

Chinese Short Story

中文微小说

Intermediate to Advanced Level Chinese

罪恶有痕

Traces of Sin

【Simplified Chinese - 简体中文】

Grace Feng

Version: 1



www.JustLearnChinese.com

Disclaimer

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents either are the products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, businesses, companies, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

“罪恶有痕 Traces of Sin” by Grace Feng

Published by JustLearnChinese.com

© 2014 Grace Feng

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced in any form without permission from the publisher, except as permitted by Canadian copyright law. For permissions contact:

Grace@JustLearnChinese.com

南方的盛夏，闷热得连一丝凉风都没有。

屋里的电风扇一边转，一边发出嘎吱嘎吱的声音。当人的思维在高速运转时，大概也会发出这样的声音。

窗边坐着的女人有一头染成棕黄色的卷发。她盯着窗沿的某个地方，努力回想着当天早晨发生的事情。

旁边一个男人提示她，“你不用害怕，我们会对你的个人情况绝对保密。在这起持枪抢劫案里，你很可能是唯一看清嫌犯模样的人。我们虽然已经做了一遍笔录，你不妨再叙述一遍经过，这样做对你的回想会有帮助。”

女人点了点头。这是一个聪明镇静的女人。一份推销保险的职业，虽然不太讨人喜欢，但却培养了她对人过目不忘的能力。

“因为客户住得远，我今天很早就出门了。天刚蒙蒙亮，我就开上131国道。”

“当时路上车多不多？”提问的男人一边问，一边在纸上记着。

“车很少，星期天那条路都很好开。”

“请继续说。”

In the midsummer of the southern cities, it was so hot and damp that there wasn't even the hint of a breeze.

The fan in the room kept spinning tirelessly in a cracking tone. It's probably true that when our brain works in full power, it would make a cracking sound just like that.

The woman sitting beside the window had curly hair that dyed in Brown. She stared into a certain spot on the window sill, trying her best to recall all that had happened in the early morning.

A man on her side reassured her, "Don't worry, we will keep your identity absolutely confidential. As for this armed robbery, you probably are the only person who witnessed the robbers' look. Although we've just finished our interview, you might as well run through the whole event again to help you recall all the details."

The woman nodded. She's smart and calm. A job of an insurance agent, not that much of a likable occupation, had trained her to remember people's appearance extremely well.

"Due to the far location of my client, I had to get out very early this morning. Before dawn, I've already driven onto highway 131."

"Were there many cars on the road at that time?" the man asked her while taking down notes.

"Not really. It's always an easy drive on that road in Sundays."

"Go ahead please."

二

“我的车前面是一辆红色桑塔纳，我跟车开了一段后它突然减速。我忙踩刹车。同时听见前面有撞车的声音。是桑塔纳追尾了，它前面那辆被撞的商务车也停了下来。奇怪的是，在桑塔纳的右道，一辆白色轿车也同时停了下来。本来就只有两条道，这样交通就堵死了。

我停住车，刚想下车看看，抬头看见商务车上下来一个男的，同时从白车里也下来一个男的。商务车的人指挥白车的人绕到桑塔纳驾驶员这边，然后两人分别从衣服里掏出手枪，拉开桑塔纳车的车门，先后往车里开了几枪。我被吓到，没敢下车，低下头，按电动钮把车窗拉起，把车门反锁。枪声停后，我害怕他们过来找麻烦，又壮着胆把头抬起来察看。这时，那两个开枪的人已从桑塔纳车上拖出一个黑色的旅行包，看起来很沉的样子。然后他们把包扔进白车，一起开车跑掉了。”

做笔录的男人是刑警队长刘明天。对于本市一个月来发生的第二起枪案，他已感受到了来自多方的压力。桑塔纳车上的司机和乘客，当时正带了大笔追来的欠款往回赶，准备回公司清点后交给财务。不料路遇劫匪，双双毙命。

"The car ahead of my car was a red Santana. I drove following it. But all of a sudden it slowed down. Then I had to step on my brake. At that moment, I also heard a big bang due to car crash. It was the Santana that drove into the backend of a van. The van also stopped. It was very strange that a white car travelling on the right lane of the Santana stopped too. After that, the traffic was totally jammed since there were only two lanes on that road.

I stopped my car, was about to step out and have a check when I saw a man got off the van. The man in the white car got out of his car too. The van man signalled the white car man to turn around and come to the driver's side of the Santana. Each of them took out a pistol. They opened the door of the Santana, and fired a few shots to the inside of the car. I was terrified, scared of getting out of my car by that time. I lowered my head and pressed the electric buttons to slide up my windows and locked my doors. When the gunshots stopped, I was afraid that they might approach me next. So I bravely raised my head and peeked outside. By then, the two robbers had dragged out a big travel bag that seemingly very heavy. They threw it into the white car and drove away swiftly."

The man taking the notes down was chief inspector Liu Mingtian. With the second local gun-related case in hand in one month, he could feel the pressure from everywhere. The driver and passenger in the doomed Santana were driving back with a big load of cash paid by their debtors, and were going to bring it back to their company. Unfortunately they encountered robbers and were both killed instantly.

三

“开枪的那两个人，你看得清楚吗？”刘明天问。

“指挥的那个很清楚，白车里的那个不太清楚。他带着帽子，而且行动很快。”

“没关系，慢慢来，请尽量回忆。”说到这，刘明天站了起来，指了指坐在一幅画架旁的微胖的中年男子，“这位是我们这儿出名的画师，老曾。你把开枪人的模样详细描述给他听，他就能照你说的画出来。”

女人看向“画师”老曾。她一脸疑惑。从没听说公安局里也有画师。不过她想，自己记忆里的形象要是能用笔墨生动地勾画出来，那真是一件绝妙的事情！老曾面善，不象刘明天看起来严肃。女人稍稍松了口气，端起桌上的可乐拉罐，痛快地喝了一大口。

“那我们先从指挥抢劫的那个开始吧！”老曾扶了扶眼镜，拿起一只素描笔，开始用一问一答的方式，引导女人一点一滴地回忆抢劫犯的身高，长相，肢体语言和穿着。

女人记不清和老曾聊了多长时间，两个小时？三个小时？她只觉得画师平易近人，兴趣广泛，既谈案情，也谈一些和案情无关的话题。不知不觉中，画师已经把两个嫌犯的画像都画完了。

“我现在给你同时看四幅画像，你看你能不能一眼认出指挥抢劫的那个家伙。”老曾推了推鼻梁上的眼镜，眼带笑意地对女人说。

女人心里七上八下的，已经放松了的心情又紧张了起来。凭我那些支离破碎的描述，老曾会画出一幅什么样的图画呢？

四幅黑白画像被同时翻了过来。女人刚用眼浏览了一遍，就惊恐地捂住嘴。画像中有这么一张脸，只看了一眼就让女人倒吸了一口凉气。空气里也突然凭添了一种杀气。

“砰！砰！”枪声在女人的耳际回旋。

“就是他！”女人颤抖地伸出手，指了指其中的一幅画像。

"The two gun men, did you have a good look at them?" Asked Liu Mingtian.

"Yes for the one in charge, not much so for the one in the white car. He wore a hat and was moving around in a quick fashion."

"No worries, take your time and try your best." By saying that, Liu Mingtian stood up. He gestured to a plump middle aged man who was sitting beside a sketching easel. "This is our famous drawing artist, Zeng. You can describe the gun men's looks to him, and he will draw them out for you."

The woman looked at Mr. Zeng. Her look was full of doubts. She had never heard of an artist working in a police station. She thought however, if the images in her memory could be vividly drawn out with pen and ink, it would be awesome!

Mr. Zeng looked friendly, not as formidable as Liu Mingtian. The woman relaxed a little and picked up the Coke can on the table and drank a big amount of coke in one gulp.

"What about we start with the one in charge ..." Mr. Zeng nudged his glasses up, picked up a sketching pen, and started to exchange questions and answers. That's his way to help her recall the robbers' size, look, body language and clothing, bit by bit.

The woman couldn't remember how long she had been chatting with Mr. Zeng. Two hours? Or three hours? All she remembered was that the artist was amiable with broad interests. He chat not only about the case, but also about other unrelated topics. Without her noticing, the artist had finished his portraits.

"Now I'll show you four portraits all together. You see if you can recognize the robber in charge right away." Mr. Zeng pushed up his glasses and said with a smile.

The woman was unsettled. Her already relaxed mood became nervous again. Based on those scattered memories of mine, what kind of portrait Mr. Zeng could make?

Four portraits in black and white were turned over at the same time. Upon one glimpse, the woman covered her mouth in horror. With only one quick peek, that one face among the portraits made her hold her breath. A murderous spirit filled up the air.

"Bang! Bang!" – The gunshots rang in her ears.

"It's him!" She raised her hand in a shiver of fear and pointed it to one portrait among the four.

四

“一号嫌疑人比较靠谱，二号嫌疑人没有一号画得成功。因为目击者的印象不够清晰，所以只能尽力而为了。”

刘明天和另几个刑警来看画像时，老曾特意做了说明。

“我看二号画得也不错嘛，好象看起来还有点眼熟呢。”同事们七嘴八舌地调侃起来。

刘明天问老曾，“这两幅画像能不能公布？”老曾又认真看了看自己的作品，说，

“我看可以，公布吧，一号这张把目击证人自己都给吓到了，她说太像了。但愿她的记忆是准确的。”

当晚的电视新闻中，老曾的嫌疑人画像，在千家万户的屏幕上被反复播放。

“妈妈，那个画上的人好象哥哥啊！”

正在厨房里洗碗的中年女子，用袖子抹了抹脸上的汗，歪着头瞟了一眼客厅里的电视，又转头对女儿无奈地笑笑，“佳佳，快做你的作业！你哥咋能象那个人呢？那是抢劫犯，是大坏蛋！不懂不要瞎说。”

她麻利地把手在围裙上擦干，走过来关了电视。慈爱地抚摸着女儿的小脑袋。

“是不是想哥哥了？”

“嗯。”女儿委屈地撅起小嘴。

“那过两天妈叫哥过来吃饭？”

“好啊，好啊！”女孩仰视母亲的小脸，立时笑成了一朵花。

"Portrait of suspect one is quite good. The one for suspect two is not as good since the impression left with the witness was not clear enough. That's the best we could do."

Mr. Zeng explained specifically when Liu Mingtian and other detectives came to see the portraits.

"In my humble opinion, the portrait for suspect two is not bad, it looks actually a bit familiar." His colleagues started chit-chat about the drawings.

Liu Mingtian asked Mr. Zeng, "Do you feel OK to release these two portraits?" Mr. Zeng had a careful look at his own drawings once again and said, "Yes, let's release them. The one for suspect one even scared the witness herself. She said that it resembled the man a lot, I hope her memory is good."

That night, via the evening TV news, Mr. Zeng's suspects' portraits appeared on the screens of million of families.

"Mom, the man in the picture looks just like my brother!"

The middle aged woman who was washing dishes in the kitchen wiped her sweat off with her sleeve, and then turned her head around to have a peek on the TV screen in the living room. She then turned back to her daughter, smiling, "Jiajia, mind your own homework please. How could your brother look like that guy? He's a robber, a scoundrel! For things you don't understand, please think before you talk."

She wiped her hands on her apron in an agile manner and walked over to turn off the TV. Then she stroked her daughter's head affectionately and asked, "Do you miss your brother?"

"Yes." Her daughter felt upset and put up a pouting face.

"What about I invite your brother to have dinner with us in a few days?"

"Yes, yes!" The girl's little face looked up at her Mom, blossomed into a flower instantly.

五

与此同时，受害人的桑塔纳，和被嫌疑人丢弃的商务车，都被从现场拉回局里，由那技人员进行物证检验，寻找嫌犯可能留下的蛛丝马迹。

综合目击者的证言，法医报告，和物证人员的初步结论，刘明天在案情分析会上试图还原抢劫杀人的具体经过，一号和二号嫌犯都开了枪。一人打了两发，各负责一个目标。如此短的时间，两个人分别从不同的两辆车上下来，分工杀人，再劫走巨款，一起开车逃逸，临时起意的可能性很小，应该可以断定是有计划，有预谋的行动。

“为什么要分工杀人？”一个清亮的声音，从会议室的一角传来。这一嗓子吸引了所有人的目光。

提问的是那个新分来的大学生赵凯峰。

“问得好！”刘明天提了提嗓门。”跟据目击者的证言，一号嫌疑人，也就是商务车的驾驶员，是开枪的第一人，他如果有足够的子弹，完全可以在最短的时间里射杀两个受害人。但他没这样做，他在杀害驾驶员后，闪身让他的同伙，也就是开白车的二号嫌犯，来射杀乘客座位上的那名被害人。”

“好比他们之间签了一个合同，每人手上一桩命案，这样谁也不要心存侥幸去出卖另一方。”说话的又是赵凯峰。

“有道理。所谓的生死契约，比建立在利益上的契约要牢固得多，他们既需要相互依靠，又能够相互制约。现在的劫匪也都蛮讲犯罪文化的。”技术科的秦东打趣道。

“回到正题，下一步的当务之急，追查逃逸的白色捷达，调查受害人死前几日的活动，确定枪支类型。商务车已经确认是案发前一天被盗走的，现在还在做检验。”

刘明天话音刚落，会议室的门外进来一个人，“刘队，刚接到电话，说东风广场那边发现一辆弃置的白色捷达，让你们过去看看。”

Meanwhile, the victim's Santana, the van that was left by the suspects were all towed from the scene to the police station. They were given to the investigators to test for material evidence, or tiny traces that the suspects might have left.

Based on the witness' testimony, forensic medical report, and preliminary conclusion from material evidence, Liu Mingtian explained the sequence of how the deadly robbery happened, "Both suspect one and suspect two fired their guns. Each of them fired two shots at their own targets. With that short period of time, each of them came out of a different car and shared the killing task. Then they robbed a huge sum of money and drove away together. It's very unlikely to be a random robbery. It's almost certain to be a planned, premeditated mission."

"Why did they share the killing task?" A clear voice came from the other side of the meeting room. It captured the attention of the whole room.

The questioner was a new university graduate Zhao Kaifeng.

"Good question!" Liu Mingtian responded with a louder voice. "According to the witness, suspect one, the driver of the van, opened fire first. If he had enough bullets, he should have killed both victims. However he didn't do that after he killed the driver, instead, he moved aside to let his partner to shoot the victim on the passenger's side."

"It's like they signed a contract between them that each one of them to be responsible for one count of killing. So that none of them would ever think of selling the other one out without risking himself." Zhao Kaifeng commented again.

"Make sense. That's called bond of life. It's stronger than any other agreement that are based on lucrative reasons. They not only need to rely on each other, but also need to restrict each other. Robbers today already have criminal culture." Qing Dong from criminal technology team teased.

"Let's get back to our topic. Our current highest priorities are, searching for the escaped white Jetta, investigating the last activities of the victims and identifying the model of the gun. The van has been identified as being stolen one day before the robbery. It is still under testing for material evidence."

The second Liu Mingtian finished his speech, someone came into the meeting room, "Chief Inspector Liu, a phone call just came in, there was a discarded white Jetta on Dong Feng square. They want you to have a look over there."

六

当刘明天，秦东和赵凯峰赶到东风广场时，有两个交警已经守在那辆白色捷达旁了。高个的那个指了指车子，“在这至少停了三个小时了，旁边的小贩说，从他们来时车就已经停这儿了。车门开着，没人见到过车主。这是违章停车，听说你们在查一辆白色捷达，所以拖走前先通知你们过来看看。”

秦东此时已在车的另一侧后门处蹲下，“你们过来看，车门上有个洞！”

秦东所指的洞，大小能穿过人的一个小手指。洞的形状和位置让秦东颇感兴奋。

“这车看起来很新嘛，却偏偏生出个洞来？”刘明天看着秦东兴奋的表情，问道，

“你觉得它象什么？”

“枪洞。”秦东回答。

“你不是说，抢劫案中的四颗弹头都找到了吗？”

“这个枪洞跟那四枪没有关系。”秦东肯定地回答。

“就是说，可能还有新的命案？”赵凯峰看看秦东，又看看刘明天，两人都没有说话。

白色捷达的车主很快就弄清楚了，是一个登山用品公司的老板，叫齐友发。但接下来的，却是刘明天最不希望听到的结果，齐友发在抢劫案发前一天失踪了。

据齐友发的雇员反映，齐友发失踪那天下班比较早。下班的时候是跟他的情妇一起开车走的。而他的家人一直到夜里都没见他回家。他的妻子打不通他的手机，担心出事。第二天中午就去派出所报了警。

When Liu Mingtian, Qin Dong and Zhao Kaifeng arrived at Dong Feng square, there were two traffic policemen waiting beside the White Jetta. The taller one pointed at the car, "It has been parking here for at least three hours. The peddlers nearby said that the car had been here since they came. The car door was left open, no one had seen the owner. This is illegal parking. We heard that you are looking for a white Jetta, so we figure it's better to let you have a look before we tow it away. "

During the conversation, Qin Dong already squatted down beside the rear car door on the other side of the car. "Come have a look! There's a hole on the car door!"

The hole that Qin Dong mentioned was of the size that a little finger could come through. The shape and position of the hole made Qin Dong excited

"The car looks quite new, how could it has a hole on it." Liu Mingtian noticed the excitement on Qin Dong's face and asked,"What do you think it looks like?"

"Bullet hole." Qin Dong answered.

"Didn't you say that all four bullets fired at the robbery scene were collected already? "

"This one has nothing to do with those four." Qin Dong stated.

"Does that mean that there were possibly more killings?" Zhao Kaifeng looked at Liu Mingtian and Qin Dong, none of them said anything.

The owner of the white Jetta was identified soon to be Qi Youfa, the owner of a climbing equipment business. But what happened to him was the worst that Liu Mingtian expected to hear. He was missing the day before the robbery.

According to Qi's employee, he left work early that day and drove away in his car with his mistress. His family never heard back from him since then. His wife couldn't reach him by his cell phone so she reported his missing to the police around noon the next day.

七

不难推断，这辆白色捷达很可能就是劫案中的那辆车。对它的堪验也立刻成了破案的关键。

“这车收拾得可真干净，就是外星人开过来的，也该留个爪印不是？”秦东嘀咕着。

赵凯峰耸耸肩，做了个鬼脸。看秦东一脸大汗，就安慰他道，“秦老师，你刚才不是在后车座位上发现两点血迹了吗？”说着，他抬了抬手上拿着的紫外灯，提醒秦东。

“那两点痕迹可能是人血，也可能不是。我本来想，既然有弹孔，那车上应该能检测到多一些的血迹。但我错了。整个车内干净得出奇，根本找不到有价值的证据。你帮我把手库门打开，灯也开了。我们可以看看车外部。这鬼天气！”秦东骂了一句，擦了擦额上的汗。然后把车引擎盖打开支了起来。

赵凯峰开了灯，虽然是白天，能照进车库的太阳光仍不充分。他对引擎没有兴趣。通常在人命案里，后厢多会被用来运尸。这样想着，他绕到车尾，正打算开车后厢，秦东在那一头发出一声感叹。

“怪事，引擎上居然有鸟粪?!”

“鸟粪?!”

秦东指的鸟粪是一小块白色的粘稠物。他用戴着手套的手指摸了摸。

“还没干，落到引擎上的时间还不长。鸟的粪便怎么会落到引擎上呢？”秦东琢磨着。

“肯定不是在车行走的时候，谁会开着引擎盖开车？”赵凯峰也来了兴趣。

It's not hard to see that, the white Jetta was quite possible to be the car that was used in the robbery. A forensic investigation of the car became a new focus of the case.

"How much cleaner it could be? Even if it was driven by an alien, there must have been paw print left somewhere, isn't?" Qin Dong murmured.

Zhao Kaifeng shrugged and grinned. Checking on the sweating face of Qin Dong, he decided to give him some comfort, "Qin Sir, didn't you find two bloodstains on the rear car seats just now?" He raised the ultraviolet lamp on his hand as a reminder to Qin Dong.

"Those two bloodstains could be human's, could be not. I was hoping there were much more bloodstains in the car judging by the bullet hole. But I was wrong. The whole interior of the car is just too clean to bear any valuable evidence. Please help me open the garage door and turn on the light. This damn weather!" Qin Dong cursed while wiping off the sweat from his forehead. Then he stood the engine cover up.

Zhao Kaifeng turned on the light. Although it's day time, the sunlight came into the garage was not sufficient. He had no interest in the engine. Usually in a homicide case, the trunk of a vehicle is often used to carry bodies. With that thoughts in mind, he walked to the back of the car and was about to open the trunk before he heard an outcry from Qin Dong.

"Weird. How could bird shits get on the engine?"

"Bird shits?"

The bird shits that Qin Dong mentioned was a small blob of white sticky stuff. He touched it with glove on.

"Not dried up yet. It hasn't been too long after it got on the engine. How could bird shits get dropped on the engine?" Qin Dong thought out loud.

"For sure it didn't happen when the car was moving. Who would drive a car when the engine cover is open up?" The question aroused Zhao Kaifeng's curiosity too.

秦东在车旁踱起步来，“既然齐友发和情妇崔雁双双失踪，而且失踪时开的车又出现在抢劫案中，我们是不是可以这样推测：齐友发下班后和崔雁开车出来，他们可能去了郊外一个有林子的地方，把车停了，待在车内，又怕被路人看见，所以齐友发就把引擎盖支起来。树上的鸟儿就在那段时间里在引擎上做了印记。”

“引擎盖被拉起，挡住了齐友发和崔雁的视线，所以他们也不会注意路人。”赵凯峰试着把秦东的推测讲完。“他们更不会想到，有人竟拿着枪来打劫。从车被发现时的状况来看，歹徒至少开了一枪。车被抢，再被丢弃时里里外外都清洗得干干净净。这说明齐友发和崔雁很可能已经被害了。”

秦东沉思着点了点头，“接下来的问题是，抛尸地点又在哪儿呢？”

“我们还没堪验过后厢吧？”被赵凯峰一提醒，秦东忙绕过来打开后厢。

后厢和车内一样，干净得没有任何杂物。赵凯峰略显失望。

秦东取下一只手套，摸了摸后厢的垫毯，“还有点湿！看来他们用水好好清洗过。”

说着他把垫毯拉起来，底下露出一个备用胎。秦东重新戴上手套，在备用胎的缝隙里摸来摸去。

“你在找什么？”赵凯峰忍不住问。刚被分到刑警队的他，心里还带着一些心高气傲。对老刑警的办案方式，他有自己的看法。对秦东现在的举动，他觉得是白费时间。

Qin Dong strolled beside the car, "Since Qi Youfa and Cui Yan were both disappeared, the car they were in also appeared again in a robbery, we could probably speculate the case like this: Qi youfa drove his car out after work with Cui Yan. They probably went to the woods in the suburb area. They parked their car and stayed in the car. Being afraid to be watched by the passersby, Qi Youfa pull up the engine over. Birds in the tree made their mark on the engine during that period.

"With the engine cover stood up, Qi Youfa and Cui Yan couldn't see the passersby well either." Zhao Kaifeng tried to complete Qin Dong's speculation. "They never expected that someone could have robbed them with guns in hand. Based on the condition of the car when it was found, the robbers at least had fired one shot. The car was robbed and then again got abandoned after a thorough cleanup. That means it is quite possible that Qi Youfa and Cui Yan have both been killed.

Qin Dong nodded silently, "Then the next question is, where did they dumped the bodies?"

"We haven't check the car trunk yet?" Reminded by Zhao Kaifeng, Qin Dong turned to the back and opened the trunk.

The trunk was as sparkly clean as the inside of the car, no single extra object was found. Zhao Kaifeng was a bit disappointed.

Qin Dong took one glove off and touched the mat in the trunk, "Still wet! I bet they did a good wash on it."

He lifted the mat up while talking. A spare tire came to light from underneath. Qin Dong put the glove back on and reached his fingers inside the spare tire.

"What are you looking for?" Zhao Kaifeng couldn't help but ask. A new guy in the criminal police squad, he still carried on a bit of pride and arrogance from his youth. For the methods the senior folks used in their work, he had his own opinion. He thought it was a waste of time for what Qin Dong was doing.

九

“他们如果用水冲洗过后厢，那小的物品就会被水流冲走，而且很容易卡在有缝隙的地方。”秦东觉察到赵凯峰语气里的烦躁，但他并不介意。

片刻后，他从备用胎的缝隙里摸出几粒粗沙。他把他们放在一个物证带里，然后继续在备用胎里摸索。

接下来秦东摸出来的东西，让赵凯峰着实愣住了。

“螺狮?!”

“没错，螺狮！从一个崭新的备用胎里找到的螺狮。”秦东小心翼翼地举起他的新发现，得意而畅快地笑了，笑得眼角的皱纹都立时堆积起来。“这一定是冲洗用的水里带来的。还有这些沙子，这些东西是不可能从自来水里跑出来的。”秦东说着，用食指戳了戳螺狮的螺盖，“还是湿润的呢！”

“这么说，他们是在野外清洗的车子？”赵凯峰又回到了请教式的语气。

“没错。走，我们该去看看地图了。”秦东把几个物证带捏在手上，朝赵凯峰挥了挥手，一起走出了车库。

“妈妈！哥哥来啦！哥哥来啦！”小姑娘站在门口，把门外一个穿白T恤衫的年轻小伙子拉了进来。

小伙子一把抱起了妹妹，在空中轻轻抛起又接住，“小丫头，你是越长越沉了，哥都快抱不动你了！”

“立群来啦？快进来！先坐会儿，菜一会儿就好！”女孩的妈妈文素云手里拿着一把蔬菜，眉开眼笑地把儿子迎了进来。

"If they use water to wash the trunk of the car, then small objects might have been flushed away and got stuck in narrow cracks." Qin Dong sensed the agitation in Zhao Kaifeng's tone, but he didn't mind.

After a little while, he took out a few big pieces of grit. He put them into an evidence bag, then went on fumbling inside the spare tire.

The thing that he got out of the tire really surprised Zhao Kaifeng.

"A snail?!"

"That's right, a snail! A snail that comes out of a brand new tire." Qin Dong held up his discovery carefully with a loud laughter, a laughter that made all his eye wrinkles that obvious. "This thing might have come from the water that they used to wash the car. Together with all the sand, there's no way they could come out of water tap." While talking, Qin Dong poked the lid of the snail with his forefinger, "It's still wet!"

"So that means they washed the car in the wilderness?" Zhao Kaifeng changed his tone into consulting.

"Yes. It's time for us to check the map out." Qin Dong pinched the evidence bags with his fingers and gestured Zhao Kaifeng to walk out of the garage.

"Mommy! Bro is here! Bro is here!" The little girl stood at the door and dragged in a young man in white T-shirt.

The young man grabbed his little sister, gently threw her into the air and caught her back again, "Little sis, how heavy you've grown, I hardly can hold you now!"

"Liqun is coming? Come on in! Have a seat, dinner will be ready soon!" With a handful of vegetables, Wen Suyun, the girl's Mom welcomed her son in with a warm smile.

十

庄立群陪同母异父的妹妹玩了一会儿，就跑进厨房帮忙上菜。

“佳佳爸什么时候回来？”他问。

“快了，说着话他就该回来了吧。你和佳佳先喝点果汁，看会儿电视，他一来我们就开饭。”文素云一边抄菜一边招呼孩子们。

其实庄立群今年已经二十四了，在这个纷杂的社会里也混了八年有余。不过每次来生母家做客，他都会觉得自己又变回了孩子。

庄立群斜靠在沙发上，让妹妹靠在自己身上看“喜羊羊”。他想，也许有一天他自己也会有一个这样的家。不过，那个家会十分地气派，他会让自己的女人，妈妈，妹妹和所有的亲戚都为之自豪。他会邀他们常来聚会。他会象个大哥一样，关照所有他想关照的朋友们。

“立群，这些东西是你的吧，快放到客厅去，厨房油烟大，别弄脏了。”已准备好一桌丰盛菜肴的文素云指着厨房墙角边的几个大大小小的精美购物袋对儿子说。

“妈，那些都是给你们买的，看喜不喜欢？”庄立群扭头回答。

“来吃饭就来吃饭，谁让你拎东西来啦？你那点工资还不够你自己使呢！”文素云一边说，一边弯腰瞅了瞅袋子里的盒子。

“我说立群，你咋买那么贵的东西呢？！”文素云从袋子里拿出一张小单，上面打着人民币五千八的总价。

Zhuang Liqun played with his half sister for a while. Then he entered kitchen to offer a hand for the dinner preparation.

“When will Jiajia’s Dad come back?”

“Should be soon, any minute as we talk. You go watch TV and drink some juice with Jiajia first. Once he’s back, we’ll start to eat.” Wen Suyun talked to her children while cooking.

As a matter of fact, Zhuang Liqun was already twenty four years old. He had worked in this cynical society for eight years. However, every time he came to his Mom’s house, he felt like a kid again.

Zhuang Liqun reclined on the sofa, letting his sister to lean on him and watch “Happy Lambs”. He thought, maybe one day he would have a home like this of his own. However, his own home would be really glamorous, he would let his own woman, his Mom, his sister and all his other relatives be proud of his home. He would invite them for parties. He would behave like a mogul and take care of all the friends that he cares.

“Liqun, are these stuff yours, move them to the living room please. I don’t want the kitchen grease to get on them.” Wen Suyun, who had just prepared a full table of delicious dishes, asked Zhuang Liqun while pointing at the pretty shopping bags lined up at the corner.

“Mom, those are for you guys, see whether you like it?” Zhuang Liqun turned his head and replied.

“If you just come to eat, why do you need to bring things for us? The income you have can barely meet you ends with!” Wen Suyun said while drooping down to have a look at those bags.

“Come on, Liqun, how could you spend so much on buying this?!” Wen Suyun picked up a receipt from the bag. The total price on the receipt was five thousand and eight hundred RMB.

十一

庄立群心里暗暗懊悔，忘了把小单从袋子里拿出来。妈妈节俭了一辈子，最怕子女乱花钱。送她名贵的东西都得骗她说不贵或打折她才肯收。

“妈，那件大衣是国际品牌，质量样式都没得说的。你不老说冬天出门冷吗，穿上这件保证暖和！”没等听的人回话，他就把妹妹拉起来，带她去看他给她买的玩具和衣服。

佳佳手舞足蹈地摆弄着她的新礼物。而庄立群则对妈妈说，“我给佳佳爸也买了套按摩器，放门口这了。可以做全身按摩。看他喜不喜欢？”文素云刚要开口，佳佳的爸爸老钟推门进来了。“是立群来啦？我说怎么那么热闹呢！”

老钟是个老实忠厚的药厂工人。虽然庄立群从九岁起就跟离了婚的父亲一起生活，但也经常来生母家帮忙。和老钟处得挺好。时不时还一起出去办个事什么的。

“佳佳爸，你看立群这孩子，今天来，买这么贵的东西！”文素云一脸为难的样子。

庄立群一边帮老钟把大衣挂好，一边笑着说，“妈，你就不能痛快收下吗？我难说过段时间要去外地，暂时来不了你们这。就当是我的一份过年礼不行吗？”

“你要出差？”老钟问。

“是有这可能。”庄立群应付了一句就嚷着肚子饿，招呼大家一块儿上桌吃饭了。

Zhuang Liqun secretly regret that he should have taken out the receipt from the shopping bag. His Mom had been living frugally in her whole life. He had to lie about the cost every time he gave an expensive gift to her.

"Mom, the coat is an international brand. Quality and style are both guaranteed. Didn't you say it's too cold to walk outside in winter. Then wear this coat. You'll feel really warm!" Before his Mom said anything back, Zhuang Liqun already pulled his sister to check the toys and clothes he bought for her.

Jiajia played with her new gifts with joy. Zhuang Liqun told his Mom, "I bought a set of massage tools for Jiajia's Dad. It's left near the door. It can be used to massage the whole body. See whether he likes it?"

As soon as Wen Suyun started to talk, Jiajia's Dad opened the door and came in. "Liqun is here? No wonder it sounds like a party!"

Lao Zhong was an honest and considerate worker that worked in a medicine factory. Although Zhuang Liqun lived with his Dad after his parent's divorce, he used to come to Mom's house to lend a hand. He got along with Lao Zhong very well. They even went out on errands together from time to time.

"Jiajia's Dad, see? Liqun spent so much money on buying us gifts today!" Wen Suyun was not comfortable with that.

Zhuang Liqun helped Lao Zhong hang up his coat, and then said with a smile, "Mom, can't you just happily accept the gifts? You probably won't see me in a while since I'll be on a trip to other places. Think about them as my new year gifts for you all, OK?"

"Will you be on business trip?" Asked Lao Zhong.

"Possibly yes." Answered Zhuang Liqun briefly. He then went on to complain how hungry he was and called out to get dinner started.

十二

赵凯峰把上身探出车窗外，极力向前张望，“快了快了，我已经看见大门了。”开车的刘明天往左右扫了一眼，“这大门怎么修得那么深？要是外地人来水库办事，能找得着门才怪呢！”

车子最终在水库的大门前停了下来。刘，赵两人下了车。赵凯峰走到铁栅栏门旁，向里张望。门里除了一栋水库管理处的三层小楼，其余的都是湖水，沙滩和树林，既安静又优美。

“你说，那辆白色捷达，真会是在这儿被清洗的吗？”赵凯峰问。

“这种可能最大。因为这儿是本市唯一的自然水体。先进去看看再说。”刘明天答。

“有人吗？”他接着朝栅栏门里喊了一声。

“找谁啊？”从小楼里走出了一个小楼里走出了一个无精打采的老者。

“你好！我们是公安局的，来这儿了解点情况。”说着，刘明天向老者出示了证件。老人看是公安，态度马上就积极了起来。他先自我介绍，说是水库管理处的老闻，然后就把他们领进接待室。接着又忙着沏茶倒水。被刘明天劝阻后，老闻才放心地坐下来谈话。

“你们的水库总共有几道大门？”刘明天直奔主题。

“只有两道。除了你们进来的那道，南面还有一个门。”

“那个门汽车开得进来吗？”

“开得进来，不过...”

老闻犹豫起来。刘，赵两人急了，“不过什么？”

“我们这两道大门常年都锁着。平时上下班的人都从正门上的那个小门进出。南边那道大门几乎不用。我们这儿很少有车来。”

Zhao Kaifeng stretched his body out of the car window and looked ahead, "We're close, I can see the gate already. "

Liu Mingtian, who's driving the car, did a quick check around and said,"How could they build the gate up in such a remote place? How could they expect people to find it if they are not from local?

Finally they parked their car in front of the reservoir gate. They both got off the car. Zhao Kaifeng looked inside through the barred gate. Inside the gate, other than a three-story building for administration staff, the rest were just lake, sandy shore and ravine, quiet and beautiful.

"Do you really believe that the white Jetta was washed up here?" Zhao Kaifeng asked.

"This is the only nature water body in this city. Let's go in first." Liu Mingtian replied. Then he called out,"Anybody here?"

"Who are you looking for?" An old man walked out listlessly.

"How are you? We're police. We're here to collect some information. " Liu Mingtian introduced himself while showing his identify to the old man. Knowing it's a visit by the police, the old man's attitude warmed up. He introduced himself as Lao Wen, who worked in the Administration Office of the reservoir. He then led the two detectives into the office. He intended to make some tea for them, Liu Mingtian kindly stopped him.

"How many gates do you have in total here?" Liu Mingtian got to the point.

"Only two. Other than the one you came through, there's another gate on the south side."

"May car drive through the other one?"

"Yes. However ..."

Lao Wen hesitated. Liu and Zhao followed up quickly, "however what?"

"Both gates are locked up year round. Employees use the small door at main entrance to get in and out. The south gate is hardly used for anything. We don't often have visiting cars neither."

十三

赵凯峰看了一眼刘明天，然后转头问老闻，“最近这一星期有车辆进出过这两道大门吗？”

老闻摸着脑门想了一想，然后说，“没有。”

"不进这两道门，有没有可能从别的地方开车进水库呢?" 刘明天并不甘心。

"那是肯定没有的。你们来时开的那条小路，是唯一一条能走车的路。而且那是条死路，绕到南门就断了。水库沿路都有围栏，人有可能钻得进来，但车不通过两道大门是进不来的。"老闻对水库的情况了如指掌。

"那谁有这两道大门的钥匙呢?"赵凯峰沉不住气了。

"有钥匙的只有两个人，我和保卫处的罗元。"

"罗元? 他今天在吗?"刘明天问。

"在!在!他刚刚去水边取样去了。水库的水质我们定期要做检查的。要不要我带你们去找他?"

水库一眼望去象个大湖。水边是黄白黄白的沙滩。因为不对游人开放，沙滩上还是挺干净的。

刘明天和赵凯峰一路走，一路观察，就怕漏掉什么重要的线索。

罗元背对着他们蹲在水边，身边放着一个打开的箱子，里面放着一些大大小小的玻璃瓶。

"小罗啊，公安局的同志来找你了解情况。你把东西放放，我们先回办公室吧!"老闻对罗元说。

刘明天冲老闻摆摆手，"不用麻烦，我们就在这儿谈吧!"说着，他向罗元伸出了手，并简单做了自我介绍。赵凯峰也和罗元打了个招呼。

Zhao Kaifeng made an eye contact with Liu Mingtian, and then asked Lao Wen, "Was there any car came in through either of these gates this week?"

Lao Wen put his hand on his forehead and thought for a moment, "No, there were none."

"Without going through these two gates, are there any other entrance that a car could get in?" Liu Ming didn't give up.

"Zero possibility. The road you came in from is the only route a vehicle could drive in from. Moreover, that road hit a dead end at the south gate. The reservoir is fully encompassed by barriers that could only allow people to slip in, but not cars. Other than the two gates, there's no other way for a car to slip in." Apparently Lao Wen knew the inside and out of the reservoir.

"Then who has the keys to these two gates then?" Zhao Kaifeng asked impatiently.

"Only two people, Luo Yuan, the security staff and me."

"Luo Yuan? Is he in today?" Asked Liu Mingtian.

"Oh yeah! He just went off to take water samples. As a routine, we need to check water quality. Do you want me to take you to him?"

The reservoir was like a big lake. There was yellowish sandy shore around the water. The shore looked very clean since it's not open to public.

Liu and Zhao checked the surrounding carefully while walking. They didn't want to miss any critical clues.

Luo Yuan was crouching beside the water facing his back to them. A box was open aside with sorted glass bottles, big or small.

"Mr. Luo, police is here to collect information. Please put down your work for a while and come back to the office!" Lao Wen talked to Luo Yuan.

Liu Mingtian gestured to Lao Wen and said, "No worries, we can just talk here!" He reached out his hand to Luo Yuan and introduced himself. Zhao Kaifeng greeted Luo Yuan as well.

十四

刘明天问罗元，最近这几天有没有开过水库的大门？

罗元长得人高马大，脸上看起来却十分地稚气。他摸着脑袋努力思考了一下。

"没有开过。这两道门没事儿我们都锁着的。去年一年大概也就开过五六次吧。你们是不是怀疑有人躲在这儿啊？我们水库不对外开放，闲人一般进不来，这里面都是开阔地，小树林也很稀疏，就是有人想躲这儿也没地方藏啊！你们到底要找什么？"罗元连珠炮似的说了一通。

刘明天和赵凯峰交换了眼色，罗元的态度很主动，但似乎过于主动了。刘明天想，那我就给他透露些情况，看他有什么反应。

"是这样，我们正在寻找一辆白色捷达车的车主。他已经失踪好几天了。这是他和他朋友的照片，你见过他们吗？"

老闻也凑过来看刘明天手上的照片。但两人都摇头表示没见过。

刘明天又拿出两张打印纸，指着上面的画像让他们辨认。老闻认真得看了半天，失望地摇了摇头。而罗元则马上开始问问题。

"这两个人犯什么事儿了？"

Liu Mingtian asked Luo Yuan whether the gates of the reservoir were ever opened lately?

Luo Yuan was tall and strong. However his face looked childish. He scratched his head and thought hard for a while.

“No. We usually keep both gates locked. They were open only five or six times in previous year. Do you suspect that someone is hiding here? The reservoir is not open to public, no one is allowed to come in other than staff members. It’s a open place, even the ravine is sparse. There’s no spot secluded enough to hide a person here! What exactly you’re looking for?” Luo Yuan talked in a fast fashion.

Liu Mingtian and Zhao Kaifeng exchanged a meaningful glance. The attitude of Luo Yuan was quite active, a bit too active though. Liu Mingtian thought that he should reveal more information to him to get more reaction.

“The situation is like this. We are looking for the owner of a white Jetta. He had been missing for a couple of days. Here are photos of him and his friend. Have you ever seen them before?”

Lao Wen came close to check the photos too. Yet the two of them shook their heads and said that they hadn’t seen any of them.

Liu Mingtian then took out two pieces of print paper and let them to identify the portraits on the paper.

Lao Wen looked carefully for a while, but shook his head disappointedly in the end. Luo Yuan, instead, started to ask questions right away.

“What crime did these two guys commit?”

十五

"怎么?看着眼熟?"赵凯峰问。

"不熟也不生，长这模样的人到处都是。他们到底干啥坏事儿了?"罗元又重复了一遍他的问题。

"你不怎么看电视吧?前几天新闻里都在通缉这两个人，他们是持枪抢劫案的嫌疑犯。"赵凯峰一边回答，一边目不转睛地盯着罗元。

"诶，同志，你的意思是，这两人，就是星期天在国道上抢劫又杀人的路匪?!"罗元显出吃惊的模样。

"没错，说的就是那桩案子。"刘明天确认道。

"不会吧..."罗元小声嘟囔了一句。

"不会什么?"刘明天反问。

"哦，没什么，我就是觉得那些路匪不会到我们这儿来。这个水库是片开阔地，无处躲啊!"

"我们更关心的是，这几天有没有车辆进来过?你能再好好想想吗?"刘明天恳切地问罗元。

"反正我是肯定没见过有车进来的。"罗元说完又看向老闻。"闻主任，你呢?"老闻又摆手，又摇头，"我也没见过。"

"Parden me? They look familiar?" Asked Zhao Kaifeng.

"Not familiar nor strange. People with this look are everywhere. What bad things they did exactly?" Luo Yuan asked his question again.

"You don't watch TV, did you? These people were posted as most wanted in the news lately. They are the suspects of an armed robbery." Zhao Kaifeng answered Luo Yuan's question while fixing his eyes on him.

"Then are you saying that they are the robbers who killed people on the Highway last Sundays?" Luo Yuan looked a bit shocked.

"Exactly, that is the case we're talking about." Liu Mingtian confirmed.

"It can't be true..." Luo Yuan murmured.

"What can't be true?" Asked Liu Mingtian.

"Oh nothing, I just think that those robbers should not choose to come here. The reservoir is open land, there's nowhere to hide at all."

"We're more interested in whether people were allowed in these days. Could you please think it over one more time?" Liu Mingtian asked Luo Yuan earnestly.

"Sure enough I haven't seen anyone coming in." That being said, Luo Yuan turned to Lao Wen, "And you?"

Lao Wen waved his hand and shook his head, "Neither have I."

十六

刘明天他们走后，罗元又回到水边取样。老闻则回到办公室，开了他的小播放机，继续听他最喜欢的京剧。

天色渐晚，老闻看了看播放机上的时间，收拾收拾东西，拎着包到水边跟罗元打了个招呼就回家去了。

水库里只剩下罗元了。他丢下取水样的箱子，沿着水边不紧不慢地走起来。

异常安静的水和沙滩，还有周围的矮树林，在警察来过后，都变了味道。它们不象平时那样让罗元感到身心放松，正相反，它们的沉默给罗元带来的是不一种不安，一种难以名状的不安。

"水库的门开不开，跟抢劫案会有什么关系呢？这些警察真是脑子进水。这里面树都很矮，稀稀疏疏的，猫都藏不了，还能藏人？"罗元在心里嘀咕。"虽然没跟警察说实话，也不会有多大的后果吧。我天天在这里上班，没啥不对的呀..."

一只绿皮青蛙挡住了罗元的路，罗元对青蛙做了个鬼脸，然后用力在青蛙面前跺了一脚。青蛙飞快地逃开了。看青蛙逃命的样子，罗元呵呵一笑。与此同时，手机声响起，罗元忙把手机从腰间摸出。

After Liu and Zhao left, Luo Yuan came back to the water side to continue taking water samples. Lao Wen went back to the office and turned on his audio player to listen to his favorite Beijing Opera.

The night was approaching. Lao Wen checked the time on the audio player. Then he wrapped up his stuff, carried his suitcase, went back to the water side, said goodbye to Luo Yuan and left.

By then, Luo Yuan was the person left in the reservoir. He left his sample box and strolled along the water bank.

The quiet water and the sand shore, also the ravine around, they all looked different after the visit of the police. They can't offer the relaxing atmosphere to Luo Yuan like before. On the contrary, their silence made Luo Yuan to feel uneasy and fidgeting.

"Whether the gates of the reservoir were opened or not – what could that has anything to do with the robbery? These police must have had their head stuffed. With trees so short and sparse, even a cat can't hide here, how could a human being do that?" Luo Yuan questioned in his mind. "Although I didn't tell the truth to the police, I don't think anything bad could come out of it. I work here everyday, things look just normal everywhere. "

A green frog blocked Luo Yuan's way. He made a face to the frog and then stomp heavily in front of it. The frog escaped in a flash. Looking at the hopping-away frog, Luo Yuan chuckled. At that moment, a phone ring came. He then quickly fished out his cell phone.

十七

"咦?没有来电啊?"

罗元瞬时明白了，铃声不是自己的手机发出来的。声音不大，听起来就在附近。

可是，水库里现在应该只有罗元一个人!

"老闻!老闻!"罗元喊了两声。"你还没走吗?"他的声音有些发颤。

无人答应，铃声也终于停止。

罗元紧张地四下张望。别说人影，连个鬼影都没有!他咽了口唾沫，象是在拼命吞下一颗壮胆药。

"不会的，这里面藏不了活人。"他正想着，铃声又响了。

这一次，罗元冷静地竖起了耳朵。他闭上眼，感应着声音来的方向。

"是下面，地上。一定是有人把手机掉这儿了?"罗元略微松了口气，蹲在声音发出的地方，用手胡乱地扒了扒沙子。这部分土比较湿，声音就是土里发出的。

他随手捡了根棍子，一边用棍子扒，一边琢磨：这手机丢了有一段时间了吧，都被土埋上了...咦?这好像有东西，还用布袋装着...咦?不是布袋，

是...是人的手臂!!!

罗元受了一惊，身子本能地向后弹起，没站稳，又一屁股坐到了地上。

“Why? There’s no call coming?”

Suddenly, Luo Yuan realized that the ring tone did not come from his own cell phone. The sound was not loud but felt like it came from nearby.

However, Luo Yuan was the only person left in the reservoir!

“Lao Wen! Lao Wen!” Luo Yuan called out. “Haven’t you left?” His voice was a bit shivered.

No one answered. The ring tone stopped.

Luo Yuan looked around nervously. No single live soul or ghost existed in sight. He swallowed his own fear, as if to swallow down a pill of courage.

“No, it’s not possible to hide any live person here.” While he was thinking about it, the ring tone came again.

This time, Luo Yuan perched up his ears calmly. He closed his eyes and searched for the source of the sound.

“It comes from the ground down there. Someone must have left his/her cell phone here?” Luo Yuan felt a bit relief. He then squatted down and started to dig the sand. The sand was wet and the sound did come from under.

He picked up a stick and continued to dig. He thought to himself while digging, the cell phone must have been lost for quite a while to be buried down there... Eh? Something is there, packed up in a fabric bag... No, it’s not a bag, it’s... it’s a human’s arm!!!

Luo Yuan was startled and threw himself back by instinct. He lost his balance and fell down to the ground.

十八

刘明天的手机急促地响了起来。他和赵凯峰刚刚踏进一家面馆，准备把晚饭对付了。

刘明天接完电话后，精神一振，“罗元来的，他在水库发现了尸体。”

齐友发和崔雁是面对面被埋在沙堆里的。死亡原因都是致命枪伤。罗元听到的手机声来自崔雁还挎在手上的手袋。打电话的是一个才从外省来本市的年轻人，是崔雁的老乡，还不知道崔雁已经出事。

“两人身上所带的钱包，只是现金遗失，但证件都在。尸体完整，没有故意掩盖受害者身份的企图，不象是熟人做案。“这是刘明天和赵凯峰对现场的初步看法。”看来，齐友发和崔雁，是在错误的时机，选择了一个错误的地点幽会。”

这时天已渐黑，聚集的警察，法医，和现场技术人员，打破了水库里让人窒息的寂静。罗元弓着背，颓丧地坐在一处稍远的石凳上。

“行，我跟你们走一趟。你们一定要相信我，我没杀人，跟这事儿一点边都不沾。我承认，门是我开的，可我真没看见是谁干的。”

罗元对刘明天说这话的时候，显然已经没有了早些时候那次谈话时的淡定。

As soon as Liu Mingtian and Zhao Kaifeng stepped into the Noodle Diner for dinner, Liu's cell phone rang in a hurry.

The Phone call boost his spirit, "It's from Luo Yuan, he found bodies in the reservoir. "

Qi Youfa and Cui Yan were buried in the sand face to face. Cause of Death was lethal gun wound. The ring tone that Luo Yuan heard came from Cui Yan's hand bag. The person that called was a young man who came from another province. He didn't know the terrible misfortune that Cui Yan had.

"Other than the cash was missing, all other ID cards in their wallets were intact. Their bodies were not intentionally deformed, which means the killer didn't intend to cover their identities. Therefore the killer is not likely to be the victims' acquaintance. " That was the first conclusion that Liu and Zhao made after the crime scene investigation. "It looks that Qi and Cui picked the wrong place and wrong time to date."

At that time, it was getting dark. The gang of police, forensic technicians and crime scene investigators broke the pure tranquility of the reservoir. Luo Yuan sit on a stone stool a bit further from the crime scene with his back hunched.

"Fine, I'll go with you. But you have to believe me that I have nothing to do with this. I admit that it was me who opened the door, but I don't know who did it."

Obviously Luo Yuan had lost his calmness while he did the above confession.

十九

稍晚，在询问室里。

罗元回忆，“那天下午快下班的时候，大概四点多的时候，我接了我朋友的一个电话。他说晚些时候会开车经过水库，让我把上次跟他借的东西放在我的办公室，他想顺便把它带回去。”

“什么东西？”刘明天问。

“一个修车用的工具箱。”

“请继续说。。。”

“他说他要开车进来取，让我不要锁大门。我照做了，只锁了小门，大门虚着，然后我就下班回家了。第二天一上班，工具箱已经不见了，我就知道他肯定过来了。”

“今天白天问你的时候你怎么没说实话？”

“我害怕。。。老闻找我的茬儿。水库两星期前丢了一批装修材料。闻主任认为是因为我下班忘锁门，把小偷放进来了。如果他知道我又干了一次，还是故意的，非把我吃了不可。”

“你的朋友说没说他是个人来，还是和别人一起来？”

“这倒没说。”

“那天下班后你又跟那个朋友联系过吗？”

“我下班到家的时候又打了一次他的手机，没人接。后来我就再没跟他联系过。”

“现在谈谈你的朋友吧。他叫什么名字，长什么样，是做什么的？和你有些什么交情？关系如何？”

Later, in the interrogation room.

Luo Yuan thought, "About four o'clock that day, just before I wrapped up my work, I received a phone call. He said he would drive by the reservoir later that day. He asked me to left the thing that I borrowed from him in my office, so he could pick it up when he came."

"What is the thing?" Liu Mingtian asked.

"A box of tools for car maintenance."

"Continue please..."

"He said that he would drive into the reservoir, and ask me to leave the gate unlocked. I did what he asked. I locked the small door but left the gate unlocked. Then I left. The next day, I noticed the tool box was gone. So I know he had been there. "

"Why didn't you tell us the truth earlier today?"

"I was afraid Lao Wen would have scolded me. Some renovation material was lost two weeks ago. Lao Wen thought that my negligence on gate keeping had invited the thieves. If he knew that I did it again, he will eat me alive."

"Did your friend tell you that he came alone, or with others?"

"No, he didn't. "

"After you left your work that day, did you contact your friend again? "

"I called his cell phone again after work. No one picked up the phone. Since then I had not talked to him again."

"Now, let's talk about your friend. His name, how he looks, what does he do and your relationship with him please."

二十

听完刘明天的问题，罗元懊悔地叹了口气，“其实啊，我这朋友长的，和你们今天给我看的画像中的一个人很像。说句心里话，我真不信他会干抢劫杀人的事。他对家人和朋友其实都挺不错的...所以你们第一次让我看画像的时候，我压根就没往他身上想。”

刘明天回忆了一下罗元白天看到画像时的反应。他判断罗元当时就看出画像和真人十分相似，但基于某种原因，他当时选择了隐瞒。

“可以告诉我们你的朋友叫什么名字了吧？”赵凯峰已经沉不住气了。

第二天中午，当赵凯峰和刘明天风风火火赶回局里的时候，正好碰上防暴队的柯勇和李维，他们是来刑侦这边拉人搞活动的。穿着一身警服的柯勇拍了拍赵凯峰的肩头，“小赵，我们那边正在广场搞活动，来了很多市民。头儿已经问了，怎么没有刑侦的人参加？你反正也是新来的，老刘他们缺你一个不打紧。”

李维也在一旁说服刘明天。刘明天苦笑了一下，“去吧，小赵，这种活动我们刑侦老不参加也不好。你就做我们的代表吧。如果有什么紧急情况，我会打你手机。”

To react to Liu Mingtian's question, Luo Yuan sighed in regret, "As a matter of fact, this friend of mine looks rather similar to the portrait you showed me. Honestly, I can't believe he could in any ways be a robber and killer. He's very kind to his family and friends therefore I hadn't doubted of him when you first showed me the portrait."

Liu Mingtian re-played in his memories the reaction that Luo Yuan had when he first looked at the portrait earlier that day. He then decided that Luo Yuan already recognized his friend from the portrait back then. But he chose to conceal the truth due to unknown reasons.

"Could you please tell us the name of your friend?" Zhao Kaifeng couldn't wait any longer for the answer.

In the afternoon next day, when Zhao and Liu came back to their office in a rush, they met Ke Yong and Li Wei. They worked in Anti-riot police department and came to find some detective staff to join their event. Dressed in his uniform, Ke Yong pat Zhao Kaifeng on his shoulder and said, "Zhao, we're hosting an event at the square. Lots of residents came. My boss already asked why there were no staff from detective department joined us? You're a new guy here, Liu Sir won't feel short of people without you I think."

Li Wei helped persuade Liu as well. Liu gave them a grin, "Go, Zhao, it doesn't look good if none of us participates in that event. You can represent us there. In case of any emergency, I'll call your cell."

二十一

赵凯峰虽然一千个不愿意，也实在不好拒绝。只好和柯勇他们一起上了车。路上，柯勇给三个人都买了盒饭。三个人迅速吃完饭，就继续朝广场开去。

"听说，你们昨天在水库那边找到捷达车主的尸体了?"开车的柯勇问坐在旁边的赵凯峰。

赵凯峰看了柯勇一眼。柯勇人很精神，平头，浓眉，大他五六岁的样子，在防暴队已经是老队员了。他和赵凯峰是同乡。赵凯峰刚进刑侦大队的时候他还请他吃过饭。他们有一阵子没在一起聊了，今天出来搞活动，赵凯峰正好可以跟他聊聊。"是啊，还是秦老师有本事啊，从一颗螺狮就断定水库可能是抛尸地点。"

"老秦可是我们这儿出了名的福尔摩斯，你跟他应该能学到不少东西。既然尸体找到了，那有嫌犯的线索了吗?"柯勇继续聊着。

赵凯峰犹豫了一下。按规定，正在调查的刑事案件案情是不该随便泄露的。不过柯勇和李维都是一个单位的弟兄，谈案情也算内部讨论吧。

"一号嫌犯已基本确定了，可惜晚了一步。"赵凯峰懊恼地回答。

Although Zhao Kaifeng was rather reluctant to go, he knew he couldn't decline. He had to get on the car with Ke Yong.

On the way, Ke Yong bought take-away lunch for the three of them. They finished their lunch in a flash and then continued their drive to the square.

"I heard that you guys found the body of the Jetta owner in the reservoir yesterday?" Ke Yong asked Zhao Kaifeng while driving.

Zhao Kaifeng cast a glimpse at Ke Yong. Ke Yong looked handsome with a crew cut and dense eyebrow. He looked five or six years older than Zhao Kaifeng and was a senior in Anti-riot department already. He came from the same hometown as Zhao. Zhao even invited him for lunch when he first entered Detective department. They haven't chat with each other for quite a while. It was a good opportunity to chat anyways while going to the event, Zhao thought to himself. "Yes, we should give credit to Lao Qin. He is really good. Just by inspecting a tiny snail, he figured out that the body could have been hid away at the reservoir."

"Lao Qin is widely renowned as the Sherlock Holmes here. You should have learned a lot working with him. Since you already found the bodies, have you discovered any new clues then?" Ke Yong went on.

Zhao Kaifeng hesitated. His work ethic warned him not to reveal any more info on the criminal investigation. However, Ke Yong and Li Wei were both colleagues in the same system. It should had been deemed as internal discussion he thought.

"Suspect One has been confirmed. But it's a pity that we were a bit late ..." Zhao Kaifeng answered with regret.

二十二

“怎么讲？”

“他已经跑了。没人知道他去了哪儿。”

“我说啊，这已经是大突破了，至少你们可以把画像换成照片来通缉了吧？”坐在后座的李维也加入了他们的谈话。

“那当然。”赵凯峰回答。“而且，从他的关系网摸下去，二号嫌犯也应该能查出来。”赵凯峰其实更想坐在刘明天的车上，他可不想错过查出二号嫌犯的精彩时刻。

两声刺耳的车喇叭声打断了他们的谈话。原来，他们已经到了搞活动的广场。柯勇正用车喇叭声和同事打招呼呢。

一清早在佳佳上学的校门口，两个警察把文素云拦了下来。他们接下来和文素云谈的话，让她半天回不过神来。

“同志，你们一定搞错了。立群是个懂事的孩子，他根本不可能去干什么抢劫杀人的事。我的孩子我最清楚。”

“Why?”

“He has escaped. No one knows where he had gone to.”

“In my opinion, you’ve made major breakthrough. At least you can swap photo with picture for the most wanted?” Li Wei, who was sitting in the rear seat joined their conversation.

“That’s for sure.” Zhao Kaifeng answered. “Moreover, the second suspect should be identified soon as well once we sort out the social network of the first one.” Honestly, Zhao Kaifeng did prefer to be sitting on Liu Mingtian’s car, he didn’t want to miss the moment that the second suspect were identified.

Suddenly, their conversation was interrupted by harsh honking sound. They’ve just arrived at the square. Ke Yong was honking to other colleagues as a greeting.

It was early in the morning when Wen Suyun encountered two policemen at the gate of Jia Jia’s school. The things they told Wen Suyun there after made her rather confused.

“Sir, you must have made mistakes. Liqun is a good kid, it’s not even possible that he could have been involved in robbery and killing. I know my own kid.”

二十三

然而，她的话并没有得到足够的重视。警察不动声色地继续他们的问题。

“我怎么知道他现在在哪儿？他该在哪儿，还在哪儿啊。你们去他上班的地方找过吗？他住的地方呢？”

“他刚把租的房子退掉，也辞了职。没人知道他去哪儿了。你是他母亲，他跟你讲过要离开的打算吗？”警察仍然心平气和地提问，可文素云的心里却象烧起了一把火。

“这不可能！我儿子这个周末才来我这儿吃过饭呢，怎么可能说走就走呢？”

文素云的近乎叫喊的反问并没有引起两个警察的反感，正相反，他们在他们的眼中，似乎觉察到了同情的成分。这种同情让她心生恐惧。难道，立群是真的出事了？

However, her comment didn't attract enough attention. The police still went on with their questions calmly.

"How could I know where he is now? He should be where he should be. Have you visited his work place? Also the place he lives?"

"He just signed out from his renting lease and quit his job. Nobody knows where he has gone to. You are his Mom. Did he tell you about his plan to leave?" The police asked kindly. However, the question lit up fire in Wen's heart.

"That's not possible! My son just had dinner at my home this past weekend. How could he leave just like that?"

Wen's almost-yelling pitch didn't bring any disturbance at all to the police. On the contrary, she sensed sympathy in their eyes. That brought her even more fear. Could that be true that Liqun did commit to something illegal?

二十四

"我难说过段时间要去外地，来不了你们这儿。"儿子的这句话突然地回现在文素云的脑海。难道。。。文素云不敢再往下想。离婚后心里一直藏着的对儿子的欠疚，此时这种欠疚一股脑翻腾起来。不管儿子做了什么，她都要尽全力帮他。她也一直相信，立群不是一个坏孩子。他虽然有过十分激烈的叛逆期，但那早已过去了。抢劫杀人?!这绝对不可能!

那一整天，文素云都处于一种魂不守舍的状态，直到晚上一个电话打进来的时候...

"妈，是我。"

"呀，是立群吗?你总算打来电话了!你这是去哪儿了呀?今天两个警察来找我，问你的情况呢!"

"妈，我很好，你不用惦记，我想出来做点生意。我还急着赶路，不跟你多说了。你一定保重!"

"唉等等，立群，别挂!"

电话就这样匆匆挂断了。文素云失神地放下话筒。听到儿子报平安，她有了些许欣慰，但这种欣慰很快就被更重的愁云所取代。

"It is possible that I'll be out somewhere soon, can't visit you for a sometime." That words of her son suddenly struck her mind. Could it be true that ... Wen Suyun dared not to continue the thoughts. The guilt for her son that she had been hiding in her mind after the divorce started to boil now. No matter what her son had done, she was determined to help him regardless. She had belief in that her son was not a bad boy. He had had tough teenager time, but that was long gone. Robbery and murder?! That was beyond imagination!

That whole day, Wen Suyun's mind was somewhere else until she received a phone call in the evening ...

"Mom, it's me."

"Is it you Liqun? You finally call back! Where have you been? There were two policemen approached me today for you!"

"Mom, I'm fine, don't worry. I want to come out and do some business. I'm in a hurry, can't chat for long. You take care!"

"No wait, Liqun, don't hang up yet!"

That was the end of the call. Wen Suyun put down the phone in a heavy mood. She was a bit comforted upon hearing his son's voice. However, that ease of mind was replaced by more worries soon.

二十五

佳佳坐在对面的沙发上玩着芭比娃娃，老钟则坐在电视机前专注地看着体育新闻。文素云蹒跚地走到老钟身边，用遥控棒把电视关了。又用虚弱而无望的声音对老钟说，“老钟，立群...可能出事了...”

“你小子怎么尽干蠢事？你怎么能往家里打电话呢？你现在是通缉在逃，必须切断与自己过去的任何联系！你找个地方好好躲一躲，等过段时间再跟我联系！好了，就这样。”

男人说完话，把手机往桌上一扔。又从身上摸出一根烟点燃抽上。

“又是个婆婆妈妈的主儿。”他的话和他的脸，都被烟雾所包围。

Jiajia was sitting on the sofa on the other side playing with her Barbies. Lao Zhong was watching Sports News attentively on TV. Wen Suyun staggered over to Lao Zhong and use the remote controller to turn off the TV. Then she spoke to Lao Zhong in a weak and desperate voice, "Lao Zhong, Liqun ... he's probably in big trouble ..."

"How could you do such a stupid thing? Calling back home? You're under radar of the police, you have to cut out all your contacts to the world! You need to find a place to hide. Wait for some time before contacting me again please! OK, bye."

The man threw his cell phone on the table after he finished. Then he fished out a cigaret from his pocket and light it up.

"Such a fuzzy thing." Immediately, his words and face were all surrounded by smoke.

二十六

庄立群看着镜中的自己，满意地点了点头，在假发和假胡须的掩饰下，他自己都快认不出自己了。他现在这番打扮倒让他想起了一个人，他的父亲。

父亲因经济问题进监狱的时候，他只有十六岁。之后妈妈把他接到自己家，但他坚决不想上学了。他说他要工作，要独立生活，对上学毫无兴趣。无奈，老钟帮他找了一个车辆维修的培训班。他学了三个月，然后就在一个私人店里做学徒，后来就在那个店里修了四年车。在第四年里，修车时认识了一个来修车的男顾客。

此人和他一拍即合，他们都喜欢探险运动。于是，那个人带他加入了漂流俱乐部。在俱乐部里，他认识了一些比较富裕的漂友。他们开着漂亮的跑车来参加漂流探险。他们中的相当一部分人并不把俱乐部高昂的会费当回事。他们有时间就来，没时间则很久见不上面。漂流对于他们来说只是生活中的一个消遣。

Looking at his image in the mirror, Zhuang Liqun nodded in satisfaction. Under the disguise of wig and beard, he hardly can recognize his own face. The look he's bearing now reminded him of another person, his Dad.

He was only sixteen when his Dad was put into prison due to financial crimes. Thereafter, his Mom took him to her own family. However, he refused to go to school. He said he wanted to work and live independently instead of studying at school. With no other choice, Lao Zhong helped him to find a training school for car maintenance. He studied for three months and then became an apprentice in a private body shop. Thereafter he did car maintenance for four years in that shop. During the four years he spent there, he became acquainted with a customer.

That gentleman clicked together with him. They both loved adventure sports. Therefore, he was led by that man to join a rafting club. In the club, he got to know some rich people. They drove to the adventure revenue in shining sporty cars. A big portion of club members didn't give it a second thought on the expensive club fee. They came when they had time. They disappeared for a time when they don't. Rafting was just a small recreational activity in their life.

二十七

庄立群羡慕他们。他希望有一天他能成为他们中的一员。

他只是一个贫穷的修车工。为了自己的爱好，他需要省吃俭用才能交得起会费。他们在他们中间感到自卑。他多么期待，他平凡得不能再平凡的生命，能在某一天突现转机。

"你有一天也能象他们那样..." 他的朋友不动声色地说。

"我?!你开玩笑吧，我这样既没学历，又没背景的，光靠自己这双手，就是干到一百岁也挣不来他们那么多钱。"他自嘲地摇摇头。

"你说的是事实，光靠你这双手傻干当然没戏。所以你得重新计划你的人生。你还年轻，只要路走对了，用不了几年，你就能跟他们一样，甚至更好。"

他朋友的话，一针见血，说到了他的心里。可是，什么样的路才是对的呢?他期待地看着他的朋友。他的朋友没有正面回答，反而问他，"如果这些有钱人让你帮个忙，你愿意吗?"

Zhuang Liqun envied them. He wished that he could become one of them someday. A poor auto mechanic as he was, he had to save hard to afford the expensive club fee. He felt inferior to them. How much he wished that his fate of being a mediocre man could suddenly steer toward another direction.

“One day you’ll become one of them ...” His friend said calmly.

“Me?! You’re kidding. No education, no background, with a pair of bare hands, it’s not even possible to earn that much money if I keep working till one hundred years old.” He shook his head and laughed.

“You’re right, it’s not possible at all with your bare hands and frame of mind. Therefore you need to re-think about your life. You’re still young, as long as you’re on the right track, you can become one of them in a few years, even better.”

His friend’s words, he must admit, did hit the nail on the head. However, where was the right track then? He cast a glance of hope to his friend. His friend didn’t response right away. Instead, he asked, “If those rich people need your help, will you help them?”

二十八

"只要我办得到的，当然愿意!"

"爽快!那你能帮我一个做玉石生意的朋友拉一车货去省城吗?他太忙，抽不出身，自己没时间跑，又不想现去雇司机。就想找一个可靠的人，他会付不错的报酬的。"

"不就是帮忙开开车吗，包在我身上了!"

庄立群的朋友没有食言，他帮忙拉货的第二天，报酬就到了手，而且比他期望的高得多。他的心里有过忐忑。俗话说，无功不受禄。他怀疑过那车货品的水份。但这个朋友的特殊身份又让他放下心来。只想在家里心安理得地过日子，怎么可能成大事?

就这样，他的这个朋友为他带来了不少机会。他的腰包一天天鼓起来，胆儿也越来越大。直到有一天，朋友教他用枪，他才意识到他似乎无可挽回地走错了方向。

“Of course, as long as it’s something I’m capable of.”

“Excellent! Could you help my friend, who’s in jade stone business, to deliver a car load of goods to the city? He’s too busy to find time to do it himself. Moreover, he doesn’t want to hire a driver randomly. He prefers a reliable person and is willing to pay generously.”

“If driving the car is all he wants, I can take care of it with no doubt.”

Zhuang Liqun’s friend kept his words. He was rewarded generously the next day after his help. It was much more than what he had expected. He did hesitate in mind for once. As the old saying went, “Do not accept a reward if you’re not deserved.” He did have doubts on the goods he helped delivered. However, the special identity of his friend made him feel relieved. No one could gain any success by just hiding in his own comfortable zone. Just like that, his friend brought lots of opportunities to him. He’s getting rich than he was day after day. He also became more and more fearless. He hadn’t realized that he had gone on a no-return path until one day his friend began to teach him how to shoot a hand gun.

二十九

“你到现在还不明白吗？这个社会没有绝对的好与坏，它所遵循的只是一个简单的法则。”朋友对他耐心开导。

“什么法则？”

“森林法则。”

他一脸迷惑。

“兄弟，不爱读书吧？森林法则简单讲，就是大鱼吃小鱼，小鱼吃虾米。谁强谁就得天下。朝廷是这样，民间是这样，江湖更是这样。”

“如果是这样，你为什么还做你现在的工作？”庄立群反问到。

“呵呵…”朋友笑了，“工作只是份工作，如果你足够聪明，它可以是你最好的伪装。”

那之后，庄立群咬着牙杀了第一个人。他们的行动布置得很周密。案子至今未破。庄立群整整做了一个月噩梦。

"You still don't understand? There's no absolute right or wrong in this world. All that truly exists is just a simple law." His friend nudged on him patiently.

"What law?"

"The Law of the Jungle."

He looked bewildered.

"My brother, you're not fond of reading, are you? Simply put, Law of the Jungle means the big fish feeds on the smaller fish, the smaller fish feeds on little shrimp. It's another word for 'survival of the strongest'. It applies to the rulers, the civilians and even more to the underworld."

"If that's so, why you're still doing your current job?"

"Hehe ..." His friend laughed, "If you're smart enough, your job could be your best disguise."

Thereafter, Zhuang committed his first murder. The mission was very well planned and the case has since not been resolved.

Zhuang Liqun had been having nightmares for a whole month.

三十

他逐渐意识到，他需要一个更强大的梦想来给予他继续这种生活的动力。他想辞去自己这份普通的工作。但他的朋友对他说，“急什么，等我们做完这笔大生意，你再辞职也不迟。”

“这笔大生意”和以往的小单生意不一样。他的朋友没有告诉他到底是什么样的生意，但却总是锁着眉头冥思苦想。基于他对朋友的了解，他知道他心里一定装着一个煞费苦心的计划。

而事实证明，“这笔大生意”确实筹划了很长时间。他的朋友只对他说，这一次他们收买了一个很深的“内线”。

With time went by, he started to realize that he needed a bigger dream to motivate himself to live on in that way.

He wanted to quit his simple job. However, his friend said to him, "Why now? Wait till we complete THE "big deal". You still have time."

THE "big deal" is nothing like the other small deals they've sealed in the past. His friend kept his lips closed but always got his minds occupied. Knowing his friend so well, Zhang Liqun's could guess it out that a carefully calculated plan was forming in his friend's mind.

As a matter of fact, the plan did take a long time to complete. His friend only told him that they bribed an "internal guy".

三十一

庄立群想了一想，问他的朋友道，“‘内线’足够可靠吗？”

那人拿起桌上的空烟盒说，“他提供的信息绝对可靠。毕竟，他有私人恩怨要我们帮忙。不过完事后，这人必定会成为后患。”

“那怎么办？”

那人并没有立即回答，而是将那个空烟盒举到庄立群的面前，然后一把将它捏成废纸，并用一种冷酷的目光灼着他。“那就连他一起解决。一干二净。”

说完，那团废纸被扔进了桌边的垃圾桶。

庄立群突觉嗓子发干，浑身泛起一种异样的感觉。好象坐在那儿的不是自己的，而是别人的躯壳。他伸展了一下发硬的背脊，努力辨别着那种异样到底是什么。

是厌恶。

Zhuang Liqun gave thought about it for a second, "Do you think the "internal connection" is reliable enough?"

The man pick up an empty cigarette pack from the table, "The information he provided is sure enough reliable. After all, he needs us to help him solve his own "troubles". However, he is surely to become a hidden jeopardy once we closed the 'deal'."

"Then what we should do?"

The man didn't answer right away. Instead, he raised the empty pack to Zhuang Liqun. At the blink of an eye, he crumbled it into a tiny ball. He then coldly stared at Zhuang Liqun. "Then we finish him as well, neatly."

Following that word, the tiny ball of paper flew into the garbage can at the foot of the table.

With a dried throat, Zhuang Liqun suddenly had a weird feeling. He didn't feel like himself again. He stretched his stiff back and tried hard to figure out what exact feeling that was.

Disgusting.

三十二

“想做大事，就要学会习惯各种令自己不舒服的感觉。”这是朋友经常挂在嘴边的一句话。

“这是不是也包括对自己的厌恶感？”庄立群疑惑地想。

然而，他并没有太多的时间去思考这个问题。“大生意”的时机说来就来。他突然忙得顾不得想别的事情。行动计划得很紧密，容不得他有一点分心。他知道，其实，他只有机会做一次决定，做，还是不做。一旦做出了决定，它的意义就不再重要了。因为生意的成败，与他生命的存亡已经分不开来。

庄立群又做了一回杀手。

这次之后，他暗下决心再也不干了。他要走得远远的，销声匿迹，然后再重新作人。

看着镜中那个不像自己的自己，他有了一种幻觉。是不是以后都要做另一个人了呢？或者，现在的自己，已经穿越到了另一个人的世界里？

“If you want to make big difference, you have to get used to the discomforts that you feel from time to time.” This was something that his friend used to say.

“Do they include the disgust you feel toward yourself?” Thought Zhuang Liqun confoundedly.

However, he didn't have enough time to think further on that. “The major business” came sooner than they expected. He suddenly had no time to think about anything else. The plan was tightly knitted. It didn't have any margin for distraction. He knew, as a matter of fact, he only had one chance to make a decision. To do, or not to do. As soon as a decision was made, nothing else mattered anymore since whether it succeeded meant whether he would survive.

Zhuang Liqun committed killing once again.

Thereafter, he made up his minds to run away forever. He planned to go somewhere far away, got disappeared, and then lived again.

Looking at the man in the mirror, he cringed at the possibility that he might have to live as somebody else since then. Or maybe, the self he was in, has crossed into another man's world?

三十三

庄立群万万没有想到，他打回家的那个简短电话，竟是他犯下的一个致命的错误。一直在苦苦寻找他的刑警们，从这个电话记录入手，很快查清了来电的位置。电话虽然是在公用电话亭打的，但地点离他藏身的地方并不远。打完电话的第二天，刘明天，赵凯峰他们就连夜赶了过来。

调查是从电话亭的监控录像开始的。尽管庄立群化了妆，通过对比打电话的时间和监控画面上的时间，锁定庄立群的影像并不困难。

从录像上看，他离开电话亭后一路步行，最后消失在街尾。而街尾的尽头是一片低矮的出租屋。

Zhuang Liqun didn't realize at all that the brief phone call he made to his family was a deadly mistake. The police, who were searching for him day and night, were able to trace him down from the record of that call. Although he called from a public phone booth, it's not far from where he's hiding. The next day after he made the phone call, Liu Mingtian and Zhao Kaifeng arrived at the place together with their men.

Investigation then started from the security video near the phone booth. Although Zhuang Liqun was wearing a disguise, it's not that hard to lock down his image by comparing the timestamps from both the video taps and the phone log.

According to the video, he walked along the street after the call toward the end of it. What existed beyond that was an area of low-rise renting properties.

三十四

小屋里唯一的窗子被拉上了窗帘。屋外的亮和屋里的暗形成鲜明对比。百无聊赖，又坐卧不安的庄立群靠在床上。电视里放些什么他一点都看不进去。即将过去的早晨是那样的漫长。这让他逐渐对这个狭小的空间失去了耐心。可一旦想起到手的那比丰厚的“收入”，他烦躁的心情又平静下来。

这只是暂时的，他对自己说。这之后，他开始盘算中午的午饭，是出去买还是吃方便面。正犹豫着，门响了。

庄立群的第一反应就是去摸枪。他迅速下了床，站在门边听动静。

敲门声再次响起，“里面有人吗？我是房东！”

The only window in the small room was covered by curtains. The room felt even darker against the brightness outside. Leaning on his bed, Zhuang Liqun couldn't find anything to do to cope with the boredom and anxiety. Whatever was on the TV didn't attract his attention. The morning that was passing by was like an eternity. He realized that he was losing patience to that dingy place quickly. The only thing that could comfort him were the thoughts of the big "revenue" he made from the "deal".

"It'll pass." He told himself. Then he began to think about lunch, whether to pick up something outside, or to cook convenient noodle. While he was uncertain which one to choose, there was a knock on the door.

His first reaction was to reach to his gun. He swiftly got off the bed and stood by the door side.

The knock came again, "Anybody there? This is the landlord!"

三十五

听起来是房东的声音，但庄立群希望他赶快走开，他已经交够四个月的房租，完全没有再跟房东打交道的必要。

门里门外都沉默了有十秒钟的功夫。庄立群突然有了一种不祥的预感。

随即，一声爆响，门被猛地撞开来。庄立群还没来得及看清门外人的脸，就被人迎头一击，按倒在地，动弹不得。

“小心有枪！”

话音刚落，庄立群的手腕就被人狠命一扭，完全没了力量，手一松，枪被人夺了去。

顿时，他的周围多出了好几个人。

他勉强转了转脖子，看清按倒他的是两个全副武装的警察。

“完了。” 他心里一沉。

The voice sounded like the landlord. However, Zhuang Liqun wished he could have left sooner. He already paid up to four months of rent. There's no need to deal with the landlord again.

There was a moment of silence on both side of the door. He suddenly had a premonition that things would go wrong.

The door was forced open following a deafening bang. Before Zhuang Liqun could get a glimpse at the intruder he had been pressed down to the ground and couldn't move at all.

"Be careful of the gun!"

What followed the voice was a powerful twist of his wrist that forced him lose the grip of the gun. It was then snapped off his hand.

He struggled to turn his neck and only found out the two men that were holding him down were fully armed police.

"I'm toasted." His heart sank.

三十六

老曾隔着玻璃见到庄立群的时候，竟然摇了摇头。站在一旁的刘明天不解地问，“怎么？我们抓错人了？画像可是你画的啊！”

“人没抓错，不过他并不像主谋。你看他那副魂不守舍的样子，充其量就是个帮凶。虽然证人的印象是，一号指挥二号。但当时的情况是，一号在她的视野里停留得比较长，所以她可能会主观认为一号是主导。二号在整个行动中很会隐蔽自己，反倒可能是真正的主谋。”

老曾话音刚落，刘明天就举起手里的二号画像，仔细地端详起来。”我也有同感，这个庄立群不是主谋。如果他能把二号供出来，就应该能破案了。”

Looking at Zhuang Liqun through the window glass, Mr. Zeng shook his head. Liu Mingtian, who was standing beside Mr. Zeng and feeling a bit puzzled, asked him, "Why? You think we got the wrong guy? It was you who drew the portrait!"

"Yes, he's the right guy. However, he doesn't look like the mastermind behind the crime. Look at him. He's scared and loses his focus. The best he could have been was just an accomplice. Although the witness got the impression that suspect one was the one in charge, not suspect two, it is possible that her judgement was skewed by spotting suspect one much longer than suspect two. Suspect two, on the other hand, was very agile in protecting himself all through the crime. He was more likely to be the principle criminal.

Liu Mingtian raised the portrait of suspect two and looked at it carefully upon Mr's Zeng's comment. "I do feel the same way. Zhuang Liqun is not the brain. If he can make a confession about suspect two, then we should be able to crack the case."

三十七

审讯室里，庄立群僵硬地坐在木椅上。手和脚都带着铐子。他眼神迷茫，似乎还没看清这到底是现实还是噩梦。他一直觉得自己谨慎小心。就是打回家的那个电话也十分短。可万万没想到，这次历险这么快就要结束。

“和你一起参与抢劫杀人的那个人是谁？”

询问者的话听起来很遥远。庄立群真希望这一切只是一个噩梦。他想一梦醒来，继续做他的修车工。

然而审问他的警察是真实的，窗上的铁条是真实的，“坦白从宽，抗拒从严。”的标语是真实的，他注定是不可能从噩梦中醒来了。

In the interrogation room, Zhuang Liqun was stiffly sitting in a wooden chair. His glares were distant, as if he wasn't able to tell whether it's reality or nightmare. He believed that he had been very careful all along. Even the phone call he made to home was very short. However, to his surprise, the adventure ended so soon.

"Who was your accomplice in the robbery?"

The voice of the questioner seemed distant. Zhuang Liqun wished that it had all been nothing but just a nightmare. He wished that he could just go back to work in the auto shop after waking up from the dream.

However, the policeman who was questioning him was real, the medal bars in the window were real, the slogan saying "Leniency to those who confess, severity to those who resist." was real. He was destined to be stuck in this nightmare.

三十八

“路是自己选的，都这个时候了，就是把什么都供出来也是死路一条。”庄立群听见了自己的心声。“给自己在朋友那留点名声吧！毕竟，他们给过我这辈子最大的梦想，虽然美梦最终成了噩梦，毕竟是自己选的路，怪不得别人。”

“抢劫杀人？我没干过。”他回答。

“你没干过？那你带枪干嘛？”

“我前段时间被人打劫，所以偷偷买了把枪防身。”

“啪！”对面桌后的胖警察一巴掌拍在了桌上。

“我没时间听你编故事！你被人打劫？！是你打劫别人吧？抢了钱还不够，还要杀人灭口。”

“我不明白你在说什么？”庄立群看了一眼胖警察，又心虚地垂下眼。

胖警察绕过桌子，凶巴巴地走了过来。庄立群暗中咬了咬牙，心想，不管他们怎么审，坚决不交代。

"It was myself who chose to go down this path. Even if I confessed everything now, it won't change my fate of death penalty." Zhuang Liqun heard his own inner voice. "It's better to keep my last dignity among my friends. After all, they were the ones who ever gave me the biggest dream in my life. Although the dream turned into a nightmare in the end, it's my own choice. There's no one else that should take the blame."

"Robbery and murder? I didn't do it." He answered.

"You didn't? Then why did you carry a gun?"

"I was robbed sometimes ago. So I secretly bought a gun for self-defence."

"Pa!" The plump police officer behind the table smacked his palm on the table.

"I have no time to listen to your lies! You were robbed?! Isn't that you who robbed others? You even killed your victims to cover yourself up."

"I don't understand what you're talking about?" Zhuang Liqun cast a glance at the plump officer and then held his head down.

The officer turned around the table and stroked forward to Zhuang in a wicked manner. Zhuang Liqun clenched his teeth and thought to himself, no matter what I won't let them to get confession out of me.

三十九

就在胖警察气势汹汹地站到庄立群面前的时候，门突然开了，一个中年男人不紧不慢地走了进来。胖警察看到来人立马换成了笑脸。“刘队，这小子不好好交代还嘴硬。”

“那你也不能用这种态度吧？”中年男人的话充满力度。胖警察知道自己理亏，尴尬地站在一旁。中年人抬手示意他出去。

胖警察走后，坐在胖警察旁边做笔记的年轻警察好奇地看着中年人。只见中年人挪过一把椅子在庄立群旁边坐下。

“小孙，你给他倒杯水吧！”

年轻人愣了一愣。狐疑地看了一眼中年人后起身倒水去了。

“庄立群，我先自我介绍一下吧。我叫刘明天，是你的案子的主要负责人。我们先随便聊聊好吗？”

As soon as the plump officer stood in front of Zhuang Liqun intimately, the door opened and a middle-aged man came in composedly. The plump officer smiled at him immediately. "Liu Sir, this guy doesn't cooperate at all."

"What about your attitude?" Middle-aged man asked right back. The plump officer stood awkwardly knowing he was in the wrong. "Middle-age" gestured him to leave.

After he left, the young police officer who was sitting beside him observed "middle-age" curiously. "Middle-age" moved a chair to Zhuang's side and sat himself down.

"Sun, could you get him a glass of water please?"

The young officer was a bit surprised. Then he cast a doubtful glance at "middle-age" and went to get the water.

"Zhuang Liqun, please let me introduce myself. My name is Liu Mingtian. I'm mainly responsible for your case. Can we have a little chat first?"

四十

“你说抢劫杀人犯该怎样判比较合理？”刘明天说话的语气就像在和嫌疑人商量事情。

“死刑呗！”对方的声音不大，但语气很横，完全没有继续交谈下去的意愿。刘明天顺着他的思路继续说，“如果真是死刑，你想过给你家人留下点什么吗？”

对方沉默了两秒钟，然后突然抬高声音，“你跟我说这些干嘛？我什么也没做，你们凭什么抓我？”

“凭证据。”刘明天说着，从口袋里拿出一个小本，翻开来，逐条把已掌握的证据念给对方听。

他念的最后两条是：“嫌疑人在齐友发和崔燕被害那天开车进入过水库，即抛尸地点，人证和物证充分”。

被害人身体里取出的子弹经技术鉴定，与嫌疑人所持枪支相符。

念完，他轻轻关上笔记本，放回口袋。抬眼直视庄立群。

庄立群和中年人对视了二十秒功夫，突然垂下眼，懊恼而丧气地呼出一口气。“既然你们都调查清楚了，还问我干嘛？”

"Tell me what is a reasonable sentence to give for robbery and murder?" Asked Liu Mingtian in a negotiation tone.

"Death penalty!" The answer came in in a quiet voice but tough tone, with no interest in keeping the conversation going.

Liu Mingtian went along with the suspect's thoughts, "If it is true. Have you thought about leaving anything to your family?"

Zhuang Liqun kept silent for two seconds and then suddenly raised his voice, "What are you talking about? I didn't do anything. How could you arrest me just like that?"

"We have proofs." Liu Mingtian told him. Then he fished out a small notebook from his pocket and opened it. He then read out all the evidence items to the suspect.

The last two he read were: "The suspect entered the reservoir, where Qi Youfa and Cui Yan were buried, on the day of murder. There are witness testimony and material evidence to support it."

The bullet that was taken out from the victim was tested to match the gun that the suspect carried.

When he finished reading, he closed his notebook and put it back inside his pocket. He then looked straight at Zhuang Liqun.

Zhuang Liqun looked back at him for about twenty seconds before he stopped and sighed disheartenedly.

"If you've got everything you need, why you need to talk to me?"

四十一

中年人看着年轻人轻轻摇了摇头。“年轻人，你给我的印象并不差。你虽然犯下重罪，但良心还是有的。我相信这宗劫案并不是你策划的，我猜你只是个帮凶，并不是主谋。你现在有两种选择，要不把实情说了，帮我们抓到主谋，也算做一件对得起良心的事。要不继续否认。不管你怎么否认，只要证据确凿，我们照样可以给你定罪。到时候，主谋可要开心了，有你为他顶罪，他落得逍遥自在，还可以继续祸害他人。而你的家人呢？你母亲，你妹妹，她们将面对的现实有多残酷你想过没有？”

提到妈妈和妹妹，庄立群心里紧了一紧。从被抓那一刻，他就努力不去想她们。他祈祷最好他们也把他忘却。反正，他们所熟悉的那个可以信赖的儿子和哥哥早已变了，变得自己都快认不出来了。

“Middle-age” looked at the young suspect and shook his head. “Young man, the impression you gave me is not bad. Although you committed serious crime, you still have conscience. I believe you were not the mastermind behind this robbery. I guess you were only an accomplice, not the boss. Now you got two options: Either to tell the truth and help us find your boss, which is the right thing to do from good conscience; Or, you can deny as you want. No matter how hard you try to deny, as long as we have proven evidence, we are able to give you the sentence you deserve. By that time, your boss will be happy to have you serve the time for him. He could go on to harm others. Then what about your family? Your mother and sister? How cruel the reality would be for them to face? Have you ever given a thought about that?”

With his mother and sister mentioned, Zhuang Liqun’s mind got agitated. He tried to not to think about them since the moment he was captured. He prayed that it’s better they forgot about him forever. After all, the son and brother they were familiar with had changed. He had changed into a person he himself could barely recognize.

四十二

“这个人是你用枪射杀的吧？”

一张被害人胸部中弹，脸色死灰的照片呈现在庄立群的眼前。白衬衣上已凝固成暗红色的大片血迹显得十分突兀。中年男死者睁着眼，令人颤栗的目光穿过相纸，直刺庄立群的面庞。

庄立群“呀”了一声，身体本能地向后躲避。

“他是死在你的枪下吧？知道吗？他死的时候女儿刚出生两天。如果这一切没有发生，他至少可以和女儿见上一面。”

庄立群把目光移向地板，一身冷汗。”求求你，别让我看照片！”他心想。

刘明天观察着庄立群的表情变化，然后伸手把水杯送到他的面前。庄立群接过水杯，一仰头把水喝完。

“不知道你妹妹知道你做的事后会怎么想。”刘明天小声说。

“不要告诉她。”庄立群低声恳求。

刘明天镇静地回视着他。“我答应你。我会和你母亲商量如何回答你妹妹的问题。”

庄立群点头示谢。

"Is this the victim that shot by you?"

A photo of the victim with a face grimly pale and gun shot wounds on the chest appeared in front of Zhuang Liqun. The big blotch of dark red dried bloodstains stood out on his white shirt. The middle-aged male victim stared ghastly at Zhuang Liqun through the photo sheet.

Zhuang Liqun jumped his body backward with a startled cry.

"He died from your shooting, didn't he? You know what, he just became a father to a new born daughter two days ago. If nothing happened, at least he could have seen her daughter once."

In cold sweat, Zhuang Liqun moved away his eyes to the floor. "Please, don't show me the photo again!" He begged in mind.

Liu Mingtian observed the changing face of Zhuang Liqun and passed on the glass of water to him. Zhuang Liqun received the glass and drank all water in one gulp.

"I don't know what will come to your sister's mind once she knew what you did." Liu Mingtian murmured.

"Don't tell her." Zhuang Liqun pleaded in a low voice.

Liu Mingtian looked back at him calmly. "You have my promise. I will have a talk with your mother about that."

Zhuang Liqun nodded lightly to say thank you.

四十三

“我承认我参与了抢劫杀人。”说出这句话后他突然感觉到一阵轻松。

“很好。告诉我，谁是策划人？”

“这个...我不能告诉你。”

刘明天笑了一笑，“你觉得你很讲义气是不是？庄立群，我知道你不是策划人，那你告诉我，和你在131国道上持枪抢劫的那个同伙是不是策划人？”
庄立群沉默了半分钟之久，然后回答，“是。”

“很好。那你知不知道，他近期有没有别的什么计划？”刘明天仍然用朋友聊天般的口气继续问庄立群。

庄立群又一次沉默。刘明天倒吸了口凉气，心想，如果他没有及时否认，那就暗示策划人还有新的计划。

做笔记的年轻刑警也紧张而期待地看着他们。

“是不是还会有人丢掉性命？”刘明天尽量把语气放平和。

"OK , I admit that I was part of the robbery and murder." He felt greatly relieved after that confession.

"Very good. Who planned all this?"

"This ... I can't tell you."

Liu Mingtian smiled, "Do you think you're doing the right thing being blindly loyal to your friends? Zhuang Liqun, I know you were not the one behind all this. Was it the one that robbed together with you on Highway 131?"

Zhuang Liqun was silence for half a minute, and then he said,"Yes."

"Very good. Then do you know whether he has any other plans lately?" Liu Mingtian asked in a chatty manner.

Zhuang Liqun became quiet again. Seeing the likelihood of another planned crime, Liu Mingtian felt a chill ran down his spine.

The young police officer who was taking notes for the interview looked at them, worried.

"Is anyone going to die?" Asked Liu Mingtian in a peaceful tone.

四十四

庄立群坐立不安，但还是不愿回答。

“想想吧，年轻人，你现在说出来，还可以挽救一些人的性命，拯救他们的家人。也算赎罪立功。你难道愿意永远和那些没良心的人渣站在一边吗？”

“人渣？！”庄立群突然抬头逼视着中年人。“你叫他人渣？！你以为你比他强？他和你一样每天进出这道大门，和你穿一样的制服，做一样的工作，他是你们的人，就是他教唆我杀人放火！别跟我谈什么大道理，你们都是一样的人渣！”

激动的嫌疑人一把将水杯推开。水杯重重地砸在地上，摔了个粉身碎骨。

这会儿该轮到刘明天纳闷了，他只觉心里一凉。“二号嫌犯是我们自己的人？！”

做笔记的年轻警察也惊愕地站起身。中年人冲他轻轻摆手，示意他坐下。

As fidgeting as he was, Zhuang Liqun didn't answer.

"Think about it, young man. If you tell us now we might still have time to save people, in turn to save their family. You can somewhat atone for what you've done. Do you really want to stand by those scoundrels forever?"

"Scoundrel?!" Zhuang Liqun suddenly raised his head and stared at "middle-age". "You call him scoundrel?! You think you're a better man? He goes in and out of the same door as you do, he wears the same uniform as you do, he does the same job as you do, he's your people, but he taught me to murder! No need to bluff in my face, you're nothing better than him!"

The agitated suspect pushed the water glass away. It fell onto the ground and broke into pieces.

Now it's Liu Mingtian's turn to become bewildered. He felt a sudden drop in his heart.

"Suspect two is our guy?!"

The young officer who was taking the note stood up in awe. "Middle-age" gestured him to sit down again.

四十五

刚才的发作让庄立群得到了情绪的释放。他双手抱头，又像一个受了委屈的孩子一样啜泣起来。

“你的警察朋友，我真为他感到羞耻。告诉我，他是谁。”

啜泣声并没有停止。刘明天也不催促，只是在一旁耐心地等待。

庄立群在心里做了最后一次挣扎，然后异常平静地吐出几个字，

“他叫柯勇。”

当刘明天把这个新发现告诉赵凯峰的时候，赵凯峰不敢相信自己的耳朵。

“柯勇？！怎么会是他？”他虽然和柯勇是同乡，但和他并没有深交。即使这样，他也很难相信柯勇会犯下这样亵渎警察职业的罪行来。

The angry outburst helped Zhuang Liqun to let go the pressure he had inside. He buried his head in his hands and sobbed like a child who was misunderstood by others.

"I'm very shamed of your police friend. Please tell me, who he is."

The sobbing didn't stop. Liu Mingtian didn't urge. He waited patiently aside.

Zhuang Liqun struggled one more time in his mind and let out a few sounds calmly, "His name is Ke Yong."

When Liu Mingtian told the news to Zhao Kaifeng, he couldn't believe his ears.

"Ke Yong?! For real?" Although he was from the same hometown as Ke Yong, he didn't know him that well. That being said, the truth of Ke Yong's anti-police conduct was hard to swallow.

四十六

“就是防暴队的柯勇。庄立群已经在相片上指认了。小赵。。。我知道柯勇和你是同乡，他有没有向你打听过案件的侦查情况？”

“这...” 赵凯峰被问住了。

“小赵，把实情告诉我，他昨天请假回家了。眼下一切有关他的信息都可能是重要线索！”

赵凯峰忽觉脊背发凉，他意识到他犯下了一个严重的错误。“昨天中午他给我打过一个电话。向我打听一号嫌犯的抓捕情况。我告诉他我们抓到他了。”

“看来，还真是他。”刘明天低声说。

"It was the Ke Yong in anti-riot team. Zhuang Liqun has identified him from his photo. Zhao ... I know Ke Yong and you are from the same hometown, has he asked you anything about the investigation?"

"That ..." Zhao Kaifeng hesitated.

"Zhao, tell me the truth. He asked for a leave and went back home yesterday. Now every single piece of information about him is crucial!"

Zhao Kaifeng had an uneasy feeling. He realized that he had made a serious mistake. "He called me yesterday noon. He wanted to know how it went for the chase of suspect one ... I told him we just got him."

"OK, then it is him."Liu Mingtian murmured.

四十七

“刘队，我违反了纪律，对不起！我压根没想到会是他。”赵凯峰一脸歉意。

“这次就算是个教训。记住这句话，在嫌疑人没有确定之前，任何人都有嫌疑。”刘明天话音刚落，那个记笔记的年轻刑警就风风火火地赶到刘明天面前。

“刘队，刚接到消息，有人看到柯勇出现在他老家‘云山村’。”

刘明天听完迅速向赵凯峰做了个手势，两人就匆匆走出了房间。

"Liu Sir, I violated the rule, I'm sorry, I've never doubted about him." Zhao Kaifeng said apologizingly.

"It's a lesson learned. Please remember, before the suspect is identified, anyone could be possible." Right at that moment, the young officer who's keeping note of interview came up to Liu Mingtian.

"Liu Sir, we just received a message saying Ke Yong is seen in his hometown Yunshan Village."

Upon that message, Liu Mingtian gestured Zhao Kaifeng to hit the road with him immediately.

四十八

“云山村”是个山清水秀的地方。然而此刻它却被荷枪实弹的武警所占据。他们围住一家农宅，一个拿喇叭的武警正向屋里喊话。

农宅不算大，中等平房户形。一堵灰白色的围墙围住四五个房间和一个小院。作为警方攻坚的焦点，院子安静得让人不安。

警方的喊话并没有得到屋里人的响应。围墙上朱红色的大门纹丝不动。

据侦查得来的信息，柯勇就在屋内。他在警方第一次进入时向外射击。警方被迫退出。但屋里是否还有别人，并不清楚。

“Yunshan Village” was a place with enchanting scenery. However, it was occupied by armed police force that day. They surrounded one farm house. A police man was talking through a loud speaker.

The farm house was not very big. A grayish wall encompassed a yard and four or five rooms inside. Being the centre of the police attack, the yard looked uneasily quiet.

The police didn't receive any response from inside the house. The red door of the house stayed shut.

According to what they knew, Ke Yong was actually inside. He fired back when the policed tried to enter the house at first. Police was forced to back out. However, they were not sure whether there were other people inside.

四十九

僵持一段时间后，警方开始投掷催泪弹。围墙里顷刻烟雾弥漫。与次同时，有人迅速从前门进入，穿过院子，攻入离大门最近的厨房。据了解，农宅的所有房间从里面都是想通的。

在外围待命的人都紧张地观察着农宅。这里面也包括刘明天和赵凯峰。

赵凯峰是盼望不要再有枪声的。他最好不要出人命。而刘明天则冷静地对他耳语了一句，“做好最坏的打算。”

他的话音刚落，农宅里突然枪声大作。声音刚一消停，更多的武警进入农宅支援。

After a short period of stalemate, police started to throw tear bomb into the farm house. Smoke spread out inside the walls immediately. Meanwhile, people broke in from the front door, ran across the yard and entered the kitchen, the room that was closest to the door.

People who were on stand-by watched the house anxiously. Liu Mingtian and Zhao Kaifeng were among them.

Zhao Kaifeng had hoped to not hear any cross fire. He wished no more lives to be claimed again. Yet Liu Mingtian whispered to him, "Prepare for the worst."

Right after that, the gun fire stirred up violently inside the house. Before the next break of gun fire, more armed police forced their way in.

五十

不一会儿，农宅的正门大开，刘明天在听到耳边里的指示后对赵凯峰摆摆手，“走吧，到我们了。你得有点心理准备。”

赵凯峰会意地点点头，胃里一阵发紧。

他俩进入农宅的时候，法医已在他们前一步赶到。大家关注的焦点是离厨房最远的一间卧房。

透过因火药和催泪弹而变得污浊的空气，赵凯峰一眼认出了坐在墙角的柯勇。带着橡胶手套的法医正给他做检查。他半睁着眼睛，手里还握着一只手枪，已没有生命迹象。

Not long after, the front door of the farm house was wide open. Liu Mingtian gestured to Zhao Kaifeng to go in upon hearing the order from his earphone. "Let's go. It's our turn now. Stay cool."

Zhao Kaifeng nodded in understanding. He felt the stress in his stomach.

When the two of them entered the farm house, forensic investigators were ahead of them. People's attention focused in one bedroom that was furthest from the kitchen.

Through the fuzzy air that smelled smoke and gunpowder, Zhao Kaifeng recognized the sitting figure at the corner to be Ke Yong. Forensic investigators were checking on him with gloved hands. His eyes was semi-open. A handgun was still clutched in his palm. He was dead.

五十一

赵凯峰凝视着柯勇的脸，希望能在上面找到一些答案。然而他找到的只有冷漠。在他的头的上方，贴着一张书法作品，上书，“出人头地”。

这四个字也曾经伴随过赵凯峰成长。“出人头地”，在他年轻的生命中，这四个字也曾经激励过他。不过今天，它们的形象却显得如此扭曲。他悲哀地揣度，某一年的某一天，当柯勇和他现在一样注视这四个字的时候，他的心里是否正盘算着一个杀人劫财的计划呢？

此次抢劫案劫得的脏款，大部分都在农宅里被寻获。庄力群还没有等到分脏就被警方发现。而柯勇收买的“内线”，也很快得到了确认。他逃过了柯勇的“灭口”，却没有逃过法律的制裁。

Zhao Kaifeng stared at Ke Yong's face, hoping he could find some answers. Yet all he could find was coldness. Right above Ke Yong's face, a piece of calligrapher's work was hanging on the wall, on it it wrote: "Chu Ren Tou Di".

Those four characters had been too familiar to him while he grew up. "Chu Ren Tou Di" – they had kept inspiring him through out his young life. However today, the meaning of the phrase felt twisted. The thoughts came to him sadly that, on a certain day of a year, while Ke Yong was standing here looking at the motto like he was, a plan of murder and robbery was actually hatching in his mind.

Most of the robbed money was found in the farm house. Zhuang Liquan was captured before he got a chance to take his share of money. The "insider" that Ke Yong used was soon identified. He escaped murder from Ke Yong, but couldn't escape the penalty from the law.

五十二

至于柯勇所卷入的黑恶势力，在劫案被侦破后的一年里，也遭到了警方的突击和清理。那个所谓的漂流俱乐部也被勒令关门整顿。

庄力群终审被判死刑。判决结果在人们意料之中。“杀人偿命”，这是中国的古训，也是一个最简单的司法逻辑。何况是这种有预谋的抢劫杀人，是没有理由可以开脱的。而庄力群自己也放弃上诉。

就在同事为破获大案要案而忙着庆功的时候，刘明天却独自开车离去。他径直去了看守所见庄力群。并给他带来了一封信。

As for the vicious gangs that Ke Yong was involved in, they were battled by the police in the following year. That "rafting club" was ordered to tidy up with licence suspended.

Zhuang Liqun was sentenced to death in his trial. The result was expected by all. "Life for life" was a well accepted rule since ancient China, it's also a simple judicial logic to all. Moreover, it's hardly any excuse for such premeditated robbery and murder. Zhuang Liqun himself also gave up the right to appeal.

When Liu Mingtian's colleagues were celebrating their latest success in fighting the vicious underground gangs, he drove away alone. He was to meet Zhuang Liqun in the detention centre. He also brought a letter to him.

五十三

“你现在先别打开，等我走了慢慢看吧。昨天顺路看了你母亲，她现在状态不太好。不过她说，你的事她和老钱会慢慢跟你妹妹说的。她希望你心里负担不要太大。事情已经这样了，多想无益，这段时间保养好身体就行。”

庄力群点点头，母亲嘱咐的“这段时间”，正是自己在人世的最后日子。什么梦想，憧憬，欲望，打算，现在统统没了。他现在所惦记的，只是自己犯下的罪恶，给亲人的阴影还会有多长。对于受害者的家属，在法庭最后陈述中，他由衷地向他们道歉，并深深鞠了一躬。他说，“如果时间能够倒转，如果我还能有第二次选择，我真的希望什么都没有发生。为了过上有头有脸的生活，在他人的鼓动下，我一错再错，越陷越深，最终犯下不可饶恕的罪行。我很后悔，但已无力回天。希望我的教训，能警醒其他步入歧途的年轻人。”

“You can open it later after I left. I visited your Mom yesterday on my way home. She’s still trying hard to face it. However, she said that she and Lao Qian will tell your sister what happened to you little by little. She hoped that you don’t burden yourself too much. What happened happened, it won’t help to keep thinking about it. Please take care of yourself for this period of time.”

Zhuang Liqun nodded. “This period of time” his Mom mentioned, was actually his last days to live. Dreams, hope, desire and plans, they are all gone now. All that had been left to him to concern about, was how long his sin will shadow his loved ones. For the victim’s family, while giving his last statement on the court, he sincerely apologized to them and bowed to them in deep regret. He said, “If we can travel back in time, how much I wished that none of this had happened. In the pursuit of a successful life, with other folks’ bad influence, I went on the wrong path of life and was trapped in the wrong side of the world. Eventually I committed unforgivable crimes. As much as I regret about it, I can’t reverse what I’ve done. I hope the lessons of me will wake up those young people that are stepping on the wrong path of life now.”

五十四

刘明天走后，庄力群打开了信封。原来，那是父亲给他写的。父亲显然还不知道儿子出大事了。还告诉他自己就快刑满释放了。说就要与他见面了。庄力群忍不住湿眼。他想，刘明天没有把真相告诉父亲，是不想让他出狱前受刺激。

在庄贵祥被释放的早晨，刘明天，文素云和庄贵祥的弟弟静静地等候在监狱门口。庄贵祥拎着属于自己的那一点物品，忐忑地走出了大门。五十来岁的他，已是一头白发。他看到了文素云，弟弟和那个来看过他的警察。他心中涌起一股温暖。他向他们走来，向他们身后寻找，但他们中唯一缺了那个他日夜思念的儿子。

他并不知道，等待他的三个人，此时比他还要忐忑和紧张，他们已准备好将实情告诉他，准备好面对他的崩溃，准备好同心同力帮他走过黑暗，重新开始新的生活。

- 全文完 -

When Liu Mingtian left, Zhuang Liqun opened the envelope . It was actually from his Father. Obviously he didn't know what happened to him. His father told him that he almost finished his service in the prison and would re-gain his freedom. He said they would re-unite soon. Zhuang Liqun couldn't help but let tears welled up his eyes. He thought that Liu Mingtian didn't tell his father about his trial because he didn't want to sadden him before his release.

On the morning that Zhuang Guixiang was finally released, Liu Mingtian, Wen Suyun and Zhuang Guixiang's brother were waiting quietly outside the prison. Zhuang Guixiang carried all that he had and stepped outside of the prison anxiously. He was in his 50's though his hair was all gray. He saw Wen Suyun, his brother, and the police officer who had visited him. Warm feelings filled up his body instantly. He walked toward them, he glanced over their back, he couldn't spot the son that he had missed so much!

He didn't know that the three were even more anxious and nervous than himself. They've been preparing to tell him the truth, to face his desperation upon hearing the truth, and to help him get out of the darkness and start a new life

- The End -