

## **Menu 235**

### Chapter 235: The Lobbyist

Jason frowned at the sight of the notes, all with identical handwriting.

But as the aroma of pastries wafted up from downstairs, Jason's frown instantly relaxed.

He stuffed the notes back into the paper bag, pulled open a drawer, and tossed it in.

As long as the female pastry chef did not have the scent of 'food' on her, she could be trusted.

Most people, sometimes, really are strange.

One you've spent a considerable amount of time with, another you've never met.

But just let the latter say a few bad words about the former, and the person involved will immediately lose judgment, becoming cautious and wary of the former, never considering the true nature of their time together.

Jason wasn't that kind of person.

He believed more in what he saw, heard, touched, and perceived.

Not some mysterious 'information'.

And also...

The pastries smelled so good!

Smelling the scent of the pastries, Jason quickened his cleanup pace.

After laying out the 'bed' as he had imagined, Jason headed straight downstairs.

"If you need to wash your hands, use the sink in the hallway; the one inside the store isn't for handwashing,"

the female pastry chef said, busy with her work, upon hearing the sound of Jason coming downstairs.

"Hmm,"

Jason grunted in response and walked towards the sink in the hallway.

He had no resentment toward the practice of not washing hands inside the pastry chef's store.

On the contrary, he appreciated this attitude,

It was respect for the food.

As Jason came out drying his hands, the aroma of the pastries became even more pronounced.

The scent of milk and sweetness was infused with a hint of walnut.

“Walnut cake?”

Jason guessed.

“Right, along with my special custard tarts...”

the female pastry chef replied, and then she suddenly realized that Jason’s attention wasn’t on that anymore.

The somewhat astounded pastry chef turned her head to find Jason looking out the door.

“Jason?”

the pastry chef asked tentatively.

“It’s nothing.”

“There’s a visitor.”

Jason waved his hand and smiled.

Smile?!

The pastry chef stared blankly at Jason’s smile.

It was the first time she had genuinely seen Jason smile.

It wasn’t a mere courtesy smile.

But one of heartfelt joy.

What had happened?

The pastry chef was puzzled, but not neglecting her duties, she stayed in front of the oven while watching Jason leave the shop.

There weren't many things that could make Jason happy,

but 'food' was definitely one of them.

Just now, within the pastry-scented shop, he had smelled a faint aroma of 'food'.

And it was coming straight in this direction, getting closer.

He didn't know the intentions of this 'food' yet,

but that didn't stop Jason from going out to investigate.

As he stepped outside,

Jason watched the approaching figure, frowning again.

He could clearly smell that the 'food's' scent was fading away, dissipating.

It wasn't 'food'!

But rather someone who had been in contact with 'food'!

Jason eyed the person who was getting closer.

Medium build.

Ordinary face.

The clothes looked expensive.

The way he walked, with even steps and eyes straight ahead, indicated a clear purpose.

His right hand subconsciously moved closer to his waist, where there was likely a weapon.

As Jason sized up the man, the man also caught sight of Jason.

The man first looked surprised, then offered a smile.

With that smile, his ordinary features suddenly took on a friendly countenance.

“Sure enough, Mr. Jason,”

“Your perception is as sharp as the rumors say.”

“I’m Griffin, a humble persuader,”

the man complimented Jason as he introduced himself.

Persuader?

Jason sized up the man once again.

He never thought he would come into contact with such a person.

Suddenly, Jason's heart skipped a beat.

He thought of a possibility.

Then, as he looked at the man who claimed to be a persuader once more, his gaze became sharp.

Griffin, on the receiving end of the stare, waved his hands repeatedly.

"Mr. Jason, please don't misunderstand,"

"I have no ill intentions, I'm just a humble persuader, I only bring my client's thoughts, and my job is to, as much as possible, persuade you."

"If successful, I'll receive a handsome reward."

"If I fail, it's no loss to me, after all..."

“Being able to take on this task is already doing a favor for my employer. Mr. Jason, you should know, sometimes, people like me have no choice.”

Griffin shrugged his shoulders with a look of helplessness.

Jason didn't say a word, just stared at him.

This made the man who claimed to be a persuader somewhat uncomfortable; he always felt like Jason's gaze was odd, as if looking at a dish.

“How about we talk in detail somewhere else?”

the other party suggested.

“Right here is fine,”

Jason insisted.

“With your intelligence, you surely know what I've come for.”

“Yes, it’s about the missing women.”

“I don’t know what my employer has done, I’m just responsible for persuading you to stop pursuing it.”

“For this, my employer is willing to give you \$2,000 as payment.”

As he said this, the man who claimed to be a persuader paused for a moment, displaying an even more amicable smile, and whispered, “Of course, if you agree, it’s also my success, and I’ll share thirty percent of my reward with you, and promise one free help, so you won’t have worked for nothing.”

The man who claimed to be a persuader didn’t stop speaking.

After providing ample benefits, he continued,

“I can’t reveal my employer’s identity.”

“But he is someone important.”

“In fact, Mr. Jason, with your smarts should understand, being able to keep things quiet with the diligent Edward investigating for so long, it means something.”

“I hope you won’t...”

Before he could finish, the man who claimed to be a persuader stopped.

Offering benefits as a bargaining chip, then following with threats, has always been the persuader’s surefire strategy.

Griffin was no exception.

The only difference was that he expanded the range of the tempting chip.

Offering the persuaded more.

That was one of the secrets to Griffin’s success.

Another secret was: thoroughly investigating the target of persuasion.

Just like this time, he had done his homework well before coming.

Jason, a veteran of the battlefield, had to leave the military due to post-traumatic stress disorder.

He had stayed at a veterans' hospital for treatment.

But it was ineffective.

Then, he sought treatment from the highly acclaimed Dr. Hannibal.

Unfortunately, he had to leave before the treatment was truly complete, due to lack of money.

And subsequently became homeless.

This time, he was involved in a special incident by chance.

So, to persuade him, money was all that was needed!

As for the accidental involvement in special events?

That was just a coincidence.

There surely wouldn't be much emotion involved.

At worst, just offer more money.

Griffin had seen such people more than once.

Therefore, he was very confident.

He could already picture Jason nodding in agreement.

In fact, the next moment, he saw Jason nodding.

Not only nodding, his nostrils flared slightly, and he even said a strange phrase,

"Tastes good."

Tastes good?

Griffin was puzzled, but that didn't stop him from praising the completion of the task; after all, compliments were free, and it didn't matter if he gave a few more.

“You see, I told you, you’re a smart man, here’s to a fruitful partnership—”

Bang!