Chapter 282 No Choice but To Fight

I stared into the darkness behind him and asked, "Is anyone following you?"

Baldie replied simply, "Who could?"

He had a point. Out of the other men with Zhao Zichen and Baldie, no one could.

I focused my attention on Baldie, and he raised his hands above his head.

"What is Zhao Zichen thinking?" I asked.

Baldie's expression did not change. "Do you not trust us or do you not trust yourself? Boss is just doing what you asked him to."

I clenched my fists, unsure if Zhao Zichen was doing this because I had hinted to him to oppose me, or because he was really betraying me.

"You wouldn't doubt your comrades on the battlefield," Baldie pointed out.

"I can't be sure right now if you're still my comrades."

If my guess was wrong, the moment I put the gun away, I would be dead. With Baldie's speed, he could definitely take my life in that moment.

Out of the blue, Baldie sighed deeply, took off his jacket, and peeled off his pants. He stood in front of me in his underwear and raised both hands in surrender again.

The corner of my mouth twitched. There were no weapons on him anymore. There was no way for him to attack me by surprise.

"Fine. Zhao Zichen is really too realistic," I sighed and put away the gun.

"Rock wouldn't believe it otherwise," Baldie replied.

I watched him cautiously for a while, and felt relieved when he did not seem to want to attack me.

Truthfully, I had only just realized that Baldie's body was covered in scars. He was just as scarred as us soldiers.

While our scars were from knife or bullet wounds, Baldie's were different. He bore marks of a whip. Some of them were layered on each other; a newer scar on top of an older one.

I figured that they had to do with his past and did not ask. Baldie also did not seem inclined to make small talk with me. He put his clothes back on and bent over to drink from the stream.

"Wait, don't drink that. There are too many parasites in the water. Eat fruits instead."

I stopped him and turned to the trees. I picked two wild fruits by feel and rubbed them clean on my clothes before passing them over.

Baldie looked dazed, perhaps from dehydration, and sat down to eat the fruits.

"How did you get to the other side of the stream?" I asked.

Even if he was thirsty, he should be on the same side as me. He must have taken a long way to get to the other side.

Baldie fidgeted with his cap and replied nervously, a faint blush on his face, "I got lost."

I was dumbfounded. To an ordinary person, these mountains were as good as a labyrinth. No matter how skilled you were at martial arts, it was useless if you could not make your way out. No wonder Baldie seemed quite desperate for the fruits, he must have been very thirsty and hungry.

"Let's get through tonight first. Predators and snakes are starting to come out and it's dangerous to rush around. I'll pick some firewood."

Baldie watched me sluggishly. He even tried to help pick firewood.

I almost laughed in frustration when I saw him pick up damp wood. "Have you ever been in the mountains?"

"Only during field trips in kindergarten and elementary school."

"Damn, your Cloud Cliff Sect kids went to kindergarten and elementary? Don't you martial artists become disciples from elementary school age?"

Baldie replied, "I only joined the Cloud Cliff Sect as a disciple after graduating from Tsinghua."

"F me," I could not help but swear. "You're only in your twenties. You have to be a gifted student that was invited to Tsinghua."

He had to be at least twenty-three by the time he graduated from Tsinghua University. How long had he been a disciple?

"I was gifted. I went to university at fourteen," he said.

"Shut up, education level isn't everything. I'll bury you in the mountains if you say anymore."

Baldie did not object and helped me light a fire.

"The predators won't approach the fire," I said, "Otherwise, we'd both end up as reserves for the animals preparing for hibernation. Zhao Zichen must be brave to send you in here alone after me. Isn't he afraid you won't be able to get out?"

Getting lost deep in the mountains was a scary thing. Not everything could be eaten, and if you ate something poisonous, you could get diarrhea or even die.

Baldie had not received special physical training. Even though he was a good martial artist, he did not have the stamina, and he was starving.

I picked more fruits for him. He gobbled three more down before asking, "Aren't you eating?"

"We're not far from the edge of the forest. I don't need to eat. You need to rest. We'll take turns to keep watch. I'll watch the first half of the night and you take the second. We'll leave tomorrow morning when it's light out."

Baldie ate the last apple and suddenly asked, "What if Boss really betrayed you?"

My heart skipped a beat. Baldie would not be asking this for no reason. This was actually what I was worried about the most. That Zhao Zichen was not acting as we had agreed. We had arranged for him to find an opportunity to stage a show for the people of Tong City by beating me up.

But Zhao Zichen had veered from the script and ordered Baldie to kill me.

It would be a lie to say that I was not nervous. Zhao Zichen was a crafty man who could change his mind at any time. When I first met him, he had fooled me many times.

I let out a sigh. "It's a gamble. We can only solve this case completely if Zhao Zichen manages to gain Rock's trust and get in contact with the main members of the gun-smuggling ring. However, this will only lead to more hostility between the Black Dragons and the Red Lanterns. Will Zhao Zichen betray me?"

Baldie watched the fire crackling and did not respond. After a long time, he finally spoke, "Boss isn't unfaithful."

From his attitude, I understood what had happened. Zhao Zichen's actions had also made him suspicious. He too was unsure if Zhao Zichen really wanted me dead or was just acting.

This was not Baldie's fault. Zhao Zichen was a master actor.

Sitting here and wondering what Zhao Zichen was really up to was pointless.

I changed the topic. "Baldie, don't punch me when I ask you this. Why are you called Baldie?"

He exited his own thoughts and patted the cap on his head.

He had never taken this cap off. I felt that he was hiding some secret under it.

Just as I thought that, he took the cap off.

I was dumbfounded. Not because of the big bald head I saw, but because he had taken the cap off. I thought he would never take off that old cap.

The cap was beginning to fray at the edges, but he never took it off even to sleep.

"Your...your hairstyle is quite cool."

Baldie dusted off the cap in his hands and actually smiled warmly.

I thought I had gone blind. I had never seen him smile like this before. He seemed to be thinking of a beautiful woman.

Baldie replied, "I shaved it myself to make my junior happy."

This must be the junior that Jiang Ming mentioned. The smile that appeared on Baldie's face when he mentioned her gave me goosebumps.

"Didn't your master have any opinion when you joined up with Zhao Zichen? I thought you martial artists were very particular about this stuff."

Baldie cast his eyes down and stared at his cap. "I was expelled by my master."

Damn. His short answers had fired up my curiosity. The matter could not be that simple. What had Zhao Zichen done to make this promising young man abandon his master and his junior and join him in a gang?

Baldie fell into a dark mood when talking about this.

I could only say, "Zhao Zichen is really amazing."

"Boss will always be my brother. I won't betray him," Baldie said in reply, "Zhang Chao, if Boss really wants me to fight you one day, I have no choice but to do so. However, I'll give you a tensecond headstart."