

The Hidden Billionaire Chapter 46

The Hidden Billionaire Chapter 46 Financial Backing

"I'm only saying this out of consideration for you. Besides, it isn't as if you can actually follow me, not in that Bentley at least."

With this, I didn't bother with words anymore. Instead, I showed them exactly what I meant. Winding up the window, I shifted into gear and slammed the foot down onto the accelerator. The engine of the Porsche roared joyously as it sped down the highway, tearing through the dark of the night in the heavy rain like a drawn arrow finally granted the freedom to fly. Before Chen Ruhai realized, I already left him in my tail light.

Taking a glance at them through the rearview mirror, I noticed that they might have tried to catch up, but it doesn't matter whether they actually did or not, since by now their Bentley was nothing but a pair of tiny and dim light. It was night time already, and in this heavy downpour, there were hardly any cars on the highway. I kept shifting up the gear and let my Porsche run wild like the way it was meant to run before it was unfortunate enough to find itself shipped to a foreign land such as mine. Soon, I could no longer see even their headlight.

I found an exit, and turned off out of the highway, ending the Porsche's momentary freedom and once again subjugating it under the traffic laws of this land. I took out my phone, and headed towards the address that Zhao Gongming had sent me.

Devil's Eyes, I've heard of this place, but I've never been there before.

Even when I was still in school, years back, this place has already made quite a name for itself, most of the time in various bad ways. Since then, it was a common gathering place for gangsters and thugs, and was full of junkies looking to get high and dealers providing them with the substance they need. Every single year, the school would always remind us time and time again to stay away from that place.

It would appear, that this Zhao Zichen wasn't such a nice cookie after all. Any self respecting citizen would avoid this place like the plague, and he said that he came here to relax and wind down over a couple of drinks?

I no longer wanted anything more to do with this Zhao Zichen. But, since I already promised Zhao Gongming, I didn't want to go back on my words. I thought as I drove, conceding that I'll drag that precious son of his away the moment I see him, and then I'll throw him back to his father. Whatever happens next would be their own business.

In the heavy rain, there were only a few people standing at the entrance of the Devil's Eyes. The light from the neon signpost almost seemed to discolor and blend in the

downpour. At the entrance of the pub, a few young girls wearing miniskirts, so tight and short that they might as well have not worn them at all, stood and posed.

When I stopped my Porsche right at the entrance, their eyes lit up and soon a small crowd of dresses and heels formed around my car door despite the heavy rain.

“Sister, you just take it easy. I got this.”

“You dirty tramp, who are you calling ‘sister’? This one is mine.”

I unlocked the door, and at least three hands shot out to open the door for me. But as soon as they saw my face, the expressions on their faces froze.

“You’re... you’re... Zhang Chao?” One of the girls spat, “Sister, I’ll let you have this one, you need it more than I do.”

“Get back here you pig! I’m not letting you weasel out of this and make me deal with it by myself!”

Looking at them backing off back to the pub entrance, I laughed. I didn’t think that I was so famous that even all the girls who worked the streets knew about me.

I waited for all of them to go back fully under the roof and out of the rain, then reached inside my bag and slowly took out a thick bundle of hundred dollar notes. Giving them a sideway glance, I gave the cash in my hand a little wave.

When they saw the money in my hand, the girls became visibly conflicted. They looked among each other, but in the end, the temptation of money was too great for them to bear, and a few of the girls ran back to my car through the heavy rain. By the time they got back again, the thin fabric that passes for their clothes was already soaking with water, their makeup was ruined, and droplets of water dripped from their hair.

But when they got here, I put the money in my hand away back into my bag, one note at a time.

When they saw this, anger exploded on their face as they glared at me with eyes opened as wide and round as coins.

In fact, they were so angry that they looked like they could lunge at me and claw my face out any second.

“Let’s get out of here, sisters. Scums like that deserved whatever the Chen’s will do to him!”

Then they ran back underneath the shelter of the roof. All who weren't moved enough by my money laughed at them, at their greed for money, and at them being played like a fool for it.

But when they all went back under, I took out the money again. Two bundles this time. But this time, none of them moved an inch.

"Zhang Chao, you have the heart of a rotten egg! Are you even human!? Do you think it's fun to play all my sisters here like fools!?"

"Sister, never mind him. He won't have much more time. Didn't you see what they say about him on the internet? The guy is rotten to the core. He even messed with Chen Yuzhou. Don't worry, the Chen's won't let him off for that."

"That's right. Just wait, when the Chen's finally do away with this trash, let's go celebrate over some nice food and drinks." One girl spat on the ground again.

I ignored everything they said and minded my own business. After a while when they began to grow tired of their trash talks, I glanced at them and threw the bundles of cash out of the window of my car. They scattered, and soon there was puddles of wet cash everywhere on the ground beside my car door.

All their voices stopped to a halt, with their eyes plastered to the pile of cash on the ground, in speechlessness.

Then, less than one second later, they seemed to have forgotten that they were badmouthing me just an instance before, and every single one of them darted out into the rain and threw themselves onto the ground, their hands busying with securing whatever cash they could gather. When they stood before, their skimpy low cut tops barely covered their chest at all, and now as they bent down to pick up the money on the ground, the two lumps on their torso either showed through their thin and soaked low cut tops, or popped out and hanging loose entirely. It must be freezing out here in the downpour, and in the middle of the night too, but none of them cared.

"Hey, that one was mine!"

"Too slow, mine now!"

And sure enough, though there were a lot of bank notes in the two bundles of cash, they quickly picked up every single note on the ground. But even after they got all of it, they still kept their eyes peeled and looked everywhere on the ground, watching out for anything that their "sisters" might have missed.

Only when I stopped the engine of my Porsche, did they lift their head up to look at me. Their eyes spoke, and even urged, for me to throw out some more cash.

“I have plenty more where those come from. But, I’m only interested in those who are actually serious about making money.” I said.

“Pick me! Mister, I’m serious about making money.”

“Get lost, as if. It’s me! Me me me! Mister, just speak, I know every position that you could possibly think of.”

“You tramps get your grubby paws off him! Look, I’m not in this for your money mister, I just thought that you look like the kind of guy who is nice to be around. Why don’t we have a little chat inside?”

I wasn’t surprised at their sudden changes of hearts, at all.

I laughed a little, “I think all of you looked fine. So, you girls come here often?”

“You bet, we’re here to party every day, and every night.”

“Yeah, and when we see good looking studs like you, we go and find a warm room for him. Speaking of which, Mr. Zhang, don’t you feel cold?”

She began stuffing herself into the Porsche, but before I even need to open my mouth to object, her “sisters” already pried her out and shoved her aside.

I asked them, “So how did you girls knew me? On the internet?”

Immediately they fell silent. They looked and nudged at each other, but none of them spoke a word.

I made a show of pulling the door shut, “Looks like none of you know anything. Well, guess I better find someone else who knew.”

“No don’t! Please! Mr. Zhang, it’s the Chen’s. Right now, just about every place in Tong City got word from them already, especially those who still want to run a business.”

“Oh? Looks like this Chen Ruhai really is well connected, with every sort of people.”

“None of us dared to disobey, unless they’re mad and didn’t want to run a business anymore. If anyone dared to say otherwise, they’d have the Black Dragons on them the next instant later. No one dared to oppose the Chen’s, not if we still want to live in the Tong City!”

“The Black Dragon? What do they have anything to do with the Chen’s?”

If my memory serves, the Black Dragon should be Jiang Ming’s people. What could they possibly have anything to do with the Chen’s? I did think that perhaps the Chen’s has

some sort of connection to the local gangs, but that night at the Night Wolves, I educated Chen Yuzhou so good that if he really had the Black Dragons backing him up, he would have called them and razed the entire place to the ground.

In the Tong City, most gang members belonged to either the Black Dragon or the Red Lantern. Out of the two, the Black Dragons were a lot more verbose and physical about their business, trashing up places and threatening people into paying up “protection fees”. Except for the places that run under Junran, just about everyone else in Tong City fears the Black Dragons.

Of course, it wasn't as if the Black Dragon was nice enough to leave Junran alone out of respect, but that Junran had always hired and maintained guards and watchers of their own. All of their businesses were under 24 hour surveillance. Of course, the cost associated was heavy, but at the same time it guaranteed that they won't be hassled by thugs and gangs.

But for every other shops and store fronts in Tong City, without Junran's incomes and financial backings, they had little choice but to give in to the Black Dragons.

And as for the Red Lanterns, they operate somewhat similar to how Junran does. They never threatened anyone for money, but the business they had their hands in wasn't exactly legal either.

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The Hidden Billionaire Chapter 47 He Has a Gun!

The Black Dragon and Red Lantern were often at odds with each other, causing troubles and starting fights. Junran's disposition towards the two gangs had always been distant and uncaring, more or less turning a blind eye to them so long as they keep themselves off Junran's properties.

One of the girls was called Yan, and seemed to be the most outgoing and talkative one out of the group. She said, “The Chen's, they're in it together with the Black Dragons! So long as the Black Dragons get the money, they'd do anything short of killing their own mother! Oh, but don't tell anyone what I just said, I... I'm... also afraid of them...”

So that was how it is, now I could finally began to understand just how the Chen's were able to do what they do.

“You girls, if any of you are willing to be my people, I'll make sure that you'll be well paid.”

As soon as I finished my sentence, Yan immediately dropped to her knees in the rain, and reached out to loosen my pants.

I did bring it upon myself I guess, since I knew full well that they were in the business that they're in, but I just hadn't expected that they would be as direct and upfront about it. They almost got into my pants, if my reflex wasn't quick enough about securing my belt around my pants. I waved them away.

"Mr. Zhang, didn't you say just then to be your people?"

I quickly looked around. Though there weren't any passerby due to the heavy rain, this was still right at the front entrance of the Devil's Eyes. These girls were daring enough to do it right in the open public!

I backed off a little, "You... I... step back a little. What I mean is, help me to keep an eye out here. If anything unusual happens, tell me immediately. If any one of you will do that for me, I promise that you will be well paid. I'll be frank with you girls, if you betray me or sell me out to the Chen's, I probably wouldn't do anything to you. I'm not like the Black Dragons. But, I'm just saying, if you don't want to work the streets and sell your youth for the rest of your lives, if you want to have a decent job and live a decent life, I can make it happen."

I looked at their faces, their makeup ruined and a complete mess under the rain. I knew that out of these girls, some of them were bound to have a loose tongue to either the Chen's or the Black Dragon, but I cared not. The terms that I proposed was a million times better than what either of them can offer, there must be someone willing to help, or willing to take my money to be precise.

The girls all looked at each other and laughed awkwardly. They nodded and said yes, all of them, but I knew that most of them weren't serious about it.

I wanted to know more about Jiang Ming, but I couldn't afford to bring his name up here, not with so many eyes watching and ears listening. I'll have to wait and see if one of them would be willing to contact me later, in private.

Instead, I asked, "Did someone who went by the name Zhao Zichen came to drink today?"

"Mister, you're here for that good for nothing?" Yan asked in return.

I was more than a little surprised to hear that. As it turned out, Zhao Zichen seemed to be a regular around here.

"He is inside?"

“He is in, of course he is in. But mister, I suggest you turn around and go away for now. He is in trouble, someone is coming for him!”

As soon as she finished, the entrance was busted open and someone came flying out, obviously involuntarily. He landed on his back, and rolled around on the ground from the pain. Then he sat up and pointed, and yelled, “Zhao! Zi! Chen!”

The girls saw what happened, and went around to help him up. Only now was I able to take a good look at his face. It was Jin, from the Black Dragon.

Amongst the chaos, Yan secretly gave me a knowing glance, and I understood. This woman would contact me later. I walked up, and secretly stuffed a piece of paper with my number on it into her hand while everyone else busied themselves with helping Jin back onto his feet.

Never looking back, I continued on and went inside the Devil’s Eyes.

In the large and crowded pub, there was a clearing in the center. Surrounded by an angry crowd, a young man with flowing long hair stood at its center, holding a glass in his hand. Behind him, were a few young men and girls, trembling in fear, definitely not the type that frequents this place.

“Zhao Zichen, you dared raising your hand against our brother Jin! Today, you’re not walking out of that door without losing a limb or two!”

All eyes around him burned with a lust for blood, a little like what happened back at the Night Wolves. Looking around, I could see quite a few familiar faces. Most of them were the same crowd that went with Jin to corner Hong that night at the Spring Gardens.

“Yeah! That’s right!”

The crowd all shouted, their voice so loud that they could raise the roof. From the looks of things, they were mad enough with this man standing before them that they could swallow him whole.

Under watchful eyes, Zhao Zichen raised his glass high and gulped down its content in one go. Then he opened his mouth, as if to say something. Everyone looked at him nervously.

Then he burped.

A loud and long burp.

“See, what did I tell you? Don’t come to this place. Don’t come to this place. But no, you just had to come to this stinking hole. Now look what you got yourselves into. Really, you lot are all good boys and good girls, what are you even thinking coming to a place

like this? So you can go back and show off to your friends how much of a badass you are? I want a formal written letter of apology from each and every one of you, on my desk at the hospital tomorrow morning.”

It was as if Zhao Zichen was completely unfazed by all the eyes locked onto him from all around. Instead, he even began to turn around and lecture the little doctors and nurses behind him.

Jin’s men were so mad that they might throw themselves at him any seconds now, and the little doctors were almost at the verge of tears, but Zhao Zichen seemed to pay no mind to anything at all. He poured himself another glass of spirit, and drank it up again, like he was in his own back garden.

I found a spot somewhat close by. Leaning against the table, I folded my arms and observed this little show that he put on.

This Zhao Zichen doesn’t look like the good little boy that his father said he was. Far from it. But, with so many of Jin’s men surrounding him, I just had to see what he still has up his sleeves to get himself out of this one.

“Screw it.” Someone from the crowd mutter, then growled and yelled, “Get him!”

All the Black Dragons grabbed whatever weapons they had or whatever that looked like it would pass for one, and threw themselves at Zhao Zichen and the people behind him.

All of a sudden, all hell broke loose. From all around were sounds of things breaking, and people screaming. Looking at the crowd that rushed to bury Zhao Zichen in, I kicked myself for not stepping in sooner. I squeezed myself in and swam through the crowd towards him. At least, I need to make sure that Uncle Zhao’s little boy doesn’t get hurt too badly, since I did promise him that I’d protect him.

But the noise only went on for a few seconds, and soon, silence fell all around again. Everyone stopped moving, and froze in place paralyzed and petrified.

Somehow, from God knows where, Zhao Zichen procured a refined looking decorated handgun, and had it held right up against the leader’s nose in between his eyes. The man who took lead still has a chair in his hand, raised high up in the air and was going to smash it down on Zhao Zichen, but now it simply remained in the air. His legs trembled, and his eyes stared cross eyed at the gun barrel in between.

Zhao Zichen tensed, and then burped again. But this time, no one dared to make even a sound at him.

Zhao Zichen squinted with his drunk and sleepy eyes, and even faltered for a bit in his footsteps, but his gun never left the leader’s face. He slurred, tapping the leader’s skull with the tip of the gun barrel, “Bao, you little bastard, look at you, so stupid, something

wrong with your brain? Yes, something's definitely wrong with your brain. Tell you what, I'm not that bad of a neurosurgeon, here, let me blow a hole open and look at it for you."

"No... no... thank you... Zhao, brother... look, I'm wrong, we're all wrong. Just... enjoy your drink, and food..." Bao was almost about to get down to his knees and beg, if he wasn't even more afraid that Zhao Zichen might accidentally took it as a sign of aggression in his drunken haze, and decided to squeeze the trigger.

"Drink?" Setting his glass down and randomly taking a half finished bottle on the table, Zhao Zichen glanced passingly at the label, and then suddenly brought the bottle down right onto Bao's head. "You drink!"

Liquid streamed down Bao's face, booze and blood. It looked so painful that I cringed a little inside, but Bao didn't dare say anything else except for forcing a smile on his face and said, "Yes, brother, you're right, it tastes good."

Then Zhao Zichen laughed and said to the little doctors and nurses behind him, "You lot, go home now. Now that you've been here and seen this place, you'd have plenty to brag about to your boyfriends and girlfriends right? Go home now, and never come to this place again. This isn't a place you belong. Oh, and don't forget about the written apology, at least 5000 words, I want to see it on my desk first thing in the morning tomorrow."

"Vice Department Head, can it be a little less..."

"I said get lost. You don't really think you can bargain with your Vice Department Head do you?"

"Vice Department Head, you're not coming with us?"

Zhao Zichen laughed as if he just heard a joke, "Me? I still got booze I want to drink."

The little doctors began to walk away without Zhao Zichen, albeit gingerly and reluctantly. I don't blame them, for not wanting to leave him. He has a gun in his hand, and that means that he was the person that needed the least amount of protection out of all of them.

After they left, Zhao Zichen resumed drinking by himself, glass after glass. A while later, long enough for those doctors to have called a cab and got away, he laughed and set his glass squarely on the table, and began swaggering towards the exit as if all the Black Dragons around him were nothing but air.

Wherever he went, people gave way. They may be mad at him, but what else could they do?

They may be tough, or able to smash up tables and kick a hole through the wall, but in the end, all lives are equal when set in front of a gun barrel.

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The Hidden Billionaire Chapter 48 Humbleness

Stumbling out of the Devil's Eye, Zhao Zichen walked alone by himself, strolling down the street through the heavy rain, with his long hair plastered onto him from the wetness.

Seeing him acting the way that he did, if I didn't know that he was actually the Vice Department Head of the Tong City Hospital Cardiology Department, I'd say that he was either a nutter or a homeless bum.

Behind him, Bao and a limping Jin followed him from a distance, and I followed behind them even further back.

Though it does seem a little odd with Zhao Zichen. Maybe he was so drunk that he couldn't recognize his way around anymore. The more he walked on, the darker and tighter the way became. From the road, then to the streets, and even now he was turning off into an even narrower alleyway.

The crude stone pavement of the alleyway glistened with wetness from the rain, looking like a terrible slipping hazard. In the alleyway, there was only one dim street lamp, glowing yellow in the dark of the rainy night. It was quiet, with no one else around us, just the sounds of our footsteps and the raindrops hitting the ground.

Then Zhao Zichen suddenly whipped back around, and looked right at Bao straight in the face.

"Oh, I see you people are still here." Zhao Zichen said, in perfect consciousness. He was completely sober all along!

I was startled, to say at the least, and Bao was even more so. He growled dangerously, "Zhao Zichen, are you nuts!? You mean you did all that on purpose? You think you can get away with pointing a gun at us Black Dragons!?"

"Gun? Oh, you mean this thing. So what about it? Why didn't you say so when you're acting like a whimpering dog before?"

"Screw this!" Jin rasped, "Don't be afraid, he won't dare shoot anyone. He is a doctor. If he fires that gun and hurts anyone, that'd cost him his entire career."

Before Bao went on to say anything, Zhao Zichen once again surprised everybody. He threw the gun on the ground and stepped on it, and it shattered to pieces under his shoes.

He laughed, "It's a toy."

Knowing that they've been played well and good, Jin and Bao was so livid that they couldn't even think of anything to say. They looked at each other, then at themselves, and after a moment of silence, the only

Those Black Dragons were furious beyond sanity. They went at him as if they wanted to rip Zhao Zichen apart with their bare hands.

Zhao Zichen on the other hand only responded in cool calmness and complete control, keeping his wits about him as he dealt with whatever attacks they threw in his way. From behind the Black Dragons, one by one I began picking them off one by one as they had all their attention focused on Zhao Zichen. It was easy routine work. Find someone, catch, then twist and turn and pop. Wherever I go, I left behind a trail of dislocated shoulders. With one of their arms out of commission, they could only roll around on the ground in pain.

To me, fights like this were as easy as a walk in the park. The enemies were pincered and had their backs to me. I cut into their numbers as easy and as smooth like a hot knife through butter.

A moment later, I got three more of them, and only then did they begin to realize that something wasn't quite right back here. Some of them turned around and came at me.

Taking a glance at how Zhao Zichen was doing, he seemed unharmed as of yet, with a few people lying on the ground, incapacitated. From the looks of things, he seemed to know his way around his punches and kicks as well.

Now this was really getting odd. If he was this good, why does Daddy Zhao want me to look after him? If anything, these people should be thanking every gods they knew just to have him stay off their backs.

But regardless, the Black Dragons still had the advantage of numbers on their side. This fight won't be ending any time soon. As I dealt with the Black Dragons that began to flock over in my direction, I saw Zhao Zichen looked at me in surprise, that there was actually someone helping him out in this mess.

Jin also turned his head around, and as he saw me, his face immediately became as scrunched up as bitter melons, and as green and bitter too. He was terrified to see me. Think as he might, but he'll never know why he was unlucky enough to run into me in this place.

He frantically pulled Bao and hid inside the crowd of Black Dragons, and a while later, an uncomfortably piercing whistle sounded and cut across the dark of the night, echoing down the otherwise silent alleyway.

Zhao Zichen made a pass at me with his eyes, and then yelled, "Run!"

Then he did exactly as he said, and disappeared around a corner. I didn't know what was going on exactly, but if Zhao Zichen wasn't going to stick around, then I had no more reasons to stay here either. I disengaged myself from the crowd and ran out of the alleyway.

Coming out, I looked around and took a guess which direction might be the closest to where he was headed, and began running at full speed, and I almost ran into him as he somehow magically came out of an obscure exit.

He took a look at me, but unfortunately we have no time for words. He motioned at me with his hand to follow him, and we headed even deeper into yet another alleyway.

This one was even darker than the one before, and it didn't help that the heavy rain had made its dirty and greased ground even more slippery than it normally is. On top of that, it was littered with piles of trash and junk. If it wasn't for Zhao Zichen, I'll definitely get myself lost in here.

"They're there, get them!"

From behind us, yelling and shouting never ceased. Zhao Zichen was running his lungs out, and when he took a glance backward and saw that I kept up with him as if it was a stroll through the park, he gave me a look and flipped his eyes at me.

"What are you, some kind of superman!?"

"Oh, not much, just did a few years in the forces."

"Here, we're going this way!"

And once again we turned off into an even narrower alleyway. The alleyway in Tong City had always been a complicated mess. If someone accidentally got lost in it, the best way to get out would be to ask a local for help. And even then, sometimes even the locals themselves get lost around the alleyways in parts that they weren't perfectly familiar with.

The longer I stayed with him, the more I felt that something wasn't quite how it seemed. The number of footsteps behind us didn't lessen one bit, but grew instead. I remembered that there were perhaps 50 odd people then, but now there seemed to be a few hundreds of them. Just where might these people had come from?

On the other hand, it doesn't seem like Zhao Zichen was in a hurry to get rid of them either. Judging by the way he ran, he seemed to be gathering them behind him and herding them to a specific place.

We ran on for a bit more, and then, the alleyway in front of us came to a halt. A tall wall stood before us, it was a dead end.

I also grew a little tired of playing this game of cat and mouse. Turning my head to look at Zhao Zichen, I asked, "Well, now what? We calling the cops?"

He said only one word in reply, "Through."

He ran to a corner of the wall, then moved a few things aside to reveal a small door. He unlocked it and went through, dragging me along with him.

Behind the door on the other side of the wall was filled with people. Before I could ask what was going on, these people put their fists together in front of their chest in unison, and gave Zhao Zichen a slight bow, and then went out through the door that we came through before. As they did, I noticed that all of them were equipped with a machete hanging at their waists. In the darkness, their blades glistened occasionally with a metallic sheen reflecting off the dim light from the street lamp.

After this, I could only imagine that Jin and Bao would hate Zhao Zichen and I so much that they could chop us up and feed us to the dogs if he ever gets the chance. Especially Jin, this would be the second time that I wrecked his day. Even if he didn't used to have a personal grudge against me, he has now.

"Jin, those two went that way, I remember that it leads to a dead end!"

Jin said, pleasantly surprised, "Those bastards, both of them, I swear, I'll be damned if I don't mess them up real good today. Come on boy, follow me!"

Then they happily took the lead and flocked into the alleyway.

Then Jin fell into a dumbstruck silence.

And Jin also fell into a dumbstruck silence.

Jin wiped at the wetness on his face, which came from more than just the rain. At the supposed dead end of the alleyway, around 20 muscular men waited for him to show up with all of their weapons drawn. Jin could do nothing but give them a somewhat awkward smile.

"Well, well, look who it is, if it isn't our old friend Jin. Oh, don't be in such a rush to leave, not that you can anyway." One of them came forward and patted Jin's face with the flat side of the machete in his hand.

Jin almost wanted to cry at his misfortune in his jianghu walk today. He lost in a head on fight, got played and threatened with a toy gun, and even when he called his people to corner them, he instead found himself walking right into the heart of their elaborate trap.

Bao backed off slowly. The Black Dragons do have more people than the 20 odd men standing in front of them, but all of their enemies had a menacing machete in their hand. Right now, even their leader was backing away, who would be stupid enough to stand up for them? Despite their number, the Black Dragons began backing away out of the alleyway slowly, while the 20 walked forward casually.

But soon, the Black Dragons stopped backing off. Not because someone had a burst of courage, but because they can't.

A few hundred other people gathered at the mouth of that alleyway, and they all grinned at the Black Dragon members bottled up inside the narrow alleyway.

Jin cried out, "It's a trap!"

But it was too late for him already. Zhao Zichen was another man again completely. He gave my shoulder a few pats, "Hey brother, thanks for that. Just give me a few seconds to wrap up the things over here for a bit. Dinner is on me tonight."

Then he yelled, "At them, everyone! Remember, hurt them as badly as you can, I don't want to see any of them walking out of here today with only minor cuts and grazes! We hospitals and doctors need to make a living somehow too. Do it!"

Zhao Zichen's voice seemed to have lit a fire in their heart. All of a sudden, in a burst of emotions, the two groups collided, and for a long while, the sounds of shouts and screams never ceased, as well as the sound of punching and kicking and things breaking.

Though the Black Dragons had just as many people as Zhao Zichen, he set an ambush on them, and had them surrounded and cornered. Tactics wise, Zhao Zichen clearly had the upper hand in this.

Also, Jin had never been a tough. In our few exchanges, when the going gets tough for him, he always gets going. Looking at him trembling in his boots now, he has more or less lost half of the fight already. In fact, he looked like he was close to dropping to his knees begging for mercy.

Shortly after, Zhao Zichen's people had subdued the Black Dragons along with Jin and Bao. Some of them just gave up and never resisted in the first place.

As I looked on throughout all that happened in the last few minutes, I was taken aback on so many occasions. Just how would such a terrifying character like Zhao Zichen need any of my protection anyway? From those doctors' interactions with him back at

Devil's Eyes, they obviously knew that there is more to Zhao Zichen than what people took him for on the surface, so how could it be possible that Uncle Zhao didn't know anything about this? And if not, just what was he after in his mind exactly when he asked me to "watch over" his son?

Seeing that they were almost done with the Black Dragons, I reminded him, just in case, "These people belong to the Black Dragon. If you're too rough with them, there's a chance that the Black Dragons won't let you off that easily."

As soon as I said that, a slightly older and buff looking man standing beside Zhao Zichen roared with laughter, "Now just why would we of the Red Lantern have anything to be afraid of them Black Dragons? Right, Boss?"

Zhao Zichen only gave him a slight smile, "Don't make me remind you all the time. Humble. Low profile. Remember?"

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The Hidden Billionaire Chapter 49 All an Act

"What did he just call you!?"

Though I already knew that Zhao Zichen couldn't possibly be just a simple cardiology surgeon, what that man called him just then still made me jump.

"More on that later. Meng, you go ahead and clean this place up. With all those noises we made, someone was bound to have called the cops. We don't want them on our case. And, send a few of our people out, get the words around, that as of today, all places here in the Black Alley are officially Red Lantern territory!"

It was as if the Red Lanterns around us suddenly had an adrenaline boost, or steroids. They yelled and roared triumphantly, sending echoes throughout the alleyway. On the other hand, the Black Dragons hung their heads low in defeat, especially Jin, who had buried his head almost entirely between his knees.

Many of the Black Dragons are hurt, or crippled, or worse. As for those who were hurt too badly, Zhao Zichen had his men take them directly to the Tong City Hospital. Looks like what he said before about looking after the hospital's revenue wasn't just talks.

"Alright brother, this is some fine work you done today! I got an entire hall booked at the Spring Gardens. Tonight, we celebrate!"

The crowd cheered all around.

Tonight, the Black Dragons looked after Zhao Zichen's hospital revenue, while he on the other hand looked after my restaurant business. Looking at the number of people, my Spring Garden will be packed tonight.

"Come on, brother, don't be in such a hurry to leave."

I was just thinking of slipping out quietly unnoticed amongst all the chaos, but Zhao Zichen called out to me before I could get away. He smiled politely, "Brother, we have a celebration coming up. Won't you come with us? My treat."

For a second, I didn't know what to say. Truthfully, I really didn't want to get myself mixed up in this. I did promise Zhao Gongming that I would look out for his son's safety, but with how it is, Zhao Zichen obviously didn't need my protection at all. In fact, people should be praying and offering tributes to their gods and ancestors to keep him away from them.

How could someone as perceptive as Zhao Gongming not know that his own son is an underground mafia lord? Now I was really puzzled as to why he had me come here when Zhao Zichen obviously had everything under control.

"No, but thank you. My clothes are all wet, so I'm heading home for a hot shower first." I said, a little put off by how uncomfortable it felt.

"I'm afraid, brother, that you probably won't be able to find a place willing to sell you clothes tonight, much less a place willing to let you stay."

I asked, "You know me?"

Zhao Zichen thinned his eyes playfully and hooked his arms on one of my shoulders, "Who doesn't know you in Tong City now? The Black Dragons has made it known to all, that they'll treat whoever helps you or do business with you as one of their enemies."

I sniffed, "What are they, five years olds? Well, it's nothing to it. I just happened to be around the neighborhood today. They pissed me off, so I hit a few of them around for a bit. I didn't exactly did it to help you or anything."

I promised Zhao Gongming that I won't tell Zhao Zichen that he asked me to look out for him in the dark.

"But you did help me, a great deal, intentional or no. Plus, any enemy of them Black Dragons is a friend of mine." Zhao Zichen smiled, extending a hand to me, "I'm Zhao Zichen, the leader of the Red Lantern, at least for now."

Looking at his outstretched hand, I thought for a while. Then I took it and shook it, firmly.

“Well, you already know who I am. I’m Zhang Chao. Incidentally, I’m not too different from you in this regard, any enemy of the Chen’s is a friend of mine.”

I didn’t want to get myself caught in the conflict between the Black Dragon and the Red Lantern. These two mafia groups arouse fights over territories days in and days out. And, as a respectable member of the military, even if I was discharged, I would never associate myself with anyone who disrespects the law and thinks themselves outside of it. So I made it clear, that I had no interests in either the Black Dragon’s or the Red Lantern’s business, that I’m only after the Chen’s.

“A pleasure.” Zhao Zichen’s grip was firm too. Then he gave my shoulder a few pats, and said earnestly, “Well then, shall we? You’re not going to refuse again are you, brother? Come on, it’s a celebration, and you’re one of the stars in this!”

Since he put it that way, it’d be unthoughtful of me to refuse him even further. And he was right, if I don’t crash with the Red Lantern tonight, I actually won’t have a place to stay at all.

“Chao, how about we go and get ourselves some clean clothes first? Like you said, you’re all drenched, from getting into this mess in this heavy rain for my sake. And I don’t think I’m any drier either.” Zhao Zichen looked at me inquisitively. Seeing that I didn’t object, he motioned one of his people over and we headed for one of the shopping plazas in the city.

He told me to go ahead first, and told Meng to come with me. When I looked back at him, he said that he’ll wait for us in the car.

“I have another patient lined up for operation tomorrow. I need all the sleep that I can get before that.”

I was speechless. Utterly speechless. Really, if I hadn’t seen and heard it with my own eyes and ears, I’d never believed that he was a mafia boss, of the Red Lantern no less. Even now, I still find it hard to believe.

Between two unfamiliar men, shopping was no more than a process of finding out the quickest way to get what we need, and get out. Before long, we quickly found a shop that specializes in men’s clothing. While I went inside to look for what I want, Meng stood and leaned against the wall by the entrance and took out his phone to kill time.

“Please, just a moment, sir...”

I was just looking at myself in the mirror with a shirt in my hand, and suddenly a thin and frail hand reached from behind me and took away the shirt.

Startled, I turned around, and a lean but fine looking face was before me. A small woman stood before me, gingerly looking up to my face.

“We... we couldn't sell you that, sir... maybe... maybe you could try elsewhere?”

I was startled at first, and then immediately remembered. How could I forget? The Black Dragon has made it clear to all in Tong City that no one was allowed to do business with me.

I didn't want to trouble this small woman, since there was little she could do about it. I turned to leave, but my wet cloth was getting sticky and was clinging against me, and it was getting uncomfortable. So I asked if I could at least borrow a towel to dry myself off properly.

“But... alright. Please, wait for me for a while.” She hesitated a little bit, then turned around and went to the back.

But as soon as she walked in, a voice roared and chased her out.

“Wait? Wait!? I told you, kick his sorry butt out of my shop. What are you doing getting him to wait!?” Another woman with a body as large and unrefined as her bark came out, tearing aside the little curtain that separated the front and back section. She was probably the shop manager. She advanced on the little woman, pointing rudely at the little woman's nose with her thick finger.

“Alright, I get it, no means no. There's no need to be so harsh with her.” I couldn't bear to watch anymore, and cut in between the two of them.

Hearing me, the fat manager's beady little eyes locked onto my face. Then after a while, she spat forcefully, at me. She wasn't a particularly skilled spitter, and instead of hitting one particular part of me, her saliva spewed around all over my face in my general direction.

I was livid beyond words. This crackpot of a nutjob wasn't satisfied with just banning me from buying things at her store. She wanted to humiliate me on top of it.

“Why aren't you getting lost!? Why are you still in my shop!? You had the balls to even show your face in public after that shameless stunt you pulled!?”

Subconsciously, I gripped my fists hard, as I imagined them sinking satisfyingly into her disgusting face. When this woman noticed my anger, instead of getting afraid, it seemed to have fueled her arrogance instead. She put her hands on her hip, and stuck her meaty face even closer to me, “Yeah, that's right, hit me, like the brute you are. Come on, hit me! Just you try, and the next second I'll call the cops and throw you behind bars where people like you belong! What, you chickening out? Really, just try thinking even a little bit with that thick head of yours, you crossed the Chen's The Chen's! They spread the word already, no one in the entire Tong City was to take your business. Think you can sneak in here and fool me?”

She spat again, this time on the ground, "Well, think twice! You must be nuts to think that you can pull a fast one on me, and on the Chen's! I swear, even the rats have more dignity than people like you. Think you can buy our clothes? I think not! Why don't you buy some underwear instead, and put it over your face to cover that stench that was reeking from your mouth!"

This fat woman fired her words at me like a machine gun. A dirty and disgusting machine gun. I was so disgusted by her that I was actually rendered speechless.

Feeling my tightly gripped fists, I willed as hard as I could and kept my anger and my desire to strike her down in place.

I kept chanting silently within myself, over and over again, almost like a mantra, "This is a woman. She may be fat, and she may be ugly, but she is still a woman. I am a soldier, and a man. I have not trained my fists to be used on a helpless woman..."

Finding my peace, I opened my eyes and looked at her, "My good woman, are you on your period? Or did you just accidentally eat a bag of gunpowder?" Leaving her with that, I turned around and walked away.

"You...! Get lost! And don't ever come back!" That woman chased after me to her shop entrance, and yelled at me.

Hearing all the commotion, Meng lifted his eyes up from his phone screen and looked at me. Seeing the anger on my face, he asked me what was wrong.

That woman chased me out of the shop, and still she hurled her venomous words at my back. I wanted nothing to do with this woman, and said to Meng, "Let's go, we're leaving."

With that, I began walking, but Meng quickly grabbed me and asked, "What's going on here exactly? Boss wanted me to get you some clothes, if we leave without that, what am I going to say to Boss?"

I sighed, "I appreciate it, brother, but like your boss said, there's probably no one willing to sell clothes to me in this entire Tong City."

Only now, did I realize just how annoyingly disgusting the Chen's could be. Truly disgusting, they were. I couldn't even find a place to live, and do something as simple as buying a change of clothes! Though they couldn't really kill me, they disgusted me so much that I felt as if they might as well be killing me!

"The moment that lady saw me, she became fired up or something, and she has been like that ever since." I sighed, "Never mind, let's get out of here. If I stay and hear her words any longer, I might actually be mad enough to go against my principle of never hitting women."

But Meng quickly went in front of me and stopped me, “Oh, you mean that? Didn’t you know? They did it on purpose. These business people, they do that on purpose so they can please the Black Dragons. You think they don’t want you in their shop? Think again. They wanted you in their shop, they wanted it bad, because then they can put on an act of insulting you and chasing you out, like that woman just then, and get on the Black Dragon’s good sides. Maybe they’ll even be rewarded.”

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The Hidden Billionaire Chapter 50 His Henchmen

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“What the...!?” I was so much in awe by their logic and ingenuity that they left me at a loss for words, “I never thought that they could take the Black Dragon’s warnings that way.”

“You were out of the shop already, why else would Ms. Meatball over there go as far as to openly flinging insults at you even now?”

That brought me a smile. This Meng here seemed to have quite a playful character, unexpectedly so. Judging by his appearance alone, he seemed to be one of those big and simple minded types, but that was quite a mouth he had just then.

He put away his phone and scratched his nose, and said to me, “Actually, let’s head back. We’re not leaving this place without buying our clothes, and we’ll be buying it from her, whether she liked it or not.”

Turning around, Meng tugged me and dragged me back to that shop again. Truthfully, I really didn’t want to be here again, that was how much that Ms. Meatball there traumatized me.

I was never any good at handling those barbaric and unreasonable types. But Meng assured me that I wouldn’t have to say a single word later. Just enjoy the show, was his words.

Hearing that someone has entered her shop, and my familiar voice, the manager lady came out from the back of the shop again, excitedly. It looked like she was already ready for round two, or three, or four. But unfortunately for her, instead of Zhang Chao

the whipping boy, it was Meng whom she had to deal with. In her excitement, she almost ran headfirst into Meng.

She almost did, if Meng didn't hold her face away from him with his fingers, as hard and as unyielding as eagle talons. Finally, this woman seemed to have sensed that something wasn't quite right. She looked up, and then squeaked awkwardly, "M...Meng... ahem, umm... Mr. Meng?"

Meng motioned at me with his thumb, "I heard you won't let my brother here buy his clothes?"

"Your... brother? But isn't he... isn't he Zhang Chao?"

Meng never did give even a rat's ass about whether she was a woman or not. He hardened his grip and pushed, and Ms. Meatball yelped and backed off, all the way back, until her foot caught something and luckily fell on a soft sofa meant for the waiting customers.

That little shop clerk girl from before was hiding behind the counter, too afraid to make a sound, but when she saw what Meng did to the manager, she hurried over and helped her back onto her feet.

"Please, don't do this to us! We didn't want to do this either. It was the Black Dragons, they're the ones that won't allow anyone to sell anything to Zhang Chao. We just don't have what it takes to say no to the Black Dragons!" The little woman worked up her courage and tried to reason with Meng.

But Meng would have none of it. He simply nodded, and smiled, though the mirth never reached his eyes, "And you think you have what it takes to say no to the Red Lanterns?"

"That's not... that's not what we mean!" The manager panicked.

She couldn't afford to offend either the Black Dragon or the Red Lantern.

Personally, I didn't want to trouble these two women. Chen Ruhai was the one that I had beef with, and he was the one that did this to me. In a sense, these two were simply unfortunate victims that got caught in between.

But then again, I won't stop whatever Meng was doing, or what he was going to do either. I have better things to do with my time than to stand up for the woman that just gave me one of the most unreasonable and infuriating berating of my life.

Meng simply said, "Shut it, two sets of clothes, now. If you won't sell, then we rob, saves me money that way too."

The manager was almost on her knees. From the looks of the shop and the merchandises they put on display, any two sets would easily cost her more than a few thousand dollars. There was no way that she could swallow that loss.

“I...! We will... we will sell...”

After considering the gains and losses, the manager’s shoulders slumped in defeat and motioned the shop clerk to bring me two sets of clothes, which I paid for.

Meng slapped my shoulder, and said to the manager, “Get the words out there. Any enemy of Zhang Chao is an enemy of the Red Lantern! From now on, we the Red Lanterns rise and fall together with Zhang Chao!”

The manager was panicked enough to cry, so she pleaded, “Please don’t make me do that, Mr Meng, if I did, I’d be doing the exact opposite of what the Black Dragon had told us to do, they’ll never let it slide! Please, please don’t get us involved...”

“You don’t want to be involved? But you were so into it when you let loose your rant onto my brother here just then, are you saying that I had imagined all that?”

“I’m wrong, I shouldn’t have said what I said. Mr. Meng, please forgive me.”

Meng did not budge at all, “Now what did they say on TV? Ah, ‘If apologies are all it takes, what do we still need to cops for?’ I think that’s how it goes. Tomorrow, I’ll be back here with my brother, and if I as much as come across even one person on this plaza who didn’t know about this, I’ll hold you responsible.”

All hopes left the shop manager, as she slumped back down into the sofa like a lifeless doll.

Pitiful. But, I won’t pity her. If anything, she brought it down upon herself.

After getting changed, I felt much better and refreshed, so I turned around and said to Meng, “Look, brother, I appreciate what you did for me just then. Though as to your Boss’s celebration, I don’t think I’ll go after all.”

“But, that just won’t do, Boss made it clear to us that we are to take you to the celebration tonight. You saved our boss, we need to at least show our appreciation!”

I straightened out my new clothes on me in the mirror. A habit I picked up when I served in the forces, since we were required to be impeccably dressed at all times.

Looking at Meng’s reflection in the mirror, I smiled and replied, “Meng, I’m sorry, but I really won’t be going to that celebration. But you can relax, I won’t tell anyone about Zhao Zichen’s identity as the head of the Red Lanterns. This, I promise. Though I don’t know why as of yet, I can still tell that you’re trying to tie me together with the Red

Lanterns, and I must say that it wasn't the brightest of ideas. Be it the Black Dragons, or the Chen's, none of them would be naive enough to believe that I'm one of the leaders in the Red Lantern, because if I really am, I would have used that privilege to deal with them long ago. Let's not fool ourselves, Meng. Whatever ideas you have in your mind, it won't work, let it go."

Meng's face was a variety of colors when I spoke, jumping between red and blue and green, as his large stature froze in place.

I've already seen through the purpose behind his behaviors, even when we were back at the shop. But since I was urgently in need of a clean change of clothes, I went along with his little act and pretended that I hadn't noticed.

Meng waved his arms frantically and tried to convince me otherwise, but I held up a hand and politely stopped him. I reassured him, that it was only natural, that I knew that they were only doing what they think is the best for the Red Lantern, and that I won't hold it against either the Red Lanterns or Zhao Zichen personally for this. However, I also made it clear that I wanted no part in whatever business they might be involved in. As a soldier, a protector of the people, my pride would not allow myself to dabble in mafia businesses.

Meng's face was bright red all over. He was embarrassed to the point that he couldn't even find the right words to say. This man really was one of those big and simple minded types. Whatever he said and did back there was probably all Zhao Zichen's instructions.

That explains why he stayed behind outside when I first entered the shop.

If he had appeared with me right from the beginning, there was a slight possibility that the shopkeeper wouldn't have acted as rudely towards me as she had been. And now, after I've been thoroughly berated, he swept in and stood on my behalf, putting on an act of going out of their way to do a favor for me, and hopefully I would feel indebted to them because of it. Really, it was all quite elaborate. I'll give them that.

I had a nicer impression of the Red Lantern at first. Had. But now, I couldn't help but feel that perhaps the two were not so different after all.

"Chao, just... give me a moment to call Boss. Please, don't make this even more difficult for me, brother."

"That's fine. Regardless of what happened, you did help me get two sets of clean clothes, and made it so that I could at least purchase some necessities here in this plaza. This, I am thankful." I laughed.

Meng nodded and acknowledged me, then walked a little distance away and called Zhao Zichen. The quality of the speaker on his phone was either extremely good, or

extremely bad, as I could hear Zhao Zichen's voice coming faintly from his phone even at this distance.

"Never mind about that, come back." Zhao Zichen's voice spoke through the phone, "He got you. Your brain was never a match for his in the first place. We thought we were baiting him, but he took the bait and even used it to play us one. Who'd thought that he really used the Red Lanterns just so he could buy himself some clothes."

"Boss, what do I do now?"

"Don't worry about it, just come back."

Meng looked awkwardly at his phone, and then gave me a forced smile.

I walked up to him and gave his shoulder a pat, "Come on, Meng, don't be so guarded. How about this, I'll give you guys a half price discount at the Spring Gardens tonight as a token of my gratitude, how does that sound?"

I knew that Zhao Zichen could hear what I said loud and clear.

A loud and playful laughter sounded through the phone, "Then I'll thank you in advance here, brother."

"You know who I am, right from the beginning." I said.

"Your old man and my old man were once the best of the best of mates. Don't hold this against my old man for this alright? He was just worried about me and me getting my hands inside this Red Lantern business. Somehow he kept having this idea that one day the cops would break in and throw me into the cells, so much that he was desperate enough to draft up this not so well thought out plan to get you involved. You're the son of Junran's founder, their largest shareholder, and Han Kun's employer. He figured that if he got you mixed up in all this, even if the worst comes to the worst, Han Kun would never let anything serious happen to you."

Speaking to him through a phone held in someone else's hand was too much hassle. I took the phone from Meng and said to him directly, "So that's why Uncle Zhao wanted to get me mixed up with the Red Lanterns. That way, when things come, if I'm fine, then you'll be fine."