

PROTEGE 121

Chapter 121: RS BIJOU

As Ling Li sat in her elegant office, a large glass window behind her offered a panoramic view of the bustling city below. The vibrant energy of the metropolis was a stark contrast to the focused calm that Ling exuded. Today was a pivotal day, and she had a crucial meeting with the head of RS Bijou to discuss the intricacies of the company's operations.

"Could you please explain your supply channels to me?" Ling Li asked, her tone professional yet warm as she addressed the RS Bijou employee sitting across from her. The young director of RS Bijou, Ren's right hand, a poised and diligent individual, met Ling Li's gaze with confidence.

"Our main supplier is The Axis. They provide us with the bulk of our raw materials," the director began, her voice steady and assured. "The rest of our materials come from Master Shi Min's mining company. In cases where we need to outsource materials, Master Shi Min's company handles it for us since they can acquire resources at a lower price and pass them on to RS Bijou at cost."

Ling Li nodded, impressed. She had always known Shi Min was a shrewd businessman, but his dedication to supporting her sister's company was truly admirable. 'It's good for them,' Ling Li thought, a small smile touching her lips.

"And what about the designs?" Ling Li inquired, her curiosity piqued.

"We have in-house designers in every outlet to cater to clients who want customized jewelry," the director explained. "At our main office, we also have designers who work on our display pieces. Miss Ren, in particular, often shares her own creative ideas with them."

Ling Li leaned forward, her interest evident. "We release seasonal and exclusive designs for the Asia Pacific, Europe, and America regions," the director continued. "Currently, Miss Ren wants to launch a new design for the winter collection that features cherry blossoms. Our designers are currently focusing on that theme."

"Alright," Ling Li said thoughtfully. "I want all designs submitted to me for approval. I'll be overseeing the company for the time being."

"Yes, Madam," the director replied with a respectful nod.

Ling Li's expression softened slightly. "If you have any immediate concerns, don't hesitate to contact me. Please don't disturb Ren or Lily. If you can't find me, call Mushu or Pharsa."

"I understand, Madam," the director said, his tone reflecting his respect for Ling Li's authority and consideration.

"Alright," Ling Li said, sitting back in her chair with a sense of finality. "Dismissed."

The director stood and left the office, leaving Ling Li to her thoughts. She glanced out the window once more, the city's skyline now tinged with the golden hues of the setting sun. She knew the road ahead was long and fraught with challenges, but she was ready to face it head-on, drawing strength from the determination and resilience that had always guided her.

That evening, as the family gathered for dinner, the atmosphere was a mix of warmth and underlying tension. The dining room, illuminated by a chandelier casting a soft golden glow, was filled with the clinking of cutlery and murmured conversations. Ling Li's mind, however, was racing with questions and concerns about the days ahead. She turned to Mushu, her voice a hushed whisper to avoid alarming the others.

"Mushu, have you found out anything about Dr. Gao?" she asked, her eyes searching his for answers.

Mushu nodded, his expression grim. "I've begun to dig into his background, Madam. Some discrepancies need further investigation."

Ling Li's eyes narrowed, her determination evident. "Keep me updated. We need to get to the bottom of this."

After a moment of silence, Ling Li turned her attention to Ren and Lily, who were engaged in a quiet conversation, their voices soft and intimate amidst the clinking of cutlery and the gentle hum of family chatter.

"Ren, Lily," Ling Li began, her voice cutting through the ambient noise with a tone that was both firm and gentle, "tomorrow, your brother and I are leaving for a while. We have something to do in Camp Phoenix." Her words hung in the air, heavy with the weight of the unknown.

Ren looked up, her delicate features etched with concern. "Mom, will you be gone for a long time?" she asked, her voice trembling slightly with the anxiety of uncertainty.

"We will be back before you know it," Ling Li replied, offering a reassuring smile that didn't quite reach her eyes. "You two take care of your little sisters. Also, don't forget that your Pap's parents are at the guest house."

"I know, Mom," Ren said, her voice steadying as she spoke. "The twins usually play with their grandparents in the afternoon. I will also send Reginald with Lily when Reginald is free since I'm only staying here at home."

Ling Li nodded approvingly, her expression softening with pride. "I know I can count on you," she praised, her voice filled with warmth and affection.

Turning to Lily, Ling Li's tone became more instructive. "Lily, don't disregard your studies. If the business has any concerns, Leeroy and Reginald can help you, too. Your gym will be on its way. Your brother has arranged for its construction."

Lily's face brightened at the mention of her gym, a spark of excitement lighting up her eyes. "Thanks, Mom. You have to come back immediately. The twins will definitely miss you and Paps," she said, her voice a mix of gratitude and concern.

Ling Li's expression softened even further as she reached out to gently touch Lily's hand, her fingers warm and reassuring. "I know; this is the first time we leave them behind. So, please look out for them," she implored, her voice carrying a maternal tenderness that spoke volumes.

"Don't worry, Mom, we know what to do. You and brother should take care," Lily assured her mother, squeezing her mother's hand in a gesture of solidarity and support.

The room fell into a contemplative silence, the weight of the upcoming journey pressing down on everyone like an invisible burden. The atmosphere was thick with unspoken fears and unvoiced hopes, each family member lost in their own thoughts.

Chapter 122: RETRIEVING CAMP PHOENIX: INVESTIGATION

Early the next morning, the sun crested the horizon, bathing the landscape in a golden hue. Ling Li, Shi Min, Mushu, Pharsa, Goldie, and Tod gathered their gear, the air heavy with anticipation and uncertainty as they set out on foot toward Camp Phoenix. The journey was long—ten miles of rugged terrain, winding paths, and dense underbrush—but they were determined. Each step brought them closer to the Camp, a place shrouded in mystery and danger.

As late afternoon approached, they reached a vantage point overlooking the Camp, its boundaries hazy against the backdrop of the setting sun. They made a collective decision to remain concealed, unwilling to throw themselves into the chaos that pulsed like a heartbeat below.

Goldie and Tod were tasked with lookout duty, their familiarity with the Campgrounds a key advantage. The two settled among the trees, eyes peeled for any signs of incoming personnel, able to navigate the terrain with instinctual ease that only years of experience could forge.

With the adrenaline coursing through their veins, Ling Li, Shi Min, Mushu, and Pharsa elevated themselves above the ground, grace personified as they soared to the treetops, the wind whistling through the leaves. From their perch high above, they surveyed Camp Phoenix with hawk-like vigilance.

The scene that unfolded before them was one of stark horror. The Camp, once a beacon of collaboration and strategy, was now teetering on the edge of chaos. Soldiers stumbled through the dirt paths, their faces blank and drained, as if they were marionettes cut from their strings. Some twitched violently, their bodies betraying them with intense seizures. In contrast, others dashed about in reckless abandon, lost in a frantic state. It was a far cry from the disciplined harmony that had once existed; now, they seemed to be caught in the grips of an unseen malevolence, oblivious to the once-familiar surroundings that had collapsed into disarray.

Ling Li felt a chill crawl up her spine, a whisper of danger that danced along her senses. Just as she was about to turn to her comrades and voice her growing concern, a sound broke the tense silence—a rustle from the foliage behind them. Her heart raced, and she instinctively tightened her grip on her weapon, ready for confrontation. Peering through the branches, she discerned a figure emerging from the shadows, clearly ascending through the ranks of cultivation.

"The person is at its sixth level of cultivation? Who can it be?" Ling Li murmured, her brow furrowing with intrigue. As the figure drew closer, the flicker of recognition dawned upon her.

The man pulled down his facemask, revealing his fatigued yet resolute features, his eyes reflecting the turmoil of the Camp. "Madam, it's Dane," he declared, breathless but firm.

Relief washed over Ling Li, albeit mingled with urgency. "You are now on your sixth level of cultivation. Congratulations," she said, her voice low, laced with both admiration and concern.

Dane nodded, his expression serious. "Madam, I have been waiting for you. It is very dangerous to talk here. Let's go to my cottage." His tone was both a plea and an order, urging them to follow him to safety.

Dane had been left in charge of Camp Phoenix by Mushu, a responsibility he bore with pride and dedication. His formidable prowess as a martial artist had not only benefited them during training but had also earned him the respect of his comrades. His cottage was a sanctuary tucked away five miles into the woods—an escape only known to his closest superiors and family. Having a personal place to stay was his privilege as the Camp Commander.

With urgency guiding their movements, they followed Dane deep into the woods, the shadows of the towering trees enveloping them as they moved further from the Camp's madness.

Upon reaching the cottage, they stepped inside, the comforting scent of wood and nature surrounding them. Dane gestured for them to sit as he retrieved a small camera from a weathered satchel.

"Tell us what is going on," Ling Li urged, her eyes steady and intent, ready to absorb whatever dark truths lay ahead.

With shakiness betraying his normally calm demeanor, Dane began recounting the harrowing events of the past few weeks.

"After my breakthrough, I usually leave my car here and fly to the Camp. Madam, I came back after two weeks of leave only to find the Camp had been completely taken over. The moment I landed, I saw

chaos unfolding. My fellow officials—captured, tied up, and treated like playthings by these groups of men."

Dane displayed photos on his camera, images fraught with tension and desperation that echoed the horror he had witnessed. The gravity of his words hung heavy in the air.

"I went searching for you at your house and office, but all I could gather was that you were out of the country. The people here are unreliable; I didn't know who to trust, so I left no messages... Yet even in my absence, turmoil brewed within the Camp."

"And Dr. Erik?" Ling Li interrupted, her intuitive mind racing ahead. "You mentioned him earlier."

The mere mention of the man stoked a flicker of anger within Dane. "Yes. I heard him yelling, roaring like a wounded beast. Dr. Gao claimed to have received a letter of dismissal signed by you. Dr. Erick was insisting it was a lie, that you would never dismiss him so simply."

Ling Li's heart sank at the news. The Camp—their home—was spiraling into disarray under the influence of powerful adversaries. She exchanged worried glances with her comrades. Dark truths loomed like ominous clouds on the horizon, and they needed to act swiftly before the storm engulfed them all.

"What is this?!" Shi Min saw one of the pictures.

"Yes, Madam, I'm sorry I have failed to protect my soldiers." Dane kneeled in front of Ling Li. "My four officials and Dr. Erick are being used as experiments."

"Get up," Ling Li said.

Ling Li and the rest are scrutinizing pictures showing five men inside a life-size test tube floating in a liquid with their heads separated from their necks.

Chapter 123: RETRIEVING CAMP PHOENIX: OTAKO'S PLAN

Dane wiped a bead of sweat from his brow, the urgency in his voice palpable. "I was almost caught when I took that picture. These groups have installed new surveillance cameras, so we must be careful," he warned, the gravity of the situation settling heavily in the room.

Ling Li, ever the meticulous leader, leaned in, her eyes narrowing with determination. "What happened to the other soldiers?" she asked, her voice steady but laced with concern.

Dane's hands shook slightly as he fished out a photo from his jacket pocket. "Here, look at this picture. There are deliveries every end of the week; they pour solutions into the water reservoir," he explained, his voice breaking slightly under the weight of his words.

Ling Li's eyes widened as she pieced together the puzzle. "So they infected the water. I see. Mushu, we need to find out what that solution is," she directed, her voice carrying the weight of command.

Shi Min, who had been silently studying the photo, suddenly spoke up.

"Mom, I have seen this guy. He looks familiar," he said, pointing to a man in the background.

Ling Li's face turned ashen as her photographic memory kicked in. "He is Fen Zhang. He works closely with the President. And also the secretary of the group," she revealed, her voice trembling with suppressed fury. The tension in the room was palpable, like a coiled spring ready to snap.

Dane snorted, unable to hide his contempt. "Madam, Dr. Gao is now the one directing the camp," he said with a bitter edge.

Ling Li's eyes flashed with a mix of anger and determination. "How many people do they have inside the camp?" she asked, her mind already racing with plans.

"They have around three hundred. Several new doctors arrived, too. But when there is an alarm, a truckload of soldiers would come immediately. When I took that picture inside the lab, I didn't know they had installed new cameras. The alarm sounded, and more than ten truckloads of soldiers searched the area for me," Dane stated, his voice reflecting the adrenaline rush he must have felt at that moment.

"Another thing is that one Doctor comes in and out of the Camp and stays by the lake. I don't know what he is up to," Dane added, his brow furrowing in thought.

Shi Min's face lit up with sudden realization. "He must be waiting for someone among us," he mused aloud, his thoughts racing.

Ling Li nodded, her decision made. "Otako must take action on this," she said firmly.

"Mushu, please get in touch with El Padre and El Capitan. I will contact Otako. Dane, come with us. Let's go back first and plan this well. Let's stay at my vacation house," Ling Li decided, her voice brooking no argument.

The mention of Ling Li's vacation house, a secluded haven known only to her family, underscored the gravity of the situation. It was a place where plans could be made without the prying eyes of their enemies, a sanctuary where they could regroup and strategize for the battles ahead.

When they arrived at Ling Li's vacation house, Shi Min, Dane, Mushu, and Pharsa eagerly gathered around the large television, scrutinizing the photos displayed on the screen. The vibrant images captured by Dane while investigating the Camp's situation. The room was filled with anticipation as they awaited the arrival of El Capitan and El Padre, whom Goldie was picking up from the airport.

Ling Li was in her office, connecting with Otako's team and discussing urgent matters that couldn't wait. Her brow was furrowed in concentration, fingers dancing over the keyboard as she communicated with urgency. The air in the office was tense, but Ling Li's determination was palpable.

An hour later, the sound of an approaching car drew everyone's attention. The front door burst open, and El Padre and El Capitan entered, their faces etched with fatigue from their journey.

Ling Li also emerged from the office, her presence immediately commanding attention.

As the group reunited, El Padre's eyes were drawn to the television screen. "Wait! Go back to the previous picture," he said, his voice urgent.

Shi Min quickly rewound the slideshow, and the image in question reappeared. El Padre's eyes widened in disbelief. "I'll be damned!" he spat out, the words dripping with shock and anger.

El Capitan's reaction was equally intense. "That is Boris!" he exclaimed simultaneously with El Padre, their voices echoing in unison.

"Who is Boris?" Ling Li asked, her tone curious but cautious.

El Padre's expression darkened, his fists clenching at his sides. "He was the merchant I was telling you about. He was the mastermind of your ambush!" he said, his voice seething with wrath.

The room fell silent, the weight of El Padre's revelation hanging in the air. Ling Li's mind raced as she processed the information. The merchant who had orchestrated their ambush more than a year ago was now staring back at them from the photograph, a smug smile on his face.

"Fuck them! Fuck them all!" El Padre couldn't help express his anger.

"So what you have seen in heaven was true, Mom. Your ambush is related to this group. Could it be that the President knew the ambush would take place?" Shi Min asked with his brows almost intertwined.

"Let me kill that bastard!" El Capitan yelled angrily.

"Relax; Otako will give us a hand," Ling Li said, her voice calm and assured. The room was still buzzing with the tension of the recent revelation, but her words had a soothing effect on the group.

Shi Min, always the cautious one, leaned forward, her eyes narrowing. "What is Otako's plan?" he asked, his tone reflecting both curiosity and concern.

Ling Li took a deep breath before responding, his gaze steady. "Otako said they will take care of all the people guarding inside the camp and let the truckloads of soldiers arrive, and they will wipe them out."

There was a moment of stunned silence. Then, Dane, who had been pacing nervously, stopped in his tracks. "What the hell!" he exclaimed, the shock evident in his voice.

"Fuck up!"

What the hell!"

One after the other, they expressed their disbelief.

Chapter 124: RETRIEVING CAMP PHOENIX: OTAKO CAME TO HELP

Ling Li nodded, her expression resolute. "Otako is confident. They've planned every detail. The key is timing and precision. They will create a diversion to draw the guards, then take them out swiftly."

El Padre and El Capitan exchanged a glance, their earlier anger replaced by a steely determination. "We need to trust Otako," El Padre said, his voice firm. "If anyone can pull this off, it's them."

"Yes, once the guards are neutralized, we will move in and eliminate the remaining threats and immediately entrap the doctors in their offices and labs. We can't let them go and die; we need to know their purpose. This is your aim." Ling Li explained.

"What about you?" El Padre asked, his gaze fixed on Ling Li.

"I will give Otako a hand," Ling Li replied with a determined look. "Shi Min, you have to lead them and find the microchips. While we wipe out the soldiers, find that Doctor by the lake and see what he is up to."

Shi Min nodded, understanding the gravity of the task. "I understand, Mom. When do we do it?"

"Tomorrow. Let's get some sleep," Ling Li said, her voice firm but comforting.

Early the next day, Shi Min and his group were perched atop the trees, their eyes scanning the horizon. The morning air was crisp, filled with the sounds of nature waking up. They waited in tense anticipation for Otako's arrival, knowing that the success of their mission depended on precise timing.

Moments later, a stirring in the distance caught their attention. Otako appeared, flanked by his fifteen entourage. They moved with the grace and precision of a flock of birds in the sky, their Samurai masks and clothes giving them an otherworldly presence. The sight of the fifteen 'exalt realm' cultivators left Shi Min's group in awe.

Otako's group landed in the middle of the campground, facing the main office. The security guards, caught off guard, shouted in panic and began firing at Otako's group. The alarm blared, echoing through the camp and adding to the chaos.

With a swift, fluid motion, Otako unsheathed his sword and swung it towards the incoming bullets. The bullets deflected, darting back towards the guards, who fell one by one, their bodies hitting the ground before they even realized they had been shot.

Otako then pointed a finger toward Shi Min's group, signaling their cue to move.

"Let's go!" Shi Min shouted, and his team sprang into action, moving with precision and speed toward the main office. Meanwhile, Goldie and Pharsa headed towards the lake to find the elusive Doctor.

The doctors were taken aback by the sudden appearance of Shi Min's group. Panic set in, and several doctors, realizing the inevitability of capture, quickly swallowed pills to commit suicide.

"Capture them fast! They are committing suicide! Dammit!" El Padre yelled, urgency coloring his voice.

Shi Min and his team worked quickly, managing to capture more than half of the doctors and tie them up. Among the captives was Dr. Gao, the most important target.

Back at the Campground, Otako's group was holding their ground as truckloads of soldiers arrived. From the window, Shi Min's group could see the soldiers disembarking, their movements coordinated and swift. As per Otako's order, they stayed inside, waiting for their next move.

The soldiers, wasting no time, simultaneously jumped down from the trucks and charged towards the intruders, ready to eliminate the threat.

Shi Min was astonished by the sheer number of soldiers pouring into the camp, and it had to be at least five thousand. 'Are they here for a war? What the heck!' Shi Min thought, his mind racing with the implications.

Looking out the window, El Padre and El Capitan shared Shi Min's shock. "They are truly serious and are here to eradicate whoever disrupts them. Look at these soldiers! They are twice the number of the whole camp!" El Padre spat out angrily, his voice quivering with indignation.

"This implies that the project they are doing is extremely important," Shi Min responded, his face tense with realization.

Outside, Otako stood resolute, his sword held high toward the sky. With a swift, decisive motion, he swung his sword, and a bolt of lightning erupted from the blade, striking the soldiers. Almost immediately, a majority of them fell to the ground, lifeless. Otako then swung his sword a second time, unleashing another bolt of lightning that finished off the remaining soldiers. In just two strikes, he had decimated the entire force.

The sight of Otako's incredible power sent shivers down the spines of those watching. The fifteen other martial artists stood still, their stance impassive, not needing to lift a finger.

Shi Min couldn't help but feel a mix of awe and slight envy. With his own cultivation level, he knew he possessed the ability to harness the earth's energy, lightning, thunder, water, air, and light. Yet, he couldn't perform such a feat with the same ease and efficiency as Otako. Shi Min let out a light laugh, shaking his head at the sheer prowess displayed before him.

With the task completed, Otako and his group ascended, leaving the bodies of the fallen soldiers sprawled across the ground.

"Mushu, check on Pharsa," Shi Min commanded, his tone urgent yet calm.

While Mushu moved to follow Shi Min's order, Shi Min and his companions delved into the lab and office, searching through papers and files for any critical information they could uncover. The air was thick with the smell of paper and ink mixed with the tension of their mission.

Meanwhile, Mushu and Pharsa's subordinates arrived from different directions. Leading them was another martial artist, Wusheng, who had reached the sixth level of cultivation. His presence commanded respect and immediate attention.

"Grand Master, we have arrived," Wusheng announced, bowing slightly.

"Wusheng, I'm glad you have arrived. The water reservoir is contaminated. Get samples and find out what they are. Ask someone to take care of the dead bodies while the others guard the area," Shi Min instructed, his voice authoritative.

"Yes, Grand Master," Wusheng replied. He quickly divided his team. Three hundred and eighty of them were placed under his command—one hundred from Mushu's elite team, eighty from Pharsa's, and the remainder from his own. He also assigned several men to help the soldiers who were experiencing seizures. With his orders clear, he and two others proceeded to the water reservoir.

Chapter 125: RETRIVING CAMP PHOENIX: DR. GAO

At the water reservoir, the team worked swiftly, collecting samples and analyzing them for any traces of contamination. The urgency of their task was not lost on them, and every movement was calculated and precise.

As they worked, the camp was eerily quiet, the aftermath of Otako's devastating attack still resonating in the air.

Inside the lab, Shi Min and his companions continued their search, the weight of their mission pressing heavily upon them. Each piece of paper, each file could hold the key to understanding the enemy's plans and stopping them once and for all.

Meanwhile, at the cottage by the lake, Mushu found Pharsa engaged in a tense conversation with a young doctor.

“Dr. Gao trusts me very much because we were classmates. But I know how it is to betray Madam Li,” the Doctor said, his voice shaky with a mixture of fear and guilt.

“Is that so? Who is Dr. Gao working for, and what are they working on?” Pharsa asked, her eyes narrowing as she leaned in closer.

“A certain man named Boris always comes. But the rest of us would only be given tasks, never any information about the bigger picture,” the Doctor replied, his voice trembling slightly.

“I thought Dr. Gao trusted you, but he never revealed anything to you?” Mushu interjected, stepping forward with a sarcastic smirk.

The young Doctor faltered, unable to meet Mushu’s piercing gaze. “But I am telling the truth,” he finally answered, his voice dropping to a nervous whisper.

“Mushu, you are here. Come and take a look at this,” Goldie called out, emerging from a nearby room with an urgent expression.

“Tie him up,” Mushu instructed Pharsa before following Goldie into the room.

“Wait! Wait! I’m not with Dr. Gao! I’m with you!” the young Doctor screamed, his desperation echoing through the cottage.

Ignoring the Doctor’s pleas, Mushu and Goldie discovered a hidden basement beneath the room. Inside, they found several monitors and running computers, the screens filled with data and surveillance feeds.

Mushu quickly browsed through the systems, his eyes narrowing as he recognized the servers and IP addresses. “These are from abroad,” he muttered, his tone smug. As one of the world’s top-notch hackers, Mushu knew exactly what to do. He pulled out a portable drive and made a copy of everything on the computers.

“Let’s go back,” Mushu said, his voice confident.

Upon their return to the main building with the tied young Doctor, they found Ling Li already in the midst of an interrogation with Dr. Gao. Ling Li sat face-to-face with the Doctor, a smile playing on her lips.

“You don’t want to talk?” Ling Li asked, her tone almost playful.

“Well, let me show you what Otako has for you,” she said, pulling out her phone. She quickly found the video she was looking for and showed it to Dr. Gao.

“Do you recognize them?” Ling Li asked, her eyes studying Dr. Gao’s reaction closely.

Dr. Gao’s face paled as he saw the video. He had been promised that his family would be safe while he worked in the camp, but it seemed that Otako had found them. The video showed his wife, three young children, and his mother all tied up and looking terrified.

“Please don’t hurt them. You can hurt me, even kill me, but not my family. Please,” Dr. Gao pleaded, his voice breaking.

“I’m very easy to talk to, Dr. Gao. So tell me, who is ordering you? And what are you trying to execute?” Ling Li’s voice was calm, but there was an underlying menace in her words.

Dr. Gao looked defeated, the weight of the situation pressing down on him. He knew he had no choice but to comply.

“Boris, it’s Boris. He pays me to do an entire experiment,” Dr. Gao revealed, his voice trembling with fear and desperation.

Ling Li wasn’t surprised. She raised an eyebrow and asked, “Boris? Who else?”

“Boris is only a middleman. I really don’t have any idea who he works for,” Dr. Gao replied, his voice faltering.

“Alright. And what is the experiment all about?” Ling Li’s tone was calm but insistent.

Dr. Gao hesitated, his mind racing. He knew he couldn’t escape death, and revealing anything could mean the end for his family. ‘What about Otako? Surely, my family will also die in the end,’ he pondered, trapped between two dangerous paths.

Noticing Dr. Gao’s silence, Mushu stepped closer to Ling Li, bringing the young Doctor with him. “Madam, this young Doctor here claims he is Dr. Gao’s most trusted. We found sets of computers in his cabin, and he’s been sending reports to Pakistan and India,” Mushu revealed.

Dr. Gao’s eyes bulged as he heard Mushu’s words. “You! Traitor!” he roared at the young Doctor, his anger boiling over.

“It seems like they are working for different people,” Ling Li chuckled, her eyes glinting with amusement.

“I have a copy of all the reports he sent,” Mushu said, handing an external drive to Ling Li.

“Shi Min, check this out,” Ling Li instructed, passing the drive to Shi Min.

Turning her attention back to Dr. Gao, Ling Li said, “Dr. Gao, call Boris to come.”

“I... I can’t,” Dr. Gao stammered.

“You can’t, or you won’t dare?” Ling Li challenged, her eyes piercing. She knew she needed something more to push the man. She tapped her phone, and within moments, it lit up.

“Dr. Gao, are you sure you won’t call Boris?” she asked, her tone now colder.

Dr. Gao remained silent, his fear paralyzing him.

Ling Li turned up the volume on her phone, capturing Dr. Gao’s attention.

It was his wife's voice, crying. "No! No! Don't do this!" Meanwhile, men's laughter could be heard around her.

Tied to his chair, Dr. Gao became hysterical. "Please! No! Don't hurt my wife!" he cried, tears streaming down his face. "I'll call Boris!"

Dane, holding Dr. Gao's phone, walked by his side. "What's his name in your contacts?"

"Professor," Dr. Gao responded, his voice barely audible.

Dane dialed the name and held the phone to Dr. Gao's ear. "Sir, yes, this is Dr. Gao. Could you please come? I must show you something critical, and I need your decision," Dr. Gao said, his voice shaking. "Thank you," he added after a pause. "He said he would be here in an hour. Please don't hurt my wife."