

The Beauty 501

Chapter 501 Such Fast Speed

Study Ling Gengqiu?

Ling Chen touched his nose; he certainly had no such intentions. With Nanrong Wanqing's temperament, he had no idea what consequences would ensue if he dared to do so.

"Right, about that... eh?" Before Ling Chen could finish speaking, he discovered that the man in the suit who had been in the pavilion had vanished without a trace, leaving behind only a mobile phone and a bottle of wine on the stone table.

Such impressive speed!

Ling Chen inwardly marveled at the feat. Before he could even react, the man had already disappeared into thin air.

Walking into the pavilion, he picked up the mobile phone and scrolled through the saved phone numbers, then slipped the phone into his pocket and turned to head back to the Nanrong Family.

Having learned so much important intelligence from the man in the suit, he needed to think carefully about how to guard against the God Organization.

The next day.

It was the rare occasion of a Saturday, meaning no work, so Ling Chen slept in and didn't get up until eight o'clock.

After breakfast, he saw Nanrong Hao running over excitedly, grinning and saying, "Chen, do you have time today? Everyone wants to invite you out for a gathering."

Ling Chen, holding a toothpick and picking at his teeth, eyed Nanrong Hao warily and said, "If it's to some shady place, then don't call me. I'm not interested. If your sister finds out, neither you nor I will have a good time."

Nanrong Hao chuckled, "Chen, don't be like that, relax. I, your little nephew, definitely wouldn't set you up. This time, we want to invite you to join a celebration."

"Celebrate what?"

Nanrong Hao sold the suspense, mysteriously saying, "You'll find out when we get there."

Ling Chen nodded half-convinced: "Alright then."

When it was almost eleven o'clock, Ling Chen followed Nanrong Hao out of the house, then drove towards the city center.

After spending more than half an hour on the road, they finally arrived at a resplendent luxury restaurant. Even from the lavish exterior decorations, it was clear that this place was not cheap.

Ling Chen shook his head, seriously criticizing, "You guys are getting more and more materialistic. You can't just squander money even if you have it; don't let wealth corrupt you."

"Yes, yes, but since you, Chen, have joined us, we can't lose face, so we chose a slightly more upscale place. Usually, we just grab a bite at roadside stalls."

Hearing this, Ling Chen couldn't help but laugh and curse, "Who would believe you."

Entering the restaurant, with a server's guidance, Ling Chen and Nanrong Hao arrived at the top floor's panoramic suite, the most luxurious one in the establishment, offering sweeping views of the bustling city for a hundred meters around.

Of course, the consumption of this suite was not low, priced at two thousand yuan per hour.

When Ling Chen arrived, Jiang Hao, Zhao Zhengxiong, and Jiang Yunkai were all already seated, just waiting for the two of them.

"Chen."

"Chen."

Seeing Ling Chen appear, everyone got up to greet him.

"Alright, sit down, you guys. We're all friends here, no need for formalities."

Saying this, Ling Chen took a seat beside Jiang Hao. Seeing everyone looking at him with smiles, Ling Chen touched his face and asked curiously, "Why are you all staring at me? Is there something on my face?"

Jiang Hao said with a beaming smile, "Chen, we invited you here mainly to give you a surprise."

"What surprise?"

"We've taken over North City District." Zhao Zhengxiong excitedly announced.

"Really?" Ling Chen gave a thumbs-up and praised with a smile, "Well done."

Nanrong Hao smiled, "It's all thanks to Hao, Xiong, and Kai, otherwise it wouldn't have been so smooth."

Zhao Zhengxiong modestly said, "You can't say it like that. Everyone made efforts, and the merit belongs to us all."

"Enough with the mutual praise. Tell me what's going on now," Ling Chen interjected. He had been busy attending the Heavenly Mechanism Great Ceremony recently, and afterwards went to Beijing. He knew nothing about the developments with Jiang Hao and the others.

"Chen, here's the thing," Zhao Zhengxiong took a sip of tea to moisten his throat, and started explaining, "Over in North City District, the people there were extensively engaged in illegal gambling and drug activities. After our report, the police launched a rigorous crackdown, shut down many of their venues, and arrested a number of their mid-level backbones. We took advantage of their weakened state, quietly amassed our manpower, and directly took out their stronghold."

Ling Chen nodded. He knew all too well that despite how effortlessly Zhao Zhengxiong put it, achieving this victory must have cost them a great deal of blood and losses.

Surviving in this line of work meant genuinely risking one's life—there wasn't much room for trickery.

"Chen, now that we control the turf of all six districts of East Sea City, we would like to hear your thoughts."

Ling Chen looked at Jiang Hao, who posed the question, and instantly understood that this was probably the real reason they invited him. Now that Jiang Hao and the others had triumphed and seized such a big piece of cake, how to share it was the most critical issue. It was vital to strike the right balance in who gets how much. If one couldn't maintain control, conflicts could easily arise among certain individuals.

After pondering for a moment, Ling Chen asked, "What are your thoughts?"

"This..."

Jiang Hao and the others looked at each other, none speaking out at first.

After a while, Jiang Yunkai spoke up, "I don't want a share of the turf. I don't have the energy to manage it either; running three security companies is already keeping me busy."

Ling Chen gave a faint smile—he was well aware of Jiang Yunkai's nature. Yunkai was never that interested in this line of business and lacked ambition, which made him the easiest to deal with.

"I have no objection," Zhao Zhengxiong spoke first.

"I also have no objection."

Nanrong Hao said with a smile, "Chen, I'll listen to you."

"That settles it then. Since none of you have any objections, let's decide this matter now," Ling Chen announced, glancing at the four present, and continued in a serious tone, "But before that, let me make one thing clear. Even though the territories are divided, we are still all on the same side. In the future, do not start conflicts with each other. If I find out anyone has broken the rules, don't expect me to be lenient. Just as I can lift you up, I can also pull you down. Moreover, no illegal activities are allowed on your turf."

Jiang Hao and the others unanimously responded, "Chen, rest assured, we're all good brothers for life, and would never do anything to betray our own people."

Chapter 502 The Pretty Boy (1)

"I hope so too, I don't want any unpleasantness among us either." Having said that, Ling Chen picked up his teacup and continued, "Since everyone is here, I have a favor to ask. I want you to firmly secure control over East Sea City's territories in the shortest time possible."

Jiang Hao curiously asked, "Chen, why?"

"I've run into some trouble; someone is out to get me, and they're a force to be reckoned with. However, their influence hasn't extended to East Sea City yet. Before it does, I hope you can keep an eye out for any suspicious individuals making an appearance."

Upon hearing this, Zhao Zhengxiong and the others exchanged glances, with a trace of unease flickering in their eyes.

Seeing that no one spoke, Ling Chen continued, "I know this is a difficult task, but right now, you guys are the only ones I can count on, so..."

"Chen," Nanrong Hao interrupted Ling Chen, adding, "We didn't say we're not going to help you. In fact, we've been prepared for such a situation and have been planning for a long time."

"What do you mean?"

Jiang Hao said with a smile, "Chen, weren't you always wondering why we insisted on opening courier companies? It's not just courier services, but also the taxi industry; we're involved in it all. Once we've organized all the territories, half the city's taxi companies will be under our control. Both couriers and taxis interact with the largest number of people and are the quickest ways to acquire information. Our initial idea was to build a complete intelligence system. Each courier company is an information outpost, with couriers specifically tasked with gathering intelligence, which is then filtered through multiple layers to retain valuable data. With this system, as long as it's in East Sea City, we can be the first to know about anything that happens."

Ling Chen's eyes lit up as he listened to Jiang Hao's explanation. If it weren't for his normal sexual orientation, he would have felt like kissing Jiang Hao right then. This news was undoubtedly the best surprise for him; having his own source of intelligence would make many things much more convenient in the future.

"Good job, well done," Ling Chen said with a grin, "I hadn't realized you had such foresight."

Nanrong Hao bragged boastfully, "Of course, we're all people who handle big matters."

"Chen," Zhao Zhengxiong chimed in from the side, "Even though we've established a fairly complete intelligence system, there's still a major issue we haven't solved."

"What's the problem?"

Zhao Zhengxiong said resignedly, "We're all rough and tumble guys. We can handle fighting and killing, but managing intelligence is really not our forte. We need to find someone meticulous and analytical to handle the intelligence."

Ling Chen thought for a moment, and a name immediately popped into his mind.

Hu Fei was in the intelligence business; he would be the perfect candidate to bring onboard. With that thought, Ling Chen smiled and said, "Don't worry about the candidate, I've got it arranged."

With the big matter settled, everyone enjoyed their meal immensely.

During the meal, Ling Chen discreetly handed a regular Heavenly Mechanism Pill to Jiang Yunkai and explained its use, filling Yunkai with both excitement and gratitude.

Ling Chen knew what Yunkai was after, so this regular Heavenly Mechanism Pill was undoubtedly the best reward for him.

After a satisfying meal, Ling Chen helped the drunken Nanrong Hao out of the restaurant, following the others as they left.

After throwing Nanrong Hao into the car, Ling Chen closed the car door and then walked over to Zhao Zhengxiong's newly bought BMW, gesturing to Zhao Zhengxiong who was in the driver's seat.

After getting into the car, Zhao Zhengxiong, belching from fullness and with a flushed face, asked, "Chen, did you want to see me for something?"

Ling Chen nodded and said, "There were things I couldn't discuss in front of everyone just now. Now that it's just the two of us, I want to have a serious talk with you." After saying that, Ling Chen looked meaningfully at Zhao Zhengxiong and asked, "Do you know why I agreed to let you divide the territories among yourselves?"

Zhao Zhengxiong answered, "Well... Chen, I don't quite understand what you mean."

"In both life and work, one should always look far ahead, that's what I think..."

Five minutes later.

Ling Chen stepped out of the BMW, and in the driver's seat, Zhao Zhengxiong watched Ling Chen's departing figure with a solemn expression and ultra-clear eyes.

...

In the blink of an eye, it had been a week since the return to East Sea City. These past days had been peaceful without any trouble from the God Organization, and Ling Chen had been enjoying a few rare days of tranquility.

That day after work, Ling Chen got in the car with Nanrong Wanqing, preparing to drive back to Wealthy Manor. Halfway there, as she watched the traffic outside the window, Nanrong Wanqing suddenly said, "Let's take a detour to Huamei Mall."

Ling Chen gave a slight smile, "Feeling like shopping today?"

"You don't want to go?"

"How could I not? You're the boss here, wherever you say we'll go." Saying this, Ling Chen glanced at Nanrong Wanqing's voluptuous chest and wore a teasing smile on his face.

Feeling the burning gaze from Ling Chen, Nanrong Wanqing's cheeks turned slightly red, and she lightly tapped his arm, her eyes reproachful as she said in both embarrassment and annoyance, "Don't stare rudely."

Ling Chen leaned in close to Nanrong Wanqing's ear and whispered, "I hand-raised this myself, can't I even take a look?"

Hearing this, Nanrong Wanqing instantly blushed even deeper, her face as red as an apple, endearingly cute and enchanting. If it weren't for Zhong Wei sitting in the front, she would have loved to give Ling Chen a good scolding.

This damn guy is getting bolder and bolder, not considering the situation at all.

Seeing Nanrong Wanqing's hand stretch toward his thigh, Ling Chen's face changed and he quickly sat up straight, looking forward with undistracted eyes, and said solemnly, "Captain Zhong, to Huamei."

"Understood."

The car turned into the lane and after more than twenty minutes, the convoy finally arrived at the underground parking garage of Huamei Mall.

Getting out of the car, Nanrong Wanqing turned and said, "You guys stay in the car, no need to follow. Having Ling Chen with me is enough."

They took the elevator up, arriving directly at the top floor of the mall. This place was lined with international luxury brands, and the clientele who shopped on this floor were all rich and prestigious.

Stepping out of the elevator, Ling Chen wrapped his arm around Nanrong Wanqing's slender waist, strolling on the floor's mirror-smooth surface, perusing clothing and purses from various big-name brands.

"Let's go check that out."

Ling Chen turned his head to look in the direction Nanrong Wanqing was pointing to, and saw it was a boutique specializing in custom-made menswear. While the store was small, it had a steady flow of customers, some entering excitedly but leaving looking disappointed and dejected.

"Are you buying clothes for me?" Ling Chen quickly caught on.

Nanrong Wanqing retorted, "Is that a problem?"

"No problem at all, but... I heard that brand's suits are pretty expensive, the cheapest starting from two hundred thousand."

Nanrong Wanqing gave Ling Chen a look, without another word, pulled him towards the store.

Chapter 503 Pretty Boy (2)

The shop was small but fully equipped, with an endless queue of waiting customers.

Most of the people who come here to buy suits are from rich households or are successful business people. As such, Nanrong Wanqing's arrival quickly drew everyone's attention, and the scene became quite noisy for a while.

Especially when they saw Nanrong Wanqing confidently holding Ling Chen's arm as they entered, it triggered a lot of discussion and speculation.

Feeling everyone's unusual gazes converging on him, Ling Chen suddenly felt a bit uncomfortable. That feeling was like being a kept man, which was really annoying.

Although he often jokingly says he doesn't mind being a kept man, that's just a joke. For a macho man with his personality, the idea of really becoming a kept man would make him want to die.

At this time, some people who knew Nanrong Wanqing approached one after another, greeting her. However, during their conversations, their gazes kept sizing up Ling Chen, as if they were very interested in his background.

"Miss Nanrong, and this gentleman is?" Finally, someone asked about Ling Chen's identity.

Nanrong Wanqing casually replied, "He's my boyfriend, Ling Chen."

Upon receiving Nanrong Wanqing's straightforward response, a burst of gasps rose from the crowd, surprised by her candid admission.

"So it's Mr. Ling." A middle-aged man smiled and extended his hand politely, greeting him. Then, he changed the subject, lavishly praising, "Mr. Ling is truly a man of looks and talent, to have won Miss Nanrong's heart must mean you are quite capable. May I ask what high position Mr. Ling holds?"

Hearing this, Nanrong Wanqing turned to look at Ling Chen, her pretty face adorned with a light smile.

Ling Chen touched his nose and grinned, "Nothing high-profile, I'm just a security guard scraping a living."

"A security guard?"

As soon as these words came out, everyone was stunned, their faces filled with surprise and disbelief.

The middle-aged man laughed a bit awkwardly, "I would not have guessed, Mr. Ling seems to enjoy joking."

Ling Chen spread his hands and said, "I'm not joking. I work as a security guard at Hongyu Group. If you don't believe me, feel free to ask her. She is the chairman of Hongyu Group, and she knows best."

Seeing everyone looking at her, Nanrong Wanqing didn't say a word, just lightly nodded her head.

It was actually true!

Nanrong Wanqing's acknowledgment immediately set off a frenzy among everyone present. No one expected the chairman of the mighty Hongyu Group, a billionaire heiress, to actually have a security guard as a boyfriend.

For a moment, everyone looked at Ling Chen with a mix of complicated feelings in their eyes, including envy, jealousy, disdain, and contempt. Some even couldn't wait to take out their phones, eager to spread this sensational news to their friends.

Watching their actions, Ling Chen inwardly gave a wry smile. Without a doubt, by tomorrow morning, he was bound to become a 'celebrity.'

No helping it, Nanrong Wanqing was too well-known. As the golden flower of East Sea City, almost everyone was speculating which talented young man could pluck this beautiful, thorny flower.

If it had been a young man with status and background, it would probably not have been a surprise to anyone. After all, a matching social status is of utmost importance. But Nanrong Wanqing had to choose a "good-for-nothing" security guard, which was enough to make it a hot news topic.

Faced with the whispered exchanges and pointing fingers of the crowd, Ling Chen gently tugged Nanrong Wanqing's arm, signaling her to leave quickly.

"What's the rush? We haven't bought the clothes yet," Nanrong Wanqing said softly, seemingly unconcerned with the discussions around her.

Ling Chen, resigned, could only wait in line with Nanrong Wanqing.

After about half an hour, the tailor finally took their measurements, and they paid a hefty deposit, only waiting to pick up the suit in a few days.

Under the gaze of the onlookers, Ling Chen took Nanrong Wanqing's hand and fled the shop.

Seeing Ling Chen drenched in sweat, Nanrong Wanqing couldn't help but laugh: "What are you so nervous about?"

Ling Chen said sullenly: "Did you do it on purpose? Knowing there were acquaintances around, yet you still dragged me over."

"Are you unhappy?" Nanrong Wanqing's words carried a hint of apology.

"It's not that I'm unhappy, it's just so sudden. I wasn't mentally prepared at all. Since you wanted to expose our relationship, you should have at least given me a heads up. With this, who knows how many reporters might show up at Wealthy Manor's door tomorrow."

"It's okay, at most they'll be a nuisance for a few days."

After calming himself down, Ling Chen looked at Nanrong Wanqing somewhat puzzledly. He was not against Nanrong Wanqing making their relationship public; since Nanrong Wanqing didn't care about it, as a man, he cared even less.

Returning to the underground parking, Ling Chen, seeing Nanrong Wanqing's empty hands, couldn't help but ask: "Didn't you come to go shopping? How come you didn't buy anything?"

"Didn't I buy clothes for you?"

Ling Chen was taken aback: "You came just to buy me clothes?"

"Yep." Nanrong Wanqing said with a beaming smile: "What else did you think?"

Ling Chen was a bit confused. There was nothing happening at home, so why buy a suit for him? Could it be that she was planning to bring him to some sort of gathering?

With doubts, the two took a ride back to Wealthy Manor.

At home, Ling Chen sneaked off to Nanrong Hao's villa alone, only to see Nanrong Hao sitting on the living room sofa, joystick in hand, engrossed in a video game. It was hard to imagine that the once idle playboy of a wealthy family had now become a prominent figure controlling two major districts.

"Chen!"

Seeing Ling Chen approaching, Nanrong Hao quickly greeted him with a smile: "Chen, take a seat. Want something to drink?"

"No need for that trouble." With that, Ling Chen lay down ungracefully on the sofa, legs crossed, hands propping his head, and looked at Nanrong Hao: "Get some people to block the entrance to the manor tomorrow, don't let the reporters in."

"Chen, what happened?"

"I just went shopping with your sister and our relationship got exposed. I guess we won't have any peace for the next few days."

"Really?" Nanrong Hao said with a happy laugh: "That's good news. If my sister is willing to do this, it shows she's committed to you. Hey, speaking of which! Chen, what gift did you prepare for my sister?"

"Gift?" Ling Chen looked puzzled and asked, "What gift?"

Now it was Nanrong Hao's turn to be surprised: "Chen, you can't be unaware, can you? In a few days, it will be my sister's birthday, and there will be a birthday banquet. Didn't she tell you?"

Birthday?

So that's it!

Ling Chen instantly realized why Nanrong Wanqing had taken him to get a tailor-made suit—it was for this very reason.

"If you hadn't mentioned it, I really wouldn't have known." Saying this, Ling Chen sat up and asked earnestly: "What does your sister usually like?"

Nanrong Hao spread his hands and said: "How would I know." As soon as the words left his mouth, seeing Ling Chen's stern gaze, Nanrong Hao quickly explained: "Chen, I really don't know. My sister is always busy with work, and aside from work, I haven't seen her pursue other hobbies or interests."

Seeing Ling Chen deep in thought, Nanrong Hao said with a smile: "Chen, you've lived with my sister for so long, and she's your girlfriend, don't you know what she likes?"

"Nonsense, of course, I know what she likes."

Chapter 504 Kaelina Attacked

Ling Chen pointed to his own nose and said, "The one your sister likes is me."

Uh... Nanrong Hao turned his head away, struggling to hold back his laughter.

"What's wrong? Am I not speaking the truth?" Ling Chen glared at Nanrong Hao.

"No no no." Nanrong Hao hurriedly waved his hand and said, "Chen, you're not wrong, my sister does like you, but that's a different story. You can't just wrap yourself up as a gift for her, unless..." At this point, Nanrong Hao's face revealed a sly smile.

"Unless what?" Ling Chen pressed on.

Nanrong Hao leaned in close to Ling Chen's ear and whispered, "Unless you deliver yourself to her bed. My sister would definitely be satisfied."

Hearing this, Ling Chen 'smack', slapped Nanrong Hao on the head, reprimanding him irritably, "Is my sister that kind of person?"

Nanrong Hao rubbed his head, muttering, "I don't know about my sister, but you definitely are that kind of person."

Ling Chen glared at Nanrong Hao. It was pointless to ask him; not wanting to waste his breath, he simply got up and left the villa.

Nanrong Wanqing's birthday, this was a big deal, and with it being a birthday banquet, there would definitely be many attendees. Being her boyfriend, if he didn't prepare a stunning gift, it wouldn't only let down Nanrong Wanqing, but it would also reflect poorly on himself.

Sigh! No choice, all men are creatures that care about face.

The next day.

As expected by Ling Chen, the outside of Wealthy Manor was filled with reporters who had come to interview. Fortunately, Ling Chen had prepared early and had Nanrong Hao arrange manpower in advance to block all those reporters outside Wealthy Manor.

However, even so, news about Nanrong Wanqing and her new boyfriend still flooded all major newspapers and news channels, even entertainment news covered it.

The most attention-grabbing was still Ling Chen's identity.

A mere security guard actually managing to win Nanrong Wanqing's favor amazed countless people, even the tale of a sparrow turning into a phoenix was applied to Ling Chen.

And at this moment, the main character Ling Chen, wearing a face mask, was strolling alone in the mall, selecting a gift for Nanrong Wanqing.

Rings, necklaces, bracelets, from tens of thousands to several hundred thousand, Ling Chen looked over each one, but none caught his fancy. In his view, it was not about how expensive the gift was, but its significance.

With Nanrong Wanqing's wealth, even the most expensive gifts would be considered cliché, and Ling Chen naturally didn't want to fall into that trap.

In the blink of an eye, the morning passed.

After wandering around for most of the day, Ling Chen found a seat in a fast-food restaurant across from the mall, ready to fill his stomach and continue shopping in the afternoon.

While eating, Ling Chen suddenly felt a whiff of fragrance hit him. He looked up to see across his seat, a blonde girl wearing tight leather pants, draped in a coat, sexy and charming, her figure graceful, walking on high heels towards him, then sat down beside him.

Ling Chen took a brief moment of surprise, then smiled, holding up his cola cup and said, "Do you want something to eat? My treat."

The blonde woman brushed her bangs from her shoulder and spoke indifferently, "I really admire you, still having the appetite to eat right now."

"As eating is crucial for survival, as long as the sky hasn't fallen, one needs to eat; we can't starve ourselves. Tell me, what brings you to me?"

"I think you should be clear on why I'm seeking you out." Kaelina said, "Initially, I made an agreement with Ghost to cooperate and take on the God Organization together. However, a few days ago, I received a notice saying our cooperation is over, with no reason provided, just a unilateral termination of the agreement. Since you're our go-between, of course I have to come to you for an explanation."

"This matter is not Ghost's fault. Recently, Ghost had an unforeseen disaster and suffered a heavy blow. As far as I know, Ghost has received orders to disband. From now on, Ghost no longer exists in this world, and their ceasing of cooperation was also out of necessity."

"Why?" Kaelina furrowed her brows.

"Apart from the God Organization, do you think there could be any other reason? The God Organization had long infiltrated the inner workings of Ghost, but we had always been kept in the dark until just recently." With that said, Ling Chen pivoted the conversation and asked, "When you first proposed the cooperation, you told me that before Blood Wolf was killed, he gave you some documents containing secrets about the God Organization. That document was your only chip for cooperating with us. Now that Ghost has disbanded, what are you planning to do with that document?"

Kaelina picked up a french fry, her bright red lips parting slightly to reveal her pearly white teeth, and the glint in her beautiful eyes betrayed the hesitation within her.

After a moment, Kaelina glanced at the crowded clientele of the fast-food restaurant, stood up, and said, "Meet me at the library downtown in half an hour."

"Alright, I'll be there on time."

Having finished eating, Ling Chen glanced at the time and saw it was almost time, so he set out for the library.

Upon reaching the library's entrance, Ling Chen was about to enter when an ambulance suddenly drove up from the roadside. Subsequently, several medical staff rushed towards the library with a stretcher at a brisk pace.

Seeing the ambulance, Ling Chen couldn't help but feel an ominous premonition in his heart and hurriedly followed the medical team inside.

On the third floor of the library, he saw a crowd gathered at the entrance, all talking amongst themselves, with no one daring to enter.

Without thinking too much, Ling Chen swiftly pushed through the crowd and entered the library. In a short while, between two rows of bookshelves, he found Kaelina.

Seeing the blood scattered on the ground and Kaelina lying in a pool of blood, Ling Chen's expression changed. He cursed silently to himself, rushed over in a panic, and cradled Kaelina in his arms to check her wounds.

However, seeing Kaelina's abdomen bleeding profusely, Ling Chen's face instantly contorted with grimness.

Whoever was behind this had very precise moves, clean and to the point, striking a vital area at once. Moreover, the assailant intentionally didn't deliver a fatal blow right away, instead letting Kaelina slowly endure the tormenting pain until death. It has to be said, the perpetrator was incredibly ruthless.

During his contemplation, Ling Chen glanced around, his brow furrowing instantly.

Kaelina was attacked in this place, with no signs of struggle nearby, indicating the assailant's action was very swift, leaving Kaelina with no chance to defend herself. To easily wound Blood Spider, ranked third on the assassin list, the perpetrator must be far from ordinary.

"Kaelina, wake up!" Ling Chen gently patted Kaelina's cheek, hoping to rouse her.

But Kaelina, having lost too much blood, had already sunk into a comatose state, her face pale, and she could die at any moment.

At this point, the medical team had swiftly arrived on-scene with a stretcher.

"Sir, please move aside."

Ling Chen glanced at them and said sternly, "There's no time for the hospital, she needs immediate on-site treatment."

Chapter 505 Five Thousand Years

Before the medical staff could speak, Ling Chen had already torn open Kaelina's clothes, exposing the wound, a knife gash that was a full three inches wide. At this moment, fresh blood was ceaselessly pouring from the wound, staining Kaelina's abdomen red.

"Give me a knife."

Seeing Ling Chen's outstretched hand, the medical staff were momentarily stunned.

"What are you dawdling for, it's a matter of life and death, hurry up," Ling Chen urged anxiously.

Seeing that Kaelina was barely hanging on, looking as if she could die at any moment, the medical personnel finally snapped to attention. They quickly opened the medical kit and handed Ling Chen a scalpel. Following that, one of the medical staff placed an oxygen mask over Kaelina's face.

Holding the scalpel, Ling Chen concentrated intently on the wound, then carefully made a few centimeter-long incisions at both ends of the wound, widening it.

"Hemostats."

As Ling Chen's words fell, a medical staffer immediately handed him the hemostatic forceps.

Ling Chen frowned, trying several times in succession but failing to locate the exact source of bleeding.

"The light is too dim, I can't see clearly," Ling Chen said, turning his head to look around, hoping to find a more brightly lit area. At this time, he noticed that there were quite a few people at the entrance of the library using their cell phones to record.

"Call those people over, have them turn on all the flashlights on their phones."

In no time, more than a dozen onlookers hurried over, focusing the lights of their phones on Kaelina's wound.

With everyone's help, it didn't take long for Ling Chen to locate the source of the bleeding. After clamping off the bleeding point, Ling Chen had the medical personnel do a simple treatment to stop the bleeding for now. Then, they lifted Kaelina onto a stretcher and transported her to the ambulance.

There was blood stored on the ambulance. Given Kaelina's current condition, she just needed to replenish the blood she had lost to stabilize and get out of life-threatening danger.

However, Ling Chen still felt uneasy letting Kaelina go to the hospital alone, so he followed the ambulance and left the library.

No matter who the assailant was, if they knew Kaelina was still alive, they certainly wouldn't let it go.

Once at the hospital, after an hour of surgery, Kaelina was moved to the intensive care unit.

Seeing the normal values displayed on the monitor, Ling Chen quietly breathed a sigh of relief, glad to have saved Kaelina's life. It was fortunate that Kaelina's constitution was stronger than that of an average person, and that he had arrived in time. If it had been a few minutes later, not even a deity could have saved her.

As for the person who made the attempt on her life, the God Organization was the most likely suspect. They probably realized that Kaelina knew too much about their secrets, hence the ruthless attempt to eliminate her.

Had Ling Chen not arrived in time, they would have succeeded.

"Sir."

At that moment, a nurse walked in from outside the ward, handing Ling Chen a transparent plastic bag.

"This was found inside that lady's clothes, you're her friend, please keep it safe for her."

"Okay, thank you!"

Once the nurse left, Ling Chen looked at the items in the transparent bag—a cell phone, a wallet, some change, and a few receipts.

Huh?

Ling Chen suddenly noticed that among the receipts were several expired library borrowing vouchers. He had originally thought Kaelina had asked him to meet at the library as a convenient place to talk, but now it seemed that Kaelina frequented that library.

With that thought, Ling Chen took out the borrowing vouchers and examined them for a moment. He quickly noticed a problem.

Each of these vouchers showed that Kaelina always borrowed the same book, "Five Thousand Years."

Considering Kaelina's personality, she shouldn't be interested in this type of book.

After pondering for a while, Ling Chen took out his cell phone and dialed a number.

Before long, Jiang Yunkai arrived at the hospital with more than twenty suit-clad security personnel.

"Kai, help me keep an eye on her. Anyone approaching her must be personally vetted by you, including the doctors and nurses of this hospital," Ling Chen instructed.

"Understood."

Leaving the hospital, Ling Chen hurried back to the library. When he arrived, he saw several police cars parked outside.

An attack at the library; the police would certainly not ignore it.

Upon reaching the third floor of the library, he saw several uniformed officers busy searching the scene, questioning the library staff and witnesses.

"Mr. Ling."

Then, a policeman noticed Ling Chen's arrival and greeted him friendly.

Ling Chen had cooperated with Xia Mutong on many cases and had frequented the police station, so many people there recognized him.

Ling Chen smiled and waved his hand, asking, "Is Officer Xia here?"

"Right there!"

"Okay, got it, go on with your work, I won't disturb you." After speaking, Ling Chen scanned the people around him, quietly approached the bookshelf, searched for the call number, and found the book "Five Thousand Years" that Kaelina often borrowed.

After flipping through it, Ling Chen didn't find anything unusual. However, knowing Kaelina, she wouldn't do anything meaningless. Thinking this, he sneakily hid the book under his clothes, then, pretending to be an innocent bystander, left the bookshelf area and walked straight towards the exit of the library.

"Stop right there!"

Just as he reached the door, Ling Chen heard a familiar voice coming from behind.

This girl... he had intended to leave quietly, but still couldn't escape her sharp eyes.

Turning around, Ling Chen looked at the stern-faced Xia Mutong and grinned, "Officer Xia, long time no see."

"What are you here for?"

"I wanted to borrow a book to read, but ran into you police conducting an investigation. Seems like I can only come back next time... You go ahead with your work, I won't disturb you."

"Borrow a book?" Xia Mutong scoffed, her tone icy, "I think you mean stealing a book."

Hearing this, the smile on Ling Chen's face stiffened, and he said somewhat unnaturally, "Not at all. Officer Xia, please don't wrong me."

Xia Mutong pointed at the surveillance cameras installed in the corners and said with annoyance, "Don't think I don't know what you just did. Fess up, what's your relationship with that wounded woman?"

"Friends, just ordinary friends."

"Really?" Xia Mutong's tone carried a trace of disbelief.

"If you're her friend, why aren't you at the hospital with her, and instead back at the library? Could there be something here more important to you than your friend?" As she spoke, Xia Mutong reached out her hand in front of Ling Chen, saying, "Hand over that book, I want to see what kind of trick you're pulling."

Ling Chen looked troubled and said, "Officer Xia, come on, we're all friends here, you..."

"If you keep rambling, do you believe I'll take you back to the police station?"

Hearing this, Ling Chen immediately shut his mouth. He knew Xia Mutong too well; she was someone who would definitely follow through with her words.

"Officer Xia, I'm not going to lie to you, the contents of this book are very important to me."

Xia Mutong's eyes brightened, and she said with a half-smile, "That makes me even more curious."

Chapter 506 Tracking the Killer

Seeing Xia Mutong unwilling to let him go, Ling Chen couldn't help but give a bitter smile. If it weren't for Xia Mutong being able to find him at any time, he would have considered running away.

Seeing Ling Chen's troubled face, for some reason, Xia Mutong felt incredibly annoyed. She had clearly seen through the surveillance footage how Ling Chen saved the blonde lass, his anxiety and concern clearly showed that he knew the blonde, and that their relationship was deep.

Moreover, she couldn't help but think of the newspaper and news she saw this morning, which were filled with exposés about Nanrong Wanqing and Ling Chen's affair.

The man in front of her, she didn't know what charm he had that attracted so many women.

The more Xia Mutong thought about it, the angrier she became, her eyes almost spitting fire as she glared straight at Ling Chen. She had helped him numerous times, yet he treated her like an outsider, unwilling to reveal anything. Thinking of this, besides being angry, she felt more sad and was beset by an indescribable emotion that was tough to bear.

Sensing the complex emotion in Xia Mutong's eyes and the anger overtaking her exquisite face, Ling Chen cursed inwardly.

This girl must be angry.

Did I really do something to merit this?

In the blink of an eye, Ling Chen, with a smile, said: "Officer Xia, I have an urgent matter. How about... how about I treat you to a meal next time?"

Looking at Ling Chen's cautious face, Xia Mutong sighed inwardly. Forget it! He has nothing to do with her, why bother making a big deal out of it and ruining her mood.

However, her face still wore a frosty 'keep away' expression.

"Follow me."

"What for?" Ling Chen looked at Xia Mutong warily. She couldn't be giving up on soft tactics and planning to go hard, could she?

As he pondered, he only heard Xia Mutong say angrily, "Just follow me, no need for so much nonsense." Saying that, Xia Mutong couldn't bother to deal with Ling Chen anymore and turned to walk back to the library.

Dammit!

This girl is really angry.

Ling Chen was somewhat baffled, but his legs honestly followed Xia Mutong back. Not to mention the past relationship he had with Xia Mutong, as a friend, he couldn't just walk away, especially when Xia Mutong was angry.

Soon, the two arrived at the library's security room.

Xia Mutong didn't even look at Ling Chen, she just gestured to the staff in front of the computer to pull up the surveillance footage.

Soon, under the skilled operation of the staff, the computer screen displayed a scene.

The surveillance footage showed the time two hours ago, which was when Kaelina was attacked. Ling Chen stared fixedly at the screen, watching Kaelina approach a bookshelf in the library alone, casually flipping through books and occasionally checking her watch.

Suddenly, a man in a down jacket and wearing a hood appeared in the surveillance footage.

The man's face was hidden by the hood, making it impossible to see his features, only revealing his slightly slender build. The man lingered in front of the nearby bookshelves for a few minutes, waiting until no one was around before quietly approaching Kaelina.

When the man was about three meters away from Kaelina, she finally noticed him. However, at that moment, an unbelievable scene occurred. In the surveillance footage, the man's body suddenly turned into an afterimage, and almost imperceptibly, he successfully carried out the attack and then swiftly left the library.

Throughout the entire process, Kaelina didn't even have the chance to react, collapsing into a pool of blood. Moreover, the man moved so fast that even his knife-wielding motion was unseen; the entire attack happened in a flash.

"See that?" Xia Mutong turned to look at Ling Chen and asked.

Ling Chen nodded, his expression growing solemn. No matter who the attacker was, he was clearly a master, and his strength was no less than those on the Dragon List; otherwise, not even the most skilled assassin could achieve this.

"The killer is very professional, his route was entirely within the blind spots of the surveillance cameras, and he kept his head down the entire time, making it impossible to see his face, so we can't ascertain his identity. You're more experienced, so I wanted to ask for your input, see if you have any good suggestions."

Ling Chen thought for a moment and asked, "Have you checked the surveillance outside the library?"

"We did, but he disappeared right after leaving the library. The person is a professional, he wouldn't make such a rookie mistake."

Ling Chen frowned secretly, this was a tricky situation. The killer was not only professional but also highly skilled; even if Xia Mutong and her team could track him down, they likely wouldn't capture him and could potentially lose many officers.

"Officer Xia, I'm sorry, it's not that I don't want to help, but I'm also powerless. If you really want my suggestion, I recommend you send someone to the hospital to properly protect the victim. If the killer knows the victim isn't dead, he definitely won't let this go easily and will surely find a chance to attack again."

"Do you want us to wait in ambush?"

"That's the only way."

Xia Mutong thought for a moment and reluctantly sighed, "That's all we can do." After saying that, she glared at Ling Chen, and said not too kindly: "Why are you still standing here? Do you want me to send you out?"

Hearing that, Ling Chen felt relieved and hurriedly left the library. Honestly, he was really worried that Xia Mutong would interrogate him about the secrets of that book.

Sitting in the car back to the hospital, Ling Chen was still thinking about the killer. His suggestion to Xia Mutong to guard the hospital wasn't really to capture the killer, but for the safety of Xia Mutong and other police officers.

The killer was a very dangerous character; once someone's strength reaches the Dragon List, ordinary people can hardly handle them.

"Chen, want a cigarette?"

Hearing the taxi driver's words, Ling Chen was slightly startled, then looked up at him and asked, "Do you know me?"

The driver smiled in response, "Hao showed us Chen's photo, and he specifically told us to greet you warmly if we see you."

"So you're one of Jiang Hao's men."

Ling Chen suddenly understood. Jiang Hao had mentioned that they had bought up nearly half of the taxi companies in East Sea City to establish an information system; he didn't realize they had progressed this quickly.

As he pondered, Ling Chen's attention was suddenly drawn to the dash cam installed in the taxi.

"Guys, do all your cars have these installed?"

"Yeah, it's a company-wide requirement. There are too many scammers these days; having a dash cam saves a lot of trouble."

Got it!

Ling Chen's eyes lit up, and a faint smile appeared on his lips. If he was lucky, perhaps they could really find the assailant who attacked Kaelina.

Chapter 507 Lucifer Experiment

After getting out of the car, Ling Chen thanked the driver, then took out his cell phone and dialed Hu Fei's number.

After the call, Ling Chen had already arrived outside the hospital room where Kaelina was staying. Jiang Yunkai, following Ling Chen's instructions, had been standing guard inside the room, ensuring Kaelina's safety.

Seeing Kaelina lying on the hospital bed, her complexion gradually improving, Ling Chen felt slightly relieved. Then, he went alone to the next room of the special care ward.

After closing the door, Ling Chen eagerly took out the "Five Thousand Years" and began to examine it carefully. Kaelina had borrowed this book several times for a reason; perhaps secrets unknown to others were hidden inside.

Minutes passed, and the eagle-eyed Ling Chen noticed that the book's cover was unusually thick with remnants of re-gluing at the edges. He found a small knife in the room and carefully cut along the edge. Once he made a slit in the cover, Ling Chen picked up the book and gently shook it a few times.

Instantly, an SD card fell out from the opening.

Sure enough!

Ling Chen smiled to himself, it seemed his guess was correct; Kaelina had hidden secrets inside the book.

This SD card was compatible with both cell phones and computers. Ling Chen immediately took out his mobile phone and inserted the SD card.

Once the phone rebooted, he accessed the files on the SD card, which included more than a dozen photos, some documents, and a video of several dozens of megabytes.

Without a second thought, Ling Chen clicked on the video within the SD card.

As the video played, a miserable scream immediately came from the phone, almost startling Ling Chen. He hurriedly turned down the volume and watched the content of the video closely.

This video appeared to be secretly filmed with a mobile phone, the camera was constantly shaking. In the footage, a man wearing just boxer shorts was tied to a machine, his arms and legs spread out in an X shape. His body was filled with various intravenous tubes, purple, blue, red—several different colored liquids being infused into his body simultaneously.

Dozens of seconds passed, and as the man screamed, his body started to mutate. His limbs became grotesquely swollen, his skin turned a terrible shade of purplish green as if countless things were squirming under the skin, a horrific sight to behold.

Suddenly, with a loud 'bang', the man's body instantly turned into a mist of blood, bursting violently, splattering blood all around.

"Test subject number three failed, bring in number four," a voice commanded.

As the sound came, the video ended there, and the rest of the footage was just chaotic light, nothing discernible.

Ling Chen frowned. This video only recorded the experiment process of the God Organization; it was unclear which experiment. Overall, the intelligence value wasn't significant.

Just as he thought this, a deep voice suddenly emerged in the video: "This is the 'Lucifer' experiment of the God Organization. None of these subjects are ordinary—they all have immense strength. Up to now, twenty-five attempts have failed, and without exception, all the subjects perished. Once the experiment succeeds, the God Organization will quickly establish a formidable force. Unless it's the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion from the mystical Eastern land, no one will be able to contend with them. To my knowledge, the God Organization has already begun to plot, preparing to eliminate the only threat to them."

"Kaelina, although I am an assassin, at least I have humanity. The God Organization, on the other hand, is utterly inhumane. To achieve their goals, they use every cruel means possible. I'm deeply involved and can't leave; the moment I harbor any disloyal intentions, they won't hesitate to kill me. To protect myself, I have no other choice. Kaelina, my only purpose in leaving these things behind is to seek redemption, to lighten the sins I've committed. If I die, you can do whatever you want with this information."

With these words, the video ended.

Although the man didn't show his face, Ling Chen recognized that the voice was indeed Blood Wolf's.

Reflecting on Blood Wolf's words, Ling Chen fell into deep thought.

He didn't know when the video was recorded, but it contained many important pieces of intelligence. First was the experiment code-named Lucifer, and then the subjects of the experiment. Blood Wolf stated that none of these subjects were ordinary; they were strong individuals.

Immensely strong... Suddenly, something occurred to Ling Chen, and he hurriedly replayed the video.

That was it!

Ling Chen's brows furrowed tightly. The test subject in the video appeared to be Asian, potentially from Huaxia. In addition, from his observations, just from the exterior characteristics of the man, he should have undergone long-term training, and his physical condition was very good.

If his guess was correct, these subjects might be martial artists, which is why Blood Wolf emphasized that they were individuals with immense strength in the video.

An ordinary person, after taking the God Organization's enhancement drugs, could have their strength, speed, and reaction capacity instantly increased several times. If it were a martial arts expert, the power unleashed would be even more terrifying.

With this thought, a chill ran down Ling Chen's spine.

Blood Wolf also mentioned that only the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion from the mysterious Eastern land had the capability to contend with such forces. This suggested Ling Chen's guess was not unfounded.

This was trouble!

If the God Organization was planning to make a move against the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, he must notify them as soon as possible.

After thinking it over, Ling Chen composed himself and continued to look through the other materials on the SD card.

After spending over an hour, Ling Chen finally finished examining all the materials. It had to be said, these materials were precious, all stolen by Blood Wolf from within the God Organization at great risk.

A few documents repeatedly mentioned the Lucifer experiment, but they did not specify what it entailed, only indirectly describing the horror of the Lucifer experiment.

Right now, what Ling Chen urgently needed to ascertain was whether or not this so-called Lucifer experiment had been successful.

As he pondered, a gentle knock came from outside the door.

Ling Chen got up to open the door and, seeing Jiang Yunkai standing there, asked, "What's up?"

"The patient woke up; she wants to see you."

Hearing this, Ling Chen hurriedly went to the special care ward. By the bedside, he saw Kaelina half-opening her eyes, still somewhat pale.

Seeing Ling Chen appear by her side, Kaelina said weakly, "The book..."

"I know, I have found that SD card. Kaelina, do you know when that video was recorded?"

"A year ago."

Good!

Ling Chen sighed in relief inwardly. With one year passing, the God Organization's Lucifer experiment might not have been successful yet.

"How much do you know about Lucifer?" Despite knowing that Kaelina was weak, it was a matter of urgency, and Ling Chen had to ask.

Chapter 508 The Identity of the Killer

"I... I know..."

"What do you know?" Ling Chen asked eagerly.

But as soon as the words left his mouth, he saw Kaelina close her eyes and fall back into a deep sleep.

Seeing this, Ling Chen couldn't help but let out a wry smile. At times like this, he couldn't force Kaelina to say too much.

Just then, Jiang Yunkai walked into the hospital room from outside and said, "Ling Chen, the police have arrived."

"Got it."

Leaving the hospital room, Ling Chen saw Xia Mutong standing in the corridor with more than a dozen police officers, each armed with a gun. It was clear that after watching the murderer's violent actions, Xia Mutong understood the danger and had made preparations in advance.

"Officer Xia." Ling Chen stepped forward to greet him.

Xia Mutong pointed at the security guards in suits and asked, "Are these people arranged by you?"

"That's right."

"Have them step back. From this point on, that lady's safety is fully the responsibility of the police."

"Okay." Ling Chen nodded and replied with a smile, "Then I'll leave it to all of you."

With these armed police officers for protection, Kaelina should be safe. No matter how fierce the killer was, he would not be faster than bullets, especially with so many police officers around.

On the way out of the hospital, Ling Chen noticed plainclothes officers positioned all around the hospital's hallways and corridors; it seemed Xia Mutong had the whole hospital under surveillance.

"Kai, you take everyone back first. I'll contact you if there's any trouble."

"Alright."

After watching Jiang Yunkai and the others drive away, Ling Chen hailed a cab by himself, planning to return to Wealthy Manor.

But just then, his cellphone rang in his pocket.

"Hello! Fatty, got any leads?"

"I'm in the Old City, come quick."

"I'll be there within half an hour."

After hanging up, Ling Chen immediately took a cab to a courier company located in the Old City, which was Jiang Hao's main intelligence station in Old City. All intelligence gathered would be processed here.

After going through several layers of security, Ling Chen walked into the office as if familiar with the place. Hu Fei was sitting at a three-meter-wide desk, focusing on six computer screens, typing rapidly on the keyboard.

"Fatty, did you find the person?" Ling Chen leaned in and asked.

Hu Fei pointed at one of the screens and said, "Following the method you provided, I had the taxi companies reach out to the drivers who picked up fares near the library at noon today, and I've collected all the footage from their dash cams. And wouldn't you know it, your method actually worked. Look! A taxi just happened to pass by the library entrance at that time and caught this on camera."

As he spoke, Hu Fei zoomed in on the footage, locking the cursor on a person.

"You said before that the person was wearing a grey down jacket and a hood, and it should be this person here."

Ling Chen stared at the image of the murderer on the screen, who blended into the crowd and disappeared into an alley in the blink of an eye.

"Is that all?"

"Don't rush it, keep watching." Hu Fei said, "I checked the map for that alley's exits and it connects directly to the street opposite. You reminded me that this individual is very professional in his actions, and since I consider myself somewhat of a professional as well, I theorized from a professional standpoint that the person would have changed his appearance as quickly as possible after entering the alley, including his clothes. As I expected, my men went to check the alley and, sure enough, they found a grey down jacket in a trash bin."

Continuing, Hu Fei brought up another image, grinning and saying, "That guy thought he could disappear without a trace, but he still missed a step. Across from the exit of that alley, there was an ATM. This is footage from that ATM, take a look, this is the only person who came out of the alley at that time, and the timing matches perfectly."

Watching the enlarged image on the screen, Ling Chen's mouth curled into a smile as he patted Hu Fei's shoulder, "Fatty, nicely done."

With a look of pride, Hu Fei said, "Of course, who do you think you hired?" After a pause, his tone shifted, "But speaking of which, those few people you trained are pretty good, smart enough to use the courier and taxi companies to establish an intelligence network. If it weren't for the dash cam footage, we wouldn't have found the murderer so quickly."

"Their ideas are good, but they are not professionals. Since you specialize in intelligence work and have experience, I brought you in this time in hopes that you could help refine it and prevent any leaks."

"Don't worry, give me a month, and I'll have the intelligence network covering the whole East Sea City, but well..."

Hearing Hu Fei's tone at the end of his sentence, Ling Chen could guess what he was going to say next without even thinking.

"Ling Chen, clear debts make close friends. You brought me in for this job, so don't skimp on the commission. Also, setting up the intelligence network is going to need a significant investment, you can't expect me to foot the bill."

"Cut it out, you won't be left short. I'll call Jiang Hao in a bit, just ask him directly for whatever financing you need; he'll fully support you."

Ling Chen knew the importance of intelligence and couldn't be stingy in this aspect; he was willing to spend whatever it took.

After chatting for a bit more, Ling Chen got back to the point, "Fatty, can you help me find out where the killer is?"

"I've checked the person's background. His name is Jiang Xinwu, thirty-eight years old. Ten years ago, he invested in opening a Martial Arts Academy in a northern city, but for some reason, he suddenly disappeared without a trace, and even his family reported him missing, but he was never found. Years later, the police concluded that Jiang Xinwu might be dead and stopped the search."

Ten years ago...

Ling Chen mulled over it for a moment and then said, "First, help me find out where this person is living. Also, look into how many people have gone missing across the country in the past ten years, and how many of those missing are martial artists. I don't need an exact figure, just an estimate."

"Holy crap!"

Hu Fei's eyes bulged as he exclaimed, "Are you trying to run me into the ground?"

"Cut it out." Ling Chen joked, "Gross, who's trying to run you into the ground? That's a woman's job, and I'm not about that."

"No, it's just..." Hu Fei rushed, "Do you have any idea how many people go missing in the country every year? Trying to look that up like you suggested, I'll work myself to death. I won't do it, even if you kill me..."

"One million."

"Don't write checks you can't cash."

"OK! No problem." Ling Chen grinned, understanding Fatty's character all too well - as long as there's money involved, everything is negotiable.

"Alright then, get going if there's nothing else. Don't disturb me while I'm working."

Leaving the courier company, Ling Chen strolled along the street, looking up at the darkening sky. It was almost evening.

He had initially set out to pick a birthday gift for Nanrong Wanqing, but instead, he ran into all these troubles, which was really worrisome.

"Ling Chen!"

While pondering, a pleasant voice suddenly came from the side of the road.

Chapter 509 Encounter with Leng Feifei (Part 1)

Upon hearing that familiar voice, Ling Chen didn't need to look to guess who it was.

Leng Feifei!

Ling Chen turned his head and saw Leng Feifei standing across the street, waving at him.

Perhaps due to the cold weather, Leng Feifei wrapped herself up like a zongzi, wearing a thick down jacket that extended to her knees, with a fluffy scarf around her neck, from which hung two pink pom-poms, adding a touch of cuteness and charm.

Ling Chen smiled and waved back, then crossed the traffic and quickly made his way to Leng Feifei's side.

After some time not seeing her, Leng Feifei looked the same as before, with a rosy, apple-shaped face that was irresistibly tempting, making one desire to take a bite. Though she was dressed warmly, it couldn't hide her proud figure, puffing up her down jacket, causing Ling Chen to take a few extra glances.

"Feifei, what are you doing here?"

"I'm working."

"Working?"

Ling Chen instantly realized, Leng Feifei and Su Lin were in the same school year, both were senior students; Su Lin was interning, so naturally, Leng Feifei was no exception.

However, because of Leng Feifei's experiences, she matured earlier than other students and had more work experience, directly skipping the internship phase and officially started working.

"Where do you work?"

"I'm designing at an advertising agency over there, still on probation. After a month, based on my performance, they'll decide whether to hire me."

"With your capabilities, it definitely won't be a problem."

While talking, Ling Chen looked around and then pointed to a Starbucks not far away, "It's cold outside, let's sit inside."

"Okay." Leng Feifei happily agreed.

It was the peak of rush hour, Starbucks was full of people; Ling Chen and Leng Feifei were lucky to find seats that had just become available.

After they sat down, Ling Chen ordered two cups of cappuccino and casually asked, "Are you still living at school?"

"No, I moved out a while ago. The company provides accommodation, it's just around the Old City area, only a ten-minute walk. When you have time, you should come over and visit, I'm usually there alone."

Ling Chen smiled and said, "Don't just stay at home all the time, go out more when you have time, maybe you can find a boyfriend."

Hearing this, Leng Feifei's face turned slightly red. She lowered her head to look at the coffee cup in front of her, gently stirring the foam on the surface with a small spoon, occasionally stealing glances at Ling Chen with the corners of her eyes, her bright eyes filled with an unspeakable shyness.

"Feifei!"

At this moment, a familiar voice came from the door. Ling Chen and Leng Feifei turned to look and saw a group of young men and women in their twenties appearing in the Starbucks, smiling and greeting Leng Feifei.

"Why are you guys here too?" Leng Feifei asked.

"It's too cold outside, we came in for a hot drink, to warm up," replied a pretty girl, wearing a skirt with black cotton stockings paired with a casual leather jacket and just a thin top inside, the neckline slightly open, revealing a fair neck.

Dressed like that in this weather, no wonder she felt cold. Ling Chen shook his head internally; nowadays, women pursue beauty at too great a cost, he still preferred women who were more down-to-earth.

"Feifei, who is this handsome guy?"

As they spoke, the group of young men and women turned their attention to Ling Chen.

One of them teased, "Feifei, we just asked you to join us for KTV and you refused. Turns out you were here meeting your boyfriend."

"No, that's not it." Leng Feifei blushed and retorted, "He's my friend, Ling Chen. He has a girlfriend, so don't talk nonsense." Then, Leng Feifei introduced them to Ling Chen, "These are all my colleagues from the company."

Ling Chen politely said, "Hello."

"Alright! Feifei has a handsome guy with her, let's not disturb their time together." A beautiful female colleague joked.

"Hu Yan, Feifei just said Ling Chen is just a friend, stop teasing her. Since it's still early for KTV, let's sit down and have some drinks." A male colleague suggested.

Hu Yan looked around at the fully occupied seats and said helplessly, "All the seats are taken. Xu Dong, let's just leave."

"Why leave? Look, Feifei has a few empty seats here. We are all friends here, squeezing in a bit is fine." After saying this, the male colleague named Xu Dong smiled at Ling Chen and asked, "Mr. Ling, you don't mind, do you?"

"We are all Feifei's friends which make you my friends too. I'm more than happy to welcome you all. Please, take a seat." Ling Chen stood up to relinquish his seat and moved a few chairs from nearby, politely inviting everyone to sit down.

Leng Feifei bowed her head, hiding her discontent while forcing a strained smile on her face.

She wished to be alone with Ling Chen, but unfortunately, someone was being inconsiderate.

With this thought, Leng Feifei glanced at Xu Dong out of the corner of her eye, her beautiful eyes showing a hint of displeasure.

She understood Xu Dong's intentions; since joining the company, Xu Dong had shown some interest in her. Although he never explicitly stated his intentions, he had hinted at them many times, to which she always feigned ignorance. After all, she was new to the company and did not want to disrupt the relationship between colleagues by making things awkward.

A smart person would know that this was a subtle way of rejecting him, but Xu Dong did not see it that way. In his mind, persistence would eventually lead to success.

Unfortunately, not all women felt the same.

"Mr. Ling, what do you do?" Hu Yan, trying to avoid an awkward silence, proactively asked Ling Chen.

Ling Chen replied with a light smile, "Security."

Security?

Hearing this, Hu Yan and the others exchanged glances, their eyes filled with wonder as they looked at Leng Feifei. From what they knew, Leng Feifei was a top student from a prestigious university; it was strange for her to be associated with someone in such a profession.

In their eyes, security was a low-level job. For office workers like them, who enjoyed air-conditioned comfort and worked in front of computers, such low-level occupations were generally looked down upon.

Learning that Ling Chen worked as a security officer, Xu Dong's face revealed a faint smile of delight, relief, and disdain.

"Mr. Ling, didn't you go to university? How did you end up in this line of work?"

The moment Xu Dong made this remark, Leng Feifei immediately felt offended, as it was clearly an insult towards Ling Chen.

Xu Dong could belittle anyone, but never in front of her, especially not Ling Chen. Ling Chen had not only helped her but also saved her several times. In her heart, Ling Chen's position was irreplaceable.

Leng Feifei opened her mouth intending to retort, but heard Ling Chen saying, "I joined the army before, so I didn't have the chance to attend university."

"That explains it," Xu Dong slightly lifted his lips and said with a smile, "These days, everyone needs technical talent. People like you who have military backgrounds, without any special skills, find it hard to land a good job. But being a security guard isn't bad, at least it's a stable job that can solve basic living needs, much better than those begging on the streets."

Chapter 510 Encounter with Leng Feifei (Part 2)

Xu Dong's remarks suddenly made the atmosphere among everyone a bit awkward, as they didn't know how to continue the conversation.

Everyone, as colleagues who see each other day and night, naturally knew Xu Dong's intentions, but they didn't expect him to be so merciless. No one would be happy hearing those words.

Seeing everyone silent and the conversation cooling down, Hu Yan forced a smile and changed the topic, saying, "Mr. Ling, your name sounds familiar to me."

Ling Chen replied indifferently, "There are many people with the same name, nothing strange about that."

"Hey! Ling Chen, how much do you make a month as a security guard?" Xu Dong spoke up, not even using 'Mr.' anymore, directly addressing him by name.

Hearing this, Hu Yan and others frowned. Even as colleagues, they felt Xu Dong was being too much. After all, Ling Chen is a friend of Leng Feifei, and one should respect the friend for their friend's sake. Disrespecting Ling Chen in front of everyone would surely not please Leng Feifei.

After what happened today, does Xu Dong still think he can chase after Leng Feifei? It's like a fool's dream, they are lucky not to get slapped.

At this moment, Leng Feifei, who had been silent, couldn't listen anymore. Xu Dong repeatedly took the opportunity to humiliate Ling Chen, angering even the usually gentle Leng Feifei. She looked at Xu Dong with an angry face, opened her mouth to scold him, but before the words came out, a big hand suddenly reached out from under the table, gently patting the back of her hand.

Leng Feifei turned to look at Ling Chen beside her, seeing him giving her a look, signaling her not to rush. Thinking of Ling Chen's capabilities, Leng Feifei forcefully suppressed her anger, swallowing the words she was about to say.

Ling Chen looked at Xu Dong with a half-smile, stating, "My salary isn't high, certainly can't compare to a top talent like Mr. Xu."

"There's truly no comparison." Xu Dong replied unmodestly.

"I suppose Mr. Xu's monthly salary must be quite high then."

"Not much, just seven or eight thousand, barely managing a middle-class lifestyle," Xu Dong said, unable to hide the smug look on his face.

Ling Chen nodded, "Seven or eight thousand isn't much, but no worries, young people have room for improvement. Work hard, and maybe you could earn over ten thousand a month."

Xu Dong was momentarily taken aback, as Ling Chen's tone made it seem as if Xu Dong was the security guard living at the societal bottom. Annoyed, Xu Dong scoffed, "Enough about me, how much do you earn a month?"

"Not much, this much." Ling Chen held up two fingers.

"Only two thousand?" Xu Dong looked disdainful.

"You missed a zero."

"Twenty thousand?"

At this, not only Xu Dong, but even Hu Yan and others were stunned. A security guard earning that much? They must be kidding.

Xu Dong derisively said, "Ling Chen, be realistic. If it's two thousand, say two thousand. Claiming twenty thousand when no one is mocking you here."

Ling Chen shrugged, unconcerned, saying, "Whether you believe me or not is not my problem. Nowadays, many people think highly of themselves, thinking they're superior. In reality, to others, such people are merely clowns, not worth mentioning."

Hearing this, Xu Dong's face turned ugly, clearly understanding Ling Chen's implication. Although not naming names, Ling Chen's words were obviously directed at him.

"Hu Yan, I think we should leave. There's nothing good to talk about with this kind of person."

Leng Feifei responded coldly, "I never asked you to stay. You're the one who insisted on staying."

"You..." Xu Dong's face turned pale, surprised at Leng Feifei's blunt rejection.

"What's wrong, did I say something incorrect? Ling Chen is much more capable than you. He just doesn't want to stoop to your level, yet you keep comparing yourself to him, how childish."

"Capability?" Xu Dong felt angry, scornfully looking at Ling Chen, scoffing, "What capabilities can a security guard have? Feifei, everyone in the company knows I like you, I want to chase you, but now I realize, we're just not the same. Your standards are too low, actually seeing something in this kind of person."

"You..." Leng Feifei was furious.

"Feifei, don't bother arguing," Ling Chen said, cutting her off, "Why stoop to arguing with his sort." After saying that, he glanced at Xu Dong, speaking indifferently, "Mr. Xu, you think highly of your capabilities?"

"At least more than you."

"Good, hope you won't regret this." Saying so, Ling Chen kicked the table over, making a loud 'clang' sound.

This move shocked Xu Dong and the others; they didn't understand what he was planning.

As everyone was confused, a male store manager quickly came over, asking, "Sir, what's the matter?"

Ling Chen said lightly, "I'm here to cause trouble."

The male manager smiled nervously, "Sir, is there some kind of misunderstanding?"

"You don't understand my words. I said, I'm here to cause trouble."

The manager frowned slightly, "Friend, don't say I didn't warn you, this place is not where you cause trouble. Doing this, you're just asking for trouble."

Ling Chen waved his hand impatiently, "Less nonsense, call someone if you can. I know people from Old City all pay protection money."

"This is self-inflicted." With that, the manager quickly pulled out his phone and stepped aside.

"What are you doing?"

Leng Feifei looked anxiously at Ling Chen, whispering, "I heard Old City is controlled by a gang with great influence. Even our company has to pay protection money on time, not daring to defy them."

Ling Chen smiled slightly, giving her a reassuring look, "Don't worry, I know what I'm doing."

As they spoke, more than ten burly, muscular young men burst into the Starbucks.

The leader shouted as he entered, "Which blind fool dares to cause trouble in Old City."

Seeing the newcomers, the store manager quickly went up, pointing towards Ling Chen and whispering a few words.

"Ling Chen, let's see how you wrap this up." Xu Dong stood by, arms crossed, looking forward to the scene.

Just then, the leader and his menacing gang approached Ling Chen.

Onlookers stepped aside, fearing being caught in any potential violence.

However, after taking a good look at Ling Chen, the leader's expression subtly changed. Then, under everyone's gaze, he did something surprising.

"Chen."

The leader bowed, appearing extremely respectful.

"Chen." The followers echoed in unison.

Ling Chen smiled, saying, "We're all friends here, no need for such politeness."

"Chen, what do you need us to do?"