

Crazy 821

Chapter 821: Strange Call

“At that time, it was still quite warm!” As he drove, Director Ba explained some of the details of the murder case to Zhao Yu.

He then continued, “At first, unit 110 received a phone call from the informant, saying that a murder might have occurred in the Royal Tomb neighborhood! The police thought that it was an emergency, so they had the criminal police go and check it out immediately. But, since Big Tooth had drunk too much the night before, he had me fill in for him! So, I went with the police to the crime scene in his place.”

Deputy Bureau Chief Zhang quickly jumped in and explained, “Yes, that is a common situation here. Since we’re really short of manpower, the logistics director often has to stand in and embrace some other duties sometimes. However, our Director Ba is no amateur, as he used to be in the Criminal Police Force!”

Director Ba nodded his head in thanks of the recognition, then continued, “The informant was the brother of the deceased. His name is Zhang Jingfeng. When we arrived, he had already jumped over the wall and opened the iron gate that led to Han Kuan’s house for us. But, as the front door was locked, he couldn’t get inside the house.”

Director Ba then said, “When we asked him why he had called the police, he said that he had just received a phone call from his sister, but when he had picked up the call, nobody spoke on the other end of the line. At first, he thought his sister accidentally called him, so he hung up. But then, he saw that Zhang Jingru had also sent him a picture in Wechat, which was an image of a bloody arm!”

Director Ba continued, his voice getting more high-pitched out of excitement, “As he recognized the bracelet on the arm, Zhang Jingfeng thought that it was his sister’s wrist in the picture. So, he rushed to report the matter to the police! He then rushed to his sister’s residence and met the police there.”

Director Ba shook his head, then said, “At that time, we followed Zhang Jingfeng to knock on the door and windows, but there was no response. So, police officer Xiao Fengzi stepped on my shoulder, climbed up to a windowsill, and looked in. Because it was quite dark, he could only see that there were two people on the bed, but they weren’t moving at all. At this time, we realized that something was very wrong, so we got an axe and broke down the door!”

Director Ba continued nervously, “When we rushed in, we saw a lot of blood on the bed. As Han Kuan and Zhang Jingru were both lying in the blood, we thought that they were both dead at first. We soon discovered that Han Kuan was only asleep, and he had no wounds on his body. But, he was holding a fruit knife in his hand! It certainly looked like he had cut his wife’s wrists.”

Director Ba paused to take a deep breath, then said, “That scene was quite frightening. We called an ambulance and reported it to our leaders immediately. The victim’s brother, Zhang Jingfeng, was distraught. He rushed to Zhang Jingru and shook her, but Zhang Jingru had already lost so much blood that she was already gone.”

Director Ba shook his head sadly, then said, "We even tried to wake up Han Kuan, but got no response from him at all either. At that time, we firmly believed that Han Kuan had killed his wife, then had possibly committed suicide with poison or sleeping pills! So, instead of waiting for an ambulance to arrive, we put Han Kuan into the police car and took him to the hospital."

Director Ba then said, "We were really shocked by the crime scene. In our haste to deal with Han Kuan, we did not pay much attention to preserving the evidence at the scene, which made it difficult on us later..."

At this point, Miao Ying couldn't help but interrupt him, saying unhappily, "It was so unprofessional of you guys to give us such a limited report before. No wonder Han Kuan insisted that he was innocent!"

Wu Xiumin then turned to Director Ba and said, "Yes, there must be something more that we could find if we had access to that phone call and Wechat message. So, where are they? Were they saved in the criminal police data system?"

"Zhang Jingfeng's mobile phone should have been taken to the Department of Evidence." Director Ba said.

"I'll have someone get it out..." Deputy Bureau Chief Zhang quickly took out his mobile phone to make the call.

"Hey... Check it out... Another Zhang Jingfeng..." Zhao Yu muttered.

It turned out that the younger brother of the deceased had the same name as Zhang Jingfeng of Qinshan, but the middle character was only the same in pronunciation.

"Did you find the victim's cell phone at the scene?" Miao Ying asked Director Ba.

"Yes, it was also on the bed, lying between the couple," Director Ba replied. "We confirmed that both the phone call to Zhang Jingfeng and the photo of the bloody arm were both sent from that mobile phone. We also know that the arm in the picture is indeed Zhang Jingru's..."

"Wow. Well... I'm beginning to understand why the police have been insisting that Han Kuan is the murderer. At least on the surface, it really does look like a murder and a suicide!" Zeng Ke said thoughtfully.

"No. At least from a psychological point of view, that would be very unreasonable!" Wu Xiumin said. "If Han Kuan was determined to die, there would be no reason for him to refuse to plead guilty!"

"I agree!" Miao Ying said. "Moreover, if he wanted to die, why didn't he just cut his wrists too? Why take sleeping pills, which were clearly a less surefire way to commit suicide?"

Director Ba did not quite know how to answer the women, so he simply continued reporting the facts of the case thus far, "Um... After we confirmed that the fingerprints on the mobile phone only belonged to Han Kuan and Zhang Jingru, we then consulted a trusted doctor, who assured us that the dosage of sleeping pills in Han Kuan's body was not enough to cause his death."

"Oh..." Wu Xiumin nodded. "Then that means that either Han Kuan did not want to die, or someone else did not want him to die!"

Deputy Bureau Chief Zhang nodded, then said, "Oh... I remember that we had a professional psychiatrist come to examine Han Kuan as well. Although he was very upset by his wife's death, it was concluded that he didn't show any signs of mental illness."

"Wow! This case is getting more and more interesting!" Zhao Yu exclaimed. "It seems that this case is really full of unknowns! I'm looking forward to meeting this great writer!"

At this time, Deputy Bureau Chief Zhang's mobile phone rang. After he answered it and listened to the person on the other end of the line, his face changed slightly.

He then said to Zhao Yu and the others, "Investigators, the criminal police just called to tell me that they just confirmed that the death in the Xianghe neighborhood was indeed a murder! According to their preliminary estimation, the victim was electrocuted and has been dead for more than a month and a half."

After hearing this news, Zhao Yu and the others felt that the case was getting much more complex...

Chapter 822: 11 Kills

The place where Han Kuan was being kept was the only detention center in the Golden City. The detention center was old and run-down. Because the exterior walls were painted with blue paint, just like the brothels had been in ancient times, the local people all called it "the brothel."

Regarding its size and management, it was far worse than the district detention centers in Qinshan. Zhao Yu even worried that, if there were more criminals in the future, this place just might not be adequate to hold them all.

Having been already notified of the situation before their arrival, the prison guards had already taken Han Kuan to the interrogation room by the time Zhao Yu and the others got there. Just as Deputy Bureau Chief Zhang had said, it was just after 4 p.m., but the sky was already getting darker.

Due to the limited space in the interrogation room, only Zhao Yu, Miao Ying, Wu Xiumin and Deputy Bureau Chief Zhang entered the interrogation room. The others all went to the observation room next door.

"Oh, Officer Zhao! I didn't expect that you would actually come!" Just as Zhao Yu entered, Han Kuan recognized him and called out to him in excitement. "Now, I will finally be saved!"

Han Kuan was so relieved, he started sobbing. He then started mumbling almost incoherently, apparently speaking to his deceased wife's spirit, "Babe, you can rest in peace now! The famous police officer Zhao has come, and he will surely find the real murderer!"

Hearing this, Zhao Yu was somewhat touched. He didn't expect that he had become so famous.

Han Kuan then turned to Zhao Yu and said, "I have been hearing your name often these last few years!" Han Kuan said. "Before the Headless Female Corpses Case, I was already paying attention to your work! In my opinion, you are the biggest talent in the entire criminal investigation force!"

Han Kuan was getting more excited as he continued to flatter Zhao Yu, "I even thought about adding some of your cases to my novel as side plots!"

Zhao Yu was pleased to hear his words. He waved his hand and said, "Although what you have said is all true, you'd better not say such things in front of too many people! After all, they just might get jealous! Ha ha..."

Miao Ying couldn't stand Zhao Yu at the moment. So, she faked a few coughs as a warning to Han Kuan before saying, "Han Kuan, it's getting late. If you really want us to help you, you should get right to the point."

"Oh... Yes." Han Kuan looked heavy-hearted as he begged Zhao Yu, "Officer Zhao, you must help me! I really am innocent. It is clear that someone framed me!"

"Rest assured, if you have been wrongly accused, I will definitely prove your innocence!" Zhao Yu pulled a chair up to Han Kuan and sat down in front of him before he added, "But, before I decide whether or not I will help you, you have to tell me about the serial killer first!"

Han Kuan nodded, then said, "Officer Zhao, there's a serial killer out there, and he is killing people according to the plot of a novel that I wrote several years ago. If you help me clear my name, I will certainly help you find the real murderer!"

Zhao Yu then asked, "Is there anything else?"

"What else could there be?" Han Kuan asked, clearly having told him all that he knew.

Zhao Yu sighed, then smiled and asked, "Man, do you really think that you can force me into making some deal with you?"

Han Kuan still couldn't understand his meaning, but cold sweat started to collect on his forehead as he asked, "What exactly do you mean?"

"You should know that I came here to investigate the case only, not to do business with you!" Zhao Yu said. "You've written so many crime stories, you seem to think that you're now capable of working with the police as some sort of an expert. But, you're really just trying to force them into allowing you to weasel your way into this role. As I remember, threatening the police is a serious crime."

"I... I don't mean to do that! I just want to clear my name!" Han Kuan said, clearly frightened.

Zhao Yu then said, "I don't like to beat around the bush! I'll give you 10 seconds to tell me about the serial killer, then I'll ignore the fact that you tried to manipulate the police. If you don't tell me, I'll just say goodbye to you right now and leave you to rot in here."

"Hmm..." Han Kuan was still confused and did not know how to answer him.

Zhao Yu didn't give him time to think before he began the countdown, "1... 2... 3..."

When he reached the number 10, he slammed his fist down on the table and shouted, "Okay, time's up! Congratulations! In addition to homicide, you are also going to be charged with threatening the police, making false claims, and interfering with an active investigation! I am done with you now."

Hearing this, Han Kuan said in a panic, "Officer Zhao, I'll tell you whatever you want to now. You must not leave me! Everything that I have said is true!"

Bang!

Just as Han Kuan finished begging, Zhao Yu went straight up to him and slapped him across the face! Han Kuan was shocked, and he spit out blood immediately.

Miao Ying and the others were also shocked. They didn't understand why Zhao Yu had hit him!

Han Kuan was stunned, and soon, tears filled his eyes.

Zhao Yu then said, "I hit you because I felt that I needed to teach you a lesson. Remember, you must be an honest person in the future!"

Upon hearing this, Miao Ying and the others almost fell to the ground.

"I... I was wrong!" Han Kuan covered his face. "I was confused because I was eager to approve my innocence. You're right! Honesty is the only way! I'll tell you all that you want to know! That serial killer should be in the Golden City. If I am right, he should have killed three people by now. No, it should be four, at least according to the timeline of my novel."

Seeing that Han Kuan had finally given Zhao Yu the information that he was seeking, Miao Ying and others were relieved and sat down once again.

Han Kuan then said, "My novel's title was originally 11 Ways to Kill Yourself, but it was later changed to 11 Kills. I wrote it not long after I graduated from high school. I wrote the story in notebook with a ballpoint pen. Because my writing skills were not mature back then, it wasn't published. In fact, I didn't even let anyone read it, but just kept it in my locker all of the time."

He shook his head, then admitted, "The story actually kind of sucks. It's about a girl who jumps out of a building because of a situation related to school violence. A few years later, the father of the girl wants to avenge his daughter, so he kills everyone who bullied her one by one, using 11 different ways to disguise the crime scenes as suicides! Probably about half a year ago, I found that someone had started to kill people in the exact ways that I described in my book!"

Chapter 823: Serial Killer

"You're not a policeman, so you couldn't have seen the crime scenes," Zhao Yu said.

He then asked, "So, Why are you so sure that the man killed the people according to your novel?"

Han Kuan took a deep breath and paused to organize his thoughts before he said, "In early August of last year, the police found a corpse in an abandoned building near the Dongshan Building Material Market in the Golden City. By the time the corpse was found, the victim had been dead for more than half a month. The police confirmed that the killer cut the victim's wrists."

After the group heard that there was another victim, who was also killed by having their wrists slit, the atmosphere became quite tense. Obviously, due to Han Kuan's case, this method of murder had become quite a sensitive topic.

"Because the corpse was highly decayed, the police did not find any usable clues that would help solve the murder. So, the case was considered to be a cold case and was closed without the truth ever being found out..." When he spoke, Han Kuan took a look at Deputy Bureau Chief Zhang, and his eyes clearly showed his dissatisfaction and disdain.

Han Kuan then added, "Since I'm a crime fiction writer, I'm very interested in these kinds of cases, so I actually did some investigating myself. But, my main purpose for doing so back then was to find out if that case was really a suicide or not."

He help up his hand and waved it toward Zhao Yu as he said, "Of course, I'm not a famous detective like Officer Zhao, so I couldn't find anything definitive. So, after a while, I just forgot about that case."

Han Kuan frowned, then said, "However, when the National Day holiday came around, another suicide occurred in the Golden City. A breaking news report said that a person hanged himself in an unfinished residential building in the Qiaobei neighborhood."

He sighed. "After hearing the news, I was totally shocked. I vaguely recalled the plot in my book, and that was the first time that I also connected the first suicide to my book! I finally realized that something was very wrong!"

Han Kuan then said, "In 11 Kills, in order to avenge his daughter, the protagonist killed the first victim by slitting his wrists, then tampered with the crime scene to make it look like a suicide! And... The second victim in my book was also hanged. I remember clearly that the location was also in an unfinished residential building, just like what the news report had described!"

As they were listening to Han Kuan, the others all kept quiet. Zhao Yu blinked toward the interrogation room, signaling for Zeng Ke to check the two cases that Han Kuan had just mentioned.

"When I realized that something was wrong, I rushed to my basement to look for the notebook like crazy!" Han Kuan said, his voice revealing his distress. "However, even though I turned the basement upside down, I couldn't find my notebook, nor my previous manuscripts! My manuscripts were kept in a carton, and that carton was gone!"

Han Kuan's face had a look of intense despair on it. "At that time, I really wanted to report my findings to the police. But, when I calmed down, I realized that because my book was written so long ago, I'd forgotten many of the details that were in the plot. In fact, I could only remember its general framework."

He shook his head, then added, "Besides, when I wrote 11 Kills, I was very young and had so much to learn about writing a good book. So, its plot is full of loopholes. In my mind, that meant that, if someone had really killed people according to the plot of the book, the police would already have found the killer!"

Han Kuan shrugged his shoulders as he said, "Since those two cases ended up being classified as suicides, I thought that it might not be as bad as I first thought."

Han Kuan shook his head and grinned bitterly. "But then, my wife was killed! I... I am really innocent!"

At this point, Han Kuan was so emotionally excited that he had to stop for a moment to calm himself down. He then went on to say, "Then, I was wrongly accused of her murder and thrown in jail! After that, just two weeks ago in fact, I read in the newspaper that someone had found a frozen dead man in an abandoned factory building!"

Han Kuan continued with wide eyes, "The article also said that the police had detected a large amount of alcohol in the victim's body, proving that the victim was quite drunk before his death. Therefore, the police suspected that it was an accidental death."

He shook his head, then added, "Those days happened to be the coldest that the Golden City had experienced in years. In that case, no matter who slept outside would be frozen into a human ice stick!"

Han Kuan then said with a solemn expression, "But, that is not important! What is important is that the fourth victim in my book also died this same way! Alcohol... An abandoned factory... Severe cold... All of it was the same!"

Hearing this, people finally realized that what Han Kuan had said about his book really did seem to add up.

"Wait a minute..." Zhao Yu thought of something, so he asked, "You said that the fourth victim was frozen to death in your book! So... It seems that... There should be a third victim, right?"

"Yes, although I can't remember the exact details from my book's plot, the order of the deaths are still clear in my memory!" Han Kuan said. "There was the slit wrists, the hanging, the electric shock, the frozen body, a drowning and..."

"So... The third victim should have died from an electric shock?" Zhao Yu interrupted him and asked.

"Yes!" Han Kuan confirmed. "At least, in my novel, the third victim dies after suffering an electric shock. Then, the fourth victim in my book is frozen to death! Perhaps the murderer confused the order?"

"Wait..." Zhao Yu interrupted him again, then counted with his fingers.

He then turned to Deputy Bureau Chief Zhang and asked, "Chief Zhang, what are you waiting for? Call the criminal police and ask them!"

"Ask them what?" Deputy Bureau Chief Zhang was confused and wasn't following Zhao Yu's train of thought.

Miao Ying, however, did understand his meaning, so she quickly explained, "Well, you said before that you received a report today that a man was found dead, and that he had been dead for more than a month. Moreover, he was found in a residential area in the southern part of the Golden City. So... Ask your man exactly how did the man died!"

"Oh..." Deputy Bureau Chief Zhang's face immediately turned pale, as he now realized that this might be a really big case!

But, before he had time to make the call, the door to the interrogation room was pushed open. Director Ba rushed in and said, "There is no need to call, as I just received news that the coroner has confirmed that the victim that was found in the Xianghe neighborhood died from an electric shock!"

Chapter 824: The Whereabouts of the Manuscripts

"How is this possible?" Upon hearing the news from Director Ba, Deputy Bureau Director Zhang collapsed on the table.

As he was the Golden City Deputy Bureau Director, who was in charge of all criminal investigations, he couldn't possibly keep calm in the face of such a big case! Moreover, if Han Kuan's statement was indeed true, it meant that the police had made numerous mistakes in dealing with the previous three cases. For this, he would surely bear the brunt of the blame!

Miao Ying felt that the smartest person in the Golden Police Station was the logistical director, so she asked him directly, "Director Ba, you heard what I said just now, so tell me, besides this newly discovered body, where were the other victims' corpses found?"

Director Ba regretfully answered her, "I just checked, and all of them were cremated!"

Miao Ying shook her head, clearly dissatisfied with the work of the Golden City police force. However, Zhao Yu appeared to be calm.

He knew that it was not the time to play the blame game, as finding more clues was the most pressing matter. So, he waved to Director Ba, signaling for him to leave the interrogation room.

Han Kuan looked sad as he said, "It seems that I'm right. I can still vaguely recall that, in the novel, the murderer killed about a person a month! Every one of the murders was meticulously planned, and the killer always made the murder scene look like a suicide."

Han Kuan then hesitated before he said, "Because the man who was frozen to death was found not too long ago, we can assume that the murderer will not strike again for about a month. That's why I wanted to ask Officer Zhao to help me clear my name during this time!"

He then continued, clearly distraught, "I know it's my fault that I didn't report all of this earlier, but believe me, I was not completely sure that I was right until the frozen body showed up!"

Han Kuan then pleaded, "Officer Zhao, you can rest assured that, although my novel's original handwritten manuscripts were lost, I can still recall a majority of the plot. That means that I can help you find the murderer!"

Zhao Yu remained silent as carefully analyzed the case. It seemed to him that Han Kuan really was not lying. It appeared that a serial killer, who was killing people according to the plot of his novel, really existed!

That was to say, they needed to investigate two cases at the same time in the Golden City. The first one was Han Kuan's wife's case, and the other was the fictional murder cases related to the plot in 11 Kills.

Zhao Yu wondered... In addition to the novel's plot, did the two cases have any other connection?

After thinking of this, Zhao Yu asked, "Han Kuan, did you ever think that your wife's death could also be related to your novel? Are there any similar plots in your book?"

"No..." Han Kuan said firmly. "Ever since I was thrown in jail, I have constantly been analyzing my wife's case. I've never written a story like this before! Moreover, I am not really a social person, and since I don't often interact with others, I can't imagine that I have offended anyone! I really can't figure it out who would frame me! It just makes no sense. Why would this person kill my wife?"

"So, you're saying that you think that your wife's death has nothing to do with the serial killer?" Zhao Yu asked for clarification.

"Well... It's hard to say..." Han Kuan frowned. "God knows who the serial killer is! He must be a madman! So... Maybe he also killed my wife!"

"Oh... So... You think that the two cases are one killer's work?" Miao Ying asked. "So... If we catch the serial killer, then you think that we can prove your innocence?"

"Yes... At least... It is possible." Han Kuan seemed unsure.

"Then, why didn't you tell the police about this earlier?" Wu Xiumin crossed her arms and scoffed at him. "That was not smart!"

"Alright, tell me how you lost that book's manuscripts again," Zhao Yu said. "After all, if we can just find out who took the book, the case will be solved!"

"Yes!" Han Kuan agreed. "My parents kept all of my manuscripts at their flat in a small box. The box has been in their basement for many years, and nobody ever really paid any attention to them!"

Han Kuan continued, "So... I really don't know when exactly 11 Kills went missing. Not long ago, when I first discovered that the box missing, I asked my parents about it. However, they had no idea that it had even been taken!!"

"Well... Sometimes, especially when people get old, they start to forget things. Would it be possible that they confused the box with garbage?" Zhao Yu asked.

"No!" Han Kuan said with certainty, "My mother is a very careful person. Moreover, she is especially careful with my stuff. Also, she never makes mistakes! Although my father is a little careless, he never deals with anything related to domestic household things. So, it wouldn't be them!"

"Um... So... Could it have been stolen by someone?" Zhao Yu asked again.

Han Kuan seemed to still find this hard to believe. "I still just don't understand... Why would someone steal my manuscripts of all things? They aren't worth any money, as if they were, I certainly wouldn't leave them in my parents' basement!"

"This is all very strange!" Zhao Yu said. "Can you at least give me a rough estimate of the time that your manuscripts were lost?"

“Well... That may prove difficult, as my parents have lived in that building for decades!” Han Kuan said. “The manuscripts have been there in their basement ever since my wife and I got married!”

“In that case...” Zhao Yu shook his head and said, “We might have to set aside that lead for now and take a look at solving this case from a different angle.”

After that, Zhao Yu turned to Wu Xiumin and said, “Xiumin, have him write down everything that he remembers about the plotline of his novel... The more detailed the better!”

Wu Xiumin nodded and agreed.

Zhao Yu then snapped his fingers and looked at Miao Ying before the two of them immediately turned and walked out of the interrogation room together. Deputy Bureau Chief Zhang soon hurried out to follow them.

As they walked, Zhao Yu said to Miao Ying with a laugh, “Meow, you’ve just become our deputy group leader, and already you’ve been faced with such a difficult case! So, what do you think of it all?”

“I really haven’t been so excited about a case for a long time!” Miao Ying was smiling. “Right now, my instincts tell me that I should go to the Golden City Police Station to look at the latest victim’s corpse!”

Zhao Yu laughed at her eagerness, then said, “You really need to think twice about that strategy! After all, don’t you think that Han Kuan’s case is more pressing to solve at the moment?”

“Oh... You think so?” Miao Ying laughed. “To tell you the truth, I actually do kind of miss the old days, when we competed with each other in the Rongyang Branch!”

Zhao Yu laughed and said, “Yes, but it’s a pity... You haven’t beaten me once!”

“Humph! You sure are a big talker! In that case...” Miao Ying reached out her forefinger and pointed it at Zhao Yu as she said, “Let’s compete again! After all, opportunities to do so don’t come around often!”

“Good...” Zhao Yu pointed back at her as he said, “I’ll take Wu Xiumin... You can have Ran Tao and Cui Lizhu. Zeng Ke will have to find a place to store his equipment, so that we can share access to him and his findings. That way, we can share our resources, but we still need to have a clear division of labor. How about that?”

“Deal!” Miao Ying’s eyes shone with excitement as she reached out a crooked pinky to make a pinky promise with Zhao Yu.

Chapter 825: Killer’s Motive

The minute it got dark, the temperature outside dropped sharply. Although he was sitting in a car with the heater going at full blast, Zhao Yu still felt cold. It was a kind of coldness that chilled one to the bone, and it made Zhao Yu feel distressed.

Although Zhao Yu and Miao Ying were responsible for investigating two different murder cases, what they were both looking for was basically the same. At the moment, Miao Ying needed to go to the

Golden City Police Station to see the electrocuted victim's body, while Zhao Yu also needed to go to the police station to collect relevant information to Han Kuan's case, as well as to build their temporary office with Zeng Ke.

In order to avoid any unnecessary travel, Zhao Yu applied for permission from the police station and was approved to bring the suspect Han Kuan to the police station to assist in the investigation. Although Deputy Bureau Chief Zhang didn't have the authority to approve this, he had helped them to get permission.

Due to the severe shortage of personnel at the police station, several experienced prison guards from the detention center had to help them escort Han Kuan.

Fortunately, the detention center and the Golden City Police Station were near to each other. So, after leaving Han Kuan, Zhao Yu drove the van to the local police station and arrived within five minutes.

The local police station was indeed old and rundown. It had three floors and was much smaller than the local police substation in Qianshan.

In order to show their respect to the Special Investigation Group, Deputy Bureau Chief Zhang, according to his leaders' instructions, had emptied the Bureau Chief's office for Zhao Yu's use.

In addition, because of the seriousness of the case, they had summoned more staff members to arrive during the night, having called in favors from various police substations. Although the overall working environment was severely lacking, the Bureau Chief's office was actually in pretty good shape.

It was spacious, and it even had a small sideroom attached to it. So, whenever someone got tired, he could go in there to rest.

Of course, Deputy Bureau Chief Zhang had also booked a hotel for all of them. The hotel was just across the street from the police station, which made it very convenient, as it was just a short walk away.

Fortunately, the heating in the police station was adequate, and once they got inside, Zhao Yu and the others finally were able to get warm again.

"Director Ba!" Having just arrived, Zhao Yu greeted Director Ba.

He then said, "First, I need to talk to all of the police officers who were at Han Kuan's house the night of the murder, especially the ones who were in charge of collecting evidence. Please bring all of these people to me, as I want to ask them something! Also, don't forget to call in the victim's brother, Zhang Jingfeng."

"Okay..." Director Ba nodded, but looked confused. He then asked, "So... What about the other case?"

"That case is being taken care of by the others. You just need to do as I said!" Zhao Yu waved his hand, signaling his dismissal. At that moment, Director Ba hurried out to obey his orders.

After they had sorted out Zhao Yu's new office, Zeng Ke started installing the necessary equipment. Wu Xiumin then went to the prison at the police station, where Han Kuan was writing down his notes regarding 11 Kills.

Zhao Yu followed his usual practice and set up several white boards, then started to add case information on each of them. He felt that only by doing this could he sort through his thoughts clearly.

“Team leader, I just heard Wu Xiumin talking to Cui Lizhu,” Zeng Ke chatted with Zhao Yu as he was setting up the equipment. “She said that, from her point of view, the serial killer must have serious psychological problems...”

Zhao Yu replied without hesitation as he was adding information to the white boards, “The murderer and the character in the book are sharing the same experience. Because of the serial killer’s mental problems, he somehow related with the character in the book, which is why he began to conduct his killings according to the plot!”

Zeng Ke nodded, “You are really good at this, boss!”

Zeng Ke then said, “Since the father in the book avenges his daughter, could Miao Ying find any useful information by checking previous suicide records in the area?”

“Not necessarily, as the working conditions here are really unsatisfactory,” Zhao Yu said as he shook his head. “Besides, didn’t you hear what Chief Director said? Accidental deaths, suicides, and people that are frozen to death are quite numerous around here. Moreover, the book manuscripts were lost a long time ago. If the killer’s daughter committed suicide, it should have been done a long time ago. In short, it’s not that simple...”

Zeng Ke then said, “Oh, so her case is even more difficult than ours?”

Zhao Yu laughed, then said, “Not really! Actually, I think they should be able to solve their case by using conventional investigative means! After all, there have been four murders, so how could the killer leave not a single trace in all four of them? Plus, Miao Ying is really good. She should be able to solve her case before we can solve ours.”

Zeng Ke then pointed to the white boards and asked, “So... You think that it will be more difficult to prove Han Kuan’s innocence?”

“Precisely, as it’s much too early to even say that he is innocent,” Zhao Yu said, while looking at the white boards. “After all, Han Kuan is a talented crime fiction writer, so it’s not impossible that he just made up all of this!”

Zeng Ke shook his head, then said, “No... I have read the records. Chief Zhang is right. The psychiatrist has examined Han Kuan thoroughly, declaring that he has no mental problems whatsoever.”

He shook his head, then shrugged his shoulders. “Han Kuan is just a crime fiction writer, plain and simple. And the most unreasonable thing to consider about that scenario is his motive. Almost all of the people who knew the couple said that Han Kuan and his wife had a very happy marriage. Although they were not super rich, they live a good life. So, there was absolutely no reason for him to kill his wife!”

Zhao Yu quickly reminded Zeng Ke, “The Yongjin Island case has just been closed. Did you forget it so quickly?”

Zeng Ke shook his head, immediately understanding what Zhao Yu meant.

Zhao Yu said sadly, "That case proved... We may see a man's exterior, but not know the darkness that is lurking in his heart. So... What if Han Kuan is also a hidden murderer?"

"Your words scare me." Zeng Ke shook his head. "Han Kuan is already in prison. What else can he do?"

"Think about it... If the police can't find Han Kuan guilty, Han Kuan will be set free," Zhao Yu said.

"Then... What will happen?"

"Oh..." Zeng Ke's eyes grew wide as saucers as he gave the right answer immediately, "Han Kuan's novel will surely become a big hit! After all, a crime fiction writer, who is involved in a homicide case, then regains his freedom sure does make for a great headline!"

Zeng Ke shook his head suddenly, then said, "But... Team leader... In order to become famous, would he really kill his beloved wife? I find that pretty hard to believe. Moreover, that is quite a gamble to take. Is he not afraid of ruining his future? After all, if no one can prove his innocence, he'll be in prison for the rest of his life!"

Zhao Yu then asked, "Have you read about Han Kuan's background carefully? If so, didn't you find it strange that the couple were both over 40 years old, but never had a child?"

"Hmmm..." Zeng Ke never thought that Zhao Yu would bring this up.

Zhao Yu then said, "That could very well be a motive for the murder. Maybe Han Kuan couldn't stand the fact that his wife hadn't provided him with any descendants, but since he couldn't find any official reason to divorce his wife, he went to extremes to get rid of her in this way!"

Zhao Yu continued excitedly, "Then... After he clears his name, he would be able to marry another woman and then have a child with her! As his novel will become a sensation due to this high-profile murder mystery that it is entangled within, then it will surely sell well. Hence, he could have both fame and wealth in the end!"

"No way!" Zeng Ke was shocked by Zhao Yu's theory. He actually had to sit down on the chair for a moment and collect himself.

Just as Zeng Ke started to check the information according to Zhao Yu's new theory, Director Ba came to report that the victim's brother, Zhang Jingfeng, had just arrived.

Chapter 826: Locked Room Murder

The Zhang Jingfeng in the Golden City was not related whatsoever to Zhang Jingfeng in Qinshan. Just like his name suggested, this Zhang Jingfeng was tall and slender and actually did have a body shape similar to that of a water well ("Jing" means "well" in Chinese).

Moreover, he had a strange hairstyle, which looked like a cartoon character's. It was definitely a very unique style!

However, this fellow was shabbily dressed, He also had a foul smell about him, which made people pinch their noses whenever he came near them!

After the others had left, Zhao Yu and Zhang Jingfeng got behind the screen. Zhao Yu then asked Zhang Jingfeng to recount exactly what happened on the day of the crime.

“That evening, I was playing mahjong with my friends in Pengling,” Zhang Jingfeng explained. “That day, I had good luck... Six wins in a row! Just as we were starting the seventh round, my sister called me.”

Zhang Jingfeng shook his head as he recalled the memory, “I remember that it was quite late, and since my sister never calls me that late, I was worried about her. So, I answered it, but there was only silence!”

As he was speaking of this moment, he clearly felt guilty. “At that time, it was quite noisy. I tried a few times to get a response, but finally hung up after not having any luck. Then, after I hung up the phone, I saw that I had missed a Wechat message from my sister...”

He then shook his head and sighed. “But... I was about to win the round! So, I didn’t look at it right away. Later, when I read the message, I saw that frightening photo! It was only then that I realized that my sister might be in danger!”

“Was that a photo of the left hand or the right hand?” Zhao Yu asked. “Also... How did you know that it was you sister?”

“Hmm...” Zhang Jingfeng held up his two hands and pondered for a moment before he answered confidently, “The right hand! I recognized the bracelet on my sister’s right hand. Besides, I also recognized her bedsheets, so I knew that it must be her, and that she must have been at home, or at least that was where the picture was taken.”

Zhao Yu frowned. “So... When you saw the picture, did you go to your sister’s house immediately?”

“Yes!” Zhang Jingfeng said. “Well, actually, I called my sister first, but she did not answer! So, I called my brother-in-law, but he didn’t answer either. That was when I rushed to my sister’s house.”

“Okay... How long did it take for you to get there?” Zhao Yu asked.

“Um... Pengling is far, and I was on my electric bicycle. As it had no electricity left, I pedaled for quite a while. Hmm...” Zhang Jingfeng pause to calculate the time.

He then recalled, “Probably less than an hour. On the way, the more I thought about everything, the more worried I became.

I thought that I might not get there in time to help her if she was indeed in trouble, so as I was riding my bicycle, I called the police! However, when I arrived, the policemen weren’t even there yet!

Zhang Jingfeng then said indignantly, “What a bunch of garbage! I was worried that they wouldn’t take me seriously when I called, so I had even told them that someone had been killed, and they still didn’t get there quick enough!”

He was clearly upset as he added, "Those jerks didn't even arrive until I had already climbed over the wall to get into the yard. I saw them coming and opened the gate for them, and those idiots actually thought I was a thief!"

Zhang Jingfeng shook his head, then said angrily, "After I tried to explain everything to them for quite a while, they finally understood what was going on! My poor sister! If they had come earlier, she might have been saved!"

Next to Zhang Jingfeng, Zeng Ke, who was holding the autopsy report, said, "No... That is not possible. Whoever the murderer is, he calculated the time precisely. According to our report, your sister could only have survived for 20 minutes after being cut."

Zeng Ke then picked up his phone and said, "Judging from the already dried bloodstains in the picture, Zhang Jingru had been cut quite a while before that photo was taken! So, no matter what, she couldn't have been saved!"

"I know what you are doing. You are just making all of that up to escape taking responsibility!" Zhang Jingfeng replied disdainfully. "Regardless... I won't argue with you about this now, as even if the police had arrived earlier than I did, the front door was still locked! We had to end up smashing down the door frame with an axe before we finally got inside! It took us ages."

"Do you remember if the door locked?" Zhao Yu asked.

"Of course I remember!" Zhang Jingfeng's face showed great anger. "I've said it more than 800 times, and all of the policemen on the scene can corroborate it! My sister's front door could only be locked from the inside!"

Zhang Jingfeng grit his teeth and said, "So... By process of elimination, the murderer has to be Han Kuan!"

Only then did Zhao Yu understand why the police were so confident that Han Kuan had killed his wife. It turned out that this was a murder in a locked room!

"Zhang Jingfeng!" Zhao Yu said. "Han Kuan had no motive to kill your sister. After all, they were living a happy, married life. Did they have any conflicts that we are unaware of?"

Zhang Jingfeng stood up excitedly and scolded Zhao Yu, "Is there something wrong with your brain? Why do you need a motive for this kind of crazy thing? Just look at the evidence! Isn't the evidence clear enough? When we broke in, Han Kuan was holding the actual knife in his hand! If he didn't kill my sister, who else could it have been?"

Zhang Jingfeng then rolled his eyes and demanded to know. "Do you think that my sister committed suicide? What a joke!"

Zhang Jingfeng laughed like a madman, then added, "Although I have to admit that I despise my bald brother-in-law, I won't deny that he and my sister really loved each other! They have been married for so many years, yet they still took a walk together every day, holding hands nonetheless!"

"Then... What about children? Zhao Yu took the opportunity to ask a key question, "As they had no children, were there any conflicts about that?"

Zhang Jingfeng immediately shook his head and said, "In fact, that is not my sister's fault! They went to the doctor regarding this so many times, and every time, the doctors found that it was Han Kuan's problem, not my sister's. But even with this knowledge, my sister never complained about him. She was happy with him and what they had... Each other."

Unexpectedly, while he was speaking of this, Zhang Jingfeng suddenly cried out, "My sister told me several times that she hoped that I could get married and have children soon, so that they could help me raise them! However, Han Kuan didn't know that she felt this way."

He was sobbing now, as he struggled to speak through the tears. "My poor sister cared for him so much, but in the end, she was killed by that bastard! My parents died early, so she basically raised me. And... How do I repay her? I didn't protect my sister! And... Look what happened to her."

Chapter 827: Team Swap

After Zhang Jingfeng left the office, Zeng Ke exhaled heavily and said to Zhao Yu, "Team leader, I now understand why you think Han Kuan's case is more difficult than the serial killer case!"

"It's so hard to find other possibilities in such this crime scene!" Zeng Ke frowned. "If it's a locked room murder, theoretically, there are only two possible murderers, one being Zhang Jingru, and the other being Han Kuan! However, neither of them seem reasonable! Han Kuan had no reason to kill his wife, and Zhang Jingru had no reason to commit suicide! Isn't this a dead end?"

Zhao Yu thought for a moment, then replied, "I hope not. But... The condition of this locked door is very important, so let's go to the crime scene tomorrow morning and check it out!"

Zeng Ke had assembled the equipment by now, and as he perused a document on the computer screen, he said, "Okay. Also, I just checked Han Kuan's medical records. It turns out that he did go to the doctor several times regarding his infertility. I'll send someone there later to investigate this in further detail!"

"Great... And while you are at it, take a look at Zhang Jingru's medical records as well!" Zhao Yu said. He then thought of something and asked Zeng Ke, "Hey... Do you know if Zhang Jingru had any mental problems?"

"I'll check, but I don't believe that she did," Zeng Ke said. "After all, Zhang Jingru was a credit officer at a bank, and most people with that job normally don't have problems with their mental health. Besides, her brother was right... If she wanted to commit suicide, why would she go to the trouble of framing her husband?"

At this time, Zhao Yu started to breathe heavily. Earlier, he had asked Zhang Jingfeng whether Zhang Jingru and Han Kuan had affairs or any close friends of the opposite sex.

Zhang Jingfeng had denied the existence of either circumstance quite confidently, saying that Han Kuan and his wife had been married for 10 years, and there was never any gossip related to things of that

sort. In Zhang Jingfeng's words, Han Kuan was a typical boring guy, who did not smoke, drink, play cards, etc.

In fact, he said that he normally just stayed at home in his room, writing. So, such a person having an illicit affair seemed highly unlikely.

Moreover, although Zhang Jingru had more social interactions with people, she behaved herself impeccably and was above reproach. Therefore, there were no rumors or doubts about her either.

As he looked at the information on the white boards, Zhao Yu felt that this case was very strange. He was curious to uncover the whole truth.

Later, when they met the criminal policemen who were at the death scene, Zhao Yu and Zeng Ke asked them about the details that they found upon first arriving there. The policemen's stories corroborated exactly what Zhang Jingfeng had said.

Now that Zhao Yu had a clear idea of the original crime scene, he had requested all kinds of evidence, including the detailed autopsy report and the mobile phones that belonged to Zhang Jingfeng, Zhang Jingru, and Han Kuan sent to them. Only then did Zhao Yu finally get to see the photo of the slit wrist.

The Forensics Department had already confirmed it to be Zhang Jingru's arm, and it was also confirmed that the photo had indeed been taken and sent from Zhang Jingru's mobile phone. They also saw that there were several unanswered calls on both Han Kuan's and his wife's mobile phones, confirming that Zhang Jingfeng did call them after he saw the photo.

As Zhao Yu handed all three mobile phones to Zeng Ke, he ordered him, "Go check their mobile phones carefully once again!" Look into their contacts and recent Wechat interactions to see if there are any other people that we should check out."

Just as Zeng Ke was taking the mobile phones, the office door was pushed open and Cui Lizhu came. She looked quite unhappy.

She started to complain to Zhao Yu as soon as she entered the door, "Team leader, your girlfriend is impossible! She is being so hard on me, asking me to do so many things!"

She then sat down on a stool in front of the white boards and said, "I can't stand her yelling at me anymore! You must let me come back and work with you!"

Zhao Yu always naturally sided with Miao Ying, so immediately frowned and started to scold her, "What nonsense! Lizhu, you are the newest team member, so you especially have to obey orders! Now, get back to work. Otherwise..."

"Otherwise... You'll tell her about how you took off my clothes in Jinping?" Cui Lizhu interrupted him and spoke in a defiant, somewhat threatening tone.

She then added, "You've seen my body clearly. Do not think I have forgotten!"

Hearing this, Zeng Ke almost fell off of his chair onto the ground.

“You...” Zhao Yu scolded her angrily, “You dare to threaten your superior! What’s wrong with you? Did you learn that rascal trick from me? How many times have I told you that I’ve changed my ways now? We must both be honest people from now on. Don’t you understand?”

Cui Lizhu lightly pointed to her lip with her finger as she recalled, “I remember... We slept in a room that only had one bed, and we took a bath together in the hotel. You seemed to have touched me here more than once...”

Seeing that Cui Lizhu pointing to her chest now, Zeng Ke was shocked yet again.

Zhao Yu got even angrier as he shouted at Cui Lizhu, “That’s enough! Fine... You win! You can stay and work with me for the time being. I have to teach you how to do your work correctly anyway.”

Cui Lizhu smiled an exultant smile. She then turned to the white boards and pointed to a specific piece of information and asked, “Team Leader, what does this mean? A locked room?”

As Zhao Yu was still angry with her, he was reluctant to answer. So, Zeng Ke explained instead, “Oh... That means that we figured out that the front door could only be locked from the inside. Hence, we described Han Kuan’s case as being a murder in a locked room!”

“Oh... So, you have no doubt that Han Kuan is indeed the murderer? Then, why does he still insist that he is innocent?” Cui Lizhu asked, while she looked at the white boards carefully.

She then asked, “Also... On this front door... Was there a mirror?”

“Why do you ask such a strange thing?” Zhao Yu was puzzled by her seemingly random question.

“Yes, there was!” Zeng Ke rushed to hand a document to Cui Lizhu, which happened to have a photo of the door, which had been taken by the police on their first day at the crime scene.

Cui Lizhu looked at it carefully and said, “Well, I know a way to unlock a door through the mirror! So, the killer could have possibly also locked the door inside through the mirror as well. After he did that, he would just need to place the mirror back in its original position, allowing him to leave no trace of his entry or exit!”

Zhao Yu was surprised by this pieces of news, and he asked, “So, you are saying that the the locked room scenario could be a manipulated crime scene?”

“Yes! It’s as simple as that!” Cui Lizhu laughed. “Take me to the crime scene. If someone tampered with the mirror, I will know it at a glance! Moreover, skylights, pipes, and even windows can be tampered with in a similar fashion, so all of these details must be investigated as well!”

“Great!” Zeng Ke wiped the cold sweat from his forehead, then looked at Zhao Yu, seeing that Zhao Yu was also wiping the sweat off of his forehead.

“As I said, it’s better for me to be in your group, Team Leader!” Cui Lizhu smiled with relief. “Besides, Miao Ying is fierce, and she might hurt me!”

Chapter 828: Identity of the Dead

“Lizhu... I meant to ask... How is the Miao Ying’s case going?” As Zhao Yu pondered over his case, he did not forget to ask about the other team’s progress.

“Um... The most recent corpse is already completely rotten!” Cui Lizhu said. “Even though there were people living upstairs and downstairs, the body was not found for at least a month. That it totally absurd.”

“Oh... Are you talking about the body that was electrocuted?” Zhao Yu asked to confirm.

Cui Lizhu nodded. “Judging from the way he committed the crime, I think that the murderer is definitely not a professional. The killer caused the victim to lose consciousness, then pulled the victim’s hand into the electric door with his own hand, while wearing something insulated, in order to manipulate the scene to look like the victim died from touching the electric door.”

She shook her head, “However, he did not expect that the air switch had a detector, and because of the electric shock, the air switch turned off automatically.”

Cui Lizhu then said, “What’s even more absurd was that the electric shock woke the victim, at which point the two fought, which resulted in the victim’s head wound and torn clothes.”

She paused to take a breath, then continued, “As the murderer was apparently a better fighter, he either knocked out the victim with a punch or made him lose consciousness again with some other unknown method. This time, the murderer learned his lesson, so he connected the wires around the air switch, finally allowing him to successfully electrocute the victim!”

Cui Lizhu then added, “However, in this way, the murderer’s carefully planned suicide scene was botched! This was because he left DNA traces on the air switch, the socket, all throughout the room, and even on the dead body, all of which contradict it being a possible suicide!”

“Then... What about the victim’s identity?” Zhao Yu asked.

“I only remember that his surname was Sun, and that he was a pig farmer.” Cui Lizhu said.

She then added, “Also, he didn’t have many friends, as he gambled a lot and had a criminal record. He didn’t have many relatives, which explains why no one reported him missing! It was only by conducting a fingerprint comparison that we were able to identify him in the end.”

Cui Lizhu then said, “And... In a strange twist, the house that he died in had nothing to do with him! The owner was a car mechanic, who had not lived in the Golden City for a long time. This was why the owner wanted to sell the house. Who knew that when the salesman took the buyers to have a look at the house, they would find a corpse?”

“If that house had nothing to do with the victim...” Zhao Yu started to ask a question.

But, he did not finish before Cui Lizhu interrupted him, “That may have something to do with the murderer! You’ve just said exactly the same thing as Miss Miao, and even in the same tone as she used! You can rest assured... She has sent someone to investigate that already!”

“So... What about the other victims?” Zhao Yu asked. “Are they connected in any way?”

Cui Lizhu said, "It's almost exactly like the plot of the book. Miss Miao will come here to organize all of the information soon, so you'd better prepare some white boards for her to use, too!"

"Then... What else do you know? Tell me." Zhao Yu said. "Maybe these two cases are connected in some way!"

"Okay..." Cui Lizhu thought for a moment, then said, "At present, all of the information about the four victims has been sorted out. Except for the hanged woman, all of the other victims are men. As for whether they have any relation to one another, Miss Miao is investigating that as we speak."

Cui Lizhu then said, "Their order of deaths are the same as the plot in Han Kuan's novel. Although the interval time between the murders is not fixed, it is around one and a half months, which is also similar to the book."

She took a breath, then continued, "The bad news is that, except for the who was electrocuted, all of the other people's bodies were cremated. And for various reasons, their families didn't insist on a follow-up investigation. So, there were no autopsies, and the three of them were all classified as suicides."

Zeng Ke then said, "Han Kuan said that the murderer in his novel was the father of a girl who committed suicide because of a campus bully. Would the real killer have had the same experience?"

"Miss Miao has already thought of this very question!" Cui Lizhu said. "Although the suicide rate in the Golden City is quite high, it is not common for students to commit suicide on campus! Regardless, she has already sent someone to investigate this angle, and she also wants Zeng Ke to look it up in the system!"

"Ok. That will not be difficult!" Zeng Ke immediately sat down at the computer and got ready to start a search.

At that moment, Zhao Yu's phone rang. It was Miao Ying.

"Zhao Yu, I am heading to the crime scene now!" Miao Ying said excitedly. "In this electric shock case, the murderer left a lot of clues, so I have to get to the crime scene as soon as possible!"

Zhao Yu cared about her, so he said, "You don't have to rush out like that! It's no big deal. I will still let you take all of the glory regardless!"

"I don't need your charity, as I can beat you fair and square in this little competition!" Miao Ying fired back, refusing to accept his charity. "And while I am thinking about it, go ahead and take back that young girl! She's just like you were in the early days. I can't have such a disobedient member in my team! She's all yours! Haha!"

Zhao Yu sighed, then said, "Okay... Just please remember to put on plenty of layers of clothes, so you don't catch a cold. If anything goes wrong, please tell me immediately! I suspect that there may be a deeper connection between these two cases..."

"Fine!" Miao Ying shouted into the receiver before hanging up the phone.

"Humph! I could hear her all the way from where I stand!" Cui Lizhu said provocatively. "She even blamed you for my behavior! This woman is impossible!"

“Your hearing is good!” Zhao Yu threw the files in his hand in Cui Lizhu’s direction as he said, “I’m telling you right now, if you don’t behave yourself from now on, I’ll send you back to prison forever!”

“Boss, no! Okay... But I will only listen to you!” Cui Lizhu rolled up her sleeves, picked up the scattered files, and said, “As for the case, calm down about it. Tomorrow, after I check out the crime scene, I will go around to see if I can get some news from the other students on campus! After all, I used to be a student there, so I’ll be the perfect spy to find out any inside secrets!”

“Hmm...” Seeing that Cui Lizhu had adopted a good work attitude, Zhao Yu calmed down as he said, “That’s not a bad idea. Remember, I’ve decided to say goodbye to the old me, so you must do the same! We must be honest from now on!”

Chapter 829: An Unsatisfactory Completion

In a dumpling restaurant near the Golden City Police Station, Zhao Yu, Zeng Ke, Cui Lizhu and the logistics director, Director Ba, were sitting around a small table and waiting to be served. Meanwhile, Miao Ying had taken Wu Xiumin and Ran Tao to the crime scene to investigate.

As Director Ba looked at the people around the table, he said with some embarrassment, “I’m sorry about the restaurant, officers! Tomorrow, as soon as our chief comes back, we will take you to the best restaurant in order to give you a proper welcome.”

“Oh... This place is fine! Dumplings are good enough for us!” Zhao Yu waved his hand and said, “Director Ba, you must tell your chief that excessive indulgence is unnecessary. We are all honest people...”

Unexpectedly, before Zhao Yu could even finish his words, both his and Director Ba’s mobile phones rang at the same time! However, the messages that the two men received were quite different. Zhao Yu received a message from his bank, while Director Ba received a personal message.

After seeing his message, Director Ba smiled before excitedly announcing to the others, “Oh! Our criminal police captain just gave birth to a healthy boy!”

“Ha ha... Why are you so happy? After all, it’s not your child!” Cui Lizhu joked.

When Director Ba heard Cui Lizhu’s words, he scratched his head and rushed to explain, “It’s just that our captain turned 41 this year. So, it wasn’t so easy for her at that age! I’m just happy for her!”

Everyone at the table giggled at their banter. Then, Cui Lizhu asked curiously, “Boss, do you any news?”

“Oh... Only that all of the bonuses for the Gem Theft Case and the Headless Female Corpses Case have been paid!” Zhao Yu shook his cell phone in front of her as he said, “See that? Stick with me and you’ll never be short of money!”

Zhao Yu didn’t lie, as the message that he had just received on his phone confirmed what he had just said. To be specific, the bonus for solving the Gem Theft Case was 60,000 RMB, and the bonus for the Headless Female Corpses Case was an unprecedented 280,000 RMB!

However, the money was not Zhao Yu's alone, but belonged to the whole Special Investigation Group to divide at their discretion. Protocol determined that Zhao Yu was to distribute the bonus to his team members according to their contributions.

Since he was the leader, he would naturally be offered the biggest share, which was almost half. But, as Zhao Yu didn't care about money that much, he had decided that he'd evenly distribute the bonus, thus bucking traditional protocol. That was why he was so excited when he saw the amount of the bonus.

Upon hearing about the bonus, Cui Lizhu pouted. "It's not fair! I also made a contribution in both of those cases. So... Why don't I get a portion of the bonus?"

"You little fool! Don't you know that the money is always allocated by the team leader?" Zhao Yu laughed as he said, "Although you were not in my team at that time, you will certainly be given a share if you made a contribution! But, as to how much you will get..."

Cui Lizhu didn't even let Zhao Yu finish before she immediately started massaging his neck and said, "Boss, from the first time I saw you, I knew that you were an honest man, a principled man, and a posh man with great taste."

Nauseated by her shameless flattery in an attempt to get more of a share of the bonus, Zeng Ke and Director Ba shook their heads and sighed. Fortunately, Cui Lizhu did not flatter Zhao Yu much longer, as the steaming dumplings soon arrived at the table.

At the moment, it was nearly 8 p.m., and all of them were very hungry. So, they immediately picked up their chopsticks and started to eat.

"Please have as much as you like!" Director Ba laughed and said. "Dinner is on me tonight! Would you like me to order drinks? They serve strong spirits here! You will feel so warm after having some!"

Upon hearing this, Zhao Yu snapped his fingers and said, "Great! Two shots for me, please. I'd like to test the strength of these spirits myself!"

Director Ba stood up quickly and walked over to the waiter to place Zhao Yu's drink order. Zeng Ke took this opportunity to ask Zhao Yu, "Boss, regarding Han Kuan's case, what are we going to do next?"

Zhao Yu laughed with confidence. "I promised Miao Ying that I'd let her have a taste of victory this time. So, if I have too much progress, she won't be happy about it. Besides, Han Kuan has already waited for three months, so surely he won't care about waiting just a little longer!"

After he finished speaking, Zhao Yu picked up a dumpling and tossed it into his mouth.

"Boss... I've read almost all of the related files, and I discovered that the local police actually did a decent job at gathering data and evidence." Zeng Ke said, clearly a bit worried.

"During the past three months, they have spoken with all of Han Kuan's and his wife's relatives and friends. They have investigated all of the possibilities, only to determine that the two never had any conflicts with anyone. So, the police really couldn't find any concrete leads!"

"Yes. It appears this case is really tough!" Cui Lizhu nodded and agreed.

Zeng Ke shook his head, then said, "I really can't figure out any motive that either the wife or husband would have... For suicide or murder!"

At this time, Director Ba returned and said, "They had to open a brand new bottle of wine, so it will be here in a few moments!"

Zeng Ke then continued, "In my opinion, Han Kun is not a murderer. After all, he had sleeping pills in his system, too! So, the crime scene was most likely designed and manipulated by someone else."

"You are absolutely correct in your opinion!" Director Ba shouted excitedly.

As he was very familiar with the case, when he heard what Zeng Ke said, he immediately explained, "Since our medical equipment is limited, we can't know exactly how long Han Kuan was unconscious! But, regardless, it would be impossible for him to have killed his wife and then taken the sleeping pills!"

Zhao Yu nodded, "Indeed! Regardless, the evidence will tell us the truth. Now, we need to sort out all of the details to see if the police overlooked anything."

Just as Zhao Yu finished speaking, the system informed him that today's side adventure was over. He couldn't believe it! No way! It's still early!

As the side adventure had ended so much earlier than usual, Zhao Yu immediately felt that something was wrong. So, when he looked at the system interface, he was not surprised to see that the completion score was only 116%, and he had only received one Invisible Bone Setting Device!

As for his side adventure points for the day, due to the fake ticket thing, which happened on the green train, Zhao Yu only got 20 points. Judging from these less than stellar results, one could safely say that his side adventure did not go as smoothly as he had hoped.

Moreover, because of the Gen hexagram, Zhao Yu felt that his understanding of the case had some loopholes. Thus, he determined that he had either deviated from the right path of investigation, or he had neglected something very important!

Chapter 830: Deja Vu

After dinner, Zhao Yu and the other two returned to their temporary office to review the details of Han Kuan's case. Han Kuan and Zhang Yu had been introduced by friends. The couple clicked as soon as they met, so they tied the knot before they had even been together for three months!

Han Kuan was a professional writer, who wrote from home daily. Zhang Jingru used to work in a post office, but later went to work for a bank. She became a credit officer and had recently been promoted to the deputy manager position in the credit department.

Han Kuan didn't have a fixed income, and although he was not very famous, he had lucrative royalties that constantly streamed in from his previous works. As for Zhang Jingru, even though her salary was not high, it was adequate. Thus, the couple was able to live a good and comfortable life together.

The testimonies of the couple's relatives and friends all coincided with Zhang Jingfeng's testimony. According to all of them, Han Kuan was quiet, while Zhang Jingru was more outgoing. They complemented each other and got along quite well.

Although they had no children, they were always affectionate with one another and no one heard about any scandals regarding their marriage. They were basically the perfect married couple example in most everyone's eyes.

As for close relationships that the pair may have had, Han Kuan had no close friends except for several of his old classmates from school and a handful editors from several publishing houses. Regarding Zhang Jingru, although she knew a lot of people, she only got together occasionally with a few of her work colleagues every now and then.

So, no matter from which point of view one looked at this case, it didn't look like it was a murder, nor did it seem like a suicide either!

During his investigation thus far, Zeng Ke had also organized all of the chat and Wechat histories that he had procured from Han Kuan's and Zhang Jingru's mobile devices. Even though the team had read through all of them several times, they still hadn't found anything out of the ordinary.

The three worked feverishly until late that night. When they were so exhausted that they could barely lift their heads up, Zhao Yu let Zeng Ke and Cui Lizhu return to the hotel to rest. But he, as usual, remained there, pondering over the case for a long time as he paced back and forth in front of the white boards.

When Zhao Yu finally got to the point where he couldn't think clearly, he turned off the light and went into the small sideroom in the office to rest. As Zhao Yu was so exhausted, he fell asleep immediately.

Unaware of how long he had been sleeping, Zhao Yu was suddenly awakened by a noise from outside. As he opened his drowsy eyes, he glanced through the partially open door to see that someone had turned on the light in the office!

He looked at his watch to see that it was 3 o'clock in the morning, which meant that it could only be one person who would be working here at such an ungodly hour... Miao Ying! So, Zhao Yu quickly put on his clothes and went to check it out.

As soon as he opened the door, he saw Miao Ying. She was dressed in a black suit and was getting hot water from the office machine. Hearing a noise, she turned around quickly.

When she saw that it was only Zhao Yu, she was instantly relieved. After all, she had come to the office alone, so she couldn't be too careful.

"Wow, Meow... Why didn't you go to the hotel to rest? It's so late!" When Zhao Yu saw his goddess, he immediately went up to her.

Seeing that Miao Ying was shivering, he grabbed her nearly frozen hands and said with concern, "You are freezing!" Then, Zhao Yu wrapped Miao Ying tightly in his arms, attempting to warm her up.

"I'm okay," Miao Ying said, while she took a sip of hot water and put her cold cheek on Zhao Yu's neck.

Zhao Yu was totally not expecting this. Even though her cheek was uncomfortably cold, Zhao Yu didn't move away from her. Instead, he took off Miao Ying's down jacket and held her tighter in his arms.

He then said, "That's better! See... It's much warmer now!"

Zhao Yu then pulled Miao Ying into the warm, small room, where he rubbed her hands as he asked, "How is the case going? Do you think that you will beat me this time?"

"Ahh! Why did you have to bring that up?" Finally feeling warm, Miao Ying snuggled into Zhao Yu's embrace.

She then said, "It's a total mess! The monitoring system is broken and useless. And guess what Chief Zheng said? He said it was too cold, so the cameras were frozen! It's the first time I've heard of such a thing!"

Miao Ying frowned as she continued, "Moreover, their duties aren't even clearly divided! Today, I saw criminal police, civil police, traffic police, and even some people from the security team, but there were no forensics people! They don't know how to protect the scene or what to do with the security camera recordings. They don't even have basic knowledge about how to conduct a proper investigation!"

She was clearly upset as she insisted, "I'm going crazy! If the case had happened in Qinshan, it would not have been like this at all!"

Miao Ying stomped her foot, then continued to complain, "I asked them to find a detailed report of the suicide that happened on the campus in the Golden City ages ago, but I still haven't gotten it! There is just no excuse for that!"

"Meow!" Zhao Yu advised, "Don't be so anxious about everything! Remember last time? In Quliang? We met with these very same problems, but we still solved the case in the end!"

Miao Ying sighed softly. "Yeah... I just thought that it would be more professional once I started to work in the Special Investigation Group versus dealing with the criminal policemen in Qinshan. Now, it seems that I was totally wrong, as these guys are far worse than my colleagues from the Rongyang Branch!"

Zhao Yu attempted to persuade her, "Actually... What you have just described is pretty normal! When I first joined the Special Investigation Group, I was as messed up as you feel right now!"

He smiled, then continued, "I felt this way not only because of the unfamiliar environment, unfamiliar teammates, and strange cases, but also because I had just become a team leader."

He shook his head as he recalled, "Back then, when I was dealing with the Hasty Murder Case, I had no idea what I was doing! In fact, Ran Tao and Zeng Ke were really a big help. After I worked with them for some time and realized that we all got along well, I knew that everything would be okay."

At this point, Zhao Yu could not help but say to Miao Ying with great affection, "You are doing well. And hey! At least you have me! As for me, in the beginning, I had no one at all, not even a single person to talk to!"

"Don't say that, babe!" Miao Ying could not help but say with embarrassment, "At that time, if I had known that you could solve the New Zealand problem, I would not have been so foolish as to leave you!"

After she spoke of this, they kissed. After the kiss, Miao Ying confessed to Zhao Yu with relief, “Babe, about Cui Lizhu... It wasn’t my intention to find fault with her! It’s just that...”

“I understand. At first, I felt the same way about her as you do right now!” Zhao Yu touched Miao Ying’s beautiful face, then said softly, “Over time, you’ll get used to her. She might even grow on you!”

“Hmm... If you say so...” Miao Ying said very unwillingly.

She then added, “It’s just... Whenever I see her, I inevitably think of that girl! I also recall what happened to us at the General Ridge and the Gold Buddha Temple... And I think about the poisonous arrow that shot you! Alas... How could there be two people with such similar looks? Also, the first time that I saw her was in the middle of a dark night, which was really creepy!”

Zhao Yu said with a laugh, “Well, you can rest assured that we have tested her DNA, which proved that her parents were Tao Xiang’s fellows. So, she has nothing to do with that girl!”

“Well, maybe I’m being too eager for quick success!” Miao Ying nodded slightly, then took Zhao Yu’s hand in hers and said, “Honey, I saw both crime scenes today, for the electric shock case and for the frozen corpse case! I feel that the murderer’s method was coarse and unrefined, definitely not professional. Hence, it is only a matter of time before we find him! But somehow, after I saw the scene, I had a very strange feeling...”

Zhao Yu asked immediately, “What kind of strange feeling?”

“I can’t say for sure... But it was indeed strange...” Miao Ying said with some uncertainty. “It was like I was seeing a similar scene that I had once seen in a dream!”

Zhao Yu laughed and said, “No way! Have you read Han Kuan’s 11 Kills?”

Miao Ying shook her head. “Um... I don’t think so.”

Zhao Yu laughed as he pushed Miao Ying down on the bed gently. He then said with a flirtatious tone, “I see... Well, maybe you could experience some similar ‘strange’ feelings with me first...”

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