

## **The Beauty 1611**

### **Chapter 1611 - Netherworld Snake (2)**

In the past few days, Ling Chen's days at the Dragon Tiger Hall have been quite idle. Every day, he makes tea, watches disciples train, occasionally offering some guidance. Sometimes, the two old masters, Golden Dragon and Wang Teng, would come outside to chat with him, reminiscing about martial arts anecdotes from decades ago.

However, the good days didn't last long; this leisurely life was disrupted by a phone call.

"Hello! Elder Tong, I just received a message, is it true?" Ling Chen dialed Tong Zhentian's number, his tone somewhat grave.

"I received it too, the martial arts association has just confirmed it, it's absolutely true, the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion was attacked, with more than half of the people dead or injured, even Master Su was lightly wounded. Fortunately, Du Kang arrived in time to save her life."

Ling Chen said in a serious voice, "Who did this? Could it be the Dark Pavilion?" Although the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion is no longer as powerful as it once was, they are still the number one force in martial arts, yet they were easily breached. This shows how terrifying the attackers were. After much consideration, the only group with enmity and such power would be the Dark Pavilion.

"I don't know exactly who, the martial arts association is sending people to investigate, and if there's any news, I'll notify you immediately. However, with the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion facing such a disaster, it may be difficult for them to recover in the short term."

"Elder Tong, doesn't the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion have so many hidden experts secretly supporting them? How could they be so easily defeated?"

"Master Hui Yun and Dan Xuzy both have their own temples and Taoist halls to manage, they can't stay at the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion all the time. Unless the pavilion is in trouble, then they will help. In any case, this incident has caused quite a stir in the martial arts world, creating fear among the people. Even a major force like the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion suffered heavy losses, causing others to worry they might be targeted as well. Ling Chen, with such events occurring in the martial arts world, I can't return for the time being, I need to stay at the martial arts association to oversee things. During this time, be extra careful and contact me if there's anything."

"I know." After hanging up, Ling Chen put down the phone and gently massaged his brow.

The incident at the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion seems simple, yet it might become a catalyst, bringing more martial arts forces back into the fight for fame and profit. A while ago, he discussed this topic with Golden Dragon and Wang Teng, as both the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion and Dragon Tiger Hall are currently the largest forces in the martial arts arena. Thus, their existence might inevitably become a thorn in the side of others.

Now, with the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion being attacked and its power greatly diminished, many people might take advantage, trying to suppress them further. Once the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion is defeated, the next one might be their Dragon Tiger Hall.

No! Suddenly, Ling Chen thought of something. Su Cheng'en and Su He have yet to show up; as long as these two are alive, they wouldn't let anything happen to the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. As thoughts raced through his mind, Ling Chen couldn't help but smile. Perhaps the pavilion's troubles are a good thing, drawing out Su Cheng'en and Su He. Ever since the last martial arts tournament, these individuals went to Beijing and vanished without a trace. Initially, he thought Su Cheng'en and the others went to participate in the tournament, but they didn't appear, and he has no idea what they're doing in Beijing.

While pondering, the phone beside him suddenly rang. Seeing the unfamiliar number displayed, Ling Chen pressed the answer key. Immediately, a cold voice came from the other end of the line, "Ling Chen, you've gone too far."

Upon hearing this inexplicable comment, Ling Chen was momentarily stunned and asked, "Who are you?"

"The person I sent should have explained clearly to you. Jiang Yue'e is returned to you, from now on we won't interfere with each other, yet you killed my man, it seems you are determined to go against us."

Netherworld Snake's people! Instantly, Ling Chen realized.

"Sorry, I wasn't trying to cause you trouble, there was a bit of a mistake. I wonder if I can still accept your proposal now?"

"Mistake? Humph! Ling Chen, do you really think we're easy to bully? Since you want to start a fight, fine, we'll accompany you to the end." After saying that, the other party directly hung up, leaving Ling Chen without a chance to speak.

Ling Chen shook his head; it had been over a week, and he thought the Netherworld Snake's people wouldn't pursue it. Unexpectedly, they still came to him. Just as he was thinking, a person walked into the office from outside. It was a disciple from the Dragon Tiger Hall, holding an arrow in hand, quickly running up to Ling Chen and said, "Deputy Hall Master, someone just shot an arrow into the hall."

Upon hearing this, Ling Chen sat up straight and reached out to take the arrow. Upon closer inspection, he saw a note tied to the arrow's tail. He took off the note, which was written with a time, midnight two days later. Apart from that, there was no other content. However, the back of the note was printed with a pattern of the Netherworld Snake.

This is not... Ling Chen squinted his eyes, immediately recalling what Ling Gengqiu had told him. The time on this note means he'll be killed at midnight in two days. Informing the target in advance of when they'll die is a typical style of the Netherworld Snake, although it's been abandoned for many years. But after all these years, in the whole martial arts world, the Netherworld Snake has become a history. Even if someone receives such a note, they might not understand what the time on it signifies.

Humph! Really interesting, just after receiving the call from the Netherworld Snake, they immediately sent this thing, it seems he's already under their surveillance.

After some thought, Ling Chen crumpled the note into a ball and threw it into the trash can. If the people from the Netherworld Snake want to kill him, let them come then. He's already a master on the Heavenly List, why should he fear a few assassins? Besides, the two senior masters, Golden Dragon and Wang Teng, are at the Dragon Tiger Hall. These two are even more powerful than himself, with them around, he wants to see what kind of skills the Netherworld Snake's people have to kill him.

In the evening, Nanrong Wanqing called, inviting Ling Chen to her home for dinner. Originally, Ling Chen planned to decline, as the Netherworld Snake's assassins are watching him, it's better to reduce outings. However, Nanrong Wanqing told him that Jiang Yue'e extended the invitation. If Jiang Yue'e invites him, he can't refuse, or it would be too discourteous.

After hanging up the phone, Ling Chen didn't delay and immediately drove to the Nanrong Family.

As he entered, he saw more than a dozen dishes on the dining table, all perfectly cooked in appearance and aroma. In the kitchen, Nanrong Wanqing was helping Jiang Yue'e.

"Mrs. Jiang, why are you personally cooking today?" Ling Chen asked with a smile.

"It's been a long time since I cooked. I don't know whether my cooking skills have declined or not. You better not dislike Auntie's dishes later."

"Mrs. Jiang, you're too modest. With your skills, I guess even five-star chefs can't compare."

Hearing Ling Chen's compliment, Jiang Yue'e's face was filled with smiles.

"You really know how to talk, Wanqing, go sit with Ling Chen, it's enough with just me here."

Chapter 1612 - Matchmaking Convention (1)

Nanrong Wanqing answered, then secretly shot a look at Ling Chen. He got the hint, stepped forward to follow behind Nanrong Wanqing, and went upstairs together with her. Once in the room, Ling Chen spread his arms and wrapped Nanrong Wanqing's delicate body from behind, pressing his face to the back of her neck. Breathing in her faint body fragrance, he teased, "You brought me here, don't tell me you're planning to get a little cozy with me?"

Nanrong Wanqing's face flushed red, and she scolded, "Can't you be serious for once? I asked you here because I have something important to tell you."

Something important? Ling Chen let go, turned Nanrong Wanqing around, looked at her stunning face, and asked, "What's so important?"

Nanrong Wanqing said with a distressed expression, "I don't know what's gotten into my mom lately, she keeps dragging me along to visit her old friends' houses."

"What's wrong with visiting friends? Isn't that normal?" Ling Chen asked, puzzled.

"If it was just purely visiting, of course I wouldn't overthink it. The problem is, every time we visit someone, there's always some guy about my age there. The vibe... it feels just like a blind date. You have no idea how awkward it is for me."

"Blind dates?" Ling Chen rubbed his nose, looking surprised as he asked, "You're sure your mom is taking you on blind dates?"

Nanrong Wanqing nodded and said, "Otherwise, why does she only bring me along and not Nanrong Hao? And also..." At this point, a trace of hesitation flashed in her eyes, as if she was debating whether to say it or not.

Seeing that, Ling Chen said, "Don't hold back. Just say it. Didn't you ask me here so I could help you think of a solution?"

Nanrong Wanqing lowered her head and said, "Lately my mom keeps talking to me about you. She says... you're not really suitable for me, that you can't give me a stable life. Maybe because of what happened to my dad, she hopes I can live peacefully. Even if I find an ordinary man, it'd be better than someone like you."

Hearing that, Ling Chen couldn't help but laugh. He gently stroked Nanrong Wanqing's long hair and said, "That's just your mom's suggestion. It's not like she's forcing you to marry some ordinary guy. You're Nanrong Wanqing, the chairwoman of Hongyu Group, a famous iron lady in the business world. Don't tell me you can't even fight for this bit of autonomy?"

"I know, but... but she's my mom. After all these years, it wasn't easy for our family to finally be reunited. I don't want to upset her."

"So what then? Are you thinking of breaking up with me or..."

"No, that's not it." Nanrong Wanqing hurriedly shook her head and said, "That's not what I mean. I just wanted to discuss it with you, see if there's a way to make Mom accept you."

"Accept me?" Ling Chen said with a wry smile, "I am who I am. You can't expect me to turn into some ordinary guy. That's just not realistic. Wanqing, it's not that I'm unwilling to give up everything for you,

it's that I can't. A lot of people are counting on me. If I just walk away and leave them behind, their end could be really miserable. Since I've chosen this path, I can only keep walking down it. I hope you can understand."

"I do understand, so we..."

Before Nanrong Wanqing could finish, Jiang Yue'e's voice drifted up from downstairs: "Wanqing, are you all up there? We have guests, hurry and come down."

"Guests?" Ling Chen looked at Nanrong Wanqing and said, "Weren't you only inviting me? There are other guests too?"

"I don't know, Mom only told me to invite you. Come on, let's go down and take a look first. We can talk about our stuff later."

Leaving the bedroom, Ling Chen followed behind Nanrong Wanqing and headed straight to the living room downstairs. At the top of the stairs, Ling Chen glanced over and saw several young men sitting in the living room. Each of them was in a sharp suit, handsome and polished, clearly having dressed up deliberately for tonight. By comparison, Ling Chen's outfit looked quite plain.

As Nanrong Wanqing came down the stairs, a few of the young men immediately stood up from the sofa. All their gazes locked onto her, some filled with admiration, others with greed.

"Miss Nanrong, it's a pleasure to see you again." One of the young men stepped forward, extending his right hand like a gentleman, wanting to escort Nanrong Wanqing to her seat. But Nanrong Wanqing was rather aloof; she only gave him a faint "hello," then walked right past him.

Ling Chen followed behind and glanced at the snubbed young man. When he noticed the other man's gaze turn his way, he was just about to offer a polite greeting, but the guy completely ignored him and instead turned around to catch up to Nanrong Wanqing.

Watching the few young men crowd around Nanrong Wanqing, all smiles, fussing over her, each presenting the gifts they'd prepared, Ling Chen couldn't help rubbing his nose. He quietly went to sit off to the side, pulled out his phone, and started fiddling with it. After a while, footsteps sounded from

outside the door. Everyone turned to look and saw Nanrong Hao walking in with two bottles of red wine in hand.

Seeing so many people in the living room, Nanrong Hao grinned and said, "Whoa, pretty lively in here."

"Nanrong, we meet again."

As Nanrong Wanqing's younger brother, he was naturally someone these people wanted to curry favor with. One or two of them even secretly slipped a few small items into Nanrong Hao's pockets. After a few pleasantries, Nanrong Hao's gaze naturally drifted over to Ling Chen.

Noticing Ling Chen sitting alone there, playing idly with his phone, then glancing at how things were around his older sister, Nanrong Hao immediately understood. He put down the red wine, quickly trotted over, and in no time came back holding a freshly made cup of coffee, setting it in front of Ling Chen with a squinty-eyed smile. "Chen, here, have a taste."

Seeing what Nanrong Hao did, the expressions of the young men all changed slightly. They'd already noticed Ling Chen. In their eyes, he was here for the same purpose they were, so they deliberately left him out. But the eldest young master of the Nanrong Family, Nanrong Wanqing's own brother, actually personally made him coffee? What was that about?

Under everyone's gaze, Ling Chen acted as though he hadn't noticed, casually pointed at the coffee table beside him. Nanrong Hao instantly got the message and quickly set the coffee down on the table. This scene gave everyone another shock. Damn! Who was this guy? Not only did Nanrong Hao personally make him coffee, but he didn't even bother to take it from him—how rude was that? Yet judging from Nanrong Hao's smiling face, he didn't seem to mind Ling Chen's attitude at all.

Could this guy not be a romantic rival? Maybe he was also someone from the Nanrong Family? For a moment, everyone's minds were spinning. A few of them even hesitated over whether they should go and greet Ling Chen proactively.

"Chen, what've you been busy with lately?" Nanrong Hao started chatting casually.

"What else could I be doing? Just killing time." As he said that, Ling Chen crooked his finger at Nanrong Hao, who immediately leaned his head in and asked, "Chen, what is it?"

#### Chapter 1613 - Matchmaking Convention (Part 2)

"Your mom is pushing to find a partner for your sister, hasn't she introduced anyone to you?"

Nanrong Hao didn't expect Ling Chen to ask this, and his face reddened. He lightly coughed and said, "Mom introduced me to two people, both are nice, we're currently in contact, whether it works out or not, that's a future matter."

Ling Chen joked with a smile, "Your mom really cares about you guys. Seems she's eager to have grandkids."

"Chen, don't talk about me, think about yourself. To be honest, I didn't expect my mom would do this. She knows the relationship between you and my sister, yet she finds someone for my sister, that's too unfair."

"She's your mom, how can you say that."

"Right is right, is everything she does correct just because she's my mom? I really didn't know about tonight's matter, otherwise, I definitely wouldn't have let mom do this. After all, you're her lifesaver, how could she do such a thing."

Ling Chen shook his head and said, "Your mom hasn't done anything wrong. She's doing what a mother should do." Actually, he understood Jiang Yue'e's decision and her feelings. He's a person hard to settle down; too many things revolve around him, and he can't just leave them all aside. As long as Nanrong Wanqing is by his side, she will always live in potential danger, who knows when it may come to her.

Therefore, Jiang Yue'e hopes Nanrong Wanqing can find an ordinary person and live a simple life. For those who have aged and experienced the ups and downs, all fame and fortune are just fleeting, bound to disappear eventually, only a peaceful life is a blessing.

It's impossible to say that there's no dissatisfaction at all, that would be a lie. Since Jiang Yue'e wants to introduce someone else to Nanrong Wanqing, he has no choice but to find a way to disrupt it. He wanted to see, who would dare fight for the woman he Ling Chen has his eyes on.

Soon, dinner was ready. Jiang Yue'e came out of the kitchen, took off her apron, looked at the invited youths in the living room, and said with a smile, "Everyone come over for dinner."

"Mrs. Jiang, thank you for your invitation. This is a small gift I specially prepared for you, I hope you like it." A young man presented an exquisite handbag to Jiang Yue'e.

Ling Chen glanced at the English letters on the bag, finding them familiar—it seemed to be a luxury international cosmetic, estimated to be worth tens of thousands.

Jiang Yue'e warmly smiled and said, "It's good that you came, why bring gifts."

"Mrs. Jiang, he's so clueless. For someone as youthful as you, cosmetics aren't necessary. Here, I've brought ginseng obtained at a high price; it's great for health."

Seeing a few youths scrambling to present their gifts, Ling Chen shrugged and followed Nanrong Hao to the table.

"Chen, this is red wine given to me by someone, all with good years. Let's have a toast first." Nanrong Hao handed a glass of red wine to Ling Chen, and the two drank happily as if no one else existed.

Nanrong Wanqing stood by, pursing her lips with a suppressed smile. She understood Nanrong Hao's intentions well. Jiang Yue'e glared at her son lightly and then turned to the youths, saying, "Everyone sit down."

As the elder, Jiang Yue'e naturally sat at the head of the table, with Nanrong Wanqing beside her. Initially, the seat next to her was for Nanrong Hao, but he sat with Ling Chen, acting as if everyone else at the table was invisible, enjoying drink after drink.

Jiang Yue'e pretended she saw nothing and smiled as she said, "Haven't cooked in a while, everyone try and see if my skills have slipped."

A young man quickly picked up his chopsticks, grabbed a piece of braised pork, and put it in his mouth, swallowing it without savoring. Giving a thumbs up, he said, "Mrs. Jiang, your cooking is impeccable. This is the best braised pork I've ever had."

Once the young man spoke, others echoed with various compliments for Jiang Yue'e.

Then, Nanrong Hao picked up a pair of chopsticks, casually grabbed a dish to taste. After chewing for a bit, he shook his head and said, "This dish is too salty." He then tried a piece of fish, savoring it, and shook his head again, "Too fishy. Mom, don't take offense, but your cooking needs more practice."

Nanrong Hao's words immediately cast awkwardness over everyone's faces. Just moments ago, they were eagerly praising Jiang Yue'e's culinary skills. Now, with the child critiquing harshly, they were left speechless. Suddenly, the atmosphere turned cold.

Nanrong Wanqing glared at Nanrong Hao, signaling him not to overdo it lest it angers their mom.

Nanrong Hao smiled cheekily and said, "Mom, don't get mad, I'm just joking. Chen, my mom's cooking is really good. If you become her son-in-law, you'll be lucky." Then suddenly, he turned to Nanrong Wanqing and asked, "Sis, when will you and Chen get your marriage certificate? I'll help arrange the banquet."

Upon hearing this, a few young men exchanged glances with evident surprise on their faces. Marriage certificate? Banquet? What's this about? Weren't they here for matchmaking? Could this have been decided already?

Ling Chen glanced at the expression of Jiang Yue'e opposite him, seeing her face wasn't looking good, he promptly said, "Haozi, stop joking." He knew Nanrong Hao intended to help him, but if it truly upset Jiang Yue'e, it would be problematic.

"Enough, stop kidding." At this point, Jiang Yue'e's expression returned to normal, as she said, "I invited you all here today because you're outstanding among your peers; get to know each other, be friends, and keep in touch." As she spoke, Jiang Yue'e kept her gaze on Nanrong Wanqing.

Nanrong Wanqing understood well that these words were meant for her.

"Let's all introduce ourselves."

Jiang Yue'e spoke, and several youths chimed in, introducing themselves and their backgrounds. Without exception, they hailed from prominent families, wealthy, influential, and with immense assets at a young age, playing important roles in family enterprises.

Quickly, they finished their introductions, turning their attention to Ling Chen—the only one left who hadn't introduced himself.

Facing the gaze of the crowd, Ling Chen put down his wine glass, glanced at the people present, and slowly said, "From your introductions, it seems everyone is from major cities."

"Does it matter to you where we come from?" one young man asked discontentedly.

Ling Chen chuckled lightly, "Not really."

Impatiently, another young man urged, "Stop talking rubbish, just say your name."

Chapter 1614 - Blind Date Convention (3)

"My name is Ling Chen," Ling Chen said plainly.

"Ling Chen?" Several young men exchanged glances. The name... seemed really familiar. At that moment, one young man reacted first and asked cautiously, "Could you be Ling Chen from Beijing?"

"I've only heard about a Ling Chen in East Sea City..." another young man chimed in.

Nanrong Hao laughed and said, "You've all heard about the same person, right, Brother Chen." Hearing this, the expressions of the young men changed immediately. They were all heirs of prestigious families and certainly knew the influence of Ling Chen's name in Beijing and East Sea City. He was not someone they dared to provoke. Thinking about their previous attitude toward Ling Chen, a chill swept over their hearts.

Oh no! Competing with him over a woman—it was like asking for death. Suddenly, the young men could hardly sit still. Jiang Yue'e noticed the change in their expressions and asked, "Is everyone okay?"

One young man grinned apologetically and stood up from his chair, saying, "Mrs. Jiang, I'm really sorry, I almost forgot about something important I needed to do, um... I'll head out now and visit you another day." As he finished, Jiang Yue'e hadn't even had a chance to respond before the young man briskly walked out.

"Mrs. Jiang, I just remembered something my dad entrusted me with, and the time is almost up, I'll have to leave now," another young man also stood up to say goodbye.

Before long, all the young men sitting at the dining table had found excuses to leave, leaving only Nanrong Wanqing's family and Ling Chen.

Looking at the few people remaining at the table, Jiang Yue'e's expression remained calm, but when her gaze met Ling Chen's, there seemed to be a sense of complexity in her eyes. "Let's eat," Jiang Yue'e spoke lightly after a while.

Shortly, a quiet dinner passed. After eating, a maid took care of cleaning the kitchen, while Jiang Yue'e sat in the living room accompanied by Nanrong Wanqing and Nanrong Hao, sipping tea and chatting. Ling Chen sat on a single armchair nearby, listening to their conversation silently. It wasn't that he didn't want to join in, but Jiang Yue'e's topics never seemed to involve him, almost as if... she didn't want to deal with him.

After a short while, Ling Chen checked the time; it was getting late, so he stood up and said, "Mrs. Jiang, Wanqing, I have some business to attend to over there, I'll be leaving now."

"I'll walk you out," Nanrong Wanqing promptly stood up.

"No need, you stay and chat with Mrs. Jiang," Ling Chen said before turning to leave the room. Even by the door, Jiang Yue'e didn't say anything. Ling Chen shook his head helplessly, it was clear that Jiang Yue'e seemed to have issues with him, otherwise she wouldn't have remained silent.

After Ling Chen left, Nanrong Wanqing looked at her mother, somewhat dissatisfied, and said, "Mom, don't you think your attitude towards Ling Chen is a bit too cold?"

Jiang Yue'e responded lightly, "What do you think I should do? Wanqing, I was young once too, and I know what you're thinking. But, as someone who's been through it, I hope you'll seriously consider my advice; Ling Chen is indeed outstanding, but people like him aren't quite suitable for you. I've been through so much that I don't expect anything now, just wish you and Little Hao live peacefully."

"Mom, what you're saying isn't right," Nanrong Hao chimed in from the side, "Brother Chen is a good person. If it weren't for him, my sister and I wouldn't be as relaxed as we are now. He's helped our Nanrong Family and even saved you. Isn't it a bit unreasonable to oppose him being with sis at this time?"

Jiang Yue'e replied unhappily, "Are you suggesting I'm being ungrateful?"

"No, that's not what I mean," Nanrong Hao hurriedly said, "There's a saying, 'Children have their own happiness,' and we're not kids anymore; we know what to do and what not to do, so you shouldn't worry too much."

Jiang Yue'e sighed lightly, "You say it easily, but can I not worry?"

Seeing Jiang Yue'e's complicated expression, Nanrong Wanqing couldn't help but ask, "Mom, what have you been through all these years? Ling Chen asked, but you won't say, not even to us."

Jiang Yue'e shook her head and said, "It's all in the past; what's the point of bringing it up." Hearing this, Nanrong Wanqing wanted to say more, but Jiang Yue'e didn't give them a chance to continue questioning, standing up and saying, "I'm a bit tired, going to rest now."

Upon returning to her room, Jiang Yue'e went to the window, gazing blankly at the night scene outside, lost in thought. Suddenly, a melodious ringtone echoed in the room. Glancing at the phone on the bedside table, Jiang Yue'e stepped over, noticing the unfamiliar number displayed, she frowned slightly before picking up the phone to answer the call.

As she heard the voice from the other end, her face suddenly changed.

"You... why are you contacting me? We've settled everything between us... What?" It was unclear what the person on the other end said, but Jiang Yue'e felt as if her strength had left her, and she slumped onto the bed.

"Alright, I understand, but this is the last time; please don't disturb my life again." After saying this, Jiang Yue'e hung up the phone directly.

Dragon Tiger Hall.

Ling Chen pushed open the door to his dorm, took a shower, changed into casual loose clothing, then lay on the bed browsing news on his phone, while checking on Baidu how to win over a future mother-in-law. Previously, when Nanrong Wanqing's parents weren't around, they could do whatever they wanted, but now it's different, Jiang Yue'e's return has made Nanrong Wanqing a bit worried. There's a saying, romantic relationships are between two people, but marriage concerns two families.

If he truly wanted to spend his life with Nanrong Wanqing, he definitely had to win Jiang Yue'e over.

As he was pondering, a series of knocks sounded from outside the door.

"Come in."

Upon his words, Kaelina entered wearing a sexy nightdress.

"Not asleep yet?" Ling Chen sat up from the bed and asked with a smile. Kaelina had been at the base, but she was busy these days, so he invited her to Dragon Tiger Hall to help out.

"It's still early, and I can't sleep, came to chat. I hope I'm not disturbing you?"

Ling Chen grinned, "A beauty like you coming to find me, I'd love to be disturbed more."

Upon hearing this, Kaelina unabashedly threw a flirtatious glance at Ling Chen, laughingly saying, "With Nanrong Wanqing not here, your courage has grown, you're even daring to seduce other women. If she finds out, you'll have no chance of sharing her bed again."

"Sigh! Don't bring it up, even if I wanted to now, I couldn't."

"Why, did you guys have a fight?"

Chapter 1615 - Life-and-Death Countdown

"No arguments really, mainly, it's Wanqing's mom, she doesn't seem to like me much," Ling Chen said somewhat dejectedly.

"Doesn't like you?" Kaelina asked with interest, "Why doesn't she like you? You're young, wealthy, and manage such a large organization, why wouldn't she like you?"

"Precisely because of that, she doesn't like me, maybe she feels someone like me offers no sense of security. Alas! Actually, I can understand her feelings, which parent wouldn't want their child to live a peaceful life? But the simpler the life is, the less I can provide. You can't ask me to abandon everything I have now."

Kaelina nodded, "That's true. So, what do you plan to do?"

"What else can I do," Ling Chen shrugged, "Of course, try to win her favor and change her perception of me." Then he looked at Kaelina, "You're a woman too, if you were Jiang Yue'e, what would you think?"

"Me?" Kaelina smiled and shook her head, "Better not ask me this question, I'm different from you Huaxia people, I don't have so many reservations. As long as my children are happy, I won't interfere too much."

"Forget it! I won't think too much about it, when a boat reaches the bridge, it will straighten naturally. There will always be a way." Ling Chen rubbed his temples, "This isn't the most troublesome issue right now."

"Is there anything else that's bothering you?"

Ling Chen thought for a moment and asked, "Kaelina, you're ranked third among the world's assassins, you must know a lot about the assassin industry. I want to ask you, have you ever heard of the organization called Netherworld Snake?"

"Netherworld Snake?" Kaelina recalled for a moment and shook her head, "No, I know of any assassin organization with even a bit of fame, but I've never heard anyone mention Netherworld Snake."

Ling Chen secretly nodded, according to Ling Gengqiu, Netherworld Snake rose in the Martial Arts World hundreds of years ago as an assassin organization known for its brutality. Later, they were driven underground due to suppression from Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion and other Martial Arts forces, disappearing and never seen again. However, Netherworld Snake did not perish, instead, it secretly passed down for hundreds of years until today.

If it weren't for Jiang Yue'e, they probably wouldn't know of Netherworld Snake's existence. After pondering, Ling Chen found it strange. An assassin organization naturally focuses on assassination, otherwise, how would it survive? If Netherworld Snake accepted deals, there should be clients who know its name. But over these hundreds of years, not a trace of Netherworld Snake's name has leaked, their protective measures are too well-done.

Seeing Ling Chen deep in thought, Kaelina stood up, "Take your time and think, I won't disturb you."

Ling Chen responded, watching Kaelina walk to the door, suddenly thought of something, and reminded, "Next time, don't dress so provocatively when you go out."

"Why?"

"Dragon Tiger Hall is full of young hot-blooded guys, dressing like this, aren't you enticing crime?"

Upon hearing this, Kaelina brushed her hair, smiling charmingly, "It's fine, I'm quite lonely anyway, if any handsome guy is willing to comfort me, I wouldn't mind at all." After saying that, she left behind a string of bell-like laughter and pushed the door open.

Comfort?

Ling Chen touched his nose, damn! Is this woman indirectly flirting with me? However, he couldn't deny, Kaelina is not only a blonde beauty but also has a great figure, few men could resist her charm.

Nonetheless, Ling Chen had no interest in flirting with women, with issues involving Nanrong Wanqing still unresolved, he had no other mindset.

For the following day, Ling Chen stayed at Dragon Tiger Hall all day without venturing out. It's not that he didn't want to go out, but because of the death notice from Netherworld Snake.

Calculating the time, there's still over thirty hours left until Netherworld Snake's appointed time of death, probably the area surrounding Dragon Tiger Hall is already secretly surrounded by assassins from Netherworld Snake. For everyone's safety, he must remain in the hall, organize, dispatch, and strengthen defenses.

"Hey! Fatty, have you accomplished everything I instructed?" Sitting in the office of Dragon Tiger Hall, Ling Chen took out his phone and chatted with Hu Fei.

"Relax, when have I ever disappointed you, every street and alley surrounding Dragon Tiger Hall have been installed with surveillance. As soon as anyone approaches Dragon Tiger Hall, they won't escape my eyes." Pausing for a moment, Hu Fei continued, "Hey! Since those people are so dangerous, shouldn't we deploy more people?"

"There's no need, there are so many masters at Dragon Tiger Hall, do you still think I can't handle it? That's it for now, I'll contact you if needed."

Another night passed in the blink of an eye.

When Ling Chen woke up the next day, he checked the time, it was nine in the morning; there were fifteen hours left before Netherworld Snake would take action.

Getting up from bed, Ling Chen carried on with his routine, unaffected. Quickly, the day went by, and during the evening, Ling Chen took a few bottles of wine and some snacks and headed into Golden Dragon's room.

After eating and drinking, the group chatted about Martial Arts World anecdotes, unknowingly, it was already past ten o'clock in the evening.

Time to act! Ling Chen thought to himself.

"Ling Chen, what's wrong? You seem distracted, is there something on your mind?" Wang Teng asked from the side.

Ling Chen grinned, "Nothing. Two old masters, tonight might get lively, just letting you know in advance, so it won't disturb your sweet dreams."

Hearing this, Golden Dragon and Wang Teng exchanged glances. Both are experienced in the Martial Arts World, of course they'd understand Ling Chen's meaning.

"Lively sounds good. It's been a while since we encountered something exciting, we'll definitely join in the fun when it happens," Golden Dragon chimed in.

"Great, then I'll have to trouble the two old masters," Ling Chen smiled faintly, he just wanted to give them a heads-up, if matters spiraled out of control, he hoped these two old masters would lend a hand. Since they've agreed, he had no reason to stay. With over an hour left until midnight, he had many preparations to make.

Leaving the room, Ling Chen returned directly to his place and called Hu Fei.

"Fatty, what's the situation outside?"

"Very quiet, no suspicious individuals have appeared yet."

"Keep watching, they're surely nearby." After saying this, Ling Chen walked to a corner of his room, took out a rectangular wooden box, and placed it on the table. As the box opened, a cold chill instantly emanated from within.

Observing the sword quietly lying in the box, Ling Chen grasped the sheath and raised the sword. This was the Divine Weapon given to him by Ling Gengqiu, named Wave-cutting. Although buried underground for hundreds of years, its luster hasn't lessened and remains sharp.

His previous Sky Blade had become obsolete, and this Wave-cutting perfectly filled the gap.

#### Chapter 1616 - Clash of Experts (1)

As time ticked by, it was ten minutes to midnight. Ling Chen pulled up a chair and sat in the center of the Dragon Tiger Hall, the Wave-cutting Sword resting on his legs, his eyes slightly closed.

Ten more minutes, the Netherworld Snake's people should be arriving soon. Ling Chen thought to himself, listening carefully to the outside noise. However, at that moment, a sudden burst of phone ringing broke the silence. Ling Chen took out his phone, expecting it to be Hu Fei, but realized it was an unfamiliar number. Could it be someone from the Netherworld Snake? With that thought, Ling Chen answered the call directly.

"Hello! Is this Ling Chen?"

Hearing the voice on the other end, Ling Chen couldn't help but be surprised. Wasn't this Jiang Yue'e's voice?

"Mrs. Jiang, it's me. Is there something urgent so late?" Ling Chen asked, feeling a bit puzzled. What was Jiang Yue'e contacting him for at this hour? Could it be about Nanrong Wanqing again?

While pondering, Jiang Yue'e spoke anxiously: "Ling Chen, where are you? Can you come over? Something happened here, Wanqing and the others might be in danger."

Danger? Ling Chen's heart sank, he hurriedly asked: "Mrs. Jiang, don't worry, tell me exactly what's happening."

"It seems like they've come."

Although Jiang Yue'e didn't specify who, Ling Chen knew whom 'they' referred to. Netherworld Snake! These guys had found Jiang Yue'e again. Probably because he hadn't fulfilled his promise, the Netherworld Snake's people wanted to capture Jiang Yue'e and Qiang. With that thought, Ling Chen responded: "Mrs. Jiang, don't worry, I'll be there immediately."

After hanging up, Ling Chen didn't think twice and got up to leave. In no time, Golden Dragon and Wang Teng appeared at the entrance of the Dragon Tiger Hall. Ling Chen drove, picked up the two elders, and headed straight for the Nanrong Family's home.

He had already informed the elders beforehand. To ensure tonight's safety, it was safer to bring them along. Although he had encountered the Netherworld Snake's people before, he hadn't truly gauged their strength. However, since they could nurture an Earthly List expert like Qiang and attract Ling Gengqiu's attention, it meant the Netherworld Snake's strength wasn't weak.

Leaving the Dragon Tiger Hall, Ling Chen maintained a speed of about a hundred kilometers per hour. It was close to midnight, and the roads were desolate, only a few taxis were still picking up passengers. Halfway through, Ling Chen glanced at the car's LCD screen, where the time displayed exactly midnight.

The time has come!

Ling Chen checked the side and rearview mirrors but didn't notice any suspicious characters. However, he remained vigilant. Since the Netherworld Snake had issued a death notice, they certainly wouldn't give up easily. While pondering, Ling Chen suddenly saw a garbage truck pull across the road ahead, blocking the intersection. Seeing this, Ling Chen didn't hesitate, swiftly braking and turning, ready to head back the way he came. Besides this road, there were alternative routes to the Nanrong Family.

However, as the car turned around, several taxis came rushing from behind, lining up together to form a barricade, trapping their vehicle in the middle.

Seeing more than a dozen men in black getting out of the cars, Wang Teng opened the car door and calmly said: "Leave this to me."

"Senior Wang, be careful."

Wang Teng smiled and said: "Don't worry, these people don't concern me."

Ling Chen acknowledged, pressed the accelerator hard, and charged straight toward the taxis. The assassins from the Netherworld Snake saw the sedan heading their way and dodged to both sides, without attempting to stop it. With a 'bang,' the sedan's front fiercely crashed between two taxis, effortlessly creating an opening.

"Kill!" A Netherworld Snake assassin coldly spat out a word. Immediately, over a dozen assassins rushed toward Wang Teng, instantly surrounding him. Facing the onslaught of numerous assassins, Wang Teng's expression remained composed, not taking the enemies before him seriously at all.

As the group of assassins neared Wang Teng, the latter suddenly spread his arms, drawing a massive circle in the air. Vaguely, a Qi Force seemed to dance in the air along with his hands. Suddenly, the Qi Force rapidly gathered and then burst out fiercely, like a bomb, the airwave surging, instantly knocking the surrounding ten-plus Netherworld Snake assassins into the air.

In a moment, those Netherworld Snake assassins flew backward like kites with broken strings, landing heavily on the ground.

Witnessing Wang Teng's formidable strength, the assassins from the Netherworld Snake were immediately filled with dread. This was no ordinary Heavenly List expert.

"Retreat!" The leading Netherworld Snake assassin quickly decided, avoiding unnecessary sacrifice and swiftly withdrew with his men from the scene.

Watching the Netherworld Snake assassins retreat one after another, Wang Teng had no intention of pursuing.

At this time, Ling Chen was already driving another route to the Nanrong Family. During this time, he called both Jiang Yue'e and Nanrong Wanqing, intending to ask about their situation. However, neither of their phones could be reached, which worried Ling Chen immensely. Could something have happened to them? With that thought, Ling Chen drove at high speed through the city, the speed already reaching over a hundred and fifty kilometers per hour.

Just then, Ling Chen seemed to see something ahead, his expression changed abruptly, and he hurriedly stepped on the brake. However, the sedan, traveling at high speed, couldn't stop immediately due to inertia, even with the brakes applied.

Suddenly, a series of 'bang bang' sounds echoed, as all four tires of the sedan burst. For a moment, the sedan lost control, crazily rolling over on flat ground. Once the car stopped, Ling Chen kicked open the door and asked, "Elder Huang, are you alright?"

"I'm fine."

The two climbed out of the car, only to see a spiked roadblock positioned in the middle of the road. Because the sedan drove over it earlier, all four tires had burst. Not only that, numerous men in black were slowly closing in from all sides. Golden Dragon glanced around and said: "You go ahead, I'll handle this."

Ling Chen hesitated slightly, then nodded. From here to the Nanrong Family was just under two hundred meters, and without a vehicle, he could only proceed on foot. With that, Ling Chen quickened his pace, swiftly circumventing the group of men in black, heading toward the Nanrong Family.

In no time, Ling Chen reached the Nanrong Family's neighborhood. Entering through the community gate, Ling Chen's steps quickened, worried that, with Jiang Yue'e and the others not contacting him by now, disaster might have struck.

Whoosh!

Suddenly, a sound of something slicing through the air came over. Ling Chen quickly reacted, tilting his body slightly; with a crisp 'clang,' a flying knife landed beside him.

Chapter 1617 - Clash of Experts (2)

"Who goes there?" Ling Chen's heart skipped a beat as he turned his head toward the direction the flying knife came from. In the darkness, a black-clad figure walked out slowly. The man's attire was identical to the previous black-clad figures, the only difference being a mask covering his face. He moved silently, as if he were one with the surrounding darkness. Had it not been for his initiative to attack, Ling Chen would never have noticed his whereabouts.

Gazing at the black-clad man in front of him, Ling Chen felt a weight in his heart. The wrinkles at the corner of the man's eyes indicated he was of advanced age, likely around sixty or seventy years old.

As the man approached, a stinging sensation prickled Ling Chen's skin, and his whole body tensed. So strong! Ling Chen squinted, staring at the black-clad man across from him. Even though they hadn't come close yet, he could already feel the aura emitting from him. Only true experts could exert such invisible pressure.

Other than pressure, what Ling Chen felt most deeply was the icy murderous aura. Though he was seasoned in battle and carried a murderous aura himself, in comparison to the man before him, he felt utterly outmatched. If his murderous aura was refined from the blood of a hundred people, the black-clad man's was forged from a thousand lives, the disparity between them vast.

A Heaven List master! That was indisputable. Back then, Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion's Qin Chuan was an assassin, as well as a Heaven List master, tasked with protecting the Pavilion Master's safety. Due to Su He's connections, Qin Chuan had once targeted him. At that time, he was only an Earthly List master. However, even though he had now successfully ascended to the Heaven List rank, the pressure from the black-clad man still surpassed what Qin Chuan had imposed.

This is troublesome... Ling Chen thought to himself. Surely, it's a killer organization with a legacy spanning hundreds of years, able to cultivate such terrifying assassins.

At this moment, the black-clad figure was only ten steps away, his sharp eyes fixed on Ling Chen's face. As their gazes met, Ling Chen felt the overwhelming murderous intent, and an urge to retreat flashed through his mind.

Over the years, he had faced countless opponents, including Heaven List masters, but never had anyone instilled fear in him.

The black-clad man remained still, and Ling Chen didn't move either. It wasn't that he didn't want to, but that he didn't dare, not even daring to breathe loudly. He knew that the other was waiting for him to show a flaw. Any action would prompt the man to unleash a merciless attack.

Time ticked away, the two standing motionless on the road of the compound.

Just then, a night breeze swept through, rustling the roadside trees. A leaf detached from the branch, slowly drifting down.

As the leaf settled between them, the motionless black-clad man finally moved. A glint of cold light flashed, and suddenly, a sharp iron sword appeared in his hand. The sword sliced through the air, piercing the leaf and aiming straight for Ling Chen.

As the black-clad man moved, Ling Chen sprang into action too. With a light tap of his toes, his body surged forward in an instant. Simultaneously, the Wave-cutting Sword slashed through the air.

Clang!

As the blades collided, sparks flew, and a potent force erupted between them. Ling Chen's expression changed—such powerful force! The strike made his palm hurt intensely, and his entire arm nearly went numb.

Without time to ponder further, Ling Chen swiftly retreated. Although this move was merely exploratory for both, Ling Chen already deeply felt the opponent's formidable strength.

In a direct confrontation with such a foe, he stood no chance of victory. He had to find a way to shake him off! Ling Chen thought to himself, the situation with the Nanrong Family was unknown, and the longer he tarried here, the less favorable the circumstances.

Quickly calculating, Ling Chen didn't hesitate, instantly deploying the Nine Yang Qiankun Step, transforming into a shadowy blur as he darted into the surrounding greenery, using the darkness and trees for cover to evade the black-clad man's pursuit.

However, after sprinting several dozen meters, Ling Chen realized in surprise that the black-clad figure was trailing closely behind, maintaining a distance of about ten meters. No matter how he tried to hide, the opponent seemed locked onto him, always able to pinpoint his location.

Indeed a troublesome adversary!

Gritting his teeth, Ling Chen pushed his speed to the limit. With his current power executing the Nine Yang Qiankun Step in the darkness, ordinary eyes couldn't track him. In the blink of an eye, the two—a pursuit and a flight—had circled the compound.

Listening to the footsteps behind slowly closing in, Ling Chen suddenly leaped, rising high toward a tree ahead. At the peak, he twisted his body, forcefully kicking the trunk, launching himself like an arrow toward the black-clad man, the sharp sword tip aimed downward at the man's face.

Since escape was futile, he'd have to fight head-on.

Seeing the sword approach, the black-clad man's wrist flicked slightly, hoisting the iron sword up. Immediately, the iron sword seemed to soften, deftly winding around Ling Chen's blade. Then, the black-clad man's arm flung, sending Ling Chen's body along with the Wave-cutting Sword flying to the side.

In these circumstances, Ling Chen could let go, freeing himself to land safely, but he valued the Wave-cutting Sword greatly, as it was a Divine Weapon given by Ling Gengqiu.

Unable to free the sword, Ling Chen gritted his teeth, concentrated his Inner Strength, and with a yell, fiercely pulled the Wave-cutting Sword back.

At that moment, the Wave-cutting Sword finally showcased the power of a Divine Weapon. With a piercing sound, the Wave-cutting Sword forcefully withdrew from the winding iron sword, not only that, the sharp blade left a deep gouge on the iron sword, nearly severing it into pieces.

Witnessing the sharpness of the Wave-cutting Sword, the black-clad man's brow furrowed slightly. Yet, he remained unaffected, chasing Ling Chen once he saw him escape with the sword, closing in on him swiftly.

Ling Chen lifted his gaze, spotting a figure darting rapidly toward him, accompanied by a gust of wind. Simultaneously, a strong sense of danger surged through his heart.

Bad news!

Ling Chen's heart sank, his toes tapping quickly on the ground as he leapt backward. Even though his reaction was swift, the black-clad man's attack was even faster, the icy blade closing in on his face, its sting almost palpable on his skin.

With a loud shout, Ling Chen gathered his Inner Strength again, swinging his arm to slash out. With a crisp clang, the iron sword was severed into two, its tip dropping to the ground.

Seeing this, Ling Chen breathed a sigh of relief, finally resolving the crisis. Were it not for the Wave-cutting Sword's sharpness, the previous attack might have injured him.

#### Chapter 1618 - Masters Clash (Part 3)

The iron sword was destroyed, yet the man in black showed no intention of halting his attack. Instead, he quickened his pace, closing in on Ling Chen, using the broken sword in his hand to stab towards Ling Chen's vital parts. However, just as the broken blade was about to approach, the man in black suddenly loosened his five fingers, releasing the sword which flew straight towards Ling Chen's body.

Seeing this, the well-prepared Ling Chen bent backwards, his body forming a bow shape as the broken sword flew right over him.

Without the iron sword in his opponent's hand, and with a sharp Wave-cutting Sword in his own, Ling Chen undoubtedly felt he had the advantage. Yet, as soon as this thought emerged, Ling Chen realized his thinking was overly simplistic.

Without the iron sword, the man in black stepped forward boldly, launching frenzied punches at his body. Furthermore, the opponent seemed intent on limiting the use of the Wave-cutting Sword, maintaining close combat, preventing Ling Chen from wielding it effectively. Each time Ling Chen attempted to increase the distance, the opponent would quickly close the gap, taking the initiative, leaving Ling Chen with only defensive options, without any chance for counterattack.

Damn! Ling Chen cursed under his breath. This opponent was too difficult to handle. He had assumed the battle would turn to his advantage. However, the opponent forcefully suppressed his advantage, converting it into a disadvantage. Although he held a long sword, such close combat was ill-suited for it.

Punching? Ling Chen never even considered it—he wasn't naive. The opponent's strategy was to force him to sheathe his sword, and if he followed, it would play right into the foe's hands, making the situation increasingly dire for him.

The opponent was well aware of the power of the Wave-cutting Sword. Should Ling Chen find an opening, the one to suffer would be the man in black himself. Yet, the man in black persistently attacked, maintaining control, seemingly holding the advantage yet taking numerous risks.

Ling Chen knew that if he could withstand the opponent's fierce assault, he would find an opportunity for counterattack. No matter how strong the man in black was, it was impossible to sustain such high-intensity attacks indefinitely; he would eventually need a breather. That would be Ling Chen's chance.

Admittedly though, without an iron sword in his hand, the man in black's attacks still took their toll on Ling Chen, each punch heavily laden with Power, numbing his arms. He worried he might not last, fearing the Wave-cutting Sword might slip from his grasp.

After several minutes, the man in black's fluid assault finally slowed slightly, with a rhythm that was starting to unravel. Witnessing this, Ling Chen felt a rush of joy—here was the opportunity! Seizing the moment, his steadily retreating body suddenly lunged forward, thrusting the long sword through the opponent's defenses, aiming straight for his body.

As the sword thrust out, the man in black's movements suddenly accelerated, as though he had anticipated Ling Chen's action. Seeing him dodge the sword edge, reaching single-handedly towards Ling Chen, Ling Chen's lips curled into a sly smile.

Halfway through delivering the sword, Ling Chen tapped the ground with his feet, halting his advance and swiftly retreating, causing the man in black's attack to miss its mark.

Indeed! Ling Chen secretly chuckled, having guessed that the opponent intentionally left an opening, trying to draw him into attacking. He had prepared in advance, and this sword thrust was merely to hoodwink the opponent; he never actually intended to strike.

The man in black frowned upon realizing he had been played, and his offense quickly became fierce again, akin to a torrential storm, enveloping Ling Chen in oppressive intensity.

For a moment, Ling Chen felt his breath stifling, fighting while retreating.

At that moment, a blinding light suddenly shone over, catching the attention of both Ling Chen and the man in black. Turning their heads, they saw an Audi sedan driving in from the direction of the residential area's entrance. Glancing at the license plate, Ling Chen discovered it was Nanrong Hao's vehicle.

Likely startled by the combat outside, Nanrong Hao hurriedly hit the brakes, bringing the car to a halt. Upon recognizing Ling Chen, his face changed, hurriedly poking his head out of the car, exclaiming, "Chen, you..."

Before Nanrong Hao could finish, the man in black suddenly flicked his wrist, sending a gleaming projectile flying directly towards Nanrong Hao's head. Given Nanrong Hao's skill, he couldn't possibly withstand or even dodge the attack.

Seeing this, Ling Chen reacted instinctively, immediately throwing the Wave-cutting Sword, deflecting the flying dagger in mid-air, narrowly saving Nanrong Hao's life.

"What are you waiting for? Go!" Ling Chen exclaimed sharply, prompting Nanrong Hao, sitting inside the car, to finally snap out of it, hurriedly stepping on the accelerator, driving the Audi sedan forward. Watching Nanrong Hao leave, Ling Chen let out a breath of relief, knowing that his presence just added trouble and posed significant danger to his life.

With Nanrong Hao gone, Ling Chen and the man in black exchanged stares once more.

"Kill!"

Without the Wave-cutting Sword, Ling Chen had no choice but to rely on his fists for combat. He thrust a punch, immediately seizing the initiative, launching several attacking punches consecutively.

Explosion!

Clenching his teeth, he executed his most powerful technique instantaneously. In an instant, an invisible Qi Force erupted, akin to haze, gradually forming around Ling Chen.

A punch! A straightforward punch, yet the man in black's eyes froze. Although Ling Chen's punch appeared simple, a visible Qi Force enveloped the area surrounding his fist.

Bam!

The man in black took a step back, gathering his Inner Strength, directly countering Ling Chen's punch.

At the moment their fists collided, something seemed to explode in between, generating a strong air wave that forcefully propelled both their bodies apart.

After retreating seven or eight steps, Ling Chen finally steadied his footing and looked up to see the man in black having only retreated four or five steps before steadying himself. Instantly, a stark contrast was evident.

Narrowing his eyes slightly, Ling Chen stared directly at the man in black, utterly shocked inside. This guy...was insanely tough! Even after deploying his most potent technique, he still couldn't drive the opponent back. If it continued like this, wouldn't he be doomed?

His 'Explosion' skill allowed him to project Qi Force externally, generating formidable strength. Against myriad powerful foes in the past, this move had always been infallible. Yet, the man in black showed no fear of his explosion, managing to withstand it solely through his own prowess.

Terrifying! Absolutely terrifying!

Frowning, Ling Chen understood that the explosion skill couldn't last long, and it brought significant exhaustion to his body. Unable to shake the opponent off, the likely result was perishing right there.

"You are quite a formidable opponent!"

In a flash of thought, the man in black finally spoke, his tone still icy.

"Thanks for the compliment," Ling Chen responded coolly, all the while desperately strategizing in his mind.

#### Chapter 1619 - A Lucky Escape

At this moment, the sound of engines suddenly came from the entrance of the community. Ling Chen turned his head and saw a fleet of more than ten cars quickly rushing toward this side. Under the glaring lights, Ling Chen raised his arm to shield his eyes. However, judging by the sound of the cars, they were all crashing toward them.

Black-clad figures! Ling Chen's mind raced, quickly turning his gaze toward the opponent, only to see the latter leaping up from the ground, soaring over the roof of a sedan. But just as his feet touched the ground, another vehicle swiftly charged from the side.

Watching the black-clad figure standing in front of the car, Ling Chen's vision blurred momentarily, and the figure immediately vanished without a trace.

Where did he go? Just as he was thinking this, a car horn suddenly sounded in front of him. Ling Chen focused his gaze and discovered a Porsche sports car parked in front of him, with a familiar voice entering his ears: "Chen, get in quickly."

Jiang Hao! Hearing Jiang Hao's voice, Ling Chen was slightly surprised, and without time to think, he immediately opened the passenger door and got in.

As Ling Chen got in the car, Jiang Hao revved the engine a few times and then drove the Porsche out of the community. As soon as the Porsche moved, other vehicles followed behind. Ling Chen looked at the Porsche's rearview mirror and asked, "How did you end up here?"

"Haozi just called me, saying you were in trouble and asked us to come help you. So, I immediately gathered the brothers and rushed over. Luckily, I was at the nearby nightclub, otherwise, I wouldn't have arrived so quickly."

"Haven't you got a girlfriend now? Why are you still heading to nightclubs?"

"Chen, don't overthink it. I'm just there managing business, not partying." As Jiang Hao finished speaking, there was a sudden loud 'bang' from the top of the Porsche. Looking up, Ling Chen saw the rooftop had sunken in, even showing a crack.

Damn! Jiang Hao was startled, almost losing control of the steering wheel.

Seeing this situation, Ling Chen's heart sank. He thought he had shaken off the black-clad figure, but unexpectedly, the opponent was lurking on the rooftop, unnoticed. With the strength of that black-clad figure, the rooftop couldn't possibly hold him.

In just a moment, Ling Chen had an idea. "Jiang Hao, is your sports car convertible?"

Jiang Hao nodded, asking, "Chen, what are you planning?"

"Detach the convertible top."

Upon hearing this, Jiang Hao immediately understood Ling Chen's meaning. He floored the gas pedal, and the Porsche surged forward, its speed instantly reaching over a hundred kilometers per hour. At that moment, there was another loud sound from the rooftop, and a sharp knife pierced through the top, creating a long slit.

Ling Chen looked up and met the icy gaze of the black-clad figure.

"Jiang Hao, now!"

With Ling Chen's shout, Jiang Hao immediately pressed the button next to his seat. Instantly, the Porsche's roof separated from the car body and flew backward at high speed, spinning rapidly in the air. Ling Chen rolled down the window, leaned out to look behind, and saw the body of the black-clad figure falling to the ground along with the roof.

A few seconds later, Ling Chen seemed to see that black-clad figure getting up from the ground.

Not injured? Ling Chen was shocked; that old guy's physical strength was incredible. But anyway, he barely escaped a disaster. Had Jiang Hao and the others not appeared suddenly, he likely wouldn't have survived tonight. The assassin sent by Netherworld Snake was too formidable, no wonder they dared to openly send him a death notice.

"Chen, where are we going now?" Jiang Hao asked.

Ling Chen thought for a moment and asked, "When Haozi called you, apart from mentioning my situation, did he say he was in danger?"

Jiang Hao shook his head, "No. Chen, what's up?"

"Nothing." Ling Chen replied, then picked up his phone and dialed Nanrong Hao's number. Soon, the call connected, and Nanrong Hao's voice came from the other end, "Chen, how are you, are you okay?"

"I'm fine, thanks to you calling Jiang Hao and the gang over; otherwise, I'd be in serious trouble this time." After pausing, Ling Chen asked, "By the way! Haozi, how's your sister and mom? Are they okay?"

"They're great! When I got home, my mom and elder sister were chatting. I didn't dare tell elder sister because I was afraid she'd worry about you."

Chatting? Ling Chen slightly frowned, Jiang Yue'e called him, saying people from Netherworld Snake had shown up, asking him to come over immediately to help, but could it be... this was all a scam? Thinking carefully, Ling Chen felt very vexed. After leaving Dragon Tiger Hall, he encountered two waves of attackers along the way. Based on their demeanor, they were clearly well-prepared, knowing he'd pass through that route, hence the set ambush in advance.

Jiang Yue'e... Ling Chen kindly helped her escape misery, why would she join forces with Netherworld Snake to frame him? Could it be just to make him leave Nanrong Wanqing? If it was merely for that reason, there was no need at all.

With a turned thought, Ling Chen was eager to return to the Nanrong Family immediately to confront Jiang Yue'e for clarity. However, he feared the Netherworld Snake assassin might still be lurking outside the Nanrong Family. Brainstorming for safety, he decided to take it slow and return to Dragon Tiger Hall.

Back at Dragon Tiger Hall, after watching Jiang Hao drive off, Ling Chen headed straight to the lobby, where Golden Dragon and Wang Teng were already back, waiting for his return. Seeing him enter safely from outside, the two elders breathed a sigh of relief.

"You finally returned; we thought you'd run into trouble."

Ling Chen said with a wry smile, "If it weren't for some brothers helping tonight, I might really not have made it back." Saying this, he glanced at Golden Dragon and Wang Teng, "I encountered an assassin from Netherworld Snake, incredibly formidable, I'm totally out of my league."

"Heavenly List assassin?" Golden Dragon's tone carried a hint of surprise.

"Yes." Ling Chen nodded.

Wang Teng said puzzled, "You're proficient in the Nine Yang Qiankun Step and a Heavenly List level, even a stronger Heavenly List master shouldn't be able to kill you easily; is that person really so formidable?"

"Extremely formidable, the most powerful assassin I've ever encountered. Escaping tonight from him was sheer luck. Honestly, I really don't want to be his enemy now." After saying this, Ling Chen began to understand why Ling Gengqiu valued this Netherworld Snake organization so highly. With such terrifying assassins, this Netherworld Snake is indeed not simple.

"The next few days, you'd better reduce going out; if you must go out, be thoroughly prepared." Golden Dragon cautioned, "That assassin failed tonight, might not give up easily."

Chapter 1620 - The Second Person in History

Ling Chen responded, just about to speak when the ringtone of his phone rang. Taking out his phone and glancing at the caller ID, Ling Chen felt a stir in his heart and immediately answered the call.

"Ling Chen, your luck is indeed very good." Hearing that cold voice again, Ling Chen instantly recognized the caller—it was the person who had contacted him a couple of days ago, from the Netherworld Snake.

Ling Chen smiled slightly and said, "Thank you, I also think my luck is great. You wouldn't have called just to say that, right?"

"I just want to tell you, you are very fortunate. In the hundreds of years since the Netherworld Snake was founded, you are the second person to escape from the hands of a Netherworld Snake assassin. The rule of the Netherworld Snake is that anyone who survives an assassination attempt will be pursued relentlessly, even if it takes everything we have to kill them. So, I say you are fortunate; for a long time in the future, the Netherworld Snake will use all means to kill you until you are dead. Furthermore, aside from us in the Netherworld Snake, you are not allowed to die at the hands of others. If anyone wants to harm you, rest assured, you don't need to lift a finger, the Netherworld Snake will handle it for you."

Hearing this, Ling Chen felt a mix of amusement and frustration. This was trouble! The Netherworld Snake wanted to go all out against him.

"Your Netherworld Snake has been a Martial Arts force for hundreds of years; can't you be more magnanimous and let me go?"

"This is the rule of the Netherworld Snake; it cannot be changed by anyone."

"You said earlier that I am the second person to escape from a Netherworld Snake assassin. I'd like to ask, who was the first person to escape?" Since the caller had no intention of letting him go, Ling Chen figured he might as well glean more information.

"Ling Gengqiu." The caller spat out the name coldly, "He was someone from hundreds of years ago, you wouldn't know him even if I told you."

Ling Gengqiu? Ling Chen was suddenly stunned, unable to fathom that the first person to escape the Netherworld Snake's assassination was his own ancestor. No wonder Ling Gengqiu had taken it upon himself to kill all the Netherworld Snake people that day. Initially, Ling Chen thought Ling Gengqiu was just doing good by eliminating evil, but now it seemed there was an old feud between Ling Gengqiu and the Netherworld Snake.

Seeing Ling Chen silent for a long time, the caller also ceased speaking and hung up the phone directly.

"Ling Chen, what's wrong?" Hearing Wang Teng's inquiry, Ling Chen snapped back to reality, saying with a face full of gloom, "It was the Netherworld Snake calling me just now; starting today, the Netherworld Snake will spare no effort to assassinate me. Dear elders, it seems my life won't be long."

"Don't be anxious," Golden Dragon said, "The Netherworld Snake might be strong, but don't forget you have the entire Dragon Tiger Hall as your support. Enough! You've had a tiring night; get some rest and we'll talk more tomorrow."

...

The next day.

After lunch, Ling Chen, accompanied by his two bodyguards, Chen Junfeng and Ji Gang, drove to the Nanrong Family. Recently, Chen Junfeng had been staying in Beijing, helping Tong Zhentian with Martial Arts Association matters. Due to last night's events, Ling Chen specially brought Chen Junfeng back to act as his bodyguard. Not only that, but he also brought Ji Gang, who was responsible for guarding the base.

After all, he was constantly facing the threat from the Netherworld Snake, and only with two Heavenly List experts by his side could he feel secure.

Last night, lying in bed, he didn't sleep a wink, thinking about Mrs. Jiang and the Netherworld Snake. Undoubtedly, Mrs. Jiang must have played a part for the Netherworld Snake to be so well-prepared. It was distressing to think that his girlfriend's mother would do something like this. Therefore, as soon as Chen Junfeng returned to East Sea City without even taking a break, Ling Chen took him to the Nanrong Family.

Today was a workday; Nanrong Wanqing and Nanrong Hao had already gone to the company, leaving only Mrs. Jiang and Nanrong Yong at home, which was a good thing for Ling Chen. If Wanqing and Hao were present, some things would be inconvenient to discuss.

Arriving at Nanrong Wanqing's villa, upon entering, Ling Chen saw Mrs. Jiang sitting on the sofa in the living room, holding a cup of tea, seemingly lost in thought, not even noticing Ling Chen's entrance.

As he approached, Ling Chen lightly coughed, finally catching Mrs. Jiang's attention. Turning her head to look at Ling Chen standing beside her, Mrs. Jiang's expression changed slightly, uttering with surprise, "You... how come..."

Ling Chen smiled faintly and said, "Mrs. Jiang, were you wondering why I'm still alive?"

"No, not at all," Mrs. Jiang quickly responded, shaking her head, "I was wondering why you are here; Wanqing and Little Hao have gone to work. If you're looking for them, you might want to come back later."

Ling Chen sat down casually at the side, saying, "I'm not here to find them. Mrs. Jiang, let's speak frankly. I believe you are aware of why I'm here."

"I don't know what you're talking about." Mrs. Jiang put down her teacup, stood up, and said, "I'm a bit tired; take your time, I'll go rest."

Watching Mrs. Jiang's departing figure, Ling Chen said unhurriedly, "Mrs. Jiang, if Wanqing and the others knew that you collaborated with outsiders to try to kill me, how do you think they would see you?"

Hearing this, Mrs. Jiang paused slightly. After hesitating for a moment, she slowly turned around and looked at Ling Chen, saying, "What do you want?"

"Don't worry, I'm not here for revenge. You're Wanqing and Haozi's mother; even if you did want to kill me, I wouldn't harm you. But, I'm curious, why would you do this?" Ling Chen asked, "We have no grudge or hatred; I've even helped you out of your troubles, reuniting you with your family. Although I didn't expect anything in return, you shouldn't repay me in this way. Now that it's just the two of us, let's be clear. If you don't like me, you can say it directly; there's no need for underhanded tactics."

Mrs. Jiang remained silent for a while, then nodded slightly, "You're right, I indeed don't like you. Being with Wanqing will only bring harm to her; she's my daughter, and I don't want her future to be like mine."

"So you teamed up with the Netherworld Snake to kill me?"

"No, I never intended to kill you. It was the Netherworld Snake who approached me. They threatened that if I didn't cooperate, they would kill everyone in the Nanrong Family. I've spent so many years with the Netherworld Snake that I'm very aware of their power; they absolutely mean what they say, so I can't take chances with my children."

Ling Chen smiled faintly and said, "For the sake of your family's safety, you're willing to harm another's life. Mrs. Jiang, it seems these years with the Netherworld Snake have gradually changed your character. Rest assured, I don't blame you; people act in self-interest, and you've made the decision most would make. Fine! Since you've made it clear, I won't shamelessly linger around the Nanrong Family any longer. From now on, I won't set foot in the Nanrong Family again, and regarding Wanqing... I'll try to minimize meeting her. Over these years, I have contributed quite a bit to the Nanrong Family; now without my protection, you all take care."