

The Beauty 1281

Chapter 1281 Obtaining the Record (2)

"Release my granddaughter immediately, and I will let bygones be bygones. Otherwise, I will mobilize the entire Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion to hunt you down. Even if you flee to the ends of the earth, I won't let you go."

"I appreciate your kindness, but I think she'll be safer staying with me." As he spoke, Ling Chen took out the record book he had just found from his pocket. Seeing the thing in his hand, Su He's expression changed, his eyes turning sharp and filled with a murderous aura.

"Give that to me." Su He stretched out his hand, enunciating each word.

"Haha!" Ling Chen replied with a smile that didn't reach his eyes, "Old Su, I went through a lot of trouble to find this thing. Do you think I'd hand it over so easily?"

Su He said nothing, just gestured to the two middle-aged men behind him. One of them understood and immediately exited the room. Before long, the middle-aged man returned to Su He's side, accompanied by a large group of members—more than ten of them, each with a sharp glint of murderous intent in their eyes.

Seeing these people arrive, a trace of surprise flashed in Ling Chen's eyes. He had stayed at the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion before but had never seen such fierce people. Skyhawk Pavilion! In an instant, Ling Chen guessed their identity. Only assassins from the Skyhawk Pavilion would Su He dare to bring into this room without any scruples.

"You'd better look below you."

Hearing this, Ling Chen retreated to the window and glanced obliquely at the ground. Instantly, he saw the tower surrounded by nearly a hundred people.

"Without my command, you won't escape from here. Hand over my granddaughter and that record, and I will spare your life," Su He said coldly.

Ling Chen fearlessly laughed, "What if I refuse?"

"Then don't expect to leave alive."

Facing Su He's threat, Ling Chen flipped his wrist, and a sharp dagger appeared in his hand. He placed the dagger against Su Mei's fair neck, staring at Su He and said, "If I die, she won't live either. Now, tell your men to step back."

At these words, everyone turned their eyes to Su He. However, Su He showed no sign of having them retreat, instead taking two steps forward and speaking, "Let me be clear. If you don't hand over what you have tonight, I won't let you leave."

"Even if it costs your granddaughter's life, you won't let me go?"

Su Mei looked at her grandfather, wanting to know his decision. However, without even glancing at Su Mei, Su He said chillingly, "That record concerns the entire Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion and must remain. As for my granddaughter... being part of the Su Family, making sacrifices for the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion is normal. If she dies, I will expend every effort to avenge her. Whether it's you or the forces behind you, you'll pay in blood."

Ling Chen smiled, "I see, so your granddaughter's life isn't as important as that record." As he spoke, he stole a glance at Su Mei, seeing her face pale, eyes dead, devoid of any emotion.

Seeing this, Ling Chen sighed inwardly. He knew that Su He's response not only hurt Su Mei but also filled her with despair.

"Hand it over," Su He demanded coldly, "My patience is limited."

"Or what? Are you prepared to kill us all?"

Su He nodded and said, "If necessary, I will."

"Alright." Ling Chen shrugged helplessly, "I can't compete with you in ruthlessness, but... I'm smarter than you." As soon as he finished speaking, Ling Chen suddenly revealed a strange smile. Seeing the smile on his face, Su He felt a sense of unease.

Before he could react, Ling Chen suddenly pushed Su Mei forward then turned and rushed towards the window. Since Su Mei was blocking him, Su He couldn't pursue immediately and had to circumvent her. This undoubtedly slowed his actions by a beat.

When he was about to reach the window, Ling Chen spread his arms and jumped from the top of the tower. Everyone was stunned by the sight.

This guy... does he want to die? Jumping from such a height, even a top expert from the Heavenly List would undoubtedly die.

However, as everyone was puzzled, they suddenly heard a sharp cry from the night sky. Immediately, a huge dark shadow swooped down, grabbing the falling Ling Chen and swiftly rising, disappearing into the vast night.

That was... an eagle?

Everyone was shocked, not expecting the opponent to have such a trick, able to control such a large eagle. No wonder he was fearless; he had already planned his escape route.

"Chase him!" Su He commanded sternly.

"Su... Su Lao, how are we supposed to chase him?" a man asked.

Su He gave the man a cold glance, and he immediately shut up, not daring to say more, hurriedly leading people out of the room. "Grandfather..." Su Mei stood aside blankly, expressionlessly looking at Su He.

"Do you know who that kidnapper is?"

Su Mei shook her head and asked, "Grandfather, what was that thing in his hand? Why are you so tense?"

"That thing concerns the fate of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. I'll tell you when the time is right. For now, you must be shaken; go rest, I have many things to handle." With that, Su He ignored Su Mei and walked out.

Watching his departing figure, Su Mei gritted her teeth, her once lifeless eyes gradually gaining determination.

At this moment, two kilometers away from the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, a shadow swooped down from above, slowly lowering Ling Chen to the ground.

As soon as he touched down, Qiu Yong and others immediately ran over, asking with concern, "Sixth Brother, are you alright?"

Ling Chen smiled slightly, "Big Brother, do I look like I'm in trouble? Fortunately, Little Tian helped, or I wouldn't have escaped."

"Only you would be bold enough to use such a method," Yuan Yun said admiringly.

Xu Ming asked, "Sixth Brother, did you find what you were looking for?"

"Here!" Ling Chen pulled the record from his pocket and handed it to Xu Ming, "I've looked over it; it should be correct."

Xu Ming flipped through a few pages and nodded, "Yes, that's it." Then Xu Ming handed the record back to Ling Chen, instructing, "Keep it well and don't lose it; it's key to our success or failure."

"Second Brother, you should keep it," Ling Chen said. "You're so skilled; with you keeping it, there should be no problem."

Xu Ming hesitated for a moment, then nodded, "Alright."

Chapter 1282: Self-Sacrifice

After getting the item, everyone didn't stay and rushed back to East Sea City overnight. Upon returning to Dragon Tiger Hall, Tang Guolun and Hu Fei and others immediately came over.

"Ling Chen, you were right, the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion indeed made a big move. However, luckily, we had arrangements in place beforehand, preventing them from succeeding."

Hearing Hu Fei's words, Ling Chen nodded. Before the action, he had anticipated that the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion would definitely react strongly because the records concerned the fate of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, and they would not let it go easily. In East Sea City, the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion had long arranged for people to secretly monitor Dragon Tiger Hall's every move.

Once they succeeded, Su He would definitely take action and have East Sea City's people make a move. Therefore, he told Hu Fei and Tang Guolun to prepare in advance.

"Ling Cheng, how do you plan to use those records?" Qiu Yong asked.

Ling Chen thought for a moment and said, "If I'm not mistaken, Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion will soon send people to East Sea City. We must deal with these records quickly to let everyone know what Skyhawk Pavilion has done."

"The internet." Hu Fei chimed in: "This is the fastest method. Give me the phone numbers of those people and I can send a copy of the records to them. By then, it will spread from one to ten, from ten to a hundred, and the whole martial arts community will see these records. Even if Su He wants to stop it, it'll be too late."

"That's a good idea." Ling Chen nodded and said, "Alright, let's do it."

Without caring about the overnight rush, everyone copied all the records onto the computer, organized them into files, and sent them out. However, before sending, Ling Chen had Hu Fei make a small modification, removing the signatures of Su Mu, Su He, and Su Zhengyang from the electronic files.

He had an agreement with Su Mei to try and preserve the existence of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. If the martial arts community saw these signatures, they would surely vent their anger on the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. By then, the outcome for the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion would be destruction.

So, after discussion, everyone decided to let the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion off the hook and focus primarily on the Skyhawk Pavilion. Doing this had two benefits; the first was to fulfill the agreement with Su Mei. Additionally, there was another extremely important reason.

The strength of Skyhawk Pavilion was undeniable; over the years, the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion had maintained its position as the martial arts overlord thanks to Skyhawk Pavilion. Therefore, if they fought head-on with Skyhawk Pavilion, it would certainly cause significant casualties. However, separating the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion and Skyhawk Pavilion and treating Skyhawk Pavilion as a single evil force to deal with, then Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion had no excuse not to act. As the martial arts overlord and peacekeeper, it must take the lead.

Moreover, even if Su He was unwilling, he had to do this. Only then could he allow the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion to continue surviving unless he wanted to see it destroyed. However, knowing Su He's character, he would never make that choice.

Having the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion deal with Skyhawk Pavilion would not only eliminate Skyhawk Pavilion but also deplete the living forces of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, which is undoubtedly beneficial.

"Phew! Finally done." Ling Chen leaned against the chair, exhaustion written all over his face. At this time, dawn had broken, and everyone had been busy for over ten hours without closing their eyes.

"Brother, why don't you go rest first."

"What if Su He takes action against us?" Qiu Yong said with concern, "We should wait and see."

"Brother, don't worry, it's fine. The materials have already been sent out, and with Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion's intelligence capabilities, they'll receive the materials quickly. By this time, it's too late for them to stop it. Just wait and see; I believe Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion will respond soon."

Seeing Ling Chen's confident demeanor, everyone nodded and returned to their rooms to rest.

They slept until four in the afternoon when Ling Chen was awakened by a knock on the door. Rubbing his sleepy eyes, Ling Chen opened the door and saw Yuan Yun outside, yawning as he said, "Third Brother, what's up?"

Yuan Yun grinned, "Ling Cheng, you really are perceptive. Just now, the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion has openly declared war against Skyhawk Pavilion, hoping all martial arts practitioners will join their ranks. We've also received an invitation."

"Just this?" Ling Chen laughed and said, "I expected this. It's the only choice for the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. Su He is a clever man. To protect the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, he has to make some sacrifices. Alright, Third Brother, if there's nothing else, I'm going back to sleep."

"Wait!" Yuan Yun grabbed Ling Chen, who was about to return, and said, "There's no time to sleep now. People from the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion are already outside, and they've asked us to go over now."

"Now?" Ling Chen was surprised, "So soon?"

"That's right, Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion has invited us over, probably wanting to have a good chat."

Ling Chen nodded, "Okay, I got it. Third Brother, have everyone prepare, and I'll be right over."

Soon, Ling Chen arrived at the entrance of Dragon Tiger Hall. By now, everyone was ready to go at any time. Seeing the people sent by the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, Ling Chen was a bit surprised that it was Du Kang, whom Su He had sent.

Su He probably did this for fear that I would refuse the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion's invitation, so he sent someone with weight. Moreover, when he was in the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion before, Du Kang had helped him a lot. In any case, I should give him some face.

"Elder Du, I didn't expect you to come in person."

Du Kang looked deeply at Ling Chen and said meaningfully, "I have no choice but to come. Time is of the essence, let's get going quickly. Otherwise, the one from the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion might get anxious."

Watching Du Kang lead the way ahead, Ling Chen shrugged helplessly. He had wanted to chat more with Du Kang to probe his intentions, but Du Kang was too astute, not giving him a chance to speak.

After a few hours of long travel, Ling Chen and his group finally arrived at the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. Throughout the journey, Du Kang kept his distance from Ling Chen with minimal communication. Upon reaching the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, Ling Chen saw many martial artists who had responded to the call from all over the country.

At this time, several Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion Disciples approached and led everyone to their prearranged accommodations.

"Ling Chen."

Just as Ling Chen was about to follow the main group, he heard Du Kang's voice from behind. Turning back and seeing Du Kang not far away, Ling Chen quickly walked over and asked, "Elder Du, what are your instructions?"

"Old Su wants to see you alone."

Ling Chen smiled, nodded slightly, and said, "Alright, no problem." He anticipated Su He would want to talk, and he was already mentally prepared. Under Du Kang's guidance, they quickly arrived outside a relatively secluded room.

"Right here, go in."

Chapter 1283 Gathering for Crusade (Part 1)

Ling Chen smiled, pushing the door open and walking directly inside. Although this house was quite isolated, Ling Chen wasn't afraid of Su He and his men pulling any dirty tricks on him. With Qiu Yong and Tong Zhentian present, if something happened to him, Tong Zhentian and the others certainly wouldn't

let it slide easily. Besides, with the original copy of that record in hand, unless Su He wanted the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion to incur the wrath of many, he wouldn't dare do anything to him.

Upon entering the room, Ling Chen saw Su He sitting on a wicker chair by the window, holding a cup of hot tea, quietly watching the autumn scenery outside. Ling Chen walked to the chair opposite Su He and sat down of his own accord.

After a good while, Su He slowly turned his head and cast his bloodshot eyes towards Ling Chen.

As their eyes met, Ling Chen smiled slightly, cupping his fists in greeting, "Elder Su."

Su He said indifferently, "Why don't you call me Old Su? Last night, you seemed to say it with ease."

Upon hearing this, Ling Chen was taken aback, not expecting Su He to mention this. It seemed he had already guessed that the person from last night was him. Thinking of this, Ling Chen smiled nonchalantly. Actually, everyone understood, they just didn't voice it. Since Su He pointed it out face-to-face, it showed he was ready to speak frankly with him.

"Elder Su, you didn't call me here just to talk about that, did you?"

Su He took a sip of hot tea and sighed involuntarily, "My tea-making skills are far inferior to my granddaughter's."

"Miss Su's tea art is exceptional, and I have been fortunate enough to taste it."

"Unfortunately..." Su He shook his head, sighing lightly, "A daughter is bound to leave and assist another family. I've told her many things, yet she remains too naive, believing she can handle everything on her own. Over the years, without my covert assistance, dealing with countless adversaries, her position as Pavilion Master wouldn't be secure. However, not only does she fail to understand my painstaking efforts, but she also rebels against me at every turn. Alas! If I had known, I shouldn't have kept her then."

Ling Chen was startled, puzzled, and asked, "Elder Su, what do you mean by that? Could it be you want to kill her? Don't forget, she is your granddaughter."

Su He set down his teacup and said meaningfully, "One shouldn't be too curious; haven't you heard that curiosity killed the cat?" He paused for a moment, then shifted the conversation, "Where is the original copy of that record?"

"Thank you for your concern, Elder Su. Rest assured, it is in a very safe place. Without necessity, it will not appear easily."

"Why?" Su He suddenly sat upright, staring into Ling Chen's eyes, and spoke coldly, "Why do you oppose me? Have you considered that when Ji Gang knocked you into the sea, it was I who saved you, giving you a chance to survive? Moreover, I passed down my Absolute Skill to you. Despite my life-saving grace and teaching, you not only fail to repay me but repay kindness with enmity. Is this worthy of a man?"

Ling Chen pondered for a moment before speaking, "Elder Su, you are right, I have received much of your favor, and now I oppose you, which is indeed wrong. But are the things done by the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion right? Elder Su, I am not against you; I only want to do the right thing. Elder Su, may I ask you, after the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion has killed so many people, does your conscience feel at ease?"

"Everything I do is for the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. In my view, as long as it can maintain the Pavilion's esteemed reputation for hundreds of years, anything is worth it. Personal standpoints differ, and so do perspectives on matters. If you were in my position, I believe you would make the same decision."

"I can understand your perspective, but there are countless ways to maintain the Pavilion's reputation. Why choose killing? Yes, eliminating threats by the root is the quickest and most effective method, but do you think about those who died? I believe you haven't; you only think about yourself, the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, and your century-old legacy. If it were before, I would never get involved in such matters. But since I have become part of the Martial Arts world, I must think about it as a whole."

"For the Martial Arts world as a whole?" Su He said mockingly, "You really dare to speak; should I compliment you for your great ambition?"

Ling Chen smiled, "If you're willing to praise me, I am willing to listen. I am just an ordinary person and naturally enjoy compliments."

Speaking this far, Ling Chen glanced at the cooling tea and said, "Elder Su, I don't think there's a need for us to waste time on these worthless words anymore. You called me here, presumably to say something. Since we've opened up, let's make everything clear."

"If I asked for the original copy of that record, you certainly wouldn't give it to me. So, I want to propose a different deal. After this matter is settled, I will leave the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, entrusting the entire Pavilion to Su Mei, never intervening in its affairs again."

"What should I do then?"

"Guarantee that the original copy of that record will never appear."

"Alright. As long as you keep your word, I assure you, that record will forever remain in an unknown place."

"Good, I hope you remember today's words. Otherwise, no matter the ends of the earth, I won't let you off." With that, Su He picked up the teacup again.

Understanding the cue, Ling Chen stood up, "Elder Su, I shall take my leave." Reaching the door, Ling Chen suddenly turned back, looking at Su He by the window, "Elder Su, a promise is a promise, but I want to remind you, if you don't want that record to surface, you'd better handle this matter with care."

Finishing his words, Ling Chen didn't say more and walked out without looking back.

Just as he closed the door, he heard the sound of a breaking cup from inside the room. Ling Chen looked up at the azure sky, pondered for a moment, not staying longer, and strode back the way he came.

Before arriving at the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, Ling Chen had anticipated that Su He might collaborate with the Skyhawk Pavilion to stage a show for everyone. Therefore, he deliberately mentioned this matter, both as a reminder and a warning to prevent Su He from resorting to deceit.

Soon, Ling Chen returned to the room arranged by the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. Shortly after sitting down, Tong Zhentian and Qiu Yong, along with others, entered the room.

"Brother Ling, where did you go just now?" Qiu Yong asked.

"Elder Su called me; I chatted with him for a while."

"I'm sure he didn't get what he wanted."

Ling Chen shrugged and said, "I made an agreement with him. Whether he can fulfill it, I don't know."

"By the way!" Ling Chen shifted the topic, asking, "How many people from the Martial Arts world have arrived?"

"Including us, there are about a hundred people." He Ziyun replied, "People are still arriving one after another. The Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion has already set up over a hundred tents around. I estimate that by tonight, there should be two to three hundred."

Chapter 1284 - 1592: The Crusade (2)

"Second Brother," Ling Chen looked at Xu Ming and asked, "Do you think there's something suspicious about this?"

"What do you mean?"

"We all know the headquarters of Skyhawk Pavilion isn't in the country, yet Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion has gathered everyone here. What do you think they're up to?"

Xu Ming shook his head and said, "It's still unclear for now. However, Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion has leverage over us, so I believe they won't play any tricks."

"Let's hope so."

In the midst of conversation, a sudden 'thump thump thump' sound came from outside the door. Wei Jiahao quickly walked to the door and opened it. Seeing who had arrived, Wei Jiahao was slightly stunned, then smiled and stepped aside, calling into the room, "Sixth Brother, come see who's here."

Ling Chen focused his gaze and saw a woman standing behind Wei Jiahao. Upon realizing who it was, Ling Chen was somewhat surprised and quickly got up to greet her.

"Xiaozhu, how come you're here?" Ling Chen was very surprised, not expecting to see Zhu Xiaozhu at Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion.

Zhu Xiaozhu gave a gentle smile, greeting everyone present.

"I was invited by Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. I heard they're planning to fight Skyhawk Pavilion. Since there are quite a few martial artists involved this time, to prevent casualties, Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion invited several doctors."

"So that's how it is." Ling Chen nodded and asked, "Will the Shi Family folks be here as well?"

"They're already here. I saw Master when I arrived." As she spoke the word 'Master', a trace of sadness flashed in Zhu Xiaozhu's watery eyes.

Back then, Shi Su had single-handedly raised her, teaching her medicine. In her heart, she always regarded Shi Su as her mother. However, Shi Su's actions had deeply disappointed her.

Feeling Zhu Xiaozhu's emotional fluctuation, how could Ling Chen not understand her thoughts?

"Don't think too much of it," Ling Chen comforted, "Come on. Since you're here, stay with us. I'll arrange a room for you."

"Thank you!"

"Why the politeness between us?"

In the blink of an eye, two days passed. The number of martial artists gathering at Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion grew to over three hundred. Including Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion's members, there were nearly five hundred people.

"Sixth Brother, we just received word from Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. We'll head out after lunch," Qiu Yong came to deliver Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion's message.

"Finally, we're leaving," Ling Chen remarked, "Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion wasted two to three days here, no way their intentions are pure. For now, let's follow them and see what they're planning."

"Alright, I'll notify the others to be ready for departure at any time."

After lunch, following a brief rest, they saw members from Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion arriving. Ling Chen was surprised to see Wang Hao, unexpectedly sent by Su He.

Ling Chen cared little for Wang Hao, someone he didn't even want to look at.

Su He sent Wang Hao to accompany them, obviously to monitor their every move.

Before long, several hundred martial artists, led by Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, marched grandly outside the forest. After half an hour of walking, twenty or so double-decker buses were parked on the road, each capable of seating dozens.

Ling Chen and his group, numbering over ten, found a spot towards the back. Qiu Yong and the others were tactful, leaving the seat next to Ling Chen for Zhu Xiaozhu without competing for it.

As the bus started moving, Ling Chen looked out the window, keeping an eye on the convoy's route.

Over an hour passed, and the convoy reached the airport. For this expedition, Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion had chartered three planes. For the wealthy and powerful Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, this was nothing.

Boarding the plane, Ling Chen had a sudden idea and led his people onto the plane that Su He and his group were on.

"What are you doing?" Wang Hao stepped forward to stop Ling Chen, pointing to a nearby plane, "Your seats are over there."

Ling Chen smiled with a hint of sarcasm, saying, "I'll sit wherever I like. You don't have the authority to control me."

At this, Wang Hao's expression turned cold, saying sternly, "Ling Chen, this is a Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion-led operation; you'd better not be too arrogant."

"Is that so? I think you should consult your master, see if he agrees to my request."

Wang Hao waved his hand dismissively, coldly saying, "No need to consult; the master is busy and doesn't have time for such trifling matters."

"In that case... we won't participate in this operation." With that, Ling Chen turned to leave with his people heading out of the airport. After a short distance, Ling Chen suddenly turned back, smiling at Wang Hao, "You should tell Elder Su, not for anything else; I just fear you can't bear the consequences."

Wang Hao snorted, not taking Ling Chen's words to heart. Let them leave, what's the big deal. Previously, Su He had him accompany the Dragon Tiger Hall people, he was already displeased. Bound by his master's orders, he complied. Now, with Ling Chen's group gone, he was relieved not to have them in his way.

Leaving the airport, Ling Chen and his group found a quiet place to rest for a while.

"Sixth Brother, why didn't we just board the plane?" Yuan Yun asked puzzled.

From the side, Xia Yue agreed, "Yes, why insist on being on the same plane as Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion? Anyway, we're at odds with them, might as well not see each other."

Ling Chen smiled slightly, explaining, "Third Brother, Fifth Sister, I'm just being cautious. Once the plane takes off, we'll be trapped in the air, unable to act. If Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion has any foul play in mind, none of us will survive. So, staying with them ensures our safety."

"Indeed," Tong Zhentian chimed in, "Ling Chen's consideration is wise. Right now, we're a thorn in Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion's side, Su He would gladly kill us immediately. Whatever the case, we must be vigilant, never giving Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion a chance."

Hearing this, everyone finally understood.

Minutes ticked by, and after about ten minutes, Ling Chen finally saw Wang Hao running over.

"Ling Chen, seats have been arranged for you all. Let's go," Wang Hao said flatly, suppressing his anger. He couldn't understand why Su He, upon learning Ling Chen's group had left, flew into a rage, scolding him severely, a first-time occurrence.

Not only that, Su He tasked him personally to fetch them back; failure would mean severing their master-disciple relationship and expelling him from Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion.

From Su He's attitude, it was clear the matter was serious, no joke. Left with no choice, Wang Hao searched high and low for Ling Chen's group. Luckily, he spotted Ling Chen at the entrance.

Chapter 1285 - 1593: The Campaign Against the Enemy (Part 3)

Ling Chen touched his nose and said lightly, "Wang, if you tell us to leave, we leave, and if you tell us to go, we go, then wouldn't we be too spineless."

"Then what do you want?" Wang Hao suppressed the anger in his heart with great effort. It wasn't easy for him to come to find Ling Chen. "Ling Chen, I'm warning you, don't push your luck."

"Wang, with that attitude of yours... forget it! You can go back and tell Mr. He that we're not going."

"You..." Wang Hao's face darkened, wishing he could draw his knife and slice Ling Chen into two. However, thinking of Su He's order, Wang Hao had to suppress his impulse.

Taking a deep breath, Wang Hao said in a deep voice, "What exactly do you want?"

"After walking so long, we don't even have a sip of water. Brother, are you all thirsty?"

Upon hearing this, Wang Hao gritted his teeth and ran towards the store across the street. After a while, Wang Hao came back carrying a big bag of mineral water.

"Wang, you're really thoughtful, thank you." Ling Chen took the water Wang Hao handed over, ignoring the anger in his eyes, and said with a smile.

"Is that enough?" Wang Hao forced out a sentence through gritted teeth.

"I'm a bit hungry, and the food on the plane wasn't good. How about we take some food up there. Sixth Brother, what do you think?" Yuan Yun suggested.

"That's a good suggestion." Ling Chen nodded, "Who should go to buy the food?"

Wang Hao stared at Ling Chen fiercely, gritting his teeth, "I... I'll go!"

"Then I'll trouble you, Wang."

After a while, seeing Wang Hao coming over with bags and packages, Ling Chen stood up and said, "Alright, everything is pretty much ready, let's go."

After toying with Wang Hao for so long, it was time to stop; otherwise, it wouldn't be fun if Wang Hao really got angry.

Once on the plane, the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion arranged Ling Chen and others in a private cabin, and even Wang Hao left, leaving only their group of over ten people.

After more than half an hour, Ling Chen, looking at the leisurely white clouds outside the window, suddenly stood up from his seat.

"Sixth Brother, where are you going?" Qiu Yong, sitting in the back row, asked.

"I'm going to the restroom."

On the way to the restroom, Ling Chen encountered a few members of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, all of whom stared at him with sharp eyes, as if treating him like a criminal.

At this moment, Ling Chen found an opportunity, and while no one was around, he quickly opened the passage leading to the plane's cargo hold and slipped inside.

In the cargo hold, Ling Chen listened closely and found a few people chatting, likely guards from the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion watching the cargo. Secretly glancing at their position, Ling Chen quietly snuck past them.

After wandering around the cargo hold for a bit, Ling Chen found many large wooden crates, with their lids nailed shut, making it impossible to see what was inside. Forcibly opening them would definitely make a noise, attracting those guards' attention.

However, Ling Chen was quite curious about what the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion was transporting in these large wooden crates.

Thinking carefully, Ling Chen hugged one of the large wooden crates, testing its weight.

So heavy! Ling Chen was secretly shocked; the large wooden crate weighed at least several hundred pounds. It couldn't go unexplored. With a quick thought, Ling Chen suddenly noticed a tool bag not far away. He quickly walked over and found a utility knife from the bag.

Returning to the large wooden crate, Ling Chen used the utility knife to cut a slit in the wooden board on the side of the crate, then gradually enlarged the slit until it formed a hole the size of a fist.

Next, Ling Chen took out his cell phone and turned on the flashlight. As the beam of light shone into the crate, Ling Chen's face changed, showing a hint of shock in his eyes.

This... how could the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion have this kind of thing?

As he was thinking, he heard footsteps coming from the entrance of the cargo hold. Ling Chen leaned against the wooden crate and sneaked a few glances, seeing a few people who looked like they were coming to change shifts. Taking this opportunity, Ling Chen didn't stay any longer and quickly climbed out. If he left for too long, it would definitely arouse the suspicion of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion.

In no time, Ling Chen safely returned to his seat.

"What took so long?" Qiu Yong asked.

"Stomachache," Ling Chen replied casually, his mind still thinking about what he'd just seen.

What exactly does the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion intend to do?

After a few hours of flight, the three planes finally reached their destination.

Getting off the plane, looking at the familiar surroundings, Ling Chen nodded slightly to himself. The last time he was here, this was a small country near Huaxia, with large deserts. He had met Agula in that desert and saved the porridge girl from danger.

However, what Ling Chen unexpectedly discovered was that the headquarters of the Skyhawk Pavilion was also established here.

After leaving the airport, the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion had already arranged shuttle buses. More than a dozen large buses directly took everyone to the nearby hotel. Before coming, the Heavenly

Mechanism Pavilion had already booked the largest hotel in the area. Fortunately, the hotel was large enough; otherwise, there wouldn't have been enough room for so many people.

After a short rest, Ling Chen received a message from the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, inviting him to the hotel's main hall to participate in a mobilization meeting held by the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion.

To keep everyone's energy levels up, Ling Chen only called Xu Ming to go with him, leaving the others to rest in the rooms.

Entering the main hall, the place was already packed, with not enough seats, and many people standing in the aisles. Ling Chen and Xu Ming arrived late and could only stand at the back.

After waiting a few minutes, Su He, accompanied by Wang Hao, walked onto the stage.

"Everyone," Su He cupped his fists toward the crowd below the stage and said loudly, "I believe you are all aware of the various crimes committed by the Skyhawk Pavilion. As the leader of the Martial Arts world, the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion will not allow such malevolent forces to exist. According to our investigation, the headquarters of the Skyhawk Pavilion is located over a hundred kilometers away from this city, in the desert. To eradicate this evil force as soon as possible, we hope everyone will work together, following the unified arrangement of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion."

Pausing for a moment, Su He continued, "Everyone should rest well tonight, regain your strength, and we will set off early tomorrow morning, aiming to complete the mission within half a day. When we return to Huaxia, I will personally host a celebration for everyone."

"Second Brother, something feels off to me," Ling Chen said, observing Su He on the stage, his brows furrowed with a bad feeling in his heart.

"What's wrong?"

"I can't say for sure, just a gut feeling," Ling Chen shook his head. "You surely know Elder Su better than I do. Do you think he'd willingly sacrifice the Skyhawk Pavilion?"

"No, absolutely not. To establish the Skyhawk Pavilion, the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion has expended countless resources. It's the culmination of efforts from several generations. Su He wouldn't give up the Skyhawk Pavilion easily." Saying this, Xu Ming turned the conversation, "Actually, in this operation, what we need to guard against is not the Skyhawk Pavilion, but Su He himself. So everyone should be cautious; I'll keep an eye on Su He to prevent him from acting against us."

"Alright."

Chapter 1286 - 1594: Miscalculation

The next day.

Ling Chen got up early. Su He mentioned that the assault on the Skyhawk Pavilion would be launched this morning, so he certainly couldn't be lazy at such a time.

After everyone gathered, they first went to the hotel's restaurant to have breakfast. At seven o'clock, the people from the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion appeared at the entrance of the restaurant on time and took everyone onto the bus, heading directly towards the desert.

Ling Chen and the others sat in the back seats, occasionally chatting as they looked at the scattered buildings outside the window. There were hundreds of martial arts people involved in this operation, using more than a dozen large buses. After more than an hour of driving, the bus finally entered the desert. However, due to the environmental factors of the desert, the bus was no longer suitable for further travel. Therefore, everyone had to follow the people from the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion on foot into the desert.

Fortunately, the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion was well-prepared, providing each person with a supply pack containing enough food and water.

"Please rest assured, the headquarters of the Skyhawk Pavilion is very close to us; it is at most two hours' walk away," said a member of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion loudly, which made the martial artists slightly relieved. The desert is not only dry but also hot, and these martial artists, accustomed to Huaxia's weather, inevitably found it slightly uncomfortable to suddenly be in such an environment.

Now, everyone just wanted to quickly resolve the matter so they could catch a plane back to Huaxia. Along the way, many people complained, regretting responding to the call of the Heavenly Mechanism

Pavilion impulsively, traveling thousands of miles to this godforsaken place when they learned the Skyhawk Pavilion's headquarters was abroad.

In the blink of an eye, more than two hours had passed, and all they could see was endless yellow sand — there was no sign of the Skyhawk Pavilion.

"Damn! It's been more than two hours, why aren't we there yet?" People began to murmur.

"Everyone, please calm down, we're almost there," responded a member of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. As they spoke, people began to count heads.

"Old Pavilion Master." After more than ten minutes, a disciple from the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion hurried over to Su He's side and reported, "We just counted the number of people and found we're missing over ten people."

Upon hearing this, Su He's face darkened, and he asked, "How could they be missing? Weren't you watching all along? Who's missing?"

The person hesitated for a moment and stammered, "It's... members from the Dragon Tiger Hall. The group is so large that we didn't pay attention."

Wang Hao, nearby, said coldly, "This is the desert; where can they go? Without us leading the way, they could easily get lost in the desert. Hmph! I think they're courting death on their own."

Su He pondered for a moment and ordered, "Take some people back to the rear to look for them; don't let them leave our sight."

Again with me? Wang Hao's expression changed slightly, internally resisting the order. If it weren't for Su He's command, he wouldn't want to go. With no choice, since his master had spoken, Wang Hao had to comply. Immediately, Wang Hao led over twenty Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion disciples to return along the path and search for Ling Chen and the others.

At this moment, several kilometers away from the group, Ling Chen and his companions stood in the desert, using a satellite phone to make a call. After hanging up, Tong Zhentian asked, "Ling Chen, where are we going?"

"We'll find a place to rest for now," Ling Chen said with a smile. "Su He thought he could deceive us, but he didn't account for the fact that I've been to this desert before and am very familiar with the environment here. Two hours... Hmph! Walking for even four or five hours would still leave us in the middle of the desert, finding nothing. If I'm guessing correctly, the headquarters of the Skyhawk Pavilion should be in the deepest part of this desert."

"Then why did Su He bring us here?" Yuan Yun asked perplexed.

"If I'm not mistaken, he intends to use the environment here to deal with us. There's no signal in the desert, phones can't be used, and even if we're attacked here, we can't contact people in Huaxia. By the time we meet our end, no one will know," Ling Chen explained.

Qiu Yong nodded and chimed in, "In this way, Su He can buy the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion enough time to track down the whereabouts of that recorded document. They brought in so many martial arts people, probably to confuse us into believing they're really taking action against the Skyhawk Pavilion."

Ling Chen smiled slightly and said, "If I hadn't been to this desert before, I might have been fooled. Unfortunately for Su He, he miscalculated." Saying this, Ling Chen shook the satellite phone in his hand and continued, "When I arrived yesterday, I prepared in advance by paying a high price at the market for a satellite phone to guard against accidents."

"Whom did you call just now?" He Ziyun asked.

"You'll find out soon," Ling Chen replied with a mysterious smile, keeping them in suspense.

Not long after, several off-road vehicles approached and stopped in front of the group. The car door opened, and a middle-aged man jumped down from the passenger seat.

When they saw him, the group studied him for a moment, but only Qiu Yong and a few others recognized the man; the rest felt unfamiliar.

"Mr. Ling," the man said, smiling as he greeted everyone.

"Elder Tong, let me introduce you to Liu Dongsheng, Uncle Liu, who used to be a legendary figure in the Assassin world," Ling Chen explained.

"Mr. Liu, hello," everyone greeted him.

"Mr. Ling, hop in; everything's been arranged," Liu Dongsheng said.

Ling Chen nodded and led everyone into the vehicles. After half an hour of driving in the desert, the off-road vehicles finally reached their destination.

Getting out of the cars, they were first greeted by two fortresses, armed with heavy weaponry. Behind the fortresses lay a massive base, surrounded on all sides by three-meter-high walls, with an outer layer of barbed wire and a watchtower every three meters. Guards were equipped with weapons, constantly monitoring the surroundings, providing extremely strict defense.

As Ling Chen walked, he toured the area, occasionally nodding to express satisfaction with the setup.

"Ling Chen, what is this place?" Tong Zhentian couldn't suppress his curiosity and asked.

"It's a training camp," Ling Chen replied with a smile. "I funded its construction a few months ago."

Upon hearing this, everyone was astonished; Ling Chen had never mentioned it before. Qiu Yong couldn't help but laugh, "You sure know how to keep secrets; you didn't even let slip a whisper of this to us."

"My original plan was to use this as a secret base for our fallback, but didn't expect to use it so soon," Ling Chen said as he turned to Liu Dongsheng. "Uncle Liu, it's my first time here, so I'm not too familiar with the place. Could you show us around a bit?"

"No problem, follow me," Liu Dongsheng replied.

Immediately, everyone followed Liu Dongsheng and entered the base.

Chapter 1287 - 1595: Desert Territory

The base is enormous, covering thousands of square meters. Since it's in the desert, with no restrictions, you can build a base as large as you want, as long as you have the financial and manpower resources. Walking through the base, Ling Chen observed the surroundings and noticed that besides Asians, there was also a mix of Caucasians and Africans, representing nearly all ethnicities.

Back when Jiang Yunkai suggested setting up a training camp in this desert, Ling Chen considered the matter of choosing the personnel. After much thought, it seemed only Liu Dongsheng was suitable, as everyone else was busy. So, Ling Chen approached Hu Fei to discuss it with Liu Dongsheng.

Luckily, Liu Dongsheng agreed. Over the past few months, Ling Chen was only responsible for funding, while Liu Dongsheng handled everything else with the assistance of Hu Fei. Therefore, Ling Chen was completely unaware of the situation here.

"Uncle Liu, where did you find these people?" Ling Chen asked.

Liu Dongsheng replied, "I used some of my old connections to recruit some mercenaries, as well as assassins who have retired. Additionally, I used special channels to bring in a group of orphans. These orphans are between twenty and thirty years old, have had basic training before, and are in good condition overall."

Ling Chen nodded, quite knowledgeable about this aspect. Some countries are relatively poor, have a large number of orphans, and some mercenary organizations entice them with various benefits to join, training them from a young age and selling them to organizations or forces in need when they come of age. These people are in high demand on the black market, so their costs are not low, ranging from one hundred thousand to five hundred thousand dollars each.

The training camp has about 300 people in total, and Ling Chen is unaware of how much money Liu Dongsheng spent on setting up this base.

Ling Chen didn't care much about money and didn't impose many restrictions on everyone; as long as there was a need, spending any amount was not an issue. Besides, Hu Fei, who is crazy about money, handles the finances and is incredibly stingy. Therefore, Ling Chen had no concerns about Hu Fei squandering the money.

"Mr. Ling, this is our training ground," Liu Dongsheng said, pointing to an open area ahead.

Ling Chen and the others looked and saw more than twenty youths using various firearms for shooting practice on an open space of several hundred square meters. Beside them, two robust instructors in tank tops were responsible for guidance.

With sharp eyes, Ling Chen noticed over a dozen large wooden crates at one end of the training ground, all filled with firearms and equipment.

"Uncle Liu, where did these weapons come from?"

"Thanks to you," Liu Dongsheng said. "You have a good relationship with Agula, right? He's now the ruler of this country. Hu Fei used your connection with him to purchase a large number of weapons and equipment from his army at a low price." After speaking, Liu Dongsheng pointed to a shaded area not far away and said, "See that? There's an armed helicopter hidden inside, which Agula gifted to us free of charge, saying it was to thank you for your help."

"Really?" Ling Chen grinned, pleasantly surprised that Agula was so loyal, even gifting him an armed helicopter.

"Our daily training is divided into four parts: shooting, close combat, physical fitness, and stealth skills," Liu Dongsheng said.

"Uncle Liu, you're training them like special forces soldiers."

"Pretty much. Since you're treating this base as a future insurance policy, I, of course, need to train the most powerful soldiers." As he spoke, a military truck suddenly drove through the base gate. Once it stopped, over a dozen medical staff swiftly approached with stretchers to transport the injured brought by the truck to the emergency room.

Seeing the bloodied wounded, Ling Chen asked in surprise, "Uncle Liu, what's going on here?"

"They're team members injured in real combat."

"Real combat?" Ling Chen was taken aback, "Where did the real combat come from?"

"Although Agula has defeated the rebels, ****, some fled to the desert. I contacted Agula to provide their locations, and we are dealing with those rebels on his behalf. This not only helps Agula but also allows our people to gain real combat experience and grow rapidly. Why not?"

Ling Chen nodded in agreement, approving of Liu Dongsheng's approach. Real combat is the fastest way to improve. With Liu Dongsheng leading the team, Ling Chen had complete confidence that given enough time, a strong reserve force could be built for him.

After touring the entire base, Ling Chen was very satisfied. After some casual chatting, the group followed Liu Dongsheng to the main building of the base. Soon, they entered the base's central control room. Seeing the electronic instruments and equipment in the room, Ling Chen asked, "Uncle Liu, is there any progress on the task I entrusted to you earlier?"

"Don't worry, I've already found them." Liu Dongsheng gestured to a young man seated at a computer. The young man understood and tapped lightly on the keyboard. Suddenly, an image appeared on the large screen.

In the image, a mighty group of hundreds of people was marching swiftly in the desert. Although the march was fast, the formation was very scattered, with a large distance between the front and rear. "Mr. Ling, these are the people you're looking for, right?"

Ling Chen nodded slightly, "That's right. Uncle Liu, they won't discover our surveillance, will they?"

Liu Dongsheng confidently smiled, "You can rest assured, there won't be any problem. This footage is captured by a drone, located several hundred meters in the air. They can't possibly detect it, but..." Liu Dongsheng's tone shifted, "Judging from the direction they're heading, I suspect their destination might be the death zone."

Hearing this, Yuan Yun asked, "Mr. Liu, what is the death zone? Is the environment there too complex?"

"No," Liu Dongsheng shook his head. "It's called the death zone because it harbors a highly dangerous force. No one knows who they are, but anyone who enters that area never returns. Many organizations are hidden within this desert, and I've interacted with a few. They've named this area the death zone and advised me never to enter it. Many years ago, several organizations allied to search the area, but they all perished, not a single person survived."

Ling Chen and Tong Zhentian exchanged glances, a glimmer flashing in both their eyes.

"So, it's possible that the headquarters of Skyhawk Pavilion is there."

Chapter 1288 - 1596: Breaking Up and Going Separate Ways

"Uncle Liu, based on their traveling speed, how long do you think it will take them to reach that death zone?"

Liu Dongsheng estimated for a moment and said, "At least a day. From their current position to the death zone is still dozens of kilometers, relying purely on foot, and considering the harsh environment here, a day is still too little."

"What exactly does Su He intend to do by luring all these martial artists into the desert?" He Ziyun frowned and said.

"I think... this might be part of Su He's plan." Ling Chen pondered for a while and then said, "Think about it, this time there are hundreds of martial artists who came to the desert following the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, nearly half of the martial arts masters are here. Once we publicly reveal the original records, the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion will inevitably face a blow. Now, with so many martial artists trapped in the desert, relying on the power of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, dealing with the remaining martial artists in Huaxia will be more than sufficient."

Hearing this, Tong Zhentian nodded and said, "You're right. Su He wants to divide the entire martial arts force and destroy them individually. That old man is too cunning to come up with such an idea."

"I knew he wouldn't give in easily." Ling Chen smiled slightly and said, "Unfortunately, he calculated everything but didn't account for the precaution I took beforehand."

...

"Master." At this moment, in the advancing team, Wang Hao quickly reached Su He's side with everyone, reporting, "I've searched everywhere but haven't found any trace of Ling Chen. I think he might have gotten lost."

Su He said with a stern face, "Do you think they're as dumb as you?" With that, Su He waved to a young man not far away, who immediately ran over and asked, "Old Pavilion Master, what are your instructions?"

"Can you track Ling Chen and his group's signal?"

"The signal in the desert isn't very good, we might not be able to detect the signal, but I can try." After saying that, the young man took a notebook from his backpack and started checking on the spot. A few minutes passed, and a hint of confusion appeared on his face.

Noticing the change in expression, Su He asked seriously, "How is it, did you find them?"

"Old Pavilion Master, I've found a weak signal. However, according to the signal, they haven't moved from their place."

"They haven't moved?" Su He frowned, thought for a moment, and said, "Mark the location and let Wang Hao go over and clarify."

The Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion has always been cautious in its operations. Each supply bag distributed contains a micro-tracking chip. Through these chips, the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion can lock onto a person's location.

Wang Hao had no choice but to take people on another trip. This back and forth took more than an hour.

"Master, I only found these items; I didn't find any trace of Ling Chen and his group." Wang Hao threw down a dozen supply bags he had found and said, "Did they sense something and quietly slip away?"

"Let them go if they want, no need to mind them; anyhow, I've already taken precautions. Go, tell everyone to speed up."

"Elder Su." At that moment, someone rushed over from the back and asked, "Elder Su, we've been walking for four to five hours, how come we haven't reached the destination yet? Could it be that your Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion got the location wrong?"

Su He, with a stern face, ignored the person's inquiry. Wang Hao glanced at his master's sullen face, knowing he was angry about Ling Chen's issue, quickly took over, and said, "The direction is correct, maybe the distance is not as close as we imagined, everyone, don't worry, just hold on a little more, we'll reach soon."

"Elder Su, everyone has been walking for so long and is extremely tired, we need to stop and rest for a while." The person suggested.

"Can't rest before reaching the destination." Su He coldly left a sentence and then stepped forward directly, ignoring the person further.

Watching Su He leave, the person's face showed a trace of displeasure. However, thinking of Su He's status, even if he was dissatisfied, he dared not vent it, so he returned to the team, embellishing Su He's attitude and spreading it to others.

In no time, rumors spread, and everyone stopped walking, resting on the spot.

"Master, they refuse to walk any further." Wang Hao observed the situation at the back and reported promptly.

Su He sneered and said, "If they don't want to walk, that's fine. You go and tell them that we won't wait for anyone, if they don't keep up with the team and get lost in this desert, their lives are none of my concern."

"This..." Wang Hao hesitated a bit and said, "Master, isn't this a bit too harsh?"

"What's so harsh about it? Do you expect me to treat them like lords? Stop dawdling, hurry up and go!" Su He said impatiently.

Upon Su He's words spreading throughout the team, everyone's emotions turned exceptionally angry. How could anyone say such words? They had responded to the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion's call, traveled thousands of miles to this godforsaken place, only to be treated with such an attitude; anyone would be displeased.

Soon, someone suggested turning back and leaving the desert, returning to Huaxia. This suggestion quickly gained support from many people.

"Master, half of them are planning to return the way they came. What do you think..."

"If they want to leave, let them leave then." Su He said indifferently, "Having come so far, do they think they can just turn back and go home? If that's the case, they're underestimating this desert. Ignore them, we'll continue forward and try to reach the destination by nightfall."

"Yes."

In the end, only about a hundred people chose to continue accompanying the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, while the others decided to turn back and no longer participate in the upcoming actions.

Over two hundred people moved under the blazing sun, walking through the desert, and as time passed, the water and food provided by the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion were used up. Staring at the endless yellow sand, despair grew in their hearts, uncertain if they could hold on until they escaped the desert without water and food.

In the blink of an eye, another four to five hours passed.

"Brother, why...why haven't we left this damn place?" Someone asked. Under the scorching sun for so long and without water to drink, everyone's lips were about to crack. At first, they could use saliva to moisten their lips, but eventually, there wasn't even enough saliva, and some who couldn't adapt to this environment had long fainted, being carried by others.

"I can't go on; I really can't." A middle-aged man lay weakly on the yellow sand, breathing heavily.

"Everyone...everyone, hold on a little longer, and we can leave this damn place soon."

"Buddy, it's all desert around, do you know which way is out? I think we might as well save our energy."

"If I had known, I shouldn't have separated from the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. Things are not looking good now; we might even lose our lives here."

Chapter 1289 - 1597: Counterattack (Part 1)

At this moment, the sound of engines gradually approached, appearing in everyone's line of sight. Seeing the military transport vehicles, all the martial artists froze. After a brief stunned silence, they immediately became alert, quickly forming a circle and looking at the newcomers with caution.

Soon, the military transport vehicles drove closer and slowly came to a stop. The car door opened, and a young man jumped down from the passenger seat, smiling broadly at the crowd, "Everyone, we meet again."

Seeing the young man in the car, everyone was taken aback, exclaiming, "Why is it you?"

Ling Chen smiled and said, "Don't you wish it were me? I know you've been through a lot of hardships, so I deliberately brought food and water. If you're not happy to see me, then I'll take my leave."

Upon hearing about food and water, everyone's eyes lit up. They hurriedly surrounded Ling Chen, impatiently asking, "Ling Chen, where's the water... the water?"

Ling Chen waved his hand, and several young men jumped down from the military transport vehicles, gradually unloading food and water from the vehicles. In no time, the food and water Ling Chen brought were swept clean by over two hundred martial artists.

After everyone had rested and regained much of their spirits, a middle-aged man stood up, took the initiative to walk over to Ling Chen, clasped his hands together, and said, "Thank you, Mr. Ling, for saving us."

"You're welcome. I just did what I should do."

"Mr. Ling, how much further until we leave this desert?"

"About seventy or eighty kilometers."

"That far?" The middle-aged man was astonished, "We've been traveling for so long..."

Ling Chen replied, "I know. However, you're heading in the wrong direction. If you continue along your previous route, you'll only delve deeper into the desert. If I hadn't arrived in time, you wouldn't survive past tomorrow."

Hearing this, the middle-aged man asked in confusion, "Mr. Ling, how did you know we were here? And... weren't you supposed to be with us?"

Ling Chen shook his head and said, "This isn't something you should worry about. What you should be concerned about now is the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion."

"What do you mean?"

"Su He casually let you go without specifying a direction, clearly wanting you to blindly head to your doom."

The middle-aged man pondered for a while, nodded, and said, "You're right. After entering the desert, the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion's attitude towards us became increasingly indifferent, and eventually, they ignored us completely. Honestly, I'm puzzled as to why the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion would do such a thing."

"The reason is simple. Su He wants you dead."

"Why?"

"If you want to know why, why not come with me?" With that, Ling Chen said no more and directly boarded the transport vehicle.

After passing on the message, the middle-aged man hesitated for a moment, and gradually everyone got into the vehicles. After half an hour's drive, the convoy finally returned to the base. Upon arrival, Ling Chen immediately arranged for everyone to a relatively spacious warehouse.

By this time, Tong Zhentian and others were already waiting in the warehouse. Seeing Tong Zhentian there, the crowd seemed to have found their backbone, huddling around to ask questions, wanting to clarify the reason. "Alright, everyone quiet down, I will explain the situation shortly."

Upon hearing this, the noisy warehouse gradually quieted down, and everyone's attention focused on Tong Zhentian.

Tong Zhentian glanced around at the crowd, cleared his throat, and said loudly, "I believe everyone is confused about this operation. To be honest, this operation is actually a plot laid out by the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion... To be precise, it's Su He's scheme. His goal is simple: to bury all present in the desert."

"Elder Tong, do you have any evidence for saying this? Elder Su is a martial arts magnate like you, why would he do such a thing?"

"Because of the Skyhawk Pavilion," Tong Zhentian said lightly. "As is well known, we've come all this way to eliminate the Skyhawk Pavilion that has been causing trouble in the martial arts world. However, you may not know that the Skyhawk Pavilion was actually established by Su He, specifically to carry out certain shady activities for him."

Tong Zhentian paused, looking at the group of astonished people, waiting for them to digest the news before continuing, "I believe everyone has received records of the havoc caused by the Skyhawk Pavilion

over the years. Many have fallen victim to them. When the Dragon Tiger Hall learned of this, they immediately launched an investigation and found that each action taken by the Skyhawk Pavilion was related to Su He."

At this point, Tong Zhentian signaled to Ling Chen. The latter understood, distributing over a dozen pages of prepared parchment to the crowd.

"Please look at these, everyone. These are the original documents we've found, containing records of Skyhawk Pavilion's actions and signatures. You only need to compare the handwriting to know whether what I say is true."

"So the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion and the Skyhawk Pavilion have been colluding all along," someone said indignantly.

"We've been blind. If only we had known earlier, we should have united and destroyed the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion back then."

As voices of resentment rose, Ling Chen stepped forward and spoke, "Everyone, this matter is not related to the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion."

Everyone paused, looking at Ling Chen with confusion, asking, "What do you mean? Haven't you all said this was Su He's doing? Why say it has nothing to do with the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, isn't that contradictory?"

Ling Chen smiled slightly and explained, "Everyone, Su He is Su He, and the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion is the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. Please do not confuse the two. Although Su He was the old Pavilion Master of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, the current Pavilion Master is only one, and that is Su Mei, who alone represents the entire Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. Moreover, to hide his crimes and continue living freely, Su He imprisoned his granddaughter and seized control of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, even using Master Su's name to make the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion's people collude with him. Therefore, we need only take action against Su He and the Skyhawk Pavilion, not include the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. Please do not mix this up."

A few days ago, Ling Chen reached an agreement with Su Mei to allow the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion to continue to exist, on the condition that the Skyhawk Pavilion be eradicated. Hence, he had to say this to avoid everyone's anger being directed at the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion.

"Mr. Ling, this is just your word; how do you know the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion and Su He aren't in cahoots? Don't forget, Su He and Su Mei are family, would Su Mei really go against her grandfather?"

"That makes sense, I also think that the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion can't be exonerated from involvement in this matter."

As the crowd continued discussing, Ling Chen raised his hand to calm everyone down.

"I understand everyone's suspicion of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, but I can assure you. Even if you don't believe me, you should trust Elder Tong."

Chapter 1290 - 1598: Counterattack (Part 2)

"Elder Tong, please say something. If this matter has nothing to do with the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, then you should present some convincing evidence." Someone spoke.

As soon as the words fell, Tong Zhentian nodded and said, "Alright, since you want evidence, I will give you evidence." After speaking, Tong Zhentian stepped aside. Immediately, two people walked forward from behind him.

Seeing the people who suddenly appeared, everyone couldn't help but be surprised.

"Elder Tong, how do they happen to be here?"

Ling Chen smiled and said, "You need evidence, don't you? Is there anything more convincing than them?" Pausing, Ling Chen turned to the newcomers and said, "Miss Su, Elder Du, I'll leave it to you now."

Upon learning Qiu Yong's plan, Ling Chen immediately contacted Su Mei to inform her of the situation here, gaining her consent. To convince everyone that this matter had nothing to do with the Heavenly

Mechanism Pavilion, Ling Chen, after careful consideration, decided to let Su Mei personally come forth. Only with the appearance of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion Master could everyone be convinced.

"Everyone, I know there are many grievances and misunderstandings against the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, and here, I first express the most sincere apologies on behalf of the Pavilion." Su Mei said softly, "As Mr. Ling just mentioned, this incident has nothing to do with the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion; however, since Su He is my grandfather and was once the Pavilion Master, the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion will not shirk its responsibility. We will exert all efforts to resolve this matter."

"Master Su, the Skyhawk Pavilion has been wreaking havoc in the Martial Arts world for many years, slaughtering countless martial artists, all under Su He's instructions. As the Pavilion Master and Su He's granddaughter, are you completely unaware of this?" someone in the crowd asked.

"Everyone, as you all know, my grandfather left the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion decades ago, and has been out of touch ever since. I know nothing of his whereabouts, let alone what he is doing. I've stated that the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion will not evade responsibility. My grandfather betrayed the Pavilion and founded the Skyhawk Pavilion, harming martial artists. As the Pavilion Master, I will give everyone an explanation."

Before anyone could ask further, Ling Chen stepped forward to stand before Su Mei and said, "Alright, with the Pavilion Master here and Elder Du present, I trust there won't be any more suspicions. Also, the upcoming actions will involve the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, so everyone can keep their eyes open."

"Actions?" someone asked, puzzled, "What actions?"

Ling Chen smiled slightly, "After suffering such losses, don't you wish to seek justice for yourselves? Remember, you came here with a purpose."

Upon hearing this, a middle-aged man chimed in, "Mr. Ling, you don't mean to act against the Skyhawk Pavilion, do you?"

"Absolutely." Ling Chen nodded, "With such a golden opportunity, we must not let it slip. I've pinpointed the headquarters of the Skyhawk Pavilion, and no matter what, we cannot let Su He and the Skyhawk members unite. Therefore, we must eliminate the Skyhawk Pavilion members before Su He arrives. Everyone, the vehicles are ready; we rest for an hour and then move out, so please prepare."

"I don't want to wade into this mess any further, take me back." someone said.

Ling Chen squinted his eyes, smiling faintly, "Not going? Fine! If anyone doesn't want to go, say so now, I won't force you. However, let me be upfront—I've saved your lives, the gratitude is yours to repay or not. But to those unwilling to participate, feel free, I won't send a vehicle for your departure, nor provide water or food, as I have no obligation to do so. Whether or not you can walk out of this desert alive depends on your luck."

As these words fell, everyone was stunned, not expecting Ling Chen to say such things. It would be a joke without knowing their exact location, without vehicles, water, or food. How could they possibly walk out of this desert on their own?

For a moment, no one mentioned leaving further. Even if someone felt dissatisfied, they dared not voice it. As Ling Chen just stated, had he not intervened to save them, they would have perished in the desert.

People from the Martial Arts world highly value loyalty, especially life-saving grace. No matter what, they had to go this time.

After arranging everyone in a warehouse, Ling Chen and his group returned to the command tent.

Seeing Su Mei remain silent, Ling Chen walked over to her and said, "Miss Su, I'm sorry, I didn't want to do this either. But I offered Elder Su a chance: if he abandons the Skyhawk Pavilion, the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion could gain prestige and preserve his reputation. Unfortunately, he chose another path."

Su Mei nodded lightly and replied, "I know, you don't need to apologize. It's not your fault; if blame is to be laid, it could only be with grandpa himself for believing too much in himself."

"It's good that you think this way. Rest assured, although the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion will be impacted to some degree, your actions today will make everyone remember you."

After a few words of comfort, Ling Chen turned to Elder Tong and the others to discuss the upcoming action plan.

One hour passed quickly, and Ling Chen and Liu Dongsheng directly took that armed helicopter to the destination, while others were transported by military trucks to meet them there.

The armed helicopter flew swiftly, reaching the death zone in less than half an hour. Upon entering the Skyhawk Pavilion headquarters area, the helicopter found a relatively secluded spot to drop off Ling Chen and his team.

Under Liu Dongsheng's command, several accompanying technicians immediately set up temporary tents and connected all equipment. Ten minutes later, two drones launched successively to begin searching for the precise location of the Skyhawk Pavilion headquarters.

"Sir, we've found the target."

In just about three minutes, the technicians operating the drones discovered the location of the Skyhawk Pavilion. Ling Chen and Liu Dongsheng leaned over the computer, observing the real-time footage transmitted by the drones, showing a vast base amidst the barren desert. From the aerial view, many people could be seen moving around within the base.

"Can the image be magnified?"

The technician nodded and zoomed the lens to the maximum. After a close observation, Ling Chen stated with certainty, "That's right, this is the Skyhawk Pavilion headquarters."

"I've just contacted the convoy, they need another forty minutes to arrive."

"What about Su He and his men?"

"They're still quite far from here, even if they run the whole way, it would take at least three hours, giving us ample time to complete our mission."

"Excellent! Keep monitoring the movements of the Skyhawk Pavilion, and remember to block their signals before the action begins so they can't connect with Su He."

