

The Beauty 1501

Chapter 1501 Layers of Crisis (3)

"What?" Ling Chen was taken aback, frowning, "What does Su Mei mean? Could it be that she wants to use Zhu Qianshan and his wife to lure Zhu Hong?"

"That's probably the case. The Pavilion Master doing this... to be honest, I don't quite agree with this approach, it feels a bit unscrupulous. Unfortunately, I have no say in this matter, I can only follow orders."

"Su Mei's idea is good, but her plan won't succeed." Ling Chen shook his head.

"Why?"

"She doesn't understand Zhu Hong well enough. Zhu Hong isn't someone who compromises easily, especially without being threatened by anyone. Even if Su Mei really killed Zhu Qianshan and his wife, he wouldn't show up. So, this method is useless against Zhu Hong."

Song Ge chuckled helplessly, "This is the Pavilion Master's decision, I can't make the call. Whatever, she can do what she wants." Then, changing the subject, Song Ge asked curiously, "Ling, do you think Zhu Hong is dead?"

"Zhu Hong isn't someone who dies easily, he's as tough as me. If I'm not mistaken, he should be in this small town just like us."

"Are you sure?" Song Ge was a bit surprised.

Ling Chen nodded, "Within a hundred miles, there's only this small town. Zhu Hong and Chen Quan are both injured and need treatment urgently, so they would definitely choose this place. However, what Zhu Hong and I could think of, Seland would definitely think of too. It's likely his people have already infiltrated this small town. In any case, everyone be careful and don't reveal your identity."

"Got it."

After more than three hours of unconsciousness, Hu Fei finally woke up from his coma. Seeing Ling Chen's smiling face approaching, Hu Fei said, "Why didn't you arrange for a beautiful woman to take care of me?"

"Get out of here, you almost lost your life and you're still thinking about women. How do you feel now, any better?"

Hu Fei touched his abdomen wound and immediately grimaced in pain.

"Be gentle."

"Hey! I mean... the wound in that area, it won't affect my ability to reproduce, right?"

"Don't worry." Ling Chen laughed, "It'll be fine, at most it'll leave a scar. A charming man always has scars, and if you meet a beautiful woman, you can brag about it."

Hu Fei said with lingering fear, "I thought I was dead for sure this time, is everyone else okay?"

"It's nothing, just some minor injuries, not as severe as yours. You just rest for now. Later I'll have someone get you something to eat."

"I can't rest now, um... where's my phone?"

"What are you up to?" Ling Chen pulled the phone out from Hu Fei's jacket and handed it to him.

"We're trapped in this damn place, we must figure out a way to escape. Seland definitely knows we're here, and in our current condition, how can we fight him head-on?"

"So you mean..."

"Of course, we need to seek reinforcements. Damn! I've been a broker in the assassin world for so many years, and it wasn't for nothing. It's just about money, Seland may be rich, but I'm not lacking in money either. Just watch, if Seland dares to come, I'll make sure he doesn't leave." With that, without waiting for Ling Chen to speak again, Hu Fei had already dialed a number.

Ling Chen shrugged, it seems Seland really pissed off Hu Fei.

"Well, you take care of that. I'm going to rest now. I've been watching over you all night, and I'm exhausted."

Coming out of the bedroom, Ling Chen went alone to the couch in the living room, closed his eyes, and quickly fell into a deep sleep.

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The streets of the small town were filled with people at this moment, two police cars were parked by the roadside, and several police officers were coming and going in a clinic.

"Sir, what happened here?"

The white man glanced at the person asking and said, "You're from out of town, aren't you? This morning, this clinic was robbed, and a lot of medicines are missing. The police are collecting evidence."

"Thank you." With that, the man who asked the question led his companion out of the crowd and turned into an alley.

"Hmph! It seems Ling Chen and the others have arrived in this small town as well, fulfilling the saying, 'We're all in the same boat,' didn't expect we'd end up like this." The man was none other than Zhu Hong, who had just arrived at the town. Beside him, Chen Quan stood quietly, wearing an overcoat. The coat was stolen by Zhu Hong from someone's clothesline to cover Chen Quan's injuries and bloodstains.

"Master, let's go find a place to settle down."

In the evening, Ling Chen finally woke up. After sleeping for seven or eight hours, he felt refreshed and the pain from his injuries had lessened considerably.

"Sixth brother, you're finally awake, fifth sister just bought dinner, come and have some." Yuan Yun called out.

Ling Chen responded, got up, went to the table, and started eating a sandwich with big bites. He was starving after not eating all day. After satisfying his hunger, Ling Chen looked at the darkening sky outside the window and said, "Later, everyone, don't turn on any lights to avoid attracting attention and exposing our location."

"I have to tell you something, Seland's people are already here."

Hearing this from Kaelina, Ling Chen asked, "Did you see them?"

"Not exactly." Kaelina handed her phone to Ling Chen, "This is the news from the local TV station this afternoon, take a look for yourself."

Ling Chen pressed the play button, and a picture of Zhu Hong and Chen Quan appeared on the screen, accompanied by a description. They were portrayed as remorseless killers, with the hope that the town residents would actively provide leads. Besides the photos of Zhu Hong and Chen Quan, Ling Chen, Chen Junfeng, Kaelina, Hu Fei, and Qiu Yong also made the list.

Since the town issued such a notice, it must be Seland pulling the strings behind the scenes.

"Lady Zhu, after dark, please go outside to gather some information."

"No problem."

"Sixth brother, why don't we just leave?" Qiu Yong asked, "We could get some vehicles and move to another place first, then figure out a way to go back to our home country."

Ling Chen shook his head, "The fat one's injuries are too severe for long journeys, he needs a few days to rest. Once his condition stabilizes, we'll leave." After a pause, Ling Chen looked at everyone present, "How about this, Sir Chen, big brother, you take everyone else and leave first. I'll stay here with the fat one. Once you've found a safe place to settle, I'll bring him to you."

"That's not an option, we're leaving together. Besides, without us around, who'll ensure your safety?"

As Qiu Yong's words fell, Chen Junfeng chimed in, "I think Ling Chen makes sense. We're too many people to move together, making us a big target. And since everyone is injured, if discovered, we could easily fall into danger. I suggest we split into two groups, one leaves first while the other stays here. What do you all think?"

Chapter 1502 Escape from the Town (Part 1)

"I agree with Sir Chen's proposal," Ling Chen said. "This is the most reliable method. Big brother, you take the others and leave first. I'll stay behind with Fatty, Sir Chen, and Lady Zhu."

"Your combat strength is only Sir Chen and Lady Zhu. What if there's an unexpected situation?" Qiu Yong thought for a moment, then turned to Zhang Zhongfeng. "Fourth brother, you stay too."

Zhang Zhongfeng didn't say much, just nodded.

"That's settled then," Ling Chen smiled slightly and turned to Zhu Qing, "After it gets dark, get a commercial vehicle. Remember, be careful and don't attract attention."

"I understand."

Midnight.

Zhu Qing returned alone from outside. "Lady Zhu, how's the situation outside?"

"About a kilometer outside the town, there's a mercenary group stationed with around a hundred people, well-equipped. Their defense is very strict, I didn't go in." Zhu Qing paused, then continued, "Plus, I stole a commercial vehicle and parked it outside, ready to go at any time."

Ling Chen nodded and said, "Thank you for your hard work, go rest first."

As per the previously decided plan, apart from Ling Chen's group of five, Qiu Yong took the others to leave by car to find a safe place.

"Sixth brother, we're not by your side, be careful and don't let anything happen," Qiu Yong advised with concern.

Ling Chen smiled and said, "Big brother, you don't need to worry about me. Despite my young age, I've seen all sorts of challenges over the years. Alright, no more talking, hit the road and we'll stay in contact by phone."

"Alright." Qiu Yong patted Ling Chen on the shoulder, then turned to Zhang Zhongfeng and said, "Take care of sixth brother." With that, Qiu Yong and the others got on the commercial vehicle.

Watching the taillights gradually disappear into the thick night, Ling Chen slowly exhaled. Actually, his strong insistence on Qiu Yong and the others leaving first was not only to protect everyone but also because he didn't want too many people to be in danger.

This operation was his idea, traveling so far to seek revenge, but things turned out this way. Honestly, seeing everyone injured, he felt more than just upset, mostly it was guilt. Sometimes, because of his own decision, everyone followed him without hesitation, willing to take risks. This loyalty alone was enough to move him. Currently, their situation wasn't safe, rather any time there could be danger. So, he hoped some could withdraw first to avoid more losses.

Nothing happened overnight.

Early the next morning, Ling Chen yawned, got up from the sofa, rubbed his sleepy eyes, went to the kitchen, opened the fridge, and took out two bags of bread to eat with ketchup. It was time to run for their lives, so personal hygiene was not a priority.

After breakfast, Chen Junfeng and Zhu Qing, among others, got up, and everyone gathered in the living room to discuss the next steps.

"I just checked, the garage of this house has a five-seater SUV, just enough for us. Once Fatty's condition stabilizes, we can leave by car. During this time, we'll keep a low profile. Except for Lady Zhu, no one should leave. Once we get through these two days, we'll be safe," Ling Chen said.

"Lady Zhu, these two days might be tough on you to scout the outside situation. Besides Seland, there's also Zhu Hong who's probably hiding somewhere in this town like us."

"I will."

After assigning tasks to everyone, Ling Chen went to the bedroom to check on Hu Fei. Fortunately, Fatty's abdomen had a lot of fat, so the metal piece didn't hit any vital organs. However, the wound caused by the metal piece was quite long, and it required careful management to prevent it from splitting open.

By lunchtime, Zhu Qing returned from her scouting, sharing the latest updates with everyone.

"This is the situation; we're likely trapped in this town."

Ling Chen frowned. Seland's mercenaries and the local police had blocked all the roads in and out of the town. Even if they had a car, they couldn't force their way through. Otherwise, a hail of bullets would finish them off.

"Did you find any sign of Seland?"

Zhu Qing shook her head, "No news on him. Whether he's in town can't be confirmed. But someone of his stature probably values his life highly and wouldn't risk it lightly. I think he might be in the camp, under the protection of those mercenaries."

"If that's the case, let's not worry about him for now and think about how to get out of here."

Saying that, Ling Chen pulled up a map of the town vicinity on his phone. The map showed two roads entering the town and two roads leaving, but all were blocked, so they needed another way out.

Two days went by in the blink of an eye, and Hu Fei's condition had basically stabilized. Additionally, Qiu Yong called, updating Ling Chen on their situation. Qiu Yong's group had found a port with ships going back home.

However, it was over 300 kilometers from the town to the port.

"Sir Chen, Fourth brother, whether we leave alive depends on tonight," Ling Chen said to Chen Junfeng and Zhang Zhongfeng in the living room.

The longer they delayed, the worse their situation would be. Hu Fei's condition had stabilized, and they needed to retreat as soon as possible.

"Mr. Ling." As they talked, Zhu Qing approached and said, "I found a good spot downstairs."

"A good spot?" Ling Chen got up and followed Zhu Qing, asking, "What kind of good spot?"

"You'll know when you see it." Soon, they arrived at a storage room on the first floor. Zhu Qing moved a carpet aside on the floor, revealing a square wooden board with a handle.

Ling Chen grabbed the handle and slowly lifted it, finding a flight of stairs underneath. "This is the basement. I found it by accident." Hearing Zhu Qing, Ling Chen became curious, "Why design such a hidden basement? Is there something unsavory down there?"

Zhu Qing said nothing and went straight down the stairs. Ling Chen followed her to the basement, turned on the light, and was shocked. This wasn't a basement, it was an armory.

"In this country, trading weapons is legal. If I'm not mistaken, this should be the owner's collection room. You see, from firearms from the '70s to the latest advanced models, every type is here."

Ling Chen smiled and said, "I didn't know you understood weapons so well."

Zhu Qing rolled her eyes at Ling Chen and said, "Do you think assassins only know how to use daggers? To be a competent assassin, you must be familiar with various weapons, not necessarily mastering them, but knowing their features."

Chapter 1503 Escape from the Town (2)

Ling Chen nodded, raised his thumb and said, "I didn't expect you to have some research in this area, not bad!" Saying that, Ling Chen picked up an M416 assault rifle from the weapon rack, loaded a full magazine, and then cocked the gun. The sound was crisp and the surface was smooth, indicating that its owner regularly maintained these firearms.

"You don't have the strength now, so it's just right to use these to arm yourself."

Hearing this, Ling Chen couldn't help but touch his nose, and said with a bitter smile, "Lady Zhu, are you complaining about this burden of mine?"

"Did I complain? Even if I did, there's nothing I can do, since you are my employer." After a pause, Zhu Qing said unhappily, "I say, can you stop always calling me Lady Zhu, and just call me Zhu Qing?"

"Alright, alright, it's my mistake, I'll definitely change in the future. You go upstairs first and check on everyone, have them all get ready, I'll pack up a few things and be right along."

After Zhu Qing left, Ling Chen took a big bag from the side and packed everything needed inside. Tonight was a crucial night, and he had to be fully prepared without the slightest error.

Carrying the big bag back to the living room upstairs, everyone was already ready and could set off at any time. Ling Chen took out his phone, glanced at the time, and said, "Everyone take a break, we'll move out at midnight, twelve o'clock sharp."

There were still more than ten hours until the action, a long enough time. Chen Junfeng and Zhang Zhongfeng returned to their respective rooms to rest and prepare for the night's combat. Among the five, the busiest was Zhu Qing, as she had to constantly monitor the situation outside. Zhu Qing was well-suited to be a scout due to her assassin background and expertise in stealth and concealment.

Around three o'clock in the afternoon, Zhu Qing hurriedly returned from outside. As soon as she entered, Ling Chen, who was sitting in the living room with his eyes closed, noticed Zhu Qing's face was not looking good, "What's wrong?"

"The police, along with those mercenaries, have started searching the entire town house by house; in two or three hours at most, they'll search here."

"The homeowner here is away on vacation, they shouldn't come in."

"That's not necessarily true, I secretly monitored their actions. If they encounter a house with no one inside, they'll still find a way to get in. There's still over three hours until dark; we probably can't wait that long."

Hearing this, Ling Chen slightly frowned. After pondering for a while, he nodded and said, "Help me call Sir Chen and Zhang Zhongfeng, we'll act ahead of schedule and leave this place as soon as possible."

At four in the afternoon, everyone gathered in the garage. With Ling Chen and Zhang Zhongfeng's help, Hu Fei was slowly carried to the back seat because the abdominal wound was quite severe, preventing him from sitting up, so he had to lie down. Zhu Qing and Zhang Zhongfeng guarded his sides, ensuring his safety.

Once in the car, Ling Chen glanced at Chen Junfeng in the front passenger seat, then started the off-road vehicle, ready to drive out.

However, at that moment, a sudden burst of gunshots rang out through the town.

"What's going on?"

Zhu Qing looked worried, "Could they have found us?"

Ling Chen thought for a moment, then shook his head, "Everyone, don't panic; the gunshots are over a hundred meters away from us, definitely not aimed at us. If I'm not mistaken, it's likely that Zhu Hong and Chen Quan have been discovered by those mercenaries." At this point, Ling Chen couldn't help but

smile and said, "It's truly heaven's help for me. With Zhu Hong attracting the mercenaries' attention, the pressure on our side will be greatly reduced."

Finishing his words, Ling Chen opened the garage's automatic rolling door and slowly drove the off-road vehicle outward.

Before long, the off-road vehicle reached the main road in the town center. Ling Chen drove at a speed of over thirty miles per hour along the spacious road, careful not to drive too fast to avoid drawing attention. Along the way, Ling Chen saw police officers and mercenaries running past on both sides of the road, heading in the direction of the gunshots, probably to support the team over there.

The town was small, and a few minutes later, Ling Chen followed the main road out of town and directly drove toward Qiu Yong's location. Although leaving the town, everyone didn't relax, instead heightening their vigilance.

Soon, Ling Chen saw a checkpoint at the intersection, with two police cars and three off-road vehicles blocking the road. At the moment, five cars were lined up there, waiting for inspection.

Ling Chen parked the off-road vehicle at the end of the line, then looked around at the situation. Twenty meters away from the checkpoint, a camp was set up with over a dozen tents, while fully armed mercenaries occasionally walked past. Roughly estimating, there appeared to be thirty or forty mercenaries there.

Exhaling slowly, Ling Chen looked around inside the car and asked, "Is everyone ready?"

Zhang Zhongfeng and Chen Junfeng didn't speak but silently pulled out their weapons, ready for battle at any moment.

"Let's go!" At this point, the cars in front of them that had been checked passed smoothly, and Ling Chen drove the off-road vehicle slowly towards the checkpoint. A police officer immediately walked over and signaled for Ling Chen to roll down the window.

Glancing at the police officer outside the window, Ling Chen's mouth slightly lifted, and he suddenly floored the accelerator, rushing straight ahead. At the same time, all the windows opened, and Chen

Junfeng and Zhu Qing swiftly climbed out, charging toward the mercenaries guarding the checkpoint. Instead of exiting the car, Zhang Zhongfeng emerged from the sunroof, holding a longbow, facing the mercenaries in the direction of the camp, ready to use arrows mercilessly to stop anyone coming to support.

Heavenly List experts and professional assassins acting simultaneously, in the blink of an eye, all the mercenaries guarding the checkpoint were eliminated. As for the police officers... Chen Junfeng and Zhu Qing spared them, as Ling Chen had previously instructed. Killing police officers would mean going against this country's government, causing themselves big trouble.

With the checkpoint cleared, Ling Chen wasted no time driving the off-road vehicle through the breach. When the camp's mercenaries chased after them, Ling Chen and the others had already driven far away.

Hearing the sporadic gunshots coming from the town, Zhu Qing asked, "Do you think Zhu Hong and Chen Quan can survive?"

"Hard to say, Zhu Hong has always had good luck; otherwise, he wouldn't have survived to this day. Moreover, he has a monstrously capable Chen Quan by his side." Ling Chen hoped Zhu Hong and Chen Quan would die in that town. However, knowing Chen Quan's strength, the likelihood was not very high.

"I can't quite understand why Seland is relentlessly pursuing us? To hunt us down, he's already lost so many mercenaries."

Chapter 1504 Escape from the Town (3)

"This really isn't hard to understand." Ling Chen said flatly, "Zhu Hong has the formula for the enhancement drug. If he gets out, he could partner with any military corporation, or just sell the formula. If the Yingtai Group wants to keep its top-dog status, there's no way they can let Zhu Hong live."

"So by your logic, we're just collateral?"

"Not exactly. Yingtai Group is the global leader in military industries. No one's ever dared to challenge their authority. But this time we stormed their headquarters and killed a lot of their people. If Yingtai Group doesn't act and lets us get away, they'll be a laughingstock in the industry."

As he spoke, Zhang Zhongfeng's tone suddenly sank. "Sixth Brother, there's a convoy catching up behind us."

Hearing that, Ling Chen quickly shifted his gaze to the rearview mirror, only to see more than a dozen Land Rovers closing in fast. Their speed was very high; in no time, the dozen Land Rovers had closed to within a hundred meters.

At that moment, the sunroofs of the lead Land Rovers slid open. Several mercenaries leaned half their bodies out, bracing a heavy machine gun. Tongues of fire spat out in bursts, and Ling Chen's off-road vehicle rang with sharp metallic "clang clang" impacts. The rear windshield shattered outright.

"Heads down, all of you!" Ling Chen shouted. Both hands on the wheel, he swerved left and right, driving in an S-pattern to the front, a tactic that could effectively throw off their aim. But the moment he did that, the speed dropped sharply. Very soon, several Land Rovers had run up onto their tail, less than twenty meters away.

The closer they got, the more vicious the heavy machine-gun fire became. In just a few seconds, the off-roader's body was riddled with holes, bullet scars everywhere. Luckily, the rounds hadn't hit the tires or the gas tank; otherwise this vehicle would already be scrap.

Watching the Land Rovers getting closer and closer behind, Ling Chen's face turned grim. At a time like this, he absolutely couldn't stop, and even more couldn't get out to fight back. The enemy's firepower was too fierce. The moment anyone got out, they'd be a live target. Even someone as skilled as Chen Junfeng couldn't stand up to that many bullets.

"Zhu Qing, you drive!"

"Me?" Zhu Qing froze for a second, not reacting. "Don't zone out, get over here." As she spoke, Ling Chen shifted aside, one foot still pressing the accelerator. Seeing this, Zhu Qing didn't dare hesitate any longer. She quickly crawled from the back seat to the driver's seat and took his place.

Once he was in the back, Ling Chen pulled out the large bag he'd prepped in advance from under the seat. He reached in and took out a Grenade Launcher, then fired a round straight through the rear window.

Bang!

With a thunderous boom, the lead Land Rover exploded on the spot, blooming into a ball of fire.

With one Land Rover gone, the rest immediately slowed down, opening the distance between the two sides. Seizing the chance, Ling Chen turned back and shouted, "Stop the car!"

Moments later, the off-roader screeched to a halt and stopped dead in the middle of the road. Ling Chen grabbed his big bag, pushed the door open and said as he got out, "You go on ahead. I'll figure out how to hold them off."

Hearing this, Chen Junfeng and Zhang Zhongfeng spoke in unison, "I'll help you."

Ling Chen shook his head, refusing their offer, his expression solemn. "Sir Chen, Fourth Brother, I'm the one who dragged everyone into this mess. This is on me. I want you both to make it home safe. If anything happens to you, I'll never forgive myself." With that, before Chen Junfeng and Zhang Zhongfeng could say anything else, Ling Chen was already shouting at Zhu Qing in the driver's seat, "What are you waiting for? Drive!"

"I..." Zhu Qing hesitated.

"That's an order." Ling Chen said coldly. "Don't forget what you promised me before. Move!"

Zhu Qing bit down hard, then stopped wavering. She stepped on the gas and drove the off-roader away. Watching the vehicle gradually disappear into the distance, Ling Chen walked alone to a large rock by the roadside, tossed his bag down, and set an assault rifle up on the stone.

Soon, the Land Rover convoy, their formation readjusted, appeared in Ling Chen's line of sight again. When the vehicles were just about to pass by his position, Ling Chen suddenly rose, raised the Grenade Launcher in his hands, and fired all nine grenades in an instant.

For a moment, all that could be heard on the road were continuous "boom boom" explosions. Fire blossomed everywhere.

Ling Chen's objective was clear. He didn't expect to wipe out the convoy with just those grenades. As long as he destroyed the front few vehicles, he could effectively block the rest of the Land Rovers and stop them from advancing.

Bang! Bang!

Amid a series of loud detonations, the trailing Land Rovers had no time to evade and slammed one after another into the wrecked vehicles in front.

Seeing the mercenaries jumping off the vehicles one after another, Ling Chen didn't waste a word. He grabbed the assault rifle and started spraying wildly. In the blink of an eye, more than a dozen mercenaries who couldn't get to cover in time were cut down by the gunfire.

After a brief moment of chaos, the mercenaries quickly regrouped, turning their eyes to the large rock where Ling Chen was positioned. The remaining twenty-odd mercenaries split into two teams, flanking out to the left and right, intending to pincer him.

Watching the two squads slowly closing in, Ling Chen's expression stayed calm, without a trace of panic.

After slapping in a fresh magazine, Ling Chen pulled two smoke grenades from the bag and tossed them to either side. Thick smoke billowed out, shrouding the large rock where he was. Visibility dropped to zero.

He drew a deep breath and closed his eyes, using his sharp hearing to pick up the footsteps around him and gauge the mercenaries' positions. After a while, as the smoke began to thin, the flanking mercenaries discovered that there was no one behind the rock. But there was something sitting on top of it.

Is that... a bomb?

The mercenaries had just realized what it was and hadn't yet had time to dive for cover when a gunshot cracked—"bang"—and a bullet slammed into the bomb, detonating it instantly. The blast wave swallowed the more than twenty mercenaries around the rock and hurled them flying.

Whoosh!

Ling Chen exhaled, climbed up from the grass a short distance away, and looked over the bodies scattered all around. The corner of his mouth lifted in a slight, satisfied grin. He might have lost all his internal skills, but that didn't mean he was completely useless in a fight.

Now that he'd taken care of the threat behind him, he could finally hit the road without looking back.

However, just as Ling Chen was about to find a vehicle and leave, the clear blue sky suddenly filled with the thumping of rotor blades. He looked up and saw a helicopter rushing in from afar, rapidly closing the distance until it was circling right over his head.

Staring at the chopper, Ling Chen's expression changed slightly, and he cursed to himself, Damn it, are they ever going to stop coming?

Chapter 1505 - 1811: Failed Return (1)

Seeing the helicopter slowly descend, Ling Chen immediately raised the assault rifle in his hands, found a Land Rover as cover, and prepared to fight at any moment. As the helicopter landed, a Caucasian man stepped out of the cabin.

Seland? Seeing the newcomer, Ling Chen couldn't help but be taken aback. This guy sure was bold, coming here alone without mercenary protection. Wasn't he courting death?

While thinking, two more people jumped out from the helicopter. Ling Chen's pupils slightly contracted, a hint of gravity in his expression.

Zhu Hong! Chen Quan! It was actually these two guys.

It seemed like Seland was being held hostage by them. Indeed, as expected, Zhu Hong and Chen Quan weren't so easy to kill. However, although Zhu Hong and Chen Quan managed to escape, they had obviously gone through a bloody battle. Even someone as monstrously strong as Chen Quan was covered in scars, as if his body had been bathed in blood, looking exceptionally grim and terrifying. In comparison, Zhu Hong's condition was slightly better.

At this moment, the three stood by the helicopter, looking at the surrounding corpses. Then, Zhu Hong's gaze turned to the Land Rover where Ling Chen was hiding, and he shouted loudly, "Ling Chen, I know you're there, come out."

Hearing Zhu Hong's voice, Ling Chen didn't respond but opened the large bag he carried and checked his weapons. The grenade launcher's ammunition was completely used up, the grenades, smoke bombs, and explosives all exhausted. The only usable weapon he had was an assault rifle, and it wasn't even a full magazine, just ten bullets.

The situation was very unfavorable!

Ling Chen frowned slightly, thinking to himself.

"Ling Chen, are you too scared to even meet me?" Zhu Hong taunted from not far away, "This doesn't seem like the Ling Chen I know."

"Zhu Hong, have you ever seen me afraid of you?" Ling Chen stepped out from behind the Land Rover, directly facing Zhu Hong and the others.

Zhu Hong's lips curled into a slight smile. He glanced around and asked, "Why are you alone? Where are your companions? Could it be they abandoned you and ran for their lives?"

"You don't need to say pointless things."

"Why not say them?" Zhu Hong laughed, "After today, we won't have the chance to chat again, so you should enjoy this moment. Say whatever you have to say, or if there's anything you wish to convey, I can pass it along for you."

Ling Chen opened his mouth, about to retort, when the ringtone of his phone in his pocket rang out. Taking out the phone and glancing at the caller ID, a flash of hesitation crossed Ling Chen's eyes. He thought it would be a call from Zhu Qing and them, but didn't expect it would be her... After a moment's hesitation, Ling Chen pressed the answer button and said hello.

"Where are you? Haven't seen you recently." Nanrong Wanqing's voice came from the other end of the line.

Ling Chen smiled slightly, "I'm abroad handling something. It'll take a few days before I can return. Why, is there something you need?"

"Can't I call you for no reason?" Nanrong Wanqing's tone carried a trace of displeasure.

"Of course not. I wish you would call me every day. But, I have something important to deal with now. Can I get back to you later?"

"Alright then, just make sure you stay safe out there and don't make me worry."

"I know." Hanging up the phone, Ling Chen looked up at Zhu Hong not far away, only to see the other squinting his eyes, looking at him with a face full of resentment.

"Was it Wanqing who called?"

Ling Chen nodded.

"Hmph! She really cares about you. If it weren't for you butting in, the person she should care about would be me." Zhu Hong said coldly.

"Don't be naive. Even if I hadn't appeared, Wanqing wouldn't have fancied someone like you. Cold-hearted and indifferent, ignoring even family, who would want to spend a lifetime with you?"

"Isn't it all because of you?" Zhu Hong roared, "Without you, my future would be bright. It's because of you that you know how much suffering I've endured? I can survive until now because of one belief supporting me, revenge! I have nothing left now, only hatred in my heart. I will kill you and everyone who opposes me."

"In that case, we have nothing more to say." Ling Chen released the safety on his assault rifle, the muzzle slightly raised. As soon as they attacked, he would pull the trigger.

"Master, kill him for me!"

Following Zhu Hong's words, Chen Quan immediately stepped forward, heading towards Ling Chen. Seeing the opponent approaching, Ling Chen didn't hesitate, raised his gun, and shot, the bullet aiming straight for Chen Quan's eyes. However, just as Ling Chen fired, Chen Quan suddenly reached out, pulling Seland over to shield himself.

Since Seland was slightly shorter than Chen Quan, the bullet went straight through his brow.

With a shot to the head, Seland's head jerked back abruptly, and blood gushed out of the bullet hole. The dignified president of the Yingtai Group, a giant of the world military industry, died just like that, without leaving a final word.

With Seland's body shielding him, Ling Chen's bullets were useless and couldn't pose a threat to Chen Quan at all.

Watching the opponent approach step by step, Ling Chen had to retreat, trying to conserve the bullets in his magazine, as they were his only lifeline.

The best plan is to make a tactical retreat!

Clenching his teeth, Ling Chen decided not to drag it out any longer and started running down the road. Seeing Ling Chen trying to escape, Chen Quan immediately quickened his pace. However, whenever Chen Quan attempted to discard Seland's body to pursue full-speed, Ling Chen would always turn back and fire a shot, using the bullets to limit Chen Quan's pace. Fortunately, Ling Chen had excellent aim, with each shot targeting vital points, otherwise, Chen Quan wouldn't even pay attention.

After several shots, the distance between Ling Chen and Chen Quan gradually expanded. However, Ling Chen's actions also provoked Chen Quan, who shouted, swinging his arm fiercely, and hurled Seland's body like a ball in Ling Chen's direction.

Opportunity?

Ling Chen raised the assault rifle in his hands, intending to aim at Chen Quan's vital points, but his sight was blocked by the flying Seland. This delay undoubtedly created an opportunity for Chen Quan to close in. By the time Ling Chen turned to escape, the latter had already closed in, his powerful fist punching straight towards Ling Chen's back.

Thud!

With a spurt of blood, Ling Chen felt as if all the bones in his body were about to break apart, his body flying out and landing heavily on the ground.

Prone on the ground, Ling Chen looked at the assault rifle that had fallen nearby, wanting to reach out and grab it, but as soon as his arm moved slightly, a sharp pain surged through. Even someone as resilient as him couldn't help but cry out.

His bones were certainly broken in several places, especially the spinal bones in his back, making it impossible for him to even stand up.

Chapter 1506 - 1812: Failed Return (2)

"Why aren't you running anymore?" At this moment, Zhu Hong's mocking voice came over.

Ling Chen slowly turned his head and looked at Zhu Hong walking over from the side.

"You came all the way overseas to hunt me down for revenge, and this is how you end up. Do you regret it?"

"I don't feel regret, just a bit disappointed I couldn't personally avenge Qin."

"Doesn't matter, you'll be seeing him soon enough." As he said this, Zhu Hong's eyes rolled. He took the phone from Ling Chen's pocket and began fiddling with it on his own.

"What are you doing?"

"Tell me... if Wanqing saw you looking like this, how do you think she'd feel?"

Hearing that, Ling Chen's expression changed slightly. He said in a low voice, "Zhu Hong, if you're going to kill me then do it. Cut the crap."

"Killing you just like this would be way too boring. You know, for countless nights I've dreamed about what kind of torture I should use on you to finally vent the hatred in my heart if you ever fell into my hands."

"And did you figure it out?"

Zhu Hong's lips curled up. He nodded with a smile and said, "Just now, I did." With that, he opened the video recording function on the phone, then turned to Chen Quan and said, "Master, help me take off both his arms and both his legs, and then... help me snap his third leg too. I really want to know, if Nanrong Wanqing sees that, will she still choose you as her man?"

As soon as he heard Zhu Hong's words, Chen Quan didn't say a word. He walked straight to Ling Chen, grabbed his right arm and gave it a vicious twist. A crisp crack sounded, and Ling Chen's face instantly turned pale. Faced with the searing pain, he clenched his teeth and didn't utter a sound. Only the faint trembling of his body showed just how intense the agony he was enduring was.

Seeing Ling Chen in such unbearable pain, Zhu Hong felt a rush of savage satisfaction and couldn't help but burst into loud laughter.

"Master, don't rush. Let him catch his breath first. Don't kill him all at once; that wouldn't be any fun."

As soon as Zhu Hong spoke, Chen Quan immediately stopped, quietly standing to the side, waiting for Ling Chen to ride out the wave of pain.

A few minutes later, seeing Ling Chen's face gradually return to normal, Zhu Hong gave Chen Quan a look. The latter understood, grabbed Ling Chen's left arm again. However, just as Chen Quan was about to dislocate his left arm, a gunshot suddenly rang out from the distance. Almost at the same time, Chen Quan jerked to the right, and a bullet smacked into the spot he'd just been standing.

"Who is it?" Zhu Hong turned his head and saw more than ten off-road vehicles appear not far away, roaring straight toward them. At the same time, several SUVs stopped halfway, and a dozen fully armed men jumped out of the vehicles and raised their guns, firing at Zhu Hong and Chen Quan.

At this moment, there was no cover around Zhu Hong. To dodge the bullets, he quickly followed Chen Quan, sprinting toward a tree behind them.

Yingtai Group again! Zhu Hong stared darkly at those mercenaries, what a bunch of persistent bastards. Seland was already dead, yet they still wouldn't let it go.

In no time, more than thirty mercenaries slowly pressed in, forming a fan-shaped encirclement. Zhu Hong and Chen Quan hid behind the tree, occasionally poking their heads out to peek, looking for a chance to counterattack. However, at that moment, Zhu Hong noticed a detail. As those mercenaries passed by Seland's corpse, they didn't react at all, as if Seland didn't exist.

"How is that possible?" Zhu Hong muttered to himself. Wasn't Seland their employer? Why did they not care whether he lived or died?

As he was thinking, a few mercenaries had already reached Ling Chen. Seeing him lying on the ground, they immediately lifted him up and turned to run back to the SUVs.

No!

Seeing what the mercenaries were doing, Zhu Hong instantly sensed something was wrong. These mercenaries probably weren't Seland's people. Too bad—by the time he realized that, it was already too late. Just now he assumed they would just shoot Ling Chen, so he hadn't bothered about his life or death. Now, even if he wanted to stop them, he couldn't.

Watching Ling Chen being carried into an SUV, Zhu Hong cursed angrily. But he had no time to worry about Ling Chen now; the mercenaries were steadily closing in, and he had to think of a way to escape.

"Master, let's go!"

As the words left his mouth, Zhu Hong dashed straight toward the helicopter landing spot, with Chen Quan close on his heels. With Chen Quan's level of strength, if he ran flat out, he'd easily leave Zhu Hong in the dust. But to protect Zhu Hong's safety, he could only hold back his speed.

Bang! Bang!

Gunshots kept ringing out behind them, but Chen Quan stayed right behind Zhu Hong, using his own body to shield him from the bullets. In the blink of an eye, Chen Quan had taken at least a dozen rounds in the back and legs. However, his strength was what it was; with his thick Inner Strength, although the bullets tore through his flesh, they didn't hit any vital spots.

Not long after, the two finally reached the helicopter.

Once aboard, Zhu Hong quickly started the rotors, and before the mercenaries could close in, he had already lifted the helicopter into the air and pulled away.

Watching the mercenaries retreat down below, Zhu Hong's face was a sickly shade of dark. Just a bit more... it was really just a bit more, and yet Ling Chen still slipped through his fingers.

At that moment, inside one of the SUVs, Ling Chen was lying flat on the back seat while a white man held a first-aid kit, treating his wounds.

Seeing the man's friendly smile, Ling Chen had a belly full of questions he wanted to ask. But the pain from his injuries had drained every ounce of strength from him. After holding on for a while, he closed his eyes and sank into a deep sleep.

He had no idea how much time had passed. When Ling Chen woke up again, he found himself lying in a bright room, all his wounds neatly wrapped in bandages.

Where am I? Ling Chen thought to himself, wanting to sit up and take a look. But the moment he moved, a wave of sharp pain ripped through his entire body, almost making him cry out. On top of that, he realized his right arm seemed to have lost all sensation.

Right!

Thinking back to the day he ran into Zhu Hong, Ling Chen finally remembered that his right arm had been snapped by Chen Quan.

As he was thinking, the door to the room was pushed open from the outside, and a young girl in a nurse's uniform walked in. Feeling Ling Chen's gaze on her, a beautiful smile immediately blossomed on her face.

"You're finally awake. How do you feel?"

"I've felt worse," Ling Chen said. "Excuse me, where am I?"

"This is the City People's Hospital in East Sea City. You've been lying here for two days. What, you don't remember anything?"

"East Sea City?" Ling Chen was slightly stunned. Wasn't he overseas? When did he get back? And... he'd already been in the hospital for two days. Damn, how long was I out?"

Chapter 1507 - 1813: Failed Return (3)

"Um... Is my friend in the hospital?"

"He went to the cafeteria to eat and will be back soon." Saying this, the nurse picked up the medicine bottle by the bedside and started the infusion for Ling Chen.

After the nurse was done, Ling Chen lay on the bed for a few minutes before seeing Tang Guolun walk in from outside.

"Ling, the nurse just told me you woke up, so I rushed over without even eating." Tang Guolun smiled as he pulled up a chair and placed it by the bedside, asking with a concerned face, "How are you, okay? If there's anything uncomfortable, be sure to tell me."

"It's nothing. I've been through a lot, so this injury is nothing and will heal with some rest. By the way! Boss Tang, how long have I been unconscious?"

"A week. Those mercenaries handed you over to us while you were still in a coma. Fortunately, they treated your wounds in time, otherwise, you wouldn't have woken up so quickly."

Mentioning those mercenaries, Ling Chen couldn't help but ask curiously, "Boss Tang, who hired those mercenaries?"

"I did."

Just as Ling Chen finished speaking, he heard a familiar voice from the door. He turned to see Hu Fei slowly sliding in, seated in a wheelchair.

"Fatty!" Ling Chen exclaimed with joy, "How's your injury?"

Before Hu Fei could speak, Tang Guolun chimed in, "This guy's injuries have long been fine, but he's staying because he thinks the nurses here are pretty and refuses to leave."

"Come on, don't talk nonsense, I'm staying to keep Ling Chen company, it's not as sleazy as you think."

Ling Chen teased with a laugh, "Fatty, don't make excuses, I know you too well; you can't move when you spot a pretty girl."

"Keep it down." Hu Fei hurriedly said. "If the nurse hears, it won't be good. I want to stay a bit longer."

"Hey, seriously, when did you hire those mercenaries? Why didn't I know?"

"Didn't I mention it before? Fatty here doesn't mess around. So what if Yingtai Group has money? I'm not broke either. After getting injured that day, I kept pulling strings to find help. However, many mercenary groups backed off once they found out the opponent was Yingtai Group, until I found a bold

group later on, but they charged high prices. Once they came and joined me, I immediately sent them back to rescue you. How does it feel? Grateful?"

"Thanks to your backup plan, otherwise, I'd have been doomed." Reflecting on the ordeal, Ling Chen felt a bit guilty. So much time and effort wasted, not only failing to deal with Zhu Hong but also leaving everyone battered.

Tang Guolun seemed to sense Ling Chen's thoughts and comforted him, "Don't overthink it; everyone wants things to go smoothly. But sometimes things don't work out as planned, and failure is inevitable. Honestly, you should be grateful. This operation was extremely dangerous, and the fact that everyone made it out is already something."

"Boss Tang, any news on Zhu Hong?"

"Not yet, but after this incident, he won't have a place abroad. Just a few days ago, the new president of Yingtai Group made an internal announcement, fully searching for Zhu Hong's whereabouts. In their eyes, Seland was killed by Zhu Hong, and they want revenge. Yingtai Group is also warning other military enterprises, saying anyone daring to cooperate with Zhu Hong is an enemy. So, Zhu Hong's situation is certainly difficult."

"As long as he can't find channels to expand, this operation wasn't in vain." Ling Chen shifted the conversation, "Boss Tang, how's my arm?"

"The doctor said, although your injury is serious, recovery is possible with proper rest, and there shouldn't be major issues. However, it's best not to use that arm for heavy work."

Ling Chen nodded, "I've noted."

In a flash, it's been over half a month since returning to East Sea City. During this time, Ling Chen has been hospitalized, spending his days eating and sleeping, gaining five pounds in just over half a month. A week ago, under everyone's 'pressuring,' Hu Fei reluctantly left the hospital. There was no choice; the base had many matters requiring his attention, he couldn't keep slacking off at the hospital.

"Ling Chen, your discharge papers are done; you can leave."

Ling Chen stood by the window, looking out at the bright sun, stretched, and smiled, "Stuck inside for so many days, finally can go home."

"Let's go, the car's waiting outside." Tang Guolun helped carry the luggage.

Leaving the hospital, Tang Guolun drove Ling Chen straight home, reminded him to rest well, and then returned to the base.

Lying on the soft sofa, Ling Chen pulled out his phone, scrolling through his contacts. After being alone for so long, a little adjustment is necessary. Besides fine dining, life's spice includes lovely ladies.

Shiyun... Suddenly, Ling Chen's gaze paused on Tang Shiyun's number. Thinking back, they had little contact since they were together. It's not that Ling Chen didn't want to contact her, just unsure how to face her.

After hesitating, Ling Chen dialed Tang Shiyun's number. It's been so long; wonder how that girl has been.

After a while, the call connected. A familiar voice came from the other end, but it wasn't Tang Shiyun.

"Hey! Hong, is it you?"

"It's me, Mr. Ling, hello." The voice belonged to Tang Shiyun's agent, Xu Hong.

"Hong, where's Shiyun?"

"She's rehearsing and can't take calls right now. Is there anything urgent? I can pass the message."

"It's nothing. Since Shiyun is busy, I won't disturb her." Hanging up, Ling Chen continued looking through his contacts.

Right! Xiaozhu seems to be in East Sea City too. Ling Chen found Zhu Xiaozhu's number and was about to call. But recalling something, he hesitated, ultimately deciding against it. Zhu Xiaozhu is likely still worried about her parents, a meeting might not be too joyful.

While pondering, his phone suddenly rang.

Shiyun?

Ling Chen answered, hearing Tang Shiyun's sweet voice: "Ling, it's me, Shiyun, you called earlier?"

"I heard from Hong you were rehearsing; didn't want to disturb..."

"It's fine, just finished rehearsal, it's break time now. Ling, you've been out of touch for so long." Tang Shiyun's tone carried a slight complaint.

Ling Chen awkwardly chuckled, "Been busy lately, um... I'm in East Sea City, do you have time today? Want to have dinner together?"

"Sure." Tang Shiyun readily agreed, "I finish rehearsal at five, shall we meet at six-thirty?"

"Okay, I'll wait for you."

Chapter 1508 - 1814: Assisting with the Case (1)

At six o'clock in the evening, Ling Chen was alone in the bedroom, trying on several outfits. It's rare to meet Tang Shiyun, so he definitely had to dress up a bit. Actually, he had been eating and sleeping, sleeping and eating lately, so his spirits were quite high.

However, while trying on clothes, Ling Chen realized that his right arm was still a bit inconvenient; slight movements caused piercing pain. Changing into casual attire, Ling Chen checked the time and then drove to the agreed place.

Tang Shiyun's fame was growing bigger and bigger. According to entertainment news reports, at the recent most prestigious awards ceremony in the music industry, Tang Shiyun won nearly half of the awards, essentially the only big winner. That awards ceremony also pushed Tang Shiyun's fame to a peak.

Therefore, to enjoy a quiet meal, Ling Chen didn't choose a high-end restaurant but rather a fairly ordinary one, considered a mid-market option. Upon arriving, Ling Chen reserved a window seat in the dining hall and watched the restaurant entrance, awaiting Tang Shiyun's arrival.

At six thirty, Tang Shiyun appeared exactly at the restaurant entrance. Seeing Tang Shiyun's outfit, Ling Chen couldn't help but chuckle. The girl was dressed in light blue casual attire, wore a mask on her face, and a baseball cap on her head, covering her entire face.

Though he couldn't see her face, Ling Chen recognized her as Tang Shiyun at a glance. Besides her, who else would dress like this.

At this moment, Tang Shiyun had already entered the restaurant, looking around as if searching for someone. Ling Chen swiftly approached, waving a hand and saying, "Shiyun, I'm here."

Seeing Ling Chen, a hint of confusion flashed in her eyes, as if looking at a stranger.

Ling Chen found it odd and asked, "Shiyun, what's wrong?" Saying this, he reached out to hold her hand. But as soon as he touched her, she slapped his hand away, "Who are you? Get out of my way, don't bother me."

Hearing her voice, Ling Chen was momentarily stunned; this woman wasn't Tang Shiyun. Mistaking identity, Ling Chen touched his nose and laughed awkwardly, saying, "Sorry, I thought you were my friend." With that, Ling Chen quickly backed away and returned to his seat.

Watching the unfamiliar woman at the entrance, still looking around anxiously, Ling Chen smiled secretly; the woman's figure was similar to Tang Shiyun's, both petite and exquisite, and the height was the same, so he had mistaken her. Although he couldn't see her appearance, Ling Chen instinctively judged that the woman should be very pretty.

After waiting for more than ten minutes, Ling Chen checked the time; it was almost six fifty, yet Tang Shiyun hadn't arrived. He didn't know if something came up or traffic was bad. Thinking about it, Ling Chen decided to call Tang Shiyun to ask about the situation.

Soon, the call connected, and Tang Shiyun's apologetic voice came from the other end, "Ling, I'm really sorry, I've been delayed by something important here; would it be okay if you eat first, and I come over after I'm done?"

Ling Chen smiled slightly, "No problem, take care of your business first; no rush. If you really can't make it, we can reschedule."

"I knew Ling understands me best. Well, I'll hang up now and contact you later."

"Alright." After hanging up the phone, Ling Chen shook his head helplessly; it seemed tonight's meeting was off. Oh well! Ling Chen gestured to the waiter and randomly ordered a few dishes. Since Tang Shiyun wasn't coming, he'd just eat something simple.

Before long, the food was served, and Ling Chen ordered two bottles of Erguotou for himself. Suddenly, a fragrant breeze approached, and Ling Chen looked up to see the woman he mistook earlier come up to his table and sat down unceremoniously.

Seeing the woman's actions, Ling Chen was slightly stunned and asked puzzled, "Miss, do you need something?"

"Can't I just sit for no reason?" Her tone was somewhat brusque, seemingly in a bad mood.

Ling Chen shrugged, not bothering with her, and continued drinking his wine. Having stayed in the hospital for so long, eating bland food every day, he wasn't allowed to eat spicy food, let alone drink. It didn't take long for two bottles of Erguotou to go down Ling Chen's throat.

With the wine finished, the dishes were untouched. Ling Chen wiped his mouth, still wanting more, and ordered two more bottles from the waiter.

"Did you drive?" the woman opposite suddenly asked.

Ling Chen replied casually, "Yeah, I did. Why?"

"You drove and drank so much. Even if you don't care about your own safety, think about others' lives."

Hearing this, Ling Chen couldn't help but laugh, "You sound just like a friend of mine." The friend he mentioned was naturally Xia Mutong, always in a lecturing tone. Saying this, Ling Chen drank another glass, "Don't worry, I have a good tolerance; these few bottles are nothing." Ling Chen paused and put down the glass, curiously scrutinizing the woman in front and asked, "Why are you here? Coming to a restaurant without eating, there's only one possibility, you're looking for someone? But seeing your disguise, you're probably trying not to be recognized, and yet you're sitting at a stranger's table. Hey! Are you here because your husband has a mistress, secretly catching an affair?"

Having heard Ling Chen's words, the woman immediately widened her eyes and asked, "Are you a detective?"

"No, just guessing. So did I guess right?"

"Guess right my ass, don't pretend to know what you don't." The woman snorted softly, then turned away to look at the guests entering and leaving, ignoring Ling Chen.

With her not speaking, Ling Chen enjoyed the peace, drinking his wine and eating his food. After a while, the woman opposite suddenly took a cigarette packet from her pocket and placed it on the table.

Ling Chen thought she was going to smoke, ready to say something and ask her to smoke outside. But when he looked up at her, he found her gaze intentionally or unintentionally directed at a nearby table. Seeing this, Ling Chen curiously glanced over to notice seven guests sitting around four meters away; five men and two women, all quite young, the men around thirty, the women in their twenties.

Ling Chen scanned them briefly, his eyes suddenly focusing on one of the women.

How was it her? Ling Chen was stunned, surprise flashed in his eyes; he didn't expect to run into her here, such a coincidence. However, seeing her being close and intimate with other men, Ling Chen's brows furrowed unconsciously.

Unpleasant! This feeling was really unpleasant.

Chapter 1509 - 1815: Assisting with the Investigation (2)

After hesitating for a moment, Ling Chen suppressed his impulse and carefully observed the situation at that table. The five men were dressed very ordinarily, not like wealthy people. Of course, if they were wealthy, they wouldn't come to a place like this to eat. However, judging from their expressions, those men didn't seem to be good people. One of the men even had a few knife scars on his face, looking very ferocious. Among them, he was the quietest while the others were bragging and chatting. He just sat there quietly, drinking his tea.

Moreover, the scar-faced man's gaze occasionally swept around, as if observing the surroundings, showing great caution.

Ling Chen took a few glances, then locked his gaze on Xia Mutong. Xia Mutong was wearing a very sexy off-the-shoulder outfit, with her long hair flowing gracefully, displaying none of the briskness of a police officer, but rather an elegant demeanor. However, seeing a man's hand rubbing Xia Mutong's tender shoulder, Ling Chen felt quite displeased, wishing he could rush over and kick the man away.

This little lady... Ling Chen shook his head helplessly. From his understanding of Xia Mutong, she would never mingle with this kind of man, let alone dress so provocatively. The only reason for her to act that way is to go undercover.

Thinking of this, Ling Chen couldn't help but shift his gaze to the woman across from him. Her attention was always on that group, and after taking out a cigarette box, she never lit a cigarette. Glancing at the cigarette box on the table, he noticed that one end of it was facing that group. Upon seeing this, Ling Chen immediately understood. That was not a cigarette box at all, but a miniature camera used for secret filming.

Apparently, this woman in front of him was also a police officer, specifically there to investigate and gather evidence.

While thinking, three men in their forties walked in from outside the restaurant. Seeing the men at the door, the scar-faced man immediately stood up and waved at them. The three men responded with a wave and quickly walked towards the scar-faced man's table.

With guests arriving, except for the scar-faced man, the other men and women all stood up from the table and moved to another table, leaving their seats for the three new middle-aged men.

After sitting down, the scar-faced man courteously took out a pack of cigarettes, handing one to the three middle-aged men, but they politely refused.

Then, the four of them began to chat at the table. Due to the distance and the noisy environment of the restaurant, Ling Chen couldn't hear clearly. The woman across from Ling Chen seemed very eager to hear their conversation, but unfortunately, Ling Chen couldn't hear it, let alone her.

Heh! Who would have thought I'd run into something like this while grabbing a meal. Having been idle for a while, Ling Chen found the sudden event quite intriguing, since it was related to Xia Mutong. To be honest, Ling Chen was very interested in their conversation. Immediately, he stood up and walked to a nearby waiter, asking for a few more bottles of wine.

Of course, acquiring wine was just a cover; the real purpose was to eavesdrop on their conversation. He was only about three meters away from those people. With his keen hearing, even in a noisy environment, he could clearly hear their words.

"Gentlemen, isn't the price for this batch of goods too high? Can you make it cheaper?"

"Long, this is already the lowest price. Do you know how much they are asking in the market now? At least two million per bottle, and the demand exceeds the supply. We don't have much stock either. If it weren't for your sake, we wouldn't be allocating so much to you. So, Long, can you accept this price?"

The scar-faced man, referred to as Long, hesitated for a moment and nodded, "Alright, according to your quote, one hundred eighty thousand per bottle, I'll take all three bottles."

"Great, Long is indeed a straightforward person. In that case, let's trade money for goods." Saying this, a middle-aged man placed a briefcase on the table, took out a slip of paper from his pocket, and handed it

to the scar-faced man, "The goods you want are in there, and this is my bank account number; you can transfer the money directly."

The scar-faced man nodded, immediately taking out his phone to operate.

Soon, the scar-faced man put down his phone, looking at the three middle-aged men, "The money has been transferred. As for the goods... I won't inspect them; I trust you won't play tricks."

"Long, you must be joking. We rely on integrity for a living, why would we ruin our reputation? Alright! Long, since the business is done, we'll be leaving." With that, the three middle-aged men got up and left the restaurant.

As the three middle-aged men left, Xia Mutong and the other men and women returned to the scar-faced man's table. Ling Chen took a glance, seeing that the important parts of the conversation were overheard, he returned to his seat, eating while keeping an eye on their movements.

About ten minutes later, the scar-faced man and the others got up and left the restaurant after paying the bill.

Seeing them leave, the woman sitting across from Ling Chen immediately pulled out her phone and sent a text message. She then quickly walked outside the restaurant. Seeing this, Ling Chen threw down a few hundred-yuan bills and followed her out.

Outside the restaurant, Ling Chen glanced around and saw the scar-faced man and Xia Mutong getting into a business car, heading straight down the road. The woman who tried to follow them secretly hurried to the roadside, trying to stop a taxi, but unfortunately, all the taxis passing by were occupied.

Ling Chen chuckled to himself, driving his car slowly beside the woman, then rolling down the window and leaning out to ask, "Miss, need a ride?"

Seeing Ling Chen, her eyes lit up, and without another word, she opened the door and got into the passenger seat, "Quickly, follow that business car ahead."

Upon the urging of the opposite party, Ling Chen smiled, driving his sedan to follow. Luckily, there was a traffic light ahead. The business car waited for more than ten seconds for the red light, giving Ling Chen plenty of time to catch up.

"Miss, what are you doing?"

The woman directly pulled out an ID from her pocket, waved it in front of Ling Chen, and said, "See that? I'm a police officer, and you need to cooperate with my work. From now on, you and your car are requisitioned by me."

Ling Chen glanced at it and saw the name 'Zhang Ling' on the ID, presumably the woman's name. Judging by the photo on it, as expected by Ling Chen, she was indeed a typical beauty.

"So it's Officer Zhang." Ling Chen joked with a smile, "I can understand you requisitioning my car, but... if you want to requisition me... I'm wondering what method you would use for that?"

Zhang Ling glared at him, not at all amused, "Are you flirting with a cop? I think you're itching for trouble."

Chapter 1510 - 1816: Assisting with the Case (3)

"Officer Zhang, you're joking. How would I dare to mess with you cops? That's asking for trouble." At this point, Ling Chen changed the subject and asked curiously, "Officer Zhang, you asked me to follow that car ahead. Could it be that the people in that car are all bad guys?"

"If you can't stop talking, no one will mistake you for a mute. Shut up! Don't distract me from my work."

Ling Chen hit a wall and had no choice but to shut his mouth and focus on driving. After about twenty minutes on the road, the van ahead finally stopped. Instead of stopping directly, Ling Chen drove past the van.

"Hey! What are you doing? Stop the car!" Zhang Ling quickly shouted.

Ling Chen ignored her until he drove to the next corner and disappeared from the van's sight. Only then did he find a place to park the car.

"Can you even understand human speech?" Zhang Ling said angrily, "I told you to stop. If you mess up my big plan, you're going to regret it." After saying that, Zhang Ling pushed open the car door and hurriedly ran towards the van's location.

Ling Chen shook his head helplessly. He really didn't know how this chick became a cop; she had no tracking skills at all. After following the van for so long, unless the people in the van were idiots, they would definitely suspect something. If he had parked right behind it, their suspicions would be confirmed, and they would definitely try to evade them.

After getting out of the car, Ling Chen followed Zhang Ling's footsteps, and soon, the van appeared in his sight.

However, the people in the van had already left. Ling Chen looked around. On either side of where the van had parked, there was a hotel and a residential building. He had no idea where those people had gone. At this moment, he saw Zhang Ling standing by a big tree, holding her phone and looking around constantly. Ling Chen approached and saw that the phone screen displayed a map app with a red dot flashing continuously. From the position of the red dot, it seemed that the scar-faced man and others were in the residential building.

Noticing Ling Chen beside her, Zhang Ling frowned and said, "What are you doing here?"

Ling Chen smiled and said, "Officer Zhang, didn't you just say you were commandeering me? What if you need the car again? Don't worry, I'm just following you and won't hinder your case." As he finished speaking, Ling Chen glanced at Zhang Ling's phone and pointed, "Why did that red dot just disappear?"

Zhang Ling looked down at the map app on her phone and couldn't help exclaiming in alarm. Without waiting for Ling Chen to speak again, she rushed into the nearby residential building. Seeing Zhang Ling's nervous demeanor, Ling Chen's heart sank slightly. The signal from the red dot represented Xia Mutong; with the red dot now gone, did this mean something had happened to her?

Thinking of this, Ling Chen quickly followed Zhang Ling into the residential building.

The building had five floors, with ten units on each floor. Before the signal disappeared, Xia Mutong's last location was on the third floor. In no time, Ling Chen followed Zhang Ling up to the third floor.

Looking at the dim corridor, Zhang Ling seemed very tense, taking careful steps and her breathing turning rapid.

As they neared the room where Xia Mutong was, Zhang Ling drew a pistol from her waist, chambering a round, and leaned against the wall to observe the situation in the room. Ling Chen followed behind, feeling a bit helpless about Zhang Ling's response. An undercover officer was in danger, and she should have immediately called for backup before deciding to intervene based on the situation. It seemed Zhang Ling was a rookie, lacking experience in crisis management.

Ling Chen glanced around as he noticed the neighboring room had its lights on. Since the window was covered with curtains, he couldn't see inside. However, using his keen hearing, Ling Chen detected the footsteps of two people moving back and forth inside the room.

Just as Ling Chen was about to move closer to better understand the situation inside, an abrupt and loud phone ringtone suddenly rang out. Ling Chen's expression changed slightly as he quickly turned his head, only to see Zhang Ling fumbling to pull out her phone from her pocket and hanging up the call.

Ling Chen sighed. He had intended to act stealthily, but this chick's slip had exposed them.

Sure enough, with the phone ringing, the room inside fell completely silent. Ling Chen pressed himself against the wall and slowly felt his way to the door, holding his breath. Soon, he heard a soft noise as the door was opened from inside. A man poked his head through the gap to check the corridor.

In that instant when the man extended his head, Ling Chen swiftly grabbed the man's head and yanked him out forcefully. Instantly, the man's body was pulled out of the door and he smashed his head against the wall, knocking him out cold.

Having dealt with one man, Ling Chen immediately kicked open the door and charged inside.

Inside the living room, there were four men and two women, one of whom was Xia Mutong, tied to a chair.

As Ling Chen burst inside, everyone's expressions changed. The scar-faced man coldly shouted, "Kill him!"

"Watch out!" Xia Mutong cried out, abruptly rising from the chair as she broke free of the ropes. The men had their focus on Ling Chen, completely missing Xia Mutong's escape.

Before those men could react, Xia Mutong lunged at them from behind, taking down the four men, including the scar-faced man, in a flurry of punches and kicks. As for the other woman... she was pale with fear, curled up in the corner, too scared to move.

"Officer Xia, your skills are still top-notch." Ling Chen approached with a smile.

Xia Mutong rolled her eyes at Ling Chen, demanding, "What are you doing here?"

"It's a long story. I got commandeered by your colleague." As he spoke, Zhang Ling came rushing in with her gun drawn, shouting, "Nobody move!" But seeing the subdued criminals, she was momentarily stunned.

"Officer Zhang, you're a step too late. Officer Xia and I have already taken care of the bad guys."

Zhang Ling awkwardly said, "Captain Xia, I'm sorry, I..."

"It's fine." Xia Mutong waved her hand and said, "Call headquarters and tell them to send a team here immediately."

"Yes."

"Hey! Officer Xia, you're so skilled. How did you get caught by them?" Ling Chen inquired curiously, following Xia Mutong.

Xia Mutong replied with a calm demeanor, "I let myself get caught on purpose to trick them into confessing their crimes." With that, Xia Mutong picked up a briefcase from the table and opened it to take a look.

Wasn't this the item the scar-faced man paid a hefty price for in a deal?

"Officer Xia, what's inside?" Ling Chen moved closer, examining the contents of the briefcase. Upon seeing what was inside, his expression changed.