

PAW 1591

Chapter 1591

Evening.

Casino.

Top floor office area.

The sky had darkened early, which was also the busiest time of day for the casino because of its unique nature, requiring a lot of tasks to be handled, and no one was idle. This was an office area within the casino, not open to the public, surrounded by screens of all sizes, recording real-time footage from the cameras downstairs, including the lobby, the casino floor, and even the footage above each gambling table. Of course, it wasn't fully covered, so plenty of staff on-site were ready to report any findings.

Beep beep.

The intercom sounded, "There's a situation in the main hall."

A young staff member immediately picked up the intercom, "What's the situation?"

The intercom sounded again: "It seems that someone from the list just entered. He is around twenty-five years old, has short hair, and is male. He is wearing a white shirt, casual pants, and black leather shoes."

"Are you sure?"

"Not very sure."

"Which category?"

"The third category."

"I'll check the third category. Keep the line clear."

The young man knew that many of the people assigned below were not security guards or responsible for maintaining order. Their real purpose was to identify some particular groups of people. Their training focused on memory, requiring them to remember many photos and identify the individuals. These could include those with a history of cheating, those with records of gambling misconduct, and even some skilled gamblers who couldn't be caught cheating but consistently made significant profits. Internally, they referred to these people as the third category. The photo library was categorized accordingly.

The casinos did not welcome these gamblers.

Of course, it was just a matter of not being welcomed. There were many ways to deal with it.

The young man walked to a computer and pulled up the footage from the lobby, not in a hurry, feeling numb because this kind of thing happened daily in the casino. After all, it was just photos, and too many people in the world looked alike. Mistakes were common, and there was a seventy to eighty percent chance of making a mistake. They checked every time to be safe and avoid unnecessary losses and trouble for the casino. That was their job. The young man didn't take it

seriously, slowly flipping through until he finally locked onto a picture of Dong Xuebing based on the information provided by the person below.

Average appearance, nothing special.

At first glance, the young man shook his head slightly. With a casual mouse click, he accessed the photo and information database of the "third category" group.

He was used to flipping from back to front.

They were all used to flipping from back to front.

The third category of people in all Macau casinos had records, and they could be said to be connected. Whatever records a person had, their achievements, or any suspected cheating behavior, it was all documented, spanning over a dozen pages. There were over a hundred people in total.

The young man began cross-referencing facial features manually, of course, as they didn't have facial recognition technology, so the process was a bit slow.

Thirteen pages.

Ten pages.

Six pages.

Three pages.

The young man still hadn't seen anyone resembling the description and was getting impatient. He thought the person below might have made a mistake or misremembered the category.

So he picked up the intercom. "Are you sure it's the third category?"

The person below immediately replied, "I'm sure, definitely not from the first or second category."

"Why can't I find a match?" The young man muttered to himself, continuing to flip through, reaching the third page, then the second page. As he went forward, the number of people on the pages decreased because of the different levels. Internally, the data classified the third category into levels. For example, on the third page, many famous gambling kings from the past appeared on the list, indicating the significance of the list.

But there was no one on the second page either.

There was no need to deliberately distinguish because the top-ranking individuals in the third category were generally around forty years old, which was easy to determine at a glance.

The young man finally reached the first page, which was almost legendary. Only three people were listed, but everyone in the industry knew the significance of these three individuals. They had heard stories about them. A hint of awe appeared as the young man turned to the first page. These three individuals could be said to be the top three figures in the gambling world. Well, it used to be two until a few months ago. Since they usually check from back to front, the young man rarely comes across this page. He wasn't very familiar with the individuals who had joined the first page in recent months, only remembering the shocked expressions on the faces of the staff when the boss requested their inclusion on the first page. It was a big deal in the industry, and the new additions to the first page seemed only to have one recorded event.

The photos of the three individuals appeared on the screen.

The young man glanced at them, subconsciously about to close the database because he had never seen a big shot from the first page of the third category list in his many years of work. It hadn't even crossed his mind. But as the young man was about to close the database, he suddenly froze, blinked, and felt something was wrong. Anxious, he focused and took another look. This time, he broke out in a cold sweat.

Drip.

A drop of sweat fell down his forehead.

The young man stood up suddenly, "There's a situation!"

His shout was a bit loud, startling many of the people working.

"What's going on?"

"Lower your voice."

"Why the panic?"

Many people looked over.

The person handling other matters also turned his attention, calmly asking, "What happened?"

The young man was frantic, pointing at the screen. "A third-category person entered the casino!"

"Are you sure you've checked the photo?"

"I'm sure it's him, exactly like the photo," the young man said breathlessly.

The person in charge frowned and approached. "Let's follow the procedure. First, monitor him with the cameras and see what he does. We don't need to intervene if the amount involved isn't too large."

"We can't just ignore it. This is one of the first-page individuals from the third category."

The previously calm person in charge was dumbfounded as soon as these words were spoken.

"What did you say?"

The surrounding staff stopped their work, all staring in shock.

First-page individuals from the third category.

One of those three people.

Many people gasped in the work area, and it suddenly became chaotic.

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Chapter 1592

Casino.

Office area upstairs.

As soon as the words were heard, the atmosphere in the room became tense.

The manager hurried over, followed by over a dozen staff members, some in disbelief, others visibly tense.

"Are we seeing this right?"

"How could it be someone from the first page?"

"Those three have never been to our casino before."

"This shouldn't be happening. Xiao Zhou, double-check to make sure, don't scare us."

"I hope it's not those three. Otherwise, it's going to be big trouble."

Everyone abandoned their tasks because they knew the three people's power from the third category's first page. The former gambling prodigy Zhou Hu, who had won tens of millions in several casinos, was only ranked on the third or fourth page of the casino's third category list. Therefore, it was unimaginable what caliber of people the three on the first page were. Things would be hard to handle if one of them appeared at their casino. So, almost everyone pitched in to help.

The manager's breathing became hurried, and he forced himself to remain calm. "Pull up the video footage and compare. Find out which one of those three it is."

A young man quickly clicked the mouse and brought up the footage from the hallway. Cameras froze the frame, extracted it, enlarged the image, and then brought up the third person's photo on the first page of the internal data. "It's the newcomer."

The photo was clear, and the features were distinct. Although they had anticipated it, everyone in the room still gasped in shock. It was unmistakable. The photo was an exact match.

The manager's expression changed slightly. "It's him."

A middle-aged man behind him asked, "Who is he exactly?"

"How would I know?" The manager said stiffly. "There's no information about him, not even his name, only records of one gambling session."

"How could someone like this be unknown?"

"But no one in the circle recognizes him."

"How did he learn his gambling skills? And what's his track record?"

"You don't even know that?"

"Well, he only just made it to the first page. I didn't have time yet."

The manager sighed and turned to the young man. "Pull it up for everyone to see."

Many of the staff members had already known, and some had heard a bit about it, but there were still one or two who didn't understand. Soon, a row of text appeared on the screen.

Name unknown.

Age unknown.

Hometown unknown.

The only recorded gambling session involved betting three times on the roulette wheel, all three times winning. A round of mahjong. Four consecutive hands: the first was a heavenly win, the second was a heavenly win with big three dragons, the third was a heavenly win with big four winds, and the fourth was a heavenly win with a pure one-color luxurious seven pairs. He played cards with the gambling god Zhou Hu, who conceded defeat. On the slot machine, he only bet one chip. On his first try, he got triple sevens. Ultimately, it was calculated that he used only one chip with the lowest value and walked away with two billion US dollars, equivalent to over ten billion Chinese yuan. The casino was forced to close early.

The staff who hadn't seen the information before were left speechless. Every time they read the simple description, their hearts couldn't calm down.

A single low-value chip won over a billion Chinese RMB from the casino.

The middle-aged man nearly fainted. He finally understood why this person was added to the dangerous list on the first page of the third category in the internal data. If this kind of person wasn't dangerous, then nobody was. This was too ruthless. He hit the jackpot every time in roulette, three consecutive times, and even in mahjong; how could every hand be a heavenly win? He even won

with the big four winds and seven luxurious pairs. It wasn't surprising that the gambling god Zhou Hu lost to him. However, how could he hit the jackpot with just one chip in the slot machine? Other things might have involved cheating methods, perhaps using some unnoticed techniques, but how could he cheat on the slot machine?

Someone asked, "What cheating methods did he use?"

The manager shook his head. "I don't know. Even from what we know, he didn't show any signs of cheating. He behaved just like any ordinary gambler, betting and winning, betting and winning. And he's proficient in mahjong and card games, roulette, and baccarat. According to someone with him on a gambling ship then, he didn't even choose what to play; whatever others suggested, he could play. He had a flawless record. From this point of view, the other two people on the first-page list might not even compare to him."

There was silence.

The manager looked at them and pointed to the photo of Dong Xuebing on the screen. "Now, this person who bankrupted a casino with just one low-value chip is coming to our place. Let's hear everyone's thoughts on what to do."

"Well..."

"What does he want?"

"Yeah, we don't even know his purpose."

"We haven't offended him, have we? We don't even know him. Why would he have a problem with us?"

"We can't kick him out. He has no misconduct record, and we can't prove cheating."

This was the most significant legal casino in Macau, not filled with thugs as rumored. They had their rules and regulations, too.

After discussing it, everyone didn't know how to handle the situation. After all, they had never had someone from the first page of a dangerous list come to their place before.

"I'll contact the boss." The manager was also at a loss, and given the magnitude of the situation, he would need to report it upwards. The person on the screen wasn't ordinary; he was an extremely dangerous individual who could win tens of billions within two hours. There was no time to waste, so he quickly dialed a number and then took a moment to instruct his subordinates: "What are you still looking at? Follow the surveillance cameras and track what the target is doing."

Click.

The call connected.

The manager respectfully said, "Boss."

"What's the matter?" The voice on the other end was middle-aged.

The manager hurriedly said, "We have a situation. Someone from the first page of the dangerous list is here."

"Which one?"

"The newcomer to the list." The manager glanced at the screen and said, "We don't know the other party's purpose yet. The surveillance cameras are tracking him. He just entered the casino and hasn't exchanged chips yet."

The boss said, "Have you made contact with him?"

"Not yet. We didn't dare to act rashly."

After contemplating, the boss said slowly, "For the three people on the first-page list, if you can avoid offending them, then don't. Make contact with him, politely ask him to leave, remember, ask him to leave."

The manager said, "Yes, I understand."

Chapter 1593

On the other side.

Inside the casino.

Magnificent and luxurious crystal chandeliers sparkled in all directions without a hint of smokiness. Instead, it felt like being in a high-end leisure club. Inside were various gambling tables: roulette, baccarat, and card tables. Judging from the chips, they were all relatively small stakes. Further inside, there should be a VIP area, but the group from Jiangnan Province had no intention of going there. After all, they could only look but not touch, and they didn't have any chips on them, so they just wandered around the small hall.

"The casino is quite large."

"Heh, there's more inside."

"Really?"

"There are several other areas, but we definitely won't be able to get in."

"Why do you need a membership card?"

"It depends on how many chips you exchange. If you have enough, it's fine."

"Secretary Song's son is quite knowledgeable."

"Auntie Chen, I just heard it from someone else, hehe."

The young man who had been here once began to show off, acting as a guide for everyone. After introducing this and that, his mouth didn't stop. His companions also spoke with a few words, all seeming very knowledgeable. Having been overshadowed by Dong Xuebing in the car for so long, they finally regained the initiative in the conversation. With a relatively strong sense of clique, it wasn't surprising, as exclusivity existed everywhere. On the other hand, Dong Xuebing hadn't said a word since entering the casino; he just kept looking around.

The young master Song glanced at Dong Xuebing. "Xuebing, did you play cards during university?"

Dong Xuebing smiled faintly. "Of course, we played often."

The young master Song said familiarly, "For money?"

Many older cadres and their family members felt this was inappropriate.

But Dong Xuebing wasn't pretentious and didn't care. "Yes, for money, but just small amounts. I didn't have much money then, so I didn't play many times."

Hou Wen wanted to cover for Dong Xuebing with a sentence, especially since he was now with the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, and this topic was sensitive.

But Dong Xuebing didn't mind. "Oh, everyone has played cards with friends and classmates a few times. This kind of thing is just entertainment; it doesn't constitute gambling."

Hou Wen laughed. "You wouldn't even think of gambling. Back then, you had poor card skills; you couldn't even play Landlord. We had to teach you."

Dong Xuebing said, "You're still bringing that up? Even though you taught me, you didn't teach me everything. You guys ganged up on me and won."

Dong Xuebing repelled several official offspring, but the only girl among them, Han Fang, always squeezed into Dong Xuebing and Hou Wen's circle. She giggled and said, "How about we play cards at the hotel tonight without betting money? We can play Truth or Dare. What do you think?"

Hou Wen clapped his hands. "I'm in."

Dong Xuebing smiled. "Forget it. You all know my poor card skills. If we play, I won't win a single hand. I'll watch you guys beat me."

Han Fang always tried to get close to Dong Xuebing. The group around the young master Song couldn't stand it and felt very dissatisfied. After all, it was just a slightly higher rank. Who knew how he got there? There couldn't be such a young deputy Division Chief cadre; it was probably through connections. From just now until now, more than an hour had passed, and they hadn't seen Dong Xuebing demonstrate any skills or standout qualities. His appearance, temperament, personality, knowledge, and conversation were all very ordinary, even more so than ordinary people, which made them even more unbalanced in their hearts.

Young Master Song saw them chatting lively and intentionally interrupted their conversation. He also consciously showed off his experience and knowledge, pointing upwards, "Everyone, you see, there are cameras everywhere, even behind the glass, there are hidden cameras. The coverage here can reach almost eighty percent."

Han Fang blinked, "So many?"

Young Master Song nodded and smiled, "To prevent cheating."

The others in the group also looked up, "Hmm, this angle..."

Hou Wen also paused, "Why do I feel like these cameras are all pointing at us?"

The people around Young Master Song also looked up and were startled. It was OK for those far away, with no changes, but the six or seven nearby cameras all turned to face them, making a buzzing sound as they followed their movements.

One of the family members said, "Something's not right."

Everyone frowned, wondering why the cameras were pointing at them.

Han Fang and Hou Wen each stared at a camera, but the cameras didn't react; they continued to face them.

But when Dong Xuebing squinted at the camera diagonally above, the camera hastily turned away within a second, moving in another direction.

Dong Xuebing:

He didn't understand what was going on. Even if they recognized their identities, what was the point? The officials who came here weren't the first batch, and many big shots were inside. Their status wasn't significant enough to attract attention from the casino. Besides, they couldn't be suspected of cheating; they hadn't even exchanged chips or indicated any intention to bet.

Everyone felt very uncomfortable and didn't understand what was happening.

Suddenly, the elevator door opened, and four or five people in suits walked out. They didn't look like security guards; they seemed more like office workers. As soon as they came out, they looked toward the group from Jiangnan Province, hesitated momentarily, then came over.

The two groups met.

The lead man immediately said, "Hello, I'm in charge here."

The oldest woman among them, the wife of a City party secretary, looked at them with a strong demeanor and asked, "Do you have any business here?"

The person in charge coughed, "Forgive me for asking, are you all together?"

Dong Xuebing walked up with a stern face, "What if we are? What if we aren't?"

Seeing Dong Xuebing, the person in charge's pupils contracted, and the other staff members behind him also stared wide-eyed at Dong Xuebing as if they were looking at a giant panda.

Dong Xuebing wondered, "Why are you staring at me as if I've grown flowers on my face?"

Han Fang unhappily said, "Why are you all pointing the cameras at us?"

Young Master Song's group also asked, "Why are you monitoring us? Give us an explanation."

Being people of status, they were all dissatisfied with this particular treatment and had a confrontational attitude; there wasn't a single coward among them. As they raised their voices, many of the casino's guests noticed, and even many dealers and staff in the hall looked over in surprise.

"It's Brother Zhang."

"Brother Zhang and Brother Li. They've come down personally."

The dealers recognized several of them, knowing they were responsible for the casino's operation, especially the person in front who managed the prominent figures.

What surprised them was that today's person in charge seemed relatively low-key, with a polite expression. He said, "It's not about monitoring everyone, mainly due to some special reasons. Well, forget it. Let me say it straight and not waste everyone's time. There's a somewhat unpleasant request, could you..." The person in charge looked at Dong Xuebing with a wry smile, "Could you please be magnanimous and let us off today?"

Hou Wen was stunned.

Han Fang was dumbfounded.

Dong Xuebing pointed to himself, "Are you talking to me?"

The person in charge wiped the sweat from his forehead, "Yes, you."

Young Master Song's group looked at Dong Xuebing in astonishment, wondering what was happening.

At this point, Dong Xuebing probably understood why the other party had behaved as if facing a great enemy earlier. He was also a bit speechless. "Are you asking me to leave?"

The person in charge clasped his hands, "Please be magnanimous, please be magnanimous."

Han Fang exclaimed angrily, "Why should Mr. Dong leave?"

A staff member behind hurriedly said, "We're quite embarrassed to say this, but..."

Dong Xuebing was also unhappy. "We haven't even exchanged chips and never intended to place bets here. We just came to have a look around. How come we don't even have this right?"

The person in charge smiled bitterly and said, "Your friends are fine, but you..."

Dong Xuebing was even more furious. "What's the meaning of treating me differently?"

"No, no," although he said this, the person in charge wanted to curse in his heart. Of course, they were treating him differently. You just found out, didn't you? It's not that we deliberately targeted you, but you, a person who won a large casino with just one chip. How could we dare to let you in?

No chips, still not acceptable. They couldn't take this risk. Other people on the danger list were fine; some didn't need to be managed. Just a quick check with the cameras would do. They could accept it as long as it wasn't too large an expenditure. But this person in front of them was different. This person was notoriously ruthless. What if he stuffed a chip into the slot machine and rolled out 777? Their casino's profit for half a month would be flushed away.

Not only did the group from Jiangnan Province not understand, but even the surrounding gamblers and staff who didn't know the situation were also shocked. They had never seen such a situation before. What was going on? Why weren't they allowed to look just coming in for a look and not exchanging chips? Could it be that there were rogue gamblers here? It didn't seem right. Even if there were people with a bad record, they wouldn't be allowed in. Even if they sneaked in, the casino manager wouldn't be this polite; they would have been kicked out long ago.

Dong Xuebing said, "What if I don't leave?"

The person in charge wiped his sweat again, "Can we talk somewhere else?"

"No need, let's talk here," Dong Xuebing said with a slightly unpleasant tone.

The person in charge didn't know what else to say. He could only be even more discreet, making a very low posture, clasping his hands, and saying in a bitter tone, "Now that we've met, if there's anything you need in the future, just speak up. But could you please give our boss some face today? We are also a small business. If you let us go today, I'll thank you on behalf of our boss."

When everyone heard this, they almost spat blood.

A small business? You are the largest casino in all of Macau, and you call yourself a small business?

Chapter 1594

It's eight o'clock.

In the casino lobby.

Almost all the attention of the outdoor customers and staff has been drawn here. Everyone is puzzled by the casino manager's attitude.

Small business?

Give their boss face?

Let a young person like them off?

Everyone couldn't imagine these words coming from the undeniably largest casino manager and staff in Macau. It was shocking. Most of the regulars at the casino had seen this manager before; some had even spoken to him. They were familiar with some of the big and small events in the casino and understood some of the methods of dealing with them. However, today, no one can understand. They had no idea what was going on with the usually stern-faced manager. When did your Wynn Casino become so low-key?

"Who is that person?"

"So young."

"Don't know, Brother Hu."

"I haven't seen him before. It seems like he's never been here."

"Ask the dealer, Xiao Li, what's going on."

"Um, I don't know either. I don't know that young man."

Many people were conversing in a buzz, pointing and gesturing towards Dong Xuebing and others. Many gambling tables also stopped, all looking over.

They all had inexplicable expressions.

Only Dong Xuebing understood what was going on.

It must be because of his recent visit to the gambling ship with Zhang Longjuan and the others. He won big that time, probably equivalent to a billion RMB. He gained a lot of attention because of it. With so many people on-site and cameras, capturing his image was easy. Many casinos probably recorded him. That's why the staff member at the door just now looked strange. That's why all those cameras were pointing at him and others. He was recognized. Usually, this kind of thing isn't shown off, especially since Dong Xuebing is now with the Discipline Inspection Commission, and even more so because many relatives and cadres from Jiangnan Province are present. But Dong Xuebing isn't afraid. He isn't afraid of being exposed. He isn't afraid of any negative impact this might have.

Why?

The reason is simple.

Because this incident is unlikely to be exposed.

Official gambling, especially by a member of the Discipline Inspection Commission, is a big deal. Dismissal is inevitable if investigated. That's a given. But, on the other hand, the root cause of the gambling ship incident wasn't Dong Xuebing's gambling; it was because he wanted to protect Zhang Longjuan's safety. Sister Zhang was on the ship because of a task from State Security. This matter even received approval and tacit consent from the high levels of State security. So, Dong Xuebing and Zhang Longjuan helped the State Security Agency carry out the task. Sister Zhang even asked for policies from the State Security. She, an affiliated non-staff member, took a significant risk to help with the undercover investigation. In return, all the money Dong Xuebing won from gambling was entirely legal. For this reason, Dong Xuebing is naturally not afraid of anything. Even if the gambling incident caused problems, the State Security Agency would clarify or cover it up. It can't be exposed.

So, Dong Xuebing stood here calmly. He was very dissatisfied with the differential treatment from the casino. This guy has always been like this.

Others can go in.

Why can't I?

Why the hell not?

Dong Xuebing looked at the person in charge and said, "Let me repeat it. We didn't intend to exchange chips today. Even if you give us chips for free, we don't intend to use them. We came here to take a look. Everyone else can come in, so why am I the only exception? Are you trying to bully me?"

The person in charge thought, "You're easy to bully? With your gambling skills, no casino can handle you." The person in charge was extremely helpless. Encountering such a gambling god was challenging to handle. Offending him was not an option. Even if the boss didn't speak up, the person in charge knew the score. With such formidable gambling skills, if this person wanted to cheat the casino, it would be almost effortless. Ultimately, it would be a loss for their casino, and they would unnecessarily antagonize someone. But letting him wander around the casino freely was also not an option. As the person in charge said earlier, in front of someone listed on the danger list, their casino was indeed a small business. Other gamblers were acceptable; even if they boasted about their gambling skills and cheated using every possible method, the casino wouldn't mind as long as they didn't win too much. But this person was different. They couldn't even detect how he was cheating. He could win over a billion RMB with just one chip. In other words, if he had enough chips, he could bankrupt their casino in ten minutes or even less. Even the number one casino in Macau couldn't afford to lose billions of RMB.

Their money wasn't earned quickly.

This kind of winning method couldn't even fill the gaps in their teeth with the money from a tornado.

The person in charge could only bow again and said helplessly to Dong Xuebing, "Sir, would you consider going to another casino? Our casino..."

Dong Xuebing interrupted, "Since I'm here, why should I go elsewhere?"

The person in charge could only laugh bitterly and said, "Please, I beg you to reconsider."

Hearing the repeated emphasis on "please" and "give us face" from the casino manager, everyone gradually guessed something.

This person is a master.

Or a master who even the casino can't handle.

How is that possible? How could such a young person be like this?

Hou Wen was also dumbfounded for a moment. "Xuebing, have you been here before? Do they know you?"

Dong Xuebing shrugged, "It's my first time in Macau. How would I know?"

Han Fang glanced at Dong Xuebing's profile and said, "They must have mistaken him for someone else."

The young people led by Young Master Song also looked at Dong Xuebing suspiciously, unable to digest the situation.

The person in charge thought, "We hope we've mistaken him. We wouldn't want to encounter such a dangerous figure. We'd rather never meet someone like him in our lifetime. My heart is still trembling because if we don't handle this well, the losses to the casino won't be just hundreds or thousands of millions; it could be tens of billions. We can't afford to lose."

The oldest secretary's wife said, "Xuebing, what should we do?"

Since they came together, and Dong Xuebing's identity was unique, they would stick together and stand with Dong Xuebing.

Dong Xuebing shrugged, "Let's mind our own business."

The secretary's wife nodded, "Okay, let's continue watching."

As for what others were saying, the person in charge didn't bother. They could do whatever they wanted. But Dong Xuebing was different; all eyes were on him.

Dong Xuebing casually followed along.

The person in charge immediately said, "Can we have a word in private?"

"It's fine," Dong Xuebing walked away on his own.

The person in charge's smile turned bitter as he looked back and clenched his teeth. He received a box from his subordinate and hurriedly approached Dong Xuebing. "Sir, please wait."

Dong Xuebing turned around, "What now?"

The person in charge saw many eyes watching, but he couldn't care too much. He quickly walked up to Dong Xuebing and opened the safe. Inside were bundles of US dollars.

"Oh my!"

"Take a look!"

"What's this for?"

There was an uproar among the crowd.

Dong Xuebing looked at him, "What does this mean?"

The person in charge said, "There's no other meaning. We also know that this amount of money may not be much. Here's a hundred thousand US dollars. It mainly compensates you for your trip here, which we haven't properly hosted. We think it's inappropriate. Please accept this money. Our boss said that since you've come to Macau, our boss will extend his hospitality to you. In the future, we'll all be friends. If you need anything, feel free to contact us. So please, be magnanimous."

Dong Xuebing: "....."

Master Song and Han Fang were dumbfounded.

The surrounding gamblers and uninformed casino employees were also stunned, almost hitting the wall with their heads. They couldn't understand what was happening. Who was this person? Not only was the manager smiling and polite, but he was also giving away money for no reason.

A hundred thousand US dollars!

Tens of thousands of RMB!

This was giving it away!

This was a scene that nobody could understand. Everyone knew that casinos always took but never gave back. They had never heard of a casino giving money to someone, especially when this young man hadn't even exchanged chips or placed a bet. He just stood there, yet they were so frightened that they hurriedly gave him money.

Who exactly was this young man?

Just a few steps into the casino, he had scared them like this.

Everyone was amazed, staring at Dong Xuebing's face.

The scene shocked some casino staff who didn't know who Dong Xuebing was. They might not know who Dong Xuebing was, but they understood some behind-the-scenes and administrative procedures. So, seeing the casino manager's gesture of giving away money, they were also shocked, and a terrible thought arose in their minds.

Could one of the three people on the top of the danger list have arrived?

If not, how could the manager treat him with such an attitude?

Those three people were almost legendary figures in the industry. Everyone knew their deeds, and they were held in awe and even admiration. Some people hoped to become like them one day.

Could it be?

Has one of those three arrived?

The casino suddenly became lively, and everyone's expressions were varied.

Chapter 1595

Dong Xuebing felt frustrated, helpless, and speechless.

This was his current mood. He wasn't afraid of conflicts with others; Dong Xuebing had made countless enemies over the years, but he stood his ground. Those who offended him often ended up

defeated or injured. Perhaps it was related to his past experiences; Dong Xuebing's temperament had always been strong. He couldn't tolerate being treated differently when others were allowed in. Given his personality, how could he endure such treatment? Even if the casino called over staff and security personnel, Dong Xuebing was ready to fight. He wasn't afraid, and none of them were his match. In the past, Dong Xuebing had resolved conflicts like this and was accustomed to this direct and unavoidable approach. Sometimes, when faced with such situations, there was no choice but to act.

But the casino didn't respond with hostility. Instead, they all smiled and gave him money. They didn't even glare at him, let alone show any hostility.

Dong Xuebing was angry, but he couldn't express it. There's a saying that you can't hit someone who's all smiles. Dong Xuebing was a reasonable person. If someone respected him, he would reciprocate. Now that the casino had lowered its attitude, Dong Xuebing couldn't just explode in anger. That would be unreasonable. Upon careful consideration, he understood why the casino didn't welcome him. It was inevitable. He wouldn't welcome people like himself if he owned a casino. Even if he didn't exchange chips or gamble, standing there would put too much pressure on the casino. It was like someone with a gun standing in a bank lobby for no reason. Who knows if he might rob the place?

Dong Xuebing's expression softened slightly.

Seeing a chance, the person in charge closed the box and handed it forward. "If there's anything we've neglected, please accept our apology."

To appear and receive a hundred thousand US dollars just like that made many people envious.

Master Song, Hou Wen, and other leaders' family members didn't know what to say. Up to this point, they still didn't understand what was happening.

Only some dealers and staff who guessed Dong Xuebing's identity didn't feel jealous; instead, they looked at Dong Xuebing with respectful eyes. They knew that this money wasn't something anyone could take. The casino was giving money because of Dong Xuebing's reputation. Despite being just one person, he threatened the casino's interests, even its foundation.

But Dong Xuebing didn't accept or speak.

The person in charge said, "Then let our boss treat you to a meal these days to compensate for our shortcomings. What do you think?"

Boss?

Apologizing by treating him to a meal?

Although they knew the person in charge was saying this and wouldn't have the boss apologize, everyone could sense that someone who could summon the boss of the largest casino in Macau must be extraordinary. Many dealers became more convinced of their speculations. This person was probably one of those three, not their apprentice or junior, but the person himself.

Dong Xuebing pushed the box back. "There's no need for your boss to apologize, and I don't know him, so it's unnecessary. But I accept your apology just now. We came here to have a look around. It's our first time in Macau, so we must visit the largest casino, right? Otherwise, it would be

embarrassing to say we've been to Macau, yet you've deprived me of this right. Your apology was necessary."

The person in charge echoed, "Yes, we were wrong in this matter, so this money..."

"I don't want the money," Dong Xuebing interrupted, not intending to accept it. "I have no reason to take your money, and you have no reason to give it to me."

Not taking the money?

Are you refusing free money?

Even those who were just bystanders thought this person was being foolish.

But the casino staff weren't surprised because they knew that someone who could earn billions with a wave of their hand wouldn't care about tens of thousands. When they gave him the money, the person in charge didn't expect him to take it. They were showing a humble attitude. In fact, given his status, he could earn back tens of millions just by chatting with them for a while and playing a few tables.

Dong Xuebing slowly said, "You've apologized. Let's leave it at that." Pausing momentarily, he added, "I'm giving you face today."

Hearing this, the person in charge and his subordinates breathed a sigh of relief and hurriedly said, "Thank you, thank you. If there's a chance, we'll come to apologize in person."

"No need," Dong Xuebing replied, then turned to the bewildered family members of the officials. "Aunt Zhang, Sister Chen, Aunt Zhou, you all carry on. Since they're not welcoming me here, I'll go out for a smoke first. I'll wait for you all outside."

The person in charge quickly explained, "It's not that we're not welcoming you..."

Aunt Zhou responded, "That won't do."

Sister Chen suggested, "Let's leave together."

Another family member said, "Yes, it's about time."

Since they came together, they naturally left together. After discussing for a while, they all turned and headed towards the door.

The person in charge and his subordinates hurriedly followed to see them off. They said to Dong Xuebing's companions, "I'm sorry about today ruining everyone's mood. Where are you all going? I'll arrange for a car to take you there."

"No need."

"Have you arranged accommodation? If not, I can arrange a hotel."

"We've arranged it, so there's no need to trouble."

As they walked out, they were surrounded by apologies from the casino staff.

Listening to all this, the family members couldn't get angry anymore.

Five minutes later.

On the street outside the casino.

There was still sometime before the scheduled meeting time, so they could only wait here.

Dong Xuebing felt embarrassed and joked with everyone, "Sorry, it's my fault today. I'm too handsome, and the casino doesn't welcome me."

Han Fang chuckled.

The wife of the secretary was also amused by him, but she quickly asked, "What's going on?"

Master Song and others were all paying attention, waiting for Dong Xuebing's explanation and response.

But Dong Xuebing certainly wouldn't say. He shrugged, "I don't know either, probably a case of mistaken identity."

"Oh, I see. No wonder," the secretary's wife didn't ask further, letting the matter pass with just a sentence.

But everyone knew that things might not be that simple. The husband of this Secretary Xie must have done something earth-shattering. Otherwise, how could such a massive and legitimate casino be terrified when they saw Dong Xuebing? There must be something going on inside.

Master Song and the other leaders' nephews and sons no longer dared to underestimate him.

A person who had never been to Macau before just showed his face and scared the casino; who could underestimate him?

Chapter 1596

Night falls.

On the long street.

"We are still early."

"Yeah, over half an hour before we gather."

"Standing around, or we could do something else."

"Okay, there are plenty of shops around. We can go shopping."

"Alright, then we'll see each other at the gathering time."

"Mrs. Chen, Mrs. Zhang, hehe, let's go together."

After discussing, everyone went their separate ways, some heading north and others west, all going shopping. Coming to Macau is difficult, so they can't waste the opportunity.

Only Dong Xuebing, Han Fang, and other young people were left.

The group led by Master Song didn't talk much, still not fully absorbing what had happened earlier.

"Where should we go?" Han Fang asked.

Hou Wen smiled, "How about going to the mall?"

Dong Xuebing was about to speak when his phone rang. It was from Xie Huilan, so he excused himself and walked away to answer the call.

"Huilan," Dong Xuebing said.

Xie Huilan, on the other end, smiled, "Still at the casino?"

Dong Xuebing sighed, "No, I'm out."

Xie Huilan said, "That's perfect then, come find me."

Dong Xuebing was surprised, "Have you finished shopping too?"

"Hehe, not yet. I saw a few nice things. It's rare to come to Macau, so my shopping desire has been ignited, too," Xie Huilan said with a faint smile.

Dong Xuebing chuckled, "Then go ahead and buy them. Why do you need me?"

Xie Huilan said matter-of-factly, "If there's enough money in your sister Xie's account, then I won't bother calling you. I've spent a lot these past few months, mostly buying things for the children. I've also had a lot of social engagements, so I'm running low on funds. Come quickly. I know you still have money, little guy."

Dong Xuebing:

Xie Huilan said directly, "The mall is five hundred meters north. You can see it outside the casino. I'll be waiting for you."

Dong Xuebing chuckled helplessly, "You remember me only when you're out of money. Alright, alright. I'll come over now. Wait for me at the entrance."

"I'm too lazy to go downstairs. On the third floor, come up to the women's clothing section. Hehe. Bye." After saying that, the phone beeped and hung up.

Dong Xuebing had no choice but to walk back. Seeing them still discussing where to go, he said, "You guys go ahead. My wife is calling me, and something's coming up."

Hou Wen looked at him, "Leaving the group, huh?"

Dong Xuebing shrugged, smiling, "My wife's matters are important. I'm out."

As he walked away, Master Song looked at Hou Wen, "What's the background of your university classmate?"

Hou Wen replied, "How would I know? What do you mean by 'background'?"

Another young man said speechlessly, "The incident at the casino just now, don't you find it strange?"

"I didn't find it strange. They just mistook someone," Hou Wen affirmed, clearly siding with Dong Xuebing.

Han Fang added, "Hehe, not to speak ill behind someone's back, but Director Dong has no distinguishing features. It's understandable to be mistaken."

Hou Wen organized, "Let's go, let's go. Let's also go shopping. I've been wanting to buy a pair of shoes. I heard they're cheaper here, so let's go."

The mall.

Third floor.

There weren't as many people here as in Beijing, but it was still lively and bustling. There was a lot of foot traffic, with customers carrying large and small bags everywhere. Dong Xuebing scanned left and right after going upstairs, searching for several minutes before spotting Xie Huilan's figure at a counter.

"Huilan," Dong Xuebing called from afar.

"Coming." Xie Huilan squinted and waved, "Help me take a look."

Dong Xuebing walked over and said, "I won't look. Just buy whatever you like."

Xie Huilan smiled, "Oh, you're not taking me seriously. You're underestimating me."

"Where do you see that?" Dong Xuebing chuckled, sweating a bit. "You have high standards. Alright, alright, I'll take a look. What clothes are these? Hmm, they look good, they look good."

"Do they really look good?" Xie Huilan compared the clothes in her hand.

"They look perfect. My wife looks beautiful in anything," Dong Xuebing complimented.

"Okay, that's it then." Xie Huilan handed the clothes to the salesperson and said to Dong Xuebing, "Swipe your card."

Dong Xuebing went to settle the bill and returned to see Xie Huilan still holding two or three more packages and bags. He casually took them and asked, "What else did you buy?"

Xie Huilan asked, "How much money do we have left at home?"

Dong Xuebing thought for a moment, "I haven't calculated. We've spent quite a bit this year, but there's still... hmm, still several tens of millions in my account."

Xie Huilan glanced at him, "So much?"

Dong Xuebing nodded, "You've got nothing left over there."

"Just a few thousand, waiting for next month's salary," Xie Huilan said.

Dong Xuebing said, "Then I'll transfer some to you later, ten million."

Xie Huilan chuckled, "No need. My salary is enough to spend."

"With just a few thousand, buying diapers for a month would be tight. Anyway, our money comes easily. Don't worry about it. I'll call you later," Dong Xuebing said.

Xie Huilan looked at him and said, "It's easy for you to earn money, huh? Just show your face, and someone will send you a hundred thousand US dollars for free. Or is it my little husband's ability? There's no need to work hard to earn money anymore. People are lining up to give it to you, right?"

Dong Xuebing cleared his throat, "You're well-informed."

"Although your sister Xie has just taken office, she still knows a few people," Xie Huilan smiled. "Someone tipped me off. What's the story?"

"It's not convenient to talk about it here."

"Hehe, let's walk forward then."

Ahead, at a corner with few people, the two stopped.

Dong Xuebing looked around, then said to his wife, "Actually, it's not a big deal. It's all from half a year ago. The State Security Bureau had a mission, and a good friend who saved my life got involved. You know me, I'm sentimental. How can I watch someone take risks? So I went over and ended up on a gambling ship to help her out. To find out who was behind that ship, I won some money from them and eventually exposed the person."

"But it wasn't just some money," Xie Huilan's eyes narrowed as she looked at him. "If it was just a little money, would the casino at MGM treat you like that?"

Dong Xuebing coughed, "Alright, I won over a billion from them. Rest assured, this matter won't involve me. I was helping the country. I contributed to maintaining social harmony and unity. If there are any repercussions, the State Security Bureau will cover for me."

"How did you win so much?" Xie Huilan asked.

"When I was in charge of the Public Security Bureau in Yantai County, I also cracked down on gambling crimes. I learned some gambling skills back then," Dong Xuebing made up.

Xie Huilan smirked, "There's nothing you can't do."

"That's right, your husband is amazing," Dong Xuebing boasted.

"You're getting excited again. Can't you tell I'm criticizing you?" Xie Huilan said.

"I didn't hear you criticize me. Look at that dress. It's so nice, especially for you," Dong Xuebing immediately changed the subject.

Xie Huilan shook her head and waved her hand, "Forget it. I can't be bothered to argue with you. You're always causing trouble wherever you go. I wouldn't have called you this time if I had known it would be like this. You always make a mess for me."

Dong Xuebing retorted, "Hey, are you trying to take advantage of me? Your husband bought you clothes, and that dress alone cost tens of thousands."

"Aren't you the one who has over a billion? Tens of thousands aren't considered money to you," Xie Huilan replied.

"Well, I haven't received that money yet. It all went into my friend's company's shares. Her company isn't listed, and I own twenty percent of the shares," Dong Xuebing explained.

"It's a woman, right?" Xie Huilan asked.

"Uh, what does it matter if it's a man or a woman?" Dong Xuebing shrugged.

"If it were a man, you wouldn't work so hard," Xie Huilan remarked.

"You're overthinking it. She's over forty, and we have a good relationship. She once saved my life. It was during the incident to save your cousin, Professor Zhong. She helped me a lot. I'm just returning the favor," Dong Xuebing explained.

"You always have an explanation," Xie Huilan sighed.

"Let's go, let's look at clothes and jewelry. We hardly ever go on vacation, so let me buy you more. It's unfair to disappoint anyone, especially my wife," Dong Xuebing suggested.

"Enough. Buying too much will invite gossip," Xie Huilan replied.

"You're worrying too much. There's not much to say. If we want to buy, we'll buy. Who cares what others say? Our money is all earned legally; I've even been investigated by the disciplinary committee these past few years. I'm used to it. If they want to investigate, let them. Besides, your husband is now a cadre at the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection. Our money is clean. Buying a few things is nothing," Dong Xuebing reassured her.

Dong Xuebing knew that he wouldn't see his wife and children for a long time after returning from Macau. After all, he still had work in Beijing. He couldn't keep taking leave to see his wife. So he wanted to buy more things for Huilan. He hardly held back, almost swiping his card for anything he saw.

LV bags.

Several bottles of high-end perfume.

The clothes were all international brands.

If it hadn't been for the approaching gathering time, Dong Xuebing would have continued shopping. In the end, Xie Huilan dragged him away downstairs to the bus stop.

Most of the family members and cadres had returned.

Everyone was carrying large and small bags, all having done some shopping, though not excessively, as it wasn't public funds but their own money.

"Hey, Mrs. Zhang, did you buy a bag?"

"Yeah, I wanted to change it for a while. Does it look good?"

"It suits you well."

"Hey, Mrs. Li, did you buy a lot?"

"They weren't expensive, so I bought a few more."

Hou Wen and Han Fang also came out of the mall, their spirits high. Everyone discussed what they bought and how much they spent on bags and watches.

Then Dong Xuebing and Xie Huilan walked over.

When everyone saw Dong Xuebing carrying dozens of large and small bags on both arms and hands, they were all stunned. At that moment, Dong Xuebing was almost buried under the packages, and his body was barely visible.

"Wow, how much did you buy?"

"And those brands on the packages... they're speechless."

All of them were top international brands. Just this pile alone was worth at least a million RMB.

Chapter 1597

It was past nine o'clock.

Royal Hotel.

The bus stopped at the entrance, and everyone got off one after another, all returning.

Dong Xuebing was the last one to get off. He struggled with the dozen or so packages for quite a while. In the end, Hou Wen took a few of them, allowing Dong Xuebing to squeeze out the bus door. He was sweating profusely and realized he had miscalculated. He had been so happy buying whatever he saw, never imagining that they added up to a considerable weight while each item wasn't heavy. It was difficult for him to carry them all.

"You bought too much," Hou Wen said speechlessly.

Dong Xuebing gasped, "It's because my wife likes it."

Hou Wen teased, "You're good to your wife. Look at you." Then he paused and added, "Um, but if I could marry such a beautiful wife, I would treat her the same way."

Dong Xuebing scoffed, "You keep talking."

"How much did all of this cost?" Hou Wen asked.

Dong Xuebing nonchalantly replied, "Not much, I didn't keep track."

Han Fang, beside them, envied, "They're all top brands. I know this bag is eighty thousand. I saw one just like it, but it was too expensive, so I didn't buy it."

Hou Wen exclaimed, "Xuebing, when did your family become so wealthy?"

Dong Xuebing calmly responded, "I won the lottery a few times, first prize."

Some people nearby overheard, finally understanding how he could afford to buy so much. But the revelation that he won the first prize, not just once but several times, left them all dumbfounded.

Hou Wen clenched his teeth and said, "We haven't seen each other for only three years since graduation. It's only been three years, sigh, there's no comparison."

Ahead, Xie Huilan turned back and said, "Xuebing, give me a few bags."

Dong Xuebing was reluctant to let her carry them, "No need, I'll carry them."

"I said give them to me," Xie Huilan smiled and walked over, taking a bag containing perfume and another with a scarf from inside, and left.

Since the perfume was heavy, Dong Xuebing felt much lighter. He also took the bag that Hou Wen had helped him carry. Everyone chatted as they went upstairs.

Many cadres and family members who hadn't gone to the casino with them probably heard about what happened at the Grand Lisboa. Seeing Dong Xuebing spending so much money on shopping, they looked at him with a strange expression, unable to understand what kind of person he was. A young man with so much money, even though he's a leader in the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection and married to Secretary Xie, they increasingly couldn't understand Secretary Xie's husband. What does he do, exactly?

Upstairs.

In the executive room.

Dong Xuebing returned first and didn't see Huilan. With so many people around, he didn't know where she had gone. After entering the room, he panted heavily as he dropped the pile of bags. The

volume of these bags was almost larger than Dong Xuebing himself, and he didn't know how he managed to carry them back.

So tired.

It's time for a shower.

Dong Xuebing took off his clothes and walked into the bathroom naked. After running the water, he settled into the bathtub, enjoying the hot bath and lighting a cigarette. He was delighted with this vacation. After being so busy with work for many years, he finally had a few months to rest appropriately.

So comfortable.

Such enjoyment.

Ding, the room card beeped. It seemed like the door outside was being opened.

Dong Xuebing called out to the bathroom door, "Back?"

"Yeah," footsteps approached. "What's up, taking a shower?"

"Exhausted and sweaty all over, I had to shower. Where did you go before coming back?" Dong Xuebing extinguished his cigarette and tossed it into the trash can.

"Hehe, went to chat with a few ladies."

"Put the stuff down first and come here. Let's shower together."

"There's nothing left. It's all been given away."

"Ah, what about the perfume and the scarves you just got?"

"Yeah, Sister Chen and Secretary Cheng's wife liked them."

"These cost over a thousand each. Is it okay to give them away?"

"It's not a hierarchical relationship. There's nothing between friends."

"True, strengthening relationships is good. You just arrived in Jiangnan Province; your network isn't strong enough yet. You need to establish connections quickly to carry out your work effectively."

There was silence outside.

After a while, the bathroom door suddenly opened.

Dong Xuebing was startled and turned his head to look. He saw a white figure slowly walking in, closing the door behind her and waving at him naturally.

"Make some room," Xie Huilan smiled.

Dong Xuebing swallowed hard and moved over a bit. "Um."

Xie Huilan lifted her slender legs slightly before entering the water, then her whole body submerged as she lay down in the bathtub next to Dong Xuebing.

Even though they had been married for over a year and had a child, Dong Xuebing still found Xie Huilan terrifyingly beautiful every time he saw her. That face, it was beyond description, and her

figure, her skin, her temperament, he could never get enough of it. Dong Xuebing was moved and reached out to embrace her smooth back, leaning in to inhale the fragrance of her hair deeply.

"How are you so beautiful?" he asked.

"Hehe, it's natural for me," Xie Huilan replied.

"Do you think I'm worthy of you?"

"Why are you being so sentimental?"

"Just asking. Seriously, why did you marry me?"

"Do you want to hear the truth?"

"Yes, tell me."

"Because you always get into trouble, making people constantly worry. If I'm not there to keep an eye on you, if my family isn't there to clean up after you, who knows what trouble you'd cause? So I couldn't rest assured. So, I had to marry you to keep you on the right path. That's probably it." Xie Huilan smiled ambiguously.

Dong Xuebing rolled his eyes. "What kind of nonsense is that?"

"Motherly love is also a kind of affection. A woman's feelings are very complex. You should be content. You're lucky to be able to act cute and take advantage of it."

Dong Xuebing retorted, "..."

"Not satisfied?"

"Not at all. I thought you were attracted to me because of my charm," Dong Xuebing boasted shamelessly.

"If causing trouble is a charm, then you have quite a bit of charm," Xie Huilan chuckled.

Dong Xuebing grumbled, "I'm unsatisfied. Being fooled by a sudden burst of motherly love. I thought you were attracted to me."

"Okay, then I will make you satisfied today."

Before Dong Xuebing could react, Xie Huilan lowered her head and, holding her breath, submerged her head in the water, gently opening her mouth underwater.

Dong Xuebing's body trembled suddenly, and he felt like his scalp was about to explode. He gasped for air, and a chill ran down his spine. Today was truly a surprising day.

Chapter 1598

The next day.

Early in the morning.

As the sky brightened, the snow-white blanket on the business room's large bed stirred slightly, and the sound of yawning filled the air as the two woke up.

"What time is it, Xiaobing?"

"Ah, it's a little after seven."

"It's still quite early. Let's lie down for a while longer."

"I've had enough sleep. Do we have anything planned for today?"

"Not really, it's free time. We don't have to join them."

"Well, let's wander around here alone as if it were our honeymoon."

Seemingly no longer sleepy, Xie Huilan's lips curved into a smile as she got up and leaned back against the head of the bed. She wasn't wearing any clothes, yet she didn't bother to pull up the blanket. Thick-skinned as ever, she seemed. Upon noticing a gap in the curtains over there, although nothing could be seen from the outside, Dong Xuebing still pulled the blanket over her upper body, covering her, and then leaned back, putting his arm around her shoulder.

"Why were you so proactive yesterday?" Dong Xuebing asked.

Xie Huilan smiled as she looked at him. "Weren't you dissatisfied? And then you were satisfied."

Dong Xuebing nodded. "I'm satisfied now. You did well. Keep it up."

With her legs crossed under the blanket, Xie Huilan chuckled, "Flattering me even more, huh? Last night, I even choked with several mouthfuls of water. My nose and throat feel uncomfortable now."

"I'll give you a massage."

"There's no need to be polite; massage my shoulders and waist, too. Letting you toss me around like that yesterday, you didn't give me any face."

"I see you were quite happy."

"Do I seem so?"

"Yes, you're even more proactive than I am."

"Am I embarrassing you?"

"Are you afraid of being embarrassed? When have you ever been shy?"

"Oh, it's as if you're saying I'm shameless. Alright, you understand now; there won't be a next time."

"Hey hey hey, don't be like that."

It was time to get up after teasing each other for a while.

Dong Xuebing let go of her shoulders and slowly sat up. "Let's get up, or we'll miss breakfast."

"Okay." Xie Huilan lazily yawned, swung her legs off the bed, put on her slippers, and went to the bathroom to freshen up.

Dong Xuebing stayed behind. Once she left, he lit a cigarette. But before he could finish it, Xie Huilan returned, covering her nose as she fanned the air. Dong Xuebing knew his wife didn't like the smell of smoke, so he quickly put it out. Seeing her take out the bags from yesterday's shopping, Dong Xuebing said, "Huilan, put on that lingerie you bought yesterday. Not the black one, the red one. You'll look good in it."

"What should I wear on top?"

"A blouse. You like wearing white blouses, don't you?"

"A white blouse with it? The red straps at the back will be visible. Too sexy. People might think I'm up to something."

"Come on, it's just a vacation. There's no need to worry so much."

"I'm still a City party committee secretary. I can't dress too casually. I'll wear the red one, but I'll have to wear a blue blouse on top."

"That works."

"What about pants? Do you have any suggestions, hehe?"

"For pants, uh, how about wearing a skirt?"

"I didn't bring any skirts this time."

"Isn't that long skirt down to the ankles the one we bought yesterday?"

"That's for my mom. I was planning to send it back."

"It suits you, too. I've never seen you wear a more casual skirt before. You always wear either suits or professional attire, and I'm tired of seeing you in professional skirts."

"I am not suitable for long skirts; they are too gentle."

"You look perfect. Try it on quickly."

"Hehe, okay, I'll listen to you today."

Xie Huilan wasn't wearing any clothes, so she immediately put it on after opening the bag and taking out the lingerie. Then came the black stockings. As it was a bit chilly in autumn, she opted for pantyhose. Wrapping herself in the brightly colored floral half-skirt, she finally put on a bright blue long-sleeved women's blouse. She took a few steps forward and slipped into a pair of newly purchased coffee-colored Prada leather shoes.

"How is it?" Xie Huilan smiled.

Dong Xuebing applauded, "Looks great, looks great. You always look beautiful, no matter what you wear. You used to be so conservative. Changing your style is nice. I'm not just flattering you with this outfit; believe me, you'll turn heads when we go downstairs later."

Xie Huilan glanced at herself in the mirror, "Hmm, not bad."

"It's more than just not bad. You're stunning, head to toe. Hmm, tie up your hair. It'll give you more grace. Oh, I'll buy another one for our mom. You keep this skirt for yourself." Dong Xuebing also got out of bed, walked over to her, and couldn't help but pat his wife's buttocks, sincerely feeling that his wife was too beautiful today. As he wrapped his arm around her waist, he became affectionate with her.

Xie Huilan chuckled, "Hurry up and freshen up."

"Okay." Dong Xuebing let go of her and went to the bathroom. "When are we going back?"

Outside, Xie Huilan replied, "About four days later. We won't stay out for long."

"Alright. Am I going back with you guys?"

"There's no need. Just book a plane ticket back to Beijing when the time comes, so you won't have to fly back to Jiangnan Province again."

"Okay, but I still want to go back and see our son."

"Hehe, there will be opportunities to come over in the future. It's not like we won't see him again."

After freshening up, Dong Xuebing also dressed up a bit. But he knew his options were limited, so he had no choice but to wear a relatively stylish casual outfit that barely matched his wife. Of course, this matching was only in terms of color.

Second floor.

Breakfast area.

Many guests were having breakfast downstairs. Most people in Jiangnan Province woke up around this time and were dining in twos and threes.

At this moment, Dong Xuebing and Xie Huilan entered.

It started with one glance, then ten, then a hundred.

Xie Huilan, as beautiful as a celestial being, smiled gracefully as she found a table and sat down.

The difference between luxury and regular brands isn't significant; they're all fashion. However, the difference is also significant; aside from the price, luxury brands' fashion culture and heritage are incomparable to regular brands.

Hou Wen narrowed his eyes.

Master Song and many other men were also stunned.

Even Han Fang and a few female comrades were momentarily stunned.

It seemed like the room's entire focus was on Xie Huilan.

Dong Xuebing picked up a tray and went to get some self-service breakfast. As he passed by Hou Wen, Hou Wen gave him a fierce glare and said, "Xuebing, are you trying to make people jealous of you?"

Today, Xie Huilan looked even more beautiful than yesterday.

Dong Xuebing chuckled at the remark, feeling quite satisfied with his vanity.

The next day.

Early in the morning.

As the sky brightened, the snow-white blanket on the business room's large bed stirred slightly, and the sound of yawning filled the air as the two woke up.

"What time is it, Xiaobing?"

"Ah, it's a little after seven."

"It's still quite early. Let's lie down for a while longer."

"I've had enough sleep. Do we have anything planned for today?"

"Not really, it's free time. We don't have to join them."

"Well, let's wander around here alone as if it were our honeymoon."

Seemingly no longer sleepy, Xie Huilan's lips curved into a smile as she got up and leaned back against the head of the bed. She wasn't wearing any clothes, yet she didn't bother to pull up the blanket. Thick-skinned as ever, she seemed. Upon noticing a gap in the curtains over there, although nothing could be seen from the outside, Dong Xuebing still pulled the blanket over her upper body, covering her, and then leaned back, putting his arm around her shoulder.

"Why were you so proactive yesterday?" Dong Xuebing asked.

Xie Huilan smiled as she looked at him. "Weren't you dissatisfied? And then you were satisfied."

Dong Xuebing nodded. "I'm satisfied now. You did well. Keep it up."

With her legs crossed under the blanket, Xie Huilan chuckled, "Flattering me even more, huh? Last night, I even choked with several mouthfuls of water. My nose and throat feel uncomfortable now."

"I'll give you a massage."

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Chapter 1599

Five days later.

Around ten in the morning.

A plane roared as it descended at the capital airport.

In the airport lobby, Dong Xuebing returned alone. After getting off the plane, he was still lightly packed with just a small bag in his hand. He walked leisurely and casually out of the airport, humming a tune as he exited the hall and queued up for a taxi from Yinjian Company. Dong Xuebing had a great time these days, first reuniting with his wife and child, then helping his wife build momentum and deal with certain people in the province. He met old classmates, and finally, he and his wife went to Macau for a big round of sightseeing, shopping, and enjoying the scenery. He wouldn't mention sleeping. Now, he felt that every cell in his body exuded a pleasant aroma and was completely relaxed.

"Master, go to Ping'anli."

"Okay."

"Can I smoke?"

"Go ahead, just roll down the window a bit." "Alright, would you like one too?"

"Hehe, sure, I just ran out of cigarettes. Just got off the plane, young man?"

"Yeah, went out to play with my wife, just got back."

"The scenery in other cities is nice, but when it comes down to it, nowhere compares to our Beijing."

"Hey, you're speaking right from my heart. That's right. Any tourist city outside has mountains and water and looks beautiful. Even if it's not a tourist city, there aren't as many people or cars, inside and out, and it's quite comfortable. Honestly, Beijing isn't good in many ways compared to other places. We can't compete at all, but, hehe, I still think Beijing is good; I can't help it."

Dong Xuebing chatted with the driver most of the time. Beijing taxi drivers are very talkative, and Dong Xuebing can talk too, so once they started, there was no stopping them.

Ring ring ring.

The phone suddenly rang.

Looking at the number, it was from Beijing, but Dong Xuebing didn't have it saved in his phone, so he didn't know who it was, but he answered it anyway.

"Hello?" Dong Xuebing said.

The voice on the other end was a woman's, "Guess who I am."

Dong Xuebing recognized it immediately, "Uh, it's Sister Zhang, right?"

Zhang Longjuan chuckled, "Alright, you sharp-eared kid!"

Dong Xuebing smiled bitterly, "With your voice and tone, it would be strange if I couldn't tell. Huh, why did you change your phone number? Isn't this a Beijing China Mobile number?"

"You know me, I'm always in Beijing. My number in Fuzhou isn't working well, and there's always no signal there, so I temporarily changed it. I just tried calling you, but your phone was off. Where are you?"

"Just got off the plane, almost at... Dongzhimen, right?"

"That's perfect, just you? Come to Houhai, it's not far."

"Just me. Why should I go to Houhai? Where are you?"

"That's right, haha. Sister Zhang has been in Beijing for several days, waiting for you. Come quickly; don't waste time talking to Sister Zhang; I'll surprise you when you arrive!"

"A surprise? What surprise?"

"So many questions! You'll know when you get here!"

"Uh, where should I find you?"

"Call when you're almost here. Haha, bye."

The call was cut off, leaving Dong Xuebing helpless, so he just told the driver.

One minute...

Five minutes...

Ten minutes...

The car arrived, and Dong Xuebing paid and got out.

This should be one of the most central areas in Beijing, also the best environment in Beijing's boundaries. Although Houhai is not a sea, it's still an immaculate gorgeous lake, unlike the dirty moats or Liangshui River. The whole place exudes a refreshing and transparent atmosphere, surrounded by ancient buildings with a strong cultural heritage. The atmosphere is lovely by the lakeside, with willow trees swaying in the breeze. Of course, this is relatively well-maintained now. When Dong Xuebing was a child, the cultural atmosphere here was not as clean. Beijing has changed a lot in the past twenty years, almost a different place every year.

Standing by the lake, feeling the cool breeze, Dong Xuebing looked around. Finally, a hearty laughter came from behind. Hearing it, he knew who it was. Sister Zhang's laughter had a distinctive quality, just like her voice. Few people could laugh as sexy and free-spirited as her with a "haha." Even if Dong Xuebing didn't know her, his first impression of her from this laughter would surely be that she was a great beauty.

"Here, kid?"

"Yeah, here."

"I've been waiting for you for half a day."

"Uh, I came pretty quickly. You didn't tell me in advance. Fortunately, I took a flight today. Otherwise, where would you find me?"

Dong Xuebing turned around and saw Zhang Longjuan not far away.

Today, Sister Zhang was sexy, wearing particularly tight black leather pants that wrapped her plump legs with full elasticity, leaving no gap in between. She stepped on a pair of golden high-heeled sandals, revealing a hint of flesh-colored stockings between her feet and the pants. On her upper body was a leopard-print low-cut V-neck top, deep in the cleavage, stylish, and highly tempting.

Zhang Longjuan flicked her wavy curls and provocatively touched Dong Xuebing's cheek with her hand, "Missed your Sister Zhang?"

Dong Xuebing's face flushed, "Missed you."

Zhang Longjuan said, "Am I beautiful today?"

Dong Xuebing awkwardly replied, "Beautiful, you've always been beautiful."

Zhang Longjuan's laughter made her chest tremble, "You little thing, you know how to sweet talk. I loves it."

Sister Zhang's smile was not as graceful as Xie Huilan's, as gentle as Qu Yunxuan's, as reserved as Yu Meixia's, as cold as Geng Yuehua's, as maternal as Xu Yan's, or as elegant as Jiang Fangfang's. It was a kind of bold and hearty smile, particularly genuine as if one could feel the air of confidence emanating from her bones just by seeing her laugh.

It had been a long time since they last met, and Dong Xuebing couldn't help but look at her a few more times, especially those beautiful legs and buttocks bursting out of the leather pants, which were... quite attractive.

Zhang Longjuan grinned, "Hey, stunned?"

Dong Xuebing hurriedly said, "No, definitely not."

"Let's walk and talk, haha." Zhang Longjuan boldly put her arm around Dong Xuebing's shoulder and walked forward.

Dong Xuebing felt quite awkward. He least enjoyed Sister Zhang's enthusiasm, both in the past and now. He didn't know how to respond. With Sister Zhang's embrace, the large chest wrapped in the leopard-print top rubbed against Dong Xuebing's arm with the rhythm of her high heels. He could feel the softness, as if the bra inside was thin, almost like not wearing one, very soft.

"Sister Zhang, don't."

"What's wrong? Look at you blushing."

"Cough, if there's going to be an embrace, it should be me embracing you. It's not common for a woman to hug a man."

"Hey, our little handsome guy still cares about his face, huh? Alright, you can hug me while walking, haha." Zhang Longjuan let go of his hand and generously lifted her shoulder.

Dong Xuebing cleared his throat, but he didn't dare. He changed the subject: "So, why did you come to Beijing? For business?"

"Yeah, the company has some matters to deal with here. Recently, our business and investments have gradually shifted to domestic. Also, I wanted to give you a surprise."

"What surprise?" Dong Xuebing asked.

Zhang Longjuan smiled, "I can't say now. You'll find out when you get there. Haha. Anyway, let's talk about how your trip to Macau went."

"It was okay. I just wandered around casually, and then..." Suddenly, Dong Xuebing paused. "Hey, how did you know I went to Macau?" It just dawned on him that he hadn't even told his unit leader, Dong Xuebing, about his vacation, so how could others know?

Zhang Longjuan lifted her chin, "What doesn't I know?"

Dong Xuebing quickly said, "Seriously, you... I didn't tell you?"

"Do you think I don't know when you didn't tell me? Are you sure you didn't go to the Wynn Casino? Don't forget that I made my first fortune in the casino. Naturally, I know quite a few people. I just heard a few days ago from a friend that a young man recently listed on the first page of the danger list went to the Wynn Casino and scared the biggest casino in Macau. You may not understand this list; it consists of people with extremely high gambling skills who are not welcome in the casinos. The higher the page number, the more dangerous they are, and only three people are on the first page. Hehe, I immediately guessed it was you. It's said that on the night you went, all the casinos in Macau were in an uproar as if facing a major enemy. Haven't you heard about it? Some gamblers of your age and similar appearance were denied entry, and they were even asked to leave during security checks."

Dong Xuebing realized, "So that's what happened? I didn't pay attention afterward; I just went to some tourist spots and didn't go to the casinos."

Zhang Longjuan patted his hair, "You, causing such a stir and not even knowing about it, really something. You gave them a hard time these few days you were there. I heard that a casino with some connection to the gambling ship we went to even closed down for a day. Haha, I was amused when I heard about it."

Dong Xuebing wryly smiled, "I never intended to gamble. You also know my current position. These people... aren't they going too far?"

Zhang Longjuan chuckled, "They don't know you're a disciplinary inspection cadre. They don't even know your name. Seeing you in the past, they probably thought someone had offended you. Were you planning to settle scores with the casinos? That's why they were so on guard. You, young man, became a legend by winning over ten billion RMB with the lowest-value chip. Based on that, which casino wouldn't want to keep their distance from you? They're afraid you'll come to them. They can afford to lose millions, tens of millions, but billions? Nobody can handle that!"

Dong Xuebing laughed, "They're being petty, doubting a gentleman's integrity. I told them I just went to take a look and had no intention of placing bets."

Chapter 1600

Morning.

Haohai Street.

Autumn is in full swing, with leaves falling everywhere, sprinkling the ground with golden hues. Dong Xuebing and Zhang Longjuan walked along the edge of Haohai Lake. The sound of crunching leaves and twigs echoed beneath their shoes. Zhang Longjuan didn't say where they were going, and Dong Xuebing couldn't guess the surprise. He could only follow her along the way. Dong Xuebing wasn't in a hurry anyway. When he went to Jiangnan Province, he requested leave from his unit, and they granted him half a month of business trip leave. Calculating the time, it had only been about ten days since then. He still had about five days of vacation and leisure left. He wasn't in a rush to return to work and wasn't even thinking about returning to his unit.

"Sister Zhang, when are you going back to Fuzhou?" Dong Xuebing asked.

Zhang Longjuan glanced at him. "What do you mean? You just met me, and you're already chasing me away?"

Dong Xuebing quickly said, "Oh no, it's nothing like that. I was asking."

"Haha, I'm not in a hurry to leave. I have some things to deal with, so I'll stay for a week," Zhang Longjuan said.

"Well, that's a coincidence. My vacation lasts until next week. Since you're here, I can accompany you for a few more days," Dong Xuebing said.

"Oh, you're quite proactive. Are you up to no good? Are you trying to deceive me for money or romance?" Zhang Longjuan never had a straight face.

Rolling his eyes, Dong Xuebing said, "What are you talking about? No, I want to thank you properly. I was able to get promoted so quickly this time, thanks to your significant investment in

Zhengshui County. Since you rarely come to Beijing, I have to treat you well and show you some hospitality. Where do you want to go?"

Zhang Longjuan smiled, "Not trying to deceive me?"

Dong Xuebing: "... He thought, "I want to deceive you too."

Dong Xuebing lacked restraint in his speech, but Zhang Longjuan's mouth was even more unrestrained than his. So, when he was with Zhang Longjuan, Dong Xuebing always felt exhausted and passive everywhere.

The so-called "like attracts like." Perhaps that's the reason.

After chatting, Zhang Longjuan confidently walked ahead in her high-heeled sandals. Many people were attracted by her charm and drawn to her. Dong Xuebing, standing beside her, naturally became the object of attention. Dong Xuebing glanced around, feeling a sense of accomplishment in his heart.

"Sister Zhang, where are we going?" Dong Xuebing asked again.

"Don't worry, we're almost there," Zhang Longjuan said.

"You said that a while ago."

"Haha, we're just ahead. Keep going."

Suddenly, Zhang Longjuan turned a corner and walked down an alley. Dong Xuebing was surprised but quickly followed. He grew up in a hutong himself. The old courtyard houses had been demolished long ago, and now he felt nostalgic for the old hutong life and culture. Moreover, this area has been renovated recently, and many hutongs and courtyard houses have been refurbished. It no longer looked as dilapidated as before but had a quaint and ancient charm, similar to the atmosphere near Liuli Factory. The atmosphere of the hutong was intense, and he knew that this area wouldn't be demolished. Most courtyard houses had been protected as cultural heritage sites, and he could see one or two protected trees fenced off nearby. Walking here, Dong Xuebing felt very comfortable all over. It reminded him of the happy scenes of living with his parents when he was a child, and he remembered playing with his childhood friends in the hutong. But...

What are we doing here?

There don't seem to be any famous restaurants inside.

Moreover, it's not even lunchtime yet.

Suddenly, Zhang Longjuan stopped and turned sideways, facing a courtyard with a red, quaint wooden door. She reached into her bag and took out a key. "We're here."

Puzzled, Dong Xuebing said, "But didn't you just arrive a few days ago? Why did you rent a house?"

Zhang Longjuan smiled, opened the door with the key, and strode in. She reached out and beckoned, "Stop talking nonsense, come in."

Dong Xuebing followed her in, and then he also looked around in astonishment. There was a main house to the north, two side rooms to the west, and two side rooms to the east. In the middle was a spacious, bright courtyard with a Chinese toon tree, stone tables, and stools. This was probably the

best courtyard he had ever seen. His family's old house also called a hutong and a courtyard house, was unlike this square one. It was more like a maze, with houses turning in all directions. It wasn't too regular or neat. But this courtyard was different. It was the most regular type of courtyard. If Dong Xuebing's family's old house was for ordinary people at that time, then this courtyard must have been the residence of officials and nobles. At a glance, you could tell that the grade was different. The eaves and tiles were particularly exquisite.

Standing under the Chinese toon tree in the courtyard, Zhang Longjuan turned around with a smile and said, "How's the environment? Does my little handsome guy like it?"

"I like it," Dong Xuebing said.

"As long as you like it," Zhang Longjuan smiled.

Dong Xuebing didn't understand. "Then what's the point? What do you mean?"

Zhang Longjuan waved her hand. "What else could it mean? Haha, it's a gift for you!"

When Dong Xuebing heard this, he was stunned and said, "What do you mean, a gift for me? Huh? Did you buy this? Is this the surprise you mentioned earlier?"

"Yes," Zhang Longjuan took out a lady's cigarette, lit it, and held it in her mouth. Then she threw a bunch of keys in her hand to him. "Take it. All the keys are here."

Dong Xuebing hurriedly stepped forward to catch it, then quickly pushed it back. "This won't do, this won't do. How can I accept your gift? And this is not an ordinary thing. The property prices in Beijing are already high enough, not to mention a place like Haohai, the most central area. The surrounding property prices are all 100,000 RMB per square meter. Moreover, it's a courtyard house. Courtyard houses are much more expensive than apartment buildings. They can't be estimated based on the average price in the area. And it's even such a formal, old courtyard house. It's simply something that, even if you have money, you can't buy. It cannot be bought for tens of thousands of yuan per square meter."

Zhang Longjuan smiled, "Okay, you have a good eye. Let's not talk about the price for now. This kind of courtyard is indeed not something you can buy with money. Moreover, it's a whole courtyard. Ordinary people wouldn't sell it. Those who can have such a courtyard wouldn't lack money at all. Haha, but there are exceptions to everything. This time, you caught a break with me. This courtyard used to belong to an old friend of mine. Although we had no business contact before, I once helped him out. I lent him some money when he was having the most difficult time. His family's business has reencountered some problems, and he wants to sell this courtyard. But he's reluctant to sell it to others. A few days ago, I happened to be in Beijing, and we talked about this matter when we met. I came over to look with him, and we agreed. Although the price is a bit high, this unique courtyard can't be found anywhere else. So, I bought it."

Indeed, it's hard to find such a place. Generally, these kinds of courtyard houses are occupied by several households, with as many as a dozen or as few as three or four families. One family occupies one room. So, having a huge courtyard for one household is almost impossible. Even if it's possible, as Zhang Longjuan said, the other party wouldn't lack this money. So, to be able to encounter such a good thing still depends on luck.

Dong Xuebing asked, "How much?"

"Haha, take a guess?" Zhang Longjuan teased.

Dong Xuebing estimated and was startled himself, "Two hundred million?"

Zhang Longjuan smiled, "He wouldn't sell it for two billion. Well, it's about three hundred million."

Dong Xuebing almost fainted. This woman had such a lavish spending habit that he felt dizzy hearing this number: three hundred million! But thinking about it, this number wasn't unreasonable. In a better location, a villa would cost several tens of millions, and the area of this courtyard was not smaller than any villa, even larger by quite a bit. Just the central courtyard alone would be at least three hundred square meters.

This was Haohai.

This was a protected area.

This was an entire single-household courtyard!

Three billion might be expensive, but it was about the right price. Moreover, it was hard to come by. This old house couldn't be bought even with five hundred million. According to what Dong Xuebing heard, only a few old folks with the same status and influence as Senior Xie occasionally had a single household courtyard. And it seemed that none of them were as good as the courtyard bought by Zhang Longjuan, nor were they as large. Even Senior Xie didn't have one. He only lived in a villa. So, you can imagine how precious this was.

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"So much?"

"Yes."

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Morning.

Haohai Street.

Autumn is in full swing, with leaves falling everywhere, sprinkling the ground with golden hues. Dong Xuebing and Zhang Longjuan walked along the edge of Haohai Lake. The sound of crunching leaves and twigs echoed beneath their shoes. Zhang Longjuan didn't say where they were going, and Dong Xuebing couldn't guess the surprise. He could only follow her along the way. Dong Xuebing wasn't in a hurry anyway. When he went to Jiangnan Province, he requested leave from his unit, and they granted him half a month of business trip leave. Calculating the time, it had only been about ten days since then. He still had about five days of vacation and leisure left. He wasn't in a rush to return to work and wasn't even thinking about returning to his unit.

"Sister Zhang, when are you going back to Fuzhou?" Dong Xuebing asked.

Zhang Longjuan glanced at him. "What do you mean? You just met me, and you're already chasing me away?"

Dong Xuebing quickly said, "Oh no, it's nothing like that. I was asking."

"Haha, I'm not in a hurry to leave. I have some things to deal with, so I'll stay for a week," Zhang Longjuan said.

"Well, that's a coincidence. My vacation lasts until next week. Since you're here, I can accompany you for a few more days," Dong Xuebing said.

"Oh, you're quite proactive. Are you up to no good? Are you trying to deceive me for money or romance?" Zhang Longjuan never had a straight face.

Rolling his eyes, Dong Xuebing said, "What are you talking about? No, I want to thank you properly. I was able to get promoted so quickly this time, thanks to your significant investment in Zhengshui County. Since you rarely come to Beijing, I have to treat you well and show you some hospitality. Where do you want to go?"

Zhang Longjuan smiled, "Not trying to deceive me?"

Dong Xuebing: "...". He thought, "I want to deceive you too."

Dong Xuebing lacked restraint in his speech, but Zhang Longjuan's mouth was even more unrestrained than his. So, when he was with Zhang Longjuan, Dong Xuebing always felt exhausted and passive everywhere.

The so-called "like attracts like." Perhaps that's the reason.

After chatting, Zhang Longjuan confidently walked ahead in her high-heeled sandals. Many people were attracted by her charm and drawn to her. Dong Xuebing, standing beside her, naturally became the object of attention. Dong Xuebing glanced around, feeling a sense of accomplishment in his heart.

"Sister Zhang, where are we going?" Dong Xuebing asked again.

"Don't worry, we're almost there," Zhang Longjuan said.

"You said that a while ago."

"Haha, we're just ahead. Keep going."

Suddenly, Zhang Longjuan turned a corner and walked down an alley. Dong Xuebing was surprised but quickly followed. He grew up in a hutong himself. The old courtyard houses had been demolished long ago, and now he felt nostalgic for the old hutong life and culture. Moreover, this area has been renovated recently, and many hutongs and courtyard houses have been refurbished. It no longer looked as dilapidated as before but had a quaint and ancient charm, similar to the atmosphere near Liuli Factory. The atmosphere of the hutong was intense, and he knew that this area wouldn't be demolished. Most courtyard houses had been protected as cultural heritage sites, and he could see one or two protected trees fenced off nearby. Walking here, Dong Xuebing felt very comfortable all over. It reminded him of the happy scenes of living with his parents when he was a child, and he remembered playing with his childhood friends in the hutong. But...

What are we doing here?

There don't seem to be any famous restaurants inside.

Moreover, it's not even lunchtime yet.

Suddenly, Zhang Longjuan stopped and turned sideways, facing a courtyard with a red, quaint wooden door. She reached into her bag and took out a key. "We're here."

Puzzled, Dong Xuebing said, "But didn't you just arrive a few days ago? Why did you rent a house?"

Zhang Longjuan smiled, opened the door with the key, and strode in. She reached out and beckoned, "Stop talking nonsense, come in."

Dong Xuebing followed her in, and then he also looked around in astonishment. There was a main house to the north, two side rooms to the west, and two side rooms to the east. In the middle was a spacious, bright courtyard with a Chinese toon tree, stone tables, and stools. This was probably the best courtyard he had ever seen. His family's old house also called a hutong and a courtyard house, was unlike this square one. It was more like a maze, with houses turning in all directions. It wasn't too regular or neat. But this courtyard was different. It was the most regular type of courtyard. If Dong Xuebing's family's old house was for ordinary people at that time, then this courtyard must have been the residence of officials and nobles. At a glance, you could tell that the grade was different. The eaves and tiles were particularly exquisite.

Standing under the Chinese toon tree in the courtyard, Zhang Longjuan turned around with a smile and said, "How's the environment? Does my little handsome guy like it?"

"I like it," Dong Xuebing said.

"As long as you like it," Zhang Longjuan smiled.

Dong Xuebing didn't understand. "Then what's the point? What do you mean?"

Zhang Longjuan waved her hand. "What else could it mean? Haha, it's a gift for you!"

When Dong Xuebing heard this, he was stunned and said, "What do you mean, a gift for me? Huh? Did you buy this? Is this the surprise you mentioned earlier?"

"Yes," Zhang Longjuan took out a lady's cigarette, lit it, and held it in her mouth. Then she threw a bunch of keys in her hand to him. "Take it. All the keys are here."

Dong Xuebing hurriedly stepped forward to catch it, then quickly pushed it back. "This won't do, this won't do. How can I accept your gift? And this is not an ordinary thing. The property prices in Beijing are already high enough, not to mention a place like Haohai, the most central area. The surrounding property prices are all 100,000 RMB per square meter. Moreover, it's a courtyard house. Courtyard houses are much more expensive than apartment buildings. They can't be estimated based on the average price in the area. And it's even such a formal, old courtyard house. It's simply something that, even if you have money, you can't buy. It cannot be bought for tens of thousands of yuan per square meter."

Zhang Longjuan smiled, "Okay, you have a good eye. Let's not talk about the price for now. This kind of courtyard is indeed not something you can buy with money. Moreover, it's a whole courtyard. Ordinary people wouldn't sell it. Those who can have such a courtyard wouldn't lack money at all. Haha, but there are exceptions to everything. This time, you caught a break with me. This courtyard used to belong to an old friend of mine. Although we had no business contact before, I once helped him out. I lent him some money when he was having the most difficult time. His family's business has reencountered some problems, and he wants to sell this courtyard. But he's reluctant to sell it to others. A few days ago, I happened to be in Beijing, and we talked about this matter when we met. I came over to look with him, and we agreed. Although the price is a bit high, this unique courtyard can't be found anywhere else. So, I bought it."

Indeed, it's hard to find such a place. Generally, these kinds of courtyard houses are occupied by several households, with as many as a dozen or as few as three or four families. One family occupies one room. So, having a huge courtyard for one household is almost impossible. Even if it's possible, as Zhang Longjuan said, the other party wouldn't lack this money. So, to be able to encounter such a good thing still depends on luck.

Dong Xuebing asked, "How much?"

"Haha, take a guess?" Zhang Longjuan teased.

Dong Xuebing estimated and was startled himself, "Two hundred million?"

Zhang Longjuan smiled, "He wouldn't sell it for two billion. Well, it's about three hundred million."

Dong Xuebing almost fainted. This woman had such a lavish spending habit that he felt dizzy hearing this number: three hundred million! But thinking about it, this number wasn't unreasonable. In a better location, a villa would cost several tens of millions, and the area of this courtyard was not smaller than any villa, even larger by quite a bit. Just the central courtyard alone would be at least three hundred square meters.

This was Haohai.

This was a protected area.

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