

The Beauty 1421

Chapter 1421 Turning Peril into Safety

Two hours later, Xia Mutong drove to the hospital. Standing outside the ward, looking at the waiting crowd, Xia Mutong eagerly asked, "Where is he?"

Hu Fei pointed to the ICU and said, "He's still resting. The doctor said he's still in a coma and shouldn't be disturbed for now." Just as he finished speaking, the door of the ICU was pushed open. A doctor in a white coat emerged, looking at everyone outside and said, "The patient has woken up, and he wants to see you. However, his injuries are quite serious, so it's best not to talk to him for too long to avoid delaying his rest."

Upon hearing this, the crowd immediately rushed into the ICU. At this moment, Ling Chen had already awakened, leaning against the slightly inclined hospital bed. Because of the explosion, his body was mostly covered in bandages, even his left cheek was wrapped up.

"Sixth brother, how are you, are you alright?" Qiu Yong and others surrounded Ling Chen, asking with concern.

Ling Chen managed to squeeze out a faint smile and said, "I'm okay. It's already fortunate enough to be alive." After a pause, Ling Chen changed the subject and asked, "What about Jiang Hao and Sir Chen? How are they doing?"

"Don't worry, both of them are fine," Hu Fei said, "Among the three of you, your injuries are the most severe."

"Sigh! We were too careless this time," Ling Chen sighed lightly. "I didn't expect Zhu Hong would plant bombs in that warehouse." At this point, Ling Chen turned his gaze to Xia Mutong and asked, "Officer Xia, was the explosion damage severe?"

Xia Mutong nodded and said, "I just got back from the scene. We found a total of nine bodies from the fire, all killed in the explosion. Besides your people, there were also two passersby who happened to be nearby the warehouse. There's a strict order from above to capture the perpetrator."

"Fatty," Ling Chen looked at Hu Fei and asked, "Didn't I tell you to arrange people at the airport? How did Zhu Hong manage to board a plane and leave?"

"I was puzzled at first too, but I later checked. If I'm not mistaken, someone definitely helped them board the plane secretly."

"Who?"

"Zhu Qianshan," Hu Fei said, "I checked all the flights departing at that time, and on one flight to Beijing, I found Zhu Qianshan's name. Later, I retrieved the surveillance footage of Zhu Qianshan entering the airport. At that time, besides the couple, there were a few accompanying people. I carefully checked the identities of those companions and found two of them were very suspicious. They should be Zhu Hong and Chen Quan."

"Zhu Qianshan..." Ling Chen frowned slightly, surprised it was him. But thinking about it, it made sense; they were father and son. If Zhu Hong reached out to Zhu Qianshan for help, the latter wouldn't refuse. Thinking of this, Ling Chen instructed, "Zhu Hong should have arrived in Beijing. Notify the people in Beijing to keep an eye on Zhu Qianshan's movements to see if we can find Zhu Hong's whereabouts."

"Understood."

Ling Chen pondered for a moment and then added, "Also, don't tell Wanqing about my situation for now. I don't want them to worry about me."

"Got it."

After chatting for a while, since the doctor advised Ling Chen to rest more, everyone didn't stay in the ward for too long, except Ling Gengqiu, who stayed behind.

"Kid, you're really fortunate this time," Ling Gengqiu said with lingering fear, "You don't know, when I got the message, I was worried sick."

Ling Chen jokingly said, "You worry? I thought after living so many years, you would be indifferent to life and death."

"Actually, that's the downside of living too long. Even though you're accustomed to life and death, it still feels terrible when it involves someone close to you. Maybe I'm a bit carefree usually, but I really care about you all. Rest assured, anyone who crosses you won't have a good time."

Ling Chen smiled slightly, "No need to use a sledgehammer to crack a nut. Zhu Hong is just a minor issue, I can handle it myself." Then, as if remembering something, Ling Chen changed the subject and said, "By the way, big brother, there's something else. Besides Su Cheng'en, there's someone else in this world quite similar to you all."

"Oh?" Ling Gengqiu got interested and asked, "Do you know who?"

Ling Chen nodded and said, "Not long ago, we discovered an ancient tomb hundreds of years old. The tomb's owner, like you, lived for hundreds of years. Later, tired of endless life, he put himself into endless slumber until we unearthed the tomb, waking him up. Recently, I was nearly killed by the conspiracies of the Nanrong Ling Family, and it was him who helped me to narrowly escape. I had a brief conversation with him, and he seemed very confused, not knowing what direction to pursue in the future. I told him that there are others like him in this world. Moreover, I promised him that if there's a chance, I'd bring you to meet him. Perhaps you'll have many common topics."

"If that's the case, I would be very interested to meet him. According to what you said, he should have lived longer than us." After a pause, Ling Gengqiu continued, "Do you know what I'm most interested in now? Huaxia has over a billion people. Given that a few of us possess immortality, living for so many years, maybe there are others like us in this world that we haven't discovered yet. If there are more like us, it would certainly be interesting."

"Interesting?" Ling Chen chuckled bitterly. He didn't think so. If it were true, this world would be in chaos.

"Big brother, aren't you going to rest?"

Ling Gengqiu waved his hand and said, "No, I will stay with you until you're discharged, in case something else happens. Su Cheng'en and that Su He are still lurking, waiting for an opportunity. If they learn about your incident, who knows what they might do. So I think it's safer if I stay here."

Ling Chen nodded. With Ling Gengqiu by his side, he indeed felt more at ease. Still, thinking of so many people dying in this accident, he felt terribly bad. Therefore, he had already instructed Hu Fei to properly take care of the families of those who died, including substantial compensation for the two passersby.

Not only that, but Xia Mutong also just called. Since the accident was orchestrated by Zhu Hong, they have already issued a wanted order in the public security system, searching for Zhu Hong's whereabouts with all their might.

Chapter 1422 Ling Gengqiu's Guidance

In the blink of an eye, another week has passed.

After this period of treatment, Ling Chen's body has mostly recovered, but because the explosion burned a lot of his skin, he now has to be wrapped in bandages, so that no one can see his terrifying appearance. However, the fortunate thing is that possibly due to the Prajnaparamita Sutra of the building and his own genetic mutation, the areas that originally required skin graft surgery have grown new flesh, and it won't be long before his looks are restored.

These days, Ling Gengqiu has been by Ling Chen's side, as well as Zhu Qing, who is responsible for looking after Ling Chen's diet.

After a week's recovery, following the doctor's diagnosis, Ling Chen moved out of the intensive care unit to live with Jiang Hao. The two brothers lie side by side on the sickbed, and can chat now and then, chew the fat, and don't feel bored.

"Come, have some chicken soup. I made it with my own hands today, it's very fresh." Jiang Hao's girlfriend Liu Xin handed a bowl of chicken soup to Ling Chen, then personally fed Jiang Hao with a spoon, making Ling Chen next to him envious.

"I say, can't you two be a bit more low-key?" Ling Chen said helplessly: "At least consider my feelings."

Jiang Hao grinned and said: "Chen, look at how you're talking, we're not showing off our love in front of you. Right, Xinxin?"

"Ling Chen is not getting any younger, is he? Why not find a girlfriend?"

"Ugh! I'm not as lucky as Jiang Hao to find a virtuous girlfriend like you." Saying this, Ling Chen glanced at Zhu Qing who was busy beside him, handed the chicken soup over, and said with a smile: "Lady Zhu, why don't you feed me?"

Hearing this, Zhu Qing rolled her eyes at Ling Chen with displeasure, "You're not without hands or feet."

Having been snubbed by Zhu Qing, Ling Chen couldn't help but sigh, and drank the chicken soup in the bowl cleanly in one gulp.

"You guys rest well, I have class in the afternoon, I'll come see you after work." Liu Xin said while tidying up the dishes.

"Xinxin, you don't need to run over every day, it's too tiring for you. Anyway, my injuries aren't serious, after a few days of rest I can be discharged, you stay home and have a good rest."

"That won't do. Without me by your side, how will you take care of yourself? All right! No more talking, I'm leaving now. Bye-bye!"

Watching Liu Xin leave, Ling Chen grinned and said: "Jiang Hao, you're a lucky guy, don't miss out on such a good woman."

"I know."

Not long after, two nurses came in and helped Jiang Hao go outside. Jiang Hao's leg is injured, although he's mostly recovered, he still needs further physical therapy, requiring two hours of activity outside each day.

Watching Jiang Hao leave, Ling Chen also let Zhu Qing go rest, leaving only Ling Gengqiu in the ward.

"Jiang Hao's girlfriend is nice, good for a lifetime," Ling Gengqiu said while peeling an apple.

"I think so too, actually I'm quite envious of them."

"What's there to be envious of, your girlfriend is so pretty, and you have so many close female friends."

On hearing this, Ling Chen touched his nose, smiled bitterly and said: "Brother, actually I'm curious how you used to handle such complex relationships? You have so many women around you, do they all not know each other's existence?"

"No." Ling Gengqiu shook his head and said: "On the contrary, not only do they know about each other's existence, they all live together. In my time, polygamy was common, so this phenomenon wasn't strange. However, I want to tell you, although the system allowed it, having so many women living in harmony is a very difficult thing."

Talking about women, Ling Gengqiu seemed very proud and boastful, "Kid, I'm not bragging, when it comes to experience with women, ten of you wouldn't compare to me. Actually, I understand your confusion, because in this era the system lets you choose only one woman as a wife, and you must be loyal, avoiding extramarital affairs. However, a man's wandering heart can't be changed with the times. Furthermore, the more outstanding a man is, the more women he has around him, just like you, besides your official girlfriend, you have many female friends with whom you're very close. Actually, some women don't care about a title, they care about how much you really care about her, you understand? If you're willing to give up everything for a woman, as long as she truly loves you, even without a title, she'll stay with you unwaveringly."

"In terms of emotions, women and men are actually very emotional creatures, few truly rational people exist. So my advice to you is, don't care so much about rules, when with women let your heart guide you, don't just avoid it. Like is like, why find excuses to hide it, repressing your feelings. As a man, be one who stands tall, takes responsibility, gives women a sense of security. Understand?"

After listening to Ling Gengqiu's advice, Ling Chen nodded ambiguously.

"Yo! Just you two?" at this moment, the door of the ward was pushed open and Hu Fei walked in with a few bags of fruit.

"Why did you come today?"

"As a friend, can't I come see you? Where's Jiang Hao?"

"Went out for activity."

Hu Fei nodded, walked to the bedside on his own, put down the fruit, then took a laptop out of his backpack.

Seeing Hu Fei's actions, Ling Chen immediately realized his visit to the hospital might have an ulterior motive. Sure enough, as Hu Fei opened the laptop, he said: "There's news from Beijing, we found Zhu Hong's whereabouts."

As the screen on the laptop opened, Ling Chen immediately saw Zhu Hong's face. Although the surveillance video was shot at night, the picture was crystal clear.

However, Zhu Hong only appeared in the surveillance footage for three seconds before disappearing. Before disappearing, Zhu Hong glanced at the surveillance, seemingly noticing it and hiding to the side.

"Where in Beijing is this?"

"Next to a plaza," Hu Fei said: "After finding Zhu Hong's whereabouts, I immediately searched the surrounding area. Zhu Hong suddenly appeared there, likely for a complex reason."

"Any findings?"

"In an office building near that plaza is a research organization sponsored by a private tycoon, mainly focusing on cell evolution and genetic research. I suspect Zhu Hong might have gone there for this research organization."

Chapter 1423 - Reorganizing the Martial Arts Association

Ling Chen frowned and said, "What exactly does he intend to do?"

"I'm not entirely sure, but rest assured, I've already contacted Falcon Company in Beijing. Coincidentally, the security for that private research organization is handled by Falcon Company, which is very convenient for our operation."

"Have any experts been dispatched over there? Zhu Hong alone is not a concern, but we must be wary of Chen Quan by his side."

"You don't need to worry about that; I've already informed Officer Xia. Zhu Hong is now an A-level fugitive, and as long as he dares to show himself, the police won't let him slip away. By then, Beijing will dispatch police support. Even if Chen Quan is a Heavenly List expert, he can't possibly compete against bullets." Pausing for a moment, Hu Fei continued, "Anyway, Zhu Hong and Chen Quan hold no value for us. If they're dead, so be it. We just need to get hold of that severed limb."

Ling Chen nodded and said, "Alright, I leave this matter entirely to you. I just asked the doctor, and with my current condition, it looks like I'll need to recuperate for another week before discharge."

"No problem, just focus on healing; we'll handle the rest." At this point, Hu Fei seemed to recall something and spoke again, "Oh yes! There's another matter, not sure if they mentioned it to you. The Heavenly Mechanism Arts Hall has recently had a lot of big moves, and they're all aimed at Dragon Tiger Hall."

"Is that so? They didn't tell me."

"Probably because your health hasn't recovered yet, Elder Tong and the others didn't want you to worry and kept it from you."

"Are you clear on the details?"

"Longhu Martial Arts Hall isn't under my purview. I just heard that the Heavenly Mechanism Arts Hall convinced people from the martial arts association to host an exchange competition, with participants from major martial arts academies across the country. However, everyone knows the real stars of the

competition are the Heavenly Mechanism Arts Hall and Dragon Tiger Hall. Additionally, it seems the Heavenly Mechanism Arts Hall proposed to reorganize the martial arts association, establish a committee, and comprehensively manage all martial arts academies nationwide. In the future, whether establishing an academy or founding a branch, approval from the martial arts association will be required."

Upon hearing this, Ling Chen's eyes narrowed. The proposal from the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion speaks for itself. They are used to being high and mighty, wanting to be the overlord in the martial arts world, and now in operating martial arts academies, they intend to dominate as well. Once the martial arts association is reorganized, the power it holds will be immense, and the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion will surely find ways to control the martial arts association, thereby restricting Dragon Tiger Hall's development.

Tsk tsk!

It's undeniable; the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion's idea is clever. If they succeed, the development prospects for Dragon Tiger Hall are indeed worrying.

"Fatty, how do they plan to restructure the martial arts association?"

"That I don't know; you need to ask Elder Tong and the others for specifics. However, for now, you don't need to worry too much about it. Elder Tong, with his age and experience, will certainly figure out a solution."

"Got it, I'll give Elder Tong a call and ask at that time."

After seeing off Hu Fei, Ling Gengqiu nearby asked, "Do you think the actions of Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion are related to Su Cheng'en and the others?"

"There definitely is a connection, but we don't have evidence to prove it. And even if we had evidence, what could be done? Su Mei has become smarter now; she won't openly help Su Cheng'en and Su He but will secretly create trouble for our Dragon Tiger Hall to ensure Su Cheng'en can deal with them in peace."

"If that's the case, why not directly eliminate Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion?" Ling Gengqiu suggested, "Just let me make a move; I guarantee solving them quietly."

Ling Chen shook his head and said, "No, we can't do that. Everyone in martial arts knows about the open and covert fights between Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion and Dragon Tiger Hall. If Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion were suddenly eliminated, they would surely suspect us. Moreover, if we did that, how would we be any different from Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion? Even if we want to compete, it's about defeating them openly and fairly, not using underhanded means. Besides, what Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion is doing now is exactly what I hope for."

"What do you mean by that?"

Ling Chen smiled slightly, "Competition brings progress. It's the right time to use Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion to reshape the entire martial arts world."

"Your idea is good, but the key is, if you can't achieve ultimate victory, it's all for nothing."

"I know, which is precisely why competition becomes fun. Otherwise, if one only seeks victory by any means, what's the point? Don't you think?"

"You're right. Okay, since you don't want me to get involved, I won't meddle."

After resting for a while, Ling Chen's mind returned to what Hu Fei mentioned, Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion... Su Mei, I hope you don't become another Su He, otherwise, I will have no choice but to act harshly.

After contemplating for a moment, Ling Chen took out his phone and dialed Tong Zhentian's number. Although Tong Zhentian would handle it, he still felt uneasy. After all, this matter involves the future of Dragon Tiger Hall and must be treated seriously.

Before long, the call connected, and Tong Zhentian's voice came through, "Your call is quite timely; we just finished the meeting."

"Were you worrying about the matter of the martial arts association?"

"You found out?" Tong Zhentian replied with a hint of surprise.

"Fatty just came to see me and mentioned it. Elder Tong, why didn't you tell me about such an important matter?"

"Didn't want to disturb your rest. So, what's your take on the matter?"

"Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion's goal is clear, aiming to restrict the development of Dragon Tiger Hall. Elder Tong, did you come up with a strategy during your meeting earlier?"

"It's a bit problematic." Tong Zhentian said in a deep voice, "Things aren't as simple as we thought. Restructuring the martial arts association is something I look forward to. However, Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion proposed establishing a committee with nine representatives from the martial arts community, and every major decision in the association must pass through committee voting. We're now troubled by the issue of the committee members' slots. Representatives from the martial arts community must be people of influence within the martial world, a field in which our Dragon Tiger Hall falls short compared to Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion."

Hearing this, Ling Chen couldn't help but furrow his brows. He understood Tong Zhentian's point; the most respected figure in Dragon Tiger Hall was Tong Zhentian himself, and besides him, there were few people of influence in the martial world. Once the committee is established, Dragon Tiger Hall's control of the slots will certainly be inferior to Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. Consequently, Dragon Tiger Hall will face comprehensive suppression.

This is a big problem!

"Elder Tong, do you have any ideas?"

"There are a few revered elders in the martial world, and they've received invitations to join the committee. If we can gain their support, perhaps we have a chance to compete with Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. However, I'm now worried about another issue."

Chapter 1424 - 1732: Attentive

"Elder Tong, what is your greatest concern right now?"

"The proposal from Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion took us by surprise. I believe they've thoroughly prepared beforehand, possibly notifying the Martial Arts veterans. Therefore, even if we reach out to them now, success is uncertain."

Ling Chen felt a sinking feeling in his heart; indeed, this was a major issue, "What should we do then?"

"I don't know what to do either." Tong Zhentian sighed helplessly, "The only option now is to seek them out and hope that they'll give some face to this old man."

"Alright." Ling Chen replied, "That's all we can do. Ultimately, just giving our best effort should suffice."

After hanging up the phone, Ling Chen felt weighed down. What initially seemed manageable now loomed as a threat to the very future of Dragon Tiger Hall.

Once the Martial Arts committee reforms, forming the committee, the nine representatives will become crucial. Whether it's Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion or Dragon Tiger Hall, controlling five representatives will not only thwart each other's progress but also secure maximum benefits.

Within Dragon Tiger Hall, Tong Zhentian alone has the qualifications to be a committee member. Despite Chen Junfeng being a Heavenly List master, skill is not decisive; martial status and influence are key. In this regard, Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion undoubtedly holds a stronger advantage.

A sleepless night ensued.

The next morning, Ling Chen, pretending to nap, heard the hospital room door open. Only Zhu Qing would visit at this hour. Ling Chen yawned and turned with a smile, "What tasty food did you bring today..." Before finishing his sentence, Ling Chen froze in surprise at the visitor.

What... it's her?

"I brought century egg and lean pork congee and mung bean cake. I'm not sure if you'll like them?"

Hearing the gentle voice, Ling Chen finally regained his composure, rubbing his nose with a sheepish smile, "I didn't expect it to be you."

"Who else did you think it was?"

Ling Chen wisely avoided further discussion on this topic. Instead, he asked, "How did you know I was here?"

She blinked, "What do you think? The hospital director is my friend; I often come here for medical exchanges, so a lot of people know me. Coincidentally, I was asked to consult on a special patient recently, and your name appeared on the list."

Looking at Ling Chen wrapped in bandages, Zhu Xiaozhu approached the bedside, her soft gazes showing a hint of concern, "What happened to you? Why so severely injured?"

Ling Chen opened his mouth but hesitated upon recalling Zhu Xiaozhu's relationship with Zhu Hong, eventually swallowing his words.

"It's nothing, just some minor injuries. A few days of rest and I'll be fine."

Zhu Xiaozhu said irritably, "Stop hiding. I saw your medical records, 40% of body surface burns. You're lucky, anyone else in such a situation wouldn't have survived."

"I know, thank you for your concern, but I'm really fine. The doctors said I can be discharged after another week's recovery." Trying to prevent further questioning from Zhu Xiaozhu, Ling Chen hurriedly changed the subject, "I'm hungry, let's eat."

Seeing Ling Chen about to reach for the bowl of congee, Zhu Xiaozhu immediately stopped him, "Wait! You haven't washed your face or brushed your teeth, at least maintain hygiene." With that, Zhu Xiaozhu picked up a basin and walked out. Shortly thereafter, she returned with a basin of hot water.

After Ling Chen brushed his teeth, Zhu Xiaozhu held a damp towel, gently wiping Ling Chen's chiseled face. Observing the scars on Ling Chen's cheeks, Zhu Xiaozhu felt an inexplicable heartache and muttered, "Honestly, you're so grown up, yet still can't take care of yourself. What if something serious happens to you?"

Ling Chen didn't respond, just grinned foolishly.

"Always laughing, never serious." Zhu Xiaozhu rolled up the towel, glancing at Ling Chen, then blew on the congee before feeding it to him.

Taken care of meticulously by Zhu Xiaozhu, Ling Chen reclined in bed, feeling blissful. Though Zhu Qing usually took care of him, she never treated him like Zhu Xiaozhu did. Lately, seeing Jiang Hao and Liu Xin flaunting their love daily made Ling Chen quite uncomfortable. However, with Zhu Xiaozhu's presence, Ling Chen felt balanced.

Around eight, Jiang Hao, a late riser, awoke. In fact, he'd been awake for a while, but hearing sounds from Ling Chen's side, he remained quiet to avoid disturbing the pair.

Greeting Zhu Xiaozhu, Jiang Hao had just finished washing when Liu Xin came in, carrying a bundle of items.

"Ling..." Liu Xin was about to greet Ling Chen but was distracted by Zhu Xiaozhu beside him.

Ling Chen smiled and introduced, "Liu Xin, meet my friend, Zhu Xiaozhu."

"Ah, Miss Zhu, nice to meet you."

"You're Jiang Hao's girlfriend, right? I've heard him mention you." Zhu Xiaozhu smiled, "You can call me Xiaozhu, my friends all do."

"Okay, Xiaozhu." Liu Xin teased Ling Chen, "Ling Chen, is Xiaozhu your girlfriend?"

On hearing this, Zhu Xiaozhu blushed and lowered her head. Ling Chen coughed lightly, "I wish, but I'm not that lucky."

"What do you mean not lucky? I think you and Xiaozhu match perfectly, like a pair made in heaven."

Seeing Liu Xin getting carried away, Jiang Hao quickly interrupted her. Everyone knew Nanrong Wanqing was Ling Chen's actual girlfriend; Liu Xin's comments would only embarrass Ling Chen and Zhu Xiaozhu.

"Xinxin, what did you bring me today?"

"I brought your favorite cantaloupe, and some beers for you all. The doctor said a little beer is fine." Liu Xin unpacked the items, arranging them on the bedside table.

"You chat, I'll wash some fruit for you."

"I'll help you." Zhu Xiaozhu replied, following Liu Xin outside.

After the two women left, Ling Chen stretched lazily into a comfortable position and asked, "Jiang Hao, haven't you thought about confessing to her yet?"

Chapter 1425 - 1733: No Escape Even with Wings (1)

Jiang Hao said with a bitter expression, "Chen, it's not that easy. I've tried several times, but every time the words come to my lips, I just don't have the courage to say them."

"Do it sooner rather than later, don't delay anymore. The way she treats you shows she truly likes you; perhaps she won't mind your status."

Jiang Hao wanted to say something more, but Zhu Xiaozhu and Liu Xin had already returned, so he had to close his mouth and say no more.

With Zhu Xiaozhu and Liu Xin accompanying them, the four of them talked about all kinds of things, and Ling Chen and Jiang Hao didn't find it boring. However, Ling Chen had concerns on his mind. Although he kept smiling, his thoughts were focused on Zhu Hong and the future of the Dragon Tiger Hall.

"Ling Chen, Ling Chen?"

At this moment, Zhu Xiaozhu called out several times, and Ling Chen snapped back to reality, embarrassedly asking, "What is it?"

"Liu Xin just said, after you are discharged, she's inviting you to her place as a guest."

"No problem." Ling Chen didn't even think, immediately agreeing, "Set a time, and I'll definitely be there."

"Then it's settled, don't forget to bring Xiaozhu." Liu Xin said with a cheerful smile.

Today is Sunday, Liu Xin had the day off, so she spent the whole day at the hospital. Zhu Xiaozhu still had to consult with patients, and after sitting in the ward for a while, she was called away by the hospital director.

Night falls.

After Liu Xin and the others had left, Hu Fei and Tang Guolun came to the ward.

Seeing the laptops Hu Fei brought, Lin Chen curiously asked, "Fatty, what's this for?"

Tang Guolun answered, "There's going to be an operation in Beijing tonight. We know you're very concerned about this matter, so we want to let you watch the live feed."

Soon, Hu Fei got the equipment set up, and three laptops each displayed a different feed. At this moment, three members of the action team far away in Beijing were wearing head-mounted cameras that could transmit what they saw in real time to the computer screens. This way, Ling Chen and the other two could constantly keep track of the situation in Beijing.

About two hours later, the Falcon Company members in Beijing finally began their operation. The target this time was very simple, to apprehend Zhu Hong. According to the latest intel obtained by Hu Fei, Zhu Hong would make a move on that private lab tonight. As for Zhu Hong's purpose, Hu Fei was still unclear. However, this was a very good opportunity for them.

As the operation began, the three action members equipped with head-mounted cameras quickly entered the office building where the lab was located. At the time, the building was pitch black, but thanks to the night vision function of the head-mounted cameras, everything around was clearly visible on the screen.

Meanwhile, Hu Fei held a laptop and rapidly tapped on the keyboard. On the screen of his laptop, a diagram of a tall building appeared, with twenty red dots moving inside it.

These twenty red dots represented the twenty members in action. Using this positioning device, they could clearly know their locations. The lab was situated on the thirteenth floor of the office building. To avoid alerting anyone, the action team did not take the elevator but entered the thirteenth floor directly via the stairwell.

More than ten minutes passed, and all twenty action members had entered the floor, each staying at their designated positions. As long as Ling Chen issued the command, they could launch a raid at any moment.

"Fatty, where's Zhu Hong? Have you found him yet?"

Hu Fei hit the keyboard and said, "The number two elevator inside the office building has been activated, heading towards the thirteenth floor. Hang on! I'll pull up the surveillance footage inside the elevator." As he spoke, the screen of that laptop displayed a new feed.

Inside the elevator, there were two people, one being Zhu Hong, the other being Chen Quan.

"Let's see how you escape this time." Ling Chen muttered to himself while staring at the surveillance screen, then instructed, "Fatty, notify everyone not to alert them just yet. Zhu Hong has Chen Quan by his side; rushing in recklessly would only increase our casualties." He paused and continued, "Figure out Zhu Hong's objective first."

Hu Fei nodded and immediately conveyed the order. Soon, the number two elevator arrived at the designated floor. As the elevator doors slowly opened, Zhu Hong and Chen Quan strode out, heading straight for the lab.

Although the lab door was reinforced and burglar-proof, Zhu Hong had come well-prepared. In less than five minutes, the door was opened.

After Zhu Hong and Chen Quan entered, an action member equipped with a head-mounted camera pulled out a miniature smart car from his backpack, only the length of a finger. Once the smart car was placed on the floor, Hu Fei immediately started remote controlling it, maneuvering the smart car through the gap at the bottom of the burglar-proof door, tailing Zhu Hong and Chen Quan.

Through the camera on the smart car, Zhu Hong and Chen Quan's every move was under their surveillance.

Once inside the lab, Chen Quan found a chair and sat down, while Zhu Hong headed to the lab's cold storage room. The cold storage contained many vials of drugs, mostly experimental medications and new drugs developed by the lab.

Looking at the labels in the cold storage, Zhu Hong soon stopped in front of a refrigerated cabinet and reached out to open the door.

Through the feed, seeing Zhu Hong rummage through over twenty vials of drugs, Ling Chen couldn't help but ask, "What are those drugs?"

Without delay, Hu Fei slowly zoomed in the camera on the smart car. Soon, they saw that one vial of the drug had a label on it that read 'cell culture fluid.'

"Fatty, what's this stuff?"

Hu Fei pulled up a website, searching for information about cell culture fluid.

"It's an agent used to cultivate cell growth, a new type of drug. It's not yet mass-produced in the domestic market. Due to strict national regulations on pharmaceuticals, such drugs are generally difficult to distribute and are only used for experiments."

As he spoke, Ling Chen and the other two were surprised to see on the screen that Zhu Hong actually opened a vial of the drug and drank it. After consuming two vials consecutively, Zhu Hong then pulled out a bag and packed all the vials from the refrigerator into it.

"Fatty, can this cell culture fluid be consumed directly?" Ling Chen asked, puzzled.

Hu Fei shook his head and said, "No. Based on the data, this drug cannot be used directly on the human body, or it will lead to severe consequences."

"Zhu Hong underwent enhancement experiments before; his body is different from ordinary people. Perhaps because of this, he can ignore the side effects of such drugs." After speaking, Ling Chen watched the screen and said in a grave tone, "They're preparing to leave, tell everyone to be ready."

"Got it."

As Zhu Hong and Chen Quan slowly walked out of the lab, Ling Chen and the other two couldn't help but hold their breath, realizing that the most critical moment had arrived.

Chapter 1426 - 1734: No Escape (2)

Sure, here is the translation of the text you provided:

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As Zhu Hong and Chen Quan stepped out of the research lab's door, a sudden burst of intense light exploded from the ground on either side, blinding them temporarily, rendering everything indecipherable. At the same moment, several operatives charged swiftly from their ambush positions.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh

Accompanied by a series of piercing sounds, Chen Quan lightly tapped his toes, his body soared upwards, leaping more than two meters high, just out of reach of the surrounding attacks. While he evaded the strikes, Zhu Hong remained rooted in place. Hearing the sound of the piercing wind, Zhu Hong's body suddenly swayed, dodging all the attacks around him.

Watching this scene through the camera, Ling Chen and the others were astonished. Was this really Zhu Hong? When did he become so formidable?

It was known that for this operation, each combatant was equipped with crossbows set with tranquilizer darts, potent enough to sedate an elephant. Chen Quan and Zhu Hong had just been blindfolded by the flash grenade, unable to see anything clearly. Chen Quan, a Heavenly List master, evading tranquilizer shots was expected, but Zhu Hong... Ling Chen was genuinely stunned by his agile response.

Of course! Ling Chen suddenly recalled that Zhu Hong once joined Skyhawk Pavilion and was taken as a direct disciple by Zhu Chuan. Spending several months at Skyhawk Pavilion, Zhu Hong must have undergone considerable training with Zhu Chuan, which showcased his current skills and reflexes.

The effect of the flash grenade wouldn't last long; seeing Chen Quan and Zhu Hong evade the first wave of attacks, Hu Fei immediately issued orders for everyone to execute Plan B. Instantly, all twenty combatants charged out, encircling Chen Quan and Zhu Hong in the middle.

"Humph!" Chen Quan sneered. Although his vision was still a bit blurry, he wasn't mindful of the danger ahead. Judging from earlier, he had concluded there were no masters among the crowd. Had there been any, they would have surely attacked during his moment of blindness.

"Who are you people?"

Upon hearing Zhu Hong's rebuke, everyone remained silent, calmly watching the two in the center.

"Disciple, you leave first. I'll cover the rear." As soon as those words fell, Chen Quan lightly tapped his toes, his body shot forward like a cannonball, targeting the nearest person. As Chen Quan approached, the twenty operatives remained incredibly calm, unperturbed by Chen Quan's displayed prowess.

Just then, a 'boom' was heard, a beam of intense light erupted suddenly, enclosing Chen Quan. The beam appeared so abruptly that Chen Quan had no defenses ready. Moreover, aside from its blinding effect, the beam inflicted considerable harm to the body.

As the beam gradually faded, Chen Quan's right side was blood-soaked, eyes tightly shut, his entire body trembling slightly. It was evident the sudden attack had inflicted significant injury upon him.

Witnessing the outcome, Ling Chen and the other two in the ward naturally breathed a sigh of relief. The attack hadn't come from the operatives but was controlled by Hu Fei. That mini-smart car could not only relay real-time footage through cameras but came equipped with explosive devices specifically meant for Chen Quan and Zhu Hong. Previously, when blinded by the flash grenade, Hu Fei had secretly maneuvered the smart car to Chen Quan's feet.

With Chen Quan acting, the mini-smart car exploded instantly, rendering Chen Quan blind again and severely injuring his body.

Seizing the opportunity, twenty operatives approached Chen Quan swiftly. Chen Quan's body badly wounded and eyes blinded, unable to see anything, it was the perfect chance to neutralize him. However, seeing his master in peril, Zhu Hong chose to rescue rather than escape alone.

Presently, Zhu Hong was no longer the same. With his mastered skills, even an Earthly List master might struggle against him.

In the blink of an eye, due to close range, Zhu Hong easily knocked down three operatives.

Whoosh! Whoosh!

At this moment, over ten operatives decided to attack using the crossbows. More than ten tranquilizer darts shot towards him; Zhu Hong swiftly moved, dodging and weaving to barely avoid the darts.

"Master, are you alright?" At this moment, Zhu Hong stood before Chen Quan, speaking in a deep voice. Yet, there wasn't a sound from Chen Quan standing behind him. Seeing Chen Quan's delayed response, Zhu Hong couldn't help but turn around, only to find a tranquilizer dart lodged in Chen Quan's thigh.

Moreover, under the effect of the tranquilizer, Chen Quan's body wavered, ready to collapse any moment.

Witnessing this situation, Zhu Hong's expression changed briefly. He had counted on Chen Quan's help, not expecting him to be struck by a tranquilizer dart. Could the explosion have been so powerful, temporarily robbing the Heavenly List master of combat ability?

No time to ponder further, Chen Quan already had fallen into a stupor; Zhu Hong needed to carry him out of the encirclement.

"Don't rush, he's by himself now, all spread out and try to hold him down," Hu Fei instructed from the computer.

Chen Quan had lost his combat capabilities; Zhu Hong was alone, no need to fight him head-on.

Facing the scattered operatives, Zhu Hong could discern their strategy. This couldn't continue; the longer it dragged on, the worse it worked for him. Moreover, the operatives continually fired tranquilizer darts; being hit by one would spell doom.

In a flash of thought, Zhu Hong quickly made a choice. He hoisted Chen Quan's body over his shoulder, using Chen Quan as a human shield, blocking out all the darts. Simultaneously, he accelerated towards the emergency exit beside the elevator.

None anticipated Zhu Hong to betray his companion; during their momentary daze, Zhu Hong reached the emergency stairwell, swiftly descending the steps.

"Chase!"

In the ward, watching the fight via the camera, Hu Fei picked up the phone, dialing a number, instructing: "Everyone alert, the target is preparing to leave the building."

"Did you have others arranged?" Ling Chen inquired beside him.

"Certainly," Hu Fei nodded, saying, "It's not like I'm unaware of how formidable a Heavenly List master is; I made ample preparations to deal with them. Just watch, without Chen Quan's aid, even with Zhu Hong's significant skills, he won't escape."

Tenth floor... seventh floor... Zhu Hong's speed was astonishingly quick; within the blink of an eye, he'd reached the third floor of the office building. Without waiting for the pursuers behind to catch up, Zhu Hong leaped, directly clutching Chen Quan's body, hurtling out of the third-floor window.

After falling seven or eight meters, Zhu Hong's body landed steadily on the ground. Surveying the surrounding environment, Zhu Hong hesitated not, charging directly towards the nearest street.

Chapter 1427 - 1735: Captured

"Don't move!" Just as Zhu Hong was about to escape with Chen Quan, dozens of armed detectives suddenly burst forth from the surroundings of the office building, completely surrounding Zhu Hong and Chen Quan.

Facing the dark gun barrels, Zhu Hong immediately halted his steps, threw Chen Quan, whom he was holding, to the ground, and slowly raised his hands.

"Cuff them." A detective quickly stepped forward, handcuffing Zhu Hong's hands and, in passing, also placed a pair on Chen Quan who was on the ground.

"Zhu Hong, you didn't expect this, did you?" A voice came, and Xia Mutong appeared from the crowd, staring coldly at Zhu Hong.

"It's you?" Zhu Hong's gaze turned somber as he looked at Xia Mutong, "How did you know I was here?"

"I have my ways, naturally. You should know what crimes you've committed. Even if it's not the death penalty this time, it's at least life imprisonment."

Zhu Hong frowned and remained silent; he hadn't expected to be caught by the police.

"Take them all into the car." Xia Mutong waved a hand, signaling to the others to take Zhu Hong and Chen Quan away.

"OK!" In the hospital room, Hu Fei laughed and high-fived Tang Guolun, "Ling Chen, how was it? My arrangement wasn't bad, was it? Hmph! With Zhu Hong falling into the police's hands, let's see how he gets out of this one. After so much effort, we finally took care of that guy Zhu Hong."

In contrast to the excitement of Hu Fei and Tang Guolun, Ling Chen appeared much calmer. He glanced at the screen showing Zhu Hong being taken away and said somewhat perplexedly, "Don't you find it strange? Why would Zhu Hong take such a huge risk to break into that laboratory to steal cell culture fluid? Even if that thing is of great use to him, with Zhu Hong's cautious nature, he would certainly plan everything in advance. However, from today's actions, it seems Zhu Hong didn't do much preparation, which is a bit out of character for him."

Tang Guolun thought for a moment and said, "Maybe Zhu Hong thought no one had discovered his whereabouts. And with Chen Quan by his side, that was his greatest reliance. With a master from the Heavenly List protecting him, he wouldn't feel he was in danger."

Ling Chen shook his head and said, "Zhu Hong isn't someone overconfident, especially knowing Beijing is my territory and still daring to move so conspicuously. It must be because that thing is very important to him." Saying this, Ling Chen turned to look at Hu Fei and asked, "Was Zhu Hong caught by the Beijing police?"

"Exactly! I only passed Zhu Hong's information to Xia Mutong. If we couldn't catch him ourselves, we'd depend on the police for assistance."

Ling Chen pondered for a while and said, "Even though Zhu Hong has fallen into the hands of the police, we still can't let our guard down. You all know what kind of person Zhu Hong is. Someone might secretly rescue him. How about this? I'll make a call to the people in Beijing later to try to keep Zhu Hong under our surveillance."

"That's a good idea. If you want to personally solve this problem, you might as well take some time to go to Beijing."

"We'll see about that."



"Alright, if there's nothing else, we'll head back first. You get some rest." After saying this, Hu Fei packed up his laptop and left with Tang Guolun.

Not long after the two left, Jiang Hao came in from outside. In matters like this, Jiang Hao was quite tactful. Although he was Ling Chen's brother and one of Ling Chen's men, he wouldn't ask about things he shouldn't know. Just like earlier, he chose to avoid the situation.

After resting for two or three days, Ling Chen's injured cheek had scabbed and peeled off, with most of his body recovering. To the hospital doctors, this was nothing short of a miracle. In their view, severe burns on Ling Chen required skin grafts and cosmetic surgery, with no possibility of returning to his original state. Ling Chen's change astonished them. If not for Ling Chen's identity, these doctors would likely have researched him.

That day, just after lunch, Ling Chen was about to take a short break when Tong Zhentian and He Ziyun appeared in his hospital room.

"Elder Tong, Mr. He, what brings you here?" Ling Chen quickly got up from the bed.

"You should stay lying down, no need to be so formal."

"It's alright," Ling Chen smiled and said, "My body has almost fully recovered. If Xiaozhu wasn't worried about my health and insisted I rest a few more days, I'd have been discharged already."

Once Tong Zhentian and He Ziyun were seated, Jiang Hao, whose leg and foot had mostly recovered, promptly brewed two cups of tea, handing them to the two elders, before greeting Ling Chen and leaving the hospital room.

"Elder Tong, why didn't you just call me if you had something to discuss? You didn't need to trouble yourselves to come in person."

Tong Zhentian began, "Firstly, we wanted to visit you, and secondly, we have something important to discuss with you."

"Is it still about the Martial Arts Association?" Ling Chen immediately guessed Tong Zhentian's intention.

He Ziyun nodded and said, "Indeed! These days, Elder Tong has been running around for this matter but to no avail. As we feared, the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion made thorough preparations regarding this matter. Several martial arts seniors have expressed their stance. If they are selected for the martial arts committee, they will treat each martial arts academy fairly and never abuse their power for personal gain. However, we all know that these are just empty courtesies. Them saying this means they've reached a consensus with the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion."

Hearing this, Ling Chen frowned slightly and asked, "Elder Tong, is there no way to convince them to side with us?"

"It's futile." Tong Zhentian sighed helplessly, "If it were earlier, perhaps we could tempt them with benefits. But not now. Our greatest reliance was martial arts secrets, but since the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion revealed their depths, our advantage has vanished. I suspect the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion promised them a great deal of valuable items, so they are willing to join their camp."

Ling Chen pondered for a while, feeling somewhat heavy-hearted; this was his most worrisome scenario, and it had come to pass. If they couldn't secure five spots, they would be at a disadvantage in future competition. Thinking of this, Ling Chen spoke, "I have something that might work."

"What is it?" He Ziyun and Tong Zhentian asked in unison.

"Nine Elements Pill." Ling Chen slowly uttered, recalling the time when Ji Gang, while serving the God Organization, had kidnapped Ling Kun and threatened Ling Chen to exchange the Nine Elements Pill for Ling Kun. To that end, Ling Chen went to the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion and participated in the internal competition of the Yangxin Pavilion as Su He's disciple, ultimately defeating Wang Hao to acquire a Nine Elements Pill.

Later, with the assistance of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, Ling Chen luckily rescued Ling Kun, preserving that Nine Elements Pill, which was never used. Perhaps, offering the Nine Elements Pill could persuade those martial arts seniors to join their own camp.

Chapter 1428 - 1736: Competing for Quotas

"The Nine Elements Pill is indeed a good thing," Tong Zhentian said. "If a Heavenly List expert takes the Nine Elements Pill, their strength can greatly improve. If an Earthly List expert takes it, they might have a

chance to break through the bottleneck and reach the Heavenly List level. Moreover, the quantity of the Nine Elements Pill is extremely scarce; even the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion never gives it to outsiders, only insiders have a chance to obtain it, but..."

Tong Zhentian changed the subject and said, "Ling Chen, even if you have the Nine Elements Pill, you can only win over one person. I've thought about it carefully; the restructured Martial Arts Association will have one President and two Vice Presidents. These three people are considered part of the committee quota. Additionally, there's something you might not know. The Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion is endorsing a candidate for President. Do you know who it is?"

"Who? Do I know them?" Ling Chen asked curiously.

Tong Zhentian pointed at himself and said, "They are backing me."

"Backing you?" Ling Chen was taken aback and asked puzzledly, "Why would they do this? The Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion expends so much effort; shouldn't they seize the President position for themselves?"

He Ziyun sneered and said, "Do you think the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion is acting in good faith? On the surface, it seems like the Pavilion is generously giving up the President position, but in reality, whether or not they take the President spot doesn't really matter. Since the Martial Arts Association is to be restructured, the President position should be held by someone capable and respected within the Martial Arts world. If Su He were still around, he'd be the most suitable candidate. However, Su He's reputation is now tarnished, so no one would nominate him for President. Although the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion still has Du Kang, compared to Elder Tong, while their abilities aren't very different, there's a significant difference in prestige. So, from any perspective, Elder Tong is the most suitable candidate."

After hearing He Ziyun's words, Ling Chen suddenly understood. Making Tong Zhentian President not only shows the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion's generosity but also allows them to win acclaim in the Martial Arts world. However, as He Ziyun said, even if Tong Zhentian becomes President, he'll be a President without real power because decisions in the restructured Martial Arts Association are not solely determined by him. Any major decision requires a committee vote.

Therefore, as long as the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion firmly grasps five seats, Tong Zhentian's power is effectively neutralized.

Understanding this point, Ling Chen couldn't help but silently praise them. He had to admit, this step by the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion was incredibly ingenious.

After mulling it over, Ling Chen asked, "Elder Tong, who are the confirmed members of the Martial Arts Association committee now?"

"Myself, the Pavilion Master of Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, and Du Kang—our participation is certain. Apart from this, if nothing unexpected happens, I'll serve as the Martial Arts Association's President, Su Mei as a Vice President, and the other Vice President will be selected from the Martial Arts world."

"Doesn't Mr. He qualify to run? And Sir Chen, he's a Heavenly List expert at least."

"No," Tong Zhentian said. "Members selected for the Martial Arts Association must be people of both virtue and talent, not chosen solely based on ability. Chen Junfeng may be a Heavenly List expert, but he's been absent from the Martial Arts world for too long, hardly anyone recognizes him. Mr. He is known by many, but his prestige in the Martial Arts community is too low. I've discussed with Mr. He about having Ye Liangyong try to secure a spot."

"Mr. Ye?" Ling Chen was somewhat surprised. Ye Liangyong is He Ziyun's top disciple, also a successful businessman currently residing in Beijing. If He Ziyun doesn't qualify, does Ye Liangyong have a chance?

He Ziyun seemed to perceive Ling Chen's confusion and explained, "Before I joined Dragon Tiger Hall, I handed over Qingyun Martial Arts Hall entirely to Liangyong—he's effectively the Martial Arts Hall Master there now. When you were in Beijing, you had a dispute with the Martial Arts Association's President and Vice President and even stormed into their Martial Arts Hall, causing their reputations to plummet. Seizing that opportunity, Liangyong promoted Qingyun Martial Arts Hall aggressively. Now, with the support of Longhu Martial Arts Hall, Qingyun Martial Arts Hall has become the largest Martial Arts Hall in Beijing, more renowned than our own branch there. So, letting him run for a slot in the Martial Arts Association isn't entirely without chance."

"Ling Chen, those chosen for the Martial Arts Association must meet certain criteria—they must either be esteemed elders in the Martial Arts world, leaders of influential factions, or those who have made contributions to the Martial Arts. Meeting any of these criteria offers a chance for inclusion," Tong Zhentian said.

"Then..." Ling Chen pointed at his own nose and said, "Can I run for it too?"

Tong Zhentian and He Ziyun exchanged a glance, both smiling and said, "You've finally realized this is mainly why we sought you out."

Ling Chen was speechless, "Elder Tong, why didn't you just say so, why go around in such circles."

He Ziyun smiled and said, "We were worried you'd refuse. You have so many things on your plate, and besides, I know you dislike such conflicts, so we didn't want to drag you into this, but now we really have no choice."

Tong Zhentian nodded, agreeing, "Mr. He is right. Back at the Heavenly Mechanism Great Ceremony, you found the antidote and saved everyone on the ship. Later at the Martial Arts seminar held in Beijing, you thwarted the God Organization's scheme and saved everyone. Moreover, when Su He recently tried to frame all Martial Arts figures, you stepped forward, relieving everyone from danger. Just based on these points, you undoubtedly qualify for the Martial Arts Association."

"If I join, wouldn't we effectively control three of the seats?"

"Correct! However, even though Ye Liangyong qualifies to compete for a spot, whether he can succeed is another matter. So we can't rely solely on him, we must think of other strategies and locate more candidates."

"Candidates?" Ling Chen scratched his head, wondering where he could find eligible candidates to run.

"Elder Tong, is there really no one else?"

"No, I've looked everywhere I could, but the prospects are slim. We need to secure at least two more seats to position ourselves invincibly. Of course, you don't have to worry too much; although the restructuring of the Martial Arts Association is inevitable, it won't happen immediately. While we have our concerns, the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion has theirs too. If I'm not mistaken, we have at least another month."

"Time is indeed ample," Ling Chen nodded and said, "I'll try to think of a way to secure more seats."

#### Chapter 1429 - 1737: Secret Prison

After spending a few more days in the hospital, Ling Chen finally got the doctor's approval to go home. After completing the discharge procedures, Ling Chen couldn't wait to follow Ling Gengqiu back home. He had been stuck in the hospital for two whole weeks and was nearly bored to death.

To celebrate Ling Chen's recovery, Hu Fei, along with Qiu Yong and others, gathered for a feast.

"Hey! I've already booked your plane ticket; it's a 4 PM flight." Hu Fei said after finishing the meal.

"Plane ticket?" Ling Gengqiu asked from the side, "Where are you planning to go, kid?"

"Beijing." Ling Chen replied, "Zhu Hong was captured, so I need to go to Beijing to resolve this matter."

"In that case, I'll accompany you, just to make sure you don't get into trouble again."

Ling Chen grinned, "Big brother, even if you didn't say anything, I wouldn't let you stay here alone. Without me watching you, what if you cause big trouble? I don't want to clean up your mess."

After resting at home for a while, around two o'clock, Ling Chen and Ling Gengqiu set off for the airport.

Dusk.

A plane finally landed at Beijing Capital Airport. As they exited the airport, a Mercedes sedan had already been parked outside the exit, waiting for the two of them to arrive.

"Chen."

Seeing Jiang Yunkai approaching them, Ling Chen greeted him with a smile, "Thank you for your hard work during this period." Although Beijing was Ling Chen's territory, he lacked people here whom he could fully trust. Therefore, Ling Chen transferred Jiang Yunkai to Beijing, putting him in charge of managing the underground forces.

"Chen, Qiu, I've booked a restaurant; let's go have dinner first."

"No need." Ling Chen declined Jiang Yunkai's good intentions, saying, "I have other things to take care of. You guys go back to the company; just leave a car for me."

Jiang Yunkai nodded, handed the car keys to Ling Chen very straightforwardly, then took his men and left in a taxi.

Getting into the car, Ling Chen took Ling Gengqiu for a ride around the city while making a phone call. After more than half an hour, the two arrived outside a two-story small building in the Beijing Suburb. It was already evening, and Ling Chen looked out the car window at the brightly lit building.

At this moment, Ling Chen honked the car horn, and before long, someone walked out of the building and came directly to the car.

"Tang Yuan, you finally arrived. I heard you were injured recently; are you okay?"

Ling Chen smiled and said, "Do I look like I have something wrong?" With that, Ling Chen pointed to Ling Gengqiu beside him and gave a simple introduction.

"You guys come in with me."

Inside, Tang Yuan glanced at Ling Gengqiu and said with some difficulty, "Later, you can only go in alone; you can't bring anyone else. It's only because you asked that they've given you this favor. Otherwise, no one else would be allowed here, so..."

Before Tang Yuan could finish, Ling Chen nodded and said, "I understand your point. Don't worry; Qiu will wait outside while I go in alone."

"That's best."

Knowing he couldn't go inside, Ling Gengqiu didn't insist; after all, his goal was to protect Ling Chen's safety. As for those secrets... he wasn't interested.

After settling Ling Gengqiu, Ling Chen, led by Tang Yuan, went down to the building's basement. The two arrived at a wall, saw a keyboard and a retina scanning device slowly emerge from inside the wall. After dual verification, the entire wall slowly opened, revealing a spacious entrance. "When was this built?" Ling Chen asked curiously.

"Just recently." Tang Yuan replied, "Because Lonely Wolf didn't have a place to detain major and secret criminals, they sought permission from above to build a prison here. Chen Quan, whom we caught last time, is a Heavenly List expert, very dangerous, so above ordered us to detain him here and keep a strict watch."

While talking, the two had arrived at the secret prison's control room.

Being a secret prison, it's equipped with high-tech facilities. Moreover, through Tang Yuan's introduction, it was learned that each cell here is independent, equipped with adequate protection and top-notch security. Each cell is surrounded by electric grids; even if a prisoner escapes from the cell, they can't break through the grids unless they wish to die.

Furthermore, each prisoner's calf has a sensing device. If a prisoner attempts to forcefully destroy the device, it will explode, taking the prisoner with it. Also, if a prisoner leaves the prison premises by more than fifty meters, it also triggers an explosion.

"Well done! Your defenses are very robust; even a Heavenly List expert, once detained here, can't escape."

"Let's go; the prisoner you want to see is already here; I'll take you to him." At this point, Tang Yuan suddenly changed his tone, "Let me remind you, that guy has undergone a lot of changes since being incarcerated; you'd better be mentally prepared."



Soon, the duo went through several blast-proof doors and arrived outside a standalone room.

"You go in; I won't interrupt you. Just call me if you need anything."

Ling Chen nodded and, without saying much, pushed the door open and walked in. Entering the room, Ling Chen looked around and found a wall replaced by thick bulletproof glass. Through the glass layer, one could clearly see the situation in the next room.

After waiting for about a few minutes, a wheelchair slowly appeared in Ling Chen's line of sight. Ling Chen's expression changed upon closer inspection. Sitting in the wheelchair was a person or, more accurately, a person whose facial features were twisted, the body completely deformed.

This is... Zhu Hong? Ling Chen looked at the face in surprise, temporarily finding it difficult to believe.

Zhu Hong used to be quite handsome, but... how did he end up looking like this monster? Ling Chen's mouth hung open. If it weren't for Tang Yuan personally arranging this, he would suspect whether the person before him was Zhu Hong or not.

After a brief moment of being stunned, Ling Chen carefully examined Zhu Hong, noticing both his cheeks were swollen to varying degrees, his nose was crooked, and one end of his mouth slightly curled up as if it had been torn. Moreover, Zhu Hong's body was extremely bloated, looking like a two-hundred-pound fat man, the strangest part being his legs, which were completely deformed and somewhat atrophied, appearing very discordant with the rest of the body, no wonder he was in a wheelchair. In his current state, those legs probably couldn't bear his body's weight.

If there's anything normal, probably only those two arms.

Looking at Zhu Hong behind the bulletproof glass, Ling Chen opened his mouth and asked, "How did you end up like this?"

Upon hearing Ling Chen's question, Zhu Hong gritted his teeth and replied coldly, "It's all thanks to you."

Chapter 1430 - 1738: Zhu Hong's Leverage (1)

"Thanks to me?" Ling Chen said with a half smile, half smirk. "I didn't do anything. How can you pin this on me? If you really have to blame someone, you can only blame yourself. If you hadn't been so stubborn, hell-bent on fighting me to the death, you wouldn't have ended up like this."

Zhu Hong snorted coldly, acting as if he hadn't heard Ling Chen at all. He kept his mouth shut, his eyes coldly fixed on his own wheelchair.

Seeing Zhu Hong ignore him, Ling Chen didn't push it. He went on at his own pace, "I think you should know why I came to see you."

"I don't."

"When you left Skyhawk Pavilion back then, you took something with you. I think you know exactly what it is. Hand that thing over to me, and the grudges between us are wiped clean. How does that sound?"

Zhu Hong let out a disdainful laugh. "You think I'd agree to that? Ling Chen, I admit this time I slipped up. But you really think I came here without any preparations at all? If you want that thing, fine, but you have to let me go. As long as I regain my freedom, I'll tell you right away where it's being kept."

"Sorry, I can't agree to that condition," Ling Chen said. "You brought this on yourself, and besides, that explosion killed so many people—you have to pay the price for that. Honestly, the fact they didn't sentence you to death is something you should be secretly happy about."

"If that's how you're going to talk, then there's no need for us to keep chatting," Zhu Hong said coldly. "You have one month to think it over. If you go past that deadline, even if you want to accept my terms then, it'll be too late. That thing will sink into the sea forever and no one will ever find it."

"No way. I went through a lot of trouble to catch you. You think I'd just let you walk?" Ling Chen paused, then went on, "Zhu Hong, you know what kind of person I am. If you won't talk, I'll use every method I have until you do. If you want to actually live out the rest of your life in one piece, you might want to think about what I said. I'll give you three days. I'll come back then, and I hope you can give me a satisfactory answer."

With that, Ling Chen didn't say anything more. He turned and walked out of the room.

Tang Yuan, who had been standing guard outside the door, asked in some surprise, "Out so fast? I thought you two would be at it for a long time."

Ling Chen gave a faint smile. "What's there to talk about? What I do find strange is how he ended up looking like this."

Tang Yuan shrugged. "I'm not too sure myself. After we took him over, we only locked him up for one day before his body started changing. I brought in a lot of doctors to examine him, but they all came up empty. They told me his body has already mutated—his genes and cells are completely different from a normal person's. No one knows how he pulled that off."

"When Zhu Hong was in the God Organization, he went through body enhancement experiments. It's probably related to that."

"Hey, you just talked to him for a bit—did you get the intel you wanted?"

"No. His mouth is hard as hell. He insists I have to release him or he won't say a word. That thing is very important to me, but I'm not letting him go because of it. I know him too well. The second he's out, he'll never let it go. I don't want that threat hanging over my head again."

Tang Yuan nodded. "If you want, I can put in a request for you, or we can arrange a little accident and make him disappear for good."

Ling Chen was tempted when he heard Tang Yuan's suggestion. But after thinking it over seriously, he still turned it down. As much as he wanted Zhu Hong gone, for now Zhu Hong still had some value. Unless they found that severed limb, he could only spare Zhu Hong's life.

Lost in thought, Ling Chen followed Tang Yuan out of the secret prison.

"Brother, let's go."

"I'll walk you out."

At the entrance, Ling Chen looked at Tang Yuan and said, "I'll come back in a few days. I'll have to trouble you again then."

"No problem. Just give me a call."

After saying goodbye to Tang Yuan, Ling Chen didn't linger. He took Ling Gengqiu and drove straight to Falcon Company's headquarters.

It was already past ten at night. Jiang Yunkai had been waiting at the company for the two of them to return. When he found out they hadn't eaten yet, Jiang Yunkai immediately made a call and had someone send a late-night snack over to the company dorms.

"Kai, I need your help with something," Ling Chen said, holding a glass of wine.

"Chen, just tell me what you need."

"Tomorrow you take a team over to the Zhu Family and have a talk with Zhu Qianshan. Zhu Hong came to Beijing with Zhu Qianshan's help. There's a chance Zhu Qianshan knows where the thing I want is."

"Got it." Jiang Yunkai nodded. "Don't worry, I'll handle it."

"Why make it so troublesome?" Ling Gengqiu cut in from the side. "Just let me go see him. Hmph. With my methods, we'll see if he talks or not."

Ling Chen hurriedly said, "Brother, I know how capable you are, but stay out of this one. I'll deal with it myself. If it really doesn't work, then I'll ask you to step in. That's fine, right?"

"Since you put it that way, fine... I'll listen to you this time," Ling Gengqiu said, gnawing on a chicken leg, his mouth slick with grease.

After a night's rest, early the next morning Ling Gengqiu was still sleeping in his room, while Ling Chen was already at work. Now that he was back at Falcon Company, as the chairman he had a lot of things he had to look over. He couldn't just be a complete hands-off boss on everything.

After listening to Dong Ying's work report, Ling Chen smiled and said, "Not bad. Looks like we picked the right person. Assistant Dong, I really appreciate your abilities. I hope you can keep this up. Who knows, one day the position of company vice president might be yours."

Hearing that, even though Dong Ying was good at hiding her emotions, the excitement in her eyes still flashed through for a moment.

"Thank you for your trust, Chairman. I'll keep working hard and won't let you down."

"Alright, get back to work."

Dong Ying answered softly and turned to leave the office. Watching her go, Ling Chen picked up a file on the desk, glanced through a few pages, and the corners of his mouth lifted unconsciously. He had to admit, Dong Ying's work ability was excellent. When Ling Chen brought up starting an investment company, he'd only mentioned it casually, but Dong Ying had handled it brilliantly. In just a few short months, the investment company was already turning a profit, and the numbers weren't low—far beyond Ling Chen's expectations.

When it came to fighting and other fields, Ling Chen was very confident. But in business, he was a complete rookie, no different from an outsider. That's why he attached great importance to talent in this area. After all, he owned so many businesses and had no time to manage all the miscellaneous stuff himself. He needed someone to help him run things, and Dong Ying was undoubtedly a suitable candidate. However, before that, he still needed to test her loyalty.