

Martial Arts 301

Chapter 301: I Have a Way to Find Him

"Awakened Association members?"

On hearing this, Du Hao and another thick-browed man both widened their eyes.

"Brother Zou, you suspect that guy is actually from the Awakened Association?" Du Hao hurriedly asked.

"It's a possibility we can't rule out."

Zou Xuan said, "In Yan Country, there are only five Martial Arts Associations in total, and the number of True Essence Realm Martial Artists altogether is less than twenty. If you really wanted to find them, how could you not, unless he's not part of the Martial Arts Association."

Without the help of the Martial Arts Association, a martial artist relying solely on their own strength to reach the True Essence Realm is an extremely small possibility. Out of millions in Yan Country, maybe not even one could achieve this."

"You're right."

Du Hao nodded.

Forget about martial artists; even for awakeners like us.

If you don't join the Awakened Association and explore on your own, the effort and dedication required could be many times that of others. The key issue is, after putting in so much, there's no guarantee of any return because many things, you simply wouldn't know exist without joining the Awakened Association.

The Martial Arts Association is just the same.

Of course, if such a monstrous talent exists, Du Hao's eyes flashed with murderous intent. We should find this guy and kill him!

"By comparison, I think the second possibility is most likely, that is, he's a member of the Awakened Association, just disguised as a martial artist."

Zou Xuan said, "Brother Du, you must know that many awakeners, after reaching B-level, start attempting to practice martial arts. For example, our awakeners' spiritual power is far superior to the average person's, making the practice of Spirit Secret Manuals significantly easier. Many Spirit Martial Arts are not less powerful than superpowers. Learning an additional one or two Spirit Martial Arts could be equivalent to mastering one or two more superpowers."

"And martial arts, beside Spirit Secret Manuals, also include various forms of physical techniques, weapons, body techniques, inner strength, and so on. Many B-level and above awakeners choose a few to study out of interest to be prepared for any eventualities.

That person very likely has studied a Saber Technique. Didn't you say his physical defense is strong? Then this person is very likely an awakener with body enhancement type superpower."

"I see."

Du Hao suddenly realized.

No wonder, there are so few martial artists above the True Essence Realm. Even after sending so many people to search, how could they not find him?

Turns out, they're all members of the Awakened Association.

But then, he frowned.

If it were a martial artist, he wouldn't have much to fear. Even the President of the Jiangbei District Martial Arts Association would be courteous to him.

However, if it's another awakener, that's different.

After all, Jiulong City is at most a mid-sized city. Not only him, but even the Jiulong City Lord, must tread carefully around many people.

Could this vendetta really be left unresolved?

Zou Xuan exchanged a glance with someone beside him. The latter smiled, saying, "Even if he's from the Awakened Association, Brother Du needn't worry. With the two of us here, even if the other party is a B-level awakener and skilled in Saber Techniques, so what?"

"Yes indeed!"

Du Hao's eyes brightened.

These two before him are genuine B-level awakeners!

What's there to worry about? Isn't it the other party who should be concerned?

"Brother Jiang is right. With you two here, what should I be concerned about? The only issue is, finding that guy might not be so easy." Du Hao frowned.

He, Du Hao, is a significant figure in Jiulong City.

But in other mid-sized cities, he's insignificant.

"Don't worry, Brother Du," Zou Xuan smiled, "I have a friend with a unique superpower, olfactory enhancement, which allows him to track scents."

"!"

Du Hao trembled with excitement, "Brother Zou, you mean?"

"That's right."

Zou Xuan nodded, "That battle only happened a day ago. Even if we go tomorrow, the scene's scent wouldn't have completely dissipated."

As long as my friend reaches the scene and identifies the person's scent, he can track and find that person's whereabouts."

"That's fantastic!"

Du Hao jumped up from his chair, grabbed Zou Xuan's hand, and said, "Brother Zou, where is that person now? Can you call him over immediately? Rest assured, once we find that guy's hiding spot and kill him, the benefits will definitely be considerable for you both!"

"Brother Du, calm down, calm down."

Zou Xuan was also very pleased, "That person is a good friend of mine. He's not in Jiulong City, but a phone call will get him here soon. However, I must say something upfront."

Du Hao released his hand and sat down, saying, "Go ahead."

"That friend's tracking range is theoretically unlimited, but in practice, the superpower consumes a lot of spiritual power. If the distance is far, even with traces, it will take time to find the target. I hope Brother Du can be mentally prepared for this."

"I thought it was something significant."

Du Hao smiled, "It's just a matter of time; I can wait."

Hearing this, Zou Xuan and Jiang Miao glanced at each other and laughed.

"Alright, Brother Du needn't worry. With my friend's help, finding that guy's hiding spot is just a matter of time. Once we do, we'll capture him and turn him over to you."

"Exactly, that guy must have a lot of gall to attack Brother Du. I say, we won't rest until we've skinned him alive and torn him apart."

Hearing their promise, Du Hao was elated.

B-level awakeners are indeed reliable.

Compared to martial artists, they're far more trustworthy.

Not only did they quickly come up with a solution, but they also offered to handle the task.

However, finding these two today wasn't just for this matter but also for the Celestial God Fruit.

According to Yan Ming, the Celestial God Tree bears twelve Celestial God Fruits!

If possible, he would love to monopolize them, but since he couldn't, he needed allies.

"Ahem, you two, to be honest, there's another matter for which I need your help."

"Brother Du, just say the word. Even if there are ten matters, we won't hesitate."

"Indeed, Brother Du, skip the formalities and just tell us."

The two spoke enthusiastically.

After all, given Du Hao's status, he wouldn't take advantage of them.

"It's like this..."

Du Hao explained why he went to Anshan City.

Upon hearing this, their expressions changed.

"Brother Du, are you serious? There's a Celestial God Tree in Anshan City with twelve Celestial God Fruits?" Zou Xuan licked his lips.

Even for them, the number of Celestial God Fruits they had consumed was minimal.

In other words, consuming such a fruit now would still be very beneficial for them.

Even if the benefits were minor, each could be sold for 50,000 points!

"I believe Yan Ming wouldn't dare lie about this." Du Hao said.

"Unfortunately, he didn't give me the exact location; I didn't ask. I only know it's in the mountains behind Anshan City."

He sighed.

"In the mountains behind."

Zou Xuan and the other exchanged looks.

"Brother Du, there's no need to worry. Having this information is enough."

"Exactly. With the strength of those C-level awakeners, they couldn't have gone far. We'll find it with a bit of searching."

"That's what I thought too."

Du Hao nodded, "But when the fruits mature, many fierce beasts will be attracted, perhaps even Commander-level Fierce Beasts..."

"Don't worry, Brother Du. Even if Commander-level Fierce Beasts show up, before us, they're just as weak as chickens." Zou Xuan sneered.

"That's right. Brother Du can stay in Anshan City and await our good news." Jiang Miao added.

"With you two saying this, I don't know how to thank you enough," said the moved Du Hao. "How about this, we divide the twelve fruits evenly among us. If you have any objections, we can discuss further."

He discreetly glanced at their eyes.

Dividing equally was a significant concession on his part.

If these two were still unsatisfied...

Zou Xuan and the other exchanged glances and nodded.

"Brother Du, you're being too kind. We are only providing some help; it's no big deal. On the contrary, if you hadn't sought us out, we wouldn't have a chance at these fruits regardless of our strength."

Zou Xuan smiled, "So, how about this: Brother Jiang and I will each take one from our share, leaving you with six fruits, and us with three each."

"How could I accept that?"

Du Hao was delighted but feigned reluctance, "Brother Zou, Brother Jiang, you two will help avenge me and obtain the fruits for me. How can I benefit so greatly from you? Let's stick to an equal division."

"Brother Du, I agree with Brother Zou. Without you, how would we get three fruits?" Jiang Miao shook his head, "Brother Du, if you're so polite, we dare not accept the task."

"This?"

Du Hao looked at them both and sighed, "Why make things difficult for me? Alright, since you insist, I'll reluctantly agree. Rest assured, when future good opportunities arise, I'll think of you first."

"Great, then we'll count on you, Brother Du."

Zou Xuan and Jiang Miao exchanged knowing smiles.

It's rare to have a chance to strengthen relations with Du Hao. Giving up one fruit for that, why not?

Moreover, the two tasks were easy, providing benefits and strengthening connections, it was a win-win.

Chapter 302: What Era Is It to Still Use Bow and Arrows for Hunting?

"Roar!"

On the boundless plain, a Violent Bear, almost two stories high, stood up, opened its bloody mouth, and roared into the distance before rushing over.

The ten-plus tons of its body caused the ground to tremble in waves.

And just a few hundred meters away, an adventure team coldly watched this scene.

As the distance between both sides narrowed to less than a hundred meters.

A petite woman in the team extended her hands toward the Violent Bear.

Blue frost continuously grew on the Violent Bear's body, and its sprinting speed visibly slowed down.

At this moment, the air was filled with the sound of several whistling noises.

Several basketball-sized red fireballs, several wind blades as long as small arms, and a black ball the size of a fist flew toward the Violent Bear.

"Roar!"

The Violent Bear seemed to feel a strong sense of crisis and roared again.

But its limbs had already been covered with a thick layer of frost, connecting it to the ground, preventing any movement in the short term.

Then.

With a "boom".

Several fireballs hit it solidly on the head, and in the violent explosion and flames, half of the Violent Bear's face was instantly gone, revealing a white skull, blood drenching.

Then, several wind blades also whizzed in, directly cutting off the Violent Bear's two front legs, with two or three wind blades slicing through its body, cutting through the tough skin and breaking the bones inside!

The most terrifying was the black ball the size of a fist.

Compared to the fireball and wind blades, it was the slowest.

But when the black ball hit, the body of the Violent Bear, comparable to a heavy tank, was as fragile as paper.

The black ball directly pierced through its heart, leaving a fist-sized bloody hole in its chest.

"Roar!"

The Violent Bear let out a mournful cry, and with a thud, it heavily fell to the ground, blood quickly spreading.

In the blink of an eye, this once invincible Violent Bear fell in such a miserable way.

Gu Ze, who had been standing at the back of the team with a bow drawn, was dumbfounded at this scene.

A Violent Bear!

Not only a High-level Fierce Beast but also one of the hardest to deal with among High-level Fierce Beasts.

If he had encountered it, let alone killing it, escaping would have been in question.

Yet this Fierce Beast, enough to destroy his village, was as defenseless as a Low-level Fierce Beast in front of the Crescent Squad, killed in one encounter.

"Is this the strength of a D-level Awakened team? Too strong!"

Gu Ze put down his bow and felt a sense of relief.

If he hadn't listened to Chen Fan's advice back then and left the village for Wang City to join the Awakened Association, he'd never know the outside world had such powerful Awakened Ones.

Above the D-level Awakened, there were also C-level Awakened, like the President of the Association and the City Lord of Wang City. Their strength was immense!

Not to mention Violent Bears, even Elite-level Fierce Beasts could be easily dealt with.

Thinking of this, the flames of determination burned in Gu Ze's eyes. One day, he would become a C-level Awakened, like the President!

Of course, the prerequisite for becoming a C-level Awakened was to be a D-level Awakened with the strength to kill a High-level Fierce Beast alone.

He wasn't there yet, but he would work hard.

"Hahaha."

At this moment, a hearty laugh came from the front of the team, "Am I unnecessary? You guys dealt with that guy without needing me to step in."

The speaker was a big man nearly two meters tall, his body like a tower, with thick arms as robust as two adult men's thighs.

"Hahaha."

The other four in the team also laughed.

One man smiled and said, "Captain, if possible, it's best if you don't need to step in next time."

"Exactly, exactly."

The other three echoed.

The powers used to deal with the Violent Bear earlier corresponded directly to the four of them.

They had worked together for so long that they were seamless in their cooperation. Even if attacked by one or two High-level Fierce Beasts simultaneously, they could kill them immediately.

However, if an unexpected situation arose, or they were unfortunate enough to encounter an Elite-level Fierce Beast, then the Captain would have to step in.

The Captain's superpower was Gigantification, which, once activated, could reach six or seven meters, comparable to an average Elite-level Fierce Beast.

Thus, the Captain's presence was a safety net, used only if necessary.

"You guys have a point, I too hope I won't need to step in next time." The big man smiled and suddenly thought of something, turned around, and looked at Gu Ze at the end of the team, smiling, "Xiaogu, were you scared just now?"

At his words, the others also looked over.

Their expressions varied.

Some were curious, others indifferent, and two had expressions of impatience and irritation.

If it weren't for the Captain insisting on bringing this newcomer, they wouldn't want to bring along a burden while doing tasks.

Just look at what he's holding?

A bow and arrow!

In this day and age, who brings a bow and arrow to hunt Fierce Beasts?

To put it bluntly, even if he had learned from those Martial Artists and brought a machine gun, it would be more effective than this thing.

Sigh, the Captain probably only took special care of this guy because he awakened an Enhancement Superpower and felt sympathetic.

Gu Ze quickly showed a smile and said, "No, Brother Jin."

"Hmm, that's good."

Jin Quan glanced at the bow in his hands and smiled, "Looking at you, you used to go hunting often?"

"Hmm."

Gu Ze's face reddened, "I did hunt often, but it was only Low-level Fierce Beasts. I would occasionally encounter Mid-level Fierce Beasts."

"I see."

Jin Quan extended his hand, patted his shoulder, "No worries, come out with us more often, and you'll see. These High-level Fierce Beasts aren't as scary as you think."

After that, he turned to the others, "Let's handle the materials and keep moving forward."

"Let me."

A tall and thin man stepped forward, reached out, and waved his hand at the Violent Bear's body. Several wind blades flew out, cutting through bones and muscles effortlessly.

The whole collection process took less than half a minute.

"Okay, let's move on."

Under the lead of the big man, the group continued forward.

After a short while, they encountered another High-level Fierce Beast.

As expected, this one fared no better than the Violence Bear. In a blink of an eye, it was dismembered into pieces, as dead as it could be.

The team continued along the plain, occasionally encountering some Mid-level Fierce Beasts.

With people in the team feeling bored, they casually killed the Mid-level Fierce Beasts without even bothering to collect the materials.

Gu Ze couldn't help but gulp.

Those were Mid-level Fierce Beasts!

In the village, a Low-level Fierce Beast would make everyone happy. The nutrition in the blood and flesh of a Mid-level Fierce Beast was several times better than a Low-level Fierce Beast's.

Yet now, the corpses of the Mid-level Fierce Beasts were just being left there,

He really wanted to go over and pick them up, but reason told him he couldn't do that because those Fierce Beasts were killed by others, whether they picked them up or abandoned them had nothing to do with him.

The Crescent Squad taking him, a rookie, on a mission was already a great favor. He couldn't be too ungrateful.

It was at this moment that whispers arose at the front of the team.

"Captain, do you really intend to keep letting this rookie follow us?" A red-haired youth said discontentedly.

He was the one who had cast the fireball earlier.

To enhance his perception of the Fire Element, he even dyed his hair red.

"Yeah, Captain,"

The tall and thin man complained, "You saw what weapon that kid is using? A bow and arrow, haha, do you think that thing could penetrate a High-level Fierce Beast's defenses if it hit?"

Hearing their complaints, Jin Quan laughed, "We're all part of the same association. Besides, he's a newcomer. It's only right to take care of him a bit."

"Taking care of him once or twice is fine, but taking care of him three or four times is not okay, right? And if we encounter an Elite-level Fierce Beast, should we save him or not?"

"That's right, Captain, I think he should go hunt Mid-level Fierce Beasts on his own. If anything happens, it has nothing to do with us."

"Hey, you two are going too far," the petite woman frowned, "Who wasn't a rookie once? Without the Captain leading you two back then, would you have gotten to where you are?"

"Xiaohua, we are different from him." The red-haired youth snorted coldly, "I awakened a Flame Superpower. Do I need to say anything about its potential? Far away, there's Master Yan Monarch, an absolute A-level Awakened.

I've heard he's the most likely to break through to S-Class among the many A-level Awakened. Nearer to us, the City Lord of Anshan City possesses the Flame Superpower, and Old Luu has Wind Element Superpower, both highly potential powers. But what about that kid?"

He turned back to look at Gu Ze holding the bow and arrow behind them, showing a look of extreme disgust,

"He awakened a Strength Enhancement superpower. What use is it? Shooting arrows from afar can't penetrate High-level Fierce Beast defenses. Close combat? With his small frame? And have you ever heard of an A-level Awakened with Strength Enhancement? Have you? No, right?"

The petite woman moved her lips but said nothing.

Indeed, there wasn't...

Even with body enhancement, the Captain's Gigantification, once activated, significantly boosted not just strength but also defense, speed, and various attributes, far surpassing mere Strength Enhancement.

Chapter 303: Li, Chairman Li!

"Alright."

Jin Quan looked at the red-haired man and said, "Zhao Yan, I understand your point, but everyone starts as a novice. If we can take care of each other a bit more, we should."

Just like when I first joined the association, many people didn't want to team up with me after knowing my superpower. Even those who did were mostly looking to use me as a meat shield. Several times, I almost died, and they immediately abandoned me. But later,"

Jin Quan's eyes showed gratitude, "I met the Moonlight Squad. They genuinely treated me as a comrade. Because of them, I grew from a rookie to a near C-level Awakener,

and Gu Ze reminded me of my past self, so I wanted to take care of him. Maybe one day he will surprise us?"

"Exactly, exactly!" The petite woman quickly echoed.

The red-haired man and the tall, thin man exchanged a glance, seemingly compromising.

"Alright, since the captain says so, we can't object. But captain, if you want this guy to join us, it won't be easy. At the very least, his strength must be acknowledged by us."

"Exactly, we don't want someone who is always marginalized. Old Qin, what do you say?"

The tall, thin man looked at the man who hadn't said a word from the beginning.

"I'm fine with it."

The latter said.

"Alright."

Jin Quan smiled, "I'll mention it to him later. But you also need to give him a chance to grow, right? It's his first time out, asking him to hunt high-level Fierce Beasts might be too demanding."

"Exactly, exactly."

The petite woman repeated.

The red-haired man pursed his lips.

He had already decided; if this guy named Gu Ze doesn't become a D-level Awakener, he will firmly oppose his joining.

They continued walking forward, and as the sky began to darken, Jin Quan glanced at the time and said, "Let's call it a day. It's getting late, and lingering here might be dangerous."

The rest nodded, faces brimming with smiles.

Today's earnings weren't bad.

Going back, each person would earn at least five to six hundred points.

Gu Ze was also envious.

But he was self-aware; he wasn't yet capable of hunting high-level Fierce Beasts, and even mid-level Fierce Beasts would be challenging to shoot.

"Xiaogu, tomorrow we rest. If you have time, join me to hunt mid-level Fierce Beasts."

"What?"

"Captain?"

"Brother Jin?"

Upon hearing this, everyone around was stunned.

Even Gu Ze himself was rooted to the spot.

"Haha, I brought you out today to build your courage. You've seen, so-called high-level Fierce Beasts are just like that."

Jin Quan laughed, "But with your current strength, hunting high-level Fierce Beasts might still be difficult. So, let's start with mid-level Fierce Beasts. When you feel comfortable hunting them, you can join us in hunting high-level ones."

"Captain..."

The red-haired man didn't know what to say.

Is it worth it?

To foster this guy, the captain was willing to waste cultivation time and even prepare a special training session with mid-level Fierce Beasts? The cost-effectiveness was too low!

"Brother Jin, I..." Gu Ze was touched and didn't know what to say.

"If you have time, let's settle this. Meet me at the association's entrance tomorrow, okay?"

"Okay, alright, thank you, Brother Jin." Gu Ze responded quickly.

During his days at the association, he had sought out several squads, but was always rejected. Just when he thought he would have to hunt alone, the top Crescent Squad agreed to his request, and had been taking good care of him.

"No problem, we help each other."

Jin Quan smiled, "Alright, let's head back."

The group headed towards Wang City.

Their speed was quick; within fifteen minutes they saw the city's outline.

Showing their identification, they entered the city under the admiring gaze of guards, and proceeded to the Awakened Association hall.

"Hey, Old Jin is back?"

Seeing Jin Quan, someone immediately greeted him warmly, "How was the harvest?"

"Not too bad."

Jin Quan replied with a smile.

"Really? Last time you said that, you completed several tasks, and each person got a thousand points."

"Exactly, Old Jin, your Crescent Squad's combat power is top-notch in our association. Don't be overly modest, it borders on arrogance."

"Seriously, it's not much. Let's go submit the tasks first." Jin Quan smiled and walked towards the back.

Seeing this, the crowd also smiled, but as their gaze fell on Gu Ze at the back of the group, their eyes filled with surprise.

What's going on?

Isn't this guy the new Strength-type Awakener?

Did he join Crescent Squad?

No way!

Feeling the pressure, Gu Ze, seeing the rear courtyard approaching, stepped forward and softly said, "Brother Jin, thank you for today's care. I'll head off now."

After all, the rest would be dividing rewards, and he, an outsider, would only feel awkward staying.

Jin Quan paused, then smiled, "Alright, I'll call you tomorrow."

"Okay."

Gu Ze thanked him again and left, walking alone towards his lodging.

"This kid knows his place." The red-haired man muttered.

Back at his lodging, Gu Ze sighed.

Thinking of others earning a large amount of points, he couldn't help but feel envious.

"If I work hard, one day I'll have lots of points, and my strength won't stay at D-level. I'll become a C-level, perhaps even an A-level or S-level Awakener!"

Sitting on the bed, Gu Ze clenched his fist and said through gritted teeth.

Suddenly, Chen Fan's image appeared in his mind.

His fist slowly relaxed, and he muttered, "I wonder how Chen Fan is doing right now?"

Thinking of this, he sighed again.

Chen Fan was a Martial Artist. The arduous path of a Martial Artist was far more challenging than that of an Awakener.

Just like that Violent Bear.

Crescent Squad members could easily inflict deadly injuries on it.

But a Martial Artist? According to Uncle Zhang, even a Transforming Force Martial Artist, using heavy firepower, would still struggle to kill a high-level Fierce Beast, not to mention using cold weapons.

It's said that only when a Martial Artist reaches the Meridian Refining Realm can they truly battle high-level Fierce Beasts.

Chen Fan left the village last time as a Transforming Force Martial Artist, right? I wonder if he has reached the Meridian Refining Realm now.

"I need to work harder myself, not pinning all hopes on Chen Fan alone."

With this thought, Gu Ze felt a surge of power throughout his body.

At that moment, a figure appeared outside Wang City, looked up at the two big characters on the city wall.

"This is the place."

Chen Fan, or rather Li Ping, muttered.

He had sent Gu Ze a message upon arrival, but hadn't received a reply yet.

"Did he go hunting?"

Chen Fan thought.

It's late now; if he went hunting, he should've returned.

"Let's perceive first."

He focused his mind, activating Celestial Response.

Instantly, more than ten thousand strands of aura became clear.

"There are actually around ten C-level Awakeners here?"

Chen Fan was slightly surprised.

Compared to Anshan City's five or six, this place had about double.

However, this city was located on a flat plain, without terrain protection, so stronger guard forces were expected.

Next, he sensed a very familiar aura.

"Seems like I arrived at the right time."

Chen Fan smiled slightly and then headed into the city.

In no time, he arrived across the street from the Awakened Association, took out his phone, and called Gu Ze.

However, after several attempts, no one answered.

"Did this guy put his phone in space items?"

Chen Fan sighed.

A phone in space items is basically in an alternate space, thus no signal.

No choice.

He put away his phone and walked towards the association hall.

Originally, he didn't want to cause a commotion and intended to quietly take Gu Ze away, but now it seemed unrealistic.

Hopefully, no one recognizes me.

Even if recognized, he wasn't afraid.

Walking into the hall, dozens of gazes turned towards him. Initially, they were normal glances, but then many brows furrowed.

This person looks familiar, like they've seen him somewhere. But where?

Chen Fan ignored it and walked straight to the counter.

"Hello, sir, may I help you?" The counter lady asked with a smile.

"Please call someone for me: Gu Ze. I have business with him."

Chen Fan said directly.

"Gu Ze? Alright, sir, please wait a moment." The lady typed quickly, found Gu Ze's name, then looked up and smiled, "Sir, could you please show your ID? Otherwise, according to our rules, it's difficult to notify him."

Chen Fan placed his membership card on the counter.

"Li Ping?"

The lady squinted, searched the database, then widened her eyes, even holding her breath.

This man was not only a C-level Awakener but also the chairman of Anshan City Awakened Association!

My god!

Her mind buzzed. A chairman-level figure was here personally!

This could alarm Chairman Su!

As the name left her lips, the other Awakeners in the hall were shocked.

Li, Li Ping?

Li Ping!

Many exchanged glances; no wonder he looked familiar. He was the one who recently caused a stir at Stone City Awakened Association?

"Li Ping, no, Chairman Li. Please wait a moment. I-I'll notify Gu Ze right away." The lady stammered, wishing she could slap herself.

This man was on par with her own chairman! How could she have been so casual?

"Alright, quickly."

Chen Fan retrieved his card and nodded.

Everyone around, whether recognizing him or not, wore expressions of extreme shock upon hearing the title.

Li, Chairman Li?

This man is a branch office's chairman?

For real?

Chapter 304: Someone Looking for Me?

The most shocked were those Awakened who had heard the name Li Ping before.

Initially, they felt that the person in front of them looked familiar but couldn't place him immediately.

It was only when they heard the woman say the name Li Ping that they had an epiphany and remembered.

Isn't this the C-level Awakened who caused a commotion in the Stone City Awakened Association a few days ago?

Some even took out their phones to find the video from that time and compared it with the person in front of them, confirming it was indeed the same person!

But when did this guy named Li Ping become Chairman Li? What kind of chairman is he?

"Chairman Li, please wait a moment." The woman picked up her phone as she spoke.

Chen Fan nodded and glanced at the camera in the hall.

He had a premonition that someone was watching him through this camera.

Indeed, that was the case.

In the president's office on the third floor, three or four Awakened were watching the screen showing Chen Fan, looking quite tense, as if facing a formidable enemy.

"Chairman, he must have realized we're watching him," a man on the left took a deep breath and said, "Such powerful Spiritual Perception."

"Isn't this guy supposed to be in Stone City? Why is he here? Could it be he's here to cause trouble for us?"

"Hmph, what's there to fear?" A deep, gruff voice sounded, "We have so many people here, are we afraid of just him? This isn't Stone City, he can't come and go as he pleases. If he causes trouble here, let him try!"

"You say that, but this guy isn't just your average Joe," the man who first spoke said worriedly, "You've seen his previous fight; his body defense is on par with an Elite-level Fierce Beast, and he's incredibly fast. The most terrifying is his Spiritual Power."

"Yep, he seems to have also cultivated Soul-Annihilating Finger. Any one of us hit by that would surely die. So, if we do fight him, we must kill him at the first instant. Otherwise, there will definitely be casualties."

Hearing this, the deep-voiced man fell silent.

Indeed, if a battle did break out, at least one of their side would die.

C-level Awakened aren't easy to come by; each one reaching this stage didn't come easy. Besides, who wanted to be cannon fodder?

"You don't need to worry too much."

At this moment, the middle-aged man sitting in the boss's chair glanced at the chat window on the computer screen and said, "He seems to be here to find someone, not to pick a fight with us."

"Find someone?"

"Find who?"

"Someone named Gu Ze," Su Yu said.

"Gu Ze?"

The other three in the room all widened their eyes simultaneously.

Did the association have an Awakened named Gu Ze?

It seemed not, right?

"He's a newcomer,"

Su Yu explained, "He joined the association a few days ago. His superpower is Strength Enhancement, and he's just an E-level Awakened."

"E-level?"

"An E-level Awakened? Chairman, are you kidding us? This guy named Li Ping came to find an E-level Awakened?"

"It's not just you; even I find it hard to believe,"

Su Yu glanced at the chat window again and said, "You should come and take a look."

The other three heard this and looked at the screenshot on the screen.

"Chairman?"

"He's the chairman?"

"When did this guy become the chairman of the Anshan City Awakened Association?"

The three had expressions as if they had seen a ghost.

"I just confirmed it; this Li Ping is indeed the chairman of the Anshan City Awakened Association."

"This..."

The other three didn't know what to say upon hearing this.

They could never have imagined that this audacious guy had turned into the branch office's chairman...

"So, a branch office chairman came personally to find someone?" One of them asked in astonishment, "And it's an E-level Awakened?"

"I also find it a bit strange,"

Su Yu, with his hands clasped and chin supported, said, "Let's wait and see. If he's really here to find someone, that's good. But if he's pretending to find someone and is here to cause trouble, we can't let him act recklessly."

"Yes, Chairman!"

The three responded in unison, but their eyes still showed a trace of fear.

This guy's combat power among C-level Awakened is definitely top tier, and from him daring to come alone, it showed his absolute confidence in his strength.

If a conflict broke out, their side definitely wouldn't have it easy.

In the lounge.

Gu Ze had just finished his shower, changed into a white training suit, and was about to grab a meal when the phone on the bedside table rang suddenly.

"Hmm?"

He looked puzzled.

What's going on?

Could it be the things he ordered? But they arrived a few days ago?

With curiosity, he walked over and picked up the receiver, "Hello?"

"Hello, is this Mr. Gu Ze?" A sweet voice came from the phone.

"Yes, what can I do for you?" Gu Ze asked.

"Well, Mr. Gu Ze, someone is here in the hall to see you. If it's convenient, please come down as soon as possible."

"Someone's looking for me?"

Gu Ze was even more puzzled, "Who is it?"

"It's Chairman Li Ping,"

The woman glanced cautiously at Chen Fan and said.

"Li Ping, Chairman Li?"

Gu Ze was completely at a loss.

He tried to recall, but had no impression at all.

It made sense, since he hadn't been in the association for long, and besides the Crescent Squad members, he knew no one else.

"Yes, Chairman Li is waiting for you. If you're available, please come down quickly," the woman said with a hint of urgency.

"I don't know him,"

Gu Ze blurted out.

"Ah?"

The woman was stunned.

"Let me talk to him,"

Chen Fan said.

"Okay,"

The woman quickly handed the phone to Chen Fan.

"Gu Ze, you know Chen Fan, right?"

Hearing this name, Gu Ze was stunned and quickly asked, "You, you are?"

"I'm his friend. He sent me to bring you to Anshan City. You should check your phone; he sent you a message you might not have seen."

Chen Fan got straight to the point.

"He sent me a message?"

"Yes, read the message, and you'll understand the situation."

After saying this, Chen Fan returned the phone to the woman.

"Mr. Gu Ze, please come quickly," the woman said before hanging up.

"Chairman Li, would you like to sit in the conference room? I'll make you some tea?"

"No need, I'll wait here," Chen Fan waved his hand.

Gu Ze hung up the phone and recalled the conversation in his mind. He quickly took out his phone from the Space Items.

Sure enough, there was a new message from Chen Fan.

He quickly opened it and read it carefully.

By the end, his eyes were filled with shock.

Really? Has Chen Fan become so powerful?

He could even be friends with the chairman of the Anshan City Awakened Association?

Gu Ze couldn't believe it and read the message several times.

The message was straightforward: Chen Fan was now doing well in Anshan City and had a good relationship with the Awakened Association. So, he wanted Gu Ze to develop his skills in Anshan City. But since Chen Fan was busy, he had asked Chairman Li to fetch him, so he'd be prepared.

Gu Ze couldn't help pinching himself, wincing in pain.

It was real, not a dream.

So, the person he just spoke with was the chairman of the Anshan City Awakened Association!

Not only that, but he came here specifically to pick him up?

Unbelievable.

He was just an E-level Awakened. Among ordinary people, he was formidable, but within any Awakened Association, he was among the lowest ranks.

And this Li Ping?

Not only a C-level Awakened, but also a chairman!

"How strong is Chen Fan now?"

His mind was buzzing.

Being friends with a chairman and convincing him to come personally to fetch him—what did that mean?

Thinking about this, he felt a mix of shock and excitement.

Undoubtedly, if he went to Anshan City, with the chairman taking care of him, his treatment and position would be much better than here!

"I should go and confirm if this is true."

With a nervous heart, he walked toward the door.

At this moment, the hall was already filled with people.

The news of Li Ping's arrival spread like a wildfire through the Wang City Awakened Association.

Especially since this Li Ping was the chairman of the Anshan City Awakened Association, the excitement reached its peak.

"Is it true that Li Ping is the chairman of the Anshan City Awakened Association?"

"Yes, absolutely! If you don't believe it, look it up on your phone."

"I just did. He's indeed the chairman. It's amazing; I heard he joined the Stone City Awakened Association not long ago, and now he's already the chairman of the Anshan City Awakened Association."

"Those who are capable excel everywhere."

"That's true."

Many of the D and E-level Awakened present had some respect for Li Ping.

They knew the backstory, understanding that Li Ping refused to collude with other C-level Awakened, which led to the fallout with the Stone City Association.

They asked themselves: Would they reject such an offer if they were C-level Awakened?

Probably not.

"What's he here for? To cause trouble?" someone whispered.

"What are you thinking?"

Someone nearby rolled their eyes, "He's here to find someone."

"Find someone? Who?"

"I think it's someone named Gu Ze, yeah, Gu Ze."

"What? Gu Ze?"

Nearby, a giant nearly two meters tall couldn't help exclaiming.

Chapter 305: A Small Token of Appreciation

His shout immediately drew the attention of many around.

"Gu Ze?"

Someone looked at the members of the Crescent Squad and couldn't help but say, "Isn't he the rookie who followed Old Jin and his team earlier?"

"Is it him? The Awakener with Enhanced Strength?"

"Now that you mention it, I think I remember! He just came back with Old Jin and the others."

"Could it be that the person he's looking for is him?"

The crowd murmured while instinctively glancing at Chen Fan in the distance, all with expressions of disbelief.

Even Jin Quan and his men exchanged puzzled looks.

"Captain, did you hear what they were saying?" The red-haired man glanced around and said, "Is the Gu Ze they're searching for really the same Gu Ze we know?"

"That person is a chairman, just like our chairman!"

"I, I'm not so sure."

Jin Quan smiled wryly and said, "But it seems we only have one Gu Ze here, right?"

The red-haired man and the others were stunned into silence.

Yes, indeed. Even among those with the surname Gu, there was only one in the whole Wang City Awakened Association.

So, was the big shot really here to see Gu Ze?

No, it couldn't be, right?

If Gu Ze knew such a powerful person, why would he come here with no one willing to team up with him?

Why didn't he just stay in Anshan City?

The surrounding chatter continued.

At that moment, a series of footsteps sounded, approaching from afar.

The immediate silence around was palpable.

"Gu Ze is here!"

Someone in the crowd shouted.

Immediately, hundreds of eyes turned towards Gu Ze.

"Is that really Gu Ze? The rookie?"

"It seems like he's the one who came back with the Crescent Squad, doesn't it?"

"He doesn't look particularly special. Is that really who they're looking for?"

It was the first time Gu Ze was treated this way.

His heart raced, his breaths quickened, and his eyes turned to the counter.

There he saw a burly man with an ordinary appearance standing with his hands behind his back, nodding to him.

"He really is here to find me!"

Gu Ze's mind was in turmoil, and he stood there stunned.

Seeing this, everyone else was also dumbfounded.

"Mr. Gu Ze, this is Chairman Li. He's been waiting for you for quite some time," a woman hurriedly reminded him.

Gu Ze snapped out of it, feeling an invisible pressure bearing down from all directions.

After all, the man before him was the chairman of the Anshan City Awakened Association, on par with the chairman here!

His combat strength was at C-level.

Although Gu Ze's aim was to surpass C-level, becoming A-level or even S-class, that was a goal for the future. Right now, he stood no chance against an Awakener of this level.

Amid the varying expressions of those around him, Gu Ze finally walked up to Chen Fan.

"Chairman, Chairman Li."

He mustered the courage to speak, but dared not meet his eyes.

Chen Fan inwardly found it amusing but maintained a calm expression. He nodded and said, "Gu Ze, right? You should know the details by now, correct?"

Gu Ze nodded twice.

"Good. Since you understand, pack your things and follow me to the Anshan City Awakened Association."

As soon as the words were spoken, everyone was struck silent, rooted like statues.

Had they heard correctly?

Chairman Li was going to take Gu Ze away, to the Anshan City Awakened Association?

Good heavens!

Everyone couldn't help but look at Gu Ze with faces full of shock and envy.

Who was this rookie to warrant a chairman-level figure personally coming to fetch him?

Once Gu Ze reached the Anshan City Awakened Association, regardless, life would be much better than remaining here.

Envy!

If only they too had a chairman-level figure looking after them.

Among the crowd, the members of the Crescent Squad were even more shocked than anyone else.

Especially the red-haired man and the tall, lanky man—they were stupefied.

When they had taken Gu Ze out before, they found him terribly burdensome and mused about convincing the captain to abandon him.

But never in their wildest dreams did they imagine that this rookie had connections with another Awakened Association chairman?

And the relationship wasn't trivial!

Gu Ze's heart pounded wildly with excitement.

He had no objections to going to Anshan City.

Not to mention, it was closer to the village.

And Chen Fan was there too, and importantly, this man was the chairman of the Anshan City Association! Surely, the training he'd receive there would be far superior.

However, he didn't immediately agree. Instead, he cautiously asked, "Chairman Li, what about Chen Fan?"

"Chen Fan is currently in seclusion. If you wish to see him, you can visit the Martial Arts Association later," Chen Fan said.

"I see."

Gu Ze nodded.

He didn't see any issues with the arrangement.

Firstly, Chen Fan had texted him a heads-up.

Secondly, Chairman Li had no reason to deceive him, as he had nothing valuable to offer.

"Alright, Chairman Li, please wait a moment while I go pack my things."

"Sure, go ahead. I'll wait here." Chen Fan responded.

At that moment, he frowned and glanced towards the elevator.

The next second, the elevator doors opened, and a group of people walked out.

"Chairman!"

"It's the chairman!"

The crowd buzzed, eyes filled with shock and reverence.

Not only the chairman, but several C-level Awakeners from the Association were present too!

This was a rare sight.

They must have been alerted by Chairman Li's presence.

Chen Fan met their gazes, and the tension in the air soared.

"Ha ha ha."

Suddenly, the leading middle-aged man laughed heartily and approached quickly, clasping his hands in greeting:

"Chairman Li, it's an honor to have you here. My apologies for not welcoming you earlier. I hope you don't mind."

His friendly demeanor indicated he was an old acquaintance of Chen Fan's.

But the faces of those behind him were far less friendly, mostly wearing cold looks filled with wariness.

Sandwiched between them, Gu Ze felt the immense pressure, almost suffocating.

"So, it's Chairman Su,"

Chen Fan nodded slightly, thinking that these must have been the individuals who scrutinized him through the monitors earlier.

As for why they chose to appear now, it was probably because they had deciphered his intentions.

"Chairman Su, I'm here to take a friend with me, should be no problem, right?"

Upon hearing this, Su Yu glanced at Gu Ze and then smiled, "No problem at all. To be honest, it's our fault for not recognizing, Mr. Gu here is Chairman Li's friend. Please forgive our oversight."

He approached Gu Ze and produced a card seemingly out of thin air.

"What's that!"

"A Points Card?"

"2,000 points on the card!"

Exclamations erupted around.

"Brother Gu,"

Su Yu reached out and patted Gu Ze's shoulder with a warm smile, "I apologize for any difficulties you've faced here. Please accept this small token of recompense."

He handed over the 2,000-point card, smiling warmly.

Gu Ze's eyes nearly popped out.

2,000 points!

His highest point tally was only 100.

And now 2,000 points were right before him. Even the members of the Crescent Squad only earned five or six hundred points per mission.

More significantly, it was the chairman here offering the card!!!

The surrounding crowd was equally stunned.

Heads turned from Gu Ze to Chen Fan.

No fool would believe that an ordinary Gu Ze could make Chairman Su give up 2,000 points. It had to be because of the man behind him—Li Ping!

Chairman Su's intentions were clear—to make amends with Chairman Li!

Many present were envious. Why didn't they have a chairman friend like that?

Gu Ze also realized and looked to Chen Fan for help.

"Since Chairman Su is so kind, you should accept it," Chen Fan said.

2,000 points were nothing to him but a fortune to Gu Ze.

Moreover, refusing would embarrass Chairman Su.

"You heard Chairman Su; quickly, accept it," Chen Fan urged.

"Chairman...," Gu Ze hesitated but still didn't dare to take it.

"Ha ha ha."

Su Yu laughed and placed the card into his hand, patting his shoulder, "Alright, go pack your things. Don't keep Chairman Li waiting. Also, when you're at the Anshan City Awakened Association, feel free to visit Wang City anytime."

"Okay, Chairman,"

Gu Ze, mind blank, instinctively headed to the rest area.

"Chairman Li, would you like to come inside for some tea?" Su Yu turned to Chen Fan with a smile.

"No need to trouble you, Chairman Su. It's getting late. Once Gu Ze is ready, we'll be on our way before it gets dark," Chen Fan replied.

He understood they were wary of him.

If he stayed for tea, they might go crazy.

Sure enough, Su Yu's followers all sighed in relief.

"That's a pity. Hopefully, next time we can host you properly," Su Yu sighed.

The hall quieted down again.

A few minutes later, footsteps drew near, and Gu Ze returned, carrying a bow and quiver.

"Chairman Li, I, I'm ready," Gu Ze stammered.

Before two chairmen and several C-level Awakeners, his nervousness showed.

"Alright, let's go," Chen Fan said, glancing at Su Yu.

The latter maintained a usual smile.

"Chairman Li, please wait," Gu Ze searched the crowd and found Jin Quan and the others, "I'd like to say goodbye to Brother Jin and the team."

Chen Fan paused and nodded.

Gu Ze approached the Crescent Squad, looking at Jin Quan with gratitude, "Brother Jin, thank you for taking care of me. I'll remember your kindness. If you ever need my help, I will do my best to assist."

"Brother Gu, don't mention it. It was nothing,"

Jin Quan smiled wryly, "Train well in Anshan City. I hope we'll meet again."

"We will,"

Gu Ze nodded, glancing at the others.

"Brother Zhao, take care,"

The red-haired man and his companions blushed.

"Brother Gu, you take care too."

"Take care."

Gu Ze waved at them and returned to Chen Fan's side, "Chairman Li, I'm all set."

"Alright."

Chen Fan looked at Jin Quan and company before turning to Su Yu, "Chairman Su, we'll be leaving now."

"Chairman Li, let me see you off," Su Yu offered.

"There's no need, Chairman Su," Chen Fan shook his head and, after a moment, added, "Chairman Su, I have reliable information that a Beast Tide will soon erupt, and this time it could be far beyond what anyone expects. You'd better prepare."

"A Beast Tide? More devastating than expected?"

Su Yu was about to inquire further but realized Chen Fan and Gu Ze had already left.

Chapter 306: No, He Might Be Right

Su Yu gazed intently towards the city gate.

He didn't know why, but after listening to a few words from Li Ping, an ominous premonition rose in his heart.

It felt as though something extraordinary was about to happen?

"Chairman?"

"Chairman?"

Several C-level Awakened behind him softly called out once.

The person had already left, what was there to look at.

Moreover, that guy was famously ill-tempered, they couldn't wait for him to leave quickly.

"Hmm, let's go back first."

Su Yu turned around, his gaze sweeping over the crowd, then walked straight towards the elevator.

When the elevator doors closed, the Awakened in the entire hall collectively breathed a sigh of relief.

Two chairmen-level figures along with three or four C-level Awakened were present; they were so scared that they didn't even dare to breathe heavily.

However, recalling the scene just now, it felt like a dream to them.

The newcomer named Gu Ze could actually get a chairman to personally come and pick him up.

What virtue and ability!

Many people regretted it in their hearts.

If they had known it would be like this, they would have spent those precious few days building a good relationship with the newcomer.

As the saying goes, more friends mean more paths.

If they couldn't make it here in the future, they could still go to the Anshan City Awakened Association. Given Gu Ze's relationship with the chairman, taking care of them would be easy.

Thinking of this, many people looked at the members of the Crescent Squad with envy.

Among those who built a good relationship with Gu Ze during this time, there was no one else besides the Crescent Squad.

"Brother Jin, we really envy you guys."

Someone nearby said, "When Gu Ze left just now, he even specially greeted you and said he would always remember your help."

"Yes, if you encounter trouble in the future and contact him, he definitely won't refuse."

"Even if he can't help much, that Chairman Li behind him wouldn't sit idly by."

"Yes, yes."

Many people echoed, their envy and jealousy evident.

"Oh, it's just a small effort."

Jin Quan waved his hand repeatedly.

At that time, he didn't overthink it; he just thought of helping a newcomer with a similar body enhancement type, who he related to and could help if possible.

If Gu Ze grew stronger in the future, it would only make the Crescent Squad stronger, right?

But who would have thought he had a significant background, much stronger than their D-level Awakener status.

Gu Ze going to the Anshan City Awakened Association, directly under the chairman's cultivation, was far better than hunting outside with them.

He would be lying if he said he didn't envy him.

But really, he didn't expect any repayment or anything.

However, the other members of the squad didn't think the same.

Especially the two men, one red-haired and the other tall and thin, looked remorseful and guilty.

Had they known, they wouldn't have said anything disdainful about the guy, at least not in his presence while out in the wild.

The only relief was that their captain had been kind and said he would personally take him to hunt Mid-level Fierce Beasts tomorrow.

If something unfortunate happened in the future and they needed help, the other party would likely not refuse considering the captain's attitude.

However.

They recalled what Chairman Li said before he left, and their expressions changed.

Was there going to be another Beast Tide soon?

Really?

The last Beast Tide was two years ago, right?

That time, Wang City almost fell; many Awakened died, like the squad the captain was previously with, everyone except the chairman perished under the claws of Fierce Beasts.

If it happens again...

They dared not think further.

At the same time, in the chairman's office.

Several C-level Awakened looked at Su Yu sitting in the boss's chair with a solemn expression, eyes filled with confusion.

"Chairman, hasn't that guy named Li already left?"

"Yes, to get rid of him, Chairman, you even gave Gu two thousand points; it wasn't necessary. Two thousand points isn't a lot but it's not little either."

"As long as we could get rid of that plague, it would be worth it, even if it were four or five thousand points."

"That's true."

Others nodded in agreement.

They were genuinely afraid that Li Ping would suddenly say he was here to challenge them.

That would be awkward.

If they accepted, they might not be able to win, losing both points and face.

If they didn't accept, with so many people watching, refusing wasn't an option.

"Chairman, why aren't you saying anything?"

Someone asked.

Since returning, the chairman had been preoccupied.

Li Ping leaving should be a cause for joy, right?

"I'm thinking about something."

Su Yu lay back in his chair, frowning.

"Thinking about something?"

"What is it?"

"Do you all remember what Li Ping said before he left?"

"What he said before leaving?"

"What words?"

Two people looked at each other in confusion.

One person on the far right suddenly widened his eyes, "I remember, he said he had reliable information that a Beast Tide would break out again soon, and warned you to prepare."

"What! Another Beast Tide?"

"Beast Tide!"

In an instant, the joyful atmosphere in the room disappeared.

A sense of fear spread.

Beast Tide, they could never forget the scene of Fierce Beasts swarming from all directions, blocking out the sky, sometimes even emerging from underground, catching the city's people off guard!!!

"Chairman, do you think what Li Ping said is true?"

"Impossible, right? He's not a Fierce Beast, how could he know when a Beast Tide would break out?"

"Exactly, Chairman, I think Li Ping was just being mysterious, saying some scary stuff, don't take it to heart."

"No."

Su Yu shook his head, "Do you all remember when the last Beast Tide broke out?"

"Of course."

A C-level Awakened responded without hesitation, "Two years ago? I wasn't even a C-level Awakened then."

"Right, I remember it was two years ago too. The situation was critical, if not for a B-level Awakened from nearby Frost City, Wang City would have fallen."

"Yes, so does anyone remember when the Beast Tide before that broke out?" Su Yu continued.

"The one before?"

They looked at each other.

Some of them only arrived in Wang City in the past two or three years.

"If I remember correctly, it should be four or five years ago."

An older-looking Awakened thought, "At that time, I wasn't even a D-level Awakened, I could barely use superpowers. After the Beast Tide broke out, many of my friends died, and I survived by luck."

"Yes, four or five years ago. Does anyone know when the Beast Tide before that broke out?" Su Yu asked again.

At this, they all fell silent.

Before that?

When was that, they couldn't even remember where they were then.

At this moment, someone's eyes revealed a flash of shock and they blurted out, "Chairman, do you mean seven or eight years ago?"

"What! Seven or eight years ago?"

"This?"

The others were stunned, a chilling sensation creeping up their backs.

"Yes, seven or eight years ago."

Su Yu's expression was extremely grave, "Including the great upheaval ten years ago, there have been four Beast Tides, each about two years apart,

The first was the largest, wiping out seventy percent of Yan Country's population. The subsequent three Beast Tides were much smaller, with no Beast Emperor-level Fierce Beasts appearing,

Even so, after four Beast Tides, our country's survivors have dwindled from fifty billion to less than one billion. If this pattern continues, the fifth Beast Tide should indeed be happening."

"!!!"

They heard this, their minds buzzing.

Instinctively, they wanted to reject this possibility.

Beast Tide!

No matter the scale, it was a Beast Tide! This small city couldn't possibly withstand it.

But logic told them this was an objective pattern based on past Beast Tides, beyond anyone's control.

The first broke out ten years ago, then every two to three years subsequently, the second, third, fourth, each time.

Would the fifth break this pattern?

Would it?

Probably not...

"Chairman Li also said something before he left that you may have forgotten."

"Chairman, what else did Chairman Li say?" they asked eagerly, their tone more respectful of Li Ping.

Su Yu spoke with difficulty, "He said this Beast Tide might exceed everyone's expectations."

The room fell silent again.

They stared, minds blank.

This time's scale exceeding everyone's expectations, what did that mean?

Was it a repeat of ten years ago?

This, how could it be!

"Cha-chairman," someone stammered, "Isn't this a bit sensational? Chairman Li might be overthinking it?"

"Yes, Chairman."

"Chairman, maybe we should call Chairman Li and ask?"

Su Yu nodded, "We should ask, but not now. Chairman Li reminded us probably because we gave his brother two thousand points,

If we keep asking now, it would be inappropriate. I'll find a chance to ask later, but we should indeed make preparations, at least send our families to nearby medium or large cities."

"Hmm."

They all agreed.

Indeed, if a Beast Tide broke out, escaping themselves wouldn't be hard, but their families couldn't.

You should be prepared for anything.

Chapter 307: Are You Going to Attack Us?

The sky was slightly dark, and from time to time, the roars of beasts could be heard from afar.

The Anshan City Awakened Association was ablaze with lights, creating a lively scene.

Gu Ze followed Chen Fan and stepped into the hall.

In the next moment, dozens of gazes in the hall gathered and fell on Chen Fan.

"President!"

"Good evening, President."

"Greetings, President."

Many people bowed and showed respect in their eyes.

"Hmm."

Chen Fan nodded slightly and glanced around, asking, "Where is the Vice President?"

Everyone exchanged looks, then their gazes fell on a slightly chubby middle-aged man wearing square-framed glasses.

"President."

The middle-aged man quickly stepped forward and said, "The Vice President went out with a few people. He probably won't be back for a while. If you need anything, you can just tell me."

"I see."

Chen Fan nodded slightly.

The Vice President was likely handling the second task Chen Fan assigned, which was reclaiming land.

"He is my friend. Arrange a rest room for him later."

"Yes, President."

The chubby man cautiously glanced at Gu Ze and imprinted Gu Ze's appearance in his mind.

Not only him, but everyone in the hall also stared at Gu Ze.

If the President said this person was his friend, their relationship must be close, right?

Just looking at this person, he seems a bit inexperienced, not too difficult to deal with. Maybe in the future, they could build a good relationship with him to please the President.

Chen Fan nodded and looked at Gu Ze, saying, "Follow me."

Gu Ze was startled and quickly said, "Yes, President."

Honestly, he was a bit nervous on the way here.

Although the possibility was small, Chen Fan couldn't possibly harm him, but he still felt uncertain deep down.

However, everything that happened now allowed him to completely relax.

The two entered the elevator.

Gu Ze stood to one side, slightly lowering his head, not daring to make a sound.

Chen Fan found it amusing.

This boy had grown quite a bit during this time.

In the past, in the village, he was always very cocky, defiant toward everyone. After being outside for a few days, now seeing a strong person, he had learned to be low-key.

However, Chen Fan had no intention of revealing his identity to him.

Of course, it wasn't because he didn't trust Gu Ze, it just wasn't necessary.

The elevator doors opened, and the two of them entered the President's office one after the other.

Looking at the grand decoration inside the room, Gu Ze took a deep breath and said, "Pres... President, thank you for bringing me from Wang City, Chen Fan, he?"

"He's in seclusion for cultivation. He should come out in a few days, and he'll message you then."

"Alright."

Gu Ze silently breathed a sigh of relief.

When he meets Chen Fan, he plans to ask him about how he knows this big figure.

"President, please take this card."

In the next moment, he took out a Points Card worth two thousand points from his pocket and presented it with both hands.

"What is this for?"

Chen Fan frowned, "Do you think that I, a dignified President, would lack the two thousand points on your card?"

"No, no, President, that's not what I meant, I..."

"Enough, someone gave this to you, just keep it. In the coming days, focus on your cultivation here. If you have any questions regarding cultivation, you can ask me or others. If you go out hunting, be cautious."

"Yes, yes."

Gu Ze nodded repeatedly.

"Hmm, if there's nothing else, you can leave now."

"Yes, President."

Gu Ze gratefully looked at Chen Fan, put away the card, opened the door and walked out, closing the door carefully.

"Phew..."

After all this, he finally exhaled lightly.

What a terrifying aura.

Just one glance made his heart skip a beat.

However, to be fair, this President was indeed nice, not only bringing him from Wang City but also giving him two thousand points.

Two thousand points!

Gu Ze licked his lips, curious about what kind of good things he could unlock in the mall with these points.

He turned around and hadn't walked far when the slightly chubby man from the hall downstairs came up smiling.

"Young brother."

"Hello," Gu Ze greeted quickly.

He wasn't stupid, from everyone's behavior earlier, he knew this kind middle-aged man in front of him must have a high position here.

"Young brother isn't even twenty yet, call me Brother Chu if you don't mind," Chu He said with a smile, "What's your surname?"

"Brother Chu, my surname is Gu, as in the flood and expanse of 'Ze'." Gu Ze replied hurriedly.

"So, it's Brother Gu, haha, I have already arranged the matter the President mentioned earlier. Brother Gu, if you have time, come with me."

"Thank you, Brother Chu."

"Haha, it's nothing. After looking at the room, I'll show you around the Association and introduce you to some people. The more, the merrier, right?"

The two walked away, and naturally, their conversation fell word by word into Chen Fan's ears.

"Chu He, right."

Chen Fan's lips curled slightly.

He didn't mind people having some self-serving motives, after all, that's human nature. Besides, with their help, Gu Ze's growth would accelerate.

He really didn't have much time to spend on Gu Ze himself.

"Next, it's time to relocate the people from the village into the city. I hope the Vice President won't disappoint me. Coming up..."

He walked towards the door.

The package sent from the headquarter of the Martial Arts Association had already arrived.

With new equipment in hand, he'd go to test its power against elite-level fierce beasts tomorrow morning, maybe even try it against a few commander-level fierce beasts.

Additionally, he had a Cloud Jade Fruit.

However, he felt that it might not help much now that he's broken through to the True Essence Realm.

Currently, with twenty to thirty circulations of True Essence, he could increase a point of True Essence in about half an hour.

The last Cloud Jade Fruit he took only increased his True Qi by less than a thousand points, which meant about ten points of True Essence.

It had some use, but not much.

"Since that's the case, it's better to save it to help others break through to the Meridian Refining Realm."

This thought emerged in Chen Fan's mind.

For instance, Uncle Zhang, his father, and Sun Wei.

Because of his unwillingness to compromise, Sun Wei didn't get compensation from the headquarters. So he'd give him an eighth of the Cloud Jade Fruit to help him breakthrough from Transforming Force to Meridian Refining.

...

Meanwhile, in a villa's living room on the northern hilltop, it was also brightly lit and crowded with people.

Unlike the Awakened Association, these people included adults, elderly, and children, nearly a hundred people.

At the front, several figures stood, the leader being Vice President Hua Jun.

"Hua Jun, did you call all of us here because you found out who killed my elder brother?" asked a man who looked somewhat similar to Yan Ming, showing no respect.

"Who exactly is the bastard that killed my son?" said a well-dressed old woman with a gnashing expression.

"Damn it, if I find out who he is, I'll finish him off to avenge my brother!"

"Killing him is too easy, at least he should be chopped into pieces!"

Everyone spoke one after another, clearly, they were either Yan Ming's friends and family, or former President Gao Jinming's family.

Therefore, they didn't have any respect for the people in front of them.

"Alright, everyone quiet down."

Hua Jun had a huge headache.

After several attempts, the noisy crowd finally quieted down and glared at him.

"I called everyone here today to discuss another matter."

"What, another matter?"

"Another matter?"

"What other matter? Hua Jun, you called us here not to tell us about the killer?"

"Sorry, the investigation is ongoing."

Hua Jun apologized, "The headquarters said they would send Hunters, but the specific time is unknown."

"What, you don't know?"

"Why call us here if you don't know?"

"It's been so long, you still don't know who the killer is? What is the Awakened Association doing!"

"What did you say!"

This statement angered several people beside Hua Jun.

In the past, when Yan Ming and others were around, these people acted superior, but now, Yan Ming and they are dead, most of these people are ordinary, even the few martial artists or awakeners are useless in combat, so what's with the arrogance?

The person who said this seemed to realize the situation had changed, shrank back, but stubbornly said, "Since you don't know who the killer is, calling us all here is a waste of time."

"Exactly, Hua Jun, if there's nothing else, we'll leave and come back when you have news about the killer."

"Not interested, let's leave."

"Speechless."

A group of people said, getting up and heading for the door.

"President!" Several awakeners were furious seeing this.

"Wait!"

Hua Jun frowned and suppressed his displeasure, saying, "Everyone, I haven't finished speaking, you can't leave yet."

As soon as he spoke, two awakeners blocked the path.

Instantly, the atmosphere became tense.

The previously arrogant crowd now showed fear.

After all, they were ordinary people, even skilled ones were limited, and definitely not a match for these few.

Blocked, it was natural to be scared.

Realizing this, many looked at the man who resembled Yan Ming.

He was Yan Ming's brother, and most importantly, he was also an awakener.

"Hua Jun, what do you mean?"

Yan Hao turned around angrily, "My brother's body is still warm, and we don't know the killer, but you're eager to act against us?"

Chapter 308: Do I Need to Make Myself Even Clearer?

Upon hearing Yan Hao's words, Hua Jun felt overwhelmed.

He had long anticipated this scene, or rather, this was just the beginning. When he revealed the Chairman's words later, he expected a far more intense reaction.

However, Li Ping was someone he had desperately tried to retain, and he should be the one to support Li Ping the most within the Association.

With that in mind, he sighed softly and said, "Yan Hao, please sit down first."

Upon hearing this, Yan Hao stared at him with unyielding eyes.

Hua Jun remained silent.

The two Awakeners blocking everyone's path also stood motionless.

Clearly, without Hua Jun's permission, no one present could leave.

"Alright, Hua Jun."

Yan Hao said hatefully, "When my brother was around, you didn't act this way. Now that he's dead, you can't wait to show your claws. Fine, fine."

He spoke while sitting down, "Let's hear it then, why did you call us here today."

Seeing this, the others exchanged glances and sat back down.

"Ahem."

Hua Jun cleared his throat and swept his gaze over everyone present, "What I'm about to say is very important, I hope you all pay serious attention."

"Stop beating around the bush! Say what you need to say!"

"Yeah, Hua Jun, stop pretending here."

"Hurry up, I need to go back to sleep."

A group of people said irritably.

They usually didn't think much of Hua Jun, and now he was flaunting himself in front of them, how could they not be angry?

"Alright, I'll get to the point. You all know what situation Anshan City is in now that the City Lord and Chairman are in trouble. It may seem peaceful now, but who knows when chaos will arise? For example, cultists, fugitives, and what if a Beast Tide breaks out again? Do you think we can fend it off?"

His words brought about a sudden silence.

Fear showed in many people's eyes.

They were not very afraid of cultists and fugitives; Anshan City was big enough that if any cultist sneaked in, it wouldn't be them who were unlucky.

But a Beast Tide?

That's definitely disastrous.

"So?"

Yan Hao squinted his eyes and asked.

"So, I invited a powerful Awakener to serve as the Chairman of our Anshan City Awakened Association. His strength among C-level Awakeners is top-tier,

capable of easily killing other C-level Awakeners. Even an Elite-level Fierce Beast like the Fire Scaly Pig is no different from ordinary Elite-level Fierce Beasts before him. This, not only I but other members of the Association know very well."

Saying this, Hua Jun looked at the others.

"Indeed, we have all witnessed it personally. The Chairman's strength is top-tier among C-level Awakeners."

"It might even be close to a B-level Awakener."

"With the Chairman overseeing, should a Beast Tide break out, we might hold it off."

Several people spoke one after another.

The elderly, women, and children in the crowd relaxed upon hearing this.

So Hua Jun had already thought of a countermeasure, easing their worries for nothing.

However, some young men looked cautious, their instincts telling them that if it was that simple, Hua Jun wouldn't need to call them all here.

In the next moment, Hua Jun's words confirmed their suspicion.

"After our persuasion, he agreed to stay and serve as our Chairman, protecting Anshan City, but he has one condition."

Hua Jun took a deep breath and said, "He hopes to buy the vacant land in your hands at market price to arrange housing for people outside the city."

His words were like a heavy stone thrown into a calm lake, causing a huge commotion.

"What? He wants our land?"

"Take our land?"

"No way! Absolutely not!"

The crowd became very agitated, some even stood up, shouting loudly.

Hua Jun frowned deeply and had to shout, "Everyone, calm down, calm down."

It took a while for the noise to subside, but everyone still looked at Hua Jun as if they wanted to tear him apart.

"You misunderstood me."

Hua Jun said helplessly, "It's not about taking your land, it's about buying your land at market price."

"Buying is not okay either!"

"That's right, it's my land, just because he wants to buy it means I have to sell it?"

"Exactly, even at market price, if I want to sell, I could easily get double or triple the market price from others."

"Hua Jun, you tell that guy to get lost. Just arrived in Anshan City and already targeting our land?"

"Let him scram!"

Everyone was talking over each other.

The entire hall became chaotic.

The Awakeners looked at each other helplessly.

They had foreseen this scene from Hua Jun's words, as touching their interests is harder than touching their souls, and these people, used to luxury, would never agree to this.

Several minutes passed, and the crowd showed no signs of stopping, even directing their anger towards Hua Chen.

"Hua Chen, you called us here just for this? You traitor, teaming up with outsiders to target our land. Are you even a human?"

"Right, Hua Chen, when Jin Ming was around, didn't realize you were this scheming. Hmm? Now that Jin Ming is missing, you're getting bold? I'm telling you, Jin Ming is missing, not dead. When he comes back, you'll pay for this!"

"Hua Chen, you despicable scoundrel!"

"Hua Chen, you coward, if my Brother Fang were here, would you dare say this to us?"

Hua Jun was being verbally attacked fiercely, his anger rising rapidly.

Although he had anticipated such responses, being cursed to his face felt different.

Still, he restrained his anger and waited for the crowd to throw their tempers before speaking, "Everyone, no matter how much you curse me, it won't change the reality. The new Chairman has been appointed and his words must be heard by everyone present, including me, Association members, the City Lord's Mansion, and everyone here. If ignored, the consequences will be severe."

"Hua Jun, are you threatening us?"

The crowd got even angrier.

They thought their attitude would make Hua Jun retreat, instead, things escalated.

"Sigh."

Hua Jun sighed deeply, "You lot occupy over half of Anshan City's land, what's the use of that?"

"I can leave it there, what's the problem?"

"Exactly, it's our choice."

Hua Jun ignored the comments and continued, "The Chairman's intention is clear, hoping you can give up the land for those in need, not for free, but at market price. Additionally, he promises your safety in Anshan City. Isn't this good?"

"Good my ass! We don't need him to guarantee our safety!"

"That's right, we're living well here, no Beast Tide, Hua, stop fear-mongering!"

Hua Jun was greeted with intense curses again.

Hua Jun said helplessly, "Do I really have to spell it out for you?"

Everyone was shocked.

"When the City Lord was around, you could do as you please, even broad daylight robbery with no consequences. But now? Things have changed."

Hua Jun sighed, "The City Lord and Chairman Gao are dead or missing, likely gone. You have no one behind you anymore. Having precious resources while defenseless, knowing what you've done,

anyone would target you without rounds of talk. Not just the Chairman, even we could easily deal with you, right?"

The crowd's faces turned sour.

"So, take Chairman's olive branch. Though losing land, you'll gain wealth, ensuring an easy life elsewhere. This is my sincere advice considering past acquaintance."

Hua Jun sighed again.

Honestly, he didn't want to take it this far.

Despite the harsh earlier words, he held back his anger.

But, firstly, the Chairman's orders had to be obeyed, and secondly, if this brings the Chairman here...

He didn't want to imagine further.

His words had an effect.

The chaotic crowd fell silent like quails.

They weren't stupid, understanding Hua Jun's undertone.

But they felt reluctant and angry!

In the past, no one in Anshan City dared to touch them, not even a hair strand!

Now, a newcomer wanted their core asset! Who could swallow this insult?

Seeing this, Hua Jun sighed again, "Do I need to clarify further?"

Whispers began among the crowd.

Many looked at Yan Hao, who stayed silent, pretending oblivion.

Someone finally buckled under pressure, tentatively asking, "Chairman Hua, can we get a higher price if we agree to sell?"

Chapter 309: Nobody Gets Off Easy!

"Indeed, Chairman Hua, acquiring land at market price is far too low. There's only so much land in the city. It's unrealistic to think one could buy it at market price, don't you think?"

"At the very least, it should be twice or even three times that amount, right?"

"If it's really at market price, it's not impossible, but to take all the land we have at once, isn't that too harsh?"

"Exactly, Chairman Hua, we've known each other for quite a few years and have always got along well. Why would you turn against us like this?"

"Chairman Hua, could you put in a good word for us with that chairman? We won't let you do it for nothing."

Everyone began speaking up one after another.

As the saying goes, a wise man doesn't suffer immediate losses. If it came to it, they could just sell off a portion first.

Hua Jun shook his head and said, "I'm sorry, but there's no room for negotiation on this matter."

The atmosphere fell silent once again.

Everyone clenched their teeth in anger.

That guy was too merciless. Was he determined to take everything from them?

Without the land, how would they be any different from others in the city?

"Chairman Hua, does that person behind you really intend to go through with this so ruthlessly?" At this moment, Yan Hao, who had been silent all along, suddenly spoke up.

"Chairman Hua, this Anshan City was founded by my elder brother and his associates. The land we own is rightfully ours. Now that my brothers are gone, some stranger emerges to rob us of our property. Can you say this is just?"

The previously silent crowd immediately found their voices, echoing his sentiment.

Hua Jun sighed lightly and looked at Yan Hao, saying, "Brother Yan, I didn't want to bring this up, but you're forcing my hand. Yes, your families do have the right to own large plots of land in Anshan City.

However, there were many families who were allocated land back then. Why is it now that other families' lands have all ended up in your hands? You currently own half the land in Anshan City. Do I need to elaborate on what happened?"

"You!" Yan Hao's face showed a hint of guilt.

Not only him, but most of the people behind him lowered their heads.

Hua Jun was right. When Anshan City was first established, their families were not very well-known.

The ones who seized large portions of land were others.

But later, the key figures of those families either died or were incapacitated. Naturally, their land was transferred to other families through various means.

A few years passed, and they transformed into the most powerful families in Anshan City.

Heaven's cycle never misses; now, the retribution for their past deeds had come.

However, their opponent was far more tactful than they had been.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I have said what I should and shouldn't. If you still refuse to cooperate, don't blame me for disregarding our past relationships."

Hua Jun scanned the room as he spoke.

Although the chairman had said he could call him any time if there were difficulties,

the people present were not that powerful. If he couldn't handle it, wouldn't that be too incompetent of him?

Sure enough, when he said this, everyone's faces showed signs of fear.

As the saying goes, the situation dictates the approach.

No matter how resentful they felt, what could they do?

If they refused to cooperate, they might end up losing both their properties and their lives, which would be a total loss.

"Sigh."

Yan Hao suddenly sighed, looking as if he had aged ten years in an instant.

"Chairman Hua, if we give up the land, would that person really stop troubling us and even protect us afterwards?"

Hua Jun's eyes showed a hint of surprise. He hadn't expected the usually proud Yan Hao to succumb to reality so quickly.

But with him taking the lead, the others would be much easier to deal with.

He nodded and said, "Rest assured, the chairman is not a petty person. As I've mentioned before, he's reclaiming the land from you not for personal use, but to allow people outside the city to move in."

"What? Let people from outside the city move in?"

"Give our land to them to live on?"

"On what basis?"

For the first time, the group seemed to realize the intended use of the land, each of them staring in astonishment.

To them, those outside the city were inferior, by definition beneath them by several levels.

How could these inferior people be allowed to live in the same city as them?

"Enough, this is the chairman's decision, and you don't need to know why."

Hua Jun waved his hand. He didn't fully understand either.

But his job was to execute the chairman's orders, not question them.

"In any case, once you sell the land to the chairman, you won't need to worry. He doesn't have the time or need to harm you. If there are no other objections, let's sign the transfer contracts now!"

Two Awakeners behind him immediately produced the prepared documents.

The people inside the room looked at each other.

They finally understood that they had no choice in the matter; unless they signed the contract, they wouldn't be able to leave.

Hua Jun was truly ruthless!

"Brother Yan, why don't you start?" Hua Jun said with a smile.

All eyes turned to Yan Hao, some glaring, others swallowing nervously.

"Alright."

Yan Hao responded with a faint smile. He stepped forward, glanced at the pre-drafted contract, signed his name, and pressed his thumbprint.

"Chairman Hua, is this fine?"

"Yes, thank you, Brother Yan. The money will be transferred to your account within three days. Please be patient."

Hua Jun replied with a smile.

"Well then, thank you, Chairman Hua. If there's nothing else, I'll take my leave now."

"Please, Brother Yan."

Yan Hao smiled, turned around, left his family behind, and walked out alone. As he walked, his smile grew colder, and his eyes filled with intense resentment.

Those lands and even the entire Anshan City belonged to the Yan Family!

Now, not only had most of Anshan City, but also more than ninety percent of the land had been taken from them. How could he accept this?

"Chairman Li, right? And you, Hua Jun, if the Yan Family can't have it, neither can you!"

His face twisted with rage as he quickly disappeared into the night.

...

In the Anshan City Martial Arts Branch Association.

Sun Wei pushed open the door to the cultivation room, and a voice immediately greeted him, "Chairman, you're here."

"Yes, I am."

Sun Wei entered, carefully shutting the door behind him, and curiously asked, "Brother Chen, is there something you need from me?"

"Yes."

Chen Fan smiled and asked, "Chairman, do you wish to break through to the Meridian Refining Realm?"

Sun Wei was taken aback.

Then he nodded enthusiastically and said, "Yes, of course, I dream about it!"

Chen Fan chuckled, "What if I told you there's a way to immediately break through to the Meridian Refining Realm? Would you be willing to try?"

"A way to immediately break through to the Meridian Refining Realm?"

Sun Wei's mouth hung open in astonishment.

Is there really such a method in this world?

If there were, wouldn't the association be full of Meridian Refining Martial Artists by now?

Suddenly, a thought occurred to him, and his voice trembled, "Brother Chen, the method you mentioned, could it be that?"

"It appears the chairman knows."

Chen Fan said, placing a piece of Cloud Jade Fruit on the table.

"This!"

Sun Wei's eyes widened, and after a moment, he exclaimed, "Cloud, Cloud Jade Fruit?"

"That's right, it's Cloud Jade Fruit."

Chen Fan nodded, "If a Meridian Refining Martial Artist consumes this, it can increase the Primordial True Qi within their body. If an Entry Force Martial Artist consumes it, it also increases the Primordial True Qi within their body."

However, since their meridians are not opened, there's no place to store this True Qi, which could harm their veins and organs. But if a skilled person aids them by opening their meridians, that's a different story."

Chen Fan finished speaking, smiling as he looked at Sun Wei, "Chairman, if you trust me, consume this piece of Cloud Jade Fruit, and leave the rest to me."

"I trust you, of course I trust you."

Sun Wei nodded like a pecking chicken.

As for Chen Fan's strength, others might not know, but he was fully aware.

Even if he wasn't at the True Essence Realm, he was close. With such a strong person assisting, what did he have to worry about?

However,

his gaze fell on the piece of Cloud Jade Fruit.

Such a rare and precious item, even though it was just a piece, was it really okay for him to use it?

"Chairman, if you're worried about the price of this item, there's no need."

Chen Fan smiled, "I still have plenty in my possession, and this time helping you is also to compensate for what happened this morning."

"Th-this,"

Sun Wei quickly waved his hands, "That incident wasn't worth mentioning, really."

Chen Fan shook his head with a smile, "Alright, Chairman, there's no need to say anything more. Just consume this piece of Cloud Jade Fruit, and leave the rest to me."

"Alright!"

Gritting his teeth, Sun Wei made his decision.

Since he had this opportunity, he should seize it. Hesitating might make him miss the chance forever.

He sat down on the mat, placed the piece of Cloud Jade Fruit into his mouth, and swallowed it.

Instantly, pain appeared on his face.

Underneath his skin, several streams of energy surged. At that moment, he felt a warmth on his back, calming the restless energies within his body.

Then, the energies began to converge in one direction.

With a "boom,"

it felt as if something inside him had broken, and a familiar sensation emerged.

"Is this True Qi?" Sun Wei's eyes flew open.

Indeed, after consuming the Cloud Jade Fruit, True Qi had appeared within his body,

though it was uncontrollable and volatile.

As he pondered this, several more breaking sounds occurred.

Most of the True Qi within his body dissipated, leaving only a faint presence.

"It seems that the True Qi provided by the Cloud Jade Fruit can only go so far."

Chen Fan retracted his hand quietly.

Theoretically, he could continue opening Sun Wei's meridians, but the cost was too high.

According to the association's research, without the aid of the Cloud Jade Fruit, a Meridian Refining Martial Artist could channel their True Qi into an Entry Force Martial Artist to help them break through,

but this method was risky. If mishandled, it could cause irreversible damage to the latter and backfire on the former.

Moreover, it was not worth it.

The Meridian Refining Martial Artist's Primordial True Qi was finite, while the Entry Force Martial Artist gained only a fraction of it.

Hence, this technique was also known as "transmission of power."

Anyone with sense wouldn't do it.

Chapter 310: One Step Behind, Every Step Behind

Feeling the hand on his back move away, Sun Wei couldn't wait to open his eyes. He turned around to look at Chen Fan, and asked nervously, "Brother Chen, I...?"

"Yes."

At some point, Chen Fan had already stood up. Hearing him, he smiled slightly and said, "President, you are now, without a doubt, a Meridian Refining Realm Martial Artist."

"!"

Sun Wei's breathing became rapid instantly. Then, two streams of hot tears fell from his eyes.

"I... I am already a Meridian Refining Realm Martial Artist, a Meridian Refining Realm Martial Artist?"

"Meridian Refining Realm, Meridian Refining Realm..."

He was so excited that he couldn't speak coherently.

Chen Fan stood beside him, smiling silently.

In his mind, the image of Zhang Ren appeared.

If Uncle Zhang broke through to the Meridian Refining Realm, would he also have this kind of reaction?

He just had some doubts.

When Uncle Zhang was still a Dark Power Martial Artist, he helped him clear his meridians. Was it a bit too hasty?

The president in front of him, although an Entry Force Martial Artist, his realm had already reached Transforming Force. It could be said that he was just a step away from the breakthrough.

"Just in case, it's better to wait for Uncle Zhang to become a powerful Martial Artist before helping him break through."

Chen Fan made up his mind.

At this moment, Sun Wei also woke up from his excitement.

"Brother Chen, I..."

Chen Fan waved his hand and said, "President, there's no need to say more thanks. What I did just now was merely helping you clear the previous few acupoints. When your true qi recovers, you can try to control this true qi yourself to impact the next acupoint. However, President, you must be careful not to be too hasty. Maintain a calm and composed heart."

Besides waiting for your true qi to recover on its own, President, you can also spend money to buy True Qi Pills from the association to replenish your true qi for easier impact during Chong Meridian."

"Good, good."

Sun Wei nodded repeatedly, unable to express his gratitude in words.

"Alright, that's all for now. If you encounter any problems in your cultivation in the future, feel free to ask me at any time."

Chen Fan smiled and said.

"Alright, alright, I will go back for now and ponder over it."

Sun Wei stood up, expressed his gratitude to Chen Fan several times, then opened the door and walked out.

At the moment he closed the door, he pumped his fist vigorously.

"President?"

Suddenly, a voice sounded in front of him.

Sun Wei looked up and saw Tu Yue and Gao Shan looking at him with strange expressions.

"Ahem."

He put his fist in front of his mouth, coughed lightly, and said, "What a coincidence? Are you going for training?"

"Yes, I wanted to ask Brother Gao for some guidance," Tu Yue said.

"It's just a spar, just a spar," Gao Shan smiled, then stared at Sun Wei curiously, "President, just now you...?"

"Oh, nothing, nothing, hahaha."

Sun Wei laughed it off, "You are going to spar, then go ahead, don't mind me, hahaha."

After saying that, he walked quickly ahead.

Tu Yue and Gao Shan exchanged glances.

"Something's strange."

"I also think it's a bit odd."

The two nodded simultaneously, then quickly followed.

"President, President," Tu Yue jogged ahead, stopping Sun Wei's path, smiling, "President, are you hiding something good from us?"

Sun Wei froze.

"Tu Yue is right."

Gao Shan pondered, "President, knowing you for so many years, I've never seen you this happy."

"Really, there's nothing," Sun Wei hastily waved his hand.

But the more he looked like this, the more Tu Yue and Gao Shan's curiosity grew.

"President, that's not fair."

"Yes, President, if something happened in the past, you always told us. Now you have good news, but you keep it to yourself. That's not right."

The two spoke one after another.

"Good news? What good news?"

Xu Jie walked over from a distance, asked curiously.

"The President is not willing to say, we are trying to find out," Tu Yue said.

"President, that's not fair of you," Xu Jie shouted, "What can't you tell us?"

Seeing more and more people gathering around, Sun Wei said helplessly, "Do you really want to know?"

"Nonsense!"

Xu Jie's eyes lit up, urging, "President, we are close friends. If there's something good, tell us so we can be happy for you."

"Yes, yes, tell us quickly."

"President, stop hiding."

"Alright."

Sun Wei sighed, looked around, and said, "Let's go to the conference room and talk."

The three glanced at each other and nodded.

They entered the conference room. Sun Wei was the last to enter. After walking in, he peeked outside to make sure no one was around, then gently closed the door.

"President," Tu Yue rolled her eyes, "Did you go out to be a thief? Why are you acting so sneaky?"

"Not really a thief, but it is kind of weird."

"Indeed."

"More like a thief..."

Sun Wei was speechless. Sitting on a chair, he said, "Actually, I didn't plan to tell you so soon. I originally wanted to wait a while."

"Hurry up and tell us."

The three urged.

"Alright."

Sun Wei glanced at the three, then slowly said:

"Just now, I broke through."

The conference room instantly fell silent. Tu Yue, Gao Shan, and the others stared at him in shock as if their souls had left their bodies.

After a long time, Gao Shan stammered, "President, did you just say you broke through?"

"President, are you now in the Meridian Refining Realm?" Tu Yue's mouth dropped open.

"Yes."

Sun Wei nodded somewhat embarrassedly.

He mainly felt that this breakthrough owed a lot to Chen Fan. If he had broken through by his own strength, that would have been something worth announcing to the world.

The trio exchanged glances, shock and excitement alternating in their eyes.

Two or three years ago, the president was already a powerful Martial Artist. All this time, he still couldn't break through that final barrier to become a Meridian Refining Martial Artist.

But today, the president broke through!

Their comrades felt astonished but mostly happy.

First, they were happy for Sun Wei's hard-earned breakthrough, and second, they thought they might receive guidance from Sun Wei when they reached Transforming Force.

"President, you are so strong!"

Xu Jie couldn't help but give a thumbs up.

"Amazing. President, you're the first one in the Anshan City Martial Arts Association to break through to the Meridian Refining Realm, right?"

"Not counting Brother Chen, that should be the case."

He added.

This morning, the corpse in the conference room was still fresh in his memory.

Chen Fan's strength was probably far beyond the Meridian Refining Realm.

But even if the president was the second in the branch office to break through to the Meridian Refining Realm, it was still impressive. Unlike them, most hadn't even reached Transforming Force, let alone the Meridian Refining Realm.

"President, how did you break through? Can you also give us a few pointers?" Gao Shan asked eagerly.

He was now a powerful Martial Artist and had taken a lot of Top-Grade Qi Blood Pills recently but still couldn't sense the qi within his body.

"President, wait a moment," Tu Yue suddenly stood up and said, "I'll go get the others, so they can also come and hear."

"Wait, Tu Yue, don't rush."

Sun Wei quickly extended his hand and said, "You first listen to what I have to say."

"Listen to you finish?"

Tu Yue sat down in confusion.

"Actually, this breakthrough has nothing to do with me. It was entirely Brother Chen's credit."

Sun Wei smiled bitterly.

He found it really difficult to share his insights on the breakthrough.

"Brother Chen's credit?"

"President, you mean Brother Chen guided you to break through?" Gao Shan asked excitedly.

Yes, he should have thought of that earlier!

Maybe after leaving the conference room, he could also ask Brother Chen for some guidance.

"It's not guidance."

Sun Wei shook his head with a bitter smile, "Brother Chen used a treasure called Cloud Jade Fruit to force me to break through."

"Cloud Jade Fruit?"

"Cloud Jade Fruit!"

The three were initially stunned, then their eyes widened again.

They had heard of this thing too.

After consumption, it could increase the true qi in a martial artist's body. For those without true qi, it could also be effective.

However, the risk was immense. Even with a master protecting, the risk was considerable.

Therefore, while the Cloud Jade Fruit was precious, finding a master to protect was equally challenging.

"Yes."

Sun Wei sighed and said, "Brother Chen first had me consume a piece of the Cloud Jade Fruit. Then he helped me clear a few acupoints, giving my true qi a place to settle down and calm. So, I did break through, but it wasn't through my own strength. It was with external help."

After hearing this, the three showed deep shock in their eyes.

The seniors in the association had mentioned that protecting a powerful Martial Artist was perilous. Even the presidents at the headquarters were not fully confident in doing so.

But from the president's account, it seemed so effortless...

Brother Chen was too strong?

"So, in terms of guiding you, I probably can't help much in the short term. After all, I broke through with someone else's help and don't even understand how it happened myself."

Sun Wei said awkwardly, "But don't worry, once I become familiar with my true qi, I'll share my insights with you. Maybe it could help you in the future."

"It's okay, President. We still have a long way to go before breaking through. We can wait," Tu Yue said with a smile.

"Yes, yes. Besides, President, don't say things like relying on external help to break through. Isn't it still a breakthrough?" Xu Jie frowned, "Saying things like that, it's like you're bragging to us."

"Exactly."

Gao Shan nodded vigorously.

What does it matter if you break through with external help?

Isn't it still the Meridian Refining Realm?

In martial arts cultivation, one slow step leads to another.

Once you break through to the Meridian Refining Realm, the goal becomes very clear. As long as you clear eight meridians and open up the Elixir Field and Sea of Qi, you can enter the True Essence Realm.

Unlike Entry Force Martial Artists, after reaching Transforming Force, no one knows when the qi sensation will appear. It might be tomorrow, in a week, a month, a year, or even several years.

During this time, cultivation cannot slack off, for fear that a day or two of slack might delay the imminent qi sensation.

In terms of cultivation experience alone, the Meridian Refining Realm is far better than Entry Force Martial Artists.

"Sigh!"

Thinking of this, Gao Shan sighed heavily.

If given a chance, he too would like to use external help to break through to the Meridian Refining Realm.