

Chapter 34 - The Martial Arts Society of Qingyang

Even a sick Huang Binghu gave Li Qingshan a feeling akin to a tiger. His very essence, his bones, would remain standing even if he were dying. His might would never collapse, making him extremely dangerous. During their spar last time, Huang Binghu had made a mistake in his battle tactic, taking him on in a close combat brawl. He fought with his weakest aspect against Li Qingshan's strongest, so it was natural for him to struggle. Otherwise, even without Huang Binghu using his archery, Li Qingshan would fail to defeat him even with a weapon in hand.

Li Long said, "I heard you wanted to see me?"

Li Long had some judgement as well. He thought to himself, This Li Erlang has got an aura of level-headedness. You can tell from a single glance that he practises martial arts; he is unlike a regular ruffian. Moreover, the presence he gives off is a little like master's.

Immediately, he shook his head. He found this connection he had made to be funny. Who was his master supposed to be? How could he be compared to someone like Li Qingshan?

"You were bold enough to harass my family while I wasn't home. Don't you know how the word 'death' is spelt?"

"Oh, I would like to learn how it's spelt."

Before Li Qingshan had even finished talking, Li Long erupted with a roar and launched an attack. Using his move 'Sago Palm Pierces the Clouds', he attacked Li Qingshan's chest.

There were a series of cries from the surroundings. Li Fugui called out, "Be careful, Erlang!"

Li Qingshan stood without moving, perhaps unable to dodge or simply petrified from fright. Li Long felt contempt inside, Turns out it's all just an act. You've made me overestimate you.

With a muffled thud, the punch landed on Li Qingshan. Li Qingshan used the Ox Demon Stamps its Hooves, and his feet seemed to be rooted to the ground. He did not move at all, "Considering we're from the same village, I'll give you a handicap of three punches."

Li Long was stunned. He had only used thirty percent of his strength in that punch. Even among his seniors and juniors, there was not a single person bold enough to receive it forcefully. However, some unknown junior had received it like that now. Just as he was taken aback in surprise and doubt, he became even more furious from Li Qingshan's words. He was actually so arrogant.

In the blink of an eye, the second punch was thrown. He used seventy percent of his full strength and thought, You can't blame me for not showing mercy this time! The punch struck Li Qingshan's body with a swift gale.

Li Qingshan trembled and said, "You still aren't using your full strength, right? Hurry up, it's your last move."

Li Long looked at Li Qingshan like he had seen a ghost, but he refused to be misled by this act. Suddenly, he erupted with a bellow and used his full strength, the complete one hundred percent. The huge

muscles on his arms bulged with veins, and he abruptly formed a fist that gave off a slightly darker colour. It was truly like iron. In regular battles, even when it came to life or death, he would never do this. He would be afraid of overextending and revealing an opening, but he could not care anymore. He used his full strength to launch his strongest and fiercest punch.

Taking the punch head-on, Li Qingshan's figure wavered before finally taking a step back. His face reddened as well as his body surged inside. "That punch had some strength, but now that you've used up your three punches, it's my turn." He raised his hand and threw a punch.

"Iron Chains Across the River!" As the fierce punch whistled over, Li Long paled in fright. He crossed his arms and used the strongest defensive move the Iron Fist school had to offer. Afterwards, he felt like a charging bull had struck him, the chains falling apart in the raging river flow. He was blown away uncontrollably. Even when he landed on the ground, disbelief still filled him. I was actually defeated in a single move! How can he possess so much strength!?

"The second punch!" A black shadow filled his vision and instantly blocked the sunlight. Li Qingshan had already appeared in front of him.

Li Long wanted to block, but his arms were in so much pain that he could no longer raise them.

Li Qingshan's punch descended from above, striking Li Long's stomach like a pile. Li Long immediately curled up like a prawn and vomited.

"The third punch!" It directly flew towards Li Long's face.

The villagers cried out; this unexpected turn of events left them astounded. The greatest talent of the village that they had mentioned constantly, Li Long, had actually been defeated in an instant. Moreover, he had been defeated in such an overwhelming manner.

Li Hu and Li Bao found this even more difficult to believe. Their elder brother that they always admired was actually so flimsy.

Village head Li yelled out hoarsely, "Show mercy!"

There was a gust of wind but no pain. Li Long opened his eyes slowly and saw Li Qingshan's fist, which had stopped right before his face. Li Long could feel that he was already drenched in cold sweat.

In that moment earlier, he felt like he was facing his undefeatable master, only able to shut his eyes and wait for his doom

Village head Li threw himself at Li Qingshan, grabbing the latter's arm with his skinny hands. "Erlang, Erlang, for the sake of your departed parents, spare my little Long!"

"Father, move. He has come for me!" Li Long struggled to his feet.

Li Qingshan said, "I'll save this punch for now considering how you have some filial piety." He was rather satisfied with his moves earlier. He was not taking pride in his strength but his tactics.

Li Long had practised martial arts for over a decade, which was not for nothing. He was much more experienced in battle than Li Qingshan. If they had a proper battle, Li Long would have never engaged in

close combat with him, forcefully taking on his blows. Li Qingshan would need to expend quite the effort to win.

As a result, Li Qingshan just let him throw three punches first. Blocking punches like that was his forte. He would focus on wherever Li Long punched, and the true qi in his body would flow to that point.

After throwing the three punches, not only was Li Long taken aback mentally, but his physical strength had declined drastically as well. He could not dodge, only able to endure Li Qingshan's punch, which led to his loss. Li Long stood up under the support of Li Hu and Li Bao. "Are you really Li Erlang? This is impossible!" He only had an extremely blurry impression of Li Qingshan, besides him being rather unsociable. He was not a person of any importance. Even from his father's description, Li Qingshan was just a hot-blooded youth who had been forced into suddenly responding violently. He had seen this frequently before. He had never thought Li Qingshan would actually know martial arts.

This scenario was just like a child who had ventured out of the mountains and toiled about. The child finally established himself, succeeding and making a name for himself and returning home with glory and riches. Just when his fellow villagers worshipped him, an unremarkable country kid suddenly appeared and was even richer than him. The dejection he felt inside had reached the very bottom and anger soon followed.

"I'm not Li Erlang. I'm Li Qingshan!" Since he no longer had an elder brother, Li Qingshan did not want to be some Erlang any longer.

Li Long said viciously, "Then do you know who I am?"

"Of course I do!"

"Then do you know who my master is?"

"Who?"

"The current master of the Iron Fist school of Qingyang city, known as the Iron Lion by the people of the Jianghu, old hero Liu!" Suddenly, caretaker Liu emerged from the crowd and interrupted with an elated tone of admiration.

Li Qingshan frowned. "Never heard of him." What Iron Fist school? What old hero Liu? It all sounded like third-raters, but he forgot that he himself was a third-rater as well.

"Ignorant. You actually don't even know my master's name. Looks like you haven't heard about the four great masters of Qingyang, the 'Dragon, Tiger, Lion, and Bear'!"

"Don't tell me that the Dragon is you!" Li Qingshan glared at him. This was the second time he had been called ignorant today. All he knew was that in the wuxia novels of his previous life, any person who used an animal as a nickname was an insignificant minor character. Whether it be wolf, tiger, leopard, or so on, none of them were any good.

Only people who used directions as their nickname were true, peerless masters, like Eastern Heretic, Western Venom, Southern Emperor, and Northern Beggar¹.

"Of course not," Li Long wanted to laugh from exasperation.

In Qingyang city, within the government office, the advisor held a small book and introduced to the fat official,

“Sir, apart from the local aristocrats and landowners, there are four other people in four places that you can’t afford to offend.”

The fat official said in irritation, “I might as well offend nobody in the entire Qingyang city!”

The advisor ignored his feelings. “These four places are a school, a sect, a village, and a stronghold.”

“What do you mean by a school, a sect, a village, and a stronghold?”

“The school is the Iron Fist school, the sect is the Dragon’s Gate sect, the village is the Drawn Reins village, and the stronghold is the Black Wind stronghold. The ‘Dragon, Tiger, Lion, and Bear’ are the respective leaders of these places. Sir, if you offend the local aristocrats, you’ll be chased out of Qingyang city at most and lose your position as district magistrate. However, if you offend these parties, you might end up losing your life unknowingly.”

The fat official’s body jiggled. “Why is it so frightening to be an official? Oh right, have you found the young man that we came across that day? If I can have someone like him serve as a guard, I’ll be able to sleep soundly at night.”

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1. These are four of the Five Greats, five powerful martial artists, taken from Louis Cha/Jin Yong’s Condor Trilogy