

The Beauty 1031

Chapter 1031 Han Mingchao's Fate

"Went to the bathroom, be right back. Chen, let's have a couple of drinks first."

Not long after, three people entered through the back door of the warehouse. Two were Jiang Hao's men, and the other was a middle-aged man dressed in a sharp suit. However, the suit was creased all over, his hair was a mess, and his face was bruised and swollen, looking quite distressed.

The man was brought forward, and upon seeing Ling Chen drinking at the table, his complexion turned pale instantly, and he started trembling.

Ling Chen stood up, holding a bottle of beer, and walked straight to the middle-aged man, saying, "Mr. Han, we meet again. I heard you changed your residence, you really made me look for you."

Han Mingchao opened his mouth, carefully plastering a smile and said, "Ling... Mr. Ling, what are you doing? Can't we talk properly? Why bring me to such a place? Besides, wasn't the matter last time resolved already."

"If it really was resolved, I wouldn't be here to trouble you." Ling Chen said calmly, "Mr. Han, do you know what kind of people I detest the most? Those who agree to something, then do something completely different behind your back. Such people are the most shameful. Mr. Han, let's be straightforward, you should understand what you've done."

"I... I don't know. Mr. Ling, I have no idea what you're talking about, there must be some mistake here. How about this, no matter what it is, I'll set up a meal to apologize, how about it?"

"I don't think that's necessary. Han Mingchao, at this point, you're still not admitting it?"

Han Mingchao pulled a long face and said, "Mr. Ling, I truly don't know what you're talking about."

"Alright!" Ling Chen nodded and said, "Since you've forgotten, let me help you remember." With that, Ling Chen grabbed the beer bottle in his hand and smashed it over.

Bang!

Instantly, there was a dull thud, and the beer bottle shattered instantly, spilling all over Han Mingchao. At the same time, blood trickled down Han Mingchao's forehead, staining half of his face red.

Looking at the blood-covered Han Mingchao, Ling Chen discarded the beer bottle mouth from his hand and asked, "Mr. Han, have you remembered now? If you still haven't, I can help jog your memory further." As he spoke, Ling Chen extended his hand, and Nanrong Hao behind him immediately handed him another beer bottle.

Seeing Ling Chen's actions, Han Mingchao was startled, he didn't expect Ling Chen to really make a move.

"Ling Chen, what you're doing is illegal, do you believe I won't call the police?" Han Mingchao shouted loudly.

Ling Chen chuckled nonchalantly, "Mr. Han, you'd have to leave here alive to call the police. But now, being so uncooperative, do you think I'll let you walk out that door?"

Hearing this, Han Mingchao's expression changed drastically, looking at Ling Chen in horror.

"You... you want... you want to kill me? Ling Chen, aren't you afraid of the police arresting you?"

Ling Chen shrugged and said with a smile, "Mr. Han, do you not realize what kind of person I am? Do you think I'd have to do it myself to kill you?" Saying this, Ling Chen pointed to the young men around them, "If I put out a few million, do you believe that everyone here would fight over the chance to kill you?"

"Ling Chen, what... what do you actually want?"

"What I want is simple. I'm asking you, did you go to find Nanrong Wanqing and mention my affair with Leng Feifei? You'd better think carefully before answering my question, because if you miss this chance, I won't give you another."

"I'll speak, I'll speak!" Watching Ling Chen raise the beer bottle, Han Mingchao feared another hit to his head.

"Yes, I did find Miss Nanrong, and I mentioned your affair with Leng Feifei."

"And what else did you say? You probably didn't tell her about your drugging incident. If I'm not mistaken, you definitely spoke ill of me to make Wanqing misunderstand me. Am I right?"

"I..." Han Mingchao opened his mouth, unsure of how to respond.

Ling Chen sneered, "What, afraid to admit it after doing it? Mr. Han, do you really think I'm easy to bully, and that without Wanqing as my backer, I can't deal with you? If that's what you think, you're very wrong." As soon as Ling Chen finished, he grabbed the beer bottle in his hand and smashed it on Han Mingchao's head.

Bang!

Accompanied by a horrific scream like a pig being slaughtered, fresh blood gushed from Han Mingchao's head, dyeing his entire face red.

"Ling... Ling Chen, I know I was wrong, please, let me go." Han Mingchao pleaded, enduring the pain in his head.

Ling Chen said coldly, "Now you know to beg for mercy? Why didn't you consider the consequences when you retaliated against me then? Did you really think that moving away would prevent me from finding you?" After finishing, Ling Chen ignored Han Mingchao and turned to Jiang Hao, saying, "Deal with him however you like, alive or dead, it's up to you."

Hearing this, Jiang Hao smiled and said, "I have a good job for him. Isn't he fond of playing with women? Coincidentally, I have a nightclub under my command that needs men, why not let him have a go, make sure he plays as much as he likes."

"No, please don't!" Han Mingchao understood Jiang Hao's meaning all too well and immediately begged, "Mr. Ling, I can give you money, as long as you let me go, any condition, I have no problem with it."

"Too late, Jiang Hao, he's yours."

"No problem. Chen, you can trust me to handle this."

Leaving the warehouse, Nanrong Hao quickly caught up from behind, saying, "Chen, I'm going with you."

"Hey! How's your older sister?" Ling Chen asked. There was still no news from Su Lin, so he had to ask Nanrong Hao.

"I'm not sure yet, I haven't seen my sister today. But with our cousin accompanying her, nothing should go wrong." As they talked, the phone in Nanrong Hao's pocket started to ring.

Nanrong Hao took out his phone, glanced at the caller display, and said, "Chen, I have something to attend to, I'll head back first." With that, before Ling Chen could say more, Nanrong Hao got into his Audi.

Watching the Audi disappear in the dust, Ling Chen smiled wryly. Judging by Nanrong Hao's cautious demeanor, it seemed he was hiding something he didn't want him to know.

Back home, Ling Chen hid in his room and made a few calls to sort out the remaining issues.

At present, Lin Guodong was arrested, Ji Gang was no longer a threat, and very little of the God Organization's influence remained in East Sea City. For safety's sake, Ling Chen had Tang Guolun mobilize everyone to drive any remaining God Organization members out of East Sea City.

Having been through this event, Ling Chen needed to establish a stable defense to keep East Sea City firmly under his control.

Two days passed in the blink of an eye.

On this day, with light rain falling outside, Ling Chen sat inside the car, parked by the roadside, quietly waiting.

Chapter 1032 Lin Guodong's Fate

A few minutes passed, and a Honda minivan slowly drove up and stopped in front of Ling Chen's car. At the same time, a Mercedes sedan came from behind and parked next to the two cars.

Seeing the two cars arrive, Ling Chen pushed open the car door and got out, gesturing towards the Mercedes sedan. Soon, Tang Guolun got out from the passenger seat, followed by the driver and two security guards.

"Boss Tang, wait outside for a bit. I'll go in and have a word with him." With that, Ling Chen directly took a seat in the back of the Mercedes sedan.

At this moment, Lin Guodong was quietly sitting in the back seat. When he saw Ling Chen come in, he asked, "Why did you bring me here? If you wanted to kill me, you could've done it at the base. Why go through all this trouble?"

Ling Chen smiled slightly, "I said before, I won't take your life. Also, I brought you here to offer you another way of life. Although you'll lose your freedom, at least you can spend the rest of your life peacefully."

Upon hearing this, Lin Guodong immediately reacted, asking, "Are you sending me to prison?"

"You are the head of the God Organization; it's not like you'll be put in prison. Rest assured, I've arranged everything for you. You just need to provide some intelligence in exchange for a villa and a comfortable life."

Lin Guodong nodded and said, "I see. You've made a deal with the government?"

"Sort of. I can't keep you by my side forever. To be honest, I don't trust you, so I thought it over and handing you over to the government is the best arrangement. This way, it benefits both you and me."

Ling Chen paused before continuing, "Don't worry, the government won't torture you. They just want some intelligence about the God Organization and the Ling Family. You're a smart person; you should know how to use your value."

"I understand." Lin Guodong smiled faintly, "This may be the best outcome for me. Ling Chen, although we are on opposing sides, I still have to say thank you!"

"No need to be polite. Like you said, we're family after all, and I don't want any infighting. As long as the main culprit is brought to justice, that's enough." Finished speaking, Ling Chen led Lin Guodong out of the car.

At this time, two middle-aged men in suits got out of the Honda minivan in front.

As they approached, Ling Chen pointed to Lin Guodong beside him and said, "I'm handing him over to you."

"Mr. Ling, Mr. Zhang asked me to convey a message to you. He promised to fulfill his commitments, so rest assured."

"I understand."

"Mr. Lin, let's go." One of the middle-aged men opened the car door, gesturing for Lin Guodong to get in.

"Ling Chen, I'm leaving. I guess we won't have the chance to meet again in the future."

"Take care." Ling Chen waved as he watched Lin Guodong disappear into the car. Watching the departing minivan, Ling Chen slowly exhaled.

With Lin Guodong gone, it meant everything was coming to an end. The God Organization was leaderless, and the Southern Ling Family would need substantial time to re-integrate the God Organization. However, Ling Chen had already spoken with the mysterious Mr. Zhang from the

government, and the government would assign Lonely Wolf to capture the remaining forces of the God Organization.

As long as everything went smoothly, the God Organization would eventually become a thing of the past.

"Boss Tang, let's head back!"

...

After spending half a day at the base, Ling Chen made some simple arrangements for the tasks that needed to be done next. Then he drove alone to the Hongyu Group.

In the past couple of days, Ling Chen had called Su Lin to inquire about Nanrong Wanqing's situation. However, Ling Chen underestimated the impact this matter had on Nanrong Wanqing. No matter how much Su Lin tried to persuade her, Nanrong Wanqing was unresponsive, refusing to listen to anything, and eventually drove Su Lin out of the room.

Helpless, Su Lin had no choice but to give up persuading her.

With Su Lin unable to help, Ling Chen had no choice but to personally make a trip to explain face-to-face with Nanrong Wanqing.

Arriving at the elevators in the lobby of the Hongyu Group, Ling Chen pressed the button for Nanrong Wanqing's private elevator and entered the password, intending to head to the top floor. However, just after entering the password, it immediately indicated that the password was wrong and the elevator couldn't start.

Seeing this, Ling Chen couldn't help but let out a bitter laugh.

It seemed Nanrong Wanqing was guarding against him everywhere, even changing the elevator password. Never mind! He decided to take the regular elevator instead. With this in mind, Ling Chen

switched to the elevator next to it. However, just as he got in, he saw Security Captain Wei Jun hurrying over.

"Wei," Ling Chen grinned and said, "Are you looking for me? Wait a moment; I have something to discuss with the Chairman. I'll come to your office to chat later."

Wei Jun said, frowning, "Ling, don't make this difficult for me, please."

Hearing this, Ling Chen asked, puzzled, "What happened?"

"The Chairman ordered not to let you go up, otherwise, all the security personnel will have to resign and go home. Ling, for the sake of our friendship, please don't look for the Chairman; this concerns the livelihood of dozens of people."

Ling Chen slightly frowned and asked, "Did the Chairman personally instruct you?"

Wei Jun nodded, "Not only the second security team but the first team has also been instructed. Captain Zhong has a good relationship with you too, but with the Chairman's orders, no one dares to disobey. Ling, I suggest you find another opportunity to meet with the Chairman."

"Alright." Ling Chen gave a bitter smile. Since Nanrong Wanqing refused to see him, why make things difficult for Wei Jun and the others?

"Wei, I'll head back first, and I'll find you for a drink when I have time."

"Sure, next time it's my treat."

Leaving the Hongyu Group, Ling Chen took out his phone, initially planning to call Nanrong Hao to help him see Nanrong Wanqing. But at that moment, the phone rang.

Seeing that it was Yang Qingling calling, Ling Chen quickly answered and asked, "Mom, is something up?"

"Where are you? We have guests at home who say they have urgent business with you. If you're free, come back quickly."

"Okay, I'll be there right away."

After hanging up, Ling Chen looked back at the Hongyu Group building, sighed silently, and then got in his car to head home.

He returned home half an hour later.

Upon entering, Ling Chen immediately saw a group of young people sitting in the living room. There were both men and women, all of whom he found unfamiliar, as if he had never seen them before.

Strange!

Ling Chen thought. He didn't know any of these young people, so why would they come looking for him? He approached them, looked at Yang Qingling beside him, and asked, "Mom, is it them you were talking about?"

Yang Qingling nodded, "They said they need your help with something."

Chapter 1033 - 1040: Xiaozhu in Trouble

"You're looking for me?" Ling Chen looked at the young people and asked, "I don't think I know you."

As his words fell, one girl quickly stood up and said, "Mr. Ling, we've met once before, at the hospital, remember?"

"Hospital?" Ling Chen paused slightly, trying hard to recall.

"We were Doctor Zhu's interns. That night, you brought someone to the hospital for treatment, and we met you there."

When the girl said this, Ling Chen immediately remembered. That night, Qiu Yong was poisoned by Song Mingzhe's snake venom and was in critical condition. Ling Chen and the others rushed Qiu Yong to the City People's Hospital. There, Ling Chen met Zhu Xiaozhu. At that time, Zhu Xiaozhu was surrounded by a group of young men and women, all freshly graduated interns.

In an instant, Ling Chen immediately remembered.

"I remember now. But, why are you looking for me? Also, how did you know I live here?"

"When your friend was hospitalized, a relative's phone number was left on the patient's resume. We called and found out you live here," the girl replied. "Mr. Ling, we came to you this time hoping you could help us rescue Doctor Zhu."

"You mean... Xiaozhu?" Ling Chen was stunned and quickly asked, "What's wrong with Xiaozhu?"

"Doctor Zhu went missing last night. We went to her dorm, but she wasn't there, and her phone can't be reached."

"Could she have gone home?" Ling Chen suggested.

"Impossible," the girl said urgently. "Doctor Zhu has an important surgery today. She never misses such serious matters, especially life-and-death situations. She must be in trouble, which is why she didn't go to the hospital. Mr. Ling, I know you're her friend. Please help us find Doctor Zhu and make sure nothing happens to her."

"Yes! Mr. Ling, you're the only friend of Doctor Zhu we know in East Sea City, and besides you, we don't know who else to turn to."

Yang Qingling chimed in, "If that Doctor Zhu went missing, why didn't you report it to the police immediately? The police should handle such matters."

The girl said helplessly, "We did go to the police, but without direct evidence, they can't file a case until forty-eight hours have passed. It's only been over ten hours now; we can't wait that long. Mr. Ling, please help us," the girl pleaded earnestly.

Ling Chen thought for a moment and nodded, "Okay, I'll help you look for her. But without any clues, the chance of finding her is very slim, so you better not get your hopes too high."

"Thank you, Mr. Ling!" the girl and others expressed their gratitude.

Ling Chen waved his hand and said, "No need to thank me. Xiaozhu is my friend. If anything happened to her, I would also be responsible. Alright! You can go back and wait for news."

"Okay, then we'll leave now."

After seeing the young people out, Ling Chen returned to the living room and rubbed his forehead.

"Ling Chen, what's wrong?"

"Xiaozhu seems to be in trouble," Ling Chen said gravely.

"You mean that Doctor Zhu?" Yang Qingling asked suspiciously. "Didn't you just say you weren't sure if anything happened to her? Why are you so certain now?"

"They're just some young people with no experience in such matters. If they knew, they would only worry. It's better to keep it from them," Ling Chen replied.

When taking Qiu Yong to the hospital, Ling Chen saw Zhu Xiaozhu being taken by several people. If it hadn't been for his timely intervention, Zhu Xiaozhu's situation might have been very dangerous.

At that time, Ling Chen had warned Zhu Xiaozhu to be more careful and to report to the police to prevent similar occurrences.

So now that Zhu Xiaozhu was missing again, it was highly likely related to the people who kidnapped her last time.

Ling Chen immediately took out his phone and dialed Hu Fei's number. With no clue on hand, the only one he could rely on was Hu Fei. The Secret Society's intelligence network spanned the entire East Sea City, and they might find some useful clues.

After the call, Yang Qingling looked at Ling Chen and asked, "Son, what kind of friend is that Doctor Zhu to you? Her name sounds like a girl's."

"Mom, Xiaozhu is just an ordinary friend; don't overthink it."

"Fine, fine, I won't ask if that's okay? By the way! How's Wanqing doing? It's been several days, and she hasn't come to see me. Haven't you two made up yet?"

Ling Chen scratched his head and said with a wry smile, "Mom, please don't ask. As you can see, I have a lot of things to deal with right now." To be honest, whenever Nanrong Wanqing was mentioned, he felt troubled, so he simply didn't think about it.

Seeing Ling Chen's impatience, Yang Qingling, as an experienced person, could understand her son's feelings.

"Alright, I won't ask too much anymore. You handle your matters on your own." Saying that, Yang Qingling checked the time, picked up her handbag from the sofa, and said, "I'm heading out."

"Mom, where are you going?"

"Shiyun asked me out for a meal and to go shopping. You don't have time to accompany me, and it's rare for that little girl to have the heart, so I'll take the opportunity to go out. Okay, I won't talk to you more, take care of yourself outside."

With that, Yang Qingling turned and walked out of the villa.

Watching his mother leave, Ling Chen touched his nose. That girl Tang Shiyun sure has her ways, actually managing to win his mother's favor. But it's good, since he doesn't have time to accompany Yang Qingling, having Tang Shiyun with her is not bad either.

...

The efficiency on Hu Fei's side was fast; in less than an hour, news came back.

"Hello! Ling Chen, we've checked, and Zhu Xiaozhu has indeed been kidnapped."

"Where is she?" Ling Chen asked urgently.

"It's still unclear for now. We checked the surveillance cameras near the hospital. Late last night, a van was spotted around the hospital. The van was careful, avoiding the nearby surveillance area, so we couldn't see who's inside. Additionally, I checked the van's license plate, and it's a fake. We can't track the vehicle's location."

"What should we do then?"

"Don't worry. We're retrieving surveillance footage from various routes to see where the van appeared at the same time last night. Once we determine the general direction, we can estimate their approximate location."

"Okay, hurry up. It's about Xiaozhu's safety; I don't want anything to happen to her."

"Don't worry, I'm already on it. I'll notify you as soon as there are updates."

...

At this moment, in a dark basement, a series of footsteps approached, accompanied by a light appearing at the basement doorway.

When the person entered the basement, several youths inside stood up and called, "Haozi!"

"Where's the person you captured?"

"Haozi, she's inside."

"You didn't harm her, did you?"

"Haozi, you specifically instructed us not to harm a single hair on her head, so we didn't dare disobey."

Chapter 1034 - 1041: The Mastermind

"Alright, all of you go outside and stand guard. Let me be alone with her for a moment."

"Yes, Haozi!"

Once everyone in the basement had left, Nanrong Hao walked alone to a small room. He knocked on the door and pushed it open. Inside the small room was a simple bed and a small round table with a case of bottled water and a box of bread and biscuits. Next door, there was a rudimentary toilet.

At this moment, a woman was sitting on the bed in the room. It was Zhu Xiaozhu, whom Ling Chen was searching for.

Seeing who came in, Zhu Xiaozhu was stunned and said in surprise, "Nanrong Hao, why are you here? Did they also capture you?"

Nanrong Hao replied expressionlessly, "Miss Zhu, you are mistaken. No one captured me. On the contrary, I had you brought here."

Hearing this, Zhu Xiaozhu was taken aback and asked incredulously, "Why? Why would you do this? We've never had any enmity; if not great friends, at least we're friends."

"Miss Zhu," Nanrong Hao interjected, "You are my friend, but I'm compelled to do this because I want revenge."

"Revenge?" Zhu Xiaozhu faltered and asked in confusion, "I never wronged you; what revenge are you looking for?"

"You haven't, but your brother did. You might not know yet—my father was killed by your brother." Nanrong Hao tried to keep his tone calm.

"Impossible!" Zhu Xiaozhu immediately retorted without a thought, "That's absolutely impossible; my brother wouldn't do..."

"Enough!" Nanrong Hao coldly interrupted her.

"Miss Zhu, no need to defend your brother. Chen told me himself; would he lie to me? Moreover, don't you know what kind of person your brother is? I want revenge, but I can't find Zhu Hong on my own, so I have to use you to find him. Zhu Xiaozhu, I'm sorry, but some grudges cannot coexist until avenged. Once I kill Zhu Hong, I will release you."

Zhu Xiaozhu bit her lip lightly and said, "Nanrong Hao, even if what you say is true, have you not thought—vendettas beget vendettas. If you kill my brother, won't the Zhu Family retaliate against the Nanrong Family? Aren't the Nanrong and Zhu Families long-time friends? Do you really want to see both families fighting to the death?"

"And so what?" Nanrong Hao couldn't control his anger and shouted, "Should I just let it go? If it were your father that I killed and someone told you the same thing, would you forgo revenge?" Breathing deeply to calm himself, Nanrong Hao continued, "Miss Zhu, put yourself in my shoes; there's no point in saying things that make no difference. I still consider you a friend because you're not like Zhu Hong. Maybe Zhu Hong was a good person once, but not anymore. You are his sister; you should know how he's changed. If I don't kill him, more people will die by his hand."

"Can't you spare him? Must you resort to such extreme revenge?"

"Blood for blood. When he killed my father, did he think about sparing him?" Nanrong Hao said coldly, "Miss Zhu, there's no need to plead for him. I've made up my mind to avenge this matter." As he spoke, Nanrong Hao took a phone out of his pocket and tossed it beside Zhu Xiaozhu.

"Tell Zhu Hong, if he cares about you as his sister, to come see me at once."

"I don't know how to contact him; I haven't seen him in a long time."

"Miss Zhu, I've been more than reasonable with you. You're his sister; you must be able to reach him. I've laid it out for you: either have Zhu Hong come to see me, or... you'll stay here until you contact him. Just beware, Miss Zhu, don't think of using this phone to call the police or anyone other than Zhu Hong. My people will monitor your calls and texts, and if you try to call the police, don't blame me for being ruthless." With that, Nanrong Hao said no more and left the room.

Outside, Nanrong Hao summoned a few of his men in.

"Is everything set up?"

"Boss, rest assured. Everything's arranged as you instructed. If that guy dares show up, he won't be leaving."

"It better be that way. I don't want any slip-ups. Alright, keep an eye on her and remember, no slacking off. Notify me immediately when she contacts Zhu Hong. Understand?"

"Yes, Boss."

...

In the cramped room, Zhu Xiaozhu sat on the bed with the phone in her hand, dazed. She didn't have any contact for Zhu Hong, so she couldn't fulfill Nanrong Hao's demand. Even if she knew how to reach Zhu Hong, she wouldn't call him for help. Regardless of what Zhu Hong might have done, he was still her brother.

"Brother..." After a long silence, Zhu Xiaozhu sighed softly and murmured to herself, "Why did you have to do this?"

...

In no time, two days had passed.

During these two days, Ling Chen hadn't had a good sleep, and the lack of news from Zhu Xiaozhu was making him anxious. He couldn't understand why anyone would capture her, especially given her gentle nature that wouldn't offend anyone.

After thinking it over, Ling Chen picked up his phone and called Hu Fei to check on the investigation's progress.

"Fei, it's been two days; have you found that van?"

"This is tricky. We found the van, but it was burnt, leaving no evidence. Plus, the people who kidnapped Miss Zhu seem very aware of our capabilities, choosing roads without surveillance. We haven't found any clues. Hey! Ling Chen, it's been two days, and there's no movement from the Zhu Family, so it's not a ransom. They must have another motive. I'm thinking, if it's not money, then Zhu Xiaozhu's safety..."

"Shut your crow's mouth," interrupted Ling Chen irritably. "As long as she's missing, don't jump to conclusions. Instead of speculating, you'd do better to focus. Let Boss Tang know to temporarily set aside other matters and have the Secret Society use all resources to locate Zhu Xiaozhu."

"Alright, I'll do my best."

After hanging up, Ling Chen rubbed his temples, feeling increasingly worried. Hu Fei's intuition wasn't necessarily wrong; if the abductors weren't after ransom, what could they want?

Revenge?

Chapter 1035 - 1042: Vengeance for My Father's Death (1)

Nightfall!

In an apartment located in the city center of East Sea City, Zhu Hong stood on the balcony, gazing into the colorful nightscape in the distance, a cigarette already halfway burned in his hand.

"Disciple, what are you thinking about?" At this moment, Chen Quan walked up from behind, leaning on the balcony railing, and asked.

"Master." Zhu Hong threw down the half-burned cigarette and said, "I'm thinking about the way forward. To be honest, I didn't expect Ling Chen to be so cunning, setting up a trap to lure Lin Guodong in. Now, Lin Guodong has been captured, Ji Gang is missing, and the remaining forces of the God Organization in East Sea City have been driven out. Now, Ling Chen has firmly controlled East Sea City. With this experience, he will definitely strengthen his control over East Sea City, which is very disadvantageous for us."

After listening to Zhu Hong's words, Chen Quan squinted his eyes, revealing a sharp look and said, "Disciple, let me ask you a question."

"Please go ahead, Master."

"What is it that you seek?" Chen Quan looked straight into Zhu Hong's eyes, saying slowly, "Everyone has their own pursuits. You've given so much; surely there is something you want to obtain. Tell me, what do you want?"

Hearing this, Zhu Hong unconsciously clenched his fists. After a moment of silence, he slowly began, "What I wanted before was simple, the same as all ordinary people: career and love. Unfortunately, things didn't go as planned, and even something so simple I couldn't obtain. In the end, I was left neither human nor ghost, having to wear this mask to face people. Master, you can't understand the feeling of being disfigured. Looking like this now, I can't be called a human, no woman would dare to look at me, even if I were rich. So now, I don't seek women or wealth, but power. Only power can give me everything. Besides, I want revenge. Whoever ruined me, I will pay them back tenfold, a hundredfold." As he finished, Zhu Hong almost spoke through gritted teeth.

"Your enemy is Ling Chen?"

"Yes, it's him!"

Chen Quan nodded and said, "I've seen Ling Chen and dealt with him. He's not so remarkable, apart from being better in kung fu, he doesn't have many other advantages. Disciple, I'm well aware of your abilities. I've been confined in the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion for too long, and I don't understand many things outside, so I can only rely on you to help me. Trust your Master, as long as you follow me, those pursuits of yours will eventually become reality. However, before that, we must stabilize and can't be running around like this. Do you understand what I mean?"

"Master, rest assured, I am already planning. If everything goes smoothly, there will be news soon."

"Good, then I'll wait for your good news."

As he spoke, Chu Huaiyang quickly walked over from inside the house.

"Zhu Hong."

"Looking for me for something?"

Chu Huaiyang glanced at Chen Quan beside him and said, "Our people just intercepted a piece of information from the police, related to your sister."

"Xiaozhu?" Zhu Hong frowned slightly and said, "What's happened to her?"

"The police have just filed a case; your sister has been missing for forty-eight hours. The reporter is her student at the hospital, and according to those students' testimonies, they think your sister might have been kidnapped."

"Are you sure?" Zhu Hong said coldly, "Who dares to kidnap my sister?"

"I'm not sure."

"Disciple." Chen Quan said from the side, "Since it's about your sister, you should pay attention to it. Go on, we don't have much to do these days, handle your sister's situation well, then we can proceed with the next step at ease."

"Yes, Master."

Returning from the balcony to the room, Zhu Hong took out his phone and dialed a number directly.

Not long after, the call connected, and a deep male voice came through on the other end, "Hello! Who's this?"

"Dad, it's me."

"Hong?" Hearing Zhu Hong's response, the voice immediately grew excited, "Hong, where are you? Do you know your sister's in trouble."

"Dad, don't worry, I just got the news." After a pause, Zhu Hong asked, "Dad, what's going on with my sister? Our family hasn't made enemies with anyone, who would kidnap her?"

"Those people weren't after us, they were after you. Two hours ago, I got a call from the kidnappers asking if I knew your whereabouts and told me to turn you in. You didn't leave any contact information, and I couldn't find you even if I wanted to. Luckily, you called back; otherwise, I really wouldn't know what to do."

"After me?" Zhu Hong said solemnly, "Did the kidnappers reveal their identity?"

"No. But they gave me a contact; tomorrow evening at seven, at the intersection of Wangbei Street and Datong Street in East Sea City, there's a phone booth there, they want you to wait for a call there. Hong, no matter what you've done outside, your sister is innocent, you must save her."

"Dad, don't worry, I won't let little sister be in danger."

After hanging up the phone, Zhu Hong narrowed his eyes and muttered, "Who wants to go against me?"

"Could it be Ling Chen?" Chu Huaiyang speculated from the side.

"Impossible. I know Ling Chen's character well; even if he wanted to force me to appear, he wouldn't use such lowly means. Besides, he has a very special relationship with my sister, he would never do this to her."

"If it's not Ling Chen, then who could it be?"

"It's unclear for now. However, no matter who kidnapped my sister, I won't let them off easily."

"I didn't expect you to care about your sister so much; I thought you'd given up on family ties."

Zhu Hong glanced at Chu Huaiyang and said blandly, "I won't go back to the Zhu Family, but someone has to be there for my parents when they're old, so my sister must not be harmed."

...

The next day.

Around six fifty in the evening, Zhu Hong and Chu Huaiyang drove to the designated location. At the intersection of the two streets, there indeed was a public phone booth.

Checking the time, Zhu Hong greeted Chu Huaiyang and went alone into the phone booth to wait for the call.

Ten minutes passed, and the phone in the booth rang right on time.

Picking up the handset, Zhu Hong calmly said, "This is Zhu Hong, who is this?"

"You finally showed up." A voice processed through a voice changer came from the other end of the phone.

"Zhu Hong, if you want to save your sister, be at the place I tell you in an hour. Remember, you must come alone. If you report to the police or bring others, then get ready to collect your sister's body." After giving the address, the person on the other end immediately hung up.

One hour... Zhu Hong looked at the time on the phone screen, turned around back to the car, and said to Chu Huaiyang, "You go back first."

Chapter 1036 - 1043: Vengeance for My Father's Death (2)

"You're going alone?" Chu Huaiyang asked, "What if something happens to you?"

"That's none of your concern." With that, Zhu Hong started the car and drove straight toward the destination.

After more than forty minutes, Zhu Hong finally arrived at the place mentioned. It was an old building located in East Sea City's Old City. Since the Old City was undergoing redevelopment, all old houses were designated for demolition. As a result, all the residents in this area had been relocated by the government, leaving these buildings empty.

Getting out of the car, Zhu Hong surveyed the surroundings, spotting a young man emerging from a building not far away, who waved at him.

As he approached, the young man made a gesture for Zhu Hong to stop and spread his arms. Then, he carefully checked Zhu Hong up and down, ensuring he wasn't carrying any weapons, before saying, "Follow me."

The young man led Zhu Hong through the stairwell of the old building straight to a staircase. The staircase led directly to the bottom, and shortly after, the two arrived at a dimly lit basement.

"Where's my sister?" Zhu Hong glanced around and asked.

The young man walked to a door, pointed inside, and said, "Go in, you'll see your sister soon."

Upon hearing this, Zhu Hong didn't hesitate, he pushed the door open and walked in. As soon as he entered, two young men rushed out from either side with knives, pressing them against Zhu Hong's neck.

"Don't move, you'd better behave, or you'll lose your life," the young man coldly warned.

Zhu Hong calmly said, "I've come as you asked, shouldn't I see my sister now?"

"Don't worry, your sister is fine, nothing has happened to her." The voice came, and Zhu Hong's eyes turned cold and sharp.

"Nanrong Hao?" Zhu Hong said in a deep voice, "Did you kidnap my sister?"

"That's right!" Nanrong Hao nodded and said, "Zhu Hong, it's been a long time. I've spent a lot of effort to find you. Your sister didn't know how to contact you, so I had to call your house. I figured someone there would know where you were." Pausing, Nanrong Hao asked, "I think you know why I'm looking for you."

"I don't quite understand."

"Don't understand?" Nanrong Hao sneered, "You killed my father, do I need to emphasize this to you? Zhu Hong, a father-killer and I can't coexist, all I want is your life in return."

"So you know everything. Did Ling Chen tell you?" Zhu Hong seemed to relax, smiling, "I thought it was something serious. Nanrong Hao, did you know how many people your father killed in the God Organization? Someone like him was doomed to die sooner or later; I just helped him along."

"Shut up!" Nanrong Hao barked coldly, "Zhu Hong, who do you think you are? Blood for blood, you killed my father, today I will use your life to pay for it."

Zhu Hong chuckled dismissively, "Nanrong Hao, it's not that I look down on you, but do you have what it takes to kill me?"

"You'll find out soon enough if I have what it takes." Nanrong Hao glanced at the two young men beside Zhu Hong and said, "Lock him up."

"Yes, boss!"

"Wait!" Zhu Hong stopped Nanrong Hao and asked, "Didn't you kidnap my sister? Where is she, let me see her."

"No need to see her; she's not here. Zhu Hong, unlike you, I don't kill innocent people. I had no choice but to catch your sister to draw you out. Before you came, I already moved her elsewhere. She's completely safe now, so rest easy on your way."

"So my sister's okay?" Zhu Hong nodded gently and said, "If that's the case, I don't need to be polite with you."

With those words, Zhu Hong's body suddenly lunged forward, instantly shaking off the two knives at his neck. Before the two young men could react, Zhu Hong swiftly repositioned himself and delivered a double-fisted blow to their foreheads.

In an instant, with two muffled groans, the young men couldn't even resist and fell directly to the ground.

Seeing this, Nanrong Hao's expression changed; he hadn't expected Zhu Hong to break free from his two subordinates. Without a second thought, Nanrong Hao charged forward, striking a punch at Zhu Hong's face.

Seeing the punch come his way, Zhu Hong smirked, advancing instead of retreating, quickly closing in on Nanrong Hao. When the punch was less than ten centimeters away, Zhu Hong slightly tilted his head, syncing the motion with his upper body's sway, letting Nanrong Hao's punch sail over his shoulder, hitting nothing but air.

Seizing the moment, Zhu Hong sharply lifted his foot and kicked Nanrong Hao hard in the stomach.

Nanrong Hao's face changed from the pain in his abdomen as he stumbled back several steps until his back hit the wall, finally stabilizing his stance.

"How did you..." Nanrong Hao stared at Zhu Hong in shock, not expecting this guy to be so skilled in fighting. Back then, Zhu Hong couldn't fight at all; a few street thugs could easily take him down. But now, he had become this formidable.

"Nanrong Hao, do you still think I'm the old Zhu Hong? Don't you know who my master is?" Zhu Hong bent down to pick up a knife from the floor and walked directly toward Nanrong Hao.

"I know you're eager for revenge, but you overlooked one thing: you underestimated me. To kill you, I don't even need help."

"Boss!"

"Boss!"

At this moment, over ten young men burst into the basement from outside, each wielding steel bars and machetes.

Seeing his reinforcements arrive, Nanrong Hao immediately pointed at Zhu Hong and shouted, "Get rid of this bastard for me."

Following Nanrong Hao's command, the young men wasted no time, grabbing their weapons and swinging at Zhu Hong.

In no time, Zhu Hong's body bore several more wounds. Although he learned various fighting techniques from Chen Quan, Zhu Hong's training time was simply too short. Even with a master instructor, becoming a true expert in such a short period was impossible.

If there were only four or five opponents, Zhu Hong might have managed, but against more than a dozen, his skills were stretched thin.

Before long, Zhu Hong was cornered by Nanrong Hao's men.

"Zhu Hong, were you not quite impressive earlier? I want to see how capable you really are." Nanrong Hao cursed as he walked, taking a machete handed to him by a subordinate, aiming to strike a fatal blow to Zhu Hong's head.

Ah!

But just then, a sudden change occurred, and agonizing screams erupted from among the crowd.

Chapter 1037 - 1044: Dangerous Situation (1)

The sudden scream instantly grabbed everyone's attention. Nanrong Hao focused his gaze and saw a small red snake wrapped around the arm of one of his men. At this moment, the red snake was fiercely biting the man. In just a few seconds, the young man's face turned a bluish-purple, his eyes lost all luster, and he collapsed directly to the ground.

Witnessing this scene, Nanrong Hao was greatly shocked. Where did that red snake come from? However, what shocked Nanrong Hao even more was the terrifying poison of the red snake, taking his subordinate's life in mere seconds.

Just as Nanrong Hao was alarmed, he suddenly heard the cries of the crowd.

As he looked down, Nanrong Hao was horrified to discover that there were more than a dozen red snakes on the ground, slithering towards everyone.

"Watch out!" Nanrong Hao shouted, quickly swinging his machete and slashing at an approaching red snake.

Perhaps sensing the crisis, the red snake immediately changed direction, darting several meters away, avoiding Nanrong Hao's machete.

Before Nanrong Hao could continue his pursuit, he heard the screams of his men around him. In the blink of an eye, two or three people had already been bitten by the red snakes.

Seeing this, Nanrong Hao had no time to hesitate and hurriedly rushed out of the basement.

"Stop!" Zhu Hong followed closely behind Nanrong Hao, picking up a machete from the ground and quickly chasing after him.

Soon, Nanrong Hao charged out of the basement, running directly towards the stairs. However, before he could take a few steps, he saw a wolf with bared fangs coming down the stairs.

After a brief stupor, Nanrong Hao quickly came to his senses. Not daring to move forward, he urgently turned and sprinted back. Behind Nanrong Hao was a straight corridor. The buildings in this area all had basements, with each building's basement interconnected. Now that the way out was blocked, Nanrong Hao had to find another way to escape.

...

At this moment, Ling Chen was driving on the road, planning to go to the supermarket to buy some groceries and daily supplies, as per his mother's instructions. Halfway through, the car's Bluetooth-connected phone rang, and he immediately answered the call.

"Hello! Fatty, what's up? Have you found Xiaozhu's whereabouts?"

"We haven't found Miss Zhu, but we discovered something else that might interest you."

"What did you find? Tell me."

"We found a falcon in the Old City."

Falcon?

Ling Chen raised an eyebrow. Isn't that Song Mingzhe's pet? How did it end up in the Old City? Are they... Thinking of this, Ling Chen said, "Fatty, send a few people to check out the Old City. I'll head there right away."

With that, Ling Chen hung up the phone and quickly drove towards the Old City.

Over twenty minutes later, Ling Chen finally arrived at the location Hu Fei had mentioned. After parking the car, Ling Chen approached an area with old buildings. Observing the surroundings, he prepared to venture further inside. But at that moment, a man in work clothes called out to him loudly from the roadside.

"Stop! You're not allowed to enter."

Seeing the man quickly approaching, Ling Chen halted and asked when the man got closer, "Uncle, why can't I go in?"

The man explained, "These buildings are all at risk, and we are preparing for explosive demolition. Bombs have been set around the buildings, so it's best to stay out to avoid any accidents." As he spoke, the man pointed to a warning sign erected not far away and said, "Didn't you see the warning over there?"

Ling Chen glanced over and apologized, "Sorry, I didn't see it earlier. Don't worry. I'll just watch from the roadside; I won't go in."

"That's for the best." The man reiterated a few more warnings before walking away.

"Chen!"

Shortly after the man left, a few young people called out Ling Chen's name and quickly approached. Recognizing them without needing to think, Ling Chen knew for sure they were sent by Hu Fei.

"How about it? Did you find anything?"

"Chen, all the buildings around here have been rigged with explosives. The police are setting up a protective perimeter over there. I just asked, and they said the demolition will take place tomorrow morning."

Another young man chimed in, "When we first arrived, we saw a large bird nearby, but it disappeared later; we don't know where it flew to. Oh, right! Chen, there's something else. We ran into some familiar faces by the roadside."

"Familiar faces?" Ling Chen asked curiously, "Who are these familiar faces?"

"They are subordinates of Haozi. When I asked what they were doing here, they hemmed and hawed, only saying they were passing by, refusing to say anything else."

"Haozi's car is also parked over there, but there's no one from Haozi's crew in it."

Hearing this, Ling Chen frowned slightly. Nanrong Hao was actually here? But how could one Nanrong Hao bring Song Mingzhe into the picture? Thinking it over, Ling Chen took out his phone from his pocket and dialed Nanrong Hao's number.

Soon, he heard the system message from the other end, indicating that the phone was unreachable.

Can't get through?

Ling Chen looked at the distant buildings, pondering silently. He had lived in the Old City before, and these buildings all had basements. Since the basements were underground, the phone signal wasn't very stable inside.

With Nanrong Hao's car parked here, he must be nearby. With his phone unreachable, it indicated that Nanrong Hao was likely in the basement.

This guy... What on earth is he up to?

With thoughts racing, Ling Chen looked at the young men and said, "You guys stay outside, I'll go in and have a look."

Taking advantage of the police not having fully set up their perimeter, Ling Chen swiftly ran into one of the old buildings. Following the stairs, Ling Chen headed straight down to the basement. Observing the pitch-black surroundings, Ling Chen took out his phone and turned on its flashlight, illuminating the basement path as he carefully walked forward.

Because these buildings' basements were all connected, they had a vast area and very complex passageways. When Ling Chen had lived in the Old City, he'd only visited the basement occasionally. Back then, there were lights in the basement, making it convenient. Now, due to the upcoming demolition, all electrical wires had been disconnected, leaving it pitch-dark and catacomb-like.

Using his phone's light, Ling Chen moved through the basement corridors, searching for any sign of Nanrong Hao.

Since the demolition wouldn't take place until tomorrow morning, there was plenty of time, so Ling Chen wasn't concerned about any immediate danger. The only thing troubling him was why Song Mingzhe would appear in the same place as Nanrong Hao.

After wandering in the basement for a while, Ling Chen suddenly heard faint noises not far away, like the sound of footsteps moving around.

Chapter 1038 - 1045: Dangerous Situation (2)

Ling Chen stood still, listening intently for a moment, and realized the footsteps were approaching him. Immediately, he turned off the phone's light, quietly leaned against the wall, and fixed his gaze ahead.

After more than ten seconds, a faint light appeared in Ling Chen's line of sight. Focusing intently, he realized the faint light came from a phone screen. A young man in his twenties, holding a phone, was gasping for breath as he stumbled along, covered in filth, looking as disheveled as one could be.

When the young man got closer, Ling Chen suddenly lunged forward, quickly locking the other's neck and thrusting him against the wall.

The young man was startled, struggling desperately, and shouted loudly, "No, don't kill me, please, give me a chance!"

"Shut up!" Ling Chen said softly, "Look carefully at who I am first."

Hearing this, the young man aimed the phone screen at Ling Chen. After seeing Ling Chen's face clearly, the young man breathed a big sigh of relief and relaxed completely.

"Chen, you're... you're here at the perfect time, please, help us." The young man pleaded.

"What happened?" Ling Chen asked, "Why did you come here? Also, what about Nanrong Hao, have you seen him?"

"Haozi got separated from us, I don't know where he is now. Chen, you must save us, several people have already died."

Seeing the young man's tense appearance, Ling Chen loosened his grip and patted the young man's shoulder, saying, "Don't be afraid, as long as I'm here, no one can hurt you. Tell me, what exactly happened?"

The young man took a couple of deep breaths and finally began to speak slowly, "Chen, it's like this..." He then explained everything that had happened.

After listening, Ling Chen felt a heavy weight on his heart and cursed silently. No wonder Song Mingzhe was here; it was because of Zhu Hong and Zhu Xiaozhu. Ling Chen never expected that it was Nanrong Hao who kidnapped Zhu Xiaozhu. As for the reason, Ling Chen didn't even need to think; it was obviously for revenge. But Nanrong Hao's thinking was a bit naive; did he really think he could kill Zhu Hong and avenge his father?

"What about Zhu Xiaozhu? Is she here?" Ling Chen asked.

The young man nodded and said, "Before Zhu Hong arrived, Haozi locked her in a room in the basement, planning to release her after Zhu Hong died."

"Do you know the specific location?"

The young man pointed down the passage he came from, "Follow this road, about thirty meters in, turn left, and there's a room ahead. If she hasn't been rescued, she should still be there."

"Okay, get yourself out first." With that, Ling Chen quickly walked inwards.

"Chen." Watching Ling Chen's retreating figure, the young man suddenly thought of something and quickly called out to Ling Chen, reminding him, "Chen, the basement is full of venomous snakes, several of our brothers were bitten and died, you'd better be careful and stay safe."

Ling Chen responded without looking back, "Got it, you get out quickly."

Walking in the pitch-black passage, Ling Chen advanced cautiously by the light of his phone. After the young man's reminder, Ling Chen became even more careful. It wasn't hard to guess that those snakes must have been Song Mingzhe's pets. Ling Chen had witnessed their fearsome nature when he last fought with Song Mingzhe and his group, and he still felt some lingering fear.

Soon, Ling Chen arrived outside the room the young man described. Seeing the slightly ajar door, Ling Chen murmured to himself that something was wrong and quickly pushed the door open. As expected, the room was empty, not a single person inside. Before he arrived, someone must have rescued Zhu Xiaozhu.

However, Ling Chen could not confirm whether it was Zhu Hong who rescued Zhu Xiaozhu or someone else.

Bang!

While pondering, Ling Chen suddenly heard a loud explosion over his ear. Along with the explosion, the whole basement started to shake slightly, and dust began falling from the ceiling in layers.

What happened?

Ling Chen was shocked, and before he could react, he heard successive 'bang bang' explosive sounds outside. At the same time, the ceiling and the walls of the room all cracked, filling with fissures.

Not good!

Seeing this situation, Ling Chen immediately understood what had happened. Someone must have detonated the explosives placed under the building.

Based on what the young man earlier had said, Ling Chen already knew about Nanrong Hao's plan. Nanrong Hao, now a management member of the Hongyu Group, was responsible for the redevelopment project in the Old City. These buildings needed to be demolished by blasting, so he must have been aware. Hence, he chose to meet Zhu Hong here. Once Zhu Hong arrived, he only needed to detonate the explosives pre-buried under the building to easily kill Zhu Hong, avenging his father.

What Ling Chen was worried about now was whether Nanrong Hao and Zhu Xiaozhu had managed to escape from the basement. If they were still here, they would definitely be in mortal danger.

No time to think more, Ling Chen rushed out of the room, lighting his way with his phone, hurrying towards the site of the explosion. Along the way, Ling Chen noticed that the walls on both sides of the passage had already cracked, and stones occasionally fell from above.

No way! These were all decades-old buildings, and now that they've been blasted, they could collapse at any moment. I must evacuate as soon as possible. If I'm any later, I might be buried inside too.

Not far ahead, Ling Chen saw a pile of stones fall from above, blocking the door ahead. With the path blocked, Ling Chen had to find another route, which would undoubtedly take more time.

At this moment, outside the building, the policemen who heard the explosion were all shocked, quickly contacting their superiors and evacuating all the crowds around. After more than ten minutes, several police cars quickly arrived on the scene, led by Xia Mutong.

"Captain Xia!" A male policeman quickly approached Xia Mutong.

"What's the situation inside?"

"It's not clear yet. The explosion occurred in the central building. Upon careful observation, due to the explosion, cracks have appeared in that building and several surrounding buildings. They might collapse at any time."

Frowning, Xia Mutong asked, "Are there still people inside?"

"No, we checked yesterday, and all the residents of the buildings have already been evacuated."

"Very good." Xia Mutong slightly relaxed and said, "Extend the perimeter around the blast point by twenty meters and prohibit any unauthorized personnel from approaching." While saying this, another police officer hurried over, saluting Xia Mutong.

"Captain Xia, lots of journalists have arrived over there, and they want to know the situation."

After thinking for a moment, Xia Mutong said, "Tell them the police are actively investigating and eliminating danger. We will inform them as soon as there's a result."

Chapter 1039 - 1046: Dangerous Situation (3)

As time ticked by, Ling Chen walked cautiously through the basement, his brows tightly furrowed with each careful step.

Along the way, Ling Chen noticed that many stairways leading to the surface were blocked by stones and were impossible to traverse. Even if he found Nanrong Hao and Zhu Xiaozhu, getting back to the surface would still be a troublesome task.

"Who's there?"

At that moment, Ling Chen suddenly heard a familiar voice ahead.

"Haozi?" Ling Chen's eyes lit up, and he quickly rushed forward. Before long, Ling Chen saw Nanrong Hao sitting on the ground, leaning against the wall, his leg covered in blood, with some bloodstains on the ground.

"Chen!" Seeing Ling Chen arrive, Nanrong Hao asked in surprise, "Chen, what are you doing here?"

"Why do you think I'm here?" Ling Chen said irritably, "If it weren't for your great deeds, would I have to come looking for you?"

Hearing Ling Chen's reprimand, Nanrong Hao sheepishly scratched his head and said, "Chen, you... you know already?"

"Enough, we'll talk about this later. Let me check your injuries first." Ling Chen squatted in front of Nanrong Hao, tore open the trousers, revealing the wound inside. It seemed to have been scratched by falling stones, leaving a ten-centimeter gash on Nanrong Hao's leg, blood and flesh mangled, with blood continuously oozing out.

"How about it, can you still stand?"

Nanrong Hao tried to stand but pain was already evident on his face before he got up. Seeing this, Ling Chen didn't bother asking further and hoisted him onto his back.

As he walked, Ling Chen asked, "Who detonated the explosives just now?"

"Chen, it wasn't me. I'm still down here myself, how could I have detonated explosives? I wouldn't do such a reckless thing."

"Then who was it? Could it be Zhu Hong?"

"I don't know. Originally, I could have taken out that bastard Zhu Hong, but suddenly a bunch of snakes appeared from nowhere and bit a few of my companions to death. At that time, I was only concerned with escaping and didn't pay attention to Zhu Hong's whereabouts."

"You! I don't even know what to say to you. If Zhu Hong were that easy to deal with, I would have taken care of him long ago. Zhu Hong is not what he used to be; he has experts around him. Let alone you, I wouldn't be 100% confident in killing him myself."

"Then what should we do?"

"Haozi, I understand how you feel, but you can't rush into these things. Otherwise, you'll only invite more trouble." As he spoke, Ling Chen stopped and turned to Nanrong Hao, asking, "Do you smell anything?"

"Smell?" Nanrong Hao asked, puzzled, "Chen, what smell?"

Ling Chen didn't respond, but he gazed at the surrounding floor, his eyes sharp and alert. Suddenly, a red flash shot out from the rubble on the ground, heading straight for Ling Chen's face.

Without time to think, Ling Chen stepped back, his body subtly shifting as the red flash flew past him. Simultaneously, Ling Chen reached out with his right hand and grabbed the tail of the red flash, slamming it against the wall. Instantly, blood splattered everywhere.

Upon closer inspection, Ling Chen held a small red snake in his hand, its head shattered from the impact, with blood dripping to the ground.

"Chen, it was this kind of snake that attacked us just now," Nanrong Hao exclaimed.

Ling Chen nodded and casually tossed the small red snake to the ground, saying grimly, "Forget it for now, this place is too dangerous; we need to find a way out quickly."

A few minutes passed, and Ling Chen, with Nanrong Hao, searched several exits, but all were blocked by stones, impassable. Moving the stones would take too long, and by then, the building might have already collapsed.

"Chen, look over there!" At this moment, Nanrong Hao seemed to spot something, pointing excitedly to the distance.

Following Nanrong Hao's direction, Ling Chen glanced over to see a crack on the top of the basement, with light shining through from outside, strikingly noticeable.

The crack was about twenty centimeters wide, likely split by the earlier explosion, just wide enough for an adult to squeeze through. Ling Chen walked over to the base of the crack and examined it closely. The area was laced with cracks; it was uncertain how long it could hold. Moreover, the crack was quite high, about three meters up.

"Chen, what do you think, should we try?" Nanrong Hao asked.

Ling Chen didn't respond, pulling out his cellphone instead. Checking the signal strength, he found it was halfway full due to the crack. Scrolling through his contacts, Ling Chen found a number and dialed it directly.

After the call, Nanrong Hao asked, "Chen, why did you call Officer Xia?"

"There's been an explosion here; Xia Mutong will definitely come to the scene. At this point, we can only seek her help."

After waiting in the basement for about four to five minutes, Xia Mutong's voice came from the crack above: "Ling Chen, are you there?"

"I'm down here," Ling Chen responded loudly.

"Hold on, I'll have someone send down a rope right away."

Shortly after, a rope dangled down from the crack above. Ling Chen took the rope, wrapped it around Nanrong Hao, then tugged on it, signaling to Xia Mutong above to pull him up.

"Haozi, once you're up there, if Xia Mutong asks anything, don't say a word. Let me do the explaining, got it?" Ling Chen instructed.

Nanrong Hao nodded, "Chen, don't worry, I know what to do."

Watching Nanrong Hao being hoisted up, Ling Chen suddenly heard a rustling sound behind him. Turning around, he saw a dozen or so small red snakes had appeared on the ground, slowly approaching from behind. Had it not been for Ling Chen's keen hearing, he would have been bitten by them.

Seeing the red snakes inching closer, Ling Chen picked up a few stones from the ground, flicked his wrist, and the stones flew out, accurately hitting the heads of the red snakes, knocking them out.

Perhaps sensing Ling Chen's threat, the red snakes paused, slowly retreated. As Ling Chen picked up a few more stones, the red snakes turned and slithered away.

Watching the red snakes crawl away, an idea struck Ling Chen. Their retreat was too orderly to be random, indicating someone nearby was controlling them. This suggested that Song Mingzhe must be nearby, not too far away.

With this in mind, Ling Chen informed Xia Mutong above and pursued the direction in which the red snakes retreated. If Song Mingzhe was here, Zhu Hong and the others were likely here too. Since Xiaozhu wasn't found yet, and her rescue was uncertain, Ling Chen needed to ascertain this.

Chapter 1040 - 1047: Dangerous Situation (4)

"Ling Chen, Ling Chen!" Xia Mutong stood at the edge of the crevice, calling Ling Chen's name loudly.

Seeing that Ling Chen was not responding, Xia Mutong couldn't help but stomp her foot, cursing inwardly, "That bastard!" At a time like this, he still refuses to come out. Does he really want to stay inside and wait for death?

After thinking it over, Xia Mutong gritted her teeth and said to her colleague beside her, "Give me the rope and let me go down."

"Captain Xia, what are you going to do?"

Xia Mutong said angrily, "I'm going to bring that bastard up."

"No!" A male police officer hurriedly shook his hand, saying, "The ground around here has already cracked and could collapse at any moment. We should evacuate quickly."

"But there are still people down there. I can't just watch them die without trying to save them," Xia Mutong said urgently, "I'm the person in charge. Just follow my orders and don't worry about anything else. Quick, give me the rope!"

Seeing Xia Mutong's determined expression, the male police officer hesitated for a moment but finally handed over the rope obediently. Xia Mutong took the rope and immediately wrapped it around her waist. Then, she walked to the edge of the crevice and lightly tapped the ground with her foot to test it. As she did so, the ground on both sides of the crevice suddenly cracked, and the cracks spread rapidly.

Seeing this, her colleagues standing nearby were shocked and quickly grabbed Xia Mutong's arm to pull her back from the edge of the crevice. As everyone retreated about four meters away, there was a 'boom,' and the ground around the crevice collapsed instantly, raising clouds of dust.

Xia Mutong patted the dirt off her body and hurriedly got up from the ground. Suddenly, the crevice before her had become a huge pit, blocked at the bottom by rocks, making it impossible to go down. Furthermore, the surrounding cracks were gradually spreading, and the area of expansion was growing larger.

"Captain Xia, let's evacuate quickly; it's too dangerous here."

Thinking of Ling Chen still underground, Xia Mutong lightly bit her lip, a hint of worry flashing in her eyes. After pondering for a while, Xia Mutong spoke, "Evacuate everyone, and inform the firefighters to bring equipment and rush to the scene for rescue; make sure to get the people trapped below out."

"Yes!"

After retreating from the scene to a safe area, Xia Mutong found Nanrong Hao, who was receiving treatment in the medical vehicle, and questioned him in an interrogative tone, "Tell me, what exactly happened? Why were you down there?"

Nanrong Hao remembered Ling Chen's instructions and feigned ignorance, "Officer Xia, I also don't know what happened. We'll have to wait until Chen comes up to find out the details."

Hearing this, Xia Mutong felt a surge of anger and said coldly, "You were down there, and you don't know what's going on? Nanrong Hao, I'm warning you, don't play dumb with me. Do you believe I won't take you back to the police station?"

Nanrong Hao responded indifferently, "Captain Xia, I honestly don't know. I got hit on the head by a rock earlier, and it's still buzzing. I can't remember a lot of things. How about this, let me rest first, and if I recall anything, I'll tell you right away."

"You..." Xia Mutong glared, struggling to suppress her anger. She realized that anyone close to Ling Chen was just as infuriating as he was.

"Captain Xia, the firefighters have arrived."

Upon hearing the report from her subordinate, Xia Mutong ignored Nanrong Hao and immediately led her team to the scene.

A few minutes passed, and several firefighters approached Xia Mutong to discuss the rescue plan.

"Captain Xia, going in now could be very dangerous," a firefighter said. "We just surveyed the scene, and the entrances leading to the basement are all blocked by rocks. Additionally, the ground has various degrees of cracks and is at risk of collapsing at any moment. If we use drilling equipment, it could expand the cracks and cause the ground to cave in."

Xia Mutong frowned and asked, "Then what should we do? We can't just watch Ling Chen die in there."

"Captain Xia, after our discussion, it's not suitable to carry out a rescue at this time. The risk is too high. Even if our people go in, there's no guarantee they could get out."

"I don't care," Xia Mutong said firmly. "This is what you specialize in. I'm giving you half an hour; no matter what method you use, you must come up with a solution for me."

...

At this moment, in the dim basement, Ling Chen was still following those small red snakes. His plan was simple: these snakes would surely head for Song Mingzhe. By following them, he couldn't only find Song Mingzhe but might also find Zhu Hong.

While pondering, the light in front of Ling Chen suddenly went out. Glancing at the phone in his hand, Ling Chen cursed inwardly. He had been using the phone's flashlight, severely draining the battery. Now, it had less than one percent left, not enough to last two minutes.

As the battery indicator flashed a few times, the phone automatically shut down, and darkness enveloped him.

With the phone screen dark, Ling Chen's keen ears caught the rustling sounds around him. There was no need to look; those small red snakes were undoubtedly returning.

In the pitch-black environment, the small snakes had an advantage. Ling Chen gripped the phone tightly, his body slowly pivoting in place as he listened attentively to the movements of the red snakes.

Suddenly, the sound of something cutting through the air was heard. Ling Chen swiftly turned around, flicked his wrist, and threw the phone. A second later, a faint noise was heard as if something had hit the wall.

Meanwhile, Ling Chen leaned back, raised his right leg, and gave a fierce kick. Although he couldn't see anything in the darkness, he could feel through the impact that he had killed at least seven or eight red snakes.

After waiting silently for over twenty seconds, there were no more sounds. It was unclear whether all the snakes had been killed or had escaped in fear, but they hadn't attacked Ling Chen anymore.

Seeing the crisis resolved, Ling Chen didn't pause for a second, heading forward immediately. Even without the snakes to guide him, he only needed to determine the right direction.

However, because the surroundings were too dark, with stones scattered everywhere, and rocks occasionally falling from above, Ling Chen's speed slowed significantly. After advancing a few dozen meters, he suddenly stopped and looked ahead. There, he noticed a light. At this moment, a light meant there was someone there. It was likely that Song Mingzhe and the others were in front.