

The Beauty 1161

Chapter 1161 Arrows from the Sleeve (Part 2)

"Please everyone, stay calm!" Tong Zhentian shouted loudly. However, the noise in the hall was so chaotic that Tong Zhentian's voice was drowned out.

Ling Chen squinted his eyes, scanning his gaze around, searching for the assailant's whereabouts. The arrow was shot from within the crowd earlier, but everyone's attention was focused on the stage at that moment, and they didn't notice the assailant. Now, the person had already blended into the crowd and disappeared without a trace.

"Sixth Brother." Qiu Yong's voice came, and Ling Chen turned his head to ask, "Big Brother, what's up?"

Qiu Yong held the arrow he had just pulled out from the ground and said, "This is a wrist arrow, that person must be wearing hidden weapon equipment. Ask everyone to check their wrists, and we'll know who the assailant is."

Hearing this, Ling Chen nodded and immediately called Tang Guolun over to inform him of Qiu Yong's suggestion.

At this moment, under Tang Guolun's organization, dozens of subordinates formed a square, encircling everyone present.

"Everyone, please stay calm to avoid unnecessary panic." Tong Zhentian shouted in a voice mixed with Inner Strength, like rolling thunder, instantly reaching everyone's ears. Before long, the crowd gradually quieted down, focusing their gaze back on Tong Zhentian.

"As you can see, someone is trying to harm Dragon Tiger Hall. Our purpose at Dragon Tiger Hall is to revitalize Huaxia's Martial Arts community, and doing so will surely disrupt some people's interests. I just didn't expect them to be so bold as to attack us in public. The assailant must be among the crowd, and there is more than one. Please cooperate to help capture them." Pausing for a moment, Tong Zhentian added, "Anyone who helps capture the assailant will be generously rewarded by Dragon Tiger Hall."

Hearing the words 'generously rewarded', everyone's eyes immediately lit up. Just now, Ling Chen displayed five lost Martial Arts secret books in succession. Helping Dragon Tiger Hall might not necessarily reward one with a lost Martial Arts book, but obtaining some other secret Martial Arts book should be possible, and that's certainly a profitable deal.

Thinking of this, everyone's eyes glowed green, like hungry wolves searching for prey, staring at the people around them, trying to find the assailant among them.

"Everyone, the assailant is wearing a wrist arrow, please cooperate by raising your hands and rolling up your sleeves."

Tang Guolun's voice sounded, and everyone cooperated, raising their hands. Ling Chen and Tong Zhentian stood on the stage, looking one by one, and did not find any wrist arrows. After scanning a few times, Ling Chen stepped forward and said, "Now, please stay where you are and look at your feet."

As soon as he finished speaking, surprised exclamations came from the crowd: "There's a wrist arrow on the ground."

"There's one here too."

"I see one too."

"..."

For a moment, everyone cried out. Ling Chen slightly raised the corners of his mouth, it seemed his guess was correct. When Tang Guolun made the request, the assailant, afraid of being discovered, must have secretly removed the wrist arrow and thrown it on the ground. However, he had anticipated this point, which is why he asked everyone to stay still. Wherever a wrist arrow was found, an assailant must be present.

However, what surprised Ling Chen was that all the attackers were wearing wrist arrows. In doing so, they undoubtedly exposed their hiding places.

After discovering the wrist arrows, Tang Guolun made a gesture, and the security personnel surrounding the area quickly moved into the crowd, surrounding all the people near the wrist arrows.

"Elder Tong, what are you doing?"

"Please everyone, remain calm. We will check one by one, and we will not wrongly accuse any innocent person involved in the incident."

While Tong Zhentian was speaking, Ling Chen had already jumped off the stage, walking towards a few men in the distance. Looking at the seven men surrounded by security personnel, Ling Chen smiled and said, "Please put your hands out."

Upon hearing this, the men hesitated but stretched their hands towards Ling Chen to prove their innocence.

Ling Chen scrutinized a few of them, his gaze slightly rising and directly locking onto one man. Feeling Ling Chen's gaze, the man's face changed slightly, and he involuntarily retreated.

Trying to escape? Ling Chen sneered, lightly tapping his toes with no warning. His steel fist carried with it a ferocious force and struck hard.

As the fist rapidly approached, the man quickly crossed his arms, shielding his chest. However, Ling Chen's attacks were not so easy to block unless the person was an Earthly List expert. However, although there are many experts on the Earthly List around the world, they are not common.

The fierce force of the punch erupted, and the man's arms instantly emitted a cracking sound. Simultaneously, accompanied by a painful scream, the man's body flew backward violently, crashing into the side of the stage, vomiting blood non-stop.

Ling Chen glanced at the man who couldn't get up, let out a cold snort, and said, "Everyone carefully check who has marks on their wrists, that person must be the assailant."

Yes indeed!

The crowd suddenly realized why hadn't they thought of that? Since the assailant had worn wrist arrows, even if they took them off, they would leave marks on the skin that couldn't recover in a short time. With Ling Chen's prompt, everyone began looking at the people next to them, searching for wrist marks.

"Go!"

A light shout was heard, and a man, not waiting to be discovered, had already broken through the security personnel's encirclement and ran towards the Dragon Tiger Hall gate.

Whew!

Suddenly, the sound of something breaking through the air resonated. Before everyone could react, they heard a cry of pain. The man who tried to escape had already fallen to the ground, an arrow embedded in his leg.

On the stage, Zhang Zhongfeng slowly lowered his bow, his expression calm, as if the astonished voices surrounding him had nothing to do with him.

Arrow God!

With Zhang Zhongfeng here, who would dare to flee?

It didn't take long for more than a dozen hidden assailants in the crowd to be apprehended. At Ling Chen's signal, Tang Guolun ordered the assailants to be sent to an interrogation room and closely monitored.

"Everyone, please wait a moment, we will be right back." Before leaving, Ling Chen glanced at the not far away Wang Hao, whose face was iron green, and walked straight into the main building. The group of people captured earlier was at most a smokescreen meant to numb Ling Chen into believing the danger had passed. In reality, the real killer move was yet to come. It must be said, Wang Hao had some brains, knowing to lower Ling Chen's guard first.

However, what Wang Hao didn't think about was that Ling Chen was different from him. Ling Chen had truly experienced life and death, always lurking on the brink of danger, and vigilance had become a habit for him. Even in his sleep, he never lets down his guard, let alone an event as significant as today. Furthermore, Ling Chen had to guard against not only the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion but also others. The exposure of those people by Wang Hao not only failed to lower Ling Chen's vigilance but rather increased it, something Wang Hao likely did not anticipate.

Chapter 1162 Pushed Too Far

Back at the main building, the moment he stepped inside, Tong Zhentian couldn't help but curse out loud, "Damn it! The people from the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion are really going too far."

Qiu Yong and the others beside him remained silent, but none of them were in a good mood. They had considered such a situation before, but hadn't expected the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion to be so shameless, repeatedly sabotaging the ribbon-cutting ceremony. Although they knew it was the work of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, they had no evidence to prove it. Without proof, rash accusations would only provoke retaliation from the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion.

Seeing everyone in silence, Ling Chen suddenly smiled, catching Qiu Yong and the others by surprise.

"Ling Cheng, why are you smiling?" Yuan Yun asked, "At a time like this, you can still laugh."

Ling Chen slightly lifted the corner of his mouth, smiling as he said, "Since the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion is disregarding their reputation and insists on troubling us, we have no need to hold back."

Upon hearing this, Tong Zhentian replied, "Are you planning to make trouble for the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion in public? We don't have any evidence to prove they did it. The Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion is not easy to deal with; they must have a backup plan. I suggest we endure today and wait for another opportunity to settle accounts with them."

"Elder Tong, I understand your concern; you don't want things to escalate. But at this point, the reputation of Dragon Tiger Hall has already been affected. If we do nothing, people will think Dragon Tiger Hall is easy to bully. So, we cannot let this matter rest."

Then, as if recalling something, Qiu Yong said, "Didn't we apprehend several offenders? Interrogate a few of them. As long as they expose the mastermind, we can legitimately seek trouble with the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion."

Ling Chen waved his hand, "No need for such complexity. These people are members of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, prepared to be captured before acting. So, even if we interrogate them rigorously, we may not get anything useful. Moreover, there are many outside waiting; we can't waste too much time."

"Then what should we do?"

With a smile, Ling Chen declared, "Since the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion wants to destroy Dragon Tiger Hall, I must show them that Dragon Tiger Hall is not a pushover. Whoever dares to bully me, I won't let them off easily." As he spoke, a bright glint flashed across Ling Chen's eyes, sharp and intense.

In the venue, guests murmured among themselves, discussing the recent incidents. What was expected to be a simple ribbon-cutting ceremony had turned into a sequence of unexpected events. Clearly, someone detests Dragon Tiger Hall. Amid the discussions, people's gazes occasionally drifted toward where the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion was situated. From the recent occurrences, the suspicion towards the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion was the greatest. Wang Hao consistently spoke disrespectfully, clearly intending to cause trouble. Therefore, the group of perpetrators earlier was likely under the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion's instruction.

But just as everyone engaged in heated discussions, Ling Chen and Tong Zhentian emerged from the main building, followed closely by Qiu Yong and the others.

At this moment, keen observers would notice a small detail: Ling Chen and Tong Zhentian appeared to walk side-by-side, but Tong Zhentian slightly lagged half a shoulder behind Ling Chen, indicating that Ling Chen would fully take charge of the upcoming events.

Under the watchful eyes of hundreds of guests, Ling Chen led the group directly through the crowd towards the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. Not just the guests, even Tong Zhentian and the others were unsure of Ling Chen's actions. In the earlier discussion, Ling Chen hadn't mentioned his plan to everyone. So now, they were taking it step by step.

Soon, Ling Chen stood before Wang Hao. Despite Su He sitting right beside him, Ling Chen paid no attention to Su He and instead focused on Wang Hao.

Staring directly into Ling Chen's ink-deep eyes, Wang Hao sneered, "What are you doing?"

The originally expressionless Ling Chen suddenly grinned, responding, "Nothing much, just wanted to greet you and, incidentally, your ancestors to the eighteenth generation."

At these words, the entire venue erupted. Damn! This was the first time anyone had heard such an elegant way of cursing.

Wang Hao's expression changed slightly; he hadn't expected Ling Chen to utter such harsh words under everyone's gaze. Anger surged, and his eyes showed a trace of murderous intent as he coldly replied, "Ling Chen, if you dare, repeat what you just said."

"Do you want me to greet your ancestors to the eighteenth generation again? Fine! It's the first time I've seen someone actively seek out insults. But insulting isn't thrilling enough, getting right to action is more satisfying. What do you say?"

As soon as he finished speaking, without allowing Wang Hao another word, Ling Chen's steel-like fist was thrown forward.

Upon witnessing Ling Chen's move, Wang Hao was shocked; he hadn't anticipated Ling Chen to strike suddenly. Without much thought, he took a step back, evading Ling Chen's attack and widening the distance between them.

"Ling Chen, you're crazy! I haven't offended you." Wang Hao roared in anger.

"Wang, you know exactly what you've done; don't tell me those attackers earlier have nothing to do with you."

Hearing Ling Chen's words, everyone present suddenly understood. Their suspicions were correct; those people were secretly directed by the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, perhaps orchestrated by Wang Hao. Otherwise, why would Ling Chen seek out Wang Hao of all people?

Wow!

Today's spectacle is becoming increasingly entertaining.

Many people actually admired Ling Chen. Despite the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion's well-established status, others, even knowing it was their doing, wouldn't openly challenge them because it wouldn't benefit themselves. Furthermore, Dragon Tiger Hall had only recently been established; confronting the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion now was clearly unwise.

Bravery without strategy... That might be the most fitting evaluation of Ling Chen.

Those who accomplish great things don't nitpick over minor details; if one fusses over every little thing, the road ahead will be hard to travel far.

At this moment, Qiu Yong and the others were somewhat anxious; not expecting Ling Chen to suddenly engage Wang Hao without a word of greeting was surprising to everyone. But having reached this point, they couldn't put a stop to it.

Among the crowd, Tong Zhentian alone diverted his attention away from Ling Chen and Wang Hao. He kept a close eye on Su He beside them to prevent any interference. However, throughout, Su He kept his eyes shut as if everything happening around him had nothing to do with him, showing no intent to help.

"Ling Chen, you're slandering me without evidence. What proof do you have that I did it?" Wang Hao, having dodged two waves of Ling Chen's attacks, angrily and loudly demanded.

Ling Chen withdrew his fists, glaring intently at Wang Hao, sneering, "Do you think I need any proof to prove?" With that, before Wang Hao could react, Ling Chen lightly tapped his toe, launching another assault.

Chapter 1163 - 1170: Heaven and Earth Reversal (Part 1)

"Do you think I need any evidence to prove it?"

Upon hearing Ling Chen's words, everyone understood. Ling Chen didn't care about evidence. Whether there was any or not, he was going to make an example of him today. More precisely, Ling Chen wanted to use the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion as a way to establish his might. Everyone feared the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion and dared not offend them. Since that was the case, Ling Chen wanted to show everyone that the Dragon Tiger Hall was not afraid of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion.

Facing Ling Chen's storm-like attacks, Wang Hao constantly shifted positions to dodge Ling Chen's steel fists. Since the battle at Yangxin Pavilion, almost half a year had passed. At that time, Wang Hao was already an Earthly List expert, while Ling Chen was merely a Dragon List expert. However, with his versatile tactics, Ling Chen successfully defeated Wang Hao and claimed victory.

Ever since that battle, Wang Hao hasn't been reconciled. He felt it was his own mistake, and judged purely on personal strength, Ling Chen was far from his opponent.

Now, half a year later, as the two faced off again, Wang Hao found Ling Chen's strength had improved rapidly, not much inferior to his own.

After dodging several waves of attacks from Ling Chen, Wang Hao's expression darkened, and he coldly shouted, "Ling Chen, I've been lenient everywhere, don't blame me for being impolite if you continue to press me like this."

"Why all the nonsense? Back at Yangxin Pavilion, you lost to me and haven't been convinced since. I'm giving you a chance today to see what you're capable of." With those words, Ling Chen showed no signs of holding back, his attacks continuously and crazily pounced on Wang Hao.

Under Ling Chen's fierce attack, Wang Hao retreated step by step, soon reaching the edge of the stage. In a sudden lunge, Ling Chen planted his feet on the ground, leveraged forward, his speed rapidly accelerating as he lashed a whip kick at Wang Hao's neck.

As the violent wind struck, Wang Hao unhesitatingly tapped his hands lightly on the stage edge, his body bounced upward, landing steadily back onto the stage, avoiding Ling Chen's deadly strike. Seeing Wang Hao retreat onto the stage, Ling Chen said nothing and immediately pursued.

In a moment, everyone's eyes were fixed on Ling Chen and Wang Hao. They were eager to see who was more outstanding between the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion's top disciple and Ling Chen. More interestingly, one was Su He's apprentice, the other guided by Su He, both were considered disciples of the world's top martial arts master. Setting everything else aside, this match was very intriguing.

As for Su He, he kept his eyes closed from beginning to end, sitting quietly as if the happenings around him were none of his concern.

On stage, Wang Hao took off his coat and threw it aside. Having lost to Ling Chen last time, he couldn't afford to lose again this time. Not only did he want to win, he also aimed to defeat Ling Chen thoroughly, to let everyone present know that the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion was the true Martial Arts overlord.

"Ling Chen, since you're courting death, I'll fulfill your wish today."

Suddenly, Wang Hao tapped his foot, and his body instantly transformed into a fleeting shadow, disappearing from Ling Chen's sight. Seeing the opponent's move, Ling Chen's eyebrows slightly raised, a hint of seriousness in his eyes.

Nine Yang Qiankun Step!

Unexpectedly, Su He had passed the Nine Yang Qiankun Step to Wang Hao. If it was before, Ling Chen could use the Nine Yang Qiankun Step to maneuver around Wang Hao and gain the upper hand. At present, having lost his only advantage coupled with slightly inferior strength to Wang Hao, defeating Wang Hao was undoubtedly a challenging task.

Taking a deep breath, Ling Chen cleared his mind, maintaining calm, his ears capturing the surrounding sounds. Since his eyes couldn't detect Wang Hao's position, he had to rely on his ears to discern the opponent's location.

A surge of wind approached, as Ling Chen, waiting silently in place, swiftly rotated and punched out straight at Wang Hao's body. However, before his fist could make contact, Ling Chen saw just a blur as Wang Hao disappeared once again.

Seeing this situation, Ling Chen couldn't help but furrow his brows. This wouldn't do, standing stationary like this was too passive, placing him at a disadvantage. Moreover, he had no method to counter the Nine Yang Qiankun Step.

As thoughts raced through his mind, Wang Hao's attack approached once more. This time, Ling Chen didn't calculate Wang Hao's location nor defend. As shadows flitted, Ling Chen performed the Nine Yang Qiankun Step instantly. Seeing Ling Chen vanish before him, Wang Hao dared not be careless, watching the surroundings vigilantly. Meanwhile, the Nine Yang Qiankun Step danced beneath their feet, both transforming into fleeting shadows, swiftly moving across the stage.

Observing the changes on stage, the audience below felt as if their eyes were dazzled, unable to clearly discern Ling Chen's and Wang Hao's positions, only seeing two figures shifting left and right, indistinguishable from one another. Among the crowd, perhaps only Tong Zhentian and Su He could grasp all the changes on stage.

"Elder Tong, do you think Ling Cheng has a good chance of winning?" Qiu Yong asked.

"Hard to say," Tong Zhentian replied solemnly. "Speaking purely of strength, Wang Hao is definitely much more formidable than Ling Chen. Also, more importantly, Ling Chen's skills were taught by Su He, meaning his advantages are completely nullified in front of Wang Hao."

Upon hearing these words, Qiu Yong's face darkened, worriedly saying, "Doesn't that mean Ling Cheng is in danger?"

"Don't rush to a conclusion. Ling Chen isn't a reckless person, surely he has some confidence to have acted this way. Let's wait and see, he might surprise us."

As they spoke, Ling Chen and Wang Hao had been continuously moving on stage for over a minute. The Nine Yang Qiankun Step was indeed formidable, but the consumption was equally immense. In comparison, Wang Hao could endure much longer than Ling Chen. After all, Wang Hao's strength was considerably superior to Ling Chen's.

Another half-minute passed, and finally, Ling Chen's body began to gradually manifest. Prolonged use of the Nine Yang Qiankun Step rapidly depleted his energy. At this moment, he didn't have much strength left to maintain it. Nonetheless, Wang Hao continued moving at high speed, with Ling Chen as his

center, constantly shifting positions. Suddenly, a fleeting shadow flashed, and Wang Hao appeared behind Ling Chen.

Before Ling Chen could react, Wang Hao's palms had already struck Ling Chen's back, sending him flying away.

Smack!

A mouthful of fresh blood spat out, Ling Chen propped himself up on the floor with his hands, standing up again. Taking two deep breaths, Ling Chen spat out a mouthful of bloodied saliva, his pale face showing a hint of determination.

In the crowd, Nanrong Wanqing and Tang Shiyun held hands, watching Ling Chen without blinking, worry evident in their beautiful eyes.

"Xiaozhu, Ling Chen won't be in trouble, will he?" Liu Xiyao was somewhat concerned. Originally thinking it was merely a straightforward ceremony, she hadn't expected so many events, now even life was on the line.

Zhu Xiaozhu, somber in expression, said, "I've heard of Wang Hao; he's incredibly formidable; Ling Chen might be in danger."

"What should we do then?" Tang Shiyun asked anxiously, "Should we... should we call the police?"

Chapter 1164 - 1171: Heaven and Earth Reversal (Part 2)

"No way." Zhu Xiaozhu spoke, "We absolutely cannot call the police. This is a matter concerning the Martial Arts community, and it must be resolved according to the rules of the Martial Arts World. Life and death duels are normal occurrences. If we call the police and they intervene, even if Ling Chen's life is saved, his reputation will be ruined, and he won't be able to establish himself in the Martial Arts World. Ling Chen has high hopes for Dragon Tiger Hall, and if anything happens to him, the hall will face dissolution before it's even founded. Therefore, regardless of victory or defeat, he must put forth his full effort in this battle. Even if he loses, he must leave a good impression in everyone's hearts."

"Kill!" Wang Hao shouted coldly, his speed suddenly increased as he charged directly at Ling Chen. At this point, Ling Chen was already injured, combined with an enormous depletion of strength, he was completely at Wang Hao's mercy.

Watching the rapidly approaching Wang Hao, Ling Chen steadied himself, firing out steel fists consecutively, one punch after another, trying to seize the initiative.

Wang Hao sneered, extending one arm forward, and forcibly accepting Ling Chen's punch with his palm. Then, Wang Hao's body shook, Hua Realm erupted, blasting through his palm directly towards Ling Chen's fist. Instantly, under the impact of that force, Ling Chen abruptly leaned back, his body collapsing to the ground once more.

As Ling Chen struggled to get up, Wang Hao sneered coldly, disdainfully saying, "Once, you could defeat me because you had a good Master. Now that I am his only disciple, what advantage do you have over me? Talent? Hah! Do you think your talent is better than mine?"

Ling Chen remained silent; honestly, Wang Hao was indeed strong, not just in terms of power, but his talent and aptitude were top-notch. With good mentorship, Wang Hao's potential for growth was immense. Given time, his name would surely appear on the Heavenly List.

"Regret it?" Wang Hao sneered coldly, "I know your plan; you're just trying to use me to make Dragon Tiger Hall renowned. Unfortunately, you picked the wrong opponent. Today, I will personally destroy Dragon Tiger Hall. Prepare to die!"

As these words fell, Wang Hao lightly tapped his toe, like a gust of wind, charging at Ling Chen with irresistible force.

He intended to decide victory in a single move, not wanting to prolong the fight. Although he wanted to slowly humiliate Ling Chen, to torture him to death, in front of such a crowd, he couldn't use overly despicable tactics as that would tarnish his own reputation.

Seeing Wang Hao getting closer, Ling Chen remained standing, showing no intention to move. He didn't even assume any defensive posture; his entire body was full of openings, which to others seemed like an act of suicide.

Tong Zhentian and Qiu Yong below the stage watched closely, eyes fixed on Wang Hao's actions. If Ling Chen encountered danger, they would stop at nothing to rescue him.

Three meters... two meters... closer!

Everyone present held their breath. Tang Shiyun covered her mouth, resting her head on Nanrong Wanqing's arm, not daring to watch Ling Chen. In her mind, Ling Chen was invincible, and she didn't want to see Ling Chen fail or get hurt.

Nanrong Wanqing and the other two women were not as terrified as Tang Shiyun, but their anxiety was growing stronger, making it difficult for them to breathe.

As Wang Hao got closer, Ling Chen made a shocking move—he directly closed his eyes, ignoring Wang Hao's presence.

"What is he doing? Is he seeking death?"

"I think he's surrendering."

The crowd below the stage broke into gossip.

Ling Chen's unusual move didn't catch much of Wang Hao's attention; in his view, at such a close range, Ling Chen was doomed.

"Die!" Wang Hao shouted violently, his fist drove straight in, Power erupting, aiming directly for Ling Chen's face.

However, at this critical moment, Wang Hao's pupils slightly contracted, doubting his eyes. In that split second, he seemed to see Ling Chen's body slightly move to the sides. Yet, Ling Chen was clearly standing in front of him without changing position.

Was he seeing things?

At this moment, Su He, who had his eyes closed below the stage, suddenly opened his eyes, looking at Ling Chen on stage with a hint of amazement in his clouded old eyes.

"Ling Cheng, be careful!" Xia Yue couldn't hold back any longer and loudly warned Ling Chen.

As Xia Yue's voice echoed, Ling Chen abruptly opened his eyes, his body swaying side to side, instantly transforming into shadows. Seeing Ling Chen's transformation, Wang Hao was shocked. At this moment, three shadows appeared before him, making it impossible to discern any real Ling Chen.

Whatever! Wang Hao gritted his teeth, aiming his punch at the middle shadow. Instantly, the punch pierced through the middle of that shadow.

Fake?

Realizing this, Wang Hao hastily changed direction, targeting the remaining shadows. However, just as he shifted targets, the shadow he deemed fake suddenly froze, revealing itself as Ling Chen. With a punch thrown, Wang Hao had no time to react, getting hit and sent flying backward.

Watching Wang Hao hit the ground, everyone was stunned by the scene; it was beyond their imagination. That shadow was clearly fake, so why was it Ling Chen? If it was Ling Chen, why didn't Wang Hao's attack succeed?

These occurrences were simply incredible.

At this moment, Wang Hao stood up from the ground, looking at Ling Chen on the opposite side of the stage, his expression extremely displeased. The seemingly assured victory had been shattered by Ling Chen. He couldn't understand what had happened.

"Come again!" Ling Chen still stood his ground, not moving.

Ling Chen's calm words were undoubtedly the greatest provocation to Wang Hao. Wang Hao didn't believe it; surely it was a coincidence and luck, he couldn't possibly be wrong. With this thought, Wang Hao roared in anger, rushing forward.

Upon nearing, without waiting for Wang Hao's move, Ling Chen's body once more became three shadows. Not only that, but these three shadows all moved within a fixed position, not shifting around the stage.

Wang Hao glanced, choosing the left shadow as his target. To avoid a recurrence of the previous situation, Wang Hao was very cautious, opting for a probing attack instead of an immediate one.

But that shadow made no response. Seeing this, Wang Hao no longer hesitated, rapidly closing in and delivering a palm strike. Suddenly, his palm passed through the shadow, his force striking into the air.

Another fake!

This time, Wang Hao was certain of his judgment. He withdrew his arm, redirecting his focus to the other two shadows. Just as he was about to depart, the nearby shadow suddenly froze, a fist emerged striking Wang Hao's back fiercely.

Boom!

With a heavy sound, Wang Hao's body was sent flying again, then crashed onto the floor.

This result made the venue extraordinarily silent, as everyone gazed at Ling Chen with disbelief.

Chapter 1165 - 1172: Heaven and Earth Reversal (Part 3)

If the first time could be considered a coincidence, the second occurrence undoubtedly was not; it was a symbol of true skill.

However, everyone was deeply puzzled, not knowing how Ling Chen had achieved it.

"Elder Tong, was this something you taught to Ling Cheng?" Qiu Yong curiously asked. The Eight Oddities had been with Ling Chen for so long but had never seen such a technique. So, the only possibility was Tong Zhentian. Given that Tong Zhentian was a Heavenly List master, he possessed countless formidable skills; perhaps Ling Chen had learned it from him.

"Not from me," Tong Zhentian replied. "Though I taught him a few moves, they did not include the technique he just used." He then smiled slightly and said, "I knew this kid had some tricks up his sleeve. Without some assurance, he wouldn't dare to mess with Wang Hao. However, the technique he just used is indeed fascinating, and even I couldn't see through how to counter it."

"Is it really that powerful?"

Tong Zhentian nodded, glancing at Su He beside him out of the corner of his eye. Su He currently looked very serious, his gaze fixed on Ling Chen, his eyes flickering as if contemplating something. Noticing Su He's behavior, Tong Zhentian was somewhat surprised. Su He had previously paid no heed to the duel between Ling Chen and Wang Hao, yet now he suddenly focused on Ling Chen, indicating there was definitely an issue at hand.

"Impossible... impossible..." Wang Hao struggled to get up, looking at Ling Chen with an expression bordering on madness, "What sort of technique is this?"

"Heaven and Earth Reversal!" Ling Chen replied calmly, "This is the true essence of the Nine Yang Qiankun Step, which I doubt your master ever taught you."

Heaven and Earth Reversal is the most formidable technique of the Nine Yang Qiankun Step. When Su He initially taught him the Nine Yang Qiankun Step, he hadn't covered this move. However, Ling Chen discovered the Nine Yang Qiankun Step and uncovered this move's existence among the martial arts texts archived by the Ling Family.

It seemed Su He had kept something back, not imparting the essence of the Nine Yang Qiankun Step to him.

Heaven and Earth Reversal emphasizes the blend of real and illusion, what's true seems false, what's false seems true. If mastered flexibly, one can continually switch between reality and illusion. However,

given Ling Chen's current strength, executing this move is quite a strain. At this moment, he is more show than substance, weak enough that even a common person could knock him down.

But none of this mattered now; Wang Hao had already lost his fighting spirit. Moreover, Ling Chen's last words infuriated him. Why did Ling Chen know the essence of the Nine Yang Qiankun Step, and yet he didn't? As Su He's officially accepted disciple, did he still not measure up to an outsider?

"Step down!" At this point, Su He's voice emerged from the crowd.

Wang Hao bit his lip. Although his heart brimmed with discontentment, he truly understood that just with Ling Chen's one move, he had no chance of winning. Continuing to fight would only be to court disgrace.

Under the crowd's gaze, Wang Hao suppressed his inner rage and leapt off the stage.

Returning to Su He's side, Wang Hao hung his head in silence. But even so, Su He could still sense his anger. To this, Su He had no intention of explanation. Wang Hao was merely a pawn in his hand, and he had no reason to concern himself with a pawn that held little value.

"Old Man Tong, congratulations. I hope Dragon Tiger Hall will only flourish and become a new banner in the Martial Arts world." Su He left the remark expressionlessly and then turned to leave, taking Wang Hao with him. As for the martial arts veterans who had accompanied him, they remained standing in their spots, showing no intention of leaving.

With Su He gone, the oppressive atmosphere in the venue seemed to vanish instantly, and everyone exhaled a collective sigh of relief.

"Ling Cheng!" Xia Yue and Wei Jiahao quickly made their way to the stage, supporting the visibly weak Ling Chen and asking, "Are you alright?"

"I'm fine. Just help me in for a rest. Let's leave the other matters to my big brother and Elder Tong to handle."

Although Ling Chen had left the venue, the enthusiasm of the crowd only grew higher despite the recent events. The first direct face-off between Dragon Tiger Hall and Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion served as a splendid advertisement for Dragon Tiger Hall.

At that moment, a car drove down the road, with Su He and Wang Hao seated in the back seat. From the departure of Dragon Tiger Hall, both maintained their silence, neither uttering a word.

"You need to genuinely elevate your strength. Dragon Tiger Hall will be the biggest rival of Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion."

Startled slightly by Su He's sudden remark, Wang Hao opened his mouth wanting to say something but ultimately couldn't voice it.

"I know what you want to ask." Su He glanced at Wang Hao's expression, his perceptiveness seeing through the young man's thoughts. "I didn't teach Ling Chen Heaven and Earth Reversal. You are my disciple; I could not possibly play favorites."

"Then why does he..."

"There's no use asking me; I also don't know where he learned it from. However, the intelligence from Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion indicates that Dragon Tiger Hall possesses many martial arts scripts. Judging from the situation earlier, this is likely true. Otherwise, Ling Chen wouldn't have been able to bring out so many lost martial arts techniques. I imagine those scripts likely included the Nine Yang Qiankun Step, which is how Ling Chen knew how to use Heaven and Earth Reversal."

Hearing this, Wang Hao felt a bit better. As long as it wasn't partiality from Su He, everything else was bearable... no, there was still one more thing. Losing to Ling Chen again was something he couldn't accept.

"Victory and defeat are routine matters for a warrior; there's no need to take it too much to heart. The more you dwell on it, the more it will disturb your mindset. A martial artist must maintain a composed heart to achieve the greatest progress. In terms of strength, you're stronger than Ling Chen; you've just had less luck. Spend this period in deep meditation, strive to advance yourself even further. Next time you encounter Ling Chen, he won't be your opponent."

Su He advised earnestly. Looking across the entire Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, Wang Hao was undoubtedly the most outstanding of the younger generation. Besides him, there wasn't another who could rival Ling Chen within a short time. Therefore, Su He had no choice but to continue valuing this pawn.

Meanwhile, outside Dragon Tiger Hall, a middle-aged man stepped out from a corner, accompanied by a woman of similar age.

The two walked side by side, resembling an ordinary married couple. Watching the middle-aged man with a constant smile, the woman laughed and said, "Your son is remarkable."

"Indeed, and that's because of whose son he is," the middle-aged man responded proudly.

After receiving a call from Yang Qingling, Ling Kun had no choice but to rush to East Sea City to assist Ling Chen. Unexpectedly, Ling Chen handled the situation alone without needing his help. Witnessing his son's incremental growth, Ling Kun couldn't help but be pleased.

Chapter 1166 - 1173: Skyhawk Pavilion (1)

"Ling Kun, aren't you going back to see your wife?" The woman teased with a laugh, "I've never seen a man so obedient to his wife."

Ling Kun laughed heartily, "Being afraid of one's wife isn't a bad thing. I won't be going back today. This time, I just managed to visit East Sea City briefly. Ling Chen, that kid, is handling things well. I don't need to worry too much."

"Haven't finished what Ling Tao asked you to do yet?"

Upon mentioning business, Ling Kun's expression immediately became serious, "That matter is quite troublesome, afraid it might be hard to finish in a short time."

"Be careful, those people are not easy to deal with. You have a wife and son now, remember, safety first."

"I know. I've been making arrangements during this period, and if nothing unexpected happens, I'll take action soon. Ling Chen's Dragon Tiger Hall has just been established, and he still needs time. I must secure some time for him to develop smoothly."

"You're not an ordinary father, going to such lengths for your son."

Ling Kun smiled, "Isn't this what a father is supposed to do?" Saying this, Ling Kun hailed a taxi and headed straight to the airport.

As the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion exited, the ribbon-cutting ceremony of the Dragon Tiger Hall finally proceeded smoothly.

Because Ling Chen was too weak, he couldn't attend the venue, but his treatment was better than anyone else's. Nanrong Wanqing, Liu Xiyao, Zhu Xiaozhu, and Tang Shiyun were taking care of him, serving tea and water, and feeding him fruit, just like an emperor.

"Ling Chen." At this moment, Tong Zhentian walked in from outside. Seeing Ling Chen lying on the bed like a big lord, with several beautiful women gently attending to him, he couldn't help laughing, "You really know how to enjoy yourself. We old fogeys are busy outside, while you recline in a land of warmth and tenderness."

Ling Chen chuckled awkwardly, "Elder Tong, I'm a patient now. It's only right I enjoy some special treatment. How about outside, are all the guests sorted out?"

"I had your friends send them back to the hotel, but a large number stayed behind wanting to understand the conditions for joining Dragon Tiger Hall." Saying this, Tong Zhentian gave a thumbs up, praising without reservation, "You've done a great job this time, not only maintaining the Dragon Tiger Hall's reputation but also giving the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion a firm slap. Hmph! I can't stand their arrogance everywhere. Hopefully, this lesson will make them more cautious and not so ostentatious in the future."

When he finished, Tong Zhentian glanced at Nanrong Wanqing and others, saying, "Girls, please step out for a while, I have something to discuss privately with Ling Chen."

After the ladies left, Ling Chen sat up and looked at Tong Zhentian, asking, "Elder Tong, is there something important you need to discuss with me?"

Tong Zhentian nodded, putting away the smile from earlier, his expression slightly stern, "You did well today, but we seem to be completely at odds with the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion now. I've known Old Su for years, and I know exactly what kind of person he is. He'll definitely look for an opportunity to deal with us in the future. He won't let us off easily."

Hearing this, Ling Chen asked, "Elder Tong, is Old Su really that ruthless? I've known him for a while, and he seems like a nice guy."

"A nice guy?" Tong Zhentian smiled wryly, "That's because you don't know about his past. Ling Chen, don't be naive. Who is Old Su? He's the former Pavilion Master of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. Back then, when he controlled the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, their external activities increased multiple times. In order to expand the Pavilion's influence, Old Su would stop at nothing. Anyone who resisted the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion never met a good end. There's a valley behind the Pavilion, you've been there, haven't you? Do you know how many people Old Su buried there? No less than three figures, all representatives of forces unwilling to submit."

"At that time, Old Su was only in his thirties, determined to expand the Pavilion's scale and influence, aiming to make it the eternal overlord of the Martial Arts world. To achieve this goal, he decided to host a conference with various Martial Arts forces participating. There were four hundred and eight participants, but only one hundred and thirty-nine left alive, the rest buried in the valley by Old Su."

Ling Chen was stunned and said in shock, "He was that ruthless?"

"The Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion Masters, how many of them aren't ruthless? Do you think the Pavilion has stood tall for hundreds of years by chance? To keep the Pavilion stable, countless lives have been taken. Of course, the Pavilion wouldn't handle these matters personally, as the Martial Arts overlord, it needs to maintain its image. After all, going too far and sparking protests from everyone would do the Pavilion no good."

"If the Pavilion doesn't do it themselves, then who?" Ling Chen asked curiously.

Tong Zhentian enunciated clearly, "Skyhawk Pavilion." Observing Ling Chen's puzzled expression, Tong Zhentian explained, "The Yangxin Pavilion is a visible force, known to be overflowing with experts, a critical part of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. However, it's merely for show; there's a secret existence within the Pavilion—the Skyhawk Pavilion, a venomous snake nurtured by the Pavilion to handle inconvenient matters. Only two people within the Pavilion know of the Skyhawk Pavilion's existence—the Pavilion Master and an elder from the Yangxin Pavilion. No one else knows about the Skyhawk Pavilion."

"The Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion is a talent cultivation site, the Yangxin Pavilion is a retirement home for experts, but the Skyhawk Pavilion is where assassins are trained. These three together form the true Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. Ling Chen, everything has a light and dark side, so does the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion."

"Elder Tong, if only two know about the Skyhawk Pavilion, then how did you hear about it?"

"Mr. Du told me," Tong Zhentian said, "Aside from the Pavilion Master, the only other who knows about the Skyhawk Pavilion is Du Kang. You know Du Kang likes drinking; during a drinking session with him, he got drunk and spilled the secret. I knew it was the Pavilion's secret, so I kept it to myself and never mentioned it to outsiders. Although we've boosted the Dragon Tiger Hall's reputation today, we've also exposed some weaknesses. Su He won't allow a force capable of threatening the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, so he'll undoubtedly use the Skyhawk Pavilion against us secretly."

As Tong Zhentian spoke of the severity, Ling Chen also sensed the crisis, "Elder Su, how strong is the Skyhawk Pavilion? Can we handle it?"

"That I don't know, I only heard about it from Du Kang."

Chapter 1167 - 1174: Skyhawk Pavilion (2)

"However, I have secretly investigated some matters," Tong Zhentian said. "Ever since I learned of the existence of the Skyhawk Pavilion, I began to pay attention to many things. In the past, masters or some forces in the Martial Arts world would disappear without a trace, and at first, not many people cared. But later, I discovered that these incidents were likely the work of the Skyhawk Pavilion. Who else but the Skyhawk Pavilion could wipe out a faction overnight? Moreover, every time such an event occurred, the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion would be the first to voice condemnation of the perpetrators, then send people to investigate. Although the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion puts on a show, they did indeed capture many people. However, those they captured were rarely made public and instead were secretly executed, with everyone told that justice had been served. I investigated several similar cases, and those captured by the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion were not the culprits but rather people who opposed

them. Using the pretense of capturing murderers, the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion framed and falsely accused them, then openly dealt with their opponents."

"Among these events, what left the deepest impression on me was the death of a master from the Heavenly List. This Heavenly List master had publicly accused the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion of being a den of corruption and called on Martial Arts figures to unite against it. However, half a year later, it was discovered that the Heavenly List master died at home, reportedly from a sudden illness. Many believed it, but I did not, because I knew him. That person was very robust, and even if he were ill, he could not have died so suddenly. Therefore, I suspected the Skyhawk Pavilion murdered him - only they had the motive. This suggests the Skyhawk Pavilion's power is terrifying, possessing the ability to eliminate a Heavenly List master."

After hearing Tong Zhentian's account, Ling Chen gently nodded. Ling Chen was not repulsed by the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion's actions because this was quite normal. As Tong Zhentian said, everything has two sides - this world is just like that. Not only the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, even he had done similar things. As a major power, eliminating potential threats and consolidating one's position is perfectly normal and not surprising.

However, what Ling Chen worried about now was that since the Skyhawk Pavilion was so powerful, they had to act cautiously and not give the Skyhawk Pavilion an opportunity to strike.

Seeing Ling Chen in deep thought, Tong Zhentian spoke, "I told you all this just as a reminder. As for whether Su He will engage the Skyhawk Pavilion, that's still unknown. Furthermore, given the Skyhawk Pavilion's operating style, all we can do is defensively react. Presently, it's a good time for us to grow quickly."

Ling Chen understood Tong Zhentian's intention. The rich resources displayed by Dragon Tiger Hall today were enough to attract a large number of people to join, which was indeed a good beginning.

After Tong Zhentian left, Ling Chen rested for most of the day. Under the careful care of Wanqing and the others, his injuries healed quickly. In the afternoon, Ling Chen asked Nanrong Wanqing and the others to go home first and, accompanied by Tang Guolun, went to the main control room on the underground second floor.

At this time, everyone was busy handling various affairs. Tang Guolun mentioned that since the morning, Hu Fei had not properly rested.

Seeing the busy Hu Fei in front of the computer, Ling Chen approached and greeted, "Hey, fatty, how's it going?"

Hu Fei pointed to the stack of documents beside him, eyes on the computer screen, and said without turning his head, "I definitely have to work overtime today, with half the data still unfinished."

Ling Chen casually picked up a document, glanced at the filled information, and asked, "Whose data is this?"

"Who else could it be? It's naturally those wanting to join Dragon Tiger Hall. Old Man Tong had all the data collected, over two hundred files, and asked me to investigate each of them thoroughly. My staff is limited, and the workload is so heavy, hey! You need to raise our pay," Hu Fei complained discontentedly.

Ling Chen patted Hu Fei's shoulder with a smile, encouraging him, "Do a good job, take this chance to lose some weight, and maybe beautiful women will notice you later."

"Get outta here, it's my chubby figure that the beauties love."

After a few jokes, Ling Chen didn't disturb Hu Fei's work any further and returned to the main building with Tang Guolun. Ling Chen understood Tong Zhentian's request. Although Dragon Tiger Hall needed to absorb a large amount of fresh blood, they couldn't be too casual in recruiting people. Rather go without than hire unsuitable individuals - that's the standard. Those wanting to join Dragon Tiger Hall needed to have clean backgrounds and not engage in criminal activities. Furthermore, if they previously belonged to another faction, Dragon Tiger Hall would reject their application.

Who knew if they were genuinely eager to join Dragon Tiger Hall or just spies wanting to steal martial arts secrets from Dragon Tiger Hall.

In short, it's not about how strong your skills are, but your character passing muster and having a clean background to meet Dragon Tiger Hall's recruitment standards.

There weren't many who met this standard, and Hu Fei worked overtime through the night to finally clear up the background checks of those applicants. Out of more than two hundred applicants, only about forty met the criteria.

What surprised Ling Chen was that Tian Hanzhong was also on the list of applicants, and he passed the preliminary review. It turned out that initially, Tong Zhentian wanted to accept Tian Hanzhong as a Registered Disciple, but during the assessment, they found Tian Hanzhong's qualifications quite ordinary, not meeting his requirements, so he could only dissuade him.

Although Tian Hanzhong was introduced by Ling Chen, Tong Zhentian didn't like to base such matters on personal connections. Martial Arts inheritance is a very serious matter and can't be chosen carelessly. Otherwise, it wouldn't be beneficial for either party.

Nonetheless, getting the opportunity to join Dragon Tiger Hall was indeed a stroke of luck for Tian Hanzhong.

Among the forty-plus individuals joining Dragon Tiger Hall, only about ten had barely passable martial arts skills, while the others were quite average. Fortunately, it wasn't their aptitude that was average. For better training and improvement, Ling Chen split them into two groups and used different methods for their cultivation. Fortunately, these individuals had solid foundations, so there's no need to start from scratch - only to choose martial arts suitable for them for teaching, quickly enabling them to become elites.

In the aspect of martial arts teaching, after discussions between Ling Chen and Tong Zhentian, it was decided to conduct the teaching in stages. They were well aware that the major attraction for these people joining Dragon Tiger Hall was the martial arts secrets. If everything were given at once, they might all run away the next day. Therefore, gradually imparting skills was best. In the meantime, as long as their sense of belonging to Dragon Tiger Hall was strengthened, there shouldn't be any major problems with retention.

Apart from the training of martial arts figures, Dragon Tiger Hall also began to recruit disciples externally and set up many youth classes. This was a request proposed by Tong Zhentian; those children would be the future of the martial arts world. Only by nurturing from a young age and instilling the right concepts could the Huaxia martial arts world truly rejuvenate.

Chapter 1168 - 1175: Mr. Yang

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

The Dragon Tiger Hall was gradually getting on track. As its reputation grew, more and more people wanted to join and improve themselves. Over this period, Dragon Tiger Hall had recruited forty to fifty people, and including the previous batch, the number had already surpassed a hundred.

For easy management, Ling Chen divided the Dragon Tiger Hall into two sections: the Dragon Section and the Tiger Section. The names might be a bit common, but they were simple and easy to remember. Anyone with a certain level of skill was assigned to the Dragon Section, managed by Tong Zhentian. The rest went to the Tiger Section, managed by He Ziyun. Ling Chen was a free agent and would go wherever he was needed. Among the three, it seemed only he had it easy.

Ling Chen was naturally happy to accept such an arrangement. However, he knew very well that Tong Zhentian and He Ziyun were not doing this to seize power. At their age, fame and fortune were external matters they didn't care much about. Their willingness to share the burden was primarily to give Ling Chen more time. After all, they were old with limited room for improvement, but Ling Chen was different; he was still young and talented. As long as he trained diligently, he would eventually enter the ranks of true masters.

However, at this moment, Ling Chen was clearly falling short of Tong Zhentian and He Ziyun's expectations.

In a bustling mall, Ling Chen was carrying large and small bags, following behind Nanrong Wanqing and the four women, accompanying them shopping. Calling it shopping was more like being a laborer. As Liu Xiyao put it, when Ling Chen was injured a while back, it was their meticulous care that helped him recover. Now that his injuries had healed, it was only natural to repay them.

Since Ling Chen was with them, none of the ladies brought bodyguards. If there was a problem Ling Chen couldn't solve, no amount of bodyguards would be of any use. Besides, ever since they witnessed Ling Chen's prowess at the Dragon Tiger Hall, their confidence in him skyrocketed.

As a public figure, Tang Shiyun was still wearing a mask as usual, to prevent being recognized. There was no other way, she had too much star power. If people knew Tang Shiyun was here, the whole mall would probably be packed to the brim.

After a morning of shopping and eating, it was almost noon when Ling Chen asked, "Should we head back now?"

Liu Xiyao smiled and said, "I know there's a nice restaurant on the top floor of the mall. The menu is diverse and the food is good. Let's go there for lunch."

No one objected to Liu Xiyao's suggestion, or rather, none of the women did. As for whether Ling Chen had any objections, the ladies simply ignored him.

Arriving at the restaurant, it was just as Liu Xiyao described, a very upscale fusion restaurant built on the rooftop. Part of it was open-air, with luxurious decor and seats by the railing offering a panoramic view of much of East Sea City.

With the status of Nanrong Wanqing and her companions, they naturally chose the best seats. Putting down his large and small bags, Ling Chen plopped down in the chair and let out a long breath. Shopping was indeed tiring work, testing both his physical stamina and patience.

"Ling, are you tired? Here, have a glass of water." Tang Shiyun poured him a cup of tea and handed it to Ling Chen, then gently massaged his shoulders with her small hands.

Enjoying Tang Shiyun's attentive service, Ling Chen couldn't help but smile and say, "Shiyun is the best."

Liu Xiyao couldn't take it any longer and said, "Shiyun, you can't spoil him like this. You must never spoil men, or they'll become unbearable. Even if someone should be spoiled, it should be men spoiling women."

"Yao, that's just not fair. Shiyun is just being considerate because I'm so tired, giving me a shoulder massage. It just means Shiyun is more thoughtful than you all."

"Are you saying we're not considerate?" Zhu Xiaozhu chimed in with a slightly odd tone. Not just her, but Nanrong Wanqing and Liu Xiyao all looked at Ling Chen with a hint of displeasure.

Ahem!

Feeling the 'killing intent' emanating from the three women, Ling Chen let out an awkward laugh and stood up, saying, "I'll go to the restroom; you guys order first." With that, he made a swift exit, jogging to the restroom. A wise man knows when to retreat; this was not the time to show off.

A few minutes later, Ling Chen returned to the open-air restaurant, only to find his seat was already occupied. Three people were sitting in his place: a middle-aged man and two young men, all handsome. Even the older one was exceptionally charming.

At this moment, the three were sitting at the table, laughing and chatting, seemingly trying to amuse the women. Liu Xiyao was maintaining a composed demeanor, with a faint smile that kept people at a distance. Nanrong Wanqing was even more straightforward, with her cold expression and gaze set on the distant scenery. Zhu Xiaozhu sipped her tea silently, ignoring the men. On the other hand, Tang Shiyun listened with interest, occasionally laughing.

Ling Chen quietly moved to the back of the restaurant, listening as one of the young men said with a smile, "Ladies, it's fate that we meet here. How about I host a lunch, and afterward, we find somewhere to hang out? I've heard there are many fun places in East Sea City. It's my first time here, and I'd love to explore."

The middle-aged man added, "Yang, we still have business in the afternoon. We might not have enough time, so why don't we..."

"Brother Li, what could be more important than these lovely ladies? Just tell the board that I have more important things to do and have them postpone the meeting. I plan to stay in East Sea City for a few more days and will head back to Beijing next week."

After speaking, the young man named Yang continued to gaze at Nanrong Wanqing with a smile, "So, what do you think, beautiful? Interested in hanging out?" Among the women, he was most captivated by Nanrong Wanqing. Despite her cold demeanor, she was the most attractive of the four. Plus, her ice-cold and lotus-like demeanor only fueled his desire to conquer.

If he could get such a rare beauty into bed and indulge under him, it would greatly satisfy his wicked fantasies.

As a man, who doesn't relish conquering women? The more challenging the woman, the greater the thrill. After spending years in Beijing and thinking he had seen his fair share of beauties, he was surprised to come to East Sea City and encounter such top-tier women, each with their own unique qualities. It truly was a worthwhile trip.

Facing the young man's invitation, Nanrong Wanqing slightly raised her eyebrows, looked towards Ling Chen in the back, and spoke softly, "If you want to invite me, you should ask him first."

Hearing this, the three men turned their heads, only then noticing Ling Chen's presence.

Seeing their attention shift to him, Ling Chen gave a slight smile and said, "Gentlemen, I'm sorry, but you're sitting in my seat."

"You?" The young man assessed Ling Chen with an unfriendly expression and asked, "Who do you think you are?"

Chapter 1169 - 1176: Impostor Assassin

Ling Chen smiled faintly and said, "Friend, I don't know what I am, but I know for sure you are nothing."

Hearing Ling Chen's unabashed insult, the young man's face immediately changed, and he sprang up from his seat, pointing at Ling Chen's nose, coldly shouting, "You wretched thing, you have a lot of nerve to curse even me. Do you even know who I am?"

Ling Chen spread his hands, helplessly saying, "Friend, I don't have the energy to care who you are. Whether you're a cat, dog, or some other beast, it has nothing to do with me. You've taken my seat, I'm just asking you to leave."

"Good kid, you really have guts." the middle-aged man beside interjected, "Standing before you is Yang He from Beijing, Mr. Yang. Do you know what their family does? Whoever offends the Yang Family won't have anything good. Young man, in consideration of your ignorance, I advise you to apologize to Mr. Yang, or you'll pay the price."

Ling Chen said with a half-smile, "This friend, you also mentioned Mr. Yang is from Beijing. But I must remind you, this is East Sea City, not a place where you can run amok. I kindly advise you to be more

low-key when out and about. There are always bigger fish, be careful not to end up unable to return to Beijing."

"Hey! Brother, you have quite a tone." said the young man beside Yang He, "I, Zheng Guangchun, have never seen someone as fearless as you. Brother, having guts is good, but you need to choose your time and place. In Beijing, no one dares to be cocky in front of us."

"You're right. In East Sea City, no one has ever dared to be cocky in front of me." Ling Chen pointed at his seat and said, "Don't blame me for not giving you a chance, quickly scram, and I won't hold the previous matter against you."

"Fine, fine!" Yang He, extremely angry, laughed, gritting his teeth at Ling Chen and said, "I just arrived in East Sea City today, originally wanting to have some fun, but since someone is so eager for death, it will have to wait. Li Gang, call the board, in ten minutes, I want this person gone from my sight."

"No problem, Mr. Yang!" said the middle-aged man named Li Gang, immediately pulling out his phone and dialing a number.

Seeing their actions, Ling Chen paid no attention, walked over to the dining table, and sat down. "Have the dishes been ordered?"

"Not yet, we were waiting for you to order." Liu Xiyao said with a smile, not worried about what had just happened. Although these people came from Beijing and have backgrounds, bullying Ling Chen in East Sea City, Liu Xiyao could only mourn for them.

Ling Chen accepted the menu handed by Zhu Xiaozhu, snapped his fingers, called a waiter, and nonchalantly ordered a few Chinese dishes.

"Waiter, please serve the food quickly, I'm hungry."

Yang He sneered from the side, "Eat as much as you can while you still can, after today, I'm afraid you won't get the chance to eat."

Ling Chen ignored Yang He's threat, holding his phone with one hand, chatting casually with the women around him.

Less than ten minutes later, a group of people appeared at the restaurant's entrance. From their attire, they appeared to be street thugs, each carrying something wrapped in newspaper. Li Gang and the two others leaned against the open-air restaurant's railing, pointed towards Ling Chen, and those thugs instantly understood, quickly pulling machetes from the newspaper and rushed towards Ling Chen.

"Hey! Could those be your men?" Liu Xiyao asked.

Ling Chen said nothing, his eyes fixed on his phone. Soon, more than a dozen thugs rushed to Ling Chen, swinging machetes directly towards his head. At this critical moment, the motionless Ling Chen finally reacted. His body slightly sidestepped, dodging the attack. Then, Ling Chen lightly tapped his feet, his body instantly leaving the chair and springing into the air, landing behind the group of thugs.

Observing the thugs, Ling Chen's eyes scanned around, as if searching for someone.

"What are you standing around for?" Yang He demanded angrily, "Quickly act, kill this bastard."

Ling Chen glanced at Yang He by the railing, suddenly accelerating his feet, like a swift wind, instantly getting close to Yang He, punching straight at his face. As the punch was about to hit, suddenly, a glint of cold light flashed by.

Having anticipated, Ling Chen quickly turned, dodging the cold light's attack. Upon focusing, he noticed Li Gang holding a sharp dagger.

"Good skills." Ling Chen said calmly, "If you want to kill me, come at me directly, why go through so much trouble?"

Li Gang laughed coldly, "When did you find out?"

"Remember to be prepared to avoid revealing flaws when disguising your identity." Earlier, while fiddling with his phone, Ling Chen sent a message to Hu Fei, asking him to help check Yang He's and the

others' identities. Knowing their backgrounds will help him decide how to handle them. However, unexpectedly, although Yang He's group's identity information appeared fine, the archived records showed that Yang He, Zheng Guangchun, and Li Gang's appearances completely differed from before. Furthermore, these three were still in Beijing, and hadn't come to East Sea City. This indicates that the identities of these three are fake. Based on this, Ling Chen perceives they likely came for him.

As expected, after a little probing, their fake identities were promptly exposed.

"Who's instructing you?" Ling Chen asked.

"That's not something you need to know." Yang He, changing his previous hedonistic demeanor, said with a grim face.

Could it be people from Skyhawk Pavilion? Ling Chen thought inwardly. Due to Tong Zhentian's warning, Ling Chen couldn't help but suspect that.

"Ling Chen, we came only to deliver a message to you this time." Hearing Yang He's words, Ling Chen asked, "What message?"

"One day, everything you've subjected him to, he will return doubly." After speaking, Yang He extended his five fingers, and with a flick towards the ground, there was a 'bang', and a cloud of smoke exploded. Ling Chen waved his arms, waiting for the smoke to clear, surprisingly discovering that Yang He and the three others had vanished.

Amazing!

Ling Chen was somewhat amazed; even with his abilities, he hadn't detected their departure. From their actions, it's clear they aren't from Skyhawk Pavilion. If they truly were Skyhawk Pavilion's people, there wouldn't have been so much talk.

However, Ling Chen is puzzled about who prompted Yang He to relay a message. It seems investigation is necessary; the enemy hiding in the dark, while he is in the open, is not a favorable situation.

Chapter 1170 - 1177: Rebirth

"Did you see him?"

In a dark, lightless room, a cold voice was heard, devoid of any emotional fluctuation.

"We saw him. As you said, he's very skilled. I estimate his power is enough to rank sixth on the Earthly List." At this moment, three people stood outside the room. If Ling Chen were here, he would definitely recognize these three as the ones who attempted to assassinate him in East Sea City that day.

"Zhu Hong, this opponent of yours is quite tough." A young man spoke, "When we were in East Sea City, we specially investigated his background. Essentially, the whole of East Sea City is under his control, moreover, he recently opened the Dragon Tiger Hall, recruiting a lot of experts, and his power is growing rapidly. However, I've heard that Ling Chen had a fallout with the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. Given the pavilion's nature, they probably won't let him go."

"Humph! I don't care about the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, Ling Chen's life is mine, no one can take it from me. Alright, you all go for now, keep a close watch on Ling Chen's movements."

"No problem. By the way, I asked the master, you still have about a month left before you can come out. How's the feeling inside? Can you hold on?"

"This is just a small matter for me, I've been through worse."

"Impressive! No wonder the master chose you. Well, we'll get busy now. Contact us if anything comes up." After speaking, the three turned and walked out.

In the dark room, there was a water tank about two meters long, filled with a black viscous liquid, emitting a foul stench. At one end of the tank, a disfigured head appeared, marked with burnt scars, devoid of eyebrows and hair, only those sharp eyes emitting a fierce light.

This person was none other than Zhu Hong, who was once lost in the desert.

At that moment, in the thick black liquid, long eel-like creatures occasionally surfaced and then submerged again. Simultaneously, Zhu Hong let out a faint groan, his face contorting as if enduring immense pain.

Persevere! Zhu Hong gritted his teeth; this was the only thing he needed to do now. Only by persisting could he gain everything.

Recalling everything that happened recently feels like a nightmare to him.

Back then, after getting lost in the desert, with no water, no food, and no way to use the phone, he was entirely trapped. To survive, he killed his companion, drank his blood, and ate his flesh. Though disgusting, Zhu Hong had to endure it to stay alive.

However, the desert heat caused the companion's corpse to rot rapidly. After consuming too much rotten flesh, Zhu Hong finally couldn't hold on and fell ill in the desert. Just as he thought he was done for when he fell unconscious, fate didn't abandon him.

When he woke again, he found himself lying in a room, his injuries already healed.

The person responsible for treating him was an old man, and he was from Huaxia. Moreover, it was this old man who found him in the desert, saved him, and gave him another chance at life.

Through understanding, Zhu Hong gradually figured out the old man's identity. The old man was not an ordinary person but an assassin, and the place he was still in was deep in the desert. However, it was a base for training elite assassins, and the old man was the head of this base.

After his injuries fully healed, the old man gave him two options: become his disciple or leave. Zhu Hong didn't hesitate and chose the former. The reason for such a decision was because he witnessed the training of these assassins.

These people were not just assassins but experts. If he could harness this power, he could do anything he wanted.

Honestly, at that time, Zhu Hong also wondered why the old man wanted to accept him as a disciple. It wasn't until later, while chatting with his fellow disciples, that he learned the old man's main reason for accepting him was his characteristics.

An assassin is dark. A person who could slaughter a companion and devour flesh and blood to survive also had a dark heart. Such a person was most suited to be an assassin.

During his time in the assassin base, Zhu Hong didn't idle, he learned a lot about this place.

Assassin! To his former self, it was just an insignificant profession. With money, an assassin is just a dog to command. However, this base changed his view on assassins. To be precise, the elite assassins trained here were unlike those in the outside world.

Like his master, the old man hailed from an assassin family. For hundreds of years, the family had served the royal family, performing unspeakable deeds for them. Even now, they continued serving the wealthy and powerful. Moreover, their service was lifelong and did not accept temporary hires. Because of this, they became invisible in the assassin world.

Zhu Hong knew this assassin's power was like a poisonous snake, lurking in the grass, rarely revealing itself. But once it acted, no one could escape its deadly bite.

His master told him, although his potential was good, he lacked a strong foundation. Therefore, his master specially concocted a potion to improve his physique so he could grow faster. According to the master's requirement, he must soak in the potion for two months until his physique fully transformed, only then could he proceed to the next step. Currently, it's been a month. In the beginning, every day was unbearably painful, with a desire to end it all. However, to become stronger, he gritted his teeth and persevered.

Just wait! Sooner or later, I'll have you all bowing at my feet.

...

Another month passed in a blink.

Ling Chen was living comfortably. With Tong Zhentian and He Ziyun managing the Dragon Tiger Hall, there wasn't anything for him to worry about. Apart from practicing his skills, he spent his days relaxing and enjoying with his many female companions.

Yet, despite the ease, Ling Chen didn't lower his guard. He knew he had made too many enemies; only by continually strengthening himself and expanding his power could he prepare for upcoming crises.

The Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, a critical challenge he must overcome.

This day, Nanrong Wanqing and the others went to work, while Ling Chen stayed at home, intending to solidify his recent learnings. Suddenly, a phone rang.

"Hello! Fatty, calling me for something?"

"Are you free? Join me for a trip to the hospital. Just received a message saying Ling Beichuan is critically ill."

Critically ill?

Ling Chen felt a rush of anxiety; this was troublesome. Ling Beichuan held a wealth of information about Ling Gengqiu. Ling Chen was counting on extracting Ling Gengqiu's grave location from him. If he died, it would be a huge loss for Ling Chen.

After hanging up, Ling Chen quickly donned his coat and drove straight to the hospital.