

War God 281

Chapter 281: Lotuses Bloom with Every Step, Walking Across the Lake!

"Excellent!" Fang Cheng was overjoyed, slapping his palm heavily on the table. "With him on our side, I refuse to believe that little bastard can ascend to the heavens!"

"Family Head, Mr. Xiao has also arrived!" the butler rushed in again, his face alight with delighted surprise.

"Quickly, invite him in! On second thought, I'll go greet him myself!" Fang Cheng said, about to head for the door.

"Haha, no need to trouble yourself, Boss Fang."

A laugh rang out as a middle-aged man in a short jacket walked in, followed by a young man in his twenties. The pair exuded a formidable presence, like two walking furnaces, making the entire hall feel scorching hot. Even Fang Cheng, standing several steps away, broke out into a heavy sweat.

The Fang Family's guards stared in awe at the two men, their faces filled with shock.

What a terrifying aura! They're definitely masters!

Fang Cheng hurriedly rose and clasped his fists. "Mr. Xiao, and this is..."

The middle-aged man smiled. "This is my junior brother. Although he joined our sect later than I did, his strength isn't much weaker than mine. He just came along for some fun this time."

"Then we shall be counting on you both," Fang Cheng said, overjoyed.

I can't believe Mr. Xiao brought a reinforcement. This time, Lin Mu is a dead man walking!

"Don't worry, Boss Fang," Mr. Xiao chuckled. "Getting paid to make problems disappear has always been our principle."

The young man, his expression arrogant, said nothing. His gaze, however, lingered on Fang Fei with a particular meaning. Fang Fei, in turn, pursed her lips in a smile, a faint blush gracing her cheeks.

The young man licked his lips and took the initiative. "My name is Fan Shuai."

"Fang Fei."

With a slight smile, he stepped forward. As his foot landed, a deep print appeared on the ground. With each subsequent step, another print formed, every single one three inches deep. Everyone who witnessed this gasped in astonishment.

「...」

"Venerable Master, the Fang's Villa is just across the lake."

By an artificial lake, shaded by green trees, the air was filled with the fragrance of blooming lotus flowers. Lin Mu stood at the water's edge with his hands behind his back, squinting as he sized up the villa on the other side. This entire area was considered Fang Family territory, though it was normally semi-open to the public, attracting many visitors. But today, a major event was taking place within the family, so all visitors had been sent away.

Yet, Lin Mu and Cheng Bugui stood there, completely unnoticed.

"The scenery is quite nice," Lin Mu remarked.

Cheng Bugui felt a chill run down his spine.

What does the Venerable Master mean by that? Does he intend to take this place for himself?

"If the Venerable Master likes it..."

Lin Mu cut him off before he could finish. "It's a nice place, but I don't like it."

If he doesn't like it, he'll just destroy it.

Cheng Bugui gave a bitter smile and said hesitantly, "Venerable Master, are you really going to... annihilate the Fang Family? What about Jiangling...?"

"At this point, even if I were to spare the Fang Family, would they spare me?" Lin Mu retorted.

Cheng Bugui was rendered speechless. The Venerable Master had crippled Fang Ming and blown up their company. There was no longer any room for reconciliation. This could only end with one side's annihilation.

But the power of the Fang Family is not to be underestimated. The wealthiest family in River City, the Fang Family of Jiangling, the Martial Alliance, the Military Department... antagonizing any one of them would be like poking a hornet's nest. Then again, if someone had crippled my son and bombed my company, I would also be desperate to hack the perpetrator to pieces.

"Have you ever heard a saying?" Lin Mu suddenly asked.

"What is it?"

Lin Mu stood with his hands clasped behind his back, gazing at the distant Fang's Villa. "If I'm shown an inch of respect, I'll return it by the yard. If I'm wronged by a single grain, I'll seize three bushels in return!"

Cheng Bugui shuddered, his expression turning pensive. A moment later, his face hardened with resolve.

Since the Venerable Master has made his decision, there's no point in me saying more. Besides, with his strength, a single Fang Family is nothing to worry about!

"Venerable Master, when do we make our move?" Cheng Bugui asked.

Lin Mu glanced at the sky. "We wait a little longer."

Wait for what? For nightfall, of course. The darkness is perfect for killing.

「...」

「The Capital」

"Commander, should I send a message to River City?" a young man asked. In a certain courtyard, the Commander was lying in a chair, admiring the moon.

"Send what message?" Elder Xiao feigned ignorance.

"Commander, you're no fun," the young man said, scratching his head.

Elder Xiao glared. "Fun? Does anyone even listen to me anymore? I told you to go test that young man ages ago. How long has it been?"

The young man adopted an innocent expression. "Commander, isn't my primary mission to protect you?"

Elder Xiao huffed, his mustache twitching. "Don't give me that. You're just lazy, aren't you?"

The young man just chuckled slyly and didn't respond.

Elder Xiao let out a long sigh. "Still, that kid is a real troublemaker. He's dragged the Fang Family, the Martial Alliance, and the Military Department into this mess."

「...」

Night had fallen. Lights blazed to life at Fang's Villa, illuminating it completely.

The Fang Family guards had already grown impatient.

"Do you think that guy was bluffing? It's so late and he's still not here."

"Shh! Keep your voice down! If the Family Head hears you, you're dead meat!"

「The Main Hall」

Mr. Xiao glanced at the time and said disdainfully, "Boss Fang, it seems your man is all talk. He still hasn't shown up. He's probably already fled."

Anyone would be scared by such a show of force from the Fang Family. He's just the owner of some small company. How could he possibly stand against them?

"You're right, Mr. Xiao," Fang Cheng said with a faint smile that quickly vanished. "But if he dares to run, I'll hunt him to the ends of the earth and tear him limb from limb!"

"Heh, Boss Fang is certainly a man who thinks big," Mr. Xiao chuckled.

Fang Cheng said grimly, "Provoke my Fang Family and think you can just run away? Not a chance!"

"Who said I was running?"

Just then, a calm voice reached everyone's ears.

Everyone looked up in shock. Standing in the doorway was a tall, handsome young man, his features etched with sharp determination.

It was Lin Mu!

"Kid, how did you get in?!" Fang Cheng exclaimed in shock. He had posted numerous guards in secret; not even a fly should have been able to get through, let alone a person. And yet, this young man seemed to have appeared out of thin air.

Lin Mu smiled faintly. "I walked in, of course. Step by step."

The Fang Family guards exchanged confused glances, completely baffled as to when Lin Mu had entered. For a moment, none of them dared to make a move.

「Across the artificial lake」

Cheng Bugui stared, utterly shaken, at the fading ripples on the lake's surface. A moment ago, the Venerable Master had merely said, "It's about time." Then, with his hands clasped behind his back, he had stepped onto the water. Instead of sinking, he stood upon the surface. The water beneath his feet bloomed into ethereal lotuses, supporting him and carrying him to the opposite shore.

With every step, a lotus bloomed, as he walked across the lake!

The Venerable Master truly is a Heavenly God descended to the mortal world!

「The Fang Estate」

Lin Mu stood with his hands clasped behind his back, his indifferent gaze fixed on Fang Cheng. "Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Lin Mu, and I am here to exterminate the Fang Family."

Chapter 282: How Can You Be So Strong!

"So, it was you!"

At these words, Fang Cheng flew into a rage and bellowed, "Men! Get in here and chop him to pieces!"

The guards at the doorway immediately charged in, brandishing their weapons as they rushed toward Lin Mu.

"Just a bunch of trash."

Lin Mu smiled slightly, then lightly stamped his foot on the ground.

CRACK!

A terrifying power emanated from Lin Mu, and the ground where his foot landed split open. At the same time, the charging guards slammed into what felt like an invisible wall of qi and were sent flying backward.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

The guards cried out as they crashed to the floor, writhing in agony.

Lin Mu took a step forward and kicked a guard square in the chest. The guard spat out a mouthful of fresh blood and skidded across the ground, dying tragically.

With a single move, he had killed a man.

The expressions of the remaining guards changed, a hint of fear creeping into their eyes.

"What are you standing around for? Get him!" Fang Cheng roared. The dazed guards gritted their teeth and charged at Lin Mu again.

"You think this garbage can stop me from annihilating the Fang Family? A futile effort," Lin Mu said, shaking his head as a sharp glint flashed in his eyes.

SWOOSH!

Lin Mu vanished, darting through the crowd.

He threw a punch.

He delivered a palm strike.

He launched a kick.

Any guard who dared to block his path was slaughtered and fell dead to the floor. In the blink of an eye, more than a dozen corpses littered the hall. Blood pooled on the ground, creating a frightening scene.

This time, it wasn't just the guards; even Fang Cheng looked at Lin Mu with dread.

This man's killing intent is terrifying! His attacks are merciless and brutally efficient!

What shocked him most was Lin Mu's demeanor as he killed. He was as indifferent as if he were crushing ants, completely unmoved. He had a total disregard for life.

"Audacious wretch, cease your rampage!" a thunderous shout rang out. A figure slowly stepped forward, blocking Lin Mu's path.

It was Mr. Xiao.

Fang Cheng was overjoyed. He pointed at Lin Mu and yelled, "Mr. Xiao, kill him!"

With his hands behind his back, Mr. Xiao looked at Lin Mu with disdain. "Who would have thought a mere corporate lackey could be a Martial Artist? No wonder he dares to threaten the extermination of the Fang Family."

Although many had died at Lin Mu's hands, Mr. Xiao didn't believe he was all that strong. Any Martial Artist could have done the same. In his eyes, Lin Mu was at the very bottom rung of the ladder.

"You're so young, yet your heart is so heavy with killing intent. It seems your elders taught you the Martial Way but failed to teach you martial morality!" Mr. Xiao said with a cold expression. "Since that's the case, I shall act in their stead today and teach you how to conduct yourself!"

Lin Mu's eyes narrowed. "You'll teach me? Are you even worthy?"

Mr. Xiao's expression shifted, and a glint of murder appeared in his eyes. "Big talk for someone with so little skill!"

He had now resolved to kill Lin Mu.

"Mr. Xiao, kill him now!" Fang Cheng glared at Lin Mu with pure hatred, grinding his teeth. "I want him torn to pieces to avenge my son!"

"Hahaha, rest assured, Mr. Fang," Mr. Xiao laughed heartily. "Even if you hadn't asked, I would kill this blight on the Martial Arts World myself!"

As he spoke, Mr. Xiao walked toward Lin Mu, his aura swelling with each step. His blood energy surged like a fierce inferno.

"Boy, if you cripple your own meridians, kneel to Mr. Fang, confess your crimes, and beg for forgiveness, I might be in a good enough mood to leave you an intact corpse," Mr. Xiao said with a cold smirk, as if this were the greatest mercy he could offer.

Fang Cheng's eyes lit up, and he quickly added, "Lin Mu, get on your knees and apologize right now! Cripple your own limbs and admit you destroyed the Wanta Group, and I can guarantee your family

won't be harmed! Otherwise, not only will you die today, but your family and friends will pay a terrible price for your crimes!"

"Heh." Lin Mu's eyes narrowed into slits as he spoke with chilling indifference. "I don't respond to threats. I'm not afraid of them."

"If someone dares to threaten me, I simply kill them."

As his words fell, Lin Mu took a step forward.

CRACK! CRACK! CRACK!

As his foot landed, fissures spread across the floor and throughout the entire hall.

"Since you've chosen the hard way, then die!" Mr. Xiao bellowed, thrusting his hands forward. A violent wave of heat howled toward Lin Mu. "Fire Cloud Palm!"

The blast of air was hot enough to desiccate a man.

"What a trivial trick."

Lin Mu simply raised his hand and extended it forward.

Seeing this, Mr. Xiao was secretly overjoyed.

What a rookie. He thinks he can do whatever he wants just because he has a little power. My Fire Cloud Palm, cultivated to mastery, might not be able to boil an ocean, but it can easily roast a man into a dried corpse.

"It's over," Fan Shuai, who was chatting with Fang Fei, said, shaking his head slightly. He could already picture Lin Mu's desiccated body.

But what happened next caught everyone completely by surprise.

The scorching wave rushed toward him, but Lin Mu acted as if he didn't even see it, slowly extending his hand.

Then, he gave it a light wave.

WHOOSH!

Like a sudden gust of wind, the heatwave—powerful enough to kill an External Strength Peak martial artist—was simply blown away, dissipating into nothing.

Mr. Xiao froze.

The others were even more shocked.

Lin Mu had blocked Mr. Xiao's attack? And with just a casual wave of his hand? What kind of phantom technique was this?

The smile on Fan Shuai's face stiffened for a moment before he quickly shook his head. "That kid is in for a world of hurt now."

Fang Fei nodded eagerly. "Mr. Xiao is an Inner Strength Martial Artist with unfathomable power! He's also a disciple of the Fire Cloud Sect. That Lin Mu is no match for him."

"So, you do have a few tricks!" The flash of embarrassment on Mr. Xiao's face was instantly replaced by bone-chilling murderous intent. "But this is as far as you go!"

With a low shout, an aura even more powerful than before erupted from his body, pressing down on Lin Mu with immense ferocity. He was trying to intimidate Lin Mu with the sheer pressure of an Inner Strength Martial Artist.

"Die!"

At the same time, Mr. Xiao's figure blurred as he threw a punch at Lin Mu's head. The fist was charged with terrifying, searing power; if it connected, Lin Mu would undoubtedly die on the spot.

"Slaying Gods and Demons and Punishing Immortals—Deicide Fist!"

Just as Mr. Xiao's fist was about to land, Lin Mu's own punch shot out like lightning to meet it.

When Mr. Xiao saw Lin Mu intended to meet his fist head-on, he froze for an instant, then his face lit up with ecstasy.

This punch of mine contains eighty percent of my strength. It's more than enough to pulverize his arm!

Fan Shuai had the exact same thought.

The two fists collided with a thunderous impact.

CRACK!

The sound of shattering bone echoed, followed by a wretched scream. Mr. Xiao was sent flying backward as if struck by a train.

THUMP!

PFFT!

He slammed into the wall, slid to the floor, and spat out a mouthful of blood, staring at Lin Mu in utter horror.

"How... How can you be so strong?!"

Chapter 283: Slap to Death!

The hall fell into a dead silence. Everyone watched Mr. Xiao lying on the ground, their minds reeling.

How could someone as strong as Mr. Xiao be so severely injured by a single punch from Lin Mu? One of his arms appeared to have been completely destroyed, with shards of bone piercing through his shoulder.

Lin Mu approached Mr. Xiao step by step, his expression impassive, his gaze indifferent. It was as if he were looking at a corpse.

"You... what are you going to do?" An inexplicable fear began to creep into Mr. Xiao. He could sense the killing intent rolling off Lin Mu.

"What am I going to do?" Lin Mu stood over him, looking down with a grin. "Didn't you say you were going to teach me a lesson? What now?"

Mr. Xiao's face flushed with shame, feeling utterly humiliated.

"Kid, what are you so proud of? Do you think you can do whatever you want just because you defeated me?" Enduring the excruciating pain in his arm, Mr. Xiao glared at Lin Mu. "Let me tell you, you are a dead man today!"

Lin Mu slowly shook his head. "I don't know if I'm going to die, but I know you are."

"You dare kill me?" Mr. Xiao's eyes widened as if he had heard something inconceivable, and he laughed with fury. "Kid, let me spell it out for you: you don't have the guts to kill me!"

"Sigh. People like you..." Lin Mu shook his head with a sigh. "You always think you're superior to everyone else, that you can look down on the world. You believe your distinguished status means no one would dare to touch you."

"But have you ever considered that there is always someone stronger? That there are heavens beyond the one you see? What do you truly amount to?"

Mr. Xiao scoffed. "What's the use of saying all that? I am a member of the Fire Cloud Sect. If you dare to kill me..."

SPLAT!

Before he could finish, a foot kicked him squarely in the head, causing it to explode. Blood and brain matter splattered across the floor.

Many people recoiled in shock. Fang Fei let out a terrified scream, her face turning pale.

"I forgot to tell you, there's no one I don't dare to kill," Lin Mu said without a single glance at Mr. Xiao's corpse. He turned his gaze to Fang Cheng and smiled. "And another thing—I really can do as I please."

Feeling Lin Mu's stare, Fang Cheng shuddered involuntarily.

"You... you killed Mr. Xiao?!" Even now, Fang Cheng couldn't believe Mr. Xiao was dead. "He was from the Fire Cloud Sect! You've killed him! There's no way you'll survive this!" Fang Cheng pointed at Lin Mu, his eyes burning with venomous hatred.

"What? You want to avenge him?" Lin Mu gave a cold smile. "You can't even save yourself right now, yet you're worried about others?"

Fang Cheng's expression changed. Indeed. Now that Lin Mu had killed Mr. Xiao, who was left to stop him? At this thought, his expression darkened further.

"Dad, what do we do now?" Fang Fei's face was a mask of anxiety. The person she was waiting for had yet to arrive, and if he didn't come soon, no one could stop Lin Mu.

"Miss Fang, don't worry. Leave this man to me!" Fan Shuai, who had been sitting nearby, grasped Fang Fei's hand. "This man killed my martial brother, making a mortal enemy of our Fire Cloud Sect. He will surely die!"

When Fan Shuai grabbed her hand, Fang Fei only struggled for a moment before her face filled with despair. "But... no one can stop him right now. What if he really kills us?"

Fan Shuai suddenly smiled. "Don't worry, he wouldn't dare."

He then retrieved a wooden token from his robes, on which was carved the image of a fiery cloud.

"Because I am the Young Sect Master of the Fire Cloud Sect!"

At these words, not just Fang Fei, but even Fang Cheng was stunned. The Young Sect Master of the Fire Cloud Sect? This was an incredibly esteemed status.

It was said that many years ago, the Sect Leader of the Fire Cloud Sect became a Martial Arts Grandmaster. He ranked thirty-seventh on the Heavenly List, his strength unfathomably profound. Most critically, his mastery of the Fire Cloud Palm Technique was said to be divine, capable of melting steel with a single strike! His only son was naturally held in the highest regard, whom no one would dare to touch.

At this realization, Fang Fei began to cry with joy. Feigning coyness, she clung to Fan Shuai's arm and shook it. "Young Sect Master, you must save our Fang Family! If you kill this man, I... I'll agree to anything you ask."

As she spoke the last words, Fang Fei shyly lowered her head, her pretty face blushing. The implication was obvious. This woman certainly knew how to use her assets.

Looking at the delicate, charming face before him, Fan Shuai felt a surge of excitement and blurted out, "Miss Fang, rest assured, this man will die today!"

Letting go of Fang Fei's hand, Fan Shuai walked straight toward Lin Mu.

"Kid, now that you know who I am, aren't you going to kneel and accept your death?" In his mind, Lin Mu would surely fall to his knees and beg for mercy. After all, he was the Young Sect Master of the Fire Cloud Sect, an ancient martial sect with a long history and countless experts. His father was a Martial Arts Grandmaster on the Heavenly List.

"If you want to play the hero and save the damsel, you should first know your own limits," Lin Mu shook his head indifferently, walking slowly toward Fan Shuai. "Otherwise, you'll only end up harming yourself."

"Is that so?" Fan Shuai sneered. "I am determined to save the Fang Family. If you dare to make a move, then be prepared to face the wrath of my Fire Cloud Sect!"

"Why are there always so many self-righteous idiots in this world?" Lin Mu shook his head, looking every bit the villain.

"You dare call me an idiot? You're courting death!" Enraged by the insult, Fan Shuai raised his hand and swung his palm toward Lin Mu's face. "Kneel for me!"

He had no doubt that Lin Mu wouldn't dare to fight back. His status spoke for itself.

However, to his and everyone else's astonishment, Lin Mu made a move. Before the stunned eyes of Fang Cheng and the others, he also raised his palm and slapped back at Fan Shuai. Before Fan Shuai's hand could even reach him, he felt a large hand descend with the speed of lightning.

"No!"

WHACK!

A head soared into the air, landing with a THUD right in front of Fang Fei.

The dignified Young Sect Master of the Fire Cloud Sect was killed with a single slap? His head sent flying from his shoulders?

This...

Fang Fei let out a bloodcurdling scream and staggered backward, her face a deathly white. Fang Cheng fared no better, his head buzzing as if it were about to explode. This Lin Mu was too ruthless!

"I can't believe your Fang Family would hire such an idiot. Aren't you afraid of the embarrassment?" Lin Mu said coolly as he walked toward Fang Cheng. "Now, we can properly settle the score between us."

Staring at that unnervingly calm face, Fang Cheng couldn't help but swallow nervously.

"You, Lin! You're the one who crippled my son and destroyed my Wanta Group! And now you have the nerve to talk about settling accounts? This is outrageous!" Fang Cheng gritted his teeth. "I admit you're strong, but if you truly try to destroy my Fang Family, I guarantee you'll regret it for the rest of your life!"

Lin Mu shook his head.

"You know better than anyone what your son is like. I could have let his bullying and strong-arming slide, but he dared to bring people to injure my brother and smash up my company. Everything before this was just a little interest."

Lin Mu's voice turned cold. "Destroying your Fang Family is simply a reminder to the world: no one touches my brothers!"

Chapter 284: I Killed the Person, What Can You Do About It!

"What?" Fang Cheng's mouth fell open.

Just for that?

"Just for one of your brothers, you broke my brother's limbs, blew up my Fang Family's company, and now you want to annihilate my family?" Fang Fei pointed at Lin Mu furiously. "Who does your brother think he is? What right does he have to be compared to mine? So what if he got beaten? You actually..."

SLAP!

Before Fang Fei could finish, Lin Mu appeared before her and struck her across the face.

"Ahhh!" Fang Fei let out a painful scream, half of her face swelling and contorting from the blow. "You dare hit me?"

She clutched her cheek, blood trickling from the corner of her mouth. She stared at Lin Mu with wide eyes and shrieked, "You actually hit me! I'll kill you!"

With that, she flicked her sleeve, and a thin shadow shot out, lunging toward Lin Mu.

It was a small red snake, no thicker than a chopstick, with a flat head that screamed of deadly poison. The snake was incredibly fast, reaching Lin Mu in the blink of an eye and snapping at his face.

A sadistic grin spread across Fang Fei's face, as if she could already see Lin Mu dying from the poison. This red snake was a gift from her master, who had also taught her to feed it unique toxins. It might not look large, but a single bite could render even an Inner Strength Martial Artist completely helpless and at the mercy of others. Fang Fei had made a name for herself in River City so quickly precisely because of this snake. Anyone who provoked her was bitten and killed.

However, just as the snake was about to strike, Lin Mu shook his head disdainfully and snatched it out of the air, pinching it securely. The red snake writhed in agony, its sharp, fine fangs a terrifying sight.

Lin Mu snorted coldly and squeezed.

SQUISH!

The small snake was crushed in his grasp and then tossed casually to the ground.

"Such low-level tricks are useless against me."

Lin Mu looked at Fang Fei indifferently. This woman has the heart of a viper; she's utterly malicious.

"You killed my snake?" Seeing the snake's corpse, Fang Fei charged madly at Lin Mu. "Bastard, I'm going to kill you!"

"Fei'er, no!" Fang Cheng's expression changed drastically. He started to shout a warning, but it was too late.

Lin Mu seized Fang Fei by the neck. With a slight squeeze, her breathing became labored and her face flushed crimson.

"A single hair on my brother's head is more precious than your entire being. Who does your Fang Family think they are to be compared to him?" Lin Mu's eyes gleamed with murderous intent, and he had no intention of letting Fang Fei go. "You've done wrong, yet you feel no remorse and even act entitled. So if I decide to exterminate your Fang Family, what can you possibly do about it?"

With that, he prepared to strike.

"Wait!" Fang Cheng cried out. "Lin Mu, don't hurt my daughter!"

Lin Mu looked at him coldly.

Fang Cheng took a deep breath. "You've already crippled my son and bombed the Wanta Group. Now, you've killed Mr. Xiao and the Young Sect Master of the Fire Cloud Sect. Are you truly prepared to commit the heinous crime of annihilating my entire Fang Family? No matter how powerful you are, you can't cover up the annihilation of an entire family! Putting aside that we are a branch of the Jiangling Prominent Fang Family, the Sect Leader of the Fire Cloud Sect alone will not let you go!"

"What are you getting at?" A mocking smile appeared on Lin Mu's face.

Fang Cheng said hurriedly, "If you spare the Fang Family, I can let everything that has happened be bygones. My family will even help you cover up the fact that you killed the Young Sect Master of the Fire Cloud Sect!"

This was Fang Cheng's bargaining chip. He intended to use this leverage to force Lin Mu to leave.

"So? I assume you don't want to offend a Heavenly Ranking Grandmaster, do you? And I don't mind telling you, the Fire Cloud Sect is a first-rate power in Jiangling, and they have an excellent relationship with us. Not only that, but the connections my family has with the Martial Alliance and the Military Department are beyond anything you could imagine!"

Fang Cheng was confident Lin Mu would be intimidated. No one dared to provoke a family with so many connections. Lin Mu would be no exception.

After all, he's just some minor Martial Artist!

"Who said I was afraid of them?" Lin Mu's eyes filled with a frosty killing intent. "If they dare to come, I'll make sure none of them leave alive. And if the Jiangling Fang Family truly makes a move, then don't blame me for taking my sword to Jiangling and annihilating them too!"

At these words, the color drained from Fang Cheng's face. He truly never imagined that Lin Mu would show such blatant disregard for the Jiangling Fang Family.

"Such arrogance!"

Just then, a cold voice drifted in from outside. "I'd like to see just how you plan to annihilate the Fang Family, let alone the one in Jiangling!"

The sound of crisp footsteps followed as a woman in a leopard-print coat entered. She paid no mind to the corpses littering the hall, walking straight toward Lin Mu, her long, narrow eyes sizing him up. "Let her go."

The woman had a powerful presence and showed no fear of Lin Mu. Behind her followed four burly men in sharp attire. They exuded a formidable aura, their gazes locked firmly on Lin Mu.

This woman was none other than Fang Cheng's sister and the wife of River City's richest man, Fang Ting.

A look of joyous relief washed over Fang Cheng's face when he saw her. "Tingting, please, save Fei'er!"

Fang Cheng recognized the four men behind his sister. They were Qiao Tianhao's personal bodyguards, rumored to be incredibly powerful—each one a master of the Martial Way, one in a million.

"Don't worry, brother. As long as I'm here, no one will lay a finger on you." Fang Ting was over forty but impeccably maintained. As the wife of the city's wealthiest man, she was no stranger to high-stakes situations.

"Fang Ming assaulted your employee and wrecked your company, but you've crippled him and blown up the Wanta Group in return. That makes you even." Fang Ting looked at Lin Mu coldly. "And now you've stormed the Fang estate, gone on a killing spree, and threatened to destroy our family. Tell me, who gave you the audacity to do so?"

Lin Mu raised an eyebrow. This woman is no simple character.

However, Lin Mu was not the least bit afraid. His confidence stemmed from his own strength.

"I don't need anyone to give me audacity," Lin Mu said, looking at her. "Since a wrong was committed, a price must be paid."

"Fang Ming and the Fang Family have already paid their price." Fang Ting lifted her chin, looking at Lin Mu arrogantly. "I believe it's enough."

"But I don't," Lin Mu sneered. "If you try to stop me, don't blame me for killing you too!"

"You..." Fang Ting's expression soured. She hadn't expected Lin Mu to be so stubborn.

"If you kill Fang Fei, I will make sure you die a gruesome death!" Fang Ting swore through clenched teeth, "I guarantee it!"

"Is that so?"

Lin Mu smiled faintly, and the hand holding Fang Fei's neck tightened.

CRACK!

The sickening sound of a neck snapping echoed through the hall. Fang Fei's eyes bulged in terror as she stared at Lin Mu in utter disbelief. She never imagined he would actually dare to kill her, and right in front of her aunt, no less.

He casually tossed Fang Fei's corpse to the floor, then met Fang Ting's gaze with cold indifference. "I've killed her. Now what are you going to do?"

Chapter 285: You are Lin Wudi?!

Lin Mu had actually killed Fang Fei! Ruthless and merciless, a true destroyer of beauty!

Fang Cheng and Fang Ting's eyes widened as they stared at Fang Fei's corpse.

"So I've killed her. What can you do about it?" That unspoken taunt almost drove Fang Ting mad with rage.

"Fei!" Fang Cheng let out a heart-wrenching scream, cradling his daughter's body as tears streamed down his face. His wife had died young, leaving him with only a son and a daughter. His son had been crippled, and now, his daughter had been murdered right before his very eyes.

"Lin Mu, I want you dead! I will kill you!" Fang Cheng glared at Lin Mu, his eyes burning with venomous hatred.

"Kill him!" Fang Ting roared, also furious. She pointed at Lin Mu and gave the command, and the four hulking men behind her stepped forward in unison.

BOOM! A terrifying aura erupted from the four men, faintly locking onto Lin Mu.

"Lin Mu, you killed Fei! I will make sure you suffer a fate worse than death!" Fang Ting's face was a mask of icy, murderous intent. She had always treated Fang Fei and Fang Ming as her own children, so one could only imagine the immensity of her hatred now that Fang Fei had been killed right before her eyes.

"I will find your family, your friends, and everyone close to you! I'll make them beg for death but never grant it!" Fang Ting spat venomously. "Kill him! Kill him now!"

She had great confidence in these four men, because they were the infamous Jiangbei Four Fiends. Each one possessed the strength of an Inner Strength Martial Artist, and when they worked together, they could even hold their own against a Grandmaster-level expert. Although they couldn't defeat a Martial Arts Grandmaster, the ability to stall one for even a moment was a remarkable feat in itself.

The Jiangbei Four Fiends had once committed a heinous crime and, with nowhere else to turn, fled to River City where they were taken in by Qiao Tianhao. Though cruel, ruthless, and perverse in their methods, they were fiercely loyal, earning Qiao Tianhao's deep trust. He had sent them this time specifically to help the Fang Family.

"Kid, a quick death is a much happier fate than being tortured to death by the four of us brothers," one of the Fiends cackled. "Otherwise, you'll truly learn the meaning of despair."

"Too much nonsense." Lin Mu slowly shook his head, and as the words left his mouth, he lashed out, his hand reaching for one of the men.

The man was stunned for a second before bursting into laughter. "This kid's lost his mind. What a pity he's asking to die." Instead of retreating, he advanced, smashing a fist directly toward Lin Mu's reaching hand. A single punch like that was powerful enough to cripple a Martial Artist of the same level!

Unfortunately for him, he was facing Lin Mu.

"Demonslaying Claw!" A sharp glint flashed in Lin Mu's eyes. His hand, shaped like a claw, seized the man's wrist from an impossible angle and viciously tore at it.

RIP! With sheer force, he tore the man's arm clean off!

The other three Fiends cried out, their eyes brimming with horror.

Lin Mu didn't stop there. He raised his foot and slammed a kick squarely into the man's chest. The man flew backward, a spray of blood and shredded viscera erupting from his mouth.

THUD! By the time his body hit the ground, he was no longer breathing.

One grab, one kick, and one of them was dead. The remaining three Fiends stared at Lin Mu, their faces paling in utter terror.

"Kid, who the hell are you?" one of them demanded. Their companion had been an Inner Strength Martial Artist, a relatively strong one at that. And yet, before Lin Mu, he was defeated so easily.

"The one who will kill you," Lin Mu answered. As his voice faded, he stomped the ground and instantly, almost supernaturally, appeared before the three Fiends. Heavenly Emperor Nine Steps!

"Attack together!" The remaining three exchanged a look, nodded, and charged at Lin Mu in unison. Their combined strength was formidable, and they had no fear of him.

"Nothing but a disorganized mob." Lin Mu shook his head, his body blurring as he slammed his shoulder directly into one of the men's chests.

The man sneered. He didn't dodge, intending to hold Lin Mu back for a moment to create an opening for his companions. However, the moment Lin Mu's shoulder collided with him, he knew he'd made a fatal mistake. It felt as if he'd been hit by a freight train as a piercing, agonizing pain overwhelmed him. He was sent flying backward, his chest completely caved in from the impact.

GASP! The last two men sucked in a sharp breath. They exchanged a glance, and each saw the raw fear mirrored in the other's eyes.

Run! The thought was simultaneous. They didn't need to exchange a single word. Seeing how dire the situation had become, they immediately turned to flee.

As for the life or death of their employer, Fang Ting, they couldn't give a damn. They were, at their core, vicious bandits who had only thrown in their lot with Qiao Tianhao to save their own skins. The rewards were great—endless money and women—but when weighed against their own lives, there was no contest.

"Trying to escape?" Lin Mu scoffed. He extended his hand, and a steel saber from the floor flew into his grasp. He gripped both ends of the blade.

SNAP! The steel saber broke in two, and he held a piece in each hand.

With a slight flick of his wrists, the two halves of the blade shot out, whistling through the air propelled by terrifying spiritual power. The two men, who had almost reached the main doors, felt their expressions contort in horror. They tried to dodge, but the shards were as fast as lightning. The shards pierced through each man's back, exiting through their chests. They continued flying out of the hall and finally embedded themselves deep into the compound wall several meters away.

"A Martial Arts... Grandmaster..." Clutching their fatal wounds, the two men exchanged a final look, their eyes filled with regret. Then, they collapsed to the ground, lifeless.

Lin Mu dusted off his hands and turned to the stunned Fang Ting. "Now," he asked calmly, "what will you use to kill me?"

From the moment the Jiangbei Four Fiends had attacked to the moment Lin Mu finished killing them all, only an instant had passed. It happened so fast that Fang Ting still hadn't processed it.

Only when Lin Mu spoke did she finally react, stumbling back a few steps before collapsing onto the floor. She could only stare at him, her face a canvas of pure terror.

In her eyes, Lin Mu was a monster! A demon! Those were the Jiangbei Four Fiends, and he killed them all! Without the slightest hesitation! They didn't even have a chance to fight back! How could anyone be this powerful?!

Fang Cheng looked from the bodies on the ground to Lin Mu, and then back again. Finally, as if a horrifying realization dawned on him, his eyes widened in terror.

"You... You're Lin Wudi?!" The more Fang Cheng stared, the more certain he became. He blurted out, "Yes, you have to be! You're Lin Wudi, the Martial Arts Grandmaster ranked sixteenth on the Heavenly List!"

He understood. At last, he understood everything. Why Lin Mu dared to kill the Young Sect Master of the Fire Cloud Sect. Why even the Jiangbei Four Fiends were no match for him. Why he had the audacity to declare he would annihilate the Fang Family. Why he showed no fear, even toward the Jiangling Fang Family Martial Alliance Military Department. It was because he was Lin Wudi. He was a Martial Arts Grandmaster. The man who had single-handedly killed Yun Xu!

At this realization, Fang Cheng's expression went slack, and in an instant, he seemed to have aged a dozen years.

"I was wrong. I was so wrong." Fang Cheng began to laugh like a man who'd lost his mind, a bitter, broken sound. "A Grandmaster cannot be insulted... It was our Fang Family that was wrong."

Fang Ting was also stunned into silence. Lin Mu... is the mysterious Lin Wudi of River City! No wonder... As the truth sank in, her heart filled with utter despair.

Just then, a hoarse, strange voice called out from outside. "So you're Lin Wudi. I've been looking for you for a very long time!"

Chapter 286: Killing You, Only Takes One Hand!

"Are you Lin Wudi? I've had such a hard time finding you!"

As the voice faded, a figure stepped into the hall, and a foul, cold stench filled the room. The man carried a frigid, fetid odor that was incredibly pungent. His hair hung to his shoulders, matted together and greasy, making his age impossible to discern.

Most peculiar of all were the many pouches hanging from his body. Each one swayed as if it held something alive, and the offensive odor emanated from them. As he entered the hall, his eyes immediately fixed on Lin Mu with a strange look in them.

This person is powerful! That was Lin Mu's first thought. At least, much stronger than Yun Xu.

"Indeed," Lin Mu replied, looking at the man without fear, his expression calm.

"Very good." The man nodded, glancing casually at Fang Fei's body on the ground. He sighed with a complex expression, "For my disciple to die at the hands of Lin Wudi... I suppose it's a blessing in a way."

As the man finished speaking, Fang Cheng trembled and stammered, "You... you are..."

The man chuckled dryly. "It seems you've guessed who I am."

Fang Cheng was immediately overcome with joy. He began kowtowing repeatedly to the man, "Master Ouyang, this man killed my daughter! I beg you to avenge her! The Fang Family will forever remember your great kindness!"

In the world today, there was only one person known as Master Ouyang: the eighteenth master on the Heavenly List, Xiao Ouyang, Ouyang Ming! His Martial Way cultivation was incredibly high, having reached the rank of Martial Arts Grandmaster years ago. He was even hailed as one of the Four Great Grandmasters, the Western Poison.

I can't believe he's actually in River City! If word of this gets out, the entire Martial Arts World will be shaken.

"So it's Master Ouyang!" Fang Ting's face also lit up with elation. "Master Ouyang, this man is extremely vicious and has killed countless people. Please, make your move and kill him!"

Fang Ting bowed respectfully. "The Fang Family and the Qiao Family will never forget your kindness!"

Ouyang Ming nodded. "Rest assured. Since this man killed my disciple, I will naturally seek vengeance." He turned to Lin Mu, a peculiar smile on his face. "Lin Wudi? Sixteenth on the Heavenly List? Heh, I didn't realize the Martial Arts World was so teeming with talent these days. It seems each new generation surpasses the last!"

Ouyang Ming licked his lips, a strange light in his eyes. "Kid, you killed my disciple. You deserve to die." His tone then shifted. "Of course, I don't want people saying I bullied the young. Considering your age, I'll grant you the first three moves."

"Master Ouyang..." Fang Cheng grew anxious. He didn't want Ouyang Ming to give Lin Mu any advantage. Taking immediate action to kill Lin Mu was the safest option.

"What? Do you have an objection?" Ouyang Ming glanced indifferently at Fang Cheng, who shrank back, suddenly remembering that the man before him was a Martial Arts Grandmaster of long-standing fame.

At that thought, Fang Cheng said respectfully, "I wouldn't dare."

Ouyang Ming looked at Lin Mu with some impatience. "Hurry up, kid. I'm in a rush!"

In his eyes, Lin Mu was already a dead man. Invincible? Sixteenth on the Heavenly List? Such titles were meaningless. He could kill Lin Mu with a mere wave of his hand.

"Heh." Lin Mu suddenly laughed.

"Let me have three moves?" He shook his head slowly. "Let's not."

Ouyang Ming's brow furrowed. "What? Are you scared?" In his mind, Lin Mu had to be terrified. As for killing Yun Xu, it was either a fluke, or Yun Xu was simply weaker than imagined.

"If you want to admit defeat, that's fine too," Ouyang Ming said, his hands clasped behind his back, his tone dripping with mockery. "Just kneel on the ground now. Acknowledge that you're nothing but a fame-seeking impostor. Announce to the world that you don't have the strength of a Grandmaster, that you're Lin the Rat, not Lin Wudi, the Invincible. If I'm in a good mood, I might even let you live a few more days."

Of course, he had no intention of letting Lin Mu go. He would humiliate him first, make him kneel and beg for mercy, force him to admit he was nothing but a coward. Then, Ouyang Ming would test all the poisons he had developed over the years on Lin Mu, making him experience a fate worse than death.

"You've misunderstood me," Lin Mu said, shaking his head. "What I mean is, the moment I make a move, you'll be dead. So, three moves won't be necessary!"

At these words, not only did Fang Cheng's face drain of color, but even Ouyang Ming was stunned for a moment.

"How dare you!" Fang Cheng pointed at Lin Mu and rebuked him. "So what if you're really sixteenth on the Heavenly List? Everyone knows your relationship with the Martial Alliance is poor! They only ranked you that high to provoke the other Grandmasters. Do you really think you possess that kind of strength?"

Fang Cheng was right. The Martial Alliance's ranking was a clear attempt to set Lin Mu up for a fall. And sure enough, Ouyang Ming was the first to take the bait. That's why he had come.

"Heh, whether I have the strength or not doesn't require anyone's acknowledgment," Lin Mu stated coolly, "and it certainly doesn't require yours. In my eyes, no one here can stand against me!"

With a grab of his hand, spiritual energy roared out. Fang Cheng cried out in surprise as he was lifted into the air.

"Master Ouyang, save me!" Suspended in mid-air, Fang Cheng's face contorted in terror as he pleaded with Ouyang Ming.

"Lin Mu, release my brother at once, or you'll die an even more horrible death!" With Ouyang Ming present, Fang Ting had no doubt that her brother was safe.

"Is that so?" Lin Mu waved his hand dismissively, and Fang Cheng's body was sent flying toward a wall.

"Master Ouyang, save me..."

Fang Cheng let out a final, shrill scream as his body smashed into the wall.

BOOM!

The wall crumbled, and Fang Cheng's body was torn to pieces. The entire process had taken only a few seconds. Neither Fang Ting nor Ouyang Ming had time to react.

"You..." Fang Ting's expression changed dramatically as she stared at Lin Mu in disbelief. She couldn't fathom that he would actually kill her brother right in front of Ouyang Ming.

Ouyang Ming's face, too, turned exceedingly grim. He didn't care in the slightest about Fang Cheng's death. Even his own disciple, Fang Fei, had just been a plaything he'd grown tired of. But for Lin Mu to dare kill someone right before his eyes, to so blatantly disregard him—that was something Ouyang Ming found unacceptable.

"Good. Very good!" A hint of crimson slowly appeared in Ouyang Ming's eyes, and the smile on his face grew more sinister. "It's been many years since anyone dared to be so arrogant in my presence. You are the first, and you will be the last!"

With that, Ouyang Ming waved his palm, and several wisps of gray mist whistled through the air toward Lin Mu. The mist carried terrifying toxins that even an average Grandmaster wouldn't dare to touch.

"You think you can kill me with this?" Lin Mu scoffed. He strolled forward with his hands behind his back, and all the poisonous mist parted around him, leaving him completely unharmed.

"Ouyang Ming? Eighteenth on the Heavenly List?" Lin Mu suddenly snickered. "To kill you, I only need one hand!"

Chapter 287: Number 18 on the Heaven Ranking List: Western Poison Little Ouyang!

"Kill you with just one hand?"

This was the first time Ouyang Ming had ever heard such arrogant words.

His face turned ghastly. Taking a deep breath, he said, "I'd like to see you try!"

"Then watch closely!" Lin Mu laughed, stomped his foot on the ground, and threw a punch at Ouyang Ming.

Heavenly Emperor Nine Steps—One Step to Shatter Rivers!

BOOM!

The ground shook as a terrifying aura erupted from Lin Mu.

Ouyang Ming's expression shifted. This Lin Wudi's aura is so strong! It's already no weaker than my own.

Thinking this, Ouyang Ming also snorted coldly. "Very well, Lin Wudi. We'll see how you kill me with one hand!"

As he spoke, Ouyang Ming's aura also surged. Countless clouds of black mist, filled with a pungent, unpleasant stench, rose from his body. During his cultivation, Ouyang Ming would consume highly toxic substances. Over time, even his own True Qi had become imbued with deadly poison.

A hissing sound filled the air as Ouyang Ming clenched both fists and punched forward.

At that very moment, Lin Mu's fist arrived.

Slaying Gods and Demons and Punishing Immortals—Deicide Fist!

POP!

The punch landed, seeming to shatter the very air. An ethereal fist, condensed from spiritual power, materialized over Lin Mu's own and smashed straight toward Ouyang Ming.

BOOM!

The instant the fist connected, Ouyang Ming's face contorted, and he retreated continuously.

CRACK! CRACK!

The ground cracked beneath his feet. Ouyang Ming felt the force from Lin Mu's fist growing ever stronger until, at last, he could no longer bear it and was blasted away.

THUD!

With a tremendous noise, Ouyang Ming was sent flying by Lin Mu.

CRACK!

Ouyang Ming slammed into the hall's wall. The force, showing no sign of weakening, carried him straight through it and outside.

"LIN! WU! DI!"

Ouyang Ming's roar echoed from outside, growing more and more distant.

Staring at the ruined hall, Fang Ting was completely stunned. She couldn't believe that the great Master Ouyang, ranked eighteenth on the Heavenly List, had been sent flying by a single punch from Lin Mu. If word of this got out, who would believe it?

Watching Lin Mu, who still held his punching stance, Fang Ting shivered involuntarily.

Slowly retracting his fist, Lin Mu smiled faintly. "Eighteenth on the Heavenly List? Is that all?"

He stamped his foot on the ground again and shot forward.

"Ouyang Ming, since I said I would kill you with one hand, then with one hand it shall be!"

The voice lingered, but Lin Mu had already vanished.

Fang Ting stared after the disappearing figure, her expression dazed.

「...」

"Cough, cough!" Ouyang Ming coughed violently, barely managing to stabilize the roiling True Qi in his body, only to see a figure suddenly descend from the sky.

"Ouyang Ming, show me your true strength. Don't disappoint me."

Lin Mu's voice rang out as he appeared eerily above Ouyang Ming's head, and a furious fist crashed down mercilessly.

"You've gone too far!"

Ouyang Ming nearly spat out a mouthful of blood. But Lin Mu's attacks were as fierce as a torrential downpour, leaving him no room to think.

"Poisonous Fog Overworld!"

Ouyang Ming let out a low shout. His hands flew apart, and an even denser mist surged from his body, swirling upward.

HISS! HISS! HISS!

The moment the poisonous fog appeared, a piercing sound filled the air. The surrounding flowers and trees immediately yellowed, wilted, and died upon contact. In the blink of an eye, every living thing within a radius of several meters of Ouyang Ming had perished. It was clear that if this fog were to land on a person, it would be an absolute disaster.

Truly befitting the name of Western Poison, Xiao Ouyang.

However, just as the toxic mist swept into midair, it was met by the terrifying force of a punch.

WHOOSH!

The fist descended, tearing through the poisonous fog, and continued unstoppably toward Ouyang Ming.

"How is that possible?" Ouyang Ming's expression changed drastically when he saw Lin Mu break through his technique. This Poisonous Fog Overworld was his ultimate technique, one he had spent many years mastering. It had caused immense suffering for countless opponents during his battles with other Grandmasters.

Yet before Lin Wudi, it was utterly useless. He's an absolute freak!

Not daring to hesitate, Ouyang Ming crossed his arms above his head, channeling all the True Qi in his body to meet Lin Mu's punch head-on.

Slaying Gods and Demons and Punishing Immortals—Decide Fist!

Lin Mu's eyes were sharp as his punch slammed directly into Ouyang Ming's arms.

BOOM!

CRACK!

In an instant, a horrifying shockwave radiated outward, peeling up the very surface of the ground. The terrifying force slammed Ouyang Ming into the earth, burying him up to his knees.

"Gah!"

The horrific power was too much for Ouyang Ming to bear. He violently spat out a mouthful of blood.

Lin Mu landed slowly, his gaze icy as he stared at his opponent.

"This is the strength of the eighteenth-ranked master on the Heavenly List?" Lin Mu said indifferently.
"Ouyang Ming, you have truly disappointed me."

To be honest, Lin Mu had initially been excited to encounter someone from the Heavenly List. He had expected a grueling fight, but after clashing, he realized that this was the extent of Ouyang Ming's strength.

"You..."

Ouyang Ming was enraged, but trying to speak only aggravated his injuries. Forcibly swallowing the blood rising in his throat, he took a deep breath. "Lin Wudi, I admit I underestimated you. But the fight has just begun!"

As soon as he finished speaking, Ouyang Ming waved his hand, and countless clouds of poison fog whirled in from all directions, completely enveloping Lin Mu.

"Hahaha! Lin Wudi, did you really think someone could reach the Heavenly List without real skills? How laughable!" Seeing Lin Mu fall into his trap, Ouyang Ming began to laugh maniacally. "My poison fog? Forget about you—even the great Shen Lang would have to tread carefully against it!"

His poisonous fog possessed intensely corrosive properties. Even masters of body-refining arts would be corroded to death upon contact.

"Rumor has it that your techniques are unparalleled, Lin Wudi, that no one can match you in Thunder Law or Sword Dao. But from what I see today, those claims were greatly exaggerated."

Ouyang Ming shook his head, certain that Lin Mu was doomed.

"Is that so?"

Suddenly, Lin Mu's calm voice drifted out from within the toxic mist.

The next moment, a figure slowly walked out. All the poison fog recoiled as if it had encountered something terrifying, scattering away, not daring to even approach him.

What's more, to Ouyang Ming's utter shock, Lin Mu simply raised a hand. All the poison fog, as if drawn by an unseen force, converged into the palm of his hand. In the blink of an eye, Lin Mu had collected every last wisp.

"This..." Ouyang Ming's eyes widened. "How is that possible?"

Lin Mu smiled faintly. "Nothing is impossible. This paltry poison fog is hardly enough to trouble me."

To collect the fog, Lin Mu had, of course, used the Mountain and River Cauldron. The cauldron could contain all things, and the poison fog was no exception.

Ouyang Ming sucked in a sharp breath. A deep sense of dread rose in his heart.

This man is not someone I can defeat by force!

Ouyang Ming was already thinking of retreating.

Chapter 288: The Imprint Technique Falling from the Sky!

"Lin Wudi, I admit you're powerful enough, but if I want to leave, you can't stop me."

Ouyang Ming had already decided to retreat; Lin Mu's strength had far exceeded his expectations.

"Heh," Lin Mu said indifferently. "Want to leave? It's not that easy!"

With a single step forward, the very world seemed to change color.

Ouyang Ming's expression changed once again.

What kind of technique is this? This Lin Wudi truly has an endless array of methods.

Since he had already decided to retreat, Ouyang Ming wasted no more time and threw out all the pouches on his person. They flew out and opened automatically, revealing all sorts of bizarre venomous creatures. They were all the most powerful of the Five Poisons: snakes, insects, rats, and ants.

Not only that, but hissing sounds also echoed from the surrounding woods, as if something was crawling toward them.

"Lin Wudi, if you want to keep me here, you'd better worry about yourself first," Ouyang Ming laughed loudly, his figure rapidly retreating. He knew these creatures alone couldn't stop Lin Mu, but even a moment's delay was better than nothing.

Watching Ouyang Ming flee, Lin Mu smiled faintly.

Ouyang Ming must not be allowed to escape! Although this man isn't overwhelmingly powerful, he is skilled with all kinds of deadly poisons. We're already enemies. If he decides to seek revenge in the future, I might not care, but Qin Luoli and the others would be completely unable to handle him.

With a wave of his hand, the Thunder Dragon appeared. Having absorbed countless thunderbolts deep within Thunder Mountain, its power had grown even stronger. As soon as it manifested, all the venomous creatures prostrated themselves on the ground, trembling, not daring to move an inch.

CRACKLE!

Countless arcs of electricity shot out, striking the creatures with precision and incinerating them to ash. Finally, Lin Mu took a step, landed on the Thunder Dragon's head, and gave chase.

"Ouyang Ming, I told you that you can't escape!"

Ouyang Ming's speed was incredible. When a Grandmaster was determined to flee, it was said that truly no one could stop them. But Lin Mu was no ordinary Grandmaster. Ouyang Ming was fast, but the Thunder Dragon was faster. After just a few surges through the air, Lin Mu appeared directly above Ouyang Ming.

"Damn it!" Ouyang Ming's face grew even uglier as he felt the terrifying might of the thunder from above.

He had previously doubted Lin Wudi's mastery over thunder, but now it was clear his opponent's strength far exceeded his own estimations. This man is too terrifying!

A hint of regret blossomed in Ouyang Ming's heart.

When Fang Fei had originally asked him to take action, Ouyang Ming had thought it a trivial matter and paid it no mind. No matter how powerful someone was, he could kill them with a wave of his hand. His main purpose in coming to River City was to battle Lin Wudi. He never expected that the person the Fang Family had provoked was Lin Wudi himself. He had been observing for a long time, and Lin Wudi's strength hadn't seemed as formidable as the rumors suggested. But once they truly fought, he discovered he was no match for his opponent.

Seeing that Lin Mu had no intention of letting him go, Ouyang Ming roared with fury, "Lin Wudi, you killed my disciple, but she provoked you first! Now that you've killed her, if you continue to press me, don't blame me for taking you down with me!"

"Taking me down with you?" Lin Mu's indifferent voice drifted down from the sky, showing no fear, only contemptuous scorn. "With your meager strength, you are not capable of that."

ROAR!

With a light tap of his toe on the dragon's head, the Thunder Dragon opened its great maw and spewed a thick beam of lightning. The blast swept forth, carrying an irresistible power as it bore down on Ouyang Ming. His expression changed drastically as he mobilized his True Yuan to block it.

BOOM!

Following the massive explosion, countless trees and boulders were pulverized. A huge, deep crater now marred the ground. In its center, Ouyang Ming was half-kneeling, his entire body charred black. His body trembled slightly, his eyes filled with a crazed killing intent.

"LIN! WU! DI!"

"You forced my hand!" Ouyang Ming gritted his teeth, hating Lin Mu so much he wished he could tear him apart.

Lin Mu frowned.

In the middle of the crater, Ouyang Ming's cheeks were puffing out, as if he were brewing something. A strange, eerie aura began to emanate from his body.

CROAK!

Suddenly, a sound that made one's heart clench came from Ouyang Ming's mouth.

CROAK! CROAK!

His abdomen heaved violently; the dull sounds were emanating from deep within him. Wave after wave of invisible sonic force spread out with Ouyang Ming at the center. He dug his feet into the earth and assumed a crouching posture, bracing his hands against the ground. With his head tilted slightly up, he glared fixedly at Lin Mu. Black, web-like patterns emerged on his face, making him look fierce and

terrifying. With his cheeks puffed out, croaking sounds continued to erupt from his abdomen, each one more grating and irritating than the last.

CROAK! CROAK! CROAK!

Ouyang Ming's eyes turned blood-red as a rabid killing intent coalesced within them.

RIIP!

His clothes tore apart as his body began to expand. Seen from the sky, Ouyang Ming now resembled a massive toad preparing to strike.

The Toad Skill! Lin Mu was somewhat surprised. He hadn't expected Ouyang Ming to have cultivated such a self-destructive technique.

The Toad is one of the Five Poisons. To cultivate this technique, one must consume vast quantities of poison and even live among venomous creatures. In the end, even if one succeeds, they are twisted into something neither human nor ghost. However, once mastered, the Toad Skill possesses considerable power. Its croak can stun the soul, leaving an opponent defenseless.

As expected of Western Poison Little Ouyang, Lin Mu thought with a detached smile. Unfortunately, it's useless against me.

Ouyang Ming seemed not to have heard Lin Mu's words. His aura only grew stronger as waves of poisonous mist radiated out from him, turning the surrounding land barren. Its life force destroyed by the toxic mist, the area would become a deadland, incapable of supporting life for years to come.

CROAK!!

A thunderous croak erupted from Ouyang Ming's abdomen. With his feet anchored to the ground, he arched his body slightly. It was a preparatory stance for an attack.

"Ouyang Ming, I wonder if you are familiar with a palm seal that descends from the heavens!" Lin Mu's lips curled into a smirk as he slowly raised one hand. Endless Spiritual Energy converged on him with a roar. The Thunder Dragon ascended, soaring straight into the sky and carrying Lin Mu higher and higher until he was just a small dot against the clouds.

CROAK!

Ouyang Ming kicked off the ground, his body launching into the sky like a cannonball!

A croak that seemed to shake the very heavens and earth rang out, and the ground for a hundred meters around him instantly collapsed.

The people far away in River City were jolted awake, their faces filled with panic. Countless citizens looked up, only to see a dark shadow roaring into the sky. Even from such a distance, they could feel its terrifying power.

Watching the figure shoot into the heavens, Cheng Bugui's face turned deathly pale, his heart seized by fear.

Venerable Master, you must win!

Chapter 289: One Less Grandmaster in the World!

Soaring into the sky!

The fierce wind howled!

In Ouyang Ming's eyes, there was only that single point of light in the heavens.

His killing intent surged! The Toad Skill was his most powerful technique. Ouyang Ming had faced countless enemies in his life, but no one had ever survived this lethal strike.

Except for that one person in the Capital.

However, that person's strength was beyond ordinary comprehension. It had already transcended mortal understanding, breaking free from the constraints of the human race. Losing to him was no disgrace.

But Lin Mu had clearly not reached that level yet. How could he possibly be my match? Whether for fame or for gain, Lin Wudi must die!

As his killing intent swelled, his speed increased. He could now see the figure. Hmm, riding a Thunder Dragon, hovering tens of thousands of feet in the air. This Lin Wudi is quite the figure. A pity he has to die by my hands today!

At this thought, a faint smile appeared on Ouyang Ming's face. By personally slaying such a monstrous talent, my position on the Heavenly List should move up a few ranks.

With that, Ouyang Ming let out a low roar, bursting through the clouds and shooting forth like a cannonball.

ROAR!

The Thunder Dragon bellowed, its enormous body thrashing fiercely in midair. It fixed its gaze on the dark shadow below, its massive eyes filled with icy killing intent.

A majestic cry resounded as the Thunder Dragon suddenly contorted its body and dove downward.

From afar, two disproportionate figures in the sky collided in an instant. Everyone who witnessed this scene stared with wide eyes, forgetting to breathe, to cry out, to feel fear. They only wanted to know who between the two was stronger.

Finally, the two collided!

BOOM!

A colossal boom that echoed for thousands of miles erupted like a peal of heavenly thunder. Many people nearby fell straight to the ground, unconscious. Even those farther away felt as if their organs had been smashed by a heavy hammer, blood trickling from their mouths and noses as their faces turned deathly pale with terror.

In the distant sky, the collision bloomed like a firework, its dazzling light quickly fading to darkness.

"Hahaha!" Ouyang Ming laughed with wild abandon. "Lin Wudi, I thought you were supposed to be strong, but it seems you're nothing special after all!"

A single strike had sent the Thunder Dragon flying, its body flickering weakly with lightning, utterly exhausted.

The outcome is already decided! As for Lin Wudi's so-called ranking on the Heavenly List, it was clearly just thanks to the Thunder Dragon's might. His own strength is not even worth mentioning!

"Is that so?"

However, a cold, emotionless voice suddenly echoed from the heavens. "Aren't you celebrating a bit too early?"

As the voice fell, Ouyang Ming's pupils shrank, and horror flooded his heart. He saw the very air around him seem to freeze. All the Spiritual Energy erupted into a violent frenzy, converging toward a single point.

"I summon a seal to descend from the heavens!"

The voice resounded like an edict from the Heavenly Emperor, like a decree from the Great Way. Across the world, thunder rolled!

"Slaying Gods and Demons and Punishing Immortals Twelve Styles—Demonslaying Seal!"

Ouyang Ming's heart felt as if it were being crushed, making it hard to breathe. He saw a hand seal of an impossible size materialize and descend from the sky in an instant. The air offered no resistance as the hand seal carried an unstoppable momentum, tearing through the sky and thundering down.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

As the enormous hand seal fell, it grew ever larger, its momentum swelling. In the blink of an eye, it was directly above Ouyang Ming's head. Without the slightest hesitation, it plummeted!

SPURT!

Ouyang Ming had no time to react as the hand seal instantly struck him. A mouthful of blood sprayed out, his heart consumed by terror.

CRACK!

His clothes disintegrated, and even his bones began to emit painful cracking sounds.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

From a distance, Ouyang Ming was seen hurtling downward at a speed even faster than he had ascended.

CRASH!

A deafening impact shook the earth. The mountain crumbled, countless trees toppled, and the shockwave spread far and wide. The nearby Fang's Villa, unable to withstand the force, wobbled precariously before collapsing with a final thunderous roar, turning into a pile of rubble. The surrounding residents let out terrified screams, while those who had been watching the battle were rendered collectively speechless.

"Is that something a human is even capable of?" Cheng Bugui, who had retreated to a safe distance, stared at the collapsed Fang's Villa and the lingering trace of power in the sky. His body trembled violently, certain that the sight he had witnessed tonight would be etched into his memory for the rest of his life. The Martial Artists who arrived later also felt their limbs go weak, struggling to remain standing.

In a massive crater on the ground, Ouyang Ming lay weakly. His body trembled, but he could not get up. In that moment, he felt as if every bone in his body had been shattered. His Dantian was destroyed, his Cultivation Level reduced to nothing. Pain wracked his entire body.

A figure slowly descended, landing before him.

"Western Poison Little Ouyang? Eighteenth on the Heavenly List?" Lin Mu's face was indifferent, his eyes serene. "What a joke."

Hearing these words, Ouyang Ming struggled to lift his head from the crater floor. Gazing at the figure, he revealed a smile that was uglier than a grimace of tears. "I've lost," he said, his voice filled with bitter regret. "I've lost..."

His head lolled to the side, and Ouyang Ming breathed his last. A celebrated Martial Arts Grandmaster, a lofty figure from the Heavenly List, had fallen. From this day forward, only three of the four Grandmasters remained.

Looking at Ouyang Ming's corpse, Lin Mu sighed.

"Though our paths in the Martial Way differed, you were still a master among men. I will grant you a dignified death."

With a wave of his hand, the earth churned and boulders rolled, forming a simple grave mound. A desolate wind howled, sweeping away the fallen leaves. The grave stood on the mountaintop, lonely and forlorn.

Fang Ting crawled from the rubble, dazed. She stared blankly at the wreckage before her, her heart aching. This was the Fang's Villa. Once, it had been one of the most prestigious and luxurious places in River City, but now, it was nothing but a pile of ruins. Buried within were her dear brother, her nephew, and her niece. This meant that the Fang Family of River City was now history.

"Lin Mu!" Fang Ting muttered his name, her eyes burning with venomous hatred.

"If you still wish for revenge, you can come find me anytime," a faint voice said from behind her.

Fang Ting shuddered and turned around silently. A figure was walking slowly into the distance, his voice, as cold as a winter breeze, drifting back to her.

"The only reason I'm not killing you now is so you can deliver a message to Qiao Tianhao. Have Qiao Zishan ready within three days. When the time comes, I will pay him a personal visit."

It's time to avenge the original host. It's time to deal with Qiao Zishan.

Hearing his words, Fang Ting's body shook as if all her strength had been drained away, and she collapsed powerlessly to the ground.

Chapter 290: Worth It in the Human World!

News of a battle between two Grandmasters spread throughout the entire Martial Arts World before dawn.

Shock! It was nothing but pure shock.

Countless people were startled awake. After carefully confirming the news was true, they erupted in a series of astonished exclamations.

"Does anyone know which two Grandmasters were fighting?"

"It's unclear. Some suspect it was River City's Lin Wudi, but no one dared to get close enough to watch, so we don't know who was involved!"

"River City's Lin Wudi? Impossible! Don't you realize how little time has passed since his battle with Yun Xu? Is he trying to overturn the Heavenly Rankings?"

"But that's what the reports say. He originally intended to wipe out the Fang Family, but then a mysterious Grandmaster appeared, and the two of them ended up in a massive battle."

"This is all too strange. It can't possibly be Lin Wudi!"

No one believed Lin Wudi was one of the two Grandmasters because the idea was simply too preposterous. It wasn't that they thought Lin Mu was incapable, but Lin Wudi had just slain Yun Xu on the Bolan River and subsequently accepted a challenge from Dragon Tiger Mountain's Heavenly Master, Zhang Daoyun. Instead of properly entering seclusion to cultivate and increase his strength, he was getting into fights with other Grandmasters? It completely defied common sense.

When later reports emerged, people were once again convinced that the person involved was not Lin Wudi, but another Martial Arts Grandmaster. This was because the one who had annihilated the Fang Family of River City was just the owner of a small company. Rumor had it that this man was quite powerful and was backed by a Grandmaster. Thus, when another Grandmaster appeared, a battle broke out, and the newcomer was slain.

The person who had been killed was none other than Western Poison Xiao Ouyang, one of the four great Grandmasters!

Even if Lin Wudi were strong, how could he possibly be a match for Xiao Ouyang? Putting aside the difference in their strength, the gap between their rankings on the Heavenly Rankings was substantial. Furthermore, Xiao Ouyang was a famed veteran who was most adept at killing.

Lin Wudi just wasn't at that level yet.

To be capable of slaying Western Poison Xiao Ouyang, this person had to be one of the top ten figures on the Heavenly Rankings. Only then would it be possible! Because the top ten were known as Great Grandmasters!

As this speculation spread, the prevailing opinion throughout the Martial Arts World began to shift. People accepted this version as the truth, no longer suspecting Lin Wudi at all. Many even began to theorize that the only reason Lin Wudi could have become a Grandmaster before the age of thirty was due to his connection to this Great Grandmaster who had slain Xiao Ouyang.

Besides this possibility, no one could imagine any other reason why two Grandmasters would be present in the same place, let alone why they would have such a deep connection. Although the top ten Great Grandmasters on the Heavenly Rankings were not well-known to the public, their power was beyond question.

However, as this realization dawned on them, people were left reeling in shock. The Martial Arts World had recently been struck by one major event after another. In such a short period, two Grandmasters had fallen. Now, this latest incident even involved one of the top ten Great Grandmasters.

People began to speculate again. Was the one-year challenge set by Zhang Daoyun actually related to this Great Grandmaster? Or perhaps, Zhang Daoyun never intended to challenge Lin Wudi at all, but rather the Great Grandmaster standing behind him.

All sorts of rumors began to fly throughout the Martial Arts World.

「The Capital.」

"Commander, is all this really necessary?" the young man asked, rolling his eyes at Elder Xiao beside him, completely bewildered.

He truly didn't understand why the commander had to release this information and twist the entire narrative. A Great Grandmaster of the Martial Way? One of the top ten on the Heavenly Rankings? It was all just a story deliberately released by Elder Xiao.

The one responsible for everything was Lin Wudi.

Is the commander trying to protect Lin Wudi?

The youth knew full well how highly Elder Xiao regarded the young man from River City, but he never expected him to use his personal connections to suppress the matter. He had even deliberately muddled the situation to encourage public speculation.

Hearing the youth's question, Elder Xiao let out a gruff chuckle. "You think I wanted to do this? If it weren't for Lin Wudi causing so much trouble, do you think I'd be taking this huge risk to muddy the waters?"

The youth understood. Elder Xiao was protecting Lin Wudi.

A tall tree catches the wind. Lin Wudi had first slain Yun Xu, then accepted Zhang Daoyun's challenge. If the world were to find out now that he had also killed Western Poison Xiao Ouyang, wouldn't the Martial Arts World descend into chaos?

Elder Xiao had served the country his entire life. He commanded the Military Department and the Martial Alliance, and his long career in the army was a testament to the passion he had dedicated to his nation and its people. With the Military Department currently facing some instability and the Martial Alliance growing restless, Elder Xiao absolutely could not allow the Martial Arts World to fall into disarray. If chaos erupted, there would be no one left to suppress it.

An even more important reason was... Elder Xiao was very old. Old age meant he didn't have much time left. For many years, the old man had been searching for a successor. But his own casual nature, Shen Lang's pride, and the weakness of the others made them all unsuitable. As time wore on, the old man had slowly begun to give up.

But ever since that person from River City had appeared, the youth had seen a glimmer of light return to the old man's cloudy eyes.

The youth knew that glimmer was hope.

Looking at the white-haired elder, the youth suddenly felt a pang of heartache.

"I will make a trip to River City as soon as possible," the youth said, looking toward Jiangling. Lin Wudi, I hope you don't let Elder Xiao down.

Elder Xiao also gazed in the direction of River City, a faint smile on his face.

Youngsters, grow up quickly. When you've grown up, our nation and our people will have hope. I can't hold on for much longer. But this old man promises that until you are ready, I will fight with everything I have to protect our country and its people, to keep them from the slightest harm! This life is worth living. What an incredible honor it has been.

「Jiangling. The Fang Family Estate.」

"What? Fang Cheng is dead?" Fang Tang, the Fang Family Head, was in disbelief as he listened to the butler's report.

"Yes, sir. It's said that a Great Grandmaster was involved." A trace of shock still lingered in the butler's voice. When he had first heard the news, he too thought he had misheard. But according to the information he received, it was the truth.

"Have you found any connection between this Great Grandmaster and the one who killed Fang Cheng?" Fang Tang asked with a solemn expression. If a Great Grandmaster was involved, he would have to reconsider his next move carefully.

The butler shook his head. "None at all. Fang Ting stated herself that there is no connection!"

"Good!" Fang Tang said in a deep voice. "We don't need to concern ourselves with the Great Grandmaster's business, but the killer who wiped out a branch of our Fang Family must die!"

"Yes, sir!"

「River City. The Qiao Family Estate.」

"Is the madam still in her room?" Qiao Tianhao glanced at the tightly locked door, his brow furrowing slightly.

"Yes, sir. Ever since the madam returned, she has locked herself in her room. It's been several hours now," the servant said nervously.

"I see. You may go," Qiao Tianhao said with a nod. After the servant left, he knocked on the door.

"Darling, it's me."

After a long moment, the door finally opened. But when Qiao Tianhao saw Fang Ting, his expression changed drastically.

"Darling, what's wrong with you?"

At that moment, Fang Ting's face was deathly pale. She was trembling all over, her disheveled hair making her look utterly wretched. She was completely distraught, as if she had just witnessed something terrifying.

Fang Ting looked at Qiao Tianhao with hollow eyes, then suddenly threw herself into her husband's arms and began to sob in despair.

"Tianhao, Zishan... he's caused a terrible disaster..."