

## Menu 511

Chapter 511: 'Good Luck All The Time' Emod (3)

"Someone attacked our base!"

Bang, bang bang!

Amid the words, bursts of gunfire resounded around, and the moment Emod heard the gunshots, his heart tightened.

You see, that place was not only one of his secret bases but also one of his important sources of income.

If anything unexpected happened, he would suffer an unbearable burden.

"Who is it?"

"Who is attacking?"

Emod growled low, his face contorting into a grimace with that roar.

"It's..."

Bang!

Another gunshot sounded, different from the previous ones around him; this one was right by his ear.

The speech stopped abruptly.

"What is it?"

"Speak up!"

Emod heard the gunshot, but he still hoped his subordinate had enough vitality to tell him the most crucial clue. Unfortunately, all he could hear on the phone was a heaving breath, the sound of someone choking on blood in their windpipe, trying to speak but being restrained, completely unable to catch their breath.

At the moment of death, most people are in this state.

Emod knew, this subordinate was done for.

More importantly, he was about to suffer inconceivable losses.

"No matter who you are!"

"You're as good as dead!"

Emod threatened.

"I'm the same!"

"No matter who you are, I will personally take you out, because you have done the most unforgivable thing. I will use the methods I've learned in my long career to become your nightmare."

"I will find each and every one of you."

"And then, kill you one by one."

Having said that, Brian at one of Emod's secret bases elsewhere hung up the phone in his hand.

Snap!

The handset collided with the base, emitting a crisp sound.

The noise echoed in the empty room, bodies on the floor stained with white powder, which quickly soaked through and turned bright red, sticking to the corpses.

Brian didn't even glance at these poisoners.

They weren't worth his pity.

But...

Where was his daughter?

This was the most concealed place of Emod's that he could find.

Thinking, Brian took the bomb he had prepared from his backpack and gently placed it on the table. Then he turned and walked out.

Stepping outside, Brian pressed the button directly.

Boom!

Flames soared into the sky as Brian walked away without looking back, headed in the direction of Emod's residence.

This father couldn't wait any longer.

He was ready to meet the other party.

And then, have a good talk.

Meanwhile, on the other side of Cherry City, John ended the man in front of him with a single shot.

This was an 'agent', not the target he was looking for.

However, he hadn't lost the trail.

He had just interrogated the broker to find out whose subordinate he was.

In fact, at the beginning, the other party directly threatened him with their own boss.

Emod!

A big shot in Cherry City! Experience new tales on .com

John knew him.

So, to confirm, he interrogated the 'agent' to verify the other party's words.

Since the 'agent' didn't know who was behind the scenes, then the 'agent's' boss must know.

With that thought, John headed straight for Emod's residence without hesitation.

Sitting in the car on his way back to the residence, Emod felt terrified, not only because one of his secret bases was destroyed, but it seemed like something even more horrifying was about to happen.

No way!

I can't just sit and wait for death!

I need to gather my people!

Thinking this, Emod reached for the phone, but before he could pick it up, it began to ring.

Ring ring!

The sudden ringing startled Emod, making his hand tremble.

He hesitated for a moment before picking up the phone.

Then—

"Aaaahhhh!"

"Monster!"

"There's a monster!"

Chapter 512: The Hunt is On

When the sun had completely set, the lights of Cherry City began to twinkle on.

Those who had been busy all day hastened their pace to go home.

Of course, many chose to have a drink. Experience more content on .com

The relaxation after tension and busyness was unforgettable.

It was precisely for this reason that most people found the motivation to keep going.

It gave them a so-called sense of happiness.

Therefore, naturally, some professions emerged to cater to these needs, and for some, life was just beginning at this moment.

However, this definitely did not include the henchmen guarding Emod's mansion.

A team of 20 men was divided into four groups for continuous 24-hour guard duty; these trained toughs not only possessed considerable strength but were also adept at using modern technology.

With the help of cameras hidden all around, the two guards on duty had every inch of the mansion and the surrounding hundred meters in their sight from the surveillance room.

This all-encompassing view made the two men feel at ease.



They believed that unless someone went crazy, no one would dare mess with Boss Emod—no, the boss, that's the right term.

Emod had emphasized more than once that he should be called the boss, not the boss man.

Many who made the mistake had been punished.

Seeing the condition of those who had been punished was enough to make everyone learn what to do.

"The boss seems to be in a good mood recently."

One of the guards said.

"Of course!"

"The last 'goods' auctioned off fetched a real high price."

"Those guys on the streets are so lucky, stumbling upon such good 'merchandise'."

The other guard said, unable to help himself.

"What do you mean, stumbled upon?"

"Those guys are clever, tempting a bunch to Cherry City with cheap travel deals, then using so-called lucky draws at the mall to dupe the selected targets one by one."

"They put in a lot of effort."

The guard with the sideburns corrected his companion's statement.

"They're not afraid of getting busted?"

The other guard, who had loosened his shirt collar, sneered.

"Afraid? That's why they use all the boss's businesses."

"From advertising to travel agencies to arranged hotels and then to malls, aren't each of those the boss's enterprises?"

"Otherwise, how could they operate so smoothly?"

As the sideburns-wearing guard spoke, a smug smile appeared on his face.

"The cops should be on alert by now, right?"

The guard with the open shirt collar asked.

"Yeah, I heard that Davide has started investigating quietly, but... what does it matter? We'll just adjust the process—someone suggested turning dressing rooms into secret chambers. Once the chosen targets enter, we strike immediately!"

"With so many people around, usually, nobody notices."

"The way we directly nabbed people inside the church before was better, so direct! Unfortunately, we can't do that often, once or twice a year is the limit."

Sideburns sighed as he spoke.

The guard with the open shirt collar laughed scornfully.

"Are you missing the nun you strangled with your own hands?"

"Why did she scream?"

"She could have lived a few more days, but she didn't cooperate, did she?"

Sideburns shrugged his shoulders deliberately as he said this.

"Cooperate?"

"I heard one of this batch's 'merchandise' was uncooperative."

The guard with the open collar seemed to recall something.

"That girl tried to escape but was caught and brought back. If it weren't for her being virgin and fetching a higher price, she would've been given to the guys as a reward!"

"You know, the girl who got rewarded last time was tortured alive by those guys for three days before she died. The scene... tsk tsk."

Sideburns tsked with relish.

But a look of longing appeared on his face.

And in his eyes shone a wolf-like gleam.

Suddenly!

A swath of crimson covered his face, his eyes.

The longing on his face, the gleam in his eyes, both were engulfed by crimson.

Losa was stunned.

He turned his head instinctively and saw his companion, his head clutched in the grasp of a towering figure wearing a hockey mask.

The broad, powerful palm covered his companion's mouth, fingers digging into the muscles of his cheek, twisting his partner's face into a distortion, rendering him utterly incapable of speech.

An attacker?!

The moment Losa entertained the thought, a cold flash crossed his vision.

Thump!

Blood gushed out from his chest as Losa's head soared into the air, his face frozen in a dazed expression.

The man Jason was holding by the face widened his eyes as he began to struggle frantically to break free.

But the punches and kicks he was so proud of were useless at this moment.

Thud, thud, thud!

Each blow he landed on Jason felt like hitting a cement pillar; it didn't make Jason budge an inch but only caused him pain in his limbs.

After several attempts, the guard quickly came to grips with reality.

He looked at Jason with pleading eyes, hoping to be spared.

But Jason didn't even glance at him; after quickly dispatching the sideburns-wearing guard with a knife, he slashed the other guard's throat with a backhanded cut.

After casually tossing the dead body to the ground, Jason turned his attention to the surveillance screens in front of him.

Chapter 513: The Hunt is On (2)

He was not here for no reason.

Not only was he eliminating the 'eyes' that might detect something amiss, but he also wanted to thoroughly understand everything about this mansion.

Including, but not limited to, the patrolling sentries, secret watchers, and any possible hidden rooms.

Although he had Brian's investigation, Jason habitually wanted to check for himself.

Of course, being able to infiltrate the surveillance room directly, Brian's information was indispensable.

It didn't take long for Jason to confirm everything he needed to know.

The next moment, his tall figure vanished into the shadows of the corridor.

Then, the killing began.

One by one, the unsuspecting thugs were dragged into the shadows by hands that suddenly reached out for them.

Either there was the crisp sound of breaking bones.

Or the sound of a blade slicing through flesh.

These sounds arose one after another, unceasingly. Experience tales with

Though the thugs were fairly well-trained, they were nowhere near Jason's level.

So, when they were under Jason's gaze, their fate was already sealed.

Asa sat in the armchair, frowning slightly.

He felt that something was amiss.

But he couldn't put his finger on what it was exactly.



"Is it because the next auction is about to start?"

Asa speculated on the possible reasons in his mind.

As Emod's top lieutenant, Asa was well aware of the true purpose of this auction, to draw more people into his boss's camp and then help his boss secure a seat in the council.

Once his boss entered the Cherry City council, their situation would undergo a dramatic transformation.

Their boss would become a real big shot.

And themselves?

Naturally, they would rise with the tide.

What was more important was that at that time, their boss would certainly not stint on rewards.

As Emod's top lieutenant, he was bound to receive rewards beyond imagination, including money, power, women.

Asa, who came from a street gang, couldn't help but get excited when he thought of the rewards he could get.

"I hope that day comes soon!"

Asa thought to himself, then stood up and walked toward the fridge.

He wanted to drink some water, to cool down a bit.

The fridge door opened silently, revealing a head wrapped in cling film inside, its features blurred by the bloodstained plastic, already indistinguishable.

Asa saw the head, but was unfazed.

Because he was the one who put it there.

An intruder among them, personally executed by his hand.

The identity of the intruder?

Besides being a snitch for Chief Davide, there couldn't be another possibility.

The man had been keeping too close a watch on Asa recently.

However, Asa trusted that his boss would handle it appropriately.

So, that head would be shown to Emod.

Then, destroyed.

And the body?

Already fed to the dogs.

The ferocious, aggressive, warlike dogs that he had handpicked himself.

He savored that kind of scene.

Asa took a bottle of water from beside the fridge, twisted off the cap, and began gulping it down.

He nearly drained the 500ml bottle in one go.

The coolness swirled around his chest and stomach, quickly calming the irritation in his heart and chilling his brain, and then, he was struck with a realization.

He had finally noticed what was wrong!

Dog barking!

The seven ferocious dogs he had chosen hadn't made a sound for over half an hour.

This was impossible!

Even if they were led by one of their own men, those dogs would occasionally growl fiercely, let alone at night, when tied up at entrances, garages, and other places.

They would bark at any passing vehicle.

And although their boss's mansion was far from Cherry City's downtown, it was by no means in the middle of nowhere.

On the contrary, this was an affluent area, certainly not lacking in vehicles and patrolling security guards.

The moment these people got close, those dogs would bark.

If they didn't bark...

There was only one possibility!

Thinking this, Asa immediately pulled out a gun and turned toward a wall.

There was a backup set of surveillance equipment.

One set was in the surveillance room.

The other was in his own room.

Compared to the former, the latter had a wider and more detailed monitoring range.

Including but not limited to the thugs' rooms.

As Emod's most trusted lieutenant, Asa had this special privilege.

Click!

The wall slowly rose, revealing a bank of surveillance monitors.

When Asa saw what was on the screens, his pupils shrank.

Bodies!

He saw the bodies of his subordinates!

Not just one or two!

But the majority!

He couldn't find the rest, but Asa knew what had happened to them.

Without any hesitation, Asa picked up the phone.

He had to call his boss.

But at that moment, a tall figure wearing a mask pushed open the door to his room.

Bang, bang bang!

Asa pulled the trigger without a second thought.

Gunfire erupted, and casings clinked as they hit the floor.

But that tall, masked figure didn't even try to dodge; the bullets struck him squarely but...

Sparks flew everywhere!

Bullets ricocheted!

Asa's eyes involuntarily widened.

He was about to pull the trigger again, but the masked figure gave him no chance.

One moment at the door,

The next right in front of him.

Under the light, the hockey mask radiated a strange glow, growing more savage and terrifying, and when that broad-bladed, short-handled axe was raised...

The cold gleam of the blade enshrouded Asa.

Chapter 514: The Hunt is On (3)

Thud!

The weight in his hand lightened, as Asa's wrist, which was holding the gun, was severed clean off.

"Ahhhh!"

"Monster!"



"There's a monster!"

In agony, Asa couldn't help but cry out in pain.

Then, that voice stopped abruptly.

Asa was beheaded in one swift stroke.

"Hello? Hello?"

"Asa? Asa?"

Emod's voice rose from the telephone, as Asa had just made the call.

"Whoever you are!"

"I'm telling you!"

"You're as good as dead!"

Emod's voice was frantic with rage.

Jason paid no attention, simply lifting his foot and crushing the fallen receiver.

Crack!

With a crispy sound, the receiver was completely shattered.

The nostrils behind Jason's hockey mask twitched continuously.

He was zeroing in on the exact location of his 'food.'

To Jason, this was not difficult.

After dealing with the unnecessary trouble, it took just four or five seconds for him to locate where the 'food' was.

"The basement?"

Jason strode towards the basement.

According to the information Brian provided earlier, Emod's mansion had two floors underground, publicly claimed to be a wine cellar and a recreation room.

Of course, that was just to the outside world.

An elevator went directly to the two basement levels.

But Jason chose the stairs.

He didn't like the confined, narrow surroundings of the elevator.

Such environments always felt like a coffin to him.

With the data provided by Brian, Jason found the staircase next to the elevator that led down to the first basement level. The staircase was divided into two sections, connected by a platform, weaving up and down.

At the end of the lower half was a door bolted shut from the outside with a T-shaped latch.

Clang!

Jason pulled the latch and immediately heard panicked voices from behind the door.

There were hushed, nervous whispers, as well as the sounds of bodies curling up.

And when he pushed the door open, there was a chorus of cries.

Under the harsh light of the incandescent bulb, a tall, strong man wearing a hockey mask entered, holding a bloodstained machete. The moment Kemi saw him, she curled up and shrank back.

The other girls did the same.

Some of them even started sobbing uncontrollably.

Yet even in such distress, they covered their mouths to keep from making noise.

They had been targeted by this butcher-like man because of their sounds.

They didn't want to die.

Kemi also didn't want to die.

She wanted to go home.

She now deeply regretted not listening to her father's words.

Dad, where are you?

I want to go home.

Kemi prayed silently in her heart.

Then, she saw the butcher-like man standing in front of her cage.

"Kemi?"

"Your dad says it's time to go home."

Jason had seen Kemi's photo.

His ability to deal with Emod's men so quickly was much credited to Brian's information, and under such circumstances, he certainly didn't mind saving the man's daughter.

Clang!

The chains were severed by a stroke of Jason's blade.

Creak.

The door of the cage opened.

It wasn't only Kemi's cell; Jason opened all four of the remaining cages.

Having saved one, he naturally rescued the others along the way.

"Leave this place, then inform your families and call the police,"

"Tell them exactly what happened to you."

"Go now, hurry."

Jason said to the girls.

The girls looked at each other, too scared to move.

They worried it was some kind of trick.

But Kemi bravely stepped out and ran quickly towards the exit.

With one person taking action, the rest naturally followed suit.

Five girls ran out, but as the door closed, Kemi looked back.

Through the crack in the door, the tall figure continued downward.

What was he going to do?

Kemi wondered.

But she didn't dare ask, nor did she dare to follow.

I hope you're safe!

Kemi wished silently.

Jason couldn't hear such a blessing; the scent wafting into his nose quickened his steps.

Soon, he had entered the second basement level.

The scent of 'food' came from there.

Creak!

Amid the sound of the door axle scraping against the frame, Jason pushed the door open.

And then...

Jason paused.



## Chapter 515: The Suffering Writers

What can be found in the basement of a gang big shot stained with colors?

Guns? Gold? Cash?

All of these are normal.

Even the appearance of a pile of corpses, Jason could accept that.

Even if these corpses were incomplete, that would be okay.

None of the things that appeared would make Jason hesitate.

The reason Jason was genuinely stunned was that the objects before him were too unexpected.

A rickety bicycle, not only without a seat but also without its rear wheel, was simply hanging in the air, placed inside a glass cabinet.

A floor clock, its pendulum long since stopped, with its hour, minute, and second hands all gone, only a white face ringed with multi-colored yellow left, obviously very old.

This floor clock was also inside a glass cabinet.

Jason turned his head to look to one side.

He saw... a crowbar?

Jason confirmed for a few seconds, it was indeed a crowbar.

Completely black, placed on red velvet, with a glass case, just like the previous ones, covering it.

And the entire vast second underground level was adorned with just these three items.

From the gravity of their placement, it was clear that this was definitely not some surreptitious scheme.

Rather, Emod truly valued these things.

Similarly, this was not some special kind of collecting habit.

Because there was an emanating scent of 'food' from the crowbar.

An item with the scent of 'food' was naturally no ordinary matter.

But only the 'crowbar' had it, the bicycle and clock did not.

"Can't clearly identify, can only do a rough confirmation, huh?"

"And moreover, it's no longer 'weapons', but more... mundane?"

Thinking of the differences between the current 'food' and 'food' of the past, Jason could not help but remind himself to be attentive.

Clearly, the world before him had a different 'food system'.

His underlying thoughts did not hinder Jason's actions; he raised his hand and smashed the glass case that contained the 'crowbar'.

Drip, drip-drip!

Immediately, a shrill alarm went off.

But Jason did not care.

That phone call had long since let Emod know that it didn't matter whether the alarm sounded.

Lifting a corner of his hockey mask, Jason stuck out his tongue and licked the crowbar.

Sweet, with a faint scent of rice.

Hmm... it tasted a bit like Rice Krispies!

Jason's eyes lit up, he slightly took the 'crowbar' in his mouth and then bit down hard.

Crunch!

Amidst the crisp metallic sound, Jason bit off a corner of the 'crowbar'.

Crunch, crunch!

With the crisp sound of chewing, the sweetness and rice flavor directly spread across Jason's taste buds.

Jason was now certain, it was Rice Krispies.

He had eaten it often before and would not forget this flavor.

Then, he took out a ketchup packet Bob, the hotdog stand owner, had given him that afternoon from his pocket.

With one hand holding the ketchup packet, he bit at one corner of it, gently tearing it open, then squeezed the ketchup onto the 'crowbar'.

At this moment, Jason could clearly see the highly intricate regular pattern that appeared where he had bitten off the corner.

Obviously, this 'crowbar' was anything but simple, possessing an extraordinary purpose.

But for Jason, this was to be expected.

How could an object that became 'food' be simple?

The knives, swords, steel bars, television towers, and the like that he had consumed before were all special existences.

The 'crowbar' naturally should be the same.

It's just a pity... I don't know how to cook 'crowbar.'

I can only dip it in sauce!

Jason thought silently as he squeezed the ketchup from several packets over the whole 'crowbar.'

Next, he opened his mouth wide, and his throat bulged.

Suddenly, the entire 'crowbar' was stuffed into his mouth.

Crunch, crunch.

Amid the crisp sound of chewing, Jason squinted his eyes.

Eating was always such a pleasure.

Especially when eating came with a sense of fullness—

[Swallowing Physical Holy Sword (Inferior Imitation)!]

[Physical Strength, Energy, Moderate recovery from injuries!]

[Fullness +8!]

[Fullness: 152]

...

A fullness level that was not high for Jason at the moment, but this did not diminish his joy in the slightest.

Because it was completely an unexpected gain.

Having readjusted his mask, Jason strode towards the exit.

And just as he was about to push the door open, three grenades with their pins pulled were tossed in.

These were the spoils of war from earlier.

Now was the perfect time to use them, naturally to eliminate any trails he might have left.

Not just the second underground level.

A few other strategic locations, especially the two surveillance rooms, had been given special attention by Jason.

Boom, boom-boom!

The sound of the grenade explosions followed one after another.

As Jason walked out of the mansion, the whole house had virtually become ruins.

However, that was not the end.



Outside, Brian stood with a rocket launcher.

Seeing Jason emerge, he pulled the trigger toward the mansion.

Whoosh!

Boom!

The rocket plunged in and then came the roar of the blast.

The whole mansion just flew into the sky.

Then, Brian took out two strange-looking grenades from the car and tossed them towards the ruins of the mansion.

Incendiaries!

Jason instantly recognized the true nature of the two grenades.

Boom!

Flames shot into the sky!

The fire lit up the surroundings!

But besides the burning flames, there was not a single sound in the vicinity.

The wealthy neighbors all huddled in their basements while their armed guards stood nervously outside the door, not daring to come out and investigate what had happened.

Chapter 516: The Suffering Writers (2)

"Get in the car,"

Brian looked at the blazing fire, gesturing to Jason.

Jason shook his head in refusal.

Then, without waiting for Brian to speak again, he walked towards the darkness nearby.

He didn't mind acting with Brian, as it was to show his gratitude.

But that didn't mean he would leave with Brian.

The target was too big!

It was far better to be on his own.

Moreover, he was a writer, and he now had to rush back to write his manuscript.

As for what happened here?

It was the Masked Man's doing, what did it have to do with him, Jason?

Watching Jason disappear swiftly into the darkness, Brian didn't linger either. He opened the car door, got in, and stepped on the gas pedal right away.

"Daddy, who was that?"

As the car started, Kemi couldn't hold back any longer and asked directly.

"Let's say he's my friend,"

Brian murmured after a moment's thought.

"Then what do you do, Daddy?"

Kemi asked.

Brian fell silent.

He didn't want to lie to his daughter, but he also didn't want her to know about his past occupation.

Silence became the final choice.

Confronted with such silence, the clever girl Kemi didn't press further but changed the topic.

"Where are we going now?"

"Is it to Mommy's place?"

"No."

"Your mother's place isn't safe either."

"You need a safe place."

Brian shook his head.

He knew very well what kind of person Emod was; a guy like that would never let the girls who escaped from him off the hook, he would seek revenge and find out who ruined his den.

So, he needed to strike first.

Before Emod made his move, he wanted to eliminate Emod.

But obviously, he couldn't bring Kemi along.

He had to act alone.

Fortunately, he knew a very safe place.

...

Jason returned to Room 13 on the third floor of Apartment 3A.

The whole process was just as silent as when he had left.

After putting away the mask and machete and washing up, Jason, wearing only boxer shorts and slippers, with a pajama jacket thrown on, sat in his study.

Although he knew his writing skills were poor, faced with the "Main Quest," he had no choice but to bite the bullet and start writing.

At the top of the page, he quickly wrote "Chapter One."

Then, he remembered that the beginning of the book might need a "Preface."

So—

Rip!

He tore off the first page, crumpled it up, and threw it aside.

On the second sheet of paper, Jason carefully wrote a "Preface."

Then...

1 second.

2 seconds.

3 seconds.

...

Two minutes later, Jason still hadn't written a word.

He didn't know what to write.

He didn't even have an inkling how to begin.

But he wasn't one to give up so easily.

So he persisted for another minute.

He stood up silently, gently pulled the chair to the side, then grabbed the manuscript papers on the desk and began to tear them furiously.

"Can't write!"

"Can't write!"

"Really can't write!"

While tearing, Jason roared.

Then, he picked up the fountain pen, his eyes ruthlessly fixed on it.

"And you!"



"You're a mature fountain pen, why can't you write on your own?"

"Why?"

"Tell me why?"

Of course, the fountain pen didn't answer.

Only Jason's yelling echoed throughout the room.

Naturally, such sounds penetrated the walls and reached the ears of the police monitoring next door.

"Should we check it out?"

"I feel like something has happened to the writer,"

A young detective asked.

"It's okay,"

"Writers, you know,"

"they're all schizophrenics, they're all mad,"

An older detective with experience, holding his coffee, said unhurriedly.

The young detective looked puzzled.

"Think about it, a writer is writing a book, creating a book, he pours his heart and soul into that book, that book becomes a new world!"

"But what about reality? He still has to return to reality, he has to interact with people, needs to eat, drink, sleep."

"Back and forth once, twice, three times, shuttling between two worlds. Any normal person could go mad."

"Not to mention writers, who stay up all night, with irregular schedules and diets, they're even more prone to breakdowns,"

The older detective explained.

"Writers are really pitiful,"

The young detective couldn't help but lament.

"Yes,"

"Years of occupational hazards, along with various misunderstandings, put writers under pressures that most people can't even imagine,"

The older detective nodded in agreement.

"Misunderstandings?"

Once again, the young detective was confused.

The older detective didn't immediately answer but sighed lightly before continuing,

"Writers are those who devote almost all their energy to writing. They're different from most people, with no holidays, no downtime, 365 days a year."

"If you have friends who are writers, you'll have gone through this—"

"Can you come out to play? Sorry, I have to write."

"Come on, let's eat out! Sorry, I have to write."

"Let's have a date, go to the movies! Sorry, I have to write."

"It's a holiday today! Sorry, I have to write."

"Once, twice, at most three times later, writers basically have no friends left."

"People think they're antisocial, aloof."

"They don't realize how much writers want to go out, how much they want to dine out, how eager they are to date, but... they can't manage it, they have to write."

Chapter 517: The Suffering Writers (3)

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Sighing, the older police officer sighed again.

Then, without waiting for the young detective to ask another question, the older detective continued.

"Even so, there's still a whole bunch of people going after them."

"Those who watch pirated versions, not spending a dime, have the cheek to leave all sorts of comments, saying such books aren't worth reading, playing the 'I'm poor, a college student, I look down on genuine versions', acting all self-righteous because they're disadvantaged."

"But what if they really don't have the money?"

The young detective asked.

"No money?"

"That's just them thinking that this is the kind of money that needs to be saved, to be spent in more useful places, like: night clubs, bars, picking up girls. Then, each and every one of them is a winner, spending the money it would take to buy ten, a hundred books without blinking an eye."

"But the moment they come back to books?"

"They're back to their 'I'm poor, therefore I'm right', 'I'm disadvantaged, therefore I'm right' act."

"It's really laughable."

The older detective scoffed again and again.

"It's really outrageous!"

"Don't they ever think, if everyone goes to read pirated versions, how is an author supposed to make a living?"

The young detective indignantly retorted.

"Make a living?"

"Shouldn't authors go get a job?"

"Writing can be considered a contribution, something done out of love, then, they can just work another job to support themselves."

The older detective sarcastically mimicked the tone of some people.

The young detective was dumbfounded.

"This, this..."

"Do you think I'm making this up?"

"This was told to me by a writer friend of mine. A reader of pirated books actually said this to him."

"Moreover, that person was scoffing at the readers of genuine versions, considering these people fools, idiots."

The older detective recounted the story of a writer friend.

"Such a scourge on the community!"

The young detective said gravely.

"Not enough! Not enough!"

"How is this enough?"

"There are some who read pirated versions and deliberately leave harsh comments in the reviews of novice writers, because they know well that these new writers aren't paid attention to, that every comment is extremely valued, and even if it is harsh and sharp, it won't be deleted. They enjoy such treatment, but they don't know that doing this could actually stifle a writer for real."

The older detective sighed again.

"Writers are really pitiful."

The young detective couldn't help but say.

"Sometimes they are indeed pitiful, but other times they are actually very happy."

"Because they have a group of true readers supporting them."



"Have you never thought about how happy a writer can be after receiving the support of true readers? It's a kind of mutual understanding, an encouragement that comes from the soul, a bond that's unforgettable."

The older detective's voice involuntarily rose with excitement.

"True readers, huh?"

"I understand."

"I will definitely support genuine versions!"

The young detective nodded firmly.

The older detective smiled, about to say something, when footsteps came from the hallway.

He immediately made a gesture to his assistant, then climbed up to peer through the peephole.

Thump, thump thump!

The next moment after the knocking, Jason opened the door.

He had already heard the footsteps.

Looking at Brian and Kemi outside, Jason's brows furrowed. He didn't want to get entangled with this father-daughter pair for the time being, but eventually, he stepped aside, letting the two into the room.

He could hear the monitor next door holding their breath, watching intently.

After closing the door, Jason gestured towards the next room to Brian.

Immediately, Brian understood.

"Sorry."

"I couldn't think of a more suitable person."

"I can only leave Kemi in your care for now."

Brian whispered to Jason.

"You're going after Emod?"

Jason asked.

"Mhm."

"I won't be at peace until he's dead."

"Only if he's dead, can Kemi live in the sunlight."

Brian said outright.

Jason didn't immediately refuse; he pondered.

Emod, according to the descriptions in "Cross Street Tracker," was quite an essential character, a crucial element in the Protagonist's change. If Emod were to die, the killer's plans would almost fall apart on their own.

Maybe...

Jason, thinking of something, looked up at Brian.

"How long do you need?"

Jason asked.

"Till dawn!"

"At most till dawn!"

Brian gave a definite answer.

"She can stay till dawn."

That was Jason's reply.

"Thanks!"

"I appreciate everything you've done for me!"

"Jason, I'll repay you!"

Brian promised, then turned to look at his daughter.

"Kemi, stay here."

"Jason is trustworthy."

After speaking, Brian ignored Kemi's reluctant and obstructing gaze and turned to leave.

Brian didn't look back, and the door closed with a 'click'.

Jason looked at the girl huddled in the armchair, thought for a moment, then turned and walked towards his study and bedroom.

Kemi, who had been staring at Jason, paused as he turned around.

This silhouette... it looked familiar!

Almost instantly, Kemi thought of the fleeting glance back in the basement level earlier.

This silhouette was exactly the same as the previous one.

And the friend her father mentioned.

The two were one and the same!

Quickly, Kemi arrived at the answer.

So, when Jason came out holding a pillow and blanket, Kemi had already stood up from the sofa, looking straight at him as if seeing him for the first time, scrutinizing him closely.

Chapter 518: The Suffering Writers (4)

His eyes carried curiosity.

And a thick sense of surprise.

"What's the matter?"

Jason asked, his expression unchanged.

"Are you really a writer?"

Kemi inquired.

"Yeah, a has-been writer."

Jason nodded, not denying but simply adding a prefix.

"Then where's your mask?"

Kemi continued to ask.

"What?"

"I don't understand what you're talking about."

Jason denied flatly.

He didn't mind Brian knowing his identity because he knew Brian would keep his secret; he trusted people like Brian.

As for Brian's daughter?

Seeing her eager attitude, Jason knew what he had to do.

He didn't want any more surprises.

"It was you who rushed in there just now!"

"I'm certain of it!"

"Your silhouettes are exactly the same!"

"And your walking posture too, it's identical!"

Kemi paid no attention to Jason's denial, her eyes widened as she watched him, and she even started circling around him as if admiring an unexpected piece of art.



Under such scrutiny, Jason remained unmoved.

He had been through too many scenes like this.

The current situation didn't even count as child's play to him.

He threw the pillow and the blanket he was holding into Kemi's arms and coldly said,

"You now have two choices."

"First, you rest here."

"Second, leave my room."

After speaking, Jason no longer paid attention to Kemi and turned back to his bedroom-cum-study.

Kemi was stunned, a bit frightened by Jason's indifferent tone.

It took her quite a while to say, "This here is the living room."

"Hm, I know."

"You sleep on the living room sofa."

"The bed in the bedroom is mine."

Jason nodded, indicating Kemi hadn't misunderstood.

"But I'm a girl!"

Kemi stressed.

"Gender equality."

Jason returned to his desk and sat down without looking up, as he said,

"You're really not a gentleman!"

"If I weren't a gentleman, you wouldn't have a pillow and blanket."

Jason retorted.

"You... you're going to end up lonely!"

Kemi, looking at Jason's demeanor, huffily threw the pillow and blanket onto the sofa and burrowed into them.

She told herself that as long as she endured until daylight, saw her father, everything would be over.

But just two minutes later, Kemi couldn't resist getting up.

She tip-toed toward the bedroom-cum-study's door and peeked out stealthily.

She wanted to see what Jason was doing.

Then, she saw Jason holding a pen, looking seriously at a brand-new sheet of manuscript paper, as if he were brewing something.

Is this what writers do?

Kemi couldn't help but wonder.

Just when she was anticipating Jason to start writing vigorously, suddenly, he looked up.

Their eyes met.

"Sorry, I didn't mean to."

"I was just curious."

"I apologize."

Unlike her previous obstinacy, Kemi, knowing she had made a mistake, bowed apologetically in a flurry. Her chestnut-colored hair floated forward as she bent over, revealing her fair neck. When she straightened up and flicked her hair to one side, the youthful vitality of a young girl and a woman's unique allure were fully displayed.

It was no mistake that someone with Kemi's looks would catch the attention of the Emod Gang. At this moment, her actions, coupled with her delicate beauty, were incredibly charming.

Jason stood up from behind the desk and walked straight toward Kemi.

His tall, strong figure frightened Kemi into retreating step by step.

"At noon, when I'm home cooking hotpot base, adding potatoes, cabbage, tofu, shrimp paste, and lamb roll, I always take a sip of the soup first."

"The soup tastes really good at that time."

"Then, I'll eat all the ingredients, leaving just the hotpot base."

"In the evening, I'll add potatoes and cabbage again for dinner."

"At midnight, I'll light the stove once more, cook noodles in it, and serve them with the broth to make a special pot of soup noodles."

"Do you know why?"

Jason asked, looking down at Kemi.

"Because... you're poor?"

Kemi stuttered in response.

"Hmm."

"So, do you know what you should do now?"

"I'm too poor!"

"So I'm used to being alone."

"I find it a bit uncomfortable with two people."

After nodding, Jason walked over to the sofa.

What should I do?

How would I know what to do?

Kemi shouted in her heart but dared not raise her voice at Jason.

Then, as she watched Jason pick up the pillow and blanket and prepare to open the door as if to kick her out, Kemi got frantic. And at the moment the door was pulled open, she suddenly blurted out as if struck by a stroke of genius—

"I'll treat you to a midnight snack!"

Chapter 519: Took an Extra Glance at You in the Crowd

"Where to?"

As soon as Kemi's voice fell, Jason immediately asked.

It was entirely instinctive.

Originating from Jason's... stomach.

And from Jason's soul.

Therefore, faced with such an invitation, Jason would definitely not refuse.

He walked back, tossed the pillow and blanket he was holding onto the couch, and then looked down at Kemi.

"I know a good 24-hour restaurant."

Kemi, under Jason's gaze, felt a flutter in her heart, and almost subconsciously, she spoke.

Then, she noticed that Jason had already started striding out the door before she had even finished speaking.

"Hurry up."

Jason, reaching the door and seeing that Kemi had not followed, called out to hurry her.

"Oh, oh, coming, coming."

Kemi responded absentmindedly.

It wasn't until the two of them had left the apartment that Kemi came back to her senses.

Was that it?



Everything's okay now?

Resolved with just a meal?

Was Jason too easygoing?

Or was he just cold on the outside but warm on the inside?

Could it be... he likes me?

As she thought about it, Kemi raised her head and sneakily glanced at Jason.

Under the streetlight, Jason's tall, strong figure almost completely enveloped Kemi, but she didn't feel the slightest bit of aversion. On the contrary, deep inside she felt a sense of security she had never known before.

When she was in despair, it was this tall figure who had slashed through the iron locks with a single stroke and rescued her.

She remembered clearly how the sparks had danced as the blade met the lock.

She opened her mouth, wanting to say something to Jason.

But in the end, she closed it.

She realized she didn't understand Jason.

And he was different from the other guys she had interacted with before.

Those boys would indulge her, accommodate her, flatter her.

But not Jason.

Jason faced her with an attitude of equality.

This feeling was so novel!

It gave her a strange thrill and... joy!

Yes!

Joy tinged with delight!

It was all so fresh for Kemi, experiencing feelings she had never had, and so she quickened her pace.

Jason?

He wasn't paying attention to what Kemi was thinking at his side; instead, he was guessing what midnight snacks the restaurant might have.

About 500 meters later, Kemi stopped walking.

In front stood a restaurant with no sign—Jason determined it was a restaurant by the smell.

The exterior?

The understated décor could easily make anyone think it was a design firm instead of a restaurant, with its gray brick walls and lighting.

"Case Restaurant, this is one of the 24-hour restaurants I know of."

"Their flavors are quite good."

"More importantly, their ice cream is excellent."

As a regular, Kemi introduced the place.

Ice cream?

Jason nodded to show he remembered, planning to start with thirty portions.

"Come on!"

"I'm paying!"

"Don't be shy!"

Kemi said as she pushed the door open and entered, with Jason following behind, surveying the restaurant's layout subconsciously.

Different from the indecipherable understatement of the exterior, the inside of the restaurant was normal, with conventional restaurant seating—long tables and stools, with nothing noteworthy except for a stage on one side, obviously intended for large groups of patrons. *ŘANÓĚS*

Being only two, Jason and Kemi naturally chose a corner of the restaurant.

After sitting down, Jason's gaze traveled to another corner of the restaurant.

There sat another two people.

Like him and Kemi, a man and a woman.

The man sat with his back to them, his face unclear, his voice deep; the woman appeared very young, even younger than Kemi, with a hint of panic on her face.

"I shouldn't have run away."

"They'll kill us!"

"We're done for!"

The girl murmured in a low voice, her tone laced with sobs.

"Shh!"

"Don't worry."

"Telly, I promise you, we are safe—at least here."

The man was comforting her.

Jason wasn't deliberately eavesdropping; it was his heightened senses that made him unintentionally overhear the conversation of the two.

"What's up?"

"Jason, can you hear their conversation?"

Kemi turned her head to look at the two who were several meters away, her eyes wide with surprise as she turned to Jason.

"I can't."

Jason responded as such, and then his gaze shifted to the approaching waiter.

"Good evening, the two of you."

"Don't worry, I assure you, there won't be any problems there."

Apparently noticing that both Jason's and Kemi's attention was on the distant couple, the waiter quickly explained, then handed Kemi the menu.

"Glad to see you back."

"What would you like?"

The waiter inquired.

"It's on me, you choose."

Kemi passed the menu to Jason.

Without hesitation, Jason opened the menu and after carefully looking through it, he pointed to the drinks section on the last page and said:

"This one, this one, and this one."

"Just these?"

The waiter swiftly took note of the alcoholic drinks Jason was pointing at.

Although it was uncommon for guests to order alcohol directly, it was not unheard of.

Some people liked to do it backwards, ordering some drinks first, and then some snacks to go with the alcohol.

"Aren't you going to eat anything?"

"I'm paying, don't hold back."



Kemi saw the drinks Jason ordered, clearly misunderstanding something.

Such a gentle person.

To think he's concerned that, as a student, I don't have much income, so he ordered these cheaper drinks!

After we drink, he'll definitely use the excuse 'You treated me, now let me treat you' to order again.

Chapter 520: Took an Extra Glance at You in the Crowd (2)

Although a bit cliché, the gentle Jason actually looked quite handsome.

"Got all that down?"

Jason didn't pay attention to Kemi and instead looked at the waiter.

"Yes, I've got it all down."

"Is there anything else you need?"

After nodding, the waiter asked once more.

"Cancel everything I just ordered, serve the rest."

Jason answered.

"What?"

The waiter was taken aback.

"Cancel everything I just ordered, serve the rest."

"Right, your ice cream is good; bring me thirty servings."

Jason repeated and then emphasized.

"Are you sure, everything but what was just ordered? And you want thirty servings of ice cream?"

As the waiter spoke, his voice trembled, and his wide eyes were filled with disbelief.

If he hadn't seen Kemi before, he would have thought Jason was there to cause trouble.

The waiter couldn't believe it.

Kemi felt the same disbelief.

She seemed to freeze, looking at Jason as if she were stupefied.

She hoped that at this moment, Jason would turn his head and say to her with a smile, "Hey, silly girl, I'm just kidding, it's a joke."

Then, she actually saw Jason turn his head and show his teeth to her.

His ghastly teeth, under the light, shimmered with a faint Cold gleam.

To Kemi, it was as if she was seeing a great white shark charging towards her, its gaping mouth wide open.

"Hey, you said you were treating, right?"

After finishing, Jason gestured to the waiter with a wave of his hand, indicating to hurry up.

"Coming right up!"

The waiter, coming back to his senses, turned and ran towards the kitchen.

The night shift's sales were tied to his bonus.

Watching the departing waiter, Kemi raised her hand, wanting to stop him, but in the end, she did not make a sound.

She was the one who offered to treat.

Now she couldn't take it back.

But...

She didn't have enough money!

Although she didn't know how much it would cost to order the entire menu, she was sure that the money her father had given her wasn't even enough to cover the thirty ice creams.

What to do?

Am I going to be left washing dishes?

Is it too late to regret this now?

Kemi looked at Jason, who sat confidently, fidgeting anxiously.

Now she truly wanted to make a phone call to her father.

But she worried that doing so would disturb him.

And in the midst of Kemi's anxiousness, the dishes were served one by one.

This 24-hour restaurant was a fusion cuisine eatery.

To put it simply, from Wellington beef, tomahawk steak, to charcoal-grilled pork belly, pan-seared lamb chops, to hand-pulled lamb, potato stewed beef brisket, and fried rice—they had it all.

While not everything could be available.

They all had their specialties.

Moreover, the chefs here did a pretty good job.

Especially that tomahawk steak.

When the waiter asked if it should be cut, Jason gestured with a swipe of his hand denying it; he ignored the heat and directly lifted the tomahawk steak, and instantly, the aroma of the beef hit his nose.

Jason bit into it, restraining himself.

Juices spurted everywhere.

The marinated beef was even more tender and delicious, the mix of lemon salt and herbs created a unique steak sauce that, along with Jason's chewing, started dancing on his taste buds.

A subtle sourness, in a certain way, heightened the salty taste.

And the mushroom bits in the herb sauce were quite crispy.

Had they been fried in advance?

Thinking this, Jason opened his mouth again and completely pulled the remaining beef off the bone.

Even with restraint, a tomahawk steak was only a two-bite affair for Jason.

No, that's not right!

Actually, three bites!

Jason tossed the bone into his mouth and began to chew.

At the same time, he picked up the knife and fork beside him and began cutting into the Wellington beef.

The pastry was easily sliced open, releasing a burst of pepper and beef aroma.

It's not an adjective.

But literally 'burst'!

A stream of leftover heat trapped within the pastry—and with the touch of the knife and fork—

Whooshed!

It sprayed out, enveloping the dining table.

"Did you make the pastry with layers on purpose?"

"Not bad!"

While saying this, Jason put the beef into his mouth.

What was worth paying attention to was that he tasted the mushroom sauce again.

It was still crispy and delicious.

Even though this was his second attempt, Jason felt not a hint of weariness.



The charcoal-grilled pork belly was served with a small stove, sizzling on a grate. Jason picked up a piece, dipped it in cumin and chili powder, and threw it into his mouth.

The fat instantly burst out.

It was like reuniting with an old friend after a long separation.

Wonderful!

So moving it brought tears to one's eyes.

It made one irresistible to have another piece.

The pan-fried lamb chops that followed, however, were different.

They were tender.

As tender as a shy touch on a maiden's hand when you first meet.

The olive oil firmly locked in the juices of the lamb chops, making them exceptionally tender. Pepper grains cleared away the lamb's gamey taste, while the crushed basil leaves and chopped parsley added a lovely garnish and a bit of crunch, just like the maiden who coyly withdrew her hand, her eyes wide with feigned anger and shyness, yet with words she hesitated to speak.

A flavor to reminisce over and over.

In front of the hand-torn lamb, stewed beef with potatoes, and fried rice with eggs, lay a performance at its peak.

The stewed beef's sauce was poured over the fried rice with eggs, big chunks of lamb meat also placed on top. There was no need for any ceremonies, just lick one's fingers, grab a spoon, shovel the rice, and stuff it fiercely into one's mouth.

At this moment, the lamb meat was still bashful.

The beef was reserved.

Only the rice was grainy, slightly hardened.

But the sauce harmonized everything.

When the lamb and beef mixed together in one's mouth, any shyness or reservation quickly vanished, leaving only the exuberant and solid taste of meat.

Slurp!

Jason, holding his plate, was almost inhaling his food.

Five minutes!

Start to finish, just five minutes!

The entire table of dishes was wiped clean!

Kemi was once again dumbfounded.

It wasn't just Kemi, the men and women from a distance were also attracted by Jason.

Even the girl who had been timid and scared was staring blankly at Jason.

But the man, upon seeing Jason, had a look of surprise.

Jason noticed.

However, he didn't pay it any mind.

He put down his plate and called out to the waiter who was about to serve him ice cream, "Let's have another round of what we just had."

Kemi shuddered.

She had calculated the cost of the food she had just had, even washing dishes, she would need to wash for two months.

Another round, and she probably wouldn't be able to leave this restaurant for the rest of the year.

Spending New Year's Eve washing dishes here?

She absolutely refused!

After all, this year was a special New Year's Eve!

She didn't want to!

Should she just slip away?

Thinking this, Kemi shook her head the next moment.

If she just slipped away like that, she would be too embarrassed.

Moreover, even if she wanted to slip away, where could she go?

Her father had told her to wait here for Jason.

The phrase 'caught between a rock and a hard place' described Kemi at this moment perfectly.

After experiencing the fright of a few days ago and the despair from a few hours earlier, she was once again learning another important lesson in the adult world.

Similarly, she was learning how adults solve their problems.

Sigh.

Kemi resigned herself with a sigh.

She was ready to wash dishes.

Never again would she make promises so casually!

The girl told herself this earnestly.

And just at that moment, the restaurant's door was suddenly pushed open.

Four menacing figures walked in.

As they entered, their gaze locked onto the man and woman at the distant table. The girl's face turned ashen, and she began to tremble

The four men surrounded them.

"Do you know the consequences of running away?" one of the men sneered at the girl.

The remaining three men were staring menacingly at the middle-aged man, threatening him with their glares.

Then, another seven or eight people walked in.

The newcomers, like the first group, had fierce faces.

Among them, a man wearing a leather jacket clearly appeared to be the leader of the group. The leader first glanced at his 'targets' that had been 'secured', then his eyes swept over to Jason and Kemi.

Upon seeing Jason's sturdy figure, the leader's brow furrowed, a hint of wariness flashing in his eyes.

However, when he turned to see Kemi, such wariness vanished without a trace.

"Heh heh!"

"Seems like we've found two of the boss's goods!"

"This is just too good!"

Amidst the malicious laughter, the leader of the group drew a dagger and started walking step by step toward Jason and Kemi.

His eyes fixed on Kemi, the blade in his hand pointed at the back of Jason's neck, and his mouth issued a direct threat:

"Hey, buddy, if you don't want to get into trouble, just stay still."

"Otherwise, you..."

Click!