

The Beauty 1361

Chapter 1361 - Ancestor

"Su Sanshui, you... what do you intend to do?"

Hearing Shi Hongyu's voice near his ear, Su He turned his head and said lightly, "Family Head, don't worry. We'll be there soon."

"Who exactly are you?" Shi Hongyu asked coldly.

"Me?" Su He said with a faint smile, "At this point, haven't you guessed my identity?"

"You... Su Sanshui... Su Sanshui..." Shi Hongyu murmured, his mind repeatedly pondering over this name. Suddenly, he seemed to realize something, and his expression changed dramatically as he exclaimed, "You... you're... Su He of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion?"

"You do have some wits about you."

"But... why?" A chill surged in Shi Hongyu's heart. He thought that after successfully breaking through to the Heavenly List realm, he would have a place in the entire Martial Arts world. However, considering his current situation, he had no thoughts of resistance at all.

What about being a Heavenly List expert? He's still fallen into Su He's hands.

"Shi Hongyu, I said I wanted to ask for your help, and you agreed."

Shi Hongyu said hastily, "No, no, I haven't agreed to anything. Elder Su, I was blind to Mount Tai and offended you. Please show mercy and spare me. Okay?"

"It's too late to say that now. My main purpose for going to the Shi Family was because of you."

"Elder Su, don't forget, it was our Shi Family who saved you. A life-saving grace should not be repaid with harm, at the very least, you shouldn't harm our Shi Family."

"Don't worry, after you die, I will take good care of the Shi Family." As soon as he finished speaking, the car slowly came to a stop, and the driver turned his head and said, "Elder Su, we've arrived."

"Wait for me here." After saying this, Su He opened the car door, carried Shi Hongyu, who was lying on the seat, on his shoulder, and walked out with large strides.

With each step Su He took, Shi Hongyu's body swayed. Looking at the surroundings, Shi Hongyu's expression changed slightly, and he exclaimed in surprise, "This is... the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion?"

Su He remained silent and walked straight toward the forest. Seeing no reaction from Su He, Shi Hongyu struggled desperately, trying to escape his restraints. However, he found his hands and feet were unresponsive, as if they had lost all feeling.

After over an hour of intermittent walking, Shi Hongyu was taken by Su He to a mountain valley.

Looking at the wooden house not far away, Su He took a deep breath, then quickened his pace and walked to the front of the wooden house. Before Su He could knock, the door was already opened by someone, and a young man appeared in front of Su He.

Seeing the other person, Su He threw Shi Hongyu, who was on his shoulder, to the ground, then clasped his fists respectfully and said, "Young brother, please announce that Su He has something to ask for."

The young man glanced at Shi Hongyu on the ground, expressionless, and uttered two words, "Wait a moment." After speaking, he turned and closed the door. After about two minutes, the door opened again, and the young man walked up to Su He and said, "Master invites you in."

"Thank you!" Su He felt a sense of relief and stepped into the room. Standing in front of a bedroom, Su He's emotions appeared somewhat uneasy. As a Heavenly List expert, it had been a long time since he felt this way.

After adjusting his mood, Su He gently knocked on the bedroom door.

"Come in."

Hearing the voice from inside the bedroom, Su He pushed the door open to a gap wide enough for a person and entered with his head down. As the door closed, the entire bedroom's lighting was very dim. The only window was covered by blackout curtains, perhaps not having been ventilated for a long time, filling the room with a peculiar smell.

Since entering the room, Su He had kept his head down, not daring to look around, only able to judge the other's position through breathing sounds.

Thud!

Su He was seen kneeling on the ground, respectfully kowtowing three times, "Fifth generation disciple of the Su Family, Su He, greets the ancestor."

"Rise, we're all family; no need for such formalities."

"Yes." Su He responded, stood up, and stood aside. Throughout the entire time, he didn't dare lift his head.

"If I recall correctly, when you first came to me, you were around twenty years old. In the blink of an eye, you're now white-haired." The voice was hoarse, always pausing intermittently. Perhaps because it hadn't spoken for a long time, it seemed a bit inarticulate.

"What brings you here this time?"

"I would like to ask the ancestor to lend a hand." Su He said with his head lowered.

"Help you? Then you should be aware of my rules. For me to act, a certain price must be paid."

Su He nodded and said, "I know. I have already brought the person. That person has just entered the Heavenly List realm."

"Very well, as long as they are a Heavenly List expert. Tell me, what do you want me to do?"

"I hope the ancestor can step forward to revive the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion and eliminate all its rivals."

"With your strength, you can't achieve that?"

"To be honest, ancestor, I was ambushed by the opposition some time ago, suffering severe injuries and losing a Heavenly List expert. Right now, I have no one usable by my side. As far as I know, the enemy still has three Heavenly List experts. With just my own strength, there's no way I can contend."

"Three Heavenly List experts?" The other's tone instantly became excited, "Alright, I agree to this matter. Give me their details, and I'll resolve it."

"Thank you, ancestor!"

"You're welcome. You're our Su Family's descendant; naturally, I must wholeheartedly work for the Su Family. Alright, if there's nothing else, you should leave. I need to rest."

"Yes." Su He clasped his fists, paid his respects, then turned and exited the room. From start to finish, he never dared to lift his head to look at the other person.

Upon leaving the room, the young man could be seen having already brought in Shi Hongyu. It was unclear what the young man had done, but Shi Hongyu's expression had become blank, as though entirely devoid of awareness, dazed to the extreme. Seeing Shi Hongyu's appearance, Su He didn't say much, merely nodded at the young man before walking out the door.

Standing outside the wooden house, Su He felt completely relaxed. In front of the ancestor, the reason he didn't dare lift his head was because of the innate pressure from the ancestor's presence, making him too intimidated to breathe freely.

Ling Chen... Su He muttered, a hint of coldness flashing in his eyes.

With the ancestor stepping forward, let's see how long you can endure. The Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion... will forever be the dominant power of the Martial Arts world. No one can shake its status.

Leaving the mountain valley, Su He stood on the periphery of the Yangxin Pavilion, gazing into the distance, observing a few Yangxin Pavilion disciples practicing martial arts. He hesitated for a moment and ultimately gave up on the idea of returning to the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion.

Having decided to let Su Mei take over the entire Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, there was no need for him to intervene. He hoped that his granddaughter would not disappoint him and, more importantly, not let down the entire Su Family.

Chapter 1362 - Special Agent (1)

In the blink of an eye, a week passed.

At eight in the morning, Ling Chen was called up by Yang Qingling, "You child, it's already so late and you're still in bed."

Seeing his mother standing at the door, Ling Chen hastily covered his body with the quilt, "Mom, I'm so grown up, how can you just enter my room?"

"No matter how grown up you get, you're still my son." Yang Qingling put her hands on her hips and said irritably, "Hurry up and get up, there's a guest outside."

"A guest?" Ling Chen quickly sat up and asked, "Mom, who's here?"

"I don't know him, your dad is hosting him right now."

"Okay, I'll be right down." After Yang Qingling left, Ling Chen dressed quickly, rushed through his washing up, and then went to the first-floor living room.

In the spacious living room, he saw Ling Tao and Ling Kun there; naturally, in East Sea City, he would stay at home. Besides them, there was a stranger — a middle-aged man. The man was dressed in a Zhongshan suit, had short hair, and sat with a standard posture, seeming to have a military background, with a capable appearance.

Seeing Ling Chen coming down the stairs, the man immediately stood up from the sofa, proactively approached Ling Chen, and extended his hand, "Mr. Ling, hello."

"Hello." Ling Chen smiled politely and asked, "I haven't had the pleasure of knowing your name yet?"

"My surname is Li, Li Bin, I am a special commissioner appointed by the military, specially coming to East Sea City to meet Mr. Ling this time."

A special commissioner from the military? Hearing the man's title, Ling Chen was slightly stunned. Why was the army looking for him? Why hadn't Tang Yuan mentioned it?

In a flash, Ling Chen smiled and asked, "I wonder what's brought Mr. Li from Beijing to find me?"

"It's like this. Recently, the government established a research institute in North County, which we are responsible for taking over. At that time, Mr. Ling participated in various tasks in the ancient tomb excavation, correct?"

Ling Chen nodded, "Correct. If Mr. Li is here regarding the confidentiality agreement, rest assured, I was a soldier before too and understand confidentiality agreements thoroughly, I wouldn't reveal a single piece of information about the ancient tomb to outsiders." After pausing, Ling Chen added, "Including my family."

"Mr. Ling, although you say that, according to the intelligence we obtained, you copied all the materials you found in the ancient tomb secretly to study on your own. Am I wrong?"

Upon hearing this, Ling Chen's expression changed slightly, looking at Li Bin with surprise, "Mr. Li, this is entirely slander, I haven't done any of what you said. Moreover, there were troops with me at the time, how could I have had the chance to do such things?"

"The person you mentioned, is it Tang Yuan? He has been detained by us and is undergoing investigation. Mr. Ling, as a military man, I hope you cooperate with our work and come back to Beijing with me to thoroughly investigate this matter."

Ling Chen frowned slightly, feeling puzzled. The things he did with Tang Yuan were only known to the two of them, how could the government know? Did someone tip them off? But besides Tang Yuan, who else could it be?

"Mr. Ling, the car is ready, please."

"Mr. Li, is there some misunderstanding about this matter?" Ling Kun and Ling Tao hurried over, "Ling Chen would never do anything illegal..."

"I know." Before Ling Kun could finish, Li Bin interrupted, "We're just asking Mr. Ling to return for investigation, if he's innocent, we'll definitely clarify everything."

"Mr. Li, can I make a call?" Ling Chen asked.

"Of course, I have no problem with that. However, I hope after you make this call, you can cooperate with my work."

Ling Chen nodded, then walked into the kitchen, took out his phone, and dialed Pang Jiulin's number. Soon, the call connected, and Pang Jiulin's voice came from the other side, "Ling Chen, are you okay?"

"Instructor, the military people are already at my house, they want me to go to Beijing to assist with the investigation."

Pang Jiulin sighed and said, "As expected! They're still targeting you."

"Instructor, what exactly is going on?"

"Sigh, I don't know who tipped them off, saying you secretly hid valuable materials from the ancient tomb. You don't know, ever since the discovery of that tomb, the government has paid extreme attention, even having a battalion stationed near the research facility, layering protection around the ancient tomb. To prevent secrets from leaking, the government keeps a tight lid on confidentiality. Anyone and anything related to the tomb undergo thorough scrutiny to prevent any problems."

Ling Chen asked, "Instructor, do you know who reported me?"

"I don't know. After Tang Yuan was taken away yesterday, I tried using many connections to get him out, but hit walls everywhere. Now, as soon as people hear it's related to that tomb, everyone avoids it. Ling Chen, it's not that I don't want to help you, but I'm truly powerless. You and Tang Yuan can only fend for yourselves now."

Hearing this, Ling Chen let out a bitter smile secretly and replied, "Instructor, I understand, thank you!"

"By the way! One more thing, don't go looking for the old General. Because of you two, the old General is also suspected now. Luckily, he is a national hero, and the government hasn't done anything excessive to him."

"I understand. Instructor, don't worry, I'll find a way to resolve this myself."

He hung up the phone and returned to the living room. Li Bin spoke, "Mr. Ling, should we go?"

"Let's go."

"Son!" Ling Kun hurried forward, blocking in front of Li Bin and Ling Chen, "No, I can't let you take him."

Li Bin frowned and said, "Mr. Ling, by doing this you're opposing the government, I advise you to think clearly before deciding."

"Dad, don't worry about me, didn't Mr. Li say? I'm just going to Beijing to cooperate with the investigation, not being convicted of anything."

Hearing this, Ling Kun hesitated for a moment, then stepped aside, say in a deep voice, "Son, don't worry, no matter what happens, I will definitely save you."

As they walked out the door, they saw a jeep parked outside, with two soldiers standing beside it.

Getting in the car, under the watchful eyes of Ling Kun and others, the jeep slowly drove out of the neighborhood and disappeared from everyone's sight.

"Ling Kun, will Ling Chen be okay?" Yang Qingling asked worriedly.

Ling Kun gently stroked his wife's hair, reassuring her, "Don't worry, our son is very capable, I believe he'll be fine."

"Do you think...could this be the work of the Ling family from the south?" Ling Tao pondered for a while and then spoke.

"The Ling family from the south?"

Ling Tao nodded, "It's very possible they set up Ling Chen. Initially, someone from the southern Ling family went to the tomb but was intercepted by Ling Chen, accomplishing nothing. This incident might be their revenge."

Chapter 1363 - Special Agent (2)

Beep Beep!

At this moment, the sound of a car horn came from nearby. Ling Kun and the other two looked up and saw two military jeeps driving toward them, stopping at the entrance of the Ling Family.

The car door opened, and a man in military uniform jumped down from the vehicle, striding up to Ling Kun and the others, and saluted formally.

"Hello, I'm Lieutenant Zheng Jiong from the Beijing Military District, ordered to pick up Mr. Ling. There is something that requires Mr. Ling's cooperation, do you know where he is?"

Upon hearing this, the expressions of Ling Kun and the other two changed dramatically. Damn it! They fell for it!

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After half a day of traveling, Ling Chen, following Li Bin, finally arrived in Beijing, at a three-story factory building located in the Beijing Suburbs. This factory had been abandoned, surrounded by wilderness. However, the place had been taken over by the military as a secret interrogation site for prisoners.

Standing at the entrance of the factory, Ling Chen suddenly stopped in his tracks. Looking at the front gate, a glint of light flashed in his eyes. For some reason, he had a very bad feeling. Once he walked through this gate, he was very likely to be in danger.

Having been an agent, Ling Chen was well aware of what such a place represented. This was a secret military interrogation base, easy to enter, but difficult to leave, some people were trapped in places like this for a lifetime.

"Mr. Ling, why aren't you moving?" Li Bin, walking ahead, turned around and asked Ling Chen, who stood still.

"Mr. Li, I want to know where Tang Yuan is."

Li Bin pointed at the factory ahead and said, "He's inside here, you will see him soon. Come on, everyone is waiting for you, don't waste time."

Upon hearing this, Ling Chen shook his head helplessly. Now that he's reached this place, it's impossible to turn back. At this moment, Ling Chen adjusted his mood, followed behind Li Bin, and walked straight toward the factory.

Although the factory had three floors, the place Ling Chen headed to was the basement beneath the factory—a basement that was over six hundred square meters in size, divided into many small rooms, each reinforced with concrete and steel, specially designed to imprison criminals.

Walking down the stairs into the basement, a foul smell instantly assaulted his senses.

Ling Chen looked around and asked, "Mr. Li, where is Tang Yuan? When can I see him?"

"Don't rush, he's resting now, I'll take you to sit somewhere first, and someone will come to ask you a few questions soon, hope you'll cooperate."

Ling Chen nodded, and soon, he was taken by Li Bin into an interrogation room.

"Mr. Ling, wait here, I'll go find Tang Yuan."

"Okay, thank you." After watching Li Bin leave, Ling Chen found a seat on his own, patiently waiting. As moments passed, Ling Chen reached into his pocket to get his phone. However, when he felt an empty pocket, Ling Chen finally remembered that he had handed over his phone upon entry as Li Bin had requested.

It's been almost half an hour, why is no one here yet?

Ling Chen thought to himself, frowning silently. Besides, isn't this a secret interrogation base? It's too quiet, not even footsteps or any sound can be heard.

After waiting a few more minutes, the restless Ling Chen stood up and pushed open the door of the interrogation room. Stepping into the corridor outside, Ling Chen looked around and found there was no one around.

Seeing this situation, Ling Chen felt increasingly strange. He walked to the neighboring interrogation room, pushed the door open, and saw inside, the room was in a complete mess, all dilapidated, seemingly untouched for a long time.

This... Seeing the scene before him, Ling Chen was slightly stunned, feeling increasingly uneasy. Without time to think further, Ling Chen hurried to the next interrogation room, and similarly found it in the

same condition, all filled with rubble, except for the interrogation room he was in, none of the other rooms had been cleaned.

Moreover, there was not a single person in the entire basement.

Damn it! What's going on here? Ling Chen cursed quietly, quickly walking toward the stairs, only to find the door at the top of the stairs already closed. Bang! Bang! Bang! Ling Chen reached the door and started pounding on it, but there was no indication of movement outside.

Without thinking, Ling Chen kicked at the door fiercely, intending to break through the door in front of him.

However, to his surprise, except for feeling a strong recoil, the door showed no signs of damage. After a brief moment of staring, Ling Chen pulled out a set of keys and lightly scraped across the door's surface.

Shortly after, Ling Chen found in despair that the door was made of steel, both in hardness and thickness, beyond his ability to break. Damn it! Who the hell did this?

Ling Chen thought silently. It seemed that Li Bin he met earlier wasn't actually from the military, otherwise, they wouldn't have brought him to such a place. The real purpose of those people was likely to trap him here, leaving him to fend for himself in this hell-hole.

What should I do?

Ling Chen ruffled his hair, frustrated at being deceived by those bastards. Having called Pang Jiulin and learned about the situation in Beijing, Ling Chen didn't doubt Li Bin's appearance at all. But only now did he realize that someone was impersonating a military officer.

Great, now, without a phone, without food, without drink, calling for help from the heavens or the earth would be futile, all he could do was wait for death.

Fortunately... This basement had ventilation shafts, at least he wouldn't suffocate to death. Just as he was thinking about this, smoke suddenly began to spew from the ventilation shafts in the basement's ceiling.

Seeing the thick smoke, Ling Chen couldn't help but curse loudly. These bastards! Truly despicable, using such methods to deal with him. Without a second thought, Ling Chen ran over, took off his clothes, and stuffed them into all the vents to prevent the smoke from seeping inside.

After spending about five minutes, all the ventilation shafts in the basement were blocked, preventing the smoke from coming in. But similarly, losing ventilation, the basement was completely sealed, with no air circulation possible.

Considering the size of this basement, without air circulation, it would hold out for a few hours at most.

No! I must quickly find a way to escape or I'll really die here.

With this thought, Ling Chen began searching room by room, hoping to find a way out. However, after half an hour, Ling Chen sunk into despair. Besides the steel-made door, the basement had no other exits. Moreover, he had tried digging a tunnel to escape, only to find that the walls surrounding the basement were made of concrete and steel, extremely hard, and it was impossible to escape relying solely on his own strength. With limited air, he couldn't engage in intense physical activity.

Damn it!

Ling Chen slumped to the ground, leaning against the wall, wondering if he was truly going to die here.

Chapter 1364 - 1672: Citywide Search and Rescue

"Have you found anything? Have you found anything?" Ling Kun asked anxiously.

"Uncle Ling, don't worry yet, I'm looking for clues." Hu Fei wiped the sweat off his forehead and kept tapping the keyboard. Since learning Ling Chen was taken away, the entire base panicked, everyone was searching for Ling Chen's whereabouts.

A few minutes passed, Hu Fei shook his head and said, "No, I can't find any information on that Li Bin, also, I've checked all the flights going to Beijing, and found no suspicious targets. Since the other party is impersonating military personnel, they must be well-prepared, we're completely at a loss now, with no clues at all."

Ling Kun asked from the side, "Is there no progress over there in Beijing?"

"Falcon Private Security Company and all the underground forces members are searching for Ling Chen's whereabouts. However, Beijing is so big, completing the search in a short time is impossible, who knows where they'll take Ling Chen."

Ling Kun took out his phone, glanced at the time, and said in a deep voice, "It's been so long, and there's no news from Ling Chen at all, he must have fallen into the opponent's trap. No way! I can't just wait here, I must go to Beijing."

"I'll go with you," Ling Tao said.

Hu Fei nodded and said, "I'll arrange a plane for you, it'll take off in half an hour." Although the Beijing forces are under their control, with no one on-site in Beijing, it's better for Ling Kun and the others to go there, at least to issue orders in person.

At this moment, not only Ling Chen's forces, but even the Beijing police have joined the search and rescue operation. Knowing someone impersonated military personnel to take Ling Chen away, Pang Jiulin immediately contacted the Beijing police and military personnel. Ling Chen is identified by the military as a person of interest, now someone dares to impersonate military identity, the military won't let that go. Therefore, now the entire Beijing is agitated due to Ling Chen, with all forces in motion.

As time ticks away, in the underground room of an abandoned factory building, Ling Chen leaned against the wall, trying to minimize his movement to preserve the underground room's air from depleting too fast. Ling Chen calculated earnestly, as long as he utilizes the underground room's air properly, he should last about three days. Going three days without food and water is not a big issue considering his physical condition. However, once it exceeds three days, he will be in mortal danger.

So now, all hopes lie in the hands of those people outside, if they can't find him within three days, then he's really finished.

Southern Ling Family... Ling Chen clenched his fist, a flash of fierceness in his eyes. Thinking carefully, the mastermind behind this isn't hard to guess. The Southern Ling Family knew he got involved with that ancient tomb, so when the government showed great interest in that tomb, the Southern Ling Family only needed to find one or two insiders and anonymously report, directing the government's attention to him.

Although the forces he controls now are quite formidable, compared to the nation, he's just an ant under the giant's foot. Hence, as long as he's within the country, he must comply with government orders, not defy them. Through this matter, the Southern Ling Family seized the opportunity, impersonating military personnel, no matter how vigilant he is, he couldn't identify Li Bin's false identity.

Just wait! Ling Chen thought to himself. As long as he survives this, he'll completely crush the Southern Ling Family people.

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In a flash, a day and a half had passed.

"What good are you, thousands of people can't even find one person." In the Falcon Private Security Company, Ling Kun cursed in the conference room.

So much time has passed, still no clue of Ling Chen, how could Ling Kun not be anxious. After all this time, Ling Chen might already... Ling Kun didn't even want to continue this line of thought. To find Ling Chen, he's gone two days and nights without resting, Ling Tao accompanied him, tirelessly searching for Ling Chen's whereabouts.

Unlike Ling Kun, Ling Tao is well aware, if anything happens to Ling Chen, then the Northern Ling Family will be finished forever, with no hope of rising. So, his emotions closely matched Ling Kun's, both longing for Ling Chen to return safely.

Faced with Ling Kun's scolding, everyone in the conference room hung their heads, not daring to breathe heavily. These were all high-levels of Falcon Private Security Company, along with some major and minor leaders of the Beijing underground forces. To find Ling Chen, all mobilizable power has been deployed.

Taking a deep breath, Ling Kun composed himself, looking at everyone present, saying, "Sorry, my emotions got out of control earlier, I hope you can understand." Pausing for a moment, Ling Kun continued, "Tell me about your progress."

A middle-aged man stood up and said, "The Southern District of Beijing has been searched with no results, police and military personnel are searching the Northern District, currently with no progress."

Hearing this, Ling Kun frowned and said, "Does that mean there are three districts still unsearched?"

"Mr. Ling, Beijing is too large, it took over a day just to search the Southern District, to search the entire Beijing, it'll take at least six to seven days. Adding Beijing suburb, it's at least ten days."

"What I'm lacking most now is time." Ling Kun said sternly: "Listen up, I don't have ten days to give you, maximum three days, I must get news of Ling Chen. Do you hear? Alright! Dismiss now, don't waste time here."

After the conference room emptied, Ling Kun and Ling Tao quickly headed to Falcon Company's tech department. Pushing the door open, seeing over a dozen busy technicians, Ling Kun asked, "How's it going, any results?"

"Not yet, according to the surveillance footage from the airport the day before yesterday, there were three people in total, they left the airport in a military jeep. However, these people were very cautious, deliberately avoiding areas monitored by surveillance cameras on the road. We've organized all the traffic surveillance from that day and are checking them one by one. Beijing's surveillance coverage is seventy percent, no matter how careful those people are, it's impossible to avoid all surveillance."

Ling Kun nodded and said, "Keep searching, if manpower is insufficient let me know, I'll find a way."

"Understood."

Exiting the tech department, Ling Tao patted Ling Kun's shoulder, comforting him: "Don't worry too much, you and I both know Ling Chen's skills, he won't be in trouble."

Ling Kun sighed lightly: "Let's hope so. If anything happens to him, I wouldn't know how to face Qingling. Honestly, I'm already regretting it, maybe I shouldn't have let him get involved, letting him remain an ordinary person would have been better."

Chapter 1365 - 1673: Su Mei's Decision

"Pavilion Master."

In the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, Du Kang gently pushed open the door and walked into Su Mei's room. Seeing Su Mei pretending to nap, Du Kang called out softly.

Opening her eyes and seeing Du Kang in front of her, Su Mei slowly sat up straight from her chair and made herself a cup of hot tea, "Elder Du, is there something you need from me?"

"I've just received news that Ling Chen might be in trouble."

"In trouble?" Su Mei's hand holding the cup paused slightly, and she looked at Du Kang with surprise, asking, "Elder Du, what happened to him?"

"I'm not entirely sure about the specifics. However, according to the information we've received, many people are currently searching for Ling Chen's whereabouts in Beijing. Even the government is involved, and all TV channels are reporting on this, with missing person notices almost covering the entire city."

"So, Ling Chen has disappeared?"

Du Kang shook his head and said, "I don't really know, maybe he's missing, or perhaps he's been kidnapped. Pavilion Master, I don't think this is something you should be concerned about. Don't you see this as a rare opportunity for us?"

"Opportunity? Elder Du, what do you mean by that?"

"While everyone's busy with Ling Chen's matter, our Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion can take this chance to apply some pressure on Dragon Tiger Hall and slow their expansion. From what I know, besides their headquarters in East Sea City and their branch in Beijing, Dragon Tiger Hall is already preparing to

establish branches in ten first-tier cities. Once these branches are established, Dragon Tiger Hall's influence will expand further. Over the years, although our Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion has been a dominant force in the Martial Arts world, we've focused primarily on that domain. Dragon Tiger Hall is different; they have two development paths, one targeting martial artists and another for the future populace."

"Dragon Tiger Hall is essentially a martial arts academy, recruiting a large number of talented youths for training from a young age. Unlike other academies that charge fees for profit, Dragon Tiger Hall differentiates their learners into two levels. Ordinary learners need to pay a fee to train in Dragon Tiger Hall, while talented learners are highly valued; they are trained in martial arts for free and also receive significant welfare and financial support. To put it plainly, Dragon Tiger Hall is cultivating talent for themselves. When these learners grow up, they won't leave; they'll stay with Dragon Tiger Hall, serving it."

"Pavilion Master, I must admit, Dragon Tiger Hall has more foresight than us. They're not after short-term glory; they're considering the future. Just think, when Dragon Tiger Hall's branches cover the country, how many talented learners would join them? In ten years, once these talented learners mature, Dragon Tiger Hall will possess the strongest power, and no one will be able to shake their position. By then, the future of the Martial Arts world will belong to Dragon Tiger Hall, and our Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion's glory will be entirely overshadowed by them. The most terrifying part is, whether the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion can survive until then is uncertain. If we don't come up with a strategy soon, it will spell real disaster for us."

Upon hearing Du Kang's words, Su Mei felt a chill run through her body. She thought that by emulating Dragon Tiger Hall's methods and using the treasured martial arts secrets to attract martial artists, she could go toe-to-toe with Dragon Tiger Hall. Now it seemed like a naive wishful thinking. While she was pondering how to restore the pavilion's glory, Dragon Tiger Hall had already set their sights firmly on the future.

Ten years... Du Kang was right; if she didn't take action and allowed Dragon Tiger Hall to continue its development, in ten years, it would be questionable whether Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion could even exist.

"Elder Du, what do you think we should do?" Su Mei asked.

"We absolutely cannot let Dragon Tiger Hall's branches open smoothly. Additionally, we must establish our own martial arts academy modeled after Dragon Tiger Hall; it's the only way we can confront them as equals."

"Establish a martial arts academy?" Previously, in the eyes of Su Mei and others, martial arts academies were merely money-making schemes, with their founders considered the least reputable in the martial arts world. Now, even the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion had to open one, and it was imperative, which left Su Mei feeling conflicted.

"Pavilion Master, our Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion isn't short of money; financially, we can match Dragon Tiger Hall."

After pondering for a moment, Su Mei nodded and said, "Alright, I approve of this."

"Rest assured, Pavilion Master, our Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion will have its day of glory again."

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Ling Family.

Ever since the missing person notice about Ling Chen was reported on television, Nanrong Wanqing, Tang Shiyun, Liu Xiyao, and other women rushed to the Ling Family to stay by Yang Qingling's side, comforting her and waiting for news about Ling Chen.

Among the women, no one was more worried than Nanrong Wanqing. As clever as she was, she clearly understood the danger Ling Chen was facing. If it weren't for desperate circumstances, the forces behind Ling Chen would never have issued a missing person notice on television.

"Wanqing, you don't need to worry too much. I believe Ling will be alright; he has a knack for surviving tough situations," Tang Shiyun comforted.

Nanrong Wanqing gently nodded, trying to muster a smile, "I believe he will be okay too."

Just then, a phone started ringing, and everyone's gaze turned to Yang Qingling. She quickly pulled out her phone, answered it, and asked, "How's it going? Any news of him? ... Really? Okay, okay, I understand."

After hanging up, Nanrong Wanqing eagerly asked, "Mrs. Yang, is there any news about Ling Chen?"

"Your Uncle Ling just called to say they've found the car that transported Ling Chen. They're currently following the trail, hoping it might lead to his whereabouts."

Hearing Yang Qingling's words, Nanrong Wanqing felt her heart sink. After all this time, Ling Chen was still missing. It's been over two days now, and although they hope for his safe return, the longer it takes, the less hope they feel. Perhaps... Nanrong Wanqing closed her eyes, shook her head, and pushed that possibility out of her mind.

No, it can't be. Ling Chen will definitely be alright. Nanrong Wanqing bit her lip, and tears slowly streamed down her face.

"Wanqing..."

Liu Xiyao looked at the grieving Nanrong Wanqing, sighed softly, and offered her a tissue.

"Thank you!"

"Don't be sad; everything will be alright," Liu Xiyao said confidently, "I believe Ling Chen wouldn't let us down."

...

"I'm afraid I'll disappoint you all..."

In the confined basement, Ling Chen sat limply on the ground, muttering to himself with a hint of weakness in his voice.

Chapter 1366 - 1674: Jiubao Village

Two and a half days have passed, and the air in the basement has become thin, making each breath extremely precious.

Now, every time Ling Chen takes a breath, he has to hold on for several minutes before changing breaths. Only in this way can he endure for a longer time.

Slowly exhaling a breath, Ling Chen gave a bitter smile to himself. From hope at the beginning to despair now, he has nearly given up. It seems he truly cannot escape this disaster this time. Even with the Prajnaparamita Sutra, he can't do anything.

He's not a deity; without air and food, any master from the Heavenly List couldn't survive. Perhaps only someone like Ling Gengqiu with an immortal body could live through this.

Holding his breath for several minutes, Ling Chen reached his limit, his mouth slightly open ready to change breaths, but he quickly realized that the air in the entire basement had been depleted. Is he going to die... Ling Chen thought secretly. The suffocation from the lack of air led to oxygen deficiency in his brain, and soon, Ling Chen felt dizzy, with his consciousness gradually becoming blurred, everything before his eyes slowly turning hazy.

Seems like... he's truly hopeless now...

Bang!

As everything turned completely dark, Ling Chen's body slightly leaned against the wall and directly fell to the ground.

...

At this moment, ten kilometers away from the abandoned factory, Ling Kun and Ling Tao were sitting in a car, followed by a dozen vans slowly driving ahead along the road. Looking at the buildings on both sides of the road, Ling Kun occasionally issued commands through the walkie-talkie. Soon, several vans from the convoy would head towards those buildings for a search.

Just a few hours ago, the tech department finally found that military jeep in the surveillance footage of Beijing, even though it was only one image. Using the direction of that military jeep, the tech

department has pinpointed the possible area where Ling Chen might appear. With this clue, the entire search range has been narrowed down to the Beijing Suburb.

At this moment, everyone including the police has put efforts into the search operation in the Beijing Suburb.

After driving for over half an hour, Ling Kun had already searched all the buildings he saw along the road but still found no clues related to Ling Chen.

"Mr. Ling, there's an abandoned factory ahead, should we go take a look?"

Upon hearing the voice from the walkie-talkie, Ling Kun responded, "Let's go."

Before long, the convoy stopped next to the abandoned factory. Getting off the car, Ling Kun looked at the surrounding environment. Because it had been abandoned for a long time, weeds grew around the factory.

"Ling Kun, look over there." At that moment, Ling Tao who was accompanying them seemed to have discovered something and quickly ran towards the front. Upon reaching, Ling Tao pointed at the ground, "Look here, these weeds have been pressed down, it should be tire tracks. Moreover, there are four tire marks here, indicating that a vehicle has stopped here."

Squatting on the ground, Ling Kun examined the tire marks, then measured with his fingers, "The width of the tires matches that military jeep, and if there are no surprises, Ling Chen was probably confined here." With that, Ling Kun stood up and said to everyone behind him, "Search this factory thoroughly."

As everyone entered the factory, it wasn't long before the search personnel made a discovery.

Upon hearing the news, Ling Kun and Ling Tao quickly arrived inside the factory, looking at a damaged door, and couldn't help but frown.

"Did you break this?"

A man shook his head and said, "No, it was like this when we arrived."

Ling Tao examined it for a moment and said, "Judging by the damage marks, it should have been caused just recently. Is it possible that Ling Chen broke through this door and escaped from inside?"

"Impossible." Ling Kun pointed at the scattered stone and the iron door on the ground, "The iron door fell inward, indicating the person who broke this door did so from the outside." Saying that, Ling Kun's eyes narrowed slightly and took a few steps to the iron door, reaching out and touching the dent in the middle of the iron door.

"Look at this mark, doesn't it look like a fist imprint?"

Ling Tao approached closely, astonished, "This iron door is two fingers thick, and the door frame is fixed tight, yet someone managed to punch through this iron door, their strength surely reached the Heavenly List level."

Ling Kun nodded, "Indeed! Let's go, let's check inside first." Entering the basement, everyone turned on the flashlights built into their phones.

Soon, Ling Kun found a piece of clothing in the basement's ventilation hole, "This is the outfit Ling Chen was wearing when he was taken that day."

"Seems like we found the right place, Ling Chen was confined here all along. Look at the residue marks on the clothes, someone tried to smoke him out. Thankfully, Ling Chen was clever enough to use the clothes to block the ventilation duct."

"But who could have rescued him from here?" Ling Kun asked puzzled.

"That we don't know, but what we can confirm is that Ling Chen is at least still alive. The person breaking this iron door was clearly not among those who held him, or else they wouldn't need to resort to such violent methods. Don't worry, Ling Chen might contact us soon."

"Let's hope so."

...

Not knowing how much time passed, Ling Chen groggily woke up, opening his eyes, looking at the surrounding environment, Ling Chen felt his head heavy, weighed down. Lying on the bed, Ling Chen took a deep breath. He didn't expect to still be alive! At that moment in the basement, he thought he was surely done for.

But who rescued him? Looking at where he was now, it seemed less like a hospital; more like an old abandoned house, the window glass was shattered, the roof occasionally let wind in, even the bed he lay on was made of straw.

After resting for a while, Ling Chen slowly got up from the bed, then moved around the bedside a bit. Once his body had sufficiently recovered, Ling Chen pushed the door open and walked outside.

Standing outside the house, Ling Chen looked around and saw fields of rice paddies, the air was very fresh. Typically, only the countryside has such clean air.

Looks like he's not in Beijing. Just then, Ling Chen suddenly saw a person walking from a distance. To be precise, it was a middle-aged man. The other was dressed simply in a vest, carrying a bundle of firewood, and a couple of straw bundles, striding towards him.

When the man approached, Ling Chen hurriedly went to meet him and asked, "Uncle, can I ask you, where is this place?"

"This is Jiubao Village."

"Jiubao Village? How far is this place from Beijing?"

"Not far, more than forty kilometers."

Thankfully, more than forty kilometers is not too far. Ling Chen nodded secretly. "Right! Uncle, do you know whose house this is?"

The middle-aged man grinned, "This is my home."

Chapter 1367 - 1675: Yao Zhensheng

"Your home?" Ling Chen asked in surprise, "Then... how did I end up at your place?"

The middle-aged man smiled and said, "Someone entrusted you to me and asked me to take care of you. You seem to be recovering well. Come, eat something first, and later help me repair the house. This place hasn't been lived in for many years, and it's not suitable for living now."

Seeing the buns and water brought by the middle-aged man, Ling Chen couldn't contain his hunger. He hadn't eaten or drunk for days, and his stomach was already empty. In no time, Ling Chen devoured five buns, drank the water, and wiped his mouth, saying contentedly, "Thank you, Mr. Yao!"

"No need for thanks."

"Mr. Yao, I still don't know your name?"

"My name is Yao Zhensheng, just call me Mr. Yao."

"Mr. Yao, can you tell me who entrusted me to you?" Ling Chen asked curiously. He was eager to know who had rescued him from the basement.

"Sorry," Yao Zhensheng shook his head and said, "I can't answer that question. I promised that person I wouldn't reveal their identity. You just need to know that person doesn't mean any harm to you."

Without waiting for Ling Chen to ask more, Yao Zhensheng brushed the grass off his pants, stood up, and said, "Alright, since you're full, come and help. We need to fix this house today; otherwise, we won't have anywhere to stay tonight."

"Um... Mr. Yao, can I make a phone call to my family? I've been missing for so many days, they must be worried."

"Don't worry, it'll be fine." Yao Zhensheng said as he climbed a ladder, carrying straw to the roof and starting to repair it.

Ling Chen looked around and saw nothing nearby except fields. The nearest building was over a hundred meters away. After hesitating for a moment, Ling Chen decided to help Yao Zhensheng. After all, Yao Zhensheng knew the person who saved him. Besides, he had many unanswered questions and hoped to find some answers from Yao Zhensheng.

Seeing Ling Chen climb onto the roof, a bright smile appeared on Yao Zhensheng's face, as if he was quite pleased.

After two whole hours, Ling Chen and Yao Zhensheng finally finished repairing the entire roof, laying a new layer of straw. They also collected wood, cutting it into flat planks to seal the drafty spots in the house. However, even though the house was repaired, they couldn't make furniture inside, leaving it looking very bare.

Yao Zhensheng seemed quite satisfied. "Come, I'll take you to get some food. After working hard all afternoon, we deserve a reward."

Without resting, Ling Chen quickly followed Yao Zhensheng toward the mountains north of the field. Along the way, Ling Chen spotted many wild rabbits and pheasants. Wow! There's quite a lot of game on this mountain.

Yao Zhensheng broke off some branches from a tree, sharpened the ends with a knife, making some simple spears, and handed them to Ling Chen, "I heard you're skilled, so I'll leave the hunting to you."

Ling Chen nodded and gladly agreed. In no time, using the spears, he had caught several wild rabbits and pheasants. Carrying their game, the two returned full-handed to the house's side.

"You go rest first, I'll prepare the food." Yao Zhensheng said while skillfully cutting and cleaning the game.

Ling Chen sat quietly, occasionally glancing at Yao Zhensheng, observing this extraordinary middle-aged man.

"Mr. Yao, where is your home?" Ling Chen asked. The house beside him had just been repaired, and inside it was a mess, with thick dust showing that no one had lived there for years. Yao Zhensheng must have lived elsewhere before.

"You mean my home?" Yao Zhensheng turned and glanced at Ling Chen, smiling as he said, "Actually, I don't know where my home is. I've stayed in many places and only recently returned here. Although the world is vast, I prefer these quiet and peaceful places."

"You don't have family?"

Yao Zhensheng shook his head, a hint of nostalgia in his eyes, "I haven't had family for a long time. Over the years, I've forgotten what it's like to have family around." He looked at Ling Chen and said, "I actually envy you, having so many people who care about you. You'll never know what loneliness feels like."

"Mr. Yao, if you're willing, you could leave with me. My friends could become your friends too." Ling Chen suggested.

Yao Zhensheng chuckled and said, "Thank you for your kindness, but I'm used to living alone."

As they chatted, the aroma of the roasting game under the flames became more intense, making Ling Chen's mouth water. Taking the roasted chicken handed over by Yao Zhensheng, Ling Chen tore off a drumstick and took a big bite, savoring the juicy and flavorful taste.

"It's a pity..." Ling Chen lamented, "If only we had some wine now."

Yao Zhensheng laughed heartily and said, "I almost forgot. Wait a moment!" With that, he went to the side of the house, found a shovel, and began digging into the ground. Shortly, Yao Zhensheng unearthed two jars of wine.

"Here, try this, it's been buried for decades."

Without hesitation, Ling Chen took a swig from the jar. The rich and aromatic wine flowed down his throat, and Ling Chen's eyes lit up. He had thought the wine he drank at Du Kang's was the best, but compared to this wine, Du Kang's couldn't compare at all.

"How is it?"

"Excellent wine, the best I've ever had in my life." Ling Chen praised without reservation.

"This is probably the only time you'll taste this wine in your life."

After they were full, Ling Chen and Yao Zhensheng sat outside the house, chatting by the fire. "Mr. Yao, you really can't tell me who saved me?"

"It's not that I don't want to tell you, but I promised someone I wouldn't reveal their identity. Rest assured, he means no harm, and you'll be able to return in a couple of days."

"Didn't he leave any message?" Ling Chen found it strange. There had to be a reason for someone to rescue him and bring him here.

Yao Zhensheng nodded, "He left a message for you, but now's not the time to tell you. Get some rest, and I'll let you know tomorrow morning." With that, Yao Zhensheng belched and stood up, saying, "I drank a bit too much, so I'll head to bed first. You should rest early too; there's plenty to do tomorrow."

Chapter 1368 - 1676: The Cave Dweller (1)

Watching Yao Zhensheng walk into the house, Ling Chen stood up by himself and walked to the two empty wine jars, a peculiar glint flashing in his eyes.

The next morning.

Ling Chen crawled out of bed, looking at the bright sunlight streaming through the window. He walked out of the room, only to see Yao Zhensheng already up, wielding an axe and chopping wood. Ling Chen greeted him, and Yao Zhensheng pointed to the table outside the house, saying, "Breakfast is there, eat it while it's hot."

Breakfast was simple, two steamed buns and a bowl of millet porridge. Ling Chen wasn't picky; after days of hunger, he'd eat anything.

After breakfast, Yao Zhensheng walked over to Ling Chen and pointed to the large mountain to the north, saying, "Do you remember the path I took you up the mountain yesterday? Follow that path all the way up, and when you reach the top, you'll find a cave, where someone will be waiting for you."

"You mean... the person who saved me?"

Yao Zhensheng nodded, "That's right. You have many questions, don't you? He will help answer them."

"Mr. Yao, aren't you coming with me?"

"I won't be going, and perhaps we may never have the chance to meet again." With that, Yao Zhensheng turned around and continued chopping wood.

Watching the busy Yao Zhensheng, Ling Chen said nothing more and headed straight up the mountain. Following the winding mountain path, it took Ling Chen about an hour to finally reach the summit. Upon arrival, Ling Chen immediately spotted the cave Yao Zhensheng mentioned.

Outside the cave, Ling Chen didn't rush in but instead surveyed the surroundings. At that moment, a low voice suddenly came from inside the cave, "Why are you hesitating outside when you're here? Are you afraid to come in?"

Upon hearing the unfamiliar voice, Ling Chen hesitated for a moment, then stepped inside. The light inside the cave was very dim, and it grew darker as he ventured further.

After walking about ten meters, Ling Chen stopped, choosing not to proceed further. It was pitch black ahead, and he couldn't see his hand in front of him. Who knew if there might be danger lurking? It was best to be cautious. From his current position, he would be able to escape immediately should there be any danger.

"Who are you? Why did you save me?" Ling Chen asked.

"I believe you should have guessed who I am." The unfamiliar voice replied, "Perhaps you don't know, but I've been following you these past days, observing you in secret."

Startled upon hearing this, Ling Chen realized this person had been monitoring him, yet he hadn't noticed. This showed the person's extraordinary skill. Ling Chen asked, "Why were you watching me?"

"Because you know people like me, and I find you very intriguing."

People like him... At that moment, Ling Chen's heart raced, and he guessed the person's identity, "You... you're... He Zhishen?"

"It seems you're not too dim."

It was indeed him! Ling Chen was internally shocked. Back in the ancient tomb, the person in the stone coffin vanished without a trace, and now it was clear he had been secretly following Ling Chen. No wonder he knew where Ling Chen was imprisoned. The thought that the person before him was another century-old anomaly made Ling Chen feel a complex array of emotions.

"So you saved me to learn about the person like you?"

"Pretty much," He Zhishen replied. "You should know, people like me are rare in this world, so finding someone like me is extremely difficult. I tried in the past, but it was all in vain. Hundreds of years of solitude are beyond your imagination, which is why I chose to bury myself. If you hadn't opened the ancient tomb, I might have slept forever."

"Ling Chen, arrange for that person to meet with me. Consider it repayment for saving your life. How about it?"

Faced with the request, Ling Chen hesitated. "What, are you unwilling?" Seeing Ling Chen's delayed response, He Zhishen asked.

"It's not that I'm unwilling, it's just... that person's situation is more complicated. Unlike you, who are whole, he now only has a head and can't speak. So even if you meet, communication won't be possible." Pausing, Ling Chen shifted his tone, "Can I ask, if you were to meet, what would you discuss?"

"Of course, we'd discuss the question that's troubled us for centuries. If I'm the only one like this in the world, it means I'm very special, but since there are others like me, there must be a reason. I've been searching for the answer to this question for centuries. Now, the world has changed and progressed. Perhaps I can find the answer."

Ling Chen thought for a moment, then asked, "Have you practiced martial arts?"

"Yes, I started practicing at five, and in thirty years, I broke through to the realm of the Heavenly List, then spent another fifty years reaching the pinnacle of martial arts mastery. From that moment, my life underwent a tremendous change."

"Seems like my guess was correct."

He Zhishen asked, "What do you mean?"

"Every person with immortality has reached the pinnacle of martial arts mastery. Simply put, your martial arts realm has surpassed the Heavenly List, reaching another unknown level. As practitioners of martial arts, we all understand that besides strengthening the body, martial arts also unlocks potential and breaks physical limits. Perhaps the unknown level you've reached has surpassed human limits. I believe this is the most reasonable explanation."

"Life limits..." He Zhishen said, "Your guess is indeed reasonable."

"Mr.... Mr. He..." Ling Chen struggled with how to address He Zhishen and finally called him 'Mr. He'. After all, given his age, he absolutely deserved the title.

"Everyone seeks longevity, and many would stop at nothing for a few more years of life. In this world of billions, only you have such long lives. Isn't that good?"

"Perhaps you think it's good, but to me, it's the beginning of pain. My appearance doesn't change, and I won't age. So we can't stay in one place too long, about ten years; if people notice I haven't aged, I must leave. Otherwise, I'll become a 'monster' in people's eyes, hunted by everyone. Consequently, I must keep moving, constantly meeting strangers. When those strangers become your friends or family, all you can do is watch their lives end while you're powerless to help. Do you know how painful that feels?"

Chapter 1369 - 1677: The Cave Dweller (2)

After listening to He Zhishen's words, Ling Chen nodded to himself. Indeed, not everyone is as carefree as Ling Gengqiu. For Ling Gengqiu, as long as there are women alive in the world, he has a reason to continue living.

"I went to visit your tomb, it seems like you've done a lot of experiments."

"That's right, I want to find out the reason for my longevity, so I can let more people I care about continue to live."

Hearing this, Ling Chen was taken aback, "You want to replicate your longevity onto others?"

"Yes. To achieve this goal, I've tried countless methods, but unfortunately, none succeeded. Apart from extending their lifespan by decades, they eventually died. That's why I grew disheartened and decided to bury myself forever."

"What about now?" Ling Chen asked, "Are you still willing to fight for this goal?"

"I don't know, these days, I've been following you, observing this new world. To be honest, I'm very confused right now, so I need someone who can help me understand."

"So you want to meet with someone like you." Ling Chen nodded and said, "I understand. How about this, I'll try to arrange for you to communicate with them. How does that sound?"

"Alright. Once you have everything arranged, come here and find me."

"Do you plan to stay here? The current world is vastly different from the one you knew, don't you want to go out and see it for yourself? If you're willing, I can take you around and help you understand this new world."

"Thank you for your kindness, but no need, I still prefer a quiet life."

"Alright then, I'll come back to find you." With that, Ling Chen didn't linger, turned around, and walked out of the cave. Previously, Yao Zhensheng had told him that this place was only a few dozen kilometers away from Beijing. After descending the mountain, Ling Chen identified the direction and headed straight for Beijing.

After walking for about an hour, Ling Chen arrived beside a wide highway. After waiting for a while, he finally hitched a ride.

Once in Beijing, Ling Chen immediately borrowed a phone to call Hu Fei. In less than half an hour, several business cars arrived at his location.

Seeing Ling Kun and others walking briskly from the car, Ling Chen smiled slightly and quickly approached, "Dad, Uncle Ling."

Ling Kun looked Ling Chen over from head to toe, and once he was sure Ling Chen was safe, he breathed a sigh of relief and patted him vigorously on the shoulder, "You little rascal... you almost scared your dad to death."

"Dad, don't worry, I'm tough. See, I'm perfectly fine."

"Son, who exactly saved you?" Ling Kun asked curiously, "When we found the place where you were held, you had already been rescued."

"It's a long story, not something that can be explained in just a few words. Dad, let's head back first."

"Alright then, get in the car."

On the way back to the Falcon Private Security Company, Ling Chen called his mom to let her know he was safe. Initially, Yang Qingling wanted to come to Beijing to see him, but he managed to talk her out of it.

After hanging up, Ling Kun, next to him, said, "You should call Elder Tong; he's encountered quite a few troubles. Because of you, Dragon Tiger Hall has suffered some losses recently."

Hearing this, Ling Chen immediately dialed Tong Zhentian's number.

"Hello! Elder Tong, it's me."

"Ling Chen? Great, you're finally safe." On the other end, Tong Zhentian obviously breathed a sigh of relief.

"Elder Tong, I heard that something happened at Dragon Tiger Hall? What's going on?"

"Sigh!" Tong Zhentian sighed lightly and said, "Originally, Dragon Tiger Hall planned to open ten branches in several first-tier cities in the country. However, in the past few days, all those branches that were being prepared were attacked. Fortunately, there were no casualties, but all the facilities were destroyed. I'm afraid our plans will have to be postponed for several months now."

Frowning, Ling Chen asked, "Elder Tong, how did this happen? Do you know who did it?"

"If I'm not mistaken, it should be the handiwork of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion."

The Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion... Ling Chen was slightly taken aback, it turned out to be Su Mei! This... with Su Mei's personality, she shouldn't have done something like this.

"Elder Tong, could there be some mistake? The Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion shouldn't provoke us at this time."

"Who else could it be if not them? The Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion really knows how to seize opportunities. Since you disappeared, all of Dragon Tiger Hall's efforts have been focused on you. Taking advantage of this, the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion not only destroyed our branches but also opened more than twenty martial arts academies in major cities in just a few days. By doing this, they clearly want to compete with us."

"Alright, I understand." Ling Chen replied, "Elder Tong, don't worry too much about this matter, let the people from Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion taste a little success, and I'll handle it when I get back."

"Okay."

Putting down the phone, Ling Chen looked at Ling Kun beside him and said, "It seems the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion couldn't hold back anymore and wants to compete with us."

"What the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion did is smart. If they didn't do this, in ten years, they might cease to exist. They must have realized the crisis, which is why they chose to act. However, with Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion making a move, Dragon Tiger Hall's days will be tough."

Ling Chen smiled faintly and said indifferently, "It doesn't matter, it's good to have a rival. I don't want to be like Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, dominating everything. Only competition can truly promote the development of the martial arts world."

"By the way!" Ling Kun suddenly changed the topic and said, "Later, I'll take you to meet someone. I think you'll be happy to see them."

"Really?"

Before long, the convoy reached the Falcon Private Security Company. Getting out of the car, Ling Chen followed Ling Kun and went straight up to the fifth floor by elevator. Outside the room, Ling Kun opened the door and led Ling Chen inside.

Upon entering, they saw someone sitting in the spacious room, or to be precise, tied to a chair with ropes. Seeing the person, Ling Chen couldn't help but be a bit surprised, "Dad, where did you find this guy?"

"In recent days, I've mobilized thousands of people to find your whereabouts, but instead of finding you, we unexpectedly discovered his traces. Now that you're back, I'll leave this person to you to handle."

Ling Chen nodded and walked directly in front of the person, with a faint smile, he said, "Mr. Li, we meet again." This man was none other than Li Bin, who impersonated a military officer that day.

Watching the smile on Ling Chen's face, Li Bin's expression instantly turned extremely unpleasant.

"Mr. Li, tell me, who instructed you to do this, was it someone from the southern Ling Family?"

Chapter 1370 - 1678: Whereabouts of the Southern Ling Family

Li Bin kept his mouth shut, his eyes fixed on the ground, ignoring Ling Chen's words. Seeing the other's reaction, Ling Chen's lips hinted at a smile. He brought over a chair and placed it in front of Li Bin. "Mr. Li, the name Li Bin probably isn't your real name. Do you realize that if it weren't for my luck, I'd be dead in that basement by now? So, if you don't want to suffer, you'd better tell me everything you know. Otherwise, don't blame me for what happens next."

After hearing Ling Chen's words, Li Bin slightly raised his head, glanced at Ling Chen, and his face showed a hint of determination.

"Won't talk?" Ling Chen nodded slightly. "Alright, if that's the case, don't blame me for being ruthless."

"Bring some people." As Ling Chen's voice fell, two security personnel in suits entered from outside. "Mr. Ling, what are your orders?"

Ling Chen pointed to Li Bin in front of him and said, "First, get a big wooden barrel and then bring over a dozen rats. Strip him naked and put him in the barrel with the rats. Since he doesn't want to associate with people, let him spend some time with rats."

Hearing this, Li Bin's face finally showed a slight change.

"Mr. Li, enjoy your time. I have plenty of tricks up my sleeve. Find me when you feel like talking." With that, Ling Chen turned and walked out.

"Dad, did the military pass on any messages?" Ling Chen asked Ling Kun beside him. The military wanted him to assist in an investigation, but due to his disappearance, the matter was postponed. Now that he's been rescued, he wasn't sure if the military would still call him in.

"Not clear yet. Don't you have contacts in the military? Why don't you give them a call?"

Ling Chen nodded and said, "Alright." To be honest, Ling Chen wasn't worried about cooperating with the investigation; his only concern was Tang Yuan. The military had already taken Tang Yuan away, and he wasn't sure about his current situation.

Returning to his room, Ling Chen called Pang Jiulin to inquire about the latest developments.

"Glad you're alright." Pang Jiulin smiled on the other end of the line. "You don't need to worry about Tang Yuan; the military's investigation is over, and he'll be back soon. Moreover, since you were taken by someone impersonating the military, the military suspects this anonymous report was likely a plot against you. You'll just need to explain the situation, and they won't trouble you."

"Really? That's great." Ling Chen breathed a sigh of relief; he hadn't rushed back to East Sea City just to handle the military matters. He didn't want to ruin his relationship with them. In a way, he should thank Li Bin for helping him avoid the investigation.

However, what's done is done, Li Bin nearly caused his death, and that's something he couldn't just let go.

After resting for half a day, Ling Chen went alone to the basement's holding room. Currently, inside the room was a giant wooden barrel sealed with a plank. Standing outside, one could occasionally hear roars and screams coming from within.

Seeing Ling Chen come over, the two suited guards quickly opened the holding room's door.

"Remove the plank." At Ling Chen's command, the two guards immediately lifted the lid from the barrel. Approaching it, Ling Chen saw Li Bin leaning against the edge, sitting inside with over a dozen rats

crawling over him. If one looked closely, they'd notice numerous tiny bite marks on Li Bin's body, all caused by the rats.

"Mr. Li, how's it going? Enjoying it? Rats carry bacteria, and with all those bites, without timely treatment, your life may not last long."

Gritting his teeth, Li Bin said grimly, "Ling Chen, if you're going to kill me, just do it. Why torture me like this?"

With a slight smile, Ling Chen replied indifferently, "This is just the beginning. If you still refuse to confess, I'll have to resort to other methods. Mr. Li, you've probably seen my background, you know what I used to do. I'm very skilled at this craft. Have you ever tried electric shocks? Or having toothpicks driven under your nails... Of course, these aren't the only methods I have. If you're interested, you can try them all. I guarantee it'll be unforgettable."

Hearing Ling Chen's descriptions of torture, Li Bin's body involuntarily trembled, fear evident in his eyes.

"Alright." Ling Chen shrugged helplessly. "Since you still haven't made up your mind, I'll wait a bit longer." With that, he signaled to his subordinates, who immediately understood, preparing to cover the barrel with the plank again.

"No, no, I... I'll talk, I'll tell everything!" Li Bin suddenly shouted at that moment.

With a hint of a smile, Ling Chen said, "If you'd cooperated sooner, you wouldn't have had to suffer so much. Tell me, were you sent by the Southern Ling Family?"

Li Bin remained silent, only nodding.

"Where are they now?"

"I don't know."

"Hmm?"

"I... I really don't know. They have a submarine constantly moving in the Public Sea."

Ling Chen pondered for a bit, then asked, "Do they have a base in the Public Sea?"

"Yes, it's an island," Li Bin said. "But I don't know the exact location of the island. People are taken there by a special ship from the Southern Ling Family. The island is strictly managed. Besides the base's communication tower, no one else can contact the outside world."

"How do you contact them after completing your mission?"

"They gave me a number. After completing the mission, I contacted them. They told me to wait, that a ship would leave for the island in a few days, and they'd notify me of the specific time."

Hearing this, Ling Chen's eyes lit up. Having a ship going to that island was undoubtedly good news. As long as he found that island, he could destroy the Southern Ling Family's base. Then, when the submarine replenishes supplies on the island, he could easily capture it. At that time, the Southern Ling Family would never rise again.

"Once they contact you, tell me the time and place, and I promise to spare your life." With that, Ling Chen turned to instruct the security personnel beside him, "Take him to the infirmary, then arrange a room for him and keep watch on him twenty-four hours."

"Yes, Mr. Ling."

After leaving the holding room, Ling Chen went straight to Ling Kun's room. He knocked on the door, and upon receiving permission, he pushed it open and walked in.

"Son, what's up?"