

THE WAY OF RESTRAINT

Chapter 131: The Art of Air Throwing and Deception

"Zhou Chun has always regarded that incident as a disgrace," Song Qiong said. "I'm afraid he will challenge you again, so you should be prepared."

"You seem to know me quite well," Su Jie said, somewhat surprised. "This is my first time meeting you."

"Uncle Su and my grandfather are old friends. Occasionally, my grandfather mentions this incident, and since I pay attention to the fighting scene, I watched the video of you defeating Zhou Chun and even analyzed it with my master. My master said you are a once-in-a-century talent. Given time, you will surely achieve greatness, but you are still not polished. You haven't yet mastered the principle of 'using the opponent's force against them, feigning to attack when they defend, and exploiting their weaknesses.'" It turned out that Song Qiong understood some principles of martial arts.

"Your master is the new Judo god, Omo Hoshikawa from Japan?" Su Jie recalled that Song Qiong had managed to lift such a heavy box earlier, indicating she had considerable strength, and he had heard her mention Omo Hoshikawa.

This person was a genuine Japanese who admired Chinese culture and named himself Hoshikawa. In his youth, he was a Judo expert and later joined the Shaolin Boxing Alliance. He frequently traveled to Shaolin to seek roots, learn martial arts, and find masters, bringing knowledge back to Japan for further study.

The Shaolin Boxing Alliance was a community organization founded by a monk in Japan. Later, Omo Hoshikawa seemed to have grasped some profound truths of martial arts and joined a Judo organization, where he reproduced the legendary technique of the Judo god, Mifune Kyuzo, known as the "Air Throw," and was hailed as the new generation Judo god.

Su Jie studied martial arts and had knowledge of both domestic and international practices, including ring fighting, expert training, competition videos, and the achievements and records of famous fighters and martial artists from around the world. He had also meticulously studied their signature techniques and moves. This was a vast field of knowledge, and Su Jie had not yet mastered it, merely scratching the surface.

The so-called "Air Throw" is a technique where two wrestlers do not physically contact each other during the throwing process, causing one to fall. At first glance, this seems to defy the laws of physics, akin to a scam. However, there are instances in daily life where this occurs. When someone attacks me fiercely, thinking they will hit me, I can dodge at the critical moment, causing them to lose balance and fall.

This is actually a high-level skill that manipulates the opponent's force and plays with their psychology. Of course, this requires the practitioner to have exceptional agility and accuracy; otherwise, they would be hit.

Thus, this technique was only mastered by Mifune Kyuzo, a disciple of Judo's founder, Kano Jigoro. Mifune weighed only 48 kg and stood at 1.48 meters tall, yet he could throw a 200-pound, 1.8-meter tall man using Judo techniques. This truly exemplified the principle of using four ounces to deflect a thousand pounds.

His signature technique was the "Air Throw," where he caused his opponent to fall without making contact. Unfortunately, after his death, no one could replicate it.

However, Omo Hoshikawa managed to demonstrate this technique again. "It is said that your master realized the Air Throw when he discovered the similarities between Judo and Tai Chi techniques, so he went to H Province to learn Tai Chi. During a meal in the cafeteria, his companions jokingly pulled his chair away, causing him to fall to the ground. Instead of being upset, he laughed heartily and finally understood the Air Throw, returning to competitions with great success. Is this true?" Su Jie recalled watching an interview with Omo Hoshikawa.

"That's true," Song Qiong replied. "My master told me that everyone has a 'root' that supports their actions and balance. The highest realm of martial arts is to see the opponent's 'root' and destroy it. This 'root' appears as the center of gravity to ordinary people, but to my master, it also includes inner stability."

"The balance nerves deep in the brain can create illusions under the influence of deception. Just like a drunk person, even without anyone confronting him, he will sway and fall," Su Jie said. "I didn't expect you to understand so much."

"Are you interested in trying some Judo?" Song Qiong asked. "No punches or kicks allowed."

"Sure," Su Jie nodded. Various martial arts have rules, and within certain rules, each has its strengths.

Su Jie often heard discussions about how, in a no-holds-barred situation, certain martial arts are the most powerful, which is self-deception. In a no-rules scenario, one could use guns, even bombs, or weaponized drones.

Even in street fights, there is a distinction between armed and unarmed combat. Weapons are divided into cold and hot weapons.

Song Qiong swiped her card to enter the Judo dojo, where the Judo coach was training some students.

"Junior sister, you're back from Japan? How was your visit with the master?" The Judo coach was a young man in his late twenties, not particularly muscular, but his bones seemed as strong as steel, visible through his skin. He wore a pristine white Judo uniform, and his hands bore clear signs of training, with calluses and cauliflower ears from repeated grappling.

"This is my senior brother, Mu Qiang. He has been practicing Judo for fifteen years and has competed many times. He is now retired and teaching here," Song Qiong introduced. "This is Su Jie, a coach from Grand Ascent Dojo and my friend. He is the one who defeated Zhou Chun."

"Grand Ascent Dojo? Su Jie?" Mu Qiang's eyes lit up. "I've seen the video of you defeating Zhou Chun. At that time, he was overwhelmed by anger and not calm enough. If he had used throwing techniques while trembling, the outcome would have been very different."

"I haven't practiced ground techniques much; I mainly focus on standing techniques," Su Jie nodded. In reality, he knew that in a sudden street fight, ground techniques are not very useful, as one could easily bump their head while rolling around.

In the ring, they are practical, as the environment is simple, and the ground is soft, suitable for rolling and locking techniques.

"Let's give it a try," Song Qiong said, changing into a white Judo uniform and standing face to face with Su Jie. "Senior brother, you be the referee. By the way, the master is taking a group to Minglun Martial Arts Academy for an exchange in three months. I heard that Haoyu is hosting a large-scale international martial arts exchange competition."

"Let's use throwing techniques and not striking techniques," Su Jie asked.

"Of course, I can't compete with you in striking techniques," Song Qiong nodded.

In Judo, "striking techniques" refer to using fists, elbows, knees, and legs to strike the opponent, similar to free fighting. "Throwing techniques" are purely wrestling, bringing the opponent to the ground to subdue them.

In international competitions, even in the Olympics, Judo primarily consists of throwing techniques, akin to the pushing hands in Tai Chi.

"I'll be the referee," Mu Qiang said. "Begin."

As the signal sounded, Song Qiong assumed a Judo stance and advanced aggressively.

Hey!

Suddenly, she made her move, directly grabbing Su Jie's clothing, preparing for a "back throw." This was somewhat similar to a "shoulder throw," with a graceful and beautiful motion, often used in real combat. However, it requires significant grip strength, waist strength, and explosive force from the user. In fact, Judo practitioners generally possess better physical fitness than ordinary free fighters, with immense strength.

In Judo, technique is crucial, but physical fitness and strength, along with agility, or speed, are even more important.

Song Qiong weighed about 60 kg, standing at 1.75 meters tall, neither thin nor fat, but of a healthy build. She had considerable strength in her hands, and if she were an ordinary person, they would likely be thrown to the ground the moment she grabbed their clothing.

However, after Su Jie was caught, no matter how much Song Qiong pulled, he remained completely still, like a massive iron man.

Song Qiong initially failed to move him, but she quickly changed her tactics, tripping him, pulling, and throwing, using techniques like "knee throw," "foot sweep," and "hip throw" in succession.

Yet Su Jie remained unmoved, no matter how she tried to disrupt his balance, sway him, or trip him.

To Song Qiong, it felt as if Su Jie had rooted himself deep into the earth; to shake him was akin to shaking the entire planet.

"A thousand-pound drop?" Mu Qiang observed as Song Qiong used all her techniques without being able to budge Su Jie, realizing that the gap between them was not on the same level, especially considering their weight difference.

Su Jie weighed 85 kg, and they were fifty pounds apart, which would be unacceptable in a competition.

"Junior sister, let me try," Mu Qiang said. "I weigh about 90 kg. Our weights are similar."

"Forget it, I really can't move you. Is this the stance training in martial arts? I've heard that once Tai Chi is mastered, no matter how one pushes, they cannot be moved. No one can make them fall. My master also said that indeed, there are Tai Chi masters whose stances are so stable that even a bull cannot move them after their internal energy sinks."

Song Qiong felt a bit frustrated. Initially, she had some doubts about Su Jie's strength, but now it seemed to far exceed what was shown in the video.

"Senior brother, you go," Song Qiong said, sitting aside to catch her breath.

At this moment, Mu Qiang stepped onto the mat.

He faced Su Jie.

Suddenly, he swayed left and right like a bear that had just woken up, then charged at Su Jie, targeting his center line. His fingers were like eagle claws, not only grabbing his clothing but also penetrating the grip into the bones beneath the skin.

An ordinary person would likely bruise or even feel pain to the bone from such a grip, immediately losing their strength.

Even Su Jie felt the opponent's grip like an iron hoop, especially as it caught the critical nerve in his wrist.

Hey!

Mu Qiang let out a loud roar, like a fierce tiger descending the mountain, shaking the dojo, startling many students.

He swayed and charged, closing in, grabbing, pulling, and with each action, there was a roar, a throw, a slam!

This was strikingly similar to Su Jie's "hoe and shovel" technique.

A series of actions resembled predatory tactics of animals, fierce and ruthless, embodying the brutal spirit of nature's competition.

Even a master, once caught and roared at, would likely soften and be at the mercy of the capture and throw.

"This Judo technique is quite formidable," Su Jie felt his body shake as he pressed down hard, like an eagle catching a rabbit, surprisingly matching Mu Qiang in strength.

Bang!

Mu Qiang felt as if he was facing not a person, but a several-ton elephant. Not only was his strength no match, but he couldn't even apply his techniques effectively.

When strength exceeds a certain level, technique becomes useless.

In that moment, his master's words echoed in his mind, and then his body was thrown to the ground.

Chapter 132: Masters Challenge

"Come again!"

Mu Qiang, a professional judo player, was not discouraged after being thrown down. He quickly got back up and launched another attack.

Su Jie waited for him to approach, and the two grabbed each other's clothing, starting to grapple once more.

Mu Qiang repeatedly employed various judo techniques—foot sweeps, hip throws, shoulder pushes, body presses, and a mix of feints and real attacks, all aimed at shaking Su Jie.

Su Jie, on the other hand, was intentionally assessing Mu Qiang's strength. Coming from a prestigious school, Mu Qiang had a wealth of judo techniques, many of which were worth learning from. Su Jie had a solid foundation in martial arts, but to say he had reached a transcendent level would be far from the truth.

He prided himself on two aspects: first, his physical fitness and resistance to blows; second, his mental fortitude. Having experienced the chaos of war-torn areas where bullets flew, close combat felt trivial in comparison.

As for technical experience, he still had some shortcomings and had not encountered many masters.

Su Jie's competition experience was also not extensive. He had participated in small-scale tournaments at the Minglun Martial Arts Academy, later fought on Gray Wolf Street and A Ding Street, and exchanged techniques with various

enthusiasts at Starshine Club and Grand Ascent Club. Occasionally, he faced some professionals, but none were top-tier fighters. Defeating Zhou Chun was a notable achievement, but Zhou Chun was far from the best in the country. After that, he fought again in war-torn areas against Gray Wolves and Hungry Wolves.

The only time he felt real pressure was from Daru.

But it wasn't a true life-and-death struggle.

Later, when he was preparing to exchange ideas with Daru, the latter was killed by Feng Heng Yi.

Street fights and facing a hail of bullets greatly enhanced his mental resilience, far surpassing the experience gained in the ring. However, in terms of technical skills, the ring was still more refined. If he could exchange techniques with top domestic professionals or even world-class fighters, it would significantly benefit Su Jie's technical growth.

Thus, Su Jie took every opportunity seriously and respected every competitor.

"Courage, strength, and skill."

Facing a hail of bullets, he had indeed developed courage. Practicing the "Thirteen Protectors' Golden Bell Iron Shirt Dragon-Tiger Vajra Qi Gong," his strength had grown immensely, leaving only some technical shortcomings in his martial arts skills.

This required extensive communication, exploration, and practical experience, especially with top masters to gradually accumulate knowledge; shortcuts were not an option.

"Flip!"

After grappling with Mu Qiang for several seconds and observing many judo techniques, Su Jie seemed to perform a big turtle flip, turning Mu Qiang upside down, leaving him lying flat on the ground.

Finally, Mu Qiang conceded, gasping for breath.

This exchange seemed to have exhausted all his strength.

"Indeed, there are many good techniques in judo," Su Jie thought about the history of martial arts. The most popular modern mixed martial arts, Brazilian jiu-jitsu, was taught by Mitsuyo Maeda, a disciple of judo's founder, Jigoro Kano. After arriving in Brazil, he passed it on to the Gracie brothers.

These brothers improved ground techniques and dominated an era of mixed martial arts.

Even now, many victories in mixed martial arts are still decided by ground techniques. However, as everyone's skills have improved, the instances of standing strikes resulting in direct KOs have increased.

"No wonder you could defeat Zhou Chun," Mu Qiang said after resting for a moment, standing up. "Your judo techniques are still not very refined, but your stamina is incredibly strong, your stance is stable, and your strength is immense. I think only Brother Geng Tianyi could match you."

"I hope we can exchange more in the future," Su Jie knew that the Japanese martial arts community had already completed the modernization of martial arts. Back in the Meiji Restoration era, after the samurai disarmament, some martial arts masters emerged, innovating judo, karate, kendo, and founding aikido, finally achieving scale. This was much better than the traditional martial arts circles in China, which were stuck in their ways and rife with deception.

The modernization of Chinese kung fu was a significant matter, one that he could not accomplish alone.

Just as he was about to chat with Song Qiong and Mu Qiang, his phone suddenly rang.

It was a call from Hua Xing.

"Su Jie, you're back? When are you coming to the club? There's an urgent matter!" Upon answering, he heard Hua Xing's anxious voice. "Several masters from the circle have arrived at the club, specifically requesting to see you, and they even brought cameras to film. I can't stop them! Hurry over!"

"Challenging the dojo?" Su Jie nodded. "I'll be there right away."

"Can we go see?" Song Qiong asked excitedly upon hearing this.

"Sure," Su Jie immediately called for a car, heading straight for Grand Ascent Club.

Grand Ascent Club had been operating for a while now, relying on Su Jie's reputation from defeating Zhou Chun and Hua Xing's connections. Although it was not open to the public, it was still thriving. A group of people exchanged ideas daily, rapidly improving their skills.

However, Su Jie's popularity could not last long. As his mother, Xu Ying, had predicted, during the winter break, the number of people began to decline. After the holiday, with Su Jie absent again, the heat diminished, and income started to drop.

But Hua Xing didn't mind; he was preparing to create some big events to stir things up in the circle.

However, before he could finalize his plans, someone came knocking.

Su Jie and the others quickly arrived at Grand Ascent Club.

This club was a rented warehouse, not very large, just over a thousand square meters, but the atmosphere was excellent. It was not open to the public, usually with the main gate tightly closed, only accessible through introductions from acquaintances.

But now, the iron gate was open, and it was noisy inside.

As soon as Su Jie entered, he saw two distinct groups.

His side wore the practice uniforms of "Dian Dao." This practice uniform was neither the traditional Japanese gi nor the Tang suit but rather a sports outfit designed by a well-known designer hired by Hua Xing. It had some ancient Chinese elements but was also modern and convenient for fast-paced practice and fighting.

The outfit was quite popular, and Hua Xing even made some money selling it to the public.

He even began to consider a renaming plan to change the club's name to "Dian Dao," but the term "Dian Dao Wei Zhi" was proposed by Su Jie. In this club, Su Jie held a relatively small share, making it somewhat inappropriate.

With Hua Xing's business intuition, he felt that he could expand the "Dian Dao" brand. Now was the time to build connections and reputation; once enough was accumulated, they could make a big splash.

"Feng Lei Fighting?"

Su Jie looked at the other group, which consisted of seven or eight muscular individuals, all wearing sportswear emblazoned with the words Feng Lei Fighting.

Upon seeing him enter, some of these seven or eight people took out their phones to film, while a few others nearby were adjusting cameras, seemingly wanting to capture their actions and expressions clearly.

"What's going on?" Su Jie ignored the group and joined Hua Xing.

"I advertised on social media," Hua Xing whispered. "These Feng Lei Fighting people claim we are frauds and have been attacking us online. Our students got into arguments with them. They came here to exchange ideas, but in reality, they are here to challenge us. They specifically requested to see you. The leader of this

group is someone I know, named Xiong Zhiguang. He was once a professional fighter, on the rise, but after losing to Liu Long in a match, he disappeared. It was said he went to Thailand to train, then vanished completely, gradually being excluded from the fighting circle. But recently, he somehow returned, formed Feng Lei Fighting, reportedly secured investment, and obtained some training systems from Minglun Martial Arts Academy, starting to make a name for himself. However, Feng Lei Fighting, like us, is also part of a small circle. But I suspect there are connections to Haoyu Group behind this, as I found out that the registered capital shareholders of Feng Lei Fighting are a subsidiary investment company under Haoyu."

"Feng Lei Fighting?" Su Jie instantly thought of Feng Heng Yi.

The name Feng Heng Yi actually concealed a mystery.

The term Heng is a hexagram from the I Ching. Above is thunder, below is wind, representing constancy! Thunder represents strength, wind represents softness. Strength is above, softness is below.

And Yi is also a hexagram. It is precisely the reverse of Heng. Above is wind, below is thunder, which is the "Yi Hexagram."

Combined, Su Jie understood the meaning: the fusion of wind and thunder, the interplay of hardness and softness, following one's heart.

"You must be Su Jie."

At this moment, the leading man walked over, looking at Su Jie.

This was Xiong Zhiguang, as mentioned by Hua Xing.

Once a professional fighter, he lost to the top fighter Liu Long, fled to another place, and disappeared for many years, now making a comeback.

Su Jie sized up Xiong Zhiguang. The man had a noticeable scar on his face, knife wounds on his arms, and crisscrossed scars on his forehead. His aura was somewhat similar to Daru's, but not as intense and not as robust as Daru.

Daru weighed 150 kilograms, while Xiong Zhiguang seemed to be around 80 kilograms, similar to Su Jie.

"This Xiong Zhiguang has also killed before; I can clearly sense that hint of treating people like livestock emanating from him," Su Jie felt a chill in his heart. However, having encountered Daru, who had even heavier Baleful Qi, he was not surprised.

Su Jie nodded, "I am. What do you want?"

"What do we want?" A young man beside him stepped forward, looking aggressive, seemingly ready to fight. "Your students have been insulting us online; how do you plan to settle this?"

"We're not here to bully you today," Xiong Zhiguang waved his hand. "You agree to two points: first, publicly apologize online. Second, compensate us for our economic losses. Then we can settle this matter."

"Clearly, they insulted us first, calling us frauds and challenging us to a fight," a student from Grand Ascent Club interjected.

"Looks like they're deliberately trying to bully us," Su Jie shook his head with a smile. "I think you should apologize online and compensate us for our economic losses."

"What did you say?" Xiong Zhiguang narrowed his eyes. "I didn't hear you; say it again and see what happens?"

"I said I'm going to slap your face. Are you ready?" Su Jie said slowly.

Chapter 133: Moments of Anger

"You're looking for death!"

Xiong Zhiguang finally heard clearly.

He had come to provoke Su Jie. After Su Jie defeated Zhou Chun, he gained a bit of fame in the circle. Xiong Zhiguang intended to use the excuse of coming to beat Su Jie up, film it, and upload it to the circle or online, thereby ruining Su Jie's club.

He had planned to be aggressive, thinking that as long as Su Jie showed any sign of weakness, even if a fight didn't break out, it could serve as proof of cowardice. But he didn't expect Su Jie to be even more arrogant than him.

Killing intent surged from deep within him, and accompanying the words "you're looking for death" was a punch.

The punch came like a bullet, smashing in front of Su Jie, but suddenly curved, like a snake turning back, transforming into a horizontal elbow strike that sealed off all of Su Jie's retreat routes, whether forward, backward, or sideways. It was fierce and deadly, a guaranteed kill.

This was the "straight punch covering elbow" in Muay Thai. Don't be fooled by the gradual punching and retraction; the power was immense, using all of one's

strength to press forward. The elbow struck like a knife, capable of slicing off a person's skull.

A punch is a bullet, an elbow is a cannonball. Better to take ten punches than one elbow.

This is a martial arts saying; generally speaking, elbow strikes are not allowed in free fighting.

The simpler the martial art, the harder it is to practice, and the more practical it becomes.

At the moment Xiong Zhiguang struck, Su Jie also moved.

He didn't retreat, squat down, or dodge; he stood firm on his legs.

When the punch came, he didn't move. When the punch curved into an elbow, his palm had already shot out.

It was still a "Hoe Strike" technique.

The palm was as fast as lightning, almost invisible to the naked eye; unless filmed with a high-speed camera and slowed down tenfold, one wouldn't be able to see the speed of Su Jie's "Hoe Strike" technique.

Since returning from the war-torn lands, Su Jie's skill had become increasingly formidable, especially when facing the disguised panda-masked man, Odell; this technique had reached a new level.

At this moment, he seized the tiny gap, striking hard, a technique that could rival dodging bullets—dangerous yet masterful, breaking through Xiong Zhiguang's "root".

Clap!

A crisp sound echoed.

It was the sound of a slap.

A handprint appeared on Xiong Zhiguang's entire face, from top to bottom.

He was knocked down by the slap, rolling away in a panic, fearing that Su Jie would pursue him again.

When he stood up, Su Jie seemed to have not moved at all, merely nodding: "Not bad, you actually managed to take a slap from me. But this time, you struck first, and I was just defending myself. Brother Hua Xing, was the video recorded?"

"It's recorded and is being uploaded to various groups right now," Hua Xing nodded.

"According to the principle of self-defense, your punch just now was already a criminal act. I intercepted your elbow strike and slapped your face in self-defense, which is justified. However, now that you're rolling on the ground to escape, you've already ceased your criminal behavior, and I cannot pursue you. Otherwise, we would both be engaging in mutual fighting," Su Jie said slowly, "So you don't need to worry about what I'll do next."

Hearing this, Xiong Zhiguang was so furious he nearly spat blood.

If Su Jie had merely mocked him or said something harsh, he wouldn't have been this angry.

But Su Jie didn't say anything harsh; instead, he lectured him on the laws of self-defense. This only fueled his rage further.

Yet he didn't strike again, managing to restrain himself.

"Fine, Su Jie, you actually attacked me first. I won't fight you here," Xiong Zhiguang said. "If you have the ability, let's see who's better in the competition. Our Feng Lei Fighting will sign up for the Haoyu Cup. If you have the ability, defeat me there; a sneak attack doesn't count as skill. We're leaving."

He immediately took his people away from there.

"What a pity," Hua Xing quickly came up. "I've already uploaded the video of you slapping Xiong Zhiguang's face to many groups; many people have become active. Unfortunately, Xiong Zhiguang used to be famous, but now he's just another face in the crowd. Even if you slapped him, it doesn't have the same impact as defeating Zhou Chun. However, you can participate in the Haoyu Cup; if you can defeat some famous figures there, our club can officially expand."

While speaking, Hua Xing showed Su Jie the news online.

Su Jie looked at it and indeed found many big news stories from the fighting world.

"Haoyu Group invests heavily in the sports fighting circle, partnering with Minglun Martial Arts Academy to host the Haoyu Cup fighting competition, which will be divided into individual and team events. Individual competition points will count towards the team, and the individual champion will receive a prize of ten million..."

"Is Haoyu trying to monopolize the fighting market? Entering the sports industry?"

"Haoyu invests billions to establish a sports department, making a huge splash."

"The first Haoyu Cup competition is about to be held, with broadcasting rights sold for a sky-high price. Currently, the number one fighter in the country, Liu Long, has announced his participation."

"The competition will take place in October."

Many news outlets reported this information.

"Haoyu indeed has major moves," Su Jie nodded. "They are aiming to make a big splash. Right now, the fighting world has brands like the Heishan Cup, Jingwu Cup, and Hero Cup, all doing fairly well, considered the best in the industry. Other second-tier brands, like Wulin Club and Kung Fu Tide, have more than a dozen events, some losing money, some making profits. In reality, none of these brands have truly made a name for themselves. Haoyu's establishment of a sports department has a simple goal: to eliminate all these brands, dominate the fighting circle, and become the highest event, capable of influencing the rules. This market is quite large and can cultivate numerous fighting celebrities."

"Haoyu has invested in Minglun Martial Arts Academy, swallowed Starshine Club, and established various clubs everywhere, poaching talent. It's as if they want to

unify the martial arts world," Hua Xing said. "I believe you can win the first championship, disrupt Haoyu's plans, and conveniently win a huge prize."

"Liu Long is also going; I'm afraid it will be difficult for me to win. The competition is in October, by which time I will be in college. There's still about half a year left, and my training is far from enough," Su Jie thought for a moment.

He was well aware of Liu Long's strength. If it came down to life and death in reality, after experiencing the war, Su Jie might not fear him. However, under the rules of the arena, it would still be hard to match him.

If Su Jie had two or three years of training time to gain experience, he would definitely surpass him. Right now, he was perhaps a bit too anxious.

From the time he learned martial arts until now, although he had experienced many things and encountered many fortuitous events, it had not yet been a year, and he had too little accumulation to soar to great heights.

"Since it's hosted by Haoyu, I definitely have to go. Haoyu is holding this competition to promote someone and simultaneously seize the dominant position in the fighting circle. I think even Liu Long might encounter very tough challenges," Song Qiong suddenly said.

"Liu Long is extremely formidable even in unregulated fights. It's said that once during an overseas competition, while accompanying a friend to a bar, he

encountered robbers. He fought against more than ten people with his bare hands, and even though they had weapons, he knocked several of them out," Mu Qiang said. "He's even more powerful in the arena; basically, no one in the country can compete with him. It's said he seems to be on the verge of breaking through to a certain realm. Once he breaks through, he could even challenge many world-class experts for the title of world fighting champion."

"Liu Long is indeed strong, but there are those stronger than him," Su Jie recalled Feng Hengyi. "Of course, I'll participate. If I can encounter Liu Long in the arena, even if I lose, I can still gain experience from interacting with a master."

"You're too humble," Mu Qiang said. "I believe you really have a chance to fight him. Your advantage is your youth; you're much younger than him."

"This place is quite interesting," Song Qiong said. "Get me a card; I'll come here often to practice."

"Me too," Mu Qiang nodded. "If I have the chance, I'll bring my Japanese brothers here too."

Outside, on a bus, Xiong Zhiguang and a group of people from the Feng Lei Fighting were on it.

Xiong Zhiguang had a clear handprint on his face. He took out a blood circulation ointment and kept applying and rubbing it on his face. Slowly, the handprint began to fade; the ointment's effect was simply miraculous.

If Su Jie were here, he would find that the "ointment" Xiong Zhiguang was applying was the same kind he practiced with, said to be developed by the Tifeng Training Camp.

"Boss, what do we do now?" a burly man asked Xiong Zhiguang. "The plan has failed."

"I didn't expect Su Jie's strength to improve so dramatically," Xiong Zhiguang said, unfazed by his loss. "He defeated Zhou Chun just a few months ago. I analyzed his videos, and the techniques were calculated by artificial intelligence; my chances of winning were quite high. But even artificial intelligence didn't account for how quickly he progressed."

Su Jie had his sister Su Muchen's artificial intelligence analysis module, and Xiong Zhiguang clearly had one too, and it was even more advanced. He had come prepared, believing he could defeat Su Jie through intelligent analysis. He thought that after suppressing him, he could ruin this club's reputation and business.

Unfortunately, he failed.

"Although Feng Lei has received investment from Haoyu, Feng Hengyi has many such investments. It's a competitive environment; this is raising a poisonous insect," Xiong Zhiguang understood clearly. "If I had defeated Su Jie this time and sent out the video, it would have attracted many high-end clients. But now that I've failed, I need to think of a way."

Becoming famous in the fighting and martial arts world is too easy.

That's simply by defeating a master.

Defeating a famous figure, even if you're an unknown person, can instantly elevate your reputation.

To be fair, martial arts fighting has never emphasized qualifications or connections; it only values strength, making it purer than any other circle.

The bus stopped in front of the Feng Lei Fighting in the suburbs.

As Xiong Zhiguang got off, he saw a luxury car parked in front of the club. The door opened, and out stepped Zhou Chun.

"Xiong Zhiguang, you also lost to that little trash," Zhou Chun's tone was much deeper. "I told you, this opportunity isn't so easy to seize. You want to become

famous in one go; it's not that simple. That little trash is stepping on my fame; you want to step on his to gain fame, what does that make me?"

Chapter 134: Martial Arts Gradually Takes Shape

"Zhou Chun, you probably still aren't his match right now." Xiong Zhiguang said, "Even though I was just testing him, he was able to exploit the tiny flaws in my movements in an instant and counterattack me. Our strengths are about the same, but if we go underground to fight, my chances of winning are higher than yours."

Although Xiong Zhiguang was slapped in the face by Su Jie and lost all face, his strength was actually quite formidable. He had lost to Liu Long in their earlier encounters, but after reflecting on it, he trained in Southeast Asia. He didn't know how many underground fights he had been through or how many times he had escaped death.

He returned this time wanting to make a name for himself.

But he just happened to run into Su Jie, who directly knocked him into the abyss.

However, he didn't feel discouraged at all. Instead, he was actively planning some countermeasures. For someone like him, who was used to life and death, as long as he wasn't dead, there would always be opportunities.

“But you still lost to that little trash.” Zhou Chun was indeed a bit wary of Xiong Zhiguang.

“Let’s not talk about that. Let’s think about how to join forces and expand.” Xiong Zhiguang said, “This time when I went to his club, I saw someone I shouldn’t have seen, which is Zhonglong Group’s chairman Song Longhua’s granddaughter, Song Qiong.”

“Could it be that Zhonglong Group has already invested in him?” Zhou Chun’s expression changed drastically. He knew that Haoyu was running rampant in business, but it also had rivals, with Zhonglong Group being the foremost. They had fought many times, and it had always ended in a tie. If Zhonglong Group got involved, many of his schemes would be meaningless.

Xiong Zhiguang’s observational skills were outstanding. In this short time, he had not been dazed by Su Jie’s slap and had even noticed who was beside Su Jie.

“Let’s take our time to discuss this.” Xiong Zhiguang said to Zhou Chun, “I have some ideas, but I need your help.”

The two walked into the club.

At the same time, at a table next to Grand Ascent Club, Hua Xing, Su Jie, Song Qiong, and Mu Qiang were chatting.

“That Xiong Zhiguang is much calmer than Zhou Chun. He can still endure after being slapped.” Song Qiong, though a little girl, had a keen observational ability: “When he left, his gaze lingered on me for a while.”

“This person has a sharp and angular face, with a straight nose and uneven features. It can be seen that he is a person with determination, able to endure hardships, tenacious, but also has a sinister heart. He can tolerate and endure humiliation, but has a strong desire for revenge. This is a typical ‘night owl’ face in physiognomy. He definitely will retaliate after being at a disadvantage, and will hide in the shadows, like a venomous snake, striking at you once, and if he misses, he will hide again, waiting for the next opportunity to strike.” Su Jie said, “Indeed, we need to be careful of him. He is more terrifying than Zhou Chun. Zhou Chun is relatively shameless and rogue, but sometimes he can’t endure it. I’m not afraid of dealing with such people, but Xiong Zhiguang is different.”

“You even understand physiognomy?” Song Qiong asked in surprise.

“I know a little, I learned from Professors Luo and Ma.” Su Jie nodded, “I don’t know if you know them?”

Whether it was Luo Weiji or Ma Fengnian, these two “masters” actually disliked being called masters and preferred to be referred to as professors.

They believed they were scholars, academic experts like Socrates, Plato, and Da Vinci, and in reality, they were also studying academics.

“My grandfather doesn’t touch this.” Song Qiong said, “My grandfather is a soldier, an atheist, follows state policy unwaveringly, and has taught us to do the same since childhood. But I know these two masters are quite famous. By the way, Su Jie, I want to invest in your club, how about it?”

“How do you want to invest?” Hua Xing, who was responsible for business negotiations, immediately recognized the opportunity and hurriedly asked.

“I plan to invest thirty million first.” Song Qiong said, “You can form a team to compete in the Haoyu Cup. Of course, Su Jie must participate. This time, besides the individual champion, individual results will also be counted towards the team, but each team must have at least three members registered. Coach Hua Xing, do you want to participate?”

“My physical condition has declined significantly, so it would be quite difficult to compete and I probably won’t achieve good results.” Hua Xing said.

“No problem, I’ll find three people.” Su Jie instantly thought of Zhang Manman and Zhang Jinchuan. The three of them had collaborated quite happily in the war-torn area.

Both Su Jie and Zhang Jinchuan wanted to take action against Haoyu.

“This is what I’m thinking: I’ll invest thirty million to test the waters. Even if it’s a loss, it’s still a way to thwart Haoyu.” Song Qiong had a decent business mind; she

quickly recognized Su Jie's value: "Also, your club can change its name. I think 'Dian Dao' sounds great. If it's called Dian Dao Martial Arts Club, it's different from fighting and has a cultural vibe. We can rearrange the shares."

"I agree." Hua Xing immediately expressed his stance.

Now he was the major shareholder, but he knew that although he had many connections, they were all limited to the fighting world. Teaming up with Su Jie to make some small money was fine, but wanting to make big money and expand influence was far from enough. Now that Song Qiong wanted to invest, he couldn't ask for more.

"I don't mind either." Su Jie had never cared much about money and shares. As long as it was enough for him and he could find something beneficial for his practice, that was good enough.

Like this time in the war-torn area, Zhang Jinchuan at least made several hundred million, and he didn't take a single cent, feeling no regret at all.

In fact, he had contributed a lot this time. If he hadn't stopped Zhang Jinchuan from killing Gaier in time, everyone would have been under General Awasi's revenge.

"Let's sign the contract as soon as possible." Song Qiong's face showed signs of joy.

The three of them finalized the investment and shareholding arrangement.

Hua Xing held thirty percent, Su Jie held thirty percent, and Song Qiong was the major shareholder, having directly invested thirty million. Plus, she provided various resources.

After this matter was settled, Su Jie's emotions didn't fluctuate at all; he still went home to sleep.

When he got home, Su Shilin happened to be sitting on the sofa and asked, "How did it go?"

"Not bad." Su Jie nodded, "I secured thirty million in investment for my martial arts club."

"I meant how did you get along with Song Qiong." Su Shilin asked.

"The martial arts club is her investment." Su Jie said.

“Stinky kid.” Su Shilin was exasperated, wanting to blow up but held back: “Hurry up and go to bed. You need to prepare for the National College Entrance Examination properly these days. We’ll talk after you get into college.”

Su Jie obediently washed up and lay down, and when he opened his eyes, it was already three in the morning.

He finally restored his biological clock.

“There aren’t any places to train in the city.” Su Jie thought about how to improve his martial arts. Training in the city was impossible; he could only go to deep mountains and forests, far from human habitation, to get close to nature: “I’ll practice soft skills first. After the National College Entrance Examination, during the summer vacation, I’ll go to Minglun Martial Arts Academy and properly train for two months, pushing my horizontal training skills to the extreme.”

Without an environment to practice the Thirteen Protectors’ Golden Bell Iron Shirt Dragon-Tiger Vajra Qi Gong, Su Jie didn’t feel anxious. He had his own ideas.

He hadn’t finished watching Odell’s teaching videos yet.

There were hundreds of hours of videos, and he had only learned the Magic Step.

The Magic Step was a complete set of coordinated movements for athletic neurology, different from other martial arts. It also contained some visual illusions from magic, deceiving the eyes and brain. Moreover, it required a significant amount of physical exertion, consuming energy quickly.

Su Jie set a training plan for himself, insisting on mastering the Magic Step before the National College Entrance Examination.

Watching Odell's instructional videos, he began to move his footwork.

Whoosh!

His body slid to the left and then back again. Sometimes it looked like he was leaning forward, but in reality, he was retreating.

This footwork, not to mention in actual combat, was pleasing to the eye even just for viewing.

Thus, Su Jie's daily training transformed into the Magic Step. He didn't watch Odell's later teaching videos but repeatedly viewed the Magic Step, pondering and walking. After a week of focused practice, he suddenly felt like he was truly floating while walking, as if gravity didn't bind him as much anymore.

Of course, this was a psychological illusion. In reality, his long-term practice had strengthened his motor nerves again, making his speed and reflexes quicker.

In traditional martial arts, footwork was also extremely important.

It is said that the first thing to practice in the Xin Yi Ba change is the “chicken step,” which requires practicing for three years to build a solid foundation before practicing the fist techniques.

Su Jie settled down and earnestly practiced the Magic Step. Sometimes, during his practice, he would integrate the Crystal Ball technique, maintaining high-speed movement while the Crystal Ball could still show a stable floating feeling.

This had already transformed from martial arts into a profound acrobatic dance art.

Of course, during the practice, Su Jie felt himself becoming increasingly relaxed. With a breath, he felt like a snowman melting under the sun, as if he were turning into a slug stuck to the ground, with not a single bone in his body.

In the process of practicing relaxation, his perception also became more sensitive.

His movements were light and soft.

Time flew by, and soon it was June.

During these days, Su Jie had no fluctuations, just practicing the Magic Step and the Crystal Ball, relaxing himself. As for studying, he wasn't worried at all; the National College Entrance Examination would definitely not be a problem for him.

Finally, June 7 arrived.

It was the day of the National College Entrance Examination.

For all high school students, this was definitely a significant day that could determine their fate, but Su Jie felt it passed quite blandly.

During the two days of exams, he still practiced every day, not disrupting his biological clock.

On the evening of June 8, after finishing the last exam, he walked out of the examination hall, looking at the sunset hanging in the sky, the evening glow splendid, another beautiful day.

Chapter 135: Unity of Heaven and Man Has Its Mysteries

"High school, my youth, goodbye."

Su Jie felt a surge of emotions within.

Even though he had experienced things that many ordinary high school students hadn't, he still wanted to savor the important experience of life.

At the moment the National College Entrance Examination ended, he had essentially become an adult.

Not just him, every graduating high school student had to go through this test.

Looking at the faces coming out of the exam hall, some were beaming with joy, feeling they had done well. Others looked anxious and dejected, probably because they didn't manage to answer the questions, yet still hoped for a miracle.

Some were completely relaxed, ready to enjoy their upcoming life. While others had confusion about the future written all over their faces, seemingly unsure of what to do after graduating high school.

Each student had their own emotions.

Su Jie observed their expressions, as if he had delved deep into their hearts, understanding their thoughts.

A massive crowd surged forth, and those parents picking up their kids waited anxiously outside.

Suddenly, Su Jie understood why his dad had suggested he not drop out and continue studying.

This was something ninety-nine percent of people in society had to go through. Even if Su Jie felt special, experiencing it deeply made him realize his own ordinariness; in the face of such overwhelming circumstances, he remained a small figure.

But within the ordinary, there was also greatness.

Everyone who had gone through this battle was a hero.

Suddenly, Su Jie really enjoyed the atmosphere of this moment.

He stood at the school gate, watching the flow of people finishing their exams, reluctant to leave.

The sunset, people coming and going, the gentle breeze carrying the scent of flowers; life could never return to the past, but a more exciting youth awaited him.

Could some people still gather together?

Could some things be repeated?

A vivid flavor rippled in Su Jie's heart.

"Su Jie, why are you just standing here?" Someone patted his shoulder.

Su Jie turned around and found it was Ning Zixi.

She had also finished her exam.

"How did you do? Which university are you planning to apply to?" Before Su Jie could respond, Ning Zixi began asking the questions everyone asks after the exams.

Su Jie thought for a moment: "It should be 745. If I'm not mistaken, you're also planning to apply to the top university in B City, right?"

"You know your score?" Ning Zixi seemed a bit surprised: "Your estimate can't be wrong, right? This time it's not AI grading."

"It won't be wrong," Su Jie nodded.

After each exam, the school also conducted score estimates.

Su Jie's estimates surprised Ning Zixi because they were always spot on, not one point more or less than the actual score.

If this time his estimate matched the actual score, Su Jie would be a genius.

"There's a class gathering tonight; you're not going to take a leave again, right?" Ning Zixi asked.

"No leave," Su Jie smiled.

For the next three days, Su Jie seemed to be like an ordinary person, celebrating with classmates at school, estimating scores, filling out applications, and then dispersing, all very plain, without any excitement.

But Su Jie's mindset was maturing; he knew he was not only mentally an adult but also physically had become one.

After finishing everything, when he returned home, his parents didn't ask about his exam results because they knew there wouldn't be any surprises.

He just informed his parents and sister.

Su Jie then packed his things and boarded a flight to D City again.

After arriving in D City, he went to the countryside and stayed in the small courtyard that Odell had bought.

This small courtyard was purchased by Odell, who designed and decorated it himself; it was small and every year Odell would come here to stay for about a month. Usually, he wouldn't be around and had someone clean it weekly.

At that time, Odell said that if Su Jie wanted to stay, he could move in anytime.

Not far from this small courtyard was the town, and about ten kilometers behind it lay a vast mountain range, sparsely populated, with many valleys, and numerous myths and legends have existed since ancient times. In recent years, more and more rural people have moved to the city, resulting in fewer and fewer people in the villages outside the mountains.

This was the kind of environment Su Jie wanted.

He lived in Odell's small courtyard, walking over ten kilometers into the mountains every day to practice the "Thirteen Protectors' Golden Bell Iron Shirt Dragon-Tiger Vajra Qi Gong."

Far away from the hustle and bustle of the world, calming his mind, wholeheartedly practicing, treating it as a gift for his coming of age.

During his last practice at Minglun Martial Arts Academy, Su Jie was still preoccupied with high school, the National College Entrance Examination, and matters at home, along with the school's attitude.

But now that the National College Entrance Examination was over, he felt light and unburdened.

Some classmates were just preparing to play for the summer and happily head to university to embrace a new life. Some were going to work to experience life, while others planned to study university courses again to enrich themselves. Ning Zixi said she was planning to enroll in a combat training class to get fit.

Su Jie, on the other hand, wanted to completely return to nature, experiencing the elegance of the Wei and Jin dynasties, living as a recluse.

It is said that the founder of Kyokushin Karate, Masutatsu Oyama, secluded himself in the deep mountains for three years, diligently practicing martial arts and breaking through his limits.

In Su Jie's view, merely hiding in the mountains was not reliable; martial arts require many people to research together.

But people do need to calm down and reflect; sometimes, being alone in the deep mountains can lead to moments of inspiration, discovering many things.

One should never take extremes.

On June 13th, early at three in the morning, Su Jie got up from Odell's small courtyard, had some canned food, drank water, moved around, warmed up, packed his backpack, and then directly ran over ten kilometers into the depths of the mountains.

By the time he climbed to the top of a mountain, the sky was already showing a fish belly white, and the sunrise seemed about to rise.

All around was truly silent and deserted; that feeling of being the only one in the world returned to Su Jie's heart, making him feel extremely peaceful, as if everything mundane had nothing to do with him.

He took off his clothes and began applying oil to himself, continuously kneading and pressing to completely eliminate the lactic acid from running and climbing, his whole body heating up until the sunrise suddenly broke over the horizon.

At the moment the sun appeared, Su Jie seemed to sense it and let out his first long howl.

This howl echoed far away, piercing the sky, and the mountains responded.

Su Jie felt incredibly comfortable; in the city, he wouldn't dare to howl like this, having suppressed himself for too long, but now he was freely expressing his passion.

This howl seemed to shout out countless worldly impurities accumulated within him, instantly making him feel pure and flawless.

Then came the beating.

A storm-like impact struck all over his body.

This time, compared to the war-torn lands, his state was even better in the wilderness.

Because Su Jie's heart was completely relaxed.

In the war-torn areas, he had to complete his tasks, and the National College Entrance Examination had not yet ended; now that it was all over, he wholeheartedly came to practice, truly reaching a state of single-mindedness.

At this moment, he felt the National College Entrance Examination was truly necessary; twelve years of hard study, once released, made him feel particularly light.

"This mindset, Feng Hengyi probably can't feel it," Su Jie thought to himself.

Dragon roars and tiger howls, crane cries and monkey calls, all kinds of sounds rose and fell, echoing among the mountains, and the mountain peak seemed to tremble under Su Jie's practice.

Su Jie's movements were entirely instinctual; he didn't even need to urge them, and his mind was completely empty, void of any thoughts.

Muscle memory had reached a point where it didn't require brain response.

At this moment, his spirit seemed to merge with the rising sun, illuminating the earth and nurturing the mountains and rivers, while his movements continued, like a robot operating on an automated program, with no one managing it.

Spirit and flesh had separated.

This is what is meant by "Entering the Realm of the Divine" in martial arts. The speed was significantly higher than the brain's reaction.

From a scientific perspective, this is when proficiency reaches a certain level, resulting in "automation."

At this moment, Su Jie had truly solidified the realm of "The Ultimate Being Moves Like a Machine."

In the war-torn areas, he contemplated the mindset of "Moving Like a Machine," but that was merely contemplation, not truly applied in practice. Now, with a completely relaxed mindset, on the uninhabited mountain peak, facing the sunrise, he had truly connected the realm of "Moving Like a Machine" with his martial arts, with no flaws whatsoever, perfect and flawless.

After a full two hours, his practice finally concluded, and after the tiger howls and dragon roars ended, the mountains fell into an eerie silence.

The sunrise had risen halfway, and the weather began to heat up.

Su Jie applied another layer of oil to his body, lying flat on the mountaintop to bask in the sun; he resembled a sunbathing turtle, occasionally flipping over with his four limbs up, taking the opportunity to let the oil seep into his skin.

Basking in the sun promotes bone growth, calcium absorption, and also makes the skin healthier.

His heart had never been this relaxed; in the forest, he could do whatever he wanted.

This turtle-on-its-back position, facing the sun, would be impossible to do anywhere else but in the mountains, as it would be quite embarrassing.

Moreover, Su Jie had taken off all his clothes, even his underwear, completely naked. He was just enjoying the scenery, practicing, drinking water when thirsty, eating the canned food he brought, then pondering, sitting quietly, and howling.

There was no one around.

A whole day passed like this, and as night fell, the stars filled the sky, making it even more silent. Occasionally, night birds made sounds that would terrify ordinary people, but Su Jie found them quite charming.

He didn't return to that small courtyard but took out a tent, wiped his body with a wet towel to stay clean and fresh, and directly lay down to sleep in the tent.

When he opened his eyes, it was already five in the morning, and the eastern sky was once again showing a fish belly white.

This was a biological clock he intentionally set for himself, just to practice at sunrise.

For several consecutive days, Su Jie was in the mountains alone, feeling nature, watching the sunrise and sunset, not speaking to anyone, and not going online for information, completely in a closed state.

Restlessness gradually disappeared.

Chapter 136: A Year of Change, Reaching the Pinnacle

For this month, Su Jie was completely alone.

When he ran out of food and water, he returned to the small courtyard to fetch some, not speaking a single word to anyone.

In the small courtyard, he had long prepared a large amount of nutrient water and high-grade military canned food for his secluded life in the mountains.

In the mountains, he returned to the small courtyard every seven days, cutting his hair, shaving, and bathing by himself, truly living a peaceful and carefree life. Throughout June, he didn't turn on his phone or computer, nor did he communicate with anyone, just like a profound monk practicing "Silent Meditation" in Zen.

This was to train his heart to be purer, not allowing impurities to enter.

In the mountains, he ate, drank, slept, listened to the wind blowing through the trees, heard the chirping of birds and insects, watched the sunrise and sunset, and observed the rolling sea of clouds.

At times, Su Jie would let out a long howl, sometimes run 'naked', sometimes sing, and sometimes dance, as if he had found the Zen essence of the hermit madman howling in the mountains from years ago.

Every day, he practiced the "Thirteen Protectors' Golden Bell Iron Shirt Dragon-Tiger Vajra Qi Gong," feeling his body becoming increasingly flexible, as if the rigid shell was being 'kneaded' into a malleable dough, yet deep inside, a certain will was becoming harder.

Bang!

One time, he casually threw a punch without using much force, hitting a large tree, and surprisingly, the trunk cracked open.

Such a level of training seemed very lonely to outsiders, but he felt increasingly at ease, able to continue for a long time.

One day, while facing the sunrise, he howled again, feeling different this time. He sensed that his spirit was connecting with the sun through his howl; each call seemed to establish a certain channel, and within this sound channel, a warm current seemed to flow into his body from the rising sun, forging his body like a furnace, completely refining the impurities within his consciousness and marrow, then circulating and flowing repeatedly.

Su Jie felt as if he was entirely bathed in the golden hue of the sun from the inside out.

The blood, bones, and soft tissues within him had all turned to gold.

Of course, this was just an illusion, a state of mind.

Gold represents immortality, a kind of symbolism.

In ancient cultivation, the Golden Core and Golden Body represented a psychological suggestion.

Just like some people who always feel ill, even when doctors confirm they are healthy, they still don't believe it. They insist their psychological suggestion is correct, and now Su Jie felt that he had turned into gold inside and out, even though his body was still flesh and blood. He knew that this feeling was due to his increased physical abilities.

Whether it was strength or resilience, the vitality of his organs, or the firmness of his brain, all had reached a new level after a month of training.

Just like an athlete who could only lift three hundred kilograms, but after a long period of training, suddenly one day, he could lift four hundred kilograms. This is a leap in growth.

In this, there is an elevation of a certain realm.

"The horizontal training has reached a new level again," Su Jie understood clearly in his heart. He was becoming increasingly sensitive to the control of his body inside and out, especially at the joints and the connections between bones, as well as the movements of his internal organs. As long as he calmed his mind, he seemed to be able to form an image in his brain, sensing any slight discomfort, and immediately make adjustments, keeping himself in a state of pleasure and comfort at all times.

Especially with the external muscles, he could control them freely.

Even the accumulation of lactic acid and slight soft tissue injuries, he could sense immediately.

This meant that in a fight, he could accurately protect himself from any harm.

Jumping in the mountains and forests, his jumping ability and balance had greatly increased. Sometimes he even learned to climb trees like Tarzan, jumping from one tree to another. Although he still couldn't match the agility of a monkey, he could definitely amaze ordinary people.

Moreover, he disregarded danger, gazing over the cliff, moving without a hint of fear deep within.

Just like those extreme challenge athletes, running and jumping on rooftops dozens of stories high, performing various parkour moves, ordinary people watching the videos would feel their scalp tingle, but the participants felt exhilarated.

However, Su Jie didn't feel excited.

He was calm, exercising at the edge of the cliff, feeling no different than on flat ground.

In reality, it was the same.

The edge of the cliff and flat ground were just psychological deterrents for people. Once this psychological deterrent was eliminated, he could run and jump as usual, without affecting his balance.

Those who felt excitement from extreme sports still hadn't eliminated their psychological barriers; they could still feel the thrill of the cliff.

But Su Jie treated the cliff as flat ground and flat ground as a cliff, doing whatever he wanted deep within. This calm mindset allowed him to avoid any emotional fluctuations that could affect his brain's judgment and thinking when faced with danger.

Su Jie thought about driving on the highway, for example, if a tire suddenly blew out, the correct response is to drive straight, not to turn the steering wheel, then slowly brake, reducing speed until coming to a stop.

Yet almost ninety-nine percent of people would lose their composure in such a sudden situation, wildly turning the steering wheel, leading to destruction and loss of life.

These are all influenced by external environments affecting brain thinking, swayed by external factors.

In the past, Su Jie understood this principle; he believed he could remain unaffected by external factors. But after visiting a war-torn area, he realized he was still lacking. Now, after a month of solitude and calm reflection, he had finally digested the experiences from the war-torn area, turning them into his own.

His psychological and physical qualities had both clearly improved a level.

"It's been a year now."

Standing at the edge of the cliff, watching the rising sun.

Su Jie slowly wrapped up.

It was now July 1st.

Around this time last year, he had come to the Minglun Martial Arts Academy to study, joining Gu Yang's training class, and was introduced to what kung fu was and what the deepest cultivation entailed.

Now, a whole year had passed.

This year had seen many events that helped him grow.

This was also a crucial year for him, transitioning from youth to adulthood.

He packed his things, let out one last shout, left the mountains, and returned to the small courtyard to bathe, change clothes, wash laundry, and hang it out to dry.

After finishing everything, he opened his phone, which had various messages.

There were messages from Hua Xing, his dad, mom, and older sister, classmates, and even from Zhang Manman, Zhang Jinchuan, and others, as well as messages from Uncle Mang, Nie Shuang, Master Luo, and Master Ma.

However, there was nothing important.

"I really scored 745," Su Jie logged onto the website to check his score, confirming his judgment with confidence; it was exactly one point more, one point less, even the teacher's grading of his essay was guessed accurately.

After replying to each message, Su Jie opened the smart module computer for analysis, inputting the videos he had practiced over the past few days.

The smart module computer digested his videos, first calculating the amount of exercise.

"Hello, your exercise volume this month is five times that of a professional fighter," the smart module provided the result, then began analyzing against Odell's videos.

"Hello, your action accuracy rate has reached ninety-nine percent, and your posture is almost identical to the coach's, very accurate."

Seeing such ratings, Su Jie was very satisfied.

He also saved Odell's horizontal training video, adding it to the smart analysis module, along with his own training videos, comparing and analyzing them with the smart module to find some errors and inaccuracies for correction.

The only thing that couldn't be corrected was the activity of thought and the realm of the mind.

Of course, if it were the strongest artificial intelligence combined with the best hardware, it could obtain data on psychological activities based on human hormone secretion.

But Su Jie didn't have that condition now.

Such powerful machines and intelligence might not even be available to Haoyu.

"What exactly is the realm of the Living Dead?" Su Jie's progress in cultivation this month was significant, but he still hadn't broken through in his mind. Until he broke through, he wouldn't have any confidence against Feng Hengyi.

Su Jie wasn't clear about Feng Hengyi's mental realm, but his physical quality was above his own.

He once thought he could break through the "Living Dead" realm at any time, but now it seemed difficult to leap to the next level; a barrier was firmly blocking him, hard to surpass, like a chasm.

But at this moment, Su Jie was no longer anxious.

He knew that the more he felt it was out of reach, the easier it would be to break through. Conversely, the more he felt it was easy, the further away it would be.

Life always brings surprises.

"My physical quality has temporarily reached its peak; next, it's time for the improvement of technical experience. The small Arena Competition at Minglun Martial Arts Academy is becoming increasingly popular. It wouldn't be bad to seek out experts for exchanges and earn some money, but for now, I should go find Uncle Mang and Coach Gu Yang to catch up. I wonder if the second summer class has started yet, and if Coach Gu Yang is still teaching students to dig and turn the soil? Has anyone thought he was just scamming money?"

Su Jie recalled his experiences from last year, a smile unconsciously appearing on his face.

He strode into the Minglun Martial Arts Academy.

However, the Minglun Martial Arts Academy was different from what he imagined; it was undergoing extensive renovations. In a nearby vacant lot, high-rise buildings were being constructed, with signs for Haoyu Minglun hanging above. Everywhere he looked, there were advertisements for the Haoyu Cup competition.

"Million-dollar grand prize!" "Strongest event!" "Martial Arts Conference!" and other slogans were plastered everywhere, with many foreigners stopping to watch. The flow of people was much greater than last year.

This was Haoyu promoting the events.

Su Jie frowned, instantly sensing a feeling of purity being tainted.

Minglun was Minglun; what did it mean to add Haoyu?

Although many of his skills were taught by Odell, his enlightenment was at Minglun, and he had a deep emotional connection to the Minglun Martial Arts Academy. Even with Liu Zihao present, he still felt it was a pure land.

Chapter 137: Deaf, Mute, and Dull-Witted

The Minglun Martial Arts Academy looked just like it did a year ago.

However, there were noticeably more people, mostly foreign faces, along with some vibrant young individuals.

Su Jie did not see Gu Yang.

He only noticed many coaches on the playground leading summer training sessions, with some practicing martial arts routines, others running long distances, and some training with martial arts equipment like blades and swords, creating a bustling atmosphere.

Su Jie easily made his way to the massage room inside the school.

He was looking for Uncle Mang.

The massage room had expanded again, now boasting dozens of rooms, where many masseurs were helping students with muscle relaxation, loosening tendons, and eliminating lactic acid, while also recording their data.

What surprised Su Jie the most was that the massage room was equipped with computers and medical devices, making it resemble a hospital and a scientific laboratory.

"This must be Haoyu's idea; this data is extremely valuable," Su Jie thought. He knew that the Minglun Martial Arts Academy held many competitions every day, capturing numerous training sessions and collecting a wealth of physical data from many individuals. These things should not be underestimated; they were rare resources.

If one were to ask what was most precious in this era, Su Jie would certainly say data.

Big data, cloud computing, artificial intelligence could calculate results that scientists had struggled to determine for thousands of years.

What humanity had calculated over millennia could be surpassed by a supercomputer in just an hour.

"Feng Hengyi probably wants to consolidate this data and sell it to the Typhon Training Camp to earn considerable virtual currency." Many people were unaware that their data could be sold for a high price.

He arrived at Uncle Mang's massage room.

The sign still hung there: as long as one could endure, they could receive a free massage.

Just as he was about to knock, the door opened, and Nie Shuang came out. Upon seeing Su Jie, she paused for a moment: "How did your National College Entrance Examination go? Have the results come out? Are you back for further studies? How's your martial arts practice?"

Faced with Nie Shuang's barrage of questions, Su Jie simply smiled: "I scored 745; that should be enough for any university. I've made some progress in my martial

arts, so I wanted to consult Uncle Mang again. By the way, I want to learn how to cook from you; would you be willing to teach me?"

Su Jie had an interest in cooking. He had experimented at home, making the best stir-fried cabbage with meat, but it was still far from the standards of the Nie family's private cuisine. He was determined to master this skill, as cooking was actually more useful in daily life than martial arts.

Moreover, cooking involved nutrition, which had immense benefits for body conditioning, indirectly enhancing his martial arts.

"745? You might have the highest score in the country, a super scholar! No wonder your martial arts progress so quickly," Nie Shuang exclaimed in surprise. "You want to learn cooking? I can teach you. After all, some of the dishes in our Nie family's private cuisine can only be mastered by those with exceptional talent. By the way, you can go in and take a look; Uncle Mang has encountered someone who is no less impressive than you. This person can actually endure his massages and withstand electrical stimulation. During the first stimulation, he remained completely unharmed."

"There's someone like that?" Su Jie was taken aback. Only he knew how terrifying that electrical stimulation was; during his first experience, he had even lost control of his bodily functions. Now, hearing that this person could endure it on the first try was definitely impressive.

As Nie Shuang spoke, she pushed the door open again and entered with Su Jie.

Inside, Su Jie saw Uncle Mang operating a machine, with an assistant managing things beside him.

On the massage table lay a young man, around twenty years old, covered in silver needles, with electrical currents stimulating many of his neurons and muscles through the needles.

Uncle Mang switched to another machine, which seemed to output electrical currents with a precision far exceeding the one that had shocked him before.

"This person is actually asleep?" Su Jie observed the young man on the massage table. He was of average build, neither muscular nor thin, looking completely ordinary, with no apparent special qualities.

Yet, under the kind of electrical stimulation that even agents would find hard to endure, he was sound asleep.

Moreover, his sleeping posture was quite strange, coiled like a snake, occasionally moving, resembling a turtle. From him, Su Jie vaguely sensed the shadow of a turtle-snake.

The snake was agile, twisting and turning, able to climb trees, scale cliffs, and burrow into the ground.

The turtle was still, stable, and long-lived, adept at nurturing health.

The spirit of the turtle-snake represented true martial prowess, a symbol of the highest deity in Taoism.

"His name is Kang Gu; he is deaf and mute," Nie Shuang explained. "He registered at our Minglun Martial Arts Academy last year and has been learning martial arts here for a year. However, he rarely competes; whenever he runs low on money, he participates in a few small Arena Competitions. Other than that, he just practices and doesn't communicate with others."

"Su Jie, you're here?" Uncle Mang heard Su Jie's voice and said, "Come over here and let me feel how far your martial arts have progressed! How's your physical condition?"

Before Su Jie could respond, Uncle Mang rushed over, grabbing Su Jie's arm and squeezing it hard, moving upwards.

"Damn, damn, damn!" Uncle Mang exclaimed three times, "What kind of physique is this? The force is starting to expand, seemingly infinitely, dissipating my strength, yet inside it feels incredibly sharp, ready to rebound at any moment. No, wait... Could it be that this is the Golden Body of horizontal training?"

"Golden Body?" Su Jie suddenly remembered that when he faced Chaoyang's long howl, he had indeed felt a golden essence within his body, a sense of immortality.

This was a psychological suggestion, an illusion, yet it felt so real that he believed he had truly achieved the Golden Body.

However, if one were to dissect him, his blood was still red, his skin was skin, and his flesh was flesh, no different from an ordinary person, except that his bone density and resilience were extraordinarily high, and his muscle contractions were explosive, with overall coordination and cerebellar balance far exceeding that of normal individuals.

That was all.

But for Uncle Mang to have sensed his "Golden Body" was indeed astonishing.

"What exactly is the Golden Body?" Su Jie asked.

"The Golden Body is achieved through a series of secret exercises, breathing techniques, Qi Gong, medications, flexibility training, internal and external strengthening, psychological suggestion, and mental meditation, combining to push the body's strength and sensitivity to a certain level. It allows for better elasticity against impacts, just like gold; no matter how much it is hammered, it merely turns into gold leaf, getting thinner and thinner without breaking like iron. Furthermore, the structure of gold is very stable, not reacting chemically with

other substances. It represents a body that is also stable, not easily eroded by diseases, with extremely strong immunity. It's just a metaphor, not that a person's body is literally like gold," Uncle Mang explained.

"This kind of physical quality is extremely rare; even world-class professional athletes may not possess it. In short, your body can withstand blows, falls, and hits, recover quickly, and has strong immunity. As long as you don't overexert yourself, you could live to be over a hundred years old, and even after a hundred, you could still run, climb, and fight with young people."

Upon hearing this, Su Jie couldn't help but ask, "Uncle Mang, have you seen anyone else who has achieved the 'Golden Body' like me?"

"Of course, but they are few and far between," Uncle Mang replied. "But don't go getting yourself killed; you're still flesh and blood. A blade can still cut you, and a bullet will still create a large wound."

"I know that," Su Jie nodded.

Just as he was about to discuss the electrical stimulation further, the machine automatically shut off, signaling the end of a treatment session.

The young man opened his eyes, silently removed the needles from his body.

Then, he stared at Su Jie for about ten seconds before directly pushing the door open and leaving.

He was mute and deaf, unable to speak or hear, so Su Jie wasn't surprised by his behavior.

"Kang Gu is quite the hidden gem; his martial arts are strong, and he has received specialized training. Although he doesn't speak, I can tell from a few instances that he has some secret training methods similar to yours," Nie Shuang said. "I've approached him several times to sign with our Minglun Martial Arts Academy, but he refuses, just as you did back then."

"I need to focus on the National College Entrance Examination and go to university," Su Jie quickly explained, but deep down, he was curious about this deaf-mute youth, Kang Gu.

The fact that their training methods were somewhat similar made him wonder if he had also been taught by Odell.

Odell, the foreigner, was always looking for talented young individuals to teach, and for him, Su Jie was merely an experiment.

Su Jie was certain that during Odell's travels, he had taught many students, and the feedback data from these students helped him understand which methods aligned better with human evolutionary patterns.

"Coach Odell initially had me learn the 'Great Corpse Spreading Method.' And this Kang Gu seems to practice the 'Turtle-Snake Sleep Method.' This is an ancient Taoist sleeping technique; I don't know the specifics, but it looks quite impressive. I should find a time to exchange ideas with him," Su Jie thought. "Of course, he might not have been taught by Coach Odell."

Much of what Odell taught came from the Typhon Training Camp, and some techniques from Feng Hengyi were similar, like the Grey Wolf and Hungry Wolf.

He also had to be wary that Kang Gu might be from the Typhon Training Camp.

"This person has a dull expression, clearly due to being deaf and mute for years, leading to an inability to communicate. Yet, his aura is also wooden, giving off a sense of a pain-insensitive wooden man; it's hard to tell if he is good or evil," Su Jie thought, using his knowledge of Physiognomy but unable to discern anything.

"I heard you studied Physiognomy and Feng Shui with Luo Weiji and Ma Fengnian," Uncle Mang asked. "But they are unwilling to communicate with me, probably due to their relationship with Haoyu, fearing their data will be taken."

"Uncle Mang, I don't support Haoyu investing in the Minglun Martial Arts Academy. What do you think?" Su Jie asked.

Chapter 138: The Martial Arts Academys Turmoil

"This matter is beyond our control," Nie Shuang said. "Moreover, since Minglun Martial Arts Academy partnered with Haoyu, the number of students has increased several times, and now the venue is insufficient. This is good for the development of martial arts."

"With more people, there are also more data," Uncle Mang said. "Regardless, Haoyu has provided many research facilities, which is beneficial for me. Su Jie, now that you've returned and achieved the Golden Body, I may not have much to assist you with, but if you cooperate with me on experiments, we can study the data together. Perhaps we can push your body to a higher realm; human potential is immense and definitely goes beyond this. Have you seen the recent scientific news? Scientists discovered a new organ in the human body called interstitial tissue, and many suspect that this new organ is what Traditional Chinese Medicine refers to as the Sanjiao."

"I've noticed that too," Su Jie nodded.

Recently, there was a significant news story about foreign scientists researching patients' bile ducts for cancer signs, discovering some cavities that did not match previously known human anatomical structures. They collaborated with several medical doctors and inadvertently found interstitial tissue, which could be the largest organ in the human body.

The theory of meridians in Traditional Chinese Medicine cannot be seen in anatomy, but some people can perceive it through thought and nerves.

Although modern anatomy has studied various human tissues and organs in great detail, many secrets of the human body remain undiscovered.

"Uncle Mang, are you researching this entirely new topic?" Nie Shuang asked.

"I am a naturally curious person," Uncle Mang replied. "Traditional Chinese Medicine has its own theories, which are experiences summarized by many people by chance, and there must be some truth in it, though there is certainly a lot of dross. I want to push human physical capabilities to a higher level and see just how far it can go. The world record for various physical activities is broken every year. In the coming decades, it will continue to be broken. Unfortunately, I know that many laboratories have developed super stimulants with no side effects, and after long-term injections, they create super soldiers whose physical abilities far exceed Olympic champions. But I can't access this data; it's truly a pity."

"Uncle Mang, do you have any data on Feng Hengyi, who defeated me in two punches last time? He came from the Typhon Training Camp, which supposedly possesses the most advanced life science technology and a wealth of data, along with cutting-edge artificial intelligence," Su Jie said.

"I can't get his data either, but Gu Yang told me about this matter," Uncle Mang became excited upon hearing this. "The Feng Family has a conspiracy; they want to monopolize the formulas for Inner Strength Wine and the secret ointment. In fact, Liu Zihao knows this too; he just wants to obtain certain things from the Feng Family. You might as well have a match with Feng Hengyi; I can get the video and analyze the data. Unfortunately, my eyes are gone; many things need to be seen with my own eyes to touch the soul."

"With today's highest technology, is there anything that can restore your sight, Uncle Mang?" Su Jie asked.

"In theory, yes. The optic nerve can be connected to the brain through surgical transplantation, and it can succeed. After all, if heads can be replaced, what are eyeballs? Of course, this is very complicated; it requires precise surgical robotic arms to connect the nerves one by one, and the eyeballs need to be cloned. These technologies haven't undergone clinical trials; only the most cutting-edge secret laboratories have them. I fear only the Typhon Training Camp possesses this technology," Uncle Mang shook his head. "The Typhon Training Camp was initially established as a life science laboratory by a group of fearful oligarchs, but later it was taken over and grew larger, becoming a monster. By issuing virtual currency, it amassed immense wealth and infiltrated many areas. However, their research is indeed very advanced."

"By the way," Su Jie took out some ointment, "this is the ointment Professor Luo Weiji gave me. It is said to have been purchased from the dark web of the Typhon Training Camp and is effective for treating external injuries, strengthening bones, and protecting the skin. I want to see how it compares to the secret ointment from Minglun Martial Arts Academy."

"I've studied this ointment; it is not on the same level as the secret ointment from Minglun Martial Arts Academy. Simply put, even if you obtain the Typhon Training Camp's ointment, after research and understanding its components, it would be nearly impossible to replicate because many of its ingredients are extracted using special instruments," Uncle Mang said. "Our secret ointment, if obtained, could be analyzed and the formula acquired. With an investment of a few hundred million to build a factory and procure machinery, it could be manufactured. That's why we have never sold it externally, including the Inner Strength Wine."

"By the way, does Zhou Chun seem to have Inner Strength Wine? Could he be giving it to the Feng Family for research?" Su Jie reminded.

"It's not that easy; making Inner Strength Wine also requires a formula. Without the right timing and many key steps, it is impossible to produce successfully," Nie Shuang said. "The secret ointment was originally from our Nie Family, but later my grandfather gave the formula to Principal Liu Guanglie due to a certain incident. After many rounds of research and improvement, he finally perfected the secret ointment. In fact, it complements the ointment from the Typhon Training Camp."

"I feel the same way," Su Jie said. "Actually, my body became stronger because I started using the secret ointment from Minglun Martial Arts Academy and later combined it with the ointment from the Typhon Training Camp, which played a crucial role. That's why I came this time; I want to buy some Inner Strength Wine and some ointment to mix with the ointment from Minglun Martial Arts Academy to cultivate my hard Qi Gong, hoping to advance further."

"Do you know how expensive this ointment is?" Nie Shuang laughed. "Not to mention that you can't buy it even if you have money; even some old principals' good friends who seek medicine and wine have to pay a lot. For example, a jar of Inner Strength Wine costs at least three to five million, while the ointment is a bit cheaper; for a box this size, it would be around a hundred thousand. Your Typhon Training Camp ointment is probably about the same price or even more expensive."

Nie Shuang held Su Jie's "ointment," which was a tin canister, and Su Jie's box could last about half a month.

So far, he had used three jars of ointment.

All given to him by Luo Weiji.

It was surprisingly expensive.

"Too expensive," Su Jie shook his head, dismissing certain thoughts.

"Our ointment from Minglun Martial Arts Academy is green," Uncle Mang took out a glass jar from the drawer. Inside was the ointment that had been applied to Su Jie, while the Typhon Training Camp's ointment was dark golden.

Although Uncle Mang couldn't see, he had used this stuff long ago.

"The ointment from Minglun Martial Arts Academy is called 'Born-Perfect Ointment.' It can compensate for congenital deficiencies, used externally and internally, and when combined with Inner Strength Wine, it can remedy the physical weaknesses caused during childhood. It is the mildest tonic. If a child is malnourished at a young age, it can be used in conjunction. The ointment from the Typhon Training Camp is called Typhon Oil, which contains some of the latest stimulants. When applied to the skin, it can quickly suppress pain, causing the internal tissues of the skin's blood vessels to contract, thereby stimulating vitality. From a Traditional Chinese Medicine perspective, it is a potent medicine. Of course, the effects are very noticeable; for someone as strong as an ox, the results

are quick, and it won't harm the body, making it an excellent product. However, for someone with a weak constitution, it can lead to further depletion."

Uncle Mang said, "If both are used together, it can indeed yield miraculous effects, allowing the body to surpass ordinary limits and forge the strongest physique. You are a prime example."

"I want to advance further now; Uncle Mang, do you have any suggestions?" Su Jie asked.

After coming down from the mountain, his physical abilities and horizontal training had improved. Su Jie knew that Uncle Mang had done extensive research on the limits of human potential and wanted to hear his opinions to find the next growth point and breakthrough.

"You have two options now. The first is a breakthrough in psychological quality to reach the Living Dead realm. Although you haven't broken through yet, you're close. It may be because you're young and lack experience and exposure. This cannot be forced; if you try to force it, it may lead to some psychological issues. The second is to gradually train your body; persistence pays off. Calm down, and one day it will happen naturally. You are not even twenty yet; your body still has room for growth and hasn't hit a bottleneck. If you continue at your current pace for three to five years, you will definitely break through," Uncle Mang said. "I wonder why your mindset seems a bit anxious; logically, it shouldn't be like this. Why?"

"Is my mindset anxious?" Su Jie realized he indeed felt a bit anxious. He immediately understood it was because he had decided to participate in the

competition organized by Haoyu Group in October, where he might encounter Feng Hengyi. With his current strength, he was still not a match for Feng Hengyi.

This urgent feeling unknowingly affected his emotions.

His emotions were usually stable, but there were still some vulnerabilities.

The person involved is confused, while the observer sees clearly; Uncle Mang noticed this immediately, which made Su Jie feel a sense of alertness.

"Su Jie, I heard you also started a club and want to participate in the competition held by Haoyu?" Nie Shuang asked. "Do you have some grievances with the Feng Family?"

"I have some," Su Jie replied. "However, I feel there must be some conspiracy behind Haoyu's collaboration with Minglun Martial Arts Academy for this competition." Su Jie said, "The situation with the Feng Family, as Professors Luo and Ma mentioned, has the aura of ancient ferocious beasts. Anyone associated with them will be left with nothing but bones. I want to remind you that Minglun Martial Arts Academy is my foundational martial arts school, and I wouldn't want it to be swallowed by the Feng Family."

Chapter 139: The Rare Judgment

Uncle Mang and Nie Shuang held considerable authority within the Minglun Martial Arts Academy. Su Jie's efforts to persuade them were part of his broader attempt to sabotage the Feng family's plans.

Last time, when he went with Zhang Manman and Zhang Jinchuan to a war-torn region, he managed to persuade the local warlord, Awasi, to release the Xu family's shipment. It had been a brush with death—he'd gained nothing personally, but the blow to the Feng family's Haoyu Group had been severe. The experience had also given him a profound sense of renewal, which made it all worthwhile.

This time, his instincts told him that Haoyu's sudden commotion inside Minglun Martial Arts Academy was part of a major strategic move. Naturally, Su Jie couldn't just stand by; whether he succeeded or not, he intended to give it everything he had.

Participating in the tournament, winning the championship, and disrupting Haoyu's plan—that was one part of it. The other part was getting the academy's administrators and higher-ups to resist Haoyu on a strategic level. Ideally, he hoped they could pull a "Zhang Jinchuan" move and make the Haoyu Group's scheme backfire spectacularly.

With that in mind, he already had a plan: for this upcoming Pointing Path martial arts team competition, he wanted to recruit Zhang Manman and Zhang Jinchuan again.

The three of them had handled warlords in a war zone before. In the relatively tame environment of home, they'd surely thrive.

Sometimes, an individual alone couldn't achieve much—but a united team could move mountains.

“You think we don't already know that old ghost Feng Shoucheng's scheme?” Uncle Mang chuckled. “Don't worry. Liu Guanglie knows what's going on too. Of course, we might still need your help. As for your current situation, I can't really teach you anything—only study alongside you. But that guy Gu Yang has some good stuff on him. You might want to learn a thing or two from him—if he's willing to teach.”

“As for the ointments and internal strengthening wine you want to buy, that's beyond my authority,” Nie Shuang said with a grin. “I can try to introduce you to the old headmaster sometime. He's the only one who can make that call about whether the Fengs can buy in.”

The old headmaster—Liu Guanglie—was a remarkable man. He'd founded Minglun Martial Arts Academy with his own hands, built multiple enterprises, created the Minglun Daoyin Technique, and developed miraculous tonics like Internal Strength Wine and Heavenly Ointment.

Technically, they weren't medicines but health supplements.

Su Jie had seen the slow, deliberate movements of the Minglun Daoyin Technique performed by Zhang Jinchuan, and it struck him as both fascinating and mysterious.

If he could meet Liu Guanglie in person, it would surely be a great opportunity.

“Well, I’ll go find Coach Gu Yang now,” Su Jie said. “I’ll be around for the next two months—just reach out anytime.” He knew he couldn’t convince Nie Shuang and Uncle Mang for now.

Everyone had their own ideas.

He left the massage room and went to look for Gu Yang.

Watching Su Jie’s retreating figure, Nie Shuang murmured, “Uncle Mang, that kid’s getting stronger by the day. It’s only been a year—how can anyone progress that fast? Is he one of those once-in-a-generation prodigies?”

“Human potential is immeasurable. Even the greatest scientists can’t define the limits of the human body,” Uncle Mang said. “His psychological strength is incredible—he’s constantly absorbing knowledge and turning it into power.”

“That sounds unscientific,” Nie Shuang remarked.

“Maybe so,” Uncle Mang replied, “but you’ll see. That kid’s full of surprises. Apart from talent, he’s hardworking, disciplined, smart, and knows exactly what to do and what not to do. He’s like a precision machine. Even an ordinary person who lived like that for a year would achieve remarkable results.”

“True enough,” Nie Shuang nodded. “The Feng family seems to be pressing in on all fronts. They really want to swallow Minglun Martial Arts Academy whole. I can’t tell what the old headmaster’s thinking. Liu Zihao’s reckless, sure, but the old man shouldn’t be so shortsighted.”

“There’s a powerful force behind the Feng family—it’s connected to the Typhon Training Camp. The old headmaster’s been tempted,” Uncle Mang said. “He’s spent his life chasing the mysteries of martial arts. The Typhon Camp’s research and technology are irresistible to someone like him. Honestly, even I’d hesitate if given that chance.”

“If we could get access to Typhon’s research data through the Feng family while still staying independent, that would be perfect—a win-win,” Nie Shuang said. “But the old headmaster seems to have a piece on the board—a little nemesis for the Fengs.”

“You mean Zhang Jinchuan, the only true practitioner of the Minglun Daoyin Technique?” Uncle Mang asked. “That boy’s talent is extraordinary—even higher than Su Jie’s. He’s brilliant, resourceful, patient, and goal-oriented. But compared to Su Jie, he lacks a certain grounded depth, that quiet steadiness beneath the surface. Don’t you think?”

“I feel the same,” Nie Shuang agreed. “When you’re with Su Jie, you feel at ease. He’s not calculating—everything’s out in the open. At first, I thought he was just blunt, but now I see he walks the path of integrity. If you help him, he’ll remember it and repay you. Zhang Jinchuan, though... he’s clever to a fault. You always have to keep your guard up.”

“Exactly,” Uncle Mang said, nodding. “That’s why I’d rather research alongside Su Jie than get tangled with Zhang Jinchuan. As for the Feng family’s third son—he’s a man-eating beast, through and through.”

“The old headmaster’s wisdom runs deeper than ours,” Nie Shuang said.
“Whatever we know, he surely knows too. Maybe he’s just playing along for now. At the very least, Haoyu’s involvement has boosted our student intake and widened our reputation. You’ve also gotten more research funding out of it.

“But that Su Jie kid—he’s worth studying. I think all his physical transformations come from his psychological strength. That’s a major topic of global research. You might actually make a breakthrough through him.”

“Agreed,” Uncle Mang said, nodding. “The link between psychological and physical strength is undeniable, but we still don’t know how far it can go. We have no precise data—too few examples.”

Uncle Mang’s research focused on how psychological resilience affected physical ability.

A person who stayed happy and positive tended to be strong and long-lived.

A person steeped in negativity had weaker immunity, fell ill often, and even died young.

That was an iron law.

But what kind of mindset could push human strength to its absolute limit? There was little scientific data on that. Psychological states were intangible—impossible to measure—but undeniably real.

Uncle Mang's studies relied heavily on traditional Chinese medical experience—case by case, observing, recording, inferring.

“Luo Weiji and Ma Fengnian are both experts in psychology,” Nie Shuang said. “They’ve also set their sights on Su Jie. He’s a perfect test subject—someone they can collect meaningful data from. Ordinary people are useless for that—no research value.”

“Ninety-nine percent of people are lazy, greedy, fearful, impulsive, chasing shortcuts, drifting without plans or self-awareness,” Uncle Mang sighed. “No value at all for study. So far, I’ve only found two who let me research them—Su Jie, and Kang Gu, the deaf-mute. Zhang Jinchuan refused, and Feng Hengyi—forget it.”

“There’s actually another person worth studying,” Nie Shuang said.

“You mean Gu Yang?” Uncle Mang shook his head. “Old Gu’s too stubborn. I can’t get through to him.”

Their talk drifted naturally from Su Jie to Gu Yang.

At that very moment, Su Jie was on his way to find Gu Yang.

He’d heard that Gu Yang hadn’t taken on any students this summer, and the traditional martial arts class had been handed over to another instructor.

Supposedly, there had been too many complaints—students claimed they weren’t learning anything.

“People these days are so impatient,” Su Jie thought. “Coach Gu Yang’s methods are simple but powerful. Back when I learned his ‘hoe-and-dig’ exercises, that was the foundation of everything I’ve achieved since.”

He walked toward the teachers’ dormitory.

Gu Yang lived alone there.

He had no family—no one at all.

Bang!

As Su Jie reached the door, he heard a muffled explosion inside, like a hot water bottle bursting, water spilling everywhere.

“Someone’s fighting in there.”

His instincts flared. The door was locked. He pressed his palm to it—then shoved hard.

Crack!

The bolt snapped under the force of his “Hoe Head” technique. In a flash, he slipped inside.

“Who’s there?”

A voice—and a flash of steel.

A dagger stabbed straight toward Su Jie's chest—fast, precise, lethal. The thrust was serpentine, twisting unpredictably, impossible to block or dodge by sight.

That dagger's even deadlier than Gray Wolf's or Hungry Wolf's! Su Jie's brain calculated instantly. A month ago, I'd never have stopped that strike. This isn't Coach Gu Yang—the guy's got the aura of a soldier.

Before his eyes could even register the attacker's face, his body was already moving. His torso bent backward ninety degrees, the dagger slicing through the air where his chest had been.

His leg shot out like a spear, aiming for the attacker's knee, then he rolled aside like a giant python twisting through a swamp—dodging the follow-up strike.

Swish! Swish! Swish!

Both missed—the kick and the dagger. The assailant's movements were lightning-fast, ghostlike, striking and withdrawing in an instant.

Su Jie dropped low, crawling out the doorway. The room was dangerous—too many unknowns. Better to retreat, assess, and strike from a position of advantage.

That was a lesson he'd learned in the war zones.

Chapter 140: The Best Training

In an instant, he saw clearly the people in the room.

There were two individuals.

One was Gu Yang, also holding a dagger.

The other man was dressed in ordinary sportswear, also wielding a dagger. This man appeared to be around forty years old, looking weathered and worn, with a long face, raised eyebrows, and a cruel expression formed by years of ruthless behavior.

A person's appearance is shaped by their heart; over time, one's mindset can subtly influence their looks.

Some people wear a frown for years, and to outsiders, they truly seem to have a face full of sorrow. Others who commit evil deeds for a long time will develop a fierce and menacing appearance.

The one who just attempted to assassinate Su Jie was that kind of person.

"Su Jie, is that you?" Gu Yang also recognized him: "Punishment, this matter has nothing to do with him; don't harm the innocent. This is a society governed by law. If you hurt someone, I guarantee you won't get out of here without being arrested."

"Judgment, are you coming with me?" The man called "Punishment" sneered: "This young man just managed to dodge my strike; his movements are skilled. He must be your disciple, otherwise, he wouldn't have rushed to break down the door. Well, since you won't come with me, I'll cripple your disciple and see whether you listen or not."

"He's not my disciple. Wait!" Gu Yang was about to intervene, but the man called "Punishment" suddenly lunged forward again, attacking Su Jie.

"Good." Su Jie sensed the true intent to kill; he had achieved the "Golden Body" and was eager for a fight against a strong opponent.

This man before him was powerful and would serve as a touchstone for his Martial Arts advancement!

Since returning from the war-torn lands, he hadn't encountered a worthy opponent.

That Xiong Zhiguang was a master, but he paled in comparison to the man codenamed "Punishment."

Just moments ago, Su Jie had barely escaped the dagger's deadly strike, but he felt no fear. Having experienced the hail of bullets, he no longer regarded daggers as a threat.

As the man codenamed "Punishment" burst out of the doorway, Su Jie countered by entering the room directly, moving to Gu Yang's side.

"Coach, give me the dagger." Su Jie extended his hand and took Gu Yang's dagger.

Just then, the man codenamed "Punishment" returned, lunging at him again. He was like a shadow, as relentless as a parasite, with the dagger glinting coldly, targeting many vital points on Su Jie. At that moment, Su Jie had obtained Gu Yang's dagger, and his arm moved as if it had transformed into multiple limbs, his whole being resembling a giant spider, aiming to ensnare the man called "Punishment."

Crackling sounds filled the air...

The daggers clashed, sparks flying.

Both "Punishment" and Su Jie accurately intercepted each other's daggers while simultaneously countering.

In just a few exchanges, danger lurked at every turn, yet Su Jie grew increasingly excited; good opponents were hard to come by.

He let out a sharp whistle, the dagger dancing in his hand like a silver snake. At the same time, his footwork resembled magic; with a single movement, he appeared on the left, yet his body was on the right, advancing and retreating, deceiving the eyes and minds of his opponent.

This was his painstakingly practiced "Magic Step," the essence developed by Odell, which he had perfected during his training in the mountains. Unfortunately, he hadn't yet fought anyone with it.

"What kind of footwork is this?" The man called "Punishment" displayed a strange expression, unleashing his own strength. The dagger in his hand flickered as if it were a venomous snake striking.

With each stab, a faint hissing sound could be heard.

His body was like that of a soft-bodied creature, almost magnetic, repelling Su Jie's attacks just as they were about to connect.

"This footwork is impressive." Su Jie felt a chill in his heart, his focus sharper than ever.

Since achieving his Martial Arts, he rarely faced such a formidable opponent who could push him to this extent. Even in the war-torn lands, he hadn't encountered such terror. Of course, that time with Daru was merely a spar, while the man before him, "Punishment," aimed to cripple him.

Naturally, he had also met Odell in the war-torn lands, but Odell was too strong; he was no match for him and gained little experience from that battle.

Dagger duels were exceptionally perilous, ten times more so than bare-handed fights; a moment's inattention could lead to bloodshed.

Needless to say, such clashes were incredibly honing.

"When did Su Jie become this strong?" Gu Yang moved, already at the doorway, guarding it. He had noticed that Su Jie was holding his own in the fight, his footwork more agile than a monkey's, and his dagger techniques exquisite, especially the footwork, which was astonishing, more impressive than a magic show.

Even Gu Yang, who had seen much, had never witnessed such a miraculous footwork.

"This kid is tough to deal with." "Punishment" frowned; after a few rounds, he realized Su Jie wielded his dagger with great agility. Although his experience wasn't vast, he was quite slippery, and he couldn't handle him easily, especially with Gu Yang nearby. If the two of them teamed up, he would surely be in trouble.

"Alright, Punishment," Gu Yang said, "I won't go back. It wasn't easy for you to find me here; after all, we fought side by side before and were once brothers. I'll let you go this time, but don't come back. And I advise you, that path is meaningless; it's better to find a place to live peacefully. You have enough money to live like a wealthy man. Su Jie, stand down."

"I'll cut him first, then come for you." "Punishment" growled, ignoring Gu Yang's words and instead attacking Su Jie with even more ferocity.

"This is exhilarating; fighting with daggers is far more thrilling than with fists." Su Jie faced "Punishment" with no fear, no matter how fierce the attack.

At that moment, his spirit was completely unified, emitting a roar like a tiger and a dragon, echoing throughout the room, the wind howling, stirring up a tempest in the small space.

His arm shot up, the dagger swirling in his hand, drawing an arc upward, perfectly intercepting "Punishment"'s attack as their daggers collided.

Clang!

With a tremendous force, both daggers flew out of their hands, leaving them bare-handed.

Su Jie didn't pause; he let out another long howl, unleashing his most adept "Hoe Strike."

In the war-torn lands, facing the "Panda Mask Man" Odell, believing that Zhang Manman and Zhang Jinchuan had fallen victim, he had unleashed his strongest strike. That state of mind, whenever recalled, felt like a true breakthrough in his Martial Arts.

Now, facing "Punishment," he recalled that state of mind again and unconsciously executed the move.

"Not good." "Punishment" didn't see Su Jie's action but felt an overwhelming pressure from deep within, sensing a vast momentum enveloping him.

In this critical moment, he raised his arm to protect his head, squatting down hard and sliding forward.

Bang!

He took Su Jie's slap head-on, staggering back, struggling to maintain his balance.

But just as he charged forward, he prevented Su Jie's "Hoe Strike" from reaching its full power, thus avoiding a fate of having his limbs broken.

Even so, his arm was severely injured, blood flowing from the wound.

Su Jie's "Hoe Strike" was a swift and powerful move, digging in and tearing out in one fluid motion.

After being struck, "Punishment" felt Su Jie's attack dig deep into his flesh, nearly tearing off a chunk of meat.

Roar!

"Punishment" lost interest in continuing the fight with Su Jie and charged towards Gu Yang at the door.

But Gu Yang merely sighed, stepping aside to let "Punishment" escape.

Su Jie didn't pursue; he could tell Gu Yang had intentionally let "Punishment" go.

"Coach, what's going on? I came to see you and ran into this master; he's truly formidable." Su Jie picked up the two daggers from the ground, examining the notches on them, realizing just how immense their strength had been.

Moreover, Su Jie noticed that many parts of his clothing had been torn by the daggers, but fortunately, his skin remained unbroken.

His skin was very sensitive now, automatically contracting in the face of danger; this was the result of his rigorous Martial Arts training.

"You're strong." Gu Yang gave Su Jie a thumbs up: "He was my former comrade, codenamed Punishment. He came to find me to rejoin the team. I won't go into the past, but how did you train? In just a year, you've become this strong? You were clearly weak when you left. Did you go to war? How come you have the scent of battle on you? This isn't something you can cultivate in a fighting ring. Your various movements and techniques feel like dodging bullets."

"I went to the war-torn lands and encountered a few attacks; my training is still far from enough." Su Jie had a vague sense that Gu Yang's background was not simple and that he had experienced warfare. He had occasionally heard Zhang Manman mention bits and pieces of things.

Zhang Manman wanted to recruit Gu Yang but had never succeeded.

"Coach, I think your comrade will come back to bother us again." Su Jie said, "Why don't we team up to catch him and hand him over to the police? He brandished a weapon and committed a crime; by law, he should at least serve a few years in prison."

"Bringing me back is his mission. As long as I'm here, he won't leave and will always come for me." Gu Yang stared at Su Jie and suddenly said, "Here's the deal: I'll give you a task. If you can capture him alone, I'll agree to help you with one thing and teach you all my Martial Arts. How about that?"

"Coach, with your skills, you should be able to handle this 'Punishment,' right?" Su Jie couldn't gauge Gu Yang's depth.

"I don't want to deal with a former brother, but he is quite annoying. If you can capture him, he'll give up. He thinks you're my disciple; if he can't handle my disciple, he'll know when to back off." Gu Yang sat down and poured himself a glass of water.

