

The Beauty 1581

Chapter 1581 United in Resolve (1)

"What do you all think?" Tong Zhentian looked at everyone present and said, "If we don't find a way to change this, this Martial Arts Tournament will become a joke in the Martial Arts World. What martial arts association, what reform, no one will take us seriously in the future."

"I do have an idea." At this moment, Ling Chen, who had been silent, spoke up. Seeing the confident look on Ling Chen's face, Tong Zhentian's eyes couldn't help but brighten. He knew Ling Chen well; this guy always came up with brilliant ideas that worked.

"Let's hear it, so everyone can give you some input."

Ling Chen smiled mysteriously and said, "There's no need for input. I'll settle it as soon as possible." With that, Ling Chen turned and walked out.

Once outside, Ling Chen took out his phone, made a few calls, and finalized everything. Afterwards, Ling Chen pondered for a bit and then dialed the number of the old General.

"Hello! You brat, aren't you hosting the Martial Arts Tournament? How do you have time to call me today?" Hearing Qiao Zhen's voice on the other end, Ling Chen chuckled bitterly and said, "Old General, you know what happened yesterday."

"Oh? Is it a big deal?"

"More than big! The whole venue is almost empty. It's our fault for not protecting everyone's safety, a gross negligence on our part. Luckily, there weren't too many casualties. Otherwise, we wouldn't know how to handle it."

"I've already received orders from above. They want me to investigate this secretly since it's no small matter. However, because this happened at the Martial Arts Tournament, I don't think it's a simple terror attack; it could very well be an internal conflict within your Martial Arts World, so we've been holding off a bit, planning to ask you more about it after the tournament."

"Old General, the attackers were a secret faction within the Martial Arts World. We only know they call themselves the Dark Pavilion, and nothing more. Matters of the Martial Arts World are settled internally. Old General, I know about national laws, but some issues we need to solve ourselves. Right now, the police and military are gearing up to start an investigation. Could you help by keeping the government from getting involved?"

Qiao Zhen thought for a while and said, "I can help you with that, but there's one condition."

"Whatever you say, as long as I can do it, I won't refuse."

"Within Huaxia, the law applies to everyone. However, considering your unusual situation, we can give you some special treatment. Although we can't manage disputes in the Martial Arts World, we must ensure civilian safety. If another incident like yesterday's happens, causing innocent civilians to get injured, we will have no choice but to unleash the full force of the nation's iron discipline against any group responsible. Do you understand what I mean?"

"Old General, rest assured, I will make sure it won't happen again."

"Alright, that's that. I have some matters to attend to, so I'll end the call here." With that, Qiao Zhen hung up.

Putting away his phone, Ling Chen sat alone on the railing of the venue, watching the sparse crowd, shaking his head in dismay. Who would've thought such a well-prepared Martial Arts Tournament would end up like this?

After sitting for a while, the audience began gradually leaving, and in no time, the thousands of spectators dwindled to a few hundred. Even some martial artists started leaving. Seeing this, Ling Chen frowned slightly. He understood why regular spectators would leave, but why were even martial artists leaving? Without them, how could the Martial Arts Tournament continue?

As he was pondering, he saw Jiang Yunkai running over quickly from a distance.

"Chen!"

"Kai, what's up?"

Jiang Yunkai said nothing and directly pulled out his phone, opened a live-streaming app, and handed it to Ling Chen.

At that moment, the live stream showed a reporter and a cameraman entering a helicopter. As the helicopter ascended, Ling Chen saw a shocking scene. The whole camera view showed a sea of fire, where a massive factory was engulfed in flames, with thick smoke billowing and the fire raging skyward.

"Kai, where is this?" Ling Chen asked curiously.

"Just on the outskirts of Beijing, look over there." Jiang Yunkai pointed south of the venue. Ling Chen looked and saw smoke rising in the distance. Though it was far, Ling Chen could see it clearly.

"When did this happen?"

"An hour ago. I heard there were hundreds of employees trapped inside the factory, none of them escaped." Jiang Yunkai sighed and said, "It's really tragic. I doubt many will survive."

So it turned out something so big happened, no wonder all those spectators left the venue. Ling Chen watched the live stream, seeing many fire trucks surrounding the factory, actively engaged in putting out the fire. But given the fire's magnitude and the factory's size, the fire trucks couldn't effectively put it out. With the fire uncontrolled, rescuing people seemed impossible.

Through the helicopter's camera, many people were trapped inside the central building of the factory, waving their hands in the windows and shouting to the helicopter for rescue. Unfortunately, the building was already surrounded by flames, and the rescue teams and helicopter couldn't reach it; the chance of survival for those people was very slim.

"Chen." Jiang Yunkai seemed to receive some information through his earpiece and said, "The fire brigade stationed here just received orders to head to the site immediately to assist with the rescue."

Upon hearing this, Ling Chen's eyes shifted, and he quickly had an idea. He tossed his phone to Jiang Yunkai and said, "Go notify Elder Tong and the others to gather outside the venue, and prepare a few buses."

Jiang Yunkai asked in confusion, "Chen, what are you planning to do?"

"Rescue people!"

In no time, everyone who received the notification gathered by the buses. Meanwhile, Ling Chen arrived with people. Once they were all together, Tong Zhentian asked, "Ling Chen, why did you call us all here?"

Ling Chen surveyed everyone present and said, "Everyone, I'm sure you've heard about the fire. The factory isn't far from the venue, just over ten kilometers away. From what I know, there are hundreds of workers trapped inside, unable to be rescued. As martial artists, it is our duty to uphold justice and help those in need. Hundreds of lives are at stake now; shouldn't we lend a hand?"

As soon as he said this, everyone was momentarily stunned, not expecting Ling Chen to make such a request.

"Ling Chen, you want us to go to the fire and rescue people?" Su Mei from the crowd asked.

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"Indeed!" Ling Chen nodded and said, "I know it's asking a lot, and I understand the risks everyone might bear. But don't you think this is a perfect opportunity? The fire scene is dangerous, I know that in my heart, but I believe our abilities can handle this. Taking advantage of this opportunity, we can show everyone that martial artists are not just about fighting and seeking fame. When needed, we will stand up without hesitation. Ladies and gentlemen, every second we delay here could mean one less life saved. For those trapped in the fire, time equals life. I hope everyone can unite and help them get through this disaster."

As Ling Chen's words fell, Tong Zhentian nodded and said, "Well said, I agree with Ling Chen's proposal. Master Su, what about your Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion?"

Su Mei smiled lightly and said, "Our Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion will certainly give it our all."

"Good, time is tight, everyone don't delay, quickly get on the bus."

Soon, hundreds of martial artists in the venue all got on the bus, heading straight for the fire scene. Ten minutes later, the factory surrounded by flames finally appeared in everyone's view. At this moment, thousands of spectators had gathered outside the factory, and news media from various platforms were vying to report on the fire situation at the factory.

The arrival of several buses immediately drew the attention of the onlookers. As the bus stopped, Ling Chen jumped off right away. Though not close to the fire scene yet, the surrounding temperature was noticeably higher.

"Look, the rescue team is out again."

"Sigh! This is the third time; it seems those people inside have no hope." The spectators around discussed.

Ling Chen raised his eyes and saw a rescue team of more than ten firefighters retreating from the fire scene in a sorry state, seeming to have failed even before entering deep into the fire.

At this time, the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, Dragon Tiger Hall, and other martial artists all alighted from the buses one after another. Seeing Master Hui Yun dressed in kasaya, Dan Xuzi in a Taoist robe, and some martial artists in strange costumes, the onlookers instantly became lively.

"Who are these people? Are they here to perform?"

"Who knows, maybe it's some drama group coming to see the spectacle."

"No, don't you think those people look familiar? I seem to have seen them at the Martial Arts Tournament. That's right! They should be from the Martial Arts Association. The old man who gave the opening speech is also there."

"What is the Martial Arts Association doing here?"

"What's strange about it? The Martial Arts Tournament couldn't be held, no one is interested in joining them, so they had to come here for excitement. Hmph! What martial arts masters, all a bunch of frauds."

Facing the surrounding clamor, Ling Chen pretended not to hear and went straight to the fire command center outside the fire scene.

"Who are you looking for?" A firefighter looked at Ling Chen and asked.

"I'm from the military; they've asked me to come and understand the situation and assist you in rescuing people. You should have received the call earlier." Ling Chen said. On the way here, he had already called the old General. Qiao Zhen was well aware of the capabilities of these martial artists, so when Ling Chen offered to help, he gladly agreed.

"Are you Mr. Ling?" A middle-aged man in a firefighter's uniform came over, extended his hand, and said, "I'm Zhou Guosen, the onsite chief commander. We've been informed from above, thank you for coming."

"It's our duty." After a few polite words, Ling Chen pointed to the factory surrounded by raging flames and asked, "How is the situation now?"

"Not very optimistic." Zhou Guosen frowned and said, "This is a chemical factory where many chemicals and alcohol are stored. It's difficult to extinguish the fire with water. I've applied to use helicopters to carry dry powder for aerial drops. However, judging from the onsite conditions, I'm afraid the effect won't be great because the fire area is too large. Putting out the fire via helicopter would take too long, and I worry the workers inside can't hold out that long."

"Commander, the rescue team is ready. Should we push forward again?" A firefighter came to report.

"No need." Zhou Guosen waved his hand and said, "The fire is too big; we can't get in. It's not worth the waste of time. Let's wait for the helicopter instead."

Taking advantage of their conversation, Ling Chen focused on the blueprints on the table. The factory consists of three large warehouses, two large workshops, and two office buildings. From Zhou Guosen's words, he learned that the workers are currently concentrated in two large workshops and office buildings. Because the interior of the large workshops is spacious, the fire won't spread too fast. However, the fire will consume the air, and if rescue isn't carried out in time, once the air is exhausted, even if they aren't burned to death, they will suffocate.

After looking at the blueprints for a few moments, Ling Chen returned to the group alone and explained the situation.

"Passing through the fire scene directly is impossible; that would be too risky. I just took a look. The best course is going in from above."

"Above?" He Ziyun asked in confusion, "How can we get in from above?"

Ling Chen smiled and pointed at Zhang Zhongfeng, saying, "Zhang Zhongfeng can help us solve this problem. There's a six-story office building at the very center of the factory. As long as we pull an iron chain over, we can enter the factory and rescue people."

"Amitabha Buddha, Mr. Ling's suggestion is good, I think we can give it a try." Master Hui Yun said on the side.

Having spoken, Master Hui Yun had no opposition from the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. At this point, Zhang Zhongfeng took out his bow and arrow and tied a rope to the arrow tail. Everything ready, Zhang Zhongfeng climbed to the top of a car, pulled the bow, and aimed at the office building in the fire center.

"Look, what's that guy doing?" Noticing Zhang Zhongfeng's movements, the surrounding onlookers immediately focused their gaze.

"Shooting arrows? Damn! What are they up to? Still in the mood to play at such a time."

Whoosh!

Standing atop the car, Zhang Zhongfeng released his fingers, and the arrow quickly shot out, disappearing into the raging flames. After flying for a few seconds, the rope on the ground suddenly became stationary. Seeing this, Ling Chen took up the rope and pulled hard; the soft rope quickly became taut.

Done... Ling Chen secretly let out a breath. The arrow had successfully anchored to the office building. Once the first step was completed, the subsequent tasks became much easier.

"It's my turn." At this moment, Tong Zhentian dragged a chain over quickly. Given the raging flames below, the rope wouldn't last long before being burnt through. The rope needed to be replaced with a chain to construct a temporary aerial passage.

Chapter 1583 - 1888: United as One (Part 3)

"Elder Tong, be careful and stay safe," Ling Chen advised.

"Don't worry, such a small matter won't trouble me." With that, Tong Zhentian grabbed the chain, lightly touched down with his toes, and jumped directly onto the rope. Then, he swiftly moved forward along the rope, his body agile like a leopard. In the blink of an eye, his figure disappeared into the raging flames.

Seeing this, everyone was taken aback, both surprised by Ling Chen and his team's actions and amazed by their skills. They've seen tightrope performances before, but using such a thin rope, holding a chain, and being totally unaffected, like walking on solid ground, is certainly not something everyone can achieve. Moreover, how could someone rush into a fire scene alone without fear of being burned?

After a while, the rope in Ling Chen's hand suddenly slackened and broke in the middle. Presumably unable to withstand the scorching fire, the entire rope had severed. However, Tong Zhentian had already safely reached the office building and set up the chain.

After securing the other end of the chain, a makeshift and special bridge was successfully built. At this time, the martial arts experts had already prepared well. Seeing the fixed chain, Chen Junfeng and the eight eccentrics immediately jumped on it, each holding a chain. With such a crowd, one chain would certainly be insufficient and inconvenient for passage; hence, setting up more chains could save more people efficiently.

Soon, ten chains were fully set up, suspended more than ten meters in the air.

"Mr. Ling, what are you doing?" At this moment, Zhou Guosen receiving the news hurriedly came over, his face full of confusion upon seeing the chains suspended in mid-air.

"Captain Zhou, there's no time to explain much, please prepare some fireproof cloth, we'll need it shortly." As soon as the words fell, Tong Zhentian quickly ran back from the other end of the chains, carrying a person in his arms.

Seeing Tong Zhentian land, Ling Chen and Zhou Guosen rushed over.

"This person is in critical condition; they need immediate rescue," Tong Zhentian said urgently as he set the survivor down.

"Leave it to us." Zhou Guosen picked up the walkie-talkie and urged medical personnel to quickly arrive on the scene. "Elder Tong, how is the situation inside?"

"Over three hundred people are trapped in two large workshops, and the situation isn't optimistic. The workshop roofs are about to collapse due to the fire. The others are in two office buildings; they are slightly better off but won't hold out for long."

Ling Chen nodded, "Looks like we need to speed up." Pausing for a moment, Ling Chen turned to Zhou Guosen, "Quickly prepare the fireproof cloth, the rescue work outside is handed over to you." With that, Ling Chen hesitated no more and swiftly headed into the fire scene along the chains.

Watching numerous martial artists swiftly dash along the chains, bringing trapped individuals out of the fire, Zhou Guosen was momentarily stunned. Where did all these people come from, and how could each one of them be so formidable?

Entering the fire scene, Ling Chen followed the chains directly to the central office building of the factory. At this moment, He Ziyun was at the top floor of the office building, orderly arranging the evacuations of those trapped. With so many martial artists involved in the rescue, having someone to handle the unified scheduling to prevent chaos could save quite some time.

Ling Chen stood at the top and surveyed the surroundings, nodding to himself. No wonder he was the founder of the Phantom, He Ziyun's leadership ability was outstanding. Ten chains, five for entry, five for exit, preventing congestion. Additionally, He Ziyun dispatched most martial artists to the workshops to rescue the trapped workers. As long as those workers were brought to the office building, He Ziyun would immediately arrange their evacuation. At such times, the difference among experts becomes apparent.

Ordinary martial artists could only take one person out each time, but experts like Chen Junfeng and Master Hui Yun could carry one on each shoulder and grab two more, evacuating four people at once, highly efficient.

More than ten minutes had passed, and half of the trapped workers had been rescued.

Watching the survivors being continuously rescued, the surrounding onlookers couldn't help but applaud. They had seen various rescue operations but had never witnessed such a unique rescue method.

"Experts! These are true experts!" someone in the crowd exclaimed.

If it weren't for these martial artists stepping forward, no one else could rescue people using this method.

However, at this moment, a series of 'boom boom' explosion sounds suddenly emanated from the factory's interior, strong blasts that even the outside onlookers could feel.

"Not good!" Hearing the commotion from inside the factory, Ling Chen's face changed slightly after having rescued one person. As Zhou Guosen had mentioned to him earlier, this was a chemical factory storing many chemicals and alcohol. Should a chain explosion occur, not only would rescue operations become more difficult, it would also endanger the safety of the rescue personnel.

"We must speed up." Ling Chen thought for a moment, quickly moved next to Su Mei, and instructed her a few things.

"Alright, I understand, take care of yourself," she replied.

Ling Chen acknowledged and, without a second thought, stepped on the chains again and dashed toward the fire. Before long, most martial artists rescuing people from the fire were held back by Su Mei from re-entering the fire. With the interior of the factory too dangerous now and explosions likely at any moment, if too many martial artists suffered casualties due to this, it wouldn't be worth it. Therefore, from now on, those ranked below the Earthly List are restricted from entering the fire.

Those ranked on the Earthly List and Heavenly List boast formidable strength, able to protect themselves even amidst danger.

Another few minutes passed, the workers remaining inside the factory totaled over thirty, all gathered in the office building. Each Heavenly List expert rescued four survivors, and each Earthly List expert rescued two, and soon all of the dozens of workers in the office building were escorted out of the fire.

"Mr. He, you go first, I'll bring up the rear."

"Alright." He Ziyun nodded slightly and dashed onto the chain with a worker. Watching He Ziyun leave, Ling Chen glanced around, noticing the two large workshops collapsing in the fire with a loud 'boom', sending sparks flying.

Fortunately, they managed to get everyone out of the workshops in time; otherwise, the casualties would have been significant.

"Are you two ready?" Ling Chen asked the two exhausted workers beside him.

The two nodded hastily, the surrounding heat waves becoming unbearable, making them reluctant to stay even a moment longer.

"Then let's go." Ling Chen wrapped his arms around the waists of the two workers and gently tapped his toes, jumping onto the chain and swiftly rushing toward the fire's edge.

Chapter 1584 - 1889: National Idol (1)

However, just as Ling Chen was leading the two people to the middle of the chain, a sudden change occurred. A loud bang erupted from the office building behind them, and Ling Chen instantly felt the ground vanish from beneath his feet as the whole chain quickly fell downward.

Not good! Witnessing this situation, Ling Chen inwardly thought something was amiss. Without even needing to glance, he knew that the office building anchoring the chain had surely collapsed due to the explosion. As his body lost control, Ling Chen and the other two plummeted towards the inferno below.

Seeing this scene, everyone was shocked, staring dumbfounded at the falling trio, helpless. Even with so many experts on site, no one could reach the fire in an instant to save Ling Chen and the others.

It's over!

This was almost everyone's thought.

Whizz! Whizz! Whizz!

At this critical moment, a series of sharp sounds suddenly pierced through the air. When the crowd turned their heads, they saw Zhang Zhongfeng holding a bow, firing a barrage of arrows.

Seeing the approaching arrows, Ling Chen, who had been somewhat frightened, suddenly brightened up. He tapped lightly on the arrows with his toes, and his plummeting body soared upwards. Over a dozen arrows had been shot, forming an invisible bridge right before Ling Chen.

Utilizing the arrows beneath his feet, Ling Chen continuously propelled himself, like a dragonfly skimming water, swiftly landing outside the factory.

Whew! Safely out of the crisis, Ling Chen couldn't help but breathe a sigh of relief. Honestly, that moment had genuinely scared him. If he had fallen into the raging fire, even nine lives would not have been enough. As for the two workers, they were already stunned with fear, their faces extremely pale. It wasn't until the surrounding cheers erupted that they came back to their senses, realizing they were still alive.

"Sixth Brother, how are you, are you alright?" Qiu Yong and others hurriedly ran over, looking at Ling Chen with concern, fearing for his well-being.

Feeling everyone's concern, Ling Chen grinned and said, "Big Brother, don't worry, I'm fine." With that, Ling Chen turned his gaze to Zhang Zhongfeng, who was walking over from the side, and thanked him, "Fourth Brother, thank you for saving my life."

"No need for such polite words among family."

After resting for a while, Ling Chen went alone to find Zhou Guosen to inquire about the condition of the workers.

"Mr. Ling, we truly owe you a great deal. All 342 individuals trapped have been rescued, without a single casualty," Zhou Guosen said with some excitement, "This is truly a miracle."

"As long as everyone is safely out, then our efforts were worthwhile. Well, I won't disturb you further, goodbye!"

However, when everyone was preparing to take the bus back to the Martial Arts Tournament venue, they encountered a small trouble: the news reporters swarmed them, surrounding everyone, eager to conduct interviews.

"Ling Chen, what should we do now?" Tong Zhentian asked.

"Isn't it simple? If they want interviews, let them come to the Martial Arts Tournament."

Upon hearing this, the news reporters wasted no time, immediately driving towards the Martial Arts Tournament venue. By the time Ling Chen and the others returned to the venue, nearly a hundred journalists were already waiting there.

"Elder Tong, as the president of the Martial Arts Association, I'll have to trouble you with these matters," Ling Chen said with a smile and then sneaked away with the others from the other side.

After lunch, Jiang Yunkai ran excitedly from outside the command center and shouted loudly, "Chen, our Martial Arts Association is famous now! Did you see the report? Everyone is praising us, especially you."

Your performance of stepping on arrows to soar through the air was both handsome and cool, and countless beauties are infatuated with you."

Ling Chen smiled faintly and said, "Alright, keep your voice down, unless you want everyone to know. I've seen the news reports, and they met my expectations."

"Expectations?" Jiang Yunkai asked, puzzled, "Chen, what do you mean?"

"We needed a chance to showcase our capabilities to the public and promote the spirit of martial arts. We've achieved both objectives today. Just wait and see; the Martial Arts Tournament is about to get lively."

As Ling Chen anticipated, with the vigorous promotion from the news media, the reputation of the Martial Arts Association was thoroughly established. Moreover, people's perceptions of the Martial Arts Association had changed. By two in the afternoon, a large crowd of spectators once again gathered at the Martial Arts Tournament venue, and the atmosphere became lively once more.

At the same time, Tang Shiyun promised through television media to sing at the Martial Arts Tournament venue, adding fuel to the fire. In just a few hours, tens of thousands of spectators flooded into the Martial Arts Tournament venue, surpassing the popularity of the previous two days.

At the command center, Tong Zhentian watched through the monitors as more and more spectators entered the venue, his face full of joy.

"Ling Chen, was Miss Tang arranged by you?"

Ling Chen nodded. Seeing the venue's desolate appearance today gave him the idea. Tang Shiyun is very well-known domestically, famous with both the old and young alike. Her attendance to sing a couple of songs would surely boost the tournament's popularity. However, after the factory fire incident, even without Tang Shiyun's help, the popularity wouldn't be too low.

Since everything was already arranged, it wouldn't do to cancel Tang Shiyun's appearance last minute.

As the two chatted, He Ziyun walked in from outside, smiling.

"Mr. He, what brings you so much joy?"

He Ziyun laughed heartily, "You won't believe it—I just checked the registration at the Dragon Tiger Hall. Do you know how many people registered?"

"Seeing how happy you are, the number mustn't be small."

"Three thousand people."

"Three... three thousand?" Ling Chen was startled and said in amazement, "That many?" He expected only a few hundred people, never imagining such a large turnout.

"It's not just us; even the Heavenly Mechanism Arts Hall broke the thousand mark. Other martial arts academies and sects also had great success, each with hundreds of registrations. Still, none as many as our Dragon Tiger Hall. Ling Chen, we owe much to you for this."

"Me? Mr. He, what does this have to do with me?"

"That scene of you gliding on arrows shocked many, making people realize the power of martial arts. Of course, it mainly comes down to your youthfulness, which gives them the illusion that with ten or twenty years of hard training, they could become as skilled as you."

Hearing this, Ling Chen expressed a mix of amusement and helplessness, "Mr. He, does that mean I'm engaging in false advertising?"

"How is it false?" Tong Zhentian interjected, "Martial arts depend on aptitude, diligence, and opportunity. With these three, reaching the Heavenly List in your twenties isn't impossible. You're living proof."

He Ziyun echoed with a laugh, "Exactly, you're now a public idol, so you must be mindful of your image in the future."

Chapter 1585 - 1890: National Idol (2)

As night fell, the lively venue of the Martial Arts Tournament gradually became quieter. Tomorrow would be the last day of the Martial Arts Tournament, and also the day Tang Shiyun would make an appearance to sing. Although today's programs had ended, many young people still chose to stay overnight at the venue. They wanted to secure the best spot to enjoy Tang Shiyun's performance up close tomorrow. There's no denying it; Tang Shiyun's charm is that immense.

Returning to the Dragon Tiger Hall branch, Ling Chen intended to go back to his room to rest. As soon as he got out of the car, he was blocked by reporters from all directions. Today at the venue, only Tong Zhentian, on behalf of the Martial Arts Association, gave an interview. But everyone was more interested in Ling Chen. Young, handsome, and skilled in martial arts — who wouldn't like such a person? There were even talent scouts in the crowd throwing business cards at Ling Chen.

After finally shaking off the journalists' harassment, Ling Chen plopped down in a chair, gulping water with a tired look on his face.

"What, not used to being treated like a public figure?" Tong Zhentian asked with a smile.

Ling Chen shrugged helplessly and said, "I have no interest in the title of 'national idol' at all. Besides, who likes having a bunch of people following behind them? I can't wait for the Martial Arts Tournament to be over so I can return to East Sea City. I can't stay in Beijing any longer."

At this point, Ling Chen changed the subject and asked, "By the way! Elder Tong, are there any updates on Su Cheng'en?" That day, Hu Fei forwarded a message saying that after Su Cheng'en and Su He arrived in Beijing, there had been no trace of them. It's unknown whether they are still in Beijing.

"Not at the moment. I've arranged for people to closely monitor their movements, but these days, they don't seem to have appeared at the Martial Arts Tournament venue. Perhaps their purpose for coming to Beijing wasn't for the Martial Arts Tournament," said Tong Zhentian. "Think about it, although this Martial Arts Tournament is held under the name of the Martial Arts Association, the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion is also involved. Su Cheng'en and Su He are the old Pavilion Masters of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion; they probably wouldn't trouble their own people."

"That makes sense." Ling Chen nodded and said, "And what about Zhu Hong and Chen Quan? They appeared at the venue a couple of days ago but have since disappeared. Nobody knows where they've run off to. Honestly, I'm not at ease with these people wandering around outside."

"There's no need to worry too much. We're in the spotlight now; all eyes are on us. No matter how bold they are, they wouldn't dare cause trouble at this moment unless they want to become public enemies. Anyway, there's only the last day left tomorrow. After it's over, everyone can take a break and relax for a while."

"Alright." Ling Chen got up from his seat and said, "Elder Tong, if there's nothing else, I'll head to my room to rest first."

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Late at night.

The streets of Beijing were deserted, with only an occasional taxi speeding past. At this moment, a figure suddenly emerged from a quiet alley. Under the dim streetlight, the person's features were unclear; but from his swaying movement, he seemed drunk, staggering out of the alley.

Just then, a taxi drove by the road. However, the person seemed not to notice the taxi, rushing directly onto the street. Suddenly, there was a 'bang' sound. The taxi driver didn't react in time, and the car's front collided heavily with the person, sending him flying.

Seated in the driver's seat, the driver seemed scared stiff, staring blankly at the man lying several meters away. After a long while, the driver finally regained his senses, hurriedly poked his head out of the car window. After checking the surroundings and seeing no surveillance equipment around, the driver immediately stepped on the gas pedal and drove the taxi away, leaving the man lying on the cold ground.

About ten minutes later, the man's limbs suddenly twitched. Then, he slowly got up from the ground. Even though he was hit by the car, the man seemed uninjured, with not a trace of blood on him.

After standing still for a while, the man looked around in confusion, then started walking along the road. Shortly after the man's departure, two middle-aged men quickly chased after him from the previous quiet alley.

"Where is he? Damn it, where the hell did that bastard run off to."

"Don't worry, he couldn't have gone far in that state; he should be around here. Let's split up and search."

"Why am I so unlucky to encounter something like this."

"Who told you to love drinking so much? Drinking leads to trouble; don't you understand such a simple fact? Alright, stop complaining, I haven't even started complaining yet. I left for such a short time, and you couldn't even keep an eye on one person. If the higher-ups call us out on this, neither of us can escape responsibility."

"Alright, alright, let's not point fingers at each other, let's go find him. If we lose him, neither of us will live."

Immediately, the two middle-aged men ran in opposite directions along the road.

The next day.

As soon as Ling Chen arrived at the Martial Arts Tournament venue, he saw a sea of people everywhere, bustling with activity. Wow! It's not even eight o'clock, and so many people have already arrived. There's no denying, Tang Shiyun's allure is enormous.

Ling Chen made himself a cup of coffee in the command center and went over to the surveillance area to observe the situation outside.

"Chen!"

Hearing Jiang Yunkai's voice from behind, Ling Chen turned around to see that, besides Jiang Yunkai, Jiang Hao, Nanrong Hao, and Zhao Zhengxiong were also present.

"Hey! Why's everyone here?" Ling Chen said with a smile, inviting everyone to sit down.

Jiang Hao chuckled and said, "We're here to support Miss Tang's performance, of course."

"Haha! Women are always the most captivating thing for men," Zhao Zhengxiong joked.

"Haozi, where's your sister? Didn't she come with you?"

"She's here, she's chatting with some friends and saving a spot for us," Nanrong Hao said, giving a thumbs-up and grinning, "Chen, I saw yesterday's news. You're amazing. When will you teach me some of your skills?"

"You?" Ling Chen shook his head and said, "Forget it. I'm not trying to discourage you, but you'll probably never learn in your lifetime. Hey! On a serious note, all of you big shots have come to Beijing; nobody is left in East Sea City. Won't there be any issues after so many days?"

"Chen, you can set your mind at ease. Everyone knows East Sea City is our territory. Unless someone is suicidal, nobody dares to cause trouble on our turf. Besides, Mr. Hu is in East Sea City. With his help, nothing can go wrong."

After hearing Jiang Hao's words, Ling Chen nodded and said, "That's for the best. It saves me from worrying about you guys."

At this moment, a familiar voice suddenly came from the door: "So you're all here. I'm exhausted."

Chapter 1586 - 1891: The Arrival of the Fatty

A voice came, and everyone turned to look. They saw Hu Fei with his round belly, carrying a big bag as he walked in from outside. Ling Chen was slightly startled, he had just said that Hu Fei was in East Sea City, helping to oversee things, but now, even he had come to Beijing.

"Fatty, aren't you in East Sea City? How did you end up here?"

Hu Fei said unhappily, "You guys can come to Beijing for a vacation, but I can't? I was almost bored to death alone at the base, so I came out to relax. Hey! I heard there's Miss Tang's performance later, is it true?"

Ling Chen said with a helpless smile, "You, didn't even give a heads-up before coming. When did you get here?"

"Just arrived, Ling Chen, I took the flight around four and I'm exhausted."

"Hu, here, have some water first." Jiang Hao handed a cup of tea to Hu Fei.

"Alright, since you're here, relax with everyone for a few days; you've been working hard lately." As Ling Chen finished speaking, a staff member came over and said, "Mr. Ling, Miss Tang has arrived and is preparing backstage. She can start at any time."

"I got it."

"Brother Chen, since Miss Tang is here, we'll head out first."

Watching Jiang Hao and the others rush towards the venue, Ling Chen smiled helplessly. They were all people who cared more about romance than friends. Ling Chen withdrew his gaze and suddenly noticed Hu Fei still sitting nearby, not planning to move.

"Hey! Fatty, aren't you going with them?"

"I..." Hu Fei opened his mouth as if wanting to say something. Just then, a burst of lively music came from outside, "Forget it, let's not talk about it now. You focus on your work." With that, Hu Fei caught up with Jiang Hao and the others, leaving the command center.

Watching Hu Fei's departing figure, Ling Chen touched his nose; this guy seemed troubled by something. It seemed he didn't come to Beijing without reason.

After pondering for a while, Ling Chen put aside his concerns and focused on venue safety. Due to Tang Shiyun's live performance, the audience size had hit a new record, exceeding the venue's maximum capacity. From the surveillance feed, it was people everywhere inside and out. Originally, there was an invitation match scheduled for today, but considering Tang Shiyun's performance, worried about overshadowing it, they had to postpone the match until after her show.

As a special guest, Tang Shiyun's appearance immediately excited the crowd, with cheers and whistles filling the venue.

Ling Chen sat in the command center, crossing his legs, sipping coffee, enjoying Tang Shiyun's sweet voice. According to the plan, Tang Shiyun was supposed to sing three songs, but due to the audience's enthusiasm, she had to sing two additional songs before leaving the stage amid thunderous applause.

No choice, if Tang Shiyun continued to perform, the Martial Arts Tournament might have been unnecessary. With her departure, the audience's attention was again drawn to the ring. To keep the excitement, the invitation match started immediately after Tang Shiyun's show. First up were two guests of honor in their sixties, each with unique skills, making for an engaging performance.

The focus of the invitation match was on performance, not actual combat, so for true experts like Ling Chen, it wasn't particularly interesting—it was mainly for audience entertainment. According to the Martial Arts Tournament arrangement, the invitation had five matches, running until three in the afternoon, followed by Tong Zhentian's closing ceremony.

Checking the time, Ling Chen put down his coffee and stood up, saying, "I'll head out. Call me if anything comes up."

Leaving the command center, Ling Chen went straight to the backstage area. As soon as he entered, he heard several familiar voices chatting and laughing.

"Ling!" Seeing Ling Chen enter, Tang Shiyun's face lit up with joy, as if preparing to rush over. However, after a few steps, she seemed to realize something, sheepishly stopping to say, "Thank you, Wanqing, for coming to see me."

"Of course." Nanrong Wanqing smiled lightly and held Tang Shiyun's hand, saying, "Being able to listen to your live performance makes this trip to Beijing worthwhile."

"Wanqing, why didn't your dear brother come along?"

"They all wanted to come, but this is the backstage, so it's inconvenient for several men. I told them to wait outside."

Hearing this, Ling Chen touched his nose, saying, "Should I also head out then?"

"No need," Tang Shiyun hurriedly said. "Ling is not an outsider."

Ling Chen chuckled, patting Tang Shiyun's head, saying, "You've really worked hard today; I know your body hasn't fully recovered, yet you had to go through this exertion."

Tang Shiyun laughed cheekily, "No worries, it's just a few songs, I'm not that fragile. Besides, I'm happy to help Ling."

"How about we all have a meal together?" Nanrong Wanqing suggested, "It's been a while since everyone got together."

Hearing this, Ling Chen gave Nanrong Wanqing an apologetic look and said, "I'm afraid I can't join. Before the Martial Arts Tournament concludes, I need to stay here to ensure the venue's safety. How about tomorrow? The tournament ends today, I should have time tomorrow. How does that sound to everyone?"

"I don't mind; I have some company matters to handle, and I'll probably be heading back to East Sea City next week."

Tang Shiyun, looking a bit disappointed, said, "The company only gave me two days off, and I must return tomorrow, so it seems we'll have to gather another time."

Ling Chen smiled slightly, "No problem, once we're all in East Sea City, we'll have plenty of chances. Wanqing, why don't you first take the girl out to have some fun; Haozi and the others are around, you guys can enjoy together."

"Alright."

Meeting Ling Chen's gaze, Tang Shiyun opened her mouth, seemingly wanting to say something. But after hesitating for a moment, she chose to stay silent. If possible, she'd rather stay at the venue, by Ling Chen's side, even if Ling Chen didn't have time for her. Just being able to watch him from afar would satisfy her. However, considering Nanrong Wanqing was around, there were things hard to say aloud, so she refrained.

As Nanrong Wanqing and the group drove away, Ling Chen turned to Hu Fei and asked curiously, "I must say, Fatty, you're acting strange today; are you troubled by something?"

Hu Fei laughed, "What's strange about me?"

"Not strange? This isn't like you at all. Normally, you wouldn't need me to say anything; you'd be tagging right along with them. Hey! We're all brothers, just say what's on your mind. Don't keep it bottled up; I'll help with anything I can."

"Actually, I..." Hu Fei began but stopped when Jiang Yunkai approached from a distance, shouting, "Brother Chen, Elder Tong and the others are asking for you."

Chapter 1587 - 1892: Internal Strife and External Threats

"Understood, I'll be right there." After speaking, Ling Chen patted Hu Fei on the shoulder and said, "Let's discuss anything in the evening; let me finish the Martial Arts Tournament matters first."

Upon reaching the lounge, Ling Chen pushed the door open to find everyone present. Tong Zhentian and Su Mei were sitting side by side, whispering to each other about something unknown.

"Elder Tong, Master Su, were you looking for me?"

Su Mei nodded and said, "Ling Chen, there's something we want to discuss with you."

"What is it?"

"This Martial Arts Tournament concluded satisfactorily. Despite not being highly successful, it achieved our expected goals. Moreover, the most crucial point is finding out about the existence of the Dark Pavilion. You've seen the prowess of Li Haibin and his men; they're formidable. So many powerful individuals gathered together, which shows the terror of the Dark Pavilion. Just now, I was chatting with Elder Tong. After this tournament, dealing with the Dark Pavilion will be our significant objective moving forward."

"You aim to confront the Dark Pavilion?" Ling Chen glanced at Tong Zhentian and Su Mei, a thought suddenly sparked in his mind. "You didn't call me here to discuss a collaboration, did you?"

"Indeed," Tong Zhentian nodded. "Master Su does have that intention. The Dark Pavilion we see is just the tip of the iceberg, but they already display enough strength to be concerning. Neither side can fight the Dark Pavilion alone. To defeat them, cooperation is our only path."

Ling Chen smiled, "I don't oppose cooperation, but I think it's necessary to remind you that we're not just facing the Dark Pavilion but also internal and external conflict. You should understand what I mean."

Upon hearing this, Su Mei and Tong Zhentian exchanged a glance and said, "Are you referring to Qi Yong?"

"Everyone is well aware of Qi Yong's ambitions. If he were to disrupt from within or stab us in the back when we're unprepared, we'd be in grave danger. Therefore, before dealing with external threats, internal troubles must be resolved. How can we handle external threats without first addressing the internal ones?"

"Your point is valid," Su Mei stated. "What do you think we should do then?"

"Special times call for special measures. Since Qi Yong cannot be used for our benefit, we should eliminate him directly or remove him from the equation. However, knowing Qi Yong's character, if we

merely remove him, he would likely bear a grudge and seek revenge. So, the best approach would be..." Ling Chen didn't finish his sentence but gestured a throat-cutting motion.

Seeing this, Su Mei's expression slightly changed, and she asked, "Are you sure about this? It doesn't seem like your usual way of handling things."

"As I said, special times require special approaches. At such a time, we can't afford to be soft-hearted or merciful. Master Su, you lead the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion; sometimes, you have to be decisive and not overthink things."

"I agree with Ling Chen's suggestion," Du Kang, who had been silent until now, interjected. "Master Su, Ling Chen is right. Procrastination in decisive moments invites chaos. Qi Yong is a latent threat. If we can't win him over to serve us, we must eliminate the threat."

"What about the force behind Qi Yong? Once Qi Yong is dead, the Dangyang Sect will definitely suspect us. Although there aren't many experts around Qi Yong, the power he holds should not be underestimated," Su Mei still had some concerns.

Ling Chen smiled faintly, "This matter can be handled easily. Since the Dark Pavilion has appeared, why not let them take the blame? What do you think?"

"Who will handle it?" Su Mei asked.

"Master Su, I personally think your Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion should carry this out."

"Why?"

"It's simple. The Dark Pavilion's target is the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. Everything they've done is to bring you down. Dragon Tiger Hall can unconditionally support you on this matter. Resolving the threat of Qi Yong will allow you to focus on dealing with the Dark Pavilion. Master Su, do you think what I said makes sense?"

Hearing Ling Chen's words, Su Mei fell into deep thought. After a while, she replied, "This isn't a trivial matter; I need to consider it carefully. How about this: I'll give you a response after the Martial Arts Tournament ends, okay?"

Ling Chen shrugged, "I have no problem with that. I'll look forward to hearing from you then." With that, Ling Chen and Tong Zhentian rose and left the lounge.

Outside, Tong Zhentian asked, "Do you think the people from the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion will agree?"

"Master Su might hesitate, but Du Kang will certainly persuade her to agree. Su He once told me something. I didn't pay attention then, but now it seems he was right."

"What did he say?"

"Su Mei is only suitable to lead the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion during peacetime because her nature is too gentle, lacking ruthlessness in many matters. As a leader, one must have vision, thought, and overall perspective. However, Su Mei's abilities haven't reached that level. Frankly, without Elder Du assisting her, it's doubtful she could lead the entire Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion." At this point, Ling Chen curiously asked, "Elder Tong, I'm puzzled. Being a member of the Su Family and the Pavilion Master of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, why hasn't Su Mei practiced martial arts? In the Su Family, almost every pavilion master has been a top martial artist; why is she an exception?"

Tong Zhentian shook his head, "I'm afraid I can't answer that for you, as I don't know either. Had you not mentioned it, I wouldn't have thought about it. It's indeed strange for a pavilion master not to practice martial arts."

In the blink of an eye, the invitational event concluded, and the Martial Arts Tournament was nearing its end. Sitting in the command center, Ling Chen watched Tong Zhentian slowly walk onto the stage through the surveillance screen, and finally, his heart settled.

The five-day-long Martial Arts Tournament officially concluded, allowing Ling Chen to finally relax. Throughout these days, he hadn't had a peaceful night's sleep due to concerns over the venue's safety.

With Tong Zhentian's closing remarks, the Martial Arts Tournament wrapped up. Watching the audience gradually disperse, Ling Chen smiled slightly, stood up, and exited the command center. By now, his task was complete, and there was nothing more for him to do.

The dismantling of the venue was the responsibility of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. Ling Chen counted the security personnel and then led the group back to the city by car. Everyone had worked hard for this mission, and as their leader, Ling Chen naturally wasn't stingy. Each person received a generous bonus and vacation.

Returning to the Dragon Tiger Hall branch, Ling Chen went straight to the main hall, where he saw Tong Zhentian and He Ziyun chatting cheerfully, both with smiles on their faces, occasionally bursting into hearty laughter.

"Elder Tong, Mr. He, what are you two discussing that's making you so happy?"

Chapter 1588 - 1893: The Homeless Man

"Ling Chen, you're here at the right time. I was just summarizing the gains from this Martial Arts Tournament with Elder Tong."

"Is that so?" Ling Chen asked with a smile, "Did you gain a lot?"

"Not just a lot, it exceeded our expectations," Tong Zhentian said. "This time, over three thousand people signed up for the Dragon Tiger Hall, and besides that, several Martial Arts Academies want to establish long-term cooperative relationships with our Dragon Tiger Hall. In simple terms, we would delegate the titles of the Dragon Tiger Hall branches to them, allowing them to recruit and train under the Dragon Tiger Hall's name. In this way, the scale of Dragon Tiger Hall could expand severalfold in a short period, saving us much time and effort."

"If that's the case, then it truly is a good thing. However..." Ling Chen said with some concern, "Aren't you worried that those Martial Arts Academies might ruin the reputation of Dragon Tiger Hall?"

From its establishment till now, Dragon Tiger Hall has only used trusted people, and everyone has contributed to its development. Therefore, there's a sense of belonging within Dragon Tiger Hall. But if the delegation is handed over to other Martial Arts Academies, it can enhance Dragon Tiger Hall's reputation and influence. However, the quality of those Academies is uneven, and who can guarantee they won't tarnish the name of the Dragon Tiger Hall?

It's important to know that many people are profit-oriented. Those actively seeking cooperation with Dragon Tiger Hall are merely attracted by its reputation, wanting to leverage it to strengthen themselves. If those Martial Arts Academies defame the reputation of Dragon Tiger Hall, it would be a loss instead.

After hearing Ling Chen's concerns, Tong Zhentian exchanged a glance with He Ziyun, saying, "We've considered your concerns, however, everything has pros and cons, and we can gradually correct them."

"Elder Tong, we're not lacking funds now. We can build as many Dragon Tiger Halls as we want. Why must we cooperate with others? As the saying goes, a single rat dropping can spoil a pot of soup. If any of those Academies have issues, it could significantly impact Dragon Tiger Hall. So, I'm against this approach."

Tong Zhentian nodded, "I understand your point. But constructing new Dragon Tiger Halls requires a lot of time and personnel training. Do you think we have enough resources to manage so many halls?"

"Elder Tong is right," He Ziyun chimed in, "Although Dragon Tiger Hall now has numerous members, ninety percent are apprentices, and there are few who can take on responsibilities alone. Elder Tong and I have seriously considered this; in terms of foundation, Dragon Tiger Hall is far from comparable to the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. The Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion can establish ten or twenty Martial Arts Halls because they have ample personnel and resources. They can easily send one or two disciples to manage a hall. Can we do that? We cannot. I've calculated carefully, and given the current resources of Dragon Tiger Hall, at most, we can open three more halls. It would take at least several decades to popularize Dragon Tiger Hall nationwide."

"Ling Chen, I hope you can understand. Elder Tong and I are both aged, and before we pass, we wish to see Dragon Tiger Hall prosper. Hence, we decided to take a shortcut. Of course, you are the founder of the Dragon Tiger Hall, and even though I am the Martial Arts Hall Master, I respect your opinion. If you disagree, we will abandon this plan."

Upon hearing this, Ling Chen hesitated. He knew that Tong Zhentian and He Ziyun were doing this for the future of Dragon Tiger Hall, but... forget it! Since both elders have considered it thoroughly, he decided to trust them this time.

"Alright," Ling Chen nodded, "Elder Tong, Mr. He, without you both, there wouldn't be today's Dragon Tiger Hall. Whatever you decide to do, I will unconditionally support you."

"These past few days, you've been exhausted because of the Martial Arts Tournament. Take a good rest. Anyway, there's nothing much happening during this period; give yourself a few days off," Tong Zhentian said.

"If there's nothing else, I plan to return to East Sea City for a while, since everything in Beijing is already taken care of."

"That's good. The Martial Arts Tournament has just ended, and there will undoubtedly be many things at the Martial Arts Association. I need to stay a bit longer, and Mr. He needs to manage the Beijing Hall; Dragon Tiger Hall Headquarters doesn't have anyone in charge. You can help out when you return."

"Alright, I understand."

...

Beijing, Hongyu United Investment Company.

After sending Tang Shiyun back to her residence, Nanrong Wanqing and Nanrong Hao drove straight back to the company.

"Sis, how long are you planning to stay in Beijing?"

"There are some company matters that need handling, probably around three or four days. Why don't you head back to East Sea City early tomorrow? We need someone at headquarters."

"Alright, I'll go book a flight later."

As they conversed, Zhong Wei, who was trailing them with a walkie-talkie, seemed to receive some news and spoke up, "Chairman, Young Master, the security department just informed me that a cleaner found an unconscious person in the alley behind the company."

Nanrong Wanqing turned her head, "There are many homeless people in Beijing, probably fainted from hunger. Call the hospital and have them take him away."

"Okay." Zhong Wei responded, then instructed Liang Zhao Hui next to him, who immediately headed downstairs.

Arriving at the chairman's office, Nanrong Wanqing pushed the door open, preparing to enter when her phone suddenly rang. After the call, she lightly tapped her forehead and said, "I almost forgot something important; a major client scheduled a meeting today. If not for the secretary's reminder, I wouldn't have remembered."

"Sis, I'll take you there."

"Alright."

Immediately, the siblings returned the way they came, taking the elevator down to the building lobby, intending to catch a car at the entrance. Passing by the lounge area, they saw Liang Zhao Hui with several security personnel, while a disheveled man sat on the nearby sofa, looking like a beggar.

At the moment, the man was devouring a bowl of instant noodles, seemingly having not eaten for many days.

"Xiao Liang, let's go," Zhong Wei called out to Liang Zhao Hui. Hearing Zhong Wei's shout, the man glanced in their direction. Upon seeing Nanrong Wanqing waiting by the door, he seemed to freeze, staring blankly and forgetting to swallow the noodles in his mouth.

Suddenly, the man sprang up from the sofa, throwing away the instant noodles in his hand, and dashed toward Nanrong Wanqing.

Witnessing the man's action, Zhong Wei and Liang Zhao Hui's expressions changed, each charging to stop the man.

"Stop!" Zhong Wei shouted softly, reaching out to grab the man's shoulder. However, before his hand could touch the man's body, a powerful force suddenly struck, sending him flying.

Chapter 1589 - 1894: Qiang (1)

Seeing Zhong Wei fall to the ground, the others were taken aback, surprised by the man's tremendous strength, which had actually sent Zhong Wei flying. "What audacity!" Liang Zhao Hui leaped forward from behind and kicked the man's back.

However, despite Liang Zhao Hui's powerful kick, the man's body was unaffected. Instead, Liang Zhao Hui felt as if he had kicked an iron plate; not only was the man unharmed, but Liang Zhao Hui was pushed away by an invisible force.

Witnessing Zhong Wei and Liang Zhao Hui suffer at the man's hands, Nanrong Hao immediately shielded Nanrong Wanqing behind him without saying a word. Trained by Ling Chen, though not comparable to those martial arts masters, he was still more than capable of handling a few ordinary strong men.

As the man charged forward, Nanrong Hao shouted fiercely and threw a punch, intending to knock him down. Facing Nanrong Hao's attack, the man seemed oblivious, letting Nanrong Hao's fist land on him.

Suddenly, a cry of agony echoed through the spacious hall. The scream didn't come from the man but from Nanrong Hao, who clutched his right fist in pain, his face turning pale and sweat pouring down his forehead.

Nanrong Wanqing was also startled by the man's actions, involuntarily stepping back and anxiously asking, "What do you want?" As soon as she spoke, the man had already rushed up, and seeing his fierce look, Nanrong Wanqing couldn't help but close her eyes.

However, after a second or two, Nanrong Wanqing was unharmed, instead hearing a heavy breathing sound nearby. She slowly opened her eyes, discovering the man standing right in front of her, seemingly with no intention of harming her.

Seeing the situation, Nanrong Wanqing was momentarily stunned, a hint of confusion flashing in her beautiful eyes.

"Do not harm the chairman." By this time, notified security personnel had already rushed over, armed with batons, preparing to teach the man a lesson and drive him away from Nanrong Wanqing.

Seeing more than a dozen security personnel surrounding them, Nanrong Wanqing suddenly held out her hand to stop their actions, saying, "Don't come closer yet." After saying this, she glanced at the man and asked, "Who are you?"

"Elder... Sister!"

Unexpectedly, the man actually called Nanrong Wanqing "sister," shocking everyone. This man appeared to be at least over thirty years old, and yet he called Nanrong Wanqing sister, which was indeed puzzling. Could there be something wrong with this man's eyes, not realizing Nanrong Wanqing's youth?

Seeing the man with such a docile expression, Nanrong Wanqing's heart moved, and she asked, "Do you know me?"

"Sister, sister." The man didn't answer Nanrong Wanqing's question but continued calling her sister, his tone even carrying a trace of excitement.

"Chairman, this man is too dangerous; you'd better not get too close." At this point, Zhong Wei had gotten up from the ground and quickly walked over to Nanrong Wanqing. But as soon as he approached, the man immediately turned fierce, his cold eyes staring directly at Zhong Wei, ready to strike at any moment.

Seeing the man's actions, Zhong Wei was scared, quickly stopping his steps, not daring to get closer to Nanrong Wanqing. As Zhong Wei slowly retreated, the man's fierce demeanor quickly turned back into the docile expression from before.

Noticing the man's change in expression, Nanrong Wanqing seemed to grasp something and said, "He is protecting me, not an enemy." Saying this, Nanrong Wanqing gestured to Zhong Wei. The latter

understood and approached Nanrong Wanqing again. This time, the man looked at Zhong Wei with a much milder gaze, showing no intention of making a move.

Seeing this, Nanrong Wanqing nodded lightly. As she expected! She guessed correctly that the man in front of her had mistaken her for someone else. Although not knowing whom the man had mistaken her for, one thing was sure, that person held significant importance in the man's heart.

"You should go sit over there and have something to eat."

Upon hearing Nanrong Wanqing's words, the man immediately returned to the sofa and sat down, grabbing the instant noodles on the floor and preparing to eat.

"Don't... don't eat that, it's dirty." Nanrong Wanqing's expression changed, quickly shouting.

The man, without a word, obediently put the instant noodles down. Following Nanrong Wanqing's indication, a staff member quickly prepared a bowl of instant noodles and handed it to the man.

Watching the man devour the noodles ravenously, Nanrong Wanqing's curiosity deepened. What kind of person was this?

"Chairman, what should we do now?" Zhong Wei asked beside her.

Nanrong Wanqing pondered for a moment and said, "Didn't Officer Xia get transferred to Beijing? You help me contact her and then hand him over to her."

"Understood." Zhong Wei replied and immediately took out his phone to make contact.

"How are you, are you okay?" Seeing Nanrong Hao's pained expression, Nanrong Wanqing asked concernedly, "Do you want to go to the hospital?"

Nanrong Hao forced a smile and said, "Sister, no need, just a minor injury." Saying this, he shook his aching right hand, his gaze moving to the stranger, frowning, "Who is this person, so powerful."

"Don't worry about it. I still need to go meet a client. How about this, you stay at the company and wait for Officer Xia, help her finish handling this matter."

"Alright."

However, as Nanrong Wanqing prepared to leave with Zhong Wei and Liang Zhao Hui, the man suddenly cried out and quickly rushed to Nanrong Wanqing's side, seemingly unwilling to let her leave. Seeing this, Nanrong Wanqing said, "You sit here for now, I'll be back soon."

But unexpectedly, the man shook his head continuously, entirely disregarding her arrangement. "Sister, why don't I call Chen?" Nanrong Hao suggested, "This guy has some issues; for safety, we'd better get a few experts to help."

Seeing the man's anxious expression, Nanrong Wanqing felt not just curious, but also captivated. What kind of person could make the man so devoted? After hesitating for a moment, Nanrong Wanqing said, "Captain Zhong, help me call the client and tell them I'm unavailable today and I'll meet them another day."

"Yes."

"Come with me." Nanrong Wanqing gestured to the man, who immediately followed her to the lounge area, obediently sitting on the sofa.

Seated next to Nanrong Wanqing, the man became very well-behaved, but his gaze occasionally landed on the instant noodles on the ground, his mouth watering. Noticing the man's little gesture, Nanrong Wanqing called a security personnel and instructed, "Go outside and buy him some food."

Chapter 1590 - 1895: Qiang (2)

After a short while, the security personnel returned with several hamburgers. Seeing the food, the man devoured them all in just a few minutes, as if he hadn't eaten in a long time. Everyone was astonished by his appetite. The quantity was enough for four or five people, yet he still seemed unsatisfied.

Having eaten his fill, the man became much quieter, sitting on the sofa without speaking for a long time.

More than half an hour later, a police car slowly drove up and stopped at the company entrance. Nanrong Wanqing turned her head and saw Xia Mutong walking in with two police officers.

"Officer Xia." Nanrong Wanqing stood up to greet them with a smile, "Thank you for coming."

"No problem, serving the people is our duty. Where's the person you mentioned, Miss Nanrong?"

Nanrong Wanqing pointed to the man sitting on the sofa, "Someone found him in the alley behind the company today, he probably passed out from hunger. We gave him some food, and he's much better now."

Xia Mutong nodded, walked straight to the man's front, and asked, "What's your name and where do you live?"

Facing Xia Mutong's inquiry, the man seemed oblivious, only glancing repeatedly at Nanrong Wanqing. Seeing this, Nanrong Wanqing helped to ask, "You still haven't told us your name."

"Ah... Ah Qiang." The man opened his mouth and clumsily uttered two words.

Ah Qiang? Xia Mutong and Nanrong Wanqing exchanged a look. That didn't sound like a real name, more like a nickname. "What's your full name?"

"Ah Qiang." The man still uttered only those two words.

Xia Mutong frowned slightly and asked, "Where did you live before?"

The man shook his head, unclear whether he didn't know or didn't want to say. Other than getting the name 'Ah Qiang,' they learned nothing more.

"Miss Nanrong, I'll take him back with me. Maybe we can find his information in the database."

"Alright, thank you so much."

"Ah Qiang, come with us." Xia Mutong pointed to the door, signaling for Ah Qiang to get up and leave with them. But Ah Qiang didn't react at all, still sitting on the sofa.

Seeing Ah Qiang sitting there unmoved, Xia Mutong reached out, trying to pull him up from the sofa. As her hand touched Ah Qiang's body, his eyes suddenly turned sharp, exuding a chilling murderous aura. Simultaneously, Ah Qiang suddenly stood up from the sofa, swinging a punch straight at Xia Mutong.

Without hesitation, Xia Mutong stepped back, attempting to hold his wrist and pin Ah Qiang to the ground. However, just as Xia Mutong secured her grip, a powerful force erupted, instantly throwing her arm off and propelling her body several meters away.

So strong!

Xia Mutong was inwardly shocked. She wasn't an ordinary person; after undergoing experimental modifications by the God Organization, her strength was several times that of a regular person. However, the man's strength before her was even more terrifying, an overwhelming dominance.

As thoughts raced through her mind, Ah Qiang charged again. Seeing this, Nanrong Wanqing quickly shouted, "Stop!"

Hearing Nanrong Wanqing's shout, Ah Qiang immediately halted his steps, obediently standing aside.

"Officer Xia, are you alright?"

Xia Mutong shook her head, now looking at Ah Qiang with a hint of doubt. This man's strength was formidable; he must be a skilled martial artist. Yet, he seemed mentally impaired. "Miss Nanrong, are you sure you don't know him?"

"I don't recognize him; today's our first meeting." Nanrong Wanqing said helplessly, "I'm confused myself; he seems to mistake me for someone else. Officer Xia, what do you think we should do?"

"From his behavior, he only wants to stay by your side. If we forcefully take him away, he might hurt someone. How about this: I'll collect his fingerprints and check back to see if we can find his identity records. If we can locate his family, I'll call someone to pick him up."

"Alright then." Nanrong Wanqing nodded, "For now, that seems to be the only option."

After sending Xia Mutong off, Nanrong Wanqing had someone take Ah Qiang for a wash and change into clean clothes. An hour later, when Ah Qiang reappeared before everyone, both Nanrong Wanqing and Nanrong Hao were shocked.

After cleaning, Ah Qiang's left cheek revealed a scar, and his dull face bore many fresh wounds, probably inflicted recently. The security personnel responsible for changing his clothes reported, "Chairman, this man has many scars on his body, and it seems he also has gunshot wounds."

Hearing this, Nanrong Hao had people help remove Ah Qiang's shirt. Instantly, Ah Qiang's muscular body was exposed, covered with ferocious scars, some in critical locations. Moreover, as the security personnel mentioned, there were several gunshot wounds on Ah Qiang's back.

"Sis, have we unknowingly taken in a major criminal?" Nanrong Hao worried, given Huaxia's strict gun control; anyone involved with firearms is either military, police, or a criminal.

Nanrong Wanqing examined Ah Qiang's body and said, "Don't jump to conclusions. Officer Xia has already collected his fingerprints; we'll have results soon."

As her words faded, a phone ringtone suddenly sounded. Nanrong Wanqing answered, asking, "Officer Xia, have you found out his identity?"

"Miss Nanrong, this man might be problematic. I checked his fingerprints; there are no records in the database. It's as if the person called Ah Qiang doesn't exist."

"What do you mean?"

"To clarify, he's off the grid, no birth certificate, no identity card, nothing to prove his identity. I suggest taking him to a hospital for a checkup, to assess his mental condition. Unless he tells us himself, we can't trace his background."

"Alright then."

After hanging up, Nanrong Hao asked, "Sis, why didn't you mention the gunshot wounds to Officer Xia?"

"It's not necessary for now. This Ah Qiang doesn't seem like a bad person; perhaps he's suffered some mental trauma, causing him to be this way. Later, take him to the hospital for a checkup. Let me know once there's an update."

"Sister, is it really necessary for someone unrelated?"

"Since he mistook me for someone he knows, I should help him a bit. Besides, can you just drive him away in his current state? Beware, or you might get another beating. Enough talk, just go."

Shaking his head helplessly, Nanrong Hao took Ah Qiang and drove straight to the hospital.