

The Beauty 511

Chapter 511 Jiang Xinwu

Ling Chen glanced at Xu Dong, whose face was full of surprise, and spoke, "Go to their company tomorrow and tell their boss that I take a strong dislike to this person. If he knows what's good for him, he should know what to do."

"Understood."

"Also, spread the word that as long as it's within East Sea City, any company that dares to hire him cannot offer a salary higher than two thousand. If anyone dares to go against my wishes, don't blame me for being unkind. Did you get that?"

The young man replied, "Very clear."

After listening to Ling Chen and the young man's conversation, Xu Dong's face turned pale in an instant. His mouth opened and closed a few times, but he couldn't utter a single word.

"Feifei, let's go."

Having dealt with the trivial matter, Ling Chen stood up and walked towards the door. When passing by Xu Dong, Ling Chen stopped and said, "Mr. Xu, since you're more capable than me, I believe you will surely find a satisfying job in East Sea City."

Leaving Starbucks, the outside cold wind grew sharper. Ling Chen wrapped up his collar and looked at Leng Feifei, whose cheeks were red, and said with concern, "I'll take you home first."

"It's not necessary, you go about your business. My home is nearby." After speaking, Leng Feifei bit her lip, her expression shy and bashful as she said, "Ling Chen, sorry for the incident just now, don't take it to heart."

Ling Chen smiled lightly, "It's fine, I'm not that narrow-minded."

"I'm going back then, let's chat again when you're free."

"Okay."

Watching Leng Feifei's retreating figure, Ling Chen did not linger long in the Old City District and took a car back to Wealthy Manor by himself.

Upon arriving at the gates of the manor, he saw many reporters still outside, having stood there all day refusing to leave. With no other option, Ling Chen had to enter the Nanrong Family through the side gate of Wealthy Manor.

It was already seven o'clock in the evening when Ling Chen entered his home, and the fragrance of dinner instantly filled the air.

Nanrong Wanqing, who came down from upstairs, saw Ling Chen return and asked, "Where have you been today? Haven't seen you all day."

"A friend had an accident, and they called me to help."

Nanrong Wanqing nodded and did not ask any further.

The next day.

Just after noon, when Ling Chen was about to take a nap, he received a phone call from Hu Fei, who said that he had some leads on the investigation he was asked to look into.

Recognizing the gravity of the situation, Ling Chen immediately drove to the Old City District.

At the courier company, Ling Chen walked into the office and asked, "Fatty, got any results?"

"You asked me to look into the cases of missing persons over the past ten years, right? I spent the whole night on it, and though I haven't finished looking through everything, I think there's no need to continue."

"Why?"

Hu Fei picked up a rough set of data he had compiled, "I accessed the database at the Ministry of Public Security and started looking back from ten years ago. I've only gone through two years' worth of missing person cases so far. According to my investigation, out of these missing persons, there are over a hundred martial artists from different regions and cities, and without exception, they all disappeared without a trace, as if they vanished into thin air."

"So many martial artists missing in just two years can't be a coincidence. Moreover, whoever is behind this is very cautious. They only strike once in each city and will never do so again in nearby cities to avoid drawing suspicion from the authorities."

After hearing Hu Fei's report, Ling Chen furrowed his brows. It seemed his guess was right; the experiment codenamed 'Lucifer' was using martial artists as basic test subjects. If the transformation of the test subjects was successful, their strength would increase significantly.

No wonder Blood Wolf said in the video that only Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion had the power to stop this.

A Tiger List expert undergoing the experiment could potentially approach the strength of a Dragon List expert. By extension, what level of power would an Earthly List expert reach if they completed the experiment?

At this thought, Ling Chen's back broke out in a cold sweat.

"Fatty, have you found out anything about Jiang Xinwu's whereabouts?"

"Not yet, that guy is hiding deep. Unless he shows himself, it's hard to pinpoint his location."

"We must find a way to track him down."

Ling Chen said. From the video left by Blood Wolf, it was evident that the Lucifer experiment had not made progress a year ago. But now, a year later, with Jiang Xinwu reappearing in East Sea City as one of the missing persons, could it mean that the Lucifer experiment had succeeded?

This was crucial intelligence; he had to clarify it.

"By the way!"

At this moment, Hu Fei seemed to recall something and handed a piece of information to Ling Chen, saying, "I've done a deeper investigation on that Jiang Xinwu's information. His parents, as well as his closely acquainted friends from before, are all recorded in this document. Have a look, it might be useful to you."

Hearing this, Ling Chen carefully flipped through the document. Soon, his gaze was arrested by a name on the paper.

What a coincidence!

"Fatty, you keep busy, I'm going out to make a call."

Leaving the office, Ling Chen walked alone to the balcony and took out his mobile phone to dial a number.

Beep... beep...

The call connected, and a hearty voice immediately came from the other end of the phone, "Ling Chen, how come you have time to call me today?"

"Mr. Ye, there's something I'd like to consult with you about."

Ye Liangyong asked, "What's the matter?"

"Do you know someone named Jiang Xinwu?"

"Jiang Xinwu... yes, I know him, but that was a long time ago. Xinwu was a promising youngster, trained in martial arts from a young age, and had solid foundations. I met him at a local martial arts exchange and we hit it off, so we kept in touch. Later, I even invited him to my home as a guest. It's just unfortunate that Xinwu disappeared ten years ago and has been missing ever since. Sigh, after so many years, he's likely in grave danger."

Ye Liangyong sighed, then curiously asked, "Ling Chen, why are you suddenly asking about him? Did you run into him?"

"Jiang Xinwu is not dead; not only is he in East Sea City now, but he has also injured my friend. Luckily I arrived in time to save my friend's life."

"That's impossible! Xinwu would never do such a thing."

"Mr. Ye, you haven't seen him for ten years. People change, and moreover... I suspect he has something to do with the God Organization."

"Are you sure?" Ye Liangyong asked gravely.

"I only suspect it at the moment; there's no proof yet. Mr. Ye, when you knew Jiang Xinwu, how skilled was he?"

"He was about on par with me. With his talent, as long as he worked hard, he could have advanced to the Tiger List in ten years."

Tiger List...

Ling Chen nodded to himself. Judging from the footage from that day, Jiang Xinwu's demonstrated ability was enough to contend with a Dragon List expert.

It was evident; Jiang Xinwu's formidable strength after ten years could only be attained by unusual means.

Could it be... the God Organization's Lucifer experiment had already succeeded?

Chapter 512 Intelligence from the Secret Society

After chatting with Ye Liangyong, Ling Chen hung up the phone, turned around to return to his office, greeted Hu Fei, and then left the courier company alone.

Half an hour later, Ling Chen drove to the outside of Qingyun Martial Arts Hall.

He felt it necessary to talk to He Ziyun about this matter; moreover, he had some intelligence to share with He Ziyun.

Standing outside the gate, Ling Chen knocked on the door. Soon after, the gate opened, and Little Hua poked her head out. Seeing Ling Chen outside, she exclaimed with joy, "Big Brother!"

Ling Chen smiled and intended to pat Little Hua's head, but remembering her true identity, his hand hanging in midair stiffened abruptly. He gave an awkward smile, subtly pulled his hand back to his pocket, and asked, "Is Mr. He in?"

Pouting, Little Hua said with displeasure, "Big Brother, every time you come, it's to see my Master, you never come just to see me."

Ling Chen hastily corrected himself: "This time, I primarily came to see you and then to talk to Mr. He."

Little Hua humphed twice, dissatisfied, "Since you came to see me, why didn't you bring me a gift? That's insincere."

Uh...

Ling Chen couldn't help but give a bitter smile; this little girl was quite demanding.

"I forgot this time; I'll definitely make it up next time," Ling Chen promised.

"You better not forget it next time," Little Hua replied, batting her huge, adorable, and charming eyes. If outsiders saw her, they might find it hard to believe that this seemingly five or six-year-old girl was actually in her twenties.

Ever since learning the truth, whenever Little Hua acted coquettishly around him, Ling Chen felt somewhat unsure how to respond.

Entering Qingyun Martial Arts Hall, Ling Chen casually asked, "Has Xiaozhu come back recently?"

"Xiaozhu has been quite busy lately; she said she needs to stay with her master and doesn't have time to come back."

Ling Chen nodded. The incident on the luxurious ship must have dealt a great blow to Shi Su; as Zhu Xiaozhu was her disciple, she needed to stay by her side and take good care of her.

As they spoke, the two entered the main hall of the Martial Arts Hall.

"Here you are!"

He Ziyun glanced at Ling Chen and pointed to a seat nearby, "Take a seat." Then turning to Little Hua, he said, "Girl, go brew two cups of tea for us."

Obediently, Little Hua nodded and then turned to leave. Once she was out of sight, He Ziyun started, "Liàngyong just called me, he mentioned Jiang Xinwu's matter. Do you think it's related to the God Organization?"

"Mr. He, please look at this first," Ling Chen said as he handed his smartphone to He Ziyun, playing a video recorded by Blood Wolf from start to finish.

After the video ended, Ling Chen put away his phone and said, "This Lucifer experiment is an important research project of the God Organization; they started over ten years ago. I had Hu Fei check for me, and starting ten years ago, every year dozens of martial artists in Huaxia mysteriously disappear without a trace. I suspect they were abducted by the God Organization as experimental subjects, and Jiang Xinwu is one of them. A few days ago, Jiang Xinwu appeared in East Sea City; I suspect that the Lucifer experiment has been successful."

He Ziyun's expression turned grave, "If that's the case, it indeed poses a troublesome issue."

"Exactly!" Ling Chen changed the tone, "Mr. He, there is another very important matter. I received information from a reliable source that over these years, we have been deceived by people from the God Organization."

"What do you mean?"

"All this time, we thought the main forces of the God Organization were concentrated overseas, but that's not the case. The main force of the God Organization has long been rooted in Huaxia; this is their main base. For many years, they have used many smokescreens to confuse us. Unfortunately, they have indeed succeeded in diverting our attention and made us overlook the most critical place."

"Are you sure?" He Ziyun's face slightly darkened, seriously saying, "This is no joking matter."

"I believe the person who gave me the information wouldn't deceive me."

He Ziyun pondered for a moment and then sighed, "It seems that we have all underestimated that mysterious leader of the God Organization. The most dangerous place is the safest place; we thought our defenses were strong enough to prevent the invasion of the God Organization, but we were careless. To put it precisely, we didn't lose to the God Organization, but to our own arrogance. Ling Chen, do you have any other intelligence about the God Organization?"

"There's one thing: the mysterious leader of the God Organization can be confirmed as a person from Huaxia, but his identity is not very clear."

He Ziyun chuckled, "If it was so easy to figure out the identity of the opponent, we wouldn't have been struggling against the God Organization for decades." After speaking, He Ziyun paused thoughtfully and asked, "Who gave you these pieces of information?"

"I don't know; that person didn't tell me, but he claimed to be a friend of my father."

"Secret Society."

"What?" Ling Chen didn't catch on for a moment.

"That person who gave you the information must be from the Secret Society. When it comes to the ability to gather intelligence, no organization in the world surpasses the Secret Society. If there's anyone who could understand the God Organization so thoroughly, it would only be the Secret Society. Ghost has always claimed to be the world's most mysterious organization, but in reality, the truly mysterious ones are the Secret Society and the God Organization, as nobody knows where the main bases of the Secret Society and the God Organization are located, nor who the leaders of these mysterious organizations are." Saying this, He Ziyun sighed, "Since Ghost Base was invaded, all of Ghost's mysterious aura has been stripped away. I heard from Qiao Zhen that the higher-ups have officially issued an order to disband Ghost."

"Mr. He..." Ling Chen opened his mouth, unsure of what to say.

Ghost was an organization founded by He Ziyun; he was the creator of Ghost. Now that Ghost was disbanding, probably no one felt worse than him.

He Ziyun gave a somewhat forced smile, "No organization can consistently endure; for me, the disbanding of Ghost was inevitable, I just didn't expect it to come so soon."

"Mr. He, even though Ghost has disbanded, isn't there still Lonely Wolf? The members of Lonely Wolf were all selected from Ghost; in a way, Lonely Wolf is just a replacement for Ghost, so you don't have to feel too sad."

He Ziyun shook his head, "I'm not sad about that; it's just that I feel it's unworthy for the members of Ghost. They have shed blood and sweat for the country for many years, but in the end, this is their fate. It's a pity."

With that, He Ziyun perked up and said, "Let's not talk about this anymore and instead focus on how to deal with the God Organization. Based on what you just said, Jiang Xinwu should be a key figure."

Chapter 513 Locking Down the Criminal

"Correct." Ling Chen nodded, "I've already had people searching for Jiang Xinwu's whereabouts. All the stations and airports in East Sea City are under close surveillance, so he should not be able to leave. Moreover, I don't think he will leave East Sea City so quickly."

"Why?"

"I think his next target is likely me. The Secret Society informed me that I have been placed on God Organization's assassination list. They will try every possible means to kill me. So, Jiang Xinwu's presence in East Sea City probably has more than one target."

He Ziyun asked worriedly, "If he comes for you, can you handle it?"

Ling Chen smiled slightly, "Mr. He, don't forget, I'm the top of the Newcomer List, my self-preservation abilities are still strong."

"That's true. But God Organization members are always cunning, they act solely to achieve their goals and never hesitate to be ruthless. If Jiang Xinwu comes for you, he certainly won't play by any rules."

"I'm aware of that. The so-called means are nothing but techniques of killing. It's still uncertain who would lose or win when it comes to a showdown. Mr. He, my visit this time is mainly to remind you, God Organization is definitely planning something big. It's best if you alert the General and especially those above, have them prepare their defenses. My words carry little weight, they might not believe me, but it's different with you. You are, after all, the founder of Ghost, your words carry more weight and with the General and others supporting you in the background, those above will surely take it seriously."

"I understand. Don't worry, I will get in touch with them."

Leaving Qingyun Martial Arts Hall, Ling Chen got into his car and headed straight back to Wealthy Manor.

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In the blink of an eye, three days passed.

That evening, Ling Chen, sitting in a Rolls-Royce with Nanrong Wanqing, watched the flowing traffic outside the window, his eyes revealing deep thought.

"Ling Chen."

Hearing Nanrong Wanqing's voice beside him, Ling Chen turned his head and asked, "What's the matter?"

"The suit we ordered last time has been delivered. Try it on when you go back later. Also... there's a party tonight at Yulong Mansion. You'll accompany me."

"Okay." Ling Chen nodded.

Although Nanrong Wanqing didn't say it explicitly, Ling Chen had already learned from Nanrong Hao that today was Nanrong Wanqing's birthday. However, what worried him was that he hadn't prepared a gift even now.

These past few days, he had been so preoccupied with the gift that he hadn't gotten a good night's sleep. After all, this birthday party was extremely important, both for Nanrong Wanqing and for Ling Chen.

That day at Huamei Mall, when Nanrong Wanqing publicly revealed her identity, it was just to set the stage for tonight's birthday party. Tonight, he would appear in an official setting as her boyfriend for the first time. Given Nanrong Wanqing's identity and status in East Sea City, such a move undoubtedly meant public recognition of him. If he failed to impress, it would inevitably lead to disappointment.

In reality, Ling Chen knew very well that Nanrong Wanqing didn't care about the gift. But as a man, he certainly didn't want to be seen as a gigolo clinging to a wealthy woman. Therefore, his gift had to be dazzling, to astonish everyone.

Back home, Ling Chen tried on the suit, which fit perfectly. Worth hundreds of thousands, as a bespoke item, both the materials and the craftsmanship were top-notch.

The party was scheduled to start punctually at 8 o'clock. Ling Chen checked the time; there was still an hour to go. Just enough time for dinner, a bath, and then head out.

But then, his phone in the bedroom suddenly rang.

Ling Chen glanced at the incoming number on the display and hurriedly answered the call.

"Hey! Ling Chen, get over here quickly." Hu Fei's voice came from the other end of the phone.

"What happened?"

"That Jiang Xinwu, there's news on him."

"Can it wait?" Ling Chen was conflicted as he was about to leave for Yulong Mansion, and leaving now would certainly mean missing the party.

"Wait? How can we wait, opportunities come and go in an instant. I finally found out his whereabouts, if you dilly-dally, he might vanish. Enough talk, hurry up, I'm waiting for you at the usual place."

Before Ling Chen could say more, Hu Fei had hung up the phone.

This fatty... Ling Chen shook his head, feeling helpless.

After careful consideration, Ling Chen decided to prioritize the more important issue. Jiang Xinwu was key in the fight against God Organization, and he had to find out more.

Changing his clothes, Ling Chen left the bedroom, went upstairs to inform Nanrong Wanqing. He didn't mention where he was going, just said he had something urgent to attend to and asked her to head to Yulong Mansion first, assuring her that he would arrive on time.

Nanrong Wanqing considerately didn't say much, only reminding him to be careful.

Leaving Wealthy Manor, Ling Chen immediately drove to the Old City.

At the courier company's office, Hu Fei was already prepared, pulling Ling Chen directly into the car.

Seated in the passenger seat, Hu Fei cradled a laptop, typing on the keyboard, and said, "Let's go to Vanke Road."

Vanke Road... such a familiar name!

A thought struck Ling Chen. Wasn't that the road outside Wealthy Manor?

"Fatty, is Jiang Xinwu hiding on Vanke Road?"

"Half an hour ago, the surveillance camera on Vanke Road caught Jiang Xinwu. Though it was just a profile shot, facial recognition software analysis says there's an eighty-five percent chance it's him."

"Then it must be him."

Saying this, Ling Chen started the engine and sped towards the destination.

Along the way, Ling Chen took back roads to avoid traffic lights. In less than fifteen minutes, they arrived at Vanke Road.

"There." Hu Fei pointed at a Western restaurant by the road through the car window, "The surveillance caught Jiang Xinwu entering that place. Don't know if he's still there now."

"You wait in the car. I'll go take a look."

Exiting the car, Ling Chen concealed the Tianling Blade he carried and stepped into the Western restaurant.

It was dinner time and the restaurant was crowded with customers. Ling Chen entered, glancing around the hall in search of Jiang Xinwu. He had seen a photo of Jiang Xinwu from ten years ago, and even after a decade, his appearance wouldn't have changed much and would be easy to recognize.

"Sir, how many are in your party?" A smiling waiter asked.

"I'm looking for my friend. By the way, do you have private rooms?"

"Yes, they're on the second floor. Would you like me to take you there?"

"No need to trouble yourself, I'll go up on my own."

Not seeing Jiang Xinwu in the hall, Ling Chen figured the man might be in one of the private rooms. After dismissing the waiter, he climbed the stairs to the second floor.

Walking down the corridor, he listened to the sounds coming from behind the private room doors, eliminating them one by one as suspects.

After a moment, Ling Chen stopped in front of the private room at the end of the corridor, his gaze fixed on the door, eyebrows slightly raised. Then, he reached for the Tianling Blade, took hold of the doorknob with his other hand, gently turned the lock, and prepared to enter.

Chapter 514 Encounter in a Dead End

However, the moment Ling Chen was about to push the door, his hand suddenly stiffened, and his eyes gradually became solemn. The Tianling Blade was already drawn halfway from his waist.

Although the door to the private room wasn't opened yet, Ling Chen could sense that the person inside had also grasped the door handle at the same time he did. Moreover, not only did Ling Chen feel the presence of the other party, but the person inside must have also become aware of his presence. For a moment, both parties silently held onto the door handle, neither making a rash move.

Ling Chen clenched the Tianling Blade tightly, his breathing slowly evening out as he listened intently to the sounds coming from behind the door.

Despite the barrier of a door, Ling Chen could faintly hear a breathing sound.

Jiang Xinwu!

It must be him behind the door.

Just as Ling Chen was silently contemplating his next move, a waiter delivering food happened to pass by. Seeing Ling Chen standing quietly at the door, motionless and with a grave expression, the waiter asked with concern, "Sir, do you need any help?"

Ling Chen opened his mouth, about to send the waiter away. However, before he could speak, he suddenly heard a loud 'bang' next to his ear, as a fist punched straight through the door panel, aiming a blow toward the outside.

This sudden change caused Ling Chen's complexion to shift slightly as he hastily retreated two steps back to avoid the punch. Immediately after, without waiting for Jiang Xinwu to rush out from the private room, Ling Chen swiftly closed in with a forceful kick to the door, kicking it open, and then charged in wielding the Tianling Blade.

Eh?

After entering the private room, Ling Chen was surprised to discover that the room was empty. And on the left side of the room, the anti-theft net outside the window had been broken, revealing a large opening—Jiang Xinwu must have escaped through there.

Without a moment to spare, Ling Chen crawled out through the anti-theft net and leaped, jumping directly from the second-floor down to the ground.

This was an alley located behind the Western restaurant, with two streets connected to its left and right sides. At this moment, Jiang Xinwu had long since vanished without a trace, and it was unclear which street he had fled down.

Ling Chen frowned slightly, the alley paved with concrete offered no way to determine the direction based on footprints. After pondering for a moment, Ling Chen took out his cell phone and dialed Hu Fei's number.

"Fatty, Jiang Xinwu has escaped. He should be nearby; help me look for him."

"Received!"

After hanging up the call, Ling Chen randomly chose a direction and went from the alley onto the street, observing the pedestrians on the roadside in hopes of discovering Jiang Xinwu's whereabouts.

Several minutes passed, and there was still no news from Hu Fei's side, indicating that he was unable to find Jiang Xinwu on the surveillance cameras either.

What a pity!

Ling Chen sighed inwardly; it wasn't easy to have located the target, only to let him escape.

With no other choice, Ling Chen took out his cell phone, ready to tell Hu Fei to withdraw for now. But at that moment, a strong sense of crisis suddenly surged in his heart.

Almost instinctively, Ling Chen swiftly turned his head to look behind him. And at that instant, he saw a dagger with a cold gleam thrusting straight at him, its speed incredibly fast.

Not good!

Ling Chen's pupils contracted as his body quickly dodged to the side, narrowly avoiding the dagger's attack. Had he been a second slower, his waist might have been pierced by the dagger.

Seeing Ling Chen evade the sneak attack, the man wielding the knife was slightly taken aback. Without any hesitation, he immediately turned and sprinted toward an adjacent alley.

Watching the silhouette of the fleeing figure, Ling Chen's lips curled into a slight smile, and he let out a soft chuckle.

Let's see where you can run to!

With that, Ling Chen stretched his legs and quickly pursued Jiang Xinwu.

The small paths in the alley were intricate and crisscrossing. Ling Chen closely followed behind Jiang Xinwu, maintaining a distance of more than ten meters. Jiang Xinwu's choice of escape routes indicated that he was not familiar with this area and was blindly selecting his path.

Several minutes passed, and Jiang Xinwu, who was in flight, suddenly stopped in his tracks, slightly furrowing his brow at the high wall in front of him.

A dead end!

Ling Chen, who was chasing from behind, saw this scene and immediately smirked.

"Jiang Xinwu, surrender, you can't run away."

Hearing Ling Chen's voice, Jiang Xinwu slowly turned around, facing Ling Chen with a calm demeanor and said deliberately, "Don't celebrate too soon. You should only speak after you manage to defeat me."

Ling Chen drew out the Tianling Blade, leisurely saying, "Jiang Xinwu, I know you're now working for the God Organization. If you're willing to cooperate with us and provide intel about the God Organization, I can plead on your behalf to lessen your sentence."

"Thanks for the kind offer, but I don't need it. I advise you to worry about yourself instead—whether you can walk out of here alive is still an uncertainty."

Seeing Jiang Xinwu's composed and fearless appearance, Ling Chen felt a surge of doubt. This guy was not at all scared, either he had enough confidence in his own skills, or he had some backup.

Thinking this, Ling Chen's expression suddenly changed, and he cursed inwardly.

He had been so focused on finding Jiang Xinwu that he had overlooked something very important.

If he remembered correctly, when he burst into the private room, there seemed to be three sets of tableware on the round table.

Could it be... there wasn't just Jiang Xinwu in the private room at that time?

As thoughts flashed through his mind, a series of footsteps approached from behind.

Ling Chen turned his head just in time to see two unfamiliar men walking toward him from the left and right, forming a triangular pincer with Jiang Xinwu.

Just as he suspected!

Ling Chen frowned slightly, realizing that there wasn't just one person, but three.

Jiang Xinwu spoke with an indifferent tone, "Did you think I would face you alone? You're different from Kaelina; at best, she's just an assassin with some mediocre skills. But you're the top expert on the Newcomer List, I naturally can't treat you the same way as her - that would be far too disrespectful."

Ling Chen smiled faintly, "So, should I thank you for taking me so seriously?"

"Jiang Xinwu, stop wasting time with him, let's kill him quickly. The higher-ups are waiting for our report," urged a middle-aged man.

Ling Chen sized up the two men and asked, "I haven't had the pleasure of knowing your names."

"He Chen."

"Huang He."

Hearing these two names, Ling Chen immediately recalled the missing persons list Hu Fei had given him. He Chen and Huang He—these two names were indeed on the list; they were the people who had disappeared at the same time as Jiang Xinwu.

Thinking, Ling Chen glanced at his phone. It was already 7:40, and Nanrong Wanqing's birthday dinner would start in twenty minutes.

Time was of the essence. He needed a quick resolution.

Accompanied by a streak of cold light, the blade of the Tianling Blade flashed out.

"The three of you, I'm in a hurry. Let's all fight together."

As those words fell, Jiang Xinwu and the others exchanged glances, each drawing their weapons and slowly advancing towards Ling Chen.

Sensing the palpable intent to kill emanating from them, Ling Chen stood still, his gaze sweeping over each of the three before finally locking onto Huang He.

Among the three, only Huang He carried the most peculiar weapon—a large pair of scissors as long as an arm with very sharp blades. Moreover, among the three of them, Huang He was the most oppressive, likely being the strongest.

Chapter 515 The Fierce Battle (Part 1)

"Kill!"

With a cold shout, Jiang Xinwu swung two one-foot-long blades and leaped towards Ling Chen, striking from both sides. At the same time, He Chen and Huang He launched their attacks from behind, pinching Ling Chen in a way that left him with no retreat.

Seeing his escape route blocked, Ling Chen's eyebrows knitted slightly. With a light flick of his wrist, the Tianling Blade pierced through the air, meeting the oncoming assault from Jiang Xinwu.

Surrounded by the three assailants, he had to find a way to break through; once trapped, the danger to him would grow exponentially.

Clang!

Accompanied by a crisp ringing sound, the two blades held tightly by Jiang Xinwu trembled, his hands numbed, and the weapons almost dropped to the ground.

Seeing this, Jiang Xinwu's face immediately changed, and he shouted urgently, "The target's tough, be cautious!"

Hearing Jiang Xinwu's cry, Ling Chen's eyebrows raised slightly, and the intensity in his eyes relaxed a little. He had thought Jiang Xinwu's strength to be formidable, but after the recent exchange, he realized that Jiang Xinwu's prowess would rank around the eighth on the Dragon List at most, posing no threat.

With an understanding of Jiang Xinwu's strength, Ling Chen immediately locked onto the direction for his escape, paying no heed to Huang He and He Chen closing in from behind, and charged directly at Jiang Xinwu.

First to take down the weakest, then deal with the other two.

In that moment of rapid thought, a whooshing sound suddenly came from above. Ling Chen looked up, only to see Huang He leap over him from above and land steadily beside Jiang Xinwu.

Then, Huang He turned around, and the large scissors in his hand sprung open, reaching straight for Ling Chen's head.

Without time to think, Ling Chen immediately halted his forward rush. The edge of the Tianling Blade gently tapped the side of the large scissors. Instantly, Huang He's arms trembled slightly, and the scissors deviated from their course.

"Indeed, the top expert of the Newcomer List does have some skill," Huang He said with a smile that didn't reach his eyes.

"Thanks for the compliment!"

"It's just a pity..."

"What's the pity?"

"The pity is that you won't survive tonight." Huang He sneered.

Ling Chen replied indifferently, "Who lives and who dies is still uncertain, don't be so quick to conclude."

"You will undoubtedly die tonight because too many people want you dead."

As soon as the words fell, Ling Chen suddenly heard footsteps coming from the alley. He turned his head and saw two middle-aged men and two old men walking side by side, appearing in his line of sight.

When their eyes met, he immediately felt the venom and resentment emanating from their gaze.

For a moment, Ling Chen had a bad premonition.

"Who are they?"

"People from the Han Family; I suppose you are no stranger to them."

The Han Family!

Ling Chen's mind raced, and he internally cursed, realizing the predicament.

Back at the Heavenly Mechanism Great Ceremony, he fought a life-and-death battle with Han Yu, resulting in Han Yu's tragic death at his hands. The Han Family approaching him now was likely seeking revenge for Han Yu.

"Ling Chen, I've finally found you," the leading old man said coldly. "You killed my grandson, and today you'll pay with your life, without a proper burial place."

Ling Chen faced his opponent squarely and said, "The Han Family really has some guts, daring to collude with the God Organization. Don't say I didn't warn you, you are courting destruction."

"It's none of your business what the Han Family does."

Huang He boasted with a proud smile, "Ling Chen, all thanks to you. Without you, the Han Family would never have so readily accepted our conditions. They knew you had the protection of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, so they didn't dare touch you. But with our God Organization backing them, what is the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion?"

Hearing this, Ling Chen's heart sank to rock bottom. If it were just the three of them, he might have a chance to break out. But now, with the addition of the Han Family. Against seven, he truly had little confidence.

Fatty!

Thinking of Hu Fei, Ling Chen stealthily reached into his pocket and blindly pressed on his phone, trying to call Hu Fei for help.

But at this moment, the sharp-eyed He Chen noticed his action and immediately roared. In an instant, Huang He, Jiang Xinwu, and others quickly moved their legs toward Ling Chen, preventing him from seeking help...

Yulong Mansion.

A Rolls-Royce pulled up at the entrance, Zhong Wei and Liang Zhao Hui got out first, and opened the rear car door.

Then, Nanrong Wanqing gracefully stepped down from the car, dressed in a snow-white evening gown. For tonight's birthday party, she had deliberately worn a diamond-encrusted platinum tiara to match her pristine white dress, looking like a princess standing proudly among the flowers, drawing all eyes to her.

Getting out of the car, Nanrong Wanqing walked up the steps with Zhong Wei and Liang Zhao Hui's escort. When she reached the entrance, she stopped, turned her head to look behind her with a trace of anxiety in her clear, beautiful eyes.

The banquet was about to start, but Ling Chen hadn't appeared, which was a cause for concern. The banquet was not only for celebrating her birthday but more importantly, to formally reveal her relationship with Ling Chen. Otherwise, she wouldn't have gone to the trouble of hosting such an event, inviting so many dignitaries.

"Zhong Wei, give Ling Chen a call, ask him how much longer he'll be."

"I understand, Chairman."

Saying so, Zhong Wei took out his phone and dialed Ling Chen's number.

A minute passed, Zhong Wei put down his phone and shook his head, "I called twice, no answer. Chairman, all the guests are here; perhaps you should go in first, Ling Chen might be on his way."

"Alright then," Nanrong Wanqing nodded lightly.

At that moment, in the deserted alley, Ling Chen stood at the corner, breathing laboriously, his arm holding the Tianling Blade trembling slightly, his face pale.

So strong!

With the Han Family joining in, Ling Chen was completely outmatched. Seven experts from the Dragon List, with Huang He's strength reaching the level of projecting Inner Strength outside his body; he alone was enough to match Ling Chen, not to mention the other six Dragon List level masters to assist.

During his heavy breathing, the phone in his pocket rang again. Without thinking, he knew it was Nanrong Wanqing calling to hurry him.

Sadly, he had no time to answer. Facing the encirclement of seven masters, he could not afford to be distracted.

"Ling Chen, surrender, there's no need to struggle like a trapped beast, you can't escape. It's better to give up rather than wasting energy, perhaps I can grant you a swift end," Huang He said.

Ling Chen breathed heavily, silently staring at his opponents.

Suddenly, his eyes slowly closed, and his whole body seemed to relax, his breathing gradually steadied.

Seeing Ling Chen's actions, Huang He sneered and gave a glance to Jiang Xinwu beside him. The latter understood and, holding two sharp blades, immediately walked forward.

However, just as Jiang Xinwu was about to approach, Ling Chen's eyes suddenly snapped open, shining with a cold light that startled Jiang Xinwu, causing him to hastily retreat.

Chapter 516 The Fierce Battle (Part 2)

At this moment, Ling Chen's eyes emitted a cold and gloomy light, as if all emotional fluctuations were erased, leaving only a bone-chilling coldness, like a bloodthirsty and brutal beast lurking in the darkness.

For some reason, gazing upon Ling Chen's bloodthirsty eyes, Huang He and the others felt an involuntary chill in their hearts. At their level, such emotions were rare. Yet, facing Ling Chen, this feeling was completely uncontrollable.

"Stop wasting time, let's go together and kill him," He Chen said coldly.

Instantly, Huang He wielding that large pair of scissors, took the lead, charging towards Ling Chen, the others followed closely, cornering Ling Chen against a wall, all kinds of weapons greeting his body.

Seeing the various weapons attacking, Ling Chen's face showed no emotional fluctuation, his expression cold and indifferent, like an unmelting iceberg, chilling and bone-piercing.

Suddenly, the still-standing Ling Chen finally reacted. His body leaned forward, rapidly advancing with his feet. Following that, his waist twisted, a nimble change of direction, slipping through the gaps between two weapons.

"Where do you think you're going!" Jiang Xinwu roared, immediately moving to the back, blocking Ling Chen's retreat, his two blades thrusting straight at Ling Chen's neck.

As the blades approached, Ling Chen did not dodge, but instead moved closer to the two blades. However, as he closed in, the Tianling Blade, held horizontally in the air, aimed directly for Jiang Xinwu's vital spot.

The blade of the Tianling Blade was three feet long, while Jiang Xinwu's blade was only one foot long. In comparison, even if the Tianling Blade pierced Jiang Xinwu's body, his blade could not reach Ling Chen.

Seeing the disadvantage, Jiang Xinwu knew his weapon was inferior and hastily retreated backward, avoiding a direct confrontation with Ling Chen.

As he stepped back, four skilled members of the Han Family immediately filled his spot, sealing Ling Chen's escape route, continuing to trap him in the corner.

Hiss!

At that moment, Huang He's large scissors exerted force, taking advantage of Ling Chen being restrained by the Han Family, silently approaching from the side, launching a sneak attack and inflicting a wound on Ling Chen's thigh.

In an instant, blood gushed from the wound, quickly staining his trouser leg red.

However, Ling Chen seemed not to feel the pain in his leg, his movements were not affected at all, his attack speed even increased, making it hard to guard against.

"Get out of the way!"

In the melee, a member of the Han Family seized the opportunity, leaped forward, his long sword thrusting fiercely from the crowd, aiming straight for the back of Ling Chen's neck.

Hearing the whooshing sound by his ear, Ling Chen instantly reacted, forcing He Chen and others back a couple of steps, then striking back with his sword.

But before the Tianling Blade could hit its mark, a large pair of scissors suddenly extended, clamping tightly onto the blade, making the Tianling Blade immovable.

Seeing this, that member of the Han Family sneered: "Ling Chen, meet your death!"

As the opponent's long sword drew close, a sharp glint suddenly burst forth from the sinister gaze in Ling Chen's eyes. Immediately afterward, a scream was heard, and the Han Family member who had leapt towards him fell from mid-air, his chest bleeding profusely, his body twitching uncontrollably, soon becoming unresponsive.

Seeing one of their own killed, the other three Han Family members were instantly filled with shock and rage, their faces twisted with hatred as they madly rushed forward, wanting to tear Ling Chen to pieces.

"Be careful!"

Huang He slightly furrowed his brows, fearing something might happen to them, and quickly voiced a warning.

Others might not know how that Han Family member died, but he was crystal clear about it. Although he had clamped the Tianling Blade's edge with his large scissors, Ling Chen's Martial Arts level had reached a point where he could project Inner Strength externally. Just now, that Han Family person was pierced through the chest and killed instantly by the Inner Strength emitted from the tip of the blade.

Unfortunately, the Han Family members had already been overwhelmed by their rage, casting rationality aside. No one cared about Huang He's warning as they desperately sought to kill Ling Chen.

Seeing three Han Family members charging towards him, Ling Chen, with a stern expression, flicked his wrist and retrieved the Tianling Blade from Huang He's large scissors. Immediately after, he pointed the blade tip, and the handle of the Tianling Blade instantly extended, transforming from a sword into a long spear.

The first Han Family member who rushed in didn't even react before he was pierced by the suddenly elongated blade.

Another person dead!

At this, the other two Han Family members finally calmed down, hastily retreating, fearful of becoming the next corpse.

At this moment, Huang He gestured to everyone not to be hasty. The chaos just now had allowed Ling Chen to kill two people.

"This guy is problematic, it feels like he has become a different person, have you noticed?"

Hearing He Chen's question, Huang He didn't say a word, just nodded in acknowledgment. He too had noticed a significant change in Ling Chen compared to before.

Jiang Xinwu frowned and snorted coldly, "We have so many people, are we still unable to handle him?"

"Don't be too careless. This kid has been acknowledged by Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, he must not be simple. Leave the frontal engagement to me, and you guys look for opportunities from the sides," Huang He said.

"Understood!"

He Chen and the others nodded, then dispersed to both sides. At the same time, Huang He stepped forward alone, drawing Ling Chen's attention.

"Go!"

As his words fell, Huang He swung his large scissors, aiming straight for Ling Chen's head. However, a longer weapon has its advantages, and with the long spear in hand, Ling Chen simply pointed it and deflected Huang He's attack.

Not waiting for Huang He to strike again, Ling Chen stepped forward aggressively, his long spear creating a multitude of spear shadows.

Seeing that Ling Chen's focus was solely on Huang He, Jiang Xinwu and He Chen exchanged glances and immediately launched a surprise attack from the side. In a blink of an eye, the two men closed to within two meters around Ling Chen.

Seeing his comrades engaging, Huang He slightly relaxed, finally alleviating some pressure from the front.

But just then, Huang He realized his miscalculation.

Facing the surprise attack from Jiang Xinwu and He Chen, Ling Chen didn't bother about them at all, not even distracted to counter their strikes, but instead focused all his energy on Huang He, intent on defeating him.

This course of action resulted in several new wounds on Ling Chen's body. However, it seemed like Ling Chen felt no pain. Not only that, but after each injury, his speed and strength appeared to significantly increase.

"Help me, quickly help me!"

At that moment, Huang He, who was fighting directly against Ling Chen, cried out loudly, urgently asking Jiang Xinwu and He Chen for help.

He had mistakenly thought Ling Chen would be distracted by Jiang Xinwu and He Chen's side attack, thus he had relaxed his guard, only to find that Ling Chen paid no attention to them, instead increasing his attack's intensity.

In a moment, his defense was precarious, possibly collapsing at any moment.

"Die!"

Suddenly, Ling Chen roared explosively, his spear seeming to contain endless power, unstoppable, thrusting directly towards Huang He's throat.

Chapter 517 The Fierce Battle (Part 2)

Seeing the long spear thrusting towards him, Huang He's pupils constricted, and he quickly raised the large scissors in his hands, locking the blade around the spearhead to halt its advance.

Dangerous!

Looking at the sharp spearhead less than two inches away from his throat, Huang He silently congratulated himself.

Just then, Jiang Xinwu, who had caught up from behind, swung two sharp blades viciously towards Ling Chen's back.

In an instant, both blades plunged deep into Ling Chen's flesh, piercing right through his chest.

Success!

Jiang Xinwu let out a loud laugh, filled with pride. However, his smile did not last long before he was shocked by the scene before him.

Far from collapsing from his severe injuries, the cold severity in Ling Chen's eyes only intensified. With a single shove of his arm, the spearhead, originally locked by the large scissors, broke free from its restraints and thrust swiftly forward, piercing directly through Huang He's throat, with hot blood spattering everywhere.

Huang He's eyes widened in disbelief as he looked at the spearhead, his mouth slightly agape as if he wanted to say something. But before his last words could escape, his body fell straight down, devoid of life.

Retracting his long spear, Ling Chen glanced at Huang He's corpse and then shifted his gaze to Jiang Xinwu and the others.

Feeling the icy chill radiating from Ling Chen's eyes, Jiang Xinwu felt a shiver crawl from the soles of his feet, involuntarily taking a step back.

"How is this possible?" He wondered silently.

To have received such grave injuries yet still be capable of killing; moreover, Ling Chen didn't seem to show a trace of weakness, as if he were someone brimming with vigor.

Watching Ling Chen approach step by step, Jiang Xinwu and He Chen unconsciously stepped back, fear evident on their faces.

Now that Huang He was dead, they truly lacked confidence.

"What are you two doing standing there? Hurry up and get him!"

He Chen glanced at the Han Family members beside him and urged them.

"He's so badly injured, he couldn't possibly still have the strength," said a member of the Han Family, though the remark sounded more like self-comfort.

"Go, kill him!"

Thereupon, two members of the Han Family no longer hesitated; the more they did, the more unsettled they became.

As they charged at him, Ling Chen flicked his wrist, and the long spear instantly transformed into a blur of shadows, piercing through the necks of the two men, giving them no chance to react.

"Run!"

Seeing the two Han Family members fall easily to Ling Chen's hands, Jiang Xinwu and He Chen no longer hesitated, immediately turning and running towards the alley's exit.

However, just as they turned, a person suddenly flew overhead—Ling Chen. He lightly stepped on their shoulders with the tips of his feet, using the momentum to rise and land steadily in front of them, blocking their escape route.

Seeing this, He Chen and Jiang Xinwu's complexions changed.

"Split up!"

Making a rapid decision, Jiang Xinwu bolted towards Ling Chen's left side. Simultaneously, He Chen moved his legs and ran straight to the right.

As the two split up, Ling Chen, without a moment's thought, went straight for He Chen, pouncing on him like a hungry tiger, intercepting the fleeing He Chen.

Bad luck!

He Chen's expression shifted slightly, not expecting his luck to be so poor. Ling Chen didn't go after anyone else but targeted him instead.

"Xinwu, save me!"

Hearing He Chen's plea for help, Jiang Xinwu looked back. Seeing that He Chen was stopped by Ling Chen, he hesitated for a moment, then said in a deep voice, "You're on your own now."

After speaking, without waiting for He Chen to speak again, Jiang Xinwu's figure had already disappeared at the entrance of the alley.

Damn it!

He Chen silently cursed, watching Ling Chen who was steadily approaching. He swallowed his spit and tried to placate, "Ling Chen, I was just following orders, I didn't want to kill you. If you let me go, we can talk things over, I can tell you about the secrets of the God Organization, and also... Eh..."

Before he could finish speaking, the tip of the spear unmercifully pierced through He Chen's throat.

As He Chen's body fell to the ground, Ling Chen put away his spear, leaving behind six corpses, and turned to walk outside.

However, not far after stepping out, with a 'thump', Ling Chen's body suddenly collapsed on the ground, passing out.

...

It was hard to tell how much time had passed when Ling Chen slowly regained consciousness in a daze.

"Ling Chen, how do you feel, any better?"

Hearing the familiar voice next to his ear, Ling Chen moved his lips weakly and asked, "Fatty, what time is it now?"

"It's almost nine o'clock."

Nine o'clock... shit! Nanrong Wanqing's birthday party started at eight, and he was already an hour late. Upon that realization, Ling Chen struggled to get up and said, "Hurry up and take me to Yulong Mansion."

"Have you lost your mind!" Hu Fei glared and said, "Do you realize how severe your injuries are? If you don't go to the hospital now, you might not even survive."

Ling Chen waved his hand impatiently, "Cut the crap and hurry up, these injuries won't kill me."

While talking, he tore open his shirt to reveal his chest wound, which had been simply bandaged. Fortunately, Jiang Xinwu's blades had not stabbed through any vitals; otherwise, he would already be dead.

"Fatty, how did you find me?"

"I called you and no one answered. Worried that something happened to you, I had to use the phone signal to determine your location. It's a good thing your phone wasn't switched off; otherwise, I would've been clueless. Hey, weren't you going to see Jiang Xinwu, what happened with those bodies?"

"They were all sent by the God Organization to kill me, but unfortunately, Jiang Xinwu got away," Ling Chen said with a hint of regret.

However, as much as he regretted it, he was even more relieved.

It was lucky that Jiang Xinwu had escaped; otherwise, he would have killed Jiang Xinwu along with the others. By then, he wouldn't have left a single survivor.

Back then, the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion Master had given him two pieces of information – one was about Ling Gengqiu's life records, and the other was an introduction to the Prajnaparamita Sutra.

The Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion Master had once said that the power of the Prajnaparamita Sutra was related to feminine allure and killing. The killing she referred to wasn't the general sense of murder but reaching a selfless state of mind.

In such a state, one could forget the pain and only retain the most primitive desire to kill. Moreover, the greater the pain endured in combat, the more it could stimulate one's potential and display even greater strength.

Without this reliance, it would have been difficult for him to survive the siege of Huang He and the others today.

This killing state was strong but somewhat uncontrollable. Once entering this state, one would become indifferent to all relationships, striking down anyone without hesitation.

"Hey! Are you really going to Yulong Mansion?"

"Stop talking nonsense, start the car. Oh! And call Haozi to go home and grab me a set of clean clothes."

"You and your... barely holding onto life, and yet insisting on celebrating a woman's birthday, I'm astounded by you."

"Wait until you have a girlfriend, then you won't say such things. But with a face like yours, I guess not many women will fancy you."

Chapter 518 Miss's Birthday Banquet (Part 1)

"Pfft!" Hu Fei said disdainfully, "Women these days are too materialistic, as long as you have money, what kind of woman can't you find? Fat Daddy here has nothing else in spades but cash, and believe it or not, with a pile of cash thrown down, countless women would come begging to spend their lives with me."

Hearing this, Ling Chen bursts into a smile, unreservedly retorting: "Just looking at you, I can tell you've never been in love. What's so great about women who chase after material things? Besides, not every woman is a gold digger like you say. Look at me, when I first came to East Sea City, I didn't have a penny to my name, yet now... the richest woman in East Sea City has been conquered by me. So you see, it's not a question of money, but personal charm. If you had my handsome looks and charm, you would have been off the market a long time ago."

Frustrated, Hu Fei retorted, "Don't get so smug with me, I really can't see how Nanrong Wanqing could fall for someone like you."

"Alright, enough joking around. Let's talk business. Jiang Xinwu is still on the run, and we must find his whereabouts before he leaves East Sea City."

"Don't worry, I've already given the orders, the intelligence department's members will be keeping an eye out at all times. The moment Jiang Xinwu shows up, we will definitely find him."

While talking, Ling Chen, who was sitting in the passenger seat, took out his cellphone and started browsing through his contacts.

Hu Fei glanced over and asked casually: "Who are you planning to call?"

"Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. The people who ambushed me today included members of the God Organization and the Han Family. Since the Han Family is in cahoots with the God Organization, I must inform Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion to deal with them."

The ability of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion to maintain its impartial standing in the Martial Arts world is not just due to its formidable power, but more importantly because it has always upheld justice in the Martial Arts world. The Han Family, being a martial arts family, has colluded with evil forces and violated the rules of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, who will certainly not turn a blind eye.

...

Yulong Mansion.

Nanrong Wanqing was holding a stem glass, the semi-transparent champagne swirling gently in the glass like crystal, a few droplets spilling onto her hand without her noticing. Her mind had already wandered far from the party.

Mingling among the crowd, as the protagonist of tonight's banquet, wherever Nanrong Wanqing went, she would hear a string of blessings. Yet those blessings only elicited a forced smile from her.

It was already nine o'clock, and Ling Chen still hadn't appeared. His phone was unreachable too, which dampened her mood. Given her personality, she didn't need to hold a banquet at all. In previous years, she would stay at home, only spending her birthday with Nanrong Hao and Su Lin, humble yet cozy.

This year, the main reason she held a birthday banquet and invited so many guests was for Ling Chen. She hoped to declare her relationship with Ling Chen to everyone on such an important day. Yet, so much time had passed without seeing the man of the hour.

What's more, several guests she bumped into just now had alluded to Ling Chen, curious as to why he wasn't present. In fact, a good portion of the attendees came for Ling Chen; they wanted to see the man who had won Nanrong Wanqing's favor for themselves.

"Miss Nanrong."

At that moment, a gentle voice sounded from her side.

Nanrong Wanqing turned her head, looking at the person speaking. She slightly lifted her lips and raised the stem glass in her hand as a greeting.

"Miss Nanrong, if I may ask so boldly, why has your male companion not yet arrived after all this time?"

Nanrong Wanqing replied indifferently, "He was delayed by some urgent matters and might be late."

"Any urgent matter should not be more important than Miss Nanrong's birthday, unless..."

Nanrong Wanqing looked directly at the person, asking, "What are you trying to say?"

"Nothing, just... We are all speculating, is Miss Nanrong doing this, perhaps, to shake off the pursuit of others?"

"Pursuit? What do you mean?"

"I know that Miss Nanrong's suitors are not few, and you must have grown tired of their harassment, which is why you made such a decision – to find any man to pose as your partner temporarily, so as to let others give up hope. Otherwise, with Miss Nanrong's esteemed status, why would you choose a security guard as your boyfriend? That would be laughable."

As the two spoke, a number of the young guests around them pricked up their ears, eavesdropping on their conversation. They too wanted to know if Nanrong Wanqing really did what the other person suggested – using a man as a decoy. If that was the case, they all still had a chance.

Being a golden daughter of East Sea City and the chairwoman of Hongyu Group, whether it was her looks or her family background, she was a prime choice, and few men could resist her allure. Remember, when Nanrong Wanqing first took up the position of chairwoman, there were two secretaries arranged for her, one of whom was specifically responsible for dealing with the abundance of date invitations.

In a single day, she would receive at least thirty to forty bouquets sent by men, as well as invitations, all of which were politely refused by Nanrong Wanqing. Over time, some gave up knowing it was hopeless, no longer harboring thoughts about Nanrong Wanqing. However, there were still some who refused to give up.

It wasn't until Zhu Hong appeared a while ago that many suitors felt ashamed and left Nanrong Wanqing be for a time.

Now, with Zhu Hong gone from East Sea City, those former suitors inevitably started getting ideas again. The primary reason everyone accepted the invitation to today's birthday banquet was to catch a glimpse of this young man named Ling Chen, to see what outstanding qualities he had to win Nanrong Wanqing's heart.

Nanrong Wanqing gazed at her interlocutor, her delicate eyebrows slightly furrowed and a hint of displeasure in her beautiful eyes.

The man in front of her was Li Gang, also one of her many suitors and one of the most persistent. For three years, apart from holidays, there wasn't a day he didn't send her roses and a handwritten card, each with different words.

Moreover, Li Gang's family was also not to be underestimated; they had a good reputation in East Sea City and were considered well-matched with the Nanrong Family.

Because of his perseverance, his actions left a deep impression on Nanrong Wanqing.

"Mr. Li, if we have to talk about matching social ranks when it comes to love, wouldn't that defeat its purpose?"

"It's true what you say, but we must be rational when it comes to love, not overly sentimental. Miss Nanrong, you should consider more on behalf of the Nanrong Family and Hongyu Group. You need not only affection but also a support, someone who can share the burden with you. That Ling Chen, I don't think he has what it takes. So, I hope you will think it over and not make any rushed decisions."

"Mr. Li, I appreciate your concern, but this is my private matter, and none of anyone else's business. I hope you enjoy your evening."

Seeing that Nanrong Wanqing was about to leave, Li Gang hurriedly reached for her wrist and said, "Wanqing..."

Chapter 519 The Young Lady's Birthday Banquet (Part 2)

Before Li Gang could finish speaking, Nanrong Wanqing frowned, lightly shook her arm, and struggled free from Li Gang's grasp, saying with dissatisfaction, "Mr. Li, please respect yourself."

"Sorry, Wanqing, I didn't mean anything else, I just wanted to tell you that I..."

"What do you want to say? Just go ahead and let everyone hear it."

The voice came through, and both Nanrong Wanqing and Li Gang were startled, turning their heads to look. In an instant, they saw Ling Chen approaching with confident strides, dressed in a sharp suit, his handsome face wearing a faint smile, accompanied by Nanrong Hao.

Seeing Ling Chen arrive, a smile finally appeared on Nanrong Wanqing's pretty face.

"So, you are Ling Chen?" Li Gang looked at Ling Chen expressionlessly, his disdain evident in his words.

"Yes, I am. And you are?"

"Li Gang, General Manager of Dongyu Group, the Chairman is my father."

"Oh!" Ling Chen nodded with a lifted lip, "So you're a second-generation rich."

As he spoke, Ling Chen wrapped his arm around Nanrong Wanqing's slender waist, pulling her close to his body, and whispered in her ear, "Sorry to keep you waiting, something came up on my end that caused a delay."

"It's okay." Nanrong Wanqing expressed her understanding.

Watching their affectionate behavior, Li Gang's expression turned ugly, especially after hearing the phrase 'second-generation rich,' which irked him.

"I heard Mr. Ling works as a security guard at Hongyu Group?" Li Gang spoke up. When he mentioned 'security guard,' he specifically raised his voice to make sure the surrounding people could hear clearly.

Ling Chen smiled slightly: "I don't think that's a secret. Everyone here should be aware of it."

Li Gang's smile was forced and unpleasant as he said, "Mr. Ling is really something, a mere security guard able to win Miss Nanrong's favor. A toad wanting to eat swan's meat, it seems that this saying isn't wrong."

"Everyone is a person, there is no need to judge a person's worth by their occupation. Although I am a security guard, at least I make a living with my own hands, unlike some people born with a golden key in their mouth, relying on their parents, not having to do anything, just enjoying the benefits."

Upon hearing this, a dark shade flashed in Li Gang's eyes, and his face fell. He could clearly understand the implication in Ling Chen's words, that a mere security guard dared mock him as a do-nothing rich second-generation, truly ignorant of how high the sky and how deep the earth is.

Contemplating, Li Gang quickly changed the subject, "Mr. Ling, today is Miss Nanrong's birthday. Everyone has prepared a gift. Since you are Miss Nanrong's boyfriend, I'm sure your gift must be more precious than others. Why not show it to everyone, so we can all gain some insight?"

Nanrong Wanqing said displeasedly, "Mr. Li, I have already received Ling Chen's gift, there is no need to display it here. As long as I like it, that's all that matters."

Li Gang scoffed, he didn't believe a word Nanrong Wanqing said. Either Ling Chen hadn't given a gift, or it was something embarrassing, that's why Nanrong Wanqing offered an excuse for him.

"That's really a pity." Saying that, Li Gang took out a delicate box from his suit pocket and presented it to Nanrong Wanqing with both hands. Then, under everyone's gaze, he gently lifted the lid off.

Instantly, a beautiful necklace set with various colored diamonds came into everyone's view.

"Miss Nanrong, this is a birthday gift I had custom-made for you, with a total of ninety-nine diamonds. I hope you will like it."

Seeing the gift Li Gang had prepared, an exclamation of surprise arose unanimously from the guests.

Ninety-nine diamonds, not to mention the implied meaning, but the value alone was extraordinary. Indeed, as the heir of the Dongyu Group, his generosity was evident.

Nanrong Wanqing didn't even take a second look and said indifferently, "Mr. Li, thank you for your gift, I appreciate the thought, but this gift is too precious, I cannot accept it. Please take it back."

"That's not acceptable, you can't just take back a gift that's been given. If Miss Nanrong doesn't like it, then just throw it away. I'll prepare another gift later to make up for it."

With those words, Li Gang walked toward a nearby trash can, looking like he was about to throw the necklace in his hand into it.

Seeing his action, Nanrong Wanqing didn't say a word and showed no intention of stopping him.

At this moment, Li Gang stood in front of the trash can. Seeing that Nanrong Wanqing still didn't speak up, he couldn't help feeling embarrassed. He had wanted to provoke Nanrong Wanqing, but she didn't say a word, leaving him no face.

However, since he had already spoken, he had no choice but to throw the necklace in his hand into the trash can with a heavy heart.

Millions simply gone down the drain.

Noticing the gloominess on Li Gang's face, Nanrong Hao couldn't help but snicker: "Chen, this guy is really dumb, putting on an act all the way to this point."

Ling Chen shrugged and said, "He brought it upon himself. Who can he blame?"

"Hey! Chen, what gift did you prepare for my sister?" Nanrong Hao asked curiously.

"You'll know in a bit."

During the conversation, Li Gang returned to their group, still wearing a smile on his face as if the necklace he had just thrown away wasn't his, acting as if nothing had happened.

"Mr. Li, enjoy your time, we have other guests to entertain so we won't accompany you any longer."

Seeing Nanrong Wanqing about to leave, Li Gang suddenly became anxious. He had planned to show off in front of Nanrong Wanqing and overpower Ling Chen, but she didn't give him the chance.

Before Li Gang could speak, a huge image suddenly appeared on the big screen in the banquet hall.

As the sound from the image filled the room, everyone's attention was captured by the big screen.

Nanrong Wanqing looked up at the big screen on the wall. The screen was showing a live broadcast from the local TV station with a cameraman sitting in a helicopter, filming the night view of East Sea City; the buzzing of the helicopter's rotor blades was clearly audible.

"What is this about?"

"Did the banquet hall staff put on the wrong video?"

For a moment, there was a flurry of speculation.

"Sis, I'll go find the manager and have him turn it off right away." Saying that, Nanrong Hao turned to leave.

"Haozi, there's no need."

Nanrong Hao looked at Ling Chen, puzzled. "Chen, why not?"

Ling Chen chuckled slightly: "I arranged it." As he finished, he turned to Nanrong Wanqing by his side and said, "This is the birthday present I prepared for you. I hope you like it."

A gift?

Upon hearing Ling Chen's words, before Nanrong Wanqing could respond, Li Gang couldn't help but sneer: "Hiring some TV crew to shoot some night scenes as a gift? Mr. Ling, that really lacks sincerity."

"Mr. Li, why the rush? This is just the beginning. Just watch, the real show is yet to come."

As soon as Ling Chen spoke, everyone watched the big screen intently, looking forward to the climax of the event.

Chapter 520 The Eldest Miss's Birthday Banquet (Part 3)

Several minutes later, the helicopter soared high into the sky, the camera capturing the entire splendid and bustling night view of East Sea City.

At that moment, a striking red light suddenly appeared in everyone's view on the screen. Following that, the cluster of red light spread swiftly along the street like dominoes, forming a long frame hundreds of meters in length.

Simultaneously, in the middle of the frame, countless groups of red lights lit up on the streets and then extended in various directions, eventually intertwining with each other. Seeing this magnificent scene,

the guests could not help but exclaim in astonishment. However, everyone was still in the dark, not knowing the significance of these red lights.

Just as everyone was puzzled, the helicopter ascended further. As the camera's shooting range increased, the lights on the street converged into a set of English letters, "i, love, y".

At the same time, around those English letters, dazzling rays continuously flickered, forming a massive, spectacular frame.

Seeing those letters form in an instant stunned everyone; they incredulously looked at Ling Chen, their eyes filled with admiration.

This gift might seem simple, but among so many people present, probably none could have achieved it.

Using the entire East Sea City as a canvas and the lights as ink is not something anyone could do. After tonight, the creativity of this gift will probably spread wildly nationwide.

Ling Chen secretly smiled and turned his head to look at Nanrong Wanqing beside him, asking, "Do you like it?"

Nanrong Wanqing gently nodded, her hands tightly clinging to Ling Chen's arm, her eyes brimming with excitement and thrill.

What woman doesn't love romance? Ling Chen's gift undoubtedly hit women's soft spot.

Seeing the smile on Nanrong Wanqing's face, Ling Chen breathed a sigh of relief, finally able to relax. For this gift, he had put a lot of thought into it, not only borrowing over a thousand people from Jiang Hao and Zhao Zhengxiong but also employing hundreds of taxis.

For planning all these, he had hardly slept well for several days. Fortunately, Jiang Hao and the others lacked everything but manpower, otherwise, his plan would have been difficult to accomplish.

Now, seeing Nanrong Wanqing's smile, Ling Chen felt all the hardship was worth it.

In contemplation, Ling Chen glanced at the stunned Li Gang, smiling and asking, "Mr. Li, how do you like my gift?"

Hearing this, Li Gang finally came back from his shock, his face looking ugly.

"Nothing special," Li Gang snorted disdainfully and turned to walk into the crowd.

"Thank you!" Nanrong Wanqing said softly, "This is the best gift I've ever received in my life."

"A lifetime is still very long; who knows, there might be even more surprises later."

Nanrong Wanqing sweetly smiled, saying, "I'll be waiting."

...

At ten o'clock in the evening, the birthday dinner finally ended.

"Captain Zhong, you guys take Sister home first, Chen and I have some business to take care of."

Nanrong Wanqing looked at Nanrong Hao suspiciously and asked, "Where are you going so late at night?"

"That... well, it's a very important private matter. Sister, don't worry, I won't abduct your future brother-in-law," Nanrong Hao joked.

Nanrong Wanqing's face slightly blushed as she cautioned, "Don't stay out too late."

"Got it." With that, Nanrong Hao quickly pulled Ling Chen and walked outside.

Watching their departing figures, Nanrong Wanqing noticed that Ling Chen's walking posture was a bit odd. Moreover, with each step he took, a faint red imprint was left on the ground.

"Zhong Wei, what is that?"

"I'll go check."

Zhong Wei walked forward, touched the red imprint left on the ground, and then sniffed it. A familiar scent came to his nose, and his expression suddenly changed.

It's no wonder Nanrong Hao dragged Ling Chen away, so that's what happened.

"Chairman, it's nothing, it must be that Ling Chen's shoes got stained with alcohol. It's getting late, let us take you back first."

Outside Yulong Mansion, Nanrong Hao supported Ling Chen, and hurried to a car.

Seeing the two of them come out, Hu Fei, who was sitting in the driver's seat, quickly got out of the car, helped open the door, and got Ling Chen into the back seat.

At this moment, Ling Chen lay in the back seat, weak all over, consciousness gradually becoming hazy, already half-unconscious.

"Hurry, to the hospital." Nanrong Hao urged anxiously.

Hu Fei nodded, without a word, quickly started the engine, and drove towards the hospital.

In less than half an hour, Hu Fei ran through more than ten red lights and finally got Ling Chen into the operating room.

Looking at the red light on outside the operating room, Hu Fei muttered, "This guy really suffers for the sake of face; if he had come to the hospital earlier for treatment, it wouldn't have gotten this bad."

"Chen went to great lengths for my sister's birthday; if it were you, you wouldn't miss it either."

"Alright, alright, forget I said anything, I just hope he's okay."

The surgery lasted for more than an hour, and only then was Ling Chen moved to a special care ward. Lying in the hospital bed, Ling Chen looked pale and very weak, just having undergone surgery.

Earlier at the dinner party, although the wound had been treated simply. However, standing with Nanrong Wanqing for so long and moving around caused the wound to rupture. Fortunately, they made it to the hospital in time, or he might have nearly lost his life.

"Haozi, call your sister and tell her we're occupied tonight, and we'll return tomorrow."

"Chen, the doctor said your injuries are serious, you need to stay in the hospital for observation for at least a week."

"Figure out a solution, just make sure your sister doesn't find out, to avoid her worrying."

As they were speaking, the hospital room door was pushed open from the outside. Then, Xia Mutong walked in.

"Officer Xia?"

Seeing the visitor, Ling Chen was slightly startled, then remembered that the hospital he was in was where Kaelina was staying.

"I just met Hu Fei outside, heard you were injured, so I came to see how you are."

Ling Chen forced a slight smile: "Thank you for your concern, Officer Xia."

Xia Mutong kept a stern face and said: "No need for thanks, tell me what really happened."

"It's nothing, just accidentally got hit by a car." Ling Chen casually said.

"Hmph! I knew you wouldn't confess honestly. I just went and asked the hospital, you were injured by a sharp weapon, clearly from a fight. I advise you not to play dumb with me, better explain clearly."

Ling Chen internally grimaced, originally planning to brush it off with an excuse, not expecting Xia Mutong to consult the doctor.

Just as he hesitated whether to tell the truth, Hu Fei suddenly rushed in from outside, excitedly shouting: "Ling Chen, I found the person, that guy is at... uh, Officer Xia, you're here too."

Seeing Xia Mutong in the room, Hu Fei's expression shifted slightly, quickly correcting himself.

"Go on, who did you find?"

"This... I..." Hu Fei stammered, looking at Ling Chen, unsure what to say.

"Fatso, tell her."

Seeing Ling Chen speak up, Hu Fei immediately reported the situation about Jiang Xinwu.