

## **The Beauty 491**

### Chapter 491: Funeral

"Are you sure?" Ling Chen's spirit lifted.

"I found an alias once used by Snake King. Just half an hour ago, this alias appeared at Beijing International Airport."

"He's also come to Beijing?" Ling Chen muttered to himself, "Could this be a coincidence... Fatso, I got it, thanks!"

After hanging up the phone, Ling Chen pondered for a moment, then stood up and walked to the window, dialing a number on his cellphone.

If Snake King has come for Nanrong Wanqing, this would be a perfect opportunity to capture him once and for all.

The next day.

At nine in the morning, Ling Chen drove with Nanrong Wanqing to a public cemetery in the suburbs of Beijing.

The sky was unkind today, drizzling, and the gloomy weather mirrored Ling Chen's somber, melancholic mood.

Entering the cemetery, Ling Chen held a black umbrella, walking quietly beside Nanrong Wanqing, his expression solemn. Soon, near a gravesite, stood several men in black suits. Leading them were Qiao Zhen, Han Bing, and Tang Yuan, positioned on either side, standing straight with raindrops hanging from their hair and faces.

"Take this."

Ling Chen handed the black umbrella to Nanrong Wanqing and walked over to Tang Yuan, silently staring at the freshly erected tombstone.

Looking at the two black-and-white photos on the tombstone, Ling Chen felt as if something was blocking his heart, making him unbearably uncomfortable.

"Salute!"

Following Han Bing's light shout, everyone neatly gave a military salute.

After the salute, Qiao Zhen took out two military medals from his pocket, placed them in front of the tombstone, and muttered, "Old Mu, rest assured, I will not let the murderer go unpunished. The blood debt must be repaid with blood."

Having said that, Qiao Zhen stepped back, turned to Ling Chen, and said, "I have other things to attend to, you stay and accompany them a bit longer."

"I will."

Tang Yuan patted Ling Chen on the shoulder, nodded at Nanrong Wanqing, and then left the cemetery with Qiao Zhen and the others.

After they left, Ling Chen took Nanrong Wanqing's hand, walked up to the tombstone, and pointing at the two black-and-white photos said, "This is Uncle Mu and Mrs. Chen. Though not related by blood, they were like family to me. I am grateful for their care over the years. In my heart, they have always been my closest people. I originally wanted to take you to meet them sometime, but alas, fate had other plans, and this tragedy happened."

Hearing Ling Chen's words, Nanrong Wanqing finally understood why he had brought her to attend the funeral; it was undoubtedly a recognition of her status.

Back in the car, Ling Chen drove Nanrong Wanqing straight back to the hotel. The death of the Mu couple was a huge blow to him. Although accustomed to life and death, it was the first time someone so close had passed away. Before his mood could clear, he wanted nothing more than to stay quiet and still.

In the afternoon.

Nanrong Wanqing greeted Ling Chen, then left the hotel accompanied by Zhong Wei and Liang Zhao Hui, driving to the Beijing branch office.

She had wanted Ling Chen to accompany them, but considering he had just gone through a life and death separation, Nanrong Wanqing hoped he would rest well, so she didn't ask him to come.

At that moment, the sky was still overcast with continuous cold wind howling. With the year-end approaching, the temperature in the north was becoming colder. The frail Nanrong Wanqing, dressed in a wool coat and wrapped in a scarf, walked into the company escorted by Zhong Wei.

At that time, across the street from the company, a modern sedan was parked. Inside the car, a middle-aged man held binoculars, watching Nanrong Wanqing's disappearing figure, his lips curling into a sinister smile. Then, he drove the car into the company's underground parking lot.

Two hours passed, and the annual summary meeting finally ended.

"Chairman, there is a company gala tonight, would you like to join us?" The branch manager keenly sent out an invitation.

"No, thank you." Feeling tired, Nanrong Wanqing rubbed her temples and politely refused, "I have other matters to attend to, maybe next time." After saying this, Nanrong Wanqing turned to Zhong Wei and said, "Let's go back to the hotel."

"Yes, Chairman." Zhong Wei nodded, and gave Liang Zhao Hui a look, signaling him to go get the car.

A few minutes later, a Mercedes sedan stopped at the company's entrance.

Zhong Wei, guarding beside Nanrong Wanqing, quickly walked to the rear seat of the car and opened the door. After Nanrong Wanqing got into the car, Zhong Wei closed the door and prepared to sit in the passenger seat.

Click!

But at this moment, a light noise suddenly came from the Mercedes.

Zhong Wei was slightly startled, pulled the car door, and found that it was locked and could not be opened.

Not good!

In an instant, Zhong Wei realized what was happening, hurriedly raised his elbow, trying to break the car window. However, before he could break the window, the Mercedes had already started and quickly rushed onto the road, disappearing at the intersection in a blink of an eye.

Zhong Wei hastily took out his cell phone and dialed Ling Chen's number.

"Hello! Ling Chen, the chairman has been kidnapped, and Liang Zhao Hui is missing too... Okay, I'll go look for him first." Saying this, Zhong Wei quickly ran towards the underground parking garage.

Soon after, in a corner of the underground parking garage, Zhong Wei found Liang Zhao Hui, who had suffered a severe head injury and had passed out. Fortunately, Liang Zhao Hui's injuries were not fatal, just bleeding a little.

Holding his wound, Liang Zhao Hui asked, "Captain Zhong, what should we do now?"

"Ling Chen told us not to panic, to go back and meet him at the hotel first."

At this moment, the escaped Mercedes slowly drove into an open-air parking lot in the city.

After parking the car, the driver in the front seat turned around, looked at Nanrong Wanqing in the back seat, and said with a cold smirk, "Finally caught you. You should remember who I am, right?"

Nanrong Wanqing stared directly at him, her expression cold, "I remember, Snake King. You are an assassin, why didn't you just kill me directly? Why bother bringing me here?"

"If it were before, I would have definitely killed you without hesitation, but I've changed my mind now. Before you die, I must retrieve something that belongs to me from you."

"What is it?"

Snake King picked up a document bag from the co-driver's seat, threw it into Nanrong Wanqing's hands, and said, "Everything I want is in here, you just need to sign it."

Hearing this, Nanrong Wanqing took out a few contracts from the document bag, glanced through them, then looked up at Snake King with slightly furrowed brows, "You want me to transfer the shares of Hongyu Group?"

"Hongyu Group was never yours to begin with; I'm merely taking back what belongs to me... no, to be precise, what belongs to my father. Is there anything wrong with that?"

Nanrong Wanqing casually threw the contracts onto the seat and said indifferently, "Sorry, I'm afraid I can't satisfy your request."

Snake King's expression turned cold, and he viciously said, "You better not test my patience, otherwise Nanrong Hao and Nanrong Yong will both die."

Unruffled, Nanrong Wanqing unwrapped her scarf and said indifferently, "I've told you, I can't satisfy your request, because I am not Nanrong Wanqing."

Chapter 492 Luring and Capturing the Snake King

Not Nanrong Wanqing?

Snake King looked stunned, his gaze suddenly drawn to a part of the other person's body. As he clearly saw the protruding part, his face changed dramatically, and he quickly pushed the car door open. But

before Snake King could run out of the car, the 'Nanrong Wanqing' sitting in the back seat had already wrapped a scarf around his neck, firmly restraining him in the driver's seat.

At the same time, the door of the Mercedes-Benz sedan was opened by someone from outside. Following that, Zhong Wei and Liang Zhao Hui pounced in like ferocious wolves, jointly overpowering Snake King and binding his hands with the ropes they carried.

Within the cramped driver's seat, no matter how skilled Snake King was, he had no chance to escape from the three men. Soon, he was subdued by Zhong Wei and others, thrown into the backseat where both Zhong Wei and 'Nanrong Wanqing' kept watch over him.

"Who exactly are you?" Snake King glared at 'Nanrong Wanqing', his teeth gritted as he asked.

The latter pointed at his Adam's apple and replied seriously: "Of course I am a man."

"Disguise Skills... Impressive!" Snake King snorted coldly. He saw the Adam's apple only after the other party removed the scarf and realized he had captured the wrong person. Unfortunately, his reaction was still a beat too slow to escape.

At that moment, 'Nanrong Wanqing' removed a thin, skin-like mask from his face and then took off the wig, revealing a masculine visage.

Seeing the true face of the other, Zhong Wei raised his thumb and praised with a smile: "Amazing, if Ling Chen hadn't alerted me in advance, I wouldn't have been able to distinguish between the real and fake."

The man before them was none other than Bai Huanjun, who had been missing for a long time.

Initially, Bai Huanjun was injured and it was Ling Chen who had saved his life, and also given him two million. Later, fulfilling his promise, Bai Huanjun settled his affairs and returned to East Sea City as soon as possible.

All along, Ling Chen had arranged for Bai Huanjun to stay near Nanrong Wanqing, secretly ensuring her safety. He would not show himself unless absolutely necessary.

Learning that Snake King had arrived in Beijing, Ling Chen decided to use trickery, having Bai Huanjun impersonate Nanrong Wanqing to capture Snake King's attention. Ling Chen had seen Bai Huanjun's Disguise Skills, which were incredibly lifelike, making it difficult for even acquaintances to discern the truth.

Of course, setting up this plan wasn't guaranteed to entice Snake King, Ling Chen could only try to create opportunities and lure Snake King into action. This was also the main reason he didn't accompany them. If he appeared beside Nanrong Wanqing, Snake King would likely be cautious and not dare to act rashly.

Twenty minutes later, the Mercedes-Benz sedan arrived at an abandoned warehouse in the suburbs.

Zhong Wei and Liang Zhao Hui escorted Snake King out of the car, then followed behind Bai Huanjun into the warehouse.

In the vast warehouse, thick dust covered everything, and there was a chair placed in the middle. Ling Chen stood with his hands behind his back, watching Zhong Wei's party approaching with a slight smile on his lips.

"Snake King, long time no see."

Snake King, with a cold face, silently watched Ling Chen, his icy and venomous gaze as if he wished he could carve Ling Chen up with a thousand cuts.

"Sit down!"

Zhong Wei uttered sharply, forcibly pushing Snake King into the chair, while Liang Zhao Hui immediately used zip ties to bind Snake King's hands and feet, rendering him immobile.

"Just kill me, why waste time," Snake King said coldly.

"Do you really want to die?"

"Since I dared to become an assassin, do you think I'd be afraid of death?"

Hearing this, Ling Chen gave a slight smile and turned to signal with his eyes to Zhong Wei and the other two. Getting the message, they turned and exited the warehouse.

After Zhong Wei and the others left, Ling Chen paced around Snake King and asked, "Should I call you Snake King or should I call you Nanrong Zhengqing?"

The moment the four characters of 'Nanrong Zhengqing' entered his ears, Snake King's ashen face instantly changed color. He violently raised his head, looking straight into Ling Chen's eyes, and asked with furrowed brows, "How do you know my true identity?"

"There are no walls in the world that can keep out the wind. Truth be told, I didn't expect you to be so ruthless. Nanrong Wanqing is your niece, related to you by blood, yet you have the heart to kill her."

"We've been brought down to this state by their family. Shouldn't I seek revenge?"

Ling Chen shook his head and said, "Whatever feud your father had with Nanrong Yong, it was between the older generation. Wanqing knows nothing of these affairs, why trouble her?"

"The debt should be repaid by Nanrong Yong and his son Nanrong Yuan. Unfortunately, Nanrong Yuan has been missing for many years. As the daughter of Nanrong Yuan, with her father gone, the debt should be repaid by her." Having said that, Snake King let out a cold laugh and continued, "I've already been more than fair to their family. According to my plan, I intended to kill Nanrong Wanqing and Nanrong Yong, leaving Nanrong Hao with a chance at life. Nanrong Hao is a male descendent of the Nanrong family, as long as he lives, the Nanrong family's line continues."

"Heh! By the sound of it, should I praise you for your mercy?" Ling Chen mocked.

Snake King replied coldly, "No matter what you say, I will not let my father die with his eyes closed." After saying that, he looked at Ling Chen and asked, "Do you even know what Nanrong Yong did to my father? If you don't, you're not qualified to judge me."

Ling Chen waved his hand and replied, "I'm not interested in the grudges of the older generation, it's none of my business. Moreover, you're right about one thing, I'm not qualified to judge your rights and wrongs. From your perspective, you may think you've done nothing wrong, but from where I stand, anyone who dares to harm a member of the Nanrong family is my enemy."

"Then why don't you kill me now?"

"No! I have no intention of killing you," Ling Chen said. "No matter what you've been through, that doesn't change the fact that you're a part of the Nanrong family."

Snake King asked with an unpleasant expression, "What do you want to do?"

"I'll take you back to East Sea City and let Nanrong Yong deal with you. The affairs of the Nanrong family should be settled by the Nanrong family themselves. I, an outsider, shouldn't intervene."

"Good, I'd like to ask him face to face why he treated my father that way back then."

After leaving the warehouse, Ling Chen looked at the three people, Zhong Wei and the others, waiting outside, and spoke, "Captain Zhong, you two follow me back."

"What about the assassin inside? Should we call the police?"

Ling Chen pointed at Bai Huanjun and said, "He will handle it, no need for you to worry." With that said, Ling Chen turned to Bai Huanjun, smiled slightly, and said, "I owe you this time. Thanks!"

"No need to be polite, I'd never go back on a promise."

Ling Chen nodded and instructed, "Find a way to bring him back to East Sea City, lock him up somewhere for now, and we'll discuss the rest when I'm back. Be careful on the way."

"Understood."

## Chapter 493 Visiting the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion

On the way back to the hotel, Ling Chen suddenly received a call from an unknown number.

The call connected, and Ling Chen greeted, only to hear a familiar voice on the other side: "Ling Chen, it's me."

"Zhou Jun?" Ling Chen recognized the voice and asked with a smile, "What made you think of calling me?"

"This time, it's on behalf of my old man; I specifically called you. Hey, are you free these days? Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion would like to invite you over as a guest and give you the reward we owe you."

"That might be a bit inconvenient; I'm in Beijing, maybe..."

"You're in Beijing?" Zhou Jun laughed loudly: "That really is a coincidence."

Ling Chen was slightly taken aback and said with a tone of surprise, "From what you're saying, could it be that the headquarters of Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion is in Beijing?"

Zhou Jun laughed and replied: "Where else did you think it was? Since you're in Beijing, there's no better day than today. Where are you? I'll come and pick you up."

Ling Chen thought for a moment and then told Zhou Jun the address of his hotel.

When Ling Chen arrived at the hotel, Zhou Jun was already waiting in the lobby for his arrival.

"Ling Chen, it's been a few days. How have you been?"

Although the two had not known each other for long, they had fought side by side, and both admired each other and deliberately befriended one another, thus their relationship was quite good.

"Just so-so, the usual."

"Let's go. The old man is waiting for you there so he doesn't end up calling to rush us."

Ling Chen nodded, gave a few instructions to Zhong Wei to ensure the safety of Nanrong Wanqing. Now that the Snake King was captured, Nanrong Wanqing's safety was temporarily secured even if Ling Chen was not by her side.

As they exited the hotel's main entrance, a silver Porsche was parked by the roadside; Zhou Jun pulled out his car keys and walked over.

Getting into the car, Ling Chen chuckled: "Does everyone in Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion have as much money as you?"

Zhou Jun pursed his lips and said, "I'm not bragging, but Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion never cares about money. We don't have salaries here, only bonuses. Adding together the bonuses from holidays, let's not exaggerate, but one million is guaranteed."

Ling Chen was somewhat surprised; he knew Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion was wealthy, but he didn't realize it was to this extent. But then again, considering Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion has a history of hundreds of years with profound heritage, it made sense they had accumulated substantial wealth.

After a drive of more than ten minutes, Zhou Jun drove the Porsche into an underground parking garage.

"Are we here?" Ling Chen looked at Zhou Jun, his face full of astonishment. He had thought the headquarters of Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion would be in a quiet place in the suburbs. Yet here he was, in the bustling center of Beijing, the most vibrant part of the city.

Zhou Jun laughed and retorted: "Where did you think the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion would be?"

Ling Chen touched his nose and said, "I thought it would be in a very secretive place."

"There's an old saying, 'The greatest secrets are hidden in plain sight'. The best way to avoid discovery is to blend in."

In the meantime, the two walked side by side into the parking garage's elevator.

This luxurious office building had sixty-six floors, and according to Zhou Jun, it was entirely funded by Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion and had been standing for about a decade now. The headquarters of Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion was located on the top floor of this luxurious office building, covering an area of more than 2,000 square meters, while the rest of the floors were rented out. Just from this rental income alone, the earnings were substantial.

Ding!

As the elevator doors opened, Ling Chen stepped out to see a spacious reception hall wherein several attractive young women in professional attire respectfully stood on both sides, their faces adorned with gentle smiles that made people feel very comfortable.

Under Zhou Jun's lead, Ling Chen passed through the reception hall and went straight into the lounge. Along the way, Ling Chen's eyes never rested, carefully observing the surrounding environment.

What amazed Ling Chen was that the headquarters of Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion weren't much different from a regular company; each employee had an individual cubicle, and all work was completed via computers, a uniformly modern setup. If Zhou Jun hadn't stressed on it several times, Ling Chen wouldn't have believed that this place was indeed Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion.

Upon reaching the lounge, Zhou Qi was seen holding a tea cup, waiting inside.

"Mr. Ling." Zhou Qi greeted with a smile, stood up, and approached Ling Chen with an extended hand: "Welcome to Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion."

"Elder Zhou." Ling Chen politely shook hands.

"Mr. Ling, as Zhou Jun probably told you, the main reason for inviting you here is to deliver the reward we promised you. Zhou Jun, go fetch the items."

"Alright!" Zhou Jun responded and left the lounge.

"Mr. Ling, please have a seat."

"Elder Zhou, no need to be so formal; I'm friends with Zhou Jun, just call me Ling Chen."

"That's fine." Zhou, smiling, nodded his head, then suddenly shifted the conversation: "Did you encounter any trouble on your way back last time?"

"Ran into a bit of minor trouble, but it wasn't a big deal."

"That's good. After you left, I knew the God Organization wouldn't give up easily, so I've been worried about your safety. Seeing that you're alright, I can rest easy now."

"Thank you for your concern, Elder Zhou." After saying this, Ling Chen couldn't help but ask: "Elder Zhou, is this place really the headquarters of Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion?" Although Zhou Jun had confirmed it several times, Ling Chen was still somewhat disbelieving.

"It is." Zhou Qi explained with a smile: "Previously, Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion was located in deep mountains and forests where transport and communication were very inconvenient. With the advancement of the time, the Pavilion Master decided to keep up with the times, abolishing old rules and giving Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion a complete makeover. Thus, we built this new building, serving as the headquarters. All of Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion's documents were uploaded to the server, and the originals are preserved at Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion's old site."

"The Pavilion Master of Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion..."

"Of course, the Pavilion Master resides in the old location; it's the foundation of Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion's centuries-old inheritance and can't just be abandoned. Also, that old site is entwined with many of Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion's secrets, so it must be guarded."

So that was the case!

Having heard Zhou Qi's explanation, Ling Chen finally understood. Zhou Jun wasn't wrong, but this place could only be considered the modern headquarters of Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion; the real main base was still at the original location.

He had thought he might be able to visit Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion to broaden his horizons, but it seemed there would be no chance now.

Lost in thought, Zhou Jun came in holding several exquisite wooden boxes.

"Ling Chen, these are all Heavenly Mechanism Pills; four top-quality Heavenly Mechanism Pills plus one ordinary Heavenly Mechanism Pill. Take care of them." Zhou Jun said while handing a tablet to Ling Chen.

"What's this for?" Ling Chen asked, puzzled.

Elder Zhou said: "Your reward includes an Internal Cultivation Method; the tablet contains a directory, browse through it first and see if there's anything you're interested in."

Hearing this, Ling Chen skimmed through it quickly, and his eyes widened more and more in amazement.

#### Chapter 494 Visiting Guo Liang (Part 1)

Within the tablet's directory, there were nearly a hundred different Internal Cultivation Methods, virtually encompassing those of every sect and school, which was truly astonishing.

For someone practicing martial arts, this was no less than a treasure trove. Ling Chen silently marveled; the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion truly deserved its reputation as a centuries-old power with such profound heritage, no wonder it was esteemed as the leader by all major sects.

"Ling Chen, have you made your choice yet?"

Hearing Zhou Qi's question, Ling Chen put down the tablet, looked at Zhou Qi, and said, "Elder Zhou, to be frank, I'm not particularly interested in these Internal Cultivation Methods."

He had already cultivated the Prajnaparamita Sutra; other Internal Cultivation Methods were simply superfluous for him and of no use. Moreover, the two sets of information given to him by the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion Master provided him with a deep understanding of the Prajnaparamita Sutra. Not to say that it was stronger than all other Internal Cultivation Methods, but at the very least it was no weaker than any of those listed in this catalog.

"As expected!" Zhou Qi said with a smile: "The Pavilion Master once mentioned to me that you might not choose an Internal Cultivation Method, and it seems he was quite accurate in his judgment. How about this, since you're not interested in these Internal Cultivation Methods, why don't you make a request? As long as it's reasonable, the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion won't refuse, and we'll consider it as compensation for your reward."

"This..." Ling Chen scratched his head, not sure what to request. After thinking for a moment, his eyes lit up, and he made up his mind.

"Elder Zhou, I know that the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion has powerful intelligence capabilities. Could you help me find someone?"

"That's not a problem, but I need to ask clearly first, who are you looking for?"

"Ling Kun." With that, Ling Chen took out his wallet from his pocket, fished out an old, yellowed photo, and handed it to Zhou Qi, saying, "This person, this is his photo from his youth, he should be around fifty years old now."

Zhou Qi scrutinized the photo and asked, "May I ask, what is your relationship with this man?"

"He's my father, and I haven't heard from him for many years. Elder Zhou, I wonder if the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion could fulfill my request?" Ling Chen's tone carried a hint of hope.

"We can." Zhou Qi nodded, "But I can't guarantee it one hundred percent."

"That's fine, do the best you can."

"In addition to this, the rewards from the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion also include a weapon personally forged by Master Guo Liang. When the time comes, contact Master Guo Liang yourself, explain your requirements, and he will forge a weapon for you according to your wishes."

"Alright."

Even if Zhou Qi hadn't mentioned it, Ling Chen would have sought out Guo Liang. The last time at the Heavenly Mechanism Great Ceremony, Guo Liang mentioned to him that there was an unknown secret hidden in the Tianling Blade, and Ling Chen was keen to get a clear explanation from Guo Liang.

"Elder Zhou." At this point, Ling Chen changed the subject and asked, "What has happened to Zhu Hong since you took him last time?"

"He's not dead. However, he will have to pay for his actions for the rest of his life."

Hearing this, Ling Chen tactfully refrained from asking further. Zhu Hong, having fallen into the hands of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, would likely not have an easy life ahead.

After some casual conversation, Ling Chen left the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion headquarters with Zhou Jun's company.

"Ling Chen, you're always welcome to visit when you have the chance. I spend most of my time in Beijing."

"Sure, I'll come to find you when I'm free."

Ling Chen waved his hand and watched as Zhou Jun drove off, then he turned and entered the hotel.

Back in his room, looking at the Heavenly Mechanism Pill inside the wooden box, Ling Chen's face showed a faint smile. Of all the rewards from the Heavenly Mechanism Great Ceremony, the most precious was undoubtedly the Heavenly Mechanism Pill, especially the four top-quality ones. If he were to put them out there, who knows how many people would be green with envy.

Having stored everything properly, Ling Chen headed directly to Nanrong Wanqing's guest room.

Upon entering, he saw Nanrong Wanqing had just finished a phone conference, sitting on the sofa resting.

"Tired?" Ling Chen walked behind Nanrong Wanqing, asking with concern, his hands on her shoulders, gently kneading, helping to ease her fatigue.

Nanrong Wanqing lifted her head, looking up at Ling Chen with the corners of her lips slightly raised, bearing a shallow smile, blissful and contented.

"There's another meeting tomorrow, if all goes well, we can go home the day after."

Ling Chen nodded and said, "No rush, you should rest well. I will take you to meet someone tonight."

Night fell.

After dinner, Ling Chen took Nanrong Wanqing out of the hotel, driving into the street.

After more than half an hour of driving, Ling Chen arrived at his destination, an ancient Siheyuan. This Siheyuan, situated deep within the alley, had a history of at least a hundred years, quiet and serene, making it a perfect place for retirement.

Ling Chen took Nanrong Wanqing by the hand to the entrance, and gently knocked on the door.

Thump, thump, thump!

Not long after, the vermilion gate opened from the inside, and a young man around twenty peeked out, scrutinizing Ling Chen and Nanrong Wanqing politely, saying, "Who do you wish to see?"

"Good day, I'm here to see Mr. Guo. Could you please let him know that Ling Chen has come to visit?"

"Ling Chen?" The young man's eyes lit up, his face brimming with an enthusiastic smile, said, "So you are Mr. Ling, please come in!" Saying so, the young man stepped aside to let Ling Chen and Nanrong Wanqing into the Siheyuan.

"You recognize me?" Ling Chen followed the young man, asking as they walked.

"My Master mentioned Mr. Ling to me, I heard that Mr. Ling is the champion of the new martial arts competition, so I remember it clearly."

As they talked, the three of them arrived at the main hall of the Siheyuan.

"Please take a seat. I will go and call my Master."

After the young man left, Nanrong Wanqing asked with curiosity, "Ling Chen, what was the competition he talked about just now?"

"Oh, nothing much, just martial artists challenging each other." Ling Chen casually replied.

Martial arts affairs were too extensive to explain in a moment. Nanrong Wanqing, unfamiliar with this circle, would not understand even if he explained.

In the middle of their chat, the silver-haired Guo Liang, supported by his disciple, came walking in from the outside with faltering steps.

"Mr. Guo!" Ling Chen promptly stood up, greeting politely.

Guo Liang laughed heartily, "Sit down, no need to be so formal here." With that, Guo Liang turned to look at Nanrong Wanqing, smiling kindly, "Ling Chen, who is this lady?"

"She's Nanrong Wanqing, my girlfriend."

"Very good." Guo Liang nodded, smiling, "Truly a match of talent and beauty."

Once everyone was seated, Guo Liang inquired, "Did you come to see me about making a weapon?"

"That's not urgent. My main purpose for visiting is to inquire about the secret of the Tianling Blade."

"I mentioned to you last time that the Tianling Blade was personally forged by my ancestors of the Guo Family. My ancestor was once entrusted to hide a secret within the weapon; as for what that secret is, probably no one knows except for my ancestor and that client."

#### Chapter 495 Visiting Guo Liang (Part 2)

"Mr. Guo, I have to be honest, ever since you mentioned this to me last time, I've repeatedly studied the Tianling Blade but didn't find anything. Additionally, I've scanned it with instruments, and there's nothing inside the blade either."

"I'm not clear on that," Guo Liang said. "The one thing I am sure of is that there's definitely a secret hidden within the Tianling Blade. As for where they've concealed it, that remains unknown. Ling Chen, the wisdom of the ancients far exceeds our imagination, you can't use common logic to speculate on their thinking."

At this point, Guo Liang stood up and said, "Come, let me take you on a tour."

Leaving the hall, Ling Chen and Nanrong Wanqing followed Guo Liang into a room next door locked with a large padlock.

As they entered, Ling Chen saw the room neatly arranged with more than ten kinds of tools: Furnaces, bellows, large anvils, and many hammers of various sizes—all the forging tools needed in ancient times for ironworking were there.

"These tools are all inherited from the Guo Family ancestors; they've been here for hundreds of years, always kept dust-covered in this place. That Tianling Blade was forged with these tools," introduced Guo Liang.

Ling Chen asked with interest, "Mr. Guo, may I take a look around?"

"Of course, no problem."

With Guo Liang's permission, Ling Chen walked around the room, looking here and there, occasionally touching things with his hands. Suddenly, he noticed in the corner of the room, there was a pile of rusty scrap iron sheets. These sheets were not ordinary, each one incredibly thin and etched with different shapes and lines, looking quite bizarre.

"Mr. Guo, what are these used for?" Ling Chen asked.

"These are what my ancestors left behind. According to Guo Family records, our ancestors were not only skilled at forging weapons but also enjoyed engraving, especially micro-engraving, such as carving text and pictures on grains of rice; it was among his hobbies. Those iron scraps you see were used for practice."

Skilled at engraving?

At these words, Ling Chen's heart stirred, as if he had thought of something, and a flash of brightness passed through his eyes. However, he quickly concealed that flash.

After the visit to the old tools, Ling Chen and Nanrong Wanqing followed Guo Liang back to the hall.

After discussing the weapons that Ling Chen wanted to forge, it was already half-past nine in the evening. Seeing that it was getting late, Ling Chen, not wanting to disturb Mr. Guo's rest, took his leave and stated that he would visit again when he was free.

Upon leaving the Siheyuan, Ling Chen seemed unable to wait. The journey that usually took over half an hour was completed in less than twenty minutes back to the hotel.

Back in the room, seeing the busy Ling Chen, Nanrong Wanqing asked curiously, "What are you doing?"

Ling Chen cracked a smile and said mysteriously, "You'll know soon."

While talking, he laid a piece of white paper flat on the table and placed the ink he had just bought from the roadside next to the paper. After everything was ready, he took out the Tianling Blade, evenly coated its surface with ink, especially on the areas engraved with patterns.

With the application complete, Ling Chen placed the Tianling Blade on the white paper and gently rolled it. Soon after, tiny characters began to appear on the paper.

Indeed!

Ling Chen was excited. It looked like his guess had been correct—the secrets of the Tianling Blade were all hidden here. It was fortunate he had visited Mr. Guo's home, otherwise, he never would have thought of this method.

Looking at the hundreds of characters revealing themselves on the paper, Ling Chen immediately felt a headache coming on. These characters were smaller than flies, ancient text, and the ink made the script rather blurry, making it difficult to discern the content.

"Wanqing, come take a look."

Nanrong Wanqing leaned over the paper and studied it carefully, then shook her head and said, "The handwriting is too unclear."

"Then never mind."

Since he had found the secret of the Tianling Blade, he only needed to decipher these characters. When he returned to East Sea City, he would have Hu Fei use instruments to scan these characters.

...

After staying in Beijing for another two days, waiting for Nanrong Wanqing's conference to end, the group took a private plane back to East Sea City.

After resting at home for a day, life returned to normal.

That day.

After dropping Nanrong Wanqing off at the Hongyu Group headquarters, Ling Chen drove back to Wealthy Manor.

He arrived outside of Nanrong Yong's study, knocked gently on the door, and after hearing a response, he pushed the door open and went in.

Inside the study, Nanrong Yong was standing in front of a writing desk, his hand brandishing a brush, practicing calligraphy on rice paper.

Seeing Ling Chen come in, Nanrong Yong put down his brush and asked with a smile, "Weren't you accompanying Wanqing to the company?"

"Elder, I have something to discuss with you."

"Sit down and talk."

After sitting down, Ling Chen cleared his throat and said, "Elder, when you asked me to investigate Nanrong Gang's matter, although results have been found, the situation is not as simple as we imagined. Nanrong Gang is dead, but he has a son."

Hearing this, Nanrong Yong's expression changed slightly, and he asked eagerly, "Are you sure?"

Ling Chen nodded and said, "Elder, do you remember the assassin Snake King who attempted to assassinate Wanqing a few months ago? He is Nanrong Gang's son, Nanrong Zhengqing."

Nanrong Yong was stunned, his face turning red with rage, his eyes fiery as he said sternly, "Why would he attack his own niece so viciously?"

"According to him, he did it purely for revenge."

"Revenge?" Nanrong Yong snorted coldly. "Against whom, me? If he wants revenge, he should come at me directly. Why involve Wanqing? He..." Before he finished his sentence, Nanrong Yong suddenly stopped and looked at Ling Chen. "You said you heard it from him, have you seen him?"

"Not only have I seen him, two days ago in Beijing, he intended to harm Wanqing again, but he was captured by me and is now imprisoned in East Sea City. Elder, this is a feud within the Nanrong Family, so I wanted to ask for your opinion on what to do."

Nanrong Yong pondered for a moment, then said, "First, take me to see him."

"Alright."

Leaving the Nanrong Family home, Ling Chen drove Nanrong Yong to an abandoned factory.

As they got out of the car, they met Bai Huanjun coming towards them.

"How is he doing?"

"Still quite meek."

"You wait outside; we'll go talk to him."

Inside the factory, they saw Snake King tied to a chair, his hands and feet restrained, with fast-food containers and water bottles scattered around.

Perhaps hearing the footsteps of two people behind him, Snake King turned his head, his fierce eyes immediately locked onto Nanrong Yong.

Nanrong Yong looked at Snake King and asked, "So you're my brother's son?"

"Shut up!" Snake King said coldly. "You're not worthy to call my father 'brother'."

Chapter 496 Nanrong's Past

Nanrong Yong was completely indifferent to the Snake King's rage, saying lightly, "He is my elder brother, a fact that can't be changed by anyone. No matter how you deny it, you cannot negate our blood relationship."

He paused for a moment, not waiting for the Snake King to speak, Nanrong Yong continued, "Over the years, I have always thought that it was your father who secretly hired an assassin, intending to harm the Nanrong Family, but what I didn't expect was that he had long passed away, nor did I expect that he would have a son. Wanqing is your niece, how could you bear to have her killed?"

The Snake King sneered, "Why don't you ask yourself why you treated my father so cruelly back then? I'm merely repaying tooth for tooth, an eye for an eye."

Nanrong Yong shook his head and said, "I think you've misunderstood; I have never done anything to wrong your father. If anyone is to blame, it's your father himself. His downfall was entirely of his own making. Unfortunately, he neither realized nor repented, but instead blamed everyone else entirely, never reflecting on whether he had done anything wrong."

"Shut your mouth!" the Snake King said coldly, angrily shouting, "Don't you slander my father!"

"I am merely stating the facts, not a single word of falsehood. If you don't believe me, there's nothing I can do. My father, who is also your grandfather, had some reputation locally. When your father and I grew up, the old man gave each of us a substantial amount of funds to start our own businesses. In addition, he set a rule that whoever could create the most wealth in the shortest amount of time would inherit the position of Family Head of the Nanrong Family."

"Your father was capable, but he was too eager for quick success and easily trusted others. In less than half a year, the funds he had were almost gone, either lost in failed investments or swindled by others. At the time, I took the money and contracted a pier. Although the profit wasn't much, it was at least steady. Your father, as the eldest son, couldn't bear to lose face in front of the old man, so he turned to me, hoping I could help him. Out of brotherly love, I gave him all my profits from the past six months, hoping he could start over."

"Regrettably, your father couldn't change his impatient nature, always looking to make the biggest profit with the least money. Such businesses did exist, but they were all illegal activities. Later, under the guise of transportation, your father used my port for smuggling, and not only that, he also started to traffic drugs through the cargo ships. By the time I found out about this, it was too late; no matter how much I tried to dissuade him, he wouldn't listen. In the end, I had no choice, not wanting the reputation of the Nanrong Family to be tarnished by his actions, so I secretly informed the old man, telling him everything your father had done."

"After learning of this, the old man was uncontrollably furious, and he personally reported it to the police. Your father was imprisoned for five years because of this. For this matter, your father utterly hated me and the old man, believing that we were the ones who had wronged him. Especially me—he thought I was jealous of him, afraid that he would take the position of Family Head from me, so I snitched to the old man and even instigated him to report to the police. It's undeniable that I am partly to blame for not considering the potential consequences. But most of the responsibility still lies with your father. If it hadn't been for his delving into the illegal business, none of this would have happened."

"Actually, your father didn't know that with the crimes he had committed at the time, he was facing at least twenty years. It was the old man and myself who ran about asking for favors, which reduced his sentence to five years. After he was released from prison, he didn't even enter his own home but left East Sea City immediately. Since then, I never saw your father again. Even when the old man passed away, he didn't come back to see him one last time."

"I know your father hated me, but I didn't expect him to pass that hatred onto you. Ling Chen, the cycle of vengeance has no end—yes, I am responsible for what happened back then, but I have no regrets. If your father had continued down that path, once his crimes came to light, he would not merely face imprisonment, but execution. I don't expect you to understand, but I hope you can see the truth clearly and not be blinded by your father's selfish hatred."

After hearing Nanrong Yong's words, the Snake King fell into silence.

After a while, he finally spoke, "My father is dead, there can be no verification. How do I know what you're saying is true?"

"I really have no proof, I just want you to know, no matter what happens, he will always be his elder brother, and you are my nephew, people of the Nanrong Family will never turn on each other."

With that said, Nanrong Yong looked at Ling Chen and said, "Untie him."

"Master..."

"Let him go. I've said everything I needed to say. If he's still deluded, still determined to take revenge for his father, there's nothing I can do." As he spoke, Nanrong Yong paused, then turned to the Snake King and said, "If you still wish to take revenge, just come at me, don't go after Wanqing anymore. She knows nothing about the past. I only hope that after I die, the grudges between our two families can finally end."

Ling Chen silently untied the bindings around the Snake King, then stood beside Nanrong Yong, vigilantly watching the Snake King in case he intended any harm to Nanrong Yong.

The Snake King stood up, glanced at Ling Chen, and asked, "Do you have a cell phone I could use?"

Without much thought, Ling Chen took out his phone and threw it to the Snake King. The Snake King then walked to the other end of the warehouse, dialed a number, and was seen quietly talking to someone.

Several minutes later, the Snake King returned to Ling Chen and Nanrong Yong with an expressionless face, saying, "I believe what you just said."

Hearing this, Ling Chen and Nanrong Yong looked at each other, puzzled by the sudden shift in the Snake King's attitude.

"I just spoke to my mother on the phone and asked her about my father's past. What she told me was much the same as what you said. My mother was pregnant with me when my father divorced her, and

then he left the country. Shortly after I was born, my mother remarried. All this time, I was led to believe that my stepfather was my biological father until later when I found an old photo while going through my mother's belongings, and then I learned who my real father was. Perhaps for my sake, my mother never spoke ill of him; whenever she mentioned him, she praised his good qualities, and I never had any reason to doubt her."

"One year, by sheer coincidence, I met someone and entered the profession of an assassin. Once I had enough ability, I started looking for my father's whereabouts. Persistence pays off. After three years, I finally found him. Unfortunately, by that time, he was gravely ill and near death. I stayed with him for three days until he died. While he was alive, he told me a lot about the Nanrong Family. He said that it was because of you that he ended up in such a hopeless situation, that you ruined him. Thus, I vowed over his corpse that I would avenge him."

Chapter 497 Elder Cousin Brother

"You're right, my father truly was a selfish man. If it weren't for you telling me the truth, I would probably still be in the dark, deceived and used by my father."

Nanrong Yong sighed and said, "Regardless, he is your father after all. Besides, he's already gone. There's no need to hold a grudge against him anymore."

Snake King nodded, about to say something. But at that moment, his expression abruptly changed, and he said in a deep voice, "Not good!"

...

Hongyu Group headquarters.

Nanrong Wanqing handed a document to Wang Lan and instructed, "Hurry and deliver this to Manager Chen."

"Yes, Chairman."

Leaving the office, Wang Lan was about to enter the elevator, but then she heard her cellphone ring in her pocket. She took it out, and a blissful smile instantly bloomed on her face when she saw the caller ID. She quickly answered the call.

"Hello! Calling me during work hours, be careful that your manager doesn't find out and dock your pay... No, the Chairman asked me to deliver a document downstairs... Okay, then wait for me, I'll be over soon."

A few minutes later.

The elevator doors opened, and Wang Lan returned to the office, followed by a young man—it was Ji Beizhao.

"Beizhao, why do you insist on speaking with the Chairman in person, is it something I cannot convey?" Wang Lan asked curiously.

Ji Beizhao spoke with a grave tone, "This matter is of great importance; I'd better tell her myself."

As they spoke, the two arrived at the door to the Chairman's office.

Knock, knock, knock!

Hearing the knock, Nanrong Wanqing, who was dealing with documents at her desk, looked up and said, "Come in!"

With the office door pushed open, Wang Lan walked in with Ji Beizhao following closely behind. Seeing the arrivals, Nanrong Wanqing put down her work and asked Wang Lan, "Who is this?"

"Chairman, his name is Ji Beizhao, an employee from the marketing department. He says he has something important to report to you."

Hearing this, Nanrong Wanqing scrutinized Ji Beizhao and said indifferently, "You should be clear about the company's policies. I don't meet with staff below the Manager level, nor should employees bypass their superiors to report directly, unless there's an exceptional situation. Tell me, what's the important matter?"

Ji Beizhao briskly walked to the desk and placed the folder he was carrying on it.

"Chairman, please take a look at this first."

Nanrong Wanqing nodded slightly, ready to open the folder to review it. But at this moment, the cellphone by the computer suddenly rang, showing Ling Chen's number on the caller ID.

"Wait a moment," said Nanrong Wanqing to Ji Beizhao, gesturing with her hand as she picked up the phone. However, before she could answer the call, Ji Beizhao, who stood in front of the desk, suddenly lunged forward without a word, smacking the phone out of her hand to the ground.

His unexpected action stunned Nanrong Wanqing momentarily. Behind her, Wang Lan's face changed dramatically; she did not expect her boyfriend to act so boldly and out of line.

"Beizhao, what are you..."

Before she could finish, Ji Beizhao let out a cold sneer, his eyes glinting menacingly as he leaped over the desk to land beside Nanrong Wanqing. Immediately after, he reached to his waist, and a sharp dagger was swiftly drawn, pressed against Nanrong Wanqing's delicate neck.

Seeing this scene, Wang Lan's face turned ashen, her voice shaking as she said, "Be... Beizhao, what... what are you doing?"

"Shut up!" Ji Beizhao shouted coldly.

Nanrong Wanqing lifted her head, looking straight at Ji Beizhao with a calm demeanor, "Are you an Assassin?"

"Assassin? If I were an assassin, you'd be dead by now."

"So what do you want?"

"It's simple. Prepare a contract for me to transfer Hongyu Group's shares to me."

"You think that's possible?" Nanrong Wanqing spoke, "Even if I agree, I don't have the authority. The shares of Hongyu Group aren't in my hands; they're all under my grandfather's name."

Ji Beizhao frowned and was about to speak. However, at that moment, there was a 'bang', and the office door was kicked open from the outside. Immediately, Zhong Wei and others rushed in, shouting, "Ji Beizhao, release the Chairman at once."

Seeing Zhong Wei and his people closing in, Ji Beizhao's expression shifted slightly, and he hastily shouted, "Don't come any closer, take one more step, and I'll kill her right away."

As Ji Beizhao held the dagger tightly against Nanrong Wanqing's neck, Zhong Wei immediately spread his arms, signaling the others not to make any rash moves. Then, he took out his cellphone from his pocket, dialed a number, and put it on speaker.

Du-du...

The phone rang a few times before quickly being picked up, and a familiar voice followed, "Beizhao, stop this now, don't continue making mistakes."

"Ling Chen?" Ji Beizhao laughed coldly, "It's too late for me to stop now, there's no turning back."

"Beizhao, stop it, won't you listen to me anymore?"

As a voice full of magnetism emanated from the phone, Ji Beizhao froze, incredulously saying, "Dad, you... you're still alive, I thought you..."

"Don't worry, I'm fine. Listen to Ling Chen and release Nanrong Wanqing. We were wrong to blame them for that incident."

Hearing this, Ji Beizhao pleaded, "But..."

"No buts. Release her now, won't you even listen to me?"

Ji Beizhao hesitated for a moment, his eyes flickering as he looked at Nanrong Wanqing. After a while, he stepped back and threw the dagger to the ground.

Seeing this, Zhong Wei and Liang Zhao Hui rushed forward, subduing Ji Beizhao who had given up resisting.

"Beizhao..."

Watching Ji Beizhao being led away, Wang Lan's color was drained from her face, and she mumbled as if she couldn't believe what had just unfolded.

"I'm sorry," Ji Beizhao said softly, his eyes filled with remorse.

By the time Ji Beizhao was taken away, it hadn't been twenty minutes before Ling Chen and Nanrong Yong hurried back to the Hongyu Group headquarters.

"Wanqing, are you alright?" Ling Chen rushed to the Chairman's office, deeply concerned.

"I'm fine. Ling Chen, who was that Ji Beizhao just now?"

"He is..."

"He's your cousin," Lian Zhao Hui cut in before Ling Chen could finish.

"Cousin?" Nanrong Wanqing was taken aback, asking in confusion, "When did I get a cousin?"

Nanrong Yong sighed softly, and said with melancholy, "It's a long story that dates back to my younger days."

"Grandfather, Wanqing, you guys talk, I will go down to check on Beizhao."

As Ling Chen turned to leave, Nanrong Yong quickly called out to him, saying, "Ling Chen, he was just misled and didn't truly mean to target the Nanrong Family. I hope you can help."

Ling Chen nodded and said, "Grandfather, don't worry, I know what to do."

Leaving the office, Ling Chen took the elevator straight to the security department.

#### Chapter 498 Thawing Former Resentments

In the security department's reception room, Ji Beizhao sat quietly on a chair, with Zhong Wei and Liang Zhao Hui standing guard on either side of him, watching him closely to prevent escape.

Seeing Ling Chen enter, Zhong Wei nodded in greeting and asked, "Do you want me to call the police?"

"No need," Ling Chen said. "Captain Zhong, you two step out for a bit, I have something to discuss with him alone."

"Alright, we'll be outside if you need us." With that, Zhong Wei and Liang Zhao Hui stepped out of the reception room.

Once they were gone, Ling Chen pulled up a chair and placed it in front of Ji Beizhao, saying, "I know all about you. To be honest, you played your part well, even I was fooled. If not because of your father, you probably wouldn't have exposed your own identity."

Ji Beizhao spoke up, "A few days ago in Beijing, he contacted me by phone, saying he was ready to make his move, but then I heard nothing for days. At that time, I knew something had happened to him."

"So, you decided to go all in," Ling Chen shook his head and commented, "Lucky for you, your father understood your nature, knew you wouldn't just give up; otherwise, you could have caused a great disaster."

"Enough with the nonsense. Just get to the point and tell me how you plan to deal with me."

"Based on your actions, I should turn you over to the police. However, the Nanrong Family has decided to let bygones be bygones, out of consideration for past relations, and will not further pursue your wrongdoings." With that, Ling Chen pointed to the door of the reception room and said, "Go on, your father is waiting for you outside. Remember, don't come around to disturb the Nanrong Family's life again."

Hearing this, Ji Beizhao gave Ling Chen a deep look, and then, without a word, stood up and walked straight out.

Watching Ji Beizhao's silhouette disappear at the door, Ling Chen let out a sigh of relief to himself—finally, it was over. It was a good thing that Snake King was sensible and had stopped Ji Beizhao in time; otherwise, with such a person lurking nearby, who knows what could have happened.

Returning to the chairman's office, Nanrong Yong and Nanrong Wanqing were still talking. From the shocked expression on Nanrong Wanqing's face, it was clear she had come to understand the ins and outs of the affair.

"Ling Chen, where is Ji Beizhao?" Nanrong Yong asked.

"I let him go."

Nanrong Yong nodded and said, "Let the past be the past. The Nanrong Family hasn't suffered any loss, and it's best if this matter is considered an internal conflict within the Nanrong Family and not publicized."

During the conversation, a gentle knock sounded at the door. After receiving Nanrong Wanqing's permission, Wang Lan entered and handed a resignation letter to Nanrong Wanqing, her eyes red as she said, "Chairman, I'm sorry."

"What are you doing?"

"It's all my fault," said Wang Lan ashamedly. "If I hadn't broken the rules and brought him up here, you wouldn't have been put in danger."

"This has nothing to do with you; don't take it to heart. Besides, you were used by him, it's not your fault," Ling Chen comforted.

Nanrong Wanqing echoed, "Ling Chen is right, I don't blame you, and I won't accept this letter of resignation. You go back and rest for a few days, and come back to work once you feel better."

Holding back her tears, Wang Lan gratefully said, "Thank you, Chairman!"

...

Night fell.

After finishing work and having dinner with Nanrong Wanqing at home, Ling Chen was ready to head to the bedroom for a bath and relax his body.

But upon entering the room, he saw Liu Kun and Hu Fei coming in from outside.

Seeing Hu Fei, Ling Chen was momentarily startled and immediately knew the reason for his visit. After thanking Liu Kun, he quickly pulled Hu Fei into his own room.

"Chubby, have you cracked it?"

Hu Fei put down his backpack, took out the Tianling Blade, and handed a piece of A4 paper filled with content to Ling Chen, saying, "I've scanned the text on it, it's all in classical Chinese, and given your level of education, I reckon you wouldn't understand, so I had someone translate it for you."

Without heeding Hu Fei's teasing, Ling Chen eagerly took the A4 paper and read it intently.

The ancient text engraved on the Tianling Blade was hundreds of words long, translating into over a thousand words, filling the entire A4 paper.

After reading the content on the paper, Ling Chen sat on the bed, staring blankly at the floor, his expression vacant for a long while without coming back to his senses.

"Ling Chen, Ling Chen!"

Hu Fei waved his hand in front of Ling Chen and, seeing no response, patted his shoulder, finally rousing him.

"What are you dazing off about?"

Ling Chen looked up, holding the piece of paper in his hand and asked Hu Fei, "Did you see the content on this?"

"Nonsense, how could someone as curious as me not read it? But, though I read it, I didn't understand it, I don't know what it means. Hey! Can you explain it to me?"

"Forget it." Ling Chen, forgoing his usual light-hearted demeanor, said seriously, "Besides you, has anyone else seen this?"

"The person responsible for the translation?" Hu Fei waved his hand, "Don't worry about that, I'm always careful with my work. I was afraid of the content getting out, so I split it up and had several different people translate it. Except for you and me, no one knows the full content."

"That's good then." Ling Chen nodded, got up, took out a lighter from the drawer, and burned the A4 paper completely.

"Chubby, do me a favor, grind off all the text engraved on the Tianling Blade, don't leave a single word."

"Exactly what secret do these texts hold, and also, who is the Ling Gengqiu mentioned there?" asked Hu Fei, curious.

"Don't ask. You wouldn't understand even if I told you."

Seeing Ling Chen reluctant to say more, Hu Fei didn't bother to inquire further. After packing up, he left the Nanrong's.

Once Hu Fei was gone, Ling Chen sat alone in the bedroom, staring at the ashes remaining in the trash can, frowning to himself. Never had he imagined that the Tianling Blade would hold such earth-shattering secrets.

Moreover, this secret was related to Ling Gengqiu from hundreds of years ago.

Initially, from the materials given to him by the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion Master, Ling Chen had learned about Ling Gengqiu's life, including the origins of the Prajnaparamita Sutra. He had always thought Ling Gengqiu was just a fleeting genius in the martial world, never expecting the man's identity to be so complex.

At this moment, all Ling Chen wanted was to find his father as soon as possible, or meet with the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion Master, to understand the full story.

During his contemplation, the bedroom door was pushed open by Nanrong Wanqing.

Seeing Ling Chen sitting on the bed, lost in thought, Nanrong Wanqing smiled faintly and asked, "What are you thinking about?"

"Nothing."

"Take this, answer the phone first."

Seeing the phone that Nanrong Wanqing handed him, Ling Chen asked, "Who's calling?"

"Su Lin."

A smile spread across Ling Chen's face—it was that girl.

#### Chapter 499 Ling Family Secrets

Su Lin had been out for an apprenticeship for over half a month now; with that girl not at home, the home felt much colder than usual, and Ling Chen rather missed her. But that girl knew her own mobile number, why didn't she just call him directly instead of bothering Nanrong Wanqing?

Picking up the phone, Ling Chen answered with a hello, only to hear Su Lin's sweet voice from the other end of the phone: "Future brother-in-law, I'm not at home. Are you and Wanqing enjoying your time alone together?"

"That we are." Ling Chen replied with a laugh: "If it were up to me, you wouldn't come back and disturb us at all."

Hearing this, Nanrong Wanqing gave him a reproachful look.

"You wish. Let me tell you, this young lady will be back in a month. You'd better cherish the time you have alone with Wanqing, and don't blame me when I interrupt your duo's world."

"Alright, just be safe out there."

After a bit of idle chat, Su Lin seemed to have something come up suddenly on her end and had to hang up the phone.

"Su Lin said she'll come back in a month."

"That's just around Chinese New Year; it's time to come home."

Chinese New Year!

A thought struck Ling Chen, had it not been for Nanrong Wanqing's reminder, he would have almost forgotten about it. Since his childhood, he had never really had a concept of celebrating the New Year. When he lived with his father, festivals were just like any other day, with simple meals and no distinctions. After joining Ghost, he was always performing tasks outside, never getting the chance to enjoy the festivities.

Involuntarily, Ling Chen found himself looking forward to the upcoming festival.

After taking a bath, Ling Chen watched an entertainment program in the living room with Nanrong Wanqing. At ten o'clock, after escorting a sleepy Nanrong Wanqing back to her room, Ling Chen changed into fresh clothes and left the Nanrong house alone, wandering in the garden of Wealthy Manor.

The night was as dark as ink, decorated with stars.

Ling Chen strolled on the flagstone path, his thoughts drifting to recent events, and a bitter smile appeared on his well-defined face.

He had thought that after leaving Ghost, he could wave goodbye to his past life and return to normalcy, but some matters are hard to disentangle once involved. For him, leading an ordinary life had almost become a luxury.

Moreover, the circumstances he was facing now plunged him into profound confusion, as if everything were veiled in layers of fog, obscuring the truth.

While wandering, Ling Chen's gaze suddenly landed on a pavilion in the garden.

Sitting with his back to a stone bench in the pavilion was a man. Due to the dense night, only his slender silhouette and dense hair were faintly visible, his simple suit outlined his form, and according to Ling Chen's judgment, the man appeared to be in his forties or fifties.

The man sat alone in the pavilion, with a jug of wine and two cups on the stone table, pouring and drinking by himself as if he hadn't noticed Ling Chen's presence.

Ling Chen looked twice and guessed that the man was probably brooding over some troubles, thus drinking alone here. Thinking it over, Ling Chen decided to take a detour to avoid disturbing him.

"Since you're here, why not join me for a drink?"

The voice came from the pavilion. Before Ling Chen could react, a whooshing sound suddenly emerged.

Ling Chen focused his eyes, his brows slightly raised; he quickly reached out and caught the incoming object. Looking at the wine cup in his hand, its contents not spilled, Ling Chen's eyes narrowed with interest, sizing up the man in the pavilion.

"Are you specifically waiting for me here?"

"Is that important?" the man countered.

"If you want to drink with me, at least tell me who you are."

"These things are not important." The man in the suit said indifferently: "What's important is that I can answer the doubts in your heart."

"How do you know I have doubts?"

"Because I know you, whether it's your time with Ghost or the things you've experienced in East Sea City, I know it all clear and clear. I believe you must have many questions in your mind. Since you left Ghost, you've been living aimlessly, clueless about which direction to take."

Ling Chen said with a smirk, "Do you know then?"

"Your father once asked me to secretly watch over you and ensure your safety. His intentions were clear, hoping that after you left Ghost, you could live an ordinary human life, carefree for the rest of your life. Unfortunately, fate does not always follow one's wishes, and the more you try to avoid some things, the harder it is to stop them. Many troubles will find you even if you do not seek them out."

Hearing this, Ling Chen's expression changed slightly, and he quickly walked towards the pavilion. However, before he could get close, the man in the suit waved his large hand, and the stone bench on the ground immediately flew up, landing in front of Ling Chen, blocking his path.

"Don't come closer, I do not wish to reveal my identity."

Ling Chen stepped back two steps, impatiently asking, "Do you know my father?"

"Of course. I came to find you at his behest. He knows you've been using Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion's intelligence capabilities to find him, and due to some reasons, he cannot show himself right now, so he had me meet you instead. You can ask whatever questions you have, and I will try my best to answer them."

Ling Chen paused for a moment and said, "Since you know my father, then you should be aware of my origin and background."

"You mean... the Ling Family?" Upon hearing this, the man in the suit chuckled, adding, "Your father had predicted you would be curious about your own ancestry. Since you were young back then, he didn't tell you, but now that you are an adult, it's time to tell you the truth."

"You were born into the Ling Family, a grand family that has been passed down for hundreds of years, with dozens of siblings. You and your father both belong to a collateral branch of the Ling Family, which for hundreds of years, has only had a single descendant per generation. Due to the actions of several of your ancestors, your line has not been well-liked in the Ling Family, often neglected. However, given that you both have the blood of the Ling Family, they have not done anything too outrageous to you or your father, until an incident more than a decade ago that completely severed relations. After that incident, your father took you and left the Ling Family, moving far away."

After listening to the man's words, Ling Chen couldn't help but say, "Can you clarify? You're telling me so much it's like you're saying nothing."

"You must already know about Ling Gengqiu."

"I know about his deeds, all that happened hundreds of years ago."

"Correct, but what you do not know is that Ling Gengqiu is actually your ancestor."

"What?"

Hearing this, Ling Chen was completely shocked.

"Back then, Ling Gengqiu was secretly poisoned by his wife, which led him to become a monk. After that, Ling Gengqiu's wife sent his only son to the Ling Family, then quietly disappeared, leaving no trace. Later, it was the Ling Family who raised Ling Gengqiu's child, which led to your line's existence."

Chapter 500 Blacklist

So that's how it is!

Ling Chen nodded to himself. Just a few days ago, he was evaluating Ling Gengqiu as a winner in life, having toyed with so many women throughout his days. Unexpectedly, he turned out to be his own ancestor, a transformation that was truly bewildering.

"What happened afterwards?"

"When Ling Gengqiu was alive, due to his indiscretions, he brought great shame to the Ling Family and caused a lot of trouble, which severely impacted them. Consequently, the Ling Family took a dim view of his descendants. Imagine, a child who's lost his parents and is all alone, growing up in such an environment, surrounded by cold eyes and subjected to people's scorn daily. If you were in his shoes, how long do you think you could endure? Therefore, it wasn't easy for our lineage... your lineage to survive."

After a pause, the man in the suit continued: "Although the Ling Family has a martial arts heritage, as times progressed, the martial arts tradition gradually declined, and the Ling Family decided to abandon martial arts in favor of business. Fortunately, with their vast family fortune and rich heritage, it took them less than fifty years to build a business empire, becoming the wealthiest in the south, at the pinnacle of their power."

"No wonder I didn't see any members of the Ling Family at the Heavenly Mechanism Great Ceremony this time."

"No, you're wrong. It's not that they don't participate, but that they disdain to do so. Even though the Ling Family has shifted from martial arts to business, they haven't completely forsaken martial arts. Also, the Heavenly Mechanism Great Ceremony is just a grand event for the masters on the Dragon and Tiger List."

Hearing this, Ling Chen was taken aback. The implication was clear—the Ling Family didn't participate in the Heavenly Mechanism Great Ceremony because they had already surpassed the Dragon and Tiger List in strength.

Could it be... the Ling Family's power has reached the Earthly List?

"Knowing this much about the Ling Family is enough for you. I advise you, don't think about tracing your ancestry or seeking affinity with the Ling Family. The relationship between the Ling Family and your father has deteriorated over a decade ago. Between you and them, there's only enmity, not kinship. Do you hear me?"

"Enmity?" Ling Chen asked, puzzled. "What enmity?"

"That you don't need to know, nor do you need to intervene. Your father will take care of it himself. In short, don't provoke the Ling Family; they're not a force you can shake. The Hongyu Group is at best a huge enterprise dominating East Sea City, but the Ling Family owns the entire south. The difference between them is like night and day. To the Ling Family, the Nanrong Family is nothing. Besides, there's another matter."

"What's that?"

"It's about the God Organization. You've dealt with the God Organization for so many years and should be well aware of their strength. However, I need to remind you that if you think the God Organization's strongest forces are overseas, then you are sorely mistaken. Many years ago, the God Organization began to infiltrate Huaxia, developing covertly. Around the world, their power in Huaxia is the strongest. Over the years, they have deceived you, making you believe that the God Organization's influence hasn't fully penetrated Huaxia, thus relaxing your guard and shifting your focus abroad. In fact, all these are smokescreens set by the God Organization to facilitate their growth and expansion within Huaxia."

Ling Chen frowned and said, "Since you know so much about the God Organization, how much do you know about their leadership?"

"He's from Huaxia. That's all I can tell you for now; there are some things I haven't fully investigated, so I can't make arbitrary conclusions. The main reason I came to see you is to remind you that you've been listed on the God Organization's blacklist, and they perceive you as a target that must be eliminated."

"Me?" Ling Chen was stunned and asked, "Why?"

"The man in the suit replied, "Because you're too high-profile in your actions, having confronted the God Organization head-on several times, causing them significant losses. Besides that, there's another crucial reason—Mr. Yun, also known as Nanrong Yuan, Nanrong Wanqing's father."

"What does he have to do with this?"

The man in the suit sneered, "Do you really think the God Organization is oblivious to Nanrong Yuan's identity? That's just Nanrong Yuan being too clever by half, thinking he could deceive the agents of the God Organization. There's no absolute trust within the God Organization; everyone is scheming against each other. At least a dozen people around Nanrong Yuan are spies planted by the God Organization, constantly monitoring his every move. All his secrets are well known to the God Organization."

"Then, if the God Organization is aware of Nanrong Yuan's intentions, why do they let him be?"

"Like I said, the God Organization is good at creating smokescreens to blind everyone, including Nanrong Yuan, who is one such significant distraction. Initially, the God Organization intended to keep Nanrong Yuan around, but then they discovered that the power he was secretly building up had become uncontrollable. From what I understand, the new technology Nanrong Yuan has mastered poses a

serious threat to the God Organization, which is why they are determined to eliminate him, despite the cost. In fact, all the power and efforts Nanrong Yuan has accumulated will end up benefiting the God Organization. Once Nanrong Yuan is dead, they will easily take over those forces."

After a moment of silence, the man in the suit continued, "I'm not sure what new technology Nanrong Yuan has mastered, but the God Organization places great importance on it. You've had contact with Nanrong Yuan, and given your connection to Nanrong Wanqing, the God Organization believes it's highly likely that Nanrong Yuan would have shared that new technology with you."

"So, that's why they put me on the blacklist?"

"Exactly."

Injustice, what an injustice!

Ling Chen sighed inwardly. Nanrong Yuan hadn't mentioned any new technology to him; he'd only said... the key!

That's right!

Ling Chen suddenly realized. When Nanrong Yuan was injured, he had said something to him.

Nanrong Wanqing is the key!

At the time, he had been at a loss, unable to grasp the meaning of these words. Now thinking about it, there might be a connection between the two.

Could it be... the new technology Nanrong Yuan mastered is in the hands of Nanrong Wanqing?

As he pondered, the man in the suit at the pavilion slowly stood up, his back facing Ling Chen, and said, "I've said all that needs to be said. Take care of yourself. Here's a phone with a number saved in it; if you need any information, you can call this number, and the person on the other end will try to help you."

Seeing the man was about to leave, Ling Chen hurriedly called out to him, asking, "You know my father; can you tell me his contact information?"

"There's no need for that. When your father wants to see you, he'll come looking for you. Until then, just focus on keeping yourself alive. Oh, and... your father told me to pass along this message: he finds his future daughter-in-law quite satisfactory. However, as the saying goes, 'When flowers bloom, they should be picked at once; don't wait until there are no flowers and just empty branches to break.' The descendants of Ling Gengqiu, each one is a philanderer; hardly any of them has been faithful from start to finish, including your father. So, don't worry too much about what others think, just go with the flow. Ling Gengqiu used to say, a true man should drink the strongest liquor, enjoy the company of the finest women—that's the only way to live a life without regrets. You might as well learn a thing or two from him."