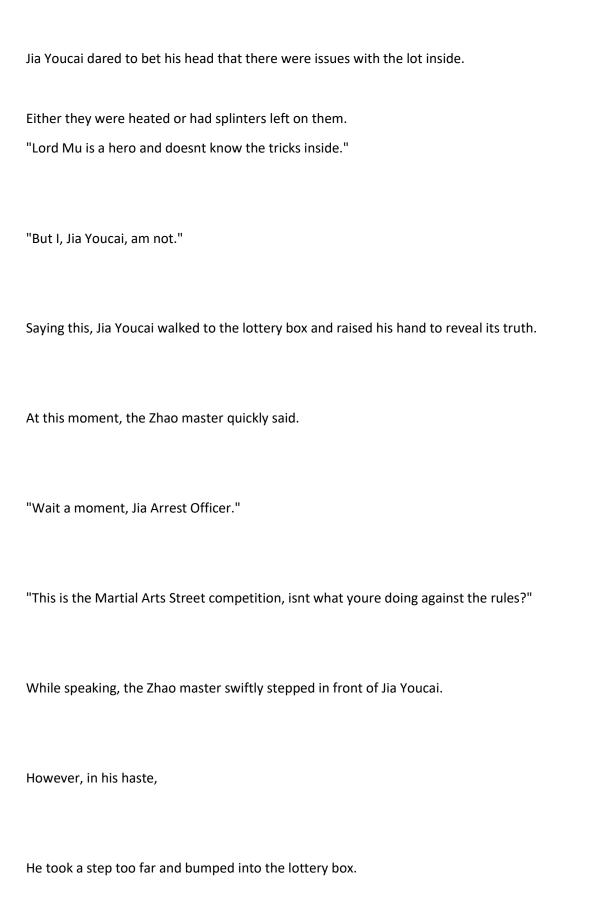
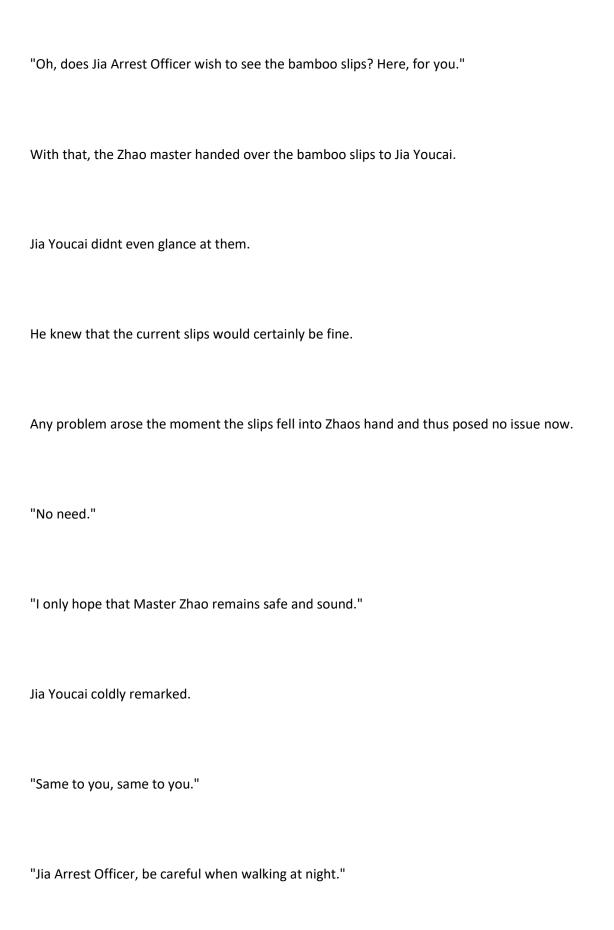
Menu 1281

Chapter 1281: One Punch, One
Looking at Li Zhao and the old pugilists appearance, Jia Youcai laughed.
He was born in the marketplace, and in his youth, he was unruly, having engaged in petty theft and made trouble with a gang of friends.
Back then, he believed that the heavens were first, and he was second.
He feared nothing.
Until one time, a friend called him out, and he was blocked in an alley, missing for three days, causing his mother to cry herself blind before he suddenly woke up to reality.
However, he distanced himself from those unsavory friends.
But some things and knowledge are not easily forgotten.
For example, the lottery box in front of him.



Crack!
The table holding the box and the box itself shattered.
The bamboo slips scattered around.
"Oh oh!"
As if on instinct, the Zhao master suddenly raised his hand to grab it.
Whoosh, whoosh!
Four bamboo plaques that were about to drop were caught by the Zhao masters hand.
The whole process happened in an instant.
By the time everyone had come to their senses, the Zhao master already had the bamboo plaques in hand.





"After all, the city hasnt been peaceful lately."
"Even I, as a martial artist, am terrified."
The Zhao master responded with a grin that didnt reach his eyes.
During his response, he emphasized the word martial artist.
"You dare mention martial?"
"Why not?"
"At least Im a martial artist, and you are not."
The exchange between the two instantly became charged with tension.
Jia Youcai looked at the Zhao master before him, really wishing he could cut him down in one strike.

But he knew he couldnt do that.
He currently bore an official title, inherently having an advantage over the opponent, but had to act according to the rules. If he broke them, Li Deshang would be the first to not spare him.
Moreover, at that point, if Zhao resisted, he wouldnt be a match.
Damn it, I shouldve diligently learned martial arts when I was younger.
Jia Youcai cursed his youthful recklessness and despised his own helplessness.
Even if he had learned a trick or two, there would have been ways to deal with Zhao.
The Zhao master, observing Jia Youcais gritted teeth expression, couldn't help but smile even more brightly.
He knew Jia Youcai dared not openly confront him.
Because the others strength was less than his.

If they truly confronted each other, he could kill Jia Youcai with one punch.
With this thought, the Zhao master felt increasingly triumphant.
He stood his ground but looked towards his disciples, energizing his voice from his dantian, saying loudly: "A martial artist should strive for self-improvement and never rely on external forces, understood?"
"Understood, Master!"
All the disciples responded in unison.
The Zhao master nodded in satisfaction and then glanced again at Jia Youcai.
At this moment, Jia Youcais expression grew increasingly ugly.
Of course, he could hear Zhaos mockery.
It wasnt just a taunt towards him.

It also indirectly mocked Mu Bai.
Even though it was Zhao who first played dirty tricks, at this moment, it seemed as though he was in the wrong. This awkward feeling almost made Jia Youcai explode with anger. He clenched the saber in his hand, glaring at Zhao.
"Jia Arrest Officer, looking unwell, you should really take care of your health."
The Zhao master said with a pleased chuckle.
Since he had already offended Jia Youcai, he didnt care anymore.
What did an arrest officer who wasnt even a martial artist count for?
At worst, find a chance to finish him off.
And also
Mu Bai!

If not for him, how could there be so many problems?
Thinking of this, a murderous intent flickered in the Zhao masters eyes.
"Someone, bring another box here."
The Zhao master ordered.
Mu Bai was different from Jia Youcai; Mu Bai is a martial artist, so naturally, it should be handled according to the codes of the martial world.
On the stage of life and death, with a death pact.
I will first kill Mu Bai!
Then, handle Jia Youcai!
And afterwards?

Even if Li Deshang held a grudge, he couldnt really act against me for the sake of two dead men. At most, pay some compensation.
Having made up his mind, the Zhao master began to adjust his status. Chapter 1282: One Punch, One (2)
The head of the Li martial arts school naturally understood what the head of the Zhao martial arts school wanted to do.
He frowned immediately.
He didnt want to get involved.
Anyway, Peng Liang was missing, Zhang Ming was dead, and there were only three schools left on Martial Arts Street, one less than before, so naturally, there would be more apprentices.
But very quickly, the head of the Li school relaxed his brow.
Only three schools left, how could that compare to just two?
Or perhaps one?

Thinking of this, the heart of the head of the Li school started beating faster and faster.
"Thats right."
"Grab another box, lets draw lots."
The head of the Li school said this while exchanging a glance with the head of the Zhao school.
In that moment, the two reached a consensus.
Take down Mu Bai.
Split Martial Arts Street.
"Alright, master"
"Lets not bother with that."
Jason interrupted the martial arts disciples words, jumping onto the stage, and said lightly to Li and Zhao: "Its almost mealtime, Im on a tight schedule, both of you can come up together."
"Mu Bai?!"

Jia Youcai called out in surprise.
Though Zhao wasnt great, his skills were genuine. His thirty-two moves of small grappling were famous in Mountain City, and Lis sixteen moves of large grappling were too.
Mountain City had suffered from coastal bandits years ago.
It was these two who captured them.
When the bandit who wiped out entire households was brought back, his bones were half shattered, utterly unrecognizable from his previous ferocity.
Of course, the most important thing was that the wealthy family that got wiped out had two Martial Artists.
One was entering Bone Tempering, the other Muscle Mastery.
But even so, they were no match for the coastal bandit.

Yet Li and Zhao together easily captured him, indicating that combined, theyre far stronger than one Muscle Mastery and an entering Bone Tempering Martial Artist.
It really was 1+1>2.
And that was over a decade ago.
Now?
What level are the twos skills at?
Therefore, Jia Youcai immediately wanted to remind Jason.
But Li and Zhao didnt give Jia Youcai the chance.
As soon as Jasons words ended, the two jumped onto the stage.
Once on the stage, no regrets.
That was the rule.

At this point, saying anything was too late.
Jia Youcai stood there dumbfounded, his eyes full of worry.
Damn, if I had any real skills, Mu Bai wouldnt have to stand out!
What do I do?
Mu Bai absolutely cannot come to harm!
Jia Youcais heart was in turmoil, increasingly hating his own helplessness. Then, he turned his fierce gaze to the disciples of Li and Zhaos schools.
Coming from the streets and markets, Jia Youcai didnt have any good ideas.
The only thing he could think of was to capture two hostages and force Li and Zhao to proceed cautiously.
What about after?

Ruined reputation or being treated like a rat on the street?
He couldnt care less.
Right now, he just wanted to save Jason first.
Which one should I target?
Jia Youcai scanned the martial arts disciples.
There was only one chance.
He had to take down one of their disciples with one strike.
Otherwise, everything would be lost.
But these martial arts disciples all seemed strong and muscular, and he wasnt confident against any of them.

Immediately, Jia Youcai grew even more resentful about not training in martial arts when he was younger.
Once this is over!
I must learn, even if its just a trick or two!
Jia Youcai quietly resolved, then fixated on a seemingly weaker disciple, ready to act.
"Wait a minute."
"If you choose that one."
"You likely wont last a single move."
Dou Bao suddenly spoke up.
"Uh?"

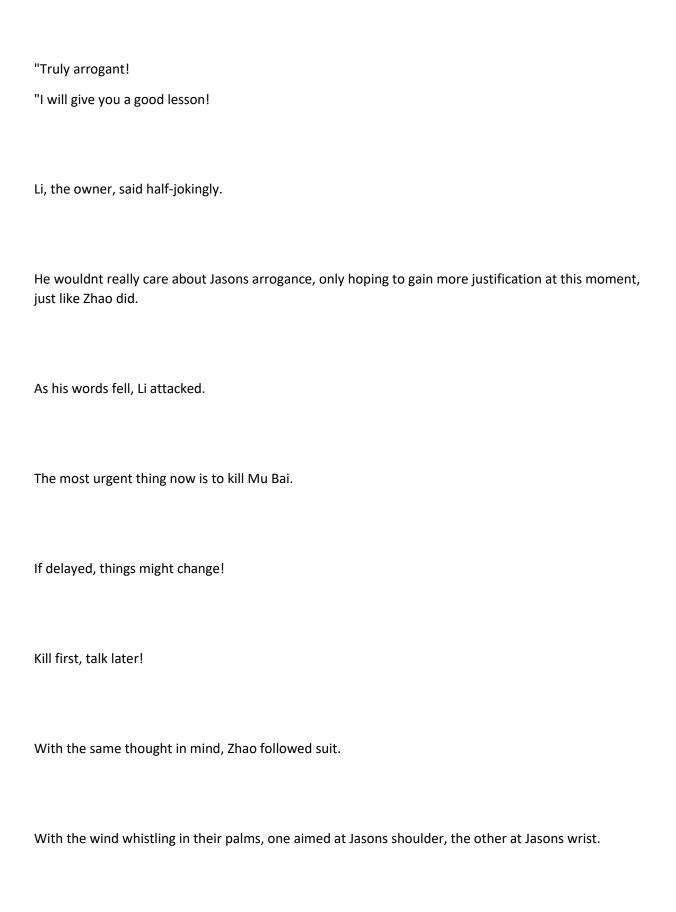
Jia Youcai was stunned.
"That disciple is Zhaos personal disciple. He looks frail, but inside hes strong and is already close to touching the threshold of Vigor, soon to become a true Martial Artist."
"If you attack him, youre seeking your own demise."
Dou Bao snorted coldly.
"Sister Dou Bao, you know what I am planning to do?"
Jia Youcai blinked his eyes.
"Anyone can see it."
Dou Bao snorted again.
However, she did not truly blame Jia Youcai.
She could tell that Jia Youcai was a decent person.

Otherwise, she wouldnt have bothered to warn him.
"Just sit tight."
"Trust the master."
Dou Bao said and then turned her gaze to the stage.
Jia Youcai scratched his ears anxiously, but at this moment, he was truly powerless, and could only pray silently in his heart.
Mu Bai, you must survive.
If anything happens to you, Ill offer my life in your place.
With Sister Dou Bao around, shell surely take care of my mother.
Thinking this, Jia Youcai suddenly felt relieved.

He was already prepared that if Mu Bai died on the stage, he would draw his sword and fight desperately.
Anyway, his mother had Dou Bao to take care of.
He could tell Dou Bao was not ordinary.
Also, she was far more generous than some men.
Entrusting his mother to Dou Bao, he was at ease.
His mind settled, Jia Youcai grasped his sword with one hand and clenched his fist with the other, staring straight at the stage.
As for Mu Bai winning?
He never considered it.
Although Mu Bai had shown many strong aspects, that was when Mu Bai was in perfect health.

Now?
Seriously injured and not fully healed!
According to Li Deshang, he had even overdrawn his life potential.
No matter how many medicines, short term recovery was impossible.
It could only be nursed back slowly.
Such information, Li and Zhao knew too.
If before, they were concerned about Mu Bai taking one of them down with him, now, they had no concerns.
Jason stood there calmly.
The two seemed even more relaxed than Jason.

One on the left and one on the right, forming a pincers movement, they stood before Jason, a touch of excitement in their expressions.
Chapter 1283: One Punch, One (3)
Beat Mu Bai to death!
Take over Martial Arts Street!
Such thoughts kept circling in the hearts of both men.
Maybe after managing it for a decade, I could also become a local power!
Li Zhao thought simultaneously.
Then, Zhao, the owner, looked at Mu Bai opposite him and spoke first.
"You said it, you want to fight us together, its not us forcing you.
"Hmm.
Jason nodded.



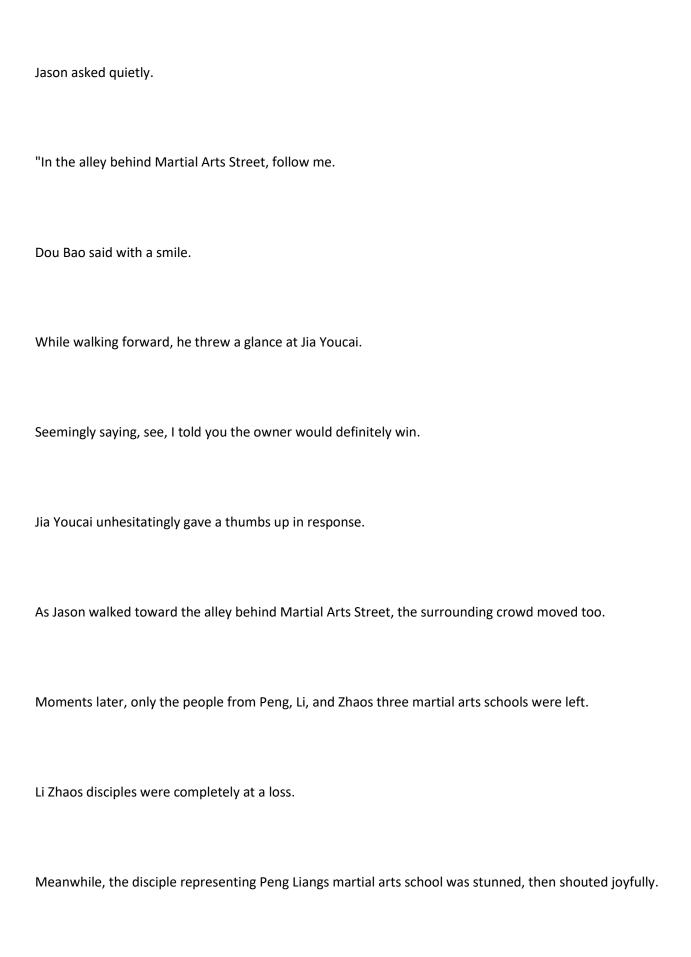
Sixteen Paths Grand Grapple, targeting major human joints.
Thirty-Two Paths Minor Grapple, targeting minor human joints.
Once captured, it means broken bones and torn tendons.
And to successfully capture the enemy, one must be fast, precise, and ruthless.
Thats how Li and Zhao were.
As soon as they made their move, they appeared in front of Jason with a whoosh, as fast as arrows leaving the string, especially since their cooperation was so tacit that it seemed like a combined attack.
Die!
Seeing Jason so close, Li and Zhao snarled with ferocious expressions, yelling in their hearts.
Jason remained expressionless, raising his fist.

Cry!
A cry sounded.
Like the call of a crane.
Li and Zhao, who had swiftly charged at Jason, shuddered all over, their advancing momentum collapsing immediately, and they looked at Jason with pale faces, filled with disbelief.
How did Mu Bai know Zhang Mings Crane Cry Fist?
No!
Its not just knowing!
He far surpassed Zhang Ming!
Zhang Ming needed to charge for at least a dozen moves to make a crane cry punch, and its power wasnt nearly as great, at most making their ears uncomfortable.

But the targets Crane Cry Fist?
Felt like a knife piercing their bodies.
Retreat!
With unexpected circumstances arising, Li and Zhao attempted to distance themselves, but Jasons fist suddenly accelerated, landing squarely on the retreating Zhao owners chest.
Bam!
Zhao felt as if a blade had been driven into his chest.
Then came the shock!
An intense shock spread from within, shattering his internal organs.
And that wasnt the end!
In the next moment, a surge of scorching energy exploded.

Boom!
Zhaos chest burst open directly, and amid the blood mist, Jason swiftly caught up with Li, who was turning to flee in a panic.
"Wait
Bam!
A punch landed on Lis back.
Boom!
Lis back exploded directly.
The two corpses stood back to back, then toppled over.
Thud, thud!

The entire scene fell silent, everyone stared dumbstruck at the spectacle.
Is it over just like that?
One punch each?
People were full of disbelief; the three hundred rounds of battle they expected never occurred, but soon, cheers erupted from the crowd.
Its Jia Youcai!
"Master Mu, amazing!
Such cheers, like a domino effect, quickly spread among the surrounding people.
Jason then jumped off the platform, heading straight toward Dou Bao.
"Wheres the banquet being held?



"I survived!
He dashed toward Jason while shouting, like he was about to express his gratitude. Chapter 1284: Guests Arrive
In the end, the disciples of Peng Liang Martial Arts School did not personally thank Jason.
Not because they changed their minds.
But because they couldnt squeeze through the crowd.
Li Zhao both died on the stage, their discovered disciples gathered around, faces uncertain, while the ordinary disciples were all squeezed into the back alley of Martial Arts Street.
"Master Mu, I want to join Mu-style Martial Arts School!
"Me too!
"Count me in!

Voices reverberated one after another, leaving the disciple of Peng Liang Martial Arts School stunned.
He seemed to see the scene of his own martial arts school at its peak. Yet, instinctively, he recalled an earlier moment.
Go on, represent Peng Liang Martial Arts School.
But Master Brother, I
Its the decision of everyone.
But I
Are you afraid to die?
Are you ignoring the grace of the master?
The words echoed in his ears.

The disciples expression became bitter.
Indeed.
He was forced.
Like a duck driven to the water.
Senior brothers who had followed the master for a long time collectively passed the proposal for him to represent Peng Liang Martial Arts School, while he was the last to know.
He wanted to oppose it.
But it was of no use.
It was the decision of all the senior brothers.
And him?

Merely a disciple originally doing odd jobs in the school, discovered by the master for his decent talent, admitted exceptionally.
In terms of qualifications, he was naturally short compared to others.
In terms of martial arts, he was the worst among all the senior brothers.
What should I do next?
Looking blankly at the noisy scene in front of him, the disciple was at a loss.
"Do you know what the Jianghu is?
Suddenly, a low voice rang beside his ear.
The disciple immediately looked left and right.
"I asked if you know what the Jianghu is?
Seeing nothing but the voice appeared once again.

"I dont know.
The disciple answered honestly.
"Then do you want to know? Do you want chariots and horses? Do you want beauties in your arms? Do you want gold, silver, and jewels? Do you want secret martial arts techniques? All of these are in the Jianghu, they are all there.
The voice spoke, with a hint of allure.
"I dont want.
The young disciple shook his head, saying affirmatively.
Following this, the young disciple seemed to find a goal he had always had.
He answered like this
"I just want to go back to the countryside, become a farmer, have two acres of thin fields, live in a cottage where mountain springs flow, living a life of sunrise to sunset, thats what Ive always wanted!

"Thank you for your reminder!
"I finally know what I want to do!
The disciple sincerely thanked, then turned and walked towards the Mountain City exit.
He wants to go home.
The county town is not suitable for him, the countryside is.
Chariots and horses? Beauties in arms? Gold, silver, and jewels? Secret martial arts techniques?
He thought about it.
More than once.
Especially when he was admitted by the master, it reached an extreme.

Only, with the masters disappearance, he was pushed onto the stage again.
Everything faded.
Everything was not as valuable as the original possession.
Im sorry, Master.
Goodbye, Master.
Im leaving.
The disciple whispered silently in his heart.
Who would say these things to him for no reason?
Apart from his master, no one else.
It must be his master.

The master hasnt left, hes always been in the Mountain City.
Watching him go to the stage.
Perhaps it was a test?
Perhaps its something else?
He doesnt know.
Nor does he want to know.
Now, he just wants to go home.
Outside the crowd, in a concealed shadow, a clean-looking young man frowned as he watched the back of this young man, ultimately sighing lightly.
The Jianghu, isnt it just like this?

Some are bold and vigorous.
Some stand calmly.
There are wins and losses.
The former lives.
The latter dies.
Looking once more at the alley behind Martial Arts Street, he walked towards the outside of Martial Arts Street, passing the stall named Zhao Laosis wontons, unable to resist stopping.
Street, passing the stall named Zhao Laosis wontons, unable to resist stopping.
Street, passing the stall named Zhao Laosis wontons, unable to resist stopping. "Too perfect, thus becoming imperfect.

Saying such words, the young man quickened his pace.
The rumors were wrong, Double Unique is not here, but in Zhoufu.
He must speed up.
No one knew, and no one noticed, at noon after the martial arts competition on Martial Arts Street, two completely different young men left the Mountain City one after the other.
Each person has their own life.
Theyre no exception.
Jason, too.
"The taste of that humble meal is simply average, except the portion is quite large, nothing compares to your skills, Dou Bao.
Seven days had passed, and for the thirty-third time, Jason responded to the same question from Dou Bao.

After receiving such a response, Dou Bao breathed a sigh of relief again, quickly walking away.
Since that day when Jason ate at the humble stall, eating from noon until dark, Dou Bao felt her position in the masters heart was inexplicably threatened.
She became insecure.
She knew it wasnt good.
But she couldnt help but ask.
Thankfully!
Each answer was what she wanted.
The master is truly gentle.
I ask time and again, causing senseless trouble, yet the master never grows impatient.



Or is it clear soup with scalded beef?
Or perhaps a stew pot?
Food is worth looking forward to.
So, the process of waiting for food, no matter how tough, is incredibly beautiful.
Because its worth it.
Jason adjusted his mood, his gaze directed towards the martial arts field.
At this moment, the martial arts field seemed slightly crowded, with a full 30 people practicing boxing here after the martial arts competition on Martial Arts Street concluded, a large number of apprentices flocked to the Mu-style Martial Arts School, with Dou Bao selecting 20 of them through multiple screenings.
The rest?
Were rejected under various pretenses.
After all, those guys were clearly of impure motives, seeking to take advantage.

And even among the 20 accepted, there are inevitably such people.
They were just better at disguising themselves.
Dou Bao knew.
Jason also knew.
Dou Bao intended to maximize the tuition income while striving to maintain a balance.
Jason, however, was completely indifferent.
As long as they paid the fee, he would teach.
Of course, it was just the basic form; the private knowledge of Mu-style Tiger Fist such as Tiger Power would not be taught at all.
In Dou Baos words, even for indoor disciples, they need to be tested for three years, let alone these apprentices. Being able to teach some basic forms and a few moves of the Loose-hand Fighting Technique is already pretty good.

This is how other martial arts schools do it too.
Regarding this, Jason was not familiar, nor did he participate.
He left it entirely to Dou Bao.
He just needed to know that after leaving it to Dou Bao, he could not only ignore everything but also eat better and more abundantly.
Thinking of this, Jason walked down the steps, passing by the apprentices.
The apprentices, who were already practicing diligently, worked even harder.
Unlike the previous rumors about their master, which were all hearsay.
The martial arts competition on Martial Arts Street, that was witnessed with their own eyes.
They saw with their own eyes Li Zhao being beaten severely.

Such boxing skills, such martial arts, they were seeing for the first time.
Although the original masters of Martial Arts Street were all very strong and remarkable, none could explode someone like their own master did.
That shocking scene attracted those who yearned for it.
And also those who wanted to use it as a stepping stone.
Undoubtedly, the latter were more prevalent.
But that didnt hinder their diligent practice.
After all, only by gaining entry could they learn the secret teachings.
Everyone knew this fact.
Therefore, each of them was doing their utmost.

Jia Youcai was the same.
As the special one outside of the 20, Jia Youcai was looked upon differently by Dou Bao. Though old, and with many bad habits, he was a decent person.
Dou Bao intended to test Jia Youcai for a few more days before teaching him some Loose-hand deadly moves.
Jia Youcai didnt know about this.
Having gone through the events of these days, he only knew that he needed to learn martial arts, otherwise, he wouldnt have a foothold.
Fortunately, Li Deshang supported him well, not only paying the tuition for him, but also allowing him to work half a day, giving him an extra day off every month, and promising him to provide some Secret Medicine in the future.
At his age, without Secret Medicine, it would be impossible to fully develop muscle in his lifetime.
Not to mention other things.
Jia Youcai was extremely grateful.

Naturally, he worked even harder, not only practicing in the martial arts school but also at home, pondering in his mind how to confront an opponent when he had nothing else going on.
As if possessed.
Even at this moment, with Jason passing by his side, he was completely unaware, immersed in his practice.
But other apprentices were different.
When Jason walked past them, each did their utmost, grunting incessantly.
Jason listened, indifferent, and continued circling the martial arts field.
His gaze was looking ahead.
His thoughts wandered to who knows where.
[Reputation gained: 205/3000]

Has the reputation value plateaued?
From that night to this morning, it only increased by 1 point.
Indeed, no matter how explosive an event, as time passes it fades into memory.
Goldfish have a memory span of only seven seconds.
Humans?
Seven days.
Jason couldnt help but think of some of the sayings from his hometown, he didnt object to them in any way.
The traces of events exist.
But memory of them, especially food, can be altered.

Even misled.
Even if the true outcome eventually emerges, some people are unwilling to believe it.
People, always willing to believe what they want to believe.
Or perhaps
Leaving a fake reality gives people hope to live on.
But, is such false hope truly hope?
Jason himself didnt know.
He only knew that his plan of bounty on myself had failed.
Apart from the mysterious assassin disguised as Zhao Laosi on that day, in the following days, he hadnt encountered any assassin or killer.

Indeed, because of what happened with Zhao Laosi, it scared off those assassins, those killers!
Zhao Laosis body was found in the small house he rented deep within the alley.
Like being bled dry, with not a trace of blood in his body, and his heart was missing too.
Plus, the sudden decay of the assassin disguised as Zhao Laosi.
The whole matter immediately turned bizarre.
And he was involved in it.
Whether as the Masked Man or as Mu Bai, he was present in this event.
A wise man follows the currents first.
Such bizarre events were naturally known by those practicing specialized traditional professions hidden in darkness within Mountain City.
No one is more cautious than these traditional professionals.

Moreover, each of these special traditional professionals retained the ancient tradition: preserving ones life is ever paramount.
No matter how high Hua Hong is, you need a life to spend it.
Not to mention whether theres a genuine promise or not.
Why trouble oneself?
Therefore, these people chose to abandon it.
Sigh.
Jason sighed in his heart.
But just a sigh it was.
He lamented not being able to eat more.

As for more thoughts?
There were none.
After all, Li Deshang had already written a letter to the Northern Li Family seeking one or two real Secret Medicines, and had sent people to Zhoufu to search for more Nourishing Essence Pills.
The former Jason held no hope for.
The latter?
Jason was full of anticipation.
For by himself, he had already found 15 Nourishing Essence Pills and 30 Small Nourishing Essence Pills at the seedy market in Mountain City.
With Li Deshangs involvement, there would undoubtedly be more.
Im likely to see a significant increase in my food intake again.

If there are enough, I can consider the upgrade of [Dragon. Battle Pattern. Plus. Griffin. Shadow Stealth Body Forging Technique].
I wonder what level the Transcendent level of [Dragon. Battle Pattern. Plus. Griffin. Shadow Stealth Body Forging Technique] will reach.
Thinking this, Jasons gaze turned towards the entrance of the martial arts school.
The gate of the martial arts school would be closed while the apprentices practiced boxing, but once they finished, and they practiced individual moves in the corners, the gate would be opened. By now, with boxing practice concluded, the gate was open.
Jason could easily see outside the gate.
An elderly man, dressed in an azure silk robe with slightly graying hair, was leading an attendant from one end of Martial Arts Street, heading towards the Mu-style Martial Arts School.
The destination of the two was clear, precisely the Mu-style Martial Arts School.
Under Jasons watchful eye, the two walked straight over.

The leading elder was very polite.
Although the gate of the martial arts school was open, he still paused outside, signaling for his attendant to step forward and knock on the open door.
Knock, knock.
The attendant gently rapped on the brass plate of the martial arts school door, bowed to Jason, and then stepped aside.
The elder then stepped forward, cupping his hands as he spoke.
"Is this Master Mu in person?
"Yes, may I ask?
Facing the elders etiquette, Jason immediately responded, imitating the mannerisms of the current realm by cupping his hands in return, he asked.
"This humble one is the proprietor of Red Fragrance Alley, Ive met Master Mu.

"A small gift, a token of no particular esteem.
Saying that, the elder took out a palm-sized small box from his pocket, smiling as he handed it to Jason. Chapter 1286: Red Fragrance Alley
Red Fragrance Alley!
Another secret market in the Mountain City besides the Yue Lai Inn, and compared to the secret market underground the Yue Lai Inn where anyone can set up a stall as long as they pay, in the secret market of Red Fragrance Alley, the only sellers are Red Fragrance Alley itself, and those who enter are all guests of Red Fragrance Alley.
Of course, selling isnt disallowed.
But the only buyer is Red Fragrance Alley.
And doing so hasnt caused Red Fragrance Alley to lose customers.
On the contrary, Red Fragrance Alleys business is better than Yue Lai Inns.
Not only is the quality of the goods sold guaranteed, but the prices are also transparently set, with no sudden price hikes.

Thus, many people from the martial world, when they come to Mountain City and choose a secret market, their first choice is Red Fragrance Alley. Only when they cant reach an agreement there do they opt for Yue Lai Inn as a second choice.
Naturally, the transparent prices are still slightly higher than market price.
However, most people from the martial world dont mind.
Recalling the information about Red Fragrance Alley obtained from Li Deshang, Jason didnt lift his hand to receive the so-called modest gift from the opponent.
Although the scent of the Secret Medicine itself was sealed using special techniques, Jason already caught faint hints of its sweet aroma from this close distance.
His sense of smell assured him that the palm-sized box contained the Secret Medicine.
Moreover, its level was quite high.
Exceeded the Tiger Blood Strong Yuan Powder, almost reaching Ginseng Toad Pill.
One Ginseng Toad Pill is priced around 2500-3500 Silver Coin in the market.
This price is nearly the monthly income of his current martial arts academy.

Note, this is after the academy gained fame and recognition following outstanding results in tournaments.
Previously?
Not enough for a quarter.
More importantly, Secret Medicines like Ginseng Toad Pill are generally priceless in the market.
Their prices far exceed market price.
Unless under special circumstances, such Secret Medicines are not sold.
Everyone keeps them for personal use.
Even if they cant use it themselves, its reserved for family and offspring.
Yet, Red Fragrance Alley brought similar-level Secret Medicine upon their visit.

Was it a simple visit?
Jason didnt believe so.
Theres no free lunch.
Jason learned this back in his hometown, and was taught a harsh lesson in Nightless City.
Even if the current Red Fragrance Alley owner seemed quite friendly.
Remember, the old lady who invited him for bread in Nightless City was even friendlier, with a kind face that put people at ease.
And the result?
The bread was drugged.
Eating it would cause unconsciousness.

Then?
People would be slit, drained of blood, and made into pies for sale.
Fortunately, he survived, saved by the Old Man who arrived just in time.
But Jason couldnt guarantee hed always be this lucky.
Thus, Jason clasped his hands again.
"No merit, no reward.
Jason said.
"Master Mu is too kind, we are both on Martial Arts Street, just some small gifts.
The owner of Red Fragrance Alley laughed.
It seemed truly as so, just some small gifts.

Jason didnt point it out, only looked at the owner quietly.
After full three seconds, the old owner seemed to understand Jasons intent, put away the palm-sized box, without any anger on his face, still smiling broadly.
"Master Mu truly is noble and virtuous, I admire.
"May I have a cup of tea?
The old owner asked.
"Certainly.
Jason replied laconically.
In his heart, Jason already guessed what the opponent wanted.
Recruitment!

The purpose of the visit was to recruit him.
The so-called modest gift was to test the waters.
Being rejected, yet asking for tea, showed the opponents determination to succeed.
Seems Ive underestimated the influence a Bone Tempering martial artist has in Mountain City.
No!
I also revealed that I have Innate Divine Strength!
Perhaps the owner of Red Fragrance Alley is speculating whether I can battle a Skin Training martial artist.
After the martial arts street tournament finished, Jason unintentionally revealed he had completed Bone Tempering.
This was his original plan, to show strength gradually.

Not abruptly.
Still, he somewhat underestimated the influence of Bone Tempering completion combined with Innate Divine Strength.
However, this didnt hinder him from turning to lead the owner of Red Fragrance Alley to the front hall of the courtyard.
The eyes of those in the front yard training field involuntarily fell on the owner of Red Fragrance Alley.
Those who come to Martial Arts Street to learn, aside from a few exceptions, mostly have affluent family backgrounds, otherwise they wouldnt afford a monthly tuition of ten Silver Coins, and naturally they arent strangers to the owner of Red Fragrance Alley.
Likewise, they know what business Red Fragrance Alley is involved in privately.
Whats the owner of Red Fragrance Alley doing with the Master?
Could Red Fragrance Alley want to collaborate with the Master?
The hearts of everyone spawned such speculations.

Only Jia Youcai was different.
In Jia Youcais eyes lay worry.
When the Transmigration Cult attacked the city, Red Fragrance Alley shut down.
Waited until all settled and the situation became clear, Red Fragrance Alley reopened.
Perhaps its just that Red Fragrance Alley is well-informed.
But such being well-informed still made Jia Youcai uneasy.
Because
Li Deshang didnt have a hint of information.
Chapter 1287: Red Fragrance Alley (2)
Its not that Red Fragrance Alley wouldnt inform Li Deshang, Jia Youcai wouldnt be so naive. He knows that the key to a force like Red Fragrance Alley is to maintain good relations everywhere, and its

impossible to truly bet everything on someone like Li Deshang, one of the chief officers.

Perhaps they might establish friendly relations.
But everyone worth befriending, they would befriend.
Yet, there are differences in importance.
For example, Master Mu before us.
Jia Youcai can speculate, once the owner of Red Fragrance Alley understands the current situation of Mountain City, they will definitely strive to please Master Mu with all their might.
A Martial Artist who has achieved Bone Tempering mastery would undoubtedly have significant influence in Mountain City.
However, this is not what concerns Jia Youcai.
What truly worries Jia Youcai is that after all the currying favor, Red Fragrance Alleys attitude might affect Master Mu.
This is not impossible.
One side provides benefits endlessly, without any effort needed.

While the other side is exhausted, needing strong dependence.
Everyone would choose the former.
And it so happens that Li Deshang is the latter.
In the seemingly stable Mountain City, Li Deshang needs to rely on Master Mu for far too many things. If Master Mus attitude changes, the current situation will be overturned immediately.
Li Deshang would be crushed.
And him?
The outcome wouldnt be much better.
I hope
"Jia Youcai!

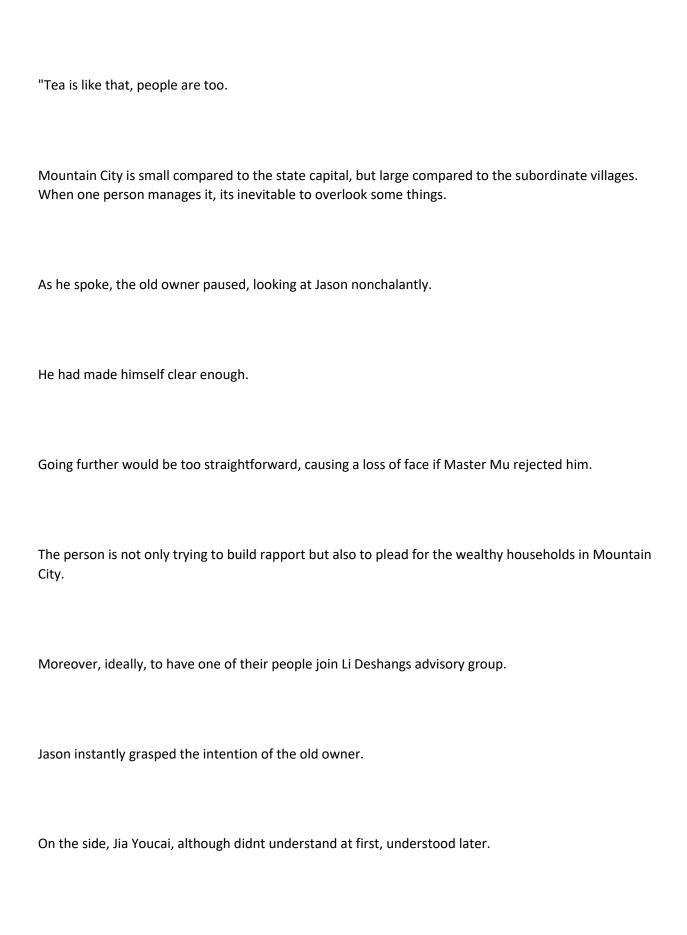
Jia Youcai was still deep in thought when he suddenly heard Dou Bao calling from the distant kitchen.
"Sister Dou Bao, whats the matter?
Jia Youcai hurriedly ran towards the kitchen.
"Im busy cooking and cant leave, the Master wants you to take the tea to the front hall and serve them closely.
Dou Bao said as she handed a tray with a teapot, tea cups, and dried fruits to Jia Youcai.
Jia Youcai was stunned.
Then, the arrest officer smiled.
"Alright.
"Thats good at it, huh.
Saying this, Jia Youcai carried the tray and headed towards the hall.

His earlier worries?
Had already completely vanished.
Master Mu had already shown his stance, no change at all, otherwise he wouldnt have been asked to serve tea and water at this moment, serving is merely an indication of attitude, isnt it?
No doubt its Master Mu.
Only someone like Master Mu could have honed his skills to such a degree at this age.
And someone like me?
Too many thoughts.
With admiration and reflection in his heart, Jia Youcai entered the front hall.
Jason and the owner of Red Fragrance Alley sat on the left and right.

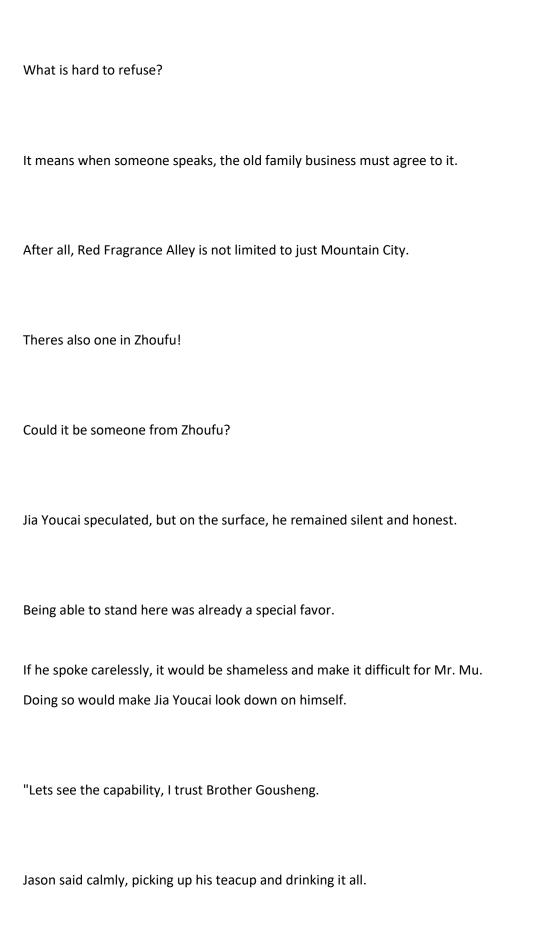
The attendants of Red Fragrance Alley stood behind their own master, Jia Youcai, clad in short attire, set up the dried fruits, brewed the tea, and stood deferentially behind Jason.
"Officer Jia, still in good health?
That old owner laughed and cupped his hands, but did not get up.
"Thanks, thanks.
Jia Youcai replied with a smile.
"Same, same.
That old owner laughed and cupped his hands again, then turned back to look at Jason, speaking gently: I heard that Master Mu turned misfortune into blessings, and not only survived but reached Bone Tempering mastery, such talent is truly admirable.
"All thanks to Goushengs unsparing help.
"Otherwise, Mu Bai would have died long ago.

Jason responded politely.
And straightforwardly highlighted Li Deshangs role.
For Li Deshang, this collaborator, Jason was quite satisfied, not just due to Li Deshangs sincerity, but also because of a hint of naivety in Li Deshangs personality.
In Jia Youcais words, The gentleman is a good person, just a bit foolish from reading too much.
Jason didnt dislike such naivety.
Of course, he didnt like the evaluation of foolishness from reading too much.
He preferred to call it scholarly spirit.
"Mr. Li, you have always earned my admiration.
This old owner from Red Fragrance Alley was already a seasoned person, how could he not understand Jasons series of hints?

With Jia Youcais presence, combined with Jasons words, it was enough to explain everything.
Then, this old owner from Red Fragrance Alley smiled warmly and picked up the teacup for a sip.
"Nice jasmine tea, the fragrance is overwhelming.
"It would be better with a couple of sugar crystals.
"And ideally a peel of dried orange.
As he spoke, he took another sip.
As if to clear his throat, he continued.
"The sugar makes the tea smoother and easier to drink, while dried orange peel has properties that promote digestion and relieve dampness. Together with the tea, they complement each other perfectly.
"Yet, balance is key; too much sugar cloys, too much tea gets bitter, the same goes for dried orange peel.



The person came to plead!
In fact, since several wealthy households in Mountain City were raided, many pleaded.
But Li Deshang had closed his doors to them all.
Now someone pleaded with Mu Bai
Sigh!
Not easy to deal with.
Jia Youcai took a deep breath in his heart, he knew clearly, being able to move this old owner from Red Fragrance Alley meant those wealthy families had surely made a significant move, enough to interest the old owner.
Chapter 1288: Red Fragrance Alley (3)
Of course, its more likely that
Its hard to refuse!



In the tea, he would add rock sugar and dried tangerine peel.
Because it tastes good.
Simply tastes good.
No other reason.
At most, to quench thirst.
As for more?
Nothing else.
Jason never meddled in things he was not good at, nor would he intervene in others decisions to influence their plansa person must rely on themselves.
He very much agreed with this statement.

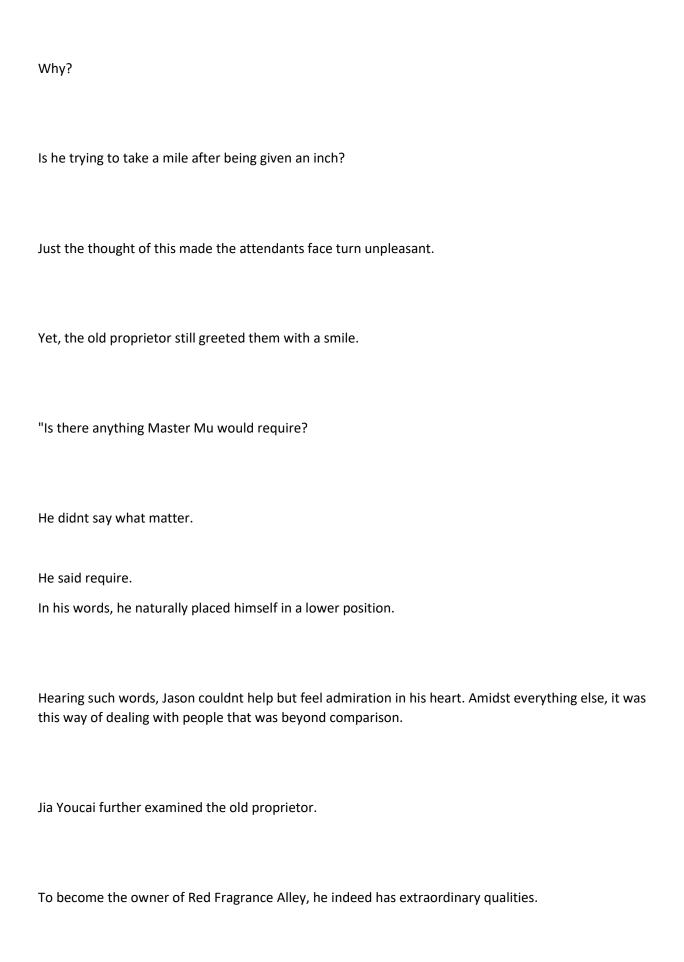
But he agreed even more with: a person should have self-awareness.
He had his ideas.
Li Deshang had his own ideas.
The two cooperated very well now, but that didnt mean he would make decisions for Li Deshang.
Persuasion?
What a joke.
That is truly a false and hypocritical excuse. Given the current situation maintained by Li Deshang, if he spoke, whether Li Deshang wanted to or not, he would agree.
Such an attitude was felt by the old family business.
"Master Mu is truly admirable.

"This makes me even more eager to cooperate with Master Mu.
"This time its a matter for Red Fragrance Alley itself. Although Mountain City is peaceful, there will inevitably be wandering great thieves. I hope to cooperate with Master Mu. If something happens to Red Fragrance Alley, Master Mu can lend assistanceof course, Red Fragrance Alley will provide Master Mu with three Nourishing Essence Pills every month and there will be additional rewards if Master Mu takes action.
After clarifying Jasons attitude, the old family business immediately refrained from talking about previous matters and turned to an invitation.
In Mountain City, if one succeeds in martial arts, they can open a martial arts school, become a guest elder for businesses, or serve as guards, and some even join escort agencies.
However, there are no escort agencies in Mountain City.
Moreover, most people who practice martial arts in Mountain City are drawn to Martial Arts Street.
Because most businesses prefer to affiliate themselves with the martial arts school.
This is also why people from wealthy families are willing to learn martial arts, not only to strengthen themselves but also to form a deeper connection with the martial arts school.



Not to mention anything else, just this kind of generosity was enough to earn anyones goodwill.
While Jason was surprised, Jia Youcai was shocked.
One Nourishing Essence Pill costs one hundred Silver Coins.
In twelve months, thats thirty-six pills.
Which means three thousand six hundred Silver Coins!
Oh my!
How much money is that!
I wouldnt earn that in my whole life!
After a simple calculation, Jia Youcais eyelid twitched, and his mind started malfunctioning.

And the old family business stood up.
With the matter settled, the old family business was going to make arrangements.
As for deepening the bond?
Since Mu Bai agreed to be the guest elder of Red Fragrance Alley in Mountain City, there will be plenty of opportunities.
But just as the old family business was about to leave, Jason suddenly spoke up
"Wait!
Chapter 1289: Deal!
The attendant from Red Fragrance Alley who was walking outside turned back in shock, his face full of confusion.
He had been observing all along.
The boss not only gave Master Mu all respect but also paid a high price.



Not just this attitude, but also such poise.
I am far behind.
Jia Youcai silently thought.
At this moment, Jason already smiled and waved his hand.
"I wouldnt call it a requirement, just want to purchase some Secret Medicine and Secret Martial Arts Techniques from Red Fragrance Alley.
Jason didnt conceal it.
Such matters arent worth hiding.
Ever since visiting the secret underground market beneath the Yuelai Inn, Jason had been full of anticipation for Red Fragrance Alley.
Hearing Jasons words, the old proprietor smiled.

"Master Mu is already a guest elder of Red Fragrance Alley; you can buy Secret Medicine available at Red Fragrance Alley at a ten percent discount, but as for the Secret Medicine that can benefit the Bone Tempering to its peak, Red Fragrance Alley doesnt have any this month. I will reserve some for Master Mu from Zhoufu next month, as for Secret Martial Arts Techniques
Saying this, the old proprietors smile contained a hint of helplessness.
"Even in Red Fragrance Alleys Zhoufu location, Secret Martial Arts Techniques are scarce, mostly incomplete, making it hard to fully train Tendons and Muscles, and acquiring further Secret Martial Arts is even more difficult, not to mention Skin Training, which is a core family secret that absolutely wont be passed outside, once it is leaked, it becomes an unending conflict, and at the crucial moment, every family head would choose to go down together, so there are no true Secret Martial Arts Techniques in Red Fragrance Alley.
The old proprietor sighed as he spoke.
Secret Medicine is rare.
Secret Martial Arts Techniques?
Even rarer!
Of course, the rarest are those with the talent to practice martial arts.

Although everyone seems able to train in martial arts, truly mastering Tendons and Muscles are extremely few.
Even with the support of Secret Medicine, its the same.
Secret Medicine might stimulate Qi-Blood, accelerating ones path to being a martial artist, but doesnt instantly make one a martial artist.
Becoming a martial artist still depends on talent.
Unless money isnt a concern, and one consumes Secret Medicine like candies to forcibly nurture a martial artist.
Or that truly heaven-defying Great Medicine.
However, its not just the rarity of such Great Medicine, even Secret Medicine aimed at Skin Training is considerably rare in Red Fragrance Alley, their fully dedicated alchemist hasnt reached that level.
Additionally, becoming a martial artist is not only about talent but also the martial techniques to be practiced.

The combination of both makes it exceedingly difficult.
If both were easy to obtain, Red Fragrance Alleys development wouldnt be so rocky.
With the yearly production of Secret Medicine, not to mention others, they could nurture over a dozen masters who have mastered Tendons and Muscles, although placing a dozen such masters in the Northern Capital or Shu Capital might be insignificant, in a place like Zhoufu or a county town, they wouldnt need to tirelessly connect with the local powerhouses, government, and then pay the respective costs to open a business smoothly.
They could outrightly press forward.
They could intimidate some life-risking great thieves.
But its truly too difficult.
Even though the alley chief has worked hard, continuously cultivating martial artists belonging to Red Fragrance Alley, only two or three can become martial artists each year, placed in a city under Zhoufu, its still decent, but within Zhoufu its somewhat lacking, let alone in big cities like Northern Capital or Shu Capital, it is truly insignificant.
Thus, when this old proprietor found a martial artist with Bone Tempering mastery + Innate Divine Strength, comparable to Skin Training, he spared no effort to draw them in.

If unable to nurture independently, they would bring them into their own faction.
Red Fragrance Alley had been doing this for years.
The result?
Pretty good.
At least the situation in various places has long since stabilized, silently developing for another decade, Red Fragrance Alley would have the opportunity to take another step forward as described by the alley chief, becoming a true major force akin to the Northern Li Family.
"Mr. Xu misunderstood; I just want to purchase a Nourishing Essence Pill.
"As for Secret Martial Arts Techniques?
"If available, its a bonus; if not, no matter.
Jason said with a smile.

After consuming so much Secret Medicine, Jason already had a certain understanding of it.
Among the Secret Medicine he consumed, Nourishing Essence Pill is undoubtedly the most cost-effective.
One Nourishing Essence Pill provides 10 points of satiety, costing 100 Silver Coins.
While one portion of Tiger Blood Strong Yuan Powder offers 50 points of satiety, it needs 1000 Silver Coins.
Not to mention Ginseng Toad Pill, which at 80 satiety points, requires 2500-3500 Silver Coins, if using this price to purchase Nourishing Essence Pill, it could buy 25-35 Pills, translating to 250-350 points of satiety. Chapter 1290: Deal! (2)
Therefore, for Jason, the Nourishing Essence Pill is the best choice at this stage.
Nourishing Essence Pill?
"Red Fragrance Alley has enough stock.
"How much do you intend to buy, Master Mu?

"But the Nourishing Essence Pill is already useless to Master Mu, isnt it?
Xu Dashan, the old owner of Mountain City Red Fragrance Alley, was full of doubts in his heart.
As monthly tribute, he had just promised Master Mu a years supply of Nourishing Essence Pill, a total of 36 pills.
In Xu Dashans view, Jason wouldnt need any more Nourishing Essence Pill in the short term.
After all, once one achieves Bone Tempering, the power of Nourishing Essence Pill is essentially useless, its effect is negligible, and an excess could produce medicinal toxins and impurities, affecting the purity of Qi-Blood.
Therefore, the Nourishing Essence Pill Xu Dashan offered is mainly meant to help Jason nurture more trusted disciples, bolstering his own strength.
"Master Mu, let me say one more thing.
"Though the Secret Medicine is good, do not indulge too much.
"Once medicinal toxins and impurities are produced, its likely youll never enter Skin Training in your life.

Xu Dashan reminded.
"I understand.
Jason nodded slightly but said no more.
Seeing Jasons attitude, Xu Dashan naturally didnt say anything further.
Hes said what needed to be said, any more would be annoying.
Xu Dashan wouldnt do such a thing.
"Aside from the monthly tribute for you, Master Mu, Red Fragrance Alley still has a hundred Nourishing Essence Pill left, and as a Guest Elder, you can buy them for 100 Silver Coin each.
Xu Dashan stated a number.
"Good, III take them all.
Jason said directly, then a Gold Note with a face value of 200 appeared on the table.

Xu Dashan was taken aback as he looked at the Gold Note in front of him.
Firstly, he was surprised Jason could produce the 200 Gold Note, which equaled 10,000 Silver Coin; even the martial arts schools on Martial Arts Street would need years of accumulation to manage that.
Secondly, he was surprised Jason needed such a large quantity of Nourishing Essence Pill.
Could it be theres some force behind this Master Mu?
Xu Dashan couldnt help but wonder.
Jason being a master of Bone Tempering wouldnt need so many Nourishing Essence Pill; he must be buying for others, and spending 10,000 Silver Coin at once showed the demand was high, and they werent lacking money.
Aside from a force, there was no other explanation for this.
Who could it be?
The rich households in the city were already eradicated by Li Deshang.

Any other outsiders?
Could it be
Involuntarily, Xu Dashan made more guesses in his heart.
On the surface, Xu Dashan smiled and cupped his hands in thanks.
"Thank you for your patronage.
"Master Mu is even more powerful than imagined.
Xu Dashan said while pocketing the Gold Note, speaking in a veiled manner.
"Please, Mr. Xu, help keep an eye on the stock of Nourishing Essence Pill in Red Fragrance Alley at Zhoufu; if there are any, please have them brought together.
Jason added.

The main purpose of becoming a Guest Elder at Red Fragrance Alley was to purchase Secret Medicine.
Now that it started, he naturally wouldnt need to be so reserved anymore.
As for suspicion?
Anyone truly knowledgeable about martial artists wouldnt suspect someone consuming so much Secret Medicine.
They would only think theres an organization behind him.
Requiring a large amount of Secret Medicine.
For this, Jason wouldnt explain.
This was advantageous for him.
"Zhoufu probably has a hundred pills in stock as well; the rest can only come next quarter, as alchemy isnt easy work.

Xu Dashan was increasingly convinced that there was additional force behind Master Mu.
However, Xu Dashan wasnt worried at all but rather happy.
A force that needed to rely on Red Fragrance Alley, Xu Dashan wished for the stronger it was, the better.
As long as the organization didnt have its own Alchemist, it was Red Fragrance Alleys best partner.
As for having their own Alchemist?
Thats not an easy thing.
Even their owner had spent half his life just to have an Alchemist by chance.
Which also gave birth to the idea of establishing Red Fragrance Alley.
Or rather!
An Alchemist is the foundation of an organization.

Everything else?
Are just branches and leaves.
Even for a martial artist accomplished in Bone Tempering or Skin Training, its the same.
"Alright, please hurry.
Jason said, placing another 200 Gold Note on the table.
Xu Dashan unobtrusively pocketed it and stood up to take his leave.
This time Jason didnt stop him.
Xu Dashan left the martial arts school with his attendant, who couldn't help but ask once they were far away: Why didn't you buy more Nourishing Essence Pill, Sir? There are two hundred in stock at Zhoufu, and new supplies are brought every month, enough to meet daily sales needs?
Xu Dashan took one look at his attendant and couldnt help but shake his head.

Despite his efforts to train him, there were still areas where this attendant fell short.
Not only did he lack patience, his sense of the big picture was also somewhat lacking.
"Alas.
"What do you think of Master Mu?
Xu Dashan asked.
"Very strong, very wealthy.
The attendant answered honestly.
"Why is he wealthy?
Xu Dashan continued to ask.

The attendant blinked, confused as to why his employer would ask such an obvious question, but still replied: Because he unhesitatingly pulled out 400 Gold Note to purchase Nourishing Essence Pill
As he spoke, the attendant froze.
"He has the need, we have the supply.
"This is the basis of collaboration.
"But we cant give too much at once.
"Just like eating, if you eat too much, youll just feel stuffed and wont want to do anything.