

War God 211

Chapter 211: The Retaliation of the Martial Alliance!

The Sky List.

It was created by the Martial Alliance, and most who know of it are extraordinary martial artists. Those who can enter the Sky List are one in ten thousand; all of them are Martial Arts Grandmasters. This list, which encompasses the entire Huaxia Martial Arts World, contains only fifty names.

One could only imagine the storm it would create in the Martial Arts World once it was published.

The Sky List had not been updated for nearly twenty years, and every update caused a sensation.

When numerous martial artists opened their computers and logged into the heavily encrypted martial arts forum, their breathing grew heavy as they stared at the bold, golden characters hanging at the top of the homepage.

"The Huaxia Sky List!"

Everyone subconsciously swallowed and clicked on it with feverish excitement.

"Sky List, 50th Place—One-Armed Blade Feng Biyuan. Age: 51. Realm: Martial Arts Grandmaster. Twenty years ago, he shocked the world with his domineering blade technique, known for its wide, sweeping, and overwhelmingly powerful style. He was later defeated by Beiming Qingyan."

"Sky List, 49th Place—Outer Barrier Silver Spear Qiu Yuhai. Age: 47. Realm: Martial Arts Grandmaster. His family's spear technique has reached a state of perfection..."

"Sky List, 21st Place—Dragon Tiger Mountain Yun Xu. Age: 67. Realm: Martial Arts Grandmaster. Skilled in Thunder Law, versed in talismans, and proficient in swordsmanship. Thirty years ago, he failed in his bid for the title of Heavenly Master. He later challenged various Martial Arts Grandmasters, securing the twenty-first spot on the Sky List. Died at the hands of Lin Wudi on the Bolan River and was removed from the Sky List the following day."

"..."

"Sky List, 20th Place—Northern Blade Beiming Qingyan. Age: 41. Realm: Martial Arts Grandmaster. Her blade technique has reached the pinnacle. She often practices in the wilderness of the Northern Ridges and has been undefeated since her debut. She once defeated the One-Armed Blade Feng Biyuan."

"Sky List, 19th Place—Southern Butcher Nangong Xiu. Age: 55. Realm: Martial Arts Grandmaster. A merciless and vicious man. During his debut, he killed every opponent he challenged."

"Sky List, 18th Place—Western Poison Xiao Ouyang. Age: 45. Realm: Martial Arts Grandmaster. Adept at using poison and can command various venomous creatures."

"Sky List, 17th Place—East Madness Dong Feng Potian. Age: unknown. Rumor has it that he debuted early, challenging masters ranked below twentieth on the Sky List. After being defeated by the Sword God Shen Lang, he went to the East Sea to practice his boxing."

...

"Sky List, 16th Place—River City Lin Wudi. Age: 30. Realm: Unknown. Suspected Martial Arts Grandmaster. His appearance in the martial arts world was sudden. He challenged, defeated, and killed Yun Xu on the Bolan River. Hailed as the Master of the Three Rivers and known as Lin Wudi."

"Sky List, 15th Place—Shu Land Yang Wen..."

"Sky List, 14th Place—Shu Land Yang Wu..."

"Sky List, 13th Place—Xing Ge Da Wa of the Tibetan Lands..."

"Sky List, 12th Place—Demon City Qin Chuan..."

"Sky List, 10th Place—Southern Sky Xing Zirong..."

The rest of the list remained unchanged. As is the custom of the Martial Alliance, ranks one through ten are hidden from the public.

After finally going through the list, everyone was utterly shocked.

No one could have imagined that Lin Wudi would jump to sixteenth place after just one battle.

"Sixteenth place—Lin Wudi!"

Once this list was published, the world was astounded.

"How is this possible?"

"Although Lin Wudi did slay Yun Xu, does that really qualify him to be ranked in the top sixteen?"

"I think it's perfectly normal. Have you all forgotten how Yun Xu died? Lin Wudi killed him with a single hand. Moreover, Lin Wudi completely suppressed Yun Xu from start to finish."

"Heh heh, but did none of you notice something interesting? Lin Wudi is now ranked ahead of the Four Great Grandmasters. And those four, now behind him, were all considered top-tier Grandmasters on the previous list. That's something to think about."

"..."

"Huh, now that you mention it, I didn't notice. The Four Great Grandmasters have been famous for a long time. Although they haven't made an appearance in years, they were once formidable and renowned figures on the Sky List. The Martial Alliance's decision to rank them this way is very telling."

Amid their shock, everyone else noticed the issue.

With this move, the Martial Alliance was essentially making Lin Wudi a target.

You had to understand, never mind the Grandmasters from rank eleven to fifteen, but the four famous ones now ranked just behind him—East Madness, Western Poison, Southern Butcher, and Northern Blade—had been undefeated since their debuts.

Some people almost laughed out loud.

There were rumors that Lin Wudi had once severed the arm of Lu Tong, a Helmsman of the Martial Alliance, with a single sword strike on the Bolan River. Furthermore, it seemed Mr. Liu from the Military Department, who had gone to River City to observe the battle, was also knocked into the water by Lin Wudi.

Considering the new rankings, it wasn't hard to see that this was the Martial Alliance's deliberate retaliation against Lin Wudi, with the Military Department likely involved as well. After all, the Yang brothers from Shu Land, Yang Wen and Yang Wu, were both from the Military Department.

Then there was Qin Chuan from Demon City, another master of the Sword Dao, who called himself the 'Little Sword God' and specifically challenged other sword experts. He would naturally seek out Lin Wudi.

It seemed there was a good show on the horizon.

「Late at night.」

In a lavishly decorated private room of the River City Grand Hotel, a number of people were gathered. If an outsider saw this scene, they would be shocked speechless.

Those present were all the patriarchs and heads of River City's most powerful families.

There was the Patriarch of the Guan Family, Guan Chengye; the Liang Family Head, Liang Yue; the Patriarch of the Song Family, Song Wen...

However, at this moment, these powerful figures were perched on the edge of their seats, looking respectfully at a young man in the seat of honor.

The young man had his head down and was using his chopsticks to feast on a table laden with rare delicacies. The battle during the day hadn't consumed much of his energy, but Lin Mu still felt a bit hungry.

Only after he had nearly finished all the dishes did Lin Mu put down his chopsticks, let out a satisfied burp, and look up at the others.

After the plates were cleared and a pot of fine tea was brought in, Guan Chengye asked tentatively, "Master Lin, may I know why you have summoned us here tonight?"

Lin Mu took a sip of tea before speaking. "Gentlemen, I've called you here at such a late hour to offer you a great opportunity. I also have something to tell you."

A great opportunity?

Despite the offer, the men were more concerned about what Lin Mu was about to say.

"Master Lin, please feel free to speak your mind," Elder Guan coughed, taking the initiative.

Song Wen, who was beside him, quickly nodded. "Yes, Master Lin, if you have any instructions, please do not hesitate to ask."

He had heard about the day's battle from his granddaughter, and his words were now laced with hints that he hoped his granddaughter could grow closer to Master Lin.

Lin Mu took a small porcelain bottle from his clothes. It was transparent, and inside, several smooth, white, round objects rolled about.

In an instant, all eyes were drawn to the small porcelain bottle.

What is this?

"Master Lin, could this be..."

Only Elder Guan seemed to realize what it was, his expression turning to one of excitement as he exclaimed, "These are elixirs!"

The moment he saw the porcelain bottle, Guan Chengye remembered that Lin Mu had taken out a similar one when treating his son, Guan Xinhe. Given Lin Mu's abilities, any elixir he provided would surely be extraordinary.

Lin Mu nodded. "Correct. These are the Essence Cultivating Pills I have concocted. Not only can they eliminate hidden ailments, but they can also help you break through your current cultivation realms."

Instantly, everyone's breathing became ragged, their faces flushing as they stared greedily at the porcelain bottle in Lin Mu's hands.

Lin Mu placed the bottle on the table. "Gentlemen, please, have a taste of my Essence Cultivating Pills."

While the others were still hesitating, Guan Chengye impatiently grabbed the bottle, tipped out a round elixir, and swallowed it in one gulp.

Chapter 212: We Pay Our Respects to the Venerable Master!

In the next moment, under the astonished gazes of the crowd, Guan Chengye's body began to tremble. His facial skin then started to squirm as if he were in agony.

"Master Lin, what is this...?"

Everyone was startled, their faces filled with panic. They feared the so-called elixir was actually poison.

However, Lin Mu offered no explanation, instead serenely sipping his tea.

UGH!

Suddenly, Guan Chengye spat out a mouthful of black, foul-smelling blood.

"It really is poison!" a magnate exclaimed in alarm, shooting to his feet and pointing at Lin Mu. He suppressed his rage and said, "Master Lin, what is the meaning of this? We were kind enough to help you, and you repay us by trying to harm us?"

This man was Cheng Bugui, a major figure in River City whose influence was comparable to Dao Wuming's. As soon as he spoke, the expressions of the other leaders turned grim.

"Everyone, please calm down," Song Wen said, standing up to soothe the crowd. Although his own face was pale, he continued, "With Master Lin's strength, if he wanted to harm us, why would he need to stoop to a despicable method like poison?"

Liang Yue hurriedly agreed. "That's right, Old Master Song is correct. If Master Lin really wanted to do something to us, he could have just attacked directly. There's no need for all this trouble."

Though their faces remained dark, Cheng Bugui and the others said no more.

As for Lin Mu, he simply maintained a calm smile from beginning to end, looking completely unfazed. Only then did the others turn their attention back to Guan Chengye.

Just a few seconds later, a shocking scene unfolded.

BOOM!

A dull thud echoed from within Guan Chengye's body, and a powerful aura erupted from him. At the same time, the wrinkles on his face began to fade. His complexion grew rosy, and he looked as if he had shed more than a decade from his age, radiating with vitality.

WOW!

The crowd gasped in amazement, staring at Guan Chengye with utter disbelief.

"Hahaha! My injuries... they're completely healed!" Guan Chengye burst out laughing, his voice trembling with emotion. "In my early years, I fought battles far and wide. Even after treatment, I was left with many hidden injuries that caused my strength to stagnate. I thought I'd never have a chance to fully recover in this lifetime, but to think a single elixir could not only heal my injuries but also considerably improve my strength!"

With that, Guan Chengye stepped forward and bowed deeply to Lin Mu. "I, Guan Chengye, thank Master Lin for this gift of rebirth!"

Lin Mu nodded slightly and looked at the others. At that moment, all traces of doubt vanished from their eyes. Their gazes were now fixed with fiery intensity on the porcelain bottle on the table.

If we weren't weaker than Lin Mu, we might just try to seize it by force, some of them thought.

Seemingly sensing their thoughts, Guan Chengye shifted his position slightly, moving to stand in front of the table and shield Lin Mu.

Cheng Bugui swallowed hard, suppressing the reckless idea in his heart. He cupped his hands and said, "Master Lin, what is the price for this elixir?"

"Indeed, Master Lin! No matter the cost, I, Song Wen, will buy one!" Song Wen exclaimed, equally thrilled. He too was a Martial Artist, but his cultivation level was low, only at the mid-stage of External Strength. At my age, I no longer expect any breakthroughs on the Martial Way, but a miraculous elixir like this could extend my life by at least ten years! No matter the cost, I must get one!

Everyone's breathing grew ragged as they stared intently at Lin Mu.

Lin Mu smiled faintly. "No charge. I'm giving them to you. Of course, it's one per person."

What?

No charge?

Free?

The crowd was stunned, certain they had misheard.

Cheng Bugui got straight to the point. "What are your conditions, Master Lin?" He never believed that good things just fell from the sky. And with an Immortal Pill this potent, I refuse to believe Master Lin would give it away for nothing.

Lin Mu gave him an appreciative look and smiled. "I own a pharmaceutical company, and I plan to use it to produce this."

"What did you say?" Even Guan Chengye couldn't hide his shock. "Master Lin, are you saying this can be mass-produced?"

Lin Mu slowly shook his head. "Mass production is an overstatement. Besides, some of the required medicinal ingredients are hard to find. However, if we modify the formula slightly, the resulting product, while not as effective as this one, will still be a hundred times better than anything else on the market."

Lin Mu's explanation was clear, and the others were no fools. They understood his meaning perfectly. With their business acumen, they could already see the immense profits and opportunities this represented.

"What do you need from us, Master Lin?" Song Wen asked gravely.

Although the Song Family was a clan of scholars that valued literature and etiquette, every great family's growth depended on its industrial enterprises. And this... this could be a pivotal moment for the Song Family's next hundred years!

The others looked on, their faces a mixture of curiosity and anticipation.

Lin Mu smiled. "Simple. I want you all to invest in my company. We will pool all the resources in River City, and even the entire Three Rivers Area, to operate it. I'll take an eighty percent stake, and the remaining twenty percent will be divided equally among you."

This was a plan he had considered for some time. Cultivation relies on wealth, companionship, method, and location, with wealth always being the most critical. Given his current condition, the only way to rapidly raise his cultivation level was through the aid of various elixirs and training in locations rich with Spiritual Energy. Both of those required an immense amount of money! Although he could help the Qin Family leverage their status in River City to grow quickly and amass a fortune, they were ultimately outsiders. Given Lin Mu's personality, he was unwilling to rely on them. That was why he had taken over Boheng Pharma, to build his own industrial base in River City. Of course, he would still help the Qin Family—the two endeavors weren't mutually exclusive. In fact, he had another, grander plan slowly taking shape in his mind, but the time was not yet ripe for it.

The magnates exchanged hesitant glances. After all, an eighty percent stake was enormous.

"The Guan Family has no objection!" Guan Chengye declared, the first to speak. The Guan Family was already inextricably linked with Lin Mu.

"The Song Family has no objection either," Song Wen said with a shrewd smile.

Liang Yue also nodded in agreement. The Liang Family was in the medicinal herb business, so partnering with Master Lin was a golden opportunity for them.

Next was Ning Xian. For him, the shares were irrelevant. What truly mattered were Mr. Lin's endless stream of medicinal recipes and elixir formulas.

With these key figures having voiced their support, Cheng Bugui and the remaining men also nodded their assent.

"Good. These elixirs are yours," Lin Mu said with a smile.

The moment he finished speaking, the dozen or so people scrambled over each other to claim the Essence Cultivating Pills from the table. They swallowed them in a single gulp, as if terrified someone else would snatch them away.

Lin Mu watched them quietly. Only after they had all taken the pills and begun to feel the incredible changes in their bodies did he speak again, his tone cool. "You have all taken the elixirs. Now, I want you to remember one thing."

He stood up, clasped his hands behind his back, and swept his gaze across the room.

"Everything you now possess was given to you by me. And I can take it all away whenever I please."

His voice was quiet, yet it resounded with absolute authority.

"There can only be one voice in River City!"

As his words fell, Guan Chengye was the first to drop to his knees, his voice filled with profound respect. "We pay our respects to the Venerable Master!"

"We pay our respects to the Venerable Master!" the others echoed, kneeling in unison.

Chapter 213: Ye Tong's Apology!

If people had merely submitted to Lin Mu out of fear after he killed Liu Xianhe to win the River City Martial Arts Gathering, then the battle at the Bolan River inspired true awe.

After Lin Mu cleanly executed Yun Xu and then demonstrated the effects of the Essence Cultivating Pill, their fear had transformed into reverence.

Half of River City's most prominent families had pledged their allegiance! Lin Mu had become the undisputed number one figure in River City, with both the criminal underworld and legitimate society at his disposal.

After they all expressed their fealty, Lin Mu discussed the matter of investing in his ventures with them.

Everyone present was a regional powerhouse in their own right, and they were all ruthlessly efficient. In just a few sentences, they had hammered out the major details of the arrangement.

At the same time, they once again witnessed the Venerable Master's commercial foresight and grand vision.

"The Venerable Master is truly worthy of the title! We cannot begin to match such ambition!"

After hearing Lin Mu's plan, even someone of Cheng Bugui's stature was left astounded. He was thoroughly convinced, and the slight reluctance he'd previously felt about acknowledging Lin Mu as his superior had mostly vanished.

With River City as the foundation, his plan was to connect to the Three Rivers Area and span east to west, encompassing the entirety of Huaxia.

And this was merely the first step...

"The Venerable Master's vision is as vast as the mountains and can contain all the rivers. This old man is truly humbled," Song Wen mused, reflecting on Lin Mu's words with a deep sigh.

"I've always said that following Lin... oh, the Venerable Master, would never lead to disappointment!" Liang Yue exclaimed.

The others nodded enthusiastically.

Previously, they thought a twenty percent share divided among them was too little. Now, they understood that once the first step was complete, that twenty percent would be worth an astronomical sum.

As everyone was discussing the allocation of shares, a commotion erupted outside.

「At the entrance of the River City Grand Hotel.」

Ye Tong bit her lip, her expression complicated as she looked at the security guard blocking her path. "Please, could you inform him... just say I'm looking for Lin Mu. He's my classmate."

"That's *Master* Lin!" Song Wenrou couldn't help but correct her.

Ye Tong nodded quickly. "Right, Master Lin."

"You say Master Lin is your classmate?"

The security guard chuckled and shook his head. "Miss, you should probably just go home. Master Lin isn't someone just anyone can see."

This hotel was Cheng Bugui's property, and he had given strict orders: no one was to be admitted without his express permission. Consequently, the head of security had placed his entire team on high alert, stationing his best men at every exit. He even had them report in every five minutes, ready to relay the slightest disturbance. His sole objective was to ensure the gathering between his boss and Master Lin's group was not interrupted.

The security chief wouldn't normally be so meticulous, but his boss had repeatedly stressed that the young man he'd personally escorted to the top floor was Master Lin, River City's newest celebrity. That was all the motivation he needed to be this diligent.

Seeing his disbelief, Ye Tong repeated herself, her voice tinged with desperation, "Master Lin really is my classmate. If you just tell him my name, he'll know."

After the battle on the Bolan River, she hadn't dared to speak to Lin Mu. But upon reflection, she felt she owed him an apology. However, Lin Mu had left so abruptly that she never got the chance. If Song Wenrou hadn't told her that her grandfather was meeting with Lin Mu today, she would have had no idea where to find him.

"I'm sorry."

The head of security shook his head firmly. "I cannot let you in. Master Lin is a distinguished guest of our hotel, not someone just anyone can meet. If he's really your classmate, you can give him a call right now."

Ye Tong's face froze.

She didn't have Lin Mu's phone number. How could she? Though they were once classmates, she had always looked down on him. Even at the Martial Arts Gathering, she'd been too busy disliking him to even think of asking for his number. The classmate she once loathed had become a towering figure in River City, a distinguished guest at a five-star hotel, while she couldn't even get past the door. What a bitter irony.

"Security guard, sir, my last name is Song, and my grandfather came with Master Lin today. Could you please let us in for a moment?" Seeing her friend's pain, Song Wenrou sighed inwardly and pleaded with the guard. "Don't worry, we really are Master Lin's classmates."

"Wenrou, I..." Ye Tong opened her mouth, wanting to say something, but the words wouldn't come out.

Song Wenrou grabbed her hand. "It's okay. Lin Mu isn't that petty. I'm sure he'll forgive you."

"Please, sir, just let us go up," Song Wenrou begged, trying to sound as cute as possible.

However, the head of security was unmoved.

"I'm sorry, but it's my duty. I can't let you in!"

Song Wenrou was about to protest again, but Ye Tong pulled her back, a bitter taste in her mouth. "Forget it, Wenrou. Let's go."

Just as Ye Tong turned to leave, a voice suddenly echoed in the security guard's mind.

"Let them come up."

Lin... Master Lin's voice? The head of security froze, looking left and right. But Master Lin is nowhere to be seen... He's not here, but I can hear him speak. It truly is Master Lin! A power like this... he's practically an immortal!

Shaking off his shock, he didn't dare hesitate for a second. He quickly called out to Ye Tong, "Wait! Master Lin will see you."

"Really?"

Ye Tong and Song Wenrou were overjoyed. They hurriedly followed the guard into the hotel and up to the private room where Lin Mu was.

When she saw the people sitting in the private room, Ye Tong's expression changed, and she hastily lowered her head. Many of them were influential figures she often saw on television, yet they were all treating Lin Mu with the utmost respect.

Is this his true status? Is this the real power of a Martial Arts Grandmaster?

As Ye Tong reeled from the shock, Song Wen's expression soured. He barked at his granddaughter, "Wenrou, what are you doing here?"

Song Wenrou flinched, feeling wronged. Grandpa adores me. Why would he scold me so loudly in front of so many people?

"Mr. Song, don't worry about it. I was the one who let them up." Lin Mu smiled, then turned an emotionless gaze to Ye Tong and said coolly, "Well? What do you want?"

His tone was neither cold nor warm, as if he were speaking to a complete stranger.

Ye Tong glanced at the crowd, then back at Lin Mu, but her mouth remained shut.

Guan Chengye chuckled. "Venerable Master, since we've settled most of the details, we'll take our leave."

"Wenrou, let's go home!" Song Wen said, standing and pulling his granddaughter out of the room.

His departure was the signal for the others, who promptly rose and left as well, leaving the room to Lin Mu and Ye Tong.

Lin Mu leaned back in his chair and said coolly, "Speak."

"I..." Ye Tong's mouth opened as she finally gathered her courage. "Lin Mu... I'm sorry!"

Chapter 214: Queen Qin Luoli!

"I'm the one who deliberately arranged for Qiao Zishan and Song Wenrou to interact. It was all to humiliate you."

Ye Tong's head hung lower and lower. She had always looked down on Lin Mu, and not just because she felt he was unworthy of Song Wenrou. She had her own selfish reasons, too. Given Lin Mu's status back then, he couldn't have helped her at all, even if he did end up with Song Wenrou. On top of that, his grades were poor, and his future prospects seemed bleak. The men she met later, like Jiang Xia and Qiao Zishan—weren't they all far more outstanding than Lin Mu?

So, when she ran into Lin Mu again, she couldn't help but subconsciously mock him. It confirmed her belief that he truly was good for nothing.

But then came the martial gathering in River City and the battle on the Bolan River. Lin Mu had become the Master of the Three Rivers Area, revered by all as Master Lin.

At that moment, Ye Tong felt like nothing more than a clown.

"Lin Mu, it was my mistake. I shouldn't have looked down on you, shouldn't have mocked you, and I certainly shouldn't have deliberately made Qiao Zishan resent you too."

Ye Tong lifted her head, her eyes red as she looked at Lin Mu. "Lin Mu, scold me, curse me, do whatever you want. I just hope you won't hold this against me."

Lin Mu laughed.

He looked at Ye Tong, his former classmate, and said flatly, "Are you apologizing because you're afraid I'll kill you?"

Ye Tong wrung the corner of her shirt, unable to utter a single word.

This was indeed her greatest fear.

At the martial gathering in River City, Lin Mu had killed so many people. In the battle on the Bolan River, Lin Mu had annihilated Yun Xu. This proved that Lin Mu was decisive, cold-hearted, and ruthless. He wouldn't think twice about adding one more kill to his name.

Lin Mu sneered, "If that's the case, you have nothing to worry about. It's beneath me to concern myself with a woman like you."

Ye Tong opened her mouth to say something more, but Lin Mu cut her off. "Enough. Let the past be the past. You can go."

The distance in Lin Mu's tone sent a shiver through Ye Tong's heart. But she didn't dare object in the slightest. She merely said thank you and quietly exited the room.

...

Over the next few days, the fallout from the battle between the two Grandmasters on the Bolan River slowly subsided. Aside from a few interested parties who were still discussing it, the news had been completely sealed off from the general public.

Lin Mu also enjoyed a couple of rare, peaceful days. Qin Luoli was managing the Qin Family, and Su Ke'er was handling Boheng Pharma. So, aside from his cultivation, he was completely idle.

「River City. The Luo Family.」

"It's over. It's all over."

Luo Jinping collapsed onto a stool, his face deathly pale.

"To think that Lin Mu was actually a Martial Arts Grandmaster... and he even killed Yun Xu! Damn him!" Luo Jinping clenched his teeth, his face contorted.

Luo Huai'an also wore an expression of bitterness and fear, but he did his best to remain calm in front of his grandson.

"What are you panicking for?" Luo Huai'an scolded. "Master Lin's strength may be immense, but even he can't cover the sky with one hand here in River City!"

"Grandfather, are you saying..." Luo Jinping looked at his grandfather in shock.

Luo Huai'an finally composed himself completely and scoffed, "Don't worry. The conflict between you two is just a minor squabble. If that Lin Mu knows what's good for him, we'll let it go. If not, does he really think there's no one in River City who can handle him?"

...

「In a suburban manor.」

Dao Wuming swirled the red wine in his glass but didn't take a sip. His brow was perpetually furrowed, as if weighed down by some trouble.

Sitting opposite him was an elder in a Daoist robe who looked to be over sixty. The elder was lean, with eyes as sharp as a hawk's and palms that were wider than an average person's. Most peculiar of all, two small, emerald-green snakes were coiled around his wrists.

"Has it been confirmed that he's the one who killed my disciple, Zeng Wen, and sabotaged our plans?" the elder spoke first, his voice hoarse as if something was caught in his throat.

Dao Wuming set down his glass and sat up straight. "The investigation is clear. The higher-ups have instructed us to handle it ourselves."

"Handle it ourselves?" the elder sneered. "The man just killed Yun Xu and rose to sixteenth on the Heaven List. His reputation is at its zenith right now. How are we supposed to deal with him?"

Dao Wuming suddenly spoke. "Master Ding, do you think there's any possibility of recruiting him?"

"Recruiting?" Master Ding's face darkened instantly as he roared, "This man killed my disciple and stole the Nine-Star Bloodshadow Worm I spent years cultivating, flushing all my hard work down the drain, and you want to recruit him?"

Dao Wuming tried to persuade him, "Master Ding, please quell your anger. This matter concerns our organization's grand plan. You know as well as I do how valuable a Martial Arts Grandmaster from the Heaven List is to us."

Master Ding snorted coldly. "A mere brat who thinks he can look down on everyone just because he killed Yun Xu and made it onto the Heaven List? Don't forget, I am also on the Heaven List!"

Ding Fengqiu, ranked twenty-second on the Heaven List!

He was a prodigy who had studied Gu poisons since childhood. His skill with them was nothing short of miraculous.

Ding Fengqiu gave a chilling smile. "That Lin fellow only killed Yun Xu. That Yun Xu may have seemed powerful, but on the Heaven List, his rank was still below mine. Besides, the Martial Alliance's

announcement was just a deliberate diversion. It doesn't prove that Master Lin truly has the strength to be ranked sixteenth."

"Master Ding, what are you implying?" Dao Wuming seemed to understand.

Ding Fengqiu said nonchalantly, "I'll allow you to contact him. If he sincerely submits to our organization, hands over the Nine-Star Bloodshadow Worm and his Cultivation Method, I am willing to let bygones be bygones. Otherwise..."

"Don't blame me for issuing a challenge to Master Lin!"

Dao Wuming was aghast. "You want to challenge Master Lin?"

Ding Fengqiu chuckled. "Have you forgotten my methods?"

Grandmaster Ding Fengqiu, who killed without a trace!

Dao Wuming's resolve hardened. Master Lin, oh, Master Lin, I hope you make the right choice. Otherwise, you'll become the fastest Grandmaster to die in history!

...

"Lin Mu, get to the restaurant quickly! There's trouble."

That day, just as Lin Mu finished his cultivation, he received a call from Qin Luoli.

"What's wrong?"

Qin Luoli's voice was uncharacteristically tense. "Just get over here."

"Alright. I'll be right there."

Lin Mu threw on his clothes and hurried out the door. His mother's restaurant had been open for nearly a month. Everything should have been settled by now, so there shouldn't be any troublemakers.

Did a customer get sick from the food?

「Suqin Restaurant.」

A large crowd was gathered at the entrance, shouting things like "crooked business" and "death trap for profit!"

Lady Su and Lady Ye both looked anxious and utterly lost.

Qin Luoli stood in the doorway, looked at the unruly crowd, and yelled, "Everyone, be quiet!"

Though dressed casually, her appearance and presence had been elevated to their peak after taking the Ever Youth Pill. Combined with the dignified air she had cultivated over the years, she managed to stun the crowd into silence.

But it only lasted for a few seconds before a burly man waved his hand and shouted, "What? Your restaurant's food killed someone, and you won't even let us speak?"

"That's right!"

"Call the police! Hurry up and call the police!"

Lady Su panicked. "We can't call the police!"

However, Qin Luoli grabbed her hand and fixed her gaze on the burly man. "Fine. I agree, you can call the police. But before you do, can we please send the person to the hospital first? If our restaurant is at

fault, we will take full responsibility. But if we are not, then don't blame me when I sue you for malicious slander and disturbing the peace!"

At her words, the entire place fell silent.

Her queenly aura was on full display.

Chapter 215: Come Prepared!

"Call the police! Let the Jing Fang handle this!" Qin Luoli told Lady Su with a commanding air.

"Luo Li, do we really have to call the police?" Lady Su was still somewhat apprehensive.

Qin Luoli sneered, "Since they suspect our restaurant is the problem, then let them call the police."

The burly man's eyes darted away, but emboldened by the crowd, he immediately blurted out, "Go ahead and call them! This place is a crooked shop, and I refuse to believe they won't find something!"

"Right, call the police! I've long suspected there was something wrong with this restaurant," a sleazy-looking young man yelled, waving his hands frantically from behind the crowd.

"Everyone, step aside! What happened here?"

The crowd parted as two police officers walked through. Their eyes met the burly man's for a moment before their gazes settled on Qin Luoli, narrowing slightly.

Qin Luoli was no ordinary person. Though their gazes only met for an instant, she had already pieced together the situation.

"Officer, here's what happened..."

Lady Su's face paled when she saw the police. Just as she was about to explain, an officer cut her off.

"I didn't ask you. You speak!" the officer snapped, looking at the burly man and motioning for him to go first.

The burly man chuckled, then immediately put on a look of pain and anguish. "Officer, you have to get justice for us," he lamented.

The officer stood with his hands behind his back, looking all business. "Describe the situation. What exactly happened?"

The burly man nodded and pointed to a man lying on the ground, covered in blood. "It's like this," he began. "My brother and I are businessmen who travel around River City year-round. We came here this time because we heard about a good project. A friend recommended the newly opened Suqin Restaurant, so we decided to try it. But we never expected..."

He wiped away a tear, his grief seemingly overwhelming. "Just as we were leaving, my brother started vomiting blood uncontrollably! He fell into a coma, and... just a few minutes later, he was gone."

"Officer, you must get justice for us!"

The burly man clung to the officer, a blubbing mess of snot and tears that stirred immense sympathy among the onlookers.

"What a black-hearted establishment, treating human life like dirt!"

"They're completely ruthless! Business owners these days will do anything for money!"

Hearing the crowd's chatter, Qin Luoli's lovely face turned cold.

Lady Su's complexion was ashen and her lips trembled, though whether from fear or distress, it was hard to tell.

As for Liu Zijian's mother, Ye's, she was hiding behind them in fear.

After hearing the burly man's story, the police officer's expression darkened. "This is heinous," he said angrily. "To commit such an act in broad daylight, in a society ruled by law."

"Come on, cuff her!"

The officer gestured with a sweep of his hand, signaling his companion. They headed straight for Qin Luoli, their target clear and their movements unhesitating.

A cold smile played on Qin Luoli's lips.

"Is this how you police operate?" Qin Luoli's voice dripped with sarcasm. "If word of this gets out, the public won't stand for it."

The officer raised an eyebrow and retorted coldly, "Are you teaching me how to do my job? The evidence is conclusive. Are you still trying to argue?"

Qin Luoli stood her ground. "First, you haven't shown your police badges. Second, in a situation like this, shouldn't you be calling an ambulance? And third, you're about to arrest someone based on a one-sided story. Is that what you call 'conclusive evidence'?"

Her logical, well-reasoned words left the officer speechless.

"But... isn't this what everyone saw? Whatever you say now is useless," the officer said, growing flustered and angry.

"What everyone saw?" Qin Luoli scoffed. "So, you're telling me that police don't rely on evidence to solve cases, just what they see with their own eyes?"

"You..." The officer's face turned red with anger. "Audacious! You're challenging the authority of the police and resisting law enforcement. I am authorized to use force!"

"Yes, use force! I'd like to see what she has to say then!"

"A woman like her, thinks she's somebody just because she's a little educated."

The crowd buzzed with discussion. The sleazy man from before yelled for them to cuff her and take her away, drawing loud cheers from the onlookers.

"If you know what's good for you, you'll come with us," the policeman said expressionlessly.

"Is that so?"

Just then, a quiet voice cut through the noise.

"I'd like to see who dares take her away today."

The crowd subconsciously parted as a tall, handsome young man slowly made his way forward.

"Xiao Mu!" Lady Su's face lit up with joy. She grabbed the hand of Ye's, saying, "It's alright now, it's alright."

A small smile appeared on Qin Luoli's face. "You're here."

Lin Mu nodded. "Are you okay?"

Qin Luoli shook her head and whispered, "Be careful. I'm sure these people came prepared."

"Don't worry," he assured her. "Leave everything to me."

Patting Qin Luoli's hand, Lin Mu didn't even glance at the policemen. Instead, he walked toward the burly man.

"So you're saying you were dining at the restaurant, and then he vomited blood and fell into a coma?"

Though Lin Mu's tone was calm and his demeanor casual, the burly man felt a surge of panic. It was as if he were facing an Ancient Fierce Beast; one wrong move and he'd be devoured whole.

But then he remembered he held all the cards. So what if this guy showed up?

At that thought, the burly man puffed out his chest. "That's right! The problem started in your restaurant. And he's not in a coma—he's dead!"

Lin Mu said quietly, "Instead of rushing to a hospital after an incident, your first thought is to gather a mob and cause a scene. To do so with such composure... I must say, it's a first for me."

His tone was laced with sarcasm, and the burly man's expression changed.

"Hey, kid, who do you think you are?" The burly man rolled up his sleeves and said menacingly, "I suggest you mind your own business, or you might just bring trouble upon yourself!"

"Are you threatening me?" Lin Mu shook his head. "Your methods are too primitive."

With that, he crouched down and examined the man on the ground.

The man's complexion was cyanotic and his chest was covered in blood, the clear signs of poisoning. His eyes were tightly shut and he wasn't breathing. He looked for all the world like he was dead.

However, a cold smile curled Lin Mu's lips.

"To think a fake-death drug actually exists. Aren't you afraid it could actually take your life?"

Lin Mu's voice was very low, but the burly man still heard him.

The man's face faltered for a second before he feigned outrage. "Kid, what nonsense are you spouting?"

"Nonsense?" Lin Mu gave him a half-smile. "I can prove to all of you, right now, that he isn't dead."

Everyone gasped. He wasn't dead? Were they really frauds?

The officer's expression changed as well. He took two steps forward and said, "Hey, don't cause trouble here."

Glancing at the two policemen, Lin Mu raised an eyebrow. "Causing trouble?" he asked, his tone indifferent. "I think you're the ones causing trouble."

The officer grew flustered. "You... what do you mean by that?"

"You'll find out soon enough."

Chapter 216: Silver Needle Reveals Its Divine Power!

"What a load of mysterious nonsense!"

The police officer curled his lip. "Don't waste any more time. You're coming with us."

Lin Mu turned to look at him and asked, "Go with you? May I ask what the charge is?"

"What charge?" The police officer laughed with rage. "With everyone watching, you still want to deny it? Your restaurant caused a death due to hygiene and safety issues. Is that charge serious enough for you?"

"Caused a death?" Lin Mu sneered coldly. "But what if the person isn't dead?"

"Not dead?"

"How is that possible?"

"..."

The crowd was shocked, and even Qin Luoli's expression changed drastically. Then, as if she had remembered something, her eyes suddenly lit up.

The burly man was stunned and bellowed, "Bullshit! You killed my brother, and now you're trying to blame us? I'm going to sue you!"

"Go ahead," Lin Mu said, watching him coldly. "You'd better get a forensic pathologist to conduct a proper autopsy and investigate the cause of death."

"If our food is truly what killed him, I'll take full responsibility. But if someone deliberately framed us, don't blame me for being ruthless!"

His speech echoed Qin Luoli's previous words exactly.

"This..."

The burly man faltered, and the two police officers' expressions grew uncertain.

Lin Mu said calmly, "What? Are you scared?"

"What's there to be afraid of?" The burly man stiffened his neck. "I'll get a doctor to check him right now. Don't even think about running off!"

"Fine, I'll wait." A faint smile appeared on Lin Mu's face.

As time passed, the crowd of onlookers grew until the restaurant entrance was completely packed.

"Lin Mu, will this be alright?" Qin Luoli asked, worried. If this escalated, it would ultimately affect the restaurant.

"Don't worry." A faint smile touched Lin Mu's lips. "Since someone wants to cause a scene, we might as well let it be a big one."

He knew that although his identity hadn't been exposed, some interested parties had been secretly investigating him ever since his battle with Yun Xu. This time, it was likely a test. If they wanted to play, he would play along—provided they could withstand his wrath.

The burly man pulled out his cell phone and made a call. Shortly after, he hung up as if he had confirmed something, a determined, chilling smile touching his lips.

About ten minutes later, an ambulance arrived. The crowd was so dense that the paramedics had to get out and walk over with the stretcher.

"They're quite well-prepared," Lin Mu remarked with a slight nod. He even had one of the restaurant's waiters bring him a stool, and he sat down imposingly right at the entrance.

This scene made the two policemen gnash their teeth in irritation.

A doctor in a white coat walked over and crouched to examine the unconscious man. Finally, he shook his head. "The patient is dead. The preliminary diagnosis is food poisoning."

"So it really is food poisoning."

"Looks like the man wasn't wrongly accusing the restaurant."

"Nobody should eat here anymore. This is terrifying."

"Hmph. After a death, it's doubtful they'll even be allowed to stay open."

The crowd buzzed with discussion, all of them pointing fingers at the restaurant.

Qin Luoli's expression grew grim.

She was sure there was nothing wrong with the restaurant's food. She just never expected someone would go so far as to sacrifice a human life to frame them. She'd seen plenty of underhanded schemes in the business world, but this was the first time she had ever encountered one that came at the cost of a person's life.

"Lin Mu," Qin Luoli said, "we need to hire a lawyer. I know the best one in River City. Otherwise, if this situation gets any bigger, it'll be bad for us."

"It's fine," Lin Mu said, shaking his head. "Like I said, just leave it to me."

With that, Lin Mu stood up and walked toward the doctor and the police officer, who were in conversation.

"Officer, you have to get justice for my brother!" the burly man cried, wiping at his eyes. "His death was so unjust! He lost his life just by having a meal!"

His performance was so over-the-top that even the doctor instinctively looked away.

"Don't worry. The police certainly won't stand by and do nothing in a case like this. We will give the victim and his family a satisfactory resolution!" the officer said, consoling the burly man before turning to Lin Mu. "Now, the man is dead. What more do you have to say?"

"Hmph, why waste more words on them? Just shut down their shady shop and arrest them! Let's see if they can weasel their way out of this!" the burly man said furiously.

"Yeah, shut them down! Arrest them!"

"Shut them down! Arrest them!"

Shouts rose from the crowd.

A flicker of a smile passed through the burly man's eyes. The crowd is easy to manipulate.

The police officer nodded. "Don't worry. We'll take them in, open an investigation, and make sure they receive the punishment they deserve."

With that, the officer walked toward Lin Mu and said coldly, "No more excuses now, right? Come with us!" As he spoke, he took out a pair of handcuffs, moving to restrain Lin Mu.

"Wait," Lin Mu said.

"Kid, you keep obstructing our investigation. What are you trying to pull?" the officer bellowed.

"Investigation?" Lin Mu sneered. "We haven't broken any laws. What exactly are you investigating?"

"The man is dead, and you still want to argue?" the officer shouted. I've never seen someone so shameless.

"Dead?" Lin Mu sneered. "Who told you he's dead?"

"Shameless!"

"Despicable!"

"He's lying through his teeth!"

Some onlookers grew furious, shocked that Lin Mu would say such a thing.

"Young man, the person is indeed dead. This was confirmed by our Doctor Ma," said an elderly man, one of the medical staff who had arrived with the ambulance. The Doctor Ma he referred to was the young doctor who had pronounced the man dead.

"Oh?" Lin Mu asked, raising an eyebrow. "And how was that confirmed?"

Being challenged, Doctor Ma's expression soured. He pointed at the man on the ground. "The deceased's face is cyanotic, he was frothing at the mouth, his pupils are dilated, and his abdomen is swollen. Respiration and heartbeat have both ceased. His muscles are even rigid. All of this proves he has been dead for at least half an hour."

"By saying he isn't dead, are you questioning my diagnosis, or are you simply refusing to accept the facts?"

The crowd stared at Lin Mu, eager to hear what he had to say next.

However, Lin Mu just smiled slightly. "Proving whether he's dead or not is simple. All I have to do is wake him up."

His words sent an uproar through the crowd.

Everyone looked at Lin Mu in utter shock. A doctor had already pronounced the man dead, yet Lin Mu claimed he could just wake him up? Was he joking?

"What nonsense are you spouting, kid? Do you think saying something like that will help you evade legal responsibility?" the officer raged. "Let me tell you, that's impossible!"

"Then I'll just have to prove it to you," Lin Mu said with a faint smile as he walked toward the unconscious man.

"What do you think you're doing?" the burly man shouted, moving to stop him. "My brother is already dead! What more do you want to do to him?"

Lin Mu looked at him. "Do you want him dead or alive? Or... do you have some other motive?"

"I..." The burly man faltered, instinctively glancing at the police officer and the doctor. Doctor Ma gave him a subtle nod.

"Let him try," Doctor Ma said. "I'd like to see if he can actually bring the dead back to life."

Despite his words, everyone looked at Lin Mu with mocking disdain, as if he were a complete fool.

Lin Mu, however, remained unperturbed.

He took a box from his pocket and retrieved a Silver Needle.

"A Silver Needle?"

Seeing the Silver Needle in Lin Mu's hand, everyone was slightly taken aback. Could he know medicine?

Crouching down, Lin Mu flicked his wrist, and the Silver Needle instantly pierced the bridge of the man's nose. Lin Mu then deftly inserted several more needles in succession: just below the man's lips, into his chest, and on both of his hands.

Finally, Lin Mu produced a ten-inch-long Silver Needle and instantly plunged it into the man's throat.

"Urk..."

As soon as that needle went in, the man's tightly closed eyes shot open. He lurched forward, spitting out a pool of partially digested food.

And wriggling within the vomit was a single black insect.

Chapter 217: Did I let you go?

It was quiet. Deathly quiet.

The crowd was plunged into deep shock.

Hadn't that person been declared dead? Why had he suddenly woken up?

As they watched the man vomiting while looking around in a daze, everyone had only one thought in their minds: he had returned from the dead!

Was there really a medical art in this world that could bring back the dead? It was miraculous!

The crowd was shocked, erupting in gasps and exclamations.

However, the expressions on a few faces were exceptionally grim.

The burly man stared at his companion, dumbfounded.

The police officer looked at the "victim," who was vomiting forcefully, his face pale.

Doctor Ma looked at the "corpse" he had confirmed dead, his limbs trembling.

A man who was clearly dead had been brought back with just a few needles. This completely overturned their understanding of the world.

"Look, what is that?" someone in the crowd suddenly shouted, pointing at the vomit on the ground.

At the sound, everyone hurried to look.

That one glance was enough to make the more faint-hearted scream and stumble back several steps. Some even began to vomit on the spot.

"My God, what is that thing?"

"What on earth did this person eat?"

"Yeah, that's so disgusting!"

On the ground, amongst the vomit, was a black insect. That black insect actually began to lay eggs and hatch...

In just a few minutes, the ground was swarming with a dense carpet of black insects. The sight was enough to make one's skin crawl.

Some people with a fear of dense clusters turned pale, growing dizzy and nearly collapsing.

"Lin Mu, what is this stuff?" Qin Luoli's face was also a bit pale, her body swaying as if she felt unwell.

"A Southern Region Gu Insect."

Lin Mu explained briefly, then took Qin Luoli's hand and channeled a surge of Mana into her to ease her discomfort.

"Southern Region Gu Insect?" Qin Luoli looked puzzled, but from the name alone, she knew it wasn't anything good.

"Hmph. Southern Region Gu Insect? If you're going to make up an excuse, at least find a convincing one," Doctor Ma scoffed. "I think it's just an insect with a terrifying reproductive ability, and it came from your store."

"Didn't you just say this person was already dead? How do you explain this now?" Lin Mu smiled nonchalantly.

"I..." Doctor Ma was rendered speechless by Lin Mu's retort.

"Your medical skills are lacking, and you nearly got someone killed," Lin Mu snorted, his tone unfriendly. "What right do you have to speak now?"

He then turned to the burly man, who had already gone deathly pale, and said coldly, "As for you..."

The burly man was startled and stammered, "W-what about me?"

"You know perfectly well what you've done. Do I need to spell it out?" Lin Mu's gaze was piercing, like a sharp blade stabbing straight into the man's heart.

In that moment, the burly man felt as if all his secrets had been laid bare before this person. A surge of unease washed over him.

"It was your store's food that nearly killed my brother, and now you're trying to turn the blame on us? How can you be so malicious?" the burly man insisted, craning his neck stubbornly, refusing to admit anything.

Lin Mu let out a cold laugh. "It seems you're unwilling to confess."

"If you've done nothing wrong, you have nothing to fear. I did nothing, so what is there for me to confess to?" The burly man was certain Lin Mu had nothing on him, so he held his ground.

"Very well." A chilling smile touched the corners of Lin Mu's mouth. "I gave you a chance. You're the one who didn't take it."

Lin Mu crouched down, glanced at the black insects on the ground, and swept his palm over them.

The crowd only saw the frantically multiplying insects vanish in an instant, but they had no idea how.

But the two police officers exchanged a look, and each saw a trace of shock in the other's eyes.

This person isn't afraid of the Feigned-Death Insect?

Immediately afterward, Lin Mu looked at the man who had stopped vomiting and said, "Alright, talk. Why did you come here?"

The man acted as if he still hadn't recovered, feigning ignorance.

"It seems you're truly not afraid of dying." Lin Mu chuckled softly, then spread his palm open. He held a few black insects, which seemed to be frozen solid, showing no signs of life.

But at the sight of these insects, the man's pupils instantly constricted, and an unmistakable look of terror appeared on his face.

"It seems you know where this thing comes from," Lin Mu smiled. "Then this will be easy."

With that, Lin Mu grabbed the man's mouth, about to stuff the insects inside.

"What are you doing?!" The two police officers were alarmed and moved to intervene.

"Get lost if you don't want to die!" Lin Mu suddenly turned, a horrifying look exploding from his eyes.

The two police officers cried out and scrambled backward.

"Mmph... mmph..." The man's cheeks were pinched by Lin Mu, and he couldn't utter a word, only muffled whimpers.

Just as Lin Mu was about to force the insects into his mouth, the man summoned strength from nowhere and broke free from Lin Mu's grip.

"I'll talk! I'll talk! Just don't make me eat that thing!" His voice was filled with terror, as if he was deeply traumatized by the black insects.

Lin Mu watched him with a half-smile. "Speak. Who sent you?"

"Hey! What do you mean, someone sent us? Kid, you'd better watch your mouth!" the other burly man blustered, sensing the situation had turned against them.

Lin Mu said faintly, "I wasn't talking to you. You'd best shut your mouth. Otherwise, I'll let you experience something worse than death."

The burly man flinched, terror on his face, and he immediately fell silent. For some reason, he felt an innate, gut-wrenching fear of Lin Mu.

The other man swallowed hard before cautiously saying, "Actually, I ate that insect to feign death."

A gasp went through the crowd. Feigned death?! What was going on?

Everyone was stunned. That disgusting insect could actually make someone feign death? Was he bluffing?

The man continued, "Someone gave my brother and me a sum of money. They said all we had to do was eat a meal at your restaurant and then ingest the insect."

His face was filled with lingering fear as he spoke. "That person said the insect wouldn't cause any harm; it would just put someone in a deathlike state for a few hours before they woke up automatically. But..."

"But you didn't expect that the insect would nearly kill you," Lin Mu finished for him.

"Exactly." The man trembled all over, still trapped in his fear.

"No, impossible!" The other burly man shook his head frantically. "He wouldn't lie to me! I saw that insect myself. It really does just make you stop breathing, as if you're in a feigned death state. It can't be harmful!"

"He lied to you!" the man roared. "Just now, I thought I was really dead! In a daze, I could feel my whole body being covered in insects. Then, Silver Needles appeared one by one and killed them. If they hadn't, I'd be dead by now!"

The man lunged, grabbing the other by the collar and bellowing, "You nearly killed me!"

"No, it wasn't me..."

As the two scuffled, everyone else finally understood what had happened. This restaurant had been framed.

Seeing how things had turned out, the two police officers tried to slip away quietly.

"Did I say you could leave?"

Just then, a cold voice reached their ears.

They stopped in their tracks and turned around, only to be met with a smiling face.

"Without my permission, I'd like to see who dares to leave!"

Chapter 218: Treat Like An Ancestor!

"Without my permission, who dares to leave!"

These words sent another shock through the crowd.

This guy sure has some nerve, speaking to the police with that tone. Does he have a death wish?

The two policemen's faces darkened. "What, you want to stop us from leaving?" one of them said grimly.

Mother Lin was extremely anxious. "Xiao Mu, it's better to let things go. Since the investigation is clear, let's just forget about it," she urged, pulling Lin Mu back in an attempt to de-escalate the situation.

But Lin Mu said, "Mom, haven't you realized? These people are all in it together."

"What? They're in it together?" Mother Lin was just an ordinary woman; she had no idea about the complex scheme at play.

With a cold sneer, Lin Mu continued, "Not only are they in cahoots, these two aren't even real cops."

What? Impersonating officers? The crowd was shocked. Who would dare to impersonate police officers? Did they have no regard for their lives?

The two policemen's faces changed dramatically as they roared, "Kid, don't spout nonsense! Do you want me to haul you to the station right now?"

Lin Mu replied indifferently, "Sure, I'd like that very much."

One of the men said to the other, "Bing Ge, why bother with a lunatic? Let's go, we still have a mission to carry out."

That policeman snorted coldly, pointing at Lin Mu. "Hmph, kid, consider yourself lucky." Then he announced, "We're leaving!"

As if remembering something, the policeman grabbed the two brawny men. "You've falsely accused someone. The police will thoroughly investigate this."

The two brawny men hung their heads dejectedly, as if resigning to their fate. Although the crowd was somewhat puzzled, they didn't overthink it.

However, just as they tried to leave, someone refused to allow it.

"What do you think this place is? You think you can just cause trouble and leave?" Lin Mu let out a cold laugh. "Do you really think I'm that easy to bully?"

"Are you done yet?" the policeman said impatiently. "Or do you think we're easy to bully?"

Lin Mu's voice remained calm. "Since you keep claiming to be cops, then show me your police IDs." He chuckled lightly. "I may not be a big shot, but I have plenty of friends in the police force. I'd like to ask them if the department has two officers like you."

The two men exchanged glances, and a hint of panic flashed in their eyes.

"Who do you think you are to demand to see them?" one of them erupted angrily.

"If you can't produce them, then don't even think about leaving today!" Lin Mu's voice turned icy.

"You..." The policeman glared, then hastily said, "We were in a hurry when we left today and didn't bring our IDs."

"In such a hurry that both of you forgot them?" Lin Mu's voice was laden with mockery.

The crowd also began to doubt the two men's identities. A buzz of discussion erupted, preventing the pair from leaving. As the situation escalated, the expressions on the fake policemen's faces grew uglier.

"Alright, that's enough," a voice cut in. It was Doctor Ma. "I can confirm that these two officers are real."

Lin Mu glanced at him and said indifferently, "A quack like you has no right to speak."

"You..." Doctor Ma was rendered speechless.

But Lin Mu's next statement made Doctor Ma's face turn pale.

"The only reason you're speaking up for them is because you're in league with them, too."

Everyone was astounded. The situation had turned on its head so quickly. They're all in this together?

Doctor Ma pointed at Lin Mu, stammering, "You... what nonsense are you talking about?"

Lin Mu let out a cold laugh. "It seems you're one of those who won't shed a tear until you see the coffin. Fine, I'll make sure you know exactly why this is happening."

With that, Lin Mu took out his phone and dialed a number. "Have you found them? Bring them over."

After hanging up, Lin Mu watched the men with a relaxed demeanor. Surrounded by the crowd, they didn't dare try to leave.

Just then, the crowd parted to let a group of people through. Leading them was a policewoman with short hair, an oval face, and a fiery figure. Her uniform gave her an air of valiant heroism.

The crowd's eyes lit up. What a beautiful police officer!

"Which son of a bitch had the courage of a bear and the gall of a leopard to impersonate a police officer? Are they tired of living?"

The moment the policewoman spoke, the crowd's eyes bulged in shock.

"It's those two," Lin Mu said with a slight smile as she appeared.

He had seen this policewoman before at Boheng Pharma; her name seemed to be Zhou Qian.

When the two fake policemen saw Zhou Qian arrive, their faces instantly turned pale. They had never imagined Lin Mu would actually call the real police.

Zhou Qian first glanced at Lin Mu, then turned to the two men. "You two look unfamiliar. Which squad are you with?"

The two men stammered, unable to utter a coherent sentence.

SNAP!

Zhou Qian snapped her fingers. "Looks like they're really impostors. Take them away!"

Immediately, several police officers stepped forward, handcuffed the pair, and led them away.

"Disperse, everyone, disperse. These two were impersonating officers. As you all saw, this restaurant did nothing wrong. They were framed."

As Zhou Qian and her team dispersed the onlookers, the crowd slowly left, still discussing the incident animatedly.

"Let's roll out!"

Zhou Qian had arrived suddenly and left just as quickly. Before she departed, she gave Lin Mu another look, lifted her chin, and let out a soft snort through her nose.

Watching Zhou Qian stride away, Lin Mu felt somewhat speechless. Officer Zhou sure can hold a grudge. At the same time, however, he marveled at how cleanly and efficiently Old Master Song handled things.

The two burly men, however, were not taken away. This was, of course, at Lin Mu's request, as he had a significant use for them.

Then, Lin Mu beckoned. A few casually dressed young men walked over, flanked the two burly men, and quickly escorted them out of the restaurant.

"Alright, it's all over," Lin Mu said, clapping his hands as he turned to Qin Luoli and his mother.

"Xiao Mu, is everything really alright?" Mother Lin was still worried.

Lin Mu reassured her, "Don't worry. When I say it's fine, it's fine. You can reopen and get back to business as usual."

Before Mother Lin could say more, Qin Luoli interjected, "Mom, just relax. If Lin Mu says it's alright, then it really is."

Once Mother Lin and the others went back to running the restaurant, Lin Mu headed alone to an abandoned repair shop.

"Mr. Lin, you're here!"

Seeing Lin Mu arrive, several young men guarding the door immediately stood up. Their expressions were respectful, their eyes blazing with fervor.

"Good work," Lin Mu nodded.

The men grew even more excited, standing straighter. "It's our honor to work for you, Mr. Lin!"

The boss had told them to treat Mr. Lin with their highest standard of respect. Even treating him like an ancestor wouldn't be an exaggeration.

"Mhm." Lin Mu nodded again. "Where are they?"

A young man in the lead replied, "Following the boss's orders, we've got them inside."

"Take me to them."

The young man then led Lin Mu into the repair shop, calling back over his shoulder, "You guys, stand guard out here. Don't let anyone in!"

Once inside, Lin Mu saw the two burly men from the restaurant. They were trussed up and tied to a pillar, their bodies covered with injuries. It seemed they had already received a thorough beating.

"These two bastards dared to cause trouble on your turf, Mr. Lin. The brothers couldn't stand for it, so we taught them a lesson," the young man explained. He let out a quiet sigh of relief when he saw that Mr. Lin didn't seem upset.

Lin Mu looked at the two half-dead men, his gaze instantly turning sharp.

At that moment, the young man couldn't help but shiver.

Mr. Lin's aura was terrifying—even more frightening than the boss's.

Chapter 219: Don't Ask What You Shouldn't!

"These guys really are something else, to be so heavy-handed," the young man said, a bit embarrassed.

With caution, the young man asked, "Mr. Lin, should we wake them up?"

"No need."

Lin Mu shook his head and, under the young man's curious gaze, pulled out a silver needle and plunged it straight into one of the burly men's chests.

"Ah!"

The unconscious man's eyes shot open. His features and limbs twisted wildly, contorting in immense pain.

Witnessing this, the young man felt his scalp tingle.

In just a few breaths, the burly man's clothes were soaked with sweat, as if he had just been pulled from the water.

He managed to say in agony, "Spare... spare my life. Please, let me go."

Lin Mu chuckled. "Let you go? The show has only just begun."

The point Lin Mu's needle had struck was the man's Danzhong Point.

Being pierced there wouldn't be immediately fatal, but it would cause unbearable, excruciating pain.

As Lin Mu finished speaking, he brandished his needles again.

Dabao Point, Hegu Point, Taichong Point...

After three consecutive strikes, the burly man was left gasping for air, only able to inhale but not exhale.

He curled up in agonizing pain. He wanted to struggle wildly, but his body wouldn't obey.

Bound by the ropes, the man felt as if he were enduring the torment of a thousand cuts, every inch of his skin and every piece of his flesh seemingly being sliced open.

The young man was so scared his legs had turned to jelly, and he staggered back several paces.

Seeing that it was about enough, Lin Mu withdrew the needle an inch.

Although the pain wasn't completely gone, it became bearable.

Even so, the burly man's consciousness was a blur; he felt as if half his soul had been torn away.

"Speak. Who sent you?" Lin Mu asked indifferently after the man had a moment to recover.

"Master Dao... It was Master Dao who sent us," the man gasped. Having just experienced torture worse than death, he didn't dare conceal anything and confessed everything.

I've never seen someone play by such unorthodox rules! Shouldn't you start with threats and bribes, then move on to harsh interrogation? Who starts with their ultimate move? Who could possibly withstand that?

Unwilling to experience that extreme torment again, the burly man revealed every last detail.

"Master Dao? Dao Wuming?"

Lin Mu sneered. "I haven't even gone looking for him, and yet he comes knocking on my door."

He muttered to himself. This is actually better. Since I plan to establish my roots in River City, I might as well start by uprooting this malignant tumor.

He then asked, "What's the deal with that Doctor Ma?"

The burly man said weakly, "He's Ma Xuan's older brother. He heard you stole his brother's woman, so he came for revenge."

"Ma Xuan?"

Lin Mu was stunned for a moment, then recalled the man who had shown up the last time he treated Su Ke'er.

Was his name Ma Xuan? Truly courting death.

"I've told you everything, I'm begging you, please spare me," the burly man pleaded, all the arrogance he'd displayed at the restaurant entrance gone.

Lin Mu couldn't be bothered with his nonsense. With a wave of his hand, the man passed out.

Then, he repeated the process on the other burly man, asking the same questions.

Once he confirmed their stories matched, Lin Mu knocked them both unconscious again.

To him, these two no longer held any value.

He wasn't going to kill them right now, but they wouldn't live for much longer.

A moment ago, Lin Mu had left a trace of Spiritual Energy inside their bodies.

In three days, the two would die silently.

This method of interrogation made the young man's scalp crawl. Mr. Lin truly had an endless arsenal of methods.

When Lin Mu glanced at him, the young man trembled and quickly covered his eyes, stammering, "Mr. Lin, I didn't see anything! I didn't hear anything!"

He had, in fact, heard every single word the two men said.

He was afraid that if Mr. Lin decided to silence him, he'd be subjected to that hellish treatment too. With his frail body, he wouldn't last a few minutes.

Lin Mu shook his head, disdaining to bother with the fellow.

He was now contemplating how to eliminate Dao Wuming's faction.

Dao Wuming's plot might seem childish, but the consequences would have been severe had it succeeded. At the very least, my family would have been dragged into it. Besides, they had already half-succeeded. Their goal was to flex their muscles, to show me that they could take my life whenever and wherever they pleased. However, you truly underestimate me!

Lin Mu sneered coldly.

Just then, the door was thrown open, and a group of people barged in.

"You bastards! Didn't I tell you to guard the door?" the young man roared, about to fly into a rage.

"Boss... Boss..."

But as the young man spun around, he froze on the spot.

"Boss, why are you here?" his expression changed instantly. He shot his underlings a glare, as if blaming them for not giving him a heads-up.

The young men looked aggrieved.

The boss showed up out of nowhere, what were we supposed to do?

Lin Mu also turned to look at the newcomers.

The leader was a bald man with a face full of menacing flesh and eyes like copper bells, giving him an extremely ferocious appearance.

Upon seeing Lin Mu, the bald man's pupils contracted. He quickly wiped his hands and hurried forward.

He bowed and dropped to one knee.

"Xu Sanhu pays his respects to the Venerable Master!"

Everyone was stunned.

They all stared wide-eyed at their boss, momentarily unable to process the scene.

The Descending Mountain Tiger, one of the Two Tigers of River City, was actually kneeling and paying respects, addressing someone as "Venerable Master"?

And to a young man who wasn't much older than them?

What on earth was wrong with this world? Had their boss lost his mind, or were they all dreaming?

"What are you gawking at? Hurry up and pay your respects to the Venerable Master!" Xu Shanhu roared when he saw his men still standing there dumbly.

His underlings shuddered and rushed forward, kneeling behind Xu Shanhu.

"We pay our respects to the Venerable Master!"

Lin Mu waved his hand dismissively. "Did Cheng Bugui send you? Get up."

"Thank you, Venerable Master!"

Xu Shanhu stood up, his excitement palpable.

Others might not know, but he knew full well.

Although he, Xu Shanhu, held considerable sway in River City's underworld, all of it was granted to him by Smiling Tiger Cheng Bugui.

Cheng Bugui, Lu Minghu, and Xu Shanhu were together known as The Three Tigers of River City.

The world knew of the Two Tigers of River City, but not that Smiling Tiger Cheng Bugui was the true mastermind pulling the strings.

And because of his connection to Cheng Bugui, he knew a little about Lin Mu's identity.

This made him even more thrilled.

A Martial Arts Grandmaster! A legendary figure, and today I finally get to see one in the flesh!

"Venerable Master, Boss Cheng is on his way. Please, wait for just a moment," Xu Shanhu said respectfully.

Lin Mu frowned slightly. "It's a trivial matter. Tell him there's no need to come."

Before heading to the restaurant, Lin Mu had called Cheng Bugui and asked him to investigate the men's backgrounds. Since the matter was mostly settled, there was no need to see him.

"But Venerable Master, Boss Cheng he..."

Before Xu Shanhu could say more, Lin Mu cut him off impatiently. "What? Does my word no longer carry any weight?"

Xu Shanhu quickly recoiled. "Not at all, not at all! I will follow the Venerable Master's every command!"

"Good. Alright, you can release these two for now. I have matters to attend to."

With that, Lin Mu left without another word.

"Farewell, Venerable Master!" Xu Shanhu bowed respectfully.

Only after Lin Mu was gone did the young man dare to ask, "Boss, who exactly is that person?"

SLAP!

Xu Shanhu smacked the young man on the head, scolding him, "Don't ask what you're not supposed to. Also, if you want to live, not a single word about what happened today gets out! If I find out you've said anything, don't blame me for being ruthless!"

They all shivered and hastily promised they wouldn't dare.

Chapter 220 Jungle Sniper!

Night. Stars twinkled, and the twilight was like still water.

A silver sedan was speeding along the mountain road.

Inside the car.

"The Zhao Long brothers have failed."

"Don't worry. Since I've taken your money, I will personally clean up your loose ends. I'll make sure there's no evidence left behind."

"As for those other two fools, I've made sure they can't leave the police station."

"We of the Blood Rat Mercenary Corps always keep our word."

A mobile phone was thrown out the window as the vehicle sped up, heading toward the mountain's peak.

Several villas stood atop the mountain. The one in the middle, flanked by two others, blazed with light. A man in a suit stood at the door, seemingly waiting for someone.

The silver sedan stopped. The car door opened, and a pair of shiny leather shoes appeared first, followed by a tall figure. This person had his back to the light, so his features were unclear. But from him emanated a faint scent of blood, suggesting he was no ordinary man.

"Lord Zhu, you've arrived." The waiting men approached, led by a hunched old man.

"Hmph. Is everything ready?" the man's voice was hoarse and distinctive.

"It's all been prepared, and it's all top-notch," the old man said, his face sporting a professional smile.

"I'll be the judge of that," the man said, dismissing the flattery as he walked straight into the villa.

Two men in suits looked displeased and were about to protest.

PFFT! PFFT!

Two muffled sounds echoed. THUD! THUD! The two men fell to the ground. Their eyes showed terror, but they were already breathless. In the center of each of their foreheads was a tiny hole from which red blood and white brain matter oozed.

This single move instantly subdued the rest of the men in suits, who now dared not move a muscle.

Because no one had seen how he'd done it.

"Lord Zhu, please!"

The old man, ignoring the deaths of his two subordinates, respectfully invited the man into the main hall.

At the hall's entrance, a row of men in black stood with their backs to the interior, keeping a vigilant watch outside. The hunched old man accompanied Lord Zhu, inspecting the various firearms on the coffee table.

The R1895 handgun: high damage, long-range, capable of a one-shot kill with a headshot, comparable to a 98K.

The AWM sniper rifle: one of the world's top ten sniper rifles, adored by countless mercenaries.

The VSS: known as a divine artifact of marksmanship, it came with a built-in silencer and a four-times scope, and it could be fired automatically. It was suitable gear for dense parachute jumping.

In addition, there were various grenades and combat knives.

The man's gaze swept over the table, his expression unchanging. But then, his eyes lit up slightly.

He plunged a large hand into the pile of guns and pulled out a heavy sniper rifle.

The Barrett M82A1!

The man's jaw shifted slightly, showing he was quite satisfied with this weapon.

"Not bad. I'll take this one."

The old man's expression changed subtly.

Though the rifle was powerful, with a long range and terrifying lethality, its weight was astounding. An ordinary person would not only struggle to use it but would find it incredibly difficult to even carry.

However, the man seemed unconcerned. The heavy Barrett was like a feather in his hand as he toyed with it effortlessly.

"Clean up and get out of here. Remember, don't leave anything behind."

After speaking, the man walked out with the rifle in hand. As he reached the doorway, he turned slightly, revealing a white rat mask.

"Go back and tell your master to transfer the remaining payment to my designated account."

Then, the man got in his car and drove away.

"Elder Tan, who in the world is that man?"

The old man glared, his voice cold. "Don't ask what you shouldn't. Clean this place up and leave!"

"Yes, sir!"

「...」

The man drove along the mountain road, his mind on the mission's target.

Name: Lin Mu.

Gender: Male.

Age: 27.

Confirmed as a Martial Artist, strength unknown.

Combat Record: Has killed dozens of members of the Blood Rat Mercenary Corps and the Azure Hawk, including someone codenamed "Ground Rat".

Danger Level: A!

Just a mere Martial Artist, and he wiped out an entire base. It seems these guys have gotten more and more useless over the years. What a bunch of trash!

Bai Shu let out a cold laugh. The thought that his target was such a person ignited a flicker of excitement in his heart.

Looking at the photo taped to his dashboard, Bai Shu's lips curled into an icy smirk.

I hope you don't disappoint me.

「River City.」

Lin Mu didn't practice his Cultivation tonight. Instead, he took a lap around the Qin Zhu Courtyard. He wasn't exercising, of course, but laying a Formation around the perimeter. People had been disturbing his home frequently of late, and Lin Mu was getting tired of it. With this protective Formation in place, no one whose strength was beneath his could even dream of breaking in.

Of course, even for Martial Artists stronger than him, breaking this Formation would be as difficult as ascending to the heavens. After all, this was the eternal and profound array laid by the Heavenly Shepherd Venerable, Lin Wudi himself.

After completing the Formation, Lin Mu nodded in satisfaction.

But just as he was about to head back inside, he suddenly felt that something was amiss. It felt as if something was about to happen, yet it didn't stir any sense of unease in him.

Cultivators are extremely sensitive to any shifts in the heavenly machinations and to their own intuition. Lin Mu was no exception. This intuition had saved him countless times.

With this in mind, Lin Mu acted as if nothing was wrong. He didn't enter the villa but instead chose a direction and started walking away.

After he left the villa grounds, the feeling that something was wrong grew even stronger.

Obviously, something had been following him the entire time.

A slight smile touched Lin Mu's lips. He immediately picked up his pace, heading toward a small, nearby hill. He had already used his Divine Soul to detect that someone was tracking him. Their objective was clearly him.

Who could it be? The Dark Web? The Martial Alliance? Or perhaps someone from the Celestial Master Mansion? I just exposed the Dark Web's plan today, so they're the most likely culprits. I haven't even come looking for you, yet you've shown up at my doorstep. In that case, let's have some fun.

Lin Mu quickened his pace again and plunged into the forest.

Several minutes after he entered, a few figures followed, stopping at the edge of the woods. In the darkness, the figures, all clad in black, exchanged glances. They made a hand signal to disperse and encircle, then split up.

The starlight vanished, plunging the woods into darkness. Even the chirping of insects gradually faded into silence.

A man in black, dagger in hand, moved cautiously through the forest, his eyes darting around vigilantly.

WHOOSH!

Suddenly, a shadow flashed past. The man turned in surprise, but the shadow had already vanished.

However, the man in black didn't let his guard down. He immediately sent out an alert, confident his companions would arrive as quickly as possible.

Sure enough, only a few breaths later, footsteps could be heard rushing in his direction.

The man in black relaxed, a fierce glint appearing in his eyes.

Today, this place will be your grave!

However, just as the thought flashed through his mind, he felt the world spin. His vision lifted higher and higher before his head suddenly crashed to the ground.

As it landed, he saw a headless body spurting hot, fresh blood.

That was his body.