THE WAY OF RESTRAINT

Chapter 61: First Battle Victory, Fierce as a Tiger

Gray Wolf retreated continuously. His upper clothing had been torn apart by Su Jie, his hands braced against the ground.

But Su Jie lunged with a "Hoe Strike," breaking through his defense, striking with his entire body. Gray Wolf's chest took a headbutt, feeling as if his sternum had cracked, the pain leaving him breathless.

In the instant Su Jie pounced, he unleashed a seamless barrage—hand strikes, elbow strikes, shoulder strikes, abdominal strikes, rib strikes, hip strikes, back strikes, knee strikes, stomping kicks, and headbutts. Every part of his body became a weapon, striking wherever it landed!

To outsiders, Su Jie's move was far from elegant. Once he lunged, he grabbed whatever he touched, tore what he grabbed, ripped what he tore, and split what he ripped—like a madwoman in a frenzy. Yet this was the true combat essence of traditional martial arts, embodying the predatory style of wild beasts. A tiger pouncing on a sheep or an eagle seizing a rabbit—lunge, press, then fling, tear, rip, knead, and crush, using full force to shred the prey in the shortest time. It was the most ferocious and ruthless.

In less than three seconds, Gray Wolf retreated three steps. Not only was his upper clothing shredded, but his belt and pants were torn to tatters, even his underwear reduced to rags, exposing unsightly parts. Fortunately, his agility, strength, and keen danger sense spared him; otherwise, it wouldn't be his clothes torn apart but his limbs and head!

"This is the truest Chinese martial arts!" Su Jie had never fought like this before. He knew many variations of the "Hoe Strike", but in real combat, there was no chance to display them all—once unleashed, it was kill or be crippled. Now, with Gray Wolf wielding a dagger against him, Su Jie fought desperately, unleashing the move's full potential without restraint.

In those two or three seconds, his body stretched freely, exhilaration surging as he let out a long howl. With a final stomp, he struck Gray Wolf's stomach, sending him crashing into the alley wall before sliding down. Gray Wolf struggled on the ground, trying to crawl but failing.

Stripped bare, Gray Wolf covered his vital parts with both hands, curling into a ball.

"What? Not so cocky now?" Su Jie pulled out his phone, recording Gray Wolf's naked state as evidence.

"You wait, kid," Gray Wolf spat, still talking tough.

"Brother, why go this far? It's a lawful society. I could send you to the police, but in the spirit of healing and saving, I'll let it slide this time. Reform, start anew—gold awaits the prodigal's return." Su Jie smiled.
Hearing this, Gray Wolf nearly died of rage, blood foam spewing from his mouth.
"Get lost." Su Jie kicked him. "Can you move? If not, I'll call Haoyu Group to pay for your doctor."
Gray Wolf struggled to his feet, fleeing naked through the other end of the alley. The hatred in his eyes told Su Jie he wouldn't let this go.
Su Jie packed his things and left, avoiding further trouble. His sister still worked at Haoyu Group, after all. He kept the evidence—these videos would be a surprise blow when the time was right. Acting rashly now would only alert the enemy, ruining his plan. He knew Haoyu Group's power dwarfed his own; clashing headon was like an egg against a rock.
The skirmish—from Gray Wolf's appearance to being beaten and their brief exchange—lasted two or three minutes, barely affecting Su Jie's training schedule. He headed to Starshine Combat Fitness Club as planned, training with Hua Xing and others.
Bang!

Sparring with Hua Xing, after testing each other with punches and kicks, Hua Xing suddenly used jiu-jitsu, attempting a takedown. Su Jie shook him off, flipping Hua Xing onto the ground instead. "Why are you so strong today?" Hua Xing asked, puzzled. He sensed a leap in Su Jie's skill, courage, and spirit. "Nothing much, just a sudden realization," Su Jie replied, feeling at ease during training. His fight with Gray Wolf had been an epiphany, like a Buddha awakening-his body flowing freely. That was true combat. Still, he'd held back. If he'd pounced again after kicking Gray Wolf airborne, he could've killed him. But Su Jie couldn't cross that line. He even admired Gray Wolf's ability to dodge his relentless assault and escape after taking a stomach kick—a testament to the foreign mercenary's skill. He threw Hua Xing down a few more times. This national-level fight coach was now completely outmatched. Training until night, Su Jie returned home, sleeping soundly as if nothing had happened—his mental resilience unshakable. For an ordinary student, even a petty thug's threat would be terrifying, let alone Gray Wolf's. But Su Jie didn't care, sticking to his routine. This was thanks to Odell's training, especially the "Great Corpse State," refined to a "neither dead nor

alive" mental state. Nothing seemed to shake him. He'd set his life's path and

would follow it.

Vaguely, a truth brewed in his heart, ready to erupt but lacking an outlet. Before bed, he texted his sister Su Mocheng about encountering some "rich kids" today, leaving the decision to her while offering input.

Tomorrow and the day after were school holidays—rare breaks for senior students. Most would relax, but Su Jie had no such notion. He slept at 9 p.m. with the "Great Corpse State," waking at 3 a.m. for training until 6 a.m.—literary, martial, and endurance practice—for nearly four months without a single day's break. Without Odell's beatings, he trained himself, slapping, pressing, or striking walls and trees. His body, forged day and night, was undergoing a transformation.

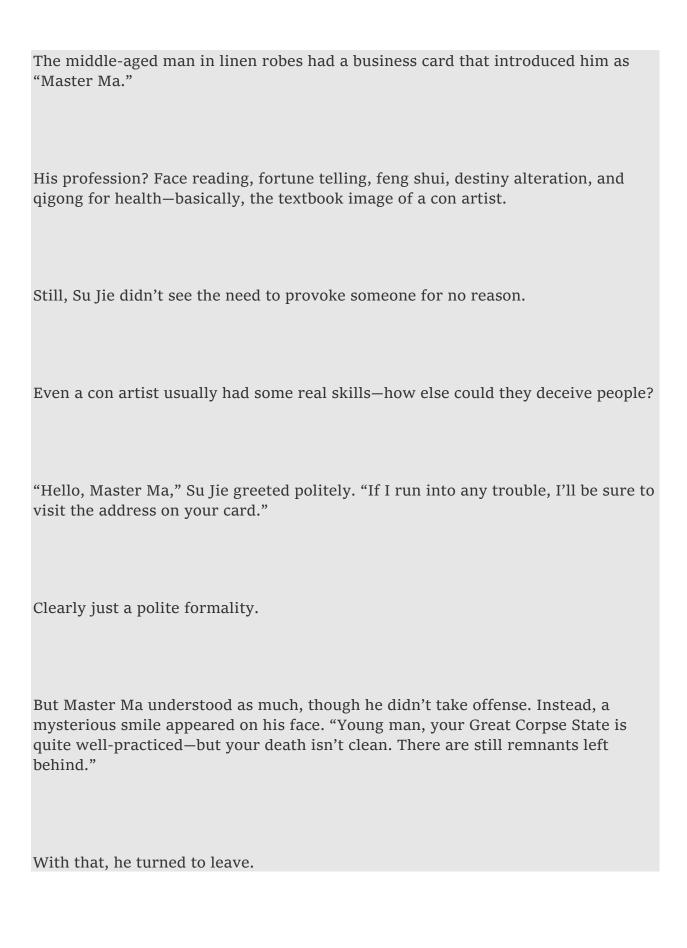
At 3 a.m. the next day, he trained in the neighborhood park. During literary practice, he reflected on his seconds-long clash with Gray Wolf, growing more excited as insights flooded in. Ignoring formal techniques, he imagined Gray Wolf attacking with a dagger, dodging and countering. Soon, one Gray Wolf became two, three, four. He evaded with footwork, striking back with ruthless precision, lost in this self-crafted mental state.

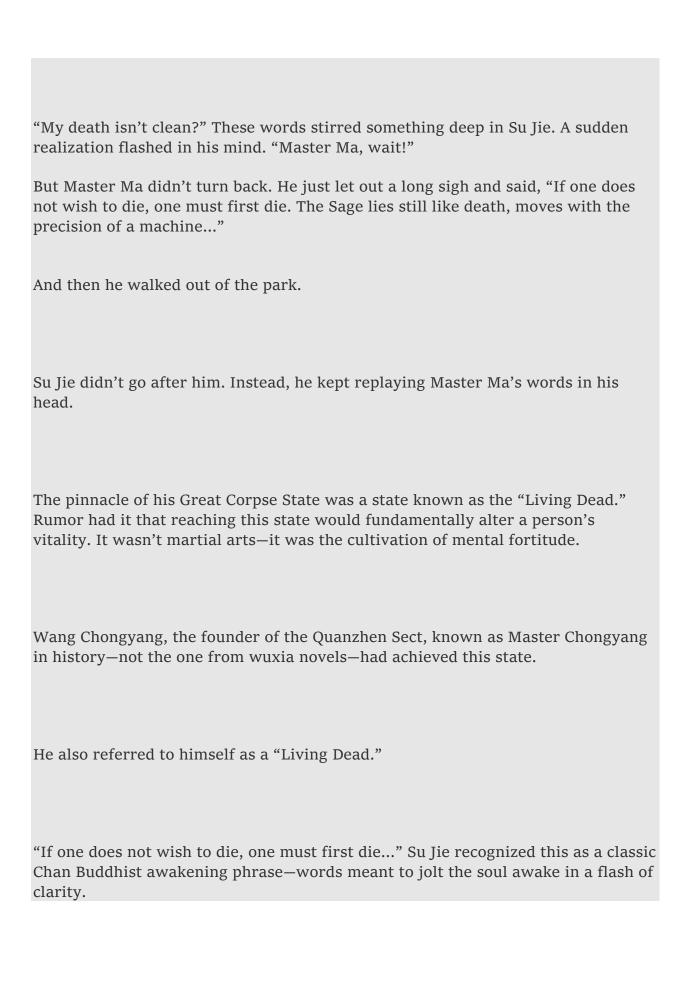
Bang!

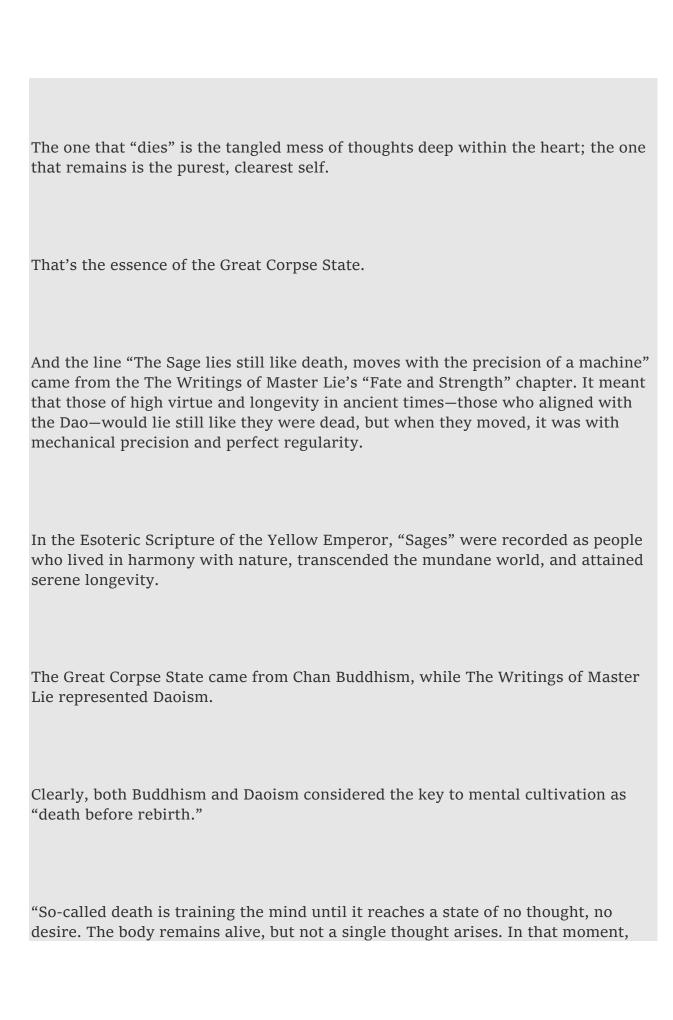
He elbowed a tree, shaking it violently, then clawed off a chunk of bark. On a person, it'd tear flesh and bone. Finishing, Su Jie felt invigorated. Next time he faced Gray Wolf, he could end it faster, maybe even disarm and subdue him barehanded.

"Young man, isn't your intent a bit too vicious?"
As Su Jie wrapped up, a voice came from nearby—a middle-aged man in linen clothes, likely an early riser exercising. Near the park was the Hunyuan Tai Chi Martial Arts Hall; its students and teachers trained daily. Once, Su Jie had seen ar old man perform pure taiji forms, each move brimming with power, unlike typica park taiji. He'd thought the academy had substance and planned to visit, but hadn't found time. This man's clothes, though, bore no Hunyuan Taiji mark.
It was still dark, only 4 a.m. after an hour of practice, silence reigning. Early November brought autumn chill to the park, with few out this early.
"I've only trained a few months; I'm not good," Su Jie said humbly. The deeper his martial arts grew, the more cautious and modest he became—insights from the Book of Changes. Odell had taught him its first lesson: the "Qian" hexagram, a mountain within the earth. One should have a mountain's lofty virtue, hidden in the vast earth, unnoticed, for all to prosper.
"Lying's not a good habit, young man. That intent and skill—even twenty years of hard training under a master might not achieve it," the linen-clad man said, frowning. Stepping closer, he studied Su Jie's face, as if reading it.
Su Jie started to explain, but the man raised a hand. "No need. I believe you. Your face says you're not lying."

"Can a face reveal lies?" Su Jie felt this man was bluffing.
"The face reflects the heart. It reveals character, past, even future," the man said, handing Su Jie a handwritten card: "Master Ma."
"If I'm right, you're in grave trouble—bloodshed looming, even harming your family. Trust me, come to this address. I can help."
"Fortune-telling? Bloodshed?" Su Jie smirked. He didn't believe in fate, especially after studying the Book of Changes. Supposedly, all fortune-telling stemmed from it, but to him, it was a guide to life and virtue, not divination. No wonder scholars across dynasties deemed it essential for self-cultivation, family, governance, and peace.
He who grasps the Book of Changes defies fate. "Heaven moves with vigor; the gentleman strives ceaselessly. Earth's form is receptive; the gentleman bears all with thick virtue."
With these truths, one breaks through all, invincible—how could fate bind him?
Chapter 62: The Master in Linen Robes



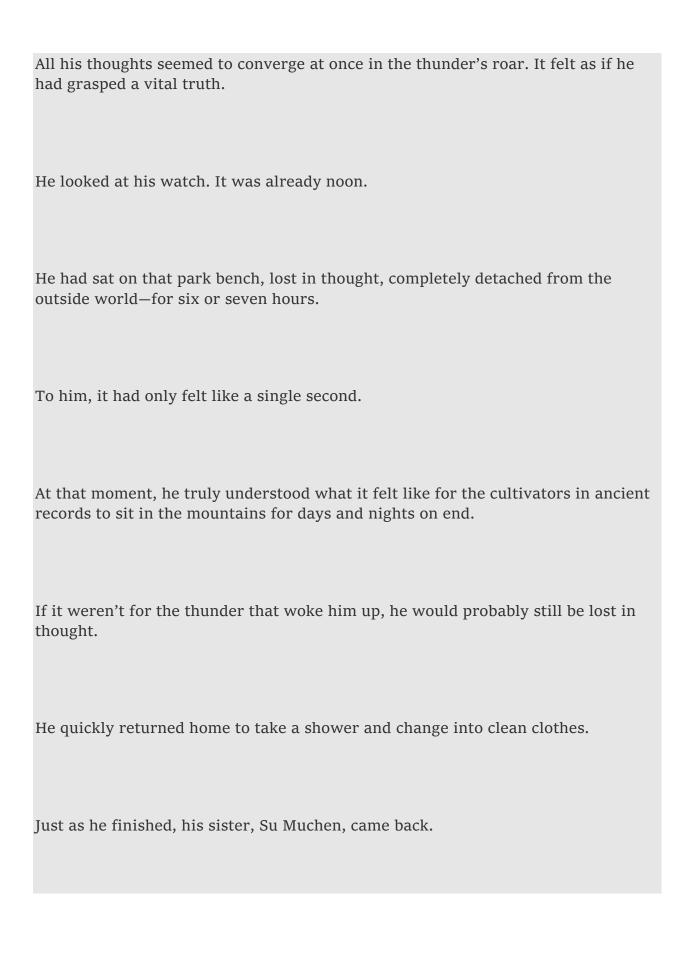


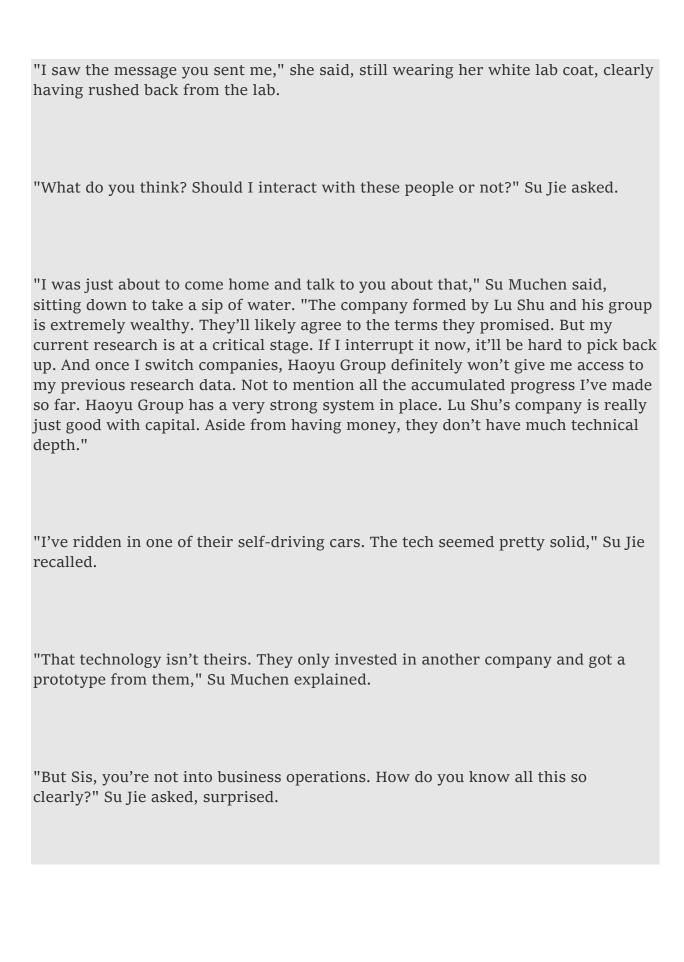


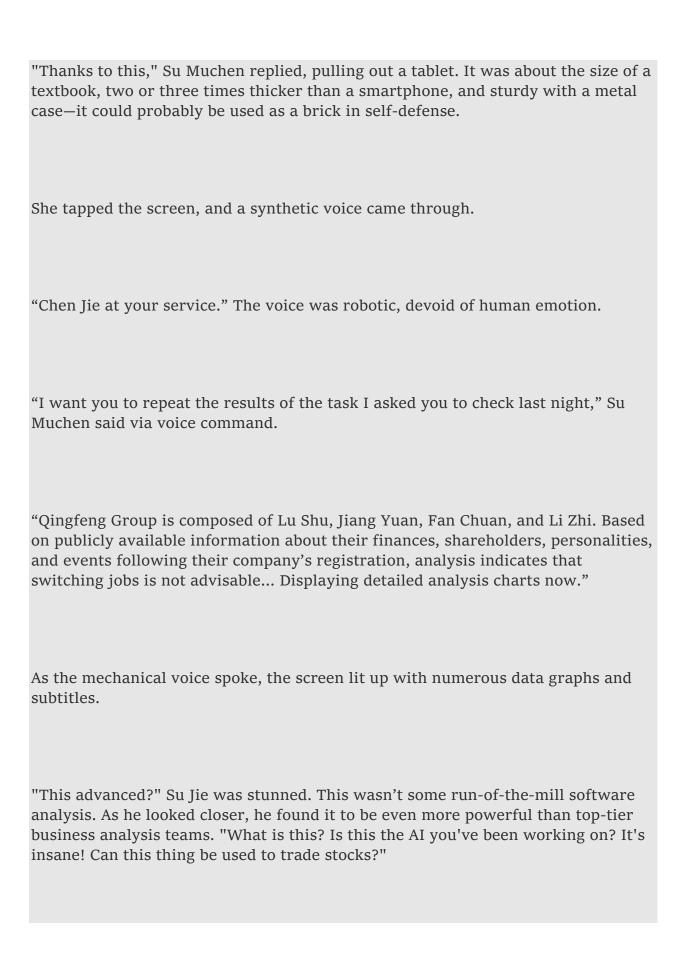
the brain enters a tranquil state. And in this state, its potential is unlocked, influencing the entire body." Su Jie had been reading many scientific papers lately and understood how mental strength impacted physical health.
Of course, physical training was relatively straightforward, but mental training was only just beginning to be explored in scientific fields—it was practically untouched territory.
Su Jie sat down on a park bench, lost in thought.
How could one reach that realm of "still as death, moving like a machine"?
What exactly did that feel like? Did it really hold such immense power?
Had Odell reached that level?
Was this the state of mind Odell had been searching for—or perhaps something even higher?
Su Jie regretted not asking him more questions during training.

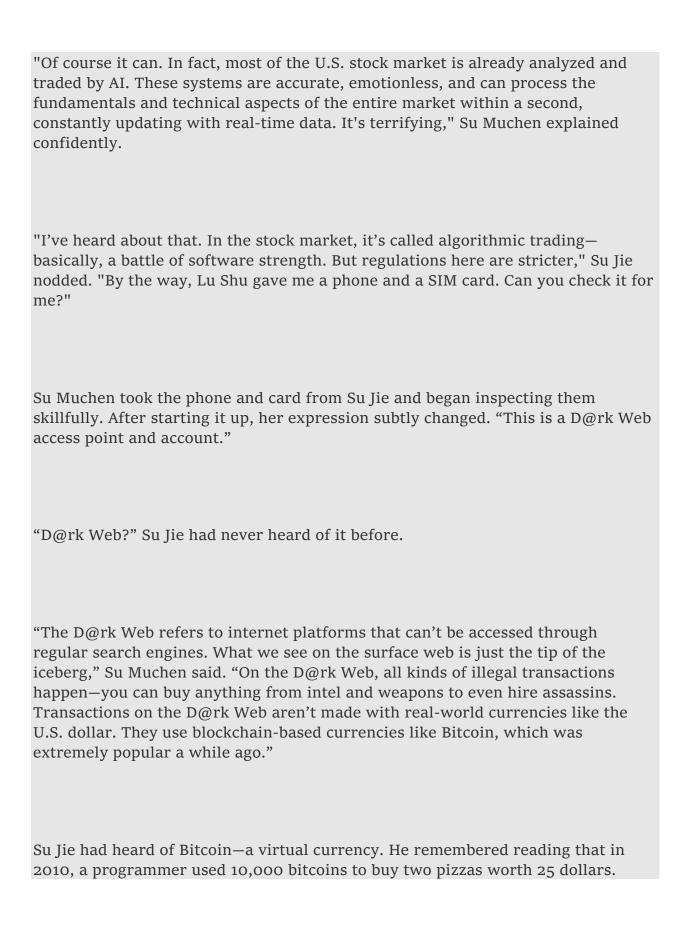
Of course, Odell was a foreigner. He probably couldn't fully grasp the deeper levels of Buddhist and Daoist cultivation, which was exactly why he sought out so many masters.
Those people might not have been skilled fighters—but they were true cultivators.
Thoughts raced like lightning through Su Jie's mind. He wrestled with one question after another.
"What is the meaning of life?"
"How do we truly distinguish between life and death?"
"Where do we come from, and where do we go?"
He sat there, dazed, with turbulent thoughts rising and falling before slowly settling. Time slipped by unnoticed.
Eventually, the sky brightened, and more people came out to exercise. Some passed by, curious as to why he was sitting so still, but they soon moved on.

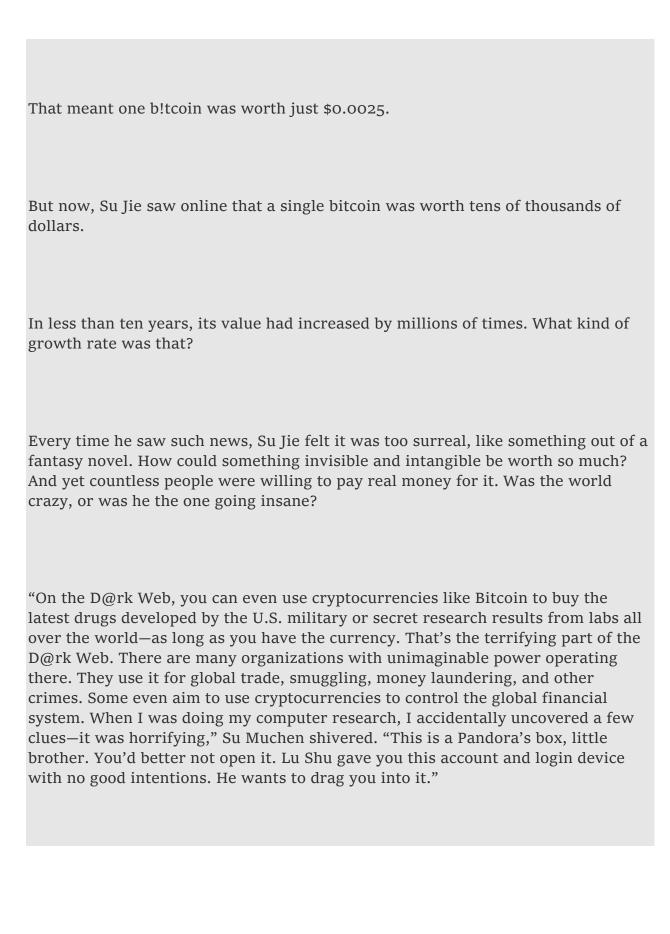
Su Jie didn't care. He was still deep in contemplation.
It was as though he were lost in a dark maze, unable to find his way.
Suddenly, the sky darkened. Wind stirred, clouds gathered, and thunder rumbled in the distance. A deafening crack of lightning shook the ground—then came a torrential downpour, rain splashing down in sheets.
It was already November—almost the start of winter—and thunderstorms were rare.
But this was the south, where the weather was still mild. Occasionally there'd be a thunderstorm, but one this fierce was unusual.
People scattered from the park like birds and beasts.
Autumn rain could easily lead to colds.
The thunder snapped Su Jie out of his trance. His entire body was soaked.

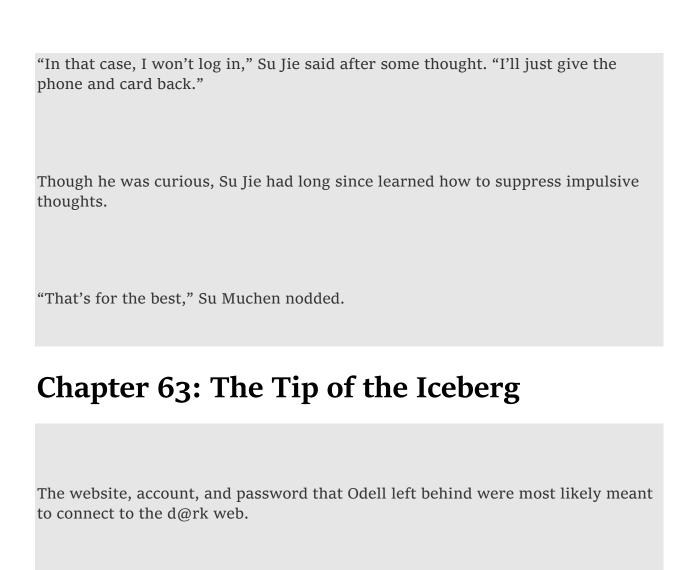










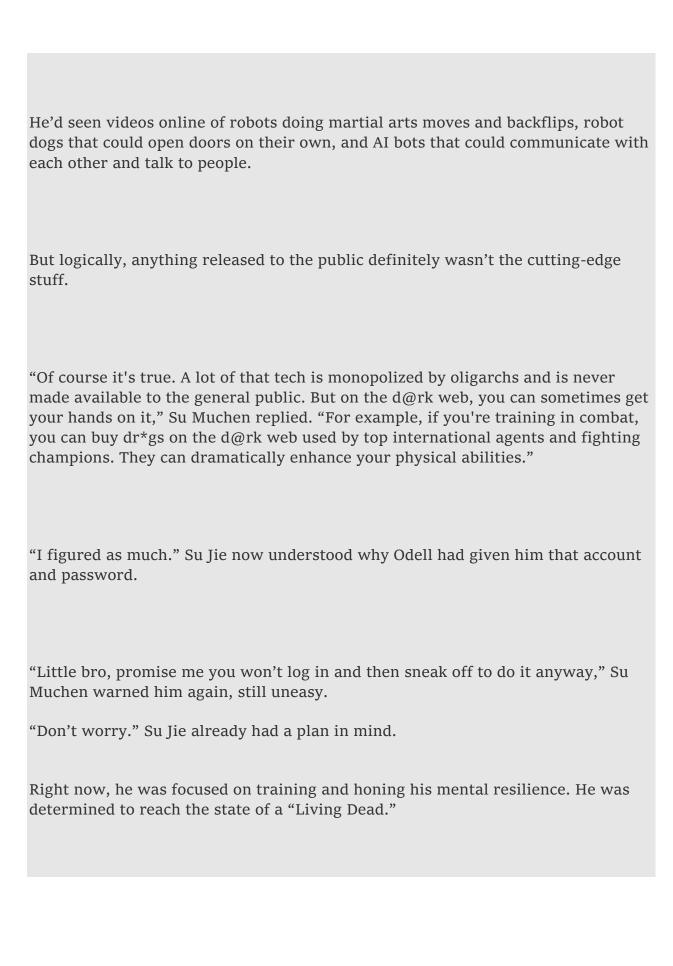


No wonder Su Jie couldn't access or search it through regular means.

According to Odell, that site offered access to many things not available on the open market—items that could enhance physical abilities. That sounded plausible.

"Big Sis, just how advanced do you think modern technology is? I read some reports and theories saying that certain laboratories have tech that's thirty to forty years ahead of what's publicly available. Do you think that's true?" Su Jie

suddenly raised a question.



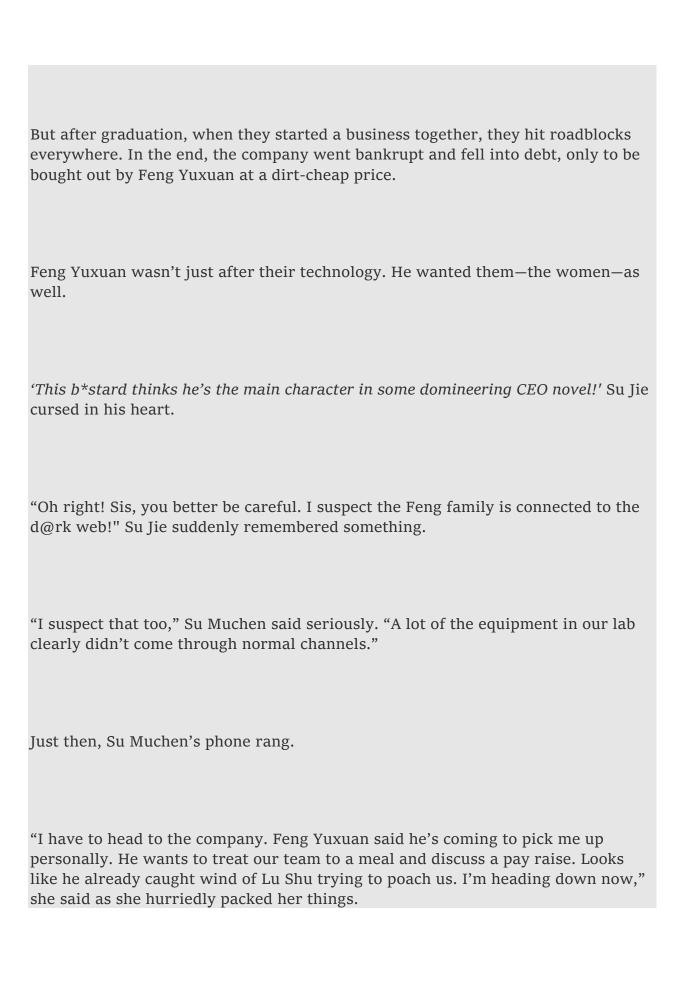
As his training grew more profound, he began to understand that the highest level of martial arts wasn't just about physical enhancement—it was about spiritual cultivation.
Otherwise, with Odell's status as a "Godmaker" and the top coach at the Typhon Training Camp, wouldn't he have had access to all kinds of drugs and technology? Yet he still chose to leave it all behind to pursue the ultimate spiritual state.
If not for Odell's example, Su Jie might have focused too heavily on external things.
But now, his priority was on elevating his mental state.
"That's good. You've always been true to your word. You've never told a lie, even now when you're already so grown up," Su Muchen said, still trusting her little brother. She handed him a tablet as thick as a brick. "This is the training device I mentioned last time. You can upload your usual training videos and sparring sessions into it. The AI in here will build a model, automatically generate animations, and simulate fights against current professional fighters—even world-class champions. The analysis has an 80% accuracy rate."
"Really?" Su Jie remembered he had quite a few training videos stored on his phone.

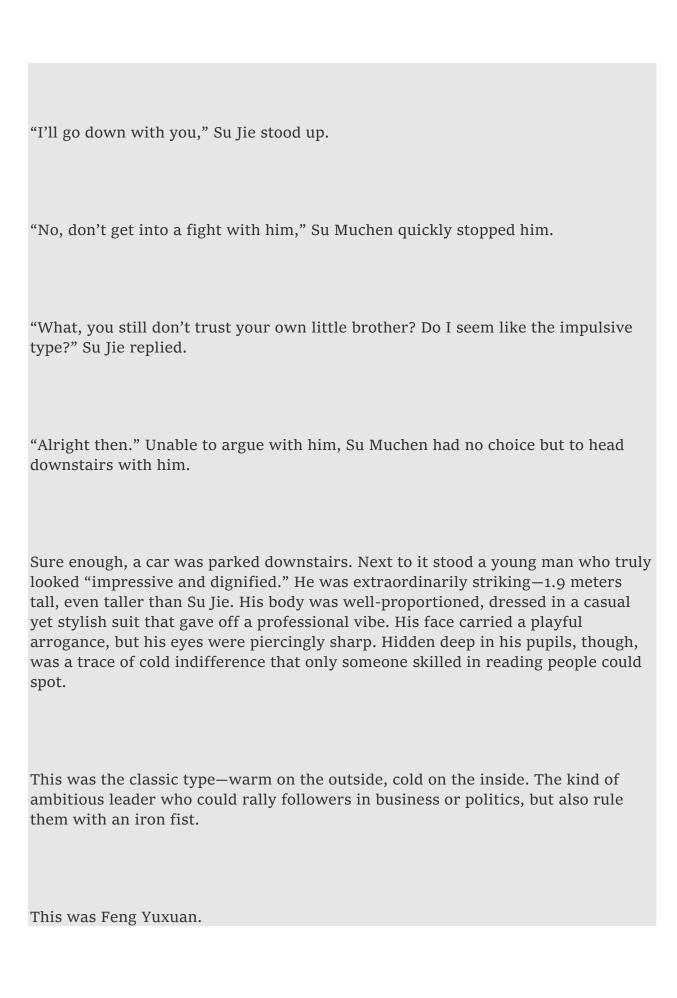
He had a habit of recording every training session and sparring match. Afterward, he'd watch them closely to analyze and reflect.
It was the best way to grasp key points and understand what worked and what didn't.
That was one of the reasons why modern training could advance so much faster than in ancient times.
In the heat of combat, many people felt they performed well, but after watching the footage, they'd find their techniques full of flaws. That's the difference between being in it and observing from the outside.
In the past four months, Su Jie had already fought over 300 times.
At Minglun Martial Arts Academy alone, he had participated in over a hundred fights. And at the Starshine Combat Fitness Club, he fought even more frequently. But even after hundreds of sparring sessions, none had as much impact on him as that one street fight against the "Gray Wolf."
He copied the videos from his computer and phone onto the tablet, letting its AI system create modules and run analysis.

That process would take several hours.
"This is already the best hardware on the market," Su Muchen said. "Right now, this is the smallest it can get. Any smaller and the program wouldn't be able to run."
"With this kind of hardness and weight, there's no way it could circulate commercially," Su Jie nodded. "The hardware tech still needs to level up."
"This is where AI and humans differ. A lot of people think that if AI gains consciousness, it could threaten humanity's position. But that's not really the case," Su Muchen said. "Setting aside whether AI can even become self-aware—AI is just software. No matter how powerful a computer's software is, it can't physically improve its own hardware. But humans, on the other hand, can undergo massive transformation as their mental resilience grows."
"That makes sense." When Su Jie heard that offhand remark, it reminded him of the thoughts he had earlier that morning in the park. A new insight began to form.
In truth, computers and humans were very much alike.
The hardware, monitors, and case were like a person's physical body. The operating system and various software were the soul—that is, the heart and mind in martial arts.



"Even though our current pay isn't great, you have to admit Feng Yuxuan invested in us when we were just fresh grads starting up."
"Pay isn't the main issue. I just have a bad feeling about the Feng family. I'm afraid something might happen."
Su Jie remembered how Feng Hengyi blatantly sent someone nicknamed 'Grey Wolf' to threaten him. They were totally unscrupulous. And Feng Yuxuan himself wasn't just no gentleman—he was complete scum.
What made Su Jie even more uneasy was that this scumbag was pursuing his sister.
And not just her—he was also chasing after her best friend from the same team.
Su Jie had even overheard that himself.
Unfortunately, the evidence had been snatched away.
Su Jie knew his sister's situation well. She and her dorm mates in college were all top students—high achievers with good looks, all holding PhDs at a young age. They were true winners in life.

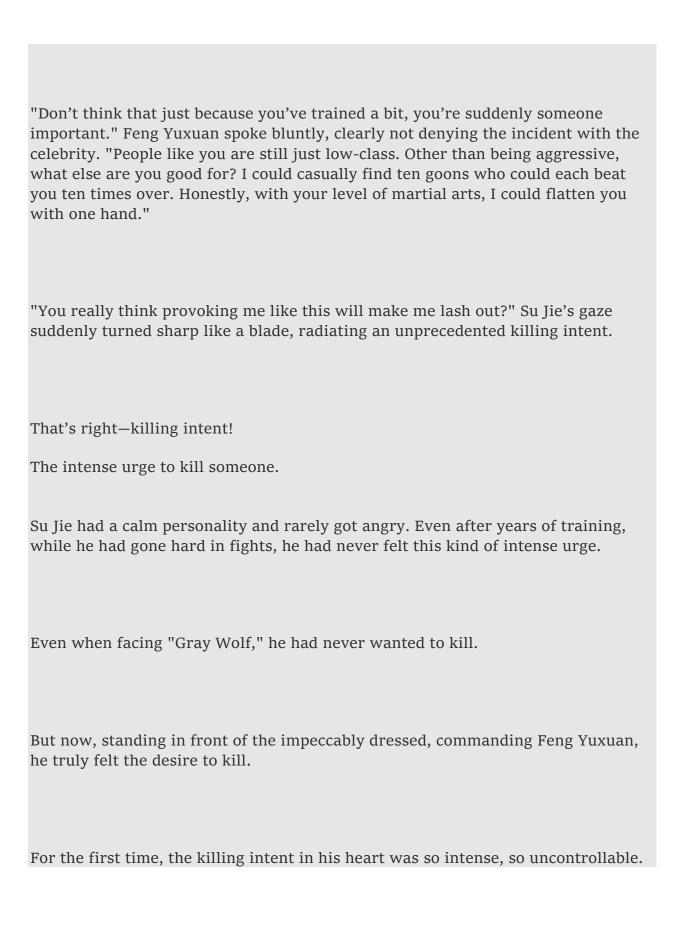


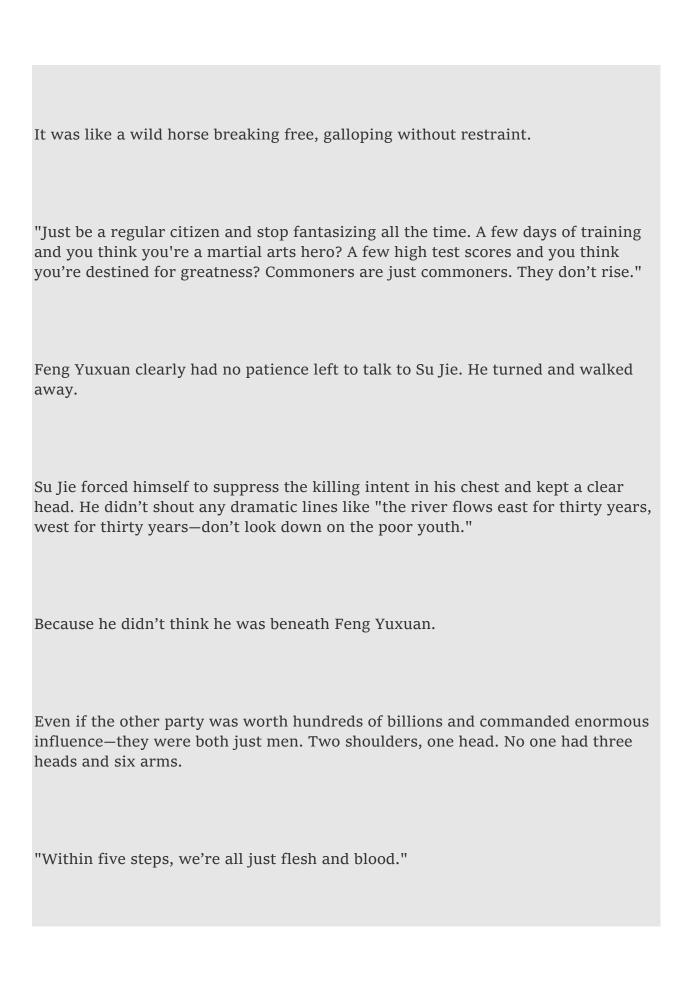




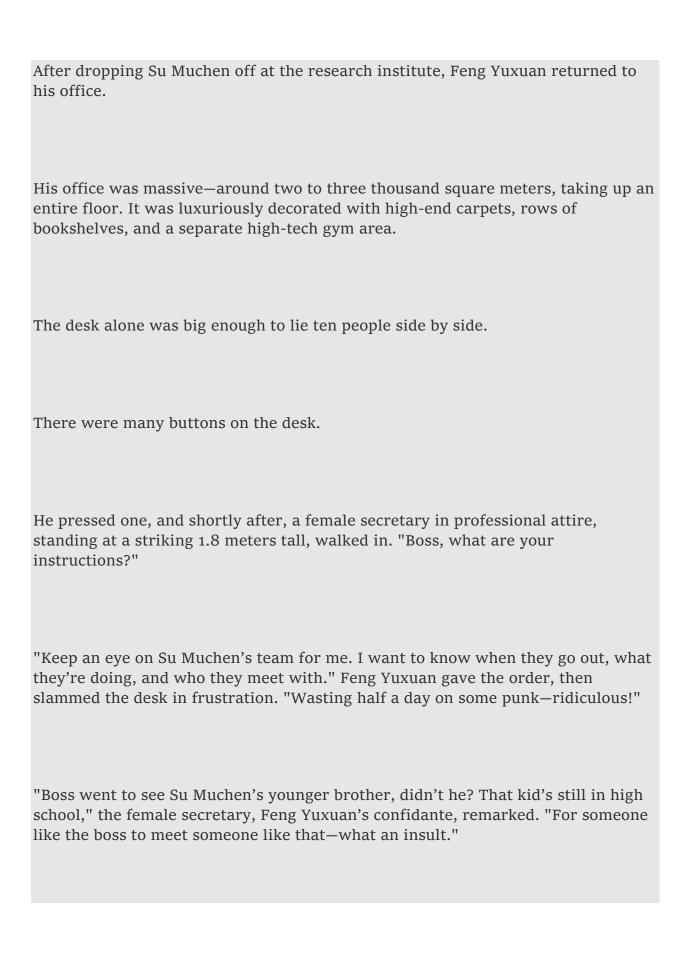
Chapter 64: Head-to-Head: Within Five Steps
His martial arts training had taught him that the best way to deal with an enemy was not through impulsiveness, but by biding his time, finding their weakness, and striking with a single, decisive blow.
But he was no longer the impulsive guy from a few months ago. That rashness of youth was gone.
"Because I met with Lu Shu's people?" Su Jie looked at that handsome face, feeling a deep sense of disgust. He wished he could just punch it flat.
"You know why I came to see you personally?" Feng Yuxuan didn't bother with small talk or sugarcoating. His tone was cold and straight to the point.
The tension between them was thick as they walked over to a narrow hallway on the side of the complex. Once they were out of sight from the car and Su Muchen, they stopped.
Back in the day, Su Jie might have felt intimidated by Feng Yuxuan. But now, he couldn't care less. His eyes were sharp, staring straight into Feng Yuxuan's.

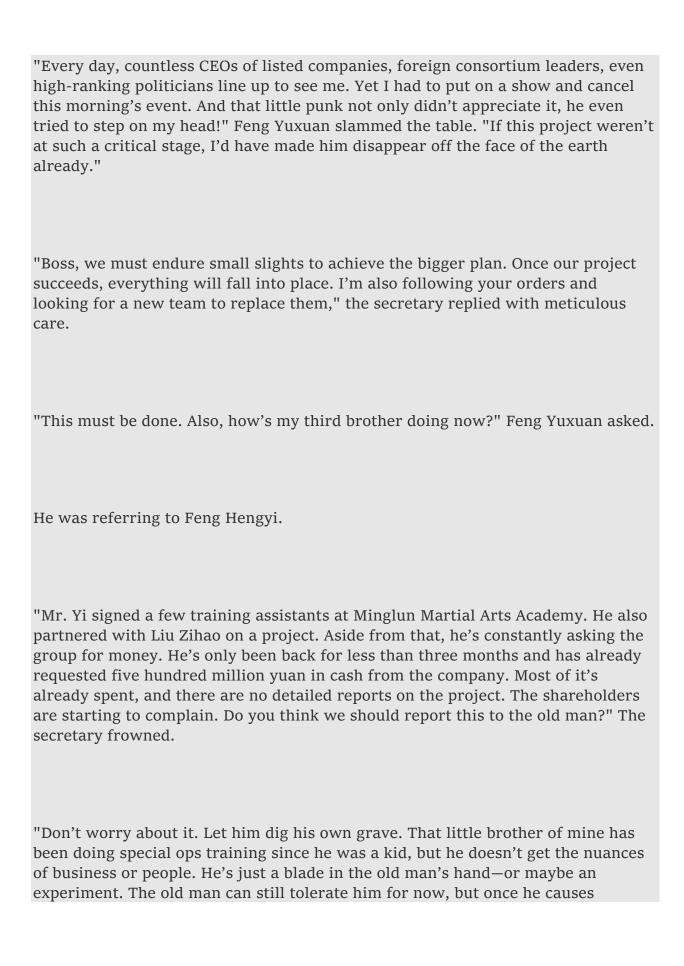
"That's right." Feng Yuxuan looked at Su Jie.
On the surface, it seemed like a heart-to-heart talk, but deep down, he felt that even saying one more word to him was a waste of time. "My patience and time are limited. Do you know how many important people I meet every day? I made time to meet you personally just to tell you—stay in line. It's good for your sister, good for you, and good for your whole family."
"Are you threatening me?" Su Jie felt a flame burning inside him, yet he remained still.
"It's not a threat, it's just a fact." Feng Yuxuan wasn't worried about Su Jie secretly recording or filming anything. He raised a finger. "Your little tricks are amateurish. If you weren't Su Muchen's younger brother, even my subordinates' subordinates wouldn't spare you a glance. Remember, this meeting with Lu Shu and those people is a one-time thing. I'm only allowing it this once. If it happens again, as per usual protocol—whatever betrays me must be destroyed. I think you know the consequences for those who've crossed me."
"Back then, you slept with a small-time celebrity. Later, she had a falling out with you and publicly accused you online. But the information was wiped clean shortly after, and not long after that, she disappeared overseas. That was your doing, wasn't it?" Su Jie picked up on what Feng Yuxuan truly meant: if Su Muchen jumped ship, he would destroy her.
Normally, with how deep his martial arts had become, Su Jie didn't get riled up by anything. But seeing Feng Yuxuan's blatant threats, his anger nearly exploded. The only reason he didn't strike was because he was holding back.

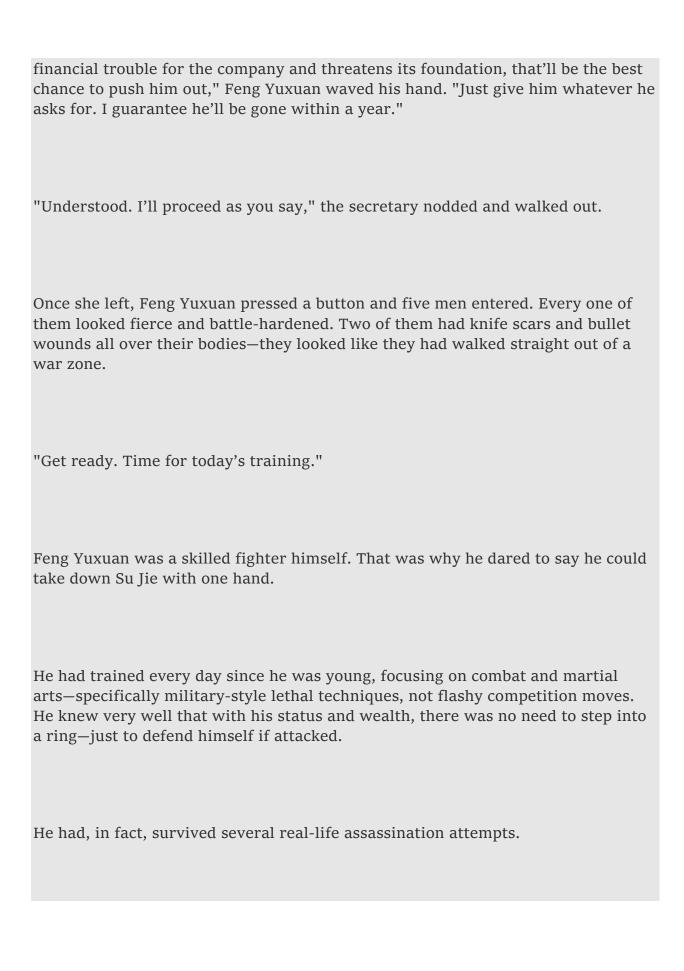




Su Jie watched Feng Yuxuan leave and muttered to himself, "Even the Bodhisattva of mercy has the wrath of a Vajra."
Feng Yuxuan returned to the car. From a distance, Su Muchen watched her brother walk out and asked, "How did the talk with my brother go?"
"Very well." At that moment, Feng Yuxuan seemed like a completely different person—gentle and charming. "Your brother's misunderstandings about me have more or less been cleared up. After he graduates, talk to him about joining Haoyu Group. I'll give him a decent position. After all, we'll be one family in the future."
"What family?" Su Muchen didn't look too happy. "I'm a researcher. Let's wait until this project is completed before we talk. Our contract is only until then, and whether we renew it or not is something I'll have to discuss with the rest of the team."
"Up to you. We don't keep people by force here. Don't worry, I'm not as petty as the rumors say." Feng Yuxuan opened his arms generously.
"Then take me to the research institute," Su Muchen told the driver.
The driver looked at Feng Yuxuan. After getting his nod, he drove off.

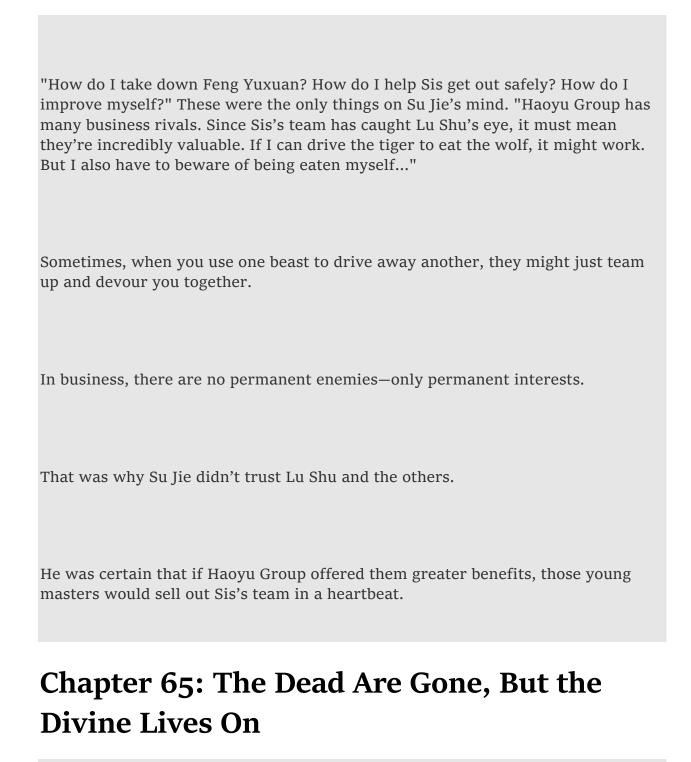




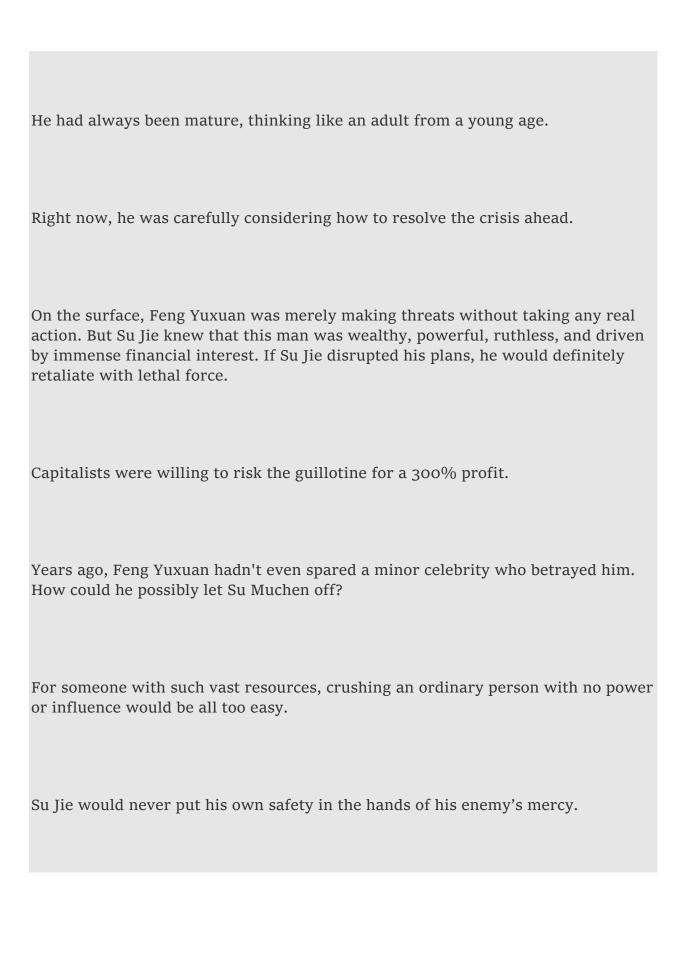


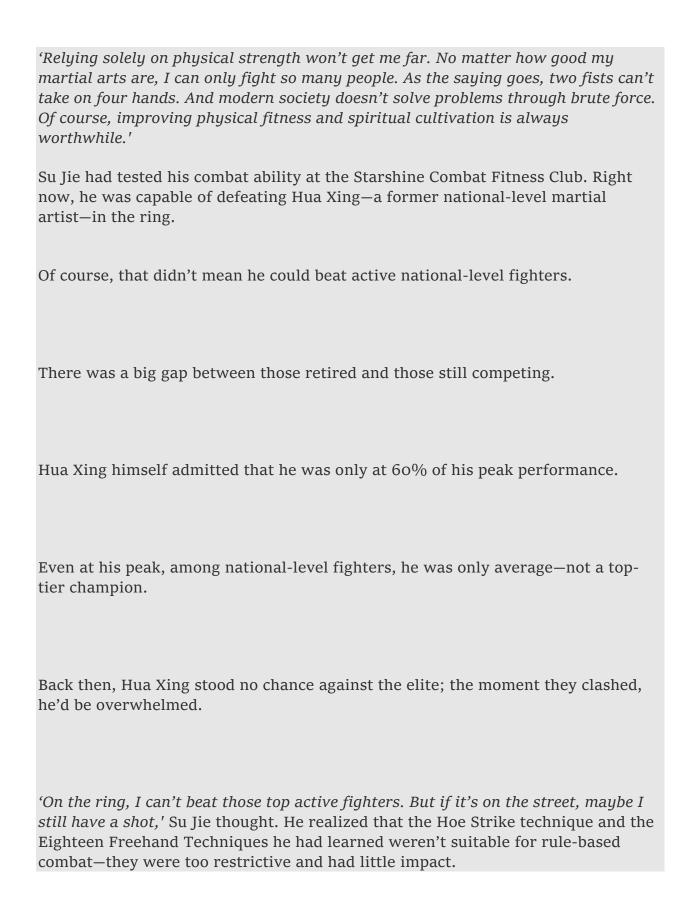
Shua!
He stripped off his clothes, revealing a physique only a seasoned fighter would have. Two female massage therapists entered and applied ointments to his body, working out the tension with massages and deep tissue work to fully relax him.
An hour later, he launched into a burst-intensive training regimen.
Squats, deadlifts, battle ropes, bench presses, target shooting—all as fierce as a storm.
That was just the warm-up.
After warming up, he sparred with the five warriors in simulated combat.
Like a perpetual motion machine, he trained nonstop for four hours before stopping.
Then came the team of health specialists who ran physical checks, took measurements, and returned to develop personalized nutrition and wellness plans.

Many outsiders saw him as a playboy, but in reality, no matter how busy he got, he carved out four hours a day for training and recovery—without fail.
Otherwise, with his indulgent lifestyle, his body would've long since broken down.
But not only had it not broken down, it had actually gotten stronger.
That was also why he looked down on Su Jie. The money he had spent on his body over the years—he couldn't even count. The annual costs alone were more than Su Jie could earn in ten lifetimes.
His investment in Liu Zihao and partnership with Minglun Martial Arts Academy was, in fact, largely driven by interest in the academy's secret health and wellness techniques.
Meanwhile, Su Jie lay sprawled on his bed back home, not training but thinking.
He had secretly recorded Feng Yuxuan's earlier comments, but when he got back, he discovered that the equipment had been interfered with somehow—nothing had been captured.
Then he suddenly understood why Feng Yuxuan had the audacity to threaten him so brazenly.



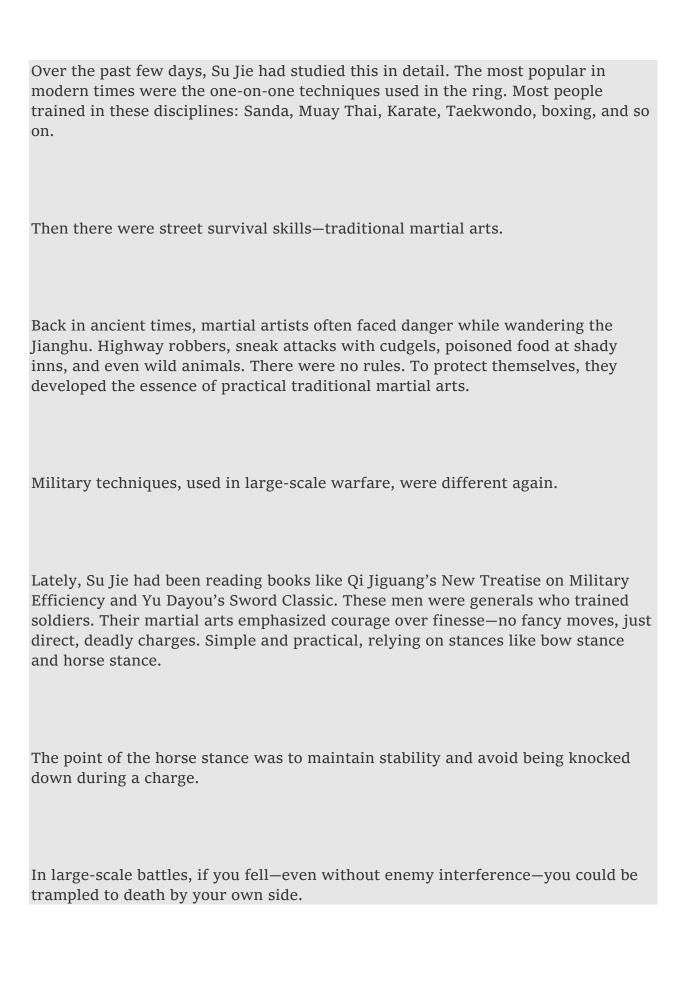
Su Jie was nothing like a high school student.



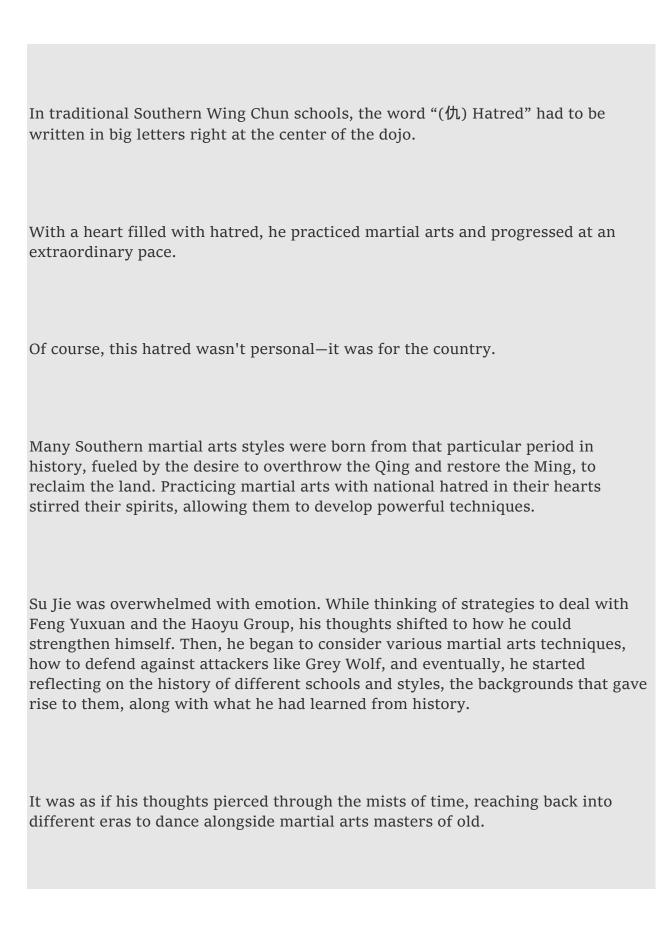


However, in no-rules street fights—especially against multiple opponents—those moves were incredibly useful.
At Starshine Combat Fitness Club, Su Jie and the others had simulated multiple-opponent combat scenarios.
Su Jie discovered he could handle two to three opponents at most. If there were more than four, he would be quickly defeated.
Of course, those opponents were all well-trained fighters, practically professionals—not ordinary people.
The gap between an average person and a seasoned martial artist was massive.
If it were regular folks, Su Jie had no idea how many he could take on.
He also realized that in multi-person brawls or one-vs-many fights, most ring techniques became useless—and trying to use them would just get you hit.

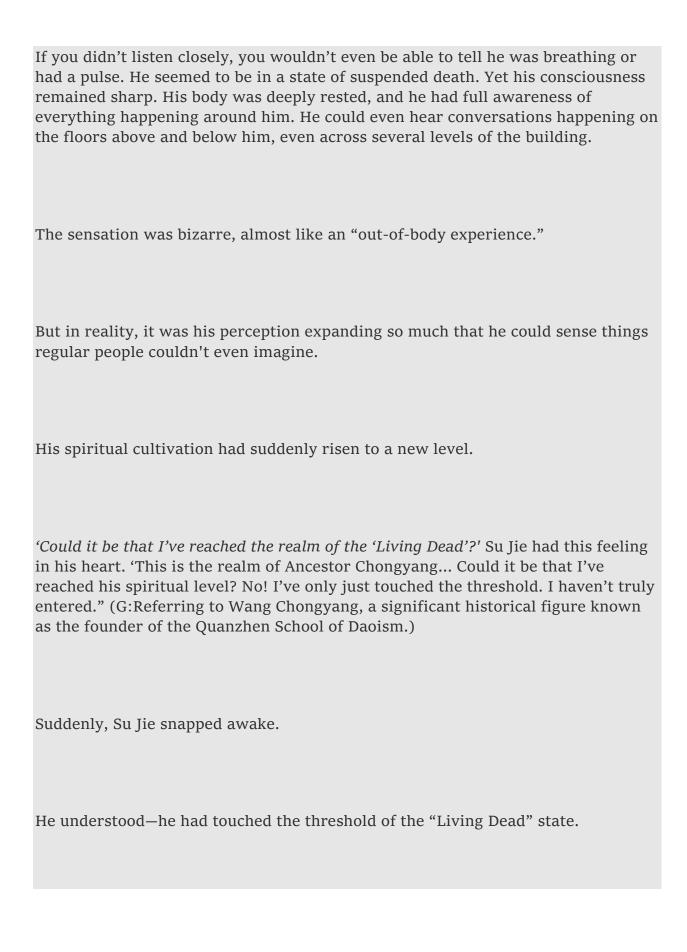
Take grappling arts, for example: even if you locked down one opponent, the others would start kicking you like crazy. You'd just become a punching bag on the ground.
In those chaotic fights, even Sanda's leg techniques were ineffective. Boxing turned out to be way more practical.
Through repeated experimentation and testing during simulated group battles, Su Jie found that the most effective move was the Heart Intent Fist. No wonder it was called the "King of Ten Thousand Fists" in ancient martial circles.
Clearly, the experience passed down from generations of ancient martial artists who fought bandits and rebel armies was incredibly valuable.
'I can handle one Gray Wolf, but if there are two, the risk goes up a lot. Three, and I'm definitely dead. And Feng Yuxuan seems to have a whole crew of these guys. Why would a tech company hire so many foreign mercenaries?'
Lying in bed, Su Jie was thinking about how to defend himself if he got ambushed again.
"Real combat martial arts can be divided into ring fighting techniques, street survival skills, and large-scale military combat techniques."

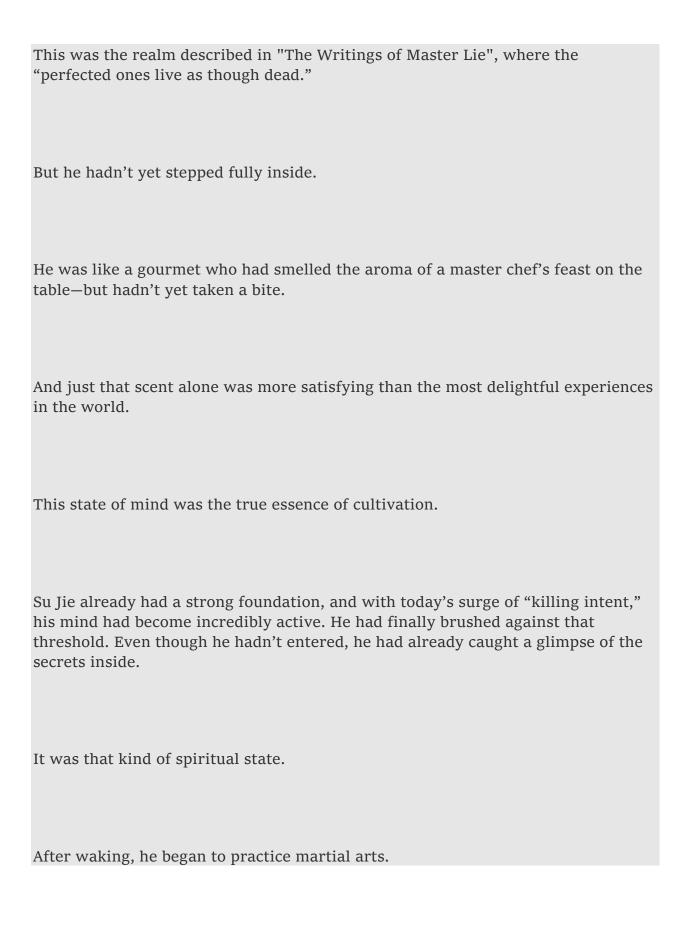


Ring fighting and street survival skills focused on agility and evasion, while military combat prioritized staying grounded.
Martial theories, the history of martial arts, real combat principles, health-focused qigong, traditional Chinese medicine—everything Su Jie had studied these past few months—were fermenting and simmering in his mind.
One scene after another of combat scenarios flashed through his thoughts like lightning.
For the first time, he felt a real sense of danger—and even a desire to kill.
That thought of killing pushed him to his limits, drawing out all of his potential. His mind became more agile than ever, his cerebral cortex extremely stimulated.
"This feeling is strange When hatred toward someone reaches the extreme, and you want to kill them, your whole being gets fired up. Hatred really can accelerate growth—because emotions dominate the cerebral cortex. No wonder Southernstyle Wing Chun centers around the concept of 'vengeance.'"
Su Jie quietly felt his heart and mind—he had made huge progress.



Every culture and every martial art has its own unique historical background.
Once you're familiar with their history, the social conflicts and transformations they faced, it's not hard to understand their techniques, training methods, and core philosophies.
That's what it means to seek the origin of martial arts with your heart.
To use intention to part the mists of history—
Only then can you grasp the truest form of martial arts.
With the dedication of an archaeologist or historian, you can restore martial arts and history to their original form, unearthing the truth buried beneath the dust of time.
Boom!
After Su Jie's mind reached this heightened state of activity, he suddenly fell silent—and actually drifted off to sleep just like that.





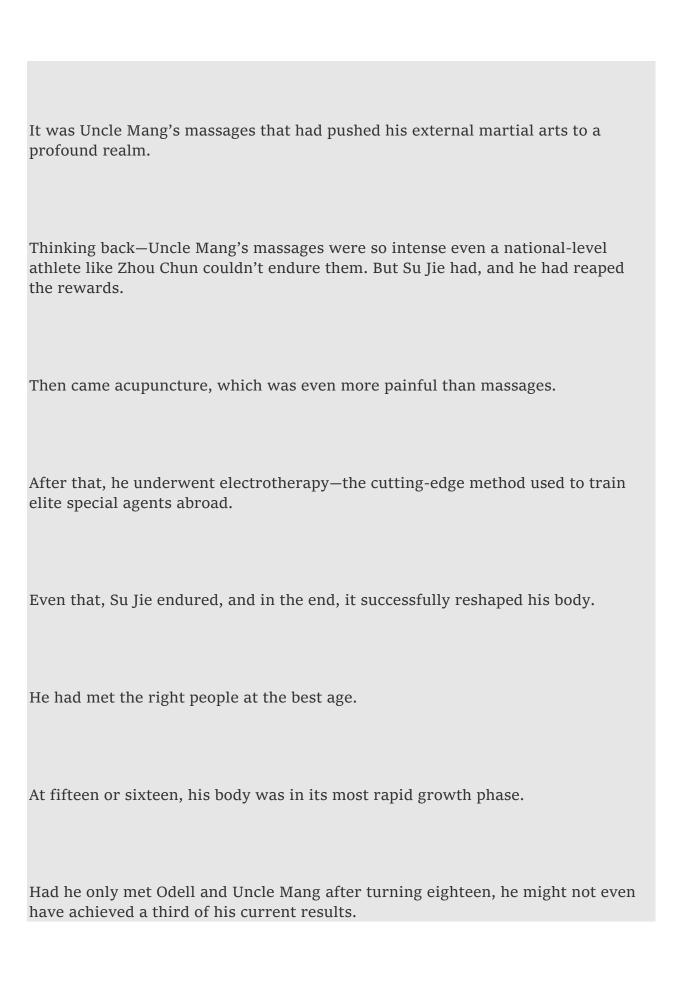
Right there in his cramped bedroom.
Originally, the room was so small it could barely fit a person—it was impossible to train in, with no space to stretch out. But now, as he began practicing, everything flowed naturally. The room felt vast, as if it were as wide as the massive training field at Minglun Martial Arts Academy. Every movement could be executed freely.
He twisted and turned, moved swiftly and smoothly, without any hindrance at all.
It was as if the limitations of space no longer existed for him.
Even the tiniest corner could now be used to practice martial arts without compromising the essence of the movements—everything flowed like a mountain spring or drifting clouds.
'This is the state where a dragon can rest calmly even in a cave meant for eels and serpents. My martial arts have improved again,' Su Jie thought to himself with growing clarity.
Just like drinking water—only you can know whether it's hot or cold.

Chapter 66: Flawless and Smooth: The Villain Returns	
Although he hadn't fully reached the realm of the "perfected ones who live as though dead," he still did his best to embody the idea of "moving like a machine.	>>
Su Jie made a daily plan for studying and training, then followed it step by step.	
"I'll head over to Starshine Combat Fitness Club later today to test myself. Then I'll talk to Lu Shu and the others to explain the whole situation. Those rich boys might be useful too. Of course, they're all slick as foxes—definitely not easy to do with. I'll need to come up with a plan"	eal
Martial improvement certainly boosts combat strength, but exactly how much? That was still uncharted territory.	
His martial arts had indeed improved, but how much it would affect his actual combat ability was still unknown. Su Jie couldn't wait to test it out.	

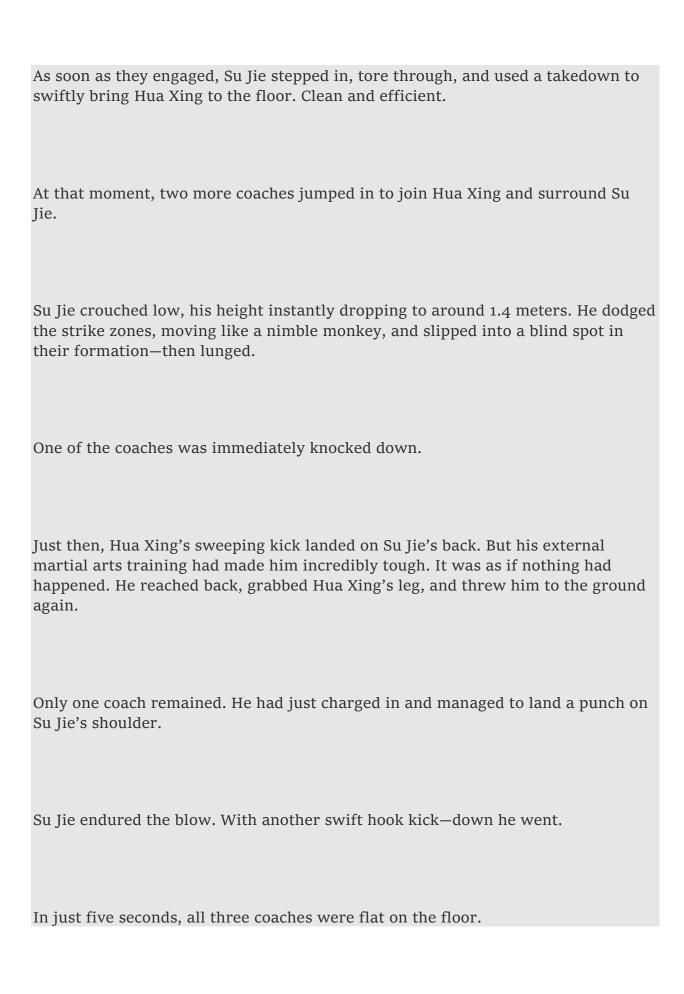
"Lie down!"

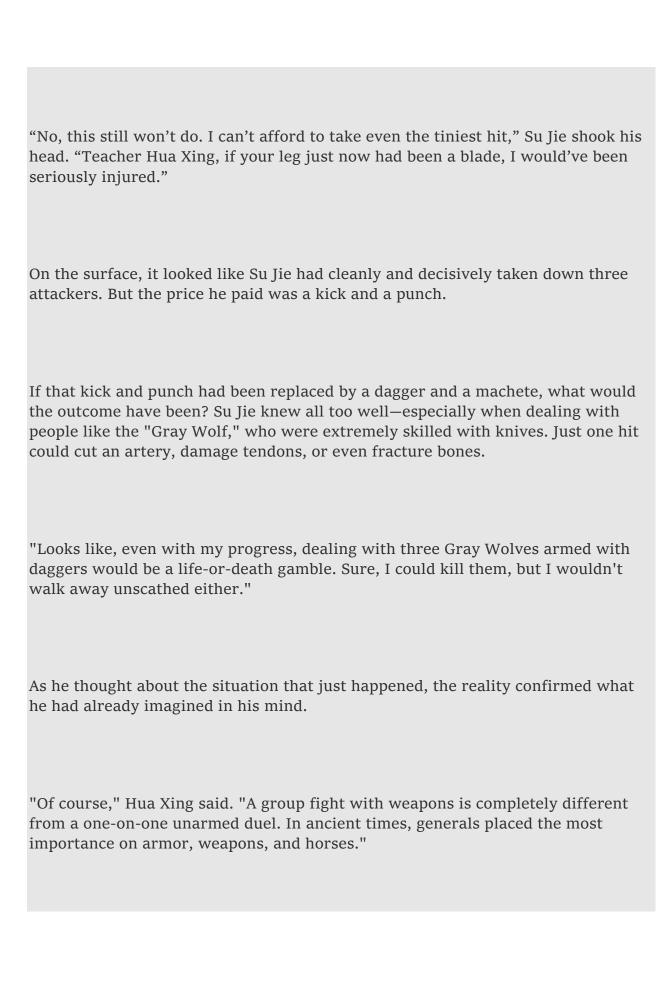
Su Jie gave a swift hook with his foot, sharp as a sickle cutting wheat, and his opponent immediately lost balance and crashed to the ground.
Inside the ring at the Starshine Combat Fitness Club, his opponent was an amateur martial arts enthusiast. However, he had been training for ten years and was also a small business owner—wealthy and with plenty of free time.
His technique and physical ability were excellent, able to go toe-to-toe with city-level athletes. But in front of Su Jie, one shout was all it took for him to fall—he couldn't even escape.
"Coach Su, your martial arts are getting more and more incredible," the small business owner said admiringly as he got up.
"Let me try!"
Another challenger stepped forward—a tall, burly office worker who weighed over 200 pounds. But even he was sent crashing to the floor in just three seconds with a single leg sweep.
No matter their size or weight, everyone looked like scarecrows in front of Su Jie. If he said they'd fall, they'd fall. If he said lie down, they'd lie down.

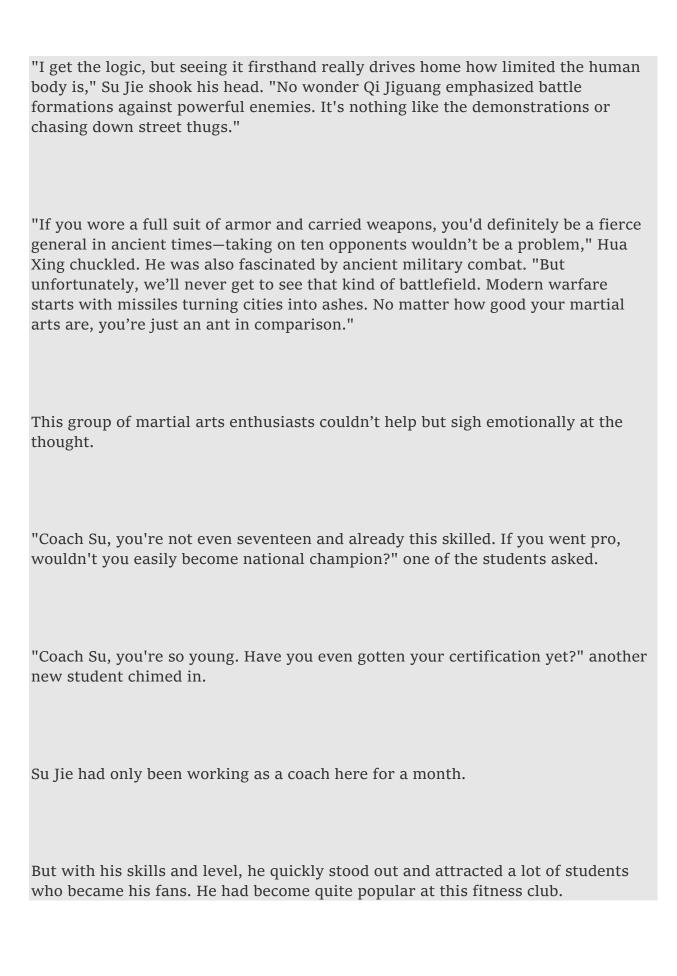
Su Jie had been eager to test the martial arts realm he had just grasped, so he came to the Starshine Combat Fitness Club. As expected, his technique had become much smoother. It was as if he could sense the flow of air and the subtle shifts in movement. Just a light nudge, and his opponents spun like tops. This was the essence of Taiji. Japan had a similar martial art called Aikido. "This all comes from my physical condition. Technique is secondary," Su Jie knew well in his heart. He now weighed 85 kilograms, standing tall at 1.85 meters. With this weight, he could already compete in the super middleweight division of boxing. A few more kilos, and he'd qualify for the heavyweight stage. But just by looking at him, he seemed quite lean—like he weighed less than 70 kilograms. That was because his body was extremely solid, with a thick and sturdy frame like it was forged from refined steel. Odell's training had given him the best physical foundation. But if that was all there was, his fitness level would still be no different from regular provincial or city-level athletes. He wouldn't have been able to break through to the level he was at now.

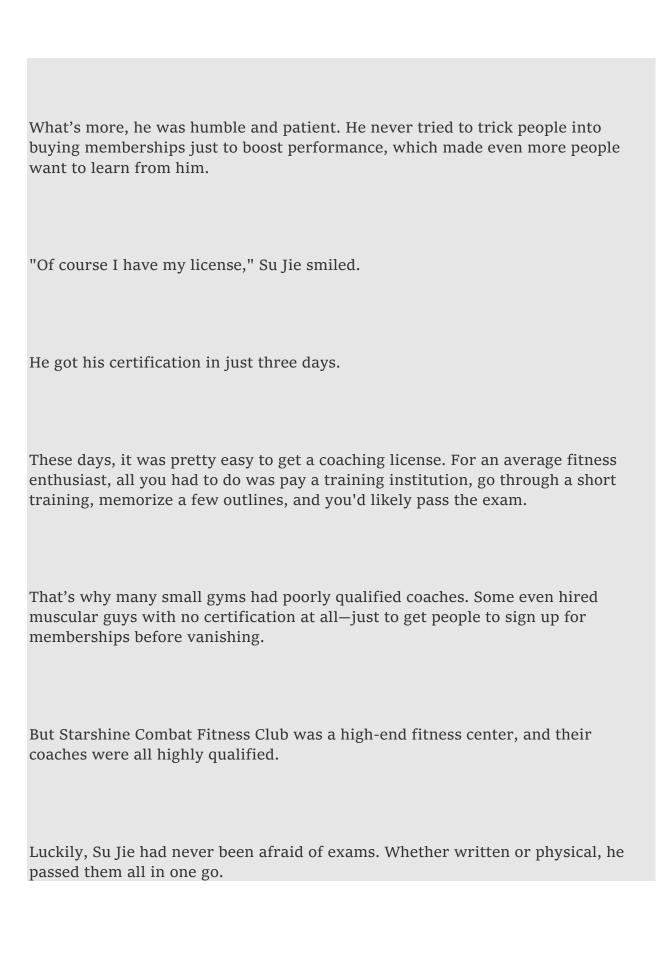


Not just him—even an ordinary child with proper nutrition could grow a full centimeter in just one or two weeks during that age range.
One of Su Jie's classmates had been only 1.65 meters tall in his first year of high school, but by the end of the semester, he had shot up to 1.8 meters.
Every time Su Jie thought of this, he felt incredibly lucky for his decision to attend the summer martial arts training camp at the Minglun Martial Arts Academy. At the same time, he felt a lingering fear—what would his life be like now if he hadn' made that decision?
Fate was so strange and unpredictable that Su Jie couldn't help but feel deeply emotional.
And it constantly reminded him—he must not waste these golden years. He had to seize every opportunity.
"Su Jie, your martial arts have improved again."
Hua Xing stepped in and sparred briefly with Su Jie.









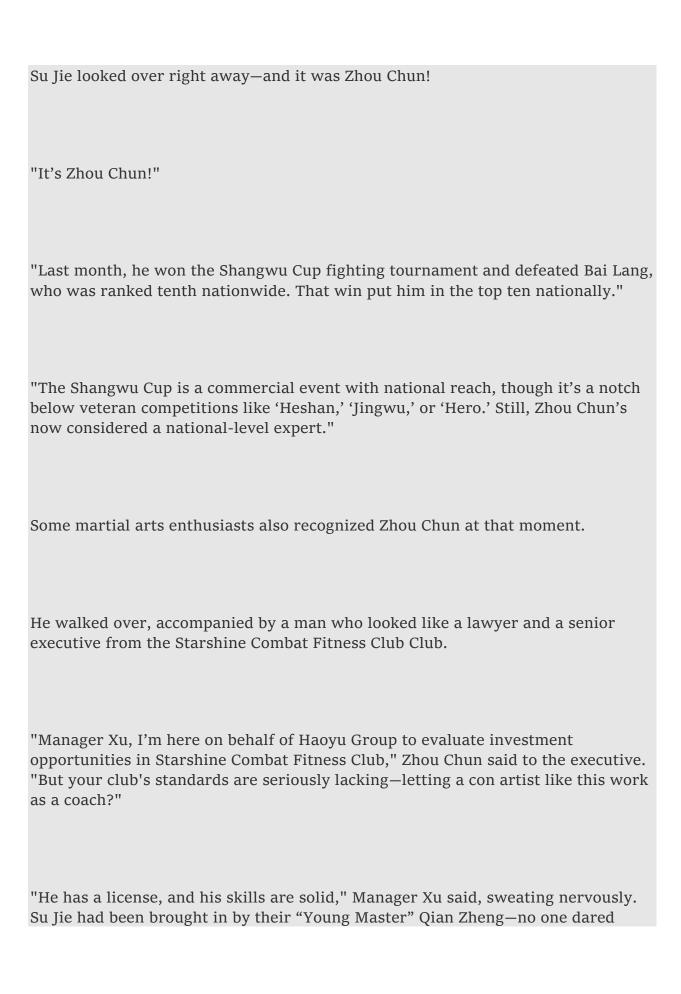
"Su Jie, you should really enter a competition and win a championship. When you come back, your value as a coach would skyrocket," Hua Xing chatted with him during a break. "Right now, you're making just 100,000 a month. I thought that was high, but with your skills, it's actually low. Let's not even talk about domestic standards—top-tier coaches abroad with a bit of fame can charge over \$10,000 per private session. There was even a rumor that before the biggest crossover fight of boxing champion Pasci's career, he hired Odell—the legendary 'Godmaker'—as his coach. The deal wasn't even a set salary, but a third of the champion's prize money! That match pulled in \$200 million, with over a billion in total revenue. The organizer made a fortune, and Odell walked away with \$60 million."

Su Jie knew about that crossover fight—he'd seen the news. It was a massive matchup between the king of MMA and a boxing legend, hyped up by every major media outlet.

But there was almost no coverage of the boxing champion's coach. That information was buried, shared only among a tiny circle within the industry. That's why Odell wasn't well-known—just bits and pieces could be found online.

In the fitness and fighting world, a coach's actual skills came second to having won titles and built a name for themselves.

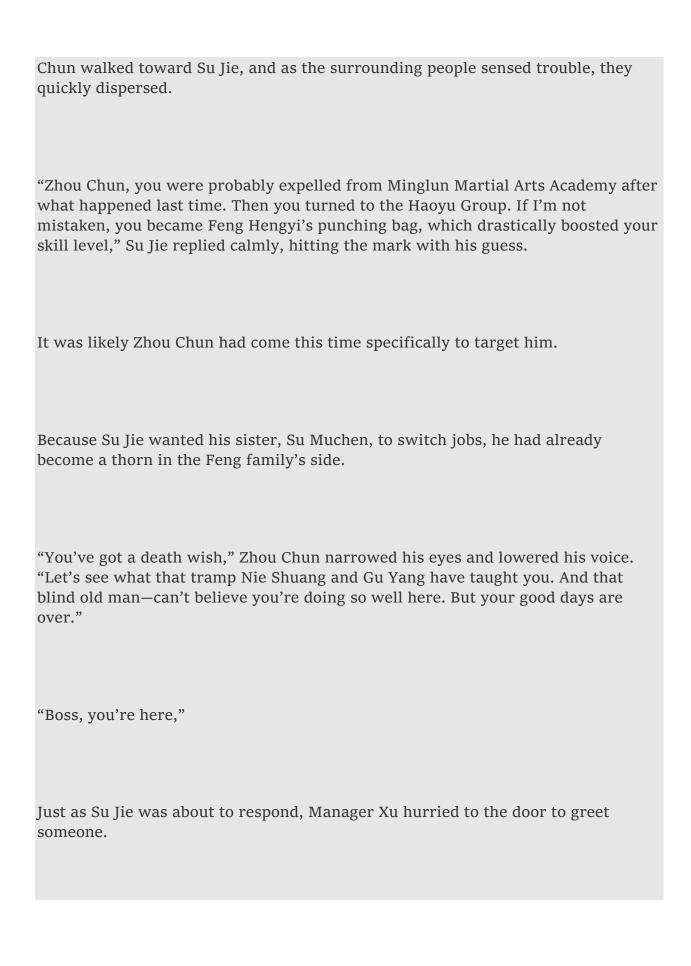
"Don't be fooled by him. This guy only did a two-month crash course at Minglun Martial Arts Academy, and now he dares pose as a master and act like a coach? Ridiculous." A voice suddenly cut in.



object. On top of that, Su Jie was well-liked and widely acknowledged as highly capable.
Plus, Su Jie's presence attracted students from other clubs who came just to check him out.
They weren't necessarily here to train—just curious. After all, a high school student defeating professional coaches one after another was already headlineworthy. Everyone came to witness the hype, which boosted business significantly.
At first, Manager Xu thought Qian Zheng was just fooling around, but it turned out Su Jie had actually helped bring in more revenue.
"I was there in July when he was training at Minglun Martial Arts Academy. This whole investment might be off the table now," Zhou Chun said to Manager Xu. "But if you insist he's not a fraud, I'll prove it to you later. I hear Mr. Qian is coming soon. For his sake, I'll wait until he arrives and expose this fraud in person."

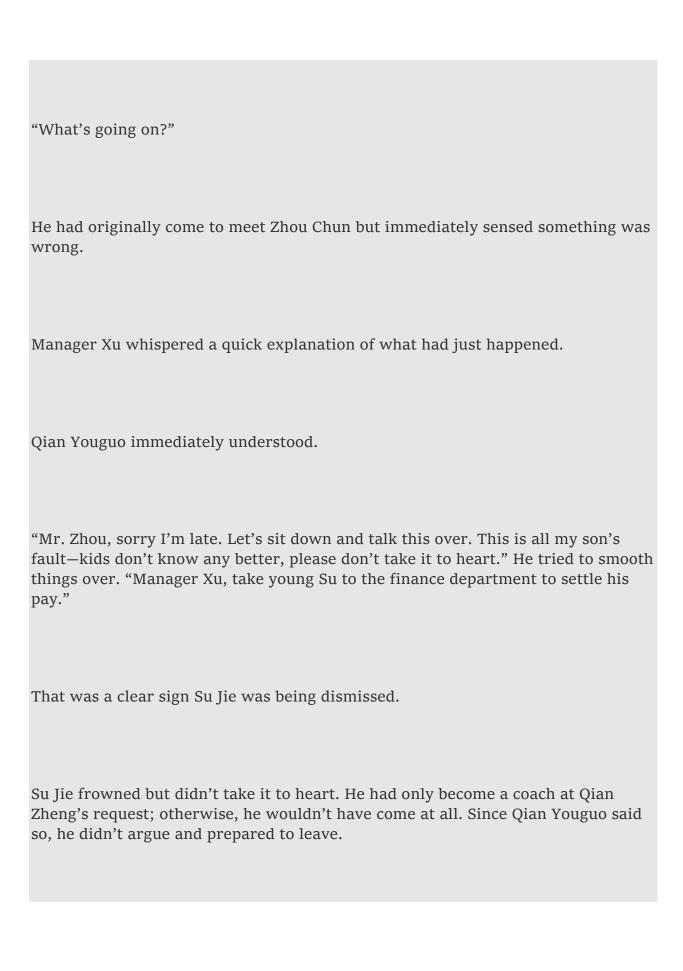
Chapter 67: A Million-Yuan Bet

"You look pretty comfortable now, kid. Earning a high salary and training in such a nice facility. But let's see how long you can keep up the scam. Hand over the money you conned and turn yourself in to the police. Admit you're a fraud." Zhou



The newcomer was flanked by assistants and secretaries. He wore gold-rimmed glasses and, though dressed in a suit, gave off a scholarly air.
This was Qian Youguo, the boss of Starshine Combat Fitness Club and Qian Zheng' father. He single-handedly founded Starshine Combat Fitness Club and was quite wealthy. However, compared to the giant that was Haoyu Group, he still fell short
He had taken this visit very seriously upon learning that Haoyu had sent someone to evaluate investment opportunities, choosing to show up in person.
Haoyu's moves were always shrewd, entering markets ahead of the curve.
Qian Youguo had been paying close attention to Haoyu. When the company partnered with Minglun Martial Arts Academy, he knew they were stepping into the fitness and combat sports market.
With such a giant entering the field, the entire industry was about to be reshuffled. Clubs that weren't vigilant would likely get wiped out in the upcoming quake.
Qian Youguo wanted to seize this opportunity. If lucky, it could be his ticket to skyrocketing success.
Haoyu Group had many video platforms, entertainment resources, a film company and self-media channels—not to mention a massive advertising force. If they made a move, they could go nationwide in an instant.

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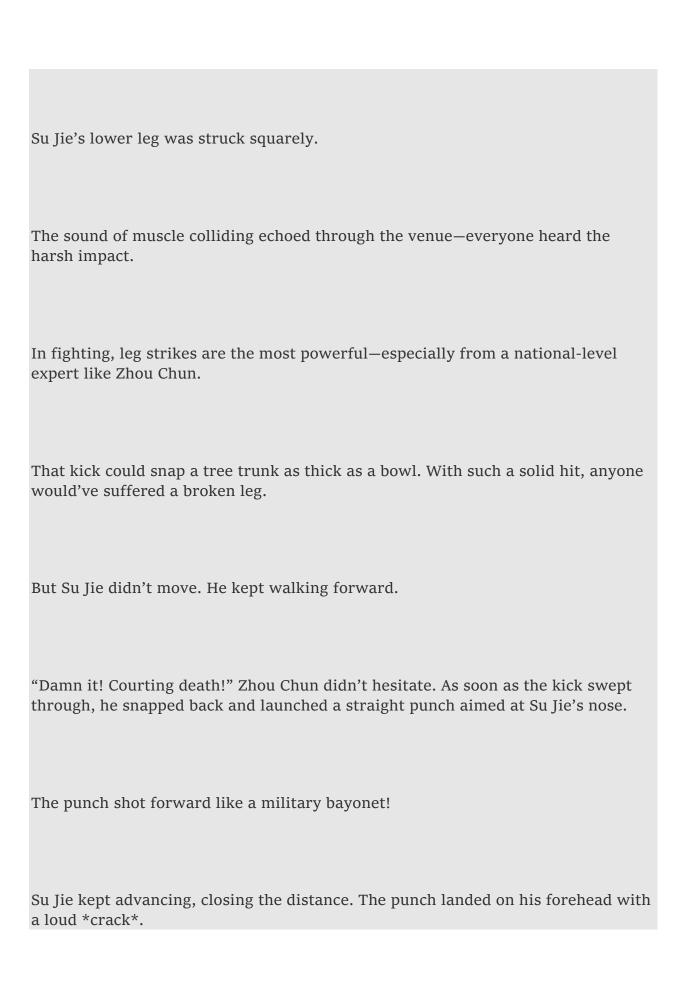
"Hold on, you little con artist! Think you can just walk away? Planning to scam people somewhere else?" Zhou Chun sneered. "Mr. Qian, I can't let this slide. This punk needs a lesson. Scamming people at such a young age—clearly his parents failed at raising him. Let me do it for them."
"Zhou Chun, how do you plan on educating me? A little match between us?" Su Jie stopped in his tracks when he heard Zhou Chun bring up his parents. "How about we make a bet? We each put up 300,000 yuan. We'll fight right here. Whoever loses has to hand over the prize money and admit in front of everyone that they're a fraud. Do you dare?"
"You've got guts, kid." Zhou Chun's grin turned vicious. "300,000? That's too little—make it a million!"
"I don't have that much," Su Jie raised an eyebrow. He only had 200,000 yuan on him. With Starshine Combat Fitness Club's payout, he'd have 300,000 at most.
Originally, he had saved up 200,000 from working at Minglun Martial Arts Academy. His sister Su Muchen had given him another 100,000, and Starshine Combat Fitness Club's monthly salary should've brought him to 400,000. But over the past few months, he'd spent 100,000 on various nutritional supplements and premium secret formula herbal balms from the academy's website.
"I'll lend it to you." At that moment, Hua Xing stepped forward.

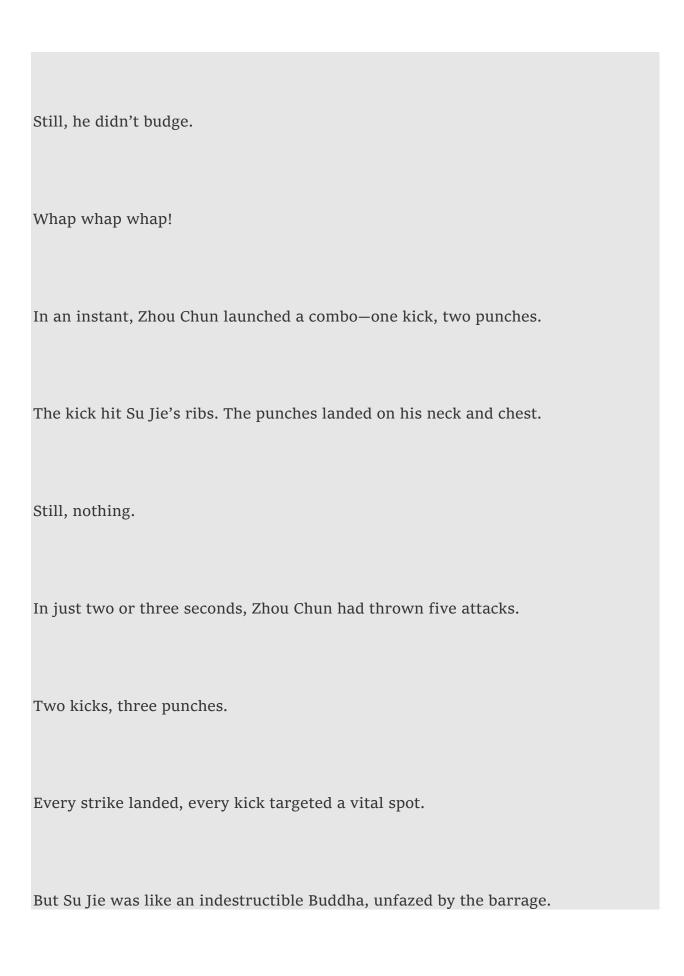


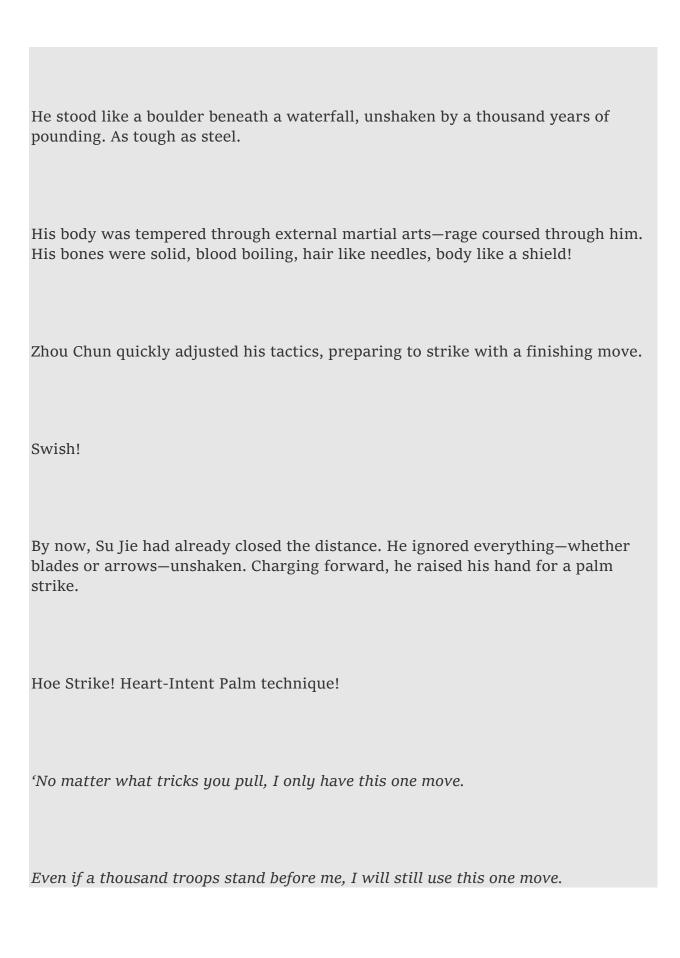
Qian Youguo nodded and signaled to Manager Xu.
Manager Xu immediately began organizing things and returned shortly with a contract for both parties to sign.
As Zhou Chun signed it, a ruthless glint flashed in his eyes like a snake ready to strike.
'This guy's born vicious. He's definitely planning to go all out on me,' Su Jie instantly realized.
"Please transfer the deposit to the designated account," Manager Xu said.
Su Jie and Zhou Chun immediately started the transfer.
Hua Xing helped Su Jie borrow seven hundred thousand.
The match instantly drew a crowd.

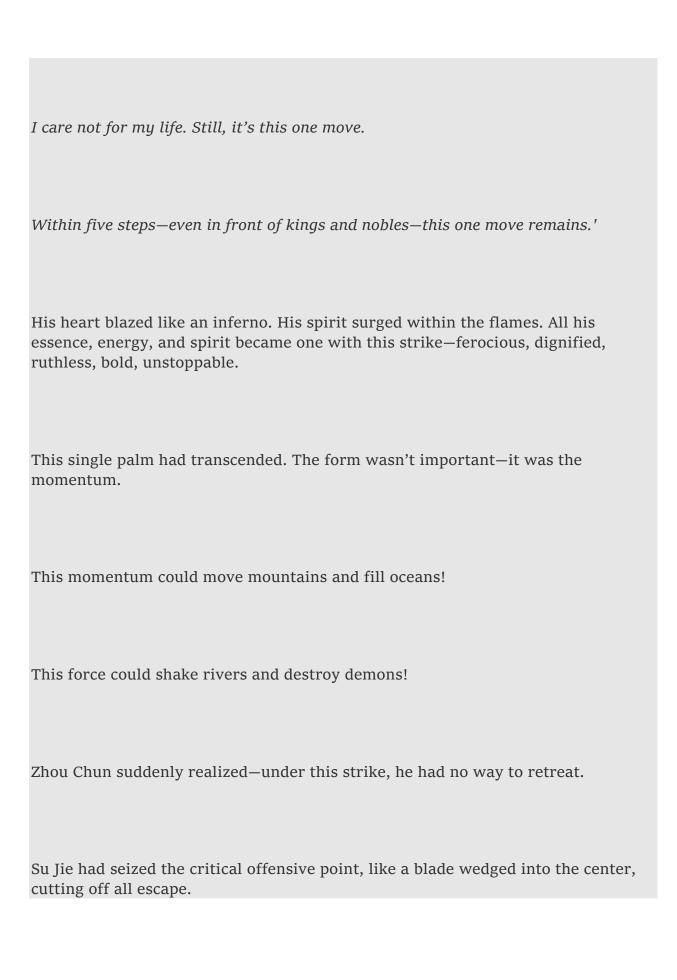
The place was in an uproar. Fighters were always eager for action, and with a good show like this, how could they not join in? Some even started messaging their friends.
At that moment, Manager Xu quickly organized staff to isolate the area and strictly prohibited any photo or video recordings from being uploaded online. They even blocked the signal in the venue—it was clear they had a lot of experience organizing such events.
"The match rules are—" Manager Xu had just begun to announce when Zhou Chun interrupted, "No rules. No referee. It ends when one party is knocked down, loses the ability to fight, and begs for mercy."
"Boss, that's against the rules," Manager Xu hesitated.
"Do as he says," Qian Youguo ordered. "Just assign more security. No filming, and don't let this spread online."
"You little con artist, dare to go through with this?" Zhou Chun casually shook out his limbs, took off his shirt, and began warming up. A vicious aura rushed forth—he was planning to go all out and seriously injure Su Jie.
Su Jie didn't warm up. He simply stepped onto the platform. Neither of them wore any protective gear or gloves.

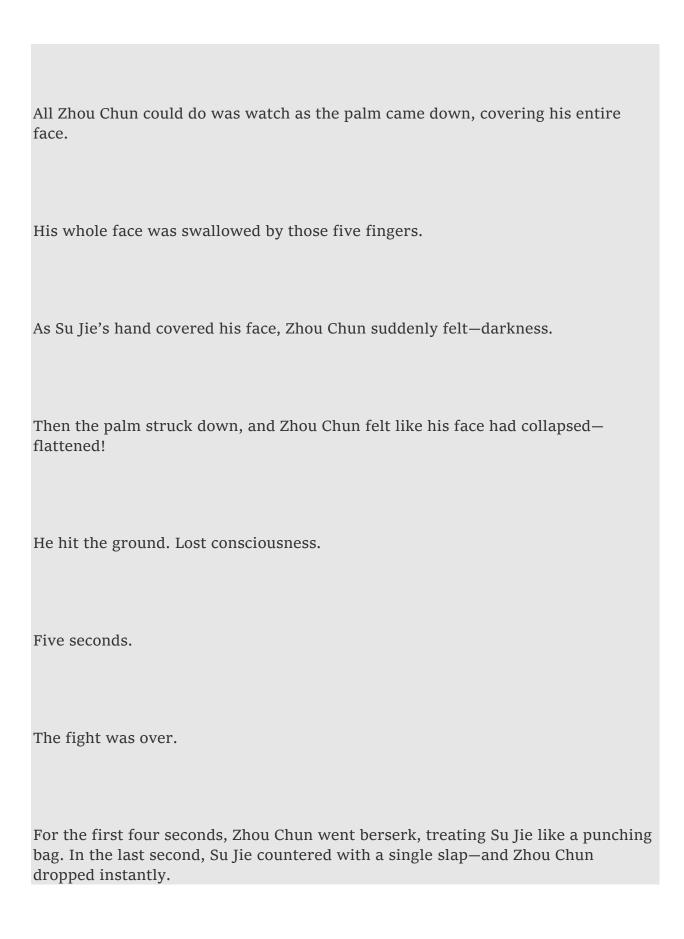












"He'll wake up soon. I held back and didn't cripple him," Su Jie said to the stunned Manager Xu. "Transfer eight hundred thousand to my card. Give the rest to Teacher Hua Xing."

With that, he stepped down from the platform, grabbed his backpack, and walked straight out of Starshine Club.

Even when Qian Youguo called out repeatedly behind him, Su Jie didn't look back.

Chapter 68: High-Speed Drift

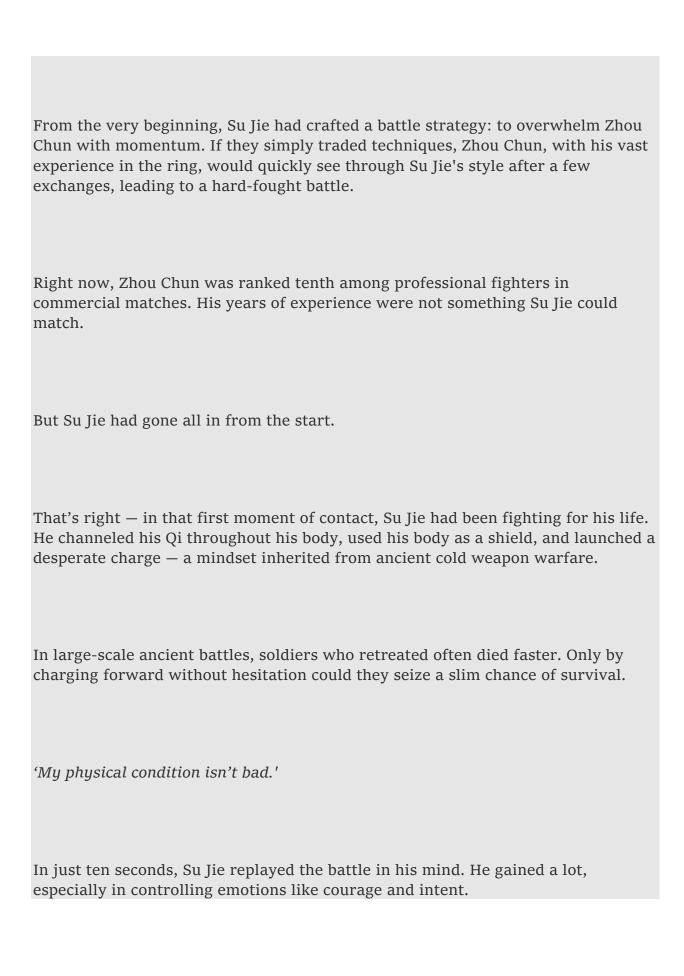
A text message showed that 800,000 yuan had been deposited into his account.

This was all the money Su Jie had.

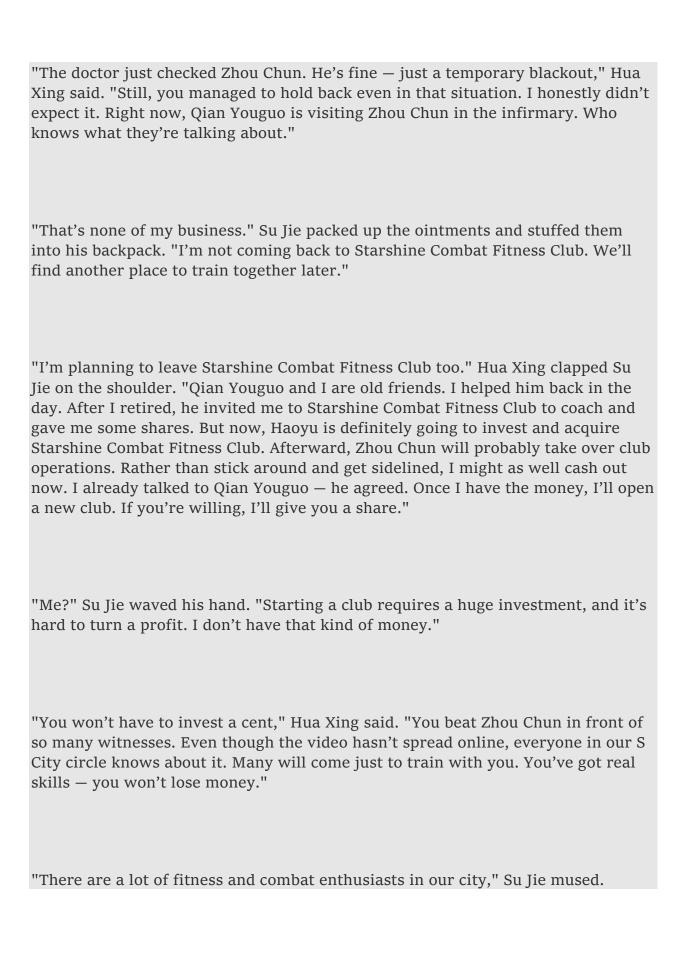
Ding-dong!

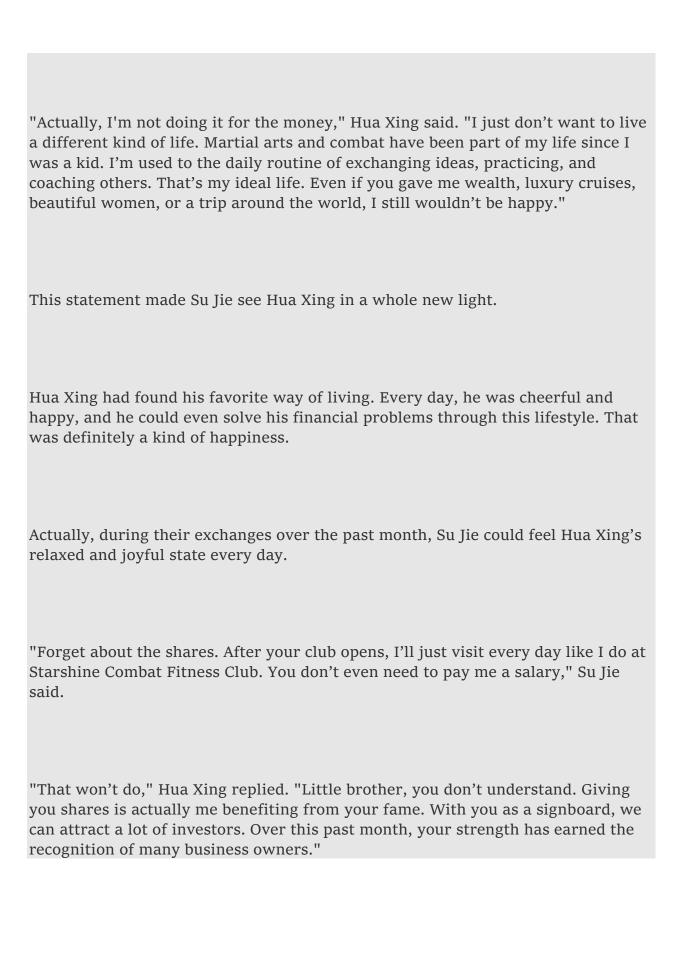
'At least Starshine Combat Fitness Club stuck to the contract and transferred the prize money to me,' Su Jie thought. Even though he earned 500,000 from this match, he didn't feel happy at all.

He couldn't stay at Starshine Combat Fitness Club anymore. It wasn't about the 100,000 yuan monthly salary for being a coach. It was about the friendships he built through daily sparring sessions. The atmosphere had been great, and he was reluctant to leave. Martial arts had never been a solitary pursuit. Hiding away in the mountains practicing forms, or punching a sandbag at home, would never lead to real progress. Only by treating martial arts like a science gathering people to exchange and refine techniques — could one achieve true improvement. 'Forget it, Club is Club, friends are friends. We can always find another place to gather,' Su Jie thought as he stepped out of Starshine Combat Fitness Club. The cold wind blew past, pulling him out of the intense state he'd been in. Earlier, during the fight with Zhou Chun, he had unleashed all his martial arts skills. Taking hits head-on and counterattacking without flinching looked simple on the surface, but in reality, it required courage, physical fitness, combat experience, and a perfect grasp of timing and angles — none of which could be missing. Zhou Chun wasn't weak — quite the opposite. His strength was tremendous. Although he wasn't at Feng Hengyi's level, he wasn't someone Su Jie could easily defeat.

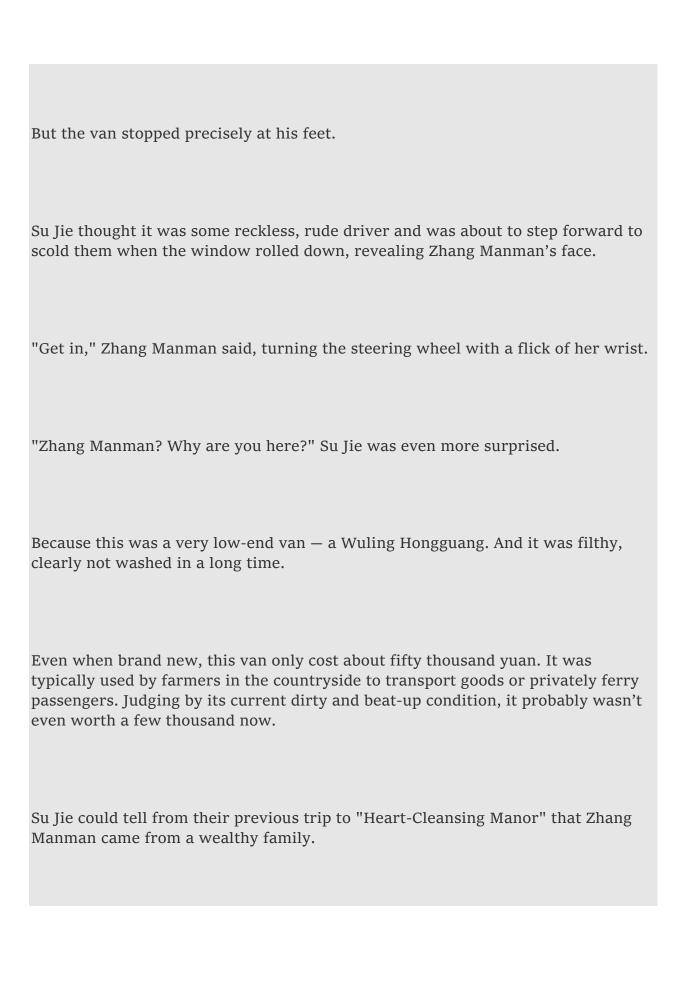


During the fight, he hadn't felt any pain. But now, as his adrenaline wore off, the spots where Zhou Chun had struck began to ache slightly, showing signs of swelling and bruising.
He pulled out a bottle of liniment and various medicinal powders from his backpack, mixed them together, and rubbed the mixture onto the injured areas. Coordinating his breathing techniques from his body strengthening training, he massaged the bruises. In no time, the swelling and bruising disappeared, and the pain was gone.
This was a remedy from the Minglun Martial Arts Academy — extremely effective at treating combat injuries. It wasn't any worse than treatment from professional doctors, and in some cases, it was even better.
The fact that he recovered so quickly also showed just how astonishing his muscle and soft tissue recovery abilities were.
"Su Jie, why did you leave?"
As Su Jie finished his treatment while sitting on a flight of stairs, Hua Xing caught up to him and plopped down beside him.

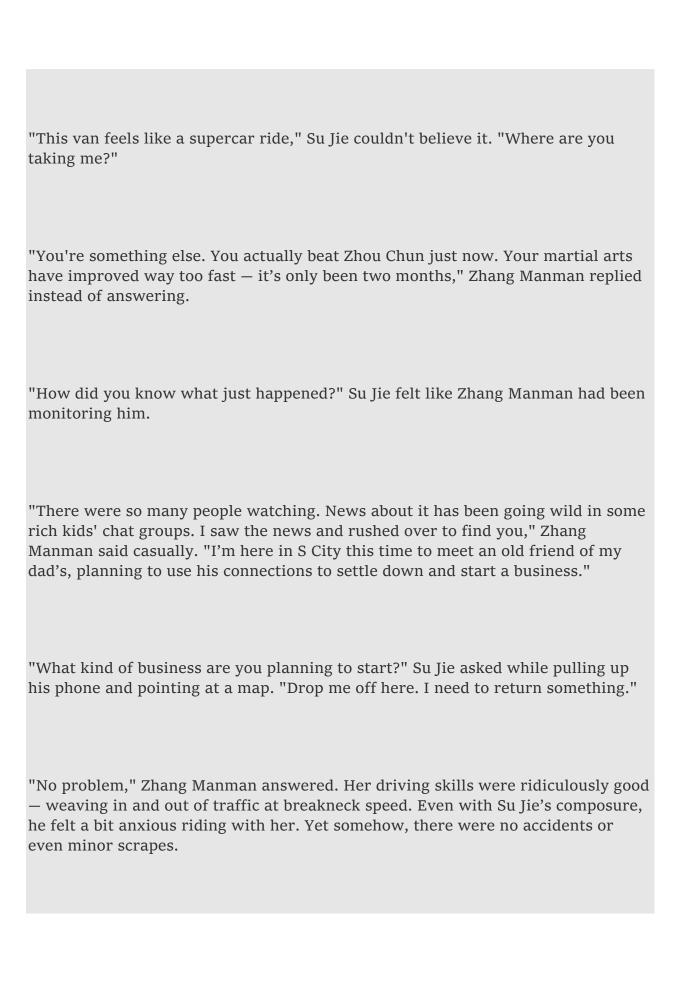




"Alright then. Just let me know when everything's ready," Su Jie thought for a moment and nodded. "I have something to take care of now."
He had already made a plan for himself — he was going to return the dark web login device and the card to Lu Shu and the others.
"Alright, I'll get things ready and contact you again," Hua Xing stood up. "But you still need to be careful of Zhou Chun. He's definitely not going to let this go. That guy is crafty, has decent skills, but his character is terrible. He was originally a disciple of Liu Guanglie from Minglun Martial Arts Academy. With Liu Guanglie's connections, he achieved decent results in various commercial competitions. But instead of being grateful, he secretly opened a fighting gym to poach students from the academy. He also has a gambling problem, and Liu Guanglie had to clean up his messes many times. People in the martial arts circle tend to stay away from him. I don't know why Haoyu Group would place so much trust in someone like him."
"Maybe Haoyu itself isn't exactly clean and needs someone to handle the dirty work," Su Jie said as he bid farewell to Hua Xing and headed towards the downtown villa area by subway.
Whoosh!
A van almost drifted to a stop right in front of Su Jie, startling him so much that he quickly dodged.



If she showed up in a luxury sports car worth millions, Su Jie wouldn't have been surprised at all. But showing up in this beat-up van didn't match her status in the slightest.
"What? Looking down on this car?" Zhang Manman seemed to read Su Jie's mind "I just came down from the mountain roads after racing with a bunch of rich second-generation kids from B City. I actually won two million from them — and had them leave behind their car emblems as trophies."
She pointed to the back seat.
Su Jie looked over and, sure enough, saw a bunch of freshly pulled-off car emblems — Ferrari, Lamborghini, Porsche, Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Bentley, and even a tiny golden Flying Lady from a Rolls-Royce.
"Impressive," Su Jie said. From the way she had just drifted the van, he could tel Zhang Manman's driving skills were almost on par with professional race car drivers.
"Don't underestimate this van. It sells very well in Africa, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia. Some factions in the Middle East and Africa even use it to transport troops. If you took a Mercedes, BMW, or Ferrari there, it would break down in no time. When I was doing bounty hunter missions in Africa, I relied entirely on this type of van," Zhang Manman said as Su Jie climbed aboard. Then she stomped the gas, sending the van flying forward, giving Su Jie a strong sense of being pressed into his seat.



"Drive slower! Don't break any traffic laws. By the way, do you even have a driver's license? Don't tell me you're driving without one," Su Jie suddenly remembered to ask.

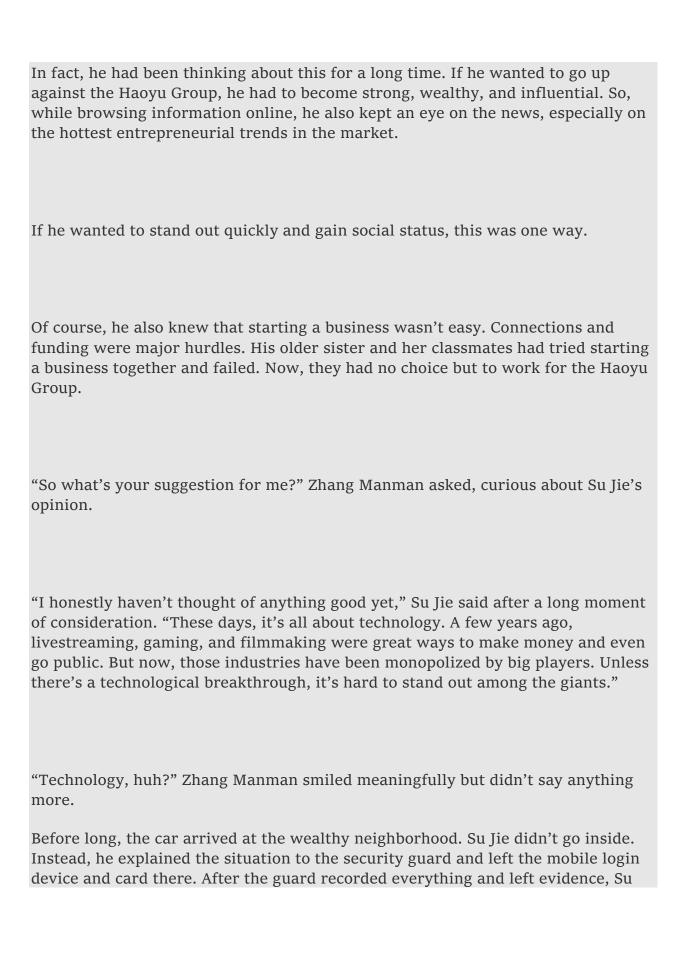
"Of course I have a license," Zhang Manman said without even turning her head. "As for what business to start, I'm still researching. What do you think about opening a fitness and wellness club?"

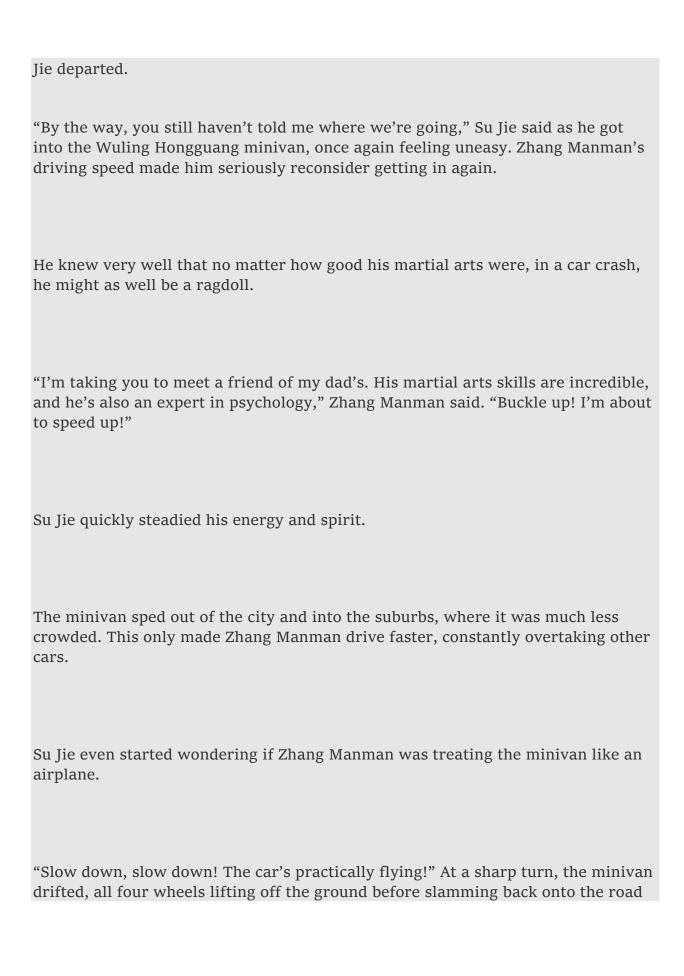
Chapter 69: The Tai Chi Master Doesn't Believe in Geniuses

"How big are you planning to go?" Su Jie asked. "Judging by your actions, it doesn't seem like it'll be small. But right now, the hotspots for startups are artificial intelligence, blockchain, big data, cloud computing, autonomous driving, and all kinds of high-tech fields. A step down from that would be film, gaming, animation, livestreaming, entertainment, and social networking. Basically, it all needs to be connected to the internet to truly take off. Other industries are either too deep in the water or already sunset industries with no real future."

"I didn't expect you to know so much about startups!" Zhang Manman was genuinely surprised. "I thought you only focused on martial arts."

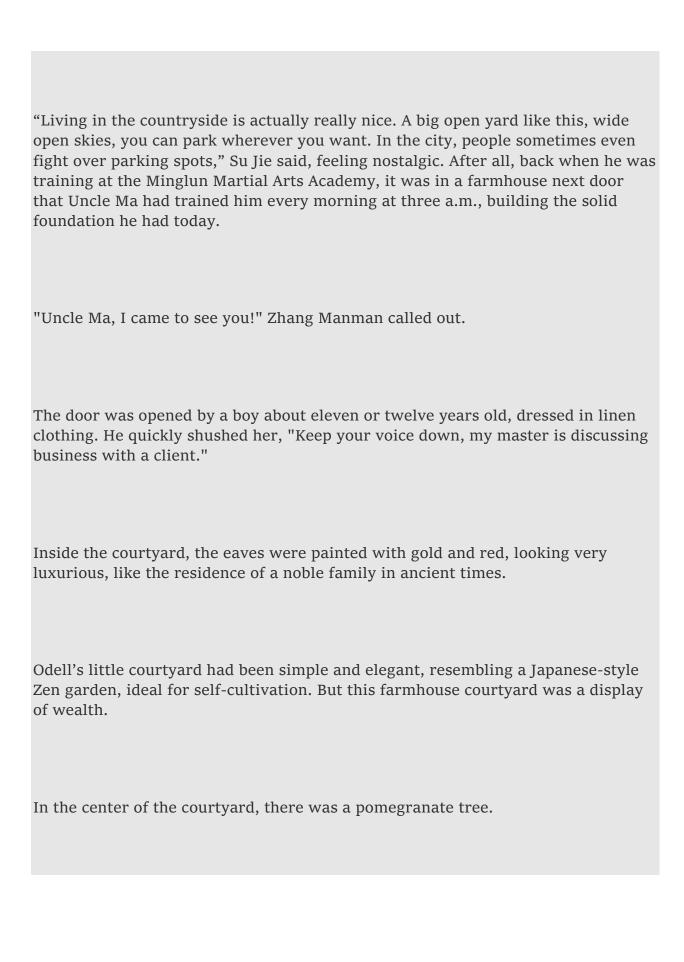
"Life itself is martial arts," Su Jie said, sounding philosophical.





with a loud thud. The seats creaked like they were about to fall apart, and the car door banged so loudly it seemed like it might fall off.
Startled, Su Jie grabbed the handle next to him to steady himself. "Are you trying to drift?"
"That's nothing. A piece of cake," Zhang Manman said, clearly enjoying the sight o Su Jie panicking. Ever since she had met him, he had always been calm and steady like an immovable rock—never showing the impulsiveness or recklessness typical of teenagers. Even many middle-aged men couldn't match his composure.
Seeing him flustered for once, she couldn't help but speed up even more, deliberately drifting around sharp corners. Sometimes, it looked like they were about to fly off the road before she would slam on the brakes and jerk the steering wheel, causing smoke to rise from the tires.
"This van's performance is insane. Are you sure it's just a regular minivan?" Su Jie gradually stabilized himself and regained his composure. He even realized that high-speed drifting was great for training his balance. His breathing sank deeper, his feet stuck to the floor like suction cups, becoming one with the vehicle no matter how much it rocked.
"Amazing!" Zhang Manman spun the steering wheel with one hand and gave him a thumbs-up with the other.

Three hours later, they drove into a rural area.
Although it was called the countryside, this place was actually quite prosperous. I had already been developed, with lots of tourist attractions, homestays, and beautiful scenery. Some of the courtyards were even nicer than houses in the city.
The minivan finally stopped in front of a large farmhouse.
The farmhouse had tall red walls and yellow-tiled roofs, built very much like a traditional courtyard house, with a locked front gate.
As soon as the car stopped, barking came from inside.
Zhang Manman knocked on the door. After a while, it opened, and two large yellow dogs rushed out—not barking aggressively, but wagging their tails and leading the way, which surprised Su Jie. These dogs were clearly well-trained and intelligent.
Outside the farmhouse was a huge drying yard where several luxury cars were parked—Land Rovers, the latest Maybach Mercedes vans, and even a large RV.
Compared to these, Zhang Manman's minivan looked completely out of place.



Pomegranates symbolize fertility and blessings in ancient traditions, so planting one in the yard carried that meaning.
The courtyard was huge, with multiple sections leading inward. There was a main house, east and west wings, an inverted house opposite the gate, and even a screen wall at the entrance. All the buildings were two stories tall, and the enclosing walls were very high, as if wrapping the entire property tightly.
There was a certain "mountain within the earth" feeling from the *I Ching* about it.
It seemed that someone was discussing matters upstairs in the main house.
The linen-clad boy led Zhang Manman and Su Jie into one of the side rooms and served them tea. Looking at the bright red carpet and red lanterns, Su Jie felt like he had stepped back into ancient times.
"Manman's here?" A short while later, two middle-aged men came downstairs.
Su Jie was slightly stunned because one of them, dressed in linen clothes, was the very same "Master Ma" he had met at the park. This man had given him a business card and warned that he and his family might face "bloody disasters." At the time, Su Jie thought he was a fraud. But later, the man had casually pointed out that Su Jie was practicing the "Great Corpse State" and even quoted the ancient saying, "A true man dwells among the dead and moves like a machine."

Clearly, he was an expert who knew his stuff.
'Could it be that this Master Ma is an old friend of Zhang Manman's father? Wait, didn't she say earlier that he was a psychology expert?' Su Jie recalled Zhang Manman's introduction during their walk over.
"Little Friend, we meet again. You didn't come looking for me that day," Master Ma said, as if he wasn't surprised to see Su Jie. "I knew we would cross paths again."
"Uncle Ma, you two know each other?" Zhang Manman asked in surprise.
"We met while practicing in the park," Master Ma explained to the middle-aged man beside him. "Old Chen, your Hunyuan Tai Chi Martial Arts Hall is right next to the park. You lead your students there to practice every day. How come you didn't notice such a talented young man?"
"I really didn't notice," said Old Chen, who was wearing a loose robe and cloth shoes, looking relaxed and full of vitality. His face was rosy, and his eyes were sharp as he looked Su Jie up and down. "Little Friend, Old Ma says you're skilled. What style do you practice?"

"Just a rough country style" Su Jie hurriedly waved his hand. "I'm not a master, not at all. I'm just a student who recently learned some skills at Minglun Martial Arts Academy."
"I can vouch for that," Zhang Manman quickly chimed in. "We joined the same training class, studied under Gu Yang together. He's only been learning for two months. When he started, he didn't even know how to dig or hoe the ground, but he's improved incredibly fast. Uncle Ma, weren't you looking for a genius? I've brought you one!"
"Gu Yang is the real deal when it comes to practical combat. His style has genuinely been used to kill, unlike me, who just practices for health in the park," Old Chen said while still scrutinizing Su Jie.
"Just earlier, Su Jie knocked down Zhou Chun!" Zhang Manman eagerly recommended him to the two men.
"Zhou Chun? Ranked tenth now? The fighter expelled from Liu Guanglie's school?' Old Chen clearly kept up with the fighting scene. "Impossible. Even a mediocre pro is still a pro. An amateur can't possibly go up against a professional. Especially someone who made it into the top ten."
"I got a secretly filmed video just now," Zhang Manman said, pulling out her phone.

Old Chen took it and watched the five-second clip—Zhou Chun launched an attack, Su Jie took it head-on, charged forward, and slapped Zhou Chun unconscious.
The move was lightning-fast, so much so that the footage needed to be slowed down significantly to catch the details. And there was nothing flashy about it; to the untrained eye, it would look utterly ordinary.
It was a lot like how wrestlers handle sanda fighters—taking hits and then grappling them into submission.
Su Jie, however, simply took the blow and countered with a direct slap to the face.
"Impressive," said Old Chen, who clearly understood what he was seeing. His expression changed as he looked at Su Jie. "Your external conditioning has reached this level? How did you train? How did you manage to forge such a solid foundation?"
"You, young man, have already glimpsed that threshold? You're almost a 'Living Dead'?" Master Ma was also stunned at this moment.
He seemed to have seen through Su Jie's mental state.
"You're almost a Living Dead."

To an outsider, that would sound like a curse, and even Zhang Manman didn't understand and thought he was insulting Su Jie. But Su Jie knew exactly what he meant.

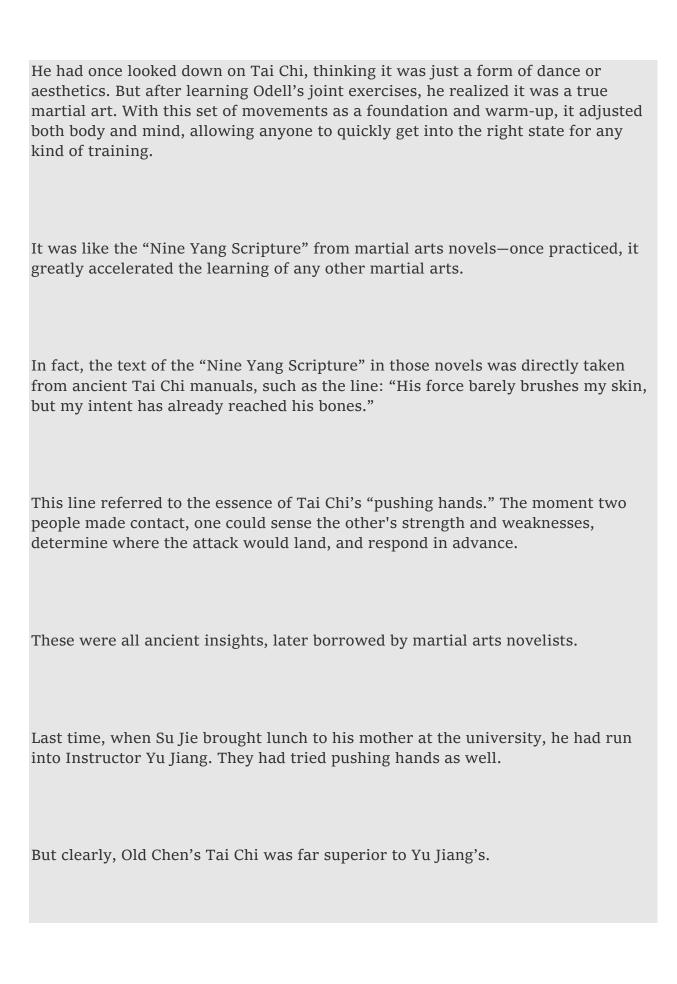
That night lying on his bed, he had indeed touched the threshold of becoming a "Living Dead."

"Only when the mind dies can the true form be born," Master Ma said to Old Chen. "Old Chen, I was just about to tell you that I met a genius, but you didn't believe me. Now do you believe it?"

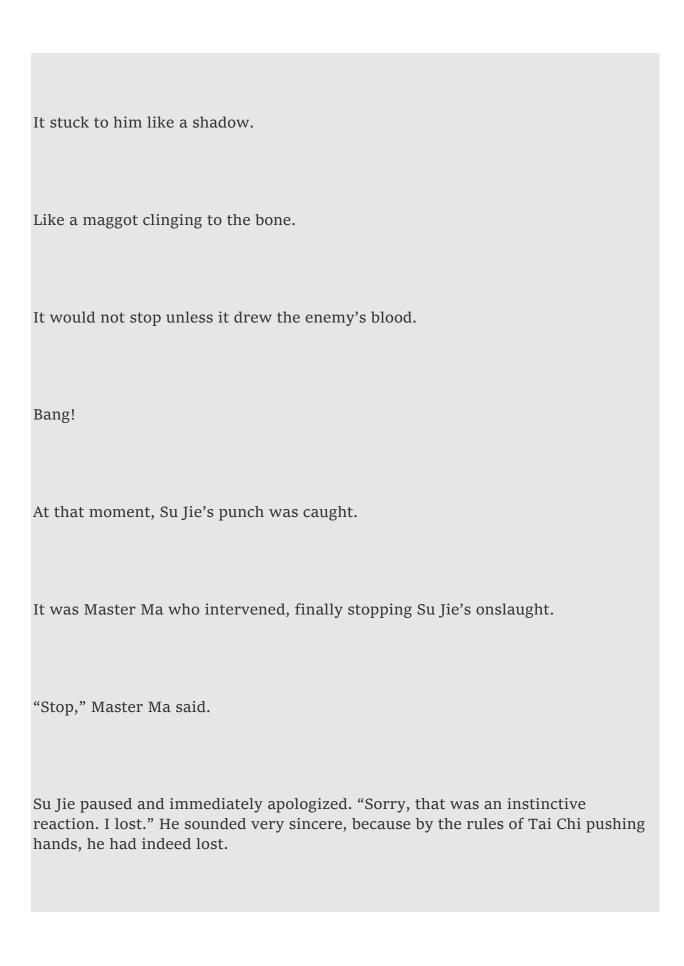
"I still don't believe it. That's impossible. If he's really reached that state, that's the realm of Patriarch Chongyang," Old Chen shook his head. "Little Friend, how about some push-hands with me?"

Chapter 70: Think Carefully for the Big Picture

Su Jie could tell that Old Chen was a grandmaster who had practiced Tai Chi for many years.



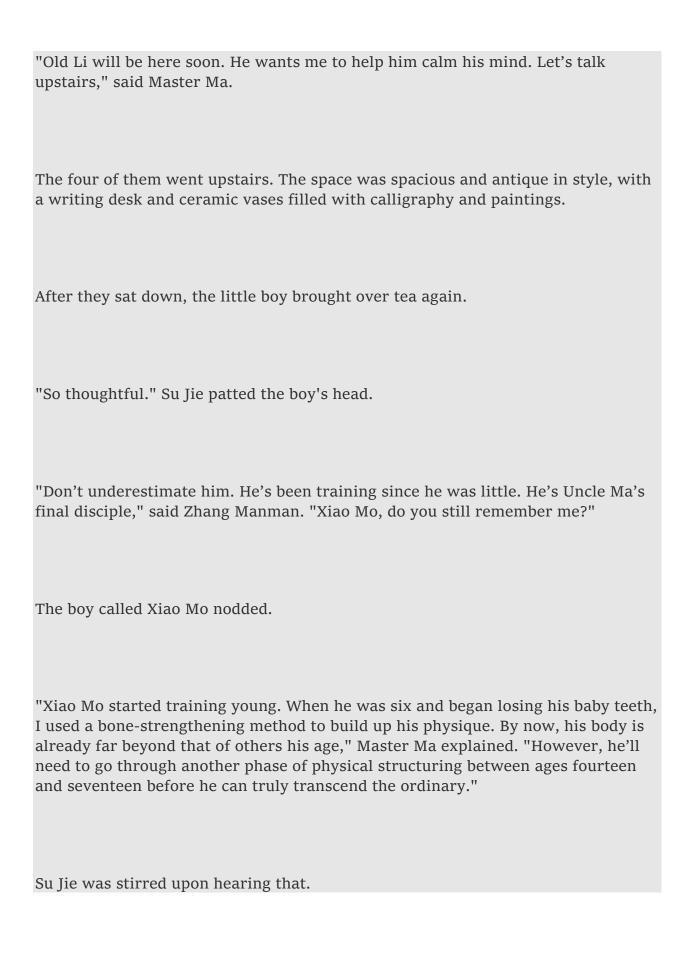
Su Jie reached out and made contact with him.
Old Chen's eyes lit up. To outsiders, it seemed like he hadn't even moved, but Su Jie immediately felt a powerful force pushing him backward.
This technique was simply godlike.
Su Jie bent his body, rooted his feet to the ground, and suddenly slid forward. Without even thinking, his arm lashed out.
No matter how you tried to throw me, hit me, kill me, push me, confuse me, or distract me—I would still strike with this move.
His palm was already aimed at Old Chen's face.
All of Old Chen's Tai Chi skills—borrowing force, redirecting power, techniques like peng, lu, ji, an, cai, lie, zhou, kao—were rendered useless. Like Zhou Chun before him, he could only watch helplessly as Su Jie's palm came crashing down.
In that split second, Old Chen suddenly bent at the waist, folding his chest and waist together, almost flattening himself to the ground. He darted to the left and barely avoided the blow.
But before he could stand up, Su Jie's punch came flying at his face again.

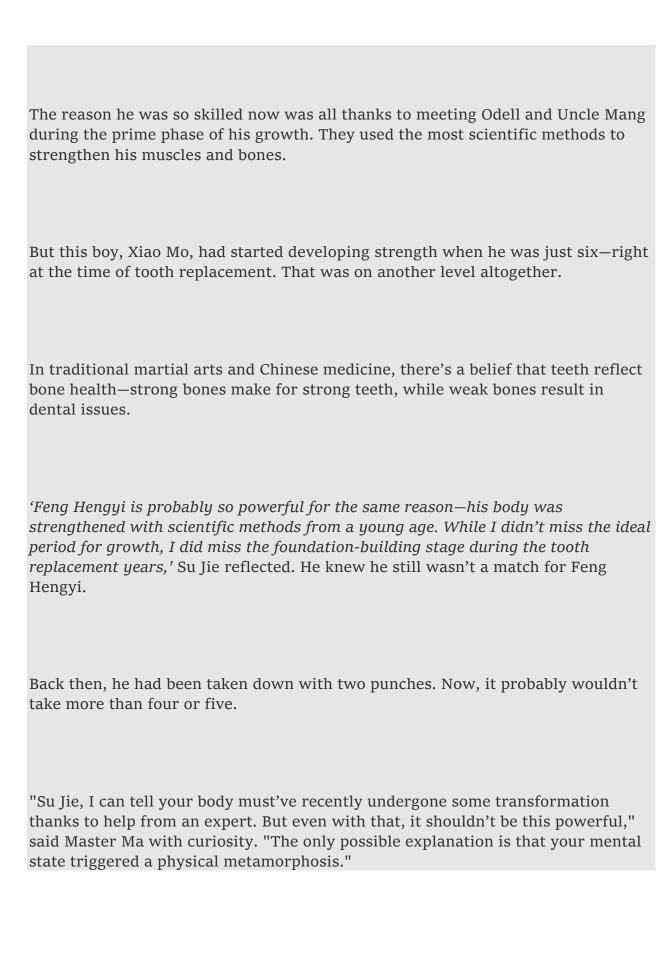


Of course, under no-holds-barred combat rules, if he had kept going, it could've ended in a bloody mess.
But those last two strikes had been purely instinctual. He didn't even have to think—they bypassed conscious thought entirely.
In such lightning-fast exchanges, there was no time to think. It all came down to muscle memory forged through relentless training.
"As they say, fists fear the young. I really can't deny that anymore," Old Chen took a deep breath. Though he hadn't been hit, he was clearly shaken. "There's a saying in the martial world: 'The most vicious and deadly is the Xingyi strike.' It's not just empty talk."
"Of course," Master Ma said, still staring at Su Jie. "The farmer's Hoe Strike Technique isn't simple. Since ancient times, farmers were usually the most honest people. But once pushed too far, they could turn the world upside down—overthrow emperors and dynasties. Old Chen, now that you've experienced this strike for yourself, what do you think?"
"To train a move to such a level I've seen very few like it. It's pure. Extremely pure. Right—my student once told me he encountered a master who was just a kid One explosive strike could burst a basketball. That must've been you." Old Chen looked at Su Jie as if he had found a treasure, examining him up and down.

"Instructor Yu Jiang is your student?" The mention of the exploded basketball told Su Jie everything. No wonder Yu Jiang's power was somewhat similar to Old Chen's. "He's my youngest student. He's an officer now. After that match with you, he couldn't stop thinking about it. He's been looking for you, hoping to become friends," Old Chen said. "Uncle Chen, what do you think of Su Jie? If you're satisfied, why not take him as your disciple? I think he's the best fighter among all your students," Zhang Manman suggested, throwing Su Jie a meaningful look. From that look, Su Jie could tell that Old Chen was well-connected, and becoming his student might bring considerable benefits. "Not at all, not at all," Old Chen quickly waved his hands. "Even though I'd love to have a disciple like him, I really don't have anything to teach Little Brother Su when it comes to martial arts. I can't shamelessly take the title of master. But we can definitely exchange insights on cultivation. I heard from Brother Ma that your fist techniques aren't even your strongest area—what's truly impressive is your mastery of Zen. They say the Great Corpse State is practically dead now? I really can't believe that. In martial arts, it's harder to temper the mind than the body. Shaping the form is easy—training the intent is hard. As the saying goes, 'the mind is like a monkey, the will like a wild horse.' The mind is the all-powerful Sun Wukong, and the will is the White Dragon Horse. Only the likes of the Buddha or

Guanyin can subdue them."





"Master Ma, as far as I know, the world is just beginning to explore psychological training. In some countries, athletes are starting to incorporate elements of psychological conditioning alongside their regular physical training, but it's still far from complete. I heard from Zhang Manman that you're an expert in psychology. May I ask you a few things about the Great Corpse State?" Su Jie didn't believe in things like feng shui, divination, or fortune-telling, but he did believe in psychology—because it was a science. While some parts resembled metaphysics, they were nonetheless grounded in reality. He had initially learned the Great Corpse State from Odell, but their time together had been too short for him to grasp its deeper essence. Though he had continued studying on his own, many doubts remained unresolved. The last time Master Ma casually mentioned the technique in the park, Su Jie had wanted to ask more, but the man had already left. Even so, after pondering it carefully, he still found himself gaining a lot. Now that he had the chance to meet Master Ma again, he wouldn't let it slip by. "I was looking for Old Chen last time when I happened to see you practicing in the park. I saw quite a bit just from that," said Master Ma, his eyes gleaming with insight. "But you getting up at 3 a.m. every day to train until six? No wonder Old Chen hasn't seen you. You're literally training at the crack of dawn."

