

Emperor 4031

Chapter 4031: Recruits

Yiyun had no retort since it did make sense.

“You’re right, Young Noble.” Yiyun replied: “But either way, you should be moderate and keep it low-key. Cultivators have a long path ahead.”

She still thought that there was something off about his logic. After all, she came from a fallen clan. Of course, because she was a prestigious member there, she didn’t experience abject poverty. The experience only taught her to be frugal and cautious with her spending.

“That’s the mindset of the weak. A true expert does not need moderation.” Li Qiye shook her head: “If you think experts are humble, it’s because you’re not at the right level to see otherwise.”

“Hmm, I don’t quite get it. Please elaborate.” She became curious.

“Would an invincible dao lord talk to you about his merit laws or show you his top treasures?” Li Qiye glanced at her.

“No.” She answered right away since it was obvious.

A dao lord stood at the apex. Not to mention a junior like her, most cultivators were merely viewed as ants. In other words, would an elephant show off its strength to an ant?

“Then how do you know dao lords don’t show off to other dao lords or brag about their merit laws and peerless treasures?” He smiled.

“Well, I’ve never heard of two dao lords being around at the same time before...” She murmured.

“You wouldn’t be there in person anyway.” Li Qiye said.

“Yes.” She nodded in agreement.

How could an insignificant character like her be in the presence of two dao lords talking about their items?

“Experts do not bother to keep a low profile.” Li Qiye said: “It’s just that they don’t care to show off to you, you’re not qualified for them to be bombastic around.”

“I see...” She pondered his comment. She thought that maybe he was right. Keeping a low profile or remaining humble seemed to be a belief for the weak to make themselves feel better.

“That’s why I don’t need to be humble.” Li Qiye said: “I’ve won a large prize and now am the richest, this is my golden age and I need to enjoy it before it comes to an end.”

“True.” Yiyun replied. He became the richest in the world, why shouldn’t he buy the most expensive and the best?

“Go, don’t worry so much. Money is just mere worldly possession, let it go for entertainment’s sake.” Li Qiye waved his hand.

“I understand.” She bowed and left.

On the other hand, Lu Qi didn’t have a problem with Li Qiye’s wasteful spending. Others were ready to die for the legacy but it wasn’t a big deal for him. Plus, how long would it take to actually spend it all?

Xu Yiyun went to carry out his order. Despite the previous conversation, she remained frugal with her purchases and tried to barter with the stores each time.

Li Qiye didn’t bother asking her about the cost in the slightest. This was only a way to kill time.

Today, Yiyun did someone a favor and allowed an audience with Li Qiye before the recruitment period.

It was none other than the shopkeeper of the antique shop.

“My name is Tie Jian, nice to meet you, Young Noble.” The shopkeeper greeted Li Qiye again during this official meeting. [1]

“Yiyun said that you wish to follow me.” Li Qiye smiled.

“Yes, though I might be overestimating myself, I heard about the recruitment so I want to offer my service along with ten fellow members, seeking enough to get by.” Tie Jian solemnly responded.

He had carefully thought about this choice before coming.

“I’m sure you and your fellow members can get by just fine. In fact, joining another place might be better.” Li Qiye shook his head.

“You’re right, Young Noble, but we seek to see how vast the world is.” Tie Jian said.

“Not bad, joining me not for wealth.” Li Qiye smiled.

“Yes, Young Noble, we do not require a single coin to work under you.” Tie Jian nodded.

Yiyun found this astonishing. Then why were they here?

“Little one, you’re underestimating him.” Li Qiye could see her confusion and chuckled.

“Why are you here, Uncle Jian?” She asked.

She knew that Tie Jian was a special cultivator but not much more than that. Their relationship was limited to the meetings in the store.

“We are looking for a wise lord.” Tie Jian revealed.

Yiyun didn’t expect this answer. It sounded illogical and unrealistic. She wouldn’t believe anyone coming here to join Li Qiye for anything other than money.

Nonetheless, Tie Jian spoke with sincerity. Plus, he had no reason to lie to her and Li Qiye.

“Even a king requires a stage. Without a stage, a king is inferior to a clown.” Li Qiye said.

“Hmm?” Yiyun didn’t understand right away.

Lu Qi, on the other hand, glanced at Tie Jian and said: “You wish to change your sect? Our young noble has no reason to help you with this.”

“You misunderstood, Miss Lu Qi.” Tie Jian replied: “I haven’t worried about the sect for a long time now. We are only here to find a place to stay and a better future.”

These two clearly knew each other’s true identity.

“We are here with utmost sincerity, please accept us, Young Noble.” Tie Jian asked again.

“It seems you have a high evaluation of me.” Li Qiye smiled: “You’re not only gambling your future but also your descendants’.”

Tie Jian was obviously a big shot, one of the strongest in the contemporary. Others would find it astonishing that he was here to join Li Qiye without requiring any condition.

“I’m certain that you will be a wise lord.” Tie Jian earnestly responded.

“Don’t be so sure since anything is possible. It’s not too late to change your mind.” Li Qiye smiled.

Chapter 4032: Gift

“I trust in you and also myself. If you accept our group, we will pledge our lives to your cause.” Tie Jian took a deep breath and said.

He then prostrated and repeated: “Please accept us.”

“Haven’t seen this in a long time.” Li Qiye chuckled: “Very well, how can I refuse such enthusiasm? Rise. From now on, you have a position under my banner.”

“Thank you, Young Noble.” Tie Jian bowed again: “This lowly one will jump into a boiling cauldron or tread through an ocean of fire, as long as you give the command.”

Yiyun could see that Tie Jian was powerful and should have a frightening background. Thus, he seemed to be lowering his status by offering to work for free. Furthermore, Li Qiye was a stranger as well. Anyone with a bit of sense would consider Tie Jian’s choice crazy, that his brain had stopped working. However, Tie Jian knew exactly what he was doing.

Yiyun didn’t say anything. She thought that this must be part of his plan after careful consideration.

“Since you have joined me, I must give you a meeting gift.” Li Qiye casually said: “Mmm, I do have something that is just right for you.”

Having said that, he took out a tiny sword with many rusty spots on it.

Yiyun didn't expect this and nearly told Li Qiye that he had taken out the wrong thing. She thought that Li Qiye would give something amazing, perhaps even a dao lord weapon.

After all, he gave equally-impressive treasures to her and Lu Qi before. This didn't make sense because the young noble wasn't a stingy person. In fact, he was unreasonably generous.

Others could construe this as Li Qiye purposely insulting Tie Jian. Alas, the guy was completely shocked to see this sword.

His eyes were as wide as can be while gazing at the sword. He thought that he was seeing things.

"This is..." Lu Qi became startled and didn't dare to come to a conclusion. She had never seen this sword before but had read and heard about it.

Tie Jian was the same way. He knew everything about this sword because he had read all the ancient scrolls depicting it. Each word and image describing the details of this sword were engraved in his mind.

For millions of years, generations of his clan have been searching for this weapon. Why was it in Li Qiye's possession?

"This is that sword?" Tie Jian spoke with doubt. Though he knew everything about the sword, he still hadn't seen it before.

"What is it?" Xu Yiyun knew that the sword was a big deal after seeing their expression.

"That's right, this is it." Li Qiye nodded and smiled: "It is returning to its rightful owner."

He obtained the sword from Black Tides; it fell off when he collected Sword God's corpse. He naturally had a reason for bestowing it to Tie Jian.

"Clank!" Li Qiye swung it and the tiny sword pulsed brightly.

The rust fell off the sword and a modification process began. Once the light fully dispersed, a regular sword appeared.

It had a gray scabbard with embedded ancient runes, truly inscrutable. They had a majestic aura, seemingly capable of splitting heaven and earth.

One could already sense its scorching battle intent and sharp gales while still sheathed. The moment it came out, it would be able to sweep through any battlefield.

"This is it!" Lu Qi blurted.

"The forefather's sword!" Tie Jian prostrated before the sword that once belonged to their forefather. It somehow went missing and they couldn't find it despite trying for generations.

Thus, he was overwhelmed with emotions. It was as if he was looking at his forefather.

"Take it." Li Qiye smiled and handed the sword to Tie Jian.

Tie Jian hesitated, not knowing what to do. He knew the value of this sword more than anyone else. Moreover, it had pivotal importance for his sect as well.

The sect members would pay any price just to possess this sword. Alas, he felt both gratitude and shame at this moment.

"I have yet to contribute, Young Noble. I cannot accept this supreme item." He said.

"There's plenty of time later." Li Qiye casually responded and handed him the sword.

He raised both hands respectfully to accept the sword then bowed deeply again. His forehead knocked on the ground repeatedly.

"Our sect will do everything we can to repay your kindness. All of our members are at your command." Tie Jian powerfully declared without holding back.

"I am merely gifting with borrowed flowers." Li Qiye smiled and said: "You should be thanking Sword God or this sword would be who-knows-where right now."

"Sword God..." Tie Jian naturally knew this senior because the latter had deep ties with the sect. Some even thought that Sword God came from there.

"I will definitely start a shrine in order to show our respect." Tie Jian said.

"Congratulations, it's finally back." Lu Qi was happy for him.

"Thank you." He bowed towards her.

Their two sects used to have a close relationship. Alas, after the war back then, Tie Jian's sect declined and rarely interacted with others afterward.

"Right, aren't there more recruits? Let's go take a look." Li Qiye smiled and walked outside.

Yiyun calmed down and followed him right away: "I've prepared everything already, Young Noble. Select whoever you like."

Chapter 4033: Recruitment

Numerous cultivators from various races and differing statuses waited outside in the courtyard.

Some actually hid their true identity while waiting for Li Qiye. Others purposely released their aura to intimidate the crowd and to make a good impression.

They have received an invitation and came to earn a good salary from Li Qiye. Of course, a few naturally had their own plans that might not be favorable for Li Qiye.

Groups talked among themselves about one key topic - the right approach to get the best payment.

Li Qiye's group finally showed up and interrupted the conversations.

"Gentlemen, our young noble is here. Those interested may state their price." Yiyun spoke after Li Qiye sat down.

"I only need 300,000 Grand Dao Refined Jades each year and I'll follow any order." One cultivator impatiently shouted.

“I will work for five years in exchange for a Heavenly Sovereign weapon.” Another shouted.

“Young Noble, I am at the Grand Dao Sacred Physique Realm. How much will you pay me?” One expert released their fate palaces. The power of the dao erupted as a result.

“I am only asking for a particular alchemy grass, I’m sure you have it in your treasury, Young Noble. I will work for three years.” One old man said.

“Our sect has five hundred members. We are located next to one of your territories. We will work for you for five years in exchange for the nearby border.” A sect master wanted land.

“Our group of eight is known as the Eight Tyrants of Qilian. We have plenty of workers and slaves under us. Our requirement is 300,000,000 Grand Dao Refined Jades...”

Li Qiye simply sat there and listened. His gaze moved across the courtyard like flowing water.

He eventually stopped the shouting crowd: “Enough, no rush. One at a time.”

“Silence!” Xu Yiyun roared sharply and silenced the crowd.

“Good. Who’s first?” Li Qiye smiled and said.

Cultivators exchanged glances. Earlier, they were shouting nonsensical deals to play up the atmosphere.

Now, when it was actually time to negotiate, they trod carefully in order to get the best possible deal. After all, stating a ridiculous price might lose them the opportunity completely.

That’s why some rather waited and listened to the bids instead. This would give them more time to think while seeing Li Qiye’s reaction.

Their rumination was interrupted by a burst of rather creepy laughter. A shadow appeared on the ground first then a black root drilled out, causing mud to splash.

It grew larger and turned into a tree demon with countless black branches. The scariest part were the skulls hanging on some branches.

“Kekeke...” It laughed sinisterly.

“Dark Hand Devil!” Those nearby immediately ran away from this tree.

“The monster at Nine Dao Sovereign realm?!” A youth turned pale after hearing this title.

“That’s him, he destroyed his own sect.” An older cultivator nearby became serious.

The title was notorious in Sword Continent. He wasn’t the strongest cultivator by any means but could be one of the cruelest.

Rumor has it that he came from an above-average sect. However, he became at odds with the sect and eventually ambushed then devoured his fellow members. He then took all of its resources and treasures.

This act made people’s hair stand up in anger. Some heroes of justice declared a crusade against this demon. However, they were killed instead.

The demon was elusive and traveled alone, managing to escape the law while committing evil acts.

He looked quite happy to see the crowd's frightened reaction. He sneered at Li Qiye: "Young Noble Li, I am a reasonable person, give me one billion Golden Sovereign Refined Jades and I'll leave without ever thinking about opposing you."

"One billion for peace of mind?" A crowd member commented.

He wasn't the only one who viewed Li Qiye as someone with more money than sense. However, he was the most blatant so far. Other big shots couldn't do the same thing since they cared about their reputation.

The sum was quite outrageous. The demon could rob and steal for the rest of his life without ever reaching this amount. His cultivation wasn't high enough to make this demand.

When a cultivator reached Grand Dao Sacred Physique, they would have two potential paths - either a heavenly body or a golden avatar.

The former was the path of the sovereign while the latter would take one to the dao lord realm.

The first levels of Heavenly Sovereign included ten dao. After reaching ten dao, that would take them to the next classifications - Golden Sovereign, Myriad Sovereign, Supreme Sovereign, and Immortal Sovereign.

At Nine Dao Heavenly Sovereign, the demon was strong enough to hold his own anywhere in Sword Continent. Thus, even if he wasn't evil, others would still be intimidated by him.

Alas, this cultivation realm wasn't enough to demand one billion refined jades. Few sects could come up with this amount, let alone an individual. It was enough to cause a mass-scale conflict.

"One billion?" Li Qiye chuckled after hearing the demand.

"That's right." The demon smirked: "One billion is nothing to you, akin to a drop of water compared to the ocean. It is way too cheap considering that it'll save your life, kekeke..."

The crowd did agree with this comment. One billion was actually nothing to Li Qiye. After all, he had billions of Dao Lord Refined Jades.

"Isn't it nice to dream? I can produce this sum but I don't think you'll be alive to enjoy it." Li Qiye calmly answered.

Chapter 4034: Money Causes Problems

"Kekeke, I'll live long enough to spend an even larger sum." The tree demon coldly smiled: "Brat, you're running out of time. My branches are thirsty right now, don't force my hand."

Having said that, his roots and branches wiggled creepily. This tree demon followed the evil path. Its roots and branches were its weapons. Once they drilled into the opponent, they would suck out all the vitality, leaving a dried corpse behind.

Many have suffered this terrible fate before so the listeners trembled after listening to the demon.

“You’re not leaving this place alive after your threat.” Li Qiye smirked and declared a death sentence for the demon. The actual process didn’t matter but this demon’s fate has undoubtedly been sealed.

Xu Yiyun glanced at Li Qiye. The way he was staring at the demon was akin to staring at a dead man.

“Kekeke.” The demon tree smirked: “You’re quite bold, brat. You might be rich but you can’t kill me. Be smart and hand one billion over before losing your life over nothing.”

All eyes were on Li Qiye, wondering if he would acquiesce. After all, this sum was inconsequential to him.

He ignored the tree and stared at the crowd: “Don’t all of you want an invitation? Here’s your chance. Kill him and one spot will belong to you. The salary is one billion Golden Sovereign Refined Jades annually.” He then pointed at the tree with a gentle smile.

“One billion!” The crowd clamored. Even the ancestors became emotional.

One billion Golden Sovereign Refined Jades each year - this salary was shocking. No one else in Sword Continent could have a job with such a handsome salary, not even the ancestors and elders from the behemoths.

A few hidden big shots started losing their patience after hearing this. It might be their only chance. Some thought about quitting their own sect and joining Li Qiye instead.

“Hmph, who dares?!” The demon could sense the murderous gazes nearby. He became defensive as well.

“Come if you do not fear death. I will drain and leave nothing left of you, your sect will be next too, kekeke.” He threatened.

His nefarious laughter expressed his cruelty perfectly. The crowd knew that he would stay true to his word.

They shuddered as if a basin of cold water had just been poured on them. The fire of greed cooled down as a result.

The powerful ancestors also hesitated. After all, this demon was stronger than most here. They would die after two or three moves at best.

Those capable of fighting him also hesitated. If they couldn’t kill him right here and now, the guy would escape and start terrorizing their sect. This had happened before. Money was tempting but being alive was more precious than anything else.

“Kekeke, see, your money is of no use here. Looks like you want it the hard way instead, here is your punishment.” The demon laughed and told Li Qiye.

He swung his hand and the tentacle-like branches flew towards Li Qiye with the speed of divine arrows. They resembled poisonous insects wanting to take a bite.

“Watch out!” Some shouted in horror.

“Break!” They suddenly heard the sound of a weapon leaving its cover.

A ray came from above like a heavenly waterfall, easily cutting down the branches and leaving a deep gash on the ground.

“Bam!” A figure landed in front of Li Qiye. This man had a snake body, a human head, and two arms. He wielded two hatchets and looked ready to fight.

His scales were red with golden outlines. His body was big, needing two or three adults to fully wrap their hands around it. Nonetheless, this bulkiness didn’t hinder his agility.

“Crimsondeath Monarch!” Someone recognized him and shouted.

“Another monster...” Another murmured.

“Even devils and ghosts obey money.” One ancestor said: “This evil guy wants to get paid.”

Crimsondeath Monarch was another notorious character in Sword Continent. He was a snake demon who achieved the dao and now, a vagabond cultivator.

He earned his fame with the blood of others, always ready to use his hatchets even against stronger cultivators.

“Two monsters fighting each other, how fitting.” One expert said.

The spectators thought that it would be best for these two to fight to the death.

“Brat, you must be tired of living.” The demon tree uttered coldly.

“Birds die in pursuit of food and men die in pursuit of wealth. This job shall be mine.” Crimsondeath guffawed.

“How dare you boast before me when you’re only at the six-dao level? I don’t think you’ll survive to take the job.” The demon tree said.

“Old geezer, you might be three levels higher than me but you’re old and your vitality is gone. I can last until your last moment.” Crimsondeath retorted.

“You have no idea what you’re in for.” The demon tree became murderous.

Chapter 4035: Myriad-eyed Hypnosis Banner

“We’ll see who will be the last man standing.” Crimsondeath raised both hatchets and shouted: “Geezer, don’t blame me for killing you today.”

“Kekeke, the blood of a wild crimson serpent should be delicious. I’m gonna have my fill today.” The tree demon licked his lips.

When comparing the two, the tree demon was far eviler. Crimsondeath was certainly fierce and brutal. However, the tree demon was evil incarnate.

Of course, the crowd became excited, wanting to see the outcome of the fight.

“Enough talk!” Crimsondeath spewed out poisonous miasma. The smoke surrounded the tree.

This miasma was made from his own snake poison. Normally, cultivators have become impervious to poison.

However, his poison wasn’t normal. One aspect of his cultivation included gathering the strange poisons and venoms all over the world. He then refined and added it to his own poison.

It had transcended into something greater long ago - a miasma capable of melting cultivators’ body and true fate.

A scorching heatwave accompanied the miasma and melted the affected area. The crowd quickly retreated, not wanting to die for a dumb reason.

“Zzz...” However, the surging miasma was actually being devoured by the countless roots and branches of the tree demon. They served as a defensive barrier and easily stopped the snake poison.

Of course, some branches were being burnt by the high temperature. Alas, they had a frightening level of tenacity. The burnt sections kept on growing back to protect the tree demon.

“Kekeke, brat, this is nothing. Watch.” The tree demon uttered.

“Whoosh...” His roots shot upward and blotted out the sky. This looked like a prison descending to trap the monarch.

This was a large-radius attack, enough to seal a clan or a sect.

“Bring it! Wild Whirlwind!” The monarch retaliated by spinning his hatchets and unleashing whirlwinds.

They pulled everything nearby inside and crushed them into smithereens. This applied to the incoming roots as well.

“Not bad!” The tree demon summoned a devil banner.

It caused people to become dizzy since it had countless eyes. They each exuded a beautiful and mesmerizing light with a hypnosis effect.

The weaker spectators started falling asleep and dropped to the ground. Those nearby took note of this and stopped looking at the banner.

“Get back!” They shouted.

“Myriad-eyed Hypnosis Banner.” An ancestor took a deep breath after seeing the banner.

It was refined from the dao bone of a myriad-eyed moth. Thus, it had the potential to hypnotize others into sleeping forever. Just imagine having the ability to do this in battle. The opponents would become fish on the chopping board.

The tree demon activated the banner and all of the eyes opened wide. They exuded a frightening radiance that engulfed the entire area.

Even the faraway spectators felt themselves becoming dizzy and drowsy. This was the case for Crimsondeath Monarch as well.

He became alarmed but still maintained his composure: "Geezer, this is nothing more than a trick. Watch this!"

He also opened his eyes wide. The pupils suddenly changed shape and assumed a dark red color. A third eye opened on his forehead. This was his heavenly gaze. It released a green light akin to the ray of death from hell itself.

The red and green rays gathered into a pulsing halo of both colors. This successfully stopped the hypnosis effect of the banner.

"That's the monarch's innate ability." Most were surprised to see this outside of the ancestors.

They knew that he used to be a crimson serpent with this innate ability. It became even stronger through cultivation, allowing it to see through illusions and techniques.

"Take this!" The monarch swung both hatchets without holding back after defeating the banner.

The large tree demon easily evaded the slash by sliding to the side with incredible speed. It then leaped into the air.

"Where do you think you're going?!" The monarch instantly unleashed a vertical slash.

However, the tree demon had a strange movement technique. Everyone got the impression that space was being displaced. Thus, the swift slash didn't hit the target.

"Demon Shift, his top technique." One ancestor who had seen it before spoke.

With the successful evasion, the tree demon had the advantage of being higher up in the air and ready to attack.

Chapter 4036: Black Wyvern Link

The tree demon floated in the air with his roots twisting in a nightmarish manner. He had all the visual characteristics of a devil in the mind of others and sure enough, his personality also matched one.

"Brat, I'll send you to your demise since that's what you're asking for." He coldly uttered.

On the other hand, although Crimsondeath Monarch was weaker than his exponent, he wasn't afraid in the slightest.

"Geezer, one of us will go down today. No need to waste breath!" He swung his hatchets again, looking determined to seize victory.

"Let's see what you can do then, junior!" The tree demon furiously laughed.

“Boom!” The tree demon activated his fate palaces. Twelve manifested into reality along with nine dao. Each dao was unique and looked like rivers circling around the tree.

“Nine Dao Sovereign.” Others confirmed upon seeing this.

The floating dao shouldered heaven and earth as they poured down laws. A chaotic presence emerged, seemingly gestating a new world inside.

The tree demon fully showed his power at this point. The aura of a sovereign permeated across the realm and intimidated the spectators. Everyone could sense the pressure and found it harder to breathe.

“I am going to crush you!” The demon tree looked like the incarnation of a devil king. His nefarious voice resembled the breezes of hell.

“Enough boasting, you might be stronger but you can’t crush me. Say this again once you reach the golden level.” Crimondeath retorted.

There was only one level separating the nine dao and golden level. However, the power difference was immense.

“I don’t need to be a Golden Sovereign to crush you.” The tree demon declared.

“Activate!” The monarch released his own fate palaces and chaos energy poured out like a tsunami.

He had a total of six dao that circled around and protected him like a divine wall. His body grew larger before turning into a gigantic serpent. When it coiled together, it was the size of a mountain.

This wasn’t an illusion or a grand avatar but rather, his true form. As his cultivation improved, his original size also increased.

“You’re finished!” The tree demon attacked first by taking out a bowl made from a skull. It grew larger and became an enormous gate.

It came crashing down straight for the serpent. One could hear screams and howls coming from it. There were millions of souls trapped inside.

“Boom!” This gate could even suck in the sun and the moon. It hovered right above the serpent, ready to imprison the beast.

Resisting seemed futile before its power. The skin then flesh would be stripped away first before the bones.

“So strong!” Experts trembled in fear. They were smart enough to be away from the radius of that skeletal bowl.

Nonetheless, they still felt their soul being pulled away from their body along with their flesh. This was a terrifying experience.

“Break!” Crimondeath commanded his two hatchets to smash the gate with the force of two tornadoes.

However, this bowl was an extraordinary treasure - a prized creation of the tree demon. It had killed numerous experts before.

Thus, it kept on descending closer towards the serpent. The spectators thought that the monarch was absolutely on the losing side.

"There's a considerable gap in power." One soul commented.

When weapons were similar, the fight became a contest of power and cultivation. Thus, the tree demon had the upper hand.

"Seal!" The monarch could see the deteriorating situation and went on the defensive instead. He crossed the hatchets together and the blades came together like two serpents. They formed a single rune and erected a barrier around him.

"Boom!" The gate smashed into the barrier and began removing the embedded dao power.

"Crack!" Everyone heard the barrier cracking so the serpent was pushed into the ground, creating a deep pit.

"Not an even match." A few ancestors expected this outcome from the start.

In fact, the monarch was already impressive enough to resist the devouring bowl for this long.

"Kekeke, brat, see, you're not my opponent." The tree demon started gloating.

"Too early for that!" The monarch leaped out of the pit again, resulting in a tsunami of debris.

"Black Wyvern Link!" The monarch summoned his ultimate weapon for a counterattack.

"Boom!" Frost and snow took over the region due to the appearance of this treasure. An ocean of dao runes also appeared with a black wyvern in the center.

Chapter 4037: Evil Takeover

The black wyvern roared and released an oppressive divinity. It had the aura of a divine beast capable of soaring through the nine firmaments and time itself.

Other beasts had no choice but to accept their inferiority since the divine beasts stood at the apex.

Weaker cultivators felt the same way. Some fell down to their knees, unable to stand up again.

"This is divine beast?" A youth asked in horror.

"No, this is what's known as a true link, a treasure crafted from the dao bone of an emperor-level dao bone. That's the only way to summon the beast's true power." A high elder shook his head.

Crimsondeath possessed such an item. He knew that he didn't have a chance against the enemy without using it. Thus, he chose to unleash its true link - Black Wyvern Link with the ice affinity.

The tree demon's expression soured after seeing this. He took out a divine lamp and released flames for self-protection.

“Zzz...” A confrontation between ice and fire ensued. The opposite duality resulted in smoke and vapor permeating the air.

This seemed to be an even contest but the true link wasn't so simple. The wyvern formed a mudra with its claws and started a sealing art.

“Boom!” The myriad dao in the area were instantly subjected to its power.

The spectators became frozen due to an invisible rune hitting them. This left them unable to muster any power from their vitality and energy. The main seal then went on the offensive, shooting straight for the tree demon.

The demon was startled to see this treasure in action. His nine dao moved to the front in order to block the wyvern's attack.

The laws of the nine seals couldn't stop the attack so he was sent flying into the ground, creating a second pit.

“Hahaha, did that taste good, geezer?” The monarch vented successfully after seizing the upper hand.

He was bloodied from top to bottom. That last move from the bowl seriously injured him. Alas, he got his revenge thanks to the Black Wyvern Link.

“The monarch isn't bad at all.” Some spectators found his success surprising due to the cultivation gap.

“Hmm, this should be his strongest ace card. If he has nothing else, he can't win.” An ancestor shook his head.

“Hahaha!” The tree demon laughed from being too angry. He also looked tattered and injured. The move earlier was clearly effective.

“You're not leaving this palace alive, brat.” His face twisted with rage and anger.

This was rather understandable because he was proud of being a Nine Dao Sovereign. Now, he actually was sent flying and suffered injuries to a Six Dao Sovereign?

This was partly due to him underestimating the monarch, not expecting the guy to have such a powerful ace card.

“Buzz.” Dao runes appeared beneath the tree demon and turned into a diagram depicting an abyss. It contained millions of wailing souls and ghosts to the horror of the spectators.

His nine dao weaved together and emitted a dark light. This in turn created a tree of the darkness affinity, large enough to blot out the sun. Darkness took over as a result.

“Evil Takeover!” The tree demon shouted before summoning a special mirror.

“Boom!” The mirror released a horde of fiendish creatures towards the monarch. Meanwhile, the dark tree also attacked with all of its branches at the same time.

“Black Wyvern Guard!” The monarch was startled to see such a strong response from the tree demon.

The wyvern roared and coiled around the monarch, protecting him like a fortress. His six dao came together to form a wall as well.

“Rumble!” The dark fiends and the branches began hitting the monarch’s defensive lines. The world seemingly spun from the shockwaves.

The monarch had a tough time holding on so he trembled continuously. The onslaught seemed endless with the next wave stronger than the previous.

“Ugh...” The monarch’s vitality churned so he spat out blood.

“Kekeke, I’ll feel much better once I crush you.” The tree demon laughed.

“We’ll see about that!” The monarch bellowed.

The spectators could see that his defeat was inevitable.

“Crimsondeath Monarch lost.” One spectator said. This was a clear display of when cultivation mattered too much.

“Crack!” The dao fortress and wall started cracking, on the verge of crumbling any second now.

“Die!” The tree demon channeled all of its energy into the attack without holding back.

“This is it!” One spectator shouted, aware of the incoming murder.

However, in this split second, the tree demon suddenly had an ominous feeling and became alarmed.

A bright ray came out of nowhere and aimed for the tree demon’s forehead. Once the top masters realized it, it was already inches away from him. It turned out to be a divine arrow with extreme speed.

Nonetheless, he quickly evaded with a spatial shift so the arrow only pierced his left shoulder instead of his head.

Chapter 4038: Killing

No one expected a third party to join the fray at such a crucial moment.

“The monarch’s friend?” One spectator wondered. However, most knew that the monarch was also a friendless lone wolf.

“Who has the audacity to sneak attack me?!” The tree demon roared since victory was snatched from his grasp.

“Hehehe, it’s your grandpa.” A figure appeared among the clouds - Jian Sanqiang.

“Him again?” Everyone found this surprising because Jian Sanqiang had no ties with Crimsondeath Monarch, at least as far as they knew.

“How dare you attack me?!” The tree demon was livid; his eyes contained nothing but rage.

“Just don’t like the way you look, that’s all.” Sanqiang smiled and shrugged.

“Brat, I’ll cut you to pieces too!” The tree demon roared and became engulfed in devilish flames.

However, he couldn’t attack because Sanqiang suddenly disappeared from sight. The guy probably escaped.

On the other side, Crimsondeath Monarch released another true link attack, no longer holding back any vitality and energy.

The black wyvern leaped up in the air and launched the cold freeze again towards the tree.

However, the tree was ready this time. He snorted and used his mirror to create black halos serving as a defensive wall.

The powerful ice managed to freeze the halos but it became weakened as a result, unable to seal or harm the tree.

“Buzz.” Rays suddenly lit up the sky afterward.

Everyone looked up and saw a massive portal with countless arrows floating on the other side. This looked like an ocean ready to fire.

“Whoosh!” The arrows launched downward in an unstoppable manner, piercing through space and time. This was enough to decimate an entire sect but there was only one target - the tree demon.

The tree demon bellowed in astonishment. Flames and branches gathered upward in order to stop the relentless barrage.

Numerous branches and leaves were left with holes in them. Nonetheless, their sheer number made up a formidable defense.

“Black Wyvern Seal!” Crimsondeath Monarch didn’t just stand there and watch.

The tree demon faced powerful foes from both sides, realizing how grim it was getting.

“Boom!” The true link managed to fully pierce through the halos and sent the tree demon flying. The latter smashed into the ground and created another pit.

At the same time, the rain of arrows poured down the pit, wanting to annihilate the tree.

The monarch took advantage of this situation and unleashed another seal - this time, with all of his might.

“Boom!” Jian Sanqiang’s arrows and the monarch’s seal obliterated the area around the pit.

“Ahhh!” The tree and the main body of the demon suffered grievous damage at first. A few seconds later, he was fully crushed by the combined effort. He never expected to meet his end like this.

After all, the monarch was clearly weaker than him. If it wasn't for Jian Sanqiang's dirty attack, he would have killed the monarch already.

"He's finally dead." The spectators exchanged glances and heaved a sigh of relief.

If they had to pick a side, they would have chosen the monarch because he was the lesser of two evils.

In fact, he could be considered a good person when contrasted with the tree demon. His only faults were his brutality and overbearing nature.

"Yeah, it's over." Most saw the tree exploding and shared the same thought.

When everyone thought that it was over, a poisonous root suddenly drilled out of the ground and rushed for Li Qiye.

Thousands of branches spiked out as well, resulting in a violent wave intending to devour Li Qiye.

"No, he's still alive!" One ancestor shouted.

Jian Sanqiang and the monarch tried their best to stop it but it was too late. The wooden wave turned into a monstrous jaw right before Li Qiye.

"This is the end for him!" A spectator bellowed.

"Clank!" At this critical juncture, a heavenly sword descended out of nowhere with violent energy rays. It caught the root of guard and pulverized everything. Not a single branch escaped destruction regardless of its size.

This root turned out to be the demon tree's poisonous source. With it gone, the only thing left was his true fate. Thus, he decided to run right away. His true fate soared for the horizon.

Alas, the sword didn't let up. A hymn could be heard before the sword slashed forward.

"Ahh!" It cut the true fate down so this spelled the end of the tree demon.

A gray-robed old man stood not far from there. He wore a large cap low enough to hide his face. The only thing discernible was his old age.

In reality, the hat was unnecessary. He already performed a shrouding technique to hide his true appearance. Only those strong enough would be able to see through it.

He was the one who killed the tree demon. It appeared that he wished to keep his identity a secret for now.

"Thank you, Fellow Daoists, I appreciate it." Crimsondeath Monarch was ecstatic and cupped his fist towards Jian Sanqiang and the mysterious man.

The old man didn't bother responding. As for Jian Sanqiang, he laughed and said: "I wasn't helping you. Young Noble Li is my boss so I'm just doing my part." Having said that, he disappeared from sight.

Nonetheless, the monarch still bowed in that direction because Jian Sanqiang did indeed save him.

He then walked closer and asked Li Qiye: "Young Noble Li, Dark Hand is dead now so the job is mine?"

Chapter 4039: Just Meals

All eyes were on Li Qiye due to his previous promise of a grand salary for the tree demon's killer - one billion Golden Sovereign Refined Jades.

Of course, the monarch didn't finish the job by himself. Nonetheless, it seemed that Jian Sanqiang and the mysterious old man had no intention of claiming the contribution. He became the only one eligible for the reward.

Nonetheless, he was definitely the main fighting force and certainly contributed to the demon's demise.

"I am a man of my word. From today henceforth, you shall be under my banner. The salary is as stated prior." Li Qiye smiled.

"!!!" The crowd clamored after hearing the confirmation.

"One billion Golden Sovereign Refined Jades..." Reality still struck them hard.

"This should be the highest-paid position in the world?" One expert calmed down and asked.

Most sects in Sword Continent couldn't produce this sum but now, the monarch gets to have it each year. Most importantly, it wasn't a big deal for Li Qiye.

"I don't think the first elder of Sword Emperor got this much." Another jealous soul said.

"Even the city lord of Nine-wheel pales in comparison each year." An older cultivator shook her head.

The lord of Nine-wheel Citadel certainly had enough authority and prestige in Eight Desolaces. However, even this existence couldn't have such an insane salary.

"I'll be his horse and ox for this much money without uttering a single word of grievance." Someone wouldn't mind licking Li Qiye's shoes for this sum.

"You need to be capable enough." An ancestor responded: "Everyone had the chance earlier but only the monarch gave it a shot. He earned it by risking his life so no need to be jealous."

The others exchanged glances and found this logical. None dared to step up earlier; some ancestors were certainly strong enough but they had their own plans. In the end, the monarch became the victor.

"I'll quit being an ancestor right now for this job." Nonetheless, people were still envious.

After all, they could work for their sect for a lifetime and still wouldn't earn this much. Jealousy was unavoidable.

The monarch himself didn't expect Li Qiye to say yes. In fact, he would have been more than happy with a one-time payment or even just a salary of one hundred million.

He was just a Six Dao Sovereign so the salary was a monstrous sum. All of his wealth right now didn't come close to it. Thus, he just became rich overnight.

“My lord, from now on, my life is yours. I will do all of your biddings.” He got on his knees and prostrated.

“Rise.” Li Qiye smiled.

He then got up and came over to stand behind Li Qiye while others watched with envy.

Not long ago, Li Qiye was just a nobody. Others viewed him with disdain and contempt. Not to mention a Six Dao Sovereign, even regular disciples had contempt for him.

Everything had changed in one day. It seemed that being able to work for Li Qiye was a true privilege. As the saying goes - everything has a price.

Two scenarios existed for a “priceless” treasure. One would be that it wasn’t for sale. The other being that it wasn’t worth a coin, completely undesirable.

“What do you want?” Li Qiye then stared at the old man in gray.

The old man hasn’t said a word ever since he got here. He helped out greatly and managed to save Li Qiye from the tree demon. Thus, he should enjoy a reward similar to the monarch.

He became the center of attention. Everyone wanted to hear his desired salary.

“I am incapable and do not dare to ask for anything.” The old man bowed towards Li Qiye: “I am more than satisfied with daily meals as my payments during my service.”

Many became frozen after hearing the response. Everyone could see that he was extremely strong and Li Qiye owed him his life.

Thus, he could even ask for something grander than the monarch’s salary. There was a high possibility of Li Qiye agreeing.

On the contrary, he chose to be illogically humble and ask for nothing. This was akin to throwing at least one billion jades away for nothing. Given his immense power, he would have no problems taking care of daily meals. Thus, he was viewed as crazy.

“May I ask for your name, Sir?” Lu Qi stared at him and asked. She couldn’t see through him so intuition told her that she was weaker than him.

“My memory has gotten worse with age.” The old man slightly bowed and said: “I do not recall my name, Young Noble. If you don’t mind, you can call me A’zhi.” [1]

Lu Qi couldn’t pry any further since the old man was being as humble as can be. It would be awfully impolite.

As for the crowd, they were still confused by his strange choice.

Chapter 4040: More Recruitment

Some actually thought that there was something wrong with the old man’s head. Nonetheless, he didn’t seem to be a madman.

“Why? He clearly had a chance for one billion. Refusing is one thing but he’s selling himself short too.” One youth said.

The guy offered to be Li Qiye’s servant for free. The ancestors thought that only one scenario was plausible - that this so-called A’zhi had other plans up his sleeves for wanting to stay near Li Qiye.

Perhaps he wanted to wait for the right moment to kidnap Li Qiye and take all of his wealth? This could be the right answer. After all, he still kept his appearance and identity a secret.

By sticking around, he could potentially take Li Qiye’s legacy one day and no one would have a damn clue about where to start finding him. It would become an unsolved mystery for future eras.

“I think he knows his real goal.” Another ancestor murmured since this was the only explanation for the old man’s action.

Thus, they became interested in Li Qiye’s choice. It would be unwise to take in the old man now, akin to sowing a seed of trouble. They believed that it would be best to refuse him.

In fact, Lu Qi was confused as well about the old man. She had a good idea about the top characters in Sword Continent. However, she had no impression of this old man.

“I haven’t heard of anyone named A’zhi in Sword Continent.” Lu Qi said.

The old man bowed in response: “You’re a transcending cultivator floating above the firmament, I am a nobody in comparison. Since we are from two different worlds, it makes sense that you haven’t heard of me before.”

Lu Qi’s eyes narrowed after hearing this. The old man obviously knew her true identity and background. Keep in mind that she still had her stealth technique on. Everyone else simply thought of her as Li Qiye’s maid.

Thus, he came prepared or didn’t mind her presence at all.

“What do you think, Young Noble?” She asked Li Qiye instead of making a decision herself.

The choice was obvious for most. Alas, Li Qiye was eccentric and unpredictable.

“So you wish to join me?” Li Qiye smiled.

“Yes, Young Noble, but if it is inconvenient, I do not dare to force the issue.” The old man bowed.

An ancestor wanted to shout - It’s obviously inconvenient to have a potential backstabber around! However, he refrained from doing so since he didn’t know the powerful cultivator’s identity. Prudence was required in this case.

“What’s inconvenient about it?” Li Qiye smiled.

“Because my identity is unknown and I might have nefarious intent. Being cautious is common sense.” The old man said directly.

“True, but common sense doesn’t apply to me.” Li Qiye clapped and said: “Very well, you may stay since I can afford to feed another person.”

“Thank you, Young Noble, I will do my very best.” The old man replied.

The crowd naturally found Li Qiye’s choice surprising.

“Maybe this is why he became the richest man.” One expert commented: “He’s so unconventional.”

“True, he’s different indeed. You might be right.” An older cultivator who has been paying attention to Li Qiye replied.

Of course, the mass still thought that his success with the legacy was nothing more than luck. Only a few top masters knew that luck couldn’t open the legacy. There was something else to it. Alas, this remained a mystery even for them.

“Okay, does anyone else have some cool abilities to show me? Money is not a problem as long as you can impress me.” Li Qiye shifted his focus towards the crowd.

No one thought that he was being arrogant. This should be the style of the world's richest man.

“I am the sect master of Southgate Mountain.” An old man stepped forward and bowed: “We have more than eight hundred disciples and three hundred miles of territory. We wish to work for you for an annual salary of thirty million...”

“I am a member of Aerial School, versed in flying techniques. I would like to join you as a follower, my requirement is not high...” A woman with a great figure bowed and said.

“I am a demon monarch with thirty thousand lesser demons under my banner. We are valiant and ready for battle. As for the yearly payments...” A mighty demon landed from above and bowed.

In just a short time, numerous cultivators stated their strong points and desired salary to Li Qiye. It included powerful demons and ancestors hiding their true background along with some unknown juniors...

Of course, their demand was quite high. Some asked for a salary dozens of times higher than the regular amount.

These particular cultivators harbored zero nefarious intent. However, they viewed him as a fat sheep to be taken advantage of.

Li Qiye casually picked without following any logic. He refused some that had stated a fair price but eventually picked a few with unreasonable demands.

All in all, no one could make an accurate prediction. It didn’t take long before he recruited a large group.

Those chosen were elated because their salary became far higher than before.

“Okay, you’ll be in charge of them.” After finishing, he told Crimsondeath Monarch: “A’zhi will be my consultant. Ask him if you have questions.”

“I understand.” The monarch bowed.