

War God 141

Chapter 141 You're not going to make it, classmate!

"Why should I have to explain my actions to you?"

Song Wenrou's beautiful eyes lit up, her gaze on Lin Mu becoming as gentle as still water.

Guan Jiaojiao clapped her hands. "Well said!" she exclaimed. She looked at Ye Tong proudly and said, "A person needs some self-awareness. Who do you think you are, trying to teach others how to behave? You should worry about yourself first."

Ye Tong's face turned pale, her eyes brimming with tears. She hadn't expected Lin Mu to be so indifferent toward her. Although Lin Mu had always been reserved, even reluctant to interact with others, his words had never been so sharp.

Song Wenrou said softly, "Tongtong, you aren't Lin Mu, so how could you possibly know what kind of person he is? That's why we shouldn't judge someone based on appearances alone; it's not fair."

Fair? Ye Tong thought with a wry smile. You silly girl. With your status, of course no one would dare be unfair to you. But what about Lin Mu? He's just an ordinary person.

At that thought, her anger subsided significantly. Indeed, Lin Mu was different from them. He was just an ordinary person. So, Ye Tong offered Song Wenrou a smile, deciding to let it go. Then, she looked toward Jiang Xia on the stage and shot him a look, signaling that he had done enough.

Jiang Xia stared at Lin Mu for several seconds before shaking his head. "Boring. These people are too weak."

"It's not that they're too weak, it's that you're too strong, Director Jiang!" Gu Can chimed in, shamelessly flattering him. The praise immediately lifted Jiang Xia's mood, sweeping away any irritation he felt toward Lin Mu.

Li Ping added, "Of course. I mean, who is our Director Jiang? He's not like some people who are all talk."

"The king of empty boasts, you mean? Hahaha!" Xue Fei roared with laughter.

Jiang Xia nodded with a smile. "Tongtong, no offense, but your classmate really isn't up to par."

Ye Tong forced a smile. "Alright, alright, let's not talk about this anymore. Are we going to keep having fun or what?"

"As you wish."

Just as Jiang Xia was about to get off the stage, a sneering voice called out from the crowd. "Hey, kid, don't be in such a hurry to leave. You said the people here are so weak? How about letting this young master have a go with you?"

The crowd parted to reveal two men and a woman. It was Tian Boguang and his two disciples. The one who had spoken was Tian Boguang's disciple, Wang Wu.

"It's Master Tian from Lingcheng! I can't believe he's here."

"I heard Master Tian has reached the peak of External Strength, just a step away from becoming an Inner Strength Martial Artist capable of Qi Release. His disciples must be powerful."

"Of course. Among the younger generation, Wang Wu is known as the Little Martial King."

Hearing the discussions ripple through the crowd, the expressions on Ye Tong and her friends' faces changed, a hint of fear creeping in. Jiang Xia's expression was just as grim, and he remained silent.

Wang Wu's gaze first swept over Lin Mu with disdain, then settled on Jiang Xia on the stage. "So, are you up for it? Say something."

Jiang Xia's expression flickered, unsure whether he should accept. Although Li Ping and the others lauded his great strength, only he knew the truth: without cultivating Internal Energy, one couldn't truly be called a Martial Artist. As his coach had once told him, "Practicing form without cultivating power is

pointless in a real fight." He understood that principle all too well. This Wang Wu, with his slightly bulging temples and steady, deep breathing, was clearly a Martial Artist who possessed Internal Energy. And the Master Tian behind him was an even greater expert in the Martial Way.

"What are you afraid of, Director Jiang? Just fight him!" Li Ping said indignantly. "Show them how powerful you are!"

"That's right, Director Jiang, we believe in you!" Gu Can and the others goaded him, as if Jiang Xia being looked down upon was a personal insult to them.

Seeing this, Lin Mu couldn't help but shake his head. What a bunch of useless teammates. That Wang Wu hasn't even reached the External Strength realm, but he's at least cultivated a sliver of Internal Energy. How could Jiang Xia, who only knows a few clumsy moves, possibly be his opponent?

Jiang Xia felt like his lungs were about to explode with rage. Are these three idiots trying to get me killed?

At that moment, Tian Boguang spoke. "The purpose of the River City Martial Arts Meet is to make friends through martial arts," he said calmly. "Just remember not to injure anyone." He directed that last part at his disciple. After speaking, Tian Boguang found a seat and sat down. As for Lin Mu? In Tian Boguang's eyes, such an insignificant figure wasn't even worth a glance.

"Alright, Master," Wang Wu agreed with a smile. He shot Lin Mu an extremely provocative gesture before tapping his foot on the ground. He vaulted into the air, using a chair as a stepping stone to execute a clean flip, landing lightly on the stage.

His movements were graceful and effortless. With that single move, Wang Wu instantly earned a round of thunderous applause.

Jiang Xia's expression turned even uglier.

"Let's begin," Wang Wu said, beckoning to Jiang Xia with his finger. "Don't say I'm bullying you. I'll give you the first three moves."

Jiang Xia's face darkened. This Wang Wu is too arrogant! Goaded by the cheers from below, Jiang Xia's eyes turned red. He was a man who cared deeply about his reputation, and he couldn't stand being looked down on like this. "Fine!" he snarled. "Then let me see what you're made of!" With a low roar, he threw a punch at Wang Wu.

"One," Wang Wu said, simply shaking his head and tilting it to the side to dodge the punch.

Jiang Xia's gaze sharpened. He changed his fist into a claw, attempting a grappling move on Wang Wu's shoulder.

But Wang Wu merely smiled, leaning back slightly to once again evade the strike. "Two."

Jiang Xia's face was flushed with rage, and he wished he could tear Wang Wu to pieces. Each of Wang Wu's words felt like a stinging slap to his face, leaving it burning with shame.

"Get him, Director Jiang!"

"Hit him, Director Jiang!"

Li Ping and the others cheered wildly from below the stage. They were so invested, their teeth clenched, that they looked as if they wanted to jump into the ring themselves.

Jiang Xia nearly ground his teeth to dust. Those three idiots! With a furious roar, he leaped into the air and aimed a flying kick at Wang Wu's chest.

"Too slow. Too weak. No technique. All flash and no substance." With just these few words, Wang Wu delivered his verdict on Jiang Xia. He then stepped forward and lightly bumped Jiang Xia's chest with his shoulder.

THUMP!

With a muffled sound, Jiang Xia cried out as he was sent flying from the ring, crashing hard onto the ground.

"Jiang Xia!"

"Director Jiang!"

Ye Tong and the others rushed over to help him up.

Li Ping looked up furiously at Wang Wu. "How could you be so heavy-handed?" she shouted. "Are you trying to kill someone?"

Wang Wu shot her a disdainful look. "Idiot," he sneered, looking down from the stage at the fallen Jiang Xia. "You may not be strong, but you were right about one thing." He added, "Her classmate truly is useless."

Chapter 142: Your Apprentice is No Good!

Humiliation! This was blatant humiliation!

Wang Wu's sole purpose was to humiliate Lin Mu. He had found his chance to get revenge for Lin Mu's previous disrespect toward his master, Tian Boguang.

While Lin Mu remained calm, Guan Jiaojiao, who stood beside him, was visibly indignant. "That guy is despicable! He's not that strong, but he sure talks big!" she snorted.

Wang Wu's gaze swept over to her. "You seem upset," he said mockingly. "Why don't you come up here for a spar?"

Jiang Xia had said the same thing earlier, but Lin Mu had ignored him. Now that Wang Wu repeated the challenge, everyone's eyes shifted to Lin Mu, waiting for his response.

"Jiang Xia already lost. Why must you be so unrelenting?" Ye Tong said through clenched teeth. Although she didn't like Lin Mu, they were still classmates. Since Wang Wu was so obviously targeting him, she naturally chose to stand on Lin Mu's side.

"Hmph, he couldn't even defeat me. How could he possibly dare to accept?" Jiang Xia glared at Lin Mu, his eyes sullen. In his mind, his own humiliation at Wang Wu's hands was all Lin Mu's fault.

"He's just a nobody. How could he possibly be a match for Master Tian's disciple? Going up on stage would be nothing but asking for humiliation," someone sneered, their gaze filled with disdain.

"That's right. In a few years, Master Tian's disciple will surely become a prominent figure." The crowd lavished him with praise, clearly using Lin Mu's predicament as an opportunity to curry favor with Tian Boguang.

"Kid, don't say I'm bullying you. I'll even fight you with one hand. Do you dare?" Wang Wu's smile widened, his gaze growing more disdainful. I told you I'd make you pay, kid. This is the price for disrespecting my master.

At last, Lin Mu spoke. "Forget it. I don't like to bully the weak."

His voice wasn't loud, but since everyone was focused on him, they all heard his words clearly. Doesn't like to bully the weak? This guy really knows how to make himself sound good. Countless people sneered inwardly, their contempt for Lin Mu growing.

"Oh? What's this? Are you saying you want to challenge my master instead?" Wang Wu sneered. "Who do you think you are, and who is my master? You dare challenge him? Are you even worthy?"

Lin Mu gave a wry smile and shook his head. "You're mistaken. I have no intention of challenging your master."

Wang Wu was speechless. So was the crowd. Is he that much of a coward? He doesn't even dare challenge Master Tian? Then again, that's understandable. After all, Tian Boguang is incredibly strong.

Wang Wu roared with laughter. "So you do have some self-awareness, kid! Otherwise, with your pathetic skills, dreaming of challenging my master would just be asking for pain."

Lin Mu's tone was placid. "You seem to have misunderstood. What I meant was... your master is not worthy of my challenge."

The statement sent a shockwave through the crowd. Lin Mu's words were like a boulder crashing into a placid lake, creating a massive uproar. Everyone stared at him in disbelief. Has this kid been kicked in the head by a donkey? Saying something so outrageous right in front of Master Tian... he's courting death!

Sure enough, Tian Boguang's eyes narrowed slightly, a hint of displeasure flashing within them. But he had to maintain his dignified composure, so he would not be the first to speak.

"Kid, do you have any idea what kind of disaster you've just brought upon yourself?" Wang Wu's face darkened as he stared daggers at Lin Mu. "Believe it or not, killing you would be as easy as slaughtering a dog!"

Lin Mu stood with his hands clasped behind his back, his calm gaze fixed on Wang Wu. "An ant who has yet to even cultivate Internal Energy dares to spout such nonsense before this venerable one? Are you not afraid you'll bite your own tongue?"

Though his voice was calm, a mysterious and transcendent aura emanated from him, giving him an air of intangible authority.

"An ignorant child, daring to use such a title for himself! He's asking to die!"

"How presumptuous! How ignorant!"

"He's simply digging his own grave!"

Lin Mu's words had provoked a wave of condemnation. As everyone knew, only a Grandmaster dared to refer to themselves with such an honorific. It was a title of utmost respect. For Lin Mu, a man of no discernible ability or virtue, to use it was tantamount to seeking death.

"Boy, be careful what you say." Tian Boguang finally spoke, his voice cold as ice. "Have you never learned that a careless tongue invites disaster?"

Lin Mu merely sneered, ignoring him completely.

"Good! So you even ignore my master's words! You're courting death!" On the stage, Wang Wu bellowed, then leaped into the air and threw a punch straight at Lin Mu. "Die, kid!"

Wang Wu's speed was immense, and his punch carried a sharp, powerful momentum.

"He's using his fist to break through! He's converting raw power into true strength!" The entire audience was stunned.

No one expected Wang Wu to officially cross the threshold into External Strength at this moment. Even though it was just a wisp of Internal Energy, he could now be called a true Martial Artist, completely set apart from ordinary people.

Tian Boguang was stunned for a moment before bursting into hearty laughter. "Excellent! Worthy of being my, Tian Boguang's, disciple! A breakthrough in the heat of battle! A true Martial Artist!" He was visibly emotional, his face filled with gratification.

The others immediately chimed in with their own lavish compliments and congratulations. Tian Boguang's face flushed red, as if he had drunk fine wine. The girl beside him was also smiling, her eyes brimming with admiration and love.

Wang Wu felt an immense power welling up inside him. He felt as if he could sunder heaven and earth with a single punch. Elated, he let out a long, exhilarated howl. "Boy, take this!"

At that moment, Wang Wu looked at Lin Mu as an Immortal looks down upon a Mortal, as a god regards an ant. From this day forward, I am a Martial Artist. We are no longer the same. His next punch was even faster, bursting with savage, murderous intent.

"Lin Mu, get out of the way!" Ye Tong cried out from a distance, her expression changing drastically.

"Shut up!" Jiang Xia snapped.

"What are you doing?" Ye Tong yelled back at him.

Jiang Xia grabbed her arm. "Are you trying to get us killed? He's a Martial Artist now! If you provoke him, he could kill us all!"

"But Lin Mu..." Ye Tong was fraught with worry.

Jiang Xia scoffed. "That kid brought this on himself. He has no one else to blame."

Ye Tong froze, then slowly calmed down. He's right. Lin Mu brought all of this on himself. There's no one else to blame.

At this moment, Lin Mu seemed to be frozen to the spot as if scared stiff. The onlookers sighed and shook their heads. The young man was finally about to pay the price for his arrogance.

Wang Wu closed the distance, the smile on his face growing colder. When he was just an arm's length from Lin Mu, he let out a low grunt and brought his fist crashing down.

CRACK!

A sharp sound echoed through the venue. It was the sound of breaking bone. Everyone assumed it was the sound of Lin Mu's cheekbone shattering.

"AARGH!"

A scream tore through the air. A figure flew backward in a blur, smashing through the stage railing before collapsing limply on the ground below.

It was Wang Wu!

Lin Mu, however, still stood in the exact same spot, his hands clasped behind his back, looking as if he hadn't moved a muscle.

"The light of a single grain of rice dares to compete with the bright moon." Not even sparing Wang Wu a glance, Lin Mu turned his gaze to Tian Boguang. "Not only is your own strength lacking, but the disciple you've trained is utterly unremarkable."

Chapter 143 The Murderer, Forever Killed by Man!

"Your classmate is not up to par." That was what Jiang Xia had said, and Wang Wu had repeated it.

"Your disciple is not up to par." That was what Lin Mu said. It was also his counterattack.

In contrast to a verbal retort, Lin Mu hadn't even lifted a finger, yet Wang Wu was already seriously injured. The key point was that no one saw how Lin Mu had struck. The sudden turn of events had happened too fast. So fast that the expressions of contempt, ridicule, and tension were still frozen on everyone's faces.

What in the world just happened?

The expressions on countless faces solidified, simultaneously turning into shock. This lasted until Lin Mu spoke.

"You're an incompetent master, and the disciple you've taught is just as incompetent."

This sentence pierced Tian Boguang's heart like a sharp spike. In a low, ominous tone, he said, "Boy, you're courting death!"

Lin Mu slowly shook his head. "Don't say things like that. It's embarrassing."

Everyone then remembered that Wang Wu had said the same thing right before he was defeated. He had lost in an instant. Now, Wang Wu was lying on the ground, his condition unknown.

"What an arrogant youngster, striking without restraint! Today, this old man will teach you a lesson on behalf of your elders!"

Enraged, Tian Boguang slammed his palm on the chair, launching himself into the air and striking fiercely at Lin Mu. Compared to his disciple, Wang Wu, Tian Boguang's speed was far greater, and his killing intent was more astonishing. The surrounding crowd quickly backed away to avoid getting caught in the crossfire.

BANG!

In the blink of an eye, Tian Boguang's palm crashed down on Lin Mu's chest.

However, Lin Mu's body didn't move an inch. Even his expression remained unchanged.

"How... how is this possible?" Tian Boguang exclaimed in shock. "How can your body be so strong?!"

He was an expert at the External Strength Peak, capable of felling a bull with a single palm strike, let alone an ordinary human. But Lin Mu seemed completely unaffected.

"Because you're too weak."

Lin Mu slowly shook his head. His tone was calm, but to Tian Boguang's ears, it was the ultimate mockery, causing his face to flush red with rage.

"Alright. Your strike is done. Now, it's my turn."

Tian Boguang was alarmed. He roared, "Brat, so what if your body is strong? You're still going to die!"

With a great roar, Tian Boguang's Internal Energy erupted, coursing through his arms as he unleashed a thunderous strike.

THUD!

However, the only result was a heavy thud and a scream of agony.

Tian Boguang's body was sent flying backward, crashing into the edge of the arena.

CRACK!

He felt as if his body was about to shatter, and the sensation of his spine breaking filled him with panic.

"You...!"

Tian Boguang couldn't finish his sentence before he spat out a mouthful of blood and collapsed, unable to get up.

"Dad!"

A figure rushed over; it was the girl named Xiao Duo. Seeing her badly injured father and her senior martial brother, whose life hung in the balance, Tian Xiao Duo's face filled with grief. She glared at Lin Mu and shouted, "How could you be so cruel? Even if they were wrong, you didn't have to be so vicious! You inhuman beast!"

As soon as she finished, a figure rushed forward and slapped her across the face.

SMACK!

Guan Jiaojiao stood with her hands on her hips, looking at the girl as if she were an idiot. "Your father and your senior martial brother were trying to kill someone, and you call that just 'being wrong'? Should Lin Mu have waited to be killed before fighting back?"

Tian Xiao Duo clutched her face, glaring venomously at Guan Jiaojiao. "Even so, he didn't have to be so vicious! How is that any different from a beast?"

SMACK! SMACK! SMACK!

Guan Jiaojiao slapped her again.

"A beast? I think a stupid woman like you is the real beast. Your whole family are beasts! What, are their lives precious while other people's aren't? I don't see you being any more noble than anyone else. Who gave you this courage? Was it these two pieces of trash?" Guan Jiaojiao pointed at Tian Boguang and Wang Wu on the ground.

She had long since grown to detest the two. They had mocked Lin Mu the moment they met him. Lin Mu had let it slide out of magnanimity, but that didn't mean he could be freely humiliated. Besides, as willful as Guan Jiaojiao was, she knew Lin Mu was here to help the Guan Family. She had to stand up for him, no matter what. So, teaching this idiotic woman a lesson was by no means going too far.

The others remained silent, clearly agreeing with Guan Jiaojiao. But what terrified them more was a different question: Who exactly was Lin Mu? How could he be so formidable?

"He who insults others will always be insulted; he who kills others will always be killed," Song Wenrou said slowly, her voice calm.

Everyone's hearts trembled. This girl seemed gentle, but her words were incredibly sharp and ruthless.

Song Wenrou ignored them, her beautiful eyes fixed calmly on Lin Mu.

Lin Mu walked forward slowly. Everyone in his path scrambled to get out of the way as if fleeing a prehistoric monster. After all, his performance had been too unsettling.

Only the sound of Lin Mu's footsteps echoed through the venue.

He walked over to Tian Xiao Duo, whose face turned pale. She instinctively recoiled in fear.

Lin Mu didn't pause. He continued walking until he stood before Wang Wu, looking down on him.

What is he going to do?

That was the question on everyone's mind.

The next moment, the crowd's eyes widened in horror. They saw Lin Mu raise his foot and stomp down.

"Aaaargh!"

With a bloodcurdling scream, Wang Wu jerked upright, his eyes bulging and his face contorted in agony. Then, his eyes rolled back in his head, and he fainted.

His Dantian had been crippled.

Seeing Wang Wu lying unconscious on the ground, everyone shivered.

Lin Mu was absolutely ruthless!

Wang Wu had struggled to gather a sliver of Internal Energy and officially become a Martial Artist, only to have his Dantian crippled by Lin Mu. From this day forward, Wang Wu would be less than an ordinary person.

From start to finish, the entire affair had taken less than ten minutes.

Tian Boguang had just opened his eyes to witness this scene. He abruptly sprayed a mouthful of blood, his face turning ashen. He had only this one disciple. His daughter had no talent for martial arts, so he had poured all his hopes and countless efforts into his apprentice.

Now, because of Lin Mu, it was all ruined.

Lin Mu looked at him and said indifferently, "I have crippled your disciple. Do you submit?"

Do you submit? The question was crueler than simply killing Tian Boguang.

But he didn't dare *not* to nod.

"I... submit," Tian Boguang forced out, his voice filled with resentment, despair, and an indelible humiliation.

"Get out of River City. If you ever dare to cause trouble here again, I, this Venerable One, will take up my sword, march north to Lingcheng, and exterminate your entire clan!" he commanded. "Scram!"

Chapter 144 Dragon Tiger Mountain Celestial Master Mansion!

Silence fell over the grounds.

Everyone watched Tian Boguang and his two disciples leave, completely speechless. Many recalled how the trio had arrived with such swagger, yet now they were leaving in utter disgrace.

At this thought, many eyes turned toward Lin Mu. Who on earth was this mysterious young man, who could defeat even Tian Boguang, a master at the peak of External Strength?

He had to be a master of Inner Strength at the very least! To be a master of Inner Strength at such a young age... his talent could only be described as astounding. What's more, he was even younger than Wang Wu, who had only just now managed to cultivate a single strand of Internal Energy.

Guan Jiaojiao puffed out her chest, her face filled with pride and satisfaction as she glanced around. It was as if she were saying, "All of you who looked down on Lin Mu before, why are you so quiet now?"

As for Song Wenrou, a faint, incredibly gentle smile graced her lips. In her eyes, his figure seemed to have grown even taller.

The most embarrassed were, without a doubt, Jiang Xia, Ye Tong, and their friends. Previously, they had treated Lin Mu with nothing but mockery and disdain. But now, look at them. Jiang Xia couldn't even block a single one of Wang Wu's moves and was beaten like a dog. In contrast, Lin Mu not only crippled Wang Wu but also defeated Tian Boguang—a master at the peak of External Strength—with a single blow. With that kind of power, how could Jiang Xia possibly compete? What right did Gu Can and the others have to mock him?

Jiang Xia's face burned, especially when he recalled Lin Mu's earlier words: "I'm afraid I might accidentally kill you." It felt like an invisible hand had slapped him across the face. At that thought, he could no longer bear to stay.

"Let's go!" Jiang Xia snarled. However, Ye Tong didn't move.

"Tongtong, aren't you coming?" Jiang Xia asked, his expression turning ugly.

Ye Tong looked at him, embarrassed. "Why don't... you go on ahead? I'm going to wait for Wenrou."

"You..." Jiang Xia was furious, but he couldn't unleash his anger here. He could only say, "Fine! If you're not leaving, I am!"

Taking Li Ping and the others with him, Jiang Xia left, looking just as pathetic as the last group.

Ye Tong walked over to Lin Mu. She wanted to say something, but in the end, found she was at a loss for words and could only stand there awkwardly. Guan Jiaojiao's cold snort in her direction only made her feel even more out of place. She wanted to leave, but with Jiang Xia already gone, it felt wrong to depart by herself. Besides, she was overwhelmingly curious. How had Lin Mu become so powerful after all these years?

Time ticked by, yet not a single person in the arena made a sound.

"Tsk tsk. The great River City Martial Meeting... are you really going to hold it up just because of some nobody?"

Just then, a voice filled with mockery rang out. The crowd turned to see a group of a dozen or so people slowly approaching. The speaker was a young man with long hair. He had plain features, but a scorpion tattoo at the corner of his eye gave him a sinister air. Behind him were about a dozen other men and women, all with varying expressions.

"The Zhang Family of River City!"

Seeing the young man, those who recognized him gasped in surprise. The Zhang Family was no ordinary clan in River City. They had made their fortune in transportation and held significant influence. This young man was the representative of their younger generation, Zhang Yan.

"I heard the Zhang Family has connections to Dragon Tiger Mountain. I wonder if it's true," someone in the crowd whispered.

"It's true. Zhang Yan became the disciple of an eminent master from Dragon Tiger Mountain at a very young age, and his talent is said to be exceptional."

A shockwave passed through the venue. All eyes turned to the young man named Zhang Yan, filled with a mixture of envy, jealousy, and respect.

Dragon Tiger Mountain had been the domain of the Celestial Master Mansion since ancient times, a sect that boasted numerous experts. The current Celestial Master of Dragon Tiger Mountain was a Martial Way practitioner on the Grandmaster rankings. His Thunder Law was said to shake the heavens, making him unmatched in the world.

A faint sneer touched Zhang Yan's lips. He led his entourage toward the ring, and as he passed Lin Mu, he suddenly flashed a grin. He then cast a strange glance at Song Wenrou but said nothing.

"Young Master Zhang, are you representing the Zhang Family at this meeting?" one of the patriarchs familiar with the Zhang Family asked after Zhang Yan had found a seat.

Zhang Yan nodded faintly. "That's right."

Then, Zhang Yan glanced at a thin man standing behind the patriarch and sneered, "So, this is the specimen the Xiao Family sent out this time? Hardly impressive."

His tone was casual, but the arrogance it contained was unmistakable.

The patriarch looked embarrassed, while a flash of anger crossed the thin man's face, and he looked ready to explode.

Zhang Yan said dismissively, "What? You want to fight? With your meager strength, you'd best not embarrass yourself in front of me."

The man flew into a rage. He shot to his feet, glaring at Zhang Yan. "Brat! Others might fear your Zhang Family, but I don't! If you've got the guts, let's settle this with our fists!"

BOOM!

With a blur of motion, the man landed squarely on the ring.

Zhang Yan raised his eyelids slightly, a mocking smirk playing on his lips. "Since you're so eager to die, I'll grant your wish."

"Besides, all of you are going to die sooner or later anyway."

His gaze lingered for a moment on the faces of several people in the crowd. These were the patriarchs and leaders from the various powers attending the River City Martial Meeting. When they met his gaze, they all immediately lowered their heads in fear, not daring to look him in the eye.

"A bunch of trash." As his voice fell, Zhang Yan's figure shot into the air, and he landed lightly on the ring.

Seeing this display of skill, the members of the Zhang Family erupted in cheers.

"I'll let you have the first move. Otherwise, you won't get a chance once I start," Zhang Yan said to the man, letting out a casual yawn.

"Arrogant brat!" the man roared. His body tensed like a bull, a cold gleam in his eyes. While he wouldn't dare kill Zhang Yan, he was confident he could teach the boy a lesson.

With that thought, the man let out a low growl and charged, throwing a furious punch down at Zhang Yan. The punch whistled through the air with such power that the expressions of many spectators changed.

"Lin Mu, who do you think will win?" Guan Jiaojiao asked. Deep down, she was obviously hoping Zhang Yan would lose, but she had also heard about his training at Dragon Tiger Mountain and knew his strength was not to be underestimated.

"We'll know soon enough," Lin Mu replied, offering no evaluation.

"Tsk." Guan Jiaojiao pouted. Suddenly, a gasp rippled through the crowd. She whipped her head up, her jaw dropping in utter shock.

What just happened? Where did Zhang Yan's opponent go?

"Look! In the sky!" someone in the crowd shouted.

Chapter 145: The 72 Tan Legs!

Everyone looked up to see a figure shooting straight into the sky. It was the skinny man, his face now a mask of terror. Trapped in mid-air, he had no way to leverage his body.

Then, a blinding bolt of lightning roared down.

"BOOM!"

The bolt was no bigger than a thumb, but it was blindingly bright as it struck the man with a deafening crash.

"AHH!"

With a piercing scream, the man was instantly turned to ash by the thunderbolt.

An uproar erupted from the crowd. Countless people shot to their feet, their expressions a mixture of shock and terror.

Was that a thunderbolt? How could a human possibly summon a thunderbolt? Is that something a person can even do?

It was simply too frightening, too terrifying.

The crowd's horror didn't stem from the power of the thunderbolt itself. Those present were seasoned individuals who had seen their fair share of major events and witnessed plenty of violent thunderstorms. But that was the power of nature, not something controlled by a person. No matter how terrifying nature was, it couldn't be as shocking as this moment.

That Zhang Yan can actually summon thunderbolts? Is he even human?

"Dragon Tiger Mountain and the Celestial Master Mansion... truly terrifying!"

Numerous faces turned pale. As long as Zhang Yan was in the competition, how could anyone else possibly continue? This River City Martial Arts Tournament seemed to have been prepared solely for the Zhang Family.

Zhang Yan withdrew his hand, his gaze sweeping arrogantly across the crowd with domineering contempt.

"Who else?"

His voice struck the ears of the crowd with more force than the preceding thunderbolt. It was widely said that only the Dragon Tiger Mountain Celestial Master could command thunder, but few knew that his own master also understood the art of commanding thunder, and his strength was not much inferior to that of Master Zhang. Of this, Zhang Yan was absolutely certain.

Guan Jiaojiao and Bing'er were scared pale, and Ye Tong wasn't faring much better. If she hadn't been clinging tightly to Song Wenrou, she might have fallen over. It was too terrifying. How could such a person exist in this world?

Her gaze involuntarily fell upon Lin Mu.

Lin Mu is so strong, but can he be a match for Zhang Yan? He probably can't defeat him. After all, Zhang Yan can summon thunderbolts; that's practically a divine technique.

No one dared to answer Zhang Yan's challenge. After all, most of those present were not particularly strong.

"Boring." Zhang Yan curled his lip, his eyes turning towards Lin Mu.

The crowd followed his line of sight, a flicker of anticipation in their eyes. Lin Mu had shown impressive strength before. If he were to fight Zhang Yan, it would surely be a spectacular match.

But Zhang Yan said nothing. He just shook his head slightly, seemingly disappointed, and walked off the stage.

Although the crowd felt a tinge of disappointment, they also understood. No matter how strong Lin Mu was, he probably wouldn't be a match for Zhang Yan. That art of commanding thunder was not something an ordinary person could possibly deal with.

For a moment, the venue quieted down again. Some people, however, seemed to sense something was about to happen and remained silent. Sure enough, it wasn't long before more people began to arrive one after another, each of them a major figure in their own right.

Elder Guan had also arrived. After finding Lin Mu, he led him to a place to sit down.

"Lin Mu, are you alright?" Elder Guan asked with concern as soon as he sat.

He already knew everything that had just happened; Lin Mu defeating Tian Boguang and driving him away had certainly exceeded his expectations. But he was also worried that Lin Mu had brought trouble upon himself. After all, his greatest enemy in the River City Martial Arts Tournament, Liu Xianhe, had yet to appear. Lin Mu revealing his strength so early was not to their advantage.

"It's nothing," Lin Mu replied calmly, not elaborating further.

At this moment, a rather old man walked onto the stage. He was also a Martial Artist, though not a very strong one, but he appeared to hold a position of some status. Once on stage, he gave a brief introduction. It was mostly about the purpose and rules of this River City Martial Arts Tournament.

The purpose was simple: for the various major powers to test one another's skills and, based on the outcomes, negotiate the distribution of resources.

The rules were even simpler. Each power would send one representative to compete. Victory and defeat would be decided on the tournament stage, with no holds barred—life and death would not be a factor. The winner would naturally gain enormous benefits, while the loser... would have no right to speak.

Finally, the elder looked around and announced, "Alright, enough with the pleasantries. Let the tournament begin!"

As his voice fell, a figure eagerly rushed onto the stage and clasped his hands in a salute to the crowd.

"I am Liang Sheng, representing the Liang Family in battle!"

The man was in his thirties, with a Cultivation Level at the Mid-Stage of External Strength—not remarkably high, but not low either. The Liang Family was considered a significant household in River City, and producing a Martial Artist at the Mid-Stage of External Strength undoubtedly required a heavy investment of resources.

Just as Liang Sheng finished speaking, another figure stood up and walked slowly toward the stage. His pace was unhurried, but after just three steps, he suddenly accelerated. His feet became a blur of afterimages as he appeared on the stage in an instant.

"Tan Feng. I await your instruction!"

Tan Feng was the representative of another family clan.

"It's actually Tan Feng!" the crowd murmured in surprise. Clearly, Tan Feng had a considerable reputation.

"Tan Feng is from an ancient martial family. He practices the Seventy-Two Stances of Tan's Leg Techniques! That style is hailed as the most representative of the 'Northern Legs' in the famous 'Southern Fists, Northern Legs' tradition. I can't believe the Yan Family managed to invite him."

"Doesn't that mean Liang Sheng is bound to lose?"

"It's inevitable. Although Liang Sheng isn't weak, there's still a significant gap when compared to a disciple from an ancient martial family."

"Lin Mu, do you think Liang Sheng has no chance at all?" Elder Guan asked.

Though not the strongest, the Liang Family had always maintained good relations with all parties in River City and had contributed a great deal to the city. When the Guan Family had first arrived, the Liang Family Head had personally paid them a visit to welcome them, even promising that his family would not hesitate to help if the need arose. For that reason, he didn't want to see Liang Sheng lose.

Lin Mu said, "Rest assured, Elder Guan. It won't be easy for Tan Feng to win."

Hearing Lin Mu's words, Guan Chengye felt relieved. If Master Lin said so, there must be a reason for it.

However...

"Hmph. A mere youngster like you shouldn't be so quick to comment on the world's masters," someone immediately retorted. "That Liang Sheng is only at the Mid-Stage of External Strength. Tan Feng is at the Late-Stage of External Strength, and with his Seventy-Two Stances of Tan's Leg Techniques, he's practically unrivaled. Liang Sheng is no match for him."

The speaker was the Family Head of the Yan Family. He looked at Lin Mu with a lecturing tone. "Moreover, you aren't even a Martial Artist. Aren't you afraid of causing public outrage by making such remarks?"

Clearly, he was unaware of Lin Mu's earlier victory over Tian Boguang.

"Elder Yan is right. Some people just love to criticize others when they themselves are incapable. It's a bad habit," someone else added in agreement.

In response, Lin Mu merely smiled and offered no explanation.

Up on the stage, the battle had already reached its most intense phase, with Liang Sheng currently on the defensive.

Seeing this, the smile on Elder Yan's face deepened.

What a brash young man, he thought, his gaze toward Lin Mu and Guan Chengye growing even more disdainful. He couldn't understand what Guan Chengye was thinking, bringing someone like this to such a place. Did he not realize that a single misstep could easily court disaster for them?

Chapter 146: Do You Want to Die?

"Hmph, young man. You can eat the wrong food, but you can't say the wrong things."

A member of the Yan Family spoke up, clearly displeased with Lin Mu's earlier comment.

On the arena stage, Liang Sheng was continuously retreating under Tan Feng's assault, seemingly without the slightest power to fight back. To any outsider, it naturally looked like he couldn't hold on for much longer. This sight only convinced more people that Lin Mu was a clueless loudmouth.

Faced with the multitude of jeers, Lin Mu's expression remained calm, but Guan Jiaojiao's face was flushed with indignation. She wanted to say something, but everyone present was an influential figure from some faction or another. As a junior, she didn't feel it was her place to speak, so she could only puff out her cheeks and sulk.

BOOM!

On the arena, Tan Feng's legs moved like shadows, swift as lightning, relentlessly forcing Liang Sheng backward. In just a few steps, he had pushed him to the very edge of the stage. One more strike from Tan Feng, and Liang Sheng would surely be knocked off, ending the match.

Seeing this, the Liang Family's people were all tense with worry. In contrast, the faces of the Yan Family's people were lit up with delighted surprise and immense pride.

On the stage, a cold smirk touched the corner of Tan Feng's mouth. His legs suddenly exploded with force as he leaped into the air, aiming a kick straight at Liang Sheng's chest. If that kick landed, Liang Sheng's defeat was certain. And Tan Feng's speed was incredible; The Twelve-Route Tan Leg Technique was renowned for both its speed and power, making it exceedingly difficult to dodge.

It's over.

Down below the stage, this single thought surfaced in the minds of the audience. At the same time, Guan Jiaojiao heard Lin Mu, who was sitting beside her, utter the exact same words.

"Die!" Tan Feng roared, his legs snapping straight as he kicked out.

However, just as the sole of Tan Feng's foot was about to connect with Liang Sheng, the latter suddenly threw his arms open, as if he had given up defending himself.

Given up? Tan Feng smirked coldly, thinking Liang Sheng finally knew his place. Seizing the opportunity created by Liang Sheng's wide-open guard, Tan Feng launched another kick in quick succession.

At this moment, some of the more faint-hearted spectators instinctively covered their eyes, unable to bear watching. But many others stared with wide eyes, eager to witness Liang Sheng's humiliating defeat. Among them were the people from the Yan Family and Zhang Yan.

But in that very instant, a shocking twist occurred.

Liang Sheng's outstretched hands suddenly shot forward, his fingers splayed like talons as he grabbed viciously.

RIP!

The ear-piercing sound of tearing fabric echoed, followed by a pained scream from the stage.

The next moment, the crowd saw something that stunned them. Liang Sheng had clamped both hands onto Tan Feng's ankle. Then, he clawed down hard. Suspended in mid-air, Tan Feng had no leverage. He stumbled, and Liang Sheng violently flung him off the stage.

BANG!

Tan Feng's body hit the ground, kicking up a cloud of dust.

PFFT!

Tan Feng spat out a mouthful of blood and lifted his head to look at Liang Sheng on the stage, a sharp fierceness flashing in his eyes.

I actually lost? Me, a descendant of the Seventy-Two Stances of Tan's Leg Techniques, actually lost to an ant from a minor family? The thought made Tan Feng feel utterly disgraced.

"You're courting death!" Tan Feng roared furiously. He scrambled to his feet and charged back toward the stage. He was going to kill Liang Sheng.

"Stop!" the referee shouted, suddenly stepping in front of Tan Feng. With a grave expression, he declared, "The match is over. You have lost."

Tan Feng hesitated, a flicker of venomous resentment in his eyes.

"We don't care how you all choose to fight outside of here, but since you've come to participate in the River City martial arts competition, you must abide by the rules!"

A powerful aura suddenly erupted from the old referee, its pressure so intense that Tan Feng's expression changed.

A late-stage Inner Strength martial artist!

That level of strength might be nothing in the Tan Family, but this is Wufeng Town, not my family's territory. Thinking this, Tan Feng let out a cold snort. He shot a hateful glare at Liang Sheng on the stage, then turned and walked away.

The people from the Yan Family, of course, had no face left to stay. With Tan Feng's defeat, they had lost all their opportunities. As for the resources they had wagered, there was no getting them back now. At this thought, Elder Yan gave the silent Lin Mu a deep look, a sharp glint flashing in his cloudy eyes.

Some of the others who had heard Lin Mu's earlier prediction also glanced at him with curiosity. It was clear that Liang Sheng was no match for Tan Feng in any respect, so why had Lin Mu been so certain that Tan Feng would lose? Recalling Lin Mu's earlier demeanor, they felt they were beginning to understand something.

However, the martial artist named Zhang Yan stood up, straightening his clothes. He glanced at Lin Mu and scoffed, "Just lucky. If Tan Feng hadn't been so careless, how could he possibly have lost?"

"Indeed," someone quickly chimed in. "In terms of both strength and martial skill, Tan Feng is far beyond ordinary. This loss was definitely due to carelessness."

Naturally, there were those who would agree with Zhang Yan. After all, he had a significant background, and a little flattery might earn them some goodwill.

But someone else was not having it.

"A loss is a loss! Stop making so many excuses, how shameless!"

An awkward silence fell over the crowd.

The speaker, of course, was Guan Jiaojiao. She had been annoyed with Zhang Yan for a while now, and in her eyes, those who fawned over him were all cut from the same cloth.

"Little girl, watch your mouth. Be careful, or you might not be able to leave Wufeng Town!" Zhang Yan shot a menacing glare at Guan Jiaojiao before his eyes drifted to Song Wenrou, who was seated next to Lin Mu. A woman of such ethereal beauty naturally drew attention, and Zhang Yan himself had a particular fondness for women with such a temperament.

"Is that so? Such big words. Be careful you don't bite your tongue," Lin Mu said flatly, his gaze shifting to Zhang Yan.

"You'll find out in a moment." A cold arc formed on Zhang Yan's lips. His body suddenly sprang up, and he landed on the arena stage. He didn't spare Lin Mu a glance, instead looking directly at Liang Sheng. "Continue, or should I fight someone else?"

Liang Sheng was incredibly hesitant. If he fought, he was definitely no match for Zhang Yan. But if he stepped down now, the Liang Family's share would be far too small.

"Liang Sheng, give up," the Liang Family Head called out from below the stage, his tone filled with helplessness.

Liang Sheng was just about to nod in agreement when a figure suddenly appeared before him, a furious fist punching downward.

"Look out!"

"Despicable!"

The crowd below erupted in curses. Zhang Yan hadn't even waited for Liang Sheng to concede before launching a sneak attack. It was utterly shameless.

But Zhang Yan was too fast; Liang Sheng had no time to react. The moment he lifted his head, Zhang Yan's fist was already filling his vision.

THUMP!

The punch struck him square in the chest, sending Liang Sheng flying backward while spitting blood. He was hurtling directly toward where Lin Mu was sitting.

"Not good!" Guan Feifei's expression changed. Liang Sheng was flying too fast. If he was allowed to crash into the seats, he would certainly injure their grandfather or his little sister.

Guan Feifei had just caught Liang Sheng when a tremendous force surged through him. His face paled as he was forced back, stumbling and about to fall over with him. Just then, a hand slowly reached out, lightly bracing Guan Feifei's back, while another hand gripped Liang Sheng. With those two simple movements, he steadied them both and helped them down.

Lin Mu stood with his hands clasped behind his back, his eyes narrowing slightly as he looked toward the arena.

"Do you want to die?"

Chapter 147: Heavenly Law, Five Elements Controlling Thunder!

"Are you looking for death?"

The simple words instantly froze the atmosphere in the arena.

Facing such a formidable Zhang Yan, Lin Mu actually dared to say such a thing. One couldn't tell if it was commendable courage or just blind confidence. The rest of the audience shook their heads slightly, thinking Lin Mu was far too arrogant.

A flicker of worry crossed Ye Tong's eyes, but she quickly covered it with a sneer. "Does this guy really think he's Ip Man? If he gets beaten off the stage, it'll be so embarrassing."

The smile on Zhang Yan's face slowly froze, replaced by a cold smirk. "You have a big mouth. I wonder if your strength is as hard as your words. Come on up. Watch me kill you with a single punch."

Watching Zhang Yan beckon from the stage, Lin Mu's expression remained unchanged as he slowly started walking toward the platform.

As the crowd watched Lin Mu's back, their expressions shifted. This guy, he really dares to go up? He must be a newborn calf unafraid of the tiger, coming here just to die.

Compared to the astonishing ways previous contestants had mounted the stage, Lin Mu's choice to simply walk made everyone lose all hope for him. They all thought he was courting death.

But Elder Guan was all smiles. What a joke. Even if this Zhang Yan is strong, could he possibly be stronger than a Grandmaster like Lin Mu? This time, the Guan Family is going to steal the show!

At this thought, Guan Chengye whispered a few words to Guan Feifei. She was startled at first, then nodded with understanding before getting up to leave.

「...」

Lin Mu stepped onto the stage, clasped his hands behind his back, and said to Zhang Yan, "I'm here. Let's begin."

Hearing Lin Mu's words, everyone was stunned again. Is he going to let Zhang Yan make the first move? Has this kid been kicked in the head by a donkey? After all, Zhang Yan had been the one to let his opponent strike first when he fought Liang Sheng. Now, Lin Mu was saying the same thing to him. This is getting interesting. Still, no one held out any hope for Lin Mu.

Ye Tong grew even more anxious. Has Lin Mu lost his mind? Not only is he not striking first, but he's also letting his opponent go first? He's going to lose the initiative!

Zhang Yan's expression darkened, and his eyes narrowed slightly. "Kid, you will pay for your arrogance today!"

As soon as his words fell, he lunged forward. The moment his foot hit the ground, he charged toward Lin Mu.

BOOM!

Before he even got close, Zhang Yan threw a punch. It tore through the air with a piercing shriek, carrying a powerful wave of Internal Energy.

Down below, Liang Sheng's eyes widened in fear. If I had faced that move from Zhang Yan, I would've had no chance of survival. Can Lin Mu take it? He couldn't help but worry.

Song Wenrou and Guan Jiaojiao, however, remained perfectly calm. To them, no one could be a match for Lin Mu.

But the others didn't think so. They saw that from beginning to end, Lin Mu hadn't reacted at all, not even moving an inch. It was as if he had been scared stiff.

The next moment, the fist struck Lin Mu's chest squarely.

THUD!

A dull sound echoed. The crowd silently shook their heads. He's dead!

But in the next second, Zhang Yan's expression changed drastically. He was thrown backward as if struck by a tremendous rebounding force.

THUMP! THUMP! THUMP!

Stumbling back several steps on the stage, Zhang Yan barely managed to steady himself before looking at Lin Mu in utter shock. "You... you're not hurt?"

Lin Mu stood his ground, not moving a muscle, his expression completely unchanged.

Below the stage, many people gasped in disbelief. Not only is Lin Mu unharmed, but he sent Zhang Yan flying? What in the world is going on?

Among them, the most shocked was the recently returned Tan Feng. He had lost to Liang Sheng and was still unconvinced. He had been secretly gloating when Zhang Yan defeated Liang Sheng, and when he saw Lin Mu take the stage, he had sneered incessantly, certain the man wouldn't last a single move. But reality was the complete opposite of what he'd imagined. Not only was Lin Mu unharmed, but Zhang Yan, in contrast, looked rather disheveled.

This guy... he's actually this strong? Tan Feng was stunned. Even he wasn't confident he could take on Zhang Yan.

"You are too weak." Lin Mu shook his head. "If this is all the strength you have, then this competition is meaningless."

Lin Mu had agreed to participate in this martial gathering in River City for two reasons. The first was to fulfill his three conditions to Guan Chengye. The second was to gauge the strength of other Martial Artists. But clearly, Zhang Yan's performance was a great disappointment.

"You're courting death!" Zhang Yan roared in fury. His hands shot up, swiftly forming countless spells.

CHZZT!

Out of thin air, two blinding bolts of lightning appeared in his palms, which he clenched fiercely.

CRACK!

The two lightning bolts transformed into a pair of gauntlets, encasing Zhang Yan's fists.

"Thunder God Fist!" Zhang Yan let out a low roar, his body becoming a blur as he charged toward Lin Mu.

The entire audience was stunned. Zhang Yan summoned lightning to form gauntlets for an attack? Was that really necessary? This lightning, this thunderbolt, it's a force of heaven and earth, incredibly powerful. Even if Lin Mu has a few tricks up his sleeve, there's no need to be this cautious, right?

But only Zhang Yan himself knew the truth. My last punch didn't even touch his clothes. When my fist was an inch away, it was repelled by an even greater force that sent me flying. I was just repelled by my own power. Right now, he wanted to kill Lin Mu in a single blow.

BOOM! BOOM!

The fist appeared in a flash as Zhang Yan slammed it down toward Lin Mu.

CHZZT!

In that instant, sparks flew, and everyone in the audience instinctively shut their eyes.

"Hmph!"

It wasn't until a muffled grunt sounded out that people opened their eyes, which were burning from the bright light. But the sight before them made them completely ignore the stinging pain.

Lin Mu was still in his previous stance, having not moved at all. Zhang Yan, however, was leaning against the ring's ropes, his face pale, a trace of blood at the corner of his mouth. Both of his hands were scorched black.

That last strike had no effect on Lin Mu?

"Still too weak." Lin Mu shook his head, the disappointment in his eyes unconcealed. Zhang Yan's strength truly wasn't enough to even pique my interest.

"Who exactly are you?" Zhang Yan's eyes were fixed fiercely on Lin Mu. The Thunder God Fist was one of his trump cards, yet Lin Mu was completely unharmed. This made his expression turn exceedingly grim.

"You're not yet worthy to know who I am. But if this is the extent of your ability, then go back to where you came from," Lin Mu said, his hands clasped behind his back, his demeanor one of utter indifference.

To outsiders, it looked as if he was planning to let Zhang Yan off.

Zhang Yan couldn't stand it. His eyes turned bloodshot as he roared, "I haven't lost yet!"

Instantly, an even more powerful and ferocious energy erupted from his body as his hands danced through a series of complex seals.

BOOM! BOOM!

High in the sky, which had been clear moments before, a massive expanse of Wuyun suddenly gathered. Eventually, the Wuyun loomed overhead, creating a suffocating and oppressive atmosphere.

"This is..."

"The Controlling Thunder Technique?"

Many in the audience's expressions changed drastically. Although they had seen Zhang Yan turn lightning into gauntlets, it was clear he wasn't just summoning a thunderbolt now. He was controlling the thunder.

Wind, rain, thunder, and lightning were forces of heaven and earth, far surpassing the great Dao. Controlling them was by no means a simple matter. However, the technique Zhang Yan was using was none other than the Controlling Thunder Technique.

"Kid, so what if you're strong? In the end, you'll still die!"

Wild thunderbolts converged above Zhang Yan's head, making him look like a descending Thunder God filled with vast, apocalyptic power.

"Heavenly Law, Five Elements Controlling Thunder!"

Chapter 148: I Have a Word that Can Call the Nine Heavenly God Thunder!

Heavenly Law, Five Elements Controlling Thunder!

This was the supreme thunder-controlling art of the Dragon Tiger Mountain Celestial Master Mansion, hailed as powerful, invincible, and unparalleled in the world. However, to learn this Daoist art, one needed not only the direct lineage of the Celestial Master Mansion but also immense innate talent. For Zhang Yan to have mastered this Thunder Law by the age of thirty was a rare feat even within the Celestial Master Mansion, a testament to his exceptional gifts.

What was even more terrifying to consider was his relationship with the Celestial Master Mansion; it was clearly anything but simple. Realizing this, the crowd's gazes toward Zhang Yan were now filled not only with admiration and flattery but also a hint of dread. The Celestial Master Mansion had always been one of the nation's greatest martial holy lands. Since ancient times, it had received imperial favor and been bestowed with countless edicts. The current Master Zhang of the mansion was a great figure on the Grandmaster List, his strength profound and unfathomable, and his Thunder Law was considered the best in the world.

"From this day forward, Zhang Yan is more than worthy of the title 'Little Celestial Master'," someone murmured, their eyes brimming with envy. For all Martial Artists, the Celestial Master Mansion was a place of reverence and aspiration.

"Indeed, indeed. Little Celestial Master's Controlling Thunder Technique, while perhaps not on par with Master Zhang's, is still sublime and hardly inferior," the crowd chattered, their voices full of envy and respect. Of course, the fawning praise from each of them was completely undisguised.

As for Lin Mu, he had already been forgotten. So what if he had withstood two of the Little Celestial Master's moves? Just as the Little Celestial Master had said, he was still going to die.

A flicker of worry crossed Guan Chengye's face. Lin Mu may be a Grandmaster, but... this Controlling Thunder Technique isn't something a mortal can wield. This is practically a divine power. Can he really handle it?

Hearing the crowd's chatter, even Guan Jiaojiao, who usually had unwavering faith in Lin Mu, turned pale, her expression one of utter terror. And while Song Wenrou concealed her emotions well, her tightly clenched fists betrayed her inner turmoil.

You're finally going to die! Tan Feng thought with gleeful satisfaction. Although he had no personal grudge against Lin Mu, the sight of Lin Mu's impending gruesome death filled him with an immense sense of pleasure, one that seemed even more exhilarating than killing the man himself.

BOOM!

Thunder roared. Above Zhang Yan's head, lightning crackled, creating an apocalyptic scene. He was clearly a mortal, yet with thunderbolts flashing above and multi-colored bolts of lightning swirling around him, he looked like the Thunder God incarnate, majestic and awe-inspiring.

His aura surged as he stared at Lin Mu with cold indifference, his frigid voice echoing all around.

"Kid, provoking me is your greatest misfortune!"

"But dying by my hand is your greatest fortune!"

The crowd nodded in unison, feeling that Zhang Yan had a point. An ordinary person could never even imagine that someone in this world could command thunder, let alone witness it firsthand. Such a divine ability was simply unheard of.

"Heh heh, boy, time to die!" Zhang Yan sneered cruelly. With a flick of his hands, the thunderbolts around him shot out like roaring dragons, hurtling toward Lin Mu.

Lin Mu stood with his hands behind his back, his eyes narrowing slightly. "Relying on a cheap talisman to drive a few thunderbolts, and you dare call it the Controlling Thunder Technique? I truly wonder how your Celestial Master Mansion became the foremost martial sect in Jiangbei."

Lin Mu shook his head slightly, murmuring to himself, "Today, I will show you all what the true Art of Thunder Command is."

It was to 'command', not merely to 'control'. A one-character difference, yet they were worlds apart.

As he spoke, Lin Mu took a step forward.

"What is that kid... trying to do?"

"He's courting death!"

Everyone was stunned to see Lin Mu actively walking toward the thunderbolts. The man was simply asking to be killed!

Lin Mu paid them no mind. With his hands clasped behind him, his lips parted slightly.

"With a single word, I command the divine thunder of the Nine Heavens! Where are the Eight Thunder Gods?!"

As his voice fell, everyone felt a power descend that was even more oppressive, ferocious, and vast than before. The entire sky turned pitch-black, as if ink had been spilled across it. Gazing upon the terrifying scene, which looked like the very collapse of the world, everyone's heart filled with despair. Many even cried out in horror, begging for their lives.

BOOM!

A clap of thunder echoed in all directions. Bolts of lightning rained down from the heavens, carrying with them a terrifying, world-destroying momentum. In the next moment, Ye Tong, Song Wenrou, Guan Chengye, and the other magnates witnessed a scene they would never forget for the rest of their lives.

The stage shattered with a loud SNAP. The entire venue sank several inches under the immense pressure. Lightning filled their entire vision.

At that moment, in their eyes, Lin Mu stood upon the thunder, his entire body surging with terrifying electrical light. All the thunderbolts submitted at his feet. This was the true Art of Thunder Command.

The whole of Wufeng Town fell deathly silent. As the rolling heavenly thunder prepared to descend, a gale kicked up, so fierce that no one could keep their footing. The scene before them was the greatest shock their souls had ever experienced. Whipped by the raging winds, countless people stumbled and fell.

Since Tan Feng's entire focus had been on Lin Mu, he was the first to meet that cold and merciless gaze as it suddenly shot toward him.

PFFT!

Tan Feng abruptly spewed a mouthful of blood. His aura instantly withered, and his face turned deathly pale. It wasn't just him; every Martial Artist present above the level of Inner Strength suffered a backlash from the heavenly thunder and coughed up blood. Even if Lin Mu didn't make another move,

they had lost all courage to continue in the River City Martial Meeting. Their faces etched with terror, they scattered wildly, scrambling for buildings or large trees to cling to, terrified of being swept away by the gale.

RIP!

Most horrifying of all, the women, including Guan Jiaojiao, cried out in unison as the fronts of their blouses were ripped open by the fierce wind, revealing the colorful garments beneath. They stared at the figure high in the sky, their eyes filled with both terror and bitter resentment.

That bastard, he definitely did it on purpose!

"This... this is a miracle! This is a true divine power! What's a Little Celestial Master? Pah! That Zhang Yan is nothing! How could he possibly compare to such a god!" a pale-faced old man stammered, trembling with excitement as he gestured wildly at the figure in the center of the storm.

Under such magnificent heavenly might, everyone felt a primal fear. Ordinary people with little experience, like Bing'er, were already on their knees, praying fervently.

At the same instant Lin Mu summoned the thunder, the few bolts that had been streaking toward him wavered, almost as if they were begging for mercy. A moment later, they simply disintegrated into nothingness, vanishing completely. This was an obliteration on a fundamental level; they had ceased to exist.

As for Zhang Yan, he coughed up a great mouthful of blood and crashed onto the stage, landing with a heavy THUD. In his hand, a talisman slowly crumbled into ash. His ability to summon thunder had been entirely dependent on that talisman. It was a Five Elements Thunder Command Talisman his master had given him for protection, but now it was gone.

Without Lin Mu even lifting a finger, Zhang Yan was defeated.

And it was a miserable defeat.

However, Lin Mu didn't spare Zhang Yan a single glance. Instead, his gaze fell upon a spot below as he announced in a clear voice, "Elder Guan, just sit back and watch. I will take a head for you!"

The moment his words fell, the thunder filling the sky converged into an immense Thunder Dragon. It coiled around Lin Mu, carrying him as it soared into the nine heavens

Chapter 149 Grandmaster Liu Xianhe!

As Lin Mu's voice faded, he himself had already ridden the Dragon Tamer away.

The crowd was momentarily lost in a daze.

But not a single person wanted to leave.

Nor did anyone pay any mind to Zhang Yan, who lay on the stage, his status unknown.

For at that moment, they saw the clear cry of a crane piercing the sky in the distance.

"KREEE!"

An immortal came riding a crane from beyond the horizon.

Dressed in white, with a three-inch beard and a horsetail whisk in his hand, he floated ethereally, resembling a celestial being.

"Liu Xianhe!"

The crane was enormous and incredibly fast, reaching the skies above Wufeng Town in the blink of an eye where it was clearly seen by all.

Guan Chengye gritted his teeth and uttered the name, a complex look in his eyes filled with anger, regret, and a hint of apprehension.

Liu Xianhe was the very enemy with whom Guan Chengye had a ten-year feud.

But ten years had passed. Guan Chengye's journey on the Martial Way had stalled at the Inner Strength level, whereas Liu Xianhe had surged ahead, advancing even further to become a Martial Arts Grandmaster.

"Martial Arts Grandmaster Liu Xianhe?!"

Someone suddenly yelled at the top of their lungs, pointing excitedly to the sky. "That's the Martial Arts Grandmaster, Liu Xianhe!"

THWIP!

However, as soon as the words left his mouth, a feather whistled through the air, instantly piercing his chest and embedding itself deep in the ground.

It was a feather from the Vermilion Crane, with not a single trace of blood on it.

Could a single feather slay a Martial Artist at the Internal Energy Early Stage?

Recognizing the identity of the slain man, the crowd took a thunderous step back. They showed no animosity toward Liu Xianhe; on the contrary, their respect for him grew even deeper.

In the Martial Arts World, the strong are always revered.

"Is my master's name something the likes of you can utter so casually?"

It was only then that everyone noticed another person standing on the back of the Vermilion Crane.

He was a boy of about twelve or thirteen, with a cherubic, chubby-cheeked face that was incredibly cute.

But the crowd was deeply shaken.

For it was this boy who had flicked that feather.

And so, the way they looked at him changed completely.

The boy swept his cold gaze across the crowd and said, "Who is Guan Chengye? Show yourself and face your death!"

His tone was thick with murderous intent, and his expression was one of utter disdain.

Guan Chengye's face paled. He had not expected that a mere disciple of Liu Xianhe would be so powerful.

Then...could Lin Mu possibly be a match for him?

At that thought, Guan Chengye looked up. The sky was clear, but Lin Mu's figure was nowhere to be seen.

Guan Chengye sighed heavily, his face a mask of despair.

He couldn't believe Lin Mu had actually fled. It seemed his opponent must have sensed Liu Xianhe's arrival and had spoken those words to placate him, buying time to make his own escape.

If even Lin Mu, a Grandmaster himself, knew he was no match, what hope did he have?

It seemed Guan Chengye was not going to escape death today.

With that thought, Guan Chengye gritted his teeth and stepped forward.

"Liu Xianhe, it has been ten years since we last met." Given his status, Guan Chengye naturally ignored Liu Xianhe's disciple and addressed the master directly.

"Audacious!"

The boy's eyes widened as he prepared to act, but a hand stopped him.

Liu Xianhe sat cross-legged on the crane's back with a whisk resting on his lap. Hearing the words, he opened his eyes slightly, and a sharp glint shot forth.

Below, Guan Chengye's expression changed drastically as he suddenly coughed up a mouthful of blood.

He was severely injured by a single glance from the Grandmaster. If it came to a fight, he was doomed to fall in the first move.

"Grandfather!" Guan Jiaojiao hurriedly supported Guan Chengye, her small face completely white.

"I have lived rather well these ten years," Liu Xianhe's voice was low and hoarse. Descending from the sky, it sounded immensely grand and mysterious. "But whenever I think of you, I am overcome with the desire to kill you with my own hands."

Liu Xianhe's gaze lingered on Guan Jiaojiao for a moment before he cracked a smile. "The only reason I waited ten years was to let the Guan Family's heirs grow up, so I could then exterminate your entire line!"

His tone was overflowing with killing intent.

The people standing near Guan Chengye quickly distanced themselves, afraid of getting caught in the crossfire.

Guan Chengye's body trembled. "Liu Xianhe, our grudge is between us. Why must you involve the younger generation?"

"Heh."

Liu Xianhe let out a cold laugh. "My disciple, Zhang Feng, was merely delivering a letter of challenge, yet you killed him. Do you truly believe I would let your family go?"

Guan Chengye roared, "But you must remember, I am a member of the Military Department!"

Liu Xianhe did not speak.

The boy beside him flicked his wrist, and a piece of paper fluttered down, landing before Guan Chengye.

A Martial Alliance life-and-death pact.

Five large, blood-red characters glared up at him.

"Do you see it clearly? A challenge signed by the Martial Alliance. The grudge between our families will be settled by our own abilities. Life and death will not be questioned!"

Liu Xianhe smiled cruelly. "That year, you killed my father and stole my beloved. Today, I will make you pay in blood!"

Everyone stared in shock but dared not make a sound. They never imagined the hatred between Guan Chengye and Grandmaster Liu Xianhe ran so deep.

Guan Chengye closed his eyes in pain, then snapped them open. "Do you not know what your father did?" he said in a low voice.

A corner of Liu Xianhe's mouth twitched. "He was my father, after all. And you took the woman I loved. That is a debt I must also collect!"

"Go. Kill that girl first." Liu Xianhe pointed at Guan Jiaojiao and muttered, "It's her own bad luck she looks so much like Xiaocao."

Guan Jiaojiao's face drained of color. Guan Chengye threw himself in front of his granddaughter, while Da Jun and the others formed a human wall before them, their expressions grim.

"Unrelated parties, scram. Otherwise..." Liu Xianhe's disciple swept his gaze over them, his cold tone echoing in everyone's ears, "none of you will leave!"

The rest of the crowd retreated further, with only Da Jun and his companions holding their ground.

"Very good. I like those who aren't afraid to die." The boy smiled cruelly. "As for the rest of you... submit, or die!"

"We submit!"

"Greetings to Master Liu!"

"Greetings to Master Liu!"

The crowd fell to their knees and kowtowed, acknowledging Liu Xianhe as their superior.

Only then did the boy smile with satisfaction. With a wave of his small hand, two feathers appeared and were gently tossed down.

The feathers were as light as could be, but the moment they started fluttering, they transformed into two sharp swords that shot through the air.

Da Jun knew that the few of them stood no chance of blocking the attack.

But even so, they would use their own flesh and blood to try and stop it.

Guan Jiaojiao's face was deathly pale as she cried out in her heart, Lin Mu, where on earth are you?

CRACK!

Just as the two feathers were about to pierce the bodies of Da Jun and the others, a crisp sound suddenly descended from the sky.

A bolt of lightning struck the two feathers precisely, reducing them to ash.

"I have been waiting for a long time. You have finally arrived."

Chapter 150: Battle of the Divine Beasts!

"Lin Mu!"

As soon as Lin Mu appeared, Guan Jiaojiao burst into tears of joy.

A smile appeared on Guan Chengye's face as he forcefully exhaled a turbid breath.

A brilliant smile bloomed on Song Wenrou's face.

"How dare you show such disrespect to my master!"

The page's attack had been thwarted, and upon seeing Lin Mu's position was much higher than Liu Xianhe's, he became furious. He raised his hand, and a feather, propelled by Internal Energy, instantly shot high into the sky.

He was actually planning to strike at Lin Mu!

The feather moved with incredible speed, arriving before Lin Mu in the blink of an eye. But how could such a feather possibly harm him? Before it could even touch Lin Mu, it disintegrated into nothingness.

The page was startled and prepared to strike again. However, Lin Mu, growing impatient, waved his hand dismissively. An invisible force suddenly manifested.

"Overestimating your own strength!" the page sneered, not seeing what was coming.

However, in the next moment, a palm made of condensed Internal Energy materialized out of thin air in front of him and slapped down fiercely.

"Not good!"

Liu Xianhe's expression changed. He wanted to intervene but was already too late. He could only watch as the palm descended, striking his disciple.

"No!"

The page let out a piercing scream as his entire body erupted into a bloody mist. Blood splattered everywhere, leaving everyone present in shocked silence.

This page, after all, had appeared and instantly killed a master of Inner Strength. His own power was self-evident. And yet, he couldn't even withstand a single slap from Lin Mu.

Recalling that even Zhang Yan had been no match for Lin Mu, the crowd felt a sense of understanding amidst their shock. After all, someone who could defeat Zhang Yan and command lightning itself could not be underestimated.

"You brat, you're courting death!"

With his disciple killed, Liu Xianhe was enraged. He flicked his horsetail whisk, and an invisible burst of Internal Energy whooshed toward Lin Mu. He planned to kill Lin Mu first before slowly torturing Guan Chengye.

SWISH!

High in the sky, Lin Mu casually raised his hand, and Liu Xianhe's attack instantly vanished, causing him no harm whatsoever.

Liu Xianhe's pupils contracted slightly.

"You're also a Grandmaster?!" His tone was filled with utter disbelief.

This declaration threw the entire venue into an uproar. This guy, Lin Mu, was actually a Grandmaster?

Guan Chengye laughed heartily. "Indeed! Master Lin is, of course, a Martial Arts Grandmaster!" At that moment, he sensed Liu Xianhe's apprehension and continued, "Liu Xianhe, Master Lin is the one I invited to assist me. So, you think killing me will be so easy?"

Upon hearing Guan Chengye's words, the expressions of some in the crowd shifted subtly. After all, they were all well aware of Guan Chengye's status. If he was acquainted with a Grandmaster, did certain plans now need to be revised?

As expected, a few individuals subconsciously exchanged glances and then quietly slipped away.

Guan Chengye clearly saw this happen but didn't intervene, a cold smile touching his lips. The reason he had chosen to participate in the River City Martial Arts Tournament in Wufeng Town was certainly not just to compete for River City's resources. Given his status, he had no need to vie with others for them.

His real objective, of course, was the Dark Web. Having discovered that Wufeng Town was one of its strongholds, Guan Chengye certainly wasn't going to let them flourish right under his nose.

...

"In that case, I'll kill him first, then kill you!" Liu Xianhe stared coldly at Lin Mu, but his words were for Guan Chengye. "Do you really believe that with him alone, you can escape this calamity? Even among Grandmasters, there are vast differences in strength!"

Liu Xianhe suddenly rose to his feet. A tremendous aura burst forth from him, spreading out in all directions. Feeling this aura, countless people's faces changed drastically.

Is this the power of a Martial Arts Grandmaster? It's too strong!

"Guan Chengye, these past ten years have not been wasted! I advanced to Grandmaster eight years ago, spent one year stabilizing my cultivation, and another year contemplating martial techniques. Today, I shall let the world see what I am capable of!"

As his voice fell, Liu Xianhe tapped his toe on the crane's back, his figure leaping into the sky. He raised his arm, stretched it taut, and thrust it toward Lin Mu like a spear.

"Brat, you killed my disciple! Now watch how I kill you!"

The voice thundered across the plains, and everyone felt as if they were hearing the deafening call of an Immortal.

"Is that so?" Lin Mu smiled faintly and shifted his feet slightly.

ROAR!

The dark clouds parted, revealing a Thunder Dragon of immense, indeterminate length.

"This is..."

When the crowd saw the Thunder Dragon, they almost lost their composure. It was too real, too powerful. It was like a true dragon from myths and legends, ridden by some celestial foe on a campaign of conquest, exuding an aura of cold ferocity. Compared to the Thunder Dragon Lin Mu had previously commanded, it was on a completely different level.

Could it be... In the moment he disappeared, the Thunder Dragon became this powerful?

Indeed, just as Lin Mu finished condensing the Thunder Dragon, one of the Eight Divine Generals had unexpectedly cast a sliver of their Divine Sense into it, lending it their power for his battle. In fact, the strength of this Thunder Dragon alone already far surpassed that of an ordinary Martial Arts Grandmaster.

ROAR!

The Thunder Dragon raised its head and roared, gazing at Liu Xianhe with cold eyes filled with merciless disdain. The next moment, a torrent of violent power erupted from it, rushing directly at Liu Xianhe.

"Hmph!"

In midair, Liu Xianhe let out a muffled grunt as his body was sent flying backward.

SCREECH!

A spectral image flickered, and the Vermilion Crane flapped its wings, appearing beneath Liu Xianhe to catch him. It raised its head and stared intently at the Thunder Dragon beneath Lin Mu's feet.

The Thunder Dragon tilted its head up and glanced at the Vermilion Crane.

"Go."

With a nudge from Lin Mu's foot, the Thunder Dragon beneath him coiled violently before bursting from the clouds and lunging toward the Vermilion Crane.

SCREECH!

The Vermilion Crane took flight, proactively breaking away from Liu Xianhe to charge toward the Thunder Dragon. The two beasts, like mortal enemies, clashed head-on.

Watching this scene, everyone gasped.

"This... this is a miracle! A true miracle!"

"Heavens, what did I just witness!"

At that moment, everyone felt as if they had been transported into a fantasy novel, witnessing a great battle between two Ancient Divine Beasts. It was a thrilling and awe-inspiring sight.

Many widened their eyes, unable to believe what they were seeing.

Ye Tong's mouth hung open, her eyes wide, her mind reeling in utter shock.

That Thunder Dragon... was summoned by Lin Mu? Who is he? What is he?

In that instant, the image of the figure standing in the sky was seared into her very soul, never to be erased.

As for Song Wenrou, she was the calmest among all the spectators. After her initial surprise, she had already regained her composure. A gentle smile played on her lips as she watched the figure in the sky.

Now this is the you I know.