

The Eternal 81

Chapter 81: The Return of The Martial King

A light flashed across Yunxiao's forehead, and Black Girl, the great sword, appeared in his hand in the next instant. He grabbed the sword's hilt with both hands and thrust the blade into the ground while waves of force spread out from all over him. With a look of madness in his eyes, he laughed wildly and said, "Come! Let's see if it is your Roaring Spear of Dragon and Tiger or my defense that is stronger! Defensive style, Glazed Body!"

Under his soaring fighting will, streams of light began to appear and swirl over his skin, and his body seemed to have turned slightly transparent, making him look like a glazed lantern.

After cultivating the Tyrant Body Tempering Technique, the strength of the physical body would be divided into three levels: the Glazed Body, the Tyrant Body, and the Indestructible Body. When one cultivated to the last level, one could become a Saint with just the fleshly body, possessing the strength to crumble the mountain and shatter the earth!

Bam!

Several shadows of dragons and tigers roared and engulfed Yunxiao. Meanwhile, shafts of blinding light shot up into the sky as a huge flower of light seemed to suddenly bloom where Yunxiao stood!

"This is insane...This is madness! I can't believe he made no effort to defend or dodge! He's my idol!"

"He's a madman! I'm sure he'll be hurt under such a powerful attack!"

"Even if he is seriously wounded, he'll still be my idol! Li Yunxiao is too cool, too handsome!"

Everyone present was aghast, gaping in disbelief as Yunxiao reemerged after the flower of light faded away. To everyone's surprise, he looked neat and his clothes were dustless!

“Haha! The Glazed Body, how interesting!” Yunxiao suddenly threw his head back and laughed, thinking to himself, ‘No wonder Tyrant could resist my Starslash Sword with his Indestructible Body...It is so strong!’

Lin Yu sucked in a cold breath, and as if he were greatly shocked, he moved back a few steps while seeming to be at a loss.

At this moment, Luo Landuo, who had also signed up for the mission and was standing amidst the crowd in the arena, was staring blankly with mixed emotions at the lone figure in front of her, who was laughing wildly into the sky. She swallowed hard as one scene after another began to flash through her mind.

“My husband must be a hero of indomitable spirit, and he will be a Guardian of the State! Despite your distinguished status, you are, after all, a loser who cannot practice martial arts. Unless you can defeat me one day, I won’t give any thought to your proposal.”

As she looked at the man who stood in the arena with a mighty air like that of the Martial Sovereign Gu Feiyang, Luo Landuo smiled bitterly. She knew that from then on, the paths of two people under the same sky would never cross again. He would get stronger and go further, and she could only watch him from a great distance as he rode away at great speed.

“Brother Lin, let’s join hands!” Suddenly, Bai Chengfeng jumped forward and cried out, “Stop worrying what others will say about us. Only by joining hands can we defeat him!”

Yunxiao’s prowess had forced the two heaven’s favored ones to pocket their pride. Their eyes shone with the determination to win as they began their attacks.

“Thunderbolt Beads, scatter!”

Bai Chengfeng cried as he threw his hands out. Immediately, dozens of tiny beads scattered in the air, all shooting straight toward Yunxiao like a great canopy. Their speed was so fast that they seemed capable of piercing through diamond rocks.

When the beads reached in front of Yunxiao, Bai Chengfeng narrowed his eyes and shouted, “Explode!”

The dozens of Thunderbolt Beads exploded in an instant, producing waves of blast that slammed at one another and eventually joined into a towering pillar of flame! It was so powerful that even a Great Martial Master would have been killed if he were in the center of the explosion.

But, Bai Chengfeng felt that it was not enough. At the moment the beads exploded, he brought his arms together, and then both his vambraces joined into one and transformed into a round stone disk. In the next instant, a shadow of the disk emerged in the sky before swooping down at Yunxiao!

“Suppress the enemy, Blue Millstone of Death!”

“Take my strongest attack, Roaring Spear of Dragon and Tiger!” Lin Yu was very familiar with Bai Chengfeng, so he caught the right timing and struck together. Under the combined attack of the two geniuses and the dozens of Thunderbolt Beads, Yunxiao could never escape his death even if he were a one-star Great Martial Master!

Just when everyone thought the two geniuses had won, shafts of light suddenly broke out from where Yunxiao was, blooming and fading like lotus flowers. On each of the flowers was a mass of light in different colors that looked like a miniature world.

“The Song of Blue Lotus Sword!” Yunxiao cried out in a soft voice.

It was dreamlike and surreal as he stood there in the center of numerous blue light rings, which stopped all the attacks from getting close and hurting him.

“It’s my turn to attack now.”

Yunxiao slightly narrowed his eyes as he swung the great sword in his hand. An invisible force spread out of him, and all of the natural Primordial Qi several meters around him was completely drained and compressed on the blade. With a cold grin, he took a light step and said under his breath, “The Song of Blue Lotus Sword, a kill in every ten steps!”

Meanwhile, he made a cross-cut with the sword, and the compressed Primordial Qi exploded in an instant, sweeping out with a formidable force!

Lin Yu and Bai Chengfeng were startled. The moment they saw Yunxiao appear unhurt under their attacks, they knew they had lost the battle, and their faces fell when they saw his attack come slashing at them, which forced them to quickly retreat.

“Trying to run from me? One hundred times gravity force!”

Bam! Bam!

The two had just jumped up with their feet a few inches away from the ground when the one hundred times gravity force came crashing down on them, throwing them back to the ground and shattering the bluestones bricks. Shocked, they quickly lifted their mystic weapons to defend themselves against the thunderous attack.

Bam!

The attack hit them, sending rubble flying in all directions as a large hole appeared in the arena. Covered in blood, both geniuses lay motionlessly in it, and no one could tell if they were still alive or not.

Every student sucked in a cold breath and quickly backed off, their eyes filled with fear and shock.

Even Li Chunyang and Bai Mou were gaping in horror. They could hardly believe Yunxiao's fighting strength could be so strong. No wonder he could chop off one of Li Yi's arms. The power of the attack was totally at the level of a Great Martial Master.

Although Zhong Lishan was shocked as well, he was somewhat mentally prepared, so he could still accept what he saw. But, he gave Li Chunyang an envious look, and his heart was filled with indignation.

Yunxiao put away his sword, then glanced sharply at the students in the arena, over two thousand of them, and said in a cold voice, “Who else refuses to accept me as his or her commander? Step out right now!”

All students backed off once again, drawing a great distance from him.

Only then did Yunxiao smile in satisfaction. “Although this is a temporary army, you must behave like soldiers! The academy will distribute military supplies to you today, and I hope all of you will arrive on time at the muster roll platform tomorrow!”

After the duel, Yunxiao’s image in the minds of all the students reached a great height, and whatever he said was obeyed like military orders!

...

The muster roll platform was in the southern part of the capital. It was the venue where the emperor reviewed the troops before the army went to war.

But obviously, Qin Zheng was not in a good mood today, as he did not show up on the platform, leaving Li Chunyang sitting alone with his eyes closed, his hand holding the military deployment order. Qin Yue, Yunxiao, and a few others stood quietly beneath him.

Beneath the platform, in addition to the two thousand students who stood in neat rows and all clad in armor was a stark contrast of a dozen generals and about three thousand soldiers, who were either old, weak, or crippled.

These generals were all from Li Family’s faction. Under Qin Zheng’s deliberate arrangements, they were brushed aside in the military. So, although their status was prominent, they did not have any real power in their hands.

“What should we do, my lord? It’s past time, and I don’t think there will be any more men coming!” Han Bai’s father, Han Qianfang, said angrily. “In my opinion, even if we don’t have the support of the Central Army, we can still march with just this army of five thousand elite soldiers!”

Li Chunyang slightly lifted his eyelids, revealing his cloudy eyes. Turning to a man on the left side of the platform, he said, “Commander Xiao, you may begin.”

With his eyes narrowed, Xiao Qingwang leaped onto the platform and looked up at the bright blue sky. Suddenly, he gathered all his Primordial Qi over his dantian, and in the next instant, his voice exploded out of his mouth, spreading across the sky into every corner of the capital and shaking the entire city!

“Guardians of the State, assemble beneath the muster roll platform within the time it takes for half an incense stick to burn! Whoever does not arrive on time will be deemed to have disobeyed the order and punished accordingly!”

For a moment, everyone in the capital—whether the princes or nobles, peddlers or menial servants—raised their heads in horror and looked up at the sky. The god-like voice made everyone stop what they were doing, striking awe into their hearts.

“It’s Xiao Qingwang!” Gao Feng jerked his head up, his eyes filled with fear as he muttered involuntarily, “He has recovered...He has really fully recovered! And his power...it is stronger than before! Li Yunxiao really healed him!”

Qin Yang was horrified as well. His face was overcast as he said coldly, “So what if he has recovered? More than ninety percent of the Central Army is under my control. Does he want to assemble the five units of State Guardians to fight the enemy?” Looking at Gao Feng’s frightened face, he frowned and said, “Since you’re so worried, let’s go and see what my brother wants to do this time!”

Deep in the imperial palace, Qin Zheng was watching the singing and dancing in front of him through a pair of glazed and cloudy eyes, his expression seeming bored. Suddenly, his hand shook, causing the wine in his glass to spill all over the floor. For a moment, his eyes seemed to become clearer. “Xiao Qingwang, you’re back at last...I can finally feel at ease.” the emperor muttered to himself.

In the Prime Minister’s residence, Lan Hong also looked up at the sky with awe on his face.

“Dad,” Lan Guang said in surprise, “was that voice just now...”

Lan Hong pondered for a moment and then said, “It is indeed Xiao Qingwang! After five years of silence, the number one martial arts warrior of Tianshui has finally come back. It seems that the balance of destiny has begun to tilt this time.”

Chapter 82: The Might of a Martial King

“Dad, do you mean...” said Lan Guang, aghast.

The father breathed out a long sigh and said, “Tomorrow is Lady Xiang’s birthday. Get someone to prepare and send a generous gift into the palace.”

Lan Guang seemed to have understood. Lady Xiang was Qin Yue’s birth mother.

A trace of a smile suddenly appeared on Lan Hong’s face as he muttered to himself, “It looks like the Li Family is going to suppress us for the many years to come. But, haven’t they suffered enough by being cast aside after their services were no longer needed?”

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Two men were drinking in a floating restaurant anchored on Qinhuai River, with a dozen beautifully dressed girls sitting around them and acting coyly to pleasure them.

The man on the left was clad in martial attire and looked handsome. He had two girls in his arms, and was rubbing their soft spots with his hands. “We should thank that Li Yunxiao,” he laughed. “After what he has done, those scholars who claimed themselves to be talented and romantic all scrambled back to their hometowns, leaving the best beauties here for us to choose.”

The man on the right had a scar on his face. With a look of disdain in his eyes, he said, “I can’t believe those weak and pedantic scholars had the courage to provoke the Li Family. They asked for it. And that old fogy Kong...Although he claimed to be aloof from politics and material pursuits, he was eventually used by the elder prince and got himself killed.”

“Well, whatever happened in the court has nothing to do with us.” The handsome man chuckled. “Blinded by profits, Gao Feng is assisting the elder prince while Bai Mou is willing to stand behind the younger prince because of love. In my opinion, Luo Yunshang, you and I are living a better life, free and easy. And this life is even better now without those disgusting scholars fighting with us for the girls.”

The other man laughed, then both of them toasted and downed the wine in their glasses. Soon, their hands were already down between the girls' legs, filling the room with rapid rasps and seductive moans.

Suddenly, they trembled as Xiao Qingwang's voice exploded in the sky, shaking the floating restaurant and throwing the girls off their feet. Tall waves swept across the surface of the river as if a storm was coming.

Both men exchanged a glance in horror, then looked up at the sky together. In the next instant, the dozens of beauties in the restaurant found that both men had vanished, and saw only a heap of gold coins on the table. While cheering, the girls threw themselves at the gold.

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Qin Yang and Gao Feng were the first to arrive. Looking at Xiao Qingwang, whose face was cold and serious, Gao Feng felt his heart race. He walked before the platform and cupped his fist as he offered his greeting.

"The commander of the first unit of the State Guardians, Gao Feng, offers greetings, my lord!"

The elder prince glanced coldly at the crowd, then walked to the other end of the platform where he sat down comfortably while looking at the army of broken soldiers with a scornful look on his face.

"The commander of the second unit of the State Guardians, Wang Suguan, offers greetings, my lord!"

"The commander of the fifth unit of the State Guardians, Xiao Chen, offers greetings, my lord!"

Two voices drifted over at the same time, and when the crowd turned to them, two men had already landed beneath the muster roll platform. They were none other than the two middle-aged men enjoying their time in the floating restaurant just now.

Meanwhile, Luo Yunshang and Bai Mou, who were sitting to the left of the platform, rose to their feet and walked over, standing next to them.

“The commander of the third unit of the State Guardians, Bai Mou, offers greetings, my lord!”

“The commander of the fourth unit of the State Guardians, Luo Yunshang, offers greetings, my lord!”

With the arrival of the five commanders, many State Guardians began to pour over from all directions, forming ranks behind them. Soon, over a hundred men had gathered beneath the platform.

The student army was very excited as they watched their heroes appear one after another, and they felt their blood begin to boil.

Xiao Qingwang raised his eyes. His sleeves fluttered as a gust of wind blew against his face, and wherever his gaze went, no one dared to look him back in the eyes. “A State Guardian’s duty is to protect the state until his heart stops beating!” he said coldly. “The army of Baizhan is invading our state, and His Majesty has decreed the Central Army to the rescue. But until now, only some three thousand men are here. Therefore...”

There was a hint of a sneer on Qin Yang’s face as he thought to himself, ‘Therefore what? Therefore, you are asking these State Guardians to fight the war? With only a hundred of them? Hah! Even if they are all Martial Masters, they would be useless in the face of an army with over a hundred thousand soldiers!’

Suddenly, Xiao Qingwang’s eyes shone with fierce killing intent as he cried out, “Therefore all of the one hundred and twenty-four generals of the Central Army have disobeyed the imperial edict, a crime that earns them their death! I want you to capture them and bring them here, where they will be executed!”

That instantly startled everyone. Qin Yang jumped up from his chair and growled, “How dare you, Xiao Qingwang! Who gave you the right to kill the generals of the Central Army?”

Xiao Qingwang turned to look at Qin Yang, his gaze stabbing right through the prince like a sharp blade. The latter shuddered in response and felt a chill rush up into his head.

Staring at him, Xiao Qingwang said in a cold voice, “As one of the generals of the Central Army and the prince, Qin Yang had taken the lead in disobeying the imperial edict. His action had placed the state at

risk, and that makes him the arch-criminal!” He paused for a moment as a towering killing intent exploded out of him. “Somebody, take down Qin Yang and put him in captivity. We shall execute him together with the one hundred and twenty-four men later and offer their blood to the banners!”

An uproar broke out among the crowd. The order had not only completely stunned everyone, even Li Chunyang, who had been calm all the time, was utterly shocked and opened his eyes in horror. Yunxiao, although slightly surprised as well, was the only one with a hint of a smile on his face as he . silently nodded in approval.

In his eyes, Xiao Qingwang was a man with no strings attached. He would kill anyone as he pleased, no matter the man was a peddler, a menial servant, or a noble. It was the nature a martial arts warrior should have. The path of martial arts was eternal but merciless. Every warrior who reached the peak and held sway over the world had his hands covered with blood.

Li Chunyang, on the other hand, had been fighting for his state for many years, and the concept of loyalty and patriotism had been deeply rooted in his mind. Because of that, he could never act as freely as Xiao Qingwang, and therefore, his achievements could never be as great as the latter.

“You want to kill me? Do you dare to kill me?” Qin Yang’s eyes grew wide, as if he had heard the funniest joke. He was the prince of the state, a noble existence who would succeed to the throne, and Xiao Qingwang was just the courtier. How could a courtier kill his emperor?

He felt it absurd, and he could not help but burst into laughter. However, after laughing for a while, he felt a chill run down his back. The way Xiao Qingwang looked at him as if he was already a dead man made him feel like he was trapped in an ice cellar!

“Why can’t I kill you?” Xiao Qingwang’s voice was cold and contemptuous. “If Li Chunyang hadn’t fought the enemy and expanded the territory for the state, if I hadn’t defended the state, Tianshui would have long been wiped out, and your family would have been a speck of dust in history. And what are you? I am an eight-stars Martial King. So tell me, who dares to fight against me in the whole Tianshui? I can kill you like a dog!”

I can kill you like a dog!

The words rang so loud in Qin Yang's ears that he felt his eardrums almost shatter to pieces and his head continue buzzing. For a moment, he almost collapsed to the ground.

Even the five units of the State Guardians were struck dumb, and each of them stood frozen to the spot.

It was not until Xiao Qingwang gave an angry roar that everyone woke from their shock. With horror filling their hearts, the State Guardians dispersed into all directions to capture the one hundred and twenty-four generals.

Xiao Qingwang, who had been silent for five years, shut himself away from the world and always seemed so kind, had finally returned! And the wrath of the Martial King had shaken the whole state!

Gao Feng blended himself with the crowd and hurried away. He was not going to capture any of the generals but run toward the palace. As he had followed Xiao Qingwang for many years, he was very familiar with that killing intent, and he knew the other was serious. If he did nothing, Qin Yang would definitely be dead soon.

Right now, the only person who could save Qin Yang was the one in the palace, the emperor of Tianshui, Qin Zheng.

No one on the muster roll platform could recover from their shock, including Qin Yue. As he looked at his elder brother, whose status was superior to him, being tied up with ropes like a criminal, he felt lost instead of joyful. For the first time, he questioned himself about his pursuit of the throne.

If he did ascend the throne, would he really be above all men, and the entire world bow to him?

If the answer was 'yes', then what was happening to his elder brother now? Xiao Qingwang was an eight-stars Martial King, and if he really killed all the princes, could the laws and millions of troops take him down?

The answer was obviously a 'no'.

If Xiao Qingwang could kill Qin Yang like a dog, then what about him?

Qin Yue could taste the bitterness in his mouth. For the first time, he felt that perhaps his goal was wrong.

Under Xiao Qingwang's imposing manner, the more than two thousand students and three thousand old, weak, and disabled soldiers beneath the platform were extremely excited. They stood neatly in the ranks, with no one daring to breathe loudly or relax. Although there were more than five thousand people, the whole place was as quiet as if there were no one.

When all the State Guardians were deployed at the same time, their efficiency was amazing. Soon, one hundred and twenty-four generals were all tied up and brought back before being pressed to the ground. Some of them struggled at first, but when they saw that even Qin Yang had been tied up and hung under the banner, they collapsed to the ground with fear.

One hundred and twenty-four men knelt orderly under the platform, and behind each stood a State Guardian, holding them down so that they could not fight back.

Xiao Qingwang's eyes swept across these people as if he were looking at a group of dead pigs. "You must be thinking that the law cannot be enforced when everyone is an offender, do you?" He sneered sarcastically. "You must be thinking that Li Chunyang can't do anything to you, right? Well, I will now offer your blood to the banner! In your next life, remember that Tianshui will flourish even without you! Don't take yourself too seriously! You are nothing!"

"Kill them all!" He cried out with a wave of his hand, sending a freezing murderous air across the generals' faces.

The one hundred and twenty-four generals were scared out of their wits. They thought Xiao Qingwang was just putting on airs to reduce their arrogance, and he would eventually still have to rely on them to lead the army. They did not expect him to be serious and give the order so decisively. It had exceeded all expectations.

"Hold on!"

Suddenly, a loud voice came from the distance. At a speed almost akin to flying, Gao Feng ran over to the platform, then knelt down and held up an imperial edict with both hands. He gasped fiercely, and his clothes had already been soaked with sweat.

Chapter 83: The Army Sets Out

“His Majesty has an imperial edict for Xiao Qingwang!” Gao Feng said loudly.

Standing still, Xiao Qingwang gave him a cold look and said with a straight face, “Read it!”

Gao Feng hurriedly unfolded the imperial edict and read aloud, “Qin Yang and all the generals of the Central Army are arrogant and have disobeyed the order of deployment. They should be punished according to their crimes! However, at present, when the state crisis is taking place, I will give them another chance to redeem themselves by performing their duties. As for Qin Yang, although he is a prince, he had not attached importance to the state affairs. He should be flogged a hundred times to make an example for the others!”

After listening to the imperial edict, all the generals breathed a sigh of relief at the same time, glad that they did not have to die now. Meanwhile, Qin Yang’s forehead was covered in cold sweat. He had never felt so close to death. Although it was a great pain to be flogged a hundred times, at least his life was saved, and so was that of his loyal followers.

Xiao Qingwang slightly raised his eyes, which were filled with confusion. Suddenly, his pupils constricted, and then he said to the people beneath the platform with an indifferent face, “Kill everyone but Qin Yang. He will be flogged five hundred times to make an example of others!”

That horrified everyone, and one of the generals glared at him and bellowed, “Xiao Qingwang, you old fogey! How dare you to disobey the imperial edict! You are the one who should be killed!”

Bam!

As soon as he finished speaking, the State Guardian standing behind him slapped him on the head, sending his brains all over the place.

Bam! Bam!

The air rang with shrieks, but peace was soon restored. At this point, all one hundred and twenty-four Central Army generals were killed on the spot, which also meant that Qin Yang's loyal subordinates in the Central Army were all executed!

Puke!

Qin Yang felt his head reel and coughed out a mouthful of blood. "Xiao Qingwang, you have disobeyed the imperial edict! Your entire family will be executed for your crime!" he screamed venomously.

"His Majesty gave them a chance, but I won't." Xiao Qingwang gave the prince a cold smile. "If you disobey the imperial edict, someone will kill you, but who dares to kill me? Now, I don't think you really want me to give you a chance, do you?" He glanced coldly at Qin Yang, causing the latter's face to turn pale with fear and quickly close his mouth.

Qin Yang believed from the bottom of his heart that as long as he uttered one more word, he would surely be killed on the spot!

Xiao Qingwang waved and said, "Drag Qin Yang away and flog him five hundred times!" Then, while looking at the bodies all over the ground, he said with a straight face, "Immediately notify all the generals of the next level to come to the muster roll platform in a quarter of an hour. Kill those who refuse to come!"

The State Guardians dispersed once again. In less than ten minutes, all the generals in the capital, whether they should or should not have come, had arrived, and everyone was wearing armor and swords. No one dared to show any impatience or weariness.

"Very good!" Xiao Qingwang glanced at everyone with satisfaction, then turned and walked down the platform, handing the stage back to Li Chunyang. He went straight to the seat on the left side of the platform and sat down as he said to Yunxiao, "I've completed the first thing."

Yunxiao smiled and said, "You sure are ruthless. Now no one will dare to harbor any ill intentions."

Li Chunyang stood on the platform, looking at the crowd below as he shouted seriously, "Chen Dasheng will be the commander in chief of this mission! Chen Dasheng, step out of the rank and receive the commander seal!"

Everyone was at a loss. Chen Dasheng? Who was this man? There was no such person among the senior generals present. They knew Li Chunyang would definitely send his own men, and Han Qianfang and the master of the Chen Family, Chen Lin, were all possible candidates. But, no one expected him to come out with such a strange name.

But soon, some older generals seemed to remember something, and their faces fell as they looked at the platform, aghast.

Chen Lin, who was standing in the crowd, was shocked as well, and he began to shiver as he watched an old man slowly standing up from a seat on the left of the stage.

He felt that his sight was blurred by some fluids, and when he saw the old man's face, he could no longer hold it. He ran over and dropped to his knees, bursting into tears as he cried out, "Dad! Dad! It's really you! You are still alive!"

Chen Dasheng was also in tears. Fighting back his joy, he patted his son on the head, then his face suddenly darkened and he kicked the latter away. "You are embarrassing our family! Stop crying in front of the muster roll platform!"

After that, he strode to the front of the platform and took the commander seal with both hands, then shouted, "Chen Dasheng receives the order!"

He held the seal high and let the crowd look at it for a moment before walking up the platform and crying out, "Han Qianfang, step out of the rank!"

"Yes, my lord!" Han Qianfang stepped forward in a hurry. He, too, was shocked by the fact that Chen Dasheng was still alive. Although he did not weep like Chen Lin, his heart was full of joy.

Chen Dasheng took out a token and threw it at him. "You will lead the left flank's vanguard. I will give you one hundred thousand men!"

"Understood, my lord!"

"Chen Lin, step out of the rank!"

"Yes, my...my lord!" Still in tears, Chen Lin came forward excitedly.

Chen Dasheng snorted angrily as he grabbed a token and threw it in Chen Lin's face. "You will lead the right flank's vanguard with one hundred thousand men as well!"

"Understood!" While sobbing, Chen Lin picked up the token and walked back into the rank.

"Li Yunxiao, step out of the rank!"

Yunxiao got up from his seat on the left side of the platform and walked up to Chen Dasheng, then cupped his fist and said, "I'm here. What do you want of me?"

Chen Dasheng frowned. If the others dared to be so rude in front of him, they would definitely be punished. But, since the man was Yunxiao, he did not bother to argue with him. Dropping a token, he said, "I now appoint you as the chief logistics officer. You will lead the two thousand student troops to provide uninterrupted logistics support and provision."

A wry smile appeared on Yunxiao's face. He did not expect that he would be put in charge of logistics. Anyhow, he took the token and returned to his seat.

Some of the two thousand students were happy and some were sad. Those who were happy were so because they felt they would be safer by not going to the frontlines, while the others were sad because they would not be able to become Qin Yue's loyal followers, since their chance of fighting in the battle was taken away.

Chen Dasheng shouted again, "The rest of you are at my disposal! And now, we will march!"

"We will march!" All the generals cried out in unison, their voices towering into the sky. Columns of armed and armored troops began to march around the capital before leaving the city. It was the custom before every army went to war.

Only then did Qin Yue walk up to Chen Dasheng and speak with a look of respect, "General Chen, the safety of Tianshui is now entirely entrusted to you!"

Chen Dasheng nodded and said, "Rest assured, Your Highness! I will not come back if I have not thrown the enemy back to where they came from!"

Li Chunyang also came over and patted him on the shoulder. "Dasheng, be careful and take care!"

"Don't worry, brother! I haven't died after five years of torture, so why would I die now?"

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As the army was leaving the city, two people ran up suddenly and came directly to Yunxiao while shouting, "Young Master Yun, take us with you!"

After that, they jumped directly into his chariot. He glanced at them and found that it was Han Bai and Chen Zhen, both of whom looked depressed.

The army commander's chariot was more than thirty meters long and ten meters wide. It was pulled by eight horses and could accommodate dozens of people.

It turned out that because their aptitudes were slightly poor, although they had opened all seven chakras after taking the origin impacting pills given by Yunxiao, they were unable to make any further breakthrough. It was then that the academy began to recruit students for the mission, and the minimum requirement was that the applicant must be a warrior. The cruel reality depressed them. Later, when they learned that Yunxiao had been appointed commander of the student army, they immediately waited happily at the city gate, and then rushed at him when he approached.

Surprised, Yunxiao said, "Are your aptitudes really so poor? I can't believe you didn't break through and become warriors even after taking my origin impacting pills!"

Han Bai released a little of his Primordial Qi, and the light of a warrior immediately emanated from his body. With a wry smile, he said, "I didn't sleep last night, and I broke through this morning. But, it's one day too late."

Chen Zhen said miserably, "Your foundation is better than mine. I've been stuck at the bottleneck for three days and haven't broken through."

Meng Bai, who was sitting nearby, said with surprise, "I broke through and became a warrior on the night I took the origin impacting pill, and before that, I had only opened five chakras. Brothers, it seems that your aptitudes are a little bit too out of ordinary, don't you think so?"

"That only shows Young Master Yun played favorites, because the quality of the pills he gave us is not as good as yours," said Chen Zhen angrily.

"Hmph! It is obvious that you are useless, but you blame the pill!" A voice rang out of the tent erected on the chariot.

"Who is it? Who dares to scold me!" In a fit of rage, Chen Zhen kicked open the tent flaps and rushed inside while roaring. Everyone thought that there would be some commotion, but Chen Zhen never made any noise again, as if he had fallen into the sea.

While frowning, Han Bai said, "What's going on? Is his father in there?"

Yunxiao only smiled. If truth be told, not only Chen Zhen's father, but his father's father was in there as well.

"Ahhh!" Right at that moment, a scream rang out from inside the tent; it was Chen Zhen's voice. Not long after that, Chen Dasheng's voice was heard, "Yunxiao and Han Bai, come in!"

They went into the tent, which was occupied by Chen Dasheng, Chen Lin, and Han Qianfang. They were discussing tactics, but they had stopped now while Chen Zhen was kneeling on the ground, sweating profusely.

Yunxiao's face grew dark as soon as he squinted at Chen Zhen. "You've made him break through by force?"

Han Bai was shocked, and he hurriedly looked at Chen Zhen, who was gasping on the floor. Sure enough, Chen Zhen had become a warrior of the Origin Realm, with the light of Primordial Qi swirling around him.

There was a flicker of anger in Yunxiao's eyes. "Don't you know that this has hurt him instead?" he said coldly. "Forcibly breaking through such an important bottleneck will definitely affect his future achievements."

Chen Dasheng looked up at Yunxiao and sighed. "You must know that my grandson's aptitude is really mediocre. To what extent do you think his future achievements can reach? Life is finite, but martial arts are infinite. Instead of letting him wander in the realm of low-level warriors, I think it's better for me to help him become someone useful as soon as possible."

The look in Yunxiao's eyes grew harsh. "To what extent do you think you can shape him?"

"I've discussed with Chen Lin. With the help of experts and various medicinal pills, I'll be satisfied as long as he can become a Great Martial Master in the future."

Yunxiao nodded, his eyes flashing with a cold light. "Put away your ridiculous ideas." Then, he held out a finger and said coldly, "One year. Give me one year, and I will make him step into the Four Quadrants Realm and become a Martial Lord."

Everyone was shocked by what he said. Looking at him, Chen Dasheng said, "Yunxiao, I know you are very capable, but every step is as difficult as climbing the sky on the way to the peak of martial arts. In those days, my aptitude was already among the best of my peers, and yet it was not until I experienced death and by coincidence that I was able to step into the Four Quadrants Realm. I know you mean good for Chen Zhen, but you must not be too impulsive."

Chapter 84: A Military Pledge

Yunxiao picked Chen Zhen up from the floor and looked at the three men coldly. "Have you said enough? If yes, continue with what you were doing. But, if I find out that you made him break through his bottleneck by force again, I'll not be so courteous anymore! Take my words seriously and don't do it again!"

His words stunned them and utterly shocked Han Bai.

Without saying another word, Yunxiao turned and walked out of the tent while dragging Chen Zhen with him. Han Bai stole a glance at the three stunned men. Not daring to stay with them alone, he quickly left the tent as well.

Han Qianfang was the first to speak. "This Li Yunxiao really does behave a little differently from the past. In recent days, rumors about him have been spreading in the capital, but I can't believe he has the courage to be so arrogant in front of the three of us."

While frowning, Chen Lin said, "He's amazingly gifted. Although he's the same age as Chen Zhen, he's already an eight-stars warrior. But, I still have doubts about the fact that he has the ability to defeat Lin Yu and Bai Chengfeng alone, the two top geniuses of Jialan Academy. I've closely observed the two boys, and I know how good both of them are."

"Since Duke Jingguo agreed to let him come out alone, he must have his own fortes," said Han Qianfang. "It's just that he's too boastful, with that claim of making Chen Zhen a Martial Lord in one year. Does he think the Martial Lord stage is something that can be easily achieved?"

Chen Dasheng kneaded the tiny clay figurine in his hand into a ball and said, "Let the boy try. From now on, stop interfering with Chen Zhen's cultivation."

Chen Lin was startled, and he said hurriedly, "Dad, don't tell me you believe his bullsh*t? Becoming a Martial Lord in one year? Does he think he's..."

“That’s enough!” Chen Dasheng cut him off. “The boy’s a little strange. I know it is kind of absurd, but when he said that, I couldn’t help but believe it.”

With his eyes growing wide, Chen Lin shook his head and said, “Dad, that’s totally a groundless claim.”

“We’ll give him a year to try,” said Chen Dasheng. “With your cultivation base, you can’t feel the feeling I had. It’s a belief that came from one’s instinct. And there’s one thing that you don’t know...the boy is a genuine second-tier Master Alchemist!”

Chen Lin and Han Qianfang’s eyes widened in great astonishment.

After stepping out of the tent, Yunxiao threw Chen Zhen to Jia Rong and said, “Give him a rain pill and stabilize his cultivation level.” Then, he turned to ask a sergeant standing nearby, “What is the next city and how long does it take us to arrive?”

The sergeant saluted him and answered, “My lord, the next city is Yangpu. At our current speed, we will arrive in ten days!”

“Ten days? So long?” Yunxiao frowned as he looked into the distance. In his previous life, he had already forgotten the feeling of traveling on foot, because he could tear through space and reach any destination that was tens of thousands of miles away in just the blink of an eye.

“Why? Starting to feel bored?” At some point, Chen Dasheng had walked out of the tent and stood behind him. “We are already marching at the highest speed. It will take us at least a month if we were marching at normal speed,” he laughed. “War is hard work, not fun.”

Yunxiao glared at him. “Fun? I just wish to arrive faster so I can find Chen Zhen some herbs to temporarily stabilize his cultivation level and negate the negative effects you’ve done on him.”

“Ugh...” Chen Dasheng felt there was something stuck in his throat, and he found that the boy’s aura was somehow suppressing his, which upset him. ‘After all, I’m the commander in chief. I need to tone the boy’s arrogance down a little,’ he thought to himself.

Pointing at the troops, who were marching at the highest speed, he asked, "What do you think of the army, boy?"

Yunxiao answered indifferently, "Mediocre at best."

"Mediocre at best?" Chen Dasheng scoffed. "You really are a green boy who has never experienced the world. This is an army of four hundred thousand troops. Although they are not the best, they are well-disciplined and well-trained, which can be seen from the details of their marching," he lectured with a triumphant look on his face. "And look at that cloud of murderous air faintly visible over the army, which can only be produced when an army has gone through battles of life and death. The murderous air can..."

"Alright, I know that," Yunxiao cut him off. "It's already noon, time for you to take your medicine. Don't forget to ask Teacher Yunshang to suppress your cold poison."

Chen Dasheng stood frozen to the spot and felt extremely embarrassed while the people around tried hard to suppress their laughter by covering their mouths with their hands. In a fit of rage, he said, "I know you are an alchemist, and you might think you are someone great because of that! But marching and warring are..."

Yunxiao furrowed his eyebrows as he interrupted the old man once again, "Murderous air, you said?" He pointed a finger at the student army, which was guarding the various provisions at the rear, and said, "Ten days later, before the army enters the city of Yangpu, the murderous air of these two thousand student troops will suppress your army of four hundred thousand troops! Do you believe it?"

"Haha! Your arrogance knows no bounds! Do you think murderous air is the air we all breathe? Something you can get with just the wave of your hand?" Chen Dasheng burst into wild laughter.

Pointing at his own head, Yunxiao said coldly, "I now make a military pledge with my head, that if I lose ten days later, I'll cut my head down and let you kick it like a ball! But if I win, I will replace you as the commander in chief, and I want you to run errands for me!"

Chen Dasheng's expression changed drastically, and all the people around them were astounded. "A military pledge is not a game. As the commander of the student army, you should know that you are held accountable for every word you say!"

Yunxiao chuckled and cocked his head. "Of course, I know! But, I have to hand the task of guarding the provisions back to you. I'll make them march faster now. See you ten days later at Yangpu!"

By the time he had finished, he leaped into the air and fell lightly on another chariot, followed by Ji Meng, Jia Rong, Meng Wu and her brother, Chen Zhen, and Han Bai. Standing on top of the chariot, Yunxiao cried out at the top of his lungs, "Boys and girls of the student army, listen up! Put down all the provisions now and march at full speed behind my chariot!"

The sergeant lashed at the horses, making Yunxiao's chariot rumble past the rest and soon leading the army. Soon, the two thousand students increased their speed and caught up with him.

These students were warriors with extraordinary strength. No matter it was their stamina or cultivation base, they were at least several times stronger than ordinary soldiers, so it did not take them too much effort to begin running. Soon, led by Yunxiao, the student army overtook the army and marched into the distance.

Chen Dasheng's face flickered as he watched the cloud of dust that obscured the sky ahead.

"Dad, how could you let him go?" Chen Lin said shockingly. "He's talking nonsense! Do you really believe he can make the student army produce a murderous air stronger than the Central Army in just ten days while they need to march along the way?"

"Of course not!" said Chen Dasheng with a cold snort.

That confused Chen Lin. "Then...then why did you...and he has made the pledge with his head...If he really..."

Chen Dasheng suddenly slapped him on the back of the head and snapped, "Anyone here heard his military pledge? Do you really want me to kill that boy with military law? When the time comes, I'll just tie him up and give him a beating!" After saying that, he turned and started toward his own tent while muttering to himself as he walked, "Aye, my body has started to ache again. It's really time to take my medicine..."

As he turned, he caught the sight of Xiao Qingwang and Luo Yunshang, who at some point had come onto the chariot. The tiny beads of sweat covering Luo Yunshang's forehead clearly showed that she had just exhausted a significant amount of Primordial Qi.

"Teacher Luo, can you continue?" Chen Dasheng asked.

Luo Yunshang smiled and said, "No problem. I wonder where Li Yunxiao found the healing method. When I suppress the cold poison in you, I can feel my pure Yang energy growing as well, and the result seems to be better than cultivating in seclusion!"

Chen Dasheng said angrily, "Don't mention that boy again. See if I don't tie him up and beat him into a cripple!"

Xiao Qingwang, who had been quiet, smiled and said, "Oh? I don't think you will have the chance to do that." His voice suggested that he was eager to see Chen Dasheng run errands for Yunxiao.

Chen Dasheng paused for a moment, then put on a look of disbelief.

...

For a moment, everyone around Yunxiao was silent. It was after some time that Chen Zhen smiled wryly and said, "Young Master Yun, you've gone too far this time. With that military pledge of yours, my grandfather will surely give you a severe beating if he decides to not cut your head..."

"It's nothing but producing some murderous air. Do you think it's very difficult to achieve?" Yunxiao smiled.

Han Bai said seriously, "It's nothing but producing some murderous air? I can't believe you would say that. Do you know what murderous air is? It can only be accumulated in the body after a soldier has fought with real weapons on the battlefield. Once the soldier returns to the battlefield, it will be released to boost the soldier's fighting strength. It can't be trained in ten years if the soldier did not go to the battlefield in person, let alone ten days!"

Yunxiao did not seem to worry. "Well, that can be easily solved by letting them experience battles of life and death."

Paying no mind to the astounded expressions around him, he shouted loudly, "I want the army to march at full speed and arrive outside of Yangpu in four days!" He smiled, and then said in a voice that could only be heard by those near him, "I'll send you to hell in the remaining six days!"

He turned and walked into the tent, his sleeves waving.

Not daring to disturb him, the rest of the people sat outside the tent and began to meditate.

Along the way, the sergeant rode the chariot as fast as he could. As the two thousand students were all warriors, they could run even faster than those horses, but no one had dared to overtake Yunxiao's chariot, and they just followed closely behind.

On the third day, the spirit of the students had completely collapsed. The column was dragged to a few miles long as they ran along the road with pale faces. Many of them were looking at the chariot ahead with hatred in their hearts. 'Why do we have to run like cows for three days when those good-for-nothings can sit comfortably in the chariot?'

But, there were two figures that still followed closely behind the chariot and did not show any weariness, who were once the idols of many students. Clenching their jaws, Lin Yu and Bai Chengfeng did not complain as they ran behind the chariot, and their eyes were burning with determination!

Chapter 85: Thousand and Thousand Illusion Formation

The eight horses pulling the commander's chariot were all bought from Firecrow Empire at high prices, a mixed breed of horses and demon beasts, which gave them their red eyes and great stamina. Even so, galloping without rest for such a long time was not something they could have withstood. Eventually, when they arrived outside of Yangpu on the third day, they screamed and then collapsed to the ground, all dead from weariness.

It took another ten minutes for all the students to arrive, and by the time they did, each one of them was gasping for breath with a pale face.

Only then did Yunxiao walk lazily down from the chariot. He stretched himself and yawned, then looked up at the sky. "Oh, I didn't know it's already nighttime. The moon is quite full today... Hey, come down here and join me in enjoying the moon."

His voice drew Chen Zhen, Han Bai, and the others down from the chariot, each holding a steaming cup in hand and sipping at it from time to time. The sight of them made all the two thousand students fume and filled their hearts with resentment. But when they thought of Yunxiao's incredible fighting strength, they did not dare to speak a word about it.

With a sly smile on his face, Yunxiao said, "Alright, the time for tea is over. We need to get to work now."

Chen Zhen and others put down their teacups and took out their weapons as they began to draw on the ground. The two thousand students looked at them curiously, but no one could understand what they were doing. Very soon, a huge circle was drawn on the ground. Some students immediately realized that it was a formation, one that enclosed all two thousand students.

"What are they doing? What is this formation?"

"Heaven! Do you know how many Primordial Stones it takes to activate such a huge formation? And do you know how strong an alchemist must be to activate it?" A student with knowledge of formations cried out in shock.

"Can't you see we have Master Jia Rong, a second-tier alchemist, following us? Tsk, tsk...I know what it is...it must be a huge restoration formation. They are going to restore our Primordial Qi."

"Oh? Is there such a good thing?"

"Of course! If you don't believe me, just wait and see!"

A hint of a cold smile emerged on Yunxiao's face as he listened to the chattering. Before long, the construction of the formation was completed. Countless Primordial Stones of various sizes and grades were socketed along both sides of the lines that formed the formation. It was a sight that made everyone gape.

'It is just too wasteful! This son of an aristocratic family is so rich!'

If truth be told, Yunxiao was quite in an agony right now. For the purpose of constructing the formation, he had almost emptied all the Primordial Stones in the Divine Realm Tablet!

Choking back the bitterness, he walked to the center of the formation, took out the swords of Taiyin and Spring Water, and stabbed them into the ground. A beam of light towered into the sky immediately, with the shadows of both swords taking shapes in them while shining brightly and emanating freezing cold air. The army of students, who had never seen such a magnificent scene, was instantly attracted as each of them looked up at the sky.

A cruel smile appeared on the corners of Yunxiao's mouth as he said, "This is a formation that has exhausted all my wealth, and its two eyes are both third-grade mystic weapons. It can help you all become true warriors in a very short time! Now, my friends, please enjoy the pleasant journey I've prepared for you!"

Under the light of the swords, the look in his eyes appeared to be unusually bizarre. Meanwhile, he performed a few incantation gestures, with which numerous ancient, strange-looking words emerged in the void before falling into the formation. All of a sudden, everyone was shocked to find that the bright and beautiful moon in the sky had become abnormal, with blood-red traces gradually appearing across its surface.

"What...What happened!" Everyone was utterly astounded as the moon transformed into an evil-looking eyeball!

Standing outside the formation, Yunxiao's pupils had turned blood-red and begun to gradually twist and curve, changing into two crescents. Then, all of a sudden, they expanded and from the moon came spreading out an evil power.

All the students in the formation felt a jolt through their hearts as the strange power emanated from the blood-red moon instantly controlled their minds. Their expression began to turn vacant as they all stared blankly at the air.

When those standing outside the formation looked into it, they saw each of the students frozen to the spot with a blank face.

“What happened to them, Young Master Yun?” asked Chen Zhen, aghast. Yunxiao had only told them the steps to construct the formation but never the purpose.

Yunxiao turned and gave him a look. The pair of evil-looking pupils frightened Chen Zhen and made him back off a few steps.

“You will go in and have some fun as well.” Before his voice had died away, he took a few steps and pushed Chen Zhen, Han Bai, Meng Wu, and Meng Bai into the formation, leaving only Jia Rong and Ji Meng with him.

With a look of fear on his face, Jia Rong quickly stepped away from him. Ji Meng, on the other hand, frowned and wanted to walk into the formation himself.

“Don’t go in,” Yunxiao suddenly said. “You are a Martial Lord, and Jia Rong is a second-tier alchemist. My eye technique is still too weak, so I can’t control your minds.”

Upon hearing that, Jia Rong breathed a sigh of relief. He collected his courage and walked over to Yunxiao as he asked carefully, “Young Master Yun, this formation...”

Yunxiao closed his eyes and said calmly, “This is an illusion formation called Thousand and Thousand. In it, they will experience something that they will never forget for the rest of their lives...hehe, something very interesting.”

Jia Rong shuddered; the playful and wicked look on Yunxiao’s face when he said ‘something very interesting’ chilled him. He could not help but begin to pray for these students.

“I need you to protect everyone, Ji Meng. I’ve no idea how long I can last, but I’ll try my best.” When he had finished, he drew a small circle around his feet, placed a few Primordial Stones in it, and then sat cross-legged down. Next, he locked both hands in an incantation gesture and began to meditate.

With his eyes narrowed, Ji Meng jumped up a nearby tree and hid himself within the branches and leaves while spreading his divine sense as far as he could. Jia Rong was the only one who had nothing to do now, so he just sat down and began to meditate as well.

...

Zhang Tao was the most outstanding student at Skyhawk Martial Arts Academy in town. He was only thirteen years old, but he had already opened five chakras, and it was very likely for him to condense his dantian, produce Primordial Qi, step into the Origin Realm, and become a true warrior before the age of fifteen.

His greatest wish was to save enough money quickly, then get in Jialan Academy and become a State Guardian after graduation. He wanted to bring glory to his ancestors, let his parents live a good life, and marry her sister into a good family.

He would come to the back of the mountain every day to practice alone. By now, he could punch a big hole in a tree that took two men to embrace.

“What’s this?” A furry-white head poked out from the basin-sized hole he had just punched in a big tree. To his surprise, it was a wolf!

“How could there be a wolf in the tree?” Zhang Tao retreated hurriedly in horror. Meanwhile, the white-furred, green-eyed wolf drifted out of the tree, and the sight immediately made him cry out, “Demon wolf! A demon wolf! Why is there a demon wolf at the back of the mountain?”

He had no time to think further. In his desperation, he spun and ran down the mountain. Even a true warrior would not dare to fight a demon beast!

“Awoooooo!”

The demon wolf howled and then swooped over with its bloody mouth wide open!

Knowing that he could not avoid it, Zhang Tao quickly turned around and locked himself in a horse stance. 'Don't panic! Don't be afraid!' he kept telling himself in his mind.

"Clenched Fist!"

Since he could no longer escape, he had decided to fight. Putting strength into his feet, he threw out a punch, which pierced through the air with a whistling noise.

An ordinary wolf would certainly die if it were struck by the punch. But, it was a demon wolf that he had encountered. The punch hit the wolf head, and just as Zhang Tao was excited about that, he was immediately terrified to find that his fist went through the demon wolf as if it had hit nothing.

"What's going on?"

His mind went blank in an instant. Suddenly, the demon wolf wrapped around his arm, opened its mouth, and closed its jaws hard!

"Ahhh!"

Zhang Tao's face twisting into a grimace as a stab of sharp pain washed up his shoulder, and then he saw his right arm bitten away by the demon wolf.

"Bast*rd! I will kill you!" he screamed with his eyes turned bloodshot. Meanwhile, he pounded the five fingers of his left hand like claws at the demon wolf's head.

"What?"

The claws went through the wolf's body once again without touching anything. Shocked, he bellowed, "How can this be? How is this even possible!"

“AHHH!”

Another piercing shriek rang out, sending countless birds in the back of the mountain up into the sky. The severe pain knocked Zhang Tao out, and when he woke, the dusk was already settled in.

“How... how did this happen...” He stared blankly at the blood all over the ground and his shoulders where both his arms were missing, eaten by the demon wolf!

“Ahhh! Why! Why didn’t you just kill me?”

Zhang Tao ran frantically down the back of the mountain, with tears streaming down his eyes!

“Without my arms, how am I going to practice martial arts, get into Jialan Academy, become a State Guardian, and bring my parents and sister a new life?”

“Heaven, why are you doing this to me?”

Face after face flashed through his mind. Stumbling, falling, rolling, Zhang Tao somehow managed to return to his home. Looking at the dim light inside the small broken house, he knew his father must be smoking hookah in front of the door, his mother must still be mending clothes beside the bed, and his sister should be having her dinner in the kitchen.

He did not feel any pain when he looked at his empty shoulders. Instead, he felt his heart filled with mercury, so heavy that he could hardly breathe and lift his foot. He did not know how to face his family, the closest people to him.

“No! NO! NOOOO!” Suddenly, a painful scream rang out of the house.

It was his sister’s voice!

Zhang Tao jerked his head up and bolted into the house. The shabby door had fallen to one side. He saw his father lifting a hoe and trying to hit a man on the forehead. But, the man kicked him in the chest and

sent him flying backward, leaving a trail of blood in the air. By the time his father fell on the ground, he was already dead, with blood trickling out of all his seven orifices.

“Dad!”

Zhang Tao felt his heart being torn apart. He roared and ran over, wanting to pick his father up, but how could he do that when he had lost both his arms?

Chapter 86: Demon Moon

“No, don’t do this! Please, I beg you, please don’t do this!” Another cry for mercy echoed out from one of the rooms, but it was his mother this time.

“Mom!”

In grief and indignation, Zhang Tao rushed inside just in time to see the son of town magistrate stomp a foot on his mother’s head. His mother rolled her eyes and her skinny body struggled a few times, and then she was dead, with her eyes wide open.

“Mom!”

Zhang Tao coughed out a mouthful of heart’s blood, and he felt the world around him spinning.

Fully naked, the son of town magistrate was lying atop his sister’s innocent body, plunging in and out of her excitedly while a group of ruffians and hooligans watched around them. Blood trickled down from both her thighs, and her young face of a ten-year-old girl was twisted with pain, her eyes filled with despair.

“Bast*rds! I’ll kill you all!”

Zhang Tao was completely crazy. Like a mad cow, he ran headlong toward the group of men!

“Kill us all? Hah! I was afraid of you, but how are you going to kill me now when you have lost both your arms? Beat this piece of rubbish to death for me!” As the son of town magistrate shouted wantonly, he did not stop his movement even for a moment. Instead, he moved even faster, as if he was getting more excited.

Zhang Tao only felt a sharp pain on the top of his head, and then he was thrown to the ground, with punches and kicks raining down on him like a storm, breaking all his limbs and bones. Soon, his head was reeling and his pupils were dilating, and he gradually began to lose consciousness.

Staring blankly at the blood that kept trickling down his sister’s body, he felt he had lost all his strength. His body was aching all over, but he could no longer feel it. The only thing he could feel now was the monstrous pain in his heart, as if someone was slicing at it with a sharp blade.

“Ah! AH! AHHH!”

The son of town magistrate thrust himself over and over again into his sister. Soon, he reached his climax, and after shivering for a moment, he fell feebly onto her petite body. Zhang Tao saw his sister’s fair body begin to slowly turn stiff and cold, with purple and green spots emerging here and there.

After all the humiliation, his sister finally died.

Zhang Tao’s heart broke in an instant, and his dilated pupils suddenly began to constrict. Lying face down on the ground, he felt strength coming back to him from somewhere, which made him clench his fists tightly. For a moment, a feeling of power that he had never felt before came to him.

“Fists?” He was confused. “I have fists now?” In fact, not only did he have both hands now, but he also had a sword in his right hand, a bright and cold sharp blade!

“Kill, kill, kill!”

His mind was completely blank, and then a huge character of ‘kill’ appeared in both of his pupils. He lifted the sword, and amidst streaks of bright light, the hooligans and ruffians who had beaten him just now were all cut into halves!

“A good sword!” His face twisted ferociously as he stepped over to the son of town magistrate.

“Kill, kill... I’m going to kill everyone... all the people are going to die!”

With the sword in hand, Zhang Tao walked out of his home and started toward the town magistrate’s house. Wherever he passed, he left behind numerous dead bodies on the ground.

“Run! Run for your life! Zhang Tao is killing everyone!”

“No, nooo! I’m the granny who lives next to your house! Don’t kill me!”

“Go get the town magistrate! Hurry up! Go get someone to bring this murderer under control!”

“Oh no! The entire family of town magistrate is murdered! What should we do now? Somebody help us!”

“Run! Run for your life!”

The town was plunged into chaos. Zhang Tao could not remember how many people he had killed; he had not stopped killing from day to night, and now, no matter where he went, there was no one alive. The whole town was empty.

The night was dark, and the moon was unusually round and huge. With his mind completely blank and his eyes devoid of emotions, Zhang Tao looked up at the moon in the sky.

It was not a full moon he saw, but a huge red eyeball of a man!

He stared at the huge eyeball in a daze. The whole town was dead, silent and lifeless. Suddenly, he felt a trance, as if the world around him began to twist, and an extremely unreal feeling came into his mind.

In the next instant, all the dead bodies were gone, and even the town had vanished. He blinked and found himself standing in a wilderness, surrounded by the black of night and two thousand peers from Jialan Academy, with the bright round moon over their heads.

“What...?” Zhang Tao glanced blankly at the surroundings with a look of confusion on his face. In fact, he was not the only one with that look. All of the two thousand students seemed to be struck dumb as well, with the same look of confusion in their eyes.

“AHHHH!”

Suddenly, a female student burst into tears, and her voice immediately caused a commotion to break out across the wilderness. Every student covered their faces or buried their heads between their arms and began to wail, filling the air with sad voices.

There were even many students who knelt on the ground and kept punching the earth with their fists, their eyes bloodshot and their faces covered in grief and indignation.

Jia Rong was dumbfounded as he stared at them from the outside. In his eyes, these students had barely stood there in a daze for one day and one night. He could not understand why they suddenly experienced such a violent emotional fluctuation. But then, he felt a chill run down his back as he thought of the ‘something interesting’ Yunxiao had told him. While shivering, he stole a glance at Yunxiao from the corner of his eye.

Yunxiao’s eyes had returned to normal, but he was extremely pale, with fine blood vessels all over him clearly visible to the naked eyes.

Jia Rong breathed a sigh of relief and thought to himself, ‘Had it not been because I am a second-tier alchemist and my spiritual energy is very powerful, perhaps I would already be pushed into the formation by him to experience that ‘something interesting’.’

Yunxiao did not feel good right now, as the load had exceeded his expectations. He had thought that after making the students run for three days and three nights to reduce their spiritual energy to the lowest level, he could easily pull all two thousand of them into illusions with his eye technique and the Thousand and Thousand illusion formation. But, he did not expect the consumption to be so huge that he was forced to end the journey of illusion earlier, releasing all the students.

As soon as his spiritual energy was cut, the whole illusion vanished. Then, he quickly sent his soul power into the Divine Realm Tablet and made his soul materialized in there. The golden Great Expansion Divine Technique appeared in the void and shone shafts of warmth onto his soul like sunlight expelling the cold, making him feel very comfortable and nourished.

He turned to Jia Rong and said, "Help me back to the chariot. I need to take a rest. Let them enjoy the happiness that they can still cry."

After all, people did not even have the luxury to cry at times.

Jia Rong was taken aback, as he found that Yunxiao was already weakened to such an extent. He had never seen the latter so exhausted, not even when they were refining pills in seclusion last time. But, when he thought of the illusion that trapped all two thousand students at the same time, he could not help but shiver once again.

After experiencing great grief and joy for half a night, the two thousand students could no longer hold it anymore and fell asleep on the spot. Three days and three nights of running and the subsequent mental blows had completely crushed them.

Everyone had a beautiful dream, in which the world was full of pleasant scent and a sunny, clear sky. The next day when they woke, they found that they were surrounded in the same faint fragrance from their dreams.

"Have you all awakened, little bast*rds? Get up now!" Jia Rong growled, with dark circles beneath his eyes, "You all had a comfortable sleep last night, didn't you? Do you know I burned the Purple Dragon Incense for you the whole night?"

Only then did everyone find the trace of burned wood beside Jia Rong and see him fanning the incense smoke toward them with a fan. They had never imagined that they would be served by a second-tier alchemist when they were sleeping. Frightened, they quickly got to their feet, and then each of them hurriedly jumped out of the circle of formation, not daring to stay within its boundary again.

The Primordial Stones socketed in the formation had all turned into heaps of dust as the energy contained in them had been exhausted.

At that moment, Yunxiao walked out of the chariot in great spirits. At the sight of him, the faces of all students fell and they stepped back involuntarily, as if they had seen a ghost.

Jia Rong's pupils constricted as he was utterly shocked. He was one hundred percent sure that Yunxiao had completely exhausted his soul power last night. But from the energetic look on his face now, it was plain that his soul power had fully restored. But, it had only been a night! How could it be so fast?

Yunxiao glanced smilingly at everyone. "Did everyone have a good time yesterday?"

'Fu*k you! Good time my ass!'

All two thousand students were cursing in their minds, but no one dared to reveal their anger. Looking at the smile on Yunxiao's face, they felt as if a gust of cold breeze was blowing at their faces, which made them move back a few more steps. Zhang Tao's face was pale, and he would shiver whenever he thought of what happened in the illusion. It was simply a nightmare!

"I know you all must be cursing me in your minds. But..." His face suddenly grew solemn and his eyes deep as seas as he spoke in a serious voice, "I don't know what you saw in the illusion, but I can tell you that it is possible for that to happen in real life if you do not have the strength!"

Zhang Tao shuddered, and he screamed frantically in his mind, 'Impossible! Absolutely impossible! It is too terrible! I'll never let that happen! Strength! I need strength!'

Yunxiao stared coldly at those young faces. In his eyes, even Lin Yu and Bai Chengfeng, the two leaders among the students, were just kids. At that moment, a cruel smile emerged on the corner of his mouth. "Although the illusion is fake, the obsessions in your hearts are real. This is how the world runs, natural selection and the survival of the strong! If you want to live and protect the traces of weakness in your hearts, you will need to keep strengthening yourself and keep advancing on the path of martial arts!"

He saw that there seemed to be some murderous look in everyone's eyes, which did not exist in the past. He smiled approvingly and said, "So, I'll use the remaining five days to teach you all a set of skills that can quickly improve your strength. It is called the Murderous Air Script!"

Tempted, Ji Meng walked over from the distance.

Yunxiao gave him a look and said, “The style of sword technique you cultivated is agile and swift, which is the complete opposite of this script. But, all martial techniques in the world lead to the Great Dao, and they will eventually come back to the understanding of the martial essence. You can study it for reference, but you don’t have to learn it.”

Chapter 87: Murderous Air Script

Ji Meng nodded, then stood on the side and watched carefully as Yunxiao began to explain, “Murderous Air Script is a cultivation technique that can stimulate the potential strength of the human body through murderous air. Its nascent form was first seen in battlefields, and then discovered by warriors who studied it and invented the technique. The extent to which murderous air increases strength is related to your cultivation level. The technique is divided into two parts—the first part is to condense murderous air, and the second part is to stimulate potential. Now, I want you all to memorize the script!”

He read the script aloud while all students repeated after him in their minds. Ji Meng was shocked when he heard it. He had thought it was just an ordinary cultivation technique, but after listening to it, he immediately realized that its value was too great to be estimated.

According to the script, if an individual’s murderous air was strong enough, it could even double his strength! And if this script was used to train soldiers, then the fighting strength of the army...

At the thought of that, Ji Meng felt a chill in his heart. Staring at the indifferent look on Yunxiao’s face, he found it hard to convince himself that he was really just a fifteen-year-old teenager.

After he had finished teaching, Yunxiao said in a serious voice, “If this script is cultivated by many people at the same time, the murderous air between them can affect each other, thus achieving the effect of multiplication! I hope when you all exercise the Murderous Air Script together five days later, your fighting strength will double! To encourage everyone, the thirty people with the largest increase in murderous air will each be awarded a second-grade medicinal pill that can enhance their potential without side effects!”

“A second-grade medicinal pill!”

“Enhance potential without side effects!”

All eyes lit up in an instant. For them, a second-grade medicinal pill was something beyond their reach. If truth be told, except some children of aristocratic families, most of them had not even seen a first-grade medicinal pill before.

Jia Rong grimaced as soon as he heard the reward, because he knew he would be assigned to refine those pills.

After he was done with the students, Yunxiao turned to stare at Meng Bai with a big smile on his face. Seeing that, the latter shuddered and hurriedly moved beside Meng Wu. “Ma-master, what do you want?” He, too, was in great awe of Yunxiao by now. The nightmare he had experienced in the illusion still frightened him.

“Hehe...” Yunxiao smacked his lips. “I need your poison to make a breakthrough and become a nine-stars warrior!”

All the two thousand students sat cross-legged down and began to recall the murderous heart born out of their despair in the illusion, condensing their murderous air bit by bit. Yunxiao, on the other hand, ignored Meng Bai’s protest and dragged him into the chariot to drain his poison by force.

With a long face, Jia Rong began to refine those Thousand Birds pills. Fortunately, after he was promoted to a second-tier alchemist, refining second-grade medicinal pills became something rather easy. If he worked day and night, he could produce thirty of them before the deadline.

Meanwhile, Ji Meng closed his eyes and went through the contents of the Murderous Air Script in his mind. He had a vague feeling that the martial essence contained in it was the key to his breakthrough. Ever since he was promoted to a Martial Lord, his cultivation base had stooped progressing. He was not panicking, though, because each progress in the realm of Martial Lords was not the same as that of Great Martial Masters.

Three days and three nights later...

Ji Meng felt that his stagnant cultivation base was moving slightly when a mighty murderous intent came blowing at his face all of a sudden. Startled, he jerked his head up and saw that the eyes of all two thousand students had turned red, and the murderous intent had made their hair exude a faint dark-purple mist, which rose into the sky in tendrils.

“What’s that!” His eyes widened in horror. In the sky over the student was a cloud of dark-purple murderous air, which vaguely took the shape of a huge finger covered in scales, with demonic light flashing around it. Although Ji Meng was a Martial Lord, he still felt a suffocating pressure just by looking at it.

“Oh, not bad! I didn’t expect them to reach this extent in just three days. It seems that the stimulation in the illusion has played a major role.”

At some point, Yunxiao was already standing behind him, looking smilingly at the terrifying finger looming in the sky.

Ji Meng swallowed hard, and then asked in shock, “Young Master Yun, what... what is that thing?”

Yunxiao said calmly, “The God of Slaughter’s finger condensed by the murderous air, which is also the strongest essence of the Murderous Air Script!” He stared at the sky and went on, “Judging by how vague and drifting it is, the finger has not even reached the most basic level. However, it is considered a good achievement for them to reach this extent in just three days.”

“The God of Slaughter’s finger...” Ji Meng murmured to himself. “How powerful will it be if the finger truly materialized?”

“Materialized?” Yunxiao laughed. “No one has ever been able to do that. However, if the God of Slaughter does descend on our world, I think it can easily kill a Martial Sovereign of the Nine Heavens realm with a finger. But, do you know how much murderous air it requires? Well, at least tens of thousands of times more than this, or perhaps hundreds of thousands of times more. It is simply impossible for even a Martial Sovereign to accumulate so much murderous air, not to mention an average warrior.”

Ji Meng breathed a sigh of relief. If someone could do that, who in the world could resist that person?

“It will take the army about two more days to arrive. Let them continue with their cultivation. I’ll visit the city and find some herbs to stabilize Chen Zhen’s cultivation level.”

Upon hearing that, Jia Rong ran over. “Please bring me with you, Young Master Yun!” He put on a wry face and said, “I’ve been refining pills for three days and three nights without resting...Take me with you so I can have a rest.”

“And me, me!” Meng Bai bolted over as well. After staying in the wild for a few days, he had been sick and tired. But at the moment, his skin was fair, as the poison in him had been drained by Yunxiao.

“Alright, you two will follow me. And Meng Bai, call your sister as well. Ji Meng, stay here and protect the students.”

Soon, Meng Wu was called out from among the students, and then the four of them started for the city. As he watched them disappear into the distance, Ji Meng could not hide his shock. He smiled wryly as he shook his head and muttered to himself, “Heaven, it’s been only three days, and he’s already a peak eight-stars warrior...”

...

Yangpu was the hub that connected the east and west of Tianshui, which made it far more important than other cities. And because of its strategic location, it was also one of the most prosperous cities.

As they approached the city, Yunxiao saw that anyone who wished to enter or leave the city would have to pay a fee, which baffled him. Soon, the four of them were stopped by the guards at the gate. “You need to pay eight hundred copper coins to enter the city, two hundred each.”

A silver coin was equivalent to one thousand copper coins. It was not expensive, but Jia Rong asked in a cold voice, “Why do we have to pay to enter or leave the city? Which law states that?”

The guard paused, and then said angrily, “The fee is to buy yourself an opportunity to enter the city! It seems to me that you don’t want to enter the city. Get the hell out of here now!”

Suddenly, another guard hurried over and pulled the first guard to the side as he whispered into his ear while glancing at the four of them. Perhaps the guards thought they might be some important people from the way they were dressed, so the first guard frowned and waved impatiently, "Forget it then! You may enter the city!"

Jia Rong was so angry that he was about to explode, but Yunxiao grabbed his arm as he smiled at the guards and dragged him into the city.

"Young Master Yun, why don't you let me teach them a lesson? It is plain that they are collecting the fee illegally! It is against the law!" Jia Rong said indignantly.

Yunxiao smiled. "A lot of people are breaking the law. Can you teach them all a lesson? A crooked stick will have a crooked shadow. The guards are not the culprits, they are just following orders. Do you think the money they collected will go straight into their pockets? I bet ninety-nine percent will have to be submitted to their superiors."

Fuming with anger, Meng Bai said, "These officials are really wicked!" Since they were children, he and Meng Wu had been making their way in life by their own efforts, so he naturally knew how these officials exploited the common people.

"Even if we teach them a lesson now, things here will continue to be the same as they were after we leave," Yunxiao said. "Besides, for us who cultivate martial arts or alchemy, we need to free our minds from the worldly affairs. Let Qin Yue do something about this when he ascends to the throne."

They strolled through the street as they talked. Yangpu was indeed a prosperous city, not inferior to the capital. Very soon, they arrived at the largest medicine shop in the city, but were disappointed as soon as they stepped in. The variety of herbs in the shop was nowhere near as much as the capital. After all, the capital was packed with talents and many alchemists while Yangpu might not even have one alchemist.

Yunxiao frowned and thought for a moment, then listed down several ordinary herbs and asked the shopkeeper to prepare ten portions for each. As the shopkeeper prepared the herbs according to the list, he suddenly said, "We have only eight portions of Gulan Leaves left. As the main ingredient of body strengthening potion, this herb has a high demand."

“Well, eight portions are better than none. Please pack them for me.”

At that moment, two men walked into the shop. When they saw the Gulan Leaves on the counter, the eyes of one of them lit up, and he quickly strode over and placed a palm over the herb. “I’ll take all these Gulan Leaves. I’ve finished my body strengthening potion, and I need them to refine a new batch.”

The shopkeeper forced a smile and said, “It’s nice to have you visiting my shop, Young Master Wu Guang. But, the few customers here have purchased these Gulan Leaves.”

Wu Guang’s face flickered as he glanced at the four of them, and his eyes lit up when he saw Meng Wu. He held his head high and looked down at Yunxiao while speaking with a smile, “I’ll buy the Gulan Leaves and the girl. Name me your price.”

Meng Wu’s nostrils flared. She could not believe someone would treat her like some goods. She was about to rush over, but Yunxiao stopped her. “Oh, you want to buy them?” he chuckled and said. “Well, the price will be fair and reasonable, but I am afraid you can’t afford it.”

“I can’t afford it?” Wu Guang burst into laughter, as if he had just heard the funniest joke in the world. “Shopkeeper, tell him who I am.”

The shopkeeper gave Yunxiao a pitying look and said obediently, “Young Master Wu Guang is the son of the City Lord of Yangpu, and behind him stands Master Zhong Tai, an advance alchemy apprentice.”

“Oh?” Yunxiao’s curiosity was aroused. “May I know which master did this Master Zhong Tai learn from?”

Zhong Tai glanced at them in disgust, as if talking to them would damage his dignity. “Why? You think you know all the Master Alchemists?” he said coldly. “Well, I don’t mind telling you. I’m learning from Master Jia Rong of the Alchemist Association!”

Chapter 88: The City of Yangpu

Bam!

Jia Rong fell to the ground under Yunxiao's startled gaze. "Young Master Yun, this is not true! He's lying!" While fuming, he stood up and jerked a finger at Zhong Tai as he snapped, "I know Jia Rong, and I know you are not his disciple!"

"Although Master Jia did not take me as his disciple personally, his disciple Shi Yuan and I are good friends. As we often discuss alchemy together, I'm considered a half-disciple of Master Jia." He studied them suspiciously and asked, "How could someone like you know Master Jia Rong?"

Wu Guang was already losing his patience. "Why waste your breath with these bumpkins, Zhong Tai?" He pointed at Yunxiao and said, "Hurry up and tell me how much you want me to give you for the herb and the girl."

Yunxiao narrowed his eyes as they flashed with a killing intent. With a cold smile, he said, "It's cheap...you can just pay me with your heads."

"What! How dare you!" Wu Guang flew into a rage. "Do you really know who I am?"

"Slap him, and that 'Master' as well!"

Pa!

Jia Rong jumped over first and threw Wu Guang to the ground with a slap, then rushed to Zhong Tai and began beating him. With his cultivation base of a warrior, beating Zhong Tai was an easy task. He hated this guy to the bones. He would not be so angry if he had only used his name to deceive others, but he should never have said that to Yunxiao. At the thought that his good opinion in Yunxiao's heart was reduced because of this, Jia Rong immediately boiled with rage.

Meanwhile, Meng Wu and Meng Bai were beating Wu Guang up. Both of them were warriors, and after they had cultivated the Murderous Air Script, they were shrouded in a faint but intense murderous aura, which made them look fierce and violent.

The shopkeeper was struck dumb. After gaping at them for a brief moment, he ran over and cried out, "Hey, you can't beat them! Stop it! Please, I beg you, stop beating them!"

He knew he would have to bear a huge responsibility now that the son of city lord and Zhong Tai were beaten up by someone in his shop. His situation would be better if the four of them were captured and put in jail, but if they fled after this, he would be completely doomed. So, the shopkeeper felt his heart ache even though it was not he who was being beaten up.

"That's enough! They will die if you keep beating them like that," Yunxiao finally called a stop. However, they did not stop immediately, but continued the beating for a while. Only then did they spit at the two poor guys and leave the shop with Yunxiao.

"Are you alright, Young Master Wu Guang?" The shopkeeper was scared out of his wits. Hurriedly, he helped them up, but was shocked to see that their faces were already swollen like pigs. He could hardly recognize them. "Which of you is Young Master Wu Guang?" he cried out in horror.

The guy on the left pointed at himself and said in a hoarse voice, "I... I am." Then, he reached a hand into his pocket and pulled out a signal flare before handing it to the shopkeeper. "Qui-quickly...send the signal! I...I...I'm going to kill them!"

While trembling, the shopkeeper took the signal flare and ran outside the shop before pulling the trigger. A plume of smoke and flare towered into the sky immediately and spread out, looking rather magnificent. But, the shopkeeper was not in the mood to appreciate such a beautiful firework. He just prayed that the people of the City Lord Mansion could arrive as soon as possible. As long as the four culprits were captured, he should be fine, or so he hoped.

Yunxiao stopped suddenly and looked up at the fireworks in the sky. "It seems to come from the medicine shop," said Jia Rong with a frown. "I smell trouble."

"Trouble?" Yunxiao smiled. He was not a troublemaker, but he was not afraid when trouble came to him.

Sure enough, before they left the city, columns of troops had already rushed over from all directions and surrounded them. Wu Guang and Zhong Tai were quick enough to wrap their swollen faces with bandages, exposing only their eyes.

The leader of the troops was a middle-aged man with a pair of sharp eyes and an imposing manner. After glancing at the four of them for a while, he said in a cold voice, "Who are you, kids? Where are you parents?"

At a glance, Yunxiao, Meng Wu, and Meng Bai all seemed teenagers who were about fifteen years old, and Jia Rong was the only one who looked older, about twenty years old. So, the man directed his questions at him. As the commander of Yangpu City Guards for many years, Ban Bingbai's judgment was naturally more precise than that of ordinary people. Although the four of them were well-dressed, that was not what concerned him. The key was that they were all warriors, and one of them was even a peak eight-stars warrior.

What did a fifteen-year-old peak eight-stars warrior mean? It told him that this group of teenagers should have a pretty strong background. And because of that, he did not rashly give up the order to capture them.

Jia Rong was angered by the question, and he said in an even colder voice, "Get out of the way!"

Wu Guang's nostrils flared. "Don't waste your breath with them, Commander Ban, capture the men, tie them up, and beat them to death! And send the girl to my room! I'm going to make her suffer!"

Ban Bingbai felt his head reel. How he wished he could slap this profligate son in the face. 'Why can't he tone his arrogance down a little in front of so many people?' But, as the commander of the City Guards, he was forced to perform his duty. With a sullen face, he said to Jia Rong, "Do you know what crime have you committed? You will have to face a serious consequence if you don't call your parents over!"

"You will have to face an even serious consequence if you don't get out of the way!" said Jia Rong disdainfully in a cold voice.

Ban Bingbai knew it was pointless to talk further, so he waved a hand. Immediately, the troops drew their sabers or spears and crowded over.

“Hold on!” Yunxiao shouted suddenly. “Are you trying to bully us with numbers?”

Wu Guang said, “Yes, we are! Why? Not satisfied? Well, I’ll beat you until you satisfied!”

Yunxiao nodded slightly. Among the guards, he saw many experts of the Origin Realm, and the commander sitting on the horse was even a Great Martial Master. He had no fear of them, because none of them could stop him if he wished to leave. But, it would not be so easy for Meng Wu and the others. “I thought you asked for our parents? Give us five minutes.”

Ban Bingbai waved again. At the gesture, all the guards stopped instantly, standing straight as spears and waiting for orders. Clearly, they were well trained.

Meanwhile, Yunxiao took out an arrow from his pocket and threw it up into the sky, which burst into eight smaller darts and shot out in all directions with plumes of thick smoke and blinding light.

“A Cloud Piercing Arrow!”

Ban Bingbai blurted out in horror, his eyeballs almost dropping out of their sockets. Beads of cold sweat began to seep out of his forehead as he studied the four youths again.

As someone who served in the army before, he naturally knew what that arrow was. It was an assembly signal of the highest order in the military. Made of steel, each such arrow contained a material called Flaming Cloud Powder, which could produce thick smoke and strong light when detonated, and would shoot in all directions with the eight darts in the arrow. So, no matter where the troops were, they could always accurately find the exact location of the assembly point.

Although Wu Guang did not know the arrow, he was struck dumb as well. But then, his eyes beamed with excitement suddenly. “Kill them all, Commander Ban! I want that arrow! It looks so much stronger than my signal flare!”

Ban Bingbai nearly fell off his horse, and his face had already turned pale green. ‘Damn it! His is the strongest signal flare in the military, and yours is just a firework, they are simply two different things! Idiot! You’ve gotten yourself into trouble now!’

He immediately concluded that the four of them were not just some common people. Hurriedly, he whispered a few words to a guard standing nearby, who received the order and ran wildly toward the City Lord Mansion.

All of a sudden, a great commotion rang out from the city gate, and the ground began to shake as well.

“Run! Run for your life!”

“Who are you? Who gave you permission to enter the city of Yangpu?”

“Run! There’s an army attacking the city!”

“Inform the City Lord and Commander Ban at once!”

The commotion in the distance startled everyone. Ban Bingbai realized what was happening when he saw the calm expressions on the faces of the four youths and the trace of a smile hanging on the corners of their mouths. His heart sunk in an instant. ‘We’re done this time! We’ve offended someone we should never have offended! After committing all sorts of mischief in Yangpu for many years, Wu Guang has finally run into a brick wall!’

In just about ten minutes, two thousand student troops, each emanating a strong murderous air, had surrounded the City Guards of Yangpu.

“Wh-who are you?” Wu Guang finally panicked and seemed to have understood something. He gave Ban Bingbai a quick push and asked in fear, “Wh-what should we do now, Commander Ban?”

Ban Bingbai swallowed hard; he was already drenched in a cold sweat. When the troops poured over, their menacing murderous air had already made his heart skip a beat, even though he was a Great Martial Master. And what frightened him was that a mighty pressure had locked down the void around him, and the murderous air had seeped straight into his bone marrow. He did not even dare to move right now.

He believed that as long as he moved, even if it were just a casual movement, he would be killed instantly!

'They have an army of two thousand warriors, and among them is even a Martial Lord! Heavens, who exactly are these four people? Could one of them be a prince? But...even a prince would not have such a frightening army!' He felt stiffed all over, with only sweat trickling down his cheeks and back.

The air became extremely quiet. Although the place was crowded with thousands of people, there was not even a single noise that could be heard.

Wu Guang was at a loss when he did not get any response from Ban Bingbai. His panic grew, and he glanced around nervously. The murderous air emanated from each of the warriors and the solemn look on their faces sent a chill down his back.

"Alright, we can start the game now," Yunxiao said. "Tell me, pighead, how do you want to play?"

As soon as Yunxiao spoke, Ban Bingbai felt the air around him loosen and the pressure vanish. However, he could still vaguely feel that he was being targeted by a divine sense. If he tried to do something, he would likely be killed in an instant.

How would Wu Guang have the courage to speak now? He had long thrown himself against the neck of his horse, not daring to even lift his head.

Ban Bingbai had no other choice but to straighten himself and swing down his horse. His imposing manner was gone, and he asked in a very cautious voice, "May I know who you are? This is Yangpu, and we are protected by the laws. You cannot bring your troops into the city without permission."

"The laws?" Meng Bai rolled his eyes and laughed. "When you have more men than us, you want to take us down by force. But, when we have more men, you suddenly recall that there are laws?"

Yunxiao sneered, "At the beginning, the few hundred of you wanted to beat the four of us, and now my two thousand men want to beat you. If we calculate by the ratios, we're still on the losing side. But never mind. Commander Ban, let's begin and not waste any more time. I'm very busy."

Chapter 89: Let's Have A Good Talk

Ban Bingbai drooped his head. How could he have the courage to fight when each of the two thousand troops around him was a warrior, and their murderous air was so strong and brutal that it could only be produced after going through countless battles of life and death? If he were to fight this army, it was no different from digging his own grave. Not to mention that there was a Martial Lord who alone could kill all his City Guards.

Just as he was at his wit's end, there was a sudden commotion outside. The City Lord had finally arrived.

The commander of the City Guards breathed a long sigh of relief. 'No matter how serious this will become, at least His Lordship himself is here to deal with it. After all, the trouble was created by his son. Luckily, I haven't offended any of these people...'

"Let me through, I'm the City Lord of Yangpu, Wu Liantian." Escorted by a few guards, a man with a big belly walked into the circle.

He had prepared to say a few words of courtesy, but when he saw it was four youths being surrounded in the center, he froze in place, for he did not know which of them was the leader and whom should he target his greetings at.

"Dad! You're finally here!"

Wu Guang fell off his horse and scrambled over to Wu Liantian, then hugged his legs and burst into tears. Now that his father had arrived, he felt everything could be solved, and he no longer had to stay in this damn place and be surrounded by these damn people. It was just too frightening!

"Dad, they bullied me!" Pointing at Yunxiao and others, he said, "Look how they have beaten me! And they even called upon so many soldiers to surround us! Dad, you have to put them in jail and beat their guts out!"

All the City Guards around them broke out in cold sweats while Zhong Tai had an incredulous look in his eyes. 'Why is this profligate son so idiotic? Can't he tell the situation he is facing right now? Heaven, how can we have a bright future if we keep following such an idiot?'

"Beat them? This will beat some senses into you!"

Wu Liantian was also rendered speechless by his son, so he quickly put on a fierce look and knocked Wu Guang on the head as he scolded, "All you know is how to create trouble everywhere! I'll teach you a lesson when we return home!"

As he had no idea who the leader was, he cupped his fist at the four of them and said, "Greetings! I'm Wu Liantian, the City Lord of Yangpu. I've done a poor job of teaching my son. I hope you can forgive him for what he had done!"

"Well, we are not unreasonable people," Yunxiao said. "But, I think it's not appropriate for us to stand here and talk. Why don't we move to some other place and have a good chat?"

Jia Rong and others stared at Yunxiao in astonishment, wondering what he was up to. They could not understand why he would want to have a chat somewhere else, when it was clear that they had the upper hand here with the student army.

Wu Liantian, on the other hand, was taken aback. He did not expect that this teenager was the leader. 'He seems quite accommodating, and since he's still a boy, he should be easy to coax with some sweets.' Face beaming with joy, he said, "Good, good! Please come with me to my mansion!"

Soon, the few of them had become the distinguished guests of the City Lord Mansion. But, Wu Liantian's heart was filled with fear and confusion because the two thousand student troops were not sent away, but had fully surrounded his mansion.

Between sips of the tea in his cup, Yunxiao smiled and said, "Friends are often made after a fight. I think that best describes the relationship between brother Wu Guang and me."

Wu Liantian said hurriedly, "Oh, I couldn't agree more! Guang'er, quickly pour some wine for our little brother here." He still had no idea about Yunxiao's identity, so he tried to find out by asking some simple questions, "Little brother, may I know your name? And what is your post in the court?"

Looking at Wu Guang, who wore a grumpy face, Yunxiao chuckled and said, "I'm just a nobody. It is just that I heard the situation at the front line is getting critical, so I've decided to bring my brothers to support them. We need to protect our home and our state!"

Wu Liantian was struck dumb, and then he almost burst out laughing. 'A sorry lot like you also want to go to the front line? Are you kidding me?' He did not know the strength of these people, and all he saw was their young faces. Still, he put on a passionate look and cried out, "Excellent! Little brother, your heroic and chivalrous spirit should be the example for all the young people out there! Guang'er, you need to learn from him!"

"Hah, I'm not really a good example to learn from," Yunxiao laughed. "I just happened to pass by your city and had a fight with brother Wu Guang. Well, I think that's what we call fate. In any case, as I can see my lord does care about the safety of our state, I have a rather presumptuous request."

'Here he comes...Let's see what he's up to,' thought Wu Liantian. "Oh? Tell me what it is. Our duty is to serve the people and the state, so don't stand on ceremony with me."

While smiling, Yunxiao said, "Oh, I won't. I believe my lord has seen that all two thousand of us came with empty hands, so I wish to borrow some provisions and fodder."

"Provisions and fodder?" The City Lord pondered a moment, then said, "Yangpu's grain and fodder reserves are at a very low level...I'm afraid we don't have extras to lend."

Yunxiao narrowed his eyes. "If that's the case, we don't mind being aided with money. We can always visit other nearby cities and see if we can purchase provisions and fodder from them."

'Now he's showing his true color...' Wu Liantian sneered in his mind, but he put on a troubled look and said, "I know I should aid you with all I have, little brother, as you are heading to the front line to defend our state. However, although Yangpu is a prosperous city, as the City Lord who cares for his people, I don't have too much in terms of personal savings. Well, I can still cut most of my expenses and donate ten thousand gold coins to you. What do you think?"

He spoke with great righteousness, and he thought ten thousand gold coins should be enough to send a boy away. But, he did not see the wry smile on Ban Bingbai's face. 'How could that be enough? Just the Cloud Piercing Arrow alone is worth tens of thousands of gold coins...His lordship has oversimplified this matter...'

Yunxiao burst into laughter, and then Jia Rong followed. They laughed so hard that it made Wu Liantian, who had the full confidence in his offer, feel uncertain suddenly.

"You're too generous, my lord!" said Yunxiao. "There are only two thousand of us, and we don't need so many gold coins. I'll just let my men take some for themselves."

He whispered a few words into Jia Rong's ears, and then the latter strode away with a cold grin on his face.

Wu Liantian suddenly panicked. "What do you mean by that, little brother?"

Yunxiao gave him a faint smile as he lifted his teacup and said, "Nothing. Come, my lord and Commander Ban, let's drink some tea. Ahh, this is such good tea!"

Meanwhile, some noises were heard from outside—the cries of men and the clanging noises of weapons. Soon the cries turned into shrieks, filling Wu Liantian's heart with fear. Hastily, he gave Ban Bingbai a look. With a wry smile, the commander shook his head as he leaned over and whispered into the City Lord's ear, "There is a Martial Lord among the men who serve this youth!"

His words exploded in Wu Liantian's head like a sudden thunderbolt, making his ears buzz!

There was a Martial Lord among the men who served this youth!

In Tianshui, all Martial Lords were either great lords, powerful generals in the military, or commanders of the State Guardians, and each of them held sway over the entire state. Even though Wu Liantian was a City Lord, he would have to bow his head when he met one of them!

And yet, an expert so mighty was just one of the men who served this youth!

Wu Liantian suddenly realized the seriousness of the problem, and he hurriedly said, "Take it easy, little brother! What you are doing now is no different from robbing!"

"Robbing?" Yunxiao's face grew dark while his eyes turned cold, flashing with killing intent. "Be careful of what you say, as you will be held responsible for that. A false accusation will get you killed!"

Wu Liantian shivered. As the noises continued to be heard from outside, he put on a long face and said, "I've told you, little brother, I don't have much personal savings. You know what, I'll get someone to prepare a hundred thousand gold coins for you."

Pa!

Yunxiao broke the table with a slap as he stood up and said angrily, "Wu Liantian, who do you think I am? I just want to find some funding for the army, and yet you take me for a robber? Well, you asked for this!"

He shouted loudly, "Somebody!"

At his voice, Chen Zhen and Han Bai, who had been waiting outside, rushed into the hall and tied both Wu Liantian and Wu Guang up with some ropes. That scared Wu Guang out of his wits and sent him screaming and crying, while Wu Liantian, utterly terrified, shouted, "Save us, Commander Ban!"

Ban Bingbai was about to move when a killing intent suddenly targeted him. "Anyone who moves without permission will be killed instantly!" Yunxiao said in a cold voice.

What shocked Ban Bingbai was that the killing intent, which made his heart skip a beat, did not come from the Martial Lord, but this young man who was only about fifteen years old! And, he had an instinctive feeling that if he moved, the young man would kill him without hesitation. 'But...he's only an eight-stars warrior! How could I have such an absurd feeling?'

Soon, the City Lord and his son were bound and hung from the ceiling. Meanwhile, Ban Bingbai watched from the side and did not dare to move.

The student troops kept running in and piled boxes of loot on the ground, which soon occupied half of the hall. In addition to a great amount of gold and silver coins were numerous rare and precious treasures, Primordial Stones and medicinal pills, mystic weapons, and all kinds of alchemy materials. Even Yunxiao was shocked by the findings.

It was not that he had never seen so many valuable things, but he could not believe that the wealth accumulated in the mansion of a small city lord was more than his family!

Han Bai was shocked as well, and he said in horror, "Look, Young Master Yun, he's only a little city lord and yet he's got so much wealth! There are at least hundreds of millions of gold coins alone! I wonder how much life-blood of common people has he sucked to accumulate so much money? If we report him, the crimes he committed should be enough to get his whole family executed!"

"Report? Why do we need to report him?" Yunxiao played dumb and said, "Lord Wu cares for his people and doesn't have too many personal savings. He is a poor man. Do any of you see anything valuable in his mansion?"

"No," Chen Zhen said quickly, "I saw nothing. Do you see anything?"

Meng Bai shook his head. "Neither do I. The treasure vault in the mansion is empty. If you don't believe me, you can go and have a look yourself."

"Oh, I believe that! I truly do!" Chen Zhen laughed joyously.

Although Wu Liantian was hung in midair and gagged, he still roared at the top of his lungs, "You can't touch those things or you will be dead meat! Those are Prince Qin Yang's resources! Your whole family will be executed if you lay a finger on them!"

"Oh, no wonder!" said Yunxiao in an enlightened tone. "So, those things belong to Qin Yang. Then, I'll not stand on ceremony with him." He lightly pointed out a finger and put away all the Primordial Stones

and alchemy materials, leaving only coins, treasures, medicinal pills, and mystic weapons. Then, he turned to Meng Wu and said, "Distribute these things to everyone as reward!"

Chapter 90: The Golden Lion Army

Meng Wu was stunned, as she had never seen so many precious items in her life. With the help of a few students, she brought all the things outside and began to distribute them.

There were a few second-tier mystic weapons, which were quickly snatched away by Chen Zhen and others. That was their privilege of being in a favorable position, so no one could say anything about that. Meanwhile, the students quickly divided up the rest of the things. Those who did not get mystic weapons or medicinal pills got a great amount of money. As a result, everyone was very excited.

Meng Bai had taken two second-tier mystic weapons; he kept the saber with a tiger-head pommel himself and gave the green sword to his sister. Chen Zhen and Han Bai had also gotten themselves a second-tier mystic weapon each.

Pointing at the father and son, Han Bai asked, "What should we do to them, Young Master Yun?" He made a gesture and said coldly, "Why don't we just kill them? After all, they are Qin Yang's men."

'Who are these people? Why aren't they afraid of His Highness?' Wu Liantian was really scared right now. In a voice thick with fear, he pleaded, "Don't kill me, little brother! Please don't kill me! You can take away everything, but spare our lives!"

"Fine, release them," Yunxiao ordered. In his opinion, it was not right to kill them after he had taken away the wealth they had spent so many years to accumulate. With a smile on his face, he walked before Wu Liantian and patted him on the shoulder, "Remember to work harder. I'll visit you again in a few more years."

Wu Liantian shivered with rage, but he did not dare to say a word. It was only until Yunxiao and others had left that his eyes flared and his face twisted into a frightening look. "Write a letter to His Highness at once! I want these people dead, dead, dead! Oh, heaven, they have taken away all my treasures and money!"

He sunk on his buttocks and burst into tears, looking as if he had lost his soul. Among the robbed wealth was not only the annual tribute to be provided to Qin Yang immediately, but also the money he had accumulated through years of plundering people's life-blood. He was truly broke now. And in the end, he still did not know who those young men were.

Meanwhile, a servant trotted over with an urgent look and whispered a few words into Wu Liantian's ear. When he had heard what the servant told him, Wu Liantian's eyes lit up, and then he jumped to his feet suddenly, grabbed the servant's arms, and shook him hard a few times while saying in great joy, "Are you sure? Haha! This is great! Even heaven is on my side! Now quickly report what happened here to General Cang! GO NOW!"

The servant hurried out as Wu Liantian burst into laughter. "Yes! My savior is here! Let's see what will happen to them!"

Behind him, Wu Guang and Ban Bingbai looked puzzled.

...

Yunxiao took the student army on a tour of the city. Everyone was happy, as the rewards they had just received were even greater than the ones promised by Qin Yue. Like a group of rich people, they bought whatever they wanted before leaving the city.

"We'll wait here. Continue cultivating the Murderous Air Script!"

After giving out the order, Yunxiao arched his eyebrows suddenly and looked toward Yangpu. He saw clouds of dust rising into the sky and heard the faint beating of hooves and feet on the ground. It seemed that a great army of horses and troops were coming their way.

Chen Zhen said in shock, "We should never have spared that old codger! Look, he has mobilized an army to attack us so quickly!"

Yunxiao cried out in a deep voice, "Everyone, get ready for battle!" Standing at the forefront, he stared coldly at the dust cloud that veiled the sky.

“Something is not right,” said Han Bai while frowning. “Yangpu has only a troop of city guards which is less than five thousand men, and they don’t have so many horses. Who is this army...”

Countless horses galloped out of the city gate, spreading into a long straight line. Before very long, there were already thousands of horses gathered in front of the gate. The men on them all looked fierce, and each held in hand a standard military spear. The troops continued to pour out of the gate, and the city rang with loud rumbles, as if there were an endless stream of men in it.

Han Bai’s face fell. “What should we do, Young Master Yun?” he said in horror. “This is definitely a regular army with at least hundreds of thousands of soldiers!”

The army spread out in columns and crowded the land like countless ants. In just the blink of an eye, it had surrounded Yunxiao and the student army. It was only then that a banner erected on a chariot became visible, on which was depicted a large golden lion with bared teeth and claws.

“The Golden Lion Army!” Chen Zhen blurted out in horror. “I thought they’ve lost Whitehead Town! Why do they still have so many horses and troops?”

Han Bai’s face grew dark. “Not only do they still have so many horses and troops, but each one of them is beaming with energy and full of spirits,” he sneered. “Look at their horses and equipment, do they look like an army that had just been defeated?”

Chen Zhen was shocked. “Do you mean they retreated without putting up a fight?”

Meanwhile, a general, who sat in a tiger-skinned chair on the foremost chariot with a wine vessel in his hand, said in a lazy voice, “Who are you? How dare you come to Yangpu to rob?” The chariot was luxuriously decorated, and there were two sexily dressed girls pouring wine and massaging the general’s back.

Yunxiao answered mockingly, “Oh, we’ve just retreated from the front line after being defeated, and we’ve purposely come to Yangpu to show our might.”

Bam!

The vessel in the general's hand broke into pieces and the wine within spilled everywhere while the girls' faces turned pale with fright as they covered their mouths with hands. A vast murderous air spread out of the general as he slowly stood up from his seat and said, with a faint awe-inspiring air emanating from him, "You are looking for death!"

His menacing air and the battle array of the army of hundreds of thousands of troops surrounded and pressed against the two thousand student troops like mountains. As they were all students, the student army had never seen such a battle array, so their hearts were already pounding fast and they felt something weighing down on their chests, making them hard to breathe.

Meanwhile, Ji Meng released his aura of a Martial Lord, which towered mightily into the sky in the face of the enemy, knocking back the threatening air that had struck fear into the students' minds as he stared coldly at the chariot.

"A Martial Lord!" The general's face fell and his pupils constricted. "Who are you?" he shouted once again.

Ji Meng sneered. "I trust you've been in good health since we last met, Cang Liqun. Were you so busy that you can't recognize me anymore?"

While frowning, Cang Liqun thought for a while, then his eyes lit up suddenly and he said in shock, "You are Ji Meng? You've become a Martial Lord too?" He was truly stunned. He remembered when he returned to the capital about a year ago, Ji Meng was just a sixth-tier Great Martial Master. But now, he had stepped into the Four Quadrants Realm and become a Martial Lord, just like him.

Ji Meng nodded. "By luck...What is this, General Cang?"

Cang Liqun gave a cold snort and said reproachfully, "Since we both are serving Prince Qin Yang, why did you rob Yangpu and make things difficult for Wu Liantian?"

With a faint smile, Ji Meng walked behind Yunxiao and stood there, "I'm no longer serving Prince Qin Yang. I've vowed to follow Young Master Yun with all my heart. I've no business in whatever Prince Qin Yang is up to."

“What!” Cang Liqun was shocked. He had thought the leader of these people must be Ji Meng, but it turned out to be a teenager who was merely a warrior. His face grew dark instantly. “If that is the case, there’s no need for me to be courteous with you anymore. Who is this boy?”

Yunxiao took out a token and shouted aloud, “I’m the chief logistics officer of the Eastern Expedition Army, and my purpose of visiting Yangpu is to solve the shortage of provisions and fodder. By donating all his personal wealth to us, the City Lord of Yangpu, Wu Liantian, has rendered a meritorious service! When I return to the capital, I’ll certainly report his deeds to His Majesty and request a handsome reward for him!”

Startled, Cang Liqun squinted at the token and found that it was indeed genuine. Seeing that, he was somewhat surprised. Although he had received reports a few days ago that the capital had sent the Central Army to reinforce Kunjin, he did not expect he would come across the army so soon. A strange look gradually appeared in his eyes as he said, “The Eastern Expedition Army? Why are there so few of you?”

Yunxiao sneered. “The march of the army is absolutely confidential. We are ordered to gather provisions and fodder.”

Just as Cang Liqun’s eyes flickered with suspicion, a man suddenly appeared on the chariot and whispered into his ear. Yunxiao’s pupils constricted at the sight of the man, who was looking back at him with a venomous and hideous smile—it was Li Yi!

When he had finished listening, Cang Liqun’s eyes sparked with killing intent. “You said you were ordered to gather provisions and fodder? You’re lying! You’ve abused your assignment for private gain and robbed a loyal official of the state! You shall be put to death for your crime! Somebody, take all these people down and kill those who refuse to surrender!”

“Yes, my lord!”

The cries of hundreds of thousands of soldiers shook the wilderness and echoed as far as three miles away while causing the faces of the two thousand student troops to change dramatically!

Yunxiao could clearly see Li Yi's cold face and the slight movements of his lips, which read 'Let's see how you are going to face your death this time!'. He cocked his head proudly and put on a contemptuous smile as he moved his lips while saying, 'It's been a while, Old Eight. I bet it doesn't feel good to lose an arm, right? Haha!'

Li Yi's face flickered. No matter it was 'Old Eight' or 'lose an arm', they both stabbed into his heart like a sharp blade. His neck flushed instantly, his body shivered all over, and the murderous look in his eyes was so strong that it was more than enough to melt a man directly.

"Attack!"

Hundreds of thousands of soldiers shouted in unison. The few thousand cavalry at the forefront charged out first, galloping across the field with their spears pointing forward.

Yunxiao's face darkened as he ordered, "Spread out and kill the enemy one at a time!"

The order immediately calmed the two thousand students, and they spread out quickly. In the face of a charging cavalry, it would mean death if they still gathered together. Their advantage was that their individual fighting ability was far better than the enemy's, and as long as they did not let the cavalry's advantage come into play, they could deal with them easily.

The student army scattered at the charge of thousands of cavalry. Looking from the sky, it was like a cockroach rushing into a colony of ants. However, the ants were all warriors, but what formed the cockroach were just ordinary soldiers. When calmed down, all the warriors exuded a towering murderous air as they began to slaughter the foes.

"Ahh!"

Screams and shrieks rang out without end from all over the chaotic field as students of Jialan Academy ran between the horses, killing the foes as quickly as possible. Jets of blood shot in all directions while men fell from horses after they were killed. In just less than ten minutes, the entire cavalry was slain!