

The Beauty 1521

Chapter 1521 Senior Brothers Reunited (2)

"The martial arts association has just been reformed, and we must do something significant to consolidate our position. It would be best to hold a grand event and invite everyone from the Martial Arts world to participate. I mentioned this idea to Elder Tong, and he agreed. We just haven't come up with a good plan yet. Last night, I thought, why not hold a Martial Arts Tournament, similar to the Heavenly Mechanism Great Ceremony at the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, where we can compete and exchange skills. We could also prepare generous rewards to attract everyone's participation."

"A Martial Arts Tournament?" Ling Chen said with interest. "That sounds intriguing. But how does this relate to Qi Yong?"

"Since it's a competitive event, injuries are inevitable. You participated in the Heavenly Mechanism Great Ceremony before; you saw how fierce the battles were, and you experienced it firsthand. If something happens to Qi Yong in the martial arts arena..." Su Mei paused slightly and emphasized, "I'm not talking about being killed by an opponent but being seriously injured, with martial arts skills ruined. Do you think someone without strength would still qualify for an important position in the martial arts association? Although the association doesn't emphasize martial arts prowess, it is the basic requirement. At that time, we will have enough reason to remove Qi Yong."

After hearing Su Mei's reasoning, Ling Chen's eyes brightened. Remarkable! Su Mei has truly grown a lot to come up with such a plan. As someone in a high position, having only a kind heart isn't enough; having the necessary ruthlessness is what's most important. Especially for a girl like Su Mei, there's no room for mercy. It seems that under Du Kang's guidance, Su Mei has advanced rapidly in this aspect.

Seeing the smile at the corner of Ling Chen's mouth, Su Mei rolled her eyes at him and asked, "Do you think I'm being vicious?"

"Not at all." Ling Chen replied with a smile, "I'm just happy for you. Alright, we'll do as you say. I'll discuss it with Elder Tong to finalize the timing."

"Alright, I have to go to Beijing in a few days. Let's stay in touch."

After the discussion with Su Mei, Ling Chen didn't linger and returned to the guest room to call Ling Gengqiu. Accompanied by Song Ge, they left the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. Outside the pavilion's forest, Ling Chen waited for a moment and saw Yu Beifeng slowly walking over from another hill.

"Brother Yu." Ling Chen quickly stepped forward to greet him. The latter nodded, glanced at Ling Gengqiu beside him, and said indifferently, "Let's go."

Initially, Ling Chen and Ling Gengqiu planned to fly back to East Sea City, but because of Yu Beifeng's addition, Ling Chen had to change their plans. There was no choice; Yu Beifeng had been residing at the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, rarely leaving. In society, he essentially had no identification, no records, no files—nothing.

Upon reaching the city, Ling Chen rented a comfortable business car and then hit the highway towards East Sea City. It took them a whole day, but the trio finally arrived at their destination safely.

Outside the base, Ling Chen and Ling Gengqiu got out of the car with Yu Beifeng. As soon as they landed, Xu Ming, who had been waiting nearby, quickly ran over. In all the time Ling Chen had known Xu Ming, never had he seen him this excited.

"Junior Brother." Seeing Yu Beifeng in front of him, Xu Ming forcefully patted his shoulder, embraced him, and vigorously patted his back, "It's been so many years. I never thought we'd have the chance to meet again, brothers."

"Senior Brother, you still look the same." Seeing Xu Ming after so many years, Yu Beifeng's eyes grew moist.

Ling Chen stepped forward with a smile, "Second Brother, Brother Yu, this isn't the place to talk. Let's go, back to the base."

Once inside the base, Xu Ming immediately took Yu Beifeng away. The brothers hadn't seen each other in years and naturally had much to discuss. Considerately, Ling Chen didn't disturb them and instead went to the control room.

"Fatty, Zhu Hong called me the night before last."

"Zhu Hong?" Hu Fei was taken aback and asked, "What did that bastard contact you for?"

Ling Chen didn't hold back and shared Zhu Hong's request, "In short, that item is very important to me and I must get it. So, I'm quite conflicted now, unsure what to do."

Hu Fei rubbed his chin and spoke, "He wants you to help revoke the military's accusation against him. He's probably struggling abroad and has no choice but to return. While you were away, I used my overseas network to investigate some information. In the past half month, Zhu Hong's situation has been dire. The Yingtai Group is hunting him everywhere. I've heard he's been fleeing from one country to another, spending each day on the run, with no force willing to help him. Maybe it's because of this that he wants to come back."

"Let him suffer for a while longer, and then I'll contact the people from the military to see if they can revoke the accusation against Zhu Hong."

"Do you think they will agree to such a major request?"

Ling Chen smiled slightly, confidently nodding, "Don't worry, they will definitely agree."

Ling Chen sat in the control room for a while, and soon Xu Ming entered from outside.

"Thank you, Sixth Brother!"

"Second Brother, we're family. No need for such formal words. So, does Brother Yu have any plans? Is he staying or...?"

"He'll be staying with me from now on. He's been residing at the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion for years and isn't familiar with the outside world. I'll get him acquainted and help him integrate quickly."

"That's wonderful," Ling Chen said with a joyful smile. Who is Yu Beifeng? He's not just Su Cheng'en's apprentice but also a Martial Arts expert on the Heavenly List. Having another expert in their ranks is certainly a matter for happiness.

"By the way," Xu Ming said, as if recalling something, "When I was chatting with my junior brother, he mentioned something about Su Cheng'en."

"What is it?"

"Su Cheng'en has a property in Jin Hai City, and sometimes he leaves the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion to stay in Jin Hai City for a few days. If you want to find Su Cheng'en, you might send someone there for a look; you might discover something."

"Alright, I understand. I'll send someone over as soon as possible."

After Xu Ming left, Ling Chen turned to Hu Fei and signaled him with a glance. Hu Fei immediately understood, picked up his phone, and made a call.

"I've already sent a team to Jin Hai City. If all goes well, we should have news in the coming days."

Ling Chen nodded, knowing that if they could find Su Cheng'en's whereabouts, they would gain an early advantage for their next move.

After handling matters at the base, Ling Chen didn't return home but chose to stay directly at the base. After all, there was no one at home, so it didn't matter. Besides, after a bit of rest, he needed to visit the Dragon Tiger Hall to work with Tong Zhentian on finalizing matters regarding the Martial Arts Tournament. As the president of the martial arts association, Tong Zhentian's involvement was undoubtedly essential.

Chapter 1522 - 1828: The Whereabouts of Su Cheng'en

"That's right!"

In the Dragon Tiger Hall, after listening to Ling Chen's account, Tong Zhentian nodded and said, "This is a good idea. Holding the Martial Arts Tournament can not only boost the influence of the Martial Arts Association but also find opportunities to clear out people like Qi Yong. In the past, the Martial Arts world held a tournament every few years, but eventually, it deteriorated and became a stage for various forces to compete, which diminished its appeal, leading to its eventual cancellation. Now, the Martial

Arts Association has unified the major forces in the Martial Arts world; I believe this tournament will be a grand event." Tong Zhentian spoke with noticeable excitement.

"Elder Tong, Su Mei mentioned that she will be going to Beijing in a few days. You two can meet and discuss the details thoroughly."

"No problem, coincidentally, there's something to handle in the Martial Arts Association, we can take care of it together."

Three days passed in the blink of an eye.

Tong Zhentian had already gone to Beijing with his team. Ling Chen took a moment to call and found out that his conversation with Su Mei went well, and both sides were enthusiastic about organizing the Martial Arts Tournament.

In these few days, Ling Chen hadn't returned home and stayed at the base since everyone was there, making it lively.

"Hey! Sixth Brother, Fatty Hu wants you to come over. He says there's a major discovery."

Hearing the message from Xia Yue, Ling Chen acknowledged and started walking towards the control room.

"Fatty, what's up?"

"Good news." Hu Fei grinned, his face full of smile and said, "We've found Su Cheng'en."

"Really?" Ling Chen's face lit up with joy, hurriedly asking, "Where is he?"

"Hold on!" Hu Fei said as he placed his hands on the keyboard, busily typing. Soon, a real-time surveillance feed appeared on the computer screen.

"I had someone set up a high-definition camera. The footage is being transmitted directly to my computer. Look, this is where Su Cheng'en is hiding."

Looking at the screen, Ling Chen couldn't help but click his tongue in appreciation. Su Cheng'en sure knows how to enjoy life, staying in such a luxurious place. In the coastal city of Jinhai, Su Cheng'en resides in the most expensive sea-view villa, not only close to the sea but also with a private beach, and the villa spans thousands of square feet.

"This old geezer certainly knows how to live the high life."

"Tell me about it, I was shocked too. The cost of this sea-view villa is at least several million, and there are young and beautiful women coming and going every day. It seems like Su Cheng'en has the heart of a young man despite his age, with luxury cars, villas, and beauties in abundance, just like a nouveau riche."

Ling Chen jokingly said, "I think you're just jealous. If it were you, you'd probably do the same." After a pause, Ling Chen turned serious and asked, "Besides Su Cheng'en, have you found any trace of Su He?"

"Didn't see him, maybe he's in the room and hasn't come out, but I saw Wang Hao." As he finished speaking, Hu Fei slowly zoomed in the lens, and soon, on a lounge chair on the private beach, Wang Hao was seen lounging comfortably with his shirt off, wearing only a pair of shorts. Beside him stood a bikini-clad beauty, holding a glass of wine and fruits, thoughtfully serving Wang Hao.

"Hmph! He really knows how to enjoy himself."

Hu Fei complained indignantly, "That bastard... If you gave me a gun, I would..."

"Even if I gave you two guns, it wouldn't help." Ling Chen interrupted, mercilessly teasing, "Everyone knows how bad your shooting skills are. Even at ten meters, you're unlikely to hit."

Hu Fei blushed and protested, "Do you have to be so serious? I was just saying. Alright! Enough of the side talk. Now that we've found them, what's your plan? Should we just send someone to take him out directly?"

"How would we do that?" Ling Chen asked in return, "Shoot him with a bullet or blow up the villa with explosives? Use your head; this is our country. If you dare to do that, you'll end up in jail sooner or later."

"We have so many martial arts experts, are we really afraid of just a few of them?"

"Su Cheng'en is extremely capable. Without a foolproof plan, even if we surround him, Su Cheng'en could still escape. Moreover, how do you know they haven't taken any precautions? Did you check out that sea-view villa, do you know what arrangements are inside?"

Hu Fei shook his head, "Not clear yet. To avoid exposure, I didn't let them get too close."

"Then keep monitoring it. Try to gather more information. Once we find their hideout, you'll have your chance."

"Alright, I'll do as you say."

"Take care of things at the base. Tomorrow, I need to go to Beijing. Elder Tong is busy preparing for the Martial Arts Tournament. There are plenty of things I need to help with, and I might not return until after the tournament is over."

"Martial Arts Tournament?" Hu Fei asked with interest, "Hey! Are there any beauties?"

"No beauties, but plenty of tigresses. Why, are you interested?" Ling Chen teased, "Should I introduce you to some? After all, with your chubby build, you can take it."

"Get lost!"

The next day.

Ling Chen, accompanied by the Eight Oddities, Ling Gengqiu, Chen Junfeng, and Yu Beifeng, flew to Beijing. After disembarking the plane, a dedicated car was already waiting and took them directly to the Beijing branch of the Dragon Tiger Hall.

Tong Zhentian went to handle affairs at the Martial Arts Association, leaving only He Ziyun at the branch. Since He Ziyun took charge of the Beijing branch, Ling Chen had fewer opportunities to meet him. After more than a month without seeing each other, he naturally felt a surge of warmth.

"Mr. He, how's the preparation for the Martial Arts Tournament going?"

"The progress is fairly smooth. We just finalized the venue yesterday. It will be in the suburbs of Beijing. The Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion has a large tract of land there, perfect for the Martial Arts Tournament. Elder Tong mentioned that the construction team has already moved in and is speeding up the renovation. The venue should be ready in about a week."

"Is it indoors?"

"No." He Ziyun shook his head, "The venue is outdoors. This was a decision made by Elder Tong and Master Su. They believe that the difficulties in developing the martial arts world stem from too many restrictions, often allowing only insiders to participate, which means the value of martial arts cannot be effectively propagated. So, this time they aim to create an unparalleled event, open to everyone, even ordinary people can attend and watch. This would greatly promote the development of the martial arts community."

"It's a good idea," Ling Chen said with a smile, "However, it is crucial to ensure everyone's safety. With a large crowd, things could become chaotic."

Upon hearing this, a cloud of worry immediately appeared on He Ziyun's face.

Noticing the change in his expression, Ling Chen couldn't help but ask, "Mr. He, what's wrong, is there a problem?"

Chapter 1523 - 1829: Qu Guanying

"The security issues you mentioned are indeed a major problem. Right now, no one is willing to take responsibility. Elder Tong and Master Su are both passing it to each other, hoping the other will be responsible for the venue's security."

"There's such a thing?" Ling Chen couldn't understand. It's not a difficult task, just requires a bit more effort. Why is no one willing to do it?

He Ziyun seemed to catch Ling Chen's thoughts and said, "Don't think this is so simple. To put it plainly, anyone can do the job, but no one dares to take on the responsibility. Among the three major forces in the Martial Arts Association, Elder Tong, Su Mei, and Qi Yong, everyone is smart and none of them wants to take the risk. If something goes wrong, it could easily lead to gossip."

"I see." Ling Chen nodded and said, "In this matter, everyone will definitely be very cautious. In my opinion, the best solution is for the three forces to cooperate and share the responsibility, so no one loses out."

"Let's leave this for Elder Tong to worry about, and we shouldn't get involved. You take a rest for now; I'll call you when Elder Tong returns."

"Alright."

After leaving He Ziyun's room, Ling Chen didn't go to rest. He wasn't tired anyway, so he couldn't waste a perfect day in bed. Of course, if there were a beauty in bed, that would be another story.

Since he was in Beijing, he definitely had to visit the Ling Family. After a phone call with Yang Qingling, he arranged to go back for lunch.

"Son, give Wanqing a call later and ask her to come over for lunch."

"Wanqing?" Ling Chen was slightly taken aback and said, "Mom, isn't she in East Sea City? I..."

"You brat, you don't care at all. Wanqing has been in Beijing these past few days. She often calls me to chat. Hmph! They say having a son isn't as good as having a daughter, always so uncaring. If I don't call you, it's like you vanish without a trace, not a word from you."

After being scolded by his mother, Ling Chen promptly responded, "Alright, I got it. I'll call her now." With that, not waiting for Yang Qingling to complain further, Ling Chen hung up the phone directly.

Phew! Remembering Yang Qingling's instructions, Ling Chen picked up his phone, intending to call Nanrong Wanqing. However, seeing the time already past ten, he decided to visit her company directly instead of calling and give her a surprise.

With that thought, Ling Chen smiled and drove alone towards Hongyu United Investment Company.

Beijing's traffic was relatively congested, and with the approaching end of work peak, it took almost forty minutes to cover just over ten kilometers.

Having parked, Ling Chen walked straight into the company lobby. A receptionist immediately approached him, "Hello, sir. Whom are you looking for?"

"I'm looking for your chairman. Is she in her office?"

The receptionist politely asked, "Sir, do you have an appointment?"

Ling Chen smiled, "My name is Ling Chen, your chairman's boyfriend. That identity shouldn't need an appointment, right?"

"Oh, it's Mr. Ling." The receptionist said apologetically, "I'm new here. I've heard of Mr. Ling but never met you. Please don't mind. The chairman is in a meeting on the third floor. You can go up directly."

"Alright, thank you!"

Taking the elevator to the third floor, Ling Chen had just stepped out when he heard an angry voice from the meeting room: "Nanrong Wanqing, I'm telling you, if you dare touch my interests, I'll make your life difficult."

As the words fell, the meeting room door was kicked open, and a middle-aged man in a suit angrily stormed out, passing by Ling Chen. Watching him enter the elevator, Ling Chen was curious: Isn't this supposed to be a meeting? Why such anger? While pondering, a surprised, slightly delighted voice came from the meeting room door: "Ling Chen?"

Turning around, he saw Nanrong Wanqing's beautiful face, and Ling Chen grinned, "Meeting over?"

"When did you come to Beijing? Come, let's go to my office."

"No, if you're done, let's head out. My mom is waiting for us at home for lunch."

"Going to your house for lunch? Great! I haven't visited Uncle and Aunt in a long time. Wait for me a bit; I still have something to handle." With that, Nanrong Wanqing called her assistant over and whispered a few words.

"Chairman, are you sure about this? I'm worried..."

"We're a legitimate business, not doing anything illegal. What are you afraid of? Go ahead."

After seeing the assistant off, Nanrong Wanqing walked over to Ling Chen, affectionately linking her arm with his, and asked, "Should I change clothes?"

Ling Chen looked her up and down, smiling, "No need to change. You're naturally beautiful; you look good in anything." Hearing Ling Chen's compliment, Nanrong Wanqing's eyebrows arched like crescent moons, her face full of a sweet smile.

In the car, Ling Chen curiously asked, "Earlier, when I went to the meeting room, I saw someone storm out. What happened to him?"

"He is Qu Guanying, the CEO of a technology company. Our Hongyu Group wants to acquire his company. A few weeks ago, we agreed on a price and were supposed to sign the contract today, but Qu Guanying suddenly reneged and demanded a 50% increase on the original price. The price I offered was already high, definitely exceeding his company's actual value. Adding 50% would mean over 1 billion in extra cost. I'm a businesswoman, not a philanthropist; I have to protect my interests."

"Why is Hongyu Group acquiring a tech company? Didn't you focus on industrials before?"

"It's not like you don't know. Changlong Technology and Hongyu Group are partners, and you own part of the shares too. But you've never been involved as the hands-off partner."

Hearing the hint of complaint in Nanrong Wanqing's tone, Ling Chen sheepishly scratched his nose and smiled, "You can't blame me. I have other things to handle. Besides, I'm purely an investor, not involved in management or operations."

"Not long ago, Changlong Technology's representative, Leng Feifei, approached me and mentioned Qu Guanying. His tech company's research direction is the same as ours, except their resources are less than our two big companies, so their progress is slower. However, we heard other investors are very interested in his tech company and want to invest. Once his company gets new funding, it might not surpass us, but it will at least take some of our profits. In this situation, it's best to reduce competitors and develop independently. Only then can we create enough profits for our future."

Chapter 1524 - 1830: Urging to Marry

After listening to Nanrong Wanqing's explanation, Ling Chen finally understood the general situation.

"So you want to acquire Qu Guanying's tech company to nip the potential future competitor in the bud."

"That's basically it," Nanrong Wanqing nodded, "Tech security will be the only direction for the future security system. Anyone with a bit of strategic vision will prepare ahead. Do you know why Changlong Technology wants to find partners in Huaxia? With Changlong Technology's influence in the world, many people are eager to cooperate with it. However, it insists on establishing a research headquarters in Huaxia."

"Why?" Ling Chen asked curiously.

"It's because many foreign groups are already conducting secret research, and currently, only Huaxia is blank in this aspect. Changlong Technology choosing Huaxia is to seize this market. You must know that Huaxia is the world's largest market, and no one can resist its allure. We originally agreed with Qu Guanying, but today, he suddenly made such demands. I suspect it might be because he doesn't want to sell his company."

"You mean... someone offered him additional investment?"

"Exactly!" Nanrong Wanqing nodded slightly, "According to the data provided by Leng Feifei, several foreign investment companies have approached Qu Guanying. They want to increase their investment, expand his company's scale, and accelerate the research progress. Once the investment succeeds, Qu Guanying's company value will be four or five times more, which means his value will multiply severalfold. If you were in his situation, would you still sell your company to others?"

"So that's why Qu Guanying deliberately raised the price today, so you would give up."

"You just need to know about this; don't get involved. I'll discuss with Leng Feifei to see the next steps."

"Alright, if you ever need me, feel free to ask. Although I don't have your business acumen, I'm still good for doing some hard work."

As they chatted idly, the car unknowingly arrived at the Ling Family's entrance.

"Mom, we're back," Ling Chen shouted as he walked in.

Yang Qingling peeked out from the kitchen, and seeing Nanrong Wanqing beside Ling Chen, she immediately welcomed her with a bright smile, holding Wanqing's hand, "Look at you, losing weight after not seeing you for a while. I specially made black chicken soup today to nourish you."

"Auntie, no need to trouble yourself."

"It's no trouble at all. As long as you're willing to come, I'll make soup for you every day."

"You're too kind," Nanrong Wanqing smiled sweetly, taking off her coat, "Auntie, let me help you."

"That's great." With that, the two went hand in hand into the kitchen, leaving Ling Chen alone at the door.

Listening to the occasional laughter from the kitchen, Ling Chen rubbed his nose with a helpless expression. He was her biological son yet wasn't even asked a single question, as if he didn't exist.

Just then, Ling Kun walked in from outside, seeing his son sitting alone on the couch, he laughed and asked, "Why are you sitting here alone? Didn't your mom say Wanqing was coming too? Where is she?"

Ling Chen pointed to the kitchen, "They're busy inside." As he spoke, Ling Chen noticed an invitation in Ling Kun's hand, and curiously asked, "Dad, what's this?"

"Here! Have a look for yourself." Ling Kun tossed the invitation into Ling Chen's hand.

"Martial Arts Tournament Invitation?" Seeing the big characters on the invitation, Ling Chen asked strangely, "Dad, how did this invitation end up with you?"

"I find it strange too. Our Ling Family rarely gets involved in Martial Arts affairs, and not many martial artists know about us. I'm thinking Elder Tong might have sent it to me. What, you and Elder Tong are in cahoots; don't you know about this?"

Ling Chen shook his head, "The Martial Arts Tournament is being organized by the Martial Arts Association folks. I haven't been involved, so I'm not familiar with the details."

"I've heard that the scale of this Martial Arts Tournament is quite large," Ling Kun said, "Not to mention those famous martial arts masters, many unknown high-level figures on the fringes of Martial Arts, like our Ling Family, have received invitations. I can imagine, if the Martial Arts Association sent invites to everyone, this tournament will be an unprecedented event."

"I really don't know about this; I just arrived in Beijing this morning and haven't had a chance to meet with Elder Tong."

"Son, you need to remind Elder Tong, with such a grand scale, does the Martial Arts Association have enough capacity to manage it well? Make sure there aren't any issues. Otherwise, this tournament could reignite hope or plunge the entire Martial Arts realm into despair."

"Understood."

The father and son chatted for a while, then saw Nanrong Wanqing and Yang Qingling carrying dishes out of the kitchen.

"Everyone come over and eat."

Looking at the table full of delicious dishes, Ling Chen smiled and said, "Mom, you worked hard today."

Yang Qingling rolled her eyes at her son, replying with a lukewarm tone, "Not hard at all. I did all this for Wanqing. As a chairman managing such a big company, she's busy but still knows to call and greet me. Unlike some people, who might not even have me in their eyes."

Cough cough!

Ling Chen quickly offered a smile, "Mom, I know I'm wrong, okay? Rest assured, I'll definitely come home more often."

"Just you alone won't do; I don't have enough energy to entertain you. If you really want to visit, come by with her. Did you hear that?" Saying this, Yang Qingling didn't forget to glance at Nanrong Wanqing nearby. Feeling Yang Qingling's peculiar gaze, Wanqing's pretty face couldn't help but blush, involuntarily lowering her head and looking at the empty bowl in front of her.

"Alright then!" Ling Kun timely interjected, "It's not that Ling Chen doesn't want to come back; he's just busy, you should understand as a mom."

Hearing this, Yang Qingling shot a disgruntled glance at Ling Kun, saying, "You men only care about your careers, not bothering with lifelong matters. Ling Chen is already at a considerable age, and you, as his

father, don't pay attention to your son at all. And you..." Turning to Ling Chen, she continued, "Haven't you heard of the saying 'Family first, then career'? A man should establish a family before a career."

"Yes, yes, yes," Ling Chen nodded like a pecking chicken, not daring to argue at all. Just kidding, if he dared to say more, his mom's words wouldn't stop.

"Auntie, let's eat first, or the food will get cold." At the crucial moment, Nanrong Wanqing spoke, allowing Ling Chen to escape unscathed.

Yang Qingling slowly sat back down in her chair, murmuring as if unfinished, "Remember what I said earlier, don't come alone in the future."

Chapter 1525 - 1831: Visiting the Venue

After much difficulty, they finally finished the meal. Ling Chen found an excuse and immediately led Nanrong Wanqing away in a hurry. If they stayed any longer, Ling Chen feared his ears would grow calluses.

"Auntie is just concerned about you, what are you so afraid of?" Sitting in the car, Nanrong Wanqing spoke up for Yang Qingling.

"I'm not afraid," Ling Chen defended himself.

"Then why did you run away? I originally planned to sit with Auntie for a while and chat with her."

"What's there to chat about? It's better to chat with me. Hey! Wanqing, do you think... every mother likes to nag her son?"

"How would I know, I haven't been a mother." Saying this, Nanrong Wanqing looked at Ling Chen, who was driving, with a hesitant expression.

"What's up?" Ling Chen asked with a smile, "If you have something to say, just say it, there are no outsiders here."

"You..." Nanrong Wanqing hesitated for a moment, then asked, "Are you afraid of getting married?"

Hearing this unexpected question, Ling Chen almost choked on his own saliva. Marriage! The familiarity yet strangeness of these two words left Ling Chen unsure of how to respond. To be honest, he hadn't really considered this issue yet.

Seeing Ling Chen's face full of uncertainty, Nanrong Wanqing withdrew her gaze, turned her head to look out the car window, and said softly, "If this question is difficult for you, pretend I didn't ask."

Ling Chen was silent for a moment, then suddenly smiled, "Don't misunderstand, it's not that I feel troubled, it's just... your question took me by surprise, and I don't know how to answer right now. However, I hope you understand that my hesitation isn't because I don't want to marry you, but because I want to give you a sufficiently secure living environment. Do you understand what I mean?"

"I once watched a movie where, if you truly like someone, you will overcome all difficulties to be together, regardless of how short or long."

"You also said that's just a movie. Besides, don't you think doing so is too selfish? If it were you, would you prefer a long-lasting relationship or one that just focuses on the moment? Alright now, stop overthinking it, give me some time, and I'll get back to you as soon as possible."

Nanrong Wanqing nodded gently, pointing to a junction ahead, "Just stop there."

"Aren't you going to the company?"

"No, the Beijing branch of Changlong Technology is right here. I need to have a talk with Leng Feifei about Qu Guanying later on. What about you? Do you want to come up and say hello to some old friends?"

Ling Chen coughed lightly, "I'd better not, you're there to talk business, I won't meddle. How about I wait for you outside? After you're done, I'll give you a ride back."

"No need, you go on with your work, I'll have Captain Zhong and the others pick me up later." After pausing for a moment, Nanrong Wanqing reminded, "Try to visit home more often when you have time; Auntie really misses you. Every time I talk to her on the phone, she asks mostly about you."

"I know."

"Then I'll be off, bye!"

Watching Nanrong Wanqing walk into the doors of Changlong Technology, Ling Chen only started the car and drove straight back to the Dragon Tiger Hall branch.

Upon arriving back at the Dragon Tiger Hall branch, Ling Chen had just gotten out of the car when he saw Tong Zhentian walking out.

"Elder Tong."

Tong Zhentian turned around, looked at the swiftly approaching Ling Chen, and asked with a smile, "Kid, where did you run off to?"

"I went home for a bit. Elder Tong, did you need me for something?"

"Hop in, I'm about to go check the venue; you can come with me. I have something to arrange for you as well."

Once in the car, Ling Chen sat in the back with Tong Zhentian, along with the driver Tian Hanzhong and He Ziyun.

"Elder Tong, when I was heading back, I saw that my dad also received an invitation to the Martial Arts Tournament. My dad isn't a martial artist, why invite him?"

"That was suggested by Master Su. It's been over a hundred years since the Martial Arts Tournament was held, so of course, it should be grand. We extended invitations to not just your dad but many unknown experts as well."

Ling Chen curiously asked, "Elder Tong, since they're unknown experts, how did you all know about them?"

"We have Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion to thank for that. Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion has stood for hundreds of years. Despite many hardships, they are still top-notch in intelligence gathering. You know, Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion values talent identification very highly, and they maintain records of all notable individuals. Honestly, when Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion gave me this list, I was quite shocked. While I know Huaxia is full of hidden talents, I didn't realize there were so many."

"By the way, Elder Tong, Mr. He mentioned the venue's security issues to me; have those been resolved?"

"That's what I wanted to discuss with you. After some deliberation, the three of us will jointly oversee the venue's security. Should an issue arise, all three parties will bear responsibility, so no one can shirk it. Earlier, I talked with Mr. He and we thought you should handle it."

"Me?" Ling Chen was startled.

"That's right! Didn't you just set up Falcon Security Company in Beijing? You have sufficient professionals, just maintain order on-site to prevent chaos."

"No problem, I can arrange that." Ling Chen joked, "Elder Tong, our Falcon Company's fees aren't cheap; will there be reimbursements?"

Tong Zhentian chuckled, "If you're serious about reimbursements, talk to Master Su. All expenses for this Martial Arts Tournament are being covered by Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion is undeniably wealthy, covering all the costs without asking us for a cent."

"Since you've put it that way, I wouldn't have the nerve to ask her for reimbursements."

After an hour's drive, the group finally arrived at the Martial Arts Tournament venue.

Getting off the car, Ling Chen found a high spot to overlook the scene, seeing a large area filled with materials and over ten construction teams working hard.

Wow! What a grand setup. This massive venue must accommodate at least ten thousand people.

Seeing Ling Chen's astonished expression, Tong Zhentian asked with a laugh, "How is it, impressive?"

"Elder Tong, for a Martial Arts Tournament, does it need to be in such a grand setup?"

"This is already considered small. Initially, Su Mei wanted to expand the venue twice this size to accommodate tens of thousands. However, this would have been too time-consuming and laborious, and unnecessary. Plus, we don't have the manpower to ensure security for such a large crowd. After final discussions, we capped the venue capacity at twenty thousand."

After speaking, Tong Zhentian looked at Ling Chen and asked, "Do you know why Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion is putting on such a grand show?"

"Why?"

"Because Su He's incident tarnished Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion's reputation, and they want to elevate their reputation through this Martial Arts Tournament."

Chapter 1526 - 1832: Fire Rescue (Part 1)

"Elder Tong, what is Qi Yong's attitude towards this Martial Arts Tournament?"

"He is very enthusiastic and cooperative with all our requests." Tong Zhentian's tone carried a hint of doubt as he said this, "To be honest, Qi Yong's recent behavior is quite strange. He holds four positions in the Martial Arts Association, which makes his influence on par with the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. However, he has been keeping a low profile during this period, basically complying with everything and never making any suggestions. Elder Su and I have been making all the decisions. Do you think... someone with such ambition would be content with this?"

Upon hearing this, Ling Chen nodded and said, "I understand what you mean. You are implying that Qi Yong might have another scheme."

"I wouldn't call it a scheme, but he surely has his own plans. Anyway, I will be cautious of him, and if he tries anything suspicious, I won't let him succeed."

"Elder Tong, when is the Martial Arts Tournament scheduled to begin?"

"In a month. Master Su has hired over ten construction teams to start simultaneously, which will take about twenty days. After the construction is complete, we'll have a few days left for other preparations, making it just in time. During this period, your task is to monitor the actions of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. As the president of the Martial Arts Association, I will be held responsible if any issues arise. If I am expelled from the association, then we really have no chance."

Ling Chen replied, "Elder Tong, rest assured, I will handle my responsibilities well."

"Good, that's for the best. Let's go, I need to visit the Martial Arts Association later. This month is probably going to be very busy."

"Elder Tong, you should take care of your health, considering your age, and not overwork yourself."

Touched by Ling Chen's concern, Tong Zhentian smiled and said, "No need to worry for me, I'm still in good shape."

Back in the city, Ling Chen got out of the car alone and hailed a taxi straight to Falcon Private Security Company. Tong Zhentian entrusted the venue's security to him, and to say there was no pressure would be a lie.

"Chairman." Upon learning that Ling Chen had arrived, Assistant Dong Ying hurried to the door to greet him.

In the office, Ling Chen casually flipped through some recent documents and asked, "Assistant Dong, how many people are currently available in the company?"

"There are fifteen in senior security, ten in intermediate security, and more than thirty in regular security."

"Only this many?"

"The company's business has been consistently good, so demand for security is always high. These available personnel have just been recruited and are undergoing training. Once they pass the training, they will quickly be deployed." At this point, Dong Ying couldn't help but smile, "Chairman, our biggest shortage right now is manpower. This month alone, we received over twenty orders, but due to the staffing issue, we could only complete half, and the rest had to be postponed."

"If we start recruiting now, how many people can we hire within a month? Of course, quality must be ensured."

"This..." Dong Ying hesitated for a moment, shook his head, and said, "I cannot be certain, as there is considerable competition in this field. Unless we loosen the requirements, we won't be able to recruit many."

Ling Chen pondered for a moment and asked, "Can we improve the employee benefits a little?"

"Based on the company's profits, the employees' salaries can be increased by one to three thousand per month. Any more than that, and the company will struggle to be profitable."

"Alright, inform the finance department that from today onward, increase the salary of senior security by three thousand, intermediate by two thousand, and regular security by one thousand. Additionally, conduct nationwide recruitment and enroll anyone who meets the company's standards, with preference given to veterans."

"Chairman, what are you planning?"

Ling Chen slightly raised the corner of his mouth, smiling, "I need staff now, a lot of them. Within a month, at least a 300-member security team must be prepared, composed entirely of senior security

personnel. Assistant Dong, this is a formidable task, and I hope you won't disappoint me. After this task is accomplished, I will promote your position in the company."

Upon hearing this, Dong Ying's eyes lit up, and he replied with excitement, "Rest assured, Chairman, I will complete the task."

"That's for the best." After a pause, Ling Chen changed the subject and asked, "By the way, where is Manager Jiang? I haven't seen him around." He was referring to Jiang Yunkai since he had left Jiang Yunkai in charge of managing Falcon Company during his limited time in Beijing.

"Manager Jiang went out for business. Do you need me to call him?"

"No need, let him attend to his work. I'll be leaving shortly."

"Yes, sir. Please have a seat. I'll go to work now." With that, Dong Ying turned and left the office.

Looking at the clean desk, Ling Chen noticed a delicate small wooden box at the corner. Inside the box were over ten cigars. Without a doubt, they were prepared by Dong Ying. Picking one up, Ling Chen lit it with a lighter, savoring a few puffs, and then got up to the floor-to-ceiling window, gazing at the cityscape outside.

The view from this office building was excellent, allowing one to see far into the distance. Exhaling a puff of smoke, Ling Chen stretched lazily and pulled out his phone to check the time. It was already past five in the afternoon. Having spent considerable time accompanying Tong Zhentian to the outskirts, returning to the company, he might as well wait for Jiang Yunkai, and have dinner together, as the two brothers hadn't gathered in a long time.

However, just then, through the smoke he exhaled, Ling Chen noticed a building in the distance emitting thick smoke.

On fire?

Ling Chen tried to see more clearly, but due to the distance, he could only make out the smoke. As time ticked away, the sky gradually darkened, and the flames became conspicuously visible in the darkness from afar.

"Chen."

At this moment, someone walked into the office. Ling Chen turned around to look at the person and smiled, "Kai, you finally made it back. I was just waiting for you to have dinner."

Standing next to the floor-to-ceiling window, Jiang Yunkai looked at the distant flames and said, "On my way back, I saw a lot of fire trucks and police cars rushing in that direction. I heard the fire is severe, and many people were trapped in that building."

"Let's hope everyone is safe. By the way, where's the fire?"

"It seems to be a company called Changlong Technology."

Changlong Technology?

Ling Chen's expression suddenly changed. Damn! Without time to think, he quickly pulled out his phone and dialed Leng Feifei's number. Though the call went through, no one answered it.

Could something have happened? Ling Chen couldn't help but worry. Wait! Wasn't Wanqing at Changlong Technology this afternoon too? Unsure if she had left, Ling Chen immediately dialed Nanrong Wanqing's number.

Chapter 1527 - 1833: Rescue in the Fire (Part 2)

However, nobody answered Nanrong Wanqing's phone either. Leng Feifei and Nanrong Wanqing... Ling Chen was almost dead with worry, could it be that both of them were inside the building? Just as he was thinking this, his phone suddenly rang, it was a call from Zhong Wei.

"Hello!" Ling Chen quickly answered the call and asked, "Captain Zhong, where's Wanqing, is she with you?"

"The chairman is still inside the Changlong Technology building, Ling Chen, the building caught fire, and I haven't been able to contact the chairman for more than half an hour now, I'm worried..."

Ling Chen said in a deep voice, "Don't panic yet, haven't the firefighters already arrived on the scene? Haven't they started the rescue?"

"About ten minutes ago, there was a series of explosions inside the building, many stairways are completely blocked, the rescue team can't get up there at all. They're still trying to find a way because the fire is on such high floors, it's impossible to effectively extinguish it, now the fire is getting bigger and bigger, and people trapped inside can't get out."

"Wait there, I'm coming over right now." Hanging up the phone, Ling Chen immediately rushed out of the office, Jiang Yunkai, understanding the severity of the situation, quickly caught up with him.

As they exited the building, Jiang Yunkai tossed the car keys to Ling Chen and sat in the passenger seat himself.

With the roaring of the engine, the car shot forward, heading quickly towards the location of Changlong Technology. Despite some traffic congestion, Ling Chen's worry for Nanrong Wanqing and Leng Feifei's safety made him drive faster, ignoring several red lights.

At this moment, he was no longer concerned about anything else, as long as he could reach Changlong Technology, no matter the cost.

Finally, in just under eight minutes, Ling Chen arrived outside the Changlong Technology building. At this time, over a dozen fire trucks were parked on the street outside the building, the police had drawn a cordon to disperse the surrounding crowd.

Ling Chen jumped out of the car, looking at the top of the building, he saw the raging fire continuously pouring out of the windows. All the floors above the tenth were engulfed in flames.

"Ling Chen!" Upon seeing Ling Chen arrive, Zhong Wei and Liang Zhao Hui, who had been waiting outside, immediately ran over.

"Captain Zhong, Brother Liang, what's the situation up there?" Ling Chen asked urgently.

"It's bad, the firefighters can't enter the fire scene, they're preparing to deploy helicopters to enter from the top of the building if..."

Boom!

Before Zhong Wei could finish speaking, a huge explosion sounded from the top of the building, followed by countless rocks falling down.

"Run! Run!" The surrounding police shouted loudly.

Ling Chen looked up and saw a huge rock falling rapidly towards him, quickly pulling Jiang Yunkai to run away. Suddenly, with a 'bang', the rock crushed that car, the car windows shattering, glass flying everywhere.

"What's going on?"

"Ling Chen, what are you doing here?" Suddenly, a familiar voice came over. Ling Chen turned his head, stunned and surprised, and said, "Officer Xia?" A few days ago, when he met Xia Mutong, she said she had been transferred to Beijing, he didn't expect to see her here.

"Are you on a mission here?"

"I'm the on-site commander."

Upon hearing this, Ling Chen's eyes shone, it seemed Xia Mutong was promoted three levels in a row this time. Such a major fire incident usually had high-ranking officials in command, for Xia Mutong to be the on-site commander, it showed she was of high rank.

"Officer Xia, can you do me a favor and send me into the building?"

"You want to go in?" Xia Mutong's eyes widened, looking at Ling Chen, she said, "Are you crazy? Do you know how dangerous the situation inside is? Even the firefighters don't dare to go in easily."

Just as she finished speaking, a firefighter ran over quickly, urgently saying, "Director Xia, we just checked, there was a big explosion on the rooftop, the entire roof has blown apart, the helicopter can't land."

"Have the helicopter hover in the air, let other rescue personnel use ropes to descend."

"It's useless," the firefighter shook his head, saying, "The fire is too intense, it will pose a great danger to our rescue personnel. Also, we're not sure if there will be a second or third explosion, if anything goes wrong, our rescue personnel will be trapped inside."

"What should we do then? Rescue is your expertise, think of a solution."

"This..."

"Let me go," Ling Chen stood out and said, "You take me to the roof, I'll handle the rest myself."

Xia Mutong was shocked, blurting out, "Are you crazy?"

"I'm not crazy," Ling Chen said seriously, "Both Wanqing and Feifei are in this building, I've called them, but no one answered, they must be waiting for someone to rescue them."

"What? Why are they both in there?"

"There's no time to explain that now, if you consider me a friend, help me once, let me go inside."

Xia Mutong frowned and said, "Do you know how dangerous the situation inside is?"

"I know, precisely because the situation is urgent, there's no time to delay, I must go in immediately. Help me!"

Seeing Ling Chen's determined eyes, Xia Mutong hesitated. She wanted to help Ling Chen, but she was more worried about his safety. Deep down, she didn't want anything to happen to Ling Chen. However, facing Ling Chen's pleading look, Xia Mutong hesitated for a while and ultimately wavered.

"Alright, if you insist on going in, I'll let you." Saying this, Xia Mutong turned to the firefighter, saying, "Arrange for the helicopter."

The firefighter looked at Ling Chen, wanting to say something, but before he could, Xia Mutong urged, "What are you standing around for? Go quickly, I'll take responsibility for any consequences."

"Yes!"

"Follow me." Xia Mutong pointed at Ling Chen and led him to a fire truck. At her signal, someone quickly brought over firefighting gear and an oxygen tank, helping Ling Chen get equipped. "Take this, stay in touch with me at all times." Xia Mutong handed Ling Chen a walkie-talkie and warned, "Remember, if the situation inside is very dangerous, don't push yourself, come out immediately, alright?"

Ling Chen nodded and said with a smile, "Don't worry, I'm so young, I wouldn't gamble with my life."

The walkie-talkie suddenly sounded, "Director Xia, the helicopter is ready, can take off at any time."

"Received!"

"I'll be off then. Thank you!"

Xia Mutong replied irritably, "Thank me after you come back safely."

Watching Ling Chen's figure gradually recede, Xia Mutong couldn't help but clench her fists, her heart seemed to be in her throat, her throat unbearably dry.

Nothing... nothing must happen!

Chapter 1528 - 1834: Rescue Amidst the Flames (Part 3)

Boarding the helicopter, as it slowly ascended, it did not take long for Ling Chen to reach the rooftop of the building. Looking down, he saw that the building's roof no longer existed, with flames raging everywhere, over two meters high. Not only that, the fire carried an acrid smell. Observing the building's condition, Ling Chen frowned slightly.

Inside this building is Changlong Technology's research lab, which surely stores a lot of chemicals. The fire's intensity is probably largely related to those chemicals. "Mr. Ling, where do you plan to go down?" asked the accompanying firefighter.

Ling Chen observed for a while, then pointed his finger at the side window of the building, "Please prepare a rope for me."

The firefighter looked at the position of the window, shook his head and said, "Mr. Ling, it's probably very difficult to get in there, there are obstacles above; even if the helicopter can fly up there, there's no way to vertically drop down a rope."

"I know, you ask the pilot to fly the helicopter to that position." Ling Chen explained his plan to the firefighter sincerely.

After listening, the latter's face was full of surprise. If Xia Mutong hadn't given a heads-up in advance, he would suspect that the man in front of him was crazy for coming up with such a mad idea.

"Hurry up, we don't have time to delay now."

Under Ling Chen's urging, the firefighter had to follow his plan and asked the pilot to move the helicopter to the side of the building. Then, the two threw down a rope over ten meters long from the helicopter. Ling Chen checked the gear on his body, then tied the rope's buckle to the clip on his waist.

"I'm going down now." After speaking, Ling Chen slowly slid down along the rope. At this time, the helicopter hovered in mid-air, and the rope fell straight down. Before long, Ling Chen was already at the

end of the rope. Being in mid-air with only one rope, Ling Chen's body couldn't be stabilized and kept swaying back and forth. Seeing this, the crowd below held their breaths, their palms sweating.

"OK! Send me over." Ling Chen controlled his body and picked up the walkie-talkie to speak to the pilot. Instantly, the helicopter's nose tilted slightly forward, carrying Ling Chen toward the side of the building. When Ling Chen's body was four to five meters away from the building's side wall, the helicopter above suddenly stopped moving forward. At the same time, using the helicopter's inertia, Ling Chen pulled the rope and swung quickly forward like a pendulum.

Seeing the window getting closer and closer, Ling Chen took a deep breath, seized the moment, and suddenly stretched out his hands to firmly grab the edge of the window.

Phew! Made it... Untying the rope from his body, Ling Chen took a small saw from the tool bag at his waist, cut open the window bars, and climbed in from the outside.

At this time, Xia Mutong stood at the bottom of the building, holding binoculars, constantly monitoring Ling Chen's movements. Seeing Ling Chen successfully enter the building, Xia Mutong's nervousness finally calmed down a lot. "Hey! Ling Chen, it's me, what's the situation inside?"

"The fire is fierce, smoke is everywhere, visibility is very low. I'm now preparing to search from the top floor downwards, I'll notify you as soon as there's any news."

Walking in the building's corridor, Ling Chen's speed was very slow, not because he didn't want to be quick, but because he couldn't. Due to the explosion, many walls had collapsed, stones blocked the corridor, making passage difficult. Ling Chen struggled to move the stones aside, slowly proceeding down the corridor, while also checking the rooms on both sides to see if there were any trapped individuals.

In the blink of an eye, over ten minutes passed, and Ling Chen searched the entire top floor of the building without finding Nanrong Wanqing, Leng Feifei, or any others. Helpless, Ling Chen could only continue searching by going down the fire escape stairs.

Checking the oxygen usage, each oxygen tank lasts at most half an hour, and currently, the tank he's using can last for about twenty more minutes. Fortunately, he had foresight and carried two oxygen cans, ensuring it shouldn't be a problem for an hour of survival.

"Officer Xia." As Ling Chen descended, he took out the walkie-talkie and asked, "Did you track Wanqing's mobile signal?" Although Nanrong Wanqing's phone wasn't answering, it was still reachable, so her position could be located via the mobile signal.

"It's no use, the phone is probably burned out, unreachable. However, I just asked a few survivors who escaped from the building, and according to their clues, before the fire broke out, Nanrong Wanqing was in Leng Feifei's office. I've inquired, Leng Feifei's office is on the thirty-sixth floor, you can go have a look there."

Thirty-sixth floor... Ling Chen looked at the current floor he's on, forty-two, it seems he needs to speed up.

Soon, Ling Chen directly descended from the forty-second floor to the fortieth floor, just as he was preparing to rush to the thirty-sixth floor, he suddenly heard a weak cry for help coming from the floor. Someone? Ling Chen halted his steps, listened carefully for a while, and discovered the sound was coming from a room on the fortieth floor. Lucky for his keen sense, for anyone else, it would have been impossible to hear.

Following the sound direction, Ling Chen quickly moved through the corridor, but didn't get far before the fire blocked his way. The entire corridor's rooms on both sides had been engulfed by flames, fierce flames occasionally leaping out, intertwining.

"Hey! Can you hear me talking?" Ling Chen shouted loudly from outside.

"Help... Help me!" Hearing Ling Chen's shout, the cries for help immediately grew louder. Through the voice, Ling Chen quickly pinpointed the person's location, in the room at the end of the corridor.

Looking at the flames blocking the way, Ling Chen frowned slightly. He must find a way to get through. Although he's wearing firefighting gear, which has some resistance to fire, charging through like this is too risky. Looking at the blackened ceiling, full of cracks, it may collapse at any moment.

Damn!

Ling Chen cursed inwardly, there's nothing usable now, is he really forced to charge through?

"Help... Help..." Hearing the increasingly weak cries for help, Ling Chen gritted his teeth, couldn't afford to hesitate, and charged straight towards the flames. Lives are at stake, there's no time to waste.

Pushing through the fierce flames, Ling Chen pushed his speed to the limit, trying to minimize contact time with the flames. A few seconds later, he finally reached the room at the end of the corridor. Pushing the door open, Ling Chen glanced inside, seeing a middle-aged man curled up in a corner, wrapped in a thick blanket. Because this break room is at the end of the corridor, it hasn't been engulfed by flames yet, but the room is filled with thick smoke, making it very uncomfortable.

Chapter 1529 - 1835: Rescue Amidst the Flames (Part 4)

"How are you?" Ling Chen quickly rushed to the middle-aged man, removed the blanket, then took off his own oxygen mask and placed it on the man's face. After taking a few deep breaths, the middle-aged man's condition gradually improved, and his consciousness became much clearer.

Looking at the middle-aged man's attire, Ling Chen asked, "Are you the building's cleaning staff?"

The man nodded, continuously inhaling the oxygen. Once the middle-aged man's condition stabilized, Ling Chen stood up, glanced at the situation in the room, and said, "We can't stay here long, we must leave immediately." Saying this, Ling Chen took an oxygen tank off his back and helped the middle-aged man carry it on his back.

"Brother, the oxygen inside isn't much, it's hard to say if we'll make it out. You'd better reduce oxygen consumption. Once it's all used up, we're really done for, understand?"

The middle-aged man weakly replied, "I understand."

"Let's go!" As he spoke, Ling Chen picked up a blanket, covered himself with it, and walked out of the room, heading straight into the flames. With the blanket as protection, the flames on both sides couldn't harm Ling Chen's body. Soon, he returned to the safety stairwell on the fortieth floor. At this moment, the middle-aged man mimicked him, grabbed a blanket, and rushed over.

After the two met up, the middle-aged man asked, "Young man, what's your name?"

"Ling Chen."

"Thank you for saving me," the middle-aged man said, full of gratitude. "My name is Chen Chong."

Ling Chen gave a faint smile, "You're welcome, thank me when we get out alive." After a pause, Ling Chen asked, "Chen, you're the cleaning staff of this building, you should be familiar with its layout, right?"

"I wouldn't say very familiar, but I have some understanding."

"That's good, I'm planning to go to the thirty-sixth floor, my friends might be trapped there. Later, stay behind me, and don't get lost."

"Aren't we going straight out?" Chen Chong asked, "I'm not in great shape, I'm afraid I'll slow you down. How about... you take me out first?"

Ling Chen shook his head and said, "Chen, I know you're scared, but rescue teams can't get into the building yet, and besides me, everyone else is outside. So, I can't take you out. Moreover, you're not the only one trapped in this building, others need rescuing as well." Having said this, Ling Chen patted Chen Chong's shoulder and comforted him, "Chen, don't worry. As long as I'm alive, I'll find a way to get you out."

After hearing Ling Chen's words, Chen Chong remained silent, silently following Ling Chen down the stairs to the thirty-ninth floor. "Mr. Ling, don't you need oxygen?" Seeing Ling Chen placing the oxygen mask aside, Chen Chong couldn't help but ask.

Ling Chen smiled without saying anything. He only brought two bottles of oxygen, one for Chen Chong, leaving one for himself. For now, he hadn't found Nanrong Wanqing and Leng Feifei, and perhaps there were other trapped people as well. So, he had to conserve the oxygen; it was his lifeline. To reduce oxygen usage, Ling Chen usually took a breath, then held it, trying to withstand for about a minute before exhaling.

On reaching the thirty-ninth floor, Ling Chen found this was where Changlong Technology's laboratories were located, with many areas already destroyed by explosions and the fire raging fiercely. Ling Chen

hesitated for a moment, but still decided not to go in. With such a big fire, it was basically a one-way trip. Moreover, even if someone were trapped inside, surviving was nearly impossible.

"Let's go, head straight to the thirty-sixth floor." Worry for Nanrong Wanqing and Leng Feifei's safety made Ling Chen pick up speed, proceeding directly along the stairs to the thirty-sixth floor.

"Wanqing, Feifei!" Ling Chen shouted their names as he walked, hoping for a response. But after shouting for a long time, he still didn't hear Nanrong Wanqing and Leng Feifei's voices.

"Who's out there?" Suddenly, a woman's voice came from inside.

"Chen, stay outside, I'll go in and take a look." Ling Chen instructed, immediately covering himself with a blanket and rushing in. At this moment, the doors of the office were already burned down, and the ceiling had fallen, blocking the entrance. Ling Chen didn't hesitate, holding the blanket tightly, he charged forward, utilizing his body's momentum, slamming vigorously into the blockage.

With the blanket as protection, he wasn't afraid of being burnt. With a 'bang', the debris blocking the entrance was forced open by Ling Chen. With a roll, Ling Chen got up from the ground. Looking around, he saw two women in the corner of the office, faces covered in soot. One was lying on the ground, eyes closed, unclear if she was alive, while the other kept crying.

Seeing Ling Chen appear, the weeping woman hurried over, pleading, "Quick, save her, please."

"Don't worry." Ling Chen approached the wall corner, checked her condition, and found the woman already had no breath, with a nose full of burnt debris. Seeing this, Ling Chen sighed and gently shook his head at the other woman, "She's already gone, I'm sorry!"

"No, it can't be." Hearing this, the woman broke down, collapsing onto the other, crying uncontrollably. Ling Chen gently patted the woman's back, consoling, "Don't be sad, the dead can't come back to life. The fire outside is getting bigger, we can't stay here too long."

The woman raised her head, tear-stained eyes looking at Ling Chen, and asked, "Can I take her with me?"

"I understand you're very sad, but for now, we can only save ourselves, let's go!" After finishing, before the woman could respond, Ling Chen was already pulling her towards the office exit.

"Hello! Ling Chen, how's the situation up there, have you found them?"

Hearing Xia Mutong's voice from the walkie-talkie, Ling Chen replied, "I'm already on the thirty-sixth floor, haven't found their whereabouts yet, but I've rescued two survivors, they're with me." With this said, Ling Chen glanced at Chen Chong and the other woman, then walked aside, speaking softly, "There should be other survivors in this building, but I'm afraid the oxygen I have isn't enough. The fire's getting bigger, if we can't find a way out within half an hour, they might die inside."

"The firefighting team is studying rescue plans and will notify you as soon as there's progress."

"Okay."

"Ling Chen, be careful yourself, don't let anything happen."

"Don't worry, I know what I'm doing." After speaking, Ling Chen put away the walkie-talkie, walked to the woman inhaling oxygen, and asked, "Feeling better?"

The latter gently nodded, "Thank you for saving me."

Chapter 1530 - 1836: Fire Rescue (5)

"Let's set that aside for now. Tell me, do you know Leng Feifei?"

"Are you talking about President Leng? Yes, I know her. I'm her personal assistant." Upon hearing this, Ling Chen felt a surge of joy and quickly asked, "Then where is she? You should know where she is."

"Well... I'm not exactly sure," the woman responded. "President Leng was chatting with the chairman of Hongyu Group in the office. After they finished talking, President Leng escorted Chairman Nanrong to the elevator. They went in together, while I stayed behind to help President Leng with some materials. So, I didn't follow them. When I returned to the office, I suddenly heard a loud bang downstairs, and a fire rapidly spread. Hearing the screams outside, I was terrified and didn't dare to go out, so I've been hiding in the office."

Upon hearing this, Ling Chen's face changed suddenly, and he said sternly, "Are you saying that when the explosion happened, both President Leng and the others were inside the elevator?"

The woman nodded, "It should be. In such a short time, the elevator couldn't have gone from the 36th floor to the ground floor. I think when the explosion happened, the elevator might have been around the 20th floor."

As soon as the woman finished speaking, Ling Chen immediately turned his gaze to the surroundings. He quickly stood up and rushed towards the elevator doors. At this moment, the elevator doors were tightly closed, and with the added heat from the fire, the doors were scalding hot. Ling Chen took out a knife from his tool bag, wedged it into the door gap, and forcefully pried the doors open. He was wearing thick insulated gloves, so they protected him from getting hurt.

As the elevator doors opened, a wave of heat rushed up from below, almost knocking Ling Chen off his feet. Fortunately, he managed to grab the elevator door in time and steady himself. Peering down, through the smoke and flames, Ling Chen vaguely saw an elevator stopped in the middle of the building. Judging by the height of the elevator, the woman's judgment was correct; the elevator was roughly on the 25th floor.

However, he wasn't sure if Nanrong Wanqing and Leng Feifei had escaped from the elevator.

He needed to find a way down. As the thought crossed his mind, Ling Chen made a quick decision. Looking at Chen Chong and the woman not far away, he started to approach but was suddenly interrupted by a loud 'boom' from above, causing the entire ceiling to collapse and fall towards their heads. Seeing this, Ling Chen's heart raced with fear. Without a second thought, he dashed towards Chen Chong and the woman, knocking them to the ground.

Boom!

Countless stones rained down from above, and the raging heatwave swept over them. In the blink of an eye, Ling Chen and the others were buried in the dust and debris.

"Hey! Ling Chen, can you hear me?"

Outside the building, inside a command vehicle, Xia Mutong held the radio, repeatedly calling out, her face full of anxiety. Another explosion erupted inside the building earlier, cutting off her communication with Ling Chen since. Her heart was full of worry, silently praying that Ling Chen was alright.

"Director Xia," a young man entered the command vehicle outside, saying, "Several high-ranking officials are here. They're waiting for you to give a report on site."

"Alright, I understand." After dismissing her subordinate, Xia Mutong took a deep breath to calm her emotions, then left the command vehicle. Not far outside, several middle-aged men were pointing at the burning building, their faces filled with concern.

Xia Mutong quickly approached and saluted, asking, "Director Liu, why are you here?"

"Commander Xia, the top leadership is taking this incident very seriously, so we're here to oversee the operation. We must rescue all trapped personnel and prevent the fire from spreading to surrounding areas, which could cause more damage. You're the on-site commander for this operation, so the responsibility weighs heavily on you. We hope you won't disappoint the trust we have in you."

"Please rest assured, leaders. I guarantee the task will be completed."

"Tell us, what's the current situation? When can the rescue operation begin?"

"The situation is very complex at the moment. The fire inside the building is too intense, and frequent explosions are occurring, delaying our rescue efforts. I just discussed with the fire department personnel, and the environment inside the building is too dangerous. If we forcefully send people in now, not only will it be impossible to save anyone, but it could also expose the rescuers to great risk, making self-rescue difficult even."

"I heard on my way here you sent someone inside about twenty minutes ago. That person doesn't seem to be one of ours; what's the situation?"

Upon hearing the leader's inquiry, Xia Mutong replied, "Some of his friends are trapped inside the fire, so he wanted to go in to rescue them."

"Absurd!" A middle-aged man said sternly, "You know the situation inside is dangerous, so why let an amateur go in? Are you sending him to his death?"

"Please don't worry, leaders. He's not an amateur. He's a retired special forces soldier with very strong capabilities, no less than professional rescuers."

"Is that so? What's his name?"

"Ling Chen," Xia Mutong uttered the name.

"It's him?" Director Liu's expression changed slightly. Noticing the change, Xia Mutong became curious and couldn't help asking, "Director Liu, do you know him?"

"Sort of, we've met once. I have some connections with his former superior. If it's Ling Chen, then I trust his capabilities. Tell him that as long as he can rescue the survivors inside the building, no matter what he needs, we will support him unconditionally. Alright, you go ahead with your tasks." Watching Xia Mutong walk away, Director Liu took out his phone and dialed a number.

Cough, cough!

On the 36th floor of the building, Ling Chen shook his head and slowly climbed up from the ground. Feeling the heatwave around him, Ling Chen glanced around and saw Chen Chong and the woman lying on the ground, seemingly unconscious. A large stone was pressing on Chen Chong's legs, and Ling Chen could vaguely see the blood on the floor.

"Chen, Chen," Ling Chen called his name, quickly removing the stone. Suddenly, he saw Chen Chong's right leg crushed under the stone, with the bones jutting out.

Despite Ling Chen's shouts, Chen Chong remained unresponsive. Instead, the woman beside him came to. Upon seeing Chen Chong's injury, she was taken aback. "Help me lift him up."

The woman nodded, assisting Ling Chen to set Chen Chong's body upright. Then, Ling Chen took off Chen Chong's belt, tying it above the injured leg to prevent excessive bleeding. After tending to Chen Chong, Ling Chen picked up an oxygen mask, took several deep breaths, and felt much more comfortable.

"Mr. Ling, what do we do now?"

"Don't panic, let me think of a plan." Saying this, Ling Chen pulled out a radio, intending to inform Xia Mutong about their situation. However, he quickly realized that he had accidentally broken the radio while dodging earlier. Besides some static noise, nothing else could be heard.