

The 80s 442

Chapter 442: Quagmire

Locust Tree Village, as always tranquil and serene, the local families' mongrel dogs were undeterred by the chill, scampering all around the village while the children's cheeks reddened from the cold, their big round eyes blinking rapidly as they stared at passersby.

One old three-section mansion in the village, positioned neatly to the east of Locust Tree Village, sat upon the land as if atop the head of a dragon, blessed with excellent feng shui.

In the grand hall of the mansion were rosewood furniture exclusively, with a portrait of a warlord on horseback, sword in hand, hanging in the central spot. On either side, there were landscape paintings and other works of art, as well as an antique shelf adorned with what appeared to be ancient bottles and pots.

At that moment, two men were smoking and talking.

"Master Wei, with the current tight situation, would it not be too risky to make a move now?" a man in a black coat with a buzzcut inquired to a forty-something-year-old man in traditional Chinese attire who sat in the seat of honor.

The man known as Master Wei glanced at him and said, "Jin Hong, we have no choice. The New Year is approaching, and this year's tribute has doubled from the last. Without working, what will we offer up?"

Jin Hong frowned and said, "This is too harsh. We're fighting tooth and nail here, and after handing over what we've earned, there's only a fraction left, not enough to go around the brothers. Master Wei,

there's been growing discontent among the ranks lately, and moreover, a few of our brothers have been caught..."

Master Wei darkened his face, "Without offering tribute, where would we stand? We would probably be in custody by tomorrow."

Jin Hong fell silent. After a while, he said, "What if we talk to their side, and if that fails, we take it up the chain? I refuse to believe they can ignore us the barefoot ones when they are the ones wearing shoes!"

Master Wei looked at him with a smirk that wasn't quite a smile, "Go ahead, if you're seeking death, die far away. I bet they'll take you out before you can even take it up the chain!"

His tone was not without contempt.

If this won't do and that won't do, then are we to simply lay down our lives for them in vain?

Jin Hong felt somewhat discouraged.

Master Wei glanced at him and said, "Don't lose heart. I've already arranged a way out to Hong Kong. If things don't work out here, we'll head there. We can still make a name for ourselves, but the most important thing is to keep things stable here and try to grab as much as we can first!"

Jin Hong nodded.

"Speaking of which, what do you think about the Cao family girl? Is she done with the work?" Master Wei asked, frowning.

"The girl has come of age and wants to get married," Jin Hong remarked.

Master Wei took a puff of his cigarette, "The young man she brought?"

"That boy seems a bit clever. Master Wei, should we give him a try?"

"Forget it, you said yourself the situation is too tense right now. Let's not involve people of unknown backgrounds, or we won't even know how we died," Master Wei said sternly. "As for the Cao family girl, make her work a couple more jobs."

Jin Hong nodded, "She's a rare beauty, too. There's no one in the village that compares to her!"

A beautiful woman, with her hair disheveled, merely sitting on the roadside, would entice many men driven by pity or lust to stop their cars and inquire. She was the ideal bait but alas, a woman whose heart has been ensnared is adrift.

And while they spoke of her, the Cao family girl, Cao Xiaojuan, was also laden with heavy thoughts.

"That Master Wei, he looks pretty mighty. Is he involved in some big business? Hey, Juanjuan, how about you hook me up, and I work with him? Earning money could pave the way to marry you!" Ning Ge asked Cao Xiaojuan, feigning nonchalance.

Cao Xiaojuan started, then immediately snapped in a stern voice, "No!"

Realizing her reaction was too strong, she promptly tried to soften it, "Master Wei is not easy to deal with, no good. Let's leave after the New Year and make our way to your hometown!"

She was already mired in the muck and about to extricate herself; she couldn't drag him down with her.

Ning Ge studied her back, his lips pursed.