

The Beauty 541

Chapter 541 Wei Quan

"Mr. Louis."

At this moment, a staff member reported, "Mr. Tang has disappeared."

"Disappeared?" Louis's expression changed slightly as he spoke in a deep tone, "What happened?"

"I don't know. Their room is equipped with surveillance cameras, I just checked, and there's nobody inside. Mr. Tang and his entourage have all vanished."

Louis sneered to himself, "It seems those guys weren't sincere about working with us. Activate all surveillance, we must find their whereabouts at all costs."

"Yes."

...

District C.

He Ziyun watched the retreating security personnel, yet he couldn't relax. With his years of experience, he faintly sensed a whiff of unease.

As he pondered, a series of crisp footsteps suddenly echoed in the corridor. He Ziyun looked up and saw a person appearing at the end of the passage. To be precise, it was a man in his forties. His stride was strong, his posture upright, and a sharp light shone in his eyes.

As the man approached, He Ziyun immediately felt an overwhelming aura.

A master!

He Ziyun's pupils contracted slightly. The man before him was not just a master, but a master ranked on the Earthly List.

No wonder those security guards had withdrawn, it turned out a master had been dispatched.

"He Ziyun." The man spoke coldly, "I know you, ranked seventh on the Earthly List."

"Who are you?"

"Wei Quan."

"As a Huaxia national, you assist the God Organization in targeting your own countrymen, don't you feel ashamed?"

Wei Quan's lips curled slightly, his smile cold as he said, "I don't care about that. As long as I can become stronger, I'm willing to do even the most shameful things. A year ago, I was just an obscure figure, unknown in the Martial Arts world. But today, a year later, I've become a master of the Earthly List. For me, this place is a land of fortune, it is where I was reborn."

"People like you, even with high Martial Arts skills, are still the scum of the Martial Arts world."

"Is that so? Well then, I shall see for myself who is the scum."

As his words fell, Wei Quan sneered, suddenly leaning forward with the power of his legs. In an instant, he had closed in on He Ziyun, his fist hurtling towards the face.

He Ziyun stepped back, his waist bending backwards, dodging Wei Quan's fist. Then, he shifted his feet lightly, moving to Wei Quan's side, his palm slightly raised and slowly pressing out. His movement seemed slow, but the Inner Strength it contained reached a terrifying level. Once hit, it would not necessarily kill, but could at least cause Wei Quan serious injury.

Sensing the powerful force in the palm, Wei Quan's face changed in surprise. He tapped his feet rapidly, swiftly evading He Ziyun's attack range. As He Ziyun's Inner Strength dispersed in the air, Wei Quan once again closed the distance, throwing punches from left and right, channeling his Power into them and bringing about a gusting sound.

Through their brief exchange, He Ziyun had gauged Wei Quan's strength, both of them evenly matched. Now, without avoiding any further, He Ziyun raised his palm, attacking with full force, ready to clash with Wei Quan's assault.

But, at that moment, two fierce bursts of wind shot out suddenly from Wei Quan's sleeves, aiming straight for He Ziyun's face.

This sudden change surprised He Ziyun.

With less than a meter between them, it was impossible for He Ziyun, even with his swift reflexes, to avoid the attack from the sleeve arrows.

Swoosh!

In an instant, a deep cut appeared on He Ziyun's left cheek, his face instantly stained with fresh blood.

"You are nothing more than this," Wei Quan said with a smirk of triumph.

"Despicable!"

"The victor is king; the vanquished is the bandit, what's wrong with being despicable?"

After saying that, Wei Quan sneered coldly and pounced on He Ziyun once again.

Watching the approaching Wei Quan, He Ziyun's face turned somewhat unsightly. To think that a high-ranking fighter from the Earthly List would resort to such vile tactics. It was truly difficult to guard against an opponent of equal strength using such means.

Seeing He Ziyun retreating step by step, not daring to confront him head-on, Wei Quan couldn't help but scoff, "What's the matter? Scared?"

After speaking, Wei Quan advanced his steps, ready to continue his aggression. But at this moment, a strong gust of wind suddenly struck from behind.

"Who is it?"

Wei Quan's heart skipped a beat, and he swiftly turned his head to look back. Instantly, he saw a fist rapidly enlarging in his field of vision.

"How dare you!"

Wei Quan roared furiously, quickly shifting his target and swiveled his waist, sweeping his leg in a lash.

As Wei Quan directed his attention behind him, He Ziyun didn't say a word, his toes lightly tapped the ground, quickly moving closer to Wei Quan and slammed his palm forcefully.

Trapped between attacks from both front and back, even with Wei Quan's speed, there was no way to deal with assaults from both sides simultaneously.

After a brief hesitation, Wei Quan quickly made a decision and focused his attention on He Ziyun. After all, being a powerhouse of the same caliber, the threat from his opponent was far greater than from others.

Bang!

Accompanied by a muffled sound, a powerful punch smashed harshly onto Wei Quan's back.

Instantaneously, Wei Quan's face turned pale as he felt his internal energy roiling, almost unable to refrain from spitting out blood.

Strike while the enemy is sick, take their life!

Seeing Wei Quan wounded, He Ziyun didn't hesitate at all, immediately intensifying his attack, his palms striking out in rapid succession. Caught off guard, Wei Quan's chest was hit solidly by a palm, his body flying out and heavily crashing to the ground.

"You... You're despicable!"

Wei Quan endured the pain, shouted angrily with blood in his mouth.

"The victor is king; the vanquished is the bandit, what's wrong with being despicable?" He Ziyun spoke, "Those words, they seem to be yours, right?"

"Mr. He, why bother talking nonsense with him, just kill him quickly." Ling Chen urged from the side.

Originally, Ling Chen wanted to find Liu Xiyao, but the main control room's door was tightly locked, and he alone had no way to open it. Moreover, the system had already restarted, and there was no point in him staying there. After some thought, he simply came to find He Ziyun to discuss their next move.

After dealing with Wei Quan, He Ziyun looked at Ling Chen and asked, "What's your idea?"

Ling Chen pointed towards the passage ahead and said, "Just now, Louis sent many people to besiege you. I suspect the reason he did this was not because he values you, but because he values the security of this area."

Hearing this, He Ziyun's mind stirred, and he said with a hint of realization, "You mean..."

"This area must be hiding the secrets of the God Organization. Given that we can't escape for the time being, in my opinion, we might as well look around."

"That's a good idea." He Ziyun nodded, agreeing with Ling Chen's suggestion.

The two then followed the passage to the end, where they came across a large door sealed with a yellow warning sign.

"Wei Quan came out from here just now."

Ling Chen looked around the door and noticed a biometric device that included both fingerprint and retinal recognition on the side.

"Do you have a way to open this door?"

Upon hearing He Ziyun's question, Ling Chen's gaze shifted and looked at Wei Quan's corpse, his eyes suddenly lighting up.

Chapter 542 Lucifer's Laboratory

Ling Chen dragged Wei Quan's corpse, placing his hand on the fingerprint scanner. After the scan, the red light instantly turned green. After passing the first layer of authentication, Ling Chen pried open Wei Quan's eyelids and continued with the retina scan.

After the dual identity verification was complete, Ling Chen stared intently at the blast-proof door, waiting for it to open. However, more than ten seconds passed without any reaction from the door.

Could it be that this blast-proof door requires additional identity verification? Ling Chen thought to himself.

During his contemplation, there was a light 'click' sound, and the blast-proof door suddenly cracked open in the middle. Following that, the door slowly opened.

Seeing this, Ling Chen breathed a sigh of relief.

Finally, it's open.

However, at this moment, in the main control room, Louis was watching Ling Chen and He Ziyun enter through the blast-proof door via the surveillance camera, a cold smile spilling over his lips.

"Mr. Louis, is it really a good idea to let them in?" a staff member asked with concern.

"What's there to be afraid of. Since they want to go in and have a look, let them go," Louis said unconcernedly. Little do Ling Chen and the others know, if it wasn't for him remotely operating in the main control room, inputting the final permissions, they would have never been able to enter.

Such a core area of the base is not that easy to enter.

At this moment, Ling Chen and He Ziyun were oblivious to what was happening in the main control room; their attention was captured by the equipment behind the blast-proof door.

Behind the blast-proof door was a huge laboratory, filled with precision instruments and equipment. However, the most eye-catching was the circular machine in the center.

The machine looked like a ring with a diameter of about two meters with a support on each side, clamping the ring to the floor. On the surface of the ring were many tubular objects, likely infusion tubes, which were connected to various devices.

Ling Chen noticed that the majority of the equipment in the lab seemed to be serving that ring-shaped machine.

He Ziyun looked at the machine intently and asked in confusion, "What is this machine?"

"Mr. He, you've seen this kind of machine before."

Hearing Ling Chen's words, He Ziyun was surprised, "I've seen it? How come I don't recall..." Before he finished speaking, He Ziyun seemed to remember something, showing a sudden realization, and nodded slowly, "I remember now."

Actually, Ling Chen was also curious about this machine when he first came in. But the more he looked at it, the more familiar it felt, as if he'd seen it before. It wasn't until just now that he remembered this machine had appeared in the videos secretly recorded by Blood Wolf.

This was exactly the equipment needed for Lucifer's experiments.

Unexpectedly, they stumbled into such a secretive place.

Coming to a computer, Ling Chen pressed a few buttons to start the equipment. As dialog boxes popped up on the computer screen, Ling Chen began to browse through the files stored on the computer. Since he was there, he wanted to find data related to the Lucifer experiments. If he could take this data with him, he could undoubtedly deal a heavy blow to the God Organization.

However, after Ling Chen found a few hidden files, he discovered they were all locked and needed passwords to open. Although he knew a bit about computers, he wasn't capable of doing such technical work; it would have been easier if Hu Fei was here.

Thinking this, Ling Chen moved behind the computer screen, following the monitor's cables to the wall.

On the wall was a rectangular metal cabinet embedded in the wall. Many wires split from the bottom of the metal cabinet, neatly lined up together.

Glancing at the password lock on the metal cabinet, Ling Chen clenched his fist tightly and threw a punch at the surface of the cabinet.

Bang!

A crisp sound rang out, and Ling Chen instantly punched a fist-sized hole into the metal cabinet.

In the surveillance video, Louis looked at Ling Chen's actions with a bit of confusion, not understanding what Ling Chen was up to. He leaned closer to the surveillance monitor, carefully watching Ling Chen's every move.

When Louis saw Ling Chen forcefully pull something out of the metal cabinet, his expression finally changed.

Damn! He nearly forgot about that crucial thing.

"Contact the people in Zone C immediately, tell them to act at once, they must kill that man. Quick!"

"Yes."

At this time, Ling Chen, holding the computer hard drive he had just torn out, tucked it into his pocket. If there was a chance to leave this damned place, he could ask Hu Fei for help to check the secret data stored on the hard drive.

"Ling Chen."

At this moment, He Ziyun's voice came from behind.

Ling Chen, still focused on organizing the computer hard drive, asked without turning back, "Mr. He, what's wrong?"

"Ling Chen!"

He Ziyun's voice rose again, with a trace of gravity.

Feeling a change in He Ziyun's tone, Ling Chen immediately turned around, opening his mouth to speak. But before he could say anything, his gaze was captivated.

In front of He Ziyun, more than a dozen men had appeared out of nowhere, all in their thirties or forties, each with sharp eyes and a menacing aura.

Seeing those people closing in, Ling Chen's heart sank, and he cursed internally.

There was no need to think about it, these were definitely the Transformed People who had been strengthened through the Lucifer experiments.

Indeed, how could such an important experimental site not be guarded by experts. They had been too careless; they should have expected this.

As the dozen or so people surrounded them from all directions, Ling Chen immediately moved towards He Ziyun, backing against him to prevent any surprise attacks.

"Ling Chen, I'll try to hold them off for as long as I can. You need to get away quickly."

As He Ziyun's words fell, the blast-proof door suddenly closed, sealing the only exit of the laboratory.

It's over!

Ling Chen silently sneered to himself, as now not even the last hope of escape remained.

"Kill them all, leave none alive."

With those words, two men locked their gaze on Ling Chen.

"Do you choose to end it yourself or shall we make the move?"

Ling Chen shrugged, silently watching them.

"Alright, I understand."

The two men nodded, stepping towards Ling Chen. As they moved, their pace gradually quickened.

As the two were about to approach within five meters of Ling Chen, who had been standing still, he suddenly reached toward his waist. Before anyone could react, two 'bangs' rang out, and the two men fell to the ground, each with a hole in their forehead, blood pouring out.

Seeing their companions dead, the others were stunned for a moment, taking a while to recover from the shock.

"You... despicable!"

The group glared furiously at Ling Chen, their eyes sharp enough to tear him to pieces.

Ling Chen looked at the gun in his hand and innocently said, "Why are you all looking at me? Is there a rule that says guns can't be used?"

Chapter 543 No Escape

Upon hearing Ling Chen's words, everyone fell silent, as if no one had said guns were off-limits.

"You, as a martial artist, what skill is there in using a gun?" a man coldly shouted.

Ling Chen chuckled and retorted, "So it's skillful for so many of you to bully the two of us?" As he spoke, he glanced at the crowd and wryly said, "There are eleven of you left, and my gun should still have seven bullets. Whoever wants to taste a bullet, feel free to come at me."

"Don't waste words with him, let's all go at him together; with so many of us, are we still afraid of him?"

"Go!"

However, although more than ten people shouted aggressively, not one dared to step forward, all somewhat wary of the gun in Ling Chen's hand.

The two who were just gunned down were Dragon List experts. Though they ranked at the bottom, they were still Dragon List experts and didn't even have a chance to evade. With this lesson before them, the others were all somewhat frightened, fearing they would be the next to be gunned down.

Seeing that no one dared to make a move, Ling Chen impatiently said, "Are you going to fight or not? I don't have time to dawdle with you. If you don't take action, then we're going to leave, okay?"

Saying that, Ling Chen signaled He Ziyun with his eyes, and the two of them, back to back, slowly moved towards the blast-proof door.

A man coldly said, "This door has been locked tight; I'd like to see where you can run."

"I..." Ling Chen was about to speak, but before he could finish, a sudden loud 'boom' came from outside the blast-proof door. Accompanied by the roar, the door vibrated violently.

What's going on?

Ling Chen looked at the blast-proof door in surprise, inwardly puzzled.

Just as he was astonished, the blast-proof door was hit again, exploding outward from the outside, with both iron doors deformed, revealing a narrow gap. Although it was tight, it was just wide enough for an adult to squeeze through.

"Mr. He, let's go!"

After a brief moment of shock, Ling Chen quickly reacted, urging loudly.

Hearing Ling Chen's shout, He Ziyun hesitated no longer and quickly ran toward the blast-proof door.

Seeing the two ready to escape, a group of masters did not dare to hesitate any longer, and they all started moving, racing towards Ling Chen and He Ziyun, trying to intercept them.

As the opponents closed in, Ling Chen quickly glanced using his peripheral vision, and with a flick of his wrist, he fired a shot.

Bang!

A man who was at the forefront instantly fell into a pool of blood, hit directly between the eyebrows, with deadly precision and without any deviation.

Looking at the body on the ground, the corners of Ling Chen's mouth curved up into a proud smile. Although he hadn't used a gun for a long time, his marksmanship had not regressed; on the contrary, it was even more precise than before, which might be due to his increased strength, making his reactions and vision sharper.

In the future, as long as he carried two guns, which Dragon List expert would dare to mess with him?

One shot, one kill.

As he was thinking this, he heard He Ziyun's voice from behind: "Ling Chen, come quickly."

Ling Chen shifted his gaze and saw He Ziyun had already crawled through the blast-proof door. Without another word, he immediately followed. At this time, the group of masters stood hesitantly, not daring to act rashly. After witnessing Ling Chen's precise shooting, it would be a lie to say they were not afraid.

Seizing the opportunity, Ling Chen quickly squeezed through the gap in the blast-proof door.

After leaving the laboratory, Ling Chen then realized that besides He Ziyun, there were two unfamiliar men with them. Curiously he asked, "Who are you?"

"Don't ask so much now; this is not a place to stay for long, let's hurry up and go," one of the men urged.

Ling Chen asked, "Do you have a way to escape?"

"Just follow us."

After speaking, the two men no longer lingered and quickly headed towards the outside of the base.

"Worthless! A bunch of worthless trash!"

In the control room, Louis saw the performance of that group of experts through the surveillance footage and got infuriated. So many skilled fighters, yet scared stiff by a mere gun, failing to subdue even two people. He really wondered why the organization had spent so much to train these wastes.

"Mr. Louis, what should we do now?"

Hearing the staff's question, Louis took a deep breath, trying to suppress the anger in his heart, and said solemnly, "Send everyone out, no matter the cost, they must not be allowed to escape the base." After he finished, he paused, then coldly added: "Tell those wastes that the God Organization has no use for useless people, if they can't capture them, then they should go to die."

"Yes!"

At this moment, Ling Chen and He Ziyun, following the two men, marched rapidly through the corridors. Before long, the group of four arrived at the site where the railcar was parked.

Walking along the way, Ling Chen noticed something odd – no one was coming to stop them, as if they were allowed to leave freely.

"The railcar has been shut down; we can only walk out." one of the men declared after checking the railcar.

"Let's go."

Looking at the pitch-black tunnel, Ling Chen did not hesitate and took off running. Once through this tunnel, it would mean seeing daylight again.

However, they hadn't run a third of the distance when they saw a heavy gate, weighing a thousand kilograms, drop in front of them, sealing the entire tunnel.

When he first entered, Ling Chen had heard Louis mention that the tunnel was rigged with many traps, making it impossible for anyone to escape. This thousand-kilogram gate must be one of the contingency measures.

Faced with the heavy gate, Ling Chen turned his gaze to the two unfamiliar men, hoping they had a solution. However, they just shook their heads, making a gesture of helplessness.

Ling Chen felt somewhat helpless; he had thought these two guys could lead them out.

Just as he was contemplating, two people suddenly rushed from behind in the tunnel. Turning his head, Ling Chen's expression became peculiar. The two, a man, and a woman, were wearing masks as if afraid of being recognized.

Moreover, the woman's eyes dodged upon seeing him, as if she dared not meet his gaze. Even when she approached, she remained behind the suited man, never revealing herself.

Strange!

Ling Chen thought to himself that at a glance, the woman felt oddly familiar. However, he wasn't sure if his feeling was real.

It was probably the Prajnaparamita Sutra from the large building at work.

"Are you all in this together?"

The suited man who had caught up nodded and asked, "We've dealt with most of the pursuers, and no one should catch up for now. What's your situation?"

No wonder the path was so smooth; they had been helping.

Ling Chen immediately understood. Pointing at the heavy gate, he said, "This gate has sealed the tunnel; we can't get through."

Hearing this, the suited man walked up to the gate, touched it, and seemed to be checking its thickness.

"This gate is very sturdy. It's unlikely to open with just human strength."

"What do we do then?"

Just as Ling Chen finished speaking, Louis's voice came through the loudspeakers on both sides of the wall: "Gentlemen, I advise you to stop wasting your efforts. Just surrender peacefully, and maybe I can spare your lives."

Chapter 544: Episode The Irked Ling Chen

Ling Chen sighed inwardly, having spent so much effort and still unable to escape. The defenses of this base were too solid; there were no holes to exploit.

Forget it!

At this point, all he could do was a desperate attempt.

Not just him, everyone else felt the same.

At this moment, in the control room, Louis watched the people displayed on the surveillance screen, a cold smile hooking at the corner of his mouth.

"Send someone over now, arrest them all. Anyone who dares to resist, kill without mercy."

"Yes!"

A staff member responded and was about to relay Louis's command.

But at that moment, Liu Xiyao, who had been standing to one side, suddenly charged at a security guard with his back turned to her. Before he could react, she snatched a pistol from his holster and aimed it at the people present.

Seeing Liu Xiyao's actions, Louis coldly said, "Miss Liu, what are you doing? Put down your gun right now."

"Sorry, Louis, I can't do that," Liu Xiyao said, then suddenly swung the gun around and pulled the trigger.

Bang!

The gunshot rang out, and the bullet went straight into the control room's server.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Several successive shots hammered home, destroying the control room's mainframe and servers, sparks flying; computer screens instantly turned blue and lost all images.

A staff member urgently said, "Mr. Louis, the system has crashed."

Louis's face darkened as he glared at the gun-wielding Liu Xiyao and commanded coldly, "Miss Liu, you'd better put down your gun now, or don't blame me for not being courteous."

As he finished, Louis drew his pistol, aiming it at Liu Xiyao's forehead. If Liu Xiyao dared to shoot again, he would not hesitate to pull the trigger.

Facing the dark muzzle, Liu Xiyao didn't resist and obediently dropped the pistol she held.

"Take her away, lock her in a cell first, and wait for Mr. Lin to come back and deal with her."

Escorted by two security guards, Liu Xiyao left the control room without a word. She had done what she could; whether Ling Chen and the others could escape was now up to their luck.

Meanwhile, Ling Chen and the others trapped behind the thousand jin gate were prepared for a desperate fight. However, minutes passed without seeing anyone, and instead, the heavy gate behind them opened.

Without time to think, the group immediately ran towards the outside.

Until they reached the tunnel entrance, they encountered no danger; it seemed as though all the tunnel's devices had stopped.

Regardless, it was at least good news for them.

"The plane's over there; you guys go ahead, we'll cover the rear," the man in the suit said.

Ling Chen nodded and quickly followed the other two men towards the small Boeing plane. Once on board, one man hurried to the cockpit and notified the pilot to prepare for takeoff.

Taking advantage of this moment, Ling Chen sat by the window, watching the men and women covering their retreat. After dealing with more than a dozen pursuers, they finally boarded the plane. At the same time, the plane's speed surged, leaving the security personnel who rushed out of the tunnel far behind. As the plane's nose lifted, its body swiftly climbed, and soon the aircraft entered the clouds.

Safe at last, Ling Chen couldn't help but breathe a sigh of relief, finally allowing himself to relax.

However, the thought of Liu Xiyao, still trapped in the base, made it impossible for him to feel happy. He had promised to take her with him when leaving, but in the end, he hadn't kept his promise.

Thinking of the events that had just transpired, Ling Chen suspected Liu Xiyao might have been involved. Otherwise, why would the thousand jin gate open without reason? Moreover, with so many heavy

weapons set up outside the base, all of which failed to fire, it was evident someone was helping them from the shadows to escape.

While mulling it over, Ling Chen looked at the two men sitting opposite him and asked, "What about those two, where did they go?"

"Mr. Tang? He's resting inside."

"Isn't it time you tell me your identity now?"

"We are members of the Secret Society."

"The Secret Society?" Ling Chen's expression darkened as he stood up abruptly, saying coldly, "Is it you guys? Good, I was just about to settle the score with you."

"Mr. Ling, please calm down. It's not what you think it is."

"Are you saying the Secret Society didn't betray me?"

One of the men explained, "Mr. Ling, you might have misunderstood. We never thought of betraying you. The reason we did this was solely to coordinate with our plan."

"Plan? What plan."

"It's like this." The man spoke patiently, "We knew all along about the two secret bases of the God Organization, but since the bases' locations are highly confidential, we had no way of finding out. We came up with this plan to use you as bait to discover the base's location. You and Little Hua; you're both part of the plan."

Hearing this, He Ziyun suddenly raised his head and asked word by word, "Little Hua was taken by you?"

"Yes... We didn't tell you because we feared you might leak the information and alert the God Organization. Knowing Little Hua's importance to the God Organization, we used her to negotiate, to pique their interest. According to the plan we originally set, we intended to use Little Hua to trade for you. This way, your safety would be assured."

"What about Little Hua?" Ling Chen frowned and asked, "According to your plan, are you going to hand Little Hua over to the God Organization?"

"This..." The man hesitated for a moment before saying, "We had two approaches. We demanded to go to this secret base to carry out the trade. If the God Organization didn't agree, then we planned to hand over Little Hua as agreed upon and get you back. You're a former agent with rich experience. As long as you've been to that secret base, you should be able to identify its approximate location, which helps us find it. As for Little Hua, the God Organization values her, so she won't be at risk for her life in the short term; we have plenty of opportunities to rescue her."

"On the other hand, if the God Organization agreed to our demands, then there's no need to hand over Little Hua to them since we would already know the location of the secret base. If you hadn't caused such a commotion in the base, we wouldn't have exposed ourselves so easily. According to the plan, after today's meeting, we would leave first, then notify the Secret Society's field agents to strike at the secret base, getting you all out."

Ling Chen sneered, "You people of the Secret Society are really something, keeping us all in the dark."

In a grave tone, the man said, "Mr. Ling, we did this to deal a heavy blow to the God Organization, we hope you can understand."

"Sorry! I am a layman, I understand but I'm not pleased. What do you think of me, that I can be used at your will?"

"Mr. Ling, no, listen to me..."

"Shut up!" Ling Chen interrupted coldly.

Chapter 545 - Petty

"After the plane lands, hand over Little Hua immediately. If anything happens to her, none of you will live."

The man hurriedly said, "Mr. Ling, rest assured, I can guarantee that Little Hua is very well and has not been mistreated." He paused for a moment and then continued, "I know that our plan was not thorough enough this time, and I hope you will not take it to heart."

"I hate being used by others the most in my life. Your Secret Society has investigated my background, so you should understand my character. This is the first and the last time; if anything similar happens again, don't blame me for being ruthless. Now, you two had better disappear from my sight, I don't want to see you again."

The two men looked at each other, shook their heads helplessly, and had to get up and leave.

In the resting room at the rear cabin of the airplane, a middle-aged man and a girl wearing a mask were sitting on the sofa, chatting softly.

When his two subordinates entered, the middle-aged man asked, "Did you make things clear to them?"

"Mr. Ling, I did tell them, but... Ling Chen seemed very unhappy. He said he doesn't like being used. I'm worried that this operation might cause him to reject the Secret Society."

The girl spoke up, "That's just the way Ling Chen is. Once he knows our identities later, I believe he won't mind what happened before."

"Mr. Ling, why don't you tell him your identities directly?"

The middle-aged man shook his head and said, "It's not time yet." With a slight smile, he continued, "Wouldn't have thought the kid had quite a personality. Well, let him have his way for now, after all, we were in the wrong this time. As soon as we arrive, take Little Hua to him, then send the three of them back to East Sea City."

"Yes!"

...

Waking up from sleep, Ling Chen rubbed his eyes and looked out the window to find the airplane had already reached the airport and was descending.

Once the plane stopped in the hangar, Ling Chen and He Ziyun disembarked, only to see a Cadillac slowly driving up. When the car came to a halt, a man dressed in a suit and wearing sunglasses jumped off from the passenger side and reached out to open the back door.

Then, Little Hua jumped out of the back seat.

"Little Hua!"

Ling Chen's eyes lit up and he hurriedly waved and called out.

"Big Brother!"

Seeing Ling Chen and He Ziyun, Little Hua's face burst into joyful smiles as she bounced over and hugged Ling Chen's arm affectionately.

He Ziyun couldn't help laughing and said, "You girl, do you even remember I'm your master?"

"Master," Little Hua sweetly said, "you can rest assured, I haven't forgotten you."

Ling Chen habitually stroked Little Hua's little head and asked with a smile, "They didn't give you a hard time, did they?"

Hearing this, Little Hua pouted, her face full of grievance, "They locked me in a dark room and didn't give me anything to eat. I've been hungry for days."

"Is that so?" Ling Chen's expression turned cold, and he turned to look at the two men who had just come down from the plane, his sharp eyes like a freshly unsheathed blade, revealing its edge.

Feeling the murderous gaze from Ling Chen, the two men felt a chill down their spines as if a cold breeze had swept over them.

"What's the matter... Mr. Ling?"

"How could you have the face to ask me?" Ling Chen hummed coldly and suddenly raised his fist, smashing it into the man's nose. Immediately, blood gushed crazily from the nostrils, and the nose bridge was broken.

The man screamed in pain, holding his bleeding nose with both hands, tears about to flow out.

"Mr. Ling, what are you...?" The other man looked at Ling Chen, terrified, and involuntarily stepped back, fearing he might be the next victim.

Ling Chen coldly commanded, "Didn't you say Little Hua would be well taken care of? But what I'm hearing from her seems quite different from what you told me."

"This... Mr. Ling, I assure you there's no such thing, could there be some misunderstanding?"

"I don't believe it's a misunderstanding. She's right here; you can ask her if you don't believe me." After saying this, Ling Chen looked at Little Hua and said, "Tell them what you've experienced these past few days." After finishing, Ling Chen winked at Little Hua without leaving a trace.

Smart as Little Hua was, how could she not understand Ling Chen's intention, and she immediately began to complain, "They locked me in a dark room and didn't give me any food."

Ling Chen stared coldly at the man and hummed lightly, "Did you hear that?"

The man hastily explained, "Misunderstanding, Mr. Ling, it must be a misunderstanding, I... ow!" Before he could finish, Ling Chen had kicked him in the abdomen, knocking him to the ground. With intense pain, the man's face turned pale, and sweat beaded on his forehead.

"Remember, I won't pursue it this time, but there won't be another. Let's go!"

After saying this, Ling Chen, holding Little Hua's hand, walked out of the hangar with He Ziyun.

When Ling Chen and the others were gone, the middle-aged man and the girl came down from the plane.

Looking at the sorry state of his two subordinates, the middle-aged man chuckled bitterly and asked, "Are you guys alright?"

"Mr. Ling, he is making things up. We never mistreated the girl," one man complained.

"I know," the middle-aged man said helplessly, "He just wanted to find an excuse to vent his dissatisfaction. This kid, he really holds a grudge over the smallest things. Forget it, don't take it too personally, I apologize to you on his behalf."

"Please don't say that, sir; we're not worthy of such an apology from you."

"Alright, you two go and rest for a bit. There's still important business to handle later."

Once the two men left, the middle-aged man turned to the girl beside him and said, "You should manage him better in the future and correct this bad habit of his."

"Master, it's not like he's without anyone to discipline him."

"Apart from you, I doubt anyone else could handle him."

...

At three o'clock in the afternoon, Ling Chen and his party finally arrived at East Sea International Airport.

After taking He Ziyun and Little Hua to Qingyun Martial Arts Hall, Ling Chen didn't stay long and went straight to the Old City in a car.

Arriving at the courier company, Ling Chen saw Hu Fei busy working in the office. Besides Hu Fei, Ling Chen was surprised to find that the office now included several young and pretty women, all in their early twenties, with sweet appearances and graceful figures – if not top class, they were certainly among the best.

"Fatty, what's this about?" Ling Chen asked.

Grinning from ear to ear, Hu Fei said, "Didn't you promise me last time to let me recruit some people? Here they are."

Hearing this, if not for the presence of the ladies, Ling Chen truly wanted to give him the middle finger. This damn guy actually used the money to bring in so many women, it was unclear whether it was for work or for pleasure.

Muttering a few words, Ling Chen pulled out a hard drive from his pocket, placed it in front of Hu Fei, and said, "Help me decrypt this and see what kind of data is inside."

Chapter 546 - Blood Dripping Device

Hu Fei picked up the hard drive, examined it briefly, then connected it to the computer and said, "Ladies, time to get to work."

As soon as the words were out, a beauty immediately brought a freshly brewed coffee to Hu Fei. Two other beauties stood behind him on either side, gently massaging his shoulders, and another beauty with freshly washed grapes crouched beside him, feeding him the seedless and peeled grapes from time to time.

Witnessing this scene, Ling Chen's eyes widened.

This fatso... damn, he's treating himself like an emperor. He'd never enjoyed such treatment in all his years.

At this moment, Hu Fei's fingers danced on the keyboard, typing rapidly. After a while, he shook his head and said, "No good!"

"Why not?"

"The data on this hard drive are encrypted with something special; it's going to be pretty tough to crack. How about this, why don't you leave the hard drive with me, and I'll try to break into it?"

Ling Chen asked uneasily, "Are you sure you can handle it?"

Hu Fei replied discontentedly, "Do you even know who I am? Special encryption is only a bit of a hassle, it's not easy to stump me. Give me seven or eight days, and I'll contact you once I have results."

"Alright then." After saying that, Ling Chen changed the topic, "Oh, one more thing, help me find someone, Lin Guodong, in his fifties, with a square face and a southern accent when he speaks."

Lin Guodong, the person in charge of the second experimental base; this personal information was provided by Liu Xiyao. Assuming no accidents occurred, this intel should be enough to find data related to Lin Guodong.

"Got it, you head back and wait for my message," said Hu Fei.

Ling Chen had wanted to stay a bit longer, but seeing Hu Fei's enjoyment, he really felt like punching him a few times. However, recalling that he needed Hu Fei's help, he repressed the urge, deciding out of sight, out of mind, and left the office.

By the time he left the courier company, it was already past four in the afternoon.

Having been out of touch for several days, Nanrong Wanqing must be worried sick. Ling Chen hailed a taxi by the roadside and headed straight for Wealthy Manor.

Once home, Ling Chen entered and saw the empty living room, then he remembered—it was Wednesday, and Nanrong Wanqing would definitely be at work. He should've gone directly to Hongyu Group instead of coming home.

Clang!

While he was thinking, Ling Chen suddenly heard a crisp noise from the rooftop, as if something heavy had fallen to the ground.

Is there someone else in the house?

That's right, it must be that girl Su Lin at home.

With that thought, Ling Chen walked up the stairs, arrived at Su Lin's bedroom door, and knocked.

"Who's there?" Su Lin's voice came from inside the room.

"It's me."

"Wait a moment!"

After about half a minute, the door finally opened, and a blushing Su Lin peeked through the crack, looking at Ling Chen outside and asking, "What do you want?"

"Nothing, I just heard some noise from your room, so I came to check. Hey, are you okay? Why is your face as red as a monkey's buttocks? You weren't..." Ling Chen halted there, choosing not to continue.

He still vividly remembered the incident of Su Lin's online purchase of large bananas. The girl was alone at home, probably couldn't bear the loneliness, so... Ling Chen smirked mischievously to himself.

Seeing the bad smile on Ling Chen's face, Su Lin's pretty face turned even redder. Knowing well what the scoundrel was thinking, she fought back the embarrassment and said irritably, "Don't let your imagination run wild."

"Who's fantasizing? We're all adults here; I can understand. Uh... you carry on, I won't disturb you," said Ling Chen as he turned around, ready to leave.

"Stop right there!" Su Lin hastily called out to Ling Chen. She definitely didn't want Ling Chen's assumptions to cause any misunderstandings and damage her 'ladylike' image.

"What's up, is there something else?"

"You..." Su Lin hesitated for a moment and then said, "Come in first."

Into the room?

Ling Chen was slightly stunned and asked cautiously, "Is it... appropriate for me to enter now?"

Su Lin grew anxious and said angrily, "Ling Chen, if you... if you keep talking nonsense, do you believe I'll go complain to Wanqing about you?"

"Alright alright! I'm coming in, isn't that enough?" Ling Chen, speechless, had to follow Su Lin into the bedroom.

Once inside the room, Ling Chen's gaze was immediately drawn to something on the floor.

This is...

Ling Chen's expression changed slightly, and he looked at Su Lin in surprise, asking, "Is this real or fake?"

"It should... probably be real," Su Lin glanced at the object, a hint of fear in her eyes.

Seeing the reluctance on Su Lin's face, Ling Chen said helplessly, "You study archaeology; it's just a skull, is there a need to be so scared?"

Saying this, Ling Chen picked up the skull that had fallen on the floor, and examined it closely in front of him.

And sure enough, the skull was not only real but also seemed rather old.

"Where did you find this thing?"

"I was bored today, so I went to an auction. I saw an ancient weapon and thought it looked cool. Plus, it was cheap, so I simply bought it, planning to make it a collectible. Who knew... who would have guessed that a skull would suddenly fall out from it."

"And why was your face all red when you opened the door?" Ling Chen asked curiously. Anyone who saw her like that just now would probably have the wrong idea.

Su Lin pointed to some food on the table and explained, "When I left the house, I bought some southern specialties, not knowing they would be so spicy." Saying this, she glared at Ling Chen with annoyance and chided, "You think everyone's mind is as dirty as yours, always thinking about unhealthy things."

Ling Chen gave a small cough to cover his embarrassment and quickly changed the subject, "Uh... let's not talk about that. By the way, what weapon did you buy?"

"There! In the box," Su Lin said, pointing to the cardboard box by the bed.

Ling Chen walked over to the bed, lifted the lid off the box, and saw something that resembled the shape of a lantern, with several sharp blades attached to the bottom, forming a lotus-like shape—quite cool-looking.

This is...

Looking at the weapon in front of him, Ling Chen's mind stirred, and immediately a name came to him.

The Blood Dripping Device!

The legendary weapon specifically designed for beheading.

No wonder there was a skull hidden inside; probably only the Blood Dripping Device could have done this.

As he pondered, Ling Chen lifted the Blood Dripping Device out of the box and then carefully placed it on the table.

The bottom of the Blood Dripping Device should have been sealed by the blades, but Su Lin had triggered the mechanism, causing all the blades to come apart, which led to the centuries-old skull falling out.

Chapter 547 - Strong Army Plan

However, Ling Chen found it strange that since the Blood Dripping Device had become an auction item, it should have been inspected. Why did no one discover the skull inside? Could it be that the device's mechanism went unnoticed?

After thinking for a while, Ling Chen cast aside the distracting thoughts in his mind and decided not to dwell on it any further. Some things are just like that, hard to figure out what exactly happened in between.

Putting the skull aside, Ling Chen picked up the Blood Dripping Device and began to study it seriously. This was an ancient hidden weapon, and as far as he knew, very few of the Blood Dripping Devices that existed today were well-preserved.

The Blood Dripping Device in front of him, both in terms of exterior appearance and internal structure, was completely intact without a single crack, and could almost be described as perfect.

"Eh! You just said this thing wasn't expensive, how much did you pay for it?"

"Over seven hundred thousand. Someone bid over two hundred thousand, but I couldn't be bothered to haggle, so I just added five hundred thousand."

Tsk tsk!

Rich people are really different, so capricious.

"What do you plan to do with this thing, keep it at home as a collectible?"

"I don't know, if you like it, I'll just give it to you." Perhaps because the skull had fallen out of it, Su Lin was less interested in it, even feeling a bit disgusted, and couldn't wait to get rid of it by handing it over to Ling Chen.

"Alright, since you're so generous, I won't be polite." Ling Chen didn't refuse, packing the Blood Dripping Device into a cardboard box and also took the skull with him. From Su Lin's expression, it was clear she definitely wouldn't keep the skull in her room as an ornament.

Back in his room, Ling Chen stuffed the skull into a cabinet and then started playing with the Blood Dripping Device.

He had only seen this kind of hidden weapon on television before and was not very familiar with it, nor did he know how to operate it. After several attempts, he was unable to deploy the Blood Dripping Device. Its operation was difficult, and without extensive practice, it was hard to control its direction and force.

Forget it! He would study it more when he had time in the future.

By six o'clock, accompanied by Zhong Wei and others, Nanrong Wanqing finally returned.

Having disappeared for several days without any news, Ling Chen naturally had to find an excuse. Fortunately, Nanrong Wanqing was quite familiar with his background, so she didn't ask too much, only reminded him to be careful outside and not to get into trouble.

After dinner, Ling Chen sat with Nanrong Wanqing on the living room sofa, talked about love, expressed feelings, and also took some small advantages, which made Ling Chen quite happy.

However, despite taking advantages, Ling Chen did not dare to be too presumptuous. It wasn't that Nanrong Wanqing was unwilling, but Ling Chen was afraid he couldn't control himself.

Around ten o'clock, Nanrong Wanqing, who had been at work all day, felt sleepy and directly cuddled into Ling Chen's arms and fell asleep.

Looking at Nanrong Wanqing's delicate face and her skin pale as snow, Ling Chen couldn't help but lean in closer, inhaling her faint body fragrance and gently kissed her cheek.

When Nanrong Wanqing was fast asleep, Ling Chen took her to the bedroom on the second floor, then returned to his own room, ready to have a good night's sleep.

However, not long after he lay down and was about to drift off, Ling Chen was awakened by the urgent ringing of his cellphone.

Picking up the phone, Ling Chen glanced at the caller ID and immediately answered, asking, "Fatty, calling me so late, could it be that you've got some news?"

"No news, I'm calling to remind you, you're in big trouble."

Hearing this, Ling Chen sat upright on his bed and asked, "What trouble?"

"I've just received intelligence that there have been a lot of suspicious people at East Sea City's airport and train stations. Additionally, an old acquaintance of yours has also arrived in East Sea City."

"Old acquaintance? Who?"

"Yi Shuiyan."

"Is it him?" Ling Chen was startled and asked, "Do you know the purpose of his visit to East Sea City?"

"You wouldn't guess it, just over ten minutes ago, Yi Shuiyan met with those suspicious people I mentioned, and that's why I'm calling to remind you to be careful."

"Besides this, is there any more specific intelligence?"

"Those people are likely members of the God Organization. I've just checked, and some of them are individuals who disappeared over a decade ago, with experiences matching those of Jiang Xinwu and others. Hey, I wonder if they could be coming for you?"

"I'm afraid so."

Louis knew that he had taken the hard drive from the lab, and if the information on it was especially important, the God Organization would definitely do everything possible to retrieve it.

However, for Yi Shuiyan to be interacting with those people, could it be... Yi Shuiyan has also joined the God Organization? Since Yi Shuiyan is a disciple of the Dangyang Sect, if he has joined, perhaps the Dangyang Sect is also involved.

If it was before, Ling Chen might not have considered this possibility. But, with the precedent set by the Han Family, Ling Chen thinks this kind of thing is very likely.

With less than a month until the New Year, he had hoped for a peaceful celebration, but now it seemed this year might not be so quiet.

"Fatty, keep an eye on those people, especially Yi Shuiyan. I need to know his every move."

"You don't need to tell me; I've already instructed my people to do so."

Hanging up the phone, Ling Chen sighed and once again laid back down to sleep.

...

The next day.

Ling Chen drove Nanrong Wanqing to her company, then hurried to the West District of East Sea City.

Upon reaching his destination, he parked the car by the roadside and walked alone into a nearby office building.

Reaching the thirteenth floor of the office building, as soon as he stepped out of the elevator, he saw 'Dongming Security Company' in golden letters, with an emblem representing the company next to it.

Seeing Ling Chen appear at the company entrance, a receptionist immediately approached him with a gentle smile on her delicate face, asking, "Hello, sir, how may I help you?"

"I'm here to see Kai... oh no, I mean President Jiang. Tell him Ling Chen is here to see him for business."

"Yes, Mr. Ling."

After the receptionist hung up the phone, shortly after, Jiang Yunkai appeared at the entrance. Before approaching, he began to wave and greet.

"What brings you here today?"

"I came to discuss something with you."

"Come, let's talk in my office."

Once in the office, Jiang Yunkai handed Ling Chen a cup of freshly brewed tea and asked, "So, what's up?"

"How many staff do the three security companies currently have?"

"Over five hundred in total, but only fifty can be considered elite; the rest are just average. Why, do you need manpower?"

Ling Chen nodded and said, "I might face some trouble soon, although I can ask others for help, I prefer to rely on my own strength rather than depend on outsiders. I still have a long road ahead, and I can't always depend on outsiders for help."

"That makes sense. What's your plan?"

"I've already got the people, what I lack now is equipment. No matter how inexperienced the person, as long as they're well-equipped, they can form a significant force. What do you think?"

Chapter 548 - Difficult Trade (1)

"You are right about that, but the problem is, if we were to equip them with firearms, it would violate the country's laws. You know full well that the country has very strict gun control, and there are no loopholes for you to exploit."

"I am aware of that." Ling Chen gave a slight smile and said, "The weapons and equipment I'm referring to are not firearms. We live in an era of advanced technology, our options are not limited to guns; there are many alternatives."

Jiang Yunkai asked, "What do you suggest, then?"

Ling Chen's lips curved upwards, his face bearing a hint of a mysterious smile as he spoke deliberately, "Exoskeleton armor."

"Exoskeleton armor?" Jiang Yunkai replied, full of curiosity, "What is that?"

"It's the latest cutting-edge technology which allows the wearer to multiply their abilities several times over in a short period. However, since the exoskeleton armor is classified as a secret project by the state, we need to ensure the loyalty of our subordinates, which is the most important point. All members of the three security companies were handpicked and nurtured by you; you should know best in this regard."

Jiang Yunkai nodded and said, "That shouldn't be a problem, I know who can be trusted."

"That is for the best. Determine the personnel as soon as possible, then submit me a list."

"Alright."

After finalizing the plan with Jiang Yunkai, Ling Chen did not stay long and left the security company on his own.

Exoskeleton armor was a recent idea that Ling Chen had come up with. The intelligence network in East Sea City had been fully established, but intelligence alone was not enough; what he needed most at the moment was manpower. He had considered recruiting some experts, but given his circumstances, he doubted many would be willing to serve him. Thus, after much thought, Ling Chen settled on that exoskeleton armor.

He had personally experienced the power of the exoskeleton armor. If he could use it to build a team, they would be more than capable of handling crises, and he himself would have an easier time.

Although the technology for the exoskeleton armor was traded to the military, Nanrong Wanqing still retained the core technology of the exoskeleton armor. As long as they kept a low profile, he believed the military would not discover it. Besides, with the old General secretly looking out for him, there should not be any problem.

On the way back, Ling Chen suddenly received a call from Tang Yuan.

"Hello! Old Tang, how are things progressing on your end?"

"Let's not even talk about it. By the time we got there, that base had been destroyed, not a soul was found, not even bodies. Someone must have been there before us."

"Really?" Ling Chen was taken aback. The only people who knew about that secret base were he and the members of the Secret Society. If someone had gotten there ahead of them, it had to be the Secret Society.

"You didn't find anything?" Ling Chen asked with reluctance.

"Nothing. All indications are that the people from the base had evacuated a while back, even the equipment was gone."

"Forget it! They probably knew their location had been exposed, so they left early. I'll let you know if there's news later. Oh, and one more thing, do you have any leads on Lin Guodong?"

"Nothing so far. We've searched the national archives, and there are many people named Lin Guodong, but their identities are all clean, without suspicion. I'm beginning to wonder if Lin Guodong is a made-up name, it might not be his real name."

"Maybe. Ok, let's not talk about that now, we'll be in touch later."

After hanging up, Ling Chen drove his car, intending to go to the Old City to see Hu Fei and ask about Yi Shuiyan and others.

But as he was driving, before he had entered the Old City area, Hu Fei called.

"Ling Chen, where are you?" Hu Fei's voice had a tinge of urgency.

"I was just about to come to you, what's up?"

"You better hurry back to Hongyu Group, I just got word that those people are on their way there by car."

Hongyu Group?

Ling Chen was startled. What were they doing at Hongyu Group? Could it be they were looking for him?

In a flash of insight, Ling Chen changed direction without another thought, speeding towards Hongyu Group.

On the way, Ling Chen called Zhong Wei and ordered him to immediately gather a team to protect Nanrong Wanqing. He made his way as fast as he could, and a little over ten minutes later, Ling Chen finally arrived at the Hongyu Group headquarters.

Upon entering the elevator, Ling Chen held his phone and asked, "Fatty, where are those people now?"

"Five minutes ago, they entered the underground parking lot but haven't been seen since. They're probably already in the building."

"How many?"

"Five. Have your security department connect their surveillance system to the network, so I can remotely control the surveillance throughout the entire building."

"Got it, keep in touch, and inform me immediately if you spot them."

In the midst of their conversation, Ling Chen took the elevator up to the top floor of Hongyu Group.

Pushing open the door to the Chairman's office, he saw Captain Zhong and Liang Zhao Hui inside. After confirming Nanrong Wanqing's safety, Ling Chen secretly breathed a sigh of relief. However, the infiltrators who had entered the building had not been found yet, and the crisis was still at hand, allowing no room for complacency.

"What's going on, Ling Chen?" Nanrong Wanqing asked.

"I received intel that there are several criminals inside the building, their purpose is not clear yet. For safety's sake, have all the staff in the building evacuated immediately."

Nanrong Wanqing did not doubt Ling Chen's words and, without a second thought, immediately picked up the intercom phone, instructing her secretary Wang Lan to relay the order.

"Captain Zhong, have the vehicles ready to take the Chairman back first."

"Understood."

"Aren't you coming back with us?"

Looking into Nanrong Wanqing's eyes, which shone like brilliant stars, Ling Chen smiled faintly and said, "I'll return after handling the situation."

"Alright then." Nanrong Wanqing advised him with concern, "Be careful yourself."

Watching the convoy leave the parking lot through the glass windows, Ling Chen went directly to the security office, watching Wei Jun who was busy and asked, "Wei, have all the company's employees left?"

"Everyone's gone; I'm arranging for the floor check to ensure no one is left behind."

Ling Chen nodded and said, "After you finish checking, you should head home as well."

"We're not standing guard?"

"No need. The Chairman said all staff have the day off today."

Wei Jun grinned and said, "That's good news. It's almost Chinese New Year; I can finally go out and buy some new year's goods for the house."

Half an hour later, the entire building had been checked; Wei Jun said goodbye to Ling Chen and left for home.

Once all the members of the security department were gone, Ling Chen was left alone to lock down the entire building.

"Hello! Fatty, have you found those people?" Ling Chen called Hu Fei.

"Wait a moment; I'm still searching. There were so many employees leaving just now; I'm not sure if those few people could have blended in with the crowd."

Chapter 549 - Difficult Trade (2)

"You needn't worry about that; they're certainly still in this building," Ling Chen said.

Before the employees left, they all swiped their cards, and there were security department members assisting in the inspection; if any strangers appeared, they would have known.

"I couldn't find their whereabouts in the surveillance, I guess they're hiding somewhere."

"We need to find a way to force them out."

Ling Chen pondered for a moment before turning back to the security room, picking up the walkie-talkie, and connecting to the building's PA system.

"Now it's just you and me. Do you not even have the courage to face me?"

For a moment, Ling Chen's voice echoed throughout the entire building.

"I'll be waiting for you in the lobby on the first floor. I hope you won't make me wait too long." After speaking, Ling Chen put down the walkie-talkie and walked into the lobby.

After waiting a few minutes, suddenly footsteps came from the security staircase of the lobby. Ling Chen turned to look, just as the door was pushed open by a hand. Following that, a young man in casual clothing and ordinary appearance walked out alone.

Looking at the young man approaching, Ling Chen slightly raised the corner of his mouth and said with a faint smile, "You finally decided to show up. Where are the others?"

"Just me is enough," the young man spoke, "Our target this time isn't you, so we have no interest in fighting you."

"Not me?" Ling Chen narrowed his eyes and asked, "Then who is your target?"

"Ling Chen, you're a smart man. Some things I don't need to spell out; I trust you can guess," the young man said, then his tone shifted playfully, "I heard Nanrong Wanqing is your girlfriend?"

"Is there a problem?"

"It's not that there's a problem, just that... I quite envy you."

"Envious that I found a rich and beautiful girlfriend?"

"No!" the young man said, "I just envy your luck with women. Ling Chen, you haven't forgotten about Liu Xiyao, have you? Unfortunately, you're safe now, but her fate is not as good as yours."

Hearing this, Ling Chen's gaze hardened as he said in a deep voice, "What have you done to her?"

"When in the base, Liu Xiyao betrayed Mr. Lin and let you escape; what do you think her treatment would be? You should know, the God Organization never shows mercy to traitors. I heard Mr. Lin has locked her up in a cell, planning to let his men enjoy her as a treat. Tsk tsk! Such a top-quality beauty, one would be willing to die ten years early for a taste. Don't you think so, Ling Chen?"

Ling Chen's expression turned icy as he pressed, "Where is she now?"

With a cold laugh, the young man said, "Why should I tell you? How about this? Hand over Nanrong Wanqing, and I'll immediately have someone bring Liu Xiyao to you, unharmed. What do you say?"

"Don't even think about it," Ling Chen flatly refused the offer.

"If that's the case, then we have nothing further to discuss," the young man said, pulling out his mobile phone from his pocket and pointing the screen at Ling Chen. Suddenly, Liu Xiyao appeared on the screen, dressed simply with what appeared to be whip marks all over her body, covered in numerous scars, looking pitifully heart-wrenching.

At that moment, apart from Liu Xiyao, two muscular men with bare upper bodies also appeared in the video.

Seeing the two men approaching, a look of fear immediately covered Liu Xiyao's face as she continuously stepped backwards, her back pressed against the wall as she said in a panicked voice, "What... what do you want to do?"

"Miss Liu, don't worry, we won't do anything, just coming over to have some fun with you," a man chuckled sinisterly.

"No... don't!" Liu Xiyao shook her head, her beautiful eyes brimming with tears, pleading desperately, "Please, I beg you, let me go."

"Sorry, Miss Liu, your words are useless to us, unless Mr. Lin is willing to let you go."

Watching the two men closing in, ignoring Liu Xiyao's resistance as they grabbed her arms and forcefully pushed her to the ground, Ling Chen's rage boiled over as he roared, "Stop! Tell them to stop!"

"Ah! How pitiful." The young man feigned sadness and sighed, "Miss Liu is risking her own safety to save you, but you do nothing to help. If she finds out, who knows if she will regret her initial decision."

"Shut up!" Ling Chen's face was livid as he said, "Let her go, I can agree to anything except handing over Wanqing."

"Nanrong Wanqing is the only condition, if you can't accept that, then we have nothing to discuss."

Hearing Liu Xiyao's screams emanating from the phone, Ling Chen clenched his fists, veins throbbing on his forehead in anger, wishing he could kill the other party. Taking a deep breath, he struggled to control his fury and after a moment of contemplation, he finally made up his mind.

"Fine, I agree to your terms, just get those people to stop now."

"Haha!" The young man laughed triumphantly, "Ling Chen, it seems you do have a conscience. Here's the deal, tomorrow night, I'll call you with the location, bring Nanrong Wanqing along, remember, just the two of you. If I find out you've been tampering secretly, don't blame me for being ruthless."

"Let's go!" As the young man's words fell, four people successively exited through the emergency passage.

Watching them disappear from sight, Ling Chen frowned in puzzlement, somewhat perplexed. He originally thought that the God Organization sent these people to snatch the hard drive, but it now seemed that was not the case.

He couldn't understand, was the God Organization not worried about the contents of the hard drive being leaked?

And also, why did they kidnap Nanrong Wanqing? Could it be for... At this thought, something clicked in Ling Chen's mind, realizing the crucial point.

Previously, Mr. Yun, who is Nanrong Yuan, had told him that Nanrong Wanqing was key. According to him, Nanrong Yuan had developed a new technology that the God Organization feared, hence they were determined to eliminate him at any cost.

Ling Chen had been speculating, could the tip from Nanrong Yuan mean that his new technology was related to Nanrong Wanqing?

Now that the God Organization had decided to take action against Nanrong Wanqing, they must have grasped certain intelligence. Or perhaps, they already knew that Nanrong Wanqing was Mr. Yun's daughter.

After pondering for a while, Ling Chen set aside these miscellaneous thoughts. For him, the most important thing now was to rescue Liu Xiyao. Given that Liu Xiyao was captured because of him, he couldn't stand idly by.

Returning to Wealthy Manor, when Nanrong Wanqing saw Ling Chen entering, she stood up and walked over, asking, "Is everything alright with the company?"

Ling Chen managed a smile, "You can rest assured about my handling."

Noticing Ling Chen's preoccupied appearance, the perceptive Nanrong Wanqing asked with concern, "What's wrong, are you troubled by something?"

"There's nothing, maybe just too tired, I'm going to take a shower first." After speaking, Ling Chen went into the bedroom alone.

Closing the door, Ling Chen leaned against it. Thinking about the transaction the next night, he couldn't bring himself to feel happy.

Chapter 550 - Difficult Trade (3)

The next day.

Everything at Hongyu Group had returned to normal, with employees going about their business as usual. However, today, Nanrong Wanqing was the only one absent, claiming illness and resting at home.

In the evening.

Ling Chen, who had been staying at home the entire time, finally received a phone call.

"Okay, I got it, I'll be there on time."

After hanging up, Ling Chen glanced at Nanrong Wanqing beside him and asked, "Are you ready?"

Nanrong Wanqing nodded gently, but her beautiful eyes couldn't hide the color of nervousness. Holding the corner of her dress, she asked, "What do I need to do when the time comes?"

Ling Chen comforted her, "You don't have to do anything. Just peacefully stay by my side. Don't worry, with me protecting you, nothing will happen to you."

Once Nanrong Wanqing was ready, Ling Chen took her and left the Nanrong Family home, driving out of Wealthy Manor together.

They drove for over forty minutes until Ling Chen and Nanrong Wanqing arrived in the North City District of East Sea City. North City District was a development area still in progress in East Sea City, where many places still retained their look from decades ago. Compared to other districts, the prosperity level of North City District was somewhat behind.

By now, it was already past seven o'clock.

Ling Chen checked the time; there were about twenty minutes left until the agreed upon moment. At this time, his phone rang again, still from the same young man.

After a few words of conversation, Ling Chen hung up the phone, looking somewhat displeased. Nanrong Wanqing, who was sitting in the passenger seat, asked, "What's wrong?"

"They've changed the location."

"Where?"

"Old City."

In the blink of an eye, more than two hours had passed. Each time Ling Chen arrived at the agreed location, the other party would change the meeting address, causing Ling Chen to run around tirelessly.

After switching locations three or four times, Ling Chen was starting to get impatient. He knew very well that the other party was doing this only to confirm if anyone was following them.

When the other party made another call, before the man could speak, Ling Chen said, "Friend, my time is valuable. If you keep playing this game, I won't accompany you any longer."

"Don't be hasty, we'll be right across from you soon."

Hearing this, Ling Chen immediately saw a car not far ahead blink its high beams. Then, putting away his phone, he turned to Nanrong Wanqing and instructed, "Later, you don't have to say anything, just do as I tell you."

"I understand." Nanrong Wanqing's face was taut. Though she had Ling Chen by her side, she couldn't control the nervousness inside her heart.

After getting out of the car, Ling Chen walked straight towards a Chevrolet off-road vehicle. Meanwhile, a person also got out of the car across from them; it was the young man they had seen yesterday at Hongyu Group.

"Did you bring the person?"

Ling Chen pointed to the Audi parked behind him and said, "She's in the car."

"Good." The young man smiled and said, "I suppose you won't mind if I verify her identity."

"Of course not. But have you forgotten something?"

"You're referring to Miss Liu? Don't worry. After I receive Miss Nanrong, someone will naturally bring her to us."

Ling Chen nodded, then turned and gestured to Nanrong Wanqing in the passenger seat. Soon, Nanrong Wanqing got out of the car and stood close beside Ling Chen.

The young man looked over Nanrong Wanqing, his smile faint as he said, "Miss Nanrong, it's a pleasure to meet you. Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Liu Wei. If there are any offenses in a while, please don't take it to heart."

Nanrong Wanqing's brow was slightly furrowed as she asked, "What are you trying to do?"

"Nothing much, just verifying Miss Nanrong's identity. I wouldn't want any issues later on, getting scolded by the higher-ups." With that, Liu Wei waved his hand toward the Chevrolet off-road vehicle.

Shortly after, a woman in her forties came over. At Liu Wei's signal, she approached Nanrong Wanqing and started inspecting her body closely, inevitably touching some sensitive areas.

Even though the other party was a woman, Nanrong Wanqing still felt uncomfortable with her cheeks blushing slightly as she looked at Ling Chen and asked, "Didn't you say you were taking me out to meet someone, what are they doing?"

Hearing this, Liu Wei asked with interest, "What, Ling Chen didn't tell you?"

"Enough!" Ling Chen sharply ordered, "No need for you to prattle."

Liu Wei spread his hands and simply stopped talking. After a moment, the middle-aged woman finished her inspection and nodded to Liu Wei to indicate there were no problems.

"You've confirmed her identity, now it's your turn." Finishing his words, Ling Chen turned his head to Nanrong Wanqing and said, "You go back to the car first."

"I..."

Nanrong Wanqing wanted to speak but was interrupted by Ling Chen.

"Listen to me, don't ask so much, I'll explain later."

Once Nanrong Wanqing returned to the car, Liu Wei said with a laugh, "Ling Chen, I really admire you. For another woman, you've delivered your own. She seems to be unaware of the deal between you and me."

"That's none of your concern. Where is she?"

"Don't worry, I'm a man of my word, without fail."

As he spoke, three people alighted from the Chevrolet off-road vehicle, one of whom was Liu Xiyao. Under the watch of two men, Liu Xiyao hobbled over, her legs appearing to be injured. Her fair face bore several fresh wounds.

"The person you wanted is here, shall we make the exchange?"

Seeing Liu Xiyao and confirming her identity, Ling Chen stepped aside, allowing the two men to pass by him and head towards the Audi car.

After opening the door, the two men showed no sign of tenderness or mercy as they pulled Nanrong Wanqing out of the car. Ignoring her resistance, one of the men pulled out a syringe from his pocket and plunged the needle into Nanrong Wanqing's arm.

In an instant, the struggling Nanrong Wanqing quickly calmed down, and as if losing all strength, she was dragged back to the off-road vehicle by the two men.

"Alright, the deal is done; we should leave too. Ling Chen, Mr. Lin asked me to convey a message to you, as long as you don't oppose the God Organization in the future, we won't bother you. Conversely, if you're willing, we'd very much like to be friends. Mr. Lin values a talent like you highly."

Ling Chen replied indifferently, "Being friends is unnecessary, I can't afford to be involved. I just hope that you won't appear before me again." After speaking, Ling Chen supported Liu Xiyao, walking back step by step to the Audi car.

Once in the car, Ling Chen immediately started the engine and drove away from the scene.

Watching the Audi car drive away, Liu Wei sneered and then headed back to the off-road vehicle.

"Head to the airport, call Mr. Lin and tell him that everything is progressing well. Also, inform the people at the lab to get ready, we'll bring the person over in two hours."

"Yes."