

The Beauty 1331

Chapter 1331 Hunting Operation (4)

"Ling Chen, I've told you, I've never admitted defeat in my life. If you want me to surrender, at least show some skills."

"Alright." Ling Chen nodded and said, "In that case, don't blame me for being impolite." As he finished speaking, Ling Chen waved his hand, and Chen Junfeng emerged from the corners of the walls along with Ji Gang. Besides the two, there were also Xu Ming and Qiu Yong, forming a circle and surrounding Su He and Qin Chuan.

Su He glanced at Chen Junfeng across from him, his expression indifferent as he said, "I thought you were long dead, didn't expect you to be alive all this time."

Chen Junfeng, with a fierce look in his eyes, said coldly, "Surprisingly, you still remember me. Back then, I was clearly wronged, yet your Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion insisted on making trouble for me. To force me to submit, you even burned my wife and child in a great fire. Su He, do you know that for all these years, I haven't had a good night's sleep? As soon as I close my eyes, images of my dead wife and daughter appear in my mind. Today, I'm going to use your blood to honor them."

"If you have the ability, you can take my life." After speaking, Su He turned his head and signaled Qin Chuan beside him with his eyes. The latter understood and slowly moved towards the left, where there was a shadow close to the wall. As a Heavenly List assassin, in the right environment, he could unleash immense combat power.

Seeing Qin Chuan's movement, everyone understood his intent. At that moment, Ling Chen, Qiu Yong, and Xu Ming all moved towards Qin Chuan's location, preparing to intercept him.

Capture the ringleader first! Ling Chen had already planned for Chen Junfeng and Ji Gang to deal with Su He together, while the others would restrain Qin Chuan. Once Su He was defeated, Qin Chuan would be easy to handle.

As Chen Junfeng and Ji Gang slowly approached, Su He remained indifferent, as if he did not regard these two at all. At this moment, a whistling sound filled the air. Su He and Qin Chuan looked up, seeing more than ten arrows shooting down from the sky, swiftly closing in on their heads.

Witnessing the situation, Su He lightly tapped his toes, instantly moving to the side, avoiding the threat of the arrows. However, when the arrows landed, there were several soft 'bang' sounds, and the arrows exploded into numerous green powders, scattering in the air.

Unavoidably, both Su He and Qin Chuan were touched by the green powders.

Facing this sudden change, their expressions changed slightly as they immediately retreated a few steps until the green powders slowly dissipated from the air.

"Ling Chen, I can't believe you used poison?" Qin Chuan covered his nose, refraining from breathing, pointed at Ling Chen, and shouted angrily, "I never thought you were so despicable. If you have the skill, fight openly!"

Hearing this, Ling Chen slightly raised the corner of his mouth, smiling as he said, "Elder Qin, I think you misunderstood. How could I use such despicable tactics? Rest assured, what we used just now was not poison powder."

"Then what is it?" Qin Chuan looked unconvinced.

"You'll know by looking at yourselves."

Su He and Qin Chuan immediately looked down at their bodies. Instantly, they saw that all parts of their bodies emitted a faint green glow. This... both of their expressions changed, eyes showing a trace of surprise.

"This is glow powder." Ling Chen smiled slightly and explained, "Don't worry, this stuff is non-toxic." Seeing Ling Chen's smug smile, Su He and Qin Chuan's expressions turned grim. They certainly knew what glow powder was, and they had guessed its purpose.

Su He was well-versed in the Nine Yang Qiankun Step. Back at the Skyhawk Pavilion headquarters, he had easily escaped an encirclement of hundreds of people with his exquisite Nine Yang Qiankun Step. As for Qin Chuan, he was a Heavenly List-level assassin. Once he vanished into darkness, he posed an absolute threat. So, Ling Chen pondered and ultimately thought of the brilliant idea of using glow powder.

As long as the glow powder stuck to Su He and Qin Chuan, they would become conspicuous targets wherever they went. This way, Qin Chuan's assassination tactics became useless, as he could be discovered even in the dark. It was the same for Su He; the presence of glow powder significantly reduced the effect of his Nine Yang Qiankun Step.

At this moment, Su He and Qin Chuan were no longer at ease, their eyes showing a hint of seriousness.

"Elder Su, it's still not too late to admit defeat."

"Kill!" Su He frowned, coldly uttering a word. As his voice fell, Qin Chuan simultaneously made his move, charging straight at the nearest Qiu Yong. Since the glow powder was on him, there was no need to hide in the dark. Right now, the only way was to fight head-on.

Seeing Qin Chuan rushing towards Qiu Yong, Ling Chen and Xu Ming did not hesitate at all, immediately speeding up and rushing to Qiu Yong's side to jointly counter Qin Chuan's attack.

"Die!" Qin Chuan shouted angrily, producing a sharp dagger and aiming it at Qiu Yong's throat.

Sensing the formidable momentum, Xu Ming quickly stepped in front of Qiu Yong without a word, delivering an uppercut towards Qin Chuan's wrist. Meanwhile, Ling Chen leaped up and kicked at Qin Chuan's head.

Faced with the two-pronged attack, unless Qin Chuan gave up his assault, he had to endure one of the attacks. After a brief hesitation, Qin Chuan immediately made a choice, quickly retracting his dagger and retreating, avoiding the combined assault of Ling Chen and Xu Ming.

However, just as Qin Chuan was preparing to retreat, an arrow suddenly came shooting from above. A strong sense of crisis welled up in Qin Chuan's heart, causing him to hurriedly twist his body, forcibly moving a centimeter or two away from his retreating position. Though only a centimeter or two, it saved his life. The arrow grazed his ear, leaving a bloody mark.

No time to tend to the pain from his ear, Ling Chen, Xu Ming, and Qiu Yong's attacks were already upon him, rushing in close.

With a crisp sound, a chain suddenly appeared in Qiu Yong's hand.

Seeing the chain descending towards Qin Chuan, Ling Chen applied force to the tip of his toes, leaping directly over Qin Chuan's head. Watching Ling Chen's move, Qin Chuan wanted to turn and cover his back, but Qiu Yong and Xu Ming were still in front of him, and he couldn't ignore these two's attacks. Besides, Zhang Zhongfeng was always aiming at him from above, so he had to split his attention.

Under a three-sided attack, Qin Chuan gritted his teeth and went straight for Qiu Yong and Xu Ming's attacks, wielding his dagger as he charged forward. He knew that in such a situation, he had to endure one of the attacks. Therefore, he chose to ignore Ling Chen's attack, believing it to be the weakest among them, thus minimizing the damage.

Chapter 1332 The Hunt (Part 5)

Aiming at Qin Chuan's back, Ling Chen swung his steel fist, gathering his strength, and threw a punch squarely at Qin Chuan's back. Instantly, Qin Chuan's face turned pale, and he spat out a mouthful of fresh blood. Under the impact of that force, Qin Chuan's body pitched forward sharply, stumbling underfoot, almost falling to the ground.

However, Qin Chuan's reaction was swift. Seeing this situation, he simply rolled on the ground. Although the move lacked the demeanor of a Heavenly List expert, it skillfully avoided the attack from Qiu Yong and Xu Ming. Watching Qin Chuan stand up again, Ling Chen and his two companions gave him no time to breathe, continuing to close in from three directions, pressing him hard, leaving him only able to defend.

At this moment, Qin Chuan gritted his teeth, enduring the pain from his back, while fending off the attacks from Ling Chen and his companions. Besides, he had to keep an eye on Zhang Zhongfeng above him, never knowing when he might shoot out a deadly arrow.

No! Qin Chuan furrowed his brows, glancing toward Su He out of the corner of his eye from time to time. His situation was extremely bad. With his strength, holding on a bit longer wouldn't be an issue. However, the key lay in Su He. If Su He couldn't quickly deal with those two Heavenly List experts, his defeat was only a matter of time.

Meanwhile, Su He was facing the combined attacks of Chen Junfeng and Ji Gang. Confronted with the siege of two Heavenly List experts, Su He appeared calm and composed, but all he could do was ensure his temporary safety, with no room to spare for the precarious Qin Chuan.

It was fortunate that Ling Chen came up with the brilliant idea of using fluorescent powder, making Su He unable to hide. Even if he executed the Nine Yang Qiankun Step, he couldn't escape the pursuit of Chen Junfeng and Ji Gang. As long as the fluorescent powder was there, Chen Junfeng could accurately lock onto his position.

Ah!

At this moment, a miserable scream came from Qin Chuan's side. Su He turned his head to look, his face changed drastically. Qin Chuan's back had been struck by a knife, blood flowing freely, instantly dyeing his clothes red. The attacker was none other than Yuan Yun. From the beginning of the battle until now, Yuan Yun had been hiding in the dark, seeking an opportunity to strike. Just now, he seized a chance, quickly approaching Qin Chuan from behind, delivering a heavy slash that severely wounded him.

Qin Chuan spat out a mouthful of blood, his body swaying as he retreated a few steps. His back injury was too severe, at that moment he felt as if his entire upper body had lost sensation, and even gripping his dagger required great effort.

"Elder Qin, surrender, there's no need to make things harder for yourself," Ling Chen stepped forward and said.

Qin Chuan, with a cold face and heavy breaths, replied, "Ling Chen, if you have the guts, kill me. I'm from the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, and I will never bow to anyone." With that said, Qin Chuan shouted fiercely, mustering all his strength and charged straight at Ling Chen with his dagger raised.

He knew he couldn't hold on much longer. So, before dying, the only thing he could do was to risk everything and take Ling Chen down with him.

Seeing Qin Chuan rushing towards Ling Chen, Xu Ming and Qiu Yong hurried forward, intending to stop Qin Chuan. However, even after being hit by both, Qin Chuan's body merely swayed slightly and showed no sign of stopping. Clearly, he was determined to take Ling Chen with him before he died.

Just as Qin Chuan was about to reach him, Ling Chen remained standing, motionless, as if he didn't regard Qin Chuan's threat seriously.

At this crucial moment, a person suddenly leaped out from the ground, with a dagger in hand, stabbing it fiercely into Qin Chuan's body. Having succeeded in one strike, that person quickly retreated, rejoining Ling Chen's side.

Fatally stabbed, Qin Chuan's forward momentum finally stopped. Glancing at the dagger lodged in his chest, Qin Chuan opened his mouth as if to say something. However, before he could utter a sound, he collapsed to the ground, lifeless.

"Phew!" Seeing Qin Chuan's body on the ground, Qiu Yong couldn't help but let out a breath, speaking with lingering fear, "Sixth Brother, fortunately you had things arranged, having Lady Zhu hidden underground all this time, otherwise, you would have been in danger just now."

Ling Chen smiled slightly, "I trust Lady Zhu will not disappoint me."

Before the battle started, Ling Chen had made full preparations. He, Qiu Yong, Xu Ming, along with Zhang Zhongfeng, were responsible for drawing Qin Chuan's attention. Yuan Yun and Zhu Qing were hidden, waiting for a chance to strike. Except for Chen Junfeng and Ji Gang, he deployed almost all resources against Qin Chuan.

Once Qin Chuan was dealt with, it would be much easier to handle Su He alone.

"Ling Chen, be careful, he's trying to escape!" This warning from Chen Junfeng came from the side.

With the death of Qin Chuan, Su He felt a sense of crisis. Surrounded by so many, despite his strength, the chance of escape was slim. So, before Ling Chen and his group could close in, he had to flee the area quickly.

Seeing Su He attempting to escape, Ling Chen immediately led the group chasing after him. As Su He's body was marked with fluorescent powder, retreating into the dark would only make him more noticeable. One had to admit, Su He's speed was incredibly fast, covering a kilometer in the blink of an eye, and Ling Chen's group chased relentlessly, maintaining about a hundred meters distance.

"Hey! Old Tang, get over here for support," Ling Chen shouted through the walkie-talkie.

In no time, the sound of propellers was heard from above. Subsequently, a spotlight cast down from the helicopter, landing precisely on Su He. Apart from Tang Yuan, Zhang Zhongfeng was also on the helicopter. Tang Yuan, heeding Ling Chen's request, had brought Zhang Zhongfeng onto the helicopter.

Watching Su He fleeing below, Zhang Zhongfeng held a longbow, drawing five arrows in one hand, nocking them all onto the bow.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

With the sound of arrows piercing the air, all five arrows shot forth, slowing Su He's pace.

Seizing this opportunity, Ling Chen and his group quickened their pace, pursuing from behind, gradually closing the gap.

At this time, Tang Yuan, sitting in the helicopter, looked ahead, his expression suddenly changing. He quickly grabbed the walkie-talkie, "Tang Yuan, it's not good, there's a lake ahead. The target is heading straight towards it."

"Do everything possible to stop him, he mustn't be allowed to jump into the lake."

"Send me to the front," Zhang Zhongfeng, at his side, said.

Tang Yuan responded, immediately instructing the pilot to fly the helicopter to the lake's edge, hovering in mid-air. Watching Su He running toward them, Zhang Zhongfeng, from a high vantage, drew his bow and aimed an arrow directly at Su He's forehead.

Whoosh!

An arrow flew out. Su He, quick to react, immediately leaped to the side, dodging the arrow.

Chapter 1333 - 1641: Hunt Operation (6)

Staring directly at Zhang Zhongfeng, Su He frowned deeply, constantly shifting positions to dodge the arrows shot from above.

If possible, Su He wanted to change his direction to avoid Zhang Zhongfeng's attack range. However, there was a lake ahead, his only hope for escape.

Being chased by so many people and forced into such a pathetic state made Su He very angry. As a dignified expert on the Heavenly List, reputed to be the number one in the world, to fall into such a situation would surely make him a laughingstock if it got out.

Whoosh!

Another arrow came shooting toward him. Under such a dense rain of arrows, Su He finally made a mistake and was hit in the right leg. Feeling the pain from the right leg, Su He gritted his teeth, dragging the injured leg as he continued to run forward. At this moment, he couldn't stop, as the footsteps behind him were getting closer, and Ling Chen and the others could catch up at any moment.

Whoosh! Whoosh!

A series of arrows came flying again, affecting his movement due to the injury in his right leg. Facing the rain of arrows ahead, Su He couldn't dodge as flexibly as before. Soon, he was struck by several arrows, and blood slowly flowed from the wounds.

The arrow wounds on his right leg and left arm were not serious, but the one in his abdomen was causing much discomfort, making it difficult to even walk.

Seeing the lake getting closer, Su He gritted his teeth and, with all his strength, leaped directly toward the lake. However, the moment Su He hit the water, a sharp arrow shot from above, striking his back.

Plop! Water splashed as Su He's body sank into the lake, disappearing into the darkness. Due to the lake, even though Su He's body was covered with fluorescent powder, it was of no use at this moment.

By this time, Ling Chen and the others had also reached the shore. Looking at the spot where Su He fell into the water, Ling Chen frowned and said, "Everyone spread out, guard every spot on the shore, and report immediately if there's any sign of Su He."

"Understood!"

At this moment, Tang Yuan and Zhang Zhongfeng were sitting in a helicopter, circling over the lake, searching for Su He's whereabouts. More than an hour passed in the blink of an eye, but everyone came up empty-handed. "Sixth brother." Suddenly, Ling Chen heard Yuan Yun's shout.

When he reached Yuan Yun's location, he saw Yuan Yun holding an arrow, saying, "I found this on the shore. It still has blood on it; Su He probably pulled it out when he came ashore."

"Did anyone see him come ashore?"

"No." Yuan Yun shook his head and said, "There are a lot of water plants here; he might have used them to sneak ashore while we weren't paying attention. So, should we keep searching?"

Looking at the bloodstained arrow, Ling Chen pondered for a moment, then shook his head: "Forget it, he's probably long gone. There's a road over there; he might have mingled with the crowd and left."

Su He's escape left Ling Chen feeling unwilling. After making so many arrangements, thinking they were foolproof, he still managed to escape. However, the fortunate thing was that although Su He had escaped, Qin Chuan and those assassins from Skyhawk Pavilion were all dealt with, eliminating a significant threat.

"Sixth brother, don't worry too much. Su He might not live long," Zhang Zhongfeng said as he stepped down from the helicopter. "He took four of my arrows, two of which are very severe. If he doesn't get timely medical treatment, no matter how strong he is, he won't last long."

"Let's hope so." Ling Chen nodded and then arranged for everyone to return to the company.

At this time, in a dark alley, Su He supported himself against a wall, slowly moving forward. His clothes and pants were soaked with blood from the arrow wounds. His hair was wet, and each step he took left a bloody footprint on the ground.

After walking more than ten meters, Su He's legs suddenly went weak, and he collapsed directly onto the ground.

Taking a deep breath, Su He leaned against the wall, gasping as he pressed his hand against the wound on his abdomen. Though the abdominal wound was severe, the truly fatal injury was Zhang Zhongfeng's last arrow. Just as he jumped into the water, an arrow pierced through his back. At this point, due to excessive blood loss, his consciousness was becoming faint, his limbs cold, and his life force was rapidly fading.

Just then, an iron door in the alley opened and a man stepped out, carrying two bags of garbage.

Startled by the sight of Su He, the man hurried to his side, asking, "Sir, are you alright?"

Su He opened his mouth, wanting to speak, but felt too weak to utter a word. Seeing this, the man didn't dare to delay and quickly picked up Su He, hurriedly returning inside.

"Auntie, come quick, I've got a patient here who needs emergency care."

At the man's shout, a stately woman emerged from an inner room. Seeing Su He lying on the bed, she approached and lifted his clothing to inspect the wounds. Her eyes widened at the strange injuries, and she immediately stopped the man's actions.

"Auntie, what's wrong?"

The woman pointed at Su He on the bed and said, "This man is a martial artist. Before helping him, you'd better find out his identity."

"A martial artist?" The man was slightly taken aback, asking in bewilderment, "Auntie, how do you know he's a martial artist?"

"Look at his wounds; they're caused by arrows. Few people use bows and arrows in martial arts, and the most famous is the Archer God Zhang Zhongfeng. This old man's skills should not be weak; if I'm not wrong, these arrow wounds were likely caused by Zhang Zhongfeng."

"Auntie, why does it matter? He's in critical condition. If we don't treat him, he won't survive."

The woman glanced at the man and spoke calmly, "Rescuing someone is one thing, but we also need to see if he's worth saving. Our Shi Family has always dealt with martial artists, and if we save him recklessly without knowing his identity, it might bring us trouble."

"What should we do then? He's already unconscious. Do we just watch him die? If I had known this, I wouldn't have brought him in." The man sounded somewhat helpless.

The woman contemplated for a moment and said, "Alright, go find some ropes and tie him up before treating him, to prevent him from causing us trouble when he wakes up."

Hearing this, the man responded immediately, quickly leaving the room. Soon, he returned with several ropes and tied up Su He's hands and feet.

Chapter 1334 - 1642: The New Name Sanshui

After the man and **** rescued him for more than an hour, Su He's wounds were all covered with ointment. "Aunt, it's done. His pulse has stabilized. Let's let him rest for a while, and we can check on him again tomorrow morning," the man said.

"Alright." **** nodded and turned to leave the room.

The next morning, Su He groggily opened his eyes and surveyed his surroundings, immediately becoming alert. He tried to sit up, but quickly discovered that his hands and feet were tied with ropes, making him unable to move.

Despite being seriously injured, with his skill as a master on the Heavenly List, breaking free from these ropes was no difficult task. After hesitating for a moment, Su He lay back down.

Soon after, the door to the room was pushed open, and a man walked in from outside. Seeing Su He awake, the man hurried to the bedside and asked, "How do you feel?"

Su He looked at the man and said, "Did you save me?"

The man nodded, "You fainted in the box behind my house. I saw you when I went out to dump the garbage, so I brought you inside."

"Are you a doctor?"

"Yes, our Shi Family has been practicing medicine for generations, so you can rest assured," the man said with a smile. After a pause, the man glanced at the ropes on Su He's hands and feet and said apologetically, "Sorry, my aunt said we didn't know your identity, so for safety's sake, we tied you up."

Su He said meaningfully, "So you are from the Shi Family."

Hearing this, the man excitedly said, "You've heard of our Shi Family?"

Su He nodded and said, "No one in the Martial Arts world does not know the Shi Family. Many people's lives have been saved because of the Shi Family's miraculous hands. Thank you for saving me."

"You're welcome. By the way, I still don't know your name."

"My surname is Su, Su Sanshui."

"Su Sanshui?" The man smiled slightly and said, "That's an interesting name. Let me introduce myself, I am Shi Tian."

As soon as he finished speaking, someone walked in from outside. Seeing this person, Shi Tian smiled and introduced, "Elder Su, this is my aunt, Shi Su."

"Thank you, Miss Shi, for saving my life."

Shi Su looked calm and asked, "Elder Su, I'm curious, who injured you so severely?"

"The Arrow God, Zhang Zhongfeng." Su He quickly stated Zhang Zhongfeng's name. Since he knew that they were from the Shi Family, there was nothing to hide. With the Shi Family's medical skills, they would have already seen it from the wounds. So, instead of lying and arousing suspicion, it was better to be straightforward.

"Just as I suspected!" Shi Su nodded and said, "I guessed it, it was indeed him. Elder Su, if you don't mind, would you be willing to tell me why Zhang Zhongfeng attacked you?"

"I have personal grievances with the Eight Oddities, and it just so happened they ran into me in Beijing this time, so a conflict broke out. Besides me, everyone else was killed."

"Humph!" Shi Su gritted her teeth and said with resentment, "As long as Ling Chen is involved, nothing good ever happens."

Hearing this, Su He looked at Shi Su with an intrigued expression and asked, "Do you have a grudge with Ling Chen?"

"That's all in the past. I don't want to talk about it anymore. Elder Su, please rest well. I'll have Shi Tian take care of you," said Shi Su before turning and leaving the room.

"Young brother, could you help untie the ropes?"

"No problem." Shi Tian hurried to untie the ropes, restoring Su He's mobility.

After Shi Tian left, Su He lay alone on the bed, his smile gradually receding, revealing a hint of coldness in his eyes. Remembering the events of last night, Su He couldn't help but clench his fists, his body trembling slightly. After living so many years, he had never suffered such humiliation.

In the blink of an eye, three days had passed.

Under Shi Tian's careful care, Su He's injuries healed quickly, and he was basically able to walk around.

That day, having just finished lunch, Su He lay on the bed, intending to have a good rest. But suddenly, he heard a conversation between Shi Tian and Shi Su outside the room.

"Aunt, are we really going back?"

"Yes! A message came from home, saying that your uncle is at the most critical point. After so many failures, this time he has the best chance to break through the bottleneck and enter the Heavenly List realm. Our Shi Family has never had a master on the Heavenly List in all these years. If your uncle succeeds this time, our Shi Family will have a master on the Heavenly List. Do you know what it means to have a master on the Heavenly List? From now on, our Shi Family won't have to bow to anyone. Everyone will have to treat us with utmost respect."

"Yes, Aunt, I understand. I'll go prepare now."

"Go ahead, I've already booked the plane tickets. By the way, inform Elder Su that while we're away, he'll have to take care of himself."

"Okay." As soon as he finished speaking, the door to the room was pushed open from the outside. Hearing the footsteps, Su He slowly opened his eyes, looked at the approaching Shi Tian, and asked, "Young brother, do you have something to discuss with me?"

"Elder Su, our family has some important matters and will likely be away for a while. Will you be able to take care of yourself?"

"You're going back to the Shi Family?" Su He appeared very surprised. After a moment of silence, Su He continued, "I have an unreasonable request, and I'm not sure if you would be willing."

"Elder Su, please go ahead."

"Could you take me with you to the Shi Family?" Su He pleaded, "I have nowhere else to go now. My brothers were all killed by Ling Chen and the others. Considering how the Eight Oddities behave, they surely won't let me go. The Shi Family saved me, and from now on, I want to stay with the Shi Family and serve you." Hearing this, Shi Tian hesitated, looking troubled, and said, "Elder Su, I'm afraid I can't make that decision."

Su He quickly said, "Don't worry, I won't be a burden. Despite my age, I still have some abilities. At least, I don't regard martial artists below the Earthly List level as a threat."

"Elder Su, you are an Earthly List master?" Shi Tian seemed a bit surprised.

Su He nodded and said, "After so many years, I've only barely entered the Earthly List level. Young brother, if you don't mind..."

"Shi Tian, take him along." Before Su He could finish his sentence, Shi Su appeared at the doorway, "Elder Su, since you wish to stay with our Shi Family, I agree. However, our Shi Family has many rules, and I hope you can abide by them."

Su He smiled slightly and said, "Rest assured, Miss Shi, I definitely won't let you down."

He actually knew that Shi Su was eavesdropping outside the door, so his words were meant for her. Because he knew that only Shi Su could make the decision. An Earthly List master, he believed Shi Su would be interested.

Chapter 1335 - 1643: The Shi Family's Ambition

"Ling Cheng, the entire Beijing has been searched, but there's no trace of Su He, and we haven't found his body either. It seems he's not only escaped but also survived." Yuan Yun reported the latest news.

"Third Brother, let's recall all our men, there's no need to search anymore. Although we didn't capture Su He, at least we took down Qin Chuan. Now, Su He is all alone, without the backing of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, he shouldn't be able to stir up much trouble." Ling Chen said.

Next to him, Xia Yue asked, "What are you planning to do with Qin Chuan's body?"

Ling Chen pondered for a while and said, "Qin Chuan was part of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, we might as well return his body to them."

Upon hearing this, Qiu Yong and the others were taken aback, "Ling Cheng, you want to send it to the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion? Isn't that inappropriate? If you do that, it will be as good as telling them you were the one who killed Qin Chuan. The relationship between our Dragon Tiger Hall and the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion is already very tense, doing so might make them hate us even more."

Ling Chen nodded and said, "Big Brother, I'm aware of all this."

"Then why are you doing it?"

"I want to give everyone a warning and simultaneously establish the authority of the Dragon Tiger Hall. I want everyone in the Martial Arts world to know that those who oppose Dragon Tiger Hall will not have a good end, regardless if they are from the Earthly List or the Heavenly List, our Dragon Tiger Hall will not spare them."

Ling Chen was very determined about this matter. He knew that doing so would make Su Mei resentful, but he had no other choice. This was a perfect opportunity for the Dragon Tiger Hall to surpass the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion and become the new overlord of the Martial Arts world. At the same time, he also wanted to remind the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion not to take any more extreme actions, otherwise, the Dragon Tiger Hall would show no mercy.

Even though he was friends with Su Mei, when it came to the two major Martial Arts forces of the Dragon Tiger Hall and the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, he had to be ruthless at times.

Three days later.

Qin Chuan's body was transported to the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion.

Seeing the body laid out in the main hall, Su Mei's eyes turned red. Although Qin Chuan had colluded with Su He and done many bad things secretly, over the years, he had also been secretly protecting her safety. She had known Qin Chuan since she could remember, and in her heart, his status was no less than Su He's.

Now, seeing Qin Chuan's body lying there, she could not feel good.

Soon, Du Kang, who received the news, also rushed over. Seeing Qin Chuan's body, Du Kang's expression changed slightly, and he asked, "Pavilion Master, who sent this body?"

"People from the Dragon Tiger Hall." Su Mei bit her lip and said, "They said Elder Qin and my grandfather were ambushed, trying to assault Ling Chen, and ended up falling into his trap."

"What about your grandfather?"

"I don't know. I asked them, but they didn't say a word. I guess either he escaped or was captured by them."

Du Kang thought about it and said, "With your grandfather's strength, he shouldn't be easily captured." Having said that, Du Kang sighed lightly, "Your grandfather is too stubborn. The matter has already concluded, why must he provoke Ling Chen further."

"Grandfather wanted the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion to rise again." Su Mei said sadly, "Everything he did was for the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, but his methods were too radical. As of today, the decline of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion is all his doing."

"Recently, there have been many rumors in the Martial Arts world that the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion has lost its power, and the current overlord is no longer the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, but the Dragon Tiger Hall."

"That is inevitable." Su Mei replied, "We should actually feel fortunate. Had I not made an agreement with Ling Chen, the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion would have faced the wrath of everyone in the Martial Arts world. At that time, not to mention lingering on, the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion might not even exist. Regardless of other things, it's thanks to Ling Chen that the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion can still survive."

"However, now that he has sent Qin Chuan's body, do you know what this means?"

Su Mei nodded gently and said, "I know. Indeed, it makes me uncomfortable. But what does that matter? Compared to other things, this is trivial."

"Pavilion Master, what are you planning to do next? The Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion has been established for hundreds of years and has never faced such a predicament."

Upon hearing this, Su Mei sighed, "Elder Du, to be honest, I don't know what to do either. The Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion has always held a transcendent status in the Martial Arts world, and no one dared to openly oppose it. Because of this, the people of the Pavilion have long lost their fighting spirit. They believe they are number one in the world, and no one dares to challenge them. Over time, they have all lost their passion for competition. Elder Du, I have thought a lot during this time. The biggest threat to us is not the Dragon Tiger Hall, but ourselves, our centuries of complacency at the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. They have gotten used to a superior life and simply do not wish to fight."

After listening to Su Mei, Du Kang nodded and said, "Pavilion Master, you are correct; this is indeed the downside of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion."

"If we do not find a solution to this problem, we do not need any external forces to suppress us; the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion will inevitably head towards destruction. Elder Du, you are well-versed and knowledgeable; what strategy do you have for this matter?"

Du Kang pondered for a moment and said, "There is a way: to ignite their spirit of competition. The Dragon Tiger Hall presents a suitable target. We could use them as an imaginary enemy. However, the critical issue is that we must achieve a victory to give the people of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion hope, to show them that although the Pavilion is currently weak, it still possesses strength and does not fear any enemy. Once they regain confidence, everything else will be much easier."

"Victory..." Su Mei murmured, "But, Elder Du, with grandfather gone and Elder Qin dead, our strength in the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion has greatly decreased. How can we compete with the Dragon Tiger Hall to achieve victory?"

Du Kang pointed to his head and said, "If force is not an option, then outwit them. Pavilion Master, to be honest, I have long been aware of the existence of the Skyhawk Pavilion and the things they do. However, I have always remained silent and never mentioned anything. Why? Because a powerful force must have both dark and light sides. Many challenges cannot be resolved through normal means, so

someone must engage in the shadowy deeds. The strategy I'm referring to will involve some extraordinary measures. It is said that those who achieve great things do not bother with small details. Pavilion Master, I feel the first change must be with your perspective."

Chapter 1336 - 1644: Su He's Purpose

"My thoughts?" Su Mei appeared somewhat confused.

Du Kang nodded and said, "Pavilion Master, you're too upright in your actions. This is both your strength and your weakness. If it were a peaceful time, your character would suit being a Pavilion Master, but given the current circumstances of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, your personality isn't suited for confrontation. Therefore, only by changing yourself can the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion be reborn."

Su Mei pondered for a while and asked, "Elder Du, according to you, what should I do?"

"First, you must learn to be ruthless. Not only ruthless to yourself, but also to others. Looking through history, which emperor wasn't a person with ruthless means? Pavilion Master, the future path is perilous; without enough resilience and determination, you might find it difficult to lead us to victory."

Su Mei lowered her head, glanced at Qin Chuan's corpse, and couldn't help but clench her fists.

"Pavilion Master, there's one more thing I must remind you of. Never regard Ling Chen as your friend. He is now with Dragon Tiger Hall, and you are the Pavilion Master of Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. Even if you never face each other with weapons, you are competitors. Between you and him, there can only be victory or defeat, no personal emotions involved."

"This..." Su Mei hesitated for a moment before gently nodding, "Elder Du, I understand your meaning. It's just that I'm not sure I can do it."

"You must." Du Kang said sternly, "In the past, your grandfather was there to support you, and no one dared to defy you. But now things are different, Su He has left Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, and you can no longer count on him for help. Now, you're the only one left in the Su Family, and you must strengthen your authority to maintain your position."

Upon hearing this, Su Mei's expression changed slightly. It was her greatest concern; if someone refused to accept her leadership and deliberately opposed her, her position in Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion would be precarious. In this world, there's never a shortage of ambitious people.

"Elder Du, will you always support me from the background?"

"Rest assured, I'm with Yangxin Pavilion, and Yangxin Pavilion will be your strongest support. So, no matter what you want to do, just proceed boldly without worrying too much."

Su Mei breathed a slight sigh of relief; currently, she could only rely on Du Kang. In the past, Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion had several Heavenly List masters, and it was precisely because of these masters that outsiders dared not easily offend Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. Now, these masters are either dead or have fled; only Du Kang remains within Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion.

"Elder Du, do me a favor and give Elder Qin a proper burial."

"No problem," Du Kang replied and immediately called people to carry out Qin Chuan's body.

...

Shi Family.

Su He had arrived at the Shi Family two days ago and had been resting in his room. Recently, the Shi Family had become very lively, with everyone returning from outside.

Because the Family Head, Shi Hongyu, is very likely to break through a bottleneck and enter the Heavenly List realm.

Although there are many martial artists in Martial Arts circles, very few truly become Heavenly List masters. Therefore, Shi Hongyu's success is an exciting event for the Shi Family.

The emergence of a Heavenly List master would elevate the Shi Family. Previously, the Shi Family was just a regular family of medicine practitioners with little power in Martial Arts circles. However, with a Heavenly List master in the Shi Family, things would be very different. No one would dare to ignore the Shi Family from now on.

Su He sat up from the bed and slowly walked down, pushing the door open by himself.

Soon, Su He arrived outside the Shi Family's hall. At this moment, the hall was filled with people, lively and bustling, as they all looked forward to the future and strategized.

At this moment, a young man excitedly ran in from outside, incoherently saying, "It's... it's done, successful!"

"What's successful?" Someone impatiently asked, "Speak clearly."

The young man gasped for breath, his face red as he said, "It's the Family Head; he's... he's succeeded."

"Really?" Upon hearing this, the hall burst into excited cheers.

"Wonderful." An elder of the Shi Family slapped his thigh excitedly, saying, "The heavens have eyes, our Shi Family finally has its day of rise."

"Third Master, from now on, let's see who dares to underestimate our Shi Family."

"Exactly! The Family Head is now a Heavenly List master. Given time, he might command the entire Martial Arts world as the new overlord. As for the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion... hmph! Sooner or later, they'll be under the Shi Family's heel."

"Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion?" Someone joined in, sneering disdainfully, "The current Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion is no longer the Martial Arts overlord. Since the old fool Elder Su betrayed the entire Martial Arts world, the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion has become a rat that everyone wants to beat. Some members of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, fearing association, have chosen to leave. Furthermore, the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion now only has one Heavenly List master stationed, not

much different from our Shi Family. Given enough time, the Shi Family will certainly replace the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion."

"That's right, hahaha!"

Listening to the loud laughter coming from the hall, Su He, standing outside eavesdropping, coldly smiled. Truly a group of overestimating fools, daring to dream of replacing the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion.

"Hey! Aunt, I heard from Shi Tian that you brought back an old man this time. What is that old man here for?"

"He is called Su Sanshui, an Earthly List master. Our Shi Family lacks masters at the moment, so it's certainly good that he's willing to serve us."

"Aunt, is there nothing wrong with him? Have you checked his background?"

"Yes, Aunt, I haven't heard of the name Su Sanshui in Martial Arts circles."

"The Martial Arts world is vast; you can't know everyone. Moreover, if Shi Tian and I teamed up, that Su Sanshui would already be dead. Martial artists value friendships greatly; I saved his life, so he certainly won't harm us." After a pause, Shi Su continued, "However, your concerns aren't entirely unfounded. Let's have someone secretly watch him."

Upon hearing this, Su He didn't dare to stay longer, quickly returning to his room. After days of rest, his injuries had healed halfway. If he wanted, he could easily slaughter everyone in the Shi Family. However, he had a very important purpose for coming to the Shi Family this time. Before that purpose was achieved, he didn't want any issues to arise.

Shi Hongyu... Lying on the bed, Su He stared at the ceiling, talking to himself. This Shi Hongyu had just broken into the Heavenly List realm, requiring at least a month to solidify his foundation. It seemed he would have to stay in the Shi Family for another month.

As he pondered, he heard a slight movement outside the room. Su He turned his head, sneering to himself. Shi Su's actions were swift; they've already sent someone to watch him.

Chapter 1337 - 1645: Sparring in Martial Arts

A little over a week has passed in the blink of an eye.

Just two days ago, Ling Chen flew back to East Sea City. Currently, the situation in Beijing has stabilized, and he no longer needs to stay there. Moreover, Nanrong Wanqing had returned to East Sea City a week earlier.

Having stayed in Beijing for a while, it was time to come back and have a look.

Now, Dragon Tiger Hall is on track, overpowering the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion to become the new overlord in the Martial Arts world. Besides, Falcon Private Security Company and other businesses are doing very well. In terms of business, Ling Chen is an outsider, so while in Beijing, he specifically hired several professional managers to help run the company and the newly opened investment company.

Returning to his role as a hands-off manager, Ling Chen enjoyed a leisurely life, spending time at home with his mom, as well as his grandparents. When he felt restless, he would drive to the base or Dragon Tiger Hall for a stroll, chat with his pals, and boast a bit.

Of course, apart from a laid-back lifestyle, Ling Chen didn't forget to take care of some serious matters. As the saying goes, prepare for danger in times of peace. Although there is no sense of threat recently, who knows what might happen in the future?

The day they captured Qin Chuan and Su He, Ling Chen witnessed Zhang Zhongfeng's archery skills. With just Zhang Zhongfeng's bow and arrow, they severely injured Su He. If there had been a few more bows, they might have had a chance to keep Su He there.

Therefore, after returning to East Sea City this time, Ling Chen discussed with Zhang Zhongfeng and decided to set up a team specializing in archery training at Dragon Tiger Hall, with Zhang Zhongfeng personally serving as the instructor.

It must be said, the title of "Arrow God" is very attractive. As soon as the news spread, dozens of people flocked to apply. Finally, after Zhang Zhongfeng personally screened them, thirty people were selected.

Ling Chen didn't require these people to become Arrow Gods like Zhang Zhongfeng; it would be enough if they had one-third of Zhang Zhongfeng's skills. At that point, these people would become a major force of Dragon Tiger Hall.

"Again!"

In the martial arts training ground of Dragon Tiger Hall, Ling Chen was sparring with Xu Ming. The two of them were going back and forth, each using ninety percent of their strength. Facing Xu Ming, Ling Chen didn't dare to be careless. After knowing each other for so long, Ling Chen had a deep understanding of Xu Ming's strength. Among the crowd, apart from Tong Zhentian, Chen Junfeng, and Ji Gang, the strongest was Xu Ming.

Tong Zhentian and the other two are all Heavenly List experts, so their strength needs no explanation. As for Xu Ming, he is likely the one closest to the Heavenly List level, needing just an opportunity to break through and become a Heavenly List expert.

Under Ling Chen's storm-like attacks, Xu Ming stood like a sturdy pine, effortlessly resolving all attacks with ease.

After more than a dozen moves, Ling Chen raised an eyebrow, suddenly withdrew, shook his head, and said, "Second Brother, you're defending too resolutely, not giving me any chance."

Xu Ming smiled faintly, "You can only blame your strength for being too weak. Don't you still have some trump cards? Why not use them all and see if you can break my defense?"

Hearing this, Ling Chen nodded and said, "Alright, then don't blame me for hitting too hard." With that, Ling Chen's foot slipped, and his body instantaneously transformed into an afterimage, disappearing from his original spot.

"Heaven and Earth Reversal!"

In an instant, Ling Chen's figure multiplied into three, moving around Xu Ming, indistinguishable and confusing.

Watching the rapidly moving afterimage in front of him, Xu Ming squinted slightly, refraining from rash actions. Instead, he focused carefully, trying to identify Ling Chen's exact position.

"Big Brother, do you think Second Brother can see through it?" Yuan Yun and others stood by, discussing with a smile.

"It's hard to say. Heaven and Earth Reversal is the ultimate skill of the Nine Yang Qiankun Step. It's confusingly real and fake. Your Second Brother is strong, but he's not a Heavenly List expert, so it might be hard to spot any flaw."

After a pause, Qiu Yong continued, "Didn't any of you notice? Sixth Brother has improved again. Previously, when he sparred with Second Brother, he could only last thirty rounds at most, but now he's sustaining over seventy rounds, and still has energy to continue."

Hearing this, Xia Yue exclaimed, "Big Brother, judging by what you said, Sixth Brother's improvement is quite significant."

"Indeed." Qiu Yong nodded, "His improvement is truly rapid. At his current rate, it's not impossible for him to enter the Heavenly List in time."

Bang!

Amidst the conversation, a loud sound echoed from the training ground. They saw two figures rapidly retreating. Looking closely, they found Xu Ming and Ling Chen each stepping back over ten steps.

Seeing this, Yuan Yun couldn't help being shocked, opening his mouth wide, "Second Brother actually broke through Sixth Brother's Heaven and Earth Reversal."

Qiu Yong chuckled, "It seems your Second Brother has touched the threshold of the Heavenly List realm. Soon, our group of eight oddities might give birth to a Heavenly List expert."

With that, Qiu Yong stepped forward and said, "Alright, let's end the sparring here. Sixth Brother, you've improved a lot, but you still need to work hard."

Ling Chen rubbed his nose, looking at Xu Ming opposite him, "Second Brother, how about we go again?"

Hearing this, Xu Ming gave Ling Chen an unexpected look, "Sixth Brother, besides Heaven and Earth Reversal, do you have other tricks up your sleeve?"

Ling Chen smiled mysteriously, "Well... it's a secret for now. So, are you in or not?"

Xu Ming hesitated for a moment; then Yuan Yun shouted loudly from outside the training ground, "Second Brother, since this kid is asking for a beating, don't be polite, and teach him a good lesson."

Seeing the smile on Ling Chen's face, Xu Ming thought for a moment, and gently nodded, "Alright, since you want to continue, I'll see it through to the end. Come on! Show me what hidden cards you have."

"Then you better watch closely, and don't blame me if you get hurt later," Ling Chen slightly raised the corner of his mouth, inclined his body a little, ready to charge forward.

As everyone's eyes focused on Ling Chen, suddenly, his legs accelerated, skimming across the ground like a dragonfly touching water, rushing towards Xu Ming like an arrow leaving a bowstring.

Seeing Ling Chen approaching him, Xu Ming squinted his eyes slightly, observing Ling Chen's every movement.

At that moment, when Ling Chen almost reached Xu Ming, he suddenly stopped, swung his fists, lowered his waist, took a deep breath, and assumed a strange posture.

Seeing Ling Chen's odd actions, Qiu Yong and others couldn't help being surprised. They've known each other for so long, but never seen such a weird move before. Additionally, the move looked kind of... comical!

Chapter 1338 - 1646: Formidable Trump Card

Ah!

Accompanied by a soft shout, the spectators suddenly changed expressions, their pupils shrank, and they looked at Ling Chen with astonishment. For some reason, a layer of visible Qi Force appeared around Ling Chen.

Although that layer of Qi Force was very faint, it felt extremely oppressive.

While everyone was shocked, there was a 'boom', and the floor under Ling Chen's feet instantly shattered.

At the same time, that layer of Qi Force suddenly dispersed, forming a strong wave of Qi that instantly knocked Ling Chen and Xu Ming both flying, slamming heavily to the ground.

Seeing this scene, everyone hurriedly ran over and helped Xu Ming and Ling Chen from the ground.

"Second Brother, Sixth Brother, are you all right?" Qiu Yong asked concernedly.

Ling Chen coughed lightly, spat out a mouthful of blood-stained saliva, looked pale, and said with a wry smile, "Second Brother, sorry, I accidentally hurt you."

"It's nothing, just a slight injury." Xu Ming stood up and curiously asked, "Sixth Brother, how did you do it?"

Upon hearing this, everyone's gaze focused on Ling Chen. Not only Xu Ming, everyone was amazed, not knowing how Ling Chen did it, to be able to condense Qi Force to that degree, truly terrifying. Even a Heavenly List expert may not necessarily achieve it.

"I grasped a special cultivating technique that allows me to transform Inner Strength into a projected Qi Force. The longer it is condensed, the stronger the Qi Force, and the more terrifying the power formed. However, as you saw just now, with my current strength, I still can't control that Qi Force. If not careful, it could endanger even myself." Ling Chen said with a helpless smile, "To be honest, it was my first time using this move in actual combat, so I don't have much experience."

"Qi Force projection, Sixth Brother, it's already quite impressive that you could do that. Do you know how frightening the power of that move was?" Xu Ming said, "Luckily you couldn't control it; otherwise, I wouldn't be able to withstand the attack of that Qi Force. I could sense that the strength of that Qi Force was equivalent to the attack of a Heavenly List expert."

"That powerful?" Ling Chen was stunned. He knew this move was formidable but didn't expect it to be this strong. This move was actually taught to him by his grandfather. Initially, he saw his grandfather practicing an extremely peculiar set of fist techniques during morning exercise. After inquiry, he found out that the fist technique was taught by an old Taoist. However, his grandfather never practiced martial arts, and although the old Taoist instructed him in Breathing Skills, he couldn't grasp it.

Thus, when Ling Chen learned about it, he had unexpected gains by combining the fist techniques with Breathing Skills.

Although he had mastered this move long ago, he had never used it because his strength limited him from controlling its execution. The reason he demonstrated it in front of Xu Ming today was mainly due to his recent advancement in strength, prompting him to try it out to see if he could control it well. Unfortunately, the result was still unsatisfactory.

"Sixth Brother, although this move is very strong, you're too forced to use it at present. Moreover, once Qi Force projection is not controlled well, it is highly likely to backlash and endanger your life. So, unless you have absolute confidence, never use this move again. Do you hear me?" Xu Ming earnestly admonished.

Ling Chen nodded, "Second Brother, don't worry, I'll try to avoid using it in the future."

"Alright, go rest quickly." Qiu Yong patted Ling Chen's shoulder and said.

Back in his room, Ling Chen felt extremely weak, as if all his energy was drained, unable to even move his fingers. After lying on the bed for a while, Ling Chen fell into a deep sleep.

The next day.

After resting for a whole day, Ling Chen, feeling invigorated, drove alone to the Nanrong Family.

Having not returned to East Sea City for a long time, Nanrong Wanqing came back home this time, conveniently checking on Nanrong Yong. Nanrong Yong's health was poor; he almost passed away last time, but fortunately, Ling Chen managed to obtain some new medicines from Ling Tao, barely prolonging Nanrong Yong's life.

Arriving at the Nanrong Family and preparing to enter, Ling Chen saw Nanrong Hao coming out from the house.

"Chen!" Seeing Ling Chen, Nanrong Hao seemed very excited and hurried over.

"Chen, how come you're free to come today?"

"I'm here to see your grandfather. How is your grandfather's health?"

"Grandfather's very sturdy, recently he goes out for a walk every morning."

"What about your sister?"

"Sister?" Nanrong Hao smiled meaningfully, "Chen, I think you're not here for the wine, claiming to see my grandfather, but actually wanting to see my sister, right."

"Go away." Ling Chen flicked Nanrong Hao's forehead in annoyance and asked, "Is your sister home?"

Nanrong Hao shrugged, "Chen, you're a day late, my sister's not home."

"Did she go to the company?"

Nanrong Hao shook his head, "No, she went abroad."

Ling Chen asked confusedly, "Wasn't she just back from Beijing? Did she go to Beijing again?"

"Sister didn't go to Beijing, she went to a... what's that place called?" Nanrong Hao thought for a moment and said, "Seems like it's called North County, a small county in the western part of Huaxia."

Ling Chen puzzledly asked, "Why did your sister travel thousands of miles to a county?"

"I don't know, it seems related to cousin. When I returned that day, sister had already left, we only spoke briefly on the phone. She told me cousin needs help, the rest she didn't understand much."

Su Lin encountered trouble? Ling Chen frowned slightly. Wasn't Su Lin interning in a foreign place? What trouble could arise from internship? Thinking of this, Ling Chen took out his phone, intending to call Nanrong Wanqing.

Before dialing, he heard his phone ringing, displaying Nanrong Wanqing's incoming call. Ling Chen answered and said hello, Nanrong Wanqing's slightly anxious voice came, "Ling Chen, where are you now?"

"I'm at your doorstep, about to see the old man."

"Do you have time? I'm facing some trouble here and need your help."

"What's the matter?"

"It's hard to explain in a short time. If you have time, could you come to North County? Lin and I are over here."

"Alright, wait for me there, I'll try my best to come over today." Ling Chen replied, hung up the phone, and looked at Nanrong Hao, "Your cousin seems to be in big trouble."

"Chen, do you want me to accompany you?"

"No need, your sister's not here, Hongyu Group needs someone to oversee. Besides, with me taking action, don't you feel assured?"

Nanrong Hao nodded, "Okay then. Chen, take care and make sure nothing happens to sister and cousin."

"Got it. Tell the old man I'll come visit him next time."

Chapter 1339 - 1647: North County

After parting with Nanrong Hao, Ling Chen drove home, packed some simple clothes, and then headed to the airport. Hearing Nanrong Wanqing's tone on the phone, Ling Chen realized the matter must be complicated. Otherwise, with Nanrong Wanqing's calm personality, she couldn't possibly be so anxious.

Traveling from East Sea City to North County covers thousands of kilometers, one on the easternmost side of Huaxia, the other on the western side, the distance is very far.

After taking a flight for more than four hours, Ling Chen transferred to a car and spent over five hours on the road before finally arriving at the destination, North County.

North County is a small county town in the west, not very economically developed, with only one hotel in the entire town. Due to its remote location, there are rarely any outsiders here.

Upon arriving at North County, Ling Chen took out his phone and called Nanrong Wanqing. After more than ten minutes, an old model Mercedes slowly drove up and stopped beside Ling Chen.

The car door opened, and Liang Zhao Hui got out from the driver's seat, waving his hand at Ling Chen, "Ling, get in the car!"

"Liang," Ling Chen greeted with a smile and got into the passenger seat.

"Liang, where did you get this car?" Ling Chen examined this at least ten-year-old Mercedes, asking.

"Oh! Don't mention it, we searched the whole town and only managed to rent a somewhat decent car."

Ling Chen nodded, then shifted the topic to business, "Is the situation serious this time?"

"Ling, honestly, we don't know what's happening right now. But judging by the chairman's demeanor, the situation should be tricky."

"You mean you really have no idea what's going on?"

"Those guys are so arrogant they don't take us seriously at all. No matter what we ask, they don't say a word."

"Them?" Ling Chen asked, "Who are 'them' you're talking about?"

"Isn't it that group of archaeologists? Honestly, if it wasn't for the chairman stopping me, I'd have taught them a lesson already."

As they spoke, the Mercedes drove out of North County into a pitch-black wilderness. After about ten minutes of driving, the Mercedes finally stopped. Ling Chen opened the car door and looked far, seeing a dozen tents pitched about tens of meters away, the area brightly lit.

"Ling, let's go, the chairman and the others are there."

Ling Chen responded, quickly following Liang Zhao Hui's steps. Soon, the two arrived at the location of the tents. At this time, Nanrong Wanqing was already waiting outside. Besides Nanrong Wanqing, Zhong Wei and several security personnel from Falcon Private Security Company were present.

"Chairman."

"Chairman." Everyone greeted.

Ling Chen responded to each, quickly stepping forward to Nanrong Wanqing, asking, "What's going on? Where's Su Lin?"

"Lin is currently missing; I wanted to find her, but those people stop us from going, and I have no way."

"Missing?" Ling Chen was taken aback, speaking in a deep voice, "Who stopped you? Take me there."

"Follow me." Without delay, Nanrong Wanqing led Ling Chen and a group of security personnel to a tent not far away. Before entering, several youths standing outside the tent reached out to block them.

"Miss Nanrong, we've already said we'll find a way to handle it, hope you don't interfere with our work," one youth said patiently.

"By the time you come up with a solution, it'll be too late. Move aside! I want to see your professor."

"Sorry." The youth shook his head, "The professor instructed that no outsiders are allowed to disturb him."

"Where's the need for so much nonsense?" Ling Chen raised an eyebrow, directly squeezing past the youths outside the tent and striding in. Seeing this, the others quickly followed.

Inside the tent, Ling Chen glanced around, seeing an old man with graying hair seated inside, along with three or four middle-aged men in their forties and fifties. These people were surrounded at a table, seemingly researching something.

Seeing Ling Chen rush in from outside, the gray-haired old man immediately stood up, pointing at Ling Chen and angrily shouting, "What are you doing? Don't you know this is a research area, no outsiders allowed."

Ling Chen strode forward, kicked the table to the ground, and glared at the old man, "Old man, spare me the useless talk, I just want to ask you one thing, where's Su Lin? I want to see her right away."

The old man spoke, "I've told you, we'll bring Xiao Su to you, but first, you mustn't interfere with our work."

"Professor Hao, I chose to believe you before, the result is it's been two days, and there's still not a trace of Lin. As her family, you should at least tell me what's happened to her," Nanrong Wanqing interjected.

"Sorry, Miss Nanrong, this involves our archaeology department's secrets, not suitable to disclose to outsiders. Also, our archaeological operation this time is authorized by the country, if you interfere with our work, you're opposing the country. By then, I'll make sure you won't be able to walk away from this."

As he spoke, the old man pointed to the tent's entrance, angrily shouting, "Now, all of you get out, don't let me see you again."

"Hmph!" Ling Chen sneered, "Using the national authority to oppress us? Old man, let me tell you, I'm not scared so easily." After speaking, Ling Chen turned to Nanrong Wanqing, asking, "What's this old man called?"

"Hao Dongnan, he's a professor of archaeology at East Sea University."

"Hao Dongnan." Ling Chen nodded, pulled out his phone, and dialed a number.

"Hello! Old Tang, can you check for me if there's a professor named Hao Dongnan in archaeology, yes, that's right, Hao Dongnan... What? Okay, I see." After hanging up, Ling Chen glanced at Hao Dongnan, smiling faintly and said, "I wondered what big shot you were, daring to impersonate national archaeological personnel."

Hearing this, Hao Dongnan's face couldn't help but show panic, "You... what are you saying?"

"Professor Hao, do you know how serious a crime impersonating on behalf of the state is? Once verified, you'll spend the rest of your life in prison."

"No, it's not." Hao Dongnan hurriedly waved his hand, "I didn't, you're talking nonsense."

"I had my friend check your profile, you're just a professor of archaeology at East Sea University, the National Archaeological Team hasn't approved your employment application. Professor Hao, you'd better think carefully, do you wish to tell me Lin's whereabouts, or spend your life in prison."

"I..." Hao Dongnan opened his mouth, momentarily dumbfounded, unsure of what to say.

"What, haven't thought it through yet? Fine!" Ling Chen picked up his phone, saying, "Then I'll call the police."

Seeing Ling Chen's actions, Hao Dongnan hurriedly stopped him, "Don't, I'll... I'll talk, I'll say everything."

Chapter 1340 - 1648: Tomb Rescue (1)

"Two months ago, our school's archaeological team discovered some ancient records. Based on those records, combined with our field investigations, we found that there is a huge ancient tomb hidden in the outskirts of North County."

Hao Dongnan slowly said, "At that time, a few professors and I brought a group of interns over here and found that the Feng Shui of this place is quite extraordinary. According to ancient funeral practices, only a prince or a king would be worthy of such Feng Shui. However, we scoured the ancient books and couldn't figure out which king might be buried here."

"After discussions, we decided to carry out a protective excavation of this ancient tomb. Given the tomb's age and size, it should provide us with a wealth of archaeological research material. However, the excavation work was much more arduous than we had imagined. It took us over a month just to clear the tomb's entrance."

"Why didn't you get more help?" Ling Chen asked. "For large archaeological projects like this, you would need a team of dozens or even hundreds. How can you manage with just a dozen people?"

Upon hearing this, Hao Dongnan and several other professors appeared hesitant, looking as if they wanted to speak but couldn't.

Noticing their change in expression, Ling Chen said, "What? At this point, is there still something you can't disclose?"

Hao Dongnan hesitated for a moment before saying, "We didn't dare to gather too many people. The more people, the more likely it is for information to leak. If word about this tomb got out, all our hard work over these months would go down the drain. Mr. Ling, usually, government permission is needed to conduct a protective excavation of such a tomb. But we didn't dare report it to the state. Otherwise, once the state knows, they will send the National Archaeological Team to take over the tomb. At that point, all our efforts would become worthless. This is a tomb that we discovered, and I hope to personally oversee the excavation."

So that's how it is! Ling Chen suddenly understood. No wonder Hao Dongnan was not seeking help; he was afraid his discovery might be taken away by someone else.

"Professor Hao, what about Su Lin? Where is she now?"

"She's in the tomb," Hao Dongnan explained. "A few days ago, we started preliminary excavation work on the tomb. However, the work didn't go smoothly; the tomb door is incredibly heavy and we couldn't move it with our equipment alone. Later, after careful examination, we found a robbery hole on the other end of the tomb. The robbery hole is several hundred years old, with weeds growing all around. Luckily, Miss Su was attentive and we discovered the hole's existence."

"Due to the limited width of the robbery hole, only Miss Su could barely fit through among us. According to our plan, Miss Su was to enter the tomb through the robbery hole to see if it had been damaged by grave robbers. However, not long after Miss Su entered the hole, a collapse occurred in the middle due to its age, blocking the entire passage."

"For the past two days, we've been keeping in touch with Miss Su via cellphone, trying to rescue her as soon as possible. Just yesterday, her phone probably ran out of battery, and we lost contact with her."

Nanrong Wanqing, beside them, said, "Lin called me right before her phone died. She told me she was trapped somewhere and hoped I could quickly bring help. After the call, I tried reaching her several times, but the phone kept notifying me that it was off."

Ling Chen nodded and said, "Professor Hao, I understand you're concerned about losing credit for your discovery. However, this matter requires government authorization. Without it, despite being for archaeology, your actions are not much different from those of tomb robbers." Pausing for a moment, Ling Chen thought for a while and continued, "Professor Hao, I'll ask a friend in Beijing to get you a

government authorization. This way, everything you do will be legal, and we can also mobilize more manpower to assist."

"You...you mean it?" Hao Dongnan's eyes lit up, looking excitedly at Ling Chen.

"Don't worry, I keep my promises. However, your first priority must be to help us rescue Miss Su. Professor Hao, let me be clear, if anything happens to Miss Su, it will be the end for all of you, understood?"

Hao Dongnan quickly agreed, "No problem, even if you hadn't said it, I would do everything possible to rescue Miss Su."

By now, it was already late at night. Having run around all day, Ling Chen immediately called Qiao Zhen without taking a break. Although Qiao Zhen had already retired, he still had influence, and this matter required his help.

After making all the arrangements, Ling Chen accompanied Nanrong Wanqing to the excavation site. The ancient tomb was surrounded by tarps, and because it was too dark, many things were hard to see clearly.

Nanrong Wanqing, full of worry, asked, "Ling Chen, it's been two days now. Lin doesn't have anything to eat or drink. Do you think she could be in danger?"

Ling Chen comforted, "Don't worry. Even without food or drink, it's possible to hold on for three or four days. I've already contacted help. As long as everything goes smoothly, we can rescue Miss Su tomorrow."

With that, Ling Chen looked at the sky and said, "It's late. Go get some rest. There's still a lot to do tomorrow."

Nanrong Wanqing softly responded, and then returned to the tent with Ling Chen.

The next morning.

A dozing Ling Chen suddenly heard the roar of engines approaching the camp.

Opening his eyes, Ling Chen crawled off his folding bed and quickly stepped outside the tent. He immediately saw three military transport vehicles and two large engineering trucks slowly approaching.

Finally, they arrived!

Ling Chen breathed a sigh of relief. He had been most worried that support might not arrive in time. Now it seemed his heart could finally settle.

As the vehicles stopped, the door of the leading military transport truck opened, and a young man jumped out from the passenger seat.

Seeing who it was, Ling Chen was slightly taken aback, quickly went over, and exclaimed, "Old Tang, why are you here?"

Tang Yuan, looking helpless, said, "How could I not come? The old General was worried and specifically had me come along. I say, ever since I'm acquainted with you, I've turned into a handyman, doing all sorts of odd jobs."

Ling Chen laughed and patted Tang Yuan on the shoulder, "Brother, I appreciate it."

"Hey! I brought fifty people over from the army. Is that enough? If not, I'll have the Southwest Military District send more manpower."

"No need, just have everyone rest and eat something, then we'll get to work in half an hour."

"Alright, no problem." With that, Tang Yuan handed a document to Ling Chen, "Here, this is the authorization you wanted. The old General had to pull a lot of strings for it."