

## Chapter 57 Stand at Attention

In the end, Chen Yuzhou was dragged out of the courtroom.

Chen Ruhai was so frustrated that he looked like he might have a heart attack. His entire face was as white as ash, and just as dry.

To make sure that they could pin those charges onto me, they took no chances and hired the best lawyer duo who specialized in criminal law to assist Chen Yuzhou in prosecution. They were both tried and tested and had long since earned their place in their profession. Today, they had their first loss in a long time coming, utterly and completely.

The judge called for order and slammed his gavel over and over, but to no avail. It would take a lot more than his little hammer to quiet down the uproar.

Through so many cameras, the entire country watched the show that the Chen's had so painstakingly staged. But in the end, they found that they themselves had become the stars of their own show after all.

It was comedy on a national scale.

In the end, the judge was completely spent, and had no choice but to adjourn this hearing and reschedule it for another time. I was back in the hands of the police officers, and they began forcibly escorting me back to my confinement cell. As soon as I stood up, countless cameras zoomed in on me, and some reporters and their cameramen even ignored court etiquette and chased after me directly, and every other reporters immediately followed suit.

Chen Ruhai tried to stand up, but he couldn't. His own legs gave way under him, and he remained slumped in his chair, even with his lawyers helping him and supporting at his sides.

He and I both knew that things really got serious this time. No matter how powerful he is, no matter how capable he might be, there was simply no way that he could possibly get his son out of this unscathed.

When Chen Ruhai finally stood up, he started urgently in my direction, wanting to catch up to me, but his lawyers grabbed his shoulder and stopped him.

"Mr. Chen, we mustn't be hasty! We mustn't be rash!"

The police officers handled me roughly. They blindfolded me as soon as they got their hands on me, and continued shoving me forward until I was stuffed into the police car.

"Question. Did the witness withdraw her original statement in court because of the inability of the police to remain impartial as dictated by their duty during the investigations?"

"Our own investigations revealed that Chen Yuzhou was an individual with substantial privileges while Zhang Chao was but a normal citizen. Was this case against him truly an elaborate cover up on the prosecution's side?"

"Apologies, no comments."

The police officers were swamped by reporters and camera so much that in the end, they could only resort to what they too had so often seen people in their profession did in movies and dramas, and continuously repeated "apologies" and "no comments" as they escorted me to the police car. With so many eyes and cameras and national coverage, whoever dared to utter anything unnecessary risks losing their entire career.

"Quick, let's get out of here. Put this devil away back in place where he belongs!"

After I was transported back to the police station, none of them even dared to touch me more than they absolutely had to, as if I was the devil himself.

With the Deputy Commissioner busy dealing with the swarm of reporters gathering by his office door, these police officers decided to put me back into my confinement cell, after much discussions among themselves.

As I walked through the prisoners on my way back to my confinement cell, all the inmates cheered me on, much to the chagrin of the officers escorting me.

"Zhang Chao, you're the man!"

"Nice one there, Zhang Chao!"

To be honest, I really hadn't seen this coming. To think that I'd live to see the day that a proud soldier of the country would receive something akin to a standing ovation inside a prison by its inmates. I really didn't know what to make of this.

"Chao! Brother!"

Among them, I heard a familiar voice. I looked closer and saw that Chou was held up in that cell. He looked extremely excited, and his entire face flushed with excitement.

He reached his hand out of his cell and grabbed and patted my arm. "You really are good, scary good. The Chen's couldn't even touch you!"

The officers' faces fell, and one of them brought their baton out and brought it down hard on Chou's hand, "Well, aren't you quite the informed one."

Chou only laughed and joked at the officer, "You cops only arrest us Red Lanterns, so of course news travels fast among us. Besides, all Red Lanterns are Zhang Chao's brothers in spirit, so if even one of us caught even a glimpse of what he did, you can bet that this entire outfit would know about it in a heartbeat."

That officer grunted, "They why don't you gather those bright minds together and guess just when you'll finally be able to go out?"

Chou was so excited that the officer's threat did nothing to sour his mood.

"Brother, we'll continue this talk another day. Outside. My treat." I replied.

The officers kept shoving me forward, and pushed me to the innermost cell of this place.

"Oh, my dear comrades, I see I've been upgraded. A single room with sound insulation this time?"

These two officers looked at each other, and then the taller one of the two shrugged and said, "Suit yourself."

In the days that followed, the police didn't release me, but they didn't dare question me either. Every day, my meals always arrived timely on the dot, and I even had someone attending to me at all times. I guess with all the spotlights from the media, they really don't want them to think that they were mistreating me in here.

One day, about a week later, two officer brought someone to my cell. I was resting then, and the first thing I saw when I opened my eyes was a pair of shiny black shoes. Then, a familiar face appeared before me.

It was Zhou Xiaoqiang, the police officer that arrested me on charges of battery and assault that night at the hospital. He had a notebook in his hand. He growled at the two other officers, "Give us some privacy."

His eyes looked dangerously like a wild beast's, and almost seemed ready to execute me right on the spot. His temple spasmed and twitched from anger, and he gritted his teeth so tight that his face swelled.

The other officers peered at Zhou Xiaoqiang carefully, not trusting him with me.

"Zhou, don't do anything stupid. With so many pairs of eyes watching him from all over the entire country, we won't be able to answer if he even as much as had a little mark on him!"

Even in my confinement cell, my hands were cuffed behind my back apart from meal times and other occasions that call for it. And now, obviously this wasn't one of those times, as those two officers didn't seem like they were going to uncuff me at all. Zhou Xiaoqiang laughed ruthlessly, and then slugged me one right in my stomach.

I curled up in pain. The stomach area was the softest part of the human body. Even someone who has been trained won't be able to take much hits to the stomach, especially when unprepared.

Then, a pain ripped at my head. Zhou Xiaoqiang grabbed me by my hair, and pulled my head up to look at him.

Zhou Xiaoqiang's eyes were red with bloodshot. A cold sweat has broken out on me from the pain, and a water drop gathered at the tip of my nose. I could swear that I heard the sound of his teeth grinding against each other from how hard he gritted them together.

"Don't worry about that. Only on the stomach. After a day or two, even the doctors won't be able to tell.

Zhou Xiaoqiang let go of my hair. I began coughing and dry retching immediately, then I felt another impact on my stomach. This time, he kicked me when I was writhing on the ground in pain.

"You may laugh all you want, Zhang Chao. Do you really think that you could get out of this by doing whatever you've done? We can wait. We can lay low and wait, until the media forgets about us, about you, and then open the case again."

I rolled around and drew in sharp but shallow breaths in pain. But when I heard what he said, I still couldn't help but laugh in his face.

Zhou Xiaoqiang growled, "What are you laughing about!? You think you're so smart don't you!? Let me tell you this straight. It won't work! In Tong City, you cross us like this, we'll make sure that you die as slowly and as painfully as possible!"

I crawled to the wall and panted. After I recovered somewhat, the absurdity of what he said hit me again, and I began laughing again.

Zhou Xiaoqiang grabbed my mouth, and squeezed my chin so hard that I could hear the sound of my jaws bones grinding.

"I've always heard that you military have a tough frame. Let's see today if you could still laugh after I crushed your jaw to pieces!"

"I'm only laughing because you're so stupid that it was hilarious! Just think about it? You, being here right now, and torturing me out of spite, who did you do it for?"

Zhou Xiaoqiang snorted, "You played us police officers like fools. You brought shame to all of us. Who do you think I did it for? Let this be a warning, Zhou, you're too full of yourself. Here in Tong City, you can burn us to the ground by striking one little match? Ridiculous. That little match won't kill us, but it just might burn yourself to death."

I spat in his hypocrisy. Even now, he hides his dirty deeds behind his police badge. It was people like him that bring the most disgrace to the uniform and badge that he claimed to honor.

"So you did it for honor? Or did you do it to kiss up to Deputy Commissioner's ass? It must have been difficult, right? His ass doesn't look easy to kiss."

His hand gripped tight around my mouth, and I couldn't get my words out clearly, so it came out more as a rasp than clear sentences.

"Just let me get it out straight, you won't be able to provoke me like that. He is my boss, and I am his men. You insult him, you insult me. Zhang Chao, you're too full of yourself. Here in Tong City, you think you can burn us to the ground by striking one little match? Ridiculous. That little match won't kill us, but it just might burn yourself to death."

"Why don't you take your own advice?"

Enraged by my calmness, Zhou Xiaoqiang's hand gripped tighter and tighter around my mouth. I swear, he must have forgotten all about not leaving a mark on me.

Then suddenly, a group of rushed footsteps came from a distance. The other two officers were startled at first, then hurried over to us and pulled Zhou Xiaoqiang off of me.

Zhou Xiaoqiang struggled, but he couldn't break free of the two. He growled at them, threatening them to let go of him.

A few seconds later, a group of people arrived at my cell. It was a group of police officers, escorting a man in the midst of them. The hair on his man was all silvery white. His actual age wasn't nearly as old as his appearance, but his white hair genes guaranteed that he must suffer that misconception for the length of his entire life. Despite his appearance, he was only just a little over 60 years old. His eyes was almost permanently half closed, looking deceptively slothful and laid back.

He only walked slowly before Zhou Xiaoqiang and gave him a look, Zhou Xiaoqiang immediately cowered and slumped to the ground.

No one dared to talk. It was as if someone had pressed the "mute" button on a remote somewhere.

The man kept sweeping his eyes back and forth between Zhou Xiaoqiang. Then after a long silence, he spoke, "Stand at attention."

Zhou Xiaoqiang and the two other officers got up and was more nervous than anything else, but they didn't dare do otherwise. Because they knew well that the medals and emblem on his uniform means just how heavy his words are.

After the man came inside my confinement cell, Zhang Rongmao, the Chief Commissioner of the Tong City Police Department followed him in closely behind, waiting for his next instruction.