

New Era 311

Chapter 311 - Like I'd Believe You

The next morning.

After getting up, Chen Shouyi went to the bathroom for a shower.

He had just finished and was about to brush his teeth when the door was knocked.

"Brother, are you done yet? It's almost seven o'clock!" Chen Xingyue urged.

"What's the rush? They probably aren't even awake yet," Chen Shouyi said, glancing at the watch on the sink—it wasn't even half past six.

She's never this concerned for her brother.

"Aren't you going to buy a gift?" Chen Xingyue said.

"Hold on!" Chen Shouyi said, feeling a bit agitated.

"Hurry up then!"

After washing up, he took out a set of clothes from the wardrobe and got dressed, while quietly speaking to the Shell Lady who was already curling up alertly in the air-conditioned quilt: "Stay at home and keep sleeping, I'm going to meet the bad Giant."

As soon as he spoke, a little head popped out of the quilt, seriously whispering, "Oh! You go ahead, little one will be good."

"Stay home, I'll be back soon."

Then he opened the storage cabinet, which was stacked high with cash.

His monthly salary and allowance as a Martial Artist was 1.5 million, and that was just the small part; the biggest portion was the bonus from missions.

As a Martial Artist, his mission bonuses ranged from 2 million to as much as 5 million.

Like last month, due to executing a high-risk mission in Ningzhou, his income reached 6.5 million.

Nowadays, society is quite unstable, and keeping money in the bank isn't secure.

So every time he gets paid, Chen Shouyi withdraws piles of cash to store at home. Now, there's over 10 million in the cabinet, and if it weren't for the fact that bank gold is no longer tradable, he'd have converted it all to gold.

He took some money, put it in his wallet, and closed the cabinet.

...

A light rain fell last night, leaving puddles on the road, and the withered willow leaves on both sides suddenly looked much greener.

After breakfast, Chen Shouyi and his sister headed out the door.

Chen Xingyue wore a white T-shirt and deep blue athletic shorts, revealing her long, toned legs. Her ponytail swayed energetically as she walked.

The two of them stopped at a nearby fruit and vegetable supermarket.

Amid Chen Xingyue's expression of disdain, Chen Shouyi bought a watermelon and carried it in his hand.

"Brother, you're just bringing a watermelon as a gift?"

"Then what should I buy, grapes?" Chen Shouyi asked, puzzled.

"Did you even get what I meant?" Chen Xingyue said furiously, "Mom told you to buy something valuable, and you're just bringing fruit?"

This is a Martial Artist we're visiting! Even if not a lavish gift, it should at least be something with style!"

"Style? So a watermelon has no style? How do you know Colonel Xiao doesn't like watermelons?"

Frustrated by her brother's stubbornness, Chen Xingyue stomped in exasperation, "Fine, I'm not managing this anymore. You'll be the one embarrassed!"

"Embarrassed by what? You just overthink things!" Chen Shouyi said, then paused, and tentatively asked, "How about... you don't go? I can handle the embarrassment myself."

Visiting Xiao Changming's home could likely reveal his identity as a Martial Artist.

That would be awkward.

"Hmph!"

Chen Xingyue snorted coldly from her nose, turned away, and ignored Chen Shouyi.

Feeling awkward, he reluctantly headed towards the nearby police station.

He still didn't know where Xiao Changming lived.

Though he knew his house was in the villa district, the district was quite large, divided into east, west, south, and north sections, with a central park and a huge golf course yet to be developed, covering hundreds of acres.

The police station managed local households; Chen Shouyi had Chen Xingyue wait outside and upon revealing his identity, soon got Xiao Changming's address.

...

On the way, Chen Xingyue started chattering away again.

"Brother, what is Colonel Xiao's personality like? Is he very strict?" she asked nervously.

"He's alright!" Chen Shouyi replied casually.

"What's 'alright' supposed to mean?" Chen Xingyue asked, clearly displeased with Chen Shouyi's dismissive tone.

"Just what it sounds like!"

"Does he have kids? Boys or girls?"

"Can't you stop being so annoying? You'll see in a while!" Chen Shouyi retorted, feeling irritated.

Seriously, nothing to be so nervous about.

Chen Xingyue didn't care at all about her brother's bad attitude, "Just tell me!"

"He has a daughter, a bit younger than you," Chen Shouyi said helplessly.

...

Soon the two reached Xiao Changming's house.

The gate was wide open, and the living room inside was bustling, most wearing military uniforms—clearly, they weren't the only visitors.

Chen Shouyi stepped inside.

Later, Chen Xingyue also braced herself and followed with a nervous face.

Many people, upon seeing Chen Shouyi, subconsciously stood up, and the atmosphere suddenly quieted down a bit.

Xiao Changming came over and said with a smile, "Brother Chen, since you're here, there's no need for gifts, you're too kind!"

"Bought it casually on the roadside!" Chen Shouyi replied.

Chen Xingyue almost wanted to cover her face upon hearing this.

Xiao Changming accepted the watermelon and then looked at Chen Xingyue, asking, "And who is this?"

"This is my sister Chen Xingyue, insisted on coming over," Chen Shouyi introduced, feeling a strange sensation in his heart.

On the opposite side, although Xiao Changming was smiling, his expression was somewhat stiff and gloomy, and facing him, Chen Shouyi felt a faint sense of oppression, his sharp sense of smell also detected a faint smell of stench emanating from him.

At this point, Xiao Changming's wife, holding two cups of tea, came over, interrupting his unusual thoughts.

"General Manager Chen, don't just stand, have a seat, have a seat. And little sister, don't be shy, make yourself at home!"

Her face was somewhat haggard, and her smile seemed forced, as if burdened with heavy thoughts.

Logically speaking, Xiao Changming, having narrowly escaped death and returned, shouldn't be in such a state.

But these are someone else's household affairs, he was too lazy to inquire further; accepting the teacup, he said with a smile, "Thank you, sister-in-law."

Then he and Chen Xingyue sat down on the sofa.

Xiao Changming put the watermelon away, returned, and smilingly said, "Almost forgot, let me introduce you, this is the Provincial Security General Advisor, Chen Shouyi, this is Huang Luoxi, instructor of the special squad, Deputy Captain Wang Feng, and this is from the military district logistics department..."

"General Advisor, nice to meet you!"

"Hello!"

...

Several people stood up to greet him.

If he were merely an ordinary civilian martial artist, even a grand martial artist, these military folks wouldn't pay much attention, but a martial artist is on a completely different level.

When personal power reaches such a level, even the military, a force of violence, can no longer ignore it.

Chen Shouyi stood up, exchanged polite words, and had just sat down when Xiao Changming smilingly said, "You've come at a good time; we were just talking about you."

"Oh, talking about what?" Chen Shouyi smiled and asked.

"About the mission in Ningzhou this time; I really have to thank you, if you hadn't taken over the mission at the end, found the church's lair, and completed the bombing, I probably wouldn't have made it back." Xiao Changming said with a laugh.

"That's not my credit!" Chen Shouyi said modestly, unable to hold back his curiosity and asked, "What happened then? Why was it delayed for so long?"

"It's really luck; thinking back, it's like a trip through hell..." Xiao Changming shook his head and proceeded to recount his near-death experience.

Listening to his account, Chen Shouyi finally understood; it turns out that initially, he only managed to escape heavily injured.

He then hid in the sewer all the while recovering, surviving on rats and sewage every day, completely unaware that Ningzhou had been liberated, not until his injuries healed, did he quietly come out and find out that everything had changed.

Beside him, Chen Xingyue pricked up her ears, listening to their conversation, but the more she listened, the more confused she became, feeling that something was off.

...

Chen Shouyi sat for ten minutes and then announced his departure.

Xiao Changming tried to hold him back a few times, along with the other military personnel, got up to see him off at the door.

Watching Chen Shouyi's departing figure, Xiao Changming's expression became uncertain, his fingernails rapidly turning black, but when he turned around, he was smiling again: "Let's continue talking, where were we?"

...

At that moment, the sun had fully risen, its rays dazzling.

The coolness of the morning was completely dispelled, replaced by a hint of heat.

Chen Xingyue walked silently the whole way, perhaps because there were too many people earlier, or maybe she was too nervous, she never got around to asking Xiao Changming.

After walking in silence for a few minutes, she couldn't hold back any longer, filled with doubts: "Brother, why do they call you the Provincial Security General Advisor."

"I've always been the Provincial Security General Advisor!" Chen Shouyi said with a stiff face.

Chen Xingyue looked skeptical, though she wasn't familiar with it, it seemed her brother did have a general advisor position.

"Then what about the task in Ningzhou you guys mentioned at the beginning?" she pursued.

"It was just a battlefield reconnaissance mission, underestimated by the opponent, who was seriously injured by a Barbarian expert; I was lucky enough to avoid danger and incidentally helped him a great deal."

"Then why was Colonel Xiao so warm towards you?" Chen Xingyue continued to question,

"Maybe he thinks I'm a genius, admires talent despite status, plus I indirectly saved his life. So why are you asking all this?"

Chen Xingyue thought it made sense, she could understand her brother's explanation, because she often experiences this herself; no matter how strict the teachers were, they always treated her warmly and kindly.

She suddenly relaxed, smiling brightly: "Wow, I was scared, I thought..."

"Thought what, thought I was also a martial artist?" Chen Shouyi glanced at her, cutting her off.

Internally, he sighed with relief; he had narrowly managed to fool his difficult sister again, otherwise, all his efforts convincing her he was still a Martial Artist Apprentice would be undone.

It's best if the sister remains forever a Martial Artist Apprentice!

In these times, becoming a martial artist is indeed too dangerous.

"I thought you were a big idiot!" Chen Xingyue laughed, dodging swiftly.

Chen Shouyi felt contempt in his heart, I want to hit you, can you dodge?

Yet now is different from the past, he feels old mentally, no longer wanting to do such childish things.

"Humph, humph, I'm truly a martial artist!"

"I don't believe you, when I become a grand martial artist, you might have a tiny bit of possibility."

Chapter 312 - Predation

Night.

Pale moonlight filtered through the study window, bringing a faint light.

A figure sat bolt upright at the desk without moving. His nails were pitch black, his eyes faintly red, and he emitted a subtle stench of a corpse. A shadow seemed to dance and sway behind him, casting an eerie and terrifying atmosphere over the entire study.

"Knock, knock, knock!"

The sound of knocking at the door startled the figure from his daze, and at the same time, the countless whispers in his ears quickly dissipated. The previously black nails returned to normal, his eyes also returned to their usual state, and all strange phenomena in the room rapidly disappeared. He rubbed his cheeks as if just waking from a dream, his expression unpredictable.

"Changming, aren't you going to sleep?" his wife's voice came from outside the door, tinged with a hint of worry.

"You go to sleep first, I'll sleep in the study tonight," Xiao Changming said.

"Changming, are you okay?"

"Don't worry, I'm fine, trust me, everything will pass," Xiao Changming reassured.

"Then I'll go to bed, and you should also rest early."

His wife's footsteps gradually faded, and with the soft sound of the door closing, his face turned gloomy.

"Damn it! It's getting worse."

Xiao Changming could feel his resistance to the eerie voices becoming weaker. His consciousness, thoughts, and even memories could not escape being warped and assimilated.

He felt like he was barely holding on.

He glanced at the cold food on the desk, then suddenly picked up the chopsticks, repressing his nausea to begin eating.

The dishes were all his favorites from before.

But now, they tasted like wax.

As soon as he swallowed it down, he was overwhelmed with retching.

An inexplicable irritation rose up from his heart, causing his eyes to faintly redden.

So hungry!

Since waking again, he hadn't eaten for five days, the intense hunger constantly tormented him:

"Mortal... you are no longer human. Blood and souls are the source of your strength. To you, humanity is merely food. Go, slaughter... my mighty warrior... you are the source of chaos..." The whispered murmurs returned, like the devil's temptation, echoing by his ear.

He had already been transformed into a monster by that dreadful presence.

His body craved fresh blood, craved the souls of living beings.

Unawares, Xiao Changming stood up, eyes glowing red as he walked to the window, looking at the passing pedestrians in the distance, his expression shifting...

Half a minute later, the window stood wide open, but the figure had vanished.

...

The next morning.

Chen Shouyi, riding a bicycle, passed by a villa and suddenly stopped,

The entrance of the villa was cordoned off with tape, surrounded by a crowd of onlookers.

"There's blood everywhere inside, a family of four all dead, it's horrific."

"I live nearby, but I didn't hear a thing last night."

"Aren't there soldiers patrolling here at night? How could this happen?"

The crowd was abuzz with discussion, faces filled with terror.

Chen Shouyi's expression changed slightly. Those living in the villa area were primarily military and government elites, at the very least martial artists. Therefore, the security here had always been good, heavily guarded, with a battalion of soldiers stationed specifically for patrol day and night.

Since moving here, not to mention picking things up from the street, there had never been any mention of murder cases, let alone home invasions.

Committing a crime under the patrolling soldiers' noses, without causing any disturbance,

This was definitely not the work of ordinary people.

Soon, police emerged from the entrance, carrying corpses covered with white cloths.

Once the flatbed tricycles carrying the bodies had left, Chen Shouyi hesitated for a moment, then continued riding his bicycle towards the spatial passage in the city.

During the day, there was no one at home. His parents were at the restaurant, Chen Xingyue at school.

All were bustling places, so there was not much danger.

...

In the next seven or eight days, there were no more murders in the villa area.

This allowed the slightly anxious Chen Shouyi to relax a little.

Perhaps they were caught!

The morning forest was shrouded in a thin mist, with light piercing through the layers of leaves, leaving sparse, dim spots on the forest floor.

Time advanced into July.

The otherworld had become even colder,

The morning low temperature was close to freezing,

One could occasionally hear various eerie roars from near or far, as if continually reminding that this was a barbaric wilderness.

Fortunately, for the current Chen Shouyi, this place posed basically no danger.

Chen Shouyi plucked a bright red fruit casually by the roadside.

He bit into it, its sweet and sour juice delighting his taste buds.

Having been in this forest for so long,

he had managed to identify several kinds of edible fruits, though most wild fruits were astringent, with only this one being palatable.

He ate while following a 'beast path' trodden by some large creature, moving quickly forward.

His pace was neither too fast nor too slow, like an ordinary person, yet each step miraculously covered seven or eight meters.

The forest paths were not easy to traverse.

The rotted leaves, soft enough to reach the calves, concealed roots like tripwires and vines crossing like a web, making the place a minefield of traps.

Yet Chen Shouyi moved as though on level ground.

If someone were observing closely, they'd notice his soles barely touched, the rotted leaves just about to cover the instep would explode with a small pit, fragmented leaves fanning out wildly.

Given this world's triple gravity, were he on Earth, he was confident he could walk freely on water.

During this time, his strength increased another 0.1 point, reaching 16.3.

Agility, constitution, and perception also grew by 0.1 point, reaching 16.1, 16.5, and 14.0 respectively, especially perception finally breaking through to 14 points.

However, he clearly felt his power growth rate was slowing, no longer advancing at the previous fast pace.

...

Nearby in the flower bushes, the Shell Lady, limbs retracted within leaves, stared intently at an insect stealing food, buzzing around the flowers collecting nectar.

This fellow, daring to snatch food on her turf, aroused quite the anger, her eyes seemingly ablaze, yearning to smash it at once.

But the menacing three sharp stingers glistening at the opponent's tail,

made her hesitate, decisively backing down.

Despite being much larger in size, she didn't think she could defeat it.

Annoying nasty bug, but thankfully I have the foolish giant.

With one resentful glance, she scrambled out from the leaves, scampering over to Chen Shouyi.

"Good giant... sob, sob... a bad bug wants to bite me!"

"Boom!"

"Boom!"

"Boom!"

...

A sizable tree ahead split open into small holes along the trunk, leaves rustling loudly.

The holes widened, eventually causing the tree to collapse, landing with a thunderous crash.

Chen Shouyi set down his bow, panting heavily.

His arms trembled slightly, muscles twitching uncontrollably.

"Finally got to six arrows per second!"

Chapter 313 - Who Is It?

"Good giant... boo hoo hoo... there are bad insects trying to bite me."

Shell Lady tugged at Chen Shouyi's pant leg, crying and loudly complaining.

Chen Shouyi, who was about to turn back, almost stepped on her.

"Alright, alright, where is the insect?" Chen Shouyi quickly stopped, asking impatiently.

It was obvious that she was fake crying.

"Over there, it's stealing my nectar, so fierce." Shell Lady pointed her little finger at the flower cluster nearby: "Good giant, quickly kill it."

Chen Shouyi walked over to take a closer look and was speechless; the insect wasn't much bigger than a fly.

He glanced at Shell Lady, thinking how she was such a waste for being so big!

...

This poor little insect, bothering no one, was still obliviously fluttering in the flowers, planning to gather enough nectar for the winter, unaware of the impending doom.

The next moment, it was pinched by Chen Shouyi's fingers and instantly crushed into pulp.

"Good giant, you're amazing."

Shell Lady immediately beamed with joy, wiped her nonexistent tears, and quickly leaped back into the flowers.

Now no bad insects were left to compete with her.

Chen Shouyi looked at the squashed insect in his hand.

With a gentle flick of the wrist.

With a "pop" sound.

The air burst.

He looked at his hand, which seemed to be thoroughly cleansed and instantly became spotless:

"Now, my strength is around 1,300 kilograms, not small even among martial artists. If I count the agility that has almost grown in tandem, my power should now be at the level of a senior martial artist."

He mused in his heart:

"Moreover, I have the innate ability to transform into a giant, coupled with extreme defense, even a peak martial artist is not beyond being a match for me."

He closed his eyes to sense the tiny vortex in his dantian that was still spinning. Since it had been depleted last time, it had now finally recovered to about half.

Then, he slowly inhaled, calmed his mind, posed in the starting form of the thirty-six horizontal training stances, and continued practicing.

...

At midnight, everything was silent.

Only the footsteps of two patrolling policemen sounded clearly.

"Let's stop for a moment and take a break up ahead for a smoke!" a middle-aged policeman suddenly suggested.

"Okay." The young policeman nodded.

The two policemen stopped under a streetlamp, and the young policeman quickly took out a pack of cigarettes, handed one over, and politely lit it for him.

At this point, he noticed to his surprise that the other's hands were shaking continuously, and his face looked a bit off.

He immediately reacted, instinctively reaching for the gun at his waist.

"Don't move, and don't ask. We're just having a smoke." The middle-aged policeman whispered.

"Brother Cao, what's wrong?" The young policeman looked around cautiously and asked in a low voice.

The middle-aged policeman shook his head slightly, saying nothing, just focusing on smoking.

The young policeman could only suppress his unease.

As the cigarette was about to burn out, the sound of dogs barking came from afar, and the middle-aged policeman suddenly breathed a sigh of relief, his whole demeanor relaxing: "It's okay now."

"Brother Cao, what happened just now?"

"Didn't you notice how there wasn't a sound on the road just now?" The middle-aged policeman said with lingering fear.

The young policeman then realized that indeed, it had been unnaturally quiet.

At this time of summer, all sorts of insects, especially the sound of crickets, would be extremely noisy at night, but just now there was nothing.

"Have you heard about that murder case at the Fuli Police Station?" the middle-aged policeman asked, deeply inhaling a puff of smoke.

"I have, something about a dozen people dying." The young policeman replied nervously.

"Sixteen, five entire families mysteriously perished, and now the Third Matters Investigation Bureau is handling it!" The middle-aged policeman said solemnly.

"Are you saying that just now..." The young policeman asked, his face turning pale with fright.

"Just a guess, better safe than sorry, this is not something we ordinary people can handle!" The middle-aged policeman put out the cigarette: "Let's first report back to the station, and maybe we'll find out by tomorrow."

...

In a dark corner, a figure remained quietly hidden.

His body seemed to merge with the darkness.

Countless shadowy tendrils danced around him, his nails were black and sharp, his skin unusually pale, and a pair of crimson, bloodthirsty eyes made him look as though he were demon-like.

"Mortals, kill, slaughter, destroy all human order, and you will gain even greater power." A voice seemed to whisper seductively deep within him.

"No, I can't kill, I'll be exposed!"

He looked at the distant City Government building, his expression conflicted.

After a long while, the intense murderous intent in his eyes gradually faded, and he quickly and silently retreated, disappearing in the blink of an eye.

He was Xiao Changming.

These days, his mind had been gradually twisted and assimilated by that eerie voice.

Except during the day, when he could barely maintain normality in front of his wife and daughter, at night he could no longer control himself, as if he had completely changed personalities, becoming devil-like.

He was killing more and more.

So far, the number of people who had died at his hands had exceeded one hundred.

However, he still retained his original memory, familiar with all things human, and was very cautious with each move, never engaging in repeated killings in the same place to avoid detection.

Soon after, he easily evaded the stationed soldiers and infiltrated a residential area.

...

Just as Chen Shouyi was sleeping soundly, he was suddenly awakened by a strange feeling. He glanced at the time and found it was only two in the morning.

As a divine creature, he required very little sleep, and once awake, he no longer felt sleepy.

He simply got up, walked to the window, and outside, all was dark, with only dim gas lamps casting a yellowish light.

Then he suddenly sniffed, the air seemingly carrying a faint blood scent.

"Could there be another murder?" He frowned slightly.

He turned back to glance at the Shell Lady, who had turned over and was starting to sleep again.

He picked up a large pair of shorts from the bedside table, put them on, opened the screen window, and jumped out the window.

He carefully avoided the patrolling soldiers and quickly moved forward, following the scent of blood.

His physique of 16.4 points was more than 13 times that of an ordinary human, able to discern even the slightest smell in the air.

After walking a kilometer or two, he suddenly felt the smell of blood stop, it faded immediately. He searched around once more, finally locking his gaze on the manhole cover on the road.

"It's here."

He squatted down, reached out to open it, and found a bloody garment at the bottom of the dark sewer, with fresh blood stains, just recently taken off.

At this moment, Chen Shouyi felt a surge of unease in his heart, followed by a fierce gust of wind blowing from behind.

His heart felt cold, and in a split second, he quickly grabbed the manhole cover beside him and flung it backwards.

The manhole cover, weighing nearly two hundred pounds, seemed light as a feather in Chen Shouyi's hand, slicing through the air with a whistling sound, meanwhile he planted his hand on the ground, performed a roll, and stood up.

However, in front of him, there was no one.

"Damn it, where did they go?"

His expression became grave as he glanced around but saw no sign of anyone.

This place was surrounded by villas, making it impossible to see everything at a glance, and there were roads crisscrossing between them, branching out in all directions.

Yet in such a short time from attack to disappearance, it was clear that this attacker was very powerful.

"Clang!"

The manhole cover flew dozens of meters and landed on the road, creating a loud noise.

"Who's there?" A dense sound of footsteps was faintly heard from afar.

He instantly gave up the idea of continued searching, not wanting to face the patrolling soldiers. Moving like a shadow, he quickly left the area.

Since the mutation, Hedong City had enforced a curfew, and he was only wearing a pair of shorts, without any ID on him. Running into soldiers would be troublesome.

Moreover, the attacker was very powerful, completely beyond what the patrolling soldiers could handle.

It's not helpful at all.

Anyway, it's only a few hours till dawn, and reporting it then wouldn't be too late.

A few minutes later, Chen Shouyi returned to the bedroom, finding the Shell Lady awake.

"Oh, Giant, where did you go? I shouted myself hoarse, couldn't find you!" The Shell Lady said with a face full of grievance.

"I just went out for a bit, you go back to sleep," Chen Shouyi comforted, closing the window as he spoke.

"Oh!" The Shell Lady lay back down again, and soon fell into a deep sleep.

Chen Shouyi paced back and forth in the bedroom.

Thinking about the earlier ambush, the more he thought about it, the heavier his expression grew.

Since when did someone so powerful appear in Hedong?

Xiao Changming?

Lei Ruiyang?

He quickly ruled out these two.

From a certain perspective, both were just quasi Martial Artists. With his current strength, they posed no threat to him.

"Who could it be? Could there be another Barbarian invasion?"

Chen Shouyi's heart fluttered, he climbed into bed and closed his eyes, entering the Book of Knowledge Space.

He selected the memory fragments.

With a wave of spatial transformation, he soon returned to the previous scene, just at the moment when he was about to be attacked while opening the manhole cover.

He pretended to continue lifting the manhole cover, his whole body tense, listening carefully for the movement behind him.

Though this was Memory Space, all the bodily sensations were exactly the same as reality.

Soon, he heard a barely audible sound of footsteps approaching from afar, step by step.

Tap... tap... tap...

The footsteps were so light that if not careful, no one would notice.

Chen Shouyi's face showed a hint of coldness, his body suddenly turned around.

Just then, not far away, a figure seemed frightened, suddenly retreating more than ten meters, standing still.

His hair was disheveled, his whole body shrouded in a vague shadow, carrying a hint of eerie creepiness, except for a pair of blood-red and bloodthirsty eyes, his face was completely obscured under the dim light.

What the hell is this?

"Since you've already discovered me, I have no choice but... to kill you," the figure suddenly spoke, his voice hoarse and rough, as if his throat was clogged with phlegm, yet vaguely familiar.

Chen Shouyi was momentarily dazed; in that instant, the figure flashed, rushing toward him like a ghost.

The distance of twenty or thirty meters was crossed in an instant, a fist wrapped in white mist tearing through the air towards him.

The fierce wind whistled, causing his skin to sting as if being cut.

Chen Shouyi immediately felt a strong sense of crisis, his figure blurred, barely avoiding the attack, and a whip kick was fired at the opponent's waist but was blocked by the opponent's raised knee.

"Boom!"

Their legs collided violently.

The air erupted with a loud bang.

A huge force transmitted, Chen Shouyi's body flew backward, his toes gripping the concrete ground tightly, plowing a deep rut.

Before he could stop, the blurry figure rapidly approached, retracting its right leg and suddenly changing direction, like a spring, kicking at his chin, which he barely dodged by slightly tilting his head.

Then a straight punch aimed at Chen Shouyi's chest, the air formed a visible shockwave rippling out in waves.

Chen Shouyi's face changed drastically.

Attempting to evade, but it was too late.

His head shook violently, his neck bones made a cracking sound, his head bent back bizarrely, his mind went blank, and his body was like a cannonball, smashing through the wall of a nearby villa, and without stopping, crashing through another wall, rolling out onto the street.

His whole body twitched non-stop like a decapitated frog.

...

Lying in bed, Chen Shouyi suddenly opened his eyes, his chest heaving violently.

"Who exactly is it?"

Chapter 314 - Frenzied Giant Transformation

He let out a breath, calming his mind from the lingering fear of his earlier death.

Such deaths, he had experienced many.

They were already a common occurrence.

Chen Shouyi sat up from the bed, lost in thought:

"This mysterious person, their movements were sharp and fierce, as swift as lightning, completely human martial arts style, and their actions were well-practiced, almost a natural reflex of the body... This is definitely not some novice martial arts creature from another world!"

At this moment, he recalled the words the mysterious person said before the attack.

"Since you've found me out, I'll just have to kill you!"

Chen Shouyi pondered these words in his mind:

"Without a doubt, from the implications of the words, the other party clearly knows me, they might even be an acquaintance."

"But who exactly are they?"

Chen Shouyi felt troubled.

Such a terrible and mysterious existence living nearby made him restless.

He was most worried not about himself, but about his family.

"However, there's no use dwelling on it!" A hint of ruthlessness flashed across his face: "Let me unveil your mystery and see who you really are?"

He lay back in bed, closed his eyes again, and entered the Memory Space.

The scene was the same as before.

He turned to closely observe the terrifying figure shrouded in shadow, finding it increasingly familiar the more he looked.

Before he spoke, he feigned a cold voice and said: "Is it you?"

"Since you've found me out, I'll send you to death." Unfortunately, the other party wasn't fooled, as their body, like an afterimage, rapidly enlarged before his eyes.

This time, even though Chen Shouyi was prepared, he could only barely withstand seven moves before his chest was crushed by their kick, dying a tragic death.

He opened his eyes, visibly angry: "Damn it, once more!"

This time, he wasted no words, immediately using Giant Transformation.

Unmasking the identity was set aside for now.

Unless he took them down once, Chen Shouyi felt a thought lingering unfulfilled.

His body began to swell, and the mysterious person was about to speak, but upon seeing the unusual changes in Chen Shouyi's body, their expression changed and decisively charged over, throwing a punch at Chen Shouyi's head, which was directly blocked by his hands crossed in a defensive stance.

"Boom!"

The enormous impact made Chen Shouyi's arms feel like they were tearing with pain, vaguely sensing the bones were already cracking, and he stepped back repeatedly to dissipate the force, the concrete ground below shattering like brittle cookies under his feet.

"What terrifying strength! Comparable to the barbarian I met in Ningzhou at full strength. What kind of monster is this!"

Two meters one... two meters three...

His body continued to expand rapidly, and his power soared, a shocking aura spreading out like a prehistoric beast about to descend.

A tearing sound.

The loosely-fitted shorts he wore began to split.

The mysterious figure dashed forward again at lightning speed, their leg turning into a blurry shadow aiming for his neck. Chen Shouyi was just about to dodge but found his movements unexpectedly slow.

The next moment, a severe pain shot through his neck, and his body was sent tumbling in the air by the kick.

Before he even landed, he was caught up again and hit by a chopping attack akin to a war axe on his waist, slamming his body heavily into the ground.

"Boom!"

The ground burst open, creating a shallow pit about two meters across.

In the sky-high dust, Chen Shouyi's neck was at a bizarre angle, his body motionless.

The mysterious person glanced at him and turned away to leave.

After just a few steps, a low voice came from behind.

"That really hurt!"

The mysterious person turned sharply, their red eyes seemingly filled with surprise: "You're not dead?"

Chen Shouyi stood up, an incredible aura spreading, his three-meter-tall figure casting a gigantic shadow in the moonlight as he looked down on the adversary:

"Are you giving me a massage? I really enjoyed the beating earlier!" He twisted his neck, the joints cracking, and the dislocated neck bones instantly reset.

"You're looking for death!"

The mysterious person was enraged, red light blazing in their eyes, taking a quick step forward and charging swiftly, but just halfway, they began to retreat urgently.

A massive fist, enveloped in thick white mist, punched towards them like lightning.

The speed of this punch reached four times the speed of sound, the air ahead becoming distorted from extreme compression.

A circle of shockwaves erupted.

Nearby villa windows shattered one by one.

The mysterious person was pushed back by the air shock.

Chen Shouyi roared, his voice booming like thunder, pushing off his feet, causing the ground to collapse instantly as his nearly one-ton body charged violently like a discharged cannonball.

The mysterious person showed not an ounce of fear, red light flashing in their eyes, shadows spreading across their body, exuding a sinister and terrifying aura, kicking a streetlight that hadn't even fallen before it was held and swiftly thrust at Chen Shouyi.

Chen Shouyi's expression didn't change, his body unwavering, twisting his waist to punch the streetlamp pole.

With a booming sound.

Like Mars crashing into Earth, the streetlamp was instantly shattered, and the mysterious person, taken by surprise, was struck backward, clearly not anticipating such a savage and brutal approach.

After the Giant Transformation, Chen Shouyi's defense became incredibly strong.

To offer a vivid comparison, it was like the difference between an armored vehicle and a tank.

Yet, despite this, enduring such a wild collision left his fists bloody, nearly exposing the bone.

However, the other party was clearly worse off. Chen Shouyi noticed their hands twisted bizarrely, evidently broken.

Without waiting for them to stand up, he stepped forward, stomping on their chest, and with a crunch, it caved in, his large fan-like hand grabbing their head and lifting them up.

The mysterious person spewed black water, their body violently struggling, punching and kicking.

Yet such small punches couldn't shake his body in Giant Transformation.

A faint, indistinct foul smell wafted through the air. He stared fixedly at the mysterious person as if shrouded in a hazy shadow, feeling increasingly familiar:

"Xiao Changming!?"

He blurted out.

The mysterious person's entire body stiffened, then relaxed, ceasing their struggles. The red glow in their eyes gradually faded, the shadow on their face quickly disappearing, revealing a grotesque face quite like Xiao Changming's.

In just a few days, their appearance had changed drastically, their once square face now extremely gaunt, the skin a corpse-like pallor, and particularly, their extremely dilated pupils gave off a strong horror vibe.

Chen Shouyi was astounded, never imagining it would actually be him.

"Chen Shouyi, spare..." Halfway through his words, Xiao Changming spat out a mouthful of black blood.

Chen Shouyi said nothing.

You killed me twice, and you still expect me to spare you?

There's no reasoning like that anywhere!

He pressed his head down firmly onto the road.

With a "boom" sound!

The ground exploded.

His entire head shattered like a watermelon.

Chapter 315 - Escaped

Chen Shouyi opened his eyes and got up to pace back and forth in the bedroom.

He glanced at the mechanical clock on the wall, noticing it was only two-thirty, far too early for dawn.

He hesitated for a moment, then quickly dressed and grabbed his credentials.

"I'm going out for a bit, I'll be right back," Chen Shouyi said, turning to the sleeping Shell Lady.

"Oh!" Shell Lady responded groggily, turning over and snuggling back into the blanket, continuing to sleep.

What a coward, doesn't she ever feel hot!

Chen Shouyi grumbled internally, opened the screen window, and leaped out.

The night was as calm as water.

He avoided the patrolling military police on the way and quickly headed for the City Government.

Xiao Changming, as the captain of the military special squad, held the rank of Colonel and was recently even recognized as a combat hero, extensively reported by the newspapers. No matter his prestige or status in Hedong City, he wasn't someone who could be easily touched.

Even knowing Xiao Changming had become something neither human nor ghost, without concrete evidence proving his murderous actions, the authorities might choose to turn a blind eye.

The Martial Artists were considered one of the strategic forces not just in Hedong City but within Jiangnan Province. The higher-ups wouldn't rashly make decisions unless necessary, especially since Xiao Changming had the backing of the strongest force in Hedong — the military.

But no matter the case, these were the rules.

He couldn't just do as he pleased and break the rules.

He also didn't have the power to challenge the rules.

Moreover, Xiao Changming had mysteriously returned this time with immensely powerful abilities, posing a strong threat even when Chen Shouyi transformed into a Giant.

Transforming into a Giant, while offering terrifying attack and defense, had a significant weakness.

His reaction times slowed.

If the opponent was unarmed, it was manageable, but if equipped with a weapon, his body's defense might not withstand the attacks.

In the recent battle in the Memory Virtual World, had Xiao Changming not used a streetlamp as a weapon in an attempt to obstruct his advance and misjudged his actions, the fight wouldn't have resolved so easily.

The streetlamp, weighing over a hundred pounds, inevitably impacted the attack speed significantly.

If it had been a Long Sword instead,

with his speed, there was no certainty he'd even dodge, let alone break the streetlamp with a punch directly.

Even if Chen Shouyi killed him afterward, he would inevitably get injured.

...

"Ka-chak"

As soon as he stepped into City Hall Square, a dozen rifles aimed right at him.

Not only that, he faintly sensed numerous gazes focused on him from behind, making him feel like he was pricked by needles. A glance over his shoulder confirmed hidden snipers in the vicinity.

"Who goes there, don't move!"

Two soldiers quickly approached, and Chen Shouyi had no choice but to stand still for inspection.

Luckily, once he showed his credentials, his path was clear.

It was not like the past; communication was inconvenient, especially with Hedong City being unstable and frequent incidents occurring. Even at night, many personnel were on duty, with the entire City Government building brightly lit.

Accompanied by a staff member, he knocked on the office of the Deputy Mayor on duty.

...

Ten minutes later, Chen Shouyi was escorted out by the Deputy Mayor and soon returned home.

From now on, it was beyond his control.

The next day, Chen Shouyi did not venture into the other world; he remained at home.

The villa area appeared calm, as if nothing had happened.

The third day was the same.

On the fourth day, just as Chen Shouyi was about to lose patience, Bai Xiaoling arrived accompanied by a military Martial Artist with the rank of Major.

"...It is now confirmed that Xiao Changming's survival this time is part of a Barbarian God's plot from the other world; he has turned into a demon," the Major said in a deep voice.

His expression was complex, filled with anger and a trace of disappointment.

The military is a place where the strong are most revered.

Xiao Changming had always been a top-tier powerhouse on par with Lei Ruiyang within the military!

He was a symbol, a Great Mountain.

The lower-ranking soldiers might not know the name of the commander of the Hedong Garrison, but they would undoubtedly know who Xiao Changming was. This incident was undoubtedly a scandal.

In fact, what prompted the military to make a decisive move was Xiao Changming's attack on an air force base just the previous night, damaging thirty-eight aircraft in the hangar and causing over a hundred military casualties.

It wasn't until the defending forces used heavy weaponry that he was finally forced to retreat.

This attack resulted in the destruction of over a quarter of the aircraft, causing substantial losses.

The Hedong City air force base doesn't belong to the Hedong Garrison but is part of the General Military Region, especially now during wartime, making this incident even more significant, leaving the military no room to delay.

But naturally, these matters weren't openly discussed with Chen Shouyi.

He learned through intelligence that Chen Shouyi was the first to notice something was wrong with Xiao Changming, even four days prior. Had the higher-ups made a timely decision, many innocent deaths could have been avoided.

...

This time, Chen Shouyi had no hesitation, grabbing his sword and bow case, and left with the officer immediately.

"The residents near Xiao Changming's residence have gradually relocated over the past few days, and our people have been in place," the Major said en route: "The action is set for noon; we discovered he never leaves during the day, suggesting possible photophobia."

Photophobia?

Chen Shouyi recalled the eerie shadow on his body; indeed, it seemed possible.

Besides, the horror of his changed face was likely a factor too.

They were only halfway there when suddenly gunfire erupted in the distance, interspersed with the roar of machine guns.

"What's going on?" The Major's face changed dramatically.

Beside him, Chen Shouyi was already moving like the wind, racing forward swiftly.

Within seconds, Chen Shouyi stood at the entrance of Xiao Changming's villa, stopping in his tracks.

His heart sank; a large hole had been blown in the villa's wall, and bullet holes were everywhere, but all the figures inside had vanished.

Chen Shouyi watched for a while before the Major arrived, breathless.

"Where is he?"

Several military Martial Artists emerged from nearby villas immediately: "Captain, he seemed to have sensed something was amiss and broke through the wall to escape. He was too fast; we were completely caught off guard."

"And his wife?"

"She was taken by him too, but Director Lei is already in pursuit."

"Damn it!" He punched the wall, leaving a large hole with his bloodied fist.

"Order him back, he's courting death!" Chen Shouyi said coldly.

Given Xiao Changming's strength, even weakened during the day, he could crush Lei Ruiyang like an ant.

Public matters were public, private matters were private.

Though he harbored resentment against Lei Ruiyang, he didn't wish to see him throw his life away needlessly.

Moreover, with Xiao Changming gone, Hedong City was left with only two Martial Artists. If Lei Ruiyang fell as well, all the burdens would fall on his shoulders, with no one to share his load.

Simply from that perspective, he couldn't just let him die.

Chapter 316 - The Death of Lei Ruiyang

"Are you saying Director Lei is in danger?" The lieutenant colonel officer hurriedly asked.

"Xiao Changming is stronger than you imagine. With Lei Ruiyang's level of power chasing after him, it's just suicidal!" Chen Shouyi said bluntly.

The lieutenant colonel's expression changed dramatically upon hearing this.

The other party, as a Martial Artist, was the first to notice Xiao Changming's abnormalities, and instinctively, he trusted Chen Shouyi's judgment.

To avoid alerting the enemy, the military's arrangement this time was rather hasty and completely underestimated, thinking that Chen Shouyi and Lei Ruiyang alone could capture him.

Of course, this plan was not bad, but it clearly underestimated Xiao Changming's alertness and power.

For such a strong figure, if he is intent on escaping, this kind of low-density firepower layout is utterly useless.

Chen Shouyi looked at the two rows of pits left on the street, the concrete had already turned to powder, one row of pits being a foot in diameter, obviously left by Xiao Changming, while the other row was much smaller and should belong to Lei Ruiyang.

However, he had no intention to chase after them, as from the start of the gunfire to now, nearly a minute had passed—a minute is enough for Xiao Changming to run a few kilometers away or even escape the Safe Zone.

Fortunately, there was a helicopter arranged nearby as a contingency if the other party managed to escape.

A group of people quickly acted.

The helicopter was on the rooftop of a nearby building, Chen Shouyi initially thought it was just an ordinary helicopter, but it turned out to be an armed transport helicopter.

This was the first time he had seen such a colossal helicopter.

It was a steel giant with a length comparable to a basketball court and the height of a two-story building.

Both beehive rocket launcher ports were already filled with rockets, along with a six-barrel machine cannon in the middle. This armed transport helicopter clearly possessed considerable firepower.

Two pilots were already seated in the cockpit, and once everyone boarded the transport cabin, the helicopter quickly took off.

Fifteen people boarded the helicopter, all military Martial Artists.

Everyone was in a gloomy mood, except for the loud buzzing noise from the transport aircraft, clearly showing that the Xiao Changming incident was a heavy blow to all military Martial Artists.

If even Lei Ruiyang died, the comparison between military and civilian Martial Artists' strength would be completely reversed.

Chen Shouyi sat in his seat and checked the attribute panel.

Strength: 16.3

Agility: 16.2

Constitution: 16.4

Intelligence: 14.5

Perception: 14.1

Will: 15.1

Energy Accumulation: 3.1

Compared to a few days ago, his agility had increased by 0.1, but he knew in his heart how much of that increase was real; it was merely on the verge of a numerical change, with limited actual improvement.

Moreover, his perception and will also increased by 0.1.

However, these do not constitute hard power, and their impact on strength is limited.

He finally paid attention to the energy accumulation.

Since absorbing another divinity last time, his energy accumulation rate had accelerated slightly but did not increase much, only rising from 0.15 per day to 0.16, which was better than nothing.

Chen Shouyi closed the attribute panel and shut his eyes, likely preparing for a big battle; he needed to adjust his state.

For example, entering the Memory Virtual World to warm up.

...

Xiao Changming held his wife in his arms, darting through the street, his body moving with ghostly agility to dodge pedestrians.

Screams occasionally echoed.

"Changming, what's happening? Why are soldiers attacking us? Are you hiding something from me?" Xiao Changming's wife asked in panic, her hair flying in the wind, and her eyelids struggled to stay open.

Xiao Changming was silent for a while before he hoarsely said, "Don't worry, we'll be alright; no one can kill us."

His pale face carried a hint of gloominess, but in the day, he managed to barely maintain normalcy compared to the night.

"Are we on the run?" his wife asked softly.

Xiao Changming didn't reply, just kept his head down and ran.

"What about Fei Fei?"

Fei Fei was their daughter, still in her third year of junior high; she had gone to school early in the morning.

"She's still a child, no one will do anything to her," Xiao Changming said coldly.

The wife stopped talking, resting her head against his chest, feeling the stopped heartbeat, his icy body, and the faint smell of decay, she sighed softly.

In truth, ever since her husband returned home that first day, she was delighted but acutely noticed something was off about him.

Worn-out, irritable, uneasy.

He started avoiding her and didn't eat with her anymore; he became fond of darkness, enjoying solitude, and his personality turned increasingly bizarre, often muttering to himself like he was deranged.

It turned out her husband had really died!

Died a month ago.

However, she didn't mind whether her husband had turned into a ghost or a monster; she didn't care.

As long as he was here, it was alright.

Lei Ruiyang pursued closely behind, the distance between them rapidly narrowing: "Xiao Changming, you dog of the Barbarian God, you betrayed humanity! You can't escape!"

He was known for his explosive temper, known for his tyrannical nature, and he would never allow Xiao Changming to escape right under his nose.

To prepare against Hedong City's future encirclement, Xiao Changming did not run too fast, only maintaining a speed of about fifty meters per second, at such a speed, ordinary transportation could not catch up with him, and meanwhile, it didn't consume much of his stamina.

Xiao Changming's face flashed with a hint of ferocity upon hearing this.

Courting death!

Casually grabbing a pedestrian's bicycle, he flung the pedestrian into the air and in the next moment, swung his arm backward and hurled the bicycle forcefully towards Lei Ruiyang chasing behind.

The air roared as the bicycle spun at supersonic speed, rapidly flying towards Lei Ruiyang, who was relentlessly pursuing seven or eight meters behind.

Lei Ruiyang's anger hadn't yet faded before his face rapidly changed.

He was running at full speed, completely caught off guard by this and utterly unable to dodge.

In an instant, the bicycle smashed heavily into his chest. His body flew backward as if hit by a cannonball.

Accompanied by a series of dense bone-cracking sounds, he flew over twenty meters, knocking over more than ten pedestrians, finally crashing into the wall of a shop, coming to a stop.

"Damn it!"

Lei Ruiyang swiftly stood up, quickly walked to the street, and after taking just five steps, he suddenly spat out a mouthful of fresh blood, which vaguely contained bits of flesh.

He staggered, straightened back up, and felt a buzzing in his head.

His eyes filled with blood looked blankly at the fleeing pedestrians all around, his face flushed abnormally, and he felt like he was watching a black-and-white silent film, sometimes clear, sometimes blurry.

At this moment, he seemed to hear the sound of water hissing and instinctively glanced down.

Then he saw his chest, where a blood hole the size of a bowl had opened, with copious blood gushing out, and besides that, his sternum was also caved in significantly.

There's... there's no way!

His face showed disbelief.

His legs gave out, his body collapsing to the ground.

Chapter 317 - Trace

Xiao Changming's face was cold and grim, with a faint red glow in his eyes as he continued running without looking back.

His strength had now reached the pinnacle of martial artists, and someone like Lei Ruiyang, who wasn't even a true martial artist, could be crushed effortlessly.

Although Xiao Changming's wife hadn't witnessed all of this, she could still sense something.

She knew Lei Ruiyang. He had visited their home a few times before and always greeted her as sister-in-law, being extraordinarily polite.

She closed her eyes and said nothing, tightening her arms around her husband's neck to help him conserve energy while running.

Before long, Xiao Changming had successfully left the Safe Zone without facing any hindrances.

"Where are we going?" his wife asked softly.

"Leaving Hedong, heading to Dongning!" Xiao Changming said concisely.

"Dongning? Why Dongning? There's still a war going on there!" his wife said in surprise. Dongning used to be an obscure small town she had never heard of, but now it was famous, with the war there persisting for several months.

Xiao Changming was slightly startled; going to Dongning was an instinctive thought. Just as doubt formed in his mind, he heard countless whispers in his ears. A flash of red light appeared in his eyes, and a trace of irritability arose within him, "Don't ask anymore, it's the only way we can survive."

At that moment, he faintly heard the sound of helicopter rotors near his ear, and his face slightly changed.

Xiao Changming looked back and saw a tiny dot flying toward them.

His face was gloomy, and his steps slowly came to a halt.

He glanced to the sides and then noted a box truck coming from ahead.

"Hold tight!" Xiao Changming said in a deep voice.

"Mm!" His wife instantly hugged his neck tightly.

As the box truck passed by them, Xiao Changming swiftly stepped forward, grabbing lightly at the rear of the truck, quickly opened the back door, and climbed inside.

...

The helicopter hovered overhead for several hours without spotting Xiao Changming.

The atmosphere inside the cabin was stifling.

"Damn it!" The colonel suddenly cursed. His name was Sun Ding, the captain of the special operations squad and a great martial artist, responsible for this operation.

Chen Shouyi was unsurprised by the result.

Xiao Changming wasn't a Barbarian; it was clear from the Memory Space that he hadn't lost his sanity. He understood humans fully during this period lacking cameras and communications.

As long as he didn't foolishly expose himself, finding Xiao Changming in a sea of people was like looking for a needle in the ocean.

Besides, ordinary soldiers were useless against him. Unless lured into a trap with concentrated firepower, he couldn't be killed. By late afternoon, the helicopter finally landed in a vacant spot in the City Hall Square.

Metropolitan lockdown was implemented in the entire Safe Zone, transforming it into a temporary military camp.

...

Shortly after alighting from the helicopter, Chen Shouyi received news of Lei Ruiyang's death from Bai Xiaoling.

"What, Lei Ruiyang has died," Chen Shouyi said in surprise.

"Director Lei was severely injured by Xiao Changming during the pursuit and died in hospital despite rescue efforts." Bai Xiaoling said gravely, somewhat worried for Chen Shouyi.

The dedicated liaison officer wasn't idle.

Since becoming Chen Shouyi's dedicated liaison officer, she had been busier than when she was a security officer, running around town every day and almost investing all her energy in matters concerning Chen Shouyi, gathering intelligence he might find interesting, which naturally was part of her work.

Fortunately, since Chen Shouyi became a Martial Artist, her status rose, and as long as she identified herself, most departments cooperated.

Chen Shouyi was slightly surprised, but didn't think much of it; for other military martial artists, it was like a shock from flat terrain, their faces drastically changed.

"Are you sure?" Sun Ding quickly asked, "Director Lei was a martial artist; how could he die so easily?"

"This matter has already been confirmed, with the hospital having reported to the military and city government, likely contacting family members now."

"Director Lei was an orphan, and since his wife died of illness, he has never remarried!" Sun Ding said, with some sadness. He didn't belong to Xiao Changming's faction, but previously served under Lei Ruiyang, which was the reason he was tasked with heading the operation.

Chen Shouyi, upon hearing this, felt a slight pang.

...

For the moment, Chen Shouyi couldn't leave.

After eating the delivered boxed meal, night began to fall, and people on the square started lighting gasoline lamps.

Now the entire Hedong City was taking action, locking down roads gradually and organizing a citywide search. Helicopters were seen flying off into the distance, yet until 8 p.m., no reliable information came through.

Chen Shouyi had Bai Xiaoling inform his parents about his task execution.

Then leaned against the massive tire of the armed transport helicopter, mildly sighing.

Now Hedong City had only him as the martial artist.

This was a source of pressure for him.

He used to dislike seeing Lei Ruiyang alive, but now that Lei Ruiyang was dead and only he remained as a martial artist, he realized sometimes people did need to huddle together for warmth.

Despite Lei Ruiyang's weak strength, it meant nothing to him, yet being alive was a form of hope and comfort.

Look, even those weaker than me are living well, hence I should have fewer issues.

This sort of mentality.

Ultimately, his strength was still too weak!

...

Sun Ding walked over with a gloomy face, offering a cigarette that Chen Shouyi refused, then took it back: "Chief Advisor, you seem to know a lot about that demon's strength; have you fought him?"

Chen Shouyi shook his head, saying, "I indirectly contacted him once, and when he tried to sneak up, I detected it. He seemed unwilling to expose himself and quickly retreated."

He wasn't lying; this is how reality was, though there was nothing notable to say about the encounter in the Memory Virtual World.

Sun Ding felt skeptical, thinking it was somewhat exaggerated.

It wasn't that he didn't believe Chen Shouyi; it was just so shocking.

Moments ago, he had inquired about Director Lei's death.

Just one attack.

Dead from being hit with a bicycle.

More terrifying was that the demon was also carrying his wife, severely obstructing his movements.

The entire process was crisp and decisive, rendering Director Lei utterly helpless.

Truly fearsome!

And the Chief Advisor had become a martial artist later than Director Lei; his strength was probably similar to Director Lei's, so claiming to avert him seemed clearly exaggerated.

Suddenly, a red flare ascended in the distance, bursting into bright light.

Sun Ding's face slightly twitched, quickly realized, and shouted loudly, "Situation spotted, board immediately!"

Chapter 318 - The God of Hunting Appears in Shock

"Rat-a-tat-tat..."

A helicopter hovered in mid-air, its machine gun bullets like the fiery whip of Death, sweeping across the small town ahead.

With the breakthrough of Hedong City's new diesel engine, the first to be revamped were the armed helicopters that had been collecting dust in the armory since the mutation.

Since these armed helicopters were equipped, the entire garrison's mobility, combat power, information transmission speed, and reconnaissance capabilities instantly leaped to a new level.

...

"Ah!"

Xiao Changming stood on the rooftop, howling at the sky, his blood-red eyes filled with agitation and pain. At this moment, the shadows around him seemed almost tangible, exuding a terrifying aura, making him look like the descent of a Demon God.

He held his wife's head in his arms, his body, face, and mouth covered with blood.

...

His escape was remarkably smooth; after leaving the Safe Zone by truck, he found no more pursuers.

He traveled intermittently with his wife, even stopping at a small town for a while to let his exhausted and hungry wife have dinner.

If everything went according to plan, they would soon leave Hedong.

However, as dusk fell, everything changed.

He was completely overtaken by evil thoughts; looking at his wife, he finally couldn't resist and killed her.

When he came to his senses.

Looking at his wife's remains, now just a head.

He finally went mad, utterly losing his sanity.

The entire town was massacred by him, thousands of souls devoured.

"Boom!" Several rocket launchers exploded seven or eight meters away, blowing a big hole in the rooftop, with countless debris flying in all directions.

This loud noise seemingly abruptly woke Xiao Changming up.

His roaring suddenly stopped, his once painful expression became calm and indifferent, and a transcendent aura that looked down upon all things emerged from him. He gazed at the helicopter above.

"Foolish mortals!"

He glanced at the head in his hand, then suddenly flung it towards the helicopter.

"Boom!"

In an instant.

The military helicopter flying at low altitude looked as if hit by a shell, its armor tore open a large hole, the fuselage tilted, and it plummeted from the sky.

The massive rotor swept across the ground, breaking with a thud and scattering sparks, followed by a violent explosion, flames soaring into the sky.

Yet, he paid no attention to any of this.

He examined his body, seemingly dissatisfied.

Soon, the shadows around him quickly dissipated, the red light in his eyes began to fade, and simultaneously, his muscles began to squirm like mercury, a few minutes later a young, handsome man with slightly pale skin appeared at the spot.

He then lightly leapt off the rooftop, ready to leave.

Suddenly, his steps halted involuntarily, and he looked up at the night sky.

Another helicopter was rapidly heading in this direction.

...

Chen Shouyi sat inside the cabin, for some reason, feeling waves of palpitation, a vague sense of unease.

Ever since becoming a Divine Creature, he had sensed danger in a mysterious, almost prophetic way.

"Is it because of Xiao Changming, or some other danger?" Chen Shouyi pondered as he stroked the rough matte hilt of his sword.

At this moment, he suddenly thought of the helicopter he was on, realizing something, he exclaimed:
"Not good!"

Because of the need to search for targets, the helicopter was flying very low, only about one hundred or two hundred meters high, which for a strong figure like Xiao Changming was undoubtedly the best target.

"Chief Consultant, what's the matter?" Sun Ding quickly asked.

Before Chen Shouyi could respond.

The fuselage shook violently, producing a loud noise, simultaneously a steel plate behind the cockpit bulged out, then the entire helicopter began to spin violently.

Everyone's face changed drastically upon seeing this.

"We've been attacked, the helicopter is crashing," Sun Ding shouted loudly, clutching the seatbelt tightly: "Are the pilots still alive? Please respond immediately!"

Yet, no response came for a long time.

Everyone's hearts sank, clearly the cockpit's two occupants were either dead or unconscious.

Chen Shouyi made a swift decision, exerting force to tear off the seatbelt, taking advantage of the helicopter's moment of righting, his body suddenly leapt forward like a phantom to the cabin door, swiftly pulling it open.

A rush of wind hit him.

The world spun endlessly, the ground quickly closing in.

Chen Shouyi grabbed the cabin door with one hand, his body seeming welded in place, unmoving, unaffected.

He calculated the altitude, waiting until they dropped to about forty meters off the ground, then kicked hard and leapt down.

Sun Ding watched Chen Shouyi jump down, gritted his teeth: "All out, jump!"

He quickly tore off his own seatbelt, strode to the cabin door, hesitated for a moment, and jumped swiftly, followed by other Martial Artists.

...

The wind howled in his ears, he used all his strength to control the surrounding wind, adjusting the direction of the fall, while reducing his own speed.

Within just two seconds, he landed heavily on the street of the small town, his body rolling to absorb the impact, and stood immediately. Apart from tingling feet, he was unscathed, tossing the bow bag aside, drawing his sword in heightened alert.

At this moment, it's too late to reassemble the War Bow.

Judging from the recent attack, Xiao Changming should be nearby.

The town was pitch-black, with no street lights at all.

The air was thick with the bloody scent, horrific corpses lay everywhere, some even twitching reflexively.

"Boom"

The helicopter finally crashed, exploding into a ball of flame in the distance, lighting up the night sky.

Rat-a-tat-tat...

Chen Shouyi heard the sound of dense footsteps and immediately traced the sound.

Approaching were Sun Ding and several other military Martial Artists, many walked with a limp, obviously having twisted their legs jumping from the helicopter.

Counting Sun Ding, he found there were only five people.

"Where are the others?" Chen Shouyi asked.

"Three have broken legs, the rest didn't make it down!" Sun Ding said gravely.

Such a crash followed by explosion, even for martial artists, survival chances were slim, almost certainly dead.

Just then, Chen Shouyi sensitively heard a faint cracking sound.

His expression changed slightly, the sound unmistakably the sound of breaking bones.

He moved immediately, identified the direction, and quickly walked towards it.

The other military Martial Artists promptly followed.

Seconds later, he suddenly stopped his steps.

In the dim night, a handsome young man stood before an open space, beside him a corpse, its neck twisted—Chen Shouyi recognized him as one of the military Martial Artists who had come on this mission.

Seeming to hear footsteps, the young man abruptly turned his head to look at Chen Shouyi.

"Chen Shouyi."

Upon hearing this, Chen Shouyi's hair stood up inexplicably, goosebumps formed on his skin; he sensed a strong aura of danger from the man: "Who are you?"

"You may call me Xiao Changming, or also the God of Hunting."

Chapter 319 - Advent of the Saint (Double-Length -)

"You can call me Xiao Changming. Or call me the God of Hunting!"

Chen Shouyi's heart skipped a beat, his hair stood on end, and cold sweat poured down.

A gentle and cool summer breeze blew by, causing the other's fine hair to flutter. His handsome, lean face and tall, straight figure exuded a unique aura.

His body exuded an invisible momentum, the air seemed to be restless and unbearably oppressive,

This was the instinctive fear of a lower life form facing a higher one. It was a kind of Divine Power, and being in its presence felt like a helpless creature facing the apocalypse, a sense of despair as the world crumbles.

The will of the weaker might go mad.

Although this Divine Power was extremely weak, compared to the Divine Power of the gods' wars in the memory world, the Divine Power emanating from him was undoubtedly much weaker, much weaker than the God of Courage who descended to Earth.

Yet, Divine Power is still Divine Power.

It proclaimed the other's identity.

Footsteps approached from afar.

It was Sun Ding and a few Martial Artists who had rushed over.

"Chief Adviser, this person..." Sun Ding said, stopping mid-sentence.

Everyone and the military Martial Artists who followed were all rigid and motionless.

Sweat drenched Chen Shouyi's back, forehead, the tip of his nose, and the palms of his hands.

At this moment, all he felt was regret.

Why was my hearing so sharp!

Why did I charge in so quickly!

And clearly, this was just a siege on Xiao Changming.

Why did the God of Hunting appear?

"Well... that, Lao... Lao Xiao, remember me? I even treated you to a meal before!" Chen Shouyi said, pretending to be relaxed.

"Mortal, in my memory, you've never treated me to a meal!" the God of Hunting said seriously with a Jiangnan accent.

Chen Shouyi forced a stiff grin:

"Haha, looks like I remembered wrong. I have some business to attend to today, so I can't chat now. I'll treat you another day!"

Chen Shouyi was about to slowly retreat when the God of Hunting's lips curled into a mocking smile:

"Humans are indeed a cunning race. Do you think you can leave like this?"

However, I have always favored this race. It has infinite potential. Compared to the foolish plains people, humans are weak but smart and full of order!

Human warrior, I can give you a chance to submit to me—the great God of Hunting.

Compared to humanity, I can give you more, more powerful strength, higher power, and even make you a king."

"Shut up, Barbarian God! Humanity will never..." Before Chen Shouyi could speak, a military Martial Artist hurriedly interrupted loudly.

But before he could finish speaking, the God of Hunting's figure flickered, as if moving instantly, flashing past.

The next moment, his head exploded instantly, with countless blood, brain matter, and shattered skull shooting like bullets in all directions.

The surroundings quickly became silent.

Perhaps accustomed to being high above, the gods are known for their vengefulness. Facing the defiance of ants, they have no concept of patience and will never wait another second if they can crush it immediately.

"There are always some foolish ants..."

He immediately swallowed his words, seeing out of the corner of his eye Chen Shouyi desperately sprinting away. His temples throbbed, and a fierce expression flickered across his face.

He felt he had been merciful enough, even lowering himself on rare occasions.

A warrior of this strength was decent, but in his eyes, just decent.

Just a high-level warrior.

Among his followers, there were about twenty with this strength, and for someone he would patiently recruit and promise benefits, in the Tam World, they would at least need legendary strength.

He was filled with rage, stomped the ground, causing the concrete to tremble violently, and shot towards Chen Shouyi.

Chen Shouyi sensed the intense commotion behind him and no longer harbored any hope.

His bones started to crack loudly, his body rapidly expanding. His vision soared higher, his strides became larger, each step spanning twenty to thirty meters. Dust and rubble on the ground kicked up, trailing a long comet-like tail.

The scenery on both sides whooshed past.

One hundred thirty meters per second...

One hundred forty meters per second...

One hundred fifty meters per second...

His speed continued to increase.

Yet, even so, he felt the whistling sound behind him getting closer.

"Damn it, I'll go all out!" A trace of grim determination flashed across his face.

He quickly reached for his sword hilt, feeling it very unsuitable.

The twenty-centimeter-long hilt, perfect in his normal state, seemed almost ill-fitting now, with his palm alone thirty centimeters wide, exceeding a third of the hilt's width.

But he had no choice but to make do.

Sensing the danger behind him was imminent.

While running, his body abruptly halted.

Drawing his sword, he turned and swung fiercely at the figure, the sword light cutting the air at supersonic speed, even forming a shock wave as it swept the ground, creating a five or six-meter scar.

Yet he struck nothing but air.

In the blink of an eye, that "Xiao Changming" had already evaded like a ghost, the next moment, a blurred fist punched Chen Shouyi's chest. His chest visibly caved, and his entire body was flung backward, clothes instantly shredded by the violent air blast, his massive frame sent flying.

With a "boom," he smashed heavily into a concrete bollard set to restrict large vehicles, shattering half of it.

His chest almost suffocated; before he could catch his breath, he quickly ducked his head as a sharp whistle accompanied a sword light passing like a stream. A tuft of hair swiftly blew away.

Chen Shouyi shivered all over, quickly rolling to stand up.

Chapter 320 - Advent of the Saint (Double-Length -)

"Not bad, mortal. I admit, you have a powerful gift. I'm giving you one more chance, don't test my mercy." The God of Hunting said coldly.

He admitted that he had underestimated this mortal. He didn't expect the other party to have such a rare and powerful talent, with strength nearly approaching legendary.

He was, of course, not the actual God of Hunting, just a Saint descended.

There are several ways for a deity to descend into the world.

Typically, there are four ways: true form, avatar, projection, and Saint descent.

The true form requires no explanation, it means the deity descends in person, able to exert all powers, extremely powerful and terrifying. Of course, if they die, they perish for good. Therefore, unless it's the final moment or involves vital interests, they usually stay in the Divine Country and won't move easily.

The avatar is equivalent to a deity's incarnation, usually one or several ranks below the true form. Even the weakest can wield demigod power. Some strong deities' avatars are even stronger than ordinary deities. In another world, deities prefer to act through avatars.

However, an avatar is closely linked to the true form. If the avatar is injured, the true form would also be severely damaged, perhaps even fall into a slumber.

Projections require special conditions, usually needing specific rituals or summoning by high-ranking priests.

The last method, Saint descent, is a trace of divine thought descending from the deity.

Unfortunately, on Earth with low Original Force, all methods except for the true form are severely restricted.

For instance, avatars, these Divine Power-condensed bodies disintegrate instantly on Earth, like air dispersing in space, not to mention that His Divine Power is depleted. Even His hard-cultivated demigod avatar had to be turned back to replenish His own Divine Power and maintain divinity.

As for projection, it's out of the question. It's already difficult to connect with followers on Earth, let alone support the descent of a projection.

Aside from directly arriving in true form, only a Saint descent can barely work.

However, it also faces considerable limitations.

On one hand, it's challenging for Him to contact His true form and borrow Divine Power to use Divine Art, resulting in significantly reduced strength compared to normal Saint descents. Essentially, He can only exert the strength the taken-over body has, with merely stronger control.

On the other hand, taking over those with strong will proves to be very challenging, which is why it took Him so long to finally possess Xiao Changming only after their mind collapsed.

...

Chen Shouyi felt a dull pain in his chest, the infinite despair he felt upon realizing he faced a deity was gradually fading.

He suddenly realized the opponent wasn't overwhelmingly powerful, just somewhat stronger than the original Xiao Changming. He wasn't completely powerless to resist. In terms of raw strength, he might even be far inferior to his current Giant Transformation.

"A mere Barbarian God, wanting me to submit!"

Chen Shouyi roared, stepped forward, shattering the ground. His massive body instantly tore through the air, shooting toward "Xiao Changming".

"Insect, courting death!"

The God of Hunting displayed a flash of rage.

Facing the rampaging Chen Shouyi, His body advanced instead of retreating. In high-speed advance, His body twisted weirdly, stabbing with the sword, the sword light swiftly piercing Chen Shouyi's chest.

Fortunately, after the Giant Transformation, Chen Shouyi's defense became extremely tough, several times his normal state. Just the dense outer skin was half a centimeter thick, the muscle layer reached

fifteen centimeters. The sword tip penetrated less than three inches into the flesh before the muscle clasped on, rapidly slowing down its speed.

The God of Hunting's nerve response was nearly two or three times that of Chen Shouyi's, but this time was enough for him to react. He immediately struck with a knee toward the opponent's head, the compressed air violent, like an exploding cannon shell.

"Boom!"

A ring of shock waves rapidly spread.

The glass of nearby buildings shattered.

The God of Hunting's clothes were pulverized, His expression finally changing slightly. Quickly retrieving the sword, He retreated gracefully. Before an attack could be launched again, Chen Shouyi was already pouncing.

The God of Hunting's eyes faintly glowed, as if flames of rage were burning, advancing with the sword, the sword light criss-crossing.

While drifting backward, He left shallow wounds on Chen Shouyi's body.

His Swordsmanship absorbed Xiao Changming's original Swordsmanship, and with His willpower granting better body control and fast thinking, deciphered the principles of human Martial Arts Swordsmanship, elevating His Swordsmanship even further.

The sword in His hand was like a highly precise machine, accurate, efficient, unfathomable.

However, no matter how exquisite the moves, no matter how fast the reaction.

If there isn't sufficient attack power, it's futile.

Their battle was like a boxing match where a nimble, technically skilled lightweight met a clumsy heavyweight — no matter how many hits, only one hit from the heavyweight was needed to KO.

The surroundings roared with booming sounds, and the ground continuously erupted, rings of shock waves expanding through the air, bringing anyone too close to have their bones shattered.

"Crack!"

A nearby building developed a crack, quickly spreading. The entire wall collapsed.

Sun Ding and other Martial Artists swallowed hard, watching the intense conflict from over a hundred meters away.

The air around them was intensely distorted, only the large and small vague figures could barely help to distinguish who was who.

"Captain, is that Chief Advisor Chen really just a Martial Artist?" a military Martial Artist asked, dumbfounded, heart trembling in shock.

"I don't know either!" Sun Ding shook his head unconsciously.

He had witnessed Martial Artist battles before, participated in missions with the likes of Lei Ruiyang and Xiao Changming. Even though they were formidable, they were within his comprehension. But this battle had shattered his imagination.

...

"Boom!"

Chen Shouyi was kicked in the chest again, his body slamming straight into a four-story building, creating a large hole.

The God of Hunting stepped forward, closely pursuing, and before landing, the sword lunged like a venomous snake straight at Chen Shouyi's right eye.

Eyes and throat were his weak points, and Chen Shouyi had prepared against this long ago. One hand raised to shield his eyes, the other twisted his torso, kicking toward the God of Hunting.

The God of Hunting immediately retreated...

...

The building shook violently, walls bursting open occasionally, and within seconds the structure could no longer stand, swaying and collapsing with a rumble.

Before it completely collapsed, the two of them shot out one after the other, the battle suddenly halting, standing on the street.

Chen Shouyi felt a sensation of powerlessness; fighting for nearly half a minute, he hadn't landed a single hit.

"Insect, you have utterly infuriated me. I will remember those who desecrate the divine!" The God of Hunting spoke, cold and severe, eyes fixated on Chen Shouyi like a venomous snake, dripping with threat.

Saying this, under Chen Shouyi's wary gaze, he turned rapidly to leave, and within seconds, he was just a speck in the distance.

"Turns out it was just a bluff, I thought he was gearing up for a big move!"

It was similar to saying, "Just you wait, I'll make you pay," or something like that.

Chen Shouyi stayed still, vigilant against any possible deceit.

After waiting for over ten seconds, he finally sighed in relief.

Evidently, his opponent had lost patience with his tough and resilient Giant Transformation, not wanting to continue the fight.

He swiftly reverted from the Giant Transformation, a profound exhaustion surging through, his body swayed slightly but stood straight again.

Fortunately, this time the Giant Transformation hadn't completely drained his strength, far better than the last time in another world when even his fingers couldn't move.

"It's good to be alive!"

Chen Shouyi felt an immense relief and lingering fear, a sense of surviving a catastrophe.

As for the youth suspected to be possessed by the God of Hunting, where he would go and what he'd do, Chen Shouyi gave it no thought and didn't want to either.

A gentle breeze blew past, and he felt a chill in his lower body.

Looking down, he awkwardly realized he was entirely bare, even his elastic underwear had been shredded during the battle.

He quickly glanced around.

Finding a dusty coat amidst the rubble.

He immediately went over and picked it up, ignoring its dirtiness, quickly wrapping it around his waist, tying a knot.