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Ling Chen smiled and replied, "That's possible..."

"Not possible!" Suddenly, an old voice rose from the crowd, carrying a hint of chill, "Without my permission, no one can leave."

Ling Chen followed the direction of the voice, only to see an elderly man with white hair, hands behind his back, walking briskly without the faltering steps typical of old age, carrying an aura of implicit authority. People around him stepped aside, bowing slightly, their faces full of respect.

Jiang Kun!

Jiang Family Patriarch.

The name immediately popped into Ling Chen's mind. Before taking action, he had already researched the members of the Jiang family, so he was clear about the elder's identity.

Thinking of what Jiang Kun had just said, Ling Chen's eyes narrowed, his expression turned solemn. With this old fellow's appearance, things might not be so easy to resolve.

At that time, Ling Chen also noticed that, apart from Jiang Kun making an appearance, Jiang Ying had also arrived, standing behind Jiang Kun, watching the unfolding situation, his gaze complex.

"So, you are Ling Chen?" Jiang Kun approached the crowd, staring directly at Ling Chen, his tone flat, as if he hadn't seen Jiang Han being held hostage by Ling Chen.

"So, you're the old guy in charge of the Jiang Family?" Ling Chen asked knowingly, his words not very polite.

"Young man, I respect you as a Tiger List expert, and your future holds great promise, so I don't wish to make things difficult for you. Just let my grandson go, leave Nanrong Wanqing behind, and I will let you leave immediately, never to trouble you again."

Ling Chen's lip curled slightly as he responded, "I respect your age, so I won't make it difficult for you either. Just let us leave safely, and not only will I let your grandson go, I'll even let you live a few more years. How about that?"

Jiang Kun smiled faintly, his smile gradually turning cold, a sharp light flashing in his eyes as he said slowly and deliberately, "Young man, one ought to be aware of their limitations. Don't overstep your bounds. In the Jiang family, a Tiger List expert is just a bodyguard. Your ability to defeat Qiu Wen and Qiu Wu does not mean you have the right to act arrogantly here."

"Enough, stop with the nonsense." Ling Chen impatiently said, "I am just going to ask you once, do you still want Jiang Han's life?"

Jiang Kun shook his head, "I don't believe you have the guts to kill him."

"Is that so? Let's give it a try then." With those words, Ling Chen lightly slashed with the dagger in his hand, creating a cut on Jiang Han's neck.

Feeling the pain on his neck, Jiang Han's face instantly turned pale with terror, his body tense, he looked at Jiang Kun pleadingly and trembled, "Grand... Grandfather..."

"Hey!" Ling Chen unashamedly responded, his lips curling, "Grandson, rather than begging your grandfather to save you, you might as well beg me, your new grandfather, to let you go."

Jiang Kun narrowed his eyes slightly, staring at the wound on Jiang Han's neck, his eyes cold, showing a hint of ruthlessness.

"Ling Chen, you are audacious."

"Thanks for the compliment, I've always been very bold. If you don't believe me, I can prove it to you right now."

"Hmph!" Jiang Kun coldly said, "I wanted to give you a way out, but since you insist on seeking death, you can't blame others. Kill him!"

The moment the words fell, a sense of alarm surged in Ling Chen's heart, and a fierce wind broke through the air. From the corner of his eye, he saw a flash of cold light shooting towards himself and Jiang Han. The attacker was incredibly fast, nearly reaching his peak speed instantly, and Ling Chen had no time to think much, hastening to step back.

But at that moment, the cold light suddenly changed trajectory, swirling in the air, and aimed straight for his face. Seeing this, Ling Chen's expression changed slightly, surprised by the attacker's skill, which seemed to be more than a notch above the Qiu brothers.

The opponent launched two consecutive attacks, aiming to repel him and rescue Jiang Han. Not only that, the opponent's moves were aggressive and ruthless, taking the initiative. If he had killed Jiang Han at that moment, he would have taken the bait.

A life for a life, he couldn't afford the gamble and had no choice but to give up.

However, just as he let go of Jiang Han, that cold star suddenly spun in the air, circling to his back at a tremendous speed, leaving him no chance to react. He only felt a fiery pain on his back as it was torn open by a large gash.

"Ling Chen!"

Seeing the vicious wound on his back, Nanrong Wanqing exclaimed in shock, her beautiful eyes unable to hide her concern as she asked, "Are you alright?"

Ling Chen shook his head, shielding her behind him, and scanned the surroundings. He said, "Come out, at least let me know which expert I am dealing with."

"Hanlin, teach him a lesson, so he may know there are some people he shouldn't provoke."

Jiang Kun had barely finished speaking when a middle-aged man flew over the wall of the Siheyuan like a leaf rolled by the wind, lightly touching down on the ground.

An expert!

Ling Chen's heart sank a bit; just from the opponent's unassuming action, it was evident that this man was not only an expert but one of the topmost experts. He wondered what level of Inner Strength one must cultivate to reach such a state.

With the appearance of the middle-aged man, Jiang Han's eyes lit up, and he joyfully called out, "Dad."

Hearing this address, Ling Chen was taken aback as this man turned out to be Jiang Han's father, Jiang Hanlin.

At this moment, Jiang Hanlin turned his head, revealing a fairly ordinary face with thick brows and narrow eyes. Despite being over forty, his skin was well-kept, showing no signs of age, resembling a man in his thirties, his expression cold and unemotional. Even hearing Jiang Han's shout induced no change in his demeanor. However, when his gaze shifted to Ling Chen, a sharp chill flickered in his eyes.

"Dad, this guy almost killed me just now; you must avenge me." With Jiang Hanlin's backing, Jiang Han shed his earlier fear and became arrogant, giving Ling Chen a 'you're doomed' look.

Jiang Hanlin nodded slightly, sparing his words as he said coldly, "Those who bully the Jiang Family, kill!"

A single word 'kill', filled with a murderous chill, utterly cold.

Ling Chen sized up Jiang Hanlin, his gaze suddenly drawn to something at his waist. It was a silver whip winding around his waist, six meters long, with a sharp dart attached at the end, glinting with a bone-chilling light.

The dart had caused the wound on his back just a moment ago.

"Ling Chen."

Nanrong Wanqing pulled on his hand from behind, whispering, "You go first, I'll stay."

From Jiang Hanlin and Ling Chen's brief interaction, she had already deduced that although Ling Chen was strong, Jiang Hanlin was stronger. If it came down to a fight, Ling Chen had no chance of winning. She was already satisfied that Ling Chen had come to rescue her despite the dangers; she didn't want him to get hurt because of her, which would make her regret it forever.

Ling Chen turned his head, smiled, and held her hand back.

"Don't say such foolish things. If we go, we go together; if we stay, we stay together."

Feeling the resoluteness in his gaze, Nanrong Wanqing swallowed her words, a faint smile appeared on her lips, and she gently nodded.

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"You just watch from the side, I'll handle things here." Ling Chen patted her hand and turned to walk towards Jiang Hanlin.

Watching his retreating figure, Nanrong Wanqing gave her own right hand an odd glance. When Ling Chen was holding her hand earlier, she felt as if she had touched something hard.

Ling Chen strode to the center of the area, his gaze fixed unwaveringly on Jiang Hanlin, standing tall and straight like a spear, his pupils as dark as ink showing not the slightest fear.

As their eyes met, Ling Chen slightly raised the corners of his mouth, turned his head to Jiang Kun, and asked, "So if I win, I can take someone with me and leave?"

Jiang Kun, as if he had just heard some funny joke, relaxed his eyebrows slightly, his lips curling up in a scornful smile, nodded, and said, "Fine, I promise you, as long as you win, I will not trouble the two of you."

Qiu Wen and Qiu Wu standing behind him silently shook their heads, not the least bit optimistic about Ling Chen's chances. Indeed, they had both lost to Ling Chen previously. But this time, Ling Chen's opponent was Jiang Hanlin. Having spent so many years at the Jiang Family, they knew all too well how formidable and terrifying Jiang Hanlin was. Years ago, the two brothers were consistently used as sparring partners for Jiang Hanlin. It was not until three years ago that they were able to shed this role, not because Jiang Hanlin no longer needed practice, but because they were no longer qualified to be his sparring partners.

Jiang Hanlin was, undoubtedly, an expert.

In their opinion, Jiang Hanlin's strength was enough to rank in the top three of the Tiger List. Yet, his name was not found on the Tiger List, not because he lacked the qualification, but because he disdained it. Furthermore, he seldom appeared in public to showcase his strength, spending his time in seclusion within the family, practicing – even the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion was unaware that such a top-tier expert was hidden here.

At this moment, Ling Chen paid no attention to the expressions of the Qiu brothers; all his energy was focused on Jiang Hanlin.

Taking a deep breath, Ling Chen brought his hands together in salute, standing tall and announcing earnestly, "Please advise!"

Without uttering a word, the cold light in Jiang Hanlin's eyes grew colder, as if it could pierce through one's body and freeze one's soul. A shiver ran through Ling Chen, who as a martial artist knew this to be the aura emanating from Jiang Hanlin.

First, intimidate the opponent with one's presence, then strike with a fatal blow as swift as lightning.

This was the mark of a top-tier expert.

Facing this overwhelming pressure, Ling Chen drew a breath of energy from his Dantian, like a trickling stream, slowly flowing along his meridians, countering Jiang Hanlin's imposing aura.

As Jiang Hanlin's aura reached its peak, Ling Chen saw the figure in front of him flicker; Jiang Hanlin had made his move.

With a flip of his palm, concentrated with formidable Inner Strength, it blasted towards him, aiming straight for his face.

Jiang Hanlin was incredibly fast; his body approached Ling Chen in the blink of an eye.

Worried, Nanrong Wanqing shouted urgently, "Ling Chen, be careful!" But her warning came too late. As soon as she spoke out, Ling Chen had already reacted.

Ling Chen shifted slightly beneath his feet, dodging Jiang Hanlin's palm wind, and with agility swift as the wind, he moved to Jiang Hanlin's side. His fists clenched tightly, punch after punch resounded powerfully through the air, aiming for Jiang Hanlin's right shoulder.

Jiang Hanlin didn't seem to dodge; instead, he slightly bent his right arm, palm facing outward, and astonishingly used his palm to block Ling Chen's punch firmly.

Failing to land the punch, Ling Chen's pupils shrank. He quickly withdrew. However, whilst still in the stance with their fist and palm touching, Jiang Hanlin suddenly changed his move. His palm transformed into a grip, clasp firmly onto Ling Chen's fist, preventing him from pulling away.

Instantly, Ling Chen felt a powerful force flowing through the opponent's fingers, binding his fist tightly like an iron hoop, immobilizing it.

Seeing this bad turn of events, without a moment's hesitation, Ling Chen's right leg shot up, launching a powerful kick towards Jiang Hanlin's neck.

However, as Ling Chen's right leg hung mid-air, yet to hit the target, Jiang Hanlin seemed to have already anticipated his move. As Ling Chen began kicking, Jiang Hanlin's right leg lifted in sync, sweeping towards his planted left leg.

Power surged forth, and as Ling Chen's left leg tilted, his body immediately lost its balance, hanging suspended in mid-air. Seizing this opportunity, Jiang Hanlin pushed out a palm and viciously struck his chest.

Puh!

A mouthful of fresh blood spewed out, and under the impact of that force, Ling Chen's body was thrown straight out, slamming into the wall of the Siheyuan, crashing down heavily.

"Ling Chen!"

Nanrong Wanqing's voice carried a hint of sobbing, as she hurried to his side, helping him up from the ground with a face full of concern, asking, "Are you alright?"

"Hm?" Seeing Nanrong Wanqing move lightly on her feet, Jiang Kun's eyes suddenly narrowed, filled with a trace of puzzlement. Not just him, both Jiang Ying and Jiang Han were extraordinarily surprised.

Wasn't Nanrong Wanqing's legs disabled? Why could she suddenly walk?

At this moment, Ling Chen stood up from the ground, spitting out a mouthful of bloody saliva, his complexion slightly pale but his sharp gaze fixed directly on Jiang Hanlin.

Very strong!

That was his only assessment of Jiang Hanlin.

Through the recent exchange, he had profoundly experienced Jiang Hanlin's strength. He had almost exhausted all of his might, yet Jiang Hanlin had used, at most, sixty percent of his power. What was

more important was that the silver whip, constantly wrapped around Jiang Hanlin's waist, hadn't been employed at all.

That was Jiang Hanlin's strongest killing move!

"Hanlin, no need to waste time with him, finish it quickly," Jiang Kun said, urging him. More than disciplining Ling Chen, he was now more eager to know why Nanrong Wanqing's legs had recovered.

As soon as his words fell, the still-standing Jiang Hanlin tapped lightly with the tip of his foot, his body like a gust of wind, rushing swiftly towards Ling Chen. His palms lifted up before his chest, switching non-stop between feints and strikes, dazzling to the eyes and making it impossible to discern where his attack would truly come from.

Ling Chen pushed Nanrong Wanqing aside and, rather than retreating, advanced to meet Jiang Hanlin's offensive, pressing forward with both fists. Just as they were about to clash, he suddenly let out a fierce shout, his fist power bursting forth, with great momentum and force, aiming a blow at Jiang Hanlin's left chest.

He knew he couldn't discern Jiang Hanlin's feints from his real moves. Rather than take the risk, he would be better off engaging in a mutually destructive style of fighting, where neither side would lose out.

Jiang Hanlin's eyes cooled slightly, Ling Chen's actions somewhat beyond his expectations. Immediately, the forward rush of his body paused slightly as he changed tactics mid-approach, switching from palms to grabs, with his right hand striking like lightning, seizing Ling Chen's right fist at the wrist, twisting along the arm, trying to disarm Ling Chen's right arm.

Not good!

Ling Chen was greatly alarmed, his body instinctively reacting as he immediately sprung up, somersaulting in mid-air to dissipate Jiang Hanlin's power.

However, just as he was about to land, a piercing surge of power suddenly closed in on him, and next, all he saw was Jiang Hanlin's knee rising sharply, hitting his shoulder.

Crack!

The sound was crisp, and Ling Chen's expression became instantly ghastly. He knew that was the sound of a dislocated arm.

Before he could react, Jiang Hanlin's attacks continued relentlessly, not giving him a moment to breathe. Hanlin's single palm struck out repeatedly, hitting his chest, his Inner Strength bursting forth, once again sending him flying.

"You, are not worthy to be my opponent."

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The icy disdainful words reached Ling Chen's ears. He slowly lifted his head, looking at Jiang Hanlin who stood tall and proud across from him, a faint smile lifting the corners of his mouth, revealing teeth stained red with blood—feral, horrifying, like a wild beast that had just awakened.

Jiang Hanlin turned his back, unwilling to glance at Ling Chen again, his tone indifferent: "Hand him over to you. He's not worthy of dying by my hand."

Hearing this, Jiang Han immediately leaped forward, eyes alight with bloodthirsty excitement, and chuckled coldly: "Dad, let me do it. I've long wanted to slaughter this guy myself." As he spoke, he extended his hand and someone immediately handed him a sharp dagger.

Seeing Jiang Han approach step by step, Nanrong Wanqing bit her silver teeth and immediately rushed forward, arms wide open, blocking Jiang Han.

"You're not allowed to touch him."

"Cousin, you'd better step aside; I don't want to hurt you."

Nanrong Wanqing shook her head, her gaze resolute.

"Wanqing, move. He can't kill me yet."

Ling Chen's weak voice came through, and Nanrong Wanqing couldn't help but look back. She saw him leaning on the wall with one hand, struggling to stand up. However, his trembling legs didn't even have the strength to remain steady. After a great effort to stand halfway, he immediately collapsed back to the ground.

Seeing his struggle, her lips lightly pursed with a hint of reproach in her beautiful eyes—as if to say, still trying to act tough in this state.

Turning her gaze away, Nanrong Wanqing faced Jiang Han and said, "Let him go. I'll stay behind."

"It's too late!" Jiang Han, impatient, reached out to push Nanrong Wanqing to the side. Seeing his hand coming, without thinking, Nanrong Wanqing pushed back immediately, making a last-ditch effort.

But then, an astonishing scene unfolded. During their shoving match, Jiang Han couldn't withstand Nanrong Wanqing's strength and was directly pushed several meters away, then fell backward, landing on the ground with a thud.

At this, everyone present was stunned; their looks towards Jiang Han were filled with mockery, derision, and helplessness.

His father, Jiang Hanlin, possessed great strength, commanding respect from warriors far and wide, yet his son was so useless he couldn't even handle a woman who was weak as a chicken, and to make matters worse, was pushed to the ground—a total embarrassment.

Among all the people present, probably only Ling Chen knew the truth. He too had seen what happened just now, and without a doubt, it must have been the function of the exoskeleton armor. The exoskeleton armor Nanrong Wanqing wore had been specially modified to reduce combat ability to prevent accidental harm when she used it. Even so, this suit of exoskeleton armor was not something ordinary people could contend with, especially not Jiang Han, who was just an average man.

If he had known this would happen, he should have borrowed a few standard versions of the exoskeleton armor from the General. With that high-tech assistance, he wouldn't have lost so miserably.

As these thoughts flashed through his mind, Jiang Han had already stood up from the ground. Feeling the mocking gazes of the crowd, Jiang Han's cheeks were burning with shame and discomfort. Having been pushed to the ground by a woman was too humiliating; how could he ever hold his head up in the Jiang Family again?

Thinking this, rage surged within him, drowning out his rationality. He roared and raised the dagger in his hand to stab at Nanrong Wanqing.

"Stop!"

"Stop!"

Two voices rang out at once, one was Jiang Kun's, and the other was naturally Ling Chen's.

However, Jiang Han, consumed by rage, seemed not to hear the reprimands from both men, and his speed did not decrease as he lunged at Nanrong Wanqing.

The cold light flickered, alarmingly conspicuous in the dark night. Nanrong Wanqing almost instinctively raised her arms, her beautiful eyes tightly closed, not daring to look.

A second went by.

Nanrong Wanqing found herself unharmed, but beside her came a heavy breathing sound. She turned her gaze in surprise and saw that Ling Chen had appeared behind her at some moment, his eyes blood-red, one hand tightly grasping Jiang Han's wrist, gasping for breath.

"I told you to stop, didn't you hear?" Ling Chen's voice was low, heaving for breath like a bull, as if he had used up all his strength.

"You..."

Jiang Han stared at him in shock and rage, about to speak, but at that moment, Ling Chen's hand suddenly exerted force, viciously twisting the wrist he was holding, and the dagger gripped in Jiang Han's hand immediately switched direction, slashing towards his own throat.

Seeing the uncontrollable dagger closing in on a vital point, Jiang Han's face turned deathly pale. No longer caring about being ridiculed, he urgently called for help: "Dad, save me!"

Swoosh!

As soon as the words were uttered, a cold star shot through the air, accurately striking the dagger, which immediately flew out of his hand.

Following that, the cold star surged forward, from top to bottom, lightly flicking, and drew a long slash across Ling Chen's chest, spattering blood, staining his shirt red.

Gazing at the wound on his chest, Ling Chen's expression was stern, as if he felt no pain, and he strode towards Jiang Hanlin, his steps firm, his sharp eyes showing no sign of flinching.

"How reckless!"

Hearing Jiang Hanlin's cold mockery, Ling Chen grinned, lightly saying, "Not necessarily." Having said that, he lifted his arm and swallowed the bottle of blue liquid he held tight in his palm.

Earlier, when he was holding hands with Nanrong Wanqing, he had taken the opportunity to unlock Mr. Yun's metal box with her fingerprint, inside which was hidden a bottle of blue liquid. He wasn't sure what effects it would have, so he dared not consume it lightly.

At this moment, he had no other choice.

...

In Yangcheng, in the presidential suite of a five-star hotel.

A middle-aged man with a composed demeanor sat on the leather sofa, holding a cup of freshly brewed fragrant tea in his hand.

In one corner of the room were several computers and devices, with five suit-clad employees seated in front of the computers, quietly watching the screens, seemingly waiting for something.

Suddenly, an external device connected to a laptop lit up with an indicator.

Instantly, everyone sprang into action, rapidly typing on the keyboards, their eyes fixed on the leaping numbers on the screens, their expressions tense. At the same time, a young man walked over to the middle-aged man and said with a slight bow, "Boss, it's started."

Upon hearing this, the middle-aged man immediately stood up and walked behind the row of working staff.

"The test subject has successfully ingested the drug, the nanochip is activated."

"Drug integration level 80 percent... 90 percent... 92 percent... 95 percent..."

As the percentage numbers climbed higher and higher, the brightness in the middle-aged man's eyes grew more intense.

"Integration level 99 percent!"

Once the number was confirmed, the middle-aged man couldn't help but clench his fist, a hint of a triumphant smile appearing at the corner of his mouth.

"How are the test subject's vital signs?" he asked.

"Body temperature increased by 100 percent, heart rate increased by 60 percent... The test subject is currently normal, vital signs stable."

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"Very good, continue monitoring the data; I want a complete report." After speaking, the middle-aged man turned his head to look at the youth and smiled, "It seems that Zhu Hong's information was accurate. Ling Chen's genes can perfectly fuse with the potion; it's just unknown if there will be any side effects."

Jiang Family.

Siheyuan.

With a "click", the sound of a dislocated arm being set back in place could be heard.

At this moment, all eyes were focused on Ling Chen. Even ordinary people could feel the change in him.

Jiang Hanlin stared coldly, watching Ling Chen, whose body glowed red as if scorched by raging flames, his eyes slightly wavering. As a martial artist, he had a clearer sense than others. In these few seconds, Ling Chen's aura was rapidly strengthening.

He couldn't determine Ling Chen's condition, but he faintly felt that something was not right.

Strike first to gain the upper hand!

The thought prompted him to flick his wrist, and with a "swish", the tip of the silver whip with its cold gleam shot out again, aiming straight for Ling Chen's eyes.

Facing the gust of the whip, Ling Chen, who was squinting, suddenly opened his eyes wide and, with a lightning-fast move, accurately caught the end of the silver whip and wrapped it around his hand.

Jiang Hanlin raised an eyebrow and immediately tugged the silver whip, trying to pull Ling Chen's body back along with it. But Ling Chen was as stable as a rock, his legs rooted to the ground. No matter how powerful Jiang Hanlin's effort was, Ling Chen remained unmoved.

Seeing this scene, everyone found it unbelievable, even Jiang Kun's face showed a hint of astonishment. Previously, Ling Chen had been completely overpowered by Jiang Hanlin without any ability to fight back, but now he was evenly matched with Jiang Hanlin, despite his severe injuries, which was simply inconceivable.

Suddenly, a roar erupted; Ling Chen yanked the silver whip, pushing off with his legs. Accompanying his movement, Jiang Hanlin's face slightly changed, his right foot moved forward, his body slightly leaning as if he couldn't withstand Ling Chen's strength.

"Let go!"

In the midst of the yelling, the handle of the silver whip flew out from Jiang Hanlin's hand, leaving a shallow bloodstain on his palm.

The pain in his palm transmitted, and a violent flash appeared in Jiang Hanlin's icy eyes.

"Seeking death!"

With a soft exhalation, he tapped his toes on the ground, closing in quickly, inner strength surging and striking out with a single palm toward Ling Chen's vital spot.

Ling Chen, throwing off the silver whip from his hands, didn't dodge and swung his fist towards Jiang Hanlin's palm. Fist and palm met, the robust Inner Strength gushing out like a surging river continuously from Jiang Hanlin's body.

However, Ling Chen didn't move back an inch, standing firm, completely unaffected by the Inner Strength. Suddenly, Ling Chen opened his mouth and roared like a tiger, his punching power bursting out, his formidable force tearing through with a crushing momentum, immediately dismantling Jiang Hanlin's attack.

Seizing the advantage, Ling Chen pressed forward aggressively, stepping forward with rapid punches thrown from both left and right with increasing power, showing no sign of stopping.

Forced into a retreat, Jiang Hanlin continuously stepped back, his palms waving in front of his chest, desperately countering Ling Chen's punches.

After more than a dozen exchanges, Jiang Hanlin's complexion turned slightly pale, his arms numbed by the force of Ling Chen's strikes, gradually slowing down.

In contrast, Ling Chen seemed not to feel any pain at all, relentlessly advancing, with only one thought in his mind—to defeat the opponent in front of him.

At this moment, Jiang Hanlin revealed a flaw, and Ling Chen seized the opportunity, launching a punch straight towards his opponent's chest. However, Jiang Hanlin reacted quickly, slightly bending his body and tightly wrapping his hands around Ling Chen's arms, preventing his punch from advancing even half an inch.

Ling Chen's punch was blocked, and he fiercely raised his head, staring directly into Jiang Hanlin's eyes.

Not good!

This exclamation of "not good" came from Jiang Hanlin, not from Ling Chen. When their eyes met, Jiang Hanlin was surprised to find a faint sneer emerging in Ling Chen's red eyes.

Unfortunately, it was too late for him.

"Die!"

Accompanied by Ling Chen's furious shout, his arms, originally restrained by Jiang Hanlin, suddenly exerted force, broke free from Jiang Hanlin's grasp, and violently smashed into his chest.

Spurt!

A spray of blood shot out, and Jiang Hanlin's chest immediately caved in, his bones shattered, and he nearly couldn't catch his breath, standing still on the spot for a long time.

"Dad!" Jiang Han cried out in alarm and took a step forward to rush over. But before he could move, Ling Chen appeared in front of him.

Feeling the chilly ruthlessness in those blood-red eyes, Jiang Han involuntarily shuddered and hastily stepped back. But by then, Ling Chen had already reached out first, grabbing his collar and lifting him from the ground, holding him high in the air.

Seeing his actions, Jiang Kun, Jiang Hanlin, Jiang Ying, and Jiang Yu's expressions drastically changed, and they yelled in anger and shock, "Ling Chen, what are you doing?"

"I want you all to know what's called retribution." With that, Ling Chen swung a punch, heading straight for Jiang Han's forehead.

"No!" Watching the rapidly enlarging fist before him, Jiang Han's pupils constricted, his face turned pale, full of fear.

"Stop!"

As Jiang Kun's voice echoed, Ling Chen's merciless fist smashed onto Jiang Han's forehead. Instantly, Jiang Han's head tilted, dangling weakly over his neck, frothing at the mouth, unconscious.

Unperturbed by the furious stares from everyone, Ling Chen casually threw Jiang Han to the ground, his icy gaze sweeping over the crowd, like a beast on the hunt.

"Who else?"

As he spoke, a group of security personnel stepped back, not daring to meet his gaze.

Jiang Hanlin gazed at his son lying on the ground, uncertain if he was alive or dead, his eyes emitting a cold glare as his body shook with extreme anger. As he stepped forward, intense pain immediately shot from his chest, and his limbs spasmodically twitched uncontrollably.

"You... you dare..." Jiang Kun pointed at Ling Chen, his old face turning pale with anger, unable to utter a complete sentence. Jiang Han was his grandson, yet Ling Chen had crippled him right in front of him, blatantly disregarding the Jiang family.

Ling Chen coldly said, "Old fool, listen carefully. If you dare to bully the Nanrong Family again, I will ensure the Jiang Family never recovers. Wanqing, let's go."

Nanrong Wanqing softly agreed, closely following his steps, heading straight outside. The surrounding security personnel all stepped aside, not daring to obstruct. This man had dared to cripple the young master of the Jiang family; he was not someone they could afford to provoke.

Watching the two of them receding into the distance, Jiang Yu gritted his teeth and said, "Family Head, are we just going to let them go? Shall I go and invite..."

"Shut up!" Jiang Kun sharply interjected: "Do not disturb them over such trivial matters. Today we'll let them go, but sooner or later, I'll settle this account with them properly."

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With those words, he walked over to the side, bent down to pick up an empty bottle from the ground, and examined it closely in front of him. Suddenly, it seemed he thought of something, and his expression changed slightly.

"Jiang Yu, you handle the aftermath here." Leaving behind that remark, he hurriedly turned and left.

"Boss, the experimental subject's vital signs are beginning to weaken."

"Is there any danger?"

"No, at most they'll be in a faint for a while. This is a normal reaction after taking the medication."

The middle-aged man nodded and said, "That's good. By the way, how long did the drug effect last?"

"Nine minutes, which is a record-breaking duration. Other experimental subjects, after taking the new drug, could only hold out for three minutes at most, and they experienced severe side effects—the milder being brain death, the more serious being fatal—but this experimental subject hasn't shown any of these adverse characteristics."

"The nano-chip inside the experimental subject's body will soon be excreted. Hurry up and monitor all his bodily data."

"Yes."

...

After leaving the Jiang Family, Ling Chen felt his body getting weaker and weaker; his legs seemed filled with lead, unable to lift, and only with Nanrong Wanqing's support was he able to walk out of the Jiang residence.

After exiting the Nanyang Coast villa area, a Volkswagen commercial vehicle slowly approached and stopped beside them. The van door opened, and Tang Yuan and Zhong Wei immediately jumped down, lifting Ling Chen into the vehicle.

"Tang Yuan, Tang Yuan..."

The van started, and Tang Yuan gently tapped Ling Chen's cheek, trying to wake him up. But at that moment, Ling Chen's consciousness was fading, and he could no longer hear the sounds of the outside world. In a drowsy haze, his eyes tightly shut, he fell into a deep sleep.

Not knowing how long he slept for, when Ling Chen woke up, he felt soreness all over his body as if he had been severely beaten, with pain everywhere.

Sitting up, he looked around at his environment and was suddenly taken aback—wasn't this his bedroom at the Nanrong Family house? When did he come back? While he was pondering, the door was pushed open, and Nanrong Wanqing came in with a basin of hot water.

"Wanqing."

"You're awake!" With a look of surprise on her face, Nanrong Wanqing walked to the bedside, put down the basin, took Ling Chen's hands in hers, and said joyfully, "You're finally awake."

Ling Chen watched her with a smile and asked, "How long have I been asleep?"

"If you count from when we left the Jiang Family, you've been asleep for a day and a half." As she spoke, Nanrong Wanqing asked with concern, "How are you feeling? Is everything okay with your body? Do you want me to call a doctor to have a look at you?"

"You forgot, I know medical techniques myself. Don't worry, I'm fine, I'm very tough." Ling Chen patted his chest as he spoke, but immediately his body protested with a violent cough, making Nanrong Wanqing both frustrated and heartbroken.

"Alright! Stop trying to act tough and rest properly." With those words, she wrung out a towel from the hot water basin and carefully wiped Ling Chen's face.

This kind of task could be done by the housemaid at home, but she wanted to take care of Ling Chen herself. It wasn't just because of Ling Chen's sacrifices for her, but more importantly, she regarded Ling Chen as her man. As a woman, it was only natural to take care of your man.

"Wanqing."

"Hmm?"

Ling Chen curiously asked, "The Jiang Family kidnapped you, what exactly for?"

Nanrong Wanqing shook her head, her beautiful eyes also showing a trace of confusion, "I'm not sure, they seemed to have some plans for me. Originally, Jiang Han was ready to do something to me, but then you arrived in time and stopped him, so I don't know the specific reason." With that, she hesitated for a moment, and couldn't help but ask, "Is... is Jiang Han dead?"

"He's not dead, but he might as well be, he's going to have to spend the rest of his life in bed," Ling Chen said. He knew how to control his strength, and that punch, while not lethal, was enough to leave Jiang Han in a vegetative state.

He never claimed to be a good person. If someone offends him, he would strike back—that was his principle. Jiang Han repeatedly opposed him and even kidnapped Nanrong Wanqing. Without venting his anger, it would be unfair to himself and would not serve as a harsh lesson to the Jiang Family.

However, the successful rescue of Nanrong Wanqing and their smooth escape were owed to the mysterious Mr. Yun. But every time he thought of Mr. Yun, his heart was filled with doubts.

From the enhanced medicine, it was clear that Mr. Yun must be from the God Organization. Being from the God Organization, why would he help rescue Nanrong Wanqing? Moreover, every time Mr. Yun mentioned Nanrong Wanqing, he affectionately called her "Wanqing." Such a term is only used by those with close relations.

With this in mind, he asked, "Wanqing, do you know someone named Mr. Yun?"

"Mr. Yun? I don't recall. Why do you ask?"

"It's nothing, just wondering," Ling Chen replied evasively. That person knew Nanrong Wanqing very well, yet she did not recognize him—could it be... A bold guess suddenly struck his mind, leaving him utterly shocked.

No way!

He was secretly astounded, if his guess was true, then this matter would be a huge deal, likely even more complicated than he had imagined.

"What are you thinking about?" Seeing him lost in thought and appearing shaken, Nanrong Wanqing couldn't help but ask.

"I'm just thinking..." Ling Chen grinned, his gaze captured by her bright eyes, "I'm thinking, when the old man and the others see you walking again, they're going to be so excited they won't be able to sleep for days."

Hearing his words, Nanrong Wanqing's beautiful face bloomed like a thousand flowers in joy, a sparkle of childish excitement flashing in her eyes. In her view, being able to walk again was even more delightful than returning home safely from the Jiang Family.

Even though it was with the help of external exoskeleton armor, it was still better than life in a wheelchair before.

Ling Chen gently held her delicate and fair wrists, gazing intently into her eyes that shone like stars, as if making a promise, he said, "I guarantee you, this is just the beginning, I will surely make you stand on your own strength."

"Mhm." Nanrong Wanqing nodded, the corners of her lips curving up into a beautiful arc, making Ling Chen's heart itch with desire. If it weren't for his body not yet fully recovered, he would have pounced on her to taste those tempting red lips.

Seemingly sensing his intense gaze, Nanrong Wanqing's face blushed with modesty, and she rebuked playfully, "Don't daydream, rest well."

Ling Chen coughed lightly, hiding his inner impulse, and changed the subject, "By the way, where's Old Tang?"

"He's gone back. He said if you woke up, to give him a call."

"Okay."

...

The next day.

Nanrong Wanqing had gone to the Hongyu Group headquarters with Zhong Wei and others, leaving Ling Chen alone at home. Out of sheer boredom, he casually turned on the television, leaned back on the bed, and leisurely enjoyed some grapes.

For these two days, he had enjoyed an emperor-like treatment, not having to lift a finger as everything was brought to him.

Just then, a news report on the television suddenly caught his attention.

Chapter 286 Distance

"This station's latest report, Miss Tang Shiyun, an artist under Silver Star Entertainment Company, will hold a fan meeting at East Sea City International Square in two days. This will also be Miss Tang's first public appearance since she was attacked. Up to now, both Silver Star Entertainment and the police have not released many details about the previous attack. Our station will broadcast the entire fan meeting live, so please tune in..."

Watching the news, Ling Chen frowned to himself. Several days had passed, have they still not found the suspect? Could the police's efficiency be this low?

Right now, with the attacker still at large, Tang Shiyun is actually appearing in public again; he wondered what her company was thinking. What if something happens again?

While pondering, he picked up his phone, pulled up Tang Shiyun's number, his thumb hovered over 'call', hesitating, never pressing down. It's not that he didn't want to, but just thinking about Tang Shiyun's mother, Yao Li, made him somewhat indecisive.

After thinking, he decided against it, better not let Yao Li know he contacted Tang Shiyun and bring that girl trouble.

Having laid around all morning, Ling Chen really couldn't stay idle any longer. He got up from bed, dressed himself, and stealthily opened the door. Seeing that Nanny Wang was not in the living room, he secretly breathed a sigh of relief and quickly ran out.

He had no choice, as Nanrong Wanqing was afraid he wouldn't rest properly, she specifically instructed Nanny Wang to watch over him and not allow him to go out.

Once outside, Ling Chen went straight to his car, accompanied by a roar like that of a beast, the car swiftly sped off and entered the road.

He initially wanted to go to the company to have a look, but then thought, if Nanrong Wanqing happened to be there, he couldn't predict the 'lecture' he'd get. Thinking of this, he directly drove to Qingyun Martial Arts Hall. About the Prajnaparamita Sutra, he had too many questions to ask He Ziyun.

Half an hour later, the car arrived at the destination.

Ling Chen walked up to the Martial Arts Academy and gently knocked on the door. In no time, the door opened, revealing a stunningly beautiful face. Their eyes met, both paused briefly. After a short moment, Ling Chen was the first to recover and greeted with a smile.

"Xiaozhu, long time no see."

Since they last parted, it had been almost one or two months since he saw Zhu Xiaozhu. After so many days, Zhu Xiaozhu was still as gentle and graceful as ever, like a tranquil autumn water casually flowing into one's heart and intoxicating it.

"Come in."

Watching Ling Chen, Zhu Xiaozhu spoke softly. Her beautiful eyes shimmered like water, carrying a hint of unusual emotions.

Walking into the Martial Arts Academy, Ling Chen and Zhu Xiaozhu walked side by side, occasionally exchanging a few words—mostly Ling Chen asking and Zhu Xiaozhu softly responding a couple of times, silently, with her head down, her eyes touching the ground, seemingly lost in thought, appearing distracted.

"Big brother!"

Seeing Ling Chen walking over, Little Hua cheerfully ran out from the hall and affectionately wrapped his arm, seemingly wanting to hang her whole body weight on his arm.

"Careful, careful," Ling Chen said hastily. His body hadn't yet recovered, and it couldn't withstand this girl's frolic.

"Big brother, you haven't visited me for a long time." Little Hua pouted, somewhat displeased.

"I'm here now, aren't I." Ling Chen knew how demanding this girl could be, fearing she might seize the chance to 'blackmail' him, he quickly changed the subject and asked, "Where is Mr. He? I need to see him for something."

"Sniff!" Little Hua frowned with dissatisfaction, mumbling through her nose, "Every visit is to see that old man, never just for me."

Hearing this, Ling Chen was caught between laughter and tears. How cunning a child she was! Who knows what was going on in her little head?

"You guys go ahead and talk, I have some other things to take care of," Zhu Xiaozhu said softly. Without waiting for Ling Chen to respond, she had already headed towards her own room, not looking back. Watching her graceful, slender figure leaving, Ling Chen opened his mouth, tried to speak several times, but the words seemed to be stuck in his throat.

Little Hua glanced at Zhu Xiaozhu, then back at Ling Chen, a subtle twinkle hardly noticeable in her big round eyes.

"Big Brother, did you have a fight with Sister Xiaozhu?"

"Nothing of the sort."

"Then why won't Sister Xiaozhu talk to you?"

"This..." Ling Chen was momentarily speechless, unsure how to explain to her. Indeed, there was a seemingly insurmountable chasm between him and Zhu Xiaozhu. However, that didn't prevent them from being friends. In fact, he had realized upon arriving at the Martial Arts Academy that avoiding the issue was not a solution. As a man, he ought to be more magnanimous.

Yet, Zhu Xiaozhu's attitude was puzzling. Although on the surface nothing seemed amiss, he could sense that Zhu Xiaozhu was keeping him at a great distance. The smile on her face was merely polite, no longer as sincere as before.

Thinking it over, he hadn't seen Zhu Xiaozhu for a while and couldn't figure out where he might have offended her.

Ah, the heart of a woman is like a needle in the depths of the sea; not something a man like him could easily fathom. Shaking his head, he decided not to dwell on it and stepped into the lobby. Little Hua nibbled on her finger, her eyes wandering cunningly before she hurried to Zhu Xiaozhu's room.

At this moment, He Ziyun was seated in the hall, holding a scripture. Beside him, an incense burner wafted faint blue smoke, filling the room with the delightful fragrance of sandalwood.

"Mr. He." Ling Chen greeted him as he approached.

He Ziyun slightly lifted his head to gaze at him, a sharp light flashing through his cloudy aging eyes. He set down the scripture and said, "You're injured."

"I knew I couldn't hide it from your eyes." Ling Chen smiled, sat down uninvited, and began to recount the events of the past few days.

"Yangcheng's Jiang Family?" He Ziyun nodded, "I've heard of them. That family is deeply hidden and not to be trifled with."

Ling Chen touched his nose, his face filled with curiosity, "Mr. He, everyone says the Jiang Family is no simple matter, but I really can't see what's so complex about them."

He Ziyun gave a light smile, "What's visible on the surface isn't frightening. What's truly terrifying are the things hidden behind. It applies to both situations and people. You can know one's face but not the heart. The outward appearance doesn't represent the inside unless you have the skill to dissect and lay everything bare unabashedly. Otherwise, do not take it lightly."

Ling Chen took the lesson to heart, "Right! Mr. He, there seems to be an issue with the Prajnaparamita Sutra I've been practicing."

"Any Internal Cultivation Method, without predecessors' guidance or references, must be tackled through self-exploration. It's normal to encounter problems. Tell me about it, and let's see if I can help you solve them."

Promptly, Ling Chen recounted the sparring encounter with Qiu Wen and his brothers, including the sudden emergence of a strange, malevolent fire within him.

Chapter 287 Porridge Girl's Challenge Letter

"Interesting."

After listening to Ling Chen's story, He Ziyun's eyes slightly brightened, as if he had discovered something amusing.

Ling Chen secretly smiled wryly; he didn't find this amusing at all. The Internal Cultivation Methods he practiced always inexplicably lost control, who knows what situation might arise in the future. Moreover, that evil fire only appeared when he clashed with his brothers Qiu Wen, that day when he sparred with Jiang Hanlin, he hoped to ignite the evil fire inside him, but there was no movement at all, completely out of his control.

"This matter should be related to a woman."

"Woman?" Ling Chen blinked slightly perplexed, "Mr. He, what does this have to do with a woman?"

"Didn't you just say that the night before you and Qiu Wen brothers clashed, you had an encounter with a woman."

Upon hearing this, Ling Chen's face turned red, even someone as thick-skinned as him felt embarrassed to discuss this openly in front of He Ziyun.

"Prajnaparamita Sutra is a profound internal cultivation method that integrates the essence of various schools including shades of the Buddhist mental methods. Ling Chen, have you ever heard of Dual Cultivation? Though Buddhism is a tranquil place that doesn't indulge in worldly affairs, Buddhism explores all aspects, embracing the world, and even matters of men and women aren't taboo. Otherwise, how would there be Joyful Buddha. The internal cultivation method you practice mainly relies on Yin and Yang. Men are Yang, women are Yin, and only by merging Yin and Yang can it manifest its effects. Therefore, that situation occurred when you faced off with Qiu Wen brothers."

Ling Chen asked doubtfully, "But why didn't this happen when I faced Jiang Hanlin?"

"It's because you lack Yin Qi in your body, so it couldn't be activated," He Ziyun explained.

"I see." Ling Chen nodded, somewhat understanding, feeling an indescribable taste in his heart. This internal cultivation method is good, but it's too perverse. According to Mr. He, doesn't it mean that I need to engage more with women, accumulating enough Yin Qi inside, in order for the Prajnaparamita Sutra to exert its maximum power?

Damn, does it mean I really have to become a pervert.

While mulling over this, a knocking sound came from outside the Martial Arts Academy.

Before Ling Chen could get up, Little Hua had already sprinted out from Zhu Xiaozhu's room and ran directly to the door.

Soon, Little Hua came bouncing back into the lobby and said to Mr. He: "Master, a very beautiful Sister is looking for you."

Beautiful? And a woman?

He Ziyun, ignoring Ling Chen's ill-intentioned gaze, walked towards the courtyard. Ling Chen also wanted to see what that woman looked like, and quickly followed him.

Ling Chen couldn't help but glance at Mr. He again, a strange smile emerging on his lips. Unexpectedly, this old man still preserved the colors of manhood despite his age.

Exiting the lobby, Ling Chen saw Zhu Xiaozhu being dragged out of her room by Little Hua. Their eyes met, and Zhu Xiaozhu slightly lowered her head, seemingly unwilling to make eye contact. Ling Chen shrugged helplessly; he really didn't know why suddenly Zhu Xiaozhu was so resistant to him.

At that moment, the beautiful Sister mentioned by Little Hua appeared from the doorway, walking towards him. Looking at the arriving guest, Ling Chen's expression froze slightly, his pupils reflecting surprise.

Is it her?

Long time no see, she hasn't changed, still so plain and simple, wearing no makeup. However, even with a bare face, her stunning beauty cannot be hidden—her figure neither fat nor thin, perfectly contoured like a naturally carved ice sculpture, elegant and ethereal, with a touch of coldness.

When he was watching her, she was also observing him. Their eyes met, Ling Chen slightly smiled and nodded lightly, greeting her.

However, the woman didn't show much response, directly withdrawing her cold gaze and looking towards Mr. He, her lips slightly parting.

"Are you Earthly List expert, He Ziyun?"

Mr. He smiled faintly, nodding: "That's me. And you are?"

"Porridge girl."

"Porridge girl?" Hearing this unique name, Mr. He gently shook his head, "Young lady, this mustn't be your real name. Not even daring to reveal your name shows a lack of sincerity, my Martial Arts Academy doesn't entertain people without sincerity. Please leave."

"My name is indeed Porridge girl. If you don't believe it, you can ask him," she said, pointing at Ling Chen.

"Oh?" Mr. He looked puzzledly at Ling Chen, "You know her?"

Before Ling Chen could speak, Porridge girl added, "He was the one who gave me this name."

With this statement, the way the others looked at Ling Chen changed. Zhu Xiaozhu clenched her dress and a seldom noticeable hint of sadness flickered through her eyes, followed by a nearly inaudible sigh.

"Since you're a friend of Ling, I won't ask further. What brings you to me?"

"I've come to challenge you!" As she spoke, Porridge girl flicked her wrist, and suddenly, a golden challenge letter appeared in Mr. He's hand.

Ling Chen, watching from the side, was startled; he couldn't even see the trajectory of the challenge letter, and it already landed in Mr. He's hand, the speed probably surpassed visual recognition.

Her abilities are actually this strong!

When he first met Porridge girl, he knew she was an expert, but he didn't expect her to be among the very elite. Mr. He is ranked on the Earthly List, and Porridge Girl was challenging him. What did this imply?

Mr. He maintained his composure, his smile probing: "Since you know I'm an Earthly List expert, your own skills must not be negligible?" This sentence, although courteous on the surface, hinted, do you really have the qualifications to challenge an Earthly List expert?

Porridge girl effortlessly undid the cloth bag on her back, throwing a cleaved two-piece steel knife onto the ground. Although broken, the blade emitted a chilling light, the might lingering.

"This is the personal weapon of Liu Xieyuan, ranked eighth on the Earthly List. Do I qualify to challenge you now?"

Watching the broken knife on the ground, Mr. He's expression turned solemn.

"The time and place are on the challenge letter, please be punctual."

As she finished speaking, Porridge girl turned and walked outside.

"Wait! Hold on!"

Ling Chen, seeing her leaving, quickly followed, but by the time he reached the door, Porridge girl was nowhere to be seen.

This woman, after such a long time, could at least have stayed to catch up; after all, he was practically her first friend.

Returning to the Martial Arts Academy, Zhu Xiaozhu had already gone back to her room with Little Hua. Mr. He picked up the broken knife from the ground, and without looking back, said, "Ling Chen, you can leave first. I am going to close off for a few days and won't see any guests."

Helpless, Ling Chen had to leave the Martial Arts Academy and drove towards Wealthy Manor.

On the way, his cell phone suddenly rang. Looking at the unfamiliar caller ID, he answered and said, "Who is this? ... Is it you?" Ling Chen was slightly surprised, somewhat puzzled, how come this person was calling him.

Chapter 288 Death Threat

After hanging up the phone, Ling Chen turned around and entered a street, driving a hundred meters before parking by the roadside, and got out to walk into a coffee shop on the street.

Arriving at the prearranged private room, Ling Chen lightly knocked on the door, then pushed it open and walked in.

In the modest-sized room, a delicate round table was placed by the window, with the curtains drawn. Zhu Yansong was sitting on one side, holding a cup of coffee, his face colored with anxiety.

"Mr. Zhu."

Ling Chen greeted and took a seat opposite him.

Zhu Yansong squeezed out a wry smile and said apologetically, "Mr. Ling, I'm terribly sorry to bother you during your busy schedule to meet with me."

"No problem, I was just idling at home anyway. Mr. Zhu, do you need something from me?"

When Ling Chen received the call from Zhu Yansong, he was very curious, not knowing what the other party wanted from him.

Zhu Yansong hesitated for a moment, a troubled expression on his face, "Mr. Ling, my visit today is mainly concerning Miss Tang."

Upon hearing this, Ling Chen's mind stirred, and he asked without revealing his thoughts, "Is it Miss Yao who asked you to find me?"

"No, not at all!" Zhu Yansong hastily replied, "You've misunderstood, I'm here because Miss Tang needs help."

Help? Without continuing the conversation, Ling Chen waited silently for Zhu Yansong to finish speaking.

"Mr. Ling, to be frank, Miss Tang has run into trouble."

"What?" Ling Chen's heart skipped a beat, and he exclaimed, "What kind of trouble? Where is she? Is she okay?" His thoughts immediately turned to Tang Shiyun's previous assault incident. Could it be... With that thought, his heart started to race with worry.

"Mr. Ling, she's currently at home."

Ling Chen paused for a moment, then relaxed. That scared him—he had thought Tang Shiyun was in danger. "Mr. Zhu, can you please speak clearly? You're going to give someone a heart attack like this."

"Miss Tang has been scared out of her wits lately, staying at home all day, afraid to go out."

"Wait! Make yourself clear, what do you mean scared out of her wits?"

"Ever since the assault incident, Miss Tang has been receiving anonymous letters filled with gruesome photos, of severed hands and feet, or heads chopped off. At first, it wasn't too bad, but these past two days, it's not just photos anymore. The sender even mailed boxes containing dissected dead cats and dogs, their bodies brutally mutilated." Even Zhu Yansong, a grown man, showed a look of dread. Obviously, he had seen those animal corpses.

"Death threats!" Ling Chen immediately identified the nature of the incident.

"Yes, that's it," Zhu Yansong nodded.

At that moment, as if something occurred to Ling Chen, he said, "I saw on the news, Shiyun is going to have a fan meet in East Sea City. Knowing that someone is out to harm her, why not cancel it?"

"The fan meet was scheduled a month ago, and after this incident, the company's upper management was concerned for Miss Tang's safety and wanted to cancel it. However, after consulting with the police, they advised us to proceed as normal. They said as long as Miss Tang appears in public, they will definitely be able to lure out those with malicious intent. At that time, they plan to implement full surveillance, hoping to catch the suspect."

"That won't do, this is gambling with Shiyun's life," Ling Chen frowned, clearly aggravated, "What kind of terrible advice is this?"

Zhu Yansong looked helpless as he replied, "I can't do anything about this situation; it's a decision made by the company's executives and the police. I'm just a man paid to get things done, I don't have the authority to criticize. Mr. Ling, I know you care about Miss Tang and I'm aware of your capabilities, so I'd like to ask for your help to ensure nothing happens to Miss Tang."

Without hesitating, Ling Chen responded, "When it comes to Shiyun's safety, I have an undeniable responsibility." He paused and glanced at Zhu Yansong, unable to help himself from asking, "Mr. Zhu, is it Shiyun who asked you to find me, or..."

"I took the initiative."

"Oh." Ling Chen's expression turned somewhat disappointed.

"Mr. Ling, please don't mind, actually Miss Tang really needs you by her side, it's just... you know, she isn't in a position to do much right now. Just before I left, I saw Miss Tang sitting alone on the windowsill, holding her phone, staring at your number, and hesitant to call, fearing that Miss Yao would discover."

Ling Chen nodded to show he understood. The main problem wasn't Tang Shiyun, but Yao Li. With Yao Li by Tang Shiyun's side, even if she missed him, she wouldn't dare to express it, lest it would only worsen the mother-daughter relationship.

"Mr. Zhu, how are Shiyun's current security measures?"

"Besides the bodyguards hired by our company, there are the police protecting her around the clock. As long as she doesn't leave the villa, there's no problem. What I'm most concerned about is the fan meet the day after tomorrow, that's the critical moment."

"Don't worry, I will be there to assist you in secret," Ling Chen emphasized the word 'secret,' to slightly ease Zhu Yansong's anxiety. His biggest fear was having Ling Chen face off with Yao Li; her previous threats were still fresh in his memory, not to be forgotten.

Taking a glance at the time, Ling Chen stood up and said, "Mr. Zhu, we'll be in touch about the day after tomorrow. If there's nothing else, I'll be going now."

"Sure, take care."

Leaving the coffee shop, Ling Chen got into his car, mulling over Zhu Yansong's words. Whoever was sending the death threats must be the same person who attacked the Lincoln Sedan outside of East Sea University. However, what he couldn't understand was who bore such a deep grudge against Tang Shiyun to the point of wanting her dead.

Tang Shiyun was new to her career, Zhu Yansong said she got along well with everyone, never offended anyone, and wouldn't have enemies.

Could the suspect be psychologically disturbed?

If that were the case, it seemed far-fetched.

After much thought, Ling Chen decided to arrange a meeting with Xia Mutong. The operation was led by the police; it was necessary to give her a heads-up. Additionally, he wanted to ascertain which idiot came up with such a lousy idea of risking Tang Shiyun's life.

The phone connected.

"Hello." Xia Mutong's crisp voice came through.

"It's me. Are you free right now?"

"I'm very busy," Xia Mutong had just finished her sentence when Ling Chen heard a familiar voice from the other end: "Xia, dinner's ready, are you coming to eat with us?"

Tang Shiyun?

Ling Chen tensed slightly, wondering why Xia Mutong was with Tang Shiyun. Right, he realized, as a police officer, Xia Mutong must be involved in this operation. Moreover, being a woman, she could provide close protection for Tang Shiyun's safety.

However, considering Xia Mutong's sexual orientation, he couldn't help but worry if that woman might attempt anything inappropriate with Tang Shiyun.

Chapter 289 Exotic Taste

"Officer Xia, I..."

"I don't have time to talk to you right now. We'll talk later." After saying that, Xia Mutong hung up the phone directly.

This woman... Ling Chen shook his head helplessly. After all, he was her first man, yet her attitude didn't show any friendliness. If Xia Mutong knew what he was thinking, she would probably want to tear him into pieces.

Returning to the Nanrong Family, Ling Chen leaned against the sofa and crossed his legs, searching for news about Tang Shiyun on his phone. Aside from the attack incident outside East Sea University last time, there were no other reports, it seemed the police had the news tightly sealed, and didn't let the media find out.

Just then, the WeChat notification tone rang, and a new message was received. This WeChat account was registered for him by Wei Jun when he was working in the security department, who said he wanted to share some 'good stuff' with him.

Opening the message, sure enough, Wei Jun had sent a short video. The screen was pitch black; he had no idea what it was about. He casually tapped on it, and suddenly, a steamy scene that could get one's blood racing immediately played on the phone screen, accompanied by moans and groans.

Caught off guard by this raunchy clip, Ling Chen felt incredibly embarrassed, glancing stealthily around. Seeing that no one was home, he let down his guard, brazenly holding up his phone and watched it openly.

"Wow, that body, that position, that technique..." As he watched, he commented from time to time and took the opportunity to humbly learn some skills—after all, this was professional knowledge he might need to use in the future.

After enjoying a short video, Wei Jun sent several more, with each becoming more explicit.

"Big Brother Wei's taste is really something else."

Mumbling to himself, the door was pushed open, and Su Lin walked in from outside. She was about to greet Ling Chen, who was sitting on the sofa, but at that moment, a high-pitched moan suddenly rang out. She paused for a moment, glanced at what Ling Chen was holding, and immediately turned bright red.

This pervert, actually... actually at home watching such dirty videos. Unconsciously, the scene from the other day when she was fixing the computer in the room with Ling Chen resurfaced in her mind; her face and ears turned red, her ample chest rose and fell slightly, looking stunningly beautiful.

"Cough cough!" She forced out two coughs, promptly pulling Ling Chen, who was immersed in the video, back to reality.

He swiftly turned his head to see Su Lin at the door, and his face immediately turned awkward. When did this girl get back? He was so engrossed in the video that he hadn't even noticed.

At this point, the moaning from the video was getting louder and was echoing in the living room, filled with a suggestive atmosphere.

Su Lin bit her cherry lip, her face blushing a lovely red, looking irresistibly attractive, wishing she could block her own ears. The seductive moans entered her ears, making her feel restless, hot all over, and utterly embarrassed.

After a brief daze, Ling Chen finally snapped out of it and hurriedly closed the video on his phone, cursing inwardly, Wei Jun, you jerk, you've really screwed me over now.

Hearing that embarrassing sound disappear, Su Lin, in her high heels, went clacking upstairs. As she passed the sofa, she glanced at Ling Chen with a flushed face and whispered softly, "Pervert!"

Her voice was very low, but the sharp-eared Ling Chen still heard it clearly. He laughed awkwardly, "Lady Su, saints too enjoy beauty, that... it's only human nature."

Su Lin snorted lightly, "Don't make excuses for your sleaziness."

Ling Chen called out discontentedly, "Hey, hey, what's this way of talking, I am, after all, your brother-in-law."

"You can't call yourself a brother-in-law when there's not even a stroke of agreement between you and Wanqing, wait until you're married to her before you strut around me acting like one," Su Lin didn't fall for his act at all.

This little girl actually dares to question her future status. If I don't teach her a lesson now, she'll turn the heavens upside down later.

Ling Chen glared, intending to assert his authority, but just then, a knock suddenly came from outside the door.

"You go open the door." After speaking, Su Lin went upstairs.

Watching her graceful figure ascend the stairs, her round buttocks slightly perked up, Ling Chen shook his head secretly—this girl would surely be a heartbreaker when she grew up.

Approaching the door, he opened it and saw Liu Kun standing outside.

"Uncle Liu, what brings you here? Come in and sit."

"No, I have other matters. Just now I received a few express packages, and some of them are for Miss Su, so I thought I'd drop them off."

Taking the express packages handed over by Liu Kun, Ling Chen thanked him on Su Lin's behalf, then turned around and walked back to the living room, placing the packages on the table, casting a casual glance at them.

Inadvertently, one of the packages caught his attention. While other packages had the sender's name, address, and items clearly written on the courier slip, this one had only the recipient's name and phone number. Other than that, there was no further information.

With the Nanrong Family in the midst of troubled times, he had to be cautious. Moreover, the postal code on the express slip indicated it was from Yangcheng, which immediately made him think of the Jiang Family.

However, Su Lin had no involvement in the grudge between the Jiang and Nanrong Families, so it seemed unlikely that they would trouble her.

After some thought, Ling Chen still felt uneasy. Especially since he had learned from Zhu Yansong that Tang Shiyun had recently received many death threats, he didn't dare take it lightly. It was just a package anyway—checking it should be no problem.

With this thought, he took a pair of scissors from a drawer, cutting along the seam of the package very carefully.

Peeling off the tape from the package's exterior, he opened the box, revealing a slit, and then scrutinized it closely. As he saw clearly what was inside the package, his expression changed slightly, a hint of doubt in his eyes.

"What's this?"

Curious, he pulled out the object from the package, only to see it resembled a large banana, connected at the top to a wire and a remote control. He pressed the remote lightly, and the large banana started to buzz and vibrate.

This... this is...

Seeming to realize something, his eyes widened as he stared at the object in his hands, his mouth agape—big enough to stuff an egg in. No, an egg wasn't enough to convey the shock in his heart; an apple would be more like it.

Good heavens!

No wonder there was nothing written on the express package—such a private item must be too embarrassing to write about. Still, he was quite surprised that Su Lin would buy something so embarrassing. It seems that regardless of beauty or not, young people have their needs. He thought with a sleazy amusement.

Suddenly, footsteps were heard from the stairs.

Su Lin came rushing down hurriedly, asking, "Ling Chen, the delivery guy just called saying the express delivery arrived. Did you..."

Before she could finish her sentence, Su Lin froze on the spot, staring blankly at the large banana in Ling Chen's hand, her pretty face turning red in an instant.

Chapter 290 The Heart of a Young Girl

At this moment, neither Ling Chen nor Su Lin spoke. They just looked at each other as the quiet living room was filled only with the 'buzzing' of the vibrator.

"You... you..."

After a long while, Su Lin opened her mouth, her eyes full of shame and anger, at a loss for words. This pervert dared to secretly open his package, and even held such embarrassing items in his hand. She had ordered online sneakily and specifically asked the seller not to write the item on the delivery note to avoid embarrassment.

But now, the situation was a hundred times more embarrassing than any she had encountered before. She felt she could no longer show her face to anyone.

At that time, Ling Chen finally came to his senses and quickly turned off the vibrator, stuffing it clumsily back into the package while giving an awkward smile, "That... I didn't do it on purpose."

"You still say!"

Su Lin felt her anger rising uncontrollably, flames seemed to burn in her eyes, wishing she could devour Ling Chen alive on the spot. Now her privacy was completely exposed. The more she thought about it, the angrier she became, but more than that, she felt humiliated. Thinking about Ling Chen holding that thing in his hand, her face felt as if it was on fire, extremely hot.

Feeling the awkward atmosphere between the two, Ling Chen coughed lightly and spoke with earnestness, "Lin, we are all young, there's nothing to be embarrassed about, I can understand your needs, but you should still control yourself, don't be too... too much. Besides, this thing is so big, it doesn't seem suitable for you."

Su Lin could barely accept what he said at first, but the last sentence made her face turn bright red, overwhelmed with embarrassment. This bastard, what's with 'so big, it's unsuitable for me'?

For a moment, she felt she couldn't stay any longer, she glared fiercely at Ling Chen, stamped her foot, and hurried back upstairs.

Ling Chen hurriedly called out, "Hey, don't go, you haven't taken your stuff yet."

Bang!

His response was a loud door slam.

Seeing Su Lin's embarrassment, Ling Chen couldn't help but snicker to himself. Just earlier she was calling him a big pervert, and now with the evidence in hand, look who turned out to be the more pervy one. While he thought so, he still admired Su Lin for buying such a large model, how unsatisfied she must be. Moreover, she's never tasted the pleasures of a man, but could she actually handle that thing?

His mind wandering, he glanced at the vibrator left on the living room coffee table and suddenly felt uneasy. If Nanrong Wanqing were to see this, who knows what she would think. After all, it's a woman's private matter, and even though Nanrong Wanqing is Su Lin's cousin, it's probably not something Su Lin would want her to know.

With that thought, he picked up the package and went straight upstairs.

Arriving in front of Su Lin's bedroom, he made as if to knock on the door. But at that moment, he heard a faint sound of sobbing coming from the room.

Could it be? This girl is actually crying. He mentally scolded himself, blaming his loose lips for saying those words and causing her to cry. However, he found it funny too, as bold as this girl was to buy such a thing, her skin was still so thin.

Twisting the doorknob, Ling Chen pushed the door slightly ajar and peered inside. He saw Su Lin lying on the bed, a box of tissues beside her, continuously wiping away tears, murmuring under her breath. He tiptoed to her side, leaned in to listen and finally made out what she was saying. Turns out, she was cursing him.

"Pervert, bastard, hooligan, scoundrel..." Su Lin used every insulting moniker she could think of on Ling Chen. While cursing, she was also tearing the tissues, the gritting of her teeth made it seem as if she wished it wasn't tissue she was tearing, but Ling Chen instead.

Tsk tsk! Ling Chen shook his head helplessly, this girl really had a huge grudge against him.

Forget it, it's better not to disturb her, to avoid making her cry again. The last thing he wanted to see was a woman's tears—they're the invisible, most lethal weapon that could shatter your defenses at any time.

Gently placing down the express package, Ling Chen silently withdrew, then closed the room door behind him.

Not long after he left, Su Lin, having seemingly vented out her feelings, got up and prepared to head to the bathroom. However, as she turned around, she saw the opened express package placed on her desk.

Her face showed subtle consternation as she quickly approached and took out the contents of the package. Looking at the thick and big banana, her pretty face involuntarily turned red again, her shyness mixed with an undeniable flirtatious and sensual charm.

"Big pervert," she pouted and muttered.

Without even thinking, she knew it must have been Ling Chen who sneaked the item in while she was lying on the bed. However, thinking that Ling Chen had touched this thing, her cheeks turned crimson, and she immediately put that embarrassing item back.

That day when Ling Chen came to help her fix the computer, seeing those blood-pumping images, she felt the stirrings of spring for the first time. After Ling Chen left, she lay in bed restless, unable to sleep, so she couldn't help but turn on the computer and ask a girlfriend for a website.

Later, unsuccessfully resisting her friend's coaxing and temptation, she bought this item online.

After hesitating for a moment, Su Lin resealed the express package with tape and locked it in the cabinet. Now that Ling Chen knew about this thing, she was too embarrassed to use it. Just the thought of it made her cheeks burn hot.

...

The next day.

As he bit into his bread at breakfast, Ling Chen looked towards the staircase and asked, "Wanqing, where's Lin? Why hasn't she come down yet? She's almost late for school."

"I don't know, probably oversleeping. I'll go call her."

Watching Nanrong Wanqing climb the stairs with a light step, Ling Chen smiled slightly. Ever since she got that external skeleton armor and completely got rid of the wheelchair, Nanrong Wanqing wouldn't

stay idle for a moment. Even after coming home, she would continuously walk around the living room, enjoying the pleasure of walking freely.

However, the external skeleton armor was only a temporary solution, not a cure. Although Nanrong Wanqing regained the ability to walk, her legs still had no sensation. She still needed to find a way to truly heal her legs.

Lost in thought, Nanrong Wanqing had already come down from the stairs.

"She says she doesn't feel well and wants to lie down for a bit longer."

Not feeling well? Could it be that she overdid it with her passion last night. Ling Chen chuckled wickedly to himself.

"I'm off to the company," Nanrong Wanqing finished the last sip of milk and unconsciously licked the corner of her lips, her action unintentionally seductive, sending a ripple through Ling Chen's heart.

Since this woman shed her icy exterior, she has become increasingly charming and enchanting.

"Do you want me to accompany you?"

"No need, you rest well at home. Bye!"

Seeing Nanrong Wanqing turning to leave, Ling Chen swiftly grabbed her smooth wrist and, pointing at his own cheek, said with a beaming smile, "Have you forgotten something?"

Seeing his gesture, a flush of red flew across Nanrong Wanqing's cheeks. She glanced at the staircase to make sure no one was around and, holding back her shyness, bent over to Ling Chen's face, and gave him a sweet, fragrant kiss.