

Chapter 1361:

Killing a Gold Dragon

When the sheep saw the drowsy creatures that were unable to fight back, it ran over to them.

“Don’t!” Han Sen stopped Cheap Sheep in his hasty approach and moved closer to examine what state they were in.

A while later, a three-foot-long centipede emerged out of the back of one of the creatures. It was plated in gold, like a luxurious bracelet.

“The Gold Dragon!” Dragon Lady pulled Han Sen back immediately.

“You know what that thing is?” Han Sen asked her.

Dragon Lady nodded in confirmation, and said, “It is the mutant creature known as the Gold Dragon. Its geno core is gold-class! We can’t even hope to fight that thing.”

“It’s injured by the screams; perhaps we can kill it?” Han Sen said, trailing it with hungry eyes.

The Gold Dragon bit into the head of another sleepy creature and began slurping down the brain juice and mush that was inside.

The creature squealed in pain, but it was unable to do anything. Having been injured the day before already, it soon gave up the ghost.

When the Gold Dragon let go, the creature’s head had a massive cavity in it. It had been completely drained, leaving it like an empty coconut. Sickened and a little frightened, Cheap Sheep leaped behind Han Sen for safety.

“A creature with a gold geno core that may or may not be injured severely. I know for a fact its plates are extremely hardy, but that doesn’t take much to deduce.” Dragon Lady frowned, expressing it was a foolish notion to attempt attacking the sickly insect.

“Do you know what it’s made of?” Han Sen asked.

Dragon Lady replied, saying, “Its geno core is Metal Robe. Once it latches onto an opponent, it won’t let go until its prey has died. The Metal Robe tightens the squeeze, so it can’t be shaken loose. No one can escape the clutch of the Gold Dragon.”

Han Sen listened to her words intently, then turned back to look at the centipede and frowned.

Dongxuan Aura told Han Sen it was extremely injured, and that it would be best to kill the fiend now.

“You guys stand back. I’ll try.” After observing the insect for a little bit longer, Han Sen decided to try his luck and see if he could defeat the creature.

This was the best chance he would get to kill a gold core creature any time soon, he reckoned. So, Han Sen summoned his Bulwark Umbrella and Butler Doll. Then, they went towards the centipede-dragon.

The Gold Dragon noticed their approach and unleashed its Metal Robe, grabbing Butler Doll.

Butler Doll’s eyes flashed red to petrify and turn the centipede to wood, but it was unsuccessful. It was most likely because the Butler Doll was far too weak compared to the mutant Gold Dragon.

“Now!” The moment Han Sen witnessed the Butler Doll get snatched, he exhausted all the power he could in a single strike. He wanted to attack the Gold Dragon the moment the Metal Robe couldn’t be a threat to himself. It was occupied, and now there was an opening.

The robe tied the Butler Doll up, but it didn’t even seem like a brain-feeding would be necessary to kill it. The Butler Doll was shattered into pieces by the squeeze.

The Metal Robe was then quick to switch targets and go for the next aggressor. Turning itself into a gold beam, it shot towards Han Sen.

Butler Doll had been killed far too quickly, but Han Sen was not yet ready to strike the dragon.

Han Sen swung his Bulwark Umbrella towards the Metal Robe. And as he did this, Han Sen summoned his Crystal Egg and lobbed it at the Gold Dragon.

As first, it seemed as if misfortune was going to strike, as the centipede was able to muster the strength necessary for a dodge and perform a clean evasion.

Fortunately, luck was on Han Sen’s side that day. When the egg missed, it struck another of the creatures near the tree, then it ricocheted off that creature to ping off the back of the Gold Dragon.

Han Sen returned the egg to his Sea of Soul, and then, with his horn in hand, tried to stab the dragon.

The Metal Robe grabbed hold of the umbrella and tried to snap it.

Han Sen knew he’d have to hurry, especially after hearing the Bulwark Umbrella creak as if it were on the verge of snapping. It was an impressive piece of gear, but it was only bronze class. It may have been stronger than the butler, but it wouldn’t last long going up against a gold-class geno core.

Not sure how long the umbrella would last, Han Sen shifted into fifth gear.

The Gold Dragon noticed Han Sen coming for it, and so it leaned forward, wanting to meet its target.

Han Sen raised his horn and cast Ghost Slash. When the Rubberized Dragon had just about reached his face, the horn was plunged directly into the centipede’s body.

Its shell had become much softer, but not to the extent Han Sen had witnessed before. The creature was still formidable.

The horn was unable to plunge entirely through the centipede's body, and after a long drive, found itself being flung back and away. Noticing the horn didn't work, Han Sen then decided it was time to make use of Super Spank.

If Super Spank worked, the body of the Gold Dragon should shatter completely.

Han Sen wanted the creature's flesh, but he had no choice now, given the situation he was in.

Gold Dragon was injured and debuffed, but it was still no foe to underestimate. It was a violent, squirmy little thing, as well. With great anger, it fiercely went after Han Sen, shining with a gold light.

Han Sen felt his hand get cut, but he endured the pain and tried to break a part of its sequential structure through the Dongxuan Sutra.

Super Spank was able to destroy the weakest part of a foe and initiate a chain-reaction, but this enemy was so strong, it was incredibly difficult for Han Sen to do even that.

Pang!

Han Sen committed to the strike and tried throwing his weight into knocking over the first domino.

Chapter 1362: Injured Pony

Dragon Lady and Cheap Sheep were worried. If Han Sen's horn had not been able to penetrate the Gold Dragon, would there be much of a point in him using his bare fists? Surely, a slap had to be weaker.

Confused and concerned, they watched in bewilderment as his palm was driven effortlessly through the Gold Dragon, as if the frightening creature was merely composed of water.

Boom!

The moment Han Sen drew his hand back out of the creature's body, it gave out an ear-piercing scream. Then, the entire thing shattered and became dust that glided along the gentle breeze.

Dragon Lady and Cheap Sheep were frozen, trying to comprehend how Han Sen had just managed to slap a gold geno creature to death.

"Mutant Creature Gold Dragon killed. No beast soul gained. Gold Geno Core received: Gold Dragon Lock. Consume its flesh to gain zero to ten mutant geno points randomly."

The Metal Robe, now titled Gold Dragon Lock, softened its grip on the umbrella and entered Han Sen's Sea of Soul.

Gold Dragon Lock: Gold Element Gold Geno Core

Although the flesh he'd have been able to eat was destroyed, and he had lost Butler Doll in the battle, Han Sen reckoned it was a worthy exchange. A gold geno core was nothing short of spectacular.

"Boss, you are too good!" Cheap Sheep couldn't help but exclaim, as he trotted over to Han Sen. A warm welcome wasn't given, though, as Han Sen kicked his sheepish companion to the ground for referring to him as a boss again.

"I told you not to call me boss." Although he would never admit it, Han Sen was afraid of Cheap Sheep and the curse that might be following it around.

There were two more primitive creatures beneath the tree, whereas the rest were ordinary creatures. Their brains had all been sucked dry, but the bodies still had meat that was just begging to be eaten.

So, Dragon Lady did just that. She prepared a gorgeous hot pot for the four of them, and then they all gathered round to keep warm and eat the creatures merrily.

Suddenly, they could hear the sound of crunching snow. Something was approaching.

But it wasn't coming very stealthily, and when Han Sen turned to take a look, he saw a creature not too far from them. He could see that it was injured, even from the briefest glimpse.

The creature looked like a red horse, but it was small and young, more like a pony.

There was a deep cut across its belly, and it was bleeding. Its movement was a pain-inducing stagger, and it was clear that the creature was having trouble doing so little as standing up.

When the pony was a mere ten meters away from the band, it fell over and collapsed face-first into the snow. Try as it might, it could not rise again.

The red pony looked exhausted. It managed to raise its head, but that was all, and with a whimpering sound and a softly rolling head dressed with an upset expression, it looked at Han Sen and Bao'er, as if it were pleading for their assistance.

"Hahaha! Now that's a delivery service!" said Cheap Sheep, looking at the pony with much excitement. He jumped up, summoned a horn, and approached the pony, ready to slit its throat and silence its gentle wails of pain and fear.

"Ouch!" Bao'er quickly battered the sheep over the head, and after expressing her disapproval of the sheep's actions, went over to kick the horn away.

Bao'er went to the red pony and stroked its head, saying, "Dad, can we save it?"

Han Sen looked at Bao'er and the pony and told her, "Sure."

Ordinarily, Han Sen would not save it. It looked like a weak ordinary creature he could not do much with, anyway.

After the two creatures fought, morphing the landscape into the icy wasteland it was now, even the Gold Dragon had found itself badly injured. It was difficult to imagine how the pony had survived all by itself.

Even if it had managed to not freeze to death, how had it endured the killing screams and screeches that almost brought an end to Han Sen? And although it was severely injured, the pony at least seemed conscious and aware of their discussions.

Even though it might have made a nice meal for them, Bao'er had wanted to save it. So, Han Sen was not going to disappoint her. With his holy light, he began to heal the pony.

The holy light he used was still weak, despite Han Sen's advancements. So, to stop the bleeding and stabilize the wound, he used medicine and stitches to begin with.

Han Sen brought some cooked meat over to the pony, to see if he could help it get some of its strength back, but it was rejected. The pony didn't want it.

So, Bao'er tried giving it some of her milk powder.

It was fortunate Han Sen had brought a lot of milk powder with him when he returned from the Alliance. There would be enough for the both of them, thankfully, for the pony greatly enjoyed it.

After picking up sticks and moving on, Han Sen got Cheap Sheep to transport the pony and bring it along with them. As expected, the fluffy sheep complained a lot. Not that anyone cared.

Han Sen spent some time examining the Gold Dragon Lock. When Han Sen simulated its energy flow, he swiftly understood how to make fine use of it.

He practiced using it with Dragon Lady, and at a distance of twenty meters, she was not able to evade it once. A distance that was any bigger than that was trickier, though, as it gave Dragon Lady more than enough time to dodge.

The lock was very strong, too, and not even Dragon Lady's cleaver was able to break it. Silver geno cores and primitive creatures would be no match against it, then.

"This will come in handy when I need to tie people up. In the future, I should be able to depend on it a lot when I go out hunting." Han Sen was thrilled with the geno core he had managed to procure, and he believed it to be a very handy and worthy addition to his growing arsenal.

The party trudged through deep snow for another ten days, with no sign of the land improving. Over the course of that time, however, the pony's condition improved a lot. By that tenth day, it was able to stand on its own four hooves and walk alongside them, turning the traveling quartet into a quintet.

Unfortunately, the pony was unable to speak the common language, and thus, Han Sen was not able to interact and talk with it as much as he would have liked.

They eventually reached a mountain; one that was unfamiliar to Dragon Lady. After trekking across it, there was another. They descended and ascended that one, and after doing that once more, they eventually came across a shelter perched upon the loft of one last mountain.

A little while later, Han Sen's Dongxuan Sutra told him they were in an area that was home to humans.

“There are humans here?” Han Sen was delighted to know others of his same kind were around.

Chapter 1363: Green Cow

“Who is that? Hopefully it’s Old Man Ji,” Han Sen thought to himself.

He knew the chances of that were slim, but it was a nice thought for him to hope for. Unfortunately, he’d have better luck winning the lottery multiple times before bumping into someone he knew in that sanctuary.

Han Sen followed a trail towards the shelter he had spotted. His Dongxuan Aura senses were tingling, informing him there weren’t just humans in the area, but creatures, too.

The detection of humans there grew fainter for Han Sen, as his attention shifted to the shelter that was occupied by a ratio that favored a mixture of spirits and creatures.

There was something up, not too far from Han Sen. As the distance between them closed, Han Sen was able to see it was a green cow, merrily grazing upon the snow-dressed grass.

The green cow, seeing the approaching quintet, looked surprised.

Cheap Sheep asserted himself as a diplomat and instigator of negotiations. He quickly trotted forward and said, “Boss Cow, what is this place? Who owns this shelter here, bub?”

Green Cow heard what he said and replied, “This is Shadow Mountain. The shelter is called Shadow Shelter. The owner is a human by the name of Nan Litian.”

Green Cow informed Cheap Sheep that the human welcomed all in his shelter, and was a very accepting and generous person.

Han Sen had not expected a human to own a shelter that was primarily inhabited by creatures and spirits. And as for the title of the shelter being Shadow Shelter, that was remarkably strange. The Alliance knew of only four human-owned shelters, and this name was not on that brief list.

If a human did indeed rule the place, he could easily return to the Alliance as he pleased. If that was the case, how had Han Sen never heard of him before? From what Green Cow told them, he sounded like the sort whose name would carry some weight and fanfare back home.

“Does this demi-god like to maintain a low profile? Does he like keeping things on the DL?” Han Sen curiously pondered.

Green Cow told them it was a gold shelter, too. Nan Litian’s power was comparable to that of a mutant creature or a royal spirit.

He allowed creatures and spirits to join his club, and he had built a formidable alliance with those he commanded. He had done very well for himself, and he had achieved something Han Sen frequently had in other sanctuaries.

Joining a shelter and being allowed to come and go was common, and often just required a small tribute. For this shelter in particular, those who joined it would have to cough up a primitive geno fruit each month to be allowed to stay. If you paid extra, you were even allowed your own room.

“Boss, this fella’ sounds like you. He even belongs to your hairless kind. Do you think we’ll find suitable refuge there?” Cheap Sheep asked.

Han Sen shook his head, knowing humans could frequently pose the worst threats. They were never predictable, and Han Sen knew he couldn’t waltz in with the assumption he and Nan Litian would become chums. He hoped they would, but he knew it was probably unlikely.

Still, Han Sen could not go even if he wanted to. He would have to pay the toll of one primitive geno fruit, and that was something he lacked.

Han Sen asked Green Cow where he might be able to find such fruits.

Green Cow answered, saying that the most dangerous thing one should be wary of was not rival creatures or rival spirits, but the plants themselves. It was common for many to band together and cooperate to retrieve the geno fruit.

Just as Han Sen turned to leave, Green Cow went on to say, “I say, moo-moo; you seem like a talented chap. Would you like to join my team? We are all primitive and are planning to amass a whole bundle of geno fruits.”

Han Sen and Dragon Lady thought following Green Cow would not be a bad idea.

“We would gladly join you, but we haven’t yet collected a single fruit,” Han Sen said.

Green Cow told them, “That’s okay. If you want to join, we’ll welcome you with open arms.”

Seeing Green Cow be so generous, Han Sen swiftly agreed to join her and her fellows. Then, on their behalf, Green Cow paid the fee that would enable them to stay at the shelter.

Green Cow, after bringing them to Shadow Shelter, seemed to look forward to introducing Han Sen and his party to her sure-to-be misfit allies.

Shadow Shelter was a gold shelter, and it was very much like a city. There was that metropolitan-vibe, with a hustle and bustle; it was a melting pot of various races and kinds, all working together. It was a charming place to be.

The civility came as a surprise, too. There was no aggression to one another, and every being there seemed charitable and caring.

“Old Cow, did you trick this entire party to follow you back here?” As they came in from the gate, a spirit spoke, directing his speech at Green Cow.

Han Sen and Dragon Lady looked at Green Cow with squinted eyes, unsure of what the spirit meant. Whatever the meaning was, it didn't sound very positive.

Green Cow was quick to respond, saying, "Please, don't pay heed to him, moo-moo!"

The guard of the shelter laughed and said, "You keep tricking poor folk into joining your team, so they can follow you on another futile venture to Hidden Valley. You must have spent the lives of two hundred thus far; this is getting silly. How many have actually lived, following your stupid expeditions to that place?"

The guard then turned to Han Sen and said, "I suggest you guys keep your distance from this one. She can talk her way out of a paper bag, and she's as slippery as an eel in an oil slick. Don't let those sweet emerald udders charm you."

"Green Cow, have you been dishonest with us?" Cheap Sheep asked.

"Slow down a second and let me explain; the guard never paints anyone very flatteringly. And if you fellows don't want to go, I won't force you, but we should discuss these matters in proper detail. I was planning to later, with full transparency and all, I swear. Moo-moo!" Green Cow was tripping over her words.

Han Sen was not too surprised, and he knew he shouldn't have expected free lodging without strings attached. It was shady from the get-go.

Han Sen was not afraid of the conniving conspiracies that might have been wrought against him, though. But that aside, he at least had a place to stay.

"Let's go then. Let's talk," Han Sen said.

After Green Cow paid the toll and everyone got set up, they all went to her room for the discussion.

On their way there, the creatures and spirits all looked at them strangely. Some had a humorous look, whereas others looked as if they held pity for them. Regardless, it seemed Green Cow had built herself quite the reputation.

Chapter 1364: Demi-God Association

"I assure you, folks, the Hidden Valley is where the Starsea Beast is buried. If we can find its bones, we will be showered with the most magnificent of rewards." Inside the room, Green Cow reclined backwards on two hooves against a wall. With her two raised legs, she alternated between crossing them casually, patting her chest, and playing with her udders.

Han Sen had come to the understanding that the Hidden Valley mentioned by Green Cow was once occupied by a sacred-blood creature named Starsea Beast, who had been very territorial.

It was dead now and had been for quite some time. Green Cow had heard a story recited by a person who had ventured into Hidden Valley, that there were vast swathes of treasure there. That was the

catalyst for her ardent desires to venture there, in the hopes of collecting—at the very least—the bones and geno cores.

However, the valley had been taken over by a variety of strange plants. They were lethal, and countless creatures and spirits had lost their lives in pursuit of Green Cow's goal.

"After getting all those people killed, you expect us to go there? Who's to say it won't be just a repeat?" Cheap Sheep said.

"You have to take my word for it. I know how to get the treasure this time, minus bloodshed. You must trust me," Green Cow pleaded.

Cheap Sheep was quick to respond with a rebuttal. "If you know how to get there safe and sound, why do you need us?"

Green Cow said, "I just do! Gah, okay, do you really want to know the secret of how to get to the treasure and avoid harm? I'll tell you. The last time we went there, we discovered a cave in the valley. The bones most likely reside there, but unfortunately for us, the cave had a massive stone blocking its entrance. I was unable to push it away."

Green Cow continued her explanation, saying, "If you two follow me, and adhere to my guidance, I can assure your safety. No grievous harm will come to you."

"If you were unable to push the stone, what makes you think we can help with it?" Han Sen asked.

"I may not have been able to move this hefty boulder out of the way completely, but I was able to make it wiggle. With you lot there, it should definitely be possible to move it out of the way entirely," Green Cow said.

Han Sen wouldn't mind collecting the bones there, and he was interested in the plants Green Cow had briefly mentioned, too.

The geno plants did not provide people benefits, but Han Sen imagined he might be able to get the Black Crystal to feed on them. When the Bulwark Umbrella finished its formulation, the size of the Black Crystal had reduced once again.

It had shrunk by another ten percent, and it would be quite concerning if this continued with each geno core he created. The Black Crystal was now twenty percent smaller, and Han Sen thought a little bit of nourishment was all it needed.

Han Sen still had the Blood-Pulse Sutra to unlock a geno core for, and whatever else he might learn in the future. If he kept allowing it to shrink, the crystal might disappear entirely.

The Black Crystal, through its ability to absorb lifeforces, might be able to recover its power and size with the plants.

Of course, Han Sen wasn't going to believe what she told him entirely. He was dubious regarding the validity of her claims, and to avoid danger befalling Bao'er, he decided to return to the Alliance and drop her off, just in case.

Han Sen chatted with his mother and Ji Yanran while he was there for a bit, but just before he returned, he received a call.

It was Old Man Ji giving him a ring, and when Han Sen answered, he said, "Hey, what's up?"

Old Man Ji didn't frequently seek Han Sen out, and the chats they had together were usually organized through Ji Ruozen.

"I was looking for you earlier. We have a Demi-God Association meet coming up, where we exchange information to broaden our pool of knowledge regarding the Fourth God's Sanctuary. You're eligible to join now, are you interested in attending the next meeting?" Old Man Ji paused for a brief moment, and then went on to say, "Of course, this won't be forced upon you. It's not imperative that you come. You don't have to join if you don't want to."

"No, I'd love to. It benefits everyone, after all. Is there an entry fee, by any chance?" Han Sen asked, genuinely interested in the event.

"There are no fees, no. But you will need to sign up for it, and then attend via the virtual community. I can call for someone to guide you there," Old Man Ji said.

"That's okay, I can go by myself," Han Sen said.

"Ordinary people aren't able to, so just wait there." Old Man Ji then hung up the phone, rather abruptly.

Han Sen did not think anyone would be coming soon, so he went to see Ji Yanran again.

The next day, an envoy arrived to guide Han Sen there. Han Sen thought it was strange, and he wondered why he couldn't simply register through Skynet.

Before joining, a test also had to be conducted.

"It's just a formality-thing. Everyone has to go through this, so don't think much of it," Old Man Ji said explained to Han Sen.

Han Sen looked at the machines and equipment they had, and he noticed they looked quite different than the usual ones he used to check his fitness. These looked state-of-the-art, and of a much higher quality.

Inside a room, there were three men and a woman. They were watching Han Sen via a video feed.

These were the founders of the association; they were the oldest demi-gods.

If Han Sen had a good memory, he'd remember one of them as Zhu Donglai. And the blue-haired gentleman there was called Green from the Lan Te family. There was another demi-god in the room, who looked as cold as ice. He was the Steel-Fist Demi-God, named Jia Shidao. He was the owner of the Iron-Fist Martial Hall.

The female demi-god amongst them was far younger than the rest, but her contributions were grand, and the respect given to her by Zhu Donglai and Green was immense.

“I didn’t expect Han Sen to become a demi-god so soon, especially after taking the time to max out all his geno points. I wonder what his fitness is?” Zhu Donglai wondered out loud.

Chapter 1365: No Fluctuations in Power

Zhu Donglai regretted giving up on taking Han Sen as a disciple before. He had found someone else to practice the Purple Manor Sutra with, following Han Sen’s injury in the Third God’s Sanctuary. He hadn’t expected that a person whose body was believed to be destroyed, even by the likes of Luo Haitang, could recover and go on to achieve such greatness.

Now that Han Sen had become a demi-god so swiftly, Zhu Donglai was feeling profound remorse. He wished he had listened to his gut instinct and not given up on Han Sen so quickly.

Because Han Sen had already become a demi-god now, there was no real opportunity for him to take the young man as a student. And it wasn’t as if the student he currently had was a poor performer.

“A demi-god who has maxed out their super genes won’t be much stronger from the get-go. Success in the Fourth God’s Sanctuary is, more than anything, reliant on the geno cores you collect. This will be no different for him,” Jia Shidao spoke to no one in particular, addressing his peers as if he was a teacher.

Green smiled and responded, “Han Sen must be much stronger than we were. I am interested to see what powers his geno cores possess.”

“It will be difficult to tell, indeed. And I don’t think Han Sen practiced the technique of the Luo family, either,” Zhu Donglai said.

The woman did not say a word or interest herself in the conversation. With silent eagerness, she watched the video feed intently, awaiting what she could learn. And as she did, the others occasionally glanced her way, seeing if she had any input to provide. She acknowledged this, but it did not prompt anything.

Han Sen entered the testing chamber. There was a large pool before him, holding a liquid of an unknown substance.

Old Man Ji had already told him what to expect. It most certainly wasn’t water; it wasn’t even liquid. It was a swarm of nanomachines, and if he used his talents on them, they could calculate and more accurately gauge the power he possessed.

Tests like this were far more accurate than what he was used to, and in a real battle, you usually punched below the fitness level you might be given. By fighting these nanomachines, you could learn about your own strength in much greater detail.

When Han Sen entered the pool, he felt strange. It really did feel like water, but it wasn't wet.

The nanomachines were all around him, lapping like gentle waves against him, brushing against every pore across his skin. It was a strange sensation. Suddenly, the nanomachines began to tighten around him. He felt as if he was under pressure.

Han Sen knew now was the time to begin the test, so, with his power, he began fighting back against the pressure that wanted to squeeze him.

Everyone watched Han Sen and the feedback of numbers that were relayed on-screen, reflecting the power he possessed. No one wished to speak now, and even Green kept his mouth closed and his eyes fixed to the video.

Han Sen was the very first demi-god to max out their genes before entering the Fourth God's Sanctuary, so they were incredibly keen to learn if this had benefitted him a lot.

"Five thousand! That's very powerful. He really must have maxed out, to reach this figure so soon." Zhu Donglai was ecstatic.

Five thousand was the bare minimum required for a person to join the Demi-God Association. Very few demi-gods were capable of doing what Han Sen had just displayed.

Demi-gods that had only maxed out their sacred-blood geno points before ascending started at a fitness level that was far below five thousand. They'd have to spend much time hunting to reach this.

Doing so required maxing out their ordinary geno points, at least, and that was no small feat when a person started with such a low fitness. There was every chance the smallest ordinary creature could kill them.

Surviving entry to the Fourth God's Sanctuary and returning to tell the tale, that was attributed more to luck than it was to skill. Old Man Ji had spawned in a geno fruit forest. There, he was able to immediately scoff them down and max out his geno points relatively quickly.

Han Sen's first display had shown them a figure of five thousand, but they were keen to see if he could unleash even more power. But what they saw next was so spectacular, the muscles on each of their faces went slack, allowing their jaws to hang agape.

The five thousand did not change, and on the graph that was like an electrocardiogram that tracked the output of power, it flatlined.

"What? That is... scary. How can he perfectly control such power?" Green said.

Green was amazed at Han Sen's ability to dictate the power output. It was like he had dialed himself to deliver a power of five thousand and leave it like that, without the slightest wavering.

Zhu Donglai said, "This is excellent. This is control beyond what anyone else has accomplished. Might this have something to do with his geno core?"

Jia Shidao frowned and said, "Young people love to show off as soon as they've received a slight modicum of power. This is nothing more than a fancy trick."

He believed Han Sen was showing off, but the truth was, Han Sen was afraid of frightening them all with a true display of his power. It'd be too much of a shock for them if he was to instantly double his output and show them a power of ten thousand.

Furthermore, he didn't want to expose what he was capable of, and he preferred having targets who underestimated him. He didn't want any potential enemies to know what to expect if they ever fought him. He did this so the others would acknowledge he wasn't weak, but also to hide his true ability. Unfortunately, he didn't know this was upsetting Jia Shidao.

"I'll do the combat test," Jia Shidao said.

The others weren't going to stop him, and so they just nodded.

They knew why he did not like Han Sen, and that was because the Iron-Fist Martial Hall had always been in competition with the Huangfu Martial Hall.

Han Sen had chosen to co-operate with the Huangfu family and not him, which felt like a slight. Ever since, he had nothing nice to say when others spoke of Han Sen. Everyone thought Han Sen made a good choice, though, much to Jia Shidao's irritation.

The missed opportunity of training someone who went on to become a great hero had plagued his mind ever since.

Chapter 1366: Prettiest Woman in the World

The association existed primarily due to the need for detailed analysis and dissection of topics regarding the Fourth God's Sanctuary.

If you didn't have the power to back-up information you could provide, in general, it would not even matter if you were a demi-god. Talk was cheap, after all.

That was why these tests existed, and the threshold for passing and becoming a member of the elite demi-god association was proving you had a power of at least five thousand fitness.

The combat test was to provide a new demi-god a chance to prove their worth and display the extent of what was possible for them. The older members could come to understand and learn more about the new members so they could teach, guide, and inform them.

Anyone who was worthy of joining the Demi-God Association was thought of as stalwart. They held a high level of respect for one another, for reaching that point was not a common feat. They all sought to help each other, and they would teach as they would like themselves to be taught.

It was like a collective of millionaires, except they would always dip into each others' pockets, and that was fine. If someone was poor and could not cover the cost of another's dipping, no one would allow him to take from the pockets of others, either.

The combat test was an effective way of gauging the latest opponents, and while it didn't offer any immediate, tangible rewards, it paid dividends down the road.

Han Sen wasn't here to show off, but he did not want others to think he was weak, either. He didn't want to embarrass Old Man Ji, most of all; he had, after all, personally invited Han Sen there in the firm belief he would be a valued member of the association.

"Good job." Old Man Ji arrived near Han Sen and patted his shoulders.

The way Han Sen showed the demi-gods his ability by perfectly hitting five thousand had brought a shock to many of the demi-gods.

Old Man Ji thought Han Sen had handled the first test well, too, and it had left plenty of room for others to guess what his true strength could amount to.

"I hope I didn't embarrass you," Han Sen said.

"Embarrass me? You made me proud! Come; allow me to introduce you to the OGs amongst us. You're also going to have to battle one of them, and if you perform well enough, you can consider yourself a fully-fledged member of the association!" Old Man Ji laughed.

Han Sen was brought to a large Martial Hall, and there, Old Man Ji introduced him to his associates.

Han Sen had heard of Green, Zhu Donglai, and Jia Shidao before. The woman amongst them was the only one Han Sen was unfamiliar with. When Old Man Ji introduced Han Sen to them all, he did not introduce him to the woman. She was almost like a ghost in the room.

The woman was very quiet, and Han Sen thought she might have been a silenced secretary. But she seemed to brim with untold secrets and an air of mystique. There was definitely something about that woman he couldn't quite put his finger on.

Old Man Ji said there were four other founding members, but he thought it was extra strange to see him gloss over the woman and not introduce her to him or him to her.

She looked young, but you could immediately tell she was strong. Han Sen would rather fight all the other demi-gods at once than go up against her.

Her being special was the only explanation for Han Sen to feel this way.

That being said, the woman did not look special, but one thing was for sure; her face was incredibly pretty. Not even spirits could carry the beauty she so softly cradled.

The woman wasn't just pretty in appearance, either. Her beauty transcended her physical form, painting the air around her with a gorgeous glow. She carried an aura of unfathomable elegance.

Han Sen had seen many beautiful women in his lifetime, but this woman was greater than them all. He immediately recognized her to be, in his eyes and perhaps the eyes of all others, the prettiest woman he had ever seen.

Han Sen was then hit with a strange sensation, and he recalled someone recounting to him a feeling that was exactly what he himself was now experiencing.

After searching the dusty filing cabinets of his mind, he remembered. When Uncle Bug spoke to Han Sen about the self-proclaimed god and the wishes it could grant, he said there was a beautiful woman amongst them that did not make a wish.

There were only two who had not made a wish, so, provided she was this woman, Han Sen made sure to now pay extra close attention to her.

"Gah, that's silly," Han Sen admitted after wondering a while longer. He thought he had made quite a stretch to connect them, and any semblance was most likely just a coincidence.

Zhu Donglai informed Han Sen that Jia Shidao would be the one competing against him.

Right before Han Sen went forward to proceed with the battle, Old Man Ji slinked up beside him to whisper something in Han Sen's ear. He said, "In the Third God's Sanctuary, when we had to decide on partners, we chose Huangfu over Iron-Fist. I am afraid he will seek to hurt you. You must exercise great caution. If things turn awry, just concede. There can be no harm in that."

"I will be careful," Han Sen said, for his reply.

Han Sen already knew this due to him having a good relationship with Huangfu Pingqing and Huangfu Jing; the latter of the two was more widely known as Queen. Their Martial Hall was also the greatest in the Alliance.

But life was like that, and sometimes you had to make choices that would hurt others. Still, Han Sen wasn't afraid, and he wasn't going to allow Jia Shidao to bully and make a mockery out of him, no matter what he tried.

Han Sen entered the Martial Hall where Jia Shidao was already waiting.

Han Sen needed to stay alive in the fight for ten minutes, and usually, the senior member would go easy on the new member, but this clearly wasn't going to be the case.

Jia Shidao immediately looked at Han Sen and said, "Give me everything you've got. Let me see what's so special about you, and how the maxing out of one's super geno points can make a big difference."

Han Sen did not respond to what he said, but merely acted polite and bowed.

"It is nice to meet you."

Han Sen was not going to use his self-geno cores, for if they broke, it'd be a while before they could be reconstructed.

So, Han Sen summoned a golden rope that fired at Jia Shidao like a lunging snake.

Chapter 1367: An Awkward Moment

Jia Shidao was extremely confident in the white-knuckle power his fists could deliver, so he didn't summon a geno core. The Iron-Fist Martial Hall was made famous by his Iron-Fist Slash, a brutal move when coupled with his fitness level.

He had even managed to max out his ordinary, primitive, and mutant geno points, placing his fitness level at over fifteen thousand. Eight thousand of those levels were from mutant geno points alone.

He believed his Iron-Fist could beat and destroy anything, even silver geno cores. He was impressed that Han Sen could create a bronze geno core, but he did not think he had any that were greater than that.

So, Jia Shidao was comfortable in the prospect of using only his fists. He did not think he needed to summon his own geno core. But he thought something was amiss the moment Han Sen lashed a whip-like item towards him. The item was frighteningly quick.

The anticipation of seeing what geno core a new combatant would wield was always exciting, as they came in all shapes and forms. The creativity of some ranged from almighty to hilarious. But this was Han Sen, and the anticipation to see what he had created was through the roof.

Jia Shidao's fists began turning black, and they drove themselves into the incoming beam of gold.

The Iron-Fist Slash move had destroyed many bronze and silver geno cores in the past, with just one fell swoop. He was supremely confident the same result would befall Han Sen's.

But when his fist connected with the light, the tense muscles in his face quickly unfastened themselves. A metallic clang rang out, as he felt his fist barrel into a material that was as tough as it was soft. It was of a chewy texture.

He could not break the Gold Dragon Lock, and he immediately felt himself be ensnared.

"Interesting! His geno core is a rope; that'll certainly keep him tied-up." Zhu Donglai laughed.

Green thought it to be as fascinating as it was humorous, and he laughed and said, "Jia Shidao has clearly underestimated him, then. I bet Han Sen's geno core has a softening, cushion-like power."

Old Man Ji did not say anything, and merely continued watching. Han Sen had already told him what his self-geno cores were, so he knew that what he was making use of now was not any of those.

But Old Man Ji was still very curious to learn the class of the geno core Han Sen had used. Old Man Ji settled on the belief it was a silver geno core, and a very good one at that. While it seemed to display a power more commonly expected in a gold geno core, he didn't think Han Sen could get his hands on one of those.

They thought Jia Shidao had made a slip, and that he had not imbued all his power into the strike he wished to perform. They thought he had let his cockiness get the better of him, and as a result, allowed Han Sen to get the better of him as well.

He was able to break silver geno cores with ease, and he himself had a gold self-geno core.

Aside from this self-geno core, he had many bronze and silver ones, so this initial capturing did not spell doom for his combat against Han Sen. Escaping the snare, he and the others believed, would be quite easy.

Old Man Ji hoped Han Sen would soon put the core away, though, as it would be a great shame to see such a brilliant geno core be broken. But Han Sen wasn't going to do that. Han Sen had to rely on this geno core to gain the upper-hand, unbeknownst to the others. He couldn't risk using his other geno cores, as they'd end up broken.

Although self-geno cores could be broken and then later regenerated, doing so would put great strain on the body. It would also take a long time; time Han Sen couldn't really afford right now.

Han Sen wasn't going to let this happen, and thinking this was a great chance to stress test his Gold Dragon Lock, he was keen to learn whether or not Jia Shidao could break free.

He was confident in the lock, though, and he knew Jia Shidao's fitness didn't rival a top-dog mutant creature. There was every chance he couldn't escape its snatch.

Jia Shidao tried to maintain his cool, but he had to let a frown show. He used all the strength he could, but no matter what he tried, he could not get himself free.

Everyone looked on in great surprise. They could see his muscles rise, webbed by stressed-out veins. It looked as if his muscles were going to break through the fabric of his clothing any second now, redefining what it meant to be ripped.

But the rope just tightened even more, and it did not show any sign of breaking. And eventually, it began to shred the clothing, exposing the man's bulging body.

Things quickly took a concerning turn. The rope did not relent in its tightening, and it eventually began to wear into the skin, drawing blood. Jia Shidao's face changed. His power was like a volcano, but the measly-looking rope had bested him.

Jia Shidao tried gunning his muscles a multitude of times in the hopes he could break free, but nothing came loose. He could not earn himself any slack, and blood began to dye the rope and drip to the hall's floor.

It was a very awkward looking scene, truth be told. And as they watched, Green and the others' faces began to distort.

They were shocked that Jia Shidao could not escape what was essentially a rope.

He looked to be in an awful condition, made worse by how confident he had been when he walked out there. He wanted to prove to Han Sen that the young man had missed out not co-operating with him. He looked like an utter fool now.

Jia Shidao had no clue what to do himself, so he decided to summon his gold geno core. He knew his bronze and silver ones couldn't help, and if he summoned them, only for them to break, the embarrassment would only increase.

This gold geno core he had summoned was a pair of giant scissors laden with fish teeth. They looked to have been forged of blacksteel, and they were frighteningly sharp.

Old Man Ji was surprised, seeing him summon his geno core Scissor Slash. He was glad to see Han Sen had come so far and he was this powerful, and he was more than impressed to see he had put Jia Shidao in a situation where he had no choice but to summon his most powerful geno core.

Chapter 1368: Mystic Woman

The geno core Scissor Slash was controlled by the owner's mind. Without delay, it flew over to the tightening cords and attempted to snap down and cut the Gold Dragon Lock.

Old Man Ji felt awful watching this unfold. He had hoped Han Sen would call back his geno core, and he expected the phantom scissors to cut through and break the item with ease. He thought it was a great waste.

But when the teeth-laden maw of the scissors bit down on the rope, all that occurred was a flurry of sparks. The rope was unbroken.

Green's eyes opened wide, unsure if he was seeing things correctly. He could not believe the Gold Dragon Lock was able to withstand the chomp of those scissors.

Those in the group had known each other for a number of decades, so they were well aware of how powerful Jia Shidao was. He had possessed Scissor Slash for the longest time, and they all knew how terrifying its cutting power was, too. The fact it could not break Han Sen's rope was shocking.

Jia Shidao's face turned grim. He kept chomping down on his bindings madly, but it achieved nothing. The ferocity of his cutting generated a blinding firework show, but still, it was all to no avail.

There was still ten minutes on the timer, and even with all that time, Han Sen did not think his opponent would break free. Even if he gave him an additional half an hour, Han Sen thought there'd be no threat.

"Do you know what Han Sen's geno core is called? It's not a bronze geno core, is it? Surely it can't be," Zhu Donglai asked Old Man Ji, having been perplexed.

Zhu Donglai knew it was poor form to ask what the power of someone's geno core was, so he only asked for its name.

Old Man Ji stroked his beard and with a stuttered chuckle, balked. "How am I supposed to know? Why don't you ask him yourself?"

Zhu Donglai believed Old Man Ji was lying. He thought the old man did know what it was, but had chosen to hide it for some reason he could not even guess. But Old Man Ji wasn't telling a falsehood; he was as clueless as everyone else in the room, for the most part. Old Man Ji knew that Han Sen owned a crystal egg, but that was it.

For the next three minutes, Jia Shidao frantically hacked, clamped, and cut at the ropes that had ensnared him, but no progress was made. As he realized the direness of his situation, his reddened face began to lose color and go pale.

When Han Sen saw him stop resisting, he relaxed the lock's grip on him.

Jia Shidao's face then turned green, and with a stiff jaw said, "You have passed the test."

Jia Shidao quickly left the arena, and then left the area completely. He was far too embarrassed to remain.

Old Man Ji quickly ran out and proudly pulled at Han Sen's arms, dragging him over to meet his peers.

Green and Zhu Donglai were very friendly to Han Sen, which was nice to see. And Han Sen was glad not all were as spiteful towards him as Jia Shidao, who had obviously been harboring a grudge of sorts. The last thing he wanted was to make enemies, especially amongst the demi-gods.

The woman didn't say anything, though. She was as stone-cold and silent as she had ever been. Han Sen thought it was strange to see her just there, and for the others to care about her so much, despite the lack of interaction.

The woman continued to sit where she was without saying a word, like little more than a sculpture.

After they left, Han Sen asked Old Man Ji, "Who was that woman? Is she one of the originals?"

Old Man Ji responded, saying, "Yes, she's an OG! But to be completely honest with you, even I have never heard her speak before."

Old Man Ji then had a thought that seemed to brighten his mind. With raised eyebrows and sly eyes, he said, "Ah! Ah! Don't you try anything. I know she's pretty, but you need to keep that thing holstered. Don't you think about doing anything to her that would hurt Ji Yanran. If you upset her, I'll kill you with my old bones."

Han Sen gave a wry smile and said, "What are you talking about? I was genuinely curious why Old Man Zhu and Mister Green seemed to admire her so much, despite her... not really doing much of anything."

Old Man Ji said, "She is a mystery, I'll give you that. I know she was one of the very first demi-gods, but beyond that? Your guess is as good as mine. Perhaps Zhu Donglai and Green know more about who she is?"

Han Sen was surprised to hear this, and he thought to himself, "She cannot be the woman Uncle Bug mentioned, can she?"

"I now need to visit West-South System. Take the airship and return." Old Man Ji walked away then, but after a few steps, stopped in his tracks. Then, he left a few more parting words. "Again, don't do anything to upset Ji Yanran. That woman is the age of your grandmother, anyway."

Han Sen called after him, "What kind of person do you think I am?"

Old Man Ji laughed on his way, but his next few words were tinged with a lingering concern from long ago. He said, "That woman is too pretty to be true, and even I was once tempted. And given the strange forces that govern her mystic behavior, there's even the chance you'll never see her again."

After that, Old Man Ji embarked and his ship took off.

Han Sen understood Old Man Ji's worry. The woman was very weird, and she certainly wasn't some pretty girl you'd find at the cafe. Everyone knew to exercise caution when in her presence.

Han Sen could only take public transportation home, and since there were none available for the time being, he decided to relax in his hotel room.

Han Sen entered the sanctuary while there, to check up on Dragon Lady.

She had made a lot of friends and gathered a lot of information, which she promptly shared with him.

Green Cow was telling the truth, it seemed. Still, there was no hiding the fact there were no other survivors from the expeditions into Hidden Valley. That was cause enough for concern.

While Han Sen was chatting with Green earlier, he asked if he knew about a demi-god called Nan Litan and Shadow Shelter.

Strangely, he had never heard of either.

Han Sen spoke with his friends in the sanctuary, and after a while, he decided to once again go back to the Alliance. He went to his room, and before he took his coat off, he noticed he wasn't alone. On his sofa was a beautiful woman.

Chapter 1369: You're Different

When Han Sen saw the person sitting there, he was in shock. It was the woman from the Demi-God Association: the mystic woman. It was the woman who did not say a word.

"Why are you here?" After Han Sen said this, a thought sprang into his mind. He wondered if she might have simply been a mute, and if so, asking her a question was a little inconsiderate.

"I was looking for you." The woman spoke with a tone that was almost like that of a little girl. It was a sweet and soothing voice, a little high in pitch but incredibly friendly.

"You can talk?" Han Sen asked with surprise.

"It's not difficult," the woman responded.

"I never heard you speak before, and I thought maybe you were a mute or something... It was a misunderstanding on my part, I apologize!" Han Sen said, feeling a little awkward.

The woman now looked at Han Sen directly, and she said, "You are different than him. You're different than Han Jinzhi."

Han Sen was shocked. The formalities were over, clearly, and she was diving straight into the deep end. As for the differences she was referring to, he wasn't quite so sure what she was getting at.

Perhaps she was merely referring to his appearance, but that wasn't exactly significant, since he was three generations down.

Han Sen did not know which Han Jinzhi she was referring to, though. Was it his great-grandfather, or Teacher Han of the Blueblood Special Forces?

"Are you talking about Teacher Han of the Blueblood Special Forces?" Han Sen asked.

The woman replied, "You are different."

"Of course we are different," Han Sen said, acknowledging she must have known a great deal about Han Jinzhi. To him, this was practically a confirmation she was the woman in the seventh team; the one who did not make a wish.

The woman's attitude suddenly turned to one of disdain, and she said to him, "I cannot believe you describe your great-grandfather as if he was a stranger. You members of the Han family have always been so obscene."

Han Sen frowned and said, "What do you mean? My great-grandfather is Han Jinzhi, but he has nothing to do with the Blueblood Special Forces."

The woman, again with a frown of disdain, said, "Pah! You can try to trick others, but you can't fool me. You are his heir, and there is something coming that you'll never escape. Think about what might happen if they found out about your relationship to Han Jinzhi."

"Who? What? What are you talking about? Is this a warning? Is there someone out there looking to kill me?" Han Sen asked, bewildered by this strange conversation.

“You know what I mean. You know just as much as I do, if not more.” The woman briefly paused, and then went on to say, “If you’re going to talk to me with this attitude, I think we should call it quits and stop. I didn’t come here to talk to you, behaving like this.”

Han Sen said, “Lady, you’re confusing me. I’m being honest when I tell you that I am not related to Teacher Han. My grandfather was a member of staff there, but you seem to be getting offended for no reason at all.”

The woman looked at Han Sen with a different expression now.

“You... really don’t know?” the woman said.

“If there’s something you think I should know, then don’t hold back,” Han Sen said to her.

With a strange expression, the woman then said, “It doesn’t matter. You are already a demi-god, and they are sure to find out sooner rather than later.”

After a long and unsettling pause unfolded between them, she spoke again. “Fortunately, you are different. Different enough that you might even live.”

She had said something along the lines of that a few times now, and Han Sen still had no clue what she was getting at. Her mystic arrival in his room was no longer the pleasant and revelatory encounter he was expecting.

What concerned Han Sen the most was who she was referring to, and so he asked, “Who are they? Do you mean Blood Legion?”

The woman looked as if she had been worn out by an ignorance Han Sen was unaware he was conveying. She said, “Improve yourself. Just do it. Improve and you might live when you meet them.”

After that, the woman turned to leave.

Han Sen quickly asked her, “Can you at least tell me who they are? Who are you talking about?”

The woman left the room without responding. When Han Sen decided to chase her out into the corridor, she had disappeared.

“What in the Alliance was she talking about? What did she mean? Does she think I am Teacher Han’s heir? Or was this some sick game she likes playing, trying to confuse others?” Han Sen’s mind was a wallow of questions.

People said Han Jinzhi could not have possibly had an heir, and many people believed Han Sen wasn’t his heir. It had caused friction with quite a few individuals.

This time it was different, though. This woman was so sure he was an heir, it had caused her to storm off.

If Han Jinzhi was a member of Blood Legion, Han Sen’s family should have still possessed some blue blood.

“These people are too arrogant. Can’t they speak with some modicum of clarity for once?” Han Sen thought he might have gotten used to the mystique and ambivalence of these older people by now, but that clearly wasn’t the case.

If that generation hadn’t been dropping like flies, he would have learned everything he wanted to by now, for sure.

There was only one takeaway from his brief talk with the woman, and he understood and agreed with it. And that was the need for him to improve.

When he arrived home, he visited the Demi-God Association’s virtual community. There he found an abundance of information regarding various geno cores and vast swathes of maps to peruse.

The content available for him, in terms of learning material, far exceeded the expectations set by Old Man Ji. Unfortunately, none of the maps available showcased Han Sen’s region of the Fourth God’s Sanctuary.

That was normal, though. The Fourth God’s Sanctuary was gargantuan, and there were only one hundred humans currently living there. Han Sen had been the king of the Third God’s Sanctuary, but even he had not come close to exploring that entire place.

Back in the sanctuary, Han Sen learned Dragon Lady and Cheap Sheep had gone off hunting. The red pony he had recently healed had remained behind. Han Sen brought the pony and Bao’er to the gate, seeking to go out so they could hunt, as well.

“Nan Litian is back!” As Han Sen approached the gate, someone called out, and people began to gossip amongst themselves.

Chapter 1370: A Sudden Desire to Kill

Han Sen was curious to see who Nan Litian really was. Thus far, the man had been a complete enigma. After walking outside the gate, Han Sen looked ahead to see a human riding atop a black unicorn.

Han Sen could clearly see it was a human, and if he had to venture a guess, he would say he was around thirty years old. Of course, looks could be deceptive.

The unicorn trotted up the way at a slow, almost meandering pace. It gave Han Sen a chance to observe the man and his steed, but also vice versa. When the man caught sight of Han Sen, he brought his unicorn to a complete standstill. There, they both locked gazes.

Han Sen could at least tell this man was totally new to him, which came as a relief. He wasn’t someone from long ago he’d have trouble remembering—something which was an all too common occurrence.

The man's eyes were stern, though. And their lock on Han Sen would be defined as fiery, if they weren't also so sullen. It looked as if he viewed Han Sen as a thief, slinking out of his home, and he wished to do him harm.

Han Sen picked up Bao'er and casually readied himself to leave, as if the tension manifested was just a figment of the man's imagination. There was trouble brewing, and even though Han Sen could not tell why, he knew it was best if he made himself scarce.

This was clearly Nan Litian's territory, and if Han Sen remained and made himself an enemy to the human, he'd be greatly outnumbered.

The space in Han Sen's paces began to widen, until he found himself sprinting away as fast as he could. Before he realized it, he had run a mile. The red pony was following after him, too. It looked to be struggling to keep up with Han Sen, and if one did not look closely, it almost looked as if the pony was chasing him.

But it managed to stay with him, at least.

Nan Litian did not say a word, but he obviously seemed to have a bone to pick with Han Sen. He turned his steed around and took off after Han Sen.

The unicorn had to be a mutant creature, and its speed was greater than Han Sen's, so it had little trouble catching up. And noticing this, Han Sen knew he was in trouble. He knew fleeing wasn't going to be the solution to this sudden stand-off.

Unfortunately, he could not think of anything else to do. If Nan Litian had taken over a gold shelter, then he must have had a gold geno core, too.

This was different than what he had experienced with Jia Shidao, and Han Sen could immediately tell that this opponent was far stronger. He had taken over a shelter, after all.

Han Sen figured he could use his Gold Dragon Lock to trap and halt Jia Shidao's approach. He seemed to come for Han Sen blindly, so there should have been no trouble there.

But he wouldn't change his course or do anything else until he knew he absolutely had to. The unicorn was fast approaching, and it was almost on Han Sen's heels. The infuriated rider atop it clutched a spear in his hands, primed to skewer Han Sen.

It didn't take long for Nan Litian to let it fly, and as it brushed Han Sen's clothing, he dove out of the way like a bat.

Its speed was nothing short of frightening, though, and even with his Jadeskin activated, the spear managed to graze him in his evasion. And even that was enough to draw blood.

Han Sen realized the gulf in fitness between the two was far too great. This called for diplomacy.

“Why are you attacking me? What did I do?!” Han Sen cried aloud.

Han Sen wished to receive a response and at least delay a potential follow-up attack that might have been primed to finish him off.

“You know why! Why else do you run?” Nan Litian said, as he reached for another spear and swung it around like a loon.

Han Sen summoned his Gold Dragon Lock, and then said, “I wasn’t running away from you; I’m just going for my daily sprint. I’m intense.”

The rope weaved itself around the spear, then continued forward to ensnare the rider. Nan Litian was quick to react, though. He let go of his spear and dodged before he found himself tied up.

The Gold Dragon Lock had been unable to trap him, but it had managed to pin down his spear and horse.

The unicorn fell on its shadow and rolled across the ground for a dozen meters.

Nan Litian was visibly surprised by what Han Sen had managed to do, but that only fanned the flames of his hatred for Han Sen. The glint of murder that was previously residing in his eyes had now turned to one of full-on genocide.

He summoned the spear back, and it reappeared in his hands. In an instant, he brought it directly before Han Sen, almost not providing him a moment to react.

With his phoenix techniques, Han Sen was just able to muster the necessary speed to dodge the first few strikes. But the attack was relentless, and the swipes kept on coming. It was a horrifying scene, and Han Sen had rarely felt himself thrust into so much danger.

There was no competition here. Han Sen’s latest nemesis was by far his superior, and try as he might to dodge, Han Sen couldn’t help but gather a collection of lesions and wounds from the hounding madman on his heels.

And no matter what Han Sen pleaded, nothing would slow Nan Litian down. He had no clue why the man was lashing out at him like this, but things were taking a very disturbing turn.

Disheartened by what was going on, Han Sen felt his hope begin to sap. He silently cursed Cheap Sheep, too. Ever since he had met the wretched cotton ball, he believed, he had suffered nothing but bad luck.

Seeing the attacker not relent, Han Sen only had one choice left. So, he brought out both of his horns and tried to block the man’s attack.

Boom!

The horns immediately broke, and then Han Sen was sent flying a few hundred meters.

But this was what he had hoped for. The speed at which he barreled away was what he wanted, and with this speed, he could leap an even greater distance away.

Nan Litian did not expect Han Sen to do this, and he was mildly impressed. He wasn't going to let that stop him, though. He looked at his still-trapped unicorn, and then turned back to look at Han Sen. Spear in hand, he continued his pursuit.

And the speed at which Nan Litian came was frightening. He was too fast, and nothing Han Sen did allowed him to outrun the spear-wielding maniac.

Dodging the next attack successfully, Han Sen quickly switched on his Dongxuan Aura. He hoped he could find a way in which he might leave the danger of that place for good.

"Wait a minute; I'm on the path that leads to Hidden Valley," Han Sen suddenly realized.