

Beautiful 551

Chapter 551 Failure

Although the view was dark, Ling Qingyu could still see her girls and several teams below. They had installed reflectors with tiny light sources, which Ling Qingyu's enhanced vision could make out as a faint line. Her eyes were not ordinary.

She rotated herself to face the direction of their destination, spreading her limbs to slow down the fall and increase the horizontal distance covered on the ground, trailing behind the others.

Wind brushed against her skin, but everyone was equipped with headsets as ear protection, nullifying the loud noise.

"Last person out of the plane," said Ling Qingyu over the radio.

Communication between personnel during a skydive was possible with a push-button equipped on the palm, provided the words remained succinct and clear.

"Copied. Watch us from above and act as needed. Remember, you are to follow my trail," Tang Ziyi replied.

"Understood."

Tang Ziyi then addressed the other teams, "Sitrep, Kilos."

"Kilo 1, loud and clear."

"Kilo 2, received."

"Kilo 3..."

...

"Kilo 10, everything's according to plan."

They were separated into ten teams, each comprising ten operators. Spirit Fox members belonged to Kilos 1 to 8, while the Wolf faction made up Kilos 9 and 10.

"All Kilos, stay tight in formation and follow Kirin's command," Tang Ziyi said.

"Roger!" echoed through the radio.

Kirin was Ling Qingyu's call sign, a temporary name to manage the skydiving members. As the one with the most experience, Ling Qingyu was well-suited for the role. While she remained solo in the air, her

comrades flew in a tight formation, their hands nearly touching each other. At night, if they weren't careful, some operators might drift off and get lost.

But as long as they stayed grouped, the entire team could keep track of one another.

"Kirin, you have the command," Tang Ziyi said.

"Understood, Boss. I have the command." Ling Qingyu wasn't fazed by the huge responsibility. She had drilled this scenario so many times that it had become second nature.

Ling Qingyu checked the instrument on her wrist, which displayed vital information along with a GPS dot tracking her position. Thanks to Athena's top technology, Tang Ziyi spared no expense, and Spirit Fox members were equipped with better devices than even the Wolf members, supported by Ling Qingyu's god-tier satellites.

"Kilo 2, report your altitude every 1,000 meters after passing 4,000," Ling Qingyu called into the channel.

"Kilo 2, copied."

Kilo 2 was the first team to jump, followed in numerical order by 3 through 10. Kilo 1, where Tang Ziyi stayed as the HQ element, jumped last.

The group fell at terminal velocity. In the eyes of an observer, they would appear to be walking in the sky—a beautiful sight, though only visible to themselves.

"4,000 meters," Kilo 2 called out a few minutes later.

Another 20 seconds passed. "3,000 meters."

Ling Qingyu glanced at her wrist. The numbers were changing rapidly; she was 800 meters above them.

"3,000 meters."

"2,000 meters."

"Kilo 2, spread out at 1,500 and begin to deploy at 1,000," Ling Qingyu instructed. While the operators already knew the procedures, it was always good to have a backup plan in case of any discrepancies.

A few minutes later, her caution proved wise.

"Understood. 1,500," Kilo 2's team leader waved to his members to spread out and maneuver. The tight formation loosened, and the distance between them allowed for safe chute deployment without interference.

Now, the members no longer needed to worry about being separated from the team.

"Kilo 3, spreading out."

"Kilo 4, spreading out."

"Kilo 5..."

"Kilo 7..."

...

"Kilo 10..."

"Kilo 1..."

"Kilo 2, deploying chutes," Ling Qingyu squinted to pinpoint Kilo 2's chutes, managing to spot the outline of rectangular umbrellas.

Inside Kilo 2's separate radio channel, reports reached the team leader. "2-1, canopy deployed."

"2-2, canopy deployed."

"2-3..." "2-4..." The team members reported in, and only then did the team leader relay to Ling Qingyu.

"Kirin, Kilo 2, canopy deployed." The first team successfully deployed their chutes, allowing Ling Qingyu to shift her focus.

"Understood, Kilo 2. Continue to Drop Zone."

Everything was going smoothly until a panicked report came through. "Kilo 10, canopy deployed, one failure, waiting to see the reserve."

Ling Qingyu's eyes darted to Kilo 10. She counted the umbrellas and saw only nine—one was indeed missing. "Kilo 10, is the reserve working?"

"Wait one, Kirin...Negative, the reserve chute seems to be malfunctioning, 10-9 keeps spiraling in circles. Scratch that, two of the ropes disconnected from the reserve chute."

"Understood. Stay calm, everything's under control." Ling Qingyu glanced at Tang Ziyi's team and sighed in relief when she saw their chutes had deployed properly with no mishaps. Only Kilo 10 had one failure,

which was pretty good statistically. The Wolf teams belonged to Kilos 9 and 10, and it wasn't surprising that their equipment failed, especially when not manufactured by Athena.

In fact, her daughter's technology and methodologies surpassed the world's by at least a hundred years. Still, one mustn't ignore the deadly Murphy's Law.

"Kirin, Kilo 10 requests to detach from our primary formation and help him out."

"Negative, Kilo 10. Your altitude difference isn't enough to maneuver toward him and help. Continue the course; Kirin will assist. You have 300 meters until the minimum safe altitude. We have plenty of time," Ling Qingyu replied with a steady tone. She couldn't risk another team member attempting to help and failing to deploy their reserve chute.

Turning one person in danger into two would be a disaster.

Besides, whether the Kilo 10 member could even reach the malfunctioning teammate given the height difference was questionable. The best bet was to act herself.

The radio remained tense with silence. No other teams spoke to avoid disturbing the judgment call. But Ling Qingyu was calm; she had faced many similar scenarios.

Ling Qingyu adjusted her fall, steering toward the Wolf member in need. She accelerated her speed, bringing her hands and feet together to minimize drag. Like an eagle swooping to attack its prey, Ling Qingyu only slowed down just enough to grab the panicked man struggling with his failed emergency chute with deadly accuracy.

She pulled out an army knife to cut the ropes and untangle the mess, then wrapped her legs around him. The man clung to her waist as she pulled the mechanism.

The canopy snapped open, and the two held each other tightly. It would be tragic if he fell because of a loosening grip.

"Breathe. Breathe. We're fine. Take a deep breath," Ling Qingyu said, controlling the situation, though she cursed inwardly as the man clung to her. She wondered if he was taking advantage of the situation.

The man, still panicked, forgot to breathe until he gulped in the much-needed air and looked around at the rapidly approaching landscape. Just a minute ago, he had nearly fallen to his death. "Thank you...I never expect—"

"You're welcome. Statistically, you hit the lottery."

"Kilo 10 reports canopy deployed. Eagle?"

"Eagle to all units, he's fine, except for his pale expression and the fact that he's hugging me a bit too much," Ling Qingyu joked.

The entire group breathed a sigh of relief and laughed. Accidents could happen, no matter how well they prepared.

A few operators even teased on the radio, making the man blush. The most outrageous comments came from her girls, leaving Ling Qingyu speechless, unable to blame the Wolf units.

Communication chatter filled the radio as the operators discussed the thrilling event. After such a life-threatening situation, they had plenty to talk about.

With the parachutes deployed, communication became easier since the wind was no longer a disturbance, and the operators didn't need to concentrate as intensely as during the freefall. They were much more relaxed.

This level of comfort depended on the skydiver's experience. Someone like Ling Qingyu, with her expertise, could even engage in casual conversation during the most dangerous moments.

Because of the incident, Ling Qingyu and the man veered off course from the DZ. She tried to maneuver the toggles but knew they would have to walk a bit more to reunite with the team once they landed.

"By the way, I think you haven't washed your hands properly, eh?" Ling Qingyu smiled and shook her head at the man.

She lamented his bad luck. Both the primary and emergency chutes failed. She had rarely encountered such a situation in reality.

"Huh? What do you mean?" the man asked, puzzled.

"I said, you should wash your hands twice when you get the chance," Ling Qingyu rolled her eyes.

"Ah, please, ma'am. Maybe heaven just wanted to create a chance for us to be together." The man's face darkened, clearly not wanting to dwell on his misfortune. He was certain that even if he played the lottery, he'd end up owing money for some absurd reason.

Ling Qingyu glanced down at him helplessly. His skin was as thick as a city wall. "How about I kick you down to see if the universe really wants us to be together?"

Chapter 552 Repayment with body

"Hehe..." The man could only giggle awkwardly, trying to change the subject.

Although Ling Qingyu had managed to catch the man and prevent him from plummeting to his death, the momentum from their descent still remained, and they were dropping at a fast rate. Of course, Ling Qingyu knew that with her enhanced physique, they would land safely. Even if the man was an ordinary human, he'd likely end up with just a few scratches.

"Look at the city below. The lights are as bright as day—modern and developed," the man said, trying to distract himself from the recent scare.

Ling Qingyu's eyes followed the man's gaze. She nodded inwardly, noting how the landscape below resembled the top-tier developed cities she had seen before. The city was nestled among mountain ranges and hills, a stunning contrast of nature and man-made wonder. Streetlights filled the center, casting an almost daylight glow, while the intensity gradually dimmed and thinned out toward the outskirts.

The scene was picturesque, almost too perfect against the dark, clouded sky. Ling Qingyu glanced upward and saw no stars; the scent of rain wafted into her nostrils, mingling with the moisture in the air. The sky was about to open up with rain. This humidity and wetness were unmistakable. Ling Qingyu frowned slightly, knowing this could complicate their mission.

Athena's predictions had indicated this, but it was always a hassle when the weather didn't cooperate, especially when they were on the verge of beginning a critical operation.

Hmm, although Athena had already cited her prediction, she couldn't say she forgot, right? Tang Ziyi should know these troubles.

She sighed, thinking about Tang Ziyi. She should have been prepared for this possibility, but even if the weather turned out to be a hindrance, they couldn't afford to delay. The undercover operatives they were here to rescue couldn't wait.

Ling Qingyu returned her attention to the city below. "Indeed, it's beautiful," she agreed, her tone more somber now. "But that beauty is built on blood, tears, and corpses."

The man beside her fell silent, unable to argue. Kirin, as Ling Qingyu was codenamed, was right. How many had suffered to create the illusion of prosperity below them? The city's wealth was a façade, built on the oppression and exploitation of the poor.

"It's tragic," she continued, her voice soft but resolute. "A city like this, situated right along the border, should be a beacon of hope, not a pit of despair."

The man said nothing, just nodded in agreement. The industry that sustained the city's wealth was nothing more than human exploitation, cannibalizing the lives of those who had nothing to offer but their bodies.

Cannibalize. Yes, Ling Qingyu didn't think her description was wrong.

Ling Qingyu felt a chill as the wind brushed against her skin, sending goosebumps down her arms. It was as if the very souls who had suffered were crying out for justice.

They were now just 10 meters from the ground. Ling Qingyu could feel the speed picking up, faster than she liked for a controlled landing. She prepared herself mentally and physically, bracing for impact. "It's going to be a hard landing," she warned.

The man, positioned slightly below her, hit the ground first, crashing sideways upon impact. Although the fall was hard, it wasn't hard enough to cause any serious injury. He grunted in pain as he rolled to a stop, dirt and grass sticking to his clothes. Ling Qingyu's landing was similar, though she made no sound as she swiftly disentangled herself from the parachute ropes.

She moved quickly, folding the chutes and discreetly storing them inside her bracelet. She let out a small sigh of relief. This was her first time performing in front of outsiders, and she was glad she could conceal her abilities without raising too much suspicion.

"Kirin, sitrep," Tang Ziyi's voice crackled over the radio.

"Boss, safe landing. Approximately 200 meters or more from the designated DZ," Ling Qingyu responded, glancing at her high-tech watch to confirm her estimate. Even as she replied, she couldn't

help but roll her eyes at the use of the word "Boss." Sure, Tang Ziyi was technically in charge, but she was the de facto leader here. Hmph, that bastard always knew how to take advantage of others.

"Oh, glad to hear you're doing well," Tang Ziyi replied with a teasing tone. "It's a pity I didn't get to witness the rare sight of two lovebirds landing together."

Ling Qingyu felt her patience snap. "If you have nothing more to say, then f**k you," she shot back, abruptly ending the communication. The man beside her, still recovering from the fall, gave her a strange look, as though he had just witnessed something uncharacteristic of her.

She coughed, feeling a bit embarrassed by her outburst. "What are you looking at?" she asked sharply.

"Nothing," the man quickly replied, looking away. He had never expected this cold, composed goddess to have such a sharp tongue. But then again, working in dangerous environments like this every day, no one was immune to the occasional curse word.

Ling Qingyu and the man quickly set about getting their gear in order. They removed their oxygen masks, adjusted their vests, and retrieved their rifles from their packs. Finally, they both equipped their Night Vision Devices, snapping down the quad night vision goggles into place.

Ling Qingyu took a moment to adjust the brightness and focus, ensuring she could see her surroundings as clearly as if it were daytime, though everything appeared in shades of green.

In contrast to the man, Ling Qingyu had an extra hood and a small visor to protect her eyes. These small details might seem insignificant, but they added an extra layer of protection that could make all the difference in a firefight. Despite being lightly dressed compared to the conventional Spirit Fox's plate armor, her entire body was well-guarded.

Ling Qingyu then reached for the large bag that had fallen alongside her. As the team's logistics officer, she needed to ensure everything was in order, all while maintaining the secrecy of her hidden capabilities. The man didn't carry much weight during the jump—just a small bag with essential devices. His Kevlar vest also had a zipper compartment for storing a few additional items.

"Ma'am, let me carry the bag for you. Please don't refuse my kindness. You saved my life," the man offered, patting his chest as if to emphasize his sincerity of repaying gratitude with his body.

Yes, you're way too sincere! The aura of pleasing her flooded in her direction. No thanks, I'm a bit overwhelmed...Ling Qingyu complained.

Ling Qingyu's eyelids twitched slightly. She wanted to laugh at the man's earnestness, but she kept her expression neutral. "No need, it's my duty to ensure everyone lands safely."

"Please, don't make me feel bad. How can a man let a woman carry a heavy weight?" The man paused, realizing how his words might be interpreted. "Uh, I'm not discriminating based on gender, okay? It's just my morals."

Ling Qingyu rolled her eyes at his explanation and turned her head away, scanning the environment. The man smiled at her response and moved closer to the heavy bag, intent on lifting it for her. However, as soon as he tried to lift the straps, his expression changed. His eyes widened in disbelief as he struggled to lift the bag even a few inches off the ground.

Ling Qingyu watched with amusement as the man's confidence faltered. He was clearly stuck, too embarrassed to admit defeat but unable to lift the bag. Clicking her tongue in mild annoyance, Ling

Qingyu grabbed the straps and effortlessly slung the bag over her shoulder. "Let's go. The others are waiting for us."

The man's eyes nearly popped out of their sockets. How was it possible that the weight he had struggled with was so easily handled by her? He couldn't help but blush in shame. Had he become too soft after all these years in the field?

If Ling Qingyu had known what was going through his mind, she would have been disgusted. Bruh... really? Although it was somewhat related, he was thinking way too crookedly.

The man stood still in disbelief until Ling Qingyu halted her steps. "Aren't you following?"

"Of course, excuse me." The man fixed his composure and stepped forward. He pretended to check the quads and magazine as if he took some time to prepare.

Ling Qingyu didn't speak but her lips curled up.

Chapter 553 Shut your crow mouth

Tread. Tread. Tread.

Under the dark sky, Ling Qingyu led the way, followed by another operator who watched the rear from time to time.

Amidst the woods, contrary to Ling Qingyu's expectations of silence, the noise clattered in her ears. Heck, she never knew the woodlands could be so crazy. Insects chirped, a few unknown animals whined for reasons only they knew, and the wind screeched above and through the thick formation of trees.

The combination of these factors produced a chilling effect, like a beast howling in anger to express its pain. Ling Qingyu shuddered and comforted herself. All the scriptures she knew from the Bible and Buddhism, she quickly recited in her mind. It didn't matter if she believed or not—she merely wanted to drive away her fear.

Miss System was dissatisfied. Why didn't Ling Qingyu talk to her? She was much more powerful, okay?

In fact, the man following her wasn't much better. Even though he had more training and experience, this was the first time he had witnessed the terror of the woodlands... or forest.

But since a woman walked without fear, he should behave the same. He didn't want to embarrass himself. Plus, they both had weapons in their hands.

However, recalling the modern mythical legend about how a platoon from Country A suffered at the hands of a giant, the man, despite his disbelief, raised his caution to the highest.

A few minutes passed as they walked toward the DZ. The landscape didn't allow them to pass straight, increasing the distance.

Of course, Ling Qingyu would never have been able to find the proper direction, even with the GPS and compass function in the device wrapped around her wrist, without Athena's input.

Fortunately, her daughter didn't embarrass her in front of others. As a Spirit Fox operator, if she couldn't find a direction properly, the entire group's reputation might be in jeopardy.

This might be the reason why Tang Ziyi was relieved to let Ling Qingyu tag along after a slight hesitation.

At the same time, the man behind her had no doubt about Ling Qingyu's strength, having no idea she knew nothing.

Even if Ling Qingyu had become a lost navigator, the man wouldn't blame her either, given that she saved his ass.

"Mom, a larger presence of heat signatures at your 2 o'clock," Athena warned.

Ling Qingyu's eyes darted toward the specific angle, and she went straight into alert mode. She had sensed small owls and birds, but Athena had never warned her about them. Even the wild, cat-like creatures were ignored.

This time, there must be something for Athena to stress the detection. Ling Qingyu immediately brought her HK416 from a low port posture to a low-ready position.

It wasn't a shooting position yet, but Ling Qingyu preferred a clearer vision. Despite the quads mounted on her helmet, the angle range was limited.

She fiercely asked in her mind—what was it that alarmed Athena? Her daughter never disappointed her and replied. "I have no idea, but the size is comparable to yours, and that's the reason I warned you, Mom. It's not one, but a group of five now."

"Five?" Ling Qingyu muttered.

"The presence of trees makes it hard to distinguish accurately. Our most advanced satellite can't."

"What happened?" the man whispered, stepping forward and closing the gap between them to about a meter.

"Something's coming our way," Ling Qingyu answered.

The man nodded. He trusted Ling Qingyu's judgment and positioned himself to cover her back.

She spotted the emerging black shadow, its eyes scorching into hers. Twenty meters away, it paused, apparently noticing Ling Qingyu.

Its front limbs stood higher, like a tyrant king overlooking its territory. Four more shadows stepped out from its periphery.

Damn it, Ling Qingyu cursed. These were wolves—a small team. Who knew how large their numbers were behind them?

If possible, Ling Qingyu didn't want to antagonize the pack because wolves were vengeful. Once the fire was lit, either she died or they did, though the former was impossible.

She was a little bit agitated but not stressed or frightened. The weapon in her hands and her daily practice and training gave her confidence.

She could slaughter the wolves with her bare hands, too, but she didn't like bloodbaths for no reason. These animals were territorial. It was merely because she and the man had strayed into their boundary and trespassed that they were alerted.

So, technically, they were at fault. Unless these wolves went crazy and attacked them, she would never start.

"What did you find?" the man asked, curious.

"Wolves. Five of them watching us," Ling Qingyu responded in a stoic tone.

The man gulped and glanced in the direction Ling Qingyu was focused on. He took a deep breath. "Can you handle them?"

"For sure, I can put them down right now. Five targets," Ling Qingyu paused. "It's just, let's distance ourselves a little and continue our path."

"Aye, your call."

Tang Ziyi called in again. "Kirin, we're moving to the designated spot. You better hurry your ass over here."

"Moving my foot, we're only 100 meters away from y'all," Ling Qingyu pressed the button and replied.

"Time, my dear. Time. Besides, your role is minimal."

Ling Qingyu's eyelids twitched so much that she just wanted to swear and greet Tang Ziyi's ancestors. If her logistics weren't important, could the group fight for months?

Of course, Tang Ziyi realized her words and coughed. "Ahem... anyway, I'll link my position to you through the data link. Athena will guide you onward."

"Copied."

"How's the walk?"

"At least destiny likes to keep me busy. Five wolves are staring at me."

"Hmm, I'm just being polite, but you're really unlucky. Don't tell me that bastard's shit luck has passed over to you. We better get divorced."

"Divorce my ass." Even Ling Qingyu couldn't help it. She then glared and huffed at the innocent man beside her, who coughed with guilt.

Don't guess; he was also thinking the same.

Tang Ziyi chuckled and retorted, "Oh, that means you've given up your grand goal. Such a shame, this beautiful, brave heroine seems to have to wait a little longer."

Ling Qingyu rolled her eyes at Tang Ziyi's narcissism and stopped replying. Although the chatter went back and forth in a small voice, anyone close would sense their presence.

"Okay, Kirin, out." Tang Ziyi shut down the conversation.

"Fortunately, it's not two tigers," the man added with a sense of humor.

"Shut your goddamn crow mouth. I don't want to aim at tigers," Ling Qingyu scolded with disgusted eyes.

Maybe the wolves thought the two were vulnerable targets. The leader in the center marched forward menacingly.

"Oh, don't you dare take another step." Ling Qingyu didn't consider if the wolves understood her. She snapped the barrel and flicked the laser on, the line landing on the leader's head.

Her finger was on the trigger. Perhaps her killing intent was so strong that the leader sensed the malice and danger.

Its steps halted, but it never bothered to retreat and howled instead. Ling Qingyu strafed in the direction they were supposed to march while maintaining her sight on the pack.

Never leave your back to the predator. Any prey confronting them made them think twice. She didn't like killing the wolves, so she should never give them an opportunity.

Her head tilted, and she gestured to her partner. "Move, keep moving."

The man quickly took over and walked ahead. As the two stepped away from the wolves, the howling grew stronger. No idea whether it was a call to arms or merely a warning, Ling Qingyu was relieved to see that they didn't close the distance.

"Kirin, the howl shouldn't be aimed at you, right?"

"Good guess."

"Okay, best of luck. You can win them with your bare hands."

"I know I'm strong."

Ling Qingyu lowered the barrel when she could no longer see them and increased her pace. She patted the man's shoulder. "Get your ass moving."

Chapter 554 A carnival?

By the time they reached a nearby village, both Ling Qingyu and the man breathed a sigh of relief. The presence of humans soothed their hearts. The frightening cries of nature seemed to fade, replaced by the softer sounds of rustling branches and grasses swaying to the wind's rhythm.

The layers of trees thinned as signs of human activity increased. As expected of humankind, nature couldn't withstand their playful intrusions. All natural elements had either dissipated or been destroyed by human interference. The village's houses were built on wooden pillars above the ground.

Ling Qingyu recalled reading about this type of construction; it allowed the houses to be moved short distances. A group could easily lift and transport them.

Among these pillar houses, she also spotted a few courtyard types made of concrete and brick. These clearly belonged to the wealthier families. Yes, whether due to tradition or because the people hadn't fully embraced modern life, families tended to stay grouped together. More children also meant more labor, which was essential in regions where education wasn't highly prioritized.

This way of life was hard to change, even as times moved on.

Though the sky had darkened, the villagers were not yet asleep. It was still early. Candlelight and clusters of light bulbs lit up the entire village, creating an enchanting glow. Ling Qingyu gazed at the lively scene, filled with distant chatter and laughter.

To avoid detection, they had to pass through the village without alerting anyone. She glanced back to see if the wolves had followed. Her concern wasn't baseless; Athena reported that the wolves had trailed them for a while before stopping and returning to their territory, deterred by the presence of humans.

Ling Qingyu marveled at the wolves' territorial awareness. They were so persistent. If not for her initial surge of killing intent, she wondered if the two of them might have been dragged into a pointless fight.

Her partner shuffled closer and knelt down. Ling Qingyu spoke, "We'll go around the village."

"Roger. One by one or together?" the man asked.

"No need for overwatch. I've already scanned most of the area. There's no immediate danger."

"Alright, your call."

Ling Qingyu nodded. The two conversed with green glows hovering over their eyes from their night-vision goggles. The length of the goggles caused their head movements to appear awkward. Ling Qingyu rose and began to move around the village, with the man following quietly behind her.

When they crossed over the main road passing through the village, the dogs became agitated and started barking in their direction. One barked, then another, and soon a chorus of barking spread across the village. Villagers stepped out of their houses, murmuring to one another, wondering why the usually calm dogs were now so riled up.

No one realized that two 'strangers' were approaching the village and circling around to their next destination. If these 'strangers' had malicious intentions, no one in the village would have survived. Ling Qingyu glanced back one last time before disappearing into the darkness. The man smiled bitterly. Animals were indeed too sensitive.

They completed their stealth maneuver without any real mishaps. Their only mistake might have been not staying farther away, but they needed to move quickly. Tang Ziyi had already informed them of changing positions. Once Ling Qingyu and her partner reached a certain point, they would have to separate and continue on their own.

The rest of the operators were proceeding according to their objectives.

"Too many poppy fields, right?" Ling Qingyu murmured softly.

"What else? The whole village's livelihood depends on the drug trade. Their production drives the local economy," the man replied.

Ling Qingyu felt conflicted. Should she destroy these fields in the hope of cutting off the drug supply, knowing it would lead to a material crisis for the villagers? Morally, she wanted to eliminate the source of the problem. Ethically, she didn't want to ruin the lives of the families who depended on the trade. They weren't the main culprits; they were simply responding to market demand.

Besides, the fields could always be replanted. Spirit Fox wouldn't be operating here long enough to completely eradicate everything.

"Well, even if we wanted to cleanse them, it's not our call right now. Let's move," she said, picking up the pace.

After a while, they spotted a small warehouse and a workshop. A trail forked from the main road to this area. Fences surrounded the perimeter. Judging by the wear and tear on the structure and the faded paint, it looked abandoned. However, a dim light seeped through the gaps, and a modified white minibus painted a different picture.

Now what, circle around again? Just kidding—they didn't want to waste more time. Ling Qingyu and the man crouched and observed for a few seconds before deciding to pass through directly. There were no dogs or sentries. They could easily stride across without compromising their stealth.

Both of them grumbled about the large area the fences covered. If the villagers had abandoned this site without maintaining it, it could have been a hideout or storage for opium to be traded.

The two leapt over the fence and continued their path. Suddenly, Ling Qingyu raised a fist to signal a halt as her ears perked up. She turned, looking at her partner with a helpless expression. The man shrugged and asked, "What is it this time?"

Thanks to her martial arts training and study of the secret sutra, Ling Qingyu's physical abilities were greatly enhanced, including her hearing and vision. She could hear the sounds from inside the warehouse clearly. Though the words were muffled, the tones told her everything she needed to know.

A carnival was going on inside. She heard the cries and moans of women and the malicious laughter of men. Not just one or two, but a whole group. Rapid moans, cries of pleasure, and intermittent, rhythmic sounds—every adult knew what that meant.

Ling Qingyu's lips twitched. She hadn't expected the villagers to be so bold. Never underestimate rural life; they were more open-minded than city dwellers. Or maybe the easy access to drugs was the cause. Drugs could make people do daring things.

"You'll never guess what I just discovered," Ling Qingyu muttered, shaking her head.

The man waited for her to continue, but she stopped, listening more intently as the language used was that of Country C. When she caught what the men were discussing, her eyes turned cold. The sudden drop in temperature around her startled her partner. Ling Qingyu's green goggles seemed to blaze with an unholy light, like a demon summoned from the depths.

In his eyes, her expression was fierce and terrifying. "Hey... Kirin..." he called out cautiously.

"I'm sorry," she replied, her voice icily calm. "We might be delayed for a bit." Ling Qingyu flicked her radio on. "Kirin to Kilos, Kirin to Kilos."

"Kilo 1," Tang Ziyi replied instantly.

"Kilo 1, Kirin has encountered an issue that needs fixing. We might be a bit late."

"Kirin, it doesn't matter; all elements are camping and waiting until everyone's asleep. We have time. Please report what you've found." Tang Ziyi's tone lost its usual lightness; she knew Ling Qingyu was serious from her voice.

"I've got some bastards to deal with."

"Is it necessary?" There was a pause. When Ling Qingyu didn't immediately respond, Tang Ziyi added, "Copy that. Do as you see fit, but do not compromise our presence. Clear?"

"Understood," Ling Qingyu replied.

Chapter 555 Demon!

Once Ling Qingyu cut off the communication, the man's eyelids twitched. He had a feeling he wasn't going to like what was about to happen.

He saw Ling Qingyu sling her rifle away, unholster her pistol, and begin attaching a suppressor. She glanced at him while fixing the small tube in place. "You don't need to do anything. Just cover my back; we've got some blood to shed."

The gloomy glow in her eyes sent a shiver down his spine, and he nodded. "Damn, wait for me," he cursed lightly, knowing he had no choice but to follow as Ling Qingyu's figure moved away.

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Inside the warehouse, a dim yellow light illuminated everything. Groans and curses echoed through the space. The people, caught up in their lustful atmosphere, didn't care about the dirty environment.

They were separated into groups: eight men and five women. Among them, one woman held a camera in her hand, gasping lightly, seemingly enjoying the live-action scene.

Some women had more than one man on them, their flushed skin reddened from the energetic activity. Sweat mixed with powerful impacts, enhancing the erotic scene.

Of course, this so-called passionate "romantic" event could have seemed consensual if not for the men's language and attitude toward the women.

"This is so damn good," one of the men groaned in pleasure. "What's the difference? How many times have we done this together, and you're still so reserved?"

"Brother, you don't understand. Only women who act reserved tickle our desires. What's the fun if they behave like sluts?"

"But man, sleeping with a prostitute has its own flavor too."

"Heh, look at her struggling," another joked, increasing his force and speed. "She's so flushed she can't even speak. We're making you, bitches, feel good, right? Right? Come on, answer me!"

The woman underneath wanted to argue, but her limbs were frozen, unprepared for the man's aggressiveness. Her body shuddered, twitching as her face contorted with pain and unwanted pleasure. She buckled and involuntarily responded to the man's attacks. Her friends were in similar situations; they were completely forced.

"Are you sure it's good like this? We fed them pills," one man asked hesitantly. "What if their bodies develop uncontrollably?"

"They weren't willing and weren't responding to us," someone explained. "How could we enjoy ourselves if they're not into it?"

"Don't worry about their bodies. Just vent as you wish. By the time their bodies deteriorate, they'll be out of our hands. Women are just like clothes."

In reality, the women had been coerced into accepting the men's humiliation and torture. Their stoic, unwilling expressions made the men even more eager to break them, both mentally and physically.

"Yeah, don't overthink it—just enjoy the moment. Remember the twin sisters we had fun with? They were so in sync and in love with each other. Hahaha... Those two fools actually believed they had a chance..."

"Haha, boss, now that you mention them, I miss that pair. They were perfect... A pity they're in someone else's hands now."

"Hey, we played them to the fullest and got our money's worth. That's a good deal," the boss chuckled as he focused on the woman beneath him, grinning and thrusting harder. "By the way, Little Duckling, are you upset we're not touching you?"

The woman holding the camera, known as "Little Duckling," shrank back and shook her head. "Spare me, Boss."

"Boss, give her a break. Our boys have f***ed her to the point she's become one of us."

"Look at her fidgeting—maybe we should try a new method to torture her..."

"Yeah, let her rest; she's been widened so much she could probably fit an arm in there." The men erupted into laughter and jeers.

Little Duckling blushed with shame and anger, her eyes numb from the pain and bitterness. What else could the weak do? Save these women too? She just wanted to survive. She had learned to accept this hell. Her survival instincts had taught her to please these men.

Her fate was doomed—it was better to serve this group than face a hundred unknown men every day.

She had also witnessed many groups of girls kidnapped and sold after days or months of nightmare. When would this ever end?

Suddenly, the only light in the room went out. "What happened?"

"Blackout?"

"Hah, this country always has electricity shortages. Don't mind it, Xiao Gou, go and bring the lamps from our RV," the boss ordered calmly.

"That's not yours, it's ours. YOU..." The woman couldn't argue anymore as he increased his pace, nearly making her roll her eyes.

"You're a beaten bitch. What's yours is ours," he twitched a few times and bellowed at his men. "Go, what are you waiting for? I don't want our party interrupted."

A man cursed as he withdrew and shuffled to walk blindly. The warehouse was completely dark, no light to guide him. Based on his memory, he tried to search for his phone and stumbled, hitting the furniture. "Ouch!"

"Oh, right? Little Duckling, show him the way with some light. Your camera should do the job."

The woman, who hadn't smiled for a long time, obeyed and resigned herself to her task. She was about to point the screen light in the man's direction when a louder crash sounded.

Bang!

The man groaned in pain as furniture toppled over, causing a mess.

"F**k, Xiao Gou. Calm down. Our duckling will show you the way. You don't need to hurry because you miss your girl."

"Haha, that bastard..." The men laughed, but they stopped when they realized Xiao Gou wasn't responding.

In fact, Xiao Gou could barely breathe after being struck in the abdomen. He flew several meters before crashing into the furniture. Pain rippled through his entire body. He hissed, cold sweat pouring from his pores. The pain was so excruciating that he couldn't speak or make a sound. He almost rolled his eyes and fainted when a heavy weight pressed on his knees.

Click.

Oh no! A bone-chilling sensation spread, followed by another click. The feeling surged through him like electric shocks.

Wait, there were enemies. Somebody was attacking him. No...he wanted to alert the others, but his eyes rolled back, and his mouth uttered useless syllables as saliva spilled out. Finally, his body twitched, and he lost consciousness. Two continuous shocks annihilated his resistance.

"Damn, Xiao Gou, don't joke around. Be serious!" The men called out, their nerves on edge. They'd heard rumors of lingering ghosts and were getting scared, hoping their friend was just playing a prank.

However, two loud cracks raised their fears. It sounded like someone's bones breaking.

"Xiao Gou..." The men began to panic and pulled away from the women, who sneered despite their own fear of the unknown.

Ughh... Another choking sound echoed in their ears, followed by a loud bang. They'd be fools not to realize they were under attack.

"F**k! Don't let us see you...I swear..." The man who threatened no longer spoke, whining and collapsing to the ground, clutching his wounded body.

At the same time, Little Duckling looked around and shrieked as a shadow passed beside her. Her camera fell. She stumbled to the ground and scrambled away in terror. What kind of eyes had she just seen?

Four green eyes... "A demon!"

Chapter 556 A real carnage

Ling Qingyu and her teammate reached the outer wall of the warehouse. Her lips turned into a cold grin as she heard what the men were explicitly conversing about.

Good, good. She no longer needed to feel hesitant to unleash hell. Before, she merely expected these men were swaggering around the ladies and forcing them through drugs.

It turned out they were worse than she had imagined. Trafficking people. Hehe, based on the horrific description, they were really courting death!

These men didn't have the slightest remorse or a little pity. Ling Qingyu stopped after she found the main switch for the warehouse's electricity.

"You will switch it off when I tell you to." Without waiting for a reply, Ling Qingyu sneaked near the doors.

At the same time, she shut her ears by concentrating on her goal to fend off those vulgar sounds and disturbances. She felt disgusted when she knew what these men were doing.

Not disgusted at the act. After all, sex and desires were also part of life, but the manner in which they achieved it was an eyesore for her.

Her partner watched Ling Qingyu as she disappeared from his sight. All he had to do was wait for her command and provide support later.

He lit a candle of pity for the men inside. He knew how much rage Ling Qingyu held, just from her mere aura. The chill even frightened him.

As expected of Spirit Fox, none of them were soft persimmons. He knew the woman who saved him wasn't simple.

Of course, he wasn't going to side with these bastards. As a good man, how could he have the heart to hurt the innocent and abuse his strength?

These men, who relied on their power to toy with poor people's feelings and lives, should be punished by heaven.

Especially the bastards inside, they were the reason why women fear men. In today's society, men couldn't even blame the former for their extra vigilance.

Not once but regularly, women suspected men had bad ideas, of which most of them were reasonable, so much so that many men were at a loss for words.

"Cut the light out." Ling Qingyu's voice rang in his headset, and he instantly smashed the lever.

The light coming from the warehouse disappeared, and the scene darkened completely. Naturally, in the eyes of Ling Qingyu and the man, the vision didn't change much.

In fact, without the disturbance of abnormal lighting, the obscurity became clearer. The man trotted in the direction Ling Qingyu left to assist.

In front of the entrance, Ling Qingyu sneered and entered as soon as the light bulb went out.

Since the doors were slightly opened, Ling Qingyu only needed to spread them a little to fit in before she shut down the electricity, while the men were immersed in their carnage.

Her anger rose as she saw what these bastards were doing. Although she was prepared to witness the unbearable sight, her dislike went extreme when she understood these women were forced.

By life, lie, or leverage, coercing was the same as forcing. No deniability. Even if the women seemed like they were catering and cooperating.

She holstered her pistol and cracked her fist. She had already observed everything and found no threat. Plus, she had the advantage of night vision.

Despite the sudden darkness, these men didn't stop and kept indulging. Except for one of them, who appeared to be the most junior or soft persimmon, stood up to fix.

When that man stepped closer, Ling Qingyu advanced and punched at his lower right abdomen, rupturing the liver inside. He groaned and bent down uncomfortably.

Ling Qingyu's attack instantly knocked him out. He couldn't breathe or exclaim as the pain overwhelmed every nerve. He even felt the acid inside his stomach churn from the impact nearby.

The sourness across his throat and mouth raised his fear. He wanted to shout to warn others, but he couldn't lift a finger.

Taught by Tang Ziyi, Ling Qingyu knew the anatomy and acupuncture points of a human body.

She calculated her force precisely like a machine. She knew how much was needed to cause internal bleeding and destroy someone internally.

If emergency treatment didn't arrive within a golden time... nope, based on Ling Qingyu's inhumane force, she could kill him within seconds, but she chose to aggravate the pain and instill fear in the man before he died of internal distress.

So, if he wasn't treated within a few minutes, his life was over. The countdown timer for this young ruffian began.

Ling Qingyu stomped him out. His body flew and crashed into the furniture along the way. Watching the man's eyes twitch with fear and pain, she sneered and hammered his two knees.

This amount of stimulation should be enough, Ling Qingyu nodded at her masterpiece with satisfaction.

By now, the others should be alerted. But it didn't matter; Ling Qingyu liked them to have a taste of the horror and dread they inflicted on the women.

Someone spewed curses and threats. Of course, he became her target. Although the time was tight and it was best for her and the Wolf operator to regroup soon, she could still afford to play around.

She hustled fast to her target. The man was the nearest to her by coincidence. Before he finished his sentence, Ling Qingyu delivered two punches—kidney shots—without mercy and a roundhouse kick as a finishing touch.

She passed close to the camerawoman, who shouted with fright. She ignored the frightened girl and began to attack the men, one after another.

"Demon!!"

"Gosh, someone do something!"

"No, don't... ah."

Her anger dissipated slowly as the groans and begging of men rang in her ears. They were like a soothing lullaby.

She didn't kill them straightaway, but she made sure every one of her moves caused maximum pain and immobilization. They were soon to be dead within half an hour.

She broke their bones, tore their internal organs, and lit flames of fear. The fight should be over within a dozen seconds if she were serious, but she elongated it to more than a minute.

But for the men, a few minutes felt like hours, gnawing at them gradually. Naturally, the leader received her special attention and treatment.

She broke all of his bones and had considered using her karambit knife as a deadly weapon but chose not to.

She didn't want to dirty her precious dagger with the blood of rubbish. They weren't worth it. They didn't deserve to soil this metal.

Now all eight men collapsed, whining from excruciating torture. The attacker must be an evil ghost.

The women were also terrified and grouped together, though they had some sense of pleasure as they heard these men shrieking from brutality and fear.

Oh, how they understood that these men, who behaved rampantly and trampled upon them, also learned to be afraid one day. They were not so strong after all.

As for how on earth they were able to locate each other despite the darkness, Ling Qingyu expressed doubts but delved not too much into this mystery.

She swiveled her head toward the entrance and shrugged. The Wolf member gulped and even praised himself. He dared to tease this aunt. What was he thinking?

Even as a soldier, he discovered Ling Qingyu was too ruthless. If he knew Ling Qingyu disintegrated the internal organs...

Chapter 557 Aftermath (edited)

Since the warehouse was cleared, Ling Qingyu ordered, "You can turn on the light now. Everything's secured."

The man's eyelid twitched, feeling fortunate that the night vision device covered his expression. This was more than just "secure," right? His eyes glanced at the miserable appearances of the men on the floor. He controlled his trembling hand and nodded. "Sure."

Ling Qingyu turned her gaze back to the girls, who had stuck together as if they believed that grouping would provide them with extra protection.

As Ling Qingyu started talking, the poor girls immediately exhaled their fear in relief. At least the green glowing eyes spoke human language—not the demon they had envisioned.

Furthermore, the speaker was another woman like them. Even if she exhibited violence toward the men, they weren't hurt. Nine out of ten guessed that Ling Qingyu was on their side. They felt refreshed seeing these men suffer.

Technically, they hadn't seen it clearly, but based on the whines and the sounds of friction against the floor, they had drawn the pictures in their minds.

"Girls, don't move and stay calm," Ling Qingyu exhaled heavily, having vented her anger. "I'm not going to hurt you. We are going to get you out of here." She controlled her tone to the lowest and softest, in contrast to the violence she had shown.

The girls didn't talk but tried to glance in the direction of the sound. They thought Ling Qingyu didn't notice their behavior. She wanted to chuckle but had to hold back because of the occasion. She shouldn't laugh.

The light bulb brightened again, and Ling Qingyu's eyes flared up. Thanks to the technology produced by Athena and Tang Ziyi, the device didn't fry up but merely caused a little discomfort to her eyes. She flipped up the quads and squinted, adjusting her pupils to the change in lighting. The girls looked away from the light as well, although the bulb wasn't that bright.

When they adapted and looked around, the girls gasped and covered their mouths. Perhaps they were hurt too much; they dared not produce a sound despite being shocked. Ling Qingyu pitied their psychological state—oppressed, bullied, and ordered around like slaves.

Miss System: Are you sure your violence wasn't the reason why the girls shut their mouths?

Ling Qingyu kept her eyes on the camerawoman. Out of all the women, this one seemed more cooperative with the men. Not that she suspected her. She remained vigilant in case Stockholm syndrome took over and ruined her progress.

Of course, her wariness against the other girls didn't dissipate. Nonetheless, the girls' eyes shone with hope and excitement. Their feelings were genuine since Ling Qingyu's appearance seemed convincing. Modern tactical gear in full kit, as well as an MCU camouflage uniform, created a huge sense of trust.

Strangely, the camerawoman was the first to break the ice. "Emm, are you here to rescue us?"

Ling Qingyu didn't want to lie, and she didn't want her words to hurt them, yet she still spoke the truth. "We are here on a different mission, and I encountered you by accident."

"Oh..." The exhilarated mood disappeared.

"But hey, you know, I jumped from the plane and encountered some troubles deviating from the original track. Got separated from my team and met you girls here. Doesn't this say everything?" Ling Qingyu comforted. "Besides, don't worry; these bastards won't live long. Hmm... I believe it won't be past an hour before they become corpses."

Ling Qingyu began to narrate a summary of her jump and her way here. If fate didn't guide her here, Ling Qingyu would be the first to disbelieve. The girls and she were meant to meet. It was better to say she was guided to save these poor girls from a tragedy.

Although she couldn't save the twins and others the men had discussed, she had potentially stopped one trafficking group. The girls' original numbness washed away as Ling Qingyu described more. She was

worried that some had screws loosened and might try to commit suicide because of societal norms and beliefs.

"Hey..." A man interrupted, but his action prompted screams from the girls, who panicked and reached out for any clothing to cover themselves.

"Get out!" Ling Qingyu scolded the man to run off and comforted the girls.

Okay, at least they still retained some liveliness instead of being numb. Being lively was better than gloominess. Although their screams weren't so intense that they were ashamed like little girls, these girls shouldn't have too many problems with psychological counseling afterward.

Ling Qingyu discovered only the camerawoman behaved abnormally. Oh, she forgot, this girl was also wearing clothes. Based on these MFs' words, Ling Qingyu could guess how much damage she had borne before being let go of her "work."

Again, Ling Qingyu reminded them that everything was over and listened to their stories. Sobbing and cries of grievances were unleashed as Ling Qingyu responded patiently. She even wondered if her previous blows were a little too merciful. Though these men would suffer until they died, these pains seemed not enough.

She let the girls kick and vent their grievances on the defenseless men, who were like demons haunting and playing with their souls in the past.

Initially, they were a little hesitant and afraid, but with Ling Qingyu's supportive eyes, they acted mercilessly. Kicking, stomping, and beating with sticks—who knew where they grasped them from.

Ling Qingyu reported the situation to Tang Ziyi and mentioned the possibility of being late.

The latter warned her not to compromise the position because of her noise. Since the current location was far away from residents, Ling Qingyu had no worries.

And Athena's satellite monitoring would check every heat signature—her computing power more meticulous than ten thousand IT soldiers standing in front of a screen. Not even cats and dogs were spared.

Hah! Because the technology level of the satellites was so high, Athena could detect tiny airflow and even insects.

The girls regained their courage and original thoughtfulness after hitting their nightmares and facing head-on, despite Ling Qingyu's assistance.

They felt more connected with the latter and began to share their stories.

Chapter 558 Ruthless poking!

The story didn't involve a climax or thrills but shed light on the ordinary plight of average people who suffered under the hands of tyrants. Compared to those lucky ones who met righteous rescuers and had helpful surroundings, these girls had experiences similar to those on missing persons lists.

If not for their luck and Ling Qingyu's inhumane abilities, like superhearing, their fate would have been to be sold off as playthings, stripped of any rights—the real living dead. And that was because they met Ling Qingyu's Spirit Fox operation, which could decide independently.

If they had encountered Country C's military directly, orders would likely have led to their abandonment, as more important matters required attention. Apart from the camerawoman, four women were victims. Their young teenage ages showed they had just graduated. One of them rented an RV and decided to roam around, and the others agreed.

Four young girls grouped together to go on a trip and enjoy their holiday.

Their satisfaction was worthwhile; they truly felt liberated and happy, free from the stress of studying and finding a job. Although all four had managed to find internships and secured their futures, they were human, not machines. A bit of joy and adventure made their lives feel fulfilled. However, no one expected misfortune to follow.

They were targeted by a group of unknown gangsters. Their RV hit the gang's car, and they were naturally blackmailed. Seeing the RV was only filled with girls, the demands became outrageous. Conflicts started, and the girls were no match and were soon subdued. Then, the nightmare began.

Initially, they resisted, but facing a group of men who outnumbered them, their fate was sealed. In fact, even if the girls had been boys, the result would have been the same—blackmailed and extorted heavily. But women suffered more when the gangsters acted like hungry predators.

The girls had no time to seek help and were caught off guard. They thought too highly of the world and never expected these men to enter forcefully and act without scruple. What happened next was what everyone there already knew. The gang kidnapped the girls and took the RV.

Perhaps, because the girls had told their loved ones about their trip, no one was too concerned when they lost contact for a while. By the time anyone became aware, these four girls had already entered the missing persons list.

Heading toward Province N, where the gang had more influence, these bastards were thinking about their settlement and the "goods"—the four girls. However, Spirit Fox's extreme actions multiple times had blared fierce alarms, and the gang leader decided to avoid the edge of the battlefield between two titans.

He was just a small gang leader, not one of those big ones who could even threaten officials.

Although he had some backing from a big guy, Spirit Fox didn't care. Big or small, they were targets. His decision to escape became firmer when 'Operation Skyclear' commenced.

Since he had connections in the border region, he quickly moved away from Province N, where the sky had begun to change. The palpable tension before the storm struck was something anyone with an IQ could sense. He took the girls and traveled here. The van Ling Qingyu saw earlier was actually the girls' RV. Tonight's event wasn't a singular occurrence.

For two weeks, the girls had experienced hell repeatedly.

If not for their deep companionship, they might have collapsed psychologically. They were saved and redeemed after avenging themselves, even if indirectly. Ling Qingyu sighed and comforted the four girls who were in tears. At the same time, she was merciless in pointing out their flaws.

During the accident, as women, they should have known to protect themselves. Instead of leaving the vehicle, they should have stayed inside and made a call to the emergency services. No need to worry about others or rush outside, especially if the other party looked fierce and threatening. More so if their instincts warned them—better to trust oneself and avoid danger.

The situation with the four girls involved a car accident with no one around. If there had been people in the surrounding area, the gang wouldn't have dared to blatantly break the law, regardless of their backing and power. After calling the relevant authorities, it would have been best to call loved ones, particularly their parents, and explain the situation.

This would create an alibi in case anything went wrong.

Of course, Ling Qingyu asked if they had attempted to escape. They had, but apparently, the corrupt authorities in Province N backfired on them, causing them to lose hope.

As for the camerawoman, Ling Qingyu had no words. Her lover had sold her to the gang to repay a debt. She was drugged and dragged away. In contrast to resisting, she survived by pleasing the men. After gaining their trust, she investigated their backgrounds and lost any thought of escaping. She didn't want to worsen her fate.

Although they were treating her like an animal, she was better off than others.

She had witnessed the terrible fate of the twin sisters. Many women had come and gone. Compared to them, she survived tenaciously. Ling Qingyu immediately made a judgment. This woman was an important eyewitness and an asset who could help search for kidnapped victims.

Plus, she required great care and deep psychological treatment. She showed signs of Stockholm syndrome. Although she wasn't in love, this woman never expressed any blame for these men and believed that things were supposed to be this way.

Ling Qingyu pitied the girl. How long had she been abused and conditioned to be a slave with such a twisted mindset? It seemed her earlier attacks had been too light. If not for the stringent timeline, she would have requested help from Spirit Fox to shoot a movie about a torture chamber.

Since she had already discussed with Tang Ziyi about bringing the girls with them, they would follow the duo. Even though Ling Qingyu had a dragging factor, she didn't think she had done anything wrong. The girls' expressions brightened when they realized Ling Qingyu wouldn't abandon them.

Actually, Ling Qingyu could have taken them away later after the operation ended, but too many uncertainties existed. Not to mention, there were only five girls. They wouldn't limit her. Ling Qingyu also reminded the girls to pay attention to the difficulties ahead. They would have to walk through thick plantations.

Before leaving, Ling Qingyu felt a heaviness in her chest and eyed a wooden pole, its diameter just the right size for her needs. She gripped the pole and thrust it straight into the backside of the leader. The latter howled with all his remaining strength, his "chrysanthemum" bursting as scarlet petals ruptured.

The five girls and the Wolf operator were stunned by Ling Qingyu's brutal move. Especially the latter, whose sphincter muscle tightened in fright.

After poking several times, Ling Qingyu gazed at the other men who were conscious and afraid. They were soon going to meet King Yama. She decided not to poke them further—after all, she felt dirty and almost vomited. Nonetheless, being able to impose such direct punishment satisfied Ling Qingyu.

After all, this bastard tasted his own medicine. Didn't he like to bully and humiliate women? How about experiencing the deflowering process personally! Ling Qingyu snorted coldly and gestured for everyone to leave with her.

Chapter 559 Regroup

The group trekked, passing along various plantations—some small bushes, some tall trees. Ling Qingyu stayed in the lead, with the Wolf operators at the end of the column formation and the girls in the middle.

To avoid the girls getting hurt, Ling Qingyu took a machete from her backpack and cleared the path. God knows how she fit the long machete inside. The Wolf operator was really curious, but the scene he had witnessed before leaving had frightened him to death. This Kirin was definitely a thorny rose. Oh, he blessed the man who would marry her. Amen.

He must be the best representative of masculinity to withstand Kirin's abuses. This goddess was too fierce and ruthless. What if you hurt her during lovemaking—would you have to be injured to compensate, allowing a foreign object to violate the backyard? No, one must hold their dignity and defend the honor of man. The Wolf operator had the self-awareness to know he did not have such capability.

The girls were silent and obeyed Ling Qingyu's words without any complaints. They were so well-behaved that Ling Qingyu wondered if the so-called methods for managing people during a crisis she found on the internet were fake. She didn't realize her last act of impaling the man's backyard had earned her a daredevil title.

The only problem was the girls suffering slightly due to the lack of night vision goggles. Fortunately, the distance was close, and the problem was solved with everyone holding onto each other's clothes. Although the speed was slow, the group managed to arrive at the altered agreed spot: an abandoned construction area with a few five-story buildings.

Ling Qingyu had already noticed Spirit Fox figures hidden under the cover of darkness as they maintained 360-degree coverage. As Ling Qingyu's group got closer, these operators had their hands ready. Her message had been delivered, but the operators remained vigilant, even though they had confirmed their identities on the radio.

Somehow, one of them challenged, "Nine Heaven."

Ling Qingyu paused and replied, "Capital City."

The operator who spoke nodded, and everyone relaxed their guard, no longer concerned about Ling Qingyu's group.

The Wolf operator who accompanied her, and the girls behind, had their curiosity piqued as they witnessed this grand exchange of secret codes.

Wow... This was what the five girls had in mind. As for the male operator, he couldn't help but lament the strictness of Spirit Fox. In fact, Ling Qingyu was inwardly complaining, her eyelids twitching continuously. Why were her subordinates so superfluous? Did she really have no idea what these women were up to? They were playing around, flaunting themselves.

They had dark bellies for sure, and it seemed like they enjoyed this method of identity confirmation.

The code was supposed to be used when radio communication no longer worked properly, in case separated elements needed to regroup again. Ling Qingyu stopped bothering about these weirdos and gestured to her followers. "Let's go upstairs."

Along the way, she saw three bodies lying against the wall, exposed. They were obviously killed by her girls to infiltrate and avoid alerting others. As for harming innocents, Ling Qingyu trusted her teammates would never lay a finger on someone without sufficient cause. The bodies should be some sort of guards belonging to the armed militia of the underground city.

The five girls behind her also had their eyes narrowed, but they behaved properly and controlled their emotions. After all, having watched Ling Qingyu commit a crime up close had already numbed their hearts.

When Ling Qingyu reached the top floor, Tang Ziyi was clicking her tongue and leaning against the door frame.

"Tsk, tsk, tsk. Fortunately, we have time; I never expected our cold, ruthless figure to have a virgin heart."

"As a human being, it's the least I can do. You'd do the same," Ling Qingyu shrugged and replied.

"Hmph... don't think about comforting me tonight. I'm still furious about your impromptu action," Tang Ziyi snorted and twisted her waist as she stepped away.

Ling Qingyu followed with a smile, not at all bothered by Tang Ziyi's words, while the girls were a bit nervous, worried that their presence might bring trouble to Ling Qingyu.

"Oh, that boy should wash his hands twice..." Tang Ziyi remembered the importance and pointed at the figure in the rear. Her way of identifying him elicited giggles from the nearby operators.

"Pfft... haha..." Even Ling Qingyu couldn't help but chuckle. The only male operator here couldn't help but have his face darken. He swore today might be remembered by his teammates, too. His fame would be inscribed with a similar title among the squad members. Even the girls were joking about him; there was no way he would be spared by his brothers, who had 'deep' love.

Tang Ziyi turned serious and explained where the rest of his teammates were. Several Kilo teams had separated to infiltrate the staging areas and planned to attack simultaneously. Twenty Wolf operator teams were allocated to assault a specific stronghold. The man nodded and left immediately to join his comrades after saying goodbye to Ling Qingyu.

Tang Ziyi glanced at Ling Qingyu and sneered, "C'mon, prepare our logistics. So many Kilos are waiting for you."

Ling Qingyu rolled her eyes as she entered a large designated room, which provided enough space to take out the stuff from her ancient bracelet. After all, the containment team still needed heavy weaponry from her to guard against any entry and exit. Plus, they were responsible for repelling any counterattacks by the enemy's QRF.

The ammunition, rocket launcher, anti-materiel rifle—within seconds, the room was filled. She still had many remaining in her 'pocket.' It appeared this location would become a FOB and a logistical hub to support ten Kilo teams.

"And you girls..." The five girls stood stiffly, some apprehension on their faces. The witch before them seemed not easy to mess with. She must be crueler than the one who had helped them. The previous woman had poked the man's ass; this one might not spare women's too.

If Tang Ziyi knew how ruined her image was in the eyes of these five poor girls, she would engage in a unilateral lecture (beating) for Ling Qingyu, who dared to tarnish her reputation.

"Don't think about messing around. I won't hesitate to put bullets in your head if you cross my mind, understood?" Tang Ziyi spoke with threats to control these unstable factors. Though she had no fear, she didn't want trouble. The last thing she wanted was for these girls to pose a nuisance during the upcoming operations.

"Yes." They responded affirmatively. They believed the outspoken woman really dared to kill them if they disobeyed any orders.

"Alright, I know you must be tired. You will be treated well once we are in the safe zone, I promise. For now, please cooperate with us." Tang Ziyi relaxed her tone and comforted them—a proper method of sticks and carrots.

The girls listened patiently as Tang Ziyi listed the dos and don'ts, repeating several times to ensure they understood. Sniffing the air a few times, Tang Ziyi glanced at the room where Ling Qingyu had gone with suspicion. What she smelled... shouldn't be instant noodles, right?

Sure enough, this bastard came out with several cups of instant noodles in her hands, which she handed to the five girls, who didn't react.

"Go to the spare room on your left and eat." Tang Ziyi sighed and sent them away, rolling her eyes at Ling Qingyu.

The girls bobbed their heads and sped off. Once out of sight, they wolfed down the food eagerly. Their sight blurred as tears welled in their eyes.

Outside, Tang Ziyi grabbed Ling Qingyu by the neck. "Don't think I don't know what you're thinking. Huh, you really play good cop and bad cop. What righteous and virgin woman? If anyone said you ranked second in black-belliedness, no one would dare declare themselves first."

"..."

Ling Qingyu wondered if this was an insult or a compliment.

Chapter 560 Observation

"Alright, I've finished the preparation. You can let the rest of our sisters grab these tools," Ling Qingyu said, gently removing Tang Ziyi's hand.

Tang Ziyi shrugged and ordered the girls on the radio to collect their equipment. Except for the operators who were scouting around the vicinity, the majority resided in this building, occupying several floors and windows.

As the operators entered the room, Ling Qingyu came out. Tang Ziyi complained, "Aren't you spoiling those poor girls too much? You even managed to bring out my newly developed kettle to prepare noodles for them."

"Please, I'm just increasing efficiency," Ling Qingyu rolled her eyes. "Instead of letting them rot in the dust, let's make use of them more."

Since Athena had created an electronics group, she and Tang Ziyi had also researched several new inventions, which included kitchen appliances like the kettle Ling Qingyu used to boil water quickly. "Quick" was an understatement because the water boiled in under a minute, powered merely by a battery.

Of course, these products wouldn't enter public hands yet to avoid disrupting the economy and creating enemies for themselves. But this didn't mean that she and her confidantes couldn't use their own inventions. There were many more in her bracelet—rice cookers, microwaves, barbecue plates, etc.

The products were a century ahead of the conventional world, thanks to Athena's chip development and the team's other progress.

"As long as you're happy," Tang Ziyi snapped back. "Come with me upstairs; I'll explain the tactics again."

Both went up, leaving the operators confused in the room. Their minds were in chaos.

Could someone explain how on earth Ling Qingyu brought so much heavy stuff? They weren't dreaming, right?

A few suspected Ling Qingyu was a Doraemon in disguise. Otherwise, why were there dozens of anti-tank TOW missiles, Stingers, and Javelin-like missiles here?

And those were just the heaviest. What about the ammunition, launchers, and sentry machine guns?

Yes, the sentry machine guns, which could be controlled remotely and only existed in science fiction, were piled here.

Futuristic weapons had suddenly appeared in their hands, and they were overwhelmed. As for why they knew how to operate them, there were short manuals on every machine.

Plus, in the 21st century, who hadn't played shooting games?

One of the operators raised her hand subconsciously and muttered, "Is it possible that our instructor managed to produce a spatial device?"

"You mean a space storage device like the ones we read about in novels?" Another exclaimed in doubt.

Nobody argued against this possibility. Living near Tang Ziyi, they had witnessed so many absurd innovations, such as the electrical appliances in this room.

If this possibility was proven true, all of this would make sense. Since these changes happened when Ling Qingyu arrived, the device must be with their boss.

Seeing the cooking utensils and canned food, a stomach growl broke the silence. "Let's fill our stomachs first."

While the operators' minds were in a mess, Tang Ziyi and Ling Qingyu leisurely came up to enjoy the view.

"Do you see the infrastructure at your 2 o'clock, 3 km away?" Tang Ziyi leaned on the pillar and guided Ling Qingyu, whose gaze followed her direction.

"Yes, the place seems like a dormitory with abundant facilities," Ling Qingyu squinted her eyes and replied.

"Good observation," Tang Ziyi nodded and walked closer to Ling Qingyu. "That's one of our targets. The other is at your 9 o'clock, which will be taken care of by Kilo 9 and 10, AKA—the Wolf teams."

Ling Qingyu gazed at the similar structures and pursed her lips. "We chose the one on the right?"

"Yep, the infrastructure of our choice is complicated and very large, requiring more members to tackle."

"Containment?"

"They'll set up once they finish picking up what you brought and leave here," Tang Ziyi said.

"I think we can snipe from here, correct?"

"Indeed," Tang Ziyi agreed. "In a conventional war, our snipers will kill as many enemies, particularly officers and any high-ranking superiors, from an unknown position until we are exposed. Once compromised, we'll withdraw if the enemy wields power that can threaten us, like artillery or aircraft.

"Now, our mission is to infiltrate as close as possible without alerting the enemies. We'll only provide overwatch for the assault team and contain any squirts. Take a look."

Ling Qingyu accepted the binoculars and glanced through the lens. The device had a thermal function, so she saw everything in the darkness.

Some figures patrolled on the top floor, and a few sentries were near the fences. They slung AK rifles. She saw them scolding the people underneath, who didn't dare to refute.

After tweaking with the device, Ling Qingyu discovered that the binoculars must be another of Tang Ziyi's innovations.

Two geniuses always broadened her horizons.

"So, a dozen agents we want to rescue are here, I suppose," Ling Qingyu asked.

"Not certain. The buildings I pointed out likely house new recruits, ones they haven't tamed yet, like a school dormitory, locked up and examined until they are sure they can control them."

"Really modern-day slavery. No... this is still the feudal method."

"Yep, no money, nothing. You work tirelessly for food and to avoid punishment," Tang Ziyi sighed.

"In that case, our undercover operatives shouldn't be here. Otherwise, how would they obtain intel just by being recruits?" Ling Qingyu asked, puzzled.

"We don't know. They stopped exchanging messages and communication with the base. The fortunate thing is they are alive and regularly report their status through encrypted devices.

"As for the two missing operators," Tang Ziyi bit her lips, "I don't anticipate any good news. Athena couldn't investigate. I'm afraid..."

"My gut tells me they're still alive," Ling Qingyu answered with a smile. Her intuition told her so.

"Your gut?"

"You should have seen how many people I've rescued through my sixth sense."

"We'll take your word for it then," Tang Ziyi's lips curled.

"Of course, but I don't really think they are here."

Tang Ziyi glared and scolded, "Oh, your crow's mouth again. It's pissing me off!"