

War God 401

Chapter 401: Sorry, I Couldn't Hold Back!

A snow-white thigh lay across the sofa. Lin Mu's head rested on it, enjoying the warmth and softness of the moment. Hua Meiniang's eyes burned with murderous intent.

This guy was too much! Not only did he make her massage his legs and shoulders, but he was also using her as a pillow.

Hua Meiniang wanted to strangle him. However, every time a hint of killing intent surfaced, Lin Mu would half-open his eyes and glance at her. Hua Meiniang would then immediately force a sweet and gentle smile, helping Lin Mu massage his temples. In her heart, she had already cursed Lin Mu a thousand times over.

Leaning against Hua Meiniang, Lin Mu opened his mouth. A peeled grape was naturally placed inside, followed by someone holding a glass of red wine to his lips. Then, another person quickly dabbed the corners of his mouth with a handkerchief...

Besides Hua Meiniang, four other women surrounded Lin Mu. Most importantly, these four women were identical, and each was stunningly beautiful. They were Hua Meiniang's personal bodyguards, who had been hiding in the dark corners of the room, ready to assassinate Lin Mu. However, Lin Mu's Divine Soul was so powerful that he had suppressed them before they could even make a move, rendering them immobile. In the end, they had no choice but to peel fruit, pour wine, and massage his legs and shoulders.

If any outsider witnessed this scene, they would be green with envy, wishing they could trade places with Lin Mu.

With a satisfied grunt, Lin Mu muttered to himself, "No wonder people who leave this place always sigh with admiration, 'It's like a dream of heaven on earth.' Having beautiful women warm my wine amidst a garden of fragrance and beauty... this is truly the ultimate enjoyment."

Hearing this, the faces of the five women in the room darkened, their killing intent flaring. But when they remembered Lin Mu's terrifying methods, their hearts filled with powerlessness and despair.

"Sister Hua, the man has arrived..."

The short-haired woman from before walked back into the room and started to speak, but she stopped abruptly, utterly stunned by the scene before her. The formidable Hua Meiniang, one of the Five Phoenixes of Jiangbei, was letting a man use her thigh as a pillow while she massaged his temples? And Qin, Qi, Shu, Hua—who held a higher status than the twelve female guards and were considered Hua Meiniang's most trusted confidantes—were peeling fruit, pouring wine, and massaging his legs for him?

What on earth has this guy done to be enjoying such treatment in the Bai Mei Nightclub?!

"Long Ao has arrived!" Hua Meiniang said, angrily pushing Lin Mu away and pulling down her skirt to cover her thigh.

"Hmm. Let's go take a look, then," Lin Mu said. He stood up, and when his eyes fell on a reclining chair nearby, a faint smile touched his lips.

Hua Meiniang's face stiffened. "Don't even think about it!" she said angrily.

「Several minutes later.」

The elevator doors opened. Su Ke'er and the others were met with a shocking sight.

Lin Mu was sitting on a reclining chair, carried out of the elevator by four identical-looking women. Flanking him, one woman held a fruit platter while another held a wine pot. These women were all one-in-a-million beauties, enough to drive any man wild. What shocked Su Ke'er most was that the woman holding the fruit platter was wearing a red nightgown, exuding a seductive charm. However, the expressions on all the women's faces were grim, filled with humiliation.

"Elder Brother Mu, what's all this..." Liu Zijian was also startled by the scene, but he marveled inwardly. Elder Brother Mu is in a league of his own, surrounded by beauties and living a life others can only dream of.

Liu Xiaolin's eyes lit up. I have to become a man just like my godfather one day! Just look at this grandeur, this presence! He's unbelievably awesome!

"Sister Hua, what are you..." Dai Yongqing looked even more distraught. He had thought his savior had arrived and that he would be rescued. But judging by the situation, something seems very wrong.

Hua Meiniang completely ignored Dai Yongqing. At that moment, she wanted nothing more than to kill Lin Mu and wash away her shame. But this guy... he's an absolute Devil! He strikes down beauties without the slightest mercy!

"Zijian, are you alright?" Lin Mu asked, leaning forward.

"I'm fine, I'm fine. They didn't give me any trouble," Liu Zijian said, wiping away his sweat. Compared to you, Elder Brother Mu, I've brought shame upon you as a brother.

"Good." Lin Mu nodded, then glanced around. "Long Ao isn't here yet?"

"He'll... he'll be here shortly," the short-haired woman stammered, gripping the wine pot so tightly she wished she could smash it over Lin Mu's head. This bastard is infuriating!

"Who the hell has the audacity to make our Ao Ye come to see them?"

Just then, an arrogant and furious voice rang out. THUD, THUD, THUD... The sound grew closer, and the ground began to vibrate slightly.

Everyone's expression changed as they turned to look, their pupils constricting. At the end of the corridor, a tall, imposing man in his fifties led the way. He moved with the power of a dragon and the stride of a tiger, his presence unforgettable. Behind him followed a hundred men in matching black suits and sunglasses, each holding a gleaming machete. Beside the leader was a lecherous-looking old man with a Fu Manchu mustache, whose eyes roved over Lin Mu's group with ill intent the moment he appeared.

A chair was placed in the center of the open space. The middle-aged man sat down, his gaze fixed on Lin Mu's party. When he saw Hua Meiniang next to Lin Mu, his eyes narrowed sharply.

Hua Meiniang's eyes brightened for a moment before she lowered her head, feigning grievance. She dabbed at her eyes, pretending to sob.

Fury blazed in the middle-aged man's eyes. He clenched his fists, and his aura became terrifyingly intense.

This man was none other than Long Ao, the leader of the Six Dragons of Jiangbei!

"Which one of you is Lin Mu? Get over here and kneel before Ao Ye to apologize!" the sleazy old man sneered, standing behind Long Ao. He was as arrogant as a eunuch attending the ancient Yellow Emperor.

"Is it you?" the old man asked, glancing at Dai Yongqing. The latter shook his head frantically. "Not me, not me! It's him!"

Dai Yongqing pointed a finger at Lin Mu and shouted, "He's Lin Mu! This has nothing to do with me!"

The old man scoffed contemptuously and turned to Lin Mu. "Kid, you're the one who summoned Ao Ye here to apologize to you?"

Leaning back in his recliner, Lin Mu replied nonchalantly, "That's right. I am."

"How dare you!" the old man roared, pointing at Lin Mu. "Who the hell do you think you are, daring to make Ao Ye apologize to you? You're courting death! Now crawl over here and receive your punishment!"

Lin Mu simply smiled and waved his hand.

SWISH!

A streak of green light shot from Lin Mu's hand and wrapped around the old man's neck.

THUMP!

A head tumbled to the floor as blood spurted from the neck. The headless body collapsed, its facial features still frozen in a mask of arrogance and rage.

"Hiss!" The crowd gasped, stunned by the gruesome scene.

Hua Meiniang's pretty face turned even paler. She hadn't expected Lin Mu to kill Long Ao's advisor right in front of him. And he just waved his hand... What kind of ability is this? Killing from a distance?!

"Noisy," Lin Mu remarked, glancing at Long Ao with a smile. "My apologies, I couldn't help myself."

"You don't mind that I killed your dog, do you?"

Chapter 402 I Need an Explanation!

"I couldn't hold back. You shouldn't have a problem with that, right?"

Upon hearing Lin Mu's words, the expressions on everyone's faces were a sight to behold. He's deliberately humiliating him, isn't he? And the target of his humiliation is none other than Long Ao, the leader of the Six Dragons of Jiangbei!

Hua Meiniang's red lips parted in disbelief as she stared at Lin Mu. This guy is far too arrogant. Doesn't he realize he's just made a mortal enemy of Long Ao? Even if his background is immense, he can't expect to leave Jiangbei alive after this!

Long Ao took a deep breath, forcibly suppressing the killing intent in his heart. He forced a cruel smile. "It's fine. It was just a dog. What's done is done."

True to his reputation as the leader of the Six Dragons of Jiangbei, he had managed to regain his composure in a remarkably short time.

Long Ao smiled meaningfully. "You seem unfamiliar, young man. Who do you run with?"

Lin Mu's lips curved up. "What? Are you afraid my backing is too powerful for you to handle?"

Long Ao's freshly suppressed anger nearly exploded at Lin Mu's words. The veins on his hand bulged as killing intent flooded his eyes.

Taking another deep breath, Long Ao sneered, "Why would I be? I just don't know when I might have offended you."

"You haven't offended me."

The moment Lin Mu finished speaking, Long Ao shot to his feet, pointing a finger at him. "Kid, are you playing me for a fool?!"

Lin Mu's expression remained unchanged. "But you offended my brother."

"Your brother?" Long Ao frowned. "And who might your brother be? Let me see him."

"Zijian."

At Lin Mu's call, Liu Zijian slowly walked over.

Glancing at Liu Zijian, Long Ao seemed to recall something. "You're from Boheng Pharma?"

"What? You remember now?" Lin Mu asked.

Long Ao let out a huge sigh of relief. "I was wondering who it was. So, just someone from Boheng Pharma."

"Now that you remember, let's settle this score." Lin Mu's expression turned cold. Today, no matter what, he was going to make Long Ao answer for his actions.

"Settle the score?" Long Ao sneered. "Kid, do you know where you are? Who do you think you are to settle scores with me!"

With a light wave of his hand, the men behind him stepped forward in unison, their presence menacing. Hua Meiniang and her group instinctively took a step back, not wanting to get involved.

Unfazed, Lin Mu slowly stood up and walked toward Long Ao.

"Actually, if you had just kowtowed to my brother here and admitted your mistake, I wouldn't have wanted to blow this out of proportion," Lin Mu said. "But from the looks of it, you have no intention of apologizing?"

"Apologize?" Long Ao burst into laughter. "Kid, I've been running these streets for so long that people only apologize to me. Who the hell do you think you are!"

"You'll find out soon enough."

Lin Mu walked forward step by step, his expression calm, completely disregarding the hundred or so men Long Ao had brought with him.

"Go! Cripple him for me!" Long Ao snorted. If he was just some nobody from Boheng Pharma, then it didn't matter.

A few burly men slowly stepped out, advancing toward Lin Mu.

"Remember, don't kill him yet. Just break his arms and legs," Long Ao said coldly, settling in to enjoy the show.

"Yes, sir!"

The men acknowledged the order and moved toward Lin Mu, reaching out to grab his shoulders.

With several muffled thuds, the four burly men were sent flying, crashing heavily to the ground, unable to get back up.

"Hm?" Long Ao's eyes narrowed as he sneered, "So, you're a martial artist. Looks like I underestimated you!" He gestured again. "I'd like to see how many you can handle!"

Eight more men stepped out, gripping machetes as they charged at Lin Mu. But the result was the same. The eight of them were sent flying backward in a bizarre fashion before they could even get close.

"Stop wasting time. All of you, come at me at once," Lin Mu said, standing his ground and looking at Long Ao with an air of cold arrogance.

"Hm?" Long Ao's gaze grew stern. This kid seems even stronger than I thought.

"All of you, attack! I don't care if he ends up dead or alive!" This time, Long Ao gave a kill order.

Lin Mu let out a soft chuckle. Before Long Ao's men could even react, he shot forward.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

THUD! THUD! THUD!

The crowd saw only a blur, a figure flickering unstoppably as Long Ao's underlings fell one by one, screaming in agony.

One, two... ten, twenty... fifty, sixty... one hundred!

As the last man hit the ground, only one person remained standing in the clearing.

Lin Mu.

Everyone gasped, their eyes fixed on Lin Mu, filled with a mixture of shock and terror. One man against a hundred!

Hua Meiniang and her subordinates were especially stunned, staring at Lin Mu in utter disbelief. Is this guy a robot? How can he be such a formidable fighter!

Even Long Ao's face had turned a shade paler as he watched Lin Mu.

"Who... Who exactly are you?" There was a note of gravity and fear in Long Ao's voice. He had a sinking feeling that he had picked a fight with the wrong person.

"You're not qualified to question me." Lin Mu walked up to him, looking down at the crime boss. "Now talk. Why did you target my brother?"

Gulping, Long Ao spat and said, "I... I don't know what you're talking about."

"It seems you need a little reminder." The corner of Lin Mu's mouth hooked into a smirk, and he slammed a fist into Long Ao's chest.

PFFT!

Long Ao cried out in agony as he was sent flying. He coughed painfully a couple of times, his face contorting with rage. "Kid, do you really want a fight to the death?"

"A fight to the death?" Lin Mu slowly walked over and planted his foot on Long Ao's chest. "You're not worthy," he said coldly.

As he applied a bit of pressure, Long Ao felt as if his heart was about to explode.

"Stop! Stop right now!" Hua Meiniang suddenly shouted a warning. "If you kill him, you'll be in serious trouble!"

"Oh?" Lin Mu turned his head to look at her.

Hua Meiniang flinched under his gaze but still mustered the courage to speak. "Long Ao is actually an Outer Sect Disciple of the Crane Immortal Sect. He only left the sect because he failed to officially step onto the Martial Way, so he came to Jiangbei to build his own power base and make money for them."

The Crane Immortal Sect?

Most of the crowd was stunned, having no idea what that name meant. But the few who did know turned pale with fright. The Crane Immortal Sect was the only ancient martial arts sect in Jiangbei, a colossal power.

Lin Mu, however, just seemed mildly surprised. He then smiled meaningfully. "So, you're from the Crane Immortal Sect."

"Kid, now that you know I'm from the Crane Immortal Sect, let me go at once!" Long Ao snarled with murderous intent. "Otherwise, I'll make you regret the day you were born!"

"Threats are the last thing that scares me." Lin Mu suddenly grinned. "However, I'll give you one chance. Call the Crane Immortal Sect. I require an explanation."

Make the Crane Immortal Sect give him an explanation? Has he lost his mind? Hua Meiniang was now certain of it. Lin Mu is a lunatic! He acts without any thought for the consequences!

Long Ao laughed grimly. "Fine! Fine! You've got guts, kid! I guarantee you will regret this!"

Lin Mu couldn't be bothered to waste any more words on him and sent him flying with another kick.

"Hurry up and make the call. I don't have time to waste on you."

Chapter 403: Don't be nervous, I won't use my full strength!

"Kid, you're going to die a miserable death!" Long Ao said, his voice choked with grief and indignation. "I guarantee it!"

At that moment, pinned under Lin Mu's foot, Long Ao was overcome with humiliation. His entire reputation as the leader of the Six Dragons of Jiangbei hinged on his status as a disciple of the Crane Immortal Sect. Throughout Jiangbei, no one had ever dared to offend him! Yet today, he was being repeatedly stomped on and degraded, filling his heart with a bottomless well of shame and murderous rage.

"One of the Six Dragons of Jiangbei? Please. You're more like one of the Six Worms," Lin Mu scoffed from his chair. He casually ate a grape peeled for him by Hua Meiniang, a disdainful smirk on his face. "How about we make a bet?"

"Bet on what?" Long Ao said through gritted teeth. "Don't tell me you want to bet our lives!"

"Fine by me," Lin Mu replied, leaning back in his chair. "Let's bet our lives. If you lose, your life is mine. How about it?"

"And if you lose?" Long Ao asked coldly.

A corner of Lin Mu's mouth curled up. "I won't lose."

The crowd was speechless. You don't even know what you're betting on, and you already know you won't lose? Who makes a bet like that?

Long Ao took a deep breath, forcefully suppressing the intense urge to strangle Lin Mu on the spot. "Kid," he said coldly, "if you lose, the lives of you and all your people here will be under my control. How about that?"

"And her! She'll be mine too!" Long Ao pointed a finger at Hua Meiniang, a cruel glint in his eyes. This brat actually managed to get his hands on Hua Meiniang. If I win, I'll humiliate him in every way imaginable.

"Long Ao, what does this have to do with me!" Hua Meiniang cried out in alarm. How did I get dragged into this?

Before she could protest further, Lin Mu said, "Alright, I accept!"

"Bastard!" Hua Meiniang raged. "I didn't say anything! Who do you think you are, agreeing for me? What do you take me for?!"

She aimed a kick at Lin Mu, but alas, his body was now impervious to blades and spears. Her kick landed as if on solid steel, the impact sending a jolt of pain up her leg that brought tears to her eyes.

"You bastard... you're a bully!" Hua Meiniang crumpled to the ground and began to sob, a truly heart-wrenching sight.

Everyone found it hard to watch. The formidable Sister Hua, one of the Five Phoenixes of Jiangbei, had actually been made to cry by Lin Mu. If word of this got out, wouldn't every man in Jiangbei be out for Lin Mu's blood?

"Kid, just tell me what we're betting on!" Long Ao demanded, his face ashen. He had already decided that as soon as the people from the Crane Immortal Sect arrived, he would have Lin Mu killed immediately.

"Simple," Lin Mu said. "I bet that when the people from the Crane Immortal Sect see me, they will kneel and beg me to spare their worthless lives."

At these words, it wasn't just Long Ao who reacted. Even Hua Meiniang, who was crying on the ground, looked up, her eyes wide and tear-filled. "Bastard, do you have any idea what you're saying?"

She wiped away a tear and sobbed, "Don't say I didn't warn you—if you lose, this has nothing to do with me!"

Lin Mu just laughed. "What's there to be afraid of? Like I said, I won't lose."

"Kid, we'll just wait and see!" Long Ao sneered. "I'll make you regret ever provoking me!"

However, with Lin Mu's foot still on top of him, even Long Ao himself found it hard to believe his own threat, let alone anyone else.

Meanwhile, Dai Yongqing and his men hadn't dared to utter a single word. On one side were two of the most prominent figures from the Five Phoenixes and Six Dragons of Jiangbei; on the other was a madman who didn't even give the Crane Immortal Sect any face. How could he possibly dare to speak?

「About half an hour later.」

Several figures suddenly appeared at the end of the corridor. The moment they arrived, a powerful aura washed over everyone present.

"The people from the Crane Immortal Sect are here," Hua Meiniang said, her expression growing tense.

"Elder Liu, save me!" Seeing the arrivals from the Crane Immortal Sect, Long Ao's eyes lit up with hope. The hundred men he had brought were all crippled by Lin Mu, and he himself was no match for the man, having been utterly defeated and humiliated. Now, these three from his sect were his only hope.

"Long Ao, what happened here?"

Soon, the three men walked in. The one in the lead was an old man in a long robe. He had a naturally commanding presence and radiated an immense aura of power. Behind him were two young men dressed in the attire of the Crane Immortal Sect, each with a sword strapped to his back. They looked like wandering young heroes from ancient tales, except for the haughty expressions and air of arrogant superiority they wore.

"Elder Liu, please, save me!" Long Ao cried out. "Quick, kill this brat! He disrespected our Crane Immortal Sect!"

Elder Liu's gaze sharpened as he focused on Lin Mu. "Release him!" he barked.

"Hmm?" Lin Mu said nonchalantly. "You want him? Here you go."

He kicked Long Ao, sending him flying with a miserable scream.

"You're courting death!" Elder Liu snorted. Stomping a foot on the ground, his body shot out like a great roc. Amid the crowd's gasps of astonishment, he closed the distance in an instant, catching Long Ao. He grabbed the younger man by the collar and flew back to his original spot. The entire sequence was incredibly fast yet flowed as smoothly as water, a true display of a master's skill.

"Master is mighty!" the two Crane Immortal Sect disciples cheered, their expressions growing even more smug.

After setting Long Ao down, Elder Liu stared coldly at Lin Mu. "So young, yet your methods are so vicious. It seems I must teach you how to conduct yourself!"

"Master, given your esteemed status, why should you dirty your hands with a mere commoner?" one of the disciples interjected, eager to impress. "Allow your disciple to handle this."

"Very well," Elder Liu nodded. "Qing Yun, do not take his life until we have all the facts."

"Yes, Master, I understand!" The disciple named Qing Yun nodded. He exchanged a subtle glance and nod with Long Ao.

Then, he started walking slowly toward Lin Mu, a murderous intent gleaming in his eyes. He and Long Ao were close in private. Long Ao had often used his wealth to lavish gifts upon Qing Yun in exchange for the prestige of associating with a sect disciple. Whenever Qing Yun left the sect, Long Ao would provide him with the best food and drink. In return, Qing Yun had helped Long Ao solve many problems, securing his position as the head of the Six Dragons of Jiangbei. Seeing his patron humiliated so badly,

he was naturally eager to get revenge. I can't kill him, but swords don't have eyes. I'm sure Master won't say anything if I just happen to cripple him.

Watching the disciple approach, Lin Mu remained completely unfazed. He spoke calmly, "Xiao Lin, you're up."

"Yes, Godfather!" Liu Xiaolin had been waiting impatiently. Hearing his name, he ran out excitedly.

"Son!" Liu Zijian cried out in alarm, lunging forward but failing to catch him.

Lin Mu smiled. "Zijian, don't worry. An ordinary disciple who hasn't even condensed his Sword Intent is no match for our son."

"But Brother Mu, Xiao Lin isn't even five years old!" Although he knew his son had received a great opportunity, Liu Zijian couldn't help but worry.

"Aren't I here?" Lin Mu chuckled. "Relax. I wouldn't let anything happen to my godson either."

"Alright then," Liu Zijian agreed helplessly. Still, how could he not be worried watching his four-year-old son face off against a disciple from a martial sect?

He wasn't the only one; the others were just as shocked.

Qing Yun's face turned ugly. "Kid, are you trying to insult me? I don't bully children!"

Liu Xiaolin, however, simply clenched his small fists and said with an innocent air, "Don't be nervous. I promise I won't use my full strength."

Chapter 404: No One Else Will Do!

As soon as Liu Xiaolin uttered those words, the expressions on everyone's faces became priceless.

"Don't be nervous?" "Not holding back?" Kid, do you have any idea what you're saying? You're telling a Sect disciple that you won't go all out! Aren't you afraid he'll punch you to death?

"Kid, scram!" Qing Yun, clearly infuriated, snapped. "Or I might just cut you down where you stand!"

"You use a sword, too?" Liu Xiaolin's eyes lit up, and he began to clap his hands with glee. "Then let's hurry up and start! I've been wanting to test myself for ages, but Godfather would never let me."

Seeing the expression on Liu Xiaolin's face, Qing Yun was stunned. Is this kid an idiot?

"Kid, if you're scared, just admit defeat now! Don't use a child as a shield!" Qing Yun pointed at Lin Mu, his expression full of contempt.

"Why don't you try to beat him first?" Lin Mu said with a smile. "Frankly, it's not just you. Even your master wouldn't be his match in swordsmanship alone."

"Insolent!" Qing Yun roared. "My master is a venerable Elder of the Crane Immortal Sect! How dare a commoner like you make such a comparison!"

"Are you going to fight or not? Quit wasting time!" Liu Xiaolin said, a hint of impatience in his voice.

A murderous glint flashed in Qing Yun's eyes. "Since you're so eager to die," he said coldly, "I'll grant your wish! Watch my sword!"

As his voice fell, Qing Yun slapped the longsword on his back.

CLANG!

The longsword unsheathed, and Qing Yun gripped it tightly, instantly executing a signature sword technique of the Crane Immortal Sect.

"Why is Senior Brother Qing Yun using that move? It's a fatal technique, designed to kill in a single strike!" another Crane Immortal Sect disciple exclaimed, unable to bear the thought.

"Let's wait and see," Elder Liu said, his expression grave. He stood ready to intervene at a moment's notice. If the boy can't handle it, I will step in.

Though death and injury were common in disputes between Martial Artists, killing a child would tarnish the reputation of the Crane Immortal Sect.

Long Ao, however, merely sneered, completely unconcerned. It's just a kid. So what if he dies? It serves that Lin Mu right for humiliating me over and over.

Dai Yongqing was positively ecstatic. Others might not know, but this kid is a little monster! He's incredibly skilled for his age and kills without batting an eye. He terrifies me to my very bones. If one of the experts from the Crane Immortal Sect gets rid of him, it'll solve all my problems for good.

Liu Xiaolin stood his ground, watching Qing Yun's sword thrust toward him. A strange look flickered in his eyes. He felt as if his opponent's technique was riddled with openings. With this thought, he subconsciously raised his hand and pointed toward a specific spot.

To the onlookers, it looked as if Liu Xiaolin was foolishly trying to block a sword with his bare finger. Su Ke'er couldn't help but cry out in alarm. "Xiao Lin, get out of the way!"

Liu Zijian panicked and started to rush forward to pull his son back.

"Qing Yun, do not harm the child!" Elder Liu shouted, his body blurring as he moved to intercept his disciple's attack.

At that exact moment, however, a chilling sensation crawled up everyone's spines, making the hair on their bodies stand on end. A sharp and pure stream of Sword Qi had suddenly erupted from a single point.

It came from the tip of Liu Xiaolin's finger.

From that small, chubby fingertip, a wisp of Sword Qi, visible to the naked eye, silently materialized and shot forward.

"This is..." Elder Liu cried out, his face a mask of utter disbelief. "Qing Yun, watch out!"

His warning came too late.

Although Qing Yun had no intention of actually killing Liu Xiaolin, his attack was one of the Crane Immortal Sect's most powerful sword techniques, a move from which there was supposedly no return.

SLASH!

Just as his blade was about to connect, a deep sense of unease bloomed in his heart. To his horror, Qing Yun saw a beam of Sword Qi shoot from the child's hand and collide with his sword.

CRACK!

The blade instantly fractured before shattering into pieces. The Sword Qi, however, continued onward, charging toward him like an unstoppable force.

"No!" The shadow of death enveloped him. Qing Yun screamed in terror.

"Move!" A large hand suddenly grabbed his shoulder and flung him away.

It's Master!

Qing Yun landed hard on the ground and scrambled to look up. He witnessed a shocking scene. A terrifying aura exploded from his master as his potent True Qi gathered and poured into the hilt of his shattered sword. But even so, Qing Yun watched with wide eyes as his master's desperate counterattack was obliterated by that single stream of Sword Qi.

His master grunted as the last remnants of the sword disintegrated and the Sword Qi finally dissipated. He was forced back several steps, leaving a trail of deep, clear footprints in the ground.

"This..." Qing Yun's face went deathly pale, his eyes filled with horror. Even Master couldn't block a single attack from him? Just how powerful is that child?

Everyone gasped, including Liu Zijian himself. He knew his son was impressive; he'd heard Elder Brother Mu mention something about a 'sword body.' But he had never taken it to heart, always treating his son as a normal child. After this incident, however, he suddenly recalled details he had previously ignored.

It seemed Xiao Lin had never liked playing with children his own age. When they sent him to kindergarten, it took only a few days for him to infuriate all the teachers and students, forcing them to bring him home. His daily speech and mannerisms were like those of an adult—he was far too mature, not at all like a child. Now I finally understand. My son is no ordinary person! He couldn't even walk or talk at age three, not until he met Elder Brother Mu...

Liu Zijian turned his head to look at Lin Mu, who simply offered him a smile. Liu Zijian tried to smile back but couldn't shake a hollow, complicated feeling inside.

Liu Xiaolin retracted his finger. Seeing that Elder Liu, though pale, was unharmed, he let out a sigh of relief. "Good thing I didn't use my full strength. My dad would have definitely yelled at me."

Hearing this, Elder Liu nearly lost control of his internal injuries and almost coughed up a mouthful of blood.

Liu Zijian didn't know whether to laugh or cry. This kid... did he learn to be so infuriating from me or from his godfather?

"Xiao Lin, get back here right now!" Liu Zijian couldn't help but scold him. No matter how powerful his son was, their relationship as father and son remained unchanged.

"Oh," Liu Xiaolin replied, skipping as he turned to leave.

"Wait!" Elder Liu called out urgently.

"What? You still want to fight?" Liu Xiaolin turned back, his expression innocent.

"No, no, no." Elder Liu waved his hands frantically. "I just see that you are a one-in-ten-thousand genius of the Sword Dao! If you are willing, I can take you back to the Crane Immortal Sect to cultivate!" Fearing a misunderstanding, he quickly added, "Rest assured, I am not deceiving you! I swear it on my life!"

Everyone stared at Liu Xiaolin in disbelief. This child is a one-in-ten-thousand prodigy of the Sword Dao? Is this a movie?

Regardless, the opportunity to cultivate at the Crane Immortal Sect was a dream for countless people.

However, Liu Xiaolin simply shook his head. "I can't. My godfather said only he can teach me. No one else is allowed to."

Chapter 405: I Am the Grandmaster, Kneel Before Me!

"Uh..."

Elder Liu was instantly overwhelmed with a sense of shame, wishing the earth would swallow him whole. This child's words were far too cutting.

But to miss out on such an excellent talent would be a true pity.

With this in mind, Elder Liu gave Lin Mu a deep bow. "Young sir, I failed to recognize your greatness earlier. I hope you won't hold it against me."

Seeing Elder Liu actually bow to Lin Mu, the expressions of both Long Ao and Qing Yun changed drastically, their faces turning utterly gloomy.

Elder Liu continued, "I am Liu Zhengtang, an inner sect elder of the Crane Immortal Sect. Today, I have encountered a prodigy of the Sword Dao, and I truly cannot bear to see such a gem be left in the dust. I

hope you, young sir, can part with him and allow me to take him back to the sect to cultivate. It would be a waste of his innate Sword Dao talent otherwise."

Lin Mu's expression was placid as he regarded Liu Zhengtang intently.

This Liu Zhengtang... although the disciple he trained wasn't very impressive, he himself seems to be a rather upright person. A moment ago, he had instructed his disciple not to harm Liu Xiaolin and had even prepared to intervene when danger arose. For this reason alone, Lin Mu was not inclined to hold a grudge against him.

But let Liu Xiaolin join the Crane Immortal Sect to cultivate? That was something Lin Mu would never agree to. Besides anything else, Liu Xiaolin possessed the Limitless Sword Body and had received Liu Mubai's legacy. With his guidance, what need was there to join any sect? If word of this got out, where would he, Lin Mu, be able to show his face?

Shaking his head with a slight smile, Lin Mu said, "Sorry, I can't agree to that."

He refused? Lin Mu actually refused? This was the best opportunity to join an ancient martial sect! Upon entering a sect, one's self and one's family could gain tremendous benefits. Take Long Ao, for example. Even though he failed in his cultivation and left his sect, didn't he still become the respected leader of the Six Dragons of Jiangbei? And Lin Mu just rejected such a godsent opportunity on Liu Xiaolin's behalf?

"Presumptuous!" Before Liu Zhengtang could speak, Qing Yun shouted in fury. "This is a fateful opportunity my Master is bestowing upon you! You should be kowtowing in gratitude, yet you dare to refuse? How detestable!"

"Qing Yun!" Liu Zhengtang scolded before continuing, "Young sir, frankly, this child's talent in the Sword Dao is extremely rare. I'm afraid if he truly follows you to cultivate..."

"Follow him to cultivate? I think he's just a charlatan pretending to know what he's doing, probably just trying to drive up the price!" Qing Yun retorted, his tone dripping with dissatisfaction and sarcasm.

"Shut your mouth!" Liu Zhengtang was furious. If it weren't for the crowd, he would have slapped his disciple several times. He hastily apologized to Lin Mu, his posture extremely deferential. "Young sir,

please don't be angry. I've spoiled this disciple of mine." He truly hoped Lin Mu would relent and allow him to take Liu Xiaolin back with him.

"That won't be necessary," Lin Mu said nonchalantly. "Even you, an esteemed elder of the Crane Immortal Sect, struggled to block a single strike from him. If he goes to your Crane Immortal Sect, who there could possibly teach him?"

"This..." Liu Zhengtang was at a loss for words. "Our Crane Immortal Sect has countless swordsmanship cultivation techniques, and there are many who are stronger than I. With this child's talent, even our Sect Leader would be tempted to take him in as his direct disciple!"

Upon hearing this, Qing Yun's face turned ghastly, a hint of fear flickering in his eyes. That boy's talent... it's that formidable? Even the Sect Leader would be tempted?

"Hey, hurry up and agree!" Hua Meiniang's beautiful eyes were filled with shock as she nudged Lin Mu. "Only if that little guy joins the Crane Immortal Sect will you have a slim chance of leaving Jiangbei alive."

"Oh?" Lin Mu chuckled lightly. "What, if I don't agree, the Crane Immortal Sect dares to keep me here against my will?"

"If you don't agree, I have ways to make you agree!"

Just then, an exceedingly cold voice cut in. Following the voice, two figures slowly appeared before the crowd: a man and a woman. The man was also an old man, his eyes sinister. The woman, though over thirty and plain in appearance, exuded an exceptionally cold and aloof aura.

"Great Elder!" Upon seeing this man, Liu Zhengtang's expression changed abruptly, and he hurriedly stepped forward to greet him with respect.

"Such an excellent Sword Dao prodigy is truly a rare sight. Elder Liu, your contribution is significant." The Great Elder of the Crane Immortal Sect looked at Liu Xiaolin, his face full of satisfaction.

He then turned to Lin Mu. "Little fellow, perhaps you don't know the saying that an innocent man incurs guilt by possessing a treasure. If our Crane Immortal Sect cannot have such a fine Sword Dao seedling, then naturally, no one else can either."

"Elder Liu, what do you say?" the Great Elder asked, looking at Liu Zhengtang with a deep, meaningful smile.

"I..." Liu Zhengtang lowered his head, daring not to speak.

In truth, he harbored the same thought. It was just that he didn't want to resort to such measures unless absolutely necessary. That was why he had tried persuading him with kind words first.

"Heh." Lin Mu suddenly laughed. "I suggest you ask your companion, Liu Su, if she shares your sentiment before you say anything more."

"You know Junior Sister Liu!" The Great Elder was slightly startled. He glanced at the woman beside him and then smiled. "Since you're acquaintances, that makes things even easier. What do you say, Junior Sister?"

"Sigh." The woman sighed softly. With a swipe of her hand across her face, she pulled away a human-skin mask, revealing a stunningly beautiful and icy countenance.

She was none other than the daughter of the Crane Immortal Sect's Sect Leader, Liu Su!

As soon as Liu Su revealed her true face, all eyes were drawn to her.

However, Liu Su took a few steps forward and, to the utter shock of the crowd, bowed deeply to Lin Mu.

"Liu Su of the Crane Immortal Sect pays her respects to Master Lin!"

Her words shocked the entire assembly.

Master Lin? Which Master Lin?

"Junior Sister, what are you doing? There is no Master Lin here!" the Great Elder rebuked her harshly, his expression turning ugly.

"You... you're River City's Lin Wudi... Master Lin?!" Suddenly, a shriek from Hua Meiniang cut through the stunned silence.

She knew Lin Mu was from River City and that his surname was Lin. Seeing Liu Su's actions, she instantly understood everything. Her face turned pale, a trace of lingering fear in her eyes. This man was the rapidly rising, decisive Martial Arts Grandmaster, Lin Wudi!

"You... you're really Lin Wudi?!" The Great Elder of the Crane Immortal Sect was stunned. "You... How could you be here?"

Lin Mu slowly rose to his feet. Though he released no aura, everyone felt an immense pressure emanating from him, as if they were in the presence of a majestic mountain, a vast ocean, a Heavenly Being. Their legs trembled, and they could not resist the urge to kneel.

"And why shouldn't I be here?" Lin Mu asked, his hands clasped behind his back. He naturally projected the transcendent air of one who looks down upon all mortals.

THUD!

THUD!

In that moment, the crowd could no longer bear the pressure and knelt one by one.

Those with higher cultivation levels, like the Great Elder, struggled painfully to remain standing.

Lin Mu looked at Liu Su and said, "It seems that sword strike from back then helped you break through your shackles and achieve a breakthrough in your cultivation."

"Thank you for your help, Master Lin. This disciple will never forget it!" Liu Su declared, suddenly dropping to one knee. She adopted the posture of a disciple before her master.

The grace of that single sword strike was akin to the guidance of a formal teacher. She felt neither humiliated nor hesitant as she knelt.

THUD!

With Liu Su kneeling, the Great Elder and Liu Zhengtang could no longer hold on. Their legs buckled, and they too fell to their knees.

"We pay our respects to Master Lin!"

Watching everyone kneeling on the ground, Long Ao was shaking like a sieve, his expression one of utter despair.

He had lost.

Chapter 406: You Believe What a Child Says!

Master Lin!

Master of the Three Rivers!

With Lin Mu's identity exposed, the faces of Dai Yongqing, Long Ao, and the others instantly turned ashen.

It was in Wufeng Town, at a martial arts gathering in River City, where Lin Mu had defeated countless masters. He had even killed Liu Xianhe, the Internal Energy Peak master of the Crane Immortal Sect, to secure the title of Master of the Three Rivers.

Then came the battle at Bolan River.

He had vanquished Yun Xu with his bare hands!

Half a year later, the battle in Southern Sky.

He had slain Xing Zirong with a sword!

Tenth on the Heavenly List!

Such honors—who in today's Martial Arts World could achieve them?

Only Lin Wudi.

And now, this renowned Invincible Grandmaster stood before them.

Before a deity, all must surrender!

Shock, disbelief, incredulity! Fear and regret!

"Lin... Master Lin, I..." Long Ao knelt on the ground, too frightened to speak.

Before this, Long Ao hadn't taken Lin Mu seriously. He was just an insignificant nobody. No matter how skilled in combat, how could he compare to the exalted masters of the Crane Immortal Sect? One was such a person, while the other was Long Ao himself—the leader of the Six Dragons of Jiangbei, an influential figure respected and feared by all.

But when their roles were reversed, Long Ao's shock turned to fear in a fleeting moment. Even the formidable masters of the Crane Immortal Sect, whom he once believed could solve anything, were helpless!

Now that he had lost the bet, he would have to pay with his life! The complex emotions distilled into sheer terror, and Long Ao's body went limp.

He didn't want to die!

But could he dare renege on the bet? To appease Lin Mu's anger alone, the masters of the Crane Immortal Sect would strike him dead with a single sword stroke.

Lin Mu looked at Long Ao. The head of the Six Dragons of Jiangbei, a man of power who once decided life and death, was now kneeling before him like a dog, groveling for mercy. Lin Mu's expression remained unmoved.

"You lost."

Lin Mu uttered just two words, and large beads of sweat immediately formed on Long Ao's forehead.

"I..." Long Ao opened his mouth, trying to explain, but words failed him.

"Master Lin, could you possibly..." Liu Zhengtang began to speak, but Lin Mu cut him off with a single glance.

Liu Zhengtang shuddered and immediately bowed his head, not daring to say another word.

"Master Lin, a thousand faults are mine, and mine alone!" Long Ao took a deep breath and said through clenched teeth, "I didn't know he was your brother. When the Fang Family approached me, I didn't think much of it, so I acted against him."

He hurriedly added, "But I didn't do anything to him! I just had him locked up. I didn't kill him as the Fang Family suggested."

As Long Ao spoke, his body trembled uncontrollably. He was truly terrified.

"Lin... Master Lin, what Long Ao said is true," Hua Meiniang explained from the side. "He even left the man in my care, and I did not mistreat him."

"Zijian, is that so?" Lin Mu turned to ask Liu Zijian.

"Elder Brother Mu, they are telling the truth," Liu Zijian replied. He didn't want Lin Mu to escalate the situation. After all, enough people had died today.

"The Fang Family!" Lin Mu nodded, murmuring to himself, "Very well. It seems a trip to Jiangling is inevitable!"

"Now, tell me about my company," Lin Mu said, sitting back down in his chair and looking at Long Ao.

"The company?" Long Ao was startled and quickly explained, "Master Lin, I merely took your brother. Dai Yongqing handled everything. I know nothing else."

"Hmm?" Lin Mu said indifferently. "You know nothing?"

"Yes, Master Lin! I wouldn't dare hide a thing from you," Long Ao said, kowtowing deeply on the ground.

"Dai Yongqing, you tell me," Lin Mu said, shifting his gaze.

Dai Yongqing's entire body trembled. "Lin... Master Lin, it really wasn't me! I've been wronged!" he shouted, proclaiming his innocence.

"Wronged?" Liu Zijian laughed coldly. "Dai Yongqing, you dare claim you've been wronged? You embezzled company funds and secretly transferred shares to your son. When I found out, you used the excuse of a project meeting to lure the Fang Family into the company, and then you had me knocked out and taken away!"

"Am I wronging you by saying all this?"

As soon as Liu Zijian finished speaking, Dai Yongqing's face turned pale as paper. He stammered, "It was the Fang Family! They made me do it! They made me do all of it!"

"Including trying to kill me? Did they make you do that, too?" Liu Zijian snorted. "Don't think I don't know. If your son hadn't told me that someone wanted me alive, you would have already killed me, wouldn't you?"

Lin Mu glanced at Hua Meiniang, who scoffed, "Don't flatter yourself. I didn't know he was your brother back then."

Ignoring the woman, Lin Mu looked at Dai Yongqing and said, "You laid hands on my brother, and then sent people to kill us after learning we were in Jiangbei. The Fang Family has raised a good dog indeed."

"No, it's not like that!" Dai Yongqing knelt on the ground, shaking violently in terror. "Master Lin, it's all a misunderstanding."

Hearing Dai Yongqing's pleas, Lin Mu turned a deaf ear. He asked Liu Zijian, "Zijian, how do you want to deal with him?"

"I..." Liu Zijian glanced at Lin Mu, took a deep breath, and said, "A traitor like him deserves to die!"

"No!" Dai Yongqing shrieked. "Manager Liu, please, spare me! I swear I'll never do it again!" He then turned his desperate gaze. "Ke'er, for the sake of my relationship with your uncle, please ask them not to kill me! Don't kill me!"

Before, Dai Yongqing would never have believed Lin Mu would dare to kill him. But now, he didn't dare think that way. This man was a Grandmaster! A Grandmaster ranked tenth on the Heavenly List! An existence even the Crane Immortal Sect had to respect!

And he had tried to have this man killed. If he didn't die, who would?

Su Ke'er and Liu Zijian turned their heads away. If Lin Mu were just an ordinary person, if he weren't some 'Master Lin,' then not only Liu Zijian but Su Ke'er herself would have been in danger on this trip to Jiangbei. This was no time for compassion.

"You..." Seeing that his pleas were useless, Dai Yongqing burst into wild laughter. "Fine! Just fine! Kill me! The Fang Family won't let any of you off!"

"Enough of your nonsense." Liu Xiaolin suddenly extended a finger, pointing it at Dai Yongqing.

"No!" Dai Yongqing's pupils shrank. "What are you doing?" he cried out.

"Killing you," Liu Xiaolin replied, his face breaking into an innocently cheerful smile that sent a chill down everyone's spine. A four or five-year-old child spoke of killing so nonchalantly; it made one wonder if he would grow up to become a God of Slaughter.

"No! Don't!" Dai Yongqing scrambled backward in terror. "You promised not to kill me! You gave me your word!"

Liu Xiaolin tilted his head. "You believed the words of a child? You really are stupid."

As soon as he finished speaking, a streak of Sword Qi shot from his fingertip, instantly piercing Dai Yongqing's head.

Dai Yongqing's eyes bulged. He thudded to the ground, his face a mask of despair and regret. He died with his eyes wide open.

Chapter 407: No Man But Him!

Did he really kill him?

The crowd stared at Dai Yongqing's body on the ground, momentarily lost in disbelief.

This child possesses such intense killing intent! He kills without a moment's hesitation, like a young god of slaughter!

Liu Xiaolin withdrew his finger and bounced over to Liu Zijian, flashing an innocent and adorable smile at him.

Liu Zijian's face paled, and he nearly took a subconscious step back before managing to stop himself.

This is my son! No matter what Xiao Lin becomes, he will always be my son!

Taking a deep breath, Liu Zijian grasped his son's hand, giving it a firm squeeze.

Liu Xiaolin's body stiffened for a moment before he slowly relaxed, a sweet smile touching the corners of his mouth.

Watching this unfold, a smile touched Lin Mu's lips as well.

It seems that person's influence on Xiao Lin is waning. Still, a permanent solution must be found.

"Master Lin, I have something to say!"

With Dai Yongqing dead, Long Ao grew tense. He knew it was his turn next.

"Speak," Lin Mu said, watching him with a leisurely expression.

"I..." Taking a deep breath, Long Ao said, "No matter what, I cannot escape my involvement in this matter. I don't ask that you spare my life, Master Lin, but I hope you can let my family go!"

Lin Wudi's reputation was known to everyone in the Three Rivers Area. He was infamous for slaughtering entire clans at the slightest provocation, a man of extreme ruthlessness.

Long Ao knew that even though Dai Yongqing was dead, his son would not escape. He figured the same would apply to him. He also had a wife and children, and he pleaded with Lin Mu to spare them.

He wasn't wrong. Dai Yifeng had died before he even reached the hospital. Lin Mu hadn't just severed his hand; he had left a strand of Sword Qi in Dai Yifeng's body, a thread of energy that would pulverize his internal organs the moment Lin Mu willed it.

"I hope Master Lin will grant me this!" Long Ao knelt on the ground, his heart filled with regret.

Lin Mu glanced at him indifferently. "Pleading with me is useless."

A shiver ran through Long Ao's body. He immediately turned to Liu Zijian. "I hope Elder Liu will spare my family. I beg you!"

Ao Ye, the leader of the Six Dragons of Jiangbei, was actually calling someone else 'Elder.' If any outsider heard this, they would be shocked speechless.

"Elder Brother Mu, let's just let this matter go," Liu Zijian said, looking at Lin Mu.

Lin Mu glanced at Liu Zijian and nodded. He understood his brother's intentions. Liu Zijian wanted to continue developing his influence in Jiangbei, which naturally required the support of local powers. Otherwise, after one Dai Yongqing, there would be a second, and then a third. Lin Mu couldn't possibly be as lucky every time to arrive and save Liu Zijian as he was this time. Nor could he keep watch over Jiangbei day in and day out.

They were brothers, so he naturally understood his brother's painstaking efforts.

He wants to build something for himself, starting right here in Jiangbei!

Lin Mu smiled in satisfaction.

"Though your life will be spared," Lin Mu said, "you will not escape punishment!"

"Thank you, Master Lin, for the mercy of sparing my life!" Hearing he wouldn't be killed, Long Ao was overcome with ecstatic joy, tears of excitement streaming down his face.

"If you're going to thank someone, thank him. With my temper, you're lucky I haven't slaughtered your entire clan!" Lin Mu stated coolly, nearly scaring Long Ao to death.

So it's true. Lin Wudi really does enjoy slaughtering entire families!

Thinking this, Long Ao hurriedly kowtowed to Liu Zijian. "Thank you for your magnanimity, Elder Liu! From this day forward, whatever you command, I will go through fire and water without hesitation!"

"No need for formalities." Liu Zijian gave a slight clasp of his hands, his demeanor neither servile nor overbearing. Having spent so much time with Elder Brother Mu, Liu Zijian had naturally grown more composed and developed a dignified air.

"Very good, Long Ao. From now on, you will be responsible for assisting Zijian," Lin Mu declared. "As long as you are sufficiently loyal and do not act with duplicity, I guarantee that you can become not just the Dragon of Jiangbei, but the Dragon of the entire Three Rivers Area. It wouldn't even be difficult."

"Thank you, Master Lin! I will certainly not fail to meet your expectations!" Long Ao bowed deeply, his voice thick with gratitude.

Lin Mu sat on his chair like an emperor surveying his domain, his aura majestic and commanding. "However, you must also remember that you only have one chance. If I find even the slightest reason to be dissatisfied, you know the consequences!"

"Yes, I shall strictly obey Master Lin's command!" Long Ao's forehead struck the floor with force. His trembling voice was enough to stir the hearts of all who heard it.

"Rise," Liu Zijian said, moving to help Long Ao to his feet. "From now on, we are brothers."

"I dare not, I dare not," Long Ao said, waving his hands frantically. "In the future, I hope Elder Liu will look after me."

As of now, Liu Zijian was arguably the one person in Jiangbei nobody could afford to offend. His son was a Sword Talent that the Crane Immortal Sect was desperate to recruit. His brother was Lin Wudi, the Martial Arts Grandmaster ranked tenth on the Heavenly List. How could anyone dare to cross such a man?

Perhaps, as of today, the so-called Five Phoenixes and Six Dragons of Jiangbei would be no more.

"Master Lin..."

With the matter resolved, the members of the Crane Immortal Sect breathed a collective sigh of relief. After much hesitation, Liu Su finally decided to speak.

"What is it? You want me to persuade Xiao Lin to join your Crane Immortal Sect?" Lin Mu asked, cutting her off as if he already knew what she was going to say. "But what, exactly, can your Crane Immortal Sect offer him?"

"Our sect has a great wealth of Cultivation Techniques and sword arts!" Liu Su said hastily. "If this child joins our sect, I guarantee he will become my father's closed-door disciple and my own junior brother!"

"GASP!"

The Great Elder and the others sucked in a sharp breath, utterly shocked. There's a huge difference between a direct disciple and a closed-door disciple. A direct disciple is simply one of many under the Sect Leader, but a closed-door disciple is the very last student a master will ever take. As such, the master passes down their entire legacy to them. Therefore, the offer Liu Su made was incredibly significant.

"Not enough," Lin Mu said flatly. "I have cultivation techniques and sword arts as well. Besides, with my status, do you really think I can't teach a disciple better than the Sect Leader of your Crane Immortal Sect?"

"I dare not!" Liu Su bowed quickly, her expression tense. She had witnessed Lin Mu's Sword Dao firsthand. She knew her offers were indeed insignificant in comparison.

Liu Su glanced at Liu Xiaolin, her heart filling with reluctance and disappointment. "Since that is the case, then I will take my leave."

"Actually," Lin Mu said suddenly, "even if Xiao Lin doesn't become a disciple of your Crane Immortal Sect, he could be something else."

Liu Su instinctively asked, "What?"

"An Honorary Guest Officer!"

Lin Mu and his group departed.

Liu Su also left with the stunned disciples of the Crane Immortal Sect. She said she had to return to the sect to discuss the matter.

An Honorary Guest Officer? Thinking of the condition Lin Mu had proposed, Liu Su couldn't help but feel a surge of excitement. She was confident her father and the entire Crane Immortal Sect would agree.

It wasn't for any other reason than Lin Wudi himself.

Hua Meiniang was shocked, but her feelings were far more complex. Recalling Lin Mu's ruthless treatment of her, her heart was filled with bitterness and, strangely, a flicker of shyness. This man was truly different from any other she had ever met. Ruthless, decisive, and aloof! Yet, instead of hatred, Hua Meiniang found herself inwardly captivated by him. His thoughts and actions were so breathtaking they seemed to be beyond the mortal realm! Perhaps, without even realizing it herself, her fear of him was mingled with a sliver of admiration. A man like that is the only kind who could become a Martial Arts Grandmaster revered by thousands! She wondered what kind of woman could possibly be worthy of him.

Chapter 408: The Winter Lotus Blooms, As If An Old Friend Has Arrived!

"Elder Brother Mu, why did you make Xiao Lin the Honorary Guest Officer of the Crane Immortal Sect?"

After leaving the Bai Mei Nightclub, Liu Zijian glanced at Liu Xiaolin, who was licking a lollipop, and felt a knot of unease form in his stomach.

This kid? The Honorary Guest Officer of the Crane Immortal Sect? Is this a joke?

Lin Mu stopped in his tracks. "Because I'm helping the Crane Immortal Sect."

"What?"

Liu Zijian was even more stunned.

Making Xiao Lin, a four-or-five-year-old kid, their Honorary Guest Officer... and that's considered helping them? Elder Brother Mu, what are you even thinking?

It wasn't surprising that Liu Zijian thought this way. Thanks to his connection with Lin Mu, he had some understanding of the Martial Arts World.

For instance, the Crane Immortal Sect was the only ancient martial sect in Jiangbei, boasting numerous disciples and countless experts. He had even heard that the Sect Leader of the Crane Immortal Sect, Liu Qingshan, was a figure on the Heavenly Ranking.

A sect with such powerful people needs help? And help from a child, no less?

Lin Mu glanced at Su Ke'er, who understood immediately and led Liu Xiaolin a short distance away. She knew Lin Mu had something he needed to say to Liu Zijian alone.

"Zijian, have you ever considered that Xiao Lin's future is different from others?" Lin Mu said seriously. "His life is destined to be extraordinary."

Liu Zijian looked over at Liu Xiaolin and took a deep breath. "Elder Brother Mu, I know. I've known ever since you told me Xiao Lin has that... Limitless Sword Body."

"Although I don't understand the ways of you Martial Artists, I know Xiao Lin has his own path to walk. As his father, all I can do is support him."

A shadow of sorrow flickered across Liu Zijian's face.

"But he's just a child in the end. I'm worried..."

After all, Liu Xiaolin wasn't even five years old yet. If he truly became a Martial Artist, he would face countless life-or-death crises. How could his father not be anxious?

"That's why I'll keep him with me for a while." Lin Mu patted Liu Zijian's shoulder. "Zijian, you've seen it for yourself. The world of Martial Artists isn't a peaceful one. It's a world of clashing swords and dark schemes, utterly ruthless and bloody."

Lin Mu paused, then said hesitantly, "Xiao Lin is your son, so there's something I have to tell you. If you don't agree to him becoming a Martial Artist, or even becoming someone like me, I can stop it right now. I would even seal his Sword Body and let him live an ordinary, peaceful life."

"I..."

Liu Zijian was suddenly at a loss for words. His head hung low, his expression fraught with conflict.

"It's alright. Take your time to think, and let me know when you've decided," Lin Mu said with a smile. "Zijian, you just need to remember one thing. You are my brother, Lin Mu's brother, for this life and all lives to come!"

"Xiao Lin isn't just your son. He's my son, too!"

With that, Lin Mu turned and walked toward Liu Xiaolin.

"Xiao Lin, come with me. I have something to tell you."

Calling for Liu Xiaolin, Lin Mu headed toward a nearby park.

It was just dawn, and a few elderly people were already exercising in the park. They wore relaxed smiles, greeting familiar friends and chatting about their daily lives and household matters.

He led Liu Xiaolin through the park until they stood before a man-made lake. The lake's surface was shrouded in a fine mist, like a scene from a painting.

Liu Xiaolin was a little nervous, keeping his head down, not daring to meet Lin Mu's gaze.

"You're the one who has been subtly influencing Xiao Lin this past year, aren't you?" Lin Mu suddenly asked, his back still to the boy.

Liu Xiaolin's whole body jolted, and his head snapped up.

But his eyes were no longer innocent. Instead, they held a profound, ancient weariness.

"Correct."

Liu Xiaolin spoke. His voice was still that of a child, but his tone was filled with a sense of sorrow and resignation.

"To be honest, I never expected this child's talent in the Sword Dao to be so immense. He comprehended the Sword Heart in just one short year." 'Liu Xiaolin' spoke, his tone a mixture of admiration and relief. "To forge the Sword Heart, crystallize the Sword Bone, harmonize Yin Yang, transform into the Infinite! The Limitless Sword Body... it is truly a rarity in this world. Terrifyingly so!"

Lin Mu turned to look at 'Liu Xiaolin,' a meaningful smile playing on his lips. His tone grew colder. "You know that's not what I'm talking about."

"Alas." 'Liu Xiaolin' heaved a long sigh, a wry smile on his face. "I never thought I had hidden myself so well, and yet you still saw through it. You truly are worthy of..."

'Liu Xiaolin' clamped his mouth shut before he could finish. In that instant, he had felt a bone-chilling killing intent.

Even if he hid himself perfectly, and his Divine Soul completely fused with the child's, his opponent still had a way to drag 'him' out and utterly annihilate 'his' soul.

"I admit," 'Liu Xiaolin' said with a bitter smile, "when I first took the opportunity to possess this child, I intended to use him to resurrect myself. But I never anticipated that you had also left a countermeasure inside his body. When I was about to make my move, it delivered a fatal blow that nearly scattered my soul."

"There's a lot you don't know," Lin Mu said, a mocking curve to his lips. "For example, your relationship with the Crane Immortal Sect."

"Liu Mubai? The Crane Immortal Sect has always been passed down through the Liu family. I wonder, which generation's Sect Leader are you?"

'Liu Xiaolin'—or more accurately, Liu Mubai—had a look of utter shock on his face. "How did you find out?" Then, a bitter smile spread across his lips. "But of course. What in this world is unknown to Lin Wudi? I thought I had hidden that sword strike perfectly, but I see you discovered it as well."

He was, of course, referring to Liu Xiaolin's battle with Qing Yun.

Although Qing Yun's cultivation level was not high, his comprehension of the Crane Immortal Sect's sword techniques was quite profound. Even with the Limitless Sword Body and a forged Sword Heart, it should have been impossible for Liu Xiaolin to shatter his opponent's killing move in a single strike.

The only other possibility was that Liu Xiaolin himself knew the weaknesses of the Crane Immortal Sect's sword techniques. But Lin Mu had never taught the boy any Sword Dao. He had only left a strand of Sword Qi to help temper his Divine Soul and forge his Sword Heart.

Therefore, it could only have been Liu Mubai. The very same Sword Talent who also possessed a sword body!

The moment Liu Su had appeared, Lin Mu understood.

Liu Mubai had to have a relationship with the Crane Immortal Sect. And a deep one at that. Otherwise, Liu Su would never have appeared so suddenly. Liu Su had been summoned by Liu Mubai!

"You're correct, but not entirely," 'Liu Mubai' said, gazing at the lake's surface. "I am not the Sect Leader of the Crane Immortal Sect. The sect was founded by my wife."

Lin Mu was slightly surprised. He knew there were many old stories behind this, tales unknown to the outside world.

'Liu Mubai' seemed unwilling to say more. He bowed deeply to Lin Mu. "Thank you for letting this child become the Honorary Guest Officer of the Crane Immortal Sect. This is a kindness I, Mubai, will hold in my heart!"

As he finished speaking, Liu Xiaolin's body trembled, and an overwhelming Sword Qi erupted from him.

SWISH! SWISH!

The lake water rippled, the Sword Qi glittering on its surface.

The people exercising in the park all cried out in alarm, their eyes drawn to the lake.

"Look!"

In the lake, withered lotuses suddenly sprouted new leaves and blossomed one after another, filling the entire park with their fragrance.

Lotus flowers blooming in the dead of winter... like an old friend returning.

But the old friend didn't come. Instead, he had already departed.

Watching the vague figure disappear over the lake, Lin Mu sighed inwardly.

He gently patted Liu Xiaolin's head. "Kneel and bow three times toward the lake."

"Oh!"

Without asking why, Liu Xiaolin obediently knelt and touched his forehead to the ground three times in the direction of the lake, his eyes turning slightly red.

"Godfather, I feel like crying."

"A man doesn't shed his tears lightly."

"Yes! I'll remember that!"

Chapter 409: I Don't Want to Bully You Either!

Liu Xiaolin asked blankly, "Godfather, why have the lotuses bloomed?"

Lin Mu gave an unrelated answer. "When the time is right, I'll take you to the Crane Immortal Sect."

"But I just want to practice martial arts with you, Godfather."

Lin Mu laughed. "We're just going to return something. There's no need to join the Crane Immortal Sect."

"That's good." Liu Xiaolin smiled happily again.

Liu Mubai had vanished completely, leaving behind a pond brimming with lotuses. Liu Xiaolin's bow was not only a tribute to Liu Mubai but also an acceptance of his promise: he had to deliver the item Liu Mubai left behind to the Crane Immortal Sect.

Liu Xiaolin asked, "So when are we going?"

Lin Mu replied, "Very soon."

Less than two months remained in the year-long commitment, and Lin Mu still needed to make a trip to Jiangling before it was up. Time was growing tight. He needed to handle these affairs before he could face Zhang Daoyun in battle with a clear mind.

At this moment, Liu Zijian walked over.

"Have you thought it through?" Lin Mu asked, knowing that his brother had made his decision.

"Yes." Liu Zijian watched the elderly people practicing their forms in the park. "If it weren't for you, Elder Brother Mu, my life would have been less than ordinary. I don't want Xiao Lin to be like me, living a life of mediocrity, achieving nothing."

Patting Liu Xiaolin's head, Liu Zijian smiled. "As his father, there's very little I can do for him. I can only wish for his peace and happiness. But Xiao Lin ultimately has his own path to follow, one where I am powerless to help. The most I can do is try my best to give him a complete home."

Lin Mu laughed, "Yang Jie?"

Liu Zijian's face turned slightly red.

Lin Mu smiled. "Yang Jie is a nice girl. Take good care of her."

Liu Zijian, rubbing his head and looking slightly embarrassed, said, "Yang Jie and I are planning to get married."

Lin Mu was a bit surprised, then immediately smiled. "Good. Remember to let me know."

"Definitely!" Liu Zijian laughed. "You're my best brother!"

「Two days later.」

Liu Su appeared before Lin Mu, accompanied by a group of Crane Immortal Sect disciples.

"Master Lin, the sect has decided to approve Liu Xiaolin's appointment as our Honorary Guest Officer!"
Liu Su gave Lin Mu a deep bow. "However, they need to see the boy in person."

"Alright." Lin Mu nodded. "Then let's set off."

Liu Su was taken aback. "Set off?"

Lin Mu smiled faintly. "To the Crane Immortal Sect, of course."

Liu Su trembled, momentarily speechless.

Lin Mu said, "Rest assured, as long as the Crane Immortal Sect harbors no ulterior motives, I will merely observe and will absolutely not interfere in your sect's affairs."

"Thank you, Master Lin!"

「Heming Mountain!」

Located in Eastern Jiangbei and Western Chuanshu, Heming Mountain is part of the Min Mountain range with an elevation of over 1,000 meters. It lies north of Qingcheng Mountain, south of Emei Mountain, and west of Wuzhong Mountain, with its foothills reaching the Western Sichuan Plain. Named for its crane-like shape, the hidden stone cranes, and the celestial cranes that dwelt there, it is one of the four renowned mountains of ancient Jiannan.

Although Heming Mountain is in Sichuan-Shu, the Crane Immortal Sect's influence has always been based in Jiangbei. For this reason, the sect has always been known as the number one ancient martial sect of Jiangbei.

It was said that before the establishment of Dragon Tiger Mountain, Heming Mountain had always been a place of cultivation for extraordinary people. It was even rumored that Guang Chengzi of the pre-Qin era and Zhou Yishan of the Western Han dynasty ascended on the backs of cranes from this very place. Therefore, Heming Mountain is also regarded as the birthplace of Taoism, known as the "Daoist Celestial Capital" and the "Ancestral Home of Taoism."

Sichuan-Shu was home to many sects, such as the Emei Sect and the Qingcheng Sect. Since ancient times, Sichuan-Shu has been incredibly mysterious, collectively called the Southern Tri-Province along with Qianzhou and Yun Province.

Of course, none of this had much to do with the Crane Immortal Sect. Although the sect was situated on Heming Mountain, it had begun to decline over generations of change, its strength a shadow of its former self. Nevertheless, the Crane Immortal Sect was still the only ancient martial arts sect in Jiangbei and was regarded as its most powerful entity.

On the way, Lin Mu learned much more about the various sects from Liu Su. He also learned that the Crane Immortal Sect was not, in fact, at peace. Although Sect Leader Liu Qingshan was a Martial Arts Grandmaster ranked thirty-third on the Heavenly List, he had been famous for many years, and his prestige in the Martial Arts World was not particularly high. Furthermore, Liu Qingshan was always low-key and unversed in worldly affairs. Many of the sect's matters were managed by the elders, while he spent most of his time in seclusion. This time, if it had not been for Liu Su and Liu Zhengtang's insistence that they had encountered a once-in-a-millennium Sword Talent, Liu Qingshan might not have agreed to meet Liu Xiaolin at all.

Half a day later, the group finally arrived at the foot of Heming Mountain. However, Liu Su did not lead them directly up the mountain but took a side path.

"I hope Master Lin won't mind. Although the Crane Immortal Sect has always considered Heming Mountain our territory, the internal affairs are complex, so I won't go into detail," Liu Su said with an apologetic but troubled expression.

This being another sect's internal affairs, Lin Mu naturally did not bother to inquire further.

After several more hours, they finally reached the mountainside. This area had been designated as a forbidden zone. Aside from a few areas opened to tourists to generate income, everything beyond this point was where the disciples of the Crane Immortal Sect lived and cultivated.

The Crane Immortal Sect was not large; at a glance, one could only see a few buildings nestled deep in the mountains. However, the architecture was ancient and majestic, exuding an austere and solemn atmosphere.

"Master Lin, this way, please." After dismissing the other disciples, Liu Su led Lin Mu and Liu Xiaolin toward the council hall.

Even before they entered, Lin Mu could hear the sounds of an argument from within.

"A child of four or five becoming an Honorary Guest Officer of the Crane Immortal Sect? I disagree!"

"Elder Cen, it's no use disagreeing! That child has profound ties to Lin Wudi!" someone urged.

"No matter what. He can join our Crane Immortal Sect, and I'd have no objection even if he were a direct disciple. But an Honorary Guest Officer? Don't even think about it!"

Hearing the argument from the hall, Liu Su looked embarrassed and quickly explained, "The one objecting is Elder Cen from our sect's Hall of Punishment. He's always been in charge of discipline and is very particular about these rules."

Lin Mu smiled faintly. "Don't worry. He'll agree."

Not knowing where Lin Mu's confidence came from, Liu Su gave him a curious glance before leading the two of them into the hall.

The arguing crowd inside fell silent the moment the three entered. A variety of expressions crossed their faces as they stared at Liu Xiaolin, who stood beside Lin Mu. Being stared at by so many people, Liu Xiaolin grew nervous and timidly hid behind Lin Mu.

"Such pure sword intent! Truly a once-in-a-millennium Sword Talent!" a portly elder exclaimed in admiration.

"Hmph! We'll only know if he's a Sword Talent after a proper examination," another elder grumbled. He was none other than Elder Cen, the one who opposed making Liu Xiaolin an Honorary Guest Officer.

Elder Cen adopted a stern, official tone. "Furthermore, to become an Honorary Guest Officer of the Crane Immortal Sect, being a Sword Talent is not enough. One must also possess commensurate strength!"

"That's simple." Lin Mu gestured to Liu Xiaolin. "You two have a match. We'll listen to whoever wins."

"How about it?"

The hall fell silent for an instant before erupting into an uproar.

Elder Cen was furious. "You want me to bully a child? I could never do such a thing!"

"Why don't you fight me instead!" Elder Cen stared at Lin Mu, his fighting spirit flaring.

Lin Mu shook his head with a smile. "But I don't want to bully you either."

Chapter 410: Sorry, I don't agree!

"You..."

As soon as he spoke, the entire council hall fell silent. Then, a wave of angry voices erupted.

"I don't want to bully you, either?" He's treating the Punishment Elder of the Crane Immortal Sect like a child! How utterly arrogant!

"How dare you!"

"Impudent!"

"Arrogant brat!"

Several powerful auras erupted, enveloping Lin Mu. However, Lin Mu simply stood with his hands clasped behind his back, smiling at the crowd without moving an inch.

Meanwhile, Liu Su's expression changed. She retreated several steps, her own aura becoming disrupted. Seeing that Lin Mu hadn't budged, a look of shock filled her eyes. She was about to speak and warn the elders not to provoke him.

"Hmm?"

Elder Cen and the others' expressions shifted as well, and an even more powerful surge of True Qi erupted from them.

BOOM!

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

The other elders unleashed their power in unison, their fierce auras surging forward in an attempt to completely suppress Lin Mu. True Qi surged like a raging flood, crashing down on him. Yet, his expression remained unchanged, the corners of his mouth curling into a faint, mocking smile.

He was like a reef in a raging storm, unmoving no matter how the mountains and seas crashed against him. Not only was he unaffected, but even Liu Xiaolin, standing behind him, felt nothing at all.

This time, Liu Su could no longer withstand the pressure and retreated all the way to the hall's entrance.

GASP!

Elder Cen and the others drew a sharp breath, their eyes wide with shock.

Who on earth was this young man? He faced four cultivators at the peak of Internal Energy and one Martial Way expert on the verge of becoming a Half-step Grandmaster, yet he remained utterly calm and fearless.

"Elders, he is..."

Liu Su began, but an aura far more terrifying and vast than that of all the Crane Immortal Sect elders combined erupted from Lin Mu like a volcano. It roared directly toward the five elders.

The words caught in Liu Su's throat as the force threw her from the hall, and she nearly stumbled to the ground.

The other elders, who bore the brunt of the impact, roared in defiance and mobilized their True Qi to resist Lin Mu's oppressive presence. However, how could they possibly be a match for him? Even with their combined strength, they were completely unable to withstand the pressure of his aura.

Elder Cen staggered back several steps, and the other elders were forced to retreat as well.

Then, Lin Mu gently lifted one foot.

"Not good!"

As if sensing what was coming, Elder Cen's expression changed dramatically. He cried out in alarm, raising his hands in a defensive posture.

"Master Lin, please show mercy!"

Just then, a clear, resonant voice rang out.

Lin Mu lowered his foot, and the aura around him vanished abruptly. Everything returned to a state of calm. It was as if the previous scene had been an illusion, leaving behind a hollow sense of fear in everyone's hearts.

A middle-aged man dressed in white entered from outside. He had long hair draped over his shoulders and a scholarly, elegant air about him, as if he had just stepped out of a period drama.

This was the current Sect Leader of the Crane Immortal Sect, Liu Qingshan! A Martial Arts Grandmaster ranked thirty-third on the Heaven List.

"Sect Leader!"

Upon seeing Liu Qingshan, Elder Cen and the others breathed a collective sigh of relief.

Following behind Liu Qingshan was a handsome young man with a faint smile on his face.

"Many thanks, Master Lin, for showing mercy," Liu Qingshan said as he entered, clasping his hands in a gesture of gratitude. "Otherwise, my Crane Immortal Sect would have been utterly disgraced today."

The young man behind him raised an eyebrow, a flash of disdain in his eyes.

Master Lin? This person is about my age. Could he really be a Grandmaster? My master is far too courteous to people.

"Sect Leader, I..." Elder Cen began to explain, but Liu Qingshan held up a hand. "I already know."

Stopping Elder Cen, Liu Qingshan turned to Lin Mu. "I have just emerged from my seclusion. Please forgive me for not being here to welcome you upon hearing of your visit to our Crane Immortal Sect, Master Lin."

Given Liu Qingshan's refined and scholarly demeanor, he made a rather good impression. Lin Mu had only come to let Liu Xiaolin see the Crane Immortal Sect and had no intention of causing trouble, so he nodded. "It's nothing. A small matter not worth mentioning."

"Tch."

Before Liu Qingshan could say anything, the young man behind him scoffed, "What Master Lin? You're quite the actor!"

"Qing Yan!" Liu Qingshan snapped, his expression darkening with displeasure.

Although the young man, Qing Yan, looked unconvinced, he fell silent. His gaze toward Lin Mu, however, grew even more contemptuous.

"I presume this must be the Sword Talent my daughter spoke of?" Liu Qingshan directed his gaze to Liu Xiaolin. Suddenly, his eyes sharpened. He took two steps forward to scrutinize Liu Xiaolin more carefully.

"A limpid Sword Heart and the purity of a child... This boy is truly a Sword Talent seen only once in ten thousand years!" Liu Qingshan could no longer maintain his composure, and his eyes burned with fervor as he looked at Liu Xiaolin.

"Sect Leader Liu has a sharp eye," Lin Mu said with a faint smile. "Xiaolin, come and pay your respects to Sect Leader Liu."

"Greetings, Sect Leader Liu." Liu Xiaolin was a bit nervous, but he still stepped forward and bowed. While his form wasn't perfect, his sincerity was clear.

"There's no need for such formalities," Liu Qingshan said with a hearty laugh. "Child, are you willing to study under me and become my closed-door disciple?"

"Master, you mustn't!" Qing Yan couldn't help but blurt out before Liu Xiaolin could answer. "Master, we haven't even investigated his background! Please, don't be rash!"

He was Liu Qingshan's youngest disciple and had always considered himself the Sect Leader's closed-door disciple within the Crane Immortal Sect.

It's a tradition in the Crane Immortal Sect: the Sect Leader's closed-door disciple is qualified to inherit the leadership! If Liu Qingshan really accepts another disciple, won't I lose my chance to become the next Sect Leader?

"Oh?" Liu Qingshan glanced at Qing Yan coolly. "What? Are you saying your master is being reckless?"

"Of course not!" Qing Yan shuddered but summoned his courage. "I only mean that even if you truly wish to accept another disciple, Master, we should still verify his identity. After all, an ancient martial sect isn't like an ordinary faction. Once someone joins, all ties to the mortal world must be severed."

Liu Qingshan grew pensive and nodded. "That is true."

Before Qing Yan could feel a sense of relief, Liu Qingshan continued, "However, since he was brought here by Master Lin, his identity and origins can surely be trusted."

"Master..." Qing Yan's face paled, and he started to speak again.

"Hm?"

This time, Liu Qingshan just gave Qing Yan a cold look without speaking.

Qing Yan's eye twitched, and he didn't dare to say another word. But deep down, anger had already begun to take root.

Liu Qingshan turned his gaze back to Liu Xiaolin, his admiration growing by the second. "Child, just give me a nod, and you will become my closed-door disciple!"

Everyone's expressions changed slightly. They hadn't expected Liu Qingshan to take such a strong liking to Liu Xiaolin.

Just as everyone assumed Liu Xiaolin would agree, Lin Mu spoke up.

"I'm sorry, but I don't agree."