your house so it'll be easier for you to make a move on me?"

Only then did Chu Xiaoxiao realize what she just said implied. She promptly planted a foot squarely on my butt and yelled in embarrassment, "Minds out of the gutter you!"

Either way, Chu Xiaoxiao's place isn't a good idea. She is a young single woman, and I already have a

girlfriend. For her sake, and mine, it wouldn't do for me to spend the night alone with her at her place.

Besides, my old house where my aunt lives was right beside her house, at Yulong Bay Minor District. Unless they move away, I want to be as far away from that place as possible if it can be helped.

Chu Xiaoxiao said, "Then where can you go? No one in Tong City would give you a place to stay... oh, I see, I get it now! You're thinking of sleeping at Fangfang's aren't you? Come on, out with it, you've been with Fangfang for quite some time now, have you done anything x-rated to her yet?"

All of a sudden, Chu Xiaoxiao's eyes became full of stars of curiosity, and immediately I knew that it was high time for me to leave from the chill that was sent down my spine. As soon as the elevator door

opened, I ran out.

Chu Xiaoxiao chased after me, "Really!? You really mean to say that you've only kissed? You're such a virgin!"

Chu Xiaoxiao badgered after me, "How could someone as young and strong as you stay at only a kiss? Zhang Chao, don't tell me that you can't...! Oh no, I must tell Fangfang about this, I can't let her live the rest of her life with you if you can't even..."

I turned around and yelled, "I can't what!? How about I prove it to you just exactly what I can right here and now!?"

I retorted furiously, which only made Chu Xiaoxiao laugh harder, so hard that she was hugging her stomach.



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Wait! I Have Something to Say!



Send a Gift to the Writer!

That night, I really couldn't find any place to stay, and then I remembered Xia Genghuai. I messaged him and bought some booze and snacks and went to his place, but it turned out that he was called in for some overtime shifts, with all the Black Dragons that they freshly arrested waiting in line to be questioned. He came back momentarily to opened his door for me, and then he went enthusiastically off back to the police department again.

Alone in his room, I reflected on what happened over these few days. It almost seemed unreal, that amongst all the chaos I could still come out of it while remaining somewhat unhurt.

Though I also knew that this was only a moment of calm in the midst of the storm. The storm hasn't left Tong City just yet. It may be quiet for a time now, but the worst is yet

to come.

Knowing the Chen's, they'll never let me off. It was easy enough, luring Chen Yuzhou into striking out and acting out of line, but dealing with Chen Ruhai is another story completely. For now, I'll have a moment of respite, since he won't move a finger against me unless he was absolutely certain that he had everything prepared and that he had me in his clutches.

But then again, I can't exactly keep on waiting for him to get his pieces together. I must act before he finishes making preparations and move against me.

Right now, I wished for nothing more than to have an angry Chen Yuzhou on my back, making things worse for himself and shifting the scale to my end, but these days Chen Ruhai had been keeping him on a very short leash. Hopefully that

landlord lady will tell him all about what happened today and get him riled up enough into doing something foolish again.

Taking the gun in my hand, I looked at it. If this really got Chen Yuzhou mad enough to come at me again, then I guess pulling the gun on the landlord today and risking her calling the cops on me won't be a complete waste of time.

For Lin Fang's sake, I must hurry up and get rid of the Chen's influence in Tong City. For my own sake too, I also want to get this done and over with as soon as I could, so I can finally begin investigating Jiang Ming.

Usually, by 10 o'clock at night, I would be asleep already, having been trained to do so as a soldier in the military. But now, lying on the bed, somehow I just couldn't sleep. Something in my heart just doesn't

sit right.

After rolling around mindlessly for around 10 minutes, my phone rang. It was Lin Fang.

She was angry with me, for leaving the hospital unannounced when I was still supposed to be under observation, though her voice was laced with gentleness and worry.

The reason why I slipped out prematurely was that I just couldn't stand lying on the bed doing nothing anymore. I need to get rid of Chen Yuzhou fast, so that Lin Fang could go on living in peace, free of his constant threats and harassment, and so that I could finally get on investigating my father's death without having to worry about being backstabbed at every second turn.

But I couldn't just tell her that. Even now, I kept Lin Fang in the dark as

to the truths behind my being rammed into by a car. I didn't want her to worry even more on top of what she had to worry about already.

I apologized and asked her to forgive me for leaving the hospital on such short notice, and guaranteed her that I really was healed already. I said to her that, if she didn't believe me, she could come over right now and give me a punch.

She giggled, but quickly stifled it, "That tongue of yours, when did you learn to have such a slippery tongue? Alright, but just be careful and don't do anything rough, I don't want to see any more things happening to you anymore."

It was all but silence in the room, and the only sound in my ear was Lin Fang's gentle words in my ears. My heart softened. Life was good to

me, to let me have such a caring girlfriend. I must treasure her, and protect her from anything that would harm her.

The next morning, I woke up to the sound of knuckles knocking against the door.

Xia Genghuai's eye bags were dark and heavy, like a panda. He yawned and nodded at me.

"You pulled an allnighter?"

He yawned again, "It's a big catch. You know who you threw into my fishing net last night? He is one of the bigger fish in Black Dragon! For all these years Tong City had always wanted to give the gangs and mobs a serious hit, but up until now no one had managed to catch someone as big as that. My friend, my brother, this time, you ran me right into the motherlode. I really must thank you."

"Alright alright, just don't forget about me completely after you get your raise." I didn't tell Xia Genghuai that this blondie that he caught was only a small fry, as far as the big players in Black Dragon was concerned.

But it was specifically because of the fact that the blondie was only a small fry, that Xia Genghuai was able to receive commendations. If he really had arrested someone important in the Black Dragon, like Jiang Ming for example, he probably wouldn't have lived long enough to be still standing and talking to me here right now. That said, I won't just sit here and watch as they butcher up my friend either.

As long as I'm still around, and as long as Junran still stands, I'll make sure that I got all my friends' backs.

Lin Fang's father recovered well. Though he still isn't well enough to

be discharged from the hospital, at least Lin Fang won't need to look after him daily as she had anymore. He was well enough to get by with the occasional help from her brother Lin Kang, who had been doing nothing but loitering around the house.

Incidentally, Lin Kang used this as leverage to ask Lin Fang for money again, claiming that he had "helped her with her share" and that she should compensate him for that. He frustrated her so much that Lin Fang even gave up her remaining leaves and ran away back to the company.

In the morning, Chu Xiaoxiao came to pick me up with her car. Walking out of the front door of Xia Genghuai's apartment complex, I saw her pulling by the side of the street in her car, a Bentley, winding her window down and waving at me to get in, just like the movies.

“What are you doing here?” I sat down on the passenger’s seat.

Chu Xiaoxiao said, “You think I have the memory of a goldfish? You said just the other day that you’re going to give me an advertisement company to cover for my loss. You’re not weaseling your way out of this.”

I won’t go back on my words. Part of the reason why I bought Lutong was that I could give it to her. I couldn’t possibly ask Junran to back up the Chu Enterprise, but I could afford paying her back a company, having soured her shot at starting up her advertisement company.

But seeing her, I wanted to tease her a little. I lowered the back of my seat a little and leaned back comfortably, “And you’d just go about believing everything that comes out of my mouth? Do you

think that I could even to pay you back at all, and an advertisement company no less?"

Chu Xiaoxiao smiled thoughtfully, "I'm sure you can."

"And that's where you're wrong. I was just saying it for the thrill of it."

Chu Xiaoxiao started her car. But instead of driving off, she leaned her head on the steering wheel and turned back and looked at me sideways, and smiled, "How could you not? Young inheritor of Junran?"

"How the hell did you know!?"

I was beyond shocked. I've kept my identity a secret to everyone around me, and even within Junran, only a very selective few even knew about my existence. Even my aunt didn't know about my real identity.

Though it would appear that Chu Xiaoxiao was just as shocked, "What the...!?! You are!?! For real!?"

Slapping myself on the head, I swore and cursed at myself for letting my guard down, to be tricked by such a simple play of words. It was my fault completely, for thinking that Chu Xiaoxiao was too simple minded to do that.

Chu Xiaoxiao stared at me, all wide eyed, "At first, I thought you might be Mr. Qu's relative, since you have so many connections with so many of Junran's people. And then, seeing how that landlord was so afraid of you yesterday, I was guessing if you might be a little more than just a relative. I just took a random stab, I never knew that it'd hit a mark right out of the blues!"

"... I don't want to talk. Just drive."

Chu Xiaoxiao was as thick skinned

as the steel plating of her Bentley. She drew near and looked closely at my face, "Yes boss. Of course boss. From now on, I'll be your faithful minion. Whatever you want me to do, just say the word and it's done."

"Chu Xiaoxiao, can you just perhaps maybe remember back in the days when you just came back to the country, you know, when you first saw me? Like the time when you used to have a backbone?"

"No. I'm a spineless wimp that cowers before might, lusts for money, and hungers for power. You promised me an advertisement company. You owe me."

I regretted it. I really truly regretted it. What's gotten into my mind? How did I even get myself into this mess with this girl? I should have just let Mr. Qu give her an offer and be done with it!

Chu Xiaoxiao was smiling so much, almost from ear to ear. Suddenly, right out of the blues, she slapped and honked her car horn, giving me a huge fright. She said excitedly, "Does this mean that one day Fangfang would become the woman behind the man who controls Junran? Ooh, I'm so happy for her! Before I was worried that you and Fangfang might not last long, but with you being who you are, Fangfang definitely won't leave you now."

So what she was saying that, if I weren't who I am, Lin Fang might leave me? I muttered inside, but I didn't ask, knowing that it was no use asking her. Chu Xiaoxiao will never badmouth Lin Fang behind her back.



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Wait! I Have Something to Say!



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I said to her, "Fangfang didn't know that. Don't tell her yet, for now."

"Why? If she knew that you're Junran's inheritor, she'll definitely follow you for the rest of your life...! Don't tell me that you dares to even suspect for just a little bit that Lin Fang was only in it for your money..."

"No, of course not." I chose my words carefully, "I just wanted to give her a surprise. Didn't I just tell you that I wanted to give her a confession? I want to tell her about everything that day, along with the confession."

"Oh, that's good! Then when are you going to confess? I really can't wait. I wish that you two can get married as soon as possible, like tomorrow soon! Lin Fang is so lucky to be able to have someone like you. With you around, she'll never have to live another day being bullied again!"

Chu Xiaoxiao's outburst of praises were music to my ears.

I laughed, "And that's why, I want to get rid of Chen Yuzhou sooner rather than later. When I'm done making sure that no one would be able to hurt Lin Fang anymore, I'll tell her about everything and confess to her."

Thinking about Lin Fang, and thinking about her smiles, it was as if my heart was filled with a blissful warmth.

But just as I was thinking that, what I didn't know was that someone was giving Lin Fang a hard time, at Lutong. All of a sudden, my phone rang.

I picked it up, it was from Lutong, "Zhang Chao? Where are you? Quickly, come to the company, someone came in and hit Lin Fang!"

“What? Who did it!?”

“A woman, she came in and she... she said that Lin Fang seduced her husband. Just come quick!”

Still holding my phone, I was shocked. How was this even possible?

When Chu Xiaoxiao and I rushed to Lutong, Mr. Lu was already waiting for us outside the front door. It was a bright and sunny day, and judging by the amount of sweat on his head, he must have been waiting for a while.

Seeing our car, Mr. Lu ran and hurried over to us.

“You’re finally here. Quick, Lin Fang was boxed in inside.”

“Just what’s going on?” I asked.

Mr. Lu didn’t turn around, but simply

kept walking and dragging me inside, "I don't know either. Isn't she your girlfriend? I can't make sense of this either. It's probably best that you see it for yourself."

Mr. Lu looked didn't say anything more, obvious careful to avoid accidentally saying something that might trigger me.

Chu Xiaoxiao lowered her head, and had a strange expression on her face. When I looked at her, she averted my eyes almost as if it was out of reflex and only said, "Let's go and see what's going on first."

She was obviously hiding something from me. Why? Just what was it that she knew?

"Mr. Lu, you go on in first, I'll be there in just a bit. I need to have a few words with Chu Xiaoxiao."

"But... that woman is already up

there...!" Seeing that I won't change my mind, he slapped his side and said, "Alright, but just be quick about it. It's your girlfriend up there!"

Chu Xiaoxiao was going to slip away with Lutong, but I grabbed her wrist and stopped her.

"Don't ask me. I really can't say it. I don't lie, I never lie, so don't make me start now."

I considered my words, then asked, "Tell me the truth. Was Fangfang unfaithful to me?"

"No. I swear to God, she wasn't." Chu Xiaoxiao had no way out, and said in resignation, "Alright, I'll tell you. When they put you in jail, Chen Yuzhou came onto her and asked her out like crazy. And Fangfang... Fangfang went out with him a number of times."

Inside, I felt as if my head was blown to bits. My vision dimmed a little, at the revelation. I can't... I don't want to believe that this was real.

"That's not what you told me last time." I said, in weak and coarse voice.

Chu Xiaoxiao put her hands together and looked at me apologetically, "I really, really didn't mean to keep it a secret from you..."

I opened my mouth to speak, but I could only feel pain in my chest, as if someone just stabbed and gouged at it with a knife.

I've been in the forces for many years. I was no stranger to pain and injuries. I've wandered the thin boundary between life and death many times, but never once did it feel this painful.

Chu Xiaoxiao grabbed my shoulders and shook it, "Just think. Don't forget, back then, you were put inside the jail, with the entire Tong City turned against you. What would you have Lin Fang do? She is only a normal and frail girl."

But what I wanted to say to her is, under the same stress, why was it that you pulled through, and yet she can't.

As if she had read my thoughts, Chu Xiaoxiao said, "Don't compare Lin Fang with me. Though our family business isn't doing so well now, and my father and I are at odds against each other, but still, no one really dared to do anything too drastic to me. But Fangfang? She couldn't turn to you then, you were jailed up back then. She couldn't turn to me, I was grounded by my father. Who is there for her back then at that time?"

What Chu Xiaoxiao said made sense, and yet it still feels painful inside...

Chu Xiaoxiao shook my shoulders again, and straightened me to look at her in the eyes, "Zhang Chao, I asked you many times already, whether or not you really liked Lin Fang. Fangfang needs someone to constantly protect her and look after her. Maybe at times you'd feel bothered..."

I shrugged her off pushed her hands away, "It wasn't as if I feel bothered..."

"Then, don't, dwell, on, this, so, much, like, what, you, are, doing, now. She has lived a hard enough life already. Can you promise to look after her and make sure that she won't ever have to again?"

"I..." I began to speak, then sighed, "If I don't say no to that, I won't ever

be able to call myself a man again.”

A smile broke out on Chu Xiaoxiao's face. She walked on inside, pulling me along as she did, “Stop thinking about all the unnecessary things. She needs you, and you've fallen for her so much that you've already wound yourself around her little finger. The two of you are made for each other. Let's go.”

I said, “Lin Fang really is lucky to have such a good friend like you.”

“Of course. She was like a little sister to me. Of course I'd look out for her from time to time.”

I added, “One more thing. I need to keep my identity a secret just for a while longer. When you go inside, you'll go in as the new manager of this company. Originally, you were already good enough to be able to strike a deal with Junran as you were, so I got Junran to purchase a

company to be put under your name, and I believe you are more than capable for it.”

Chu Xiaoxiao startled briefly, and her eyes glittered and reddened.

“You’re not going to go all teary and whiny now are you?”

Chu Xiaoxiao broke out her curses, “Teary your butt! I was just a little moved that you weren’t a complete heartless bastard after all!”

She really was a good girl. Though she has quite a mouth on her, but she had a kind and gentle heart. No wonder she and Lin Fang had been good friends for so long.

Heading inside, we asked around a little as we went in, and knew roughly just what had happened.

In the morning, a woman who claimed to be Chen Yuzhou’s

girlfriend busted in through the front door and singled out Lin Fang, then began cursing at her and accusing Lin Fang for seducing her boyfriend.

Lin Fang had always been a little slow with words. When attacked with such coarse language and harsh accusation, her face and neck reddened with anger, but she didn't know what to do.

When Chu Xiaoxiao and I entered, we heard a series of curses.

"You little bitch, do you even know what the word 'shame' means!? How dare you even come after my man! Are you so drunk in your own hormones that you just couldn't think of anything other than just plastering yourself to any men!? And you, you, and all of you! How did you even stand working alongside with someone like that!? I swear to God...."

Lin Fang's face was blushing furiously with anger. She wanted to cut in through the woman's words to say something for herself, but she was no match for the woman.

In the general office was a large woman, a really large woman, pointing and yelling curses at Lin Fang. When I first saw her, I was astonished at how large she was, and instinctively thought of the hippopotamus.

Chu Xiaoxiao even gasped subconsciously, then shook her head after a brief silence, "My God, I don't believe this, I'm actually beginning to feel sorry for Chen Yuzhou. That little body of his... under all that bulking mass... no wonder he had been looking more and more frail these days!"

Chapter 81 Match



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Wait! I Have Something to Say!



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“Su Xiaoqiang, stop with all these false accusations already, I didn’t...”

Su Xiaoqiang. As soon as I heard that name, I turned around and immediately began walking away. As soon as I did, Chu Xiaoxiao grabbed hold of me and stopped me short, and eyed me suspiciously, “Where are you going?”

I replied, not wanting to dwell too much on this, “I’m... not the best person to deal with that woman. I’ll go get the security guards.”

“Bullshit. Best person or no, you’re going back on your words? I’m so telling Lin Fang on you after this.”

“I’m not going back on any words! I’m... I’ll explain it to you later...”

But it was too late already. I didn’t make good of my escape. Su Xiaoqiang saw me, and called out in surprise, with a touch of vicious

playfulness, “Zhang Chao? So it’s you. You work here?”

I had no place to run. At this point, I was beginning to suspect that perhaps God had me in one of his cruel jokes. Somehow, the more I hide myself from this lot, the more I keep on running into them.

“Yes. It’s me. Let Lin Fang go.”

Looking at the face that had grown so fat that I almost couldn’t recognize anymore, painful memories of my past came flooding into my heart. From when I was 7, to finally being kicked out of my own house when I was 17, all the cruelties, torments, and traumas that I received from these inhuman monsters, I thought I had either forgotten about them, or had put them behind and looked ahead already. But now, seeing her again, I realized that I hadn’t. I still remember them, all of them, as

vividly as if they had happened only yesterday.

Chu Xiaoxiao was surprised at the turn of events, and asked me in a low voice, "You know her?"

I gave her a cold snort, "My cousin. My aunt's daughter."

None of them knew about my past with my aunt's family, and thought that we were normal relatives. Lutong was firmly on Lin Fang's side at first, but after knowing that Su Xiaoqiang was my cousin, he looked lost as to which side he should be standing on.

Su Xiaoqiang was my cousin. My aunt's daughter, her second child.

Ever since she was young, she had always been an ill mannered spoiled brat. Though she wasn't nearly as cruel and vicious as her mother and brother, but she was

definitely not what people would call a good person, not by a long shot. When we were little, she pranked me and did all sorts of horrible things to me, like pouring salt onto my food and making me eat it against my will.

Su Xiaoqiang had been thoroughly spoiled by her mother. When I was thrown out of my house, she was 14. Back then, she was a spoiled little girl. But now, five years later, she became a big spoiled girl, in all manners of the phrase.

Chu Xiaoxiao asked, "Is your aunt also rich and powerful?"

"They were an average family back then, but my aunt had forcibly occupied the house my parents left me since they passed away, and she was good with making connections with the rich neighbors around the neighborhood. Because, how else would Chen Yuzhou even

want to lay his eyes on someone like Su Xiaoqiang?”

I walked over to Lin Fang. Looking at her eyes, full of tears and frustration, all my resentments simply vanished, replaced by a renewed determination to look after her well from now on.

“It’s alright, don’t cry, I’m here now.” I said, caressing her hair. Lin Fang threw herself against my chest and cried, finally letting out all her frustrations.

Su Xiaoqiang saw everything, but she paid no mind to it at all. Right now, all her attentions were focused on me.

“Cousin, haven’t seen you for so many years, you changed so much. Mother said that the military were nice enough to pick you up from the slums and let you stay with them, and you got yourself kicked out

already? Got nowhere else to go again? Let me give you a piece of advice, as your cousin, don't let yourself together with that filthy whore, she'll be the end of you one day."

Though Lin Fang was soft spoken, but what Su Xiaoqiang said infuriated even her, "And since when was what anyone said to me any of your business? Chen Yuzhou has been my classmate since school, and yes I did talk with him, but there was nothing between us! What rights do you have to say any of these things to me?"

Su Xiaoqiang sneered, "As if I'd believe there would be nothing between a tramp like you and any other men you see. I saw it with my own eyes, you were in my boyfriend's car, with my boyfriend's rose bouquet in your hands. Are you going to deny that even now? Just how shameless are you?"

What she said stabbed into my heart, and I winced inside, unable to say anything.

Lin Fang on the other hand was the picture of hellish fury, like that of a woman scorned, "Then why don't you call Chen Yuzhou over right now and we can get this over with once and for all? He was the one who stuffed those roses into my hands. I didn't want to get in his car, but he threatened me that if I don't, he'll get the hospital to throw my father out. If he really is your boyfriend, why didn't you keep him on a leash and make him behave?"

I was shocked, "Was that what happened?"

Lin Fang wiped her tears off her face, "I know I can't hide it from you anymore. Zhang Chao, I really didn't do anything unfaithful to you. Don't just listen to whatever other people may say, please? If even you don't

want me... then I really truly have nothing left.”

Hearing Lin Fang, more or less everyone at the company either saw or heard about how Chen Yuzhou had been coming on to Lin Fang, and nobody believed a word Su Xiaoqiang said anymore. Instead, people began commenting amongst themselves about how unreasonable Su Xiaoqiang is.

In the past, people had always went out of their ways to accommodate Su Xiaoqiang, and she never had to suffer being slighted like she is right now. Hearing what people around her says about her, she was infuriated.

“Lin Fang, this is all your fault! I’ll get you!” Su Xiaoqiang swiped a cup by her hand, and threw it at Lin Fang’s head along with the liquid contents still inside the cup.

All around us, people screamed. Subconsciously, I stepped forward and shielded Lin Fang with my body. The cup hit me squarely in the head and shattered, and before long I felt a warmth trickle down my face, which I knew definitely wasn't water or tea.

I cursed under my breath, and wiped the blood clear of my face, "Su Xiaoqiang, just what do you want?"

Su Xiaoqiang was terrified by the blood, and stammered, "I... I didn't mean too... but this is your fault. You're my cousin. Why are you helping that tramp?"

"Who are you calling cousin? You sure likes imagining things for your own convenience. In case you've forgotten, you and your family cut ties with me and kicked me out of my own house when I turned 17. Are you sure you didn't imagine your

relationship with Chen Yuzhou either?”

Laughter roared all around us, much to Su Xiaoqiang's shame and embarrassment.

“Since you did acknowledge me as your cousin just then, so let me offer you a piece of advice in return. Nothing Chen Yuzhou says can be believed. You claim that you're his girlfriend, but have you ever asked anyone just how many girlfriends he has, or had, out there? You're only embarrassing yourself here.”

I can bet on my very own head that Chen Yuzhou would never even want to look at Su Xiaoqiang.

To be fair, my aunt was a pretty woman. Su Xiaoqiang was once a cute girl, but she just couldn't control her mouth. Looking at her now, I'll bet that she must weigh over 200 kg, at least.

With people like Chen Yuzhou, who also had been rich for all of his life, I'd swallow my own shoe before believing that he had such an open and avant garde sense of beauty. With Su Xiaoqiang as she is right now, it was impossible that he actually had any feelings for her at all. That bastard probably only got close to her and tricked her with some other motives in mind, and she actually believed his lies.

Su Xiaoqiang was in a state of shock, unable to do or say anything.

Lin Fang said, wiping the tears off her face, "What Zhang Chao said is true. I had been classmates with Chen Yuzhou ever since elementary school, we grew up together. By now, he must have went through over a hundred girlfriends already."

Chu Xiaoxiao added, "Though I'm sure that you are the only one he had of your... calibre."

Again, laughter roared all around.

Su Xiaoqiang gradually came to. She was young, and nobody liked being ridiculed like that.

“You’re all lying, I’m Chen Yuzhou’s fiance! Chen Yuzhou’s father said so to me himself! Cousin, though my family weren’t the perfect relatives to you, but at least we raised you up until you’re an adult. How could you just discount all that we’ve done for you and turn on us to help an outsider just like that?”



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Wait! I Have Something to Say!



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Before I even opened my mouth to reply, Chu Xiaoxiao already did, "You're joking right, or had Chen Ruhai finally gone senile?"

It was as if Chu Xiaoxiao was possessed today, by the god of comedy and retorts, every replies from her sent all the onlookers laughing clutching their stomachs.

The grim and heavy air lifted and the atmosphere in the office once again returned to normal, and all Chu Xiaoxiao did to achieve that was a few offhanded comments.

I said, "Since you're his fiance, then I'd say that you'd better go back and keep Chen Yuzhou in line. Tell him to stop going after all his other girls, or you'll break his legs. After all, there's just too many women out there, it's impossible to keep all of them in check, so keeping a tight rein on Chen Yuzhou is the only practical way."

Chu Xiaoxiao added, "Yes, break his legs, all three of them."

With my hand on the wound on my head, I couldn't stifle my laugh in time.

Su Xiaoqiang felt so humiliated that she ran off out of the door, crying.

After she left, once again a heaviness set itself back into my heart.

A few days ago it was my aunt, and this time it was Su Xiaoqiang.

Though I tried all I could to stay away from them, but was it really possible or practical? After all, this is how big Tong City is, and it isn't getting any bigger. So where could I go to hide from them? As long as I stay in this place, I'm bound to run into them eventually.

I just hope, that by then, I'd have enough grounds to stand on and

stand against them tall and proud. I must get to the bottom of what happened that night 15 years ago. My father didn't drink any alcohol, the accident didn't happen because of him, and he certainly didn't cause my uncle to die. My father shouldn't be blamed for all of this, and neither should I be blamed and shunned and tormented for what my father never committed.

Lin Fang was distressed, and her eyes were all red and puffed up from all the cryings. After introducing Chu Xiaoxiao to Lu Tong, I took Lin Fang back home to rest.

All along the way, Lin Fang was silent, and only stared outside the window, lost in her thoughts and worries. My heart felt for her, but I didn't know how I could help her in any way.

I tried making small talks with her,

but her heart and mind was obviously on something else, and only gave me simple replies, sometimes only nods and shakes from her head.

I couldn't help but remembering what Chu Xiaoxiao said. Lin Fang had went through so much in her life already. If at all possible, I want to protect her from all the bad things that hurts her, for the rest of her life.

A bell chime sounded from my phone, and my phone screen lit up.

A message came in. I glanced over it, and a smile crept up to the corner of my lips.

"Who is it?" Lin Fang asked.

"It's from Chu Xiaoxiao..." I began to answer, keeping my eyes on the shops at the side of the road.

Lin Fang went on to ask, "She is the one who told you about me and Chen Yuzhou isn't she?"

"Not quite. She didn't want to say it. I had to force her to make her say it. Don't blame her, this really isn't her fault."

Since before Chu Xiaoxiao even said anything, Qingqing the receptionist at Lutong's front desk already told me, I just didn't want to believe her. But now, since it already happened, I didn't want to dwell on it too much. Nothing can change what has already happened, so I might as well just let it go.

Since, after all, I liked Lin Fang, a lot. Chu Xiaoxiao was right. Since I liked her so much, why should I keep letting what happened in the past get in my way of loving her?

But unexpectedly, after hearing what I said, Lin Fang winced

painfully and clenched her fists tight. From the reflection in the mirror, I saw that her pretty little face was once again filled with tears.

“What’s wrong?” I hurriedly pulled over at the side of the road and stopped the car.

Lin Fang only sobbed, unable to say anything. She reached and clasped one of my hands in hers, and hugged it tight against her chest, and simply cried. After a while, she finally said to me, “No matter what anyone else may say, please don’t leave me. I really don’t want to lose you.”

“Of course, I would never leave you.” I pulled Lin Fang into my embrace, and hugged her tightly in my arms. Having Lin Fang as my girlfriend was the best thing that happened to me in my life, and I wouldn’t trade it for anything else.

Lin Fang sobbed in my arms. She rested her head against my neck, and her tears fell from her face, and trickled down my shirt, and onto my heart. She didn't complain or share her pain with me often, but I can understand her pains.

Chu Xiaoxiao was right. How could a lone frail girl possibly stand her ground against someone as powerful as Chen Yuzhou? She did her best already, holding on to her last line of defense and keeping herself from being defiled by Chen Yuzhou.

I caressed over her hair, and said softly, "You don't have to be afraid anymore. From now on, I'll protect you. Me and Chu Xiaoxiao both, we'll protect you."

Lin Fang grabbed my shirt tightly in her hands, like a little girl holding onto her most precious thing in the world. My heart went out to her.

Lin Fang cried for a long time, and her face was covered in tears. Suddenly, she raised her head and kissed me on the cheek, then looked at me in the eyes, "You're so good to me. I regret it so much."

"What's there to regret about?" I wiped her tears. Pretty girls sure have it easy. If it had been Su Xiaoqiang's face that was covered in tears and so close to me, my first reaction would be to push her face away from me as far as possible. But with Lin Fang, even her tear filled face looked cute and beautiful.

"I regret not being with you back in high school." She frowned and scrunched her nose, "It's all your fault. Where were you all these years?"

I playfully gave myself a few pretend slaps, "It's all my fault. From now on, I'll stay by your side

forever. I won't go anywhere else."

She gave me a big nod, but my eyes were fixed on her puffy lips. She just cried, and she has been biting her lips, so right now, it was all red with all the blood that rushed there, like a bright and inviting cherry waiting for me to swallow it whole.

I fidgeted in nervousness. When Lin Fang found that I wasn't giving her my undivided attention, she pinched my chin and asked what I was thinking about, that was more important than listening to her.

At her words, I tried to pull my thoughts back into focus and looked down back at her. She wore her usual business suit, and had her shirt buttoned up to a dignified and respectable height without the risk of showing anything, normally. But as a soldier, I was trained to always sit up straight, and I was a head taller than her already, so looking

down from where my eyes were, all that I could see in my eyes is a beautiful scenery of white down the top of her shirt.

She still sobbed occasionally, and with each sob, the whiteness in front of her chest shook and wobbled slightly. It was as if there was a small ball of fire burning in my throat, and at some place inside of me a little bit lower than where my stomach is.

She is my girlfriend after all, so it should be alright if I give her a kiss here right? It wasn't as if we had never kissed before, but in my heart, she was like a goddess to me, and I didn't dare do anything that might displease her.

But after all that's said and done, I'm still a man, and there are no men that doesn't think about those things at all. I can rein myself in from acting on my impulses and

desires, but I still have all the normal physiological responses that a man would have in this situation.

Besides, if I continue to be as gentleman as I had been, would Lin Fang take it as Chu Xiaoxiao had and assumed that I'm... not capable down there?

Thoughts raced and bounced about in my head, all so that I could find myself an excuse to work up the courage and give Lin Fang a kiss.

So what if I kiss her a little? I'm her boyfriend, she is my girlfriend, and we've openly announced our relationship to others already.

Just as I psyched myself up and worked up enough courage to kiss her, suddenly Lin Fang's phone rang. She turned to her bag to fish out her phone.

I cursed and scorned at my own cowardice for wasting my time thinking about all the unnecessary things, but that moment was already gone.

From her tone of voice, Lin Fang was obviously disturbed by the call. She responded half heartedly, obviously wanting to end the call, but whoever that called her on the other side of the phone won't let up.

Until in the end, Lin Fang yelled into the phone in exasperation, "Chen Yuzhou, you're already engaged, your fiance even came looking for me today, so can you please just stay away from me!?"

So Chen Yuzhou was the one who called her!? He had the gall to come bothering her even now!



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Wait! I Have Something to Say!



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I signaled Lin Fang to give me the phone and let me deal with him.

But Lin Fang wouldn't, as she listened on, her face went from pure anger to bottomless hopelessness. I didn't know what happened, and she wouldn't tell me either.

Lin Fang finally said to him, almost in a begging tone, "You already have a fiance, and I have a boyfriend already. Won't you just let me go?"

Inside, I was more worried than anything. Just what did he threaten Lin Fang with again this time?

After a while, Lin Fang calmed herself, and said in an even tone, "Whether you believe it or not, I have a boyfriend, and he is Zhang Chao. Soon, I'll invite everyone I knew over for a gathering, and tell everyone about it openly. What? Why would I be ashamed of being together with Zhang Chao in any way? I like him.

Fine, call a gathering if you must, but I will bring him with me. Just as well, I can introduce him to everyone while I'm at it."

Finishing the call, Lin Fang let a breath out as if a rock had just been lifted off her shoulders. with a tired smile, she said, "Alright, Zhang Chao, I'm counting on you word that you won't ever leave me again, otherwise I'd be the laughing stock of everyone in Tong City."

I was so moved that I didn't know what to say. I clasped her hand with mine, and gave her a big nod, "And you can count on me. Just you see, you can point a gun at my head even, I will never leave you."

If I really did something to hurt her, even I wouldn't be able to forgive myself.

Now I really believed that she really did liked me. With who I was, and

my past, she would even openly announce to all her old friends that we're now together. What more could I want?

In the eyes of the majority of people in Tong City, I was nothing but a humble little security guard, who has offended one of the largest and most powerful corporations in Tong City. In their eyes, I'm someone who no longer has a future.

And even more so to the people who knew me in high school. To them, I was a mentally disabled idiot who drinks water from the urinal, who would only cower in fear against the bullies, a weak and powerless orphan and pauper. No girls would even talk to me, because if any of them had, they'd be laughed at for an entire day.

But Lin Fang, the prettiest and most beautiful of them all, the object of desire of every boy in the school,

was willing to be with me.

She did so much for me already, not for my money and identity that I've yet to reveal to her, but simply because she liked me.

I was so moved that I wished more than anything that I could tell Lin Fang who I am right now, and that she won't have to be afraid of anything anymore. More than just a little Chen Yuzhou, even the entire Black Dragon won't be able to lay a finger on her.

But I can't. I couldn't. If I did, everyone else would think that Lin Fang was only together with me because she was after my money. But she wasn't. She is the most simple and pure and kind hearted girl in the entire world.

That day, when she openly introduce me to everyone else, I'll tell her about my identity. At the

same time, I'll let Chen Yuzhou know, that be it me, or my woman, neither of us is someone that he could afford to mess with.

I stopped my car in front of a shop as Chu Xiaoxiao had instructed me, and went inside and got Lin Fang a single rose.

Lin Fang was happier than anything in the world. She looked at and brought it close to her nose to bask in its faint fragrance, then giggled jokingly, "And here I thought that you were an honest man who didn't know about these stuffs. Say, you haven't been practicing with other women behind my back have you?"

I immediately confessed and clarified, "I haven't! I really haven't! Actually, Chu Xiaoxiao was the one who taught me to do this. See here, I have never been in love before, and since Chu Xiaoxiao knows you, and she seemed like she knows a

lot of things, so I thought I'd ask her for advice about this."

Lin Fang fell silent for a bit, "From now on, can you... not be so close with Chu Xiaoxiao? She is indeed my best friend, but still..."

I smiled, she looked cute even when she was worried, "Are you worried that she might steal me away from you? You can rest assured. Chu Xiaoxiao told me herself, that she has absolutely no interest in me at all. There must be some misunderstandings before."

Lin Fang still didn't seem convinced, and said unhappily, "You don't understand women, and you don't know Xiaoxiao like I do."

I think Lin Fang was simply worrying too much. Chu Xiaoxiao wasn't that kind of person. Besides, Chu Xiaoxiao really was good to Lin Fang, so good that she'd go to any

lengths just to keep Lin Fang safe from harm. She would never even think about stealing her best friend's boyfriend.

That, and, I really don't think I have that much personal charisma for any possibilities of that ever happening.

I began to say something to explain it on Chu Xiaoxiao's behalf, but luckily I caught myself in time. Speaking for another woman right in front of your own girlfriend? That's beyond unwise, idiotic even, and it'd create nothing but problems and troubles.

"Just you relax. I know enough about myself to know that you're the only one who could possibly fall for me out of the entire world. Ever."

Finally, that brought a smile to Lin Fang's face, "Good, so long as you keep that in mind."

I took Lin Fang back to her apartment, she asked me to escort her upstairs.

When I escorted her to her door, Lin Fang made me come into her place.

My heart beat faster and faster, and I grew increasingly worried that I really might actually do something inappropriate to her.

It really can't be helped. I've never had a girlfriend before. Before this, I could count the times I've sat down and spoken with a woman with just my fingers, on one hand.

In my squad, all of us were big and buff blokes. Though from time to time we'd talk about women, but just about all of the were just like me, and only knew about women from TV shows and movies.

An urge rose up within me, wanting to do something more to her, with

her. Though Chu Xiaoxiao laughed at me, that I was an inexperienced virgin who had only went as far as kissing before, but in all honesty, I was frightened of doing even just that. More than anything else, the one thing that I was most afraid of is making Lin Fang angry and displeasing her.

Inside Lin Fang's place, she told me to sit and wait for her in the living room, then went to get the medkit for me, to help me treat the wound on my head.

"It's nothing but a little scratch. See, it isn't even bleeding anymore." I called out behind her, but Lin Fang already disappeared into her bedroom.

Looking at her bedroom door, I couldn't help but remembering her bed inside her bedroom, and how good it must feel if... look, I swear I'm not a pervert, but if any men out

there would come up to me and tell me that they never once fantasized about that sort of things, I'd call them a liar straight to their face.

I hurriedly sat myself down on the sofa, back straightened and good posture and all, like a good behaving schoolboy.

Lin Fang began going through her cupboard looking for the medkit. From where I sat, I could see her through her opened bedroom door, bending down over beside her cupboard. The fabric of her skirt was pulled up slightly and stretched taut over her buttocks, emphasizing its shape and making it look much fuller than usual, then going down are her thighs and shapely calves and...

I simply sat there and stared like an idiot.

When Lin Fang came out with the

medkit, I hurriedly turned my eyes elsewhere and cleared my throat. When I took the cup of cold water that she offered, the icy touch of the cup made me realize just how warm my hand was, and how much my face must be burning up. Now, more than ever, I was thankful for my darkened skin tone, and hopefully Lin Fang hadn't noticed it yet.

Thankfully, Lin Fang didn't say anything, and was only intent on addressing the wound on my head.

"Come over a bit, what are you doing sitting so far away for?"

I shifted closer towards her on the seat for a bit. There was a scent coming from her body, a faint and refreshing scent, and it brushed and tickled at my heart like a cat teasing its owner with its long and fluffy tail.

Maybe, not kissing, and only looking at her would be fine right? I'm a healthy functional man after all, not some eunuchs...

It was warm inside her house. Feeling the heat, she took off her jacket, and undone a button on her shirt. Her bared skin was white and silky, and her collarbone are prominent and defined, like a model for a fashion magazine.

Lin Fang pulled my head low and addressed the wound on my head. Since she couldn't see my face at all, my eyes drank in the sight of her before me.

Suddenly, Lin Fang pushed my head back. She was done addressing my wound. She looked at my still awkward and startled expression, and giggled.

"Are you thinking of something naughty?" Lin Fang asked bluntly.

“No I’m not, not even a tiny little bit.” Immediately I tore my eyes off her and sat back up straight with an impeccable posture. I was so nervous that I could feel my sweat forming in the palm of my hands.

If the people back in my squad ever came to know how pitiful I am right now, I’d never hear the end of their laughters...



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