

Beautiful 741

Chapter 741: Sheemah's insecurity

Not realizing Miss System was snickering at her act, Ling Qingyu puffed her chest with confidence—she was too strong for this world.

Ahem, Ling Qingyu recollected her chinobyi moment after noticing a pair of helpless eyes.

"What are you looking at?" Ling Qingyu taunted, her guilty feeling worsening as Xiao Yue's eyes resembled those of a kindhearted passerby looking at a mentally disabled child.

"I'm trying to calculate whether my close sister is possessed by an evil spirit," Xiao Yue said with a smile, mimicking a charlatan's finger-sealing gestures.

Ling Qingyu's eyelids twitched, veins throbbing on her forehead as she watched Xiao Yue continue her ridiculous behavior.

Then, Xiao Yue closed her eyes and uttered a mantra. "Invincible Ling Qingyu."

That was it—Ling Qingyu flung out of her seat and retaliated to save her shame. The two played around until they gasped for breath.

Fortunately, as supreme martial artists, their wide movements didn't destroy the slightest part of the scene. Fighting like Jackie Chan was as simple as eating and drinking to them.

"Alright, stop fussing around. What are you going to do with the new girls?" Xiao Yue asked.

"What girls?" Ling Qingyu sounded puzzled.

Whether the scumbag before her pretended to be confused or really was, Xiao Yue snorted to express her dissatisfaction. "The two criminals you ordered Spirit Fox to kidnap. Hmph, sure enough, Sister Tang correctly guessed your essence."

"Oh, them. Hey, hey. Spare me the essence terms," Ling Qingyu rubbed the back of her neck and giggled, feigning innocence in her expression.

"Yes, them... Athena, please show us live footage as well as their info." Xiao Yue waved her hand and requested again.

A holographic projection popped up, gyrating several screens from multiple angles before the duo's eyes.

Both video and audio were on full display. Ling Qingyu and Xiao Yue almost laughed. Inside Virgin 1, Spirit Fox operators were trying to move away from the kidnapped women.

Sheemah and Claudia, their heads covered by hoods. The latter curled up, quiet and calm. In contrast, Sheemah was lively.

She wiggled around, swiveling her body and asking questions nonstop. Worst of all—she spoke their language, inquiring nonstop like a fan in heat.

Ling Qingyu chuckled when she saw the team leader slap her forehead and cover her eyes.

She was confident her subordinates were itching to beat Sheemah into a coma if not for the fact that Ling Qingyu had regarded Sheemah and Claudia as secondary objectives.

In fact, Spirit Fox understood Ling Qingyu's mindset and what she planned to do when she ordered the capture of the two women. These two would definitely join their team.

The other was fine, but this woman—chirping nonstop without repeating her words—brought cold sweats to their foreheads. They couldn't bear to imagine their future.

Questions like: 'Are you the famous Spirit Fox?' 'Are you really all women as the rumor says?' 'Wow, awesome, you girls are the idols all females should worship.' 'I'm flattered to be chosen.' 'I heard Spirit Fox are ruthless machines, is it true?'

Spirit Fox: QAQ

They regretted their soft-heartedness and should have knocked her out. Bad reviews for the noise-canceling function in the cabin—loud noises were lowered while softer ones were amplified. Even the noisy rotor wash couldn't stop her mouth.

For the first time, Athena's product received negative sentiment.

Watching her poor subordinates, Ling Qingyu asked Athena to send a message that they could welcome a newcomer soon. Otherwise, her world's spiderhero version wouldn't quit yapping.

Sure enough, a few minutes later, the leader burst out with cuss words and admitted Sheemah's annoying queries.

Everyone expected the latter to stop questioning after getting the info she desired, but to their dismay, the questions changed.

Luckily, they weren't as annoying as before.

"She's really something," Xiao Yue smiled.

"Deep beneath her funny behavior, she is scared. All the fuss is to hide her inner insecurity and weaknesses," said Ling Qingyu.

"I never expected our Qingyu to become a psychologist," Xiao Yue teased.

Ling Qingyu returned a middle finger and sighed. "If you read her files, you can understand her mindset."

As an outsider, Ling Qingyu detected extreme wariness and fear from Sheemah, though she concealed it through inexplicable, annoying blabber.

Perhaps what she feared wasn't death but the worst fate before death. Death might be a mercy considering her career path. One mishap meant eternal hell.

It wasn't wrong to refer to her actions as venting. In fact, Ling Qingyu tried to replace herself in Sheemah's position and discovered there was only a very slim chance to escape such a life.

Cannot withdraw, cannot quit, and must keep going—uncertain to live to tell another day.

Hence, Ling Qingyu ordered her girls to talk to Sheemah and open up. Clever enough, Sheemah must have realized something from Spirit Fox's words since she calmed down immediately.

Not noticeable to the naked eye, but palpable.

On the other hand, Claudia was the complete opposite. Totally calm and composed, as if she had left everything to fate.

Perhaps her eyes were filled with fear, but the hood prevented any observation. A pity, Ling Qingyu thought—she truly wanted to see a natural beauty in a disheveled state.

From the photos she had admired before, this woman's beauty was comparable to her own, falling short slightly. If not for Miss System's transformation of herself, she'd lose huge points.

Anyway, the Persian Cat was impossible to escape from her grasp. She had all the time she needed. Too bad, these two women must live inside the submarine for a long time before she could meet them.

"Alas, Sister Yang must be sad. Her loyalty is taken for granted," Xiao Yue's words caused sweat to roll down Ling Qingyu's neck.

Ling Qingyu gulped and helplessly caressed Xiao Yue's shoulder in response. "What are you talking about? I desire their talents, background, and network—nothing else."

Xiao Yue returned an obviously disbelieving stare.

"I'm interested in that girl's statement. She says our Spirit Fox is popular online around the world." Ling Qingyu changed the topic.

Xiao Yue's curiosity was also piqued and prompted Athena to show what Sheemah was referring to.

The projection displayed a short video titled Top 10 Police Special Forces. Ling Qingyu and Xiao Yue understood the ranking was highly biased, but it was still connected to public perception.

The video began with Country R's FSB + SOBR as number 10. Ling Qingyu somewhat agreed if the ranking was based on military special forces, but not police. The infamous "1 hostage and 4 terrorists ending with five bodies" wasn't out of nowhere.

Then, Country N's DSI made the list, followed by Country J's SAT. According to the narration, the ranking depended on successful known missions and people's awe perception from both criminals and the public.

Ling Qingyu and Xiao Yue kept watching, their interest piqued after listening to the narrators' introduction of each unit. The famous BOPE appeared at sixth.

Previous units were unheard of despite their existence because their police missions didn't involve sufficient danger. But BOPE, Ling Qingyu knew them for their willingness to fight crime in areas where even the military refused to go.

Finally, the long-awaited Spirit Fox popped up as CAITO. Both women noticed the narration wasn't as detailed as before, skimming the gist of what the public knew about a newly born elite unit. The video consisted more of combat footage and descriptions of several events rather than training references like the others. Bystanders and first-person POV. Of course, the only female combat unit rumored by netizens.

From their first appearance, where Ling Qingyu asked Tang Ziyi to help Yang Qingyue quell the gang's chaos, to several arrests including the helicopter raid of the Tiger gang—where Athena spread compiled, edited footage on purpose to the public.

Short displays of presence during a certain bank robbery. Everything was included, amazing Ling Qingyu with the content creator's research. Oddly, the creator wasn't of Country C nationality, and it was shocking that he or she managed to obtain this extent of detail.

Of course, several rumors of rescue operations against scamming syndicates on foreign soil were acknowledged as the first time Spirit Fox received international attention.

Although nobody confirmed which unit undertook the missions, people's mouths were hard to suppress. The notable trait was the existence of many female operators.

Afterward, Ling Qingyu understood why her harem failed to surpass the top 5 and realized perhaps the creator had already raised Spirit Fox's status.

The formidable and renowned ones with real combat experience and successful dangerous missions occupied the top listings: GSG-9, GIGN, and the FBI HRT team.

These three were legends. The FBI had handled so many cases across the nation, and it was said that HRT was even comparable to Delta.

Besides, GIGN had bases stretching across the globe—conventional operators ready to respond to threats and specialized intervention teams to deploy later.

And to see her girls able to stand shoulder to shoulder, Ling Qingyu's nose flared up. She decided to gift an ample sum to the creator.

The number one wasn't a surprise—Yamam from Country I, with missions and a level surpassing the rest.

Naturally, Ling Qingyu didn't think her girls couldn't prevail in competitions at all. If people knew that Spirit Fox had hidden their edges and discovered their superhuman physiques, massacring other ranks would be an understatement.

Ling Qingyu's burning spendthrift wasn't for nothing. Special forces training required enormous resources, and the spending was never efficient. But she never encountered such problems—her cheats avoided all those obstacles.

Special Force operators were predominantly male. Females were endangered species in the sector because of their innate physical weakness. But Spirit Fox overcame them.

No wonder Sheemah acted adamant in eliciting responses from the operators. Spirit Fox was like a rare gem.

Chapter 742: Desire to prove

Inside Virgin 1, Sheemah relaxed after hearing the explanation. Though not much was said, she picked up the hidden meaning.

Based on the gentle treatment—except for the initial phase when she resisted—she and Claudia were captured for more than just the intel they both possessed.

Well, it was possible that they were currently being sugarcoated to lower their guards and extract useful information.

But Sheemah believed in her intuition that these female operators meant no harm once she calmed down. Rationally, her status was extremely dangerous, with ill-intentioned groups hoping to investigate through her network and drain all her capabilities.

If her captors knew her identity from the beginning, she was too deep in trouble to think further. And she intended to investigate through words.

Don't underestimate a short conversation. It revealed everything, even if the speaker wasn't high in rank.

As an expert in the intelligence world, language had always been the number one tool to decipher hidden clues. A well-trained agent had to learn the art of conversation to perfect their cover story and to be able to extract information.

The slightest mishap could unveil everything. No one liked talking to these talents, feeling undressed every time their mouths opened. Such was the reason why agents working in the intelligence field were sidelined.

Likewise, since they understood human weakness, they were also trained to resist falling for known traps. For instance, talking too much was a defensive move.

Sheemah, while blabbering, had captured Spirit Fox's intention. Their captive status was planned methodically.

Her intuition told her she and Claudia were being recruited, albeit forcefully. She wondered why Country C needed her.

The state apparatus of any nation, particularly regional powers and superpowers, easily surpassed her capability.

Therefore, Spirit Fox, with the backing of a nation, didn't require them—unless both held important intel that Country C wanted to dig out.

However, Sheemah was an intel broker. If there was any need, throwing money at her was enough, leaving the rest to the nation's agents to continue based on her lip service.

Any possible outcomes she thought of were contradictory after deep contemplation. What relieved her was the attitude of Spirit Fox—mystifying yet friendly.

A strange attitude toward someone who had kidnapped their countrymen.

Nonetheless, since others needed her, Sheemah lessened her fear but remained worried about her friend.

She had no fixed identity, not sworn to a nation. In fact, she held multiple passports. She didn't believe in loyalty or national interests. These soft words, old hags exploited to keep the young in place and use them for their benefit.

Everything they spat out might sound righteous, but the truth was far dirtier. Compared to ordinary and so-called experts, she, who swam in the dark sea, experienced far more unthinkable things.

On the other hand, Claudia belonged to Mossad's inner circle, though her status was at the lowest level in the hierarchy.

Just to join the inner ring cost a lot—youth, time, perseverance, and connections. It wasn't easy, and the first hurdle was loyalty.

Sheemah believed everything in the world was merely an exchange of interest, disguised to instill people with pride.

Her friend wouldn't easily be swayed. She dared not think about what Claudia's fate could become if she refused.

Even though Sheemah's friends were purely out of self-interest and business, Claudia was one of the very few among her confidantes who managed to enter her heart. She couldn't watch Claudia's self-destruction with cold eyes.

"Claudia, you awake?" Sheemah asked in Hebrew. She was blindfolded and had no idea if her friend was alongside her, kidnapped onto the same helicopter.

Speaking of the rotorcraft, Sheemah praised the cabin's soundproof features inwardly. No, not the soundproof feature but active noise control.

Loud, unwarranted decibels were toned down, whereas whisper-like factors were notably picked up. An aircraft version of a noise-canceling headset used by Special Forces, Sheemah concluded.

As an experienced spy, Sheemah had already devised her surroundings based on sound, yet she hadn't obtained the slightest hint of Claudia's presence—except that Spirit Fox might be carrying someone.

"What's the matter?" Claudia responded in Hebrew.

"Thank goodness, my love. I was worried," Sheemah feigned care. Her genuine emotion flattened once she heard Claudia's voice. "I hope you don't resist too much and oblige as much as possible. I don't want to see a cold body of my dear lover."

"Suit yourself," Claudia replied. Her worries dissipated from Sheemah's teasing voice.

The future was hard to predict—who knew how long they would live. It was best to enjoy the present.

"I'm serious," Sheemah's voice turned stern. "Don't think about loyalty and offend your captors."

"Do you expect me to betray my country, my belief, after I have gone through so much just to be here?" Claudia snarled.

Knowing that talking against one's ideals wasn't going to solve the problem, Sheemah softened her tone: "As long as you survive, my dear... Claudia, trust me this time. I don't think you even need to betray. Just go with the flow. Furthermore, with your level, do you have any valuable news they are seeking?"

Claudia's lips twitched and she went quiet. Her friend was indeed merciless in her language in order to persuade her to surrender. Heck, she hadn't even met the opponent's leadership yet, and this happened.

Her pumped-up morale went down the drain. Damn Sheemah!

She didn't have the energy to argue with Sheemah, but this woman was correct. She was a fish on the board at others' mercy.

Noting her silence, Sheemah explained all the stakes and her guesses. She became emboldened when no one stopped their action. The two's conversation in Hebrew was heard by everyone on the helicopter.

No operators minded their communication, even if they didn't understand. Usually, they wouldn't allow the duo to converse at all.

The duo would definitely become their comrades, one way or another. There wasn't a second option.

Of course, Athena also subtly gave hints to the operators to give the duo some space. Nothing could escape her vision. She could decipher an unknown primordial language live.

Meanwhile, watching Sheemah and Claudia live, Ling Qingyu and Xiao Yue exchanged glances and shared their thoughts. They discerned the two's inner state of mind and immediately unraveled the most appropriate approach. Obviously, out of the two, Sheemah was ready to be recruited so long as benefits appeared.

In fact, Ling Qingyu knew what to offer and what might hit Sheemah to the heart—a guarantee. A guarantee to assure Sheemah of security and a normal life. Perhaps persuading initially wouldn't gain trust, but Ling Qingyu understood that once Sheemah joined the team and realized the transformation, even if she kicked her out, Sheemah would crawl back shamelessly to beg.

Nevertheless, Ling Qingyu wasn't a cold-blooded CEO who would blast away anyone because someone became an eyesore. She cared about her subordinates and, in turn, received their utmost admiration and loyalty.

A real win-win.

Plus, her judgment of people was extremely accurate. None sought problematic issues or impeded her rise. Rather, they were her adorable cuties, daring to venture to great lengths.

Or should she praise her intuition? Ling Qingyu amused herself, completely forgetting the factor of her daughter's help.

"This girl, Claudia, is a hard bread to chew." Ling Qingyu bit her lips, unwilling to release the most alluring woman she had met from her grasp.

"A bitter melon is never sweet. Follow fate and let go—whether she's willing or not—it isn't in our hands," Xiao Yue commented.

"Hmph, there's no way I'm going to give up," Ling Qingyu snorted.

"You're not going to throw her in a cage and let her see the goods and awesomeness of yours, are you?"

"Of course not. I am not too restrictive of her personal freedom, but I can't let her leave like that," said Ling Qingyu.

"What do you want her for? I think Sheemah is enough if you are seeking on-site intelligence personnel. Her connections are far too vast, far better than Claudia," Xiao Yue added.

"Well, it can't be helped when I was so close to recruiting someone from one of the world's elite spy agencies—a beautiful damsel at that," Ling Qingyu joked.

Xiao Yue raised her brow as she gradually figured out why Ling Qingyu reacted so adamantly. While Sheemah could provide human intelligence through her information brokerage, she had no experience or knowledge to group people together into a formidable organization.

In contrast, Claudia perfectly fit the role. She worked as a handler, logistic support, and a captain of an armed wing. In simple terms, Claudia was talented in both civil and martial ways—a true asset to whatever goal Ling Qingyu had in mind.

"In the face of your so-called benefits, she won't blink an eye," Xiao Yue added. "But there's a way to handle her and ensnare her to our net."

"What's that?"

"Desire to prove herself. Accomplishment is what she seeks far more than loyalty to her nation. So long as you provide her the tools, grounds, and appropriate freedom, you'll get her. Of course, provided you can guarantee that you aren't going to use her against her motherland, I suppose the rest is easy."

"Wow, Sister Yue, I never expected you to help me chase my love," Ling Qingyu winked and smiled when a bombastic speechless side-eye lay on her.

She believed in Xiao Yue's sharp vision, whose judgment far surpassed her own. Comparing years of experience and the level of management, she paled in comparison to the former warlord who had managed huge populations and met all kinds of people.

Heck, the only advantage Ling Qingyu held was her modern knowledge and as time passed, Xiao Yue'd learn more.

Chapter 743: Ling Qingyu wants face-slap

Seeing that Xiao Yue had a way to convince Claudia, Ling Qingyu had no further worries and didn't ask about the arrangements.

Based on the former's words, she guessed what Xiao Yue intended to do, but for now, Sheemah and Claudia had to reside inside the submarine's cabin, locked in until she had time to arrange things—or until Xiao Yue was available to conquer the duo.

Poor girls—they lost the taste of freedom, Ling Qingyu snickered. It would surely take a while.

Fortunately, staying inside the titan submarine was no different from living in a luxurious hotel with all kinds of services.

If she announced to the kind homeless poor that she could let them stay, no one would refuse—much less the two prisoners.

She also wondered about the final fate of those two women because she realized everyone she had met and intuitively felt connected to had an issue.

Delving deeper reminded Ling Qingyu that she had sort of altered their destinies by her mere presence, and Miss System confirmed her prior conjecture.

Could these two contain the same mystery?

Anyway, Ling Qingyu knew that with their identities, the duo's final fate shouldn't be too good at all—and she wasn't wrong.

Setting her mind free, Ling Qingyu relinquished all control over Athena to process the final transfer. She didn't bother to succumb to headaches while arranging the link-up with Country C's forces whilst hiding her strength.

Her good daughter was so capable; why should she act?

The flight continued toward its final destination. Ling Qingyu and Xiao Yue discussed future strategic plans—the ambition for the empire's founding, powerful enough to rival any hegemonic superpower in economy, diplomacy, and wealth.

Yes, since gaining direct and nominal control of the island chains south of the Elephant Continent, Ling Qingyu's mindset had changed.

The thirst became harder to suppress when she realized the power to manipulate events behind the scenes of every nation on this continent.

Sure, signs and shadows of foreign interventions were in clear plain sight. A little investigation revealed everything, but these didn't deter Ling Qingyu.

She merely needed to wait a few months to see how Country E's next events unfolded according to her will. Revolutions, coups, or reforms—it didn't matter so long as they catered to her.

Once the groundwork was set, the neighbors should follow Country E's path. This was the fate of weak nations holding ample natural resources.

Although Ling Qingyu figured she wouldn't need too much of such resources in the coming decades based on Athena's progress on the technological tree, it didn't hurt to flaunt her presence with several nations backing her on the world stage.

She admitted she resembled evil villains plotting to subdue the entire world to its knees; yet, compared to the warmongering hypocrites, her path of encompassing everyone under her capital should treat ordinary families better than before.

That, she dared swear on Miss System's existence.

Miss System: "...!!!..."

Ignoring the sudden chill behind her neck, Ling Qingyu drew mind maps of her campaign. Then she noticed the electronic map of the flight path from the corner of her eye.

Glancing at the projection depicting the flight path and the aircraft's location, Ling Qingyu pursed her lips.

The airbus was passing by Country F. Less than an hour later, she would leave the Alyssia Continent and cross another ocean.

Country F contained all the mysteries she must seek. Her mother and her aunt—Amorette and Denise—came from Country F.

Particularly her mother—Amorette Roux. According to their deep narration, which her former self overheard during the two's conversation, her mother was from an aristocratic family in Country F.

Because she fell in love with her scumbag father in spite of her family's protest, she fled and was disowned. Neither was confirmed by Ling Qingyu; everything was purely her guess.

Given her mother's background and her condescension toward the scumbag's family, Ling Qingyu concluded there was a suffocating, outrageous level of power and reach.

She knew her past self had attempted to investigate the Roux family's background in Country F to no avail. All electronic and personnel research found nothing, as if Roux didn't exist at all.

The prestigious family seemed more powerful than originally thought, and her predecessor was about to press further when she herself encountered troubles later.

Now, with Athena—her cheap daughter—these obstacles stood no chance. Ling Qingyu also felt obligated to pursue what her predecessor had done. At least, she owed her that.

Not to mention, her mother and aunt must have had some thoughts of returning or meeting their relatives once again, even if both sides had separated badly.

Perhaps her predecessor had the desire to prove her worth to the family from her mother's lineage.

In any case, there was nothing wrong with following her predecessor's road again, though she had numerous matters to consider currently.

Ling Qingyu decided to bring Amorette and Denise along for the next trip. Hmm, considering their circle, she should also ask her secretary's mother. They must be bored residing in one place. Broadening their horizons didn't seem like a bad idea.

As for the Roux family's aristocratic background, Ling Qingyu had no time to delve further, but Athena's report rang some bells.

Those secretive societies and "royal" families had their underwear turned upside down by Athena, regardless of their data security measures. In modern society, there was no escape except maintaining a minimal public presence.

Nonetheless, Ling Qingyu obtained a clue from Athena: her mother's family was only a branch, not the direct line.

Heck, this Roux family somehow resembled the infamous Rothschild family she knew. If just a branch was powerful enough to influence the landscape of Country F, Ling Qingyu couldn't fathom the central figures' power.

Of course, Ling Qingyu wasn't afraid. Instead, she couldn't wait to slap them in the face. Since her transmigration, she had been very keen on face-slapping but had never had a chance at all.

With a protagonist's treatment, she should have the right to exercise such acts. Maybe Miss System behaved despicably behind the scenes to pour cold water on her enthusiasm.

Otherwise, she refused to believe face-slapping only belonged to Lin Fan. What she intended was to let Amorette and Denise return with pride.

The marriage had turned sour, but the fruit of it had blossomed into something unimaginable.

Honestly, whenever Ling Qingyu contemplated her rise, she knew that without Miss System, everything would have been painfully slow. She was certain that somewhere, she might just have been wrangling nonsense with low-level thugs.

Hours ticked by. Ling Qingyu, Xiao Yue, Mo Yunxi, and Yin Jingfei regrouped and had fun, not leaving the Spirit Fox operatives and flight attendants behind.

From cozy massage therapy to small-bar entertainment and karaoke, everyone indulged in their hobbies.

Most Spirit Fox sisters released their pent-up frustration to relax after going through a heavy fight. Though so much time had passed since then, the emotional toll still required recovery.

Some even played truth or dare to hype up the stakes. Except for a very few Spirit Fox operators who remained on guard, many followed Ling Qingyu's orders to play.

After all, given Miss System's rewards and guarantees, plus Athena's thorough monitoring, there was definitely no spy inside, nor any dangerous devices.

Ling Qingyu trusted her safety inside the Airbus. Even so, those handful of guards attended to their duties.

Noting their vigilance, Ling Qingyu shrugged helplessly. She gave her subordinates a chance to play around while they still could.

Once they arrived in Country A, everyone would definitely be sweating hard. Daily shootouts were the norm there.

Furthermore, they had offended Country A's secret forces during Country E's airport terrorist attack, in spite of Athena's thorough cleanup that wiped out any evidence pointing to Spirit Fox's involvement.

Surrounded by enemies in the dark, as well as unknown dirty political maneuvers ahead, Ling Qingyu hoped to soothe her girls.

Chapter 744: VVIP

Ling Qingyu shrugged at her subordinates' meticulousness. Not that she minded, since she was the beneficiary, but she hoped her girls would relax before arriving in Country A.

If her preparations went for naught, she had to be prepared for violence. Truthfully, when Country E's attack happened and Ling Qingyu learned who the real masterminds were, she nearly persuaded Mo Yunxi and Yin Jingfei to give up their studies.

After all, it wasn't like Country C paled in comparison in regard to education, aside from high-tech equipment, data, and the availability of relevant scientists. Well, these were the vital organs for successful research, although she could provide data and equipment through Athena.

It was the personnel that brought the greatest trouble. Without talents with creative and powerful minds, achievements would remain far away. Perhaps Athena's existence might replace them, but not completely.

Not to mention, some lessons were learned through experience and interaction within the same circle. These rare, precious sessions were the hardest to replicate.

Besides, having already left the country, Ling Qingyu wasn't going back even if dangers awaited ahead.

With all the backing and outrageous support she possessed, Ling Qingyu wouldn't allow hesitation to prevail. There were so many leeways to tackle the problems. Why should she give up out of fear of retaliation?

Once, she faced dangerous organized criminal groups, and now it was merely upgraded to a mafia apparatus disguised under a legal government system.

Her enemies upgraded, and she too improved. Right—why the sudden hesitation after gaining so much? Ling Qingyu smiled wryly at her state of mind, beginning to be riddled with holes unknowingly.

Alas, even with all her strength, her mentality lagged behind. Understanding the deeper hidden problem she had noticed, Ling Qingyu focused her gaze on the girls around her and regained her confidence.

It wasn't that she was scared, but that something had managed to stall her. From a fantasy and cultivation perspective, Ling Qingyu had a breakthrough in her divinity...

Before, in spite of her acting nonchalant, palpable fear thrived inconspicuously within her heart. Don't think too much—just do it.

If the worst appeared, Ling Qingyu could simply fulfill her second daughter's wish: bombarding the White House into oblivion.

Hours later, the plane had crossed the oceans and began to lower its altitude. The stewardess asked everyone to return to their seats and wear seat belts.

These women scrambled through the entire cabin to check on everyone, not adhering to the safety rules. Afterward, they relaxed and sat down in their designated spots.

As Athena had already registered the flight beforehand, the arrival airport knew Ling Qingyu's group was coming. Owing to the fact that Athena paid a handsome amount in taxes and bonuses, the luxury airbus received priority treatment.

Amidst the busy traffic control of multiple aircraft preparing to land, Ling Qingyu's flight skipped all the stages and was directly assigned a separate runway.

No staging, no circling, no messy reports. Everything was green-lighted. Politeness bought by money.

The female pilots on board exchanged knowing glances and shrugged at the smoothness of the entire process, excited to taste first-hand VIP treatment even if the service wasn't directed at them.

Whoosh.

A whirling screech followed as the tires kissed the runway. The aircraft didn't jump, nor did it create a large conventional shock to the passengers—a testament to the pilots' skills, the AI autopilot aid system, and the technological epitome of the aircraft itself.

While Ling Qingyu and Xiao Yue were deep in thought, Mo Yunxi and Yin Jingfei, a pair of doctor and nurse, were exhilarated by their new residence and upcoming lives.

The more they imagined, the more butterflies filled their stomachs. New people, new adventures—maybe a temporary step back from busy, tiresome medical careers.

After taxiing to the allocated parking spot, solely rented for the entirety of Ling Qingyu's stay in Country A, the girls witnessed a group of welcoming customs officers and airport staff through the windows while they waited for the aircraft to quiet down.

Ling Qingyu patiently remained in her seat as she giggled with Xiao Yue. For all the complicated immigration processes, she delegated the responsibilities to Athena, except where she had to personally attend a visa interview.

Likewise, the other "tour group" members underwent the same process. Here at the airport, Athena had also paid for a VVIP service where airport staff would assist with immigration entry protocols.

The whole group was allocated a private channel without the need to queue or expose themselves to the public. After all, such a service was necessary when their humongous private jet had already drawn attention.

Even smaller private jets paid for the service to avoid complications, and it was only natural for an Airbus A380. Furthermore, her group consisted of more than a hundred people.

Why waste time mingling with ordinary civilians and burdening their schedule?

When Ling Qingyu stepped down the airstairs after her subordinates occupied their safety formation, she discovered a group of men and women wearing uniforms and suits.

They were likely customs authorities. She narrowed her eyes in deep thought, but her steps remained consistent, without a loss of elegance or gait.

In fact, the officers were sweating as they tried to decipher Ling Qingyu's identity in their minds—the huge aircraft, the many security personnel with strange objects in their hands, apparently scanning the surroundings through their actions, as well as other bureaucratic factors.

And what was with the rear compartment opening? What was the size of the cargo their VIP had brought?

Heck, they suspected, even the head of state from most nations would never possess the very aura before their eyes.

Although the supposed bodyguards were women, raising doubts, their professional movements and discipline quelled the confusion.

Specifically, the leader in the center, dressed in a black suit from top to bottom, felt the greatest pressure. He cleared his throat and loosened his tie slightly.

He bolted forward as soon as Ling Qingyu's heels hit the floor. His fellow officers followed closely behind.

Ling Qingyu's brow rose helplessly upon seeing an official displaying such nervousness. Where was the skin thicker than the Great Wall of China that they were supposed to have?

Xiao Yue's lips curled even more, as she might have been the only one who understood the reason for such a display, having spoken with Athena and Ling Qingyu midflight.

"Girls, take your passports and proceed with the immigration checks ahead of us in groups. The airport staff will assist you," Xiao Yue said.

"Understood, Sister Yue. We'll scout ahead—please don't worry. Trust our professionalism."

Xiao Yue's lips twitched at their remarks. She sighed helplessly. "Relax and consider yourselves on vacation. Don't you realize you're pressuring others with your strong demeanors? The enemies won't take action so blatantly."

"Oops. Oh... hehe."

Spirit Fox noticed their strict temperaments suppressing and affecting the work of others. They immediately restrained their momentum and returned to the lively version of young women, excited for the upcoming adventure.

No one around dared to underestimate them after witnessing their sharpness. Meanwhile, Mo Yunxi and Yin Jingfei were flabbergasted by the welcoming party.

The former felt it more deeply when she realized the difference in treatment. Since being with Ling Qingyu, every airport had delivered a grand display. Country E and Medical Island were coherent with her expectations, but Country A reacting similarly surprised her.

Hmm, it appeared Sister Ling had concealed her connections with the top echelons here as well.

In contrast, Yin Jingfei didn't think much of it. With her lack of experience, she even thought Ling Qingyu's treatment was normal.

"Sister Mo and Sister Yin, why don't you also follow the girls and proceed with immigration together with them?" Xiao Yue said after noticing their silence.

She knew that small talk between Ling Qingyu and the officials wouldn't end quickly—not because Ling Qingyu felt small, but to reciprocate the minimum kindness, etiquette, and respect.

Someone had waited for them for a long time, and it was the bare minimum to exchange polite greetings and conversation.

Besides, the immigration process wouldn't end quickly with so many people and items to bring in—the convoy of armored vehicles included.

Fortunately, Athena had already taken care of the tedious paperwork and permissions.

"Good evening, Ms. Lin. Welcome to Country A. It's an honor for me to receive a guest of your stature. I am Director—"

"Thank you very much, Director. I'm truly honored. I never expected the Director to come personally," Ling Qingyu returned the official greeting.

Yet, her words contained truth. She never expected the Airport Director of Immigration and Border Control to personally welcome her.

Fortunately, she had interacted frequently with figures of similar standing lately, comparable to her mother-in-law's level—a ministerial position was nothing to sweat over. Thus, she remained calm and nonchalant.

Despite her use of the word "honor," no one detected the slightest hint of flattery or change in her expression. The immigration officers subconsciously held their breath and became more wary, fearing they might commit an inexplicable offense against the Chaebol Lady.

Actually, her deep gaze when she mouthed "Director" caused him to overthink. Although Athena's arrangements should have already drawn similar attention, the director's fawning right before his eyes was too obvious to ignore.

Clearly, the man was attempting to build connections with her to secure his own advancement. Her original plan to engage in makeshift conversation dissipated. The director's position demanded at least absolute attentiveness, even if Ling Qingyu herself did not care about him.

Really, in order to chase her goddesses, she strove really hard, Ling Qingyu comforted. For the ease of living in Country A, Ling Qingyu responded to the Director's initiative, delighting the latter to Cloud Nine.

Chapter 745: Bonus - Happy New Year

"I hope you enjoy the trip and achieve what you're looking for, Ms. Ling."

"Certainly, I will," Ling Qingyu nodded.

"The mayor sent his greetings and regards," the director spoke. "He wishes Ms. Ling to dine with his family tonight."

"I am grateful for his invitation. Please deliver my sincere greetings."

"Of course, Ms. Ling. It's only natural."

"As for the dinner, I'll have to settle my friends' needs and help them out." Ling Qingyu glanced at the pair of doctor and nurse in the distance. "So, I cannot confirm if I'm available tonight."

Mo Yunxi and Yin Jingfei waved and smiled back. The duo was currently busy taking pictures near immigration and border control.

The director followed her gaze and couldn't help but wonder if the main reason for this princess's trip was merely to accompany her friends.

Then, he shook his head to dismiss his nonsensical thought. How could someone who had already spent a lump sum before arriving be so whimsical? He didn't know he had stumbled upon the perfect answer.

After all, he had received a strong reminder from the mayor to fulfill every one of Ling Qingyu's needs and treat her as a guest of honor for the city. To see Ms. Ling show no reaction to the mayor's status blew his mind.

Seeing the director's moving lips, Ling Qingyu nodded imperceptibly and added, "Perhaps by tomorrow, I will meet with the mayor and delve more into future investments and cooperation. After all, I'm genuinely new here and must research carefully."

"Of course, Ms. Ling. I totally understand." The director sighed in relief after receiving the positive feedback he had hoped for. He had fulfilled his supporter's goal, and that was enough.

Standing next to Ms. Ling brought immense pressure. He knew nothing about her, and the unknown was the most frightening. His political foresight and discerning eyes were rendered useless.

If Ling Qingyu heard the director's trepidation, she would sneer. Her past interactions with high-ranking officials were not for nothing. Speaking with these old foxes was like treading a road made of sharp pikes.

After a polite exchange, her eyes hovered over the other restless officers. She smiled and approached them with a gentle demeanor, shaking their hands and offering greetings.

The officers were flattered until she shook hands with a man taller than her, possessing a strong and taunt physique.

She noticed the difference in this man's temperament. The air he carried was filled with discipline and steel.

Likewise, the man also spotted Ling Qingyu's hidden aura—not that of a chaebol or aristocrat. Certainly, she still wielded such airs.

But he felt as though the woman before him had killed many people. It was obvious the moment he glanced into her eyes. His instincts flared, warning him repeatedly that he mustn't fight against this woman or he'd be killed in an instant. It peaked when his hand touched her palm.

It was strange that there were no calluses—only gentle, soft skin. However, he trusted his intuition, which had saved him multiple times. Ms. Ling was dangerous.

Naturally, Ling Qingyu recognized that the man had discerned something from a simple handshake. She had yet to realize her eyes were giving clues.

Though she thought her outlook hadn't changed much, her past actions had unconsciously left their mark. She had ended many lives personally, and many more through her orders.

Even if the victims were heinous criminals, the murderous aura remained. Ling Qingyu lamented her weakness in concealment.

Look at Tang Ziyi and Xiao Yue—not many would dare imagine them as gods of slaughter. Even Xiao Yue, a former warlord, displayed no aggressiveness. She still had much to learn.

In fact, it wasn't Ling Qingyu's fault. She had done her best to bury her sharpness. But fate had her meet one of the most intuitive people.

From the uniform the officer wore, it appeared he belonged to the airport security team.

"Are you from the military? How long have you served?" Ling Qingyu asked.

Her question shocked the man. He didn't expect more than pleasantries. "Yes, ma'am. I served in the army for ten years, eight deployments."

He subtly prodded his chest after answering. "By any chance, have you also served in the army?"

"Of course not. I'm just a simple businesswoman," Ling Qingyu replied with a smile. "Ten years with eight deployments is quite a lot. I'd reckon you're from the special operations community."

Since her girls were from the military, Ling Qingyu had learned about deployment cycles. Even in foreign militaries, the difference shouldn't be too great. Eight deployments in ten years was excessive.

By now, the man trusted his earlier judgment even more. Only a fool would believe Ling Qingyu's statement.

"Ma'am, I'm impressed by your knowledge."

"Please don't praise me. I was just guessing and didn't expect to hit the bullseye." Ling Qingyu was more willing to befriend and spend time with warriors than with cunning officials.

The other officers, including the director, raised their brows, never expecting the powerful woman to take interest in the head of security.

The man relaxed and asked, "If I may be presumptuous, could you guess my unit?"

"I'd be glad to play along," Ling Qingyu chuckled. "Green Berets?"

"Whoa, ma'am. How did you guess so accurately?" The man's eyes widened. He had never spoken to anyone about his unit. Was it really just another guess? "I thought you would've said the Navy SEALs. After all, they're more famous."

"People overly deify SEAL teams," Ling Qingyu shook her head. "The only special-operations force truly capable of unconventional warfare is the Green Berets."

Xiao Yue rolled her eyes at Ling Qingyu's playful behavior. Of course, that bastard guessed correctly—she was definitely cheating.

With Athena's presence, who could truly hide or lie low? Once sufficient interest was piqued, even naked truth had nowhere to hide.

Fortunately, Ling Qingyu was focused on the officials before her, not her 'secretary.'

Otherwise, Xiao Yue would shout injustice. Ling Qingyu truly hadn't cheated—she had deduced it purely through reasoning.

The chatter continued for a while until the first SUV emerged from the aircraft's rear compartment. One after another, vehicles rolled out to their designated parking spots.

The staff and officers fell silent—completely still. From the bulkiness and weight of the vehicles, and the heavy thuds when the drivers dismounted and slammed the doors, one word hovered in their minds.

Heavy and armored.

Some observant eyes managed to gauge the thickness of the glass and door frames. Heck, if everyone hadn't been informed of the passengers' identities beforehand, they wouldn't have hesitated to designate them as a diplomatic security team.

No one would have disbelieved Ling Qingyu if she suddenly confessed that she was a diplomat traveling incognito.

Chapter 746: Stunning the TSA

The large room went quiet. Even the staff dealing with stacks of passports weren't able to concentrate on their tasks. Spirit Fox identities were fabricated from the start, so there wasn't the slightest worry about exposure.

If intelligence agents tried to investigate, everything would return as normal without raising the slightest alarm. Deeper persistence wouldn't help either.

Not to mention, since Ling Qingyu's entourage proceeded through VVIP service with the Director himself present, not a single person had the ambition to scrutinize details as long as the information was "legitimate."

Until all the vehicles were parked, nobody around Ling Qingyu spoke. She even heard a gulp and noticed the veteran staring into her eyes.

She shrugged inwardly. With all the preparations, she didn't fear political maneuvers. Within a few days, she would have smoothed everything out with the local government. By then, even the FEDs couldn't interfere without solid reason.

She ignored the dumbfounded crowd because more surprises were yet to come. Her heart twitched with humor as she imagined how people would react once her girls unveiled their armor and weapons.

Surprise. Surprise.

"Director, these vehicles are all we brought. You can bring the K9 unit to check for contraband," Ling Qingyu said.

Her voice recollected everyone's focus. The director coughed and replied, waving his arm. "That won't be necessary, Ms. Ling. I trust your conscience."

He didn't ask further or question the eligibility of bringing in armored vehicles. Although these tangled with border customs regulations, some matters allowed plenty of room to maneuver.

Ling Qingyu didn't insist and gestured for her girls to bring forth the relevant papers. Seeing this, the director nodded at his subordinates to check them and sighed in relief that Ms. Ling had prepared everything.

His eyes held vaster respect when he looked at Ling Qingyu. It seemed the puddle of the city's political landscape was about to be disrupted.

Hopefully, this woman didn't leave behind irreparable damage after she finished stirring things up. Well, that was for those above to have a headache over.

As a seasoned official, he was already skilled at avoiding blame, and he knew the limits of his decisions.

Meanwhile, the other girls carried everyone's luggage to undergo X-ray scanning. Though no one believed Ling Qingyu would risk transporting contraband, going through the motions was essential to leave behind solid evidence.

However, another group brought black luggage. Each girl held four bags, and they walked toward the head of security, who was conversing with Ling Qingyu.

Ling Qingyu exchanged a knowing smile and prodded her chin toward the large bags thrown on the ground. "I suggest you check these bags and the relevant papers. Oh... a word of advice. Stay calm and don't be scared by what you see."

"Ms. Ling surely brought surprises, but nothing could scare me," the veteran joked.

"I hope you can repeat those words later. Girls, open up."

Swish.

In order to avoid frightening the people here, only one bag was unzipped, and the lining was spread to reveal what was inside.

A combat helmet, NVGs, tactical vests, Kevlar armor, and a set consisting of an assault rifle and a sidearm.

Sure enough, the veteran—uncertain whether his eyes were deceiving him—froze and flicked his gaze back and forth at Ling Qingyu, who giggled and nodded.

The veteran swallowed his words and searched the second bag himself. He took a sharp breath, lost in thought.

His reaction elicited curiosity from the director and his fellows. Everyone familiar with the veteran knew and praised his calmness and confidence regardless of the situation.

Seeing him lose his composure, it was clear that things were serious. In fact, the veteran's behavior was entirely understandable.

Although Country A allowed possession of firearms, these were restricted to its citizens and residents. Others, such as tourists and investors, were barred from wielding them.

Though many managed to secure firearms through black channels, officially, gun control over foreigners was strict.

Even diplomats' and embassy teams needed to go through thorough federal investigations. Foreigners who desired armed security usually resorted to hiring local security companies.

To witness Ling Qingyu showcasing weapons without fear or hesitation, he dared not contemplate further.

"What's the matter?" the director asked.

"Please see for yourself, Director." The veteran angled aside to display the interior.

Collective gasps rang out. Some weak-willed security officers instinctively reached for their sidearms.

"Ms. Ling, I don't know if you are aware of gun control regulations for foreigners here," the director responded after wiping the cold sweat from his forehead, though a chill still lingered down his back.

"I am aware of all regulations," Ling Qingyu lightly shook her head in amusement. "Girls, stop scaring our helpers. Show the required permits."

The veteran beckoned multiple TSA agents to check. This time, no one dared to slack off.

The TSA officers hesitated as their scanning devices flashed federal clearance codes, forcing compliance. The officials realized Ling Qingyu was operating at a level beyond normal law—her influence was unfathomable and untouchable.

Ling Qingyu trusted that Athena had taken care of everything. Her AI daughter had already hacked into the federal system and issued firearm licenses, registered as special protective details.

To prevent apprehension during first impressions, Ling Qingyu had asked everyone to carefully pack their firearms—not even allowing the girls to carry pistols on their hips.

Other restricted possessions were kept in her ancient storage bracelet. Ling Qingyu never longed to create drama. She could have hidden all the weapons inside her bracelet and avoided the fuss.

But what if her entourage encountered a firefight later? How would she explain that?

Finding no problems, the director waved off everyone's hesitation and ordered them to speed up the checks. Anything more could offend Ling Qingyu, and he wasn't a fool.

Only the veteran continued to gaze at Ling Qingyu with caution. "Ms. Ling, I can understand carrying firearms to protect yourself, but more than a hundred armored vehicles—I can't help but think further."

"Then please don't. You'll gain nothing from it," Ling Qingyu smiled.

"Why do you have so many...?"

Ling Qingyu understood him and answered, "Because I feel unsafe here. Country A is the best place for businesses to grow due to favorable policies, but statistically, every day there are more than 1.15 mass shootings. I don't want to be mowed down by someone unknown because they're high on drugs or happened to enter an unfortunate gang turf fight. Or some sociopath seek vengeance on the society. My safety is best kept in my own hands."

Hearing her explanation, everyone's eyelids twitched. It was outrageous, yet reasonable. They couldn't refute her argument.

The police were the least dependable in the face of gunfights. Better to take the initiative than wait to be saved—the sentiment was clear.

"But that's a company-sized element," the veteran struggled to object.

He couldn't bear to imagine the chaos that would ensue if it were left unchecked—over a hundred well-trained terrorists wreaking havoc in the city. A war might erupt.

With the armored SUVs, he pondered whether Ling Qingyu had hidden agendas. Not to mention, Country A's and Country C's relationship wasn't exactly on a warm, cozy path.

Of course, he might have been overthinking it, but his worries weren't unfounded. Like Ms. Ling, he sensed a similarly dreadful and dangerous momentum from the women acting as guards in the entourage.

These smiling, beautiful femmes fatales had killed many people. They were by no means kind although they wore fashionable attires in contrast to the roles they assumed.

"That's enough. Carry on," the director ordered the veteran, who still hoped to quibble. "Order everyone not to spread what's happened here."

The former was now drenched in sweat and longed to transfer the burden to the mayor.

Ling Qingyu nodded her thanks and redirected the conversation to other topics, inquiring about health projects.

She expressed her confidence through silence rather than explanation. Soon, all necessary procedures and checks passed smoothly under the astonished eyes of the staff.

Chapter 747: I'm just a businesswoman

"I presume the vehicles I have requested are available," said Ling Qingyu.

"About that..." the director paused. "I understand your armor request, but Ms. Ling, don't you have your own? I can't understand."

"Oh, here I was confused about what your words meant." Ling Qingyu shook her head. "The vans are naturally for my flight crews and their baggage."

The director uttered an "oh" and nodded in agreement. Based on the short interaction, he had already picked up Ling Qingyu's obvious trait—thoroughness in detail, not even sparing the smallest ones.

He reckoned the noble lady possessed some sort of OCD, arranging everything meticulously. His age had taught him that control was good, but not everything. Sometimes, people would resist it even if they understood the rules existed for their own good.

Maybe, as time passed, friends could turn into enemies. Yet these weren't his problems, and he didn't believe Ms. Ling lacked countermeasures.

Ling Qingyu glanced at the director suspiciously and somehow felt this old fox was badmouthing her. She trusted her intuition, but she sensed no malice. Perhaps one of her behaviors had piqued his scrutiny.

Not knowing a misunderstanding had formed, Ling Qingyu watched her entourage finish everything. When she realized that only herself and Xiao Yue remained to pass through the check procedures, Ling Qingyu merely opened her lips and was interrupted.

"Ms. Ling, you and your secretary won't need to go through this nuisance," said the director.

"Oh, how convenient, Director." Ling Qingyu smiled. "But won't it bring trouble to you and your subordinates?"

"No, Ms. Ling. I trust your character, and this isn't troublesome at all." The director patted his chest, ignoring his security head's complaining expression.

Ling Qingyu noticed the change in mood and chuckled. "Then, I am grateful for your thoughtfulness and care."

After exchanging pleasantries, everyone took back their passports, including the flight crews who had also come out of the aircraft, already parked and locked down.

Although these crews might travel on a short trip, most of their journey would be spent attending to the aircraft. Even if the Airbus belonged to Miss System's properties, proper maintenance and health monitoring were crucial. Even if deemed unnecessary, the act had to be thorough in the public eye.

The operators mounted the Chevrolet, the flight crews hopped into the five designated armored rented vans driven by Spirit Fox, and Ling Qingyu and her group entered one in the middle.

She and Xiao Yue sat in the back seats, while Mo Yunxi and Yin Jingfei were in the rear compartment. Its spacious area provided luxurious comfort unlike the others.

Nobody spoke of the weapons or vehicles. Money always worked. What visa issues and customs discrimination? Ling Qingyu mocked.

Of course, she knew her trip went smoothly because of her wealth. Even the so-called ICE wouldn't bring unnecessary plague gods upon themselves.

They could only bully the poor, leaving a huge leeway for the rich. That included criminal activities.

Mafias and gangs with immense wealth would find no trouble navigating the country. The future remained uncertain. Ling Qingyu had worked together with her lover to wipe out gangs in Province N, but they had also faced many troubles with absolute authority—much less Country A's forever shaky politics.

Under the "reluctant" gaze of the director and his subordinates, Ling Qingyu's convoy departed from the airport and merged into highway traffic.

The large convoy attracted the eyes of some drivers, wondering which diplomat had come from the airport to the city. After all, a black luxury aura was never meant for ordinary people.

As expected, people were quick to take videos and pictures to seek attention on the internet. Unfortunately, Athena nipped all trouble in the bud. Those posts wouldn't gain the slightest traction until her mother completed her tasks and secured her foundation here—politically and businesswise.

That meant that for at least a week, nobody at large would be aware of Ling Qingyu's presence.

The smooth ride slowed and stopped. Puzzled, Ling Qingyu glanced around and sighed. "Heck, even from the airport, the highway is still congested with heavy traffic?"

"Sorry, President Ling. It seems like we will spend an hour or more until the traffic clears," the driver answered. "Don't worry. Once we're beyond the troublesome intersections, we'll escape the traffic."

"Don't fret about it. This fault lies in the inadequate public transportation of the city itself." Ling Qingyu consoled her subordinates. "I just want to move faster because I want my girls to rest soon and not tire yourselves out."

"Haha, thank you, President Ling," the operator chuckled. "We're doing fine. We've already slept on the plane. Our sisters are energetic at the moment."

"Hope that lasts longer," Xiao Yue joked. "I mean, it doesn't last for long."

"Don't jinx it," Ling Qingyu rolled her eyes speechlessly. "Speaking of which, Sofia, any thoughts of returning to your homeland?"

The copilot sitting at the front was Sofia, disguised as one of her fellow countrywomen. The passport had given her a new name as well. The convenience brought by Athena steamrolled and facilitated so many troubles.

"Ma'am, I find my greatest happiness with you all," Sofia replied and was honest about her feelings.

Those dark days she suffered because of a betrayal from her confidantes hurt the most. Just greed had led them to take someone's life—someone who had worked alongside them through ups and downs.

Perhaps some were also involved out of jealousy, wary that her success would rob them of promotions. Sofia didn't want to think about it. She found her purpose under Ling Qingyu, even if the latter was a businesswoman seeking self-interest.

That had been her conclusion until she began to unravel Ling Qingyu's ambition. She guessed that if someday the aspiration was brought to light, it would shock the whole realm.

She never sought to return, nor to avenge herself, since she had found a meaningful future.

"Please don't address me as Ma'am. I feel old," Ling Qingyu teased. "Speaking of revenge, we will help you pay back. Since you've joined us, you are our family. And for family, I will not hesitate."

"Revenge?" The ears of Mo Yunxi and Yin Jingfei perked up from behind. Both had been whispering about their preparations before meeting the academicians they would study and research under.

The former was currently on the phone, a melody tone ringing as she contacted her supervising professor to inform them of her arrival. Ling Qingyu's words piqued her curiosity.

"It's too troublesome..."

"Sofia, listen, it's extremely easy for me to do so," Ling Qingyu interrupted. "Hiring bounty hunters doesn't cost me much. Paying them to get the dirty job done means nothing to me. The amount really means nothing."

Ling Qingyu glanced at the array of automobile rear lights and continued, "It's you whom I care deeply about. And it's an injustice to let those scum die without knowing the real reasons. To avenge yourself, you need to instill fear and despair before they close their eyes. Only then will your inner heart be liberated."

Yin Jingfei and Mo Yunxi quieted down, exchanging glances. They had never seen Ling Qingyu's dark side, though the former had witnessed firsthand how Ling Qingyu dealt with robbers who attempted to harm her.

So she didn't feel terrified, merely surprised at the extent to which Ling Qingyu was willing to go.

In contrast, Mo Yunxi felt as though her worldview had completely flipped regarding her friend. As a doctor, saving lives and respecting life were solemn oaths. Seeing her friend dismiss lives so nonchalantly, despite knowing those lives belonged to evil, Mo Yunxi endured a lump in her heart.

Beside Ling Qingyu, Xiao Yue's lips curved into a meaningful smile. She knew what Ling Qingyu's intent was when she didn't attempt to conceal the slightest thing in front of the sister doctor and sister nurse.

In fact, Xiao Yue understood Ling Qingyu well. The latter had already desired to open up to her close friends. There weren't many who knew her secrets, although this secret was something she had originally wanted to reveal. From countering the airport attack to stepping into a more powerful realm, Mo Yunxi and Yin Jingfei deserved to know more.

"You know, Sofia. All the powerful events shaking the political and business circles in Country K and J, where many got killed—doesn't it seem strange that they died due to accidents, especially wealthy and influential figures?" Ling Qingyu uttered a low, evil chuckle on purpose. "Of course, they deserved their fate. At least many despairing souls can rest in peace."

"Ma'am, don't tell me you're behind all this," Sofia stuttered.

She had been paying attention to the news and wondered about the oddness in the turn of events, as if someone were orchestrating a string-puppet show.

Once having worked under a state apparatus, she knew how much strength and networking Ling Qingyu must have utilized to achieve such destructive goals without pointing fingers back at herself. The more she thought about it, the more Sofia was frightened by Ling Qingyu's powerful reach.

"What are you talking about, Sofia? I'm just a businesswoman seeking profits for my family. I'm not that cruel," Ling Qingyu replied.

Chapter 748: Low-key for once

Nonetheless, Ling Qingyu's answer was a direct acknowledgement to Sofia and everyone else inside the vehicle.

Very few saw the dark side of Ling Qingyu at the moment. If Mo Yunxi and Yin Jingfei accepted her, Ling Qingyu figured this trip was worth it—spending time together and facing dangerous moments side by side.

Of course, the danger was questionable with Spirit Fox protecting her, but hadn't the aircraft nearly exploded from RPGs and airport attacks, making the journey arduous?

Besides, it wasn't as if Nurse Yin and Doctor Mo hadn't witnessed her cruel side toward enemies. And most of her enemies deserved their final fate.

The rest belonged to the collateral group used by her opponents and standing in her way. For instance, within those Tiger gangs, there might have been people who didn't provoke her and weren't too evil, yet were eliminated because of their affiliation.

Not to mention, they weren't innocent either, as they walked the dark road.

Fortunately, no disagreement appeared from the back. It seemed both women accepted Ling Qingyu's actions. As for inner dissatisfaction or resistance, Ling Qingyu couldn't know for sure.

Turning her neck around, Ling Qingyu asked, "Do you think what I did was wrong?"

"Of course not." Mo Yunxi, while busy with her ringing tone, replied with a complicated expression. "I knew you weren't simple since day one, and I trust my judgment. Always have and always will."

"Likewise, we believe you, Sister Ling," Yin Jingfei added, reaching out her fingers to squeeze Ling Qingyu's taut muscles on her shoulders, causing the latter to beam with a smile.

"Thank you for your trust. I won't disappoint you. Never will."

Mo Yunxi heaved a sigh of relief. She had initially felt some reluctance, fearing Ling Qingyu would become another monster after working too deeply to climb the ladder. She didn't want her friend to go astray and thought that perhaps close friendship might forge a sharper will, making Ling Qingyu incorruptible in the future.

The least she could contribute was not to turn her head away when Ling Qingyu needed her. Meanwhile, Yin Jingfei didn't think too much.

Sister Ling had saved her life and helped her greatly, from her siblings to even study opportunities—everything was difficult to repay with gratitude alone.

And Sister Ling possessed a necessary benevolence that overshadowed the ruthlessness she displayed in words. Maybe Yin Jingfei didn't know much, but she felt as though she had fallen for Ling Qingyu—gender didn't matter in her eyes.

The only blockade originated from the difference in status. Despite her prior refusal to go together with Mo Yunxi, Yin Jingfei was delighted that she would be able to help Ling Qingyu more in the future.

With like-minded confidantes increasing in her arms, Ling Qingyu's mood lifted. The disturbing heavy traffic and the slow grind of engines and rolling wheels ceased to annoy her.

Mo Yunxi received a callback from her professor and chattered excitedly, already telling the academics that they were meeting tonight. Her liveliness returned at the end of the call, bragging her professors' prowess in the research, to which, Ling Qingyu responded with absent mind because she had no idea.

The group conversed more, and the previous silence warmed up. Time passed quickly, and an hour and a half later, the convoy broke away from the traffic jam, heading toward the hotel booked beforehand.

...

A sedan had just parked when the security guard came running out before the passengers inside could exit. With an apologetic face, the guard said, "We're terribly sorry, guests. There are no rooms available."

"What? How could that be?" the man exclaimed.

The family of three exchanged glances. The woman in the shotgun seat scratched her cheek near the hairline. "I don't see any cars parked here. It's impossible for the entire hotel to be occupied, right?"

"I'm sorry, milady. The situation is exactly as you've described—the rooms are full," the guard bowed slightly, displaying politeness.

"Darling, what do we do?" the woman asked her husband, glancing at their young, sleepy daughter. "It's already getting dark."

"Well, not too dark that I can't find another one. There should be many elsewhere. I was just looking for a luxurious one for our trip. We'll manage. Don't worry."

"Oh dear," the woman groaned in protest. "But we aren't locals. Who knows what other places might bring?"

"Mummy, Daddy, are we going to be homeless?" their daughter asked in puzzlement, her adorable eyes curiously seeking confirmation, a small worry flashing within them.

"..."

"Oh, sweetie," the mother shook her head and sent a message to her husband. Both knew they had to exclude such topics to avoid stressing their child.

She had learned from her classmates about the fate of homeless people and the continuous troubles, difficult to escape from the cycle.

The reason the family was reluctant to leave, even though they knew no one was staying at the moment and the rooms had been booked, was that the current hotel satisfied all their requirements—luxury, service, a safe neighborhood, and access to nearby centers.

The guard stood helplessly, a vein on his forehead throbbing nonstop at the pitiful scene before his eyes.

If not for politeness and the hotel's image, he really wanted to shove the family away. Why keep dillydallying and acting hesitant?

Of course, he understood their plight, but the hotel also needed to serve its customers—clearing away any issues before the VIP arrived.

Soon, engines growled, and a large convoy flooded in. Black reflective SUVs and vans drove into the parking area.

A sense of menace rolled into their eyes. Even the guard froze, terrified that harm was coming to the hotel. Similarly, the husband almost ignited the engine and pressed the gas.

Fortunately, these fears died down when a large number of women stepped out of the vehicles—beautiful women.

The guard straightened up, and his colleagues also came out through the entrance doors to welcome the new guests.

Indeed, the group of newcomers belonged to Ling Qingyu's entourage. Athena had booked the entire hotel, which was why this family touring from outside the city encountered trouble.

Not that it mattered to Ling Qingyu and her girls. But Athena, having monitored the trip beforehand, reported to Ling Qingyu the difficulties the poor family had experienced.

Everyone headed to their rooms, and Spirit Fox prepared "defenses," with Athena taking over the monitoring of several surrounding blocks.

Every pair of operators occupied a room. The stewardesses and pilots were given their own rooms as well.

Fortunately, all of them were female, so there would be no mess regarding riding over one another—literally, Ling Qingyu thought, though she soon realized that the same gender didn't solve such issues entirely either, but at least it minimized the probability.

As for the pitiful family, Ling Qingyu listened to Athena describing their identities and discovered that their trip plan lasted merely two nights and that they would leave soon.

Hence, she asked the receptionist to allocate a room for the family and reminded herself that she was doing a good deed. The hotel currently belonged to her and it didn't cost much to arrange a single room.

She had occupied the entire hotel for privacy and ease of conduct for her girls, without worries. Plus, she was deeply concerned about her own and her loved ones' safety, even if she knew the city's crime rate wasn't outrageously high.

However, the probability of the worst occurring was far higher here than in most parts of the world, with guns readily available.

Sure, the state controlled firearms through permits, but no official patrons stood firmly against corruption. And the underworld operated differently, exploiting loopholes.

Besides, her girls could arm themselves without regard for the law through Athena with ease. If not for her daughter's presence monitoring the surroundings and Elena's close support, Ling Qingyu's confidence might have dropped—especially since she seemed to have offended someone high up the pyramid by coincidence not long ago.

In addition, the talismans and "armored" clothing raised security to another level—a protective shield that barred threats that couldn't be otherwise resolved.

Regardless, a quick trip to the university still had to be made, as Mo Yunxi had already informed her mentor of their whereabouts.

The sky had already darkened, and it wouldn't be polite to meet elders at a later time. This hotel had also been chosen to suit the purpose of staying close to the university where her confidantes would study.

Very close, in fact—just a short ride away.

Ling Qingyu left Xiao Yue behind to rest and command her girls. She only took three SUVs with her.

Too much presence might create a poor first impression for Mo Yunxi and Yin Jingfei, contrary to her desire.

And her girls needed time to gather intelligence and prepare for the days ahead. Not that she needed it, but Spirit Fox was keen on meticulousness.

The campus came into view, and the nightlife was quite active. It appeared that the professors were still available at this hour inside the university.

Her small convoy still drew attention as they rolled toward the particular department's location.

Chapter 749: Dinner

When the vehicles halted, Mo Yunxi couldn't wait to get out. Yin Jingfei was pulled out by her hand.

Ling Qingyu chuckled at the youthful display, completely in contrast to the mature, stoic doctor's image she had always taken note of.

Perhaps she liked the academicians she intended to work with and study alongside. Or perhaps they felt like kin, working toward the same goals.

After all, one mustn't forget Mo Yunxi was a doctor whose heart leaned toward a breakthrough in health science.

Although Ling Qingyu hadn't heard Mo Yunxi speak of her dreams, she could make some guesses based on how strongly she had reacted to the Medical Island facilities before.

Regardless, Ling Qingyu was relieved about Doctor Mo's professors, as Athena had completely investigated them inside and out, even analyzing behavioral patterns to discern any dangerous hidden traits.

There were no rumors or signs of boundary violations by them. They sincerely desired to achieve success and leave a name in the records.

Except their children showed slight traits of naughtiness. For instance, the sons and daughters played around with opposite sexes and the debauchery behavior rendered the elders helpless.

Nonetheless, at least, they created no further burdens on the parents, allowing the latter to focus on research.

She also read the files of the research they were conducting—hacked by Athena—and couldn't figure out their aims until her daughter explained them seamlessly to her.

Now, she had forgotten again, but at least she knew the group researched cancer treatment, directly impacting issues at the cellular level.

Athena swore she could achieve complete success through nanotechnology once allowed to test on a real-world stage. According to simulation data, there was a 90 percent accuracy rate compared to real-life replicas if tried on humans.

Ninety percent was actually an understatement. Ling Qingyu knew Athena withheld the other 10 percent to downplay arrogance and account for unexpected events.

Nonetheless, Ling Qingyu wasn't too keen on clinical trials or adventures in the medical sector, especially treatments that had relied on huge numbers of drugs in the past, because she would be making enemies of thriving conglomerates.

She never held the morals of capitalists in high regard when interests were at stake. Achieving success and becoming famous weren't her norms, nor was charity—though the latter still had to align with her interests.

Of course, the main reason she backed off was that she felt she wasn't ready to face the titans yet. Even though she believed her cohorts and wealth could provide flawless defense against any attacks, she didn't fancy suffering seamless suffocation at the hands of her opponents.

Until she possessed the means to extract direct mineral resources and ingredients, she still had to bow under the eaves, especially since those above already owned the materials and jointly played monopoly.

Despite the conglomerates sharing different agendas, once actions that disrupted their economic chains appeared, only ruthless suppression awaited.

Similar to the oil venture, any new innovations aimed at utilizing alternative energies efficiently were nipped in the bud, even resorting to murder.

Ling Qingyu placated her daughter's aspirations and reminded her to stay low for now. It was only a matter of time before Athena would emerge. She should follow the trend and establish a solid foundation, forming thorough links between numerous chains to ensure nothing could cut off her resources in the future.

However, these matters were for the future, and Ling Qingyu currently had to step out to meet the professors who were chatting happily with Mo Yunxi.

It seemed the doctor was introducing Nurse Yin to the professors, as she had pulled some strings to incorporate Yin Jingfei as her fellow research student—a minimal polite gesture.

When Ling Qingyu exited the vehicles, eyes turned toward her for a brief moment. Mo Yunxi called out, "Qingyu, come forward please. Professors, let me introduce my close friend."

Only friend? I'm so sad, Ling Qingyu mused silently.

"Good evening, Professors," Ling Qingyu introduced herself. "I'm Ling Qingyu. It's an honor to speak with you. I hold great respect for all researchers."

"Good evening to you as well, Ms. Ling. We've heard so much about you," the professors responded one by one.

Ling Qingyu prodded her eyebrows at Mo Yunxi and wondered whether the words were genuine or merely polite. "I hope our Sister Yunxi doesn't speak ill of me."

"You jest, Ms. Ling. I can see how close your friendship is," the eldest member said.

The professors were already aware, from Mo Yunxi's wording when she informed them of Ling Qingyu's presence and the bodyguards nearby, that Ling Qingyu possessed more than a simple identity.

Furthermore, from the beginning of the conversation, Ms. Ling displayed impeccable etiquette and high-level interpersonal skills. If not for the certainty that there were no royalties among Country C nationalities—or among those they knew in their circles—it would have been easy to mistake her for a princess from an aristocratic family.

Was Ling Qingyu part of the great political family? She displayed traits more than a wealthy background. Glancing shortly at Mo Yunxi, the professors raised their brows unconsciously, not expecting their new mentorship to bring surprises.

In fact, it wasn't wrong for them to think so. Considering Ling Qingyu's daily exchanges with influential parties and the circles she regularly dealt with, she carried an unspoken pressure.

To those close and familiar with her, it felt like nothing, but to strangers—especially those seeking benefits—the air felt heavier, almost suffocating.

Ling Qingyu might behave friendly and childlike, easily overshadowing her inner ruthlessness, but one mustn't forget her roots.

Mother Amorette and Aunt Denise were not simple characters. They also originated from powerful backgrounds. Such traits would pass on, whether intentionally or unconsciously, through daily interactions. Moreover, they had trained her at the very least.

Impeccable social skills came as easily as breathing to Ling Qingyu. Thus, from the professors' perspectives—accustomed to interacting with so-called "high-class" pretentious individuals—Ling Qingyu appeared even more intimidating without the slightest hint of arrogance, like an amiable youngling conversing with elders.

However, they still detected her inner pride and sensed that her courteous politeness stemmed from their familiarity with Mo Yunxi. Otherwise, she might not even put them in her eyes at all.

Well, they were right and wrong at the same time, because Ling Qingyu respected talent, but it wasn't of the utmost importance, as she had the means and support to back her confidence.

While both sides judged each other's inner depth, they exchanged pleasant flatteries. Ling Qingyu discerned that the professors weren't dissatisfied with the addition of Yin Jingfei to the team.

Yes, there were a few student figures alongside them, communicating with Doctor Mo to warm up the relationship. Fortunately, Yin Jingfei showed no discomfort and mingled well.

Next, the group decided to dine together and began choosing a suitable restaurant when Ling Qingyu cut in to invite everyone to a meal back at the hotel. By all accounts, the location was the best fit to match the services.

The convoy returned to the hotel with additional vehicles. Under Ling Qingyu's arrangement—Athena informing Xiao Yue to prepare—everything was ready when they arrived.

Praising the hotel's meticulousness, the members took their seats, while Ling Qingyu asked the head professor responsible for the entire department, "May I have a word with you, Professor?"

"Naturally, Ms. Ling. I'm all ears."

The two separated from the crowd and walked some distance away. Mo Yunxi noticed Ling Qingyu's actions and questioned her with a glance.

Ling Qingyu smiled back noncommittally.

"Ms. Ling, I suppose it's private enough to speak honestly," the professor said, looking around.

"I hope I don't cause any annoyance," Ling Qingyu paused. "I had been indecisive until I met you all and felt assured leaving Sister Yunxi and Sister Jingfei in your hands."

"How could you doubt our community? Rest assured, we are all focused on our research goals and have no time to dally with drama. I don't know about other departments, but I can swear in my name for mine."

"No offense, Professor."

"None taken, Ms. Ling. I'm sure you didn't bring me here just to talk about this, did you?"

"As expected, I can't hide anything from you," Ling Qingyu replied, playing along with a flattering tone. "I hope that bringing in another sister of mine won't raise any opposition within your department."

"You're worried about this? What's her name, Yin?"

"Yes, she's the nurse who works at the same hospital as Doctor Mo."

"If you're worried about her, there's no need. I can vouch for it. The proposal and data Doctor Mo brings to the table are already a favor to us in our endeavors. This helps us skip many steps. What's a small favor compared to the greater road ahead? Besides, she's also a medical practitioner and also part of our circle. Who knows she might contribute outstanding results with an idea from another angle?"

"If that's the case, I'm relieved," Ling Qingyu replied, patting her chest.

"Anything else, Ms. Ling?"

"Well, I need your approval."

The professor grew serious at her words. "Care to elaborate?"

"I want to donate 100 million to your department."

"What?!"

Chapter 750: A favor. Not a deal

"What?!"

Ling Qingyu made a shh gesture and looked around. The professor unconsciously mimicked her behavior.

Sure enough, staff and others were looking at both of them, though many weren't Ling Qingyu's concern.

"Are you telling the truth?" the professor asked in a soft tone.

He wasn't sure why he lowered his voice either, but there must have been a reason Ling Qingyu spoke only with him.

"Of course. I'm not going back on my words. One hundred million," Ling Qingyu confirmed.

"That's a huge sum and very generous of you to do so."

"It's a small amount to contribute to medical research."

"That's very uncanny of you to say," the professor chuckled nervously. "A million? USD?"

"Yep, one hundred million USD," Ling Qingyu nodded.

Based on Athena's daily earnings, her other industries' income, as well as the ample sums in her bank account, a hundred million wasn't much, even in dollars.

"I really can't figure out what words to use to express my gratitude. Your donation will help a lot of people."

"Just a favor will do."

"Naturally, that's the minimum request our donor can make." The professor didn't doubt at all that Ling Qingyu was cutting a big slice.

Ling Qingyu's presentations and her subordinates' appearances had already compiled a mysterious capitalist image in his mind.

"I hope my sisters are treated well and with respect. I don't like to hear any smearings against them—not even the slightest—especially within your department."

"Ai-ya, Ms. Ling. Your wish is actually redundant. Who would dare smear the girls under my watch? They're like my daughters at my age. I'm very protective of our own."

"I'm relieved to hear your assurance," Ling Qingyu replied noncommittally. Though she acknowledged that most seniors showed care for their juniors, there still existed a term called most.

She wasn't going to trust someone based solely on words, even if she knew they might be true. But giving the professor the benefit of the doubt didn't cost much.

Who knew for certain whether the professors intended to treat her confidantes as juniors with care? Anyway, with money, Ling Qingyu easily obtained double assurance, guaranteed by direct force—her girls.

They were what Ling Qingyu relied on all those times, in addition to her lovely daughter.

Only she could bully her girls.

"Excuse me, Ms. Ling, is something bothering you?" the professor asked with suspicion.

"Sorry, I'm figuring out my words." Ling Qingyu cleared her throat and responded. Her experience and skills were upgraded to the max; she no longer required her innate thick skin to cover up lies.

"It's alright. I understand, and sometimes envy them for being your friend," the professor said.

"Sisters rather than friends," Ling Qingyu corrected.

"Oh, forgive my face blindness. I didn't know you were related. I thought Eastern culture placed the surname first."

"You're correct, Professor. But bloodline doesn't equate to a close relationship," Ling Qingyu mumbled.

"I understand." The professor's expression turned hesitant. "Is that all your demands, Ms. Ling? I'd feel uneasy if you don't list everything."

In fact, Ling Qingyu hadn't put much thought into it when she spent a hundred million dollars.

In her eyes, real wealth was something immeasurable—something everyone possessed but couldn't apply properly, lacking guidance, connections, and opportunity.

In response to the professor's uneasiness, Ling Qingyu developed a headache, calculating appropriate demands that wouldn't affect Mo Yunxi's and Yin Jingfei's reputation and welfare while they studied.

"Then, I'll be impolite," Ling Qingyu said after a short pause. "I hope your department and personnel will provide guidance and data for the future of humanity's health development to the affiliated group under mine."

"It's an unspoken obligation to fulfill the best for our donor," the professor nodded, accepting the small terms.

After all, Ling Qingyu didn't resort to demanding complete ownership of the research results, and whether the research would succeed remained unanswered.

By comparison, the professor felt his team was profiting from Ling Qingyu's generosity, and he had to trust his intuition that Ms. Ling truly didn't care about their research at all.

Nonetheless, he earned a lot tonight—securing a future colleague and financial support to sustain the research long-term.

"Worry not, Professor," Ling Qingyu said. "I assure you, the organization that might require your help in the future belongs to the medicinal institution. I assume you've heard of the infamous Medicine Island."

The professor couldn't believe what he heard. The famous island—the epitome of the medicinal institution—where top research was conducted with ample funding.

Though the institution served the wealthy elite circle, the achievements and inspiration it had brought to civilization were uncountable.

Not to mention its contributions to society from broader perspectives, leading technological advances and saving lives.

Such an institution was owned by the lady before his eyes? He must have misheard.

Ling Qingyu listed a few research topics and intrigued the old professor. The flattery turned into academic exchange.

Fortunately, the professor understood Ling Qingyu's specialty and didn't cause any embarrassment.

Even if he did so unconsciously, Ling Qingyu wasn't petty enough to hold grudges. She always accepted and acknowledged her weaknesses and strengths.

Extinct Tiger Gang: Are you sure?

Annihilated Businesses: If only that were true

"Of course, there is an important catch," Ling Qingyu remembered her intention. "The two of them mustn't be aware of my actions, not even our conversation."

"That's impossible, right?" The professor nearly scratched his scalp at the strange demand. "Sooner or later, they would find out. And it's not like there's no one who saw us chatting."

"For the donation, it's best not to let them know," Ling Qingyu chuckled. "At least for now. As long as they don't know until I leave the country. Otherwise, I'm not sure my ears can withstand their quibbling."

He hoped they could quibble more and bring in more investment, the professor thought. "That's all?"

Given the amount, Ling Qingyu's demand was far too low. His guilt heightened when he realized the group was taking advantage of this woman.

Not to mention, he had also connected with her and gained the opportunity to communicate further with the famous Medicine Island. The facilities and equipment there would provide immense help if needed.

Even though not many knew of the island's existence, the academic circle—especially in medicine and health—was aware.

"I never make a loss in investment during my business ventures," Ling Qingyu replied with a knowing smile.

However, her behavior caused the professor to doubt his decision and wonder if he had missed anything. In front of a real capitalist with deep calculations, he admitted his powerlessness.

Unaware that someone had gained an extra worry because of her smile, Ling Qingyu returned to the table to join the dinner party.

Mo Yunxi hopped out of her chair, leaned close to her, and murmured an inquiry. "What did you talk about? You didn't harass my professor, did you?"

Ling Qingyu rolled her eyes and replied, "Just a few questions and some hidden news to prepare for my business here."

"Do you think I will believe your words?" Mo Yunxi pressed her palm against Ling Qingyu's shoulder.

"I never lie to my dearest," Ling Qingyu angled her chin and stared the doctor in the eyes.

Mo Yunxi blushed at her directness. The gentle gaze on her pupils somehow caused her heart to race. Strangeness seeped into her soul. After a quick thought, she retorted, "You just left out some information."

Ling Qingyu giggled at the beautiful doctor's reaction and marveled at the wonder. Plus one toward achieving her ultimate goal.

"What are you laughing at?"

"Alright, Ms. Doctor, I assure you—you'll find out soon. It's a secret," Ling Qingyu said, patting Mo Yunxi's wrist.

Doctor Mo glanced at the professor and discovered he was suffering the same treatment as Ling Qingyu.

All she witnessed was a shaking of the head. When both displayed refusal to disclose any information, her curiosity hardened.

Of course, Ling Qingyu noticed the atmosphere and sighed. She hoped that by the time Mo Yunxi found out, she would be busy with other affairs to care.

Perhaps she might even be able to tell the professor that despite the majority of the reason owing to the doctor-and-nurse pair, profit still mattered more—and her final real goal was the data, split thirty percent to her sisters and seventy percent to capital.

On the contrary, she didn't care in the slightest about profits or return on investment at all. Only Mo Yunxi and Yin Jingfei, who had seen through her psychology, would understand her actions.

Dinner time passed quickly. The relationship warmed so much that even Yin Jingfei interacted seamlessly within the group.

As a nurse, her social skills were at their peak. What she lacked merely lay in identity and the possibility of an inferiority complex, so Ling Qingyu provided the strongest backing to nip them in the bud.

Sure enough, the research team showed no dissatisfaction at all toward the additional parachuted member. None of the signs observed by Athena through online monitoring and surveillance prior to arriving in Country A appeared.

Wealth and power—always the ultimate tools.