

## **A Father 41**

### Chapter 41: To Kill Them All Is the Best Protection

The snowflakes fluttered in the wind, the night deep and thick, almost too dense to dissipate.

In the alley, it was even three degrees darker.

An old man led a boy with a Nezha-style topknot through the snow, standing silently and watching the brightly lit Xu Ji's Wood Carving Shop.

"Master, the Spirit Infant Sect seems to have set their sights on the Spiritual Child you're fond of..."

"Should we make a move? The Spirit Infant Sect has colluded with the government of Fei Lei City, and all the masters in the shop have been dispatched elsewhere. The shop has fallen into vulnerability, and likely they'll act tonight."

Lu Chi furrowed his brows, small in stature but mature beyond his years.

The old man shook his head, "Let's wait and see for now; if I can avoid acting, I will. I also want to see... who exactly is in Fei Lei City... preparing to worship the Mysterious Temple, and who... has become a lapdog of the Temple God..."

"What if something happens to that Spiritual Child? Master... didn't you say that child is a rare Supreme Spiritual Child?"

Lu Chi asked, tilting his head in confusion.

The old man smiled and glanced at Lu Chi's large head, "When push comes to shove, you'll step in. How about giving you a chance to play the hero saving the beauty? How does that sound?"

Lu Chi rolled his eyes grandly, "A two-year-old girl is also considered a beauty? At two, what's there to see!"

The old man stroked his beard and smiled, his eyes profound, "What I didn't expect was that the twenty-something-year-old Spiritual Child... was the father of the Supreme Spiritual Child. With such pure and flawless Divinity, it's normal for him to have a Supreme Spiritual Child."

"Someone's coming."

The smile slipped off the old man's face, and gripping Lu Chi's hand, they seemed to completely blend into the darkness.

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A gust of wind fiercely tore through the cold air, shredding the falling snowflakes to pieces.

Several ghostly figures stood on top of a roof, braving the whistling cold wind, accompanied by uncanny laughter resembling the wails of ghosts.

These figures were cloaked in black robes, wearing masks of children with various expressions - crying faces, smiling faces, ugly faces, angry faces, and so on...

A total of five figures, some holding broadswords, others gripping spears, wielding hammers, and so forth.

The swirling aura of blood seemed almost enough to melt away the falling snow.

"Xu You was called back to the Inner City, and Chen Dabao, the only Blood Exchange Warrior in Xu's Wood Carving Shop, was imprisoned. Tonight is our only chance; by tomorrow Xu You will return, and Chen Dabao can no longer be kept in confinement..."

"To take away that Spiritual Child, success is the only option tonight."

"Also, using me as bait, you all better be careful, I must be rescued quickly!"

As the words fell.

The figures cried, laughed, and roared uncannily, exhibiting their martial arts, their bodies lightly leaping and somersaulting over the high walls of Xu Ji's Courtyard.

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The yard was utterly silent.

A lamp burned inside the house, its flickering flame casting the silhouettes of two figures on the paper window.

Inside the house.

Zhang Ya's face was slightly pale, and she cradled the sleeping Xi Xi. A woman's intuition, along with her husband Li Che's unusual behavior, made her realize that tonight... might be dangerous.

She looked into the distance, where a lifelike wood carving sat upright on a chair. The wood carving resembled her husband Li Che by about seventy or eighty percent, but it was unfinished and rough around the edges.

Yet, through the flicker of candlelight, it cast a shadow nearly identical to Li Che on the paper window.

It gave the cozy illusion that both husband and wife were inside the house.

At first... Zhang Ya didn't understand why Li Che had to do this. Why couldn't he just stay inside and protect them? That would have been perfectly fine, wouldn't it?

But when Li Che took out a thin wooden board, sat in the chair, and slowly carved a Cute Bull Mask with his knife, covering his face with it.

Zhang Ya was completely stunned.

She covered her mouth, staring at her utterly unrecognizable husband, her eyes brimming with unparalleled astonishment.

"Bull... Bull Demon?"

Zhang Ya asked softly.

The Bull Demon was a name known to everyone in Fei Lei City; who hadn't heard of him?

Known for specifically hunting the followers of the Spirit Infant Sect that targeted children, even though his warrant hung on the announcement boards year-round.

Yet he had become a hero in the hearts of the people of Fei Lei City!

And now, that hero... was her husband, Zhang Ya's husband?

"No... that's not right, husband. The Bull Demon's build is far too different from yours."

Zhang Ya shook her head, softly speaking.

This was the first time Li Che revealed his identity, letting his wife know who he was, and she... would be the first to learn of his identity as the Bull Demon.

Without further words, Li Che silently activated the Dragon Elephant Vajra Dao Fruit.

In an instant, countless muscles coiled like fearsome dragons, twisting and growing rapidly, stretching him taller until he loomed like a small mountain, his intimidating and domineering presence filling the room.

In Zhang Ya's stunned gaze, Li Che immediately reverted to his normal size.

"Wife, I won't let anyone harm you or our daughter, so... you must also trust your husband," Li Che said, caressing Zhang Ya's face and tucking her stray hair behind her ear, speaking softly.

Zhang Ya came out of her stupor, overcome with emotions, her mind buzzing. Her husband... could grow so large!

Was this what a Quenched-Bone Warrior could do?

But she had never heard of a Quenched-Bone Warrior who could change their size.

The obedient Zhang Ya didn't ask further, understanding that this must be her husband's secret. She didn't need to know too much, just to trust and believe.

After all, there should be some secrets kept within a marriage.

As for Li Che's identity as the Bull Demon, as for those who died at the hands of the Bull Demon...

Zhang Ya didn't care; all she cared about was her own husband.

However, Zhang Ya felt somewhat perplexed; it seemed like she had no more secrets left to hide from her husband.

"Remember the way I taught you to activate the Wood Raven..."

Li Che ruffled Zhang Ya's hair and kissed her forehead, reminding her.

Zhang Ya nodded solemnly.

Li Che then glanced at the sleeping Xi Xi.

With his wife and child close, all he wished for was to live a peaceful life with his family in this world...

But if anyone dared to touch his daughter, he would...

Kill them!

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Li Che activated the "Slumbering Dragon Elephant" ability of the Dragon Elephant Dao Fruit, completely concealing his vitality, essence, qi, and spirit, as if they were erased from the world.

The effect of Breath Concealment was excellent.

He vanished into the dark alleys surrounding Xu's Courtyard, donned a wide-brimmed hat, covered his face with a Cute Bull Mask, and on the night of swirling snow, turned into the Bull Demon.

"Zhao Chuanxiong, openly executing his ploys during the day, posturing ostentatiously, exceedingly arrogant... this doesn't quite fit with the pathetic style he's hidden in for a year."

Li Che contemplated, but his heart was already somewhat clear.

Zhao Chuanxiong knew that the Bull Demon was looking for him, yet he still brazenly made such a move, as if he was... fishing.

"Zhao Chuanxiong as bait, to fish for me?"

"The handiwork of the Spirit Infant Sect?"

"Tonight's overt plot, is a scheme that kills two birds with one stone... aiming to capture Xi Xi and planning to eliminate the Bull Demon..."

The alley was quiet.

After a long while, there was a soft exhale, brimming with a chilling murderous intent.

"Heh."

"How greedy."

Li Che looked up at the darkened sky, his eyes bright and piercing.

"No matter what conspiracies and tricks you have..."

"I want to protect my wife and child..."

"Killing you all, that is the best protection."

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The night was dark as pitch, fire was born of ghosts, the cold brought the frosty calls of geese!

The temperatures tonight rose slightly, the snow from the heavens turned into rain, trickling down endlessly in the dark...

Every raindrop was piercingly cold to the bone.

Zhao Chuanxiong, with a long knife at his waist, his wanton and jet-black hair hanging loose, wore a mask of a smiling child.

His toes touched upon the thick snow on the ground, shattering the rain and snow falling from the firmament, floating over like a specter.

He landed outside the courtyard wall of Fang Che's small yard.

Having visited Li Che before, he... easily found the yard once again.

Underneath the child mask, Zhao Chuanxiong's eyes bore little emotion, gazing indifferently at the brightly lit house inside, watching the reflection of two figures cast upon the paper window.

"What a cozy family..."

"Pity, they birthed a Spirit Child."

"Talent is a blessing, and also a... disaster."

Zhao Chuanxiong drew his gleaming long knife, the blade quivering with a tremble, emitting a long wail.

The world was eerily silent.

Inside Xu's Wood Carving Shop... there was no movement at all.

Although the old masters had been advised and asked for help by Xu You, ultimately, for the sake of their self-preservation, they still did not take action.

Even though they knew that someone would attack Li Che's courtyard tonight and try to take away Xi Xi.

Zhao Chuanxiong grasped his knife with one hand, scanning the surrounding area. With the snow and rain intermingling, there was simply no one stopping him.

Underneath the mask, his face formed a cold smile: "Human nature..."

"In this world, those who dare to be heroes... are, after all, few in number."

"Except for you!"

Boom!!!

Atop Zhao Chuanxiong's knife-edge, a crimson vitality resembling flowing fire suddenly erupted, fiercely slashing behind him.

The bloody saber light shattered the swirling wind and snow, the split air currents cascading down from both sides!

"Bull Demon!!!!!!!"

A fearful yet explosive roar came from the depths of Zhao Chuanxiong's throat!

Behind him, a hulking figure appeared like a ghost!

Cloaked in black, underneath the wide-brimmed hat, the Cute Cow Mask was like a Soul-Hooking Messenger from hell, its pair of cold, murderous eyes fixed on him.

Without a word of nonsense or idle talk.

The Bull Demon's palm, large as a fan, rose up, his fingers like hooks, violently clenching.

Below the skin, every pore burst forth with boiling vitality, intertwining like blood pythons around the hefty arm!

White Tiger Turbulent Wind!

A punch!

From above downward!

A lofty strike!

With a thunderous impact, it crashed down!

The light from Zhao Chuanxiong's backward slash was instantly shattered by the brute and domineering force!

The punch's power was far from exhausted, its residual force continuing to discharge!

Zhao Chuanxiong countered with his long knife, yet the fine iron blade instantly bent under the blow!

Fist force, unfamiliar as if carrying a tiger's roar, pierced through the blade, remorselessly striking his chest with crushing force.

To shatter his chest...

Zhao Chuanxiong's mask of the male child burst apart at once, revealing his face contorted with terror, his eyeballs nearly popping out!

His legs knelt heavily on the ground, the green bricks beneath shattered, the snow above them exploding upwards in a tall curtain.

Crisp and clear, whether the sound of bones cracking or snow falling, the echo was unceasing.

"Blood Exchange?!"

"Indeed..."

"Being used as bait... is to be eaten, after all..."