

The Beauty 631

Chapter 631 Disciple of Yangxin Pavilion

Seeing this scene, Ling Chen was completely stunned.

So impressive!

Ling Chen's eyes widened in disbelief watching Song Ge, this... this progress is too rapid.

If that sword had touched the stone, Ling Chen wouldn't have been surprised. The key point is that Song Ge used his Inner Strength to split the stone in half, and that's a significant difference. Back at the beginning of the Heavenly Mechanism Great Ceremony, Song Ge hadn't even reached the level of emitting Inner Strength, and now he could effortlessly use it to split the stone.

Tsk, tsk! Ling Chen couldn't help but admire.

As expected of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, they really do excel at nurturing talents.

"Song, you're amazing, probably no one in the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion has made faster progress than you."

At this moment, a voice drifted over from the side. Only then did Ling Chen notice that on the mountaintop, aside from Song Ge, there were two other people, both around twenty-something and very young.

"Not at all." Song Ge said modestly, "My progress has been slow." As he spoke, Song Ge noticed Ling Chen and Zhou Jun down the hill, immediately greeted them and brought the two companions over.

"Ling, you awake?" Song Ge said with a smile, "Last night you were the drunkest of us all, looks like you need to work on your alcohol tolerance."

"Song, who is this?" The two young men sized up Ling Chen and asked.

"This is Ling Chen whom I've mentioned to you before, he's much more impressive than me." Song Ge introduced, "Ling, let me introduce you. These two are Liang Zheng and Song Yi, friends I've made in the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. Don't be fooled by their young age, they're both far from simple. Had they participated in the Heavenly Mechanism Great Ceremony, it would have been difficult for us to rank."

Liang Zheng laughed, "Song is being too modest, we're not that impressive." Then, turning to Ling Chen, he bowed with clasped hands, "So you are Ling Chen, I've long admired your reputation."

"You're too kind." Ling Chen returned the courtesy.

"Ling Chen, Song just said you're even more impressive than him, why not show us a few moves? Liang Zheng and I are also curious to see how amazing the top of the Newcomer List really is."

The speaker was Song Yi, his appearance was ordinary, but there was a trace of arrogance between his brows. It seemed like he didn't accept what Song Ge had said.

"Alright, Song Yi, Ling has just woken up from his drunkenness, don't trouble him. There will be plenty of opportunities for you to see for yourself later," Song Ge said with a smile, intending to defuse the situation for Ling Chen.

"Really?" Song Yi looked at Ling Chen with a meaningful and half-smiling expression, "If that's really the case, we won't insist, to avoid someone losing face later."

"Hey! Watch how you speak." Zhou Jun immediately expressed his discontent, reproaching, "Mr. Song, didn't your Master teach you how to speak politely? You show no manners at all."

Song Yi glanced at Zhou Jun and replied coolly, "What my Master teaches me is his business, why do you care so much? If you have issues, go find my Master."

"You..."

"Alright, let's stop here, we are all friends, no need to get angry," Ling Chen hastened to intercede for fear that Zhou Jun would cause displeasure because of him. f.re(e) w.e(b)nov el.c.om

"Song, you guys go ahead with your business, Zhou Jun and I will take a stroll elsewhere. It's rare to visit the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, I should broaden my horizons." Finishing, Ling Chen took Zhou Jun and prepared to leave.

"At least you are aware of your own limitations, knowing that you lack knowledge."

Hearing Song Yi's voice coming from behind, Ling Chen's brows involuntarily furrowed. This young man named Song was quite rude considering Ling Chen hadn't provoked him in any way. Even for someone with a non-confrontational nature, this was starting to irk him.

At this point, even Song Ge found it hard to listen, saying lightly, "Song Yi, Ling Chen is my friend, speak with some courtesy."

Song Yi shrugged, "Alright, consider I haven't said anything just now."

Liang Zheng, trying to smooth things over, said with a smile, "Song, you're not unaware of Song Yi's personality, he's just straightforward and speaks his mind. Ling Chen, please don't take it to heart."

"Don't worry, Ling's tolerance is greater than yours, he won't stoop to your level," Zhou Jun coldly interjected, then led Ling Chen away towards the practice field, not wanting to stay a minute longer.

"Ling!"

Just as they returned to the practice field, Song Ge hurried over from behind, looking apologetic, "Ling, I'm really sorry about earlier, I apologize on behalf of Song Yi."

Ling Chen smiled indifferently, "It's nothing, do I look like the nitpicky type?" He then changed the subject, asking curiously, "Song, who were those two just now?"

"They are from the Yangxin Pavilion."

Yangxin Pavilion?

Ling Chen's mind was stirred, and he asked in surprise, "Isn't the Yangxin Pavilion a place for the elderly, how come those two are so young, do they have the qualifications to enter the Yangxin Pavilion?"

Zhou Jun added, "You don't understand. The Yangxin Pavilion indeed is a place for the elderly, however, which of those old folks doesn't wish to pass on their lifetime of Martial Arts? So they choose exceptionally talented individuals to take on as personal disciples. Liang Zheng, Song Yi, they were both found by those old folks and have lived in the Yangxin Pavilion from a young age, learning martial arts from their Masters. Although I don't really like their arrogance, I have to admit, their abilities are indeed strong. Aside from Liang Zheng and Song Yi, the Yangxin Pavilion has many more like them."

"If they are so strong, why didn't they participate in the Heavenly Mechanism Great Ceremony?"

Song Ge explained, "They're already part of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion once inside Yangxin Pavilion. The Heavenly Mechanism Great Ceremony is hosted by the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, and it would look silly for its own members to participate. But, I wasn't wrong in what I said before. If they had participated in the Heavenly Mechanism Great Ceremony, the rankings on the Newcomer List would have needed a big overhaul."

Upon hearing this, Ling Chen inquired in astonishment, "Are they really that formidable? They look about my age."

Zhou Jun shook his head, "You can't judge by age alone. You should consider that they have been raised from childhood by masters from the Earthly List and the Heavenly List. Not to mention, the weakest sparring partners they have had are masters from the Earthly List. With such upbringing, do you think they'll be weak?"

"That makes sense." After saying that, Ling Chen glanced at Zhou Jun, "The way you talk, I feel like you don't really get along with them."

"That's normal," Song Ge added, "People from the Yangxin Pavilion have always been quite arrogant, Liang Zheng and Song Yi are considered better among them. I've also interacted with others from the Yangxin Pavilion, and to be honest, I can't stand their arrogance. Moreover, with the backup from the group of old folks in the Yangxin Pavilion, no one dares to offend them. Except for the Pavilion Master who has some deterrent power, they usually walk around the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion openly and without fear, not caring about anyone. Because of this, there aren't many of the same age in the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion who like to associate with them."

Chapter 632 Tong Nan (1)

After listening to Song Ge and Zhou Jun's explanation, Ling Chen gained a deeper understanding of Yangxin Pavilion. He originally thought that Yangxin Pavilion was just an ordinary place for the elderly, but he didn't expect it to have so many complexities. From Zhou Jun's attitude, it was clear that he didn't have a favorable impression of the disciples produced by Yangxin Pavilion.

"Song, your martial arts skills have really improved quickly. In such a short time, you've already reached the level of projecting Inner Strength externally." Ling Chen changed the subject, avoiding further discussion about Yangxin Pavilion.

"I have to admit, my progress is largely thanks to Liang Zheng and Song Yi."

Ling Chen, puzzled, asked, "What do they have to do with your progress?"

"Don't laugh at me for saying this, but if it weren't for Liang Zheng's guidance, avoiding many misguided paths, I probably wouldn't have reached this level."

Hearing this, Ling Chen's expression changed slightly. Liang Zheng and Song Yi, both appearing young, were capable of advising Song Ge, which indicated their formidable strength. Could it be that... the disciples from Yangxin Pavilion were really that impressive?

With this thought, Ling Chen couldn't help but ask, "Song, the Liang Zheng and Song Yi you just mentioned, have they reached the level of the Earthly List?"

"Not quite," Song Ge shook his head and said, "Their overall strength barely ranks in the top three of the Dragon List; they still have some distance from reaching the Earthly List." Ling Chen gasped in astonishment upon hearing this.

Now he finally understood what that meant.

If the disciples of Yangxin Pavilion participated in the Heavenly Mechanism Great Ceremony, the rankings on the Newcomer List would likely be completely overturned.

Initially, Ling Chen didn't want to continue discussing Yangxin Pavilion, but Song Ge's words piqued his interest again.

"Song, do all disciples from Yangxin Pavilion have strength like that of Liang Zheng?"

"No."

That's a relief! Ling Chen secretly breathed a sigh of relief, thinking that all disciples from Yangxin Pavilion were as exceptional as Liang Zheng and Song Yi. However, this thought was immediately crushed by Song Ge's next words.

"Among the disciples of Yangxin Pavilion, Liang Zheng and Song Yi's strength ranks at the bottom because they joined Yangxin Pavilion later, so their Martial Arts skills are somewhat lower than others. From what I know, almost all other disciples are on the Earthly List."

Uh...

After hearing Song Ge's words, Ling Chen was momentarily stunned. All were on the Earthly List? Damn! Had the standards for being a master lowered so much these days?

At this moment, Ling Chen finally understood why Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion placed so much importance on the existence of Yangxin Pavilion. Even the word "abnormal" was not sufficient to describe it.

"How many disciples does Yangxin Pavilion have?"

"Not many, only seven or eight."

Ling Chen was somewhat surprised and asked, "So few?" He had thought there would be at least ten or twenty disciples in Yangxin Pavilion.

Zhou Jun chimed in, "Did you think Martial Arts prodigies were easy to find? Finding seven or eight is already quite difficult. Since there aren't many prodigies with excellent talents, the elderly folks in Yangxin Pavilion often clashed fiercely over recruiting disciples, leading to many conflicts. Later, it was the previous Pavilion Master who stepped in and resolved the conflicts of Yangxin Pavilion. Since then, the elderly have agreed that two or three of them will teach a disciple together. Simply put, the disciples trained by Yangxin Pavilion are an amalgamation of strengths from various experts."

So that was it!

Ling Chen nodded. It's difficult not to be formidable when several masters simultaneously train a single talent.

As he spoke, Ling Chen's gaze was suddenly drawn by a young man not far away. In one corner of the martial arts field, a young man aged around twenty-seven or twenty-eight stood tall and straight, like a javelin, hands behind his back, his eyes gazing slightly upwards at a 45-degree angle towards the blue sky.

The mountain breeze brushed gently over his forehead's hair, coupled with his handsome face and elegant demeanor, he looked extremely suave.

"Damn!" Zhou Jun cursed unhappily, "That guy from Yangxin Pavilion is showing off again."

"Do you know him?"

"His name is Tong Nan, a disciple of Yangxin Pavilion, the most handsome among them. He always comes out to show himself off and charm the women of Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. That guy is simply a scoundrel. Countless women in our Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion have willingly been deceived by him, even if they are deserted later, they still have no regrets, just like those crazy fans outside," Zhou Jun's tone was harsh, clearly disliking Tong Nan.

"So he's a playboy."

While murmuring to himself, the nearby Tong Nan suddenly turned his head, observing leaves swept up by the mountain wind into the air. His right hand extended from behind and rose into the air, his wrist subtly rotating.

In an instant, the floating leaves, like lost lambs finding their way, unexpectedly changed direction in mid-air, flying towards Tong Nan and swirling around him with the breeze.

Ling Chen was stunned, watching agape. He had only seen such scenes in martial arts movies. He never imagined someone could really do it, and it was quite incredible.

Soon, Tong Nan's performance captivated the attention of the people around. Some young women in their twenties excitedly and adoringly gathered around Tong Nan, while other men looked on scornfully and jealously.

Suddenly, the leaves swirling around Tong Nan congregated to form the shape of a rose.

Seeing the glowing eyes of those women, Tong Nan's lips curved into a light smirk, and he gently snapped his fingers. Instantly, the leaves scattered and were swept back into the air by the mountain breeze.

"Dammit, why doesn't lightning strike that bastard dead," Zhou Jun cursed irritably.

"Calm down, he hasn't provoked you."

As soon as Ling Chen spoke, beside him, Song Ge subtly tugged at his sleeve. Ling Chen turned his head, puzzled at Song Ge, not understanding his gesture.

In a low voice, Song Ge said, "Previously, Zhou Jun fancied a girl and wanted to pursue her, but she was captivated by Tong Nan and was even deceived into giving herself to him, so..."

Realizing the situation now.

Ling Chen suddenly understood. No wonder Zhou Jun was so disdainful of Tong Nan; it was because of this reason.

"Song, Tong Nan is quite formidable; he must be an expert from the Earthly List."

Song Ge nodded and replied, "Indeed. However, the technique he just displayed isn't very impressive. Once someone reaches the Earthly List, their control over Inner Strength improves significantly. As long as you learn to control your own Inner Strength well, you can easily do it."

Control?

A thought struck Ling Chen; that was exactly the technique Song He had taught him.

Although he had already encountered these skills, he had never tried to use Inner Strength to control the direction of leaves like Tong Nan had. If given the chance, it might be worth a try. Although it's a bit showy, it's still good for impressing others.

Chapter 633 Tong Nan (2)

"Tong, hitting on girls again?"

At this moment, a teasing voice came over.

Tong Nan turned his head to look and a faint smile appeared at the corner of his mouth as he waved and greeted, "Liang Zheng, if you two are jealous, just say it. How about it, want me to introduce a few women to you? Look at you, grown men and still virgins, isn't that losing face for us guys? How about I arrange something tonight and let you fully evolve into men?"

Song Yi waved his hand and said, "Tong, I'm afraid I'm not blessed to enjoy that. You know that I practice Child Skill. Master has instructed that I can break anything, only not lust."

"Well then, forget about it. Seems you won't enjoy the pleasures of being a man. How about you, Liang Zheng, any interest?"

Liang Zheng smiled and said, "Tong, you enjoy it yourself; I prefer to find my own."

"Fine! Then pretend I never said anything just now."

During their conversation, the three had gathered together, speaking in lower and lower voices, with the content of their discussion unknown. However, their gazes occasionally drifted to Ling Chen, accompanied by various gestures.

"Ling Chen, let's go." Zhou Jun grabbed Ling Chen, ready to leave.

However, they hadn't gone far when they heard Tong Nan's voice again: "Zhou Jun, where are you going? It's rare to see you at the martial arts field, why not stay and have some fun?"

With the sound of footsteps approaching, Ling Chen turned to see Tong Nan, Liang Zheng, and Song Yi walking over together.

"Ling Chen, right?" Tong Nan sized up Ling Chen, a playful smile curling at the edge of his mouth.

Ling Chen looked at Tong Nan unflinchingly and asked, "What's the matter?"

"I just heard from Song Yi that you are the one ranked first in the Newcomer List, able to manifest Inner Strength externally at such a young age. You seem to have good aptitude, so I'm rather interested in getting to know you."

"Now you know me, don't you?"

"I do know you, but... I'm more interested to see just how powerful you are, and to find out if the first place on the Newcomer List is really well-deserved."

As Tong Nan spoke, Zhou Jun immediately furrowed his brows, saying gravely, "Tong Nan, Ling Chen is a guest of Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion; don't be too rude."

"So what? Zhou Jun, don't forget where we are - this is Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. Since we are all martial artists, what's wrong with making friends through martial arts? Or are you saying... you don't dare?" Tong Nan's gaze shifted to Ling Chen, with his last sentence clearly directed at him.

Faced with Tong Nan's challenging look, Ling Chen's expression was as still as water, watching the other silently without any intention of speaking.

Song Yi chimed in with a malicious smile, "Ling Chen, you're the first on the Newcomer List; don't you even have that bit of courage? If this gets out, aren't you afraid of being laughed at?"

"Song Yi."

Song Ge frowned, speaking discontentedly, "Ling Chen is my friend; I hope you can show some respect."

"Song, I didn't hit him or insult him, how is that being disrespectful? Besides, he's your friend, but I am also your friend; you can't be too biased."

Song Ge responded seriously, "If it weren't for Ling Chen's help, I wouldn't have been able to enter Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. So if I have to choose between the two of you, sorry, I won't stand by and watch someone being disrespectful to him."

Hearing this, Song Yi sneered, "In that case, it seems we can no longer be friends."

"I don't need a friend like that anyway." Ling Chen said indifferently, "Friends should be as close as brothers, not trouble each other like you do."

Song Yi's expression turned cold, and he snorted lightly, "Ling Chen, save your breath, just give me a straight answer; do you dare or not? If you don't, then get out of Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion quick, and stop making a fool of yourself here."

Ling Chen glanced at Tong Nan and the others and said, "Guys, I don't recall having offended you, so why keep targeting me and purposely troubling me? Do I look that easy to bully?"

Zhou Jun remarked scornfully, "Everyone in Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion of our age has already been bullied by them; of course, they won't give up the chance to change targets. Yangxin Pavilion's people are better, they just flaunt their Master's reputation all day without having to do anything."

This remark caused Liang Zheng's face to change slightly as he said coldly, "Zhou Jun, watch your words, don't make things unpleasant for yourself."

"Am I wrong? Since you entered Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, aside from enjoying its resources, what have you done for the Pavilion? Ling Chen may not be one of Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion's own, but he has helped the Pavilion a great deal, even risking his life to save the Pavilion Master. On that account alone, none of you compare, and now you even have the nerve to bother him; frankly, being part of Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, I am ashamed on your behalf."

After being verbally lashed by Zhou Jun, Song Yi became enraged and scolded, "Zhou Jun, you..."

"Enough!" Tong Nan said curtly, his eyes flickering with a smile yet not quite smiling as he looked at Ling Chen, "I don't like to force others. If you're not interested in a spar, just say so, I promise I won't make it difficult for you."

At this moment, the others in the martial arts field seemed to have caught the scent of gunpowder between the two groups, and they gathered around with interest to watch the excitement, making various comments.

"Isn't that Ling Chen the first of the Newcomer List? He should be quite capable, why not just agree quickly?"

"You really have no clue, can a person on the Newcomer List compare with a disciple from Yangxin Pavilion? Anyone from Yangxin Pavilion could handle the contenders of the Newcomer List easily. Ling Chen has the good sense, that's why he dares not accept the challenge."

Hearing the surrounding commentary, both Zhou Jun and Song Ge's faces turned unsightly. Both simultaneously looked at Ling Chen, waiting for his decision.

"You're an expert on the Earthly List, and I haven't even made it to the top three on the Dragon List; do you think such a spar would be interesting?"

Tong Nan laughed, "Don't worry, it won't be me moving against you, you're not yet qualified for me to take action." Saying this, Tong Nan glanced at Liang Zheng and Song Yi, then pointed at Song Yi, "Let it be him. You compare yourself with Song Yi; he is one of the weakest in Yangxin Pavilion. How about that?"

"I have no issue," Song Yi grinned, "Just afraid Ling Chen won't be generous enough to teach."

Under everyone's gaze, Ling Chen hesitated for a moment, then nodded, "Alright, since everyone is so interested, then I shall try. But let's be clear, since it's a spar, we should stop at the first touch, don't be too hard on each other."

The moment these words were uttered, the onlookers' impression of Ling Chen lowered a few notches. Speaking such words before the fight had even begun clearly showed a lack of confidence in himself. Defeated before the battle, without a move made, he had already lost in momentum.

"Ling, be careful," Song Ge warned, "Song Yi's strength may not yet be on the Earthly List, but it's not far off. Plus, he practices Child Skill, which makes him strong in actual combat. Don't take it lightly."

"I know."

Chapter 634 Sparring (1)

As the crowd retreated, Ling Chen took off his coat, handed it to Zhou Jun, and then strode to the center of the martial arts field, staring directly at Song Yi opposite him.

When the two were about to clash, nobody noticed that, not far from the martial arts field, in a room, Su Mei stood in front of a window, quietly observing the situation on the field.

"Pavilion Master, should I step in to stop them? You know the disciples of Yangxin Pavilion better than anyone; they are heavy-handed and I'm worried they might hurt Ling Chen," Zhou Qi, who was standing behind Su Mei, said.

"It's too late to stop them now. If you step in at this point, everyone would know that Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion is protecting Ling Chen, which could inevitably lead to dissatisfaction among the disciples of Yangxin Pavilion."

"But... the discipline of the disciples of Yangxin Pavilion is deteriorating. They even dare to provoke a guest of Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. If we don't intervene, I fear they will become even more unruly. Pavilion Master, as you know, within Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, aside from you, people like Tong Nan don't take anyone seriously. Because of this, many within the pavilion are displeased, believing that you are showing too much favoritism towards the people of Yangxin Pavilion."

"So what can be done?" Su Mei sighed lightly, her tone revealing a hint of helplessness, "Elder Zhou, you're not unaware that Yangxin Pavilion is the most crucial part of Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion has stood tall in the world of Martial Arts for hundreds of years without falling because Yangxin Pavilion has deterred our enemies. In the past, with grandfather around, the people of Yangxin Pavilion behaved properly. Now that grandfather is gone, it's inevitable that they're less restrained. Regardless, as long as the people of Yangxin Pavilion are utterly loyal to Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, in other matters, we should mostly let them have their way."

"What about this sparring match?"

"Let's watch for now. If Ling Chen is in danger, then you can intervene."

"Yes, I understand."

At this very moment, on the martial arts field, Song Yi crooked his finger at Ling Chen, tauntingly said, "You're the guest, I'll let you make the first move. Come on, use all your strength, don't worry about hurting me."

Ling Chen nodded, rolled up his sleeves, and greeted with a fist salute, "Please enlighten me!"

As soon as he finished speaking, Ling Chen's eyes instantly became sharp, bursting with energy, and he charged towards Song Yi like a gust of wind.

In the blink of an eye, Ling Chen had closed in within five steps of Song Yi.

Watching Ling Chen rapidly approach, Song Yi's lips curled slightly, his expression unchanging, completely disregarding Ling Chen's attack. When close enough, Ling Chen raised his iron fist with ferocious momentum, directly aiming for Song Yi's face.

However, before his fist could extend halfway, without even hitting Song Yi's body, a palm suddenly struck, instantly enveloping Ling Chen's fist, blocking its force.

Seeing this, Ling Chen stepped back, ready to withdraw his fist, but to his surprise, he found that his punch was immovable in Song Yi's palm and could not advance or retreat.

Such formidable strength!

Ling Chen was startled and instantly stepped back, pushing off the ground to pull his fist free.

"Is that all you've got?" Song Yi shook his head with a lack of interest, "I thought you were more formidable. It seems that the title of number one on the Newcomer List is rather inflated. Come on, continue, put some more effort into it, I'm not that weak."

Hearing Song Yi's mockery, the surrounding crowd shook their heads. Ling Chen's attack had no pressure at all, and he was simply no match for Song Yi. Moreover, from beginning to end, Song Yi stood in his original place without moving an inch.

Outside the martial arts field, Zhou Jun looked at Ling Chen anxiously, his face full of nervousness.

"Alas! They shouldn't have been allowed to spar. If I had known, I would have taken Ling Chen away directly."

"Let's not worry yet," Song Ge said reassuringly. "Ling Chen's strength is not that weak. Even if he can't win, he won't be defeated so quickly. Moreover, Ling is a guest of Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, and Song Yi, no matter how bold, wouldn't dare to openly harm him, unless he wants to bear the wrath of the Pavilion Master."

Watching Song Yi's easy posture, Ling Chen rubbed his wrists and swung his fists a couple of times. Then, he made a move that surprised everyone.

Without a running start or acceleration, he walked step by step toward Song Yi and stopped right in front of him. Now, the distance between the two was less than half a meter, close enough to touch each other with an outstretched hand.

Seeing Ling Chen's unusual behavior, a look of doubt flashed in Song Yi's eyes, having no idea what Ling Chen was planning to do.

Suddenly, Ling Chen, who had been standing still, threw a steel-hard punch straight ahead without any fancy movements - a punch as simple as could be.

As the punch approached, Song Yi, without a word, reached out his hand again, trying to envelop Ling Chen's fist.

However, the moment the fist and palm met, Song Yi's entire arm shook violently, and his right shoulder involuntarily skewed backward, as if unable to bear the power from Ling Chen's punch.

How could this be?

Song Yi looked at Ling Chen in disbelief, his face filled with shock.

During their previous exchange, the power of Ling Chen's punch had been very weak. Even if Ling Chen had been probing, his strength could not possibly have increased so much in an instant.

In a split second, Song Yi quickly gathered his thoughts, channeling his Inner Strength, and sent his entire arm forward to counter Ling Chen's punch.

For a moment, Ling Chen's fist and Song Yi's palm were tightly connected, clashing solidly against each other, moving back and forth on either side.

Witnessing this scene, the onlookers were instantly startled.

Although there was no competition in martial techniques, the current spar was even more dangerous, a pure comparison of Inner Strength.

Undoubtedly, both Ling Chen and Song Yi had reached the level of externalizing their Inner Strength. But the competition of Inner Strength isn't just about the level; it's also about the accumulation. The stronger one's strength, the more robust and abundant the Inner Strength.

Among the disciples of Yangxin Pavilion, Song Yi's strength might be the weakest, but he was still ranked among the top three on the Dragon List. Compared to him, Ling Chen was at least a few levels behind. After all, Ling Chen's overall strength had always been hovering around the fifth rank on the Tiger List without any improvement.

"Overestimating himself," Tong Nan scoffed, looking at Ling Chen with a hint of disdain.

To actually compare Inner Strength with Song Yi was like asking for trouble. Leaving aside how strong Song Yi was, he had been cultivating Child Skill since childhood, never once breaking the practice for over twenty years. His Inner Strength was solid and stable, not something ordinary people could match. Even Liang Zheng, whose strength surpassed Song Yi's, might not be guaranteed a win in a contest of Inner Strength alone.

"Tong Nan."

At this point, Zhou Jun quickly walked up to Tong Nan and said in a grave voice, "Stop them immediately. A misunderstanding of Inner Strength can cause serious injuries easily. You were the one who proposed this sparring session. If anything happens to Ling Chen, how will you explain it to the Pavilion Master?"

Hearing these words, Tong Nan frowned slightly.

There were others he could disregard, but the Pavilion Master... he truly dared not offend.

Chapter 635 Sparring (2)

Thinking of the possible consequences, Tong Nan nodded and stepped toward the martial arts field.

But at this moment, a sudden exclamation burst out from the spectators: "Look, Song Yi can't hold on any longer."

Upon hearing this, everyone's gaze immediately focused on Song Yi. Indeed, at this moment, Song Yi's face was slightly pale, his shoulders trembling slightly as if he was shivering. From his appearance, he obviously couldn't hold out much longer. View the correct content at [fre.ewe\(bn\)ovel.com](http://fre.ewe(bn)ovel.com)

By comparison, although Ling Chen seemed a bit short of breath, he was in a much better state than Song Yi, his eyes sharp and clear with no sign of defeat.

Seeing this, Tong Nan's expression couldn't help but change.

This guy... such strong Inner Strength! Just from this alone, his martial arts cultivation is definitely not weak. Has he been hiding his true capabilities all along?

As these thoughts raced through his mind, a light shout came from the martial arts field: "Let go!"

As the voice fell, a meaty palm fiercely struck out, hitting right in the middle of Ling Chen and Song Yi's interlocked hands. Disrupted by the blow, both Ling Chen and Song Yi immediately took several steps back, disengaging from combat.

Ling Chen gasped for breath and looked at the person who had intervened: "Elder Zhou!"

Zhou Qi glanced at Ling Chen, then turned his gaze coldly towards Song Yi and reprimanded sharply: "Song Yi, you are a member of Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. Is this how you treat a guest?"

Song Yi tried to defend himself: "I..."

"Enough!" Zhou Qi waved his hand impatiently: "I do not wish to hear your excuses. The Pavilion Master has ordered you to reflect on your actions. You are not to leave Yangxin Pavilion for three days. Do you hear me?"

Seeing Zhou Qi invoking the Pavilion Master's name, Song Yi immediately wilted like an eggplant hit by frost.

"Yes, I understand."

"Elder Zhou, Song Yi was just exchanging pointers with Ling Chen, making friends through martial arts. There's no need for punishment, right?" Tong Nan suggested with a smile, hoping that Zhou Qi would be lenient and retract the punishment for Song Yi.

Zhou Qi replied coolly: "These are the Pavilion Master's direct orders. I am merely the messenger. If you have any objections, you may take them up with the Pavilion Master." After a pause, Zhou Qi added: "Tong Nan, you're one of the senior disciples of Yangxin Pavilion. You had better think carefully before you act, so as not to cause trouble for the Pavilion Master."

"Elder Zhou, rest assured, I know my limits." With that, Tong Nan turned to Ling Chen and cupped his hands: "Ling Chen, if there has been any discourtesy, I ask for your forgiveness."

"You're taking it too seriously. As you said earlier, it is common for those in the Martial Arts to spar and exchange pointers. If there is a chance, I would still like to ask for your guidance."

Hearing this, a sharp cold light flashed in Tong Nan's eyes as he replied with a smile: "I believe there will be an opportunity. Elder Zhou, since you're here, you go on with your work. I'm going back to see my Master."

Watching Tong Nan and Liang Zheng leave, Zhou Jun and Song Ge hurried to Ling Chen's side, asking with concern: "How are you, are you alright?"

Ling Chen patted his chest and said with a smile: "What could be wrong with me? I'm perfectly fine."

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"You... you are too bold. To actually compete in Inner Strength with Song Yi, don't you know how dangerous that is?" Zhou Qi scolded, but despite the blame, there was a hint of admiration in his voice. He was startled earlier when he saw Ling Chen and Song Yi competing in Inner Strength. Such a contest was no joke; the slightest carelessness could lead to a serious injury, and one might even lose all their martial power. That's why Su Mei had hurriedly called him to intervene.

Ling Chen said sheepishly: "Elder Zhou, I've caused you concern. I will be more cautious next time."

Relieved to see Ling Chen unharmed, Zhou Jun and Song Ge suddenly became interested and asked eagerly: "We all thought you would lose, but you actually won against that boy Song Yi. How did you manage it?"

"There's nothing to ask about. Inner Strength comparisons don't involve any trickery. It's entirely a test of one's own strength. Ling Chen's victory over Song Yi only proves that he is stronger."

Upon hearing Zhou Qi's words, Ling Chen nodded, seemingly agreeing with him.

In truth, he knew best. When it really came down to sheer strength, it was difficult for him to defeat Song Yi. The reason he won was entirely due to Su He's guidance.

Although there were no tricks in an Inner Strength contest, if one mastered the art of 'Control,' they could maximize the power of their Inner Strength. For instance, during the contest with Song Yi, the latter had been bluntly channeling his Inner Strength outward, trying to overpower him in one go.

However, Ling Chen was very clever. Knowing that his Inner Strength was inferior to Song Yi's, he condensed his own Inner Strength to counteract his opponent. In doing so, not only did he enhance the power of his Inner Strength, but he also conserved what would otherwise be wastefully expended Inner Strength.

That's why Song Yi's Inner Strength depleted too quickly and couldn't last as long as his.

In essence, Song Yi didn't lose to him, but to his own pride.

After leaving the martial arts arena, Ling Chen and the others followed Elder Zhou back to their room.

Sitting on the bed and feeling a bit tired, Ling Chen rested for a while. After all, he had exhausted so much Inner Strength that he felt weakened.

It wasn't until lunchtime that Ling Chen finally recuperated.

...

Time flew by in the blink of an eye.

Ling Chen had already been at Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion for three days.

During these three days, Zhou Jun and Song Ge visited Ling Chen's room every day, sharing drinks, chatting, or strolling around, which was rather leisurely.

However, when the night was deep and quiet, Ling Chen wasn't that leisurely anymore.

These last few days, the contact from the God Organization had begun to inquire about the progress of the operation. If he did not make any progress soon, the safety of Xia Mutong and porridge girl would be difficult to ensure.

Looking at the blue bottle in his hand, Ling Chen, resting his head on one hand, pondered some strategies.

Lin Jiawei had said that as long as he poured the liquid from the blue bottle into the drinking water of Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, it would render everyone there powerless. Then, with an inside-outside coordinated attack, they could eliminate everyone from the Pavilion.

But as easy as it sounds, it was extremely difficult to accomplish.

During his time with Zhou Jun, Ling Chen had gleaned quite a bit of information indirectly. The food and water of Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion were separate from Yangxin Pavilion. Moreover, the Pavilion was very strict about managing their kitchen, not allowing unrelated or external personnel to enter the sensitive area.

Ling Chen had originally wanted Zhou Jun to take him on a tour of the kitchen, but Zhou Jun had told him that not even he was qualified to enter the kitchen, let alone bring someone else.

If it were Elder Zhou, then it might be possible, as he was the steward of Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, in charge of managing many affairs, including logistical work.

What a problem!

Ling Chen sighed helplessly, not knowing what to do.

Lin Jiawei had only given him ten days, and one-third had already passed. If there was no progress, he could forget about ever seeing Xia Mutong and porridge girl again.

Chapter 636 Snatching a Disciple (1)

Headache!

Ling Chen stared blankly at the ceiling, his face etched with a bitter smile.

Caught between a rock and a hard place, he didn't know what to do. He took out his phone and dialed Hu Fei's number.

After a brief exchange, Ling Chen hung up the phone, disappointed. As he expected, there was still no trace of Xia Mutong. Despite Hu Fei's best efforts, the God Organization was too cunning; not a single clue could be found. Hu Fei was now like a headless fly, scurrying everywhere, gathering information.

Lost in thought, Ling Chen felt sleep creeping up on him and unknowingly drifted off in bed.

...

He woke up in a daze.

Ling Chen rubbed his bleary eyes and yawned as he sat up in bed. Just as his feet touched the floor, he heard a series of 'thump thump thump' knocks on the door.

"Who is it?" Ling asked, muttering to himself, "Can't they let one be at peace so early in the morning?"

"Ling, it's me, open up quickly."

Hearing it was Song Ge's voice, Ling Chen immediately got up and opened the door. Looking at Song Ge standing outside, Ling Chen asked, "Song, what's the matter? Why the early visit?"

Without a word, Song Ge grabbed Ling Chen's hand and pulled him outside, saying as they walked, "Come with me to Yangxin Pavilion quickly."

"Yangxin Pavilion?"

Ling Chen was suddenly taken aback and stopped in his tracks, asking curiously, "Song, why go to Yangxin Pavilion all of a sudden? Could it be..." Suddenly, a possibility crossed Ling Chen's mind, and he frowned, "Could it be that Song Yi's Master wants to seek revenge on me?"

"Song Yi's Master is correct, but it's not for revenge. As for the specific reason, I'm not too clear myself. All I know is, I've just received a command to take you to Yangxin Pavilion immediately. Oh, and the command was delivered by someone sent by the Pavilion Master personally."

Su Mei?

Ling Chen let out a sigh of relief. Since the order came from Su Mei, it probably wouldn't be dangerous.

Exiting the room, Ling Chen asked Song Ge, "Song, do you know why the Yangxin Pavilion wants to see me?"

"How would I know that? The Pavilion Master sent someone early this morning to find me and bring you to Yangxin Pavilion; she didn't tell me the specifics. However, my guess is that it might have something to do with the martial arts sparring you had with Song Yi that day."

Sparring... Ling Chen frowned to himself, feeling uneasy about the sudden summons from Yangxin Pavilion.

While he pondered, they arrived at the towering structures behind the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion.

Having passed through a long and narrow passage, the scenery before Ling Chen suddenly cleared, revealing a spacious Siheyuan, covering an area of over a thousand square meters. The courtyard was not only bright and airy but also planted with numerous trees, flowers, and plants that were lush and bursting with vitality.

What surprised Ling Chen the most was that he saw many flowers that should only grow in other seasons, blooming despite it being early spring.

"Song, is this Yangxin Pavilion?" View the correct content at [fr\ewe.bn\(o\)v\el.c\(o\)m](#)

Song Ge nodded and said, "This is where the elders of Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion retire. However, only some of them live here."

"And the others?"

"There are also some powerful seniors who live in seclusion in the surrounding mountains and forests; they don't like to interact with people much, so they choose to live alone. Additionally, although those elders retire in Yangxin Pavilion, they don't stay there all the time. Most of them are roaming outside and only occasionally come back for a visit."

As the words fell, Song Ge pointed to a house not far away and said, "That's where Master Song Yi lives. Let's go in and pay our respects first."

Under the guidance of Song Ge, Ling Chen followed in his footsteps and made his way directly to the front door.

Knock, knock, knock!

Accompanied by a series of crisp knocking sounds, the door was opened from the inside. Ling Chen fixed his gaze and discovered that the one opening the door was none other than Song Yi, whom he had defeated the other day.

Upon seeing Ling Chen, Song Yi's complexion immediately turned a bit unsightly, and he stood at the door without moving.

"Disciple, is it Ling Chen who has come? Don't just stand there; invite the guest in quickly."

Someone inside spoke up, and Song Yi, not daring to delay any longer, quickly stepped aside and made a 'please' gesture with his hand.

Stepping into the room, Ling Chen's gaze was immediately drawn to an old man by the window. The elder was dressed in a light blue robe, extremely thin for the still-chilly early spring, but he seemed unaffected by the cold outside, his complexion ruddy and spirited.

As they approached, Song Ge bowed slightly, and with utmost respect, greeted, "Elder Huang."

Ling Chen did not neglect to show his respect and followed with a bow. Song Ge had already informed him beforehand about the name of Song Yi's master.

Huang Zheng. Although he appeared to be only in his sixties, he was actually over ninety years old.

After exchanging greetings, Huang Zheng's sharp gaze passed over Song Ge and landed on Ling Chen. After a thoughtful look, Huang Zheng slowly spoke, "You are Ling Chen?"

Just as Ling Chen was about to respond, he felt a sudden fierce gust of wind assault him, pressing in on his face in an instant.

Ling Chen was not the only one caught off guard by this abrupt development; even Song Ge and Song Yi beside him were not able to react in time. They only saw a blurred shadow sweep past, and then, Ling Chen's body moved from its original spot, retreating several steps until his back was pressed against the wall.

Looking at the fist that had stopped in front of his face, Ling Chen secretly swallowed his saliva, a drop of cold sweat rolling down from his forehead.

"Elder Huang... what is this..."

The first to recover, Song Ge hurriedly ran over to Ling Chen's side and was about to plead, only to see Elder Huang suddenly lower his fist, saying, "You are quite strong, but you still fall short of defeating Song Yi."

With that, Elder Huang turned back to his chair.

Ling Chen wiped the sweat off his forehead and said to Elder Huang, "Elder Huang, I..."

"There's no need to explain, I believe you didn't resort to any tricks. With Tong Nan watching from the sidelines, if you had used any tricks, he would have most certainly spotted them. Rest assured, I didn't summon you here for any other reason; I am simply interested in you and wanted to meet you."

Hearing this, Ling Chen breathed a sigh of relief. He had thought that Elder Huang was looking for trouble with him, but it turned out to be a test of his strength.

"Disciple, go and bring a few chairs over; don't keep the guests standing."

"Yes."

Song Yi obediently replied and quickly brought chairs over to Ling Chen and Song Ge.

After both were seated, Elder Huang looked at Ling Chen and asked, "Who is your master?"

"I don't have a master."

"Oh?" Elder Huang said with interest, "So young and without a master, yet you have cultivated your martial arts to this realm; it seems you have good potential. Song Yi, did you hear that? Your potential is excellent, but potential is just a basic foundation and doesn't represent much; it doesn't mean you'll definitely become an expert in the future. Although your progress over the years has been good, there's still much room for improvement. The reason why you haven't fully tapped into your potential is that you're too confident in your own talent, causing you to become complacent."

Chapter 637 Snatching Disciples (2)

After hearing his Master's teaching, Song Yi lowered his head with an expression of being taught, and said, "Master, rest assured, I will definitely bear in mind your instruction."

"Alright, you may leave now, I want to chat with Ling Chen and the others."

"Yes." Song Yi nodded, turned, and left the room.

Once Song Yi had left, Huang Zheng looked at Ling Chen and said, "Song Yi is my disciple, normally there's nothing that can't be said in front of him. But his character is too proud, so I sent him away."

"Elder Huang, what is it you wish to say?" Ling Chen asked curiously.

"I would like to take you as my disciple, are you interested?"

Ling Chen was immediately taken aback upon hearing this, not expecting Huang Zheng to make such a request. Song Ge's eyes lit up excitedly at Ling Chen's side. Though Elder Huang was not the most

formidable figure in the Yangxin Pavilion, he was still a top expert on the Earthly List with very strong abilities. Becoming his disciple was bound to be extremely beneficial.

Seeing Ling Chen not responding, Huang Zheng asked, "Well, don't you wish to accept?"

"That..." Ling Chen touched his nose, hesitating, "Elder Huang, it's an honor to be acknowledged by you, it's just... I currently have no intention of taking a master."

Upon hearing this, Huang Zheng's face immediately darkened, and he frowned, "By the sound of it, are you looking down on me?"

"No, no, no!" Ling Chen, afraid of a misunderstanding, quickly waved his hands, "I absolutely did not mean that. Elder Huang, being respected and held in high esteem in the Yangxin Pavilion, your willingness to take me as your disciple is an honor for me. But I genuinely don't have such thoughts right now. You might not be fully aware of my current situation. I have too many things to deal with and no time to stay at the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. If you don't believe me, you can ask Song Ge; he knows my situation best."

Although Song Ge did not understand why Ling Chen was refusing Huang Zheng, he still helped explain, "Elder Huang, Ling Chen indeed has a lot of things he is busy with. When Ling Chen became the top of the Newcomer List, he originally had the chance to join the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, but he refused because he was unable to leave other duties. The Pavilion Master is aware of this too and thus did not compel him. Otherwise, with how much the Pavilion Master values talented individuals, he wouldn't have easily let him go."

Hearing both of their statements, Huang Zheng's temper settled down a bit, he nodded and said, "Well then, I won't press the matter. However, I could take you as a registered disciple for now, and when you have time later on, you can stay at Yangxin Pavilion and receive my guidance. What do you say, is that too much to ask?"

Ling Chen inwardly sighed with resignation. Not too much? It is indeed too much!

He had already refused, yet the other party was not willing to let go. Could it be that Elder Huang truly values him that much?

At that moment, not only did Ling Chen feel it was inappropriate, but so did Song Ge. What Elder Huang said was clearly putting someone in a difficult position.

Just as Ling Chen was unsure how to reply, the door outside suddenly was pushed open violently. Following steady footsteps, a silver-haired elder appeared within Ling Chen's line of sight.

Seeing the elder's arrival, Huang Zheng's old face changed, and he barked sharply, "Liang Tian, what are you doing here? Did I agree to let you in?"

The elder named Liang Tian waved his hand dismissively and coldly said, "Huang, you old man are no good, we agreed to meet together, yet you secretly invited him alone, what's the meaning of this, are you trying to take all for yourself?"

"What do you mean 'take all for myself'?" Huang Zheng stood up from his chair, raising his voice, "Liang Tian, this is my home, mind your language."

"You don't respect our decision, yet you expect me to respect you? No way! Let me tell you, you already have a disciple, don't even think about Ling Chen."

After saying that, Liang Tian turned his gaze toward Ling Chen, grabbed his arm, and started walking out.

"Liang Tian, let go of me!"

Elder Huang's voice turned icy as he strode forward, blocking the path of Liang Tian and Ling Chen.

"Let go!"

The fierce wind of the punch approached, and Liang Tian's gaze turned cold as he struck back with a palm, clashing hard against Huang Zheng's steel fist.

Bang!

Accompanied by a muffled sound, Huang Zheng and Liang Tian's bodies instantly split apart, each retreating five steps. Hit by the impact of both their internal energies, Ling Chen's body was sent flying uncontrollably, fortunately, Song Ge was behind him to prevent him from crashing into the wall.

Seeing that Liang Tian and Huang Zheng were about to go at it, Ling Chen and Song Ge hurriedly stepped back, fearing the implications of their clash. After all, a fight between Earthly List experts is nothing like one between Dragon List masters. The slightest carelessness could result in them getting severely wounded by the stray Qi Force.

"Stop, all of you!"

Just then, a low and slightly enraged voice came from outside.

Hearing that voice, Huang Zheng and Liang Tian, who were about to make their move, immediately stopped and turned their attention towards the door.

Seeing Huang Zheng and the other man walk out, Ling Chen and Song Ge exchanged glances before quickly following their steps, simultaneously leaving the room.

Outside, a person stood in the spacious courtyard, or more precisely, a young man.

Ling Chen examined the youth, who seemed to be in his twenties, with handsome features, fair skin, and fine bangs draped over his forehead, exuding an air of elegance.

However, what surprised Ling Chen the most was the change in Huang Zheng and Liang Tian's demeanor upon the youth's arrival; their eyes even held a trace of wariness when they looked at him.

How strange!

Huang Zheng and Liang Tian, as Earthly List masters, why would they be wary of a young man? Could he be an important figure from Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion? But he had been dealing with the Pavilion for so long and had never seen this person before. View the correct content at [fr\ewebnovel.com](http://www.ewebnovel.com)

"Song, who is he?" Ling Chen nudged Song Ge with his shoulder and asked.

Song Ge shook his head in confusion and replied, "I don't know, I've never seen him before."

"Huang Zheng, Liang Tian, you're practically veterans of Yangxin Pavilion. Don't you even have this much self-control? If outsiders saw this, they'd think the people in Yangxin Pavilion can't get along. I hope you take this as a warning and that there won't be a next time." free\NovelFire.c o(m)

Huang Zheng nodded, showing no intention of arguing.

Watching the youth turn to leave, Ling Chen felt incredibly surprised. What kind of background did this youth have to make Huang Zheng bow his head?

Once the youth disappeared from sight, Huang Zheng and Liang Tian exchanged glances and each snorted lightly.

"Ling Chen, come with me." Liang Tian waved at Ling Chen, signaling for him to follow.

"Listen, Ling Chen, don't blame me for warning you, but if you dare go with him, I won't be polite with you in the future," Huang Zheng added.

"Don't be afraid of him, if he dares to touch you, I'll back you up."

"You think you're capable of that?"

As he listened to their back-and-forth, Ling Chen's face was filled with a bitter smile, unsure of what he should do.

Chapter 638 Lin Jiawei's Coercion

Just as Ling Chen was feeling conflicted, Zhou Qi suddenly walked over, politely performing a ceremonial gesture towards Huang Zheng and Liang Tian.

"Zhou Qi, what are you doing here?" Huang Zheng asked with furrowed brows.

"Apologies, gentlemen, the Pavilion Master urgently needs to see Mr. Ling. Whatever matters you have can be discussed later," Zhou Qi said and then turned to Ling Chen, "Mr. Ling, please follow me."

Ling Chen had already wanted to leave, and now with Zhou Qi's help, he was no longer concerned with anything else. He quickly clasped his hands towards Huang Zheng and Liang Tian, and then hurriedly followed Zhou Qi.

After leaving Yangxin Pavilion, Ling Chen let out a breath and said, "Elder Zhou, thanks a lot just now. Oh, what did Miss Su want with me?"

"It's nothing," Zhou Qi said with a smile. "The Pavilion Master knew what Huang Zheng and his group wanted with you. Since Huang Zheng is a veteran of Yangxin Pavilion, the Pavilion Master couldn't outright refuse him and had to show some respect. Moreover, she guessed you wouldn't easily agree to Huang Zheng's request, fearing you couldn't extricate yourself and thus sent me to help."

"It's Miss Su who understands me," Ling Chen grinned and then asked, "Ah, Elder Zhou, there's something I've been wondering. Why are they so eager to take me as a disciple? Am I really that popular?"

"Of course, a martial arts student with outstanding talent is popular. But besides your talent, there seems to be another very important reason."

"What's the reason?" Ling Chen pressed further.

"I'm not too sure about that," Zhou Qi shook his head. "That's something internal to Yangxin Pavilion. I don't know much about it; probably only the Pavilion Master is aware. If you're interested, you might want to ask her, though whether she'll tell you, I don't know."

"Elder Zhou," Song Ge intervened. "We saw a young man in Yangxin Pavilion just now, both Huang Zheng and Liang Tian seemed wary of him. What is his story? I've been with Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion for such a long time, yet I've never seen him."

"Youth? I don't know about that, no outsider other than the Pavilion Master usually meddling with Yangxin Pavilion affairs. Even with my significant role in Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, without the Pavilion Master's permission, I'm not even qualified to step into Yangxin Pavilion casually. What I do know is that Yangxin Pavilion houses hidden dragons and crouching tigers, masters are numerous, many whom you might think inconspicuous might have been top masters ruling the martial world."

"Okay! If there's nothing else, I'm going to be busy," Zhou Qi finished and left.

Following Zhou Qi's departure, Ling Chen and Song Ge didn't linger outside and headed straight back to their room.

Yangxin Pavilion!

Standing before the window, Ling Chen looked out at the martial arts training ground, his brows tightly furrowed. After today's experience in Yangxin Pavilion, the challenges he faced had grown even more difficult.

Huang Zheng, Liang Tian, and that mysterious youth, all were masters among masters. Let alone poisoning, just sneaking into Yangxin Pavilion would likely result in being discovered very quickly. Thus, the mission given by Lin Jiawei proved near impossible to complete.

Sigh! Thinking about the difficulties, Ling Chen couldn't help but let out a helpless sigh, his mind a mess.
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Just six more days, if Hu Fei doesn't have any leads by then, he dared not think of the consequences.

Although both porridge girl and Xia Mutong were closely linked to him, the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion still had so many lives at stake. He couldn't just sacrifice so many lives for two, it wouldn't be worth it. More importantly, once Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion was destroyed, the God Organization would be unstoppable, without anyone to prevent them thereafter.

During these days, Ling Chen had thought it through clearly. If when the deadline came and he still couldn't rescue porridge girl and Xia Mutong, then he would have no choice but to abandon them.

Regrettably, although he was extremely unwilling, at this critical moment, he had to make the right decision.

While pondering, the ringtone of Ling Chen's cell phone suddenly erupted.

He took out his phone and glanced at the caller ID showing an unfamiliar number, a sense of foreboding sinking in his heart. This call wasn't ordinary; it was a video call. As the ringtone continued incessantly, Ling Chen stretched his hand and pressed the answer button.

Instantly, the phone screen displayed an image.

"Mr. Ling."

In the video, Lin Jiawei sat on a leather sofa, clad in a bathrobe, holding a teacup in his hand, his face still wearing a serene smile.

"Do you need something from me?"

"I've been informed by my subordinates, it's been four days and there's still no headway from your side. What, you've changed your mind?"

"No, I just haven't found the right moment yet. Rest assured, since I've promised you, I won't go back on my word. There's still a six-day deadline, what's the rush?"

"Of course I'm anxious. After pondering, I thought of a good method to motivate you," Lin Jiawei said with a smile. However, Ling Chen detected a sense of unease from his smile.

"What are you planning to do?" Ling Chen asked in a deep voice.

"Just watch." As Lin Jiawei's words fell, the video screen immediately switched to another scene.

Ling Chen was very familiar with the scene; it was the laboratory where Xia Mutong had been trapped.

At this moment, two security personnel were seen gripping Xia Mutong's arms, dragging her into the laboratory, then securing her body to the iron bed with belts.

Subsequently, several researchers in white coats entered, gathered around Xia Mutong, and began injecting her with drugs.

Seeing this, Ling Chen's face turned ashen, and he shouted urgently, "Stop! You said you'd give me ten days, you can't go back on your word."

"Mr. Ling, it's not that I want to renege, but you've been too passive. I think this will quicken your pace. The experiment has started, you better pray for your friend, that she survives. If not, I'll send her corpse to your doorstep for you to handle."

After finishing, the video screen disappeared instantly, along with Lin Jiawei's voice.

"Bastard!"

Smack!

Ling Chen cursed angrily, smashing the phone onto the ground, the fragile casing instantly shattering.

Thump thump thump!

Just as Ling Chen was enduring such torment, a knocking sounded from the door.

"Who is it?" Ling Chen managed to control his raging emotions as he inquired.

"It's me."

"Miss Su?"

Recognizing it was Su Mei's voice, Ling Chen quickly walked to the door and opened it.

"Miss Su, what brings you here?"

In just a few seconds, Ling Chen's expression had returned to calm, his lips curling into a faint smile, as if nothing had happened. free\we\bnov(e)l).com

"Come in, have a seat," Ling Chen warmly welcomed Su Mei into the room.

Upon entering, Su Mei walked over to the window, glanced at the yet to be cleared shards of the cellphone on the floor, and then turned her gaze to Ling Chen, stating, "I know."

Chapter 639 Coming Clean

"Know?" Ling Chen was startled and asked, "What do you know?"

Miss Su spoke deliberately, "The real purpose of your visit to Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion."

Hearing this, Ling Chen's face changed slightly, and he said with a forced smile, "Miss Su, are you mistaken? What purpose could I have? I came purely to pay a visit and see friends, nothing more."

"Really?" Su Mei shook her head gently and said, "I know you too well, as well as the matters around you. You've stayed in the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion for four days without any sign of leaving, so I felt something was off. A busy person like you, how could you afford to waste time here? Besides, your woman is still in East Sea City; would you really be willing to leave her for so long? So, after much thought, I can only conclude that you must have a covert purpose for coming to the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion."

"To verify my guess, I deliberately sent people to investigate in East Sea City, and the results confirmed my speculation." At this point, Su Mei looked deeply into Ling Chen's eyes and asked, "Am I wrong?"

Ling Chen gave a wry smile. Since Su Mei had already investigated clearly, there was no point in hiding it any longer.

"Indeed, I came to the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion with a purpose." Correct content is on

"Speak, I'm listening."

Thereupon, Ling Chen detailed the threats he received from Lin Jiawei. By now, there was no need to keep secrets.

Looking at the blue bottle handed over by Ling Chen, Su Mei raised her head and asked, "When were you planning to make your move?"

"I had no intention of taking action. I've thought it through these past two days; it's not worth sacrificing so many for just two lives. The reason I came to the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion was simply to buy time, allowing Hu Fei ample opportunity to find Xia Mutong, but alas..."

Thinking of the scene he had just witnessed, Ling Chen sighed and shook his head, "It's already too late."

"Miss Su, this time it's my fault. However you choose to deal with me, I have no complaints."

Su Mei replied indifferently, "Didn't you notice I came alone? If I really wanted to settle accounts with you, more than just myself would have come. Fine! Let's not discuss other matters for now. I understand your character and know you had no ill intentions, so I won't pursue this matter any further." She paused, then her tone shifted, "Now that Xia Mutong has been used as a test subject, there is still the porridge girl in Lin Jiawei's hands. You know her whereabouts; I will help you rescue her."

"If only it were that easy. The one who took the porridge girl is Ji Gang, a master from the Heavenly List. You should be very familiar with him."

"Him again?"

Su Mei frowned slightly, a hint of difficulty surfacing on her delicate face.

"Miss Su, with so many experts in Yangxin Pavilion, can't you ask a master from the Heavenly List to take on Ji Gang?"

"It's not so simple," Su Mei said, "Do you think a master from the Heavenly List can be easily summoned? I've told you before, unless the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion faces a life-or-death crisis, the people from Yangxin Pavilion will not just take action. The most important reason our ancestors set this rule was to prevent us from overly relying on the masters from Yangxin Pavilion, thereby neglecting our own cultivation. Besides, the master from the Heavenly List of Yangxin Pavilion is currently not available and cannot be contacted. So, you have to rely on yourself for this matter; at most, I can assist you from the sidelines."

"But..." Ling Chen started to speak but was interrupted by a 'beeping' sound coming from under the bed.

Su Mei looked under the bed and asked, "What's that noise?"

Without a word, Ling Chen walked to the side of the bed, bent down and took out the black briefcase hidden underneath. Opening the lid, the 'beeping' sound came from a wireless receiver.

Ling Chen glanced at Su Mei, then connected the headset to the external speaker. As the communication signal connected, Lin Jiawei's voice immediately came through the speaker, "Mr. Ling, I couldn't reach you by phone just now; I figured you must've smashed it, so I switched to radio communication. First off, I have good news for you: your friend is still alive. The experiment isn't exactly a success, but it hasn't failed either. She remains useful to us, so her life is not in danger for now."

"What do you want?"

"Nothing much, just a reminder to complete your task quickly and not to disappoint me again. Also, regardless of any other ideas you may have, it's best to abandon them early. Your friend is under Elder Ji's watch 24/7, and no matter how many experts you call in for the rescue, Elder Ji can eliminate your friend in an instant. So, I advise you, don't do anything foolish."

"Yangxin Pavilion has too many experts; I can't even get close."

"That's your problem, find a way to deal with it. I believe, with your abilities, it shouldn't be a big issue. Alright, I've said what I needed to say, hope you take it to heart."

After that, the wireless receiver's signal immediately cut off.

"What's your plan?" Su Mei asked.

Ling Chen shook his head, his mind full of Lin Jiawei's words. Xia Mutong not being dead was a small consolation. However, it seemed that after the experiment, Xia Mutong might have become someone like Jiang Yunkai and Bai Huanjun.

"Miss Su, the person from the God Organization responsible for contacting me must be near the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. Can you help me find them?"

"That's no problem, give me a day," Su Mei said and then turned to leave the room.

Once Su Mei had left, Ling Chen reached into his pocket and took out a bottle containing blue liquid. This bottle was identical to the one he had just given to Su Mei.

Sorry, Miss Su!

Ling Chen thought to himself with a stern look, his eyes becoming resolute.

...

Night fell!

Around one o'clock in the morning, Ling Chen, who had been feigning sleep on the bed, opened his eyes, swiftly sat up, slung the prepared shoulder bag on his back, and quickly moved to the window.

He opened the window, surveyed the outside, and jumped straight out, landing on the ground four meters below.

Seeing no one around, Ling Chen kept low, blending into the shadows to avoid detection. It wasn't long before he arrived at the entrance to Yangxin Pavilion.

Because he had come here with Song Ge during the day, Ling Chen remembered clearly that two Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion Disciples were guarding the entrance. If he wanted to sneak into Yangxin Pavilion, he had to get past them.

Looking at the two Disciples, Ling Chen took out a simple small crossbow from his bag and loaded it with an anaesthetic dart.

After preparing, Ling Chen picked up a stone from the ground and threw it toward the distance.

Crack!

A slight crisp sound immediately drew the attention of the two guards.

Chapter 640 Secretly Drugging

"What was that sound?"

"I don't know, I didn't see anyone pass by; maybe we heard wrong."

"No, better to be careful. We shouldn't let anything go wrong. You know the Pavilion Master's temper; if something goes wrong, we'll both pay dearly."

"Alright then, you go take a look, and I'll stay here."

After the exchange, a Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion Disciple left his post and headed straight towards the source of the noise.

Seeing the other party attracted, Ling Chen smiled in relief and quickly detoured from the side. The stone he had thrown was in a position neither too close nor too far, just right to avoid the line of sight of another guard.

Taking advantage of the guard's inattention, Ling Chen suddenly sprang from behind, drew close swiftly, and knocked the man to the ground with a heavy hand-chop to the back of his neck. Instantly, a muffled grunt was heard, and the man immediately passed out unconscious.

Ling Chen quickly dragged the man's body and moved him to a dark corner. Then, he pulled out a pre-loaded small crossbow and aimed it at the entrance's guard.

Whoosh!

The tranquilizer dart shot out and struck the guard's arm accurately. These supplies were provided by Lin Jiawei; the tranquilizer developed by the God Organization was exceptionally effective. In less than a second, the guard collapsed on the ground, without a chance to even make a sound.

Having silently dealt with two guards, Ling Chen quietly sighed in relief, swiftly crossed the passage, and entered the Yangxin Pavilion.

The night was thick, without stars or moon, with a cold mountain breeze howling through the midway, sweeping up countless broken grass and leaves, swirling in the air.

Returning to the Yangxin Pavilion, Ling Chen covered his face with a prepared bandanna, then cautiously moved through the spacious courtyard, heading towards the rear.

Generally, the kitchen would be built in an inconspicuous location. Ling Chen's mission was simple: find the Yangxin Pavilion's kitchen and dissolve the drug from the blue bottle into the drinking water.

Once the people in Yangxin Pavilion consume the drugged water, no matter how powerful, they would have to surrender obediently.

Since many masters resided within the Yangxin Pavilion, Ling Chen dared not be negligent, careful not to make even the slightest sound, treading as lightly as possible. In less than ten minutes, he finally figured out the location of the kitchen.

The kitchen was unlocked, Ling Chen gently pushed open the door, peeked inside to make sure there was no one around and then stepped inside, leaving the door slightly ajar.

He turned on the flashlight he carried, surveyed the kitchen's surroundings—it was very basic, still using the old firewood stove. A corner was piled with lots of firewood, and some pots and pans neatly arranged on the stove, while air-dried fish hung from the beams.

Water... Ling Chen looked around, his gaze suddenly brightened, and he quickly walked to a large tank full of water.

The water in the tank was clear, presumably the drinking water used in the kitchen for cooking. Without hesitation, Ling Chen immediately took out the blue bottle from his pocket and poured all the blue drug into the tank. Once mixed into the water, the blue drug quickly became colorless and tasteless, showing no signs of contamination.

"Finally done!"

After stowing the empty bottle, Ling Chen didn't linger and turned to walk outside. But, as he reached the door, ready to push it open, he suddenly heard snoring coming from above.

The unexpected noise instantly changed Ling Chen's expression as he looked up. Immediately, he saw a vague figure lying on the beam. The figure had been obscured by the beam before, which was why he hadn't noticed it.

Not making noise earlier nor later but precisely at this moment, Ling Chen found it hard to believe it was a coincidence.

Under his gaze, the person on the beam suddenly stretched, yawned, and sat up. Watching the other's actions, Ling Chen showed no intention of fleeing, but stood still on the spot. This is Yangxin Pavilion, a

place full of experts, and heaven knows how formidable the person on the beam is. Under the current circumstances, it is best to respond to changes by remaining unchanged.

In his thoughts, the person on the beam reached for a wine gourd at his waist, pulled out the stopper, and began pouring it into his mouth. After gulping down several mouthfuls, the person contentedly put the wine gourd down.

"Young brother, would you like to have a drink?"

Hearing the person address him, Ling Chen casually replied, "No, thanks!"

As his words fell, the person on the beam flipped over and directly landed on the ground. As he approached, Ling Chen finally got a clear view of the other's face.

Sleazy!

If one had to summarize the other's appearance and demeanor in one word, it would only be sleazy.

"Who are you?" asked Ling Chen.

"Young brother, I should be the one asking you that. Why aren't you sleeping at home in the middle of the night, and running to the kitchen instead? Are you hungry and came looking for food? Eh! Your features look unfamiliar; you must not be from Yangxin Pavilion."

"No."

"Not from Yangxin Pavilion, yet daring to come here, don't you know the rules of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion? What you are doing could lead to questioning. Young brother, you look young; you should avoid taking the wrong path and try to follow the right one."

"I walk my path as I wish, I don't need your guidance. If there's nothing else, I will be leaving." After saying that, Ling Chen took a few steps back, then turned and ran towards the outside of the kitchen.

After escaping more than twenty meters and seeing no footsteps following him, Ling Chen slightly relaxed.

"Young brother, since we are so fated, why not stay and have a drink with me to pass the tedious time."

At this moment, the old man's voice came again, startling Ling Chen. He was horrified to find that the old man had somehow gotten in front of him, holding the wine gourd and smiling at him.

"Old man, I'm not really interested in drinking, please find someone else."

With those words, Ling Chen quickened his pace, trying to bypass the man.

Hearing this, the old man just chuckled to himself, took another drink, seemingly not noticing Ling Chen passing by.

Seeing that the exit of Yangxin Pavilion was getting closer, Ling Chen immediately sped up, rushing past and returning to the entrance he previously came through.

I finally shook him off!

Ling Chen thought to himself. However, just as this thought appeared, he heard a familiar laughter near his ears. Turning his head, he saw the old man with the wine gourd leaning against the wall, grinning wickedly.

Seeing this, Ling Chen furrowed his brows.

The old man, who could surpass him silently, definitely should not be underestimated in strength, and was probably not much less formidable than Huang Zheng and the others. He was just unlucky to encounter such a person in the kitchen.

"Old man, what exactly do you want?"

Since he couldn't escape, Ling Chen resigned himself and looked at the other man, asking squarely.