

## M. Slaying 20

Chapter 20: The Heir of the Black Tiger Gang

Chu Liang stared at Lin Bei.

And Lin Bei stared at Chu Liang.

This went on for a while and the atmosphere became somewhat awkward.

Feeling somewhat embarrassed, Lin Bei scratched his head and said, "Right. My main duty is to investigate the bizarre case."

Cool.

Good for you for finally remembering that.

Chu Liang couldn't resist a moment of silent mockery.

Lin Bei continued, "Regarding the South Mountain Academy being haunted, there are quite a number of rumors. I was told that it all started because a girl named Situ Yan took her own life by drowning in the lake behind the academy as she had been bullied at school."

"Situ Yan..." Chu Liang mumbled her name.

"Then, seven days later, the bodies of two other students were found in the lake and their deaths were extremely gruesome and terrifying." Lin Bei explained, "And now, there is a rumor going around in school that Situ Yan's ghost had transformed into a vengeful spirit and she has returned to seek revenge on her former tormentors."

"If it were truly a vengeful spirit, this isn't a difficult situation." Chu Liang nodded and said, "But why is Li Jue so frightened? Did he bully Situ Yan in the past?"

No matter what, Chu Liang still felt that Master Li and his son weren't behaving like normal people.

"Do you see how sullen he looks? Is he even capable of bullying anyone?" Lin Bei pouted as he remarked, "He's more likely to have been the one bullied."

As they spoke, they noticed Li Jue being cornered in the near distance.

Li Jue was cornered by a young man named Yan Xiaohu and his two book boys.

Despite being called "book boys," they stood at a height of eight chi and appeared remarkably robust, resembling hired brawlers with stern expressions and a threatening presence.

Even as Li Jue was being pushed against the wall, he didn't say much. Instead, he took out a silver ingot from his pocket, which appeared to have considerable weight.

Yan Xiaohu took it and weighed it in his hand for a moment. Then, he smiled before departing with his two lackeys.

The scene appeared to validate what Lin Bei had mentioned.

"Should we help?" Lin Bei wanted to get up and stop those people.

"No need." Chu Liang shook his head gently and sat there, eating his meal.

"We shouldn't do anything about that?" Lin Bei asked, feeling irritated.

"Judging by how smoothly Li Jue handed over the money, it's likely he's been bullied for quite some time," Chu Liang responded. "If we intervene now, our relationship with him might be exposed. Also, we don't know much about Yan Xiaohu, so let's avoid causing any unnecessary troubles that might hinder us from completing our main task."

"Alright." Lin Bei turned and said, "Well, these people better not mess with me... If not..."

Slap!

Before he could finish his sentence, he was slapped hard on the back of his head, and several dark shadows surrounded them.

It was Yan Xiaohu and his two burly book boys.

"Hey, Newbie," one of the robust book boys said as he patted Chu Liang on the shoulder. "Since it's your first day, you are probably not familiar with the rules at South Mountain Academy, right?"

"What rules?" Chu Liang asked.

"If you want to stay safe here, you have to pay a monthly fee of five taels of silver. If you pay the fee, my master will protect you," the other burly book boy said.

"Five taels of silver?" Lin Bei raised his head and shouted, "You might as well just say you are robbing us!"

As cultivators in an immortal sect, Lin Bei and Chu Liang rarely used gold and silver. Yet, they knew that five taels of silver could cover a normal household's expenses for several months. It was no small sum.

The children enrolled in South Mountain Academy were from wealthy families, but this amount was a bit too much even for them.

"Do you have any objections?" the other muscular dude said and smacked the back of Lin Bei's head again.

Lin Bei was about to lose his temper. "Fuck—"

"Hey!" Chu Liang quickly raised his hand to soothe his companion's temper. With a smile, he produced a ten-tael silver ingot and handed it to Yan Xiaohu. "Since it's the rule, of course, we will follow it. I'll pay two months' worth for now, and in the future, please take care of us, Brother Xiaohu."

Yan Xiaohu chuckled and accepted the silver with warmth.

"You're quite sensible," he said. "Rest assured. From now on, you're my brother at South Mountain Academy. Just mention my name, Yan Xiaohu, and you'll have a smooth ride."

"Brother Xiaohu! Such a domineering presence!" Chu Liang praised and asked, "I wonder, Brother Xiaohu, if you'll still be able to protect us in Yanjiao City after we leave South Mountain Academy?"

"Rest assured," the muscular man behind chimed in. "Our young master is the heir to the Black Tiger Gang. You can ask around. Our Black Tiger Gang falls under the Whale Gang's umbrella. You understand what I'm saying, right? If you befriend our young master, you can do whatever you want in the entire Yanjiao City."

"Oh. So you are the heir of the Black Tiger Gang! Please accept my apology," Chu Liang said, pretending as though he had heard of the heir of the Black Tiger Gang.

After a few exchanges of conversation, Chu Liang successfully sent Yan Xiaohu on his way in high spirits.

After they left, Lin Bei reflexively touched the back of his head and asked in a solemn tone, "Although those individuals might have some martial arts skills, they are likely only at the Body Refinement Realm. I could have swiftly dealt with them using just a few moves. Why didn't you let me fight them?"

"The situation is uncertain, and for now, it's best not to cause trouble. This Black Tiger Gang seems to be influential in this area. If we provoke them and attract the attention of someone from the Whale Gang, it could complicate our mission," Chu Liang explained, "Let's collect more information before we act."

Lin Bei still felt bad about the money lost as he replied, "Okay. I lost ten taels of silver even before I received the mission reward..."

"We'll just request reimbursement from Master Li later," Chu Liang replied with a smile.

The Whale Gang, also known as the Four Seas Whale Gang, stood as one of the Terrestrial Ten, the sole gang among both the Divine Nine and the Terrestrial Ten, which showcased its formidable influence, achieving ranks similar to those of immortal sects.

With tens of thousands of members, the Whale Gang held sway over various enterprises, particularly in the shipping and harbor industries. Undoubtedly, they were a colossal entity.

If the Black Tiger Gang was truly connected to the Whale Gang, Yan Xiaohu's display of such brazen audacity wouldn't be surprising.

Nevertheless, after returning to the classroom, Chu Liang leaned in to ask Li Jue, "Are you alright? Do you need us to deal with Yan Xiaohu?"

"No need." Li Jue shook his head gently and whispered, "I'm used to it, and besides... he won't live long anyway."

Chu Liang was about to leave when he heard Li Jue saying something surprising, which made him suspicious. He asked, "What do you mean by that?"

Li Jue quickly shook his head and fell silent, leaving Chu Liang with growing doubts.

The whole afternoon passed without any trouble. When it was time to leave school, Chu Liang and Lin Bei followed Li Jue from a distance as he headed down the mountain toward Yanjiao City.

Lin Bei reported the information he had gathered to Chu Liang, saying, "The Black Tiger Gang, claiming to be part of the Whale Gang, is mostly just for show. No one has ever seen the Whale Gang work with them."

Lin Bei then continued, "In Yanjiao City, they are indeed considered a major gang. They have around a few dozen martial cultivators, but they are mostly cultivators in the first realm. A few of their hall masters have achieved the second realm of cultivation, but the gang leader is the only one who has achieved the third realm of cultivation."

Chu Liang nodded thoughtfully.

In a place like Yanjiao City, this level of influence did grant its members the power to act oppressively.

Permanent local powers and hired mercenaries were not the same. Even though families like Li Jue's could afford to hire cultivators at the Spiritual Awareness Realm to oversee things for a few

days, they couldn't afford to keep them at home for an extended period. The Mount Shu Sect typically focused on resolving supernatural issues and upholding justice, but they wouldn't help with other matters.

If a gang could support dozens of martial cultivators and was overseen by an expert at the third realm of cultivation, it was indeed formidable.

But that was all it could achieve.

Once Chu Liang had a clear understanding of the situation, he looked around and quickly spotted Yan Xiaohu, who had just made his way out of the academy.

"Brother Xiaohu," Chu Liang said, approaching with a bright smile.

Lin Bei followed behind him.

"Hey there, Little Chu, what's going on?" Yan Xiaohu inquired. He regarded Chu Liang as a clever individual and was quite fond of him, seeing his potential to become one of his loyal followers.

Chu Liang, maintaining his smile, responded, "Didn't you tell me to ask around about the Black Tiger Gang? I did some investigating."

Yan Xiaohu, feeling that Chu Liang's smile was somewhat eerie, asked, "So what are you planning on doing now?"

Chu Liang, still smiling, said, "So I am going to take our money back."