

Chinese Short Story

中文微小說

Intermediate to Advanced Level Chinese

罪惡有痕

Traces of Sin

【Traditional Chinese - 繁體中文】

Grace Feng

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“罪惡有痕 Traces of Sin” by Grace Feng

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南方的盛夏，悶熱得連一絲涼風都沒有。

屋裏的電風扇一邊轉，一邊發出嘎吱嘎吱的聲音。當人的思維在高速運轉時，大概也會發出這樣的聲音。

窗邊坐著的女人有一頭染成棕黃色的卷發。她盯著窗沿的某個地方，努力回想著當天早晨發生的事情。

旁邊一個男人提示她，”你不用害怕，我們會對你的個人情況絕對保密。在這起持槍搶劫案裏，你很可能是唯一看清嫌犯模樣的人。我們雖然已經做了一遍筆錄，你不妨再敘述一遍經過，這樣做對你的回想會有幫助。”

女人點了點頭。這是一個聰明鎮靜的女人。一份推銷保險的職業，雖然不太討人喜歡，但卻培養了她對人過目不忘的能力。

“因為客戶住得遠，我今天很早就出門了。天剛朦朧亮，我就開上131國道。”

“當時路上車多不多？”提問的男人一邊問，一邊在紙上記著。

“車很少，星期天那條路都很好開。”

“請繼續說。”

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

“我的車前面是一輛紅色桑塔納，我跟車開了一段後它突然減速。我忙踩剎車。同時聽見前面有撞車的聲音。是桑塔納追尾了，它前面那輛被撞的商務車也停了下來。奇怪的是，在桑塔納的右道，一輛白色轎車也同時停了下來。本來就只有兩條道，這樣交通就堵死了。

我停住車，剛想下車看看，抬頭看見商務車上下來一個男的，同時從白車裏也下來一個男的。商務車的人指揮白車的人繞到桑塔納駕駛員這邊，然後兩人分別從衣服裏掏出手槍，拉開桑塔納車的車門，先後往車裏開了幾槍。我被嚇到，沒敢下車，低下頭，按電動鈕把車窗拉起，把車門反鎖。槍聲停後，我害怕他們過來找麻煩，又壯著膽把頭抬起來察看。這時，那兩個開槍的人已從桑塔納車上拖出一個黑色的旅行包，看起來很沉的樣子。然後他們把包扔進白車，一起開車跑掉了。”

做筆錄的男人是刑警隊長劉明天。對於本市一個月來發生的第二起槍案，他已感受到了來自多方的壓力。桑塔納車上的司機和乘客，當時正帶了大筆追來的欠款往回趕，準備回公司清點後交給財務。不料路遇劫匪，雙雙斃命。

"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.

“開槍的那兩個人，你看得清楚嗎？” 劉明天問。

“指揮的那個很清楚，白車裏的那個不太清楚。他帶著帽子，而且行動很快。”

“沒關係，慢慢來，請盡量回憶。說到這，劉明天站了起來，指了指坐在一幅畫架旁的微胖的中年男子，“這位是我們這兒出名的畫師，老曾。你把開槍人的模樣詳細描述給他聽，他就能照你說的畫出來。”

女人看向“畫師”老曾。她一臉疑惑。從沒聽說公安局裏也有畫師。不過她想，自己記憶裏的形象要是能用筆墨生動地勾畫出來，那真是一件絕妙的事情！老曾面善，不象劉明天看起來嚴肅。女人稍稍鬆了口氣，端起桌上的可樂拉罐，痛快地喝了一大口。

“那我們先從指揮搶劫的那個開始吧！”老曾扶了扶眼鏡，拿起一只素描筆，開始用一問一答的方式，引導女人一點一滴地回憶搶劫犯的身高，長相，肢體語言和穿著。

女人記不清和老曾聊了多長時間，兩個小時？叁個小時？她只覺得畫師平易近人，興趣廣泛，既談案情，也談一些和案情無關的話題。不知不覺中，畫師已經把兩個嫌犯的畫像都畫完了。

“我現在給你同時看四幅畫像，你看你能不能一眼認出指揮搶劫的那個家夥。”老曾推了推鼻梁上的眼鏡，眼帶笑意地對女人說。

女人心裏七上八下的，已經放鬆了的心情又緊張了起來。憑我那些支離破碎的描述，老曾會畫出一幅什麼樣的圖畫呢？

四幅黑白畫像被同時翻了過來。女人剛用眼瀏覽了一遍，就驚恐地捂住嘴。畫像中有這麼一張臉，只看了一眼就讓女人倒吸了一口涼氣。空氣裏也突然憑添了一種殺氣。

“砰！砰！”槍聲在女人的耳際回旋。

“就是他！”女人顫抖地伸出手，指了指其中的一幅畫像。

"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

“一號嫌疑人比較靠譜，二號嫌疑人沒有一號畫得成功。因為目擊者的印象不夠清晰，所以只能盡力而爲了。”

劉明天和另幾個刑警來看畫像時，老曾特意做了說明。

“我看二號畫得也不錯嘛，好象看起來還有點眼熟呢。”同事們七嘴八舌地調侃起來。

劉明天問老曾，“這兩幅畫像能不能公布？”老曾又認真看了看自己的作品，說，

“我看可以，公布吧，一號這張把目擊證人自己都給嚇到了，她說太像了。但願她的記憶是準確的。”

當晚的電視新聞中，老曾的嫌疑人畫像，在千家萬戶的屏幕上被反復播放。

“媽媽，那個畫上的人好象哥哥啊！”

正在廚房裏洗碗的中年女子，用袖子抹了抹臉上的汗，歪著頭瞟了一眼客廳裏的電視，又轉頭對女兒無奈地笑笑，“佳佳，快做你的作業！你哥咋能象那個人呢？

那是搶劫犯，是大壞蛋！不懂不要瞎說。”

她麻利地把手在圍裙上擦幹，走過來關了電視。慈愛地撫摸著女兒的小腦袋。

“是不是想哥哥了？”

“嗯。”女兒委屈地撅起小嘴。

“那過兩天媽叫哥過來吃飯？”

“好啊，好啊！”女孩仰視母親的小臉，立時笑成了一朵花。

"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

與此同時，受害人的桑塔納，和被嫌疑人丟棄的商務車，都被從現場拉回局裏，由那技人員進行物證檢驗，尋找嫌犯可能留下的蛛絲馬跡。

綜合目擊者的證言，法醫報告，和物證人員的初步結論，劉明天在案情分析會上試圖還原搶劫殺人的具體經過，"一號和二號嫌犯都開了槍。一人打了兩發，各負責一個目標。如此短的時間，兩個人分別從不同的兩輛車上下來，分工殺人，再劫走巨款，一起開車逃逸，臨時起意的可能性很小，應該可以斷定是有計劃，有預謀的行動。"

"爲什麼要分工殺人?"一個清亮的聲音，從會議室的一角傳來。這一嗓子吸引了所有人的目光。

提問的是那個新分來的大學生趙凱峰。

"問得好!"劉明天提了提嗓門。"跟據目擊者的證言，一號嫌疑人，也就是商務車的駕駛員，是開槍的第一人，他如果有足夠的子彈，完全可以在最短的時間裏射殺兩個受害人。但他沒這樣做，他在殺害駕駛員後，閃身讓他的同夥，也就是開白車的二號嫌犯，來射殺乘客座位上的那名被害人。"

"好比他們之間簽了一個合同，每人手上一樁命案，這樣誰也不要心存僥幸去出賣另一方。"說話的又是趙凱峰。

"有道理。所謂的生死契約，比建立在利益上的契約要牢固得多，他們既需要相互依靠，又能夠相互制約。現在的劫匪也都蠻講犯罪文化的。"技術科的秦東打趣道。

"回到正題，下一步的當務之急，追查逃逸的白色捷達，調查受害人死前幾日的活動，確定槍支類型。商務車已經確認是案發前一天被盜走的，現在還在做檢驗。"

劉明天話音剛落，會議室的門外進來一個人，"劉隊，剛接到電話，說東風廣場那邊發現一輛棄置的白色捷達，讓你們過去看看。"

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

當劉明天，秦東和趙凱峰趕到東風廣場時，有兩個交警已經守在那輛白色捷達旁了。高個的那個指了指車子，“在這至少停了叁個小時了，旁邊的小販說，從他們來時車就已經停這兒了。車門開著，沒人見到過車主。這是違章停車，聽說你們在查一輛白色捷達，所以拖走前先通知你們過來看看。”

秦東此時已在車的另一側後門處蹲下，“你們過來看，車門上有個洞！”

秦東所指的洞，大小能穿過人的一個小手指。洞的形狀和位置讓秦東頗感興奮。

“這車看起來很新嘛，卻偏偏生出個洞來？”劉明天看著秦東興奮的表情，問道，

“你覺得它象什麼？”

“槍洞。”秦東回答。

“你不是說，搶劫案中的四顆彈頭都找到了嗎？”

“這個槍洞跟那四槍沒有關係。”秦東肯定地回答。

“就是說，可能還有新的命案？”趙凱峰看看秦東，又看看劉明天，兩人都沒有說話。

白色捷達的車主很快就弄清楚了，是一個登山用品公司的老板，叫齊友發。但接下來的，卻是劉明天最不希望聽到的結果，齊友發在搶劫案發前一天失蹤了。

據齊友發的雇員反映，齊友發失蹤那天下班比較早。下班的時候是跟他的情婦一起開車走的。而他的家人一直到夜裏都沒見他回家。他的妻子打不通他的手機，擔心出事。第二天中午就去派出所報了警。

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.

不難推斷，這輛白色捷達很可能就是劫案中的那輛車。對它的堪驗也立刻成了破案的關鍵。

“這車收拾得可真乾淨，就是外星人開過來的，也該留個爪印不是？”秦東嘀咕著。

趙凱峰聳聳肩，做了個鬼臉。看秦東一臉大汗，就安慰他道，“秦老師，你剛才不是在後車座位上發現兩點血跡了嗎？”說著，他抬了抬手上拿著紫外燈，提醒秦東。

“那兩點痕跡可能是人血，也可能不是。我本來想，既然有彈孔，那車上應該能檢測到多一些的血跡。但我錯了。整個車內乾淨得出奇，根本找不到有價值的證據。你幫我把車庫門打開，燈也開了。我們可以看看車外部。這鬼天氣！”秦東罵了一句，擦了擦額上的汗。然後把車引擎蓋打開支了起來。

趙凱峰開了燈，雖然是白天，能照進車庫的太陽光仍不充分。他對引擎沒有興趣。通常在人命案裏，後廂多會被用來運屍。這樣想著，他繞到車尾，正打算開車後廂，秦東在那一頭發出一聲感歎。

“怪事，引擎上居然有鳥糞?!”

“鳥糞?!”

秦東指的鳥糞是一小塊白色的粘稠物。他用戴著手套的手指摸了摸。

“還沒幹，落到引擎上的時間還不長。鳥的糞便怎麼會落到引擎上呢？”秦東琢磨著。

“肯定不是在車行走的時候，誰會開著引擎蓋開車？”趙凱峰也來了興趣。

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.

秦東在車旁踱起步來，“既然齊友發和情婦崔雁雙雙失蹤，而且失蹤時開的車又出現在搶劫案中，我們是不是可以這樣推測：齊友發下班後和崔雁開車出來，他們可能去了郊外一個有林子的地方，把車停了，待在車內，又怕被路人看見，所以齊友發就把引擎蓋支起來。樹上的鳥兒就在那段時間裏在引擎上做了印記。”

“引擎蓋被拉起，擋住了齊友發和崔雁的視線，所以他們也不會注意路人。趙凱峰試著把秦東的推測講完。“他們更不會想到，有人竟拿著槍來打劫。從車被發現時的狀況來看，歹徒至少開了一槍。車被搶，再被丟棄時裏裏外外都清洗得幹乾淨淨。這說明齊友發和崔雁很可能已經被害了。”

秦東沉思著點了點頭，”接下來的問題是，拋屍地點又在哪兒呢？”

“我們還沒堪驗過後廂吧？”被趙凱峰一提醒，秦東忙繞過來打開後廂。後廂和車內一樣，幹淨得沒有任何雜物。趙凱峰略顯失望。

秦東取下一只手套，摸了摸後廂的墊毯，“還有點濕！看來他們用水好好清洗過。”

說著他把墊毯拉起來，底下露出一個備用胎。秦東重新帶上手套，在備用胎的縫隙裏摸來摸去。

“你在找什麼？”趙凱峰忍不住問。剛被分到刑警隊的他，心裏還帶著一些心高氣傲。對老刑警的辦案方式，他有自己的看法。對秦東現在的舉動，他覺得是白費時間。

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

“他們如果用水沖洗過後廂，那小的物品就會被水流沖走，而且很容易卡在有縫隙的地方。”秦東覺察到趙凱峰語氣裏的煩躁，但他並不介意。片刻後，他從備用胎的縫隙裏摸出幾粒粗沙。他把他們放在一個物證帶裏，然後繼續在備有胎裏摸索。

接下來秦東摸出來的東西，讓趙凱峰著實愣住了。

“螺獅?!”

“沒錯，螺獅！從一個嶄新的備用胎裏找到的螺獅。“秦東小心翼翼地舉起他的新發現，得意而暢快地笑了，笑得眼角的皺紋都立時堆積起來。“這一定是沖洗用的水裏帶來的。還有這些沙子，這些東西是不可能從自來水裏跑出來的。”秦東說著，用食指戳了戳螺獅的螺蓋，“還是濕潤的呢!”

“這麼說，他們是在野外清洗的車子?”趙凱峰又回到了請教式的語氣。

“沒錯。走，我們該去看看地圖了。”秦東把幾個物證帶捏在手上，朝趙凱峰揮了揮手，一起走出了車庫。

“媽媽！哥哥來啦！哥哥來啦！”小姑娘站在門口，把門外一個穿白T恤衫的年輕小夥子拉了進來。

小夥子一把抱起了妹妹，在空中輕輕拋起又接住，“小丫頭，你是越長越沉了，哥都快抱不動你了!”

“立群來啦？快進來！先坐會兒，菜一會兒就好!”女孩的媽媽文素雲手裏拿著一把蔬菜，眉開眼笑地把兒子迎了進來。

"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

莊立群陪同母異父的妹妹玩了一會兒，就跑進廚房幫忙上菜。

“佳佳爸什麼時候回來？”他問。

“快了，說著話他就該回來了吧。你和佳佳先喝點果汁，看會兒電視，他一來我們就開飯。”文素雲一邊抄菜一邊招呼孩子們。

其實莊立群今年已經二十四了，在這個紛雜的社會裏也混了八年有餘。不過每次來生母家做客，他都會覺得自己又變回了孩子。

莊立群斜靠在沙發上，讓妹妹靠在自己身上看“喜羊羊”。他想，也許有一天他自己也會有一個這樣的家。不過，那個家會十分地氣派，他會讓自己的女人，媽媽，妹妹和所有的親戚都為之自豪。他會邀他們常來聚會。他會象個大哥一樣，關照所有他想關照的朋友們。

“立群，這些東西是你的吧，快放到客廳去，廚房油煙大，別弄髒了。”已準備好一桌豐盛菜肴的文素雲指著廚房牆角邊的幾個大大小小的精美購物帶對兒子說。

“媽，那些都是給你們買的，看喜不喜歡？”莊立群扭頭回答。

“來吃飯就來吃飯，誰讓你拎東西來啦？你那點工資還不夠你自己使呢！”文素雲一邊說，一邊彎腰瞅了瞅袋子裏的盒子。

“我說立群，你咋買那麼貴的東西呢？！”文素雲從袋子裏拿出一張小單，上面打著人民幣五千八的總價。

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

莊立群心裏暗暗懊悔，忘了把小單從袋子裏拿出來了。媽媽節儉了一輩子，最怕子女亂花錢。送她名貴的東西都得騙她說不貴或打折她才肯收。

“媽，那件大衣是國際品牌，質量樣式都沒得說的。你不老說冬天出門冷嗎，穿上這件保證暖和！”沒等聽的人回話，他就把妹妹拉起來，帶她去看他給她買的玩具和衣服。

佳佳手舞足蹈地擺弄著她的新禮物。而莊立群則對媽媽說，“我給佳佳爸也買了套按摩器，放門口這了。可以做全身按摩。看他喜不喜歡？”

文素雲剛要開口，佳佳的爸爸老鍾推門進來了。“是立群來啦？我說怎麼那麼熱鬧呢！”

老鍾是個老實忠厚的藥廠工人。雖然莊立群從九歲起就跟離了婚的父親一起生活，但也經常來生母家幫忙。和老鍾處得挺好。時不時還一起出去辦個事什麼的。

“佳佳爸，你看立群這孩子，今天來，買這麼貴的東西！”文素雲一臉為難的樣子。

莊立群一邊幫老鍾把大衣掛好，一邊笑著說，“媽，你就不能痛快收下嗎？我難說過段時間要去外地，暫時來不了你們這。就當是我的一份過年禮不行嗎？”

“你要出差？”老鍾問。

“是有這可能。”莊立群應付了一句就嚷著肚子餓，招呼大家一塊兒上桌吃飯了。

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

趙凱峰把上身探出車窗外，極力向前張望，"快了快了，我已經看見大門了。"開車的劉明天往左右掃了一眼，"這大門怎麼修得那麼深？要是外地人來水庫辦事，能找得著門才怪呢！"

車子最終在水庫的大門前停了下來。劉，趙兩人下了車。趙凱峰走到鐵柵欄門旁，向裏張望。門裏除了一棟水庫管理處的叁層小樓，其餘的都是湖水，沙灘和樹林，既安靜又優美。

"你說，那輛白色捷達，真會是在這兒被清洗的嗎？"趙凱峰問。

"這種可能最大。因為這兒是本市唯一的自然水體。先進去看看再說。"劉明天答。

"有人嗎？"他接著朝柵欄門裏喊了一聲。

"找誰啊？"從小樓裏走出了一個無精打采的老者。

"你好！我們是公安局的，來這兒了解點情況。"說著，劉明天向老者出示了證件。老人看是公安，態度馬上就積極了起來。他先自我介紹，說是水庫管理處的老聞，然後就把他們領進接待室。接著又忙著沏茶倒水。被劉明天勸阻後，老聞才放心地坐下來談話。

"你們的水庫總共有幾道大門？"劉明天直奔主題。

"只有兩道。除了你們進來的那道，南面還有一個門。"

"那個門汽車開得進來嗎？"

"開得進來，不過..."

老聞猶豫起來。劉，趙兩人急了，"不過什麼？"

"我們這兩道大門常年都鎖著。平時上下班的人都從正門上的那個小門進出。南邊那道大門幾乎不用。我們這兒很少有車來。"

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

趙凱峰看了一眼劉明天，然後轉頭問老聞，“最近這一星期有車輛進出過這兩道大門嗎？”

老聞摸著腦門想了一想，然後說，“沒有。”

"不進這兩道門，有沒有可能從別的地方開車進水庫呢?" 劉明天並不甘心。

"那是肯定沒有的。你們來時開的那條小路，是唯一一條能走車的路。而且那是條死路，繞到南門就斷了。水庫沿路都有圍欄，人有可能鑽得進來，但車不通過兩道大門是進不來的。"老聞對水庫的情況了如指掌。

"那誰有這兩道大門的鑰匙呢?"趙凱峰沉不住氣了。

"有鑰匙的只有兩個人，我和保衛處的羅元。"

"羅元? 他今天在嗎?"劉明天問。

"在!在!他剛剛去水邊取樣去了。水庫的水質我們定期要做檢查的。要不要我帶你們去找他?"

水庫一眼望去象個大湖。水邊是黃白黃白的沙灘。因為不對遊人開放，沙灘上還是挺幹淨的。

劉明天和趙凱峰一路走，一路觀察，就怕漏掉什麼重要的線索。羅元背對著他們蹲在水邊，身邊放著一個打開的箱子，裏面放著一些大大小小的玻璃瓶。

"小羅啊，公安局的同志來找你了解情況。你把東西放放，我們先回辦公室吧!"老聞對羅元說。

劉明天沖老聞擺擺手，"不用麻煩，我們就在這兒談吧!"說著，他向羅元伸出了手，並簡單做了自我介紹。趙凱峰也和羅元打了個招呼。

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

劉明天問羅元，最近這幾天有沒有開過水庫的大門？

羅元長得人高馬大，臉上看起來卻十分地稚氣。他摸著腦袋努力思考了一下。

"沒有開過。這兩道門沒事兒我們都鎖著的。去年一年大概也就開過五六次吧。你們是不是懷疑有人躲在這兒啊？我們水庫不對外開放，閑人一般進不來，這裏面都是開闢地，小樹林也很稀疏，就是有人想躲這兒也沒地方藏啊！你們到底要找什麼？"羅元連珠炮似的說了一通。

劉明天和趙凱峰交換了眼色，羅元的態度很主動，但似乎過於主動了。劉明天想，那我就給他透露些情況，看他有什麼反應。

"是這樣，我們正在尋找一輛白色捷達車的車主。他已經失蹤好幾天了。這是他和他朋友的照片，你見過他們嗎？"

老聞也湊過來看劉明天手上的照片。但兩人都搖頭表示沒見過。

劉明天又拿出兩張打印紙，指著上面的畫像讓他們辨認。老聞認真得看了半天，失望地搖了搖頭。而羅元則馬上開始問問題。

"這兩個人犯什麼事兒了？"

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

"怎麼?看著眼熟?"趙凱峰問。

"不熟也不生，長這模樣的人到處都是。他們到底幹啥壞事兒了?"羅元又重複了一遍他的問題。

"你不怎麼看電視吧?前幾天新聞裏都在通緝這兩個人，他們是持槍搶劫案的嫌疑犯。"趙凱峰一邊回答，一邊目不轉睛地盯著羅元。

"誒，同志，你的意思是，這兩人，就是星期天在國道上搶劫又殺人的路匪?!"羅元顯出吃驚的模樣。

"沒錯，說的就是那樁案子。"劉明天確認道。

"不會吧..."羅元小聲嘟囔了一句。

"不會什麼?"劉明天反問。

"哦，沒什麼，我就是覺得那些路匪不會到我們這兒來。這個水庫是片開闊地，沒處躲啊!"

"我們更關心的是，近幾天有沒有車輛進來過?你能再好好想想嗎?"劉明天懇切地問羅元。

"反正我是肯定沒見過有車進來的。"羅元說完又看向老聞。"聞主任，你呢?"老聞又擺手，又搖頭，"我也沒見過。"

"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

劉明天他們走後，羅元又回到水邊取樣。老聞則回到辦公室，開了他的小播放機，繼續聽他最喜歡的京劇。

天色漸晚，老聞看了看播放機上的時間，收拾收拾東西，拎著包到水邊跟羅元打了個招呼就回家去了。

水庫裏只剩下羅元了。他丟下取水樣的箱子，沿著水邊不緊不慢地走起來。

異常安靜的水和沙灘，還有週圍的矮樹林，在警察來過後，都變了味道。它們不象平時那樣讓羅元感到身心放鬆，正相反，它們的沉默給羅元帶來的是不一種不安，一種難以名狀的不安。

"水庫的門開不開，跟搶劫案會有什麼關係呢？這些警察真是腦子進水。這裏面樹都很矮，稀稀疏疏的，貓都藏不了，還能藏人？"羅元在心裏嘀咕。"雖然沒跟警察說實話，也不會有多大的後果吧。我天天在這裏上班，沒啥不對的呀..."

一只綠皮青蛙擋住了羅元的路，羅元對青蛙做了個鬼臉，然後用力在青蛙面前跺了一腳。青蛙飛快地逃開了。看青蛙逃命的樣子，羅元呵呵一笑。與此同時，手機聲響起，羅元忙把手機從腰間摸出。

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 flog 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?沒有來電啊?"

羅元瞬時明白了，鈴聲不是自己的手機發出來的。聲音不大，聽起來就在附近。

可是，水庫裏現在應該只有羅元一個人!

"老聞!老聞!"羅元喊了兩聲。"你還沒走嗎?"他的聲音有些發顫。

無人答應，鈴聲也終於停止。

羅元緊張地四下張望。別說人影，連個鬼影都沒有!他咽了口唾沫，象是在拼命吞下一顆壯膽藥。

"不會的，這裏面藏不了活人。"他正想著，鈴聲又響了。

這一次，羅元冷靜地豎起了耳朵。他閉上眼，感應著聲音來的方向。

"是下面，地上。一定是有人把手機掉這兒了?"羅元略微松了口氣，蹲在聲音發出的地方，用手胡亂地扒了扒沙子。這部分土比較濕，聲音就是土裏發出的。

他隨手撿了根棍子，一邊用棍子扒，一邊琢磨：這手機丟了有一段時間了吧，都被土埋上了...咦?這好像有東西，還用布袋裝著...咦?不是布袋，

是...是人的手臂!!!

羅元受了一驚，身子本能地向後彈起，沒站穩，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

劉明天的手機急促地響了起來。他和趙凱峰剛剛踏進一家面館，準備把晚飯對付了。

劉明天接完電話後，精神一振，"羅元來的，他在水庫發現了屍體。"

齊友發和崔雁是面對面被埋在沙堆裏的。死亡原因都是致命槍傷。羅元聽到的手機聲來自崔雁還挎在手上的手袋。打電話的是一個才從外省來本市的年輕人，是崔雁的老鄉，還不知道崔雁已經出事。

"兩人身上所帶的錢包，只是現金遺失，但證件都在。屍體完整，沒有故意掩蓋受害者身份的企圖，不象是熟人做案。"這是劉明天和趙凱峰對現場的初步看法。"看來，齊友發和崔雁，是在錯誤的時機，選擇了一個錯誤的地點幽會。"

這時天已漸黑，聚集的警察，法醫，和現場技術人員，打破了水庫裏讓人窒息的寂靜。羅元弓著背，頹喪地坐在一處稍遠的石凳上。

"行，我跟你們走一趟。你們一定要相信我，我沒殺人，跟這事兒一點邊都不沾。我承認，門是我開的，可我真沒看見是誰幹的。"

羅元對劉明天說這話的時候，顯然已經沒有了早些時候那次談話時的淡定。

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 disformed, 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，在詢問室裏。

羅元回憶，"那天下午快下班的時候，大概四點多的時候，我接了我朋友的一個電話。他說晚些時候會開車經過水庫，讓我把上次跟他借的東西放在我的辦公室，他想順便把它帶回去。"

"什麼東西?"劉明天問。

"一個修車用的工具箱。"

"請繼續說..."

"他說他要開車進來取，讓我不要鎖大門。我照做了，只鎖了小門，大門虛著，然後我就下班回家了。第二天一上班，工具箱已經不見了，我就知道他肯定來過了。"

"今天白天問你的時候你怎麼沒說實話?"

"我害怕...老聞找我的茬兒。水庫兩星期前丟了一批裝修材料。聞主任認為是因為我下班忘鎖門，把小偷放進來了。如果他知道我又幹了一次，還是故意的，非把我吃了不可。"

"你的朋友說沒說他是一個人來，還是和別人一起來?"

"這倒沒說。"

"那天下班後你又跟那個朋友聯系過嗎?"

"我下班到家的時候又打了一次他的手機，沒人接。後來我就再沒跟他聯系過。"

"現在談談你的朋友吧。他叫什麼名字，長什麼樣，是做什麼的?和你有些什麼交情?關係如何?"

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

聽完劉明天的問題，羅元懊悔地歎了口氣，"其實啊，我這朋友長的，和你們今天給我看的畫像中的一個人很像。說句心裏話，我真不信他會幹搶劫殺人的事。他對家人和朋友其實都挺不錯的...所以你們第一次讓我看畫像的時候，我壓根就沒往他身上想。"

劉明天回憶了一下羅元白天看到畫像時的反應。他判斷羅元當時就看出畫像和真人十分相似，但基於某種原因，他當時選擇了隱瞞。

"可以告訴我們你的朋友叫什麼名字了吧?" 趙凱峰已經沉不住氣了。

第二天中午，當趙凱峰和劉明天風風火火趕回局裏的時候，正好碰上防暴隊的柯勇和李維，他們是來刑偵這邊拉人搞活動的。穿著一身警服的柯勇拍了拍趙凱峰的肩頭，"小趙，我們那邊正在廣場搞活動，來了很多市民。頭兒已經問了，怎麼沒有刑偵的人參加?你反正也是新來的，老劉他們缺你一個不打緊。"

李維也在一旁說服劉明天。劉明天苦笑了一下，"去吧，小趙，這種活動我們刑偵老不參加也不好。你就做我們的代表吧。如果有什麼緊急情況，我會打你手機。"

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

趙凱峰雖然一千個不願意，也實在不好拒絕。只好和柯勇他們一起上了車。

路上，柯勇給叁個人都買了盒飯。叁個人迅速吃完飯，就繼續朝廣場開去。

"聽說，你們昨天在水庫那邊找到捷達車主的屍體了?"開車的柯勇問坐在旁邊的趙凱峰。

趙凱峰看了柯勇一眼。柯勇人很精神，平頭，濃眉，大他五六歲的樣子，在防暴隊已經是老隊員了。他和趙凱峰是同鄉。趙凱峰剛進刑偵大隊的時候他還請他吃過飯。他們有一陣子沒在一起聊了，今天出來搞活動，趙凱峰正好可以跟他聊聊。"是啊，還是秦老師有本事啊，從一顆螺獅就斷定水庫可能是拋屍地點。"

"老秦可是我們這兒出了名的福爾摩斯，你跟他應該能學到不少東西。既然屍體找到了，那有嫌犯的線索了嗎?"柯勇繼續聊著。

趙凱峰猶豫了一下。按規定，正在調查的刑事案件案情是不該隨便泄露的。不過柯勇和李維都是一個單位的弟兄，談案情也算內部討論吧。

"一號嫌犯已基本確定了，可惜晚了一步。"趙凱峰懊惱地回答。

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

“怎麼講？”

“他已經跑了。沒人知道他去了哪兒。”

“我說啊，這已經是大突破了，至少你們可以把畫像換成照片來通緝了吧？”坐在後座的李維也加入了他們的談話。

“那當然。”趙凱峰回答。“而且，從他的關係網摸下去，二號嫌犯也應該能查出來。”趙凱峰其實更想坐在劉明天的車上，他可不想錯過查出二號嫌犯的精彩時刻。

兩聲刺耳的車喇叭聲打斷了他們的談話。原來，他們已經到了搞活動的廣場。柯勇正用車喇叭聲和同事打招呼呢。

一清早在佳佳上學的校門口，兩個警察把文素雲攔了下來。他們接下來和文素雲談的話，讓她半天回不過神來。

“同志，你們一定搞錯了。立群是個懂事的孩子，他根本不可能去幹什麼搶劫殺人的事。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，她的話並沒有得到足夠的重視。警察不動聲色地繼續他們的問題。

“我怎麼知道他現在在哪兒？他該在哪兒，還在哪兒啊。你們去他上班的地方找過嗎？他住的地方呢？”

“他剛把租的房子退掉，也辭了職。沒人知道他去哪兒了。你是他母親，他跟你講過要離開的打算嗎？”警察仍然心平氣和地提問，可文素雲的心裏卻象燒起了一把火。

“這不可能！我兒子這個週末才來我這兒吃過飯呢，怎麼可能說走就走呢？”

文素雲的近乎叫喊的反問並沒有引起兩個警察的反感，正相反，她在他們的眼中，似乎覺察到了同情的成分。這種同情讓她心生恐懼。難道，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

"我難說過段時間要去外地，來不了你們這兒。"兒子的這句話突然地回現在文素雲的腦海。難道。。。文素雲不敢再往下想。離婚後心裏一直藏著的對兒子的欠疚，此時這種欠疚一股腦翻騰起來。不管兒子做了什麼，她都要盡全力幫他。她也一直相信，立群不是一個壞孩子。他雖然有過十分激烈的叛逆期，但那早已過去了。搶劫殺人?!這絕對不可能!

那一整天，文素雲都處於一種魂不守舍的狀態，直到晚上一個電話打進來的時候...

"媽，是我。"

"呀，是立群嗎?你總算打來電話了!你這是去哪兒了呀?今天兩個警察來找我，問你的情況呢!"

"媽，我很好，你不用惦記，我想出來做點生意。我還急著趕路，不跟你多說了。你一定保重!"

"唉等等，立群，別掛!"

電話就這樣匆匆掛斷了。文素雲失神地放下話筒。聽到兒子報平安，她有了些許欣慰，但這種欣慰很快就被更重的愁雲所取代。

"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

佳佳坐在對面的沙發上玩著芭比娃娃，老鍾則坐在電視機前專注地看著體育新聞。文素雲蹣跚地走到老鍾身邊，用遙控棒把電視關了。又用虛弱而無望的聲音對老鍾說，"老鍾，立群...可能出事了..."

"你小子怎麼盡幹蠢事?你怎麼能往家裏打電話呢?你現在是通緝在逃，必須切斷與自己過去的任何聯系!你找個地方好好躲一躲，等過段時間再跟我聯系!好了，就這樣。"

男人說完話，把手機往桌上一扔。又從身上摸出一根煙點燃抽上。

"又是個婆婆媽媽的主兒。"他的話和他的臉，都被煙霧所包圍。

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

莊立群看著鏡中的自己，滿意地點了點頭，在假發和假胡須的掩飾下，他自己都快認不出自己了。他現在這番打扮倒讓他想起了一個人，他的父親。

父親因經濟問題進監獄的時候，他只有十六歲。之後媽媽把他接到自己家，但他堅決不想上學了。他說他要工作，要獨立生活，對上學毫無興趣。無奈，老鍾幫他找了一個車輛維修的培訓班。他學了叁個月，然後就在一個私人店裏做學徒，後來就在那個店裏修了四年車。在第四年裏，修車時認識了一個來修車的男顧客。

此人和他一拍即合，他們都喜歡探險運動。於是，那個人帶他加入了漂流俱樂部。在俱樂部裏，他認識了一些比較富裕的漂友。他們開著漂亮的跑車來參加漂流探險。他們中的相當一部分人並不把俱樂部高昂的會費當回事。他們有時間就來，沒時間則很久見不上面。漂流對於他們來說只是生活中的一個消遣。

Looking at his image in the mirror, Zhuang Liquan 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 a 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

莊立群羨慕他們。他希望有一天他能成爲他們中的一員。

他只是一個貧窮的修車工。爲了自己的愛好，他需要省吃儉用才能交得起會費。

他在他們中間感到自卑。他多麼期待，他平凡得不能再平凡的生命，能在某一天突現轉機。

"你有一天也能象他們那樣..." 他的朋友不動聲色地說。

"我?!你開玩笑吧，我這樣既沒學歷，又沒背景的，光靠自己這雙手，就是幹到一白歲也掙不來他們那麼多錢。"他自嘲地搖搖頭。

"你說的是事實，光靠你這雙手傻幹當然沒戲。所以你得重新計劃你的人生。你還年輕，只要路走對了，用不了幾年，你就能跟他們一樣，甚至更好。"

他朋友的話，一針見血，說到了他的心裏。可是，什麼樣的路才是對的呢?他期待地看著他的朋友。他的朋友沒有正面回答，反而問他，"如果這些有錢人讓你幫個忙，你願意嗎?"

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

"只要我辦得到的，當然願意!"

"爽快!那你能幫我一個做玉石生意的朋友拉一車貨去省城嗎?他太忙，抽不出身，自己沒時間跑，又不想現去雇司機。就想找一個可靠的人，他會付不錯的報酬的。"

"不就是幫忙開開車嗎，包在我身上了!"

莊立群的朋友沒有食言，他幫忙拉貨的第二天，報酬就到了手，而且比他期望的高得多。他的心裏有過忐忑。俗話說，無功不受祿。他懷疑過那車貨品的水份。

但這個朋友的特殊身份又讓他放下心來。只想在家裏心安理得地過日子，怎麼可能成大事?

就這樣，他的這個朋友爲他帶來了不少機會。他的腰包一天天鼓起來，膽兒也越來越大。直到有一天，朋友教他用槍，他才意識到他似乎無可挽回地走錯了方向。

“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

“你到現在還不明白嗎？這個社會沒有絕對的好與壞，它所遵循的只是一個簡單的法則。”朋友對他耐心開導。

“什麼法則？”

“森林法則。”

他一臉迷惑。

“兄弟，不愛讀書吧？森林法則簡單講，就是大魚吃小魚，小魚吃蝦米。誰強誰就得天下。朝廷是這樣，民間是這樣，江湖更是這樣。”

“如果是這樣，你為什麼還做你現在的工作？”莊立群反問到。

“呵呵…”朋友笑了，“工作只是份工作，如果你足夠聰明，它可以是你最好的偽裝。”

那之後，莊立群咬著牙殺了第一個人。他們的行動布置得很週密。案子至今未破。莊立群整整做了一個月噩夢。

"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

他逐漸意識到，他需要一個更強大的夢想來給予他繼續這種生活的動力。他想辭去自己這份普通的工作。但他的朋友對他說，“急什麼，等我們做完這筆大生意，你再辭職也不遲。”

“這筆大生意”和以往的小單生意不一樣。他的朋友沒有告訴他到底是什麼樣的生意，但卻總是鎖著眉頭冥思苦想。基於他對朋友的了解，他知道他心裏一定裝著一個煞費苦心的計劃。

而事實證明，“這筆大生意”確實籌劃了很長時間。他的朋友只對他說，這一次他們收買了一個很深的“內線”。

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

莊立群想了一想，問他的朋友道，“‘內線’足夠可靠嗎？”

那人拿起桌上的空煙盒說，“他提供的信息絕對可靠。畢竟，他有私人恩怨要我們幫忙。不過完事後，這人必定會成爲後患。”

“那怎麼辦？”

那人並沒有立即回答，而是將那個空煙盒舉到莊立群的面前，然後一把將它捏成廢紙，並用一種冷酷的目光灼著他。“那就連他一起解決。一幹二淨。”

說完，那團廢紙被扔進了桌邊的垃圾桶。

莊立群突覺嗓子發幹，渾身泛起一種異樣的感覺。好象坐在那兒的不是自己的，而是別人的軀殼。他伸展了一下發硬的背脊，努力辨別著那種異樣到底是什麼。

是厭惡。

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，就要學會習慣各種令自己不舒服的感覺。”這是朋友經常掛在嘴邊的一句話。

“這是不是也包括對自己的厭惡感？”莊立群疑惑地想。

然而，他並沒有太多的時間去思考這個問題。“大生意”的時機說來就來。他突然忙得顧不得想別的事情。行動計劃得很緊密，容不得他有一點分心。他知道，其實，他只有機會做一次決定，做，還是不做。一旦做出了決定，它的意義就不再重要了。因為生意的成敗，與他生命的存亡已經分不開來。

莊立群又做了一回殺手。

這次之後，他暗下決心再也不幹了。他要走得遠遠的，銷聲匿跡，然後再重新作人。

看著鏡中那個不像自己的自己，他有了一種幻覺。是不是以後都要做另一個人了呢？或者，現在的自己，已經穿越到了另一個人的世界裏？

"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

莊立群萬萬沒有想到，他打回家的那個簡短電話，竟是他犯下的一個致命的錯誤。一直在苦苦尋找他的刑警們，從這個電話記錄入手，很快查清了來電的位置。電話雖然是在公用電話亭打的，但地點離他藏身的地方並不遠。打完電話的第二天，劉明天，趙凱峰他們就連夜趕了過來。

調查是從電話亭的監控錄像開始的。儘管莊立群化了妝，通過對比打電話的時間和監控畫面上的時間，鎖定莊立群的影像並不困難。

從錄像上看，他離開電話亭後一路步行，最後消失在街尾。而街尾的盡頭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

小屋裏唯一的窗子被拉上了窗簾。屋外的亮和屋裏的暗形成鮮明對比。百無聊賴，又坐臥不安的莊立群靠在床上。電視裏放些什麼他一點都看不進去。即將過去的早晨是那樣的漫長。這讓他逐漸對這個狹小的空間失去了耐心。可一旦想起到手的那比豐厚的“收入”，他煩躁的心情又平靜下來。

這只是暫時的，他對自己說。這之後，他開始盤算中午的午飯，是出去買還是吃方便面。正猶豫著，門響了。

莊立群的第一反應就是去摸槍。他迅速下了床，站在門邊聽動靜。

敲門聲再次響起，“裏面有人嗎？我是房東！”

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

聽起來是房東的聲音，但莊立群希望他趕快走開，他已經交夠四個月的房租，完全沒有再跟房東打交道的必要。

門裏門外都沉默了有十秒鐘的功夫。莊立群突然有了一種不祥的預感。

隨即，一聲爆響，門被猛地撞開來。莊立群還沒來得及看清門外人的臉，就被人迎頭一擊，按倒在地，動彈不得。

“小心有槍！”

話音剛落，莊立群的手腕就被人狠命一扭，完全沒了力量，手一松，槍被人奪了去。

頓時，他的週圍多出了好幾個人。

他勉強轉了轉脖子，看清按倒他的是兩個全副武裝的警察。

“完了。” 他心裏一沉。

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

老曾隔著玻璃見到莊立群的時候，竟然搖了搖頭。站在一旁的劉明天不解地問，
“怎麼？我們抓錯人了？畫像可是你畫的啊！”

“人沒抓錯，不過他並不像主謀。你看他那副魂不守舍的樣子，充其量就是個幫凶。雖然證人的印象是，一號指揮二號。但當時的情況是，一號在她的視野裏停留得比較長，所以她可能會主觀認為一號是主導。二號在整個行動中很會隱蔽自己，反倒可能是真正的主謀。”

老曾話音剛落，劉明天就舉起手裏的二號畫像，仔細地端詳起來。”我也有同感，這個莊立群不是主謀。如果他能把二號供出來，就應該能破案了。”

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

審訊室裏，莊立群僵硬地坐在木椅上。手和腳都帶著銬子。他眼神迷茫，似乎還沒看清這到底是現實還是噩夢。他一直覺得自己謹慎小心。就是打回家的那個電話也十分短。可萬萬沒想到，這次曆險這麼快就要結束。

“和你一起參與搶劫殺人的那個人是誰？”

詢問者的話聽起來很遙遠。莊立群真希望這一切只是一個噩夢。他想一夢醒來，繼續做他的修車工。

然而審問他的警察是真實的，窗上的鐵條是真實的，“坦白從寬，抗拒從嚴。”的標語是真實的，他注定是不可能從噩夢中醒來了。

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 was 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

“路是自己選的，都這個時候了，就是把什麼都供出來也是死路一條。”莊立群聽見了自己的心聲。“給自己在朋友那留點名聲吧！畢竟，他們給過我這輩子最大的夢想，雖然美夢最終成了噩夢，畢竟是自己選的路，怪不得別人。”

“搶劫殺人？我沒幹過。”他回答。

“你沒幹過？那你帶槍幹嘛？”

“我前段時間被人打劫，所以偷偷買了把槍防身。”

“啪！”對面桌後的胖警察一巴掌拍在了桌上。

“我沒時間聽你編故事！你被人打劫？！是你打劫別人吧？搶了錢還不夠，還要殺人滅口。”

“我不明白你在說什麼？”莊立群看了一眼胖警察，又心虛地垂下眼。

胖警察繞過桌子，凶巴巴地走了過來。莊立群暗中咬了咬牙，心想，不管他們怎麼審，堅決不交代。

"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

就在胖警察氣勢洶洶地站到莊立群面前的時候，門突然開了，一個中年男人不緊不慢地走了進來。胖警察看到來人立馬換成了笑臉。“劉隊，這小子不好好交代還嘴硬。”

“那你也不能用這種態度吧？”中年男人的話充滿力度。胖警察知道自己理虧，尷尬地站在一旁。中年人抬手示意他出去。

胖警察走後，坐在胖警察旁邊做筆記的年輕警察好奇地看著中年人。只見中年人挪過一把椅子在莊立群旁邊坐下。

“小孫，你給他倒杯水吧！”
年輕人愣了一愣。狐疑地看了一眼中年人後起身倒水去了。

“莊立群，我先自我介紹一下吧。我叫劉明天，是你的案子的主要負責人。我們先隨便聊聊好嗎？”

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

“你說搶劫殺人犯該怎樣判比較合理？”劉明天說話的語氣就像在和嫌疑人商量事情。

“死刑唄！”對方的聲音不大，但語氣很橫，完全沒有繼續交談下去的意願。劉明天順著他的思路繼續說，“如果真是死刑，你想過給你家人留下點什麼嗎？”

對方沉默了兩秒鐘，然後突然抬高聲音，“你跟我說這些幹嘛？我什麼也沒做，你們憑什麼抓我？”

“憑證據。”劉明天說著，從口袋裏拿出一個小本，翻開來，逐條把已掌握的證據念給對方聽。

他念的最後兩條是：“嫌疑人在齊友發和崔燕被害那天開車進入過水庫，即拋屍地點，人證和物證充分。”

被害人身體裏取出的子彈經技術鑒定，與嫌疑人所持槍支相符。

念完，他輕輕關上筆記本，放回口袋。抬眼直視莊立群。

莊立群和中年人對視了二十秒功夫，突然垂下眼，懊惱而喪氣地呼出一口氣。
“既然你們都調查清楚了，還問我幹嘛？”

"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

中年人看著年輕人輕輕搖了搖頭。“年輕人，你給我的印象並不差。你雖然犯下重罪，但良心還是有的。我相信這宗劫案並不是你策劃的，我猜你只是個幫凶，並不是主謀。你現在有兩種選擇，要不把實情說了，幫我們抓到主謀，也算做一件對得起良心的事。要不繼續否認。不管你怎麼否認，只要證據確鑿，我們照樣可以給你定罪。到時候，主謀可要開心了，有你為他頂罪，他落得逍遙自在，還可以繼續禍害他人。而你的家人呢？你母親，你妹妹，她們將面對的現實有多殘酷你想過沒有？”

提到媽媽和妹妹，莊立群心裏緊了一緊。從被抓那一刻，他就努力不去想她們。他祈禱最好他們也把他忘卻。反正，他們所熟悉的那個可以信賴的兒子和哥哥早已變了，變得自己都快認不出來了。

“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

“這個人是你用槍射殺的吧？”

一張被害人胸部中彈，臉色死灰的照片呈現在莊立羣的眼前。白襯衣上已凝固成暗紅色的大片血跡顯得十分突兀。中年男死者睜着眼，令人顫慄的目光穿過相紙，直刺莊立羣的面龐。

莊立羣“呀”了一聲，身體本能地向後躲避。

“他是死在你的槍下吧？知道嗎？他死的時候女兒剛出生兩天。如果這一切沒有發生，他至少可以和女兒見上一面。”

莊立羣把目光移向地板，一身冷汗。”求求你，別讓我看照片！”他心想。

劉明天觀察着莊立羣的表情變化，然後伸手把水杯送到他的面前。莊立羣接過水杯，一仰頭把水喝完。

“不知道你妹妹知道你做的事後會怎麼想。”劉明天小聲說。

“不要告訴她。”莊立羣低聲懇求。

劉明天鎮靜地回視着他。“我答應你。我會和你母親商量如何回答你妹妹的問題。”

莊立羣點頭示謝。

"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

“我承認我參與了搶劫殺人。”說出這句話後他突然感覺到一陣輕鬆。

“很好。告訴我，誰是策劃人？”

“這個...我不能告訴你。”

劉明天笑了一笑，“你覺得你很講義氣是不是？莊立羣，我知道你不是策劃人，那你告訴我，和你在 131 國道上持槍搶劫的那個同夥是不是策劃人？”

莊立羣沉默了半分鐘之久，然後回答，“是。”

“很好。那你知不知道，他近期有沒有別的什麼計劃？”劉明天仍然用朋友聊天般的口氣繼續問莊立羣。

莊立羣又一次沉默。劉明天倒吸了口涼氣，心想，如果他沒有及時否認，那就暗示策劃人還有新的計劃。

做筆記的年輕刑警也緊張而期待地看着他們。

“是不是還會有人丟掉性命？”劉明天儘量把語氣放平和。

"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

莊立羣坐立不安，但還是不願回答。

“想想吧，年輕人，你現在說出來，還可以挽救一些人的性命，拯救他們的家人。也算贖罪立功。你難道願意永遠和那些沒良心的人渣站在一邊嗎？”

“人渣？！”莊立羣突然擡頭逼視着中年人。“你叫他人渣？！你以為你比他強？他和你一樣每天進出這道大門，和你穿一樣的制服，做一樣的工作，他是你們的人，就是他教唆我殺人放火！別跟我談什麼大道理，你們都是一樣的人渣！”

激動的嫌疑人一把將水杯推開。水杯重重地砸在地上，摔了個粉身碎骨。

這會兒該輪到劉明天納悶了，他只覺心裏一涼。“二號嫌犯是我們自己的人？！”

做筆記的年輕警察也驚訝地站起身。中年人衝他輕輕擺手，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

剛纔的發作讓莊立羣得到了情緒的釋放。他雙手抱頭，又像一個受了委屈的孩子一樣啜泣起來。

“你的警察朋友，我真爲他感到羞恥。告訴我，他是誰。”

啜泣聲並沒有停止。劉明天也不催促，只是在一旁耐心地等待。

莊立羣在心裏做了最後一次掙扎，然後異常平靜地吐出幾個字，

“他叫柯勇。”

當劉明天把這個新發現告訴趙凱峯的時候，趙凱峯不敢相信自己的耳朵。

“柯勇？！怎麼會是他？”他雖然和柯勇是同鄉，但和他並沒有深交。即使這樣，他也很難相信柯勇會犯下這樣褻瀆警察職業的罪行來。

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

“就是防暴隊的柯勇。莊立羣已經在相片上指認了。小趙...我知道柯勇和你是同鄉，他有沒有向你打聽過案件的偵查情況？”

“這...” 趙凱峯被問住了。

“小趙，把實情告訴我，他昨天請假回家了。眼下一切有關他的信息都可能是重要線索！”

趙凱峯忽覺脊背發涼，他意識到他犯下了一個嚴重的錯誤。“昨天中午他給我打過一個電話。向我打聽一號嫌犯的抓捕情況。我告訴他我們抓到他了。”

“看來，還真是他。” 劉明天低聲說。

"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

“劉隊，我違反了紀律，對不起！我壓根沒想到會是他。”趙凱峯一臉歉意。

“這次就算是個教訓。記住這句話，在嫌疑人沒有確定之前，任何人都有嫌疑。”劉明天話音剛落，那個記筆記的年輕刑警就風風火火地趕到劉明天面前。

“劉隊，剛接到消息，有人看到柯勇出現在他老家‘雲山村’。”

劉明天聽完迅速向趙凱峯做了個手勢，兩人就匆匆走出了房間。

"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

“雲山村”是個山清水秀的地方。然而此刻它卻被荷槍實彈的武警所佔據。他們圍住一家農宅，一個拿喇叭的武警正向屋裏喊話。

農宅不算大，中等平房戶形。一堵灰白色的圍牆圍住四五個房間和一個小院。作為警方攻堅的焦點，院子安靜得讓人不安。

警方的喊話並沒有得到屋裏人的響應。圍牆上硃紅色的大門紋絲不動。

據偵查得來的信息，柯勇就在屋內。他在警方第一次進入時向外射擊。警方被迫退出。但屋裏是否還有別人，並不清楚。

“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 police 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

僵持一段時間後，警方開始投擲催淚彈。圍牆裏頃刻煙霧瀰漫。與次同時，有人迅速從前門進入，穿過院子，攻入離大門最近的廚房。據瞭解，農宅的所有房間從裏面都是想通的。

在外圍待命的人都緊張地觀察着農宅。這裏面也包括劉明天和趙凱峯。

趙凱峯是盼望不要再有槍聲的。他希望你不要出人命。而劉明天則冷靜地對他耳語了一句，“做好最壞的打算。”

他的話音剛落，農宅裏突然槍聲大作。聲音剛一消停，更多的武警進入農宅支援。

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

不一會兒，農宅的正門大開，劉明天在聽到耳邁裏的指示後對趙凱峯擺擺頭，
“走吧，到我們了。你得有點心理準備。”

趙凱峯會意地點點頭，胃裏一陣發緊。

他倆進入農宅的時候，法醫已在他們前一步趕到。大家關注的焦點是離廚房最遠的一間臥房。

透過因火藥和催淚彈而變得污濁的空氣，趙凱峯一眼認出了坐在牆角的柯勇。帶着橡膠手套的法醫正給他做檢查。他半睜着眼睛，手裏還握着一隻手槍，已沒有生命跡象。

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

趙凱峯凝視着柯勇的臉，希望能在上面找到一些答案。然而他找到的只有冷漠。在他的頭的上方，貼着一張書法作品，上書，“出人頭地”。

這四個字也曾經伴隨過趙凱峯成長。“出人頭地”，在他年輕的生命中，這四個字也曾經激勵過他。不過今天，它們的形象卻顯得如此扭曲。他悲哀地揣度，某一年的某一天，當柯勇和他現在一樣注視這四個字的時候，他的心裏是否正盤算着一個殺人劫財的計劃呢？

此次搶劫案劫得的贓款，大部分都在農宅裏被尋獲。莊力羣還沒有等到分贓就被警方發現。而柯勇收買的“內線”，也很快得到了確認。他逃過了柯勇的“滅口”，卻沒有逃過法律的制裁。

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

至於柯勇所捲入的黑惡勢力，在劫案被偵破後的一年裏，也遭到了警方的突擊和清理。那個所謂的漂流俱樂部也被勒令關門整頓。

莊力羣終審被判死刑。判決結果在人們意料之中。“殺人償命”，這是中國的古訓，也是一個最簡單的司法邏輯。何況是這種有預謀的搶劫殺人，是沒有理由可以開脫的。而莊力羣自己也放棄上訴。

就在同事為破獲大案要案而忙着慶功的時候，劉明天卻獨自開車離去。他徑直去了看守所見莊力羣。並給他帶來了一封信。

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

“你現在先別打開，等我走了慢慢看吧。昨天順路看了你母親，她現在狀態不太好。不過她說，你的事她和老錢會慢慢跟你妹妹說的。她希望你心裏負擔不要太大。事情已經這樣了，多想無益，這段時間保養好身體就行。”

莊力羣點點頭，母親囑咐的“這段時間”，正是自己在人世的最後日子。什麼夢想，憧憬，慾望，打算，現在統統沒了。他現在所惦記的，只是自己犯下的罪惡，給親人的陰影還會有多長。對於受害者的家屬，在法庭最後陳述中，他由衷地向他們道歉，並深深鞠了一躬。他說，“如果時間能夠倒轉，如果我還能有第二次選擇，我真的希望什麼都沒有發生。爲了過上有頭有臉的生活，在他人的鼓動下，我一錯再錯，越陷越深，最終犯下不可饒恕的罪行。我很後悔，但已無力迴天。希望我的教訓，能警醒其他步入歧途的年輕人。”

“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

劉明天走後，莊力羣打開了信封。原來，那是父親給他寫的。父親顯然還不知道兒子出大事了。還告訴他自己就快刑滿釋放了。說就要與他見面了。莊力羣忍不住溼眼。他想，劉明天沒有把真相告訴父親，是不想讓他出獄前受刺激。

在莊貴祥被釋放的早晨，劉明天，文素雲和莊貴祥的弟弟靜靜地等候在監獄門口。莊貴祥拎着屬於自己的那一點物品，忐忑地走出了大門。五十來歲的他，已是一頭白髮。他看到了文素雲，弟弟和那個來看過他的警察。他心中湧起一股溫暖。他向他們走來，向他們身後尋找，但他們中唯一缺了那個他日夜思唸的兒子。

他並不知道，等待他的三個人，此時比他還要忐忑和緊張，他們已準備好將實情告訴他，準備好面對他的崩潰，準備好同心同力幫他走過黑暗，重新開始新的生活。

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 -