

The Beauty 1351

Chapter 1351 Lin Yiyi's Sacrifice

"Alright, alright." Ling Chen said with a look of helplessness, "Since Officer Xia has spoken, how dare I disobey." As he finished speaking, Ling Chen obediently handed the memory card over to Xia Mutong.

"Officer Xia, how about this, you make a copy of what's in here for me? How about it? That way, no one loses out."

"No way! I'll consider giving it to you after I take a look."

Ling Chen shrugged and sighed, "Fine, you're the boss, you decide. Since there's nothing for me to do here, I'll take my leave first." With that, Ling Chen shook his head and walked out with a displeased expression.

Watching Ling Chen's back as he left, Xia Mutong couldn't help but chuckle to herself. After dealing with Ling Chen so many times, she finally saw him defeated. Hmph! Trying to negotiate with me? There will be consequences. Immediately, Xia Mutong took the memory card back to her office and inserted it into her computer.

Before long, a folder popped up on the computer screen. Xia Mutong quickly opened the folder, searching for useful clues. However, when the folder opened, Xia Mutong who was sitting in front of the computer, was dumbfounded. What was this pile of stuff? Games? Videos? Music?

Where were the clues? The intelligence? She found nothing. After a moment of being stunned, Xia Mutong suddenly realized that she had been tricked by Ling Chen.

"Bastard!"

Suddenly, the entire building could hear Xia Mutong's furious shout.

At this moment, Ling Chen was sitting in his car smiling, driving towards the base. Play games with him? It's a joke, who was he? How could he possibly hand over something so important to Xia Mutong? He

had already secretly swapped the memory card when pleading with Xia Mutong, and what Xia Mutong got was the card from his own phone, which contained nothing.

Upon arriving at the base, Ling Chen went to the control room and handed the memory card to Hu Fei, "Fatty, quickly check what's inside."

Hu Fei nodded, inserted the memory card into the computer host, and soon a window popped up on the screen.

"There's a video file." As he spoke, Hu Fei clicked on the video, and the scene appeared showing a dark, narrow room. A few seconds later, Lin Yiyi appeared on the screen. It was clear that Lin Yiyi looked very haggard, as if she hadn't slept well in a long time, with dark circles under her eyes.

"Ling Chen, when you see this video, it means something has happened to me. Recently, the Ling Family has been probing for moles, and anyone suspicious, regardless of evidence, is executed. In the past few days, I feel they have started to suspect me. Although they haven't talked to me, I can sense their different treatment towards me, guarding everything from me, keeping me out of the loop. Still, I found out about their plans through other means."

After a pause, Lin Yiyi continued, "The southern Ling Family has become extremely cautious recently, with all senior members leaving Huaxia. A few days ago, the Ling Family received relocation orders, everyone had to wear hoods, no one knew where they were going. Based on my secret investigation, I should be on a cargo ship now. They don't allow me out of the room, so I can't get more information."

"Ling Chen, the war between the southern and northern Ling Family has already begun, and from the current situation, the southern Ling Family is gaining the upper hand. If you want to eliminate the southern Ling Family, this is a golden opportunity you must not miss."

With these words, the video ended.

"Fatty, open that file and take a look."

As the image opened, Ling Chen found it was a map, not only that, but the map was also marked with many red dots, more than twenty locations.

"These should be the southern Ling Family's secret bases in Huaxia." Hu Fei said, "This Miss Lin is truly remarkable, acquiring such secret information. Ling Chen, with this, we can significantly weaken the southern Ling Family's power."

Ling Chen nodded, "Fatty, help me determine which secret base is the closest, most suitable for us to act."

Hu Fei pulled up the map, carefully examining it for a while before finally pointing to a place, Tianhai City. "Didn't Miss Lin say she's been on a ship all this time? I've looked at all the bases and the secret base in Tianhai City is the only one near the sea, so if we take this base, we might find information about that cargo ship."

Hearing Hu Fei's analysis, Ling Chen agreed and nodded slightly, "Alright, do as you say. Arrange the manpower quickly; it's still early. From East Sea City to Tianhai City isn't far, send a few people over first to investigate the situation, strive to act tonight and take down that secret base."

Hu Fei gave an 'OK' sign and got busy immediately.

"Oh!" Just about to leave, Ling Chen seemed to think of something and turned back, "Fatty, Miss Lin's body is still at the police station, once they've completed their procedures over there, help me retrieve her body and arrange a proper burial." No matter what, Lin Yiyi's death was partially his responsibility. If she hadn't provided intelligence for him, Lin Yiyi wouldn't have been suspected by her own people.

Now that she's dead, the least he can do is help her find a good burial place and lay her to rest properly.

"No problem."

"Alright, you get busy, I won't disturb you anymore."

Leaving the base, Ling Chen drove home. It wasn't until three o'clock in the afternoon that he received notification from Hu Fei and headed to the airport.

At this moment, a private plane was ready, and the personnel for this operation were all in place, just waiting for Ling Chen to board. Besides Ling Chen, only Zhang Zhongfeng from the Eight Oddities participated in this mission. The reason for inviting Zhang Zhongfeng along was to allow the Divine Arrow Team to conduct actual combat training.

Under Zhang Zhongfeng's training, the members of the Divine Arrow Team had all mastered basic archery skills. To test their training results, actual combat was undoubtedly the best touchstone. Besides Zhang Zhongfeng and the Divine Arrow Team, there were also Ji Gang, Zhu Qing, Kaelina, and Qin Genglong, along with Zhou Jun.

Zhou Jun was Zhou Qi's grandson. Originally, he wasn't part of this mission, but he went to Hu Fei and got himself a backdoor entry. Everyone knew that Zhou Jun and Hu Fei were as close as brothers, completely kindred spirits.

As for why Zhou Jun wanted to come along, Ling Chen knew a thing or two. It was said that Zhou Jun had a thing for Zhu Qing, but unfortunately, Zhu Qing didn't pay any attention to Zhou Jun. No matter how much Zhou Jun tried to court her, Zhu Qing remained unmoved, repeatedly having him hit a wall.

Ling Chen found it amusing, knowing Zhou Jun's character well. To make him give up completely, he needed to hit a wall hard enough and bleed a little.

Chapter 1352 The Southern-Northern Rivalry (1)

By the time they arrived in Jin Hai City, it was already evening. After Ling Chen and his group left the airport, they went directly to the pre-booked hotel.

After a brief rest, they heard a knock at the guest room door. It wasn't anyone else who came in; it was the sentry sent by Hu Fei to Jin Hai City, responsible for gathering intelligence on the secret base. "How's the situation?" Ling Chen asked, looking at the visitor.

The man took out a stack of photos from his backpack and placed them on the table, saying, "Mr. Ling, here are the photos of the secret base. Take a look."

Ling Chen picked up a photo, which showed a three-story building with a row of bungalows about ten meters away that seemed to have seven or eight rooms. Right next to the bungalows was a large warehouse. Besides, the whole building was surrounded by a fence.

"How many people are inside?"

"I only saw thirteen people," the man replied. "Additionally, there are motion sensors installed in the grassy areas surrounding the house. Anyone entering the grass will be detected."

"Is there any other way to get in?"

The man shook his head and said, "I've checked, and there isn't any. The only way to get in is by a direct assault."

"A direct assault?" Ling Chen pondered for a moment while looking at the photos in his hand, and asked, "Does the opponent have heavy weapons?"

"I'm not sure about that, but since this is Jin Hai City, they definitely wouldn't dare use firearms." As he spoke, the man pointed to the three-story building in the photo and said, "This building is the core of the secret base. The people living in the bungalows are the security personnel. As long as we deal with the security and take this building, we will be fine."

"Good." Ling Chen nodded slightly and said, "You've worked hard, take a rest first, we'll act after midnight."

For this operation, Ling Chen was not worried. They had enough manpower and strong combat capabilities to suppress the opponent.

After having dinner at the hotel and resting briefly, at ten o'clock, Ling Chen led the group directly to the secret base of the Southern Ling Family.

The secret base was located in a coastal area of Jin Hai City, with a row of sea-view villas not far away. To protect privacy, the secret base maintained a distance of about a hundred meters from those villas and was about fifty meters from the beach. Ling Chen used binoculars to look and saw two speedboats moored by the shore, likely the secret base's transportation tools.

Although it was already ten-thirty, the lights in the secret base were still brightly lit. Since the windows were covered by curtains, it was impossible to see inside.

Time passed by the minute, and soon it was midnight.

Ling Chen checked the time, then took out his mobile phone and dialed a number, "Hey! Brother Zhou, are you ready on your side?"

"OK! Everything's fine on my end, ready to go any time."

"Good, take care. Once you rush in, we'll follow up." Hanging up the call, Ling Chen and Qin Genglong crawled on the ground, moving slowly toward the three-story building. At this moment, the roaring sound of engines came, and Ling Chen looked up to see several headlights shining from both sides. Following that, two trucks charged in fast from left and right, crashing into the surrounding fence and smashing into the row of bungalows.

"Let's go!" Ling Chen called out to Qin Genglong and quickly got up from the ground, hurrying toward the three-story building.

At this moment, the doors of the bungalows opened, and more than a dozen men rushed out, each holding an electric stun baton.

As these men approached, Zhou Jun and Kaelina jumped out of the two trucks, attacking from the front and rear, rushing into the crowd. Although the security personnel of the secret base had the advantage in numbers, Zhou Jun and Kaelina's capabilities far outmatched these men. Within moments, four or five people were knocked to the ground, unconscious.

"Enemy attack! Enemy attack!"

With the shouting, the warehouse next to the bungalows was opened, and about twenty people rushed out.

However, before these people could go to support their companions, an arrow suddenly shot through the air, hitting the front man's thigh. Bang! The man's legs gave way, and he fell to the ground.

Whizz! Whizz! Whizz!

With the sound of countless arrows piercing the air, the men coming from the warehouse for support were shot by arrows and fell to the ground. As the outer security personnel were all dealt with, Ling Chen and Qin Genglong had already reached the front of the three-story building.

Bang! Qin Genglong didn't hesitate, kicked open the door, and quickly rushed inside. As soon as he stepped in, two electric batons fell from above, hitting Qin Genglong hard. Despite the heavy blows of the two batons, Qin Genglong's expression remained unchanged, seemingly unaffected.

"Get out of the way!" Qin Genglong shouted, raising his arms mightily. The two men who were sneakily attacking behind the door were immediately flung up, crashing heavily against the wall, their fate uncertain. Seizing this opportunity, Ling Chen headed straight for the stairs. Along the way, several people tried to intercept him, but none could stop Ling Chen's advance.

In no time, Ling Chen reached the third floor. But once he got there, he saw that everyone on the third floor had been subdued, with Zhu Qing sitting in a chair, waiting for him.

"You're quite fast," Ling Chen said with a smile. Zhu Qing was an assassin; Ling Chen had not assigned any tasks to her but let her act freely.

Looking at the computers and equipment filling the third floor, Ling Chen nodded secretly. It seemed the intelligence was correct; this was indeed the core of the secret base, and all the data was here. "Have you found the intelligence?" Ling Chen asked.

"I was a step late. I intended to prevent them from contacting the Southern Ling Family, but they managed to send out a distress signal," Zhu Qing said, throwing a mobile hard drive to Ling Chen. "All the data is in there, but it's encrypted. You can take it back and have Hu Fei decrypt it."

"Alright..." Ling Chen opened his mouth, about to speak, but at that moment, a series of phone rings suddenly sounded.

Looking at the constantly ringing phone on the computer table, Ling Chen stepped forward, glanced at the strange number on the caller ID, and, without needing much thought, knowing that since they had sent a distress signal, it must be a call from the Southern Ling Family.

Thinking for a moment, Ling Chen quickly picked up the phone and connected it to the computer data cable. The equipment here was very complete; maybe it could trace the location through the phone signal.

When the call connected, Ling Chen didn't speak, waiting silently for the other party to speak first.

"Hello! What's the situation over there? Do you know who's attacking you?" Hearing the voice from the phone, Ling Chen's face changed.

This... this voice... why is it so familiar!

"Hey! Did you hear me? Speak."

Chapter 1353 The North-South Conflict (2)

"Uncle Ling?" Ling Chen took up the conversation and said.

Immediately, the person on the other end of the line was slightly taken aback, and it took a while before they spoke, "Are you... Ling Chen?"

"It's me." Ling Chen uttered the words with a bitter smile. He never expected the caller to be Ling Tao. He couldn't understand, wasn't this the secret base of the Ling Family in the South? Why was Ling Tao calling from there, unless...

"Ling Chen, what are you doing there?" Ling Tao demanded to know.

"Isn't this the secret base of the Ling Family in the South? I..." Before Ling Chen could finish his sentence, Ling Tao on the other end immediately interrupted angrily, "Who told you that's the Southern Ling Family's base? That's our secret base. Which bastard gave you this intel?"

Ling Chen stood frozen, not knowing what to say. He thought that the map Lin Yiyi gave him marked all the secret bases of the Southern Ling Family, only to find out that it was the Northern Ling Family's secret base. How could the Southern Ling Family know so much about the Northern bases unless... Realizing this possibility, Ling Chen's heart sank.

Not good! There must be a mole in the Northern Ling Family; otherwise, how could the Southern Ling Family grasp such secrets?

"Ling Chen, what's the damage over there?" Ling Tao asked, adjusting his emotions.

"I..." Ling Chen was about to speak, but before he finished, he heard the signal from Ling Tao's side drop, leaving only a busy tone in the phone.

Seeing this, Ling Chen quickly dialed back, only to hear the system prompt: "Sorry, the number you are calling is not in service area..."

Oh no!

Just moments ago, they were still on the call, and now it indicates a lack of service area, something's definitely wrong. Could it be... Could it be that the Southern Ling Family has taken action?

Thinking of this, Ling Chen immediately focused on the computer screen. Although the call had dropped, during the conversation, the software had already locked onto Ling Tao's signal.

This is... Seeing the red dot on the map, Ling Chen was taken aback. Isn't this East Sea City? He didn't expect Ling Tao to be in East Sea City.

Bang!

Just as he was thinking, Ling Chen suddenly heard a dull sound from outside. "What's happening?"

"Ling Chen." At this moment, Qin Genglong rushed up from downstairs and said seriously, "We are under attack."

"By whom?"

"Not sure yet. The numbers are large, but the Divine Arrow Team is suppressing them. They can't break in for now."

Ling Chen nodded and said, "Lady Zhu, let's go first."

Leaving the three-story building, Ling Chen looked ahead and saw several off-road vehicles parked along the roadside, forming a temporary defensive line. Behind them, about twenty people crouched behind the car bodies, avoiding the assaults of arrows.

Taking the opportunity, Ling Chen, Zhu Qing, and Qin Genglong sped up, circled behind the enemy, and suddenly launched an attack. Before the enemy could react, all twenty were knocked to the ground. Scanning the fainted individuals, Ling Chen casually grabbed a man by his collar and slapped him twice. Once the man regained consciousness, Ling Chen asked, "Who are you?"

"The... Ling Family." The man stammered in reply.

"Southern Ling Family?" Seeing the man nod, a glint of realization flashed in Ling Chen's eyes. It seemed his suspicions were correct. The Southern Ling Family was launching a full assault on the Northern Ling Family, with all secret bases attacked simultaneously. In such a situation, the Northern Ling Family couldn't withstand the assault at all.

"Old Qin, you stay here to handle the aftermath. Lady Zhu, notify the others to head back to East Sea City with me immediately," Ling Chen instructed.

His father and the porridge girl were with Ling Tao. If Ling Tao was attacked, Ling Kun and the porridge girl might be in danger. Immediately, the group drove the off-road vehicles and rushed towards the airport. On the road, Ling Chen called Hu Fei, telling him the locked location from before.

"Fatty, check the situation over there immediately."

"Hold on." As the words fell, Hu Fei's sound of typing came through the phone. A minute later, Hu Fei said, "I found it. The place you mentioned is holding a fireworks show tonight, with a huge crowd. Hey! Are you sure it's there? Did you make a mistake?"

"No mistake, it's definitely there. Fatty, inform Big Brother and Sir Chen immediately. Make sure they rush over—my father might be there. No matter what happens, ensure their safety."

"No problem, I'll handle it personally."

After hanging up, Ling Chen tried calling Ling Tao again but couldn't get through, making him incredibly anxious, unsure if Hu Fei and the others could make it in time.

Along the way, with Ling Chen's constant urging, it took less than half an hour for the group to reach the airport from downtown. By then, the plane was ready, waiting for their arrival to take off.

"Hello! Ling Chen, we've arrived at the destination, but the environment here is too chaotic, and your location is not exact; finding them is very difficult right now." On the plane, Hu Fei was in contact with Ling Chen via phone.

"No way. Use any means you have to find them."

After the call, Qiu Yong approached Hu Fei and asked, "What did Ling Cheng say?"

Hu Fei shrugged with a helpless expression, "What else? We have to keep looking." Hearing this, Yuan Yun frowned. "With everything so chaotic, how are we supposed to look?"

At this moment, before them was a massive crowd, thousands swarming the surrounding streets, all there for the fireworks show. Coupled with the sound of explosions and the cheers of the crowd, even if there was a shootout somewhere, they couldn't hear a thing.

"How about this?" Hu Fei thought for a moment and suggested, "I'll send people to the nearby high points to keep watch, while others spread out in the crowd, looking for suspicious targets."

Qiu Yong nodded in agreement, "That's all we can do now."

Minute by minute passed by, and Hu Fei stood on a rooftop, looking down at the surrounding situation. But all he could see were masses of people, nothing else. Checking the time on his phone, Hu Fei couldn't help but curse silently.

It's been so long, and there's no sign of anything.

Bang!

The night sky burst with brilliant fireworks, transforming into countless splendid sparks, truly mesmerizing. Hu Fei raised his head, stared at the night sky illuminated by fireworks, and immediately picked up his phone to dial a number.

"Tell them to pause all firework shows. If they refuse, screw them, no need for any nonsense," Hu Fei said fiercely.

Chapter 1354 - 1662: North-South Rivalry (3)

Five minutes later, the fireworks display was forcibly paused. Hu Fei didn't bother with the dissatisfied audience; he needed to quickly find the whereabouts of Ling Tao and the others.

"Mr. Hu, we heard some noise. It's in the third house on the south side."

Hearing the voice from the walkie-talkie, Hu Fei felt a burst of joy and immediately shouted, "Everyone, head over there now."

Before long, Chen Junfeng, Qiu Yong, and others arrived outside the house. Bang! Yuan Yun kicked the door open and was the first to rush in. As soon as they entered, the group immediately found several bodies lying behind the door.

"Quick, they must still be inside," Hu Fei urged eagerly.

However, after searching the entire house, they found nothing but corpses and blood. "Mr. Hu, I saw them. They're on Beihang Street, more than ten of them, and they've captured a few people."

"Chase!"

Leaving the room, the group quickly headed towards Beihang Street. However, due to the large crowd around, their progress was significantly slowed.

"I see them, over there!" Xia Yue, with sharp eyes, pointed at a few business cars at the front of the crowd and shouted.

Hu Fei focused his eyes and saw all those people getting into cars. "Where's our car? Where's our car?"

Everyone looked at each other, unsure where they had parked. Besides, even if they got to their car now, they wouldn't be able to catch up. "Damn!" Hu Fei cursed, quickly ran to a Porsche, and kicked the car window, shattering the glass. Unlocking the car door, he crammed his bulky body into the driver's seat and connected his phone to the car's computer. In less than twenty seconds, the Porsche's engine roared to life.

"One more person, get in."

"I'll go." Xu Ming volunteered. Seeing him step forward, everyone nodded approvingly. Besides Chen Junfeng, Xu Ming was the strongest among them. With him, the hope of rescue increased.

Once in the car, Hu Fei floored the accelerator. With the screeching sound of tires against pavement, the Porsche's front shot forward.

After about three hundred meters, several business cars came into view for Hu Fei and Xu Ming. Due to the crowd watching the fireworks, the business cars couldn't travel fast, allowing Hu Fei an opportunity to catch up.

"Get to their back." Xu Ming pointed to the rear of the last business car.

Hu Fei acknowledged, immediately pushing the speed to the limit. In terms of speed, the business cars were no match for the Porsche. In a blink, the Porsche closed in on the business car's rear.

Seeing the gap close, Xu Ming opened the door, nimbly climbed onto the roof, and slowly moved forward. Standing on the engine hood, he seized the opportunity, his legs thrusting forward to break through the rear window. But just then, the business car's rear door suddenly opened, revealing an elderly man in Xu Ming's sight.

Just meeting his gaze, Xu Ming felt a chilling presence emanate from the man.

A master of the Heavenly List!

Feeling the opponent's strength, Xu Ming's expression darkened. Seeing Xu Ming standing idle on the engine hood, Hu Fei grew impatient.

Suddenly, the elderly man on the business car spread his arms, leaping like a great roc, landing steadily on the hood.

In this situation, Xu Ming dared not hesitate any longer. He charged forward, fists punching straight at the man's face. Seeing Xu Ming approach, the old man's lips curled into a slight, disdainful smirk.

Without any visible move, he merely waved his arm lightly. Instantly, it felt to Xu Ming as if he had crashed into a wall, his body thrown backward. Fortunately, Xu Ming reacted quickly, grabbing the Porsche's rear spoiler with both hands, preventing himself from hitting the ground.

At such high speed, if his body hit the ground, even a master of the Heavenly List would face a dire fate.

Witnessing the old man's power, Hu Fei was startled, stepping hard on the brakes. Using the momentum, the old man's body soared, landing securely on the business car ahead.

Damn it, is he even human?

Hu Fei stared at the old man, swallowing hard. After a brief hesitation, he remembered Xu Ming behind the car, quickly getting out to check.

"How are you?"

Xu Ming waved his hand, leaning against the car, and as he landed, a 'poof' sound was heard, accompanied by a mouthful of blood he spat out.

An hour and a half later, a taxi arrived at the City People's Hospital. The door opened, and Ling Chen swiftly ran towards the hospital.

In no time, Ling Chen reached the third floor of the inpatient department. Entering the ward, he saw Qiu Yong and others present, while Xu Ming lay in bed, resting.

"Second Brother, are you alright?" Ling Chen asked with concern.

"I'm fine. Sorry I couldn't stop them for you."

"Second Brother, don't say that. The opponent had a Heavenly List master; it's normal to fail. Your safety is all that matters." Pausing, Ling Chen turned to Hu Fei and asked, "How many people did they capture?"

"Six. I checked the surrounding surveillance and identified them. Your father, the porridge girl, Ling Tao, and three others—all captured. Additionally, we found more than ten bodies in that house, all brutally murdered."

"We failed," Ling Chen sighed. "We should've prepared earlier if we'd known the map marked the North Ling Family's secret base."

Hu Fei chimed in, "When Miss Lin found that map, she probably didn't realize it marked the North Ling Family's secret base and gave it to you, mistaking it for the South Ling Family's."

Ling Chen said with a headache, "What should we do now?"

"Don't worry, we still have a chance," Hu Fei reassured. "I've had all exits from East Sea City sealed. If they try to leave the city, we'll definitely find out."

"Hopefully, nothing will happen to them." As soon as Ling Chen finished speaking, his phone rang. Taking it out and seeing the caller ID, he immediately answered, "Who is this?"

"Hello, Mr. Ling. You probably don't know me, but I have your father and the others. If you don't want them harmed, you'd better do as I say."

Ling Chen replied in a deep voice, "What do you want?"

"It's simple. I know East Sea City is your territory, so I want to make a deal with you. Are you interested?"

"A deal? What kind of deal?"

"My people want to leave East Sea City, but yours won't let us. How about this: I'll release one person, and you let us go. How about that?"

Chapter 1355 - 1663: The North-South Struggle (Part 4)

"You want to negotiate terms?" Ling Chen calmly said, "Sure, release everyone, and I'll let you leave East Sea City safely."

"No, no, no." The other party chuckled, "Mr. Ling, though I'm not very smart, I understand one thing: never hand over all your chips. If I do that, I certainly won't walk out of East Sea City alive. So, I can only hand over one person. You now have two choices: either agree to my terms, or we fight to the death, at worst, perish together. At that point, you won't be able to save anyone."

Ling Chen pondered for a moment, then said, "Fine, then release my father first."

"Mr. Ling, I'm very sorry, I can't agree to that request. I can only hand over that woman to you, if you agree, we'll meet at the Hongyu Group's port in an hour." After a pause, the other party continued, "Mr. Ling, I advise you not to play any tricks, otherwise, you won't save anyone." With that, he hung up the phone.

"Sixth Brother, who called you?" Qiu Yong asked.

"People from the Southern Ling Family." Ling Chen frowned and said, "They want to make a deal with us using hostages, one person in exchange for their complete safety."

"This won't do." Hu Fei glared and said, "Those bastards are too savvy in doing business, this isn't right. No, one is not enough, at least three people. Ling Chen, just stay firm, if they don't agree, we can fight it out with them."

Ling Chen thought for a moment, then nodded, "I understand. They arranged to meet an hour later at the Hongyu Group's port. Fatty, send a few people to keep an eye on the outside of the port. They will surely be on guard against us, so be careful, and don't get discovered."

"Don't worry, leave this kind of thing to me, there won't be any problems." With that, Hu Fei quickly walked out of the hospital room.

"Second Brother." Ling Chen walked to the bedside, looked at Xu Ming on the hospital bed, and said, "Rest up, I'll have Eighth and Seventh Brothers stay behind to take care of you."

"Sixth Brother, be careful yourself. The Southern Ling Family's master on the Heavenly List is very formidable, his strength is almost on par with Su He. With my strength, I can't even withstand one move from him." Xu Ming advised.

"I will be cautious."

Leaving the hospital, Ling Chen and Qiu Yong drove straight back to the base. Along the way, Ling Chen's expression was grim, even with his optimistic nature, he couldn't take this situation lightly. Porridge girl, Ling Kun, these were his family; no matter the cost, he had to save them. As for Ling Tao and the others... to be honest, he wasn't very close to them. It would be great to save them, but if not possible, he could only choose to let go.

By the time they reached the base, Hu Fei had already arranged everything.

"The area around the port is surrounded by us. I've placed personnel in the nearby buildings, they'll monitor the port constantly. Also, I've called Hongyu Group, they've closed the port, and all staff have been evacuated."

Ling Chen checked the time; there was still half an hour left until the arranged time, "Have they shown up yet?"

Hu Fei pointed to a large screen, "I've pulled up the surveillance near the port, as soon as they approach, we'll definitely spot them."

Just then, a technician who was watching the surveillance footage stood up abruptly and said, "They're here!"

Everyone focused on the surveillance screen, seeing three vans slowly driving along the road, stopping in front of the port's main gate. After the vans stopped, someone from the front passenger seat of the first van got out, opened the closed gate, and once all three vehicles entered the port, he closed the gate and joined the convoy.

After those people entered the port, their tracks were lost on the surveillance screen.

"Switch to the cameras inside the port." Hu Fei immediately ordered. Soon, the surveillance footage changed, and the situation inside the port was clearly displayed on the screen. Once the three vans stopped, people inside began to get out, including those from the Northern Ling family, Ling Kun, Ling Tao, porridge girl, and three others Ling Chen had never met. Judging by their ages, they were likely high-ranking members of the Northern Ling family.

These people stood by the cars, examined the surroundings, then found a warehouse and took the hostages inside.

"Ling Chen, should I have someone sneak in?"

Upon hearing Hu Fei's suggestion, Ling Chen shook his head, "It's useless. They have a master on the Heavenly List on guard, unless we intervene personally, there's no use. Let's not rush, we'll wait and see."

The time passed slowly, and soon the half-hour had elapsed. As the hour deadline arrived, Ling Chen's phone rang right on cue.

"Hello! Mr. Ling, we've arrived at the port, where are you?"

"Sorry, I didn't plan on accepting your terms, so I didn't go to the port."

"Ling Chen, what do you mean?" The other party's tone turned noticeably colder, "Are you really planning to watch them die?"

"If I can only save one, I'd rather save none." Ling Chen replied coolly, "If you want to kill, go ahead, the entire port is already surrounded by my people. If they die, I'll immediately order a full attack. If I can't save them, avenging them would suffice."

He paused, then continued, "Listen carefully, my terms are simple: release all hostages, and I'll ensure your safe exit from East Sea City. I'll give you half an hour to consider. If you haven't reached a decision by then, I'm sorry, but I'll have to order an attack."

"Ling Chen, can you really bear to see your father killed?" The other party said chillingly.

"If you dare lay a finger on him, I swear, I'll make sure you live a life worse than death. Enough talk, decide for yourselves." Ling Chen said, then hung up without giving them a chance to bargain further.

"Ling Chen, do you think they'll agree?"

"No, but I believe they'll make the right decision. This operation involved considerable manpower from the Southern Ling, and it would be a heavy loss if those people lost their lives in East Sea City."

Just then, a technician spoke, "Mr. Ling, we found a yacht heading toward the port in the nearby waters, about ten kilometers away."

Hu Fei chimed in, "That must be their getaway vessel, keep an eye on it."

Chapter 1356 - 1664: North-South Strife (5)

"The yacht has stopped." A few minutes later, the technician reported the latest situation.

"They're still waiting for the signal from those at the port." Ling Chen had just finished speaking when he heard his phone ring. Answering the call, he immediately heard the voice of the man from before: "Ling Chen, we'll give you at most two hostages..."

Before the other party could finish, Ling Chen directly hung up the phone. "Big brother, Sir Chen, we should get going."

It's not very far from the base to the port, a little over ten kilometers, about a twenty-minute drive. Near the port, Ling Chen got out of the car and went into a shop nearby. "Boss, a cup of coffee, please." Ling Chen called out, while placing his phone on the table.

When the cup of coffee was almost finished, his phone finally rang again.

"Ling Chen, three, three hostages, that's our bottom line. If you don't agree, then let's fight to the death."

"Okay, three, that's what you said." Ling Chen slightly raised the corners of his mouth, revealing a faint smile. He knew this was the limit of what the other party could accept; if he pushed them further, it would definitely end in a mutual destruction.

"Ling Kun, Ling Tao, and the porridge girl, I want these three people. Get ready and meet at the port gate in ten minutes." After hanging up the phone, Ling Chen drank the rest of the coffee in one gulp and then stood up, leading everyone to the port gate.

About five minutes later, someone finally appeared at the port. Seeing Ling Kun and the other two come into view, Ling Chen secretly breathed a sigh of relief. As the other party got closer, Ling Chen stepped forward, looking at the man in charge of escorting Ling Kun and the others, and said, "Leave them here, and you can go."

"Ling Chen, you better keep your word, don't forget, I still have three hostages." After saying this, the man glanced warily at Chen Junfeng and the others, slowly backing away. Watching them leave, Ling Chen immediately ran to Ling Kun, untying the ropes on the three of them.

"Dad, porridge girl, are you okay?"

"I'm fine." Ling Kun exhaled slowly. Other than looking a bit pale, he seemed alright.

"Ling Chen, tell your men to act immediately, we absolutely cannot let them escape." Ling Tao urged from the side: "Those three are the core high-level members of our Northern Ling Family, they can't be allowed to meet any mishaps."

"If we launch a strong attack, they'll definitely kill the hostages. But don't worry, I've already arranged for backup."

After speaking, the group got into their cars and returned to the base. Upon reaching the control room, Hu Fei spoke up: "Those people have already boarded the yacht, heading towards the public sea."

Ling Chen nodded and said, "Keep watching them, see where they go. According to Miss Lin's intel, the people from the Southern Ling Family are hiding on a cargo ship; that yacht is likely heading to meet them."

"I understand. I'll let you know as soon as there's news."

"Dad, I'll take you to rest first."

Ling Tao shook his head and said, "No, I want to stay here; I can't focus on anything else until we rescue them." Saying this, Ling Tao glanced at Ling Chen beside him, sighed, and said, "You should have made them give us the Family Head. As long as the Family Head is safe, no matter the loss, we can find a way to recover. Alas..."

"It's not his fault; he doesn't know who the Family Head is. He only knows the three of us, so of course, he saved us first." Ling Kun interjected, "Thankfully, this kid has some brains; otherwise, the two of us wouldn't be standing here."

Seeing Ling Tao insist on staying, Ling Chen didn't say much, but took Ling Kun and porridge girl out of the control room, arranging a room for each of them.

Having not seen the porridge girl for a long time, Ling Chen stayed a little longer with her. Seeing her weary face, Ling Chen gently caressed her cheek and said tenderly, "Get some good rest for a while, don't worry about the Ling family matters anymore; I don't want you, young as you are, to turn into an old nag."

The porridge girl chuckled softly, "Anyway, Master has already promised me to you, so even if I become an old nag, you can't abandon me."

"Yes, yes, I couldn't bear to abandon you." After pausing for a moment, Ling Chen said seriously, "Since the Northern Ling Family is in trouble, you shouldn't follow them anymore. Stay with me; I don't want you to be in danger again."

"But, Master..."

"I'll talk to my dad; you don't have to worry. Besides, with the Northern Ling Family like this, I don't want my dad to be involved anymore. Our family has finally reunited; I don't want any accidents."

While they talked, there was suddenly a knock on the door. Ling Chen got up to open it, finding Xia Yue standing outside.

"Fifth Sister, do you need me for something?"

"Sixth Brother, you should go and have a look; that guy Ling Tao is arguing with the fatty."

"Arguing?" Ling Chen's expression changed slightly, and without thinking further, he hurried to the control room. Before he even entered, he heard Ling Tao's voice coming from inside: "Remember, not just you, everyone here has to listen to me. Understand?"

"Listen to you?" Hu Fei sneered. "Are you joking? Who are you, and why should we listen to you?"

"Because I am from the Northern Ling Family."

"Pah! The Northern Ling Family is finished. Stop using that name to pressure me. Besides, even if the Northern Ling Family is something, do you think I would be afraid? If it weren't for our help, you all would be done for by now."

"Shut up!"

Hearing this, Ling Chen frowned slightly and quickly entered the control room, "Uncle Ling, fatty, what's going on?"

Seeing Ling Chen approach, before Hu Fei could speak, Ling Tao had already taken the opportunity to say: "Ling Chen, you came just in time; immediately get this fatty out of my sight, and don't let him appear at this base again."

Ling Chen smiled and patted Hu Fei on the shoulder, "Uncle Ling, what's going on? We're all on the same side, no need to be unpleasant with each other, right? Fatty, you too, Uncle Ling is a guest; as the host, you should at least be a bit polite. Come on, apologize to Uncle Ling, and let's move past this."

"No way!" Ling Tao said sternly, "He must leave."

Hu Fei shrugged, nonchalant, saying, "Leave then, what's the big deal." After a pause, Hu Fei continued, "Ling Chen, it's not that I'm not being courteous, but this guy is too annoying; whatever I do is my business, why should I listen to him. Ling Chen, you judge: should this base listen to me or to him?"

Ling Tao said coldly, "This is the property of our Northern Ling Family, naturally it listens to me."

Hearing this, Ling Chen couldn't help but glance at Ling Tao and, with a smile, asked, "Uncle Ling, what do you mean by that?"

Chapter 1357 - 1665: Power Seizure?

"Ling Chen, don't forget that everything you have today is thanks to the help of the Northern Ling Family. If it weren't for the Northern Ling Family backing you, do you think you could have built such a large enterprise? So, this base, including everything you own, belongs to the Northern Ling Family's assets. Over the years, many people have tried to harm you, but we've blocked them to ensure your steady development. Once the Northern Ling Family faces changes, you are our capital to rise again."

After listening to Ling Tao's words, Ling Chen touched his nose and said with a half-smile, "Uncle Ling, hearing you say that, I suddenly feel like all my hard work and effort over the years have been in vain."

Ling Tao said, "Why in vain? You've done very well, building such a large foundation in just a few years, enough to compare with the Northern Ling Family at its peak. Ling Chen, believe me, as long as we rescue the Family Head and defeat the Southern Ling Family, the whole world will be ours in the future."

"The whole world? Uncle Ling, everything I do is for self-preservation, so my friends and family can live their lives in peace. I've never thought of the whole world, nor do I have such great ambitions. If you insist on imposing the ambitions of the Northern Ling Family on us, I'm sorry, I won't and can't do it. I only want to live my own life, as simple as that."

"Ling Chen, do you know what you're saying?" Ling Tao said with a stern face, "As a member of the Northern Ling Family, how can you have no ambition at all?"

Ling Chen smiled faintly, "Our ancestors never stipulated that people of the Ling Family must have grand ambitions. Besides, even our ancestor didn't have great ambitions: his only ambition was to charm every beautiful woman in the world. But to be honest, our ancestor's great ambition is more challenging than yours."

"Insolence!" Ling Tao scolded lightly, "How dare you slander your ancestor at will?"

"I'm not slandering; I'm just telling the truth. Even if Ling Gengqiu were here, he would agree with what I said."

"Enough! Ling Chen, if you still consider yourself part of the Northern Ling Family, then listen to me and let this fat man leave."

"Uncle Ling, I'm very sorry, but I can't fulfill your request. Moreover, this base was built single-handedly by Hu Fei; I'm just the hands-off manager. He's the true owner of this base, so you have no right to make him leave. On the contrary, you should be grateful to him for letting you stay here."

Upon hearing this, Ling Tao's expression changed, and he pointed at Ling Chen, "You..."

"Uncle Ling, ask everyone here why they stay. I'm sure they have countless reasons, but not one of them is for the Northern Ling Family. I admit, the Northern Ling Family has helped me a lot. But I want you to remember, Ling Kun is my father, and I am his only son. If he doesn't help me, who will? So, the Ling Family helping me is only natural. Uncle Ling, if you have nothing else, please go back to your room and rest. We don't need you to worry about us anymore."

"Fine, fine." Ling Tao took a deep breath, tried to calm his anger, and nodded, "I'll go find your father and see what he has to say."

Watching Ling Tao storm out of the control room, Ling Chen shook his head helplessly. He had been loyal to the Northern Ling Family, but Ling Tao's actions instantly made him lose goodwill towards the Northern Ling Family, not to mention that sense of belonging.

All along, Ling Chen thought the Northern Ling Family was different from others, but now it seems, what's the difference between the Northern Ling Family and the Southern Ling Family? They're both the same, driven by ambition and desire.

"Fatty, your judgment is still spot on." Ling Chen patted Hu Fei's shoulder and said.

A few days ago, he was planning to send all the information obtained from the ancient tomb to Ling Tao, but Hu Fei withheld some important information. Initially, he felt bad about it, but now he didn't feel guilty at all; instead, he felt grateful to Hu Fei. If not for Hu Fei's caution, he would have suffered a big loss.

Not only that, he was also planning to tell Ling Tao about Ling Gengqiu's situation, but now, he no longer has that intention.

"Ling Chen, don't blame me for not reminding you; you'd better be careful. Who knows what they might do." Hu Fei said.

"Don't worry, I know. Alright, go on with your work, and don't let such matters disturb your mood." With that, Ling Chen walked straight out of the control room.

At the doorway, Ling Chen hesitated for a moment, then turned to head toward Ling Kun's room. At the door, he knocked, and the door was quickly opened.

Seeing Ling Chen at the door, Ling Kun smiled and said, "I knew you'd come, come in."

"Did Uncle Ling come by earlier?"

Ling Kun nodded, "He threw a fit and then left."

"Dad, you can't blame me for this; he just doesn't know when to quit. Why should everything I've worked so hard to build become the property of the Northern Ling Family? Would you agree if it were you?"

"I understand how you feel. This kind of thing... sigh!" Ling Kun sighed and said, "I am from the Northern Ling Family, and you are my son, so naturally, you are one of us. Back then, watching you grow step by step, the Family Head and I discussed and decided to let you slowly develop in the rear. We would be at the front, blocking the onslaught from the Southern Ling Family, giving you ample time to grow strong yourself. Once you become strong, you could join forces with the Northern Ling Family to annihilate the Southern Ling Family. Unfortunately, things didn't go as planned; who would have thought the Northern Ling Family would suffer such a great blow? I've estimated that after this incident, the Northern Ling

Family's power has decreased by at least eighty percent. That's why Ling Tao is in such a hurry to take over your forces to rebuild the Northern Ling Family."

"Dad, if you put it that way, it seems it really is my fault." Ling Chen scratched his head and said.

"I just told Ling Tao that you would fully assist us in revitalizing the Northern Ling Family, so no matter what, you need to show some effort."

"Dad, since you've spoken, I'll naturally give it my all. However, I don't want anyone stepping in and pointing fingers. If Uncle Ling insists on taking over himself, that's fine—I will hand over this base and all the resources I control to him. But whether anyone is willing to listen to him by then, I can't guarantee."

Ling Kun chuckled bitterly and said, "You kid... this would really put him in a tough spot. Don't worry; I'll explain to him. Just do things as you see fit. You're my son, and no matter what happens, I'll stand by your side."

"By the way!" Ling Chen suddenly thought of something and asked, "Dad, is there a traitor in the Northern Ling Family?"

"A traitor?"

"I got a map from the Southern Ling Family, marking over a dozen secret strongholds. At first, I thought they belong to the Southern Ling Family, but later I realized I was wrong. The Southern Ling Family could have only obtained such accurate information if there was a traitor among you."

Chapter 1358 - 1666: Mysteriously Disappearing on the Sea (1)

"I also find it strange," said Ling Kun. "Although the Southern Ling Family has been attacking us recently, the Northern Ling Family has only suffered minor losses without any critical damage. For such a full-scale attack, targeting all our bases and even our current location, it definitely isn't simple."

At this point, Ling Kun shifted his tone, "However... these secret locations, including our position, are confidential, and only a few people in the Northern Ling Family have access to them. Even the porridge girl isn't particularly clear about them. If there is a traitor, who could it be? Surely, it won't be someone high-up in the Northern Ling Family."

"Perhaps it really could be one of them. Dad, whether it's the Northern or Southern Ling Family, to them, profit is above all. As long as there's enough profit, nothing can't be abandoned. The so-called 'Ling Family' is just a slogan. Honestly, how many of them are truly dedicated to the Northern Ling Family? Dad, if you ask me, you should quickly get out of this mess before you get in too deep. Anyway, my foundation isn't weak now. How about working with me?"

Hearing this, Ling Kun chuckled, "You rascal, are you trying to make me work for you?"

Ling Chen nodded, "Dad, at least you're a top expert on the Heavenly List. What I lack most now are experts. Father and son united, together we can cut through an iron mountain. As long as we stick together, who else in this world would dare to bully us?"

"This..." Ling Kun hesitated for a moment. "Let's talk about it later. I can't make a decision right now. Son, I'm different from you. You don't have much contact with the Northern Ling Family, so there is little attachment. But I'm different. I owe everything I have today to the Northern Ling Family's nurturing, including the Secret Society. The Secret Society is a force secretly established by the Northern Ling Family specifically to combat the God Organization. Initially, I was ordered to take over the Secret Society. Later, as the God Organization disbanded, the Secret Society also lost its purpose. With the Family Head's approval, I handed the Secret Society over to you, including all its funds. Otherwise, do you think I could have easily decided to give the Secret Society to you? The Family Head did this to provide you with enough resources to gradually develop. That's why Ling Tao's words weren't wrong. You owe a lot of your success today to the Northern Ling Family."

Ling Chen was stunned, not expecting all these hidden matters. If that's the case, he really shouldn't have said those words to Ling Tao, no wonder Ling Tao was furious, probably angered by Ling Chen's heartlessness and indifference.

"Son, for now, don't tell anyone else about the traitor situation. I'll investigate in secret to prevent mutual suspicion among everyone."

Ling Chen had no objection to Ling Kun's advice. After a pause, Ling Chen suddenly remembered something, "Dad, I've always wanted to ask you something, can you be honest with me?"

"Ask away. As long as it's something I know, I won't hide it from you."

"Why did you kill Su Zhengyang and his wife?"

"You mean those two?" Ling Kun's eyes flashed with a sharp light at the mention of Su Zhengyang and his wife, "I killed them because they deserved to die."

"Why?"

"Because they deserved to die," Ling Kun said coldly. "Do you think Su Zhengyang was a good person? The people from the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion are a bunch of hypocrites. Su He was like that, so was Su Zhengyang. The only one with a slightly better character is the current Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion Master, Su Mei."

Ling Chen asked, puzzled, "Dad, what exactly did Su Zhengyang do?"

"Over the years, after Su Zhengyang stepped down as the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion Master, he seemed to wander freely, but in reality, he was secretly overseeing secret research for the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. According to our investigation, Su Zhengyang secretly captured many people to provide more experimental materials for his research, including some minors, even children as young as one or two. I killed him not only because of a power struggle but more out of righteous anger. Ling Chen, you haven't seen the photos of those children after the experiments; it's simply inhumane."

Research? So, the lab they found at the Skyhawk Pavilion headquarters back then was actually under Su Zhengyang's supervision.

Realizing this, Ling Chen suddenly understood a lot. If that's the case, then Su Zhengyang and his wife didn't die unjustly.

After thinking for a while, Ling Chen changed the subject, "Dad, doesn't the Northern Ling Family have Ling Gengqiu's severed arm? Do you know where that severed arm is?"

"It was snatched away by the Southern Ling Family when we were ambushed. Why are you asking this?"

Snatched away... Ling Chen touched his nose, realizing that the Southern Ling Family now held three of Ling Gengqiu's severed limbs. It seems, for both public and private reasons, this battle must continue.

"Dad, help me retrieve all of Ling Gengqiu's severed limbs, and I'll give you a great surprise."

"What surprise?" Ling Kun asked curiously. Before Ling Chen could reply, there was a 'knock knock knock' at the door.

Opening the door, a man stood outside, "Mr. Ling, Mr. Hu requests your presence."

"Alright, I know." With that, Ling Chen turned his head to Ling Kun inside the room, "Dad, get some rest. I have to go."

Upon reaching the central control room, Ling Chen walked straight to Hu Fei by the computer and asked, "What's the situation?"

"The news just came in. After that yacht entered the public sea area, it immediately stopped. So far, no ships have appeared to receive them. I'm considering whether to take action now."

"Are the helicopters ready?"

Hu Fei nodded, "Rest assured, everything is ready to go at any time." Recently, Hu Fei had specifically purchased two helicopters for convenient operations, parked atop the base's high building.

"Inform Sir Chen to bring people to the rooftop to meet me."

"Alright."

Before long, Ling Chen, Chen Junfeng, Ji Gang, and Qiu Yong boarded the helicopter, flying directly towards the yacht's location. Although there were two helicopters, they were sightseeing helicopters, each with only five seats excluding the pilot—eight seats in total.

After over half an hour of flight, Ling Chen, in the co-pilot seat, finally spotted the yacht on the sea. Picking up binoculars, Ling Chen checked around the yacht, finding no other ships nearby, nor anyone walking on the yacht.

"Ling Chen, should we continue monitoring or go down directly?"

Hearing Zhu Qing's voice, Ling Chen pondered for a moment and said, "Let's circle around a bit more. There's a chance the Southern Ling Family might send someone to pick them up. If we find no other ships, then we'll go down."

Chapter 1359 - 1667: Mysteriously Vanished on the Sea (2)

Centering on the yacht, two helicopters flew a round from both ends, but no boats were seen within ten kilometers around.

Ling Chen found it strange. Why would the yacht stop on the sea? Aren't they worried that someone might come after them? This is the Public Sea, beyond any state regulation, and you can do whatever you want. After pondering for a while, Ling Chen gestured to the pilot to fly towards the yacht.

Soon, the two helicopters reached the sides of the yacht. Observing from high above for a while and confirming that there was no one on the deck, Ling Chen leaped directly onto the yacht from the helicopter, which was more than four meters high.

Once everyone boarded the yacht, Ling Chen went straight to the cockpit. Pushing the door open, he saw there was no one inside.

"Sixth Brother, we've searched below, but there's no trace of them."

Hearing Qiu Yong's words, Ling Chen frowned. How could this be? Not a single person was on board. When this yacht left the port, there were at least a dozen people on it. Hu Fei had been having people watch it all the way, and no other boats approached this yacht. Moreover, the yacht's inflatable and motorboats were all still here, so they shouldn't have left the yacht.

But why? After pondering for a moment, Ling Chen took out a satellite phone and dialed Hu Fei's number. Upon hearing there was no one on the yacht, Hu Fei's first reaction was disbelief.

"No boats approached it; they couldn't have left." Hu Fei stated with certainty.

"I think so too, but the problem is that there's no one on board. They must have slipped away by some other means."

"Did they leave from underwater?" Hu Fei questioned, puzzled. "But there are no boats for tens of kilometers; even if they dove, there are no tools to travel that far, unless they have a submarine. But that's impossible."

"Nothing is impossible. On the international arms market, you can buy any equipment if you have the money. And this is the Public Sea, not in Huaxia's waters." At this point, Ling Chen had a sudden inspiration and said, "How about this, I'll ask some friends in the military to investigate if there have been any unusual signals in this sea area."

"Alright."

After hanging up the phone, having gained nothing, Ling Chen had no choice but to return to the base by helicopter.

Originally, there was a plan to rescue some of the North Lin Family's executives, but now not only couldn't they be found, even their trail was lost. If it were as they guessed, and the South Lin Family had a submarine, it would be difficult to rescue them.

Back at the base, Ling Kun and Ling Tao were waiting in the control room for Ling Chen. Seeing Ling Tao, the latter still looked visibly angry.

"Dad, you all know the situation, right?"

Ling Kun nodded and asked, "No clues at all?"

"None. They've entered the open sea; nobody knows where they'll go. If Miss Lin were still here, maybe she could help us, but now... we can only wait."

"Hmph!" Ling Tao snorted coldly, "The South Lin Family people are just a bunch of cowards, hiding in the sea."

"I think they're quite smart," Ling Chen interjected, "The sea is the hardest place to chase. Just now, my friend passed on a message that they found radar signals in the area where the yacht was docked. After analysis, it was likely a World War II submarine. So we can now confirm that the South Lin Family has a submarine. With the advantage of a submarine, the South Lin Family's executives can go anywhere. Moreover, the open sea is vast, and the laws of various countries are ineffective there. The South Lin Family can act recklessly."

"Son, they can't stay in the submarine forever; they'll need supplies," Ling Kun pointed out.

"Exactly! Dad, there are many islands in the Public Sea, many of which are unvisited. Since the South Lin Family has a submarine, they can easily find an island and build a temporary base there."

Ling Tao furrowed his brow slightly, "Are you saying we can't find them?"

"Not necessarily," Ling Chen replied, "If we search aimlessly, we won't find them. But we can start from the source."

"The source?" Ling Tao asked in confusion, "What do you mean?"

"That World War II submarine; on the international arms market few actually buy submarines. Even if someone has a submarine, enough skilled personnel are needed to operate it. So, we can investigate along this line, and perhaps we can find some clues." After speaking, Ling Chen turned to Hu Fei beside him and said, "Fatty, this task is for you."

"You don't need to remind me. I've already got people on it. If everything goes smoothly, we'll have news soon."

Hearing this, Ling Chen couldn't help but smile. Having a reliable person nearby is definitely good, saving much effort in explanations.

After exiting the control room, Ling Chen caught up with Ling Tao and said, "Uncle Ling, I'm really sorry for today. After talking with my dad, I realized how much the North Lin Family has sacrificed for me."

Ling Tao said blandly, "As long as you know."

"Uncle Ling, although I can't give you control of this base, I promise to do everything I can to rescue the members of the North Lin Family. Also, the South Lin Family will be my primary target."

After hearing Ling Chen out, some of Ling Tao's anger seemed to subside, "I hope you can keep your word."

Once Ling Tao returned to his room, Ling Chen didn't stay long at the base and drove alone to the Dragon Tiger Hall. Just after returning, He Ziyun called him over, saying there was something to discuss.

At the Dragon Tiger Hall, Ling Chen headed straight for the director's office. Entering the room, he saw Tong Zhentian and He Ziyun brewing Kung Fu tea and discussing matters. Ling Chen walked up and grinned, "The two of you are in a good mood."

"You're just in time," said Tong Zhentian, pointing to a seat nearby. "Have a seat."

"Elder Tong, what do you need from me?"

"It's about the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion; they've taken action," He Ziyun said.

"Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion?" Ling Chen was slightly taken aback, "Mr. He, are they causing trouble for us?"

"Not exactly. We received news a few days ago that the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion has been aggressively recruiting people. In just a few days, nearly a hundred people have joined them. Furthermore, the number is still growing."

"Really?" Ling Chen was surprised, "Mr. He, didn't the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion's reputation take a big hit because of Su He? Why are people still willing to join them?"

Chapter 1360 - 1668: Borrowing a Life

"The Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion has gotten smarter this time." Tong Zhentian said, "In the past, the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion kept their treasures to themselves and was unwilling to share them with others. However, after this incident, they've learned from our Dragon Tiger Hall and have made many martial arts secrets public. As a result, many in the martial arts community have been drawn to them. Although the reputation of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion has been affected, everyone knows that their foundation is incredibly rich."

"So that's how it is." Ling Chen smiled and said, "I didn't expect, Su Mei has also learned to be flexible. Eh! Elder Tong, this shouldn't affect our Dragon Tiger Hall much, right?"

"The impact is not significant for now. However, it's clear that the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion intends to compete with our Dragon Tiger Hall by doing this. No matter what, we should be cautious, who knows if the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion will play tricks."

Ling Chen nodded and said, "Better safe than sorry. Given Su Mei's personality, I doubt she would do anything insidious." Pausing briefly, Ling Chen shifted the topic, and asked, "By the way, it's been so long, do you have any news about Su He?"

"Not clear. He was so severely injured; he must have gone somewhere to recuperate, he won't appear for a while." Speaking of this, Tong Zhentian looked worried, "However, Su He is indeed a threat, no one can ignore his strength. If he truly intends to assassinate someone, we might find it hard to prevent."

"Then what should we do?"

"I don't have a solution either unless you can find Su He and eliminate the threat forever. If not, we can only be vigilant and not give him a chance to strike."

"Alright, I'll have someone keep an eye out to see if they can find him."

...

At this moment, in the Shi Family Mansion, Su He stood beside the courtyard, instructing a few young people on their martial arts skills. Having been at the Shi Family for some time, Su He, as an Earthly List master, was treated quite well. He enjoyed freedom each day, occasionally advising the Shi Family disciples on their skills, with no constraints on him.

A few days ago, the family head Shi Hongyu had personally met with him. Su He was not worried about being recognized, he had left the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion decades ago, if it were the older generation of the Shi Family, someone might have recognized him, but the older generation of the Shi Family was basically all gone.

"Elder Su, am I making good progress?" A young man stopped his practice and walked up to Su He, asking.

Su He nodded with a smile, "Not bad, keep working hard, and you might have a chance to become a Heavenly List master." Although he said this, Su He inwardly disdained them. The Shi Family disciples' aptitude was too poor, even the ordinary disciples of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion were better. If not for needing a cover, he had no interest in instructing these people.

"Elder Su."

At this moment, someone came up, "The eldest daughter invites you over."

"Alright, I'll be right there." After speaking, Su He said to the young people, "Continue practicing, no slacking off. If I find anyone slacking, don't blame me for being rude." After a reprimand, Su He turned and followed the person to a room.

"Ms. Shi, did you need me?" Su He asked, looking at Shi Su.

"Elder Su, I will be going on a long trip tomorrow, it will probably take one or two months, I need someone to accompany me, can you come with me?"

Su He agreed straightforwardly, "Of course, no problem."

"Thank you for your trouble then."

Leaving the room, the smile on Su He's face turned cold instantly. Leaving with Shi Su for more than a month was too long for him, he didn't have that much time to waste. It seemed he would need to act soon.

Night fell.

Su He tidied up his clothing and left the room on his own. Before long, he arrived at the central room of the Shi Family Mansion.

Thud! Thud! Thud!

With the sound of knocking, the door was opened, and a young man appeared in front of Su He, "Elder Su, what brings you here?"

Su He smiled and said, "I came to see the Family Head, could you please inform him for me?"

"Elder Su, it's already so late, the Family Head is about to rest, couldn't this wait until tomorrow?"

"This matter is extremely important, I cannot afford to delay."

Upon hearing this, the young man nodded and said, "Alright then, I'll inform the Family Head." Before long, the young man returned to the doorway, looked at Su He waiting outside, and said, "Elder Su, you may go in, the Family Head is waiting for you inside."

"Alright, thank you."

Entering the room, Su He came to the living room to find Shi Hongyu sitting on the sofa, dressed in loose pajamas, holding a cup of hot tea. Seeing Su He, Shi Hongyu smiled and asked, "Elder Su, I heard you have something important to discuss with me?"

Su He stood properly to the side, nodding, "Yes, Family Head, this matter is of great importance, I only wish for you to know about it."

Shi Hongyu scrutinized Su He, then shifted his gaze to the young man at the door and gave a signal. The latter understood and immediately withdrew, closing the door behind him.

"Elder Su, it's just you and me now, feel free to speak."

"Family Head, I would like to borrow something from you."

"Elder Su, you're too polite, you're practically one of the Shi Family now, just tell me what you need, and I'll certainly fulfill it."

"Thank you so much, Family Head, actually... I want to borrow your life."

"My life?" Upon hearing this, Shi Hongyu's face suddenly changed, and he said in a deep voice, "Su Sanshui, what do you mean by this?"

Su He smiled coldly, "I told you, I want your life." With those words, Su He suddenly lunged forward, instantly closing in on Shi Hongyu.

Feeling the fierce wind attacking, Shi Hongyu was startled and quickly jumped up from the sofa, angrily shouting, "Su Sanshui, it seems you're courting death!"

"Who is courting death is not certain yet." Saying this, Su He made a quick step, and the Nine Yang Qiankun Step was instantly deployed. Seeing the flickering afterimages in front of him, a look of shock flashed in Shi Hongyu's eyes.

"You..."

"Did you think you were the only one who's a Heavenly List master?"

Hearing the mocking voice of Su He beside his ear, Shi Hongyu's heart trembled violently. Before he could react, he felt a severe pain coursing through his body, as if his whole being was falling apart.

"You... you..." Shi Hongyu opened his mouth, as soon as he uttered a word, he saw the afterimage flash before him, and his entire body fell directly to the ground.

Looking at the fallen Shi Hongyu, Su He sneered disdainfully. What's the use of being a Heavenly List master, in front of him, he was nothing more than trash. Then, Su He hoisted Shi Hongyu's body, opened the back door of the room, and easily leaped over the wall. In the blink of an eye, his figure vanished into the deep night.

No one knew how much time passed before Shi Hongyu finally regained consciousness. Feeling the tremor of his own body, Shi Hongyu opened his eyes, looking at the surrounding environment, finding himself in a vehicle, with Su He sitting next to him.