

The Beauty 211

Chapter 211 Return

Two days later, at East Sea International Airport.

A handsome young man wearing sunglasses walked out of the airport, glanced around on the roadside, then took out his phone to make a call. Minutes later, a Santana slowly drove up and stopped at the curb.

After getting in the car, the young man took off his sunglasses and complained to the chubby driver, "With all your money, can't you afford a better car?"

The chubby man chuckled, "It's more low-key this way."

"Is everything arranged?"

"Don't worry, I've got it handled." The chubby man started the car and merged into traffic, asking with interest, "Ling Chen, sneaking back to East Sea City this time, did you do something shady?"

"Cut it out." Ling Chen retorted mercilessly: "Looking like you is what's truly shady."

"Hey, what's wrong with being fat? Did I eat your food? Spend your money? It's none of your business. Fat people have a sense of security, unlike you, thin as a rail. Let me tell you, women nowadays like men with a bit of flesh, this is the ideal figure," Hu Fei said, clearly annoyed.

"Alright, alright, I won't argue with you, just take me to where I'm staying."

Soon, the car arrived at a plain residential complex. The buildings in the complex were old and about to be demolished, with most of the residents already moved out, leaving only a dozen households.

Entering a dilapidated room, Hu Fei tossed the keys to Ling Chen, "This place is very quiet, no one will bother you. Also, the location is excellent, it meets your requirements."

Ling Chen went to the window, pulled back the dusty curtains, and looked outside the complex, nodding, "Not bad, it's a good spot."

"Right, and I've got all the stuff you wanted here." Saying that, Hu Fei dragged out a large leather suitcase from under the bed, placed it on the table, and opened it. Instantly, an entire set of brand-new equipment was revealed.

"Listening devices, mini-cams, signal trackers, laptop, I've got it all for you."

Ling Chen checked everything and gave a thumbs-up, "You have wide connections. Keep these expenses on my tab for now, I'll pay you back when I have money."

"I'm not counting on you being able to pay me now. Just remember to pay me back with interest next time." After speaking, Hu Fei seemed to remember something and took out a USB drive from his pocket, "Here's the information you wanted."

"Thanks!"

"No need to be polite, everything is chargeable. Call me anytime you need something else, I'll get it sorted out for you."

"Sure, will contact you later."

During the conversation, Hu Fei's phone started to ring suddenly. He took it out, glanced at the caller ID, and his expression changed instantly. Noticing his expression, Ling Chen put down what he was working on and stepped forward, "What's up?"

Hu Fei gestured for him to stay quiet, then answered the call.

He didn't say a word the whole time, just listened intently. Two minutes later, he hung up, his round face looking a bit unpleasant, his small eyes slightly squinting as if contemplating something.

"Whose call was it?"

"Secret Society."

"Secret Society?" Ling Chen was taken aback, "What do they want from you?"

Hu Fei said with a bitter smile, "They want me to cooperate with Secret Society's investigation. Snake King thinks I betrayed him and broke the rules of the trade, so he complained about me to the Secret Society. As you know, the Secret Society won't tolerate any troublemaker. Anyone who breaks the rules can't escape their punishment."

"So, what's your plan?"

"What else can I do but cooperate with them as best as I can." Hu Fei seemed resigned, "The Secret Society, if they want to investigate you, you can't hide even at the ends of the earth. Besides, I didn't break any rules. When I shared Snake King's info with you, it was an exchange for intelligence; I didn't reveal his whereabouts voluntarily. As long as the Secret Society is reasonable, they shouldn't punish me."

Ling Chen nodded and cautioned, "Take care of yourself. If the Secret Society means harm to you, remember to notify me. You've helped me a lot, I won't sit idly by."

"Understood." After saying this, Hu Fei hesitated briefly, then took off his electronic watch from his wrist, "Take this, make sure to wear it at all times."

"What's this gizmo good for?"

"Figure it out on your own, the instructions are on it. I have other matters to attend to, I need to leave."

After seeing off Hu Fei, Ling Chen closed the door, sat in the living room, took out all the equipment from the suitcase, and started testing each one. He then opened the laptop, plugged in the USB drive, and opened a folder. Inside the folder, there were over a dozen pictures, all of architectural blueprints.

After studying for a while, Ling Chen rubbed his temples and lay down on the sofa, lifting the hem of his shirt to check the bandaged wound. After several days of recovery, the wound was healing, new flesh had grown, but his current physical condition still wouldn't allow for strenuous activity.

His goal for returning to East Sea City was clear: to destroy all the God Organization's strongholds in Huaxia. According to Liu Xiyao, the God Organization had over twenty secret bases in the country, and the one they had destroyed last time was just one of them.

Moreover, he received important information that the person in charge of operating these secret bases was none other than Zhu Hong. Based on this intelligence, he planned to start from Zhu Hong, follow the trail and destroy all the secret bases, weakening God Organization's influence in the country.

This plan had received the approval of General. From now on, he would hide in the shadows, act secretly, and try to collect more intelligence about the God Organization.

After finishing the preparations, it was already evening, and Ling Chen left the complex alone, taking a taxi to Qingyun Martial Arts Hall.

Currently, the only people in East Sea City who knew he was still alive were Hu Fei and He Ziyun. He came to see He Ziyun this time to retrieve some belongings, and also to seek his counsel on another matter.

Knock, knock, knock!

After a sequence of knocks, the door of Qingyun Martial Arts Hall was opened, and Little Hua peeked out from inside, her big eyes gazing at Ling Chen, and her round little face immediately filled with a smile.

"Big Brother!"

She called out affectionately, throwing her arms open and hugging his arm.

"Little girl," Ling Chen said with a smile as he petted her head, "Is Mr. He around?"

"Master's inside."

"Let's go, I have something to consult with Mr. He."

"Big Brother." Little Hua quickly grabbed his hand, "Wait before going in, you haven't told me yet."

Ling Chen is full of doubt: "Told you what?"

Puffing her lips, Little Hua said, "You haven't told me how your date with Xiaozhu went last time. I asked Xiaozhu, but she wouldn't reveal anything. Big Brother, I kindly helped to set you two up, you've got to let me know the outcome."

Chapter 212 Legacy

Ling Chen smiled bitterly in his heart, unsure of how to respond. Recently, he had deliberately avoided thinking too much about Zhu Xiaozhu. Although he admitted that there was mutual affection between him and Zhu Xiaozhu, there was Zhu Hong standing between them. Zhu Hong's presence was like an insurmountable barrier. As long as this barrier was not removed, there would never be any hope for them.

Moreover, he was well aware that, given Zhu Hong's status, it was impossible for him and Zhu Hong to reconcile. In this silent battle, it was either Zhu Hong's demise or his own, with no other options available. Once Zhu Hong was killed, he could foresee that even if Zhu Xiaozhu forgave him, they would no longer associate with each other.

On one hand, there were national affairs; on the other, romantic feelings. As an elite trained by the Ghost, he had already made his choice and decision. Zhu Hong must die!

Therefore, he intentionally avoided thinking about Zhu Xiaozhu, trying to extricate himself from her life. This was the best outcome for both him and Zhu Xiaozhu.

Seeing him not speaking, Little Hua, growing impatient, asked, "Big brother, what's wrong? Did you and sister Xiaozhu have a falling out?"

"Alright, kids shouldn't ask about adult matters." After saying that, Ling Chen quickened his pace and headed straight to the main hall of the Martial Arts Academy.

Little Hua stamped her foot, snorted, and muttered to herself with a pouting face full of displeasure, "Who's a child? You should be calling me sister."

Entering the main hall, he saw He Ziyun sitting leisurely in front of an exquisite tea tray, brewing kung fu tea.

"Mr. He."

"You've arrived at the perfect time, try my tea-making skills." He Ziyun smiled warmly and handed him a cup of brightly colored, richly fragrant tea.

Ling Chen took the tea cup and drank it all in one gulp, nodding in approval, "Not bad."

He Ziyun shook his head, "That comment is as good as none. This is a premium Da Hong Pao that Xiaozhu gifted me. I usually don't even bring myself to drink it."

Ling Chen touched his nose and smiled sheepishly, "Mr. He, I'm a layman and a rough one at that, I can't get into such elegant interests."

"Alright, enough about tea. Here's something Qiao Zhen sent over." He Ziyun took a paper box from under the tea table and placed it beside him.

Ling Chen quickly unwrapped it. Inside the box was a cell phone. His previous phone, given by Han Bing, had broken, so a replacement was sent to him. This type of phone was custom-made, not available on the market. Moreover, all the data from the old phone, including contacts and call logs, had been synced to this new device.

After unlocking it, Ling Chen saw several missed calls—all from Tang Shiyun. He had promised to attend her concert last time but bailed at the last minute; surely Tang Shiyun wasn't happy. He should call her back when he had time to cheer her up and apologize.

After storing the phone safely, Ling Chen turned his attention back to more serious matters, asking, "Mr. He, do you know about the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion?"

"Any true martial artist knows the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. What about it?" After a moment, as if remembering something, He Ziyun suddenly chuckled, "See, my memory fails me. I almost forgot, you are now ranked tenth on the Tiger List."

"Mr. He, how much do you know about the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion?"

"Many people know OF the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, but not many truly UNDERSTAND it."

"Is the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion that mysterious?" Ling Chen was somewhat surprised.

He Ziyun smiled, "It's beyond mysterious. You must know about the Secret Society, another mysterious organization dedicated to gathering intelligence. Their intelligence capabilities are undeniable. But the Secret Society, despite over a decade of efforts, has failed to unearth any substantial information about the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. That shows how deep the Pavilion is hidden. Of course, I do have some understanding of it which I wouldn't mind sharing if you're interested."

Ling Chen nodded, then leaned forward attentively.

"You should be familiar with the Heaven and Earth Dragon and Tiger Four Rankings. It is rumored that the mysterious Pavilion Master of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion is a master from the Heavenly List. Only those on the Heavenly List are invited to join the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. The Pavilion's external mission is to revive and pass on Huaxia martial arts, nurturing more talents. In this era of technology, wars depend on the strength of military equipment, making individual prowess secondary. Moreover, today's youth are too restless, few willing to calm their minds to learn martial arts or endure the hardships associated with it, resulting in gaps in the transmission of Huaxia martial arts, leading to many martial arts styles created by predecessors becoming lost."

"For hundreds of years, the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion has dedicated itself to the development of martial arts. They've collected secret manuals from various schools and sects, compiled them, and then looked for suitable candidates to train and teach martial arts to. Once these individuals grow, they establish their own schools and continue the transmission of martial arts. The martial arts community

today owes much of its resurgence to the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. Therefore, in the eyes of martial artists, the Pavilion is revered as the authority in the martial arts world."

"When I first established the Ghost, I thought of collaborating with the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. Since the Ghost focuses on individual strength, it was impossible to cultivate a group of experts quickly, so I wanted to borrow some experts through collaboration with the Pavilion. However, the Pavilion Master inherited the character of ancient martial artists from the Martial Arts World and absolutely refused to get involved in national affairs."

Ling Chen smiled slightly, finding it interesting, "That Pavilion Master sounds like an intriguing person."

"Not only intriguing but also very young."

"Young?" Ling Chen was taken aback, "Mr. He, didn't you just say that the Pavilion Master of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion is a master on the Heavenly List?"

"Being on the Heavenly List doesn't mean they are all old. That Pavilion Master is an exception."

Ling Chen nodded appreciatively, "Mr. He, how do you know the Pavilion Master is not old? Did someone tell you?"

He Ziyun shook his head, "I once had the chance to chat with the Pavilion Master. You might not be familiar with the rules of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, but every high-ranking individual on the Earthly List gets one chance to have a long conversation with the Pavilion Master—any question can be asked, and the Pavilion Master will answer them. However, it's just a conversation, you won't see them. During our talk, there was a curtain separating us, and I could only see a vague silhouette."

"Didn't you feel the urge to pull the curtain open and see for yourself?"

"Of course," He Ziyun laughed, "Everyone is curious, I'm no exception. But as much as I wanted, I didn't dare to break the rules. Besides, there's a cautionary tale in place, who would dare to breach such code? I heard that a previous high-ranking individual on the Earthly List couldn't contain his curiosity and pulled open the curtain. He was never seen again."

"Only a master from the Heavenly List has the chance to meet the Pavilion Master; others shouldn't even dream about it."

He Ziyun's words provided Ling Chen with a preliminary understanding of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. What surprised him even more was that He Ziyun was a master on the Earthly List. Those who make it onto the Tiger List are already among the top martial artists, and the Dragon List is even more prestigious. As for the Heavenly and Earthly Lists, they transcend the limits of martial arts, reaching another level.

At first, he was eager to spar with He Ziyun, but now he realized that He Ziyun's refusal was the right decision. The gap in their strengths was too great. Trying to fight him would not be a sparring match, but a beating.

"Ling Chen, if you get a chance, you might try climbing higher."

Confused by this remark, Ling Chen asked, "Mr. He, what do you mean by that?"

"You are currently ranked tenth on the Tiger List, but with your overall strength, you should be able to reach the sixth or seventh position. I know you are indifferent to fame and fortune and are not interested in the Heaven and Earth Dragon and Tiger Four Rankings, but I want to tell you that this is an opportunity to improve yourself. Most importantly, if you can enter the Earthly List and have a discussion with the Pavilion Master, it will definitely be immensely beneficial to you. The Pavilion Master's words were of great help to me."

"Mr. He, I won't hide it from you, I came to you this time for this very reason," Ling Chen declared earnestly. "I want to enhance my strength."

During this period, having fought twice with the Enhanced People from the God Organization, he deeply felt his own inadequacies. These Enhanced People were no longer ordinary people, and with his current strength, he couldn't gain the upper hand. Moreover, the ones he faced were only the lower-level Enhanced People; facing more powerful ones would probably leave him helpless.

The future battles with the God Organization would undoubtedly be prolonged, and to handle more dangers, he had to become stronger. He Ziyun had told him that while his external skills had reached their peak, his Internal Strength was just at the beginning stage. Only a master of Inner Strength could

become a true master. Therefore, his visit to He Ziyun this time was to seek guidance on cultivating Inner Strength.

He Ziyun smiled and said, "I already guessed you would come to me; I have prepared something for you." Saying this, he stood up and walked into the rear hall.

Soon, he returned, placing a set of beautifully bound handwritten manuals in front of Ling Chen.

"These are all secret manuals for cultivating Inner Strength, including Shaolin's Yijinjing, Wudang Sect's Pure Yang Wuji Technique, Southern Fist Skills, and more..." He Ziyun recounted like listing treasures.

"Mr. He," Ling Chen interrupted him, "I'm not really interested in these Inner Cultivation Methods."

He Ziyun looked surprised. "Then what do you want to learn? These are all top-level Internal Cultivation Methods from various schools; do you find them not worthy?"

"That's not it. I once told you, I obtained a secret manual by chance, and my martial arts, including Internal Cultivation Methods, are mostly learned from it. However, the Internal Cultivation Methods in it are obscure and hard to understand, so I wanted to consult you for some guidance," explained Ling Chen.

"In the world of martial arts, there's a saying 'understanding one opens the way to understanding all.' With a bit of guidance, you can quickly break through the bottleneck. If you don't mind, it would be best to tell me about those Internal Cultivation Methods so I can study them first."

"No problem. Mr. He, could you prepare some paper and pen? I'll write it down for you."

Soon, Ling Chen had meticulously written down the Internal Cultivation Method, without missing a single word, and handed it to He Ziyun.

He had studied this Internal Cultivation Method hundreds of times and knew it by heart. Now, as He Ziyun received the content and glanced through it, his eyes were immediately captivated, and a gleam of excitement flashed through his aged eyes.

"Mr. He, how is it? Does this Internal Cultivation Method seem decent?" Ling Chen asked for advice.

He Ziyun let out a bitter smile, "I finally understand why you looked down on the secret manuals I collected. Although I don't know who created this Internal Cultivation Method, I can affirm that it's no ordinary method. Honestly, not only do you find it hard to understand, but I'll also need some time to get it clear and need to study it thoroughly. How about this; you go back, and come again in a week."

"Alright, then I won't disturb your rest," said Ling Chen, turning to leave. However, as he reached the door, he turned back, "Mr. He, when will Xiaozhu return?"

"She mentioned that she has lots of work in Beijing and probably won't return to East Sea City for ten to fifteen days. Why, did you need her for something?"

"No, just asking."

Leaving Qingyun Martial Arts Academy, Ling Chen headed straight back to the residential area.

After sleeping for a few hours and waiting until midnight, he opened his eyes, grabbed his pre-prepared backpack, and confidently walked out of the room.

Although it was midnight, the streets were still brightly lit, and many food stalls were filled with people. Ling Chen approached the roadside, hailed a cab, and provided an address.

In less than half an hour, he arrived at his destination.

Looking at the high-rise building in front of him, Ling Chen scrutinized it for a moment. The main entrance was tightly closed, only the security room was lit, and several security personnel were walking around the building, patrolling.

Tightening the backpack on his back, Ling Chen bypassed the security guards and reached the back of the building. The building had thirty-five floors, all covered with thick glass.

Taking advantage of the moment when no security personnel were in sight, Ling Chen quickly took out two suction devices from his backpack and firmly attached them to the glass. Then, using the two suction devices alternately, he slowly started to climb upwards.

Since his wound had not yet fully healed, he didn't dare to exert too much force, moving very slowly.

After about fifteen minutes, he finally reached the eleventh floor. Taking a few breaths, he secured the two suction devices and wrapped a rope around himself, hanging mid-air. Then, he took out a sharp glass cutter from his backpack and gently slid it along the edge of the glass.

In a short while, the whole piece of glass came loose. Before cutting, he had taken safety measures, sticking the glass with a suction device to prevent it from falling.

After packing up his tools, he untied the rope from his body and smoothly entered the building's interior.

Equipping his night-vision goggles, he walked and looked around, searching for his target. Soon, a tightly closed company door appeared in his line of sight.

"Boyang Biological Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd... This is the place."

He nodded to himself, then quickly walked up to the door, took out his lock-picking tools, ready to open the door.

However, before he could start, he heard a 'click,' and the door unexpectedly opened on its own.

At the same time, Ling Chen saw a woman walking out from inside, and he was instantly stunned.

Chapter 214 The Identity of the Snake King

Their eyes met, and Ling Chen pointed at the other party with a hand, his face full of surprise, "Why is it you?"

The woman before him was none other than Kaelina, the Blood Spider, whom he had met some time ago.

Recognizing Ling Chen, Kaelina immediately withdrew the half-drawn dagger and her expression relaxed slightly. She brushed her golden bangs that fell in front of her forehead, her manner exuding a sensual charm, her enticing red lips curling up slightly.

"I didn't expect to run into you here either."

Watching Kaelina, Ling Chen couldn't help but swallow. Tonight, Kaelina was clad in a tight-fitting black outfit that accentuated her curvaceous figure, her rounded hips and full chest paired with a slender waist like a willow, the standard S-curve silhouette. Coupled with her alluring face, she was a deadly temptress, capable of igniting the flames of desire in a man at a single glance, awakening the most primal urges.

"What are you doing here?" Ling Chen shifted his gaze away from her ample bosom and asked.

"Mr. Ling, I think my purpose is probably similar to yours," Kaelina replied, glancing at the backpack behind him, "Come on, I'll take you inside for a tour of Zhu Hong's office."

Seeing Kaelina turn to leave, Ling Chen quickly followed her pace and entered a spacious office.

Kaelina went straight to the bar on the south wall of the office, opened a bottle of whiskey, poured herself a drink, and then gestured for Ling Chen to join her with a 'please' motion.

Ling Chen didn't waste words. He put down his backpack and began installing several eavesdropping devices in various hidden places around the office. After he was done with that task, he started searching around the office.

"Mr. Ling," Kaelina called him, stretching out her hand to point at a bookshelf placed along the north wall.

Ling Chen immediately understood and quickly approached the bookshelf. In no time, he found the anti-eavesdropping device installed inside. Zhu Hong was a cautious man; it was improbable that he had left himself unprotected. To keep the listening devices undetected, they had to disable the anti-eavesdropping devices.

It took about five minutes before Ling Chen finally reconfigured the anti-eavesdropping device's circuitry, making it inoperative while still appearing to function normally to avoid suspicion.

"Done with your work?"

Ling Chen nodded, glanced at Kaelina leaning against the bar, and offered with a slight smile, "Care to share a drink?"

"OK! I was just looking for someone to chat with."

Leaving the office building, Ling Chen and Kaelina walked to a nearby bar.

The night had deepened, and there weren't many patrons in the bar, making the atmosphere relatively quiet. They took a seat by the window, ordered two bottles of whiskey, and some appetizers to whet their appetites.

"Cheers!"

"Cheers!"

After finishing their drinks, Ling Chen looked at the seductive woman before him and said, "I've always had a question I wanted to ask you."

"What question?"

"You told me that you wanted to fulfill an unaccomplished wish of Blood Wolf's, but the more I think about it, the more puzzled I become. True, Blood Wolf once saved your life, and it's reasonable for you

to help him in repayment. However, as a top assassin, being rational is the most crucial thing. Since you know Blood Wolf worked for the God Organization, then you should understand how formidable it is. Your current actions are undoubtedly declaring war on the God Organization. If they find out, they will never let you go, and you'll be in great danger. Although you are cooperating with us, the God Organization's power is clear for all to see, and we don't have a 100% certainty of keeping you safe. In my opinion, for an assassin to risk their life out of gratitude is quite irrational."

"So you think my motive isn't just about repaying a debt?"

Ling Chen didn't hide his suspicion and nodded, "Anyone would think that."

Kaelina played with her glass, suddenly chuckled, her blue eyes gleaming with a deep meaning.

"Regardless of what you think, there's one thing I can tell you for certain: everything I do is for Blood Wolf. Beyond that, I have no ulterior motives. As for why I'm doing this, given our current relationship, I don't feel the need to tell you."

With that, she set down her glass, looking at the thinning crowd in the bar, "Can we talk about something else? It's rare that I get out to relax, and I don't want to discuss these vexing issues."

Ling Chen shrugged, "Sure. What do you want to talk about?"

"Let's talk about you," Kaelina said, showing interest in Ling Chen, "You're young, but with no small capabilities, even Blood Wolf wasn't your match. You must be highly regarded within your organization."

"To be honest, I've actually already left. I wanted to just be an ordinary person, but things from the past caught up with me, and there's no way I could escape it."

"Quite normal. For people like us who have gone down this path, it's difficult to turn back. Did you stay in East Sea City after you left the organization?"

Ling Chen said helplessly, "After I left the organization, I took a security job, hoping to just idle away my days. But trouble came knocking one after another, even the Snake King showed up."

"Snake King? Is he targeting your boss?"

"Yeah, Nanrong Wanqing, a very famous person in East Sea City."

"Nanrong..." Kaelina seemed a bit surprised.

"What?" Ling Chen noticed her expression, "Have you heard of her?"

"No, I'm not familiar with the person you mentioned, but her surname sounds somewhat familiar to me."

Hearing this, Ling Chen's curiosity piqued. Nanrong was a rare double surname, and it was surprising that Kaelina, who spent most of her time abroad, recognized it.

"Do you know someone from the Nanrong family?"

"I'm not sure if he's from the Nanrong family. I only know that his surname is Nanrong, but he never used his real name."

"Who?"

Kaelina smiled meaningfully, "You know him."

"I do?" Ling Chen pondered and was still a bit confused, unsure of whom Kaelina meant.

"Snake King." Kaelina uttered the two words.

"Is it him?" Ling Chen was astounded by the revelation and struggled to digest the news, "He's also surnamed Nanrong?"

"Correct." Kaelina nodded, "Assassins rarely tell others their real names, using nicknames instead. However, I once had an encounter with Snake King. At that time, I was on a mission, and so was he; our target was the same person. That target was so detested that many people wanted him dead. Given the target's particular status, the security was extremely rigorous, making it difficult to infiltrate. So we hit it off and decided to work together—he was to create chaos, drawing away the security, and I was to assassinate the target. After the mission, we celebrated together in a bar. Perhaps because we drank too much, during our conversation, he revealed his name to me—Nanrong Zhengqing."

Chapter 215 Suspicion

"Nanrong Zhengqing?"

Ling Chen's pupils constricted. The Snake King's surname was also Nanrong - could this really be a coincidence? No! He had once asked Hu Fei, and it was known that the Snake King was hired to assassinate Nanrong Wanqing. Besides, what kind of grudge could there be between the Snake King and Nanrong Wanqing?

Nanrong Yong had once told him that the Nanrong Family had an enemy, which was the Nanrong Gang. But he had had Hu Fei investigate, and Nanrong Gang had died overseas several years ago. Moreover, before leaving the country, Nanrong Gang had divorced his wife, and at the time of their divorce, they had no children.

Although there were not many people with the surname Nanrong in the country, it was not unheard of. Perhaps this was just a coincidence. However, Ling Chen found it very difficult to convince himself, to believe this point.

"What are you thinking about?" Kaelina asked, seeing Ling Chen deep in thought.

"How much do you know about the Snake King?"

"He is an odd one. The golden age for an assassin is between twenty-eight to thirty-four years old. Generally, assassins choose to retire at thirty-five, but the Snake King is an exception. As far as I know, the Snake King should now be over forty years old and is still active in the assassin world, which is quite rare. In my view, the Snake King is probably not doing it for money. As a top-tier assassin, over ten years is enough time to accumulate a substantial fortune."

Ling Chen nodded, Kaelina's words made sense. Deep in thought, a flash of inspiration suddenly crossed his mind.

"Sit for a while, I'm going to make a call." After that, he stood up and walked outside the bar, dialing Hu Fei's number.

Soon, the phone was connected, and Hu Fei's voice came through, yawning heavily: "Hey, why are you looking for me so late?"

"Fatty, you told me that the person who hired the Snake King was anonymous. I want to know if the other party was specifically naming the Snake King or if it was you who arranged it for the employer?"

"It was the employer's request. Of course, I found it strange too. That person actually knew about the Snake King, which means he's probably very familiar with our circle. Eh, why are you asking this?"

"Just asking, go back to sleep."

After hanging up the phone, a sharp glint flashed in Ling Chen's eyes. It seemed the matter with the Snake King was not as simple as he had thought.

This could very well be a play, directed and acted out by the Snake King himself.

The Snake King used an employer's identity to hire an assassin anonymously through Hu Fei. He probably went through all this trouble for the convenience of action. Any middle man would first check out the target's information thoroughly and then provide the assassin with all the necessary intelligence. The assassin only needs to act on this information to plan and eliminate the target, saving time and effort.

However, if his guess was right, another question arose.

What grudges did the Snake King have with the Nanrong Family? Could it be related to Nanrong Gang? Just now, Kaelina said the Snake King was over forty; at his birth, Nanrong Gang would have been in his

twenties. It was the exact time when Nanrong Gang divorced and went abroad, which matched perfectly in time.

It's a pity that Hu Fei couldn't find anything about Nanrong Gang's ex-wife; otherwise, he could unravel the truth of the matter and see if Nanrong Gang had any offspring.

Returning to the bar, Ling Chen found that Kaelina was no longer there, leaving behind a few banknotes on the table.

This woman... leaving without a word.

The next day.

Wealthy Manor No. 118.

At 7:30 in the morning, the motorcade was ready, just waiting for Nanrong Wanqing to appear.

In the villa, Su Lin accompanied Nanrong Wanqing at the dining table, having breakfast. While drinking rice porridge, Su Lin noticed Nanrong Wanqing kept turning her head to look towards the bedroom next to the living room.

"Wanqing, what are you thinking about?"

"Nothing," answered Nanrong Wanqing indifferently, looking away.

"I don't believe that. You must be worried about something," Su Lin said with a teasing smile. "Is it because Ling Chen hasn't come back for a few days, and you're not used to it? He's been away for so many days and hasn't come back yet. I'll call and hurry him up later."

"No need to call," replied Nanrong Wanqing, putting down her chopsticks and bowl, her expression turning somewhat cold. "He's not coming back."

"What?" Su Lin was taken aback. "Did he quit? How come I didn't know?"

"Keep eating; I'm full." Nanrong Wanqing evaded her question and wheeled herself out.

Watching Nanrong Wanqing leave, Su Lin shook her head slightly. No wonder she felt that her cousin had been behaving strangely these past few days, seemingly distracted. It turned out to be because Ling Chen quit. She didn't understand; things had been going well recently, so why did he suddenly resign?

But what concerned her more was Nanrong Wanqing's change. She had never seen Nanrong Wanqing so restless over a man. Could it be... No way?

Leaving the Nanrong home, the fleet slowly moved on the road. In the back seat of the Rolls Royce, Nanrong Wanqing looked out at the passing traffic, her beautiful eyes flashing with complex emotions.

Several days had passed, but her heart still couldn't calm down. Every time she returned home and saw that bedroom, she couldn't help but think of Ling Chen and the things they had been through.

She had to admit, she had never cared so much about a man. But this man had left without a word, without even saying goodbye. These past few days, she was angry, wronged, and resentful, a rush of emotions filled her heart as if she had lost something, leaving emptiness inside.

"Chairwoman, we've arrived at the company."

Zhong Wei's voice came through, and Nanrong Wanqing came back to her senses, composed herself, and followed everyone into the Hongyu Group building.

Shortly after arriving at her office, Wang Lan came in from outside, urgently saying, "Chairwoman, there's been an accident with the project in the Old City?"

"Don't panic, tell me slowly, what happened?"

"Last night, the construction materials at the site were sabotaged by someone, and some valuable items were stolen. This morning, when workers were about to start work, a bunch of ruffians appeared from nowhere, demanding protection money and injuring many workers. They also threatened that if we don't pay, we won't be allowed to start work."

"Such a thing happened?" Nanrong Wanqing frowned slightly, her displeasure apparent. "Don't they know that the Old City redevelopment project is a joint venture between Hongyu Group and the government?"

"They are just a bunch of hooligans; they don't care about that."

"Call the municipal government, explain the situation to them. They can handle this matter."

"Okay." Wang Lan nodded and turned to leave the office.

But at that moment, the phone in front of Nanrong Wanqing suddenly rang. She answered the phone with a hello, and whatever the caller said made her face turn sour.

"Wang Lan."

"Chairwoman, do you have any other instructions?"

"Immediately notify the company's senior executives; I'm calling an emergency meeting. Everyone must arrive within ten minutes."

Chapter 216: Crisis at Hongyu Group (Part 1)

In Hongyu Group, every word of Nanrong Wanqing is a command. Over the years, everyone has become very familiar with the character of this chairman. If an emergency meeting is suddenly called, it must be something significant, and no one dares to neglect it. Within less than ten minutes, the company's senior management had all gathered in the conference room, buzzing with speculation.

By the time it was due, the door of the conference room opened, and the secretary Wang Lan, pushing a wheelchair, came in from outside.

For a moment, the conference room fell silent, all eyes fixated on Nanrong Wanqing.

Seated at a conference table over ten meters long, Nanrong Wanqing scanned the executives present and began, "I just received news that the reconstruction project in the Old City has been sabotaged, resulting in several workers getting injured and admitted to the hospital."

"Who dares to oppose our Hongyu Group so brazenly? We must find the culprit and teach them a harsh lesson," someone angrily cursed.

"I had initially thought to leave this matter to the government, but we are now faced with another issue. This morning, the police discovered a large amount of smuggled goods at the pier operated by our Hongyu Group, involving tens of millions in value, including a significant number of contraband items."

At this revelation, a wave of shock swept through the executives present.

"How is this possible?"

"Chairman, could there be some mistake?"

Nanrong Wanqing raised her hand, signaling for silence, "Our Hongyu Group has always operated within the bounds of the law, never skirting on the edges or breaking the law. However, first there was an issue with the reconstruction project, and now an issue at the pier. I believe these incidents are not coincidental; someone is targeting our Hongyu Group."

"Chairman, we have many competitors; could they be using these underhanded tactics to mess with us?"

"It's not clear at the moment; without evidence, we shouldn't jump to conclusions. The most important task now is to manage these two issues, especially the smuggled goods discovered at the pier as they involve a large sum of money. If investigated, Hongyu Group could face severe penalties. Starting now, I want you all to strengthen the management across all business lines to ensure such incidents won't happen again. Additionally, we need to thoroughly investigate the pier incident to see if it involves any insiders."

"Yes, Chairman."

At that moment, Wang Lan received a phone call, then whispered in front of Nanrong Wanqing, "Chairman, the police are here and would like to talk with you."

"Have them visit my office."

A few minutes later, Nanrong Wanqing returned to her office with Wang Lan, only to see a very fair-skinned woman sitting on the sofa, none other than Xia Mutong.

"Officer Xia."

"Miss Nanrong, hello," Xia Mutong nodded solemnly, "I believe you're aware of why I am here. I intended to ask Miss Nanrong to come to the police station to assist with the investigation, but given your status, the chief requested that we keep this matter confidential for now."

"Thank you!"

"You're welcome. Miss Nanrong is a significant partner of the government, so it's only right to afford you some special treatment." After saying this, Xia Mutong gestured to a colleague who understood and immediately opened a notebook to take notes. Meanwhile, Xia Mutong handed a list to Nanrong Wanqing, "Miss Nanrong, please take a look at this list."

Nanrong Wanqing glanced at it, her tone calm, "Is this the list of smuggled goods found at the pier?"

"Yes. Miss Nanrong, for the past ten years, Dongling Pier has been under the management of Hongyu Group, and now you are the chairman of Hongyu Group. I hope you can explain this."

"It's clear that this is a setup. You have seen the list; it involves only tens of millions, which is a drop in the bucket for Hongyu Group, whose market value you, Officer Xia, are surely aware of. Hongyu Group's daily profits alone exceed this amount, why would we risk smuggling?"

Xia Mutong nodded slightly, "Miss Nanrong, I know Hongyu Group has substantial assets and does not care about a few tens of millions. However, who would spend tens of millions to frame Hongyu Group? That is not a small amount. Furthermore, with so much cargo entering your pier, are you saying you wouldn't know about it? Besides, this is just what we found today; who can guarantee that Hongyu Group hasn't been involved before? Tens of millions at a time, and dozens of times a year... Miss Nanrong, that's billions in profit, and anyone would be tempted."

"Officer Xia, it's right for a police officer to maintain skepticism, but the innocent are clear of guilt, and you are welcome to investigate freely. Moreover, I have a question for you, Officer Xia; how did you know about the smuggled goods at Dongling Pier?"

"We received an anonymous tip-off, claiming to be an internal employee of Hongyu Group. Miss Nanrong, given your status, we will not detain you, but from today, until the case is clarified, you must stay in East Sea City and may not leave."

"Rest assured, I will fully cooperate with你. Besides this matter, I hope you will also focus on the Old City issue, expedite the construction work, and not delay the schedule."

"No problem."

After bidding farewell to Xia Mutong, Nanrong Wanqing sat alone in her office, staring at the computer screen with a slight frown and an icy expression. She has never been afraid of trouble; it's common for Hongyu Group, as a significant player, to be targeted. But what worries her the most is not knowing who her enemy is.

After a taxing day and as the end of her shift approached, Nanrong Wanqing made a call to Zhong Wei, planning to head home early.

With so much happening today, she needed to report to Nanrong Yong.

As the convoy left the underground parking lot, ready to hit the road, suddenly, a group of people rushed in, wielding cameras and microphones, surrounding the Rolls Royce.

"Miss Nanrong, as the chairman of Hongyu Group, what is your opinion on the smuggled goods found at Dongling Pier?"

"Miss Nanrong, rumor has it that Hongyu Group started from smuggling, is that true?"

"Miss Nanrong..."

Amid the chaotic scene, reporters relentlessly posed sharp questions, seeking answers.

Nanrong Wanqing looked out the car window, her face seemingly covered with a layer of frost. The incident had happened just a day ago, and although Xia Mutong promised to keep it confidential for the time being, it seemed as though the reporters had all agreed to show up. If no one was orchestrating this behind the scenes, who would believe such a coincidence?

Seeing the scene outside, Zhong Wei frowned and said heavily, "Chairman, stay in the car. I'll disperse those reporters immediately." Saying this, he contacted other team members through the intercom.

In a short while, apart from the driver, all members of the security team got out of the cars, stood on either side of the convoy, spread their arms to block the reporters outside, and began clearing a path.

"Ah!"

As the three cars slowly moved forward, a scream suddenly erupted in the crowd.

Chapter 217 The Crisis of Hongyu Group (Part 2)

"What's happening?" Nanrong Wanqing looked out the car window and saw a female reporter lying on the ground, holding her chest, her face contorted with pain.

"You...why did you hit someone?"

The cameraman accompanying the female reporter pointed at Zhong Wei's group, angrily accusing, "Do you have no respect for the law anymore? Don't think that having money allows you to do whatever you want. This is a society ruled by law. Don't believe me? I'll sue you!"

Zhong Wei frowned slightly, his face looking unpleasant, said, "I didn't hit her, I just pushed her, and she was the one who couldn't stand firmly."

"You're still trying to argue your way out!"

"I..."

"Stop arguing." At this moment, Nanrong Wanqing rolled down the window, stopped Zhong Wei who wanted to retort, and said expressionlessly, "Take her to the hospital, and while you're at it, apologize to her. We are in a sensitive time; try not to invite any trouble."

"Yes, Chairman."

Seeing Nanrong Wanqing's face, several reporters swarmed forward, their cameras and microphones all thrust in front of her, eagerly asking, "Miss Nanrong, regarding the smuggling incident at Dongling Pier, as the Chairman of Hongyu Group, is there anything you would like to say?"

"This matter is now under police investigation, and I believe they will clear Hongyu Group's name." After speaking, Nanrong Wanqing closed the car window, shutting out the noisy sounds from outside.

Back at Wealthy Manor.

Nanrong Wanqing went straight to Nanrong Yong's study, looking at him concentrating on his calligraphy at the desk. She sat quietly by his side without disturbing him.

A few minutes later, Nanrong Yong put down his brush, looked at his granddaughter, and smiled slightly, "I've heard about what happened at the company. Someone is targeting us."

"I know."

"There's an old saying, 'A big tree catches the wind.' Hongyu Group is the leader in East Sea City's business community, involved in many industries, though we haven't created a monopoly, but many people have lost their livelihoods because of us. I know there are many in the industry who hate Hongyu Group, but I don't care because I have no regard for them. In any business, one cannot be too sympathetic, otherwise, the one who will suffer is oneself. Give them an inch and they'll take a mile, hoping you'll give even more. I learned my lesson once before, so I've never backed down since. Wanqing, the business world is a battlefield, it's either you or me, never show mercy."

"Grandfather, what's your advice on this matter?"

"Watch and wait. Whoever took action this time, there's definitely more than one person involved. They've gone to great lengths to frame us, and they won't give up so easily. There's surely more to come, just watch—the play has just begun, and the best part is yet to follow."

Nanrong Wanqing nodded lightly, "I know what to do now." After speaking, she began pushing the wheelchair, turning to leave.

"Wanqing."

"Grandfather, is there anything else?"

"Ling Chen..."

"It was his own decision to resign, it has nothing to do with me."

"Ah, it's a pity," Nanrong Yong sighed deeply, "Ling Chen is a good lad, I had hoped to keep him in the Nanrong Family for the long term."

...

The next day.

Ling Chen got up early in the morning, bought breakfast outside, then headed towards the residential area. As he passed by the newspaper kiosk outside the community, his eyes were suddenly drawn to a newspaper headline.

"Hongyu Group Suspected of Smuggling!"

Seeing the conspicuous headline, Ling Chen slightly startled, disbelief in his eyes. He picked up the newspaper, flipped through a few pages; aside from East Sea Daily, the several other papers were all reports on the Hongyu Group's smuggling case.

Buying a few newspapers, Ling Chen hurried back home, reading them in detail.

"Hongyu Group's fortune built on smuggling?"

"The dirty deals hidden in the shadows."

"Nanrong Wanqing angers into violence, directing her subordinates to assault the reporter, causing hospitalization."

"..."

There were an overwhelming number of such headlines, countless of them, all negative news about Hongyu Group.

Ling Chen bit into a baozi, shaking his head in silence. He had only been gone a few days, and so many things had happened to Hongyu Group. He wondered how Nanrong Wanqing was coping now.

As he was pondering, there came a series of knocks at the door, three short and three long.

Opening the door, he saw the chubby Hu Fei standing outside, holding a few recently bought newspapers.

Seeing his face, Ling Chen knew the reason for his visit.

"Come in."

Sitting in the living room, and seeing the newspapers on the table, Hu Fei chuckled and said, "I see you're already in the know, I had especially run over here to inform you."

"Chubby, what's your take on this?"

"It's clear someone is after the Nanrong Family." Hu Fei threw the newspapers on the table, "Just look at these papers, they're all tabloids reporting this. The major media aren't saying a peep. Hongyu Group has been operating for so many years, and they have good relations with the government and media. They won't make noise without clarifying the situation or fabricating news that would be detrimental to Hongyu Group. The current reports can only be considered rumors, not worth much. But to be honest, Hongyu Group is indeed in big trouble this time."

"What do you mean?"

"The police found smuggled goods worth tens of millions at Dongling Pier, which is solid evidence. Unless you can find proof that someone deliberately set you up, the Nanrong Family will find it difficult to shake off this accusation. Of course, if there's really no other way, they will have to find a scapegoat to take the blame and preserve the Nanrong Family's reputation and assets. But the problem is, this crime is not trivial, according to our country's laws, smuggling goods worth more than 500,000 means at least ten years or life imprisonment. Now that the involved amount is in the tens of millions, it's likely hard to escape the death penalty. Even if the Nanrong Family is willing to pay, it's not certain that someone would be willing to take the fall."

Ling Chen nodded, this was indeed a big problem.

"Chubby, do me a favor, look into that batch of smuggled goods. So many items couldn't have been moved to the pier without anyone noticing."

"Didn't expect you to still have emotions for the past."

"Speaking of which!" Ling Chen abruptly changed the topic, "Another thing, investigate a person named Nanrong Zhengqing, see if you can gather any information on him."

"Why another person from the Nanrong Family?"

"Nanrong Zhengqing has a nickname, called Snake King."

"It's him?" Hu Fei's face changed, surprised.

Ling Chen smiled, "Now you're interested, right?"

"Fine, I'll go check it out for you right away."

After sending Hu Fei away, Ling Chen returned to the table, contemplating the newspapers spread out before him, his brows furrowing slightly. The Nanrong Family was in trouble at this time, and he couldn't show himself; thinking of Nanrong Wanqing having to face all this alone, he couldn't help but feel distressed.

He wondered if she had slept well last night.

As he pondered, a device on the table suddenly lit up with a red light.

Chapter 218 The Crisis of Hongyu Group (Part 3)

Ling Chen composed himself, quickly put on the listening device, and adjusted the frequency on the equipment. Soon, a clear voice came through the headphones.

But after listening for a short while, he put the headphones down and couldn't help cursing. He thought he would eavesdrop on some valuable information, but all he heard were a woman's moans.

As a man, he knew exactly what those sounds meant. Unexpectedly, Mr. Zhu, a gentleman by appearance, was having a sordid affair right in the office.

It took less than two minutes for the seductive moaning to finally quiet down. Ling Chen, with headphones in hand, snickered to himself; that guy had such poor stamina, only lasting a minute and a half—what a wimp.

Following the sound of a door, the woman must have left. Next, Zhu Hong's voice came through the monitor: "Have the driver get ready; I'll be going out soon."

Hearing this, Ling Chen immediately shut off the equipment and left the room.

Ten minutes later.

Outside the office building of Boyang Company, Ling Chen, wearing a helmet, sat on a motorbike, quietly watching the entrance, waiting for Zhu Hong to appear.

Traffic in East Sea City is too congested; it's more convenient on a motorbike.

He didn't have to wait long before Zhu Hong emerged, flanked by several suited bodyguards, and got into a Mercedes.

Watching the Mercedes drive onto the street, Ling Chen followed behind on his motorbike, keeping a safe distance. Zhu Hong's bodyguards were professionals; if he got too close, they would surely notice.

About half an hour later, the Mercedes finally stopped outside a tall building.

"Hongyu Group!"

Ling Chen was startled; he thought Zhu Hong would go to some secret place, but instead, he headed to Nanrong Wanqing's. Damn it, this bastard, just after sleeping with another woman, came to look for Nanrong Wanqing, truly shameless. But then again, with such a big scandal hitting Hongyu Group, Zhu Hong would naturally seize the opportunity to show some concern and provide comfort.

Seeing Zhu Hong and his entourage enter the building, Ling Chen couldn't follow inside, so he stayed outside, patiently waiting for him to come out.

Inside the office.

Zhu Hong sat on the sofa, eyes filled with unconcealable love as he watched Nanrong Wanqing.

"Wanqing, I heard about what happened at Hongyu Group, are you okay?"

"Thank you for your concern."

"I know someone deliberately framed the Nanrong family this time. No matter who they are, I will help you find them and clear Hongyu Group's name."

Nanrong Wanqing lightly shook her head, "I appreciate your kindness, but the police are helping with this matter, you..."

"Wanqing," Zhu Hong cut her off, his tone firm, pausing deliberately between words, "I know what happened a while ago has changed your opinion of me, but I want to tell you that no matter how you change, my feelings for you will never waver. This is my promise to you. I've said before that I would be by your side for life, protecting you from any harm. You know my character; I always keep my word."

Nanrong Wanqing bowed her head, silent. How could she not understand Zhu Hong's intentions? But she could no longer face him as she used to.

Seeing her silent, Zhu Hong changed the subject, "By the way, Wanqing, where is Ling Chen?"

"Are you looking for him?"

"There's been some misunderstanding between him and me, but after all, he's someone by your side, ensuring your safety. For that, I'm grateful. So, no matter who was right or wrong between us, I hope to apologize to him and make peace, to avoid making things difficult for you."

"It's not necessary; he's already resigned."

"Oh?" Zhu Hong showed a surprised expression, "Why?"

"Don't ask; I don't want to talk about him anymore."

Zhu Hong nodded, "Then I'll leave you to your work. Don't worry too much about Hongyu Group; I'll find a way to clear things up soon."

After leaving the building, Zhu Hong got into the Mercedes and took out his phone to dial a number.

"Hello, Miss Zhang, the job at Dongling Pier was well done. However, the Nanrong family doesn't seem to be too worried. Perhaps you could add fuel to the fire."

"Understood. Mr. Zhu, if I may be so bold to ask, what are you doing with all these maneuvers around Hongyu Group? Are you trying to take over the Nanrong family's assets?"

"Miss Zhang, just do your job, and don't ask questions about the rest."

After saying that, Zhu Hong hung up the phone directly.

Following Zhu Hong's car back to the Boyang Company's building, Ling Chen couldn't help but swear, a complete waste of his damn time.

Evening.

Back at home, after Nanrong Wanqing and Su Lin finished dinner, Nanrong Hao came looking for them.

"Sister."

"What's the matter?"

Nanrong Hao got straight to the point: "I heard that the construction site in the Old City has been harassed, and many workers were injured. Is that true?"

"That's company business; I'll handle it. You just focus on your studies and stay out of it."

"How can I do that? You're in charge of the company; I have no say in it, but the Old City is my turf. Someone stirring trouble on my turf, should I just stand by and do nothing? Sister, let me handle the Old City situation. Street issues should be solved by street rules. I want to see who's daring enough to mess with my family." Without waiting for Nanrong Wanqing to respond, Nanrong Hao had already stormed out.

"Wanqing, you should keep an eye on him, be careful he turns into a real thug," Su Lin showed concern.

Hearing her, Nanrong Wanqing's lips curled into a faint smile.

Although she did not approve of Nanrong Hao's actions, she felt heartened that Nanrong Hao had taken the initiative to share the family's worries, no longer idling about like before, never minding the family's affairs.

Leaving the Nanrong home, Nanrong Hao called Jiang Hao and then drove to the Old City.

Upon arrival, Jiang Hao was already waiting with a group of brothers.

"Haozi."

"Hao, did you bring everyone?"

"Yes, called over thirty good men; that should be enough."

"Let's go, let's see who's so blind as to cross Lord Tai Sui."

Crossing an intersection, the group reached the Old City construction site's renovation project. The site was cordoned off with temporary fences, as there were many building materials to prevent theft, some measures were enacted.

At the site, the workers were resting in the sheds, lights bright all around. In a corner of the site, aluminum and cables were scattered haphazardly, and several uniformed security guards patrolled the area.

The day before yesterday, an incident occurred at the site; many materials were stolen, and several workers were injured, prompting Nanrong Wanqing to increase security to ensure the workers' safety.

Chapter 219 Suspected of Murder

After waiting for over two hours, the workers had all fallen asleep, and the construction site outside was desolate, not a ghost in sight.

"Hey, Haozi, will those people still come?"

"I don't know," Nanrong Hao replied as he dug his ear, "Let's try our luck. Damn it, they dared to bully the Nanrong Family, they must be severely taught a lesson."

"Haozi, I think there's no need for us to stand guard here, who knows if they'll even come. It's better to leave some brothers here, and they can notify us if anything happens," Jiang Hao advised. It wasn't that he lacked loyalty, but he didn't want to waste time for nothing.

Nanrong Hao thought for a moment and nodded, "Alright."

In the middle of the conversation, a group of people suddenly appeared outside the construction site. There were at least a dozen or twenty men, each holding an iron rod or a steel pipe, looking formidable.

"Hey, what a coincidence, just when we were thinking of leaving, these guys showed up," Nanrong Hao grinned, "Brothers, let's get to work and give them a good lesson. Dinner's on me tonight."

Jiang Hao stepped forward with big strides and questioned, "Which gang are you from? Don't you know this place is our turf? Want to get by in Old City without paying any respect?"

"Who do you think you are that you deserve our respect? Kid, scram aside, don't block our way to fortune," the other side sneered.

Jiang Hao's face turned cold, and he snorted disdainfully through his nostrils, his gaze sweeping through the crowd. Soon, a young man around twenty-five or twenty-six caught his attention. The young man was dressed in a floral shirt and jeans, with short hair, the corners of his mouth slightly raised in an arrogant manner, as if he looked down on everyone.

Moreover, while everyone was wielding weapons, this young man's hands were empty except for an odd pair of leather gloves, likely indicating he was the leader.

"Are you the leader?"

The young man scoffed at his question as if he had not heard, but instead looked towards Nanrong Hao and asked, "You're Nanrong Hao?"

"That's me. You know me?"

The young man gave a cold smile, "Of course I know you, you are exactly who we were looking for. Brothers, get him, give Mr. Nanrong a proper welcome."

Seeing that the opponents went straight to action without any regard for rules, Jiang Hao lost his temper as well, picked up a steel pipe from the ground, and charged into the fray.

"Go, take them down!"

Facing a few thugs rushing at him, Nanrong Hao clenched his fists, neither dodging nor evading, and plunged straight into the crowd. With a smash of his fist, fast as lightning, a thug had no time to react before crashing down to the ground.

After practicing martial arts with Ling Chen for so long, plus his own hard work, no ordinary person could get close to him. Within moments, he had knocked down the five thugs surrounding him.

Seeing the tide turning, the young man quickly retreated.

"Where do you think you're going, stay right there."

Nanrong Hao shouted loudly and immediately gave chase, aiming to capture the opponent. But then, the young man suddenly turned around and with a flick of his wrist, a sharp dagger whizzed towards Nanrong Hao's face.

Nanrong Hao's heart sank, he tilted his body slightly and with agile movements, snatched the dagger's hilt as it flew past his face, cursing, "You dare ambush me!" and flung the dagger back.

However, the young man's reaction was even quicker, pinching the blade of the dagger between his fingers.

Seeing this, Nanrong Hao was taken aback by the realization that the guy's skills might be even better than his own. While he was still surprised, the young man had already run far off, and the other thugs, seeing their leader flee, scrambled to escape as well.

"Anyone who dares to make trouble on my turf again, don't blame me for being rude," Jiang Hao yelled.

After speaking, he walked over to Nanrong Hao, patting his shoulder, "What are you spacing out for?"

"Nothing."

"Don't worry about it, with the lesson they've learned this time, I believe they won't dare to come back. Come on, let's go have a drink."

"Okay."

A night passed.

Early in the morning, Nanrong Hao had already gotten up and practiced basic martial arts skills in the backyard for an hour. Although Ling Chen left, he never forgot Ling Chen's teachings. Having started martial arts training late, his foundation was shaky. In order to reach a higher level, he had to double down on this aspect.

Today was Saturday, no classes. After finishing his training, Nanrong Hao went to Nanrong Wanqing's villa, ready to report to Sister about last night's events.

"Sister, Cousin."

Upon entering, he saw Nanrong Wanqing and Su Lin having breakfast.

"Have you had breakfast?"

"Not yet."

"Sit down and join us. Nanny Wang made century egg and lean pork congee." As she spoke, Nanrong Wanqing picked up a bowl and served him a portion.

A warm feeling filled Nanrong Hao's heart. Sister had always been strict with him, and over time, he had grown somewhat fearful of her. Since then, unless it was a family meal, he would deliberately avoid Sister. Over the years, they had never had breakfast together.

But recently, he felt Sister's attitude towards him had changed significantly, no longer as overbearing as before.

"Sister, last night I went to the construction site and ran into that gang causing trouble. Hao and I taught them a lesson. They won't be back to cause any more destruction."

"Are you hurt?" Nanrong Wanqing asked, her voice filled with concern.

Nanrong Hao replied with a proud smile, "No worries, all thanks to Chen's teachings. A few small-time thugs aren't worth my concern."

Nanrong Wanqing nodded gently, "Be careful in the future, and try not to hurt anyone."

"Cousin," Su Lin giggled, "Now that you're so capable, if anyone bullies your sister at school, you'll help me."

"No problem, leave it to me. However... Cousin, who at our school would dare to mess with you? No need for me to step in, your ability to command like a shrew is enough."

Hearing this, Nanrong Wanqing's lips curved into a smile, like a blossoming white orchid, overflowing with pleasant mood.

Su Lin rolled her eyes irritably and said discontentedly, "How can you talk like that? Aren't you my cousin? Humph, you've been with Ling Chen so long, you've been led astray by him."

"Not true! Cousin, Chen is a good guy. Don't wrong him."

While the three siblings were chatting and joking, the butler Liu Kun came in quickly from outside and whispered a few words in Nanrong Wanqing's ear.

"Uncle Liu, please let her in."

"Yes."

Shortly after, accompanied by Liu Kun, Xia Mutong and several colleagues walked into the villa.

"Miss Nanrong, sorry for coming over so early and disturbing you."

"It's okay. Officer Xia, have you made progress on the smuggling case by coming to see me at this time?"

Xia Mutong shook her head and said, "I'm not here to see you, but him." She extended her hand and pointed at Nanrong Hao.

"Me?" Nanrong Hao was momentarily startled, "What do you need me for?"

Xia Mutong pulled out an arrest warrant stamped with the court seal and said solemnly, "Nanrong Hao, I am now accusing you of suspicion of murder. This is an arrest warrant issued by the court. Please come with us."

Chapter 220 Nanrong Hao is Captured

Nanrong Wanqing's face changed slightly, and with surprise, she said: "Officer Xia, is there some kind of mistake?"

"Miss Nanrong, our police force values evidence in handling cases, and the evidence now is conclusive. I believe I am not mistaken." With that, Xia Mutong stared at the stunned Nanrong Hao, "Nanrong Hao, I ask you, were you at Old City's construction site last night?"

"Yes... I was there."

"Did you get into a dispute with someone and engage in a physical altercation?"

Nanrong Hao quickly tried to defend himself: "They came looking for trouble with us, I was just acting in self-defense, you..."

"You don't need to explain so much, you just need to answer yes or no." Xia Mutong interrupted him, gazing into his eyes.

"Yes."

Xia Mutong nodded: "Then that settles it. In the early hours of last night, we received a report and found a male corpse near the construction site. The victim was stabbed with a dagger in a vital spot and died from excessive blood loss at the scene. We've examined the fingerprints on the dagger, and they point to you as the murderer."

"No... it wasn't me, you... you must have made a mistake." Nanrong Hao frantically waved his hands, vigorously denying it.

"Save your words for the judge. Take him back in handcuffs."

Upon hearing Xia Mutong's order, several police officers rushed forward, ready to subdue Nanrong Hao and take him back to the police station.

"Stop!"

Seeing the situation go downhill, Liu Kun immediately shouted loudly and rushed in front of Nanrong Hao, stopping the police officers in their tracks.

"Officer Xia, I'm very clear about my brother's character. He would never do such a thing. There must be a misunderstanding. I hope you can investigate this thoroughly." Nanrong Wanqing tried to remain calm. However, the tightly gripped hands betrayed her inner tension.

Xia Mutong, with an unchanged expression, said: "Miss Nanrong, I'm sorry, but I operate according to the law. If the Nanrong family interferes, I'll have to arrest you for obstructing justice." After a pause, looking at the slightly pale Nanrong Wanqing, she felt a bit of reluctance, "Miss Nanrong, I'm only taking Nanrong Hao back for now. There will be no conviction before the court hearing. Whatever you want to do, you still have ample time. However, I suggest finding a good lawyer for your brother, it might reduce his sentence."

Nanrong Wanqing bit her lip, glancing at Nanrong Hao, her expression hesitant and undecided.

"Miss..."

"Uncle Liu, let him go."

"Yes."

"Big sister, I really didn't kill anyone, you have to believe me." Nanrong Hao pleaded anxiously.

Nanrong Wanqing nodded slightly, her tone full of resolve: "Don't worry, I won't let anything happen to you. Officer Xia, before any conviction, I hope you will treat my brother well."

"I'll try my best."

Watching Nanrong Hao being handcuffed by the police and taken out of the house, Nanrong Wanqing slowly exhaled, feeling as if all her strength had left her, she slumped into her wheelchair.

"Wanqing, are you okay?" Su Lin asked with concern, a trace of worry in her eyes.

Nanrong Wanqing shook her head, despite her physical weakness, and said with a pale face: "Uncle Liu, please go and hire a lawyer immediately."

"Miss, please rest for a while, don't harm yourself."

"How can I rest at a time like this?" Nanrong Wanqing said with a bitter smile, "Uncle Liu, don't tell grandpa about this for now. He just recovered from his illness, I'm afraid it would hit him hard."

"I understand, but with such a big incident, I'm afraid it can't be concealed."

"Just do your best."

...

In a luxurious villa in the city.

Zhu Hong sat on a leather sofa, legs crossed, holding a glass of red wine in his hand, an elegant and charming smile on his face.

At this moment, Zhang Xueli walked in from outside, saying, "Mr. Zhu, everything has been taken care of. Nanrong Hao has been taken away by the police, and everything is going according to plan."

"Excellent!" Zhu Hong smiled faintly, raising his glass, "Miss Zhang, I was right about you, your ability to handle things is strong."

"Mr. Zhu, you are targeting the Nanrong family everywhere, could it be that you are aiming for the Nanrong family's assets?"

"Assets? Miss Zhang, my ambitions aren't that low. Money to me is just a number; I don't care about that. However, if you want to think that way, it's not wrong. If things go smoothly, the Nanrong family's wealth will sooner or later be mine." With these words, Zhu Hong put down his wine glass and stood up, "Miss Zhang, I may not be at home for the next few days, contact me via phone if anything comes up."

"Where are you going?"

Zhu Hong curled his lips into a smile: "With such a big incident happening in the Nanrong family, as a friend of Nanrong Wanqing, it's only right for me to show my concern. Don't you think?"

A day passed.

"What! Nanrong Hao has been arrested?"

Holding the phone, Ling Chen stood up and said, "Fatty, what is going on, explain it to me clearly."

"It's said he's suspected of murder, I don't know the details. Nanrong Hao has been detained, locked up in the police station."

"Okay, I got it."

After hanging up the phone, Ling Chen calmed down and sat back in his chair, frowning slightly.

Nanrong Hao being charged with murder, he couldn't believe it. Although he had known Nanrong Hao for only a few months, he understood his character well; Nanrong Hao would never do such a thing.

These few days, first, the Nanrong family was allegedly involved in smuggling, and now this has happened to Nanrong Hao. Two incidents happening so close together couldn't be a coincidence, someone must be pulling strings from behind.

"I wonder how she is doing now."

Muttering to himself, Ling Chen's brows were filled with a trace of concern. With Nanrong Hao arrested, the Nanrong family was probably in chaos now. After all, if Nanrong Hao's charges were proven true, the consequences were evident. And as the only male heir of the Nanrong Family, if anything happened to him, the family line would end.

After contemplating for a while, he stood up and left the room.

Night fell.

At the headquarters of the East Sea City Police Department.

In the detention cell, Nanrong Hao slumped on the bed, dressed in a prison uniform, staring blankly at the iron bars outside, motionless for a long time, like a lifeless statue.

Bang!

Suddenly, a muffled noise came through. Nanrong Hao turned his head, only to see the guard outside the detention cell collapsing to the ground as if he had fainted.

He was a little staggered, his mind wasn't caught up yet, but a person had already appeared before his eyes.

"Haozi."

"Chen... Brother Chen? You, you..." Nanrong Hao hurriedly got up, ran to the bars with a surprised look on his face, looking at the person who came.

"I know you have questions for me, but don't ask too much now. I've heard about your situation, what happened?"

With a distressed face, Nanrong Hao said: "Brother Chen, I didn't kill anyone, I've been framed."

"I believe you, otherwise, I wouldn't come to see you. Don't worry, take your time to explain everything clearly."

Nanrong Hao nodded and recounted the events of that night in detail, "Brother Chen, Hao was with me that night, he can testify for me."