

The Beauty 331

Chapter 331 Bai Huanjun

"Have you not seen Captain Chu before?" Ling Chen smiled as he glanced at Chu Guoxiong and spoke.

"Mr. Ling, are you familiar with Xingda?" Chu Guoxiong strode ahead, Ling Chen by his side, followed leisurely by two police officers.

"Not bad, I have a good relationship with your Captain Xia. Huh? These two also look quite unfamiliar!"

"Yes, these two have just been transferred from the local police station." Chu Guoxiong's pace faltered slightly before returning to normal.

"That explains it!" Ling Chen chuckled heartily, "If it weren't for Captain Xia going to Beijing this morning to transfer a case, I guess she would have come looking for me herself."

Chu Guoxiong nodded without much conversation, entered the parking lot, briskly started the car, and the vehicle smoothly merged into traffic.

"Man, are we going the wrong way?" Ling Chen, sitting in the backseat, turned and asked Chu Guoxiong next to him.

"No mistake, just up ahead and turn, and it's Xingda."

"Really heading to Xingda?" Ling Chen narrowed his eyes and smiled, "I'm just worried it's easy to go in but hard to come out!"

"You're not a murderer, what are you afraid of?"

"I'm worried that it would be easy for you to go in but hard to come out." Ling Chen, with a keen interest, scrutinized the stern-faced man beside him and grinned, "Impersonating a police officer will land you in prison!"

Chu Guoxiong's expression darkened, his eyes filled with lethal intent, his body slightly leaned forward as he swiftly raised his hand in a chopping motion towards Ling Chen's throat.

Ling Chen, already alert to his movements, tilted his neck to dodge the strike with exquisite timing, his right hand, like a Spirit Snake, immediately coiled around the opponent's arm, reaching for the back of his head, pulling harshly and leaning back, his bent knee thrusting forward.

Chu Guoxiong evidently didn't expect Ling Chen to be able to counterattack so fluidly in the cramped space of a car's backseat. By the time he reacted, it was too late, only feeling his nose go numb, sour, and warm as tears mixed with snot and blood were all knocked out.

The policeman in the passenger seat also reacted, quickly turning around and without hesitation, drawing his gun to shoot!

Ling Chen swiftly captured the officer's wrist, lifting it upwards, causing the shot to miss and strike through the roof of the car. Chu Guoxiong, having recovered, fiercely elbowed him in the chest!

Staying in the car had become impossible. The space in the backseat of the police car was originally quite small, the two men were not of a small build, and with the copilot glaring menacingly, Ling Chen decisively took the elbow strike, shifted his weight, and burst open the car door, tumbling out.

As soon as the two in the backseat started fighting, the officer driving steered the car into a nearby alley, where almost no one could be seen.

After rolling on the ground several times, Wolf Kiss already poised, Ling Chen did not wait for the car to stop and quickly flashed to the rich man's car door. Wolf Kiss gently probed, deftly slashing the man's throat.

With a screech, an emergency stop, and the pungent smell of rubber arising, Chu Guoxiong with a dark face got out of the car, glancing at his incredulous-looking partner in the passenger seat, slightly raised his eyebrows, and said, "How did you figure it out?"

"It's nothing much, after all, I'm too familiar with Xingda. You could have impersonated anyone, but you chose to impersonate someone from Xingda."

Chu Guoxiong shook his head, "As far as I know, your familiarity with Xingda people is limited to Xia Mutong and a few of her deputies, and you have never even met the deputy head of Xingda."

"Indeed." Ling Chen nodded in acknowledgment, "Your preparation was indeed good, I'm not very familiar with the people from Xingda, but I do know that the deputy head of Xingda is a stern-faced man named Chu Guoxiong. The police badge is real too, so presumably, the real Chu Guoxiong has been duped by you, hasn't he?"

Chu Guoxiong subconsciously touched his face, still with a calm demeanor, and asked: "The identification is real, and the appearance matches, why can you still spot a flaw?"

"It's simple, because Xia Mutong just talked to me on the phone this morning, and the so-called trip to Beijing was just a test for you."

Unexpectedly, the impostor Chu Guoxiong was not angry, but just shook his head and muttered: "The work is still not meticulous enough!"

This turned out to be an adorable person who could always reflect on his mistakes at work, which was always admirable.

"Just from that one point you noticed the flaw?"

"Not entirely, if it weren't for your face, why would I think of testing you?" Ling Chen seemed somewhat proud, smiling and wiping his forehead: "The human skin mask on your face is indeed exquisite, but it has one defect."

"What defect?" Chu Guoxiong's eyes revealed an eager desire, though his face remained impassive.

"It lacks human touch!"

The impostor policeman in the driver's seat suddenly became furious: "You cheeky brat! How dare you insult me!"

"What I said is the truth. No matter how exquisite a human skin mask is, it is still an inanimate object and cannot display the changing expressions of a person's face. If one observes carefully, differences can still be detected."

Chu Guoxiong nodded thoughtfully, then suddenly reached up to his earlobe and gently pinched it a few times, gradually lifting off a thin mask as delicate as cicada wings.

"Now that you've revealed your true face, let's talk about your background. Whether I die at your hands or you fall at mine, I presume neither of us wants to die confused."

"There is a Thousand-faced Fox on the assassin list, do you know about it?"

"Yes, I had the fortune to meet him not long ago." Ling Chen's eyes narrowed slightly, saying: "Are you also from the assassin list?"

"Hmph, is the assassin list that impressive? In this world, many people simply disdain to compete for that silly ranking, but that does not mean they lack the ability."

Ling Chen quite agreed with this. Considering the masters he had recently encountered from the Heaven and Earth Dragon and Tiger Four Rankings, picking any two of them, they were not something the people on the assassin list could handle. Indeed, true masters disdain to be on such rankings, and moreover, as an assassin, pursuing profit is acceptable, but disputing over fame is foolish. Without rankings, it is even more covert, making tasks easier to handle.

"So, what do you mean by mentioning this Thousand-faced Fox?" Ling Chen was somewhat speechless.

"Because we both specialize in disguise. Also, I don't mind telling you, my name is Bai Huanjun."

"Never heard of you." Ling Chen shook his head straightforwardly; he was telling the truth.

Bai Huanjun didn't get angry, his brows and eyes moved, saying: "Whether you know it or not, your end will be the same. I just don't want you to die too confused."

Gosh! Was this guy a Monk before? Speaking with a bit of a provocative tone.

"Enough with the long talk, why do you want to kill me?"

Bai Huanjun was stunned for a moment, then suddenly scratched his head like a child, a hint of embarrassment appearing between his brows and eyes.

"Well, you see, I... am short on money."

Chapter 332 The Feeling of Being Nervous Around Women

When an assassin says in a shy manner that he wants to kill you just because he is short of money, the feeling is really beyond words.

"You're here for the bounty too?"

"Mhm, seven million is enough to last a year or so." Bai Huanjun nodded earnestly in reply, nearly making Ling Chen choke with anger.

No wonder you're short of money, seven million only lasts you a year; you're either showing off or filthy rich, or a show-off rich guy.

"Now that we're both clear, can I kill you?" Bai Huanjun's arms trembled slightly, and a Soft Sword appeared in his hand.

Saying you're an assassin being so polite, this is really not something I'm used to! Ling Chen clicked his tongue; even assassins have a sense of crisis now? What's next, a smiley face service?

"Come on!" Ling Chen nodded, the Wolf Kiss in his palm spun swiftly, and he shouted as he leapt towards Bai Huanjun.

Bai Huanjun put aside his shy expression and sharply commanded; the Soft Sword flickered a streak of silver light, thrusting straight at Ling Chen's throat.

The sword was like a venomous snake lunging out, reaching Ling Chen in a blink of an eye. Mid-leap, Ling Chen gave a cool smile. The Wolf Kiss in his hand turned horizontally, barely blocking the tip of the sword.

Ding! A crisp ring sounded; Ling Chen felt a strong force transmitted from the sword tip to the dagger, through the dagger to his wrist, and then to his entire arm. He felt as if he had been electrocuted, shaking him out of the air and sending him tumbling backward!

The companion in the driver's seat didn't hesitate and moved up from the side, holding a steel spike, forearm-long, with a cold, gleaming tip aimed straight at his waist.

Ling Chen, still in mid-air, saw the steel spike lunging towards him. Incredibly, he twisted his body forcibly, just bypassing the spike and landing with his feet on the man's shoulder, pressing down hard!

With a crack, the man's body tilted, he howled in agony for a moment but gritted his teeth and endured it, although the steel spike in his hand had already fallen to the ground, his body drenched in sweat, his face pale as paper.

With this kick in mid-air and borrowing force, Ling Chen shattered the man's shoulder blade!

Turns out he's a tough guy, apart from the unexpected cry of pain at the beginning, he could actually bear it.

A flash of admiration swept through Ling Chen's eyes, but his hands were not lax. Once on the ground, he turned around, and Wolf Kiss accurately swept across the other's neck. A thin line of blood slowly thickened, then suddenly burst open; blood sprayed high into the air. The man coughed from his throat, his head tilted, and he fell down.

Behind him, the sound of a sword cutting through the air approached stealthily, but Ling Chen was far from being careless. He knew the greatest enemy was Bai Huanjun, and these two assistants were just minor characters, merely serving to harass and distract attention.

Ducking below the sword's edge, he used one leg as a pivot on the ground to continuously sweep towards Bai Huanjun's upper, middle, and lower sections. After a dozen rounds of leg sweeps, though they were all avoided, Ling Chen had successfully breached Bai Huanjun's close quarters defense.

Hiss! Wolf Kiss grazed across the opponent's chest. Even though Bai Huanjun was quick to react, he couldn't dodge completely, resulting in a foot-long gash on his chest.

As the saying goes, the longer it is, the stronger it is; the shorter it is, the more dangerous. In close combat, it was clear that the shorter Wolf Kiss was the more fitting weapon.

Bai Huanjun's skills were evidently not just limited to his potent Disguise Skills. Startled, he executed an Iron Plate Bridge on the spot, his Soft Sword swiftly creating a swirling arc towards Ling Chen's legs.

With a smug laugh, Ling Chen was pleased he had anticipated this move. He twisted his body for a jump, dodging the stroke of the sword, while kicking towards Bai Huanjun's lower abdomen!

This kick hit the mark; Bai Huanjun felt as if he had been struck by a high-speed car. His belly numbed, no pain felt, and his whole body turned somewhat wooden.

Luckily, his head hadn't turned to mush, and Bai Huanjun finally realized he was no match for this fellow. The best course of action when faced with the 36 stratagems is to flee!

Throwing himself on the ground and rolling away may not have looked graceful, but it was a highly effective move. After rolling a few steps, he leaped to his feet, sprinted to a wall, lightly touched the top, and disappeared from sight.

Ling Chen watched, dumbfounded. The guy had executed a series of moves in one fluid motion, as if he had rehearsed them countless times—truly breathtaking.

Thinking back to how arrogantly this guy had looked down on all the heroes of the world, Ling Chen could never have imagined that after a few exchanges, he would turn tail and run, with no regard for his two companions who lay dead on the spot!

There was nothing for it; he would have to deal with the aftermath himself.

He dialed Xia Mutong's number and an impatient voice came from the other end, "Didn't we just talk on the phone this morning?"

Ling Chen was taken aback and reflexively jumbled his words: "Ah? Yes, but... I started missing you again!"

Silence came from the other end, followed by a sudden burst of anger, "I'm not deaf! Why are you yelling?!" Xia Mutong exploded.

Ling Chen felt wronged. Was he really that loud? He had been particularly careful to keep his voice down. What was with her today? She had been fine this morning, and now she was acting all bitey.

Not daring to provoke a woman who was completely not in a feminine mood, Ling Chen hurriedly explained the situation here, only to find that she had already hung up the call.

Ling Chen stared blankly at his phone for a while before shaking his head with a bitter smile. What's with all this rush?

It wasn't long before Xia Mutong arrived with backup, her face turning pale at the sight of the police car.

"Everyone, secure the perimeter!" The female detective's commanding presence filled the area, leaving Ling Chen utterly confused.

"What's going on? Why secure the perimeter? I took everyone down; they're out of breath! Hurry up and deal with... Hey? Let go of my clothes, stop pulling or I'll accuse you of harassment!"

Xia Mutong's eyes were bloodshot, and her complexion grew paler, but she gripped Ling Chen's collar as if she wanted to strangle him alive.

"Ling Chen! If you're looking to die, just go smash your head with a tofu block! What are you doing? Got addicted to killing? Escalating to the point of daring to murder a cop? So what if you have connections? Do you realize this is a capital offense! No one can save you!"

Confused, Ling Chen responded, "Hold on, who killed a cop?"

"You! You're still denying it!" Xia Mutong's hand trembled as she pointed at the two fake policemen, one in the passenger seat of the police car and the other kneeling not far away, her face filled with heartbreak.

"Quickly make a call, pull whatever strings you have. We can't evade a death penalty, but we still have to try. I can only assume you're turning yourself in, I can't help you with anything else..." Xia Mutong suddenly let go, and tears silently fell from her eyes, her whole body collapsing.

"Why would I turn myself in?" Ling Chen thought it was funny, yet he was also touched. If he had really killed the cops, her actions would clearly be a violation of discipline.

Xia Mutong, clearly in a state of disarray from her concern, suddenly jumped up and handed Ling Chen a gun. With a commanding growl that belied her bewildered gaze, she said, "Right, right, you can't turn yourself in, killing a cop means certain death! You make a break for it. With their current lack of knowledge and your skills, it wouldn't be hard to make a distant escape!"

Chapter 333 Long Pinhole

"I'm telling you, if you had said earlier that you killed a cop, would I have brought so many people here? We all saw the scene just now; it's obviously impossible for you to just walk away! Hurry up and take me hostage!"

Ling Chen stared stupidly at the anxious Xia Mutong, his face changing expressions in a peculiar way, feeling her deep emotions. After a long while, he finally sighed deeply and hugged Xia Mutong's still trembling delicate body, whispering, "You silly girl. It's such a waste for you not to write novels. What a rich imagination you have! Who said I killed a cop?"

Xia Mutong stiffened, suddenly looking up and saying, "You didn't kill these two?"

Caught off guard, Ling Chen's chin was hit by her head, nearly biting his own tongue. He quickly let go of her and spoke unclearly with his tongue sticking out, "Yes, I killed them!"

"And you still have the mood to tease me?"

"My dear! Can you let me finish speaking? Yes, I killed these two, but they're not cops!"

Xia Mutong was startled and asked, "Are you sure?"

"Sure!" Ling Chen didn't dare to talk anymore and started gasping for air, hastily explaining the whole story in detail.

Xia Mutong nodded continuously, and at the end, asked curiously, "Is that all?"

"That's all, then you all arrived."

"Then why didn't you say so earlier?"

Ling Chen couldn't help but smile wryly, "Did you give me a chance to speak? The moment you arrived it was all brash and about turning yourself in and taking hostages— I was totally wronged."

"You deserve it! Who told you to be so restless all the time!" Xia Mutong felt relieved, and it felt like the whole world became bright again. She viciously stepped on Ling Chen's foot, and with his painful groans, she puffed out her chest and ordered her subordinates to proceed with their case at the crime scene.

The identities of the two fake cops were easily found to be A-level wanted criminals, both guilty of murder. It was unclear how they got mixed up with someone like Bai Huanjun.

As for the police badge left behind by Bai Huanjun, it was indeed authentic. Deputy team leader Chu Guoxiong of Xingda was on a case in another province, only finding out at this moment that his badge was missing. He had been unknowingly using a fake one; it was unknown when and where by whom it had been switched.

Switching the badge of a veteran detective— Bai Huanjun sure had some tricks up his sleeve.

With the identities of the deceased confirmed, Ling Chen suddenly remembered the reason Bai Huanjun lured him out and urgently asked Xia Mutong for information.

Xia Mutong shook her head, "Zou Yu's case is indeed handled by Xingda, but I'm not the lead, and I haven't heard about the progress of the related case. I only know the woman was tortured to death; the case seems not so simple. I'll check on it later."

Ling Chen nodded in thanks. Xia Mutong gave him an annoyed glance and humphed, "The biggest thank you to me would be for you to kill fewer people!"

Hearing this, Ling Chen and the surrounding busy officers all felt a chill, something didn't feel right. What did she mean by 'kill fewer people'? Was he that bloodthirsty?

Considering the girl's emotional outburst today, Ling Chen decided to not take it personally. Wanting to get a little cheeky advantage, his phone rang.

"Ling Chen! Grandma has been bullied!"

"Huh? Grandma's been bullied and you're looking for me? Go find your grand-nephew!"

"Ling Chen! You're going to be the death of me! Hurry to the school and pick me up!" Su Lin on the other end of the phone was so annoyed she was itching with anger. This guy had no clue!

"Are you ordering or requesting?" Ling Chen wasn't in a hurry at all. Su Lin herself had several bodyguards, all ex-military men. Although their strength was much less than his, they were not to be underestimated. If she could angrily make a call to him now, it meant there was nothing serious.

"Please...!"

Ling Chen chuckled mischievously, sensing Su Lin gnashing her teeth on the other end, thinking to himself, 'Can't I handle you?'

After greeting Xia Mutong, he hailed a cab on the roadside and went straight to school.

He was indeed eager to see who dared to provoke Su Lin, the tigress.

Usually, the only ones brave enough to provoke a tigress are a tiger, or perhaps another tigress.

When Ling Chen arrived, Su Lin was standing on the side entrance steps of the school, looking fiercely at the girl in front of her as if ready for a fight.

"What's wrong? Bullying people again?"

"Me, bullying people? Me, bullying people! Which dog eye of yours saw me bullying anyone!" Su Lin was so angry that her mouth was pouting high, and she started cussing without picking her words.

Ling Chen snorted, turned around, and walked away, causing Su Lin to hastily grab hold of his sleeve: "What are you doing? Walking away as soon as you arrive!"

"I didn't see you!" Ling Chen said, glancing at her with an indifferent look.

Su Lin's clear eyes widened in disbelief and she protested, "Have you gotten a sty in your eye? How can you not see a living person standing right here?"

Ling Chen chuckled and said, "It's just 36D, isn't it? It's not like I haven't seen it before, enough to get a sty?" As he spoke, his eyes involuntarily glanced at Su Lin's chest, recalling the unintended intrusion that night.

Su Lin didn't notice this guy dared to leer at her even in public, and continued indignantly, "Ling Chen! Are you doing this on purpose? You didn't even greet me when you saw me; you think you got a sty?"

"I have dog eyes; dog eyes look down on people, naturally it's not easy to see."

Su Lin suddenly realized, so this guy was holding a grudge because of her previous comment.

Feeling both annoyed and amused, she quickly grabbed his arm and whispered threateningly, "Hmm, a grown man throwing a fit? Keep this up and I'll show you!"

"I'm already good-looking!" Ling Chen rolled his eyes, ignoring her.

Su Lin gave a sly smile and said, "Fine, I'll go back and discuss with my sister the possibility of a brother-in-law serving two sisters in this day and age. Oh, and I'm about to graduate, how about my thesis deeply explores this topic?"

"How would you explore it deeply?" Ling Chen was already sensing trouble and asked subconsciously.

"Obviously, I'd have to personally experience it!"

That would be disastrous; he knew Nanrong Wanqing's temper all too well—cold on the outside, warm on the inside, a model of outer softness and inner strength. If she found out he was eyeing both sisters, she wouldn't spare his life.

"Actually, I think you make sense sometimes." Ling Chen made a snap decision, as a wise man does not fight when the odds are against him, and immediately shifted his attitude with a smile.

"How so?"

"They say men are like dogs and women are like cats; saying men have dog eyes isn't entirely without reason."

Su Lin had been thinking about how to refute his nonsense, but upon hearing this theory, she asked curiously, "Who said this? What does it mean?"

"Exactly who said it, I've never really looked into." Ling Chen scratched his head and said, "The meaning? Hey? I say, you didn't call me here just to chat at the main entrance, did you?"

Su Lin was also confused by Ling Chen's antics, and it was only when she heard this that she slapped her head and turned around ferociously pointing at the girl who was still there, not having left, and declared, "She's the one bullying me!"

Chapter 334 Qin Wu

The girl was quite pretty, exuding a cool and detached air that always gave people the impression of keeping them at a great distance. Seeing Su Lin point her finger at her, she didn't speak, merely tugging at her lips with a cold expression, and it was unclear whether it was disdain or a sneer.

With Su Lin's tone, Ling Chen felt somewhat helpless; it sounded every bit like the haughty and domineering speech of a rich young lady bullying others, leaving one scratching their head, not knowing what to do.

"Speak up, what's going on?"

"What else could it be?" Su Lin curled her lip, "She's Qin Yang's sister."

Ling Chen was startled, scrutinizing her carefully; indeed, without saying a word, she did bear some resemblance to Qin Yang. No wonder Su Lin was ranting like a shrew, lashing out at everyone.

"I am Qin Wu, and you are her boyfriend?" Qin Wu spoke dispassionately, fixing her gaze on Ling Chen, her eyes crystal clear, devoid of any other emotions.

Ling Chen was about to shake his head when Su Lin suddenly clung to his arm, tilting her head haughtily and huffed, "That's right, he is my boyfriend Ling Chen! Much better than your brother who's nothing more than a wolf in sheep's clothing!"

Unexpectedly, Qin Wu nodded, "I know all too well what kind of person my own brother is. However, I want to make it clear once again, Miss Su, you can resent my brother, but I am me and he is him. Please understand this."

"I have no time to bother hating him!" Su Lin lifted her neck arrogantly, continuing to pose like a proud swan, "Just to be clear, Qin Wu, it was me who saw through your brother's true colors and dumped him, not the other way around!"

"This is between the two of you, I'm not interested, nor do I ever inquire about it. Who dumped whom has nothing to do with me."

"Then why are you spreading rumors everywhere that you were dumped by your brother?"

Finally, a look of surprise crossed Qin Wu's face, as she stared intently at Su Lin, enunciating carefully, "Miss Su, we were friends for a time, and although we've grown apart due to Qin Yang, you should know the kind of person Qin Wu is. I never stoop to gossip and slander!"

Caught between two women, Ling Chen finally started to understand the situation; it was really simple, still the residue of Lady Su's ex-boyfriend's past. Recently, there'd been rampant rumors at school about how Qin Yang played Lady Su, then left her high and dry after having his fill.

The more these words spread, the more outrageous they became, evolving into the version that Su Lin had multiple abortions because of Qin Yang, which led to her inability to have children in the future, and thus she was cruelly cast aside.

Today, it happened that Su Lin ran into Qin Wu at the gate, and this rash suspicion took hold of her, making her think there was a hidden meaning behind Qin Wu's composed demeanor. Unable to resist, she sought her out to argue but couldn't bring herself to be direct. Instead, her vague accusations made the taciturn Qin Wu leave her at a loss for words.

And this led to the angry act of calling over Ling Chen as reinforcement.

This was a tricky situation; since time immemorial, the most difficult thing to guard against, and the most frightening, was gossip. The so-called fear of public opinion came from this.

To find out who was spreading the rumors wasn't impossible, but it would take time and effort and might not win anyone's favor.

"Miss Qin, thanks for understanding. You're both young women, so I trust you can appreciate Su Lin's feelings right now. If there was any offence, please forgive us."

Su Lin was waiting for Ling Chen to take her side, and hearing this made her furious. Was this guy really sticking up for her?

"Ling Chen! You bastard! Whose side are you on? Have you set your sights on her because she's pretty?"

"Hey hey! Stop it! What do you mean 'again'? Inaccurate words can easily kill people!"

"Mind your own business? I like speaking this way! Don't think I'm unaware of your sordid affairs!" Su Lin, not showing the slightest courtesy, hissed vehemently, "You traitor! You turncoat! You betrayer!"

Ling Chen was at his wits' end, these terms she was using... He was about to say something when what followed made his heart skip a beat.

"Hmph, don't think I don't know about Tang Shiyun."

"That's my old neighbor!"

"The look in your eyes though, it's like that of old lovers!"

"..."

"And there's the beautiful policewoman Xia Mutong!"

"Don't talk nonsense, we are more like enemies! Have you not seen how many times she's wanted to arrest me?"

"Are you sure it's not a love-hate relationship? The way she looks at you, if there's really nothing between you two, I'll gouge out my eyeballs!"

"Don't, that would hurt!"

"I'll gouge out yours!" Su Lin said angrily, glaring at him.

Ling Chen felt a bit awkward; to be honest, Tang Shiyun could somewhat be explained away, as they hadn't quite crossed the final line, but Xia Mutong had actually fought over live ammunition with him. Tang Yuan's reputation didn't come from nowhere.

Seeing him not respond, Su Lin began to regret her impulsiveness. He wasn't angry, was he? Men need to save face when they're outside. Regardless of anything else, she shouldn't have lashed out at him at this time!

Feeling uncertain, Ling Chen, however, smiled and said: "You really are petty, even more so than your sister... Never mind, I won't hold it against you."

"Miss Qin, sorry to take up your time, but if you don't mind, I have a small favor to ask."

Qin Wu nodded slightly, curious about what made this fairly good-looking man special. From Su Lin's list of complaints, it seemed that this man had quite a few close female confidantes. Given her understanding of Su Lin, she shouldn't have been able to tolerate him.

After all, Qin Yang was a man of talent and looks, and Su Lin had decisively broken up with him just for lying and goofing around. Su Lin obviously showed a bit of unease just a moment ago; what was so special about this man?

Tang Shiyun? That name sounded sort of familiar...

"These rumors after all are just hearsay. When people break up, they don't utter those pretentious words of remaining friends, but it doesn't mean they want the other party dead. I think the Qin Family should also take some responsibility."

Qin Wu responded calmly, "Go on, Mr. Ling."

"I will try my best to uncover the person behind the rumors, and I'd like to ask for Miss Qin's help. What do you think?"

"Why should I help you?"

"It's not for me, it's for the Qin Family itself."

"How so?"

"I've always preferred winning people over with virtue, hmm, to put it simply, I like to reason with them," Ling Chen said with a slight smile, seemingly a bit shy.

"However, when others refuse to listen to reason and insist on being stubborn, I have no choice but to find a different way to reason with them."

"And how would you do that?"

Ling Chen swung his fist lightly and smiled, "Often, when words fail to communicate, one has to resort to the most primal methods."

After a moment of silence, Qin Wu suddenly laughed. Her normally calm and peaceful face bloomed like a multitude of flowers, shining brilliantly, even stunning Su Lin, a girl who was herself breathtakingly beautiful.

What kind of beauty was that?

Chapter 335 Celebration Banquet

Ling Chen didn't know how to describe it; he just felt that one moment Qin Wu appeared like a mortal fairy, and with a smile was transformed into a celestial maiden descending to earth, shrouded in a hazy splendor, extremely beautiful yet elusive.

"Mr. Ling's approach to winning people over with virtue is quite interesting."

"Wealth and martial arts ethics, well, virtue isn't necessarily something you talk about but also something you need to act upon. Just like love, all talk and no practice is just a sham. You have to do... ah! Oops, off-topic! Miss Qin, have you agreed?"

"Of course, I also want to know who is stirring up trouble behind the scenes!"

"Miss Qin is wise and magnificent!"

"Your flattery is a bit much!"

Ling Chen gave an awkward smile, and Qin Wu turned and left gracefully.

Picking up Lady Su to take her straight home, her mood was not very pleasant. She always felt that Ling Chen did not give her face and failed to show off his prowess as described in movies and novels to vent her frustration for her.

This made her doubt her sister's judgment. This guy hardly resembled the legendary prince on the white horse that came to her rescue; instead, he was more like the incessant nagging Monk Tang, who also rode a white horse.

Along the way, Lady Su found various ways to torment Ling Chen; now she wanted to drink coffee, then eat ice cream, later go shopping for clothes, and even blatantly wished to visit a club. After several rounds of this, the sky was already getting dark.

Ling Chen today was absolutely a model of manhood, with a temper so good it was beyond reproach. Even when Lady Su nit-picked like she was looking through a magnifying glass, she had to admit that Ling Chen was really putting effort into appeasing her!

"Why aren't you angry today?"

"What are you saying, you're actually hoping I would get angry?"

"No." Su Lin shook her head thoughtfully, "You usually don't have such a good temper. Tell me, did you do something guilty?"

Ling Chen sneered, "If I really did something wrong, the one I wouldn't dare face would be your sister, not you. Who do you think you are?"

"Huh?"

"Oh, a tender little spring onion, quite delicate!"

"Stop beating around the bush, come clean!"

"Really, there's nothing. Aren't I just going along with you because you're in a bad mood? After all, when a lady has her relative over, you shouldn't take her seriously; if it can be overlooked, then let it slide."

Su Lin was taken aback, her face suddenly flushed red, and she spoke uneasily, "You! You! How did you know I was on my period?"

"What's so strange about that? Have you forgotten that night when the two of us..." Ling Chen gave her a meaningful smile filled with implications.

Su Lin's face turned even redder. That night, by some strange twist of fate, they had run into each other in the bathroom, and by another twist, they got entangled together. If it weren't for her sister suddenly coming out, who knows what might have happened. Still, nothing did happen, so how could he know she was on her period?

"I felt it, after all, there was something padded." Ling Chen spoke indifferently, but his heart was twitching. Discussing physiological matters with a stunningly attractive lady who had a flirtatious relation with him, could there be anything more stimulating?

Su Lin was so embarrassed she nearly wished she could bury her head between her legs, thinking to herself that this guy really was her nemesis!

The first time she watched that sort of movie, he ran into her. The first time she bought ****those**** apparatuses, he saw them. Now, he even intimately sensed when she was on her period. Was this the rhythm of embarrassing her to the fullest?

"Are you cold?" Su Lin forced herself to pretend she didn't care. She was clear that the more she showed her bashfulness, the more the other party would become pleased with himself, so she quickly changed the subject.

"It's not cold at all!"

"Why are you shivering if it's not cold?"

"Um... Maybe it's the precursor to a stroke." Ling Chen made a grimace and poked fun at himself. He certainly couldn't tell her that he was laughing to himself so hard that he started to tremble.

Su Lin ignored him. As soon as they got home and she opened the car door, she ran upstairs and disappeared in the blink of an eye.

Ling Chen smiled and was just about to step in when his phone rang again.

"Chen, where are you?"

"Haozi? I'm at home, what's up?"

Nanrong Hao laughed happily over the phone, cackling like a duck, "It's great news! Come on over! We're all here at First-class Residence in the southern city!"

Hearing the words "great news," Ling Chen couldn't help but shiver. The last time it was "great news," he ended up picking the thorny rose Xia Mutong. It would be a lie to say he wasn't pleased or happy, but it was also true that he had a headache. How is he supposed to interact with her in the future?

"I'm not going, I'm afraid of falling for you guys' tricks again!"

Nanrong Hao laughed even more creepily today, still cackling gleefully, "Chen, if it weren't for my call last time, you would still be lost in bliss! Never mind that, if you really don't like it, we won't arrange it anymore. Hurry up and come over, there's a huge piece of good news!"

At this point, Ling Chen more or less understood. The so-called huge piece of good news must be related to the ownership issue of the Dongyi Group's venue. But it hadn't been long, how did they manage to secure it so smoothly?

Curious, he decided not to enter the house and turned around to drive straight to First-class Residence.

What he didn't know was that Lady Su, who had gone upstairs earlier, saw him get back into the car from the balcony. In anger, she threw the box in her hand heavily and closed the door to attend to her own affairs.

On the way, Ling Chen called Jiang Yunkai to tell him the location to meet up directly there, without specifying what the matter was.

Jiang Yunkai was obedient. Having lost a martial arts bet before, he knew this day would come. Without asking any questions, he simply hung up the phone.

First-class Residence isn't big but has its uniqueness. The whole place is arranged like the prosperous era of the Tang dynasty. The waitstaff shuttled back and forth in imperial Hanfu outfits. There were red and golden lanterns of various sizes hanging everywhere, and exquisite screens were placed meticulously throughout the hall.

The floor is entirely made of tempered glass with a pool below where the fish swim, playing beneath the feet of the patrons, adding a unique charm.

It was when Ling Chen arrived at First-class Residence that he learned there are twenty-four private rooms in total, each named after a meritorious general of the Tang dynasty's Lingyan Pavilion, which served as a distinction. The room Nanrong Hao and his group booked was named 'Duke Lu Mansion'.

Duke Lu was Cheng Yaojin, a marauding demon, a bandit leader, which quite complemented their current identities.

Entering the private room, a whole bunch of people were already waiting. Nanrong Hao, Jiang Hao, Zhao Zhengxiong, and other leading figures, all longtime core members who had fought their ways up together, were present.

When Ling Chen walked in, everyone stood up in unison, shouting "Chen!", causing the nearby waitstaff to look on with amazement. This young man, aside from being somewhat handsome, didn't seem to have any other outstanding qualities. Why were these people all showing him such respect?

Ling Chen was used to their mannerisms and smiled as he gestured with his hands, not making a big deal of it.

"Everyone's here? Why not start drinking?"

"Chen, who would dare to move chopsticks till you arrive?" Jiang Hao said jokingly, with others nodding in agreement.

Ling Chen gave him a disdainful look and snorted, "All those present are brothers of our own. There's not a single outsider. What's with putting up such pretenses? If we need to stick to such rotten rules among our own brothers, we might as well disband and be comfortable!"

Jiang Hao laughed without taking offense, but the older folks eyes showed moved expressions. Zhao Zhengxiong let out a sigh with a self-deprecating smile, "If everyone had Chen's magnanimity and open-heartedness, the scene wouldn't be as chaotic as it is now."

Chapter 336 Courting Yunkai (Part 1)

"Cut the crap!" Jiang Hao didn't dare to bare his teeth at Ling Chen, but he had no such qualms with Zhao Zhengxiong, choking out sharply, "If everyone was like Brother Chen and resolved issues just by sitting down to play a few rounds of Mahjong, what's the point in all this?"

Zhao Zhengxiong, whose temper has become much steadier nowadays, didn't get angry upon hearing this and simply continued to drink tea with a smile.

As people were joking around, the dishes started to stream in as soon as Ling Chen arrived, and the wine was poured and ready to be served. Ling Chen wanted to wait, but then the private room's door was pushed open, and Jiang Yunkai walked in with a beaming smile.

"Brother Chen, it's quite lively in here!" At some unknown point, maybe starting from the day he was defeated, Jiang Yunkai subconsciously started to address Ling Chen differently.

The others, however, didn't recognize him and showed surprised expressions.

Ling Chen smiled, seated him, and then raised his glass, saying, "Let's have a drink before we talk!"

The group roared in agreement, no one being vague about downing a 50-gram drink, except Nanrong Hao, who acted a bit sly, not leaving the glass from his lips, taking three sips to finish it.

"This is Jiang Yunkai, my brother, and from now on, he'll be your brother as well!" Ling Chen's introduction was simple, but the implications were not. Clever as Jiang Hao was, and as experienced as Zhao Zhengxiong was, they both sensed something, while Nanrong Hao just chuckled, "If he's Brother Chen's brother, then he's our brother too, what's there to say?"

With a brief introduction out of the way, Ling Chen didn't rush to elaborate, but instead waved to have all the service staff leave and then asked, "Have we taken over all of Dongyi's turf?"

"Yes!" Jiang Hao, seeing that the conversation had turned to business, also returned to his solemn state, laying down his chopsticks and declared, "Dongyi Group had thirty-six KTVs, one hundred twenty-eight bars, twenty-two bathhouses, and five private security companies, and not a single one was missed; we've taken over all of them!"

Ling Chen was taken aback, feeling that something wasn't quite right instinctively. With so many of Dongyi's businesses, there must be plenty of people eying them greedily. Now that Dongyi has fallen, wouldn't those people be scrambling to fight over it, bleeding heads and all? Even if Jiang Hao and the others acted quickly, it's unlikely that they could take it all without resistance!

"Brother Chen, it's actually not that surprising." Zhao Zhengxiong, noticing the doubt in Ling Chen's mind, shook his head and said, "Dongyi's downfall came too suddenly. Although other forces had been

eyeing them, they simply weren't ready to react so abruptly, and some who did have the time to react were still wary, unsure if it was a trap set by officials, hence a wait-and-see attitude."

Ling Chen caught on to this logic, nodding, "So you guys caught them unprepared when taking over, and basically faced no resistance or interference?"

"Yes, half of the KTVs, bars, and bathhouses were Dongyi's own assets. With their boss arrested and most of the backbone dead, those who didn't flee were considered loyal, and nobody had the guts to resist."

"What about the rest?" Jiang Yunkai suddenly chimed in.

Everyone was taken aback and instinctively looked at Ling Chen, who slightly nodded, prompting Zhao Zhengxiong to continue, "The rest was even easier to handle. They're all just doing business; we didn't raise the protection fees, so it doesn't matter who they pay, as long as we don't cause them trouble and can help them resolve it. It's all the same who's in charge."

Having finished, as though afraid the newcomer wouldn't understand, he added a few explanatory words, "These grey area industries, in between black and white, have never shied away from some involvement by gang members. For them, as long as there's money to be made, it's most important to earn it in peace and quiet. A little spending is nothing to them."

Jiang Yunkai nodded thoughtfully, taking a subtle sip of his drink.

"What about those five security companies?"

"These were fully-owned assets of Dongyi; we've taken them over as well. Official procedures are underway, but security has always just been a front; the people below were all Dongyi's. After the incident, almost everyone has fled. It's basically an empty shell now."

"Don't worry, a shell has its advantages."

Ling Chen smiled, turned his head and asked Jiang Yunkai, "Are you interested?"

Everyone reacted with uniform movements as they heard this sentence.

They all put down their chopsticks at the same time, their expressions serious as they watched Jiang Yunkai, seemingly waiting for his answer.

Jiang Yunkai remained expressionless, his eyelids drooping slightly, the cup in his hand spinning continuously between his fingers, his thoughts inscrutable.

Perhaps only two people in the room could maintain a relatively calm demeanor, one was Ling Chen, and the other was Nanrong Hao.

Ling Chen had absolute authority; his words were taken as imperial edicts without any discount in front of these people.

Although Nanrong Hao was increasingly fond of this atmosphere and had gained ample respect and one of the top positions within it, he was well aware that, whether it be playing around for fun or turning it into a career, it wasn't feasible—not with his grandfather Nanrong Yong, his sister Nanrong Wanqing, or even Chen himself allowing him to continue down this path.

Hongyu Group was his lifelong stage.

The others, however, were lost in their concerns, all understanding what mattered most in this line of work: first and foremost was absolute martial power, followed by financial power. No amount of money could necessarily buy the loyalty and life-risking dedication of people, but if you had loyal and dedicated followers, what did money mean? It could be fought for and won!

The current situation was exactly like this; the KTVs, bars, and bath cities under Dongyi were profitable ventures, but the core lay with those few security companies.

Even though they were only shells at the moment, their status held sway here, and they were destined to be the department wielding the greatest martial power internally in the future.

It wasn't that they were thinking about competing for power and profit at this moment; it's just that no one was a fool. After years in the Martial Arts World, they knew to weigh the importance; they dared not question Chen's decision but were merely curious about what abilities made Chen take notice of this man.

"Brother Chen," Jiang Yunkai finally lifted his eyelids and spoke indifferently, "I did promise you that if I were defeated, I would agree to one request from you, but I never agreed to work for you for the rest of my life, did I?"

As these words were spoken, the atmosphere in the private room condensed; the others did not understand what cryptic message was being exchanged and remained silent, not inclined to speak.

Ling Chen was unbothered, poured himself a glass of wine, and drained it in one gulp. Grimacing as though the alcohol burnt fiercely, he downed several more bowls of soup before wiping his mouth and smiling.

"You're a drifter."

This statement seemed somewhat nonsensical. Nanrong Hao scratched his head, puzzled, and for some reason, lines from Gu Long's masterworks popped up in his mind. His eyes lit up, and he watched with amusement as Brother Chen started to show off.

"I'm not a drifter; I simply have my own pursuits," Jiang Yunkai flatly rejected, not giving face.

Ling Chen shook his head and persisted, "The designation 'drifter' is inherently for those who have extreme pursuits in certain aspects. Aren't you one of them?"

Chapter 337 Courting Yunkai (Part 2)

Jiang Yunkai remained silent for a while before he spoke, "I have no benefits here."

"I suppose you wouldn't care about the money, but what if it could help with your Martial Arts cultivation?"

Jiang Yunkai was startled and then burst out laughing, leaning back and forth as if he had just heard a big joke: "Chen, even if you want to recruit me, there's no need for such a lame excuse, right?"

"How is it lame?"

"Security? Are we just facing street gangs? A situation where wielding a big machete and swinging it around can strike for miles, does that help with Martial Arts cultivation?"

"You are mistaken," Ling Chen shook his head, sighing in frustration, "Do you know why disciples from prestigious sects need to go through real-world experiences when they reach a certain level of cultivation?"

"To gain experience?"

"Right, if you really can't understand, think of it as leaving the novice village to fight monsters, gain experience, and level up!"

Jiang Yunkai's face twitched; this analogy really wasn't that great.

"The so-called worldly cultivation is exactly that; there are many experts hidden among the common folks, and being among them can bring great benefits!"

Jiang Yunkai fell silent, unable to refute Ling Chen's words that made some sense, yet subconsciously feeling something was off, but unable to pinpoint what.

"I'm planning to merge five security companies and have you serve as the general manager. Of course, if you are not interested in the regular operations, I'll assign a deputy to take over. You can focus on cultivating your Martial Arts and occasionally provide guidance to the internal security staff."

At this point, Ling Chen revealed his true purpose. It was rather simple, Jiang Yunkai could challenge the experts on the Tiger List, his presence alone would be a deterrent, swelling the courage of these old brothers both internally and externally.

Internally, it would serve as a wake-up call that the times were still unstable, not yet the time for peace and enjoyment, especially since new talents were continuously emerging; standing still ultimately leads to elimination!

Externally, having an expert comparable to the Tiger List experts would at least double their combat effectiveness, and essentially serves as a declaration to any underground forces, who dares to employ Tiger List experts?

Jiang Yunkai was still hesitant, he had gleaned their identities from their conversation and understood that though Ling Chen wasn't officially the leader, he was in fact the real leader, somewhat like a regent.

As for being involved in this line of work, Jiang Yunkai wasn't opposed to it. In fact, for him, there was nothing particularly important as long as it supported his Martial Arts progress, even if it meant involvement in dark activities.

Seeing his hesitation, Ling Chen bit his lip and made a bold promise: "Yunkai, if you trust me, I guarantee you'll reach the strength to be listed on the Tiger List within six months!"

Others were confused, not knowing what the Tiger List really meant, but Jiang Yunkai's eyes lit up. He was well aware that although he had been defeated by Ling Chen in one move initially, their level of skills were quite comparable. He knew clearly that if it were not a friendly match but a battle to the death, he wouldn't last more than ten moves against him!

There's a big difference between a friendly spar and a fight for life.

And to get listed was even harder; there are millions of Martial Artists in the world, countless of those with similar abilities, often losing by just one move for various reasons - to truly exceed someone wasn't as simple as subtracting one.

Thinking about all this, Jiang Yunkai hesitated no more and firmly nodded, saying, "Let's do it!"

At this moment, Ling Chen finally took a deep breath and introduced with a smile again, "Let's formally meet Jiang Yunkai, the future leader of our security. I know it's everyone's first meeting, and some may feel unconvinced, but that's not unusual. No man would easily bow down to others."

Looking at the group eagerly staring at him, Ling Chen slightly withdrew his smile and said, "However, I, Ling Chen, can pound my chest and tell you brothers, when it comes to pure martial force, all of you combined would not be a match for Yunkai!"

Everyone was momentarily stunned, yet unusually none showed displeasure, for they all understood that Ling Chen did not boast on serious matters.

And so, the matter was settled, marking the first large-scale gathering towards formalizing the group. Everyone was in high spirits.

Nanrong Hao even clamored about arranging a threesome for the newly appointed Kai, but Jiang Yunkai, blushing, repeatedly refused.

This intrigued Ling Yun's mischievous side. Recently losing his virginity himself, he couldn't help but gossip and subsequently passed the title of the eternal virgin to Jiang Yunkai.

The whole group roared with laughter, making the drinking even more enjoyable.

As they drank deep into the night, nearly all of them began staggering.

Ling Chen, thinking of Nanrong Wanqing at home, ordered everyone to disperse and dragged the heavily tipsy Nanrong Hao towards Wealthy Manor.

Arriving home, Ling Chen noticed the lights were still on in the house, warming his heart at the thought of having someone waiting for him.

Careful not to make noise and disturb the sisters upstairs, he tiptoed into the bathroom. Fortunately, he didn't encounter Su Lin like the last time, which left him feeling both disappointed and relieved.

After a cold shower, he realized he had forgotten to bring a change of clothes. Assuming no one would see him in the middle of the night, he simply wrapped a towel around himself and hurried back to his room.

The moment his hand touched the door, Ling Chen's mind cleared, his eyes flashed sharply, and his muscles tensed instantly!

Someone was in the room!

Who could be in his room at this time? The breathing was gentle, hard to detect, suggesting a skilled opponent, but the faint scent gave away her presence.

It couldn't be Nanrong Wanqing; given her personality, she would never venture into his room before they were married.

And it certainly couldn't be Su Lin—the blunt and gutsy girl was actually not very brave. Sneaking into her future brother-in-law's room at night would be too reckless, not to mention her concern for her sister.

Without a sound, Ling Chen gently turned the door handle, exhaled a breath smelling of alcohol, and pretended to stumble into the room, muttering something. But as he neared the bed, he suddenly transformed into a streak of light, lunging at the shadow in the corner!

With a swift hiss, Ling Chen formed his hand into a blade, aiming directly at the opponent's throat.

The shadow trembled but without any extra movement, skillfully dodged the lethal strike just with an unintentional quiver.

Ling Chen was greatly shocked. This person was a skilled opponent; his well-practiced move had been quick and unexpected. Even against the full force of the Snake King, it wouldn't have been easy to dodge. Who was this person?

The shadow trembled again, and with just a slight movement of an arm, Ling Chen felt a chill at his waist—the well-tied towel quietly slid down.

Chapter 338 Porridge Girl Knocks on the Door

Ling Chen was stunned. Through the moonlight streaming in from the window, his figure listlessly hung there, as if he too had drunk too much and couldn't muster any energy.

The shadow suddenly stepped back a few steps, and a gentle and elegant voice rang out in the room:
"What are you staring at?"

"How is it you?"

"Why shouldn't it be me?"

"What I mean is, why are you in my room?"

"Then where do you think I should be?"

Ling Chen suddenly found himself at a loss for words, staring blankly at the other's outstanding face under the moonlight, which was coated with a layer of silvery glow, and he didn't know what to say.

"It's ugly."

"What?"

The woman's expression remained unchanged, her toe picking up the clothes beside her and throwing them at him.

"Cover it up, it's really ugly."

Ling Chen suddenly realized what she was talking about, and with a twist of his mouth said, "What's ugly about it? Even if you haven't seen it now, you will in the future." While speaking, he quickly got dressed.

Porridge girl's expression was strange, her face faintly covered with a halo, not caused by the moonlight outside, but as if it was emanating from herself. This kind of demeanor made Ling Chen involuntarily think of someone.

Qin Wu.

However, porridge girl was trained in martial arts, her brilliance contained within, and this faint divine light was understandable. But Qin Wu had a regular constitution, why did Ling Chen feel this way about her too?

Holding the blanket thoughtfully, porridge girl walked straight to the side of the bed and sat down, uttering in a bland tone, "I have something to ask you."

Ling Chen thought to himself that it's obvious, why would she run into a man's room in the middle of the night for no reason?

"You have a bounty of seven million for your head?"

Ling Chen said, "That doesn't seem like anything new, does it?"

"Yeah, if I hadn't gone to challenge a senior today, I wouldn't have known about it."

By now, Ling Chen knew that porridge girl's existence seemed to revolve around constant challenges, and what level her combat power had reached, he couldn't estimate; anyway, even putting two of himself together might not be a match for this girl.

"Who did you knock down again?"

"I didn't knock him down, just sparred a bit and broke his arm." Porridge girl said very seriously, but Ling Chen just rolled his eyes – did this girl grow up watching dark comedy?

"You didn't run to my room tonight just to ask about this, did you?"

"Do you need my help?" porridge girl asked straightforwardly, "I heard that some top assassins from the assassin list have already made their move."

Ling Chen was startled and then laughed: "Don't joke, it's just seven million, the top-ranked ones on the assassin list aren't that idle, they can easily make more than that amount on any job, right?"

Porridge girl shook her head: "It's not seven million anymore."

"What?"

"Apparently, someone on the dark list has offered a new bounty, still targeting you, and the price is ten million US dollars."

Ling Chen was truly stunned then, not out of fear, but feeling a bit unbelievable, he subconsciously touched his own head and asked foolishly, "Is my head worth over ten million?"

"That depends on who you ask. To some, your head is worthless, but to others, it could be worth millions. There's no absolute standard to measure that."

Ling Chen understood the meaning behind porridge girl's words, but impulsively asked, "In your heart, how much is my head worth?"

Porridge girl gave him a nonchalant glance and casually announced a price, "Sixteen yuan and fifty-eight cents."

Ling Chen was astonished; the price was unreasonably low, and why was it so oddly specific?

"Today's unit price for pig head meat."

Ling Chen almost choked on his own saliva, staring blankly at the expressionless porridge girl and sighed, "Are you thinking about that over ten million reward?"

"I don't want it." Porridge girl slightly tilted her head, and the corners of her lips slightly lifted, "Your death brings me no benefit. Besides, I have no use for money."

"Then why are you still mad at me?" Ling Chen spoke irritably, "You might as well just kill me off easily, claim the reward, and build me a grand cemetery!"

Porridge girl looked amusedly at the somewhat childish Ling Chen, shaking her head after a while, "Do you need me to take action?"

Ling Chen regained his seriousness, pondered for a moment, and said, "No need. The path has to be walked by myself. In the future, those who want to kill me will only increase and grow more dangerous. I must face them myself, otherwise, even if I tied you to my belt, there will still be times when I need to take off my pants!"

This inappropriate analogy caused a slight fluctuation in the usually cool and unruffled beauty of porridge girl's face, her lips slightly lifting in what seemed like a suppressed comment.

"Then you take care, I'm leaving."

"Hold on, I'm curious, why did you suddenly want to help me?"

"Because I felt like it."

That was hardly an answer. Ling Chen paused, then said, "Well, regardless, thanks for the good intent. What are you planning to do next?"

"Down south, there's an old man who has just finished his seclusion. I need to check on him."

"Check on him?" Ling Chen was a bit puzzled.

Porridge girl showed a playful smile, "This old man, my master repeatedly defeated him forcing him into seclusion, the most recent one lasted for ten years. Now that he's out, I have to go and see if I can make him go into seclusion again."

Ling Chen started to wonder if his brain was damaged by alcohol, as he couldn't follow the back and forth of this mentor-student relationship. People only have a few decades in a lifetime, and here they casually force someone into years of harsh seclusion. It's quite unethical.

"By the way, who exactly is your master?"

"Cannot say."

"Why not?"

"No reason."

"What does 'no reason' mean?"

"No reason just means no reason."

"Why no reason?"

Finally unable to tolerate his nagging, the usually calm porridge girl lightly tapped his forehead.

"Shut up! It's not time for you to know yet!"

"Do you know how eager I am to 'meet the parents'?" Ling Chen couldn't resist joking when he saw her serious and indifferent demeanor.

Porridge girl's expression turned even stranger but didn't mind his teasing, suddenly quirking her lip and said, "I'm really looking forward to that eager day of yours."

Hearing this, Ling Chen was taken aback; this was not typical of porridge girl. Last time, she mentioned having a fiancé, hence rejecting any man's approach, but the change now gave him a weird feeling. Suddenly, he heard a noise and at the same moment, porridge girl's smile faded and she whispered, "I'm leaving," then disappeared from the window in a flash.

"Ling Chen, you just got back?" The door opened a crack, and Su Lin's head popped in.

"Yeah, why are you not asleep at this late hour?"

"I had already slept earlier, just woke up... and checked if you were back."

Chapter 339 Jiang Hao is Injured

Ling Chen nodded and said, "Oh, then hurry up and go to sleep."

Su Lin agreed, but suddenly her nose twitched slightly, and a suspicious look appeared on her face.

"What did you do tonight?"

"I was drinking, with Nanrong Hao and the others. What's wrong?"

"Why do you smell fragrant?" Su Lin spoke and gently pushed the door open to come in. "It wasn't just drinking, was it? Did you go fooling around?"

"There's no such thing. Is your nose congested?" Ling Chen waved his hand and laughed, "I just took a shower when I came back. Even the smell of alcohol isn't strong anymore. Where did you get that from? People talk about their eyes being deceived, but did your nose go astray?"

"It's your nose that went astray!" Su Lin glared at him and snorted, "My sense of smell has been very sensitive since I was little. I can detect even the slightest scent!"

"Impressive. It's a shame not to become a police dog."

Su Lin raised her hand and pinched him, saying angrily, "Even if I became a police dog, I'd bite you first!"

"Come on, who's afraid of who?"

Ling Chen looked disdainful, and Su Lin, infuriated, threw herself on him, wrapping around his neck and bit him.

Ling Chen hadn't expected that she would really bite, and by the time he reacted, he felt pain in his neck.

"Lighter! That's flesh!"

"Nonsense, I wouldn't bite if it weren't flesh!" Su Lin lightly nibbled, her words muffled in her mouth.

Ling Chen got anxious too, considering it was his neck. Although he wasn't afraid of her biting to death, what if she left a mark—would he have to wrap a scarf around his neck tomorrow?

"Hurry up and get down. If not, be careful I enforce some immediate justice here!"

"You wouldn't dare even if you had the guts!" Su Lin sneered, boldly contemptuous.

Ling Chen got fired up too, alright, you're asking for it!

His big hand circled around, tightly holding Su Lin's shoulders, and one hand gradually moved downward, finally resting on her perky back.

Su Lin shivered all over, feeling the intense warmth from his hand, her body going slightly soft, and she subconsciously loosened Ling Chen's neck, just about to speak, when Ling Chen, fearing she'd bite again, bent his head down and sealed her lips!

Boom!

Su Lin's mind went blank, feeling her lips burning and her body, like thousands of ants crawling over her, uncontrollably let out a low moan.

Possibly because of the training in the Prajnaparamita Sutra, Ling Chen felt an overwhelming desire, utterly incapable of stopping himself.

Su Lin tightly grasped Ling Chen's shoulders, her nails nearly digging into his flesh in her tension, her whole body taut and her entire being feeling dizzy.

Ling Chen's hand began to gently knead, waves of strange sensations flooded in, Su Lin let out uncontrollable sounds through her nose, her eyes already shut.

Ling Chen, empowered by alcohol, couldn't bear it anymore and was thinking of how to handle the situation since Su Lin seemed to be on her period, when his phone rang inappropriately.

Su Lin was startled by the ringtone, instantly sobered up, turned red-faced, glared at Ling Chen, and fiercely stomped on his foot before running out like a scared rabbit.

Watching her retreating figure, Ling Chen gave a bitter smile and casually picked up the phone.

Jiang Hao was attacked!

Ling Chen dumbfoundedly put down the phone, feeling a bit of regret. He had always known that this path wouldn't be calm, yet he had been negligent. He hadn't expected someone would dare to make a move on them so soon. Who could it be?

Without further thought, he got dressed, opened the door, started the car, and rushed to the hospital, calling Jiang Yunkai on the way. As for Nanyun Hao, he thought it over but decided not to call him. It was time for him to gradually fade out.

The hospital's emergency room was busy today, with six to seven bloodied people suddenly brought in the middle of the night; it wasn't easy to relax.

By the time Ling Chen arrived at the hospital, the surgery was already done, thankfully everyone only had superficial skin injuries. There were many cuts, but none life-threatening.

Zhao Zhengxiong made the call, the only old slicker who now drinks with caution. He was slightly drunk, only about five or six points worth. Moreover, with good luck, he was halfway through the phone call trailing at the back, which allowed him to narrowly escape the attack.

Jiang Hao's injuries were the most serious, with over a dozen knife cuts on his back that looked terrifying but weren't much issue, just superficial wounds. The real concern was a stab in the lower back.

It was his fortune that the knife that stabbed into his waist didn't get pulled out and, luckier still, it didn't hit any organs. He narrowly escaped with his life.

Others were more or less chopped up and bloodied; it looked scary but there wasn't much harm done. Lying in bed for ten to fifteen days should suffice for them to be up and about.

As for this attack being a fiasco, being drunk was naturally the biggest factor. It also reflected these young men's ever-inflating confidence. Besides God, they thought they were next in line.

That was why they hadn't suffered a significant loss before.

Ling Chen looked over everyone, and since no one had life-threatening injuries, it was a fortunate misfortune. Another relief was that the attackers clearly weren't martial arts experts, probably just a bunch of street hoodlums; otherwise, these young men might have been crippled today.

People temporarily arranged to guard them were by their sides, and Ling Chen pulled Zhao Zhengxiong out to the stairwell for a smoke.

"What happened?"

"I'm not sure yet." Zhao Zhengxiong grimaced, genuinely confused. He had trailed a few hundred meters behind, busy on the phone. When he heard the commotion up front and caught up, he saw a group of people ferociously chopping at Jiang Hao and the others. Before he could even react, those dozens of people had vanished.

"Couldn't tell who they were?" Ling Chen felt a bit frustrated. It was like a slap in the face. First-class Residence was celebrating lavishly, only to have a group come and decimate almost half of their people soon after. Embarrassing!

Zhao Zhengxiong's expression turned even more sour: "Chen Brother, do you think I have electronic eyes, or that those people were wearing jerseys that marked them as Wei, Shu, or Wu? It was late at night and from a distance, even if there were familiar faces, I couldn't tell who they were!"

Ling Chen nodded, understanding that his question was a bit far-fetched, and patted his shoulder, "First, ensure their safety at the hospital, and don't let anyone find them here for another attack."

Zhao Zhengxiong nodded in agreement, thinking about his brothers who, just a few hours ago, were boisterously drinking and now, ended up wrapped up like mummies — the feeling in his heart was indeed complicated.

As they talked, a series of hurried footsteps approached. Ling Chen curiously turned his head and saw a round face with a hint of youthful naivety appear before him.

"You're not allowed to smoke here."

Ling Chen uttered an "Oh," quickly threw away the cigarette in his hand, apologized, and only then did the young nurse give him a sharp look and walked back.

At that moment, Jiang Yunkai, who had received the news, also arrived. After drinking, he had left alone, while Ling Chen and Nanrong Hao went home together. They were the only three not present at the scene. If they had been there, perhaps nothing would have happened.

Chapter 340 The Assassin Who Won't Give Up

Ling Chen briefly explained the situation, and Jiang Yunkai thought for a moment and frowned, "It shouldn't have been done by someone from the Martial Arts circles, most likely a local faction. We've just taken over so much territory from Dongyi, there's bound to be jealousy."

Ling Chen nodded and asked, "What do you mean?"

"The priority is not to find the Assassin, but to enhance our own strength," Jiang Yunkai glanced at the fierce-looking brawny men wandering around the hospital corridor and frowned, "These guys are only good for street brawls, they get passive when facing someone a bit stronger."

"We can't just hire a bunch of Martial Arts experts, can we? They're not cabbages that you can just wholesale," Ling Chen said, understanding his meaning and spoke irritably.

Jiang Yunkai showed a strange expression, "Why would we need Martial Arts experts? These are just street fights for territory. As long as we improve the individual abilities of the people we have, that will be enough to cope. It's not a big deal!"

"You make it sound so easy. Fine, since you're in charge of the security company, do as you see fit. I won't get involved. Discuss with them yourselves," Ling Chen conceded.

Jiang Yunkai nodded in understanding, thought for a moment, then asked out of curiosity, "Originally, Dongyi's security company was almost an empty shell apart from some not-so-valuable equipment. Why did you still take it over? Starting anew wouldn't cost too much."

Ling Chen hadn't spoken yet when Zhao Zhengxiong passed over a cigarette and began to explain, "Kai, you don't understand, the domestic security industry isn't easy to handle."

Jiang Yunkai had formally objected to the nickname 'Kai' at the dinner table, but to no avail, as everyone continued to use it. It was actually Ling Chen who came to his rescue, telling everyone to stop calling him 'Kai', or else they might as well call him 'Old Virgin'.

Comparatively, 'Kai' sounded nicer.

"I see quite a few doing business under the name of security, why is it difficult?"

"The domestic security industry has experienced a roller coaster trend in the past ten years," Ling Chen interjected with a smile.

Jiang Yunkai was even more confused, but Zhao Zhengxiong, watching his bemused expression, couldn't help but burst into laughter a few times before explaining.

The private security industry was not recognized by the state at first. Twenty years ago, trying to register a private security company was sheer fantasy. Even with real needs, it was mostly handled by the relevant government departments, subordinate to various police units, and the heads of the companies were often government officials.

Later, with more favorable conditions and the winds of reform and opening up having blown, some began to enter this area. For the domestic scene, it was an emerging industry. Although there's a history of at least three thousand years of escort agencies out of five thousand years of history, hadn't they been banned in the last hundred years?

This first group of people caught the right time when policy support was leaning in their favor, approvals were quick, and they set high standards. They were at the peak.

Since it was still immature, more and more problems began to arise, with frequent cases of inadequate regulation. The control and management then tightened again, which is also why it has been impossible to apply for new licenses in this field in recent years.

After such a long explanation, what's needed is essentially just a facade. The security company under Dongyi Group has been approved through regular channels, having such a cover makes many things much more convenient! This is why Ling Chen was willing to invest money to take over the security company.

Now Jiang Yunkai understood. He nodded and promptly left a comment, stating that he would personally select a few dozen people to join the security company, and have Old Zhao assist him.

Ling Yun clearly grasped his intention; it was to build the foundation for combat capability. Zhao Zhengxiong also understood internally. He nodded repeatedly. Having tasted the bitterness of insufficient martial force earlier, he was more than eager to have a powerful backup.

The three swiftly made clear divisions of labor and plans for the future on the spot. Ling Chen still would not involve himself in any specific affairs or make any substantial commitments, but his people clearly understood that, acting as the boss or not, Ling Chen would always be their boss in their hearts.

The conversation was heating up when Ling Chen suddenly felt something was amiss behind him. He abruptly turned around to find the plump-faced, big-eyed nurse standing behind him, puffing up with anger.

"You men, how can you be so oblivious? Smoking is not allowed here! You started again as soon as I turned away!"

Ling Chen gave an awkward smile and hurriedly tossed his cigarette butt away, saying, "I'm sorry, Miss Nurse, it won't happen again!"

The nurse snorted and cocked her head, saying, "Empty promises, and 'it won't happen again'? Who would believe that?"

Ling Chen noticed her gesture and a flash of insight sparked in his eyes as he suddenly smiled, "I truly forgot. How can I make you believe me then?"

"The smell of smoke is all over your mouth! Hand over the cigarettes first! You can come to the nurse's station to get them when you leave!" she said, stretching out her fair, delicate hand.

But Zhao Zhengxiong couldn't bear this sort of treatment. It's one thing to be scolded, as it was within her job responsibilities, but taking away his cigarettes? Does she think I'm a schoolboy or what?

His eyes widened, about to snap back, when Ling Chen subtly turned his head and covertly shot him a look.

Zhao Zhengxiong was momentarily confused, but being a wily old hand at life, he quickly shut his mouth and said nothing.

Ling Chen chuckled, reaching into Zhao Zhengxiong's pocket to retrieve the cigarettes and passing them to the nurse with an ingratiating smile.

The nurse smiled triumphantly and reached out to take the cigarettes, her fingertips barely touching the pack when she suddenly let out a sinister smile!

Ssst!

Amidst a faint swoosh, a small and exquisite dagger appeared in the nurse's hand, as she swiftly aimed for Ling Chen's wrist!

Such a sudden and close attack would be nearly impossible for anyone to dodge. If it landed, Ling Chen's hand would be useless.

Ling Chen's face revealed a sly smile, his fingers loosened slightly, dropping the cigarette pack as he moved forward a few steps, flipping his hand into a claw, aiming straight for the nurse's soft hand!

The nurse felt the attack go awry halfway through and immediately drew back, slicing the dagger's blade horizontally towards Ling Chen's fingers!

Though it sounds complicated, it all happened within a few breaths. Zhao Zhengxiong hadn't even reacted yet when the two of them had already exchanged a couple of moves face to face.

Jiang Yunkai was the first to respond, bellowing loudly as he punched towards the nurse's back with no hint of chivalry or restraint.

Facing the coordinated assault of two masters from front and back, the nurse eerily twisted out of their grip, retreating a few steps and then casually asking, "How did you figure it out?"

"Old habits die hard!" Ling Chen sneered, "Seems like it's time for you to change your name, Bai Huanjun."

The person nodded silently but persisted, "I believe I left almost no flaws this time, how did you still notice?"