

PARAGON 32

Chapter 32 - 32: One Strike

When he exited the cave, he fully expected the three members of the Jade Lotus Sect to have long since left. However, to his surprise, the two core disciples were cultivating near the camp while Jiao Ning protected them. Her wind qi circulated quietly within her body, ready to defend against any and all perceived threats.

Wei Wuyin frowned. He swept his spiritual sense outward and saw his crane using its beak to grab fish from a nearby river.

Fweet!

Wei Wuyin whistled, causing the crane to lift its head and excitedly return. The whistle broke Dai Qiuyue and Mu Zhang out of their cultivation states. They looked towards him and had very odd expressions.

He jumped and landed nearby. A brow of his formed an arch as he looked at them questioningly. Mu Zhang released a stifled cough as he looked away.

Wei Wuyin was only curious as to why they stayed.

In truth, they hadn't.

Earlier, they left. However, when they came across the news that the City Lord and his son were found murdered while the elite soldiers that had gone out earlier had also been found dead in a similar fashion - beheaded - this created all sorts of a commotion.

They soon realized that Wei Wuyin had killed them. To be able to do that, he had to be a Fifth Phase expert, or even a Mortal God!

Despite having such a strong, youthful life force aura, he was such a high-level expert! They also realized that the Earthly Titan Sect had acted quickly. They had already locked down the surrounding area and were investigating the situation. After all, the City Lord was a recent Mortal God and a newly promoted grand elder of the sect.

They had to take this seriously, if only for face.

They directly sent three Grand Elders and several prominent Core Elders to investigate. They were looking for a young woman with a Heart of Wind Qi. Therefore, Jiao Ning couldn't leave and was helpless.

They believed she was an accomplice, drawing the forces of the City Lord away before an assassin took his life. They predicted the person who did the act was a Fifth Phase expert, hence the need to kill in a stealthy manner.

So, they came back and hid here. If trouble came, Jiao Ning would do her best to get Wei Wuyin to help. In truth, they weren't looking for him, so he was safe. However, she was different.

Jiao Ning walked forward with a calm expression, but when she saw Wei Wuyin brazenly taking his full of her chest, she blushed slightly. She calmly explained the situation.

"Oh? So it's like that." Wei Wuyin realized these three could not catch a break. If at any time since their meeting he had decided to just not bother with them, their fates would've been horrible. Either death or worse.

The crane arrived near him and stretched out her head. He rubbed it softly and pondered on the situation. This white crane was a signature beast for those in the Scarlet Solaris Sect. Considering the two territories were neighbors, it could be taken as a coincidence of him being here. However, if word of his Fifth Phase cultivation base had spread and his identity was discovered, then he would immediately be suspected.

This made things difficult. Of course, he could just avoid the lockdown and escape, but the crane would be left alone and he wasn't willing to abandon it. Worse was these three, if he left, they would soon be discovered and killed or worse.

After all, it was likely that she was the only person who had a Heart of Wind Qi in the immediate area that was not a top-tier Earthly Titan Sect member. She wasn't a suspect, she was the immediate culprit upon discovery. After interrogation, it's likely they would learn of his identity and involvement.

Killing a grand elder figure were grounds for war, and with him being so exceptionally talented, they would probably want to capture him to kill or trade for a vast amount of concessions and resources from the Scarlet Solaris Sect.

The politics of the situation was troublesome.

His mount wasn't fast enough to escape the pursuit of the Earthly Titan Sect. He wouldn't even be able to escape now with the crane.

He felt like he was in a bind. He subconsciously looked towards his right arm and checked his karmic value: 162.5.

"Still 162.5. Guess no luck-" His eyes widened in abrupt and mind-shaking shock as he looked at the number again. His pupils trembled as they focused heavily on the numerical text written on his right arm.

162.5.

It was 162.5.

How the fuck?

Wasn't it 162.4?

When did it change? How did it change? No one voluntarily gave him their karmic reincarnation value, right? Right?!

Because he didn't know when it had increased by 0.1, he didn't know why this happened. Could it be an inverse response? If he suffered bad luck, he gained more karmic value as a result? That didn't make sense at all, but was it the case?

The three watched Wei Wuyin stare at his right arm in disbelief. Like he didn't notice his flawless skin or toned muscles before. This caused them all to have various expressions, mostly confused and awkward ones.

Ignoring them, Wei Wuyin swore to check his karmic value more often.

"Yeah, the situation is a little much. However, we only have a few limited choices, don't we? First, wait and hope we can dodge their inspection. In a few weeks, maybe they'll leave and forget. Second, try to avoid their lockdown efforts and leave. Third, take the direct approach and plead our innocence." Wei Wuyin surmised.

Jiao Ning agreed. There were other choices, but none of them left a safe option. These were the three non-violent options, but even still, they didn't seem like very good ones.

If they find them hiding, they're suspect #1. If they get discovered trying to bypass the lockdown, they're suspect #1. If they get called on their bullshit, they're suspect #1. It really was a thin tightrope to walk.

"Hm, why worry about those things?" Wei Wuyin slightly smiled as he leapt onto the white crane's back.

He looked towards the trio, "You coming or not?"

They stood stunned. He was going to just leave? But what about the lockdown?

"If you're not going to speak, I'm leaving in five seconds." His words were swift and direct.

Jiao Ning directly grabbed Dai Qiuyue's slim waist and leapt onto the crane's back. Zhang Mu hurriedly followed suit after a bit of a daze. If he was left behind, where would he go?

"Let's go." The crane flapped its large wings and took to the skies. Without a word, it traveled east.

In the skies, Earthly Titan Sect disciples littered about on their mounts, hovering idly while other disciples commenced their searches. They mounted eagle-like mounts similar to the variant eagles used by inner disciples of the Scarlet Solaris Sect. However, they were far bigger and their colors were brighter in comparison.

Atop a particular eagle larger and more dominant than the rest, a large man towering nearly three meters and wore nothing but loose pants tied by thin straw stood atop his hovering bird while vigilantly glancing at the surroundings. He had no facial hair, bronze skin, and bulging muscles. The black hair on his head, however, was long and wild.

With his uncovered feet laid bare to the world, he gave off a fiercely savage and natural feeling. Whenever the disciples glanced at this man, there was undisguised respect held clearly within their eyes.

His name was Gu Futu, a Mortal God and Grand Elder of the Earthly Titan Sect. He possessed a Heart of Earth Qi and had a unique feral bloodline that gave him stronger than average senses, heightened natural instincts, and stronger physique. There were rumors he was raised in the wild by wolves, devouring human flesh in his youth.

The dozens of elders and disciples stood in a blockade formation. With them hovering, no one would be able to leave without their permission.

Kree!

Suddenly, an avian cry sounded that drew their attention. In the distance, a bird flew towards them. It was shrouded in violet lightning and wind qi, concealing its racial identity and passengers well. It was moving swiftly like a miniature thunderstorm.

"What is that?" A disciple asked.

"Is it an attack? Are they fools?!" Another disciple cried, a hint of a sneer on his lips.

"They're only coming to their deaths, perhaps they're the ones responsible for the murders," an elder coldly spat, his gaze mostly indifferent. With Gu Futu here, he felt confident any enemy could only wait for capture or death.

When Gu Futu saw this, his eyes narrowed sharply. He sent his spiritual sense outwards. When it came in contact with the shroud of qi resembling a thunderstorm, his pupils contracted.

"Retreat!" His expression turned fierce and solemn as he coldly ordered with haste. His order came abruptly, but the disciples and elders acted almost without conscious effort. They retreated away from the shroud of qi's path.

Gu Futu stayed in the path of the shroud and his aura erupted. The winds raged, the temperature fluctuated, the earth trembled, and the world felt heavier. He was influencing the world's natural elements with just his presence. The False Reality Phase was exceptional. As he stood there, he seemed like a savage god from legend.

Within the shroud, Wei Wuyin slightly smiled. The Jiao Ning trio panicked as they immediately recognized the identity of Gu Futu. Every Mortal God level character was widely known, such as the Helios Witch.

He sent the order for the crane to stop before Gu Futu. The shroud of violet lightning and wind qi kept their identities concealed. As they stopped, he waited for Gu Futu.

Gu Futu's eyes became like a wild beast as his spiritual sense tried to penetrate the shroud of violet lightning and wind qi, but there was a terrifyingly powerful spiritual strength preventing his entry. He frowned, his canine teeth showing with a growling aggression.

"How cowardly. As a Mortal God, do you need to hide yourself?" Gu Futu coldly asked.

"What?! That's also another Mortal God level character? Who?!"

The crowd of Earthly Titan Sect members went into an uproar. No wonder Gu Futu had them retreat. In a battle between Mortal God level experts, they could only be easy kills or in the way. If Gu Futu had to worry about them, his combat prowess would drop. That was an unnecessary risk.

Wei Wuyin didn't respond, but the faces of the Jiao Ning trio changed into wonderous expressions.

"A Mortal God?!" Zhang Mu shouted almost instinctively.

Dai Quiyue had her eyes shine with an odd light, she looked towards Jiao Ning and felt envious. She had actually enjoyed a period of intimacy with a Mortal God, and a handsome one at that!

Jiao Ning was silent. She looked at Wei Wuyin's tall and strong back and couldn't help but recall their previous actions. There was a faint hope that kindled in her eyes as she tried to recall if Wei Wuyin had been satisfied before. The thought of her husband faded out of her mind.

In the Wu Country, there were tens of millions of cultivators. A majority of them were in the Foundation Establishment, with hundreds of thousands of Qi Condensation experts. A majority of those were in the First and Second Phase as they just required accumulation and essence. With time and effort, every cultivator who reached eighty years of age would break through to Qi Condensation, even with horrible talent and no resources.

The ambient Essence of Heaven and Earth was enough.

The number of Mortal God and higher stage characters in the Scarlet Solaris Sect numbered less than twenty. This was a decent average, so within the Five Great Sects of Wu Country, they had merely a hundred or so. This was why keeping track of them was exceptionally easy.

In the entirety of Wu Country, there were no more than three hundred of these experts.

Wei Wuyin threw a transmission crystal out of the shroud towards Gu Futu.

Gu Futu frowned and grabbed the crystal. He read the message and frowned.

"You say you're on a secret mission and can't reveal your identity, wanting to pay me off for passage. You dare be so brazen and arrogant in the Gaia State, in front of the Earthly Titan Sect?! You can reveal yourself voluntarily and stay until I say otherwise, or I'll rip your concealment and you don't even need to think about leaving with breath in your lungs and warmth on your flesh." He snarled out viciously. Gu Futu looked as if he was insulted and disrespected at the same time.

Wei Wuyin helplessly smiled. He wanted to avoid suspicion and a war, if possible. This was the most direct way - lying and bribery. Unfortunately, he met a direct man like Gu Futu.

He sighed.

He sent out another message, "One strike."

When Gu Futu read this message, his eyes suffused a battle lust and fiercely roared like a ravenous beast. His bloodline seemed to boil as his aura spiked. He brought out a large, three meter long blood-red saber with a serrated edge. It looked like a monster with teeth and exuded blood qi.

Wei Wuyin didn't have any other alternatives but using brute force. If he proved to be superior in combat, then Gu Futu would have no choice but to concede the way. That being said, the two other grand elder figures had certainly been notified the moment he arrived. Even if Gu Futu didn't personally send a message, the other members should've.

He had about a minute before being forced to face three Mortal Gods. He needed to strike and severely injure Gu Futu, if not, he needed to display a sufficient amount of strength capable of acting as a deterrent to prevent them from chasing or forcing him into a corner for fear of their own lives.

After all, in the face of a true life or death battle, to hell with face, their lives were far more important.

Furthermore, he wanted to display absolute strength. The Ash Dragon City Lord was a newly ascended Mortal God who was killed in a sneak attack. If he showed strength that made the action itself pointless, when he departed, they would rule him out.

Wei Wuyin clenched his right hand into a tight fist and gathered his qi.

"Ha!" Without any arts, he unleashed his full cultivation base with the myriad of elemental energies fueling it. His earth, water, fire, wind, metal, lightning, wood, and magma, yin-yang qi were all conjured and condensed into a solidified image of a clenched fist. Its manifestation was over ten meters tall and wide.

Steel Metal Qi, Violet Lightning Qi, Life Meadow Wood Qi, and Blazing Inferno Magma Qi were imbued within this single fist to its maximum. Nearly thirty-percent of his qi was injected into this direct strike.

A large fist rivaling a one-story building formed from vibrant yin-yang energy and caused the world to shift, even the sky grew darker from its influence. It was like the entire world was using all its means to kill! It may be missing Ice Qi, but it contained nearly every element of the natural world.

Gu Futu's eyes became like full moons, a fierce, never-before felt deadly sense of crisis emerged in his heart and detonated in his mind. His wild instincts informed, no, screamed with its entire might, that he needed to flee!

Flee!

FLEE!

FLEEEEEEEEE!!!

The fight or flight response that he hadn't felt since he became a Mortal God went into overdrive as his brain became overly panicked. And, when that fist that seemed to contain the world emerged from the shroud like a fist of god and flew towards him like a myriad of elements in full fury, he did something unexpected.

He froze.

Yes.

He froze like a deer in headlights.

While many didn't realize that there's a third response to fight or flight - freeze, there was. One's brain would become overloaded with emotions and thoughts that they simply couldn't process anything in a rational or appropriate manner. For a human, this was rare, but inherently an ever-present possibility.

Boom!

The fist comprised of various elemental qi heavily smashed into Gu Futu's unprotected, burly body without the slightest of resistance. His skin, muscles, bones, and organs started to disintegrate beneath the sheer force of that fist. In moments, he was engulfed and his body vanished within the qi. Not even a whimper was heard as the fist continued to blaze through the skies.

Wei Wuyin's eyes widened in undisguised shock and utter disbelief. Even his mouth was agape, feeling as if his reality had been altered somehow. However, the truth pierced into his eyes, with Gu Futu's body dispersing beneath his attack and his senses, as Gu Futu's lifeforce aura had abruptly ceased.

No fucking way!

From this moment on, he knew, the legacy of the Mortal God Gu Futu was no more.