Divorce Only Makes a Son-in-Law Stronger

Chapter 141, you are not a deserter!

"...I’m keeping her around as a precaution against Su Mengqing."

Seeing their expressions, Lin Fan couldn’t help but smile. Then, his face grew serious as he explained frankly to Yuan Youwei and Mrs. Xue.

"Iguchi Tama must have taken Su Mengqing with him. He plans to prop her up, hoping to continue vying for the high-grade medicinal herb supply in the Southwest provinces."

"No wonder you made an exception and showed Zhang Meili mercy... But Iguchi Tama must be blind. How could he get mixed up with trash like Su Mengqing?"

Yuan Youwei paused, stunned, then exchanged a look with Mrs. Xue. Both seemed somewhat relieved.

"Mrs. Xue, send some people to keep an eye on the cemetery. We can’t let Zhang Meili get away."

"Don’t worry, Miss. We own shares in the company that manages the cemetery. I just need to say the word, and our people can have the Tomb Guardian watch her."

Mrs. Xue nodded at the rearview mirror as she started the car.

"If Zhang Meili dares to slack off or play any tricks, I’ll have someone teach her a harsh lesson!"

"She probably won’t run," Lin Fan said, shaking his head. "Su Gang is going to prison, Stubborn Su Gang is off in the Sha Country, and Su Mengqing couldn’t care less about her, having already run off with Iguchi Tama. Moreover, the Su Family looks down on Zhang Meili, and the situation with her maternal family is likely the same. Otherwise, she wouldn’t have ended up on the streets, looking like a madwoman to everyone else."

"We should still have someone watch her. That woman is unpredictable; her mood changes faster than you can flip a page," Yuan Youwei insisted, hesitating for a moment as she recalled the first time she had seen Zhang Meili’s true colors in the clinic’s memorial hall.

"Alright, handle it as you see fit," Lin Fan replied casually, turning his head to gaze out the window in the direction of the Imperial Capital.

For some reason, he had a mysterious feeling that many pairs of eyes were watching Haicheng from afar.

"Go home and get some rest. You're going to be very busy for the next two days."

A short while later, the black Bentley came to a slow stop outside a small alley in the Southern City. As Yuan Youwei got out of the car, her beautiful eyes clearly showed a hint of reluctance to part.

Lin Fan was silent for a moment before steeling himself. He turned his back on her and walked alone toward the clinic in the alley.

"Don't let your imagination run wild. You know I'm not... quite ready yet."

"Hah! Who's letting their imagination run wild? Hmph, you make it sound like I'm desperate!"

Yuan Youwei's delicate body trembled, her beautiful face flushing crimson as she gnashed her teeth at Lin Fan's retreating figure.

"Miss, what did he mean by that? He doesn't get a period, so what's there to be inconvenient about?" Mrs. Xue asked from the car, a look of complete confusion on her face.

"It's nothing! Ignore that bastard. He's like a hedgehog covered in spikes!" Yuan Youwei snapped, annoyed. But then, the thought of Lin Fan's miserable condition made her lips curl into a wry, helpless smile.

ROAR.

The black Bentley's engine fired up once more, its sound fading into the distance.

「At the entrance of the clinic.」

Lin Fan pulled his gaze away from the alley's entrance, his expression darkening slightly. Who on earth planted the Seven-Core Deadly Lotus in me... You'd better hope I never find out who you are.

He took out his key, unlocked the door, and went inside, planning to wash up. He immediately tossed the trousers Zhang Meili had dirtied into the washing machine.

"You've been standing there for a while. Come on in if you have something to say," Lin Fan said coolly, glancing toward the doorway amidst the WHIRRING of the machine.

One second, two seconds, three... After more than twenty seconds, a tall, imposing figure emerged from a dark corner, his head hanging low. It was Wang Meng, wearing a jacket over the white bandages wrapped around his upper body.

"Yin—"

Wang Meng approached Lin Fan and dropped to one knee, but he had barely uttered a single word before Lin Fan raised a hand to stop him.

"I'll say it again. My name is Lin Fan. You have the wrong person." Lin Fan frowned, gesturing toward the door with his chin. "If you insist on thinking I'm him, then there's nothing more to say. You can leave."

"I came here specifically to explain! I, Wang Meng, am not a deserter!" Wang Meng suddenly lifted his bloodshot eyes, which burned with grief and indignation.

"It doesn't matter if you're him or not, I have to set the record straight! Back when the Hulin Guard changed commanders and Shen Changlong was appointed Great Commander, the truth is, none of the brothers respected him!

"And just as we expected, ever since that old bastard Shen Changlong took over, he's been suppressing the old commander's trusted confidants and replacing them with his own men.

"Worst of all, he promoted Ying Rufeng—who was only in his twenties and had zero military achievements—all the way to the position of Deputy Great Commander!

"Which of us didn't know that Ying Rufeng had no real ability? He only soared through the ranks because Shen Changlong is his maternal grandfather!"

As he spoke, a look of intense bitterness and pain crossed Wang Meng's face. His fists, hanging at his sides, clenched with an audible CRACK.

"In later operations, many of our comrades were sacrificed needlessly due to Ying Rufeng's incompetent command! I couldn't bear to see my brothers get killed by that damn bastard, so I defied his orders, led my men in a retreat, and became a so-called 'deserter'!"

After saying his piece in one breath, Wang Meng lowered his head deeply again, a humiliating tear welling up in his crimson, tiger-like eyes.

"Disobeying an order is still disobeying an order. You violated a soldier's sacred duty to obey. But..." Lin Fan shook his head silently, his expression growing complicated. "...for them to pin all the blame for the failed battle on you, Wang Meng, that's certainly going too far."

I never would have thought that command of the three-hundred-thousand-strong Hulin Guard would end up in the hands of the Imperial Capital's Shen family. And my half-brother, Ying Rufeng, he certainly climbed the ladder quickly thanks to his connections. So young, and yet he's already showing shades of who I once was... Utterly ridiculous!

It's not as if Ying Rufeng is from the main bloodline. He's the bastard son born from an affair between Ying Wenyuan and the married Shen Yueli, shortly after Ying Wenyuan married my mother, Lin Suxin! Later, after Shen Yueli's husband died, she brought a teenage Ying Rufeng to the Ying family and forced Ying Wenyuan to divorce my mother and marry her instead. With the firm backing of Mrs. Ying Sr., even though my mother was unwilling to leave, Ying Wenyuan ruthlessly drove her out of the Ying family!

"But I can't accept it! Ying... Director Lin, I... I want to follow you for the rest of my life!"

Wang Meng's deep voice shattered the memories flashing through Lin Fan's mind. The dazed look in his eyes vanished as he reached out and helped Wang Meng to his feet.

"I... I suppose I'm a deserter, too. Aren't you afraid of getting dragged down with me?" A self-mocking smile touched Lin Fan's lips.

He must have recognized me, but what of it? The past is too painful to revisit. The young man named Ying Bufan is gone. The Xia Country government has already declared him a martyr with a state funeral, his fate sealed. He is now just a name on a monument. If he is to appear again, he can only be Lin Fan. A lonely ghost, a wandering soul with no past.

"Afraid of what? Anyone else might be a deserter, but I, Wang Meng, firmly believe that you would never be one!" Wang Meng grinned, shaking his head with conviction. "You're not a deserter. One day, you will take back everything that belongs to you!"

"...Alright. If you have nowhere else to go, you can stay with me," Lin Fan finally said after a long silence, meeting the other man's intensely excited gaze with a reluctant nod.

"However, your strength isn't sufficient yet. Come back tomorrow morning. I'll clear your meridians and give you two Qi Replenishing Pills."

"Then I'll come back tomorrow morning, hehe!" Wang Meng was stunned for a moment, then overjoyed, nodding eagerly like a chicken pecking at grain.

Qi Replenishing Pills! Back in the Hulin Guard, those were miraculous rewards only granted to soldiers who had earned at least a third-class combat merit! He himself had once earned a third-class merit for his bravery on the battlefield. After taking a single Qi Replenishing Pill, his martial arts strength had soared, advancing from the Mingjin Early Stage all the way to the Great Perfection of the intermediate stage! He had been stuck in Late Ming Jin for years now. If he could have two Qi Replenishing Pills, plus have Lin Fan clear his meridians... he could definitely soar to new heights and might even break through to the long-dreamed-of Hua Realm!

Chapter 142. Busy Man Lin Fan

Mom, I have to return to the Imperial Capital to confront those beasts who drove you to your death...

Watching Wang Meng stride away joyfully, Lin Fan withdrew his gaze and turned to the portrait of his mother on the wall. His thoughts drifted for a moment before his gaze settled with firm resolve. After muttering to himself, he pulled the clothes from the washing machine, wrung them out, and hung them to dry under the eaves.

Next, Lin Fan looked around the clinic and brought out his Alchemical Furnace and other equipment. He retrieved some herbal medicines from the rows of cabinets lining the wall. Nodding in satisfaction, he began refining Qi Replenishing Pills.

Ever since Lin Fan had taken command of the Hulin Guard, the military had produced a steady stream of experts who consistently dominated the martial arts competitions across the various military regions. The greatest factor behind their success was the potent effect of the Qi Replenishing Pill. The old leaders from other military regions were green with envy, nearly fighting tooth and nail to get Lin Fan to hand over the secret formula. They even shamelessly stooped to using honey traps, sending their beautiful granddaughters, one after another, to serve as Lin Fan’s so-called "personal assistants."

Fortunately, the matter alerted the military high command. They made the final decision to classify the Qi Replenishing Pill as a top-level national secret. Lin Fan was given sole control, and any leaks were strictly forbidden. This prevented a farce and forced the other military leaders to grudgingly abandon their schemes.

A moment later, footsteps approached from outside the door. Lin Fan, who was squatting by the entrance with his attention fixed on the furnace fire, asked without looking up, "What are you doing here so late at night?"

"Hehe, Master, I need to ask a favor of you," said the visitor, who was none other than Doctor Jiang, an obsequious grin on his face. He walked over to Lin Fan, squatted down beside him, and stared curiously at the Alchemical Furnace.

"If you have something to say, just say it," Lin Fan said indifferently, glancing at him.

This old fellow is hardly reliable. Back in the convention center lobby, the moment Iguchi Tama released that swarm of Poison Insects, Doctor Jiang proved to be the most cunning of all, bolting out of there unscathed. Now he has the audacity to show up here again. He’s definitely up to no good.

"Master, an old friend of mine invited me to give a public lecture to a class of students," Doctor Jiang said, rubbing his hands together with an embarrassed smile. "I was just

thinking, if I could get *you* to make an appearance, it would absolutely electrify the audience!"

"I don't have time. I have to go to the Imperial Capital in a few days," Lin Fan replied, frowning as he immediately shut down the idea. He couldn't be bothered with such petty, fame-seeking nonsense.

"Hey, don't refuse so quickly! I was invited to speak at the Beijing University of Chinese Medicine in the Imperial Capital. We master and disciple will be on the same route anyway!" Doctor Jiang pleaded, his eyes fixed on Lin Fan.

"The Imperial Capital... Beijing University of Chinese Medicine... Alright. We'll see how my schedule looks. If I can make time, you can contact me then," Lin Fan said, his interest piqued as he reluctantly nodded.

He couldn't help but think of Huang Jiacheng's granddaughter, Huang Xiaoya, who was a student at that very university. This might be a good opportunity to get closer to her without seeming too abrupt.

"Thank you, Master! Rest assured, I'll inform my old friend in the Imperial Capital and also have him help search for news about the Fire Fungus!" Doctor Jiang exclaimed, overjoyed. He quickly stood and bowed deeply to Lin Fan.

In truth, he hadn't been invited to give a lecture. He had made a bet with an old friend to hold a public medicinal debate. Doctor Jiang feared his own skills were insufficient. It would be utterly humiliating to suffer a crushing defeat in front of a crowd of students from the Beijing University of Chinese Medicine. Thus, his first thought was to find Lin Fan and coax him into attending. Fearing rejection, however, he had slightly altered the reason for the trip...

"Master, what wonderful thing are you refining? Could you spare some for me?" Doctor Jiang asked, his eyes filled with anticipation as he stared at the Alchemical Furnace. A rich, herbal fragrance, so potent it seemed to seep into one's very soul, wafted from within.

"Just do your job well. If you can find a clue about the Fire Fungus, you'll get your reward," Lin Fan said, shaking his head as he added two more pieces of charcoal to the fire. "This is specially refined for Martial Artists. Not only would it be useless for you, but you also wouldn't be able to withstand its effects. You could very well explode and die."

"Hiss... In that case, forget it! Hehe. Master, I'll be on my way then. I'll see you in the Imperial Capital!" Doctor Jiang's body trembled. Realizing Lin Fan wasn't bluffing, he shook his head furiously.

"Hey, Old Sun, you just wait and see! I've invited a supreme expert to back me up this time. I'll make you admit defeat!" Doctor Jiang said his cheerful goodbyes, and as soon as

he was out of the alley, he impatiently whipped out his phone. His face lit up with excitement as he dialed the number for Principal Sun of the Beijing University of Chinese Medicine.

"Hehe, Old Jiang, keep on bragging. We'll see how you keep up your bluster after my prized student defeats you," came a gloating, elderly voice from the other end of the line.

"You're no match for me, and your students are even less of a threat," Doctor Jiang retorted, filled with renewed confidence. After trading a few more barbs with his old friend, he drove off, thoroughly satisfied.

...That old fox doesn't seem to be telling the truth.

Meanwhile, at the clinic's entrance, the corner of Lin Fan's mouth twitched as he retracted his gaze from the alley. His hearing was so sharp that even from more than ten meters away, he had heard the gist of what Doctor Jiang said. Shaking his head, he decided not to dwell on it. Seeing that the batch of Qi Replenishing Pills was nearly ready, he removed most of the charcoal and let them simmer over a low heat.

Just then, his phone buzzed. Someone had sent him a private message on the traditional medicine forum app.

"I have a competition in two days. Want to come and have your mind blown?"

The message was from a user with the ID "Little Gray Machine," whose profile listed them as a seventy-plus-year-old male.

"No time. You're just a kid pretending to be an old doctor. How childish," Lin Fan frowned and typed a quick reply. The person's medical knowledge was impressive, but their arrogant tone was clearly that of a young person. They had clashed in debates on the forum many times and were practically sworn enemies.

"Hmph, I know you're poor. I'll cover your round-trip airfare and your accommodations. How about it? Do you dare to meet me?" Little Gray Machine sent a punchably smug smiley emoji.

"...I'm not poor anymore, but I'm still busy. Very busy," Lin Fan replied, the corner of his mouth twitching again as he prepared to close the app.

"Hey, I'm actually a pretty girl, you know. If you don't come, you'll regret it!" Little Gray Machine sent, seemingly unwilling to give up. A photo of a pretty girl in a school uniform immediately followed.

"What century is this? Still using tricks like this... Is that just some random picture you found online?" Lin Fan's face darkened as his fingers flew across the screen. "If I weren't so busy, I'd definitely come and expose your true identity."

"Coward! If you're too scared to come, just admit it. Don't try to act tough with me."

Little Gray Machine was clearly angry now, perhaps stung by Lin Fan's skepticism. After sending three angry emojis, their avatar went gray. It looked like they had logged off in a huff.

...

Lin Fan was left speechless. He silently put his phone down and began to pack the freshly refined Qi Replenishing Pills. This batch wasn't just for Wang Meng. A headache began to form as he thought of Mrs. Xue, whose verbal assaults were far more potent than her physical skills. The dangers he was about to face would only grow more intense. It was time to improve Mrs. Xue's martial arts abilities. Otherwise, how could he confidently trust her to protect Yuan Youwei up close?

How much your strength improves will depend on your own destinies.

After storing the Qi Replenishing Pills and putting everything away, Lin Fan turned his gaze toward the People's Cemetery. He wondered if Zhang Meili had truly kept her promise and was kneeling before his mother's grave.

Chapter 143, encountered a ghost?

"Boo-hoo... None of you want me anymore. You all bully me! You're all heartless bastards! Boo-hoo..."

「Atop Lingyuan Mountain, Haicheng People's Cemetery.」

Zhang Meili sat before Lin Suxin's tombstone, sobbing while taking huge bites of cookies.

She had been scared out of her wits by Lin Fan and had bolted all the way to the mountaintop. At first, she was a little afraid, but the thought that she had already died once gave her a surge of courage. Relying on her memory of the news footage from Lin Suxin's funeral, she finally found the grave under the dim moonlight.

She put on a show of kneeling for about ten minutes until her legs grew sore and swollen, making her complain endlessly. After a look around, Zhang Meili couldn't be bothered to keep up the act. Instead, she slumped against the tombstone, weeping silently. Soon, she was overcome with grief and began to wail. Then, she channeled her sorrow into hunger, nearly polishing off an entire bag of dry rations.

"Why is it so cold? This damned place is just teeming with yin energy..."

As Zhang Meili cried, she eventually fell asleep against the tombstone. She was jolted awake in the latter half of the night by a blast of cold wind. She rubbed her numb knees

and got to her feet. Mustering her courage, she began to wander through the nearby graves, straying farther and farther away. She was completely unaware that, at the foot of Lingyuan Mountain, an inconspicuous gray van had quietly pulled to a stop.

The doors slid open, and two furtive figures scanned their surroundings before cautiously starting up the mountain.

"Fourth Brother, this is it! Give me a hand, let's move the stone lid!"

A moment later, the tall, thin man found Lin Suxin's tombstone. His eyes lit up as he turned and whispered to his companion.

His name was Ah Shou, a trusted confidant cultivated by the Shen family for many years. There were three others, ranked according to the names "Fortune, Prosperity, Longevity, and Happiness." Ever since Shen Yueli married into the Ying family, Shen Changlong had the four of them follow her to take care of all his precious daughter's trivial matters.

Tonight, all four—Fortune, Prosperity, Longevity, and Happiness—were in action. Carrying out the individual tasks assigned by Shen Yueli, they had all flown in from the Imperial Capital by private jet. The eldest, Ah Fu, took several men to find Director Shen, the Medicine King of Yuncheng. The second, Ah Lu, was a woman. She had gone to the provincial capital, planning to use a borrowed blade to deal with the Yuan family. Meanwhile, the third, Ah Shou, and the fourth, Ah Xi, had rushed to Lin Suxin's grave.

Their task was the simplest, yet it was the one Shen Yueli prized the most: to dig up the grave overnight, steal Lin Suxin's ashes, and immediately return with them to the Imperial Capital!

"Third Brother, are you sure? If it's the wrong person with the same name, we won't be able to answer to the young lady!" Ah Xi, the fourth brother, was a short, stout man whose chubby face betrayed his nervousness. He couldn't help but shrink his neck as the night wind howled in the distance.

"It can't be wrong. I've seen Lin Suxin in person, and she looks just like the photo on the tombstone!"

Gritting his teeth, Ah Shou took out the small hammer and shovel he'd brought. He then called to Ah Xi, and together they bent over, struggling to pry open the stone cover at the base of the monument.

CLANG!

After a moment, the stone lid finally loosened, and they pried one corner open. Ah Shou and Ah Xi exchanged a glance before hurriedly lifting the heavy stone cover, revealing the urn inside, which was wrapped in red cloth.

"Are you... robbing a grave?!"

A hoarse, stuffy woman’s voice erupted from behind them.

Ah Shou and Ah Xi froze as if struck by lightning. A moment later, their blood ran cold, and they sucked in a sharp breath of terror.

"Oh my god, a ghost!"

They turned around stiffly. Standing there was a filthy "female ghost" with a bruised face and disheveled hair, holding a pile of grave offerings, along with a few candles and paper ingots!

THUMP! THUMP!

Ah Shou’s body convulsed, the whites of his eyes showing as he fainted from sheer terror. Ah Xi instantly pissed his pants in fright. He let out a scream like a stuck pig and tried to bolt, but in his panic, he ran headfirst into a tombstone and collapsed, unconscious.

"...Even a couple of grave robbers look down on me and mistake me for a ghost... Boo-hoo..." Zhang Meili stood there stunned for a moment before the realization dawned on her, and she was once again overcome by sorrow.

She dropped the candles and paper ingots she was holding. Wiping away her tears, she viciously bit into an apple she had just pilfered from another grave. After gobbling down the scavenged offerings, Zhang Meili finally felt a little less heartbroken.

She let out a burp and pulled out a lighter she’d found in a trash heap. She lit the candles and paper ingots, using the small fire for warmth.

The two grave robbers were still unconscious. Hunching her shoulders against the cold, Zhang Meili gritted her teeth, stripped off their suit jackets, and put them on.

Did I really scare them to death?

Time ticked by, and the candles were about to burn out. Seeing the two men still unconscious, Zhang Meili began to grow uneasy.

They might be grave robbers, but if I scared them to death, I’d still be in trouble!

The eastern sky was already showing the pale light of dawn. If the Tomb Guardian came on his morning patrol and stumbled upon this scene, she would have no way to explain herself.

"Hmph. Look at you two, with your soft, tender skin. I guess this is your lucky day..."

She thought about how long it had been since she'd last touched a man. Zhang Meili's face burned. She acted shy on the outside, but inwardly, she felt a small, strange thrill of excitement. She had already checked; they were merely unconscious but still breathing.

But... giving them mouth-to-mouth resuscitation would be a good deed, right?

The moment the thought occurred to her, Zhang Meili couldn't sit still. She glanced from side to side and finally decided to "save" the younger one, Ah Xi, first. Her thick, sausage-like lips slowly puckered and moved closer and closer to Ah Xi's face.

Just then, Ah Xi's eyelids fluttered, and his eyes drifted open. For a split second, their gazes met. Both of them jolted in shock.

"Help! Help me! The ghost is going to eat me!" Ah Xi's scalp tingled with terror, his vision filled with nothing but the gaping maw lunging toward him.

"What are you screaming about? I haven't even given you mouth-to-mouth yet, and you have to wake up on your own?" Zhang Meili's chubby face fell in displeasure. Ignoring Ah Xi's protests, she pinned him down and ferociously pressed her mouth against his!

"MMPH! MMPH!"

Ah Xi's eyes flew wide open. Then his head lolled to the side, and he passed out again. It was hard to say if he'd fainted from fright or if her breath had simply knocked him unconscious.

"Hmph, you get lucky and still play coy. My mouth-to-mouth resuscitation isn't something just anyone gets to enjoy."

After "saving" him to her heart's content, Zhang Meili finally stopped. Her gaze then fell upon Ah Shou, whose eyelids were twitching frantically, his back drenched in a cold sweat.

"You're a bit older, but you're not too bad-looking. I'm feeling merciful today, so consider it your lucky day, old man."

She suspected he was already awake, but the itch was unbearable. She still wanted to "save" him.

"Merciful Bodhisattva, spare me! Please, spare my life!"

THUMP!

Hearing her words, Ah Shou, who had been feigning unconsciousness, couldn't take it anymore. He scrambled to his knees and began kowtowing frantically to Zhang Meili.

It was no joke. If she actually kissed him, he'd be waking up from nightmares for the rest of his life.

Chapter 144, Deadly Artificial Respiration!

"No, I can see you're not in your right mind. You're in desperate need of my mouth-to-mouth resuscitation!"

Zhang Meili was stunned for a moment, but when she saw his horrified reaction, her embarrassment flared into a rage. She shook her head, dismissing his unspoken refusal.

It wasn't easy to have two men deliver themselves right to my doorstep. If I don't satisfy my cravings, how can I justify running to Lin Suxin's grave in the middle of the night to kneel in vigil? This must be compensation from the heavens, taking pity on me, Zhang Meili!

"No, don't! Please, spare me! From now on, I'll become a devout vegetarian and chant scriptures every day. I swear I won't do anything shady or immoral ever again!" Ah Shou stammered, trembling so badly he retreated on his knees and burst into tears.

It wasn't that he didn't want to resist. But one look at Zhang Meili's two-hundred-plus-pound frame told him he stood no chance. Furthermore, her behavior was bizarre. She had appeared out of nowhere on this cemetery hilltop, was shamelessly eating the offerings, and had even gathered a pile of joss paper and candles. Her appearance, her actions... she was scarier than a ghost!

"Right. Why did you two come here in the middle of the night to dig up my Sister Suxin's grave?" Seeing them pale-faced and stripped of all manliness, Zhang Meili's interest began to wane. She questioned them, her voice sharp with dissatisfaction.

"We... we were just bored and broke, so we thought we'd try our luck... Please, just let us brothers go! We promise we'll never dare to come back!" Ah Shou's scalp prickled with fear. He stuttered through his words, each second stretching into an eternity. He glanced down and saw that both he and his brother had been stripped to their underwear. A wave of dizziness washed over him, and his heart plunged into an icy abyss.

Damn it! Who could have imagined that we, two of the four great stewards of the Ying family who call the shots, would one day be forcefully violated by a madwoman? This is an outrage against gods and men, an utter atrocity!

"Hmph, I think you're trying to fool a ghost! There are countless graves here. Why did you two specifically choose to dig up Lin Suxin's?" Zhang Meili's small eyes darted about before she stuck out her tongue to lick her dry lips. "If you don't start telling the truth, this old lady is going to get rough!"

"Don’t, don’t come any closer! I’ll talk, I’ll tell you everything!" Ah Shou completely broke down, tears streaming down his face.

It’s true what they say... do enough bad deeds, and you’re sure to face retribution.

"Actually, we were sent by someone to retrieve Lin Suxin’s ashes!"

"Retrieve? Hmph, what a nice way of putting it. You mean dig them up to threaten—Lin Fan?" Zhang Meili wasn’t stupid; she immediately grasped part of the truth. Her heart skipped a beat, and her eyes began to light up.

If I can force them to reveal their true intentions and tell Lin Fan, wouldn’t that be a great accomplishment? No, that’s not right. It would be better to join them and, in turn, force Lin Fan to hand over everything he took from the Su Family!

"Are you going to tell the truth or not? My patience is limited!" Zhang Meili’s plump face darkened as she pressured the trembling Ah Shou.

"I’ve already told you everything! What else do you want to know?" Ah Shou hung his head, filled with anger and indignation. "We... we’re from the Imperial Capital! The powerful figure behind us... you can’t afford to provoke them!"

"Hmph, so what if you’re from the Imperial Capital? Are the men from there somehow tastier?" Zhang Meili was also growing agitated. The sky was gradually lightening. If she delayed any longer, her chance would be gone.

THUD!

Relying on her large, sturdy frame, she lunged forward and knocked Ah Shou flat on his back. Then, she administered a lethal "mouth-to-mouth resuscitation."

"Ahhh... no, no! Get away from me, get away!" Ah Shou nearly went mad. Suffocated by Zhang Meili’s foul breath, his eyes rolled back in his head. He writhed like a maggot pinned under a heavy weight, struggling desperately. But with over two hundred pounds crushing him, escape was impossible.

One second... two seconds... three seconds... Ah Shou’s limbs spasmed and then went rigid. He turned his head away as two streams of bitter tears ran down his face.

It’s over. I’m defiled. In this godforsaken hellhole, I’ve been violated by a madwoman!

"Are you crying? Hmph, you just took advantage of me. You must be thrilled, right?" Zhang Meili climbed to her feet, looking deeply satisfied and chuckling contentedly. "Now spit it out. Where exactly are you taking Lin Suxin’s ashes?"

"Just kill me... I don’t want to live anymore, I don’t want to live..." Ah Shou sobbed, his face a mask of agony. He curled into a ball, clutching his chest, looking utterly helpless and desperate.

"Heh, I see you’re still not quite satisfied. In that case, I guess I’ll have to go again!" A gleam appeared in Zhang Meili’s eyes and her lustful thoughts ran wild as she leaned in once more toward the trembling Ah Shou. She was so focused that she failed to notice Ah Xi, the Fourth Brother, slowly regaining consciousness behind her.

BANG!

The next moment, before Zhang Meili could make her move, Ah Xi gritted his teeth, lifted a heavy stone lid from nearby, and smashed it hard against the back of her head.

THUMP!

The smile on Zhang Meili’s face froze. She swayed on her feet for a moment before collapsing heavily on top of Ah Shou.

"Third Brother! Third Brother, are you alright?" Ah Xi gasped for breath as he struggled to push the unconscious Zhang Meili aside. He helped Ah Shou, whose face was a mask of utter despair, to his feet.

Their eyes met, and the two brothers burst into tears, hugging each other and weeping bitterly.

Who could have imagined that the seemingly simplest, easiest mission would turn out to be so perilous and cost them such a great price!

Recalling Zhang Meili’s foul, stinking mouth, the brothers’ faces paled. They broke apart, turning away as they were overcome by waves of nausea, retching uncontrollably.

"...Don’t say another word," Ah Shou said, wiping away his bitter tears. "Not a single word about what happened tonight is to be mentioned to anyone!" He angrily lifted his foot to kick Zhang Meili but stopped abruptly, his foot hovering in the air. He was terrified that the kick might wake her, which would be far worse.

"Let’s go. Grab Lin Suxin’s ashes and hurry back to the Imperial Capital to report!" Ah Shou clenched his fists in grief and rage. Without a second glance at Zhang Meili, he snatched the urn from the small pit inside the open grave. "Forget the clothes. Let’s get out of here, quick, before this madwoman wakes up!"

After fishing their wallets and car keys out of their discarded suit jackets, the two brothers hastily put everything back as they had found it. Cursing under their breath, they sprinted down the mountain.

VROOM!

The gray van roared to life and then sped away as if fleeing from hell itself.

Atop Lingyuan Mountain, Zhang Meili was left alone. A moment later, she groaned, clutching the back of her head as her small eyes slowly fluttered open.

They were gone. The two living, breathing men had disappeared.

She propped herself up, her gaze hollow and dazed.

It all felt like a dream... but the suit jacket I'm still wearing proves it all really happened!

"It's over! They must have stolen Lin Suxin's ashes!"

The next moment, her gaze fell upon the disturbed base of the tombstone. Her pupils contracted violently, and panic seized her.

If Lin Fan finds out that I didn't notify him immediately, that I got sidetracked by my own selfish desires... I have to run! It's still dark, and no one has noticed. I have to get out of here! Yes, that's it... I'll head to Haicheng International Terminal. I'll find a ship heading to Sha Country and go settle the score with that old bastard Stubborn Su Gang!

With that thought, Zhang Meili scrambled to her feet, patting the dirt off her rear. She, too, took off at a full sprint, fleeing the public cemetery on Lingyuan Mountain and heading toward Haicheng International Terminal.

Chapter 145. Start to layout

"Second Sister, we've taken care of everything on our end, so we won't wait for you and Eldest Brother. We'll head back and report to the Young Lady first!"

「At this moment, in the southwestern provincial capital.」

Outside the gate of a high-end residential complex, a thin-faced woman inside a brand new black Audi glanced at a message that had just arrived on her phone and nodded in satisfaction.

"Sister Ah Lu, my cousin, Yuan Lang, lives in Unit 2, apartment 305," a glamorous young woman in the passenger seat said, turning her head with a beaming smile. She was Yuan Xiangjun, the eldest daughter of the main branch of the Haicheng Yuan Family and Yuan Youwei's older sister. Previously, she had frequently clashed with her family, jealous of the Old Master's favoritism toward her younger sister.

Eventually, they had a complete falling out. Against the Old Master's objections, she insisted on marrying Han Yiming, the second son of the Han family from the provincial capital. Who would have thought that after their marriage, she'd discover Han Yiming was consumed by every vice? Eating, drinking, whoring, gambling, and drugs—he was an expert in them all and even occasionally resorted to domestic violence.

Yuan Xiangjun was sick with regret, yet she blamed her family for all of her misfortunes. Therefore, after getting married, she had scarcely any contact with the Yuan family. They, in turn, acted as if she didn't exist and never spoke of her.

"Very well. Yuan Ruoshan died a tragic death inside the Haicheng International Convention and Exhibition Center. I believe Mr. Yuan Lang is also very eager to avenge his father and restore his family's honor," Ah Lu said with a smile. She followed Yuan Xiangjun out of the car, heading toward Unit 2 within the complex.

The eldest daughter of the Haicheng Yuan Family and the Yuan Lang she was about to meet... both held enormous grudges against the Yuan family and Lin Fan. With just a few instigating words, there would be no need for the Ying family from the Imperial Capital to get involved. They could simply let the Yuan family crumble from within. As for Lin Fan, that lingering wretch? Hmph. Once the grandmaster-level assassin I hired arrives tomorrow, he will surely be taken care of, eliminating the problem for good. And in the unlikely event that Lin Fan manages to escape, Miss Shen Yueli has a backup plan: the ashes of Lin Suxin!

"Who the hell is banging on the door in the middle of the night!"

A moment later, Ah Lu, Yuan Xiangjun, and their companions were standing in front of apartment 305.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK.

A voice immediately started cursing from inside, indicating the owner was in an extremely foul mood.

"Lang, open up! It's your big sister, Yuan Xiangjun!"

Ah Lu's smile stiffened slightly, and she remained silent. Yuan Xiangjun's expression turned ugly as she knocked again, more urgently this time.

"I know you're in a bad mood, but I brought people to help you get justice for Uncle Yuan Ruoshan!"

CREAK. The door opened, revealing a drunken, disheveled face under the bright lights.

"Big Sister, stop joking. If you had a way to deal with the old man and Yuan Youwei, you wouldn't have spent all these years hiding out in the Han family residence, getting

bullied," Yuan Lang said, his eyes bloodshot. He let out a drunken burp and glanced sideways at the people behind Yuan Xiangjun.

He had only been informed by his weeping mother over the phone this afternoon that his father, Yuan Ruoshan, had died suddenly. Furthermore, the state of his body was horrific; he had died with his eyes open. What was more outrageous was that the Yuan family had not only refused to retrieve his remains but had also immediately frozen his branch's assets, transferring everything to Lin Fan based on some damned past bet. Yuan Lang was overcome with grief and rage, almost mad enough to rush back to Haicheng and fight those beasts. But he didn't dare, nor did he have the confidence to do so. His branch of the family had completely lost power. If he couldn't even keep his position as the general manager of the provincial capital's branch company, he'd be sent back to square one with nothing at all.

"Hmph, I had no choice before, but this time the family has gone too far! Even I can't stand by and watch anymore!" Yuan Xiangjun's face changed, clearly stung by his words. Turning her head, she immediately plastered a smile back on. "Sister Ah Lu, this is my cousin, Yuan Lang. He has a master's degree from a top overseas university—a true elite."

"Indeed, he's a fine-looking, talented man. It's a pity that blind old Yuan Tianguang overlooks him, leaving him to languish as the manager of a mere branch company." Ah Lu nodded, her eyes filled with pity as she looked at Yuan Lang.

"Come on in. The place is a bit of a mess, so don't mind it." Seeing that his visitors carried themselves with an impressive air, clearly people of influence, Yuan Lang rubbed his face and invited them into the living room.

The moment the door closed, Ah Lu got straight to the point, asking in a grave voice, "Yuan Lang, a golden opportunity for revenge is right in front of you. Are you willing to go all out?"

"Who exactly are you people? To take on the Haicheng Yuan Family, you'd at least need the Han family from the provincial capital to make a move personally!" Yuan Lang asked warily, trying to remain calm. He wasn't a fool; he had no desire to be Yuan Xiangjun's cannon fodder in a head-on clash with the Yuan family back in Haicheng.

"Heh, my silly little brother, in front of Sister Ah Lu, the Han family is nothing!" Yuan Xiangjun said, her expression triumphant and hateful. "Even that bastard Han Yiming was so terrified by her status that he got on his knees and begged for mercy!"

What? Even a playboy like Han Yiming cowered before her?

Seeing that Yuan Xiangjun didn't seem to be lying, Yuan Lang's drunkenness faded swiftly. He was deeply moved and couldn't help but size up Ah Lu once more.

"You don’t need to know my real identity. You just need to go back to the Yuan family with Yuan Xiangjun and seize the family enterprise," Ah Lu said, nodding calmly, a cold smile on her face. "Mr. Han Sr. of the Han family will personally help you, and I will dispatch my own people to clear away any obstacles."

"...Why? Why would you do this?" Yuan Lang’s expression wavered, still finding it hard to believe what was happening. After all, they weren’t relatives or even friends. The Han family has no reason to stick their necks out for me and Yuan Xiangjun, right?

"Because Lin Fan is our common enemy," Ah Lu said, her brow furrowing in disgust as she scanned the liquor bottles littering the living room. "And since the Haicheng Yuan Family is willing to stand up for him, they must pay the price. Yuan Lang, I need you to pull yourself together and take back everything that belongs to you and your father... Of course, if you’re unwilling, I can easily find another member of the Yuan family to cooperate with."

"No, no! Miss Ah Lu, please don’t go! I, Yuan Lang, am willing! I’m a hundred percent willing!"

THUD!

Stunned for a moment, Yuan Lang grew desperate and dropped straight to his knees before Ah Lu.

Their late-night visit is more than enough to prove their sincerity. Besides, they can get someone as influential as Mr. Han Sr. of the Han family—the third-ranked family in the provincial capital, led by the renowned Money King, Han Wanyi—to personally take action! If I can’t succeed with this kind of backing, it would be the joke of the century!

"Excellent. A young man should have that kind of all-or-nothing spirit," Ah Lu said with a satisfied smile. She and a visibly excited Yuan Xiangjun turned to leave. "Get yourself cleaned up. We head for the Haicheng Yuan Family first thing in the morning."

"Thank you, Miss Ah Lu! Thank you, Big Sister! I won’t disappoint you after all you’ve done for me!" Yuan Lang exclaimed, scrambling to his feet. He eagerly saw the group downstairs before returning to his apartment, his face flushed with excitement.

He lit three cigarettes—an offering of incense—and placed them on the edge of the balcony. His gaze, filled with resentment and viciousness, followed the curling smoke as he stared toward Haicheng. "Dad, you won’t have died in vain," he muttered. "I’ll make Lin Fan and the Yuan family join you in death!"

Chapter 146, You’ve improved dramatically!

"Lin Fan, Zhang Meili ran away."

Early in the morning, inside a clinic in a Southern City alley, Yuan Youwei put down the breakfast she had brought. She spoke to Lin Fan, who had just returned from his morning run.

"She ran away?" Lin Fan raised his hand to wipe the sweat from his forehead, frowning slightly. "Where could she possibly run? Does she have a death wish?"

"...She probably couldn't stand kneeling in repentance for three days and three nights, so she fled the cemetery in the middle of the night," Mrs. Xue interjected, her face filled with loathing. "I was just about to send someone to keep an eye on her when I received the message from the cemetery. Then, after checking the nearby surveillance footage, we found out that Zhang Meili went to the international coastal terminal around five in the morning."

"Is she trying to stow away to Sha Country to seek out Stubborn Su Gang?" Lin Fan paused, then couldn't help but shake his head.

Stupid, just irredeemably stupid.

Not only was Zhang Meili penniless, but she would be in a world of trouble if she was discovered. Moreover, Stubborn Su Gang despised her. Even if she did make it to Sha Country, he probably wouldn't want her anymore.

"I suspect that's her plan... but, the funny part is, Zhang Meili boarded the wrong ship." Yuan Youwei's red lips curved into a gloating smile. "The destination of that freighter was in the opposite direction of Sha Country!"

"...If she's determined to die, no one can stop her. If Zhang Meili wants to die overseas, then let her be." Lin Fan's mouth twitched slightly as he shook his head, deciding not to meddle any further.

He shifted his gaze to Mrs. Xue. "Come here. I'll help you clear your meridians, and then you can take a Qi Replenishing Pill to enhance your martial arts strength."

"Really?" Mrs. Xue was stunned for a moment, then asked with a suspicious expression, "You're not plotting something shady, are you? I'll have you know, I've remained pure and chaste all these years and have long since given up on marrying. I have no intention of being touched by any of you stinking men!"

"I'd have to be crazy to be interested in an old woman in her thirties," Lin Fan's face stiffened, and he couldn't help but roll his eyes. "If it weren't for the fact that you're too weak to protect yourself, I wouldn't waste a Qi Replenishing Pill on you."

"Lin! You... who are you calling an old woman? Youwei, look at him! Look at him! He actually despises me for being weak!" Mrs. Xue was shocked, her red lips agape. After a

moment, she recovered, her cold, beautiful face turning livid with rage as she complained to Yuan Youwei.

"Hmph, Director Lin says you're weak, and you still won't accept it?"

However, before a bewildered Yuan Youwei could offer a word of comfort, a booming voice came from outside the door, drawing their attention.

Following the voice, Wang Meng, dressed in work pants and a black leather vest, swaggered in. His towering build was like a black iron tower, looking exceptionally formidable.

"What are you doing here?" Mrs. Xue demanded, her expression souring with shock and anger.

"We're all on the same side from now on. Like you, he's here seeking a breakthrough in his Martial Arts Realm," Lin Fan said, standing up from behind the counter. He tossed two shimmering green Qi Replenishing Pills toward them. "Come over to have your meridians cleared first, then take the medicine to break through."

"Thank you, Boss! This thankless wench doesn't know what's good for her. How about you give me her Qi Replenishing Pill, too?" Wang Meng quickly reached out and caught the pills. His square face was filled with ecstasy, his grin splitting his face from ear to ear.

Two Qi Replenishing Pills! Back in the day, these were treasures he wouldn't even dare to dream of! There had been War Gods and other elite soldiers from different war zones who begged Lin Fan for his pills, some even offering astronomical sums! But Lin Fan had ruthlessly refused them all, stating that unless they were willing to join the Hulin Guard and earn a Third-Class Merit or higher, they had no chance. And now, he had just given him two! This is amazing, simply amazing!

"You can dream on if you think you're getting my share," Mrs. Xue retorted, staring with suspicion and disbelief at the green pills in Wang Meng's hands. As a Martial Artist, her innate senses told her that these two seemingly inconspicuous pills had an extraordinary origin. Otherwise, there was no way that merely catching a whiff of their fragrance would cause a stir of Inner Breath within her Dantian.

"Youwei, look at him! The moment he gets a new lackey, he forgets all the good we've done for him!" Turning her head, Mrs. Xue complained to Yuan Youwei again, though she couldn't stop herself from stealing glances at the small medicine bottle in Lin Fan's hand.

"Xiao Fan, don't tease Mrs. Xue anymore. For my sake, won't you give her a couple of those Qi Replenishing Pills?" Yuan Youwei sidled up to Lin Fan, trying hard to suppress a smile as she wheedled him coquettishly. She was afraid that if she laughed out loud, Mrs. Xue would lose face. After all, the woman had been proud her whole life and rarely

conceded to anyone. For her to ask for help now, even indirectly, showed just how enticed she was by those green pills.

"...It's not that I'm reluctant. I'm just afraid that when I'm clearing her meridians, someone will think I'm deliberately taking advantage of her," Lin Fan flinched theatrically, falling silent for a moment before deliberately shaking his head.

"You! Lin Fan, you're doing this on purpose, aren't you? Fine! At worst, I'll just pretend it's a mosquito bite!" Mrs. Xue's face flushed crimson, so choked with anger she could have spat blood. "Move aside, I was here first!"

With a dark expression, she shoved aside the grinning Wang Meng and walked over to Lin Fan. She sat down cross-legged, closed her eyes to focus, and silently began to circulate her internal energy.

SWISH! SWISH! SWISH!

The next moment, before Mrs. Xue could react, she felt several major acupoints along her spine being struck in rapid succession by bursts of Qi Force.

BOOM!

Immediately after, a tidal wave of potent Inner Breath surged violently within her, crashing through her major meridians with unstoppable force.

"HISS...!!" Even as she fought to endure the discomfort, Mrs. Xue couldn't stop her lips from parting in an agonizing moan that was disturbingly seductive.

"Open your mouth. Take the medicine!" Lin Fan's cold command came from above her.

Mrs. Xue's cheeks burned. She quickly suppressed the strange feeling in her heart, obediently opened her mouth, and swallowed the two fragrant Qi Replenishing Pills.

In an instant, the pills melted. Like two refreshing breezes, they tumbled down her throat. Then, the cool sensation erupted into a raging inferno, exploding within her Dantian below her navel.

"AHH...!!"

Mrs. Xue's eyes flew open as large beads of sweat instantly broke out on her fair forehead. Her clothes were soaked through in a second. The immense medicinal power transformed into countless threads, forcefully expanding her eight extraordinary meridians. The intense pain made Mrs. Xue tremble uncontrollably, her face contorting in agony as she screamed.

One second, two seconds, three seconds... Suddenly, a firm hand patted each of her shoulders. The penetrating Qi Force suppressed the chaos, causing the internal pain to gradually subside until it faded away completely.

It was a harrowing but successful ordeal. Mrs. Xue sat rigid for a moment, then shot to her feet, looking down at herself with a mixture of shock and joy. At this moment, she felt a boundless strength coursing through her body, and she felt an overwhelming urge to unleash it.

Instantly, her gaze fell upon the wall. She took a step forward and threw a punch without hesitation.

CRACK! CRACK!

The wall spiderwebbed with fractures from the deep fist mark at the center. Then, with a deafening crash, the entire section of the wall collapsed, revealing the scene in the adjacent room.

Damn, that was intense. As expected of that tough-as-nails old woman!

Seeing this, Yuan Youwei gasped and covered her mouth. Wang Meng jolted, his eyes lighting up with fiery excitement.

Meanwhile, in the next room, a man who had been on the toilet hurriedly pulled up his pants and ran for his life, screaming, "Help! Someone’s demolishing my bathroom!"

"...Look at what you’ve done. You’ve hurt so many innocent people in one impulsive moment." Lin Fan withdrew his gaze, his mouth twitching as his face darkened.

For some reason, he suddenly felt a pang of regret. Had he made this woman a little too powerful?

He pointed a finger at the collapsed wall and shook his head at the still-grinning Mrs. Xue. "Stop laughing! Go find the owner, apologize, and get their wall repaired!"

Chapter 147, regrets are useless!

"No problem. I’ll pay out of my own pocket to renovate his bathroom into a five-star one!"

Upon hearing this, Mrs. Xue wasn’t annoyed at all. Instead, her smile was practically crooked.

This really was a tremendous windfall!

Not only had Lin Fan unblocked all her meridians in one go, but her Inner Breath had also surged severalfold. A breakthrough in the Martial Realm that so many people dreamed of had happened for her as easily as eating and drinking water. Overcome with ecstatic joy, Mrs. Xue couldn't help but look deeply at Lin Fan, her eyes full of gratitude. But she couldn't swallow her pride to thank him, so she could only keep staring, hesitating to speak.

"Qi Transformation, injuring someone from a distance... Hiss... is this a direct step into the Qi Condensation realm?"

Just then, Wang Meng stepped forward to inspect the collapsed wall closely. He was shocked and couldn't help but gasp. There was a half-meter gap between the clinic's wall and where Mrs. Xue had stood. Yet, the Qi Force from her punch had penetrated right through it, demolishing the outer wall of the neighbor's bathroom!

With a sudden realization, Wang Meng turned to look at Mrs. Xue, his eyes full of envy and fervor.

"Am-am I really that strong? Did I just jump from the early stage of Righteous Energy straight into Qi Condensation?" Mrs. Xue was also stunned. She looked down at her palm in disbelief, murmuring to herself.

She had indeed felt a huge boost in her strength, but she had never dared to imagine such a drastic improvement.

"It should be pseudo-Qi Condensation, which is the peak Great Perfection state of the Righteous Energy realm."

However, before Mrs. Xue could indulge in her wild joy, Lin Fan poured cold water on her enthusiasm.

"The medicinal effects in your body haven't been completely absorbed yet, so your state is unstable. It'll only count once it stabilizes."

Ignoring Mrs. Xue's stiffening smile, Lin Fan nodded at the eager Wang Meng.

"Thank you, Boss! Thank you, Boss!"

Wang Meng was immediately exuberant. He trotted over to Lin Fan's feet and sat down cross-legged, just as Mrs. Xue had.

ZZZT! ZZZT! ZZZT!

Moments later, Lin Fan made his move again, effortlessly unblocking all of Wang Meng's meridians. Without needing a reminder, Wang Meng quickly stuffed two Qi Replenishing Pills into his mouth and gulped them down.

"Aaaaargh!"

The fierce medicinal effect erupted explosively within his body. Wang Meng couldn't help but roar, the veins on his forehead throbbing violently.

"Alright, that's all I can do for now. From here on, you'll have to walk your own paths." Lin Fan wiped the sweat from his brow and helped the excited, fist-clenching Wang Meng to his feet.

"Boss! You're like a second parent to me! Please accept my bow of respect!"

THUMP!

With tears welling in his fierce eyes, Wang Meng couldn't stop himself from kneeling and kowtowing heavily before Lin Fan. When everyone else had looked down on him and cast him aside like worn-out shoes, only the man before him was willing to take him in. He even helped him improve his Martial Arts Realm without asking for anything in return!

"Alright, there's no need for such formalities." Lin Fan frowned slightly and helped Wang Meng up again.

He grabbed his phone and checked the time. The second day of the ordering conference at the Haicheng International Convention and Exhibition Center was about to start. He had the sweat-drenched Mrs. Xue and Wang Meng find places to freshen up. Then, he took a refreshing cold shower himself, changed his clothes, and headed out with Yuan Youwei and the others.

"Let Wang Meng drive from now on. He's a Qi Condensation master now."

The black Bentley started up slowly, with Mrs. Xue at the wheel and Wang Meng sitting obediently in the front passenger seat. Seeing this, Lin Fan glanced at Yuan Youwei beside him and made the suggestion.

Truth be told, he still wasn't comfortable with Mrs. Xue protecting Yuan Youwei alone. After all, Wang Meng had been tempered by combat on the front lines of the Northern Border. When it came to reflexes and sensing danger, he naturally far surpassed others.

"Okay, I'll listen to you," Yuan Youwei said with a sweet smile and an obedient nod.

Not long after, the car stopped outside the Haicheng International Convention and Exhibition Center. The scene was almost an exact replica of the day before, bustling with a sea of people.

"It's Director Lin! Director Lin has arrived!"

"Quick, go and greet him!"

As Lin Fan and his entourage entered the hall, they immediately caused a sensation. Numerous well-dressed bigwigs swarmed toward them, surrounding them like planets orbiting the sun.

Wen Zheyang had already vanished without a trace, so today's conference was being personally presided over by Mr. Yuan Sr. Furthermore, Haicheng's top nine pharmaceutical companies had all chosen to cooperate with Lin Fan again. Instantly, many people regarded

Lin Fan with deep reverence. Despite his youth, his true strength had already earned him a place among Haicheng's four major tycoons. There was even a rumor that Lord Hu was dead and Lin Fan was destined to take his place.

"Did Director Shen and his people from Yuncheng not come today?"

Yuandao Pharmaceuticals' booth had been moved to the very center of the hall, making it exceptionally prominent. The area around it was packed with Yuandao Pharmaceuticals' employees, all looking spirited and flushed with success. Many cast proud glances around, as if the company's current status was all their own doing.

Lin Fan glanced at the unfamiliar faces, then turned to look at the right side of the hall and was momentarily stunned. The booth belonging to Yunhai Group was completely empty, with no one tending to it. His heart sinking slightly, Lin Fan immediately went forward to ask around.

"I don't know. Director Shen and his group didn't attend today's ordering conference. Maybe they had an urgent matter and already returned to Yuncheng?" someone replied, shaking their head before turning back to greet a potential distributor.

Returned... What urgent matter could be more pressing than the ordering conference? Lin Fan frowned silently, feeling that something was amiss.

"Director Lin!"

"Hello, Director Lin, I'm Xu Yingying, the head of the marketing department!"

"Director Lin, you look truly dashing today! I'm Zhou Fang, the head of the project department!"

Returning to the Yuandao Pharmaceuticals booth, Lin Fan was swiftly surrounded by a flock of chattering women, all clamoring to introduce themselves.

"Hmph, so now you're all eager to suck up?" Seeing this, Yuan Youwei gave a mocking smile, though a hint of coldness flashed in her beautiful eyes.

These people were all Yuan Ruoshan's former subordinates. When she and Lin Fan had previously visited the company, they had all been condescending and indifferent. Now that they knew Yuan Ruoshan was dead and Lin Fan was about to take power, they had all changed their tune, hoping to curry favor with the new boss.

"Director Yuan, you must be joking. We had no choice."

"Yes, that's right! We were forced by Yuan Ruoshan. What could we possibly do?"

Xu Yingying and the others blushed, sighing as they snuck glances at Lin Fan's reaction.

"Your presence here today shows you still care about your positions." Amid pairs of hopeful eyes, Lin Fan's mouth twisted into a self-deprecating smile as he shook his head. "It's a pity. If you had come yesterday, even just to put on an act, I might have been willing to look the other way."

BOOM!

As his words fell, Xu Yingying and the others trembled, their faces turning pale.

What did he mean by that? Now that he had just taken power, would he really be so impatient as to purge them all?

"No, please, don't, Director Lin!"

"We were wrong! We were wrong, isn't that enough? We apologize! Please, just forgive us this one time!"

The department heads, along with a crowd of other men and women, all panicked.

THUMP! THUMP!

Disregarding the strange looks from others, they knelt down en masse, a dark crowd of bodies hitting the floor. Their faces were filled with remorse as they began to plead desperately with Lin Fan.

Chapter 148. Making a fool of oneself in every possible way!

"What, regretting it now?"

Upon seeing their expressions, Mrs. Xue's face filled with contempt, yet a hint of vindictive pleasure glinted in her eyes.

Just a few days ago, these people were unbearably arrogant, not even deigning to give the three of them a proper glance. Despite being mere subordinates from a subsidiary, they acted high and mighty with Yuan Ruoshan's backing. They were audacious enough to show open disdain for Yuan Youwei and Lin Fan! Forget serving tea; even menial tasks like setting up the exhibition booth, selecting pharmaceuticals, or sending staff to greet clients were completely neglected and handled perfunctorily. Yesterday was the first and most critical day of the purchasing conference, yet not a single one of them showed up. They were probably hiding behind a screen watching the livestream, just waiting to see Lin Fan make a fool of himself!

"We... we never thought Director Lin could strategize so effectively and sell tens of billions all at once!"

"Director Lin, Director Yuan, please have pity on us humble workers!"

At these words, Xu Yingying and the others lowered their heads, too ashamed to meet Mrs. Xue's gaze.

After all, who could have known that Lin Fan would create a miracle and actually win that seemingly impossible bet? A full four billion in orders... In the past, it would have been absolutely impossible for Yuandao Pharmaceuticals to secure such a deal! But Lin Fan had not only done it, he had far exceeded expectations!

Annoyance, regret, anxiety... A myriad of emotions surged tumultuously through their hearts. Some wore conflicted expressions, while others clenched their teeth. A few even burst into tears, hoping to move Lin Fan with their display.

"What kind of 'humble workers' are you? Aren't you all senior figures from various departments?"

Yuan Youwei was so angry she had to laugh. She turned to Lin Fan. The fate of this lot now rested solely in his hands. If he fired them all in a fit of anger, Yuandao Pharmaceuticals would surely be paralyzed for a short time. But if he didn't make an example of them to warn the others, who knew if they would continue stirring up trouble in the future?

"Actually, I've already given you many chances."

Under the expectant gazes of everyone present, Lin Fan paused for a moment before shaking his head, his expression unreadable.

"Since you had no faith in me and chose to follow Yuan Ruoshan, I certainly won't force the issue."

"There's nothing more to say. You're all fired. I'll have Su Pharmaceutical send some people over to take charge during the transition."

What? Fire them all? Without sparing a single one?

BOOM!

Xu Yingying and the others' faces turned ashen, their eyes wide with disbelief.

Lin Fan, you are so ruthless, so utterly cruel!

Several of the more timid female subordinates were so frightened they collapsed to the floor, wailing.

"Lin Fan, how can you be so unreasonable!"

The corner of Xu Yingying's eye twitched violently. She shot to her feet, her face livid, and pointed an accusing finger at Lin Fan.

"We are all veterans of Yuandao Pharmaceuticals! We've been here since the company was founded, toiling away like beasts of burden for years! Even if we haven't made great contributions, we've still put in the hard work!"

Turning her head, Xu Yingying swept her gaze over the others who had gathered around, her voice cracking with tears of sorrow and fury.

"Do you all see this? This Lin Fan, a petty man enjoying a brief moment of power, wants to fire all of us who have served this company for so long! Just because he has a personal grudge against Yuan Ruoshan, he's taking it out on us! How are we innocent? What have we done wrong?!"

"Yingying is right! We may be at the bottom, but we absolutely won't tolerate this kind of bullying!"

Zhou Fang and a few others also stood up one after another, clenching their fists in anger and glaring daggers at Lin Fan.

"We ask all you distinguished leaders here to judge this situation for us and grant us justice!"

Amid a flurry of whispers, Xu Yingying bowed deeply, though a flash of triumph glinted in her eyes.

They hadn't come here today to seek Lin Fan's forgiveness. Instead, they had received a call early this morning from Yuan Lang, Yuan Ruoshan's son. He had promised them great benefits if they could cause a big enough scene to put Lin Fan in an impossible position. After a brief discussion, they all agreed. Since they had already thoroughly offended Lin Fan, they might as well go for broke! If Yuan Lang succeeded on his end, they could latch onto another powerful backer and remain at Yuandao Pharmaceuticals!

"What justice do you want?"

Just then, Lin Fan retorted coolly, his face a cold mask.

"None of you showed up yesterday, and today you think you can fix things? It's too little, too late."

"S-So what? We were all busy with major company projects and couldn't spare the time!" Xu Yingying straightened up and averted her gaze, her confidence clearly wavering.

"Minister Xu, what 'major company project' could possibly be more urgent and important than attending the pharmaceutical purchasing conference?"

Mrs. Xue took out her phone and scoffed as she opened a new message. She had arranged for someone to keep an eye on these people long ago to prevent any internal rebellion.

"You went on vacation abroad the day before yesterday, went on a shopping spree in Maris, and bought a pile of luxury shoes and bags. Yesterday afternoon, you flew north, apparently planning a ski trip. What a pity. When you heard about Yuan Ruoshan's death, you scrambled to change your ticket and fly back."

As her words fell, the hall plunged into dead silence, followed by a violent uproar.

So, this so-called ’humble worker’ was ’working’ like this? Taking an overseas vacation during work hours, completely disregarding the company’s major projects? Then panicking and rushing back only after finding out her superior was dead?

"How shameless! I clearly saw the Yuandao Pharmaceuticals booth yesterday, and there were no other staff. Director Lin and his team were handling everything themselves!"

"Hmph! She talks a big game, but she’s full of lies. She deserves to be fired!"

The surrounding crowd began to rail against her, their eyes filled with disgust and contempt.

"You... you actually had someone follow me in secret?"

Xu Yingying’s face was deathly pale. She trembled as she pointed at Mrs. Xue, so furious she felt her lungs might burst. The strange looks from all around felt like needles on her back, and her face burned with humiliation.

"Xu Yingying, so this is the kind of person you are! I must have been blind to ever become good friends with you!"

Before a sneering Mrs. Xue could even respond, Zhou Fang, who was standing nearby, suddenly turned on Xu Yingying. Her expression shifted as she pointed and harshly condemned her.

"Director Lin, I’m nothing like this cheap tramp! I truly have the company’s best interests at heart!" she cried out, but her eyes, fixed squarely on Xu Yingying, held a flicker of schadenfreude. "Director Lin, I apologize for what happened before! From now on, I will be completely loyal and will never again be deceived by certain people!"

"Zhou Fang, do you think your movements were so covert?"

Lin Fan remained silent, glancing at Mrs. Xue. Understanding his cue, she continued with another cold laugh.

"You told your husband you were on a business trip. But instead, you flew to Lin City, only to turn around and come back to stay in a high-end hotel with a male subordinate. You didn’t leave the room for a full day and night. You were working, alright. ’Working’ in bed with your male subordinate. Quite the elaborate excuse."

What? They even found out about that?

"Y-You’re spouting nonsense! I was in Lin City all day yesterday! If you don’t believe me, you can go ask Director Li from the Ankang Pharmacy chain!"

A tremor ran through Zhou Fang, and her face turned green. Amid the gales of laughter from the crowd, she began to shake uncontrollably, stomping her foot and screaming.

"Oh? Someone found the used condoms the two of you threw in the trash downstairs. Should we call your husband over to have them sent for a test of the... biological traces on them?" Yuan Youwei took the phone and glanced at it, clicking her tongue in disgust.

"No, stop talking! I forbid you! Shut up! All of you, shut up!"

Zhou Fang's face shifted between pale and crimson, and she could no longer bear the piercing laughter surrounding her. She clutched her head, let out a hysterical shriek, and then, sobbing, turned and fled as if her life depended on it.

Only Xu Yingying and the others remained, frozen in place, momentarily at a loss.

"Well? Are you not going to get out of here on your own? Or do you need us to continue exposing all of your sordid affairs?"

Yuan Youwei's lovely eyes turned cold as her smiling gaze swept across their flushed faces.

WHOOSH!

Instantly, Xu Yingying and the others no longer had the face to continue their farce. They all scattered and vanished in a flash.

Amid the jeers, scathing criticisms echoed throughout the hall.

Lin Fan frowned and looked away, shaking his head. He was completely unaware that from a corner of the hall, a cold, venomous gaze was fixed on him.

Trash. A complete bunch of losers. No wonder Yuan Ruoshan couldn't beat Lin Fan. What kind of garbage did he surround himself with?

Ah Lu's expression was grim. After muttering a few curses under his breath, he turned to the subordinate beside him.

"Where is the grandmaster-level assassin now?"

"He's just arrived at Haicheng International Airport. He said he'll head over as soon as he gets off the plane!"

Chapter 149. Are all the followers Qi Condensation grandmasters?

"Goodbye, Director Lin!"

"Director Lin, once the ordering conference successfully ends tomorrow, please grace us with your presence at the celebration party!"

A small disturbance hadn't affected the progress of the day's conference. Many left fully satisfied, delighted beyond words. Even the pharmaceutical representatives from the North had placed large orders, praising new drugs like the Divine Dragon Detox Powder profusely.

As evening approached, people began to disperse in small groups. Before leaving, they all made a point of saying goodbye to Lin Fan and his party. Lin Fan responded with nods to each of them but couldn't help glancing frequently at the Yunhai Group's booth.

"Youwei, once you're done here, come home for dinner. Your eldest sister said she's bringing Old Master Han from the provincial capital along," Mr. Yuan Sr. said, walking over with his hands clasped behind his back, his face beaming.

With him presiding over the day's events, everything had gone smoothly and without a hitch. If they could get through tomorrow safely, the Yuan family's prestige would surely soar. Perhaps in the future, every ordering conference could bypass the Wen family of the Imperial Capital, allowing the Hai City Yuan Family to take over completely! At this thought, the old man couldn't help but secretly straighten his back, the smile on his face growing wider.

"My eldest sister is coming back... Okay, Grandpa, you go ahead. Lin Fan and I will be over soon." Yuan Youwei's smile faltered for a moment before she nodded, her expression returning to normal.

"You have an elder sister?" Lin Fan asked, watching Mr. Yuan Sr. and the others leave before turning his puzzled gaze to Yuan Youwei. He'd had considerable contact with the Yuan family but had never heard anyone mention this.

"Hmph! Yuan Xiangjun was stubborn back then, insisting on marrying Han Yiming, the second son of the Han family from the provincial capital, whom nobody thought highly of," Mrs. Xue spoke up first, unable to stop herself from speaking indignantly before a slightly uneasy Yuan Youwei could respond. "As a result, her life with the Han family after the marriage was miserable. It's said she was even frequently abused by Han Yiming. Unfortunately, for the sake of her pride, she has stubbornly refused a divorce."

As the group made their way to the underground parking lot, Yuan Youwei let out a bitter laugh. Her mood low, she whispered to Lin Fan, "...My elder sister and I competed for the vice president position at Yuandao Capital, but Grandpa felt she wasn't competent enough. So, she married in a huff. She probably thought becoming the wealthy matriarch of the Han family would put her above me, but she chose poorly."

"Let’s go to Su Pharmaceutical first. We’ll pick a few reliable people to come over and prop up Yuandao Pharmaceuticals," Lin Fan said, shaking his head at her state, unwilling to pry further.

BOOM!

The next moment, before Wang Meng could even open the door of the black Bentley, two dazzling white beams of light suddenly pierced the darkness of the distant garage. A black SUV came roaring straight toward them!

"Looking for death?" Wang Meng’s eyes narrowed. He swore as he dodged to the side, his fists cracking loudly.

Lin Fan frowned silently, pulling Yuan Youwei and Mrs. Xue back in a swift retreat.

With a loud SCREECH, the black SUV screeched to a halt right in front of them, the harsh sound of friction grating on the ears. The car doors were slammed open, and three hostile figures jumped out.

"Young Master, long time no see. I didn’t expect you to still be alive and well, huh?" a thin-faced woman, flanked by two towering, burly men in suits, said with a nod and a mocking smile.

"The second of Shen Yueli’s four lackeys, Ah Lu?" Lin Fan’s eyes narrowed, his expression turning cold. Just as I expected. By making my mother’s funeral such a grand affair, I knew the Imperial Capital would take notice. But does a mere lackey like Ah Lu really think she can handle me, Lin Fan? Do you think that just because I was nearly poisoned to death seven years ago, I’m no longer worth your consideration?

"Young Master, you’ve only got a tough mouth left, haven’t you? The Mistress said you shouldn’t be appearing before the world, so..." Ah Lu’s expression shifted, and a sneer twisted her lips as if she were gazing at a dead man. "We’ll just have to help you out and let you die one more time!"

Her voice suddenly sharpened as she waved her hand forcefully.

CRACK! CRACK!

At that, the two suited men behind her laughed menacingly, cracking their knuckles as they strode forward.

"Getting to personally kill the man once known as the Heavenly Pride War God... This trip won’t be a waste for us brothers, hahaha!"

The two were clearly putting on a show of force. With each booming step, they cracked the hard floor tiles, leaving deep footprints in their wake!

"Fuck, two Righteous Energy masters, and it looks like they're both at late-stage Great Perfection!" Wang Meng cried out in shock, his eyes bulging, while Lin Fan remained silent and expressionless.

Meanwhile, Yuan Youwei and Mrs. Xue looked at Lin Fan, both shocked and suspicious. The identity of their opponents was far beyond what either of them could have anticipated. Otherwise, no one would be lying in wait here, so clearly intent on killing Lin Fan!

"Heh, scared now?" Ah Lu sneered, a mocking glint in her eyes as she pointed at the two large men. "Speaking of which, these two were personally selected by Great Commander Shen from the Hulin Guard to be his confidants. They were then gifted to the Mistress for her protection. And the reason they possess such strength is all thanks to the Qi Replenishing Pills you left behind in the army."

"...So, you benefited from my grace, and now you want to kill me?" Lin Fan glanced indifferently at the two men, then turned to the eager Wang Meng and Mrs. Xue. "I can't be bothered with trash like this. I'll let you two test your skills."

What? I am the elite of the elite of the Hulin Guard, favored by Great Commander Shen Changlong! A peerless martial arts master at the peak of Righteous Energy! And in your eyes, Lin Fan, I'm just trash?

"Hahaha, still talking tough when you're about to die!"

"You sickly whelp, you dare to look down on us?"

The two men in suits laughed in fury, the cruelty in their eyes flaring with even greater violence. As their gazes swept over Yuan Youwei and Mrs. Xue, they licked their lips, their faces twisting into perverted, grim smiles. Back in the Imperial Capital, cooped up with the Ying family, we have to follow a mountain of rules that tie our hands. But out here in this remote place, Haicheng, who would dare to control us!

"Lei Lang, Lei Bao, did you hear that? Even though he's already a cripple, he still looks down on you!" Ah Lu scoffed, her eyes narrowing meaningfully.

"After this is over, we'll take those two women. They're smoking hot!"

"Sister Ah Lu, I've been holding it in for too long in the Imperial Capital! It's time to blow off some steam!" the two men, now identified as Lei Lang and Lei Bao, sneered with excitement.

"No problem. As long as you don't interfere with our mission, do as you please," Ah Lu nodded, taking out her phone and opening the camera app, settling in to watch the show.

"Damn it! Are you two blind? Acting as if I, Wang Meng, don't exist?" The next moment, Wang Meng could no longer restrain himself and cursed as he strode forward. Lin Fan had elevated his Martial Arts Realm, and he had been itching for an opportunity to test his newfound strength. Now, these two clueless bastards had delivered themselves to his doorstep—it was a dream come true!

"Big guy, leave one for me," Mrs. Xue said, her cold, beautiful face taking on a sharp edge as she also stepped forward.

"Haha, you're courting death!"

"Hey, little sis, go easy on me. Your big brother is afraid of pain, haha!" Lei Lang chuckled as he moved to intercept Mrs. Xue.

Lei Bao's eyes darkened as he threw a punch, charging at Wang Meng!

In an instant, four fists from four people collided ferociously in mid-air!

BOOM! BOOM!

A piercing sonic boom erupted, echoing through the entire underground garage and setting off a cacophony of car alarms. The immense Qi Force sent transparent ripples through the air, and the radiating energy made it difficult to keep one's eyes open.

Ah Lu and Yuan Youwei quickly raised their hands to shield their faces. Only Lin Fan remained unmoved, his cold eyes fixed on the unfolding scene.

"AH—!!"

Just then, as the fighters broke apart, two screams of agony rang out almost simultaneously. Two battered figures, spewing blood, were sent flying backward, crashing heavily at Ah Lu's feet.

"Qi Condensation Grandmasters! Two Qi Condensation Grandmasters!" Lei Lang shrieked in horror, pointing a trembling finger at Wang Meng and Mrs. Xue.

"Ah Lu, you fucking tried to get us killed! What kind of garbage intel was that? His followers are Qi Condensation Grandmasters!" Lei Bao wailed, tears of pain in his eyes as he spat out mouthfuls of blood. He felt as if that one earth-shattering punch had broken every rib in his body.

"No, this is impossible! He's clearly a cripple! How could he possibly recruit such experts?" Ah Lu, who was still holding her phone to record, stood frozen, the smile wiped from her face. She stared down in disbelief at the two men at her feet, her pupils shrinking dramatically.

"Nothing is impossible," Lin Fan said calmly. He gave Wang Meng and Mrs. Xue, who were looking at him expectantly, an encouraging nod. Turning his head, he looked at Ah Lu, a mocking smile playing on his lips. "You all thought I was finished? Don't forget, the Hulin Guard's Qi Replenishing Pill came from my own hands. I can create Qi Condensation Grandmasters whenever I please!"

His indifferent voice wasn't loud, but to the ears of Ah Lu and her men, it was like a clap of thunder.

"Hahaha! Young Master, if I hadn't come prepared today, I really wouldn't have been able to send you to reunite with that bitch Lin Suxin!" Lei Lang and Lei Bao trembled violently, their faces ashen. Without another word, they scrambled to hide behind Ah Lu. Her own expression changed several times before she suddenly let out a triumphant, piercing laugh. "Miss Zi Ying, it's all up to you now! Kill them all, and I'll double your reward!"

Turning around, Ah Lu shouted toward a dimly lit corner. She completely missed the stupefied look on Lin Fan's face, which was slowly morphing into a peculiar expression.

Zi Ying? If I remember correctly... that should be the codename for my own Right Protector from the Human Tower, Wu Miaomiao, right?

Chapter 150, Pole Dance Assassin!

"Boss, this isn't looking good. It seems they have another expert!" Seeing their opponents remain completely calm as they called for yet more backup, Wang Meng and Mrs. Xue exchanged a glance. Their initial excitement vanished, replaced by a grim expression.

The two of them looked at Lin Fan, their faces a mixture of shock and uncertainty.

"What's the panic? Don't you believe I can make that assassin surrender meekly?" The corner of Lin Fan's mouth twitched in exasperation.

I already ordered that no member of Human Tower is to accept assassination jobs casually. This Wu Miaomiao has some serious nerve, leaving Sha Country to come all the way to Haicheng to try and kill her own boss?

"Uh..." Wang Meng's eyes widened in disbelief.

Mrs. Xue was stunned, sharing a speechless look with Yuan Youwei. They knew Lin Fan's skills were heaven-defying, but how could he still be boasting at a critical moment like this? Does he really think he's so funny?

CLANG, CLANG!

In the next moment, a tall, voluptuous, and seductive figure emerged from a dimly lit corner. Fishnet stockings tightly hugged her long, snow-white legs, topped by a black, ultra-short leather skirt. Her slender waist, delicate as a willow branch, swayed gently. A navel-baring, sleeveless white crop top outlined the enticing curves of her full chest. Her captivating face, adorned with deep purple eyeshadow, was utterly bewitching, like a cold and stunning demoness from legend.

Lei Lang and Lei Bao, who were gritting their teeth through the pain, found their eyes glued to her, their gazes growing hotter by the second. Wang Meng's eyes were wide, his focus locked entirely on the woman. Even Mrs. Xue and Yuan Youwei were mysteriously enchanted, their breathing growing ragged and hot.

"I like to perform a dance of death before I kill," the newcomer said, clearly enjoying the crowd's attention. She casually placed the boombox she was carrying at her feet. Then, with a firm grip, she took a thick, two-meter-long silver-white pole and slammed it down hard. With a dull thud, the pole plunged deep into the hard floor tiles as if it were a knife slicing through tofu!

"Sublime, truly sublime! No wonder she's ranked among the top ten super experts on the Xia Country assassin leaderboard!" Ah Lu saw Lin Fan's expression flicker from its previous nonchalance. Thinking he had intimidated him, Ah Lu couldn't help but start clapping. "Young Master, to have Miss Ye Ying perform for you before you die... you're quite fortunate in love!"

"...Do you always perform this little routine on your jobs?" Lin Fan asked, ignoring Ah Lu's sarcasm. He frowned at Wu Miaomiao, who was now pole dancing with vigor, causing his face to turn green. Under the powerful bass of the boombox, she leaped and spun with agile grace, her every move exuding a sultry charm.

Lin Fan was beginning to suspect something. Is this woman deliberately trying to show off her dancing skills in front of me?

"Hmph, those other targets aren't worth my effort," Wu Miaomiao said as she danced energetically, all while throwing flirtatious glances at Lin Fan. Her delicate voice held no trace of hostility; it was clear she was being coquettish!

"This... this..." Yuan Youwei, who had been tense just a moment ago, exchanged a puzzled look with Mrs. Xue and Wang Meng. The three of them began to catch on, their expressions turning peculiar.

This eccentric Pole Dance Assassin... seemed like a lunatic. The more they watched, the less it looked like she was here to kill Lin Fan and more like she was here to reward him!

"Miss Zi Ying, our time is limited! Please make your move before any complications arise!" Ah Lu and his men had also noticed something was amiss. Ah Lu's expression shifted rapidly before he forced a stiff smile and urged her on in a low voice.

However, the female assassin twisting on the pole paid him no mind at all. Instead, she danced with even more gusto, causing everyone present to blush and feel a wave of heat wash over them.

"...Did you major in a Charm Skill?" Lin Fan also noticed the strange sensation in his body. He silently circulated his internal energy, dispelling the feeling entirely. Frowning at Wu Miaomiao, he shook his head. "If you keep writhing around like that, you can forget about getting any Serenity Powder next year."

"No, please don't!"

THUD!

Wu Miaomiao abruptly stopped her dance and slid down the pole. She looked at Lin Fan with a pitiful expression, shaking her head desperately. "Young Master, I was just trying to leave a deep impression on you. If you don't like it, I... I'll only dance for you in secret from now on..."

"Just speak properly! Who said I wanted to watch you pole dance?" Lin Fan was so irritated he could barely breathe. He shot Wu Miaomiao a fierce glare. As expected, he felt three peculiar gazes on his back, sharp and unnerving. Lin Fan tensed up, utterly speechless.

"Wait a second, Miss Zi Ying... what do you mean by that? Do you know this person?"

In an instant, Ah Lu's smile froze on his face. His eyes bulged as if he had just seen a ghost. Lei Lang and Lei Bao, who were clutching their chests as they struggled to their feet, were completely dumbfounded.

No way... It can't be, right? The super-assassin the Ying family had hired for a fortune... was also one of Lin Fan's followers?

GASP!

The realization hit them all at once. The three men stared at each other, their scalps tingling with sheer terror. They had been so sure of their victory, certain they could eliminate Lin Fan and his group. Who would have thought they had lifted a rock only to drop it on their own feet!

"Speaking of which, I should thank you for reimbursing my round-trip plane ticket," Wu Miaomiao said with a radiant smile, nodding as she stood amidst the sea of stunned gazes. "I saw the assassination mission you posted on the industry forum. The location was Haicheng in Xia Country, and I immediately suspected the target might be my Young Master. After all, who else in all of Haicheng is worth a bounty of hundreds of millions?"

She turned to Lin Fan and blinked at him repeatedly, her expression smugly saying, "Aren't I smart? Praise me!"

"Why aren't you with Master Feng and the others in Sha Country? What are you doing running around?" Lin Fan asked, his voice low. He met her expectant, beautiful eyes and had to actively suppress the urge to discipline her.

"Young Master, everything's already taken care of over there, and I was bored... Besides, wouldn't it be more dangerous if someone else accepted your bounty?" Wu Miaomiao sidled up to Lin Fan pitifully, looping her arm through his and unabashedly pressing it against her chest. "I did all this for your own good!"

"Let go of me! And stand up straight!" Lin Fan felt like his head was about to explode. As good as it felt, he had to quickly pull his arm from her soft embrace.

"Who is she?" As expected, Yuan Youwei stepped forward. She wore a smile that wasn't quite a smile, but her beautiful eyes were as cold as ice, filled with deep resentment.

"Miss, haven't you figured it out yet? He's a philandering scoundrel! He looks honest on the surface, but he's secretly fooling around behind your back!" Mrs. Xue snapped, rolling her eyes in fury.

Only Wang Meng was secretly impressed, giving Lin Fan a mental thumbs-up.

"If I told you this is only the second time I've ever met her... would you believe me?" Lin Fan said through a darkened face, enunciating every word. It had to be said, a proactive woman could be the death of a man! Especially a beautiful and seductive one like this!

Seeing Yuan Youwei's disappointed smile, Mrs. Xue's continued eye-rolling, and Wang Meng's look of sheer adoration, Lin Fan sighed. He was too tired to explain. He just tilted his head toward the foolishly giggling Wu Miaomiao. "Go get those three."

"As you command!" Wu Miaomiao nodded obediently. In a few steps, she stood before Ah Lu and his cronies, who were trying to sneak away.

Ah Lu's steps froze, his face turning ugly. "Young Master, I advise you to think carefully. If you dare to touch me, you will be openly declaring war on my mistress!"

Lei Lang and Lei Bao stood beside him, tense and apprehensive, all their previous arrogance gone.