

## **Beautiful 541**

### Chapter 541 Perfectionist Ling Qingyu

"Be ready!" The platoon leader exclaimed.

Ling Qingyu stiffened at the thought of flying through fires and explosions. Whoops, if one bullet hit her, her body would be shredded into pieces.

"Go. Go. Go. Hustle up." With his speech, the light turned green.

Ling Qingyu bit her lips while sliding the clipper above attached to her rope for parachuting mechanism.

At the last moment of her step, she sprang out of an aircraft and fell weightlessly. A snap entered her ears but she had no time to care since her attention was only on her flight.

Soon, a huge jolt yanked her back and her falling speed slowed down to a halt and continued dropping at a low terminal velocity.

The chute behind her had opened successfully. If her chute malfunctioned, she would have nowhere to cry since she knew nothing about emergency alternatives.

Ling Qingyu sighed in relief but her anxiety returned as she felt the air whipped across her. She even saw tracers flying past her and exploding overhead.

Looking behind she narrowed her eyes and saw several shadows of umbrellas falling in the straight line due to the reflection of lights coming from repetitive 'firework'.

The sunset seemed to have evaporated as the night ensued. Whoever commanded this operation had timed it well. Under the cover of darkness, paratroopers' safety increased.

But she still expressed the middle finger at any particular commanders to risk their soldiers' lives. This type of parachuting should be an option where everything met its end and no other alternatives were available.

She watched herself with fear, boredom and excitement as the ground got closer. Unfortunately, perhaps due to adrenaline, her mind wasn't thinking properly and she planted her feet firmly without trying to roll off the inertia.

Sparks erupted inside her mind as the pain followed. Obviously, Ling Qingyu knew her knees must be broken. Maybe a little but she had never tasted such pain.

Ling Qingyu lay on the ground as she gritted her teeth and moaned. Cold sweats slid above her pale forehead.

F\*\*k! Why did she ever forget that she must roll? The parachutes weren't controllable. Miss System did everything on purpose.

In fact, Ling Qingyu didn't realize she could control the chutes' direction. Modern chutes had available tools to direct the falling direction as well as utilizing aerodynamic principles to slow down so that paratroopers didn't need to roll on the ground. But in her panic, she missed the crucial detail and paid the price.

Of course, even if she knew, she didn't know the technique. Miss System perfected the method of the eagle dropping its cub from the sky.

Ling Qingyu took rapid deep breaths to alleviate the pain and her surroundings changed again.

This time, she was back on the plane. The same scenes followed. Explosion, yellow tracers, red light...etc.

She was still the first jumper. Green light again and off she went.

Nope, she was still frozen, her fear of feeling her knees broken hadn't weakened yet. She attracted the platoon leader's curse and was dragged by him and kicked out of the plane.

Heck, she had no time to protest. She was simply rolled off. However, this time, she managed to grasp the two toggles which were vital for her to control the direction.

After all, a first-timer's fear dissipated if the process repeated again. Even pleasure was possible after pain. XD

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In the air, Ling Qingyu rolled left and right as she learned to control the chutes and mastered the art of falling.

She had seen video footage of influencers and military personnel and began to mimic their styles, attempting one after another technique.

Before landing, she pulled both toggles as seen in the videos according to her memory. No idea why but she did so.

The speed did slow down again and she managed the 'softest' landing. As soon as her feet planted, she grimaced and wondered if her former ordinary physique replaced the current one, every bone inside would likely be broken unless she rolled.

But Ling Qingyu wanted a stylish fall. So, she made a beautiful fail at least. Glad to survive in one piece, Ling Qingyu's good mood didn't last long.

"Where the hell are you, Sergeant Ling?! Your buddy said you deviate completely from the designated spot." A radio cracked. "Are you shot?"

Hearing worries and blaming tones from the platoon commanders, Ling Qingyu slapped her forehead. Okay, she failed and sure enough, the same surroundings appeared again like time tracked backward.

This time, without the platoon leader's kick, Ling Qingyu jumped with confidence as she steered herself properly toward a designated mark.

Her demeanor no longer contained rookie aura, like a veteran who survived a deadly tribulation. Well, from a matter of military perspective, Ling Qingyu survived two dangerous jumps so her mindset had matured to an extent.

She landed perfectly this time, being able to control a softer landing and time accurately. Even then, she knew her technique wasn't perfect yet because in spite of her strong physique, she still believed her fall was too strong for ordinary body to bear.

Until this limit had been reached, her landing wasn't soft yet.

Besides, Ling Qingyu glanced across a distance and sighed. She was 200 meters away from the spot. Although this might not be too much of a mistake, Ling Qingyu understood she committed a felony in a military context.

She still drifted too far and separated from her comrades. Once the nightmare situation occurred she was out of help. Let's try again.

The fourth time. She timed more accurately than the last to perfect the soft landing but knew she could still improve. Still 200 meters away. \*sigh\*

Jump again for the fifth time. Ordinary physique could bear the stress this time. A near-perfect landing. 180 meters away.

Sixth time.

Seventh time.

150 meters. 140 meters. 100 meters. 120 meters.

60 meters. 80 meters. 40 meters. 20 meters. 30 meters.

Ling Qingyu even managed to lessen the falling impact considerably. She speculated the ordinary physique should feel nothing by now.

After who knew how many times, Ling Qingyu landed a mere 10 meters away from the spot. She had successfully completed the mission but she wasn't satisfied yet. She sensed that she could still enhance her skills. She wanted to achieve zero tolerance deviation on average.

Not to mention, it was fun to jump off from the aircraft, and the thrill of air rushing against her pumped addictive hormones into her blood.

12 meters. 15 meters. 10 meters. 20 meters. 14 meters.

No, she must achieve under the 10-meter limit. Ling Qingyu tried again. The only consumption should be her mental fatigue but compared to 15 continuous years of driving last time, the beginning was nothing.

Chapter 542 Illusion over

Ling Qingyu attempted another 20 jumps of which after the initial 3 jumps, her margin error had averaged less than 10 meters.

It is a marvel for any parachuting specialist. Ling Qingyu tried to limit her landing below 5 meters error.

8 out of 10, she accomplished her task. The two were still under 10 meters range so she didn't fail.

Of course, other uncontrollable variables would sometimes affect the outcome such as sudden gusts, temperature, humidity, and many more physics.

In fact, these jumps as paratroopers seemed to be freely played by Ling Qingyu, unlike last time when Miss System limited the mission requirements.

However, she knew after these tutorial jumps were over, Miss System would begin to train her systematically.

That was the reason why Ling Qingyu endeavored to grasp basic understandings and principles as well as techniques to prepare herself for the challenge.

Unknown to Ling Qingyu, Miss System was impressed by her enthusiastic optimism toward challenge and relentless pursuit of perfection.

Several jumps later because Ling Qingyu didn't bother to count anymore, 5 meters radius was achieved. Sometimes, Ling Qingyu completed a landing radius of less than 5 meters but these were attributed to luck.

She couldn't improve anymore. After all, the initial jumping point was based on an automatic parachute mechanism. It was already a miracle that Ling Qingyu brought down the error margin toward 5-meter radius merely by controlling the toggles.

The surrounding environment changed again. This time, Ling Qingyu sat on the chair and an instructor was speaking in front of her, holding a stick, pointing at the whiteboard.

She knew she was in a military academy to learn the necessary knowledge. Unlike uneducated jump last time only relying on experience and sense, Ling Qingyu began to understand the concept such as why such movements brought a particular result.

Learning about parachuting and skydiving, Ling Qingyu immersed in theory and sighed in relief that Miss System had let her go. Otherwise, if she were to always train during a war scenario, who knew what PTSD would she suffer.

Then, she was forced to practice by lying flat on her tummy on the sand and strictly implement a posture, useful for skydiving maneuver.

The scene changed again, once she mastered all the essential techniques so that she could apply them in 'reality'.

Apparently, Ling Qingyu felt discomfort at the extra equipment especially the oxygen mask. She knew the plane height was around 10,000 meter.

Paratrooper usually jumped around 300 meter to 7600 meter. Static Line jumps, referring to Ling Qingyu's prior initial experience, took place between 300 to 1500 meters where the parachute automatically deployed as soon as the jumpers exited the aircraft.

High Altitude Low Opening (HALO) jumped from altitudes between 4500 and 7600 meters. As the terminology said, the jumper deployed parachute at lower altitude after free falling for a significant distance.

High Altitude High Opening referred to a jump from altitudes around 7600 meter but a parachute was deployed shortly after exiting the aircraft, allowing the jumper to glide for long distance.

Jumping from 10,000 meters was a whole new different level, requiring specialized equipment and training. Such jumps were typically associated with high-altitude military operations, like those involving special forces, but even then they are rare and not standard practice.

With a warning blare after pressure, the compartment at the trunk of an aircraft gradually opened.

Heck, Ling Qingyu wondered if she leaped directly from airborne troops to Tier-one operators. She was promoted too fast, right?

Ling Qingyu struggled to the open hanger. There were so many tools and restraints, unlike last time where she only carried necessary stuff.

Now, the weight increased with oxygen tubes and more. One by one, her comrades jumped off under the signal of her leader.

Whether other heard her jokes or not, she exclaimed— "Geronimo!"

Ling Qingyu stood at the open door of the aircraft, her eyes focused on the target far below. She had jumped so many times now that the thrill of it had settled into a cold determination. Each leap into the sky felt like a step closer to mastering not just the fall, but the control of every moment she spent in the air.

The illusion had no concept of time, but Ling Qingyu knew she had been at this for years—decades even. The same routine played out repeatedly: the adrenaline-fueled jump, the rush of air as she free-fell, and the precise manipulation of the toggles to guide herself to the ground. But each time, she pushed herself to reduce her margin of error.

Her body no longer responded with fear. Instead, it acted with an almost mechanical precision. Her mind was sharper, calculating every shift in the wind, every change in her velocity. She could now land within ten meters of her target without even trying. But that wasn't enough.

The illusion allowed her to keep going, driving her to shave off those last few meters until she could land with an error margin of just one meter.

Thirty years.

That was how long Ling Qingyu had trained, refining every aspect of her skydiving. As she stepped out of the plane for what felt like the thousandth time, everything was second nature.

The ground rushed up to meet her as she controlled her descent with a finesse that seemed almost inhuman. She pulled the toggles with expert timing, feeling the parachute respond to her every command. As she approached the ground, she aimed directly for the center of the target.

She touched down with barely a sound, her feet planted firmly on the ground, just one meter from the center.

Ling Qingyu exhaled, a small smile forming on her lips. She had done it. Thirty years of continuous training had honed her skills to near perfection.

Ling Qingyu looked around at the familiar surroundings. The illusion had served its purpose. She had become more than she ever thought possible. But now, it was time to step out of the dream and into reality.

Chapter 543 Mama Amorette

Bright light filled her vision and before long Ling Qingyu was able to open her eyes. She blinked several times, remembering she was still in her Bentley.

Glancing at the clock inside the car, Ling Qingyu nudged her forehead. 30 minutes...no more, no less.

The dizziness hadn't dissipated. She tried to massage her temples in order to soothe her headaches.

Really, Miss System knew so many methods to torture her even if she was willing to suffer.

Fortunately, the air conditioner of Bentley was high-class to avoid adding another complain.

30 years of continuous skydiving. An ordinary person without a strong will would have lost their personality and definition of oneself.

Ling Qingyu felt she was heck a lot stronger. She never expected her strongest strength to be inside.

At the same time, Miss System was scanning Ling Qingyu thoroughly with worry although she said nothing in front of the latter. 30 minutes seemed a bit too much and she was a little rushy.

However, these thoughts disappeared once she detected Ling Qingyu's mind frequency channel and was speechless.

Good, this bastard was very healthy to curse her ancestor several times. What a waste of her emotion.

Outside, Ling Qingyu's bodyguards became worried, seeing their boss not moving at all for 30 minutes. Each passing minute seemed like a year for them.

If not for Athena's persistent refusal to bar them from approaching, they would have broken in. Well, they were thinking too much.

Would Athena's and Tang Ziyi's modified Beast allow them to break in unscrupulously?

These girls were over-analyzing.

Ling Qingyu remembered the most important point of her 30-year paratroopers' skydiving skills. 'Miss System, will my experience be shared with the girls?'

[Yes, they will dream about yours when they sleep tonight and will wake up with 2 years of your skills.]

'2 years.' Ling Qingyu nodded with satisfaction. 2 years of hers was comparable to 15 years of special force operators in skydiving and parachuting.

Her complete 2 years of experience were like a titan standing in front of the most elite veterans from tier-one units. The latter was like a moth, incomparable with Ling Qingyu's staggering talents.

A pity Miss System limited the time. If 5 years of her were shared among the girls, Ling Qingyu would've leaped with joy.

But with Miss System's predictable behavior, she didn't have too much hope. 2 years was 2 years.

'Won't your existence be noticed?'

[Perhaps. Only a very strong will like iron will notice the strangeness. Most will attribute the reason to an impulsive dream. Only their subconscious knows they have learned something.]

Ling Qingyu's lips twitched. 'Don't say it. I think every girl will know something is wrong. Iron will? Under Tang Ziyi's barbaric and abusive treatment, who hasn't earned the title and honed their mentality?'

'Anyway, nobody won't believe something is wrong.'

[...]

Okay, being ignored!

Ling Qingyu smiled wryly. 'Why 2 years instead of 5? I mean, I feel so abused and not worth the trade.'

[Are you sure?]

Hearing a dangerous tone, Ling Qingyu fixed her expression and nodded with joy and a little hint of reluctance in her eyes. 'No, I'm gratified you have such a magnanimous attitude for my girls.'

[Don't be too greedy. Hmph! I have various ways to torture your soul.]

Ling Qingyu rolled her eyes. 'Sister, be normal. Don't act like some witches. I know everything you do is good for me. I love you...'

Miss System snorted and disappeared again. Oh, what a Tsundere!

Ling Qingyu sighed in regret that she wasn't able to increase 2 years to 3. Only an increment by one but the benefits brought by this change were too enormous to be ignored.

She knew best what the numbers meant. Unfortunately, Miss System had learned to diss her.

Alas, two years then. Ling Qingyu touched the steering wheel with remembrance and sped off the parking lot. She missed Yang Qingyue but her mother-in-law was here too.

Wait, wouldn't Yang Qingyue stay in her residence during the time Gu Yi stayed here?

Her smile wasn't for long when she realized Gu Yi might separate the two! Even if the two played hide and seek, Ling Qingyu must participate in the mission.

She must leave Province N, according to Gu Yi's arrangement to run a practice drill with Spirit Fox operators to prove their skills in order for the latter to confirm the mission.

As for why not play here, was Gu Yi a fool? Since the military here and the theater command were riddled with holes, why bother alarming her enemy?

So, the group was supposed to fly to the army base where Gu Yi's confidantes had power and control.

With the miserable missing affection of Yang Qingyue, Ling Qingyu drove back to take a rest.

Her side-effect of 30 minutes hadn't gone yet. So, as soon as she stepped into her manor, Ling Qingyu sprinted toward her room and jumped onto her bed.

She only asked Lin Xiao not to disturb her slumber and prepared a dinner solely for her if she woke up.

Of course, Lin Xiao didn't need to be told to arrange dinner for the guests and her elders. She got everything covered as a qualified butler.

As for greeting Yang Qingyue and selling cute, Ling Qingyu didn't bother. Once Gu Yi, a titan-class light bulb shone between the two, they had nowhere to hide to do secret stuff...Ahem.

Tang Ziyi was busy coordinating the operators who would tag along with the mission and comforting Xiao Yue because the two would be separated soon.

In fact, Tang Ziyi persuaded Xiao Yue to accompany the group but the latter refused, citing the reason, she was needed as the closest aide to Ling Qingyu to manage the rest after the two leaders left.

Indeed, Xiao Yue's importance was ignored because of the existence of Ling Qingyu and Athena.

She couldn't show her talent when the two bosses took care of everything. Not to mention, Xiao Yue didn't want to travel too much and enjoyed laziness.

Hearing these excuses, Tang Ziyi didn't know what to say. She could only pressure Xiao Yue that there was no next time.

On the other hand, Gu Yi and Assistant Su had a deep conversation with Tang Ziyi and were surprised when they knew Ling Qingyu would participate.

When they expressed worries and concerns, they received Tang Ziyi's sneer.

"You should be more worried about her enemies. Even if people died due to nuclear apocalypse, she won't."

Feeling strange at Tang Ziyi's words, both didn't think too much. They realized they might have underestimated Ling Qingyu a lot.

Unknowingly, this ruthless businesswoman was a warrior too. They trusted Tang Ziyi's words and didn't question them. Plus, they knew for a fact that Ling Qingyu had great confidence in this mission to participate herself.

Both didn't have the slightest thought of disagreeing. At night, when Lin Xiao arranged the dinner, Gu Yi and Assistant Su finally met the three elders.

After all, the manor was so big that people could rarely encounter each other. It was like a chance encounter between the monarch and his concubine.

When Amorette discovered Gu Yi's identity, she rushed away and barged into Ling Qingyu's room. The latter was still in a confused state after being scolded and dragged away.

#### Chapter 544 Leaving

Amorette scolded Ling Qingyu continuously for not treating Gu Yi as a serious guest. This child never bothered about other people's superior identities. She had no idea how strong and well-connected her daughter had become. She merely thought Ling Qingyu's business was still confined to the fashion and clothing industry.

After all, a ministerial-level boss only needed one word to abolish Ling Qingyu's wealth. Amorette and Denise both thought so, underestimating the full extent of Ling Qingyu's empire. But who was the most shocked? Zhao Xiurong never expected Ling Qingyu to have the energy or influence to invite a country minister to her home for dinner.

Of course, Ling Qingyu accepted her mother's reprimand, but her confused expression only angered Amorette further. The more Amorette scolded, the more perplexed Ling Qingyu appeared, which only fueled her mother's frustration. It wasn't until Ling Qingyu used her final strategic weapon—acting

coquettish and selling cuteness without even caring about any outsiders—that the situation de-escalated.

Outsiders? Ling Qingyu thought not. Everyone present was familiar and closely bonded. She didn't need to be ashamed of being controlled by her mother in front of them. This was love—a genuine, selfless love that she was proud to display, no matter who was watching.

After the commotion died down under Ling Qingyu's repeated promises to behave, everyone sat down and enjoyed dinner. However, Ling Qingyu had one lingering complaint: she couldn't talk properly—aka...flirt—with Yang Qingyue since her mother-in-law was always watching her.

In fact, Ling Qingyu misunderstood Gu Yi, who only paid close attention to her after discovering how significant Amorette was in Ling Qingyu's life. Gu Yi sighed in relief, realizing that the worst-case scenario she feared shouldn't happen since Ling Qingyu seemed to have a deep respect for her mother.

If Ling Qingyu ever did attempt to do something outrageous, she would likely be reined in by her loved ones, particularly by her mother.

At the very least, as long as Gu Yi maintained a good relationship with Amorette, she believed she could keep Ling Qingyu from spiraling out of control. Of course, Gu Yi wasn't naive enough to think that Ling Qingyu was a puppet she could easily manipulate.

But with her strategy and resourcefulness, combined with the influence of Yang Qingyue and Amorette, Gu Yi felt confident that she could keep Ling Qingyu in check.

If Ling Qingyu knew her mother-in-law's concerns, she would have complained about how officials and government organizations always thought the worst of everyone. They always imagined a powerful person plotting to destroy the world or disrupt the social order, never seeing the good side.

In the Marvel Universe and DC Universe, wasn't the situation the same? Heroes were constantly trying to prove they were not the enemy, despite their powers. If Ling Qingyu knew the extent of Gu Yi's fears, her complaints might turn into a bitter reality check. But for now, she looked around at the friends and family gathered around her and felt gratified.

Ling Qingyu only hoped that life would go on peacefully, but she knew better. Peace could only be obtained by fighting, not by giving in. She had enemies, and many more would come if she decided to walk down the treacherous path she was on.

She couldn't indulge in enjoyment and leisure for too long. She had to stay vigilant. The Qin family was eyeing her, and remnants of the Tiger gangs still held a grudge against her. Although they posed no immediate threat, she couldn't afford to be complacent.

A smile crept upon her face as Ling Qingyu gazed steadily at everyone and raised her glass for a toast. The night passed in a blur of laughter, clinking glasses, and shared memories. The moon dove, and the sun rose.

As expected, Ling Qingyu couldn't sleep with Yang Qingyue, who was dragged away by her mother in the name of a reunion. Helpless, the next morning, the two disappeared in the name of work again, leaving Ling Qingyu no chance to talk to Yang Qingyue.

She pursed her lips at her mother-in-law's pettiness and shook her head. Why bother when she had already won Yang Qingyue's heart? So stingy! After breakfast, Ling Qingyu met with Zhao Xiurong and requested her help with the newcomer, Tao Ling.

Ling Qingyu explained the stakes and the industries involved, leaving Zhao Xiurong wide-eyed in response. What on earth had Ling Qingyu been up to in such a short period? Zhao Xiurong felt like she could never truly see through her own boss. Every time she thought she understood Ling Qingyu, the latter would reveal another layer of complexity.

With Zhao Xiurong's guarantee, Ling Qingyu solved her final worry. Tao Ling would learn a lot by accompanying Zhao Xiurong. Besides, Ling Qingyu had faith that nothing bad would happen to them. After all, her Spirit Fox guards weren't just for show.

If Ling Qingyu declared herself the uncrowned king of Province N, no one would dare challenge her. Of course, this was assuming Ling Qingyu revealed all her wealth and connections, which she preferred to keep hidden for now.

Their conversation ended as Zhao Xiurong had to leave for work, while the unscrupulous shopkeeper received an important message from Athena to head to the secret realm. Apparently, Tang Ziyi had something urgent to discuss as well. No need to guess, Ling Qingyu knew the reason likely involved Miss System's mysterious hand in their affairs.

When Ling Qingyu met Tang Ziyi, who was deep in thought, she was suddenly hurled up by the collar, her feet dangling above the ground. It was a funny picture: the ruthless CEO swinging her calves in disgust while hanging in the air.

As for resisting, it was pointless. Who knew what moves Tang Ziyi might use to "abuse" her next? Ling Qingyu accepted the humiliation, swearing to repay it tenfold later.

"Qingyu, are you serious? The dream I had—was that your doing?" Tang Ziyi demanded, her voice tense.

"Not mine directly, but you know whose hands are behind it," Ling Qingyu replied calmly.

"Damn, I envy you sometimes for your luck." Tang Ziyi shook her head in disbelief. "You can achieve in a dream what I've strived for decades to hone in my skills. Honestly, thanks to you, I've perfected my skydiving."

"Envy me? Are you sure?" Ling Qingyu raised an eyebrow. "Imagine yourself training for 30 years, literally."

Tang Ziyi gave her a sympathetic glance. She understood the suffering Ling Qingyu must have endured under Miss System's hand, but she still thought Ling Qingyu had gained more than she had lost. No pain, no gain.

"Does your skill transfer include all our operators?" Tang Ziyi asked, getting to the main point.

"Yes," Ling Qingyu nodded. "They'll share parts of my experience and improve their skills. The consciousness level has sunk to the bones, so...everything will be instinctive level, as for how, we can only test it out."

"Indeed, we can only experiment with the results but I can already testify that I have improved a lot and I can sense it. By the way, now that I noticed, you say it was only part of your experience?"

"Yep, 2 years of mine. Compared to my 30 years, you are nothing." Ling Qingyu puffed her chest.

"Damn, 2 years seem like more than a dozen for me...Then you should be happy to suffer this ordeal because, congratulations, you've just earned us hundreds of special forces operators, thanks to that dream."

'Should she say thank you and bow?' Ling Qingyu's lips twitched, but she said nothing. Tang Ziyi, on the other hand, grew more excited as she envisioned how much easier the upcoming mission would be. Even though her guards trained continuously, experience couldn't be replaced with more training.

Ling Qingyu's input had helped them internalize the process subconsciously, as if they had jumped from planes several times already.

"Right," Tang Ziyi continued, "you're coming with us to Province T. We'll be doing some real skydiving and parachuting. Minister Gu has given us the green light, and our flight is already chartered."

"Huh, me? Why? I don't need it," Ling Qingyu replied, puzzled.

Tang Ziyi held her breath, resisting the urge to smack Ling Qingyu. Was that a sentence supposed to come out? Patience. Patience.

If not for Ling Qingyu's additional perk, the coming mission would be a little dangerous. Now that someone had lessened the risk to nearly nothing, one should be grateful, Tang Ziyi reminded herself. But she couldn't resist the urge to shake Ling Qingyu by the shoulders, getting revenge for all the stress.

"Just follow us and familiarize yourself with the team, or don't even think about participating," Tang Ziyi said, her voice firm.

Her words made sense, and Ling Qingyu could only nod under Tang Ziyi's deadly gaze. An hour later, Ling Qingyu, Tang Ziyi, and a group of girls departed in a mighty formation. Rows of Alphards lined up as they made their way to the airport.

Only Ling Qingyu had a bitter face. But for the sake of a great reward, she tolerated it.

Chapter 545 Nonsense scenario for a while

Arriving at the airport, Ling Qingyu's convoy turned heads. It was rare to see such a fleet of matching vans in such a formidable formation. Passersby couldn't help but wonder if some famous celebrities had arrived, sparking excitement that quickly simmered down when the passengers dismounted.

For the men, however, this sight was nothing short of captivating. A large group of women exited the vehicles—around a hundred in total—each one slim, tall, and alluring. Despite their modest attire, their stature and poise captured everyone's attention. Their presence was striking, as if a group of supermodels had descended upon the airport, turning it into an impromptu fashion show.

Each woman had a beautiful face, and their healthy, toned figures—enhanced by rigorous exercise and Ling Qingyu's mysterious training methods—made them all the more impressive. The air was thick with curiosity and admiration as these women, who seemed to be more than mere travelers, made their way inside the terminal.

While the crowd buzzed with curiosity, Ling Qingyu and her entourage grabbed their suitcases and strode in with purpose. They carried only the essentials for their mission, plus a few additional "tools" that Tang Ziyi had insisted on including.

Before departing, Ling Qingyu had been dragged to the underground storage where Tang Ziyi had prepared everything for the operation. The array of equipment was staggering: drones, batteries, portable solar chargers for emergencies, an arsenal of weapons including rifles, shotguns, and machine guns, and all the necessary gear for special operations, including parachutes.

Tang Ziyi's confidence in Athena's products was evident, as she ensured they had everything they could possibly need.

The weapons had been upgraded to Western standards, with HK416 and HK417 rifles suited for riflemen and marksmen, respectively. The SAW (Squad Automatic Weapon) remained the same, using the Israeli-made Negev model. Spirit Fox needed a disguise that would direct suspicion toward Country C, hence the choice of equipment.

The cache also included grenades, an automatic grenade launcher, RPGs, an autonomous mortar system, and even a MANPADS (Man-Portable Air-Defense System). The sheer volume of weaponry was overwhelming, and Ling Qingyu felt a headache forming as she surveyed the "succinct" preparation Tang Ziyi had orchestrated.

The most surprising request from Tang Ziyi was for Ling Qingyu to store vehicles—specifically, modified Toyota pickup trucks. These trucks, resembling those used by Mexican police to combat cartels, were equipped with mounted PKM machine guns, transforming them into technical vehicles built for war.

In addition, Athena had outfitted the PKMs to be compatible with NATO 7.62mm ammunition, ensuring logistical compatibility with the rest of their gear.

Accompanying the trucks were Land Cruisers, the preferred choice for tough terrains, and, to Ling Qingyu's astonishment, several Aegis armored vehicles and two armored Strykers. The sight left her speechless. The demerits of having a divine bracelet had appeared.

Heck, even the food, medicine and toiletries were stored away, sufficient for a year at the minimum. Tang Ziyi also sent in a new robot, designed alongside with Athena to build infrastructure inside Ling Qingyu's spatial tool.

Aunt, please stop torturing my soul. We're just fighting against gangs, not invading towns, Ling Qingyu thought, though she dared not say it aloud.

However, Tang Ziyi's rationale silenced her. To eliminate the entire scamming group required extensive time and blockades. They needed to seal off the hideouts and slowly dismantle them, all while preparing to fend off any reinforcements. These weapons and vehicles were necessary to maintain the upper hand.

As for how Tang Ziyi planned to explain all of this to Gu Yi and her government contacts, she assured Ling Qingyu that Athena had it all covered.

Reluctantly, Ling Qingyu decided to trust Instructor Tang's judgment.

This elaborate preparation was the reason Ling Qingyu felt more weary than excited as they headed toward the military base where Gu Yi's confidantes were stationed. Tang Ziyi's eagerness had drained her energy even before they had arrived.

Thanks to Gu Yi's arrangements and her connection with Yang Qingyue, the group was escorted through a private channel directly to their plane. Along the way, Ling Qingyu called Gu Yi to express her frustration. "Aunt Gu, you're ruthless. You didn't even let me talk to Sister Yang."

"Distance makes the heart grow fonder, doesn't it? I'm doing this for your own good," Gu Yi replied, her tone light.

Ling Qingyu nearly rolled her eyes. "You're a sly old fox."

"Thank you, little fox," Gu Yi responded, amused. "I'm just making sure you don't accidentally leak any information. Don't think too much about it."

Your reasoning is sound, but it doesn't make any sense at all, okay? Ling Qingyu thought, silently accepting the situation.

"Alright, I'll hang up now. We're boarding the plane."

"Safe flight, Little Ling," Gu Yi said warmly before ending the call.

Ling Qingyu took her seat on the aircraft, an Airbus model, though she didn't know which one exactly. What she did notice was how many seats were available, far more than needed for her, Tang Ziyi, and the 80 operators accompanying them. The spaciousness was a welcome luxury.

Tang Ziyi sat across the aisle, both of them in the business class section. Due to the need for secrecy, none of them wore their real faces, including Ling Qingyu. The disguises were so thorough that if not for their deep connection and the time spent together, recognizing one another might have been a challenge.

Ling Qingyu marveled at her mother-in-law's power and influence, arranging everything with just a few words and some important documents. It was a reminder of the reach and authority that Gu Yi wielded.

Soon, the plane lifted off, taking precedence on the runway thanks to its high-priority status. Just two hours later, they landed at the airport in Province T. Upon disembarking, the group was again led through a private channel, this time toward a small group of waiting military officers.

Tang Ziyi took the lead, exchanging pleasantries with the officers before they were ushered into four buses. Ling Qingyu observed quietly, following Tang Ziyi's lead without asserting herself.

What? Even if she was their boss, she didn't want to be in a limelight.

Half an hour later, the convoy arrived at the military base, where temporary accommodations had already been arranged. Ling Qingyu couldn't help but be impressed by Gu Yi's network, though she suspected that this display was also meant to send a message.

She understood that Gu Yi might be demonstrating her power and influence, perhaps as a subtle deterrent. While Ling Qingyu didn't enjoy thinking negatively about others, she knew it was necessary to guard against potential threats. It was essential to anticipate the worst in people, but she made an exception for her closest confidantes and friends.

Paranoia had its limits; life would be too bleak if she mistrusted everyone.

No sooner had Ling Qingyu settled in than Tang Ziyi pulled her away, ordering the entire group to prepare for training. Ling Qingyu grumbled internally but complied without hesitation. Tang Ziyi had arranged for helicopters and briefed the operators on the day's agenda.

The objective was clear: they would jump from the helicopters, skydive for a while, and then land on designated spots using parachutes. This exercise would test both their personal skills and the reliability of their equipment. With the data provided by sensors, they were expected to achieve near-perfect landings.

Normally, Tang Ziyi wouldn't have had such confidence in conducting this exercise so quickly, but Ling Qingyu's shared mysterious training had given them an edge.

The military swiftly allocated the helicopters, and the operators changed into their gear. They carried only the necessary equipment for the exercise; the focus was on practice and familiarization.

As they made their way to the helicopters, they encountered an unexpected small episode. A group of soldiers, fully equipped with weapons and gear, stood in formation, their presence exuding a menacing aura. Their intense, disciplined appearance was clearly intended to intimidate the Spirit Fox operators.

Tang Ziyi and Ling Qingyu recognized this as a show of force, a childish attempt at political maneuvering. While such displays might have rattled less experienced operators, the Spirit Fox members were unfazed. Their combat experience and training far exceeded that of the soldiers attempting to intimidate them.

Discipline and formations might impress onlookers, but Tang Ziyi's operators had long since transcended the need for such superficial displays. They trained in "undisciplined discipline," focusing on real-world effectiveness rather than rigid military ceremony.

Tang Ziyi valued creativity and problem-solving over blind obedience, knowing that her operators could snap into formation at a moment's notice if needed.

The Spirit Fox operators responded to the provocation with bored indifference, their lack of reaction a silent testament to their superiority. In terms of experience, these soldiers couldn't hold a candle to them. The training intensity, the variety of scenarios they'd faced, and the sheer volume of real-world operations had prepared them far beyond the capabilities of their would-be challengers.

Tang Ziyi and Ling Qingyu had already warned the operators about such potential provocations, instructing them to remain composed. Both women were irritated by the military's childish antics, but they kept their cool.

If the military wanted a challenge, Tang Ziyi was more than ready to deliver. She would have relished the opportunity to pit her operators against these soldiers in force-on-force drills, confident that her girls would emerge victorious. Tang Ziyi was confident to rub these lads' faces against the floor in humiliation.

She guessed that the military superiors allied with Gu Yi were likely observing, hoping to gauge the Spirit Fox's reaction.

But for now, they kept their true capabilities under wraps, their calm demeanor speaking louder than any aggressive display could.

Chapter 546 Ling Qingyu impressed many

These matters didn't affect the psychology of the girls. Tang Ziyi and the group boarded the helicopters, accompanied by another 20 soldiers assigned to supervise when necessary. From Tang Ziyi's explanation, Ling Qingyu understood that in this operation, the military had decided to send in a small squad as well.

Since the higher-ups were still arguing and remained unambiguous, the military couldn't act without orders from above, even though this base's superior was well-connected with Gu Yi. Nonetheless, sending a small squad was still possible under the condition of anonymity. This squad would receive no support apart from Spirit Fox once they landed on foreign soil.

The helicopters lifted into the air and ascended to a great height. Their rear compartments remained open.

At a particular altitude, the pilots announced that the stage was set. Tang Ziyi glanced at Ling Qingyu, who surprisingly stood at the forefront, brushing aside the girls behind her to take the lead.

Tang Ziyi thought this bastard wanted to get off first and rest and laughed at her childish behavior. However, her mouth fell open as she saw Ling Qingyu taking over the so-called instructor and checking the exterior without any fear of the height.

Compared to the operators, she was so brave and nonchalant, as if these actions were as simple as drinking water or eating food.

When Tang Ziyi looked at the girls, she saw nervousness in many of their eyes. No matter how much they had shared their experiences or trained, there was still a bit of apprehension. But she knew very well that after this flight, these girls would leap towards becoming the most professional paratrooper specialists.

Of course, their insecurities were sensed by the soldiers accompanying them. Their eyebrows raised with suspicion, even contemplating whether to report their unproven findings. Forget it, they thought, let's see how they jump before making any conclusions. These girls shouldn't be underestimated.

Even under the overwhelming momentum of an army of soldiers, they didn't flinch or make any sudden reactions. The soldiers thought that if they reported early and were proven wrong, they would be too ashamed to walk around in the future.

Soon, all the girls jumped from the helicopters' compartments, like dumplings scattered across the sky.

Tang Ziyi patted Ling Qingyu and jumped ahead. Seeing no one left in the helicopter, Ling Qingyu nodded at the crew and leaned backward.

Unlike the others, who tiptoed all the way to the edge before leaping down, Ling Qingyu simply tilted and let gravity do the work.

In midair, watching the helicopters grow smaller, Ling Qingyu twisted her hips and looked down. Her eyes scanned the horizon, counting her girls.

Don't ask why her eyesight was so good—what else but an all-out enhancement in physique? These small dots were amplified in her perspective.

She spread her limbs to slow down to the maximum allowed speed and observed her girls. Since the group was to land around a designated spot and the altitude they jumped from was a bit low, chutes

began deploying. Mentally counting and ensuring every girl deployed theirs successfully, as well as the special forces units who jumped alongside, Ling Qingyu dove.

She surpassed the operators who had leaped earlier than her and controlled her flight direction toward the white cross she saw in the distance.

On the ground, important military personnel and officers watched in amazement, nodding their heads from time to time. The chutes heading toward the target area had already impressed many.

"Look, what's that?" one of them asked, pointing his finger and squinting his eyes. "Don't tell me someone can't deploy a chute successfully?"

"No, it shouldn't be, right?"

A commotion spread as the black dot fell faster and faster, even surpassing those with chutes.

Just when people were thinking the figure was about to crash land based on the speed, a chute was launched from the back.

A rectangular parachute slowed the figure's descent and directed it toward the target. However, most were still not optimistic, worrying that even with the chute, the speed might hurt the person.

Contrary to their expectations, the figure managed to decelerate and landed perfectly on the white X mark, merely taking two steps after touching the ground lightly.

There was no crash as everyone had predicted. The landing was as light as a feather—handsome and fierce.

Gasps and silence ensued as the crowd watched in amazement, particularly the specialists who understood how difficult the achievement was, and yet the figure had made it look effortless.

The demand for such superb technique on the physique was unimaginable. The ability to withstand the pressure caused by the sudden snap of the parachute and the toll on the body during deceleration was a pain in the ass for most paratroopers.

Many deployed their chutes early, but this figure had behaved as if nothing had happened!

The rest of the operators landed and completed the task. Every girl was excited, no longer dreading the great height because their subconscious familiarity had perfected their original skills.

As long as the recruitment period passed, the girls would regain their courage and control. Tang Ziyi landed not far from the X and clicked her tongue in amazement. This was godlike, not mortal.

Honestly, she and the girls were dumbfounded by Ling Qingyu's deeds. Damn, they never expected their boss to be so impressive.

Too perfect.

The girls regrouped and went ahead for two additional runs. Afterward, everybody collapsed from physical and mental exertion.

In fact, the girls were okay, but they knew they must not show off too much in front of others. There were experts around, trying to analyze their secrets.

However, they still felt the drain in energy. Mental exertion couldn't last long, no matter how well they scored in terms of strength, stamina, and agility.

Tang Ziyi walked up to Ling Qingyu and patted her shoulder. "I realize and sympathize with your sacrifice. But for the good of everyone, it's worth it."

Ling Qingyu pursed her lips and didn't reply, shrugging off Tang Ziyi's teasing remarks. She knew best whether Tang Ziyi was truly sympathetic.

Nonetheless, Tang Ziyi should understand her plight and struggle. The group had only jumped three times; she had been doing it for 30 years...

Perhaps because of her stunning achievement, Ling Qingyu was quickly sought out by many personnel, both officers and sergeants.

Ling Qingyu nodded in response but didn't say much, pretending to stay cold. Although she respected soldiers and their creeds, provided they were truthful to their oaths, she didn't want to associate with them too much.

It wasn't that she looked down on them—they lived in different worlds. Soldiers usually interacted with curses and swear words, which made her a little uncomfortable.

She knew they meant nothing more than friendly banter, but for someone whose education and etiquette ranked in the very high echelon, she would never fit in, nor would she pretend to.

Plus, she was only here for the mission, assigned by Miss System. She shouldn't always be on the battlefield, right? Her goal was to be a powerful boss behind the scenes.

Even though the soldiers avoided impolite remarks because Ling Qingyu and the operators were all female, an estrangement remained.

To avoid further trouble, Ling Qingyu stuck close to Tang Ziyi throughout the 'interactions.' In contrast, her girls were building great rapport, which made Ling Qingyu a little protective of her 'daughters.'

She couldn't let these bastards kidnap her girls and had to stay vigilant, ready to act at a moment's notice.

Fortunately, other than daily conversations, nothing excessive occurred. The girls weren't fools; they knew Ling Qingyu had secrets that must be guarded.

They had to be mindful of their daily actions, and Instructor Tang had taught them many times how to fight against malicious inquiries and spying, hidden under the table.

The moment they became part of Spirit Fox, their relationships were destined to be affected by the work.

Chapter 547 Good Person Card

Since there was no parachuting event, social networking soon followed, but this didn't involve the Spirit Fox operators. To avoid harassment and confrontations, Tang Ziyi ordered them to stay inside the building arranged by the military and tolerate their loss of freedom temporarily.

None of the girls were idiots to ruin the important occasion because of playfulness. Although, usually, in Ling Qingyu's residence, they were the most relaxed and always playing around, they understood how to behave and not bring trouble to Ling Qingyu's cause. Of course, a little conversation and small talk with the soldiers were fine as long as they didn't leave the group.

Even though these Spirit Fox operators had no fear and could easily fight against numerically superior opponents in hand-to-hand combat, staying in a group presented strength to outsiders and deterred any possible bullying or malicious intentions.

Since Tang Ziyi was planning to meet high-ranking officials in the military, Ling Qingyu followed. A small banquet was held; obviously, the military wanted to know more from close interaction. However, among the people who greeted them, she saw three people with stars flashing on their epaulettes. These weren't ordinary stars for mid-tier officers; they were higher-tier.

Even if Ling Qingyu couldn't differentiate the rank because of her lack of knowledge, she knew through the uniforms and their temperaments that these three weren't ordinary. Nonetheless, Ling Qingyu

remained unfazed and acted nonchalant. As she had delegated everything to Tang Ziyi, she served as her subordinate.

Surprisingly, when she listened on the side, Tang Ziyi was shaking hands with the highest-ranking officer, who was female as well. No idea if Gu Yi did it on purpose to facilitate communication, but her damn rank was Lieutenant General. The other two were Major General and Brigadier General. Obviously, the base was commanded by a Brigadier General.

The two superiors came to monitor and make a judgment. What made Ling Qingyu speechless was the Lieutenant General's surname—Tang.

"General Tang, it's an honor for me to receive such a great gift." Tang Ziyi shook hands with the general.

"The pleasure is mine, hmmm...."

"Just address me as Ms. Tang."

"Ah, then, we do have fate to meet each other with the same surname."

"Who knows?" Tang Ziyi shrugged. "We might share the same ancestry hundreds of years ago. It must be fate, I agree."

Flatter, continue flattering, Ling Qingyu sneered inwardly. Same ancestry, from two different worlds; Tang Ziyi really knew how to talk smoothly.

"I'm impressed by your valor and background. A pity, I don't have a talent like you under my wing," General Tang said with a sad tone.

"No, I believe you're really talented to excel in a difficult field," Tang Ziyi shook her hand. "I reckon, it isn't an easy path but you made it. That's what matters."

"Indeed." General Tang nodded her head, and the two exchanged rainbow farts.

Soon, the topic transferred to makeup and cosmetics. What woman didn't love appearance? Actually, men were also the same. Though they might not care, who didn't want to look better to the outsiders, and perhaps both genders liked to praise themselves?

What? Men sneered at this statement? Then, what were the bros watching themselves in the mirror, flexing their muscles, and rubbing their chins?

Everybody loved beauty, and no one could deny that.

Of course, Ling Qingyu caught the eyes of many when they identified her as the perfect figure who was able to land and receive a perfect score.

They had asked the relevant experts and understood how hard it was to skydive and maneuver a parachute like Ling Qingyu.

Those who had a thirst for talents or were curious flocked toward Ling Qingyu, who responded coldly, only replying with succinct words.

Her chilly air made everyone uncomfortable, so people began to gossip and regard her as being arrogant and demeaning. Just a little talent and expertise and she's sprouting this temperament?

Ling Qingyu had no idea that because of her cold reaction, people talked badly about her. She wouldn't bother to respond even if she knew the true situation.

Jealousy and envy, hidden inside every human, had created the current dilemma. Who stipulated that those talented people must interact in order to fit into society? Some liked mingling in the crowd, while others liked being alone.

Among the speakers, a few veterans with experience observed Ling Qingyu's eyes toward the soldiers and her reactions and thought of something, excusing her.

"Don't talk badly about others when you don't understand them clearly."

"Why, isn't she just better at parachuting? Can she shoot better than us? Can she drive better? Can she fight better than us in hand-to-hand combat?"

Actually, Ling Qingyu defeated everyone all around. If no one had special talents, they couldn't catch her tail. Naturally, they had no idea about Ling Qingyu's perks.

"Watch your mouth, younglings. You have no idea what she has been through."

"Oh! By your logic, old man, you seem to understand her situation."

"Of course, I have more experience." The older officer lowered his voice and explained, "Don't you see her eyes when she looks at you? I sense love and cherish."

"Then, why does she act cold?"

"I'm explaining. Don't cut in. Ahem." The old man swallowed and continued. "You haven't been to war, so you'll never understand the behavior of us veterans. Do you know why it takes so long for veterans to accept new recruits and befriend them, especially those who experienced massive war?"

"Because of casualties?" One young man asked. Nobody frowned at his interruption because it was what everyone had in mind.

"Yes, imagine you connect with someone too deeply, and all of a sudden, they are gone. The once laughing face in front of you lies dead, devoid of any warmth. You might be a little sad if they are older, but it hurts like something shreds your heart when you see one who is younger than you."

"I see... I don't know if you have experienced similar events."

"Wouldn't you, old man?"

"Of course, I haven't encountered such a loss because I was mostly in the backline, but I have seen those who suffered this experience. And this girl behaves similarly. Don't look at her coldness and aloofness; she just can't bear to hurt her heart again. After all, if you don't connect, you might feel saddened, but the death will pass by. But if you connect deeply..."

The old man didn't continue, but everyone understood. Someone asked with a puzzled voice, "However, old man, our country hasn't had wars for so many years, how on earth did this woman experience battle fatigue?"

"Idiot, there isn't war, but can't there be secret missions by the state to combat terrorism, drug dealers, or any malicious parties working against our nation? Not to mention, we have mercenary as a side job."

"Oh, it turns out we were blaming a person wrongly without consideration. This is why the ancients said not to judge everything by its cover," the group lamented. "Our lady is a good person, then. We are guilty of having a negative opinion; fortunately, it's not too late to make amends, and the lady hasn't heard our discussion."

So, Ling Qingyu was given a good person card by a group of strangers. If anyone close to Ling Qingyu knew about this, they would have sprawled to the ground, laughing without a care for their image.

Chapter 548 Damn charm at work

"But we aren't in danger of losing our lives, so what's there to fear?"

"Well, guarding others to protect oneself is her subconscious behavior. She'll need a lot of time to realize she can connect with you." The old man smiled. "By then, she'll be leaving in a few days, and it's not possible to make friends, so why bother."

So, the news that Ling Qingyu was an experienced veteran who might have suffered a lot of trauma spread from this gossiping group.

After the banquet was over, one person spread it to ten, ten to a hundred, and so on. By the time the rumor reached the Spirit Fox operators and Tang Ziyi's ears, they were dumbfounded.

Especially when soldiers in the military eagerly asked about Ling Qingyu's biography, they had no idea what to say next and just nodded with numb faces.

What else could they do? They couldn't say more and ruin everything, right? Since the greatest misunderstanding had been formed, they let it be.

Tang Ziyi's face turned interesting under the intriguing eyes of General Tang. Even Ling Qingyu felt strange as she noticed the gazes landing more on her, filled with questions.

The night passed, and after Ling Qingyu and Tang Ziyi returned, the news grew more and more outrageous. Tang Ziyi's lips twitched as she scanned Ling Qingyu up and down carefully.

Well, even under an ordinary dress and altered face, Ling Qingyu still looked appealing. Like a dressing-up game, she wondered if she should also paint Ling Qingyu into different styles with numerous clothing designs.

Hey, her idea was possible. With the technology and clothing design ability from Ling Qingyu's companies, many cosplays were possible.

Ling Qingyu shivered subconsciously and looked warily at her surroundings. Since the day she learned to trust her intuition, she responded quickly without the slightest doubt.

"What's the matter?" Tang Ziyi asked, her brows furrowing.

"I don't know, I feel like someone is planning something bad for me. You should also be careful. The knife from the dark is hardest to block." Ling Qingyu even quoted a famous statement.

Tang Ziyi raised her brows funnily and held her laughter. She praised Ling Qingyu's weird intuition attributes and sighed, continuing to walk in a pretentious manner. "You don't need to say it; I learned to protect myself when you were still peeing in your diaper."

Ling Qingyu's face darkened at her partner's words and scoffed. But was it an illusion that she saw black gas emitting from Tang Ziyi? Oh, how evil! Ling Qingyu shook her head.

Why did she feel like the danger she sensed earlier came from Tang Ziyi?

Meanwhile, the three generals were discussing in a private room. The topic was about Ling Qingyu's veteranship.

"Do you think the rumors are true?" General Tang asked the two generals, who exchanged helpless glances and shrugged.

"I think it's a bit outrageous, but there's an element that backs up the claim."

"Indeed," General Tang nodded. "After all, we've watched and analyzed their combat footage. There's no denying their skills."

"Actually, till now, no matter how we've investigated, we know nothing about the Spirit Fox operators' identities. We know their organization, but..." The man paused. "I reckon that even if we knew their faces, we'd gain nothing out of it apart from some leader-like figures."

Spirit Fox operators' backgrounds and identities had been filtered by Athena to prevent these probes that could cause a disaster. Ling Qingyu might not suffer one, but her guards also had families to protect.

To prevent a tragic script from forming, Athena would be alerted as soon as someone attempted to search about Spirit Fox operators, rendering the official incognito investigation useless.

"Anyway, it seems like our probe is a failure. That woman knows how to dodge our questions." General Tang smacked her lips, recalling the back-and-forth dialogue with Tang Ziyi. "As for the rumor, let it be. It doesn't affect us, and I think she might have some trauma as reported. Who knows where she has experienced it?"

"Haha, that girl is a bit too cold," one agreed. "This is the fate of warriors. Underneath the limelight and glory, no one cares or understands the deep troubles and pains."

The next day, Spirit Fox operators woke up early and had breakfast. Tang Ziyi met General Tang again, who requested a friendly exchange between the two parties.

Tang Ziyi agreed, and the base hosted a match. She knew these moves were subtly testing one's depth.

General Tang had no desire to test marksmanship skills. From the old footage, she was aware of Spirit Fox's accuracy and firearm skills. She wasn't seeking abuse to undermine her own faction.

The event hosted was a sparring match between the operators and the military personnel. After all, equipping firearms equalized the difference between genders, but physical attributes could never be changed.

She knew this might be a little unfair, but against ordinary soldiers, Spirit Fox should be capable, right? Plus, she requested permission from Tang Ziyi, who also agreed without hesitation.

Since she had implicitly explained the stakes and weaknesses, Tang Ziyi's agreement proved that Spirit Fox operators could handle the task.

Of course, the rumors never stopped, and many soldiers approached the operators to ask for confirmation. In the end, the operators were so annoyed that they made up more stories, even reaching the height of some legends. What tearing a body into two pieces and so on!

So, the ordinary soldiers in the base were excited to participate since fighting against the renowned Spirit Fox was different. But their expectations were poured with cold water.

The operators effortlessly defeated their opponents, not lasting a single round, which raised interest from the special forces units who would accompany them in the upcoming mission.

They challenged the girls, who accepted the deal quickly and were abused to the point of doubting their lives. Similarly, they didn't last more than five exchanges.

In terms of skills, they had to admit defeat. It seemed like even if they attempted to exploit their bigger physiques, Spirit Fox operators solved them with grace and ease.

That was the result of Spirit Fox operators controlling their unimaginably enhanced physical strength and stamina. Imagine if they unleashed it all—they might accidentally kill someone, and this wasn't a joke.

Of course, among the girls, Ling Qingyu was repeatedly challenged because of the rumor. Almost every opponent lost the moment they moved.

It was like she knew what moves the opponents would make and struck back simultaneously. There was no dodging, no parrying, and no distancing; Ling Qingyu stepped in head-on, merely focusing on attack. Special forces units also experienced the same treatment—a true equality...

Nonetheless, Ling Qingyu's outstanding victory proved the rumor, causing more excitement. Spirit Fox operators and Tang Ziyi collectively slapped their foreheads in their minds.

Ling Qingyu was also helpless about this; she just wanted to act cold yet attracted more attention. At last, her damn charm never failed to work, Ling Qingyu thought narcissistically.

If Tang Ziyi and the girls knew what was in Ling Qingyu's mind, they might vomit blood in disgust. Here they were, troubled by the gossip and having to tone down her achievements, but the culprit was dancing with joy silently.

The three generals praised Spirit Fox and ended the match hastily to avoid embarrassment. There was not a single victory, okay! An utter abuse. No need to seek more! The three cried inwardly about their complaint.

Even their special forces unit was destroyed. Spirit Fox deserved its name and reputation. While the three flattered, Tang Ziyi also responded humbly.

She was proud of her subordinates' achievements, but she knew they were still far from being a World Class Special Forces unit.

In fact, special forces combat capability didn't exceed that of conventional units by a large margin. The unit specialized in various skills and formed a capable team. What they excelled at wasn't a frontal assault but infiltration and causing chaos behind enemy lines, which was what Spirit Fox operators lacked currently.

However, Tang Ziyi understood that their frontal combat was so outrageous that they could ignore the other aspects. If these operators learned more skills, she couldn't imagine the frightening strength that would terrify future elites.

She was looking forward to seeing those days become a reality.

When the crowd dispersed, Tang Ziyi summoned her group of girls, the friendly special unit that would ride alongside them, and the three generals to brief them on the mission.

Tang Ziyi explained the stakes and variables, describing the situation known according to Athena's intelligence through internet and satellite surveillance.

What she spoke brought great shock to the three generals, who tried to control their expressions. The intelligence level of Spirit Fox was so high—no wonder the gangs in Province N were bullied so much to the point of despair and tears.

This group of girls was overkill to work as a law enforcement party. They should join the military instead!

Chapter 549 Rules of Engagement's joke

Several questions arose as many raised their hands to clear their doubts, most of them coming from the three generals.

When Tang Ziyi mentioned completely annihilating the scamming gangs, disagreement erupted.

Of course, these concerns were from the military, raising issues about diplomatic complications and breaches of conduct. Tang Ziyi answered simply—they were mercenaries now.

The country had plausible deniability. General Tang expressed her protest, citing the dangers of fighting without support and logistical challenges.

Tang Ziyi glanced at Ling Qingyu and smiled, causing the latter to cough and silently curse. "Regarding our logistics, you don't need to worry. You should have noticed that we demand nothing from you except for the aircraft and the fuel involved."

Apparently, Spirit Fox had decided to eliminate these scamming gangs completely. The three generals were puzzled but didn't say much since the benefits would belong to them if Tang Ziyi's decision succeeded.

Sometimes, they wondered if the scamming groups had offended Spirit Fox. Or could it be that Spirit Fox was born to fight against large criminal organizations? From the beginning, its goal was always to crush any gangs that harmed the public and ordinary people.

Nobody protested, and Tang Ziyi continued her briefing, explaining her plans in detail, including the emergency backup plan.

With Athena's existence, Tang Ziyi didn't need to utilize too much brainpower in planning, even the details.

The three generals nodded imperceptibly, praising Spirit Fox inwardly—no wonder so many gangs in Province N were powerless in the face of utter humiliation.

Time passed, and evening arrived.

The airfield near the army base got busy with sergeants and crew running around in a hurry. The commotion was greatest around one large jet.

The Y-20 transport aircraft had its rear compartment open. Dozens of meters away, Tang Ziyi, Ling Qingyu, a group of girls, and the Special Unit codenamed "Wolf" stood in a circle.

Bags and equipment lay on the ground. The crowd surrounded Tang Ziyi, who had her hands on her waist as she walked around giving a battle speech—or so everyone thought.

"Any questions?" Tang Ziyi asked.

The Wolf Special Force members exchanged glances; the commander of this operation had covered everything. Although the two units would work independently, they stayed on the same channel in case any situation arose.

However, Spirit Fox operators were on a completely different channel. One of them raised her hand.

"Yes, tell us your doubt, sister," Tang Ziyi gestured for the girl to speak up.

"Rules of engagement?"

Tang Ziyi's lips twitched. She had no idea when the problem started, but her subordinates loved to ask this question. She was certain that if she didn't clarify, they would be happy to spray all the ammunition regardless.

She swore these operators might not even give the enemies the slightest chance to surrender. Who knew whether they would compete to see who failed to kill the enemy before they surrendered?

The Special Force members of the Wolf unit had similar expressions. Damn, did this question really need to be asked? Everyone should comply with the World Government convention, right?

Oh, they almost forgot they were collaborating with mercenaries.

"No restraint, as long as you ensure you won't hit bystanders and are sure that what you have in sight is our enemy, not civilians." Tang Ziyi paused. "It's best to strike slowly. We don't need speed but stealth at the beginning of our operation.

"Remember, our main objective is to extract the remaining undercover operatives and rescue two MIA agents."

Seeing nobody speak, Tang Ziyi was about to continue her talk when the engines whirled behind her. She knew the time was up and gestured to everyone. "That's it. Lock and load, ladies and gentlemen."

The group grabbed their belongings and marched into the huge transport plane. When Ling Qingyu passed by her, Tang Ziyi grasped and whispered, "Hey, you're too quiet these days, I can't stand it."

Ling Qingyu felt veins pop on her forehead and wanted to duel right then. If not for the certain embarrassing results, she would have obeyed her impulse.

She gritted her teeth and replied, "When have I ever been so talkative? I think I'm really composed and gentle."

"Urghh!" Tang Ziyi pretended to vomit in exaggeration and patted Ling Qingyu to continue. "Go ahead, I don't want to worsen my air-sickness."

"Each other," Ling Qingyu rolled her eyes and walked on.

"You're the Jumpmaster. Keep that in mind," Tang Ziyi shouted against the engines' roars, receiving a wave from Ling Qingyu.

General Tang and her colleagues wished them good luck as Tang Ziyi glanced at them and nodded.

Counting everyone, Tang Ziyi signaled the crew that everybody was in and ready. She also took a seat beside Ling Qingyu and naturally received a knee nudge.

She hugged Ling Qingyu over the shoulder and teased her. The latter teased back. Their interaction was noticed by the Wolf members and Spirit Fox operators.

The former had weird expressions while the latter discussed both leaders' orientations and relationship. Gossip flew.

Of course, they communicated through whispers and silent eye gestures. Would the two bosses connect?

Ling Qingyu felt bitter. She wanted to do what her subordinates were thinking, but she dared not. This bastard kept teasing and strumming her nerves, knowing she had no courage.

Oh, when would her enhanced physique surpass Tang Ziyi's? Even with the sutra researched by Tang Ziyi, she was still behind. Or was it that this bastard was hiding some secrets?

Then, Ling Qingyu shook her head. Tang Ziyi might be an eloquent joker, but she would never lie about serious matters.

Tang Ziyi saw that the generals and their subordinates were still watching the group, so she waved at them before the ramp door slowly came up and sealed the cargo compartment.

General Tang sighed and looked up. She really wished they had more time. Although she trusted Spirit Fox and her Wolf units, she still felt preparation was too insufficient.

Alas, the heroes needed their rescue, and they couldn't afford to wait any longer. Now was the golden hour.

Inside the Y-20, LED lights shone across the fuselage. Ling Qingyu observed her girls and the Wolf members sitting on the not-so-comfortable jump seats, which could fold against the wall when not in use.

Everyone strapped themselves into the temporary seats without waiting for an announcement from the captain. The engines' whirrs grew louder as they blew hot air for the required thrust.

"Before the plane takes off, I just want to remind my fellas to conserve your energy. You can take a nap or listen to music. Whatever the case, as long as your minds and bodies are relaxing. We'll have three hours of flight before we reach our destination," Tang Ziyi spoke through the radio. "By 'relax,' I mean literally relax—don't give me any excuses for gaming and messing around."

Laughter erupted after hearing Tang Ziyi's lecture, and everyone immersed their minds in the job. After all, someone's life was in danger; nobody dared to behave lightly.

"You look happy, speaking to them," said Ling Qingyu.

"Of course, I miss the days of bullying these cuties. The more, the merrier," Tang Ziyi joked.

"Fortunately, I have you here in this operation. Otherwise, I might die of headaches considering that our girls can't bear to suffer too much. Not that they can't withstand the pressure, but they aren't used to it like the Wolf units."

"I see what you mean," Ling Qingyu nodded. Who let her treat Spirit Fox operators so grandiosely? She treated them with luxury, over-fulfilling their needs and desires.

Suddenly, they were thrown into the battlefield where such assets disappeared, and they might not be able to adapt mentally. At least, in this regard, they were inferior to the real special forces.

Nonetheless, Ling Qingyu didn't demand too much. Her girls were already quite capable in terms of skills and physique. "Wait, what do you mean that I'm here?"

Ling Qingyu huffed with dissatisfaction at how Tang Ziyi assigned her role.

Chapter 550 JUMP!

"What else? Don't forget you volunteered to participate; I didn't ask for it," Tang Ziyi spread her hands, feigning innocence.

"You really treat me like your Doraemon," Ling Qingyu shook her head bitterly. "What's my role this time, fully-covered logistics officer?"

"You can be if you want," Tang Ziyi smiled. "Please accept the girls if they have a nature call."

Ling Qingyu's face darkened at the thought of her girls entering her bracelet for that sole purpose, effectively turning it into a portable toilet—worse than Doraemon.

"Stop giving me that angry look. Don't you care about their safety? Their comfort? Their privacy?" Tang Ziyi continued her rhythmic attack. "Oh, those poor girls. They could have lived good lives, but because of their unscrupulous, abusive boss..."

Ling Qingyu wanted to swear and slam this bastard's head. If people didn't know her well, they might actually think she was a boss who exploited her employees.

But Tang Ziyi's words seemed to be working, as Ling Qingyu's resistance weakened. If her girls needed her help, she should simply let them have it.

The two bickered endlessly until the plane started to move. They both huffed and fell silent.

Soon, the engines roared, and everyone inside felt the acceleration as the plane lifted its heavy body off the ground.

Holding onto the rails, everyone tried to stabilize themselves, even though they were strapped in safely. The nearby rails on the wall were grasped by many hands.

Ling Qingyu had thought, as usual, that the plane would slowly climb, adjust, and ascend higher. But nope, compared to civilian aircraft, the ride was harsher, with no regard for comfort or enjoyment.

Fortunately, the pilot wasn't insane enough to climb straight to 10,000 meters immediately. There were still several stages to adapt to the pressure change.

Otherwise, so many ear-popping and lightheaded moments would have jeopardized the mission before the team even reached the destination.

Three hours flashed by in the blink of an eye.

The Y-20 flew at an altitude of 10,000 meters above sea level. The sky had dimmed, and only the last few rays of the setting sun glowed against the metal.

For this operation, it was clear the planners had timed everything perfectly, even exploiting the cover of darkness to hide the trails of parachutes.

Ling Qingyu returned to her seat after conversing with the pilot. Now that their destination was nearing, she discussed the timing and distance calculations with the experts as a jumpmaster, factoring in variables like the plane's velocity and the outside weather conditions.

Because the aircraft couldn't cross the border and risk alarming neighboring nations—ruining diplomacy and complicating matters—the group had to jump while the plane was still close to the border.

With enough skill, a skydiver could travel up to 150 km from a height of 10,000 meters if the chutes were deployed shortly after leaving the plane—HAHO operation.

However, Ling Qingyu's group aimed for a fast insertion, landing near the target area—HALO operation, which typically allows infiltration of 15-20 km deep.

Of course, the target area was well within this range and suited for a HALO jump. Ling Qingyu had informed the pilots, who would signal every step from now on according to the computed plan.

Standing next to Tang Ziyi, Ling Qingyu patted her shoulder. "Done. We've got about 15 minutes before we need to be ready."

Tang Ziyi stood up and exclaimed, "Alright, you heard her! Boys and girls, move and prepare for the jump! 15 minutes!"

The operators, who had been relaxing and chatting, straightened up and got to work. Those who were lightly napping woke up and looked around.

Nearby partners relayed the orders, and everyone busied themselves with checking weapons and equipment.

They equipped everything and began to form a circle. Within five minutes, they were ready. As usual, Tang Ziyi emphasized important reminders that needed attention.

Before long, alarms blared several times, and one of the crew members ran out to announce the operation was beginning.

Ling Qingyu and Tang Ziyi donned oxygen masks and signaled the others to follow suit. At 10,000 meters, the cargo bay needed to equalize the pressure with the outside.

This was why jumping from such heights was complicated and required specialized training.

Oxygen masks, eye protection... everything was in place.

Tang Ziyi observed everyone's readiness and nodded, gesturing to the crew member who reported on the radio about the situation in the cargo bay.

Gradually, Ling Qingyu felt the change in pressure but didn't focus too much on it. She had already adapted to these variables in her extensive training.

A few minutes later, sirens blared again, and the cargo ramp slowly opened. Cold air rushed in through the gap, brushing against the operators.

Of course, since they were well-equipped and protected, they were unfazed. Everyone had a look of excitement and boiling blood.

Ling Qingyu strapped the safety rope to her waist and walked toward the ramp to check the jumping conditions. As usual, she examined both sides of the aircraft to ensure there were no interferences during the jump due to mechanical failures.

Afterward, Ling Qingyu signaled "clear," and the crew relayed the information to the pilot. Everything was unfolding as planned.

Tang Ziyi received Ling Qingyu's nod and immediately ordered a group of 100 men to check their parachute mechanisms.

One by one, they automatically formed a line, checking the person in front while Tang Ziyi walked along the path, inspecting with her eyes before returning to Ling Qingyu's side.

"Let me check yours," said Tang Ziyi.

"Go ahead. I hope you don't accidentally loosen any strings," Ling Qingyu joked.

"It doesn't matter; you have more endurance than a cockroach," Tang Ziyi retorted. "I'm sure if you fell to the ground, you'd survive."

Ling Qingyu felt a grasp on her ancient bracelet and smiled. "Indeed, I can swoop in midair if a drastic situation arises."

"Clear to deploy. You're good to go."

Ling Qingyu nodded and checked Tang Ziyi's. "You're clear too."

Then, the overhead light turned red. They were getting close. Ling Qingyu fist-bumped Tang Ziyi and stayed at the front of the formation. The latter returned to her team.

To avoid spreading out after the jump, the entire formation would jump at once. Of course, not all 100 operators would leap simultaneously—that would be madness. The jump would be performed one team after another.

Communications went dead silent except for the wind howls and the sound of metal rubbing against metal.

Operators stabilized their lower bodies to adjust to the vibrations of the Y-20 aircraft. Ling Qingyu stared at the light source, as if afraid she might miss the precious moment if she looked away.

Seconds felt like minutes, and finally, the long-awaited green light appeared. Ling Qingyu blinked and signaled with her arm. "Go! Go! Go!"

A dozen operators ran and jumped without hesitation, followed by the group behind them. Against the night sky, only their shadows could be seen, blending into the darkness.

Tang Ziyi's group, the final team, also leaped.

"The bay stands clear. Thanks for the safe flight," reported Ling Qingyu.

"Happy landing!" The crews flashed thumbs-up.

Ling Qingyu unhooked the safety straps and scanned the cargo bay and smiled, then saluted the crew before diving down to follow her girls.