

Ice Age 111

Chapter 111: Zhou Ke'er's Massage Techniques

None of the other building leaders anticipated Zhang Yi would handle the situation this way.

Given that Zhang Yi had to go out every day to find supplies, they naturally assumed he needed to venture out to survive. However, now Zhang Yi stood with his hands in his pockets, revealing his true stance.

"So, you want to fight me? Fine, I'll just hide inside my impenetrable fortress and see what you do!"

As everyone hesitated, Li Jian broke the deadlock.

"I think negotiation is the best solution. It's better than a mutually destructive fight," Li Jian said.

"If it comes to negotiating, I'm willing to step forward."

Zhang Yi smiled and said, "Mr. Li, I've always admired your sensible approach. Back when we worked together, I thought you were the most reasonable person."

"Come over and talk. I trust you more than those who prefer sneak attacks."

By calling Li Jian "Mr. Li," Zhang Yi signaled familiarity, subtly undermining Huang Tianfang and Wang Qiang.

Internal discord was key to such temporary alliances. Though these 29 buildings had formed a united front against Zhang Yi, there were inherent conflicts among them. They'd been rivals before, only uniting due to the common threat Zhang Yi posed.

Indeed, Zhang Yi's words had an effect.

Wang Qiang sneered, "Li Jian, do you think you can represent all of us?"

Huang Tianfang added coldly, "We can't let you go alone to talk!"

Chen Lingyu chimed in, "If that's the case, I should go too!"

Each leader feared the others might make a secret deal with Zhang Yi. This disruption caused chaos, with everyone demanding to negotiate.

Zhang Yi's eyes gleamed with a hint of malice.

"I'm not afraid of you coming; I'm afraid you won't come!"

"Fine, tomorrow at 2:30 PM, I'll be waiting in Building 25. If you're late, I won't wait!"

He left no room for bargaining and promptly exited the chat.

If successful, he could eliminate these 29 leaders tomorrow. Although it might incite collective resentment from their followers, leaderless chaos would prevent swift reorganization, giving Zhang Yi time to dismantle them one by one.

Confident in his superior firepower and impenetrable fortress, Zhang Yi feared no opponent!

The footbath had cooled. Zhang Yi lowered his head and said to Zhou Ke'er, "Alright, dry my feet."

Zhou Ke'er nodded and used a cloth to dry his feet before emptying the water and returning to massage him.

As Zhang Yi watched the beautiful doctor, he reached out his hand.

"Don't use your phone for the next few days. Give it to me for safekeeping."

With a potential battle looming, Zhang Yi needed to eliminate all security risks.

Zhou Ke'er hesitated briefly before handing over her phone. "Is there going to be a fight?"

She asked softly.

Zhang Yi replied calmly, "Maybe. I need to prepare for war. This time, the number of enemies is unprecedented."

"Oh, I understand," Zhou Ke'er nodded and continued massaging without further questions.

Knowing Zhang Yi well after living together for so long, she knew not to ask too many questions when he was serious.

Seeing his stern expression and occasionally sharp eyes, Zhou Ke'er understood he was deeply contemplating his strategy. She focused on fulfilling her role.

After a moment's thought, Zhou Ke'er moved behind Zhang Yi, placing her soft, white hands on his shoulders and massaging with perfect pressure. Recently, she learned new massage techniques and began applying them to Zhang Yi's head.

"What's this..." Zhang Yi's eyes glazed over.

Zhou Ke'er's expert fingers pressed into his scalp, sending a wave of delight through his nerves.

"Feels good," Zhang Yi murmured.

Zhou Ke'er blushed with joy. "I'm glad you like it. I just learned this recently."

Leaning back on the sofa, Zhang Yi felt utterly relaxed, his mind clearing.

He closed his eyes, thinking about tomorrow's meeting with the 29 building leaders. If they all showed up, he would kill them without hesitation. Their followers would be thrown into disarray, giving him a chance to eliminate them one by one.

However, not all of them were fools. Some might not show up, maintaining a wait-and-see stance.

What should he do if that happened?

Zhang Yi's mind drifted into the massage-induced tranquility. After pondering for a while, he made up his mind. If fewer than half showed up or none at all, he'd temporarily agree to their terms, lulling them into a false sense of security.

Then, through a series of maneuvers, he'd incite internal strife among them, weakening their combat strength before finding the right opportunity to kill them all.

Time was on Zhang Yi's side. Unless he actively attacked other buildings, he could crush any of them with ease.

"Patience is key. Rushing leads to mistakes, and one mistake could put me in danger."

"I'll be a patient hunter, setting traps and waiting for the prey to walk into them."

With his thoughts organized, Zhang Yi attributed his clarity to Zhou Ke'er's new massage technique.

Preparing for tomorrow's negotiations, he needed capable people to manage the situation. Naturally, he thought of Uncle You first.

He messaged Uncle You, explaining the plan for tomorrow. Uncle You replied immediately, "Just tell me what to do. I'm at your service!"

Zhang Yi's continuous small gestures of kindness and his impressive marksmanship had thoroughly won Uncle You over. He was now unwaveringly loyal, ready to follow Zhang Yi's orders without hesitation.

Chapter 112: Deployment of Troops

Zhang Yi spoke to Uncle You, "You don't need to do anything special. The negotiations tomorrow will be on our turf."

"The representatives from the other 29 buildings might come. I need someone to maintain order."

"I want you to lead this task."

Uncle You nodded. "That's easy. When they arrive, we'll search them and make them discard any weapons."

"Exactly," Zhang Yi replied. "I'll inform the other neighbors."

Uncle You agreed. "Alright, that's settled then."

After confirming with Uncle You, Zhang Yi opened the group chat for the residents of Building 25.

The residents were still begging Zhang Yi not to abandon them, hoping he would continue providing food as he had before.

Zhang Yi was done with their pleas. He typed, "Tomorrow, representatives from the other 29 buildings will come to pressure me. They want me to decide whether or not to provide them with resources."

"If that happens, I might have to abandon you. You know I can protect myself just fine."

"Or you can follow my orders, stand guard tomorrow, and perhaps we can survive. I'll try my best to secure resources for you."

Hearing this, the neighbors grew anxious.

No one dared to object. They all agreed, promising to follow Zhang Yi's orders.

After all, most of Building 25's combat power came from Zhang Yi. Without his protection, they could be wiped out by the Tianhe Gang or the Wolf Gang at any time.

After making his plans, Zhang Yi patted Zhou Ke'er's hand.

"Rest early tonight! Tomorrow is a big day."

Zhou Ke'er bit her lip and whispered in his ear, "In that case, should I help you relax tonight?"

Zhang Yi smiled, "I need to conserve my strength. Let's keep it simple."

Zhou Ke'er nodded and positioned herself in front of Zhang Yi.

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The next morning, Zhang Yi woke up at seven. Glancing at his Rolex, he saw it was still early but couldn't fall back asleep. He got out of bed and began preparing his gear for the negotiations.

He equipped himself with a bulletproof vest, modified bulletproof pants, a police helmet, a crowbar, and a machete. He also placed two military knives in his pants pockets for close combat, which were more practical than the machete.

He strapped on two fully loaded police handguns and six additional magazines on his waist. Then, he retrieved two assault rifles from his alternate space, each fully loaded. He planned to use these to quickly take out a large number of people if necessary.

Finally, he equipped his beloved sniper rifle.

Surveying his arsenal, Zhang Yi's gaze fell on the boxes of grenades in his alternate space. "If they all gather in one room, I could just throw a grenade and cripple them, if not kill them outright."

A cold smile played on Zhang Yi's lips.

He had learned how to use grenades from online tutorials. This weapon, with its mid-range area of effect, was simple to use. He had never used one before, but after surviving so long in the apocalypse and killing dozens, his resolve was as hard as steel.

"Next, we just need to wait for the fish to take the bait!"

Zhang Yi's cold eyes gleamed with anticipation.

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By twelve noon, Zhang Yi was fully armed and went downstairs, instructing everyone to gather on the seventh floor.

Apartment 1301 was a spacious one-bedroom unit, ideal for hosting many people. Its height made it safe from attacks from below, and even if a fight broke out downstairs, Zhang Yi could quickly return to his safe house. It was very secure.

The neighbors, desperate for Zhang Yi's food, complied without objection and gathered in the unit. Zhang Yi glanced at them without a word, then threw two black duffel bags on the floor. "This is today's food. Distribute it."

In reality, Zhang Yi had collected food yesterday but had withheld it. After a day without food, the neighbors lunged at the bags, ravenous.

Zhang Yi watched them devour the food without saying a word. Today might involve a fierce battle, and these cannon fodder might not survive. He wasn't being kind by feeding them one last meal; he needed them to be strong enough to fight for him.

Once they had eaten, Zhang Yi addressed them.

"Today's task is simple. I'll be negotiating with the other building leaders."

"We aim for peaceful communication, with little chance of a violent conflict. Your job is to stand guard and maintain order."

"If the negotiations succeed, you'll no longer live in fear and can return to a normal life."

"So, stay vigilant and don't let anyone disrupt the negotiations. Understood?"

Zhang Yi painted a promising picture of returning to a normal life.

Hearing the words "normal life," the neighbors were moved to tears. Some squatted down and cried, overwhelmed by memories of their previous harmonious life and the harsh reality of the past month.

One neighbor asked, "Zhang Yi, is it true? Can we go back to the way things were?"

"Yes!" Zhang Yi nodded confidently, his gaze unwavering.

"If we conclude these negotiations successfully and resolve the food issue, there will be no more bloodshed."

"So, for the sake of a brighter future, give it your all today!"

The neighbors were motivated, vowing to follow Zhang Yi's lead in the hope of a better future.

Chapter 113: Does Having More People Make You Great?

After the neighbors had eaten, Stockholm syndrome made them feel grateful to Zhang Yi. When he mentioned the possibility of returning to normal life without constant fear, their spirits were immediately lifted.

"If that's the case, let's do it!"

"I'm sick of this life. If I can return to a normal life, I'm willing to risk my life!"

Seeing their morale boosted, Zhang Yi slowly stood up from his chair.

"Alright, let's assign tasks to everyone."

They were about to face the ruthless individuals from the other 29 buildings. To ensure Zhang Yi's safety, preparations had to be thorough— even if everyone else had to die, they needed to buy enough time for him to return to his safe house.

Aside from Zhang Yi and Uncle You, there were 28 usable people on site. Zhang Yi instructed Li Chengbin and Jiang Lei to lead 18 people to guard the west entrance of the building. The entrance was booby-trapped, leaving only a narrow passage for one person at a time, surrounded by various appliances and equipment.

If anyone attacked, they would have to enter one by one, essentially walking into a death trap. A full-frontal assault would require removing the obstacles, which would take a considerable amount of time.

Even if the other 29 buildings launched a sudden attack during the negotiations, Zhang Yi could use the delay to kill everyone on site and leave calmly.

Uncle You was assigned to maintain order on the 13th floor with 10 people. Zhang Yi's remaining manpower mainly served as a façade. Even if 29 people came, Zhang Yi could kill them all in such an open space.

Everything was going according to his plan.

After setting up, Zhang Yi waited for their arrival. The agreed time was 2:30 PM, but given the urgency, people began emerging from other buildings after 2 PM.

It looked like a swarm of ants coming out of an anthill.

Black shadows dotted the snowy landscape, and the number of people kept increasing—there were at least five or six hundred, and the number was still growing! The central area of the community was packed, with almost no empty space.

"Playing tricks with me, huh?" Zhang Yi sneered, pulling out his phone to send a message in the building leader group chat.

"Have everyone back off. If you don't, don't bother coming today."

After sending the message, he pocketed his phone and took out a sniper rifle, hiding it under a table by his feet.

He shouted out the window, "Uncle You!"

Uncle You, holding a thick crowbar, entered. "Zhang Yi, what are your orders?"

Zhang Yi said, "There are too many people. I'm afraid the boys can't hold the line. Go assist them! Don't worry, I'll provide fire support from here."

Uncle You glanced outside, his pupils shrinking, but he nodded firmly. "Got it, I'll handle it!"

Even after Zhang Yi's message, the crowd didn't stop. They halted five meters from Building 25, blocking it so densely that the light was dimmed. Li Chengbin and Jiang Lei felt chills down their spines. If the crowd charged, even with the terrain advantage, they could only delay for a short time.

"How do we stop so many people?"

"They said they were coming to negotiate, but this looks more like an invasion!"

"We're doomed!"

The guards at the west entrance felt a cold chill in their hearts, unsure how to respond.

A calm voice came from the stairs. "Why the panic? If they wanted to fight, they would have already charged."

Uncle You, holding a crowbar, calmly walked down. His presence reassured the others, knowing his combat prowess.

Li Chengbin frowned, "Uncle You, there are too many people! Did the entire community come? How do we fight?"

The others looked at Uncle You with fearful eyes, seeking guidance.

Uncle You reassured them, "No need to worry. Their target isn't you, but Zhang Yi, to pressure him in negotiations."

"And think about it, what do you have that they want?"

His explanation calmed the group. Realizing they had nothing of value, they felt less threatened. The real target was Zhang Yi, not them.

For the first time, they felt grateful for their insignificance.

Suddenly, the crowd parted, and five people emerged, flanked by subordinates. They were Huang Tianfang from Building 26's Tianhe Gang, Wang Qiang from Building 21's Wolf Gang, Li Jian from Building 18's Harmony Home, Chen Lingyu from Building 9, and Zhang Yunan from Building 5.

They approached Building 25 with confident expressions, especially Wang Qiang, the 22-year-old street punk, feeling invincible backed by a thousand men. Facing Zhang Yi seemed trivial.

"We're sure to win this negotiation!" Wang Qiang said smugly.

Huang Tianfang's sallow face twisted into a triumphant grin. "Zhang Yi is probably wetting his pants now. He has no choice but to comply with our demands."

With a thousand against thirty, they couldn't imagine losing. To them, Zhang Yi was just a small obstacle.

Li Jian adjusted his glasses, his demeanor calm yet proud. Organizing such a large group was a feat he had never imagined.

Chen Lingyu, arms crossed, said haughtily, "Stop dawdling in the cold. Let's go in and tell Zhang Yi our terms. He has no choice but to accept."

Chapter 114: Fire in the Hole!

The five representatives from the other buildings looked at each other before Huang Tianfang shouted loudly, "Where is Zhang Yi? We're here to negotiate!"

Uncle You, carrying a crowbar, walked over. The scene reminded him of his days in the military, making him feel twenty years younger with his blood boiling with excitement. Fearlessly, he looked at the five building leaders and said, "Our boss is upstairs waiting for you. What, didn't the 29 of you agree to come together?"

Li Jian adjusted his glasses, maintaining his polite and humble smile. "We discussed it yesterday and decided it wasn't suitable for everyone to come. So we selected the five most capable among us to represent the rest."

They had their concerns too, fearing Zhang Yi might take the opportunity to eliminate all the leaders in one fell swoop. After lengthy discussions, they decided to send the five most influential leaders to negotiate with Zhang Yi.

Uncle You, following Zhang Yi's instructions, frowned slightly and said, "Fine, come in. But only the five of you, no one else."

"And for safety's sake, if you have any weapons, it's best to put them away. It would be unpleasant if we had to search you."

This demand changed their expressions. Chen Lingyu's eyebrows shot up as she angrily exclaimed, "A body search? What does Zhang Yi mean by this? Is this his attitude?"

Wang Qiang laughed maniacally, drawing a machete and pointing it at Uncle You. "Zhang Yi must have a death wish to be making demands at a time like this! Are you people really not afraid of dying?"

Huang Tianfang's cold smile deepened. "Is Zhang Yi blind? Can't he see the situation here? With just a few dozen of you, we could drown you in our spit!"

Uncle You didn't waste words, pulling out his phone. He had been in constant contact with Zhang Yi to keep him updated on the situation below. Hearing the arrogance in their voices, Zhang Yi laughed, "I understand. Wait a moment."

He realized he needed to curb their arrogance. These guys needed to understand that having more people didn't always mean things would go their way.

Zhang Yi walked to the window and opened it, letting the cold wind rush in. He glanced down, seeing the crowd below. Retrieving a grenade from his alternate space, he swiftly pulled the pin, as he had learned from online tutorials, and threw it into the crowd.

Those at the back were watching the scene unfold. Although their numbers were large, most were just there to make up the numbers. They didn't take the situation seriously, believing that with so many people, someone would be forced to provide them with food, clothing, and other supplies for free. They chatted happily, dreaming of an easy future.

Suddenly, they heard a whistling sound and instinctively looked up to see something falling.

"What's that?" someone asked, thinking it was just a thrown stone, paying it no mind as it was still far away.

Before they could react, the grenade hit the ground.

"Boom!!!"

The explosion sent flames skyward. Seven or eight people near the blast were immediately blown apart, with blood and shattered limbs flying alongside the snow.

"Ah!!!"

The deafening explosion triggered a wave of panic and screams. One grenade had instantly killed seven or eight people, with two at the center torn to shreds by shrapnel. The blast and shrapnel injured ten more, leaving them bleeding heavily. In this environment, they were as good as dead.

The sudden explosion shocked everyone. Ordinary people rarely encountered grenades in their lifetime. Even in the apocalypse, they hadn't imagined being attacked by grenades.

Chaos ensued. Despite the large crowd, most were there to make up numbers, and they were completely disorganized. In the panic, they trampled over each other trying to escape. The building leaders turned pale, trying to calm the chaos.

"Don't panic! Don't panic!" they shouted, trying to assert control. But this was no disciplined army. Even their most loyal followers were terrified, hugging the ground or huddling together.

Just then, Uncle You's phone rang with a mocking voice. "Does having more people make you great?"

Wang Qiang and the others were stunned. The grenade had come from Zhang Yi! Where did he get a grenade? Why did he have one? Even Uncle You and Li Chengbin were shocked, realizing what had happened only after hearing Zhang Yi's voice. A wave of relief washed over them.

Uncle You, still in shock, cleared his throat and addressed Wang Qiang and the others. "Any objections now?"

They were too frightened to speak, exchanging looks that revealed how deeply they had underestimated Zhang Yi. Having guns was one thing, but pulling out a sniper rifle was another. Now, even grenades?

Facing Zhang Yi with just sticks and knives seemed impossible now.

With a somber face, Wang Qiang said, "We came to negotiate. No need for this kind of aggression."

Zhang Yi's voice dripped with contempt, "Do you need over a thousand people for a negotiation? I found them annoying, so I helped clear them out."

Looking at his watch, Zhang Yi said, "Oh, it's almost 2:30. You have five minutes. If you're not here by then, there's no need to negotiate. Let's fight instead!"

"Fight?" they thought, realizing they were outmatched.

Wang Qiang and the others broke into a cold sweat. Chen Lingyu clenched her legs, biting her lip in pain. She had wet herself when the grenade exploded but couldn't let anyone know.

"Please, we came in good faith to cooperate. Just wait, we're coming up!" Li Jian said urgently. He walked up to Uncle You, "Can you tell us where Zhang Yi is?"

With a slightly smug expression, Uncle You replied, "13th floor!"

That meant climbing nine floors, which would leave them breathless.

Without delay, they dropped their weapons and rushed up the stairs.

Chapter 115: Let's Go Plant Corn

From the window on the 13th floor, Zhang Yi saw the thousand-plus neighborhood residents scattering in panic, and he couldn't help but gasp. This was his first time using a grenade. To be honest, he hadn't expected it to have such a powerful effect. Maybe it was because he had watched too many TV shows where heroes shrugged off grenades and other explosives without a scratch. But in reality, modern firearms' lethality to ordinary people was unimaginable!

With just one grenade, Zhang Yi had turned over a thousand people into terrified mice, directly and indirectly killing nearly twenty. Initially, he had planned to throw more grenades, but after the first explosion, the rest of the people scattered like birds and beasts. Continuing to throw grenades wouldn't have been as effective. Seeing how useless they were, Zhang Yi didn't bother wasting his grenades. After all, he only had twenty boxes of grenades and needed to use them sparingly.

He sat in his chair, waiting for Wang Qiang, Huang Tianfang, and the others to arrive. After a few minutes, the winded individuals finally reached him. In such cold weather, climbing nine floors in one go was beyond most people's stamina. Only the construction worker Huang Tianfang and Zhang Yunan, the leader of Building 5, managed slightly better. Zhang Yi knew Zhang Yunan ran a boxing gym and was skilled in martial arts, but it didn't matter to him. After all, he had a gun. Beyond seven steps, the gun was faster; within seven steps, it was both fast and accurate!

"Is it just you guys?" Zhang Yi asked in a flat tone.

Seeing so few people, Zhang Yi felt a bit disappointed. If he couldn't capture all the building leaders in one go, he'd have to resort to his backup plan.

After catching their breath, the previous arrogance of Wang Qiang and the others had mostly vanished. Facing someone who could casually toss a grenade, what were they in comparison?

Li Jian, still catching his breath, said, "Yes, we are... the representatives!"

"Oh." Zhang Yi responded indifferently, "Then let's talk."

Wang Qiang and the others, having caught their breath, found places to sit down but kept their distance from Zhang Yi. Everyone knew he was armed.

Li Jian, as usual, took the lead. Looking at Zhang Yi seriously, he began, "Zhang Yi, you know the situation is difficult. Everyone is short on food and clothing, and many people are starving or freezing to death."

"I've even heard that some buildings have started resorting to cannibalism!"

"If this continues, none of us will survive."

"So I hope you understand, we aren't targeting you specifically. We just want to survive, which is why we have to negotiate with you in this way."

Li Jian's tone was much more polite than before. Without the grenade, his approach would have been very different.

However, Zhang Yi remained unmoved. "Don't try to play the emotional card with me. Do you think that works now?"

"Let me hear your conditions first."

From the outset, Zhang Yi had dominated the conversation. Even though they tried to maintain a composed front, the fact that they had just climbed nine floors meant they were physically at a disadvantage. This was all part of Zhang Yi's calculation!

The leaders exchanged glances. Wang Qiang nodded at Li Jian, signaling him to speak.

Knowing that negotiation was their only option now, Li Jian frowned, thought for a moment, and slowly began, "What we want are essential supplies."

"First, we need food, and we need your help to gather it from outside."

"Second, we need materials for warmth, such as clothes and blankets."

At this point, Li Jian paused, and the others stared intently at him. Reluctantly, he continued, "If our cooperation goes well, we can even assist you in gathering supplies. If we can find more materials together, it would benefit everyone."

After finishing, Li Jian felt he had spoken well and asked Zhang Yi, "Mr. Zhang, what do you think?"

No matter what Li Jian said, it always sounded pleasant. However, Zhang Yi wasn't naive and understood the underlying meaning of his words.

Language is an art. Even with the same demands, the way they were phrased made all the difference. Zhang Yi quickly grasped the implications and sneered.

"I get what you're saying. You want me to help you gather food and supplies without any limit."

"And you also want to use my snowmobile, correct?"

Li Jian tried to explain further, but Zhang Yi's expression darkened. Without another word, he pulled out his gun and slammed it on the table.

The five leaders instinctively tried to escape, but Uncle You and his men had already blocked the door.

Wang Qiang, trying to appear fierce, shouted, "What do you mean by this, Zhang Yi? I'm telling you, even if you kill us, the whole neighborhood won't spare you!"

Li Jian tried to calm the situation, "Mr. Zhang, don't get excited. We can talk this through!"

Zhang Yi, however, smiled faintly. "Why are you so nervous? I just find this handgun a bit cumbersome and wanted to air it out. Don't be so jumpy! Come, let's continue."

The five leaders, faces pale, reluctantly sat back down.

Zhang Yi continued, "First, let me tell you that I can't agree to your demands!"

They tried to interject, but Zhang Yi raised his hand to stop them.

"Don't rush, let me finish."

"You're asking me to take care of the entire neighborhood? That's a joke. No one can do that."

"Thirty buildings, over a thousand people's supplies—it would be exhausting just to gather that much each day!"

"The key point is, as far as I know, none of you are so kind-hearted that you'd worry about your neighbors starving while you're barely getting by yourselves."

Zhang Yi's tone was sarcastic as he glanced at the five leaders. They looked at each other, remaining silent. Only Li Jian seemed deep in thought, weighing the pros and cons.

His building, Harmony Home, survived at the highest rate because it shared resources equally and avoided internal conflict. But if they had to divide limited supplies among so many, their harmonious setup would collapse into chaos.

Seeing no objections, Zhang Yi said, "Now, let me tell you my conditions for cooperation. Whether you accept them or not, they won't change. Otherwise, we fight!"

The leaders' expressions were mixed. Despite their fear of Zhang Yi's strength, they knew he could easily overpower any single group or even multiple groups working together.

Zhang Yi raised one finger, "First, I can provide you with supplies, mainly food. But the quantity is limited—I'll supply enough for ten people per building."

"Who gets the food and how it's distributed is up to you. That's your internal matter."

"This means I'll be supporting over 300 people's worth of supplies daily, which is my limit."

As Zhang Yi spoke, the five leaders fell silent, deep in thought. They hadn't expected Zhang Yi to agree to supply the entire neighborhood. Their primary concern was ensuring their own factions' survival.

"Ten people's worth of supplies is too little," Chen Lingyu protested first. "There are 76 people in our building. I have over 20 employees under me. How do we divide such a small amount?"

Zhang Yi gave her a cold look. "So, no deal then?"

His tone carried a deadly threat, and Chen Lingyu remembered his earlier statement—if negotiations failed, they would fight.

Huang Tianfang quickly intervened, "Wait! Chen Lingyu, you're not speaking for all of us!"

"I think the supply amount can still be negotiated."

Huang Tianfang was eager to agree, knowing that with Zhang Yi's firepower, resisting was futile. His own gang's numbers had dwindled significantly, so ten people's worth of supplies was more than enough for him.

Wang Qiang, calculating, also thought ten was too few but kept quiet for now, considering other options.

Zhang Yi's expression remained cold, "Providing for 300 people daily isn't a small task. Do you think that's easy?"

Just this single issue had already exposed cracks in their alliance. Those with more people under them needed more supplies, while those with fewer were more willing to agree.

Li Jian, deeply troubled, knew that with only ten portions of supplies for over eighty people, his leadership would collapse into chaos and infighting.

After some thought, Li Jian said, "Let us consider this further. What are your other conditions?"

Zhang Yi smiled, "Fine. Next, regarding the supplies I'll provide, there's a cost."

He placed his right hand on the table, inches from his gun, tapping lightly.

"Since we need to sustain 300 people, we must develop self-sufficiency."

"Relying solely on scavenging isn't sustainable. Who knows how long this snow will last?"

"So, we must start farming!"

With a flourish, Zhang Yi produced a bag of corn seeds and tossed it in front of them.

"While scavenging, I found a batch of seeds. I think we should plant crops to ensure a stable food supply."

Jokingly, Zhang Yi added, "Like our ancestors, food should come from hard work!"

Chapter 116: Teammates from Hell

Li Jian and the other four building leaders exchanged baffled looks, unsure of what Zhang Yi was up to.

"Planting crops?" Huang Tianfang scoffed, his displeasure evident. "Have you ever farmed before? In this freezing weather, the crops will all die."

Zhang Yi calmly replied, "Hey, you can't say that! Back in Siberia, didn't they promote corn farming extensively?"

"If you think corn won't work, I have other seeds: potatoes, wheat. One of them is bound to work."

Li Jian and the others were speechless.

"Zhang Yi, this isn't a joke. How cold do you think it is outside? And where would you plant them in this icy snow?" Li Jian asked incredulously.

Zhang Yi, however, remained serious. "What does the cold matter? Haven't we survived this long?"

"This snow disaster could last indefinitely. You might have noticed that the higher-ups have all vanished, preparing for a long-term situation."

"This suggests the apocalypse will continue for quite some time. If we don't start growing crops, our food will soon run out, and we'll all die."

"As for where to plant them, that's easy." Zhang Yi pointed outside the window. "Isn't there land everywhere? We just need to clear the snow, and there's land beneath!"

"To combat the cold, we can use underground planting methods. Although it's tough, we have to try."

"Only by maintaining a sustainable ecosystem can we survive this apocalypse!"

Among the five leaders, Huang Tianfang and Li Jian seemed interested.

Huang Tianfang had farming experience, and solving food issues through agriculture would give him an advantage over the city folks. Li Jian, seeing the potential labor force among his building's many residents, realized that transitioning to an agricultural model could boost his influence in the community.

Wang Qiang, skeptical, eyed Zhang Yi. Farming wasn't something he'd ever do, but as the boss of Building 21, he could easily make others do the work.

Li Jian raised a pertinent question. "If we're going to start farming, we need sufficient food. Three hundred portions won't be enough."

Zhang Yi's lips curled into a smile. "I don't need three hundred people. Three hundred is already too many."

He spread his hands. "Alright, let's discuss my second condition."

"Each building must send people to clear the fields daily. I need to see your progress."

"After all, I'm not working hard to find food just to feed freeloaders!"

Zhang Yi tapped his fingers on the table, watching the leaders mentally calculate their next moves.

"These are my two conditions. Agree to them, and I'll provide supplies."

"And if you accept, the quality of the food will be guaranteed. In the future, I might even provide cigarettes, alcohol, clothes, and medical supplies!"

This promise caused a stir.

Wang Qiang shot up from his chair. "You can get cigarettes??"

His eyes were filled with longing.

Huang Tianfang's lips trembled with excitement. "Do you have any cigarettes? Give me one to try! I haven't smoked in over half a month; I'm going crazy!"

Both men were heavy smokers, and going without cigarettes for more than two weeks was driving them mad. Their recent irritability was partly due to withdrawal.

Zhang Yi grinned, pulling out a pack of cigarettes and tossing one to each of them.

The two men greedily grabbed the cigarettes and rushed to light them up.

"Got a light?" Wang Qiang asked urgently.

"Here, quickly!" Huang Tianfang replied.

They fumbled to light their cigarettes, deeply inhaling the smoke, and exhaling with expressions of pure bliss. They could forgo meals, but not smoking was unbearable.

Zhang Yi's smile widened.

"So, do you agree to my terms now?"

Chen Lingyu, meanwhile, was too preoccupied with her wet pants to care, shivering in silence. Zhang Yunan, a muscle-bound, simple-minded man, was too baffled by the farming conditions to speak up.

Li Jian, hoping to negotiate further, was abruptly interrupted by Wang Qiang.

"As long as you can guarantee my cigarette supply, I'll agree to any conditions!" Wang Qiang demanded. "But make sure I get at least two packs a day!"

Huang Tianfang echoed, "Same for me."

Zhang Yi replied, "I can only give you one pack a day each. Any more, and I can't find enough."

Both men quickly agreed. "Deal! Just make sure we get our daily pack!"

Zhang Yi spread his hands, "So, we're in agreement, right?"

Wang Qiang and Huang Tianfang, easily swayed by their addiction, had no objections. Li Jian, however, remained stone-faced, silently cursing them for their betrayal.

Seeing the internal conflict, Zhang Yi's grin widened. "Until you give me a clear answer, nothing is official. If you want your cigarettes, you'll have to confirm your agreement first."

Wang Qiang, lost in his smoky haze, impatiently turned to Li Jian and the others. "What are you waiting for? We got what we wanted. Let's agree and be done with it!"

Li Jian protested, "But this is—"

Wang Qiang snapped, "Enough! I said we agree. Stop wasting time. I hate long-winded people!"

Huang Tianfang, blowing out a smoke ring, added, "We should be reasonable. Zhang Yi's been accommodating. We should understand his position too."

Li Jian, face dark, silently cursed Wang Qiang and Huang Tianfang. These two idiots had already caused infighting right in front of Zhang Yi!

Chapter 117: The Power of the Sniper Rifle

Wang Qiang and Huang Tianfang, driven by their addiction to cigarettes, were eager to agree to Zhang Yi's conditions just to secure a daily pack. Meanwhile, Chen Lingyu, preoccupied with her own discomfort, was barely able to focus.

Li Jian, forced to speak up, said, "These conditions are indeed harsh. We can't make such decisions alone. Otherwise, the other buildings won't agree."

Zhang Yunan, the simple-minded leader of Building 5, followed suit. "Yeah, we can't decide on this so easily. We need to discuss it further."

Zhang Yi's expression turned cold, and his voice followed suit. "Discuss further? Are you messing with me? If the five of you can't decide for the whole neighborhood, why did you come here as representatives to negotiate?"

Outside, Uncle You and his men tightened their grip on their weapons and moved closer to the door, their faces stern and cold.

Wang Qiang and the others felt a chill run down their spines. They realized that Zhang Yi could easily kill them if he wanted to—after all, he had a gun, and they had brought nothing.

Wang Qiang quickly intervened, "Wait, who said we can't decide? We've already agreed that the five of us would make the decisions. Do you think the others won't listen?"

"Honestly, Zhang Yi's conditions are acceptable," he added, exposing his eagerness and lack of negotiation skills. As a young street punk, he lacked the experience for such critical talks.

Li Jian and Chen Lingyu were furious at Wang Qiang's recklessness. But once the words were out, they couldn't be taken back. Huang Tianfang also supported Zhang Yi's conditions, seeing it as a beneficial arrangement.

"Everyone should be reasonable. Zhang Yi has his own difficulties. We shouldn't push too hard," Huang Tianfang said, trying to gain Zhang Yi's favor. "Zhang Yi, I agree to your terms!"

Wang Qiang followed suit, "Me too!"

Zhang Yunan, still unsure what to say, just kept frowning and pretending to think deeply.

Only Li Jian and Chen Lingyu had some sense, but Chen Lingyu, distracted by her own situation, couldn't contribute effectively. Li Jian was left alone, struggling to maintain a cohesive front.

Zhang Yi watched them with interest while keeping an eye on the situation outside. Suddenly, he noticed something alarming. The crowd he had dispersed with a grenade was regrouping and quietly moving towards Building 25.

Zhang Yi's lips curled into a sneer. "Taking advantage of the negotiations to launch a surprise attack? Classic move."

He turned to the five leaders and asked, "Did you arrange for people to attack while we're negotiating?"

Wang Qiang and the others were bewildered. Wang Qiang laughed dismissively, "What are you talking about? We're all here. Who would attack and risk their own lives?"

Zhang Yi remained indifferent. "I agree, but you'd better investigate when you get back."

He suspected the attackers weren't acting on the leaders' orders. Either other leaders had decided to sacrifice these five to distract Zhang Yi, or their own men were attempting a power grab, disregarding their leaders' lives.

Li Jian's face turned pale as he realized the situation. "They've started the attack!"

Wang Qiang, Huang Tianfang, Chen Lingyu, and Zhang Yunan were shocked. "Those idiots! Who told them to do this?"

Zhang Yi's smile remained cold. He suddenly reached down and grabbed his black sniper rifle.

"Everyone, sit down!!" Zhang Yi shouted, aiming the black barrel at the five leaders.

Uncle You and his men quickly sealed off all exits. The sight of the sniper rifle left the five leaders terrified.

"Zhang Yi, we swear it wasn't us! Please don't shoot!" Wang Qiang pleaded, sweating profusely.

Chen Lingyu, already struggling, collapsed to the floor, her pants even wetter.

Ignoring them, Zhang Yi turned and set up his sniper rifle at the window. Below, the attackers were gathering at the temporary main entrance, ready to storm Building 25.

Zhang Yi aimed at a tall figure in the crowd and pulled the trigger.

"Bang!"

The deafening sound echoed through the community as the head of the leader from Building 11 exploded, splattering the snow with red and white.

The attackers froze in shock.

"Bang!"

Another shot, another head exploded.

Finally, the attackers realized what was happening and either fled or dropped to the ground in panic.

Zhang Yi, his eyes cold, methodically targeted those lying on the ground.

"Think you're smart? Lying down like that? I'll kill you all!"

The booming sound of the sniper rifle echoed through the community, each shot sending a chilling message.

In the negotiation room, the five leaders were petrified, realizing the true terror of Zhang Yi.

Chapter 118: Zhang Yi's Kindness Can Never Be Repaid

Zhang Yi killed over a dozen people in one breath.

"Have you ever played that game where you smash tadpoles?" he asked.

In spring, there are many tadpoles in small streams, swimming in groups. When you throw a stone into the water, the tadpoles scatter instantly. It's quite interesting.

When Zhang Yi killed people, it felt similar to smashing tadpoles. Seeing people clustered together, he would pick off the most conspicuous ones. The rest would be scared out of their wits and flee in panic.

The remaining residents watched in horror as the people beside them died. Blood and brain matter from their neighbors splattered onto them. This kind of deterrent was enormous, leaving them with no courage to resist for the foreseeable future.

Seeing them so terrified, Zhang Yi slowly put away his sniper rifle. He turned back to face the five stunned leaders.

"Have you made up your minds?" he asked calmly.

Even the usually vicious Wang Qiang and Huang Tianfang felt their legs trembling at this moment. It was human nature to fear firearms.

Wang Qiang gulped and raised his hand. "I agree to your two conditions."

Huang Tianfang followed suit, "I have no objections either!"

Zhang Yunan and Chen Lingyu, too stunned to speak, simply raised their hands to indicate their agreement.

Seeing the others capitulate, Li Jian bitterly raised his right hand. "I agree too."

A slight smile played on Zhang Yi's lips.

"Good. Starting today, you'll begin working. Tomorrow afternoon, I'll notify you to collect supplies."

"And be diligent! I'll be watching you. Don't try any tricks."

They all nodded in agreement.

Zhang Yi waved them off. "You may leave."

Li Jian, disheartened, was the first to leave the negotiation room, followed by Zhang Yunan. Chen Lingyu, trembling and almost unable to stand, walked out with an odd gait.

Wang Qiang and Huang Tianfang lingered, hesitant to leave. "Zhang... Zhang Yi, could you give me that pack of cigarettes? After all, we're comrades now!" Wang Qiang pointed at the pack in Zhang Yi's hand, eyes full of longing.

Huang Tianfang, afraid of missing out, quickly added, "Wang Qiang, don't think you can hog it all! Zhang Yi, I haven't had a cigarette in ages. Could you give it to me?"

Zhang Yi glanced at them, picked up the half-empty pack, and tossed it to the floor. "Split it yourselves."

The two men lunged at the pack like wild dogs, wrestling each other on the ground.

"Little brat, how dare you grab from me!"

"Old man, let go! Give it here!"

In the end, the pack was torn apart, each managing to grab a few cigarettes before glaring at each other and leaving.

The crisis at Building 25 was temporarily resolved. Zhang Yi put away his sniper rifle and sat back in his chair, his expression serene. Today's outcome wasn't the best he had hoped for, which was to kill all 29 building leaders in one fell swoop. However, this outcome wasn't bad either. Outwardly, he had reached an agreement with them, but he planned to incite them to destroy each other and then strike at the opportune moment.

Zhang Yi wasn't in a hurry. With ample supplies and a well-protected living environment, he held the advantage of time.

After the five building leaders left, the residents of Building 25 breathed a sigh of relief and hurried over to ask Zhang Yi about the meeting's outcome.

Under his armed deterrence, Zhang Yi explained that they had compromised and agreed to provide food for 300 people in exchange for peace. Moreover, everyone needed to participate in labor to develop land for sustainable agriculture.

The neighbors were stunned.

"Food for 300 people? Can we manage that?"

"And if we give them all the food, what about us?"

No one understood why Zhang Yi proposed such conditions without consulting them first.

Zhang Yi calmly explained, "If we don't reach this agreement, what do you suggest? Fight the entire neighborhood's thousand-odd people?"

He scoffed, "I don't mind. They can have the numbers, but I'm not afraid. Can you hold up?"

The neighbors exchanged awkward glances, unable to respond. Ninety-nine percent of Building 25's firepower was concentrated in Zhang Yi. With his superior firepower and almost impregnable fortress,

he could survive well alone. But what about them? They'd be killed and cooked as kebabs by the enraged community members.

Zhang Yi softened his tone, "Don't worry, I'll try my best to find food. I won't let you starve."

The neighbors looked up, their eyes filled with gratitude and disbelief, tears welling up.

"Zhang Yi, you..."

A woman choked, "You're truly... making me cry."

"Zhang Yi, you're taking the burden of all of Building 25 on your shoulders! We're so grateful!"

"Zhang Yi, we were right to trust you. You're a leader worthy of our respect!"

Moved to tears, the neighbors realized the pressure of finding food was solely on Zhang Yi.

Zhang Yi sighed softly, his tone gentle and sincere. "Stop crying. I know some of you had opinions about me and thought I was a bad person."

"But no matter what you think, I genuinely want everyone to live well. Not just me, but each and every one of you!"

Jiang Lei, wiping his tears, shouted, "Brother Zhang, we won't disappoint you! We'll always remember your kindness!"

The neighbors nodded and whispered among themselves.

"Looking back, Zhang Yi only killed those who deserved it. He never attacked anyone unprovoked."

"He was just defending himself. He's actually been good to us. Maybe we misunderstood him. He's truly a good person!"

"From now on, I'll fully support Zhang Yi and all his decisions!"

"Zhang Yi's kindness can never be repaid!"

Chapter 119: An Open Strategy

Zhang Yi's emotional speech moved the neighbors to tears, sending them back to work with renewed determination.

Only Uncle You remained behind. He approached Zhang Yi, scrutinizing him as if seeing him for the first time.

"Why are you looking at me like that? Do I have something on my face?" Zhang Yi asked with a smile.

Uncle You shook his head, embarrassed. "No, it's just that you seem different today, not quite like your usual self."

Zhang Yi knew what Uncle You was thinking. With a smile on his lips and half-closed eyes, he asked, "Are you wondering why I made that cooperation agreement with them?"

Uncle You nodded. "Yes, it doesn't seem like your usual style to compromise. Providing food for 300 people daily is a lot of work! With just your snowmobile, how many supermarkets would you need to raid to feed that many mouths?"

Zhang Yi took his time answering. He glanced outside, then pointed. "Is there anyone out there?"

Uncle You immediately went to check, returning after confirming no one was around. "No, no one's there."

Zhang Yi nodded. Some words had to be kept secret; otherwise, his recent efforts to deceive the neighbors would be wasted.

He explained, "Cooperating with them is just a temporary measure. I initially planned to gather all the building leaders here and kill them all. Without leaders, the buildings would fall into chaos, giving me a chance to destroy them one by one."

"But today, they only sent five people. Even though they are the most powerful leaders, killing them wouldn't solve the problem. The others have already formed an alliance."

"So, I had to hold back my urge to kill, appearing weak and making them think I was too scared to take on all 29 buildings. That's why I seemed to compromise."

Uncle You's eyes lit up. "That makes sense! I knew your behavior earlier wasn't like you!"

Zhang Yi felt relieved that Uncle You understood. "Did you get all that?"

Uncle You shook his head, confused. "Not really, but it sounds very reasonable."

Zhang Yi sighed deeply. "Alright, to put it simply, I'm lulling them into a false sense of security. Once they show a weakness, I'll take them down."

"And I've also set two big traps for them!" Zhang Yi's lips curled into a devilish smile.

Uncle You, intrigued, urged, "Tell me about these traps!"

Zhang Yi looked outside again. "Go check if there's anyone there."

Uncle You, thinking he saw someone, rushed out to check again, finding no one. Confused, he returned. "I didn't see anyone!"

Zhang Yi shrugged. "Neither did I. Just double-checking. What if someone approached while we were talking?"

Uncle You was speechless.

Clearing his throat, Zhang Yi continued, "First, the limited supply of resources—each building gets only ten portions."

"That won't be enough, and as the saying goes, it's not the scarcity that's the problem, but the uneven distribution. When I distribute food, everyone will see it."

"But once the building leaders take the food back, they won't distribute it to everyone. What do you think will happen?"

Uncle You quickly responded, "They'll have internal strife!"

"Exactly! Internal strife!" Zhang Yi nodded. "Those who don't get food will fall from hope back into deep despair, which is worse than death!"

"Before, everyone was starving, so it was fair. Even if they died first, others wouldn't escape freezing or starving to death."

"But now, knowing that ten people per building can get stable food, how will their mentality change?"

After a moment of thought, Uncle You felt a chill. This manipulation was too cruel! Giving hope only to snatch it away, forcing everyone to face death equally but making some survive at the expense of others. This feeling of being trampled on, discriminated against, and treated unfairly would drive people mad.

Looking out the window as the five leaders left, Zhang Yi saw the other building residents gradually dispersing.

Soon, each building would face brutal internal conflict and fighting.

"Those in utter despair forget their fear of death and will drag someone down with them before dying!"

"Things will get interesting then," Zhang Yi said with a smile.

Uncle You admired Zhang Yi's calm demeanor, both respecting and fearing him. He felt fortunate not to be on Zhang Yi's bad side.

"Zhang Yi, you're incredibly smart and terrifying!" Uncle You remarked.

Zhang Yi shook his head, maintaining his calm gaze. "No, I have some intelligence, but I don't see myself as a genius manipulator."

"The current situation is because I'm more composed than them."

"I have enough food and warm clothes, I sleep well, and I don't worry about food or temperature."

"I have strong firepower, giving me confidence to face them head-on. My fortress is strong, and I'm not afraid of their threats."

"When you have these conditions, you don't fear or panic. They, on the other hand, are constantly cautious, their intelligence clouded."

Zhang Yi then joked, "Even a world champion boxer, after starving for thirty days, would lose to me in the ring. Don't you think?"

Uncle You was puzzled. "Starve for thirty days? That person would be dead!"

Zhang Yi replied confidently, "Exactly! A dead person can't beat me!"

Initially thinking it was a clever retort, Uncle You reconsidered and found it to be a profound truth.

Chapter 120: The Strategy of Wearing Down the Enemy

Zhang Yi spoke to Uncle You, "What I'm using isn't a scheme, it's an open strategy."

"Not everyone among that group is an idiot. People like Li Jian and Chen Lingyu are very cunning, always thinking ahead."

"They must have guessed my intention is to weaken their strength."

"But what can they do about it? I've already demonstrated my formidable strength and used substantial benefits to attract the fools among them."

"In a crowd of unruly people, the proportion of fools is much higher than that of smart ones. Li Jian and Chen Lingyu don't hold much sway and don't have enough power to convince everyone."

"Those who only see immediate benefits and cripple themselves are always the majority."

Zhang Yi couldn't help but sigh, "Even ancient emperors did such stupid things, let alone people in this little community of Tianhai."

Uncle You listened in awe. His level of education wasn't enough to fully grasp Zhang Yi's words, so he just looked at Zhang Yi with wise eyes. Scratching his head, he said, "What you're saying makes a lot of sense! Hehe... hehe."

He could only use a smile to cover his embarrassment. Then he changed the topic and asked, "But why do you want them to farm? In this cold weather, it's impossible to grow crops, right?"

Zhang Yi looked out the door. This time, Uncle You had learned his lesson and proactively checked the surroundings. "There's no one outside; you can speak freely," he said.

Zhang Yi smiled. "Some things are actually simple; don't overthink them."

"I'm having them farm just to intensify their conflicts and wear them down."

He spread his hands. "Right now, the only thing they can offer is their labor."

Uncle You pondered for a long time before saying, "So, this is a strategy to wear them down?"

"Precisely," Zhang Yi said, narrowing his eyes slightly. "Since I didn't kill all their leaders today, the next time we fight, there will be even more to kill. I need to weaken their combat power as much as possible."

Zhang Yi leaned closer to Uncle You, a serious look in his eyes. "None of these people can be trusted. The conflict between us is irreconcilable and will inevitably lead to a fight. So, we must not let our guard down."

"Also, keep everything I say to yourself!"

Uncle You, deeply impressed by Zhang Yi's wisdom, nodded slowly and firmly. "I understand! Zhang Yi, our whole family's hope for survival is pinned on you. I'll do whatever you say!"

Zhang Yi nodded with satisfaction. "Good. Let's stick to the plan and see how far they can go."

Zhang Yi had only shared part of the truth with Uncle You. In reality, he had more tricks up his sleeve that he didn't disclose. He already knew there were traitors in Building 25 colluding with people from other buildings. These traitors had previously tried to harm him and would certainly try again in the future, such as the ambush by the Wolf Gang in the snow.

Zhang Yi returned to his residence and checked on Zhou Ke'er through the surveillance camera. He had become stricter with her, locking her in her room whenever he went out, as he couldn't afford to risk his life, especially with the impending battle.

Despite the tight control, Zhou Ke'er adapted well. She was smart and knew what to do and what not to do. At least, she didn't challenge Zhang Yi's authority and obediently did whatever he asked, acknowledging that she was a maid and Zhang Yi was her master. The master's orders were absolute.

At that moment, Zhou Ke'er was practicing yoga in her room. She wore a pink tank top that highlighted her full figure and brown yoga pants that accentuated her perfect legs. Her graceful movements were both elegant and mesmerizing.

Zhang Yi walked to her door, took out the key, and unlocked it. Zhou Ke'er looked up, her forehead glistening with sweat, a lock of hair sticking to it, giving her a slightly alluring look.

"You're back!" Zhou Ke'er greeted him with genuine joy, bending her legs to stand up. Her eyes sparkled with a sincere smile. She knew Zhang Yi had been out for something important today, and seeing his relaxed expression, she assumed the negotiations had gone well.

She walked up to him, wrapped her hands around his neck, and eagerly asked, "How did the negotiations go?"

Her close proximity naturally pressed her ample chest against Zhang Yi, giving him a sensation described by a single phrase: "Any closer and he would explode."

Instead of feeling overwhelmed, Zhang Yi felt more invigorated. He hugged Zhou Ke'er tightly, kissed her passionately, and then led her to the couch.

"Here's what happened in the negotiations..." Zhang Yi told her everything. Maybe it didn't mean much, but sometimes, a man just wants to share his experiences with a woman.

"The next few days might be chaotic. Stay home and don't go anywhere," Zhang Yi warned, his tone becoming cold. "Soon, all the trouble will disappear."

Zhou Ke'er, nestled against Zhang Yi's chest, listened intently, not fully understanding as Zhang Yi only gave a brief overview without touching on the critical details. Nonetheless, she smiled happily, feeling cherished that Zhang Yi didn't want her to take any risks.

"Zhang Yi, you must be carrying a heavy burden, and I can't help much. Sometimes I feel quite useless," Zhou Ke'er said, a hint of guilt in her voice.

Zhang Yi looked at her, thinking, "I didn't buy insurance to get my money's worth but to have a safety net in case something goes wrong. I'd rather never need you, my primary doctor."

Blushing, Zhou Ke'er held Zhang Yi tightly. "But there are things I can do, like helping you relieve stress."