

The Beauty 381

Chapter 381: Crisis Lurks Everywhere

The sudden danger made Ling Chen instantly alert, and he quickly turned his head to see several logs rolling towards him from one side. The ends of the logs had been whittled by a knife, sharp beyond compare. Being hit by a log would be a certain death.

Seeing this, Ling Chen remained calm amidst the chaos, his eyes cool and collected, as he swiftly squatted down. In an instant, several logs skimmed past his abdomen and crashed into the tree trunks beside him. For a moment, all that could be heard was the rustling of branches and leaves, and falling foliage.

With the crisis averted, Ling Chen silently breathed a sigh of relief; this damned place was filled with so many traps.

Ah!

As he was thinking, a pitiful scream suddenly came from not far away. Following the direction of the sound, Ling Chen saw that one of Zhu Hong's men had accidentally fallen into a trap and was instantly killed.

Seeing this, Ling Chen had a slight premonition; it seemed they were also unaware of the arrangement of traps in this place.

"Mr. Zhu, do you want to continue the pursuit?" The man in a suit who had been following Zhu Hong exclaimed nervously, "There are many traps in this forest, I'm concerned..."

Slap!

Before he could finish speaking, Zhu Hong impatiently slapped him across the face.

"Shut up!" Zhu Hong stared at him coldly. "We're not going back until we find the person. Drive!"

As soon as he finished speaking, the walkie-talkie worn by the man in the suit immediately picked up a burst of static noise, accompanied by human voices. After clearly hearing the message that was conveyed, the man seemed to forget the scolding he had just received from Zhu Hong, and said excitedly, "Mr. Zhu, our men have reached the training camp and made contact with Reylov. They are on their way here. All the traps in this area were set up by Reylov. With him as our guide, we can reduce a lot of unnecessary casualties."

Hearing this, Zhu Hong, looking at the dark forest around him, hesitated for a moment before asking, "How long will they take to arrive?"

"Five minutes, at the quickest."

"Alright. Pass the word to hold position and rest, and we'll move out later."

"Yes!"

Since he was quite far away, Ling Chen could only see Zhu Hong talking to someone, but couldn't make out the content of their conversation. However, observing that the people had sat down right there, Ling Chen didn't hesitate any further and immediately ran forward.

The forest on the island was very dense, the deeper one went, the more crowded the trees became. Bushy branches and leaves blocked out even the moonlight, making the surroundings pitch-black as if one's hand could not be seen when extended.

After running for more than two kilometers, Ling Chen didn't dare to proceed at a fast pace, and instead, slowed down. In such pitch-black darkness, if he carelessly triggered a trap, it would be a big trouble; he certainly didn't want to die a confused death in such a place.

Gasping for breath, Ling Chen paused for a moment to adjust, and then took out his phone from his pocket. There was no signal on the island; the phone could only be used to check the time. It was nearly three o'clock in the morning now, and in just over two hours, daylight would slowly start to break. If he couldn't escape from the island before dawn, they would eventually become live targets. By then, trying to escape would be troublesome.

Moreover, what Ling Chen was even more worried about was Reylov. The man had promised him three hours, and most of that time had already passed, it was uncertain whether Reylov would keep his word. Once the soldiers from Broken Teeth Training Camp got involved, the crisis they faced would be even more severe.

While pondering, Ling Chen suddenly raised his head, his sharp gaze swiftly scanning his surroundings. For no known reason, he had a strong feeling of crisis, as if a wild beast had him dead in its sights, ready to pounce at any moment.

"Don't, it's Ling Chen!"

A barely audible voice came from within the forest, and Ling Chen immediately recognized it; it was Hu Fei speaking.

"Fatty."

"Ling Chen, we're over here."

Following the sound, Ling Chen finally reunited with the main force. A quick scan revealed that everyone was present; the body he had seen at the explosion site was not one of theirs. However, seeing the battered state of his companions, Ling Chen felt no happiness, only a deep frown, his expression solemn.

Both Wei Jiahao and Yuan Yun in the team had suffered serious injuries. Yuan Yun's were the most severe, the flesh on his back torn and bloody, with shards of stone and metal embedded in his body, his breath barely hanging on. Since no one had brought medical supplies with them, immediate treatment was impossible; he had to rely solely on his own grit to persevere.

After inquiring, Ling Chen learned of the comrades' ordeal.

Earlier, under Kaelina's leadership, the team had intended to cross the forest and reach the location where their motorboat was docked. However, halfway there, they encountered a body. According to Kaelina, it was a soldier who had died in the wilderness at the training base. Wei Jiahao thought he might find some equipment and a flashlight on the corpse.

But when Wei Jiahao moved the body, he discovered a landmine hidden underneath. The instant the mine detonated, Yuan Yun, in an effort to protect Wei Jiahao, hurled himself over him; despite this, both were still caught in the blast. Thankfully, Wei Jiahao was shielded by Yuan Yun, so he was not in mortal danger, but Yuan Yun's situation was complicated.

To look after the two injured, the rest of the team had to slow down and find a place to rest temporarily.

Having learned of everyone's condition, Ling Chen glanced at Nanrong Wanqing and nodded at her, signaling she didn't need to worry. Then he turned his gaze to Kaelina, gesturing to her with his eyes.

Understanding, she followed Ling Chen to the side and whispered, "The situation is grim. We still have half way to go through this forest. With two injured comrades and the enemy in pursuit, it's difficult for us to speed up our progress."

"You're the most familiar with this area. Do you have any suggestions?"

Kaelina gave it some thought and said, "If I remember correctly, there's a temporary camp about two kilometers from here, usually used to treat personnel injured during training. They should have the medical equipment and medicines we need. As you've seen, your friend's injuries are severe, and without prompt treatment, he won't be able to leave this island alive."

"Alright, we'll go with your plan."

Their immediate concern wasn't escape but rescue—first, they had to save Yuan Yun's life.

Time was of the essence. After explaining the situation to everyone, Ling Chen immediately carried the wounded Yuan Yun and headed for the temporary camp under Kaelina's guidance.

...

An hour later.

"Reylov, you've led us around for over an hour without a trace. What the hell are you doing?"

In the jeep, Zhu Hong looked at Reylov beside him and questioned coldly.

"This is your territory; don't tell me you can't find them."

"Mr. Zhu, don't rush, be patient," Reylov said with a smile, glancing at the time and muttering to himself, "Three hours are almost up."

Zhu Hong frowned slightly, "What's almost up?"

Reylov said confidently, "You want to find them, don't you? No problem, give me ten minutes, and I'll make sure they appear before your eyes."

Chapter 382 Breakthrough

The sea breeze was gentle, and the night sky was dotted with stars, brilliant and charming.

In the lush woods of the island, inside two temporary tents, Yuan Yun and Wei Jiahao were lying on two single beds, receiving treatment.

Wei Jiahao's injuries were not life-threatening and easier to handle. The most troublesome was Yuan Yun, whose body had too many fragments of rocks and metal embedded in it. It took over half an hour, and neither Ling Chen nor Kaelina were able to clean his back thoroughly. They could only manage the more serious wounds first, barely keeping Yuan Yun alive. Once they escaped from the island, they would seek further treatment.

There was no choice; time was limited, and they had to race against it now, without any more delays.

"Fatso, bring the first aid kit," Ling Chen instructed. Yuan Yun's condition was still unstable and to be cautious, it was better to be prepared in advance in case of emergency.

In less than two minutes, everyone packed up their belongings and continued deeper into the woods under Kaelina's lead.

At this moment, they were in the central area of the region; there was no turning back, only forward.

"Ling Chen."

Hearing Kaelina's voice beside his ear, Ling Chen turned his head and asked, "What's the matter?"

Kaelina didn't speak but merely swung her wristwatch in front of him. Seeing the time displayed, Ling Chen's expression stiffened, immediately grasping her implication.

Three hours had passed, Reylov was probably going to take action now.

"How much farther do we have to go?"

"About seven kilometers, and it's expected to take at least an hour to reach the shore," Kaelina said, looking around the pitch-dark environment with a hint of helplessness in her voice, "This place is fraught with perils; we can hardly speed up."

Ling Chen understood their predicament and said helplessly, "We'll do our best."

After speaking, Ling Chen glanced at Nanrong Wanqing beside him, slowly stepping closer to walk alongside her, and asked with concern, "Are you okay?"

Nanrong Wanqing gave a gentle affirmation, looking at Yuan Yun and Wei Jiahao who were being carried on the backs of Qiu Yong and Xu Ming, a trace of guilt flashing in her beautiful eyes, she blamed herself, "I'm sorry, it's all my fault. If it weren't for my willfulness, you guys wouldn't have..."

"Alright!" Ling Chen interrupted Nanrong Wanqing sharply, holding her delicate, boneless hand, and slightly smiled, "It's not your fault. I know Zhu Hong better than you. Even without this incident, he would have taken you away by any means." Ling Chen then changed the conversation tone, doubt in his eyes as he asked, "What exactly happened in East Sea City that made you willingly go with them?"

Nanrong Wanqing lowered her head, saying, "It's because of my father."

"Your father?" Ling Chen was shocked.

Could it be... Nanrong Wanqing already knows Mr. Yun's true identity?

Surprised, he heard Nanrong Wanqing say, "That day Mr. Yun contacted me, telling me he knew my father's whereabouts and could take me to see him whenever I was willing. Initially, I didn't believe him, but then, he mentioned many details from my childhood, and it was not just that; he knew my father very well. After knowing this, I subtly asked my grandfather and confirmed the information from him. So, my initial skepticism turned into belief. One day, Mr. Yun told me that he had arranged for me to meet my father, but because of some reasons of my father's, I had to go alone, so I... I'm sorry, I should have listened to you and had less contact with Mr. Yun."

"It's okay," Ling Chen breathed a sigh of relief internally. He had thought Mr. Yun had revealed his own identity.

If Nanrong Wanqing knew Mr. Yun was her biological father, it's uncertain if she could withstand such a shock. After all, his stance is different from Mr. Yun's, and their relationship is irreconcilable, only allowing them to stand on opposite sides. Placing Nanrong Wanqing between them would undoubtedly make her uncomfortable.

Thinking about it, Ling Chen felt puzzled. Why did Mr. Yun deceive Nanrong Wanqing into coming here? Was it merely for an experiment? Or to treat Nanrong Wanqing's legs?

Earlier, when Ling Chen met with Nanrong Wanqing, he had noticed that the exoskeletal armor she wore was gone, but her legs were unaffected and she could still walk normally. This clearly must be due to the enhancement drug.

However, as far as he knew, the enhancement drug had a time limit; after which, the effects would wear off. It had been two hours now, and Nanrong Wanqing seemed unaffected. Could it be that the effects of the enhancement drug had become permanent in her body?

Amidst his thoughts, Yang Chen, who was walking with him, suddenly stopped, his expressionless eyes "looking" around and said, "Brother, we're surrounded."

Hearing this, everyone turned and focused their attention on him, asking solemnly, "Are you sure?"

Yang Chen nodded and said, "There are a lot of them, probably no less than two hundred, and they are less than sixty meters away."

Ling Chen's expression changed slightly. Over two hundred people—it seems like the entire force of the Broken Teeth Training Camp had been dispatched. He knew Reylov wouldn't stand by idly, but he hadn't expected them to arrive so quickly.

"Breakthrough!" Kaelina said coldly, "It's the only way."

Yang Chen suggested, "The least people are on the east side, about thirty. With our strength, we should be able to break through smoothly."

"Little sister, younger brother, take good care of third brother and eighth brother," Qiu Yong and Xu Ming left the injured Yuan Yun and Wei Jiahao in their care. As two of the main combat forces of the Eight Eccentrics, they needed to free their hands to deal with the enemy.

"Ling Chen."

At this moment, Hu Fei pulled off his backpack, unzipped it, took out two handguns and magazines, and threw them to Ling Chen. Kaelina walked by herself, picked up an assault rifle, and then clipped two grenades to her waistband.

Ling Chen pulled back the bolt of the gun, chambered a round, and quickly arranged his equipment, preparing thoroughly for the upcoming fight.

"Forty meters left."

Hearing Yang Chen's reminder, Ling Chen glanced at everyone around him. Without needing words, a single look was enough for everyone to nod in understanding.

"Go!"

With a light exhalation, Ling Chen moved swiftly, sprinting toward the woods on the east side, with two handguns tightly held in his hands, his sharp eyes like a beast lurking in the shadows, searching for its prey.

Thirty meters... twenty meters...

Quiet footsteps approached, and with a quick glance, Ling Chen instantly spotted two figures. Without a second thought, he raised his wrist and lightly squeezed the trigger.

Bang! Bang!

Two gunshots mercilessly took away two lives.

However, as the gunfire rang out, not only did it expose their location, but it also hastened the approach of enemies nearby.

Chapter 383 Deadlock

Ling Chen's marksmanship goes without saying, as accurate as a textbook. Kaelina, ranked third in the world as an assassin, is no less proficient with a gun, and together with a hundred-percent accurate archer god, the three unleashed full firepower. They encountered almost no resistance, and the thirty-something enemies they faced head-on not only failed to stop them but were instead driven back by their assault.

Taking this opportunity, Ling Chen and his group didn't wait for the pursuers behind them to catch up and hurriedly sped up their breakout.

"Big brother, you take everyone and go first; we'll cover the rear," Ling Chen shouted loudly.

Without a word, Qiu Yong immediately led Nanrong Wanqing and others forward. Ling Chen and Kaelina leaned back against a tree trunk, stealing glances behind them. Illuminated by the headlights of a jeep, they saw more than two hundred soldiers, guns in hand, charging toward them with raging momentum.

"Damn it, I'll blast you bastards to death!" Hu Fei spat, rubbed his hands together in annoyance, and cursed. Reaching into his backpack, he pulled out a grenade launcher and fired a shot into the sky.

Boom!

The grenade fell into the crowd from midair and exploded instantly into a burst of flames. The powerful explosion sent four or five soldiers flying with the blast wave.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Watching the flames continuously bursting among the crowd, Hu Fei laughed heartily with a delighted face.

But at that moment, Ling Chen's gaze locked onto a jeep not far away, and his expression changed drastically. He urgently cried out, "Fatty, watch out!" As the words left his mouth, he sprang on his feet and rushed over to Hu Fei's position, tackling him to the ground.

Dadada!

At the same time, the heavy machine gun on the jeep spat out fire serpents, and a series of bullets poured out, falling around Hu Fei.

Ling Chen buried his head deeply into the ground. Under the oppressive heavy firepower, he didn't dare to raise his head at all, worried it would be riddled like a hornet's nest.

At this point, all three heavy machine guns on the jeeps were aimed at Ling Chen and Hu Fei. Bullets rained down like they cost nothing, cutting down all surrounding trees.

Bang!

Suddenly, a tree as thick as an adult toppled sideways and accurately crashed onto Ling Chen's back. Excruciating pain surged, making Ling Chen wince in agony.

Damn! He cursed inwardly. If he didn't handle those heavy machine guns, he and Hu Fei had no chance of escaping. The moment they showed their heads, they could be shot dead.

Bang! Bang!

Accompanied by two abrupt gunshots, Kaelina, hiding nearby, fired two shots, taking out two machine gunners. However, this action revealed her position. In an instant, she saw more than a dozen soldiers rushing toward her.

Without a word, Kaelina immediately stowed her gun and retreated backward.

With two heavy machine guns ceasing fire, Ling Chen felt the pressure ease significantly. Seizing this opportunity, he quickly pulled up the Fatty on the ground and dashed towards the rear.

"Chase them down!"

Seeing Ling Chen running frantically, Zhu Hong on the jeep immediately shouted.

Reylov leaned leisurely in the car seat, comfortably puffing on a cigar, and smiled, "Mr. Zhu, what do you think? I told you I wouldn't disappoint you."

Zhu Hong glanced at Reylov and asked, "How did you find them?"

"The entire area is littered with motion sensor devices, specifically installed to monitor the personnel undergoing training. As soon as anyone enters this forest, they'll trigger the sensors."

Upon hearing Reylov's explanation, Zhu Hong coldly said, "Then why did you waste our time by bringing us here?"

Reylov replied leisurely, "Mr. Zhu, I am a man of my word. I promised them three hours to escape, and I won't go back on that. Besides, haven't they failed to flee the island by now? What's the hurry?"

"Mr. Yun will be arriving shortly. You can explain it to him then."

At this moment, Ling Chen, accompanied by Hu Fei, was dashing through the forest, trying to evade their pursuers. Not long after they took off, Hu Fei, covered in fat, could not keep up any longer, gasping for air, sweat streaming down his forehead. Even while fleeing, he did not forget to carry his extra-large backpack.

Dada dada dada dada!

The two jeeps in pursuit were getting closer, the heavy machine guns ruthlessly spitting out bursts of fire, eager to claim Ling Chen and Hu Fei's lives.

"No... I can't go on..." panted Hu Fei, "I... I can't run anymore."

Ling Chen said sternly, "Hold on a little longer." While speaking, he continued to drag Hu Fei along, hurrying forward. But at that moment, Hu Fei's complexion drastically changed, and he hastily shook off Ling Chen's hands, his round face turning pale, "You... just go, leave... leave me behind."

"You're mad, what nonsense are you spouting? Let's go," Ling Chen frowned slightly.

Hu Fei managed a wry smile and glanced down at his feet, saying helplessly, "I can't go any further."

Noticing his gaze, Ling Chen's heart skipped a beat, as if he realized something. He quickly crouched down and cleared the mud beside Hu Fei's left foot. Immediately, he saw a landmine pressed under Hu Fei's foot. The landmine had been triggered, and as soon as Hu Fei lifted his foot, it would explode.

"Just go, leave me," Hu Fei urged, seeing the enemies rapidly approaching from behind.

"Shut up!" Ling Chen snapped, "Am I the type to abandon a friend? If we're going, we go together; if we die, we die together." After speaking, he took out a dagger from his waist and gently inserted it into the sole of Hu Fei's shoe. Next, he loosened Hu Fei's shoelaces, signaling him to take his foot out.

"Don't rush, move slowly," Ling Chen instructed.

At that moment, the footsteps of their pursuers grew closer, now less than thirty meters away. Ling Chen held his breath and focused, seemingly oblivious to the arrival of the enemies, as he attentively worked on disarming the landmine.

As soon as Hu Fei's foot was freed from the shoe, Ling Chen used the dagger to firmly press down on the shoe to prevent the landmine from being triggered.

"Don't move!"

Looking up, facing more than ten guns pointed at his head, Ling Chen's gaze narrowed, and he remained motionless, crouching there.

"Ha ha! Ling Chen, I bet you didn't expect this. After all the running around, you still couldn't escape from my grasp."

A cold laughter drifted over, and Zhu Hong was seen approaching in his jeep. While speaking, Zhu Hong glanced at Ling Chen's hands and, realizing what he was doing, Zhu Hong broke into laughter and said, "Your luck is really something else. Everybody back off, so no one gets hurt by the landmine."

At Zhu Hong's command, more than ten soldiers quickly stepped aside, not daring to approach the potential blast radius of the landmine.

"Give me the gun."

A man in a suit immediately pulled out a pistol from his holster and handed it to Zhu Hong.

Zhu Hong expertly worked the gun's action, chambering a round, and aimed the muzzle at Ling Chen's forehead, saying coldly, "I suggested killing you last time in East Sea City; pity Mr. Yun didn't agree. Now that Mr. Yun is not here, I'd like to see who can stop me from killing you." As he spoke, a malicious smile curled on his lips, and his finger lightly squeezed the trigger.

Chapter 384 At Wit's End

"Stop!"

Zhu Hong turned his head and looked at the shouting Hu Fei, sneered and said, "Why the rush? After killing him, it will soon be your turn."

Hu Fei flicked his wrist and threw a large backpack next to the jeep, saying, "Mr. Zhu, you'd better take a look at what's inside first."

Hearing this, Zhu Hong glanced at the backpack suspiciously. After hesitating, he gestured with his eyes to the man in the suit next to him. Getting the hint, the latter immediately jumped out of the vehicle, walked over to the backpack, and unzipped it. Seeing the contents inside, his face changed drastically, and he hastily retreated backward.

Seeing the look of terror on his subordinate's face, Zhu Hong frowned and asked, "What's going on?"

"It's... C4 explosives and grenades."

Hu Fei held the detonator in his hand and chuckled, "Mr. Zhu, these bombs are enough to level everything within a twenty-meter range. If you dare to shoot, we'll all die together. Let's see who's more ruthless."

Zhu Hong's face showed shock, and the hand holding the gun suddenly stiffened in the air.

Watching Hu Fei's grim face, Ling Chen was surprised to himself; he hadn't thoroughly checked the contents of the backpack and didn't expect that the fat man would carry so much equipment, truly a walking arsenal.

"Mr. Zhu, if you don't want to die, have your men all back off."

Zhu Hong stared at the backpack, his eyes hesitating. Such a good opportunity... but he couldn't bring himself to join Ling Chen in death. After weighing his options, he put down his gun and gestured with his eyes to the people around him.

As the soldiers began to retreat, Hu Fei breathed a sigh of relief and turned his gaze to Ling Chen beside him, asking in a low voice, "Can you handle it?"

Ling Chen's mouth curved slightly, and he nodded, "Move back a bit first."

After Hu Fei retreated more than twenty meters away, Ling Chen dug up the dirt next to the landmine, forming a pit. Then, with his hands pressing down on his shoe soles and his knees slightly bent, he took a deep breath, and with a powerful leap, his body swiftly flew backward.

A fraction of a second after his hands left the soles of his shoes, a loud 'boom' was heard – the landmine exploded instantly. However, thanks to the pit dug by Ling Chen beforehand, the force of the landmine explosion did not spread around but shot upwards at a forty-five-degree angle into the air.

Seeing the landmine successfully disarmed, Ling Chen didn't hesitate and immediately ran towards Hu Fei.

"Run!" Hu Fei waved his hands, urging urgently.

"Where's the detonator? Give it to me, I'll blow those bastards up." Ling Chen stretched out his hand, asking Hu Fei for the detonating device.

"To hell with the explosion, the plastic explosives in the backpack didn't have detonators inserted, how could they explode? I was just bluffing them."

Ling Chen's eyes widened, this fat man... was too unreliable, he had learned to play dirty too.

"Don't look at me, I learned it from you." After saying that, Hu Fei raised the detonator in his hand and roared at Zhu Hong, "All of you bastards go die."

Hearing Hu Fei's roar, Zhu Hong's face turned pale, and he hastily threw himself outside the jeep, lying on the ground with his hands over his head, waiting for the bomb to explode.

However, after more than ten seconds passed, there was no movement around them.

Reylov, not far away, raised his head, looked at the backpack next to the jeep, and then at Ling Chen and Hu Fei disappearing into the woods, and immediately realized the truth.

"Get up, everyone. We've been had."

"Bastards!" Zhu Hong's face turned ashen with anger and cursed, giving the man in the suit a furious glare, and said coldly, "Didn't you say the backpack was full of explosives?"

The man in the suit hurriedly defended, "Yes, I..."

Bang!

Before he could explain, a gunshot rang out, and Zhu Hong blew his head off with a shot.

"Chase them, we absolutely can't let them get away."

At this moment, the satellite phone in the jeep suddenly rang. Zhu Hong hurriedly answered the call, only to hear Mr. Yun's calm voice coming from the other end: "How are things going?"

"Uncle Yun, I'm sorry, there has been some trouble. Ling Chen and his group have come, they rescued Wanqing from the lab, and I'm in full pursuit."

"Hmph! You can't even handle such a trivial matter." After a pause, Mr. Yun asked: "Did Ling Chen discover the secret of the base?"

"He shouldn't have."

"What do you mean 'shouldn't'? I don't need such uncertain answers. I'll be arriving in half an hour, and you better have things taken care of before I get there, don't disappoint me again."

"I understand."

After hanging up the phone, Zhu Hong's face looked terrible after being chastised by Mr. Yun. He glanced at Reylov and said with a heavy tone: "Mr. Yun has spoken, we must capture them within half an hour. Reylov, we provide so much funding to Broken Teeth Training Camp every year, if you can't handle even this little matter, I think Mr. Yun will be very displeased, and if the budget for Broken Teeth Training Camp gets cut, you..."

"Alright, Mr. Zhu, there's no need to threaten me," Reylov cut in. "In half an hour, I guarantee they will surrender willingly."

...

At this moment, Ling Chen and Hu Fei, having temporarily shaken off their pursuers, had successfully regrouped with the main force.

Kaelina looked up at the thinning night sky and pointed ahead, saying: "It's three kilometers from here to the shore."

Ling Chen nodded: "Everyone, hold on a bit longer, we are about to escape."

Ten minutes passed.

Perhaps because they had left that dangerous area behind, they didn't encounter any traps anymore. On the way, everyone hurried along without stopping and finally reached the shore of the island as the sky was starting to lighten.

Looking at the surging waves, Ling Chen took a deep breath, feeling relieved to have finally made it.

Hu Fei lifted the cover off the speedboat, and with Qiu Yong's help, dragged the two speedboats to the shore, urging everyone to hurry up and get on.

"It's in your hands," Ling Chen said, looking at Kaelina. The waters around the island were filled with sea mines, and it was Kaelina who had led them in before, so now they had to rely on her to lead them out.

The engines started, and Kaelina piloted the speedboat, carefully avoiding the sea mines as she steered towards the Public Sea.

However, just at that moment, a 'buzzing' sound suddenly came from the sky. Ling Chen's expression changed slightly, and he quickly looked up, only to see a helicopter flying rapidly towards them, hovering above the two speedboats.

At the same time, Reylov, from the rear seat of the cabin, stuck his head out, and spoke through a loudspeaker to the people below: "Ling Chen, surrender. You can't escape."

Ling Chen frowned and said in a deep voice: "Ignore him, keep going."

"Kaelina, my finest student, do you really think you can leave smoothly?" Reylov said with a proud smile: "Just now, I've changed the positions of the underwater mines. If you plan on using the old method to leave, there's only a dead end awaiting you."

Hearing this, Kaelina's complexion finally changed and she immediately stopped the speedboat in the middle of the water.

"Surrender, you've got nowhere to escape."

Chapter 385 Maritime Crisis

Watching the thin-lipped Nanrong Wanqing biting her lips tightly beside him, Ling Chen stretched out his hand to embrace her shoulder, protecting her in his embrace, and gave her a reassuring look. Then he turned to Kaelina and asked, "Can the submarine mines move in the water?"

Kaelina nodded lightly and said, "Those mines have been specially modified with the addition of miniaturized propellers, allowing them to be moved slowly through computer control."

"Why didn't you say so earlier?" Hu Fei couldn't help complaining, "If we knew this, we would have devised another plan."

"Other than taking a boat, do you have another way?" Kaelina countered, leaving Hu Fei speechless. Indeed, the island was surrounded by the sea on all sides with no land routes available. Besides the waterway, there were no other methods.

At this moment, Zhu Hong arrived at the shore in a jeep with over two hundred soldiers in tow, looking over at the people trapped on the motorboat with a slight smile on his lips, a smile of victory.

"Ladies and gentlemen, don't hesitate anymore. Hurry back the way you came; otherwise, don't blame me for being merciless under my gun."

Hearing Reylov's voice coming from the helicopter, Ling Chen's eyebrows furrowed, his thoughts flying as he wracked his brain for a way to escape.

The key was still the mines!

If they could figure out the mine issue, they could escape the island unobstructed.

With this in mind, Ling Chen looked at Nanrong Wanqing in his embrace and said firmly, "Do you trust me?"

Nanrong Wanqing didn't utter a word but nodded her head.

"What are you planning to do?" Kaelina asked from the side.

"Just follow my instructions later," Ling Chen replied, then turned his head towards Qiu Yong and others on another motorboat, saying, "Brother, come over to this side."

Without a word, Qiu Yong immediately led the injured Yuan Yun and the others onto Ling Chen's motorboat. Fortunately, the motorboat had standard space to accommodate ten people, and though everyone was on board, it wasn't too crowded, though it might have some minor impact on the speed of the boat.

Once everyone was settled on the motorboat, Ling Chen briefed Yang Chen and Kaelina for a moment, then took out a sunshade from the boat, covered it over the heads of everyone, hiding all of them. After all this was done, Ling Chen looked up at the circling helicopter above and raised his arm high, giving the long middle finger.

Seeing Ling Chen's gesture, before Reylov could react, Ling Chen leaped into the sea from the motorboat, disappearing without a trace.

At the same time, the motorboat started again, moving forward slowly.

"I want to see where you can escape to," Reylov hummed coldly, and shouted to the pilot, "Fire!"

"Stop! Without my order, no one is allowed to fire," Zhu Hong on the shore of the island yelled into the walkie-talkie loudly.

"Do you want to let them go?"

"I... no, we can't fire no matter what," Zhu Hong hesitated for a moment, but his tone quickly became resolute.

At this moment, all the people on the motorboat were covered by the sunshade cloth, making it impossible to distinguish who was where. If Nanrong Wanqing were accidentally injured or even killed,

Zhu Hong was certain that no matter how close his relationship with Mr. Yun was, he would not be spared.

After all, that was Mr. Yun's biological daughter; he did not dare to act rashly.

Watching the powerboat gradually getting further away, Zhu Hong roared into the walkie-talkie, "I don't care what method you use, you must stop them."

Reylov's eyes were somewhat cold, and beyond that, there was a hint of admiration. Ling Chen was very smart, knowing to exploit their weakness and preventing them from daring to attack. However, what he was even more curious about was how Ling Chen, having dived into the sea and not reemerged for a while, managed to direct the powerboat away from the mines?

"Boss, what should we do?" the sergeant riding with Reylov in the helicopter asked.

Reylov sneered, "If he thinks I have no way to deal with them, then he is sorely mistaken." Saying this, Reylov glanced at his subordinates and spoke indifferently, "Now, I need your help."

"Please give your orders, Boss."

"Very well." A cruel smile spread across Reylov's face as a glint of ferocity flashed in his eyes. Without waiting for the sergeant to react, Reylov suddenly grabbed his shoulder and pushed him out of the helicopter, dropping him into the chilly seawater.

Watching the sergeant flounder in the water, Reylov said emotionlessly, "Kill him!"

As soon as he spoke, the Gatling gun mounted beneath the helicopter began to spin, raining bullets down like a torrential shower. In an instant, the sergeant's body was riddled with holes, and his blood slowly began to spread in the sea.

Beneath the powerboat, Ling Chen clung to the underside of the boat, observing the underwater mines and incessantly tapping either side of the boat's bottom, first left, then right. Although the sound was

faint, with Yang Chen's keen hearing, it was entirely distinguishable. It was through his guidance that Kaelina on the powerboat could accurately control the course, avoiding the hidden underwater mines.

When his air ran out, Ling Chen stuck his head out of the water, taking a deep breath before diving back under to guide Kaelina.

However, while surfacing for air, he suddenly smelled a stench of blood nearby. Looking intently, he saw a mutilated corpse floating on the water's surface, with blood spreading from its body.

Seeing this, Ling Chen's brow slightly furrowed, a sudden shock ran through him as something crossed his mind, and he quickly looked deeper into the water.

Instantly, several sharks about three meters in length were swiftly swimming towards him from about ten meters away.

Trouble!

Ling Chen's pupils constricted, clearly, these sharks were attracted by the smell of blood. As more and more sharks appeared around him, Ling Chen's body tensed up. At this moment, the best course of action would be to get back on the boat to avoid the sharks' attacks.

But doing so would mean lingering on the sea surface. The longer they delayed, the more disadvantageous it would be for them.

Thinking of this, Ling Chen gritted his teeth, trying to remain calm while letting the sharks swim past him. As long as there was no blood scent on him and he did not provoke the sharks, he should not be attacked.

However, Ling Chen had still underestimated Reylov's ruthlessness.

At that moment, the helicopter's Gatling gun spewed out a long stream of fire snakes, and the bullets with terrifying destructive power penetrated the sea surface, shooting frantically along the edge of the powerboat.

In an instant, several sharks were riddled with bullets, with blood flowing along the seawater, almost covering the area around the powerboat.

Seeing this, Ling Chen muttered to himself that this was bad. This way, sooner or later, he would become the target of the sharks' attacks. After a moment's hesitation, Ling Chen immediately surfaced, preparing to get back on the boat to avoid the blood-thirsty brutal sharks.

Bang!

Suddenly, accompanied by a crisp sound of gunfire, Ling Chen felt pain in his left shoulder as a bullet pierced through it, and blood gushed out profusely.

Chapter 386 Short-lived Leader

On the shore of the island, Zhu Hong held the sniper rifle, a look of pity on his face. The last shot had deviated, missing a clean headshot that would have killed Ling Chen. Now, he reloaded and continued to target Ling Chen through the scope.

At this moment, Ling Chen had spotted Zhu Hong on the shore from the direction of the incoming bullet. Seeing the sniper rifle in the opponent's hands, Ling Chen's expression changed slightly, and without hesitation, he immediately submerged himself into the sea.

Bang!

The moment his body sank into the water, another gunshot rang out. If Ling Chen had been a fraction of a second slower, that bullet might have penetrated his head.

Watching Ling Chen disappear, Zhu Hong sneered to himself, "I want to see how long you can hide underwater."

In the water, Ling Chen clutched his bleeding left shoulder, vigilantly watching the groups of sharks around him, cursing his luck silently. There was Reylov above and Zhu Hong on the shore; he had no chance to get on the boat. What's worse, his wound would soon attract the sharks.

No! He must find a way to escape both Reylov and Zhu Hong, or all their efforts would be in vain.

It was easy to think, but the real question was how to do it.

In his contemplation, a shark that had missed its meal suddenly targeted Ling Chen. Seeing the shark open its gaping mouth, revealing sharp teeth and charging towards him, Ling Chen didn't hesitate to pull out the dagger from his waist. He slightly shifted his body to the side, dodging the shark's strike.

Seizing the moment, Ling Chen rapidly moved closer and tightly grabbed the shark's head with both hands, plunging the dagger into the top of its head.

The pain-induced frenzy sent the shark thrashing madly in the water. Ling Chen held tightly onto the dagger, not daring to let go, letting the shark drag him around.

At this moment, Reylov in the helicopter, seeing that Ling Chen hadn't surfaced, immediately issued a command through the intercom: "Disable the mines' triggering mechanism, send kayaks to pick up everyone from the boat back to the shore."

In less than five minutes, two kayaks carrying more than a dozen soldiers approached the motorboat from both sides.

Reylov, sitting in the helicopter, hovered in mid-air, supervising and directing his subordinates.

However, at that time, no one noticed a bloodied hand clinging to the rear of one of the kayaks, grabbing the pull rope and slowly climbing up. As the head emerged above water, a pair of sharp eyes scanned around. Then, without waiting for the people on the kayak to react, Ling Chen flipped aboard, stabbing his dagger mercilessly into a vital area of a soldier.

Ah!

Accompanied by a scream, everyone's attention was immediately drawn. But, as they turned around, they only saw a swift gleam of cold light sweep across their necks.

In less than five seconds, all six soldiers on the kayak were killed.

"There!" At this moment, Reylov, riding in the helicopter, finally noticed the anomaly on the kayak, pointing at Ling Chen and shouting loudly.

Hearing Reylov's shout, Ling Chen looked up, bent down to pick up an assault rifle, and aimed at the helicopter forty meters away.

"Quick, turn the nose, kill him," Reylov urged.

The pilot immediately controlled the helicopter to direct the Gatling gun at Ling Chen on the kayak.

"Fire!"

In Reylov's enraged shout, the pilot lifted his thumb, gently pressing the red button on the control stick. However, at the same time, Ling Chen, holding a gun, slightly raised the corners of his mouth and gently pulled the trigger.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Gunshots rang out, three bullets streaked through the air, hitting the helicopter's front windshield with deadly accuracy. The first two bullets successfully penetrated the glass, and the last bullet went through the hole, precisely shooting into the pilot's head.

Headshot!

The pilot, killed instantly, slumped forward, pressing right against the helicopter's control stick. Instantly, the helicopter spiraling in midair lost its balance and rushed towards the sea surface.

No!

Reylov's face changed drastically. Seeing the helicopter about to crash into the sea, he immediately leapt out of the cabin.

Bang!

Right as he was falling, another gunshot from the kayak fired, hitting his abdomen. Blood gushed wildly out like a fountain.

Watching Reylov fall into the sea, Ling Chen holstered his gun, mumbling to himself, "Let's see how you like the taste of sharks."

Cold seawater rushed in from all sides. Reylov surfaced a few times in the water, enduring the pain in his abdomen, desperately paddling his arms, swimming towards the nearby kayak.

"Quick... Save me!" Reylov shouted to the soldiers on the kayak.

Several soldiers didn't dare delay, hastily steering the kayak over, reaching Reylov quickly. One soldier bent over, half his body out of the kayak, grabbed Reylov's arm, and pulled hard.

But at that moment, the soldier suddenly felt a heaviness in his arm; Reylov's body seemed unbearably heavy. Simultaneously, Reylov's pupils shrank, and the Broken Teeth Training Camp leader, known for his brutality, showed a fearful expression.

"Save... Save me..."

Reylov shouted in panic, his hands tightly grasping the soldier's arms, desperately climbing. But at that moment, the surface of the water was gradually replaced by a stain of blood red. Blood slowly spread out, and Reylov's face grew paler, blood incessantly gushing from his mouth.

Finally, with combined effort from several soldiers, Reylov was forcefully dragged onto the kayak. However, when everyone saw Reylov's miserable state, their faces instantly changed. What remained of Reylov was only his upper body, with his waist below drenched in blood, his legs already missing.

"Commander... Commander..."

A soldier tried calling out twice.

Reylov glanced at him lifelessly, his body twitching slightly. He opened his mouth, attempting to speak, but before he could, another gush of blood poured out.

Looking at Reylov who closed his eyes and showed no signs of life, the soldiers looked at each other, unsure of what to do.

The Broken Teeth Training Camp's leader had died just like that.

Looking at the motorboat not far away, the soldiers hesitated, unsure if they should continue executing the commander's orders.

At this moment, on the shore of the island, Zhu Hong frowned, his expression unpleasant. He had also witnessed the scene of Reylov being pulled up, under those circumstances, survival was impossible.

He picked up the walkie-talkie, coldly said, "Reylov is dead, I am now taking full control. Everyone listen, immediately bring all the people on that motorboat back."

Chapter 387 Cripple

Upon hearing the orders issued by Zhu Hong, everyone immediately sprang into action.

Boom!

But just at that moment, an earth-shattering explosion suddenly occurred in the center of the island, causing the entire island to tremble slightly. Zhu Hong's facial expression changed dramatically, and he quickly turned his head, only to see flames soaring and dense smoke billowing from the center of the island.

"What happened? Where did the explosion occur?"

Before Zhu Hong could finish speaking, several more explosions were heard, 'boom boom', with powerful shockwaves erupting and trees being instantly obliterated.

As the island was engulfed in explosions, Zhu Hong made a lightning-fast decision, hurriedly ordered: "Arrange for boats to evacuate immediately."

"Yes."

"Get in the car!"

However, just as everyone was about to leave in the jeep, another explosion, 'boom', occurred less than thirty meters from the jeep, sending flames skyward and sweeping blast waves across. Zhu Hong had not even recovered when he felt a wave of heat engulf him, lifting his body into the air and rendering him unconscious in an instant.

On a kayak, Ling Chen calmly observed the island being destroyed by the blasts. Kaelina had once told him, Reylov's heart had been implanted with a micro-device, controlling all the bombs on the island. Once Reylov's heart stopped beating, the bombs would immediately detonate, obliterating the entire island.

What was happening now was exactly the outcome he wanted.

In such a catastrophic explosion, it was hard for anyone to survive, including Zhu Hong.

Regaining his composure, Ling Chen drove the kayak to the motorboat, lifted the sunshade, and smiled: "All clear now."

Kaelina stood up, her eyes complex as she looked at the island, now a sea of flames, and asked, "Is Reylov dead?"

Ling Chen gently nodded, reached out to help Nanrong Wanqing up, and smiled, "We can go home now."

Hearing this, Nanrong Wanqing breathed a sigh of relief. However, seeing the wounds on Ling Chen's body, her delicate face immediately tensed, and she quickly asked, "Are you hurt? Is it serious?"

"It's nothing major, don't worry." Although he said this, Ling Chen still felt a burning pain in his back.

Previously, while battling a shark underwater, he had no idea where the shark had taken him. After dealing with the shark, when he surfaced, he realized he was tens of meters away from the motorboat. Fortunately, a kayak happened to pass by him, giving him a chance to find a gun and destroy the helicopter.

As the explosions continued behind them, Kaelina drove the motorboat far away from the island. An hour later, when their motorboat's fuel was almost depleted, a cargo ship slowly appeared in their sight.

Arriving here, Hu Fei had already arranged a rescue ship. Although the operation deviated from the original plan, it was nonetheless successful – they had rescued Nanrong Wanqing. As long as there were no casualties, everything else was acceptable.

...

Meanwhile, on the island.

A seaplane was docked at the shore, and over twenty survivors were busy counting the casualties.

"Mr. Yun."

"How is it, have you found Zhu Hong?"

The man in a suit hesitated for a moment, stammered, "We... we found him, but..."

Mr. Yun furrowed his brows slightly and urged, "But what? Speak up!"

"Mr. Yun, perhaps you should see for yourself."

Shortly after, the two arrived at a row of bodies. Looking at the white cloths covering the bodies, Mr. Yun's expression hardened and he coldly inquired, "Is he dead?"

"No!" the man in the suit hurriedly said, "He's not dead... I'm just... just afraid of frightening others." With that, he walked over and lifted the white cloth. Suddenly, a face, completely unrecognizable, appeared before Mr. Yun.

Looking at the person almost charred before him, Mr. Yun's face turned steel blue as he said in a deep voice, "Are you sure he is Zhu Hong?"

"One hundred percent sure, I've already verified it." After a pause, the man in the suit continued, "The accompanying medical staff examined him; Mr. Zhu's body has burns covering ninety-eight percent, and his injuries are severe. It's because of the strengthening agent that he's been able to hold on. However, even if his life is saved, given the condition of his burns, it's doubtful he'll ever return to his previous appearance."

Mr. Yun pondered for a moment and then said, "Send him to the laboratory in Florida."

Hearing this, the man in the suit's expression changed slightly, surprised he said, "Sending him there, do you intend to..."

"Rather than having him live as a disabled person, better to let him live with some value. Enough, say no more, just follow my orders and send him there as soon as possible."

"Yes."

...

In the blink of an eye, three days passed.

In the security office of the Hongyu Group headquarters, Ling Chen was lounging with his legs crossed, holding a mouse, watching an enthralling video on the computer, occasionally clicking his tongue in amazement.

"Ling, what are you watching now?"

The office door was pushed open as Wei Jun strode in, looking at Ling Chen's face relishing, he curiously leaned over.

"Oh! So you are also a fan of Tang Shiyun, and here I thought you were watching some adult film." Wei Jun waved his hand uninterestedly.

Ling Chen mercilessly retorted, "Only someone like you, whose mind is filled with lust, would think of nothing but women."

"Get lost, other than women, I'm also interested in money." Finishing, Wei Jun mysteriously leaned close to Ling Chen and whispered, "Ling, are you free tonight? I'll take you to a nice place."

Ling Chen curled his lip, "Another outing to find women? Sorry, I'm not interested."

"It's not women this time."

"Then what for?"

Wei Jun smiled meaningfully, "You'll know tonight. Hey, let's settle on it then, eight o'clock, I'll give you a call."

"Alright, I'll wait for your call."

Ling Chen held his head, watching Tang Shiyun in the video, with the corners of his mouth slightly raised. Having returned from the island three days ago, everything had gone back to normal. After being busy for so many days, it's good to go out and relax now that Wei Jun has invited him.

Night fell.

After dinner, having watched TV with Nanrong Wanqing and Su Lin, Ling Chen received a call from Wei Jun and drove there alone.

Arriving at the place, Ling Chen met up with Wei Jun and asked, "Where to?"

"First to Shunbei Road."

In less than fifteen minutes, the two arrived at Shunbei Road. Looking at the cold and quiet street, possibly because it was somewhat remote, it seemed even less lively than the Old City.

Getting out of the car, Ling Chen asked curiously, "Wei, what's fun around this place?"

"Heh heh! Don't be impatient, you'll know soon, follow me."

Walking along a dark alley, Ling Chen followed Wei Jun step by step until they reached the end of the alley. Seeing a rusty iron gate, Wei Jun, who seemed familiar with the place, walked up and lightly knocked on the door—four short, three long—immediately, the iron door was opened from inside.

Glancing at the burly doorman, Ling Chen muttered to himself, this place is so secretive, could it be some illegal venue?

Following Wei Jun through several doors, Ling Chen's eyes suddenly widened as the surroundings brightened. He was taken aback as he looked around.

Chapter 388: Secret Place

At this moment, what presented itself before Ling Chen was a warehouse spanning thousands of square feet. However, it was no longer accurate to describe it merely as a warehouse.

The walls around the warehouse were covered with golden striped wallpaper, and the floor was laid with pure white ceramic tiles, the gaps between each filled with copper wire, creating a visually grand

and upscale impression. Hanging from the top of the warehouse were several ring-shaped crystal chandeliers, layer upon layer, the bright lights dazzling, illuminating every corner of the warehouse.

With just simple decorations, the overall grade of the old warehouse was instantly elevated.

Inside the spacious warehouse, over fifty gambling tables were lined up, offering all sorts of games, with a row of slot machines against the wall. Even though it was just past eight o'clock, the casino was already packed with people, men and women alike crowded around the tables, their faces flushed and expressions excited.

Ling Chen, who was observant, noticed that those who came here to gamble were not very wealthy, and judging by their clothing and attire, they were not much different from him and Wei Jun, merely ordinary folks.

"Hey! Brother Wei, these underground casinos are illegal operations, aren't you afraid of getting caught by the police?" Ling Chen asked in a low voice.

Wei Jun gestured for silence with a 'shush' and said with a smile, "Why worry so much? They have connections and don't fear the police showing up. Just play boldly and without worry, if something really happens, I'll be here with you."

Ling Chen asked with curiosity, "Do you know who's behind this casino?"

"I'm not sure about that. As far as I know, this casino hasn't been open for long, not even a month. It was a friend who told me about this place," Wei Jun said, then added with pride, "I've been quite lucky recently, played a few times and made what I'd earn in two years' wages. Brother Ling, why don't you try your luck later, maybe you can win some pocket money."

"Forget it, I'm not interested in gambling. Brother Wei, don't get too addicted."

"Don't worry, a little gamble for fun won't make me go bankrupt. Eh, if you're not playing, I'll go try my luck. If I'm on a winning streak tonight, no matter what you want to do, I'll cover all expenses." With that, without waiting for Ling Chen to say more, Wei Jun eagerly moved towards the gambling table.

Ling Chen stood behind Wei Jun and watched for a couple of rounds; Wei Jun was indeed having good luck, getting several good hands in a row. In no time, he had pocketed over three thousand, equivalent to a month's salary for Ling Chen.

After watching for a few minutes, Ling Chen soon lost interest. He wasn't into gambling. Had he known Wei Jun was bringing him here, he would have rather stayed at home, spending time with Nanrong Wanqing, talking about love.

"Brother Wei, you keep playing, I'll take a walk around."

Without turning his head, Wei Jun replied, "Alright! Don't go too far, this place offers free food and drinks, don't be shy."

Leaving the gambling table, Ling Chen with hands in his pockets, aimlessly wandered around. But it was just a casino, and no matter how much he roamed, he couldn't stir up any interest. Checking the time, it wasn't even nine o'clock yet. Well, he thought, he'd endure a little longer; Wei Jun asked him out, so he ought to give him some face.

As he idled about, Ling Chen's peripheral vision suddenly caught sight of a curtain hanging in the northeastern corner of the casino, concealing the corner.

In less than half a minute, seven or eight people emerged from behind the curtain, entering the casino.

The space behind that curtain could at most accommodate two or three people. The fact that seven or eight came out in succession indicated something unusual. Driven by curiosity, the already bored Ling Chen felt his interest piqued. After scanning his surroundings and seeing no one taking notice of him, he walked toward the corner.

Lifting the curtain, Ling Chen found that behind it was a wall covered with wallpaper, with nothing else. Seeing this, the corner of Ling Chen's mouth lifted slightly, as he looked with interest at the wall. Then, he pressed his hand against the wall and gently pushed inward.

As expected, there was a secret door hidden in the wall.

Entering the secret door, the lighting inside was quite dim, but his vision was clear.

Ling Chen walked a few meters away and saw a staircase leading straight down. According to the warehouse's layout, there should be an underground room below.

Following the stairs all the way to the bottom, the vast underground room had dim lighting, casting a hazy ambiance. Unlike the gambling den, the underground room was set up with many separate booths, each enclosed by screens, allowing for privacy from the view of others.

At this moment, there were not many people in the underground room, mostly staff members preparing for something.

Seeing someone approaching, Ling Chen, afraid of being discovered, quickly hid in a nearby tea room.

Casting a glance at the wall where waitstaff uniforms hung, an idea struck Ling Chen, and he immediately changed out of his casual clothes and into the uniform of a waiter. After that, he straightened his collar, puffed out his chest, and walked out carrying a tray of drinks.

As it turned out, after Ling Chen put on the uniform, the people around only glanced at him and said nothing, not a single one suspected his identity.

After wandering around for a bit, it was almost nine o'clock.

At this time, the underground room was fully set up, all the waitstaff stood lined up against the wall, neat and orderly. Each of them took out a masquerade mask— the kind with butterfly eyepieces— from their pockets, covering the area above their noses.

Seeing their actions, Ling Chen mentally cursed, not expecting such a rule, as he was completely unprepared. Just as Ling Chen was at a loss, a male waiter next to him gently nudged his arm and passed him a mask, signaling him to hurry and put it on.

Ling Chen glanced at the waiter gratefully and hastily put on the butterfly mask, covering half of his face. In doing so, he no longer had to worry about his identity being exposed.

At nine o'clock, on the other side of the underground room, a group of men in suits came in single file or in groups of threes and fives. As though it was a mutual agreement, they all remained silent, not uttering a word, each finding their own seats without interaction. Moreover, like Ling Chen, these men all concealed their faces with various masks, seemingly fearing recognition.

This mysterious atmosphere increasingly piqued Ling Chen's curiosity, making him want to discover what was truly happening.

Once everyone was in place, the side door was immediately shut. At the same time, the lighting in the underground room instantaneously dimmed, limiting the range of vision to less than three meters.

Following the arrival of the guests, the waitstaff standing against the wall also began their work, diligently offering champagne and fine wines to the guests.

Ling Chen, carrying a tray of drinks, moved through the crowd, and while bending to serve drinks, he stealthily observed the customers. Unfortunately, everyone was wearing masks, making it impossible to identify anyone.

However, based on Ling Chen's many years of experience, he could tell from their attire that all the guests present were wealthy individuals.

Chapter 389 Special Auction Item

So many rich individuals gathered here, and it's all so secretive, I'm afraid they must be up to some unsavory business.

Minutes passed, and a spotlight illuminated the stage directly opposite all the private booths. A round platform then automatically moved towards the center of the stage. Above the platform, over two meters high, was covered with a layer of red cloth, obscuring the contents.

Ling Chen leaned against the wall, his gaze intensifying as he scrutinized the platform, wishing he could see through the layer of red cloth.

At that moment, the red cloth surrounding the platform suddenly dropped, revealing the mysterious contents wrapped inside.

Immediately, Ling Chen's expression changed, his eyes flashing with a hint of anger and a chilling iciness.

Atop the platform was an iron cage, in which stood a scantily clad young woman, roughly in her twenties, with a curvaceous figure and pretty features, a typical beauty.

The woman was wearing a bikini, covering only the essential parts, her smooth and delicate skin unabashedly presented before a room full of men, subject to their lascivious gazes.

Ling Chen frowned slightly; the woman in the cage seemed to have been drugged or injected with a hallucinogenic substance. She stood limp and groggy, her face confused and seemingly unaware of her surroundings.

"Ladies and gentlemen..."

At this moment, a woman's voice came through the speakers installed in the corner, "You all know the rules, so I won't repeat them. I can promise you solemnly that all the women we sell are pure and unspoiled, never defiled and never undergone any restorative surgery at a hospital, so you need not worry. Additionally, we're not in the business of a one-time sale; if you don't want them after use, you can contact us, and we will handle it for you. Without further ado, let's start the auction. As per usual, the starting bid is fifty thousand, and each subsequent bid must not be lower than ten thousand."

As soon as her speech concluded, someone from the crowd immediately called out a bid of sixty thousand.

In less than a minute, the price soared, quickly breaking two hundred thousand, and finally closing at two hundred sixty thousand.

"Congratulations to the gentleman at table number seven for successfully acquiring this item; please welcome the next one."

Item?

Listening to the person's rhetoric, Ling Chen's face turned sour; these people were actually auctioning off living women as items, downright despicable. Not just the wealthy bidders, but even more detestable were the shadowy figures organizing the auction.

Clearly, these women were not here by choice, otherwise, they wouldn't have been drugged.

Since he stumbled upon this, he couldn't just stand idly by.

With this thought, Ling Chen surreptitiously took out his cell phone, turned on the recording function, and captured everything happening in the basement, preparing to use it as evidence to hand over to Xia Mutong.

In just half an hour, five women were auctioned off, with a total price of about 1.3 million.

At that point, the host's laughter came through the speakers, "Alright, ladies and gentlemen, we've arrived at the climax of the evening. To thank you for your support, we've specially sourced an exquisite item, guaranteed to satisfy the tastes of all present."

As she spoke, the iron cage covered in red cloth was moved to the center of the stage.

As the red cloth fell, a slender, delicate-faced beauty immediately caught everyone's attention. Not only was this woman extremely beautiful and young, but her ample bust also had all the men drooling, unable to avert their eyes.

Looking at the woman caged, Ling Chen's mouth fell open, unable to hide his surprise.

Leng Feifei!

It was actually her!

Ling Chen had a vivid memory of this beauty he met at East Sea University. Back then, when Leng Feifei was being bullied by Qi Jianhui and Zheng Guangwu, he had stepped in to help her out several times.

Since then, they hadn't seen each other for a while due to being too busy, but he hadn't expected to meet again in such circumstances.

Those bastards!

Ling Chen gnashed his teeth in hatred, finding even his friend involved now. It seemed he could no longer remain uninvolved.

As thoughts raced through his mind, Ling Chen was about to rush onto the stage and rescue Leng Feifei from the cage.

But as he took a step forward, he immediately held back. This was, after all, the enemy's turf. Bold enough to engage in such illegal acts in plain sight, the opposing force was likely significant. Moreover, Leng Feifei appeared somewhat unconscious, which meant he might be hamstrung if attacked while attempting to flee with her.

Forget it!

Upon reflection, Ling Chen decided against immediate action, considering it would not be too late to make a move after the auction had ended.

By this time, the bidding for Leng Feifei had reached two million.

Such a peerless beauty—who wouldn't be tempted?

Not long after, Leng Feifei was finally sold for two million four hundred thousand.

"Alright, today's auction is now complete. We will notify everyone of the next auction a day in advance via text message. Thank you all for attending."

When the auction ended, everyone got up to leave without delay, including those who had successfully bid on items.

Ling Chen was inwardly puzzled—weren't they going to take the people with them directly?

As the men left, Ling Chen's gaze shifted back to the stage, only to find that Leng Feifei was no longer in the cage.

Damn it!

He had been too preoccupied to notice Leng Feifei on stage, and it seemed likely that she had been taken away by the backstage staff.

Without a moment to waste, Ling Chen rushed towards the backstage. Having not gone far, he realized there was no one backstage, and not just Leng Feifei—none of the girls auctioned off were anywhere to be seen.

They're fast!

Ling Chen frowned, and just then the sound of car engines reached his ears. Following the noise, he hurriedly dashed in that direction.

Kicking open a tightly locked iron door, a cool night breeze gently brushed against him. Outside the warehouse, he saw a row of luxury cars driving onto the road. Among these were two vans, and one had its door still ajar—one of the men had just thrown an unconscious woman into the vehicle, then hurriedly pulled the door shut and signaled an 'OK' to the driver.

Watching as the two vans started up, Ling Chen didn't hesitate to pick up the pace, chasing after them like a swiftly blowing wind.

But by this time, the two vans had merged with the traffic, accelerating and leaving Ling Chen far behind.

Assholes!

As the two vans disappeared from sight, Ling Chen cursed under his breath and then turned his attention to the staff member.

"What... what are you going to do?"

Seeing Ling Chen approaching with a dark expression, the man was somewhat frightened and asked stammeredly.

Ling Chen grabbed the man's collar in one swift motion and demanded coldly, "Where have those girls been taken?"

Chapter 390 Lady Tong

"I... I don't know, these things are not my responsibility." The man answered in panic.

Ling Chen pressed on: "Then who does know?" After speaking, he remembered the mysterious woman hosting the auction and changed his tone: "Where is that woman?"

"Woman? What woman?" The man asked confusedly.

"Still playing dumb, it seems you won't tell the truth unless I teach you a lesson." Having said that, Ling Chen swung his fist, about to smash it into the man's face.

Seeing the coldness in Ling Chen's eyes, the man realized Ling Chen was not joking and quickly said, "Don't, don't hit me, let's talk this through. The woman you mentioned must be Lady Tong."

"Lady Tong? Who is she?"

"She's in charge of the underground auction and the casino; we're all employed by her."

"Where can I find her?"

"She should be at the casino now."

"Come on, take me to her." Ling Chen grabbed the man's collar and dragged him towards the casino. Taking this opportunity, he took out his phone and called Xia Mutong to ask for immediate backup to raid this illegal venue.

Back at the casino, Ling Chen pushed the man in front of himself and scanned the crowd, demanding in a deep voice, "Which one is Lady Tong? Point her out to me."

"It's... it's her, over there." The man looked around and finally spotted Lady Tong among the gamblers.

"Buddy, I'm just trying to make a living. If Lady Tong finds out I betrayed her, my life will be miserable. Please, let me go," the man pleaded desperately.

Ling Chen stared at the woman in the crowd, snorted lightly, and loosened his grip, saying, "Scram, and stop getting involved in illegal activities."

"Yes, yes!" The man, feeling as if he'd just been pardoned, wiped off his cold sweat and scurried out of the casino.

Once the man had left, Ling Chen did not hesitate and walked straight towards Lady Tong. At that moment, the mysterious Lady Tong was leaning against a gambling table, playing with chips in her hand, her eyes focused on the cards on the table, completely unaware of Ling Chen's approach.

"Lady Tong?"

Hearing the voice, Lady Tong turned her head, sized up Ling Chen, and frowned slightly, "Who are you?"

"Who I am is not important. What's important is I know who you are," Ling Chen stated lightly.

Now closer, Ling Chen could clearly see the features of Lady Tong. Around thirty, with a pretty face that still retained its charm, she must have been quite the beauty in her youth, only slightly marred now, and both her eyes and mouth bore signs of cosmetic surgery.

"You..."

"Where is the person?" Ling Chen cut off Lady Tong's words and demanded.

"Which person? I don't know what you're talking about. Get lost, don't interrupt my betting," Lady Tong said, retracting her gaze from Ling Chen and continuing to focus on the gambling table, ignoring him further.

Seeing this, Ling Chen's lips slightly curled, and his eyes narrowed slightly, a sharp light appearing.

"Lady Tong, I never hit women. However, today, for my friend, I am forced to make an exception."

As he finished speaking, without waiting for Lady Tong to react, Ling Chen grabbed her long hair, harshly pulled it back, and his robust arm stretched forward, forcefully locking her neck to prevent any resistance.

"Bastard, let go of me. Someone, come quickly!" In shock and anger, Lady Tong immediately yelled out.

Soon, more than twenty young men from the crowd hurried over, surrounding Ling Chen and Lady Tong, shouting angrily, "Let Lady Tong go now!"

Ling Chen sneered, "I can release her, but first, let her tell me where the person is." As he spoke, Ling Chen pulled out Wolf Kiss from his waist and gently slid its sharp point across Lady Tong's delicate skin, "Lady Tong, you'd better send those women back. Otherwise, I won't mind giving your pretty face a few more cuts."

"You... dare you, do you know who I am?"

"I'm not interested in your identity right now. You asked if I dare? How about we test it? I have never done plastic surgery on a woman, why not start practicing with you?" As he finished speaking, Ling Chen pressed his wrist down, and the sharp Wolf Kiss immediately landed on Lady Tong's smooth skin.

Feeling the sting on her face, Lady Tong panicked and hurriedly shouted, "Stop! Stop!"

"Then make the call right now, don't test my patience any further." Ling Chen's tone was slightly cold.

Lady Tong hurriedly took out her phone and dialed a number.

The phone connected, and a man's voice came from the other end, "Lady Tong, the goods have been delivered, I'm on my way back and will arrive shortly."

Hearing this, Lady Tong hung up the phone.

"What are you doing?"

"It's useless, the goods have already been shipped, and at this point, the ship has left the harbor and can't be called back until it docks tomorrow morning."

Ling Chen frowned and said, "Call and have the ship return."

"I advise you to give up. The guests have already started enjoying their goods, and even if the ship returns now, you cannot save them. How about this, I'll give you five hundred thousand, release me, and don't interfere in this matter anymore." Lady Tong proposed.

Ling Chen leaned close to her ear and said coldly, "Among those women is my friend. If anything happens to her, I will make you experience a fate worse than death."

As the words fell, Ling Chen clenched his teeth and pressed down hard with the hand holding Wolf Kiss. Instantly, a ten-centimeter-long wound, deep enough to expose the bone, was permanently left on Lady Tong's cheek, with blood gushing out like a fountain, quickly staining her collar red.

"No... don't..." Lady Tong screamed in horror, her hands tightly covering her right cheek, her lips pale and utterly bloodless.

"Remember, this is just the interest. You better pray that my friend is alright. Now, call and have the ship return, find a way to ensure my friend's safety."

Watching Ling Chen's blood-stained Wolf Kiss, Lady Tong shivered all over, daring not to utter another futile word, and hastily made a call to the ship's crew.

At this moment, a piercing siren sound approached from afar, entering the gambling den from outside.

"Not good! The police are coming."

"Everyone run!"

In an instant, the gamblers scattered like birds, and in the blink of an eye, the lively casino became desolately empty, leaving only a messy scene.

"Ling, what are you dazing about? Run fast, don't get caught by the police."

Wei Jun, who had just come out of the restroom, had no idea what had happened in the casino. He was originally relieving himself and hurriedly ran out without even zipping up upon hearing the sound of the police sirens.

"Don't worry, I was the one who called the police." Ling Chen said calmly.

The half-crouching Lady Tong, with a face full of resentment, looked at Ling Chen and asked through clenched teeth, "Who exactly are you? An undercover?"

"Not at all."

"You're not even a cop, and yet you dare interfere in our affairs. Do you know who I have behind my back?"

Ling Chen coldly said, "If my friend is harmed, in my eyes, both you and the people behind you are dead."