

The Beauty 1041

Chapter 1041 Perilous Situation (5)

After observing for a while, Ling Chen touched the wall and cautiously moved forward. Soon, voices from a conversation came from ahead.

"Mr. Zhu, the road ahead is completely blocked. We must find another way to exit," said the voice, which seemed to be Song Mingzhe.

"We've already checked on the way here. All exits are completely sealed, and we can't get out. I guess the situation is similar with other exits," Zhu Hong's deep voice responded.

"We shouldn't have detonated the explosives," Song Mingzhe's tone carried a hint of regret.

So it was them! Ling Chen frowned to himself. He had been wondering who set off the explosives, and it turned out to be that bastard Zhu Hong. As he pondered, Zhu Hong's voice came from ahead: "Didn't Ling Chen come? I wanted to detonate the explosives to bury that guy underground. Unfortunately, he's too tough and still didn't die. Plus, the buildings here are too dilapidated, and the blast waves unexpectedly caused such a large impact, sealing all the exits. I didn't anticipate this." After a pause, Zhu Hong continued, "Uncle Song, you're sure that Ling Chen came, right?"

"Absolutely certain. My hawk has been circling in the sky and spotted him when Ling Chen arrived."

"In that case, we need to hurry. If Ling Chen finds his way here, we're going to be in trouble."

"Brother, why do you have to go after Ling Chen? Can't you coexist peacefully? No matter what misunderstandings you had before, you can all sit down and talk it out. Once the misunderstandings are resolved, everything will be fine. If you don't trust Ling Chen, at least you should trust your sister, right? I can help persuade Ling Chen to talk it out with you." The voice wasn't anyone else but Zhu Xiaozhu, whom Ling Chen had been looking for.

Hearing Zhu Xiaozhu's voice, Ling Chen couldn't help but let out a sigh of relief. He had been worried something happened to her, but now it seemed Zhu Hong had already rescued her.

"Little sister, don't be naive. There's no possibility of reconciliation between Ling Chen and me anymore. No! You can't say that; it's not that there aren't any ways to reconcile."

"Brother, what way? Tell me, and I'll do whatever I can to help you two."

Zhu Hong laughed indifferently, "As long as Ling Chen is dead, my grievances with him will be wiped clean."

"Brother..."

"Enough! Little sister, don't say anymore. This isn't the time for that. We should focus on getting out of here. Uncle Song, the explosion here is sure to attract a large number of police. If we leave like this, we might get caught by the police. We need to find a way to shake them off."

Song Mingzhe replied, "Mr. Zhu, there are ways, but they're a bit dangerous."

"Oh? Let's hear it."

"Didn't we just use explosives to blow up the underground beams? There are still a lot of explosives installed around. We can use those explosives to blast a new exit. However, when the explosives go off, it'll likely cause a chain reaction. By then, the buildings nearby might all collapse, and those outside might also be affected, we..."

Before Song Mingzhe could finish, Zhu Hong had already taken over, saying: "I understand what you mean. There's always danger. We can't stay trapped here forever. As for those outside... humph! What does it matter to me whether they live or die? Let's go collect the explosives first."

Listening to their footsteps gradually fading away, Ling Chen hurriedly followed behind them. Soon, he saw Zhu Hong stop at a spot and take out the explosives stuck in the beam, stacking them together, totaling twenty to thirty sticks. Seeing the explosives piled up, Ling Chen couldn't help but furrow his brow.

If these explosives are detonated, they'll definitely trigger a chain reaction. By then, even the police outside might be in danger.

No way!

I have to stop Zhu Hong. With this thought, Ling Chen's gaze swept over, locking onto Song Mingzhe. At that moment, Song Mingzhe was grabbing Zhu Xiaozhu's arm, presumably to prevent her from interfering with Zhu Hong.

"Brother, do you really have to do this?"

"Why not? Do you want to stay trapped under here?"

"But what about those people outside? Don't you care if they live or die at all?"

"I only care about myself; what do others' lives have to do with me? Alright, little sister, stay quietly there and don't get in my way." As he spoke, Zhu Hong gathered all the explosives on the ground and headed towards the blocked exit. Judging by his actions, he clearly intended to blast open the sealed exit.

Seeing this, Ling Chen stealthily followed behind, step by step, moving forward. His goal was clear. As long as he took care of Song Mingzhe, Zhu Hong wouldn't be a threat at all.

Four meters... three meters... two meters... Seeing the distance to Song Mingzhe closing in, Ling Chen raised his fist, Inner Strength gathered, ready to knock out his opponent when he was caught off guard. However, just as Ling Chen was about to approach Song Mingzhe, Song Mingzhe suddenly turned his head, his sharp eyes locking onto Ling Chen.

Four eyes met, and Ling Chen was slightly startled. This guy's reaction was incredibly keen. What Ling Chen didn't know was that Song Mingzhe was a Beast Tamer, specializing in taming wild animals. Furthermore, Song Mingzhe had lived in the jungle since he was a child, and his eyesight, hearing, and reaction speed were several times that of an ordinary person. So when Ling Chen was within two to three meters, Song Mingzhe immediately sensed it.

At this moment, Ling Chen didn't have time to think and directly charged at him, throwing a punch aimed at Song Mingzhe's head.

The punch was fierce, reaching Song Mingzhe in an instant. Seeing the fist approach, Song Mingzhe didn't dodge at all, instead pulling Zhu Xiaozhu in front of him, using her body to block Ling Chen's punch.

Seeing this, Ling Chen hurriedly pulled back his fist, withdrawing to retreat.

"Ling Chen? Tsk, tsk! I was just wondering if I'd run into you down here, and here you are so soon."

Hearing Zhu Hong's voice, Ling Chen focused his gaze and calmly replied, "I didn't see your body, so of course, I had to confirm if you were dead." With that, Ling Chen turned his head towards Zhu Xiaozhu and asked with concern, "How are you, are you alright?"

Zhu Xiaozhu bit her lip lightly and said softly, "I'm fine."

"Zhu Hong, give yourself up. The police are everywhere outside; you have no chance of escaping."

"Ha! How do you know I can't escape?" Zhu Hong sneered, "Don't you see, once I set off these bombs, whether those police outside can survive is the real question."

"Zhu Hong, I'm here. Do you think I'll let you do that?"

Chapter 1042 - 1049: Perilous Situation (6)

"Ling Chen, do you think you can stop me?" Zhu Hong sneered disdainfully, "Do you know what the biggest difference between you and me is? Sometimes he's too sentimental and cares too much about others' safety, all of which will become your fatal weaknesses. But I'm different, I don't have so many scruples. As long as I can survive and achieve my goals, I dare do anything, including abandoning my own sister."

Upon hearing this, the faces of Ling Chen and Zhu Xiaozhu changed suddenly.

"Zhu Hong, what are you trying to do?" Ling Chen asked in a low voice.

Zhu Hong walked over to Song Mingzhe and placed one of the explosives on Zhu Xiaozhu. Then he pulled out a lighter from his pocket and positioned it under the fuse of the explosive.

Seeing Zhu Hong's actions, Ling Chen was taken aback and hurriedly shouted, "Zhu Hong, are you crazy? She's your own sister."

Zhu Hong smirked, seemingly ignoring Ling Chen's admonishment, and directly led Zhu Xiaozhu aside. Not far away was a two to three-meter deep concrete pit, which should have been a storage pool for the underground pipeline. Because it had been abandoned for a long time, there was no water in it.

Zhu Hong led Zhu Xiaozhu to the concrete pit, tied her hands with a rope, and then lit the fuse of the explosive with a lighter. Once the fuse started burning, Zhu Hong pushed her without hesitation, directly into the concrete pit.

"No!"

Ling Chen roared loudly.

Ah!

Hearing Zhu Xiaozhu's scream from below the concrete pit, Ling Chen didn't have time to think and rushed over, jumping into the concrete pit.

"Uncle Song, let's go." Zhu Hong called Song Mingzhe and walked away without looking back.

Song Mingzhe glanced at the concrete pit, followed Zhu Hong's steps, and asked, "Mr. Zhu, you're really leaving your sister alone?"

Zhu Hong chuckled and said, "Don't worry, with Ling Chen there, he won't let anything happen to my sister. Besides, if my sister gets hurt, it'll slow Ling Chen down, preventing him from coming after us."

Uncle Song, it's just the two of us now, and your pets aren't here. If it really came to a fight, do you think we could take him on?"

"What if the explosive..."

Zhu Hong waved a hand, interrupting Song Mingzhe, "Relax, if it really explodes, it would take care of Ling Chen. Sacrificing my sister to kill Ling Chen is a worthwhile trade. Uncle Song, let's not worry about it and move quickly; I don't want Ling Chen tracking us down again."

At this moment, in the concrete pit, Ling Chen grabbed the fuse of the explosive, pulling it out directly and tossing it aside, then stomped on it until the fuse was completely extinguished.

"Xiaozhu, are you okay?" Ling Chen picked up Zhu Xiaozhu, helping her lean against the wall.

"It hurts!" Zhu Xiaozhu gritted her teeth, her body involuntarily twitching from the pain.

"Where does it hurt?" Ling Chen asked with concern.

Zhu Xiaozhu pointed to her ankle. Besides the sprain of her right ankle, her entire left arm was dislocated, causing tears to nearly flow from the pain.

Ling Chen, without hesitating much, rolled up Zhu Xiaozhu's pant leg, removed her shoe, and gently lifted her right foot. Seeing the swollen ankle, Ling Chen pressed down on it lightly, and when Zhu Xiaozhu's face showed pain, he immediately let go and said, "It's okay, the bone isn't broken, just sprained. You'll be fine after some rest. Let me fix your arm first."

Zhu Xiaozhu gently nodded, biting her lip, closing her eyes, not daring to watch Ling Chen.

"Don't be afraid, it's okay. By the way! Did you eat today?"

"I didn't... ah!"

Before Zhu Xiaozhu could finish her sentence, a scream of pain interrupted her. Seeing Ling Chen's smiling face, Zhu Xiaozhu couldn't help but glare at him with a hint of blame, "Why didn't you warn me first?"

Ling Chen smiled and replied, "I saw you were scared, so I wanted to distract you." After a pause, he teased, "Aren't you a doctor? Do you also fear pain? Alright, alright, I won't joke with you anymore." With that, Ling Chen stood up, looked towards the top of the concrete pit, and said, "I'll climb up and see if there's a rope. Stay here and don't move."

Zhu Xiaozhu gently nodded, advising, "Be careful."

Ling Chen acknowledged her, then jumped powerfully, using the walls of the pit for leverage to propel himself upward. In the blink of an eye, he climbed to the top of the concrete pit.

Once out of the pit, Ling Chen looked around, found several broken hemp ropes, tied them together, and lowered them down.

Once Zhu Xiaozhu wrapped the hemp rope around herself, Ling Chen immediately began pulling it from above. Before long, Zhu Xiaozhu was pulled out of the concrete pit.

"Let me carry you." Ling Chen squatted in front of Zhu Xiaozhu, gesturing for her to climb on.

Seeing Ling Chen's gesture, Zhu Xiaozhu's face blushed slightly. She gently wrapped her arms around Ling Chen's neck and rested her face on his back.

Holding Zhu Xiaozhu, Ling Chen surveyed the surroundings, frowning slightly. There were two paths nearby, and just now he had been so focused on rescuing Zhu Xiaozhu that he hadn't noticed which way Zhu Hong and Song Mingzhe went.

"Go that way, that's probably the way they went." Zhu Xiaozhu pointed to one of the paths.

Ling Chen asked curiously, "How do you know?"

"He's my brother; I think no one knows him better than I do."

"Your brother is not the same as he used to be."

"I know. From the moment he pushed me down, I didn't intend to acknowledge him as my brother anymore. Ling Chen, you're right, my brother has completely changed—detached, ruthless, and indifferent to kinship or his own family." With a pause, Zhu Xiaozhu continued, "However, no matter how much his character changes, his habits won't. He has a habit of choosing the right side. Whenever he needs to make a decision, he'll stick to it."

"Alright, I'll trust your word." With that, Ling Chen carried Zhu Xiaozhu and headed straight down the left path.

"Wait!" Zhu Xiaozhu hurriedly called out, "You're going the wrong way."

Ling Chen smiled and said, "Don't worry, I'm not going the wrong way. Your brother didn't hear an explosion, so he knows we're fine. Since you're so familiar with your brother, how could he not be familiar with you? So if his habit is to choose right, then choosing left must be the right move." With those words, Ling Chen quickened his pace, carrying Zhu Xiaozhu forward.

A few minutes later, walking through the passage, Ling Chen suddenly heard a loud 'bang' ahead. Immediately following, the ground and walls began to shake violently, dust rose, and stones occasionally fell from the top.

Chapter 1043 - 1050: Dangerous Situation (7)

Oh no!

Watching the stones falling incessantly around him, Ling Chen thought to himself that this was not good. The current situation was dire; Zhu Hong must have detonated explosives to blast open an exit to escape.

"Ling Chen, look above!" At this moment, Zhu Xiaozhu, who was on Ling Chen's back, suddenly cried out in alarm.

Ling Chen focused his gaze and saw that the ceiling of the passage was full of cracks, and those cracks were rapidly spreading towards them, quickly reaching above their heads.

This is bad! Ling Chen's heart sank, with no time to think, he quickly carried Zhu Xiaozhu on his back and ran backwards. Just as the two had not run far, they heard a 'rumble' sound, and the entire ceiling fell from the top, instantly blocking the passage. Moreover, as the cracks rapidly spread, stones began to fall crazily behind Ling Chen.

At this moment, Ling Chen dared not pause for a moment, running ahead as fast as he could. They kept running beyond thirty meters when the stones behind them gradually stopped falling. Ling Chen stopped, turned around, and saw the passage completely blocked by stones, making it impassable.

Now, he could not go find Zhu Hong.

"Ling Chen, what should we do now?" Zhu Xiaozhu asked worriedly.

Ling Chen took a breath; at this point, he was unsure of what to do. After setting Zhu Xiaozhu down, Ling Chen advised, "Rest here for a bit, I'll look around."

Zhu Xiaozhu nodded and said, "You take care too."

Walking to the blocked passage beside them, Ling Chen inspected it carefully, frowning. He and Zhu Xiaozhu were trapped in an underground storage room, with passages around it blocked by stones, making them impassable. If this continued, they would eventually perish here.

Ling Chen turned his gaze to the storage room's ceiling. Due to the explosion's aftershocks, the ceiling and the surrounding walls were full of cracks, on the verge of collapsing. However, this was their only chance of survival.

"Xiaozhu, come here!" Ling Chen walked over to Zhu Xiaozhu, helped her up, and led her to a relatively safe corner. Seeing Ling Chen's actions, Zhu Xiaozhu was puzzled and asked, "What are you planning to do?"

"We're trapped here with no other way out, so the only option is to escape from above." Ling Chen hesitated before continuing, "Honestly, I'm not sure if this will work, but it's our only gamble."

Saying this, Ling Chen picked up a few fist-sized stones from the ground and retreated to the side. Taking a deep breath, Ling Chen focused his Inner Strength, channeling it into the stones. Then, with a flick of his wrist, he threw the stones directly at the ceiling of the storage room. The cracks on the ceiling quickly spread under the impact, growing larger.

Bang!

With a loud crash, the ceiling collapsed, raising a cloud of dust. Ling Chen raised his arm to cover his nose, waving his other hand to clear the dust around him. As the dust gradually settled, Ling Chen quickly looked up at the storage room's ceiling. To his despair, the ceiling had indeed collapsed, but the top was completely buried in stones, with no exit in sight.

According to his previous thought, the ceiling's collapse should have provided a way to the surface, but from the current situation, it was packed with stones.

"Ling Chen, how does it look, can we get out?"

Upon hearing Zhu Xiaozhu's voice, Ling Chen gave a bitter smile and walked over to sit beside her against the wall. Seeing Ling Chen's helpless expression, Zhu Xiaozhu's heart tightened, and the hope in her beautiful eyes dimmed instantly.

She lowered her head, biting her lip gently, and asked softly, "Are we... are we unable to get out?"

Ling Chen forced a smile and said, "Where there's life, there's hope. We haven't reached the point of despair yet."

"You don't have to comfort me, I know it well. It's just a pity that I've dragged you into this."

"What are you saying?" Ling Chen replied unhappily, "You're my friend, of course I have to save you. If we really can't escape today, it would be my fate, and I would not blame anyone."

Hearing this, Zhu Xiaozhu turned her head, her beautiful eyes filled with tears as she stared at Ling Chen and asked, "Do you really only see me as a friend?"

Ling Chen was a bit startled, his gaze unconsciously dodging.

"Xiaozhu, what do you mean by that? Of course, I see you as a friend."

"Really?" Zhu Xiaozhu sighed softly, a trace of disappointment flashed in her eyes. Before Ling Chen could say more, Zhu Xiaozhu fiddled with her clothes, talking to herself, "If it weren't for my brother back then, perhaps... perhaps we would have been together already. Ling Chen, you know, I've never denied my feelings for you. Among all the men I've known, you may not be the most outstanding, but you're the one I have the best impression of. When I chose to give up on you, I returned to Beijing alone, just to avoid seeing you, so I wouldn't lose Control and think of you. But you always appear when I need help the most, I... I..."

"Xiaozhu." Ling Chen interrupted softly, "I can't deny that you're a kind-hearted good girl, and the first woman to move my heart. But as you said, Zhu Hong's presence is the biggest obstacle between us. If it weren't for Zhu Hong, perhaps I would have pursued you back then."

"Really?" Zhu Xiaozhu's pretty face flushed, looking at Ling Chen with a hint of shyness in her eyes.

"Considering the situation, why would I lie to you?" Ling Chen smiled bitterly and said, "In life, things rarely go as planned. Many things we can't force."

"What about now? In our current situation, we might die in the next moment. Before death, don't you want to make up for the past?"

"Make up?" Ling Chen was momentarily puzzled, then immediately understood Zhu Xiaozhu's meaning. Indeed, when faced with death, why care about so much? With this in mind, Ling Chen extended his arm, gently pulling Zhu Xiaozhu into his embrace.

Feeling the warmth in Ling Chen's embrace, Zhu Xiaozhu's lips curled into a slight smile. She closed her eyes, quietly lying in Ling Chen's arms, savoring this last moment together.

Listening to Zhu Xiaozhu's breathing, Ling Chen sighed inwardly, his right hand gently stroking her silky hair. Over the years, he had faced numerous dangers and contemplated his end, yet he never imagined dying in such a wretched place. However... glancing at Zhu Xiaozhu in his arms, Ling Chen smiled faintly. Having such a beautiful companion, even in death, would be worth it.

Chapter 1044 - 1051: Dangerous Situation (8)

At this moment, outside the entire building, the police had already set up a perimeter, sealing off all the surrounding intersections, prohibiting unauthorized personnel from getting close. Meanwhile, outside the perimeter, more than a dozen news vans were parked. Reporters and cameramen stood on top of the vans, setting up equipment, broadcasting and recording the scene live.

At this time, Xia Mutong was leading a group of police officers and firefighters racing towards the building on the east side. A few minutes ago, another explosion was heard from the east. Concerned for Ling Chen's safety, Xia Mutong hurried to the explosion site with her team. Upon arrival, they saw only a heap of rubble outside, with thick dust filling the air.

"Quick, search everywhere and see if anyone's come out," Xia Mutong shouted loudly.

However, apart from rubble and dust, no one emerged. "Captain Xia!" a colleague examined for a moment and said, "There's a hole at the bottom of the building. It must have been blasted open just now. Should we send someone down to check it out?"

Xia Mutong nodded and was about to give instructions. But then, a firefighter ran over quickly, pointing to the closest building, "Captain Xia, the beams below have been blown open; I'm afraid this building won't hold much longer."

"What should we do then?"

"It would be best to evacuate people immediately to prevent unnecessary losses."

Hearing this, Xia Mutong seemed a little reluctant. She finally managed to create an entry point, and she wanted to go in and look for Ling Chen's whereabouts. But she couldn't ignore the firefighter's advice; if the building collapsed, they would all be buried underneath.

Having no choice, Xia Mutong had to give the order for all colleagues and firefighters to evacuate. However, before everyone could retreat to a safe area, a 'boom' explosion was heard again from the north side of the entire building.

"What happened?"

Xia Mutong frowned and said in a deep voice, "Immediately call people to gather over there."

"Yes!"

However, it took quite some time to go around from the east to the north. After a few minutes, when Xia Mutong arrived with others, they only saw a crack at least one meter wide on the ground. Furthermore, this crack extended from the ground to a building on the north side. At this moment, the crack was spreading rapidly, almost covering the entire wall of the building, looking very frightening.

"Captain Xia, what is that?" Suddenly, one of Xia Mutong's colleagues pointed upwards. Instantly, everyone's gaze focused on the sky.

Above their heads, a massive strange bird flapped its wings, hovered for a moment, and then flew straight into the distance. In the blink of an eye, the strange bird vanished from sight.

"What on earth is that?" Xia Mutong asked.

"It looks like a hawk or falcon," a firefighter replied. "I've seen this animal on TV; it's a very fierce bird of prey. Strange, how could such an animal appear in the city?"

"Forget it! If we don't know, let's not bother with it. I just want to know now, what's with the two consecutive explosions. Those explosives couldn't have blown up on their own; it was definitely man-made." As she said this, Xia Mutong hoped that the person who set off the explosives was Ling Chen. If that were the case, Ling Chen could escape from inside. However, despite two consecutive explosions creating openings, no one emerged.

Seeing that the building might collapse at any moment, Xia Mutong dared not send people in to search lightly. She could only extend the perimeter again, making the onlookers move further back to avoid being affected.

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At this moment, in the storage room of the basement, Ling Chen appeared somewhat groggy, feeling his head getting heavier and his breathing becoming increasingly labored. This situation made Ling Chen's heart sink to the bottom. He knew it was due to the lack of air. In a sealed space, without air circulation, once the air was used up, he and Zhu Xiaozhu would eventually suffocate to death.

"Xiaozhu, Xiaozhu!" Ling Chen gently shook Zhu Xiaozhu's shoulder, trying to wake her up. But Zhu Xiaozhu seemed to be in a deep sleep, showing no reaction at all.

This isn't good!

Ling Chen's face changed slightly. It must be because of the thin air that Zhu Xiaozhu fell into a semi-comatose state.

Just when Ling Chen was devising a plan, a loud rumble suddenly came from above, as if an earthquake had struck, followed by the entire ground shaking. At the same time, Ling Chen saw a faint glimmer of light shining through from above. Seeing that light, Ling Chen immediately stood up.

After examining it for a few moments, Ling Chen's gaze lit up, filled with hope.

Surely, it was just now when the violent tremor caused some of these rocks to crack open. Without wasting time, Ling Chen quickly placed Zhu Xiaozhu aside and went alone to the crack, using both hands to dig open the surrounding stones. Before long, the crack became larger, big enough for an adult to squeeze through.

By this time, as the air circulation had resumed, Zhu Xiaozhu, who had been in a coma, gradually woke up. Seeing the exit Ling Chen had dug out, Zhu Xiaozhu immediately got her spirit up, quickly stepped forward, and asked, "Can we get out through here?"

"Shouldn't be a problem. I'll go out first to check. If it's safe, you can come out," Ling Chen replied.

Zhu Xiaozhu nodded, responding, "Be careful!"

Crawling out through the hole, Ling Chen dusted off himself, looked around, and found himself on the first floor of the building. However, because of the explosion, this building had suffered significant damage, with many places piled with rubble. Moreover, the walls of the building kept swaying left and right, as if they might collapse at any moment, making one's heart race with alarm.

"Xiaozhu, come out. It's temporarily safe."

Once Zhu Xiaozhu climbed out of the hole, Ling Chen suddenly felt the ground tremble, followed closely by successive 'bang' sounds from outside. Through the cracked wall, they saw the exterior walls at the top of the building peeling off, falling densely to the ground.

Seeing this scene, Zhu Xiaozhu couldn't help but ask, "How do we get out of here like this?"

Ling Chen opened his mouth, about to answer. But before he could speak, his expression suddenly changed drastically, and without a word, he immediately carried Zhu Xiaozhu and ran towards the stairwell.

The building exit had been blocked, and with too many stones falling outside, Ling Chen wasn't confident of making it out. Now, the only choice was to keep going up.

"Ling Chen, what's wrong?" Faced with Ling Chen's actions, Zhu Xiaozhu asked in confusion. She hadn't detected any danger, not knowing why Ling Chen was so tense.

Hearing Zhu Xiaozhu's question, Ling Chen did not respond, instead desperately rushing upstairs. Fortunately, the building wasn't very tall, and before long, the two of them reached the rooftop.

Chapter 1045 - 1052: Dangerous Situation (9)

In a café two blocks away from the explosion site, Zhu Hong held a cup of rich coffee, sitting in a private seat, leisurely savoring the drink, while occasionally glancing at the café's television with the corner of his eye. At this moment, the TV was broadcasting the news from the explosion site live.

"Mr. Zhu, aren't we going back?" asked Song Mingzhe. Zhu Hong smiled faintly and replied, "No need to rush. Uncle Song, after narrowly escaping death, we should take a moment to relax."

The two explosions that previously happened at the scene were both orchestrated by Zhu Hong. The first explosion, despite creating an exit, was not the one Zhu Hong used to escape. His intention was simple; the first explosion was mainly to attract the police's attention to avoid them causing him trouble. The second explosion was a few minutes' walk from the first location; he chose to detonate there because the police couldn't arrive immediately, giving them ample time to flee.

After finishing his coffee, Zhu Hong placed a hundred-yuan bill on the table, stood up and said, "Uncle Song, let's go."

Song Mingzhe nodded, following behind Zhu Hong and heading straight towards the café's exit. Before the two could reach the door, the tense voice of a reporter was heard from the TV: "Viewers, please watch; just now, two citizens appeared on the rooftop of the building. They seem to be trapped inside, unable to find a way to escape."

Upon hearing the reporter's words, Zhu Hong and Song Mingzhe turned their heads towards the television screen. On the TV, the camera zoomed in on the rooftop, clearly showing a man and a woman standing at the edge.

Is it them?

Zhu Hong frowned slightly, a sharp look flashing in his eyes. He didn't expect Ling Chen to still be alive; his luck was really something.

However, after seeing the on-site situation, Zhu Hong smirked with a cold smile. Under these circumstances, there's no way anyone could get out.

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On the rooftop, Ling Chen stood at the edge, constantly looking down, searching for a chance to escape. However, after searching all around, he couldn't find a way out. The building was five stories high, about

a dozen meters tall. If Ling Chen were alone, with his skills, he wouldn't have worried about escaping. But the problem was, he had Zhu Xiaozhu with him. Her ankle was injured, making her unable to walk, so he had to carry her on his back. This undoubtedly limited his capability.

"Ling... Ling Chen!" At this moment, Zhu Xiaozhu stammered, "There... over there, look there!"

Following Zhu Xiaozhu's finger, Ling Chen glanced over and drew his gaze back. He had already noticed the situation there earlier. Because the area was full of buildings, theirs was sandwiched between two others. Earlier on the ground floor, Ling Chen saw a nearby building had already collapsed, pressing down on another building.

As a result, these buildings triggered a domino effect, one after another, all toppling down. At this moment, less than two minutes remained before the adjacent building would collapse over. By then, Ling Chen and Zhu Xiaozhu would be buried under it, with no chance of survival.

Thus, Ling Chen had to come up with a plan within two minutes; otherwise, they were doomed.

While Ling Chen was searching for an escape route, below, Xia Mutong was also trying to find a solution. At her behest, all the firefighters had arrived, gathering together to discuss strategies. However, given the current situation, every plan they came up with was rejected one by one; none were viable rescue plans.

"Can you guys manage or not?" Xia Mutong's agitation grew; if they kept discussing like this, Ling Chen would soon be in mortal danger.

"Captain Xia, it's not that we can't manage, it's just that there's too little time. We simply can't organize a rescue. Even if we sent a helicopter to pick them up, it would take ten minutes."

Xia Mutong snapped, "If they had ten minutes, I would have gone up and brought them back myself. Why would I need you to tell me this nonsense?" After saying this, Xia Mutong took a deep breath, trying to calm her anger, and turned to look at Ling Chen on the rooftop, silently praying that nothing would happen to him.

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"Wanqing, Wanqing!"

At Wealthy Manor.

Su Lin hurriedly burst through the door, rushing into Nanrong Wanqing's study. Seeing Nanrong Wanqing busy with her work, Su Lin exclaimed anxiously, "Wanqing, how can you still be in the mood to do your work? Come on, you have to come with me!" As she spoke, without waiting for Nanrong Wanqing to respond, Su Lin grabbed her hand and started pulling her outside.

Nanrong Wanqing frowned slightly, pausing to ask, "Lin, I still have a few contracts to review. What's going on?"

"The whole city is focused on it. Don't you know?"

Nanrong Wanqing looked puzzled: "Know what? Has something special happened today?"

Hearing this, Su Lin couldn't help but smack her forehead, exclaiming, "Ling Chen is about to die; does that count as special?"

About to die?

Nanrong Wanqing's face changed color, looking at Su Lin and asking, "What did you say... what happened to him?"

"Sigh! Stop asking so much, just come with me." With that, Su Lin couldn't be bothered to explain further to Nanrong Wanqing, directly pulling her hand and heading downstairs to the living room.

"See for yourself." In the living room, Su Lin pointed to the news being broadcast on the television.

Seeing the report on TV, along with Ling Chen standing at the edge of the rooftop, and the building about to collapse behind him, Nanrong Wanqing's face instantly turned pale. She quickly pulled out her cellphone from her pocket and dialed Ling Chen's number.

"Don't bother calling." said Su Lin, "I already tried; his phone can't be reached."

Amid the conversation, Liu Kun walked in from outside the villa, looking at the dazed Nanrong Wanqing and said, "Miss, a lot of reporters are outside."

"Reporters?" Su Lin frowned and asked, "Uncle Liu, why aren't those reporters covering the big news and instead running here for Ling Chen?"

Liu Kun pointed at Ling Chen on the TV and said, "Miss Su, everyone's aware of the relationship between Miss and Mr. Ling. Now that Mr. Ling is in danger, those reporters naturally want to interview Miss."

"Hmph!" Su Lin coldly replied, "Really a bunch of heartless people; with Ling Chen about to die, they're only thinking about news and not considering our feelings. Uncle Liu, chase them all out, don't see anyone."

"Understood, I got it." Liu Kun nodded. Seeing Nanrong Wanqing standing there in a daze, Liu Kun sighed lightly and comforted, "Miss, you don't need to worry too much; people like Mr. Ling have good fortune. He will surely overcome danger and return safely." Saying this, Liu Kun left the villa with quick steps.

Chapter 1046 - 1053: Dangerous Situation (10)

Watching the building behind them about to collapse, Zhu Xiaozhu's eyes were filled with despair. At this moment, they had nowhere to escape. Stones occasionally fell around them, and even if they reached the ground, once the building fell, they would still be buried under the rubble.

"Ling Chen!" Zhu Xiaozhu turned her head, looking at the pensive Ling Chen with a glimmer of hope in her eyes, hoping he could come up with a way to escape. But seeing Ling Chen's furrowed brows, it was clear he was at a loss. Seeing this, Zhu Xiaozhu bit her lip and said, "Ling Chen, why don't... you leave first."

"Me?" Ling Chen was slightly stunned, looking at Zhu Xiaozhu with confusion, not expecting her to say such a thing. Zhu Xiaozhu gently nodded. In her heart, she knew that if it weren't for her being too much of a burden, Ling Chen, with his abilities, would have had a chance to escape on his own. Rather than both perishing together in this situation, it would be better for Ling Chen to survive alone.

"No way!" Ling Chen quickly understood Zhu Xiaozhu's intent and immediately refused, saying, "If we go, we go together. I will never leave you behind."

"No, this way, both of us will die here." Zhu Xiaozhu bit her lip and said, "Ling Chen, I know you care about me and don't want me to die, but it's better for one to die than both. You have so much to worry about, family, a girlfriend, friends, and brothers. Compared to you, I have nothing now, even my closest brother wants me dead. So, dying would also be a relief for me. Ling Chen, I beg you, please run away, don't worry about me anymore."

"No way!" Ling Chen refused firmly, "Xiaozhu, believe me, it's not the last moment yet, don't give up so easily."

Zhu Xiaozhu bitterly smiled and said, "If it truly comes to the last moment, you won't be able to escape either." As she spoke, Zhu Xiaozhu's gaze went past Ling Chen and fixed on something behind him, with a tinge of horror in her eyes.

Noticing the change in Zhu Xiaozhu's gaze, Ling Chen felt a chill in his heart and quickly turned his head to look back. However, to his surprise, there was nothing behind him. Ling Chen regained his focus after a brief pause and turned back to look at Zhu Xiaozhu, opening his mouth to speak, "Xiaozhu, you..." Before he could finish, Ling Chen's expression changed abruptly, and he hurried forward, shouting, "Xiaozhu, what are you doing?"

"Don't come over!" Zhu Xiaozhu reached out to stop Ling Chen's action.

When Ling Chen turned his head earlier, Zhu Xiaozhu, using both her hands and feet, crawled to the edge of the rooftop. At this moment, she was sitting by the rooftop, needing just a slight movement to fall from the top floor. Seeing this, Ling Chen halted and gently persuaded, "Xiaozhu, it's dangerous there, come back."

"Ling Chen, please, listen to me just this once. It's not too late to leave now. If you insist on not leaving, I can only jump down from here." Zhu Xiaozhu pleaded mournfully.

Upon hearing this, Ling Chen's eyes flashed with conflict. He didn't want to leave, to abandon his companion and escape alone was not in his nature. Even knowing death was likely, he wanted to stay and fight.

"Xiaozhu, have you thought that even if I luckily survived, what then? Do you think I could live comfortably for the rest of my life? I would surely live with guilt and regret for the rest of my days." As he spoke, with a loud 'bang', not far away, a building had already collapsed. It wouldn't take long before the adjacent building would come crashing down, and by then, no one would survive the collision of the two buildings.

As danger loomed closer, Ling Chen scanned his surroundings, quickly brainstorming for a solution. Suddenly, seeming to have found something, Ling Chen hurried toward the antennas on the rooftop.

The buildings here were old, thus many old antennas were installed on the rooftops. Before digital TV became widespread, residents mostly used antennas to receive signals and watch television, resulting in these antennas being tangled with numerous electrical wires.

Ling Chen pulled all the wires from the antennas, bundled them, and connected them one by one. Soon, Ling Chen had a wire over tens of meters long in his hand.

However, these wires were quite old, with the insulation all aged, and it was uncertain if they could support the weight of two people.

Faced with the impending crisis, Ling Chen didn't have time to overthink, and quickly moved to the edge of the rooftop, directly throwing the wire down. The length of the wire was sufficient, with a surplus of over ten meters.

Standing on the rooftop, Ling Chen looked down, frowning involuntarily. The wires reached down, but the surrounding falling wall sections and stones were constantly dropping. If they were hit by stones later, their small hope would be shattered.

Never mind!

Ling Chen muttered to himself. At this point, they could only do their best and leave the rest to fate. Immediately, Ling Chen took a few steps to reach Zhu Xiaozhu, picked her up, and carried her on his back.

Seeing Ling Chen pick up a wire not even as thick as a finger, Zhu Xiaozhu couldn't help but worryingly ask, "Ling Chen, is this... going to work?"

Ling Chen smiled slightly, giving Zhu Xiaozhu a confident smile and nodded, "Trust me, it will be fine." Despite what he said, there was no certainty in his heart.

As he spoke, a rumbling engine sound suddenly came from the bottom of the building. Ling Chen and Zhu Xiaozhu leaned over to look, and saw a police car rushing over at high speed, arriving at the bottom of the building in the blink of an eye.

Just as the police car came to a stop, a football-sized stone fell from mid-air and struck the car roof, instantly creating a dent.

While Ling Chen was feeling surprised, the car door opened, and a police officer swiftly ran out. Upon seeing who it was, Ling Chen was shocked.

Xia Mutong!

Ling Chen was taken aback. What was she doing here? Charging in alone to such a dangerous place with a car, was she crazy?

While pondering, Xia Mutong had already braved the danger, rushing to the base of the building, and picked up the wire on the ground, wrapping it onto the police car's rear and securing it tightly.

"Not good!" Just then, a chunk of the wall fell from the sky, hurtling precisely toward Xia Mutong's position. Seeing this, Ling Chen shouted with all his might, "Watch out!"

Perhaps hearing Ling Chen's warning, Xia Mutong quickly lifted her head, seeing the rapidly descending chunk of the wall, and promptly dove to the ground.

With a boom, as the wall section hit the ground, clouds of dust soared up, enveloping Xia Mutong's body. Ling Chen, standing atop the rooftop, searched around for Xia Mutong's figure with his heart secretly praying that nothing bad would happen.

As the dust gradually settled, Xia Mutong was seen crawling up from the ground, seemingly unhurt. Fortunately, she reacted quickly and dodged in time; otherwise, that falling wall section would have directly crushed her body.

Chapter 1047 - 1054: Peril at Every Turn

Back in the police car, Xia Mutong started the engine and drove the vehicle straight out. As the police car moved forward, the wire was immediately pulled taut, forming a forty-five-degree angle.

"Ling Chen, that building is collapsing."

Hearing Zhu Xiaozhu's voice coming from behind, Ling Chen turned his head to look, only to see the building next to them already tilting, slowly falling toward their building.

Taking a deep breath, Ling Chen held Zhu Xiaozhu's body with one hand, securing her firmly on his back.

"Are you ready?"

Zhu Xiaozhu replied softly, wrapping her arms around Ling Chen's neck, burying her head on his shoulder, and said in a voice only Ling Chen could hear: "If today is destined to be our end, I won't regret it, at least... I have you by my side." With that, Zhu Xiaozhu leaned in and pressed her lips against Ling Chen's cheek.

Zhu Xiaozhu's sudden action left Ling Chen stunned for a moment. He never expected Zhu Xiaozhu to kiss him at this critical moment. Seeing Zhu Xiaozhu's blushing face and slightly shy eyes, Ling Chen quickly snapped back to reality, a slight smile appearing on his lips. He understood Zhu Xiaozhu's feelings and didn't mind.

No time to think further, Ling Chen used a torn piece of clothing to hang onto the wire, then leaned forward and slid down along the wire.

With Xia Mutong's help, Ling Chen's speed was very fast. In no time, he and Zhu Xiaozhu were above the police car, about four meters from the ground. However, at this moment, the two buildings collided with each other. With a thunderous crash, the buildings instantly collapsed into countless stones, smashing down.

At the same time, the wire entwining the rooftop also came loose. In an instant, Ling Chen, who was originally sliding downwards, suddenly felt his body dropping straight toward the ground.

Xiaozhu!

Thinking of Zhu Xiaozhu on his back, Ling Chen, fearing she might get hurt again, urgently adjusted his position in mid-air, moving Zhu Xiaozhu from his back to his front. Just as he completed this move, there was a loud 'bang,' and Ling Chen's back hit the ground heavily.

Thud!

He coughed up a mouthful of blood, and Ling Chen's face immediately turned pale.

"Ling Chen!" Feeling the warmth from the back of his head, Zhu Xiaozhu knew what had happened without even looking and exclaimed quickly, "Are you okay?"

"I'm... I'm fine, quick, get up!" Ling Chen gritted his teeth to endure the pain in his body, struggling to rise from the ground.

"Hurry, get in the car!" At this moment, Xia Mutong poked her head out from the police car's driver's seat, shouting at Ling Chen and Zhu Xiaozhu.

Ling Chen didn't dare delay, quickly scooped up Zhu Xiaozhu and dashed to the police car, flinging open the door and diving in. Lying on the back seat, Ling Chen didn't even have time to close the door and shouted urgently, "Drive!"

Without a second word, Xia Mutong floored the gas pedal, swerving the police car left and right to dodge the stones falling from above. Even so, plenty of small fragments hit and shattered the car windows, and the car roof sounded with continuous banging.

A minute later, the police car finally exited the dangerous area safely. As soon as the car stopped, police officers rushed over, lifting Ling Chen and Zhu Xiaozhu from the back seat. At the same time, medical personnel who had been on standby moved in with stretchers, transferring Ling Chen and Zhu Xiaozhu to the ambulance.

After some simple bandaging and IV fluid, Ling Chen felt much better, his back no longer as painful as before. Thank goodness! Ling Chen thought to himself, it was a real stroke of luck that he survived such a dangerous situation. But it was really thanks to Xia Mutong's help. Without her risking it to drive in, it would have been hard to say if he and Zhu Xiaozhu could have made it out alive. Even if they could, they wouldn't have been nearly as comfortable as they were now.

As this ran through his mind, Xia Mutong climbed up into the ambulance from outside. Glaring at Ling Chen lying on the stretcher, she angrily snapped, "Ling, are you looking to die?"

Ling Chen rubbed his nose, smilingly saying, "Um... Officer Xia, thanks so much this time."

"Stop changing the subject," Xia Mutong said irritably, "I want to know why you didn't get in and stayed down there?"

"Officer Xia, you saw it yourself. I was rescuing someone," Ling Chen was talking about Zhu Xiaozhu.

"You..." Hearing Ling Chen's excuse, Xia Mutong was at a loss for words. After a moment, she glared at Ling Chen and said grumpily, "You almost got yourself killed, and you still want to save others. Leave such things to us professionals next time, and stop playing the hero."

"Yes, yes, I understand!" Ling Chen nodded repeatedly in agreement.

After calming her initial anger, Xia Mutong changed her tone, asking seriously, "What happened? Why did the explosives buried under the building go off all of a sudden, and why were you, Nanrong Hao, and

Zhu Xiaozhu there?" At this point, it seemed Xia Mutong thought of something, and she stared at Ling Chen, "Wasn't Zhu Xiaozhu kidnapped and missing? We even filed a case and were preparing to investigate."

Upon hearing this, Ling Chen's eyes twinkled as he smiled and said, "Officer Xia, like you said, Xiaozhu was kidnapped. Once I found clues about the kidnappers, I brought Nanrong Hao and rushed over immediately."

"If you found the kidnappers' whereabouts, why didn't you inform the police?"

"We only found a clue and weren't certain if Xiaozhu was there, so we wanted to confirm it, see if the information was accurate. When I got there, I found the kidnappers were about to harm Xiaozhu. I couldn't just stand by and watch her get into trouble, so I had to step in. Who knew those kidnappers were desperate enough to ignite the explosives underground, trying to kill us? Luckily, we were lucky not to be buried underneath."

"Is it really so?" Xia Mutong looked skeptically at Ling Chen, not entirely convinced.

Ling Chen nodded, firmly saying, "Officer Xia, don't you trust my words? When have I ever lied to you?"

Xia Mutong snorted, "As if you haven't lied to me enough times? Nanrong Hao and Zhu Xiaozhu are with the police now. Just wait; I'll ask them everything clearly. If I find out you lied, you'll see how I'll deal with you."

"Officer Xia, don't worry. I absolutely didn't lie to you." Ling Chen wasn't worried about Xia Mutong finding anything out. Back on the building, Ling Chen had already spoken with Zhu Xiaozhu, instructing her not to pursue Nanrong Hao's mistakes. If the police asked, just push all the blame onto the 'kidnappers.' Since the kidnappers were made up, Xia Mutong and the others wouldn't be able to find anything. As for Zhu Hong's appearance, Ling Chen had no intention of mentioning it.

Chapter 1048 - 1055: Tabloid News

As the on-site investigation concluded, Ling Chen, Nanrong Hao, and Zhu Xiaozhu were all taken to the hospital for treatment. Fortunately, none of the three were seriously injured, and a few days of rest would suffice.

Lying on the hospital bed, Ling Chen ate the apple Xia Yue had peeled, chatting casually with Qiu Yong and others, not feeling bored at all.

"Ling Cheng, you were really lucky this time. Be careful in the future, and don't try to be a hero again," Qiu Yong admonished.

Ling Chen nodded and said, "Big brother, don't worry. This time it's just that Zhu Hong, that bastard, was too ruthless, even willing to sacrifice his own sister. Otherwise, I would have dealt with him and Song Mingzhe earlier."

"Now Lin Guodong is no longer a threat, but the trouble of Zhu Hong remains. Besides Zhu Hong, there's Chen Quan, who is the biggest problem. With Chen Quan backing him, Zhu Hong will become more and more unscrupulous sooner or later," Yuan Yun said.

"What should we do?" Ling Chen said helplessly, "Zhu Hong is very cunning. After going through several life-and-death experiences, he is now more cautious than anyone else. Even if I know he's in East Sea City, it's hard to track him down." Pausing for a moment, Ling Chen continued, "I don't think Zhu Hong is a serious threat. East Sea City has already returned under my control, and Zhu Hong surely knows this fact. Therefore, he doesn't dare to do anything too outrageous. Otherwise, with the power I currently hold, even if he has Chen Quan's support, I have no need to fear."

While speaking, Jiang Hao hurriedly rushed in from outside, looking at Ling Chen and exclaimed, "Chen, bad news, there are a lot of reporters outside."

Reporters?

Ling Chen was slightly taken aback and asked in confusion, "What does this have to do with me?"

Jiang Hao couldn't be bothered to explain and directly turned on the TV in the ward. Instantly, a scene appeared on the screen, showing Ling Chen and Zhu Xiaozhu on the rooftop about to jump down. At that moment, Zhu Xiaozhu gave Ling Chen a kiss, all clearly captured in the footage. Seeing this scene, Ling Chen was momentarily dumbfounded, as if a thousand horses were galloping through his mind.

Isn't this disastrous? Those damn cameramen not only recorded his intimate actions with Zhu Xiaozhu but also played them repeatedly on TV. Now, how could he ever face anyone again?

Watching the news on TV, Qiu Yong and the others simultaneously turned their gaze to Ling Chen. Yuan Yun, in particular, gloatingly said, "Ling Cheng, you're impressive, even during life-threatening moments you don't forget to flirt with a beauty."

Hearing this, Ling Chen couldn't help but smile bitterly, "Third brother, don't joke around. What should I do now, my image is ruined."

"What's there to worry about?" Xia Yue said with a grin, "A hero saving a beauty, if this story spreads, everyone will understand. But are you prepared to explain to Nanrong Wanqing? Don't forget, she's your legitimate girlfriend."

"I..." Ling Chen opened his mouth, not knowing how to answer this question. Yes! This matter has already caused a commotion, with the news broadcast, not only East Sea City but audiences nationwide would see Zhu Xiaozhu kiss him. With this, no matter how much he tried to clear it, it couldn't be erased. Now, he was well aware of the nature of reporters, all of them wrote distorted reports just to catch the eye.

Bam!

At this moment, there was a muffled sound as the ward door was crashed open. Immediately, more than a dozen reporters and cameramen carrying equipment rushed in from outside, surrounding Ling Chen's hospital bed in an instant.

"Mr. Ling, may I ask what is your relationship with Miss Zhu? Are you lovers?"

"Mr. Ling, as far as I know, you are in a relationship with Hongyu Group's Chairman Nanrong. Are you keeping it from Miss Nanrong while maintaining an ambiguous relationship with Miss Zhu?"

"Mr. Ling, have you considered what Miss Nanrong would think?"

Listening to the reporters' barrage of questions, Ling Chen felt his head spinning and was extremely vexed, wishing he could throw them all out.

Taking a deep breath, Ling Chen tried to calm his anger, then gestured with his hands for everyone to quiet down. Seeing Ling Chen's gesture, the reporters instantly fell silent, extending their recording devices and microphones towards Ling Chen, waiting for his response.

"Everyone," Ling Chen said leisurely, "I understand your pursuit of news and gossip, but can you please respect others' privacy? What my relationship with Miss Zhu is — why should I tell you? I'm not a public figure, why are you so concerned about me?" Finishing his words, Ling Chen raised three fingers and added, "I'm a patient now, in need of good rest. So I'm giving you three seconds. If you don't leave by then, don't blame me for being impolite."

"One..."

"Mr. Ling, you're not clarifying your relationship with Miss Zhu. Does that mean you're implicitly acknowledging you're lovers? What about Miss Nanrong, have you broken up with her?"

Looking at the reporter who asked the question, Ling Chen slowly uttered the word 'two.'

However, the reporters didn't take Ling Chen's warning seriously and continued to bombard him with questions.

"Three!"

As the count reached three, Qiu Yong and the others, who had been standing by, sprang into action, lifting the reporters over their heads and throwing them out one by one. For a moment, painful cries could be heard outside the ward.

With the door shut, Ling Chen breathed out a sigh and said helplessly, "These reporters are really annoying. Eighth brother, keep an eye out for me. If any reporters come to bother me again, just throw them out, no need for any pleasantries."

"Ling Cheng, don't worry, this is on me,"

"Ling Cheng, what should you do now?" Xia Yue asked, "You need to explain to Nanrong Wanqing, to prevent her from misunderstanding."

Ling Chen thought for a moment, feeling that Xia Yue's words made sense. Now the whole city was discussing his relationship with Zhu Xiaozhu, and Nanrong Wanqing was bound to face pressure. No matter what, Nanrong Wanqing was his legitimate girlfriend, and he should consider her feelings and clarify the matter.

Thinking of this, Ling Chen borrowed a phone from Qiu Yong, intending to call Nanrong Wanqing. Before the call could connect, there was a 'dong dong dong' knock at the door outside the ward. Immediately, Nanrong Hao came in, pushing a wheelchair.

"Chen!"

"Haozi, why aren't you resting in bed, and coming to me?"

Nanrong Hao hesitated for a moment, then said with difficulty, "Chen, it's about my sister..."

"I was just about to call your sister."

"Chen, you'd better not make this call, at least not now."

Hearing this, Ling Chen asked in confusion, "Why?"

"My sister just gave an interview saying that she had already broken up with you, and she won't interfere with your personal matters."

Chapter 1049 - 1056: Breakup

"What?" Ling Chen was shocked and quickly asked, "Are you saying... breakup? How come I didn't know? Haozi, are you joking with me?"

Nanrong Hao said helplessly, "My cousin just called me. At first, my sister refused to be interviewed by journalists, but after watching the news on TV, she decided to accept the interview. She also told the reporters that you two had already broken up and that you don't live in Wealthy Manor. She hopes those reporters won't bother her again because of your issues."

Ling Chen frowned slightly, finding it hard to believe his ears. Seeing Ling Chen in a daze, Xia Yue chimed in, "Ling Cheng, I think Nanrong Wanqing did the right thing."

Hearing this, Ling Chen asked in confusion, "Fifth sister, what do you mean by that?"

"Think about it yourself. After that incident with Zhu Xiaozhu, if Nanrong Wanqing clarifies her relationship with you, how will outsiders perceive you? You're well aware of those journalists' skills; they would definitely accuse you of cheating and criticize you for being unfaithful. By then, it would surely affect your reputation. So, Nanrong Wanqing distancing herself from you actually protects you from being scolded by others."

After Xia Yue's analysis, Ling Chen nodded silently, feeling more at ease. It seems that Nanrong Wanqing still cares for him, preferring to endure grievances herself rather than let him suffer.

Thinking of this, Ling Chen picked up his phone and said, "Since that's the case, I definitely should give her a call."

"Alright, then you talk it out with her. We'll head out first." Qiu Yong signaled to the others with his eyes, and they all understood, leaving the ward to let Ling Chen talk to Nanrong Wanqing alone.

He dialed Nanrong Wanqing's number. Shortly, the call connected, and before Ling Chen could speak, a familiar voice came from the other side, "Hello! Who's this?"

Hearing the voice, Ling Chen was slightly stunned and asked strangely, "Miss Su, why is it you? Where's Wanqing? Why didn't she answer the phone?"

"Hmph! Lin, how dare you call!" Su Lin said angrily on the other end of the line.

"Miss Su, it's all a misunderstanding, let me explain."

"Explain? What is there to explain? So many people saw you being intimate with Zhu Xiaozhu, are you still trying to argue? Lin, I misjudged you, I thought you only cared about Wanqing, but what happened? First, it was Leng Feifei, now it's Zhu Xiaozhu, so many women surround you. Ling Chen, are you trying to tell me this is all just a coincidence?"

Ling Chen tried hard to explain, "Miss Su, things aren't what you imagine."

"Are you saying the scene on TV was fake?" Su Lin said sarcastically, "Even if you and Zhu Xiaozhu have nothing for now, her actions show she's interested in you. Can you guarantee you won't be tempted in the future? The matter with Leng Feifei isn't over, and now there's another Zhu Xiaozhu. Besides them, who knows if you're still ambiguous with other women."

"Miss Su, where's Wanqing? Can you let me talk to her?"

"No need, Wanqing specifically instructed me to hang up if you call. She doesn't want to talk to you now, and you shouldn't go looking for her. Even if you go, she won't see you." With that, before Ling Chen could say another word, all he heard was a busy signal from the other end of the line.

Putting down the phone, Ling Chen smiled bitterly to himself. Because of the issues with Leng Feifei and Nanrong Yuan, Nanrong Wanqing was already upset, and now with this incident, it's just adding fuel to the fire. To be honest, he didn't expect Zhu Xiaozhu to make such a move back when they were on the rooftop.

At that time, the situation was too dangerous; their lives were uncertain, no one knew if they'd make it out alive, so they didn't care too much. But who would have thought that moment would be captured by a cameraman.

What should he do now?

Ling Chen scratched his head, feeling utterly at a loss.

Knock knock knock!

At this moment, there was a knock at the door from outside the ward. As the door opened, Ling Chen saw Zhu Xiaozhu hobbling inside with crutches.

"Xiaozhu?" Ling Chen said surprisedly, "Aren't you supposed to be resting? Why did you come here?"

"I'm fine."

"Come, have a seat." Ling Chen quickly got up, brought a chair, and placed it in front of Zhu Xiaozhu. Then, he brewed a cup of tea and handed it to her.

Watching Ling Chen busy himself, Zhu Xiaozhu bit her thin lip, a hint of hesitation in her eyes.

Noticing her expression, Ling Chen asked, "What's wrong?"

"I..." Zhu Xiaozhu opened her mouth, and all her words turned into a single 'sorry.'

Ling Chen smiled and said, "Why say sorry to me? You didn't do anything wrong."

"I shouldn't have acted like that." Zhu Xiaozhu glanced at the TV in the room and said, head lowered, "I didn't know there was a cameraman there. If it caused you any trouble, I hope you can forgive me." Pausing, Zhu Xiaozhu continued, "I'll accept interviews and explain things clearly to them so as not to affect you and Nanrong Wanqing."

Hearing her mention Nanrong Wanqing, Ling Chen couldn't help but feel a bit bitter inside.

"Xiaozhu, you don't need to explain, the truth will become clear on its own. The more you explain, the messier it gets. Those journalists love sensationalizing stories. Besides, I'm a man; this won't affect me, so you don't need to feel guilty. After some time, people will naturally forget about this."

"But..."

"Enough!" Ling Chen interrupted her, smiling, "No buts, just relax, don't think about it, and focus on your recovery."

"Mm." Zhu Xiaozhu responded softly, nodding, "I understand." Then, she shifted the topic, "Ling Chen, Nanrong Hao hopes you can apologize for me."

"Apologize?" Ling Chen asked curiously, "Why should you apologize to him? Clearly, he did something wrong and should apologize to you."

"I know everything about Nanrong Hao; it was my brother who killed his father."

Ling Chen replied, "You said it yourself, your brother killed his father, it has nothing to do with you, so you don't need to apologize. However, a father's murder is a deep vendetta, Nanrong Hao won't easily let it go."

"I understand." Zhu Xiaozhu said softly, "I've already come to terms with it. You're right, my brother is no longer the Zhu Hong he used to be. He could even abandon his own sister, which means he's long forsaken family ties. If that's the case, I have no reason to continue protecting him. He has to pay for the mistakes he made."

Chapter 1050 - 1057: Master of Emotions

Upon hearing Zhu Xiaozhu's words, Ling Chen felt much more at ease. All along, Zhu Hong had been an insurmountable barrier between him and Zhu Xiaozhu. Zhu Xiaozhu wanted him to spare Zhu Hong, not wanting to see either of them get hurt. Because of this, Ling Chen had to stay away from Zhu Xiaozhu to prevent Zhu Hong's matters from affecting the two of them.

Now that Zhu Xiaozhu had finally let go, Ling Chen was naturally pleased. In the future, he wouldn't have to worry about anything when facing Zhu Hong.

After seeing Zhu Xiaozhu off, Ling Chen took a short rest and then had Qiu Yong help him with the discharge procedures.

Outside the hospital, a large group of reporters was waiting, eager to interview Ling Chen and get firsthand information. To avoid trouble, it was better to go home and recover.

Returning home, Yang Qingling had already learned about Ling Chen's situation from the TV. Initially, Yang Qingling wanted to visit her son in the hospital, but Ling Chen knew she would worry, so he called her first thing before going to the hospital to let her know he was fine.

"Son, I know what you're doing outside. Just because I don't ask doesn't mean I don't know; I just don't want to worry too much. Watching the live broadcast today, you have no idea how worried I was. Your grandparents are getting old and can't handle such shocks. I didn't even dare to tell them about this."

"Mom, don't worry, it was an accident this time. I will be more careful in the future," Ling Chen promised.

"Right! Son, what's the deal with that girl named Zhu Xiaozhu? I saw on TV..."

Before Yang Qingling could finish, Ling Chen hastily interrupted her and said, "Mom, don't ask so much. Xiaozhu and I are just ordinary friends." Ling Chen was really tired of explaining this and didn't want to waste his breath.

"Mom, I am a bit tired and will go to my room to rest." With that, before Yang Qingling could ask more, Ling Chen returned to his bedroom.

Watching the closed door, Yang Qingling sighed helplessly. Although she was his mother, some things were not easy to meddle in. After all, relationships are the most troublesome and hardest to handle.

A day passed.

Ling Chen originally wanted to rest at home for a few days, but he had only stayed for one day before guests began arriving continuously, all coming to visit him.

The first to arrive was Tang Shiyun. Upon learning that Ling Chen was injured, Tang Shiyun, who was performing out of town, immediately took the earliest flight back to East Sea City to visit Ling Chen after her commercial performance ended.

Besides Tang Shiyun, there were also Liu Xiyao and Xia Mutong. Although Officer Xia is quite strict at work, in her eyes, Ling Chen is not only a friend but also a friend with a special relationship. So this time, she came to visit Ling Chen as a friend.

In just half a day, Yang Qingling had received several beautiful women at home who had come to visit her son. Each was a rare beauty with different temperaments, making Yang Qingling look at her son's charm with new eyes.

Knock knock knock!

Hearing the knocks outside the bedroom, Ling Chen casually responded, "Come in!"

As the door opened, Hu Fei walked in carrying several bags, his round chubby face full of smiles.

"Hey!" Ling Chen smiled and said, "Fatty, what wind blew you here? Tsk tsk! What good stuff have you bought?"

Hu Fei placed the bags down with a grin, taking out a few bottles of erguotou and some cold dishes, placing them on the table.

"What's this for?"

"I heard you've been in a bad mood these past two days, so I specially came to have a drink with you. Come on, let's have a toast!"

After gulping down a glass of erguotou, Ling Chen looked at Hu Fei and asked, "Fatty, how did you know I was feeling down?"

"Isn't it obvious? I understand women better than you do. But I'm smarter than you; I just have fun with women without getting too emotionally involved, saving myself a lot of trouble. Unlike you, entangled with so many women, only to end up a mess. Look at you, Nanrong Wanqing has broken up with you, Leng Feifei has gone abroad, and your thing with Zhu Xiaozhu has become well-known. Even if you clear things with Zhu Xiaozhu later, when you're with other women, how do you think people will see you? As a playboy, disloyal, and eventually as a scumbag in others' eyes."

Hearing this, Ling Chen's already troubled mood worsened.

Picking up his glass, Ling Chen asked, "Fatty, do you really think I'm a scumbag?"

"Not really, you haven't played with women's feelings, but with so many entanglements, have you ever thought about whom to choose?"

"Hey! Don't talk nonsense. What do you mean by entanglements? I am just ordinary friends with them." Ling Chen immediately corrected.

"Ordinary friends?" Hu Fei chuckled mischievously. "Do you really think I don't know? Your relationship with Xia Mutong isn't that of just ordinary friends, is it? Besides Xia Mutong, I won't even mention Leng Feifei, and then there's the porridge girl. Dare you say you are just ordinary friends with them?"

Hu Fei's words left Ling Chen without a rebuttal. Admittedly, he had indeed had more than platonic relationships with these women. Truth be told, whenever he faced them, he found it hard to maintain the mindset of an ordinary friend.

Reflecting on this, Ling Chen couldn't help but sigh, "Fatty, listening to you, I do feel like a scumbag."

"Alright! Don't think too much about it. If I were you, I would stay away from those women." Hu Fei said: "You're all confused yourself, not clear about your feelings. Since that's the case, you might as well pull yourself out of it and temporarily ignore these things. Focus on managing the base and put your mind on other things. Over time, let everything take its course. You must remember, feelings cannot be forced; what is yours will be yours, no matter how much time passes, she will be there waiting for you."

Ling Chen nodded in agreement. Hu Fei was right; the women were precisely what was troubling him now.

"Fatty, I didn't expect you to be a master of emotions," Ling Chen decided to set aside these vexing matters for now, just as Hu Fei suggested.

"Of course!" Hu Fei said proudly, "I've dealt with not hundreds, but at least dozens of women; I've got way more experience than you."

Pfft!

Ling Chen didn't hold back, retorting, "All those women you deal with are paid for. How could you have the nerve to brag in front of me? Alright, enough about that, how are things at the base?"

At Ling Chen's mention of business, Hu Fei put down his glass and said, "Everything's normal now. The leftover forces of the God Organization in East Sea City have mostly been cleared up."