

Menu 405

Chapter 405: Welcome to Ang City

Esther, who had just finished chanting, didn't straighten up. In a half-bow, he pulled out another list and handed it over to Jason—

"Mercenary, Horda, has appeared ten times in six years in incidents related to that guy; however, he seems to have played no role. The morning after I reported it, the person turned up at Ang City airport, almost certainly confirming his identity as one of that guy's undercover agents."

"Reporter, Kriek, has appeared six times in four years in incidents related to that guy. The noon after I reported it, the person turned up at Ang City airport, suspected to be one of that guy's undercover agents."

"Tourist, Will, has appeared four times in two years in incidents related to that guy. The night after I reported it, the person turned up at Ang City train station, suspected to be one of that guy's undercover agents."

There were a total of three names on the list.

Jason scanned the names and etched them into his memory.

However, Jason didn't take immediate action but instead questioned back.

"Can you confirm that it was that person who signed the order for Edmund's release and promotion?"

"Yes!"

Esther replied with certainty.

"Then... does that person understand Edmund?"

Jason continued to ask.

"Probably?"

"Otherwise, they wouldn't have signed such an order."

Esther spoke with uncertainty, then, the young man, whose life goal was to live a long, inactive life, suddenly realized something. His eyes widened as he looked at Jason, pointed at the list in his hand, and exclaimed, "You mean, this is a trap?"

"Hmm."

"Since the person understands Edmund, they would expect him to act this way—maybe your involvement has complicated the situation in Ang City, but if any of the three on the list were implicated, the person would connect them to Edmund. Then, after a few targeted probes, our layout could be mostly seen through by them."

Jason nodded in agreement.

Esther, on the other hand, began to sweat.

He had never thought about this.

His continuous successful plans had made him a bit proud, believing that others were just as he had played them perfectly.

Now Jason's words brought the young man back to reality.

How could anyone who made it to the higher-ups of 'Containment' be a fool?

They started laying out their strategy from the beginning when they chose the senior Edmund.

They knew Edmund's wisdom and kindness, as well as the influence Edmund had on those around him. If it had been just me, I'd be fixated on the three on the list right now, waiting for an opportunity to strike decisively!

Because... I trust Edmund's judgment!

And if I remained unmoved, that too would be what the other party expected.

Their three undercover agents would undoubtedly investigate deeply here, and there's no guarantee they wouldn't uncover a trace.

Killing the three undercover agents wouldn't work, and neither would sparing them.

What to do?

Anxious, Esther turned his gaze to Jason.

"The three undercover agents can't be touched."

"But... there is one obvious target!"

Jason said slowly.

"Who are you referring to?!"

Esther's eyes lit up.

"Yes, just as you're thinking."

"Dealing with an exposed enemy is always easier than dealing with one in hiding!"

Jason nodded again, and without waiting for Esther to speak again, he continued, "Undercover agents can only stay in the dark because that's the only way they hold power. Those that are exposed?"

Jason did not finish his sentence, but Esther understood.

"You mean in the dark, behind the three apparent 'undercover agents' that are actually decoys, the real 'undercover agent' is lurking!"

Esther's eyes lit up.

The young man began to think.

As he watched Esther ponder, Jason did not speak again. Instead, he looked at Aras, who had been staring at him since the conclusion of the "War Rune Breathing Technique".

"What's the matter?"

Jason asked.

"Jason, you're so smart to have figured all this out,"

Aras couldn't help but praise.

She didn't understand the conversation between Jason and Esther but felt it must have been impressive.

"I'm not a smart man."

"I just habitually think of the worst case scenario."

"Then, make extra preparations."

Jason shook his head denying.

"But your habit makes you foolproof,"

"Your calm analysis really is admirable,"

Said Esther, who had finished his brief reflection, in similar admiration.

"Calm analysis?"

"I lost it once."

"Now, I'm just slowly getting it back."

Jason spoke indifferently.

A past completely dominated by 'hunger' made Jason frown just thinking about it, but fortunately, that period was not long and had not caused irreparable damage.

But it was enough to make Jason wary.

Discipline is what makes me free!

Jason thought silently.

Aras scratched her head, not understanding what Jason was talking about.

She just felt it was a bit profound but it must be impressive nonetheless.

Esther, meanwhile, thought of some 'anomalous' special states.

Containment breach?

He guessed, subconsciously taking a careful measure of Jason, and as their eyes met, the young man's knees instinctively weakened.

However, before Esther could kneel, Jason was already standing up and walking out.

Judgment never arrives late!

...

Edmund was at the airport welcoming the inspection envoy from headquarters.

Though called an inspection envoy, he knew well that this was the envoy of that high-ranking official.

He was a man over forty, already balding, and even with the help of the surrounding hair, it didn't look right. With a greasy face and a corpulent figure, it was truly difficult to have any favorable impression of him.

Edmund felt the same.

He was very reluctant to meet the other party.

It was not only because of the other party's appearance but also because of the insidious thoughts beneath their greasy exterior.

Shaun, a 'Shelter' Grade B officer, was the execution chief of the headquarters' intelligence division and a representative figure of those within the 'Shelter' with thick faces and black hearts, ruthless and merciless.

Due to work relations, Edmund had worked with him for an extended period, and hence he was very aware of the despicable things the other party had done.

Many things were absolutely worthy of being despised and torn apart alive.

However, the other party's loyalty left him unscathed.

Because he was wholly devoted to that person, to an unshakable extent.

And for precisely this reason, that person was very willing to dispatch him.

In his previous speculations, Edmund had guessed that it was certainly him who had come to Lai'ang City.

"Let's go."

Seeing Shaun approaching him, Edmund said sternly without any pleasantries.

In fact, had he not been worried about Shaun using some underhanded tactics on others, Edmund would not have even bothered to pick him up from the airport.

"Long time no see, Team Leader Edmund."

Shaun said with a smile, as if greeting an old acquaintance.

But within that address was something that grated on Edmund's ears.

For Edmund, that was an absolutely forbidden title, but Shaun still mentioned it, obviously on purpose; he knew what that meant to Edmund and was eager to see the resulting reaction.

Regrettably for Shaun, Edmund continued moving forward without even pausing in his stride.

"Team Leader, you've changed a lot!"

"At least your temper has improved a great deal."

Shaun kept talking, and then his words took a turn, his tone becoming teasing, "That's why I told the boss before that this sort of thing in Ang City couldn't possibly have been orchestrated by you because..."

"You just don't have the guts for it."

The irritating words rang in Edmund's ears.

But Edmund pretended not to hear them.

However, Shaun kept on talking.

"I wonder if you have pinpointed Horda, Kriek, and Will?"

Shaun enunciated each word deliberately.

This time, Edmund, who was walking ahead, paused briefly before continuing forward without delay.

"It seems you've locked on to them!"

"Indeed, with your intelligence, how could you not pinpoint such obvious characters?"

"It's just that Ang City is too easygoing, making you forget some of the essential rules for agents."

Shaun chuckled when he noticed the momentary halt in Edmund's step, just as he had anticipated.

The matter in Ang City was indeed Edmund's doing.

Even if Edmund wasn't the mastermind, he was at least deeply involved.

Some thousand-year-old organization?

How could such a monstrous organization exist!

If it really did exist, why would it only be in Ang City and not spread to its surroundings?

That was implausible!

There was only one possibility that could explain the current situation: A sham!

A sham!

A sham revolving around the 'Masked Man' that stretched to the entirety of Ang City and even the world!

Why do such a thing?

Shaun also guessed the general reason.

It was nothing more than to muddy the waters, to ensure the safety of the 'Masked Man' who could identify members of the 'Legion of Faceless,' and to make the whole Ang City safe!

This so-called 'justice' fitted Edmund's style to a tee!

Just wait!

I will make sure you don't have a grave to be buried in!

If you don't die... I won't rest easy!

Shaun thought silently.

In contrast, Edmund, walking ahead, had a face as dark as water, realizing his carelessness, just as that bastard behind him said, being away for so long that complacency had corroded his thinking. He had considered only what the higher-up had revealed, forgetting that those revelations might be intentional.

Damn it!

What to do?

Had Jason already taken action?

If action had indeed been taken, it would all be over!

Edmund was still pondering what to do next; he was well aware of the higher-up's way of doing things, knowing that if they were exposed, it would indeed be met with a thunderous strike. Most people would likely have no chance of survival.

With his abilities, he could only ensure the escape of some.

But how was he to choose?

Guilt and regret began to surface in Edmund's heart.

He seemed to be falling into the same kind of situation he least liked to recall from his life.

Back then, like now, he was making the most helpless of choices.

But Edmund clearly forgot.

At that time, he did not have a collaborator like Jason.

The tall, dark figure stood in the center of the road ahead.

Looking at the figure, Edmund was initially startled, and then his lips curled into a slight smile.

He continued to stride forward, his pace becoming somewhat peculiar – not the rhythm, but the angles!

With each step, he perfectly blocked Shaun's line of sight from behind, and Shaun, not noticing anything amiss and thinking he had it all figured out, smugly followed behind Edmund.

He was waiting for the moment to reap the rewards!

Not until Edmund brushed past Jason did the inspector realize something was wrong.

But, it was too late!

A flash of cold light!

A head soared into the air!

As blood spurted out, Jason's cold voice echoed around them—

"Welcome to Ang City."