

Chapter 39 - The Path of Daemons and Demons

Li Long pointed in a direction, and Liu Hong strode off. The Iron Fist school did not focus on movement techniques, but he could cover a distance equivalent to seven or eight ordinary steps with each stride. His sleeves shook in the air as he travelled quickly. Before long, he had arrived at the location where the Black Wind mountain bandits had stopped to set up camp. Only a few corpses remained there, with a few wolves tearing away from them. Upon their arrival, the wolves raised their heads and growled.

Liu Hong snorted coldly and thunderously, scaring away the wolves as they howled. Liu Hong inspected the corpses. "This really is the might of the Stone Splitter bow. Huang Binghu has actually given away his famed weapon. Is he a disciple taught by Huang Binghu? It can't be. With that sickly old tiger's martial arts, he can't have raised a disciple like that."

"But he has even given him the Stone Splitter bow, so Huang Binghu probably wants him to take over as hunting chief. No wonder he's not afraid of the Black Wind stronghold. As long as he returns to the Drawn Reins village, the Black Wind stronghold won't be able to do anything to him. Are they supposed to destroy the entire Drawn Reins village?"

"Does Li Qingshan really plan on killing them all?" Li Long trembled a little as the smell of blood stung his nose. He had practised martial arts for over a decade, and fighting was commonplace for him. However, with the Iron Fist school's might within Qingyang city, he had never been involved in a battle to the death. At most, he would punish some ignorant street punk or passing wanderer of the jianghu. He had never seen so many dead people before.

"Since he has fallen out with them completely, of course he has to kill them all. A'Long, it has been too peaceful within Qingyang city. Originally, your martial arts should be much greater than right now given your talent." Liu Hong found it completely reasonable, teaching his disciple a lesson.

Li Long muttered something, unable to find a proper response.

Liu Hong continued to inspect the corpses. "Hmm? This wound is very strange!" He discovered a bandit who had his throat slit.

"What's so strange?"

"This bandit died in a group of people. Look at his expression and posture when he died. It's like he failed to react completely."

"What's this all about?" Afterwards, Li Long discovered many other bandit corpses with the same wounds. Li Long imagined the strange sight that happened back then and shivered. He could not help but look around, wondering if the dark mountains and forests were hiding monsters. He only eased up when he looked at Liu Hong.

"Anyone with good enough movement techniques can achieve this, but only the master of the Dragon's Gate sect within all of Qingyang has movement techniques like that. Not only does Li Qingshan have a helper, but they're very strong too." Despite all the experience Liu Hong had from wandering the jianghu, he would never have guessed the real reason these bandits failed to react; it was because they could not see their opponent at all.

He followed the traces left behind on the crowd and searched through the depths of the mountains. The bandit corpses were as obvious as guide posts.

There were bandits who had collapsed from arrows, as well as people who had died from having their throats slit.

Li Long had grown completely numb. He recalled Li Qingshan's earlier words. "Today, all of you will die." Originally, he only treated it as something Li Qingshan had said out of pure anger, but now, it actually seemed like a declaration. Back when Li Qingshan had grabbed him by the neck, he had not felt particularly afraid, but he felt a lingering sense of fear now.

They discovered the corpse of another bandit. Li Long said, "All of the mountain bandits are dead. It's just the third boss left now." Afterwards, they discovered a pony frothing from the mouth, collapsed on the ground.

Before long, Liu Hong stopped and looked below a large tree. Even this experienced member of the jianghu became extremely shocked. Blood flowed very far away. The reeking, sanguine smell was even heavier than the scent beside the bonfire where the most bandits died.

Li Long only caught a single glance and could not help but vomit as if he wanted to puke up all of the horrors he had seen tonight.

For the entire night, the third boss felt like he had been trapped in a nightmare he could not wake up from. The people beside him died one by one as the god of death inched closer to him, step by step.

The third boss used his movement technique and fled towards the Black Wind stronghold desperately. His movements were nowhere near as graceful as the Dragon's Gate sect, but he was not actually slow, perhaps due to the danger that he faced.

The chilling winds revolved through the surroundings, sticking to him closely such that he was afraid of stopping at all. Only when his inner force was completely depleted did he stop below a large tree, gasping for air.

Looking down from the hill, he could already make out the shape of the Black Wind stronghold. Just when he began to smile.

Thud!

A feathered arrow whistled through the air, piercing his thigh before deeply embedding itself in the tree bark. Dead leaves fell down slowly like rain.

The third boss ignored the pain and looked at the terrifying figure emerging from the woods. He was smiling like a hunter who had caught the prey he had been tracking for a very long time. The string of the great bow in his hand still vibrated.

"That's it, third boss!"

"I'll admit that I was in the wrong today. The jianghu is constantly changing, so there's no harm for us to get acquainted. Argh!" In this moment of danger, the third boss actually tried to deceive Li Qingshan, mentioning some conventional phrase from the jianghu. However, before he could finish his words, an arrow pierced him.

“Don’t you mention that word; you’re unworthy. Come, tell me. Tell me everything about the Black Wind stronghold. How many people are there, how many bosses are there, and how are the martial arts of the first boss?”

“If I tell you, will you spare me?” The third boss was drenched in sweat, feeling both pain and fear.

Li Qingshan considered that question. “No, I can’t. I’ve said before that all of you will die today. I will give you a quick death!” He did not even try to lie, telling it straight to his face. I’ll kill you, whether you tell me or not.

The third boss said, “Fucking hell, if you want to kill me or do something to me, come at me. I won’t even bat an eye.”

Li Qingshan smiled coldly. “Just as I had wished!” Red light flowed through the depths of his eyes, but even Li Qingshan himself failed to discover it.

Li Long barely managed to recover, but he averted his gaze away from the corpse beneath the tree as much as he could. “Master, do we keep on chasing?”

Liu Hong waved his hand. “There’s no need. Now that there’s a bringer of misfortune like him, the jianghu is going to be rowdy.” He had seen many brutal people from the jianghu. The third boss could match them all.

However, for someone to be so vicious and merciless right from the beginning, now that was rare. Almost everyone would vomit a few times at the beginning. Only after going through many trials of life and death would their hearts gradually harden.

Li Long said, “He’s just a third-rate master. He used a sneak attack to heavily injure the third boss. Master, why do you treat him with such importance?”

Liu Hong said, “I’ll just tell you that people like that emerge endlessly within the jianghu, and every single one of them are powerful. Any martial arts in their hands can be unleashed to extraordinary degrees. You can’t afford to become enemies with them for no good reason.”

“How come?” Li Long did not understand. Would their martial arts be powerful just because of their cruelty and mercilessness?

“The essence of martial arts is slaughter.”

However, the person Liu Hong had labelled as a person of misfortune, Li Qingshan, was currently kneeling by a small stream as he vomited. He hunched to a point where tears streaked down his face.

In the end, the third boss was not as tough as he had acted. He told Li Qingshan everything he wanted to know, pleading for death.

After finishing off the third boss with his blade, the red light in his eyes had dimmed. He seemed to have just realised what he had done—he had used an extremely brutal method to torture a person, a living person, but that was nothing. The most terrifying part about it was that he found great joy doing so.

Just what is wrong with me?

The hoof of an ox stepped into the stream, and Li Qingshan raised his head. The black ox stared at him, speaking with a seemingly approving yet mocking tone, "You seem more and more like a demon!"

"So- what?" Li Qingshan rebuked stubbornly. He understood that as he gradually advanced with cultivation, the ability's influence on his temperament would gradually deepen. Since it was an ability of daemons and demons, it would never be about benevolence or mercy.