

Mystical 111

Chapter 111: Cleaning 1

"What do you mean by this? Are you trying to bribe me?" Garen put down the documents and asked calmly.

"How can you call it a bribe?" Bovini smiled. "This is just a simple exchange, where we each get what we need. What do you think?"

Garen smiled too. He felt a sense of contempt and absurdity.

"What a pity. Maybe you think that without the White Cloud Gate, you can become independent and completely control all the assets. But I'm not interested in getting involved in your business."

Bovini's expression changed a little. "So what you mean is...?"

"I'll take these." Garen stood up and collected the transfer documents. "Alright, it's settled then. I still have other matters to attend to. I'll make a move first."

As he watched Garen's figure slowly walk out the door and leave, Bovini's face showed a trace of confusion.

"Did he agree? Or...? Forget it, as long as he's taken the documents, it's fine." He gradually felt more reassured.

After exiting the building, Garen walked straight to a red horse carriage stopped by the roadside.

Inside the carriage sat a black-haired youth wearing a grey overcoat.

"It's up to you now, Jim." Garen stepped into the carriage and patted the youth's shoulder. "We have to let Bovini realize that he can't do anything without us."

"As the local manager for Golden Hoop, this is my duty. Since Mr. Six told me to obey your every order before leaving, I certainly will not reject," the youth said calmly. "Nonetheless, the procedures at school are done, what do you plan to do next? To tell you the truth, Golden Hoop's forces locally are mediocre. The most we can mobilize is thirty to forty people. The plan cannot work by relying on us alone."

"What's going on? I thought you could previously mobilize a lot of people in a short amount of time?" Garen asked, confused.

"It's all because of you," the youth complained. "Our local operations have been suppressed to the limit. My application to manage Huaishan City seems like a mistake from the start. No, I need to start applying to be transferred to other cities. Staying here around you is too problematic."

The youth Jim was the local ordinary staff manager for Golden Hoop, also known by the titles of intelligence chief, periphery administrator and so on. Apart from the ranked Golden Hoop members, the remainder periphery Golden Hoop members— technically nobodies—are assigned under him.

From an external perspective, he was considered the leader of two local groups.

"It doesn't matter. As long as the goal is achieved."

Garen smiled. The carriage began to move. The driver was from Golden Hoop too, but he completely ignored the conversation between the two people behind him.

"I've been back from Dinah City for more than twenty days. If I had waited for Su Lin to help me out of the tight spot, I would probably be long dead. Any news from Number 6?"

"Mister will arrive in Huaishan today, if the trains are on time," Jim said in a hushed tone. He stretched his wrist out to look at his watch. "It's now 11 o'clock. He should arrive at three. And plus, you can't say that. Mister was relieved when he heard that you managed to get yourself out of that tight spot, which is why he didn't go out of his way to make a trip over. Otherwise, he would have been here within ten days. The reason he's delayed his trip was merely to help you tie up the loose ends."

"So.. I should thank him?" Garen was speechless.

Half an hour later, the carriage slowly drove to a small, remote restaurant. The restaurant was desolate; barely a handful of people were dining inside. The only customers dining were youths wearing white robes. They were the branch students of the reopened White Cloud Dojo.

Garen stepped off the carriage and walked into the small restaurant.

A girl in a green dress who was bored inside immediately greeted him. The girl was slim and had large breasts. She looked quite pretty, and gave off an impression of innocence and charm.

"I've reserved the private room for you. Please follow me."

"Thank you." Garen had been dining here recently. The restaurant was small; there was only one main area and one private room. The owner who managed the place was a middle-aged man. The girl responsible for cleaning up was this thirteen-year-old girl in green dress he adopted. Additionally, there was the chef he hired. Father and daughter ran the restaurant near the dojo branch, and relied on business from students to make a meager living.

Their food wasn't very good. It was average, but more importantly it was clean. And the beautiful and adorable figure of the girl was pleasing to the eyes too.

Garen was wearing jeans and a white t-shirt, his strong muscles tight against his clothes. Below his indigo hair was a pair of clear dark red eyes. His actions and words conveyed an inexplicable authority, as though his physical stature was oppressive enough to crush opponents with weaker willpower.

When the green-dress girl first stood in front of Garen, she actually felt weak at the knees and didn't dare to look up into his calm red eyes. It was the type of strong confidence which gave him the ability to stay calm in the face of any situation.

Garen followed the girl into the only private room. Since he entered the restaurant, everyone else seemed to quieten in his oppressive presence. It wasn't until he completely entered the private room that they resumed their loud chatter. The gaze of a few youths curiously followed him into the private room, then slowly retracted.

After walking into the clean and tidy private room with red walls and sitting down on a wooden yellow chair, Garen ordered a few familiar dishes. The green-dress girl hurried out of the room to prepare them.

As the door closed, he could vaguely hear her let out a deep sigh of relief.

Garen smiled helplessly.

"Ever since that battle with Andrela, my Bravery is getting stronger. Even if I concealed all of it, it would still unconsciously affect others. How troublesome."

"Some people want it but can't have it, yet you complain that it's troublesome," Su Lin's voice came from outside the door. He pushed the door open to enter. He was wearing an ordinary black t-shirt and jeans, similar to Garen's. But his physique was slender, which gave the impression that he had a gentle temperament. The only imperfection was his eye-catching red hair which ruined the whole look.

"I saw you come in, so I followed."

"I thought you said you would only reach at three o'clock?" Garen casually asked as he watched Su Lin walk to the chair by the table to sit down.

"That was a ruse. If everyone could easily grasp my whereabouts, then there would be absolutely no security at all," Su Lin smiled as he sat down.

"Have you settled things with your parents and sister?"

"They are under my uncle's care. They shouldn't be involved in our world." Garen shook his head. "They should be allowed to just lead a quiet life. The Manleyton Corporation has retreated from Huaishan, the whole city is now under the control of our family. Covertly protecting the safety of a few people shouldn't be too much trouble, right?"

"According to the rules, they are indeed not in much danger. Even though you're getting more and more famous in the martial arts world, but you're still relatively unknown in other areas. The possibility that

your family is targeted is low. After all, no one would dare break the rules. Whoever starts the fight would have to expect an opponent without scruples. With your current true strength, even if you retreated behind the scenes, Celestial Circle Gate would probably still be concerned," Su Lin chuckled. "But the stronger your true strength, the more useful it would be for me."

"How are the state of things now? The specific situation," Garen poured some cheap black tea for the both of them, took a sip and asked.

"The state of things...is a little complicated. But it's simpler after a detailed analysis," Su Lin paused, seemingly thinking about how to phrase his answer.

"Currently, three forces in play have been determined, you excluded. Celestial Circle Gate is with Crimson Sand Sword, Black Mark Association is a force on its own, and Southern Sky Holy Fist Gate another."

"Celestial Circle Gate and Crimson Sand Sword are not homogeneous with Black Mark Association. Even though they have formed a temporary union, but the pie that is the Southern martial arts world which they've jointly broke up, they each want a piece. So they've been expanding wildly and challenging others along the way. Members of Black Mark Association almost got into conflict with members from Crimson Sand Sword. It seems that in the process of integrating the South, they are using the opportunity to expand their own influence. All three forces seem to be competing against each other. "

Su Lin paused and glanced at Garen who was listening attentively." Celestial Circle Gate has temporarily retreated because of you. Andrela has played a big part in this. He has openly declared that he owes his life to you. Everyone understood what he meant. Even if you've killed Ni Tenstar, but anytime you are in danger and need help, the branch that he, Andrela, commands, will instantly come to your aid. All to repay the life debt that he owes you. No one doubts the authenticity of his words. Rumor has it that when he said those words, Andrela was publicly slapped by the Celestial Circle Gate Master, and was heavily injured to the extent that he vomited blood on the spot. But this did not diminish his respected status and influence in the eyes of other disciples. So to avoid internal conflict, Celestial Circle Gate won't take any action against you. But that's not the case with Black Mark Association.

"What about the other two forces?" Garen was clear about the consequences of saving Andrela. This was a man who took his promises seriously; he didn't easily offer promises, but once he had promised something it will be honored. So he had already anticipated Celestial Circle Gate's attitude from the start.

"Black Mark Association seems to be indifferent. They are of the opinion that Andrela's true strength was being exaggerated, so they are not taking it seriously. And naturally they do not think much of you, the person who defeated Andrela. They have produced three Fist Master Grade experts internally. I predict that you will face them sooner or later. Crimson Sand Sword, on the other hand, are fully aware of Andrela's true strength before he was seriously injured, so they will be more restrained in their attitude towards you. Lastly, Southern Sky Holy Fist Gate. Merely established for a dozen days or so, they are simply referred to as Southern Holy Gate. Due to personal emotional involvement, three people stood up against the three Fist Master Grade Grandmasters of Combat from Black Mark Association. Initially, these three were not experts from the South, but because their acquaintances were injured by Black Mark Association, so they are now involved formally as a major force against them. They are styled as Divine Marshals by members of the Southern Holy Gate, collectively known as the Three Divine Marshals!"

"The Three Divine Marshals? What an impressive name. But how is their true strength?" Garen murmured.

"I'm sorry, you are one of them," Su Lin giggled as he said it.

"Huh?" Garen was stunned. "Me?"

"Yeap," Su Lin suppressed his laughter and nodded. "You are the strongest among the three in Southern Holy Gate, one of the Three Divine Marshals: the Mammoth."

"So I'm named after my Secret Martial Art? I thought they would give me a better nickname," Garen sounded disappointed. "But out of the blue I've become one of the so-called Three Divine Marshals, I'm really speechless. They've set a position for me without me even knowing about it."

"It can't be helped. It wasn't easy for Southern Sky Holy Fist Gate to find a Grandmaster of Combat who is able to oppose Black Mark Association in a short amount of time. You are merely filling in to make up the numbers, just like White Bird Holy Fist senior who was summoned to hoist the banner. Anyway, there is no disadvantage to you, just accept it." Su Lin shrugged.

"Now, I believe it's time for you to help me?"

Chapter 112: Cleaning 2

"No problem." Garen nodded. "Before that, I need you to help me locate Senior Sister and Senior Brother. Also, I need to make sure the situation in Huaishan City is under control. There are still some things I need to take care of."

"Sure, I can help you with that. I will talk to the authorities. You don't need to worry about anything after those mice are dealt with." Su Lin smiled, he was in a good mood.

"We need to finish Manleyton Corporation and Bouvini off. I'll send you some people to do the management if you want. Also, what about your uncle?" he continued.

"I will handle it," Garen said with a light tone. He was much stronger than before, and with the help of Su Lin, he could easily handle all of those issues.

However, Garen had never told his sister and parents about what he was doing. They thought that he went on a trip with Master Fei Baiyun and had no idea how bad the situation was.

Su Lin knew Garen had made up his mind. "Finding Rosetta and Farak may take some time. They just disappeared without leaving a trace."

"It's fine, just keep searching while I am away." Garen knew it was impossible to find them in a day or two.

"Sure."

The dishes finally arrived. There were several Asian style pan-fried dishes served with rice. Although the flavor was average, the food was to Garen's taste.

Su Lin was efficient. He led his special army to Manleyton Corporation, accused them of Antique Scalping and arrested whoever was left there. Someone had passed a message earlier to several elites of the corporation, and they escaped before Su Lin's team arrived.

Ten days later.

In a deep forest outside Huaishan City.

The last force of Manleyton Corporation was surrounded in a mansion. There were many gunshots going on at the place. Su Lin and Garen stayed behind the guards, surveying the white mansion from a distance.

"Our people are having trouble breaking in. It is probably the last force Manleyton Corporation has, and there are many elites inside it. They are doing a pretty good job of defending their position." Su Lin smiled and looked at Garen. "How about we just wait here until they decide to surrender? I don't want to lose anyone in my team."

"I will do it myself I guess." Garen looked at the rifles sticking out of the windows and shook his head.

He did not wait for Su Lin to respond and just walked straight toward the mansion. His body kept inflating while walking, so Su Lin ordered his soldiers to stay out of Garen's way.

"Is this guy trying to die? He's not even wearing a bullet proof suit. Who the hell is this guy? A superhero? His body is inflating?" One of the young soldiers behind the tree said in a light tone, mocking Garen.

"Shut the hell up!" Another soldier beside him slapped the young soldier's head. "You're talking about Master Garen. He's one of the three Divine Marshals from the Southern Sky Holy Fist Gate. He can easily deal with those punks."

"Tsk, I don't think he can resist bullets." The young man was not convinced, but he decided not to argue with the leader and lowered his head.

"Dumbass."

Garen did not hear their conversation. He kept on walking toward the mansion's gate.

"It's Divine Marshal Garen!" Someone inside the mansion yelled in a shaky tone. He sounded desperate and scared.

"Bring it on!"

"We can't just sit here and wait!" several others yelled.

Suddenly, the place became deathly silent.

There were no gunshots going on anymore.

Garen stood in front of the white iron gate, but he could not sense anyone pointing a rifle at him. After becoming a Grandmaster of Combat, Garen's sense was keener than before, and he could easily find the people that weren't hiding their intention to kill. To him, it was as easy as finding a shining dot of light in the dark.

Su Lin's soldiers stopped firing after the mansion became silent. They were confused, and some of them were trying to peek inside through the windows, but did not see anything moving. It seemed like the Manleyton Corporation's last force had already given up.

"What's going on? They surrendered?"

"I don't know, they aren't firing anymore."

"Let's wait for orders."

Garen stood in front of the gate quietly, his body still inflating to 1.9 meters tall. Although he was still weaker than in his final form, his defense was already incredibly high.

It was quiet.

Sunlight penetrated the leaves that were falling from the tree, and the wind blew them away. After the gunshots stopped, Garen could hear birds twittering and insects chirping.

Hoo!

Several dry leaves dropped down from the tree again due to the wind. Garen slowly reached out to the handles of the gate.

Boom!

As Garen's fingers touched the handle, Manleyton Corporation's force started firing again.

Garen rushed forward, bullets were coming toward him from all angles. The noise of gunfire suddenly returned, and he could barely determine where all the gunshots were coming from. Garen crashed through the white iron gate with his fists. It broke into pieces and collapsed inward.

Garen was locked on by four enemies, and they kept firing toward him.

Dan!

Garen was in the line of fire, but he kept stepping forward. He travelled more than ten meters after three steps. A one-eyed man had a submachine gun in his hands right in front of Garen, and Garen hit the man in the face.

Crack!

The man's head exploded, and he dropped his gun to the floor. Garen did not stop. He found the other three and finished them all, then looked for more targets. Although his speed was slower than the best Martial Artists', he was still much faster than normal people.

The bullets did no damage to Garen. It was like they were hitting a steel plate.

Finally, Garen found the last elite of Manleyton Corporation. The man was choking with tears in his eyes. He saw Garen coming for him, the horrifying shadow getting bigger and bigger in his sight.

The elite had a crazed look on his face, and he was laughing.

He quickly took something black out of the pouch on his waist.

"Let's die together... heh... together..." The man pulled the ring off the grenade and held it in his right hand. Garen stayed calm. He chopped off the man's right wrist with his hand right after he figured out what the man was trying to do.

Pon!

The man's right arm detached and flew to the corner, blood splashing all over the ground.

Boom!

The grenade exploded, and mud was everywhere. Garen could smell the gunpowder in the air.

Garen took the man by his throat and lifted him up. The crazed man took out a pistol and kept shooting at Garen's chest.

"Grasping at straws." Garen broke the man's neck without applying a lot of force. He put down the body carelessly and walked inside the patio.

There were still people shooting at him from the second floor, and some were even throwing grenades at him.

Pon!

Garen only blocked the grenades that went close to him. Although there were explosions all over the place, the further ones were of no threat to him.

Garen stood in front of the mansion and pulled the lock out of the door with his fingers. He then pushed the door open and entered the mansion. The gunfire inside stopped, and Su Lin's soldiers started firing to suppress the enemy.

Several of Su Lin's elite soldiers followed Garen, splitting into two groups after entering the building. Garen stood by the entrance and looked at the second floor.

Pon!

A bullet hit his eye lid, and it sparked a bit. Garen had closed his eyes right after seeing the enemy was about to fire. The scene made the soldiers around him speechless. No one had ever seen anything like this before.

"I want that one alive," Garen spoke in a light tone.

"But..." The lieutenant's voice was shaking. It was not the fear that made him shake, his body was just naturally reacting to danger.

Garen did not wait for the lieutenant to finish his words, he just entered the first floor of the building.

He saw a large living room first. Everything was white here, and he saw several religious sculptures in the room. On the left, there was a spiral staircase that was connected to the second floor.

The soldiers that had entered the building with him were already fighting by the stairs, judging by the sound of gunshots he could hear.

Garen did not stop, he kept going upstairs.

Before he could reach the second floor, the staircase collapsed, and lime was blown into the air. Garen fell to the first floor. He raised his head and looked at the second floor.

He saw several people, Cynthia among them. The elite bodyguard captain of Manleyton Corporation was hurt, and there was blood on her face.

"I'm done... I am Assassin Bichurin... I can't just die like this. This place is narrow, and there is no audience. There is nothing around here! I didn't even find a worthy opponent..."

There were only four enemies guarding the stairs and the windows.

The leader was a middle-aged man with a scar on his face. He finished his sentence and drew his scimitar. He was ready to engage.

Cynthia had no expression on her face. Although she was hurt, she looked calm and was even whistling.

"I am so dead... Divine Marshal Garen of Southern Sky Holy Fist Gate... I knew it! I knew I should not have stayed with you guys! Wah..." A tall handsome man was crying like a baby and trembling in fear.

"Kaiser, you weak ass bastard! Why don't you find a way to deal with that monster if you have the time to cry!" The last woman in black yelled, holding submachine gun in her hands.

There were bodies everywhere on the second floor. The blood was dripping off the stairs, and the fishy smell in the air made people sick.

Chapter 113: Cleaning 3

Cynthia looked at the strongest of the captain-rank companions around her. Three out of seven were killed, only these four were left. Last time, when she was companions with Garen, she didn't think anything of it. Now that they were opponents standing in front of each other, she felt the suffocating and terrifying pressure.

It was like facing a dozen-storey tall dark blue wave. It was the terrifying pressure of realizing that there was no way to dodge, no escape, and direct confrontation would only result in being devoured and drowned!

The dark blue wave that covered everything in sight was advancing towards her; even her breathing started to quicken, and her body temperature fell.

Clap!

Cynthia fiercely gave herself a slap, and instantly snapped out of the illusion of pressure.

"Am I breaking?" she muttered.

Only someone who was about to suffer a mental breakdown would experience such illusions. She went through death training before when she was very weak and had experienced it once, but it wasn't as terrifying as the suffocating pressure from downstairs.

Hrfff... Whooo...

She hung her head low and started taking deep breaths.

"It's going to be alright... It's going to be alright... I can do it. I will definitely be able to find a way to break through. Definitely!"

Downstairs.

Garen looked up at the broken steps on the staircase leading up to the first floor and frowned. He turned around to look at the military captain awaiting his orders.

"Break through it."

He pointed at the ground floor ceiling.

Bang bang bang bang!

Dozens of submachine guns were raised and fired towards the ceiling.

This was a small building constructed with cement-bonded wood fiber. The partition between the ground and first floor was not completely concrete; it was effortlessly punctured under the powerful impact of the submachine guns.

A large number of bullets shot through the first floor flooring like rain drops and ricocheted within the small living room on the first floor.

Crash!

A large celadon vase in the corner of the room was hit by a stray bullet and shattered into countless pieces.

Cynthia and the others crouched closely together in a corner and tried as much as possible to reduce the surface area of their bodies, but two of them were still hit multiple times to the extent that they resembled hornet's nests. The space on the first floor was limited; there was no way to effectively avoid the gunfire.

Cynthia and the captain could be considered the strongest two among all of them. In haste, the method which they chose to evade the bullets was the most effective, so they didn't suffer much harm. One got hit in the face, and the other in the left shin. At least compared to the other two, they were already very lucky.

Huff... huff... huff...

Their heavy breathing was clearly audible in the quiet space.

"Cynthia."

Garen's voice came from the first floor.

"Killing you would be as simple as crushing an ant to me. Surrender, and both of you can live in this situation. I acknowledge your true strength," Garen downstairs looked up towards the first floor and said calmly. He was indeed making the offer out of appreciation of talent.

The operational model of Manleyton Corporation differed from other companies. To prevent the concentration of power at the upper tiers, all staff would transfer teams from time to time. Constantly scattering and constantly changing, the relationship between members was detached. This was the reason he dared to solicit the other party after killing so many people from Manleyton. Moreover, White Cloud Gate currently lacked elite talent that completely belonged to him.

"It seems, among the Three Divine Marshals, you are the most mediocre one." Cynthia didn't speak. Instead, it was the other old man's voice that came from above.

Garen gestured for the soldiers to spread out, and addressed the people on first floor alone.

"From the sound of it, you've met the other two Divine Marshals?"

"Of course. They are strong and cruel. Anyone confirmed as an enemy would face their full wrath," the man replied. "But you're different. You would alter your benefit analysis based on your mood or some other reason and come up with the best solution. Am I right?"

Garen unconsciously smiled.

"Not bad. You are indeed worthy of being a talent who has survived till now. If you join White Cloud Gate, I will assign you to a suitable position. Choose: join, or die."

"The alternative of refusal is death. This is your idea of a choice?" Cynthia said sarcastically.

"Death is equally a choice." Contrary to Cynthia, Garen nodded calmly. "Well, it was your corporation that betrayed me first. A force that is familiar with my details, expecting to safely escape my sphere of influence. Don't you think that's too naïve?"

The first floor remained silent. After a while, the sound of two guns being dumped on the ground could be heard.

Garen put his hands into his pockets, turned around and headed out the door. He had his answer from the way they breathed.

"Go upstairs and bring the two of them down. Give them medical treatment and a good rest."

"Yes, sir." The military captain quickly saluted Garen. Speaking to Garen at spitting distance, he recalled the outrageous scene earlier. The captain had already listed Garen as someone he would absolutely not provoke.

Su Lin walked in from the courtyard.

"It's over?"

"Yes, it's over here." Garen nodded. He removed his torn t-shirt in one swift move, and changed into a t-shirt of the same style handed over to him.

"You're not worried they'll trick you?"

"It's fine. The risk of loss is inevitable if you want to reap the rewards."

"Next, you plan to..."

"Let's check on Bovini," Garen said calmly.

"He's now half alive after being tortured by the 'triad' members," Su Lin was delighted about Bovini's misfortune.

"It can't be helped. Nobody asked him to declare leaving White Cloud Gate. Property incapable of being defended are naturally alluring pieces of meat. What a pity. If Mr Bovini was still part of White Cloud Gate, I would offer my full assistance in punishing those unruly 'triads'. But now it's none of my business." Garen smiled.

"Sometimes I wonder if you're really seventeen." Su Lin was speechless and started smiling too.

"There will always be people who are considered geniuses in this world. Unfortunately, I'm one of them." Garen boasted without blushing.

"Brag on, you!" Su Lin patted him, speechless.

The two of them walked towards the direction they came from, and soon disappeared into the woods.

A few days later.

Garen was sitting cross-legged in the middle of the White Cloud Martial Colosseum, his eyes closed.

Across from him, also sitting cross-legged on the floor, were Collin and Simon. The entire Colosseum capable of accommodating 200 people was empty apart from them.

Recently, Garen had a growing feeling that his martial arts had gradually entered a stage where it couldn't be explicitly assessed. The Qi, blood and spirit of his body were completely in sync, as if all of his previously latent true strength was gradually being explored and utilized.

"The human body is a large treasure trove," he slowly spoke. The two people opposite him were instantly invigorated and listened attentively. It was a golden opportunity to be able to receive personal guidance from the current Garen.

"Even if it were an average person, as long as he is able to thoroughly tap into his potential, they can exhibit amazing power too," Garen said softly with his eyes closed.

"The method I'm teaching you is to be used in training exercises. Spend half an hour a day meditating, and consciously perceive the favorable and unfavorable factors generated in training within your entire body."

"The Secret Martial Art of White Cloud Gate is sufficiently intense, but lacks solidification. This is something that I have only recently realized. It's difficult to find a suitable Secret Martial Art to aid in solidification in such a short amount of time, so I've chosen to use this method. Focus on your meditating for half an hour. There will be students to remind you when the time is up."

"Yes, Eldest Senior Brother," they answered in tandem, and closed their eyes. They would never doubt Garen's words, because his actual personal progress was already evidence that the method was effective.

Garen slowly got up and headed to the basement of the Colosseum.

Simon and Collin were two core disciples that he had been devoting his time and efforts to coach recently. There were many core disciples at White Cloud Gate, but they were the most distinguished. If he wanted to successfully train two right-hand men in a short amount of time, they were his best hope.

Fortunately, both of them were aware that it was a critical period for White Cloud Gate—which needed the backing of powerful forces—so they have progressed rapidly. They weren't lacking in foundation skills in the first place, so now under Garen's personal tutelage, they have naturally improved by leaps and bounds. They had exceeded their peers and were now on par with adult Martial Adepts.

A few days ago Simon even went for a test; his Amateur Stage had reached Stage Six. This could be considered a qualified level even among adult Martial Adepts. After all, Second Senior Brother Farak was only at Amateur Stage Nine.

In comparison, Collin was similar. Both improved at a perceptible pace.

But Garen was able to see that Simon's limit was at Stage Seven. He had lost an arm, and any further training would be impeded by this inherent defect. If in future he didn't possess extremely strong willpower to persevere, this would be it for his entire lifetime.

Collin, on the other hand, could still improve. Since they returned, he had taken them both as disciples. Under his unreserved tutelage, coupled with Collin's immense potential, she could probably reach Eldest Senior Sister's level by 25 years old.

Of course that referred to Rosetta's true strength on the surface, after concealment. Her actual true strength was unknown, even to Garen. After all, he had never seen her fight with full strength before.

In estimation, Master, Eldest Senior Sister, and Tenstar Ni, should all be at the level on the brink of Grandmaster of Combat, that is, the peak of Grade E.

Of these so-called "grades", Grade D is the limit. Anything above that was not used to assess humans.

In other words, this alphabet grading was originally used by countries to grade firearms.

Grade E was for handguns and other small firearms, Grade D was medium-sized firearms. Going up the scale would be weapons that were even more powerful.

This was merely because martial art practitioners unwilling to be phased out by the times refused to withdraw from this stage of history, so they graded their own martial art powers with firearm gradings, all to prove that martial arts could reach a level not inferior to firearms. But alas, the highest could only be Grade D.

When he reached the staircase at the entrance, Garen turned around to look at the both of them.

"In the near future, they could both thoroughly stabilize the standing of the dojo locally," This so-called stabilization referred to the average daily challenges, teaching, training, explaining and similar tasks.

"You are planning to leave?" At the bottom of the stairs, Cynthia was leaning on a wall flipping a sharp dagger. She tossed the dagger upwards—it spiraled into a round silver wheel—then accurately caught the handle in her hand as it landed. The sound of the blade cutting through air could be heard.

"Where's Jack?"

"The car is ready. We can head over straightaway." Jack was the scar-faced captain who had surrendered together with Cynthia.

Chapter 114: Cleaning 4

"Alright. Let's go see that adorable chubby Bovini first. I haven't seen him for a while, I quite miss him," Garen couldn't help but laugh.

"Miss his money, you mean?"

Cynthia looked contemptuous.

Garen didn't mind. Both of them walked out of the stairwell one after the other. The students around them stared at them in awe as they exited the main dojo and stepped into a white horse carriage.

"Oh yeah, how is Master now?"

"Very well. His body is well maintained. But for some reason, he just hasn't woken up all this while." Cynthia had now become Garen's full-time secretary, replacing Grace's original role. This was the initial purpose for which the corporation sent her. Ironically, it wasn't achieved then, but achieved now after she has left the corporation.

"He hasn't woken up all this while?" Garen frowned. He suddenly thought of the illusory tactics that Sylphalan previously used. "Could it be them?"

"What did you say?"

"Nothing, let's go," Garen snapped out of his daze and said calmly.

Ever since defeating Andrela, his mind possessed a kind of fearless and strong confidence, as if there was nothing to fear in the world, and in the face of everything his body would be able to adapt seamlessly and he could confront it head on.

This was the characteristic of his strong Qi and blood, to the extent that it was at a non-human level. He wasn't sure if other Grandmasters of Combat felt this way, but it was apparent for him.

The horse carriage moved slowly, and the street on both sides gradually moved backwards.

It was now early spring. On the streets of Huaishan, some farmers carried baskets of fresh vegetables for sale.

The surface of the streets was wet; it was obvious that it had rained yesterday.

Soon, their white horse carriage stopped in front of a black marble building.

The chubby Bovini was smiling ear to ear, standing at the entrance with some people. There were bruises all over his face and body. A piece of white gauze was stuck to his forehead, and one of his eyes was so swollen it couldn't open.

"Welcome, welcome Mr Garen. The directors and I have been waiting for you for a long time."

The rest of the people around him started guffawing. Every one of them was like him, bruised all over; they looked extremely awkward.

Garen calmly said from the carriage, "You have to understand, some things are not yours to keep. Hand it over obligingly and leave Huaishan. In view of our previous friendship, I'll decide on behalf of my master: I won't pursue this matter further."

After he finished speaking, his gaze turned to Cynthia who was sitting by his side.

The latter nodded, held her handbag and stepped out of the carriage.

"Leave it to me over here. You get going. I will properly handle all the transfer documents," Cynthia said assuredly.

"Just transfer it all back under Master's name." Garen didn't need these properties. With his current status, if he wanted to make money right now, it would be a walk in the park.

"Understood."

"I'll make a move first then. Uncle is still waiting for me."

The horse carriage slowly started moving again, taking Garen to the other side where Pennington Street was.

His uncle's family on his wife's side had already been dissatisfied about inheritance matters for quite some time now.

Now that he's heard about Garen's return, his uncle immediately sent for him to meet the elders from that side of the family.

Compared to his uncle Anjer, the likes of Bovini were simply feeble nobodies.

Anjer's company footprint spanned the whole of Galantia. Even in the province they were considered a large infamous criminal group. There were even rumors that they took over an assassin-and-bodyguard type of business.

It was equivalent to the magnified version of Manleyton Corporation. Smuggling, drugs, gambling, arms, Anjer's company would do whatever generated a profit. Of course, they have cleaned up a lot over the

years. Technically speaking, the fact that White Cloud Gate could achieve their previous status in Huaishan was merely because Anjer didn't try to control it. It was a power he chose to give up on the consideration of cleaning up.

Compared to all these industries, selling antiques was just a negligible source of income, a way to distribute some excess wealth to other local companies.

This time even Garen's uncle knew that he was coming back. It could be said that, after Bovini and the rest were humiliated by Golden Hoop, the fact that there wasn't any revenge or life-and-death battle, was partly to his uncle's credit.

So Garen attending this gathering was also a show of gratitude on behalf of White Cloud Gate.

On the matter of the competition for the industries under the control of Anjer's company, this problem was slightly more troublesome.

The other party was not to be underestimated. Anjer's company was a group that spanned a dozen cities, more than half of the province. Their immense power and influence was comparable to that of Seven Moon Gate.

Of course, this was simply referring to low and middling strengths. The comparison would be less clear if it were higher-end martial art practitioners. But to be able to survive until now is definitely not an easy feat.

Garen analyzed his uncle Anjer's situation along the journey.

Since his childhood, Anjer Group seemed to have always been stable and unusually peaceful; there didn't seem to be any major complications in its development. This was obviously the embodiment of substantial power.

It was obvious that his uncle was not as simple as he seemed. What could be certain was that behind his uncle was a strong power belonging to him, shielding the entire group at all times.

And based on his uncle's lack of understanding and exposure towards the martial arts world, it didn't seem like the power of martial art practitioners.

Garen recalled his past. His uncle had always expressed disdain at martial arts, but he did have a martial arts expert friend over as a guest.

Inviting Garen over this time, it was apparent that he wanted him to gain recognition from his wife's side. Obviously the other party still had influence over the group. Even though it wasn't enough to affect his uncle's decisions, but if something went wrong there, there would still be a certain negative impact.

Sitting in the carriage, Garen fully considered all the factors, then slowly closed his eyes to rest.

Ten or so minutes later, the carriage slowed to a stop at the end of Pennington Street, coincidentally not far across from where Dolphin Antiques used to be.

There was a garden-style private bungalow which was uninhabited all year round. He didn't expect it to be his uncle's property.

The white bungalow was surrounded by a green garden and pink Chinese roses, fenced in by a wall with white vine motifs on it.

On both sides of the white pebble trail leading to the bungalow were large patches of green grass, where two children were playing chase.

To the left of the three-storey white main building, a black patio umbrella was erected in the garden. Below it was a round table and four chairs. The three fair ladies in long dresses sat there chatting and drinking coffee. They had on black or white round hats with different colored feathers and were chatting casually; the whole affair seemed composed and elegant.

Looking into the main building from its open main door, he could vaguely make out some men wearing elegant suits talking to each other in clusters of twos and threes. Some were holding red wine, some were smoking, and there were even some who were taking notes with pen and paper.

Garen could hear some music from afar. It was piano and violin music.

At the main door, the two bodyguards clad in black standing guard at the door stepped forward and bowed respectfully to Garen.

"Young Master Garen, the director is waiting for you inside. Please come in." Someone behind immediately led the carriage to park elsewhere. The white carriage was not dreadful, but compared to the luxury cars parked around the bungalow, it seemed shabby and insignificant.

Garen frowned. He looked at the black jeans and black t-shirt he had on, although they matched well, the workmanship and material seemed ordinary, and didn't go well with such occasions.

"It's okay. The director has prepared an attire," one of the bodyguards said in a hushed tone. Garen could tell that he wasn't someone in charge of standing guard at the entrance, but someone who had purposely came out to wait for him. "Please follow me."

"Very well."

Garen followed the bodyguard and changed into a black slim suit, with a dark red tie around his neck. His indigo short hair had been tidied up. Coupled with his beautiful cool red eyes, he exuded an indifferent and elegant charm. Only the glow that occasionally flashed across his dark red eyes—when he was watching others—would convey a vague sense of vastness.

It was a temperament created by his strong martial arts power resulting in mental and physical sublimation, a sense of standing on a higher level overlooking ordinary people.

Garen evaluated his look in the mirror. When he saw the immense Momentum in his eyes, he furrowed his brow.

Facing the mirror, he made some adjustments and restrained his inner state.

It was only then that the indifference in his eyes gradually faded away.

"No matter how powerful a martial arts practitioner is, they are vulnerable in the face of firearms. It was now the era of firearms, and the era of ordinary people. Being overly affected by this Momentum would only make one more and more arrogant. One has to be vigilant," he reminded himself. Although bullets weren't a threat to him now, but explosives and artillery shells were a different matter. Even if he could withstand the blast, the immense impact would still cause instability in his Qi and blood.

Even though he had never experienced it, he vaguely felt the danger of it.

Momentum was one of the byproducts of Bravery, generated from the absolute confidence in oneself. Different from Bravery, the existence or non-existence of Momentum wouldn't affect much. Moreover, Momentum with a poor foundation would lead to self-aggrandizement, which made one vulnerable.

Bravery was not the same; it was the basis of Momentum. Astute Grandmasters of Combat had to cultivate their Bravery, something akin in nature to a force field. It wasn't merely linked to martial arts strength; it was also related to one's spiritual cultivation. It was the amalgamation of strength, Qi and spirit.

Bravery was something all Grandmasters of Combat had. If one's Bravery was suppressed by their opponent before combat, Qi and blood wouldn't be affected, but the spirit would be affected by negative emotions like shock, hesitation, panic and so on.

Once the spirit is unstable, moves will not be as intense and reactions will be slower. In critical moments, one would fall into temporary hesitation, leading to a delay in response and entering a vicious cycle of reduced pace. Eventually, one would lose the upper hand and regret bitterly.

Whereas once one manages to crush their opponent's Bravery, they can attack their opponent in a complete state with strength, Qi and spirit as one, and completely quash their opponent physically and mentally. In the end, their opponent's defeat would be the only result. An opponent defeated in this way would not even have the intention to make a comeback: it was a complete collapse of one's soul and self-esteem.

This was the fundamental power that a strong Grandmaster of Combat with remarkable Bravery had.

A truly superior Grandmaster of Combat had to have remarkable Bravery.

Apart from the boost that his special ability and Attributes gave him, the factor that really gave Garen an edge over other talented practitioners, was that his actual age was more than 17 years old, as well as the experience from his past life.

In his past life on Earth, he had lived to more than 20 years old. Environment and level decides the experiences to which one is exposed, and ultimately determines a person's maturity. These extra 20 years of experience coincidentally made up for the shortfall in his level of spiritual accomplishment to become a Grandmaster of Combat.

Chapter 115: The Conclusion 1

Remembering these, Garen could not help but be reminded of Andrela.

"As for me, at that age, Andrela had already entered into the rank of Grandmaster of Combat. I don't know how much he has had to sacrifice, how much he has experienced. No wonder his spirit feels a bit abnormal. Perhaps it's only because of such focus and extremism that has allowed him to entered into such a high level at such a young age. Compared to me, I can be said to have cheated my way in..." He was very aware that he was not some gifted being.

Reminiscing all the young masters that he had met, only Andrela had gone into the Grandmaster of Combat level. Even the performance of Beo from the Crimson Sand Sword was only close to the Grandmaster of Combat level. It was clear that he lacked the bravery. His martial arts cultivation might have been perfected, but his soul cultivation had not yet been achieved.

Tucking away his thoughts, Garen straightened up the suit he was wearing, and walked out in great strides from the wing towards the main entrance of the great hall. Uncle Anjer had already been standing by the door, coming to greet him.

"There might be a bit of trouble later. On the surface, for my sake, they will not cause you any trouble, but as for any issues with the juniors, I have no reason to interfere, so it is up to you. I have also arranged for Venia and the others to follow you. Take care of your own safety, do not rely on the fact that you've trained in the martial arts to pick a fight with them. Do you understand?" His uncle exhorted in a low voice.

"I understand, uncle." Garen nodded helplessly in response.

Only then was Anjer satisfied, and he reached out to pat his head, "It's been a while since we've met, you've become taller again. It's only been a little over a year, and you have grown so strong. That bean sprout in the past has totally vanished. Not bad, not bad."

He caressed Garen's hair, laughing loudly. Garen, helpless, could only let him pat as much as he pleased.

"Alright, follow me in. Make sure to be a bit more polite, everyone inside is a dignitary, much stronger than your background as a master. Establishing good connections will be beneficial for you in the future."

"Okay." Garen could only nod and agree.

Just as they walked in through the doors, he saw the local governor of Huaishan City, Boravil, in the corner, who was laughingly chatting away with two middle-aged, goateed men, completely in character as an accompaniment.

"It looks like they are really not typical people." Garen was momentarily curious about his uncle's hidden societal influence.

The strongest force he had encountered in the martial arts world were the Celestial Circle Gate and Sun Lin's clan. Only, he did not know which level the ten or more people in this great hall belonged to in comparison.

However, these all remained mere thoughts; he still obediently followed after his uncle, putting on the polite and demure look of a junior.

Not far away, two middle-aged people, a man and a woman, were watching Garen and Anjer walk through the doors attentively.

"That is the future heir Anjer has chosen?" The woman was wearing a red, sleeveless dress, body-fitting and had a high collar; with a neat, golden ponytail tied to the side, and long, narrow blue eyes, she gave off a sharp and noble allure.

"Anjer has been working hard for a huge chunk of his lifetime. This time, he has more or less decided to retire after all the success he has achieved. However, his industry is neither here nor there. It won't be easy for him to retire completely." The man had his arms crossed. There was a little blonde goatee on his chin, and his short hair was combed to the right; he looked unusually mild mannered.

"Actually, after the banquet this time, all cards would be on the table, yes? Then I'm guessing that there will be news tomorrow."

"Let's wait and see." The woman laughed lightly. "Compared to this Garen, I am more inclined towards the Delai Xima and Vaeneris there."

"With just the support of Anjer, even if this Garen is of no use, he is still a formidable contender. A bit more time can still be stalled. Oh, right. Between Delai Xima and Vaeneris, who do you support?" The man asked in a low voice.

"Depends on the situation. Both are young leaders of the next generation, with authoritative support behind them." The woman said very nonchalantly, "Are you thinking of pulling me over to support Delai Xima again? He might be very outstanding, but he is not the type that I admire. I don't have to say much more."

"So you have noticed." The man smiled bitterly. "Cheers."

"Cheers." The woman smiled, pretending to raise up her wine glass and clink it against the man's.

Garen followed after his uncle, politely answering the questions from the elders all the way. Various appraising eyes continuously focused on him.

As he smiled and hurried forward to the thirty-plus year old man in front of his uncle, nodding in response, he swept his gaze quickly over uncle Anjer's face.

He did not know just how much of uncle's help he had received as he was growing up. Even his sister and himself were enrolled into the academy simply because of his connections here. Although his uncle's sexist opinions were rather bad, but it was really nothing for him to complain about. Only, what was causing him confusion now was this sudden desire to pass on the business to him.

This was so unexpected.

Last time, he had fought for it to the utmost of his ability, but his uncle's attitude had remained firm. However, even if Lombarth was not trying hard enough, he still would not be so willing to pass all the assets to Garen.

And uncle was only about forty years old this year...

Thinking about uncle's age, there was an increase of profoundness in Garen's eyes.

"Brother..."

Suddenly, a weak voice sounded from behind him.

Garen was slightly startled, and turned his head to see his sister Ying Er standing behind him.

"Why are you alone? Where is mum and dad?"

"They did not want to come, so they rejected the invitation." Ying Er was wearing a black dress with a drawstring waist; the skirt reached her knees, and there was a black hairband tying up her long, waist-length hair. Her lips were pink, and her eyes glistened with brightness. It was obvious that she had been dolled up by professionals.

"Rejected?" Garen was stunned. Although he had known since he was young that his parents and his uncle were not on good terms, he had not imagined it to be this bad.

Ying Er walked over to Garen's side and stood next to him, greeting uncle Anjer.

Anjer smilingly nodded in response.

"It's been a long time since you siblings have met. Have a good chat between yourselves." He patted Garen's shoulder. "In a while, when I ask for you, come over immediately. Don't dawdle."

"Okay."

Garen could vaguely feel the predicament that his uncle was facing now. He nodded resolutely.

"Brother, what is going on?!" The moment their uncle left, Ying Er immediately spoke and asked; her eye were filled with doubt and a bit of concern, as well as a sliver of confusion and unfamiliarity. "How could you came back and did not even check up at home for a bit? And how is uncle able to have such great influence?"

Garen led her to a corner and found two quiet seats. The two of them sat down.

"To be honest, I am also not clear about the situation here. Uncle suddenly wants me to take over his business. I am completely unprepared." Garen himself was in doubt, "However..." He had a vague guess, but did not speak it aloud. "Forget it. Let's hope that I can get through tonight. Don't you bother with these things. It'll be alright as long as I'm here."

"But why didn't mum and dad come over? I heard that you were here, brother, that's why I hurried over. Otherwise they wouldn't have let me." Ying Er could not understand. She suddenly felt as though her parents and the brother who was just right in front of her had all become strangers now.

"They did not come here. Is it because they were unwilling?" Garen was thoughtful. "In a while I'll go back and take a look. I've also just returned, the dojo the master was heavily ill, so I had no time." What he said was the truth; originally, before he had settled everything completely, he had not been planning to go home. He did not expect to meet his sister here.

"Then come get me in a while, don't slip off by yourself!" Ying Er felt totally uneasy at such a banquet, and unconsciously stuck closer to her big brother.

"I know." Garen laughed, and leaned on the sofa casually.

At the cocktail party, some wealthy dignitaries were complimenting each other; there was a struggle amidst their words, both openly and covertly. They had hidden agendas. It all looked to be the same old thing, but in reality, the danger was real. Being the slightest bit careless at the cocktail party could mean offending some narrow-minded people, and getting oneself into trouble. If caught just a bit unaware, one could leak out some vital information about oneself. So everyone was extremely reserved and polite; every sentence was carefully worded.

After sitting about for a while, Garen and his sister saw their uncle waving at him, not so far off.

He hurriedly got up and walked over.

"Mr. Pand Di, this is my nephew, Garen. How is he? Easy on the eyes, yes? Garen, where is your greeting?" Anjer smiled and patted Garen's shoulder. The other person was a huge client of his corporation, not to be taken lightly. He was also a very huge threat.

"An honour to meet you, Mr. Pang Di." Garen smiled, stretching his hand out to him.

The grey-haired man named Pang Di gave Garen a cold look.

"Hello. However, although Anjer recommends you, my impression of you is not so good. Of course, if you can satisfy me in the future, I might change this opinion of mine. Who knows."

"Mr. Pang Di." Anjer interrupted from the side in a deared voice, "What do you mean by that?" His eyes flashed as he fixed them on the man. His nephew was being accused in front of him; naturally he could not just ignore it.

"No meaning whatsoever." Pang Di smiled, "Anjer, we have worked together for so many years. To be honest, I am quite disappointed in your decision this time."

Standing at the back, listening to these callous words that made him look bad, Garen, however, did not feel strange about it at all.

The few dignitaries who had come over just now were also like this, albeit they did not express it as forwardly as he had.

Only, he had never intended to take over his uncle's industry. Uncle was still young, and wanting to retire at such an age.....

He suddenly stepped forward, and, with a smile, politely asked Pang Di: "Then what can I do to give you that satisfaction?"

Pang Di was slightly startled, as though he had not expected Garen to suddenly step up and speak. He turned his head and looked at Garen closely. Before breaking into a sneer.

"Do you know anything about business science? How much do you know about classic case studies in the market?"

"The information in the regard is, in the end, only information. I am very confident with my ability to learn. I'm sure you have also gone through my relevant data?" Garen said calmly.

Pang Di was still sneering.

"So what? You're only a newbie who has stood out, you are not the rightful heir, and your network is far less impressive than the other two candidates. If it weren't for the support of your uncle, what right do you have to stand here and speak to me? You're only a common student who can't even get through the door."

Garen raised his eyebrow.

"Who hasn't stood up from the basics? There is some bias in your words, sir. I don't know what your requirements are for heirs, but believe me, if you choose me, I am confident that I can do it."

"You are very confident? You think you can definitely surpass the other two candidates?" Pang Di laughed.

"If I can, would you support me, then?" Garen said coldly.

"There's no 'then'. I simply don't like you. Although I don't know how a mere nephew you like could obtain Anjer's approval, but it has been the custom that the industries are passed down to the rightful first born. Don't try to use such small tricks to snatch what is not yours. No matter what you do! I will never agree to you being the heir."

This was what they really thought.

Garen finally understood.

All these people believed that he had been flattering his uncle on purpose, with the intention of obtaining the family fortune using dirty tricks.

Although he had never wanted to be a part of his uncle's business, this man's words were really quite irritating. However, he had only spoken to him because he had wanted to understand his passionate stand and attitude.

Only, Pang Di's refusal to listen to anything they had to say, had caused him to feel a bit indignant.

"Actually, I really want to say this too. I don't really like you much either." Garen retorted sarcastically. "Isn't it a bit too early for you to interfere with my uncle's decision?"

"Anjer's issue..." Pang Di's face turned cold.

"Alright, Garen. That's enough." His uncle's face had become solemn.

Pang Di harumped coldly, and as he brushed past Garen, there was a sliver of fear on his face. It was obvious that he knew something about Garen, and walked off immediately seemingly in respect for Anjer.

Although, amongst the gentlemen on the scene, no one was afraid of anyone, and everyone was equal, but he did not need to see Anjer's displeased expressions at all.

"Alright. Garen, don't you get upset as well. Pang Di's eldest son supports Vaeneris. Delai Xima and Vaeneris are two representatives of the younger generation from my wife's side. In a while, you shall go down and meet with them privately."

Anjer knew his nephew considerably well. The recent case with the Manuyllton Company, although he was not clear about the process, but he knew the result very well. Garen had, with connections to the special forces that he had borrowed from who knew where, single-handedly gotten rid of the entire Manuyllton Company. This had caused him to see Garen in a new light. That was why he did not wish for Garen to have hatred towards Pang Di over this matter. After all, he was still a good friend who had partnered with him for many years.

"It'll be fine, uncle." Garen smiled. "How about I go and meet my peers now?"

"That's good too. Let me send someone to go with you." Anjer pondered for a moment, and felt that the attitudes of the guests on top were so-so. The advantage obtainable for Garen here was too small, so he might as well let him meet the other juniors downstairs.

Very soon, under his uncle's arrangements, a slender man wearing a dark blue suit followed Garen from behind. An attendant brought the two of them out of the banquet hall, and through a sidedoor, entered into a smaller parlour.

The small parlour could only contain about a few dozens of people. The walls and the ceiling were all light yellow, and the floor was covered with white sheepskin rugs. The lamps on the walls emitted a warm, yellow glow.

Spread around the parlour, here and there, stood and sat over twenty young men and women.

A big group of them were clustered around two people, the rest were standing in the corners in twos and threes, completely unassuming.

The moment Garen walked in, he immediately saw the two exceptionally eye-catching central figures.

On the left was a young man with thick eyebrows, looking very experienced. There was a glass of dark liquor perched in his hand, from which he occasionally took sips. He was listening to what his companion had to say, but there was a bit of a distant look in his eyes. From the conversations around him, one could vaguely hear the others calling him Delai Xima.

The man on the right had short blue hair and dark eyes; there was a faint, thin and long scar on his forehead. He was the complete opposite of Delai Xima's quietness; he had complete control on the conversation. Although he was smiling, he still gave off a threatening, aggressive vibe.

When Garen walked in through the door, he immediately caught the attention of some of the people there.

"Garen! You finally have the balls to come out!" The mature man next to Delai Xima suddenly stood up and straightened himself, speaking casually. "Xima, wasn't this the guy you saw back then?"

Hearing this, Garen was surprised, and took a closer look at Delai Xima's face. He suddenly remembered the young man in the white shirt that he had met at the doors of his uncle's house. How long had it been that he had become so matured?

Pap!

The wine glass in Delai Xima's hand had suddenly fell to the floor, and was smashed into pieces. The calm and the nonchalant look on his face had disappeared without a trace; in a moment, his face was drained of blood. Both his eyes were locked on Garen, vacant. It was obvious that his mind was now blank.

It was only after the people around him had shook him up, that he came back to his senses.

Chapter 116: Finish 2

"Yea... That's him!" His voice was shaky, but calmed down after taking a deep breath. "Brother... It was him who almost killed me last time! It was very close!"

He stepped back and hid behind the mature-looking man.

The two looked identical, but his brother had an aquiline nose and looked cunning. Garen stepped forward with a smile on his face, and Delai Xima stepped back in fear.

"No! Don't come any closer!" Although the young man looked more mature than before, he still remembered the horrifying experience Garen had given him that day. He tried to run but he was so nervous that he tripped over himself.

"Huh? Am I scaring you?" Garen smiled and grabbed a glass of black wine from the table at his side.

The room was silent, and most of the people were staring at Garen, but he did not seem to care.

"I'm Delai Ando. I think you have heard of me before." The mature-looking man did not even look at his brother who was hiding behind him. "I'm here to make you pay for what you did to my brother last time."

Garen glanced around. His plan was to come here and finish whatever was left on his uncle's side, and he really did not want to waste his time on these people. However, they had great power in their hands, even his uncle had to think twice when dealing with them.

In the end, it was a good opportunity for Garen to learn of their backgrounds.

"I'm not going to take over my uncle Anjer's business. However," Garen said, seeing the surprised looks on those men's faces, "I hope someone will at least explain to me what is going on here?"

"I saw you talking with my father not so long ago, didn't he tell you about it?" Delai Ando stood in front of his brother. "Didn't uncle Pang Di mention it to you? I don't trust you. You're doing everything you can to try and take everything from me, and you don't even know about it?"

Delai Ando stopped for a second and sneered. "I don't know what you are planning to do, but uncle Pang Di won't allow it to happen. Also, I still need to make you pay for what you did to my brother."

"Alright, what are you going to do?" Garen stared at the man in front of him curiously.

"You will know after the party." Delai Ando sneered again.

"Why wait? Show me what you got!" Garen stood up and tried to grab Delai Ando.

Garen was extremely quick, and no one had expected him to start a fight right here and now.

He was aiming at Delai Ando's neck and made it look very easy.

Bam!

Two men kicked Garen in the back, but they did no damage to him.

Another two men blocked Garen's path, but they fell to the ground after he touched them with his palm, and Garen grabbed Delai Ando easily.

Clack!

A black pistol appeared in Delai Ando's hand, and he pointed it at Garen's forehead.

"You want to fight, huh? You are dead!" There was a grim look on Delai Ando's face, and he turned off the gun's safety.

The situation got intense. The young men in the meeting room had no idea what they should do at the moment, and no one talked. They did not want to make Delai Ando angry. If he pulled the trigger, the people in the large meeting room would definitely hear the noise, and no one would be able to take the responsibility if that happened.

"You are as foolish as your brother," Garen said in a light tone. He startled Delai Ando with the shockwave from his hand, and the man dropped his gun to the floor.

Delai Ando felt like he had just lost all his strength, and Garen could see how shocked he was from his eyes.

"How dare you!" Delai Ando yelled.

Crack!

Garen hit Delai Ando's right arm with his palm, and broke the man's bone. Everyone in the room shivered after hearing the sound of bones breaking.

"Ahhh!"

Delai Ando screamed in pain.

"Let him go!"

Suddenly, someone tried to stab Garen's right arm with a black dagger.

It was Delai Ando's body guard. Although it was a fight between the Young Masters, Garen had went too hard on Delai Ando. The bodyguard thought if he did not act now, Garen would do something even worse to his charge, and he would be in trouble after.

Bam!

The bodyguard's wrist was hit by Garen, and he dropped the dagger to the ground right after. He backed off immediately, but he still lost his strength and fell to the ground.

On the other side of the room, the young man named Vaeneris started to clap. He was smiling, and it looked like he was praising Garen. He and several other teenagers were protected by more than ten bodyguards in black suits. They formed a circle around the teenagers.

Garen had no idea when they had entered the small meeting room.

Delai Ando's face was pale, and Garen just dropped him to the ground.

"Who are you? Vaeneris?" He slowly walked towards the young man.

Vaeneris's expression changed, but he quickly calmed down and backed off a bit. The bodyguards seemed nervous when Garen moved toward them and moved even closer to the teenagers.

"Garen, Mr. Anjer's situation is bad, and he does not have much time left in this world. Our fights here will not affect the right of inheritance."

"He is dying?" Garen scrunched his eyebrows.

The clean meeting room was in a mess after the fight. Wine, broken glasses, chairs, tables, bodyguards and Delai Ando were all on the floor.

Delai Xima hid himself in a corner, his face pale as he looked at Garen in fear. Delai Ando had passed out due to pain, and several other teenagers were staying as far from Garen as they could, not wanting to get involved in this.

"I will inform father about what just happened here. He broke his relative's bone! Let's see how he can get the inheritance after the rumor spreads!" a young man with grey hair said in anger. He stood right beside Vaeneris, staring at Delai Ando's broke arm with fear in his eyes.

"Westin! Are you alright?" The door of the meeting room was pushed open, and several people rushed in. One of them was Pang Di. He rushed toward the young man with grey hair and started to check on him.

Garen did not really care. He glanced around and saw that none of the bodyguards that followed the people into the room were strong. Most of them were just amateur gunmen.

Garen's uncle walked through the door with a calm look on his face and went directly to Garen.

"What happened? Are you alright?"

"I'm good." It was acceptable as long as no one was killed in the fight. That was the bottom line for a fight between family members.

"Uncle, just tell me the truth. How's your condition right now? I heard about your illness already," Garen asked in a light tone, narrowing his eyes.

Anjer looked at Garen with a bitter smile on his face.

"How did you know? I'm not sure actually. My doctor told me I have half a year left."

"You never told me before."

"I really had no idea about my condition." Anjer was searching through his memory. "About half a year ago, I was diagnosed with body hypofunction. I don't even know why I suddenly became ill. Well, that's not for you to worry about. Let's go upstairs."

Garen nodded, and he started to check the clothes and accessories his uncle was wearing. He found a black jade ring on Anjer's left first finger.

Garen was a bit confused, and he touched the surface of the ring after seeing it on Anjer's finger. His expression changed as some soothing light Qi flowed into his body. Although it was weak, the flow was stable. However, it was too weak for Garen. It would take the ring years to increase Garen's potential meter by ten percent, and that was not helpful at all.

The ring was an Antique of Tragedy, and its surface was coated with a sort of isolation paint. If Garen had not touched it, he would never have found out it was an Antique of Tragedy.

"Uncle, how long have you been wearing the ring?"

"This one?" Anjer wondered why Garen suddenly asked about the ring, but he still answered right away, "Two or three years maybe, why? I think I purchased it from a secret organization."

Garen immediately thought that it might be the Golden Hoop.

"It can't be..." There was a strange look on his face. "But if it's not in the special location it originated from, it wouldn't do any harm. I think I got this point right. This ring..." Garen started to think.

"Uncle, do you know if anyone did something to the ring after you obtained it? Or did the ring change after you started wearing it?"

"You think this ring makes me ill?" Anjer was not convinced. "Nothing happened to it I believe..."

Garen scrunched his eyebrows, ready to speak, but he was interrupted by Anjer before he could say something else.

"It can't be the ring, but I will take it off if you think it's the problem."

Anjer was happy that Garen was so thoughtful.

"Sure." Garen smiled. In the whole southern area, the Golden Hoop was in charge of selling the Antiques of Tragedy, so this ring must be from them as well. Although Garen was not sure if the ring was the reason why his uncle got sick, it was still better for Anjer to stop wearing it.

Right after Anjer took the ring off his finger, Garen could feel Anjer's Qi start to increase, and it was much better than before.

"That's the reason then..." Garen was surprised.

"Uncle, I actually like this ring a lot, would you mind giving it to me?" Garen asked.

"If I give you the ring, will you take over my business?" Anjer laughed.

"You are still young, uncle, I will take over when you really want to retire. To be honest, I think the doctor wrongly diagnosed your illness. Their equipment could be faulty, and they probably need a new set."

"I hope so..."

Garen looked at the ring his uncle handed over to him, and he knew Anjer felt much better after taking the ring off. He felt relieved after proving his assumption.

Garen left the meeting room with Anjer since he didn't want to spend more time playing with the teenagers behind him. There was one thing he needed to do before leaving, though, and it was arranging another date to meet with that young girl.

Garen needed to help Su Lin first, and it was his priority at the moment. Also, he needed to tell his family about what he was doing. He would have to lie about its dangers since he wouldn't want them to worry too much about him.

Garen needed to find a new excuse.

He had no idea how he should explain everything to his family, and he almost got a headache only thinking about it. He was uncertain of how long he would be away from home this time, too.

Chapter 117: Eliza - Harmony City 1

Coming out from the small living room, the banquet hall was still as lively as before; the band of violinists comfortably and elegantly played their violins, and in the merry music, a group of dignitaries continued on with their socializing indifferently.

As though they had not heard the scream of despair just now at all.

Garen and his uncle walking out from the small living room with a few bodyguards only attracted the attention of a few people. Other than that, there was no other response.

He swept his gaze over the entire hall, and unexpectedly saw his sister sitting on the side, somewhat frantically looking over in his direction; their eyes met coincidentally.

"It'll be okay." Garen gave Ying Er a reassuring look.

The banquet went on as usual; as the host, his uncle went onstage to speak a few words. After that, a few other important people went onstage to speak. Everyone joked about them and a few courtesans. The atmosphere was ambiguous and reserved.

Garen walked over to his sister and sat on the black leather sofa, taking a light sip from the glass of dark liquor in his hand. It was sour, kind of like sour plum wine.

"Brother..." Ying Er looked at him with a worried face, she opened her mouth to speak but she was not sure what to say.

"It'll be fine. There was just a bit of a conflict in there just now, nothing to do with me." Garen gave her a reassuring smile. "Come to think about it, it's been so long since the two of us had sat down quietly and chat."

"Yes... It's been a long time." Ying Er lowered her head. "I've already felt it very early on. Brother, you've become so mysterious. I don't know what you do everyday. I can't even see your shadow."

"What else would I be doing? I'm only following the dojo and joining exchange gatherings. There's nothing else besides that. Don't worry, if..." Garen had not finished speaking when his face suddenly became stiff; his eyes squinted slightly, before returning to normal. He changed what he was about to say, and continued. "If anything happens, I will definitely tell you. Oh right. Master has fallen sick recently. I still need to handle some stuff for the dojo. You know, after all, that I'm the master's last disciple."

Ying Er nodded as though she understood.

Click.

In the highest level of the building a short distance away from the banquet hall.

A masked man in black carried a black sniper rifle about two meters long, and was surveying the situation in the banquet hall opposite of him through the rifle scope.

His left hand adjusted the direction of the barrel, while his right hand reloaded the rifle lightly.

The bullets were golden yellow. They were very thin and sharp, like a straight, golden loach. Soft clicking sounds were made as these bullets slid into the bore of the rifle.

"Sting, there's no need to be so nervous. He's just a fellow who had been trained in the martial arts." Behind him was a man with short, silver hair, who spoke drily. He was playing around with a folding knife, wearing the same mask on his face; judging by the crystallic, deep-blue eyes and the handsome shape of his face, his disposition and looks were extraordinarily magnificent.

"Every dangerous person requires my alertness." The man carrying the rifle replied coolly. "Since we've taken the money, we are responsible for the client."

"Oh please, we are mercenaries, not professional bodyguards. Can you not be so dedicated? I'm afraid that Jia Loran will be looking for you to discuss the matter of you stealing their business." The silver haired man said, very amused.

"This can be considered a summit of the provincial leaders. Don't underestimate this." The dark shirt man responded unemotionally. "This fellow could have been well trained to fight, and might not be weak."

"Are you talking about the martial artists? Do you think that there is a martial artist who can get rid of their opponents two miles away? I seem to remember, my last record was 2.3 miles..."

"2.6," The dark shirt man added on abruptly. "You are still far."

The silver haired man gave a dry laugh.

"I'm talking about Dan Ke Tang, you are the professional who single-handedly killed Dan Ke. How can you compare yourself to such a small fry as me? Isn't that an insult to you? Within a mile, your special bullets can pass through an armoured vehicle."

The dark shirt man did not speak anymore, but watched a figure sitting by the right side window in the banquet hall through his circular rifle scope.

That man was holding a glass of dark liquor, drinking slowly while casually chatting with a young girl.

This man was Garen.

At that time, Garen could vaguely feel an extremely sharp aura locking fixedly upon himself.

He was sure that it was a firearm!

But never before had a firearm been able to cause him to feel so strongly threatened.

As he chatted away with his sister, the muscles in his entire body tensed up slightly. It could take a shot at him anytime.

Slowly, not more than a few moments later, this aura gradually moved away. He was then able to relax and breathe easily.

Just as he had let out a sigh of relief, suddenly, there was a small scuffle in the banquet hall.

"Don't come over here!! Don't come over! Don't you hear me! I'm telling you to stand still!" A somewhat crazed voice of a man came from the middle of the banquet hall.

Garen and the guests from the surrounding corners all stood up, and looked to the center.

A young, golden haired man dressed in a white suit was holding a white handgun, holding it against the neck of a middle-aged lady.

What was mystifying, was that the middle-aged lady's face was cold; there was not a hint of panic on her face, as though this was not the first time she was going through such a fuss.

The guests around them also did not look at all nervous. Some of them had even put their heads together in a whisper, a cold, uncaring look as they watched what was going on.

"Elena... Do you need our help?" A golden haired girl, wearing a red, sleeveless gown, stood out and asked casually. Her long ponytail was swept over her shoulder and fell from her neck all the way to the front of her chest. Her eyes were narrow and sharp, giving off a stinging, beautiful aura.

The woman who was being held hostage shook her head.

"Dante, I did not think that you'd do such a thing."

"You did not think? Ho... Ho ho... For that man, you can throw aside anything, you can give up everything... What would I not be able to do?!" The man in the white suit said in despair. He slowly tightened his grip on the trigger of the handgun.

Bang!

In a moment, there was a round, bloody hole the size of an egg on the back of the man's hand, which was wielding the gun. The hand was not the place with the bloody hole; right on the man's sternum was also an egg-sized hole of blood.

His hand and his chest had been pierced through at the same time. The hand that wanted to pull the trigger could not move anymore. The handgun slipped to the rug on the floor quietly.

"All hail... Black Flag Gang!!" He struggled to scream out his last words; a hissing sound, like a balloon's air being let out, was emitted from his mouth. It was somewhat hoarse. Finally, he fell to the floor. Fresh blood flowed out of his chest in spurts, and dyed the white rug on the floor red.

Garen, who had been standing on the side, pulled his sister into his arms before she could see anything clearly, covering her eyes.

He looked to where the bullet had been shot from, and for a moment the pupils of his eyes constricted.

This bullet had pierced through the wall before passing through the man. The wall was a cement wall of approximately ten or so centimeters; to be able to pierce through a wall of such thickness, and then piercing through a man, before leaving a deep, black hole in the rug, the bottom of which could not be seen. This threat..... This decisiveness of the blindshot...

"This is the power of a true elite sharpshooter, partnered with a powerful rifle." His uncle, who had been nearby, walked over, and stood next to him, speaking in a low voice. "Garen, you can use martial arts to strengthen yourself, but if you really wish to kill your enemies, the strongest martial artist can never defeat a bullet of this caliber."

He patted Garen's shoulder, and took a deep breath.

"Sting is an elite mercenary in my service, and also the secret personnel that watches over the safety of this event. There are over a hundred of elite sharpshooters like him in the entire federation. They can kill their intended target from a few miles away. An elite Grandmaster of Combat, they say, is not afraid of an ordinary bullet, but... This is not the age of martial artists anymore..."

Garen was silent.

He knew that it was impossible for him to overcome an elite sharpshooter of this sort, and this bullet of such penetrating power. This was already comparable to Adrela's full strength attack with his sword, the Three Star Convergence. It might even be more powerful. With such a powerful bullet, without even talking about better bullet, if some poison were to be brushed onto the bullet, he would be killed on the spot.

"Come. Help me." Uncle Anjer had already known about Garen's talent in martial arts, but firearms were not something that martial arts could defend against.

"I still have some matters to deal with. Let me think about it for a while, uncle." Garen said casually.

"Alright, but you had better be quick." Anjer felt like his nephew's tone of voice had finally relaxed, and he nodded his head somewhat relieved. Casting an indifferent glance at the Ying Er in Garen's arms, he turned around and left alone.

"Ying Er, something has come up. I'll need your help later to persuade mum and dad."

"What thing? Just... Just now, what happened? How's the man? Brother?" Ying Er asked doubtfully. She had already guessed it a bit, and her voice was slightly shaking.

Garen looked to the top floor of the opposite building, and his vision seemed to pass through the walls, seeing a black figure propping up a long rifle, crouching quietly there.

"Nothing. Be obedient, don't open your eyes."

On the rooftop.

Sting slowly stowed away the heavy duty silencer, his dark eyes finally peering through the scope to take a look at Garen. He kept having this feeling that the young man seemed to have discovered his position.

"What now?" The silver haired man asked, squatting on the side.

"Nothing. Let's go, on to the next point. The Black Flag Gang would not have only sent this small fry." Sting stood up and said coolly.

"That's true. I heard that lunatic has been hanging out with Duskdune Shura's men. Who knows, there might be unexpected people turning up." The silver haired man somehow had something out of nowhere and popped it into his mouth, chewing away.

"Duskdune Shura... Those guys who fuse martial arts and firearms together?" Sting was slightly stunned for a moment, "I heard that elite Grandmasters of Combat can tank bullets. Their speed is incredible, and their ability to fight in close combat is extremely strong. Perhaps I will get the chance to see this for myself this time."

"No one can defeat you, you are our trump card!" The silver haired man patted his partner's shoulder heartily. "The Black Flag Gang definitely could not have imagined that you would personally strike this time."

"Let's go." Sting said indifferently, as he turned around and walked into the darkness.

After leaving the banquet, Garen made a trip home and told his parents in detail about the situation of the dojo. Unexpectedly, someone had already talked to his parents concerning his studies and the reasons behind the subsequent arrangements.

After some enquiries, it was actually the people from the Golden Hoop. They had told his parents that Garen would immediately go to the capital of Eliza Province, Harmony City, and enroll for classes, jumping a few grades ahead. Furthermore, it was an entry exempted from the entrance exam requirements into a private university— the Matra University. It seemed that it was because the antique appraisers' requirements had been fulfilled, and he had achieved the recruitment standards of this university. That was why they had issued an invitation especially for him.

His parents at home had even received, earlier on, the special invitation by the antique appraisers at Matra University. They were so excited when they had heard the news, and kept on advising him not to keep on going to Uncle Anjer, and he must be independent. That sort of thing.

Garen and his sister's original plan to persuade them ended completely without a hitch.

Next up was one small issue to be solved.

He needed to bid his Circular Dance Gate friends and the classmates and teachers who were close to him farewell, and go to the telegraph office and send a telegram to Miss Fanny Cindy, to inform her about him leaving to jump grades and enrolling into a university.

Finally, a few days later, he finally stepped onto the train heading towards the capital of Eliza Province.

In the reddish brown train carriage. The train attendants and the guests came to and for. It was a bit noisy.

Su Lin and Garen sat opposite of each other; the two men were quietly looking out at the scenery outside flitting past quickly.

On the seats to their right, three young men were playing cards. The seats in front were occupied by a pair of young couple with a baby, and were coaxing the baby to sleep. Behind them, there were a few young men and girls who looked like university students, reading thriller novels and horrifying experiences. Their voices were rather loud.

The faint, white morning light shone in through the window, but the inside of the carriage was still very dark and grey. The skies were overcast with grey clouds, and occasionally there was a faint sound of thunder.

Su Lin gave Garen a look. "So sorry to trouble you this time."

"Don't talk about these things between us." Garen said coolly. "Tell me your situation."

"Me?" Su Lin pondered for a moment, "My parents still don't know about me. In my eyes, I'm only a toff, the second young master who just knows how to eat, drink and have fun. My parents still have my big brother. Even though they really like me, and whatever I want, I get, but this is not what I want. If it's

not because martial arts has given me the opportunity to train my inner self, I might really still be a young master who only knows how to have fun now. Even though they have already prepared every safety measure perfectly for me, I still want to prepare a core layer of protection. You and another friend of mine. I have not revealed your identities to my family, I've only said that you're my friend, so in case there's any sudden development, you can still be covert and do what you're supposed to." He sighed, "After all, my reputation outside is not really good. They don't care about my squandering, even my family isn't clear about my background, not to mention outsiders. So you guys are my final trump card!"

Chapter 118: Eliza, Harmony City 2

"Why aren't you telling your family the truth?"

Su Lin kept silent and didn't reply, a complicated expression on his face.

Seeing that he was reluctant to talk about it, Garen paused then said, "Let's change the topic. How did you get into this much trouble?"

Su Lin frowned.

"I don't know."

He scraped his index finger on the surface of the small table, which started creaking from the friction.

"If my friend in the mercenary industry hadn't passed me the information, I wouldn't have known what killed me. I'm guessing the opponent's motive should be to take a strike at my father and brother by killing me and my sister." At this thought, he started lamenting, "Duskdune Shura... How unsparing. That is a group which dares to proclaim themselves as one of the strongest assassin organizations. If I hadn't realized in advance and secretly tipped my family off, I'm afraid I would have really been killed this time. But this time, no one would have thought that a good-for-nothing playboy would have an additional extraordinary identity. Originally I didn't want to reveal it, but this time they've forced my hand."

"Duskdune Shura! How dare you threaten my beloved family members? I want anyone who dares come near them to be annihilated!"

At the mention of this name, his voice became very low, and a chill showed on his face.

"Garen, it's all up to you now," After witnessing Garen's terrifying strength, he was extremely confident in him.

"Don't worry. I'll do my best," Garen said in a deep voice.

The both of them stopped speaking and fell silent.

The train gradually stopped. Some people alighted while new passengers boarded.

Both of them sat in a cluster of six seats; four were still vacant. Soon, three youths boarded and sat with them.

Garen and Su Lin shifted slightly inwards to make space for them.

They were two boys and a girl. The only girl looked about 18 or 19 years old. She was very pretty, with a slim figure and long pale blue hair which was smooth and shiny like top-grade silk. Only her dressing seemed common.

Of the other two boys, one dressed extravagantly and was quite handsome, but he was slightly thin. He had a bourgeois air about him.

The other one was dressed ordinarily. He was well-built with dark skin, and there was constantly a gentle and polite smile on his face. He seemed to be from an average family.

The two boys sat next to Su Lin and Garen respectively, while the girl sat on the outermost seat.

In the presence of outsiders, Garen and Su Lin refrained from continuing their previous topic, and temporarily fell silent.

The both of them were traveling inconspicuously. They had their make-up artist conceal their extraordinary temperament as much as possible. Even Su Lin's overly handsome face had been covered in unhealthy colors, and he looked much paler. His clothes were swapped for the jeans and t-shirt of ordinary youngsters, nothing special.

When the three youths sat down, they glanced at Su Lin and Garen then didn't pay them any attention. After settling their luggage, they sat down and started to take out their prepared meals.

The well-built boy and the girl brought ordinary white bread and wheat crackers stored in plastic containers, paired with a small bottle of plain water that they had each brought. This was also the most common meal combination for most people on the train.

On the other hand, the thin boy took out cookies and milk, and small pieces of tiramisu cake.

"How pretty..." The girl saw the pieces of cake made into the shape of small animals and were instantly attracted by them.

"Eileen, Jeff, have a taste." The thin boy smiled, quite pleased with himself. He put the cake box on the small table, and deliberately placed the part of the cakebox labelled with the branding to face the most conspicuous angle.

"I'm alright," the well-built boy gave a stiff smile and continued munching his wheat crackers. He seemed uncomfortable with the gap in their family situation.

The girl noticed the stark contrast too, and smiled awkwardly, "No, thanks, Sharman. You eat it. I'm fine with just this."

"Don't stand on ceremony." Even though the thin boy had his faults and liked to show off, he was still quite sincere. He felt bad that he was eating well but his companions weren't, so he split the cake into three with tweezers, and stuffed one each into their lunch boxes.

"It's nothing fancy, let's eat it together. I have milk here too, I brought extra." He piled the milk cartons on the small table.

The other two felt embarrassed initially, but gradually let it go. The thin boy, Sharman, changed the topic and talked about interesting incidents on the last trip. The three of them chatted while eating; the atmosphere was warm.

Back on this side, Garen and Su Lin were slowly drinking some plain water and didn't eat anything. They quietly listened to the three of them chatting.

Maybe he felt embarrassed that only they were eating, the well-built boy, Jeff, touched Su Lin's arm.

"Buddy, did you forget to bring food? Have some." He distributed some wheat crackers and cake and put it in front of Garen and Su Lin.

"Uh, you don't have to, thanks. We're not hungry." Su Lin didn't expect him to be so generous.

"I feel self-conscious that we're eating over here and you're over there just watching us," Jeff smiled and said frankly. "Oh ya, are you two traveling together?"

"Yeah. The three of you are together too? Attending university in Harmony City?"

"Yup. We're students from the St Azure Art Academy. We're reporting for the start of term."

"St Azure, that place...I used to go there..."

Su Lin casually chatted a little with him, then stopped talking and just listened.

Garen didn't really understand the content of their conversation and couldn't get a word in, so he merely sat to one side and listened quietly.

He listened for a while and started to feel bored.

"I've heard that Harmony City is famous for its music events. It wasn't originally called Harmony City, but it was later changed to that," Garen recalled some Geography trivia he had learnt before.

"Indeed." Su Lin nodded, "There are three types of music events in Harmony City: large-scale ones, salon-style events and private concerts."

"I've been to the large-scale ones. It feels very comfortable," the girl Eileen continued. "You seem to have a strong physique, you must like to train? Your body should be very healthy, right?"

Her words were directed at Garen.

"I'm alright, I guess." Garen smiled. His physique was indeed quite buff compared to his peers.

"I'm so jealous. The weather has been really unpredictable this season; it's so easy to catch a cold if you don't take care. The last time I went to a concert I caught a cold which developed into a high fever, and it took me a long time and a lot of rest before I recovered," the girl said helplessly. "Have you been to a concert?"

"Uh...no." Garen shook his head. He couldn't tell the sound of a violin from the sound of an erhu, let alone been to any concerts.

"Lakeland"

"I went to a concert at the Lakeland Convention Center, it was a violin solo. I felt it was mediocre. Ever since Auter has been back from Weisman, his form has been getting poorer," the thin boy, Sharman, continued. "If you're interested, you can buy box tickets. They're only slightly more expensive than ordinary tickets, but there are staff who tend to a fireplace in the box, it's much warmer."

"Forget it. The money savings could be used for a lot of other things." The girl stuck her tongue out cheekily. "The tickets are expensive in the first place; I wouldn't be willing to buy box tickets."

Sharman smiled as he looked at Garen and Su Lin. "Compared to Auter, Cusey Freitas's piano is much more pleasing to the ears."

"You like Cusey's piano too?" Said one of the three people who were playing cards to a side, a youth in a white shirt sat over in interest. The Confederate Legislative Council has passed a document to regulate the scale of musical events, and Cusey was one of the people who have been asked to rectify it. It's still uncertain how that will affect his form."

"Did they pass such a document?" The other people playing cards also came over to chat. A curly-brown-haired girl looked towards the white-shirt boy. "Where did you hear that, Hershey? From your dad?"

"It was the news that came out after an executive of the province, Mr Harris, came over some time ago and went fishing with the governor. Dad was at the governor's office handling the document. After a few days, your mother's department will receive the notice too. I've just known it a little earlier."

"Executive Harris?" Su Lin suddenly said. He looked stunned.

"Ordinary people probably haven't heard of him." The white-shirt youth took a look at him. "Working his way up from the municipal general department, it merely took him ten years to reach the sub-provincial level. He's the rising star among officials in Eliza now."

"That's not the point. It's Mr Harris! He's the youngest sub-province official, tsk tsk. Has your dad met him before? How is he like?" the girl asked curiously.

"He's never met him in person. I've heard he's a very serious man." The white-shirt youth smiled and seemed pleased with himself. "About the thing I mentioned earlier, those are documents coming down from the central government, to the province and then the city. It can't be wrong."

The three people here were listening to the other three chatting, and couldn't get a word in edgewise. Their level was too high for them, and their topic wasn't a common one that youths their age would be exposed to, even relating to policy from the Governor's Office.

"k3"

Perhaps they were too absorbed in their conversation, and after gaining face in front of a pretty girl like Eileen, the white-shirt youth named Hershey got enthusiastic. "How about this? It's lunch time. Let me

treat everyone to a meal in the restaurant! Don't say no. Whoever refuses is not giving me face! The taste and grade of the meals at the restaurant on K3 trains are fairly decent. I've eaten there many times."

He pointed a finger at the five of them on Eileen's side.

Su Lin politely refused.

The others found it hard to refuse such generosity, so Eileen and the other two followed Hershey towards the carriages in the front of the train. Among them, Sharman who originally had some sense of superiority had been suppressed to an intimidated state. He seemed shy to even speak loudly.

The six of them left temporarily.

Only Garen and Su Lin were left in their row of seats. The surrounding became quiet all of a sudden.

Garen looked at the odd expression on Su Lin's face.

"Is something wrong?"

"Nothing." Su Lin snapped out of it. "Seeing youths their age, I feel very old. I wish I could go back to the time when I was young..."

"You're not too old yourself..." Garen was speechless.

"43"

"Oh ya. I've arranged your accommodation for you. It's a newly acquired property at 43 Garden Street. Someone will deliver the keys when we alight. What type of car do you want?"

"I don't have a driving license."

"One order and it's settled."

"Then give me whatever's the most expensive," Garen threw all air of courtesy to the wind.

"S7"

"You don't stand on ceremony, do you!?" Su Lin jokingly punched Garen and said. "I've give you my current Rossland S7. With a market price of 12 million, you've got a steal there!"

"Oh yeah. Why did you have a strange expression on your face earlier? Did you still have the nerve to show off and compare yourself to these kids?" Garen asked.

"Do you know who that Executive Harris that they mentioned is?" Su Lin questioned.

"Who knows!" Garen rolled his eyes.

"He's my brother."

"..."

Chapter 119: Assassination 1

"Your brother is very well-known..." Garen shrugged. He didn't know what to make of it.

"He's always been like that," Su Lin murmured. "Excellent, serious, dignified. He can even have a face-to-face confrontation with father. When I was young, I would often hear them arguing in the study."

"You have a happy family." Garen took a sip of water.

"Indeed." Su Lin reverted to his normal self and smiled. "But now someone is trying to destroy this happiness."

"Kill anyone who tries." Garen smiled. He didn't speak after that.

Soon, designated waiters served them the prepared dishes and drinks. The dishes looked visually appealing and delicious. Chicken, duck, fish, geese, all kinds of meat were readily available. At the sides, there were attendants waiting with more dishes.

Garen got up and glanced around the entire carriage: it was empty except for a gray-haired old man at the other end receiving similar treatment. The old man saw him and raised a glass to toast him with a smile.

Garen smiled back at him and sat down. He looked at Su Lin across from him having a bite of meat mixed with a mouthful of wine and chewing it in his mouth; it felt weird to Garen.

"Seeing you eat, I don't know why but I always feel repulsed."

"I don't look like someone from a rich family, right?" Su Lin wasn't bothered, and kept chewing while he mumbled. "It's normal. I would never change myself just because of other people's opinion. That's my principle."

"It's a good principle to have." Garen nodded. When he saw that one of the dishes had changed, he started eating too.

Su Lin had a large appetite, but his wasn't small either.

Ever since he reached the limit of Secret Mammoth Technique, his appetite had increased dramatically. Seven to eight pounds of meat in a meal was a walk in the park. Converted to Earth units, that was five to six catties. This was excluding bread, soup, vegetables and other dishes.

The train chugged on, slowly and steadily. Every day, Garen and Su Lin chatted or listened to the youngsters around them. Every meal, they would avoid eating with others in case their immense appetite alarmed them.

After a week, they finally reached the heart of the Eliza Province, Harmony City.

Jumping off the train from the carriage doors, Garen suddenly saw Su Lin's body tense up and he was standing still in front.

"What's wrong?" The station was so loud and noisy that Garen had to raise his voice.

"It's here." Su Lin turned around. He was holding a black card about the size of a playing card between his index and middle fingers; a 'J' was printed in the middle of it.

"Duskdune Shura's black card."

"Weren't you already mentally prepared?" Garen smiled. He was far from being that ordinary person from Earth. Confronted with any challenge, he was confident he could face it himself. When he heard that Duskdune Shura's card had arrived, he had a sense of eager anticipation instead. He had come to terms with it: even though firearms were capable of threatening martial art practitioners, he had special abilities and was a unique specimen gifted with infinite possibilities—maybe he could break through that limitation in the near future.

"That's true. Let's go. But I'm guessing father and the others should already be aware about the appearance of the black card." Su Lin gave a wry smile.

Sure enough, right after he said that, a large group of people walked towards them from the station entrance—all soldiers in brown military uniforms. The leader of the group, a male officer, walked up to Su Lin and saluted him.

"Captain Su Lin, following the orders of the Commander, we are here to escort you back to the manor."

Garen looked as Su Lin silently shrugged and turned around to give him a wry smile.

"Come on," he said as he turned around and walked towards the convoy of military vehicles parked in the distance, surrounded by the soldiers.

Garen followed close behind, and was protectively surrounded by several soldiers too.

The travelers around them were astonished and confounded; each had their own theories about what was going on.

At the sight of Su Lin and Garen being escorted away by a large group of soldiers, Eileen, Sharman and the others who were still in the carriage were left speechless.

The faces of the three rich kids who were bragging about their family backgrounds and wealth started to redden in embarrassment. Compared to them, it was obvious that Su Lin and Garen were the truly eminent characters. To think that they were boasting about their family connections and whatnot in front of them...

At the edge of a lake near Harmony City.

Amidst the dense green trees by the lake, there was a square black-roofed estate.

Double-storeyed steeple buildings formed an incomplete square; the gap in the square was the driveway which led to the estate.

The entire estate was surrounded by a metal fence, with a white gate in a gap to facilitate entry and exit.

Weak rays of sunlight fell on the roofs of all the buildings within the estate, and off the glass, faintly reflecting the light outwards.

At noon, a motorcade of dark green military vehicles drove along the driveway into the vast estate.

The motorcade comprised of four cars. They slowed to a stop at the edge of the lawn in the middle of the estate.

Car doors opened then banged shut as a large group of soldiers dismounted and dispersed. Only two officers were left escorting two youths to the white marquee in the middle of the lawn.

Of the two youths who stepped out of the car, one had flaming red hair and a handsome face with clear skin. He had a small golden earring on his ear.

The other had indigo hair and was well-built. He took in his surroundings after stepping out of the car, as if it was his first time there: it was Garen who had just arrived from the train station.

"Garen, let's go meet my father together first," the youth with flaming red hair said to him.

Garen nodded, and walked towards the marquee together with Su Lin.

On the lawn outside the marquee, a tall and sturdy man raised a brown golf club and mimicked hitting a ball from time to time; he seemed to be practicing.

The man was wearing white casual clothing. His hair was completely white and his forehead was balding. He had a healthy complexion and his eyes were calm but determined, conveying a resolute temperament.

The man was somewhat portly. After he completed a swinging action, he leaned on his club and stood there looking towards Su Lin and Garen.

"Father, I'm back. This is my friend Garen. I've invited him over to stay with us for a while. He's a very close friend of mine," Su Lin stepped forward and took the initiative to speak first.

"This is my father Crohn. You can call him uncle."

"Hello uncle. I've taken the liberty to visit you. I apologize for disturbing," Garen greeted politely.

"It's fine. I see that you're different from those other guys. I hope that Su Lin has more proper friends like you and gets into less trouble outside." Crohn nodded and gave Garen a friendly smile.

"Oh yeah. Don't go out and about for no good reason. Did you receive a black card with a 'J' printed in the middle?" he turned to ask Su Lin.

"Card? You mean this?" Su Lin took out the card and handed it to his father.

Crohn took the card. A trace of severity flashed across his eyes.

"Sure enough. Alright, you show Garen around, as long as you keep to the area around Lake Saima as much as possible."

"I know, don't worry. The area around Lake Saima would be fun enough for us." Su Lin smiled and waved. "Come on Garen, I'll bring you to your temporary residence."

They bid Commander Crohn goodbye and strolled around the estate for a while. Su Lin passed Garen the keys to the house he had prepared for him as well as the car keys, then instructed him on matters related to car maintenance. Only after that did things settle down temporarily.

"Putting these aside, you'll stay at my home for this period of time. It's not officially the start of term yet. You can move out once school is back in session. Any problems?" Su Lin started arranging matters.

"None. But I need to take a look at the layout and location of the house, and maybe get some daily necessities."

"Don't worry. It's right by the university, and well-stocked with all the daily necessities. After this, I'm going to introduce you to another friend of mine, who will also be our companion in this upcoming period," Su Lin said mysteriously.

"Companion?"

Garen was very interested in this other person who was comparable to himself. It was conceivable that a person capable, in Su Lin's eyes, of joining the ranks to counter Duskdune Shura, would absolutely not be an ordinary person.

Holding on to his expectation, Garen followed Su Lin to check out the house. There weren't any problems with it. It was a beautiful white villa, and the expensive Rossland was parked in the garage.

Then it was paying a visit to this new friend who was going to join their ranks.

Harmony City slums.

Clusters of dark gray buildings were packed together densely; some were even leaning and threatening to collapse.

Garen and Su Lin passed through an alley between two leaning buildings. On the ground floor of the buildings were dirty shops and ordinary housing for the poor. Clotheslines with laundered clothing hung above the alley; some of the clothes were still wet and dripping with water, emitting a strong smell of soap.

The walls on both sides of the alley were plastered with all kinds of small advertisements: mostly housing rental, high-interest loan, and hiring notices. Some parts even had advertisements directly written in green and red paint; it looked like children's graffiti.

In the depths of the alley, the sun couldn't reach them—they were shrouded under the shadow of the buildings. The ground was damp; it was in a constant state of humidity all year round.

Garen and Su Lin walked along the alley and were aware of the curious gazes of local residents they got from time to time. Some harsh coughing noises could vaguely be heard coming from the residences.

Su Lin carefully stepped over a dirty puddle. "I haven't been here in a long time. The city has been carrying out preventative measures against an epidemic. They say it's a new strain of influenza, more problematic. People with poor personal hygiene are the most vulnerable group to be infected. I hope that guy isn't infected."

"I guess not," Garen casually replied. He saw a bedraggled young boy sitting at the entrance of a shop to his left. The boy was weaving something using pale yellow grass. "Why doesn't he live in a better environment?" Garen asked logically.

"No particular reason. It's just how he is. This is where he grew up," Su Lin whispered. He turned a corner in front and walked towards the right. "We're here."

Garen followed him and turned the corner into a forked alley. There was only a small shop selling hoes and iron farming tools at the end of it. The shop was somewhat dark. Two silhouettes could vaguely be seen busying inside.

Garen followed Su Lin to the entrance of the shop.

"Is anyone in?" Su Lin shouted.

"How can I help you, sir?" A young man in mud-colored linen clothes walked out. He was holding his sleeves with his hands, revealing the burn scars on his arms.

"Where is your boss?"

"May I know who's asking?" An elegant young lady walked out of the shop. She wore a drab gray skirt, but her high breasts and vivacious figure revealed her youthful charms.

"Why are you looking for my father?"

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"I am a friend of your father's. Ask him to come out and see me, he'll know," Su Lin said with a smile.

Garen stood to a side and observed their exchange silently. Suddenly he heard faint footsteps. When he turned around, he saw the boy who was weaving earlier cautiously stick his head out from the end of the alley in curiosity and look over. His small dirty face had a wooden sense to it. Two streaks of transparent sticky mucus flowed from his nostrils; he sniffed hard and the mucus was retracted back into his nose.

He took a look at him then ignored him and turned back around. Su Lin had already asked the girl.

The two of them were led into the shop and offered two chairs—the cleaner ones of the lot—to sit down on.

Soon, a middle-aged man with a full-faced beard pulled aside the tattered cloth partition separating the inner part of the house and walked in. He looked like an honest fellow. His face was calm and indifferent, his gaze complex with the vicissitudes of life; obviously he had been through a lot.

When he walked out, the impression he gave was no different than that of a common blacksmith.

Honest, straightforward, strong, crude, and of course, he had oil stains all over him.

The first thing that the man saw when he walked in was Su Lin sitting on the chair. He furrowed his brow slightly. He wiped the oil stains off his hands on his clothes, walked over and sat down in front of Su Lin and Garen.

"It's you? Once I saw you, I knew my peaceful life was over. Tell me, what do you need my help for?" His sized Garen up and seemed to have doubts.

"Come on. I had a hard time getting that promise from you before. If you went back on your word, I'll be suffering a big loss. To think for your sake, I had to..."

"Alright, just come out with it. What do you want?"

Su Lin was cut short by the man, and didn't manage to finish his sentence.

The young boy and girl stood to one side and were left confused by the conversation; they had no idea what was going on.

Su Lin looked at them, and knew that the man had no intention of hiding anything from them, so he spoke his mind.

"I've run into some trouble."

"What kind of trouble?" The man leaned forward, and took his outer coat off.

"Duskdune Shura."

The man abruptly stopped what he was doing.

Silence filled the air.

The man didn't speak, Su Lin didn't speak, and neither did Garen.

Affected by the atmosphere, the boy and girl standing to a side didn't dare to breathe too heavily either. They looked puzzled; the girl even seemed vaguely excited.

After a while, Su Lin spoke again.

"What's the matter? The Eight-Arm Dragon King of yore is now speechless at the mention of Duskdune Shura?"

The man's eyes flashed.

"What's the use of reminiscing about the past?"

The Eight-Arm Dragon King!

Garen sitting to a side was instantly stunned. He had never heard of this title, but to be able to carry such a name was proof enough of his terrifying true strength in the past.

Regardless of the field, for one to be called a king, they were definitely no plain characters. Not to mention he was acknowledged by Su Lin as an absolute companion in countering the impending attack from Duskdune Shura!

When he saw the man evade, Su Lin didn't let up. "You're really able to let go of that thing with Duskdune Shura before? I don't believe it."

The atmosphere turned somber again.

The youths were mostly confused, but caught the gist of it. The old man in the shop must have been a powerful big shot in the past. He merely resided here because of some kind of grudge. These two people in front of them had obviously come to ask the old man to come out of retirement.

"I thought I could live peacefully till I died of old age. I didn't think there would be such a day..." The middle-aged man let out a long sigh. "Unfortunately, I have let it go entirely."

At these words, Garen saw Su Lin's face turned unpleasant.

"You're joking?" his voice became very deep. "What about the promise you gave me before? Also, could you bear to see your daughter and apprentice toil on in mediocrity, forever living in this dingy corner till they die?"

The Eight-Arm Dragon King was unfazed. "I will not go out. But owing to my previous promise, I will give you a satisfactory explanation."

"Explanation? What further explanation can you offer?" Su Lin said coldly. Suddenly, he took out a piece of something from his front pocket: it was part of an unknown ornament, like a brass hoop. It was cracked at the bottom.

At the sight of this, the Eight-Arm Dragon King's eyes immediately widened. "Why is this with you?" his voice became unusually frigid. In contrast to his calm and passive demeanor a moment ago, he became frantic and dangerous in an instant.

"Don't you bother why it's with me," Su Lin sneered. "I..."

Snap! The words had barely left his mouth.

The Eight-Arm Dragon King erupted instantly. He drew two machetes out with both hands and hacked at Su Lin's arms with a swoosh.

Chhhh!

The blades froze to a halt inches above his skin.

The Eight-Arm Dragon King lowered his head and saw a large hand clutching his throat.

Bang!

He instantly flew backwards into a pile of debris, and broke numerous items as he went.

Garen gave a cold scoff and retracted his arm.

"Ridiculous."

Su Lin only managed to react then, and started to break out in cold sweat. Although he could hold his own, compared to a Grandmaster of Combat, he was definitely not as good in close quarters. Even Garen, who wasn't fast, had quicker reactions than he.

"This is your so-called expert?" Garen frowned at Su Lin. "Weak."

Su Lin gave a wry smile, and was about to speak.

Suddenly a click could be heard.

Garen's pupils narrowed; a sharp sense of danger overwhelmed him. He turned around immediately to look at the direction he sent the Dragon King flying.

In the dark, four sleek black rifles were steadily aimed at Garen's head and all around his body.

The Eight-Arm Dragon King stood by the wall with an icy gaze. He had two sniper rifles in his hands and two at his feet.

Four heavy duty rifles were aimed at Garen and the directions in which he could dodge.

These four guns gave him a strong sense of danger; they were obviously not to be trifled with.

The atmosphere in the room froze for a while.

"You could try firing at me," Garen said slowly. "Within ten steps, let's see if you kill me first, or if I break your skull open."

The Eight-Arm Dragon King retained his icy cold gaze.

He could tell that Garen was serious. An unprecedented sense of threat continuously stimulated his nerves, like needle tips constantly piercing on his skin. The subtle pain surged throughout his body like a tide.

"The distance...is too close..."

They were clear that, twenty meters away, the Eight-Arm Dragon King was stronger. Within twenty meters, Garen was fearless. Both represented strong threats to one another.

The atmosphere became more distressing and grim by the minute. The youths stood far away in a corner; they looked helpless. It wasn't just them. Even Su Lin didn't expect the situation to change so abruptly.

He was the only one who was clear about their strengths.

Both of them were at the peak in their respective fields, whether it was the Eight-Arm Dragon King or Garen. To really determine a winner, harm would definitely be done to both.

"Alright, alright. For my sake, let's each give in a little. Yoda, I will tell you how I obtained the item. It has to do with Duskdune Shura."

Yoda, the Dragon King, gave an apathetic scoff, then slowly moved the guns away.

"Nobody has dared to threaten me like this before." He looked at Garen, a hint of coldness flashed in his eyes. "You are unwelcome here."

Su Lin looked at Garen, his eyes pleading.

"I'll wait for you in the car."

Garen nodded passively, turned around, and walked out of the shop.

At this, Su Lin let out a long sigh of relief.

He should have foreseen that two people with such aggressive characters put together would definitely cause problems.

Both of them had absolute confidence and pride in their respective fields, and couldn't stand to be provoked. They were like barrels of gunpowder, catching fire with a spark. Fortunately he had a good relationship with Garen, and the latter gave him some face.

He understood that the Eight-Arm Dragon King merely wanted to frighten him so that he would give up the item. He didn't expect Garen to believe the threat and act on it. And from then on, both of them wouldn't see eye to eye.

"Looks like I'll have to split them up to handle things. Otherwise, we'll have an internal fight before Duskdune Shura's forces even arrive." Su Lin felt helpless. "This can't be helped. The more powerful one is, the more confident they would be, to the extent that everything revolves around them. This was the absolute confidence established from long-term success and victory. Therefore, any such person would have absolute certainty about themselves."

The Eight-Arm Dragon King was such, and Garen was no different. Greater achievement determined stronger confidence.

"What's the deal with that guy?" the Eight-Arm Dragon King asked after Garen left.

"Southern Sky Holy Fist Gate, Divine Marshal Garen. He's someone I hired as a temporary aid, and also a good friend of mine. Originally, I thought you could get along peacefully and complement each other... Looks like it was wishful thinking on my part," Su Lin helplessly sighed.

"Southern Sky Holy Fist Gate? The one from fifty years ago?" The Eight-Arm Dragon King was stunned. "Divine Marshal, hmph... What an obnoxious title! Obviously it's corresponding to the four Royal Generals of the past!"

"It was probably re-established by the older generation. You should know, whoever is named a Divine Marshal would definitely be a pre-eminent expert. And all in the name of White Bird Holy Fist. I trust you remember the Holy Fist White Bird from before?" Su Lin explained.

"Naturally..." The Eight-Arm Dragon King nodded. "That was the pinnacle of an era. But to be able to make me feel such a strong sense of threat, Divine Marshal...He deserves that title"

"Speaking of which, do you want to join Golden Hoop? You can consider it as paving a future for your apprentice and daughter." Su Lin didn't show any trace of the hostility from earlier, but instead seemed like someone who hadn't seen their best friend in years.

He knew clearly that, in terms of defeating an opponent in a direct confrontation, Garen was absolutely much stronger. But in terms of secret assassination methods and eliminating bodyguards, the Eight-Arm Dragon King was far and away more superior to Garen.

Each had their strengths.

If they could complement each other in action, they would become a force to be reckoned with!

But unfortunately both clearly didn't see eye to eye.

During his youth, the Eight-Arm Dragon King encountered Duskdune Shura, who had the combined skills of martial arts and firearms. In contrast to average assassins, he was clear about how terrifying the combined force of martial arts and firearms could be, so he would pay attention to happenings in the martial arts world.

"Forget it. You wait here for a moment. I'll give my apprentice and daughter a brief explanation." Yoda finally made up his mind, especially after being provoked by Su Lin and Garen like this. Garen had become a Divine Marshal of Holy Fist Gate at such a young age; this truly highlighted how old he himself was.

At this thought, he motioned his apprentice and daughter—who were timidly standing a distance away and looking at him like a stranger—to come to him.

"Piccolo, Nissyan, come over, I have something to say to you."

Garen walked out of the shop, and saw the boy with a runny nose stand in a corner and looking at him blankly again.

He put both his hands in his pockets. His face was grim; the strong Momentum on him was enough to make any adult frightened. But the little boy—albeit trembling from head to toe—could still persist in holding his gaze.

Crisp footsteps could be heard from leather boots hitting the ground.

Garen walked to the boy, and looked down at him.

"Kid, why are you staring at me?"

"I...I want to learn from you...how to fight," the boy looked up and said, as he inhaled the mucus back into his nose.