

The Beauty 1651

Chapter 1651 Tian Xiong (2)

Tian Xiong responded, "That's right. How about this, Mr. Ling, I'll give you a week to consider. I'll come back to you a week later, and regardless of whether you decide to collaborate with the Dark Pavilion, I'll tell you about the Netherworld Snake. How about it?"

"Alright." Ling Chen raised his teacup and said, "Then it's a deal." After saying that, he stood up from his chair, ready to take his leave. However, when he reached the door of the private room, Tian Xiong suddenly called out to him from behind.

Ling Chen turned around and asked, "Is there anything else, Mr. Tian?"

"I have one more question for you, Mr. Ling. What are your views on good and evil?"

"Good and evil?" Ling Chen looked at Tian Xiong with a puzzled expression, not understanding why he would ask such a question.

"Perhaps I wasn't clear enough. Let me put it simply. If you had to achieve a goal, would you resort to any means necessary, Mr. Ling?"

Without thinking, Ling Chen shook his head and said, "No."

"Why not?"

"There's no particular reason. It's just my basic principle as a person. Without limits and restraints, the world would descend into chaos."

Tian Xiong laughed, "Have you ever thought that this world doesn't care about your principles, nor does it care about your process? They only care about results. Just like the current situation in the Martial Arts world, various forces are rising, fighting endlessly, without considering which means can and cannot be used. As long as the goal is achieved, no one cares how much blood stains their hands. History is written by the victors; no one cares about your means, they only cheer for the one standing at the pinnacle. Mr. Ling, after saying so much, do you understand my point?"

"I understand. However, whether others care or not is not important to me, the key is to have a clear conscience. If we abandon even the most basic morals in dealing with people and the world, what's the point of standing at the top of the world in the end? If it were me, I would never be that kind of person. The reason is simple, because such a person will have no true friends or family by their side. Even if there are, it's just an act. Mr. Tian, do you want to become such a person?"

Tian Xiong smiled and said nothing, instead turning his gaze out the window. Seeing this, Ling Chen said no more and walked straight out of the private room.

Coming out of the teahouse, Ling Chen was about to take a ride back to the Dragon Tiger Hall, but he saw a temporary stage set up outside a nearby mall, where more than a dozen staff members were busy on stage, moving sound equipment. A banner hung at the top of the stage, which read, "Wanhua Enterprise 20th Anniversary Celebration, Special Performance by Miss Tang Shiyun."

Shiyun? Ling Chen's lips curled up in a smile. He didn't expect to come upon a live performance by Tang Shiyun.

Since there were people at the Dragon Tiger Hall, there was no rush to return. At that moment, Ling Chen went to the temporary stage to wait for Tang Shiyun's appearance. Although the stage was still being set up and wouldn't begin for a while, the allure of Tang Shiyun's name was too strong. At that moment, nearly a hundred people had gathered around the stage, all young men and women with homemade posters and banners, lively as ever, clearly die-hard fans of Tang Shiyun.

Checking the time, the performance was to start in the evening, and it was early now, just after one o'clock. "Hey, Ling Chen." At this time, a familiar voice called out. Ling Chen turned to see Su Lin waving her arms at him from within the crowd.

"Why are you here too?" Ling Chen smiled as he walked up and asked.

"I was supposed to go out with friends, but then I heard that Miss Tang was performing here, so I hurriedly brought people over to save a spot. Luckily, I came early. If I had been a bit later, all the spots here would have been taken," Su Lin said just as she finished speaking and a head popped out beside her, scrutinizing Ling Chen curiously and asked, "Lin, who's this handsome guy?"

"He's Ling Chen, a friend of mine," Su Lin replied.

"Hi, I'm Luo Xianxian, Lin's high school classmate."

"Hello, nice to meet you," Ling Chen said politely. The girl named Luo Xianxian was about the same age as Su Lin, with looks above average, and with makeup that compensated for some shortcomings, she could be considered pretty.

"Lin, since he's your friend, let's go together. Gao Liang and the others found a good spot in front, right by the stage," Luo Xianxian said.

"Really? That's great!" Su Lin said with delight, "Let's go quickly." With that, not giving Ling Chen a chance to reply, Su Lin had already grabbed his hand and began squeezing through the crowd toward the front. However, the closer they got to the stage, the more crowded it became. Moreover, seeing two attractive young women trying to squeeze through, some young men with less noble intentions pressed their bodies against them, trying to take advantage.

Perceiving the hidden unwanted advances, Su Lin frowned slightly, her eyes showing a hint of annoyance.

Seeing their struggling appearances, Ling Chen shook his head helplessly, gently freeing his hand from Su Lin's grasp.

Su Lin turned back, just about to say something, when she saw an arm reaching over, pulling her into his embrace, moving forward with her. Wherever she passed, the surrounding crowd seemed to make way voluntarily, and they easily reached the front of the stage.

"Isn't this spot nice?"

Hearing Ling Chen's voice, Su Lin turned to see that his hand had been withdrawn. For some reason, a sensation of inexplicable loss filled her heart. Just a moment ago, she had experienced a warmth and security she hadn't felt in a long time.

Looks like I really should find a boyfriend.

While thinking, several tall youths squeezed over from the side. Leading them was a youth who was six feet tall, making him stand out in the crowd, with looks that were appealing, a handsome athletic type.

Seeing him come over, Luo Xianxian took the initiative to greet him, "Gao Liang."

"Who is he?" The young man named Gao Liang directly set his gaze on Ling Chen. He had seen Ling Chen coming out of the crowd embracing Su Lin, so he was very interested in Ling Chen's identity.

"He's Lin's friend, named Ling Chen," Luo Xianxian introduced.

"Friend? Boyfriend?"

"No, just a regular friend," Su Lin answered casually. Keen, Ling Chen noticed that when Su Lin uttered the words "regular friend," Gao Liang visibly relaxed.

Interesting! Ling Chen secretly chuckled to himself, seems like this Gao Liang has feelings for Su Lin.

"Hey! Is this a class reunion today?" Ling Chen asked quietly.

Su Lin shook her head and said, "No, it's just that Xianxian invited a few high school classmates to hang out, it's been years since we've seen each other, so it's just a chance to gather. If you have something to do, go ahead."

"No worries. It's rare to catch Shiyun's live performance, I have to watch it before going back."

Chapter 1652 Withdrawing from the Music Scene (Part 1)

"Lin, there's still a long time before the concert starts, are we really going to wait here all this time?" Luo Xianxian started to complain after standing for less than half an hour. Because this was a public commercial event, the organizers didn't provide any seating for the audience, nor was it feasible to do so, so everyone who came to watch had no choice but to stand.

For someone like Ling Chen, standing for half an hour, or even a whole day and night, wouldn't be a problem. But for girls like Luo Xianxian and Su Lin, there's no way they could endure that long. There were at least four to five hours before the concert started, if they continued to stand, they'd surely get sore legs.

"Lin, why don't we find a place to sit for a bit?" suggested Gao Liang.

"But if we leave, what if someone takes our spot?"

"No worries, we'll leave someone here to keep our place, and we can come back when it's almost time."

"That doesn't seem quite right," said Su Lin. "How about this, one person stays here, and we switch every half hour, that way it's less tiring for everyone. What do you think?"

"Lin's suggestion sounds good, I agree," Luo Xianxian was the first to chime in.

"So, who should stay first?" Gao Liang asked, his gaze falling on Ling Chen nearby. The latter smiled slightly and said, "You all go rest, I'll stay here."

Gao Liang's face lit up with joy, and he grinned, "Great, thanks for your hard work. Lin, let's go, I think there's a Starbucks nearby, we can go sit there."

Su Lin glanced at Ling Chen, her lips parted slightly as if wanting to say something, but before the words came out, Ling Chen smiled and said, "Go rest, I'm fine, are you really worried I might get tired?"

Su Lin nodded gently, choosing not to say more, and followed Gao Liang's group out of the crowd. Watching them leave, Ling Chen folded his arms, slightly closed his eyes, and seemed to enter a state of selflessness. Everything around him vanished, no noisy clamor, as if the whole world had sunk into tranquility.

Ever since his breakthrough in the Heavenly List, he had often entered this state. Whenever he wanted, he could enter this state anywhere, discarding everything, his mind an empty lucid space. In the

Heavenly List, this state was known as self-forgetting, forgetting oneself and everything around. In this state, time ceased to be time, for he had no concept of time in his mind.

When he opened his eyes again, a whole day might have passed, yet he would feel no passage of time. Since he had a few hours to spare here, instead of standing idly, he thought it better to enter the state of self-forgetting and practice the Prajnaparamita Sutra.

As for Gao Liang's group returning to switch with him after half an hour, Ling Chen didn't even consider it, knowing well they wouldn't come. Although Gao Liang was around his age, he was too naive, and Ling Chen could easily read his thoughts.

Besides, he had nothing to do, so it didn't matter if they came or not.

Time ticked away, minute by minute, and before long it was past five o'clock in the afternoon. By then, the organizers had announced the precise timing of the concert to start at 7:30 in the evening, leaving two hours from now.

As Ling Chen had anticipated, Gao Liang's group didn't come back to switch with him. Nearly two hours later, the stage lighting crew and band had gone on stage, and the performance was about to commence, yet there was no sign of Su Lin's group.

Could it be they're not coming? Ling Chen pondered to himself, hesitating whether to call Su Lin. Turning around, Ling Chen then realized that the stage was now surrounded by a vast crowd, with 'sea of people' being no exaggeration. Even the mall had organized a large group of security guards to maintain order, preventing traffic chaos.

It was undeniable, Tang Shiyun had such a powerful draw, not limited to the young folks; there were even quite a few middle-aged men and women present.

Seeing the scene before him, Ling Chen finally understood why Su Lin and the others hadn't come; with such a mass of people, there was no way to squeeze in.

At this moment, outside the crowd, Su Lin, with a troubled expression, surveyed the overwhelming spectacle ahead, saying, "What should we do now, we definitely can't get in."

Luo Xianxian chimed in, "Thankfully your friend left early; otherwise, even if he had saved us a spot, we wouldn't be able to get in." Saying this, she glanced at Gao Liang beside her. He chuckled and said, "Lin, why don't we find a higher spot outside to watch the concert instead?"

"Alright, that's our only choice," said Su Lin, somewhat helplessly. She had hoped to watch the concert up close for the excitement it would bring. Unfortunately, Gao Liang had told her earlier that when he went to switch with Ling Chen, the latter had left due to an urgent matter. If Ling Chen were still there, he would have surely found a way to bring her in.

Just as she was thinking this, a hand suddenly reached out from behind and touched her shoulder.

"Finally found you."

A familiar voice came, and Su Lin quickly turned her head, only to see Ling Chen standing behind her with a faint smile on his face.

"You..." Su Lin was momentarily stunned, then joyfully asked, "Didn't Gao Liang say you left because of something urgent? Why are you back again?"

"Did I leave?" Ling Chen replied with a faint smile, his gaze sweeping over Gao Liang's embarrassed face beside him. However, he didn't intend to hold him accountable. In his mind, Gao Liang was nothing and not worth wasting energy on.

"Let's go, the spot has been saved for you all along; I'll take you in." He had guessed that Su Lin might be held up outside the crowd. He wanted to call and check, but presumably due to the noise at the scene, Su Lin hadn't answered her phone, which prompted him to come out and find her.

As he watched Su Lin being wrapped in Ling Chen's embrace and slowly making their way through the crowd, Luo Xianxian and Gao Liang hesitated momentarily before quickly following in their steps.

Before long, Ling Chen guided the crowd back to the spot they originally selected, which was very close to the stage, just two to three meters away, allowing them to see everything on stage clearly.

Due to the proximity to the stage, the surrounding people were densely packed, body to body, making it hard to find any space. Ling Chen wrapped his arms around Su Lin, pressing her against his chest. His arms spread slightly outward, forming a circle, blocking the movement of the people around, preventing them from touching Su Lin.

Though it was only a small gesture, Su Lin's heart felt warm. She had never received such care before, not even from a previous boyfriend.

"Thank you!" Su Lin whispered the three words. But the environment was too noisy, and she didn't know if Ling Chen heard her.

"Lin."

Seeing Su Lin stand safely in front of Ling Chen, Gao Liang felt a bit displeased. Their interactions seemed quite intimate, which made him inevitably jealous.

Chapter 1653 Leaving the Music Industry (2)

Hearing Gao Liang's shout, Su Lin turned around and glanced at him, but soon she retracted her gaze and ignored him again, which made Gao Liang feel a bit discouraged.

At seven-thirty sharp, the stage lights turned on, and at the same time, a thrilling music resounded throughout the night sky, instantly igniting the passion of the entire audience.

Cheers, shouts, all converged into three words, Tang Shiyun!

Amidst the anticipation of everyone, dressed in a simple white long dress, Tang Shiyun had her long hair pinned up and appeared with an elegant look, slowly stepping onto the stage along the stairs at the back of the platform. As she appeared, the music immediately transformed into a soothing, gentle melody, perfectly accentuating her pure and graceful aura.

Watching Tang Shiyun walk to the center of the stage, the corner of Ling Chen's mouth slightly curled up, carrying a hint of joyful smile. No matter how long it has been, Tang Shiyun remained as before, pure and adorable, giving a sense of immaculate innocence.

It is said that the entertainment industry is a chaotic place, but Tang Shiyun delved deep into it and managed to stay uncontaminated, always maintaining her self, never tainted. Perhaps this is also an important reason why she has always been deeply loved by the audience.

Amidst the lyrical music, Tang Shiyun smiled, surveyed the audience present, and then picked up the microphone in her hand. Her lips parted slightly, and her sweet voice flowed through the stage acoustics like a clear stream into the ears of the people. At this moment, the noisy scene gradually quieted down, as if everyone was infected by her singing, immersed in that tranquility.

Unconsciously, a song ended, yet all the audience remained absorbed in her singing, unable to extricate themselves for a long time. After a while, as everyone regained their senses, thunderous applause erupted at the scene.

"Hello everyone, I am Tang Shiyun. Thank you very much for coming to listen to my singing. Today, although I've been invited to attend the anniversary celebration, I have something I want to tell you using tonight's stage opportunity. Tonight may be my last performance on stage."

After listening to Tang Shiyun's words, the entire scene exploded instantly.

Last time? What does this mean? Everyone murmured to each other, all speculating about the reason. Not only the audience on site, but even Ling Chen was stunned.

What's this girl trying to do? Why suddenly say such a thing, is she intending to stop singing?

At this moment, all eyes were fixed on Tang Shiyun, with some die-hard fans loudly crying out why in the crowd.

Tang Shiyun held the microphone and calmly said, "Thank you all for your support and companionship over the years. I know my decision will disappoint many who like me, but please understand that besides singing, I found there are many things in life waiting for me to do. If I don't do them now, I fear the future me will regret it for life. So please cherish tonight with me and let this stage forever be remembered in your memories."

Once the words fell, Tang Shiyun gently nodded to the band, and music played again. Although the melody was cheerful, the atmosphere on site still held a trace of sadness and reluctance.

"Why does she have to leave?" Su Lin turned her head and asked Ling Chen.

Ling Chen shook his head and said, "I don't know, she never mentioned this to me."

"Really?"

"Why would I lie to you?" After saying this, Ling Chen once again focused his gaze on Tang Shiyun on the stage. With sharp eyes, he quickly noticed the glistening tears in Tang Shiyun's eyes.

Crying... this girl... Ling Chen sighed lightly, feeling as if his heart was clogged.

In the blink of an eye, the originally scheduled twenty-minute performance lasted a full hour. When the last song ended, Tang Shiyun walked to the front of the stage, bowed deeply to thank the audience below, and watched Tang Shiyun's figure gradually disappear on the stage. The audience immediately went crazy, the waves of sound getting louder, all shouting Tang Shiyun's name, hoping she would stay.

Standing on the steps, Tang Shiyun paused slightly, then turned back, smiling with tears on her cheeks, waved to the audience in greeting, and then turned around and took big steps down the stage.

Although Tang Shiyun left, the audience on site was reluctant to disperse for a long time, everyone was eagerly discussing why Tang Shiyun suddenly announced her withdrawal from the music scene. She is still so young, her future limitless, leaving now is like self-destructing prospects.

"Let's go," Ling Chen gently patted Su Lin's shoulder and said.

Su Lin said, "Aren't you going to ask her about it?"

"No need," Ling Chen shook his head and said, "I believe she has her own reasons, I don't need to interfere with her decision."

Coming out of the crowd, Ling Chen looked at the time, it was just before nine o'clock. At this time, Gao Liang and his group stood not far away, whispering among themselves, yet Ling Chen could sense their eyes continuously scanning over this way.

"Are you heading home or hanging out with your classmates?"

"Going home, it's boring to be with them."

"Then I'll drive you home." Saying that, Ling Chen led Su Lin to where he parked his car.

Seeing the two about to leave, Gao Liang and his group quickly approached and called out, "Lin, where are you going?"

Su Lin replied coolly, "Home."

"Lin, it's still early, what's the fun in going home alone." Luo Xianxian linked arms with Su Lin and said, "Why don't we find a place to hang out? KTV or hit a bar, you choose."

Su Lin glanced at Ling Chen beside her, and Ling Chen smiled, saying, "I'll get in the car first."

"Lin, it's rare for us old classmates to gather together, you don't need to spoil the fun. I heard from Gao Liang that his friend opened a bar, why don't we go there and chill?"

"Not interested, don't invite me to these gatherings again." Without Ling Chen by her side, Su Lin's tone suddenly turned cold, "Xianxian, I considered you a friend, so I accepted your invitation, but you conspired with others against me, is this something a friend should do?"

Upon hearing this, Luo Xianxian's expression changed slightly, quickly saying, "Lin, you must have misunderstood, when have I ever schemed against you, you..."

"Don't think I can't see through your act with Gao Liang, even if he wants to pursue me, don't use such tactics, and don't drag my friends into it, I despise people like that the most. Fortunately, Ling Chen doesn't pursue it, otherwise, you would have brought misery on yourself." After saying this, Su Lin shook off Luo Xianxian's hand, turned and opened the car door to get in.

As the car drove along the road, Ling Chen looked at Su Lin with no expression, smiled and asked, "What's the matter?"

"Nothing, just feel people aren't as simple anymore," Su Lin said with a deep sense of feeling: "In school, everyone was very innocent, not so calculating, now entering society, feels like everyone has changed."

Chapter 1654 Quitting the Music Scene (3)

"This is a normal thing, it shows that everyone is growing."

As she spoke, Su Lin pointed to the intersection ahead and said, "Turn left."

"That's not the road back to the Nanrong Family."

"I don't want to go home yet. Those people ruined my mood. I need to find a place to vent a bit. If I remember correctly, there's a bar nearby. Let's go sit there for a while."

Ling Chen nodded and didn't refuse Su Lin's request. Soon, they arrived at a bar called 'Chunpin.' The bar is located at a crossroads, a rather lively place, not too far from the Nanrong Family, just a few kilometers away.

Once inside the bar, Ling Chen found it to be a quiet bar with an elegant and peaceful environment. At that moment, a folk singer was sitting on the stage, playing and singing a song by Tang Shiyun with a hoarse voice. Perhaps because the nightlife hadn't really started, there weren't many patrons in the bar. Ling Chen and Su Lin found a relatively quiet spot, ordered a dozen beers and some snacks.

Su Lin silently picked up a bottle of beer, her gaze fixed on the singer on stage, seemingly captivated by the music. Ling Chen sat quietly beside her, not disturbing her. In his impression, Su Lin had always been a restless person, seldom seen sitting so quietly like a lady.

Under the dim yellow light, Su Lin propped her chin with one hand, her long hair hanging down. Whether it was because of the beer or the heat from the air conditioning in the bar, her face was slightly flushed, exuding a hint of enchanting charm.

Knowing Su Lin for so long, Ling Chen rarely had the chance to quietly appreciate her beauty like this. It's undeniable that Su Lin is indeed a great beauty, her fair skin as delicate as porcelain, her exquisite features flawless. However, her usual carefreeness often overshadowed her beauty.

Who knows how much time passed, Su Lin suddenly turned her head, looked into Ling Chen's eyes, and said, "Haven't had enough of looking after all this time? Want me to lean a little closer for you?"

At these words, Ling Chen's face flushed with embarrassment. He quickly took a sip from the beer bottle to cover his awkwardness.

"Look at you, so timid," Su Lin mercilessly mocked. "After all that looking, why not admit it? You men are sometimes just too hypocritical, wanting in your hearts but reluctant to admit it."

"Is that so?"

"Can you really say it's not?"

Ling Chen scratched his nose and said with a wry smile, "Alright, alright, I won't argue with you about this." After speaking, he seemed to notice something, pointed towards the bar's entrance and said, "What a coincidence, meeting acquaintances here."

Upon hearing this, Su Lin turned her head towards the entrance and saw Luo Xianxian and Gao Liang walking in with a group. At the same time, a young man in his twenties came out from the back of the bar, enthusiastically greeting everyone to sit down.

Retracting her gaze, Su Lin said calmly, "Xianxian mentioned before that Gao Liang has a friend who opened a bar, likely this is the place. Looks like having a pleasant time tonight is out of the question." With that, she took out some hundred-yuan bills from her handbag, placed them on the table, and stood up saying, "Take me home."

Ling Chen agreed, just about to move when he saw Gao Liang coming over with a bottle of beer, smiling broadly, "Lin, didn't expect to see you here too."

Su Lin replied expressionlessly, "What do you want?"

"Nothing much, I think there might be some misunderstanding between us, so I came to apologize specially, hoping you can forgive us. We're all old classmates, it's just a joke, don't take it to heart." As he spoke, Gao Liang extended the beer in his hand towards Ling Chen, saying, "Buddy, I apologize for what happened before. Come on, let's drink this, and we can still be friends in the future."

Ling Chen smiled slightly and said, "No need, I didn't take the previous matter to heart, besides, I'm not interested in being friends with you."

Hearing this, Gao Liang's expression changed, his smile freezing instantly.

"What do you mean by that? Do you look down on me? Or think I'm not worthy of being your friend?"

Ling Chen shrugged and said, "If I were you, I wouldn't be here embarrassing myself. A word of advice, go do what you should be doing, and don't bother us."

"Well! Quite the tone you have, but do you think I'm a three-year-old, easily scared by you? Let me tell you, this is my friend's venue, you'd better not be too arrogant, or I'll make sure you crawl out after walking in."

Su Lin frowned and said unhappily, "Gao Liang, you'd better not cause trouble."

Gao Liang spread his hands, face cold, "Lin, don't blame me for not showing your friend face, it's him who's asking for it, I came here in good faith to apologize, and what was his attitude?"

"You brought it upon yourself," Su Lin said, then grabbed Ling Chen's hand and said, "Don't bother with him, let's go."

However, Gao Liang was quicker, blocking their way.

"Lin, don't blame me for being unkind. You can leave, but he must apologize to me first."

"Apologize to you? Do you deserve it, get lost!" Su Lin was somewhat irritated. Gao Liang's persistence made her very angry. With her temper, she really wanted to slap him a few times.

"Calm down, it's not worth getting mad at someone like this," Ling Chen advised.

After a pause, he glanced around, noticing the young man who greeted Gao Liang standing at the bar, watching coldly. Seeing this, he waved his hand, gesturing for the bar owner to come over.

The latter hesitated for a moment, then walked up to the three, but his gaze fell on Gao Liang, as if seeking his opinion.

"Don't look at him," Ling Chen said, "I ask you, who backs this place of yours?"

The young man sized him up and responded indifferently, "Why do you ask?"

Ling Chen continued, "Is it Jiang Hao or Zhao Zhengxiong? Tell me."

Upon hearing Ling Chen mention these two names, the young man's expression changed slightly, and his tone softened considerably.

"Do you... know them?" The young man asked cautiously.

Ling Chen thought for a moment and said, "I remember that the venues around here are Jiang Hao's, yours should be under his protection too." With that, he took out his phone and dialed a number.

Seeing his actions, the young man quickly asked, "Who are you calling?"

"Jiang Hao," Ling Chen said, tossing his phone to the young man. At this moment, Jiang Hao's voice came through the phone, "Hello! Chen."

The young man, holding the phone, hearing Jiang Hao's voice continuously coming through, grew pale, standing there helplessly, unsure whether to answer.

"Why aren't you answering the phone?" Ling Chen asked, looking at him.

Chapter 1655 - 1957: Corpse Brain Pill (Part 1)

The young man put on a smiling face, respectfully handed the phone to Ling Chen, and said flatteringly: "Brother, someone like me is not worthy of speaking directly to Hao. Please, you do it."

Ling Chen's lips curled up slightly as he took the phone and said to Jiang Hao on the other end: "It's nothing, dialed the wrong number." After speaking, he hung up and pointed at Gao Liang, who was standing dumbfounded nearby, saying: "You know what you need to do now?"

The young man nodded quickly, without a word, swung a punch, hitting Gao Liang's nose. Instantly, a scream echoed throughout the bar. Gao Liang covered his nose, blood seeped continuously through his fingers, dripping onto his clean clothes.

"Get out of here!" The young man shouted loudly at Gao Liang.

Gao Liang looked incredulously at his buddy, unable to believe he was the one who struck. Seeing Gao Liang still standing there, unmoving, the young man grew anxious, kicked him fiercely, then grabbed his collar and pressed him against the wall, whispering: "Buddy, don't blame me, I don't want to be dragged down by you." Saying this, he swung another punch, knocking Gao Liang to the ground.

Looking at Gao Liang on the ground, Su Lin withdrew her gaze expressionlessly and said: "Let's go."

Ling Chen replied with a sound, didn't say much, and followed Su Lin straight out of the bar. As they passed by Luo Xianxian and others, the latter looked at them with eyes full of fear, not daring to utter a word. Not until they disappeared at the door did they get up and rush to Gao Liang's side, helping him up from the ground.

"Are you okay?" Luo Xianxian handed over a tissue and asked with concern.

Gao Liang held the tissue to his bleeding nose, shook his head, then slowly got up from the ground.

At this moment, the young man who had acted earlier came over with a bag of ice, looked at Gao Liang's bruised face and said: "Buddy, don't blame me for being ruthless. If I hadn't done that, neither of us would have had a good outcome."

Gao Liang clenched his fists, gritted his teeth, and asked: "Who is that guy?"

"Don't know. But the fact that he can directly contact Jiang Hao means he's a player in the underground world. Buddy, do you know who Jiang Hao is? He's the underground leader of East Sea City. Provoking him is no different from courting death. If I hadn't acted just now, perhaps I'd have been dragged down by you."

"I know." Gao Liang nodded and said solemnly: "I don't blame you. But I won't let this matter rest. When have I, Gao Liang, ever been bullied like this?"

"Buddy, I'll advise you: don't stir up trouble, this is East Sea City, not your turf. If you really anger those people, your whole family won't have it easy."

Upon hearing this, Gao Liang said nothing, but a hint of resentment showed in his eyes.

After leaving the bar, Ling Chen directly drove Su Lin back to the Nanrong Family.

"Not coming in for a bit?"

"No, it's getting late, you should rest early."

"Thank you for today."

Ling Chen smiled slightly: "No need to be so polite. I'll head back now, let's get in touch later when there's time." Saying that, he waved to Su Lin, then drove out of the neighborhood.

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The next day.

Ling Chen woke up and was planning to go to the restaurant for breakfast when he received a call from Tong Zhentian who had already arrived in East Sea City and was on his way to the Dragon Tiger Hall.

Tong Zhentian's return was within Ling Chen's expectations. A couple of days ago, Kaelina had reported the matter of the Martial Arts Association to him. Since the Martial Arts Association had disbanded, there was no point in Tong Zhentian staying in Beijing.

More than half an hour later, Tong Zhentian arrived outside the Dragon Tiger Hall by taxi, and Ling Chen led Chen Junfeng and others to personally welcome him.

Walking through the main door, looking at the familiar surroundings, Tong Zhentian couldn't help but sigh: "Home is still the best place."

"Elder Tong, would you like to rest first?"

Tong Zhentian waved his hand and said: "No need, I already slept on the plane. Let's go, we'll head to the office first; I have a lot to discuss with you."

Once in the office, the meticulous Ling Chen noticed that Tong Zhentian was carrying a leather suitcase the whole time and hadn't put it in the dormitory. As they all took their seats, Tong Zhentian glanced at everyone present and began: "I believe everyone has heard about the Martial Arts Association, so I won't elaborate. I initially planned to stay a few more days at the Beijing branch to thoroughly discuss future plans with Mr. He. However, an incident in Beijing hastened my return."

Upon hearing this, Ling Chen curiously asked: "Elder Tong, what was so urgent?"

Tong Zhentian opened the suitcase in front of him, then displayed it to everyone, saying: "Take a look for yourselves."

As the suitcase opened, a peculiar smell immediately emanated from it. The crowd exchanged glances, getting up and crowding around the desk to inspect the contents.

The not-too-big suitcase contained numerous glass bottles, each with several white pills, similar in size to longans, entirely milky white. Ling Chen picked up one of the glass bottles, opened the lid, and poured a white pill into his palm, examining it closely.

The pill's surface was very soft and emitted a faint peculiar odor, looking like a cotton candy on the outside.

"Elder Tong, what is this?" Ling Chen asked in confusion, as he had never seen such a thing before.

"This..." Chen Junfeng frowned slightly and said uncertainly: "Could it be Corpse Brain Pills?"

Tong Zhentian nodded and said: "As expected, Sir Chen is knowledgeable. Yes, this is indeed Corpse Brain Pills. Since Sir Chen knows about this, you must be aware of its effects."

"As far as I know, Corpse Brain Pills are a unique poison, divided into male and female types. Anyone who consumes Corpse Brain Pills loses consciousness, turning into a mindless puppet."

"Correct." Tong Zhentian said: "Corpse Brain Pills are divided into male pills and female pills. Those who consume female pills will obey anyone who consumes male pills. These pills were rampant in the Martial Arts several hundred years ago, harming many martial artists. Later, due to their wicked nature, they provoked public outrage among martial artists, and the sects specializing in them faced annihilation. Since then, Corpse Brain Pills disappeared from the Martial Arts."

After hearing Tong Zhentian's explanation, Ling Chen asked: "Where did all these Corpse Brain Pills come from?"

"This is precisely what I want to talk about. Recently, a large quantity of Corpse Brain Pills appeared in Beijing, used for trading by many martial artists. Through my investigation, most buyers were martial factions. Despite the small amount here, the price is steep, and supply is scarce, with many people unable to secure it."

Chapter 1656 - 1958: Corpse Brain Pill (2)

"Elder Tong, did you buy all these?"

"No." Tong Zhentian shook his head and said, "I discovered someone purchasing Corpse Brain Pills, so I set up an ambush and caught both buyers and sellers in one sweep, intercepting this batch of Corpse Brain Pills. Unfortunately, the person in charge of selling was merely a pawn, and they had already taken a Corpse Brain Pill, making their every move controlled by someone else. We couldn't extract any information or trace back to the orchestrators behind the scenes. It can be imagined that once Corpse Brain Pills flood the Martial Arts world and become a tool used by multiple factions, the entire Martial Arts world will be engulfed in a bloody conflict, leaving everyone on edge. Because of the seriousness of the situation, I hurried back to East Sea City to discuss countermeasures with you all."

Ling Chen furrowed his brow slightly and said, "This sort of thing isn't easy to handle." After hearing Tong Zhentian's account, he was very clear about the potential consequences of the Corpse Brain Pills. If someone within Dragon Tiger Hall ingested a Corpse Brain Pill and fell under the control of a rival, who knows when they might suddenly strike and stab a peer in the back. Just thinking about such scenarios was enough to break out in a cold sweat.

"Elder Tong, is there really no clue about the person selling the Corpse Brain Pills?"

"It's not entirely without clues. Corpse Brain Pills are a kind of elixir, requiring someone proficient in alchemy, so that's one direction of our investigation."

"Alchemy?" Ling Chen's heart stirred, and he said, "Doesn't the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion practice alchemy? Of course, I believe the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion wouldn't do such a thing. However, the Su Family in Beijing might not be as trustworthy. Su Cheng'en is the founder of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, and Su He is its Old Pavilion Master, they are definitely skilled in alchemy. The Su Family was just established a few days ago, and a massive amount of Corpse Brain Pills appeared in Beijing, which is probably not a coincidence."

"You make a valid point," Tong Zhentian chimed in, "But even if your speculations are correct, it would be very difficult to find evidence. Everyone knows the strength of Su Cheng'en and Su He, it goes

without saying. If Elder Ling were here, we might give it a try. Otherwise, it would just be a death mission."

Ling Chen knew that when he mentioned Elder Ling, he was referring to Ling Gengqiu. However, ever since the Netherworld Snake appeared, Ling Gengqiu had vanished without a trace, unreachable by phone, and nobody knew where he had gone.

Therefore, seeking Ling Gengqiu's help was evidently unreliable.

Seeing that everyone was silent, Tong Zhentian spoke up, "I've already had Mr. He send people to conduct a secret investigation. If there are any new developments, he'll notify us in time. Since no one has a good suggestion at the moment, perhaps we should hold off and discuss this later. However, since these Corpse Brain Pills have already spread within the Martial Arts world, everyone should be cautious, particularly warn the disciples not to accidentally fall victim to the Corpse Brain Pills."

Ling Chen nodded and said, "Sir Chen, please arrange for everyone to let the entire Dragon Tiger Hall know about this matter as soon as possible."

Chen Junfeng acknowledged and immediately left the office with the others.

As the door closed, only Ling Chen and Tong Zhentian remained in the office.

"What is it, do you have something to tell me?"

"Elder Tong, someone claiming to be from the Dark Pavilion approached me yesterday, saying they want to cooperate with our Dragon Tiger Hall."

"Dark Pavilion?" Tong Zhentian's face darkened, "How did someone from the Dark Pavilion come to us?"

Ling Chen shrugged, "How would I know? From what he said, it seems they see the development potential of Dragon Tiger Hall. He gave me a week to think it over. I'm not sure, so I wanted to consult with you."

Tong Zhentian pondered for a moment and said, "You know the ways of the Dark Pavilion. Cooperating with them would mean being complicit. If you're asking for my advice, I suggest you stay away from them to avoid tarnishing Dragon Tiger Hall's reputation."

"I know that, but the problem is that Dragon Tiger Hall's position is too precarious now, with wolves ahead and tigers behind, we dare not act rashly. Moreover, the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion recently announced its seclusion and withdrawal from Martial Arts disputes, making all eyes focus on Dragon Tiger Hall. Even though Dragon Tiger Hall isn't weak, a single lion, no matter how mighty, can't possibly fend off a pack of hungry wolves."

Saying this, Ling Chen rubbed his forehead and said, "I've been pondering this issue for the past few days. For Dragon Tiger Hall to survive, we must find a strong ally. Only this way can others be deterred."

"So, you're thinking of cooperating with the Dark Pavilion?"

"No," Ling Chen shook his head, "That's not what I meant. I haven't even considered the Dark Pavilion's proposal, but they did remind me of the importance of having an ally in the current situation."

"If you're looking for an ally, I suggest you contact the Zhu Family. After all, you have a good relationship with them, and their overall strength is strong. Once a cooperative relationship is established, it will benefit both parties."

"The Zhu Family..." Ling Chen thought about it and nodded, "I'll talk to Zhu Qing and see what the Zhu Family has to say."

He then pointed to the Corpse Brain Pills in the suitcase and asked, "Elder Tong, can I take a few of these?"

"What do you need them for?"

"Not for anything specific, just curious, for casual use."

"Then take a few, but be careful not to cause trouble. The Corpse Brain Pills have a time limit; their effect lasts at most a week."

Ling Chen asked, "So, is it possible to take them continuously?"

Tong Zhentian nodded, "Of course, you can. However, continuous use would cause significant harm to the body, especially the brain. If taken more than five times, it could lead to dementia or brain death, turning the user into a vegetable."

"Understood." Ling Chen took three glass bottles, totaling six Corpse Brain Pills, and put them in his pocket.

Back in his room, Ling Chen thought of last night's events, took out his phone, and called Tang Shiyun, only to find that her phone was turned off.

What is that girl up to? How can her phone be off? Could she be in trouble?

Thinking of this, Ling Chen hurriedly dialed Xu Hong's number. However, while the call was not disconnected, it constantly indicated a busy line. Ling Chen dialed seven or eight times before finally connecting.

"Hello, Mr. Ling? I'm really sorry, it's been so busy today, and the phone hasn't stopped ringing."

"It's fine. Sister Hong, where's Shiyun? I called her, but her phone's off."

"Shiyun is resting at home, because she suddenly announced she was leaving the music scene last night, and this has caused a stir in the entire entertainment circle. Reporters have been looking for us ever since morning. Shiyun doesn't want to be disturbed, so she turned off her phone."

Ling Chen asked puzzledly, "Sister Hong, why would Shiyun suddenly make such a decision?"

Xu Hong's voice carried a hint of helplessness, "Mr. Ling, to be honest, we don't know either. Last night, Shiyun abruptly announced her departure from the music scene, and we were all shocked."

Chapter 1657 - 1959: Amusement Park

"You didn't know beforehand?" Ling was somewhat surprised. He thought when Tang Shiyun made this decision, the higher-ups at Silver Star Entertainment were aware. Unexpectedly, Tang Shiyun had kept it a secret from everyone, including Xu Hong, who was closest to her.

What's this girl up to? Doesn't she know that this sudden decision will give many people a headache?

"Hong, Shiyun hasn't had any issues recently, has she?" Ling asked. To him, Tang Shiyun must have encountered something that prompted such a big change.

"I don't know," Xu Hong thought for a moment and said, "But I've been by her side recently, and she hasn't seemed unhappy. The only issue lately has been the contract matter with the company. Shiyun's contract with Silver Star Entertainment has expired, and President Yang wants to renew it, but Shiyun hasn't expressed her stance. Because of this, President Yang and the others are quite worried. Now that Shiyun has announced withdrawing from the music scene and without any contracts binding her, nobody can constrain her. I think she must have thought it through."

"Alright, I get it. I'll head over to her place later to see her."

After hanging up the phone, Ling greeted Tong Zhentian and then drove alone to Tang Shiyun's residence.

When he arrived at Tang Shiyun's place, Ling pressed the doorbell, but after a few minutes, there was no response from inside. Strange! Didn't Hong say she was home? Thinking for a moment, Ling called out loudly, "Shiyun, it's me, open the door."

"Ling?" A surprised voice quickly came from inside. Then, the door was opened from the inside, revealing Tang Shiyun in cartoon-print pajamas, looking drowsy as if she had just gotten out of bed.

"Ling, are there no reporters outside?" Tang Shiyun peeked her head out, looked around, and only when she saw no reporters, did she pull Ling into the house with relief. Seeing Tang Shiyun acting like she was sneaking around, Ling said with a mix of amusement and frustration, "Is this really necessary, girl?"

Tang Shiyun pouted, "Those reporters are so annoying. I don't want to get caught by them, or else it'll be endless."

"Hey! Seriously, why did you suddenly announce your withdrawal from the music scene last night? Do you know your decision has become today's headline? Whether in newspapers, TV news or online, it's all about you. Everyone is eager to know why you did this."

"Ling, what's so strange about it? I'm just tired of my current life and want to try a different lifestyle."

"Really?" Ling said, half-believing, "That's not what you said last night. Didn't you say you want to do something while you're young to avoid future regrets?"

Hearing this, Tang Shiyun curiously asked, "Ling, how did you know? I thought you never followed entertainment news."

"I didn't watch the news. I was there at your performance last night."

"Really?" Tang Shiyun suddenly felt a bit shy, her pretty face blushing bright red.

"Why are you blushing? It's not like I've never seen your live performance."

"No, it's just... alright, alright! Let's not talk about this." Tang Shiyun, holding her cheeks, asked, "Ling, are you worried I'd do something stupid, that's why you came to see me?"

Ling patted her head and said, "Not really. You're not a kid, what silly thing could you do? I'm just curious why you'd suddenly make such a decision. However, you're not that young anymore and have the ability to think independently. So long as it's your will, I will support whatever decision you make."

After a pause, Ling asked, "Since you're not planning to sing anymore, what do you intend to do next?"

"I've already thought about it," Tang Shiyun smiled and said, "I'll focus on doing charity and mix in some personal things. This way, I can arrange my own time without having to fly everywhere."

"Charity work?" Ling was slightly taken aback. He hadn't thought Tang Shiyun would come up with such an idea. But truly, charity fits her well, given her immense fame; almost everyone across the country knows her name. Just by that, she possesses unparalleled influence and can help many people. As for income, Ling wasn't worried. Tang Shiyun's earnings over the years were already enough for her to live a worry-free life.

"Do your parents know about this?"

Tang Shiyun made a helpless expression and said, "My dad doesn't mind, but my mom finds it hard to understand my choice. In her view, it's like throwing away a gold mine, thinking I'll never make money again."

"That sounds like your mom's perspective," Ling chuckled. He knew Yao Li's character too well, living entirely for money. As long as there's money, even family bonds can take a back seat.

"Ling, do you have anything to do today?"

"Me? Not really."

"Then could you accompany me for a walk? Staying home is suffocating. I want to go out and relax."

"Sure," Ling nodded and said, "How could I refuse when you ask? Just say where you want to go; I'll be your dedicated driver for the day."

"Really?" Tang Shiyun's face lit up with joy, and she leapt up from the sofa, ecstatic, "That's great."

After a bit of preparation, Tang Shiyun changed into a very ordinary casual outfit. As for the mask and baseball cap, they were essentials. Whenever she went out, she could never be without them. As a public figure, it's impossible to keep a low profile, especially when she's the talk of the town.

Once out the door, Ling took Tang Shiyun into the car and drove straight out of the community. Upon exiting the community gates, several interview vehicles were parked on both sides of the road, with many reporters lingering at the gate. As it was a high-end community, the security measures were very strict. People like reporters were prohibited from entering the community, as the purpose was to protect residents' privacy and prevent them from being disturbed.

Since they were in Ling's car, the reporters didn't notice Tang Shiyun inside. After leaving the community's area, Ling drove directly toward the suburban area. After over forty minutes, the two finally reached their destination: the largest outdoor amusement park in East Sea City.

This was a place Tang Shiyun had always wanted to visit but never found the time to enjoy.

With two tickets bought, Tang Shiyun clung to Ling's arm, joyfully entering the amusement park. However, neither noticed that someone was covertly watching them from tens of meters behind.

"Ling, I want to ride the Ferris wheel."

Ling nodded, "Sure, anything you want to enjoy, I'll accompany you."

"Hehe! I knew Ling was the best."

Chapter 1658 - 1960: Roller Coaster

From ten o'clock in the morning until three in the afternoon, except for having a meal in between, Ling Chen and Tang Shiyun were almost entirely immersed in the amusement park, playing with all the facilities that interested them.

After resting for a while, Ling Chen glanced at the time; it was almost four o'clock, and it was time to go home.

"Let's go back, kiddo."

Tang Shiyun looked around, pointed at the roller coaster not far away, and said, "Ling, let's try that one more time before going back."

"Alright, it's all up to you." Ling Chen looked at Tang Shiyun indulgently, then got up to take her to the roller coaster's queue. After waiting for about ten minutes, it was finally their turn. Fastening the safety belt, Ling Chen held Tang Shiyun's hand, and they exchanged a smile.

Before long, the roller coaster started slowly, crawling up the track. When it reached the peak, amidst the screams of tourists, it suddenly plunged downwards at lightning speed.

Among all the amusement facilities, the roller coaster is probably the most thrilling. After a few minutes, Ling Chen glanced at Tang Shiyun beside him, only to see that she had her eyes tightly shut, too afraid to open them, with one hand gripping his hand firmly, her palm drenched in sweat.

Seeing her tense and frightened look, Ling Chen couldn't help but smile. This girl was clearly terrified but insisted on riding it.

As he was thinking, Ling Chen suddenly sensed something wrong. Although the roller coaster was fast, now it was abnormally fast, and he could clearly feel its speed still increasing.

Something's wrong!

Ling Chen frowned; the speed had already exceeded the roller coaster's normal rate. Thinking of this, he looked towards the roller coaster's control panel. From his vantage point, the view was wide, but the control panel's door was closed, making it impossible to see the situation inside. At this moment, besides him, many tourists had realized something was wrong and began screaming.

Without any time to think, Ling Chen quickly took out his phone and called Hu Fei. However, although the call connected, he couldn't hear Hu Fei's voice, nor could Hu Fei hear him. With no other option, sitting on a full-speed roller coaster, the wind completely drowned out all sounds.

Seeing the situation, Ling Chen simply hung up the phone and sent Hu Fei a text message.

Less than a minute later, a message from Hu Fei arrived on the phone. After reading the content, Ling Chen's face instantly turned grim. Damn! He couldn't help but curse. Hu Fei had hacked into the amusement park system and found the roller coaster's control panel had been sabotaged, with even the

emergency brake destroyed, making it impossible to stop for a while. At the current speed, the roller coaster would soon fly off the track and plummet.

From a height of several dozen meters, if such an accident occurred, none of the tourists would survive.

No doubt, this sudden incident was targeting him; someone wanted him dead. Who was it? The Netherworld Snake?

At this moment, Ling Chen didn't have time to think this through. Even if Hu Fei notified the amusement park technicians to come, there wasn't enough time to stop the roller coaster. What to do? Ling Chen racked his brain, pondering a plan. Right then, the phone rang again with another text from Hu Fei.

Emergency brake! Ling Chen's eyes brightened. Hu Fei mentioned in the message that the roller coaster also had an emergency brake switch, which would stop the roller coaster once activated. However, the switch was located at the very front of the roller coaster, whereas his seat was in the middle. He needed to move forward about ten meters to reach it.

Time was critical, and Ling Chen couldn't afford to hesitate. He immediately unbuckled his safety harness, pushing up the restraining bar pressing on his shoulders. Concurrently, he grabbed the roller coaster's top with one hand, slowly detaching his body from the seat.

Because the roller coaster was too fast, the inertia was enormous, and if he released his grip even slightly, he would be thrown out instantly. Ling Chen dared not be careless, gripping the beside seat tightly and inching forward step by step.

At this moment, quite a few tourists had gathered around the roller coaster, and everyone realized an accident was happening, rushing to capture it with their phones. The amusement park's management was organizing security to persuade the onlookers to retreat, to avoid the roller coaster crashing off and causing more casualties among the surrounding tourists.

"Look, there's someone moving up there." At this point, a sharp-eyed tourist pointed to the moving roller coaster and shouted.

Instantly, everyone focused their attention on the person.

"Damn! That guy's crazy, isn't this suicide?"

"Who knows, perhaps he feels his life is too long and wants one last wild act before dying."

Ling Chen didn't hear the discussions below; he was entirely concentrated on moving forward. The wind at the top was too strong; any carelessness might blow his body away. To protect himself in case, Ling Chen took out his belt, tied it around his wrist, and attached the other end to the roller coaster seat. This way, even if his hands were detached from the roller coaster, he wouldn't be blown away.

Slowly moving, the roller coaster rushed up a slope, reaching the top instantly. Then, the front compressed, launching downward. At this moment, the speed combined with the wind formed a powerful force, and despite gripping the roller coaster's handrail firmly, Ling Chen's body swayed continuously, on the verge of flying out.

Ling Chen gritted his teeth, not daring to relax even slightly. More than ten seconds later, the roller coaster track finally flattened significantly, no longer bouncing up and down. Taking advantage of this opportunity, Ling Chen moved rapidly forward. In just a few seconds, he had advanced four or five meters, leaving less than two meters to the roller coaster's emergency brake.

Looking at the increasingly close emergency brake switch, Ling Chen took a deep breath; success or failure depended on this.

"Ling!"

Hearing Tang Shiyun's call, Ling Chen turned his head and smiled at her. Then, he suddenly stood up, stepping on the roller coaster's top railing, charging forward at full speed over the tourists' heads. In the blink of an eye, he landed on the front end of the roller coaster, lying firmly on the hood.

It's done! Ling Chen felt a rush of excitement, without pausing to catch his breath, hurriedly reaching down, touching the emergency brake switch, and quickly activating it.

Immediately, a piercing scraping sound emanated from the roller coaster's bottom. Just then, there was an upward slope track ahead, just right for slowing the roller coaster's inertia. Not long after, the

previously speeding roller coaster gradually decelerated, coming to a steady stop on the track, no longer moving. Only at this point did Ling Chen dare to breathe out, finally relaxing thoroughly.