

Menu 1221

Chapter 1221: Thief! (2)

The questioning was laced with suspicion.

Jia Youcai, of course, knew what it meant and answered immediately.

"Sister Dou Bao, these four total captains are not like me, a good-for-nothing. The Eastern City total captain has an Iron Cloth Shirt, impervious to blades and arrows. The Southern City total captain is skilled in the Five Elements Fist, best at fighting multiple opponents alone. The Western City total captain uses the Shattered Stone Kick, able to break tablets and crack stones. The three acting together have always been unstoppable

"And what about the Northern City total captain?"

Jia Youcai was just about to continue but was interrupted by Dou Bao.

It wasn't just Dou Bao; Jason also looked over curiously.

According to Jia Youcai, the three total captains of Sand City in the east, south, and west each had their specialties. What about the north?

"Ahem, ahem."

"The Northern City total captain is the uncle of the east, south, and west total captains."

Jia Youcai said after clearing his throat twice.

Immediately, Dou Bao cast a disdainful glance.

Jason retracted his gaze, once again expressionless.

As for Jia Youcai, he didn't show the slightest embarrassment and continued to speak.

"Although the Northern City headquarters itself doesn't have much skill, it is rich in experience, coordinating with the three total captains brilliantly! Besides, those dozen or so experts were carefully selected by the constabulary, each carrying nets and crossbow arrows, making it hard for ordinary thieves to escape, yet in the end, they were all killed!"

"The Iron Cloth Shirt of the Eastern City total captain was reduced to ragged clothes."

"The Southern City total captain's hands were broken."

"The Western City total captain's legs were smashed."

"And those dozen or so experts... were all cut in half, with intestines and guts spilling all over the place. When we arrived, these brothers weren't dead yet, all begging us to give them a swift end."

As if recalling the scene at that time, Jia Youcai's face turned extremely pale.

Dou Bao's face also turned unsightly.

She had seen people cut in half before.

That was during a time of famine when a group of bandits used such tactics to force them.

At the time, they wouldn't die immediately, and would wait for a long time before dying. One even managed to drag his intestines for over ten meters, staining the ground red.

She managed to crawl away in the mountain depression to escape.

Then, buried those three quietly at night.

After that?

Mixed into the next group fleeing the famine, continuing onward.

In the north, there was a drought, and the groups fleeing were plentiful.

Fortunately, she met the Master.

The memories made Dou Bao uncomfortable, but seeing Jason nearby brought her immediate comfort.

She no longer wanted to glance at Jia Youcai, instead focusing on Jason.

Jia Youcai was unconcerned.

This arrest officer picked up the tea on the table, drank it in one gulp, took a few breaths, and continued speaking.

"The master was frightened sick at that time, and we were all scared out of our wits. Fortunately, nothing happened in the following months until yesterday, when the thief left another 'note,' saying they would visit the master's house tonight to 'steal' the master's seal."

"The master immediately ordered us officials to guard the seal with our lives tonight. If the seal is lost, the master will lose his position, and we will lose our lives."

"But with our skills, we are no match for the thief; going would just mean a futile death, so we are asking Master Mu to support and oversee us."

Jia Youcai finished speaking and stood up with a mournful face, once again bowing towards Jason.

Dou Bao, who had been intently watching Jason, couldn't keep quiet after hearing this.

"Why don't you go find Peng, Zhang, Li, and Zhao?"

Dou Bao angrily exclaimed.

Clearly, this was a life-threatening situation.

The thief was ruthless, having already killed more than ten people, and was highly skilled. Although she believed her Master was the strongest, what if?

What should she do?

Suddenly, Dou Bao found Jia Youcai increasingly displeasing.

Turning around, Dou Bao picked up a broom and began to 'sweep' at Jia Youcai.

While she called it sweeping, it was more like a beating.

It resounded with a 'pa-pa-pa' sound.

Jia Youcai dodged left and right.

"I went, but the four of them said they were injured from fighting with Master Mu and couldn't handle the thief."

Jia Youcai said repeatedly.

This made Dou Bao hit him even harder.

What do you mean they couldn't handle it?

They must have gotten some intel and started avoiding, shirking."

Pa-pa-pa!

"Sister Dou Bao, let's talk it over! Let's talk it over!"

"Don't hit! My body is frail!"

"I still have an elderly mother to care for!"

Jia Youcai said repeatedly.

But Dou Bao wouldn't listen and beat him even more urgently.

She cherished her current stable life greatly, and whoever dared to ruin it, she would get angry with them.

When people are desperate, they can do anything, except solve math problems.

At first, she was careful about damaging Jia Youcai's clothing, but now Dou Bao couldn't care less.

After a few more hits, Jia Youcai had already dodged to the door. Just as Dou Bao was about to push him out, Jason suddenly spoke

"Wait."

Jason's gaze turned to Jia Youcai.

The other party's skills seemed ordinary.

They didn't have any hidden weapons on them either.

Jason had observed carefully when Dou Bao was hitting him.

And the other's earlier words should be truthful.

After all, there's no need to expose such an easily broken lie.

Since that's the case, Jason doesn't mind going to check it out.

Not just to experience this replica world, but more for the main quest.

His main quest is to gain reputation.

And what reputation could be gained faster than from the authorities?

Of course, while at it, see if he can find a ‘food channel.’

Just as a side thought, not the main one.

"Master?!"

Dou Bao looked anxiously at Jason.

Jia Youcai was overjoyed.

"Master Mu is truly righteous!"

"Defeating Peng, Zhang, Li, Zhao all alone, you truly are a hero."

"Your strength is unparalleled."

Jia Youcai was saying all sorts of flattering words.

Since they cost nothing, why not say a few more?

"Alright."

Jason waved his hand, then looked calmly at Jia Youcai.

Jia Youcai was puzzled.

Did he say something wrong just now?

Impossible.

These were all flattering words, he recites them every night before sleep, how could he have made a mistake?

Then it didn't strike a chord?

Can't be either.

Which martial arts master doesn't like hearing words like righteous and heroic?

While Jia Youcai was in a daze, Jason straightforwardly said.

"Compensation, reward."

"Oh my, you hit the nail on the head, I got excited and forgot."

"The compensation is fifty silver coins."

"The reward is three hundred silver coins, from the master privately, and it'll be given once the thief is caught. Of course, since you're coming on board, we must show our appreciation. A few of us arrest officers will chip in a hundred silver coins."

"What do you think?"

Jia Youcai first hit his forehead as if he just remembered, then immediately listed out the prices.

This made Dou Bao even angrier.

Jia Youcai must have done that on purpose.

If the master hadn't asked, this guy definitely wouldn't have said.

Or said less.

When the master went to capture the thief, things would already be set in stone.

In the end, even if the thief was caught, there would definitely be a lot less.

This tactic, Dou Bao was too familiar with.

First use flattering words to elevate someone, putting them at a disadvantage, and then reap benefits — those patrolmen and traveling merchants always did this when they came to their town.

"Sister Dou Bao, I really forgot."

"So much has happened these past two days. I'm so busy my heels are hitting my brain, no time to even sleep."

"Please forgive me."

Jia Youcai clasped his hands to Dou Bao in apology, then turned to Jason with another hand clasp and said: "Master Mu, I was a bit frantic earlier and forgot. Let me add fifty more, make it five hundred silver coins, how about that?"

After speaking, Jia Youcai cautiously watched Jason.

He truly wasn't intentional, but instinct, a habit of acting this way.

Now that the other party pointed it out, Jia Youcai dared not mess around.

He realized the man ahead was different from what he imagined.

Not only strong, but a unique way of doing things.

Nothing like those prominent figures he had encountered before.

Have to be careful!

Must not try to be sneaky!

Jia Youcai reminded himself.

"Okay."

Jason nodded.

Only then did Jia Youcai let out a sigh of relief.

"Master Mu, when do we set out?"

Jia Youcai hurriedly asked, trying to create rapport with a change of address.

"When is the thief scheduled?"

Jason asked.

"At midnight!"

Jia Youcai answered truthfully.

"No rush."

"Wait until dark."

This was Jason's response.

In the dark, he had more than just this task to handle.

If possible, settle the Chen Residence as well.

With that thought, he walked outside.

However, upon opening the door, Jason's brows suddenly furrowed.

Chapter 1222: Hidden

Malice!

A malicious gaze swept by!

Although it only lingered on Jason for a moment, with perception ten times keener than ordinary people, Jason noticed it even if it was just a split second.

Without showing any expression, Jason glanced over.

The martial arts school's gate was open.

Outside, in the afternoon, the crowd flowed without pause, no less than in the morning.

Mountain City's Martial Arts Street was one of the most bustling places, with no shortage of taverns and shops.

Some idle people or those specifically invited would consider this one of their first choices.

Especially young couples, even more so.

According to Dou Bao, a new cinema was opening by the square on Martial Arts Street, modeled after the ones in Magic Capital, very novel.

Although it's not open yet, quite a few people have already come to take a look.

Even blocked by the fence, there's liveliness in the pointing and chatting.

With such a premise, there's no shortage of yellow carts either.

At this moment, there were three yellow carts parked outside the Mu-style Martial Arts School's entrance.

Because, without passengers, the drivers lined up the carts along the roadside, and the three of them squatted on the curb chatting leisurely.

Everything seemed normal.

If not for that malicious gaze from one of them earlier.

"Is it because of Jia Youcai?"

Jason thought instinctively.

He had just arrived in this world, and besides the 'Chen Residence', he practically had no enemies.

If it was the 'Chen Residence' seeking revenge, they wouldn't be so secretive.

Of course, that assumes the 'Chen Residence' confirmed he was the one who took down Chen Tong.

Jason was quite confident in his 'stealth' abilities.

Moreover, the killer was the Masked Man, it was 'Mu Bai', nothing to do with him, Jason.

Could it be Peng, Zhang, Li, or Zhao, the four martial arts school owners?

Except for Peng Liang, whom he killed.

The remaining three most likely got dragged into this; perhaps his intrusion into Martial Arts Street hurt their interests, but they shouldn't hold a murderous intent, much less collaborate with Chen Tong.

If that were the case, he wouldn't have met only Peng Liang today.

And Peng Liang wouldn't be the only one dead.

"This thief's power is greater than imagined."

Jason sighed inwardly but wasn't surprised.

According to Jia Youcai's description, besides their formidable strength, this 'thief' should also have considerable power.

Otherwise, it couldn't have been a trap that wiped out the so-called Mountain City's southeast, northwest four arrest officers, and those skilled individuals.

Who knows Mountain City's streets better than cart drivers?

And what's less noticeable than a cart driver acting as a lookout for the 'thief'?

Imagine, who would notice a cart driver pulling through the streets and alleys of Mountain City without a reason?

Even in a remote place, at most, someone might think this driver has good business, even running here, or pitying, thinking the driver is so unlucky to end up here with an empty cart.

That's about the extent of it.

More than that?

There won't be any.

"Uncle Mu, I'll head back and rest with the brothers first, we've been really scared these past few days."

"But it's fine now, with you as the pillar, everything will be alright."

"I'll wait at the officer's place for your grand arrival."

As Jason was pondering, Jia Youcai took his leave.

As an arrest officer, Jia Youcai's strength was ordinary, but his discerning eye was first-rate.

He could tell he was unwelcome.

Although Jason didn't say it outright, his attitude was indifferent.

Dou Bao?

Still looked at him gritting his teeth.

Fortunately, Jason agreed.

On this, Jia Youcai felt reassured.

A martial artist keeps his word, once a promise is made, it's fulfilled even at the cost of life.

So, he didn't plan to linger here any longer.

"Mm."

Jason nodded slightly as a response.

Jia Youcai led his subordinates, cupped hands in farewell, and then they all left the martial arts school directly.

Jia Youcai was gone.

Yet the three yellow carts at the martial arts school's entrance remained, and the cart drivers continued chatting there.

Hmm?

Jason squinted his eyes.

"To be safe, monitor separately?"

"Different people watching each section?"

A gleam flashed in Jason's squinted eyes.

If that's really the case, then the thieves' power and plot need to be reevaluated.

Having a few scouts in a city isn't frightening.

Frightening is having scouts everywhere in the city at any time.

Perhaps even the authorities in Mountain City couldn't achieve such a level.

Just look at Jia Youcai and his group's demeanor.

Bullies the weak, fears the strong, spins tales, procrastination etched into their bones.

Want to get things done?

Impossible.

Moreover, Jason could guarantee, if he hadn't accepted Jia Youcai's invitation today, Jia Youcai would likely 'fall ill' this afternoon, and be 'down for the count'.

And it wouldn't just be Jia Youcai.

Those following Jia Youcai earlier, and those never met, would likely end up the same.

In contrast, these 'thieves'.

Meticulously arranged, extraordinarily powerful.

And—

"If there are scouts everywhere in Mountain City, these 'thieves' aim to

"Rebel?!"

Jason naturally came to this conclusion.

"The Empire has long declined, huh."

Jason thought of the [background], sneering coldly inside.

The world's great affairs follow cycles of union and division.

Already a pattern of successive alternations.

With the emergence of new powers, the process of rising, prospering, and declining is inevitable.

Chapter 1223: Hidden (2)

Perhaps among them is a resurgence, but the subsequent decline is inevitable.

This is the so-called 'law of nature'.

Even more so...

The law of humanity!

Humans, as creatures, are too contradictory.

There is nobility, and there is degradation.

They can be called heroes, yet also butchers.

There are those with a pure heart and few desires, as well as those endlessly greedy.

They can be called sages, yet also demons.

And time is the best 'seasoning'; it can make heroes fall, and can make the pure-hearted become insatiably greedy, or even become ambivalent.

A person's change is subtle and silent.

But what about a group?

Especially when this group is in high positions?

Dragons and snakes rise, heroes vie for supremacy.

However, this has nothing to do with him.

He's just a 'wandering gourmet'.

Eating and drinking is the true meaning of his life.

Why bother with those people?

As long as they don't interfere with his meals.

If they do interfere?

If they prevent him from enjoying his meals, they won't have to eat ever again.

Gurgle.

Thinking of eating, Jason's stomach couldn't help but growl.

"Dou Bao, when's dinner going to be ready?"

Jason turned his head and asked.

Ever since Jason agreed with Jia Youcai, Dou Bao had been anxious and worried.

She was really afraid something would happen to Jason.

Jia Youcai had said that even when fully prepared, many people met with mishaps.

What if something happened to their martial arts school owner...?

Dou Bao was completely lost in her thoughts.

Only when Jason spoke did she snap back to reality.

"Didn't we just have lunch?"

Instinctively, Dou Bao asked.

"I'm hungry again."

"Is there any leftover from lunch?"

"I'll have a little bite."

Jason said with a smile.

"Is there any leftovers from lunch? Don't you know, boss?"

Dou Bao pouted.

She had clearly made so much, how could it not be enough?

Not even ten people could finish it all.

This time, she won't fail.

After all, how long has it been since lunch?

The owner may be hungry, but surely just a little will fill him up.

With this thought, Dou Bao turned and walked toward the backyard, but as she headed there, she saw apprentices slack because of Jia Youcai's presence, and shouted loudly, "Focus, keep practicing."

Seeing the apprentices shrink their necks and concentrate once again, Dou Bao was satisfied as she walked toward the backyard.

With Dou Bao gone, the apprentices didn't relax.

Jason was still there.

The impact of driving away those two apprentices in the morning was still felt.

The apprentices felt a reverent respect towards the tall and burly Jason, who rarely smiled.

Immediately, they became even more serious.

They didn't want to be thrown out.

Such a situation, though not a life-ruiner, would be embarrassing.

The apprentices became focused.

Outside the door, the coachman who looked at the martial arts school with malice also focused.

Seemingly numb from squatting, he stood and shook his legs.

Yet his eyes never left Dou Bao.

"Here for Dou Bao?"

Jason was filled with astonishment.

This was something he could never have anticipated.

What secret was Dou Bao hiding?

Jason thought, shaking his head.

Since arriving in this replica world, Dou Bao had interacted with him the most, without any unusual vitality, ordinary aura, ordinary martial skills—just a refugee girl.

Other than decent cooking skills.

Nothing else.

Appearance?

Jason hadn't paid much attention.

But it seemed decent.

At least, it wouldn't spoil his appetite.

Why would such a girl be maliciously targeted?

"Because of her looks?"

"Some big shot has taken a fancy to Dou Bao?"

"Or perhaps

Jason thought, turning his back, his eyes becoming icy.

If someone is causing trouble for his cook, they're clearly trying to stop him from enjoying his meal.

Such people have no reason to remain in the world.

Moreover, if they are indeed the type he suspects...

They deserve to be sliced into a thousand pieces!

Thinking, Jason entered the hall, his figure merging into the shadows.

Outside the hall, the nine apprentices practicing boxing knew nothing of what transpired.

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"How about two rounds when picking up the car?"

The rickshaw driver nearby asked Huang Si.

With a sharp and narrow face, Huang Si listened, his fingers involuntarily rubbing together.

His hands itched.

But even so, Huang Si waved his hand.

"No, no."

"I've got something today."

"We'll talk about it tomorrow."

As he spoke, Huang Si picked up the rickshaw and ran off into the distance.

As Huang Si ran away, the rickshaw driver, who hadn't spoken before, started to mutter.

"Huang Si is a gambling addict, why would he suddenly change today?"

"Who knows?"

"Maybe he's planning to quit?"

The previous rickshaw driver finished speaking and couldn't help but laugh.

Huang Si quitting gambling?

Might as well expect the sun to rise in the west.

Someone who would sell his own wife for gambling, you expect him to quit?

What a joke.

The other rickshaw driver also started laughing.

Then the two started chatting again.

As for Huang Si?

He was just a topic of conversation, occasionally playing cards.

More than that?

Nothing.

But Huang Si believed he was about to become a big shot.

The man had already promised him, as long as he could bring another 'Sharp Fighter', he'd let him join the gang.

"I already delivered two."

"One more, and it's a done deal."

"That guy's demands are too high."

"Luckily, I ran into another one."

"But there's not much knockout powder left, better ask the guy for more. That Dou Bao is good with fists, need to use more drugs on him."

Huang Si thought and couldn't help but smile smugly.

He was a rickshaw driver, nobody noticed him, nobody was wary of him. As long as he found the right 'Sharp Fighter', and used the knockout powder from that man, the job was done.

Initially, he was nervous and scared.

But, first time is hard, second time is easier.

And with the reward from that man, he was eager to do it more often.

It's just that the man's standards were high, not just anyone was satisfactory.

At least they had to be good-looking and well-built.

There were some like that among the common folks, but very few.

There were more amongst the nobility, but he couldn't afford to provoke them.

If the wife of an official went missing, it would be a huge disaster.

Even that man might not be able to handle it.

But someone like Dou Bao should be fine.

Although he's from a martial arts school, he's just a servant.

The master of the school probably wouldn't care much.

Even if it was investigated, with that man's backing, it could be covered up.

Thinking this, Huang Si smiled again.

Having mingled in gambling dens for years and dealing with all kinds of people daily, Huang Si had long become a sleazy, seasoned scoundrel, with his morals lowering each time.

Or rather, he'd already lost his humanity.

What's left?

Only selfish greed.

Now, he was solely focused on getting a step closer.

As for what would happen to Dou Bao?

He couldn't care less.

Dragging the rickshaw, Huang Si roamed the streets.

Soon, the rickshaw stopped at the entrance of an alley.

Turning the rickshaw around, Huang Si entered the alley.

There were no other households in the alley, just one.

A black gate, a stone step, and a doorstep at the entrance.

The gate was locked, but there was a person perched on the high wall in the courtyard.

Anyone passing by the alley couldn't escape this person's watch.

Huang Si was no exception.

However, this person simply waved without rushing.

Before Huang Si could knock, the door opened.

Huang Si was an old acquaintance of theirs.

He'd done this more than once, almost part of the group.

"Huang Si, you come really often."

"Even more diligent than me, why don't you guard the door next time."

The gatekeeper was a fat man with a brutal face, teasing Huang Si.

"Sir, I don't have that skill, just being your helper is satisfying enough."

Huang Si immediately bowed and said.

It wasn't just flattery.

He'd seen this man crush a bluestone brick with one punch.

That skill was even better than those martial arts school masters.

That's why he dared to target the martial arts school.

Thinking this, Huang Si was about to flatter again, but before he could speak, he felt a warmth on his face and head.

Instinctively, he wiped it with his hand.

A smear of crimson.

Blood!

Huang Si shuddered all over, looking up to see the fat man with the brutal face, staring wide-eyed behind him.

Instinctively, Huang Si wanted to turn around

Thud!

A blade pierced through his chest.

Chapter 1224: Dinner!

Huang Si looked down at the blade piercing through his chest, opened his mouth to scream.

But, as soon as he opened his mouth, a spurt of blood gushed out.

Poof!

The blade withdrew, and Huang Si collapsed to the ground, utterly lifeless.

Creak.

Amidst the friction sound of the door hinges and door frame, the gate of the small courtyard shut completely.

Blood, body, and the small courtyard seemed isolated from the whole world.

This scene happened in a flash, the one standing guard on the roof hadn't even reacted before it was over.

By the time he realized what had happened, Jason had already appeared before him.

"Who are you?"

"Do you know where this place is?"

"Someone, help!"

The guard shouted loudly, but the courtyard remained silent, not a sound or movement.

He instantly realized something was wrong.

Looking at Jason, who was wearing a bizarre mask, cold sweat trickled down.

"Sir, I'm just a

Poof!

Jason swung the short-handled broad blade cleaver, blood splattered.

The opponent clutched his throat and fell to the ground, equally silent.

Upon entering the courtyard, Jason had already activated [Silence Technique].

Having inherited the 'Tongshou Temple legacy', Jason was like a tiger with wings.

Not to mention other skills, just the [Silence Technique] and Jason's 'Stealth' were a perfect match; if combined with [Mist Concealment] or performed under the cover of night, it was truly possible to kill without a sound.

Leaping off the rooftop, Jason headed straight for the main house in the courtyard.

This was a very simple courtyard.

In the middle stood a table and chair, with a teapot, teacup, and a plate of sunflower seeds on the table.

A garment was hanging on the back of the chair, indicating it belonged to the fatty who was guarding the door.

Obviously, when not needed at the door, he stayed here, sipping tea and munching sunflower seeds.

On the right side of the courtyard was a kitchen, Jason didn't need to go in, he could tell just by the smell.

To the left was a high wall, with withered gourd vines and creepers clinging tightly, the gray courtyard wall and the withered yellow plants made the wall look lifeless and quite discomforting.

Straight across the courtyard was the main house.

Jason pushed the door open and entered.

"Place your bets! Place your bets!"

"Big! I'm betting on big!"

"Small! It's definitely small!"

As soon as he entered the room, shouting voices rose and fell intermittently.

Five brawny men gathered around a table, yelling fervently. The furnishings were old, the lighting was dim, even though it was afternoon, several oil lamps were needed to see the points on the gambling table clearly.

Hiss!

The flame of the oil lamp flickered, the shadows around changing in size, seemingly twisting.

Yet, the five immersed in it paid no attention.

They were likely used to it.

Their eyes were all focused on the dice cup.

"Big big big!"

"Small small small!"

Each one shouting hoarsely.

Finally, the banker opened, slowly lifting the dice cup from the table with both hands, then, just as the other four were about to see the dice numbers, slammed it back down heavily.

"What are you doing... huh?"

One of the gamblers immediately shouted in dissatisfaction, but, as soon as he raised his head, a gush of foul-smelling blood sprayed over.

Poof!

This gambler got a face full.

Not just him, the remaining three as well.

The four of them frantically wiped their faces.

And this was the last thing they did in their lives.

Jason's short-handled broad blade cleaver swiftly swept across the throats of the four.

For Jason, this was no difficulty.

It was like swatting a few flies.

Even easier than swatting flies.

After all, flies are quite vigilant.

But the five before him?

Were already lost in the gambling table, without the slightest vigilance.

After dealing with the five, Jason thought of heading towards the inner room.

As soon as he stepped through the door—

Whoosh!

The sound of something slicing through the air arose.

A cold glare came from behind the door.

A burly man holding a dagger, face twisted in ferociousness, eyes filled with murderous intent.

The dagger was swift and sharp.

Clearly, the opponent was very skilled with the dagger.

Indeed, it was so.

Zhao Yang, the leader of this group, was not only ruthless and cruel, but he also had quite formidable skills, especially with his dagger, which had earned quite a name back in Mountain City. Even the heads of a few gyms on Martial Arts Street did not dare to underestimate him. If he hadn't known he couldn't break through the rules set on Martial Arts Street, he would have opened a gym and recruited students there long ago.

Of course, more importantly, he had a murder case on his back from earlier years.

He couldn't 'show his face' in the true sense.

But that didn't stop Zhao Yang from living well.

In this world, as long as you have no bottom line, wanting to live well is really too simple.

Just like him.

Set up two gambling dens, occasionally trafficked a few people, life was really carefree.

However, Zhao Yang was still as vigilant as he should be.

The dagger, stained with blood, was never away from his side.

Just like earlier, as soon as things went quiet, he immediately flipped around, grabbed the dagger, and hid behind the door.

He didn't know who was coming.

He had offended many people, more than ten people in Mountain City wanted his life.

And these guys were all desperados like him.

So, he knew very well, to survive, he could only kill several enemies quickly as possible.

And then...

Run!

The place was gone, wasn't terrifying, losing his men wasn't terrifying either.

With his abilities, give him a few months, and he'd be able to gather a group of men again.

The men were dead, so be it, the most important thing was, he was alive.

And Zhao Yang was full of confidence about this.

He was a truly accomplished 'muscular' martial artist, normally, even ten big men couldn't be his match, let alone a sudden attack.

Chapter 1225: Dinner! (2)

"Die!"

Watching the tall and burly figure in front of him, Zhao Yang muttered under his breath, thrusting the dagger straight ahead, targeting Jason's lower back.

But just as the dagger was only a fist's distance away from Jason's back, Jason suddenly bent forward, his left leg swung up like a giant scorpion raising its tail.

Bang!

Zhao Yang's jaw was kicked hard, lifting his whole body off the ground, flying backward, crashing heavily against the wall.

After pausing for a full second, Zhao Yang's body slowly slid down.

His jaw had already shattered; more than half his face was crushed too, brain matter oozing out through his broken nostrils.

Zhao Yang twitched twice before he breathed his last.

To his dying moment, he couldn't comprehend how Jason was so fast.

Clearly, his physique suggested great strength, implying slowness rather than speed.

Jason turned his head to glance at Zhao Yang.

"This must be the leader of the group."

The different reaction and the skillful moves just now gave Jason a clearer judgment.

Then, Jason quickly began searching the entire courtyard.

He wouldn't let any stragglers escape.

Finally, he confirmed that everyone in this group was dead.

He also confirmed that there were no secret rooms or account books, only several iron cages in Zhao Yang's room, seemingly for keeping large dogs, but Jason knew their true purpose.

Seeing the bloodstains left on them, Jason dragged the bodies inside from the courtyard.

He overturned the kerosene on the table onto the ground.

Then, he threw a match on it.

Whoosh!

Flames leapt up instantly.

Jason disappeared into the courtyard with the 103 Silver Coins, a few banknotes, and 10 Gold Leaves he found.

The fire spread quickly, soon engulfing the entire house.

Thick smoke billowed skyward.

Clang!

Clang clang!

"Fire! Fire!"

The surrounding neighbors all rushed out, starting to put out the fire.

There was even a 'fire truck' modified from a flatbed appearing.

And as the flames were extinguished, the charred corpses in the house were revealed.

"Ah! Someone's dead!"

Shouted a neighbor.

People around began avoiding it urgently, but some bold ones wanted to watch the commotion, yet were stopped by the man who came with the 'fire truck'.

"Nobody move."

"Call the authorities."

The man said.

"Xin-ger, what happened here?"

Another neighbor asked.

"These guys lived alone, but I've seen them coming and going, all strong and fierce-looking, and each one looked ill-natured, so they shouldn't be good people. Now that there's a fire and no one escaped, it's hardly possible, they're not even old or incapacitated, so I suspect it's gang rivalry and murder."

The man called Xin-ger said.

After hearing this, the surrounding neighbors gasped and started to retreat.

They were all poor folks, unable to provoke gangs, and even less able to provoke the government.

Thus, when Jia Youcai arrived, it was a white-bearded elder who represented everyone to greet Jia Youcai.

The government had a clear mandate, those over sixty could be 'excused'.

Besides not needing to bow anymore, many so-called rules were gone too.

And looking at the elder in front, Jia Youcai felt a headache.

It wasn't just due to the absence of benefits, but the elder couldn't see clearly, couldn't hear well, and couldn't answer anything sensibly.

However, this did not stump Jia Youcai.

The snake has its path, the rat has its hole.

Jia Youcai had his own channels for information.

Though useless while people are alive, they surely work when people are dead.

After all, gangs value their territory highly.

Whoever helps him, he gives the vacant territory to them.

This is the rule.

Of course, they can't be short of the 'tribute'.

This is also the rule.

"Xiao Liu, go inquire for news."

Jia Youcai waved his hand, and a clever-looking constable ran out.

Soon, the exact information was obtained.

"Boss, this group was Zhao Yang!"

"Hiss, Zhao Yang?"

"The Zhao Yang who once wiped out an entire family?"

Jia Youcai took a sharp breath.

"That's him."

The young constable said, his face also filled with horror.

And just as Jia Youcai and Xiao Liu exchanged glances, Jason had already returned to the martial arts school.

This time, he didn't hide the Silver Coin and Gold Leaves in the previous secret place but instead placed them directly on the beam, leaving only the banknotes with a total value of 31 Jings in the purse sewn by Dou Bao.

Chen Tong's illicit wealth was considerable, and so many Gold Leaves were too conspicuous.

What he had now was not much, even if discovered, he could explain it as his savings.

After finishing all this, Jason patted his clothes, confirmed that there was no kerosene smell, and then walked out of the room.

By this time, the apprentices had already dispersed.

Two old matrons, one was cleaning, the other assisting Dou Bao.

Jason didn't disturb the cook who was working hard and just walked around his martial arts school, first inside, then outside.

"Master Mu, hello."

"Master Mu, hello."

All along the way, passers-by greeted him.

Clearly, 'he' had a good reputation here previously.

To fit this persona, he nodded in response one by one, his eyes continuously scanning the surroundings.

This was his first time truly observing the surroundings.

On the restaurant, the signboard was hanging, the red flag fluttering in the evening breeze, the wooden plaque inscribed with the words 'Drunken Fragrance House', the handwriting clear and the strokes sharp. Jason couldn't make much sense of it, but the characters were beautiful, much better-looking than those on the signboards of nearby shops.

Pedestrians were endless, among the men, some wore suits, some long gowns and jackets, others short-sleeved and bare-chested.

The women, however, wore bright, colorful cheongsams and the student uniforms with black skirts and light blue or white blouses.

As two female students in distinctive student uniforms passed by Jason, they couldn't help but take a second glance at him standing by the roadside, their eyes full of curiosity.

Clearly, they rarely saw someone as tall and robust as Jason.

"Is he a martial artist?"

The braided girl quietly asked her companion.

"Definitely."

"The martial arts school is not far behind him."

The round-faced, fair-skinned girl said, looking at the martial arts school with some longing.

"Forget it, your father letting you study is already the biggest concession, and you still want to learn martial arts?"

"Be careful or you'll never get out for the rest of your life."

"Otherwise, you'll end up straight into marriage and having children."

The braided girl clearly guessed what her friend wanted to do.

"You speak as if you don't want to learn martial arts."

"My brother says that if martial arts are practiced to a certain level, they can resist firearms."

The round-faced girl said, the longing in her eyes deepening.

"I've also heard my sister mention it."

"But those martial artists can only be found in major martial arts schools in the Northern Capital, Magic Capital, Fragrance City, and the like, right?"

"In our Mountain City, even the most powerful chief arrest officer in Eastern City may not be capable."

The braided girl shook her head and sighed.

Feeling both lamentation for Mountain City's smallness and remoteness, and longing for big cities.

"Eastern City chief arrest officer?"

"I've heard he practices the Iron Cloth Shirt."

"Able to be impervious to sword and spear."

The round-faced girl evidently knew a bit more.

But that was all she knew.

More information?

Clearly, it wasn't something two students could know, but it was enough.

It was enough to prove that their families were not ordinary families.

Jason couldn't help but glance at the two, immediately, the two female students stopped talking, but didn't lower their heads bashfully or run away like ordinary girls.

Instead, they gave Jason an apologetic smile.

"Sorry, my friend and I disturbed you with our conversation."

The braided girl and the round-faced girl repeatedly apologized.

Then, they turned and left.

To this, Jason naturally had no resentment at all.

The road ahead was everybody's, not his, plus they were just chatting and not hindering him in any way.

Of course, Jason didn't pay them much more attention.

Attractive people matter less than delicious food.

Jason turned around with his hands behind his back, just as Dou Bao walked out wearing an apron.

Seeing Jason waiting at the door, Dou Bao beamed and said —

"Master, it's time to eat."

Chapter 1226: Dou Bao's Worries!

Dinner consisted of stuffed pancakes, porridge, and pickled vegetables.

The pancakes were made with leftover filling from the morning's buns, mixed with half a slab of pork and four cabbages, then fried.

The porridge was plain white porridge, and the crispy bits were specially fried by Dou Bao.

The pickles were not radishes but spicy cabbage and bamboo shoots.

The pancakes were thin-skinned with generous filling, fried until crispy, and especially large, with a diameter the size of a washbasin. Jason was eating with oil dripping from his mouth.

One bite of pancake, one sip of porridge, one nibble of pickles.

Truly hitting the spot.

It even made Jason feel like he was back at his 'hometown' dining table.

They were already delicious on their own.

With a touch of 'hometown' flavor, they instantly became exquisite.

Suddenly, Jason devoured the entire dinner table like a whirlwind sweeping away the clouds.

And at this moment, Dou Bao had just brought out a bowl of porridge from the kitchen.

Where are the ten pancakes I made?

Where's the pot of porridge I simmered?

Where's the bowl of vegetables I mixed?

Dou Bao stood there dumbstruck.

She thought that after two times, she had figured out Jason's appetite and had been making each meal thirty percent larger than the previous one, yet it still wasn't enough?

The master's stomach seemed like a bottomless pit!

Are all martial artists such big eaters?

No wonder the master has such great skills, but doesn't have much money, probably because it's all eaten up, right?

Considering the master's appetite, after buying groceries, little else would remain from the apprentices' tuition.

Especially recently, with the price of pork rising again.

Shouldn't we dismiss those two old maids?

A little saved is a little earned.

As Dou Bao pondered, she frowned.

She didn't mind Jason eating a lot; on the contrary, she enjoyed watching Jason eat heartily at the dining table.

However, she thought she needed to help Jason save a bit.

After all, everything had just gotten on track, and there were still many places money was needed.

The sandbags and wooden dummies in the martial arts school were consumables, and the apprentices' uniforms were also the school's dignity, which couldn't be compromised.

Indeed, not only should the two old maids be dismissed, but I should also eat a little less!

Dou Bao thought silently.

Then

Clang!

A clear, crisp sound of silver coins rubbing and colliding.

Even without paying attention, Dou Bao could clearly distinguish it.

Like seeing a 100-watt light bulb at night.

Dou Bao looked up and saw a money pouch.

Very familiar, she had sewn it for Jason.

It was flat when she gave it to him, but now it was bulging and completely full.

"I have some savings."

Jason said calmly as he opened the pouch and poured out the silver coins, gold leaves, and banknotes inside.

Originally, there were 21 silver coins in the pouch. Later, he seized 103 silver coins, 10 gold leaves, and 31 notes from Zhao Yang and his group.

The 100 gold leaves gained from Chen Tong were placed elsewhere.

"This much?!"

Dou Bao's eyes widened instantly.

Apart from the tuition the apprentices paid on the opening day, she hadn't seen so much money before.

To know, when she buys groceries, she only brings 2-3 silver coins, and that's because the master eats a lot and needs meat; otherwise, an ordinary family of four could live well on just 1 silver coin a week.

After all, outside Martial Arts Street, the best restaurant 'Zui Xiang Lou' doesn't offer a table of high-end dishes for less than 5 silver coins.

And when she goes to the market, a pound of pork leg is only 1 jiao, which is due to a recent price hike. Previously, it was just 9 li. She buys enough to occasionally get some pig intestines and big bones as well.

"Leave it to you."

Jason returned the 31 notes to the money pouch and pushed the remaining silver coins and gold leaves to Dou Bao.

Never having directly handled so much money, Dou Bao was immediately frozen.

She looked up at the usually serious face now bearing a smile, her lips slightly parted, wanting to say something, but no words came out, only a warm feeling in her chest.

Her master wholly and sincerely trusted her.

From saving her to teaching her boxing to managing the martial arts school, and now entrusting her with all his assets, it was all trust.

No one had ever trusted her this much.

Deeply moved, Dou Bao's eyes moistened.

"Master, rest assured, I'll make sure to save this money well

"No need to save it; just buy more food."

"Don't worry, the money won't be missing."

"Don't forget I still have a bonus of five hundred silver coins to take tonight."

Jason said with a smile.

At this point, Dou Bao finally remembered what her master was going to do tonight.

She didn't stop him.

How could one go back on a promise made in public?

A martial artist, a promise is as good as gold.

She understood this.

So, after Jason made the promise, Dou Bao wouldn't stop him.

However, Dou Bao didn't just do nothing.

Dou Bao got up and returned to her room, then mysteriously placed a bundle in front of Jason.

"Master, put this on."

Dou Bao said in a lowered voice.

"What is this?"

Jason sniffed and looked at the opened bundle, inside of which was a set of black attire, including a top and pants, along with a pair of cloth shoes with thousand-layer soles.

The stitches were as fine as those on the money pouch, evidently sewn by Dou Bao.

However, Jason wasn't focused on these.

What caught his attention was the 'smell' of this outfit on his senses, which were more than ten times that of an ordinary person.

He was very familiar with the smell.

Soon enough, Dou Bao provided the answer.

"Lime!"

"I stitched lime into the sleeves and pant legs!"

Chapter 1227: Dou Bao's Worries! (2)

Dou Bao said directly, then cautiously opened a corner for Jason to see, and promptly picked up the needle and thread to sew his jacket back up.

As he sewed, Dou Bao said: "Master, did you see this thread end? During a fight, you pinch this thread end and then punch hard, the lime inside the sleeve will scatter out! Master, you must remember, the

left sleeve contains ordinary lime, the right sleeve I mixed with croton powder, the left pants leg I mixed with monkshood powder, and the right pants leg I mixed with lily of the valley powder.”

"Master, remember, this time it's not like sparring in the ring, it's a true life-and-death battle, anything could happen, so if you encounter a strongman, Master, don't hesitate, go for the kill directly, your survival is more important than anything, Dou Bao will be here waiting for your return!"

Dou Bao said this, looking at Jason with tears in his eyes.

A look of pity on his face.

However, holding this set of clothes, Jason felt a bit of a chill.

Previously watching Dou Bao practice boxing, he considered telling Dou Bao to prepare some lime or something.

And now?

He completely underestimated Dou Bao.

Croton, a common laxative, that's fine.

But monkshood, lily of the valley are deadly poisons.

Truly lethal.

Combined with lime, if these things hit your face, it's not just any person who could fall victim, even he might be affected.

Indeed, for a weak woman to escape from the Northern Land to Mountain City, it wouldn't be simple.

Jason thought but didn't ask further.

Instead, he picked up the clothes, turned around, and returned to his room to change.

The life in 'Nightless City' had long accustomed him to his own fighting habits.

What's wrong with throwing lime?

He had even used 'Jing juice' as a weapon before.

Although not very damaging, the insult was intense, really quite effective.

The clothes fit well, with no hindrance while punching or kicking, and there was no awkwardness with the hidden lime and powders inside.

Pushing the door open, Dou Bao was standing there holding a large black cloak.

Raising his hand, he draped the cloak over Jason.

The cloak was made of silk, but Jason felt liquid flowing inside. Then, as Dou Bao carefully arranged Jason's clothing, he whispered: "I made the cloak's base out of animal hide, inside contains squeezed juice of the Drip Tip plant, covered with silk, Master, if you encounter a strongman with a weapon, just take off the cloak and throw it at them."

With Dou Bao's words, Jason could already completely imagine that scene.

The strongman would most likely chop the cloak open with a single blow.

Then...

Take a bath in the juice of the Drip Tip plant.

If when chopping, they opened their mouth to shout.

Hmm...

It's a little hard to imagine.

"Hmm, I'll be careful."

Jason nodded slightly.

Seeing Jason's unchanged expression, Dou Bao breathed a sigh of relief.

She had been hesitating on whether to hand these things over to her Master.

She was really worried that her Master would think less of her because of these things.

Fortunately, he didn't.

Her Master was just as before.

Really too good.

Dou Bao let out a sigh of relief, following Jason, escorting him to the gate of the Martial Arts School.

Outside the door, Jia Youcai was already waiting.

Four arrest officers, two rickshaws.

"Master, I will watch over the Martial Arts School carefully, waiting for your return."

As Jason boarded the rickshaw, Dou Bao waved.

"Master Mu, how about I leave a couple of brothers to help with the gate?"

The Martial Arts School has just Dou Bao, it's not very safe.

This afternoon, there was a big case, some unknown strongman wiped out Zhao Yang's band of desperados, and set everything ablaze cleanly."

Sitting in another rickshaw, Jia Youcai didn't forget to seize the opportunity to show his diligence.

With a wave of his hand, two arrest officers stood by the gate of Mu-style Martial Arts School.

That group was called Zhao Yang?

Jason instantly connected to who Jia Youcai was talking about.

The killer might not be him.

The arsonist might not be him either.

But, this afternoon, it was very likely him who killed and set the fire.

"Zhao Yang was a bastard, once over a small matter, wiped out his entire master's family, we've hunted for years and never found this scoundrel, this time being wiped out by a strongman is a good thing too."

Afraid Jason didn't know who Zhao Yang was, Jia Youcai quickly spoke up.

"Hmm."

"Where are those bodies?"

"The bodies of the chiefs and a dozen experts from the four directions."

Jason discreetly shifted the topic.

"In the coroner's room at the yamen."

"The master is also staying at the yamen."

"It's on the way."

Jia Youcai answered, then urged his subordinates to hurry up.

Although his abilities are not strong, Jia Youcai knows over the years what to do when an incident occurs.

Examining a corpse is no exception.

Corpses can speak!

This is something the old forensic experts often said.

He had heard it countless times.

Although unsure of how they speak, some people always have the ability to make a corpse open its mouth. Master Mu seems to be one of those people.

With Jia Youcai leading the way, Jason arrived smoothly at the forensic room.

A total of fifteen corpses, including the four captains from the Southeast, South, Northwest, and North, were neatly placed in the forensic room, covered with white linen.

"Master Mu, you take a look first, I'll be right at the door. If you need anything, call me."

Saying this, Jia Youcai withdrew, his face showing fear.

It's not that he hasn't seen corpses before.

As an arrest officer, Jia Youcai has seen more corpses than most people.

However, corpses as tragic as those in this incident, Jia Youcai was seeing for the first time.

And he never wanted to see it again.

Jason didn't mind.

After Jia Youcai left the room, he lifted the white linen and examined each corpse.

Most of the corpses were sliced in half at the waist, including the Northern City captain.

The captains from the South and West were choked to death, with both their hands and feet twisted and turned into a pretzel shape, indicating the perpetrator was a skilled martial artist.

However, Jason was more interested in the Eastern City captain's corpse.

Because, he found marks of bullets on the corpse.

The kind shot from a Fire Lance gun.

"Gunpowder?!"

Jason squinted his eyes.

Having arrived in this world, the information he received was limited.

He could only deduce some things by observing his surroundings.

For example: gunpowder weapons.

From what he had seen, gunpowder weapons existed in this world and had developed from primitive beginnings to a near-modern scale.

But this was only an assumption.

Until this moment, he saw the Fire Lance bullet.

"Slower development than expected... But the power is beyond imagination."

Jason gazed at the Eastern City captain's corpse, deep in thought.

The deceased had an exceptionally large physique, with bones and muscles incredibly solid. Even in death, his skin retained a faint metallic sheen, proving the tales of being impervious to blades and bullets might be true.

But unfortunately, he was taken down by a single shot.

"Was it accidentally hit at the weak spot?"

"Or

"Was this weapon specially crafted?"

Jason pondered, then walked out of the forensic room.

"Master Mu, how was the inspection?"

Jia Youcai hurried over.

"Almost done."

Jason replied.

"Then please follow me, the chief is already waiting."

After saying this, Jia Youcai led the way.

In the reception room, a thin, emaciated man was waiting there.

He appeared pale, coughing intermittently.

However, his eyes were still bright, especially when he saw Jason enter, his spirit notably improved.

"Thank you, Master Mu, for extending your help. I am very grateful."

The great official from the Mountain City adopted a humble demeanor, even changing his form of address.

"There's compensation, it's only right."

Jason replied candidly.

This took Li Deshang by surprise, then he laughed.

"But you also have real skills."

"Unlike those on Martial Arts Street who chase fame."

"Once this crisis is over, I will definitely put those scoundrels in order."

Li Deshang couldn't help but become angry again at this point.

He even started coughing severely.

Jia Youcai immediately came over to pat his back.

"Don't worry, sir, with Master Mu, there's definitely no problem."

Jia Youcai comforted.

"Hmm."

Li Deshang nodded.

He knew far more than Jia Youcai, watching Jason sitting silently aside, he couldn't help biting his teeth and said, "Master Mu, if you can help me get through this crisis, I am willing to offer you a 'Secret Medicine'."

Chapter 1228: Secret Medicine!

Secret Medicine?!

When Jason heard this term, his first instinct was to think of 'food'.

After all, for Jason, most of the Mystical Side's offerings are 'food'.

Not to mention, 'secret medicine' is something that sounds ingestible right from the start.

As for 'mystical knowledge'?

Jason values it highly as well.

You need to be able to read the 'menu' if you want to 'eat' better, right?

Just like at this moment.

Jason is very curious about what this so-called 'secret medicine' might be.

However, despite his inner interest, Jason remained calm and seated, showing no emotion.

How should one engage in conversation.

Or more precisely, how should one 'negotiate business', his life in Nightless City had long engraved this skill into his bones.

Initiative!

One must grasp the initiative!

Only by controlling the initiative can one balance the scales for victory and consume more chips.

And now, he clearly holds the initiative, otherwise, the other party wouldn't have offered the 'secret medicine'.

Watching Jason remain unaffected, Li Deshang sighed quietly in his heart.

As one of the officials of Mountain City, he had access to information far beyond what Jia Youcai, the arrest officer, could touch, and therefore, when Jia Youcai reported that he had invited Mu Bai, the master of Mu-style Martial Arts School, this official sought detailed information about Mu Bai.

Although it wasn't detailed at first, everything since arriving at Mountain City was thoroughly documented.

This includes records of Dou Bao buying vegetables and meat daily.

From these records, Li Deshang deduced that Jason was truly a martial artist who had completed the 'muscle training' stage and had entered 'bone tempering', otherwise one person couldn't eat so much.

This equally indicates that Jason has a 'clean background', a grassroots origin, not from some large sect or hidden power.

Figures from those forces wouldn't use such crude methods; 'secret medicine' is their optimal choice.

Not only does it save time and effort, but it also doesn't leave much residue in the stomach, allowing faster entry into 'bone tempering'.

But that doesn't mean Jason isn't strong.

A martial artist who completes 'muscle training' is already one in a hundred.

And reaching 'bone tempering'?

Even more rare, one might not be one in ten.

It's not just about talent, but also heritage.

The technique of 'muscle training' counts as a secret technique in ordinary martial arts schools.

Having a 'bone tempering' secret technique?

One could remain stable in a corner, continue their legacy, become a hundred-year family.

As for 'skin training' secret techniques?

Even in a flourishing area, they are the powerful elite.

Li Deshang's 'secret medicine' came from such elite hands, specifically his main family in Northern Capital, granted as an award when he passed the provincial exam, but unfortunately he was born physically weak, unable to practice martial arts, let alone bone tempering or skin training, not even the 'muscle training' stage unless spending an exorbitant price with various secret medicines to assist him, or else practicing martial arts would be suicidal.

However, a dose of secret medicine is rarely attainable, even his main family doesn't offer more than ten doses a year, hardly enough for daily consumption.

Secret medicine wasn't possible, but his main family did tell him some martial artist secrets.

For example: a martial artist who completes 'muscle training', can face ten opponents effortlessly.

And those who complete 'bone tempering', become ever stronger, with the strength to drag bulls.

If adorned in heavy armor, wielding a long spear, they become military warriors.

Those who achieve 'skin training' have abundant qi-blood, skin tough as cowhide, easily resisting heavy punches and kicks, and most ordinary weapons struggle to harm them slightly.

Yet, martial artists of such caliber are extremely rare.

Indeed, the martial artists themselves are scarce.

In the entire Martial Arts Street of Mountain City, those qualifying as martial artists number only five or six.

In his own office, only the head arrest officer in Eastern City could be called a martial artist.

Perhaps hidden martial artists exist in the city, but even combined, they likely wouldn't exceed twenty.

After all, Mountain City is not exactly a flourishing area.

But because of this, Mountain City remains relatively stable.

However, everything changed with the arrival of the 'flying thief'.

Following the deaths of the four head arrest officers and over a dozen skilled hands, Li Deshang knew if he wanted to remain an official in Mountain City, he absolutely needed to catch this 'flying thief'.

Otherwise, not only his position but his life would be endangered.

Thus, he spent heavily to invite the masters from Martial Arts Street to assist.

Yet the masters he usually had good relations with all became turtles hiding in their shells, only Mu Bai, with whom he had a shallow connection, agreed.

It's not that Li Deshang disregarded Mu Bai.

But Mu Bai had just arrived, and he hadn't yet thoroughly understood Mu Bai's true background, originally planning to wait until after the martial arts competition, yet this led to no close relationship between them.

"If only I had known earlier..."

Such a thought inexplicably rose in Li Deshang's mind.

Then, Li Deshang shook his head.

Money couldn't buy foresight.

At this moment, all that remained was to do his best to make up and deepen the relationship.

"This 'secret medicine' is called 'Tiger Blood Strong Yuan Powder', one of the secret medicines of the Li Family from Northern Capital, possessing miraculous effects for martial artists in 'muscle training' and 'bone tempering'. Although I only have one dose here, being a branch of the Li Family, if I apply, I can obtain another dose—as long as Master Mu agrees, this dose will serve as the deposit, and the subsequent dose as the subsequent reward, what do you say?"

Chapter 1229: Secret Medicine! (2)

Li Deshang looked towards Jason as he spoke.

Jason captured Li Deshang's expression in his mind, his ears picking up the intense pounding of the official's heartbeat.

Clearly, the other party was anxious and uneasy.

And this also showed that he was reaching his limit.

"Alright."

Jason nodded slightly.

The mystery of 'transaction' always lies in a steady flow.

Perhaps a windfall can make one rich overnight.

But what truly benefits a person lifelong is the steady flow.

Of course, if the 'windfall' reaches a certain qualitative change, it's also possible.

This is the other mystery of 'transaction': adaptability.

However, Li Deshang clearly did not reach the level of a 'windfall', and Jason didn't mind maintaining a steady relationship with him.

Tiger Blood Strong Yuan Powder.

Northern Li Family.

Jason silently remembered these two terms.

Upon seeing Jason agree, Li Deshang swiftly gestured.

Instantly, a maid entered carrying a box.

Jason's gaze instinctively turned to the box.

A faint aroma of food!

Indeed!

Just as I expected!

The secret medicine is a type of 'food'.

Jason couldn't help but smile slightly.

Seeing this, Li Deshang finally felt relieved.

He was most afraid of Jason remaining indifferent.

As long as he showed interest, things would be easier.

A true martial artist values a promise highly, taking life lightly, valuing honor heavily.

As long as he could secure a promise, his life would be safe. Although acquiring another secret medicine from the main family would be costly, money can be earned again, but a life lost is gone forever.

"Do we need any other preparation, Master Mu?"

Li Deshang asked.

Professionals should handle professional matters.

Li Deshang managed to become one of the officials in Mountain City by adhering to this principle.

He was never ashamed to ask professionals for advice, never let a layman instruct professionals, causing chaos.

"Leave the seal with me, then you can go rest."

Jason said slowly.

The seal?

Li Deshang was startled.

But soon he gritted his teeth.

"I'll get it for you right away."

If the seal was lost, so would his life. Given it was in his possession, if thieves came, he'd absolutely be unable to protect it, so it was better to leave it with Jason.

Though feeling uneasy, it was the only option available.

Having chosen Jason, he decided to trust him.

Once the seal was delivered, Li Deshang, along with numerous servants including Jia Youcai, headed to the backyard of the yamen, leaving Jason alone in the central courtyard. Two boxes were left on the table.

One containing 'Tiger Blood Strong Yuan Powder', the other the seal.

Curiously, Jason opened the seal container to take a look. It was a copper and jade composite seal, square, with sides barely 10 centimeters long, beautifully inscribed with the four graceful characters of 'Mountain City Official Seal'.

Besides this, there wasn't much else.

Despite the elegant script, if it involved a truly skilled artisan, replicating it wouldn't be very difficult.

However, without the support of the yamen, stamping it would be futile.

Unless Li Deshang was controlled, only then could orders be issued.

But if controlling Li Deshang was possible, was such a cumbersome method necessary?

"Superficial."

Jason critiqued as he turned his gaze to the other box.

'Tiger Blood Strong Yuan Powder' was housed in a small porcelain bottle about the size of a pinky, its mouth sealed tightly with wax, with an excess forming a plug completely wrapping the bottle's mouth.

When Jason squeezed the plug and yanked forcefully.

Boom!

With a muffled sound, a rich food aroma rushed forward.

Jason tilted his neck back and directly poured the powder from the porcelain bottle into his mouth.

Sweet.

Warm.

The powder kept bouncing.

Like an enhanced version of popping candy.

Mixed with saliva, Jason gulped it down in one swift action.

[Consumed Tiger Blood Strong Yuan Powder (complete portion)]

[Physical strength, stamina, injuries significantly recovered!]

[Satiety +50]

[Satiety: 142]

...

Having subtracted the 11 points of satiety from entering the current instance world, regaining satiety brought the total to 142 points.

For Jason, who once possessed thousands of satiety points, it wasn't significant, but gaining 50 satiety from a single portion of 'Tiger Blood Strong Yuan Powder' perked him up.

One portion gives 50, ten portions give 500, a hundred portions give 5000!

Although judging by Li Deshang's appearance, this 'secret medicine' appeared rare, it was definitely not unheard of.

Moreover, this was just one of the Northern Li Family's offerings.

Jason believed that Northern Capital was not limited to just one Li Family.

The whole world, the Secret Medicine cannot be just this one.

Of course, more importantly, he solved the issue of the 'food' source.

This made Jason let out a long sigh of relief.

"So, it's a matter of boosting reputation while acquiring the Secret Medicine?"

"Both should complement each other."

The greater the fame, the higher the level you can reach.

Naturally, one can obtain resources beyond ordinary imagination.

And right now, this is the first step.

Hmm.

The night deepened.

The night wind rose suddenly.

A black shadow leaped into the government office in a single bound.

Landed silently, the whole person concealed in the shadow of a peach tree, wearing dark gray and black night attire, covering the head and face, only revealing a pair of eyes.

At this moment, these eyes surveyed the government office.

Quickly, the black shadow began to move.

Undoubtedly, the black shadow was very familiar with the government office.

With lightning speed, it bypassed the front hall, passed through the Moon Gate, and arrived at the courtyard.

The courtyard had a gray stone slab floor, with several evergreen trees planted on one side, two water tanks placed beneath, lotus leaves floating on them, swaying with the wind, creating ripples. These water tanks were used for more than just watering; they were also for fire prevention.

On the other side was a pavilion, with stone tables and benches inside, an open box placed on the stone table, the official seal visibly placed within, and a burly figure sat on the bench, eyes slightly closed.

Though not standing, sitting there was like a mountain, this figure exuded an overwhelming pressure.

Mu Bai?!

The black shadow was taken aback, then sneered aloud.

Mu Bai, he knew.

A country bumpkin from elsewhere, relying on the family-inherited Tiger-shape Fist to open a dojo on Martial Arts Street in Mountain City.

Underlings with real skill, quite commendable.

But, just commendable, nothing more.

Dealing with soft targets like Peng, Zhang, Li, Zhao, who've long lost their vigor and only know a life of luxury, naturally, he's unbeatable.

But compare with him?

He was confident to break Mu Bai's arms in ten moves.

However, the black shadow did not act immediately, cautiously surveying the surroundings.

Today he was acting alone.

No other partners for support, so naturally, he was cautious.

After about three minutes, the shadow's hidden face first showed surprise, then a smirk, and finally, contempt.

No one around!

Only Mu Bai alone!

Needless to say, no hidden archers or the like!

For him, this was indeed very good news.

After checking again, the black shadow completely relaxed.

"Master Mu, shall I call you bold because of your high skills?"

"Or..."

"Call you ignorant of your own mortality?"

The black shadow leisurely stepped out, standing in the courtyard, looking at Jason sitting in the pavilion, sneering aloud.

The voice slightly hoarse, evidently a disguise.

The eyes emitted a sharp glint.

He first glanced at the open box on the table, the official seal clearly visible under the moonlight.

Then, the black shadow's gaze locked tightly on Jason.

Compared to the official seal, he hoped more to see the gruesomely dead Jason.

What could be more satisfying than eliminating an enemy?

Naturally, when this enemy was full of confidence.

Unfortunately...

You have no idea what you are facing.

Thinking this, the black shadow strode toward Jason.

One step, two steps, three steps.

When the third step was taken, the black shadow accelerated abruptly.

Swish!

With the sound of clothes tearing through the air, he arrived in front of Jason, his hand flashed like lightning toward Jason's throat.

Jason, however, neither blocked nor dodged, raised a fist and punched toward the other party.

The force was tremendous, bringing with it a 'woo' sound.

Seeing this scene, the black shadow laughed.

He had encountered countless similar opponents, knowing they couldn't match his speed, they went for a life-for-life trade.

Sadly, in the end, it was always him who survived.

Jason in front of him would be no exception.

Although cleverly choosing to sit there, using stillness to counter movement.

But, his strength was still lacking.

"Go to hell!"

The black shadow sneered disdainfully, about to accelerate, but then everything turned black.

A large black cloak was thrown by Jason, covering his head.

The black shadow hesitated not, maintained speed, and went all out, wanting to resolve the fight as quickly as possible.

The opponent directly grabbed the black cloak with both hands.

Then, tore hard—

Rip!

The juice from "Guanyin Tears" splashed over, soaking his entire head and face.

Chapter 1230: Men Remain as Adolescent Boys Until Death

"Ah!"

The burning sensation quickly spread, and the shadow figure let out a shriek of agony.

But immediately, the scream was abruptly cut off.

Jason's fist struck the shadow figure's chest.

Crack, crack!

Amidst the sound of consecutive breaking bones, the shadow figure flew backward and fell heavily to the ground.

Without any struggle, its eyes dimmed as it landed.

The wide-open eyes were filled with disbelief.

As if questioning Jason.

And perhaps regretting.

However, none of this mattered anymore.

With the passing of life, everything else went away too, even if there was unwillingness.

Jason stepped in front of the shadow figure and lifted a foot to step on its neck.

Crunch!

In the sound of the neck breaking, he silently recited in his heart—

Yi!

A silver slash swept across the deformed neck.

Instantly, it split into two halves.

This time, Jason could confirm the opponent was undoubtedly dead.

Picking up the opponent's head, Jason turned and grabbed the box containing the seal, then headed towards the backyard.

He was certain that only this single "thief" had come.

As for the other two?

Or even more?

Jason gazed at Li Deshang, who was pacing anxiously in the room, and had already formed a few suspicions in his heart.

Jason didn't conceal his footsteps.

Jia Youcai, who was standing guard outside the door, saw Jason immediately.

He ran over at once.

"Master Mu, ah, this is... Sir, Sir, Master Mu has caught the thief!"

Jia Youcai ran while cupping his hands, then, upon seeing the head Jason held so clearly, couldn't help but let out a gasp.

Thereafter, he was overjoyed, shouting repeatedly.

Inside the room, the anxious Li Deshang pushed the door open directly.

"Good, good, good."

"Worthy of Master Mu who opened Martial Arts Street alone."

The Mountain City official couldn't stop praising, and then gestured to Jia Youcai.

Immediately, a group of torches illuminated the surroundings.

Jason had already ripped the mask off the "thief" on his way, and now, with the firelight, the face was clearly visible.

However, upon seeing the face, Jia Youcai was momentarily stunned.

Not only did the face seem unfamiliar to them.

It was also swollen and red.

It seemed like... poison?

Jia Youcai was uncertain.

But Li Deshang didn't care; coming from a branch of the Northern Li Family, this Mountain City official knew too many so-called "secrets," and in his view, as long as it wasn't a fair fight on the stage, any means used was acceptable.

As long as it didn't harm his family, it was all tolerable.

Poison?

So what?

In Shu Capital, there's a faction known for its poisons and concealed weapons.

They are also a prominent sect in the martial arts world.

"Jia Youcai, do you recognize this person?"

Facing his subordinate, Li Deshang maintained the demeanor of an official, sounding different.

"Sir, I don't recognize them, they're a stranger."

Jia Youcai answered truthfully.

"Do any of you recognize this person?"

Li Deshang looked at the people around.

Several arrest officers and soldiers carefully examined, all shaking their heads.

Li Deshang frowned, but remained composed, without resorting to curses.

Then, this Mountain City official walked around the head twice, suddenly pausing.

"Master Mu, was there only one thief?"

The official cupped his hand, approaching Jason, only asking quietly after stepping closer.

His attitude was better than before.

Jason had already proven his worth by capturing the thief, which was no less than assistance in adversity to Li Deshang, naturally improving his attitude toward Jason further.

"Just this one."

Jason answered truthfully.

Immediately, the official muttered.

"There should be three, how is it only one... not good, a decoy strategy!"

The official's expression changed.

Without hesitation, he turned to look at his subordinates, arrest officers, and soldiers.

"Jia Youcai, arrange for the surrounding soldiers to return to the city gate and dock."

"Then, take everyone to the dock."

As he spoke, the official turned to Jason again.

"Master Mu, the situation is urgent, the 'thief' affair seems to have underlying motives, please accompany me to the city gate. Tiger Blood Strong Yuan Powder' is rare, I'm not qualified enough to request more from the main family, but I can find quite a few 'Nourishing Essence Pills,' and I'll do my best to find 'Secret Medicine' within Mountain City for Master Mu."

As his words fell, the official bowed.

At this moment, Li Deshang had completely let go of his posture toward Jason.

Because, at this moment, Jason was his lifeline.

That's right, lifeline!

A straw to save the lives of his entire family!

Li Deshang had the capability to become one of the Mountain City officials, so upon seeing only one thief, he realized he had been tricked.

There were three thieves, perhaps even more.

After inspecting the body and consulting the inquirers, he confirmed it.

But now, only one came.

Coincidentally, he had previously worried about the thief stealing the seal, thus deploying the troops from the city gate and dock.

The combination led to a bad suspicion forming in his mind.

He had fallen for a decoy strategy!

These "thieves" appeared not to steal valuables, but to make him deploy the city gate and dock guards, even fabricating conflicts and brutally massacring, demonstrating strength.

"Damn it!"

As soon as Li Deshang understood, he was immediately anxious.