

The Beauty 621

Chapter 621 Battle in the Darkness

At this moment, Ling Chen and Nanrong Wanqing were both immersed in a sea of desire, forgetting everything around them. Even when Su Lin appeared at the staircase entrance, neither of them took notice.

Looking at the intimate scene between Ling Chen and Nanrong Wanqing, Su Lin felt her pretty face turn red, her beautiful eyes filled with shame that she couldn't hide.

These two... if you're going to be affectionate, at least go to your own room. How can they just make out in the living room as if nobody else is around? Don't they care about being seen by others? Su Lin thought to herself.

Then, faint moans began to reach her, causing Su Lin, who had never been with anyone, to feel hot all over, even her breathing became rapid. She, who had only ever watched little movies, had never seen such a real scene before.

At this moment, Ling Chen, who was laying on top of Nanrong Wanqing's delicate body, seemed to notice Su Lin's presence. A glance from the corner of his eye, and the blushing Su Lin immediately came into his view.

This girl... Ling Chen felt a bit embarrassed in his heart, not knowing when she had appeared. Could she not at least have made some noise?

A few seconds passed, and seeing Su Lin still standing motionless at the staircase entrance, not intending to leave but rather watching them with interest, Ling Chen began to feel uncomfortable, losing the pleasure he had just now.

Immediately, Ling Chen, while holding Nanrong Wanqing in his embrace, tilted his body, his gaze passing over the sofa and directly meeting Su Lin's at the staircase entrance, he blinked gently.

Seeing Ling Chen's action, Su Lin was momentarily taken aback. The next second, she immediately realized the teasing look in Ling Chen's eyes, and her cheeks instantly blazed with heat, burning intensely.

Bastard!

Su Lin cursed inwardly and dared not stay any longer, hurrying back to the second floor.

Finally, she's gone!

Ling Chen smiled secretly to himself, this girl really didn't know the mood. She clearly saw him and Nanrong Wanqing being affectionate, yet she did not avoid them, instead watching with great interest. Well, the girl is in her twenties, it was the age of springtime yearnings.

While he was pondering, a buzzing vibration suddenly came from the coffee table.

Nanrong Wanqing opened her eyes and looked at the mobile phone on the coffee table, asking, "Is that for you?"

Ling Chen nodded, reluctantly letting go of Nanrong Wanqing's delicate body, and picked up the phone. After glancing at the content of the text message, Ling Chen's eyes narrowed slightly, and he stood up and said, "I need to step out for a bit, I'll be back later."

"Be careful."

"I know." With that, Ling Chen put the phone in his pocket, leaned forward, cupped Nanrong Wanqing's face with both hands, and gave a light peck on the corner of her lips, softly saying, "Rest early, don't stay up too late."

After leaving the Nanrong family's house, Ling Chen drove down the road, then made a call to Hu Fei.

"Hey! Fatty, have you confirmed the target?"

"Relax, it's definitely the right one, do you want me to send a few more people to assist you?"

"No need, I can handle it myself."

After the call, Ling Chen drove straight to a residential area in North City District of East Sea City.

North City District was one of the more economically backward districts in East Sea City, and the residential district Ling Chen was looking at was actually a slum area in East Sea City, with old houses from decades ago, all run down, not even one decent building, even worse than the Old City.

Most people living in this place were migrant workers. Because the rent here was relatively cheap, only a hundred or two hundred RMB a month. Therefore, there were more mixed characters here than in the Old City, with all kinds of people.

When Ling Chen arrived, it was already 9:30 at night.

At this time, most people had already rested, with only a few setting up folding tables on the road, bottles of beer with a dish of peanuts, and a group of young men playing poker, with five and ten RMB notes on the table.

As he walked into the slum area, Ling Chen's appearance immediately attracted a lot of attention. In this kind of place, Ling Chen, with his clean attire, clearly stood out.

Entering the poor district, a young man leaning against the wall immediately approached and walked up to Ling Chen.

"Chen."

Ling Chen nodded and asked, "Where is the person?"

The youth pointed and said, "Go this way, after fifty meters there's an alleyway. Enter, take a left, and it's the third house where the person lives."

"I got it. You go back first. No matter what happens later, don't interfere."

"Understood."

Now, East Sea City was under the control of Jiang Hao, Zhao Zhengxiong, and Nanrong Hao's forces, including this poor residential area where informants were placed everywhere. If they wanted to find someone, it was almost effortless.

Following the route provided by the youth, Ling Chen wove through the poor district. Before long, he arrived at an old and dilapidated door.

If the intelligence was correct, the person he was looking for should be inside.

Standing at the doorway, Ling Chen did not act rashly, but instead, he pressed his ear to the door, listening for any movement inside. After a few minutes, the room remained deadly quiet, without a sound.

Seeing this, Ling Chen took out a piece of wire from his pocket and gently inserted it into the keyhole. After fiddling for a bit, the door lock clicked open.

He pushed open a crack of the door, Ling Chen peered inside, but the room was pitch-black, too dark to see anything clearly.

Hesitating, Ling Chen heightened his alertness and cautiously pushed the door open, stepping into the room.

Upon entering the room, Ling Chen noticed that because all the window panes were cracked, they were patched with newspaper, preventing any outside light from coming in. The room was devoid of light, forcing him to rely on his acute hearing to make judgments.

The rooms in the poor district were all small, with a bedroom, a living room, and a compact kitchen and bathroom.

Ling Chen crossed through a narrow doorway and arrived in the living room, searching for the whereabouts of his target.

Squeak!

Suddenly, a sound came. In the dark, Ling Chen accidentally bumped into a chair.

With that noise, a fierce gust of wind appeared out of nowhere, striking towards Ling Chen's back.

Fortunately, Ling Chen was prepared. The moment the gust hit, he quickly turned around, stepping back with his legs, as his steely fist forcefully shot out.

Bang!

Immediately, it seemed like Ling Chen's fist was caught by a palm, emitting a muffled sound.

As fist met palm, Ling Chen felt a surge of powerful force, pushing his body backward.

Impressive!

With just one move, Ling Chen could tell the strength of his opponent was formidable, and not at all inferior to himself.

What rotten luck—what he thought was a simple task turned out to involve a skilled opponent. There was no time for further thought; his opponent pressed on relentlessly, every palm strike deadly.

Ling Chen did not dare to be careless. He used his ears to discern the sound of the wind, judging the position of his opponent's moves.

In a blink, the two had exchanged over a dozen moves.

In the darkness, Ling Chen furrowed his brows, his fists continuously swinging, fending off the opponent's attacks, while his mind raced to think of a strategy.

Chapter 622 Got Beaten Up

Bang!

Suddenly, Ling Chen felt a sharp pain in his chest as the opponent's palm harshly struck him. A powerful force surged, lifting Ling Chen's legs off the ground and throwing him backward against the wall, then crashing heavily onto the floor.

Before Ling Chen could recover from the pain, a hand swiftly reached out, grabbed his collar, and tossed his body into mid-air.

Bang! Bang!

Two palms struck in succession, hitting Ling Chen in the back again. Fortunately, he didn't land on the ground this time but on a sofa, where the foam cushioned the blow, preventing additional injuries. However, after two severe impacts, Ling Chen felt as though his bones were about to fall apart, and he had no strength left.

Damn it!

Ling Chen cursed silently. Who on earth was this person, and why were they so formidable? He had thought he could handle the opponent, but instead, he found himself easily subdued without a chance to fight back.

No matter who the opponent was, they were definitely a master from the Earthly List, Ling Chen thought to himself.

If it had been a master from the Dragon List, even if he couldn't win, he wouldn't have been defeated so quickly. Moreover, since he had learned a little about 'control' techniques from Su He, even if the number one from the Dragon List appeared before him, he still had a fighting chance.

Gasping for breath, Ling Chen heard footsteps approaching again and immediately shouted, "Stop!"

As soon as he spoke, the footsteps actually stopped.

"Um... friend, let's talk this through. We're all civilized people, there's no need for violence. I think there might be some misunderstanding."

"Misunderstanding? Are you not here to kill me?"

"No, no, no." Ling Chen quickly denied: "I just heard that a suspicious person had arrived here, so I came to check it out. Oh, I forgot to introduce myself; I am a police officer, currently in pursuit of a fugitive."

"Police have such good skills? Who are you trying to fool?"

Hearing this, Ling Chen was about to respond. But upon reflecting, he suddenly felt something was off. The voice sounded strange, and there was even a hint of a faint smile.

"Who... who are you?"

As he finished speaking, the lights in the living room immediately turned on.

Under the light, stood a refined and beautiful woman with soft long hair draped over her shoulders, a melon-seed face, fair skin, sparkling eyes like stars, and thin lips slightly curving up with a faint smile.

Seeing the stunning woman who appeared before him, Ling Chen's expression was momentarily stunned, and it took him a while to come back to his senses.

"You... porridge girl?" Ling Chen abruptly sat up from the sofa. However, this abrupt movement immediately aggravated his injuries, causing him to grimace in pain.

Seeing Ling Chen's pale face, the porridge girl looked at him with a touch of pity and quickly walked over, speaking with a coquettish tone, "Don't move, let me check on you."

"Porridge girl, what are you doing here?"

"I have my reasons for being here, but you, what are you doing here? Don't tell me you really came to kill me?"

"I wouldn't dare." Ling Chen protested, "If I knew it was you, I would have come in openly, not sneaking around like this." As he spoke, Ling Chen changed the subject and asked, "By the way! Where have you been lately? I've been looking everywhere for you."

The porridge girl flicked her head and looked at the wall, "What do you want from me?"

"I was looking for you..." Before he could finish speaking, Ling Chen suddenly froze, unsure how to respond to the question. Since the Heavenly Mechanism Great Ceremony ended, he hadn't seen porridge girl again. All along, he had been pondering how he would face her if they met again. After all, something had happened between them during the Heavenly Mechanism Great Ceremony.

Seeing Ling Chen hesitating, a faint dimness flashed in porridge girl's eyes.

Unfortunately, Ling Chen did not notice the change in her expression.

"Okay, let's not talk about this." Porridge girl said, "Tell me, what are you doing here?"

Hearing this, Ling Chen sighed, and said helplessly: "God Organization has captured Xia Mutong. They called me, saying that their enemies had infiltrated East Sea City and asked for my help to deal with them. If I complete the task, they will release Xia Mutong."

"You should know, with God Organization's way of doing things, even if you do it, they won't easily let people go."

"I understand that. But as long as there is a glimmer of hope, I can't give up." After a pause, Ling Chen said, "I think I know why they want me to handle it. East Sea City is under my control, and if God Organization's people enter East Sea City, they will not escape my eyes. With the grudges I hold against them, I won't let them run amok in East Sea City, so they use Xia Mutong to threaten me."

"It's good that you are aware of it."

"What about you?"

"I am here for refuge. Didn't Master contact you? You should know about the crisis that Secret Society is currently facing."

Ling Chen was startled and said in surprise, "You are a member of Secret Society? That person is your Master?"

Porridge girl nodded, "A few days ago, I lost contact with Master. I tried every method, but there has been no news from him, and I suspect he might have encountered misfortune. After all, the person hunting him is Ji Gang, a Heavenly List master. Although Master is powerful, he is no match for Ji Gang. Since losing contact with Master, God Organization has locked their main target on me. These past few days, to escape God Organization's pursuit, I have been fleeing and finally hid in East Sea City."

"Since you are in East Sea City, why didn't you come to find me?" Ling Chen frowned, with a hint of reproach.

"I didn't want to trouble you. Moreover, since God Organization is after me, I didn't want to involve you."

Ling Chen said unhappily, "You're being too distant with that. You are my friend, no matter how difficult it is, I will help you."

"You can't even defeat me, how can you help me?" Porridge girl replied indifferently, "I can protect myself, you don't need to worry."

Hearing this, Ling Chen didn't know how to respond. Although he was not convinced, porridge girl was not wrong. After all, she was a Earthly List master, and he, merely a Dragon List master, was powerless.

After thinking for a moment, Ling Chen said, "Let's do this, follow my arrangement and stay in East Sea City for now. As long as you are within the jurisdiction of East Sea City, God Organization's people can't touch you. If they dare to come, I will make sure they regret it."

Porridge girl hesitated for a moment, then nodded, "Okay then."

"Let's go, I'll take you to the research base first, it's safer there." Saying this, Ling Chen stood up, ready to leave.

However, as soon as his legs stood up, he felt his knees weaken and collapsed back onto the sofa.

Feeling the soreness and pain throughout his body, Ling Chen couldn't help but give a bitter smile and said, "You really went hard just now."

"How can you blame me, I thought you were an assassin, of course I had to hit hard."

"What should we do now?"

"You have internal injuries, it's best not to move around for ten days or half a month."

Ling Chen shook his head and said, "That won't do, I don't have that much time to waste." After saying this, and seemingly coming up with something, he looked up at porridge girl with a mischievous smile and said, "You caused this injury, you should take responsibility."

Chapter 623 Primal

"I'm responsible?" The Porridge Girl was taken aback and didn't catch on immediately. But seeing the mischievous smile tugging at Ling Chen's lips, she was instantly reminded of the incident during the Heavenly Mechanism Great Ceremony.

Back then, Ling Chen was dueling with Han Yu, seriously wounded and unable to continue the fight. At that moment, she gave him her 'first time', and through Ling Chen's cultivation of the Prajnaparamita Sutra, his injuries healed rapidly, and his skills increased tremendously.

Now, as Ling Chen mentioned the word 'responsible', coupled with his meaningful look, The Porridge Girl couldn't help but recall that intimate moment. Even the usually calm and collected her felt ripples stirring in her heart, and a faint blush crept onto her fair cheeks.

Seeing The Porridge Girl not speaking, Ling Chen couldn't help but touch his nose. Feeling the awkwardness in the air, he let out a dry laugh and quickly changed the subject, saying, "Um... do you mind helping me out?"

With her face still flushed, The Porridge Girl nodded gently and supported Ling Chen's arm with both hands, walking him out step by step.

Back in the car, Ling Chen, enduring the pain in his body, started the vehicle, and headed straight for the research facility.

On the way, The Porridge Girl, looking at Ling Chen focusing on driving, couldn't help but say, "Actually..." However, after two words, hesitation flooded her eyes, and she did not continue.

"Actually what?" Ling Chen turned his head, curious.

Facing Ling Chen's gaze, The Porridge Girl, with her head lowered as if struggling to meet his eyes and her face reddened, said, "Actually, the Prajnaparamita Sutra only works the first time. After the first time, its effects aren't very noticeable."

The first time?

Ling Chen was stunned for a moment, then immediately understood The Porridge Girl's meaning.

So that's how it is... Ling Chen came to a realization. He had thought that every intimate encounter would increase his strength; he didn't expect there to be a limit.

Sigh!

Ling Chen sighed in frustration, feeling somewhat disappointed. He had hoped to use this as a pretext to advance his relationship with The Porridge Girl. Now it seemed that even this one excuse was gone.

By the time they returned to the research facility it was already midnight. Apart from Hu Fei, who was still busy working through the night like an owl, everyone else had already rested.

There were dozens of bedrooms inside the research facility, specifically provided for the staff.

"I'll arrange a room for you."

"No need, I know where the rooms are," The Porridge Girl declined Ling Chen's offer, saying, "Don't forget, I'm a member of the Secret Society, and I'm more familiar with this research facility than you are. You should head back to rest soon, don't let your injuries worsen."

The Porridge Girl's reminder would have been fine, but it made Ling Chen suddenly aware of the soreness and weakness throughout his body.

After watching The Porridge Girl leave, Ling Chen immediately ran towards Hu Fei's office, intending to spend the night there. But before he could reach the office door, Ling Chen's legs suddenly gave out, and his body plunged forward, falling flat on the ground, his forehead turning blue from the impact.

Damn!

Ling Chen couldn't help but curse.

Just then, the door of a nearby room opened, and Zhu Xiaozhu, dressed in pajamas, stepped out, looking down at Ling Chen sprawled on the ground with a puzzled expression, "What are you doing here?"

"Xiaozhu, good evening," Ling Chen said, forcing his head up and greeting Zhu Xiaozhu with a strained smile despite her astonished face.

Then, he propped himself up with his hands on the ground, trying to muster all his strength to rise. However, just as his arms pushed halfway up, a sour swelling sensation struck him.

Bang!

With a muffled thud, Ling Chen's body once again made intimate contact with the ground.

"Ling Chen!"

Seeing this, Zhu Xiaozhu was immediately startled and hastily helped Ling Chen up from the ground.

"Let's go sit in my room."

After entering Zhu Xiaozhu's room, Ling Chen was supported to sit on the bed, leaning against the headboard. At this moment, Ling Chen didn't even want to move, feeling soreness and swelling all over his body, and even lifting his fingers seemed incredibly strenuous.

Is the gap between a Dragon List expert and an Earthly List expert really that large? Ling Chen thought to himself.

"Ling Chen, what's happened to you?"

Hearing Zhu Xiaozhu's concerned inquiry, Ling Chen forced a smile and said, "It's nothing, I'm probably just a bit too tired recently. A few days' rest should do the trick."

"Let me have a look." Saying this, Zhu Xiaozhu placed her hand on Ling Chen's pulse to check his condition.

After a while, Zhu Xiaozhu said, "Your condition is a bit troubling. Did you get into a fight with someone before?"

"How did you know?" As soon as he spoke, Ling Chen knew he had asked a redundant question. Although Zhu Xiaozhu didn't understand martial arts, she had studied medicine with Shi Su for many years. Shi Su came from a family with a strong background in traditional Chinese medicine, and had many dealings with martial arts families. Consequently, Zhu Xiaozhu was definitely knowledgeable about internal injuries.

There was no hiding it from her.

"You..." Zhu Xiaozhu glanced at Ling Chen, her beautiful eyes carrying a trace of blame, and said, "You're an adult now, yet you still don't know how to take care of yourself. Who was it that hurt you so badly?"

Ling Chen touched his nose and showed a silly smile, since he couldn't possibly tell Zhu Xiaozhu that the person who injured him lived within the research base.

"Wait here, I'll get you some medicine."

With those words, Zhu Xiaozhu bent over to rummage through her luggage under the bed. However, she didn't notice that when she bent over, the most attractive scene for a man was inadvertently revealed right before Ling Chen's eyes.

Ling Chen felt a warmth in his nose, almost to the point of bleeding. He secretly swallowed and tried to look away. However, it was as if he was magnetically drawn to the scene, involuntarily swallowing again and again.

At this time, Zhu Xiaozhu was still searching under the bed, completely unaware of Ling Chen's reaction.

"I've found it... I..."

Zhu Xiaozhu raised her head with a smile, ready to speak. However, her gaze just happened to fall on Ling Chen's face. After a moment of stunned silence, her pretty face turned red 'whoosh', her beautiful eyes filled with barely concealed shyness.

Seeing Zhu Xiaozhu's blushing face, Ling Chen felt a heat in his heart, unable to control himself, and longing to pounce on the beautiful girl in front of him.

"Ling..."

Her voice broke out, and as those cherry-like tender lips full of temptation opened, the clarity in Ling Chen's eyes was swallowed in an instant, leaving only the most primal instincts of a primate.

Before Zhu Xiaozhu could finish speaking, Ling Chen let out a tiger roar, supported Zhu Xiaozhu's delicate body with his hands, and pushed her down, his entire body pressing onto her.

"Don't, don't do this... Ling Chen... Stop!"

In panic, Zhu Xiaozhu frantically waved her hands, trying to struggle out from under Ling Chen. But no matter how hard she struggled, she couldn't break free from Ling Chen's hold.

Wuu wuu!

Suddenly, seizing the moment, Ling Chen plunged his head forward and kissed Zhu Xiaozhu fiercely.

Chapter 624 The Whereabouts of Lin Guodong

This moment, Zhu Xiaozhu's mind seemed to explode, and she instantly went blank, completely losing her ability to think.

From childhood to adulthood, she had never felt this way before, nor had any person of the opposite gender touched her body. That feeling, indescribable yet beautiful, wanting to resist but also reluctant, powerless to resist, left her feeble all over.

However, at this critical moment, a ringtone of a cell phone suddenly sounded, instantly pulling the two immersed in bliss back to reality.

Under the bright lights, Zhu Xiaozhu's pretty face instantly turned crimson like she was on fire. Especially when her eyes met Ling Chen's unwilling gaze, she felt exceedingly shy. Without time to think further, she quickly turned her head away, fixing her disheveled clothes.

At this moment, the cell phone continued to ring incessantly. Zhu Xiaozhu picked up her phone, looked at the number displayed, and said with her head lowered, "It's a call from my family."

"That... I... I'll step out first." Ling Chen, feeling somewhat awkward, climbed up from the bed, daring not to take another glance at Zhu Xiaozhu, and hurriedly escaped the room.

Bang!

The door closed, and Ling Chen leaned against the wall, unable to help but exhale. Damn! Almost lost control again, he thought distressedly. If not for that timely phone call, he might have already proceeded with Zhu Xiaozhu.

Sigh, what a pity, such a good opportunity missed.

Inside the room, Zhu Xiaozhu regulated her breathing, her hand covering her flushed cheek, answered the call and asked, "Dad, what's the reason for calling so late?"

Whatever the person on the other end said, Zhu Xiaozhu's complexion suddenly changed, she asked in disbelief, "You... are you serious? ...Yes, I understand... Don't worry, I'll figure out a way."

After hanging up, Zhu Xiaozhu looked up towards the door, her beautiful eyes shimmering with complexity.

Leaving the room, Ling Chen headed straight to Hu Fei's office. Nowadays, Hu Fei was considered a big boss in one department. Besides himself, he had over twenty people in charge of intelligence work. Intelligence work was continuous, hence personnel were on duty 24 hours.

Arriving at the office, Ling Chen poured two glasses of plain water to cool himself down. Then, holding a teacup, he approached Hu Fei's busy desk and asked, "What are you busy with so late?"

Hu Fei glanced up at Ling Chen and said with a smug smile, "I've got some great news for you, I found him."

"Found him?" Ling Chen didn't catch on immediately and curiously asked, "Found what?"

"Lin Guodong. Remember the last time at Qingyun Martial Arts Hall, Nanrong Yuan provided Lin Guodong's appearance? I uploaded his photo into the Ministry of Public Security's system for matching, and finally got results."

Hearing this, Ling Chen's eyes brightened, excitedly saying, "Really?"

Hu Fei said nothing and started typing on the keyboard. Soon, the computer screen displayed a middle-aged man's details.

"Look, this person's real name is Lin Jiawei, a Southerner, previously engaged in overseas trade, has a criminal record for fraud and extortion, then suddenly disappeared for more than ten years. I think he must have joined the God Organization more than ten years ago and gradually became a high-ranking member."

Ling Chen nodded, "Climbing to such high ranks in over ten years, he must be really capable."

"Nonsense. The financial frauds he did require brains; without intelligence, such schemes couldn't be pulled off. Also, I checked his other details; he'd been married once but divorced later, no children, both parents deceased, no siblings. However, he does have a grandfather over ninety years old living in East Sea City. More interestingly, his grandfather has no social security or pension, yet lives a luxurious life in a villa served by three housemaids and a dedicated medical team, certainly someone financially supports him."

"It seems Lin Jiawei still has some filial piety."

"That's beside the point," Hu Fei continued smilingly, "I checked Lin Jiawei's entry and exit records; he returns to East Sea City at the beginning of every month, stays for two or three days, then leaves. According to the records, each visit is to see his grandfather."

Ling Chen glanced at the calendar; today was exactly March 2nd.

"So you mean he will be back these next few days?"

"Exactly, I'm currently checking the entry records. As soon as he shows up at East Sea International Airport, I'll definitely spot him."

"Great, looks like we're finally making headway. Fatty, keep an eye out, and notify me immediately if there's any news. And, give me his grandfather's address; I'll spare some time tomorrow to check out the surroundings. No matter what, we must capture Lin Jiawei; we can't let him escape."

Chapter 625 Capturing Lin Jiawei

The next day.

After a night's rest, Ling Chen woke up feeling sore in his lower back, a condition that seemed worse than the night before. He shook his head helplessly, realizing that the porridge girl was right; with the injuries he had sustained, it would probably take at least ten days to a half month to fully recover.

Coming out of Hu Fei's office, Ling Chen yawned, preparing to go to the restroom to relieve himself. Walking down the hallway, he happened to encounter Zhu Xiaozhu coming towards him. Their eyes met, and Zhu Xiaozhu's pretty face turned red in an instant. She quickly lowered her head, not daring to meet Ling Chen's gaze.

"Xiaozhu..." To avoid prolonging the awkwardness, Ling Chen opened his mouth to greet her. After all, he was in the wrong last night. As a man, he should be more magnanimous, apologize later, and ask for forgiveness.

But before he could finish speaking, Zhu Xiaozhu walked right past him without saying a word, not even a glance.

Seeing this, Ling Chen touched his nose and let out a bitter chuckle to himself, understanding that Zhu Xiaozhu was too shy to face him. Forget it! He would wait a couple of days for her mood to improve before apologizing.

As he listened to the fading footsteps, the bowing Zhu Xiaozhu suddenly turned her head, looking at the receding figure of Ling Chen with sparkling eyes, clearly deep in thought.

There was still plenty of time. Ling Chen made the time to meet with porridge girl, then drove off from the research base. Accompanying him was Kaelina.

Traveling along the road for roughly forty minutes or so, Ling Chen and Kaelina finally reached their destination - a manor on the outskirts of East Sea City.

Through the car window, Ling Chen, seated in the driver's seat, observed for a moment, then nodded to himself, "Here we are."

"Should I go, or will you?" Kaelina asked.

Hearing Kaelina's question, Ling Chen replied, "Let's split up. You take care of the outside, and I'll handle that three-story building." After that, Ling Chen picked up a backpack from the backseat and got out of the car.

The manor wasn't very large, covering only a bit over five hundred square meters. However, owning such a manor in East Sea City would cost at least tens of millions, which showed that Lin Jiawei was quite filial to his grandfather.

Ling Chen went around the manor's perimeter wall until he noticed there were no security cameras inside, which somewhat reassured him. Then, he climbed over the wall from a corner and landed steadily on the lawn.

At this point, it was half-past eight in the morning, yet there was no one outside the small building. Ling Chen approached the building quietly, with his backpack slung over his shoulder, then climbed up the pipe step by step.

Before long, Ling Chen had smoothly reached the second-floor balcony.

Looking through the window glass, Ling Chen checked to make sure no one was inside. Once certain, he gently pushed open the door and slipped in.

This bedroom seemed to be uninhabited, with all its furniture covered with dust cloths. Putting the backpack down, Ling Chen took out a pinhole camera and installed it in a corner of the wall.

"OK!"

Hearing Hu Fei's voice through the earpiece, Ling Chen walked to the door, listened for any noise outside, then cracked the door open to check the corridor conditions. Instantly, he saw two maids carrying breakfast and toiletries enter a bedroom some ten meters away.

That must be the master's room.

As soon as the maids entered, Ling Chen darted out, installing pinhole cameras in various hidden spots to monitor every move within the rooms.

All told, it took about ten minutes to install more than twenty pinhole cameras Ling Chen had brought, covering the entire house under their surveillance.

"Kaelina, how are things on your end?"

"All set."

Receiving Kaelina's response, Ling Chen breathed a sigh of relief and said, "Time to go!"

Back in the car, Kaelina asked, "Are you sure Hu Fei's information is reliable?"

Ling Chen, full of confidence, smiled and said, "The fat guy might not be good at other things, but his intel in this area is absolutely solid. Don't worry, according to his predictions, Lin Jiawei will return in these two days. All we need to do is set up our net. When the time comes, we'll capture him all at once. As long as we get Lin Jiawei, we might even be able to follow the trail and directly pull out that mysterious leader."

Hearing this, Kaelina said indifferently, "It'd be great if things will go as smoothly as you say."

Ling Chen's lips curled up in a half-smile but said nothing more. Regardless, Lin Jiawei must be captured. This was not only for himself but also for Xia Mutong. Now that Xia Mutong was still in the hands of the God Organization, capturing Lin Jiawei could enable them to exchange him for Xia Mutong.

...

In the blink of an eye.

Two days passed.

East Sea International Airport.

Ling Chen, the porridge girl, and Kaelina sat in an Audi, their eyes fixed on the airport exit, searching for the target.

"The fatso just sent a message; Lin Jiawei has entered the country and could show up at any moment. Everyone, keep your eyes peeled and don't miss him."

"That one, do you think it's him?"

Right after Ling Chen finished speaking, Kaelina immediately pointed out of the car window. Following the direction of her finger, Ling Chen picked up the binoculars he carried and saw Lin Jiawei, in a suit, emerging from the airport surrounded by four bodyguards with impressive builds, carrying a suitcase.

As he reached the roadside, two Mercedes-Benz SUVs promptly came. Once Lin Jiawei and his entourage got into the cars, Ling Chen started the Audi and followed behind the two vehicles as they all left the airport.

Since the opposing security personnel were professionals, Ling Chen did not dare to follow too closely, fearing that he would expose his whereabouts. Throughout the journey, he kept a distance of tens of meters, using the other vehicles on the road as cover, to hide his tracks.

However, upon entering the ring road, the two Mercedes suddenly accelerated, their speed instantly exceeding a hundred miles per hour.

Ling Chen frowned and abandoned the idea of continuing the chase. The other party's purpose for speeding up was clearly to prevent being followed; if he sped up to keep up, it would be tantamount to exposing his own trail.

Since they knew where Lin Jiawei was headed, there was no need to hurry too much.

Before long, Ling Chen drove up once again to the manor in the suburbs.

Looking at the two Mercedes parked at the entrance, Ling Chen picked up his binoculars to observe the situation.

"Two guards at the entrance, Kaelina, I'll leave them to you. Porridge girl and I will go directly in through the window, capture Lin Jiawei quickly, and without delay, head back to the car to regroup."

"Understood!"

After making their plans, Ling Chen and the porridge girl got out of the car and went to the spot where Ling Chen had sneaked into the manor last time. After checking the time, Ling Chen nodded to the porridge girl, then leapt onto the wall.

As the two of them began their operation, Kaelina had already approached from the other side of the manor, swiftly charging towards the two guards at the entrance.

As the third-ranked assassin on the assassin list, Kaelina, holding a dagger, showed no mercy and thrust directly at the vital points of the two guards.

However, the moment the dagger was swung, one of the guards raised his hand to block, and with a 'clang' of a crisp sound, the dagger was immediately deflected. Then, that guard threw a punch with the speed of the wind, fiercely hammering it towards Kaelina, sending her flying in an instant.

Chapter 626 Lin Jiawei

Ling Chen and porridge girl just climbed over the wall and happened to see this scene, and were immediately stunned.

Kaelina, after all, is ranked third on the assassin list, and although her strength is not as good as those on the Tiger List or Dragon List, her killing skills are absolutely top-notch. However, the unremarkable-looking security guard punched Kaelina and sent her flying, which clearly showed the strength of the opponent.

Could it be a master from the Tiger List or Dragon List?

In a flash of thought, Ling Chen felt this possibility was very likely. After all, Lin Jiawei's identity and status were there, being an important figure in the God Organization, there definitely would be masters around him.

At this moment, Kaelina, lying on the ground, covered her chest and palely stood up from the ground. Facing the approaching security personnel, Kaelina glanced at the dagger not far away, her expression slightly grave.

No good!

Ling Chen silently cursed, realizing that Kaelina could be in mortal danger given the strength of the security personnel.

"I'll go help her." As soon as he finished speaking, Ling Chen tapped lightly with his toes, accelerating instantly to his maximum speed. Like a gust of wind, he took three steps in two strides, quickly rushing towards Kaelina. However, as Ling Chen was about to reach her, another security guard outside the door noticed his approach and immediately stepped in front of him, blocking his path.

"Get out of the way!" Ling Chen shouted loudly, his fist clenched with steel, whistling through the air, and he ferociously struck out, aiming directly at the man's face.

Seeing Ling Chen make a move, the security personnel stood still, not dodging at all. As the steel fist approached, the security personnel suddenly raised his fist and clashed head-on with Ling Chen.

When the fists collided, Ling Chen felt a powerful force surge through the back of his hand, causing his body to step back instantly.

Huh?

After a brief exchange, there was a hint of surprise in Ling Chen's eyes as he looked at the opponent.

When their fists had made contact, Ling Chen noticed something odd—his fist seemed to have hit something hard, not the opponent's fist.

Upon closer inspection, Ling Chen immediately realized what was going on.

He had thought these security personnel were masters, but it seemed that was not the case. These two security personnel were simply equipped with exoskeleton armor enhancing their strength and speed, which allowed them to unexpectedly defeat Kaelina.

With this realization, Ling Chen relaxed. As long as they were not masters, he was not concerned about just an exoskeleton armor.

"Another go!"

With a roar, Ling Chen thrust his legs, leaping high, like a roc spreading its wings, striking directly at the opponent's head.

Hmph!

The security personnel sneered, tapped the ground with one foot, and his body shot up two meters high, jumping even higher than Ling Chen. Seeing this, Ling Chen's expression remained unchanged, his clenched steel fist smashed down again.

Bang!

Accompanied by a dull sound, as Ling Chen's steel fist was about to make contact with the opponent's body, a burst of dark force suddenly exploded, violently impacting the body of the opponent, directly knocking him flying. The security personnel, losing his balance, had not even time to react and heavily fell to the ground.

Without waiting for the opponent to rise, Ling Chen leaned forward, his toes forcefully propelled him forward, and he rapidly closed in like a cheetah, his elbow swiftly smashing down directly on the opponent's forehead.

Pff!

A spurt of fresh blood sprayed out, and that security personnel immediately fell to the ground, unconscious.

However, although one security guard was dealt with, Kaelina was now in a dire situation, held by the collar and lifted mid-air by the other security guard. Moreover, from the sleeve of that guard, a dagger had emerged unknowingly, stabbing straight towards Kaelina's heart.

"If it had hit her, Kaelina would have definitely lost her life."

Without time to think further, Ling Chen quickly scanned the area; his body rolled forward, single-handedly picked up the dagger that had fallen to the ground, and, with a quick flick of his wrist, threw the dagger.

In an instant, the dagger passed through the back of the security personnel's head, piercing through the forehead, and blood gushed out.

Seeing the man fall, Ling Chen quickly rushed forward, steadying Kaelina who was about to fall.

"Are you all right?"

Looking into Ling Chen's concerned eyes, Kaelina gently shook her head and said, "I'm fine, but I'm afraid I can't participate in the next part of the mission."

"It's okay, we can handle it. You go back to the car and rest, and we'll come to meet you after we've captured Lin Jiawei."

"Be careful on your own!"

Watching Kaelina leave, Ling Chen turned and walked to the door, reaching out to push it open. However, at that moment, Hu Fei's urgent voice came through the earpiece: "Don't go in!"

Ling Chen slowed his movement and asked, "What happened?"

"Porridge girl is in trouble."

"In trouble?" Ling Chen was shocked. He knew the strength of porridge girl best; as one of the top figures on the Earthly List, could she really be in danger? With this thought, Ling Chen pressed the earpiece, and called, "Porridge girl, respond if you hear me."

But after several calls, there was no response through the earpiece.

When he had intervened to save Kaelina, porridge girl had already broken through the window and entered the building. Several minutes had now passed without any noise from inside, he had thought that porridge girl had succeeded. Now, it seemed that the situation was probably not optimistic.

"Fatty, what's the situation inside?"

Before Hu Fei could reply, Ling Chen heard a voice from inside the building: "Ling Chen, come in. I know you're outside. If you don't want your friend to get hurt, it's best not to play any tricks."

"Don't go in!"

Hearing Hu Fei's warning, Ling Chen frowned, speaking in a stern tone: "No, porridge girl's safety is at stake, I must go in." With this, not waiting for Hu Fei to speak again, Ling Chen pushed open the door and strode in.

In the spacious and bright living room, Lin Jiawei was sitting on the sofa with his legs crossed, holding a cup of tea in his hand, a faint smile on his face, watching Ling Chen enter.

Behind Lin Jiawei stood two security personnel in suits, their eyes sharp, expression stern, following Ling Chen's moves closely to prevent any sudden action.

"Mr. Ling, I've long heard your reputation, and now we finally meet," Lin Jiawei said with a smile, gesturing to the sofa opposite him in a polite manner: "The guest has come, please have a seat!"

Ling Chen surveyed his surroundings calmly, and asked, "Where's my friend?"

"Don't worry, she's not in immediate danger, but her safety depends on how much you cooperate with me."

Hearing this, Ling Chen nodded, and walked over to sit down on the sofa. At the same time, a housekeeper came over and placed a cup of tea on the coffee table in front of Ling Chen.

"Mr. Ling, I believe you are clear about my identity, so I won't introduce myself."

"Lin Jiawei, alias Lin Guodong, a high-ranking member of the God Organization."

Lin Jiawei chuckled, waving his hand, "No, you are mistaken."

Chapter 627 Chips

"Wrong? Where is it wrong? Are you not the person I'm looking for?"

"I don't want to deceive you, but you really got the wrong person. My name is Lin Jiawei, I've never used an alias or changed my name. However, the Lin Guodong you mentioned does exist, and he is indeed a high-up in the God Organization."

Ling Chen was puzzled and asked with a baffled face: "Then why..."

Lin Jiawei said cheerfully: "You want to ask why you ended up finding me? Actually, it's very simple, Mr. Ling, since you know that Lin Guodong is an important high-up of the God Organization, do you think he would be so easily found by you? Now that you are here, I won't hide it anymore. Let me tell you the truth, actually I am Lin Guodong's body double. If Lin Guodong needs to make a personal appearance somewhere, I replace him. In this way, anybody tracking Lin Guodong will end up on me. To put it simply, this is a defense mechanism, I'm just a target to attract the enemy's attention. If someone wants to harm Lin Guodong, they will trace the lead to this place, and then it's up to us to handle them. What I didn't expect was that the person who found this place would be you."

Having said this, Lin Jiawei looked at Ling Chen with a meaningful smile: "Mr. Ling, you are an experienced agent, do you really think you can easily catch an important figure of the God Organization? If it were so, then you would be too naïve."

Hearing this, Ling Chen frowned and asked: "What do you want?"

Lin Jiawei, as if he hadn't heard Ling Chen's question, went on saying: "Mr. Ling, you see, you don't have any direct grievances with our God Organization, so why oppose us. Putting yourself in danger each time, do you find this interesting? In my opinion, why don't we bury the hatchet, from now on you take your sunny path, I'll cross my log bridge, we don't cross each other's paths and live peacefully."

"I also want to live a peaceful life, but you shouldn't have laid hands on someone close to me."

"Are you talking about Nanrong Wanqing?" Lin Jiawei shook his head and said: "Mr. Ling, I think you might be mistaken, our confrontation with Nanrong Wanqing is because of Nanrong Yuan. A daughter paying off her father's debts, if we must blame someone, it can only be Nanrong Yuan who dragged his own daughter down."

Ling Chen coldly said: "You should know, she is my woman, if you touch her, it's the same as opposing me."

"Alright!" Lin Jiawei put down the teacup in his hand and, with his legs crossed, said: "Mr. Ling, let's talk about something serious."

"What serious matter?"

"Both of your friends are in my hands, if you want to save them... let's make a deal."

Hearing this, a heavy feeling sank in Ling Chen's heart, immediately giving him a bad feeling.

"Mr. Ling, you must be very familiar with the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, I know you are good friends with the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion Master, last time you risked your life to save her, tsk tsk tsk, such loyalty is truly rare."

As soon as Lin Jiawei uttered these words, Ling Chen's face changed instantly, and he said in a deep voice: "You want me to help you against the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion?"

"Correct." Lin Jiawei seriously said: "The Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion is the only existence that the God Organization is wary of. For many years, the God Organization has been trying to infiltrate the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. Regrettably, the Pavilion is too cautious, and our people are either hardly able to get in, or are exposed by the Pavilion not long after. Since Mr. Ling is friends with the Pavilion, you are our best candidate."

Ling Chen, squinting his eyes and smiling on the surface but not smiling inside, said: "Lin Jiawei, have you lost your mind? Since you know the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion and I are friends, you still want my help?"

Lin Jiawei said indifferently: "Mr. Ling, I believe you are a person who values commitment and loyalty. Would you really allow your two friends to die for you?"

At that point, Lin Jiawei made a hand gesture to his security personnel behind him.

The latter understood, immediately brought over a tablet computer, and placed it in front of Ling Chen. As the screen lit up, an image immediately appeared before Ling Chen's eyes.

Seeing the person in the image, Ling Chen's gaze sharpened, an icy intent suddenly bursting forth.

In the image, Xia Mutong lay on an iron bed, bound by straps on her hands and feet, even her mouth was gagged, rendering her silent. Beside her, two men in white lab coats stood by, holding syringes filled with purple liquid as if waiting for something.

"Lin Jiawei, you..."

Lin Jiawei smiled slightly: "Mr. Ling, don't rush to get angry, listen to me finish speaking slowly. You should know, we recently acquired a new technology, but at the moment, it's still in the refinement stage. Before the technology is perfected, we still need a lot of test subjects, and your friends happen to be suitable candidates. I have given them a heads-up that at ten o'clock they will inject the drug promptly. Now, there are eight minutes left until ten o'clock, you can think it over slowly. I believe you will make the correct choice."

"Are you threatening me?" Ling Chen looked at Lin Jiawei, his eyes brimming with a frosty coldness.

"Mr. Ling, how can this be a threat? I am clearly negotiating with you." Saying that, Lin Jiawei took out a bottle containing blue liquid from his pocket and placed it on the coffee table.

"What is this?"

"This is a toxin developed by the God Organization, rest assured, this toxin will only make people lose their strength, it's not fatal. Just pour this toxin into the drinking water of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, then coordinate with us from the inside out, by then, we can easily settle the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. Mr. Ling, I've figured out the method for you, what do you say, have you considered it clearly?"

Ling Chen frowned, silent, his eyes flashing with indecisiveness.

"Of course, Mr. Ling, I'm just making a suggestion, how specifically you do it is your business. I don't question the process, only the outcome."

After speaking, Lin Jiawei seemed to remember something and said: "Mr. Ling, how much do you know about the Yangxin Pavilion of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion?"

"Yangxin Pavilion?" Ling Chen paused, then came to an understanding immediately. Zhou Jun once mentioned the Yangxin Pavilion to him. Yangxin Pavilion is where elderly people are enshrined, mostly consisting of elders living there in retirement. They are highly skilled, an important component of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion.

"The biggest obstacle of the God Organization is Yangxin Pavilion. Without solving those people, it's difficult to destroy the Pavilion. Therefore, Yangxin Pavilion will be your primary target. Just incapacitate them, and it will be easy to settle the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. By then, not only will I release your friends, but I will also consider you a friend of the God Organization and offer you certain assistance."

Ling Chen said indifferently: "Do you think I care?"

"Mr. Ling, regardless of whether you care or not, time is almost up, have you decided?"

Chapter 628 Difficult Choices

Watching the time inch closer to ten o'clock, Ling Chen couldn't help but clench his fists tightly, intently watching Xia Mutong on the screen, with eyes filled with hesitation.

If he didn't agree, both Xia Mutong and the porridge girl would die. Or, he could make a desperate attempt to rescue the porridge girl, sacrificing Xia Mutong in exchange for the safety of Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. But in doing so, his conscience would be troubled for life.

Both the porridge girl and Xia Mutong were women who had been involved with him. Just on this point alone, he could not disregard their life and death. As Ling Chen was deep in thought, Hu Fei's voice suddenly came through the earpiece: "Found the porridge girl. She's in a room on the second floor to the left, but... I think the chances of rescuing her are slim. There's an old man watching over her, he's the one who subdued the porridge girl just now."

Hearing this, Ling Chen's heart sank, and he immediately abandoned the second plan.

Even the porridge girl was no match for that person, let alone himself.

"Mr. Ling, you have one minute left. Have you made up your mind?"

As Lin Jiawei's voice rang out, Ling Chen looked up, met his gaze, and nodded: "Fine, I agree with you."

"Haha!" Lin Jiawei laughed and clapped his hands: "I knew Mr. Ling wouldn't disappoint me. Very good, then I'll place my hopes in Mr. Ling." As the words ended, a security staff member brought over a black briefcase and placed it in front of Ling Chen.

"Mr. Ling, take good care of this. It contains the equipment you'll need. Oh, and one more thing! Let me remind you, don't play any tricks on me. If you dare to deceive me, I assure you I will use all of God Organization's power against all the friends you know, including Nanrong Wanqing. So you better keep it in mind, and make no mistake."

After hearing the other person's words, Ling Chen secured the bottle with the blue liquid and then picked up the black briefcase, leaving without a word.

Back in the car, Kaelina, sitting in the passenger seat, couldn't help but ask when she saw Ling Chen come back alone: "Where's your friend?"

Ling Chen shook his head and opened the black briefcase by himself. Suddenly, a complete set of communication equipment was laid out in the case.

"Where did this come from?"

In the face of Kaelina's question, Ling Chen simply replied: "I just made a deal." With that said, Ling Chen pressed the earpiece and spoke: "Fatty, keep an eye on those people for twenty-four hours; I want to know their every move."

"Understood."

Leaving the manor, the two of them headed straight back to the research base. On the way, Kaelina didn't ask anything more. Just by looking at Ling Chen's grim expression, she could guess what had happened. At times like this, it was better to let him have some quiet time.

Arriving at the research base, Ling Chen greeted Kaelina before heading straight to Hu Fei's office.

The moment he entered the door, Ling Chen immediately called out: "Fatty, how's it going?"

"Everyone's still in the house, not a single person has left."

Ling Chen approached the computer screen and said, "Bring up the surveillance footage of the porridge girl."

Without a word, Hu Fei's hands rattled across the keyboard. Soon enough, an image appeared on the screen.

In the footage, the porridge girl was bound with her hands behind her back, thrown in the corner of the room. Besides her, there was an old man in the room. But as Ling Chen got a clear look at the man's face, his expression suddenly changed.

Ji Gang!

It's this old fellow again. Wasn't he after the Secret Society? Why is he here? Could it be... the mysterious man who had spoken to him last time had been killed by Ji Gang?

After thinking for a while, Ling Chen pushed the distracting thoughts aside and said, "Fatty, you have a wide network, is there any way you can help me find Xia Mutong's location?"

"Find her?" Hu Fei was stunned for a moment, then said with a bitter smile, "I'm no god, how would I know where she's being held? Besides, my network is all about the Assassin business. I can hire Assassins, but finding people is not something I can do. If you ask me, it's better to find someone familiar with God Organization."

A reliable person!

Ling Chen frowned, and several names flashed through his mind in an instant. Nanrong Yuan and Liu Xiyao had deep connections with God Organization. But he had already asked them, and Nanrong Yuan and Liu Xiyao had told him all they could, without providing any clues.

If he couldn't find Xia Mutong's location, then he could only follow Lin Jiawei's orders to scheme against Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion.

On one side was his woman, and on the other were his friends.

The thought of having to choose between them gave Ling Chen an immense headache; he simply did not know what to do.

After a moment of thought, Ling Chen pulled out his phone and dialed the exclusive number given to him by the Secret Society. However, though the call connected, no one answered. It seemed the porridge girl was right, the Secret Society had been under such severe pressure from God Organization recently, that most members had gone into hiding to save their lives.

"Ling Chen, look."

While he was deep in thought, Hu Fei suddenly tugged on Ling Chen's sleeve, pointing at the screen and saying, "He seems to have realized something."

Ling Chen looked up to see Lin Jiawei appearing on the surveillance footage, his mouth opening and closing as if he was saying something.

"Turn up the volume."

Soon, Lin Jiawei's voice came clearly from the speaker: "Mr. Ling, I forgot to tell you, this matter needs to be done quickly. It's been delayed for too long, and we don't have that much time to waste. To give you more motivation, I've decided to give you a deadline, ten days. If you can't achieve the goal within ten days, then don't blame me for being rude."

As Lin Jiawei's voice faded, all the surveillance screens turned to gray and white.

"The signal's cut off," Hu Fei said helplessly.

"Send someone over, we can't let them escape our sight."

Leaving the office, Ling Chen walked to the outside of the lab. Through the glass, he saw Zhu Xiaozhu discussing with several medical professors about the conditions of Jiang Yunkai and Bai Huanjun.

It had been several days since they started their research, and Zhu Xiaozhu and her team still hadn't made any progress. Although Ling Chen understood, he still couldn't help but worry.

At that moment, Zhu Xiaozhu in the lab seemed to notice Ling Chen's gaze and looked back at him.

Ling Chen waved his hand and squeezed out a faint smile. However, to his surprise, Zhu Xiaozhu looked away immediately after a glance, showing no expression at all on her face.

This indifferent reaction made Ling Chen freeze.

What's wrong?

Although he was wrong that night, Zhu Xiaozhu's character shouldn't be like this, he thought. Reflecting on the past few days, Zhu Xiaozhu's behavior had been somewhat abnormal, feeling as if she'd changed into a different person, with no explanation.

Never mind!

After some thought, Ling Chen shook his head and temporarily set aside Zhu Xiaozhu's attitude. Right now, he needed to focus on the problems at hand.

Chapter 629 Indirect Intimacy

"Ling Chen, what are you planning to do?"

In the spacious office, having learned of the situation, Hu Fei asked.

Ling Chen shook his head and sighed softly, "I really don't know what to do. Both sides are my friends; I can't hurt either of them. Lin Jiawei only gave me ten days, if I don't figure out a solution quickly, both porridge girl and Xia Mutong will be in danger."

"If only we could find Xia Mutong's location."

"It's useless," Ling Chen said with a bitter smile, "Even if we rescue Xia Mutong, we still have porridge girl. She's currently being watched by Ji Gang. No one can rescue her from his clutches unless..."

"Unless what?"

"Unless we can find a Heavenly List master to help. But, while there are many experts in the world, very few are on the Heavenly List. Even if we find one, they might not be willing to help... Wait!" At this point, Ling Chen's eyes suddenly lit up, bursting with a sharp glint.

Feeling the change in Ling Chen's gaze, Hu Fei asked, "What is it, got an idea?"

Ling Chen's lips curved slightly, revealing a faint smile, and he nodded, "I think I know who to seek out. Fatty, drop everything else these days and help me pinpoint Xia Mutong's whereabouts. If all else fails, we may just have to forcefully intervene to rescue them."

"What about you?" Hu Fei asked, "Are you still going to Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion?"

"I definitely need to go. I'm watching Lin Jiawei, and he's also having someone watch me. If I do nothing, it would definitely arouse his suspicion. So, no matter what, I must go to Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. Help me book a flight ticket later, I'll be leaving tomorrow morning."

"A flight to Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion?"

"No, I'm heading to Jinhai City first, then from there to Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion."

Jinhai City?

Hu Fei looked at Ling Chen skeptically, not understanding why he wanted to go to Jinhai City.

...

The next afternoon.

Departing from Jinhai City Airport and after more than two hours of flight, Ling Chen finally arrived at his destination.

Exiting the airport, a Cadillac was already parked by the roadside waiting. As the car door opened, Zhou Jun hopped out from the driver's seat and hurriedly welcomed Ling Chen with a warm hug.

"Ling Chen, good to see you again."

"Thanks for driving all the way out here to pick me up."

"No need for formalities among brothers. Come on, get in the car. I'll take you to get something to eat first, then we head back to Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion."

After enjoying a hearty dinner, Ling Chen and Zhou Jun directly drove to the forested area where Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion was located.

Since Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion was in a remote location surrounded by woods, the vehicle couldn't proceed further, and they had to continue on foot.

Walking through the dense woods, Ling Chen chatted sporadically with Zhou Jun. Along the way, Ling Chen clearly noticed that the security had tightened, with dark posts everywhere. It seemed that since the last attack by the God Organization, Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion had enhanced their defenses.

After about a half-hour walk, Ling Chen and Zhou Jun finally arrived at Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. By now, it was already past eight in the evening.

Seemingly aware of Ling Chen's arrival, Song Ge had already been waiting at the entrance. Naturally, greetings were exchanged between friends.

"Ling, I'll take you to meet the Pavilion Master first."

"Okay."

Zhou Jun joined in, "Then you go ahead with that, I'll help Ling Chen arrange his room. See you later."

Following beside Song Ge, the two matched their steps and soon arrived outside the room where the Pavilion Master lived.

"Ling, go ahead, I'll wait for you outside."

Ling Chen nodded, he and Su Mei were old acquaintances, there was no need for such courtesy. With that, he pushed open the door and strode into the room.

In the elegantly ancient room, with a layer of dark wooden flooring that creaked underfoot. The south-facing window was slightly open, revealing a sliver of a gap, through which a cool evening breeze passed, wandering around the spacious room, bringing a hint of chilliness.

Ling Chen turned his head and focused his gaze towards the curtain in the center of the room. Indistinctly, he could barely make out the silhouette of a person emerging from behind it. Moreover, a rich aroma of tea drifted from behind the curtain, mingling in the air and permeating the entire room, invigorating one's spirit.

"Miss Su, long time no see," Ling Chen said with a smile as he approached the curtain.

"Please sit down!"

Su Mei's gentle voice came through, with a light laugh. Clearly, she was very welcoming of Ling Chen's visit.

Ling Chen glanced at the curtain blocking his view, his right hand hesitated for a moment, but ultimately he couldn't resist and lifted the curtain, fixing it to one side. Instantly, Su Mei's beautiful face came into his view.

"You!" Su Mei looked at Ling Chen somewhat irritably, her tone tinged with a hint of reproach: "How bold of you, no one has ever dared to lift this curtain before."

Ling Chen chuckled, "Miss Su, we are old friends who have been through life and death together, why stand on ceremony? Besides, I'm not accustomed to speaking to someone with a curtain in between. It's so inconvenient." Saying this, Ling Chen made himself comfortable sitting next to the coffee table.

Without waiting for Su Mei to speak, Ling Chen casually picked up a cup of tea and took a detailed sip, shaking his head he commented, "Hmm, not bad, tastes better than the last time. Seems like your skills have improved."

However, it seemed Su Mei didn't hear Ling Chen's compliment, as her beautiful eyes stared intently at the teacup, her fair and delicate face unconsciously flushing with a hint of pink.

Noticing the change in Su Mei's expression, Ling Chen curiously said, "Miss Su, what's wrong? It's just a cup of tea, wasn't it made for me to drink?"

"You..." Su Mei glared at Ling Chen, swallowing back the words that reached her lips.

That cup of tea was originally brewed for her own drinking, she had only taken a small sip and hadn't finished, yet Ling Chen had drunk it all. Most importantly, the bastard had drunk exactly where her lips had touched.

Indirect kiss!

The thought alone turned Su Mei's cheeks even redder, a trace of shyness flashing through her beautiful eyes. Thinking that as a woman, she couldn't bring this up directly, as it would only embarrass her.

Then, she quickly changed the subject, "If you think it's good, feel free to drink more."

"Sure, sure." Ling Chen took the kettle without any hesitation and filled his cup. He had eaten something greasy outside with Zhou Jun earlier and was a little thirsty, so this was the perfect chance to quench his thirst.

"What brings you to Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion this time?" Su Mei shifted the topic, asking, "You're not here to seek my help again, are you?"

"Look at you saying that, as if my purpose here is only to seek help. We are friends after all, Zhou Jun and Song are my friends too, can't I come to see my friends?"

Su Mei gazed deeply at Ling Chen and said, "I don't think your intentions are that simple."

"Alright, I know I can't hide it from you." Ling Chen said helplessly: "You must have heard about the issues with the Secret Society, I'm here for that."

Chapter 630 Night Talk

"How come, has the God Organization threatened you again?"

"That's not the case. Recently, the God Organization has launched a cleansing operation against the Secret Society, destroying many of their strongholds and causing heavy casualties. Even the higher-ups of the Secret Society have lost contact, completely silent. As far as I know, the God Organization sent Ji Gang to hunt down the high-ranking members of the Secret Society. With a master from the Heavenly List taking action, I'm afraid those people will have a hard time escaping."

Su Mei nodded and said, "I am aware of this. According to intelligence from Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, the power of the Secret Society has shrunk by at least half. This is indeed a heavy blow to them. At present, there are almost no active members of the Secret Society, they have all gone underground. I have tried to contact the high-ranking members of the Secret Society, and as you said, all of them have gone silent, their lives are probably in great danger."

"Why has the Secret Society, a major world force, suffered such a severe setback this time?"

"You only are aware of the situation in Huaxia, but completely ignorant about what's happening abroad. For the sake of the Secret Society, the God Organization employed a lot of power this time, including their infiltration within governments worldwide. The reason why the Secret Society suffered such heavy losses is mainly due to covert operations by individuals within governments of various countries, utilizing governmental power to suppress the Secret Society, which led to the massive losses."

Governmental power?

Ling Chen was surprised. So, that was it, no wonder! The members of the God Organization lurking within government agencies are the most terrifying.

"If the Secret Society falls, the next target the God Organization will deal with is surely our Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion."

Hearing Su Mei's words, Ling Chen felt a jolt in his heart and quickly covered up the discomfort in his eyes, pretending to be serious as he asked, "Why are you so certain?"

"Do I even need to think about it? If there is any other power in this world that could threaten the God Organization, it would only be Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. Furthermore, the God Organization has repeatedly tried to kill me, it shows that they are determined to destroy Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. However, Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion is not as easy to deal with as the Secret Society. Just like you said, the forces of the Secret Society are spread all over the world, and the God Organization only needs the power of various governments to easily destroy it. But it's different for Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion; there is only one Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, based in Huaxia, and the God Organization's influence has not yet penetrated the interior of Huaxia, so we don't have to worry about the God Organization using governmental power against us."

Su Mei spoke confidently: "If it's just the God Organization, don't expect them to easily break through Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. Our heritage of several hundred years relies not merely on luck."

"Let's hope so!"

"What, you don't have confidence in us?"

Ling Chen laughed: "Not at all, I have full confidence in Miss Su. Besides, even if I weren't confident in you, I have absolute faith in those elders from Yangxin Pavilion."

"That's true. Their presence is what has maintained Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion's status for a century. Alright, you have been tired from the journey, you should head back to your room to rest. We can talk about anything else tomorrow."

"Okay, then I won't disturb you anymore."

Coming out of the room, Song Ge, who was waiting outside, took Ling Chen to the guest room arranged by Zhou Jun.

As soon as he entered the room, Ling Chen smelled a strong fragrance of wine.

In the center of the room stood a wooden table, with several side dishes for drinking set out, and two jars of wine next to it, the aroma of which was emanating from there.

Song Ge said with a smile: "Zhou Jun, you are quite good at arranging things."

"Of course." Zhou Jun smiled proudly: "These two jars of wine are pinched from my old man, twenty years of pure brewing, he usually doesn't care to drink it much, but today he let me bring them here. Come on, let's not stand around, sit, tonight the three of us brothers won't call it quits until we're drunk."

A night passed.

The next day, Ling Chen licked his lips as he woke up from his sleep. Touching his slightly throbbing head, he chuckled bitterly at the mess on the table from last night's drinking. They had gone through two urns of wine, and he couldn't even remember when he passed out. Getting up to pour a cup of tea, Ling Chen walked to the window, pushed it open to look outside and saw more than twenty youths with long swords on their backs, standing in two rows on a nearby hill, listening intently to their instructor's guidance.

On another side, several middle-aged men, bare-chested, stood in front of wooden posts, their muscular bodies vigorously striking the posts, sweat flying like rain.

Further in the distance, some elderly men were sitting cross-legged, seemingly practicing Internal Cultivation Methods.

Seeing this scene, Ling Chen couldn't help but feel moved. It was worthy of Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, the cream of the crop in Martial Arts. Just this diligence alone was enough to maintain the Pavilion's transcendent status in Martial Arts, irreplaceable.

Closing the window, Ling Chen locked the door and then opened the backpack he had brought with him, taking out a briefcase.

Looking at the various communication equipment arranged inside the briefcase, he casually picked up a wireless receiver and switched it on. At once, a row of red lights appeared on the top of the receiver, flashing continuously.

After a while, the red light disappeared, turning into a green one, indicating that the signal was successfully connected.

Putting on the headset, Ling Chen spoke softly, "Pheasant Hawk calling."

"Eagle received, all normal."

After testing the communication equipment, Ling Chen put the wireless receiver and headset back into the briefcase.

The person outside responsible for receiving signals was a member of the God Organization. Because Lin Jiawei was worried Ling Chen would be deceitful, he required that Ling Chen checks in once a day to report on the progress of his activities.

Leaving the room, Ling Chen walked straight to the martial arts training field outside Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. On the way, he happened to meet Zhou Jun who was on his way to find him. Seeing Zhou Jun's disgruntled expression, Ling Chen couldn't help but laugh and ask, "What's wrong, who provoked you?"

Zhou Jun replied gloomily, "It's that old man at home. It was just his two urns of wine, did he need to give me an earful? He doesn't think about the fact that I am his own grandson. After a hundred years, he will still need me to take care of his last rites."

"That's enough! Getting a scolding isn't too bad, at least he didn't hit you. Come on, join me for a stroll."

Arriving at the training field, Ling Chen looked at the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion members diligently practicing martial arts and asked, "Where's Song?"

"He's over there. Come, I'll take you to see him."

Crossing two hills, Ling Chen stopped and looked up at Song Ge standing on the peak of the mountain. Song Ge held his sword one-handed, his posture straight as an arrow, dressed in white, fluttering in the breeze.

Suddenly, Song Ge flicked his wrist, and the longsword became as agile as a Spirit Snake, an extension of his arm, naturally flexible. Combined with his nimble body and footsteps, he seemed to merge with the wind around him, ethereal and elegant, a pleasure to watch.

Bang!

At that moment, Song Ge changed his sword move, his arm slicing forward, and a stone weighing over a hundred pounds was instantly split into two, rolling down the hill.