

## Chapter 74 Red Lantern

At least Zhao Gongming wasn't lying to me about that. Somehow, even I could feel that Han Kun was unwilling to let me look into my father's death.

But Han Kun had always been so good to me, and my family. He practically raised and nurtured Junran into the giant that it is today, single handedly no less, and he didn't hesitate even one bit when he returned to me after I reached adulthood. As a friend, and as a human being, I would trust him with my life.

"Uncle Zhao, why did Uncle Han stop you? What do you think could be the reason?"

Zhao Gongming shook his head in resignation, "I don't know, I couldn't say, but I've never known him to be someone who would run away in cowardice. Back then, he was the most passionate one out of all of us in trying to find out what happened, but one day, it was as if he turned into a completely different person, and he never mentioned a word about the investigation to any of us again. Not too long after that, Jiang Ming's family relocated him to somewhere else in the country, and without Han Kun, none of us knew even where to begin looking for his whereabouts."

"You're the Tong City Hospital Director, are you saying that there are things that were impossible to find out even for you and your connections?"

Zhao Gongming smiled, but it was a bitter smile, "Don't you be thinking that I was who I am now. Ten years ago, here in this hospital, I was nothing more than a small no name doctor. Chen Ruhai's wife, incidentally also a Chen, she has an entire family tree of relatives of doctors, it wasn't an overstatement to say that the Tong City Hospital was more or less the Chen's family business. Look, though it pains me to admit, but I'm not like Han Kun. He is capable, smart, well connected, and your father taught him in the ways of business himself. The only reason why I became the director of this hospital was also thanks to him. And now, I'm old and almost ready to be retired, and already the Chen's grew restless once more, thinking to claim this hospital for their own again. I just wish that, Zichen won't be so helpless and alone in the hospital after I'm gone." Zhao Gongming sighed.

Hearing him, I really couldn't hold it in anymore, "Old man Zhao, you really don't know who Zhao Zichen is?"

"What do you mean who? He's my son. And though I knew he had quite a mouth on him, but deep down, I knew that he was still a simple doctor earning an honest day's living."

It really looked as though Zhao Gongming didn't know about it, but I've learned enough to be too trusting of their "reactions". The two of them, Zhao Zichen and his father too, they're just too good of an actor. You never know if they're really being completely truthful.

"Yeah right, old man, if he really is just a simple doctor, then I'll... then I'll book an appointment to become a girl tomorrow."

Zhao Gongming finally admitted, unwillingly, "Alright, so maybe he had some tiny little bit of connection with the gangs, but it was all because his good for nothing 'friends' got him into it!"

Priceless, the perfect picture of the naive and concerned parents, if it was really how he feels.

Zhao Gongming added, "You mustn't tell Han Kun what I've told you, and stay off trying to investigate Jiang Ming on your own. If Han Kun didn't want you to find out about something, nothing you could do can amount to anything but an utter waste of time and effort."

I nodded, in defeat. Knowing how capable Han Kun is, if he really doesn't want me to look into it, then he could make it seem as if it never existed in my world in the first place.

He is that capable and powerful. I believe it, I know it. But what I couldn't understand, is why. He was like a brother to my father, and a good friend! How could he simply let it go like that!?

Just what was Han Kun thinking?

After our talk, Zhao Gongming said that with my wound half healed as it is, it was crucial that I don't move around unnecessarily like I did, and sent for a few nurses to come and take me back to my ward. When Lin Fang came to visit, I told her about what happened, and she was so afraid that she began shivering. As she leaned against my chest for support, I held her and caressed her hair, and comforted her.

Lin Fang was sure that Chen Yuzhou was the one behind what happened today, and tried to convince me with all she could to leave good enough as it is and stay off Chen Yuzhou's case from now on. No matter how much I guaranteed her that it had nothing to do with Chen Yuzhou whatsoever, she won't believe me at all. In the end, she even got desperate to the point that she blurted out if I would be as cruel as to make her a widow for the rest of her life.

At which point I could think no more. Did I really just hear what I heard? Was Lin Fang really considering marrying me? Even in my wildest dreams I wouldn't dare to imagine even the possibility of it ever happening. I was already happy enough as it is, knowing that she would be my girlfriend, and now, even marrying her? For real? Am I really sure that I didn't just imagined what she said?

After staying a while in my ward, Lin Fang went back up to her father's ward to look after him. These days, Chu Xiaoxiao had been avoiding Lin Fang, so when Lin Fang was in my ward, Chu Xiaoxiao never showed up. Though after Lin Fang left, an unexpected guest showed up through the door.

"Brother, you saved my life again. How could I ever even begin to repay you?"

He said, but that uncaring smile on his face clearly betrayed that he meant none of it. He didn't even try to look it. Seeing his face, I grabbed the nearest object I could find and threw it at that shameless face of his. A shame that the only projectile I could find are the pillows behind my back.

"Come now, don't be all hypocritical with me. I knew you had it all planned right from the very beginning."

"Hey, don't be like that. Though there really was one thing that I hadn't expected. That Blondie, he got himself arrested."

"Arrested? Weren't the cops warned to stay out of it?"

"A little cop called Xia Genghuai brought a squad with him. I looked him up, one of your high school friends. Usually, types like him with no backgrounds to even speak of would patrol the same meager rounds day after day until the day he retires from the job, but somehow he was recently promoted to an inspector and was made vice captain of his squad. Got the luck of the devil himself, that one."

I had actually forgotten about Xia Genghuai completely. Though like Zhao Zichen said, he really is one hell of a lucky bastard, and it looked like he just got lucky again!

"Now that I think about it, I remembered giving him a message telling him to come and bring a few of the people he can trust, but he sure took his time. Things are already finished so long ago that I actually had forgotten that I've messaged him at all."

"Didn't you know? It's a part of their job description, that cops must only show up after everything was well finished. But in honesty, he wasn't all that late. As far as I'm concerned, he actually came at just the right time. He busted in and arrested Blondie, just as the last of my men evacuated from the vicinity. With all the recent media coverage, even the cops that they bought wouldn't dare to let them out too quickly. Which means, that he probably reached his quota for promotion again. By the time we see him again in the future, maybe he'd already been made captain of his squad already."

"Heh, those Black Dragons really got played this time round. And then? What are you going to do next?"

"The Black Dragon is the cancer of Tong City. We must strike the iron while it's still hot! You and I, we have a common enemy, and you are what they say about your enemy's enemy. Join me. Together, we can do this!"

I really have to hand it to him. A mere turf war between two mafia mobs, but somehow through his mouth he managed to make it sound as if it was a sacred battle for truth and righteousness. With that mouth of his, you'd think that he is running an election campaign and not a mafia group.

I shook my head, "You may have the upperhand now, but the Black Dragons are still stronger right? In an honest fight, if you pit the two against each other, the Red Lantern wouldn't stand a chance."

Zhao Zichen made no comments, but simply juggled an apple he took from the fruits basket beside my bed.

I continued, "Unlike the Black Dragons, who is powerful to operate in broad daylight, your Red Lantern can only afford to operate in the dark, secretly. You aren't as powerful as they are, strengths wise, and connection wise too. I was behind bars for a while, and almost all of the inmates there are Red Lanterns. They have people everywhere, both on the scene and the scene. You simply bettered them in a few little street fights, don't begin thinking that you can swallow that entire elephant whole now."

The Red Lantern took the Black Dragon by surprise a few times, and by now, the higher ups in the Black Dragon were recently taken notice. If Zhao Zichen were to continue riding on the coat tail of the Red Lantern's recent victories and push the Black Dragon even further, they just might get desperate enough and wage an all out war against them. Normally, I couldn't care less how much the mafia mobs fight amongst themselves, since they'd be doing the society a favor if they would just annihilate themselves in the process, but Zhao Zichen was Zhao Gongming's one and only son after all, so I couldn't help but remind him to remain vigilant.

"And here I thought you were one of the more gutsy types. Turns out, you're no different than them common cowards."

"Heh, I'm a man who had experienced hell at the frontlines. A coward you say? You're absolutely right. I'm most certainly not one of those brave types who can shove their heads straight into gunpoints. My brain ain't bulletproof after all. Incidentally, I also know that I'm no match for the Black Dragons myself. Zhao Zichen, I'll keep your identity a secret, but that's as far as I'll go for you. Working together? No way in hell."

I'm a proud soldier. No matter what happens, I would never stoop as low as to work with those who disrespects the justice that both I and my fellow soldiers fought and died to protect. I won't agree to such an offer, none of my squad would, and the Old Man definitely wouldn't either. In fact, if one day I should give in to the temptation, he'd be the first one to appear to give me a whipping.

"Too bad then. I was thinking that I'd share half of the Tong City with you, but looks like you're too chicken for this."

Unable to convince me, Zhao Zichen didn't stay too long. After some mindless banter, he stood up to take his leave.

"Well, I do realize that you have a point in all those things that you said, so I'll make sure to heed your advice. But, are you sure you could do this alone without my Red Lantern, going up against Jiang Ming?"

He snapped his hand out and caught the apple he was juggling in midair, then shoved it into my hands. Giving my shoulder a pat, he turned and walked away.