

The Beauty 1211

Chapter 1211 Family Reunion (1)

"Yes, I know him." Zhu Hong nodded. He knew that it would be impossible to hide this from Zhu Chuan, so it was better to just admit it frankly. Zhu Chuan gave Zhu Hong a deep look and asked meaningfully, "It seems your relationship with that Ling Chen is not good."

Zhu Hong clenched his fist, a fierce murderous intent flashing in his eyes.

This Ling Chen was truly a thorn in his side, an annoyance in such a godforsaken place, he could still hear news about him. Zhu Hong took a deep breath, trying to suppress his tone, and said lightly, "I've fallen to this point all because of him."

"So, he's your enemy. What a coincidence. Is he very formidable?"

"He's a master on the Earthly List, running his own forces in East Sea City. Besides, I've heard he's on good terms with the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. Su He from Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion seems to be his master."

"Master?" Zhu Chuan's eyes narrowed slightly, he said solemnly, "Are you sure?"

"At least that's what I've heard."

"Alright! I know, you can leave now." After waving Zhu Hong away, Zhu Chuan took out his phone alone and dialed a number. A few minutes later, a man dressed in black walked in from outside. Besides being entirely in black from head to toe, his face was covered with bizarre tattoos, almost all over his entire face, giving a very eerie impression.

Looking at the newcomer, Zhu Chuan said, "There's a client from Beijing encountering trouble, a member of the Zhu Family. Take some people over there to check it out. If the Zhu Family comes knocking again, don't be polite, kill them all. Also, if possible, take care of that Ling Chen."

"Yes!"

"And..." Zhu Chuan thought for a moment, then continued, "Bring Zhu Hong along, let him go and gain some experience. Remember, don't let him take any risks for now."

"Understood!" The man nodded without any doubt or questions. As an eagle claw, adhering unconditionally to orders is his duty.

...

In the blink of an eye, two days passed.

In Beijing, at a manor located in the Beijing suburb, Ling Chen was sitting in the living room, chatting with Tang Guolun.

It was just past ten o'clock, nothing really urgent to handle. Over the past two days, all investigations had been completed, now it only required waiting for the Zhu Family's arrival to begin the next step of the plan.

Originally, this was a struggle between Ling Chen and Hong Wei, but due to the appearance of Skyhawk Pavilion, this fight swiftly escalated into a conflict between Zhu Family and Skyhawk Pavilion. According to Zhu Qing, the Zhu Family would dispatch some experts to assist. Apart from helping Ling Chen defeat Hong Wei, capturing members of Skyhawk Pavilion was their primary aim.

Over the years, the Zhu Family persistently sought the whereabouts of Skyhawk Pavilion. However, due to its elusive nature, they had not gained any progress. Now, a rare chance to encounter members of Skyhawk Pavilion presents itself, the Zhu Family naturally wouldn't abandon such an opportunity.

Just then, a pleasant phone ringtone sounded. Ling Chen pulled out his phone, glanced at the incoming number, and promptly answered.

"Hello! Haozi, what's up?" Recently, Nanrong Hao had been staying by Nanrong Wanqing's side, responsible for her safety. Zhong Wei and Liang Zhao Hui still hospitalized for their severe injuries.

"Chen, are you free today?" Nanrong Hao inquired on the other end.

"Get to the point, you know I'm quite busy."

"Ahem! Well... it's like this, today is Miss Zhu's birthday, can you..."

Ling Chen cut in, "Xiaozhu's birthday, shouldn't she call me herself?"

"Chen, you know Miss Zhu feels awkward inviting you to her house. Last time when Miss Tang called you to come over, you refused. So, how could she still dare to invite you? Hey! Chen, I'm not trying to criticize, in these moments, don't be so particular. As a man, you should be more generous. Miss Zhu is Miss Zhu, and Zhu Hong is Zhu Hong, don't project your hatred for Zhu Hong onto his family. Don't you agree?"

"You brat..." Ling Chen couldn't help but laugh, "Are you truly your sister's brother? If your sister knows you're advising me to celebrate another woman's birthday, she might flay you alive."

"Ah, you're overthinking it. I just believe we're all friends, regardless, you should attend. Besides, I'm not asking you to pursue Miss Zhu, what could my sister possibly do to me?"

"Fine, fine, wait for me, I'll be over shortly." After hanging up, Ling Chen informed Tang Guolun, and then drove alone towards the city.

Ye Liangyong had arranged accommodations, equipped them with several vehicles for convenient travel.

Once in the city center, Ling Chen found a boutique, purchased a unique small gift, ordered a cake, and then headed to the Zhu Family.

Though he'd had numerous dealings with Zhu Xiaozhu and Zhu Hong, it was still Ling Chen's first visit to the Zhu Family.

The Zhu Family is somewhat reputable in Beijing, running several major corporations. The Zhu Family and Nanrong Family were old allies, but later due to a rift between Nanrong Wanqing and Zhu Xiaozhu,

their interactions gradually dwindled. If not for Ling Chen indirectly resolving their dispute, the relationship between the two families might have turned from allies into strangers.

At half past eleven, Ling Chen arrived outside a siheyuan in the western part of Beijing. Despite its age, in Beijing, those who can afford to live in such houses are either rich or noble.

Nanrong Hao had been waiting outside, seeing Ling Chen get out of the car, he eagerly ran over to take the cake, smiling he said, "Chen, everyone is inside, come, I'll lead you."

"Have things been going well lately?" Ling Chen asked as they walked.

"Not bad, but Hongyu Group's situation isn't great. Those guys have all sorts of tricks, trying to bring Hongyu Group down."

"How's it looking now?"

"For now, it's okay. Sister sacrificed some peripheral small companies, letting them draw the fire, but it's not a long-term strategy. Once those small companies are crushed, Hongyu Group will be next."

Ling Chen patted Nanrong Hao's shoulder, saying, "Don't worry too much, I'll help resolve this matter soon."

Those teaming up against Hongyu Group were hidden too deep with considerable numbers. To identify them all, Hong Wei is the key to uncovering their identities.

Passing through the gate, Ling Chen and Nanrong Hao walked side by side into the central hall of the siheyuan, the Zhu Family's reception hall. Upon entering, they saw a spacious hall with a large round table, laden with delectable dishes. Nanrong Wanqing, Tang Shiyun, and a middle-aged man were already seated.

Seeing Ling Chen's arrival, Nanrong Wanqing and Tang Shiyun hesitated for a moment, surprised to see Ling Chen unexpectedly joining them.

"Chen, this is Miss Zhu's father, Zhu Yaosheng."

Chapter 1212 Family Reunion (2)

"Mr. Zhu, hello, sorry to disturb you." Ling Chen looked at the middle-aged man and said, "My name is Ling Chen, I'm Xiaozhu's friend, nice to meet you."

"Ling Chen?" Zhu Yaosheng said meaningfully, "I feel like I've heard that name somewhere."

"I usually stay in East Sea City and rarely come to Beijing, so Mr. Zhu might not know me."

Hearing this, Zhu Yaosheng just gave Ling Chen a deep look and didn't continue to ask. Just then, Zhu Xiaozhu came out from the kitchen holding a bowl of food. Seeing her father chatting with Ling Chen, Zhu Xiaozhu was slightly startled, but her beautiful eyes quickly filled with joy.

Today is her birthday, and she really hoped to invite Ling Chen to attend. However, considering Ling Chen's relationship with Zhu Hong, after hesitating for a long time, she gave up on the idea.

Now, Ling Chen suddenly appeared, how could she not be happy?

"Dad, this is Ling Chen, the one I mentioned to you before." Zhu Xiaozhu proactively introduced.

Zhu Yaosheng smiled broadly and said, "No wonder it sounds familiar; you've mentioned him to me before." Saying this, Zhu Yaosheng took another few glances at Ling Chen. He knew his daughter best; since childhood, she'd never mentioned any man in front of him, except Ling Chen. This showed how much she valued the man in front of them.

"Come on, Ling Chen, don't be shy, sit down. All these dishes were made by Xiaozhu's mother herself. If it weren't for our daughter's birthday today, she wouldn't have gone into the kitchen."

Nanrong Wanqing chimed in with a smile, "We're in for a treat today."

Everyone took their seats, and soon, Zhu Xiaozhu's mother came out from the kitchen.

Zhu Xiaozhu's mother was called Chen Yan, only in her forties, very well maintained, with fair and tender skin. Standing next to Zhu Xiaozhu, they looked more like sisters, appearing only in their thirties, very young.

There were no outsiders today, and everyone chatted and laughed at the table, all very happy. At this moment, Chen Yan looked at Ling Chen and asked, "Xiao Ling, how old are you this year, and do you have a girlfriend?"

Hearing this question, Ling Chen unconsciously glanced at Nanrong Wanqing with the corner of his eye.

"Mrs. Chen, I'm still young. I want to focus on my career for now and don't want to find a girlfriend so soon."

"How can that be, your Uncle Zhu was already a father at your age. They say you should establish a family before a career. Men should start a family first, then think about working on their career. Like our Zhu Hong, he's delayed so long without a girlfriend, I'm worried about him."

Mentioning Zhu Hong made everyone a bit silent, not knowing how to respond. Next to them, Zhu Yaosheng laughed and said, "Children have their own fortunes, why worry so much? Come, drink!"

"How can drinking not include me?" Suddenly, a familiar voice came from the doorway.

Everyone turned to look and their expressions changed slightly.

Zhu Hong!

Nanrong Hao was taken aback, suddenly standing up, looking at the other vigilantly, and said in a low voice, "You..." Before he could finish, Ling Chen grasped his sleeve and gave a slight tug, signaling him to keep quiet.

With Ling Chen's reminder, Nanrong Hao then realized. He almost forgot, this was the Zhu Family, with Zhu Hong's parents present. Hesitating for a moment, Nanrong Hao sat back down, though the vigilance in his eyes did not diminish in the slightest.

"Zhu Hong." The happiest ones were still Zhu Yaosheng and Chen Yan. Seeing their son return, how could they not be delighted as parents?

"Dad, Mom, Little Sister." Zhu Hong walked in with a smile, hands behind his back, greeting each one. When his eyes landed on Ling Chen, a sharp glint flashed in his eyes. However, it was only for a moment before Zhu Hong concealed the cold killing intent.

"Ling Chen, it's been a long time." Zhu Hong said with a slight smile.

"Yes, it's been a while. You seem to have been doing well." Ling Chen smiled faintly, showing no hostility. Despite his calm appearance, he was quite surprised. In just a few months, Zhu Hong had changed so much; it was truly incredible.

The most obvious change was Zhu Hong's face. Initially, due to an explosion, Zhu Hong suffered severe burns and had to wear a mask to meet people.

But in such a short time, Zhu Hong's face recovered as if nothing had happened, with only faint traces visible, which could be described as a 'rebirth' compared to before.

Who knows what Zhu Hong has experienced during this time.

As his thoughts raced, Ling Chen heard Chen Yan's voice, "Zhu Hong, do you know Xiao Ling? I thought he was your sister's friend."

"How could I not know him," Zhu Hong said with a half-smile, "He and I are 'very good' friends. Right, Ling Chen?"

Before Ling Chen could speak, Zhu Yaosheng interjected, "Alright! You came back just in time. Today is your little sister's birthday, and it's been a long time since our family gathered together. Xiaozhu, go get another bowl and chopsticks for your big brother."

"Yes." Zhu Xiaozhu responded softly, her head bowed, not daring to look directly at Zhu Hong, and quickly got up to head into the kitchen.

Zhu Hong smiled to himself, patted Nanrong Hao on the shoulder, and said, "Could we swap seats? I haven't seen Ling Chen in a long time and want to catch up with him."

Nanrong Hao didn't speak but looked at Ling Chen. It was only when Ling Chen nodded that he reluctantly swapped seats. Sitting next to him, Ling Chen remained silent, still smiling broadly. Yet, his body was secretly on guard.

Zhu Hong's sudden return at this moment was definitely not just for Zhu Xiaozhu's birthday; there must be other reasons. Moreover, upon meeting again, Ling Chen felt that Zhu Hong changed not just in appearance but also in personality and temperament.

This made Ling Chen feel a bit uneasy; if Zhu Hong was a snake before, he was undoubtedly now a venomous one.

Soon, the meal ended amidst insincere laughter and chatter.

After the meal, Ling Chen didn't plan to stay any longer. Zhu Hong's sudden appearance gave Ling Chen a strong sense of crisis. He had to leave quickly and prepare early.

Knowing Ling Chen was leaving, Zhu Yaosheng and his wife politely urged him to stay a bit longer. However, it was merely out of courtesy. Having their son back after being away for so long, they naturally wanted to spend more time with Zhu Hong.

"Uncle Zhu, Aunt Chen, we're leaving too." Nanrong Wanqing came over and said.

"You're leaving too?" Chen Yan asked in confusion, "Weren't you staying well? Why leave? We have plenty of rooms, one or two more people won't matter. You can stay as long as you like."

Chapter 1213 Probing

"Mom, Wanqing is very busy. There are still a lot of things to handle at the company," Zhu Xiaozhu said beside her. Hearing this, Chen Yan smiled and replied, "Look at my memory, I forgot that Wanqing is the

chairman of the Hongyu Group. Alright, since you have things to do, I won't keep you long. Come visit whenever you have time."

"Girl," Ling Chen waved to Tang Shiyun and said, "They're having a family reunion. Don't hang around and affect them. Come with me."

Tang Shiyun nodded obediently. For her, she would rather stay by Ling Chen's side.

Leaving the Zhu Family, Ling Chen was about to walk to the car. But at this moment, his gaze was suddenly captured by a car across the street. Although there was a car window in between, Ling Chen could feel the presence of someone in the car. Moreover, that person was looking at him.

In a split second, Ling Chen called Nanrong Hao to his side, gave a few instructions, and told them to leave first. "Chen, you're not leaving with us?"

"No. With Zhu Hong suddenly back, I'm not feeling at ease."

"If you ask me, we should've directly made a move and dealt with that bastard just now."

Ling Chen glared at Nanrong Hao and said testily, "Do you want to make a move right in front of their family? Don't forget, your Nanrong Family and the Zhu Family are old family friends. Even if you want to make a move, you can't do it in front of Zhu Yaosheng and his wife."

In this matter, Ling Chen had his own principles and bottom lines. As the saying goes, avoid implicating family. Zhu Yaosheng and Chen Yan were unaware of what Zhu Hong had done. So, there was no need to involve that innocent couple. Besides, he didn't want to make things difficult for Zhu Xiaozhu and Nanrong Wanqing.

Watching Nanrong Hao drive away, Ling Chen walked alone to the street opposite the Zhu Family's house, found a relatively secluded spot, and quietly watched the entrance.

At this moment, the car that caught Ling Chen's attention earlier suddenly opened its doors, and two men dressed in black got out and headed straight towards Ling Chen's location.

Seeing the two men approaching step by step, Ling Chen immediately chose to move away. Walking along the street for more than ten meters, he took a turn and slipped into a nearby alley.

Watching Ling Chen disappear from sight, the two men quickened their pace and immediately ran after him.

Entering the narrow alley, Ling Chen stood in the center of the alley, smilingly watching the two of them as if waiting for their arrival.

"Who are you?" Ling Chen asked, "Zhu Hong's men?"

"That's not something you need to know," one of the men replied coldly, "All you need to know is that this time next year will be your death anniversary."

Ling Chen shrugged dismissively and said, "That'll depend on whether you have the skills." As his words ended, Ling Chen lightly tapped his feet, and his body suddenly surged forward. In an instant, he was close to the two men.

With fierce fist force quickly gathered, Ling Chen gave a light shout, and his steel fist slammed out, aiming straight at the foremost man. As the force whipped past, the man leaned slightly back, preparing to widen the distance from Ling Chen. But at this moment, Ling Chen suddenly blurred in his vision and disappeared from sight.

Where is he?

"Looking for me?"

Just as the two were stunned, Ling Chen's voice suddenly came from behind. Before they could react, one of the men's bodies abruptly flew up, like a kite with a broken string, drawing an arc in the air before heavily hitting the ground.

Turning around, Ling Chen looked at the other man and asked with a half-smile, "Is that all you've got?"

The man furrowed his brows, glanced at his fallen companion, hesitated briefly, and immediately turned around to flee out of the alley. Watching the man's retreating back, Ling Chen did not pursue. For him, having one to question was enough.

Coming to the man's side, Ling Chen bent down and turned the man's body over. However, seeing the man's ashen face, Ling Chen's heart suddenly sank.

Dead?

When he made a move just now, he had held back. It was impossible to take his life, so why...? Thinking of this, Ling Chen quickly opened the man's mouth. Instantly, a pungent odor wafted out.

He poisoned himself! Ling Chen was shocked, not expecting such extreme measures, nor did he know who these people were. After thinking for a moment, he squatted beside the man and rummaged through his pockets, hoping to find some useful clues.

Suddenly, the supposedly dead man suddenly opened his eyes and lunged at Ling Chen. Caught off guard, Ling Chen's body was directly pushed to the ground.

Seeing the sharp knife aiming at his neck, Ling Chen acted instinctively, unleashing his full inner strength, instantly creating a force that sent the man flying.

"Playing dead?" Ling Chen swiftly got up and rushed over. But, before he approached, he saw the man spit a mouthful of blood and collapse again, lifeless.

With the lesson from before, Ling Chen didn't dare let his guard down, cautiously approaching the man and checking carefully. Only after confirming the man was truly dead did Ling Chen breathe a sigh of relief.

This man... Ling Chen frowned secretly. He had encountered many types of assassins, but never someone like this. Using death to lull the opponent and then delivering a fatal blow, and indeed he had taken poison. Even in such a situation, if he successfully killed the target, he would die too, a true kamikaze tactic. He wondered what kind of organization could train such death warriors.

Zhu Hong! Ling Chen squinted his eyes. It didn't take much thought to know it was definitely related to Zhu Hong. He hadn't seen him for so long and wondered what he had gone through.

Meanwhile, in the Zhu Family's hall, Zhu Hong, who was chatting with his parents, received a phone call. Looking at the number displayed on his phone, Zhu Hong stood up and said, "Dad, Mom, you chat first. I'll take this call outside."

Outside, Zhu Hong answered the call and asked, "How did it go?"

"Failed."

"As expected," Zhu Hong replied coolly, "I've told you, Ling Chen is a master on the Earthly List, not that easy to deal with. Your probe does nothing but alert the enemy, not helping our actions but having a counterproductive effect."

"Who says it's useless? We've figured out his strength."

"I've said, he..."

Before Zhu Hong could finish, the man on the other end coldly replied, "I don't trust you. What you say is useless to me."

Hearing this, a burst of anger surged in Zhu Hong's heart. However, he didn't show it, burying it deep inside. No matter what he encounters now, he can keep a straight face.

"What are you planning to do next?"

"That's not for you to know. I'll arrange everything. Just do your part," the caller said before hanging up directly.

Chapter 1214 - 1221: Heart-to-Heart Between Brothers

Humph! This person really doesn't put me in his eyes. Listening to the busy tone on the phone, Zhu Hong let out a cold laugh.

However, the other party's attitude made him realize one thing. Even if he is Zhu Chuan's direct disciple, without enough strength, he still has no say.

He didn't know much about this Ying Hall's Eagle Claw; from Zhu Chuan's words, there are two Eagle Claws in Ying Hall, true elites of the hall with formidable strength. To receive such praise from Zhu Chuan indicates that they are truly capable. If this Eagle Claw can really deal with Ling Chen, then a bit of mistreatment would be worth it.

Putting away the phone, Zhu Hong turned and went back to the hall. He looked at Zhu Xiaozhu, who was sitting silently on the side, and smiled as he asked, "Little sister, why do you look so unhappy? Are you not pleased to see me back?"

Hearing Zhu Hong's words, Zhu Xiaozhu lowered her head and said in a voice as soft as a mosquito's buzz, "No."

The Zhu Yaosheng couple on the sofa also noticed something was wrong with Zhu Xiaozhu, "Xiaozhu, you usually cheer up the most when your brother comes home. We've been chatting for so long, and you haven't said a word. What's on your mind?"

Before Zhu Xiaozhu could speak, Zhu Hong interrupted with a smile, "Dad, little sister's not a child anymore, she's over twenty. When a girl grows up, she'll always have some worries. Mom, don't you think so?"

Chen Yan's eyes lit up, as a woman, of course, she caught the implication of Zhu Hong's words.

"My dear daughter, do you... have a man you care about?"

"No, no." Zhu Xiaozhu was startled, not expecting Chen Yan to say that, and quickly waved her hand: "Mom, stop guessing, I don't have anyone I like at the moment, if I do, I'll definitely bring them home to meet you. I'm just feeling a bit unwell." Then, Zhu Xiaozhu stood up, "Dad, Mom, brother, you carry on chatting, I'm going to my room to rest."

Watching Zhu Xiaozhu hurriedly leave, Zhu Yaosheng smiled helplessly, "This girl has grown up, she doesn't tell us her worries anymore. Zhu Hong, as her older brother, you should pay more attention to your sister, okay?"

"Dad, I know." Zhu Hong nodded, "You sit here for a while, I'll go check on little sister."

Leaving the hall, Zhu Hong caught up with Zhu Xiaozhu, calling out, "Little sister, wait for me!"

Zhu Xiaozhu kept her head down, pretending she hadn't heard Zhu Hong, quickening her pace straight to her room. But before she could enter, Zhu Hong's hand suddenly reached from behind, resting on her shoulder.

"Little sister, why are you in such a hurry?"

Zhu Xiaozhu lightly bit her lip, reluctantly turning around to face Zhu Hong's smiling face, her heart trembled inexplicably. For some reason, after witnessing Zhu Hong's true colors, no matter how he acted, he always seemed repugnant and terrifying to her.

"Brother, do you... need something from me?" Zhu Xiaozhu dared not meet Zhu Hong's eyes, instinctively bowing her head again, staring at the smooth floor.

"It's nothing, I just haven't seen you in a while and wanted to chat. Let's talk in your room."

Zhu Xiaozhu had no choice but to lead Zhu Hong into her bedroom. After they were seated, Zhu Hong gazed into Zhu Xiaozhu's clear eyes, remaining silent for a long time, as if deep in thought.

After a while, Zhu Hong slowly put away his smile and said, "Little sister, I know what you're afraid of. I'm sorry, I was too foolish in the past, reckless and inconsiderate, I hope you can forgive me and give me a chance to redeem myself."

"Brother..." Zhu Xiaozhu looked up, staring directly at Zhu Hong, "I almost died, at your hands, do you know? I don't know what you were thinking at that time, how you could be so ruthless to kill your own

sister. Since that day, I've realized you're no longer the brother I used to have; hatred and power have blinded you. In your eyes, as long as you achieve your goals, anything can be sacrificed, including your family."

"Little sister, it's not like that, listen to me..."

Zhu Xiaozhu sighed softly, "Brother, you don't need to say anything, nothing works now, I've long figured it out. Whatever you want to do has nothing to do with me anymore, I just ask that you don't involve the family. Mom and Dad are innocent, they don't know what you're doing outside, and I hope you don't disturb their peaceful life. Is that okay?"

Zhu Hong was silent for a moment, then smiled and nodded, "They're your parents, they're my parents too; I care about them as much as you do. Don't worry, I won't involve you all, but... I also hope you can help me by keeping it hidden from Mom and Dad, so they won't suspect anything."

"Okay." Pausing briefly, Zhu Xiaozhu hesitated, "Brother, I still hope you can turn over a new leaf and not fall deeper. Otherwise, you won't even have the chance to regret it."

"Little sister, do you think I still have a chance to regret?" Before Zhu Xiaozhu could respond, Zhu Hong reached out to stop her, "Alright, you don't need to persuade me, I know what I'm doing. The main thing is, stay out of my business, I know my limits. As for Ling Chen... stay away from him, lest you get hurt again." Finished talking, Zhu Hong stood up and walked straight out the door.

After leaving Zhu Xiaozhu, Zhu Hong didn't look for the Zhu Yaosheng couple but instead left the Zhu Family directly. He didn't return to Beijing aimlessly this time; Zhu Chuan had given him a task that he had to complete.

Half an hour later, Zhu Hong drove to a luxurious villa.

After getting out of the car, Zhu Hong approached the front door and rang the doorbell. Soon, two security personnel in suits walked over quickly, looked at Zhu Hong with caution, and asked, "Who are you looking for?"

"Please inform Mr. Hong that he has an important guest." As he spoke, Zhu Hong took out a carved iron plate with an eagle from his pocket and handed it over.

In less than two minutes, Hong Wei, dressed in a loose Tang suit, came to the door surrounded by a group of security personnel.

"Sir, I am Hong Wei." Hong Wei greeted warmly with a smile.

Zhu Hong nodded without a word and followed Hong Wei into the villa.

After the two sat down, Zhu Hong swept his eyes over the room full of security personnel, maintaining his silence. Seeing this, Hong Wei immediately understood and quickly dismissed all the security personnel from the living room.

Once only the two of them were left in the living room, Hong Wei spoke, "Sir, may I know how to address you?"

"You don't need to know that." Zhu Hong said blandly, "We received your call for help, and they specifically sent me to assist you."

"Thank you! Thank you!"

"Mr. Hong, don't rush to thank me just yet, it's best if we clarify the terms before I help you."

Chapter 1215 - 1222: Zhu Hong's Little Scheme

"Conditions?" Hong Wei asked, "What other conditions are there?"

"Mr. Hong, the amount you pay only entitles you to the lowest level of service. However, someone wants to kill you now, and the other party is not insignificant. If you want higher-level services, you need to pay an equivalent fee."

Hearing this, Hong Wei frowned and said, "Sir, you should know how expensive your prices are. I pay your organization more than a billion every year; that's enough to hire an army. Now you want me to pay more, do you really take me for a fool?"

Zhu Hong said expressionlessly, "You get what you pay for. Mr. Hong, let me be frank, if I pulled all my people out, you wouldn't last three days. As far as I know, your personal assets amount to hundreds of billions. Tens of billions are nothing to you. Do you really think that money is more important than your life?"

Hong Wei pondered for a moment and asked, "How much do you want?"

"Not much, just this amount." Zhu Hong raised three fingers and smiled, "For you, it's just a drop in the bucket."

Thirty billion... Hong Wei was somewhat displeased, but for his safety, he nodded in agreement. After all, what good is money if you're not alive? In this regard, Hong Wei was very clear.

"Great! I knew Mr. Hong is a straightforward person." Saying this, Zhu Hong took out a small note from his pocket and placed it on the coffee table. "This is my bank account number, and I'll check in thirty minutes to see if the funds have arrived."

Glancing at the small note, Hong Wei said, "I have your organization's public account. I can directly transfer the money there, as I've always done."

"As you said, that was before. Now I make the decisions." With that, Zhu Hong stood up, adjusted his collar, and smiled, "Mr. Hong, it was a pleasure doing business. I'll take my leave now."

Watching Zhu Hong leave, Hong Wei felt a bit resentful about losing thirty billion just like that. However, thinking of the safety that thirty billion bought him, he finally relaxed.

Leaving the Hong residence, Zhu Hong sat in the car, took out his mobile, and checked the account balance. Hong Wei was efficient; the thirty billion had already been transferred successfully. Seeing the long string of zeros in the account, Zhu Hong finally smiled.

The task Zhu Chuan gave him this time was simple: to negotiate business with Hong Wei. With so many experts from Skyhawk Pavilion involved, they naturally needed to collect some additional fees. According to Zhu Chuan, twenty billion would suffice. However, Zhu Hong wouldn't miss such a good opportunity. Easily, without any effort, he pocketed ten billion. What could be easier than making money this way?

He now owned nothing. To rise again and have enough capital, money was indispensable.

Money makes the world go 'round! In today's society, money is almost omnipotent.

After transferring twenty billion to Skyhawk Pavilion's public account, Zhu Hong picked up the phone and dialed a number.

"Hello! Master, it's me. I'm currently in Beijing. If you have time, please come to Beijing. I have something to discuss with you... Okay, I'll wait for your message."

After hanging up the phone, Zhu Hong's lips curved slightly, showing how relaxed he was. The call just now wasn't to Zhu Chuan, but to Chen Quan. Ever since he went missing in the desert, he hadn't contacted Chen Quan for a long time.

Chen Quan is a top expert on the Heavenly List, such a good resource shouldn't be wasted. Besides, Chen Quan's current situation is similar to his, owning nothing. And having been imprisoned by the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion for so many years, Chen Quan was a bit out of step with the current society. Back when they were together, almost everything was arranged by Zhu Hong, and Chen Quan only needed to take action.

The call just now confirmed Zhu Hong's suspicion. Without his assistance, Chen Quan was having a hard time. After Ling Beichuan was arrested, Chen Quan lost his place to stay. Coupled with not having a penny and not understanding his surroundings, he's been wandering outside, homeless.

Moreover, to meet his basic needs, Chen Quan, such an elite heavenly list expert, stooped to murder and robbery. Currently, he's wanted by the police, living a very miserable life.

Such a master on the Heavenly List falling to this point was indeed tragic.

"Ling Chen, just received news, Zhu Hong went to Hong Wei's place."

In the manor, Tang Guolun reported on Zhu Hong's latest movements.

"Went to Hong Wei's?" Ling Chen asked, puzzled, "What did he go to Hong Wei for?"

"I don't know. By the way!" Tang Guolun said, "Lady Zhu asked me to tell you that her people have arrived in Beijing today and are on their way, they'll arrive in about twenty minutes."

"Got it. Boss Tang, tell everyone to perk up. Once the Zhu Family's people arrive, we'll take action immediately. We've been delayed long enough in Beijing; it's time to finish this."

Before long, several Land Rover SUVs drove into the manor. At this moment, Ling Chen, along with Tang Guolun and others, waited outside. Seeing the vehicles stop, Ling Chen stepped forward to greet them.

The first to alight was Zhu Qing, followed by more than a dozen men around thirty years old. Just by their ages, Ling Chen knew that Zhu Houchang had dispatched the finest of the elite.

Whether they're assassins, murderers, or agents, thirty is the golden age in the industry. At this stage, they've gained ample experience, and their skills have been honed to perfection.

After surveying them one by one, Ling Chen was very satisfied with the support sent by the Zhu Family.

"Thank you for your efforts, Lady Zhu! Please take everyone to rest; the guest rooms are all prepared."

Zhu Qing nodded and led the Zhu family members into the villa. These elite members from the Zhu Family remained silent, but their military-like discipline and qualities were evident.

Night fell!

Ling Chen glanced at the time. It was eight o'clock, four hours until the operation.

"Boss Tang, tell everyone the situation."

Tang Guolun spread open a map, detailing the layout of Hong Wei's residence.

"We've been monitoring Hong Wei's residence these past few days. Since the attack that night, Hong Wei has strengthened his security. He hired three security companies, with about sixty personnel in total." Tang Guolun pointed to the map's markings, saying, "This is the main entrance, with ten security personnel on duty around the clock. There are ten patrolling the inside and outside of the perimeter wall. Apart from these thirty, the remaining security is stationed around the villa. Additionally, Zhou Qian and Ren Han from two martial arts academies are always by Hong Wei's side, ensuring his safety. Currently, the Hong residence is like a fortress. It's extremely difficult to infiltrate secretly."

"That's not the main problem," Jiang Yunkai interjected.

Chapter 1216 - 1223: Operation in the Dark

"Every day, there are five police cars patrolling around the area two blocks away from the Hong Family. I estimate it's because of the attack that night, that Hong Wei used his connections to get the police's help. If the Hong Family is attacked, those patrolling officers will arrive at the scene within five minutes. If the police get involved, it will be a big problem for our operation."

"Don't worry about that, I'll handle it," Ling Chen said.

After a pause, Ling Chen turned to Zhu Qing and said, "Lady Zhu, to ensure this operation goes off without a hitch, I'll accompany you. At that time, I'll stay outside, secretly assisting until your operation is confirmed successful. If anything unexpected happens, I'll provide help."

"Okay." Zhu Qing nodded. Previously, she would have certainly refused Ling Chen's proposal. As a member of the Zhu Family, they have their pride, and are confident in their abilities. But this time is different; they are facing the Skyhawk Pavilion, a formidable opponent from the same roots as the Zhu Family, so Zhu Qing doesn't dare to be careless.

"Alright! Everything that needed to be explained has been explained. If there are no other questions, everyone stay put, adjust your state, and we move in four hours."

...

Late at night.

Three Land Rover SUVs slowly drove into a chilly alley. The car door opened, and Ling Chen jumped out from the driver's seat first. Once Zhu Qing and the others got out, Ling Chen led the group quietly toward Hong Wei's residence.

At this moment, even though it's past midnight, Hong Wei's villa is still brightly lit, with high-powered spotlights set up around, leaving almost no dead corners.

"You stay here to support us." With that, Zhu Qing gestured to the people behind her. Soon, more than a dozen Zhu Family elites in black dispersed quickly, disappearing into the thick of the night.

Ling Chen felt a bit worried. Hong Wei... or to be more precise, the Skyhawk Pavilion, had clearly made full preparations this time. Otherwise, they wouldn't use so much lighting. The Zhu Family members are assassins, and an assassin's greatest skill is hiding in the dark. Without the cover of darkness, their abilities are reduced by at least half.

Cut the power! Ling Chen's mind sparkled with a thought; perhaps this could help Zhu Qing. But as soon as this idea arose, Ling Chen dismissed it. If he could think of it, there's no way the Skyhawk Pavilion wouldn't have anticipated it. Chances are, the Skyhawk Pavilion is already prepared.

Boom!

While pondering, a loud bang suddenly erupted from the villa not far away, as if something had exploded.

Ling Chen looked over and vaguely saw white smoke drifting out from a window on the top floor.

Are they making a move?

Just as he was thinking, he saw the security personnel responsible for patrolling around the villa quickly gathered, all heading towards the villa. In no time, dozens of security guards surrounded the villa, forming wall-like layers.

Watching the activity in the villa, Ling Chen took a deep breath to remain calm. At the same time, he focused on listening to his earpiece. Before the operation, he had agreed with Zhu Qing that if she needed his help, she would contact him through the earpiece. Until then, Ling Chen must remain silent to avoid affecting their operation.

Time ticked by second by second.

Meanwhile, a few police cars patrolling two blocks away received a notification and immediately drove toward Hong Wei's villa. However, at this moment, a beam of intense light suddenly shone, forcing the police cars to stop.

A policeman swiftly climbed out from the passenger seat and yelled at the intense light ahead, "Who are you? Get out of my way, don't block my path."

"Who do you want to get out?" a cold voice replied. Then, two fully armed soldiers in military uniforms appeared in the policeman's view.

The moment the scolding officer saw their attire and equipment, he started in fright, breaking out in a cold sweat.

"Which unit are you from? Why are you here so late?" The officer tried to keep his tone even and asked.

"We're conducting military exercises, and this section of the road is sealed off. You need to take a detour."

"That won't work! We received a call and need to get there immediately. Please make an exception for us."

One soldier coldly barked, "Don't you understand my words? I said this place is sealed off. I don't care who you are; if you cross the line, I'll shoot you."

"You..." The officer opened his mouth and wanted to argue further, but when he saw the other party load their weapon, he shrank back and swallowed his words.

The military is the nation's war machine, iron-blooded and ruthless. Reasoning with these soldiers is a waste of time. Moreover, if he dared to make any drastic moves, the other side would definitely shoot him dead. If that happened, the other side would be fine, and he would still face charges for disobeying military orders; if he died, he would have deserved it.

Helpless, the officer had to return to the police car, "Let's go, fall back."

At this moment, Ling Chen stood at the alley entrance, looking up at the villa not far away, waiting for Zhu Qing's message. His phone in his pocket vibrated. Ling Chen took it out and glanced at the message, the corner of his mouth lifting slightly; Pang Jiulin's people truly are reliable.

While they executed the operation, Pang Jiulin had deployed many soldiers to guard each road leading to Hong Wei's home, preventing anyone from getting close. This way, even if Hong Wei called the police, the officers wouldn't arrive immediately.

"Ling Chen!"

Suddenly, Zhu Qing's voice came through Ling Chen's earpiece. Through the device, Ling Chen could clearly hear Zhu Qing's heavy breathing.

"Lady Zhu, how's the situation inside?"

"No sign of the target, we've all been tied up and can't get free just yet."

"Hang on, I'll come in to support you."

"No! You don't need to; we can manage. The target should be hiding in the basement, and the Skyhawk Pavilion's people are engaging us, so they don't have time to look after the target. This is your chance; take it."

Upon hearing this, Ling Chen immediately understood Zhu Qing's intent for him to go and assassinate Hong Wei.

"Okay, I'll go find him right away. Be careful yourselves." With that, Ling Chen dashed toward the villa. At this time, those security guards were all around the villa, paying no attention to the situation outside.

It wasn't long before Ling Chen easily vaulted over the wall, hiding in the greenery. Looking at the security personnel standing in rows not far off, Ling Chen hesitated briefly, contemplating strategies in his mind.

With so many security personnel, it's impossible to charge straight in. While he wasn't afraid of them given his skills, breaking in directly would be too time-consuming. A quick, decisive strike was necessary.

Suddenly, Ling Chen's eyes lit up; a plan formed in his mind.

Chapter 1217 - 1224: Hong Wei's Downfall (1)

Before long, Ling Chen returned the same way, driving a Land Rover SUV and stopped outside Hong Wei's villa. Gear engaged, accelerator pressed, accompanied by a roar, the Land Rover's front surged forward, breaking through the villa gates and charging into the crowd. Hearing the impact behind them, security personnel around the villa turned to look.

Seeing the Land Rover rushing in, the crowd was startled and quickly scattered to both sides.

Bam! A loud noise echoed as the Land Rover's front slammed into the wall, instantly deforming, and a thick white smoke billowed from the engine hood.

"Who is it?"

"Quick, go inside and check."

Surrounding security personnel buzzed with discussion and quickly encircled the Land Rover. But when the door opened, they were shocked to find the vehicle empty.

At this moment, less than ten meters away from the Land Rover, Ling Chen stealthily moved toward the living room window. All the security personnel's attention was fixed on the Land Rover, and no one noticed Ling Chen's presence.

Carefully pushing open the window, Ling Chen leapt silently into the villa.

Closing the window, Ling Chen looked around, seeing the spacious and luxurious living room devoid of people, but intense sounds of fighting occasionally came from upstairs. No need to look to know, it's surely Zhu Qing and the Skyhawk Pavilion members clashing.

Zhu Qing and the others had already secured time and opportunity for him, so Ling Chen dared not waste time, hurriedly searching for the entrance to the basement. Before taking action, Ling Chen had studied this villa's architectural blueprint and understood the structural layout.

Ling Chen found the entrance to the basement without spending much time.

Opening the door and looking at the stairs below, Ling Chen didn't go down directly; who knows if traps were set below.

Taking a flashbang from his pocket, Ling Chen tossed it down the stairs. Meanwhile, Ling Chen quickly shut the door. A 'bang' echoed, followed by screams from behind the door.

Seizing the moment, Ling Chen dashed down, seeing several men on both sides of the stairs, each covering their eyes and wailing incessantly. Taking down four men, Ling Chen moved swiftly, continuing deeper into the basement.

Whizz!

Suddenly, a sound pierced the air, quickly nearing Ling Chen. Alert and prepared, Ling Chen slightly shifted left, the projectile skimming past his clothes, hitting the wall beside him.

Looking at the knife embedded in the wall, Ling Chen's gaze swept around, intending to see who had attacked. But just then, the surrounding light dimmed, the entire basement plunged into darkness, rendering visibility impossible.

"Skyhawk Pavilion members?" Ling Chen calmly said.

No response came, not even a breath, yet Ling Chen could sense their presence, a scent of danger. Moreover, his intuition told Ling Chen there were more than one assassin from Skyhawk Pavilion hidden in the darkness.

Hmph! Skyhawk Pavilion really spared no expense this time, deploying so many to protect Hong Wei.

In darkness, vision is the most useless sense. Ling Chen closed his eyes, focusing entirely on hearing. When Zhu Qing attempted to assassinate him, he experienced the same scenario. Thus, encountering such combat again was familiar, quickly adapting to the surroundings.

Now, just wait for Skyhawk Pavilion assassins to reveal themselves.

However, Ling Chen underestimated the assassins from Skyhawk Pavilion. Several minutes passed with no movement from them, like beasts lurking in the dark, staring at their prey, waiting for the perfect moment to strike.

What do assassins value most? Patience! Only those who can remain calm can become competent assassins.

Ling Chen remained still, and so did the assassins, silently waiting. With time, Ling Chen's expression turned serious. These assassins were not only complex but also highly skilled.

In such a favorable environment and with numerical advantage, most assassins would choose to attack rather than endure. But these assassins didn't act so. Even when Ling Chen deliberately exposed a flaw, they didn't seize the chance. What does this indicate? It shows they saw through Ling Chen's intentions.

Moreover, they acted cautiously, likely aware of Ling Chen's capability, which is why they held back.

Still won't attack?

As several minutes more elapsed, Ling Chen became somewhat impatient. In another location, he could wait against them. But now, that's not possible; Zhu Qing and others couldn't secure much time for him; swift resolution was needed.

Ten minutes had passed already, the longer it dragged, the more perilous Zhu Qing's situation became. Once Zhu Qing and others failed to fight on, all Skyhawk Pavilion assassins would come for him. At that point, escape wouldn't be an option. Considering this, Ling Chen didn't hesitate any longer, opting for a preemptive strike.

Boom!

With a loud noise, smoke erupted around Ling Chen's feet. These were ready-prepared gear, smoke bombs, and flashbangs provided by Pang Jiulin. This time with military backing, obtaining equipment was easy.

Assassins thrive in darkness, but adding smoke destroys such advantages. Though darkness obscures vision, smoke equally does so. In this situation, both sides become blind, relying solely on acute hearing to deduce each other's location.

As thick smoke enveloped the scene, Ling Chen reached into his pocket, pulling out a handful of steel nails.

With a flick of the wrist, dozens of steel nails hurled outwards, scattering around. At the moment of launch, Ling Chen finally heard subtle sounds from three positions.

Three people!

Ling Chen's lips slightly curved; the effect was satisfactory, finally confirming their numbers. This barrage of nails wasn't meant to harm, but to force movement, causing them to make a sound, thus determining their count and positions.

Knowing the count, as for their positions... Ling Chen listened closely, suddenly furrowing his brow. At the moment, his ears detected multiple sounds from the ground.

This... was his count incorrect? Impossible! Ling Chen immediately dismissed this possibility. Given such a confined space, it wasn't feasible to host over ten people without being noticed.

Moving carefully, Ling Chen's foot suddenly stepped on something round. Applying slight pressure, it instantly crushed. This is... Ling Chen laughed aloud.

Beans! So that's it. Never seen this tactic before, today's an eye-opener.

The opponents used beans, dropped on the ground, to create faint sounds, thereby misleading or attracting enemy attention. Besides, these beans served another purpose – locating opponents.

Chapter 1218 - 1225: Hong Wei's Fate (2)

The weight of the beans is very light, making almost no sound when thrown, only a noise when they hit the ground. If a bean hits someone before falling to the ground, the sound has a very subtle difference compared to when it falls directly. Simply put, it's a time difference. Anyone who has trained for years can proficiently master this skill.

The Zhu Family truly deserves its reputation as a leader in this field, having left behind many practical techniques from the older generation.

"Everyone, let's not waste time, let's get started quickly. I still want to go for a midnight snack," Ling Chen said.

Unfortunately, Ling Chen's words did not provoke the assassin's attack.

"You're still not making a move? Fine, then I won't play with you anymore. Bye-bye!" Saying this, Ling Chen began to step forward, not caring whether his direction was right or wrong.

However, just as Ling Chen took a step forward, a gust of force suddenly attacked, rushing at great speed. Ling Chen, sensing the impending danger, swiftly turned and threw a punch behind him.

Seemingly feeling Ling Chen's fierce punch, the opponent did not continue to attack and quickly retreated. But there were three assassins hidden in the dark. One retreated, but there were still two others.

The murderous aura approached, attacking from both left and right. Ling Chen shifted his steps, slightly tilting his body to avoid the attacks of the two men. Suddenly, for some unknown reason, Ling Chen's body paused, his movements slowed by half a beat.

In a battle of experts, every flaw is lethal. This flaw of Ling Chen immediately cost him dearly, in blood.

With a ripping sound, Ling Chen's back was sliced open by a knife blade, leaving a long gash, blood flowing freely.

"Damn!" Ling Chen cursed loudly, quickly retreating. But the three assassins, having succeeded in striking him, would not miss such a good opportunity. Strike while the iron is hot, kill while he's weak. Ling Chen was injured; this was the best time to deal with him.

In an instant, the three assassins attacked simultaneously, swiftly lunging toward the retreating Ling Chen.

As he retreated several meters, Ling Chen's heel suddenly hit a hard object. Crap! It's a wall, there's no way out. Ling Chen's pupils slightly contracted, sensing the three gusts of force coming at him, his Mo Che-like pupils instantly emitting a glint of light.

"Do you really think I'm that easy to bully?" Ling Chen's tone changed, carrying a hint of irony.

Before the three assassins could react, a dazzling light suddenly shone. The light was blinding, causing the three assassins' charging bodies to pause slightly, hurriedly shielding their eyes with their hands.

However, this brief moment was enough for Ling Chen to counterattack.

Three consecutive punches were thrown, instantly knocking the three assassins away, their bodies crashing heavily into the wall.

Looking at the fallen assassins, unable to get up, Ling Chen grinned and said, "Since I dared to come, how could I be unprepared? Your tactics and skills are good, but unfortunately, you have a fatal weakness: you can't stand the light."

Back when he fought Zhu Qing, Ling Chen had considered this issue. Zhu Qing's strength was indeed great, but she relied on the dark environment. If it were daylight, Zhu Qing's strength would be greatly diminished.

The Skyhawk Pavilion's assassins have the same origin as Zhu Qing, so Ling Chen thought of a way to restrain them, carrying a portable flashlight. The flashlight was small, but the light was strong, enough to produce magical results.

Just now, Ling Chen deliberately exposed a flaw, took a knife hit, intending to lure them into attacking simultaneously, making them lower their guard, allowing him to capture them all at once.

Despite paying the price of a superficial wound, the result was good. If it weren't for the unconventional tactics, who knows how much time it would have taken.

Having dealt with the three assassins, Ling Chen headed straight to the innermost room of the basement. Opening the door, he saw three people sitting in the small room. One was Zhou Qian, another was Ren Han, and the third was his target for tonight, Hong Wei. It was clear that Zhou Qian and Ren Han were relatively calm, and Hong Wei was not worried at all, not only holding a wine glass but also having a stunningly beautiful woman, scantily dressed, sit on his lap.

Upon seeing Ling Chen rush into the room, the three inside were slightly taken aback.

"Oh! Mr. Hong, you certainly know how to enjoy yourself," Ling Chen said with a half-smile.

"You... you..." Hong Wei stared at Ling Chen, his face drastically changed, hastily pushing the woman beside him away, standing up from the chair quickly, and retreating behind Zhou Qian and Ren Han.

"How... how did you get in? What about those outside?" Hong Wei stuttered his question.

Having paid Zhu Hong thirty billion in remuneration today, Hong Wei felt relaxed, believing there would be no more danger, which was why he dared to stay in the basement and enjoy, letting the commotion upstairs continue.

But seeing Ling Chen suddenly appear before him, a sense of ominousness rose in Hong Wei's heart.

"Are you talking about those assassins?" Ling Chen smiled slightly, "I've dealt with them. But rest assured, I'll soon send you down to meet them. When you're in the realm of the dead, perhaps you can hire them to protect you."

Hearing this, Hong Wei shivered, a chill inexplicably rising in his heart. He had seen many storms in life and was mentally prepared, but when faced with this moment, he was still somewhat afraid and terrified.

No one in this world isn't afraid of dying. Those who claim they're not afraid of death have nothing worth holding onto in this world.

"Kill! Quick, kill him!" Hong Wei urged Zhou Qian and Ren Han, shouting loudly.

Facing Hong Wei's urging, Zhou Qian and Ren Han exchanged glances, both somewhat hesitant.

"Are you two really prepared to go against me?" Ling Chen looked at the two and asked.

Zhou Qian and Ren Han did not speak, both simultaneously falling silent. When they thought of the expert from the Heavenly List behind Ling Chen, neither had the courage to make a move. Even if they joined forces to kill Ling Chen, they themselves wouldn't fare well, sooner or later facing revenge from the Heavenly List expert.

If they were just two unbound wanderers, perhaps they could act regardless of the consequences. But they both had families, businesses, and managed a Martial Arts Academy. If something happened to them, it would definitely affect their families.

Seeing Zhou Qian and Ren Han still not acting, Hong Wei suddenly got angry, kicking Zhou Qian's calf furiously and shouting, "I told you to kill him, are you deaf? Do it!"

"Mr. Hong, apologies!" Zhou Qian looked back at Hong Wei, "It's better not to get involved in this matter." After a brief contemplation, Zhou Qian made his decision. For Hong Wei's sake, it wasn't worth inviting disaster. As for Hong Wei... he didn't believe Hong Wei had a chance of surviving tonight.

With Zhou Qian's stance made clear, Ren Han followed suit.

Seeing the two of them about to leave, Hong Wei finally panicked, desperately grabbing their arms and pleading, "Don't, don't go! Zhou Qian, Ren Han, as long as you help me kill him, I'll give you whatever you want."

Chapter 1219 - 1226: Hong Wei's Fate (3)

"Mr. Hong, don't blame us for not helping you. We just don't want to risk our lives." After speaking, Zhou Qian swung his arm and strode out of the room.

As Zhou Qian and Ren Han left, Hong Wei slumped into the chair like a deflated balloon.

Ling Chen smiled. Zhou Qian and Ren Han were indeed sensible and didn't oppose him. After closing the door, Ling Chen casually walked up to Hong Wei, brought over a chair, and sat down.

"Mr. Hong, I think we need to have a chat."

Hong Wei looked at Ling Chen weakly, "You won't let me go, will you?"

"You shouldn't have sent someone to assassinate Nanrong Wanqing. Didn't you know she's under my protection? If you hadn't done this, maybe I would have considered sparing you."

Upon hearing this, a glimmer of hope flashed in Hong Wei's eyes. He quickly said, "It wasn't me who wanted to kill her; it was someone else... someone else made me do it."

"Who? Tell me the name."

"There are many... they teamed up to swallow the Hongyu Group, formed a temporary alliance. When Nanrong Wanqing came to Beijing, they approached me, wanting me to help deal with her. After it's done, they promised me ten percent of Hongyu Group's profits."

"Give me the list."

"I have it!" Hong Wei hurriedly pulled out his phone and wrote down the names of all involved.

"I've given you the list. Let me go, and I promise not to hassle you again."

"Don't rush." Ling Chen said calmly, "Let me ask you, why did Zhu Hong come to you today?"

"Zhu Hong? Who are you talking about?" Hong Wei was slightly taken aback but quickly realized who Ling Chen meant, "You mean that young man who came looking for me during the day? He's with Skyhawk Pavilion, here to discuss business."

Skyhawk Pavilion?

Ling Chen was taken aback. Zhu Hong had actually joined Skyhawk Pavilion? This was indeed unexpected.

"How did you get in contact with people from Skyhawk Pavilion?" Ling Chen thought for a moment and asked.

Hong Wei replied honestly, "They came to me directly, asking if I needed special services." After speaking, Hong Wei looked at Ling Chen and said, "I have numerous assets in Beijing worth hundreds of

billions. If you let me go, I can transfer all my wealth to you." Pausing, Hong Wei continued, "I can catch a flight abroad tomorrow morning; you'll never see me again."

"Are you really willing to do that?" Ling Chen looked at Hong Wei, half believing, half doubting. He had to admit, Hong Wei's proposal was tempting. His initial plan was to kill Hong Wei directly. With Hong Wei dead, Beijing would undoubtedly descend into chaos, providing Ling Chen an opportunity to consolidate his power in the turmoil.

However, obtaining all of Hong Wei's assets would save him a lot of trouble.

Seeing Ling Chen deep in thought, Hong Wei seemed worried that he wouldn't be believed, so he quickly picked up his phone.

"What are you doing?"

"I'm calling my lawyer. As long as you agree, I can have the transfer contract ready for you now."

"Make the call later. Come with me first." Saying that, Ling Chen pointed to the door and led Hong Wei towards the basement exit.

Returning to the living room, Ling Chen and Hong Wei went straight upstairs.

At this moment, the sound of fighting could still be heard upstairs. However, with Ling Chen and Hong Wei's appearance, the assassins from Skyhawk Pavilion and Zhu Qing's people immediately stopped, focusing their attention on the two.

"Everyone, I have Hong Wei with me; you can stop now."

Seeing Hong Wei being held by Ling Chen, the assassins from Skyhawk Pavilion's expressions changed slightly, and without a word, they jumped out the windows.

With their employer captured, there was no reason for them to stay.

"Chase them, don't let them escape." Zhu Qing quickly ordered, and more than a dozen Zhu Family elites immediately pursued them.

"Lady Zhu, are you all alright?" Ling Chen asked with concern.

"We're fine." Zhu Qing glanced at Hong Wei, then asked, "Why not just kill him?"

"There's no need at the moment; he's still of great use to me."

Half an hour later, the Zhu Family elites returned empty-handed, failing to capture Skyhawk Pavilion's assassins. By now, it was already two in the morning. Ling Chen called Tang Guolun, explaining the situation there. Meanwhile, Hong Wei's lawyer also arrived at the residence, transferring all the assets to Ling Chen's name.

After everything was settled, it was already past seven o'clock in the morning.

At nine in the morning, under the surveillance of Zhu Family elites, Hong Wei boarded a plane heading overseas. From this moment on, the name Hong Wei would become history, and a new ruler had emerged in Beijing's underground forces.

Back at the manor, Tang Guolun was already waiting at the door, ready to greet the victorious group. Seeing Ling Chen approach, Tang Guolun laughed loudly and went up to him, patting him on the shoulder, "Well done!"

"Thanks to Lady Zhu for her assistance."

"It's a pity we let Hong Wei go. If you ask me, it's best to have killed him to avoid future trouble."

"There's no need for that," Ling Chen said. Earlier before the operation, he was determined to kill Hong Wei. However, he overestimated Hong Wei's tenacity.

As Beijing's underground emperor, he expected Hong Wei to resist to the end, preferring death over surrender. Who knew Hong Wei's courage was so small, lacking any resolve? But then again, considering Hong Wei's numerous lovers and illegitimate children, how could he be willing to die? Although he abandoned his domestic assets, Hong Wei had developed many enterprises overseas, enough to live a luxurious life for a lifetime.

Anyone smart would make the same choice.

"Boss Tang, call Fatty and have him arrange people to come over as soon as possible. Hong Wei left behind such a vast industry; we need to find someone to take over." Saying this, Ling Chen turned to Zhu Qing, "Lady Zhu, we'll need your help for a few more days."

Although Hong Wei had transferred all his assets to Ling Chen, those assets were managed by Hong Wei's subordinates. Now that Hong Wei had fled the country, and no one could contact him, many would surely refuse to hand over the assets to Ling Chen. Therefore, force would inevitably need to be employed.

Three days passed in the blink of an eye.

On this day, Nanrong Wanqing drove to Beijing's most famous hotel with Nanrong Hao and reserved its most expensive private room.

Soon after, a middle-aged man entered the private room, followed by a slim, pretty female secretary.

Seeing Nanrong Wanqing seated at the main position, the middle-aged man smiled slightly and asked, "Wanqing, is there anything you can't say directly over the phone? Why insist on meeting here? I have another meeting soon, and my time is very precious, you..."

"Mr. Hu, don't worry, I've got a big business deal to discuss with you today."

"A big business deal?" Hu Zhichun asked with keen interest, "What kind of deal?"

"Hold on a moment; I've invited others too."

Chapter 1220 - 1227: The Alliance Behind the Scenes

"Wanqing, I really don't have time. If you have something to say, just get to the point, or let's talk another day at my office." As he spoke, Hu Zhichun glanced at his watch and continued, "I have a meeting to rush to now; we'll talk later." With that, Hu Zhichun turned around with his female secretary and started walking out of the private room.

Just then, the door to the room opened from the outside, and two burly men in suits stepped in, blocking the exit. Seeing this, Hu Zhichun's expression changed, and he turned back to Nanrong Wanqing, his tone tinged with anger as he asked, "Wanqing, what are you doing?"

"Nothing much, just want to ask you to stay a little longer, Uncle Hu." Nanrong Wanqing replied coolly.

"This is a threat!" Hu Zhichun exclaimed indignantly. "I'm your elder, how can you treat me like this?"

Nanrong Wanqing didn't respond, but gave a glance to the two men in suits standing at the door. They got the message, seized Hu Zhichun's arm, and dragged him to a seat. "Please hand over your phones," they said.

"Don't even think about it, I..."

Slap! Before Hu Zhichun could finish his words, one of the suited men drew a sharp knife from his waist and slammed it onto the table.

"I don't like to waste words."

Seeing the cold gaze of the suited man, Hu Zhichun swallowed his words silently.

Soon, Hu Zhichun and his secretary obediently handed over their phones. A few more minutes passed, and people began to file into the private room. Seeing the situation inside, everyone's first reaction was to try to leave. But with the burly men blocking the way, no one could get out. Some even brought security personnel to try and force their way out but ended up being taken down by the two suited men.

Having witnessed the prowess of the two suited men, everyone became compliant.

Half an hour passed, and apart from Nanrong Wanqing and Nanrong Hao, there were a total of fourteen guests in the room. Looking around at the guests, the expressions of these fourteen people were somewhat unpleasant. Each of them knew each other, and not long ago, the fourteen of them had gathered together.

Seeing everyone present, Nanrong Wanqing slowly stood up, looked around at the crowd, and said, "I think everyone here knows why I've invited you over."

"Heh!" An older middle-aged man chuckled and said, "Niece Wanqing, I understand your point. Hongyu Group has been facing many problems lately, so you want us to help. However, it's not that I'm unwilling to help; I simply can't."

Nanrong Wanqing looked at the speaker and said indifferently, "Uncle Yao, if I remember correctly, you've also benefited from my grandfather before. A drop of water shall be reciprocated with a spring of water. I'm not expecting you to repay a spring, but stabbing Hongyu Group in the back, is that what a person should do?"

Hearing this, the expressions of those present showed a hint of discomfort. At this time, one man suddenly stood up and said coldly, "Chairman Nanrong, accusations require evidence. We've always kept to ourselves with Hongyu Group, and with such unfounded accusations, I could sue you for defamation."

"During my days in Beijing, I was attacked by an assassin at the hotel. According to the assassin, the person who hired him was Hong Wei. I believe you all know Hong Wei." At this point, Nanrong Wanqing pointed to an empty seat beside her and said, "That seat was originally meant for Hong Wei. Unfortunately, he couldn't make it to today's meal."

"Mr. Hong is a well-known figure in Beijing. Anyone in the business world knows him." Hu Zhichun sneered and said, "Niece Wanqing, is this your so-called evidence?"

"Chairman Nanrong, if you called us here just to mess around, well, sorry, we don't have time to waste here. Goodbye!" With that, several men stood up, ready to leave.

"Hold on!" Nanrong Hao called out, saying, "Aren't you all smart people? Why not use your brains and think carefully. If I didn't have sufficient evidence, how could I summon you all here without missing a single one? Only fifteen people know about your secret business alliance, and apart from Hong Wei, the rest of you are here."

Hearing this, everyone finally realized something, and their faces turned grim.

Hu Zhichun frowned and stubbornly said, "I don't know what you're talking about."

Nanrong Hao said with a playful smile, "Aren't you curious why you haven't been able to contact Hong Wei these past few days? I can tell you very responsibly that from now on, you will never see him again. Furthermore, Hong Wei confessed all your dealings. A ten percent interest in Hongyu Group, tsk tsk! You are indeed generous."

Seeing everyone in silent contemplation, Nanrong Wanqing continued, "Now you have two paths before you: either I report directly to the police and let them handle it. How long do you think you'll be in jail for hiring someone to commit murder?"

Hmph!

A middle-aged man sneered and said, "Go ahead, call the police. I'd like to see what they can do to me."

Nanrong Wanqing nodded and said, "I know all of you here have power and influence. You could grease some palms and distance yourselves from the crime. However, in terms of power, even combined, you may not be a match for Hong Wei. In terms of wealth, who among you is wealthier than Hong Wei? In terms of connections, I believe no one can compare to Hong Wei. If you feel lucky and think you can deal with the police and judges, then go ahead and try. I won't stop you."

"But let me remind you, once anyone steps out of this door, they will bear the consequences, and I will not give you another chance for redemption. So, you better think carefully."

Seeing everyone lower their heads in deep thought, the middle-aged man who had earlier addressed Nanrong Wanqing as his niece chuckled and said, "Niece Wanqing, it's all a misunderstanding. You might

have blamed us wrongly. How about this, we will take responsibility for the losses Hongyu Group suffered, and this matter will be settled. What do you think?"

Nanrong Wanqing glanced at him and, with a cold expression, said, "There's no such thing as a free lunch. If this matter had happened to you, would you agree?" With that, she gestured to Nanrong Hao. He immediately picked up the briefcase he carried, pulled out more than ten documents from it, and placed them in front of everyone.

"Read this agreement carefully. If you have no issues, sign your name and leave your fingerprint."

Seeing the contents of the agreement, everyone's expressions changed, and they said in a heavy tone, "No way, I won't accept it."

"Won't accept it?" Nanrong Wanqing said coldly, "Fine, then prepare for a prison sentence."