

The First Order

Chapter 24: Ren Xiaosu, the drug dealer

At first, Ren Xiaosu was unsure whether the clinic's owner, Yu Tong, had really spotted him going out of town or if he was deliberately trying to frame him even though he did not see anything.

Later, he recalled that he had not seen Yu Tong at that time. Ren Xiaosu knew he would have to be wary of Yu Tong after stealing his business in case Yu Tong tried to take revenge on him. After all, it was always necessary to be cautious of scheming people in times like this. As such, if Ren Xiaosu did not have any impression of such "dangerous targets" appearing in his memory, it would surely mean that the other party had not witnessed him leaving town. Therefore, it was more than likely that Yu Tong was deliberately lying to frame Ren Xiaosu.

As for whether Yu Tong had considered the consequences of unsuccessfully framing him, Ren Xiaosu felt that he was not smart enough to have considered this scenario.

In the past, Ren Xiaosu could tolerate Yu Tong's antics. As he had stolen some of his business away, Ren Xiaosu could not bear to thoroughly break his living. Thus, he exhorted Yu Tong to return to his medical books and study them well. In the end, not only did he not take his advice, he even plotted against him.

Ren Xiaosu sneered as he looked at Yu Tong, who had turned tail and fled back to town. There was also a puddle on the ground where he had been standing.

Next to him, Wang Fugui laughed and said, "Looks like my intervention was not needed after all. You were going to be alright anyway."

Ren Xiaosu turned his head to Wang Fugui and thanked him earnestly. He would remember those who were willing to step forward and put in a good word for him in a situation like this.

"Hey, no need to be so polite." Wang Fugui smiled brightly. "If not for Boss Luo's appreciation of you, I would've been too scared to step forward and speak up for you. Boss Luo specifically sent someone to bring word to the town administrators to look out for you."

Ren Xiaosu was taken aback. "Who's Boss Luo? Does he know me?"

Wang Fugui winked at him and whispered, "That medicine of yours... Boss Luo likes it a lot!"

Ren Xiaosu was speechless. Ren Xiaosu realized that the black medicine that Wang Fugui purchased from him had been sent into the stronghold.

“Boss Luo has given his word that as long as you hand over a fixed amount of the black medicine on time each month, he will ensure that you’ll be free from trouble here outside the stronghold,” Wang Fugui said with a smile. In reality, he had an ulterior motive for doing this. After all, he could ensure his own safety by acting as the intermediary for Ren Xiaosu’s black medicine that Boss Luo wanted.

Suddenly, Ren Xiaosu got an idea. “Is Boss Luo very influential and powerful in the stronghold?”

“You still don’t know, do you?” Wang Fugui declared proudly, “He is the Qing Consortium’s representative in Stronghold 113.”

“If he’s the representative of the Qing Consortium, why isn’t his surname Qing?” Ren Xiaosu felt that something was off here.

“Don’t go shooting your mouth off after I tell you.” Wang Fugui lowered his voice to a whisper. “It’s said that he’s the half-brother of some big shot within the Qing Consortium, an illegitimate son of the family.”

“Then can you ask Boss Luo to help get us into the stronghold?” Ren Xiaosu thought that if an influential person like Boss Luo, who had great authority in the stronghold helped them, it wouldn’t be too difficult to get them in, right?

“We’re all contaminated, so how can we be allowed inside the stronghold?” Wang Fugui said with a sad frown. “Besides, if you get into the stronghold, who’s going to pick the wild medicinal herbs for Boss Luo?”

Ren Xiaosu had a realization. The latter half of the sentence was actually the truth as to why he wasn’t going to be allowed into the stronghold, right? For Boss Luo, there was no reason at all to bring Ren Xiaosu and the others in. He could leave them outside the stronghold and have Ren Xiaosu continue supplying him with the black medicine.

That same night, Yan Liuyuan suddenly ran a high fever. Ren Xiaosu exchanged a bottle of black medicine and tried applying it on Yan Liuyuan’s forehead, but it did not make his fever go down.

Ren Xiaosu sat beside the bed and looked at the feeble Yan Liuyuan. He said with a sigh, “You didn’t have to make a wish for this. Don’t make any wishes without me asking you to do so in the future, understand? The fevers that you get as a result could end up killing you.”

Yan Liuyuan could barely open his eyes as he said weakly, “But what am I to do if something happens to you?”

Ren Xiaosu lowered his head and thought for a long time. "Don't be stubborn. I will definitely ensure that we'll lead a comfortable life together someday."

"Mhm."

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The next morning, when Ren Xiaosu went to town to fetch water, he was surprised to hear a piece of news. Yu Tong had packed all of his belongings and money and run away in the night. He would rather face the dangers lurking in the wilderness than face Ren Xiaosu.

Someone said that Yu Tong had gone to Stronghold 114 because it was the closest to Stronghold 113 and was also in the opposite direction of where the wolves appeared. As long as he took the main road there, he should be fine.

Ren Xiaosu did not know whether to laugh or cry. Yu Tong had actually run away in fear...

However, something that surprised Ren Xiaosu even more happened. Chen Haidong, who was an administrator sent from the stronghold, came knocking on his door. He asked affably, "Ren Xiaosu, I heard that you know how to heal people and save their lives?"

Ren Xiaosu was taken aback. "I can only treat knife wounds and external injuries."

"That's fine, that's fine." Chen Haidong was smiling even more happily now. "That still makes you a doctor. Now that our town no longer has a doctor, do you think you'd be interested in becoming one?"

Yan Liuyuan, who was still lying down in the shack with a fever, opened his eyes in shock. This brother of his had only wanted to earn some gratitude tokens and money initially, so how did he suddenly become a real doctor? Furthermore, he was going to become the only doctor in town too? He didn't even have to make a wish for that!

Was it because it was unnecessary to make that wish for Ren Xiaosu's incident last night that it somehow changed his luck?

However, Ren Xiaosu understood that this was only happening because the administrator, Chen Haidong, was also trying to get into Boss Luo's good books.

Authority made the people around you want to serve you meticulously.

Ren Xiaosu was not dumb. He agreed immediately and said, "About that house at the clinic, can I..."

“Yes, you can.” Chen Haidong said with a friendly smile, “You totally can! You can move in today since no one is living there.”

Chen Haidong then walked off, his hands behind his back, while humming a little ditty. Right after, Old Wang came back with a wooden box tucked under his armpit. After Old Wang arrived, some of the people, who were rumored to be members of the richest group in town and lived in brick houses, also dropped by.

Some of them operated small gambling dens, draper’s shops, and grain shops.

Old Wang said, “Congratulations, Ren Xiaosu! You get to live in a brick house just like that!” During the conversation, Old Wang handed a gift box to Ren Xiaosu. “I got a small present for you and Liuyuan. Since both of you are still growing, eating this will help strengthen your bodies!”

Curious, Ren Xiaosu opened it and was surprised to see a white lump. “What is this?”

“You don’t know what this is, right? I’ve kept this bird’s nest for many years,” Wang Fugui explained. “It’s really nourishing!”

Ren Xiaosu had only heard of this stuff. He had never seen it before. However, he had always had doubts about it. “Mr. Zhang Jinglin said that bird’s nest is made from a swiftlet’s saliva, but I don’t think that the viscosity of saliva can be that thick, so it’s probably made of... phlegm?”

Wang Fugui was annoyed. ‘Don’t make my gift sound so disgusting.’ He said unhappily, “Then what about blood bird’s nest 1 ? What is that made of?”

Ren Xiaosu gave it some thought. “Phlegm tainted by blood?”