

Crossing 40

Chapter 40: Downed By a Glass of Wine!

Although 137 had successfully completed his mission, he still felt restless and unsettled. Something just didn't feel right. For that reason, after leaving the virtual network, he immediately reported to his commander on the strange disturbance he had sensed in the Central Scout Academy's system.

After hearing 137's report, the commander's expression became stern. Could it really be as the General suspected? Were the culprits behind Major General Ling Xiao's death on the move again?

He indicated to 137 to leave things as they were, and reminded him about the code of silence before letting him go back and rest. He then turned on his communication device and entered a number he rarely ever contacted.

It wasn't long before a middle-aged general appeared on the holographic screen, a serious expression on his face.

"Yo, Sir General, long time no see." At odds with his usual cold persona in front of his troops, the commander was now casually flippant.

"Oh, it's you, you little brat. Aren't you back on mandatory leave? Why are you free to contact me?" The familiar voice of the commander caused the general's face to soften.

"Wasn't it the military who sent us to the Central Scout Academy to take charge of the tests?" complained the commander casually.

The general's face stiffened and he said in a rush, "Being with kids is also a way of relaxing."

The commander laughed. "True!"

And the matter ended there. It had been implicit in the general's words that their assignment to the school had something to do with him.

"So what do you want, brat?" The general knew that this son of his old friend, who he had watched grow up from a little kid, would not contact him for no reason. Usually, he wouldn't see hide nor hair of him; the brat would scurry away faster than any mouse.

Reminded of his purpose in calling, the commander's expression turned grim. He faithfully reported what had happened to Ling Lan, as well as the disturbance 137 had felt on the virtual network. Since their presence at the scout academy had been by the general's design, then it was very likely related to the matter of Ling Xiao's son.

"Duly noted," said the general calmly, "Let someone else handle things after this — don't get any further involved."

The commander replied lowly, "Understood," and then asked, "Will there be any danger to Major General Ling Xiao's son?" From the general's words, he could somehow guess what the general was planning.

The general did not answer his question, only saying, "Enjoy your vacation. Don't worry about anything else." With those parting words, he ended the call.

The commander stared vacantly at the dark screen, and a shadow passed over his face. The general's words had indirectly told him the answer. The general himself couldn't guarantee that there would be no mishaps in his current arrangements.

The commander knew very well that, for the future of the Federation, some sacrifices were necessary. The moles hidden in the higher ranks of the federal military had to be dug out, otherwise another incident like Ling Xiao's would happen again — and the Federation couldn't afford to lose any more god-class operators.

Still, he felt a little indignant. In service of the Federation, his idol Major General Ling Xiao had already been sacrificed — did his child have to be sacrificed too? He stood for a long moment, staring blindly into the distance, and after much thought, decided that he had to be true to his heart just this once.

He dialled a contact number and was quickly connected. "413, I'm sorry to inform you that your vacation has been cancelled." After coming to a decision, the initial melancholy of the commander had been swept away and he was even jovial enough to joke around with 413 now.

413's wails of despair came over from the other end of the communicator, but the commander's heart was like steel and he blithely ignored 413's mournful eyes. He continued to order, "Please accept your new assignment."

Hearing this, number 413 straightened out his long face and stood at attention. "Number 413, reporting for duty!"

"Starting now, for the next month, you and your squad are to protect Ling Lan of the Central Scout Academy in secret." The commander hoped that his arrangements would be able to ensure the safety of Major General Ling Xiao's child, as a personal tribute to his departed idol.

"Ling Lan? Who's that?" asked 413, bewildered. They had just finished their assignment at the Central Scout Academy, but before he could even celebrate their release from babysitting duties, here he was, about to become a full-time nanny. Luckily he wasn't going to suffer through this alone — he had 5 underlings in his squad — which made him feel just a little bit better.

"It's that 0723 you like so much," said the commander.

413's expression grew serious. "Has the enemy nation noticed him? Is he in danger?" 413 knew that there were many foreign spies hiding within the federation. Many promising young talents had barely had the time to sprout before they were cruelly crushed by the enemy nation.

"Perhaps," said the commander, without certainty. After all, it was all just speculation on his part.

"Roger that, Sir. I'll protect him well with my squad. You can count on it," said 413 resolutely. He might have moaned a bit more if it were some other child, but if it was number 0723, he had no objections whatsoever.

Indeed, if Ling Lan didn't veer off from the right path, it was almost 100% certain that he would become an ace operator, perhaps even an imperial operator. Ever since Major General Ling Xiao had passed

away, the Federation was stretched thin for skilled operators. Therefore, any young talent who had the potential to become ace operators were very highly valued by the Federation.

“Wait a moment. I will ask 137 to transmit Ling Lan’s information into your communicator. Remember, this is a secret assignment. Don’t let anyone notice your presence,” instructed the commander.

“Yes!”

One day later, the official notification letter from the Central Scout Academy arrived on the Ling family’s general notification device, informing them about Ling Lan’s acceptance into the academy’s special class. The news made the long silent Ling family rejoice.

Looking at the information contained in the letter, Lan Luofeng’s mood was exceptionally light. Although she wouldn’t have minded if Ling Lan became an idle playboy, all parents took pride in their child’s successes and Lan Luofeng was no exception. Of course, most importantly, Ling Lan’s enrolment into Special Class-A meant that she didn’t have to study on school grounds and could freely choose her own courses, which greatly reduced the risk of her true gender being discovered — this was the greatest source of joy for Lan Luofeng.

In a great mood, Lan Luofeng decided that a grand celebration was in order. She thus instructed Chamberlain Ling Qin to prepare a feast for the entire Ling household to come together and celebrate. This was the first large-scale party held ever since the family head Ling Xiao had died — the lively atmosphere moved Chamberlain Ling Qin almost to tears.

This was also the first time Ling Lan met all the external servants and workers of the Ling household. Of course, some of the guards maintaining the safety of the Ling household perimeters were not in attendance, but the other servants and workers were all there. Seeing all of their excited and hopeful faces, Ling Lan felt pressured for the first time ever. So she wasn’t living just for herself ... she was shouldering the hopes and dreams of the entire Ling household.

And this group didn’t even include the Ling family loyalists yet — if the Ling family ceased to exist, there would be no reason for the loyalists to exist either.

For the first time, Ling Lan truly understood what her new identity meant, along with the responsibilities she had to carry with it. Although the total age of her two lives was already over 30 years old, making her a mature adult, she was still just used to being an average person, only responsible for her own wellbeing. But now, all of a sudden, she had so many people’s hopes and livelihoods resting upon her shoulders ... She panicked.

The typically serene Ling Lan, finally unable to hold on any longer, subconsciously reached out for a glass of red wine and gulped it in down in one shot, and then ... she tragically fell over, dead drunk.

If you must know, in her past life, due to her body’s condition, Ling Lan had been prohibited from consuming any drinks and alcoholic beverages that might affect the body. And then, in this life, she had been prevented from imbibing by Lan Luofeng due to her young age. Therefore, neither her mind nor her small body could withstand the assault of alcohol, causing her to be downed by just one glass of wine.

