

Constellation Door

Chapter 31: The Crazy Liu Long (1)

The law enforcement team began to search the Zhang family's old residence.

They found nothing of value, as expected. Liu Long knew that those culprits had monitored this house long enough. They were after something. Had they found it? 'If not, who are they waiting for?' thought Liu Long.

No one would come to this house... except Li Hao. Liu Long had his hands behind his back, and he walked around observing the place. Li Hao and the others followed behind. Black Panther stuck near to Li Hao as though the dog was scared of getting close to Captain Liu.

Liu Long soon walked into the kitchen. The kitchen door was already open. As they walked in, Li Hao glanced at the chimney. He had replaced the rock and tried his best to restore the chimney to the best of his abilities at that moment. But a part of it had fallen off and he had no way to stick it back.

However, the house was so old that it wasn't unusual for a part of the chimney to fall off. The others didn't look at the chimney yet. They wandered around examining the kitchen.

Liu Long was sharp. With a single glance, he scanned the layout of the kitchen. He did not expect to find anything of significance here. If the culprit had monitored this house for so long, Liu Long doubted he could find anything of value here that they hadn't.

As he was about to leave, his glance stopped at the stone on the floor that Li Hao had tried to replace. Liu Long did not say anything. He turned around and looked at Li Hao.

"Li Hao, did you happen to find anything when you were here?" asked the captain.

"No," said Li Hao, shaking his head. He hesitated. "Nothing of value. But I did notice that everything in the house had been touched. Even the old tree in the courtyard. Someone had dug up the base and tried to put it back as it was."

Liu Long nodded. "Do you think the person responsible might reveal themselves if we demolish the house?" asked Captain Liu suddenly.

“Probably now,” said Li Hao honestly. “With the law enforcement team here, they might not really dare to reveal themselves. But it would certainly alert them. I don’t think they would directly confront the Silver City law enforcement team.”

“Then do you think it is necessary to demolish this place?” asked the captain. “This is the ancestral home of your dear friend, Zhang Yuan, after all.”

Li Hao’s heart sank. Had the captain discovered something? He wondered if the captain suspected him. It was very likely. The captain might have already assumed that the people who were in league with the red shadow would have already found what they were looking for. If that was the case, Li Hao looked suspicious at the moment.

‘He’s really difficult to deal with!’ lamented Li Hao. He wondered what the captain was doing all these years. If such a person existed in the law enforcement team, how was it that it had always given him an impression of being incompetent at its job?

There were more than one or two unsolved cases in the law-enforcement team. Otherwise, Li Hao wouldn’t have considered the organization incompetent.

Li Hao thought of a response. “It would be immensely better if the house could be spare.” He hesitated. “However, if demolishing this place helps send a message to whoever killed my friend, then it is not such a waste.”

Liu Long nodded briskly. He suddenly struck out and punched a hole in the kitchen wall. Li Hao flinched. The kitchen walls were still made of bricks! That kind of punch would have killed anyone.

The impact caused an entire part of the wall to fall since it was so old. Liu Long looked around. “Since we found nothing, tear down the house!” he ordered. “If you still don’t find anything after that, burn it to the ground.”

“Yes, sir!” the team members responded.

There was a rumble as the team began dismantling the walls.

Liu Long looked at Li Hao. “Should we take a look around and take back a few items as mementos?”

“No need, sir,” said Li Hao. “The only memento I need is the head of the culprit who killed my friend so I can finally place it on his grave as a peace offering.”

He did not want to draw unnecessary attention to himself. If he took a few things from this house, he would be monitored by the enemy. They would think he had found the stone. Also, Liu Long might still be testing him. It was better to refuse.

Liu Long nodded. "Don't burn everything!" he shouted. "Bring a few things back as evidence."

"Yes, sir!" intoned his team.

Li Hao didn't say anything. But he wondered if Liu Long knew more than he let out. Did he know about the red shadow? Was he trying to lure it out?

Li Hao learnt not to underestimate the captain and the law enforcement team henceforth. He would pay attention to his every word for clues.

"Rest of you! Disperse and look around!" instructed the captain. "Li Hao, you follow me."

Chapter 32: The Crazy Liu Long (2)

Li Hao followed obediently. He didn't ask anything more.

Liu Long didn't talk for a long time. He strode out of the house. Li Hao followed behind.

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Outside the Zhang family residence, the entire street was filled by the people from the law enforcement team. A very few residents had also come out to the street in alarm at the commotion.

Liu Long did not say a word and continued to walk. He walked all the way to a water tower in the middle of the old Street and then halted. Then, he climbed the stairs to the top.

Li Hao followed him silently. He didn't know what the captain intended and why. Perhaps he wanted to look down from a high ground.

The water tower was the tallest building in the old street. Everything could be seen from up there.

'Does he want to observe the surroundings from up there?' wondered Li Hao.

The two of them walked up the old, creaky wooden stairs. A few minutes later, they were at the top. Below them, the old street spread wide. Everything was in sight.

Liu Long's trench coat was unbuttoned. It fluttered in the wind. The numerous weapons on his personage were fleetingly revealed. Li Hao had expected the weapons to be mostly guns however, to his surprise, there were various knives and blades.

There was a short knife, an exquisite silver axe, and a few throwing knives with extremely small hilts.

Liu Long looked up at the sky instead of the crowded street below. “Li Hao,” he said. “You have been working in the Confidential Information Room for more than a year now. Tell me, what was your first impression of the law enforcement team?”

“I thought that they were very capable,” lied Li Hao.

“Ha!” smirked the captain. “Lies, again! All scholars are indeed very bad liars.” He mocked.

Li Hao was astounded.

“I know you think we are incompetent. That we seem to be able to solve small cases but incapable of even investigating the big ones,” said Liu Long, appearing very indifferent, as though he couldn’t care less. “You are right. The law enforcement team has been somewhat incapable for the past few years now. Years ago, we were the stabilizing force of Silver City.”

Captain Liu looked at Li Hao. “You are from here. So, you would probably remember that the Law enforcement team was so effective that the Silver City never worried about its security. Silver City was the safest place to be in, even at night.”

Li Hao did remember. He nodded. Silver City was considered very safe when he was young. He had felt that there was never any danger, at least not in the Silver City.

“Do you know why I want you to join my team?” he asked.

Li Hao shook his head.

“Think about Zhang Yuan,” said the captain.

Li Hao was confused. How was Zhang Yuan connected to him offering Li Hao a post?

Liu Long sounded a little gentler. “I have been the captain of the law enforcement team for ten years now. I care for my team deeply. It’s how you feel about your friend Zhang Yuan. You feel like you have lost a brother. I know. I can’t bear to see my team, which I consider my family, in danger.”

“However, my emotion and my loyalty has clouded my judgment. I tried to investigate and find out the traitors. But I keep restraining myself from doing a full-blown investigation because I keep feeling like my team would never do anything to let me down. I certainly don’t want to doubt them and lose their trust in me. I have been with them, together for years. Always fighting for justice. I somehow can’t bring myself to believe that such people would betray me and betray the principles we stand for.”

“Justice is eternal, never afraid, never compromising!” Liu Long declared. “That was the oath we took together. It seems very few people believe in it now.”

Li Hao listened in silence. He wasn't familiar with the captain. But the captain seemed to think differently.

Liu Long changed the subject. “Zhang Yuan's case is not so simple. There might even be Supers behind it.”

Li Hao nodded. “I think so too. The six immolation cases were made to appear very natural. If I hadn't seen my friend die before my eyes, I would have believed it to be an accident like any ordinary person.”

“And you still dare investigate such a dangerous case?” Liu Long laughed. This was the first time Li Hao had seen him do anything else than shout, appear domineering and act indifferent.

Li Hao didn't know if this person knew about the red shadow. So, he said the only thing that was true to him. “Zhang Yuan was my best friend. I couldn't save him. This is the least I can do.”

“You are willing to risk your life for a friend?” asked Liu Long. “Young people and their impulsiveness... Anyway, that is not important right now. You are in danger. First, you dug up the cases. Second, you brought it to the attention of the law enforcement team, and of course, the traitors there. Third, you alerted the enemy by coming here tonight. All eyes are on you.”

“I know you trust Professor Yuan,” said Liu Long. “But it is never a good thing to rely too much on others. Maybe he can help, maybe he cannot. Night Patrollers might not get involved just for his sake. Hell, they think even Supers are beneath them. Do you think six dead people are of any significance to the Night Patrollers?”

Liu Long shook his head. “It's not that they don't care. But they are always scattered all over the place. The Night Patrollers are very few in the Silver City. Unless there is a large casualty, they won't be dispatched. They don't have the time to care about a few deaths even if Supers are involved.”

