

THE PRODIGES WAR

Chapter 11: Cause and Effect

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The punch was swift as the wind and as fierce as fire!

It was the Marching Army Fist's sixth move—Burn the Prairie.

The move was all too familiar to Lu Ting, and he had executed it more than once since the start of the battle. When he saw it, however, he abruptly sensed a hint of a completely different type of flavor.

The fist-winds were surging too fiercely, and resembled a wildfire sweeping through the plains!

A thought flashed in Lu Ting's head. Is this really the same Burn the Prairie?

Thud~noVElnext.cOm

Two fists smashed into each other, causing a muffled explosion in the air that scattered into a screech.

Thump thump thump!

Intense pain shot through Lu Ting's fingers, making him feel as if they were nearly broken. He could not help but grunt in pain as his body was sent flying.

If he had not used his full power in that final moment, he would likely have been seriously injured by this blow!

How the hell is this rascal so powerful?

Lu Ting's heart filled with horror. The frail thirteen-year-old boy should have been an easy target. Who could have imagined that this seemingly weak youngster would turn out to be such a formidable character?

“Brat! I’ll return this favor next time!”

Lu Ting knew that the situation no longer boded well for him and quickly turned to escape the moment he steadied his body. In a few breaths, he disappeared into the darkness of the night.

Lin Xun did not give chase, but instead secretly breathed a sigh of relief as a wave of burning pain began shooting through his meridian channels.

Although the earlier blow had successfully scared Lu Ting into withdrawing, it had consumed nearly half of Lin Xun’s aeth power. However, this was not even the main problem. Most importantly, his meridian channels were extremely weak due to his Aeth Origin Artery being dug out, and could not endure overly powerful aeth power circulation.

The Marching Army Fist was a popular basic fist technique in the army that had its own unique circulation route.

The first art embodied a few main concepts: to be free and unconstrained, to strike swiftly like rushing thunder and to move like deadly lightning. When used, the practitioner needed to fully circulate his aeth power through his channels and apertures into his hands and fingers.

If the practitioner’s channels were too weak, they would not be able to bear such fierce circulation.

With the current condition of Lin Xun’s body, using Burn the Prairie’s full might was his limit.

The Marching Army Fist’s final two moves, Raging Sea Devastates the Mountain and Fight Bloody Battles On All Directions were even more berserk and ferocious. If Lin Xun attempted to use them, he would hurt himself, doing more harm than good.

Phew~~

Lin Xun let out a deep breath amidst the messy yard. He could not help but fall into thought as he recalled tonight's battle.

"It seems that the Lian Rufeng and the other village guards clearly do not welcome me. I wonder what they are up to."

Lin Xun did not understand.

"Lin Xun, may I come in?" Village Chief Xiao Tianren's voice sounded from outside the gates.

"Uncle Xiao, please enter. It just so happens that I have something urgent to tell you." Lin Xun withdrew his thoughts and hurriedly opened the gates to welcome Xiao Tianren in.

"Just now..." Lin Xun began to speak but was stopped by a wave and sigh from Xiao Tianren, "I know. You are not at fault here."

Lin Xun frowned, "Uncle Xiao, I'm a newcomer that has yet to learn the village's current circumstances. Tonight's sudden events have honestly surprised me. Could you help me understand what's going on?"

Xiao Tianren placed his hands behind his back. Guilt colored his face as he observed the messy yard. A long time later, he finally said, "I did not expect that Lian Rufeng would be so ruthless to an outsider. From this, I can see that he is determined to align himself with the Qingyang Tribe."

A contemplative look rose on Lin Xun's face. Qingyang Tribe? He had heard of this place. It was where Feiyun Village exchanged their aeth grains for day-to-day necessities.

Guard Leader Lian Rufeng was the one in charge of this matter. He and the other guards would protect the goods during the trips between Qingyang Tribe and Feiyun Village.

“Lian Rufeng has the highest cultivation in the village and he has a strong reputation among the villagers. He didn’t use to be like this. He only changed after his son, Lian Fei, was sent to cultivate in Donglin City.”

Xiao Tianren slowly said, “Lian Fei is a very intelligent child and he is also the most talented kid in the village. As his father, Lian Rufeng paid a huge price in order to give his child better cultivation opportunities, and even begged the Qingyang Tribe leader to help recommend Lian Fei to the Donglin City’s most famous martial dojo.”

Lin Xun silently listened without interrupting. He knew that this matter was not so simple.

Sure enough, Xiao Tianren soon revealed the answer, “It isn’t easy for a child from a poor village to cultivate. The daily expenditure alone is already quite a huge sum. To allow his child to cultivate without worry, Lian Rufeng began to turn his sights to the village.

“You should know as well that Lian Rufeng is the village guard leader and has been placed in charge of sending the village’s aeth grain to Qingyang Tribe to barter for goods. Several years ago, each village harvest could be exchanged for three hundred imperial copper coins worth of goods. In recent years, however, the goods he brought back gradually decreased. In fact, there were even times where he returned empty-handed.”

At this point, anger could be heard in Xiao Tianren’s voice, “If it was to solve Lian Fei’s cultivation problems, I’m sure everyone would have not have minded him secretly taking some of the money. However, he kept taking more and more while bringing back fewer and fewer goods. It has already begun to threaten the villagers’ livelihoods. He has gone overboard!”

Lin Xun suddenly recalled the token made from purple cloud incense sandalwood he saw hanging from Lian Rufeng's body that day. It was an expensive item that was worth ten silver coins.

Ten silver coins were equivalent to a thousand copper coins!

There was also the even more valuable rune engraved boots Lian Rufeng was wearing.

Lin Xun had already found it strange back then. Lian Rufeng was merely a poor villager from a remote village deep in the mountains. Even if he had fourth layer True Martial stage cultivation, it was impossible for him to possess such pricey equipment.

Lin Xun finally found the answer. Lian Rufeng had likely been secretly amassing wealth over the years by taking advantage of his position.

Xiao Tianren suddenly sighed, "I've warned him many times, advising him to exercise some restraint and don't make things look too ugly. I told him I would not step in as long as he did not threaten the villagers' livelihoods.

Unfortunately, he has already been blinded by greed and can no longer return."

Lin Xun asked, "Was this what you were arguing with him about in the ancestral hall today?"

Xiao Tianren nodded, "Yes, the goods he brought back this time were the least in recent years and it has already begun to affect the villagers' lives. After today, everyone will likely have to scrimp and ration for some time."

His elderly face was filled with anger and sadness.

"He has indeed gone overboard." Lin Xun frowned but did not feel it appropriate to say anymore.

“What else can we do? He has the highest cultivation in the village, is the only one familiar with the route to Qingyang Tribe and is the only person who has some relations there. Without him, it will become even more difficult for the villagers to survive.” Xiao Tianren sighed helplessly.

Lin Xun said, “In other words, Lian Rufeng has realized that Feiyun Village cannot do without him. That’s why he dares do this.”

Xiao Tianren nodded with a gloomy face.

Lin Xun fell into deep thought. After a while, he said, “But why did he send someone to deal with me tonight?” Could this have something to do with him aligning himself with the Qingyang Tribe?”

“That’s what I’m worried about.” Xiao Tianren’s anxiously said, “I have a feeling that Lian Rufeng has been secretly brewing some kind of scheme that will harm Feiyun Village. If he succeeds, all of the villagers will likely be implicated.”

With this new information, Lin Xun was finally able to confirm some of his speculations, “Perhaps Lian Rufeng became suspicious due to my sudden arrival and sent someone to probe me in order to prevent his plans from being disrupted.”

“Your guess should be correct.” Xiao Tianren looked at Lin Xun in surprise as he had not expected a thirteen-year-old boy to be so intelligent and perceptive.

“That’s it then.” Lin Xun’s face relaxed, “As long as we understand the reason, there’s no longer any need to worry.”

Xiao Tianren could not help but ask, “Aren’t you afraid that Lian Rufeng will continue sending people to deal with you?”

“I already know he will and will naturally take proper countermeasures. As long as he fails to kill me, I will one day make them pay a price they can’t afford to.” Lin Xun casually said. His eyes were clear and calm, while a smile hung from the corners of his lips. However, there was a cold ruthlessness in his words that made a person shiver.

This was Lin Xun. Under that seemingly harmless and frail appearance was an unimaginable decisiveness and ruthlessness. Otherwise, a child would never have survived in that dark sunless mine prison.

Mister Lu had taught him how to survive and had given him an unyielding heart, while the guards and prisoners had shown him the meaning of true darkness and cruelty.

Xiao Tianren dazedly stared at Lin Xun for some time before he said, “You truly do not seem like a thirteen-year-old youngster.”

Lin Xun grinned and shrugged. “But I am thirteen this year.”

Xiao Tianren waved his hand, dismissing the topic, “Lin Xun, now that you know the village’s circumstances, are you still certain you want to stay? You should give this matter some careful consideration. If you stay, you will likely have to face numerous dangers.”

Lin Xun replied without hesitation, “I’m staying! Why shouldn’t I? This is my first residence in the Ziyao Empire and I’m not going anywhere else until I’m properly prepared.”

Xiao Tianren did not speak any further on this topic. He patted Lin Xun’s shoulders, “You are different from your peers and I don’t have much advice to give. Since you’ve decided to stay, you are a member of Feiyun Village. Although my old bones aren’t very capable, I will do my best to protect you.”

As the final word left his lips, Xiao Tianren turned around and left.

Lin Xun sent off the old man with his eyes. A long time later, he stretched his body and mumbled, "Being scared of everything that crops up isn't my style..."

That night, Lin Xun did not engage in his usual cultivation session. Instead, he pondered in the darkness for a long time. In the end, he rose to his feet and opened the old wooden box under the faint starlight that leaked in through the window.

Lin Xun retrieved the yellowing book and mysterious dark gray rune brush and placed them on the study table. He took a deep breath and seated himself before them.

On the very same night, Lu Ting hurriedly left Feiyun Village after fleeing from Lin Xun's residence, arriving at a small hill a dozen miles from the village.

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