

The gate opened and a lady in her thirties walked out. She was dressed in a simple manner and wore a pair of glasses perched on a face that resembled Xu Jing's.

"Miss Xu, you have guests! Over there." The child then pointed at Lu Chen and the other three men who had just gotten out of the car.

The lady pushed her glasses up and studied her guests closely. The fact that they weren't ordinary people was obvious at a glance and they drove a grand car which only emphasized it. In that instant, suspicion welled up in the lady's eyes.

"Hello, Miss. May I know if this is Xu Jing's home?" Song Hai approached her and asked.

"You are..." the lady asked in confusion.

"We are Xu Jing's colleagues. May I know if he's at home?" Song Hai asked further.

He was more or less sure that this was indeed Xu Jing's home.

"Oh! You are my brother's colleagues!"

Please, come in." The lady warmly welcomed them into her home.

In the yard, the four of them found out that the lady was one of Xu Jing's elder sisters. Lu Chen took a look around, only realizing now that Xu Jing's family was very poor; their house was low, small and made of a mishmash of mud and brick which looked as though it hadn't been refreshed for decades.

The yard also contained a pigpen made of thatch that held two piglets that looked to weigh only about 50 or 60 pounds each.

There was also a chicken coop although it contained only a few chickens.

An old man with snowy hair walked out of the house upon hearing the commotion outside. His face was thin; he wore a Chinese tunic and a pair of reading glasses, and clutched a fountain pen in his hand. Everything about him hinted that he was a teacher.

He was Xu Zhengyi, Xu Jing's father.

When he was younger, Xu Zhengyi had taught in the village's primary school and

became the primary school's principal based on his track record later in his old age. However, he had been a headmaster for only two years before he was accused of bribery and corruption.

The Xu Family had spent everything they had, though they did manage to clear his name in the end.

Back then, Xu Jing had enlisted in the army because they hadn't had the money to continue his upper secondary education. Although he'd done well there, his impulsive actions more or less canceled out his achievements. What was more, the local officials docked the pay he had been entitled to when he was discharged from military service, and he had returned home with next to nothing.

These were the reasons why the Xu Family had never had enough to repair their home.

Truth be told, Xu Jing's salary had exceeded 15,000 ever since Lu Chen had promoted him to manager. But he hadn't received much money yet since he had only held the position for two months.

"Father, these are Xu Jing's colleagues," Xu Rong explained.

"Xu Jing's colleagues? Come in and take a seat!" Xu Zhengyi nodded and ushered all four of them into the house.

The interior of the house was bright and clean despite not a lick of paint on the walls and the simple, even coarsely-made wooden furniture it held.

Lu Chen and the three others had no scruples about it and took their seats on some wooden stools.

Song Hai gave the packages—all gifts for the Xu Family whether big or small—to Xu Rong, who looked moved and exclaimed, "Oh my! You are too kind."

"Dear, come out and greet our guests!" Xu Zhengyi called out toward one of the rooms.

Xu Jing's mother was a countrywoman in her fifties who came out when she heard her husband's call. She looked gaunt but still appeared energetic. When she saw the huge gift packages in her daughter's hands, she couldn't help looking over at Lu

Chen and the others.

As Xu Rong left to keep the presents, Lu Chen saw a freshly written petition left out on the table for the ink to dry. Associating it with the fountain pen in Xu Zhengyi's hand, Lu Chen couldn't help asking, "Uncle Xu, are you bringing someone to court?"

"Yes, I am. My son Xu Jing was wronged, I must sue the people responsible for it," Xu Zhengyi disclosed.

"Huh? Xu Jing was wronged? What happened?" Lu Chen asked.

When Xu Zhengyi didn't reply, Lu Chen continued. "Uncle Xu, I'm Xu Jing's boss. I came here in person because we were unable to contact Xu Jing when he only took three days' leave but disappeared for an entire week instead. Uncle Xu, believe me, as long as Xu Jing was in the right, no matter how serious the incident or how powerful a person you offended, I will get Xu Jing out of there."

Lu Chen's expression was firm. From Xu Zhengyi's words, he already knew that Xu Jing was no longer in the police station and had already been sent into jail.

Even if Xu Jing is already in jail, as long as he really is innocent, I can get him out.

"Mister, can you really save my son from jail?" Xu Jing's mother, Du Meng, burst out and looked at Lu Chen with a face full of hope before her husband could respond.

"Auntie, my name is Lu Chen. You can just call me by my name. As long as Xu Jing really is innocent, I can get him out," Lu Chen reassured her with a nod.

Du Meng and her family wavered. Just then, Xu Rong served them tea and pointed outside the window. "All the trouble stemmed from that wall," she claimed.

Lu Chen and the Three Marquises of the Water Margin all looked out of the window. Only now did they realize that there was a new wall directly opposite the window, and it was made of red bricks and completely out of place next to the Xu Family's mud walls.

"You and your neighbor share a party wall, right?" Song Hai had also come from a village and caught on with one look at the wall.

The two families must have shared the same wall and gotten into an argument when the Xu Family's next-door neighbor had knocked it down and built the new wall over the property line.

"That's right. The old wall was more than a meter away from where the new wall stands, but last month, the Tan Family was renovating and just pushed the old wall down without consulting us and built the new wall in our yard! My husband argued with them about it but they beat him up instead, so my mother gave Xu Jing a call and when he heard about it, he went over to demand an explanation from the Tan Family, saying that he would demolish this new wall. We really hadn't expected the Tan Family Brothers to rush into our house and try to beat Xu Jing up. Xu Jing had been acting in self-defense when he beat the two of them to the ground.

Unbeknownst to us then, it was a trap set by the Tan Family. The Tan Family Brothers had just cried out as they fell to the ground when the local police rushed in and arrested Xu Jing," Xu Rong reeled off.

"Most importantly, they were the ones who made the first move! My Xu Jing was only acting in self-defense! Besides, the Tan

Family Brothers picked themselves off the ground the instant the local police took Xu Jing away and declared that they were going to make Xu Jing rot in jail." Xu Jing's mother, Du Meng, sighed in worry.

At her age and with no one influential in the house to turn to, she couldn't even get angry.

The only emotion she could have was the worry she felt for her son.

"So where is Xu Jing now? Is he still under remand, or has he already been sentenced and put into jail?" Song Hai inquired.

"He's still in remand. The four brothers of the Tan Family are the village's scoundrels. This time, they even ganged up on Xu Jing, then turned around and framed him. My poor Xu Jing, he was even beaten up under remand! When we went to see him yesterday, there were wounds and bruises all over his face!" Du Meng wept toward the end, tears falling from her eyes uncontrollably out of worry for her son.

Equally fretful, Xu Zhengyi took off his glasses and it looked as if he was about to go on a tirade. Instead, he just let out a



long, weary sigh.

“Uncle Xu, Auntie, don’t worry. We’ll get Xu Jing out of there today itself. As for the Tan Family, we will handle them later,” Lu Chen comforted her.



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Lu Chen knew Xu Jing well; he was occasionally reckless but also a man with resolve and determination.

Being a man who had gone through the rigors of the military for years, he stayed his hand unless absolutely necessary.

Moreover, Xu Jing's parents' testimonies had cemented Lu Chen's belief that the Tan Family had set a trap for Xu Jing.

"Mr. Lu, let's talk about getting Xu Jing out later. You've come a long way and you're sure to be hungry. Let's fill your stomach first," Xu Zhengyi invited as he stood up to head out and slaughter a chicken for lunch.

The simple farming folk didn't have much to offer, thus slaughtering a chicken for their guests was considered a generous gesture.

"Uncle Xu, please go ahead and prepare the meals while we get Xu Jing out to join us for lunch." Lu Chen wanted to get Xu Jing out of the lockup immediately since he now knew that he was getting beaten up in there.

“How could I do that? You traveled such a long way here, at least have a little food before you go,” Xu Zhengyi insisted.

“Uncle Xu, the house isn’t far from the local police station. We’ll be back more or less around the time when lunch is ready,” Song Hai assured him.

Xu Zhengyi gave it a moment’s thought and suggested, “Then I’ll ask Liu Pingan to lead the way as he knows where Xu Jing is locked up.”

Liu Pingan was Xu Zhengyi’s son-in-law, the husband of his daughter, Xu Rong. He also taught in the village’s primary school as a math teacher.

Last time, he had gone over to the Tan Family to discuss the issue about the wall but had been beaten up by the Tan Family Brothers instead.

However, the Tan Family Brothers hadn’t dared to beat him up too badly because he looked like a frail scholar and was a teacher at that.

Liu Pingan soon arrived and had just been introduced to Lu Chen and the Three

Marquises of the Water Margin when four burly men barged into the Xu Family's yard. One of the men pointed at Xu Zhengyi and snarled, "Old fart! I hear that your family called in reinforcements?"

Meanwhile, his three companions sized Lu Chen and the Three Marquises of the Water Margin up and down derisively.

Xu Zhengyi and his family blanched when they saw the four men, not having expected the Tan Family Brothers to barge into their home and create more trouble.

"Brats, I'm warning you! Get lost if you know what's good for you or my brothers and I will smash up your shitty car!" one of the men thundered at Lu Chen and the Three Marquises of the Water Margin.

Song Hai's face clouded over. As a powerful head honcho in the underground forces, he couldn't just allow these goons to insult them—especially Lu Chen—like that! He was about to make a move when Lu Chen threw him a look to hold him back, indicating that their first priority was getting Xu Jing out of lockup.

As for the Tan Family Brothers, there were

nothing but ants to Lu Chen. He would crush them after he had gotten Xu Jing out.

“Old fart, Xu Jing is already in lockup and you still dare to blow things up? I’m warning you, we’ll put you in there if you don’t behave, believe it or not.” The Tan Family Brothers looked at Lu Chen and the Three Marquises of the Water Margin with disdain when they didn’t speak up.

One of the Tan Family Brothers cast his gaze and strolled over to the Xu Family’s pigpen. “Let’s take one of their pigs as punishment for their cheek,” he suggested.

“Good idea. Come on, let’s take it!” The other three brothers’ faces lit up and they all ran toward the pigpen.

Xu Zhengyi and his family were full of rage and had been about to burst out when Lu Chen stopped them.

“Uncle Xu, just ignore them if you trust me. When I get Xu Jing out of remand, I’ll make sure that those brothers pay back the Xu Family ten times in fold.”

When they saw the confidence in his gaze

and the determination set on Lu Chen's face, Xu Zhengyi and his family chose to believe him.

Either way, their family was helpless without Xu Jing around. They couldn't beat the Tan Family Brothers or do anything to stop them from taking their pig away.

Though it was hard to appease the anger within them.

"Alright, we believe you." Xu Zhengyi nodded and indicated to his family members to keep their peace, so they just watched in silence as the Tan Family Brothers blatantly carried their pig away.

"Mr. Liu, let's go. Bring us to the local police station," Lu Chen requested of Liu Pingan when the Tan Family Brothers had left.

In fact, Liu Pingan had lost confidence in Lu Chen and the Three Marquises of the Water Margin when they had just stood by as Tan Family Brothers taunted them.

He didn't believe that Lu Chen and the trio would be able to handle the superintendent when they couldn't even

take care of the Tan Family Brothers.

The superintendent was in cahoots with the Tan Family Brothers after all.

Although he wasn't confident, he still led the way.

They got back in the car and soon reached Shilong Village's local police station under Liu Pingan's directions.

In fact, it wasn't far at all. It stood just next to the Village Council and had been built in the style of a traditional building with glazed, golden-yellow roof tiles decorated by alternating red and blue police lights.

A police car and two police motorcycles were parked beside its large iron door.

Lin Tong parked next to the police car and they all got down, only to find that the police station was empty.

At the corridor, they found that even the office doors were closed. Apart from the toilet lights which were switched on, the entire police station looked as if it was deserted.

“Let’s check out the second floor,” Lu Chen directed.

Upstairs, they found that all the rooms were also locked on the second floor. However, they heard snoring coming from inside the superintendent’s office when they passed by.

Song Hai had just been about to knock the door when Liu Pingan cut in. “Xu Jing has been shut in there for five to six days now,” he said and pointed.

Lu Chen’s gaze followed in the direction of his finger only to see the lockup at the end of the corridor. It was barred with a heavily locked security door.

Lu Chen walked over and banged on the door as he called out, “Xu Jing, are you in there?”

Xu Jing, hearing Lu Chen’s voice, cried out in joy. “Lu Chen, is that you? Why are you here?”

“Brat, why didn’t you call me when you had trouble that you couldn’t handle at home?” Lu Chen’s worry dissipated when he heard Xu Jing’s voice. As long as he was fine, Lu



Chen would definitely get Xu Jing out by today.

“Chen, I just didn’t want to bother you over a small issue like this. Besides, they confiscated my phone so I couldn’t call you anyway,” Xu Jing explained.

“Alright, but next time, you need to give me a call first no matter what. Never mind, let’s just leave it for now and get you out of here first,” Lu Chen ordered.

Lu Chen turned as his voice trailed off, about to look for the superintendent, when the door to the superintendent’s office swung open and a red-faced man emerged. He held a black-colored teacup and looked as if he had just crawled out of bed.

The red-faced man had clearly had too much to drink as his complexion was beet-red from the alcohol. “What are you doing here!” he hollered at Lu Chen, Liu Pingan and the Three Marquises of the Water Margin when he saw them.

Lu Chen studied the man. The hem of the light blue shirt of his police uniform hung out, his badge was nowhere to be seen,

and a pair of black leather shoes shod his feet.

Perhaps because he had been aroused from his drunken sleep, he looked at them with obvious irritation in his eyes that threatened to arrest the lot if they didn't give him a reasonable explanation.



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