

The Beauty 311

Chapter 311 Seeing Through

At this moment, everyone held their breath, and the room was so quiet that the sound of a needle dropping to the floor could be heard. The sound of Mr. Yun's breathing was faintly audible on the other end of the phone.

Qiu Yong pressed Mr. Yun for a decision once more; they needed an outcome, yet Ling Chen's words still echoed in his ears.

On one side was the hope of saving his brother, on the other side was disappointment and the anger of being deceived.

They were all patiently waiting.

"Mr. Qiu," Mr. Yun's voice finally came through the phone, "I've said before, your third brother's illness is quite complicated and requires long-term rehabilitation and observation. You want me to cure him instantly, that I cannot do."

"How would I know that you're not just stringing me along?" Qiu Yong said sternly: "A life for a life, you want Ling Chen, I want to save my third brother. Now, call the doctors in, let them cure my third brother before my eyes. I'll give them three days; if there's no improvement within three days, I'll kill Ling Chen immediately, and you'll get nothing."

Ling Chen, hearing this, inwardly cursed his bad luck. Damn it, he thought, he had become a bargaining chip in Qiu Yong's negotiation.

"Alright, I'll do my best."

The call ended, and within five minutes, there was a knock on the door outside the ward. Qiu Yong gave a look to the one-armed man, who understood and rose to open the door; five doctors in white lab coats and three nurses filed in. Once they were inside, the one-armed man slammed the door shut with a 'bang,' locking the security personnel outside, and then stood by the door with a steel knife, ready to prevent anyone from forcing their way in.

Qiu Yong scanned the doctors and nurses, and in a tepid voice let out three words: "Start then, you have three days. If my third brother suffers the slightest harm, you shall all be buried with him."

Feeling the intense killing intent in his tone, the doctors broke out in a cold sweat and hastily began their examination and treatment.

At this time, Ling Chen ungracefully slumped on the floor, drenched in sweat as if he had been out in the rain, not only was his forehead soaked, but his clothes were also drenched in cold sweat. He gasped for air and looked at the busy doctors, then at Qiu Yong, and weakly said: "Mr. Qiu, if you want to use me as a bargaining chip, at least let me stay alive."

As a martial artist, Qiu Yong could see that Ling Chen was in bad shape. He nodded his head and signaled for a doctor to give Ling Chen an IV.

Ling Chen climbed onto a chair and rested his hand on the table, rolling up his sleeve. The doctor approached with a medical kit, took out a bottle of medicine, and then with a needle, aimed for Ling Chen's arm and injected it. As the throbbing pain in his arm spread, Ling Chen looked up at the doctor giving him the IV and with a hint of peculiarity asked casually: "How long have you been a doctor?"

The doctor was slightly startled, seeming not to expect such a question from Ling Chen. After a brief daze, he lowered his head to adjust the IV tube and replied: "Over twenty years."

"Over twenty years?" Ling Chen looked at him with a smile that was not quite a smile, "An old doctor of over twenty years and you still can't insert a needle accurately? Or is it that you can't do it at all and just trying to fob me off?"

Hearing this, the doctor suddenly looked up; a flicker of sharpness passed through his dark eyes. Though it was fleeting, Ling Chen caught it accurately. He smirked slightly and chuckled: "In the future, don't pretend to be in a profession you know nothing about. It's easy to be found out that way."

As he finished speaking, before the other person could react, Ling Chen abruptly pulled the needle from his arm and stabbed it into the doctor's eye.

"Ah!"

With a piercing scream, the person clutched their left eye, from which blood gushed through their fingers.

This sudden turn of events caught everyone in the room by surprise. The four doctors in white coats and three nurses, who were treating the patient at the bedside, saw their companion attacked and their faces instantly changed. They quickly drew hidden daggers from within their clothes and stabbed towards Qiu Yong and the others.

"Seeking death!"

The patterned woman shouted furiously, her face cold as frost. Her slim and slender figure leaped up like a swallow gliding at low altitude, charging into the crowd. Following that, she loosened her sleeve, and a three-foot-long short sword slid into her hand from the sleeve. With the sword in hand, she crossed her arms and the blade split in two—it was a Mother-Child Sword.

Those posing as doctors and nurses were skilled fighters, as evident from their martial arts; all had undergone strict training in standard combat techniques.

However, Qiu Yong and his companions were no pushovers either. Although the eight eccentrics hadn't made it onto the Heaven and Earth Dragon and Tiger List, there was no doubt that they were recognized as high-level martial artists by their peers.

Ling Chen sat in his chair without getting up; he was too weak to move now. Watching the two groups fighting fiercely in the sickroom was quite enjoyable. Among the seven in front of him, besides Qiu Yong, he could only identify four. One was a little boy with astonishing jumping power and strength beyond ordinary. One was the Taiping Princess, skilled in swordsmanship; one was a one-armed man with a saber; and another was an archer. In addition to these, there were two others he wasn't familiar with.

"Eh?"

While observing the fight, Ling Chen suddenly noticed a young man dressed in summer clothes standing in the corner of the room with a brilliant smile on his face, watching both sides without any intention of joining in.

To his surprise, the fight in the sickroom was drawing to an end. Unsurprisingly, Qiu Yong and his companions were victorious. Those disguised as doctors and nurses were not weak, but unfortunately, they had intended to launch a surprise attack. Ling Chen had seen through their identities, allowing Qiu Yong and the others to be prepared.

"Elder Qiu, you should believe me now," Ling Chen spoke, "Mr. Yun knew he couldn't save his own life, so he resorted to these tactics."

Qiu Yong nodded, his face serious, with a hint of suppressed anger in his old eyes.

At this moment, no one contested Ling Chen's words anymore. The truth lay before their eyes, leaving no room for hope.

"Ling Chen, our brother and sister were deceived and used by Mr. Yun, and we have offended you greatly. Please don't take it to heart," Qiu Yong said earnestly, expressing his apologies.

Ling Chen grinned: "No worries, desperate times call for desperate measures, I can understand your feelings. Now that things are clear, shouldn't we think of a way to get out of here?"

"Big brother, he's right. If we don't leave now, they definitely won't let us go."

As soon as the one-armed man finished speaking, the landline phone in the room rang again. Qiu Yong picked up the receiver, and Mr. Yun's voice immediately came through, "Elder Qiu, it seems my people have failed. How about this, we change the terms. If you agree to serve me and join me, I will spare your lives. What do you say?"

Qiu Yong answered coldly, "Mr. Yun, before you decided to use us, maybe you should have inquired about the consequences of provoking the eight eccentrics. We have never been merciful, and you've made a grave mistake."

Chapter 312 Escape

"Hehe! Elder Qiu, are you threatening me?" Mr. Yun's laughter carried a chill.

"You had better be careful, we will find you and then kill you."

Snap! The phone hung up, and Qiu Yong glanced at his siblings and said solemnly, "Prepare to break out. Xia Yue, ensure Ling Chen's safety."

The patterned woman's complexion changed slightly, and just as she was about to speak, she was silenced by Qiu Yong's gaze.

So, this woman's name was Xia Yue. Ling Chen glanced at her, a slight smile lifting the corners of his mouth. It seemed Qiu Yong indeed cared for him, having a woman take care of him.

Bang!

Seconds later, a loud bang as the door of the sickroom was violently smashed open. Following that, over a dozen security personnel wielding riot shields entered one by one, looking around the empty room. They paused slightly, then turned their gaze toward the damaged window.

"Calling the control center, the target is not in the room, is there an error in your signal?"

"According to the signal, all eight targets are within the sickroom."

"Damn it, they must have removed the trackers from their bodies, order immediately, seal off the entire base."

...

In a corridor of the secret base, led by Qiu Yong, eight extraordinary individuals along with Ling Chen were rapidly moving towards the exit.

It was Ling Chen's first visit here, but Qiu Yong and the others had been here once before and were fairly familiar with the routes, knowing where the exit was. With them leading, at least they wouldn't go in the wrong direction.

Ling Chen dragged his heavy legs, struggling to keep up with the group. Although he wanted to match the group's speed, his body was too weak; not long after running, he was gasping for breath, falling behind.

At that moment, Xia Yue, walking in front, looked back at Ling Chen. Seeing his staggering step and shaky body, she frowned slightly. Remembering Qiu Yong's instructions, Xia Yue quickly returned to Ling Chen's side, took his arm over her shoulder, and supported his waist with her other hand, helping his body move forward.

As their bodies touched, a faint fragrance reached Ling Chen's nose, instantly revitalizing his spirit. A surge of perverse strength slowly grew within him, and his energy gradually recovered.

Damn! Does the Prajnaparamita Sutra have such an effect?

Ling Chen was startled, somewhat in disbelief. It seemed He Ziyun was right; women could strongly catalyze the effects of the Prajnaparamita Sutra. However, he had closely interacted with Nanrong Wanqing during his recovery period before, so why hadn't it had such an effect?

Could it be... that only women who have practiced Inner Strength can be effective?

If that's the case, wouldn't he be invincible in the world if he keeps a hundred women who practice Inner Strength around him in the future?

While he was entertaining these thoughts to himself, a young man in the group suddenly stopped, pointing ahead and saying, "There are people in the left corridor."

"How many?"

"About fifteen."

Hearing this, Qiu Yong gestured, and Xia Yue immediately took Ling Chen to hide in a corner, their bodies pressed tightly together.

As soon as they hid, a flurry of footsteps approached from not far away. Ling Chen stealthily peeked and saw fifteen security personnel passing right in front of their cross-corridor, inwardly shocked. That young man was impressive, not only did he know people were coming over, but he could also accurately count their number. That was quite freakish.

Xia Yue seemed to see the surprise in his eyes and explained, "The seventh brother is blind; he was born unable to see, so he intensely practiced his hearing. The eldest brother said that within ten meters, even the sound of a mosquito flapping its wings couldn't escape his ears."

It turns out he is blind.

Ling Chen was astonished; he hadn't noticed it at all.

With the help of the young man, the group was able to accurately avoid the search parties every time. It wasn't long before they successfully reached the exit.

Ling Chen leaned close to Xia Yue's soft body, looking around attentively. At the doorway, over thirty security personnel stood ready, all equipped with riot shields, stun batons, and tasers—uniform urban SWAT gear. Additionally, there were two water cannon trucks parked on either side of the doorway.

It was apparent that Mr. Yun did not wish to harm their lives, or rather, did not want to harm Ling Chen for the time being, so he did not deploy lethal weapons. Once Ling Chen died, they would lose their subject of research, rendering him valueless.

Trouble!

Ling Chen slightly furrowed his brow. There were nine of them now, one unconscious and needing care, plus he had Xia Yue who was responsible for his safety. That immediately reduced their number by four, leaving only five capable of fighting. Whether they could break through the defenses was still hard to say.

During his contemplation, his eyes lifted upward, following the ceiling, and his gaze suddenly brightened.

"Elder Qiu, do you see that distribution box over there? If we turn off the lights, we could..."

Before Ling Chen could finish speaking, Qiu Yong had already grasped his intention and gave a meaningful glance to the man carrying a quiver beside him. Without a word, the latter opened his quiver, took out a bow and arrow, and aimed at the wiring box at the top of the wall.

Whoosh!

The arrow shot through the air, instantly piercing the distribution box. Following that, the box erupted with a 'bang', sparks flying everywhere, and the surroundings plunged into darkness. However, merely two seconds passed, and the lights came on again as the backup power supply kicked in.

The man's expression remained unchanged as he pulled out five more arrows from the quiver, loaded them onto the bowstring, and fired continuously without pause. Five arrows flew simultaneously, none missing their target, all hitting the overhead lights. The lighting fixtures were destroyed, rendering the backup power useless.

"Call the main control, they have reached the exit, send backup immediately," the security personnel immediately relayed the information.

In less than a minute, three SUVs quickly arrived at the scene, their row of rooftop lights switched on, instantly illuminating the surroundings.

"Everyone be alert, they must be nearby."

As soon as those words fell, they suddenly heard a noise from behind. Then, they saw the exit door slowly rising.

"How is the door opening?" The security personnel looked somewhat dazed.

A security captain quickly picked up the walkie-talkie and loudly said, "Calling the main control, the door..."

Before he could finish, a dazzling light suddenly shone on them. Caught off guard, all the security personnel hastily raised their arms to shield their eyes. At that moment, the roar of an engine sounded, followed by the water cannon truck parked next to the gate charging directly outside.

The security captain peered through his fingers to see a young man sitting in the passenger seat, it was Ling Chen.

"No good, they are in the vehicle, don't let them escape."

Regrettably, he was still a step too late; the vehicle had already rushed out the gate and accelerated towards the parking lot outside.

Watching the vehicle kick up dust as it left, everyone was dumbfounded, unable to comprehend how these individuals managed to bypass them and get to the vehicle; it was indeed baffling.

Chapter 313 Bonds of Affection

Emerging from the parking lot, the factory security room, having already received notification, hurriedly assembled personnel, forming a human wall at the entrance. But against the high-pressure water cannon truck that didn't slow its speed, those suited men didn't have the guts to hold their ground. Before the vehicle even got close, they scattered to both sides, allowing the truck to smash through the iron gate and speed away.

"Done!"

Sitting in the passenger seat, Ling Chen glanced at the rearview mirror, a pale face revealing a hint of joy at the smooth escape. They could successfully escape this time thanks to Qiu Yong and others. Had it not been for their respective special abilities, they might still be struggling inside the secret base.

After the lights went out, relying on the sharp hearing of youth, everyone huddled shoulder to shoulder, following his lead and sneaking past the group of security personnel in the dark. They were all martial arts practitioners, who found controlling their footsteps to be a simple task. Additionally, those security personnel weren't experts. Once they successfully got behind the security staff, Xia Yue stealthily got on the vehicle, taking care of the personnel on board. Meanwhile, Ling Chen sneaked into the security room and opened the main gate.

Through this cooperation, Ling Chen truly witnessed the prowess of the eight peculiar individuals. Each possessed their own unique skills, truly strange people within the Martial Arts realm.

"Third brother, third brother..."

At this moment, an anxious voice from Xia Yue came from the trunk.

The driver Qiu Yong quickly pulled over to the side of the road, then got out and went around to the rear of the vehicle, with Ling Chen closely following. Pulling open the door, Ling Chen's expression changed slightly upon seeing a middle-aged man lying in Xia Yue's arms, black blood flowing from his mouth and his pale face, his body convulsing violently.

"Ling Chen, don't you know medicine? Quickly take a look!" the one-armed man called out urgently upon seeing him.

Ling Chen nodded, stepping quickly into the compartment, and placed his hand on the other man's pulse. Everyone's gaze was fixed on him, waiting for his diagnosis. After a while, Ling Chen sighed softly and shook his head at the others.

"His bodily functions have already collapsed," he said, turning to look at Qiu Yong. "Elder Qiu, his life can't be saved. However, you can help reduce his suffering."

"How do I help?"

"He won't die right away, but this state will continue for an hour or two. During this time, he will constantly endure the pain and torment from his body. So, the best solution is to release him from his suffering as soon as possible."

Xia Yue's gaze turned cold as she spoke sharply, "You want to kill him?"

Ling Chen nodded, "I know you can't accept it, but this is the best way to handle it. Knowing that he's sure to die, do you have the heart to watch him suffer?"

"I..." Xia Yue fell silent for a moment, then defiantly said, "No. I don't agree."

"Elder Qiu, what do you think?"

Qiu Yong looked at the middle-aged man convulsing all over, a flicker of reluctance in his eyes. After hesitating for a moment, he shook his head and said gravely, "I can't bring myself to do it."

As he spoke, the middle-aged man lying in Xia Yue's arms suddenly lifted his hand, firmly grasping the one-armed man's arm, and with a hoarse voice, as if mustering all his strength, uttered with great difficulty, "Kill... kill... me... please..."

"Third brother!"

The one-armed man cried out, his eyes red, a grown man now unable to hold back his tears.

It's not that men don't shed tears, only that the grievous moment had yet to come.

The tense atmosphere immediately spread throughout the van, everyone bowed their heads, secretly wiping away tears, and the little boy cried out loud, his expression full of sorrow.

"Ling Chen."

"Elder Qiu, what is it?"

Qiu Yong clenched his fists tightly, struggling to suppress his emotions, and spoke word for word, "I need a favor, help us siblings out."

Ling Chen was startled, then quickly understood and exclaimed in surprise, "You want me to..."

"Just consider it as us begging you."

Facing the pleading look in Qiu Yong's eyes, Ling Chen hesitated for a moment, sighed silently, and nodded gently.

"Thanks! Everyone else, get off." As soon as he finished speaking, Qiu Yong turned and walked to the back of the vehicle.

The others looked at each other, somewhat bewildered. Finally, the one-armed man was the first to rise, patted Ling Chen's shoulder, and said in a low voice, "Please grant him a quick end, thank you!"

Seeing the one-armed man get off the vehicle, the others no longer hesitated and stepped off one after another. Xia Yue, unable to let go, caressed the middle-aged man's cheek with tears already brimming in her eyes.

"Third brother, if there's a next life, let's be siblings again."

Watching everyone leave, Ling Chen squatted in the carriage, looking directly at the middle-aged man in front of him, and murmured to himself, "Don't blame me for being heartless; I just don't want you to suffer anymore."

The middle-aged man seemed to hear his words, his eyelids trembling slightly as if responding to him.

"Go in peace." With that, Ling Chen's hand moved to his neck.

The middle-aged man slowly closed his eyes, his lips slightly curled up in a smile of relief, and his twitching body gradually became calm.

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The car door opened, and those waiting outside immediately focused their gaze on Ling Chen.

Ling Chen's expression was serene; he said nothing but gave a slight nod. Seeing his gesture, Xia Yue could no longer contain herself and threw herself into the arms of the one-armed man, weeping loudly.

Ling Chen stood quietly to the side, not disturbing the others immersed in grief. He could feel the sincere emotions among these people, heartfelt and genuine.

It's rare in life to find true friends, rare to have brothers.

Having so many genuine siblings by your side throughout life, even death would leave no regrets.

Ling Chen reflected to himself, feeling a twinge of envy.

"Ling Chen, thank you for your help. We, the eight strange people, owe you a favor." After saying this, Qiu Yong handed over a piece of paper, "If you ever need anything, you can contact me with this number. Whatever trouble you face, we siblings will definitely help you with all our might."

Ling Chen's eyes brightened. These people were each skilled in their own way, and he had long thought of making connections with them. With such a rare opportunity, he naturally wouldn't miss it.

"Elder Qiu, please don't say that; as long as you don't hold this against me, that's enough."

"Not at all. We are preparing to send our third brother back to his hometown for burial. Take care of yourself, and we'll get in touch later."

"Safe travels."

After Qiu Yong and the others drove away, Ling Chen stood alone on the roadside, patiently waiting. About half an hour later, a Land Rover drove down the road and stopped at the curb. The window rolled down, and Zhong Wei poked his head out from the driver's seat, waving his hand, "Get in!"

Ling Chen nodded and quickly got into the passenger seat. When he parted ways with Qiu Yong, he had borrowed his phone to call Zhong Wei to come and pick him up.

"Where have you been these past few days? Couldn't reach you by phone, couldn't find you, the chairman and the others were almost out of their minds."

"Ran into a bit of trouble. How about at home, everything okay?"

"Not too great, something's happened."

Chapter 314 Nanrong Hao Gets Injured

"Trouble?" Ling Chen's expression tightened, and he asked hastily, "What happened?"

"Mr. Nanrong had a conflict with someone."

"Haozi?" Ling Chen immediately relaxed. It wasn't that he didn't care about Nanrong Hao; it's just that Nanrong Hao is a man, and it's quite normal for him to experience setbacks and pain. What he's most worried about is Nanrong Wanqing. As long as she's alright, nothing else is a problem.

Upon returning to Wealthy Manor, Ling Chen went straight to the villa. After entering, he realized that both Nanrong Wanqing and Su Lin were not there. It was only after asking Nanny Wang that he found out both women had run off to Nanrong Hao's villa.

Inside Nanrong Hao's place, Ling Chen caught sight of Nanrong Hao sitting in a wheelchair, his arms and abdomen wrapped in bandages and his face bruised and swollen, looking just like a mummy. This drew an unfeeling grin from Ling Chen.

Hearing the laughter at the doorway, Nanrong Wanqing, Su Lin, and Nanrong Hao all turned their heads to look at Ling Chen as he walked in.

With a frustrated face, Nanrong Hao said, "Chen, I'm like this, and you're still laughing."

Ling Chen quirked a smile. "It's fine. You're a grown man; it's okay to get hurt. It doesn't matter if you're disfigured; you're not handsome anyway." After teasing him, he couldn't suppress his curiosity and asked, "By the way, who did this to you?"

Although Nanrong Hao was no expert, he had trained for so long with Ling Chen after all. It would be difficult for four or five ordinary guys to get close to him, so Ling Chen was rather curious.

"Ah," Nanrong Hao sighed and said, "let's not talk about it. It's embarrassing."

"There are no strangers here, what's there to be embarrassed about. If you want me to stand up for you, then spit it out."

"So, here's the thing..."

Nanrong Hao then explained his ordeal.

After hearing the story, Ling Chen frowned slightly, a trace of coldness in his eyes.

Recently, Nanrong Hao had been busy with Jiang Hao and Zhao Zhengxiong, working on setting up a courier company. They had already notified Qi Jianhui of the Green Tiger Gang, intending to open five courier branches in his territory. All started well because Qi Jianhui, knowing Nanrong Hao's background, did not dare to easily provoke him, and the two sides coexisted peacefully.

But lately, for some unknown reason, Qi Jianhui, as if emboldened by a surge of ambition, openly went against Jiang Hao and his group. Not only did he send people to cause trouble at their courier companies, threatening them to pay protection money, but he also beat up their couriers, causing significant losses to the company.

Because of this, Nanrong Hao and Jiang Hao and the others were furious and wanted to teach Qi Jianhui a lesson to make him back down. But Qi Jianhui, far from being subdued, stepped up his hostility, even smashing two of their companies.

In the underworld, only those with stronger fists have a say.

After much thought, Nanrong Hao and the others decided to gather their power, call for reinforcements, and directly take over Qi Jianhui's territory.

Zhao Zhengxiong was cautious, having dealt with Qi Jianhui in the past. Before making a move, he thoroughly investigated Qi Jianhui's background and accurately counted the numbers of the Green Tiger Gang. To defeat the Green Tiger Gang, Jiang Hao had gathered twice as many people as the opponent.

With so many people, none of the three from the Nanrong family ever thought they could lose.

Last night, the trio split up, each leading hundreds of subordinates, prepared to siege the stronghold of the Green Tiger Gang. Everything went smoothly at the start, Nanrong Hao and his two companions easily took down the Green Tiger Gang's stronghold, leaving Qi Jianhui with no way out.

But at that moment, an unexpected force emerged. Although outnumbered, they were all skilled and not weak by any means. It wasn't long before Nanrong Hao and his men were effortlessly defeated in the clash, both Jiang Hao and Zhao Zhengxiong suffered injuries, and with Nanrong Hao covering the rear, he was even more seriously hurt, sustaining a dislocated arm and a stab wound to his belly. Fortunately, the vital organs were missed, and he escaped with his life.

"Do you know who they were?" Ling Chen asked.

Nanrong Hao shook his head, "Not sure for now. Hao is looking into it, but what we can be sure of is that those people were not Qi Jianhui's men."

"What's your plan?"

"Do I even need to say it? Once I've recovered from my injuries, I'll make sure those jerks pay. If we don't settle this, how can we ever mix in the circles again?"

Watching Nanrong Hao furiously talk, Nanrong Wanqing couldn't help but stand up and say, "Ling Chen, come out for a moment, I have something to tell you."

Seeing Nanrong Wanqing walk out, Ling Chen winked at Nanrong Hao, smiled slightly, and quickly followed her steps. In fact, without saying much, Ling Chen could guess what was on her mind.

Once outside the villa, Nanrong Wanqing turned back, looked at Ling Chen who was grinning, and chided, "And you're laughing. I left my brother in your care, hoping you would help him grow. Look at what he's become now, just yelling about fighting and killing, no different than a street thug. If he continues like this, how can I trust him with the Hongyu Group in the future?"

Ling Chen corrected, "That's not right. Actually, what Haozi is doing right now is not fundamentally different from running the Hongyu Group. At least now he's sort of a big brother, managing quite a few people under him. As a boss, he has to think about how to make money and ensure his subordinates aren't going hungry, while also regularly bonding with them to win their hearts. If something happens, he has to negotiate with others. Honestly, don't think those bosses have nothing to do and just enjoy life; they work harder than you, a chairman, with everything being hands-on. Once he becomes a competent boss, I believe he'll have the necessary ability to manage the Hongyu Group."

Nanrong Wanqing gave him an annoyed glance and said, "Your reasoning is twisted. Okay, enough joking, I'm not interested in what he wants to do; I'm just worried about his safety. You know the current situation at the Nanrong family is unstable; if someone has it out for him..."

"Don't worry, I'm here. I won't let anything happen to him," Ling Chen grinned and said, "After all, he's going to be my future brother-in-law."

Hearing this, Nanrong Wanqing's face blushed, feeling sweet inside, but she retorted coquettishly, "Nothing is set in stone yet, don't speak so early."

"Is that so?" Ling Chen smiled mischievously, reaching out with both hands, he wrapped them around Nanrong Wanqing's slender waist, and then gently pushed forward, pressing her delicate body against his strong chest.

Nanrong Wanqing's face turned red as she said, "What are you trying to do?"

Ling Chen leaned into her ear and whispered, "Didn't you just say nothing was decided yet? How about we make that first stroke?"

"No." Feeling the warm breath of Ling Chen tickling the sensitive spot behind her ear, Nanrong Wanqing's body trembled slightly, overcome with embarrassment, she quickly pushed Ling Chen away, her face bashfully frustrated, "It's broad daylight, no touching."

Ling Chen chuckled, "So you mean it's not okay during the day, but it's okay at night? Fine, I'll come see you tonight."

Chapter 315 Perfect Data

Although the two had confirmed their relationship, the shy Nanrong Wanqing couldn't withstand his teasing. Recalling the tender moments they shared, a blush immediately rose to her delicate face, bright and charming, like a goddess fallen into the mortal world, intoxicating to behold.

"I'm not talking to you anymore." Nanrong Wanqing, fearing Ling Chen might blurt out something bold again, quickly dropped a sentence and immediately turned to head back to the villa.

Watching her retreating figure, Ling Chen couldn't help but think of the words Mr. Yun had once said to him, feeling incredibly conflicted inside. He didn't understand why Mr. Yun would prevent him from being with Nanrong Wanqing, and now he had no interest in finding out. What he was worried about was far more important.

Mr. Yun was undoubtedly a high-ranking member of the God Organization. Given his position, he would inevitably stand against the God Organization in the future. Consequently, Mr. Yun would become his enemy. In this situation, the one who would suffer the most was undoubtedly Nanrong Wanqing. If she knew the truth, she might find it hard to face.

Thinking of these headache-inducing issues, he couldn't help but let out a sigh. Forget it, he thought, one step at a time—cross that bridge when you come to it.

Night fell, and the autumn breeze was slightly cool.

Just after nine o'clock, Ling Chen went to bed early. Having lost too much blood in the past couple of days, his body felt weak. He wanted to rest well and recover as soon as possible.

At this moment, the ringtone of the mobile phone on the bedside table rang out.

"Hello! Old Tang, how is it?"

"It's too late, they've already run away. All the data has been cleaned up, not a trace left behind."

"They sure fled quickly."

After escaping from that secret base, Ling Chen immediately contacted the Ghost Organization. Unfortunately, they were a step behind, and Mr. Yun had probably already left East Sea City with Zhu Hong.

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At this time, in an underground room, the lights were bright. In the small room filled with various sophisticated instruments, several researchers in white coats were busy preparing.

After a while, the door was pushed open, and Zhu Hong, wearing a thin patient's gown, walked in from outside and then lay down on the bed in the center of the room.

"Mr. Zhu, if you feel any discomfort, remember to tell us in time," reminded a researcher nearby.

Having said that, he turned his head to look at the north wall of the room, where a huge transparent glass window had been installed. Outside the window, Mr. Yun stood with his hands behind his back, staring intently at Zhu Hong on the bed.

Sensing the gaze of the researcher, he nodded lightly. Receiving his approval, the researcher immediately picked up a syringe and focused on injecting the serum into Zhu Hong's body.

In less than ten seconds, Zhu Hong's eyes gradually closed, and he fell into a deep slumber.

"Start!"

As the voice fell, the researchers began the experiment in an orderly manner.

With a blood transfusion tube inserted into Zhu Hong's arm, bright red blood immediately began to flow through the clear tube, then along the transfusion line into the blood exchange machine. As the fresh blood was drawn from Zhu Hong's body, another pale red blood was infused into his body through another tube.

Throughout the process, everyone's expressions were tense, not daring to relax in the slightest, their eyes firmly fixed on the data displayed on the instruments.

After more than ten minutes, Zhu Hong, who was in a deep sleep, suddenly opened his eyes, his pupils dilated, his body violently convulsing, and white foam continuously spewing from his mouth, a very frightening sight.

Mr. Yun, watching from outside the glass window, saw the changes in Zhu Hong and his face immediately darkened, his brows furrowing tightly as he asked in a deep voice, "What's the matter?"

"It's likely a bodily rejection of the blood fusion." A researcher inside the room explained, "The blood we transferred into him was artificial blood manufactured using Ling Chen's genes. It's quite normal for the body to reject it."

"Is there a risk to his life?"

"There shouldn't be a problem. We anticipated this situation and were already prepared." As the researcher spoke, several researchers had become busy, using various instruments to alleviate Zhu Hong's symptoms. As sweat formed on the brows of everyone present, Zhu Hong's condition finally began to improve and steadily stabilized.

At the same time, the data on the instruments started to jump from zero to ten, and continued to rise.

Seeing those numbers, all researchers heaved a sigh of relief, their faces breaking into relaxed smiles.

"Mr. Yun, everything is progressing smoothly."

"Very good." Mr. Yun nodded, a faint smile appearing at the corner of his mouth. Zhu Hong was a talent he had nurtured himself; he didn't want anything to happen to him. Moreover, he had higher expectations for Zhu Hong. If Zhu Hong died now, his many years of hard work would be in vain.

Two hours later.

The successful blood transfusion recipient Zhu Hong slowly opened his eyes, which, originally dark as ink, now bore a trace of eerie blue, adding a mysterious charm to his handsome appearance.

Rising from the bed, Zhu Hong lifted his hands, examined the palms and backs of them, and then flexed his joints. Feeling the changes in his body, the corners of his mouth immediately lifted.

"Not bad, this is the effect I wanted."

After getting out of bed, a researcher immediately handed him a steel pipe that was presented to Zhu Hong. Glancing at it, Zhu Hong took it, applied a slight force with his arms, and the steel pipe, as thick as a wrist, instantly deformed, twisted into a lump by Zhu Hong as easily as if it were dough.

"Proceed with the next set of tests immediately; I need to know his data clearly," said Mr. Yun from outside the glass window, his eyes excited, urging them on impatiently.

"Yes."

In less than half an hour, a complete report was delivered into Mr. Yun's hands. Looking at the astonishing numbers, even the usually composed Mr. Yun couldn't help but laugh.

"Excellent, very good! Zhu Hong, you certainly did not disappoint me. This data alone is enough to rival an exoskeleton armor suit."

At this moment, Zhu Hong, now dressed in a sharp suit, was holding a cup of tea and sitting leisurely in a chair, savoring it.

"Mr. Yun..."

"There are only us relatives here, no outsiders, you may use a different address."

"Yes, Uncle Yun." Zhu Hong spoke, "Ling Chen's blood and genes do indeed have extraordinary effects, it's a pity we let him escape, and can't collect more of his fresh blood."

Mr. Yun waved his hand and said, "These aren't problems. As long as he is out there, whenever we need him, we can capture him back at any time."

"Uncle Yun." Zhu Hong hesitated for a moment, but still couldn't resist asking, "Why do you insist on letting Ling Chen go? Even without Ling Chen by Wanqing's side, we could still ensure Wanqing's safety."

"You can't say it like that. I need someone capable and trusted by Wanqing to stay by her side, and Ling Chen is the most suitable candidate. Given the current situation, the Jiang Family will sooner or later come after Wanqing. Since we are not in a position to act now, we can only rely on Ling Chen for help." Saying this, Mr. Yun paused, giving Zhu Hong a meaningful look. "I know what you're thinking. Don't worry, I won't change what I promised you."

Chapter 316 Dongyi

The next day.

Ling Chen woke up at ten in the morning. He had been too exhausted the past couple of days, his biological clock was out of sync.

When he got up, Nanny Wang had already prepared breakfast. Ling Chen called Nanrong Wanqing to make sure she had safely arrived at the office before he could relax.

He ate a bit of breakfast quickly, then a familiar voice came from outside the door. Ling Chen turned around to see Jiang Hao and Zhao Zhengxiong walking in side by side.

"Hey! You guys are early. Here to see Haozi?"

Jiang Hao nodded and said, "Chen, where did you run off to that night? We called but couldn't reach you."

"I had my matters to attend to." While speaking, Ling Chen looked over Jiang Hao and Zhao Zhengxiong. The battle that night seemed quite 'fierce'; both were bandaged on their faces and hands.

"Are you two alright?"

"Just some minor injuries, nothing serious."

"Did you figure out who was behind this?" Ling Chen asked.

Hearing this, Jiang Hao and Zhao Zhengxiong exchanged a glance, their expressions somewhat bitter as they said with a wry smile, "Chen, we might have gotten ourselves in big trouble this time."

"Tell me about it."

"I checked. The people who showed up that night were from the Dongyi Gang. To put it simply, we're like a budding small company, but Dongyi Gang is like the Hongyu Group; it's an established gang in East Sea City with decades of foundation."

Hearing Jiang Hao's explanation, Ling Chen was taken aback and asked in surprise, "How did you guys get tangled up with such a big gang?"

Jiang Hao grimaced and said, "We wouldn't dare offend Dongyi Gang. It's all because of that bastard, Qi Jianhui. I have no idea how he got involved with Dongyi Gang. Now the Green Tiger Gang has been absorbed by Dongyi Gang and became one of their bases. Chen, I intended to keep to my own turf and be the king of my own hill, but somehow we ended up clashing with Dongyi Gang. Now we're doomed."

Zhao Zhengxiong then added, "We received a notice from Dongyi Gang this morning. Within three days, we must submit to them and hand over all our territories, or else Dongyi Gang will forcefully drive us out of Old City. Chen, you have to help us; you're the only one we can rely on."

Ling Chen frowned slightly. It wasn't that he was unwilling to help, but the situation was tricky. From Jiang Hao's description, he got a preliminary understanding of Dongyi Gang. Such a longstanding gang was a real scourge to society, indulging in all kinds of vices like gambling, drugs, and prostitutions.

Although Jiang Hao was also part of this underworld, he adhered to his principles; his gang never engaged in these criminal activities, just collected protection money and earned through legal labor. Compared to Dongyi Gang, Jiang Hao's group was like the fresh-faced youths of the underworld.

Ling Chen had dealt with underworld forces when he was abroad; those were cold-blooded killers. Real large-scale gangs had a clear hierarchy with professional fighters and assassins, and were not lacking in strength. Jiang Hao contending with those people was truly a case of a mantis trying to stop a chariot, courting self-destruction.

After thinking for a moment, he asked, "Do you know who the head of Dongyi Gang is? How about I talk to him and see if I can persuade him to lay off Old City?"

Zhao Zhengxiong shook his head and said, "Chen, not to hide it from you, but hardly anyone knows who the leader of Dongyi Gang is. That person is very mysterious and seldom shows their face; usually, the two hall masters of Dongyi Gang handle the gang's affairs. One handles the business aspects, and the other manages their men, and they are the most powerful people in the gang."

"Who should I talk to then?"

"Deng Guoyong; he's the one dealing with us in Old City."

"Fine, you guys set a time to meet him, and I'll have a proper talk with him."

Jiang Hao responded, "Alright, I'll try to arrange a meeting with him and contact you by phone."

After seeing Jiang Hao and Zhao Zhengxiong off, Ling Chen sat on the sofa in the living room, thought for a moment, then took out his phone to dial a number.

The call connected, and Ling Chen cheerfully said, "Hey, Officer Xia, are you busy?"

"Get straight to the point, I don't have time to waste."

"It's like this, how much do you know about Dongyi Gang?"

"Dongyi Gang?" Xia Mutong's tone changed slightly, and he immediately asked, "Ling Chen, what are you up to now?"

"Just asking casually."

"Dongyi Gang is suspected in one hundred and forty-five crimes including murder, kidnapping, extortion, assaulting police, and disturbing public order. They are the largest underground force in East Sea City and a major focus of our police efforts."

Ling Chen was internally shocked, with so many charges, the reputation of this old gang truly preceded it.

"If that's the case, then why has there been no effect, and Dongyi Gang is still so rampant?"

"Dongyi Gang has numerous underlings, and every time they commit a crime, a minion takes the fall, and we can't touch anyone higher up. We are police; we work based on evidence, and it's the same when making arrests," Xia Mutong couldn't help asking, "Ling, you haven't gotten into trouble with Dongyi Gang, have you? Otherwise, why inquire about them?"

"Dongyi Gang has targeted Jiang Hao and his crew, looking to swallow their territory. They asked for my intervention. We are all brothers; I can't just stand by and do nothing. Officer Xia, don't worry, I'm a civilized man, just planning to talk it out, no violence."

"That's your business. If you can really help me deal with Dongyi Gang, I have to thank you properly. Alright, I have a meeting to attend, can't talk more. You handle it your way."

After hanging up, Ling Chen grinned and chuckled to himself. Xia Mutong's meaning was clear, whatever you plan to do is fine, the police won't intervene. Since that's the case, things should be much easier now.

...

Night fell.

Nanrong Wanqing returned home from Hongyu Group, and as soon as she entered, she saw Ling Chen changing his clothes, getting ready to head out.

"Where are you going?"

"I've arranged to have dinner with someone." Ling Chen replied. Jiang Hao had just called, having arranged a meeting with Deng Guoyong.

"Who?"

Ling Chen was about to make up an excuse, but then he heard Nanrong Hao's voice from behind, "Chen, are we ready to go?"

Nanrong Wanqing looked suspiciously at them and asked, "Are you two going together?"

"Sister, we've arranged to negotiate with the hall master of Dongyi Gang; Chen has agreed to help us out."

Hearing this, Ling Chen glanced at Nanrong Hao reproachfully. This guy really spilled everything, not even considering if it would worry Nanrong Wanqing. Catching his reproachful gaze, Wanqing spoke, "Don't blame him. We have an agreement; whatever he does, he must tell me everything, no secrets, or I won't let him leave the house." Then she turned playful and asked, "Are you really going to negotiate?"

Ling Chen nodded, watching Nanrong Wanqing's spirited demeanor, a bad feeling stirring within him.

"Okay, you can go, but you have to take me with you. I want to see for myself how you guys negotiate."

Chapter 317 Negotiation

"Sister, you want to go too?" Nanrong Hao was taken aback, clearly not expecting Nanrong Wanqing to make such a request.

"What, can't I?"

"This..." Nanrong Hao was at a loss for words and turned to Ling Chen for help.

Ling Chen coughed lightly and said with an awkward smile, "Wanqing, that kind of situation isn't quite suitable for women. It's better if you stay at home. Don't worry, with me accompanying Haozi, nothing will happen to him."

Nanrong Wanqing said indifferently, "I'm not worried about whether anything will happen to him. I just want to go and see for myself. He's my younger brother, and I should be aware of what he's doing. If Grandpa asks about it later, I should know how to respond."

Seeing she was bringing up Nanrong Yong, Nanrong Hao immediately clamped his mouth shut, not daring to refute any further.

Threat! A blatant threat!

Nanrong Yong had no idea what Nanrong Hao was doing and thought he was dutifully attending school. If he found out Nanrong Hao was not engaging in proper business and dealing with a bunch of gangsters, Nanrong Hao probably wouldn't have good days ahead.

Ling Chen knew that Nanrong Wanqing had made up her mind and that he couldn't refuse her, so he said, "If you want to go, then let's go. It's not a big deal." With him by her side, who would dare to hurt Nanrong Wanqing.

Shortly after, the three of them made a few preparations and then drove to the negotiation site.

The meeting place Jiang Hao had arranged was at a high-end restaurant in East Sea City, where luxury cars filled the entrance and the stream of patrons was endless.

When Ling Chen and the others arrived, Jiang Hao and Zhao Zhengxiong were already waiting outside. They hurried up to greet them when they got out of the car. But when Nanrong Wanqing appeared in their line of sight, both men were momentarily taken aback, mouths agape, looking at her with disbelief.

Zhao Zhengxiong was the first to come to his senses and greeted her with a smile, "Miss Nanrong, what brings you here?"

"I'm just accompanying my brother to take a look. You don't mind, do you?"

"No, not at all." Zhao Zhengxiong and Jiang Hao hurriedly waved their hands, their smiles forced as they thought to themselves, where would we dare to object. Jiang Hao stole a glance at Ling Chen and Nanrong Hao, his eyes questioning. The latter spread his hands, looking helpless.

"Jiang Hao, has Deng Guoyong arrived yet?"

"He just got here. He's already in the private room."

Ling Chen nodded and said, "Let's go and meet him."

Upon entering the restaurant, guided by Jiang Hao, they arrived at a private room called 'Prosperous Blossoms.'

Pushing open the door, Ling Chen, as the representative for these negotiations, stepped in first, followed closely by the others. Upon entering the room, Ling Chen scanned the area; there were five people inside, and a middle-aged man in a black suit was sitting upright by the round table, with dishes neatly arranged in front of him. The food had already been served, the aroma wafting through the air, but the man had not started without permission, showing good manners. Moreover, this middle-aged man had a gentle face and a kindly smile. At first glance, it was hard to associate him with a gangster.

Deng Guoyong!

One of the hall masters of the Dongyi Gang.

Behind Deng Guoyong stood four young men, in suits and sunglasses, standing straight, with the air of bodyguards.

"Mr. Deng." Ling Chen's mouth curled up slightly, bearing a light smile as he took the initiative to extend his hand and said hello.

Deng Guoyong politely stood up and said, "You must be Mr. Ling? Please, have a seat!" As he spoke, his gaze swept over Jiang Hao and the others. When his eyes landed on Nanrong Wanqing, his expression instantly froze, his gaze fixated on her for a long while, unable to move away.

However, Nanrong Wanqing seemed oblivious to his stare, taking a seat with Nanrong Hao next to her, close to Ling Chen.

"Mr. Deng?"

Hearing Ling Chen's call, Deng Guoyong snapped back to reality, gave an embarrassed smile, and gestured with a 'please', signaling Ling Chen to sit down.

"Mr. Ling, I'm a straightforward person; I don't like beating around the bush. I understand your intentions for calling me out, so allow me to speak plainly up front. You can keep control of the Old City; we won't send people over, but you must join our group, under the control of Dongyi Group, and pay us forty percent of your profits every year."

Ling Chen responded with a smile that was not quite a smile, "Dongyi Group?"

Deng Guoyong smiled and said, "Mr. Ling, times have changed. We need to keep up with the times. Black activities are not allowed to exist anymore, which is why Dongyi Group was founded. Under Dongyi Group, we have thirty-six KTVs, one hundred and twenty-eight bars, twenty-two bathhouses, and also five private security companies. We are now legitimate businessmen, not the small-time

hoodlums who just know how to fight and kill. Otherwise, I wouldn't be sitting here negotiating with you."

"Is that so?" Ling Chen slightly lifted his lips, his mouth bearing a playful smile, "Mr. Deng, a wolf and a wolf in sheep's clothing, do you think there's a fundamental difference?"

Before Deng Guoyong could answer, Ling Chen continued, "I can't accept your conditions. The Old City is our hard-earned turf; if we hand over half of our profits to you, then what do we use to sustain our brothers below? Surely we can't let them go drink the northwest wind."

"Then what are Mr. Ling's conditions?"

"We won't encroach on Dongyi Group's interests in the Old City, and Dongyi Group must not touch the Old City either. We mind our own business. How does that sound?"

"Sorry, I can't accept that condition." Deng Guoyong decisively refused without hesitation, "Mr. Ling, let's not mince words. The Old City is no longer what it used to be. Previously, the Old City was populated with all sorts of people, and the environment was chaotic, so Dongyi Group was not interested to intervene. But now, it's different. Hongyu Group has partnered with the government and invested heavily to develop the Old City into a new urban area. In a few years, the Old City will become a landmark in East Sea City. Whoever controls it will have a succulent piece of meat in their mouth. To put it bluntly, Dongyi Group is determined to have the Old City."

Ling Chen shrugged, "Then we have nothing left to discuss." After that, he stood up, pointing to the dishes on the table, "Mr. Deng, enjoy your meal. We won't accompany you any longer."

As he turned to leave, Deng Guoyong spoke calmly, "Mr. Ling, you better think carefully. Being an enemy of Dongyi Group doesn't end well."

"Threatening me?" Ling Chen laughed not taking it seriously, "I don't start trouble, but I will retaliate if provoked. If you want to deal with us, you'd better think twice, lest you lose more than what you bargained for."

Hearing this, Deng Guoyong no longer responded, his gaze wandering over Nanrong Hao and Nanrong Wanqing, a contemplative look in his eyes.

After leaving the restaurant, Jiang Hao asked worriedly, "Chen, are we really going to start a fight with them?"

"Scared?"

"It's not that, just..."

Before Jiang Hao could finish, Ling Chen patted his shoulder and said, "Haven't you always aspired to be a successful hoodlum? Now's the time."

Chapter 318 Confronting Jiang Yunkai

"A promising hoodlum?" Jiang Hao looked puzzled.

Ling Chen cracked a smile, his eyes gleaming as he said, "What's the point of being just a hoodlum in the Old City? If you're going to be one, be the biggest hoodlum in East Sea City."

Upon hearing his words, Jiang Hao and the others were momentarily stunned, to be precise, astonished by Ling Chen's ambition. Being the biggest hoodlum in East Sea City was something they had thought about, but only dared to dream about. Going against the Dongyi Group wasn't a matter of courage—they simply lacked the strength.

Seeing their shocked expressions, Ling Chen didn't elaborate further. His statement wasn't something rashly said in a moment of folly but the result of careful consideration.

After several encounters with the God Organization, he profoundly realized their might. At present, he had become a target of the God Organization, and as for Nanrong Wanqing, he didn't know what she might face in the future. But one thing he could be certain of was that with Mr. Yun's involvement, it would be difficult for Nanrong Wanqing to break ties with the God Organization.

Therefore, he needed to establish his own force to help him confront the God Organization.

Jiang Hao and the others were merely insignificant hoodlums compared to the God Organization; there was a world of difference in strength, and no basis for comparison. But that wasn't key—their strength could be gradually nurtured. What mattered most was loyalty and brotherhood.

Without his help, Jiang Hao wouldn't have achieved what he has today. Thus, Jiang Hao had a kind of blind trust in him. Not to mention Nanrong Hao, who was essentially family. Although Zhao Zhengxiong had had conflicts with him, those were things of the past. Through their recent interactions, he felt that Zhao Zhengxiong wasn't a bad person by nature and was a straightforward guy who could be trusted.

As long as he could cultivate these three people and form his core team, he wouldn't need to always seek help from the old General in case of trouble in the future.

Dongyi Group would be a perfect opportunity.

Back in the car, Nanrong Wanqing sat in the passenger seat, her expression filled with worry as she looked at Ling Chen and said, "Are you really planning to take them on?"

"You saw too, they won't back down. Since that's the case, let's have a showdown and see whose tactics are superior."

Nanrong Hao said with a smile, "Sister, don't worry. Chen here is a master of the Tiger List after all. With Chen covering us, let alone one Dongyi, even two Dongyi Groups would be no problem. Isn't that right, Chen?"

Ling Chen couldn't be bothered with him. However, when Nanrong Hao mentioned the Tiger List, Ling Chen's mind instantly thought of someone. If he could win that person over, it would be greatly beneficial to himself.

Upon arriving at Wealthy Manor, Ling Chen dropped off Nanrong Wanqing and Nanrong Hao at their doorstep and said, "You guys go back first; I have some things to take care of and will be back later."

"Take care of yourself."

...

Half an hour later.

Ling Chen met Jiang Yunkai on the snack street.

"Congratulations." As soon as they met, Jiang Yunkai immediately wished him well.

Ling Chen, puzzled, asked, "Congratulations for what?"

"Congratulations for becoming the number six master on the Tiger List."

Number six on the Tiger List?

Wasn't I number five on the Tiger List? How did I drop a spot?

"Hey, how do you know my ranking?" Ling Chen voiced his inner question.

Hearing this, Jiang Yunkai looked at him with a surprised expression, his tone astonished, "Don't you know?" With that, he took out his phone, entered a website, and handed it to Ling Chen, "Take a look for yourself. The rankings of the masters on the Tiger List are all here. Any changes, and Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion will immediately update the rankings."

Ling Chen looked down from the first-ranked master one by one, and when he saw that the number five spot on the Tiger List had changed to Jiang Hanlin, he suddenly understood. However, what puzzled him was that during his time at the Jiang Family, he had clearly defeated Jiang Hanlin, so why did his ranking unexpectedly drop instead of rise?

Could it be that the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion didn't take into account the outcome of that battle because they knew I had taken a strength-enhancing potion?

That must be the reason.

To his surprise, the intelligence network of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion was truly everywhere, even managing to uncover such secretive matters.

"Ling Chen, do you need something from me tonight?"

"I'm here to keep our appointment. Didn't you want to challenge me last time? I accept, but I have one condition. If I win, you have to agree to do something for me. If I lose, you can make a request, and I will do my best to fulfill it."

"Okay." Jiang Yunkai agreed without hesitation, barely thinking it over. After a pause, he asked, "Do we fight now or choose another time?"

"Let's do it now, no need for any elaborate preparations."

Jiang Yunkai nodded, stood up, and walked to a clear area, then gave Ling Chen a salute with clasped fists.

"Please enlighten me!"

"Please!"

Both stood firm, Ling Chen took a deep breath, regulating his breathing. His aura became restrained, and the warmth of the Prajnaparamita Sutra circulated in his Dantian. Warm currents flowed gently along his meridians like trickling streams, spreading throughout his body as if basking in the warm sunshine.

Looking at the calm and composed Ling Chen, Jiang Yunkai's gaze gradually turned serious. With his energy locked on, fists clenched, and positioned in front of his body, he moved his right leg back slightly bent.

Eyes locked onto each other, after a few seconds of intense gaze, they almost simultaneously made their move.

Jiang Yunkai was very fast, taking five steps in the blink of an eye. His punches were powerful and contained Inner Strength. As his fist broke through the air, it immediately brought a whistling sound.

Ling Chen didn't dodge, and as he saw Jiang Yunkai's punch coming, he countered head-on, unstoppable.

The collision of their fists made a 'bang' sound. With his fist momentum blocked, Ling Chen didn't step back, but instead tapped his toes on the ground, twisted his waist, and instantly moved to Jiang Yunkai's side, sweeping a steel fist towards his right shoulder.

With the forceful wind approaching, Jiang Yunkai immediately changed his move, raising both shoulder and elbow to block Ling Chen's attack firmly. His feet seemed rooted to the ground, motionless, stable as Mount Tai.

Two consecutive moves were easily neutralized by Jiang Yunkai, and a gleam of admiration appeared in Ling Chen's eyes.

Jiang Yunkai practiced Xingyi Fist, which is one of the three major Inner Boxing styles of Huaxia. Ling Chen started with external techniques before mastering the inner, but Jiang Yunkai's approach was from the inside out.

Ling Chen's external skills had reached the pinnacle, and in combat, he mainly relied on them, assisted by Inner Strength, the opposite of Jiang Yunkai's approach.

Minutes passed.

The two exchanged punches and kicks, neither gaining the upper hand, but the more they fought, the more exhilarated they became.

Ling Chen secretly marveled that Jiang Yunkai had practiced Inner Boxing for quite some time, with long, continuous, and potent Inner Strength. If it weren't for his external skills reaching their peak, relying solely on Inner Strength alone would not be enough to contend with Jiang Yunkai.

Recruiting such a master to his side would indeed be a significant boost.

As these thoughts flickered through his mind, Jiang Yunkai once again closed the distance, his forceful Inner Strength coordinating with the momentum of his punch, striking fiercely toward Ling Chen.

"Bring it on!"

Ling Chen bellowed, stepping out in an instant, his presence imposing, a flash of brilliance in his eyes, and his punch exploding with force.

Chapter 319 The Sealed Villa

As the two fists were about to collide, Ling Chen made an unexpected move. Instead of moving forward, his body suddenly stopped, then he pushed off the ground with both feet and quickly retreated backward, causing Jiang Yunkai's punch to miss. At the same time, Ling Chen changed his fist to a claw, grasping Jiang Yunkai's wrist with one hand and pulling his body backward.

Jiang Yunkai didn't expect Ling Chen to suddenly change his tactic, causing him to lose his balance and lurch forward.

However, those who have the courage and confidence to challenge a master from the Tiger List are certainly no ordinary fighters.

In the face of danger, Jiang Yunkai didn't panic. He jumped up, his body suspended in the air, twisted his waist, and using the momentum of his body turning, he managed to free his wrist from Ling Chen's grasp.

Such strong adaptability!

Ling Chen silently praised, and without waiting for Jiang Yunkai's body to land, he quickly moved closer, jumped up, performed a front somersault over Jiang Yunkai's head, and landed steadily behind him.

The moment Jiang Yunkai's feet touched the ground, Ling Chen suddenly turned around, extended one arm, aiming directly at Jiang Yunkai's neck. He was mere inches away from touching Jiang Yunkai's skin.

Seeing Ling Chen's halting movement, Jiang Yunkai knew he had lost.

Defeated by a single move.

"Tiger List masters are indeed formidable," Jiang Yunkai took a step back and said while cupping his fists.

Ling Chen grinned and said, "You're being too modest, you're not bad either. If you're willing, your name could be on the Tiger List anytime."

He was speaking sincerely. Jiang Yunkai's skills were very strong, not inferior to his own. In terms of skill alone, they might be evenly matched, but Jiang Yunkai lost in terms of experience. He was a man who had climbed up through numerous life-and-death battles. Experienced people have a unique ability, which is to anticipate.

Anticipating the opponent's next move and then reacting accordingly. During the spar with Jiang Yunkai, it was precisely this skill that allowed Ling Chen to make an accurate judgment at the critical moment and defeat his opponent with a single move.

"Come on, let's go for a drink, my treat," Jiang Yunkai said generously. Although he lost, there was no sign of disappointment on his face, instead, there was a faint smile.

True masters always possess a broad mind and do not care about winning, losing, or vanity.

A rival of equal caliber is like a confidant.

At this moment, that's how Jiang Yunkai saw it, and so did Ling Chen.

After several bottles of liquor, with his face still unchanged, Jiang Yunkai asked, "What do you want me to help you with?"

"No rush, I'll tell you later. Right now, I only have a rough idea, it's not yet fully formed. I'll contact you once I've sorted it out."

"Alright, you have my number, just contact me anytime."

They drank until midnight, and a slightly tipsy Ling Chen drove back to Wealthy Manor.

Upon reaching the villa, Ling Chen saw that the light was still on in Nanrong Wanqing's room.

It's so late, why hasn't she gone to sleep? he muttered to himself, glancing mischievously towards the second-floor balcony. With a cunning smile, he shifted his eyes, then climbed up the balcony using the exterior water pipe, ready to steal a kiss.

However, when he reached the balcony, his expression suddenly changed, and his gaze turned sharp.

In Nanrong Wanqing's room, through the glass window, he saw a man's figure from behind, vaguely familiar.

Zhu Hong!

Yes, him!

How did this guy get in?

At this moment, Nanrong Wanqing was lying on the bed, wearing a thin and sexy nightgown, with her delicate shoulders slightly exposed and her soft, fair arms outside the blanket, breathing steadily, already fast asleep.

Zhu Hong quietly admired the beauty in front of him, with a hint of fervor in his eyes. After examining her for a few moments, he couldn't help but lean down, lightly brushing his hand over Nanrong Wanqing's forehead, touching her smooth, creamy skin, and savoring the faint scent on her body.

"Wanqing, wait for it, you will soon be mine," Zhu Hong murmured to himself, his lips curling up slightly. With that, he took out a small bottle from his pocket, unscrewed the cap, and brought it close to Nanrong Wanqing's nose.

After a while, Nanrong Wanqing's head tilted slightly, as if she were dead asleep.

Seizing the opportunity, Zhu Hong lifted Nanrong Wanqing's delicate body, turned, and walked towards the balcony, jumping directly to the ground floor. Throughout this, Zhu Hong never noticed that Ling Chen's back was tightly pressed against the bottom of the balcony, his hands gripping the water pipes on both sides to support his body.

Seeing Zhu Hong carrying Nanrong Wanqing and leaping from the balcony, a look of surprise flashed across Ling Chen's face. When had this guy become so strong?

Without time to think further, seeing Nanrong Wanqing being taken away by Zhu Hong, Ling Chen immediately followed. While Zhu Hong was in the room earlier, Ling Chen had a chance to stop him. However, after a moment's thought, he decided to see where Zhu Hong was planning to take Nanrong Wanqing. Perhaps by following him, he could discover Mr. Yun and their secret base in East Sea City.

However, to Ling Chen's surprise, Zhu Hong did not head towards the enclosure wall but went directly towards the wooden villa in the backyard.

Nanrong Wanqing had once told him that the villa was her parents' former residence. Since her parents left, it has been sealed by Nanrong Yong, and no one was allowed to enter.

Zhu Hong not taking Nanrong Wanqing away from Nanrong Family but bringing her to her parents' villa left Ling Chen utterly baffled.

Pushing aside the doubt in his mind, Ling Chen stealthily followed Zhu Hong, keeping as low as possible to avoid being detected.

Upon reaching the villa, Zhu Hong pushed open the door, carrying Nanrong Wanqing, and stepped inside.

Ling Chen got to the door, listened for a while to make sure the footsteps inside had faded away, then gently pushed the door open, following behind. The villa was pitch black, blindsided to the point where not even moonlight could penetrate.

Maybe due to being sealed for too long, the ground had accumulated a thick layer of dust.

Ling Chen pulled out his phone, using the faint light from the screen to carefully move forward. Fortunately, the floor was covered in dust, leaving plenty of footprints from Zhu Hong. Following those footprints, Ling Chen arrived at a narrow door next to the fireplace.

Looking at the footprints on the ground, Ling Chen pressed his ear against the door, listening to the sounds inside. After a moment, confirming no one was behind it, he pulled open the door.

Behind the door was a staircase leading down to the basement.

Seeing the lights on in the basement and the neatly arranged equipment around, Ling Chen's heart tightened, and he quickly realized:

Mr. Yun's secret base was actually in the Nanrong Family.

Tsk tsk!

Had to admire Mr. Yun, not only bold but also smart. Probably no one would have thought that Mr. Yun would set up a secret base at the Nanrong Family. Also luckily, since this villa was never entered before, otherwise, this secret would have long been exposed.

Chapter 320 Ji Beizhao

Following the stairs, Ling Chen descended slowly to the basement, scanning his surroundings cautiously to prevent anyone from suddenly appearing.

The villa's basement was huge, nearly covering hundreds of square meters. Ling Chen, with his sharp eyes, noticed several wine barrels placed in a corner and slots on the walls. This place used to be a wine cellar, but now it had been cleared and was filled with computer equipment and devices.

Arriving at a side door on the eastern side of the basement, Ling Chen immediately heard voices coming from behind it. He pressed his ear against the door and instantly recognized the two familiar voices.

"Mr. Yun, could this drug have side effects on Wanqing's health?"

"Rest assured, the dosage is well controlled, it won't cause any adverse reactions. She's my daughter, I care about her safety more than you do. By the way, is the research on that exoskeleton armor she's wearing yet completed?"

"We're still collecting data."

"Tell them to speed up; I don't have much time to waste here. I need to return to the headquarters soon to report the current situation. After I leave, you will be entirely in charge of the affairs in East Sea City. Remember, don't stir up trouble. Keep Ling Chen untouched for now; he is still useful to me."

"Yes," Zhu Hong replied, though his tone was noticeably reluctant.

At that moment, a new voice spoke, "Mr. Yun, the injection is complete, and Miss Nanrong's vitals are all normal, without any adverse reactions."

"Good," Mr. Yun spoke, "Zhu Hong, take Wanqing back. Make sure the Nanrong family doesn't notice."

"Yes, Mr. Yun."

Hearing they were about to leave, Ling Chen quickly retreated and followed the same path back to the villa. Soon, Zhu Hong, holding Nanrong Wanqing, exited and walked straight to the outdoors. Ling Chen secretly followed them, watching as Zhu Hong safely escorted Nanrong Wanqing back to her room.

After Zhu Hong left, Ling Chen hesitated for a moment and then abandoned the idea of intervening. He had just discovered the secret base of Mr. Yun and Zhu Hong and didn't want to alert them prematurely. For now, they were unaware that their secret base had been exposed, providing him an excellent opportunity.

It's finally my turn after being manipulated so many times, Ling Chen thought to himself.

...

The night passed without incident.

The next day.

Ling Chen got up early, sitting in the dining area, observing Nanrong Wanqing, who had just come downstairs, watching every move she made.

Feeling his unwavering gaze, Nanrong Wanqing's cheeks turned slightly red, feeling sweet inside, yet she couldn't help but coquettishly complained, "What are you looking at?"

Ling Chen grinned and said, "I'm not just looking, I'm admiring. I never understood what a feast for the eyes meant, but now I do."

Hearing his compliment, Nanrong Wanqing's lips curved into a sweet smile, her eyes filled with shyness and delight.

Just as they were indulging in the tender moment, a displeased voice came from the staircase, "Showing affection so early in the morning, can you choose another place next time? Don't do it in front of me. My teeth feel sour just after brushing."

Seeing Su Lin stretching lazily, her ample bust outlined and her lazy, enchanting demeanor as she came downstairs, Ling Chen unconsciously touched his nose and cleared his throat, shifting his gaze away. They say a woman freshly woken has her own unique charm, and indeed, it's true.

During breakfast, Ling Chen looked at Nanrong Wanqing sitting across him and asked, "Wanqing, how are you feeling? Is there anything uncomfortable?"

Nanrong Wanqing thought he was just showing concern and didn't think much about it, smiling as she replied, "I'm very good. I guess it's because I had enough sleep these past few days. Usually, I feel tired after a day's work, but I've been very energetic these days."

Ling Chen nodded and said, "That's good."

Eight o'clock.

Ling Chen dropped Nanrong Wanqing off at the Hongyu Group headquarters and prepared to go to the security department to chat with Wei Jun and the others.

Taking the elevator to the lobby on the first floor, Ling Chen stepped out. Just then, an irate cursing voice came through: "How do you walk, are you blind or what?"

"Sorry, sorry," a familiar voice hurriedly apologized.

Hearing that voice, Ling Chen was slightly startled and looked over, only to see Ji Beizhao bending down on the ground picking up scattered items and putting them back into his handbag. Next to him stood a woman with her hands on her hips, pretty-looking but fierce, dressed in business attire, deliberately unbuttoning two buttons at the collar, revealing a patch of bare skin, seemingly quite adept at attracting men.

Ling Chen shook his head, thinking how such nice business attire is ruined by being worn so revealingly, deducing this woman was probably not a good sort.

He walked over to Ji Beizhao, bent down to help him pick up the items, and asked, "What happened?"

Ji Beizhao, seeing it was Ling Chen, a slight smile appeared on his gaunt face, "It's nothing, I accidentally bumped into this lady."

While picking up the items, Ling Chen's expression stiffened as he looked at the items in his hand, feeling a bit awkward. Damn, this woman actually carries something that could be blown up like a balloon, and she even brought five of them, how insatiably fierce.

Caught off guard, the woman also noticed the items in Ling Chen's hand, her face slightly blushed, hurriedly snatched them from his hand, stuffed them into her upper garment pocket, and indignantly cursed, "What are you looking at, haven't you seen such things? Pervert!"

Pervert?

Ling Chen immediately felt annoyed, he hadn't harassed her. Besides, he wouldn't even be interested in her type.

"Miss, watch how you speak. Don't just curse people."

The woman, chest thrust forward, looked at Ling Chen disdainfully and said, "So what if I curse you, cursing you is still giving you face."

Ling Chen's face darkened, if it weren't for her being a woman, he would have taught her a lesson by now. At this moment, Ji Beizhao, noticing Ling Chen's displeasure, quickly advised, "Chen, it's just a small matter, we're all employees of the same company, no need to blow it up."

Hearing this, the woman scoffed coldly, "You two are such big men, yet have no temper at all, worse than trash, truly a disgrace to men." Saying this, she picked up her handbag from the ground and said haughtily, "A good dog doesn't block the way, get lost quickly, don't delay my work time."

"Work?" Ling Chen's mouth curved slightly, casually saying, "You bring so many indecent items to Hongyu Group, I seriously doubt what kind of work you do."

The woman's expression froze, coldly saying, "What do you mean?"

"There are two meanings to working, one is working for Hongyu Group, and the second... is working for yourself, like engaging in some kind of indecent service. What do you think, miss?" As he spoke, Ling Chen emphatically stressed the word 'miss,' the implication clear.

"You..." The woman, clearly understanding Ling Chen's insinuation, instantly turned frosty, eyes burning with anger, burst out cursing, "You dare insult me."