

Menu 531

Chapter 531: Findelter (3)

The 56-year-old Findelter had served two masters in total.

The first was a man named Edward, unfortunately, this gentleman's business failed, and he was unable to pay Findelter's remuneration. After nearly 30 years of partnership, they amicably dissolved their contract.

The second was Emod.

This bastard was hired through a referral to Findelter two years ago.

It was also during these two years that Emod's above-board business became quite prosperous.

Many people were speculating that this had to do with the help of the old butler.

And within the dossier in Davide's hands, there was confirmation of this.

Possessing 30 years of experience serving that "Edward," Findelter had not only accumulated a vast network of contacts but also possessed a remarkable business acumen. His investment advice for Emod often reaped significant rewards.

Therefore, Emod trusted the old butler even more.

So, Davide was certain that this old butler must know something they didn't—the "secrets of Emod."

The more this was the case, the more Davide exhibited relaxation and goodwill.

The middle-aged Chief of Police didn't look up, continuing to flip through the dossier in his hands, the praise from his mouth never ceased.

"You are truly impressive!"

"Just in 8 years, graduated from 'Butler Academy' at the age of 24. As I understand, it usually takes at least 10 years to graduate from there."

"Your first employer was extremely satisfied with you."

"Diligent, responsible, almost every year you received the same excellent evaluations."

"Your second employer... well, he couldn't praise you enough, considering you reliable and a butler who could inherit the responsibility of managing major affairs."

The praise from the middle-aged Chief of Police didn't elicit any response from the old butler.

The Chief of Police didn't seem to care whether there was a response or not, he just kept talking to himself.

Time ticked by, second by second.

Davide seemed to have met an old friend he could reminisce with.

His speech never stopped, save for when he poured water for himself and the old butler, and he even had someone cook two packets of instant noodles.

"Sorry, there isn't much to offer you."

The middle-aged Chief of Police held up the instant noodles, with a genuine look of apology on his face.

"It's more than enough."

"Thank you."

This time, the old butler replied again.

And this time, he added one more sentence.

The middle-aged Chief of Police smiled inwardly.

Everything was under his control.

In the next room, Assistant Hunter, watching all this through one-way glass, also breathed a sigh of relief.

He could tell that the old butler's attitude was softening.

A few more sessions and they would surely get what they wanted.

But just then—

Knock, knock, knock.

The door to the interrogation room was knocked on.

Unlike the Chief of Police, the knocker waited quietly instead of entering immediately after knocking.

"Come in."

The Chief of Police frowned, but quickly switched back to a smile.

The door opened.

A man dressed identical to Findelter walked in.

Compared to Findelter, this man was a bit older.

But still upright, his steps consistent as he moved, his completely white hair meticulously combed back, and a neatly folded white handkerchief peeking from the pocket over his chest. řǎnôBỀ\$

However, what caught the middle-aged Chief of Police's attention the most was the paper order the man carried.

A release order.

It was signed by the chief of police to release Findelter.

"Chief Davide, good evening."

The elder first bowed, then handed the order to the middle-aged Chief of Police.

Having already glimpsed the release order, the Chief of Police took the order with an unchanged expression, then, with a smile, stepped aside to indicate that they were free to leave at any time.

"Thank you."

The old butler stood up from his chair and thanked the Chief of Police again as he passed by him.

Davide immediately responded with a smile, then watched as the two left.

When the figures of the two disappeared at the end of the corridor, Assistant Hunter in the observation room could not hold back any longer.

"Chief, are we just letting them go like this?"

The young man inquired.

"With an order from the chief of police, we can't keep anyone here!"

"And furthermore..."

"Things seem to have become even more interesting."

Davide's smile grew even brighter.

"Interesting?"

The young man was taken aback.

"That man, the one who came with the order from the chief, is Dodd's butler."

Davide said softly.

"Dodd?"

"Which Dodd?"

The young man looked incredulously at Davide.

Davide didn't answer, just nodded his head.

And in the eyes of the middle-aged Chief of Police, a chill emerged.

...

Outside the police station, inside an ordinary sedan, Findelter sat in the passenger seat.

The butler of the Speaker of the Cherry City Council was in the driver's seat and started the car.

The car slowly left the police station, and after passing through a block, it started to accelerate.

Only when they reached a secluded area of Cherry City did the car finally stop.

"What on earth did you do?"

The moment the car stopped, Pang'er demanded.

The Speaker's butler seemed extremely angry, not only glaring at Findelter with wide eyes, his facial muscles twitching as he shouted after asking his question, "Do you realize what you've done?"

"I didn't dissuade Mr. Emod."

"I knew it would be dangerous for him to go back, but I didn't dissuade him."

The old butler hung his head in shame.

"Why?"

"Why wouldn't you remind him?"

"Why didn't you fulfill your duty as a butler?"

The interrogation continued.

"I, I..."

The old butler opened his mouth, stammering slightly.

Then he took a deep breath and said directly:

Chapter 532: Findelter (4)

"I don't want tragedy to have occurred!"

"I don't want those innocent girls to suffer anymore!"

"I don't want those happy families to be destroyed again!"

The voice was forceful and resonant, striking as if hitting the ground.

Old Pang'er looked at the flushed face of the butler, at those tenacious eyes mixed with hesitation, he remained silent for a moment, then he continued to ask.

"Do you know the consequences of what you're doing?"

"I do."

"Dismissal from the Butler Alliance."

"Loss of your qualifications as a butler."

The old butler nodded, his expression bitter.

"You will also be placed on the blacklist, unwelcome in any household or power that has members of the Butler Alliance... You've lost your last shred of dignity,"

Pang'er enunciated, word by word.

The old butler was silent, his eyes brimming with a hint of regret.

"A person must bear the consequences of his actions."

"I do."

"And so do you."

Having said that, Pang'er pointed outside.

The old butler pushed the car door open, and as he was about to close it, an envelope was handed to him.

"Mr. Pang'er?"

The old butler looked towards Pang'er.

"Your severance pay, it's not from the 'Butler Alliance', it's personally granted by me,"

Pang'er paused for about a second before continuing, "If you can, leave Cherry City immediately and never come back in your lifetime!"

Whirr!

The engine roared as Pang'er pressed the accelerator.

The car sped away.

About four or five hundred meters out, the seemingly ordinary central control panel flipped over, revealing a small LCD screen with the image of a man in his sixties with a full head of white hair, dressed in pajamas.

"Findelter, quite impressive, isn't he?"

The elder said so.

"Yes, sir, he is a good man."

"But not suitable for living in society today."

"Nor a qualified butler,"

Pang'er answered respectfully.

The title and tone both revealed the identity of the old man on the screen.

The Speaker of Cherry City: Dodd.

"This is exactly why I had hoped he would appear beside Todini, but alas... he was just a bit short, and just the darkness exhibited by Emod was enough to devour him,"

The Speaker sighed, his face a picture of regret.

Todini, the Councilor who Emod had supported with all his might.

Similarly, he was also a powerful contender for the next Speaker.

Simply put, Todini was the current Speaker's greatest enemy.

"I'm sorry, sir."

"My arrangements were inadequate."

"I misjudged Findelter's tenacity."

Pang'er spoke apologetically.

"No, no, no."

"Pang'er, you're not at fault."

"I also made the wrong estimate."

"So, don't dwell on it."

The old man waved his hand dismissively.

"Yes, sir."

"Also, I've fully investigated that mimicry case; it was just Emod's subordinates messing around."

Pang'er reported on another matter.

"Oh?"

"Damn it."

"Such darkness was allowed to be exposed to the public eye."

The old man frowned, then his brows smoothed out again.

He adjusted his sitting posture, his voice taking on a more relaxed tone.

"Fortunately, he's dead now!"

"Although we didn't achieve our goal against Todini, Emod's death is good news for us."

"Come back quickly, we need to discuss how to maximize these benefits."

"And remember to take care of Findelter,"

The old man instructed.

A butler graduating from a butler academy isn't just someone who manages affairs; more often, they also serve as advisors.

They can also occasionally perform some less honourable professions.

Which makes them more trustworthy to their employers.

Of course, each of them is highly professional.

"Yes, sir!"

With that, the LCD screen concealed itself once more.

And Pang'er dialed a number on his phone.

"Yes, proceed,"

He gave a simple command, and the car accelerated.

The headlights vanished into the night before long.

The night, as always, enshrouded the land.

The profound darkness, peaceful, yet brought an intrinsic fear.

Findelter, with an envelope stuffed with thick stacks of large bills, walked along a suburban road, where the road surface was smooth, but without streetlights; thus, when a light appeared behind him, he immediately stopped and looked back.

A pickup truck slowly approached, with a bearded man at the wheel.

"Hey, need a lift?"

The bearded man asked.

"I would be greatly obliged."

The old butler bowed in thanks. Watching the butler bow, the bearded man's eyes flashed with murderous intent, and he promptly pulled out a handgun, aiming it at the butler's head.

At that moment, the butler, seemingly to express his gratitude more sincerely, bent his neck further, lowering his head even more.

Then—

Whoosh!

A small, short arrow shot out, piercing straight into the bearded man's throat.

Spurt!

Blood exploded forth.

Chapter 533: There are always some fools in the world

The bearded man's head drooped slightly as he reached up to grab the arrow that had embedded itself in his throat, his eyes filled with disbelief.

"Heh, heh."

He tried to say something, but as words reached his throat, his voice involuntarily shifted into a kind of exhausted low chuckle, replete with both eeriness and ferocity.

Feeling life slip away rapidly, the bearded man's instincts told him to pull the trigger, intent on taking his target down with him, but by then his fingers had stiffened, rendering him incapable of action.

Gurgle.

A string of black blood bubbles emerged from his mouth.

The bearded man's body stiffened, going utterly silent.

The bubbles joined into a flow, tracing a path down from his mouth.

Dark as ink, they sent shivers down the spine of all those who saw.

The arrow was poisoned!

And with a kind of violent poison at that!

Contact with blood meant instant death!

The Butler straightened up, looking at the corpse inside the vehicle with complex emotions in his eyes.

"Sorry."

"I'm not ready to die yet."

"At least, I can't die now."

As he said this, the Butler dragged the corpse out of the vehicle.

He didn't dispose of it carelessly. Instead, after removing the arrow from the body's neck, he took a shovel from the pickup's bed and dug a hole in the soft soil beside him, dragging the body into it.

As for why there would be a shovel in the pickup?

The answer went without saying.

The bearded man buried in the hole was evidence enough.

It's just that the person who buried him differed.

After refilling the hole, the Butler, carrying the shovel, made his way back to the roadside, returned the shovel to the pickup's bed, washed his hands with a bottle of water, wiped them, put on white gloves again, and got into the vehicle.

He didn't leave Cherry City.

The Butler drove the vehicle back to Cherry City.

222 Potato Street, located in the southern district of Cherry City.

The Butler headed straight for this place.

Compared to the wealthy district, this was the perfect choice for those with some assets but not truly affluent.

Naturally, the environment here was quite nice, with a row of buildings that were not only aligned but each had its own little garden.

No. 222 stood out as even more refined, with a prettier flowerbed and a small fountain, although the fountain was not operating during the deep of the night.

And on the stone pillars flanking the gate, the one on the right hand side had a palm-sized gargoyle crouched on top of it.

The gargoyle was very small but lifelike.

Of course, what's more important was that inside the slightly open mouth of the gargoyle, there was a camera capable of clearly observing everything around it.

Consequently, as soon as the car stopped in front of the door, and the Butler got out, the iron gate clicked open on its own.

The Butler entered the courtyard, closed the door behind him, and with ease made his way into the house.

Inside the house, someone was already waiting for him.

A man with a somewhat gaunt figure and a grim expression sat at the end of the corridor.

Clad in home attire, he indicated clearly that he was the true master of the house.

Seeing the Butler walk in, this host displayed a very friendly demeanor.

"Good evening, Findelter," he said and matched his words with a smile.

The smile tried to appear warm, but to the average person, it looked more like a jackal baring its teeth.

It wasn't just ferocious; it was filled with greed, as though ready to devour someone at any moment.

"Good evening, Troys," the Butler responded, his face showing hesitation and discomfort.

This tension made Troys laugh.

He, of course, knew why the Butler held such an expression.

Everything was within his expectations.

So, the master of the house stood and approached the Butler, placed a hand on his shoulder as if to offer concern, and said:

"What's the matter, Findelter?"

"You can tell me."

"We're friends," Troys assured him with a sincere look.

"I was discovered by Lord Dodd, and just now Pang'er sent an assassin after me," the Butler confessed through clenched teeth, laying bare his recent brush with death.

"Is that so?"

"This is even more intense than we imagined, but not to worry, had we not prepared for the worst before this?" Troys reassured the Butler.

Then he paused and asked, "Did you bring the item?"

"I brought it."

"This contains Mr. Emod's account book."

The Butler produced a flash drive from his clothes but did not hand it over immediately to Troys. His face filled with guilt, he hesitated for two full seconds before finally extending his hand.

"Please remember the promise you made to me, Mr. Troys," the Butler emphasized.

"Of course."

Troys took the flash drive and walked over to his desk to check its contents on his computer. After verifying what was inside, a smug smile formed on his lips. He looked up at the Butler and said,

"Regarding the whereabouts of your former employer 'Edward,' in fact, I've already obtained some clues."

With those words, Troys pulled open a drawer next to him, taking out a brown paper bag.

"This is all the information I've gathered," he said.

"Thank you! I'm so very grateful," the Butler said, his hands trembling with emotion as he eagerly grabbed the paper bag from the desk.

But at that moment, Troys got up from behind the office desk and circled behind the Butler. The Butler, fully focused on the paper bag, failed to notice Troys' movements until a dagger pierced through his waist.

Thud!

The Butler, in the midst of opening the paper bag, shuddered; the bag fell to the ground.

Chapter 534: There are always some fools in the world (2)

The butler turned his head in confusion and stared at Troys, his eyes full of incomprehension.

"Sorry, Findelter," he said.

"I didn't want to either."

"But your existence could affect us, so we had no choice but to ask you to die—of course, we won't let you die in vain, your death will certainly be valuable, just like Emod's, after all, the one who killed you is an assassin sent by Pang'er, and Pang'er is Dodd's butler, yes, just as you're thinking, our target has always been that Dodd."

Troys spoke with apparent regret, but his face showed not the slightest hint of it, only smug satisfaction.

However, at this moment, the old butler was not paying attention to what Troys said, murmuring incessantly to himself.

"Ed...Edward..."

"Did you say Edward?"

"Of course, we don't know where Edward is, he disappeared so bizarrely."

"Who could know where he is?"

"All this was to deceive you, to make you our pawn."

Troys explained.

He didn't mind elaborating a bit more to a dead man.

Or rather... he was bragging.

After all, this was his plan--devised after learning about Findelter, the fool who earnestly sought his missing former employer although their contract had ended.

A plan that would allow them to get rid of Dodd and rid themselves of Emod at the same time.

The former was a major adversary of his older brother 'Todini.'

The latter?

A street thug who aspired to climb the ranks?

Pure folly.

He had hoped the opponent could deal with some matters they couldn't handle openly, but since the opponent was so ungrateful, naturally, he became a target to be eliminated. ~~ŘAN~~ŌβĚs

Of course, they absolutely could not act personally.

His brother 'Todini' was already a Councilor in the assembly, and could not afford such a tarnished reputation.

And him?

The same applied.

He was about to become a Councilor himself—taking over Emod's spot, an arrangement already set in motion.

Without Dodd's interference, success was almost certain.

For this, he was truly grateful to the idiot Findelter.

Troys looked down at the butler, who, upon hearing of the deception, had a momentary resurgence, struggling ceaselessly. Troys twisted his wrist, the dagger plunged into the butler's body immediately slashing through his kidneys.

Then, he pulled it out and stabbed again.

This time, into the back of the heart.

Thud!

The butler's body trembled, the light fading from his eyes.

Thump!

As Troys released his grip, the butler collapsed, crashing onto the thick carpet.

Troys checked for breath, pulse, heartbeat to confirm the butler's death, then delivered another stab to the chest for good measure.

Afterward, he wrapped the butler's body in the thick carpet on the floor, carried it out of the house, and dumped it into the pickup truck.

The pickup started up again.

And once more headed to the outskirts.

At a location previously selected, Troys placed the butler in the driver's seat, adjusted his position, buckled the seatbelt, and then pressed the lifeless foot onto the still-running pickup's accelerator.

Whirr!

Bang!

Amid the engine's roar, the pickup smashed through the guardrail and plummeted down the cliff.

Bang, bang bang!

After several impacts, the pickup crashed at the bottom of the ravine.

Troys looked briefly at the flaming pickup, then turned and walked away.

This sinister man pulled out his phone as he walked and dialed a number.

"It's done."

As soon as the phone connected, Troys stated bluntly.

"You didn't leave any clues, did you?" the voice on the other end asked.

"Of course not."

"I handled everything very carefully, especially the biggest loophole—Findelter. That guy, until his death, kept thinking about finding his former employer, that fellow named Edward."

"I really don't know if this guy was dumb or just stupid."

Troys let out a scornful chuckle.

"But doesn't that work out perfectly for us?" the other voice also began to laugh.

"Yeah."

"It's a pity there's only one such useful pawn."

"If we had a few more, all of Cherry City would be ours."

Troys sighed.

"Soon! Very soon!"

"One day, Cherry City will be ours!" said the voice on the other end with conviction, and just at that moment—

Boom!

An explosion sounded from below the cliff.

"Did you hear that?"

"That's applause for our imminent victory."

Troys said, a smirk forming on his lips.

"Heard it."

"Get back to your place quickly, and don't slip up; that guy is not easy to fool," the voice on the other end reminded.

"Understood!" Troys responded. Stay tuned for updates on

He never complained about his brother's caution.

Because he was the same.

In fact, during their calls, they would never use any personal names, and moreover, his brother would always use a voice changer.

Troys picked up the pace. After a bend in the road, he dived into the woods beside him.

Moments later, Troys appeared, riding on a motorcycle.

The motorcycle had been placed in advance, specifically for this moment.

When he rode back into the city area on the motorcycle, Troys crushed the phone under his foot, tossed the pieces into different trash cans, and his last bit of worry vanished.

In an hour, the trash would be collected by garbage trucks and taken to the waste station for sorting and destruction.

Perfect!

Everything was done without anyone being the wiser!

Troys thought this, an unwitting smile of pride forming on his face yet again.

And this self-satisfied middle-aged man did not realize that a pair of eyes had been watching him all along.

Chapter 535: There are always some fools in the world (3)

Twisting the throttle, Troy's motorcycle roared as he sped away.

From the shadow, a tall, robust figure emerged, picking up the fragments of a cellphone from the trash can.

"Interesting."

With that mumble, Jason's figure vanished in a blink.

Jason didn't linger any longer but headed straight back to Apartment 3A-313.

At first, he was merely curious about the old Butler who had survived the gunfight. According to John and Brian's description, even though the two didn't keep a watchful eye on him, the fact that the man could wait for the police to arrive unscathed indicated he must have had quite a good set of skills, especially in terms of awareness.

Otherwise, those grenades would have been deadly.

However, Jason hadn't expected that the Butler would be far more intriguing than he had guessed, and was even involved in the dark rivalry between Cherry City's Speaker Dodd and Councilor Todini.

Without a doubt, such a rivalry was fascinating.

The late Emod probably didn't know until his death that his Butler was arranged by the councilor he had been funding to take the lead in battle, to draw attention.

Without question, Emod performed exceptionally well.

Now Dodd had walked into a trap.

Everything was just as Troys had anticipated.

But...

The old Butler?

Jason sat in his armchair, frowning unconsciously.

He couldn't help but picture the moment when he first saw the man, polite and bowing his head, the arrow shot, the blood turning black.

A sense of contradiction involuntarily emerged.

Even as an onlooker to everything, he should feel that all of it made sense.

But this sense of contradiction lingered in his heart like a shadow that wouldn't dissipate.

And the more he recalled, the more familiar it seemed to Jason.

As if...

He had returned to Nightless City, encountering those cunning and venomous fellows.

He was always wary of such people.

Because he didn't want to die in an inexplicable way.

And just now, the old Butler had given him exactly that kind of feeling in a flash.

Even stronger.

Therefore, he had been watching from the sidelines all along, never stepping forward.

But there was one difference—the ones from Nightless City were definitely afraid of death and would never court it like the old Butler.

Or to be more precise...

Did the old Butler really die?

"Some sort of visual trick?"

Jason, with furrowed brows, tapped lightly on the armrest of the armchair, then shook his head.

No matter how clever the trick, it couldn't have fooled Troys's inspection, the finishing blow, and above all, Jason's own superhuman perception had confirmed Findelter's heart had been pierced.

Twice, no less.

Can a person live without a heart?

Let alone the explosion at the end.

He had seen Findelter blown to bits with his own eyes.

Unless Findelter possessed the "Undying Body" like him, otherwise, he would most certainly be dead.

Of course, there could be other possibilities!

For example—

"Some sort of secret technique similar to my 'Undying Body'?"

Jason guessed with a frown.

This world he had only been in for a day lacked a wealth of information sources, but he couldn't deny the existence of "secret techniques."

After all, there were "foods."

So it was highly likely that "secret techniques" exist, too.

Jason's brows relaxed slightly as his attention shifted to another issue.

What was Findelter up to?

Dodd, Todini, and the late Emod all had their own agendas.

But Findelter didn't—or at least, up until now, Jason hadn't seen it.

Was he really looking for "Edward"?

Jason was somewhat skeptical about this.

If Findelter truly belonged to the same type of people he knew well, such people could never care about others; their own interests were their only concerns.

However, that didn't prevent Jason from investigating this "Edward."

Such an investigation naturally required a lot of manpower and resources, and it wasn't something that could be solved merely by being strong.

Or rather, Jason admitted he wasn't strong enough yet.

Fortunately, he had other methods at his disposal.

Picking up the telephone in the living room, Jason called John.

"John, can you help me look into someone?"

"Emod's Butler's former employer, Edward."

"Yeah, okay, I'll wait for your news."

After hanging up, Jason sat back in the armchair.

He drew back the curtains and looked out the window.

In the pitch-black sky, a dazzling white line appeared on the horizon.

Dawn had arrived.

Tonight, this long night was over.

But Jason knew that it was after the sunrise when things would get most interesting.

He would silently observe all of it.

And when necessary, he wouldn't mind intervening.

When would that necessary time be?

Jason smiled.

He stood up from the armchair and walked out of the apartment, his nose catching the scent of breakfast wafting up from the streets.

...

Davide, who hadn't slept a wink all night, was gulping down the hot coffee his Assistant had brought him.

Although Findelter's unexpected takeaway thwarted his initial plan, the investigation into Emod had not stopped.

Before, he had been investigating Emod.

But at that time, there were many obstacles.

And now?

Naturally, no one would stand up for a dead man.

Everything had started to go smoothly.

Bang!

"Damn it!"

"This bastard is linked to so many missing person cases!"

"What is he trying to do?"

"Human trafficking?"

On the nearby desk, young Assistant Hunter slammed his fist down on the table and spoke angrily.

Chapter 536: There are always some fools in the world (4)

"Calm down, Hunter,"

"Anger is useless at a time like this."

"On the contrary, your calm is what can lead you to find those poor girls."

Davide reminded his assistant, but his fists had already clenched tightly, and his voice carried a sharp, harsh tone.

He had always known Emod was a bastard.

But he hadn't realized the extent of the bastardry.

Damned a hundred times!

The scum that belongs in hell!

Davide continued to browse through the interrogation documents.

The middle-aged police chief's brows furrowed involuntarily.

The interrogation documents all came from Emod's subordinates, but as his confidants all died, the documents were provided by the outer circle of his men.

With these alone, it was tough to find anything substantial.

"Hunter, which of Emod's close associates are still alive?"

The middle-aged police chief asked.

"That's it, chief—I mean, we found Emod's right-hand man, Asa, and many confidants in his mansion that turned into ruins."

"The rest of the confidants all died outside the mansion."

"Now, all we can catch are these small fish."

The young assistant, clearly knowing what his chief was asking, spoke with a tone full of helplessness.

"Is that so?"

The middle-aged police chief murmured to himself.

And at this moment, the office door was suddenly knocked on.

A uniformed patrol officer walked in.

In his hand, there was a package.

"Chief, your package!"

"The package was sent by a person named Findelter!"

Before the patrol officer could finish, the middle-aged police chief rushed over and grabbed the square package.

Looking at the clearly written sender's name 'Findelter' on it, the middle-aged police chief took a deep breath.

He sensed that a turning point was coming.

However, he was not in a hurry.

"Hunter, hand me a carving knife,"

Said the chief, carefully inspecting the entire package. After receiving the carving knife, he cautiously cut open the outer wrapping.

He had received mail bombs more than once.

Naturally, he was quite experienced.

Quickly, the package was opened, revealing a notebook and a letter inside.

"Got lucky this time."

The middle-aged police chief said as he opened the envelope and took out the letter.

Dear Chief Davide,

If you are reading this letter, it means I am already dead.

The one who killed me is most likely Pang'er.

But who exactly, I can't be sure of.

After all, I am a man deserving of death.

I was just trying to make up for my initial mistake, but I ended up making even more errors.

I am sorry to Mr. Edward.

I also let down Mr. Emod, though he deceived me about knowing Mr. Edward's whereabouts. However, as a butler, I failed in my duty.

And as a normal person, I failed as well.

I witnessed so much darkness but didn't stand up when I was needed, only feeling self-blame, guilt, and regret.

I am a useless man.

To the end, I wasn't willing to face my own mistakes.

I hope...

...the notebook can help you.

Sinner: Findelter

...

After reading the letter, a flicker of confusion appeared in the middle-aged police chief's eyes.

The matter concerning 'Edward' was something he had seen in the records, a very normal missing person case, and based on his experience, it should have been Edward leaving on his own. τΑΝΘΒΕΣ

However, the letter in his hand suggested that Edward's disappearance was not that simple,

And it seemed to be connected to Findelter.

Nonetheless, the middle-aged police chief didn't start to investigate this immediately—his gaze turned towards the notebook inside the package.

When he opened the notebook and saw the contents clearly, excitement appeared on his face.

Emod's ledger!

It had not only Emod's hidden properties but also detailed transaction records!

More importantly, these records included the names of the traders.

Among them were some big names!

"What an unexpected windfall!"

The middle-aged police chief took a deep breath.

He had a premonition that he would discover something big, but what he hadn't anticipated was it being this huge.

Just look at those names above!

Each one, a major figure!

Together, they were enough to shake the entire Cherry City!

In their presence, he really was insignificant, and if he made his move like this, Davide could guarantee that he would vanish without a trace, a car accident? Retaliation?

Or maybe just a staged suicide?

As for his boss?

The signing last night, and all that preceded, had already made it clear to him what kind of person his superior was.

He couldn't rely on that person.

In fact, he couldn't rely on anyone in Cherry City.

It could be said that, at this moment, he faced enemies at every turn.

Thinking this, the middle-aged police chief smiled.

Difficult.

As if thorns lay strewn before him.

He could already foresee it.

He would certainly be bloodied from the pricks and cuts.

But this didn't mean he would ignore the helplessness and despair represented by each of those transaction details.

He still remembered the vow he made when he became a police officer—

"I will, with a fair, honest, diligent, and just Spirit, protect and respect everyone."

"I will spare no effort to maintain peace and prevent all crimes that damage persons and property."

"I will uphold..."

"Justice!"

Now was the time for him to fulfill that vow.

The middle-aged police chief secured his notebook and slipped it into his pocket, which caused the young Assistant who was waiting to read it to startle; he was ready to see its contents.

"You're not ready yet."

"For now... it's enough that I alone know."

"Hunter, how long has it been since you took a vacation?"

"Go rest, I'm giving you a day off!"

After saying this, Davide walked away.

He knew exactly what he had to do.

He also knew the consequences of his actions.

Afterwards, he would no longer be able to stand in Cherry City.

Even death would follow him like a shadow.

Then there's no need to drag others down with him.

He alone was enough.

In the police station parking lot, Davide opened his car door and had just sat down when the passenger-side door opened and Hunter got in, the young Assistant buckling his seatbelt without a word.

"Let's go, together."

The young Assistant said.

"Hunter?"

The middle-aged police chief was taken aback.

Then, the chief sighed.

"Do you know what I'm planning to do?"

"What I'll be facing?"

The middle-aged police chief asked.

"Of course, I'm not an idiot; your expression has told me everything."

"That's why I won't let you play the hero alone."

"We're partners."

"If we are to become heroes, obviously it should be both of us!"

The young Assistant turned his head and said with a smile.

In the morning light, his young face still showed traces of youthfulness, but it was eager and resolute.

"You really are a fool!"

Davide said softly.

"Fool? Aren't you the same?"

Hunter chuckled lightly.

"Yes, we are both fools."

The middle-aged police chief took a deep breath and extended his hand toward the Assistant, introducing himself as if they were meeting for the first time.

"Davide."

"Hunter."

The young Assistant grasped the offered hand firmly.

Their hands clasped tightly together.

Bathed in the sun's radiance.

Chapter 537: Those Fathers!

Apple City, the McPherson household.

As a moderately successful businessman, the McPhersons had long entered the middle class, and as a husband and father, McPherson prided himself on improving the life of his wife and daughter through his hard work.

For over a decade, it had been like this, until three months ago...

His daughter went missing!

A trip to Cherry City had resulted in the disappearance of his daughter.

McPherson reported to the police immediately and rushed to Cherry City.

But, to no avail.

Even after three months, there was still no word from his daughter.

This left McPherson in despair.

But he dared not show it.

Because he knew his wife was even more desperate than he was.

At this time, he was her support.

If he also showed despair, then the entire family would be ruined.

So, every day he encouraged his wife.

Only when no one else could see would he reveal his sadness and regret.

Why?

Why couldn't he have accompanied his daughter?

Why did he have to be so busy?

Every bout of self-blame pierced McPherson to the heart.

Today was no exception.

While it was still dark, McPherson quietly left the bedroom and entered his study, sitting there with a numb brain and unfocused eyes.

Only when sunlight began to shine on him and the nanny started busily preparing breakfast did he come to his senses.

Slap, slap.

Raising his hand, McPherson gently patted his face, dispelling the negative emotions there, and he forced himself to smile.

He was going to see his wife.

And just at that moment—

Beep, beep.

The fax machine started up.

McPherson was startled.

After his daughter's disappearance, he had passed on his company affairs to his deputy and devoted himself entirely to finding his daughter and accompanying his wife, so the fax machine had not made a sound for a long time.

With some curiosity, McPherson looked at the paper emerging from the fax.

When he saw the content clearly, the smile McPherson had been trying to maintain completely twisted.

Rage filled the face of this husband and father.

"Cherry City?"

"Big shot?"

"Emod?"

McPherson gritted his teeth, his voice squeezing out from between them.

He almost subconsciously picked up the hunting shotgun stored in the cabinet of the study.

He wished he could blow these people away, one by one.

However, the little rationality that remained told him not to be impulsive.

He was too weak on his own.

He needed to unite more people.

And this was not difficult, for after his daughter's disappearance, McPherson had discovered while searching for her that not only his daughter, but many other girls had gone missing on trips from Apple City to Cherry City.

Naturally, these families had come together.

The more people, the greater the strength.

This was the consensus of everyone.

In these families, there were those who had brought up some terrible suggestions, but many families were unwilling to believe them.

But now?

Looking at the names on the paper, McPherson went straight to the phone.

One must face what needs to be faced, right?

Now, all he hoped was that his daughter and more girls were safe and sound.

As for those people?

He was determined to send those bastards to hell!

He swore!

...

Pineapple City's Boyka woke up from his drunkenness once again.

Subconsciously, he reached for the bottle.

He didn't want to be sober; he just wished to remain dead drunk.

Because only then could he forget the pain of losing his daughter.

That was his daughter.

His only daughter.

His only relative.

With his daughter gone, he felt as if his world had collapsed.

Get drunk!

Get drunk!

Being drunk would make one forget everything!

Thinking this, Boyka uncorked the bottle, but just as he was about to tilt his head back and gulp down the liquor, the door was slammed open and a middle-aged man ran in.

"Stop drinking!"

"There's news about Duda and Kola."

Duda, Boyka's daughter.

Kola, this middle-aged man's daughter.

Both had gone missing together a month ago on a trip to Cherry City.

"What?"

"What did you say, old Kola?"

Boyka threw away the bottle and seized his old friend by the arm.

"See for yourself!"

Old Kola handed the fax to Boyka.

Bowing his head and rubbing his bleary eyes, Boyka's features flushed red quickly and fierceness appeared in his eyes as he read the content.

"Don't act rashly, we need to contact more people."

"You understand?"

Old Kola urged his old friend.

"Yes, I understand."

"You go contact the others; I need to sober up."

Boyka headed for the bathroom as he spoke.

Watching his friend vigorously wash himself, Old Kola did not hesitate but turned to run outside.

He had to alert more people.

Amidst the sound of retreating footsteps, Boyka lifted his head, looking at his own dispirited reflection in the mirror.

"I've let you down again!"

"Sorry, this is the last time!"

Boyka murmured softly as he began shaving his beard and hair with a razor; the filthy pajamas were torn off, revealing an astonishingly fit physique.

Especially on the shoulders, where there was an eight-pointed star tattoo on each.

On the outer side of the deltoid muscle, extending down the arms, were a series of tattoos resembling iron wire coils.

And on the left side of the chest, within a casual circle, there was a dot.

The shoulder's eight-pointed stars came from an organization he once belonged to.

The iron wire coil tattoos on the outer deltoid muscle extending down the arms represented a past he least wanted to remember—his time in prison.

The tattoo on his chest?

It symbolized the habits and skills he had gained during the prison life he least wanted to recall.

The former represented disdain.

The latter was... a fight Master.

Boyka's palm covered the tattoo on his chest.

He took deep breaths.

He had once sworn never to use force indiscriminately.

But...

There were always people pushing him!

Why were there always people pushing him!

All he wanted was to live out the rest of his life in peace!

If you shattered my life, then I will return the favor tooth for tooth, eye for eye!

Determined, Boyka's eyes lit up with a light that seemed almost tangible.

He raised a fist and swung it at the bathroom wall.

Bang!

In the muffled sound, the bathroom wall, covered with tiles, shattered, revealing a hidden package. Boyka grabbed the package, brushed the dust off, and unzipped it.

An old brown jacket, a stained T-shirt and trousers, and... blood-stained boxing wraps.

Boyka picked up the wraps and started winding them around his hands, layer by layer.

The coldness in his eyes intensified.

Like a drawn sword.

The next moment, he put on the T-shirt, trousers, and then the old jacket, and walked straight out.

Wait?

He could not wait any longer.

He wanted to send those bastards to hell with his own hands.

...

Time is supposed to be the best healer.

Not sure who said that.

But to Shelton, that sentiment was bullshit.

With his wife murdered and his daughter missing, time had already turned into poison for Shelton.

With every passing day, the toxicity intensified.

He lived like a zombie, and if it weren't for the belief that he must find his daughter, he would have ended himself long ago.

And now?

As he looked at the fax in his hands, he cried out.

"Wait for me!"

"I'm coming!"

"Daddy is coming!"

With those words, Shelton entered the basement.

This place had once been his study.

It had once held his interests.

But ever since his wife was murdered and his daughter went missing, the nature of his research project had changed.

It had become dangerous and deadly.

...

Cherry City, Hunter's residence.

Davide and Hunter had been sending out faxes one after another.

All these faxes were addressed to the parents of missing girls.

They knew very well that by themselves, they couldn't oppose the big shots of Cherry City, only by rallying more people could they possibly stand a chance against them.

The number of missing girls was in the hundreds, spread across several cities surrounding Cherry City.

From morning till afternoon, it was only then that the two finished their task.

And the fax machine Hunter had just bought was already overheating.

"Is there more?"

Hunter pointed to a list that included fax addresses for major newspapers and TV stations in Cherry City, Apple City, Pineapple City, and others.

Clearly, the young man didn't trust the media.

Because he had seen far too often the true face of these media outlets.

It was truly nauseating.

"Yeah."

"This issue needs more attention!"

"Otherwise, relying solely on those parents might stir some waves, but ultimately, they will vanish without a trace."

Davide nodded firmly.

It was a desperate measure he thought of.

Though the gathered parents were strong, their enemy was even stronger.

Some necessary support was needed.

Otherwise...

They would still fail!

Davide was well aware of what those big shots would do if driven into a corner.

Just as he knew what they would be facing once those faxes were sent out.

The ears and eyes of the big shots were extraordinary.

Or rather, those who sought to get close to the big shots would definitely tip them off.

About ten minutes?

Five minutes?

Or even shorter, they would become the target of public criticism.

Squeak, squeak, squeak.

One by one, the faxes were sent.

Davide took several slices of bread and two cartons of milk from the refrigerator, didn't heat them up, and shared them with Hunter.

Their time was running out.

After finishing their meal quickly, Davide stored the laptop securely on his person.

Hunter checked the bullets in his handgun.

Then, the two of them walked outside.

They needed to stay hidden for a while, until the final gathering.

Of course, that was the best-case scenario.

In fact, as Davide drove the car out of the street corner—

Bang!

Another car slammed directly into the driver's side door of Davide's car, pushing it with full force against the wall to the side.

The airbags burst out instantly.

By the time Davide and Hunter regained their senses, a group of burly men in black suits had already surrounded them and raised their guns.

Davide had a bitter smile on his face.

Although anticipated, these people arrived faster than he had expected.

And they had no intention of talking.

They were there to silence them.

"Sorry."

Davide apologized to his partner once again.

"It's okay. It was my choice," Hunter shrugged his shoulders.

The two men exchanged a smile.

Then, they drew their guns simultaneously.

Waiting passively for their end was not their style.

Even in death, they would return fire.

Davide and Hunter's actions were fast, but still not as fast as the black-suited men who had already aimed their guns.

The men were about to pull the trigger, set to turn Davide and Hunter into a honeycomb of bullets.

But someone was even faster—

Bi!

Chapter 538: There Needs to Be Light in the Darkness!

Following a complex and mysterious yet brief sound, a brilliance suddenly appeared.

The blinding light enveloped Davide, the vehicle driven by Hunter, and also those black-clad gunmen.

"Aghhhh!"

Cries of pain arose one after another.

"Flash grenade!"

"It's an ambush!"

"Take cover! Take cover!"

The leader of the men in black shouted loudly.

But, it was too late.

The figure of Jason appeared amidst the men in black, his tall, muscular body spinning rapidly with a broad-bladed machete in his hand.

Woo!

The blade sliced the air, roaring.

Thud, thud, thud!

All those around Jason suffered fatal slashes.

Moreover, as Jason moved, the range of these slashes kept expanding.

By the time Davide and Hunter's vision had cleared, before them was a scene of dismembered limbs, with a figure standing straight among them, his hockey mask all the more sinister and terrifying amid the bloodshed.

Hunter had never considered himself a coward, but at that moment, he couldn't help but swallow hard.

What had happened?

They had clearly been surrounded just a moment ago.

How had they ended up surrounded by just one man now?

Moreover, if possible, he would have preferred his previous opponents.

Because the man standing before him, covered in blood, was clearly a psychotic killer.

The dead on the ground were the best evidence of that.

However, being a police officer, Hunter still instinctively raised his gun.

But the next moment, Davide pressed down on the muzzle.

"Lord Jason?"

Davide tentatively asked.

Jason?

Hunter was stunned, then suddenly looked towards Jason.

He had felt the figure before him looked familiar, and when Davide spoke, the figure instantly merged with the tall, strong one from his memory.

It was Jason!

Hunter was certain of it.

But the Jason standing before the two men flatly denied it.

"Jason? Are you talking about that famous writer?"

"Sorry, I'm not him."

"I'm just a passerby 'Masked Man'."

Jason earnestly fibbed.

A famous writer?

What a joke!

Who else but yourself would give such a high appraisal to a third-rate writer?

The young Hunter almost couldn't control his expression, wanting to roll his eyes.

Davide, however, was much more composed, maintaining his habitual smile.

"Then, Mister 'Masked Man' just passing by, is there anything else you want?"

"If not, we'll be taking our leave."

The middle-aged police chief asked tentatively.

Although he had confirmed that the person before him was indeed Jason, the scene before him still left the middle-aged police chief deeply shaken.

Almost two decades of being a detective had allowed the police chief to encounter many utterly ruthless individuals, but he could assert that none of those individuals could compare to even a little finger of the Jason before him. ~~RA~~NÓBEs

Just look at the bodies on the ground.

How long did that flash of light last?

One second?

Two seconds?

In such a brief interval, to eliminate so many men—why become a writer, the police chief did not know; all he knew was that if Jason wanted to trouble them, they would surely be doomed.

So, the police chief probed.

He hoped to understand Jason's attitude.

And the outcome was a relief to him.

As soon as he finished speaking, Jason twisted his body and walked away.

Hunter watched Jason closely.

At this moment, seeing Jason leave, he couldn't help but breathe a sigh of relief.

But the middle-aged police chief spoke up again.

"Wait."

"Could you tell me, why did you help me?"

The police chief asked.

"He who bears wood for the fires of others should not freeze to death in the snow."

Jason continued walking, his voice fading into the distance but still clearly entering the ears of Davide and Hunter.

After a brief moment of shock, they unconsciously muttered these words.

Hunter's eyes brightened, a conviction seemingly about to burst forth.

Previously, he too had held a similar conviction, but it had been vague.

Now, such conviction became crystal clear with Jason's words.

At this moment, he had found the value of his own existence.

Davide was different.

The middle-aged police chief, who had already understood what he needed to do, chuckled lightly and shook his head.

"I just did what I had to do."

He said.

Then, looking up, he shouted loud enough for that retreating figure to hear—

"Thank you."

Jason heard this gratitude, the corners of his mouth lifting behind the mask, murmuring indistinctly.

"What a fool."

There will always be fools in this world who will step forward when others are in despair.

Bringing light to others!

Like the stars in the night sky!

Dispersing the world's darkness!

They are called...

Heroes.

A group of fools.

Sincerely hoping these fools live long and worry-free lives.

Otherwise, the darkness they've dispelled will sooner or later return, turning the whole world into an abyss, much like hell.

Jason had seen such a state of affairs before.

In the Nightless City.

That place was already a living hell.

One such place was enough.

Any more?

The universe might just be destroyed.

Jason turned to look to the side.

John, having arrived as agreed, parked the car at the curb, watching Jason with a look of mild surprise from the driver's seat.

He had witnessed everything that had just happened.

He wasn't surprised that Jason had taken action.

It was the manner in which Jason had acted that surprised him.

Chapter 539: There Needs to Be Light in the Darkness! (2)

He had seen similar people in his "career", but he never thought that Jason would be one of them.

Why would such a person become a writer?

Just like me, was it because of retirement?

John couldn't help but wonder.

Jason then went around the car, pulled open the door, and sat down in the passenger seat.

As soon as Jason was seated, John handed Jason a document bag.

"Here are the documents related to Butler Emod's former employer 'Edward' that you requested."

John spoke with his usual crisp efficiency.

"Thanks."

While speaking, Jason tore open the kraft paper bag.

Inside was a thick stack of documents, which were very detailed.

They covered everything from Edward's birth to his disappearance.

Edward was born in 1933 in Cherry City, into a wealthy family, receiving an elite education from a young age and took over the family business as an adult, including a bank and a mining company.

Findelter became the butler of the Edward Family thanks to a letter of recommendation from the family's former butler before his retirement.

The two parties had collaborated for nearly thirty years, with Findelter diligently assisting Edward, who in turn entrusted many of his business affairs to Findelter to manage.

If things had continued this way, Findelter would have taken care of the Edward Family for two generations, and possibly even three, before retiring and introducing a new butler.

Or perhaps he would simply have his offspring inherit his role, becoming the Edward Family's legacy butler.

But something unexpected happened.

In '97, Edward suddenly contracted some bizarre illness that not only rendered him delirious but also led him to make several irrational investments, causing the decline of the entire Edward Family.

After going through the documents, Jason looked at a photograph included in the file.

It was an old black and white photo, at least twenty years old or even older, with slightly frayed edges.

In the picture, there were two men, one sitting and one standing.

A significantly younger Findelter stood smiling in the photo, while a well-dressed, bearded middle-aged man sat in front of him.

The man held a cane in his hands, resting both hands on it, left hand below, right hand above, revealing a ring embedded with a gemstone on his right index finger.

Despite the black and white photo, Jason could still roughly estimate the ring's costly value.

"A family with banks and mines..."

Jason said, looking towards John.

Though Jason didn't finish his sentence, John understood what he was getting at.

A family with banks and mines wouldn't disappear so quickly.

Unless someone was deliberately obstructing them.

And what about Edward's poor decisions?

A man who had successfully steered the family business for decades, a steady hand at the helm, was certainly not a fool. Perhaps he could make a mistake once due to an accident, but he surely wouldn't mess up several times in a row.

Such a sequence of incidents and errors suggested something more.

"There are some problems."

"But they're subtle."

"It seems someone is obscuring these issues; there isn't a trace of evidence in my channels; however, I've heard some rumors."

John talked about his investigation after reviewing the documents.

"Rumors?"

Jason was intrigued.

Rumors, although often unsubstantiated,

Still have their sources.

"In the year before Edward's bankruptcy, people often heard him cry out at night."

"The kind of inexplicable shouts filled with fear."

"And it was from that time that Edward began making investments that no one else could understand: spending exorbitant prices to buy some strange items."

John continued.

"Strange items?"

Jason became even more interested.

He seemed to have sensed the presence of 'food'.

"Yes, these items are very secretive; Edward never let many people see them. They're only known through Findelter's accounts, and the butler is reluctant to talk further about them."

"In fact, if it weren't for the desire to find Edward's whereabouts, everyone would believe this butler would remain tight-lipped."

John nodded, explaining.

"How did Edward disappear?"

Jason asked.

The recent documents noted Edward's disappearance, but the records were vague, with just a few lines: After leaving the rented house in the suburbs, Edward never returned.

The people around claimed that the destitute Edward seemed to have become insane, unable to accept his current situation.

Some say that Edward had displayed signs of suicidal tendencies more than once.

All very consistent with common sense.

It's the behavior of someone who has lost hope.

If it weren't for the "abnormal" investments before.

"Just as the records show,"

"Findelter confirmed such a claim,"

"Edward had said he was cheated, that they were all scammers and the like,"

"However, there is one thing that I am very concerned about,"

John paused for a moment, his facial expression turning somewhat strange.

Jason did not urge him, quietly waiting instead.

About one or two seconds later, John continued:

"Three months after Edward disappeared, someone saw Edward!"

"But it was Edward's ghost!"

"A ghost?"

"Yes, a ghost!"

"The witness claimed to have seen Edward wandering around his old house, his entire being ethereal,"

"The person who saw him was so frightened that they ran straight home,"

"And it wasn't the first time,"

"Later on, when someone wanted to buy Edward's old house, they encountered similar events, only theirs were even more bizarre, as if they were dragged into a nightmare,"

"After two such incidents, Edward's old house was completely shunned,"

"It quickly fell into desolation, but then suddenly last summer, it caught fire, the flames devouring the entire mansion, and by the time the fire department arrived, it had already been reduced to ruins,"

A haunted old mansion?

Destroyed by fire?

Add to that Edward's purchase of all sorts of strange things before.

Jason couldn't help raising an eyebrow.

He always felt someone was erasing traces.

Clearly, Jason wasn't the only one who thought so; some others did as well.

"In the days following the incident, some people started lingering around Edward's old house,"

"They were obviously looking for something,"

"However, they all left empty-handed,"

"This was no secret at the time; many from the Cherry City underground world tried their luck,"

"They saw those guys,"

"They must be outsiders,"

"And they are not to be messed with,"

John emphasized.

"What happened afterward?"

Jason asked.

"After that, many became increasingly interested and the 'Edward disappearance case' resurfaced in the sight of these guys, they started investigating, and then..."

"Deaths began!"

John's face took on a somber expression.

He began to describe the part of the previous investigation that troubled him the most.

"The first three who started the investigation all died unnatural deaths,"

"Drowning, accidental electrocution, and a car accident!"

"These three were the most famous private detectives, investigators in Cherry City,"

"Two died quietly, their bodies were cold when found,"

"But the one who had the car accident, he left behind a message—"

"He was holding a doll in his hand,"

"It's the kind of doll you see placed in front of cars, usually chosen by people for decoration, something they like, or you could say, cute,"

At this point, John pointed to a spitz-like dog doll on the dashboard of his car, connected by a spring that would bob its head and wag continuously when touched slightly.

"But his doll was different, and, moreover, he didn't stick it there; he held it in his hand in advance—someone investigated and found the detective had bought this doll about three days before then, and had kept it with him, as if he had already foreseen his fate, to leave a message to people,"

"What was the doll?"

Jason couldn't help but ask.

John replied straightforwardly—

"It was a..."

"A coffin!"

Chapter 540: The Obvious Answer

Coffin?

Jason narrowed his eyes, deep in thought.

The most direct meaning of this message was none other than the 'coffin' itself.

And what does a 'coffin' represent?

The deceased!

Edward fit this criterion perfectly.

So, was this message referring to Edward?

Jason felt it wasn't that simple.

The detective had bought this 'coffin' doll three days in advance, had three days to articulate more directly that it was 'Edward,' without needing to beat around the bush.

Or perhaps...

At that time, the detective couldn't clearly state the name 'Edward' and could only indirectly allude to 'Edward'?

With this in mind, Jason looked towards John, signaling him to continue speaking.

"After the first three people died, no further deaths occurred,"

"Yet no one has any valuable clues."

"As time passed, everyone gave up."

"And the story of 'missing Edward' became a rumor in the underworld."

John recounted the information he had bought from the informants.

No subsequent deaths?

And no valuable clues were found?

Could it be that finding a 'valuable clue' would lead to 'death'?

Jason pondered.

"I need to take a look at that old mansion."

A moment later, Jason said so.

"Together."

John didn't say much, simply starting the car.

For John, Jason was already considered a friend.

He wouldn't make a friend walk all the way to the suburbs.

With John's driving speed, Jason soon arrived at the site of the former Edward Family mansion.

After last year's fire, the old mansion had already lost its former appearance. Standing by the roadside, Jason could only guess at the former prosperity of the Edward Family from the quite extensive, yet dilapidated foundational walls and the expanses of charred earth.

From the area alone, the estate of the Edward Family in those days could be called a mansion.

There were gardens, fountains, parking lots, and so on.

In an open area, there was also a swimming pool, a basketball court, and other facilities.

Moreover, Jason saw the remnants of what looked like stable buildings.

He wasn't surprised.

Wasn't it normal for a tycoon who could afford to run a bank and owned mines to keep several thoroughbred horses?

But...

The residual scent of 'food' lingering in the stables was abnormal.

Jason grinned, revealing a smile.

He followed the lingering scent of 'food,' step by step into the ruins of the estate, heading straight for the stables.

John followed behind, vigilantly observing the surroundings.

Thanks to previous investigations, John could confirm that 'Edward's disappearance' was not a case of wandering off on his own, but rather that there was something deeper at play.

John may have retired.

But this didn't mean he had lost his capabilities.

On the contrary, John had grown even stronger after retirement.

With no high-intensity missions and maintaining the same training regimen as before he retired, he naturally became stronger amidst relaxation.

A P30L appeared in his hand.

It was a military pistol modified to hold more rounds.

Like the two spare Glocks hidden at his waist, it was one of his preferred weapons.

He didn't know what Jason had found in the stables.

But he was ready to shoot.

Under John's watchful gaze, Jason walked back and forth inside the collapsed stables.

It wasn't a search!

Just walking!

Occasionally sniffing the air.

Searching with an unusual scent?

A look of surprise crossed John's face.

He had seen individuals with exceptional talents who could conduct searches by scent, and after training, such individuals were far more capable than the best hunting dogs.

After all, even the best hunting dogs can't communicate with humans.

"Does Jason possess a similar ability?"

"Was he previously a 'searcher'?"

"Or a 'tracker'?"

John thought silently to himself.

He grew increasingly curious about Jason's past profession.

As for Jason's current profession?

John would never believe that a guy wearing a hockey mask and waving a machete was a writer.

Writers do have various quirks, like liking to write barefoot in boxer shorts, occasionally indulging in lavish meals under the guise of gathering material, then ruining their stomachs and taking time off to rest, but they definitely wouldn't wear a hockey mask and wave a machete!

Such actions would hardly inspire creativity!

While John speculated, Jason stopped in his tracks.

"Found it!"

As he said this, Jason bent down to move the debris blocking his view.

Soon, a concrete floor appeared in Jason's view.

Thump, thump, thump!

Jason knocked with his hand, producing a hollow sound.

"A secret passage?"

"I'll get a hammer."

John said.

The mechanism in front of them was obviously opened from the inside; to enter from the outside, they would inevitably need to break through forcefully.

Jason, however, waved his hand dismissively.

"No need for that trouble."

As he spoke, Jason, squatting there, slammed a punch downward. Explore new worlds at

Bang! Bang! Bang!

With the first punch, the concrete floor cracked.

The second punch caused the cracks to spread further.

After the third punch, the upper layer of the concrete floor completely shattered.

Jason cleared that layer and continued to hammer down with his fists.

Standing by his side, John watched the scene in a daze.

He looked at the gradually crumbling concrete floor and then at Jason's unscathed fists, and couldn't help but ask: