

Menu 501

Chapter 501: Imitation? Reproduction! (3)

The other party suppressed that kind of mischievous smile.

Proud and full of irony.

"Not very good?"

Jason replied indifferently, his tone exceedingly calm.

But such calmness caused a pause in the voice on the other end, as if the speaker hadn't expected Jason to be so composed. They had anticipated that even if Jason didn't show panic, he would at least be angry.

But now?

Calm.

"Interesting! Interesting! So interesting!"

"This is the 'author' I've been looking forward to!"

"Come on, the game has begun!"

The person laughed with an excited panting, a kind of strained yet wildly exhilarated laugh.

It took a full four or five seconds before that laughter ceased.

The altered voice of the other party came through again.

"You've guessed where the dog is, haven't you?"

"Then..."

"Let's continue."

As the words dropped, the line was disconnected on the other end.

Jason, maintaining his original composure, hung up the phone.

As for the other person's twisted actions on the other end of the receiver?

Jason wasn't surprised.

If they weren't twisted, how could they have done such a thing?

Only...

Why was this 'psycho' fixating on him?

Or to be precise, with so many excellent novels available, why choose the work of an author who was on the verge of fading away?

Just to get him back in the spotlight?

The thought crossed Jason's mind, but he shook his head immediately in denial.

He looked towards John.

"Together?"

Jason asked.

He needed to see the scene for himself.

Although the police had already been there and most of the valuable clues would have been collected, Jason still wanted to go there for a look.

After all, he had an unusual way of searching.

He, too, was once an unqualified 'detective'.

Thinking back to his 'detective' days, he suddenly felt a longing for the freshly baked pastries.

"Sure."

John didn't refuse.

Jason's behavior left him no reason to refuse.

Moreover, the incident had started because of Jason.

"I've made some preparations, those cops eyeing this place should have their attention diverted."

As they headed out, John cautioned Jason.

And right as they stepped out, he immediately bent over.

Outside the apartment was a one-sided corridor; one could see the street below directly through the cement railing on one side.

John was now sticking close to this railing as he moved.

Then, when he turned back to look at Jason, he realized that Jason had appeared by his side at some unknown point.

Silent as a ghost!

A shiver went through John.

He had tried his best to overestimate Jason, but at this point, he realized he might have still underestimated him.

Jason looked like someone strong and robust, fit for a frontal assault, but now he moved as nimbly as a cat... no, not a cat, like a strong leopard.

Perhaps a rhinoceros?

John glanced at Jason's robust frame and quickly modified his adjective.

Then, he also looked at Jason in his big shorts, pajamas, and slippers.

John wanted to remind Jason, but in the end, he said nothing.

At this time, finding Daisy was the most important thing.

Jason and John made their way together.

The two easily arrived at the parking lot behind the apartment.

There, a vintage car not matching the current era was parked.

It was not an antique car.

Instead, it was a sedan with a three-color stripe paint job that looked more like a muscle car.

"Nice car."

Jason remarked.

As a qualified 'postman,' he knew a fair bit about cars.

Although he couldn't name the brand of the vehicle before him, he could tell it wasn't only well-maintained but also had undergone several modifications.

Modifications for greater speed.

As Jason sat in the passenger seat, he confirmed this notion further.

The front remained unchanged, but in the back, all unnecessary items had been stripped away.

Including, the seats.

This was for weight reduction.

However, as soon as Jason got in, the car tilted slightly.

Jason was heavier than he looked.

John glanced at his car with a pang of distress but then stepped on the gas.

Vroom!

Instantly, the vehicle roared to life like a beast on land, charging out with a bellow.

No need for more questions, John, who had already investigated thoroughly, drove straight to the murder scene: Olive Street.

Olive Street, located in the Northern District of Cherry City, was an old street in the old district.

It had had its moments of glory.

But as time passed and the rich moved away, the Southern District replaced the Northern District, and Olive Street had declined a great deal, with those once-fashionable shops now signifying obsolescence.

And the numerous cheap apartments provided affordable housing for the many commoners, laborers.

The body was discovered in the alley between the apartments.

Just like described in the book, it was a narrow, dark alley.

Even worse.

The sun was completely blocked by the apartments on both sides; not a glimmer of light could penetrate here, making the place not just dim but also a bit cold, and the residual stench of blood relentlessly seeped into the noses of those who neared.

Jason saw the police tape up ahead.

Several officers stood there, guarding the scene and keeping the approaching journalists at bay.

These journalists buzzed around like flies attracted to the scent of blood.

The residents who lived there wore faces filled with worry and panic.

Chapter 502: Imitation? Reproduction! (4)

Jason believed that more officers were canvassing the area, taking statements, and at the same time, soothing the local residents.

He glanced at John.

"Daisy? Daisy?"

John called out eagerly.

But there was no response.

After signaling Jason with his eyes, John immediately started to search the surrounding area.

He had also read "The Cross Street Stalker" and according to the book, his dog should be near the vicinity of the murder scene.

And Jason?

He slowly approached the crime scene.

Of course, he did not cross the police tape.

Jason stood behind the crowd, looking over the tape into the scene, just like the reporters packed around him.

However, unlike those reporters who were leaning in, as if they wished to get a closer look at the crime scene, Jason stood straight.

He was tall and, without crowding, could see what was inside.

A blue tarp.

This wide blue tarp not only enclosed the end of the alley but also blocked everyone's view, leaving people to guess what was behind it.

Jason subconsciously looked up at the apartments on either side.

His view was obstructed.

What about higher up?

Then, Jason saw several people poking their heads out from the apartments, who seemed to be reporters, and they looked frustrated.

Clearly, the blue tarp must have entirely blocked all lines of sight.

Of course, not everyone's.

Apart from the police, at least two people wouldn't be obstructed.

The person who first discovered the crime scene wouldn't be.

And...

Naturally, the perpetrator who set up the crime scene wouldn't be.

The former would likely still be in the police station giving a statement at this time, and the latter?

Jason activated his Dead Sense perception!

He scanned his surroundings.

Some perpetrators return to the scene of the crime with a high probability.

Especially the arrogant types, who enjoyed doing so.

They relished seeing the police bustle about fruitlessly and enjoyed watching the fear in the faces of onlookers.

They might even create some clues to mislead the investigators.

And in the recent phone call, judging by the other person's words, they seemed like such a person.

However, as Jason looked around, apart from the police, he did not see a single person tainted with death energy similar to what was at the end of the alley, but the residue of the death energy was very clear.

Undoubtedly, the dead end of the alley was not the original crime scene.

The perpetrator had merely used that place as a stage for self-display, the real crime scene was elsewhere.

And the current residue?

It was likely the location where John's dog had been placed.

Jason walked following the trail of the death energy residue.

Soon, he had walked from that crime scene to the alley next door.

Unlike the previous alley, the apartments on either side of this one were uneven in height, and the sun, shining from the lower side, just happened to cast its light on the wall and windows of the apartment on the opposite side.

The reflected sunlight made this equally narrow space bright.

Under the brightness, the shadows dissipated.

Just one floor apart, but it felt like being in two different worlds.

The previous alley was filled with fear and anxiety.

This place, however, was full of the ease of the afternoon.

Jason, walking here, did not hide his presence; he walked openly in everyone's view.

In the afternoon, a tall, robust man, whose muscles couldn't be completely concealed even by pajamas, wearing big shorts and slippers and walking in a dense apartment complex, undoubtedly stood out and attracted attention.

Many people stared at Jason, but not a single one approached him.

Jason's tall and strong stature was enough to deter most people.

Therefore, Jason made it quite smoothly to the end of the death energy trail: a cardboard box.

The cardboard box in front of him was tainted with the prior residue, and inside the box, there was an even stronger concentration of death energy.

Jason's eyes narrowed; he instantly guessed what it was.

And just at that moment, John, who had finished searching the other side, arrived. Upon seeing the cardboard box, he immediately rushed past Jason towards it.

Standing in front of the box, the dejected man reached out with slightly trembling hands and slowly opened the box.

Inside, a little dog was curled up.

It was already devoid of any breath of life.

"Daisy!"

Chapter 503: Dogs and Fate

In the midst of heart-wrenching screams, John just knelt on the ground, his entire body beginning to tremble.

It was several seconds before he reached out with both hands to lift the puppy out of the cardboard box.

Then, the despondent man cradled the puppy in his arms, gently stroking it.

As if he were hoping for the dog's resurrection.

But the puppy hung its ears and was stiff-limbed, no longer having the strength to respond to its owner.

The despondent man sat slumped in a daze, his posture gradually loosening, shifting from kneeling to sitting cross-legged. He seemed completely defeated just a moment ago, but now a coldness was slowly emanating from deep within him.

"Jason."

The despondent man suddenly spoke up.

"Hmm?"

Jason looked toward the despondent man, his extraordinary perception telling him that John had become extremely dangerous. If the John of before was like a tiger bound by chains,

What about now?

The chains had broken.

The tiger was ready to spring free!

"He, and everything related to him, are mine now."

Having said this, John rose to his feet with the body of the puppy and left straightaway.

Who he was, was self-evident.

Jason had no intention of objecting.

Someone else dealing with trouble for him was more than welcome, especially when no 'food' was involved.

Watching John depart, Jason also headed toward the alleyway's exit, preparing to hail a cab home.

When leaving his room earlier on, Jason had deliberately brought his wallet, just in case.

As for walking home?

With more convenient transport available, Jason would not choose such a primitive method.

Though he could move faster, he had not forgotten where he was.

Compared to the 'menu' worlds before, the current world was undoubtedly the most advanced, with surveillance cameras all over the streets. Jason certainly did not want to be detected by these cameras.

Similarly, he had no desire to take a long detour just to avoid them.

Standing at the mouth of the alley, Jason stood in the taxi stand area, quietly waiting for a cab to appear.

However, what he got instead was Police Chief Davide.

Following him was the young Assistant Hunter.

At that moment, the assistant looked at Jason with a suspicious gaze.

Clearly, he must have realized he'd been played by John's 'little trick' but wasn't sure who exactly had tricked him.

"Phew."

"I'm so glad to see you're okay, Mr. Jason."

The middle-aged police chief seemed to breathe a sigh of relief, looking at Jason with a warm smile.

"What's the matter?"

Jason feigned ignorance.

"Just now Hunter was lured away by a guy. We thought the man was an imitator and sent a large number of people to chase him, but he managed to escape."

"Then we knocked on your door and found no one answering."

"It really scared me; I thought something had happened to you."

"Luckily, someone reported seeing you here."

The face of the middle-aged police chief showed a somber, relieved expression.

Then, he shifted gears in his conversation.

"Can you tell me why you came back here?"

As he spoke, the middle-aged police chief looked toward Jason.

His kindly smile remained, but a gleam inadvertently passed through his eyes.

Jason caught this flash despite its brevity.

Is this his true face?

Jason thought to himself but remained expressionless outwardly.

"Curious."

He answered this way.

"Curious?"

"Yeah, that makes sense."

"As the author of 'The Cross Street Stalker,' suddenly there's an imitator, naturally, you would be curious."

The middle-aged police chief nodded in understanding.

After a slight pause in his words, he then suddenly spoke up again.

"Mr. Jason, could you tell me why you describe the scenes so vividly?"

"As if... you witnessed them yourself."

As he said this, the middle-aged police chief's eyes were fixed on Jason's, not allowing any lapse in attention.

"For realism."

"I strive for realism."

"But it's because of that, some inconsistencies that shouldn't have been there have arisen."

Jason answered with a response he had already prepared.

When he had previously browsed through 'The Cross Street Stalker' he had authored, he had considered the possibility of such a scenario arising.

After all, Davide and Hunter had not struck Jason as incompetents.

And the current situation reinforced to Jason just how necessary it was to prepare in advance.

"So that's how it is!"

The middle-aged police chief nodded as if it suddenly dawned on him, and then, as if he had just realized Jason was standing in the cab stand area, he immediately flashed that same warm smile.

"Mr. Jason, are you planning to return to Apartment 3A?"

"Yes."

Jason nodded without concealing this fact.

"My men are headed there. Would you mind if they give you a ride?"

The middle-aged police chief asked.

"Of course not."

Jason smiled.

He certainly knew what the police chief wanted to do.

It was nothing more than wanting to monitor and observe him more effectively.

But he wouldn't mind.

Saving the fare was enough to buy another hot dog or sweet corn, wasn't it?

When he had just left Apartment 3A in John's car, he had spotted a fast food stand on the street corner, and about 200 meters from the apartment was a pizza shop, with a fast food restaurant diagonally opposite, then 50 meters further, there was a restaurant, and 300 meters on, an outdoor eatery with distinct character, and more...

He reminisced, noting all the eateries and dining places he had unconsciously recorded in his mind.

Chapter 504: Dogs and Fate (2)

Jason straightly boarded the subordinate's vehicle of that police chief.

Amid the roaring of the car's engine, Jason quickly vanished from Davide and Hunter's view.

"Chief, do you believe what he said?"

Hunter couldn't help but ask.

"What do you think?"

Davide countered.

"I'm not sure."

The young Assistant shook his head.

This young man had been observing Jason unconsciously while he spoke, hoping to find a flaw, but unfortunately, he couldn't discern anything.

"If you're unsure... then go find the reason for your uncertainty."

"Whether it's instinct or experience, since you're not sure, go and figure it out."

The middle-aged police chief was giving pointers to his Assistant.

He wouldn't complain or look down on his Assistant for not spotting the most critical point.

Because when he was the same age as his Assistant, he wouldn't have noticed these things either.

Moreover, if his Assistant had noticed these details, then he wouldn't need to be his Assistant any longer.

"Have you read 'The Cross Street Tracker'?"

The middle-aged police chief asked.

"I have."

The young Assistant immediately nodded.

Since a copycat appeared, even if the young Assistant had not read it before, he would have caught up by now.

"What do you think about that?"

The middle-aged police chief pointed towards the alley that Jason had just walked out of.

Not the alley where the crime happened, but the next one over.

The young Assistant was startled.

The middle-aged police chief had already walked towards that alley, and Davide, with a friendly smile, easily learned from the locals that Jason had once visited this alley.

Jason's build and dress were truly memorable.

"Jason has been here, so..."

"It's not imitation!"

"It's recreation!"

"The guy who committed the murder, he wanted to recreate the content of "The Cross Street Tracker," that's why he started committing the crimes, while also luring Jason here."

Facing his hesitant Assistant, the middle-aged police chief said straightforwardly.

"Should we monitor Jason's phone?"

The young Assistant, who had read through "The Cross Street Tracker," asked.

He remembered that in the book, the phone was an absolutely crucial prop 'linking' the Protagonist and the killer.

"No need."

"That guy isn't an idiot; he won't leave us such a big gap."

"What I'm curious about now is..."

"Who is Jason's landlord?"

The middle-aged police chief muttered to himself in a low voice.

"I'll look into it right away."

The young Assistant said and turned to leave.

"Remember to investigate that blade."

"Also, deploy more people around the apartment where Jason lives."

The middle-aged police chief instructed his Assistant.

"Understood."

The young Assistant immediately sprang into action, while the middle-aged police chief stood still, his brow slightly furrowed, feeling like he had missed something.

...

In John's home.

The basement.

John, holding a hammer, stood in the center of the room.

He once thought he could forget the past.

In fact, during that time, he truly forgot.

He lived like an ordinary person.

Laughing, crying.

Shopping, staying up late.

The days he loved deeply.

Because she was there.

And after she left?

Everything became dull and colorless.

Even the last bit of hope she left him was extinguished.

That guy had pushed him into the abyss.

But that guy perhaps didn't know, he came from there.

Now?

He would make that guy and everyone related to him experience a bit of that place's "scenery."

Bang!

John swung the hammer, fiercely smashing it onto the ground.

Once.

Twice.

Thrice.

The concrete floor quickly vibrated, then shattered, gradually revealing the box underneath.

Tossing the hammer aside, John bent down, brushed away the chunks of concrete, lifted the box out, and opened it right away.

A series of guns came into view.

He picked up one, checking it with practiced ease.

One after another.

After checking all of them, John stepped into the bathroom.

Amidst the sound of running water, John fully reverted to his former state. He took a towel and wiped off the remaining droplets from his body, then opened the wardrobe and took down the black suit with the white shirt.

Whoosh!

As the clothes fluttered, John pulled out the white shirt and put it on.

Then, he meticulously fastened each button, his movements so precise they were almost robotic.

When he emerged from the dressing room next to the bathroom, his medium-length hair was all combed back, and although he hadn't shaved, the air of despondency was already gone.

All that remained was a chilling aura of murder.

Drip, drip.

The text message alert from his phone indicated where to find the target he sought.

Though he was gone, the past ties remained intact.

Investigating certain matters was naturally not a difficult task.

As John stepped out, he glanced at the garden.

He had buried his dog under a tree there.

Now?

He was off to seek justice for his dog.

John got into his car, and with a press of the accelerator, the vehicle shot out like an arrow,

...

Cherry City, Northern District.

Atop an unfinished building that had fallen into financial trouble, four men sat snickering amidst the construction woes.

Compared to the dilapidated exterior, this floor, however, was quite well-decorated.

A grand chandelier, spacious sofas, a fridge filled with food, televisions, computers, gaming consoles, and more.

"It's so simple!"

A young man with a goatee lounged on the sofa, playing with a butterfly knife while speaking with disdain.

"Yeah."

"Such an easy job, with a 200K reward."

"If we get a few more like this, we could retire."

Another man wearing a knit cap was sitting opposite, holding a can of beer.

"Aren't you guys curious why the guy wanted us to do this?"

One of the thin men pointed at the television.

At that moment, the TV was playing a case about the "Cross Street Stalker" imitator.

"Tch."

"What's that got to do with us?"

"We're just paid to do a job."

The goateed young man scoffed dismissively.

Then, his gaze turned to the last man who had been silent — a burly figure.

"Hey, what are you thinking?"

"Be happy."

"We've completed a big mission."

"200K!"

"It's 200K!"

The goateed young man reminded his accomplice.

"Why did you kill that dog?"

"It was innocent."

"The client didn't ask us to kill it."

The muscular man inquired.

"That dog?"

"It was driving me nuts with its barking."

"Didn't it deserve to die?"

Standing up from the sofa, the goateed young man walked over to his cohort. Although the goateed man was shorter and much thinner compared to the muscular one, as he approached, the burly man involuntarily stepped back.

Next, the goateed man grabbed the burly man's collar.

"Are you feeling sorry for that dog?"

"Or are you..."

"Questioning me?"

As he spoke, the goateed young man raised the butterfly knife in his hand, the blade pointed straight at his companion's neck.

The burly man's eyes twitched, and he quickly raised his hands.

"I'm not."

He answered in such a manner.

"Better not be."

"Let me reiterate, and for the last time!"

"Here, I'm the boss!"

"I'm the head!"

"You all must listen to me!"

"You can't defy my orders!"

"Understood?"

The goateed young man looked at the man in the knit cap and the thin man; both hastily nodded.

Seeing this, the goateed man couldn't help but smile, seemingly pleased with the effect.

This was what he wanted.

A group of obedient underlings.

Only in this way could he earn more money.

It's just a dog, right?

Dead is dead.

Could there really be someone who would kill him over a dog?

What a joke!

"Alright!"

"Now we..."

Bang!

Chapter 505: Take the Initiative!

The sudden burst of gunfire interrupted the words of the young man with the small mustache.

He looked down at his chest, which had been penetrated by a bullet, his clothes already stained red with blood and still spreading outwards instinctively, he turned his head, wanting to see who had fired the shot.

Stained red, he saw John.

John, dressed in a black suit and white shirt, was holding a gun, pointing it at his forehead.

"Wait..."

Bang!

Another shot.

However, this shot was aimed at the forehead.

The bullet pierced through the young man's brow, and the mustachioed youth fell to the ground.

But the gunfire didn't stop.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Three swift shots, and three accomplices, one with a knit cap, slender, and muscular, lost their ability to move.

Then?

Bang, bang!

Two more shots, and the two with knit caps and slender figures collapsed with bullets in their brows.

Only the muscular man remained.

"Don't, don't kill me!"

"We were just hired!"

"We were just hired!"

The muscular man emphasized.

"Who hired you?"

Jason asked.

"Don't know."

"He'd call us for jobs, and after we completed them, we'd get paid..."

The muscular man shook his head, pointing to a cell phone on the table, then he saw John raise the gun in his hand.

Immediately, the man struggled, shouting loudly.

"Don't kill me, it wasn't me who killed your dog!"

"It was just a...!"

Bang!

John pulled the trigger without hesitation.

Again, right between the eyes.

"She wasn't just a dog, she was my everything!"

John said coldly, then fired four more shots at the bodies on the ground.

After confirming that the four were dead beyond doubt, he picked up the cell phone on the table, glanced at the received calls, and looked at the number marked with asterisks. John didn't make the call.

He sat on the couch, waiting quietly.

He believed that the other party would call again.

As long as the other party wanted to recreate "The Cross Street Tracker," they would definitely call.

In fact, the call came faster than John had expected.

Just ten minutes later—

Ring ring ring!

The phone started ringing.

After connecting a palm-sized device to the phone, John answered the call.

"Dammit!"

"What the hell are you guys good for?"

"I just told you to deal with the bodies and leave the dog there! Leave it there, not kill it!"

As soon as he picked up the phone, a roar came from the earpiece.

It was a very angry shout.

"Hmm."

John didn't really speak, just murmured vaguely.

"I'm telling you!"

"You don't have a chance anymore!"

"I'm finding new people!"

"Not you disobedient pieces of crap!"

The voice on the other end finished and hung up.

However, for John, this was enough.

He looked at the data transmitted by the device in his hand, operated it a few times, then confirmed where he needed to go next.

John got up and walked outside.

At this time, Jason had just returned near Apartment 3A.

The driving speed of the officer was too slow compared to John's driving speed.

Moreover, it seemed the other party was deliberately slowing down.

Without a doubt, this must have been arranged by the police chief.

"Guessed that the killer was recreating 'The Cross Street Tracker,' so they 'controlled' me, the protagonist, to slow down my pace, thereby restraining the 'killer' and gaining more time and initiative?"

Jason thought to himself.

If he could guess it, then Davide could too.

Jason never doubted a police chief's intelligence.

After all, one who could be an on-scene frontline chief wasn't someone to be trifled with.

And his actions?

Jason approved.

Without a doubt, the current 'killer' saw himself in the role, while he became the 'protagonist' of his own book, and the two needed to keep interacting for the plot to progress.

If one of them failed to keep up, naturally the interaction would stop.

But...

Would the other party let the interaction stop so easily?

Even if he had to stop 'passively.'

Did the other party have other plans?

There had to be!

Since they were already recreating 'The Cross Street Tracker,' they would have considered all aspects, not just be 'held back.'

So, what would it be?

"Stop the car!"

Jason, who was deep in thought, suddenly spoke up.

Screech!

Amid the friction of the tires against the road, the car came to a steady stop at the curb.

The driving officer looked at Jason, puzzled.

Jason pointed outside the window.

There was a fast food stand.

Though he was contemplating, Jason's eyes wouldn't miss an already determined 'target,' especially one related to food.

"You want a hot dog?"

The officer was taken aback, his face not catching up with the situation.

"Of course."

"Aside from that, what else could it be?"

Jason said as he pushed open the door and got out of the car.

The officer instinctively wanted to stop him, lifting his hand before realizing that he was there just to drop Jason off, not to escort him.

Jason wasn't a criminal.

That was a fact.

Suddenly, the officer swallowed the words he was about to say.

Jason ignored the officer behind him, his attention captured by the aromas of grilled hot dogs, sandwiches, orange juice, and gamer water.

"What do you need?"

"A hot dog? A sandwich? Or maybe gamer water, orange juice?"

A chubby proprietor with three chins propped up the counter, pointing at the price list next to him.

The price list was a small lightbox style, unlit in the afternoon.

Chapter 506: Take the Initiative! (2)

Grilled hot dogs: 2.5.

Sandwiches: 3.0.

Fat Otaku Water: 2.0.

Orange juice: 2.0.

...

Only four items in total, prices clear.

"Ten hot dogs, ten sandwiches, five Fat Otaku Water, orange juice."

"Fat Otaku Water with ice."

Jason ordered his afternoon tea based on his own appetite and specifically emphasized.

The plump owner glanced at the police car across the street, a look of realization crossing his face.

"You guys are on a stakeout, huh?"

"So you're buying food for two people for the whole day?"

"Don't worry, leave it to me."

"Bob is an ally of justice."

Saying this, the plump owner moved to the stove on the side and started to get busy.

Jason had no intention of explaining.

At that moment, he only cared about the food.

Shortly after the food was ready, the plump owner handed it over to Jason.

"75 bucks."

"Thank you for your patronage."

The plump owner said.

Jason pulled out his wallet, earnestly counted out 75 bucks to the other party, and then turned toward the police car.

"Good luck!"

The plump owner gestured a cheering motion behind Jason.

"Yeah."

"Check out the news after you close up tonight."

Jason said as he walked, not slowing his steps one bit.

"What?"

The plump owner asked in confusion, but this time, Jason did not answer again and instead boarded the police car.

"Are you going into seclusion to write?"

The officer, looking at Jason carrying a load of food, couldn't help but ask.

"Just a normal afternoon tea."

Jason replied, and then directly took out a hot dog.

It was a corn dog.

A hot dog fried in cornmeal, it had the taste of meat and the sweetness of corn, and the plump owner had even added some chocolate. Taking a bite, the slightly dense cocoa flavor and the sweetness of the corn rushed straight to the taste buds, and when the teeth touched the ham, there was a hint of springiness. Then, pop, the casing burst, and the juices squirted inside the mouth.

It was not purely a pork sausage but was mainly chicken, with a bit of fish meat added.

The flavor was delicious, yet the texture was not compromised.

Not bad.

It didn't disappoint me at all.

Jason evaluated.

After eating one hot dog, Jason picked up a sandwich.

It was the common ham sandwich with fried eggs, cheese slices, and ham.

However, unlike ordinary ham sandwiches, the plump owner had chosen beer ham as the main ingredient.

The slight saltiness combined with the cheese reacted in a matter of seconds.

The fried egg, crispy on both sides, and the soft bread slices elevated the sandwich's texture by more than a notch.

Mmm, mmm.

Jason ate two in a row, nodding his head uncontrollably.

Gulp, gulp.

Burp!

He downed a bottle of Fat Otaku Water in one go and let out a burp.

Do I need to say more about Fat Otaku Water?

Just lie there, drink it down sip by sip, and when I burp, it feels like my soul is ascending.

The orange juice was freshly squeezed from oranges, pretty fresh.

"I could come here a second time."

Jason thought.

Meanwhile, the officer driving the car kept looking at Jason through the rearview mirror.

No doubt, this was the first time he saw someone eat so fast.

A mere distance of less than 200 meters, and even sitting in a car, Jason had eaten a hot dog, two sandwiches, and drunk a bottle of Fat Otaku Water and a glass of orange juice. And it seemed like he had no intention of stopping.

Could that stand really be that delicious?

The officer couldn't help but wonder and decided in his mind to go and try some for himself after he dropped off Jason.

The car stopped again.

"Please be careful."

"You might be targeted as well."

"But rest assured, we will protect you."

After saying this as part of routine, the officer unexpectedly pointed to a car in the distance.

No longer hiding?

No, that's not it!

They aren't just not hiding anymore, they are making a show of it!

This was pressuring the "assassin"!

It implies that to "recreate" the scene, one must break through his blockade?

Was the pressure completely on oneself?

Jason thought of the middle-aged police chief's smiling face and couldn't help but think to himself.

Undoubtedly, the other party was more reliable than he had imagined.

Similarly, quite cunning.

Jason's senses, which were beyond those of ordinary people, could clearly perceive that in the garden behind the apartment, in a room on the second floor, and next to his room on the third floor, there were gazes fixed on him.

These gazes were full of vigilance, but not malice.

Clearly, these were the true surveillants.

That car?

Of course, it was bait.

"Thank you."

After expressing his gratitude, Jason took the remaining food and headed towards the third floor.

Of course, Jason was eating as he went along.

But so as not to draw attention, he controlled himself well.

It was only after entering his room that he finally opened his mouth—

Whoosh!

The flow of air surged, and as Jason opened his mouth, it was as though a black hole had opened, and the remaining food in his hand was swept away in an instant.

"Indeed!"

"Food should be eaten in big bites!"

Jason whispered to himself softly.

Then, as he turned on the television, he took the book "Cross Street Stalker" from his bedroom cum study and began to flip through it once more.

He always felt that he had missed something.

Time passed by the minute and the second.

The westerly sun began to slowly descend.

At about quarter past four, Jason lifted his head and looked towards the door.

Someone was approaching the third floor.

The other's steps were unhurried and extremely steady.

A few seconds later—

Knock, knock, knock.

"Hello, may I ask if this is Mr. Jason?"

Following the knock, a polite voice sounded.

Jason walked over and opened the door.

At the door stood a middle-aged to elderly man in a tailcoat and white gloves.

The man had graying hair, a pocket watch chain hanging from his chest, a courteous yet slightly stiff expression, fitting the image of a butler perfectly.

"Hello, Mr. Jason."

"I am Mr. Emod's butler."

"Mr. Emod wishes to meet with you."

"Of course, we won't take you far, just downstairs, and similarly, I will offer you compensation for your time... Please, there is no malice from me or my master."

The elderly butler said this with all due politeness.

Having spoken, he then bowed to Jason.

Seeing the old butler bowing, Jason frowned.

Subconsciously, he thought of the "Cross Street Stalker"—after the protagonist had helped a husband find evidence of his wife's affair following the discovery of the landlord's dog.

Was this husband Emod?

As Jason pondered this, he also understood the other's approach at the same time.

To exert power over others!

Jason didn't know who Emod was, but he was sure of one thing: Emod was definitely wealthy or of high status.

Without a doubt, just by looking at his butler, one could tell.

Someone who could afford such a qualified butler, in Cherry City, naturally held a significant position.

Such an important figure could easily make the arrangements of the middle-aged police chief futile.

Is this your method of dealing?

It really is quite good!

Jason said to himself, then responded to the elderly butler in front of him, "Okay."

"Thank you very much!"

"Please follow me."

Relief showed on the old butler's face as he bowed once more and then led the way.

Just as the old butler had said, they wouldn't take Jason far.

In fact, the meeting place with Mr. Emod was just downstairs.

A stretched, silver-white car was parked there.

Even to those uninformed about cars, on seeing this one, they could sense its opulence.

But of course, that wasn't all.

Two black cars were parked in front and behind the silver-white limousine, and six bodyguards wearing sunglasses were standing on both sides of the convoy, their backs to the car and facing out.

The sunglasses obscured their gazes, but Jason could feel them being sized up.

The moment he appeared, those evaluative eyes followed suit.

Clearly, Emod's bodyguards were not for show.

But what interested Jason more was Mr. Emod himself!

Because—

He smelled the "food"!

Chapter 507: Brian's Daughter

The faint scent of "food."

It was irresistible.

A smile couldn't help but curl up at the corners of Jason's mouth.

He, who had just finished his afternoon tea, definitely wouldn't mind starting a formal dinner right away.

The old butler, having already passed by Jason, didn't see his upturned lips as he carried out his duties.

The butler quickly walked up to the silver-white stretch car and knocked on the window.

Clang, clang.

"Sir, Mr. Jason has arrived," he said, following the knock.

"Hmm," came the response, neither light nor heavy, and the car door opened a crack.

The butler promptly opened the car door and turned, gesturing to Jason with his hand.

"Please," he said.

Jason nodded and got directly into the car.

Just like the exterior suggested, the inside of the car was quite spacious. With Jason's height and robust build, he could easily turn and sit comfortably even with his head bent forward.

Of course, what was more important was the luxury.

Leather seats, panoramic sunroof, with solid wood flooring underfoot; there was an aisle next to the seats, with rows of drinks placed there.

This didn't look like the inside of a car at all, but rather a small room.

"Would you like a drink?" asked the owner of the car.

"Water," Jason replied, beginning to assess Emod, this unusually important figure before him.

Emod had a square face; his features were not handsome, but he had quite a commanding presence. His hair and beard were thick and groomed neatly. The man was sitting there in a white suit with an open jacket revealing a black shirt underneath, and his crossed legs displayed his black leather shoes.

Of course, what was most important was the faint aroma of "food."

Emod had recently come into contact with some kind of "food"!

What could it be?

Jason speculated, his gaze shifting to the man's eyes.

It was the eyes that Jason was truly concerned about.

Because those seemingly smiling eyes had hidden a trace of malice just moments ago.

It was malice, not wariness.

Although fleeting, Jason was certain of it.

And because he was certain, he grew curious.

He was sure that it was their first meeting.

Could it be... I knew him before?

Jason thought to himself.

He had no memory of the past, which made him feel constrained once again.

"Hello, Mr. Emod, have we met before?" Jason asked casually, taking the bottled water handed to him.

"No," he replied.

"This is our first meeting," Emod said with a smile.

No?

Where did that malice come from?

Jason was puzzled internally, but Emod continued to speak.

"However, I've read your book 'Cross Street Stalker'."

"Hmm... quite realistic," he commented after a moment's thought.

Faced with such a comment, Jason had no idea how to respond.

He had also read the book 'he' wrote.

It had its brilliant moments, but there were also numerous mistakes. Objectively speaking, if the book could barely be classified as imaginative literature, indeed it was a stretch.

But, was it really he who wrote the book?

That's when things became delicate.

There was a touch of embarrassment and a hint of helplessness.

The next second, Jason offered a smile and said, "Thank you."

As a famous person once said, when you don't know how to respond, just smile.

"No, no, no," Emod interjected.

"I'm not flattering you."

"I really mean it."

Emod waved his hands, seemingly sincere in his words, but the important figure sat up straight suddenly, like a leopard ready to pounce, leaning forward.

"But that doesn't mean I'm used to being one of the characters inside it!" he said sharply.

"That imposter, that copycat made me come here to hire you to investigate my wife's infidelity."

"Ridiculous!"

"He's chosen the wrong target," Emod said coldly.

At that moment, the smile had vanished from his face, replaced by sheer coldness.

A trace of murderous intent involuntarily showed itself.

Jason wasn't surprised.

For someone like Emod, it was hard to guess what he had done to reach his current position.

However, one thing Jason was quite certain of.

That someone like Emod, to actually follow the "killer's" arrangement and meet him, must have been caught in some sort of blackmail by the "killer."

Otherwise, he wouldn't have bothered with the "killer" at all.

Of course, that included Jason as well.

After a brief show of courtesy, Emod had already revealed his true nature hidden beneath the politeness.

It was a kind of disdain for ordinary people.

Jason quietly contemplated, which obviously led Emod to a misconception.

"I know you have nothing to do with him, and you're also a victim," Emod said.

"But you're a lucky guy."

"He's angered me, so I'll take care of him."

"And you?"

"Just stay here and do nothing, just stay here, understand?"

Emod glared at Jason, articulating each word.

There was no room for doubt in his tone.

"No problem," Jason shrugged in response.

Of course, this was just an outward agreement.

Privately, Jason had already made plans.

If he didn't mind being a passive 'observer' before understanding the whole situation, when the 'food' appeared, that kind of 'observation' had changed.

It had become getting involved!

Chapter 508: Brian's Daughter (2)

It has become a hunt!

He was hungry.

Emod did not see any of this; he only saw Jason, who appeared to him the same as the people he had encountered before.

They were all so... well, lowly.

Truly lowly.

Evaluating this writer who didn't look at all like a writer from the bottom of his heart, Emod's disdain grew stronger.

Even, he was not willing to pretend anymore, and he bluntly said,

"Very good, you're a smart man."

"Smart people tend to live long."

"Now go back."

"Go back to your apartment and stay there until that guy is hanged by me."

After speaking, Emod waved his hand to signal Jason to leave.

Jason pushed the door open to get out of the car, and the old butler was standing beside the car. After closing the door, he looked towards Jason with a smile.

"Mr. Emod is a bit angry, so please forgive him if there is anything."

As the old butler spoke, he handed Jason a thick envelope.

Jason did not refuse.

The afternoon tea just now had left his bank account with only 101 dollars remaining, one of which was a coin, and besides, this was the promised compensation.

Taking the envelope, Jason quickly walked towards Apartment 3A.

"Leveraging the strength of a big shot to break through the blockade of Police Chief Davide, how will you deal with the retaliation from this big shot afterwards?"

"Or should I say..."

"How do you arrange for 'him' to help me?"

Jason had not forgotten that in the book, the 'Protagonist' rose to fame not least because of the second client who appeared.

It was because the 'Protagonist' completed the commission excellently that the second client introduced more people to the 'Protagonist,' allowing the protagonist not only to earn rewards and fame but also to step by step into a trap.

But that was in the book.

Here?

Emod was not so easily manipulated.

Jason could fully imagine how Emod would resist.

Thinking this, Jason's gaze involuntarily turned towards his own door.

313.

As he climbed the stairs, he clearly heard breathing from inside.

Very faint.

Not the faintness of impending death but that of concealment.

"Is this..."

"One of Emod's people?"

Jason guessed.

It was not surprising that Emod would send someone.

The other party looked like a big shot with a strong desire for control and who completely ignored others; for such a person to send someone to tightly manage him, an 'accident,' was not a big deal.

Thinking this in his heart, Jason opened the door as usual.

Then, he saw a person standing near the threshold of the door leading to the bedroom and study.

This was a middle-aged man with somewhat disheveled hair and an unshaven beard for several days. He was wearing a long-sleeved black shirt and casual pants, with boots on his feet, his eyes carried a hint of apology, and his face was filled with urgency.

"Sorry, I mean no harm."

"Please forgive my presumptuous visit."

"I thought I would have a better chance of meeting."

The man said, revealing a bitter smile.

"Do we know each other?"

Jason scanned the man, asking.

He could confirm that the man was carrying weapons, and not just one.

Moreover, considering the man's just demeanor, there was no doubt; this was a very strong individual.

"Not before."

"But we've corresponded through letters."

The man explained.

"Letters?"

"Yes, I am Brian."

"Do you remember?"

The man asked.

"Brian? The one who asked me to listen, Brian?"

Jason's mind instantly went to the sender of the second letter; the man was Brian.

"Yes, that Brian is me."

"I found your posting on the notice board interesting, and it just so happened I have some matters I can't discuss with ordinary people, so I needed a listener."

Brian spoke, his face showing another bitter smile.

"And you?"

Jason pointed at the man standing behind the threshold, hiding his presence.

"My daughter has been kidnapped."

"I have been following the leads here."

Any trace of bitterness quickly vanished from Brian's face, leaving only chill sharpness.

It was a sharpness like a long sword about to be drawn from its scabbard.

Sharp and bone-piercing.

Kidnapping?

Jason was stunned, then quickly snapped to his senses.

"It can't be?"

Jason raised his hand and gestured towards the door, pointing downward.

"Yes, him."

Brian stated with certainty.

"Emod abducted your daughter?"

Jason furrowed his brows.

It wasn't that Jason didn't believe Emod could abduct Brian's daughter; rather, Jason felt that Emod wouldn't be so foolish.

Emod held a distinguished identity, and if he wanted to do something, he didn't need to get his hands dirty.

Or rather, it was impossible for him to leave any loose ends.

"Please believe me, as a father, I would never joke about my daughter's safety, nor would I lie about it."

Brian emphasized as he then carefully and slowly took a backpack from the bedroom cum study.

The whole process was very cautious.

Brian didn't want to cause any misunderstandings.

Because, as he reached for it, he could sense an intense palpitation.

It was the kind of feeling one gets when facing an enormous crisis.

He wasn't sensing it wrong.

And he trusted that feeling even more.

Thus, he carefully picked up the backpack and handed it to Jason.

At the same time, his gaze towards Jason turned strange.

Before coming here, he had checked Jason's file.

It described an average person, who, apart from being tall and strong, and being an author, had nothing else noteworthy.

But the Jason in front of him made Brian doubt the authenticity of that file.

If he could retire, then why couldn't Jason 'retire' too?

Subconsciously, Brian thought of the "Cross Street Stalker" and the vivid descriptions of crime scenes within it.

A serial killer?

Thinking this, Brian's gaze developed a hint of wariness.

He needed Jason's help to approach Emod more quickly and safely and rescue his daughter, but that didn't mean he'd collaborate with a serial killer.

Never in the past.

Not possible in the future.

Now?

Even less likely.

Observing Jason, who had now opened the backpack, Brian already felt some regret for his haste.

Indeed, he had been retired for too long.

Brian sighed to himself.

He would never say that his daughter was the reason he grew impatient.

He owed her.

All he wanted now was to make amends for his mistakes.

Jason noticed Brian's wariness, but he did not stop going through the backpack; he was looking at the photos and descriptions.

Through these photos and descriptions, Jason quickly formed a mental image of a gang organization led by "Emod."

It was a group hidden beneath "Cherry City."

They wielded significant power, dealing not only in drugs but also in... human trafficking.

They would select 'excellent' merchandise and regularly organize some auctions.

Quite a number of significant figures would appear at these auctions.

Jason looked at the photos in his hands, observing Emod's genuinely happy expression amidst some people.

No longer scornful but sincerely smiling.

And with a touch of... ingratiation?

Exactly!

Ingratiation!

Emod was using these 'excellent' goods to ingratiate himself with those people.

"Is this your 'shortcut' to becoming a big shot?"

Jason murmured softly to himself.

Then, he turned his head towards Brian.

"Are you sure all of this is real?"

Jason asked.

"Of course."

"Even though I've retired, my sources haven't."

Brian asserted firmly. Then the father hesitated briefly before he finally said, "I was hoping to use your acquaintance with Emod to infiltrate his 'factory' and save my daughter, but..."

"But you're worried I might be a serial killer?"

"Worried my presence might put your daughter in even greater danger?"

Jason interrupted him.

Brian looked at Jason in surprise.

It seemed strange that Jason would know what he had just been thinking.

"Because, the way you just looked at me, it was as if you were staring at a pervert."

"Excuse me."

Having explained himself, Jason then signaled Brian to step aside.

Brian immediately took two steps back, watching as Jason approached the bookshelf and took out a hockey mask from behind it, slowly putting it on.

Then, Jason pulled out a wide-bladed, short-handled machete.

Holding the machete and wearing the hockey mask, Jason's eyes focused on Brian as he said very seriously—

"The depictions in the book are just that, depictions. I am not some deranged killer."

Chapter 509: 'Good Luck All The Time' Emod

Listening to Jason's assertive words, if one didn't look at him wearing a hockey mask and wielding a machete at the moment, they would be quite convincing.

But when Brian stood right in front of Jason, gazing directly at his hockey-masked visage and broad-bladed machete in hand, paired with that tall, muscular figure, the middle-aged father felt that the Jason before him was no longer just an ordinary psycho or serial killer.

But rather...

A psychotic killer!

One with no specific targets, no patterns, purely killing for the sake of killing, as natural for them as eating and drinking for an ordinary person, leaving no survivors for anyone who encountered them!

Subconsciously, Brian took another step back.

The pressure from the masked Jason was too great.

He swore that among all the terrifying opponents he had encountered in his career, none had exerted as much pressure as Jason did at that moment.

"Simply depicting?"

Brian muttered involuntarily, his hand already at his lower back.

He was ready to draw his gun at any moment.

At least when Jason swung his machete at him, he'd have the ability to defend himself.

"Of course!"

"I am a realist writer!"

"As everyone knows, for a realist writer like me, wearing a mask and carrying a machete is completely reasonable. In the still of the night, I like to immerse myself into the respective roles, searching for inspiration... Is there anything wrong with that?"

Jason asked as if it was the most natural thing in the world.

Facing such a question, Brian felt a surge of energy wanting to burst out from his chest and abdomen.

A realist writer?

Looking for inspiration?

This chilly mask and the machete that still seemed to carry a distinct residual scent of blood are merely props for your search for inspiration as a realist writer?

You're trying to fool ghosts!

No, that's wrong!

Even ghosts wouldn't believe it!

Such is your appearance that even vengeful spirits would steer clear of you.

Thinking this, Brian began to retreat towards the exit of the corridor.

He was leaving.

He couldn't stay here any longer.

He had to save his daughter.

As for Jason's 'hobbies'?

For his daughter's safety, he decided to pretend he hadn't seen anything.

"It was nice meeting you, Jason."

"But I must leave now."

Having retreated to the corridor, Brian said this.

"Together."

Jason said.

Brian must be going to save his daughter.

And him?

He was naturally on a hunt.

The deliciousness of 'food' had made him impatient.

Especially the thought of sitting quietly at the dining table and savoring the 'food' after dark made Jason's eyes gleam with excitement.

You should know, when the night is still and quiet, the taste of the 'food' doubles in deliciousness, including but not limited to instant noodles, barbecue, milk tea, spicy crayfish, hot pot, and more.

Saliva began to secrete uncontrollably, and Jason couldn't help swallowing.

Gulp.

The sound was very clear.

So here's the question.

What would you do if you were faced with a nearly 2-meter-tall man with a very muscular build, wearing a hockey mask, holding a wide-blade short-handle machete, and swallowing salivatingly at you?

What others would do, Brian didn't know.

But Brian quickly drew his gun.

The barrel pointed downward, not directly at Jason, but the attitude said it all.

Stop there, you maniac, don't come any closer!

Come any closer, and I'll shoot!

Brian's whole being emanated such an aura.

And Jason?

"We have the same goal!"

Jason stated confidently.

"Thank you."

After earnestly expressing his gratitude, Brian promptly opened the door.

Throughout the process, he maintained the stance of holding the gun with one hand and opening the door with the other, all while facing Jason.

Once the door was open, Brian didn't hesitate and quickly stepped out.

Then, he raised his hand to close the door and rolled to the side.

A wooden door—Brian was sure, if Jason wanted to, he could break it down directly; he wouldn't put his safety in the hands of a man who looked incredibly dangerous.

So after a standard evasive maneuver, Brian leaped over the stair railing and down.

The door opened once again.

Jason stepped out, standing in the shadows and watching the receding figure of Brian, shaking his head.

With that motion, the hockey mask appeared and disappeared, emitting an indescribable ferociousness and horror.

But Jason was unaware.

He thought it was normal.

He enjoyed the sense of freedom and comfort that came with wearing the mask.

As for Brian's rejection?

Jason didn't take it to heart; since the other party had refused, he certainly wouldn't insist.

After all, he was more accustomed to acting alone.

The invitation just now was merely polite and compensatory, prompted by the information Brian provided.

He, Jason, wasn't one to take advantage of others for no good reason.

But if the other party refused, then it was not his problem.

Phew!

With that thought, Jason took a deep breath and then let it out heavily, a faint voice coming from behind the mask—

"The world is filthy again!"

The next moment, the tall, robust figure was completely hidden in the twilight's afterglow.

...

Inside the stretched limousine, Emod sat calmly, one hand resting on the armrest of his chair, the other holding a glass of red wine.

Emod's fingers lightly pinched the glass stem at the base of the cup, and as his wrist shook slightly, the fragrance of the wine involuntarily wafted out.

There was sweetness and a faint hint of fruitiness.

Chapter 510: 'Good Luck All The Time' Emod (2)

The scent of alcohol was faint but unmistakable.

Emod sniffed and frowned.

He preferred strong liquor, the kind that burned all the way down with one gulp.

Then, he'd drink half the bottle in one go.

But now, he had to maintain his status.

He was no longer the type to mingle with street thugs, he had to have style.

At least, he had to appear to have style to outsiders.

That's what the big shots should have, right?

So, even when he was alone, he made sure to maintain that style.

Because, this was what he had always longed for.

Even if he didn't feel particularly good about it, he relished it.

Ding-ling-ling.

The phone rang.

Emod glanced at the string of asterisks on the secretive caller ID and picked up directly.

"I've done as you told me,"

Emod said in a deep voice, without probing.

His phone was modified, and most numbers couldn't possibly be displayed as asterisks. Although he had encountered similar situations before and handled them, now only that crazy copycat could display such numbers.

"Yes, I've seen it,"

"You've done very well,"

The altered voice emanated from the receiver, that superior tone, like a higher-up instructing a subordinate, made Emod unconsciously grip the handset tighter.

However, no dissatisfaction could be heard in Emod's voice.

"Can I have those items back now?"

Emod asked.

"Of course,"

"You've completed our deal,"

"I'll return the ledgers and videos to you as agreed,"

"I wish us a pleasant cooperation,"

"You can send someone now, but..."

"Don't you want to continue working with me?"

The other party's voice drew out, even through the altered tone, a hint of amusement emerged.

"No, I don't!"

Emod refused without hesitation.

He wouldn't be drawn in by such trifling tricks.

How childish.

"What a pity, I was actually considering telling you some information about Speaker Dodd, but alas..."

"Wait!"

"Dodd? Are you talking about the Dodd I know?"

Emod, who had just been indifferent, sat up straight.

"Is there a second Dodd in 'Cherry City'?"

The other party countered.

And this time, Emod very simply said,

"Let's talk about further cooperation."

Emod certainly knew that the imitator meant no good.

But the 'bait' thrown was too tempting.

So tempting he had to take it seriously to some extent.

Dodd, Cherry City's Speaker, a real big shot, was also the one who had always blocked his way into the council.

Of course, it wasn't because Dodd was so upright.

The other's filth was almost at par with his own.

The only reason for the obstruction was that the one he supported was Dodd's biggest rival.

All members of the council knew that the next Speaker would emerge between his supported candidate and Dodd. And currently, Dodd was at a considerable advantage.

If some 'accident' erased such an advantage... that would be too good.

"What do you want me to do?"

"Just like in the book, continue introducing clients to Jason?"

Emod inquired.

"Yes, just like in the book, please continue introducing clients to Mr. Jason. When you've helped Mr. Jason become famous and amassed some wealth, I will complete the transaction,"

"Remember, do not be overzealous, do not take any actions on your own initiative,"

"I want it exactly like in the book,"

The altered voice spoke.

There was a pause from the other end, then the voice continued,

"Of course, if you try to track me again next time, our deal is off!"

After saying that, the other party hung up directly.

Beep, beep-beep!

The electronic tone sounded through the receiver, Emod hung up the phone, and with a dark expression, looked at a device connected next to the phone. He wasn't sure how the other party knew he had installed a tracker, just as he wasn't sure how they knew about Dodd's 'leverage.'

After all, he had put a lot of effort into finding Dodd's leverage.

But to no avail!

Could it be a deception?

Emod wondered, but then he shook his head the next moment.

It shouldn't be!

If the other party could find my leverage, then finding Dodd's should be expected.

I couldn't find it, only because Dodd was wary of me and people related to me.

An outsider would naturally have it much easier.

Emod made excuses for himself.

People always tend to stand on the side that benefits them, looking at the positives.

Even if some issues arise, when they see them, they would often turn a blind eye.

Because this is... greed.

Exchanging a tiny cost for huge benefits can indeed make one lose their head.

Emod was no exception.

Even more so, he was exceptionally greedy.

"This guy cares a lot about immersing himself in his own world, so Jason has become an indispensable link. If I can get Jason under my control..."

As if he had realized something, Emod's expression grew even colder.

And at that moment—

Ding-ling-ling!

The phone rang again.

This time the displayed number was from one of his subordinates.

Furthermore, it was a trusted subordinate.

Therefore, Emod, without hesitation, picked up the phone.

"What's up?"

Emod asked bluntly, knowing that this confidant wouldn't call him if there wasn't an issue.