

## Endless 150

### Chapter 150: Stone Friends

"Kedening, you're really not cut out for this job."

In the dark alley, Kedening crouched at the corner, panting heavily. Opposite him, David leaned casually against the wall.

"I... I..."

Kedening looked at the blood on his hands, so bright, still emanating warmth.

Something squirmed in his vision, and Kedening looked in horror toward the corner. A man was whimpering, crawling toward him.

He should be dead, having been stabbed multiple times in the abdomen, yet driven by a will to survive, he stubbornly crawled, seeking some glimmer of hope.

"Even though you introduced me to this line of work, I still have to say, at times, you need to be ruthless."

David played with the short knife in his hand, still dripping with blood, and stomped hard on the man, as if crushing a rotten tomato, squeezing more blood from his body with a slight application of force.

"Ruthlessness isn't about becoming numb; numbness is when you feel nothing. But beneath your gray shell, your heart remains weak.

You need to be vicious, Kedening. You can't say you did all this for Jini. You need to do it for yourself, for both you and Jini. Only then can you be ruthless enough. Only then can you survive."

David instructed Kedening, though he hadn't killed many people, his early experiences had long instilled a vicious heart.

"I never met my father, and my mother passed away early on. I spent most of my childhood in an orphanage. In many storybooks, the authors depict it as a warm place, where poor children comfort each other."

David crouched down, speaking as he watched the dying man, observing his eyes turning murky, and the deep-seated fear in his cries.

"Sadly, stories are just that. It wasn't warm there. Kids often fought over the little they had, scrapping for survival.

As you know my character, if someone provoked me, I'd beat them fiercely, and even if I couldn't win, I would still fight. Over time, I started to gain respect. They respected my fists, knew I was not to be messed with, that I was a big bad guy.

But as time passed, I grew tired of it. I wanted friends, but everyone was afraid of me. I began to show some kindness. Once, when I got a few extra pieces of candy, I shared them with others, thinking it was a good start.

But that night, I got pinned down and beaten in bed. They saw my kindness as a sign of weakness. I started to fear them. After they beat me, their leader stood by my bed, speaking harsh words, surrounded by his cronies. I knew if I fought back, I'd just get beaten again."

David paused, looking at his blood-stained hands.

"I was young at the time, not strong enough, my fists far from hard. But I had a stone under my pillow, with ridiculous drawings made with crayons. Whenever someone asked, I said it was my rock friend.

My rock friend protected me, and I used him to smash that guy's face."

David laughed as he told the story.

"Those stupid kids had never seen anything like it—blood and teeth flew everywhere. That guy even pissed his pants from the pain."

The laughter stopped, and his face became expressionless.

"But winning didn't make me happy."

Kedening remained silent. He had known David for many years, but never heard him speak of these things. When he asked others, they only knew David frequently hung out on the streets.

"I'm not telling you about my tough childhood; I'm giving you an example."

David handed the blood-stained short knife to Kedening.

"So do you understand? Kedening, you don't have the chance to be a good person anymore. Look at the blood on your hands. Don't think about so-called kindness. That ambiguous feeling will only hurt you.

You're evil, we're evil, utterly evil, with no way back."

Kedening slowly gripped the short knife, looking at the man beneath him. The man looked at him pleadingly, well aware that David was a complete madman. Kedening still retained some humanity. His survival depended on Kedening's compassion.

Compassion... For an evil person, the least needed thing is meaningless kindness and mercy.

With a determined look in Kedening's eyes, he swung the short knife and slit the man's throat.

Blood gushed out, and the man fell to the ground, dead.

"Not bad," David looked on with satisfaction, his eyes resting on Kedening's face, "I just hope you truly hardened your heart and didn't just shut yourself off from feeling anything."

Kedening said nothing, maintaining absolute silence.

...

"Kedening, Kedening."

A familiar voice called out, she reached out her hand, gently stroking his face, dispelling the cold chill.

Kedening slowly opened his eyes. Though the light around was dim, he could still see the woman beside him, leaning on him, softly brushing his forehead, wiping away the sweat with a handkerchief.

"Did you have a nightmare?" Jini asked.

Kedening recalled the dream he just had, his expression complicated, but he nodded in response.

"Sort of, a nightmare, a terrible nightmare."

"Don't be afraid, it's okay, I'm here with you."

Jini said this as she embraced Kedening's head, the genuine sensation of skin contact dispelling much of the dreamlike illusion.

"It's nothing, just a dream."

Kedening gently patted Jini's hand and sat up from the bed.

This wasn't his familiar home but rather a strange room, a safe house Kedening had prepared for himself long ago.

A sharp pain struck his mind, Kedening's expression twisted for a moment as he raised his hand to clutch his head, rubbing it forcefully.

Perhaps this is how the world should be, with everything changing rapidly. Yesterday, Kedening was a prominent actor; today, he's a scurrying rat.

He couldn't recall how he left the theater, nor was he aware of his mood at that time.

Like a fragmentary and vague dream, when Kedening awoke from it, he found himself here.

Jini looked at Kedening, aware of what had transpired, but since Kedening didn't speak, she asked nothing.

She still remembered last night's scene, where she uncommonly stayed clear-headed, waiting for Kedening to return and tell her of the performance success. But when the door opened, instead of Kedening, Jini saw a dejected rat.

Kedening didn't even have time to change his clothes, dressed in his performance attire with heavy makeup on his face. He hugged Jini, and after a brief pause, he took her away.

Something terrible had happened, but Jini didn't want to doubt Kedening; he had done enough for her, while she gave him nothing but trust.

"Is there anything you want to say?"

Once Kedening calmed down, Jini asked softly.

At first, silence prevailed, then Kedening's voice emerged.

"Sometimes I can't tell, like someone too deep into a role. Sometimes I can't differentiate what's real or illusion, as if everything is real, everything is also illusion."

Kedening said expressionlessly.

When "Man-eater" was established, he had already prepared to die, but when people around him truly died, Kedening felt deeply saddened.

He's unsure if he's a cold-blooded villain or a regular person who strayed into the wrong path.

But soon, Kedening stopped thinking about it.

"It's nothing, I'll handle everything, wait for me here."

Kedening gently kissed Jini's forehead, stood up to straighten his clothes, and left through the door.

The sky outside was dimly lit; Kedening hadn't slept for long, his eyes lined with bloodshot vessels. He wanted to confide in Jini, but as the words reached his lips, Kedening couldn't utter a thing.

He couldn't tell Jini she's a hungry Demon, that the drugs she uses daily contain souls, nor could he reveal he's a murderer with bloodstained hands, having sacrificed the lives of many for it.

In the end, Kedening couldn't say anything.

There was no need to speak.

The phone was dialed, and Kedening spoke bluntly.

"I need two tickets to leave Opus, tonight, without drawing anyone's attention. Price is not an issue."

After a brief silence, a voice sounded over the line.

"Of course, we specialize in this," the other party agreed wholeheartedly, "please specify your address, I'll send someone to pick you up before midnight."

Kedening directed his gaze outside, observing the metallic plaque on the building opposite, cautious, he provided another address.

After completing all this, Kedening considered his plan; he couldn't rely entirely on these gangsters, who were not fundamentally different from him. Kedening understood them as he understood himself.

Kedening planned his escape journey, and amid his musings, another voice emerged beside his ear.

"Kedening, you have to live under some identity, have you decided?"

The person appeared beside Kedening at some unknown moment; Kedening recognized the makeup on that person's face, it was Bart.

No... Something was not right.

Before Kedening could say anything, the bizarre hallucination vanished, leaving nothing at all, his expression blank, as if everything just now was merely his imagination.

The headache was excruciating, like having sharp nails stuck in his brain, but thankfully the pain was brief, and after a moment, Kedening recovered.

"You can't be a good person, nor a pure villain. What are you really thinking, Kedening?"

"I... I..."

He could never provide an answer.

"Truly pathetic..."

It seemed like the man was talking to himself, or conversing with someone invisible, drowning in madness amidst the silence.