

## **The Beauty 1121**

### **Chapter 1121 Desert Crisis (Part 4)**

"Hmph! Since none of you are being honest, don't blame us for being rude." The middle-aged man pointed at Wei Jiahao in the cell and said coldly, "Get him out."

The two armed men next to him responded and immediately opened the cell door, quickly heading inside. Ling Chen raised an eyebrow, strode forward, and blocked their path, saying in a deep voice, "What do you intend to do?"

The middle-aged man sneered and said, "I'll kill him first to see if you speak the truth. If you still refuse, I'll kill you all one by one until you start talking."

"Move!" The two armed men pointed their guns at Ling Chen's forehead, signaling him not to block the way.

Ling Chen stood firm, looking at the middle-aged man, "I told you, we are not here to assassinate the General you mentioned. If it weren't for you setting obstacles on the way, we would have already passed by and wouldn't have stopped there."

"That's just your one-sided story. How can I believe you?" The middle-aged man impatiently waved his hand, pointing at Wei Jiahao, "Hurry up, bring him out."

The two armed men hesitated no more and reached out to push Ling Chen's body. Seeing their actions, Ling Chen snorted lightly, quickly grasped their wrists, and violently flung them aside. Before the other could react, Ling Chen kicked effortlessly, resolving both armed men.

Witnessing this, the face of the middle-aged man standing outside the cell changed slightly, hurriedly grasping the cell door to shut it.

Qiu Yong sneered, rushed forward without saying a word, and smashed his steel fist through the air. With a 'bang,' the cell door was instantly blown off.

The abrupt scene made the middle-aged man's eyes widen, hardly believing what he saw. Was this... still human?

Outside the cell, Ling Chen looked at the middle-aged man who hadn't recovered from the shock, lifted the man's collar like an eagle catching a chick, and said, "I didn't want to have a conflict with you, but you forced my hand."

At this moment, the middle-aged man finally regained his senses, hurriedly opened his mouth to call for help outside. But Ling Chen had anticipated this. Before the man could utter a word, Ling Chen's fist flew out and sent all the words back down his throat.

Throwing down the unconscious middle-aged man, Ling Chen picked up a gun from the ground, checked the magazine, and skillfully slung the gun over his shoulder.

"Big brother, follow me later." With those words, Ling Chen stealthily moved to the edge of the tent, lifting the fabric hanging at the entrance. Looking at the situation outside, Ling Chen's heart eased; fortunately, there weren't many armed men around the tent, just twenty or thirty people, all sitting around a bonfire, seemingly roasting something to eat.

Taking in every detail, Ling Chen turned back and signaled to Qiu Yong. Then, he took the lead, cautiously moving out.

Less than a minute later, Ling Chen and his group easily incapacitated the dozens of armed men outside the tent. Of course, they only knocked them out, not killing them, as per Ling Chen's request. Being in the desert, they had no background; if they made enemies with these people, it would undoubtedly be a big problem. In such a situation, avoiding conflict was best.

After a while, Ling Chen led Qiu Yong and the others to an armored vehicle nearby.

This was Ling Chen's prearranged plan; the military base had plenty of equipment, including tanks, armored cars, and armed helicopters. To escape safely and avoid pursuit, the only way was to use the armed helicopter. Moreover, the helicopter was faster and more convenient than an off-road vehicle.

Seeing the armed helicopter parked not far away, Ling Chen signaled to Qiu Yong. Then, he swiftly rushed over, knocking down several technicians checking the helicopter.

Opening the cockpit of the armed helicopter, Ling Chen sat in the pilot seat and adeptly started the engine. Instantly, the rotor began to slowly turn. By this time, Qiu Yong and his group had entered the cabin. Seeing everyone had settled, Ling Chen immediately controlled the armed helicopter, lifting it into the air.

The noise from the armed helicopter was quite loud, quickly attracting the attention of the surrounding armed men. Upon seeing the technicians on the ground, the armed men quickly reacted. Suddenly, shouts echoed throughout the military base.

Tatatata!

With bursts of gunfire, bullets crazily poured in like rain, hitting the helicopter's shell.

Ling Chen remained calm, looking ahead, his eyes steady, unaffected by the chaos on the ground. Under his control, the helicopter rose higher and higher, reaching over thirty meters above the ground. Meanwhile, the damage from the bullets gradually reduced.

"All good! We're safe." Ling Chen breathed a sigh of relief, speaking to everyone through the helicopter's headset.

Wei Jiahao excitedly crawled into the cockpit, watching Ling Chen calmly piloting the helicopter, couldn't help but praise, "Ling Cheng, you're amazing, even flying a helicopter."

Ling Chen faintly smiled; piloting planes and tanks was child's play to him, all part of ghost training.

"Huh? Ling Cheng, what's that?" At this moment, Wei Jiahao seemed to notice something, pointing outside.

Turning his head, Ling Chen's pupils immediately shrank.

RPG!

Damn it! Ling Chen inwardly cursed as the rocket's speed was incredibly fast, already approaching too closely to dodge in time. Gritting his teeth, Ling Chen remained composed under pressure, quickly maneuvering the helicopter sideways, swapping front and back. Instantly, the rocket that was about to hit the cabin only struck the helicopter's tail.

Boom!

With the explosion, impacted by the blast, the helicopter shook violently, thick smoke billowing from the tail. Without the tail, the helicopter lost balance, spinning unchecked while rapidly descending.

Ling Chen struggled to control the helicopter, but regrettably, the damaged aircraft was completely uncontrollable.

Bang!

With a loud crash, the helicopter plummeted from mid-air, landing heavily on the sand, skidding several dozen meters.

As the helicopter stopped, sitting in the cockpit, Ling Chen touched his forehead, shaking his head forcefully. Fortunately, despite the intense collision, he was not badly hurt, remaining very conscious. "Big brother, are you all okay?" Ling Chen asked urgently.

Inside the spacious cabin, everyone was somewhat disoriented but unharmed, only sustaining some minor injuries.

Just as Ling Chen was silently relieved, a series of urgent footsteps approached quickly from afar. Ling Chen frowned slightly, initially planning to escape using the helicopter, not anticipating the opponent deploying heavy weapons.

Chapter 1122 Desert Crisis (5)

Ling Chen kicked open the deformed cockpit door, using both his hands and feet, crawled out of the cockpit. Meanwhile, Qiu Yong and the others also left the cabin one after another.

Looking at the pitch-black gun barrels outside, a strange look flashed through Ling Chen's eyes.

The armed group before him seemed to be different from those who captured them earlier. First of all, these people wore all kinds of military uniforms, and their weapons varied as well, unlike the previous armed group, who were disciplined and uniformly dressed. No matter how you looked at it, these people seemed like a ragtag army.

While pondering, a man resembling an officer approached, sizing up Ling Chen and the others, and began conversing with his subordinates, completely ignoring Ling Chen.

Bang! Bang!

Suddenly, explosions rumbled from the nearby military base, accompanied by the sound of intensive gunfire.

Hearing the commotion over there, Ling Chen immediately understood that it was likely another military group, probably coming to cause trouble. At that moment, the officer turned and looked towards the direction of the battlefield. After a while, he pointed at Ling Chen and the others, making a 'cut' hand gesture to his men.

Seeing this gesture, Ling Chen understood that they intended to kill them. Without time for delay, Ling Chen shouted loudly, his body moved swiftly, and he plunged directly into the crowd. He punched out, and before the officer realized what had happened, he was sent flying by Ling Chen's punch, his breastbone instantly shattered.

As Ling Chen swung into action, Qiu Yong and the others immediately followed, like tigers entering a flock of sheep, rushing into the crowd. At such close range, the armed men dared not fire, afraid of hitting their companions. This undoubtedly gave Ling Chen and the others the opportunity. Being experts, facing such combatants who relied solely on firearms posed no challenge to them.

In the blink of an eye, more than twenty armed men were all subdued.

"Brother, let's go!" Ling Chen shouted and promptly led the group in retreat opposite from the battlefield.

However, after running for a short distance, Ling Chen suddenly saw ahead a large number of enemies. Judging by their march direction, they must be headed for the battlefield. In the center of the crowd was a Jeep, with a middle-aged man with a bushy beard sitting inside. Ling Chen focused his gaze, his eyes narrowed.

The middle-aged man wore a military uniform with two shoulder patches, and the General Stars were very prominent. It was needless to say that he was certainly the leader of this ragtag army.

At this moment, both parties already faced each other, and Ling Chen couldn't evade anymore. No choice left! Ling Chen's eyes chilled, and he softly commanded, "Brother, let's fight out together!"

Upon hearing Ling Chen, Zhang Zhongfeng immediately raised his long bow, placing five arrows onto the bowstring.

Swoosh! Swoosh!

Following the sound of arrows cutting through the air, five sharp arrows shot out instantly, knocking five armed men in the front row to the ground.

"Rush in." Ling Chen said in a deep voice. Long-range battle wasn't to their advantage. The enemies had numbers and firepower — one volley of dense bullets would pierce them through. To avoid such a situation, Ling Chen's only chance was to charge into the crowd, fighting at close range, which was the only advantage they could leverage.

"Ling Cheng!" At this time, Qiu Yong shouted loudly. Ling Chen swept his gaze, immediately understood Qiu Yong's intention, and quickly dashed towards him. Simultaneously, Qiu Yong joined hands and placed them at his abdomen, waiting for Ling Chen's foot to step on it. With a fierce exertion, he flung his arms upward.

Using this force, Ling Chen soared into the air, flying over ten meters high, swiftly charging towards the enemy ranks.

Behind them, Zhang Zhongfeng quietly watched Ling Chen. When Ling Chen's momentum waned and he was about to fall, Zhang Zhongfeng immediately raised his long bow, aimed at Ling Chen's position.

An arrow flew out; it was extremely fast and precise, landing right under Ling Chen's foot. Using the arrow's force, Ling Chen lightly stepped onto it, his originally plummeting body soared once more towards the Jeep.

Ling Chen's target was clear — the middle-aged man wearing the General Star patches.

To catch the thief, first arrest the king. As long as he dealt with the leader, the others wouldn't be a problem.

With Zhang Zhongfeng's assistance, Ling Chen stepped on three arrows consecutively and finally reached above the Jeep. The Inner Strength whirled, and Ling Chen descended heavily in mid-flight, landing steadily on the Jeep.

Faced with Ling Chen's appearance, the middle-aged man on the Jeep and the driver were stunned, completely not expecting Ling Chen to launch an attack this way.

Before they could draw their guns, Ling Chen kicked out, directly kicking the driver out of the seat. Then, Ling Chen quickly reached out, snatched the handgun from the middle-aged man's waist, and pointed it at his forehead.

With the pitch-black gun barrel aimed at him, the middle-aged man was startled, his face turning pale instantly.

Meanwhile, the surrounding armed men finally reacted, all raising their guns at Ling Chen in the driver's seat.

"You better not move." Ling Chen glared coldly at those surrounding him and shouted, "If you don't want him dead, put down the guns and get lost!"

For a moment, over a hundred armed men were rattled, not daring to fire, fearing for their leader's life.

Seeing no one listening, Ling Chen glared at the middle-aged man and said, "If you want to live, you'd better obediently do what I say."

Upon hearing this, a trace of hesitation flickered in the middle-aged man's eyes.

Ling Chen's lips curled into a cold smirk, scoffing, "Seems like you don't value your life much, well then, I..."

"No, don't shoot!" The middle-aged man hurriedly raised his hands, adopting a surrender stance.

"Put down... Put down the guns, quickly." Facing Ling Chen's murderous glare, the middle-aged man's heart froze with fear, quickly yelling at his subordinates.

The leader had spoken, causing the others to look at each other, then one by one threw their guns to the ground.

Seeing the armed men's actions, Ling Chen breathed a slight sigh of relief. Truly a ragtag army, too easy to handle; a casual threat made this guy crumble immediately.

"Good. Now, tell your men to scram." Ling Chen ordered.

The middle-aged man dared not defy. At this point, for the sake of his own life, he had to comply with Ling Chen unconditionally. Soon, over a hundred armed men all retreated until they vanished from Ling Chen's sight.

"Alright, now get off! I said I wouldn't kill you, but we need to borrow your car, is that okay?"

"No problem, you... you can take it." The middle-aged man hurriedly said. At this moment, he only wished to get this walking disaster away quickly. Not to mention a Jeep, even a plane or tank was no issue.

"Thanks!" Ling Chen smiled slightly, winked, and the latter immediately understood, quickly scrambled out of the car, fleeing backward.

"Brother, get in the car."

#### Chapter 1123 Desert Crisis (Part 6)

However, before Qiu Yong and the others could get in the car, the sound of rotor blades suddenly echoed from the sky. Ling Chen looked up to see two armed helicopters flying in from the front, hovering above them, with blinding searchlights shining directly on them from mid-air.

Damn!

Ling Chen's expression tensed, he thought they could escape, but didn't expect the other side to have found them so quickly.

Facing the siege of two armed helicopters, Ling Chen and the others dared not move recklessly. Are you kidding? If those guys fired even a single rocket at them, they'd be dead.

Before long, ground forces rushed over, surrounding Ling Chen and the others completely. At the same time, an officer with the rank of Lieutenant emerged from the crowd and said to Ling Chen, "Sir, our General would like to invite you to come over."

Hearing the courteous words, Ling Chen was taken aback. These people had been shouting for his capture or death, and now, in the blink of an eye, their attitude had shifted so drastically. Could it be a trick?

Not only Ling Chen, but even Qiu Yong felt something was off, quietly advising, "Sixth Brother, be careful."

Ling Chen nodded gently, indicating he understood.

Immediately, under the Lieutenant's guidance, Ling Chen and his group returned to the military base.

Compared to before, the military base now was in shambles, with bodies and shell casings scattered everywhere. In the fierce exchange of fire just now, at least dozens had perished, with casualties on both sides.

Ling Chen glanced behind him. Although the Lieutenant used the word 'invite', they were followed by a group of armed men eyeing them fiercely. Moreover, sharp-eyed Ling Chen noticed that the safeties on their guns were off, meaning they were still wary of him.

If they dared make any improper moves, those guys would definitely show no mercy, riddling them with bullets.

Before long, Ling Chen and Qiu Yong arrived at a large tent within the military base.

"Gentlemen, please, come in!" The Lieutenant was very hospitable.

Ling Chen did not overthink it and walked straight in. As soon as he entered the tent, he saw a young man in his twenties sitting at a desk, seemingly dealing with paperwork. Beside the young man were several middle-aged men in their forties or fifties.

Judging by their attire and ranks, they were all Generals.

Ling Chen, being a person who had seen the world, appeared quite calm in this situation.

After a few minutes, the young man finished his documents and 'finally' noticed Ling Chen and the others, smiling as he said, "Was it you who helped me repel the enemy just now?"

Ling Chen didn't speak, just stared into the young man's eyes. He understood what the young man meant. The middle-aged man he captured earlier was definitely the leader of another faction. They originally intended to launch an attack tonight, but due to Ling Chen's group's intervention, their offensive was thwarted.

This was truly a case of unintended success. They were trying to escape but ended up helping these people.

"Sir, may I know your identity and what brought you to the desert?" the young man asked. Although his tone was friendly, there was a hint of vigilance in his eyes.

Ling Chen looked at him and said, "Mr. Agula, I want to clarify that we have no ill intentions. If it weren't for you intercepting us halfway, we wouldn't have come here, much less disturbed you. I hope you can find out the truth and let us leave as soon as possible."

Hearing this, the young man's expression changed slightly, but he quickly regained composure, smiling as he said, "Do you know who I am?"

Ling Chen nodded. After all that had happened, he had already guessed the young man's identity.

Currently, this small country is in a state of turmoil, with various rebel factions rising to seize power. Just recently, these rebels overthrew the government and assassinated the country's leader. According to news reports, after the leader's death, his son escaped with the protection of government forces and went missing.

Considering these circumstances, this young man in front of him was the fugitive prince.

Because this small country still practiced a monarchy, the head of state was always a familial heir. Therefore, calling this young man a prince wasn't wrong. However, given the current situation, the leader is dead, and this young man has formally become the leader of the country.

"Mr. Agula, news about you is all over television, so it's hard not to know." Ling Chen replied calmly.

"Good, since you know who I am, let's be upfront. Who are you, and what's your purpose here?"

"My name is Ling Chen. I'm here in the desert because my friend is in danger, and I must rush over to help."

Agula smirked and said, "Mr. Ling, could you reveal some information about your friend to me?"

"Sorry, this is my private matter, and I don't have to tell you."

"How dare you!" The Lieutenant who had led them in spoke sharply, "In front of the General, you'd better be respectful."

Ling Chen replied indifferently, "We have been very polite. Please remember, it was you who unreasonably sought trouble with me. Do I need to speak kindly to please you? Additionally, let me warn you in advance, if because of you I fail to rescue my friend in time and anything happens to her, I will not spare you."

At this point, Ling Chen had no patience left to waste time with them. Time was ticking, and the porridge girl's situation was very perilous. Who knew how much longer she could hold on?

"You have quite the nerve." The Lieutenant frowned, about to order his men. But, before he could speak, he suddenly felt a chill. Looking down, the Lieutenant's face turned pale. Ling Chen somehow appeared in front of him, holding a dagger to his neck.

"You..."

Ling Chen casually sheathed the dagger and said flatly, "If I wanted you dead, you'd never see tomorrow. Now," turning to Agula, "you should believe me. I am not here to assassinate you, nor do I have any interest in your whereabouts or selling the information to others."

Agula, expressionless, stared at Ling Chen for a while, then suddenly smiled, "Mr. Ling, I apologize for my subordinate's rudeness. You're right, someone as skilled as you, if truly wanting to assassinate me, I wouldn't survive. As it happens, I'm facing some trouble right now, and with your capabilities, if you are willing to help, I believe I can resolve it easily."

"Mr. Agula, we are not mercenaries, and as I said earlier, we have a purpose for being in the desert."

"I understand your stance. Mr. Ling, if I am not mistaken, I think I know where you're headed."

## Chapter 1124 Agula (1)

"You know?" Ling Chen stared into Agula's eyes and asked, "How do you know?"

Agula smiled and motioned for the lieutenant to bring over the map. Spreading it out, Agula gestured for Ling Chen to come closer. When Ling Chen approached the desk, Agula pointed at the map and said, "Mr. Ling, you might not be familiar with this desert. Let me give you a brief introduction. In this desert, there are as many as forty to fifty armed organizations scattered throughout. These are international as well as domestic, and you might as well consider them terrorist forces because none of them are officially acknowledged."

"Due to the vastness of the desert, these armed organizations have not only established bases here, but also use it as a training ground for elite warriors. You might not know this, but above our heads, at least five countries have satellites constantly monitoring activities in this desert. Some of these armed groups are quite powerful, with thousands of members, while others are smaller, only a few hundred strong. According to the intelligence I've gathered, there's a rather special base over two hundred kilometers from our base."

"Special?" Ling Chen asked, "What do you mean by 'special'?"

"After my father was killed by rebels, several generals who assisted him led me and the government forces to escape into the desert, where we built a temporary military base. For my safety, it was natural to investigate the surroundings. That special base was one of the first we discovered, but strangely, it seems to be built underground, with only a few dozen guards on the surface. However, every midnight, for some unknown reason, the ground around the base lightly trembles for several hours."

"At first, my generals suggested launching an attack to eliminate it as a precaution, but given its peculiarity, I abandoned the idea. This desert is abundant with secret labs built by various countries. Since it's desolate and vast, it's ideal for conducting weapon experiments. I feared they were testing some kind of large-scale weapon at that base, so I didn't act rashly."

"However, I received intelligence a few days ago that said the base has been fiercely attacked and is now surrounded by armed forces. Outnumbered, the area is now controlled by the attackers, and my people dare not venture deep, so our intelligence is very limited. You just told me that your friend is in danger, and you're here to help. Additionally, my people reported finding a small amount of food and a large supply of drinking water in the two off-road vehicles you drove, without tents or camping equipment, which suggests the place you're heading to isn't far and doesn't require an overnight stay. After some thought, only that base fits these conditions. Mr. Ling, am I right?"

Ling Chen nodded, "You're a smart man. Since you're smart, you should know how to make a decision."

Agula slightly smiled and replied in fluent Chinese, "Mr. Ling, please be patient. I know you're from Huaxia, and as a neighboring friend of Huaxia, I've always appreciated Huaxia's cultural heritage. Out of this admiration, when I turned eighteen, I even went to East Sea City to study at East Sea University for a few years and specifically focused on Huaxia's classic literature. If it weren't for the rebel turmoil, I'd probably still be studying there."

East Sea University?

Ling Chen was stunned, not expecting Agula to have such a background.

"What year are you in at East Sea University?"

"Fourth year, about to graduate."

"Then do you... know Nanrong Hao? Or Su Lin..."

"Su Lin? Do you mean Miss Su?" Agula nodded with a smile, "Yes, I know her. Her major is archaeology with a minor in Chinese literature, and I also took that course, so we often met in class. Mr. Ling, what is your relationship with Miss Su?"

"Friends." Ling Chen replied. It was truly unexpected to find out this guy is Su Lin's classmate as well. After thinking for a moment, Ling Chen asked, "Even as a crown prince, why keep such a low profile at school? Su Lin has never mentioned you to me."

"Mr. Ling, precisely because my status is different from others, I tried to maintain a low profile to avoid being discovered by the rebels. You know, if they captured me, it would be a significant advantage for them. That's why I didn't reveal my true identity when studying at East Sea University, I was there just as an ordinary foreign student."

So, that's the case!

"General Agula, aside from all this, I'm really worried about my friend's safety. Just as you said, that base has been surrounded for days, and my friend might be in imminent danger. I hope you can let us go, so we can assist them as quickly as possible."

Agula waved his hand, "Mr. Ling, it's not that I don't want to let you go, I don't intend to hold you back, but... even if you rush over now, nothing can be changed."

Hearing this, Ling Chen opened his mouth to speak, but Agula stopped him, continuing, "Mr. Ling, I don't mean to underestimate you. To be honest, because I have stayed in Huaxia and experienced many things there, I know your capabilities and who you are. However, no matter how skilled you are, can you withstand a bombardment?"

With that, Agula had the lieutenant bring a dossier and handed it to Ling Chen.

"Mr. Ling, this is the intelligence we gathered from that base. Take a look for yourself. Regardless of the number of armed factions, they possess tanks, armored vehicles, attack helicopters, mortars, and heavy machine guns. With so many heavy weapons, it's unthinkable for a handful of your people to defeat them, even if I led my troops in an attack."

While viewing the photos attached to the dossier, Ling Chen couldn't help but furrow his brows, his eyes showing a trace of seriousness.

In the photos, countless armed individuals and various heavy equipment could be seen. Furthermore, powerful lighting installations were set up around the base, effectively turning night into day. Under such bright exposure in open terrain, a stealth infiltration was impossible.

Ling Chen continued to examine the pictures, racking his brain for a strategy. Unfortunately, to his dismay, the only feasible option to penetrate the armed defenses and reunite with the porridge girl in the base was a full-scale assault.

Chapter 1125 - 1132: Agula (2)

"General Agula, when we were captured, your men confiscated everything except for our weapons. Can we have them back now?"

"No problem." Agula gave a nod, and the Lieutenant immediately stepped out.

Shortly after, the officer returned to the tent and handed several travel bags to Ling Chen. Ling Chen pulled out his phone to call the porridge girl. As expected, the call couldn't connect, likely because the base's signals had been cut off. He then dialed Jiang Yunkai's number.

According to their previous plan, Jiang Yunkai would be flying in with a chartered plane by early dawn. However, under the current circumstances, even if Yunkai brought a hundred elite soldiers, it might not change the situation. So now, the plan had to be adjusted to observe the situation before making any decisions.

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In a hidden underground base, the porridge girl sat in a chair with a face full of exhaustion. On the table in front of her were half a glass of water and a small pack of compressed biscuits.

This was her dinner.

They had just finished a battle. Under her leadership, the group managed to repel another enemy assault. This was already the tenth attack by the enemy, and in her current state, she didn't know how much longer she could hold out.

At this time, a burly young man walked up quickly. He was dressed in a faded military uniform, covered in bloodstains, with thick bandages wrapped around his arms and legs.

Seeing him, the porridge girl perked up slightly and asked, "Zongming, how are things outside?"

"Don't worry, they've retreated. Those guys have been on a full assault all day, they're likely too exhausted to continue. I doubt they'll attack again anytime soon."

"Don't be careless, you must be extremely cautious at times like this." The porridge girl warned, "Zhu Hong is leading the team this time, and I know him to some extent. He's a ruthless person who stops at

nothing to achieve his goals. When we think they've given up because they're exhausted, Zhu Hong will also think of an opportunity to catch us off guard when we let down our guard."

Chen Zongming nodded, "I know, I'll arrange for guards. If there's any movement from the other side, I'll notify you immediately." He paused, looking at the water and biscuits on the table, and his resolute gaze showed a hint of gentle concern, "Eat something, you've gone a day without food. You'll need your strength in case the enemy attacks again."

"I'm not hungry." The porridge girl looked at the floor and asked, "How much food reserve does the base have left?"

"I just checked with the logistics department, the food is barely enough for now. The base usually stores a month's worth of food and a large amount of drinking water. It's only been about ten days, and with so many casualties, the daily consumption of food has decreased. As it stands, if we distribute it evenly, we can last for more than twenty days. As for drinking water, there's no need to worry. We have an underground river beneath the base that can be tapped at any time. However, the biggest problem isn't food but medical supplies. We have too many injured, about fifty people initially counted. We consume a large amount of medicine every day, and the base's stock is barely sufficient, and could at most last another three days. Without a supply of medicine, the injured might..." At this point, Chen Zongming sighed softly and didn't continue.

The porridge girl took out a satellite phone and glanced at the signal bars, said helplessly, "The signal's been cut off, we can't get calls out, we're surrounded outside; we're basically trapped."

Chen Zongming frowned and said, "We've been out of contact with the outside world for so long, Mr. Ling should know our situation, why hasn't he sent help?"

"It's not that they don't want to, but they can't. The Ling Family has declared total war against us, our people are tied up everywhere, and there's no additional force to assist us."

"What now? Are we just supposed to wait here until we die?"

"Don't panic. Mr. Ling knows the importance of this base and will find a way to rescue us. For now, all we can do is hold on. The longer we last, the greater the chance."

"Alright!" Chen Zongming said, "Let's hope so. You should get some rest, I'll go out and patrol to check on things."

"Let me do it. You've been busy all day and are probably more exhausted than I am." The porridge girl tried to stand, but Chen Zongming pressed her shoulder down.

"I'm a man, and it's my duty to endure hardships. Besides, I'm part of the base too, so it's right for me to bear more responsibility. Enough talk, go rest, and relieve me later at night."

Watching Chen Zongming's departing figure, the porridge girl sighed softly, took a biscuit, and began to eat slowly.

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Outside the base, in a hastily constructed tent, Zhu Hong stood with his hands behind his back, listening to his subordinates' reports.

"Mr. Zhu, after today's full-day assault, the men are tired. Should we let them rest and continue tomorrow?"

"No stopping," Zhu Hong said without turning his head, "You're tired, they're even more tired. Not only must we continue the attack, but we must intensify it. Don't let them have any chance to breathe. Go, divide everyone into three teams, and have them take turns attacking. Capture the base as quickly as possible."

"But Mr. Zhu, I'm worried they might have objections. They're not our own people, they're all hired hands."

"It's precisely because they're hired that they must fulfill their duties. Tell them if they break through the base's defenses before dawn, I'll increase their pay by twenty percent."

"Understood, I know what to do."

Once the person left the tent, a man sitting in the corner spoke up, "Aren't you being too hasty? We've got plenty of time, no need to waste that money."

"What? Do you like the desert? I don't want to stay any longer in this wretched place."

"No need to hide your intentions from me. I know what you want. You're eager to capture the base quickly to prove yourself to Ling Beichuan and get his recognition. But let me give you a piece of advice, meals should be eaten one bite at a time, and roads should be traveled one step at a time. Some things shouldn't be rushed."

"You don't need to worry about me. Just do your job." Zhu Hong replied coldly, "Any updates from East Sea City?"

"Old K got in touch with me. Ling Chen is staying put at home and rarely goes out. Wei Jun's death has made Ling Chen even more cautious. Old K won't find it easy this time."

"Whether he succeeds or not is secondary, as long as Ling Chen is stuck in East Sea City."

Chapter 1126 - 1133: Agula (3)

A night passed.

Early the next morning, Ling Chen received a call from Jiang Yunkai. They had gotten off the plane and were preparing to head towards the desert. After getting Agula's consent, Ling Chen revealed his location to Jiang Yunkai, asking him to come directly here.

"Mr. Ling, our General invites you to breakfast," a lieutenant walked into the tent where Ling Chen spent the night and said.

"Alright, I'll be right there."

Given the current situation, forming a good relationship with Agula was extremely necessary. If he could leverage Agula's power and ask for his help, his chances of rescuing the porridge girl would be much greater. Otherwise, with just their group and a lack of weapons and equipment, it would be no different from a suicide mission.

The breakfast Agula prepared was quite lavish, perhaps because he had stayed in East Sea City for a few years; the style of breakfast was similar to that of his home country.

"General Agula, thank you for the invitation."

"No need to be so formal. Mr. Ling, you are a few years older than me, there's no need to call me General. If you don't mind, just call me Agula."

"How can I do that? After all, you're the future national leader, I..."

Agula smiled, waving his hand, and said: "Mr. Ling, a national leader is still an ordinary person. You don't need to worry too much. Honestly, I yearn for my previous life even more. If it weren't for my father's incident, I wouldn't have taken on this responsibility so early. Managing a country... really isn't easy. Besides, you see my current situation; I'm no different from a stray dog."

Ling Chen asked, "Agula, is your situation very troublesome now?"

"More than troublesome." Agula gave a bitter smile and said: "Currently, there are three rebel forces in the country. The ones who attacked us last night were just one of them. As you saw, just one rebel force outnumbers and outguns us. If it comes to a fight, our chances of winning are very low."

"How many people do you have left?"

"The army that escaped with me into the desert is just over three thousand, but each rebel force numbers in the tens of thousands. However, according to my intel, we still have some government troops controlled by the rebels. Because of their numbers, the rebels want to persuade them to join, so they haven't killed them. If we can rescue them, I will have a numerical advantage. Moreover, there's a secret weapons cache in a city over four hundred kilometers from the desert. The rebels don't know about it. If I can get the weapons from that cache, I can equip a well-armed army, and resolving the rebel threat will be a breeze."

Upon hearing this, Ling Chen immediately understood the true purpose of Agula's breakfast invitation.

The other party was seeking help!

Putting down the bread in his hand, Ling Chen looked at Agula's pleading eyes and said, "You want us to help you?"

Agula nodded and said, "That's right. Brother Ling, I'm well aware of your capabilities. There are things my men can't do, but for you, they're a piece of cake. If you can help me rescue the other government troops and transport the weapons from the cache to the desert, I assure you, I will definitely send troops to assist you in rescuing your friend."

Ling Chen looked seriously at Agula, seemingly hesitating whether to agree to the terms.

"Brother Ling, my situation is dire, I hope you can help me, consider it as a favor."

"You will really use your resources to help me?"

"I swear."

Ling Chen smiled faintly: "Oaths are the least reliable thing, they can only fool children." After a pause, Ling Chen said, "How about this, I can help you as long as you keep your promise. If you change your mind later, I have ways to deal with you."

When dealing with someone like this, promises are hollow, so it's best to lay out the ugly truth first. Besides, Ling Chen indeed needed Agula's help now.

Seeing Ling Chen agree, Agula was particularly pleased and quickly nodded, saying, "Brother Ling, rest assured, I will definitely keep my promise."

"Alright! Let's not talk about anything else, give me a copy of the intel later, and I'll help you deal with it as soon as possible."

"No problem." Agula couldn't even care about finishing breakfast and immediately called someone to prepare the intel.

Ten minutes later.

"Ling Cheng, are you really going to help him?" Yuan Yun asked.

"Third Brother, this is our chance. You've all seen the intel on the porridge girl's situation. Our strength alone is too weak. Unless there's a strong military intervention, our chances of success are very low."

Qiu Yong chimed in, "Ling Cheng must have thought this through carefully. We don't need to doubt it. Since the agreement has been reached, we might as well seize the time and get it done quickly."

Ling Chen placed a copy of the intel Agula sent on the table and said, "I just reviewed the intel earlier. Those government troops are trapped in the city we passed through, about a few thousand of them, held in a sports arena. The defense at the sports arena isn't very strong, only about a hundred people. Considering our capabilities, we can easily handle it."

"Ling Cheng, you're the best at this kind of operation. Tell us what to do, and we'll do everything we can to support you," Qiu Yong said.

"Alright."

...

Bang!

A sudden explosion sent several men flying through the air.

Seeing her bloodied comrades lying on the ground, the porridge girl bit her lip slightly, ignoring the bloodstains on her own body, and quickly instructed others to fill the gaps to prevent the enemies outside from breaking in.

"It's no good, the enemy's attack is too fierce. We can't stop them," Chen Zongming said urgently while holding an assault rifle, his body covered in wounds, looking at the porridge girl.

"Even if we can't, we must," the porridge girl said firmly. "If we're short on people, recruit those from the logistics department."

"This... alright."

Half an hour passed in the blink of an eye, and the enemy finally ceased their attack, leaving behind bodies and retreating.

Looking at the shattered corridor, the porridge girl ran her hand through her hair and slowly exhaled.

"Get the injured inside and try to save them," she ordered.

Upon her words, everyone, dragging their exhausted bodies, hurriedly got to work. The consecutive days of fighting had drained them all, leaving their faces numb, devoid of any energy.

"You're hurt," Chen Zongming said, holding the porridge girl's arm with concern. "Let me bandage it for you."

"Thank you!"

"Oh, come on, don't say thank you, we're too close for that."

After bandaging the wound, Chen Zongming turned to look at the bodies neatly laid out and sighed softly, "We lost seven or eight more this battle; at this rate, we'll be consumed sooner or later."

The porridge girl lowered her head, silently staring at the ground. She had done everything she could at this point. Faced with such a hopeless situation, she didn't know what else to do.

## Chapter 1127 - 1134: Ling Chen Descends from the Heavens (1)

"I have a somewhat immature idea."

Hearing Chen Zongming's voice, the porridge girl looked up and met his eyes, asking, "What idea?"

"At this point, we should all acknowledge that rescue isn't coming. Even if Mr. Ling remembers us, by the time they can send support, this base's defense will likely be breached. By then, none of us will survive. Rather than that, we might as well take a gamble."

"How do you plan to gamble?"

"Break through," Chen Zongming uttered two words solemnly. "Rather than sitting here waiting to die, we should gather all resources for an attack. I just calculated, there are still over a hundred combat-capable members in the base, along with weapons and ammunition, enough for us to initiate a charge. As long as we open a breach, spread out, and escape into the desert, we'll have a chance at survival."

The porridge girl pondered for a moment before asking, "Have you considered the others? Besides us combat personnel, the base has dozens of researchers averaging around fifty years old, lacking physical strength and combat capability. Having them charge with us would be sending them to their deaths."

Chen Zongming hurriedly said, "Why don't you understand, staying here is a dead-end. Rather than dying here, let's give everyone a chance to fight for their lives. Dying is fate, survival is luck. We are still young, porridge girl, do you really want to bury your life in this hellish place?"

"I understand your feelings, but I don't agree with this plan. No matter what, I won't abandon any companion; that's my responsibility." The porridge girl paused and continued, "But I won't make things difficult for you. If you can convince others to break through with you, then go ahead. I'll stay and wait for rescue with everyone."

"You... sigh!" Chen Zongming opened his mouth to persuade further, but seeing the porridge girl's steadfast gaze, he chose to give up. Having dealt with her for so long, he knew her determined nature; once she decided something, no one could sway her.

"Alright." Chen Zongming considered for a moment, then nodded, "Since you've decided, I won't force you. I'll tell the others my plan and let them choose."

"Zongming, I still hope you stay. We lack manpower as it is; if you take people away, defending will be difficult. Given the situation, we can hold out for at least ten days to half a month. If you leave, we might not last a day."

"So your best choice is to leave with me."

The porridge girl frowned slightly and said, "You're forcing me."

"This is for your own good. Rest assured, I'll do my utmost to protect you, no matter what happens, I..."

"Something's wrong!" Before Chen Zongming could finish, an anxious voice rang out.

The two turned to see a young man rushing over, gasping for breath, "Those bastards outside found the base's ventilation ducts. They've thrown gas grenades inside and sealed the ducts."

Hearing this, the faces of the porridge girl and Chen Zongming changed.

Looking up at the ventilation shaft as the young man described, a faint gas was indeed seeping from it.

"Block all the ventilation shafts immediately; do not let the gas enter the base," the porridge girl commanded.

The order was quickly relayed, but no matter how fast everyone moved, they couldn't stop the gas from entering the base. The vast underground base was at least half enveloped in gas.

With no other options, the porridge girl had to seal off areas, isolating the gas completely, greatly reducing everyone's activity space.

Chen Zongming stood beside a machine, looking at the data displayed with an extremely grim expression.

"The base's air can't circulate. At this rate, within a day at most, the air will be completely depleted."

The porridge girl sat silently nearby, the unexpected situation catching her off guard. She had thought they could hold out much longer, but now it seemed they only had one day.

"Porridge girl, let's break through; staying here only leads to death," Chen Zongming stated.

"Staying leads to death, going out is the same death." The porridge girl spoke blankly, "Zhu Hong uses these tactics to force us out. He knows well that once our air runs out, the only solution is to flee the base. I imagine he's already set everything up outside, just waiting for us to fall into the trap. But you're right, facing death either way, at least breaking through offers a glimmer of hope."

With those words, the porridge girl gathered everyone in the base and explained her plan.

"We have one day to prepare; whether we survive depends on our luck." After speaking, the porridge girl sighed softly, ignoring the buzz of discussion as she walked out of the room alone. She wanted some quiet time.

Outside the base, Zhu Hong stood by a tent, watching the tanks moving in the distance, the sunlight reflecting piercingly off his silver mask.

Soon, the tank barrels all aimed at the base's exit. Whoever emerged from the base would undoubtedly be blown to bits by the ready-loaded shells.

"Alright, let's head back. Now we just wait for the victory news." Zhu Hong smiled confidently.

A day, seemingly short yet long. But for those inside the base, it was an excruciating time. They sat without image on the ground, backs against the walls, none speaking. At this point, they didn't know what to say.

Knowing it was likely death, they could only gamble without retreat. Watching the clock on the wall tick, their hearts climbed into their throats.

Half an hour left... For them, this half-hour could be life's final moments. Some began breathing heavily, faces pale with fear for the upcoming fight, fearing what's to come.

They yearned to live but understood the hope was minuscule.

A few younger members began to retch with nerves.

Footsteps sounded, and everyone looked up to see the porridge girl appear in their view. Without a word or a pre-battle speech, they all stood in unison.

They knew, it was time.

"Take this!"

Taking the riot shield handed by Chen Zongming, the porridge girl asked, "How much explosives do we have remaining?"

"Only one box left."

Chapter 1128 - 1135: Ling Chen Descends from the Sky (2)

"Have someone set the explosives inside the base, with detonation time configured to twenty minutes."

Hearing this, Chen Zongming was surprised, "You want to destroy this base? No way, these explosives are our only hope for survival, our breakout relies entirely on them. If we waste them here, what chance do we have left?"

"This base holds too many secrets, it cannot fall into the enemy's hands. If not for this reason, why would we have held on for so long? Enough! No more arguments, this is my order, carry it out."

Soon, a whole box of explosives was installed at every corner of the base. With the detonation time set, porridge girl picked up the riot shield, gripping the only two smoke grenades in one hand, and strode towards the exit of the base.

As she passed through the blood-stained passageway, porridge girl saw the exit within reach, clenched her teeth, and directly threw the two smoke grenades out.

As thick smoke spread, a series of 'bang bang' sounds erupted from outside the base.

Suddenly, under the tank's salvo, shells crazily surged in, landing at the base's exit.

Boom! Boom!

Flames burst forth, stones scattered, the entire exit was shrouded in thick dust, mixing with the smoke.

Porridge girl raised the riot shield, her eyes fixed ahead. Due to obstructions from the dust and smoke, visibility was very low.

"Go, charge out!"

Porridge girl whispered urgently, tiptoed lightly, and her body quickly dashed out. She knew, the tanks outside needed time to reload shells, this brief ten-odd seconds was her only chance to rush out.

Half of her body had just crossed the exit before a volley of bullets immediately hit the riot shield, pressure instantly increased.

If not for the riot shield's protection, porridge girl's body would likely have been riddled with holes.

Despite the pressure, porridge girl did not stop, she pressed forward step by step. Soon, those tanks appeared in her sight.

"Scatter!" porridge girl shouted loudly.

Upon hearing her call, everyone following behind quickly dispersed. At the same time, the tanks' artillery fired out with a roar. Fortunately, thanks to porridge girl's timely reminder, the shells did not injure everyone but fell in the sandy terrain, kicking up countless grains of sand.

Under the explosion's impact, even a tiny grain of sand could be lethal. Several men who didn't run in time were instantly pierced by sand grains, falling in pools of blood.

Affected by the shock wave, porridge girl's body jerked forward, tumbling to the ground, and the riot shield in her hand fell off.

Without the riot shield's protection, bullets crazily shot towards her, landing around porridge girl.

Seeing companions falling continuously around her, porridge girl couldn't help but close her eyes. She knew, at this moment, no matter how skilful she was, she couldn't change the outcome.

Today, she and everyone else were destined to die.

"Congratulations, Mr. Zhu, on successfully defeating the enemy."

Outside the tent, a man congratulated. Zhu Hong stood with his hands clasped behind his back, quietly watching the dust-covered battlefield, his lips slightly curled in a cold sneer.

A bunch of overconfident idiots, daring to fight tanks with flesh and blood, they're courting death.

"Mr. Zhu, do you want to keep any alive?"

"No need, kill them all, I'm not interested in wasting time on them."

"Yes!"

The order was given, and the firepower intensified several fold. Under the bullet's suppression, porridge girl, Chen Zongming, and the others couldn't even rise, they lay on the ground, quietly waiting for death to descend.

"I'm sorry." Chen Zongming turned his head, looking at porridge girl not far away, eyes filled with apology.

"There's nothing to apologize to me for, this is our fate."

Chen Zongming forced a smile, saying, "If we survive, I would definitely pursue you. Actually, ever since you came to this base, I fell for you, it's just, you've always been so cold that I didn't know how to approach. If... if we live, would you give me a chance?"

"Sorry, even if we survive, I won't accept your pursuit, I... already have a man."

Upon hearing this, Chen Zongming appeared bitter, "At this point, can't you say something nice? Making me sad before I die, you really are..." Chen Zongming sighed, asking, "What kind of person is your man? Comparing him to me, who do you think is better?"

"Does it have any meaning now?"

"I know it doesn't mean much, I'm just curious, what kind of person could win you over?"

"He..." porridge girl hesitated for a moment, said, "In others' eyes, he may not seem like a good man, but to me, he is worth sacrificing everything for."

"Why?"

"Since I was sensible, my Master told me, you have a fiancé, your life's sole purpose is for him. All these years, I've strived towards this goal, hoping to protect his safety."

Chen Zongming said angrily, "So, to you, that man is merely a responsibility, a task, not love. If that's the case, then you're really pitiful. As for that man, humph! Just a loathsome bastard, needed protection from a woman, isn't he a coward? And your Master, forcibly taking over your happiness, making decisions for you, it's no different from a robber."

"Shut up!" porridge girl responded in discontent, "Don't insult my Master and my man, this is my willing choice, it has nothing to do with anyone else."

"Porridge girl, why are you so stubborn? We've reached this point, can't you think for yourself? Thinking of that bastard man is pointless, do you expect that coward to save you?"

"I..."

Porridge girl opened her mouth, about to respond, but at that moment, a bullet suddenly flew along the ground, hitting her arm, blood flowing from the wound.

"Porridge girl!"

Alarmed, Chen Zongming quickly got up, wanting to rush over and protect porridge girl. However, as soon as he stood, a burst of bullets shot towards him, forcing him back down.

Seeing porridge girl's painful expression, Chen Zongming clenched his fists, yet had no solution, only anxiously lying on the ground.

Clang clang clang!

Suddenly, a crisp clattering sound entered porridge girl's ears.

Porridge girl struggled to lift her head, only to see a solid riot shield propped in front of her, blocking all the bullets.

"How are you, alright?"

A familiar voice rang out, instantly giving porridge girl the urge to cry. Throughout, she never yearned for Ling Chen's arrival as much as today.

Seeing porridge girl's slightly red eyes, Ling Chen smiled gently, "I've never seen you cry before. Sorry, I'm a bit late. Come, I'll carry you away."

Chapter 1129 - 1136: Ling Chen Descends from the Sky (3)

The porridge girl nodded, swiftly climbing onto Ling Chen's back.

"Ling Chen, there's another person over there. He's my friend." The porridge girl pointed to where Chen Zongming was.

Ling Chen acknowledged her with a sound, raised the riot shield without a word, and slowly moved towards Chen Zongming.

Seeing the porridge girl on a stranger's back, Chen Zongming was taken aback. He was sure he'd never seen this man before, definitely not a member of the base. Moreover, he hadn't noticed how this man had appeared.

When Ling Chen and the porridge girl were beside him, Chen Zongming asked in surprise, "Who is this man?"

The porridge girl hugged Ling Chen's neck, smiling brightly, "He's my man. I think I need to correct something; he's definitely not a coward."

"Coward?" Ling Chen turned his head and asked, "Who did you say is a coward?"

"Nothing. Did you come alone?"

"No, the others came too." As he spoke, a crack suddenly appeared on the riot shield. Although it was very sturdy, it couldn't withstand the relentless shooting.

"How do we escape?" Chen Zongming asked urgently.

Ling Chen shrunk his body, trying to use the riot shield to protect the three of them. Hearing Chen Zongming's question, he smiled, "Don't worry, our reinforcements will arrive soon."

Boom!

Just as he finished speaking, there was a deafening explosion as a tank blew up, turning into a ball of fire. Then several more blasts followed, and the tanks parked around were instantly destroyed by bombs, becoming heaps of scrap metal.

"What's happening?"

In his tent preparing to celebrate victory, Zhu Hong suddenly stood up and said sternly. The explosions were obviously not from tank cannons. While pondering, a young man quickly ran into the tent, saying urgently, "Mr. Zhu, it's not good, we're under heavy attack."

"By whom?"

"I... I don't know. Our tanks and armored vehicles have been destroyed by bombs, and the enemy troops are coming from all directions, around a few thousand of them."

Saying this, Zhu Hong's face changed drastically. Without more questions, he quickly ran outside the tent, only to have a bomb fall nearby as soon as he stepped out.

With a 'boom', the blast wave lifted Zhu Hong's body, slamming him heavily onto the sandy ground.

Patting his dizzy head, Zhu Hong looked up and saw the group he hired falling like wheat, row by row, without a chance to fight back.

And not far off, several tanks rolled in slowly, followed by a large group of armed individuals.

"Retreat! Retreat!"

After a brief moment of shock, Zhu Hong finally reacted, shouting loudly.

"Go quickly." At this moment, the man responsible for Zhu Hong's safety quickly arrived, lifting Zhu Hong's body and sprinting to a jeep. Under the cover of mercenaries, the jeep quickly sped into the desert.

When Agula's troops joined the battle, the fight ended swiftly, lasting no more than ten minutes. Many of Zhu Hong's hired men were either dead, injured, or chose to surrender.

The only regret Ling Chen felt was letting Zhu Hong escape once again.

"Mr. Ling, my task is completed. If there's nothing else, I'll return to report to the General."

"Thank you, Lieutenant." Ling Chen smiled, "Thanks to your help this time."

"It's what we should do. I should thank you for your assistance. By the way, the General asked me to leave five hundred soldiers stationed here to prevent those people from causing trouble for you again."

"Alright." Ling Chen accepted without hesitation. He had paid a high price for Agula's support this time, so there was no need for politeness.

After seeing the government troops off, Ling Chen carried the porridge girl into the tent. Her arm was shot through and needed quick treatment to prevent excessive blood loss and other complications.

"Ling Chen, how did you know I was here?"

"Ling Tao called me, saying he couldn't spare any manpower and had to ask for my help."

"What about those government troops? Why are they helping you?" The porridge girl asked curiously.

Ling Chen chuckled and brushed off her question. Yesterday, according to the agreement with Agula, Ling Chen and Qiu Yong split into two groups. Ling Chen led a team to rescue the trapped government troops, while Qiu Yong took a team to the armory to transport weapons to the desert.

Fortunately, the operation went smoothly, taking only a day. Because of this, he was able to arrive in time when the porridge girl was in danger.

After treating the porridge girl's wound, Ling Chen and she went outside the tent. At this moment, Qiu Yong and the others were helping to treat the wounded.

Ling Chen looked around and asked, "Where's your friend? I don't see him."

"He went to the base. I asked him to disable the bomb detonation device in the base."

As they were speaking, Chen Zongming walked out from the base's exit.

"I heard you're her man?"

Seeing Ling Chen, Chen Zongming didn't mention anything else and directly spoke up.

Ling Chen glanced at the porridge girl beside him and nodded with a smile, "That's right."

"I thought you were a coward who needed a woman to protect him. Now I see I was wrong. But let me remind you, I won't give up easily. Even if you two were married, I could still win her over."

"I'm afraid I won't give you that chance."

"Zongming, say less and go check on everyone else."

"Alright."

After Chen Zongming walked away, Ling Chen smiled and said, "I didn't expect your charm to grow so much."

"Don't misunderstand. I only see him as a comrade, nothing more. Let's go check the base."

Entering the base, Ling Chen asked, "What is this base for?"

"Research. The research equipment and personnel here are world-class. However, I cannot tell you the details unless I have authorization from above."

"Not even me?" Ling Chen seemed displeased. These people were too much, keeping everything from him. When they needed him, they just made a call, unwilling to say more.

What did they take him for? He wasn't a mercenary, always at their beck and call. Besides, even mercenaries get paid, but he hadn't received a dime.

Never mind!

Ling Chen didn't want to waste his energy and words on this matter. Now that he found the porridge girl, there were more important things he needed to know.

"Where's my father? Do you know?"

"Master? I'm not sure. It's been a long time since I got any news from him. But I know he seems to have taken on a dangerous mission and is currently out of contact."

"You can't even reach him?"

"No, my clearance isn't enough to know much. But he's your father, so perhaps you can ask those in charge." Saying this, the porridge girl took out a satellite phone and dialed a number.

Before long, the call connected, and Ling Tao's voice came from the other end: "What's the situation over there?"

Before the porridge girl could respond, Ling Chen grabbed the phone and said, "The crisis is over. Isn't it time you told me where my father is?"

#### Chapter 1130 - 1137: Stubbornness

"Ling Chen, your father is currently on a secret mission, and I can't reveal too much information to you at the moment. You know your father's capabilities, once he completes the mission, I..."

Before Ling Tao could finish his words, Ling Chen impatiently interrupted, "Stop giving me so much nonsense, I'm fed up with it. You guys keep telling me this is confidential, that is confidential, this can't be said, that can't be said, only when things reach me do you reveal a bit of information. Do you think I'm some beggar that can be easily dismissed? Let me tell you, if you don't clarify things for me this time, don't come to me for anything in the future. Also, don't blame me if I do something outrageous, don't come to reproach me."

"You... you're really stubborn, aren't you." Ling Tao's tone carried a hint of helplessness, "Didn't I tell you before? There are things I'm not withholding from you, but... telling you now won't benefit you, it'll only add unnecessary worries."

"I believe you have your good intentions, but I don't want to be a puppet that comes and goes at your command. If you want me to do these things, at least tell me the reason, let me know why I'm doing them. If you truly consider me one of your own, you shouldn't keep everything from me. Do you know, the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion has already issued the Heavenly Mechanism Order, sending people all over to hunt my father, and you're well aware of my relationship with the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. Do you understand how difficult it is for me to be caught in the middle? I'm worried every day at home, fearful that something terrible might happen to my dad. And you all, not saying a word, not even reachable when I need help, have you considered my feelings?" Ling Chen grew more agitated as he spoke, and even he, who was usually calm, couldn't quite control his emotions.

"Alright, I understand your point." Ling Tao was silent for a moment, then said, "Hand the phone to porridge girl, I have something to tell her."

"Fine, if you understand, if you want my help, don't treat me like an outsider." With that, Ling Chen handed the phone over to porridge girl.

It's unclear what Ling Tao said to porridge girl, but she responded a few times and then hung up the phone.

"What did he say?" Ling Chen asked.

"He said... since you want to know, I'll tell you some things first. As for the rest, he'll personally speak to you later. Follow me, I'll take you somewhere." With that, porridge girl proceeded directly to the core area of the base.

After passing through four explosion-proof doors, Ling Chen followed porridge girl into a hidden laboratory.

As the door to the laboratory slowly opened, Ling Chen was immediately stunned by the scene in front of him.

In the massive laboratory, various instruments and equipment were on display, but more eye-catching were over a dozen two-meter-long transparent cultivation tanks. Inside those tanks lay a man each. But that's not the most shocking part. The most astonishing was that the men looked exactly the same, as if carved from the same mold.

This... this is... clone?

Ling Chen stared dazedly at the tanks, his mind unable to react.

He had always thought that only those who crossed the moral line, like the God Organization, would do such things, but he hadn't expected Ling Tao and his people were conducting such forbidden experiments too.

"Porridge girl, what exactly is going on?" Ling Chen asked after regaining his senses.

"Don't get excited, let me explain, it's not what you think," porridge girl said. "As you can see, these are genetic clones, created over decades of research, resulting in so many test subjects. We've paid a heavy price for these test subjects."

Ling Chen waved his hand, "Don't tell me about things that don't matter, I just want to know why you're conducting such experiments."

For a long time, Ling Chen fought against the God Organization primarily because they violated human morals and experimented on innocent people over the line. In his view, the God Organization was evil, ambitious, and had to be eradicated. Now, with Ling Tao's involvement in such experiments, what's the difference from the God Organization? Ling Chen felt confused, had he chosen the wrong side all along?

Seeing Ling Chen's dazed look, porridge girl explained, "Ling Chen, don't overthink. We're different from the God Organization. They're willing to use any means to achieve their goals, but our experiments have never harmed any innocent person. Follow me, let me show you something."

With that, porridge girl walked to a refrigerated box, entered a triple password, and the box door slowly opened.

With a burst of cold air from the box, Ling Chen's expression changed slightly. He was surprised to see a severed arm inside the box.

This... looking at the severed arm, it seemed intensely familiar to Ling Chen. That's right! During his first meeting with Ling Tao, he was trying to seize a metal password box Ling Tao had. Inside that box was a severed arm. At the time, Ling Tao told him that this arm was crucial to future victory or defeat.

Whenever he recalled Ling Tao's words, he felt incredulous. He couldn't understand how a severed arm could relate to future victory or defeat.

"You've seen this severed arm before, all our experiments are based on it, including those clones. Our researchers extracted genes from this arm and then created these clones," porridge girl said.

"Who does this severed arm belong to?"

"I don't know, it's confidential, very few people are aware. If you want to find out, you'll have to ask Ling Tao. He's the one handling these matters, including this research base, which he manages entirely. When we talked on the phone, Ling Tao told me he'll come to the base after dealing with other matters, so you can ask him anything you don't understand then."

"Alright, I'll definitely find him to get clarity." Ling Chen nodded. This time he was determined, regardless of what excuses Ling Tao might have, to get to the bottom of everything, including the internal struggles within the Ling Family and their causes.

Upon leaving the base, Agula's subordinate found Ling Chen and informed him that Zhu Hong had gone missing, and the search troops had returned. Ling Chen wasn't surprised, knowing Zhu Hong was cunning and must have had a fallback plan. Moreover, intelligence indicated that Zhu Hong seemed to have personal protection.

Although he couldn't capture Zhu Hong, from this incident, Ling Chen was already able to confirm that Zhu Hong had been recruited by the southern faction of the Ling Family.

Taking advantage of everyone's distraction while cleaning the battlefield, Ling Chen made a call to Hu Fei, who was far away in East Sea City. He was abroad at the moment, but Old K was still in East Sea City, posing a threat that couldn't be ignored, who knew what his next target might be.