

Y Master 411

Chapter 411 Southwest Storm 1

Since the revival of the Martial Arts World, many sects and martial arts families have opened martial arts halls all over, and Nanming was no exception.

Martial arts halls were numerous in Nanming, among which the Wudang Martial Arts Hall was the most famous.

Located in the suburbs, the Nanming Wudang Martial Arts Hall consisted of a four-story building and two courtyards as large as soccer fields.

At eleven o'clock at night, five official disciples of Wudang sat cross-legged in the middle of the courtyard, surrounded by nine talismans, setting up a rough and simple "Nine Star Gathering Spirit Array."

As official disciples of Wudang, they spent all their time on cultivation, unconcerned with the operations of the martial arts hall, appearing only when martial artists from other sects came to challenge them.

At the other end of the courtyard in the training area, a dozen people were also sitting cross-legged.

They were the outer disciples of the Wudang Sect, mainly responsible for teaching martial arts to the members who joined the martial arts hall.

Because it was late, the entire martial arts hall was occupied only by them and the five official disciples of the Wudang Sect, while the members responsible for the operation of the martial arts hall had gone home after work.

Whoosh!

Suddenly, the middle-aged man in a Taoist robe, who was leading the group, opened his eyes, his eyes bursting with brilliance, scanning the southwest direction of the martial arts hall like a knife.

"Brother Wang Hong, what's wrong?"

The other four Wudang disciples, sensing the change in Wang Hong's energy, all opened their eyes and looked in the southwest direction of the courtyard, while sensing with their consciousness.

"Swoosh, swoosh, swoosh, swoosh, swoosh..."

The next moment.

Before Wang Hong could respond, several agile figures suddenly leapt into the courtyard.

"Someone has entered the courtyard!"

As soon as Wang Hong spoke, he sprang to his feet, bounced off the ground, and rushed towards the southwest corner of the courtyard.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

Seeing this, the other four Wudang disciples, without a word, quickly got up and followed closely behind Wang Hong.

Meanwhile, the dozen outer disciples on the other side also noticed the commotion made by Wang Hong and his group, standing up and watching from a distance.

Simultaneously, in the bushes in the southwest direction of the courtyard, ten men in black combat gear, holding submachine guns, saw Wang Hong and the others rushing through the bushes. They didn't fire but aimed, waiting for the command from their leader, Ma San.

"The north side, be alert, the moment we start shooting here, you must enter the courtyard and attack those outer disciples on the other side, make sure to end the fight in the shortest time!" Ma San, the leader, transmitted his orders in stiff Chinese through the radio.

"Yes, Brother Three!"

Soon, the radio crackled with responses.

Hearing this, Ma San put down the radio, aimed his submachine gun, and said gravely, "Open fire!"

"Da da da da da da..."

Following Ma San's command, gunfire erupted, and bullets whistled out of the barrel, sweeping toward Wang Hong and his four companions, forming a dense net of fire.

"Be careful!"

As a Postnatal Perfect Martial Artist, Wang Hong immediately hit the ground and shouted loudly at the sound of gunfire, trying to alert his companions.

However—

Compared to Wang Hong, the other four official Wudang disciples were limited in strength, had weak sensing abilities, and their reaction speeds were significantly slower.

By the time they sensed the danger, bullets carrying the breath of death had already whistled in front of them, piercing their bodies and leaving behind crimson bloody holes, much like shattered wasp nests.

Whoosh!

Hearing the intense gunfire and seeing the four official Wudang disciples fall into pools of blood, the dozen outer disciples on the north side turned pale with shock, standing frozen like statues.

"There are people behind us!"

Just then, the strongest among the outer disciples, with his exceptional sensing ability, suddenly detected movement behind them. Turning back, he saw a string of black figures leap into the courtyard, and immediately raised the alarm.

"Da da da da da da..."

The next moment.

Before the other outer disciples could recover from the shock, gunfire erupted again.

In an instant, including the outer disciple who had sensed movement behind him, all the outer disciples were unable to dodge in time and were riddled with bullets, collapsing into pools of blood.

"Bastards!"

Hearing gunfire coming from behind without turning back to look, Wang Hong, still lying on the ground, guessed that the outer disciples had likely met with misfortune, and rage surged in his heart.

Given the status of the Wudang Sect in the Huaxia Martial Arts World and the secular influence of the Wudang Martial Arts Hall, martial arts halls in various places had always been safe, not to mention attacks, even challenges were few and far between.

Due to this, although Wang Hong had sensed someone entering the martial arts hall courtyard, he hadn't taken it too seriously.

Only now did he realize: This was a premeditated slaughter!

"Whew, whew,"

After a surge of anger, Wang Hong took a couple of deep breaths, trying hard to calm himself down.

As a Postnatal Perfect Martial Artist, he could easily dodge bullets from thirty meters away under normal circumstances, but that was on the precondition that there was only one shooter, and not one as skilled as those legendary gunmen!

Currently, facing ten exceptional shooters, even from thirty meters away, he couldn't guarantee a safe escape.

"Swoosh, swoosh, swoosh, swoosh—"

Moments later, as Wang Hong was considering how to escape, four sounds of tearing air suddenly rang out, and four grenades with pins pulled almost simultaneously hurled towards his position.

Whoosh!

Wang Hong's face changed color in fright, his hands pressed against the ground like a toad, as he leaped up.

"Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom!"

Immediately, explosions sounded, flames illuminating the sky above the martial arts hall, and the shockwave from the grenade, mixed with countless steel balls, shot out towards the center of the explosion.

"Bang! Bang! Bang!"

Despite Wang Hong's best efforts to dodge, he was still hit by three flying steel balls, but fortunately he had spread his power throughout his body, which prevented fatal injuries.

But... this still affected his speed, slowing him down considerably.

"Da Da Da Da Da Da."

At that moment, known as the former gun god of Vietnam Special Forces, Ma San didn't hesitate to pull the trigger, the gun barrel spitting fire, the bullets whistling towards Wang Hong.

"Pfft!"

Wang Hong couldn't dodge in time and was hit by a bullet in the leg. His movement hesitated, then he was hit by more bullets and killed instantly.

"Retreat!"

Seeing this, Ma San put down his gun, and with a retreat gesture, he sent the command to his men in the north through the radio.

In less than half a minute, led by Ma San, twenty trained gunmen nimbly jumped out of the martial arts hall courtyard and drove away.

...

Two minutes earlier in time.

As Ma San and his men opened fire, a SUV, carrying a Yanhuang Organization Southwest Office license plate, was filled with members of the Yanhuang Organization except for the driver, all of whom turned their attention towards the direction of the Wudang Martial Arts Hall.

"Could it be a gang shootout?"

"Very likely. It's said that Ye Fan is secretly controlling the Dong Hai Gang, it's entirely possible that he was implementing a two-pronged approach, decapitating Wu Hu on one hand, and having the gang members of the Dong Hai Gang strike Wu Hu's men with a surprise attack."

"It looks like that lad Ye Fan came well-prepared, hellbent on eliminating Nanqinghong's influence in the Southwest."

Hearing the words of his subordinates, the team leader from the Yanhuang Organization said thoughtfully.

"Boom!"

No sooner had he spoken, a deafening explosion came from the direction of Tiger Roar Manor.

Whoosh!

The four Yanhuang Organization members turned their attention towards Tiger Roar Manor halfway up the mountainside and clearly saw a flash of flames shoot into the sky, nearly illuminating the dark night sky.

The light flashed once and the sky returned to darkness.

"This situation is far more serious than we thought, quick, we must hurry to Tiger Roar Manor!"

The lead Yanhuang Organization member gave his orders with a serious expression, then he took out the special communicator of the Yanhuang Organization to report.

At the same time.

Tiger Roar Manor, the villa where Wu Hu lived, the Enchanting Soul Array that surrounded it vanished, and the villa was reduced to rubble, Xu Longxiang, Wu Hu, and his bodyguard were all dead.

The sudden noise caused immediate chaos at the manor, and when the members of Nanqinghong heard that Wu Hu's villa was destroyed and they couldn't reach Wu Hu, they were almost scared to death—they dared not check it personally but chose to flee the manor instead.

All because, as elites of the Nanqinghong's Southwest division, they were well aware of the capabilities of Wu Hu and his personal bodyguard Cui Shan.

They believed that anyone who could stealthily kill Wu Hu, Cui Shan, and others, and bomb the villa without leaving any trace was clearly out of their league!

The facts were indeed so.

For Ye Fan, killing them was no different from stepping on a bunch of ants.

However, Ye Fan did not embark on a killing spree but used explosives found in the manor to destroy the villa and eliminate the evidence, before quickly leaving the manor.

Hm?

Ten minutes later, just as Ye Fan was descending the mountain through a small path, he suddenly sensed four martial artists' presences, and their capabilities all exceeded the Postnatal Perfection Realm.

"They must be from the Yanhuang Organization."

After careful sensing, Ye Fan confirmed the identities of the owners of those presences, and also recalled Chu Ji's advice before coming to the Southwest.

Chu Ji, besides suggesting he seek the aid of Ma Chaoyang to find clues about Su Liuli after reaching the Southwest, also warned him to be cautious once Su Liuli was captured by Nanqinghong, and not to let the Yanhuang Organization's Southwest head, Zhou Wu, catch him off guard, for two reasons.

First, Zhou Wu's fellow disciple is one of the core martial artists wooed by the Bai Family, considered a rare pro-Bai Family faction core member within the Yanhuang Organization.

Second, because Ye Wenhao once held power in the Southwest with his immense combat power, dominate all the evil forces so they dared not stir trouble in the Southwest, his reputation far and wide.

Since the Golden Triangle region became the new center of the underworld, the Southwest, being close to the Golden Triangle, has not only seen martial artists from various factions but also frequent conflicts.

As a result, both those direct descendants of Ye Wenhao left in the Southwest and some other high-level officials believed Zhou Wu was inactive, neglecting his duties, and have frequently targeted him, even jointly proposing to the standing committee that a report should be submitted to replace the head of the Yanhuang Organization in the Southwest.

All this made Zhou Wu very uncomfortable, and he also believed that it was Ye Wenhao's standout performance that caused his problems.

"If Zhou Wu is really like what my aunt said, determined to obliterate me for the Bai Family, then to eradicate the Nanqinghong's Southwest division and replace it with the Dong Hai Gang, he must be driven out of the Southwest first!"

Thinking of everything Chu Ji had advised, Ye Fan was clear as a mirror.

Chapter 412 Southwest Storm 2

The night grew dense in the compound of the Southwest Province committee, a picture of tranquility.

Two soldiers responsible for standing guard embraced their steel guns, their expressions stern as they stood at the entrance of the compound, in charge of inspecting all personnel and vehicles entering and exiting.

Inside the compound, two members of the Yanhuang Organization lurked in the shadows, releasing their consciousness, sensing everything within the compound, tasked with protecting the safety of all Southwest Province officials and their families, except for Zhou Wu.

This wasn't to say that Zhou Wu's rank was insufficient; rather, it was because Zhou Wu himself was an Innate Great Perfection Master, who fundamentally didn't need their protection.

As for his rank...

Zhou Wu's status was on par with the top officials in Southwest Province, but due to the special nature of his institution and the exclusion he faced, his status in the Southwest wasn't as prominent as that of the other officials.

Zhou Wu's residence was the No. 5 villa in the compound, ranking behind the heads of the other four institutions, which also indirectly evidenced his status in the Southwest Province's officialdom.

Having received a phone call from Bai Guotao and learning about Ye Fan's assassination of Wu Hu and others, Zhou Wu didn't meditate on the jade stone in his yard as usual; instead, he paced back and forth in the yard, contemplating how to handle the situation to his best advantage while waiting for the report from his subordinates.

"Beep..."

Suddenly, a light sound broke the quiet in the yard as Zhou Wu's special communicator on his wrist flashed red, indicating an incoming call.

Zhou Wu raised his wrist, glanced at it, and immediately answered the call.

"Director, we have arrived at Tiger Roar Manor..." The call connected, and the Yanhuang Organization member leading the team to Tiger Roar Manor was the first to report.

Zhou Wu, somewhat impatient, interrupted, "What's the situation?"

"Wu Hu's villa has been leveled to the ground, leaving no evidence behind, the entire manor is in chaos, and all members of Nanqinghong, except for the service staff, have vanished without a trace."

The Yanhuang Organization member reported hastily, "We questioned the manor's service staff; they didn't know what happened, only hearing a loud bang and seeing flames soaring from Wu Hu's villa. Afterwards, the members of Nanqinghong fled in panic, while these cowardly service staff didn't dare run away and hid in the manor."

"Hiss—"

Hearing the subordinate's report, Zhou Wu couldn't help but grimace—based on the subordinate's report, he could guess with his toes that all the evidence at the scene had been destroyed!

"Director, what should we do?" the Yanhuang Organization member asked for instructions.

"Immediately conduct a thorough inspection of the manor to see if there are any new findings. Also, investigate the surveillance footage of the manor and the roads leading to it," Zhou Wu thought for a moment and gave instructions, but held little hope—with Ye Fan's strength that defeated Ye Long, it would be too easy to infiltrate Tiger Roar Manor without anyone noticing.

"Director, to investigate the traffic videos of those roads leading to the manor, we need to contact the traffic department of the police," the Yanhuang Organization member, also thinking the chances were slim, remembered Zhou Wu's discord with Police Chief Ma Chaoyang and spoke with some difficulty.

"You just investigate the inside of the manor. As for the surveillance videos of the roads leading there, I'll speak to Ma Chaoyang later," Zhou Wu caught the implication from his subordinate and said huffily.

By rank, he was one of the giants of the Southwest Province, and Ma Chaoyang, the police chief, was far below him in status. In theory, he should unconditionally cooperate with his work, but since Ma Chaoyang was a direct lineage of Ye Wenhao previously in the Southwest, and a member of the Southwest Ye Family Camp, he never took Zhou Wu seriously in the past.

"Yes, Director!"

Sensing Zhou Wu's displeasure, the Yanhuang Organization member didn't dare to waste words and crisply acknowledged the order.

Zhou Wu ended the call and then heard the "beep beep" sound again as the communicator on his wrist lit up once more.

"What's the situation?"

This time, after answering the call, Zhou Wu was the first to ask. Previously, when dense gunshots rang out from the Wudang Martial Arts Hall, he had immediately sent people to investigate. The person calling now was that Yanhuang Organization member he had sent.

"Director, the Wudang Martial Arts Hall has been attacked, all the Wudang Sect's official disciples and outer disciples have been killed," said a short-statured member of the Yanhuang Organization, looking at the bodies and bloodstains all over the ground, his voice extremely grave, "They were all shot to death by stray bullets. In addition, there are fragments of a hand grenade explosion at the scene. The assailants seem to be a group of specially trained gunmen."

"Gunmen attacking the Wudang Martial Arts Hall for what?" Zhou Wu was shocked by this abrupt news and asked puzzledly.

"I don't know."

The short-statured member of the Yanhuang Organization inwardly cursed his luck; had he known why the gunmen attacked the Wudang Martial Arts Hall, he would have told Zhou Wu without waiting to be questioned.

"Then, are there any traces or evidence left at the scene?" Zhou Wu, realizing his own question was redundant, changed his inquiry.

"After a meticulous inspection just now, we found that apart from the shell casings used by the assailants and the grenade fragments, there are only some disordered footprints, but no other traces," the short-statured Yanhuang Organization member reported, inwardly sighing at how professional the assailants were.

So professional?

Not only the short-statured Yanhuang Organization member, but even Zhou Wu himself thought so, to the point that he was momentarily rooted to the spot.

Could it be the people from Dong hai Gang?

After a brief daze, Zhou Wu suddenly recalled the recent incident where Ye Wenhao and Ye Fan had slain Murong Gu and Father Murong of the Wudang Sect and felt a vague sense that this matter might also be related to Ye Fan.

"Director, police cars are on their way here, the police will arrive soon," the short-statured Yanhuang Organization member reported, watching the approaching police cars with sirens blaring.

"Protect the scene. I will immediately call Ma Chaoyang to request that the police fully cooperate with us in investigating this matter," Zhou Wu instructed after regaining composure.

Zhou Wu spoke and, remembering that Ma Chaoyang was a direct descendant brought up by Ye Wenhao himself, added, "Without receiving my orders, do not share our investigation information with the police. If the police inquire, use confidentiality regulations as your excuse."

"Yes, Director!"

The short member of the Yanhuang Organization took the order immediately.

Upon hearing this, Zhou Wu did not waste any more words and ended the call, then after a brief moment of contemplation, he still decided to call Ma Chaoyang.

Although he and Ma Chaoyang were incompatible, and Ma Chaoyang would likely help cover things up once he learned that everything done tonight was Ye Fan's doing, tonight's incident was not merely a fight between martial artists; the assailant also used firearms, which both morally and logically necessitated communication with Ma Chaoyang.

What was even more important was that, considering the current situation, Ye Fan had cleverly erased all evidence and traces, making it a must to use some of the police's investigative methods.

...

As the top official of the Southwest Police, Ma Chaoyang did not have the qualifications to move into the Provincial Committee compound; his residence was in the housing estate of the Public Security Office, a two-story villa.

In the study of the villa, Ma Chaoyang sat in front of the desk, fiercely smoking a cigarette, his expression somewhat grave.

All of this was because he had just received a report from below, informing him of a gunfight.

After receiving the report, he immediately ordered a thorough investigation of the incident at the site. However, due to the time consumed by orders passing down through the ranks and the limitations on the speed of dispatching officers, he had not received detailed reports as of yet.

"Buzz~"

Just as Ma Chaoyang was irritably snuffing out a cigarette, the mobile phone on the desk suddenly buzzed to life.

A thought struck Ma Chaoyang, and he quickly grabbed the phone, habitually glancing at the screen, only to see that the call was from Zhou Wu.

Huh?

This discovery made Ma Chaoyang slightly startled, but then he immediately realized that Zhou Wu's men must have reached the scene and obtained firsthand intelligence.

With this thought, Ma Chaoyang adjusted his emotions and answered the phone, speaking first, "Hello, Director Zhou."

"Director Ma, have you received a report about the incident that occurred tonight?" Zhou Wu asked directly.

"I am dispatching people for an investigation. Does Director Zhou have news already?" Ma Chaoyang asked without revealing anything.

"Yes, I've just received a report from my subordinates. Qinghong Group's Huaxia Branch vice president Wu Hu and his bodyguards were killed at Tiger Roar Manor, and the murderer destroyed the villa where Wu Hu lived to eliminate evidence. Later, there was a gunfight at the Wudang Martial Arts Hall, where all the formal disciples and outer disciples of Wudang were killed," Zhou Wu didn't hide anything.

Swish!

Hearing Zhou Wu's words, Ma Chaoyang's face instantly changed!

On one hand, he was unaware of the incident at Tiger Roar Manor, and on the other, as the leading official of the Southwest Police, he was very clear about the kind of sensation these two incidents would cause and the extremely adverse effects they would generate.

"Director Zhou, are you certain of this news?" After being shocked, Ma Chaoyang asked in a solemn tone.

"Certain," Zhou Wu said. "Before I called you, my people had already reached the scene."

"Who is the murderer?" Ma Chaoyang asked subconsciously.

"We don't know yet."

Zhou Wu did not share his own judgment but instead cautioned, "Director Ma, I'm sure you can judge the severity of these two incidents—if handled improperly, both you and I would be in deep trouble! Therefore, I suggest that our two sides fully cooperate to thoroughly investigate this matter and quickly apprehend the murderer to provide an explanation to our superiors. What do you think?"

"Good."

Even though he did not see eye to eye with Zhou Wu, Ma Chaoyang knew that with such an incident occurring, it was imperative that both departments fully cooperate.

"Since you have no objections on your end, we will wait until the on-site investigation is completely finished, then organize a meeting focused on this issue, inviting colleagues from the Security Office to participate as well,"

Seeing that Ma Chaoyang had no objections, Zhou Wu said, "As for the Secretary, I will communicate with him. You report to the Governor."

"Mm."

Ma Chaoyang responded absently, his mind suddenly flashing to Ye Fan's arrival in Nanming, startling as if from a dream: could it... could it be Ye Fan?

The next moment.

Before Ma Chaoyang could come up with an answer in his heart, a figure entered the study through the window.

The person was none other than Ye Fan!

Chapter 413 Southwest Storm 3

Because of Ye Fan's actions in Hanghu and Dong hai and because Ye Fan was Ye Wenhao's illegitimate son, Ma Chaoyang had started paying attention to Ye Fan a long time ago and had a clear understanding of his background.

At that moment, he recognized Ye Fan with just a glance and was so shocked that he was left agape, to the extent that he had no idea what Zhou Wu had said last.

Under the light.

He stared at Ye Fan in horror, motionless.

"Sorry, Uncle Ma, to avoid some trouble, I could only meet you in this way."

Looking at Ma Chaoyang's stunned expression and hearing the "beep beep" sound from Ma Chaoyang's mobile phone, Ye Fan stopped walking and opened the conversation with a smile.

Swish!

Startled by Ye Fan's words, Ma Chaoyang's face turned pale, and his body shook so much that he almost threw his phone away!

"Uncle Ma, don't worry, Zhou Wu has already hung up the phone," said Ye Fan, well aware of what Ma Chaoyang was concerned about.

"Phew~"

Hearing Ye Fan's words again, Ma Chaoyang took a long breath of relief, and, not wanting to give Ye Fan the wrong impression, he quickly added, "Xiao Fan, I... "

"Uncle Ma, I know the person you were talking to is Zhou Wu, head of the Yanhuang Organization East Sea Branch. You're afraid he will find out I came to you," Ye Fan said, smiling as he interrupted Zhou Wu, "Because Zhou Wu's junior brother is a martial artist recruited by the Bai Family, he can be considered half a person from the Bai Family Faction. In addition, he bears a grudge against my father, right?"

Huh?

As Ye Fan's words rang in his ears, Ma Chaoyang was startled yet again.

Firstly, he had not expected Ye Fan to know so much about Zhou Wu; more importantly, Ye Fan's initiative in saying so made it almost certain to him that tonight's incident was manipulated by Ye Fan behind the scenes!

As if to confirm Ma Chaoyang's speculation, Ye Fan waited for Ma Chaoyang to stabilize his emotions before speaking again, "Uncle Ma, you must be thinking that I am behind what happened tonight at Tiger Roar Manor and Wudang Martial Arts Hall. I won't hide it from you—both incidents were indeed my doing."

Swish!

Ye Fan's straightforward admission caused Ma Chaoyang's complexion to change wildly once more!

Although he had a vague judgment in his heart, hearing Ye Fan admit it outright still shocked him deeply. He couldn't help but be curious about why Ye Fan had come to find him and told him all this.

"Xiao Fan, come, have a seat and let's talk."

After a brief moment of shock, Ma Chaoyang came back to his senses, guessing Ye Fan's intention and, with a strained smile, gestured invitingly for Ye Fan to sit down.

Seeing this, Ye Fan didn't put on airs and straightforwardly walked over to sit down on the sofa opposite Ma Chaoyang.

"Xiao Fan, what exactly happened tonight?" As soon as Ye Fan took a seat, Ma Chaoyang couldn't help but voice the puzzlement in his heart.

"Uncle Ma, you must remember the favor I asked of you to help me find someone, right?" Ye Fan countered.

"Of course, I remember."

Ma Chaoyang replied subconsciously, then had a moment of realization, his pupils dilating slightly, "Could it be that your friend fell into Nanqinghong's hands?"

"Yes. Wu Hu, the head of Nanqinghong's Southwest Region, had his men kidnap my friend, intending to send my friend to the Golden Triangle and then lure me there to die in a foreign land," Ye Fan said, nodding while a chill flashed in his eyes, "To rescue my friend and thwart Wu Hu's plans, I went straight for the kill, taking out Wu Hu's bodyguards and key henchmen, and forced Wu Hu to call his subordinate Li Kui to stop sending my friend to the Golden Triangle."

"That's why! That Wu Hu really deserved to die!" Ma Chaoyang suddenly understood and blurted out a statement, which was indirectly expressing support for Ye Fan.

Hearing this, Ye Fan knew in his heart that he had made the right choice—Ma Chaoyang had been personally promoted by his father and was a member of the Ye Family Camp. With Ye Fan recognized by the Ye Family and favored by the elders, Ma Chaoyang would stand with him whether out of gratitude or considering his own future.

"By the way, Young Master Ye, what about the incident at Wudang Martial Arts Hall?" Seeing Ye Fan quiet, Ma Chaoyang asked again.

"While I was killing Wu Hu and the others, Xu Longxiang, the chief disciple of the Wudang Sect, made a move to kill me, but I counter-killed him," Ye Fan said solemnly, "And the Wudang Sect targeted me solely because of the recent incident where my father and I killed Murong Gu and his son, Father Murong, and took the sect's treasure, Taiyi Xuan Sword."

"So the gunmen were your men?" Ma Chaoyang asked.

Ye Fan shook his head, "No. They were Nanqinghong's men."

"Nan... Nanqinghong's men?"

Ma Chaoyang, eyes wide, almost had his eyeballs pop out in astonishment, feeling his thoughts in disarray—how could Ye Fan, after killing Wu Hu and his men, use Nanqinghong's men to attack Wudang Martial Arts Hall?

"Yes."

Ye Fan nodded and explained, "Uncle Ma, you should know that I am not only a martial artist but also a magician. Magicians have many unimaginable methods. I used some means to mix the false with the true, making Wu Hu's subordinate Ma San receive an order to attack Wudang Martial Arts Hall. And given Ma San's background as a special forces soldier who always abides by military conduct, he did not notice any anomaly and executed the order without question."

Having learned the full story behind both incidents that evening, Ma Chaoyang fell silent.

Under the light, his look toward Ye Fan changed, becoming more complex.

Though he had learned of some of Ye Fan's actions through the intranet database and other channels of information, deep down he still believed that Ye Fan's smooth progress was largely due to relying on the mountain that was Ye Wenhao and the Ye Family, not on his own strength.

And today, Ye Fan had struck at the heart of the issue and cut off the source before creating chaos with deception and killing with a borrowed knife...

All of this told him that Ye Fan was able to reach today's stage, definitely not by relying on his father's power, but on his own abilities—Ye Fan was far more terrifying than he had imagined!

"Could it be... could it be that he came to me because he wants me to help him cover up the crime and erase the evidence?"

As Ma Chaoyang realized Ye Fan's true nature, a thought suddenly emerged in his heart.

The thought had just appeared when, almost without thinking, Ma Chaoyang said, "Xiao Fan, whatever you need me to do, just say it. As I've said before, if it can be done, I'll put in more than my utmost effort to ensure it's well done; if it can't, I'll still give more than my utmost effort to make it happen!"

"If nothing unexpected happens, Zhou Wu already knows I killed Wu Hu and the others." Ye Fan said something astonishing. "But because I destroyed all the evidence, he has no proof that it was me who did it."

"Uh..."

Ma Chaoyang was once again so shocked that his mouth gaped, and his eyes bulged. He had never dreamed that Zhou Wu would already know the man behind the scenes was Ye Fan!

After the shock, Ma Chaoyang asked with full confusion, "If he has no evidence, how does he know it was you?"

"I've said before that he can be considered half a person from the Bai Family faction. And the Bai Family dreams of seeing me dead." Ye Fan unveiled the mystery. "Besides, Uncle Ma must have heard about the Bai Family's secret support of Qinghong."

Ma Chaoyang remained silent. He knew all this and understood the logical relationship in what Ye Fan had said, but he was still unable to connect these pieces perfectly with a single thread.

"After I killed Wu Hu, I had a conversation with Lin Tianyi. Lin Tianyi should indirectly tell the Bai Family about this." Ye Fan paused here, believing that Ma Chaoyang could infer everything that followed.

As expected, upon hearing Ye Fan's words, all the confusion on Ma Chaoyang's face was swept away. After thinking for a moment, he said, "Xiao Fan, even if the Bai Family wants to deal with you through Zhou Wu, but as you said, since you left no evidence, Zhou Wu, even if he wants to target you, is simply powerless."

"Yes, I'm not afraid at all that he will come after me," Ye Fan nodded.

"Then why?"

Confusion re-emerged on Ma Chaoyang's face. In his view, if Ye Fan was confident that all evidence had been eliminated and not afraid of Zhou Wu, there was absolutely no reason for him to come to him, and even less reason to tell him all this.

After all, it's much easier for one person to keep a secret than for two!

"I want to eradicate Nanqinhong's influence in the Southwest Region," Ye Fan stated bluntly.

"Eradicate... Nanqinhong?" Ma Chaoyang stared wide-eyed, incredulous.

As the leading hand of the Southwest Police, he dreamt of pulling out the thorn that was Nanqinhong, but due to the lack of solid evidence and Nanqinhong's entrenched influence in the Southwest, forming an entire chain of interests, he had always been eager but powerless. It wasn't just about eradicating Nanqinhong as a whole; even investigating Wu Hu and his core subordinates was extremely difficult.

"Xiao Fan, it makes me happy that you trust me and have come to me for help."

After the shock, Ma Chaoyang let out a wry sigh, "I really want to help you, but as you know, Nanqinhong is an underground force. Most of the leaders are Martial Artists, primarily monitored and managed by the Yanhuang Organization, with our police force only assisting. This means that to eradicate Nanqinhong's influence in the Southwest, you must get Zhou Wu's support."

As he spoke, the wry smile on Ma Chaoyang's face grew deeper.

In his opinion, even if Zhou Wu was not a man from the Bai Family camp, he might not help Ye Fan eradicate the deeply entrenched Nanqinhong in the Southwest, to say nothing of Zhou Wu being half aligned with the Bai Family Faction.

This time, Ye Fan did not speak but instead took out Wu Hu's mobile phone.

Huh?

Seeing this, Ma Chaoyang was puzzled.

Ye Fan smiled, did not explain, and simply played a recording on Wu Hu's mobile phone.

"Ma San, I've just been the target of an assassination by a disciple of Wudang Sect, and I nearly lost my life to the Netherworld."

"You must immediately take men to bloodbath the Wudang Sect's Martial Arts Hall in Nanming, remember, not a single one is to be spared!"

"Yes, Mr. Hu!"

As the recording played, Wu Hu's conversation with Ma San was clearly transmitted into Ma Chaoyang's ears.

Ma Chaoyang looked at Ye Fan in astonishment, as if to ask: How... how did you manage this?

"With this evidence as a breakthrough, and with instructions from the higher-ups to take down Nanqinghong, do you think an anxious Yanhuang Organization will find it difficult to deal with Nanqinghong's influence in the Southwest?" This time, instead of clearing up the confusion, Ye Fan countered with a question.

Not difficult!

An answer instantly surfaced in Ma Chaoyang's mind, and then he looked at Ye Fan in disbelief, "Xiao... Xiao Fan, are you certain that the higher-ups will issue such instructions?"

"Within two days, instructions from the higher-ups will reach the Southwest!" Ye Fan replied with confidence, not directly answering the question.

Ma Chaoyang was struck dumb.

Chapter 414 Southwest Storm 4

Two days later.

Wu Hu and his bodyguard, along with his key subordinates, were murdered, and the Nanming Martial Arts Hall of the Wudang Sect was attacked. These two incidents spread throughout Jianghu like lightning, causing shockwaves and creating an uproar.

Some believed these two incidents were independent events with no connection, while others thought there must be a causal relationship between them. Still others boldly speculated that these incidents were related to Ye Fan.

At nine o'clock on the same day, the party committee of Southern Xian Province convened an expanded committee meeting. Besides several heavyweights from the provincial government, key personnel such as Ma Chaoyang, the head of the police, the director of the Security Department, the head of the Armed Police Force, and the commander of the Military Region, all attended the meeting.

At eight forty, participants gradually entered the meeting room, nodding at each other but not conversing, giving the meeting room an especially solemn atmosphere.

All this because the attendees were well aware that today's expanded meeting was definitely related to the shocking Jianghu incidents two days prior.

"Gentlemen, this is a document just sent from above. The senior leadership demands that we thoroughly investigate the Tiger Roar Manor bombing and the Wudang Martial Arts Hall shooting within three days, and severely punish the perpetrators."

As the participants had guessed, the meeting started with the top official of the Southwest holding a sealed red document and speaking in a grave and low tone, "Moreover, the document expressly states that if we are unable to solve the cases within three days, the pertinent departments above will form an investigation team to thoroughly examine the matter in our province. At that time, the responsible officials must assume responsibility for their negligence!"

Huh?

As the words of the top official echoed in his ears, the brows of the other participants furrowed, especially those of several officials directly involved in the cases, who looked extremely grim.

Ma Chaoyang was an exception.

Since his conversation with Ye Fan two days earlier, Ma Chaoyang had been waiting for instructions from the higher-ups.

Now, hearing the remarks of the top official and seeing the red document in his hands, he understood that Ye Fan's words had become reality.

"How did he do it?"

As he grasped all this, confusion was written all over Ma Chaoyang's face.

The confusion stemmed from his belief that even if Ye Fan had returned to the Ye Family and was valued by the elders, he couldn't possibly intervene in senior-level decisions!

Even, he thought, Ye Wenhao, the most powerful contender to be the next helmsman of the Ye Family, couldn't accomplish all this!

"Now, let us all study the document together to understand its spirit, and then the heads of the pertinent departments will report on the two cases."

The top official of the Southwest scanned the faces of those present. When his gaze met Ma Chaoyang's puzzled look, he felt a bit of confusion himself and his eyes lingered on Ma Chaoyang for a few seconds longer, until Ma Chaoyang snapped back to attention, after which he moved his gaze away.

Seeing this, other participants looked towards Ma Chaoyang with some confusion, each harboring their own thoughts.

"Next, please, the responsible officials will report on these two cases."

A few minutes later, after the participants studied the document, grasped its spirit, and heightened their political understanding, the top official put down the encrypted red document and turned his gaze to Zhou Wu, one of the giants of the Southwest political scene, and said, "First, let Comrade Zhou Wu report."

"Now, I will report on the investigation details of the Tiger Roar Manor bombing and the Wudang Martial Arts Hall shooting..."

Zhou Wu gave a slight nod, then took up the report prepared by his secretary and began to read aloud, which was mostly filled with platitudes and almost devoid of any substantive investigative information regarding the cases.

"Director Zhou, until what time does your report cover?" asked the top official after Zhou Wu had finished his report.

"Until six o'clock last evening," Zhou Wu replied boldly, meeting the top official's gaze firmly.

"Do any other relevant department colleagues have additions? Or rather, have there been any new developments from last night at six o'clock to now?"

The top official seemed somewhat dissatisfied with Zhou Wu's attitude but considered the special nature of the Yanhuang Organization and Zhou Wu's usual approach and did not comment further but instead turned his gaze to other responsible officials, including Ma Chaoyang.

Hearing the words of the top official, the other responsible officials all looked down at the document, responding with silence.

"Secretary, let me report on our latest findings." Just then, Ma Chaoyang steadied himself and spoke up, breaking the silence in the meeting room.

Woosh!

Suddenly, including the top official, all participants turned their gaze to Ma Chaoyang. Zhou Wu's expression darkened—since the two cases were primarily handled by the Yanhuang Organization with cooperation from the police and other relevant departments, Ma Chaoyang having new information and not reporting or communicating with him clearly showed a disregard for his authority!

"Good."

The top official nodded slightly, signaling Ma Chaoyang to continue.

"After the incidents occurred, members from both the police and the Yanhuang Organization jointly sealed off the crime scenes, protected them, and conducted a thorough search. Last night, my team found a specially made cell phone on the third search."

As he spoke, under the watchful eyes of the attendees, Ma Chaoyang slowly took out Wu Hu's specially made cell phone and explained, "The police's specialists quickly unlocked the phone and discovered that it belonged to Wu Hu, a victim of the Tiger Roar Manor bombing. Furthermore, we found a recording on the phone!"

Huh?

As Ma Chaoyang's words ended, aside from Zhou Wu, the eyes of the other participants brightened.

Zhou Wu, however, squinted at Ma Chaoyang, his gaze filled with skepticism—after the incident, to find any clues left by Ye Fan, he had ordered multiple thorough searches of the crime scene without finding any evidence. Yet Ma Chaoyang had produced Wu Hu's cell phone, how could he not be skeptical?

At the same time, he also felt a bad premonition—Ma Chaoyang obtaining Wu Hu's cell phone and the recording and revealing it at the expanded committee meeting without informing him hinted at an underlying scheme; he absolutely didn't believe there were no ulterior motives!

"Comrade Ma Chaoyang, play the recording for everyone to hear," said the top official, as Zhou Wu's skepticism and unease grew, his tone becoming much lighter.

"Okay."

Ma Chaoyang nodded and then publicly played the recording of Wu Hu's call with Ma San.

"Ma San, I was just nearly assassinated by a disciple of the Wudang Sect, almost losing my life to the Netherworld."

"Now, immediately take people and bloodily purge the Wudang Martial Arts Hall in Nanming. Remember, leave no one!"

"Yes, Mr. Hu!"

The recording was activated, and the conversation between Wu Hu and Ma San reverberated clearly into the ears of all attendees.

Shush!

Instantly, everyone present, including the chief, changed their expressions!

Because... the recording provided by Director Ma revealed the inside stories of two cases!

"Director Ma, in both the Tiger Roar Manor explosion case and the Wudang Martial Arts Hall shooting, the perpetrator's methods are very professional, even going so far as to level the villa to destroy evidence and traces."

A few seconds later, in the silent conference room, Zhou Wu's voice emerged as he stared intently at Ma Chaoyang, "In such circumstances, you say the cellphone in your possession belonged to the deceased Wu Hu, and it even contains a recorded conversation between Wu Hu and his subordinate Ma San, which seems illogical—is everything really true?"

"Director Zhou, after verification by the police's experts, the cellphone's owner was indeed Wu Hu. As to why Wu Hu's cellphone ended up in the bushes of Tiger Roar Manor with a recording of a conversation with Ma San, we currently have no way of knowing."

Ma Chaoyang faced Zhou Wu's gaze emotionlessly and said sternly, "But personally, I believe this is the breakthrough for these two cases. As long as we can catch the suspect Ma San, all doubts will be resolved!"

"Director Zhou, as the person in charge of these two cases, to be unaware of the latest clues might be excusable, but what do you mean by questioning the clues presented by Director Ma at this time?"

As soon as Ma Chaoyang's words fell, a bigwig from the Ye Family Camp and one of the powerhouses in the Southern Xian Province said, frowning.

"Secretary Li, I did not know about the clues because Director Ma did not report to me!" retorted Zhou Wu sullenly.

Ma Chaoyang responded calmly, "Director Zhou, I was indeed planning to report to you immediately. However, like you previously mentioned, fearing complications, I had it verified by professionals first. This cellphone is a special device with a complex system, and my people took a whole night just to unlock it."

"Even if it took all night, you should have told me when we met outside the conference room earlier, shouldn't you?" Zhou Wu said, his tone unfriendly.

"Alright, Director Zhou."

The top official of Southwest coldly interrupted, "As the main person in charge of these two cases, instead of considering how to solve the cases with the new clues, you question the authenticity and source of the clues and fuss about Director Ma not reporting to you in time. I personally think there's a problem with your attitude!"

"Secretary, I think since the murderer was willing to level a villa just to eliminate evidence, it proves he is a very cunning and sinister murderer. I fear that this cellphone was deliberately left by the murderer to confuse our line of sight and disrupt our investigation..." Zhou Wu tried to explain.

However—

Before he could finish his sentence, the top official coldly cut him off, "Comrade Ma Chaoyang has already made it clear that by capturing the suspect Ma San, all doubts will be resolved!"

"I agree with Secretary's view."

"I also agree."

As the top official finished speaking, several people immediately voiced their agreement.

Seeing this, Zhou Wu's expression grew darker as he closed his mouth, and his unease deepened.

"We have only been given three days by the higher authorities, and time is extremely short. Now that new clues have emerged, we must act immediately."

Seeing Zhou Wu silent, the top official pondered for a moment and said, "Personally, I believe we must do the following.

First, immediately arrest suspect Ma San province-wide, ensuring the operation remains confidential so that the suspect doesn't flee abroad.

Second, closely monitor all individuals in Jianghu within the province, especially the martial artists from Qinghong Group and the Wudang Sect.

Third, immediately dispatch personnel to investigate the conflict between the Wudang Sect and Nanqinhong at the headquarters of Huaxia Branch for the Wudang Sect and Qinghong Group.

Fourth, keep the previous investigation team intact while also establishing a leadership group, which will be co-chaired by me and the governor, with Comrade Zhou Wu as the executive vice chairman and other comrades as members. Any new developments must be reported to the leadership group!"

"Since there are no objections, then let's adjourn the meeting!"

As his words concluded, the top official looked around, and seeing no objections, announced the end of the meeting.

Whish—

The meeting ended, and all the attendees one after another got up and left the conference room.

A few minutes later, as the first to go downstairs, Zhou Wu saw Ma Chaoyang exiting and approached him: "Director Ma."

"Does Director Zhou have instructions?" Ma Chaoyang stopped, seeing this.

"If I'm not wrong, Director Ma, you already know who the murderer is, don't you?"

Zhou Wu asked coldly, his gaze as sharp as a knife, almost unable to restrain himself from using telekinesis to disrupt Ma Chaoyang's thinking and find his loophole.

Facing Zhou Wu's imposing manner, Ma Chaoyang said seriously, "I have already mentioned it in the meeting, yet Director Zhou questioned me, have you forgotten?"

"Director Ma really knows how to play dumb, doesn't he?"

Zhou Wu scoffed sarcastically, then seeing other bigwigs coming out from the building, he left with a sweep of his sleeve.

"It won't be long before Zhou Wu scurries out of Southwest with his tail between his legs!"

Watching Zhou Wu's retreating figure and recalling Ye Fan's words, Ma Chaoyang awaited Zhou Wu's downfall.

Chapter 415 Southwest Storm 5

Hongyun Logistics Base, located in the suburbs of Nanming and one of the largest logistics bases in Nanming and the Southwest, boasts hundreds of large warehouses, with a daily inventory and shipping volume that is staggering.

As night fell, lights illuminated the vast Hongyun Logistics Base.

Under the lights, workers at the logistics base were drenched in sweat as they loaded and unloaded goods. Trucks came and went, their shouts and the roaring of trucks were non-stop, and the scene was bustling everywhere.

In the midst of the hustle, an inconspicuous van entered the logistics base and drove towards the rear of the complex.

A moment later, the van stopped in front of the last warehouse at the base.

Inside the van, a burly driver with an indifferent face looked around, and after making sure there was no danger, took out a walkie-talkie and spoke rapidly, "No danger, open the door."

"Received."

The reply came quickly through the walkie-talkie.

Immediately, the heavy warehouse door slowly opened, and the driver stepped on the accelerator, driving the van directly into the warehouse.

The warehouse was dark inside, but one could vaguely see it was filled with stacks of cargo boxes through the light coming from outside, densely packed and dazzling to the eye.

Click—

As the van entered, the warehouse door closed, and about a dozen men in black emerged from behind the cargo boxes and approached the van.

"Third Master."

The burly driver was the first to get out of the van and bowed respectfully to the leader, Ma San.

"What's the situation outside now?" Ma San asked with a gloomy expression.

That day, after leading his gunmen in a successful raid on the Wudang Martial Arts Hall, he had immediately reported to Wu Hu, and then followed Wu Hu's instructions to find a place to hide.

What he had never dreamed of was that shortly after leaving the Wudang Martial Arts Hall, he received the news that Wu Hu had been killed and the villa was bombed into ruins.

This news gave everyone including him a cold sweat!

He immediately destroyed all the cellphones including his own, and hid here with his gunmen, verifying the news of Wu Hu's death through various channels and investigating the truth behind the Tiger Roar Manor explosion.

Wu Hu's death alerted him that something was wrong—Wudang was one of the banners of the Huaxia Martial Arts World. The sudden attack on Nanqinghong was one thing, but using a bomb to completely destroy Wu Hu's villa and obliterate his body was completely contrary to the martial artist's duty.

"According to the message from inside the police, they have identified you, Third Master, as leading the attack on the Wudang Martial Arts Hall, and they've almost dispatched all the police forces to capture us," said the burly driver with a grave voice.

Shh!

Hearing his companion's words, the expressions of the other gunmen all changed at once, and they turned their gazes toward Ma San, seemingly asking him what to do.

Ma San frowned and remained silent.

"Third Master, Mr. Hu and several other bosses are dead, and the police are pointing their spears at us now. Our situation is very dangerous, I suggest we leave immediately!" an anxious gunman couldn't help but suggest.

"Leave here, go where?" someone retorted.

"Of course, leave the country..."

"Shut up!"

Ma San snapped at his subordinates in a cold voice, his eyebrows tightly knitted, "There's a saying in Huaxia called 'under the lamp is dark.' Currently, all the province's police, paramilitary forces, and Yanhuang Organization members are capturing us. Once we show up, we are as good as dead."

"Third Master, are we just going to stay here then?"

For a moment, the gunmen looked at Ma San again, awaiting his instruction.

"Whoo-whoo~"

This time, before Ma San could speak, the sound of a distant siren began to be heard.

Shh!

The sudden sound of the siren caused the faces of everyone, including Ma San, to change drastically!

"Woosh—"

Immediately, a gunman responsible for surveillance sprang to the ground, climbed up a stack of cargo boxes agilely like a monkey, and reached the window of the warehouse to look outside.

In the darkness of night, he saw police cars, flashing their lights like a steel dragon entering the logistics base, headed towards the warehouse.

In addition to that, he also saw four armed helicopters swooping down towards their warehouse like hawks.

"Uh..."

Seeing all this reflected in his eyes, the surveilling gunman's eyes nearly popped out of their sockets. Then, turning back, he spoke in horror to Ma San and the others, "Thir...Third Master, a large number of police, paramilitary forces are heading our way, and there are also four armed helicopters!"

It's over!

Hearing his companion's words, everyone including the battle-hardened Ma San thought unanimously.

As if to confirm their judgment, the four armed helicopters circled overhead like hawks, and one of the special forces officers yelled through a megaphone: "You are surrounded, drop your weapons and surrender immediately!"

"Hiss~"

Barely hearing the shouts from outside, Ma San and the others couldn't help but gasp.

Meanwhile, the anxious surveillance gunman said, "Third Master, apart from the police on the armed helicopters, other police and paramilitary forces will be here at the warehouse in two minutes. Should we break out?"

"Grab your weapons and follow me out!"

In a moment of crisis, Ma San gritted his teeth and made a decisive decision. Obviously... he was well aware that if they waited for the large number of police and paramilitary forces to arrive, they would be caught in a trap, and they would undoubtedly die.

Chapter 416 Southwest Storm 5_2

"Yes!"

Ma San's command echoed in their ears, reducing the fear in the hearts of the gunmen he had personally trained. They all rushed to their weapons.

Half a minute.

Just half a minute later, they stood fully armed behind Ma San, waiting for his command to charge.

"Damn, the police seem to have anticipated our escape. Four armed helicopters are hovering directly in front of the main gate, aiming Gatling guns at the warehouse doors!"

Shortly afterward, as Ma San was about to give the order, the gunman responsible for reconnaissance shouted.

Click!

Ma San and the others couldn't help but be shocked!

Because... they all knew too well the high firing speed and powerful impact of the Gatling guns on the armed helicopters, which were nothing short of death cannons!

"The men I, Ma San, trained do not run nor get captured. Charge!" Ma San said fiercely, then led the charge towards the warehouse doors.

"You are all surrounded; lay down your weapons and surrender immediately!"

Above the warehouse doors, a SWAT member continued to shout through a megaphone, only to suddenly see multiple red dots gathering rapidly towards the warehouse door on the infrared detector inside the helicopter cabin, each dot representing a person.

"Report to the commander, the suspects are preparing to charge and escape. Please advise!"

Seeing this, the SWAT member immediately put down the megaphone and reported to Ma Chaoyang, who was in charge of commanding the arrest operation, via radio.

"Use the cannon to shatter the doors for intimidation. If the suspects still choose to escape, kill them all; we absolutely cannot let them escape!"

Ma Chaoyang issued the order immediately, inwardly admiring Ye Fan's foresight—in advance of the operation, Ye Fan had not only provided the location where Ma San and his men were hiding but had also bluntly stated that they would fight to the death.

"Understood!"

The SWAT member replied immediately, then quickly transmitted commands to the four armed helicopters via radio: "Suspects preparing to escape. Helicopter 1 shatter the doors with the cannon; gunners, be ready. If anyone runs out, they must be killed! Repeat, they must be killed!"

"Understood!"

Almost simultaneously, the SWAT members on the four armed helicopters responded, and the pilot on Helicopter 1 adjusted the cannon right away.

"Third Master, the police are going to use the cannon. Get out of the way!"

Inside the warehouse, the gunman responsible for reconnaissance saw the turning cannon and screamed in horror.

"Move!"

Upon hearing this, Ma San roared out loud and swiftly ran toward the right side of the warehouse doors.

"Whoosh whoosh whoosh whoosh whoosh..."

The other gunmen, as if mad, quickly dodged to the side.

"Boom—"

Then, a deafening explosion sounded, a shell shot from the cannon barrel roaring toward the warehouse door.

"Thud—"

The shell hit the door squarely, instantly blowing the steel doors apart. The terrible shockwave not only shattered the doors but also left a large crater, scattering fragments of the door and concrete debris everywhere, hitting several gunmen who were too slow to dodge.

For a moment, groans arose as those who hadn't dodged in time fell injured to the ground, including Ma San and the other gunmen who were left dizzy and unstable by the blast.

"Repeat, you are surrounded. Do not attempt to resist or escape. Lay down your weapons and surrender immediately!"

At that moment, the SWAT member commanding the four armed helicopters smartly picked up the megaphone again and shouted loudly, trying to break the psychological defense of Ma San and his men with the immense intimidation of the cannon fire.

Meanwhile, police cars screamed towards the warehouse, the piercing sound of their sirens tearing through the sky over the logistics base, sounding like notes of death to Ma San and his men.

"Charge!"

Faced with all this, Ma San, a former Vietnamese special forces "Divine Spear," resolutely issued the command to charge.

"Swoosh, swoosh, swoosh, swoosh..."

Following Ma San's command, the uninjured gunmen, like devout followers receiving God's instructions, charged fearlessly toward the warehouse entrance.

"Dada, dada, dada, dada, dada..."

The next moment.

Four M134 miniguns, firing at a rate of 6000 rounds per minute, shot bullets carrying the notes of death, echoing through the sky, and swept toward the warehouse gates, forming a terrifying firewall within thirty meters around it.

"Pfft!"

"Pfft!"

"Pfft!"

...

In an instant, all the gunmen who had rushed out, including Ma San, were turned into sieves by the bullets and fell into pools of blood.

After the gunfire ceased, multiple police cars with flashing lights arrived in front of the warehouse, and fully armed tactical police officers orderly jumped out of the vehicles and aimed in formation.

At the same time, dozens of fully armed SWAT officers formed a line, waiting for the command to assault.

"Reporting to the commander, there are a total of eighteen suspects, eleven killed, seven are inside the warehouse, please advise," said the SWAT officer responsible for commanding the four armed helicopters, as the main force arrived.

"Assault team, go in, try to capture alive!"

From the command vehicle at the center of the police cars, Ma Chaoyang issued the order in a deep voice.

"Assault team understood!"

The SWAT assault team leader quickly acknowledged the command, then signaled with a hand gesture.

"Swoosh, swoosh, swoosh, swoosh..."

At the gesture, dozens of fully armed SWAT officers immediately split into eight squads, preparing to enter through the eight windows of the warehouse.

"Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang..."

Just then, continuous gunfire erupted from the previously quiet warehouse.

Hmm?

The sudden sound of gunfire startled all the police and tactical officers, but they soon had an inkling of what it might mean.

"Go in!"

Shortly after.

Without waiting for further instructions from Ma Chaoyang, the SWAT assault team leader decisively issued the order.

In no time, dozens of SWAT assault team members dispersed, rushing toward the eight corners of the warehouse.

"Clang——"

Two minutes later, the sound of glass breaking simultaneously came from all eight windows, as eight SWAT officers used rope guns to scale up to the windows, broke in, and more SWAT officers followed them in the same manner.

"Reporting to the commander, all seven remaining suspects have committed suicide due to fear of crime, please advise," said the SWAT assault team leader over the radio to Ma Chaoyang, after the SWAT had searched the warehouse.

"Withdraw, return,"

Ma Chaoyang pondered briefly and issued the directive.

As the words fell, he couldn't help but look up at the dark sky, thinking to himself, "The sky of the Southwest is about to change!"

Chapter 417 Southwest Storm VI

9:00 p.m.

Just one hour after the capture operation for Ma San had ended, all the personnel from the morning meeting convened again to hold a special meeting regarding the Tiger Roar Manor explosion and the Wudang Martial Arts Hall shooting.

In the quiet conference room, the gaze of all chiefs, including the top leader, was focused on Ma Chaoyang as he provided a brief report on the just-concluded capture operation.

"Director Ma, since Ma San is the main suspect in these two cases, you should have tried everything to take him alive, right?" As soon as Ma Chaoyang's report ended, Zhou Wu, who was in charge of the Yanhuang Organization's Southwest Region, asked coldly.

Facing Zhou Wu's questioning, Ma Chaoyang replied neither haughtily nor humbly, "Director Zhou, as I mentioned in my report, after the operation began, the criminal gang led by Ma San attempted to forcefully break through. Even using the Gatling guns on the armed helicopters to shatter the warehouse doors as a deterrent was not enough to stop them. To prevent greater turmoil and negative impact, they had to be shot dead."

"Then why didn't you wait for our Yanhuang Organization members to arrive before starting the operation? With the strength of the Yanhuang Organization's members, they could have definitely been captured without killing them!"

Zhou Wu was intensely pressing; on one hand, he felt that Ma Chaoyang completely disregarded him as the leader of the operation team, and more importantly, he had a vague sense that this was a setup—a trap targeting Nanqinghong and the Wudang Sect.

As for... the person who set up this trap, he could guess it was Ye Fan even with his toes!

"I'm sorry, Director Zhou, originally I did plan to wait for your men to arrive before starting the operation, but according to reliable information, the criminal gang led by Ma San learned about our operation, so to prevent them from escaping, I had to act as quickly as possible to implement the capture," Ma Chaoyang replied solemnly.

"Reliable information? Where did this reliable information come from? Did you report it to me?"

Hearing Ma Chaoyang's justified response, Zhou Wu felt a burning rage inside him and immediately glared as he fired his question.

"Director Zhou, the Public Security Department doesn't fall under your jurisdiction, does it?"

This time, before Ma Chaoyang could reply, Secretary Li, a member of the Ye Family Camp in charge of the judiciary, put down his teacup and spoke indifferently.

"Hiss~"

Zhou Wu's mouth twitched with anger, but he was powerless to retort—after all, as the person in charge of the Yanhuang Organization's Southwest Region, he only managed the Yanhuang Organization.

"Secretary, Governor, Comrade Ma Chaoyang reported the capture operation to me, and I approved its implementation. As for Director Zhou, I communicated with him and agreed that the Yanhuang Organization and the police forces would collaborate on the operation. But as Comrade Ma Chaoyang said, our arrest plans leaked, and to prevent the criminals led by Ma San from fleeing, we had to

proceed with the capture before the Yanhuang Organization members arrived," Secretary Li explained clearly and calmly.

"Secretary Li, how did the information leak?" Zhou Wu asked with a dark expression.

"There's a traitor in our ranks. Regarding this, I've instructed Comrade Ma Chaoyang to personally supervise and handle it; I will report back on the results during the meeting," Secretary Li stated solemnly.

"__"

Zhou Wu pursed his lips, wanting to say something but feeling as if something was stuck in his throat, not managing to utter a single word, his expression extremely grim.

"Alright,"

seeing the situation, the top leader interjected to break up the dispute. "Now that it has come to this, dwelling on the deaths of Ma San and others is meaningless. What we need to discuss now is, what's next?"

"Secretary, the criminal gang led by Ma San, when surrounded by the police, took the risk of being shot to death in their attempt to breakthrough, which is sufficient proof of their guilt. And when our assault team members entered, the choice of the surviving criminals to commit suicide out of fear further proves this point!"

As the top leader finished speaking, Ma Chaoyang, noticing that no one else spoke up, thought for a moment and said, "Therefore, I personally believe that the Tiger Roar Manor explosion and the Wudang Martial Arts Hall shooting can be closed as a conflict and mutual retaliation between the Wudang Sect and the Qinghong Group's Huaxia Branch."

"I agree with Chaoyang's suggestion,"

Secretary Li was the first to express support, on one hand backing his subordinate, and on the other possibly doing a favor for Ye Fan.

"What does everyone think?" the top leader asked after hearing this, frowning slightly.

"I agree."

"I also agree."

...

In just a few seconds, nearly more than half of the people raised their hands in agreement, clearly identified by the prominent Ye Family banner above their heads.

"Since the majority agrees, then we will settle on Comrade Ma Chaoyang's proposal, and he will draft a report of the situation,"

seeing this, and thinking about the urgent red-headed document issued earlier, the top leader had a hunch and readily agreed to Ma Chaoyang's suggestion.

"Secretary, according to the superior's document requirements, we not only need to thoroughly investigate these two cases but also impose severe punishment on the criminals! Now, although the main persons involved are deceased. I personally think we should conduct a thorough investigation of Qinghong Group's Huaxia Branch in the Southwest and collect evidence of their involvement in organized crime for severe sanctions!"

Secretary Li made another suggestion: "As for the Wudang Sect, being a Martial Arts Sect, it falls under the management of the Yanhuang Organization. I personally suggest leaving it to the Yanhuang Organization to handle."

"I agree with Secretary Li's proposal, what do you all think?" the Secretary straightforwardly stated his position.

Seeing this, the others expressed their agreement, while Zhou Wu sat there unwilling or rather unable to change the decision of the meeting regardless of his stance.

"Alright, since there are no objections. We will proceed as decided in the meeting, with Secretary Li taking the lead in organizing relevant departments to thoroughly investigate Qinghong Group's Huaxia Company's Southwest Branch, and Director Zhou will report the meeting's decision to the Yanhuang Organization's headquarters, which will handle the Wudang Sect's violations," With no one dissenting, the top leader made the final decision, "Meeting adjourned!"

Whoosh—

The meeting ended, and the participants rose one after another. Meanwhile, Zhou Wu frowned as he watched Secretary Li and Ma Chaoyang, only to find that they treated him as though he were thin air, not even sparing him a glance before leaving the meeting room.

"Hmph!"

Zhou Wu left in anger, snatching up his notebook and striding out.

...

Half an hour later, Zhou Wu returned to the provincial committee compound in his official car.

Entering the villa with a gloomy expression, Zhou Wu immediately picked up his private phone and dialed Bai Guotao's number.

"Hello, Director Zhou." The call connected and Bai Guotao's voice came through the receiver, much warmer than during their last conversation.

"Sorry, Secretary Bai, I'm helpless with that matter," said Zhou Wu bluntly, forgoing any bureaucratic tone.

"Oh?"

Bai Guotao was slightly startled by Zhou Wu's words, and after pondering for a moment, he didn't feign ignorance but asked directly, "Does that mean Ye Wenhao's illegitimate child didn't leave behind any evidence?"

"Mm."

Zhou Wu said with some frustration, "That little bastard is just too cunning; he didn't leave behind any evidence, and he's using others to do his dirty work."

"What do you mean?"

"After killing Wu Hu and the others, he blew up the villa to destroy the evidence. Meanwhile, God knows how he manipulated Wu Hu's gunmen to attack the Wudang Martial Arts Hall, creating the false appearance of a conflict between the Wudang Sect and Nanqinghong, pinning the blame on them, all to clear his own name," Zhou Wu reported bitterly, secretly shocked by Ye Fan's tactics. "Additionally, it's very likely that he leveraged the Ye Family's influence to issue an official document demanding that we investigate both cases thoroughly within three days and severely punish the criminals! This means he's not only cleared himself of any wrongdoing, but he's also using the power of the Yanhuang Organization and the police to strike at Nanqinghong and the Wudang Sect. He's too manipulative!"

Zhou Wu's face was the picture of frustration as he finished speaking.

Since his own junior was serving the Bai Family, he had quite a connection with them, and being considered part of the Bai Family Faction was no overstatement.

In addition to this, he had his own complaints against Ye Wenhao.

In such a situation, when Bai Guotao, the man expected to carry the banner for the Bai Family Faction in the future, personally called him for help, he naturally wanted to do everything in his power to find evidence to pin down Ye Fan by the rules.

However—

Now, not only had he failed to grasp Ye Fan's misdeeds, but he was also about to become Ye Fan's 'laborer,' helping him go against the Wudang Sect...

This stark contrast was like a resounding slap across his face!

It wasn't just Zhou Wu who was frustrated; Bai Guotao on the other end of the phone was also silent.

Although he knew from Ye Fan's previous actions that Ye Fan was not the kind of person who relied on Ye Wenhao and the Ye Family's protection to do wrong, but was actually quite capable, he had to admit that this time, he had still underestimated Ye Fan.

"Director Zhou, I want to thank you for your help, no matter what," said Bai Guotao after the silence, taking a deep breath to steady his emotions. "Let me know when you'll be back in Yanjing. Give me a call before you return; we should sit down and have a good talk there."

"Okay."

Zhou Wu immediately agreed, then felt uncomfortable with the idea of being rewarded for no achievement and added, "Please rest assured, Secretary Bai, although that little bastard is cautious and scheming, there's always a slip. If I find any evidence of him breaking the law in the future, I will nail him for sure!"

"You've been very considerate, Director Zhou."

While Bai Guotao said this outwardly, internally he felt that Zhou Wu was soon going to have trouble saving himself.

Because... from what Zhou Wu had said, he could now be fairly certain that Ye Fan had noticed something amiss with Zhou Wu.

Knowing Ye Fan's eye-for-an-eye approach, if he found out Zhou Wu's intent, he certainly wouldn't let Zhou Wu off easy!

"Four birds with one stone, heh, Ye Wenhao, you've really raised a fine son," Bai Guotao said wearily, leaning back in his chair and sneering after ending the call.

Behind that sneer was a profound sense of unwillingness!

Chapter 418 Southwest Storm 7

The setting sun cast its glow, enveloping Wudang Mountain in a brilliant golden light, resembling a heavenly paradise, capturing the awe and attention of many tourists.

Unlike the tourists, the disciples within the Yuxu Palace of Wudang had little interest in admiring the beauty of the sunset, primarily because they, having spent years on Wudang Mountain, had grown accustomed to the sight. Additionally, they all knew that the mood of Sect Leader Zhang, the Heavenly Master of Wudang Sect, had been quite foul these past few days, filling the entire Yuxu Palace with a shadow that made their hearts leap in anxiety.

"Elder Zhou."

As the sun gradually dipped behind the mountain, a middle-aged man dressed in a Taoist robe approached the entrance of the Yuxu Palace, where the sweeping young disciples promptly put down their brooms and greeted him with a bow.

Zhou Qing, the middle-aged man surnamed Zhou, merely nodded slightly before briskly entering the Yuxu Palace, heading straight to the innermost room.

Heavenly Master Zhang was waiting for him there!

Minutes passed, and Zhou Qing walked along the path of the Yuxu Palace to reach the residence of Heavenly Master Zhang.

"Huff~"

Just as Zhou Qing was about to reach the doorway, he deliberately paused, slowly exhaling a deep breath before saying, "Sect Leader, it's Zhou Qing."

"Creak!"

The response to Zhou Qing was a light noise, and the door opened instantly.

Upon seeing this, Zhou Qing steadied his mind and rushed into the room.

Inside, Heavenly Master Zhang, dressed in a Taoist robe, sat cross-legged on a mat, holding the Taiyi Brush, known alongside the Taiyin Xuan Sword as a treasure of the Wudang Sect. His eyebrows slightly furrowed, he fixed his gaze on Zhou Qing.

"Zhou Qing pays his respects to the Sect Leader."

Zhou Qing promptly knelt to pay his respects, his role as the Elder in charge of external affairs for the Wudang Sect mainly involved handling secular matters. Despite bearing the title of elder, his status

within the sect was not particularly high, not to mention compared to the deceased Great Elder Murong Gu, he even fell somewhat short when measured against his peer Xu Longxiang.

Therefore, every time he met with Heavenly Master Zhang, he would perform the kneeling salute as a sign of respect.

"Have you clarified the investigation? What exactly happened?" Heavenly Master Zhang asked coldly.

After sending Xu Longxiang down the mountain, he had been waiting for news without entering secluded cultivation, only to hear neither of Xu Longxiang's success in assassinating Ye Fan nor of any news from him. Instead, he received news of the Nanming Wudang Martial Arts School being attacked by gunmen and Xu Longxiang vanishing without a trace.

This had greatly worsened Heavenly Master Zhang's mood over the past two days, prompting him to demand that the Elder of external affairs, Zhou Wu, personally investigate the attack on the Nanming Wudang Martial Arts School and to order Zhou Qing to return to the Wudang Sect and report to him.

"Sect Leader, it has been clarified, it was the doing of Nanqinghong people," Zhou Qing replied, raising his head with a face full of reverence.

"Are you sure?"

Upon hearing this, Heavenly Master Zhang was highly skeptical.

For one, as a centerpiece and guiding star within the Huaxia Martial Arts World, Wudang Sect held a prestigious standing and had hardly faced any opposition from other powers over the past few years.

The Qinghong Organization was one of the largest underworld organizations globally, famous for its abundance of formidable members, and while powerful, its Nanqinhong branch operating within Huaxia had relatively modest strength, nowhere near capable of confronting the Wudang Sect.

Moreover, Huaxia's regulation of Jianghu members was extraordinarily strict; for Nanqinhong to act in such a brazen manner was like seeking their own demise, breaking the rules established by the Yanhuang Organization.

Furthermore, given what he knew, Ye Fan held a deep-seated hatred against the Wudang Sect, making the enemy of his enemy a friend; thus, it was even less logical for Nanqinhong to strike against the Wudang Sect!

"Absolutely, Sect Leader. Based on the intelligence we gathered, the Southwest police responded by trying to catch the gunmen who attacked our martial arts hall. The gunmen resisted to the death and were all killed," Zhou Qing nodded and reported the information obtained.

Hmm?

Hearing Zhou Qing's firm answer, Heavenly Master Zhang's expression suddenly became somewhat solemn.

Although he didn't know why Nanqinghong would attack the Wudang's Martial Arts Hall, he saw the potential for this matter to provoke lasting hostility between the Wudang Sect and the Qinghong Organization if not handled properly.

With the millennia-old legacy of the Wudang and the deterrent power of the Yanhuang Organization behind him, he wasn't fearful of Qinghong Organization's revenge, but he was wary of Qinghong Organization's leader, Chen Daozang!

As the Sect Leader of Wudang, an exalted strongman ranked sixth on the Divine List in Huaxia, his understanding of Chen Daozang was far more extensive and accurate than the rumors in Jianghu — not only was Chen a master of political and military strategy, but his Combat Power was astronomical!

Meaning, Chen Daozang stood second only to 'Yan', the leader of the Yanhuang Organization, on the globally recognized 'Divine List' of Martial Arts World's finest.

Unwilling to make an enemy of such a powerful, formidable Supreme Strongman, Heavenly Master Zhang was naturally no exception.

"What's the reason? Why would Nanqinghong want to attack our martial arts hall?" After a brief silence, Heavenly Master Zhang spoke up once again.

"We haven't found out just yet," said Zhou Qing, who, fearing blame from Heavenly Master Zhang, quickly bowed his head, daring not to look at him.

"What are you even doing?"

Indeed, upon hearing this, Heavenly Master Zhang immediately erupted, unleashing a torrent of reproach.

As his fears materialized, Zhou Qing trembled inwardly, his body tensing up to the point where he didn't even dare to breathe deeply.

"Ding-dong—"

At that moment, the quiet room was filled with the sound of a ringing phone.

"What are you waiting for? Hurry and investigate, it must be clarified!" Heavenly Master Zhang stood up and commanded sternly.

"Yes... yes, Sect Leader!" Zhou Qing anxiously responded, then prudently scrambled up and left the room drenched in cold sweat.

Meanwhile, Heavenly Master Zhang, holding the Taiyi Brush, briskly entered an inner room, swiftly sliding over to the phone and picking up the receiver.

"Hello, Sect Leader Zhang, this is He Yunting, the Martial Arts Hall Elder of the Yanhuang Organization." The call connected, and He Yunting's voice clearly reached Heavenly Master Zhang's ears.

"Elder He, I was just about to call you."

Upon hearing He Yunting's words, Heavenly Master Zhang asked sternly, "Our Wudang Sect's martial arts hall in Southwest Nanming was attacked by a group of gunmen. It was said to be Nanqinghong's gunmen. What exactly happened?"

"Don't you know the reason, Sect Leader Zhang?" He Yunting countered.

"If I knew, would I still be asking you?"

Since the last time He Yunting had called him to convey the news of Murong Gu and Murong Sheng, father and son, being killed in action, and the Wudang Sect losing the Taiyin Xuan Sword, Zhang had held a great grievance against He Yunting. Now, seeing He Yunting's tone somewhat forceful, his tone immediately cooled down.

"Sect Leader Zhang, this matter started because your Wudang Sect provoked it first," replied He Yunting, his tone unfriendly.

"Our Wudang Sect provoked it?" Zhang Heavenly Master was somewhat annoyed, "Elder He, you can eat messily, but you mustn't speak carelessly—how could our Wudang Sect possibly provoke it?"

"Sect Leader Zhang, according to a joint investigation by the Yanhuang Organization Southwest Office, the Southwest Police, and the Security Bureau, the reason the Nanqinghong gunmen attacked the Wudang Martial Arts Hall has been clarified," He Yunting said.

"What's the reason?" Zhang Heavenly Master asked coldly.

"A disciple of the Wudang Sect assassinated Wu Hu, the leader of Nanqinghong in the Southwest region. In his rage, Wu Hu sent gunmen to attack the Wudang Martial Arts Hall for revenge," He Yunting replied sternly.

"What... what?"

Upon hearing this, Zhang Heavenly Master was shocked, then said solemnly, "Elder He, our Wudang Sect is a well-known righteous sect in the Huaxia Martial Arts World, always adhering to Huaxia's laws and the Yanhuang Organization's regulations. How could we possibly engage in assassination? Moreover, we have no grievances with the Qinghong Organization, why would we assassinate a member of the Qinghong Organization?"

"Sect Leader Zhang, that is exactly what I want to ask you: why would the Wudang Sect send someone to assassinate Wu Hu, the leader of Nanqinghong in the Southwest region?" He Yunting countered.

"Elder He, are you sure the Yanhuang Organization did not investigate wrongly?" Zhang Heavenly Master retorted angrily.

"The Yanhuang Organization oversees the martial artists within Huaxia with the principles of fairness, justice, and transparency. How could it make a conclusion without solid evidence?"

He Yunting retorted sharply, no longer deliberately lowering his posture as he had when notifying Zhang Heavenly Master about the execution of Murong Gu and Murong Sheng.

Hmm?

Realizing this, Zhang Heavenly Master knew that He Yunting must have had solid evidence; otherwise, he wouldn't dare to be so assertive in front of him.

Understanding all this, he couldn't help but think of Xu Longxiang going missing, and a ridiculous thought emerged in his mind: Could it be that Longxiang failed in his assassination of the Ye boy, and the Ye boy used Nanqinghong to take revenge?

Impossible!

The thought emerged, and Zhang Heavenly Master immediately dismissed it.

First, he believed that with Xu Longxiang's strength, if he wanted to sneak attack and assassinate Ye Fan, it would be extremely easy. Moreover, it was impossible for the people of Nanqinghong to help Ye Fan against the Wudang Sect!

"Elder He, I find this matter very suspicious and believe there must be an unknown secret. I suggest that the Yanhuang Organization thoroughly re-examine this matter, clear our Wudang Sect's name, and give an explanation to our Wudang Sect!" After dismissing the thoughts in his mind, Zhang Heavenly Master spoke again, his tone equally strong.

First, he was dissatisfied with He Yunting's attitude today, feeling that He Yunting didn't take him seriously. Moreover, although he didn't know what evidence the Yanhuang Organization used to conclude that the Wudang Sect disciples assassinated Wu Hu, he firmly did not believe it!

"Sect Leader Zhang, how the Yanhuang Organization should operate is not for you to direct!" He Yunting said coldly.

"He Yunting, what did you say?"

Zhang Heavenly Master trembled with anger, the suppressed fury in his heart exploding.

As the Sect Leader of the Wudang Sect, who had reached the Gang Qi Realm in both the domains of magic and martial arts and was ranked sixth on the Dragon Ranking, he was one of the towering figures in the Huaxia Martial Arts World, with a high and distinguished status. When had he ever been treated with such disrespect?

"Heavenly Master Zhang, I hope you understand that I am speaking to you on behalf of the Yanhuang Organization," He Yunting reminded coldly.

"Ha, what about the Yanhuang Organization? Can the Yanhuang Organization just slander our Wudang Sect like this?" Zhang Heavenly Master said furiously, "He Yunting, not to mention you, even Yan cannot slander our Wudang Sect like this!"

"Slander? As I've said before, we made our conclusions based on solid evidence," He Yunting said with a cold laugh.

"Additionally, Heavenly Master Zhang, I remind you not to think that just because you are a Gang Qi Realm strong person, you can disregard our Yanhuang Organization—according to the regulations of the Yanhuang Organization, all martial artists within Huaxia must be supervised by the Yanhuang Organization, and Gang Qi Realm martial artists are no exception!"

"I called you, only to inform you of one thing: within three days, hand over the Wudang Sect disciple who assassinated Wu Hu to the Yanhuang Organization. Otherwise, all Wudang Martial Arts Halls within Huaxia will be dissolved, and the Wudang Sect will be strictly prohibited from recruiting disciples and teaching martial arts from now on."

"He Yunting, your Yanhuang Organization is going too far!" Zhang Heavenly Master was utterly furious, wishing he could make He Yunting bleed on the spot.

"Going too far?"

"Leader Yan asked me to remind you that the Wudang Sect's thousand-year inheritance is not easy to maintain, and he hopes it won't be destroyed in your hands," He Yunting stated coldly.

"Smash—"

Zhang Heavenly Master, unable to control his anger, shattered the handset and the desk with the Gang Qi that surged out.

However—

Amidst his anger, a sliver of sanity told him that even though he was ranked sixth on the Dragon Ranking and a Supreme Strongman, he was still not confident enough to challenge Leader Yan, who was ranked first on both the Divine and Dragon Rankings!

Trying to steal a chicken only to lose the rice.

He had no choice but to swallow the broken teeth in his stomach!

Chapter 419 Southwest Storm VIII

Night had fallen, the lights began to twinkle, and Nanli City, with its long history, was brightly lit. The streets were crowded with vehicles like a flowing tide, and the ancient city was bustling with people weaving through like threads in a fabric, bustling and lively.

Under the cloak of night, three cars sped along a spacious road in the suburbs of Nanli, heading towards the expressway entrance. In the middle was a Range Rover, flanked by a Mercedes-Benz van both in front and behind, providing an armed escort.

The Range Rover with the Nanli license plate bearing the number '5-8' was Li Kui's exclusive vehicle. It was very well-known in Nanli, and was particularly admired by the local ruffians who would say that one should live like Li Kui—with luxury houses, fancy cars, beautiful women, and a crowd of followers wherever he went.

Five minutes later, as the convoy was about to reach the expressway entrance, they encountered a heavy police presence with flashing lights and rows of patrol cars. Fully armed police and special forces stood at the ready, carefully inspecting each passing vehicle.

Besides the police, there was a car with the Yanhuang Organization's plates among the patrol cars. Two Postnatal Great Perfection Realm members of the Yanhuang Organization's Southwest Office were prepared for battle, assisting the police in capturing Li Kui and his group, the core followers of Wu Hu.

"Brother Wang, there are so many police cars ahead, looks like they're checking vehicles."

Frowning at the flashing police lights, the driver of the leading Mercedes-Benz van warned.

"So what if they are checking? What's there to be afraid of?"

The burly man sitting in the front passenger seat spoke with a fearless expression on his face.

Because Wu Hu's identity was clean, he had never paid much attention to the police and only dreaded the Yanhuang Organization.

Over time, some of the core members of Nanqinghong in the Southwest Region had inherited Wu Hu's tradition and held no fear for the ground-level police.

The burly man surnamed Wang was Li Kui's right-hand man, greatly valued by him, and had some status in Nanqinghong's Southwest branch, being one of its core members.

Of course, his confidence stemmed in large part from his ignorance of the series of events that had taken place in Nanming, as well as Li Kui's orders that everyone was not allowed to carry firearms; otherwise, he'd have ordered the driver to turn around a long time ago.

Just like all other vehicles entering the highway, the Range Rover and the two Mercedes-Benz vans stopped at the entrance to the expressway.

Whoosh!

The moment the three cars stopped, the waiting armed police and special forces immediately turned their guns, aiming at the three vehicles.

Simultaneously, two members of the Yanhuang Organization dashed forward, stealthily approaching the line of cars.

"Please get out of the car for inspection!"

Sometime later, as the two Yanhuang Organization members approached the vehicles, the leading policeman shouted through a megaphone.

Huh?

Seeing this display of force, Li Kui's subordinates in the three cars, even without carrying guns, grew nervous.

Including that burly man surnamed Wang, who was known as Li Kui's right-hand man!

"Do not resist, all of you get out of the car."

In the midst of the tension, the Wang surnamed big man immediately issued the order to disembark through the radio and then took the lead in pulling open the door and stepping out, forcing a smile at the leading policeman, "What happened?"

"Put your hands on your head and squat down, quickly!"

The response he got was a stern shout from the leading policeman.

"Uh..."

Originally wanting to squeeze out a smile to glean some information, the burly Wang was startled by the shout, mouth agape, but he dared not say anything else and obediently followed the policeman's orders.

Seeing this, the other subordinates of Li Kui followed suit, all the while curious about what had happened to warrant such a massive police presence.

"Swoosh swoosh swoosh swoosh..."

As if to unveil the mystery for them, once they all put their hands on their heads and squatted down, the special forces who were ready to capture them pounced like tigers, charging with formidable momentum.

Whoosh!

This sudden turn of events caused the faces of Li Kui's subordinates to change drastically, and they were so frightened that they dared not move.

Quickly, a dozen fully armed special forces reached the front of Li Kui's subordinates, their black gun muzzles pointed, making them too fearful to make a false move.

Seeing this unfold, the leading policeman turned and reported something to a slightly paunchy middle-aged man behind him, then quickly walked with the middle-aged man towards Li Kui's subordinates.

Li Kui not here?!

With a single scan, the somewhat paunchy middle-aged man realized there was no sign of Li Kui among the crowd—as the head of the Nanli Police, he had already deeply memorized Li Kui’s profile and photograph.

This discovery caused his expression to change dramatically!

The capture of Li Kui!

It was the first step in uprooting Nanqinhong’s influence in the Southwest.

It was also a crucial step!

For this reason, Ma Chaoyang, the head of the Southwest Police, had personally called him, asking him to organize and implement the capture operation himself.

After taking the call, he immediately sent someone to investigate Li Kui’s hideout, and up until an hour ago, they got news that Li Kui’s exclusive car had left a resort in Nanli and was heading in the direction of the highway.

Upon learning this information, he discussed with the head of the Nanli armed police and the supporting members of the Yanhuang Organization, and eventually decided to set the trap at the expressway entrance, planning to catch their prey lying in wait.

He had been worried that Li Kui and his men would have a desperate struggle, but the capture had gone smoothly so far, and he was beginning to breathe a sigh of relief when he discovered Li Kui was not among them!

"Where is Li Kui?"

After the shock, the paunchy middle-aged man asked coldly.

Without answering, including the burly Wang, all of Li Kui's subordinates chose silence—they were merely following Li Kui's orders to go to Nanming and had no idea where Li Kui had gone.

Moreover, sensing something was amiss from the current situation, even if they knew Li Kui's whereabouts, they would never divulge it.

"Interrogate them immediately, and be sure to find out Li Kui's whereabouts!"

Seeing Li Kui's subordinates remain silent, the middle-aged man who was the head of the Nanli Police turned a shade of green with anger.

All this because he was in charge of this arrest operation, and he knew the significance of this operation.

In his eyes, if Li Kui managed to give them the slip in Nanli, like a Golden Cicada shelling its pupa, his superiors would surely hold him accountable, and it was very likely they would strip him of his official hat!

This was something he absolutely did not want to see!

Not just him, the commander of the armed police squadron and the two Yanhuang Organization members cooperating in the arrest operation also had somewhat ugly expressions on their faces.

Later, just as the middle-aged man was quickly walking towards the armed police squadron commander and the two Yanhuang Organization members, planning to discuss what to do next, more than a dozen SWAT officers were escorting Li Kui's subordinates onto the police vehicle.

At the same time, Li Kui, the main target of this arrest, was driving an inconspicuous off-road vehicle, along a rural road, headed south toward the border.

"Bro, are we really going to the Golden Triangle?"

Li Wei asked as he looked at the endless rural road from the passenger seat of the car.

Before getting into the car, he learned from Li Kui that something had gone wrong in Nanming, and it was very likely that the police were going to go after the Nanqinhong's influence in the Southwest, so he had to take him and flee to the Golden Triangle.

And to escape smoothly, Li Kui did not hesitate to send all his subordinates to head towards Nanming by car, the purpose being to attract the attention of the police, to buy time and opportunity for the two brothers to escape.

"Hmm."

Li Kui nodded, his face dark, while he vigilantly sensed everything around him.

"Bro, why did the police suddenly decide to catch you guys?" Li Wei was a bit puzzled.

"That guy Ma San led people to attack the Wudang Martial Arts Hall, and afterward, the police caught all of them in one fell swoop."

Li Kui spoke of the news he had received, but his heart was somewhat puzzled as to why Ma San would move against the Wudang Sect; at the same time, he was curious about where Wu Hu had gone to—after he had followed Wu Hu's order to stand by in Nanli, he had not received any call from Wu Hu. When the gunmen led by Ma San were caught, he even tried to call Wu Hu, only to find that the phone was unreachable.

This made him sense danger, leading to the decision to head to the Golden Triangle in order to save himself and Li Wei first, and then inquire about the situation here. If things were resolved, he would come back with Li Wei. If the police were really gearing up to move against Nanqinghong's influence in the Southwest, then he and Li Wei would stay in the Golden Triangle.

"Isn't Mr. Hu covering the sky with one hand in the Southwest? Shouldn't he be able to smooth this over?" Li Wei asked again, knowing that Wu Hu was like an Emperor in the Southwest, not to mention

ordinary policemen, even powerful figures in the police had to be polite to him, and even his own brother Li Kui had been walking sideways in the Southwest ever since he had followed Wu Hu.

This made him subconsciously think of Wu Hu as an omnipotent being, akin to a god in his heart!

"I don't know."

Li Kui was somewhat frustrated, although he did not believe that Wu Hu, who was all-powerful in the Southwest, would run into trouble; reason told him that if Wu Hu was fine, he should have contacted him.

"Bro, after we get to the Golden Triangle, will my injury still be treatable?"

Seeing Li Kui's mood was not good, Li Wei did not dare to continue on this topic but hesitated for a moment before asking about his own concerns.

Obviously... with his wasteful lifestyle, if he had to become a eunuch, it would be quicker and more merciful to just kill him.

"Can't you be quiet?"

Li Kui glared at Li Wei without good humor and then suddenly an unbelievable thought emerged in his mind: Could this have anything to do with Ye Fan?

The next moment.

Before Li Kui could come up with an answer, his consciousness suddenly sensed a terrifying martial artist presence ahead!

Whoosh!

This discovery made Li Kui's face change drastically, and he instinctively pressed down on the brakes.

"Screech—"

Soon, the sound of the car tires rubbing violently against the road was heard, and the off-road vehicle suddenly slowed down, leaving behind a trail of tire marks on the ground.

"Bro, why did you stop the car?"

The sudden change caught Li Wei off guard, almost slamming his head into the car window, and he asked Li Kui with full confusion.

There was no answer.

Li Kui's first action was to look toward the spot where the presence had emerged.

Under the night sky.

As a Postnatal Perfect Martial Artist, he used his excellent vision and saw a figure standing down the road in front of him.

"Uh..."

Then, as he made out the person's face in the moonlight, he was so shocked that his eyes bulged and his mouth hung open, his face was full of horror, and he completely froze: How... how could he appear here?

"Thud! Thud! Thud!"

The answer to Li Kui came in the form of dull footsteps.

Under the night sky.

Ye Fan walked over with large strides!

Chapter 420 Southwest Storm IX

"Brother, who is that person ahead?"

Seeing that Li Kui didn't respond, but just looked forward with a face full of horror, Li Wei followed his gaze and suddenly saw Ye Fan striding towards them, blurting out the question.

"Hiss~"

With no response, Li Kui shuddered and twitched at the corner of his mouth, immediately shifting into reverse in a panic, preparing to flee.

However—

Just as Li Kui was about to change gears, a wave of invisible Mind Power suddenly entered his forehead at the Yintang point, attacking his consciousness.

Mind Power Attack!

Terrified, Li Kui quickly abandoned the idea of driving away and instead immediately used his consciousness to mobilize his inner strength to protect his mind.

Only—

Before the inner strength Li Kui mobilized could reach his consciousness, that invisible Mind Power silently and breathlessly struck his consciousness.

Clack!

Under that strike, Li Kui's consciousness trembled, his face turned pale as paper instantly, and he looked as if he were cursed.

"Brother, what... what's wrong with you?"

Noticing Li Kui's abnormal state again, Li Wei appeared somewhat panicked. In his memory, the powerful Li Kui had never lost his composure like this.

Ignoring Li Wei's question, Li Kui quickly refocused his mind, relying on his Martial Arts Will to resist Ye Fan's Mind Power Attack.

"Phew~"

Under Li Kui's stubborn resistance, Ye Fan's Mind Power vanished without a trace. Li Kui secretly sighed in relief, then suddenly realized that Ye Fan was already next to the car, calmly watching him.

Li Kui shivered all over, and also understood that Ye Fan's recent attack wasn't meant to kill him but merely to disturb his mind to prevent him from driving away!

"Huff... huff... huff..."

Understanding all of this, Li Kui's breathing became rapid, and his eyes filled with fear.

Meanwhile, Li Wei, who was unaware of Ye Fan's identity, looked at Ye Fan blankly.

"Get out of the car."

Under the gaze of both Li Kui and Li Wei, Ye Fan spoke up, his voice not loud but booming like a distant thunder in Li Kui's ears.

Li Kui tensed in fright, then said to Li Wei, breathing rapidly, "Get... get out of the car!"

As soon as he finished speaking, Li Kui tried hard to calm his emotions, attempting to regain his composure. No matter how hard he tried, however, the fear in his heart, like a haunting ghost, continually surrounded his mind.

Beyond the fear, the little reason left told him that Ye Fan, who defeated the Yanhuang Organization's second most powerful young Martial Arts genius Ye Long, was far beyond his capacity to confront. The wisest thing to do was to follow what Ye Fan had said, thus pleading for Ye Fan's forgiveness.

Realizing this, Li Kui no longer hesitated. Enduring his fear, he pushed open the car door and was the first to step out.

Seeing this, Li Wei, although he didn't understand why Li Kui was acting so abnormal in front of Ye Fan, also smartly followed what Li Kui had said and chose to get out of the car.

"Young Master Ye."

After getting out of the car, Li Kui didn't dare to look at Ye Fan's seemingly calm face, but bowed and saluted immediately.

Young Master Ye?!

Astonished at hearing this address, Li Wei suddenly thought about the time two days ago when Li Kui had taken people to retaliate against Su Liuli. They were scared to act by the mere mention of Ye Fan's name and had secretly proceeded only after consulting Mr. Hu.

Because of all this, Li Wei not only remembered Ye Fan's name but also became curious about him. He had even specially asked Li Kui about it, but Li Kui didn't tell him a word.

Now, hearing the address Young Master Ye, Li Wei impulsively asked, "You... you are Ye Fan?"

"Slap!"

Li Wei received a slap in response.

Under the night sky.

Li Kui slapped Li Wei to the ground!

"Brother... brother, what are you doing?"

Feeling the fiery pain on his face and seeing Li Kui's fearful and angry appearance, Li Wei was stunned.

Because he had relied on his brother Li Kui all his life, Li Kui had been extremely good to him, even to the extent of being overly indulgent.

That indulgence made him regard Li Kui as not only a brother but secretly also as a father figure.

That indulgence allowed him to swagger around Nanli, provoking whoever he wanted without blame from Li Kui, who would always unconditionally cover for him and smooth things over.

And yet... at this moment, Li Kui had suddenly slapped him to the ground—how could he not be shocked?

At that moment.

He even felt as if he were in a dream—he couldn't believe that his doting brother would slap him!

"You imbecile, aren't you going to kneel and apologize to Young Master Ye?"

Looking at Li Wei's disbelieving expression, Li Kui scolded him furiously.

Being Mr. Hu's most valued and trusted subordinate, Li Kui possessed not only a decent Combat Power but also a not so dull mind.

Initially, he had suspected that the changes in the Southwest had something to do with Ye Fan. Now seeing Ye Fan blocking their way, he was almost certain of it.

In such a scenario, instead of apologizing and pleading for mercy after seeing Ye Fan, Li Wei directly called out Ye Fan's full name...

This made him so angry that he nearly exploded, and also scared witless—In his view, given Ye Fan's way of doing things, even if both brothers knelt and pleaded, Ye Fan might not show any mercy, let alone with Li Wei acting like this?

As the saying goes, the newborn calf fears not the tiger, and the ignorant knows no fear.

Li Kui was aware of Ye Fan's identity and methods, while Li Wei only heard of Ye Fan's great reputation and knew nothing about Ye Fan, not even being sure if the person before them was indeed Ye Fan.

Thus, instead of kneeling and apologizing to Ye Fan as Li Kui had said, he was still immersed in shock.

"Thump--"

Seeing that Li Wei remained indifferent, Li Kui didn't dare to waste any more words and instead knelt down in front of Ye Fan, full of fear, "Ye... Young Master Ye, please spare our lives."

"I have expended so much effort to find you, and you ask me to let you go, is that possible?" Ye Fan countered.

"Uh..."

Li Kui, upon hearing this, was so frightened that his entire body shook, and then he opened his mouth, attempting to beg again, but he couldn't utter a single word, just looking at Ye Fan with a face full of fear.

"Are you Li Wei?"

Seeing Li Kui so terrified and at a loss, Ye Fan turned his gaze toward a confused Li Wei.

"Yes... it's me."

Li Wei nodded subconsciously.

"Ye... Young Master Ye, Lady Su is fine, she was taken away by a reclusive master from the Buddhist sect," Li Kui said nervously.

"Ye... Young Master Ye, I swear to heaven, I didn't touch a hair on Lady Su!"

The initially confused Li Wei, upon hearing the dialogue between Ye Fan and Li Kui, had a flash of understanding and trembled as he explained, scared.

"Indeed, you didn't touch a single hair on her, but as far as I know, you intended to sell her to the dirtiest nightclub in the Golden Triangle to have her gang-raped to death, right?"

As Ye Fan spoke, the rage in his heart seemed to ignite, aggressively surging upward, with killing intent suddenly flashing in his eyes.

"I..."

Li Wei struggled for words, speechless, partly shocked by how Ye Fan knew all this, and partly because that had indeed been his initial intent, though it hadn't come to pass.

"Ye... Young Master Ye, at that time we didn't know Lady Su's identity."

Seeing the situation, Li Kui made one last desperate attempt at confession, "Moreover, when I found out that Lady Su was your friend, I didn't lay hands on her. It was Wu Hu who forced me to take Lady Su to the Golden Triangle as a hostage..."

"Wu Hu is dead; blaming him won't help you."

Ye Fan looked numbly at Li Kui; he was well aware that if not for the possible intervention by the master from the Buddhist sect, who could be Bodhi Wu Yin, Su Liuli likely would have already been sent to the Golden Triangle.

If so, even if he uprooted Yanhuang's influence in the Southwest Region, he couldn't ensure Su Liuli's safety, and... he would also be risking his life to go to the Golden Triangle for a rescue!

Wu Hu is dead?!

Li Kui was also shocked as Ye Fan's words echoed in his ears. Although he had previously thought that Wu Hu might have encountered trouble since he had not called, deep down, he didn't believe that the highly capable Wu Hu could run into misfortune, let alone imagine that Wu Hu would be reporting to the King of Hell!

Even he had not considered that possibility, let alone Li Wei, who had always worshiped Wu Hu like a god.

Under the night sky.

Li Wei seemed to hear the most incredible thing in the world, staring at Ye Fan filled with horror, as if asking: Who exactly is he? How could he possibly have killed Mr. Hu so easily??

"Woo woo woo~"

The answer to Li Wei was the sound of a ghostly wind whistling.

The Ghostly Gourd appeared before Ye Fan at some point, and a stream of Evil Yin Qi blew out from the gourd, sweeping toward Li Wei.

"Ah... Ghosts!"

The sudden scene caused Li Wei to return to his senses from his shock and then he started howling in terror.

He felt as if he had been brought to hell, surrounded by darkness, with thousands of Evil Ghosts howling and shrieking as they rushed towards him, seeking his life!

Gulp!

As Li Wei's howls echoed in his ears and he felt the rich Evil Yin Qi, Li Kui suddenly woke up, realizing that Ye Fan had manipulated the Evil Yin Qi using magic to induce hallucinations in Li Wei.

"Bang! Bang! Bang!"

Realizing all this, Li Kui didn't hesitate, quickly bowing repeatedly and begging Ye Fan, "Ye... Young Master Ye... we know our mistakes, please give us a way to live!"

"Ah... Ah... Bro... Save me! Save me!!"

The response to Li Kui was Li Wei's even more terrified howl; unprecedented fear made his face turn pale, his mouth foam, his body convulsing uncontrollably.

Seeing this scene, Li Kui knew that Li Wei was at his breaking point; if Ye Fan continued to manipulate the Evil Yin Qi and attack Li Wei with illusions, Li Wei would be scared to death.

Realizing all this, Li Kui felt like an ant on a hot pan, unsure of what to do.

It's a gamble!

A second later, Li Kui gritted his teeth, made a secret decision, his consciousness moved, Power surged, and like a tiger pouncing on its prey, he suddenly lunged toward Ye Fan!

"Whoosh!"

In a flash, Li Kui lunged in front of Ye Fan, his right fist swung out fiercely like a cannonball, aiming with all his might at Ye Fan's Taiyang point!

The Taiyang point.

This is one of the deadly points on a human body; any normal person hit hard there would undoubtedly die.

Li Kui, not striking initially, delivered a killing move the moment he did, clearly desperate to kill Ye Fan.

"Hmph!"

Facing Li Kui's struggle, Ye Fan snorted coldly, neither dodging nor avoiding. Just as Li Kui's right fist was about to smash into his Taiyang point, his right hand quickly swung, transforming into a Phantom, blocking in front of him.

"Slap--"

Fist and palm collided, Power burst forth, and Li Kui felt as if his punch's Power had disappeared like mud into the sea.

"I promise, you will beg me to kill you!"

Ye Fan, completely unharmed, looked at Li Kui with a look that one gives to a dead man.