

Bodyguard 1461

Chapter 1461: You Be Careful

“What is it, old man? Is there something wrong with Snowfrost Town? Do you know this place?” Lin Yi asked, confused.

“Why is this name so familiar... I’ve heard of it before?” Old Lin frowned and repeated the town’s name again, a little stunned. “Is it really where that place is..?”

“What place?” Lin Yi was getting more confused.

“It’s nothing... I hope I remembered it wrong.” Old Lin shook his head. “The common world you’re in right now- I don’t want you to be fighting in other levels beyond that arena; those aren’t places you should be going, nor are they places you can go... I just hope that you settle down in Songshan and spend a relaxing life there, but now... It seems like things won’t go as successfully as planned. The hidden houses- this world is still within my grasp, but right now you seem to be interacting with things beyond the area...”

“What are you talking about, old man?” Lin Yi still didn’t follow. What was this talk of worlds and areas?

“That is... The areas you’re involved in are beyond my control...” Old Lin said. “If you get into trouble, I won’t be able to help you, though by the looks of your current momentum you can’t stop either...”

“What the..? Old man, I say, aren’t you a little embarrassed to say that stuff- when did you ever help me? Remember what you said when I got in trouble? You said I should go home and hide from it! When did you help me before?” Lin Yi finally understood- basically, he was acting tough! Saying that he could’ve been able to handle whatever trouble Lin Yi waddled himself in since he had the strength, but as the supporters and backers of said trouble started appearing, Old Lin had some trouble manning up to them.

“Ugh... I just wanted you to have some practical training experience, right?” Old Lin smiled bitterly. “But, if you were to get in real trouble, there’s no way I wouldn’t have helped you.”

“Ha... I know.” Lin Yi nodded. “But, I need to grow up eventually, right? Since I’m already tangled up in this trouble, I can’t hide from it anymore- plus, if I hide under your wing all the time I’ll never grow up...”

“Well said!” Old Lin remembered his past self when he was young- right, he’d met plenty of dangers himself, and he went through all of them! Lin Yi’s situation might be troublesome now, but the guy was always defying expectations. He might make a name for himself here!

“I say, old man, I had something important to talk to you about when I called- you’re there thinking about life again.” Lin Yi said helplessly. “Can’t we wait until I get home for this?”

“Alright, alright, fine. What is it? Speak, I’m listening!” Old Lin said, interrupting.

“The last time I was graverobbing, other than Zhang Liju’s notes and the Skybolt pig, I also found a qi gathering pill and a master refiner’s personal notes. I forgot to tell you this, but since I’ve got nothing to do now, I’m planning to study it a bit.” Lin Yi said.

“What! You got a qi gathering pill and even a refiner’s personal notes?!” Old Lin’s jaw hit the ground. “You’re not joking, are you? Are you serious?”

“Have I ever lied to you before...” Lin Yi was speechless. “Why are you freaking out over stuff like this?”

“Why?? It’s the qi gathering pill! You eat one of those and you’ve basically eaten countless, countless amounts of experience elixirs!” Old Lin said, clearly very excited. “Do you not know what this means?”

“I do, but can’t you just eat one in your whole life? And it’s best used for when you’re at Earth class late phase peak- you’d be able to break through into Sy class.” Lin Yi said. “I’m still so far away from Sky class, so what’s with the excitement?”

“That’s true, but eating it now still has its effects, though it would be a bit of a waste.” Old Lin said. “Of course, the important thing isn’t the qi gathering pill, but those notes- do you know just how pitiful the number of refiners nowadays is? Even I’m not a refiner!”

“I know, but being a refiner is a much more complicated practicing- I was about to ask you whether or not I should even bother.” Lin Yi asked.

“Of course you should! Why wouldn’t you practice that? This kind of thing is better than anything that’d drop from the sky- if you were to really become a refiner, the paths you’ll walk in the future will be that much smoother, even if you went higher and higher up, you’d still have authority! This is what being a refiner means!” Lin Yi said. “Well, you’d have to be a high-level refiner, of course.”

“Well, I guess I should practice it, then.” Lin Yi wanted to try practicing it in the first place, and this phone call was just made out of habit for consultation.

“You sure are a lucky one! When you have time, come back and lend me that refiner’s notes.”: Old Lin was starting to itch for that.

“Well, sure.” Lin Yi wouldn’t hide anything from this old man.

“Alright, I’ll leave it at that- be careful. It’d be best if you didn’t let anyone know about the notes you have with you. Also, don’t tell anybody you know about refining before you become a proper refiner.” Old Lin said. “In conclusion, be careful.”

“I got it.” Lin Yi didn’t want attention in the first place- his thoughts aligned with Old Lin here.

“These few days, you might see many practitioners who are going to where you are now- of course, I’m not sure though. It’s just a maybe, we’ll see. Be careful.” With that, Old Lin hung up.

“Wha-? Hello?: Wait, what? Practitioners? What do you mean, you’re not sure?” The phone was already cut off...

Lin Yi could only give up- and it was quite troubling, too. Why did this guy always speak sentences in halves? Couldn’t he finish his thoughts?

So there were other practitioners coming here these few days? What was that even about, why would they be here for, it wasn’t like there was anything good here, all the way up in the North. Were they here for the fruit..?

With that thought, Lin Yi instantly heightened his alertness. Regardless, the fruit was something he had to get his hands on- otherwise, what would Feng Xiaoxiao do? It seemed like this operation may not be as smooth as he thought- there were a lot of complications here.

Chapter 1462: Learning Refinement

In the next few days, Lin Yi spent all of his time studying the notes left behind by Zhang Liju.

Taking things slowly, Lin Yi didn't rush right into practical practice right away- he tested the chants and the Refiner's arts slowly, studying them. It was a short chant, but it was hard to understand- before he fully understood everything, he wouldn't move a single step forward into practicing!

Some less patient people, upon getting their hands on a special text, would quickly practice... Only to find out after a while that they had been doing it wrong, or if they had been going the wrong direction, taking a wrong turn...

There were plenty, plenty of these people- people who would have to redo everything if they were lucky, and people who went off the edge if they weren't. Lin Yi didn't want to go there.

It was similar to a joke Lin Yi once saw- it told of a person who got an ancient text, and was extremely pleased when he read the first line of the book. "One must castrate oneself to succeed in this art." The man thought of a long time, and, for the sake of becoming the strongest under the skies, made the decisive move and went through with the deed. The intense pain made him pass out, and when he woke up, he flipped to the second page to feel his blood pressure go up... "Even if castration is done, success is not guaranteed!" He held in his emotional pain and physical pain, and got to the third page- the frustration he felt took the form of spit blood as he died on the spot! The third page said: "Success if possible, even without castration."

Of course, this was just a joke, an exaggerated one. Lin Yi didn't know if someone so dumb and impatient in this world existed, but impatient people were aplenty on this Earth!

Zhang Naipao was training with all his might in the midst of poison wasps, under the scorching sun... Sweat dripped down his entire body, but he didn't find it difficult... Suddenly, he sneezed!

"?" Naipao scratched his nose and looked up at the bright sun. Why was he sneezing on such a hot day? Was someone talking about him or something?

Naipao spent a while thinking about it and shook his head, continuing practicing. He swore in his heart- he needed to become a super-powerful master to beat Lin Yi to death!

Lin Yi first studied the fire element of the refinement fire arts- this was what all refiners went for at first since it had the most practical routes as well as allowing for the refining of many different common medicines and elixirs. Of course, some people might have some conflict with the element, for example, an inherent conflict with the fire element-those with a tendency for ice and cold. People like that wouldn't even succeed if they went for fire, so they went for water for a better chance.

Other than qi, it took a huge amount of will and sensitivity to practice the refinement fire.

Sensitivity and will was something a bit more mysterious here- in simple words, one used his focus and will to feel the state inside the fire of the furnace- adjusting the temperature in response. Every medicine and elixir went through a different process, after all, and if the refinement fire burned too bright or too long, it might affect the pill and turn it into a faulty one, even!

Of course, one didn't need to do that if they were used to it. Refining the same medicine over and over again for hundreds or thousands of times would allow the refiner to find the tricks and faults, ending up getting a success rate from all the times of failure!

But, while this may be fine for those elixirs made with low-level ingredients, it was different for higher-level elixirs, which required more expensive ingredients. You couldn't just waste them in tons of tests- it was hard enough just to get all those ingredients together. Nobody had the luxury to be wasting those rarities on tests.

And so it was decided in that sense, that those refiners without strong will sensitivity would be stuck in the beginner stage- even if their refinement fire was trained to the seventh level, they wouldn't be able to make an elixir that was of the seventh level quality.

The profession of a refiner, as a result, became especially brilliantly perceived, better than practitioners. House Sun's support based healing arts already made them a noble house, let alone the refiners who could make elixirs and pills of the same effectiveness.

However, because of the difficulty of the refinement fire, as well as the immense qi required to be burnt through- along with the requirements for will sensitivity... All of this greatly limited the number of refiners- they were destined to be a rare breed!

Refiners also became powerful figures that factions fought over for- after all, if a family or group got their hands on a refiner, their position in the world would fly far and high.

Naturally, the reason why Lin Yi was learning all of this was simple- it was because he had nothing better to do, so he might as well do it. Who knew when the snow would stop, after all- it was pretty boring.

After completely memorizing the refiner's arts chant, Lin Yi started getting ready to work on the refinement fire. A refinement fire wasn't made of thin air- it was created using the refiner's arts, using the qi within the body and converting it into a refinement fire. A practitioner that wasn't high level really wouldn't be able to sustain such a huge amount of qi consumption- this was also why Golden class practitioners couldn't become Golden class seventh level refiners, it was because the qi couldn't keep up, resulting in the refinement process being cut short. The elixir may be destroyed, or the furnace could explode.

The faster qi was used, the more powerful the refinement flame- but if the rate of qi conversion was slow, the flame would be small. The art of refining was a practice that put serious emphasis on the control of the fire- the refining process required different types of constant fire adjustment for different elixirs, and sometimes one had to suddenly increase the fire or vice versa. If the refiner only had immense qi and nothing else, he wouldn't be able to do much with the refinement fire- he'd very well blow everything up!

And so, with all these limitations, many refiners stopped progressing in their paths, and never became true refiners. In fact, the number of refiners was so small that it could be described as pitiful- though that was also in comparison to the number of available practitioners.

But even so, this also explained what a big deal refiners were, and also why people like Zhang Liju had his name spread over the skies- his list of friends filled to the brim. Everyone wanted to be friends with someone like him.

Usually, refiners were rarely self-taught, and always had a mentor or senior guiding them, from the beginning making of the refinement fire and the control of it. Afterward, the training would fall to one's own hand- the mentor's job was only to get the student on the path, and that was it.

Chapter 1463: Failure

However, one shouldn't underestimate this process of the mentor bringing the student in- without the mentor, and there wouldn't be a whole lot of people that understood how to get into the world of refining.

But Lin Yi had no choice, and a lot of the things he practiced were done using his own abilities, and even his shifu or his old man were versed in completely different things from the ones Lin Yi trained in, and so they couldn't give him any tips or anything. The only one who could be considered a mentor was maybe Elder Jiao.

But refining was something Elder Jiao couldn't help with, evidently. He had to find his own way.

Thinking about it, he was technically inheriting Zhang Liju's arts- it was pretty much akin to him becoming his student, wasn't it?

After calming his heart down, Lin Yi slowly started chanting the fire element's refinement fire arts- it was a process that turned his qi into a catalyst for creating the refinement fire. It was only after the practitioner was able to freely turn his qi into refinement fire that he was able to refine anything at all.

The chant may just be a few lines, but it was actually a very difficult process to be able to make that refinement fire!

Lin Yi could even feel his qi rapidly being consumed, with no sign whatsoever of any refinement fire. In other words, it was a waste of qi without results!

After continuously going at it, Lin Yi finally understood just why there were so little refiners, and why so many people gave up after a while. This was just the very beginning of making the refinement fire, and the amount of qi he used up already could only be described as horrifying! Just how much qi was required to become a refiner?

No wonder low-level practitioners couldn't become refiners; they simply didn't have enough qi!

Lin Yi didn't even have any results yet, and he had already lost a third of his qi- he had been going at it from morning to night, yes, but this wasn't something anyone could just do!

Other than Lin Yi, everyone else got their qi through time and effort- it took a long time, and now a third of it was gone, just like that? Nobody could take that- if they were to go on like this for a few days, using up all of the qi with no refinement fire coming out and instead of losing all of their strength... It was insane!

But Lin Yi, though, could get qi back at night when practicing- No big deal.

And so, he practiced the refinement fire in the morning and used the Art of Dragon Mastery at night- his qi diminished and replenished, and it did give Lin Yi a sense that his strength was increasing, a faint feeling that he was about to break through middle phase peak to Mystic late phase.

“Fuu...” Lin Yi was a bit disappointed- it had been more than two days of this already, with no results. He’d lost two-thirds of his qi, and nothing had happened- he could get it back, but anybody else wouldn’t.

On the third day, Lin Yi finally felt a warmth from his palm- this was a feeling that really shocked him- though, fortunately for him, he had a stronger will and ignored it as he continued refining the fire. Finally, with a low burst, a deep red flame appeared on Lin Yi’s palm!

“Ah!” Lin Yi couldn’t help but cry out- he wasn’t burned or anything, but it was just that this sight really was too mysterious- he had mental preparation, though, and didn’t let the fire disappear from his palm. Otherwise, it might very well have been a waste of effort.

But, while the flame was hot, it didn’t burn his hand- even with just observation alone, he could tell that this fire had a very big difference between it and normal fires! Normal fires were usually a red, yellow type of ember, and the one in his hand was deep red. It was the color you’d see in a chemist’s lab or something.

But this was no chemistry- this was a refinement fire made from the qi inside him. Refiners wouldn’t be so precious and rare if chemistry could replace this.

The fire in Lin Yi’s hand did seem quite fun though- he tried quickening the qi conversion to let the fire burn brighter, but the result was a cruel one- failure!

Lin Yi still wasn’t able to control the conversion of qi to fire- and it extinguished under his impatience!

“...” Lin Yi smiled bitterly- it seemed that he made the mistake of being impatient. The fire he so carefully tried to get out had barely happened, and he was trying to adjust the flame already. Who did he think he was?

“Oink, oink...” The pig seemed to be laughing at Lin Yi’s failure.

“Damn pig, what are you laughing at? You don’t want to level up anymore? Lin Yi was in the middle of being pissed off, after all. He glared at the pig.

“...” The pig lowered its head and didn’t say anything, thinking that this guy was worse than his previous master in the first place. His old master was better both in terms of strength level and talent for practicing!

Chapter 1464: Somebody Came Again

After that, Lin Yi continued experimenting, with the same results. Once he changed the temperature of the fire, it went out by itself with precision. Lin Yi even knew the instant it was going to extinguish was at this point.

“Seems like... I’ll have to stop!” Lin Yi shook his head. “Is it because of me, or because of my qi?”

But Lin Yi didn’t give up- he tried the other elements, since the fire element wasn’t the only one, after all. With some experimentation, he was sure he’d find one that suited him.

And so, the days after that, he started experimenting with the water element refinement fire. With the experience of failure he had with the fire element, the water element was a much easier process- with just one day, he created the water element fire in his palm!

Lin Yi had the jade space supporting him, and wouldn’t lose qi permanently anyway- and as a result, the amount of people practicing the way Lin Yi was doing was extremely, extremely rare! Most people would just give up after failing to do one element since even the qi required for just experimentation was staggering. Even a Sky class master would wait until he had recovered before trying the refinement again, unlike Lin Yi, who just tried out other things if certain methods failed.

Lin Yi had a clear advantage here, but the result was still disappointing for him. The water fire was created, but changing the temperature resulted in failure once more.

“...” Lin Yi sighed. Fortunately, he didn’t waste too much effort there, so it wasn’t that bad. There were still the metal, wood, and earth that he could try.

With the fire element on his left hand and the water element on his right, Lin Yi swapped them around a little for fun before starting to practice the metal element of refinement.

But, just as he was about to create the fire successfully, the sounds of people talking came from outside the inn! Lin Yi froze, stopped his practicing, and moved to the window to take a look.

What he didn’t expect was for there to be another car outside in the parking lot, a BMW x6suv. There were only two cars earlier, Lin Yi’s jeep and the owner’s land rover. The BMW was new!

This town was an isolated one in the first place, and no one came here for tourism- other than Lin Yi, the single customer at the inn, there were no other people!

Lin Yi was curious as well at first, wondering why the inn was built so large and decorated so well- though the name of the inn was a little ancient, called Ice Mountain Inn. There was even an ice flower logo as if it were a company or something.

It was odd for Lin Yi- people wouldn’t come to this town, so what was with this huge inn? Wouldn’t this inn’s owner go bankrupt or something? Of course, he couldn’t ask about business decisions just out of the blue like that, having just arrived here.

And today, with more people coming, Lin Yi felt really confused. What surprised him was the fact that the license plate of the BMW was a Songshan one- in other words, these people came from pretty much the same place as he did!

After the BMW parked, two young men came down from the car. The driver and the passenger seemed to be dressed similarly, and from the sounds of their voices, the driver was speaking respectfully to the passenger!

The two were likely master and follower!

“Young Master Kun, this is the hotel that the invitation letter sent us to- the Ice Mountain Inn!” The driver pointed at the logo as he spoke.

“Not bad- it seems like we’re early; there’s not a lot of people here yet.” Master Kun said as he looked at Lin Yi’s keep and the owner’s landrover. “Let’s study the environment a bit first- there are advantages in being early after all. Could also go talk to some of the people from the other noble houses and sects, and see if any alliances could be made.”

Master Kun naturally didn’t pay much attention to the two other cars, and after the driver finished parking, the two just entered the hall to register.

“Hello, we’re from Donghai’s hidden House Zhao- this is our invitation letter. When does the Ice Palace test begin?” The driver walked to the counter and took out some identification- it was the letter with the ice flower logo Zhao Guanyin had.

The hotel may be big, but there weren’t any waiters there- the boss was the only one behind the counter. He kept a straight face. “Anyone who would come here all knows about the test, why else would anyone come? Take out your identification and take the room key!”

“Ah- yes!” Master Kun nodded awkwardly- he didn’t think that this guy would be so disrespectful, but he couldn’t do much about it. This was Ice Palace territory, and this owner should be one of them- even a normal guy from the Ice Palace wasn’t someone hidden houses could piss off easily.

The hidden houses and the ancient sects weren’t on the same level in the first place- this was the same as the difference between the common houses and hidden houses.

“Zhao Qikun, Zhao Qijiu- are you two sharing one room or taking two?” The owner said after writing down their names.

These two people were, naturally, the hidden house Zhao’s Zhao Qikun and the outer disciple Zhao Qijiu! Zhao Qijiu may have the name of Zhao, but this was given to him after he came- the “Qi” in the middle of his name identified him as the same level as Zhao Qibing or Zhao Qikun. The number nine behind him, “jiu,” was simply a number- there were other outer disciples called Zhao Qishi- Zhao Qiten, and Zhao Qishiyi- Zhao Qieleven...

Some families did that kind of thing, putting emphasis on the name- though some other houses didn’t care much.

House Yu and the hidden House Yu, for example, just came up with the names normally instead of thinking all about rank and stuff. Song Lingshan’s House Song and Chen Yutian’s House Chen all had normal names as well.

Chapter 1465: Same Purpose

“One room is good, we’re together,” Qikun said respectfully with a nod.

“Alright, one room. The deposit is ten thousand, and the rent is five hundred a day,” The boss said faintly.

Qijiu quickly paid and went up with Qikun.

The prices for housing here wasn’t high; the price required to join the test was ridiculous. Evidently, the rent and deposit were just something for normal tourists.

Just then, Lin Yi had already left the room and was standing in front of his door, listening intently to the conversation below!

Because of his curiosity, Lin Yi wanted to find out what was going on. With no one else in the hotel, the words were crystal clear.

Ice Palace test? What was that? Lin Yi didn’t know what this was about- it sounded like some sort of sect activity. Plus, these two, Zhao Qikun and Zhao Qijiu, seemed to have some invitation that the owner didn’t even care to see? Everyone who came here had that invitation?

So that was why the owner wasn’t even weirded out by the fact that Lin Yi was here- he assumed that he had the invitation, and was participating in the test!

Lin Yi realized then that it was why the hotel was so big, it was for this purpose alone, and it was also the reasoning behind the ancient inn name! The sects always liked those names.

But just what was this test about? Was it a good thing or a bad thing that he just stumbled upon this?

Zhao Qikun, Zhao Qijiu- the hidden House Zhao. These two had names similar to Zhao Qibing, so were they from his hidden house? Lin Yi quickly added the names to the list of people he should be wary of.

He was already knee-deep in vengeance with the hidden house Zhao- Qibing, Uncle Zhu, Yao Wang... They were all injured because of him, and Lin Yi had no intent to make peace! The war between them was different from the pettiness between him and Chentian, after all.

At the end of the day, Lin Yi and Chentian were really just playing around more than anything- with Lin Yi basically pranking him. They didn’t even get into a fight or anything, but Qibing was different. He’d come at him multiple times for trouble, so unless House Zhao gave Qibing to Lin Yi, there was no peace to be made.

Of course, these two were in his list for him to be careful of, but this didn’t mean he couldn’t interact with them and get some info. He needed to understand what this test was about first.

But his name was already famous in House Zhao, he assumed. With that thought. Fortunately, though, he came here with a fake name that Tianlong gave him, Ling Yi. This name was one he used back then when he helped with the special police department, and the identity had full registration with Tianlong.

This was also because Tianlong was worried that he’d get into trouble dragging an ice coffin around in his car.

Lin Yi, Ling Yi- they were similar names, but they were different people altogether. These two wouldn't suspect him, and even if they did, he would've learned all that he needed to.

But, coincidentally, Jianwen was also on the same path, naming the soldier "01" - Ling Yi- after Lin Yi!

Naturally, Lin Yi didn't rush to meet these two Zhaos- he just stayed in his room waiting! When Qikun parked his car, he already knew from the tone of his voice that he came this early to make contact. And so he might as well wait for that- it wouldn't seem out of place, either.

Qikun and Qijiu came here so soon also because their old elder was in isolation- however! Before leaving, the disciples from the other houses would all talk with their parents and heads of the house, to learn of the things they should pay attention to in the test. But since Old Zhao was in isolated practicing, there was nothing the two could do but come earlier and get some info, see if they could get any alliances or anything.

"Grandpa sure got into isolation at the wrong time, right when the invitation started..." Qikun said as he settled down in the room. "Back then, when I was looking forward to this test, I would ask him about it, and he'd tell me that when the time came, he would inform me of something... That I wouldn't have the mood for practicing if I knew about this benefit back then... And now, he's in isolation!"

Qijiu was the right-hand man of Qikun, so he had nothing to hide, Qijiu was a loyal supporter of Qikun in House Zhao, after all, and he wanted him to take the heirship.

"Master Kun, the old elder has his concerns, but the fact that we're able to come this time was pretty fortunate! If the test had taken place a few years later, it wouldn't be me or you here anymore!" Qijiu sighed. "It doesn't seem like our position in House Zhao is very bright for now!"

"You're talking about... Zhao Qibing?" He frowned.

"Yeah! That Zhao Qibing, I heard that he was never sent to meet with the old elder, but all of a sudden, he's back in House Zhao with Elder Bi as his shifu... Did something happen here that we don't know about?" Qijiu nodded.

"This is also what I've been worried about, but grandpa is in isolated practicing, and the only other person who knows about it was Elder Bi, whom none of us could question other than grandpa..." Qikun said, annoyed. "I think that- you see, this Zhao Qibing's appearance... Maybe it has something to do with Grandpa's isolation?"

"His isolation practicing? You're saying that he went into isolation because of Zhao Qibing?" Qijiu froze. "No way, right? He's just a tyrannical young master type, not even a practitioner! Why would he have anything to do with this?"

Chapter 1466: Fake Encounter

"Hopefully, he has nothing to do with him, but it really is such a coincidence... If these two events had nothing to do with each other, I'd even think it was a bit weird..." Qikun sighed. "At first, I sent out some guys to see if they could learn anything on Zhao Qibing, but before they found anything, the test took place..."

“Master Kun, Zhao Qibing must have received some sort of praise from the old elder, that much is for sure. There was no way he’d become Elder Bi’s disciple all of a sudden, and Elder Bi seems like he wanted to fully train this kid...” Qijiu said. “That’s what I was saying, if it had been a few years late, it wouldn’t be us participating in this test...”

“You’re saying that Elder Bi might use some of the treasures- that special text?” Qikun paused. “Isn’t that only given to the heirs?”

“If Zhao Qibing had already been recognized as the next heir by Elder Bi...” Qijiu said.

“That’s...” Qikun hesitated, but he had a fierce look on his eyes. “I don’t care if he uses the special text to power Zhao Qibing up; I have to win this test regardless so I can enter the Ice Palace and be an outer disciple, and even an inner disciple! I’ll be the next heir!”

“Shh...” Qijiu jumped. “Master Kun, please calm down, you can’t just talk about this outside like that, people might be listening!”

“So what? The old elder isn’t here, and other people don’t know us.” Qikun smiled. “Know why my uncle isn’t favored by my grandpa? It’s because he’s always so careful. The old elder doesn’t like that type, and the next heir must have the strength and will for the job- he won’t do.”

“That’s true, but we should still be careful nonetheless!” Qijiu said. “Right, those two cars we saw earlier down there- one has a local license plate, but the other one is a foreign one. The local one is the owner’s, probably, but the other one must belong to another test taker. I wonder which house or group he’s from?”

“We’ll find a chance to interact with him tonight and see if we can become friends. Even if we can’t be partners, we can try not to make an enemy of him either.” Qijiu said. “In the test, the more friends you have, the nicer things will be for you!”

“You’re right, Master Kun, but how do we do this? If we come out of nowhere, it would seem fake- the disciples from noble houses aren’t idiots.”

“We’ll see. It’ll be good if we just encounter each other, but if not, we’ll just go to the door and introduce ourselves, no need to act things out. We’re all here for the same purpose, after all, so we’d want alliances.”

Qikun wanted to find a chance to meet Lin Yi, who just so happened to be thinking the same thing. He wanted to learn more about the test! He didn’t want to be involved in it too much since he was here for the fruit, but since this was Ice Palace territory, the fruit may have something to do with them.

According to what Zhang Liju said, the fire spirit’s fruit was a powerful treasure, and so with something as powerful as the Ice Palace sect, it was unlikely they’d let that treasure go. Seeing how strong they were and just judging from the participants, there would be other hidden house members coming!

Then, the identity of the Ice Palace was clearly based on that- they should be something like ancient sects. Only ancient sects could act like that to the Hidden House Zhao.

And so he needed to interact with these two! He needed to think about it a bit, though, because even if they wanted to meet him themselves, he had to make it natural.

The inn didn't provide food, and Lin Yi always went outside to buy food himself. Sometimes he just forgot to eat when refining the fire, though since he was a Mystic, he had no trouble not eating for a few days.

Naturally, it'd be bad if he did that for a long period- Mystics weren't gods and were different from Sky class people. Three or five days was fine, but ten days or half a month would make them starve. After all, the amount of qi and the rate of it entering your body wasn't enough for consumption.

And so, Lin Yi was a special case, with the jade space of infinite qi he had. Lin Yi could just use the energy inside there for his own strength, and everything would be fine.

He looked at the time- it was almost dinner time, and Lin Yi walked out, intentionally making some sounds when he closed the door. With the Mystic class level of Qikun and Qijiu, they would be able to notice that pretty easily, especially with their proximity.

As expected, just as he finished closing the door, the other room opened as well, with Qikun and Qijiu walking out- when the two saw Lin Yi alone, they paused!

After all, each group could send two participants, and usually, they would- it was better to have an ally with them, after all.

Naturally, in some exceptions, like if the Mystics of a certain house were fighting each other already, the house would only send one to attend the test.

After all, if they sent two disciples that were enemies with each other, it was possible that higher casualties would occur. Not only would they fail the purpose of passing the test, but they'd also lose two Mystics out of nowhere.

"What a coincidence, are you going for dinner?" Qikun walked over with a smile.

"Yes, can I help you two..? You're new here, right? I didn't see you earlier." Lin Yi also spoke with ulterior motives.

"Yeah, we just got here, the first day- no idea where things are here. We were just thinking about where we should eat!" Qikun nodded. "The inn doesn't provide food, so we'll have to find our own way. Maybe we can go together? I'll buy you dinner!"

Chapter 1467: Ulterior Motives

"So how about it, brother? Let me buy you dinner?"

Qikun's attitude was quite respectful, and he wasn't acting the way young masters from big hidden houses would act. This was quite natural a thing, however, since anyone who came here in the first place had to be from houses or groups with more or less the same power than his own- their own personal strength was Mystic or above, as well, so there was no way Qikun would act like a big shot here. His respectful tone when calling Lin Yi brother and putting himself below him also gave Lin Yi have a better impression of him.

Lin Yi liked that, though- he looked up to this guy a little bit more. It seemed like he should be a big shot back in his hidden house.

“Haha, of course, no problem.” Lin Yi said casually with a nod. He had a smile on his mouth, but he didn’t seem too passionate. “As for buying me dinner, it’s fine, really...”

Lin Yi’s attitude was within expectations, too- they had just met, so it’d be weird if anyone was too passionate all of a sudden. This was a normal thing coming from a participant of the Ice Palace test- who would care for that small pocket change?

“Then, we’ll just eat a bit!” Qikun moved two steps faster and caught up to Lin Yi, while Qijiu followed beside Qikun with half a step slower, indicating their hierarchy.

Lin Yi walked down with the Zhao’s, and the owner of the inn didn’t seem surprised. Before the tests began, all the disciples wanted alliances and friendships for a better chance at passing the test- it was a normal thing to do if you weren’t stupid.

The Ice Palace wouldn’t disallow something like this from happening- this was a natural thing to happen, and didn’t break the rules.

“Brother, do we walk there or go by car?” Qikun said as he looked at Lin Yi. They had checked all the restaurants and shopped before coming to the inn, and already knew where they could go- but acting as if it was his first time; letting Lin Yi show them around was the goal here. He had to pretend.

“Let’s drive.” Lin Yi naturally wouldn’t just throw Xiaoxiao in the inn alone like that- no matter what, he had to bring Xiaoxiao along.

“Brother, maybe we can sit in my car? We’re just three people, after all.” Qikun said, trying to get closer to him.

“It’s fine; I’m not used to it.” Lin Yi smiled normally but made the decision sound final.

“Haha, sure, you go ahead, and we’ll follow you then.” Qikun shrugged casually.

Lin Yi got in the car and drove in front, while the two followed him out of the inn.

“What do you think?” Qikun said to Qijiu in the car.

Naturally, they were talking about Lin Yi.

“I can’t tell,” Qijiu said. “Anyone who can get in the test must be a big deal, and no one will be genuine with people they’ve just met for a few minutes.”

“Yes, that’s also why his attitude towards us isn’t too hot. There’s this proud feeling about him, though he is alone, and we’re two people, so it’s normal to be careful.” Qikun nodded. “If he intentionally wants to get close to us, we’d actually have to be careful on our parts.”

“You’re right,” Qijiu said. “Today’s just an emotional investment anyway- even if we can’t be friends, we can know each other’s faces, and it’ll be easier to talk to each other in the future.”

Lin Yi didn’t go far- after exiting the tavern, he looked around for a restaurant and parked there.

The two Zhao’s got out of their car after parking beside him as well.

It had the layout of a market restaurant, and while there were houses, they didn't let any air through. It was a blizzard out there, after all.

There weren't any people there, except for the manager and lazy staff watching the furnace.

Naturally, this level of cold was nothing to Lin Yi, Qikun, or Qijiu- the three were Mystics and had resistance to the cold. Lin Yi even intentionally tried to check their strength- they were farther away earlier, and he couldn't do it before.

Now that they were close, he could feel that Qikun was Mystic mid-phase peak, same as him, while Qijiu was a bit stronger- Mystic late phase. This Qijiu was evidently a follower type, and while he was stronger, Qikun was the leader.

"Hello, is this place open? I'd like three lamb legs, a plate of beef skewers, and three beers!" Qikun was the one buying, after all, so he made the order first. This was a barbecue shop, and there were no menus here- everything was written on the blackboard.

The shop only had that many things to order- there were two types of beer, spirits, and milk beer- Qikun ordered the spirits since practitioners usually liked stronger alcohol.

Lin Yi had no preference for alcohol; he drank it if it was there and didn't if it weren't.

The owner quickly told the staff to get things ready upon seeing the customers, not thinking much of the big amount they were ordering.

Lin Yi was surprised- seemed like the people of the Ice Palace were all used to practitioners!

The food came here really soon, with the lamb legs and beef skewers pre-smoked. They had to turn them around in the furnace first.

"Brother, since this is our first meeting, let me introduce myself!" Qikun took his beer pot and raised it. "I am Zhao Qikun; this is my follower Zhao Qijiu- we're from Donghai's hidden house Zhao!"

There were three pots, and one for each, so there was no need to pour for each other. Just drinking from the pot had a strong Chinese atmosphere, after all.

"A pleasure!" Lin Yi didn't go further with that since it'd look ungenueine. He also raised his pot. "I am Ling Yi- It's difficult for me to mention my mentor's name. Please understand!"

"Ha, no worries, no worries!" Qikun waved his hand casually with a smile. "It's fine if it's a difficult position you're in- no big deal! You must be from a sect, I assume, Brother Ling? You guys do have more rules than us houses!"

Chapter 1468: Invitation to Join

Qikun wasn't frustrated at all – he did hear about some smaller sects all kept a lower profile regarding their mentors when coming to the common world- different from noble houses who had not a care for the world.

The people who come out of these sects- unless the person was a son of the elder or a major disciple- were rather careful outside, and rarely cocky. Lin Yi must be one of those.

“Thanks for understanding!” Lin Yi gave a smile that indicated that they’ve come to an understanding as he raised his pot and drank from it.

“Alright, nice!” Qikun and Qijiu did the same and put down the pots.

The skewers and lamb legs were still taking a while, but the three didn’t mind.

They didn’t come here to eat, after all, they came here to make connections- while Lin Yi was here to get information.

“You two sure are early for the test.” Lin Yi intentionally moved the topic to the Ice Palace, wanting to learn more about it.

“Haha, Brother Ling was faster, right?” Qikun smiled. “You must be the first one who arrived.”

“Yeah...” Lin Yi shrugged helplessly. “Nothing I can do, my shifu chose to go into isolated practicing just before that, and there’s no point staying in the sect either, so I might as well come first.”

Lin Yi instantly addressed his identity- because of this, he’d be able to say his shifu didn’t tell him anything because of the isolation whenever there was something he didn’t know. Qikun wouldn’t suspect him then.

“Oh? What a coincidence then, my grandpa is in isolated practicing as well, so we might as well depart first.” Qikun looked at Lin Yi, surprised. “Brother Ling, this is quite a fateful encounter!”

“Oh? You guys too? What a coincidence, indeed!” Lin Yi smiled- seemed like he’d gotten the right route. He wouldn’t be suspected now for sure.

“Yeah- we’ve come from far away to meet here by fate!” Qikun smiled. “What strength level are you, Brother Ling if you don’t mind me asking? The test requires the participant this time to be Mystic or higher- what phase are you in?”

Qikun was worried Lin Yi might hide his strength, so he intentionally told him of the requirements, that everyone here was a Mystic anyway, so there was no reason to worry! It was just in case Lin Yi didn’t know about this since even he himself didn’t know much.

“I’m not too strong- just Mystic mid-phase peak.” Lin Yi smiled bitterly. “It’s a bit complicated back in my sect- the ones near my age are all Earth class, and the ones who came after are all Golden- I’m pretty much the only one who meets the requirements!”

Lin Yi only told the truth about his strength- everything else he made up on the spot. It suited the situation as well.

“I see, so that’s why you were alone, Brother Ling...” Qikun said that, but in his heart, he was thinking how Lin Yi’s sect wasn’t one to be underestimated- even the younger generation was Earth class! With that thought, he decided to get closer to Lin Yi even more.

And Lin Yi, naturally, wanted that misunderstanding to happen in the first place.

“Yeah- what strength level are you two, brothers?; Lin Yi already knew it but decided to ask for surface purposes.

“I’m Mystic mid-phase peak, same as you- Jiu is Mystic late phase, a bit stronger than us.” Qikun was a bit gleeful when bringing up Qijiu- this was his trump card after all since the requirements peaked at Mystic- and Qijiu was Mystic late phase! Their advantage over the others was clear.

“Then you two must have quite some confidence in this test, right?” Lin Yi continued pressing on.

“Not true- there might be late phase peak fighters after all.” Qikun smiled faintly. “Plus, we don’t know what the method of testing this time is, too- we’ll have to wait for the Ice Palace people to arrive...”

“You’re right- but you two are still at the front, even if you’re not at the top. There’s no need to worry.” Lin Yi continued. “Right, have you guys gone into the Ice Palace sect before?”

“Nobody can- Ling Bro, it seems like you really don’t know about this. Well, it’s true that the elders and masters don’t tell you about all this until after the invitation.” Qikun was the same as well, though he was sure he knew more than Lin Yi. “Nobody has seen the Ice Palace sect before; it’s all our first time!”

“Where is it then? Could it be somewhere near here?” Lin Yi asked.

“Yes, it’s right there!” Qikun pointed in a direction. “I know a general position, but I’ve never gone there before- we’d have to pass the test first; not anyone can just enter a place like that. They are different from us noble houses or normal sects, after all- they’re ancient sects!”

So it was an ancient sect! Lin Yi kept that in mind- though, it was a bit worrying that the guy pointed in the direction of where the fire spirit fruit was- that was the north! Why would the Ice Palace be there?

In Liju’s description, it was a place completely void of life, and if there were a sect there, Liju must have at least mentioned it... But then, it had been a long time since then-! With the time that had passed, it wasn’t too big of a surprise that a sect had been formed there!

But if that were the case, it would be much harder for him to find the fruit now! IF that place really was where the sect was, then the fruit would have already been discovered already- he wouldn’t be able to go take it if the Ice Palace didn’t allow him to!

He couldn’t help but frown- he thought that finding the location would be the toughest challenge, but it seemed like the sect had taken that role!

“I wonder if I can’t do it this time...” Lin Yi said, worried. This was his true emotion, too.

As a result, Qikun thought that Lin Yi really was worrying. However, he tried to console him intentionally, “Anyone would want to make it if they came here, after all- the number of outer disciples they’re accepting was limited, and the treasure exchange isn’t easy to get either, so... I wonder if you had any intention to team up, Brother Ling?”

Chapter 1469: Zhao Qikun’s Pull

Zhao Qikun’s Pull

“Team up?” Lin Yi paused.

“Meaning that if we move together when the test takes place- our scores will be shared too, and this will give us more of an edge!” Qikun had sent out the invitation to Lin Yi, though a bit sudden- the two had just met after all, but it seemed like a good moment for him to bring it up.

“That... I’m afraid I can’t accept it right away. There are some rules from my sect that I have to think about first...” Lin Yi said, rejecting it at first.

Qikun was a bit disappointed, but this was to be expected. Lin Yi having his own concerns was only natural- nobody would team up with a stranger they had just met, especially when it came to a test like this.

“Haha, naturally- no need to answer right away, Brother Ling. You can think about it first,” Qikun smiled, “Well, let’s not talk about that for now- let’s eat, there’s no need to be courteous here, we’re all men of the world!”

As Qikun spoke, he cut out a freshy cut lamb leg that had arrived and put it in his mouth- he chewed it loudly with his might! In the hidden house, he didn’t eat like this- but Lin Yi was from a sect, and naturally he had a different sort of air about him. Eating like this would probably look better to Lin Yi’s type of personality, increasing their chances of working together!

Lin Yi was a Mystic mid phase peak, after all, and that was a strong strength level. With Lin Yi in their team, victory would be even more likely.

“Alright,” Lin Yi ate in that manner in the first place, so he cut out a big piece and started chewing as well.

After the feast, the three chatted a bit until Qikun got up to pay. It was a bit more expensive here, but he didn’t mind.

The three exited the shop and went back to their cars- all of them were Mystic practitioners, and naturally couldn’t get drunk, nor would they dare get drunk in this sort of situation! After all, while they may be all smiles and everything, both parties were extremely wary of each other.

After getting on the car, Qikun retained his composure instantly and turned to Qijiu, “This Lin Yi isn’t as simple apparently. We already had a meal together and he still didn’t give us any concrete promise.”

“Master Kun, that is to be expected- in another perspective, if someone were to do the same to us, would we say yes right away?” Qijiu smiled, “Plus, we’ll just keep eating with him these few days- even if he doesn’t join us in the end, at least we wouldn’t be enemies.”

“Naturally, but it’s just that the guy didn’t even tell us anything useful, like which sect he was from. We don’t even know that about him,” Qikun replied, making Qijiu frown.

“Yeah, we really don’t know anything about this guy. If it really is like what he told us, then his sect must be a big one.”

Qikun nodded, “We don’t have to worry about his identity, though- his car is from the special police department, so it’s probable that he won’t have any trouble on the road. Anyone could get even the

director to help him out must at least be from a hidden house or sect- didn't the people from House Yu receive help from the special police as well?"

"That's true."

"I'm not questioning his status though- everyone here was definitely strong, after all, they wouldn't just come here to die. The problem is, we don't know which side he is from. What is the connection of his group to House Zhao?"

"I've never heard of any particular relationship between our House Zhao and other sects. Only the hidden House Yu is considered relatives with us... Though your situation is a bit complicated, Master Kun..." Qijiu smiled bitterly.

If Zhao Guangyin and Yu Xiaojin's child could join the test, then they would have had the prospect of being allies with House Yu. But now, they were lucky enough if House Yu didn't send anyone against them- Qikun was the next potential heir for House Zhao, after all.

House Yu wanted Yu Xiaojin's son to inherit the house, after all, while also maintaining the relationship of being allies between Zhao and Yu.

"That's fine, it's House Yu after all. According to what I know, it's Yu Bing and Yushan joining the test- No need to think about Yu Bing, but Yu Shan may be of some help to us. Yu Shan wants to be the heir of House Yu, so it would be a good match for us," Qikun continued, "As House Yu's two participants aren't on the same side- it'll definitely be interesting."

"As expected of Master Zhao!" Qijiu said, "But no matter what, we already have House Yu as allies- we have a pretty good chance!"

After returning to the inn, Lin Yi said his goodbyes and went back to the room.

He didn't get much info today, but what he did get was all useful- he naturally didn't expect to learn everything from just one day. He knew that wasn't practical. Asking too much would arouse suspicion, as well, and from the looks of it, this Qikun was someone with brains.

He received two pieces of info- the first was that the location of the fire spirit's fruit and the Ice Palace were in the same direction- the second was about the rewards for passing the test! One was a chance to become an outer disciple of the sect, and the other was a chance to exchange a treasure with the Ice Palace!

As for becoming an outer disciple, Lin Yi wasn't very interested- the exchange right, however, was something relevant to his situation. If the Fire spirit's fruit really was controlled by the sect, then was it possible for him to exchange something for the Fire spirit's fruit?

Of course, this was only the initial information he had gotten- he needed more depth before making any decision going forward.

In the following two days, Lin Yi spent the days practicing his refinement fire, and spending the nights having dinner with Qikun and Qijiu- they ate plenty of food and drank plenty of beer, but that couldn't be said the same for the talks they had. It seemed like even they had limited knowledge, and even when Lin Yi looked at their invitation letter, there wasn't much detail in that either.

Lin Yi didn't bring up whether or not he would be joining their team too, and Qikun didn't ask.

From Qikun's perspective, he thought that one shouldn't force this sort of thing- Lin Yi hadn't made his decision yet, and was probably thinking of giving a few more days of thought regarding the strangers he had just met.

Though, Qikun felt that his purpose had been achieved- judging from the dinners they've had, they were at least now meal buddies. They weren't allies, but they weren't enemies, either.

Chapter 1470: House Yu's Arrival

After the water element refinement fire appeared, Lin Yi continued converting his qi into the other elements of metal, wood, and earth- in other words, Lin Yi was now a five-element refiner, the type of refiner no one had become or tried to become in history.

Normally, spending an entire life just to get one type of refinement fire was good enough already. Sometimes, when one's body conflicted with other elements, getting another refinement fire as a support already made that refiner one of a kind. The ones who had three refinement fires of different elements would be considered geniuses- and those beyond that... Zhang Liju had never seen anything like that before!

Even those with powerful practitioner's arts wouldn't be able to create that many refinement fires!

Was Lin Yi a genius or an idiot, though? Lin Yi smiled bitterly- he may have been able to make five refinement fires, but that didn't mean much- Elder Jiao said himself that the qi inside of him was an all-purpose qi of all elements, so it was no surprise that he was able to create all the fire types.

The problem was whether or not he could control the temperature of the fires, and use them to make high level medicine and elixirs instead of just common ones. Lin Yi's level meant that he could only make the common elixirs that weren't even considered Golden class first level- and those elixirs were simply things that you could just mix up without even needing refinement fire. In fact, using the fire here would make the elixir much weaker than being made through conventional means.

But Lin Yi didn't feel disappointed at all, since this was just a side hobby that he was practising, and it wouldn't affect his future or current life whether or not it was successful.

He didn't have a mentor guiding him too, just some refiner's notes written with dry words. Lin Yi hadn't even approached anything like this before, so with the amount of time he had spent, his results were quite satisfactory already.

And so, he decided that he would practice this when he had time, training both flames of different elements on his palms. He only tried using his left hand to make one fire, waiting until it extinguished by itself before using the other hand to make a different type of fire- he had never done it simultaneously with both hands before.

Naturally, doing this was only because it was fun- he was planning to use it to have barbeque with Tangyun, the Miss, and Shu to see- they would probably be quite entertained... Would Xiaoxiao have woken up by that point?

But this journey wasn't easy. All of a sudden, some Ice Palace sect showed up like a big tiger blocking his path- now he didn't know what to expect.

The next morning, Lin Yi went out of the inn as usual to check on Xiaoxiao- he was always using his senses to keep Xiaoxiao safe in his mind, but in the mornings, he would make a trip to see her.

In fact, with the temperature at this place, the ice container wasn't even needed- the human body could be frozen rock solid even without it.

Locking the car, Lin Yi was ready to go back when a few more cars came driving by- probably heading for this parking spot.

Lin Yi wasn't surprised at this- judging from what Qikun said, many more people would be coming in these next two days.

He didn't know these people and didn't want to talk to them too much. He would rather let Qikun speak to them, Lin Yi just wanted to gather his intel. Speaking too much would only expose himself.

But, after the cars started parking, Lin Yi saw someone he knew come down from one of them!

Seeing him, Lin Yi's heart tensed- if they had met in another situation, Lin Yi might have pretended to not know him, but here, Lin Yi needed someone he could trust to talk with, and the situation was just right for this.

There were some things that Lin Yi didn't want to face- thinking back to his old self, he would always get emotional. Hidden houses... A power that he used to see as supreme and at the peak.... Now he was enemies with most of them, with even the hidden House Yu included!

Elder Yu didn't know that he was Lin Yi but with the common House Yu stuff going on, there was no way the hidden House Yu would just sit around doing nothing

Lin Yi stood there without moving, and evidently that person had seen him as well, pausing. Ignoring everybody else, he walked over to Lin Yi!

"Yu Bing, long time no see." Lin Yi smiled.

"You... Why are you here? You're joining the Ice Palace test too?" Yu Bing was shocked- why would Lin Yi be here?

"Come to my room after you've settled in, if you have time. Room 201, Ling Yi," Lin Yi said as he reminded him of his 'name'. Hopefully he understood.

"Alright, see you later then, brother Ling!" Yu Bing nodded, saying goodbye for now.

Thinking of his relationship with Yu Ning, it was normal for him to call Lin Yi little brother Ling. After all, if things had worked out, that would very well be what he'd be calling him.

Lin Yi nodded and went back to the inn.

At that time, Yu Shan walked out as well, seeing Lin Yi's figure walk away, "I didn't expect this, big brother- you're pretty good, making an ally right off the bat!"

“It’s a friend from back when I was in practical training,” Yu Bing naturally didn’t have the intention to talk too much about this to Yu Shan- they weren’t really in the same team, after all, so of course he would hide Lin Yi’s identity.

“That’s the son of the head of the house for you, going out to the real world for practical training- other people would just have the heir stay in their houses, and I wouldn’t even be able to come out if it weren’t for the test this time!” Yu Shan pouted.

Behind Yu Shan’s car was House Pi’s- they had met on the road before, along with a few more other people from different hidden houses and sects. Though, Pi Zhishan and Pi Zhihai had never personally saw Lin Yi before, only hearing of his name. Nobody would suspect him of being Lin Yi for now.

Pi Zhishan looked at the Yu brothers who were fighting right from the get-go, and a mocking smile appeared on his face! In comparison, Pi Zhihai and him were a much better team, since Zhihai always focused on practicing with no intention of inheriting the family.

As for the Yu Shan’s mocking, there wasn’t much Yu Bing could do- that was what happened when the young generation of House Yu were all excellent talents. Although this was a good thing for the house, it was also a tragedy- the brothers would only learn to plot against each other and eventually lead to the end of the house itself.