

Lin Yuanwang immediately gave orders for all the boats to be retrieved back to Tuzhai. It was tantamount to making Bai Haocheng, the others walk back home.

It was their first time coming to the Lin family's Tuzhai. How could they possibly find their way back? It would be terrible if they walked into the Youhun Valley. They could be bitten by a snake, a rat, or any other pest at any minute.

“Hey, I didn't expect Qin Ming to be so rich... I should've asked for something more... Huh? Where's our boat?”

“W-who smashed our boats?”

“It's too much! Our boats...”

“The Lin Family must have done this. Damn it, how dare he play dirty after getting financial aid?”

“That's right! Let's go back and seek justice.”

These merchants and creditors were filled with

anger and wanted to go back to the village to seek justice. After all, the boats they arrived in were ruined. Wasn't this akin to making them walk back home?

However, the wooden gates to the village were shut tightly, and two dogs were barking from inside, preventing these people from entering.

A young man at the door laughed and said, "I'm sorry, you are not welcomed here. Please leave."

"Where's our boat? Why are our boats destroyed?"

"Yeah! You destroyed our property. We will report it to the police once we arrive in Dayong City."

"This is murder!"

At that moment, Bi Yuan walked out with a blank expression and said, "I take full responsibility for this matter. I broke the boats, so sue me any time. Like what Mr. Qin said, do whatever you want. But don't regret it later."

After speaking, he left without leaving his name.

The young man guarding the door to the village shrugged and said, “You heard him. This matter has nothing to do with the Lin family’s Tuzhai.”

A heavy silence filled the air. It was summer, and everyone was sweating profusely. In addition, the sun was about to set.

Were they going to walk back in the dark? But wouldn’t it be dangerous to do so?

That said, it’s impossible for them to return to Tuzhai now. Besides, this was the Lin family’s territory, populated by a thousand households. They couldn’t possibly fight with the villagers.

In an instant, they all found themselves in a dilemma.

Someone yelled, “F**k! How shameless of them to ruin our boats while we were collecting the debt!”

“What should we do now? How can we go back

without a boat? Should we ask that person?”

“We can’t do anything if the Lin family doesn’t hand him over.”

Everyone whispered and looked at each other. They did not expect Lin Yuanwang would suddenly receive twenty billion in financial assistance and instantly became so confident that he drove them out.

While these people were discussing, Lin Yuanwang had already invited Qin Ming to the main building’s lobby. He insisted on becoming sworn brothers with Qin Ming, completely ignoring the fact that they were two generations apart.

Lin Yuanwang was in good spirits. He grabbed Qin Ming’s hand and said, “Mr. Qin, what a terrific plan to ruin their boats! I absolutely abhor those vile beasts. When the Lin family was doing good, I helped them and lent money to them interest-free. When they needed an investor, I gave them money and didn’t mind even when I lost my investment. In the end, when I was down

and out, they turn away from me. They only gave me hundreds of thousands and said it was giving me face. I was so infuriated that I couldn't eat or drink well for the past two months.”

“Long as well... Thanks to you, I am still well and alive.” Lin Yuanwang shook Long's hand gratefully.

Long said calmly, “It was all thanks to Mr. Qin's alert, otherwise I wouldn't be able to save you.”

Lin Yuanwang then grab Qin Ming's hand and said, “Indeed, Mr. Qin is a man with good foresight. This is as expected of someone introduced by Master Zhang. You're a savior of our Lin family. Thank you so much.”

The back hall of the main building was an ancestral hall. The Lin family's Tuzhai had lasted for more than ten generations, and plaques and incense covered the front of the ancestral hall. It seemed that Lin Yuanwang really wanted to take Qin Ming as his sworn brother.

To that, Qin Ming politely declined, “Thank you

for your kindness, Mr. Lin. I'm not looking down on you, but I really shouldn't disregard the seniority.”

Most people would reconsider when they heard that kind of refusal, but Lin Yuanwang was excited and didn't think much about it. He said, “Hey, how is this disregard? You saved my life, the Lin family, and my pride. It's easy to better things that are already good, but it isn't easy to extend a helping hand. I know so many friends from all corners of the world, but very few of them treat me genuinely. Mr. Qin, you did not leave even when I disrespected you, instead, you were still willing to stay and help me. You're worthy of being my sworn brother.”

At that moment, Zhang Quanzhen stood up, leaned close to Lin Yuanwang's ear, and whispered, “Lin Yuanwang, it's not that I'm ridiculing you, but sometimes your good intentions may not turn out well. You're asking him to be your sworn brother without knowing his identity. He may be out of your league! I think it's more likely for you to be his underling.”

Lin Yuanwang was flabbergasted. Zhang Quanzhen's words brought him to a sudden realization. *Am I qualified to be Qin Ming's sworn brother?*

Although Qin Ming was the savior of the Lin family, but Lin Yuanwang knew nothing about him. *Is he really just a live-in son-in-law of the Mu family?*

Qin Ming attempted to make his way out of the situation by saying, "Mr. Lin, it would be disrespectful of me. It wouldn't be appropriate."

Lin Yuanwang immediately changed his mind and said, "Well, since Mr. Qin said so, then let's not force it. I can only say that it's a shame for me to not have the opportunity. You're young and promising and it's admirable. Well, since we're not taking the oath to be sworn brothers, why don't you take a rest first? Tonight, the village will hold a big feast to welcome you and your wife."

Qin Ming answered, "Mr. Lin, there's no hurry. Let me deal with those people outside first."

“Huh?” Lin Yuanwang and the others were puzzled. *He had the boats ruined and told them to walk back. What else did he plan?*

Qin Ming said with a smile, “I have to make money. With so many fat sheep here, how can I let them go without shaving their wool? I have to reciprocate their insults.”

Fat sheep?

Everyone became curious. How would Qin Ming rip them off? Wasn't it enough to ruin their boats?

Of course, that was not enough. Qin Ming had recently learned that it was enjoyable to launch consecutive attacks against an enemy.

Qin Ming said with a smile, “Mr. Lin, you just need to prepare for the feast tonight and not worry about anything else. Just be careful not to let the thieves in.”

Others didn't know what Qin Ming was going to do, but Zhang Quanzhen laughed. He persuaded,

“Qin Ming, don’t go too far. You know what goes around comes around. Let’s not carry out bad deeds.”

Qin Ming disagreed and refuted, “Master Zhang, why didn’t you say something when they forced Mr. Lin to die? You can’t have double standards.”

Zhang Quanzhen said, “You were there earlier. No matter how arrogant they are, you can withstand it. And when you make your move, they will be at your mercy. Although they are in the wrong, their lives are also precious.”

Qin Ming shook his head and said, “Master Zhang, you don’t seem like someone who cares so much about others. You don’t care about the bloodsucking creditors, do you? What you’re afraid of is the five rich men getting into accidents. Why? Will it affect you? You have a lot of secrets. You wanted to trick me, huh? Hahaha. This time, it’s my turn to do you. If you want me to let them go, you have to be my company’s consultant.”

Zhang Quanzhen sighed. Qin Ming was driving a

hard bargain this time.

Zhang Quanzhen was finally forced to choose whether to be Qin Ming's underling or to witness Qin Ming torture those men.



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Qin Ming's original plan was to exploit the fact that Lin Yundong saved Zhang Quanzhen's life back then. Now that the former was the savior of the Lin Family, the best Zhang Quanzhen could do to repay Lin Family's kindness was to obey to Qin Ming's request.

Although he hated how Zhang Quanzhen always tricked him, he did admire his ability. It was impossible to recruit Zhang Quanzhen with money. So, he could only learn from him and trick the latter in return.

Fortunately for him, Lin Yuanwang wanted to seek death, and Qin Ming was left with no choice but to give Lin Yuanwang a loan, allowing the Lin family to tide over the difficulties they were facing.

Meanwhile, Zhang Quanzhen's concern for the five rich men did not escape Qin Ming's keen observation. Despite so, but the former did not agree to Qin Ming's terms.

Regardless, it didn't matter to Qin Ming. He had planned to punish Bai Haocheng and the rich men

to teach them a lesson and reward himself for his hard work over the past two days.

Helping others was important, but that didn't mean he couldn't make this trip worth.

In fact, he had found something amiss from the way the creditors swarmed into the Lin family's Tuzhai. At the same time, he had already figured out how to deal with them.

Now, the night has fallen, and the Tuzhai was brightly lit. The Lin family had deployed many young and strong patrol guards to prevent thieves and ensure that the dinner that night would proceed smoothly.

As a result, those five rich men and other creditors were stranded outside Tuzhai, worrying about the dark and wondering how they would get back home.

It was unrealistic for them to walk home. Not only would they get lost, but they would also die on the way easily.

Hence, they sent a few capable men back to Dayong City and waited while they return with boats.

Inside Tuzhai, the star of the dinner was naturally Qin Ming. The Lin family treated Qin Ming and Mu Xiaoqiao with respect and courtesy, serving good food and performing traditional songs and dances. Even Lin Yurou danced personally for Qin Ming.

She looked very charming as she danced with her thin waist, long legs, and naturally cute round face. Qin Ming could hardly remove his gaze, and all he could think of was the day he kissed Lin Yurou's body in the ancient castle.

Although he was controlled by parasites that day, his memory was very clear, especially of Lin Yurou's mole on her waist.

Alas, Qin Ming suddenly felt a pain in his waist. It was Mu Xiaoqiao pinching him angrily by the side.

“Did Ms. Lin dance so well that you even

neglected Mr. Lin's offer to drink?" Mu Xiaoqiao said in jealousy.

Qin Ming hurriedly returned to his senses and toasted Lin Yundong. He joked that he was a little sleepy and was in a daze just now, but his lame explanation caused a roar of laughter. Everyone could see how Qin Ming looked at Lin Yurou, and even Mu Xiao Qiao was jealous.

Lin Yurou also shyly hid her face. In contrast to women who were confident in their beauty and proud of their ability to attract men, she was only worried that her beauty and charm would cause Mu Xiaoqiao to be hostile towards her.

However, Mu Xiaoqiao didn't have that many thoughts. She blushed and complained, "I can dance too. I can dance for you if you like."

Qin Ming snickered as he enjoyed seeing her jealous.

Inside Tuzhai, everyone had a great time eating and drinking, but outside Tuzhai, there were sounds of cursing. Those people have been

yelling for three hours, from when every household in Tuzhai started to cook till now. Everyone's voice became hoarse from the yelling.

“Boss, I can't yell anymore.”

“They are not taking us seriously.”

“Qin Ming, you f**king smashed our boats. Just you wait.”

“I'm so hungry. Anyone has any food?”

“I finished it earlier. Ah, I can smell the wine.”

“When they return with boats tomorrow, we can leave this place. Did he think that the mountain road can stump us? F**k, we are not stupid.”

“Yeah, he wants to pit against us? Fat hope.”

“It's so fragrant... This is the smell of stir-fried pork.”

When they spoke about stir-fried pork, everyone

couldn't help but swallow their saliva. The thousands of households in Tuzhai were having a feast that night as if it were a festive season, yet they were stranded outside the gates. They were hungry and tired, and they drooled involuntarily from the smell of food.

One of the businessmen took out his wallet and said, "Hey, I have five hundred. Can you get us something to eat?"

However, the villager patrolling the entrance of Tuzhai completely ignored him. He knew that the creditors almost caused the patriarch to jump off the building. Hence he didn't care for his money. Besides, he was not short of money.

Suddenly, the gates to Tuzhai opened, and Bi Yuan pushed some roasted chicken, vegetables, and rice out in a cart.

He looked at the people around him and said, "Here, here. Anyone who wants to eat can come to me to buy food."

Everyone took a look and laughed. "Ha, you're a

smart person. You know that we are here and came to profit from us, huh? Aren't you the one who ruined our boats?"

Bi Yuan replied, "That's not me. When did I say that?"

The creditors were shocked at how shameless he was and were furious at his words.

"It's you! Don't think of denying it."

"What? Do you think we will just let you off the hook just because you provide us with food?"

In the end, Bi Yuan sighed and said, "In this case, I will not sell it."

With that, Bi Yuan pushed the cart back again.

The situation became awkward, and the businessmen looked at each other. They were usually accustomed to calling the shots in their own company and had never been mistreated like this.

Right then, Mr. Zhang shouted angrily, “Look what you’ve done! We could’ve eaten first and complain later!”

Mr. Ma chimed in, “Seriously. What a group of useless men. We have already sent people back to Dayong City to find us boats, and they will not return until tomorrow. We just have to make do with one night. Why did you have to complicate matters further?”

The businessmen were scolded, but they didn’t dare to refute them. These rich men had status in society, and they couldn’t afford to provoke them.

At that moment, the gates to Tuzhai opened once again. Bi Yuan and members from his assassination squad came out and set up a banquet at the gates. There were chicken, vegetables, sausages, wine, duck, roasted goose, and many other mouth-watering dishes. The fragrance of the food was inviting to the group of people who had been starving.

Bi Yuan waved at his subordinates and said, “Come and eat. Drink up first, and one roasted

goose per person.”

“Thank you, boss.”

“Thank you, boss.”

After a busy day, his subordinates treated themselves to a feast of meat and wine.

Meanwhile, Bai Haocheng and the others swallowed their saliva while looking at them eat.

Bai Haocheng looked resentful as he said, “I know your tricks. You know that we can’t go back by road and we’re hungry and tired. Name a price. How much does it cost for a meal? Ten thousand? Twenty thousand?”

Bi Yuan chuckled and put his bowl of rice in front of him. “Mr. Qin said that a bowl of rice costs a hundred million. If you want to eat it, then pay for it.”

Bai Haocheng became angry and cursed, “Are your brains fried? What a turn-off. Do you think we will die if we don’t eat this bowl of rice?”

Screw you! Even if I starve to death, I will not fall for your tricks.”

Bi Yuan chuckled and said, “It’s up to you. Mr. Qin said that the food does not come easy, and we must be grateful for it. I’m afraid that some people won’t even have the chance to eat.”

Everyone frowned. *What does that mean?*

Just as they were wondering, a few people suddenly came towards them from the mountains. They were helping each other, shouting as they walked, “Help... Someone is poisoned... P-Poisoned...”



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The five people who came from the mountains were the young and bold bodyguards of the rich men. One of the bodyguards was poisoned and was being carried back.

Mr. Zhang yelled at his bodyguard, “What happened? Why did you make a detour? Why didn’t you just head back to Dayong City or the villages along the way to find boats and guides?”

The bodyguard was thirsty and didn’t listen to his boss’ scolding at all. Instead, his attention was on the table of dishes that Bi Yuan and his subordinates had set up.

The bodyguards were hungry and tired from trekking the mountains. They thought that the bosses still had food even though they were locked out of Tuzhai. In the end, they couldn’t care less. They left their poisoned and injured companion and ran to Bi Yuan for food.

But how could they take the food?

Bi Yuan pierced a chopstick into the back of the palm of the first person who reached out for the

food.

“Ah!” The bodyguard screamed as blood began to ooze out of his hand on the spot.

Bi Yuan was a young and promising man. He used to be a mercenary and treated his enemies with no mercy. Meanwhile, these people insulted Qin Ming and forced the Lin family to a dead end. Naturally, he would not show them any mercy.

Bi Yuan hummed. “Don’t try to steal our food. A glass of water costs a hundred million. Pay for it.”

“Y-You... A glass of water costs a hundred million? This is an unlawful price increment!” The injured bodyguard covered his palm and staggered back. The others were also scared to stretch out their hands rashly. The people from the assassination squad looked fierce, like beasts in the dark.

Bi Yuan picked up a roasted goose and smiled grimly, “Unlawful? Law doesn’t apply to us. We

just need to execute commands like robots.”

At that moment, a kind-looking boss walked over and said, “One of us has been poisoned and injured. Why don’t you let a village doctor come out and have a look? If news got out that he died in the hands of your people, aren’t you afraid of the public’s opinion of your boss?”

“Hahaha...”

“Hahaha...”

Bi Yuan and his men burst into laughter.

The rich men were all puzzled. *What is so funny about that?* They were completely capable of making this a viral news while at the same time, point the blame towards the Lin family and Qin Ming.

Bi Yuan laughed for a long time and could barely catch his breath as he said, “Go ahead and alert the media. But that is if you guys could make it out this place alive.”

Silence filled the air, and Bi Yuan's words struck them.

How would they leave this place with no cell signal in the deep mountains of Xiangxi?

There was a guide, but there was no boat.

Walking back was no different from courting death. One of them was already poisoned as a result, and they didn't have the courage at all.

Furthermore, the people in Tuzhai completely ignored their circumstances. They were hungry and tired. Sooner or later, they would starve to death.

About an hour later, Bi Yuan and his men finished eating. They started to head back after that.

The rich men waited for Bi Yuan and his men to throw away the leftover bones from the meat so that they could at least have some food. They could still eat it after washing it by the river.

Otherwise, what else could they do other than giving him a hundred million for a bowl of rice?

They would never do that. Everyone was determined to show Bi Yuan and the other scumbags that they had pride and dignity.

However, it proved to be wishful thinking on their part. First, Bi Yuan used a large plate to pack the meat and bones, and then a guy in Tuzhai took three or four dogs out. In the end, the dogs surrounded the large plate and started to eat.

One of the dogs barked at the rich men, indicating that they would attack them if they dared to snatch their food.

It was humiliating to the rich men.

Mr. Zhang was enraged, and he yelled, "This is too much! Lin Yuanwang, did you think you could do whatever you want now that you have overcome your difficulties? You have offended the Qin family, and now you provoke us. Aren't you afraid we are going to make your life difficult going forward!"

Yet no one paid attention to them. Mr. Zhang's words seemed to be directed to the air.

In the end, the dogs finished every bit of leftover food and left behind a pile of broken bones. The plate was also left there, but no one wanted to take it. Who could eat it? They were all rich people and only ate gourmet meals.

In the middle of the night, there were a few courageous men who attempted to sneak into Tuzhai to steal food. However, they didn't expect Qin Ming and Lin Yuanwang's people were taking turns on duty, watching their every move. Upon noticing the intruders, they gave them a good beating, and threw them out as soon as they made their way in.

No one dared to mess around after that, and the night silently passed.

Qin Ming woke up early the next morning. Every household in Tuzhai was cooking, and the fragrance of the food stimulated every one of the rich men who was stranded at the gates to Tuzhai.

Qin Ming took a glass of soybean milk in one hand and glutinous rice cake in the other. He walked out of the gates of Tuzhai leisurely, with two dogs wagging their tails beside him.

As soon as Qin Ming appeared, he immediately stimulated the hunger of the exhausted rich men, and their stomachs grumbled in hunger. They lost their minds and swarmed up to Qing Ming in an attempt to grab his food.

Meanwhile, Qin Ming appeared very relaxed in the face of 30 hungry men. He even found a small wooden chair to sit at the door.

They were knocked to the ground by Long before they could even get close to Qin Ming.

Bam! Bam! Bam! Long swung his bamboo stick around, hitting his targets one by one on the head and the calf. In an instant, the rich men fell to the ground.

Qin Ming took a sip of his soy milk and said slowly, “You people are really shameless. The Lin family doesn’t welcome you anymore, but

you refused to leave. As far as I know, Lin Shenghui Tour Group has contacted the legal counsels of your respective companies. They're ready to make the repayment, and they're waiting for your confirmation."

Bai Haocheng shouted, "Qin Ming, you're nothing but a live-in son-in-law. What is there to be proud of? Stop faking ignorance. You ruined our boats! How are we supposed to leave this barren mountain? You want us dead, don't you? You are a murderer!"

Qin Ming nibbled at the glutinous rice cake and said, "Really? What's the point of cursing here? Do you have any evidence to prove that I ruined your boats? Did I stop you from leaving?"

Qin Ming's words silenced the rich men as they realized they were in no position to fight with Qin Ming.

They were regretful to have offended Qin Ming.

Qin Ming smacked his lips and said, "Hey, this glutinous rice cake is a little bit sticky. I don't

want to eat it anymore. I will sell it at a lower price. Is there anyone who wants it for ten million?

Qin Ming's act of charity angered the rich men. They hated him very much, and they were even more frustrated that they couldn't do anything to him.

Suddenly, a frail-looking businessman amongst them raised his hand and said, "Me... I'll buy it. But how do I transfer the money to you?"

"Mr. Zhao, you can't."

"He is disintegrating our resolve. Don't be fooled."

"Mr. Zhao, don't be fooled."

Then, Mr. Zhao pushed the rest of the men away and shouted, "I don't want to die here! What's the use of having my pride and dignity when I might die from starvation? I want to get out of here alive!"

As soon as Qin Ming raised his hand, Bi Yuan and his men immediately brought in a satellite communication set-up comprising of a high-tech computer. It was not a problem to log in to online banking. Their phones could be connected to the Internet as long as they connected to the network using the set-up.

Under the supervision of Bi Yuan and his men, Mr. Zhao completed the transfer of ten million to Qin Ming's account. He then took the leftover glutinous rice cake from Qin Ming and ate it with guts.

Mr. Zhao cried as he ate, "This is the most expensive glutinous rice cake I have ever eaten. Sure enough, the value of the commodity depends on its' scarcity at that given time."

Gulp. The other people who couldn't eat swallowed their saliva.

More than thirty people were starving at the scene, and their stomachs growled uncomfortably.

Suddenly, someone stepped up and said, “Mr. Qin, I presume the Lin family now listens to you? I know it’s not right for us to force Lin Yuanwang to pay back the money, but we also had our own difficulties. Tell us, what can we do for you to let us go?”

Qin Ming flashed a faint smile. “If you had said that earlier, you wouldn’t have to go through that kind of suffering.”



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Wait! I Have Something to Say!



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Qin Ming said to the creditors, "Where is Qin Weiyuan? He instigated you to come and collect the debts, right?"

The bosses looked at each other in distress.

Their expressions confirmed Qin Ming's statement.

Qin Ming continued, "My men have been looking for him to no avail. Firstly, tell me his whereabouts. Secondly, I want a fresh agreement with lower liquidated damages, and make my company the debtor. Then, I'll send you out of the mountains safely. Otherwise, you will have to walk back by yourself. No one will hold you back."

Qin Ming's terms were considerably good. He was extremely lenient towards them.

According to his inquiry last night, the liquidated damages for the contracts were as great as fifty to a hundred times.

Lin Yuanwang had blindly signed the contracts

which brought about his ultimate defeat.

Those contracts were obtained by Qin Weiyuan back then. He didn't expect his son-in-law to trick him, so he approved them and signed them, resulting in so many creditors today.

Obviously, that was Qin Weiyuan's doing. Based on the Lin family's status, the general contractual liquidated damages would only compensate the principal. Even after a discount, it wouldn't be as hefty as fifty to a hundred times more than the principal.

However, Qin Weiyuan amended the contractual liquidated damages of more than thirty contracts at once and then bombed the Lin family's Insect Valley. His intentions were sinister.

How would these people not know? He was obviously up to no good!

As for Qin Ming, he was no saint either. By signing a new agreement with the creditors, they could only recover the principal from him, while Qin Ming could benefit from the differential sum

between the initial and the new agreement.

The only benefit for the creditors was that they could leave the mountains.

Qin Ming's terms meant that they would lose billions. Naturally, they refused and clung to their contracts. As long as they could leave the mountains alive, everything was worth it.

Moreover, they could not afford to offend Qin Weiyuan with his current status.

As a result, no one agreed to Qin Ming's terms. The creditors clung to their contracts dearly.

Qin Ming didn't force them but just left them alone.

When he returned to Tuzhai, he sent someone to draw up a contract for the Lin family. It was a five-year loan contract with an annual interest rate of 4.5%. If the Lin family failed to repay him during the five-year period, he would extend the contract by another three years. This was a generous offer for the Lin family.

Once again, the Lin family was grateful to Qin Ming and showered him with flattery. Lin Yuanwang almost dragged him to the ancestral hall again to make him his sworn brother.

Qin Ming's remaining loan amount would also be credited to the Lin family the next month. This required the approval of the Huaxia and Global Bank branch of Huan Ning Century Corporation. These matters did not require Qin Ming to deal with, so he left them to Song Ying.

Qin Ming was only responsible for eating, drinking, and having fun in the Lin family's Tuzhai and learning about the different types of the Lin's parasites.

In addition to the beauty paste, Qin Ming found out about the longevity parasite.

It was common knowledge that human growth results from continuous cell division. When the DNA telomeres in the gene are depleted during cell division, the cell no longer divides, and people will die of old age.

The power of the longevity parasite was that it could secrete cytokinin, which would affect the durability of DNA telomeres by regulating and influencing cell division. As a result, it would delay and reduce cellular aging.

In other words, the longevity parasite was nature's cure to aging human genes and could basically prolong a dying man's life by another five to ten years.

Nevertheless, it's difficult to cultivate a longevity parasite. More than a hundred million per year is needed to cultivate a mature parasite. And even though a longevity parasite sells for three hundred million, it was still a hot commodity, and many wealthy families and businessmen flocked for it.

Due to the bombing of Insect Valley, there were very few longevity parasites left. As the Lin family had defrauded money from a subsidiary of Huan Ning Century Corporation in Dayong City before, Lin Yuanwang sold five longevity parasites to Qin Ming at a cost price of a hundred and fifty million.

Each longevity parasite was placed in a thumb-sized glass container. There was liquid in the glass for the parasite, and the stopper had pores for air exchange. The longevity parasite was tiny and could not be seen clearly without a magnifying glass. It looked a bit like a hairworm but had many claws.

In addition to the longevity parasite, some parasites built up the body's constitution, while others absorbed human toxins. There were also other weird insects that were used as medicine. Although Qin Ming was interested, there were no ready specimens for him to look at due to the bombing of the Insect valley.

After the two parties negotiated the deal, Lin Yuanwang said politely, "Mr. Qin, I heard that you are going to punish those people outside Tuzhai. I have no objection since they are all ungrateful beasts. However, if you go too far, lives might be lost. This wouldn't be good for anyone. What do you think?"

Qin Ming smiled faintly. "Are you interceding for the wealthy businessmen or the five wealthy

young men? Why? Are you worried about them retaliating?”

Lin Yuanwang answered, “The Lin family was almost destroyed. Although the five young men came to add insult to the injury, this incident really had nothing to do with them. I don’t want to go overboard either. After all, I’m acquainted with their parents.”

Qin Ming said, “Oh, so it seems that you’re pleading for the five of them. Let me guess, Zhang Quanzhen said something to you? Ask him to come over and talk to me instead.”

After speaking, Qin Ming patted Lin Yuanwang on the shoulder and said, “Mr. Lin, these people deserve such punishments for their sins. I have my own plans. No matter what happens, you won’t need to be responsible for it. Therefore, please rest assured.”

Qin Ming was obviously rejecting Lin Yuanwang’s request with his remarks. Lin Yuanwang’s heart sank. He had thought that Qin Ming was young, but surprisingly tolerant.

Although he was ridiculed by everyone initially, he did not say anything.

Now, the situation was under his grasp, and all the cards were in his hands.

As soon as Qin Ming walked out, Lin Yundong and Lin Yurou stepped out behind the lobby.

Lin Yuanwang said, “Dad, I have tried to persuade him, but... Qin Ming is no ordinary person. He must be a prominent figure.”

Lin Yundong said, “Looking at how he could disregard the Qin family, of course, he is not an ordinary person. However, we must do what Master Zhang requested us to do.”

Lin Yurou grumbled and said, “Dad, Grandpa, those creditors are so nasty, and they have teamed up with brother-in-law to cheat us. How can we just let them go? Isn't it good for them to suffer? Why stop Mr. Qin? Wouldn't we be offending him?”

Lin Yundong shook his head and said, “You little

girl, what do you know? The Lin family is facing a complicated and difficult tribulation now. It was Master Zhang who helped us overcome the difficulty, so we must do as he says.”

Feeling puzzled, Lin Yurou asked, “Grandpa, what do you mean by this? What complicated and difficult tribulation? Wasn’t this incident caused by brother-in-law alone?”

Lin Yuanwang explained, “Silly girl. Even if Qin Weiyuan were held in high regard and prospered, he might have the courage to divorce your sister but would never have the courage to blow up Insect Valley. Now, not only did he blow it up, but he also cheated the Lin family. In the end, he was even protected by Qin Xiaoguang and Qin Ningyuan. When you went to seek justice, you were humiliated. When I went to Sea City to ask them for a loan, their attitude and terms... It was all part of their plan to usurp the Lin family.”

Lin Yurou was taken aback. Her eyebrows gathered, and she said, “Dad, you mean the Qin family is targeting us this time? B-But we shared a close bond!”

Lin Yundong hummed in response. “It doesn’t look like Qin Xiaoguang was behind this, but in fact, he is. This is how crafty he is. If it weren’t for Master Zhang, the Lin family would really fall into Qin Xiaoguang’s hands. So, we must persuade Mr. Qin as instructed by Master Zhang.”

Lin Yurou was dumbfounded.

Lin Yuanwang nodded and said, “Now that the incident is over, we will let you in on this. In fact, Qin Weiyuan isn’t an outstanding man. He was able to enter the Lin family only because Qin Ningyuan helped him with the matchmaking. Alas, your sister was also a naive person... Yurou, you are also affected by this. You have to be careful in the future.”

Lin Yurou bit her lip. Holding a Dzi bead in her hand, she said, “Dad, I will definitely find that person. I remember how he looks like. Furthermore, he left something important behind.”

Then, she asked, “Dad, what should we do if Mr.

Outside of Tuzhai, over 40 people were starving for two days straight. In the meantime, they sent two batches of people via the mountain path to Dayong City to seek help.

None of their ventures seemed to be successful. One group of people returned injured, while the other was rumored to be lost. Many came to the woods to look for the group of people who went astray during their journey to Dayong City. Alas, their efforts were in vain. No one showed up at their calls. Right now, no one knew whether they were already in Dayong City or trapped inside the maze of a forest.

The fates of these men were completely in the hands of Qin Ming. Every day, Qin Ming would send Bi Yuan to feast in front of them to spite them. Of course, all of them were livid. They would have torn Qin Ming's head down if they could.

Unfortunately, these men could not win against the Qin Ming's men in a fight.

Moreover, Qin Ming was determined in making

them suffer. There was no way he would leave them any window to escape.

The rich merchants were now reliving Lin Yuanwang's experience of being tormented by themselves. It was beyond unbearable.

On the third morning without food, Mr. Zhao, who once spent ten million to buy the rice cake eaten by Qin Ming, could not stand it anymore.

He wanted to transfer his contract with the Lin family to Qin Ming. As long as he got back the money he lost, he would let Qin Ming have all of the penalty from the Lin family.

In the meantime, the Lin family chose to ignore the laments of the businessmen. Not only were the businessmen exhausted and famished, but they also made no progress in getting help. Right now, they were looking at Death in its face.

To all of the wealthy businessmen, it was a better decision to give in to Qin Ming. They valued their lives more than anything. They could escape from this hellish place and head back into the

embrace of their young and pretty wives.

With Mr. Zhao as the precedent, many had the intention to transfer their contracts too.

After Mr. Zhao signed the new contract, Qin Ming rewarded him a drumstick. The famished men, who had been starving forever, could not resist the aroma of the roasted drumstick. All of them lunged forward to Qin Ming like maniacs who just got out of an asylum. They rushed to sign a contract with him, through which they requested Qin Ming to let them off his hook.

Of course, Qin Ming was more than pleased to make deals with them.

In fact, he already had the contracts ready for them. One by one, the businessmen pressed their inked thumbs at the bottom of the documents. They couldn't wait to have their first mouthful of food.

In just an hour's time, Qin Ming earned the right to claim a penalty of more than 10 billion from the Lin family. No one ever witnessed such an

absurd amount of money going to a single person.

After everyone had signed their contracts, Qin Ming voided the obsolete contracts they had with the Lin family and arranged for boats to send them off.

Before leaving, the businessmen informed Qin Ming about Qin Weiyuan, the local guide who brought them to this place was familiar with the water routes in Tuzhai. At that moment, his life was hanging on a piece of thread because he had gone many days untreated after being poisoned.

The businessmen were unsure of Qin Weiyuan's motive for visiting Tuzhai. All this while, they were focused on collecting their debts from the Lin family. After Lin Yuanwang got into the accident, they worried about Lin Yuanwang not paying his debts. If that happened, their companies' growth would take a hit.

After Qin Weiyuan was bitten by a snake, these businessmen had no idea how to leave the place on their own.

Upon hearing about Qin Weiyuan's condition, Qin Ming immediately requested his subordinates to send him into Tuzhai for medical aid. He did not care how the Lin family would deal with that traitor whatsoever.

Yet, after Qin Ming got all of the businessmen bound under a contract to him, he ordered, "We have to take precautions. Inform Ying to wreck their companies."

Bi Yuan responded, "Mr. Qin, since you have decided to spare no mercy for them, why not go all the way and have them killed? We can make it look like everything's an accident."

Qin Ming shook his head. "No, that would bring many suspicions against me. Just keep an eye on them. Take them down if there are any signs of them trying to seek revenge."

Having settled everything, Qin Ming took the heavy stack of contracts to Lin Yuanwang. He said, "Mr. Lin, I'll be taking my leave now. I have pestered you long enough. I'll pass Qin Weiyuan to you. Also, you don't have to pay me

the fines for these contracts. I just hope both of our companies will have a smooth partnership with each other in the near future.”

Lin Yuanwang gawked at the pile of contracts that Qin Ming had obtained. He was very impressed by how capable he was. In just one day, he earned more than 10 billion. Now, the Lin family had no choice but to supply their goods to Qin Ming.

Nonetheless, Lin Yuanwang wondered, *Is Qin Ming not afraid of making enemies with those people?*

Indeed, Qin Ming was not afraid of those businessmen coming to him for revenge.

After bidding farewell to the Lin family, Qin Ming bought some local specialties and left Tuzhai with his men by boat. Their departure from that place was swift under the guidance of the local tour guides.

During his stay at Tuzhai, Qin Ming purposely ignored Zhang Quanzhen.

Mu Xiaoqiao was curious about Qin Ming's abnormal behavior. She asked, "Didn't you want to recruit Master Zhang? Why are we leaving now?"

Qin Ming deliberately replied in a loud tone, "If he really wanted to work for me, why would he have so many gimmicks? Sigh, if not for him, I would never have let those people leave this place alive. I really despise evil men like them. It truly disgusts me that he was defending them. I never want to see Zhang Quanzhen again."

"Haha!" Long could not hold the laughter in him. He knew what Qin Ming said was far from true.

Mu Xiaoqiao responded, "Look. Even your bodyguard doesn't buy into your lies."

As Qin Ming and the rest boarded the boats, Qin Ming deliberately said to Mu Xiaoqiao, "Count down from 5. I swear before you finish, he will show up."

Mu Xiaoqiao doubtfully started to count down. "5, 4, 3, 2... "

Before she reached '1', she could hear Zhang Quanzhen's footsteps coming from behind. He bolted to Qin Ming and Mu Xiaoqiao as he panted. "Qin Ming, Ms. Mu, please take me with you!"

Mu Xiaoqiao tried to muffle her laughter.

Qin Ming was chuckling out loud. "Okay! Hurry up, people! Start to row the boat! Ignore that old fella!"

Zhang Quanzhen saw Qin Ming's boats leaving the dock and picked up his pace. When he reached the end of the dock, he leaped with all of his might and flew across the 3m gap between him and Qin Ming. With a plop, he landed on Qin Ming's boat on both feet.

As he landed, the tip of his feet touched the ground before the rest. His motion was so controlled that the boat did not sway one bit.

Zhang Quanzhen's impressive agility caught the attention of Bi Yuan and the rest of Qin Ming's men.

Qin Ming pretended to be surprised. He gasped, “Master Zhang? Since when have you joined us?”

Zhang Quanzhen pointed a finger at Qin Ming with a big grin on his face. “Qin Ming, stop bluffing! Did you really not wait for me just now?”

Qin Ming answered with a laughing voice, “No! I swear I didn’t! Sigh. Guys, turn the boat around! We need to send Master Zhang back.”

Zhang Quanzhen replied in a haste, “It’s fine, it’s fine! Let’s go back together. There’s nothing else for me to settle at Tuzhai anyway. Why do you want to send me back, huh? Are you not willing to give me a ride?”

Qin Ming guffawed. “Oh, so you need a ride back? Why didn’t you say so earlier? I would have waited for you.”

Qin Ming stared at Zhang Quanzhen in amusement. The old man was done with Qin Ming’s playful taunts. He spoke truthfully,

“Alright, I give up, you cheeky little rascal! Youngsters nowadays are sure not to be messed with! I thought you will be the one begging me to join your team, but I ended up looking for you instead. Hehe!”

Before Qin Ming said anything, Mu Xiaoqiao spoke, “If the employer is desperate for recruits, then they will take the initiative to scout talents. Vice versa, if an employee needs work, he will also show up automatically at the doorsteps of his prospective employers. Master Zhang, since you have come to us out of your free will, you must be looking to join Qin Ming’s company right? If you really intend to join us, could you be Qin Ming’s advisor at his company? Although he’s promoted by his boss to the position of vice-chairman, he’s still very young. If Master Zhang is willing to help him, he’ll surely be saved from many tight corners and scams from other people.”

Zhang Quanzhen sneered, “He’s so sharp! How can he be scammed by anyone?”

Zhang Quanzhen sat down and rubbed his goatee.

He uttered, “Alright, then I’ll stop beating around the bush. Qin Ming, I also think you have great potential. Since you want me to guide you, why not ask me to take you in as my official disciple? I intend to have you under me as a student.”

Qin Ming was taken aback. He never thought that even though he was the one who made Zhang Quanzhen join him willingly, Zhang Quanzhen could still make it appear as if Qin Ming were the one who’s supposed to beg Zhang Quanzhen to join him.

Zhang Quanzhen didn’t want to be under Qin Ming. He wanted to be Qin Ming’s teacher, someone who could command respect from Qin Ming.

The dynamic of this relationship was very different from what Qin Ming had in mind.

Zhang Quanzhen was willing to take a step back so that things could go his way.

If Qin Ming could not get over his own ego and

rejected Zhang Quanzhen, all of his past efforts would go to waste at his own hands.

But if he agreed, then Qin Ming would lose his power to have Zhang Quanzhen at his command.

Everyone now had their eyes glued to Qin Ming. *Would he agree or reject Zhang Quanzhen?*



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It was noon when Qin Ming returned to Dayong City.

Zhang Xianmin and his men were already waiting for Qin Ming. A grumbling Mu Sichun was with them to welcome Qin Ming's return too. She was upset at Qin Ming for not bringing her on his mission this time around.

Having been busy for two days straight, Qin Ming was exhausted. "Gosh, I'm so tired. Let's head to the hotel first. Are you coming with us, Zhang?"

Until now, Qin Ming still didn't give Zhang Quanzhen a proper response as he was still figuring if there's any better way to tilt the latter's offer in his favor. At the same time, he was also cracking his head for some problems he had at the moment. However, due to a lack of experience, he still could not come up with a good solution for the problems he's facing. He could only set it aside for the time being.

Zhang Quanzhen gladly accepted Qin Ming's invitation and boarded the car heading for the

hotel behind Qin Ming.

In the backseat, Mu Xiaoqiao was helping Qin Ming remove his makeup. The fake mustache was glued onto his face with a tacky adhesive, which made it really uncomfortable for Qin Ming. Qin Ming's eyes were also dry from wearing the fake spectacles for so long. At the moment, he was long due for a rest.

Mu Sichun made a duck face. "Sis, what happened at Tuzhai?"

Mu Xiaoqiao made a silent gesture to her sister. "Shhh, let Ming rest. He's pondering about something."

Mu Sichun's face darkened. "What? Aren't the two of you divorced? Why are you so caring towards him all of a sudden?"

Mu Xiaoqiao glared at her sister. "Seems like someone really wants us to have a divorce?"

Mu Sichun writhed her lips and denied, "Nah, you're thinking too much, sis! Why do you sound

so angry?”

Mu Sichun was kind of upset. She detected hints of animosity from her sister. There was an invisible barrier between the two of them that was set up by her sister. *What did I do wrong? Tsk.*

On their way to the hotel, the Mu siblings did not talk to each other at all.

Although Qin Ming was taking a shuteye, he was aware of the loud silence between the siblings. A sense of guilt stung him. He worried that Mu Xiaoqiao had misunderstood her sister when Mu Sichun was sleep talking on the plane before.

Qin Ming figured that any explanation would make it worse and chose not to say anything about it. He hoped time would erase that incident from Mu Xiaoqiao's memory.

Qin Ming and the rest arrived at the hotel. Qin Ming took an invigorating bath right away. Now with none of his makeup on, Qin Ming was back to his original look. After he put on a fresh set of

clothes, he headed to the study to look for Zhang Quanzhen.

Zhang Quanzhen saw that there were only the two of them in the room and asked, “So? What’s your answer, Qin Ming?”

Qin Ming did not reply to Zhang Quanzhen directly. He answered with another question, “Zhang, it’s so weird. Two months ago, I was walking mindlessly on the streets because I couldn’t find Nie Haitang and there you were at the park. What a coincidence, right?”

Zhang Quanzhen smiled a little. “That’s because fate wants us to run into each other. I still remember the time I met you, I just got a Porsche from Mu Hao. I was merely driving the new car around to have a bit of fun.”

Qin Ming chuckled. “Hmm, I can’t tell if you’re lying to me or not. You sure you didn’t come prepared back then? Why don’t you tell me what do you see in me?”

Zhang Quanzhen contemplated in silence for a

while. He knew Qin Ming was no longer someone who believed in fates and the likes.

“You’re so sharp that it surprises me,” Zhang Quanzhen praised Qin Ming. “You have a pair of discerning eyes when it comes to people. However, you still have your weaknesses. They always show at the most crucial moments. You have a talent, but you need to train it. Don’t be too confident about it yet. Many people who drown usually think that they are good swimmers and overestimate themselves.”

Qin Ming did not acknowledge Zhang Quanzhen’s criticism of himself. He followed up with another question, “Are you admitting to me that you already had your eyes on me some time ago before you meet me?”

Zhang Quanzhen was frank with his words. “Yes, I need your help with something that I have longed to finish. Yet, I know that under usual circumstances, there’s no way I can get you to trust me. Coincidentally, the Mu family needed help then. I saw in the stars that if Mu Xiaoqiao and you got together, many of the Mu family’s

problems will be solved. When I found you, I couldn't believe my eyes either. You're the missing puzzle piece that I needed."

Qin Ming didn't know whether to trust Zhang Quanzhen's words or not. Until now, Zhang Quanzhen had been nothing but a sly fox. Qin Ming could only take his words with a grain of salt.

Qin Ming asked, "If I help you realize your wishes, will you give me everything I want?"

Before Zhang Quanzhen could reply, Qin Ming continued, "I am very aware of my own capabilities. I'm a first-tier student at the Huasheng University of Technology and nothing more. Even though my grades are good, I think I'm only capable enough to be a vice-chairman at a company. I have a feeling that this is the furthest I can go. If I'm less lucky, I might end up being a manager. However, now I have a chance to excel. I cannot let go of this chance just because I am not capable enough. That's why I need your help, Zhang. Long is skilled in combat and has experience in the military. He is well-

suites to be a bodyguard. Meanwhile, Qi Minghui is a business prodigy. Now, I need someone like you who's smart enough to solve just about any problem. You can solve Mu family and Lin family's problems with just your words. You possess something that I can only admire but never achieve. "

Zhang Quanzhen laughed. "Rome is not built in a day. Do you think I have always been this sharp? You haven't seen me when I was younger, haha! I have also made my fair share of mistakes too. But if you're willing to help me achieve my goals, I am willing to teach you everything I have learned. Anyway, I don't want to bring all of my knowledge to the grave. I need to pass it to someone, and that someone is you."

The two of them finally let down their guards against each other and had an honest conversation.

Now that Zhang Quanzhen had revealed his intentions, it's all up to Qin Ming to make a choice.

Qin Ming felt that it was the right time to accept Zhang Quanzhen's offer. He poured Zhang Quanzhen some tea and said, "Please be my personal tutor, Zhang. I will pay you 2000 a month, what do you think?"

Zhang Quanzhen who was reaching out for the cup of tea halted in his movement. His lips twitched as he scoffed internally. *Tsk! You just aren't gonna put down your ego, are you? Even at this moment you still want to make me one of your subjects by paying me a fee?*

Qin Ming smiled slyly. "Zhang, the salary is already pretty high. I used to have an employee who signed a contract with me for a salary of 1000. She was so grateful towards me because of it. Since you're my teacher, I will pay you more handsomely of course. If you want a higher salary, why not join my company as my personal advisor? Through my company, I can give you a much higher salary."

Zhang Quanzhen laughed wryly as he knocked Qin Ming three times on his forehead. "Quit your antics! I'm your teacher! I don't need your

money. I only want you to respect me as your teacher. I won't trick you into anything as I did before. Rest assured, Qin Ming."

Qin Ming guffawed. "You're reading too much into my words, Zhang. Anyway, 2000 is really a lot, okay?"

Zhang Quanzhen drank the tea served by his student. With that, Qin Ming was officially Zhang Quanzhen's disciple.

Now that the relationship between the two of them was different, Zhang Quanzhen also treated Qin Ming in a different way. He uttered, "By the way, I wasn't lying when I said you and Mu Xiaoqiao are a match made in heaven. But if you really don't like her, I can help you with it."

Qin Ming suddenly recalled the night he was bitten by the poisonous snake and shook his head. "It's fine. I will repay Mu Xiaoqiao myself for what I owe her."

Zhang Quanzhen picked at his beard and chuckled. "Ah, how can any men resist a

beautiful woman? I have studied your destiny before. You're bound to meet a lot of pretty women in the future."

Qin Ming scrunched his brows. "Is there a way to change my destiny then?"

Zhang Quanzhen was elated. "Weren't you the one who didn't trust fortune-telling? I wasn't planning to teach you this, though. What now? Are you eager to learn it?"

Qin Ming laughed coyly. "Of course you have to teach me everything! I have paid you to be my personal teacher. If you don't teach me, how can I ever be as great as you are?"

Zhang Quanzhen responded cheekily, "If you want to be as great as me, why do you want to change the path of your destiny? Didn't I let Mu Xiaoqiao pass you a formula book for martial arts skills? You should start practicing now! It will definitely make you good enough in bed to handle all the women you are going to meet in the future, hahaha!"

Qin Ming's face sunk as he remained silent.

Qin Ming didn't think that he would attract a lot of girls in the future. As for his relationship with Mu Xiaoqiao, he had an idea on how to settle it.

In any case, Qin Ming didn't want to dwell on the topic of women. He tried to change the topic. "If you want me to practice, then I'll do as you say. Anyway, what do you want me to help you with? What goals do you have?"

Zhang Quanzhen looked sour when his unfulfilled wish was brought up. His face was tied up into a knot.

He sighed before starting to speak, "Long time ago, my friends and I were a bunch of youngsters who were doing nothing with our lives. One day, we gathered together and decide to rule the world..."

“I need to start this story from when I was young...”

Zhang Quanzhen started to recount the story of his life. “Mu Hairan and I were best friends growing up. But unlike me, he was born into a wealthy and powerful family. Unfortunately, the families from the upper-echelons always had conflicts with one another. Since they were fighting a lot, Mu Hairan, whom his family was not fond of, was forced to learn martial arts at the Mountain of the Beasts. Together, both of us became Zhao Demin’s disciples.”

Qin Ming was puzzled. He asked, “Wait, Zhang. Aren’t you a priest from the Mountain of the Beasts? Why is Zhao Demin your teacher?”

Zhang Quanzhen knocked Qin Ming’s head lightly. “Don’t forget you’re my student now. Better start calling me Mr. Zhang instead of Zhang.”

Qin Ming teetered and responded, “Okay, Mr. Zhang.”

Zhang Quanzhen then explained, “As I told you, it was a long time ago. Back then, there aren’t many priests at the Mountain of the Beasts. Even though it is famous for many high-level priests residing in it, it was far from established. The current Mountain of the Beasts you see now is the result of many years of my hard work.”

Qin Ming had a moment of realization. He forgot that Zhang Quanzhen was already a senior that had been through the tumultuous times before.

Zhang Quanzhen continued, “Our master at the Mountain of the Beasts knew my current teacher, Zhao Demin at a struggle session. By the time my master returned from the struggle session, he became blind. He was concerned about us kids at the Mountain of the Beasts since he was not capable to feed us now with his disability. Thus, my master asked both Mu Hairan and me to become Zhao Demin’s disciples so we could at least not get hungry.”

Qin Ming got excited. “How’s the Zhao family? Are they also rich and powerful back then?”

Zhang Quanzhen nodded. “In terms of power and influence, the Zhao family was superior to the Qins in Sea City, at least in that age of depression. In fact, Zhao family was so powerful that even their servants were able to own properties in other countries.”

Qin Ming agreed in silence. The Zhaos were a member of the highest board of directors at Huan Ning Century Corporation. Even his godfather Chang Hongxi found them a force not to be reckoned with.

It was all because of the Zhao family’s influence in Huaxia.

Zhang Quanzhen added, “Back then, Master Zhao had 5 students. Mu Hairan and I were two of them. The five of us were like brothers. We swore to always be there for each other and to conquer the world together someday.”

Before Zhang Quanzhen could continue, Qin Ming intervened, “But alas, because of some wretched woman, the five of you turned on each other and parted ways. Mr. Zhang, this is such a

typical plot for the TV series nowadays.”

Zhang Quanzhen looked daggers at Qin Ming. He sighed before continuing, “I hate to say this but you’re right. Sigh, life is just like drama. Because of a woman, the five of us part ways. Over a decade’s memories of living together and playing with each other were gone just like that. Luckily, my friendship with Mu Hairan went all the way back to our time at the Mountain of the Beasts. Hence, the two of us remained in close contact with each other for all these years.”

Qin Ming then asked, “Mr. Zhang, then what is the wish you were talking about?”

Zhang Quanzhen sighed melancholically. His gruff voice rumbled on, “It’s been a few decades now but we still haven’t made up with each other. I want our relationship to be what it once was. We shouldn’t have ended up like this. I knew they didn’t want things to end this way too. It must have pained them too. Hence, I have decided to take the first step to patch things up.”

Qin Ming was moved by the bromance Zhang

Quanzhen shared with his long-lost friends. Even after so many decades, they still had a place in Zhang Quanzhen's heart.

Yet, Qin Ming was curious as to how his teacher would require his help. "But Mr. Zhang, I know none of your friends. How can I help you?"

Zhang Quanzhen replied, "It is not the right time yet. I won't reveal much to you for the time being. Now, you have to learn how to observe people and predict their personalities and behaviors from your observations. It will help you a lot when it comes to matters pertaining to human relations in the future. Right now, you are still not matured enough. You still have the mind of a teenager, which is why your judgment may be off sometimes."

Qin Ming rolled his eyes. *Tsk, will it hurt you to let me know what you need me for?*

To Qin Ming, Zhang Quanzhen was exactly like his godfather Chang Hongxi. They always stopped right before they were about to share something important. The excuses they gave

were always ‘the timing is not right’.

Despite his displeasure, Qin Ming did not retort. He spoke, “Okay then. Tell me about it when the time comes. If you need help from me, just let me know Mr. Zhang.”

Zhang Quanzhen said calmly, “Forgive me for not telling you about my wish right away. You still have a long way to go. If I let you know what I needed help with, it will be difficult for you to focus on yourself. You might even get into unnecessary problems. For now, I’ll give you a book to read. Also, remember to practice whatever that is on the book I gave to Mu Xiaoqiao. Not only will it improve your combat skills, but it will also strengthen your body.”

Zhang Quanzhen then took out a thick book with a black cover.

Qin Ming immediately flipped open the book out of curiosity. He soon realized that everything inside was handwritten by Zhang Quanzhen. His handwriting was very neat and legible.

Zhang Quanzhen added, “I have included both principles on how to deal with people and also my experiences tackling difficult issues. I have also included some entries in which I failed. Just so you know, even though there are many criteria to an impossible mission, there is always hope. The art that I’m teaching you is the smartest way possible to make people submit to you. Everything will be done with only your mouth. You will be distorting the reality and playing people’s minds with your words.”

Qin Ming’s heart lurched. *Isn’t this Zhang Quanzhen’s autobiography?*

Zhang Quanzhen took Qin Ming’s hands in his. “Remember, this book is very important. Don’t let it fall into the hands of others. If you lose it, you will also lose the right to be my student.”

Qin Ming nodded in all seriousness. “Rest assured, Mr. Zhang. I will guard it with my life.”

Zhang Quanzhen nodded in response. “I still have other matters to tend to even though I have just settled Lin family’s issue. I’ll visit you again in

Guang City. I hope you will soon master what is recorded in this book. If you have time, feel free to practice with Mu Hairan. He's not inferior to me at all. He only lost his edge because of what happened back then. That doesn't mean he's not adept in the art of talking and dealing with people."

Qin Ming replied earnestly, "I understand."

Before Zhang Quanzhen left, he asked for two longevity pills from Qin Ming. Qin Ming was quite bummed out to let him have it, as each of the pills costed a few million. *Tsk, you're just abusing your relationship with me!*

Yet, Qin Ming did not say anything but pass him the pills at once.

Anyway, since the Lin family now owed him big time, he could always get more from them.

Even though Zhang Quanzhen talked a lot just now, he still didn't touch on the most important topic. At the start, Qin Ming felt like he was just a pawn for Zhang Quanzhen to take advantage of.

Luckily, Qin Ming was aware of that. Qin Ming was not dumb. He was able to catch Zhang Quanzhen in his act and played his hand back at his teacher. With that, the two of them now shared a proper student-teacher relationship.

Even though Zhang Quanzhen would not directly obey Qin Ming's orders, Qin Ming figured that Zhang Quanzhen would definitely help him out if he ran into a problem.

With Zhang Quanzhen as his teacher, Qin Ming would now fare better in the fight going on at Huan Ning Century Corporation.

Still, Qin Ming wasn't sure if Zhang Quanzhen were a man he could rely on with his endeavors when the time came. After all, he could not read Zhang Quanzhen's mind, let alone control it.

What Qin Ming truly wanted now was to be as skillful as Zhang Quanzhen in all aspects.

Zhang Quanzhen had both brains and brawn. Ever since Zhang Quanzhen fended himself from Long in Guang City, Qin Ming knew Zhang

Quanzhen was skilled in combat. His giant leap onto the boat this morning further proved his physical prowess. Obviously, Zhang Quanzhen was purposely hiding his fighting capabilities.

Even though the two books Qin Ming received were elementary, he still didn't rush through them.

Qin Ming wanted to have a sturdy foundation in whatever he was learning.

Qin Ming spent the rest of the day with Mu Xiaoqiao and her sister. When night came, the lot of them were ready to fly back to Guang City. A private jet was already waiting for them.

On the plane, Mu Sichun was sleeping soundly with a shirt and a bunch of gifts Qin Ming bought her earlier.

Qin Ming was also taking a nap. He was tired from all the work he did in the past few days.

Meanwhile, Mu Xiaoqiao was feeling rather antsy. She sensed that Qin Ming was treating her

in a different way from before. Yet, she couldn't exactly tell how was it different. She just knew he wasn't treating her as his wife.

Ding dong.

Suddenly, a WeChat notification rang on Qin Ming's phone.

Mu Xiaoqiao turned her head around and made sure no one was looking at her before she reached out for Qin Ming's phone. Upon swiping away the lock screen, she could see Nie Haitang's heart-warming smile in the background.

Mu Xiaoqiao was hit by a small pang of jealousy. Still, she had to admit that Nie Haitang had more smiles in her. Even more, Nie Haitang's smile was prettier.

Mu Xiaoqiao browsed through Qin Ming's WeChat. She discovered a girl named Kou Xinling in his contacts. That girl was sending Qin Ming messages every day. It usually went like this: *Are you there?, So bored right now! For some reason, I just thought of you, hehe!, Why are you ignoring me?, Am I that annoying?, Have you eaten?, Do you think girls look prettier in straight or curly hair?*

However, Mu Xiaoqiao noticed that Qin Ming never replied to that noisy girl. Weirdly, she found herself smiling as she glanced at Qin Ming who was taking a nap at the moment.

Mu Xiaoqiao crawled into Qin Ming's embrace and raised his phone at a 45-degree elevation in front of the two of them. She took a selfie and sent it to all of the girls on Qin Ming's WeChat. After that, she added a text: *If you pester my man again, I will make you pay, you sl*t!*



Rate the Translation to Get 2 Pearls.



Wait! I Have Something to Say!



Send a Gift to the Writer!

At Qing Hua University. The sun was rising at a lazy pace.

Nie Haitang was crying for the whole night. She just received a picture from Qin Ming on WeChat. In the picture, he was seen sleeping next to a woman. The text Nie Haitang received was even worse. She was called a sl*t.

She thought that Qin Ming now had his heart for another woman.

Even though the woman's face was pixelated, she could still see her hourglass figure, her fair skin, and her glossy black hair. She was definitely a big beauty.

“Boohoo...” Nie Haitang started to cry the moment she woke up. Her eyes were red and swollen.

She curled up in her bed and took out her phone. The message she got from Qin Ming was already deleted.

But it doesn't matter. She was sure she had lost

her love.

Once, Nie Haitang thought that Qin Ming's feelings towards her would last forever. She never expected it to end in two months' time.

She lifted her head to look around the dorm. Knowing that her roommate was not in, she bawled even louder as she drunk herself in her tears.

After a while, Nie Haitang took out her phone and dialed the special number given to her by Chang Hongxi after telling her to leave Qin Ming for Qin Ming's sake.

“Hello?” A hoarse voice rang out once the call got through.

Nie Haitang bit her lips and asked, “I-Is this, Mr. Chang? I am Nie Haitang. Is Qin Ming safe now? I want to meet him.”

Chang Hongxi remained silent for a while before replying, “No. It's still too early. I've put a lot of effort into hiding your whereabouts. I just want to

protect you in case Qin Ming's enemies got their hands on you to blackmail him."

"B-But..." Nie Haitang was so heartbroken that her tears never stopped flowing out of her eyes. She choked on her tears as she uttered, "He's with another woman now. Didn't you assure me that there won't be any other girls around him?"

Chang Hongxi spoke into his phone matter-of-factly, "I apologize. I can no longer guarantee you that he won't have any other women around him. If what you said is true, then perhaps the love the two of you share is not strong enough to survive any hardships. Also, the latest intel says that there are foreign militants trying to assassinate Qin Ming at the moment. As his close contact, they naturally had their eyes on you too. If you are captured by them, they will use you as bait to lure Qin Ming out. Thus, I suggest you stay in the shadow for the time being."

Beep beep!

Chang Hongxi hung up the call. Nie Haitang was furious. In her mind, she did not mind standing

with Qin Ming in the front line. She was even willing to sacrifice her life for Qin Ming.

However, back when Qin Ming was still in a coma, Chang Hongxi had asked her to stay away from Qin Ming if she wanted Qin Ming to be safe and sound. He also promised that in half a year's time, Qin Ming's enemies would be annihilated.

At the same time, he also assured Nie Haitang that in the 6 months' time she was going to be away from Qin Ming, there won't be any other women around Qin Ming.

But everything was a big fat lie. Nie Haitang gained nothing and lost everything.

Nie Haitang tried to get Chang Hongxi back on the line but he was no longer reachable.

Nie Haitang stared blankly at the missed calls she made for quite some time. Then, she wiped the tears off her face and gritted her teeth while telling herself to hang in there no matter what.

Then, Nie Haitang got herself dressed and picked

up her handbag. As she checked her watch, she began her journey out of the campus.

Since she had no lessons today, she decided to clock in at her part-time job. She was working as a model for a few well-known designer brands to promote their latest creations.

Because she was no longer the princess of the wealthy Nie family in Guang City, she had to cut costs when it came to everyday living. She could not make herself a burden to her father and brother who were restarting the family business. It was the reason she had picked up the part-time modeling job.

As a model for a famous brand, Nie Haitang could earn up to 3 thousand in a day.

However, at the moment, Nie Haitang's purse was as light as ever. There were only a few penny in it, which was just enough for a meal.

It's not even enough for a plane ticket to Guang City.

Nie Haitang patted her pretty face and gave herself a pep talk. “You can do this, Nie Haitang! If the shooting is successful, you will earn more than 3000. Dad is not well lately, so you have to get the cash to buy him some medicine!”

Upon walking out of the school’s gates, Nie Haitang saw a Maserati parked at the roadside. Instantly, she could feel envy rising within her. Once, Nie Haitang also had a pink Maserati, but she had to sell it to clear her family’s debt.

When Nie Haitang saw the people getting off the car, she was taken aback. She hurriedly took out a mask from her bag and put it on.

The fashionable girl who got off from the seat next to the driver spoke, “Chun, you’re so amazing! In just one month’s time, you can drive the car so well.”

Then, the driver showed herself. It was none other than Bai Yuchun.

However, Bai Yuchun looked nothing like her old self. The smile on her face was broader now. She

was all clad in luxury brands. She was no longer the modest girl whose beauty was simple and demure. Right now, she looked like a celebrity who came out of a magazine. The three other girls with her also looked as stunning as her.

Yet, Bai Yuchun's demeanor was still the same. She writhed her lips as she spoke in a gentle tone, "Nah, I think I still have room for improvement. Thank god you guys are with me! I would've never had the guts to go onto the streets without y'all."

Nie Haitang stared at the four of them in silence. Although it wasn't the first time she saw Bai Yuchun at her campus, she was still shocked to see her.

Isn't she from the Huasheng University of Technology? I know her! Bai Yuchun was praised by many for her looks. However, she didn't come from a well-to-do family. To pay her tuition fees, she had to take up a part-time job. Some jobs she had included clearing tables, delivering food, and waiting tables.

According to hearsay, Qin Ming once tried to help her. Rumors had it that the two of them were in a scandalous relationship. Nonetheless, Nie Haitang did not feel jealous. Back then, she had faith in Qin Ming. She didn't believe in the rumors around him.

But she never expected that in just two months' time, Bai Yuchun now hailed from the powerful Bai family from Jing City. At the same time, she was in the social circle of the rich girls from wealthy families like herself.

Nie Haitang did not think much about it. With her mask on, she hurried past them.

A gust of wind blew in Nie Haitang's path as she scurried on. Perhaps she was walking too fast.

"Tsk!" The girl who sat next to Bai Yuchun on the car frowned in irk. "Are you on your way to hell? Why are you walking so fast? You almost bumped into me!"

The girl saw that Nie Haitang was ignoring her and rambled on, "Tsk, are you deaf? Must be

some poor wretched girl from the countryside. Why are you wearing a mask? Afraid that your unsightly face will offend others?"

Then, one of the girls spoke, "Li, why do you care so much? Just let her breathe. Chun, can you let me drive your car for a while?"

Bai Yuchun gazed at Nie Haitang in puzzlement as she left. She arched her brows as she found the woman who was scampering down the sidewalk familiar. As Bai Yuchun was still thinking about who that girl was, she suddenly remembered her friend's request to drive her car. She answered, "Yeah. Just have a go at it."

Bai Yuchun took the familiar girl off her mind as she got onto the backseat. The four of them whizzed away from that place at once on the Maserati.

Nie Haitang only took off her mask when she reached the bus station. She drew a long breath. She was terrified of meeting Bai Yuchun under such circumstances.

The two of them only knew each other existed. They weren't close to each other at all. Now with the enormous difference between the two of them, their encounter would be incredibly awkward.

Nie Haitang took the bus to a fashion company. The company was just set up recently. Lately, they were quite active in churning out new clothing. It took Nie Haitang quite some time to land a job at such a productive company.

Nie Haitang had both a pretty face and an attractive bodyline. She was born to make clothes look good on her. All of the new clothes became masterpieces on her. Hence, Nie Haitang was slowly getting popular in the circle of models.

But before Nie Haitang could get into her workplace, a skinny man showed up out of nowhere in front of her company's doors. He was in a suit and tie. Behind his black glasses, Nie Haitang could notice the guy's thin and scrawny face.

The guy uttered, "Nie Haitang! I really really like

you! Please accept this bouquet of flowers from me.”

Nie Haitang was stunned. She looked at the man who struck her as someone special.

His face looked very similar to Qin Ming, but his aura and his build were very different from him.

At first glance, Nie Haitang thought she was hallucinating. She could feel her eyes tearing up as she thought Qin Ming was finally here for her.

Then, Nie Haitang realized that he was not Qin Ming at all. There were only some resemblances in their appearances.

Nie Haitang was speechless. “Zhao Zhengyan, didn’t I tell you? I was only helping you back then because you look like someone important to me. I thought you were him. Also, it was a small deal. You don’t have to trouble yourself to repay me.”

That guy named Zhao Zhengyan responded, “But you did save me! Nie Haitang, you’re the

prettiest woman I've ever laid my eyes on. Not only that, but you also have such an angelic personality. I just want to confess my love to you! Please accept my flowers, will you?"

Nie Haitang shook her head. "I can't simply accept your flowers. I have a boyfriend. Well... actually I can receive your flowers, but you need to help me with something."



Rate the Translation to Get 2 Pearls.



Wait! I Have Something to Say!



Send a Gift to the Writer!

“Huh? Why are you asking me to deliver a message to Guang City on your behalf?” asked Zhao Zhengyan. He was clearly puzzled by Nie Haitang’s odd request.

Can she not make a call? Are we living in the stone age or something?

It seems like calling wouldn’t have worked. Nie Haitang noticed that she could not get through using her own number last night. It was no use.

When she changed numbers, she registered it under the pseudonym ‘Kou Xinling’. Qin Ming had not associated the name with her, and so he ignored her most of the time. He even sent her a picture of him sleeping with another woman.

She suspected that he had a change of heart, so she chose not to ask questions directly on the phone. Given the circumstances and how she stood to lose more than she gained, she was not willing to make any more calls.

In fact, Nie Haitang wanted to leave for Guang City immediately, but something was on her

mind.

That night, Qin Ming had been hunted down by organized foreign mercenaries - he was nearly killed. Nie Haitang was afraid of being a hostage herself, as that would put Qin Ming at risk. She would subsequently be used as bait to threaten him.

Nie Haitang's other problem was that she did not have the funds to fly back to Guang City.

Nie Haitang, who had been accustomed to wealth and extravagance in the past, knew how difficult it was to live frugally. She was acutely aware of the importance of money, especially in the capital city. Thousands could easily be spent in the blink of an eye without proper care.

She was no longer infatuated by the prospect of wealth either. Soon, she gradually adapted to living the life of an ordinary person and persevered to the best of her ability.

Apart from earning money for her living expenses and tuition, she also had to fork out

expenses for the family. Her father, Nie Jianmin, was sick and in need of treatment. Her brother, Nie Zhengming, was an entrepreneur and needed money to spend for business-related reasons. Life was indeed tough.

In all earnestness, Nie Haitang asked, “What about it? It’s only a small favor. Is it really so difficult?”

She looked at the person who also bore a resemblance to Qin Ming standing in front of her. It wasn’t unusual to find other lookalikes these days. Even a famous actor would have at least a few people resembling them. Zhao Zhengyan, however, had near-sightedness and a lighter, slightly paler complexion.

Nie Haitang had first met Zhao Zhengyan at university. The lad had been surrounded by several people who were beating him up. Without thinking, Nie Haitang had rushed forward to rescue him, assuming it was Qin Ming who was in trouble at the time.

The revelation came later when she realized that

the person was not Qin Ming. It was someone else who lacked self-confidence and was bad-tempered.

Nie Haitang had been taken aback. She marveled at the fact that there were people who looked so similar to each other. It was not anything particularly unusual, but the shock struck her anyway.

Hesitantly, Zhao Zhengyan replied, “My family forbade me from leaving Jing City.”

Annoyed, Nie Haitang rolled her eyes. “Then, take your flowers back and move aside. I need to get back to work.”

Zhao Zhengyan blocked her path, indignance in his eyes. “Nie Haitang, please. Be my girlfriend! I’ll support you financially; you needn’t even work!”

However, Nie Haitang was unmoved by the gesture. “I appreciate your kindness, but I’m already with someone else. I hope you meet someone better in the future. Now get out of the

way. I have a shoot at ten, and I'm going to be late."

Zhao Zhengyan stubbornly refused. "You're lying! You claim you have a partner, but you're always alone! Nie Haitang, my family is rich. If you go out with me, my family will be happy. Then I'll get as much money as I desire. You'll benefit from this too!"

Nie Haitang was in fact in need of money, but life's cruel ways had taught her about the futility of fairy-tale romances. They were unrealistic and absolutely ridiculous.

She did, at least, believe in her own capacity to earn money in the future. Even if she weren't rich, she had nothing to worry about.

Given how she was an emotional wreck at the moment, she deeply desired to seek out Qin Ming. What concerned her was Chang Hongxi and the others who sought to harm Qin Ming, so she couldn't afford to be distracted by other men.

"Leave me alone!" Nie Haitang exploded with

anger, taking it out on Zhao Zhengyan.

Zhao Zhengyan immediately acquiesced, feeling dejected. He was at a loss. The flowers he held fell to his side pathetically.

He could not understand why the first woman to treat him with kindness was already with someone.

With Zhao Zhengyan feeling disappointed, Nie Haitang left him and went off to work.

The photography studio of the fashion company was not short of models who needed to make a quick buck. A majority of them were female students. It was a busy day with plenty of shoots, so everyone was working at a feverish pace.

As soon as Nie Haitang arrived, she was assigned a pile of new clothes. They smelled of plastic and other chemicals, likely unwashed as well.

Before this, she wouldn't have even spared a glance at these items, let alone take pictures in them.

The existing group of models frowned with thinly-veiled disgust on their faces. Today's batch of garments had obviously been rushed - the strong industrial odors had not been eliminated. These girls all had good skin and putting on these clothes would surely cause allergies to break out.

Sensing the displeasure in the room, the female manager decided to address everyone loudly, "Listen here! I have a meeting at noon, and nobody is allowed to back out. Hurry up! Anyone who dares complain will be kicked out!"

Nie Haitang sighed and went to the dressing room. She had to swallow her pride to earn some money.

However, on her way there, she was stopped by the same manager. She took Nie Haitang's hand very enthusiastically and said, "Tang!"

"Hey, Ms. Cheng," answered Nie Haitang politely. "Did you need something?"

Ms. Cheng looked at Nie Haitang with a smile and replied, "Tang, you're gorgeous, and you

have an amazing body. I've been in the industry for a while now, and I've yet to see someone as outstanding as you are. You have a lovely disposition too!"

Nie Haitang grinned in response. "I appreciate the compliment, Ms. Cheng. But if you'll excuse me, I really need to get dressed."

"Hold on, let me finish," said Ms., Cheng hurriedly. "Tang, your latest shots were so well done that it made the pleated dress a hit! The boss is really happy. He wants to hire you as the brand ambassador. The contract is worth fifty thousand!"

Nie Haitang balked at the figure mentioned. "Really, Ms. Cheng? Thank you so much!"

The manager smiled satisfactorily and continued her pitch. "Of course! You have a good figure, and you're a natural at modeling! Why wouldn't the company take care of an asset like yourself? I've been rooting for you. However, there is one final request. The boss said he wants to give the greenhorns a chance. All you need to do is spend

the night with him, and it's a done deal!" She paused momentarily before she added, "Tang, this is a wonderful opportunity! If you want to gain a foothold in the modeling industry, this is it!"

"What?" exclaimed Nie Haitang in shock. Whatever enthusiasm she had was short-lived.

*So, she means I have to f*ck him? She wants me to f*ck him for a gig worth fifty thousand. Is that really all I'm worth?*

Nie Haitang suddenly recalled a past incident in Guang City where she was offered a hundred million by a rich man for the very same reason. Even then, she had refused, feeling angry and disgusted by the proposition. *Are you that great because you're rich? Do you think you can do whatever you want?*

She had not expected such a spectacular fall from grace, being offered fifty thousand for one night. The fact that this was actually work-related made her feel even more repulsed.

Nie Haitang flat-out refused and coldly replied, “Ms. Cheng, this outrageous. I will never agree to this.”

Immediately, the smile on Ms. Cheng’s face disappeared. “Tang, this is a good opportunity because our company has the resources you need! What good is your innocence here? Isn’t it all just for show?” she said reproachfully. “Think of the payout from this! Our boss in his forties - he’ll be gentle. In fact, he’s not all that particularly ‘able’. In a few minutes, you’ll land a job worth fifty thousand. This shouldn’t be a problem for you!”

“Why, you...” Nie Haitang was so angry that she sputtered, unable to finish what she was saying. What the woman had said was obviously a lie!

A loud, ringing slap was heard. Nie Haitang slapped the manager across the face, and everyone immediately turned to look at them both.

“I. QUIT!” she snarled angrily. Without any hesitation, Nie Haitang left the building. Whatever opportunities she had left for a regular

shoot were no longer an option.

As she left, she could hear Ms. Cheng yelling at her from behind. “You’re missing out on a good opportunity over something as small as that, dumbass? Even if you’re not willing, plenty of other people have done this before! Do you think you’re special just because you’re pretty? Hey, other women have good looks and cunts too! At least they’re smart enough to utilize opportunities given to them, unlike you!”

Wiping her tears, Nie Haitang quickly left the company. She felt devastated and had nowhere to go.

Nie Haitang wandered aimlessly until she reached a small, deserted park. Alone, she broke down in tears and cried, “Qin Ming, how I miss you!”

Nie Haitang sobbed and took out her phone, dialing Qin Ming’s number. She felt aggrieved and resolved to tell him the truth no matter what.

“I’m tired,” muttered Qin Ming with a disinterested yawn. He looked at Mr. Xiao, who was droning away on the lectern. Even though the man was a senior, he still had courses like the *Introduction to Economics* which felt like a never-ending curriculum.

Qin Ming’s fatigue did not come from the class, however. It was because he had begun practicing martial arts last night. Using the *Guide to Martial Arts* given to him by Zhang Quanzhen, he practiced with the three brothers until the crack of dawn. In spite of their efforts, the four of them could not even complete the basic moves.

The guidelines stated that basic movements had to be practiced twice a day with consistency and effort. Once at seven in the morning, and once again at ten at night.

Zhao Liniu was the first to retire and remarked, “This nonsense is harder than goddamn yoga. Yoga is supposed to keep you fit, at least. At this rate, why don’t we get a gym membership? Isn’t it the same thing?”

“But there are some benefits, even if there’s no real difference from a regular workout,” came Liang Shaoyong’s reply. “You can still develop core strength.”

Qin Ming laughed and said nothing. This was an introduction given to him by Zhang Quanzhen. Since he did say he wanted to learn a full range of martial arts skills, it would be difficult, no doubt. So how could he give up now?

Qin Ming picked up the guidebook and was pouring over it seriously when he felt his phone vibrate. Picking it up, he glanced at the caller ID flashing on the screen.

Kou Xinling? Isn't she the girl from Jing City?
Qin Ming wondered in mild surprise. *Why would she be calling me now?*

Qin Ming didn't feel like talking to her at all. He felt that she probably had little else to do and was bored all day. *Is she looking to date online, perhaps?*

Qin Ming briefly hesitated, mulling over if he

should hang up on the call. He was still in class; he had to respect his lecturer even if he harbored disagreements.

Zhao Liniu accidentally touched his hand, and he ended up answering the call. What he heard surprised him even more.

A burst of choked sobbing came from the speaker. Qin Ming felt his heart stir; he was the type who could not bear to see the suffering and torment of others, especially if it came from a woman.

He left his seat and crouched in a corner before answering, “Kou Xinling? I’m in class now. If you’re going to behave like this, I’m going to block you.”

“I’m not... Kou... Xinling...” came the woman’s reply in between sobs.

Qin Ming was startled. *Why does she sound so different all of a sudden?*

He was not used to hearing her voice this way.

Unbeknownst to him, Nie Haitang had always used a voice changer. She sounded syrupy, albeit a little metallic, but it was different this time. Her voice was now softer and more delicate, with a familiarity he did not expect. She sounded exactly like Nie Haitang this time!

Without thinking too much, Qin Ming pressed on, “What’s your name then? Why lie to me and use a pseudonym?”

Nie Haitang was about to reply when she suddenly stopped.

She felt something cold and hard pressed against her head. Her surprise turned to fear when she noticed that it was a silenced gun.

The person pointed it steadily at her forehead with a ruthless and cruel expression in his eyes.

Nie Haitang was so preoccupied with the conversation that she hadn’t even noticed the man approach.

Coldly, the assassin gave her a warning, “Ms.

Nie, I hope you won't force my hand. Like you, I also have to earn a living here, so don't say anything unnecessary."

Despite the chill in his words, Nie Haitang still felt a glimmer of hope.

She cried piteously again and finally understood that she had been deceived from the very beginning.

Chang Hongxi, Qin Ming's godfather, wanted her away from Qin Ming.

She could feel her heart pounding in her chest as she acknowledged that one wrong move would mean her death.

"Hello? Are you still there?" came Qin Ming's voice from the other end.

Nie Haitang breathed in deeply and held back her tears. Shakily, she said, "I... I wanted to trick you into giving me 1.1 million, but I couldn't bring myself to do it. So I... I cried."

No sooner had she finished, the assassin snatched her phone away and removed the SIM card. He then promptly returned the phone to Nie Haitang.

After that, he made another call on his own and handed his phone to Nie Haitang, prompting her to answer.

Tremblingly, she answered the phone, only to be met by Chang Hongxi's familiar voice. "Ms. Nie, I admit to having lied to you. But your... common station is unacceptable, and I cannot approve of your relationship with Qin Ming." The man paused momentarily before continuing, "If you promise to stay away from him forever, I'll give you a check for one billion to spend as you see fit. Refuse my offer, and I'll make your entire family disappear."

Nie Haitang turned paler with fright.

As a former heiress, she was naturally familiar with some of the more unsavory methods employed by the wealthy. Not to mention the fact that Qin Ming's adoptive father had a considerable amount of influence.

This was it. He was giving her an ultimatum.

Nie Haitang couldn't help but let out a sigh. *Can someone like me not even take charge of my own destiny?*

She sat there in silence, contemplating the situation. It was a while before she responded with, "Keep your money. I promise I won't contact Qin Ming anymore, but you have to swear that you won't hurt my family."

"Well, I won't lie to you this time," replied Chang Hongxi. "If you start a new life elsewhere quietly, I won't harm a single hair on your family's head."

After the man spoke, the assassin took the phone back and ended the call. He reached into his pocket and pulled out the check, handing it to Nie Haitang. "Are you sure?" he asked. "It's a check of one billion."

She gave him a blank look and shook her head slowly. "No amount of money can buy back what I've lost."

The assassin nodded and issued a final warning, “To be frank, Ms. Nie, we have eyes and ears everywhere. I hope you keep to your end of the bargain. Contact the Young Master again, and your family will pay for your transgression with their lives.”

Nie Haitang stood and wiped the tears from her eyes. She patted the dust of her clothes and walked away without so much a second glance at him. Soon after, she reached a bus stop. She put on a mask and waited for the bus to arrive in silence.

At the same time, Qin Ming stood up abruptly.

The noise he made caught the attention of Mr. Xiao, who was discussing the concept of a market economy. Mr. Xiao was aware that Qin Ming was familiar with high-level officials and dared not be too arrogant when chiding him. “Qin Ming, if you have questions, kindly raise your hand first.”

Without a word, Qin Ming left the classroom. He could not be bothered to explain the situation to

Mr. Xiao.

This angered Mr. Xiao, and he yelled at him. “QIN MING! Don’t think you can do as you please just because you have friends in high places! And don’t you dare complain about me to the headmaster and Mr. Zhao!”

Qin Ming was unfazed by Mr. Xiao’s words. He was too busy thinking about how closely Kou Xinling’s voice resembled that of Nie Haitang!

There was no way he’d forget his girlfriend’s voice, of all people.

What caught his attention was her desire to “trick him into giving her 1.1 million.” Something about that line made him associate that person with Nie Haitang.

As he made his way down the pavement, Long caught up to him. “Where are we going, Young Master? Shall I fetch the car or the helicopter?”

Qin Ming decisively said, “The car. Take me to Old Six’s bar.”

As soon as they walked out of the university gate, they immediately ran into Old Six and his subordinates, Bai and Steele.

Old Six wiped some sweat off and said, “What a coincidence, Mr. Qin! You’re just the man I wanted to see.”

Qin Ming gave Old Six a pointed look and asked, “I assume you have news about Nie Haitang?”

“Something like that. You can say that I have news, and yet I bear none,” Old Six responded, looking slightly abashed. “You paid me to look for her, and I did. For two whole months, I checked all the flight registers nationwide and did not find a trace of Ms. Nie’s name on any of the lists. I can only deduce that she never left the country.”

Old Six spoke cautiously while glancing at Qin Ming. The former hadn’t dared be too descriptive, lest he drew the ire of his employer.

“Using my connections, I mobilized people to investigate and turned the whole country upside

down. Initially, I thought you would be pissed if I returned empty-handed. It turned out that one of my subordinates in Jing City had taken a hit.”

Old Six sighed and continued, “I thought he had been careless and stepped on someone’s toes, poking his nose where he shouldn’t have. I sent someone different the second time, and the same thing happened. It made me think that this was too much of a coincidence. Why would it happen twice in a row?”

Qin Ming frowned. “You mean to say that she is in Jing City?”

Old Six nodded gravely. “Yes. I believe so.”



Rate the Translation to Get 2 Pearls.



Wait! I Have Something to Say!



Send a Gift to the Writer!

Qin Ming was in a hurry to seek out Old Six because he thought that he had heard Nie Haitang's voice. There was no mistaking it. They had both known each other for years and they used to participate in the badminton club together before dating. How could he possibly be wrong about this?

On top of that, her last words to him - "I wanted to trick you into paying me 1.1 million, but couldn't." - was something nobody else would've understood, save the both of them.

Back in the day, Nie Haitang was being threatened because the shares of Nie Sanitary Ware Group had experienced a severe drop in the stock market. The Nie family did not have the necessary funds to procure the equity. It was then that Nie Haitang took a hundred thousand and asked Qin Ming to make some money in the stock market. The man then operated a branch on his own in the dark.

At the end of that ordeal, Qin Ming managed to procure a large sum of money to give to Nie Haitang, specifically valued at 1.1 million. That

figure was forever etched into his memory.

Qin Ming had a hunch that she was giving him a hint. But why couldn't she speak plainly?

He also remembered her specifically denying that her name was Kou Xinling, but she stopped short at giving him her real name. Instead, she gave him a code of sorts.

Qin Ming guessed that her lack of admission was involuntary because she soon disappeared after that call. The fact that it was a Jing City number made him even more suspicious.

This worried Qin Ming greatly. He wished to fly out to Jing City and find her, even if he had to comb through vast crowds to do so.

However, he was also concerned that this was a mistake - that was why he needed to confirm things with Old Six. After all, he had contracted the man to help find her. It had been two months; surely there would be some progress.

He was not expecting Old Six to be the bearer of

bad news. Two of the men he had sent to Jing City were dead, but at the very least, it gave him an inkling of her whereabouts.

Of this, Qin Ming was certain. She was in Jing City.

Old Six carefully drew in a deep breath and said, “Don’t worry, Mr. Qin. I’ll have the situation investigated with more caution this time, starting with Nie Jianmin and Nie Zhengming. They’re both her relatives, so they might be a safer place for us to start.”

Qin Ming patted Old Six and shuddered a little. This made the latter unsure if Qin Ming was satisfied with the outcome.

In truth, how could Qin Ming be satisfied? Old Six had been too slow; he hadn’t made much progress.

Qin Ming then recalled a line from the thick autobiography Zhang Quanzhen gave him. “Anyone can be a pawn in a game of chess, and every chess piece has its place. It’s important to

calculate your moves and manage those pieces well, for you never know when you'll need them."

He glanced at Old Six blankly, slowly shifting into a polite but worried smile. "Old Six, you've done a good job, but this is where we part ways. You needn't intervene anymore, but please don't tell anyone else about this in the future, alright?"

Old Six breathed out a sigh of relief, the cold sweat on his forehead betraying his innermost thoughts. "Of course, Mr. Qin. Should the need arise, don't hesitate to contact me. No matter how dangerous the situation is, I'll be here," he added hastily.

After concluding his business with Old Six, Qin Ming drove over to the Yun Shan Villas.

Nie Haitang's former residence was in the seventh block at the foot of the hill. The four-story villa remained unchanged, even after Qin Ming bought over it under his own name. That had happened when the Nie family went bankrupt. Yet, this was the first time he'd set foot

in the place.

The large house was eerily quiet.

Qin Ming made his way to Nie Haitang's old room. Except for some of her clothes and other valuables, the woman had left some things behind.

The couture evening dress Qin Ming had given her was nowhere to be found.

He took a moment to remind himself to focus on the reason he came—to search for clues.

Qin Ming knew Nie Haitang was a smart woman. If she had been forced to leave Guang City, surely she'd have left some clues behind?

Qin Ming cursed inwardly, wondering why he hadn't thought about coming to the building sooner.

Qin Ming recalled the night Chang Hongxi persuaded Nie Haitang to leave. He and Nie Haitang were being hunted down by mercenaries,

and the truth about his lineage was revealed to her.

Did Nie Haitang consider the possibility of me purchasing the villa in memory of her? Did she leave a way for me to contact her?

Qin Ming touched the sheets and inhaled deeply. Her scent still lingered. *Wait, why are there pink panties on the bed?*

Qin Ming coughed awkwardly as he tossed them aside.

He also found a matching bra. *Hmm, C cups. She sure has an attractive figure, no doubt.*

Qin Ming shook his head to calm himself down. Now was not the time to reminisce over past memories.

He continued his search, but he found no electronics. Only normal paraphernalia remained in the room, along with some other personal effects. The woman had even taken away her photographs.

He was a patient man, and he soon stumbled upon something. At the corner of his eye, he caught a glimpse of a luxurious desk made of solid wood, laden with books.

As he stacked the books away, he noticed a solitary picture on the desk.

The picture contained two hearts bound by an old red thread, along with their names. She had also included a date, the 28th of July.

Wasn't that the day she left Guang City?

Qin Ming reached out to touch the words etched on the picture. Before he knew it, he was in tears. He could not imagine how she must have felt leaving Guang City at that point in time.

Even though Qin Ming still had the contact details of Nie Jianmin, Nie Zhengming, and other members of the Nie family, he found that he could not get through to any of them. Just like Nie Haitang's number, they were all disconnected.

The most important detail was that Chang Hongxi had forbidden him from using the influence and resources of the Huan Ning Century Corporation to locate Nie Haitang. The man had even arranged a blind date for Qin Ming, with the scion of the Zhao family.

Qin Ming was vehemently against this, but he had little say in the matter. He had to compromise. His previous date was merely a way to buy himself some time.

His eyes thoroughly scanned the table again to see if there was anything else of note.

It was of no use, for he found nothing else except the picture that made his heart ache.

“Is there truly nothing else?” mused Qin Ming aloud, his disappointment evident.

He then left the residence and returned to the manor house on the hill.

Qin Ming had little reason to go there. It was as opulent as an old castle, with only Song Ying and

a few housekeepers minding the grounds.

Song Ying was surprised by Qin Ming's unexpected arrival. She immediately ordered the kitchen staff to prepare a delicious meal and changed into some casual yet beautiful clothes befitting the occasion.

"Young Master," came Song Ying's demure greeting at the doorway.

Qin Ming grunted in response and walked straight in. He immediately issued her an order, "Tell everyone to leave. I only need you here for now."

Song Ying was stunned. She had not expected Qin Ming to arrive, let alone give out such a strange request.

Nevertheless, she summoned all the security personnel and other staff and asked them to leave. She couldn't help but have her own suspicions. *Does Qin Ming harbor ill-intentions towards me?*

As his loyal secretary, Song Ying wondered what else he didn't already have, apart from her body.

She flushed at the thought, fantasizing about it still. *Has the Young Master finally discovered my charms? Does he finally desire me?*

Song Ying gathered her thoughts and quickly composed herself when she sensed a change in Qin Ming's demeanor. His gaze was sultrier than before, but his emotions were more restrained. *Perhaps the boy has finally turned into a man.*

She still couldn't put away the alarm bells she heard in her head, for a woman's sixth sense was rarely ever wrong. Despite this, she cautiously followed him from behind.



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Wait! I Have Something to Say!



Send a Gift to the Writer!

Qin Ming walked into the study and surveyed the area. He was met with a huge bookcase that was filled to the brim in the large working space. There was a desktop computer and many documents arranged neatly in a pile on his desk.

A hot cup of coffee was already waiting for him.

Qin Ming did like Song Ying but in a purely platonic sense. He appreciated her presence and recognized her qualities, but it never transcended the boundary of superior and subordinate.

Song Ying could help him stabilize the industry as well as Huaxia's affairs. She handled large investments that helped their subsidiaries generate profits. Her efforts were truly commendable and praiseworthy.

However, he was aware that Chang Hongxi had planted Song Ying by his side. Back in the day, she was known as Huan Ning Century Corporation's most proficient assassin among the training camp participants.

Chang Hongxi had played him for a fool.

Qin Ming deduced that Nie Haitang was being persecuted and watched. There had been no ‘persuasion’ involved. Given how both situations had played out, he was angered by what had happened to Nie Haitang. This deception had crossed a line.

Slowly, Qin Ming sat down and pondered before asking, “Ying, is Nie Haitang being watched by godfather?”

There was a shift in Song Ying’s expression. She had not expected him to come here for the sake of Nie Haitang. Besides, was he not cozying up to the Mu family’s eldest since of late?

“Young Master, I have no clue. I know all that you know. Nothing more,” replied Song Ying earnestly. “All I’m aware of is that for your safety and to consolidate your power through marriage, Master Chang persuaded Ms. Nie to let you go.”

Qin Ming seethed. Without concealing his anger, he lashed out and asked, “Are you loyal to godfather or me?”

Song Ying was startled. The man had never been angry with her before, and this made her very uncomfortable.

“Young Master, I’m telling you the truth,” came her immediate reply. “I wasn’t there at the time, but I know that only Master Chang and Feng Dongxiang were speaking to her.”

Anxiously, Song Ying added, “Young Master, I have been nothing but loyal to you, but how would you like me to prove myself? If it weren’t for you, I would not have been selected at that training camp. It was hell. I had no choice but to placidly accept orders and carry out assassinations worldwide as required. It wasn’t much of an existence. Truly, I am grateful.”

“Find your own way to prove your loyalty to me. Prove that if the day should come that I will betray my godfather, you’ll be on my side,” uttered Qin Ming.

Song Ying visibly stiffened. Sadly, she replied, “You still don’t trust me?”

Qin Ming looked at her glumly but said his piece, even though he was sad that it had come to this. “A lie normally requires more lies to maintain its integrity. Once that façade is exposed, everything collapses. Nothing will be the same again. I don’t want to be careless as my actions will mean nothing then.”

Song Ying didn’t know the full extent of what Qin Ming was implying, nor had she the faintest idea of who Fu Hongxue was. But she did understand a little of what he meant.

“Young Master, you’re concerned about Master Chang lying to you about Ms. Nie, right?” she queried. “You also think that I was planted here by him to spy on you.”

Qin Ming had, in fact, entertained the idea. He only trusted Song Ying because he trusted Chang Hongxi.

But given the circumstances, he could not rule out the possibility that Chang Hongxi had also sent someone to keep an eye on Nie Haitang as well. Chang Hongxi was not going to let him live

his life on his terms. And if Qin Ming defied him and it came to Chang Hongxi threatening Nie Haitang at gunpoint to keep him compliant one day, what was he to do?

Chang Hongxi did not have much longer to live due to his age. In spite of this, he was going to leave behind an empire for Qin Ming and help him gain favor and status within the group by coaxing him into a relationship with the Zhao family. These tactics were beyond what Qin Ming could bear.

Qin Ming was furious at the idea. Chang Hongxi had pushed him to his limits. His life was his and his alone. His destiny was his, and nobody could take that from him. If someone lost their freedom, what other unspeakable things would happen?

“Godfather made me a promise, but he violated my trust yet again,” spat out Qin Ming through gritted teeth. “I may not be completely sure, but I don’t doubt that he had a hand in this matter.”

Song Ying observed Qin Ming. She was still sad at being questioned because she harbored no

treachery or ill-will towards him. In fact, she had even gone against Feng Dongxiang's orders for his sake.

She promptly extracted the information she was looking for and handed it over. "As one of the group's four veteran consultants, Feng Dongxiang asked me to spy on your comings and goings in Guang City," stated Song Ying. "I never said a word about your illicit affairs with other women."

The corner of Qin Ming's mouth twitched.

Illicit affairs? Those interactions were perfectly normal! Of course, getting my hands dirty is inevitable here.

Qin Ming took the report and looked at it. The woman had listed everything he'd done on campus over the last three months in detail. However, she had omitted any information about his dealings with the Mu family.

Song Ying pressed on, "If you still don't trust me, I'll be willing carry your child to prove my

loyalty.”

Qin Ming snorted, feeling a little ill at the prospect.

Excuse me, but what are you honestly thinking in that head of yours? How can you even consider pregnancy in this situation?

After giving it some thought, Qin Ming did eventually understand the rationale behind her strange suggestion.

Song Ying was not a spy. Since childhood, she had been trained in all methods and forms of combat. She walked the path of a warrior, having slept in cesspools, leaving behind mountains of corpses. She passed through a sea of blood, hunted down and executed enemies in the Amazon, and carried out other duties in Africa. Song Ying had not felt much emotion until she met Qin Ming.

Unlike a traditional spy, she was not in the business of sacrificing her body to justify her means. A warrior, on the other hand, was like any

other woman. She cared about chastity and where her loyalties would lie.

What Song Ying proposed was clumsy and frankly a little stupid, given the circumstances. But it was understandable, nevertheless.

Qin Ming placed his chin in his hands and mulled over everything Song Ying had said. He was a little touched by her display, and also a tad bit relieved. Yet, he could not shake off the feeling that she had given him a proclamation of love instead of proving her loyalty.

He wasn't blind to her deeds. The woman had worked hard to care for him as well as ensure his safety. In fact, Qin Ming was most concerned about the possibility of betrayal from Song Ying because she was important to him.

With nobody in the manor now, Qin Ming had a choice to make.

“Young Master, if I may...” began Song Ying sadly. “Master Chang has cancer - he may die at any time. The only person I will have left to be

loyal to is you. If you're gone, I'll have nothing left." She felt her lower lip tremble, but she continued, "I'm not someone with any social standing, but there are only so many organizations a trained killer like me can join. The moment I was selected to aid you, I was bound to you. If I leave, it will mean nothing."

Qin Ming looked at Song Ying, feeling tears well up in his eyes. He was moved by her words and empathized with her anxiety and the urgency at which she wanted to prove herself.

Qin Ming got up, walked to Song Ying's side, and reached out to her gently. As he wiped her tears away, he said, "I believe you. Don't look down on yourself. Even if you leave me, you're still the capable, beautiful, and smart secretary you've always been."

Song Ying's body trembled, and she felt tears wet her cheeks again. Qin Ming's trust and praise made her feel very appreciated.

Song Ying couldn't help but lean on Qin Ming's shoulder. Between sobs, she declared, "Young

Master, I will never betray you. This I swear on my life.”

Qin Ming hugged Song Ying and caressed her back gently, enjoying her sweet, womanly scent.

After a while, Song Ying calmed down. Qin Ming then said, “Ying, I’ll like you to contact my godfather now.”

Worriedly, the woman asked, “If you’re already suspecting that he’s had a hand in what happened to Ms. Nie, aren’t you also worried that he might do something to you as well, Young Master?”

Qin Ming pondered this briefly before replying, “I have a score to settle. Just make the call.”

“Very well. I’ll contact him right away.”

A call was made and Qin Ming was connected right away. On his screen, he saw Chang Hongxi lying on the bed with tubes protruding out him. An old housekeeper was giving the man his medicine.

Qin Ming asked worriedly, “Godfather, has your condition deteriorated again?”

Chang Hongxi mustered up a weak reply, “Well, I can’t die yet. We have the best biotech facilities in the world, and I’m taking this one day at a time. Did you need anything? I heard you rejected the blind date I set up for you with Zhao Yuxin. I also heard you rushed into her room?”

Qin Ming calmly waved the matter aside. “It was a misunderstanding, rest assured. But honestly, she’s not my type. I don’t fancy obedient women; I’d prefer someone with fire and spirit, like Nie Haitang. That woman had a lovely smile.”

A moment of silence passed before Chang Hongxi responded, “Forget about her. She’ll be an easy target to threaten you with. I know you well. You are a believer in love, justice... You’ll

be willing to give up everything to be with a woman. That's still one of the things I dislike about you."

"Godfather, you arranged for her departure, but I did not get to witness it. You didn't hurt her, did you?"

"Of course not. She's just an ordinary person, why would I go out of my way to do that?" retorted Chang Hongxi indignantly. "With that said, go on that blind date and make a good impression. You'll face less resistance if you have a relationship with the Zhao family's daughter when you take over. Feng Dongxiang is working on arrangements as we speak, so don't mess that up again."

Qin Ming grunted in response. He did spend some time having a chat with the other man before hanging up. He remained that way for a while, contemplating his next move in silence.

Song Ying had been present throughout the entire exchange. After watching him sit motionlessly for a bit, she prompted, "Young Master? You

don't believe Master Chang? Should I try to locate Ms. Nie in Jing City?"

Qin Ming shook his head. "No. If my assumptions are indeed correct, then Nie Haitang is being watched 24/7. If I act rashly, he might catch on. But for now, let's try doing this. Contact Qi Mingxun and get him to provide godfather with investment plans and portfolios for all the major universities in Jing City. I will visit each university to oversee things through the various student councils as a representative of the Huan Ning Century Corporation. Ask Qi Mingxun to state that my purpose in doing so is to raise my profile in the education industry. We'll see how godfather reacts to this."

He paused briefly and pressed on, "If this is all a misunderstanding, then it'll just be a false alarm and an innocent trip to Jing City. We've got nothing to lose."

Song Ying nodded. "Yes. Right away."

Qin Ming chewed on his lower lip and twiddled his thumbs, staring listlessly at the door.

Qi Mingxun used to be the chief of commerce in the northern province of Dongshan. The man was in charge of the development of many rare metal deposits, including its transportation and logistics. He also dabbled in many pharmaceutical and investment companies.

Investing in education would make for a good excuse, in this case.

The most important thing was that Qi Minghui was very different from his father, Qi Yundong. The latter was a remnant of the previous management team, but his son was new, and to his godfather, an unfamiliar face. Before long, Qi Minghui was appointed as the northern regional director, but he had the upper hand of not being associated with Chang Hongxi.

After Qin Ming had lunch with Song Yi, Qi Mingxun arrived to provide the former with an update. Feng Dongxiang had rejected the proposal, using his unfinished studies and the prospective blind date with the Zhao family scion as an excuse.

Qin Ming gave the tablet a once over and bit his lip. “Ying,” he said, “Don’t react for the time being. Just behave like you normally would, and carry on with your duties.”

Song Ying nodded in response.

That night, Qin Ming returned to the Mu residence. He had mixed feelings about the Mu family as a whole. Absentmindedly, he touched the wound he had received from the snake bite, which had already scarred over.

Fang noticed Qin Ming enter and happily exclaimed, “Ah, Sir has returned! Everyone was wondering whether you’d return for dinner today.”

Qin Ming stroked his chin and replied, “Yes, I’ll be having dinner here tonight.”

When he entered the villa, he saw Mu Hao and Xu Shulan researching prospective homes for Mu Xiaoqiao in Jing City. They felt sorry for their daughter, who lived in a simple apartment while she worked there.

Mu Hairan was entertaining Old Mrs. Mu with some opera. The old couple seemed close to each other.

Qin Ming was aware that Mu Hairan had a mistress as he'd stumbled upon her outside the hospital once.

Mu Sichun looked at Qin Ming and leaned forward, tugging on Qin Ming's hand. "You're back! I was just about to call you."

Mu Xiaoqiao swatted away her hands and pulled Qin Ming over. "Mu Sichun, go wash your hands before we eat. Weren't you staying over at the dorm, dear?"

Qin Ming nodded. "I've got something to discuss with you after dinner."

Everyone felt their hearts stir. Somehow, they knew that Qin Ming meant to leave the Mu family.

Previously, when their marriage was hanging by a thread, Mu Hao and Mu Hairan assumed it would

be irreconcilable. They tried to get Mu Sichun to fill in for Mu Xiaoqiao. But when the couple returned from Xiangxi, their relationship had indeed improved, much to the regret of both father figures. Through their meddling, Mu Sichun never seemed to stop nagging at Qin Ming, and it had gotten even worse lately, drawing the ire of Mu Xiaoqiao.

After the meal, Qin Ming and Mu Hairan had a discussion. Mu Hairan had not expected Qin Ming to be a disciple of Zhang Quanzhen. The news came as a surprise to him.

Zhang Quanzhen had a reputation for not wanting disciples, and he had made it explicitly clear that he would not accept any. His fear of nobody inheriting the mantle after he died was a barefaced lie.

Mu Hairan was rather pleased with the news. He encouraged Qin Ming to train hard because Zhang Quanzhen was the best student of his teacher, the great Zhao Demin.

Qin Ming had also wanted some information

about the elders that would have been considered scandalous gossip. He wanted to know about the type of women they fancied, how they turned against each other, and how they fared romantically.

However, Mu Hairan was not having any of it and waved his queries aside. He changed the subject and began speaking about the economy and livelihoods instead.

Qin Ming didn't push the topic any further. After chatting for a bit, he had not acquired any gossip whatsoever.

When Qin Ming returned to the study, Mu Xiaoqiao was working on the company's documents. Her visage bore a look of calmness.

Mu Xiaoqiao looked at Qin Ming and asked, "What do you want to tell me?"

Qin Ming rubbed at his temples and said, "I came to discuss the matter between you and Nie Haitang."

Mu Xiaoqiao was stunned. She gripped the files in her hands tightly, having nowhere to put them. She knew that this problem would exist anyway, but the question was whether or not she could let it slide.

If they did not clarify things, they could not progress in their relationship.

Mu Xiaoqiao took a deep breath and said, “Okay, I think it’s time I made this clear.”

Outside the study, Mu Sichun tiptoed towards the door and pressed her ears against it closely.

The possibility of a divorce between the couple was of great concern to Mu Sichun. Before this, she would have been excited to see them apart. But now, she did not want Qin Ming to leave the Mu family, for he was a good brother-in-law.

She could sense the tension and conflict between Qin Ming and Mu Xiaoqiao. There would be no happiness in the marriage even if they both decided to stay. A divorce would be ideal or inevitable.

*He's a scumbag, but he's not that bad, I suppose.
He seems to be a decent man in other aspects.
Will they actually end up divorcing this time?*

Mu Sichun felt her excitement grow as she continued to eavesdrop on the conversation.

The duo remained in the study, chatting, for quite some time.

Mu Sichun's face was filled with a myriad of expressions, ranging from surprise to joy, then puzzlement, and finally the bitterness of resentment. She furrowed her brows and thought, *Qin Ming, you're too kind. If I were you, I'd want it all.*



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Wait! I Have Something to Say!



Send a Gift to the Writer!

The next day morning, Mu Xiaoqiao had to return to the capital to continue work, so she booked an early flight and left. As for Qin Ming, he sent Mu Xiaoqiao off and went back to campus.

As the four dormmates sat down, Zhao Liniu commented, “Wow, Qin Ming. You slept out again last night but came back smelling this good. Don’t tell me you weren’t sleeping with a girl last night. Just don’t.”

“Will it kill you to keep quiet, Niu?” Qin Ming hooked onto Zhao Liniu’s arm and rolled his eyes.

“I’d actually die of envy if I don’t say this out loud,” Zhao Liniu teased. “Now, who’s the lucky girl?”

“Hey! Can you two stop messing around?” Liang Shaoyong interrupted abruptly. “I need to discuss something with you guys. I’m going to be interning at a foreign corporation in Jing City.”

Simultaneously, all three of them replied, “We

agreed that Qin Ming (I) would be in charge of work right? Why did you go and find an internship?”

Liang Shaoyong explained, “It’s my girlfriend. Last time she almost lost everything over what happened if it weren’t for Ming. So her parents want her to work at her relative’s. It’s safer, according to them. They already arranged for her to work at a relative’s company in the capital. I’m worried about her. So I’m going too.”

Liang Shaoyong gave Qin Ming a pat on the shoulder and continued, “If I can’t make it work over there, you are my backup plan, buddy. You better not kick me to the side then.”

“Of course not,” Qin Ming affirmed. “But what’re you gonna do with your credits?”

“I’ll have to self-study I suppose and come back for the exams later. It’s not a problem. Everyone’s doing that anyway. If we don’t start looking for work now, it’s gonna be hard once the new year passes, even with all that free time.”

After hearing that both Liang Shaoyong and Zhao Menghua were heading to Jing City, Qin Ming felt a sudden urge to ask them to help him search for Nie Haitang, but he quickly dismissed it.

The Old Six sent two of his men over but they got wiped. He did not want his buddy's life to be at risk.

As for Nie Haitang, Qin Ming had other plans that would be in motion soon.

At noon, all of them went out for a sendoff meal and bid Liang Shaoyong farewell.

After that, Qin Ming had some free time and felt like paying his brother Qin Chaoyang a visit at the supermarket. He decided to pass him some cash for home at the same time as well.

Qin Ming intended to speed up Qin Chaoyang's business development. He needed Qin Chaoyang to gain control over more corporations as well as more financial wealth. If he failed to get the inheritance, at least the family would still have something to live off of.

On the way there, Qin Ming saw that Zhao Fugui's mini-market was doing a stock clearance. He also noticed that the door was plastered with rent notices. Clearly, the mini-market was closing down. It had a very convenient location but the way they treated student customers was appalling. Thus, everyone no longer went there when they had more money to spend.

Qin Ming was glad. *No wonder Zhao Fugui seems to be in tatters recently.* Yang Wei's situation, however, was even direr. After his family business went down in flames, his life was no different from any average joe. With about two thousand a month to survive on, Yang Wei could no longer live as lavishly as he once did.

He had begun to live an honest man's life after losing his second hand Audi because that was his only way to get with the girls.

Qin Ming knew all about it, but decided to not intervene.

As he walked by, someone suddenly got kicked out of the mini-market. *Yang Wei?*

Li Meng hurriedly came out soon after and gave Yang Wei a hand.

In the mini-market, Zhao Fugui was holding a broom in hand as he roared, “Damn you! I treated you so well in the past. How dare you ask more from me? You wh*re, Li Meng! Back to Yang Wei? Have you no shame?”

“I’m not going out with Wei!” Li Meng denied firmly. “You’re the one who owes him money right now. Why can’t I help him out? He’s Qin Ming’s old friend, so I’m gonna help. Zhao Fugui, you paid for my meals voluntarily. But you promised you’d return the money Wei lent you.”

Yang Wei also shouted, “Zhao Fugui! Don’t think you can continue being arrogant for long. See that supermarket across the street? Qin Ming’s brother owns that! Qin Ming has you in the palm of his hand. Besides, we grew up together! Pay up the ten thousand I lent you last month by today no matter what!”

They are going at it over a mere ten thousand?

Sheesh. They never even bat an eye for more than triple that amount in the past.

Qin Ming looked at the three of them. He was old classmates with them, but he decided he did not want to be part of it.

Qin Ming continued toward the supermarket and headed to the office for Qin Chaoyang. His trip was in vain though as he was told Qin Chaoyang had left for a meeting.

So, he left as there was nothing he could do. Outside the supermarket, he saw that Yang Wei was getting ganged up and beaten up right in front of the mini-market.

“Please stop! Just stop it!” Li Meng pleaded to the side.

It looked hilarious in Qin Ming’s eyes. But there was no need for him to care about them. Qin Ming was not who he used to be; he had standards now. These types of schoolyard fights

were beneath him.

What Qin Ming needed to do was to cook up a good plan to search for Nie Haitang in Jing City while sneaking past Feng Dongxiang's eyes. The old man had been nagging at him to attend the matchmaking with the Zhao family.

As one of the four great advisors of the organization as well as one of the most respected member, Feng Dongxiang was in charge of communicating with the highest board of directors and answered directly to the boss. Qin Ming was suspicious as to why Feng Dongxiang cared so much about the Zhaos.

I thought godfather despises the Zhaos? Qin Ming felt confused. What is Feng Dongxiang up to?

Li Meng was looking at him from across the street as he walked away. She felt anxious. *Why doesn't he care about me anymore?*

He has always had a soft heart and always steps up when he sees anything wrong happening. Why isn't he doing anything about what's going on here?

Repairing my relationship with Yang Wei wasn't easy. I even coaxed him to confront Zhao Fugui about the loan. All that just for what's happening now. Are you gonna ignore us and let Zhao Fugui treat us like this?

Nothing new could be built if the old remained. Li Meng had met a lot of good people in the volunteer society and learned a lot about human relations. She knew she still had a chance with Qin Ming even after they went their separate ways. All Li Meng needed was an opportunity.

Yang Wei was just a pawn in the grander scheme of things. Li Meng was once frustrated at Yang Wei. All he did was lust for her body but he never spent a dime on her. Now she got Zhao Fugui to beat him up so that she could use this situation to get back with Qin Ming. Li Meng would be content if their relationship got back to anything similar to Zhang Xiaoyan's.

But she watched as Qin Ming walked further away and swiftly made a decision. She jumped in

front of Yang Wei and took a hit right on the head.

The strike targeted Yang Wei's butt where it was soft. It would not kill even at full strength. But Li Meng dived in headfirst and took the hit from Zhao Fugui right on the skull.

“Ah!” Li Meng let out a terrible howl as she stumbled back, seeing stars. Blood streaked down her forehead and she collapsed to the ground.

The crowd screamed when they saw what happened. It looked as though she was going to die from the hit!

Yang Wei was in shock. Li Meng was just here to help him out, but she actually took a hit for him. *Is this true love?* They were together for a few weeks after all. Even though they never ended up in bed, he still had a great time.

Qin Ming on the other side was alerted by the screams. When he turned around, Li Meng was already lying in a puddle of blood.

He hurried over and pushed through the crowd before seeing the horrifying gash on Li Meng's head. "Zhao Fugui! Are you out of your mind? Is all this necessary for a mere ten thousand?" Qin Ming berated as Zhao Fugui looked on in a daze.

"N-No. I-I didn't want to do this. S-She was the one who suddenly jumped out!" Zhao Fugui stammered.

"Qin Ming," Yang Wei interrupted. "What are you standing there for? Send her to the hospital!"

Qin Ming had no choice. He could not just let Li Meng die when she was just starting anew. Thus, he immediately asked Long to bring the car over and rushed to the hospital.

On the road, Li Meng slowly opened her eyes and saw that she was in a luxurious Mercedes-Benz. Her heart filled with excitement. *So this is Qin Ming's wealth? He even has a personal driver?*

Li Meng closed her eyes back and endured the pain. She needed to keep up the act. After all, she was once too ignorant and that was why she

failed the previous time.

“Young Master, you were supposed to be laying out the plans for Jing City today, no?” Long asked.

Qin Ming looked at Li Meng who was lying on his lap with her wound still bleeding profusely. He sighed. “We were classmates, and she was my first love. I can’t just leave her like this. We’ll talk about that later.”

This surprised Li Meng. Young Master? Jing City? Since when did that happen? So you have more secrets. I was too naïve back then to cherish what we had. But I’m gonna make you love me even more from now on. Hehehe.



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Wait! I Have Something to Say!



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In the hospital's emergency room, Li Meng gritted her teeth in agony and tried to ignore the ringing in her ears. Opening her eyes to look at the doctors and nurses around the bed, she spotted the anxious faces of Yang Wei and the university's counselor among them. However, there wasn't a sign of Qin Ming anywhere.

Did Qin Ming leave immediately after abandoning her here?

Li Meng felt slightly angry. Was she not charming enough? She had spent ages putting on her makeup, and she was pretty confident of her beauty. In the end, however, Qin Ming didn't even bother to stay a little longer at the hospital for her sake.

In the past, Li Meng would have exploded with rage. Now, she merely smiled with satisfaction and thought to herself, *One must be prepared to make sacrifices for one's desires. I let myself get hit in the head, but it seems that my sacrifice was for naught. You hid your thoughts too well. However, I'll have more opportunities to get close to you in the future. Yang Wei, Zhang Xiaoyan and Zhao Liniu are all your friends. Since you care about them so much, I'll change my strategy and find a way to get close to them instead.*

Seeing the sudden smile on Li Meng's face, Yang Wei asked worriedly, "Meng, what are you smiling at? Did you get injured in the head?"

Li Meng looked up at him and put on an affectionate smile. "No, it's nothing. I'm just so touched that so many people showed up to visit me in the hospital, that's all."

Inside, she was cursing Yang Wei out. *Of course I'm laughing! I'm laughing at you, idiot! Not only did I use you, but you were also beaten up by Zhao Fugui. Oh, how funny!*

Oblivious to her cruel thoughts, Yang Wei gushed, "Meng, I'm so grateful for you. Thank you for taking that hit for me! You're such a nice person. I'm sorry for being so rude to you in the past. I must've been blind or something."

Li Meng thought with anguish, *Yes, I must've been blind in the past to regard Qin Ming with so much disdain. He's fairly good-looking, and he's amazing in bed. Most importantly, he treats me like a princess, and he's secretly a really rich man.*

At that moment, Qin Ming, who was at the hospital entrance, sneezed loudly. He mumbled to himself, “Who’s thinking about me? I suppose it could be anyone, considering how handsome I am.”

Qin Ming rubbed his nose ruefully as he stood at the hospital entrance. He wasn’t that concerned about Li Meng. He had only rescued her out of the goodness of his heart. What she thought of the whole affair was of no concern to him.

Just as he was about to leave, Yang Wei caught up with him at the entrance.

“Ming, wait up!” Yang Wei hollered. He had called Qin Ming that even before university. After all, they had known each other since they were kids, when they were running around town in their knickers.

Qin Zhiguo was very poor in the past. He worked for Yang Qiangjian, who gifted him Yang Wei’s hand-me-downs in order to save money on Qin

Ming's clothes.

However, their affectionate relationship had changed after they started university.

In university, nobody dared to bully Yang Wei anymore. In fact, he became all the more popular because of his wealthy family background, and everyone strove to be friends with him. On the other hand, Qin Ming, who was righteous but penniless, became the laughing stock of their schoolmates.

In the past, Yang Wei had suffered from an inferiority complex. Back in Clearwater Town, Qin Ming had protected him from bullies, and the other kids had laughed at him for being Qin Ming's sidekick. When they left for university, Yang Wei was determined to step out of his shadow once and for all.

Qin Ming turned around and spotted Yang Wei running towards him. Yang Wei was still the same from before. In his eyes, there was still a hint of meekness and apprehension that had characterized him since their younger days. This

was why Yang Wei had used to be a bully magnet. As a man, how could he be so utterly devoid of self-confidence?

Qin Ming retorted, “What? Are you too broke to pay the medical fees? Don’t worry, Li Meng’s parents will pay for that. If you want to give me cab fare as a show of thanks, don’t bother. We’re classmates, after all.”

Yang Wei shook his head. “I-I need to borrow money from you.”

Qin Ming looked at him and replied tersely, “Borrow money from me? Since when is your family so poor? Can’t you take out a loan?”

However, Yang Wei only laughed bitterly. “Oh, don’t tease me. You know perfectly well how things are going with my family. Haven’t your parents told you yet?”

“I don’t, actually,” Qin Ming said, genuinely shocked. “My father hasn’t told me anything.”

Yang Wei sighed and said, “The factory used to

have seven or eight workers, but now there's only your father left. We accidentally offended one of our important clients, hence our business in Guang City has dried up completely. Our competitors in other locations have lowered their prices, so we can no longer compete with them. Our garages are overflowing with spare parts. If it weren't for a few of our loyal customers, we would have been forced to shut down our businesses a long time ago."

Qin Ming felt a little depressed. It seemed as though the Yang family's situation had something to do with him one way or another.

Yang Wei said, "Ming, in the end, your family was the nicest to us. Uncle Zhiguo refused to quit despite our company's situation, and he even volunteered to take a pay cut. Chaoyang lent me ten thousand so I could save my family business, but it was barely enough to cover it. Even after liquidating all our assets, we still need sixty thousand more. I'm trying to help my family out."

Hearing this, Qin Ming felt a little exasperated at

his father's loyalty towards the company.

However, it wouldn't be appropriate for Qin Ming to comment on his father's decision.

After a short pause, Qin Ming said, "I'm sorry, but I have no cash now. Is there anything else I can help you with?"

There was no way he was going to lend money to Yang Wei. Qin Ming refused to be hoodwinked by his pretty words.

Biting his lip, Yang Wei continued, "I know I did many awful things to you in the past, but that was because I was jealous of you. I was jealous of your capability and talents, and your popularity back in Clearwater Town. Hence, I thought I could beat you using money. I wanted to be equals with you, or even surpass you in life. Thinking back on it, I was really childish. Ming, I'm sorry for doing so many things to hurt you."

Qin Ming couldn't help but feel a little touched. After all, he and Yang Wei were childhood friends, and they had been buddies since they

were kids. Back in Clearwater Town, Yang Wei had been his little sidekick. It would be a lie if Qin Ming said he felt no affection towards this boy now considering their decade long relationship.

Besides, Yang Wei had only acted so horribly towards him because he wanted to feel that he was better than Qin Ming. Yang Wei's behavior was borne out of his inferiority complex. People liked to eat sour grapes, after all.

Qin Ming patted his shoulder and said, "I remember all of that. However, on account of Uncle Yang's kindness to my father and I, I won't regard you as an enemy. Take care of yourself, and stop hanging out with those useless rich kids like Zhao Fugui."

Qin Ming turned around to leave, but Yang Wei called after him. "Ming, there's something else I need to talk to you about. It's about Nie Haitang. If you want to hear me out, I'll tell you about it."

Qin Ming stopped dead in his tracks. He didn't anticipate this at all.

He forced down his excitement and tried to calm his quivering fingers. His face remaining expressionless, he said, "Tell me."

Yang Wei felt a little surprised at Qin Ming's lack of reaction. *Does he not care about Nie Haitang anymore?*

Yang Wei said, "Do you remember when I used to date that girl from the arts institute next door? She has an older sister, who turns out to be Nie Zhengming's ex-girlfriend from a long time ago. You probably remember how the Nie family nearly got kicked out of their own company because of problems with their stakeholders, right? It was around that time when Nie Zhengming broke up with that girlfriend of his and tried to marry into the Mu family. However, the Mu family turned down his proposal."

Qin Ming nodded. That incident left a very deep impression on him. In order to save their family business, the two siblings were willing to give up on their own happiness.

Back then, Qin Ming and Nie Haitang weren't

dating yet. They were merely on friendly terms with each other.

Yang Wei continued, “Before my girlfriend broke up with me, I met up with her sister once. Her sister told me that after the Nie family declared bankruptcy, they turned to their relatives in Jing City for help and started from scratch there. Her sister got back together with Nie Zhengming in the end, and she saw Nie Haitang on more than one occasion. Apparently, Nie Haitang is studying at Qing Hua University now.”

Qin Ming swallowed with excitement. This was a vital piece of information.

His heart was racing. He had been searching for Nie Haitang all over the country, and as it turned out, she was at Qing Hua University all along?
Looks like she's in a prestigious university now.

The Nie family's connections were certainly close.

Yang Wei replied, “I don't know if that will help you in any way. See you later.”

He turned and returned to the hospital. Suddenly, his phone buzzed. Frowning, he looked at his notifications and realized that Qin Ming had wired him fifty thousand!

Qin Ming had even left a message. “I’m lending you this money first. Remember to return it to me one day.”

Yang Wei was so shocked that he could hardly speak. He turned and ran back to the hospital entrance, but there was no sign of Qin Ming anywhere.

Yang Wei burst into tears suddenly. Hugging his phone to his chest, he dropped to his knees at the hospital entrance and wailed, “Ming, you’ll always be my bro. You were my best buddy in the past, and you’ll continue to be my best buddy in the future. I must have been blind in the past to abandon you for those useless rich kids like Zhao Fugui..”

Meanwhile, Qin Ming had gotten into his car. He had received two messages on his phone—one, which he ignored completely, was from Li Meng,

asking after his health, and the other one was from Yang Wei, who thanked him for his kindness profusely.

Qin Ming smiled to himself and put his phone away. He was in a very good mood. He had finally found Nie Haitang after all this time!

What an unexpected surprise it was.



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