

"Alright." Nanrong Wanqing gently massaged her temples and said, "He's just a coarse person, no need to bicker with him over every little thing. Right now, the most important thing is Grandpa's health."

"Hmph!"

Watching Ling Chen swagger away, Su Lin was so angry she gritted her teeth and cursed under her breath: "You just wait."

Back at the courier company, Ling Chen finished handing over the payment for the goods and then carried the ancient clock straight to a nearby pawnshop, trading it for five hundred yuan.

He made less than two thousand yuan a month, so this five hundred yuan was a considerable gain for him.

With money in his pocket, Ling Chen generously bought a case of ice-cold beer and some marinated snacks, and headed straight home.

He lived in the Old City of East Sea City, which was full of buildings that were forty or fifty years old. Because the environment was average, the rent was relatively cheap - three hundred yuan a month.

Upon entering his home, the room was stifling hot, and these cheap rental houses didn't have air conditioning, just an old fan.

Ling Chen took off his sweaty shirt, sitting shirtless on the balcony, enjoying the cool evening breeze while drinking ice-cold beer and eating marinated snacks, his face showing utter contentment.

After a few bottles of beer, Ling Chen sat with his legs crossed and, on a whim, he began to hum a popular tune from years ago.

"You are the wind..."

"I am the sand, entwined intensely... to the ends of the earth."

At that moment, a sweet voice like spring water picked up the lyrics.

Ling Chen turned his head and saw a pretty young girl walk out onto the neighboring balcony. She was seventeen or eighteen years old, like a white lotus fresh from water, elegant and delicate.

Seeing the young beauty, Ling Chen immediately broke into a grin.

She was Tang Shiyun, his neighbor's daughter, a pretty cute girl who was very likable.

When he had just moved in, he happened to come across Tang Shiyun being harassed by a few thugs on the street, so he had helped her out. Since then, they had become acquainted, and he always liked to tease the girl whenever he had nothing better to do.

"Girl, if you were to get all entwined with me, your mom would probably die of anger."

Tang Shiyun blushed with a shy smile, leaning against the railing with her hands propping up her cheeks, giggling, "Ling, you're always so unserious. Anyone who doesn't know you would think you're not a good person."

Ling Chen glared at her: "What do you know, little girl? I call this being witty."

"Who's little." Tang Shiyun retorted, not convinced: "I'm already eighteen."

Ling Chen looked at her and said with some emotion, "Eighteen, yeah, indeed not young anymore."

"Ling, you're not getting any younger either. How come you still haven't got a girlfriend?"

"You think I don't want to? Look, to get married you need three key things: a house, a car, and a bankbook. I haven't met any of those requirements; which woman would blindly set her sights on me?" Ling Chen blew out a breath of beer air, looking helpless.

"But you are handsome." said Tang Shiyun innocently.

"Can handsomeness be used as food? Alright, don't worry about me, girl. Come on, sing a little tune to cheer me up."

"Okay!"

Tang Shiyun cleared her throat, her sweet voice unfolding once more.

On the road of life, there's sweetness and bitterness, joy and sorrow.

I'm willing to share all with you.

It's inevitable to sometimes fall and wait,

You must be brave and look up.

Who wants to always hide in a sheltered harbor.

Rather have...the tempestuous freedom.

Wishing to be the lighthouse in your heart.

To guide you through the fog...

Ling Chen shook the beer bottle in his hand, listening to the tune, watching the afterglow of the sunset, feeling content and satisfied.

This - this is what I call life.

Compared to those bloody days of living on the edge, this was like heaven and earth.

"Daughter, it's time to eat."

Just then, a middle-aged woman came out from behind Tang Shiyun.

Seeing her precious daughter chatting with Ling Chen, the woman's face immediately fell, and she scolded Tang Shiyun while twisting her ear: "You naughty girl, how many times have I told you not to associate with these riffraff? Why won't you listen? Get inside now." She was speaking very loudly, seemingly making sure Ling Chen would hear.

"Got it, Mom, go easy," said Tang Shiyun, sticking her tongue out at Ling Chen apologetically before obediently following her mother inside.

Ling Chen simply smiled, unaffected. He knew that Tang Shiyun's mother had a deep prejudice against him, always treating him like a thug, but he couldn't blame her considering he often hung around with the local hoodlums of the Old City.

"Chen, hurry up and open the door."

As he was pondering, a frantic knocking came from outside the door.

"Coming."

Ling Chen got up to open the door and saw a burly young man standing outside in a tight tank top, his face full of urgency and a bruise swelling on his forehead.

"Jiang Hao, what happened to you?"

The young man, named Jiang Hao, was a local hoodlum from the Old City. He was the one who had bullied Tang Shiyun last time and got a beating from Ling Chen for it. He sought revenge by bringing people over, but ended up with his gang knocked out by Ling Chen.

Since then, Jiang Hao was extremely respectful to him, often bringing a group of lackeys to hang around, treating him with the best of cigarettes and alcohol, all to learn a thing or two about fighting.

Which is why Tang Shiyun's mother mistook him for another thug and forbade her daughter from seeing him.

"Chen, you have to help me this time," Jiang Hao said with a mournful face.

"Make it clear, what's the matter?"

"Zhao Zhengxiong, that bastard, took over my turf and even captured my guys. He's asking for ransom. I've never asked you for anything before, Chen, but you must help me this time."

Ling Chen hesitated. Although he had dealings with Jiang Hao, he never got involved in their squabbles. He saw all these street thugs as just engaging in petty skirmishes, not worth his time.

He had heard of Zhao Zhengxiong, another thug from the Old City, an old hand who had been on the scene a few years before Jiang Hao's bunch.

The Old City was full of migrants, a mixed bag of characters, with all sorts of factions, a murky pond with many small fish like Jiang Hao.

Seeing the earnest look on Jiang Hao's face, Ling Chen casually took out a toothpick and put it in his mouth, nodding, "Let's go, I'll come with you to get your guys."

Having accepted many offerings from Jiang Hao, it would be too inconsiderate to refuse, which was not Ling Chen's style. Moreover, he had known Jiang Hao for a while and knew the man wasn't evil at heart, so helping him wouldn't hurt.

Led by Jiang Hao, Ling Chen quickly arrived outside an abandoned warehouse.

Several tattooed youths were standing outside the warehouse, cigarettes in hand, exchanging various jokes, all with mischievous grins.

"Jiang Hao, you finally made it, we've been standing here for half a day," said one of them, flicking away his cigarette butt. He glanced at Ling Chen in his flip-flops and chewing on a toothpick, and said, pointing to the warehouse, "Xiong is inside, you guys go in yourself."