

The Beauty 1141

Chapter 1141 Ling Beichuan Captured

To pursue authenticity and make those who came to the rescue believe in Zhu Hong's identity, Ling Chen and Xia Mutong deliberately staged a scene where Xia Mutong was covered in blood. This way, Ling Beichuan's people would definitely not have any doubts. As for the next part, it would be even easier. Have Little Fei secretly track Bai Huanjun's location all the way to Ling Beichuan's residence.

"Mr. Ling, please come with us," Ling Chen said indifferently.

Ling Beichuan coughed a few times and calmly said, "I want to ask the officers, what crime have I committed, and why do you want to arrest me?"

Upon hearing this, the team leader Xia Mutong was momentarily stunned. Indeed, all her actions were to cooperate with Ling Chen. If it were Zhu Hong, she could find many reasons to arrest him, but Ling Beichuan's words... she couldn't think of any useful evidence.

After contemplating for a while, Xia Mutong spoke up, "Mr. Ling, you're not unfamiliar with Old K, right? You hired Old K to make bomb threats in East Sea City and even killed an innocent citizen. Just based on this, I think it's necessary to take you in for questioning."

"Old K?" Ling Beichuan chuckled, looking up at the Housekeeper Luo beside him, and asked, "Do you know this person?"

"Sir, I haven't heard of this person's name. However, if it's really as the officer said, then it was very likely secretly hired by Zhu Hong, and has nothing to do with us. Officer, if you're looking for the culprit, then go find Zhu Hong. We have nothing to do with this matter."

"Fine." Ling Chen chimed in, "Even if you have nothing to do with Zhu Hong, what about hijacking the convoy and injuring the police officers? How do you account for that? Housekeeper Luo, you were involved at the time, are you thinking of denying it? Not to mention anything else, but just the charge of assaulting police is enough to invite you for an investigation at the police station." Saying this, Ling Chen glanced at the silent Ling Beichuan with a slight smile and said, "Mr. Ling, do you have any more excuses to make?"

Without waiting for Ling Beichuan to speak again, Xia Mutong waved her hand and issued an order, "Arrest them all and keep them under strict supervision."

As her words fell, several police officers pulled out handcuffs and swiftly approached, ready to arrest Ling Beichuan and Housekeeper Luo. But just then, Ling Beichuan, sitting in a wheelchair, suddenly coughed violently, his body trembling slightly, and his limbs seemed to be out of control. At the same time, foam came out of his mouth, and his body seemed to lose control, collapsing to the ground, his face pale and in danger of dying at any moment.

Seeing this situation, Xia Mutong immediately dialed 120 for an ambulance to rush to the scene.

Looking at Ling Beichuan lying unconscious, Housekeeper Luo uttered not a word, honestly put on the handcuffs, and was escorted out of the room by the police.

Ling Chen walked to Ling Beichuan's side and checked his pulse. Considering Ling Beichuan's recent performance, he thought the man might be faking it. Because it couldn't be so coincidental that just as they were about to arrest him, he suddenly fell ill. However, judging from the pulse, Ling Beichuan seemed very weak, not like he was feigning unconsciousness. Moreover, looking at the oxygen device on the wheelchair, it seemed likely that Ling Beichuan was suffering from a serious illness and fell into a coma under external stimulation.

In any case, to be safe, Ling Chen not only maintained police surveillance over Ling Beichuan but also added more manpower. If Ling Beichuan intended to feign illness to escape, he would never let him succeed.

After Ling Beichuan and others were taken away, Ling Chen had a brief conversation with Xia Mutong.

"I've helped as much as I can, you'll have to handle the rest yourself. Remember, don't make it too big." Xia Mutong advised.

Ling Chen replied with a smile, "Don't worry, I know what to do."

After seeing Xia Mutong off, Ling Chen immediately ordered the entire residential building to be sealed. This was Ling Beichuan's turf, and his secrets must be hidden inside this house. Ling Beichuan was the first key figure he had captured, so he must be hiding many secrets.

Soon, Hu Fei arrived with people.

"Fatty, have them search thoroughly, don't miss inside or outside. Anything of value, bring it all back."

"Alright, got it," Hu Fei nodded and quickly assigned the task.

Over an hour later, standing in the corridor, Ling Chen saw Hu Fei approaching and quickly asked, "How's it going, did you find anything?"

"I'm afraid I'm going to disappoint you."

"Disappoint?" Ling Chen was slightly stunned and asked, "What do you mean?"

"We've searched all over but didn't find anything valuable, just some simple furniture, hardly anything valuable at all."

Upon hearing this, Ling Chen frowned and said, "How is that possible? Could you have missed something?"

Hu Fei shrugged and said, "If you don't believe me, why don't you check it out yourself?"

Ling Chen said nothing, quickly walked into the room. Looking at the arrangement around, as Hu Fei had said, aside from some simple furniture, there was nothing suspicious, not even a safe.

"Well, now do you finally believe me?" Hu Fei said, following behind.

"It's impossible for there to be nothing." Ling Chen pondered for a moment and said, "Fatty, get some guys, tear down the walls inside. I refuse to believe we won't find anything."

"Alright, I'll call someone right away."

Soon, more than a dozen youths with hammers began tearing down a few walls inside the house. Ling Chen and Hu Fei stood by, monitoring the progress.

"Chen, there seems to be something in here." After a few minutes, a young man suddenly shouted.

Ling Chen's eyes brightened, and he hurried over. Through a crack in the wall, he saw a two-meter-high safe hidden behind it. The safe was completely blocked by the wall, and if they hadn't broken through the wall, the inside safe couldn't have been discovered.

Ling Chen was somewhat surprised; when Ling Beichuan built this wall, he hadn't created a movable mechanism. Ling Chen was rather curious about what the safe contained that Ling Beichuan would take such great care to hide it.

Soon, with collective effort, the two-meter-high safe was pulled out.

"Fatty, can you unlock it?" Ling Chen asked. He had just checked; it was a dual code lock controlled by a smart system. If it were a mechanical lock, he might try to tackle it, but this electronic code lock could only be handled by Hu Fei.

"Well, well!" Hu Fei examined it for a moment and said, "Ling Chen, the safe model is not simple. From what I know, this safe is custom-made by a company that specializes in safes, entirely tailored to individual clientele, with top-level security measures."

Chapter 1142 Old K's Fate

"Fatty, is this kind of safe hard to crack?" Ling Chen asked.

"From what I understand, this kind of safe has a double password system. Besides an eight-digit code, it also requires retinal and voice recognition. Unless all three are correct, if even one step is wrong,

everything inside will be automatically destroyed," Hu Fei explained. "Looking at Ling Beichuan's demeanor, I doubt he'll tell you the password."

"What should we do then? Should I... try and think of something?"

"You just need to deal with the retinal and voice recognition systems; I can handle the eight-digit password."

"Okay, I'll get it sorted for you as soon as possible."

Immediately, Ling Chen gathered everyone and transported the safe downstairs, then arranged for a truck to take it to the base. This safe was secretly protected by Ling Beichuan and surely hid many secrets. If he could uncover them, perhaps he'd gain deeper insight into the southern Ling Family.

Returning to the base, Jiang Hao was already waiting for Ling Chen's return.

"Chen."

"What do you need me for?"

"It's like this..." Jiang Hao leaned over and whispered a few words into Ling Chen's ear. After listening, Ling Chen lightly nodded and said, "Let's go, take me to meet him."

Shortly after, the two arrived at an interrogation room inside the base. As the door opened, Ling Chen immediately saw a middle-aged man, hands tied with chains, sitting on a chair with a few people watching him.

"Chen!"

Upon seeing Ling Chen, everyone in the interrogation room greeted him.

Ling Chen nodded in acknowledgement, then focused his attention on the middle-aged man. After a few glances, Ling Chen slowly spoke, "Are you Old K? No need for introductions, I believe you know who I am."

"Mr. Ling, I don't know why you've brought me here," Old K asked calmly.

"You know perfectly well, there's no need for me to waste words."

Old K smiled and said, "Mr. Ling, I think you may have misunderstood. I'm just hired help, and everything I did was under Zhu Hong's orders. At most, I'm an executor. So if you want revenge, it's Zhu Hong you should be targeting, not me. I think we can sit down and have a talk. As long as you release me, I'm willing to accept some conditions."

"I don't think there's much for us to discuss. An eye for an eye, it's only natural. You and I are not new to this game. If you're caught, you should be prepared. Jiang Hao!"

"Chen, what are your orders?"

"Break his arms and legs, toss him to the streets to beg, and find someone to watch over him, don't let him escape." With that, Ling Chen turned to look at Old K and said, "I'm giving you a chance to live: whenever you can beg for a million, I'll let you go."

Upon hearing these words, a change finally appeared on Old K's face. To people like them, death isn't frightening. As Ling Chen just said, he's been mentally prepared since he entered this line of work. However, living a fate worse than death is the most painful experience.

He would rather die than become a cripple.

"Mr. Ling!" Old K suddenly stood up, but the people beside him immediately pressed his shoulders, forcing him back down.

"Mr. Ling, I am not afraid to die, but you cannot humiliate me this way."

Ling Chen said calmly, "You caused the death of my friend; this is merciful treatment already. If you have any objections, I have more ways to deal with you. Do you want to try them?"

Before Old K could respond, Jiang Hao had already signaled to his subordinates. A young man picked up a steel rod and smashed it directly onto Old K's knee.

Crack!

With a crisp sound, Old K's face instantly turned pale, and the interrogation room was filled with his screams.

Ling Chen didn't stay to watch, leaving Jiang Hao there, he walked out of the interrogation room alone. He wasn't a good person, nor a kind one. An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth were his principles.

Old K killed Wei Jun, and he wouldn't let the other go easily. Death? Ha! That's too easy.

A few days passed, and finally, with Ling Chen's efforts, he acquired Ling Beichuan's retinal and voice data. Meanwhile, Hu Fei had unlocked the first password of the safe. With the retinal and voice identification verified, the safe finally opened.

However, Ling Chen was somewhat disappointed that there weren't many documents inside the huge safe, only a few file folders. Picking up one of the folders, Ling Chen pulled out the documents inside and examined them closely.

The document contents were related to the northern Ling Family. In the past, Ling Chen might have been somewhat interested, but now, having learned the secrets, Ling Chen found these materials mundane, merely insignificant secrets without much use.

"Ling Chen, you need to take a look at this file, I can't quite understand it." At this moment, Hu Fei handed a document to Ling Chen.

Just from reading the first line, Ling Chen's eyes lit up immediately. In the desert, Ling Tao had once mentioned to Ling Chen that as of now, only two severed arms and one leg of Ling Gengqiu's body have

been found, while the other main parts remain missing. Also, according to reliable clues and intelligence, Ling Gengqiu's other parts should be buried in East Sea City. As for the specific location, no one knows yet.

Over the years, Ling Beichuan settled in East Sea City mainly to search for Ling Gengqiu's other body parts. Moreover, judging by the timeline in the document, Ling Beichuan had been searching in East Sea City for over fifty years.

Regarding the affairs of the southern and northern Ling Families in East Sea City, Ling Chen learned quite a lot from Ling Tao.

Although both forces want to enter East Sea City to search for Ling Gengqiu's body parts, they both understand that once one force enters East Sea City, the other will surely take measures. By then, as soon as both forces meet in East Sea City, it would trigger an ultimate showdown.

Neither the southern nor the northern Ling Families had absolute confidence in winning this internal fight; hence, neither dared to easily enter East Sea City. They knew well that if both forces entered East Sea City, it would ignite the fuse for a final battle.

So now, both forces are merely engaging in localized struggles to weaken the opponent's strength.

After understanding these conditions from Ling Tao, Ling Chen also realized the heavy burden he carried. Now, the entire East Sea City is under his control, and what he needs to do is consolidate power to firmly grasp East Sea City in his hands. Once the two forces commence their final battle, he will be the key determinant of victory.

It seems the southern Ling Family has considered this issue too, which is why Ling Beichuan rescued Zhu Hong to curb his power development. However, Ling Beichuan never dreamed that the one he relied upon, Zhu Hong, not only failed to serve his purpose but also ended up being dragged down.

Chapter 1143 - 1150: Martial Arts Elders (Part 1)

Looking at the content recorded in the data, Ling Chen couldn't help but admire Ling Beichuan. Doing the same thing every day for over fifty years is indeed not easy. Moreover, from the data, it seems that over the years, Ling Beichuan had already searched through a third of East Sea City but still hadn't found Ling Gengqiu's burial site.

Sometimes Ling Chen felt it was too difficult. After all, East Sea City was so big, and without any other clues, the chances of finding Ling Gengqiu's gravesite were almost zero.

After carefully storing the information back in the safe, Ling Chen drove alone to the hospital.

Arriving at the intensive care unit, he saw several police officers stationed at the door, all sent by Xia Mutong, specifically responsible for guarding Ling Beichuan to prevent him from escaping. Besides the police, Ling Chen had also secretly added more personnel. He knew too well the power of the South's Ling Family, and a few officers alone wouldn't be enough for protection.

Entering the ward, Ling Beichuan lay on the bed with an IV tube in his arm, and several medical devices were placed beside him. The data showed that Ling Beichuan's current condition was quite stable.

"Mr. Ling, I know you're not asleep. As the saying goes, a visitor is a guest. Don't you want to chat with me?"

Ling Chen had just finished speaking when Ling Beichuan slowly opened his eyes, glanced at Ling Chen beside him, and asked blandly, "What do you want?"

"Oh, nothing, just wanted to have a chat." Ling Chen sat in the chair by the bedside, picked up an apple and a small knife, and while peeling it, he said, "Mr. Ling, you've stayed in East Sea City for so many years, surely you know more about Ling Gengqiu than anyone else. Would you be interested in chatting with me about it?"

"It seems Ling Tao has told you everything."

"I know a little, but not much. Moreover, if I'm not mistaken, you should have some key clues."

"Why do you think that?"

"I've seen the records you made, and in the latter part of the documents, a section was manually cleared out by you, which makes me wonder if you discovered something and erased those key parts to

prevent others from finding out. Mr. Ling, you're a smart person, at this point, you should know how to choose."

Ling Beichuan turned his head, closed his eyes, and said, "Ling Chen, I admit I underestimated you, but if you think this can pressure me, then you're gravely mistaken. Besides, I'm at a ripe old age, and my body is full of ailments. This old life won't last much longer. If you want to kill, just kill. If you want information from me about Ling Gengqiu, you better give up on that thought."

"Mr. Ling, I know what you're thinking, you're hoping the people from the South's Ling Family will come to save you, right?" Ling Chen said with a smile, "I advise you to give up. I've already cast a wide net. If the South's Ling Family dare to appear, they'll have no way out. Moreover, I think the possibility is slim. Think about it, although you're a core member of the South's Ling Family, over the years, your gains in East Sea City were negligible. To them, you aren't of much value anymore. Just like you said, you're already old, could die at any moment, do you think they would risk it to save you?"

After pausing, seeing that Ling Beichuan remained silent, Ling Chen continued, "I understand your feelings, and I know your biggest wish is to find Ling Gengqiu's burial site. But with only your strength, it's impossible to accomplish. Only if we cooperate, there might be a glimmer of hope. Besides, let's put the South's Ling Family aside, why not think of yourself? If you can find Ling Gengqiu's burial site in your lifetime and discover his longevity secret, you might cure the illnesses plaguing you. At that time, forget about living to a hundred, living two or three hundred years might even be possible. Mr. Ling, don't you agree with me?"

Ling Beichuan continued to keep his eyes closed, showing no intention of speaking.

Seeing this, Ling Chen didn't apply pressure, took a bite of the apple, stood, and said, "Think it over yourself, but I must remind you, I just learned from the doctor that your body functions have already declined partially. With current medical conditions, you have at most half a year to live. So, time is limited, if you don't seize the opportunity, by the time you regret it, it will be too late."

After saying that, Ling Chen didn't say more and turned to leave the intensive care unit.

Ling Chen had said all he needed to say. Actually, he knew in his heart that Ling Beichuan didn't have many weaknesses for him to exploit. If there was only one weakness, it might be his soon-to-end life. The conditions were laid out, but whether Ling Beichuan would cooperate with him, Ling Chen wasn't very assured.

Before he came to the hospital, Ling Chen had discussed this issue with Hu Fei. Hu Fei's opinion was to use some special agents to force Ling Beichuan to tell the truth. Such agents exist, and many spy organizations use them to interrogate prisoners. However, Ling Beichuan's body was too weak, he probably couldn't handle the agent's stress on his body.

If Ling Beichuan died as a result, the gains wouldn't outweigh the losses.

So, after much thought, Ling Chen decided to abandon this idea.

After leaving the hospital, Ling Chen made time to visit the Dragon Tiger Hall. Now, Dragon Tiger Hall was fully under the charge of Tang Guolun, and the backup base on the second underground level had been activated. The technical talents trained by Hu Fei had all moved in and started their work.

When Ling Chen arrived, he saw that the previously quiet backup base was now bustling, with more than twenty tech personnel assembling machines and equipment.

"Ling Chen," a busy Tang Guolun waved a hand in greeting and asked, "What brings you here today?"

"Just came to have a look. How's everything going?"

Tang Guolun smiled and said, "Not bad. Once we finish these couple of days, the backup base can be officially operational. Oh! The plaque you asked me to make is ready; when do you plan to officially open?"

"It won't be too long, I'm still figuring out how to do it." To be honest, Ling Chen was a bit troubled. The official opening of Dragon Tiger Hall was not a simple affair; there were too many things to prepare. He had never been involved in this kind of thing before, let alone had any experience.

"What? Still undecided?" Tang Guolun said, "If there's anything you don't understand, you can talk to me, maybe I can help with some advice."

Ling Chen nodded and asked, "Boss Tang, what do you think is the most needed thing for Dragon Tiger Hall's opening?"

"No need to ask, it's definitely the ribbon-cutting guests." Tang Guolun immediately replied without thinking, "Dragon Tiger Hall's positioning is within Martial Arts influence. Therefore, you should definitely invite some distinguished Martial Arts Elders to hold fort. It's the best promotional opportunity. The more prominent the ribbon-cutting guests, the greater the chance to make Dragon Tiger Hall famous. As long as your planning is good, Dragon Tiger Hall could make a big splash."

Chapter 1144 - 1151: Martial Arts Elders (2)

After listening to Tang Guolun's words, Ling Chen felt as if he had a revelation and instantly understood.

Indeed! The Dragon Tiger Hall has just been established, and no one knows of its existence yet. However, if some Martial Arts Elders assist with the ribbon-cutting, the effect would be like celebrity endorsements in advertisements, quickly spreading its name in the martial arts world.

But... finding a Martial Arts Elder with enough influence is undoubtedly a headache.

Everyone knows that any Martial Arts Elder with some influence is in the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. The main purpose of establishing the Dragon Tiger Hall is as a precaution, to counter the forces of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion in the future. So, it's impossible for him to invite people from the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion to do the ribbon-cutting. Moreover, after what happened with Su Zhengyang and his wife, his relationship with the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion was almost severed; they wouldn't help him.

Thinking it over, the only person he might be able to invite seems to be Tong Zhentian. Tong Zhentian is not considered a member of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, but he has deep connections with them. When Su Zhengyang and his wife died, Tong Zhentian even rushed to the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion.

Currently, in the martial arts world, the only Martial Arts Elders with influence seem to be Tong Zhentian, Su He, and Du Kang. There's no point in considering Su He and Du Kang, but Tong Zhentian might be worth a try. Ling Chen didn't have high hopes of successfully inviting him.

In the blink of an eye, half a month passed.

Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion.

At this moment, Su Mei was sitting in the main hall, handling various affairs of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. Time is the best healing potion; after so many days, Su Mei had gradually emerged from the sorrow of losing both her parents and returned to her usual competent self.

Just then, a sound of footsteps came. Looking up, she saw Su He walking in with his hands behind his back.

"Grandfather!" Su Mei smiled and hurriedly got up to greet him.

"Girl, what are you busy with?"

"Nothing much, just some trivial matters. Grandpa, you rarely go out; why do you have time to visit me today?"

"I had nothing to do, so I came to see you. Girl, I've recently heard many people mention the Dragon Tiger Hall, what's going on?"

Hearing this, a glint of unusual color flashed in Su Mei's eyes. She knew Su He wouldn't seek her out for no reason.

"Grandfather, you've heard about it too?"

"The news about Dragon Tiger Hall is rampant; it's hard not to hear about it. How much do you know about this Dragon Tiger Hall?"

"Based on our intelligence, Dragon Tiger Hall is just an ordinary martial arts academy. However, our investigation found that the founder of the academy is quite special."

"Special?" Su He asked with interest, "How is it special?"

Su Mei lightly bit her thin lips and said, "It's Ling Chen, the Dragon Tiger Hall was founded by him."

Upon hearing this, Su He was slightly stunned, then laughed, "Interesting, that boy set aside everything else to run a martial arts academy. Does he feel he is qualified... it makes sense! Ling Chen is an Earthly List expert. With such strength, establishing an academy is more than enough. But, girl, don't you find this a bit strange?"

"Grandfather, I don't quite understand what you mean."

"If it were just an ordinary martial arts academy, would Ling Chen need to advertise so widely? As far as I know, he is advertising to martial artists, not ordinary people. I think Ling Chen's purpose for opening the academy isn't to recruit ordinary people, but to attract martial arts experts." Su He analyzed.

"How can that be?" Su Mei said in some surprise, "If it's martial arts experts, then his purpose isn't to establish an academy, but a martial arts force."

"To be precise, it should be a martial arts force against the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. Girl, with your intelligence, you should understand why Ling Chen is doing this. I think there's no need to doubt anymore."

Su Mei's expression changed slightly, and she said, "Grandfather, are you saying... it really was Ling Kun who killed my parents?"

"If that wasn't the case, why would Ling Chen suddenly do this? His aim in forming a martial arts force is simply to guard against us, to prevent us from harming his father." At this point, Su He looked at Su Mei and said earnestly, "Girl, I know you're upset, and I am too. Ling Chen is both your friend and my disciple, even if he hasn't performed the master-apprentice ceremony, in the eyes of others, he is my disciple. Now that Ling Chen has made this decision, I think we should also make up our minds."

"Grandfather, you mean..."

"Go all out to capture Ling Kun, and also send someone to monitor Ling Chen's every move. Ling Kun is Ling Chen's father, and he might actively contact Ling Chen."

Su Mei said, "Last time, we sent a lot of people to monitor Ling Chen, but they were all discovered, and Ling Chen even destroyed our branch in East Sea City. With Ling Chen's skills, unless we transfer people from the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, it's difficult for others to handle him."

Su He thought for a moment, then nodded, "I have a suitable candidate to recommend. Girl, tell Wang Hao to come to my place later; I want to have a private chat with him."

Wang Hao?

Su Mei was slightly stunned; she didn't expect Su He to suggest this person. Indeed, Wang Hao is a standout among the Disciples of the Yangxin Pavilion, with strength superior to Ling Chen. If he were to take action, there wouldn't be a problem. However, Su Mei was concerned that Wang Hao has issues with Ling Chen, and Wang Hao dislikes Ling Chen, even envying what Ling Chen possesses. If Wang Hao was sent to keep an eye on Ling Chen, there's no guarantee he wouldn't take some excessive actions.

Thinking of this, Su Mei expressed her concerns.

"Don't worry about that; they're all young people, we don't need to interfere too much. Besides, if something really happens to Ling Chen, he can only blame himself for not being skilled enough. Alright, enough about that, just do as I say. If nothing unexpected happens, I might travel in a while."

"Yes, Grandfather!"

...

East Sea City.

Ling Chen was sitting in the living room, watching the news on the television, the corners of his mouth lifting slightly, unable to hold back a smile.

What luck! He was still planning a trip to Beijing to personally invite Tong Zhentian to the ribbon-cutting ceremony of the Dragon Tiger Hall. Only to find out in the news that Tong Zhentian would be coming to

East Sea City as the honorary chairman of the National Martial Arts Association to attend a seminar, which was undoubtedly a great opportunity for him.

During this time, Ling Chen had been running around for the Dragon Tiger Hall. Besides himself, Qiu Yong and others were also busy promoting the Dragon Tiger Hall everywhere. Thanks to their help, the fame of the Dragon Tiger Hall grew day by day, and many martial artists were discussing its establishment.

Just two more days... Ling Chen looked at the time; Tong Zhentian would arrive in East Sea City the day after tomorrow, and he needed to find a way to meet him.

In the midst of his thoughts, a pair of tender little hands suddenly reached over from behind, covering Ling Chen's eyes.

"Guess who I am?"

Chapter 1145 - 1152: Martial Arts Association (1)

"Girl, do you even need to guess?" Ling Chen laughed as he pried apart those delicate hands, turned around to look at Tang Shiyun, and asked, "It's already so late, why haven't you slept yet? Aren't you going on a business trip tomorrow?"

"I couldn't sleep. I just heard noises in the living room, so I came over to check." Saying this, Tang Shiyun circled around the sofa and sat beside Ling Chen, holding his arm and said, "Ling, I'm not disturbing you, am I?"

"Of course not, why suddenly ask this?"

Tang Shiyun chuckled, "Nothing, since I'm not disturbing you, does that mean I can continue to stay here?"

Uh... Ling Chen was stunned for a moment, then laughed softly, "As long as you're happy, how long you stay doesn't matter."

Ling Chen also found it strange that Old K was no longer a threat, yet Nanrong Wanqing and Zhu Xiaozhu had no intention of going back to live. Since they hadn't asked to leave, he certainly couldn't proactively make them go back. Also, for some reason, they had made his mom very happy lately, and the women seemed to get along quite well, calling each other sisters all the time. If someone unfamiliar came across them, they might think he was the outsider.

"By the way! Girl, has your mom come to find you lately?"

"No. She hasn't contacted me in a long time; I don't know what she's been busy with. Hong says my mom's become very honest, only asking for a fixed monthly living expense, never asking me for money again."

Ling Chen nodded and said, "That's for the best."

Nobody knew better than Ling Chen about Yao Li's change. Initially, Yao Li spent extravagantly and mingled in major casinos, racking up quite a bit of gambling debt, asking Tang Shiyun for money every month. If Tang Shiyun refused, she'd hire some young punks to stage debt collection plays, exploiting the mother-daughter relationship to deceive Tang Shiyun.

Later, Ling Chen got Jiang Hao to lend Yao Li some money, but when signing the loan contract, Ling Chen swapped the contract without her knowing. According to the agreement in that contract, if Yao Li couldn't repay the loan within the specified time, Jiang Hao had the right to repossess her house and car to offset the debt. Moreover, as the interest compounded, Yao Li's millions of debt grew into astronomical figures, and her assets couldn't cover it at all.

Even if Yao Li turned to Tang Shiyun for help, she might still not be able to repay the debt.

Afterward, Ling Chen instructed Jiang Hao to stir things up a bit, which left Yao Li terrified and no longer daring to show any temper, which was why she'd become so honest, not daring to disturb Tang Shiyun again.

"Girl, do you have any free time in the coming days? My Martial Arts Academy is opening soon, and I'd like to invite you to come out and give me some support, help me draw some attention. How about it?"

"Sure!" Tang Shiyun agreed immediately without even thinking. Whenever Ling Chen asked her for help, she was willing to do anything.

Two days later, just as the news reported, Tong Zhentian arrived in East Sea City.

That evening, Ling Chen took the opportunity to visit the hotel where Tong Zhentian was staying. Upon arriving at Tong Zhentian's floor, he saw the corridor filled with people, including martial artists and some martial arts enthusiasts.

Ling Chen cut through the crowd, heading straight to Tong Zhentian's guest room. However, a few men in suits surrounded the entrance, seemingly to prevent anyone from disturbing a distinguished guest.

"Hello!" Ling Chen politely said, "Could you please pass my message to Elder Tong, saying that Ling Chen is here with an important matter?"

The men in suits remained unmoved but cast a glance at a young man leaning against the wall. That young man had a cigarette hanging from his mouth and was playing with his phone, seeming completely out of place amidst the lively surroundings.

Seeing the actions of those men in suits, Ling Chen immediately understood that the young man was the one in charge.

So, Ling Chen stepped forward towards the young man and with a smile said, "Hello, my name is Ling Chen. I'm here to see Elder Tong. Could you please help relay the message?"

The young man seemed oblivious to Ling Chen's words, continuously looking at his phone.

After waiting for a while and seeing no response from the young man, Ling Chen couldn't help but speak again, "Hey, friend, I have something important to discuss with Elder Tong, could you..."

"Are you done talking?" The young man impatiently interrupted Ling Chen, "I've seen many people like you. Do you think Elder Tong is someone you can meet just because you want to? Look in the mirror, see what kind of person you are. Get lost! Stop bothering me."

"I..." Ling Chen opened his mouth, preparing to argue a bit with the man. But before he could speak, a hand suddenly reached out from behind and pulled Ling Chen's arm, dragging him backward.

Turning around, he saw a young man of unfamiliar appearance pulling him. Ling Chen was puzzled; he didn't seem to know this person.

"Friend, what are you doing?" Ling Chen asked curiously.

"Buddy, I'm just trying to help you so you won't suffer," the young man said. "It's pointless to plead with Ren Chong, a pure waste of time and breath. That guy looks down on people like us and acts like he's superior. Hmph! Besides having a good Master, what makes him better than us?"

After hearing the young man's words, Ling Chen was utterly confused, lost in bewilderment, not understanding a bit of it.

Seeing the bewildered look on Ling Chen's face, the young man slapped his forehead and with a smile said, "Sorry, I've said so much without introducing myself. My name is Tian Hanzhong. How about you?"

"Ling Chen."

Tian Hanzhong grinned, "You seem younger than me, so how about I call you Ling?"

Ling Chen didn't mind the nickname much, he asked, "Tian, what are you all doing here?"

"Oh, don't you know the reason? Then why are you here?" Tian Hanzhong paused, then without waiting for Ling Chen to answer, said, "Well, today the Martial Arts Association is holding a meeting here with the theme of promoting Huaxia martial arts and passing on its essence to future generations. Elder Tong, as an honorary president of the Martial Arts Association, announced on-site his intent to recruit five young disciples nationwide as registered disciples. Once this announcement was made, many people like me came hoping to become Elder Tong's disciple. Even as a registered disciple, Elder Tong is a master in the martial arts realm; just learning a bit from him is already enough."

So that's why!

After hearing Tian Hanzhong's explanation, Ling Chen finally understood why there were so many people gathered in the corridor.

"Tian, what's going on with that guy?" Ling Chen pointed at the young man who spoke rudely earlier and asked.

"He's Liu Tianming, the son of the Martial Arts Association's Vice President, also a martial artist. And because of his father's influence, he's considered the first predetermined registered disciple of Elder Tong. As you can see, he doesn't allow anyone to meet Elder Tong, just so no one else becomes a registered disciple of Elder Tong. If he's the only one, he'll have a chance to be promoted from registered disciple to direct disciple."

Chapter 1146 - 1153: Martial Arts Association (2)

Ling Chen just found it amusing. That Ren Chong is indeed naive. Does he really think that doing this will stop Tong Zhentian from recruiting registered disciples? A Heavenly List master is not someone a minor figure like him can influence. Moreover, with Tong Zhentian's personality, even if Ren Chong has strong backing, he won't accept him as a registered disciple if he finds out about what Ren Chong did.

Practicing martial arts, one must first learn ethics. Without even the most basic martial arts ethics, how could Tong Zhentian ever favor such a person?

"Tian, is Elder Tong in the room?"

"Yes, he is. Besides Elder Tong, the president and vice president of the Martial Arts Association are inside too. It seems they're discussing something."

At this moment, in the spacious and luxurious guest room, Tong Zhentian was dressed in a neatly pressed Zhongshan suit, sitting on a single sofa. To his left and right sat two middle-aged men, both around forty or fifty years old, each full of energy with deep inner strength, clearly Inner experts, not mere namesakes.

"Zhou Qian, Ren Han, we are old acquaintances now. This time, I've accepted the invitation to attend the meeting mainly to make some contributions to Huaxia martial arts. I'm no longer young, living each

year as if it's my last, and I might be buried any day. While I still have some energy left, I believe we should break the old shackles and create a new martial arts atmosphere, making Huaxia martial arts a common sport for everyone. Additionally, we need to reject outdated traditions; keeping real skills to ourselves without sharing will only doom Huaxia martial arts to lose its lineage."

Zhou Qian, the president of the Martial Arts Association, smiled and said, "Elder Tong is right, we indeed need to discard outdated customs and create a spring for Huaxia martial arts. However, these old habits are deeply rooted and can't be changed overnight. I think we can only proceed step-by-step, gradually changing people's mindset, letting them understand the current state of Huaxia martial arts."

"I agree with President Zhou." Ren Han echoed, "Elder Tong, many absolute skills in Huaxia martial arts are passed from master to disciple, and few would pass on their lifetime of learning to the public. For example, like a billionaire, do you think he'll pass all his wealth to his descendants or donate it all? I believe only a few without heirs would choose the latter."

Tong Zhentian continued, "That's why we must seek change. You two have known my old self for some time now. If every meeting is just formality like before, without any change, I would never come to East Sea City, wasting time with you. This time, I am recruiting five registered disciples to set an example and pass on all my lifetime learning. As for whether they have the aptitude to comprehend it, that's another matter."

Saying this, Tong Zhentian looked at Zhou Qian and said, "Your absolute skill is the Thirty-two Routes of Tantan Legs. To my knowledge, none of your disciples have learned its essence. I ask you, did you hold back when teaching them the skill?"

"Well..." Zhou Qian gave an awkward smile, seeming a bit embarrassed.

Tong Zhentian didn't continue questioning but turned his gaze to Ren Han beside him, "You have family martial arts skills. I once faced your father in battle; his Lanyang Saber Technique was very impressive. If he hadn't passed due to illness, he would surely have a place among the current Heavenly List masters. Lanyang Saber Technique consists of one hundred and eight moves; how many have you mastered now?"

"Eighty-six moves..." Ren Han said, feeling quite ashamed.

"Zhou, the reason no one learned your Thirty-two Routes of Tantan Legs is because you are stubbornly holding back, unwilling to pass the essence on to your disciples. If you encounter any unforeseen events in the future, the Thirty-two Routes of Tantan Legs will be lost because of you. As for you, Ren Han, the more formidable the skill, the more it requires comprehension rather than blind practice. Since neither you nor your son possess this comprehension, why not find another talented disciple to pass on the Lianyang Saber Technique? With your current attitude, in a few years, retaining even half of the one hundred and eight routes of Lianyang Saber Technique will be difficult. This is a bad habit in our martial arts world that must be changed. You two, as the president and vice president of the Martial Arts Association, have the responsibility to set an example and make everyone aware of your determination to reform."

Zhou Qian and Ren Han exchanged glances and quickly replied, "Elder Tong, don't worry. We will definitely change."

"I don't want you to just say it; I want pragmatic changes. If you fail to deliver results this time, don't come to me in the future. I don't have time to waste with you."

"Yes, we won't be perfunctory. Elder Tong, it's getting late. Please rest early; we won't disturb you." With that, Zhou Qian and Ren Han stood up, about to leave.

"Wait!" Tong Zhentian stopped them and asked, "What's going on outside? Since I came in, it's been noisy and hasn't stopped."

Ren Han quickly explained, "Elder Tong, didn't you say you want to recruit a few registered disciples? Once the news spread, many people rushed here, eager to see you, hoping to become your registered disciple. To me, this is nonsense; even if Elder Tong wants to recruit registered disciples, it shouldn't be something random but should go through a review. Yet, they refuse to listen and insist on barging in. I had no choice but to ask Ren Chong to guard outside to prevent them from disturbing you. Please rest; I'll immediately call for people to drive them away."

"It's not 'drive'—it's 'invite.' Understand? They are the future of martial arts, speak to them kindly and explain clearly, avoid using force indiscriminately. We are martial artists, not street thugs; everything must be done with reason." Pausing for a moment, Tong Zhentian then said, "Tell them that I will remain in East Sea City for a few more days. In a couple of days, I will find a place and personally conduct screening. If there's a suitable person, I will keep them as registered disciples."

"Yes, please rest well; we are leaving." After speaking, Zhou Qian signaled to Ren Han, and the two quickly walked out of the guest room.

Seeing Zhou Qian and Ren Han exit the guest room, Ren Chong, who was leaning against the wall, immediately stepped forward, "Dad, Uncle Zhou."

Ren Han glanced at the crowded corridor and shouted lightly, "Drive these people away, don't let them disturb Elder Tong's rest."

"Understood." Ren Chong nodded and immediately gestured to several suited men. Soon, several robust suited men formed a human wall and charged towards the crowd opposite them.

Although some of the people gathered in the corridor had practiced martial arts, the suited men were no simple individuals either; their physique indicated years of external skill training. Under their charge, the crowd fell like wheat in the wind, swiftly being pushed back.

Chapter 1147 - 1154: Martial Arts Association (Part 3)

Ling Chen and Tian Hanzhong mixed among the crowd, and as the crowd retreated, they were also impacted quite a bit. If Ling Chen hadn't been quick-eyed and swift to help stabilize Tian Hanzhong, he might have already been knocked to the ground.

Seeing the suited men mercilessly driving the crowd away, Ling Chen couldn't help but frown. This was too overbearing. From what he knew about Tong Zhentian, the man wouldn't do something like this.

His gaze shifted, and Ling Chen's attention fell on the three people not far away, including Ren Chong. Beside Ren Chong, stood two middle-aged men in well-tailored suits, exuding an imposing aura.

Experts!

Ling Chen squinted slightly, relying solely on intuition he could tell, those two middle-aged men were definitely not simple.

"Ling, watch out!"

As thoughts raced through his mind, Tian Hanzhong's voice suddenly came from beside him. Before Ling Chen could react, a strong hand had grabbed his shoulder. Looking closely, the owner of that large hand was one of the suited men.

The man grabbed Ling Chen's shoulder, seeming to want to push him out. Feeling the strong force, Ling Chen frowned slightly; the force used by the man was considerable, with no regard for whether Ling Chen could withstand it. An ordinary person, or an average martial arts practitioner, might get injured from this.

At this moment, that suited man looked at Ling Chen with some surprise, not expecting that this person could withstand his force.

Hmph! Overestimating oneself. The suited man coldly sneered, adding more force with his hands. However, Ling Chen remained unmoved, like a towering mountain, firmly rooted to the ground.

Failing twice in a row made the suited man feel quite embarrassed and angry. He let out a cold shout, and suddenly exerted more strength, pushing forcefully towards Ling Chen. Facing his opponent's attack, Ling Chen's lips curled up slightly, not taking the attack seriously at all.

As the hands pushed forward, Ling Chen's entire body shook, and powerful inner strength burst forth instantly. In no time, the suited man's feet left the ground and he flew out, landing heavily on the ground.

Hearing the commotion, Zhou Qian and his companions all turned their gaze towards Ling Chen. Nearby, Tian Hanzhong was also shocked, thinking Ling Chen would suffer a loss, but unexpectedly, the suited man was so vulnerable, he was sent flying just like that.

"Who is that person?" Zhou Qian asked. Those suited men were selected from his Martial Arts Academy to temporarily act as security for this meeting. In terms of strength, these people are not weak; normal martial artists, even three or four of them, wouldn't easily get close. Yet now, one of them was knocked to the ground by an unremarkable young man, piquing his interest.

"Who cares who he is? He dared to touch Uncle Zhou's people, I'll teach him a lesson." With that, Ren Chong strode forward, heading straight for Ling Chen.

"Ling, let's go, there's no need to get into conflict with them." Tian Hanzhong pulled at Ling Chen's arm, trying to drag him away, but Ling Chen's feet were as steady as a rock, not moving an inch. At this moment, Tian Hanzhong realized that this young man before him was very unusual.

However, despite his surprise, Tian Hanzhong kindly advised, "Ling, those two are Zhou Qian, the President of the Martial Arts Association, and Ren Han, the Vice President. They are both formidable experts. And that Ren Chong, he's said to be ranked tenth on the Tiger List. I know you're powerful, but compared to them, you're definitely at a disadvantage. Let's go, endure the moment for peace, take a step back to open wide horizons, we don't need to cause trouble here. Come on, I'll treat you to a drink later."

Ling Chen withdrew his arm from Tian Hanzhong's grasp, "Brother Tian, no need to worry about me, I'll be fine." After speaking, Ling Chen turned his head to look at Ren Chong, who was walking toward him.

"You!" Ren Chong stopped in front of Ling Chen, looking down with an arrogant expression, coldly saying, "Before I make a move, get out of here immediately and don't let me see you again. Otherwise, I'll make you... Ah!"

Before he could finish speaking, Ren Chong's voice suddenly turned into a scream. With a fierce kick from Ling Chen, Ren Chong lost his balance and had a close encounter with the ground.

"Tenth on the Tiger List?" Ling Chen looked at Ren Chong disdainfully, "Just a useless person, and you dare claim to be a Tiger List expert."

Ren Chong opened his mouth, wanting to say something, but the intense pain kept him from uttering a word.

"How dare you!" At this point, Ren Han and Zhou Qian quickly rushed over. Meanwhile, the attention of others who hadn't been driven away focused on them as well.

"Little Chong, are you okay?" Ren Han hurriedly helped Ren Chong up from the ground, full of worry and concern.

"Who are you?" Zhou Qian scrutinized Ling Chen, speaking in a deep voice, "Daring to make a move in broad daylight and injuring a member of the Martial Arts Association, do you really think no one can deal with you?"

Ling Chen shrugged, maintaining an indifferent expression, "I'm just a nobody, but you're allowed to drive people away, and I'm not allowed to retaliate? If it weren't for my good martial arts foundation, I'd probably have been injured by your people earlier." After speaking, Ling Chen turned around and pointed to the crowd behind him, "See for yourself, how many people have been hurt by your men."

"You..." Zhou Qian was about to speak again when Ren Han interrupted, coldly saying, "You have the audacity to hurt my son, now leave half of your life here first."

With that, Ren Han didn't waste any more words and launched an attack. Raising one hand high, like a steel blade, he struck fiercely towards Ling Chen's head.

An expert shows his skill as soon as he makes a move, and Ling Chen immediately felt the pressure. The opponent's move seemed simple, yet it contained powerful Hua Realm strength.

Earthly List expert!

As expected, this person's strength is formidable. As the Vice President of the Martial Arts Association, he indeed is not a person of empty reputation.

As the hand chop approached, Ling Chen did not dodge, slightly raising his strong fist and countered it with a punch.

Seeing Ling Chen's action, Zhou Qian and Ren Han couldn't help but sneer. Such an ignorant fellow, daring to confront an attack from an Earthly List expert directly—it was unquestionably a suicidal act.

Zhou Qian turned his eyes away, certain that the youth's arm would undoubtedly be crippled.

"Damn!"

Suddenly, a gasp of astonishment was heard as Tian Hanzhong's eyes went wide, looking at Ling Chen in disbelief. Just now, when Ling Chen was confronting Ren Han, he couldn't bear to watch. In his mind, Ling Chen couldn't possibly withstand Ren Han's attack. Yet, an incredible scene unfolded—Ling Chen not only blocked Ren Han's offensive, but his legs remained firmly rooted to the ground, not moving an inch.

Being on the defensive, the advantage should be with the offensive attacker. To stand without retreating is definitely a difficult task.

But Ling Chen managed it. From the playful smirk at the corner of his mouth, it seemed effortless.

"Is this all the capability of the Vice President of the Martial Arts Association?"

Facing Ling Chen's cold mockery, Ren Han's face immediately turned ugly. Over the years, he had never been so belittled.

Chapter 1148 - 1155: Tong Zhentian's Concerns (1)

At this moment, everyone present was stunned. The dignified Vice President of the Martial Arts Association, a master from the Earthly List, was humiliated by a youth in his twenties. However, people didn't feel angry; instead, they felt rather pleased.

Earlier, when Zhou Qian and his group ordered them to be driven out, everyone felt uncomfortable. But, due to the opposing party's status and their prowess, they dared not speak out. Now, with someone willing to stand up for everyone, they were certainly happy to see Zhou Qian and the others suffer.

"Good, no wonder you dare to cause a ruckus here, I want to see how capable you really are." Ren Han scoffed coldly, retracting his hand knife, and poised to strike again.

"Stop!" Suddenly, a deep voice rang out, like a morning bell and evening drum, striking the hearts of everyone present.

Everyone looked up, only to see Tong Zhentian appear in the hallway.

"Elder Tong?" Zhou Qian's expression changed slightly, and he hurriedly approached, wearing a conciliatory smile, awkwardly saying, "Elder Tong, my apologies for disturbing your rest. Don't worry, I'll handle this immediately."

"No need." Tong Zhentian said coldly, "Zhou Qian, did I not say earlier in the room that you should not be rough with them, but persuade them nicely? Did you treat my words as if they were nothing?"

"No." Zhou Qian quickly explained, "Elder Tong, I..."

"Enough! You don't need to explain to me. I'm neither blind nor deaf. I thought you would heed my advice. Now it seems, what I said before was all for nothing. Don't invite me to such useless meetings in the future; they're full of bureaucratic nonsense. How does this help the Martial Arts world? It's because of people like you that Huaxia's Martial Arts scene is getting worse. To put it bluntly, you're just occupying a position and not doing your job. From today on, I will no longer serve as the honorary president of the Martial Arts Association. Find someone else."

Upon hearing this, Zhou Qian panicked. The Martial Arts Association's current reputation and influence largely relied on Tong Zhentian's presence. As long as this martial arts grandmaster was there, even in a nominal position, the association would immediately elevate several levels. Before Tong Zhentian joined the Martial Arts Association, no matter where they went, they received no respect. Especially when interacting with martial arts sects, they were simply disregarded.

However, ever since Tong Zhentian became an honorary president, who in the martial arts world didn't give him some respect?

Now, having offended this big figure, how could the Martial Arts Association continue in the future?

"Elder Tong, I was careless, please don't take it to heart. Give me another chance, I promise I won't disappoint you." Zhou Qian immediately admitted his mistake. In front of everyone, at this moment, he couldn't care less about face, as long as he could persuade Tong Zhentian to withdraw his decision, he was willing to do anything.

At this moment, Ren Han also realized the seriousness of the matter. In the martial arts world, one cannot offend the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, nor can one offend Tong Zhentian. There's nothing to

be done; his influence is too considerable. Without Tong Zhentian's protection, their position is hard to maintain.

Immediately, Ren Han gently kicked Ren Chong, no words needed, Ren Chong knew what his father meant.

"Sir Tong, don't be angry, it's my fault, I was too impulsive just now, it has nothing to do with my dad and Uncle Zhou." In front of Tong Zhentian, Ren Chong no longer had even a trace of arrogance, appearing self-reproachful, "Sir Tong, actually, don't blame me, I did try to persuade nicely, but they refused to listen and retaliated with violence, especially him..." Ren Chong pointed grittingly at Ling Chen not far away and said, "I hadn't even finished speaking when he attacked, he is simply the scum of our Martial Arts community. Sir Tong, you must punish such people well."

"Are you referring to him?" Tong Zhentian glanced at Ling Chen expressionlessly, "From what I know about him, if you hadn't spoken offensively to provoke him, he wouldn't have acted. Simply speaking of character and Martial Arts Ethics, I believe you don't compare to him. Ren Chong, your father is the Vice President of the Martial Arts Association, and with Zhou Qian's backing, you have a strong background. Recently, I've heard many stories of your 'heroic' deeds, a lot of people who crossed you ended up in the hospital. I didn't intervene because you're still young and impulsive, which is understandable. Besides, you're not my disciple, so I'm not obligated to guide you. Also, I wanted to see how Ren Han disciplines his son. Unfortunately, you haven't changed at all, but rather worsened. Fortunately, this time you encountered Ling Chen. If it were another undercover master, your life might have been in danger."

Upon hearing this, Zhou Qian's heart stirred, and he glanced at Ling Chen behind him, asking, "Elder Tong, you... you know the young man?"

Tong Zhentian didn't reply to him but instead gestured to Ling Chen.

"Ling... Ling Mr. Ling." Thinking about Ling Chen's recently displayed prowess, Tian Hanzhong hurriedly changed his address, afraid of unintentionally offending him.

Ling Chen smiled slightly, "Tian, just call me brother, no need to change the terms."

"That... Ling brother, do you really know Elder Tong?"

Ling Chen nodded, smiling back, "I do know him. Do you want me to introduce you?"

"That wouldn't be very fitting." Tian Hanzhong hesitated, wanting to meet for sure, but he was worried about his qualification. After all, to him, Tong Zhentian was a lofty master only to be observed from afar.

"What's wrong with that, no need to be afraid, Elder Tong won't eat people. Besides, didn't you come here to become Elder Tong's registered disciple? If you have the talent, maybe I could speak a few good words for you in front of Elder Tong."

"Really?" Tian Hanzhong's eyes sparkled, and he hastily expressed gratitude: "Ling brother, thank you, thank you so much."

Tian Hanzhong knew his capabilities very well, having no power or influence, and no background; he was here to try his luck, hoping that a pie might fall from the sky, giving him a real chance to become Tong Zhentian's registered disciple.

Now it seems, not only is he lucky, but extremely fortunate beyond measure.

Taking Tian Hanzhong to Tong Zhentian's side, Ling Chen greeted him and gave a simple introduction for Tian Hanzhong.

"Ling Chen, you've met these two people, I'll introduce them to you."

"Elder Tong, no need, Tian already mentioned them to me, the two pillars of the Martial Arts Association, Mr. Zhou and Mr. Ren, pleased to meet you." He said 'pleased,' but Ling Chen showed no expression, lukewarm, with no intent to associate.

It wasn't that he was too aloof, but he disdained associating with people who thrive on bullying others.

Tong Zhentian also noticed Ling Chen's reluctance to communicate with Zhou Qian and his group, thus did not force him.

Chapter 1149 - 1156: Tong Zhentian's Concerns (2)

"Zhou Qian, you and the others can go back first. I want to have a private chat with Ling."

"Yes, we won't disturb you then." Zhou Qian quickly responded. From Tong Zhentian's tone, it seemed he wasn't planning to pursue the matter further, which was good news for him. He dared not say more and immediately left with Ren Han and his son.

Among the three of them, Ren Chong was the most upset. He originally hoped to leave a good impression in front of Tong Zhentian and make a mark. But in the end, not only did he fail to make a mark, he didn't even leave a good impression. It was obvious that the position of Registered Disciple was out of his reach. Thinking that all of this was caused by Ling Chen, Ren Chong was furious.

"Alright, stop overthinking. Take this as a lesson, and be more humble in the future. Don't go looking for trouble everywhere." Ren Han, understanding his son's thoughts, scolded softly, trying to dissuade him from thoughts of revenge.

Ren Chong, unwilling to accept it, said, "Dad, I was injured by that guy and lost the qualification to be a Registered Disciple. Shouldn't I seek revenge?"

"Revenge? Hmph! You have the nerve to talk to me about revenge." Ren Han felt utterly exasperated, wondering how he had raised such a foolish son. "Ignoring the fact that Tong Zhentian is backing him, just that kid's strength is enough to crush you with a single finger. You still think of revenge? Don't end up losing your life in the process."

Silent all this while, Zhou Qian asked, "Ren, you fought with Ling Chen. Is he very strong?"

Ren Han nodded, his expression grave, "Extremely strong. Although I didn't use my full strength, that kid was also holding back. Moreover, judging by his confident demeanor, his skills shouldn't be much inferior to ours."

"How interesting. Such a young Earthly List expert, I thought only the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion could produce one. Do you think he might be..."

Ren Han's face slightly changed, and he whispered, "You suspect that Ling Chen is from the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion?"

"Very likely. When Elder Tong spoke to him just now, you heard it too. He didn't call him by name directly but addressed him as 'Ling.' Such treatment isn't something an ordinary person can enjoy. Ren, luckily they didn't pursue the matter, or we'd all be in deep trouble."

Ren Han drew a cold breath, feeling a profound sense of fear.

"You useless thing, it's all because of you that we almost got ruined. Tonight you'll fly back to Beijing and stay at home obediently. Without my permission, you're not allowed to go out. If you dare disobey, I'll break your leg," Ren Han said coldly, venting his anger entirely on Ren Chong.

Inside the hotel.

"Elder Tong, Tian is my friend. I heard you're recruiting Registered Disciples, and he'd like to give it a try. Could you give him a chance?"

Tong Zhentian scrutinized Tian Hanzhong, then nodded, "Since you recommend him, I'll give him a chance. But let me be upfront, I don't accept just anyone. If he doesn't meet the standards, I'll choose someone else."

"Of course."

"Alright! Leave your contact information, and you can head back. I'll have someone notify you when the test is scheduled."

"Yes." Tian Hanzhong quickly replied, "Thank you, Elder Tong, Ling."

After Tian Hanzhong left, only Ling Chen and Tong Zhentian remained in the spacious living room.

Tong Zhentian brewed a cup of tea and placed it in front of Ling Chen, asking casually, "What's your relationship with the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion now? Still at a deadlock?"

Ling Chen smiled wryly, "Elder Tong, after what happened, do you think it's possible for me to have any dealings with the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion? Honestly, I'm thankful they're not causing me trouble."

"Su Zhengyang and his wife's death had nothing to do with you, so what are you afraid of? Elder Su is not senile yet. Besides, you were his disciple, so he ought to remember that bond."

"I've severed ties with the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. I think... Elder Su won't recognize me as his disciple anymore." At this point, Ling Chen didn't want to continue this topic and changed the subject, "Elder Tong, those two guys from the Martial Arts Association just now are really unimpressive. Although their skills aren't weak, their character is too poor."

"I know." Tong Zhentian sighed helplessly, "I've been dealing with them for so many years. Don't I understand what kind of people they are? But what can I do? I'm at a point where I have no choice but to pin my hopes on them. Otherwise, I would've asked them to leave right away."

Hearing this, Ling Chen was puzzled and asked, "Elder Tong, what do you mean by that? Do you really care about people like them?"

"Ling Chen, you don't understand the Martial Arts community's current state. The Martial Arts world is facing a huge crisis. If it's not handled well, there might be a break in the heritage, and countless skills left by our predecessors will be lost. It would be a heavy blow for the future of Martial Arts," Tong Zhentian explained. "What I'm doing now is trying to save the situation and keep a glimmer of hope for the Martial Arts world."

"Zhou Qian and Ren Han are influenced by bureaucracy, focusing solely on their interests and disregarding the future of Martial Arts. But among the many candidates, those two are considered the better ones. So I'm hoping to persuade them to join me in fulfilling this mission."

"Elder Tong, you're a leader in the Martial Arts world with significant influence. Why not take action yourself? Besides, since you're closely connected with the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, their support would likely double the effectiveness."

Tong Zhentian chuckled, "You think too simply. From what you know of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, do you think they'd support me? Ling Chen, there's no one else here; I'll be honest. While I'm on good terms with the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, it's only on a personal level. In terms of the bigger picture, the real issue is with the Pavilion. They possess countless cultivation techniques, including some lost ones. However, the Pavilion keeps these techniques locked up, and even their members receive only selective instruction. Forget about outsiders; they don't even have a chance to access them. As a result, martial artists are highly protective of their techniques, unwilling to easily share them with outsiders, sometimes even withholding some secret techniques from their disciples. Think about it, in such an environment, how can Huaxia's Martial Arts be passed down and progress?"

"When Su He was in charge, I brought this up, but he saw it as a trivial matter, a mere joke. So, the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion is the epitome of outdated customs, but no one can change it due to its status and influence in the Martial Arts world, which has always been my headache. Because the Pavilion won't cooperate, I can only turn to the Martial Arts Association to convey my ideas and raise awareness among more people."

Chapter 1150 - 1157: Tong Zhentian's Concerns (3)

After listening to Tong Zhentian's complaints, Ling Chen couldn't help but laugh. Truly, you search high and low only to find it effortlessly. Before coming, he was still thinking about how to invite Tong Zhentian to the ribbon-cutting ceremony of Dragon Tiger Hall. Now, it seems that as long as he asks, it will be absolutely certain, because Tong Zhentian's ideas are quite similar to his.

Dragon Tiger Hall will be an open Martial Arts Academy, where anyone can come to learn martial arts. Whether it's lost martial arts manuals or other skills, as long as the conduct passes the test, anyone can practice.

"By the way!" Tong Zhentian seemed to think of something and asked, "Ling Chen, have you heard of Dragon Tiger Hall? I've heard quite a lot about it lately, and it seems this Dragon Tiger Hall is in East Sea City. It's been quite the talk recently, with many martial arts practitioners discussing it. You've lived in East Sea City for a long time, you must have heard of it, right?"

Ling Chen smiled slightly, unexpectedly Tong Zhentian had also heard about Dragon Tiger Hall.

"Elder Tong, to be honest, my visit this time is precisely because of Dragon Tiger Hall."

"Is that so?" Tong Zhentian asked with interest, "What is your relationship with Dragon Tiger Hall?"

"Dragon Tiger Hall was established by me. In a few days, Dragon Tiger Hall will officially open to the public. I want to invite some heavyweight figures to cut the ribbon for Dragon Tiger Hall. I happened to see the news that you were coming to East Sea City for a meeting, so I wanted to invite you to the ribbon-cutting. I wonder if you would be willing."

Tong Zhentian laughed and said, "I couldn't tell, you have this interest. Alright, since it's your Martial Arts Academy opening, I will definitely attend to show my support. Anyway, I'm staying in East Sea City these days, and there's nothing much to do." Ling Chen, why did you suddenly decide to open a Martial Arts Academy? The last time we chatted, you didn't seem to have this ambition."

Ling Chen shrugged, "You're right. I never thought I would take this path either. Many times, due to various factors, this thing came into being." After pausing, Ling Chen continued, "Elder Tong, to put it accurately, Dragon Tiger Hall is not an ordinary Martial Arts Academy. My idea is to turn Dragon Tiger Hall into a martial arts force, similar to the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion."

Upon hearing this, Tong Zhentian was slightly taken aback, his smile suddenly faded.

"Ling Chen, it's good for young people to have ambitions, but building a force like the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion is not something that can be achieved just because you want it. The Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion has a history of hundreds of years with rich heritage. Its influence and status were built step by step by countless ancestors who invested time and energy. Dragon Tiger Hall is just an emerging force, and to reach the level of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, it would take at least a hundred years."

"I understand this, but a hundred years is too long, I cannot wait until then. According to my plan, within three years, I want Dragon Tiger Hall to become a martial arts force that can rival the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion."

"Impossible!" Tong Zhentian dismissed outright without a thought. "No matter how strong your abilities are, it's impossible to achieve this within three years. Ling Chen, the path must be tread step by step; you can't become fat with one bite. What is most important for a force? A solid foundation. You're already eager to run before you've learned to walk—how can that succeed? You are the most gifted and virtuous young person I've seen, which is why I highly regard you. I hope you can be down-to-earth and accomplish great things."

Tong Zhentian worried Ling Chen wanted to reach the skies in a single bound, and couldn't help advising him.

Ling Chen, brimming with confidence, smiled, "Elder Tong, I understand your meaning. You're right, my starting point may be later than the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, but the height I stand is comparable to it." Before Tong Zhentian could say anything, Ling Chen chimed in, "Elder Tong, it's hard to explain now. How about this—do you have time tomorrow? I'll pick you up to visit Dragon Tiger Hall. Once you go, you'll understand why I have this confidence."

"Alright." Tong Zhentian nodded and said, "Since you've said so, I must go and see."

"It's settled then." With that, Ling Chen got up and said, "Elder Tong, it's getting late. You should rest first. Tomorrow morning, I'll drive over to pick you up."

After seeing Ling Chen to the door and watching his departing figure, Tong Zhentian withdrew his gaze and sighed quietly.

Having lived so long, he could guess quite a bit without needing everything spelled out. The sudden establishment of a martial arts force by Ling Chen at this juncture, with its goal aimed directly at the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, already explained many things.

It seems that after years of tranquility, the martial arts world is finally going to stir up a storm again.

...

The next day.

At nine in the morning, Ling Chen parked his car at the hotel entrance, waiting for Tong Zhentian to appear.

"Mr. Ling, coming so early to meet Elder Tong?"

A voice came up, and Ling Chen turned to see Zhou Qian and Ren Han walking over side by side. Both had friendly smiles, exuding a signal of goodwill.

"Good morning, Presidents." As the saying goes, don't strike a smiling face, Ling Chen greeted politely.

Ren Han said apologetically, "Mr. Ling, I'm really sorry about last night. If there was any offense, please don't take it to heart."

"Last night?" Ling Chen said with a faint smile, "I've already forgotten what happened last night."

"Haha! Mr. Ling is truly a leader among the younger generation, with a stomach that can hold a boat." Zhou Qian laughed and said, "We might not know each other if we don't fight. How about this—I'll host and we'll have lunch together to properly exchange thoughts. Mr. Ling, how does that sound?"

Facing Zhou Qian's invitation, Ling Chen smiled and gracefully declined, "I appreciate your kindness, but I've already made plans with Elder Tong for later to handle some private matters. Another day, I'll host."

"Alright, since Mr. Ling has plans, we won't insist. Another day then." Zhou Qian was straightforward, not pressing further. But he regarded Ling Chen more highly—being able to arrange with Tong Zhentian privately showed that Tong Zhentian valued this young man greatly.

It seems that fostering a good relationship with him will only benefit the future.

In the midst of conversation, Tong Zhentian appeared in a Zhongshan suit from the hotel.

"Elder Tong!"

"Elder Tong!"

The three greeted in unison.

"Zhou, I'm going out with Ling Chen for a bit. You handle today's meeting. I won't be attending. As always, avoid idle talk, empty words, and bragging; act instead of speaking, understand?" Tong Zhentian instructed.

Zhou Qian, smiling wryly, said, "Rest assured, Elder Tong, we know what to do."

"That's best then."

After speaking, Tong Zhentian got into Ling Chen's Audi.

More than half an hour passed, and Ling Chen drove to the outside of Dragon Tiger Hall. After parking, Ling Chen led Tong Zhentian straight into Dragon Tiger Hall.