

The Beauty 1531

Chapter 1531 Fire Rescue (6)

Just then, a cell phone rang from the pocket. Ling Chen fumbled for the phone and quickly answered when he saw the caller ID, saying, "Old Tang, I don't have time to chat right now, hanging up..."

"Hey! Wait." On the other end, Tang Yuan hurriedly said, "Kid, are you tired of living, daring to rush into that building alone?"

Ling Chen was slightly taken aback and asked, "How do you know I'm in the building?"

"The old General just received a message saying you went into the building alone to rescue people. Everyone knows. Anyway, seriously, how are things over there? Is it dangerous?"

"I've found two survivors. During the explosion just now, one survivor's leg was injured and is now unconscious." Pausing for a moment, Ling Chen continued, "Our oxygen supply is running low, can only last ten more minutes. I haven't seen Wanqing and Feifei, I need to keep looking for them."

"Don't rush, Colonel Pang and I are on our way. The old General gave orders to fully assist you and ensure your safe exit from the building."

"Okay, call me when you arrive." Ling Chen hung up the phone, hoisted the unconscious Chen Chong onto his shoulder, then turned to the woman and said, "Rescue will arrive soon, I'll find a safe place for you to stay."

The woman cried desperately, "Where is there a safe place now?"

"Don't cry, there's always hope. By the way, how many people are in this building?"

"Today is Sunday, the company is off. Because President Leng had an appointment with Chairman Nanrong, there aren't many people here, just some assistants and three staff members. They're all downstairs in the office, but I don't know how they are now."

Ling Chen nodded and said, "I'll settle you first, then go downstairs to find them." Saying so, Ling Chen carried Chen Chong, and the three rushed to the stairs. Soon, they headed directly to the thirty-fourth floor. Surveying the surroundings, Ling Chen said, "Here."

This floor was somewhat better; although the fire was spreading, several offices were temporarily untouched. Ling Chen found a spacious office, placed Chen Chong down, and smashed all the office windows with a chair. Instantly, the cold air blew in, greatly reducing the smoke in the room.

Ling Chen took several deep breaths of fresh air and piled the blankets he had brought. In the corner of the office was a water dispenser with half a bucket of water left. "Here, drink some water." Ling Chen took out several paper cups, poured a few cups of water, and handed them to the woman.

After drinking several mouthfuls, Ling Chen felt much more comfortable.

"Stay here and take good care of him."

"Where are you going?"

"I need to find others." Saying so, Ling Chen grabbed the remaining half bucket of water and poured it all over the blanket. Preparing everything, Ling Chen strapped on the oxygen tank, draped the wet blanket over himself, and continued rushing downstairs. The lower he went, the more intense the fire, with thick smoke rolling everywhere, visibility very low. Ling Chen was a bit worried; it would be hard to survive in such an environment without protection.

The previous assistant mentioned there were three staff members downstairs. So, Ling Chen searched floor by floor along the stairs. On the thirty-first floor, Ling Chen finally found three staff members from Changlong Technology. However, their condition was dire; two were unconscious, and the other was semi-conscious, ready to faint.

Ling Chen dared not delay and quickly transported the three staff members to the office where Chen Chong was. After finishing all this, before Ling Chen could catch his breath, he received a call from Tang Yuan saying they had arrived outside the building.

"I have five people here who must be transferred out as soon as possible, or they'll be in grave danger."

"All accessible ways into the building are blocked. Colonel Pang and I will figure out how to get in to help you, you..."

Before Tang Yuan could finish, Ling Chen interrupted him, saying, "There's no need for you to come inside, it's too dangerous—it's enough with me alone." Saying so, Ling Chen walked to the window, looked down, and saw the building surrounded by people—both onlookers and many press vehicles.

Just then, Ling Chen suddenly noticed the office building across. That building was more than thirty meters away, and both buildings were of similar height. After contemplating for a moment, Ling Chen picked up the phone and said, "Old Tang, I have an idea, listen to me..."

A few minutes later, a rescue helicopter approached the side of the building. Tang Yuan sat in the cabin, holding a large backpack. As the helicopter approached the window, Tang Yuan threw the backpack towards Ling Chen's window.

With the backpack in hand, Ling Chen signaled 'OK' to Tang Yuan, and the helicopter immediately retreated, not daring to linger for a second. There was no way—stones were constantly falling from the top of the building, and if they hit the helicopter, it would be a disaster.

Opening the large backpack, Ling Chen took out all the preparations inside, including a crossbow. Assembling the crossbow, Ling Chen loaded the arrow attached to the rope, aiming at the window of the building across.

Whoosh!

An arrow shot out, swiftly breaking the window of the opposite building. At the same time, Pang Jiulin poked his head out from the opposite window, gesturing to Ling Chen.

Sigh! Ling Chen exhaled slowly—the most critical step was complete. Next was transferring the survivors.

"Here, let me help you tie the rope."

"I... I'm scared..." The woman's voice trembled, clutching Ling Chen's hand tightly, refusing to let go.

Ling Chen smiled and patted her hand, saying, "Don't worry, it's fine. Just close your eyes, and in a few seconds, it'll be safe. Come on!" Saying so, Ling Chen fixed the lock onto the rope and led the woman to the window edge.

"Ready, I'll count to three." As his words fell, before the woman could react, Ling Chen gave a sharp push, and her body instantly hung in the air, sliding towards the opposite building along the rope. The rope had an incline, making the slide fast, and soon the woman safely reached the opposite building.

Apart from that woman, the other few, including Chen Chong, were injured and unconscious. Ling Chen prepared safety measures and then sent them across one by one. A few minutes later, all survivors were rescued.

"Old Tang, immediately send people to escort the injured to the hospital for treatment."

"I know. And you?"

"I still need to find Wanqing and the others."

"Be careful, keep in touch at any time."

Chapter 1532 Fire Rescue (Part 7)

In addition to the equipment, the large backpack Tang Yuan just threw over contained several small oxygen tanks. These tanks aren't as big as oxygen cylinders and are about the size of a regular thermos, making them ideal for carrying around. However, the oxygen stored in these tanks isn't much; one tank can last for a mere seven or eight minutes at most.

With three oxygen tanks strapped to his waist, Ling Chen hastily packed, slinging the oxygen cylinder over his back. The oxygen cylinder was almost used up, with only one-fifth remaining. For Ling Chen, it could barely hold out for a short while.

Coming out of the office, Ling Chen rushed straight down the stairs. At present, everyone had been rescued, leaving only Nanrong Wanqing and Leng Feifei in the whole building. Find them both and get them out; his task would be considered complete.

At this moment, time is life, and Ling Chen isn't sure whether Nanrong Wanqing and Leng Feifei can last that long. It didn't take long for Ling Chen to confirm the elevator's position at the twenty-sixth floor.

"Wanqing, Feifei!" Ling Chen shouted their names loudly while walking, hoping for a response from them.

However, the fire in the building was getting fiercer with flames everywhere, turning Ling Chen's firefighter suit almost black. Looking at the worsening environment, Ling Chen didn't know how to describe his mood.

So hot! Ling Chen panted, his clothes already soaked with sweat. Within the surrounding heat waves, he felt like his skin was about to be roasted dry.

"Wanqing... Wanqing..." Ling Chen wanted to search along the corridor for Nanrong Wanqing and Leng Feifei's whereabouts. But the rooms on both sides of the corridor were engulfed in flames, with fierce fire continually spewing forth. If he continued forward, he might be consumed by the flames, with no chance of survival.

Moreover, if Nanrong Wanqing and Leng Feifei were really on this floor, they couldn't possibly survive. Hesitating for a moment, Ling Chen gave up on the idea of moving forward and instead rushed downstairs. As long as one is sane, when the building explodes, they would surely hurry to escape the building.

Nanrong Wanqing and Leng Feifei were in the elevator below on this floor; they should continue descending along the stairs, so they are more likely trapped downstairs.

When he came in earlier, Ling Chen recalled Xia Mutong saying that the tenth-floor safety exit was blocked by the explosion, preventing rescue personnel from entering. If that's the case, then Nanrong Wanqing and Leng Feifei should be between the tenth and twenty-fifth floors.

Searching fourteen floors in a short time is indeed a challenging task.

Ling Chen did not delay, searching floor by floor downwards. As long as there was a glimmer of hope, he wouldn't give up.

However, the further down he went, the stronger the fire became, which was becoming unbearable for Ling Chen, with several areas on his body burnt by the flames. In no time, ten minutes had passed, and Ling Chen was already on the nineteenth floor. Seeing the entire floor filled with fire, a trace of despair instantaneously welled up in Ling Chen's heart. In such an environment, and after such a long time, could Nanrong Wanqing and Leng Feifei really survive?

In the midst of pondering, Ling Chen's gaze was suddenly drawn to a heap of rocks. Due to the collapsed ceiling, many large stones had fallen. At the base of that pile of stones lay a person, their face charred black.

Someone else? Ling Chen quickly ran up to the person, leaned down to take a closer look, discovering it was a man dressed in a cleaner's uniform. Presumably, he encountered the explosion while cleaning and didn't escape in time, getting buried by the stones that fell from above.

Checking the man's breathing, Ling Chen helplessly shook his head; the man's breath had completely disappeared. If only he had been spotted a few minutes earlier, he might still have been saved.

Sorry! Ling Chen silently said. If time permitted, he would transport the man's body out to his family. But now, he urgently needed to find Nanrong Wanqing and Leng Feifei, having no extra time to waste.

Now, Ling Chen stood up, turned around ready to leave. After walking less than a few steps, Ling Chen suddenly stopped, sniffing the air. Strange! This smell... why does it seem somewhat familiar. Ling Chen looked around, seeing a cleaning cart next to the deceased cleaning personnel, with its contents scattered on the ground, emanating that peculiar odor.

Ling Chen stepped forward, picked up a bottle of cleaning liquid, opened the cap, and sniffed.

Indeed! Ling Chen's expression changed, a colder edge appearing in his gaze towards the cleaning personnel. These bottled cleaning liquids weren't cleaning liquids at all but potent chemical agents with strong combustive properties.

Looking at the contents inside the cleaning cart, Ling Chen took everything out and even found several detonators. No doubt, these were the leftovers after they installed the bombs.

He originally thought this fire was an accident; now, it seemed it wasn't accidental but someone intentionally trying to commit murder.

And Ling Chen himself had been too careless; the man in his thirties or forties didn't look like a cleaner from any angle. Moreover, men of this age typically don't engage in such work.

Chen Chong... Of course! Suddenly, Ling Chen recalled Chen Chong, whom he had saved earlier, also dressed as a cleaner. Could these two guys be in cahoots?

Thinking of this, Ling Chen tore a piece of torn cloth from his own clothes, then took the dead middle-aged man's finger, pressing it onto the torn cloth for a fingerprint. The man's hand was charred black, leaving a very clear print.

Taking out his phone, Ling Chen photographed the fingerprint and sent it to Tang Yuan's phone, accompanying the photo with a call explaining the situation.

"Old Tang, what happened to that cleaner named Chen Chong?"

"He was sent to the hospital for treatment."

"Immediately have someone watch him, and investigate his identity. I suspect his identity isn't simple; this fire was likely caused intentionally by him."

"Is that so? Got it! Leave it to me to handle it."

Ending the call, Ling Chen also dragged the middle-aged man's corpse out from beneath the pile of rubble, soon finding a phone on the person.

No time to check the phone's information, Ling Chen quickly tidied up and continued searching downstairs. Before long, Ling Chen arrived at the building's seventeenth floor. Upon reaching here, Ling Chen was unable to proceed further down. The safety stairs leading to the sixteenth floor were already encircled by flames, below was a sea of fire, with no way of entering.

Could it really be hopeless? Ling Chen clenched his fists, his eyes red with frustration. He searched from the top all the way down here yet couldn't find Nanrong Wanqing or Leng Feifei. If they were downstairs, there was absolutely no chance of survival.

Bang bang bang! Bang bang bang!

Chapter 1533 - 1838: Fire Rescue (8)

Suddenly, Ling Chen heard a faint sound. Instantly, he was alert and ran towards the direction of the sound. Soon, he realized the rhythmic knocking sound was coming from the other side of the wall.

The other side of the wall should be the elevator! Ling Chen glanced around, quickly made a judgment in his heart. He then ran to the elevator door, forcefully pulled it open. Feeling the rush of heat coming at him, Ling Chen did not retreat but leaned in to take a look inside the elevator shaft.

About a meter below the elevator door, there was an elevator, which seemed to be stuck and unable to descend. Here, the sound from the elevator became even clearer.

"Wanqing, Feifei!" Ling Chen shouted with all his strength, calling the names of the two women loudly.

"Ling Chen? It's Ling Chen!" Instantly, the surprised voices of the two women came from the elevator.

Finally found them! Ling Chen fiercely hammered the wall, laughing with joy. They weren't dead, great, they weren't dead!

Without time to think more, Ling Chen extended his hands, intending to slide down the cable at the top of the elevator. However, as soon as his hands touched the cable, he immediately felt a stinging pain. Looking at the burn marks left on his palms, Ling Chen's expression changed slightly.

"Wanqing, hang in there, I'm coming down to rescue you." Saying this, Ling Chen took off his jacket, wrapped it around the cable, then slowly climbed down.

When Ling Chen's feet landed on the top of the elevator, a piercing scraping sound rang out, and then the entire elevator suddenly dropped down three or four meters before stopping. This sudden change startled Nanrong Wanqing and Leng Feifei inside the elevator, making them scream.

Once the elevator steadied, Ling Chen immediately opened the cover on the top of the elevator, seeing Nanrong Wanqing and Leng Feifei standing in the middle of the elevator, both their coats spread on the ground to avoid direct contact with the floor.

Smart!

Ling Chen chuckled inwardly. The surface temperature of the elevator was too high; only by increasing the thickness of contact could the heat transmission be reduced. However, seeing the two women drenched in sweat and flushed red, Ling Chen felt a bit grateful.

This elevator was like a giant steaming basket, luckily he found them in time, or they would've passed out from the heat if he were any later.

"Come, grab my hand, I'll pull you up." Ling Chen stretched his hand through the top cover.

"You go up first." Nanrong Wanqing said. Leng Feifei didn't refuse, as there was no time to waste in such a situation. Soon, with Ling Chen's help, Nanrong Wanqing and Leng Feifei escaped from the elevator one after another.

"How do we get out?" Leng Feifei asked urgently, looking at the surroundings.

"Let's not talk about that, I'll get you out." Ling Chen said, handing the portable oxygen tank to the two women. Watching them take several deep breaths, Ling Chen quickly reminded, "Don't use it all at once, try to conserve, we have a long way to go."

With that, Ling Chen took off his backpack, pulled out a rope, and tied it around himself. Then, he tied the rope separately around Nanrong Wanqing and Leng Feifei.

"Time is running out, we have to move, follow my lead closely." he stated.

Ling Chen next instructed the two women to tear off some rags from their clothes and wrap them around their hands. Then, he took out a bottle of mineral water from his backpack. These items were previously prepared with Tang Yuan's help. Unfortunately, the backpack space was limited and couldn't carry more.

The mineral water was limited, so Ling Chen first let Nanrong Wanqing and Leng Feifei drink a few sips, then poured the remaining water on his own hands to dampen the rags wrapped around his palms, effectively blocking the heat transfer.

Following the cable above the elevator, Ling Chen instructed Leng Feifei and Nanrong Wanqing to climb in front while he followed behind, guarding them to prevent them from falling due to exhaustion.

Fortunately, the two women had good stamina, especially Nanrong Wanqing, who wore external skeletal armor that could enhance some strength, making the climbing relatively easy for her.

As time passed, Ling Chen kept looking below. The fire was expanding, already burning up from the bottom of the elevator shaft. Looking down, the bottom had turned into a sea of flames, and the fire was slowly spreading upward. Feeling the intense heat from below, Ling Chen feared even his firefighting gear was about to ignite.

After struggling for a while, the topmost Leng Feifei finally reached the elevator door. Watching the two women leave the elevator shaft, Ling Chen breathed a sigh of relief, quickly following behind. Just through the elevator door, he heard a loud 'boom' from the elevator shaft behind, and the powerful blast wave instantly spread out, sending the three of them flying, landing heavily on the ground.

Ignoring the pain in his body, Ling Chen hurriedly got up from the ground. Seeing Nanrong Wanqing and Leng Feifei still down, his expression changed as he shouted urgently, "Wanqing, Feifei, are you okay?"

Nanrong Wanqing rubbed her aching forehead, shook her head slightly and said, "I'm fine."

"Feifei, how about you?" Ling Chen turned to look at Leng Feifei, finding her injuries more severe. When she landed just now, her head likely hit first, causing a serious bruise.

"I'm...I'm fine..." Leng Feifei bit her lip lightly, unable to hide the pain on her face. Seeing her condition, Ling Chen didn't think much, directly carrying her on his back.

"Wanqing, we should leave now."

At this moment, the fire in the building had fully erupted, flames were everywhere. Moreover, explosions happened occasionally around, with debris flying from all directions, making it hard to avoid. A slight mistake and one could get injured by the debris.

Time is life, Ling Chen gritted his teeth, carrying Leng Feifei on his back, leading Nanrong Wanqing in a swift dash upstairs. After a frantic run, the three finally reached their destination. Upon entering the office, Ling Chen felt completely overwhelmed. The continuous high-intensity running combined with the harsh environment around him had seriously drained his stamina.

Putting Leng Feifei down, Ling Chen leaned on the window, gasping heavily. If possible, he really wished he could lie down for a while. But reality was cruel; the fire had already reached the office door, thick smoke pouring in. If they delayed further, all three would be trapped here, with no chance of escape.

"Feifei, I'll get you out of here first."

Having said this, Ling Chen tied the rope around Leng Feifei, then hooked the buckle to the cable outside the window. With the inertia, Leng Feifei's body slid directly down the cable. Soon, Tang Yuan successfully caught Leng Feifei in the opposite office building.

"Wanqing, it's your turn." Ling Chen took out the rope, ready to tie it to Nanrong Wanqing. However, at that moment, a loud noise suddenly came from the top of the building, followed by countless stones falling from above.

Chapter 1534 - 1839: Rescue Amid the Fire (9)

By a stroke of bad luck, a large boulder fell from the top and smashed into the cable between the two buildings.

In an instant, under the combined pressure of the boulder and the force of its descent, the cable snapped directly. Seeing this, Ling Chen didn't say a word and quickly pulled Nanrong Wanqing back a few steps to avoid being hit by the stone.

Looking at the fractured cable, Ling Chen's brows furrowed involuntarily. Now it's a problem - the only escape route is broken, how will the two of them get out? As he pondered swiftly, the ringtone of a phone sounded. Ling Chen took out his phone and answered, "Hello! Old Tang."

"Can you think of another way to escape?"

Ling Chen chuckled helplessly, "No way, we can't go up or down now, we're completely trapped."

"Don't be anxious, we'll set up another cable, it's sure to get you out."

Hearing this, Ling Chen opened his mouth, ready to respond, but before he could speak, a loud 'boom' sounded from outside the office, and raging flames rushed in from the door. Fortunately, Ling Chen reacted quickly, pulling Nanrong Wanqing to the ground, avoiding the impact of the flames.

Turning back, he saw a wall covered in cracks, ready to collapse at any moment, and Ling Chen's face instantly turned grim. This is bad! That wall is their only safety barrier against the fire; once it crumbles, the flames will ruthlessly engulf them. And now the main problem is the fire has blocked the office's only exit, even if they want to leave, it's impossible, unless they charge through the flames. However, that's no different from seeking death.

As he pondered, Ling Chen noticed Nanrong Wanqing's breaths quickening. He glanced at her several times, asking, "What's wrong?"

"I... I can't breathe," Nanrong Wanqing struggled to say.

"I still have some oxygen here." Ling Chen hurriedly took out his oxygen tank and handed it to Nanrong Wanqing. At this moment, thick smoke billowed around them, and the air was thin, no wonder Nanrong Wanqing felt suffocated. After taking several deep breaths, she found the oxygen tank was completely used up.

Feeling Nanrong Wanqing's desperate gaze, Ling Chen couldn't help but pull her gently into his embrace, softly patting her back, "Don't be afraid, I'm here. As long as I live, I won't let anything happen to you."

Boom! Boom!

The explosions outside grew increasingly intense, and the office wall had already cracked open in the middle, aggressive flames crazily rushing in, intent on engulfing the entire office.

"Tang Yuan! Tang Yuan! Respond quickly..."

Hearing Tang Yuan's voice, Ling Chen picked up the phone from the ground, his tone calm as he said, "Old Tang, try your best to find a way to get us out." With those words, Ling Chen directly hung up the phone. At this point, saying more was useless.

"Ling Chen, can we really escape?" Nanrong Wanqing murmured hesitantly.

Ling Chen didn't speak, only held Nanrong Wanqing tightly, offering her utmost comfort with his arms. At this moment, the fire outside the office had gradually started infiltrating inside. With the threat of fire and smoke, Ling Chen moved with Nanrong Wanqing toward the window. Fortunately, the smoke filled the upper part of the room, and when they lay on the ground, they could still inhale some fresh air.

However, this situation couldn't last long; once the fire completely engulfs the office, they would both perish in the blaze.

Seeing the billowing smoke emerging from the window ledge, opposite the office building, Tang Yuan, Pang Jiulin, and Xia Mutong were anxious.

"Tang Yuan, how much longer before the supplies arrive?" Pang Jiulin asked urgently.

"The firefighters already went to get them, it should take a few more minutes."

"A few minutes..." Xia Mutong frowned, full of worry, "They probably don't have a few minutes." As soon as she finished speaking, a sudden bang erupted from Ling Chen and Nanrong Wanqing's office, flames burst forth from the window.

Seeing this, the hearts of the three instantly leapt to their throats. An explosion! Are they... After a few seconds of stunned silence, Pang Jiulin was the first to react, urgently shouting, "Quick, quickly call Ling Chen."

Tang Yuan hurriedly pulled out his phone and dialed Ling Chen's number. However, the call could not go through. Meanwhile, outside the building, more than a dozen news vans had stopped, all cameras trained on the office where the explosion had just occurred. Reporters are always the quickest to know; they were already aware that the last two survivors in the building were waiting for rescue in that office.

But given the explosion just now, the chances of the two survivors making it seem slim.

Inside the office, nearly engulfed by flames, Ling Chen lay on the ground, covered in scars, his face almost completely stained with blood. Feeling the burning pain all over his body, Ling Chen slowly opened his eyes, struggling to get up.

Pain! So much pain! Ling Chen gritted his teeth, disregarded checking his injuries, and immediately focused on Nanrong Wanqing who lay beside him.

At this moment, Nanrong Wanqing lay on the ground with her legs pinned by a large stone, seemingly unconscious. Seeing this, Ling Chen's expression changed abruptly, he hurried to her side and gently patted her cheek.

"Wanqing, Wanqing, wake up!"

With Ling Chen's cry, Nanrong Wanqing gradually regained some consciousness.

"I... I can't move," Nanrong Wanqing said weakly.

"Don't worry." Saying this, Ling Chen grabbed the large stone with both hands, trying to move it off Nanrong Wanqing's legs. However, the weight of the stone was immense, and with his strength nearly exhausted, Ling Chen managed to shift it only a few centimeters before panting heavily.

Feeling the soreness in his arms, Ling Chen couldn't help but roar, exerting all his strength.

Seeing Ling Chen's bulging veins, Nanrong Wanqing felt a pang of guilt, "Leave me, you should escape alone."

Upon hearing this, Ling Chen shook his head, saying firmly, "We leave together, I won't abandon you. Even in death, I will stay with you."

"There's no need..." Deeply touched, Nanrong Wanqing's eyes instantly reddened, tears glistening in her eyes.

Ling Chen smiled faintly, "Maybe I've done many things wrong to you, but no matter what happens, I will stay by your side, that's my promise to you - whether it's the past, the present, or the future."

"I..."

Nanrong Wanqing wanted to speak, but Ling Chen stopped her with a look. Now was not the time for sorrow; he had to race against time to remove the stone from Nanrong Wanqing's body.

Chapter 1535 - 1840: Jumping Off the Building

Watching the raging flames closing in behind them, Ling Chen swept his gaze around, strode quickly to the corner of the office, and found a steel pipe more than two meters long. This steel pipe must have been blown out of the wall in the recent explosion; it was covered in concrete.

Steel pipe in hand, Ling Chen quickly returned to Nanrong Wanqing's side, jammed the pipe under the big boulder, and used it as a lever, straining to pry the stone up.

"Wanqing, hurry... hurry and get out."

Hearing Ling Chen's urging, Nanrong Wanqing scrambled forward on hands and knees with difficulty. Very soon, her legs slid free from under the boulder.

Bang! Seeing Nanrong Wanqing freed safely, Ling Chen loosened his hands, and the boulder crashed heavily to the floor with a dull thud.

Huff... huff... Ling Chen panted hard, and despite his severely overdrawn body, he rushed to Nanrong Wanqing, helping her up from the ground.

"How is it, can you still walk?"

Nanrong Wanqing shook her head. "The exoskeleton armor seems to have been crushed." As she said this, she turned back to look at the flames surging quickly toward them, her expression couldn't help but change. With deep worry on her face she asked, "Ling Chen, what... what do we do now?"

Ling Chen glanced at the office building across the street; there was still no sign of Tang Yuan and the others. In such a short time it would be almost impossible for them to get a zipline ready. No time left! Ling Chen frowned, thinking to himself. If they waited for Tang Yuan and the others to come save them, it would be too late. At a moment this critical, they could only rely on themselves.

Driven by the flames, in no time Ling Chen and Nanrong Wanqing were already standing at the edge of the window; one more step forward and the two of them would fall from there.

At this moment, the cameramen around the building all pointed their lenses at Ling Chen and Nanrong Wanqing, who had no way out. Everyone knew in their hearts that there were only two possible endings for these two: either be devoured by the flames, or jump and die. From over twenty floors up, a jump from such a height meant certain death.

What was worse, stones kept falling from the top of the building, so the rescue firefighters had no way to approach, let alone set up an air cushion.

"Ling Chen! Ling Chen!" Seeing this, Leng Feifei in the office building panicked, shouting Ling Chen's name at the top of her lungs. Unfortunately, Ling Chen's attention was entirely on Nanrong Wanqing right now, and he didn't hear her cries at all.

Feeling the scorching heat at his back, Ling Chen let out a silent sigh, turned his head to look at Nanrong Wanqing's delicately beautiful face, now a shade pale, and couldn't help raising his hand to gently wipe away the grime on her cheeks.

"Are you scared?"

Nanrong Wanqing lightly bit her lips, nodded, then shook her head.

Ling Chen smiled slightly and said, "A few days ago you asked me why I never brought up 'marriage' with you. What I wanted to say is..."

"Don't say it." Before Ling Chen could finish, Nanrong Wanqing had already raised her hand to press against his lips, cutting him off.

Gazing into Ling Chen's eyes, dark and deep as ink, Nanrong Wanqing suddenly smiled brightly. "To me, nothing else matters anymore. When there's a man willing to live and die with you, what more could I possibly ask for?"

Hearing this, Ling Chen couldn't help but smile, his whole body seeming to relax, his expression slowly returning to calm.

"Are you ready?"

Nanrong Wanqing answered softly with a hum, not saying another word, just wrapping her arms tightly around Ling Chen's body.

"Let's go!" Ling Chen took a deep breath and, without the slightest hesitation, leaped out, jumping straight into the open air. Seeing them do this, Leng Feifei, Tang Yuan, Xia Mutong, and Pang Jiulin all cried out in shock, their faces going ashen. Leng Feifei even covered her eyes, not daring to look.

Feeling his body plummeting, Ling Chen clenched his teeth, holding Nanrong Wanqing's soft body in a death grip. In that instant, the intense sense of danger and the presence of death closing in made both of them feel as if they were suffocating. Other than shutting their eyes, they didn't know what else they could do.

However, at that very instant, Ling Chen seemed to sense something. His eyes snapped open, a sharp gleam flashing through them.

Power... surged into every part of his body like a rising tide, sweeping away his earlier weakness in an instant. Not only that, his previously numb Dantian suddenly felt like an inflating balloon, swelling as if it might explode at any moment.

Bang!

When the energy in his Dantian reached a bottleneck, Ling Chen seemed to hear an explosion inside his body. A fierce surge of Inner Strength erupted from his Dantian, flooding through his entire body, coursing a full circuit with incredible speed, blasting open all the blocked meridians. The next moment, that mighty Inner Strength gathered back into his Dantian again.

Feeling that surging power, Ling Chen couldn't help but let out a roar, venting the exhilaration in his chest. Nanrong Wanqing beside him had no idea what was happening, and was almost scared out of her wits by his sudden shout.

At this moment, while still falling rapidly, Ling Chen suddenly twisted his body, spinning as he closed in on the outer wall of the building. Then he kicked hard off the wall with both feet, using it to spring away. Right where he had been, a chunk of stone dropped past from above.

Seizing his chance, just as that stone was about to fall past his eyes, Ling Chen tapped lightly on it with one foot. Their plummeting bodies paused for a split second, then continued to fall. Though their speed was still fast, the inertia of their fall had been greatly reduced.

By now the two of them were less than ten meters above the ground. Below them were several trees four to five meters tall. Holding Nanrong Wanqing with one arm, Ling Chen stretched out his other hand and grabbed a thick branch, using it to bleed off more of their downward momentum.

Bang!

With a muffled crack, the branch snapped, and Ling Chen and Nanrong Wanqing's bodies dropped the rest of the way to the ground. Puff! He spat out a mouthful of fresh blood; pain racked Ling Chen from head to toe, as if all his internal organs had been knocked out of place.

But seeing Nanrong Wanqing lying on top of him safe and sound, Ling Chen's lips curled up slightly; he felt that everything had been worth it. If it hadn't been for that series of moves just now to lessen the force of their fall, the two of them would probably be dead already.

So although he was injured, this outcome was already very good. As for the changes in his own body, Ling Chen had no time to think about them. In this moment, nothing was more worth celebrating than surviving the jaws of death.

"Ling Chen, Ling Chen!"

By now, Tang Yuan, Xia Mutong and the others had already rushed over from the office building opposite. Seeing that the two of them were basically fine, everyone's faces lit up with joy.

"You little bastard, I thought you were done for." Tang Yuan grinned from ear to ear, unable to hide the wild delight inside.

"A miracle, this is a miracle. Falling from that height and actually surviving." Pang Jiulin at the side couldn't help sighing in admiration. Standing next to Ling Chen, Leng Feifei held his arm for support; aside from shedding tears, she didn't know what words could possibly express the joy in her heart. The moment Ling Chen jumped down with Nanrong Wanqing in his arms, all hope had drained out of her; her mind had gone blank.

In less than a minute, she had tasted the soaring joy and crushing sorrow of a lifetime.

Chapter 1536 - 1841: Entering the Heavenly List (1)

Under Tang Yuan's urging, Ling Chen, Nanrong Wanqing, and Leng Feifei were quickly sent to the hospital by ambulance. Although a large group of reporters rushed to interview them, they were all blocked by Tang Yuan.

Inside the ambulance, Ling Chen lay on the stretcher and looked at Tang Yuan beside him, asking, "Old Tang, have you found any results on the thing I asked you to investigate?"

"I checked the fingerprint you gave me earlier. That person was a professional assassin. Unfortunately, he is already dead, so we can't find out who his employer was."

"Isn't there still Chen Chong?"

"He is still in the hospital. I've already assigned people to keep an eye on him. When we get to the hospital, I will interrogate him personally."

"These two must have planned everything, deliberately setting a big fire to kill the target in the blaze. That way, people would only think it was an accident, not murder."

Tang Yuan curiously asked, "Tang Yuan, who do you think their target might be?"

"I have no idea; it's either Wanqing or Feifei, definitely one of them. Make sure to let me know after you find out."

As they spoke, the ambulance soon arrived at the hospital. After examination, Ling Chen had several broken ribs and abrasions on his hands and feet, but they were not severe. A period of rest would be enough. When doctors heard that Ling Chen's injuries were caused by jumping from over twenty floors, they were all wide-eyed in disbelief. Some doctors even suggested a full examination on Ling Chen, as if they were going to dissect him like an alien.

Lying in the special care ward, Ling Chen closed his eyes, recalling the moment he jumped off the building.

The force came in so timely that if it hadn't, he would have been nothing but a pile of flesh.

Jumping off a building!

Thinking about the talk with Ling Gengqiu back then, Ling Chen couldn't help but smile. At that time, he asked Ling Gengqiu if he could restore his strength. Ling Gengqiu told him that he had absorbed the medicinal effects of the Nine Elements Pill, but because of lacking a trigger, his strength couldn't recover.

Later, he asked Ling Gengqiu if there was a quicker way to find this trigger. The ancestor gave him a suggestion, which was to jump off a building and stimulate his potential in a huge crisis. At that time, he thought it was a joke and didn't take it seriously. Only someone with a mental illness would do something so crazy.

But the facts proved that Ling Gengqiu's suggestion was correct.

Feeling the mighty inner strength in his dantian, Ling Chen's smile was very bright. This time, it was a blessing in disguise. Not only did he regain his strength, but his strength surpassed his previous limits, directly breaking through the bottleneck and entering the Heavenly List realm.

Heavenly List!

Previously, he dared only to think about this realm in his heart. Even if he could enter this realm, it would be around forty years old. Now, entering the list of Heavenly List experts in his twenties is unprecedented.

As he was thinking, the door to the ward was pushed open, and Nanrong Wanqing and Leng Feifei walked in from outside.

Both women only had minor injuries and were fine after simple bandaging. After their wounds were treated, they couldn't wait to rush to Ling Chen's ward.

"How are you? Are you okay?" Leng Feifei asked with concern.

Ling Chen smiled and said, "I'm fine. I'm tough; these minor injuries are nothing. The doctor said a period of rest will be enough."

"Thank you for saving me."

"No need to thank me; we're friends, and this is what I should do."

Leng Feifei smiled, seemingly wanting to say something. But seeing Nanrong Wanqing beside her, she hesitated and swallowed her words.

"Ling Chen, Wanqing, you chat first. The company had such a big incident, I have to report to headquarters." After speaking, Leng Feifei turned and left the ward.

"Stop looking, she's left. If you can't bear it, I can call her back for you."

Hearing Nanrong Wanqing's teasing, Ling Chen blushed and couldn't help but cough lightly twice, quickly focusing his eyes on his own woman, smiling sheepishly, "You misunderstood, I was just..."

"No need to explain." Nanrong Wanqing smiled lightly, "I'm not that petty. Besides, after going through this, I see many things more clearly. As long as you're thinking of me, I'm very satisfied."

Right after she finished speaking, Xia Mutong and Tang Yuan walked into the ward one after another.

"Tang Yuan, I just went to see Chen Chong with Director Xia."

"How did it go, did you find out anything?"

Xia Mutong shook his head, "We were too late, he was already dead."

"Dead?" Ling Chen was shocked and asked in surprise, "How could he be dead? Wasn't someone watching him?"

"We checked the surveillance. If we're not mistaken, someone must have impersonated a doctor, entered his ward, and injected him with a high dose of medication, causing his sudden death."

Beside him, Tang Yuan interjected, "We also checked his identity; Chen Chong is a pseudonym. He was a fugitive for many years and then became an assassin. No matter what, there must be a mastermind behind this incident."

Xia Mutong nodded, "I've reported to the leaders. They're taking this case very seriously and have ordered us to form a special task force to investigate the mastermind thoroughly. However... we're still unclear about who the target is. So before we solve the case, the safety of Miss Nanrong and Miss Leng will be our responsibility."

"Alright, thank you for your hard work."

...

In the blink of an eye, three days passed.

Although the building fire incident ended, the heat did not diminish at all, and it could be seen on TV news reports every day. Besides the reason for the building fire, people were more concerned about the miraculous escape of Ling Chen and Nanrong Wanqing. Being able to survive a jump from over twenty floors is truly a miracle. Over the past few days, reporters have constantly tried to interview Ling Chen, and the corridor outside Ling Chen's ward was packed tightly.

Fortunately, Xia Mutong had people stationed, avoiding disturbances.

Due to the persistent news coverage, Ling Chen's friends all learned about the incident. Over the past few days, Ling Chen received countless calls of concern and comfort.

Putting down the phone, Ling Chen stretched in bed just as Nanrong Wanqing walked in from outside, holding a lot of food.

"I cooked chicken soup today; drink more later."

Ling Chen smiled and said, "You have so much going on, no need to work so hard. With this level of nourishment every day, I'll soon get fat."

"What's wrong with getting fat? You're not a woman; are you afraid no one will want you?" As she spoke, Nanrong Wanqing handed a bowl of chicken soup to Ling Chen.

"I just asked the attending doctor. Your recovery is going well, and you don't need to stay in the hospital anymore. I'll help you with the discharge procedures tomorrow."

Chapter 1537 - 1842: Entering the Heavenly List (2)

"Really? That's great, I'm getting bored to death being stuck here every day," Ling Chen said with a cheerful face.

"I've arranged a place for you to stay; it's perfect for quiet recovery and relatively secluded, so journalists won't disturb you."

Ling Chen nodded and said, "That's best." He really feared those journalists in recent days. To obtain firsthand information, they employed all sorts of extreme tactics. Just the night before, a journalist even climbed through the window. This was the tenth floor, and he thought someone was trying to assassinate him, almost killing the person in the process.

Nanrong Wanqing sat at the bedside, took an apple from the fruit basket, peeled it while asking, "Are you involved in the Martial Arts Tournament?"

Martial Arts Tournament? Ling Chen was slightly startled and asked, "How did you know about this?"

"What's so strange about it? Now there are promotional ads posted all over Beijing. Everyone in the city knows about it. Aren't you a martial artist? I just randomly asked to see if it's related to you."

"It certainly is. This time the Martial Arts Tournament is organized jointly by three forces, with the organizer being the Martial Arts Association. If you hadn't asked, I would have forgotten. Elder Tong has

assigned me quite a few tasks, and I haven't had time to deal with them while lying in the hospital these days."

"Given your condition, you should rest at home rather than rush, the tournament won't take place for a while."

Ling Chen smiled and asked, "Hearing your words, it seems you're quite interested in the Martial Arts Tournament?"

"Of course I'm interested," Nanrong Wanqing did not deny it and said, "Since news of the tournament spread, many people around me have expressed great interest, insisting they must see it. You know, the word 'martial arts' is something people have only seen in novels and TV shows, rarely having the chance to witness real martial artists and skills. From what I know, not only are many domestic people interested in the tournament you're organizing, but it's also spread abroad, and many international friends might attend."

"According to you, won't there be a lot of participants?" Ling Chen touched his nose, feeling a bit headache, "The venue we're building can only hold twenty to thirty thousand people at most."

"Twenty to thirty thousand?" Nanrong Wanqing shook her head and said, "That's definitely too few; the venue needs at least fifty thousand capacity."

Ling Chen gave a bitter smile, "The more people, the greater my responsibility. You don't know, Elder Tong has already instructed me to be in charge of the security outside the venue. Sigh! I hope this Martial Arts Tournament goes smoothly without any mishaps."

Nanrong Wanqing was just about to continue, but suddenly the phone rang.

Ling Chen picked up the phone, glanced at the unfamiliar number on the caller ID, casually answered the call, and asked, "Who is this?"

"Ling Chen, you're lucky; you didn't die jumping from such a high place. To be honest, I'm a bit disappointed. If you'd died, it would save me a lot of trouble."

Hearing the familiar voice, Ling Chen frowned slightly and calmly said, "You didn't call just to express your disappointment, did you?"

"That's secondary, the main thing is, I want to know if you've handled your affairs. It's been almost half a month, and there's been no word from you. Don't forget, I gave you a deadline."

"Are you that eager to return to the country? Can't make a living abroad anymore?"

"Ling Chen, enough with the crap; if you can help me resolve this matter within two days, I'll not only return Ling Gengqiu's severed limb to you but also offer you a very valuable piece of intel. How about it?"

"Intel? What intel? Tell me first; maybe I'm not interested."

"Don't you want to know who was behind that big fire? Remember, you have two days; don't make me wait too long." After saying this, Zhu Hong directly hung up the phone.

"Who was the caller?" Nanrong Wanqing asked curiously.

Ling Chen hesitated for a moment, slowly uttering two words, "Zhu Hong!"

"Him?" Nanrong Wanqing was shocked. She hadn't seen Zhu Hong for a long time because of the things Zhu Hong had done; in her heart, Zhu Hong was already a dead person, not wanting any contact with him. However, hearing Zhu Hong's name again from Ling Chen's mouth, it's a lie to say she was completely unaffected.

No matter what, Zhu Hong was her childhood playmate, her first crush. Although Zhu Hong caused her many emotional scars, truly forgetting is not easy.

"How... is he now?"

"Not well, a military enterprise abroad is hunting him everywhere; he can't make a living abroad and wants me to help revoke the military's accusations against him so he can return to the country."

"What accusation?"

"Treason. Zhu Hong collaborated with others, stealing national secrets, then fled abroad intending to trade those secrets for profit. I foiled his plan, and now he's like a stray dog, hiding everywhere. But this is all his own doing; he can't blame anyone else."

Upon hearing this, Nanrong Wanqing sighed, "I didn't expect him to become like this."

Ling Chen continued, "To be honest, Zhu Hong is a pitiful person; his experiences led him to become this way, of course, not excluding his own ambition playing a part. If he didn't have such great ambition, perhaps he would be doing well now. Sadly, he's blinded by ambition and hatred, no one can save him now." Pausing, Ling Chen asked Nanrong Wanqing, "Do you feel regrettable for him?"

"Not really; everyone has their fate. If he chose to change, maybe he could have a better life, but he insists on walking a path to death. Therefore, he should bear all consequences for his choice. To me, Zhu Hong is a stranger now; I don't care about his future. I'm just a bit worried about you; I know Zhu Hong resents you, so..."

Ling Chen smiled and said, "It's alright; his resentment against me isn't recent. Let him be; I'm perfectly fine. If he really comes to seek revenge, I'd be more than happy to settle things."

"How do you plan to handle this?" Nanrong Wanqing asked, "Do you really intend to help him dismiss the charges?"

Ling Chen nodded and said, "There's no alternative; he has something very important to me. Until I obtain that, I can only compromise."

"Then be careful; I don't want anything to happen to you again."

"Don't worry; I know what I'm doing."

Nanrong Wanqing stayed in the hospital room for a while but left due to other business at the company. After she left, Ling Chen took out his phone, dialed a number. Zhu Hong's matter couldn't be delayed, needing prompt resolution.

Chapter 1538 - 1843: Tournament Format Arrangements (1)

"Hey! Kid, are you feeling alright? Tang Yuan told me about your situation. I've been too busy these days, so I haven't been able to visit you in the hospital. You won't blame me for that, will you?"

Hearing Qiao Zhen's familiar and warm voice on the other end of the line, Ling Chen smiled and said, "Old General, look at what you're saying. Am I that kind of person? Besides, it's just a minor injury, no need to trouble you to visit me. If it weren't for you sending Old Tang and Colonel Pang to help me, I might not have made it through this ordeal."

"There's no need to say anything else, as long as you're fine. You calling me today, surely it's not just for a chat?"

"Old General, you truly understand me. To be honest, there's something I want to discuss with you." Thus, Ling Chen explained about withdrawing the charges against Zhu Hong. After listening, Qiao Zhen's tone became serious, "Kid, you should know the crimes Zhu Hong and Yi Haisheng committed. Even executing them would be too kind. Stealing state secrets and selling them for profit is something the government absolutely won't tolerate."

"Old General, please calm down. Of course, I'm aware of how severe Zhu Hong's crimes are. However, Yi Haisheng is already dead, and Zhu Hong is abroad, his whereabouts unknown. What can we do about him? Moreover, Zhu Hong still holds so many military secrets. Given time, who knows if he might sell all those secrets. We don't have time to waste."

Ling Chen said, "The reason I want the military to withdraw the charges isn't to exonerate Zhu Hong. You know very well the kind of relationship between Zhu Hong and me; only one of us can survive. But Zhu Hong is abroad, and no matter how capable we are, we can't do anything about him. However, as far as I know, Zhu Hong is in a difficult situation now, with Yingtai Group sending many mercenaries to hunt him down. Because of this, he wants to return to the country for asylum. Once the military withdraws the charges, Zhu Hong will immediately come back. As long as he's within our sphere of influence, isn't capturing him just a matter of time? Old General, what do you think?"

Qiao Zhen was silent for a moment, then replied, "You do have a point there. Alright, I'll discuss this matter with higher-ups and ask for their opinion. I'll get back to you then."

"Okay."

After hanging up the phone, Ling Chen smiled quietly to himself. He believed there wouldn't be an issue on the old General's side, and the military higher-ups would definitely agree to his suggestion. Since the military is more eager than he is to capture Zhu Hong, only by letting Zhu Hong return to the country would they have the opportunity to apprehend him.

Life in the hospital was leisurely, lying in bed all the time, occasionally watching melodramatic love dramas, or he would just go to sleep out of sheer boredom.

Fortunately, Nanrong Wanqing had already made arrangements with the hospital. The next morning, after completing the discharge procedures, a business vehicle took Ling Chen from the hospital to a relatively quiet villa on the outskirts of Beijing. According to Nanrong Wanqing, this was her property in Beijing, mainly chosen for its good environment, and the surrounding area was very peaceful with excellent greenery.

"You should rest first; I have some work to do at the company. I'll come back in the evening to have dinner with you."

"Go and do your work. I can take care of myself." After watching Nanrong Wanqing's convoy leave, Ling Chen went to the bedroom and gazed out of the window. If he remembered correctly, the Martial Arts Tournament venue was in that direction and not too far from the villa. This was convenient since before the tournament, there would inevitably be running back and forth. Living close by made things much easier.

In the afternoon, Ling Chen found time to call Tong Zhentian, who happened to be at the Martial Arts Tournament venue. They set a time, and Ling Chen sent him his location. An hour later, Tong Zhentian and Su Mei arrived outside the villa by car.

"Elder Tong, Master Su." Ling Chen stood at the door, smiling as he greeted them.

"Ling Chen, when did you get discharged? I've been so busy these last few days; I was planning to visit you in the hospital in a couple of days."

"I just got back today. This is Wanqing's villa. She liked the tranquility, so she set it up for me to recuperate here. Please, both of you, come in!" Welcoming Tong Zhentian and Su Mei into the living room, Ling Chen poured two cups of tea for them and then took a seat across from them.

"Master Su, is the venue setup complete?"

"The main construction is finished. According to this progress, we should be completely done in a week."

Ling Chen smiled slightly and said, "Master Su's efficiency is indeed fast. However, some things may be beyond our expectations."

Hearing this, Su Mei asked curiously, "What do you mean?"

"We all underestimated the appeal of the Martial Arts Tournament. Yesterday I spoke with Wanqing, and she said that many people are interested in the tournament and want to witness it in person. We've roughly estimated that at least fifty thousand people will attend the tournament, which is half more than we anticipated. Additionally, people from abroad will also come. So, I'm afraid our venue is too small."

Su Mei and Tong Zhentian exchanged a glance and asked, "Then what should we do? If it's really as you say, we might have to expand the scale by twofold."

"Master Su, is there enough time?"

"There are still more than twenty days until the opening of the Martial Arts Tournament. If we employ more construction teams, it shouldn't be too big of a problem. However, if there are so many people attending, security might be a big issue."

"Right!" Tong Zhentian nodded and said, "Even if we deploy everyone from our three factions, we can only barely manage a venue for twenty to thirty thousand people. If the number doubles, where can we find so many people to maintain order on short notice?"

Ling Chen smiled and said, "That's not a problem. I've already thought it through. Master Su, don't you have a cooperation with the military? Why don't you talk to the military higher-ups and ask them to dispatch troops to help maintain order? There are several military units stationed around Beijing, with tens of thousands of people, plenty enough. If they agree, I believe security won't be an issue."

"That's a good idea." Tong Zhentian agreed.

"Alright, I'll contact the military later. As long as they agree, I'll immediately assemble construction teams to expand the venue." At this point, Su Mei changed the subject and said, "Ling Chen, in addition to visiting you, there's another matter Elder Tong and I want to discuss with you today."

"What is it?"

"Since it's the Martial Arts Tournament, we have to arrange some interesting segments for everyone to participate in. As people from the Martial Arts world, a martial arts competition is essential, and it's the highlight of the tournament. We have to make it perfect. However, we haven't figured out the rules yet."

Chapter 1539 - 1844: Tournament Format Arrangements (2)

"What are your thoughts, Master Su?"

"I've discussed this with Elder Tong. Our preliminary idea is to divide the competition into three events: a team match, an individual match, and an exhibition match," Su Mei replied. "The exhibition is merely a performance. After all, the audience wouldn't understand the deeper nuances, so we'll just set up some superficial bouts, like flowery but impractical skills. Apart from that, the individual and team matches are the main focus of the Martial Arts Tournament."

"There are many large and small factions in the Martial Arts world, and each can participate as a team. Each team is limited to three members. As for the individual competition, there are fewer restrictions; regardless of their affiliation, anyone can participate, even independent martial artists. We will prepare substantial rewards and present them to the top three winners of both the team and individual matches."

Ling Chen nodded and said, "This is a good idea, and I think it can be implemented. But Master Su, don't forget what we initially agreed on. The purpose of the Martial Arts Tournament is not only to promote Huaxia martial arts but also to eliminate Qi Yong."

"I understand what you mean," Su Mei chimed in. "I've considered this as well, which is why I've arranged for the team matches. Dragon Tiger Hall, Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, and Qi Yong's Dangyang Sect all belong to the martial arts factions, so we definitely need to send people to participate in the team matches. Qi Yong, being the Sect Leader of Dangyang Sect and an expert on the Earthly List, can join the team match."

"Master Su, Qi Yong is the Sect Leader of Dangyang Sect. How can we decide for him to join the team match?" After a pause, Ling Chen continued, "I think we can add another event, a challenge match. Martial Arts is full of rivalries, and a challenge match can both help martial artists make a name for themselves and resolve their grudges. What do you think?"

"A challenge match?" Tong Zhentian murmured, a small smile forming on his aged face. "I think Ling Chen's suggestion is good. Since it's a challenge match, we can loosen the rules. Once the challenged party accepts, they can go all out, as long as it doesn't result in death; they can do as they please."

"Sure." Su Mei smiled in agreement. "Since everyone agrees, let's add a challenge match. According to the arrangement Elder Tong and I made, the Martial Arts Tournament will last for five days. With so many participants and such a grand scene, three days is too short. Five days would be more sufficient."

"You guys decide; I'm just here to assist."

"Take good care of yourself at home, make sure to recover before the Martial Arts Tournament starts, and then you'll be busy."

"Elder Tong, rest assured, I won't delay the important matters."

After sending off Su Mei and Tong Zhentian, Ling Chen returned alone to the living room, picked up a cup of tea, and was about to take a sip. But at that moment, a phone call came through. Glancing at the caller ID, Ling Chen quickly answered and asked, "General, do you have any news?"

"I've reported to the higher-ups in the military, and they think it's a good proposal and are willing to accept it. By tomorrow at the latest, they will withdraw their charges against Zhu Hong."

"Really?" Ling Chen grinned. "That's great! Thank you, General."

"Enough with the thanks; as long as we can catch Zhu Hong quickly, everything else is secondary."

Hanging up the phone, Ling Chen leaned back against the sofa, rubbing his temples with one hand. The issue with Zhu Hong was resolved, and once he retrieved Ling Gengqiu's severed limb, Ling Gengqiu's strength could return to its peak. Now, having reached the Heavenly List, his power had significantly increased, and with Tong Zhentian, Chen Junfeng, Ji Gang, and his father Ling Kun by his side, so many experts from the Heavenly List gathered together that even if Su Cheng'en and Su He had exceptional abilities, they couldn't possibly defeat them.

Thinking of this, the corners of Ling Chen's mouth lifted into a brilliant smile. With the power he now possessed, who in the Martial Arts world could stand against him? The Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion? Apart from Du Kang, there were no other experts there, so they were not worth considering.

If everything went smoothly, the martial arts landscape would undergo a significant change after this Martial Arts Tournament.

...

Time passed quickly, and in the blink of an eye, two weeks had gone by. Ling Chen checked the time; there was still a little over a week until the Martial Arts Tournament. During this period, he stayed peacefully in the villa recuperating. With his robust physique, his recovery was swift, and his injuries had mostly healed.

Having recovered from his injuries, Ling Chen wasn't idle; there were still many matters to handle. Not long ago, Su Mei sent news that the military had agreed to help, dispatching two thousand soldiers to maintain order at the venue. Although two thousand soldiers seemed like a lot, in reality, to secure a venue hosting tens of thousands of people, two thousand weren't enough. So, Ling Chen still needed to find a batch of security personnel.

Fortunately, he had given Dong Ying a heads-up in advance, instructing her to conduct a nationwide recruitment. Since the employee benefits improved, there had been a significant increase in applicants. Within just half a month, Falcon Company had expanded by two hundred people, half of whom were veterans, all of high quality.

These days, Ling Chen frequently visited the company to oversee the training of the security personnel.

"Chen."

In the chairman's office, seeing Jiang Yunkai enter from outside, Ling Chen asked, "What is it?"

"I just received a package, specifically requesting your signature for receipt."

"A package?" Ling Chen asked curiously. "What package?" He hadn't ordered anything online, so why would someone send him a package? Thinking this, Ling Chen followed Jiang Yunkai outside the company building, where he saw a young man standing with a large wooden box as tall as a person.

"Are you Mr. Ling?"

Ling Chen nodded and said, "I am. Who sent this to me?"

"A Mr. Zhu sent it, and he said you should know what's inside."

Zhu... Ling Chen's eyes lit up. Zhu Hong! So that's it; it seems the item he wanted had been delivered. After sending the young man away, Ling Chen had Jiang Yunkai call some security personnel to help move the wooden box into the chairman's office.

After everyone left, Ling Chen stood in front of the large wooden box, preparing to open it. But as he reached out, he hesitated. If it were a package from someone else, he wouldn't worry much. But since it was from Zhu Hong, he couldn't afford to be careless. Although they had reached an agreement—he would help lift the military's charges against Zhu Hong, and in return, Zhu Hong would return Ling

Gengqiu's severed limb—Zhu Hong was unpredictable. Who could guarantee he hadn't tampered with the contents of the box?

If there was a bomb inside, he'd be finished.

Chapter 1540 - 1845: Reshaping the Body

Thinking of this, Ling Chen dared not act rashly. Instead, he called the company's technicians to check with their equipment to avoid any danger.

Just then, his phone rang. Seeing the unfamiliar caller ID, Ling Chen didn't need to think twice to know who it was. Once connected, Zhu Hong's voice immediately came from the other end: "You got the package, right?"

"I got it."

"Then why don't you just open it? Are you afraid I might have done something to it?"

"I'm not afraid of others, but you're different; I have to be cautious." As he spoke, Ling Chen glanced out the window a few times. From Zhu Hong's previous words, it seemed he knew the situation in this office.

"When did you return to the country?"

"Several days ago, thanks to you, I've been able to have a few easy days." After a pause, Zhu Hong continued, "Have your people stand down, there's no danger in that wooden box."

"Chairman." As they spoke, a technician approached, saying, "Everything's been checked, no issues found."

"I understand, you can leave now."

"See, I didn't lie to you." Zhu Hong's laughter returned through the phone.

Ling Chen replied indifferently, "Better safe than sorry. For someone like you, I prefer to be cautious. Zhu Hong, you're quite bold. Knowing full well the military is searching for you everywhere, you still dared to come to Beijing. Aren't you afraid of getting caught?"

"The most dangerous place is the safest place; I understand this. Besides, even if the military finds me, they might not dare to arrest me unless they want to cause wide-scale panic."

Upon hearing this, Ling Chen furrowed his brow slightly and said in a deep voice, "What have you done again?"

"Nothing, just some life-saving measures. Don't worry, as long as nothing happens to me, everyone else will be safe. Oh by the way!" Zhu Hong shifted the conversation, "Last time, I promised you that in addition to returning Ling Gengqiu's severed limb, I'd bring you intelligence."

"Speak."

"The fire in Changlong Technology's branch office building last time wasn't an accident. It was someone trying to eliminate competitors, Leng Feifei and Nanrong Wanqing, both were targets."

"I knew all this, I just want to know who did it."

"Actually, you aren't unfamiliar with them; you dealt with them a while ago. What, did you forget?"

Ling Chen raised an eyebrow and spoke, "Are you saying... Yingtai Group?"

"Correct! Yingtai Group invested in a technology company aiming for the Huaxia market. However, Changlong Technology got ahead of them. To protect their interests, Yingtai Group orchestrated everything behind the scenes, wanting to eliminate Leng Feifei and Nanrong Wanqing to slow their progress. Unfortunately, your presence ruined Yingtai Group's plans."

"So it was them."

"You should know Yingtai Group's style; they won't give up easily. Although this action failed, they certainly won't quit. Huaxia's policy is strict, prohibiting mercenaries from entering. However, it's easy to dodge an open spear but hard to defend against a hidden arrow. Who knows what means Yingtai Group will use against you all."

With a half-smile, Ling Chen said, "Are you telling me this in hopes that I'll take action against Yingtai Group? As far as I know, you have recently been hunted by Yingtai Group's mercenaries everywhere. If you weren't unable to survive abroad, you wouldn't have asked me to help you drop charges."

"Think whatever you like, anyway, I've given you the intel, and what you do with it is your business." With that, Zhu Hong said no more and directly hung up.

Putting away his phone, Ling Chen walked up to the large wooden box, removed the side panel, and inside was a petri dish filled with liquid, in which a severed limb was submerged.

Finally got it! Ling Chen exhaled; he didn't know how much effort he had expended for this limb, and now he finally had it.

Reattaching the panel, Ling Chen called a few people to move the large wooden box to the car and took it straight to the Guo Family's laboratory. By the time Ling Chen arrived, Ling Gengqiu was also there.

"Kid, where's the stuff?" In the lab, Ling Gengqiu impatiently asked.

Ling Chen pointed to the busy researchers, "They're examining the limb, after all, Zhu Hong has handled this thing. Who knows if he did any experiments on it? It's going to be attached to you, so naturally, we have to be careful."

The two sat in the lab's lounge, patiently waiting. It wasn't until evening that the examination results finally came out.

"Mr. Ling, here's the report." A researcher handed a document to Ling Chen.

Ling Chen skimmed it, his expression changing, and said in a deep voice, "That limb contains a deadly poison?"

"Yes." The researcher nodded, "We thoroughly examined it and found a special component, Arrow Frog toxin, in the limb. The Arrow Frog is the most poisonous frog in the world; its toxin can easily kill an adult. I don't know what method was used, but the toxin from the Arrow Frog was somehow fused with the limb's blood, forming a unique existence."

Ling Chen frowned slightly and asked, "Are you saying there's no way to remove the Arrow Frog toxin?"

"The blood in the limb naturally carries antibodies that should eliminate harmful substances. However, it's unclear why the Arrow Frog toxin coexists with the limb's blood, with each ten milliliters of blood containing one milliliter of Arrow Frog toxin."

As expected!

"That bastard Zhu Hong clearly has bad intentions, wanting to harm us this way."

"I don't think that's important." Ling Gengqiu interjected, "Didn't you just say that the Arrow Frog toxin coexists with the blood, meaning the toxin doesn't cause harm, right?"

"Yes."

"Then that's it; as long as there's no danger, there's no need to worry about other things." Saying this, Ling Gengqiu stood up and walked straight out of the lounge.

"Brother, where are you going?"

"I'm going to get that limb attached."

Hearing this, Ling Chen wanted to say something, but Ling Gengqiu gestured him to stop, "Don't worry, I know what I'm doing. I won't do anything dangerous."

Watching Ling Gengqiu's back as he and the researcher disappeared through the lab door, Ling Chen shook his head helplessly and quickly followed.

After more than half an hour, Ling Chen paced back and forth outside the sterile room, waiting for results. Another ten minutes passed before the sterile room's door finally opened from inside, and a researcher emerged.

"How did it go?" Ling Chen asked urgently.

The researcher smiled and nodded, "Rest assured, Mr. Ling, everything went smoothly."