

Chapter 36 - All of You Will Die

Caretaker Liu stuttered, "S- surely not. The Black Wind stronghold is so far away from us. They've never come here before..." He had the largest household in the village, so the Black Wind stronghold would come for him first.

"I heard that the villages near the Black Wind stronghold have all strengthened their defences and erected walls. That's why they're travelling further away. Now that it's almost winter, they also have to stockpile food. Caretaker Liu, your granaries must all be full!"

"Won't the government do something about it?" Only now did Li Qingshan understand something; as it turned out, mountain bandits also had an 'autumn hunt'. To the hunters, autumn was when the wild beasts were plump. On the other hand, to the mountain bandits, autumn was when the villagers who had just harvested their fruits of labor were the plumppest.

"Hmph, the government collects money every year, saying that they need it to deal with bandits, yet it's never settled properly."

Caretaker Liu said, "T- then, what do we do? Sonny, why didn't you bring more people back with you?"

Li Long glanced at him unhappily. Why wouldn't he want to bring back more people? However, he was only one of his master's disciples, not the master of the school. He could get along well with his brothers normally, but it was impossible for him to make them face off against the bandits of the Black Wind stronghold.

However, he was only accepted under the Iron Lion's tutelage due to caretaker Liu many years ago. With that in consideration, he could not just rebuke him. All he could say was,

"I alone am sufficient. The master of the Black Wind stronghold is definitely not leading them this time. It should be one of the bosses at most. As long as I state my master's name, he should show me some respect. However, I do need some people on my side to match them in aura. Qingshan..." Li Long looked at Li Qingshan anxiously. If a master like him remained by his side, he would have a bit more confidence.

Li Qingshan deeply doubted whether this could work. The bandits would travel so far just to come here, so were they supposed to retreat after simply hearing a name? However, he would not allow people to ransack the small village where he was born and raised. He clasped his fist. "It will be my duty."

After Li Qingshan gave his word, Li Long's heart eased up. With a third-rate master as a helper, he would have much more confidence in dealing with this matter. This was an extremely crucial part of why he had conceded to Li Qingshan so much.

Village head Li and caretaker Liu arranged for some workers and guards to make preparations, and they even equipped them with weapons. Although the news had been locked down, the atmosphere immediately became tense.

Caretaker Liu said as he trembled, "Sonny, should we just seek shelter elsewhere temporarily?"

Li Long said, "There's no need for that. They've mainly come to plunder. They won't kill or burn without good reason. However, caretaker Liu, you might have to pay quite the price this time."

Caretaker Liu let out a long sigh. He was unable to avoid this calamity. He could leave, but his property could not.

They waited quietly in the house. Li Hu and Li Bao dripped with sweat out of pure fright as they held onto their weapons. They could not help but think about the various terrifying rumors they had heard regarding Black Wind Mountain.

Li Long glanced at his brothers, and then he glanced at Li Qingshan, who sat there composed with his eyes shut. Li Long sighed inside, If you were even just half as brave as him, I would definitely take you to Qingyang city.

Clang! Clang! Clang! Clang!

Before night had even fallen, the clanging of metal suddenly filled the village. This sound came from the scout posted outside the village. He was a quick-footed lad with sharp eyes and ears that caretaker Liu had chosen.

“They’re here!” Li Long said.

Li Qingshan’s eyes snapped open. How bold of these mountain bandits to actually come ransacking under the light of day.

The clanging suddenly stopped.

A few people hurried to the entrance of the village, but all they saw was a cloud of dust approaching from the distance. In the blink of an eye, it had arrived. There were several dozen people, but regardless of their statures, whether they be tall or short, fat or skinny, every single one of them had vicious faces. The leader rode a pony that could move through the mountains, and he held a bloody head in his hand.

“Little Six!” Caretaker Liu called out. The head belonged to the lad that he had sent out for scouting, but the bandits had actually killed him. Caretaker Liu’s legs almost gave way from fright as he looked at Li Long. Didn’t you say that they wouldn’t kill without good reason?

Li Long’s eyebrows furrowed into a mess as he whispered, “They’re killing to establish their might.” Afterwards, he clasped his fist and said loudly, “I am Li Long of the Iron Fist school. May I ask which boss of the Black Wind stronghold has come?”

“This is our third boss. If you’re clever, hand over your money and food. Don’t make things difficult for I, your grandfather, or I’ll burn down your entire damn village!” A mountain bandit called out, and the other bandits bawled out with him. They brandished their weapons with sneers plastered across their faces. It was like they were looking at a group of lambs for slaughter.

The third boss had a full beard and a fierce appearance. He tossed the head to the ground, which rolled to Li Long’s feet. “The Iron Fist school? If the Iron Lion was here, I would leave immediately without any objections, but who are you supposed to be?”

When Li Hu and Li Bao saw the cloud of dust, they became ashen from fear as their legs trembled. Now, their legs gave way, so they collapsed on the ground.

The mountain bandits laughed aloud. “How impressive of you, third boss!”

Li Long's expression changed, and he gasped. It was rumored that out of the many bosses of the Black Wind stronghold, the third boss was the cruelest. His mood constantly changed, and he could do anything, from raping to kidnapping. In the eyes of the villagers near the Black Wind stronghold, he was even more terrifying than the stronghold's master.

However, since he had asked who Li Long was supposed to be, it demonstrated that he was still fearful of the Iron Fist school. He wanted to find out about his relationship with the Iron Lion. With no other choice given the current circumstances, Li Long could only hold back his anger. "I am my master's final disciple. I knew that the third boss would be coming, but I wouldn't want you to return empty-handed. As such, I've prepared a small gift. Please spare the Crouching Ox village for my master's sake."

Caretaker Liu offered up an embroidered box as he trembled. With a flick of his horse whip, the embroidered box flew into the third boss's hands. He had demonstrated rather powerful martial arts.

Opening the box, all he saw was fine, glimmering silver, but his face gradually darkened instead. "A hundred taels. Are you trying to satisfy some beggars with this?"

"G- great king, we've done everything that we can."

"Before nightfall, I want to see a thousand taels and half a tonne of grain. Otherwise, hmph!" The third boss suddenly licked his lips when he reached there; he smiled nefariously. "My brothers also want to borrow a few women. Don't worry, this isn't stealing, only borrowing. Once we're done, we'll return them to you next spring."

The mountain bandits all smiled wickedly as one of them said, "It'll be a blessing to the women who can become the stronghold mistresses of our third boss!" Another bandit added, "By spring, perhaps the women themselves would not want to return."

However, Li Long knew that not a single woman who had gone to the Black Wind stronghold had returned. They had all been raped to death. He said loudly, "Third boss, will you really give no consideration to the Iron Fist school?"

Meanwhile, caretaker Liu was absolutely stunned by the numbers. He had blanked out, unable to say anything.

"Don't make me wait too long!" The third boss did not even glance at Li Long. Looking back, he ordered his subordinates, "Urge them on!"

Over twenty mountain bandits made their way around Li Long's group and entered the village. They hammered the door of each household in the village, and they would force their way into the houses of those who were afraid of opening up. Over a hundred villagers were herded out like sheep, gathering together in complete fear. The barking of dogs and the sobs of women and children immediately merged to create a mess.

The third boss laughed aloud as he looked at this. "We'll rest in the village tonight!"

"The child was only fourteen. He was still so young. He hadn't done anything wrong at all."

Suddenly, an extremely calm voice rang out, so calm that it did not fit in with the current scene. However, the calmness seemed to contain suppressed but uncontrollable killing intent.

Li Qingshan picked up Little Six's head from the ground and gently closed his eyes.

The third boss squinted. "Who are you?" He had not noticed Li Qingshan. From the start when he had tossed the head to the ground, Li Qingshan had lowered his head, trembling all over. The third boss had thought that he was afraid.

But now, Li Qingshan no longer trembled at all. He said slowly, "What a good, clever child. His parents must have loved him dearly."

The third boss yawned, "What are you trying to say?"

Suddenly, Li Qingshan raised his head. "Today, all of you will die!"