

## **A Father 44**

Chapter 44: Breath Concealment, Hidden Weapons, Poison Tempering, What Kind of Hero Are You?

The rain plummeting from the high sky became torrential, turning into a roaring deluge like the thunderstorms of midsummer in the midst of winter!

The night grew ever deeper.

Raindrops struck the bamboo hats, splashing up hazy mists of water, making the powerful blood and qi of the confronting martial artists seem slightly chilled.

Li Che's eyes were fierce and ruthless, as if the savagery accumulated over two lifetimes was fully ignited at this moment.

He tilted his head back, looking up at the dark sky, as transparent raindrops fell and misted upon the Cute Bull Mask, blurring his vision.

The environment was harsh, but... for Li Che, it was the perfect opportunity provided by heaven and earth.

The cold rainwater was most likely to erode vigor.

The pitch-dark night was most suitable for concealing one's form.

Combined, it was the ideal time to conceal one's breath and strike from the shadows.

"Attack!"

In the rainy night, three masked Blood Exchange Experts from the Spirit Infant Sect roared and moved in an instant!

The exploding blood and qi sent shock waves roaring!

Three blood-colored figures burst through the rain, kicking up ghostly white water mists and taking heavy steps to encircle their target, fast as three bolts of lightning, rushing at the imposing Bull Demon!

Nine muscles on the Bull Demon's back tremored, unleashing an overwhelming force as he took a forceful step back, the sheer vigour blasting a ten-foot-high wall of transparent water from the ground!

His bulging back slammed fiercely into the brick wall of the alley behind him!

The wall collapsed instantly, with violent dust rolling up, mixing with the rain into an obscure chaos.

Upon their swift arrival, the attackers instantly lost sight of their target.

The eyes of the three experts from the Spirit Infant Sect narrowed behind their masks, exchanging glances... In their perception, they could no longer sense the blood and qi of the Bull Demon!

"Gone?"

"Impossible... a Blood Exchange Warrior's blood and qi are so strong, like a blazing fire in the night, how could it just vanish?"

"Find him!"

As Blood Exchange Warriors with rich combat experience, they immediately decided to act simultaneously.

The three formerly unified figures shot apart, leaping over the high walls to seek the Bull Demon with a broader view.

Such a massive frame couldn't possibly be hidden, even on a rainy night!

However, upon reaching the top of the walls, their focused search still failed to locate the Bull Demon...

The colossal figure of the Bull Demon, as if it had dissolved into the rain, had evaporated from the human world!

"Dammit, he's so tricky!"

"No trace?!"

Formidable blood and qi swept all around, pushing back the rain and pressing down the dust, but still without a single trace, leaving only shattered bricks and stones on the ground.

"Where the hell... did he go?"

...

...

Guo Zhan's eyesight was excellent; even the torrential rain of the night couldn't impair his vision, and he managed to catch the sight of countless bricks shattering and dust rising when the high wall was broken.

A figure like a specter, silent and stealthy, darted out.

In the blink of an eye, the boisterous Blood Exchange level blood and qi were all drawn back into the body!

From explosive to restrained, the transformation happened in the span of a single breath!

What kind of bizarre technique was this?

A martial artist cannot possibly have such a method, even with the most superior breath-concealing martial arts, it is impossible to achieve such a degree of control!

Guo Zhan's scalp tingled slightly, his suspicions and uncertainties surged, his heart thudded, pounding in his ears, even drowning out the sound of the heavy rain lashing the human world.

"He's come for me!"

"His target... is me!"

Guo Zhan narrowed his eyes but did not feel afraid.

It was understandable...

A divine marksman lurking in the shadows posed a grave threat to any martial artist, making it impossible to fight with peace of mind.

So, in combat, the first to be killed is the marksman, a common sense in battles!

"But... how dare you?"

Guo Zhan sneered inwardly, as blood surged into his eyes, activating a pupil skill martial technique. His eyes were like an eagle's, and even in the torrential downpour, everything was as clear as day, captured in full view!

He saw the Bull Demon rapidly advancing along the wall in the rainy night, controlling his power, barely causing a splash in the water.

"There!"

Guo Zhan let out a fierce shriek!

The tranquility of the rainy night was instantly shattered, and in the distance, three Blood Exchange experts from the Spirit Infant Sect immediately reacted and turned their heads to look over.

Guo Zhan's eyes were brimming with killing intent, since Si Mubai had tasked him with killing the Bull Demon, he naturally exerted all his efforts!

His fingers hooked like talons, guiding the Fine Iron Feather Arrow that he was holding to pivot in an instant. The Fine Iron Great Bow creaked as he pulled, drawing it to a full crescent. The bowstring vibrated, and in a flash, the arrow burst out like a comet!

Boom!

The twang of the bowstring releasing was like thunder from a clear sky!

Yet the arrow shot forth without a sound!

The air itself rippled subtly, silently slicing through the cold droplets of water falling from on high!

Even the trajectory of the arrow was not the slightest bit deviated by the resistance of the rain!

The archery displayed by this arrow was incredibly sophisticated, both timing and angle were nigh on perfect!

Li Che, impassive, looked up, his eyes under the broad hat cold and emotionless.

This arrow could be called perfect...

But, it was not perfect.

As Li Che ran, his sleeves billowed, flinging his arms out, and suddenly, spikes from his Sleeve Crossbow accompanied by a "buzz" of splitting air, were successively shot out! f

Sleeve Crossbow!

Fling shot!

The wooden arrows from his Sleeve Crossbow, fired while running, deflected the exquisitely shot arrow from the Blood Exchange Perfected Warrior, causing its path to divert!

The wooden arrows exploded, shattering into a shower of splinters.

But Li Che buried his head and charged forward, not caring for the incoming arrows that hit the high wall, blasting huge holes like a bombardment!

Having reached level 3 in the Immortal Artisan's Dao Fruit, Li Che's grasp and control of the Sleeve Crossbow had reached an extremely profound level.

If one were to categorize it by proficiency in martial techniques, it would belong to the Master level, just one step away from the realm of Transformation!

"Crossbow Arrow?"

In the distance, standing atop a rooftop, Guo Zhan who had the Bull Demon's position tightly locked, had a momentary flicker in his gaze.

"Crossbow Arrows... That stuff has none of the soul of archery!"

As a divine marksman, Guo Zhan had dedicated nearly three decades to the meticulous practice of archery, deeply fascinated by the bow. Compared to the soulless crossbow arrows, he held a certain disdain.

His fingers hooked like claws as he reached into the quiver at his waist and drew out three feathered arrows, lifting his chin as rainwater trickled down from it.

He drew the bow to a full crescent—three arrows released in quick succession!

This time, they weren't silent; the three arrows cut through the air, shattering the raindrops and pulling along a drawn-out whistling sound.

However, under the shadow of the dark high wall, the Bull Demon simply kept swinging his sleeve crossbow without expression, launching one wooden crossbow arrow after another with a whistling sound.

Bang, bang, bang!

The three arrows hit nothing but air!

How was this possible?

His archery, which he prided himself on, was being suppressed by crossbow arrows!

Guo Zhan's eyes suddenly narrowed. Unnoticed by him, during the exchange of shots, the Bull Demon had already closed in on him, to a mere ten zhang away.

Ten zhang... neither far nor near, but for a Blood Exchange Warrior, a full burst of power could close the distance quickly. For an archer with a frail body, having the enemy within ten zhang was extremely dangerous!

Bang!

He stomped down hard, and the ripples of his Blood Exchange Perfection spread out as he began to leap from rooftop to rooftop, continuing to shoot arrows while leaping!

But soon...

He was alarmed to find that when he reached for his quiver, it was empty!

His bow... had no more arrows!

The Bull Demon evidently realized this too, as his speed abruptly increased. His robust vital energy, unmasked, erupted with a roar!

As he exploded with power to the extreme, he flicked his sleeve and sent a series of crossbow arrows flying in rapid succession!

Igniting a puffing dance of raindrops!

Guo Zhan clenched his teeth, a cold light flickering in his eyes. No longer retreating, he remembered he was not just an archer but also a Blood Exchange Perfected Warrior!

Although his close combat skills were not as good as other Blood Exchange Perfected Warriors.

He drew a shining long knife from his waist, the vital energy climbing upon it as he charged, not retreating but advancing towards the Bull Demon!

But as long as they restrained the Bull Demon, three Blood Exchange Warriors from the Spirit Infant Sect would converge to strike!

Together, the four of them would fight!

The Bull Demon... would certainly die!

Li Che watched Guo Zhan, who was rushing back against the tide...

It seemed hardly unexpected.

He didn't activate the Dao Fruit of the Dragon Elephant Vajra; instead, inside his chest, the Dao Fruit of the Immortal Artisan throbbed and hummed as if invisible fingers had suddenly clenched it hard!

He stomped hard, shattering the floor tiles, causing countless puddles to splash forward, forming an umbrella-like curtain of rain!

There were mechanisms emerging in both of Li Che's hands!

In his left hand, the Guanyin Blood Lotus!

In his right... the Wood Raven!

Li Che abruptly twisted the mechanism where the Wood Raven's eyes were, causing the flint within to strike sparks furiously, which then ignited the fuse inside!

The Wood Raven seemed to light up its eyes instantly, with golden light and fire sparking within the carved pupils!

In a moment, a powerful propulsion force burst forth.

The sound rupture tore through heaven and earth, resembling the roar of a rocket launch...

"Beep"

The Wood Raven, like a blundering bird charging with its spines, struck Guo Zhan with the ultimate speed as he charged back.

Guo Zhan was extremely alert, yet he had never seen such a wooden bird before.

The speed was so fast, there was no avoiding it!

The reflexes of a Blood Exchange Warrior allowed him to draw his knife in a swift counterattack!

At the moment of slashing the Wood Raven...

He was suddenly overwhelmed by a sense of imminent danger!

Just as the wooden bird shattered in an instant, a terrifying explosive force combined with the impact seemed to have been accumulating for a long time, erupting suddenly like a hidden piece of art!

It enveloped him in an instant!

"Boom!!!"

Fireworks blazed, gunpowder smoke billowed, and the shockwave that ripped through the rain spread ripple-like, ravaging all around...

In the distance, three charging Blood Exchange Experts from the Spirit Infant Sect stopped dead in their tracks.

Li Che stood his ground, with the Mechanical Guanyin Blood Lotus in his left hand, calmly watching the scene unfold exactly as expected...

Beneath the Cute Bull Mask covering his face, his eyes shone brightly.

"Playing with arrows..."

"Where's the fun in that compared to blowing things up?"

But...

It wasn't enough.

His body swayed.

Instantly cutting through the wind and rain, he charged towards Guo Zhan, who had been blasted to a pulp, only half alive and roaring in anger.

With a fierce motion, he flung the Guanyin Blood Lotus from his left hand.

The Guanyin Blood Lotus exploded in midair, spinning at high speed, and countless poison-tempered wooden needles, fine as cow hair, melded into the torrential rain, pouring down on Guo Zhan whose skin was torn open and defenses greatly reduced!

Guo Zhan, drenched in blood and slightly dazed from the explosion, surging with vital energy, swung his long knife, shattering countless wooden needles!

However, inevitably, a few slipped through and stuck into the ragged flesh of his skin.

Instantly...

A numbing sensation rushed through his bloodstream, spreading throughout his body!

"Breath-concealing hidden weapons... and they're even poisoned!"

"You're a vicious Bull Demon!"

"And yet... you dare call yourself a hero?!"

Guo Zhan's entire body went cold.

Between heaven and earth, a silver thread was pulled taut, wrapping around Guo Zhan's neck, as the hulking figure of the Bull Demon was already standing behind the poisoned Guo Zhan.

"I am a demon who seeks only to revel, never a hero."

Li Che spoke calmly.

The next moment, he yanked hard with both hands!

The Thousand Spider Threads suddenly tightened!

Behind him...

A massive head soared into the sky, bringing with it a geyser of blood shooting up to ten feet high!