

Chapter 248 Time To Die

Ho Zhitian was furious. His suit was flecked with salt crystals, and there was salt on his fat face.

"Come on up," I said again, "We'll let you have some water before we beat you to death."

That seemed to motivate him. He grabbed hold of the oar and we dragged him up.

Before he could get up from the floor, he was beset by the crowd. They surrounded him, punching and kicking.

I did not stop them, because I wanted to hit him myself.

After one group beat him up, another group took over. Everyone seemed to have a mutual understanding not to kill Ho Zhitian and to just prolong his suffering.

In the end, it was less that we carried him to a small meeting room, and more that we snatched him back from everyone.

Ho Zhitian was badly beaten up. Not an inch of his skin was spared, especially his face. He bore marks of women's nails and men's fists, and handfuls of his hair had been torn out.

But he did not seem to care. He squinted at me through his swollen eyes. "Water."

I held up a water bottle, and he revived and jumped up from the floor to snatch at it.

"Give me water, you said you would give me water," begged Ho Zhitian.

"I'll give you water, but you must answer some of my questions. Why did you do this?" I asked, "What do you have against us?"

Ho Zhitian swept his vicious gaze across everyone present.

"How does it feel to be near death? Is it fun? Jiang Ming?" Ho Zhitian suddenly grinned.

Everyone turned to look at Jiang Ming, who was frowning. From his expression, it seemed like he did not know what Ho Zhitian was talking about.

With some difficulty, Ho Zhitian clambered up from the floor.

"You're asking me why I want to kill you? Don't you deserve to die? After Ji Yanran died, you continued to live so shamelessly. You monsters all deserve to go to hell. If you don't die, who should?"

The crowd was in an uproar. No one could believe that Ho Zhitian would say such a thing.

I was beyond shocked. He did this for my mother? He said that he admired her, but I would not have expected that his actions were to avenge her.

Ho Zhitian continued, "Jiang Ming, Gan Quan, Liu Rushi, even Yue Mangong and Qian Xiaoqian. People like you deserve to die, you're all murderers! You killed all one hundred and forty-seven households of our Yin family. You didn't just kill, you didn't even let the children off. My cousin Xiaobao was so young. You animals didn't even let him off. Don't you deserve to die?!"

I was very surprised when he brought up the Yin family. Yue Mangong had only told me that the family fell into decline, not that they had been exterminated!

For a while, the room was deathly silent. The only sound was the eerie laughter coming from Ho Zhitian.

Although Ho Zhitian was tied up, right now, it seemed that it was everyone else present who was unable to move.

I inhaled sharply. "Your surname isn't Ho? It's Yin?"

Ho Zhitian shot back, "Would I be alive if my surname wasn't Ho?! Forty years ago, as long as your surname was Yin, it didn't matter if you were male or female, young or old, you or your parents, even unarmed children, no one was spared. Don't you deserve to die?!"

At the mention of the incident forty years ago, everyone became awkward, as if they knew that they had done wrong. What exactly had happened forty years ago? I noticed that Yue Mangong looked uncertain. Even he did not know.

This time, Guan Lang spoke up. "Even if what happened forty years ago was overdone, it was forty years ago! Besides, the martial artists then were all chivalrous. Your Yin family killed many people in the service of others. Don't tell me that you've never wronged anyone?! Ho Zhitian, don't bring up the past to whitewash your own deeds. There's no hatred without a cause. If your family had not committed such sins, there would not be such a tragedy. You're railing about injustice now, where is the justice for the people you killed?!"

"That's right. Your Yin family started it, that's why the other families worked together to take action. Otherwise, how long would the taint of your family poison us!"

I gazed around at the ages of everyone in the crowd. Even Guan Lang looked to be in his early fifties, around the same age as Ho Zhitian. When the tragedy happened forty years ago, he was probably still a kid.

Ho Zhitian's eyes were bloodshot as he retorted, "Yes, my Yin family committed heinous sins and deserved to be punished by God and man. But what wrong did my twelve-year-old cousin do?! He never even killed a chicken! What did you do to him?! We were trapped in Sweet Oak Alley in the southern part of Tong City. I remember very well that it happened to be the new year, and the alley was covered in red paper from the firecrackers. Liu Liangke, Qian Bumeng, Guan Chuxiong, and twenty men had surrounded the two of us children. I made it up the wall and tried to pull Xiaobao up but he couldn't climb up. Guan Chuxiong cut off one of his legs with one slice and the blood splattered on my face. I'll never forget that day. Xiaobao let out a heart-rending scream and begged me to save him. If I could have swapped my life for his, I would have. I pulled with all my might and had almost gotten him up when Xiaobao stopped moving. A dagger, as long as a hand, was sticking through his throat. Liu Rushi, I'm sure you're familiar with your family's scalpel. I even marveled at how strong Xiaobao was not to cry in pain. I was going to save my little brother, but he could no longer cry. Who did he kill, who did he hurt? There's no hatred without a cause? What was the cause for Xiaobao? What was the cause for me?!"

Yue Mangong had been frowning, but now he only had a shocked expression. Ho Zhitian's words had given me a chill. Only a monster could do what he had described.

Liu Rushi flushed red and insisted, "What does that have to do with us? I didn't kill your little cousin. None of us here did anything to the Yin family. There's no point in telling us this."

Ho Zhitian burst into laughter. "Does it really have nothing to do with you? Liu Rushi, you want the last words in Mount Wuxiang because you want the leadership role. Old Ge already decided who the leader is. Possessing Mount Wuxiang can't change what's in the last words. Why did you still want Mount Wuxiang? Every single one of you is still acting like a good person."

Ho Zhitian had asked the question I wanted to ask the most.

"Don't insert your despicable ideas on good people like us," Guan Lang said, "We have been lacking a leader for so long. We only want Mount Wuxiang so we can appoint our leader."

"Hey, don't slander us like that. You're the scheming one."

"Yes, we are good people. Much better than your Yin family. Even the United Nations needs a secretary-general. With a leader, we will be able to dispense justice accordingly."

"Ho Zhitian, don't change the topic. We still haven't gotten back at you for deceiving us and trying to kill us!"

Ho Zhitian laughed. "When Old Ge left behind his last words, no one was allowed to seek each other out for revenge or risk punishment from all. Are you monsters finally going to break the treaty after pretending for so many years?"

"When we find Mount Wuxiang and appoint our leader according to Old Ge's last words, it'll be your time to die."

"Well, that's simple," said Ho Zhitian, "There's no need to fight about it. Mount Wuxiang was with me for so many years. I've seen the last words. Why don't I just tell you who the leader is?"

"Shut up!"

Ho Zhitian was about to speak when Liu Rushi, his face as red as a tomato, rushed over and grabbed Ho Zhitian's jaw, preventing him from speaking.

Ho Zhitian's jaw creaked under the pressure, but he laughed, ignoring the pain.