

M. Slaying 49

Chapter 49: The Horrifying Incident in Kaoshan City

The early morning sky overhead Kaoshan City was still a misty gray. Chu Liang and Yun Chaoxian set off very early in the morning, and before the sun had risen, they arrived outside a vast residence on the outskirts of the city.

The high walls of the residence were covered with barbed wire, appearing much like thistles and thorns. From the outside, only the corner of an overhanging eave^[1] was visible.

The area was quiet, and the entrance gate of the residence was shut tight.

"The Heavenly Sound Wave's echo is coming from inside this residence. Let's rush in and kill him while he's unprepared," Yun Chaoxian urged impatiently.

"Wait," Chu Liang said.

He grabbed the halberd on Yun Chaoxian's back, forcing him to stop in his tracks.

"Huh?" Yun Chaoxian blanked out for a moment. "Brother Chu, why are you grabbing my halberd?"

"..." Chu Liang fell silent. He took a deep breath and explained, "It's too quiet. Something doesn't feel right."

"Isn't it normal for it to be quieter at this time?" Yun Chaoxian asked puzzledly.

Chu Liang shook his head. "I just used my divine sense to scan the entire front courtyard of the residence. It's completely empty; there's nothing at all. It's really strange."

His divine sense could only extend far enough to scan the front courtyard. He found that it wasn't just empty of people; there wasn't a single insect or bird around. Chu Liang found this extremely odd.

"So, what should we do?" Yun Chaoxian asked.

He was confused, but at least, he understood what Chu Liang was saying.

"Let's just watch for a moment first."

Chu Liang took Yun Chaoxian with him and hid in a street beside the residence. They crouched down and observed the residence.

After just a short while, hurried footsteps filled the quiet street like a wind blade slicing through the air with a piercing sound.

Chu Liang and Yun Chaoxian turned to look. They saw a group of black-robed constables with sabers rushing over speedily from the end of the street.

The constables of Kaoshan City seemed to be second-realm martial artists. Their leader was a third-realm martial artist and was considered an expert in the city.

The group of constables charged over. Two of them immediately kicked open the entrance gate of the residence, while several others flew over the residence's walls, getting inside the residence from various points of entry.

The moment someone stepped into the front courtyard, they felt a wave of demonic energy ripple outward.

Whoosh

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The plants in the front courtyard suddenly stretched and transformed into long vines. They wrapped around the government officials who had just entered and swung them about wildly in midair.

Those with low cultivation levels suffered miserably for a while. Fortunately, more constables entered soon after to provide support, swiftly cutting down the vines.

"As expected, there's something strange about this place," Chu Liang, who was using his divine sense to investigate from outside, whispered.

These plants were not demonic creatures; someone had used a demonic technique to enchant them, making them similar to an enchanted formation. The plants had been set so that they would be triggered by intruders and attack them.

Right after that, the officials rushed into the back courtyard. They were instantly overwhelmed by a blood-stained aura!

The ground was littered with corpses, around a dozen or so. They were all in terrible states; it had been a total bloodbath.

"Had we rushed in rashly earlier and gotten slightly delayed by the enchanted formation in the front courtyard, the officials who were rushing over would have spotted us at the scene of the massacre," Chu Liang analyzed, finally figuring out the purpose of this setup. "The demon would have been able to escape and even shift the blame to us."

Of course, these officials were incapable of stopping Chu Liang and Yun Chaoxian from leaving, but being discovered at the scene of the crime could have made things very troublesome for the two of them.

For example, if they were to get caught, they might be unable to convince the officials that they were innocent and end up being detained for some time before the investigation was done and the truth revealed. On the other hand, if they were to leave forcefully after getting spotted, then it would only be a matter of time before their sects were tracked down. The imperial court would then pressure the Great Astral Sect and Mount Shu Sects into giving them up. After all, the Divine Nine and Terrestrial Ten could not possibly allow their disciples to flout the law.

Regardless, that demon divine envoy would have easily made it out of the city by the time Chu Liang and Yun Chaoxian clarified the situation.

"How cunning!" Yun Chaoxian voiced angrily when he understood what had happened. "Brother Chu, if it wasn't for your quick thinking, I might have fallen into his trap."

Hearing that, Chu Liang could only smile and reply, "That's why it's always good to stay composed when faced with such situations."

"But..." Yun Chaoxian felt puzzled again. "It seems like this setup was specifically prepared for us...?"

"It probably was," Chu Liang agreed. "That demon divine envoy must have already gotten news about what happened at Hidden Forest Mountain. You managed to chase him all the way to Hidden Forest Mountain, so it's no surprise that he guessed you used a divine skill to leave a tracker on him. It's very unlikely the same method would work twice on such a cunning opponent."

"Eh?" Yun Chaoxian finally realized what had happened. "So, my Heavenly Sound Wave was dispelled? That's just great. We won't be able to catch him now."

"No matter. Let's head back first," Chu Liang said and turned around.

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An official notice was issued shortly after the two men returned to the inn.

A heinous massacre occurred in the city last night. A family of seventeen was murdered, and the perpetrator is on the run.

The victims were a family of medicine merchants in the city. Some rare and valuable medicinal ingredients are missing from their inventory, with the most valuable being a Nethersea Golden Lotus.

The preliminary investigation indicated that the motive was robbery. The authorities' first response to discovering the incident was to place the city on lockdown. They also offered a large reward for information that could lead them to the perpetrator and the recovery of the Nethersea Golden Lotus.

Kaoshan City was adjacent to South Bastion Mountain, where many cultivators risked their lives as herb gatherers in search of the treasures of nature. Any valuable herbs they found were then sold in the city. So, there were many medicine merchants like the victims of this tragic incident. The sudden crime put everyone in the city on edge that they would be next.

The authorities were taking this matter very seriously.

"Nethersea Golden Lotus..." Chu Liang muttered after reading the notice.

He seemed to recall Fiend from the interdimensional soul domain mentioning that once he reached the third stage of the Realm of the Five Elements, he would need treasures of nature with yin and water attributes for cultivation. There were very suitable choices among the demonic creatures of the Netherseas.

The Nethersea Golden Lotus was one of them.

It could help a cultivator at the fifth realm make a breakthrough, indicating that it was indeed a highly valuable treasure. Furthermore, the treasure's origin was further south of the Southern Regions. It grew in the southernmost part of the Netherseas, so it was rarely seen near the South Bastion Mountain.

"I can no longer sense any traces of him," Yun Chaoxian said.

He'd attempted to track down the divine envoy several times through his Heavenly Sound Wave, but as expected, he didn't receive a response.

The echoes at the crime scene earlier had been a trap that the demon divine envoy set to lure Yun Chuxian there.

"It's fine. He became a victim of his own ingenuity this time," Chu Liang analyzed. "What most likely happened was that after committing the massacre, he reported the incident to the authorities himself, intending to draw the attention of the authorities to you. That way, he could shake you off his trail and escape during the confusion. However... we didn't fall into his trap. The authorities didn't catch any suspects yet, so they decided to lock down the city.

"At the time of the incident, the city gates hadn't opened yet, so he had no chance to escape. There's an eighty percent chance that the demon divine envoy has also been locked inside the city.

"If he attempts to force his way out of Kaoshan City, he'll surely attract the attention of the authorities unless he's found some secret passage that leads outside. However, he's a demon, so he probably won't do anything too risky in the territory of the Yu Dynasty. Before he attempts anything, we still have a chance to catch him."

Yun Chaoxian's eyes were wide with confusion. While listening to Chu Liang calmly make his analysis, Yun Chaoxian initially thought he was only a step behind in terms of understanding, but he quickly found that none of it made sense to him.

However, when Chu Liang was done with his analysis, Yun Chaoxian immediately nodded and said, "Brother Chu, what you said is right... It's similar to what I was thinking."

Then he scratched his head for a while.

Nevertheless, he still couldn't stop himself from asking, "So, where are we going to catch him?"

"Let me think about it. We'll find a way to get him," Chu Liang replied nonchalantly.

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After Yun Chaoxian left, Chu Liang took out the Soul Subjugator Token instead of racking his brains for an answer.

Chu Liang and the authorities were both forces of righteousness. That meant that their perspectives were limited. So, to deal with such matters, it might just be necessary to ask for help from his brothers in the criminal world.

Chu Liang sent his divine sense into the Soul Subjugator Token and sent out a message.

[Fifty-Eighth]: "Esteemed Fiend, I've found some information on the demonic creatures of the Netherseas. There's a Nethersea Golden Lotus in Kaoshan City right now. However, I can't determine its exact location. Is it possible to request help from our fellow sect members?"