

Chapter 141: Dead Quiet Ancient City

The moment little crane heard those people looking down on Su Zimo's speed, it was displeased on the spot.

It wasn't feeling unfair for Su Zimo. Instead, it was because if Su Zimo backed off and did not go, it would not be able to join him to have fun.

Little crane cried and bent down.

The spirit tiger was the first to understand what was happening as it hopped onto little crane in a delighted manner.

Little crane's body trembled slightly and it felt disgusted for a moment. However, it did not chase the spirit tiger away and instead looked at Su Zimo, signaling for him to hop on as well.

This time round, it wasn't just Su Zimo – everyone understood what was happening!

Little crane wanted to carry Su Zimo on it!

The speed of a Foundation Establishment realm spirit demon was much faster than Lu Yangrong and the others!

Furthermore, who would have imagined that the child of the Mystical Guardian Beast would actually be willing to lower its dignity and carry a Qi Refinement Warrior?

What kind of treatment was that?

Lu Yangrong and Guan Jin were both red with envy.

If it was the both of them, they would have hopped on eagerly!

However, Su Zimo frowned. Hesitating for a moment, he said deeply, "I'm quite heavy. Are you able to carry me?"

Su Zimo was wearing the Mystic Gold Silk Armor which weighed a full 5 tons!

If he wanted to take off the Mystic Gold Silk Armor, he would have to remove his green robes. However, that wasn't convenient with Leng Rou around.

Little crane believed none of that. Pouting its lips, it raised its head and lamented internally, 'How much can a mere Qi Refinement Warrior weigh?'

"Caw, caw!"

Little crane chirped and urged Su Zimo to hurry up.

Coughing gently, Su Zimo reminded, "Be careful."

With that said, Su Zimo leaped onto little crane's back.

Thump!

Instantly, little crane fell to the ground head first, eating a mouthful of dust.

Instantly, it was enraged and nearly cursed out in human tongue.

How was that a little heavy? That was damn bloody heavy!

In truth, due to little crane's unique bloodline and its cultivation, it could carry objects of that weight without any issues.

However, it was caught totally off guard and naturally fell when something that heavy leaped onto it all of a sudden.

Embarrassed, Su Zimo said, "Why don't I come down?"

"Caw, caw!"

Little crane was upset.

That was obviously questioning its ability!

Channeling its blood, little crane flapped and slowly flew up. Under Lu Yangrong and Guan Jin's envious stares, it flew out of the sect.

Little fatty summoned his flying sword and declared while waving, "Let's go!"

Before long, little crane adapted to the weight on its body. Even though it wasn't fast, it was still far ahead of the other four.

The seven of them headed towards Linfeng City.

The distance between Ethereal Peak and Linfeng City was not too far apart. It would take approximately a day to arrive given the speed of early-stage Foundation Establishment Cultivators.

Along the way, the group of them came across other cultivators as well.

When the outsiders caught sight of their sect badge, all of them gave way respectfully.

Be it itinerant cultivators or minor sects, all of them have heard of Ethereal Peak.

To them, Ethereal Peak was a massive entity that no one wanted to offend.

In the blink of an eye, a day had passed.

Nearing dusk, an ancient city gradually appeared in front of them. That was their destination, Linfeng City.

Little crane slowed down gradually. Looking at the ancient city in the distance, Su Zimo narrowed his gaze as though in deep thoughts.

Leng Rou and the others caught up from behind.

Lu Yangrong walked over to little crane and took out an elixir from his storage bag. Smiling, he asked, "Little crane, my friend. You must be tired, right? How about taking an elixir to replenish your energy?"

Little crane turned slightly and instantly, its eyes lit up. Reaching out, it picked up the elixir in Lu Yangrong's palm and raised its head, swallowing it in one go.

When Lu Yangrong saw little crane consuming the elixir, he was elated.

He had been extremely envious of the fact that little crane was willing to carry Su Zimo on its back.

Being carried by a spirit demon was much more flamboyant compared to sword kinesis flight – also, it was less tiring.

Lu Yangrong coughed gently and asked, "Little crane, my friend. How about giving me a ride so I can rest too?"

Little crane spun its head away and ignored him completely.

"You, stupid...!"

Lu Yangrong swallowed back his words.

Even if Su Zimo dared to call little crane stupid bird, he did not have the guts.

Watching Lu Yangrong make a fool of himself from the sidelines, Guan Jin scoffed coldly.

Right then, Su Zimo suddenly said, "Everyone, watch out. Something isn't right about Linfeng City."

"What's wrong?"

Humiliated by little crane, Lu Yangrong was fuming. The moment he heard Su Zimo, he retorted, "Don't give instructions if you don't know anything! You're just a Level 9 Qi Refinement Warrior!"

"Exactly."

At this moment, Guan Jin was on the same side as Lu Yangrong. He had no intention of letting Su Zimo off as he continued, "What's wrong with Linfeng City? Everything feels normal to me."

"Even though it's already evening time, there's no lights in the city. It's strange," Su Zimo shook his head.

Leng Rou furrowed her brows, clearly realizing this.

Lu Yangrong snorted lightly, "It's not actually night yet. What kind of lights do you want?"

In a short while, all five of them arrived at the skies above Linfeng City and descended slowly.

This time, even Lu Yangrong and Guan Jin noticed something odd about the city.

It was too quiet!

The ancient city's streets were empty without a single person.

Even at dusk, it shouldn't be this quiet. It was as if the entire city was empty and everyone had disappeared, leaving it in dead silence!

The five of them landed in Linfeng City and looked around.

Shops on either side of the streets were tightly shut, as though they hadn't been open yet. The atmosphere in the ancient city was strange and even... sinister!

Su Zimo's nostrils flared but he could not smell any blood.

"What's going on?"

Little fatty asked with a stern expression.

In theory, the city lord of Linfeng City should have prepared long ago to send someone to welcome them.

Yet, there wasn't a single person to be seen in Linfeng City right now!

Lu Yangrong shook his head. He gripped his flying sword tightly with a tense expression.

The spirit tiger's ears flapped as it looked around, its claws digging the ground constantly with unease.

Little crane behaved the same way and flapped its wings.

After pondering for a moment, Lu Yangrong made a decision and said in a low voice, "Let's go. We'll check out the city lord's residence first."

His cultivation was the highest among them. Even though no one said anything, it was a silent agreement to accept him as the leader.

This time round, none of them used sword kinesis flight.

Apart from Su Zimo, everyone had expended a lot of spirit qi to get here. That was why they chose to walk now.

Walking along the quiet streets, all five of them looked around and listened to everything, taking note of any activity.

All of a sudden!

A sudden noise sounded out behind them.

Instantly, Lu Yangrong felt the hair on his neck stand on end. He spun around furiously and looked back.

Not far away, a gigantic triangular flag with the word 'wine' flapped in the wind, letting out sounds.

It was a false alarm.

Lu Yangrong and the others heaved a sigh of relief.

Yet another strange gust of cold wind blew by and suddenly, Lu Yangrong realized – he had broken out into cold sweat before he knew it.

"This is freaking weird!"

He cursed and continued walking.

Chapter 142: Discovery

They hadn't walked far when Lu Yangrong stopped in his tracks.

There were two people lying on the street not far ahead. Motionless, their faces could not be seen.

One of them was holding a gong in his hand while the other had a tool. From the looks of it, they were probably the night watchmen of Linfeng City.

However, why would they be here since night had yet to truly arrive?

Why were they sprawled on the ground as well?

"Hey, night watchmen. Are you guys dead or alive?" Lu Yangrong grabbed his flying sword. He did not rush forward and merely asked on the spot.

Guan Jin scoffed coldly at the side, "What could be up with an ancient city full of mortals to deserve such caution from us?"

Even though he said that, Guan Jin clasped a protective talisman in his hand. Heading forth, he flipped one of them over.

"Ah!"

Guan Jin exclaimed and stumbled a couple of steps back.

Su Zimo and others at the back could clearly tell that the person was dead.

All of them had seen dead people before.

Yet, this was the first time they had seen such a horrifying death.

The night watchman's face was shriveled and his skin stuck to the bones. It was as though his flesh and blood were drained, leaving only grey eyeballs that watched ahead confusedly.

Even when he died, that person most likely did not know the reason why.

Guan Jin heaved a deep breath of air before flipping the other person over – it was an almost identical death.

It felt as though the both of them were on their way to start on the night watch when they met with bad luck and were killed on the spot without any chance of reacting at all!

Su Zimo narrowed his gaze and pondered for a moment. Suddenly, he walked to a house at the side and kicked the door open before looking around inside.

The people inside were already dead.

Regardless of gender or age, most of them died in slumber in an almost identical manner as the two outside!

By the time Su Zimo returned to the street, Leng Rou and the others came forth from the other houses with a grim expression. Their hearts were filled with lingering fear.

"Everyone's dead!"

Little fatty gulped.

Even though the five of them were cultivators and there were even four Foundation Establishment Cultivators, none of them had come across anything as such.

Furthermore, if they hadn't guessed wrongly, everyone in the ancient city should have most likely met with the same fates!

A general picture formed in Su Zimo's mind.

In the previous night, Linfeng City was peaceful and serene as ever with most people in the ancient city asleep. As the night watchmen patrolled, bad luck descended upon them!

No one was spared from it!

Most people must have died in their sleep.

There were at least 100,000 people residing in the city!

Overnight, all of them perished!

Lu Yangrong remarked grimly, "It must be done by a fiend cultivator!"

"Yes, fiend cultivators are ruthless and unscrupulous. It's clear that their deaths were not committed by anyone on the orthodox path," Guan Jin nodded in agreement.

Suddenly, Su Zimo asked, "The disciple who discovered the spirit mine near here. What did he mention in his message?"

Little fatty replied, "Nothing much. He merely mentioned discovering a spirit mine at the northern outskirts of Linfeng City. Mining had already begun and he could be done in about two days. That junior brother mentioned discovering some cultivators near to the spirit mine and he was worried that they might covet it, that's why he requested for the sect to send some Foundation Establishment Cultivators as reinforcements."

After he replied, little fatty suddenly realized and asked with widened eyes, "Bro, are you going to say that the murderer of this ancient city's tragedy is after our sect's spirit mine?"

"It's very likely."

Su Zimo nodded. "Something as such happened right after a spirit mine was discovered nearby Linfeng City. It's too coincidental."

"What should we do then? Should we still head to the spirit mine?" Little fatty asked.

Su Zimo replied grimly, "Relay a message to the sect first telling them that a situation had arisen. You guys have expended quite a bit of spirit qi traveling here. We should recuperate before checking out the spirit mine..."

"Junior Brother Su, you're too weak. If you're afraid, you don't have to follow us."

Before Su Zimo could finish, he was interrupted by Lu Yangrong's cold scoff.

Guan Jin eyed Su Zimo in disdain and continued indifferently, “Junior Brother Su, since you’re so worried, why don’t you hurry back? I’ve already advised you not to follow us, fufu.”

Su Zimo frowned.

Leng Rou suddenly said, “I agree with Junior Brother Su’s suggestion.”

As she said that, she retrieved a paper crane from her storage bag and wrote a few lines of words using spirit qi. Releasing the paper crane, it flew to the skies and disappeared in the blink of an eye.

When he saw that, Lu Yangrong comforted her, “Junior Sister Leng, don’t worry. There won’t be any cultivator within the Great Zhou Dynasty stupid enough to covet Ethereal Peak’s spirit mine.”

“That’s right!”

Guan Jin analyzed calmly, “It’s just an inferior-grade spirit mine containing mostly inferior-grade spirit stones that Foundation Establishment Cultivators won’t be interested in. Even if anyone wanted the spirit mine, they would merely be Qi Refinement Warriors. There’s nothing to be afraid of.”

The spirit qi contained by inferior-grade spirit stones was not efficient in helping Foundation Establishment Cultivators.

If Foundation Establishment Cultivators wanted to raise their cultivation realms, they would require middle-grade spirit stones.

At Golden Core realm, they would require superior-grade or even supreme-grade spirit stones.

Although what the both of them said was logical, Su Zimo felt that things were not as simple.

“Let’s head to the spirit mine straight and check things out! Everything will be clear by then!”

Lu Yangrong waved and summoned his flying sword, leading the way.

Guan Jin followed closely behind. Carrying Su Zimo and the spirit tiger, little crane chased after them.

Before long, all five of them arrived at the spirit mine.

When they approached the pitch dark entrance of the spirit mine, Lu Yangrong paused in his track and turned around. “I’ll take the front with Junior Brother Guan. Because Junior Brother Su is the weakest, he’ll stand in the middle. Junior Sister Leng and little fatty will take the back.”

No one had any objections to that arrangement.

The entrance was narrow so little crane and the spirit tiger could not enter – they could only stand guard outside.

Su Zimo could tell that even though Lu Yangrong seemed indifferent previously, he had now become more cautious.

Summoning his flying sword, Lu Yangrong held it in front of his chest. With two shining spirit patterns, it was a middle-grade flying sword.

The five of them ventured deep into the spirit mine.

They did not walk far when a strange sound echoed from ahead. It was as though a large group of things were flying over and they could only see it vaguely through red flashes.

Taking a closer look, Lu Yangrong realized that it was a group of black crows with a strange red glow in their eyes!

“Kneel down and let them pass!”

Lu Yangrong bent down and everyone else followed suit.

The crows with bloodshot eyes sped above their heads without stopping.

Heaving a sigh of relief, Lu Yangrong shrugged his shoulders. Pretending to be relaxed, he turned back and smiled. “Puny beasts are common in places like this spirit mine. By ignoring them, we’re even conserving spirit qi.”

Suddenly, Su Zimo’s senses were alarmed as he hollered, “Watch out!”

Swash!

A sword beam flashed at an extremely fast speed and arrived before them in the blink of an eye.

Right now, everyone was at their most relaxed after those crows with bloodshot eyes had just passed. By the time Lu Yangrong heard Su Zimo’s warning, it was too late.

Chapter 143: Middle-Grade Spirit Mine

Poof!

With a crisp sound, a bloody flash appeared.

Lu Yangrong had just turned around when his head was pierced by a flying sword and he died on the spot!

The flying sword continued its momentum and continued to stab at the people behind. Su Zimo was the first to be targeted.

Su Zimo’s spirit perception had long alerted him to it as he instantly drew his Cold Moon Saber and slashed against the incoming flying sword, knocking it away.

The speed of that attack was way too fast to be from a Qi Refinement Warrior!

If Su Zimo wanted to defend using flying swords, he would have to use his sword formation. However, it would take too long to set up and he wouldn’t be able to deal with the situation on hand.

Lu Yangrong’s blood splattered all over Su Zimo and Guan Jin.

Apart from Su Zimo, the rest were stunned and their eyes were filled with shock.

Even with Leng Rou’s personality, she still looked somewhat flustered at the moment.

None of them could imagine how someone who had just been laughing and talking to them a moment ago had turned into a corpse in the blink of an eye!

Swash! Swash!

Two more flashes of light appeared, targeting Su Zimo and Guan Jin.

Standing where he was in a dazed manner, Guan Jin did not manage to shatter the protective talisman in his hands right away.

Su Zimo extended his palm and yanked Guan Jin back, hollering, "Hurry, retreat!"

Clang! Clang!

Flipping his hands, Su Zimo slashed twice and the two incoming flying swords fell to the ground.

The two swords carried quite a bit of power in them – their attacker was early-stage Foundation Establishment at least!

The change in circumstances had rendered Lu Yangrong and Guan Jin's earlier predictions invalid.

Within the spirit mine, there were at least three Foundation Establishment Cultivators. Furthermore, all three of them did not care if they were going against Ethereal Peak. Every single attack of theirs was lethal, showing no mercy at all!

Finally, Guan Jin and the others snapped out of their stupor.

Shattering his protection talisman, a light barrier appeared around Guan Jin's surroundings. Leng Rou and little fatty then sped towards the exit.

Clothes could be heard fluttering from the depths of the mine and by the sound of it, there were quite a number of people!

When the people inside saw that their flying swords could not kill Su Zimo and the rest, they gave chase outside.

As Su Zimo retreated, he drew out a blood-colored bow.

Before the five peaks face-off, Su Zimo had already refined the Cold Moon Saber and Sanguine Crystal Bow into inferior-grade spirit weapons.

In the blink of an eye, three arrows were loaded.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

The sound of arrows piercing through the air echoed as three flashes of light tore through the darkness of the mine.

"Ah!" "Ah!"

Two shrieks could be heard while the third arrow was blocked.

"Be careful, everyone!"

Someone yelled from the depths of the mine.

Within that narrow mine, there was not much space for cultivators to dodge and as such, Su Zimo's arrows dealt quite a bit of damage.

Running with all their might, Su Zimo and the rest got out before long.

Outside, all of them were rattled.

The blood-eyed crows that flew by them earlier on were now surrounding and pecking at little crane and the spirit tiger.

Because it was a spirit demon after all, little crane could defend itself against the attacks of the blood-eyed crows.

However, the spirit tiger sustained a lot of injuries because it could not fly. Howling on the spot, it was trying to defend itself desperately.

"Frost Wind!"

When Leng Rou saw that, she conjured hand seals and hollered, pointing towards the skies.

A cold gust of wind appeared out of nowhere and swept through the blood-eyed crows. Instantly, a number of them were frozen and fell to the ground, shattering to their deaths.

That was the power of spirit arts!

Thanks to Leng Rou's assistance, little crane broke out of the encirclement and panted slightly, looking somewhat fearful.

Residing in the sect most of the time, it had never seen such a bloody scene.

"Ride on little crane and leave this place for now!"

Su Zimo ordered swiftly.

"Hahahaha!"

Right then, a haughty laughter came from deep within the cave.

A group of people came forth. The leader who was donned in grey robes declared, "None of you will leave today. Stay here!"

"Late-stage Foundation Establishment!"

Little fatty's pupils constricted as he exclaimed.

The grey robed cultivator who spoke was at late-stage Foundation Establishment!

Among them, Lu Yangrong who was at mid-stage Foundation Establishment had already died within the spirit mine.

Not only that, a steady stream of cultivators continued out of the mine. At a glance, there were more than thirty people!

However, what was terrifying was that all thirty odd of them were Foundation Establishment Cultivators!

Other than the grey robed late-stage Foundation Establishment, there were nine others at mid-stage and the rest were all at early-stage. There wasn't a single Qi Refinement Warrior!

"It's over!"

Guan Jin looked at the thirty odd Foundation Establishment Cultivators that surrounded them and despair gushed into his heart, draining all color from his face.

Little fatty wielded his gigantic axe in one hand and a flying sword in the other, looking nervous.

Leng Rou's sword hovered in front of her. Even though she looked cold as usual, her palms were covered in sweat.

Of the four people present, Su Zimo was the only composed one as he surveyed his surroundings.

"We're cultivators of Ethereal Peak! Who are you guys?" Guan Jin took a deep breath before questioning sternly.

"Fufu."

The grey robed leader chuckled softly. His eyes were filled with mockery as he raised his brows.

"Ethereal Peak? Big f*ck! Yesterday, I just slaughtered an Ethereal Peak disciple who doesn't know what's good for him!"

Indeed, the messenger disciple had already perished.

Back when Lu Yangrong died in the mine, Su Zimo had already sensed that today's events would not be easy to resolve.

Still bearing a sliver of hope, Guan Jin tried to first show weakness. "Fellow daoist, what you want is the spirit mine before us. Alright, Ethereal Peak will give up on it then. There's no need for you guys to kill us."

"Furthermore, isn't it just an inferior-grade spirit mine? It's useless for us anyways, fufu," Guan Jin forced a laugh.

"Inferior-grade spirit mine?"

The grey robed cultivator scoffed coldly, "Let me correct you. This is a middle-grade spirit mine!"

"Ah?"

Instantly, Guan Jin's expression changed – he finally understood why there were so many Foundation Establishment Cultivators.

If it was a middle-grade spirit mine, it would definitely be attractive to Foundation Establishment Cultivators!

If they knew beforehand that this was a middle-grade spirit mine, Ethereal Peak would have sent out the strongest of inner sect disciples or even have legacy disciples lead the team!

Su Zimo remained silent and watched coldly.

Carefully, he noticed that the thirty odd Foundation Establishment Cultivators before him were all dressed differently and did not have any identification badges – they were clearly all itinerant cultivators.

What was it that gathered all these itinerant cultivators here to snatch this spirit mine?

This grey robed cultivator before them was not enough of a reason for this.

Even though a late-stage Foundation Establishment Cultivator is strong, he's not compelling enough a reason for others to join him at the risk of offending Ethereal Peak.

Guan Jin forced himself to be calm and said grimly, "Fellow daoists, to be honest, we've already relayed a message back to the sect. Before long, reinforcements will come..."

"Fufu, by then, you'll all be dead."

Before Guan Jin could complete his sentence, the grey robed cultivator interrupted him.

Scoffing coldly, he continued, "Besides, we would have left long ago by the time your reinforcements arrive."

"Hahaha!"

The surrounding Foundation Establishment Cultivators roared with laughter.

Watching Guan Jin's expression carefully, a strange glint appeared in the grey robed cultivator's eyes as he smiled. "Fellow daoist, haven't you noticed anything wrong in your body?"

Chapter 144: We Can Only Kill Them All!

When he heard that, Guan Jin's expression changed starkly as his body began to shudder.

Su Zimo glanced sideways and saw that Guan Jin's face was drying at a visible speed. Wrinkles started appearing as if all his blood would be forcibly drawn away by an invisible force at the next moment!

"Ah!"

Guan Jin roared and tried his best to release spirit energy, but to no avail.

He turned and looked towards Su Zimo and the others as panic filled his eyes; his pupils had turned grey and dull.

It was an identical situation to those mortals who had died in Linfeng City!

"Ke, ke..."

Stretching his arm, Guan Jin seemed as though he wanted to say something but a strange sound came from the depths of his throat.

Little fatty was so scared that he jumped back instinctively.

No one had attacked Guan Jin but in the blink of an eye, he had become like this – it didn't seem like he was going to survive.

It was way too creepy!

Chills ran down little fatty's spine as he panted heavily to calm himself down.

Su Zimo furrowed his brows slightly.

He looked carefully and noticed that there were faint green spots on the skin of Guan Jin's palm that exuded an evil aura.

Back in Linfeng City, that hand of Guan Jin had come into contact with the dead night watchmen.

If that was all it took for a Foundation Establishment Cultivator to die, it was quite a terrifying method!

They might be the next ones if they were careless!

The surrounding Foundation Establishment Cultivators looked at everything unfold calmly, as though this was an expected outcome.

Even though Leng Rou was always cold, she could not help but feel bad looking at Guan Jin's helpless gaze. Retrieving a couple of elixirs from her storage bag, she wanted to feed them to Guan Jin.

She did not know what had happened to Guan Jin.

However, they were fellow disciples after all and she couldn't just leave him in the lurch.

Just as Leng Rou was about to step forward, someone grabbed her arm and yanked her back.

"Don't go!"

Su Zimo's voice rang in her ears.

With a thud, Guan Jin fell to the ground, no longer breathing.

Leng Rou froze on the spot.

A ghastly green ball of light floated out of Guan Jin's body and flew into the depths of the spirit mine.

A cold glint flashed across Su Zimo's eyes as he lamented internally, 'There should be someone else in the depths of the spirit mine. That person is the true murderer behind Linfeng City's tragedy!'

"Hehehe!"

The grey robed cultivator said with a strange smile, "Oh, you have quite the tender heart for women. Beauty, if this punk hadn't pulled you back, you would have been dead by now."

Leng Rou's heart jolted.

Even though her cultivation was higher than Su Zimo, she had not been through any life and death situations. As such, she could not but lose her cool looking at the tragic death of her two senior brothers.

Upon realizing this, Leng Rou looked at Su Zimo gratefully.

Stroking his chin, the grey robed cultivator said with a perverted look, "But, that's good too. It'd be such a pity for a beauty like you to die here. Hey, I happen to be in need of a maidservant to warm my bed. You look pretty suitable for it."

"Hahaha!"

The surrounding Foundation Establishment Cultivators burst out in laughter.

Swish!

Right then, a gust of wind came from the entrance of the spirit mine as another batch of blood-eyed crows swarmed out like flying locusts. In the blink of an eye, they covered half the skies above everyone's heads.

Little fatty felt his scalp tingle as he gulped and asked softly, "Bro, what should we do?"

Leng Rou looked towards Su Zimo.

At this moment, the both of them had already subconsciously took Su Zimo as their pillar of support. They had even forgotten that their cultivations were higher than his.

"There's no other way."

Su Zimo shook his head and remarked indifferently, "We can only kill them all."

Leng Rou and little fatty's eyes dimmed.

Leng Rou sighed in her heart, 'They are all Foundation Establishment Cultivators. Apart from the nine mid-stages, there's even a late-stage Foundation Establishment Cultivator. Su Zimo is only a Qi Refinement Warrior. What can he do?'

Be it Leng Rou or little fatty, both thought that Su Zimo had only said that casually because he knew he was about to die.

Biting her lips gently, Leng Rou said in a low voice, "In a while, I'll use my talismans to try and block as many people as possible. Find a chance to get out by riding on little crane!"

Little crane looked up at the blood-eyed crows that filled the skies. Chirping, it flapped its wings, ready to strike at any moment.

Even though the blood-eyed crows weren't strong, they had the advantage in numbers. If they were to swarm little crane, it wouldn't be able to unleash its full strength.

On the ground, the spirit tiger was of no help at all.

Right then, Su Zimo suddenly drew his Sanguine Crystal Bow from the storage bag and loaded arrows. His entire action was fluid like water, as though he had rehearsed for it countless times.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Three arrows were shot towards the crowd and appeared before them in the blink of an eye.

Initially, the thirty odd Foundation Establishment Cultivators wanted to make fun of them. Most of their attention was on the two Foundation Establishment Cultivators in the group, Leng Rou and little fatty – none of them expected that the Qi Refinement Warrior was the first to strike!

It was completely unintentional.

Three precise arrows tore through the throats of three early-stage Foundation Establishment Cultivators, causing blood to spurt out!

The three of them were confused. Even in their final moments, they could not believe that they had just died under the bow of a Qi Refinement Warrior.

“It’s him!”

Someone from the crowd exclaimed.

Back in the spirit mine, Su Zimo killed two people using his bow and arrows. As such, the Foundation Establishment Cultivators recognized him instantly.

Swash! Swash! Swash!

Thirty odd Foundation Establishment Cultivators summoned their flying swords at the same time, shining sinisterly with their spirit lights.

Su Zimo shouted softly, “Don’t just stand there, strike!”

Leng Rou and little fatty summoned their flying swords and talismans hurriedly, firing them towards the crowd. The light of the talismans burst forth as all sorts of spirit arts collided in reverberating booms!

“Caw, caw!”

Little crane chirped and soared to the skies, charging to fight at the blood-eyed crows.

Little fatty howled as he charged at an early-stage Foundation Establishment Cultivator with his gigantic axe – he wanted to make use of his melee combat strength and kill the latter on the spot.

However, he was faced with too many opponents as flying swords blocked his path continuously. With no way to advance, little fatty found himself encircled in the blink of an eye and was forced to defend.

The grey robed cultivator did not move, merely watching coldly from the sidelines with hands behind his back.

This battle was in the bag for sure – there was no need for him to make a move.

On the other side, Su Zimo had already kept his Sanguine Crystal Bow.

Even though arrows were sharp, it was difficult to continuously hit targets when the Foundation Establishment Cultivators were ready for it.

Six flying swords hovered in front of his chest and sped through the voids, leaving sword scars in the air.

“Buzz!”

A gigantic hexagonal formation pattern shone with a bedazzling, bright light!

In a swift move, Su Zimo had already set up the Hexagonal Sword Formation!

Making use of the Tripartite Sword Formation was of no use given the current circumstances.

“Sword formation?”

The grey robed cultivator’s expression changed. A look of surprise flashed past his eyes as he murmured, “That Qi Refinement Warrior’s a Sword Formation Master?”

An early-stage Foundation Establishment Cultivator had been targeting Su Zimo from the start. Secretly, he summoned his flying sword and sent it flying to the back of Su Zimo’s head.

Just as the flying sword was about to strike Su Zimo’s head, the latter suddenly dodged from the spot in a swift and agile manner.

“Hmm?”

The person’s expression chased. Right as he was about to change the course of his flying sword to continue chasing after Su Zimo, a gigantic hexagonal star sword formation descended, crashing upon him!

Poof!

A sanguine light flashed.

The person was split into two by the Hexagonal Sword Formation.

Chapter 145: The Power of Lightning Arts

That Foundation Establishment Cultivator had all sorts of tricks up his sleeves. Before he was able to use any of them, he was slashed down by Su Zimo’s sword formation!

Hum! Hum! Hum!

Sending forth waves of sword qi, the Hexagonal Sword Formation rebounded multiple flying swords and broke little fatty out of his predicament.

In just a short while, there was already a wound on little fatty’s body.

“It’s fine, my skin is thick. Bro, don’t worry about me,” Little fatty yelled as he charged forth without even turning back.

Leng Rou had indeed displayed the strength as a disciple of a major sect as well. Even though she did not cultivate any secret skills of the sect, she was able to defend against the encirclement of nine mid-stage Foundation Establishment Cultivators using just her talismans!

But of course, it was clear that the nine of them had not exerted their full strength too. They were merely playing a cat and mouse game, taunting Leng Rou with lewd remarks while attacking.

Unmoved in the slightest bit, Leng Rou was not in any danger for now.

On the other side, a dozen or more Foundation Establishment Cultivators had shifted their attention towards Su Zimo. They surrounded him with all their might as flying swords tore through the voids while spirit arts exploded everywhere.

No matter how strong the Hexagonal Sword Formation was, it was unable to withstand the power of so many Foundation Establishment Cultivators. In the blink of an eye, it was on the verge of collapse.

“Haha!”

One of the Foundation Establishment Cultivators burst out in laughter. “I want to see how long a mere Qi Refinement Warrior like you can last!”

“Roar!”

Before he could stop laughing, a black shadow appeared beside him. It bit on that man’s throat as blood gushed out.

The spirit tiger had been waiting for an opportunity to attack and as such, an early-stage Foundation Establishment Cultivator’s life was ended.

Even though it was only a spirit beast, if it closed in on Foundation Establishment Cultivators, they wouldn’t stand much of a chance.

That was also the reason why Die Yue had once told Su Zimo that demon cultivators are the best at killing opponents through level gaps.

“Beast, how dare you behave so insolently!”

A few of the Foundation Establishment Cultivators cursed angrily. Invoking spirit arts, the spirit qi in the surroundings surged violently towards the spirit tiger.

With the spirit tiger’s current strength, it was unable to defend against the power of spirit arts at all.

Su Zimo narrowed his gaze and dodged a few incoming flying swords. Shifting the Hexagonal Sword Formation, he blocked it in front of the spirit tiger and defended against a few types of spirit arts.

Bam!

There was a deafening sound.

The spirit arts dispersed and Su Zimo’s Hexagonal Sword Formation could no longer hold out as well.

Struggling to form a proper pattern, all six swords fell to the ground and dimmed.

Quick-witted, the spirit tiger seized the opportunity to hide behind Su Zimo instantly and glared fiercely at the dozens of Foundation Establishment Cultivators on the other end.

“Kid, the spirit qi within you should be almost depleted by now, right?” An early-stage Foundation Establishment Cultivator scoffed coldly.

Even though the battle between both parties had been short, Su Zimo had blocked too many flying swords. He had expended a lot of spirit qi and was indeed running short.

“Let’s see how you can continue to be arrogant. Die!”

One of the Foundation Establishment Cultivators conjured hand seals and gestured towards Su Zimo. Instantly, a fireball the size of a fist shot out. Even while it was traveling, the air was already crackling from the heat.

Su Zimo’s eyes lit up as he suddenly reached out and grabbed the fireball.

“You must be courting death!”

When the Foundation Establishment Cultivator saw Su Zimo receiving the spirit art with his bare hands, he could not help but scoff internally.

Channeling his blood, a flash of dense lightning appeared in Su Zimo’s palm.

“Hmm?”

“What is that?”

“Power of thunder!”

Many of the Foundation Establishment Cultivators cried out in alarm as their pupils constricted.

Piak!

The fireball was crushed by Su Zimo’s palm as the spirit qi within it dissipated into emptiness.

Upon seeing that, the cultivators’ expressions changed drastically.

Even the grey robed cultivator frowned in disbelief as he muttered confusedly, “Thunder art? Is he not actually a Qi Refinement Warrior, but a Foundation Establishment Cultivator?”

Activating the Spirit Peering Art, he scanned Su Zimo once more. “No, it shows him to be at Level 9 Qi Condensation. Could he have cultivated some sort of technique to conceal his cultivation realm?”

“No, that’s not right either!”

The grey robed cultivator shook his head. “How is there no fluctuation in spirit qi when he released that thunder art?”

He would have never imagined that the source of power for Su Zimo’s thunder art came from the latter’s blood!

Even though Su Zimo’s spirit qi was indeed almost withered, the power of lightning in his blood was still present.

“Caw, caw!”

At the moment, little crane who was up in the skies was met with danger. Its body was already severely wounded by the blood-eyed crows as it shrieked anxiously.

Even though senior crane did not mention it explicitly, Su Zimo knew that the reason why little crane could join him was due to senior crane’s trust in him.

Now that little crane was in danger, Su Zimo unleashed his Power of Blood without second thoughts. Instantly, his body echoed out with reverberating sounds of waves gushing!

Under everyone's watchful gazes, Su Zimo's figure suddenly expanded. His body swelled and burst through his green clothes, filled with crackling electricity from head to toe.

It was as though Su Zimo was possessed by a god of thunder as murderous intent condensed in his eyes terrifyingly!

"What!"

Suddenly, the grey robed cultivator's expression changed – he finally realized that something was amiss.

Pointing a finger into the skies, Su Zimo's eyes exuded a wrathful killing intent as he hollered, "Instant Thunder!"

Snap!

A stark thunderbolt boomed out.

An extremely intense bolt of thunder struck the group of blood-eyed crow, extending like a python exuding a bedazzling shine. The blood-eyed crows were instantly electrocuted to death and fell from the skies like a shower of black rain.

Many of the Foundation Establishment Cultivators present were shocked by that deafening sound of thunder. Even the nine Foundation Establishment Cultivators that were surrounding Leng Rou stopped instinctively.

That gave Leng Rou an opportunity to take a breather. Covered in sweat, her spirit qi was almost depleted as well.

Little fatty seized the chance to kill an early-stage Foundation Establishment Cultivator before him. Swinging his gigantic axe, he cleaved the man into two as blood splattered all over him!

The power of thunder arts was so great that it nearly wiped out all the blood-eyed crows in the skies!

Little crane's spirit was invigorated instantly – the remaining blood-eyed crows were of no threat to it.

At the moment, Su Zimo whisked out a saber from his storage bag that shimmered with a cold glint. His eyes flashed icily as he strode forth, smiling to the Foundation Establishment Cultivators. "The fight... has only just begun!"

That single step of his closed a gap of twenty feet and he appeared before the many Foundation Establishment Cultivators in the blink of an eye.

Poof! Poof!

Su Zimo slashed out in reverse. The two of them only felt a blur before their eyes. Before they could even react, both heads were lopped into the skies with blood spraying everywhere.

"Ah!"

The remaining Foundation Establishment Cultivators were frightened to death as they exclaimed and stumbled back instinctively.

“Do you think you can run?”

Su Zimo chased after them with his saber like a tiger making its way through a flock of sheep. Cleaving left and right, flashes of blood shone out continuously.

Both Leng Rou and little fatty were dumbfounded.

Against Su Zimo, early-stage Foundation Establishment Cultivators were like fish on a chopping board – they could not retaliate at all!

It didn't matter whether they summoned flying swords, talismans or even conjured spirit arts – they were all killed by a single flash of Su Zimo!

At lesser mastery of the Marrow Cleansing section, Su Zimo's power was enough to slay early-stage Foundation Establishment Cultivators... and that was even before he infused the Thunder Marrow Cleansing Sutra into his marrow within Thunderclap Valley.

This was a complete crushing through sheer brute strength without requiring any technique.

Even the spirit arts of early-stage Foundation Establishment Cultivators was not enough to deal with Su Zimo after unleashing his Power of Blood!

Chapter 146: Predicament

At the sight of Su Zimo's unstoppable onslaught, the grey robed cultivator could no longer sit and wait. With a holler, he burst forth with the might of a late-stage Foundation Establishment Cultivator and summoned a middle-grade flying sword, shooting it towards Su Zimo's back!

The two spirit patterns on the sword shone with a mysterious glow, emitting a ghastly aura.

It was an extremely swift attack. If it were Leng Rou or little fatty, they wouldn't have been able to escape unscathed.

On the other hand, Su Zimo did not even have to turn back despite having just cleaved someone else apart. Standing on the spot, he made a small sidestep and dodged that fatal attack – it was as though he had eyes at the back of his head!

The expression of the grey robed cultivator was unchanged when he saw that, unsurprised in the slightest bit.

He could already tell that Su Zimo was a body tempered cultivator and was very agile. It was not realistic for him to capture this person within a few moves.

“Everyone, back down. Try to keep your distance as much as possible.”

The grey robed cultivator yelled as he manipulated his flying sword to chase after Su Zimo, “If not, ride on your flying swords in the air! Just try your best to not let this person get close to you!”

Suddenly, Su Zimo laughed. Striding forward, he exerted strength in his legs and burst forth with Divine Steed Fleeting, leaving a series of afterimages behind him.

“Mystify!”

Suddenly, Su Zimo reached out and a ball of lightning appeared in his palms, erupting before everyone’s eyes in a blinding manner as thunder rumbled and deafened everyone.

Instant Thunder and Mystify were thunder arts of the Void Thunder Manual.

Instant Thunder was a killing technique. It was powerful and had a large area of effect.

As for Mystify, it was a supplementary spirit art that had almost no lethality.

By making use of the Power of Thunder’s explosiveness, its aim was to confuse the five senses of the opponents and to mainly block their vision and hearing.

The many Foundation Establishment Cultivators felt their visions blur as their ears rang incessantly with echoes.

The next moment, Su Zimo was already before them.

In terms of melee combat, no one was a match for Su Zimo as blood splattered endlessly. In the blink of an eye, countless of the Foundation Establishment Cultivators on the other end were dead on the spot!

By now, all the early-stage Foundation Establishment Cultivators were dead!

Right then, Leng Rou who was in midair shrieked as the protection talisman around her exploded.

Immediately after, she was slammed heavily on the abdomen by a palm of spirit energy. Sent flying, she spat out a mouthful of blood and looked even paler.

Little fatty’s shoulder was also pierced by a flying sword as he fell to the ground and broke out in cold sweat.

The grey robed cultivator was the one who had struck personally. Even though he did not take their lives, it was clear that Leng Rou and little fatty were no longer able to fight anymore.

He was intelligent and quick to notice that the strength of early-stage Foundation Establishment Cultivators was no longer able to deal with Su Zimo. As such, he chose to get rid of little fatty and Leng Rou first.

With that, the grey robed cultivator could then reset the situation and group up with the nine mid-stage Foundation Establishment Cultivators to fight Su Zimo together!

Standing in front of little fatty and Leng Rou, Su Zimo held his saber before his chest and his eyes shone with a sharp killing intent. He was not fearful in the slightest bit against the ten Foundation Establishment Cultivators on the other end!

As she looked at Su Zimo’s back view, Leng Rou was filled with mixed emotions.

This mission was undertaken by her, little fatty, Lu Yangrong and Guan Jin – Su Zimo did not have the rights to join.

But, if Su Zimo wasn't here, she would have already been dead along with little fatty.

The same emotions were going through little fatty's mind.

His initial plan was to invite Su Zimo out to relax his mind, but he did not expect that they would have encountered such an incident. Both senior brothers had died tragically and now, he and Leng Rou were severely injured and could not offer any help.

"Everyone, make use of your various flying sword and talisman methods to take down this person! Find an opening to invoke your spirit arts and injure him severely!"

The grey robed cultivator was extremely decisive as he swiftly delegated the remaining nine mid-stage Foundation Establishment Cultivators in various directions to separate out.

Swash! Swash! Swash!

Flying swords tore through the air alongside many talismans.

Narrowing his gaze, Su Zimo gripped the Cold Moon Saber tightly and with a long howl, he swung his arms and blocked left and right.

For the flying swords, talismans and even spirit arts used by mid-stage Foundation Establishment Cultivators, Su Zimo could deal with them head-on using his Power of Blood without losing out.

However, the grey robed cultivator was at late-stage Foundation Establishment.

Su Zimo's Marrow Cleansing section was only at a lesser mastery. Even with the Thunder Marrow Cleansing Sutra, he was no match against that guy.

If it was just a one on one fight, he could make use of various techniques to close the distance between them so that he could take the grey robed cultivator down with his saber.

But now, the grey robed cultivator had nine other helpers and together, the ten of them restrained Su Zimo on the spot.

It was not that Su Zimo was unable to break through the encirclement.

However, if he did, Leng Rou and little fatty behind him would be killed on the spot.

Against Foundation Establishment Cultivators, the spirit tiger was no longer of much help.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

The sounds of the Cold Moon Saber and flying swords clashing echoed out repeatedly as sparks flew.

If one had not seen it personally, it would be hard to imagine that the ten Foundation Establishment Cultivators were actually surrounding to fight a single Level 9 Qi Refinement Warrior!

"Everyone, hold steady. That punk must have cultivated some sort of secret body tempering technique to turn his body so powerful. Once we kill him, that secret technique will be ours!"

The grey robed cultivator rallied once more.

Invigorated, the remaining nine mid-stage Foundation Establishment Cultivators were even more motivated in their attacks.

Leng Rou and little fatty sat on the spot and could only see and hear the endless flashes of swords clashing and sparks flying. However, they had not sustained any more injuries.

Su Zimo had blocked everything for them!

During this period, Su Zimo had no choice but to fight head-on with the grey robed cultivator. He suffered slightly and his teeth were sore while his blood was shaken.

Little fatty could tell that Su Zimo was in a predicament. He could not help but yell, “Bro, don’t bother about us! Leave first!”

Leng Rou pursed her red lips without saying anything at all.

She could naturally tell that if not for her and little fatty, even the ten Foundation Establishment Cultivators on the other end may not be a match for Su Zimo!

“Hahaha!”

The grey robed cultivator could not help but laugh when he saw that the outcome was almost decided. “Punk, let’s see how long more you can last!”

The situation was clear – Su Zimo could only react. If he was careless, not only would he fail to protect Leng Rou and little fatty, he would get injured as well.

As time passed, Su Zimo’s physical strength gradually declined and it was only a matter of time before he lost.

In reality, Su Zimo was extremely calm at the moment – he was constantly watching the fight between little crane and the blood-eyed crows up above.

Thanks to the power of Instant Thunder, there were not many blood-eyed crows left.

The remaining few were also being hunted down by little crane, barely able to pose any threat.

Su Zimo needed little crane’s help.

Given the current circumstances, only little crane’s strength was of help.

Right as the grey robed cultivator laughed, little crane finished off the last few blood-eyed crows and looked down, meeting with Su Zimo’s clear eyes.

Su Zimo nodded and little crane understood.

When he channeled his blood earlier on, the green robe on Su Zimo’s body was already torn apart, revealing a thin golden silk armor.

Suddenly, Su Zimo took off the golden silk armor and tossed it on the ground.

Chapter 147: Into the Spirit Mine Once More

Everyone had seen the golden silk armor on Su Zimo’s body but none of them thought much about it.

Without any spirit patterns, it was merely a pseudo spirit weapon.

Now, the grey robed cultivator found himself stunned momentarily when Su Zimo tossed the golden silk armor on the ground – he could not understand why Su Zimo would do that.

But, at the next moment, the grey robed cultivator's pupils constricted in horror.

After removing the golden silk armor, Su Zimo was like a completely different person! With a front dash, he slashed with the Cold Moon Saber and blocked all the incoming flying swords before charging towards the grey robed cultivator.

It was too fast!

In fact, he was at least twice as fast as before!

A black shadow flashed past like a ghost. Almost in the blink of an eye, Su Zimo had arrived before the grey robed cultivator. With a torrential killing intent, he slapped the head of the latter.

Piak!

The grey robed cultivator's head ruptured as he fell back – even till his death, he did not understand what happened.

That golden silk armor was none other than the damaged connate Mystic Gold Silk Armor.

Wearing it was akin to carrying a burden of 5 tons. Hence, Su Zimo had not displayed his true strength the entire time.

Now that he removed the burden on his body, Su Zimo was much more relaxed as he burst forth with a massive speed boost, killing the grey robed cultivator who was caught off guard!

Right as the other nine mid-stage Foundation Establishment Cultivators were about to attack, little crane had already seized the opportunity to descend and swoop little fatty, Leng Rou and the spirit tiger into the air with it.

The coordination between the man and crane was seamless.

In the blink of an eye, the only people alive on the ground were Su Zimo and the nine mid-stage Foundation Establishment Cultivators.

Blood drained from their faces as they watched Su Zimo advance towards them step by step, fear filling their eyes.

Before this, none of them would have thought that more than thirty Foundation Establishment Cultivators would be killed mostly by a Level 9 Qi Refinement Warrior!

Swash!

Su Zimo disappeared on the spot, leaving only a flurry of afterimages.

Saber flashes were accompanied by a scarlet light.

In the blink of an eye, three more people died.

Two of them mounted their swords and wanted to flee. Squatting slightly, Su Zimo left two deep pits on the ground with a single boom!

Leaping entirely into the air, his figure remained in midair as he slashed down the two Foundation Establishment Cultivators!

There were now four remaining.

Repelling two incoming flying swords, Su Zimo charged forward and banged against someone's chest, exerting all his might.

That person's eyeballs popped out with blood spraying and his chest caved in. The sound of bones cracking could be heard and he died before falling to the ground.

By then, Su Zimo had already left and had caught up with another person, letting out a saber flash.

Two more remaining!

Realizing that they could not escape Su Zimo's pursuit, the both of them dashed towards the spirit mine's entrance.

Su Zimo was hot on their tails.

They were just about to reach the entrance when the ground trembled under Su Zimo's lunge.

The slower person was rattled. His legs gave way as he staggered and fell to the ground.

The other person ahead had already disappeared into the spirit mine.

"N-N-No! It's none o-of my business! N-None of this is m-my idea! It was h-him...!" The Foundation Establishment Cultivator on the ground stammered and tried to explain things incoherently, his face devoid of color.

"Who is he?"

Su Zimo interrogated with a cold gaze.

"I don't know."

The person shook his head but looked towards the entrance of the spirit mine instinctively – there was a flash of fear in his eyes.

Pondering for a short moment, Su Zimo continued asking, "The person in the mine is the one who killed those people in Linfeng City, right?"

"Y-Yes," The Foundation Establishment Cultivator nodded furiously.

"What's his cultivation realm?"

"I..."

Right as the Foundation Establishment Cultivator was about to reply, green spots appeared on his face as he smiled at Su Zimo sinisterly.

When he saw that smile, Su Zimo's hair stood on end.

Without hesitation, he retreated immediately!

Bang!

It was a dull explosion.

The person who was alive just a few moments earlier exploded right in front of Su Zimo's eyes. Blood and flesh splattered everywhere as a ghastly green ball floated into the spirit mine.

At the moment, little crane descended with Leng Rou and little fatty upon seeing that the fight was over.

"Junior Brother Su, are you alright?"

"Bro, are you alright?"

Both of them asked at almost the same time.

A hint of panic flashed in Leng Rou's eyes but she returned to normalcy almost immediately.

"I am fine."

Su Zimo nodded and replied, frowning in deep thoughts.

After a moment, he fondled little crane's head and said, "Stupid bird, send everyone back to the sect first. This place is not suitable for you guys to linger on. If you can meet with reinforcements from the sect on the way back, that would be for the best."

"Caw, caw!"

Little crane called for Su Zimo to hurry up so that they could leave together.

"You guys leave first. I'll go back later," Su Zimo shook his head and rejected.

"Bro, you're not thinking of entering the spirit mine again, are you?" Little fatty asked with eyes widened in disbelief.

Su Zimo was silent.

Both Leng Rou and little fatty exchanged solemn glances.

"Junior Brother Su, let's head back together."

Leng Rou said, "The person within the spirit mine might have a powerful background and we don't know his strength. Moreover, his techniques are so sinister. There's no need for us to take this risk. Just let him have this spirit mine."

"That's right!"

Little fatty added, "Furthermore, we've already sent a message back to the sect and seniors will arrive soon. This spirit mine can still be ours. Bro, there's no need for you to take the risk personally."

"I have to go in and take a look."

Su Zimo's gaze was firm as he said darkly, "This is a middle-grade spirit mine, so that person shouldn't be a Golden Core. If he's a Foundation Establishment Cultivator, I will be able to escape safely even if I can't fight him. That person can't restrain me."

There were some things that Su Zimo did not tell little fatty and Leng Rou.

When he saw the tragedy of Linfeng City, Su Zimo's first thought was of Yan Country's capital and his big brother, Su Hong.

Mortals were absolutely helpless in the face of such power and could only be slaughtered.

This person's descent upon Linfeng City a day ago had caused the entire city to perish. If he were to head to the capital of Yan Country one day, his big brother and the others would definitely meet with the same ill fate!

This was his last chance. If he were to wait for the sect seniors to arrive, this person may have already left by then.

Su Zimo was worried that if he were to let this person off, he would regret it one day.

Besides, this person was accountable for the loss of hundreds of thousands of lives in Linfeng City!

"Bro, I..."

Little fatty was about to continue when Su Zimo interrupted him, "You guys are injured. You don't have to follow me in."

Leng Rou said, "We'll wait for you outside then."

Two hours."

After thinking for a while, Su Zimo replied, "If I'm not out within two hours, leave this place immediately."

After pausing momentarily, Su Zimo said to little crane as well, "Stupid bird, bring everyone with you further away. If you see any stranger approaching the mine, leave immediately! Do not turn back!"

Little crane nodded hurriedly, flapping its wings with a worried expression.

Picking up his flying swords from the ground, Su Zimo kept the Mystic Gold Silk Armor in his storage bag and pretended to smile casually. "There's so many storage bags around, hurry and collect them all. We'll split the loot secretly back in the sect!"

Su Zimo said as he entered the entrance, disappearing into the deep and dark spirit mine...

Chapter 148: Handsome Man

Su Zimo held his saber and walked through the dark mine, not daring to go too fast.

After a long time, he stopped in his tracks and his vision cleared up.

The next moment, Su Zimo was met with a shocking scene.

There were more than ten thousand strong men kneeling on the ground, forming circles after circles. In the middle of these men was a pile of spirit stones the size of a small mountain, emanating a rich scent of spirit qi.

Those strong men were dressed in plain clothes and looked terrified – they were probably mortals who came to mine the spirit stones.

On top of the pile sat an extremely handsome young man. His black hair swayed lightly by itself as he spread his arms slightly open with his eyes closed.

Green streams of air floated out of the heads of the tens of thousands of men, entering the handsome man's body continuously.

The men's cheeks were withering at a discernible pace and their eyes dimmed as though their blood and essence had been drained instantly!

The Foundation Establishment Cultivator who had escaped first into the spirit mine laid collapsed at the feet of the handsome man, having turned into a dried corpse.

This man was the true murderer behind Linfeng City's tragedy!

Su Zimo scanned the person using his Spirit Peering Art.

Perfected Foundation Establishment!

Su Zimo was secretly shocked.

His current strength was not enough to even deal with a late-stage Foundation Establishment Cultivator, let alone a perfected.

If he wanted to kill this man, he could not do it head-on – he could only rely on various techniques to close the gap!

Even though the power of a perfected Foundation Establishment Cultivator was extremely strong, his body was definitely no match against Su Zimo's.

That was Su Zimo's only chance!

Suddenly, the handsome man opened his narrow eyes – they were a sinister shade of green!

"Oh, it's a Qi Refinement Warrior?"

The handsome man's voice carried a hint of surprise. Taking a deep breath of air, he let out an intoxicated expression. "Not bad, not bad. Your body's essence is richer than the tens of thousands of people in Linfeng City added together!"

"Demon, hand over your life!"

Su Zimo scoffed coldly and leaped up, a crackling flash of lightning shining from his palm. "Thunder Spear!"

A spear formed from lightning appeared out of nowhere and shot towards the handsome man.

“Hmm?”

The handsome man exclaimed softly, “Thunder art? A mere Qi Refinement Warrior is able to utilize spirit arts?”

“Oh!”

As it approached, a flash of realization appeared in the handsome man’s face as he smiled. “I got it. The source of power for this thunder art doesn’t come from your dantian. It’s from your blood!”

It merely took him a single look to be able to speak of the secret within Su Zimo’s blood.

Against the incoming thunder spear, the handsome man smiled gently and flicked his finger, sending a green stream of light.

The two attacks collided as the two different powers corroded one another, producing an ear-piercing sound.

Thunder spear was the strongest killing move within the Void Thunder Manual.

But now, it was countered by a single flick of the handsome man!

Su Zimo’s expression was unchanged. By now, he was already at the bottom of the spirit stones pile. With a single leap, he sprinted up.

Swoosh!

The handsome man conjured seals with a single hand. His eyes glowed with green light as he pressed down.

A gigantic and ghastly green palm descended from the sky, almost blocking Su Zimo’s vision entirely.

Not daring to fight him head-on, Su Zimo quickly retreated.

Suddenly, the palm shattered in midair, forming streams of green light that chased after Su Zimo like snakes filled with life.

In terms of spirit arts, this handsome man was many times more brilliant than the thirty odd Foundation Establishment Cultivators.

Su Zimo did not dare to clash head-on and merely continued to dodge. He ran circles around the pile of spirit stones as the snakes chased endlessly.

By now, Su Zimo was already using all his strength but he could not shake off the green snakes chasing after him.

All of a sudden!

He turned around and welcomed the incoming green snakes with a slash.

Poof! Poof! Poof!

The saber split three green snakes into two right away. However, the remaining snakes swarmed forward and coiled around his Cold Moon Saber.

That initially sharp blade turned blunt right away.

Letting go of his saber in a sudden motion, Su Zimo strode forward with the Plow Heaven Stride. Exploding with a monstrous force, he ascended the spirit stones pile in three steps and arrived before the handsome man.

Even without the Cold Moon Saber, Su Zimo's melee combat strength was equally terrifying!

There were way too many killing techniques within The Mystic Classic of the Twelve Demon Kings of the Great Wilderness. Any single one of them was more than enough to kill the handsome man before him!

Bam!

Su Zimo slammed down with his palm as if he wanted to tear the world apart.

Suddenly, a bone staff appeared in the handsome man's palm. Crystalline, it was made from white bones with a skull on top that exuded a nefarious aura.

Chanting some weird sounds, the handsome man suddenly poked his bone staff against Su Zimo's palm.

Bang!

The power of the Ground-rupturing Palm shot off as the handsome man's body trembled. His palm cracked and the bone staff nearly slipped out of his hand.

All of a sudden, the skull on the top of the staff opened its mouth. As though it was alive ghastly light shone out of its sockets and it bit Su Zimo's wrist!

"Hmm?"

Su Zimo's expression changed.

The pain from his wrist was still bearable. However, Su Zimo could clearly feel his blood being drawn by an external force!

If this carried on, it wouldn't be long before he ran out of blood and died like the people around him!

Bang! Boom! Boom!

Su Zimo gave a loud roar and channeled his blood with all his might, sending a reverberating sound of waves gushing from within his body.

The Power of Blood churned furiously and burst, almost shattering the bone staff.

The handsome man narrowed his gaze and channeled his spirit energy furiously as well, causing the bone staff to emit a ghastly light.

The skull on top of the staff was still biting Su Zimo's wrist tightly, gulping blood by the mouthful.

That initially white skull was gradually turning red.

Excitement danced in the handsome man's eyes as he laughed loudly. "What a pure power your blood contains. I really want to know how a Qi Refinement Warrior such as yourself managed to cultivate such a strong bloodline."

The two of them fought in melee range. Even though it sounded slowly, everything happened in an instant.

Having lost the initiative, Su Zimo did not think further and grabbed the handsome man's head with his right hand!

Even though there was no longer demonic qi in his blood, Su Zimo's palm was no different from the claws of a spirit demon. That single palm strike was more than enough to crush rocks into dust.

The handsome man was in complete control of the situation. Without panicking at all, he conjured hand seals and hollered softly, "Blood Curse!"

In front of the handsome man's chest, a ghastly green ball of light appeared. It revolved and expanded, separating the distance between Su Zimo and the handsome man.

Su Zimo's right hand fell into the light ball. It was as if he was trapped in a quagmire and it was difficult to advance!

He was completely restricted!

Finally, Su Zimo's expression changed.

At that moment, Su Zimo could clearly sense weakness coming from within his body.

If this continued, his blood essence would be devoured within 10 minutes!

Chapter 149: Blood Bone Palm

"If your bloodline was stronger, I wouldn't be able to hold you down today. What a pity."

The handsome man smiled sinisterly.

Su Zimo had also realized this.

If he was at greater mastery of the Marrow Cleansing section, he would be able to kill a late-stage Foundation Establishment Cultivator with ease. Coupled with the Thunder Marrow Cleansing Sutra, he could definitely match a perfected Foundation Establishment Cultivator.

The handsome man's bone staff might not even be able to bite through his flesh.

At the moment, a sense of helplessness rose in Su Zimo's heart.

With the bone staff biting his left wrist tightly, almost half of Su Zimo's body had gone numb and weak by now.

On the other end, his right hand was covered by the ghastly green ball of light, rendering him incapable of moving.

He could see the handsome man's face right behind the ball of light, but he did not have the strength to pierce it.

Moreover, Su Zimo's right hand had started to corrode because of this strange power. His flesh was rotting with his skin peeled in a horrifying manner!

Behind the light ball, the handsome man smiled smugly.

Suddenly, the handsome man's smile froze as his eyes focused on something strange.

Su Zimo's gaze also landed on the light ball between them.

In that ghastly green light ball, the flesh on Su Zimo's right hand was gone entirely, revealing a crimson bone palm. His bones were crystal clear and its surface burned with a fine flame – it looked like the most beautiful treasure in this world.

The bone palm's fingertip was as sharp as a knife – it did not look like the palm of a human!

An extremely terrifying aura emanated as the ghastly green light ball shattered!

In the face of that aura, the handsome man felt as small as an ant. For a moment, his heart even stopped beating!

“W-What is this?”

The handsome man's pupils constricted.

At the same time, Su Zimo felt a new surge of energy gush into his body from his right hand. His blood felt as though it was burning and spewing flames.

“Kill!”

Su Zimo bellowed and reached for the handsome man's head with that blood colored bone palm.

The handsome man's expression changed drastically as he hurriedly moved the white bone staff in front of him to block the blood bone palm.

Piak!

Su Zimo merely grabbed gently.

The handsome man's staff was broken right away.

Poof!

The next moment, Su Zimo's palm had descended and the handsome man's head was crushed!

A perfected Foundation Establishment Cultivator had fallen!

Su Zimo stood where he was and looked at his right hand in disbelief.

The handsome man's bone staff was definitely as hard as a middle-grade spirit weapon. But, his right hand had managed to snap it with ease!

Just what was that right hand of his?

Su Zimo could clearly feel that the blood bone palm was not his original palm!

It gave off a horrifying aura that seemed as though it could destroy everything in the world.

Suddenly, something came to Su Zimo's mind.

Back in Cang Lang Mountain Range, he had fought against many cultivators of Joyful Sect and his right hand was almost crippled at that time.

After that, when Su Zimo woke up, his entire body was intact and there were no wounds.

Die Yue must have attached this blood bone palm back then.

But, what was the origin of this blood bone palm?

Why did it give him such a sense of trepidation?

At this moment, he finally found a clue to many of his previous doubts.

The reason why he was able to cultivate a Level 3 Spirit Fire right away must have something to do with this blood bone palm.

That was the reason why Su Zimo's right hand did not change when he turned into a demon previously – it was because his strength was not enough to trigger the blood bone palm.

Even if he did not know the secret behind the blood bone palm, Su Zimo knew that many of his body's abnormalities were related to it.

This was definitely one of the three gifts that Die Yue had left him!

Looking around, Su Zimo did not find anyone else and he heaved a sigh of relief.

The blood bone palm was clearly not a human palm. If it was exposed, he would have no way of explaining himself out of this.

Su Zimo put away the handsome man's storage bag and rummaged through it. He found a Grade 2 Muscle Enhancing Elixir and swallowed it.

Together with Su Zimo's already strong self-healing powers, a thin layer of flesh formed on his right palm before long. Even though he wasn't fully recovered, it was enough to hide away the blood bone palm.

Still worried, Su Zimo removed a piece of cloth and wrapped his right hand in it.

He pondered for a moment and with a wave of his hand, all the middle-grade spirit stones were put into his storage bag.

He had come here for the sake of spirit stones so he naturally wouldn't give any chances.

Looking at the tens of thousands of mortals around him who had died in the kneeling position, Su Zimo sighed. A look of pity filled his eyes together with a rush of emotions.

If he hadn't met Die Yue, he would have been no different from those mortals who could only be slaughtered by cultivators.

Why?

Why did those mortals not have spirit roots?

Senior crane once said that it was a person's fate whether or not they had spirit roots and nothing could change that.

Without a spirit root, one would not be able to cultivate.

The way these people before him met with their ends... was that their fate as well?

Su Zimo felt indignant.

He was indignant for the hundreds of thousands of innocent lives of Linfeng City; indignant for the tens of thousands of simple and plain men in front of him.

If they could cultivate, they might not have died today.

He had Die Yue to defy the heavens and change his fate by planting a spirit root for him. But, what about them? Who could change the fates of all those people?

"Ugh!"

Sighing once more, Su Zimo left the place.

...

Outside, little crane and the others were hiding nearby, watching the spirit mine for any activity tensely.

After almost two hours, a person exited from the mine.

Leng Rou and the rest focused – it was Su Zimo!

Little crane carried Leng Rou, little fatty and the spirit tiger and hurriedly flew over with little fatty cheering in midair.

"How was it, bro? Are you alright!"

Little fatty hopped down first and asked in concern.

Su Zimo nodded.

Leng Rou's gaze landed on Su Zimo's right hand and she asked softly, "Your hand..."

"It's nothing. It's just a small injury," There was naturally no way Su Zimo would tell the truth.

Right then, a stream of light suddenly sped over from afar. It was extremely fast and appeared before them in the blink of an eye.

It was a gigantic spirit vessel!

A picture of a mountain peak was etched onto the side of the spirit vessel.

A group of Golden Cores stood on the deck of the spirit peak. The five people leading the group were none other than the five peak masters of Ethereal Peak!

Leaping from the spirit vessel, the five peak masters surveyed the scene. Looking at the thirty odd corpses of Foundation Establishment Cultivators strewn all over the place, their eyes had a slight hint of shock.

Su Zimo and the rest had not expected that Leng Rou's message would alarm the sect's Golden Cores.

"Greetings, peak masters. Greetings, elders."

Su Zimo and the other two bowed.

Nodding their heads, the five peak masters asked about everything with solemn expressions.

Little fatty related the entire incident from the beginning to the end – how they realized the oddities in Linfeng City all the way to how Su Zimo entered the spirit mine alone.

Towards the end, the disheveled old man glared at Su Zimo with a look of blame.

"Alright, let's return to the sect first."

At that moment, Wen Xuan came out of the spirit mine. Waving his hand, he brought Su Zimo, Leng Rou, little fatty and the two beasts up the spirit vessel.

Chapter 150: Foundation Establishment Meridian Unlocking

Ethereal Main Peak, Ethereal Palace.

The five peak masters brought Su Zimo, Leng Rou and little fatty here to relate everything about Linfeng City and the spirit mine to the sect master thoroughly.

Su Zimo, Leng Rou and little fatty left.

Sect Master Ling Yun closed his eyes in deep thoughts before asking, "What do you guys think?"

Wen Xuan said, "For them to deploy such cruel methods... This should be the act of fiend cultivators. Sect master, we must not be careless."

The other four peak masters nodded in agreement.

"Pass the order down. Before the sect competition, all disciples should head out as little as possible. If they have to head out, they must be accompanied by disciples of peak Foundation Establishment cultivation or higher and the groups must be 20 or larger!"

Ling Yun continued, "Arrange properly for Lu Yangrong and Guan Jin's funerals. Also, Leng Rou and little fatty shall be rewarded with spirit stones and elixirs. As for Su Zimo..."

The disheveled old man said hurriedly, "Sect master, if not for that lad, Leng Rou and little fatty aside, even little crane wouldn't have returned alive! We were there and the aftermath of the battle was intense. More than 30 Foundation Establishment Cultivators died in the hands of that lad!"

"Impart him the Ethereal Foundation Establishment," Ling Yun replied.

When he heard that, the disheveled old man's eyes lit up and he was overjoyed. He quickly bowed repeatedly and said, "That's for the best! I thank the sect master on behalf of that lad, Su Zimo!"

Ethereal Foundation Establishment was one of the three major secret skills of the sect!

In Qi Condensation realm, the standards for cultivation techniques were very low. Any technique could cultivate a sea of qi. As long as one had a good spirit root, they would be able to advance to Foundation Establishment realm.

However, the standards required of techniques will become much higher at Foundation Establishment.

Foundation Establishment was divided into four levels – early, mid, late-stages and perfected.

At perfected Foundation Establishment, there's the method of meridian unlocking.

Meridian unlocking referred unlocking of the eight meridian channels with spirit energy.

Every single unlocked meridian would raise the cultivator's strength!

At perfected Foundation Establishment, the difference in strength between a cultivator with eight unlocked meridians and another with a single unlocked meridian was like heaven and earth.

Normally, if one could unlock four of the eight meridians, they would already have a high chance of forming a golden core.

With five unlocked meridians, the chance was even higher.

If one could unlock all eight, they would definitely form a golden core!

Even though it seemed simple, it was actually extremely difficult.

Many Foundation Establishment cultivators would never be able to open up four meridians in their entire lives. In the end, they could only force their core formation. Many of those will end up failing in the process and die.

But, if one could cultivate a top-notch Foundation Establishment technique, their chances of unlocking their meridians would be much greater.

Ethereal Foundation Establishment was that top-notch technique. Any cultivator of the secret skill would be able to unlock at least four meridian channels at perfected Foundation Establishment.

Of course, in the history of the Great Zhou Dynasty, there was also a Foundation Establishment Cultivator who had managed to unlock all eight meridians.

The most recent Foundation Establishment Cultivator who had managed to do it was... that monster who walked out of Ethereal Peak a thousand years ago!

It was nearly impossible to unlock all eight meridians.

No Foundation Establishment Cultivator would deliberately aim to unlock all eight meridians since theoretically, they could attempt for Golden Core realm with just four unlocked meridians.

But of course, it was undeniable that the more meridians were unlocked, the stronger one would be and the better the quality of the formed golden core.

Therefore, there were some inner sect cultivators who were even in their forties but they were still at perfected Foundation Establishment – they wanted to unlock as many meridians as possible and were in no hurry to form a core.

However, the lifespan of Foundation Establishment Cultivators was only slightly more than a hundred years.

Once anyone passes 50 years old, their energy, qi and spirit would all diminish. If they weren't able to unlock their meridians in the past, it would be even tougher in the future.

Therefore, most people would remain at perfected Foundation Establishment to 50 years old at most. No matter how many meridians were unlocked by then, they would attempt to form a core.

The most amazing thing about Ethereal Foundation Establishment was that it could ensure at least four unlocked meridians for a cultivator. It meant that one would cross half the threshold required for core formation!

Furthermore, with that foundation, cultivators with extremely strong endowments would be able to unlock even more meridians.

After all, Ethereal Peak had once produced a cultivator with eight unlocked meridians who was unparalleled in the northern Tianhuang region among all Foundation Establishment Cultivators!

As the five peak masters were about to leave the Ethereal Palace, Sect Master Ling Yun added, "By the way, don't tell anyone about this incident."

Stunned for a moment, the five peak masters nodded in agreement.

After the five of them left, a redheaded beauty appeared within the palace.

Ling Yun stood up and cupped his fists, asking darkly, "Senior, have you heard of any similar demonic techniques that enables one to suck another cultivator's essence and blood?"

The redheaded beauty had a grim look as she shook her head.

Ling Yun frowned and murmured, "Could it be one of the seven fiend sects? If he was someone from those sects, this would be sticky for Ethereal Sect to handle. If we don't handle it well, our sect might be destroyed!"

"It's not someone from a fiend sect."

The redheaded beauty shook her head and sounded certain.

Ling Yun's expression softened. He had just sighed a heave of relief when the redheaded beauty continued, "However, that person's background is probably not any weaker than the seven fiend sects. It might even be comparable!"

"Could it be..."

As though he recalled something, Ling Yun's pupils constricted and he did not continue.

The redheaded beauty nodded. "Ghastly green eyes. He should have come from Tianhuang's forbidden grounds."

"Psst!"

Ling Yun drew a breath of cold air and was shocked. After a long while, he asked, "Why are living beings of the forbidden grounds out and about?"

"I don't know either."

The redheaded beauty sighed. "Chaos has started to descend upon Tianhuang Mainland."

"Senior, your lifespan..." Ling Yun was extremely worried and could not help but ask.

"I can't hold on for much longer. A hundred years more at most."

The redheaded beauty said, "All these years, the other four major sects have all been coveting Ethereal Sect. Even some of the minor sects are tempted to take action. When I die, Ethereal Sect will be on the brink of life and death too. If no one is able to advance to Void Reversion realm within this hundred years and become a Dao being... Ethereal Peak would probably reach its end."

"Senior!"

Suddenly, Ling Yun collapsed to the ground on his knees with a feeling of guilt. He looked at the redheaded beauty silently with a mournful expression.

The crane was the spirit beast of Ethereal Peak's Founder Master and had guarded the sect for several thousands of years. It possessed strength equivalent to that of a Dao being and was the only existence in the sect at Void Reversion realm!

All these years, if not for senior crane's protection, Ethereal Peak would have been destroyed several times!

"There's no need for that. There are thousands of Nascent Soul Perfected Lords out there and none of them can advance to Void Reversion realm without a powerful mental cultivation technique. You don't have to blame yourself."

The redheaded beauty stretched her hand to help him up and said softly, "Don't worry, I will protect Ethereal Peak till the very end. I won't let down the task he entrusted for me back then."

Ling Yun sighed. "Actually, the group of disciples from last year had pretty decent endowments. Feng Haoyu, Leng Rou, Su Zimo and little fatty... their potentials are limitless. It's just a pity..."

Ling Yun did not continue.

It was just a pity that none of them would be able to reach Void Reversion realm within a hundred years to help the sect tide over this calamity of annihilation.

Chapter 151: Hundred Days of Foundation Establishment

As the five peak masters ordered Su Zimo, Leng Rou and little fatty to remain silent, no one in the sect knew the details of the battle at Linfeng City.

Everyone only vaguely heard that Leng Rou and company were met with an ambush when they went out. Two inner sect disciples died tragically and the three of them were only saved after Golden Cores of the sect arrived.

Right after, the sect sent out orders restricting disciples from heading out et cetera.

As such, the tension was high within the sect. Even though most people did not know the reason, they felt a sense of danger and chose to enter seclusion cultivation.

It was the same for Su Zimo as well.

The reason why he joined Leng Rou and little fatty in heading out after returning from Thunderclap Valley was because he was lacking in spirit stones.

Now, Su Zimo had sufficient spirit stones and he had already begun to cultivate fervently, bent on catching up on his lack of progress for the past six months!

In his cave abode, Su Zimo resumed his normal cultivation routine.

By absorbing spirit stones and refining elixirs in the day, he would then choose to consume perfect elixirs and continue raising his cultivation.

At night, he would channel the Tiger Leopard Thunder Sound and continue with cleansing his marrow liquid, regenerating fresh and powerful blood.

The effect of swapping blood through marrow cleansing was obvious. In the process, even the skin, flesh, tendons and bones would become stronger.

Every morning after waking up, Su Zimo's body would be covered by a thin layer of black mud – those were the impurities in his body.

Both his immortality and demonic cultivation were steadily improving.

With sufficient spirit stones to replenish his energy coupled with non-stop cultivation, Su Zimo reached perfected Qi Condensation after a single month!

When he was at Level 9 Qi Condensation, Su Zimo's dantian had already formed a sea of qi.

Now that he was at perfected Qi Condensation, a change happened to the sea of qi once more. As though it was dyed a shade of red, flames burned on top of it, sending forth a beautiful and powerful aura!

Even though he had no one to spar with, Su Zimo was certain that his current state of Qi Condensation was enough to crush all other Qi Refinement Warriors of the same level!

Just as Su Zimo heaved a sigh of relaxation, the sound of clothes fluttering came from outside his cave abode.

Before long, someone knocked on the door.

Su Zimo frowned.

The footsteps sounded unfamiliar.

There weren't many people who came to his cave abode usually and it was mostly little fatty. However, it clearly wasn't him because those footsteps were light.

Su Zimo waved his robes and the door to his cave abode opened.

A fragrant scent wafted in as a woman wearing a snow-white blouse stood at the entrance. She had a cold expression but a trace of uneasiness flickered through her eyes as she gazed inside somewhat nervously.

That woman was Leng Rou.

Surprised, Su Zimo stood up hurriedly and welcomed her with cupped fists. "I didn't expect it to be Senior Sister Leng. Come in quickly."

"Yes."

She replied softly and entered with her head lowered.

Given Leng Rou's character, she might not even be willing to meet anyone if they came to visit. If anyone knew that she had taken the initiative to visit a male disciple at his place, their jaws would surely drop.

"Is there anything, Senior Sister Leng?" Su Zimo asked with a smile.

Pondering for a moment, Leng Rou replied, "I haven't thanked you for everything that happened outside Linfeng City. I'm here to thank you for that formally."

"So, it's about that..."

Su Zimo smiled and waved it off. "It's nothing much. I was also saving myself as well. You don't have to worry about it."

Leng Rou nodded and said nothing more.

She was not good at conversing to begin with while Su Zimo was not good at asking questions. The atmosphere suddenly turned cold and awkward.

Hesitating for a moment, Leng Rou continued, "Junior Brother Su, I've made two Grade 2 talismans. Please take them as a token of appreciation for saving my life."

With that, Leng Rou retrieved two pieces of talismans from her storage bag and handed them over. However, her head was lowered and she did not look at Su Zimo.

Su Zimo thought to himself, 'If I reject her, things might get even more awkward.'

At that thought, he reached out and took the two talismans before smiling. "Thank you, Senior Sister Leng."

When Su Zimo received the talismans, Leng Rou's nervous expression finally relaxed. She lifted her head and glanced at Su Zimo before turning away speedily.

One of the two talismans was a protection talisman while the other was an offensive talisman.

Sensing the aura the talismans exuded, Su Zimo nodded silently.

The two talismans should be the strongest among Grade 2 talismans – it was clear that Leng Rou had spent a lot of effort on them.

Su Zimo thought to himself, 'It's a pity I can't refine middle-grade spirit weapons. Otherwise, I would have made one and returned the favor.'

By now, Su Zimo was able to advance to Foundation Establishment realm at any time.

His six inferior-grade flying swords could no longer keep up with his cultivation.

If he wanted to set up a sword formation, he would have to refine his own flying swords. Right now, Su Zimo's technique for tempering was way too crude. Even if he had superior-grade materials, he would not be able to remove the impurities and etch the second spirit pattern.

That was a huge problem he was eager to solve.

The both of them chatted casually a little more and Leng Rou left.

From his storage bag, Su Zimo retrieved an elixir that looked mysterious with five patterns on it.

It was a perfect Foundation Establishment Elixir!

He had created that Foundation Establishment Elixir during the face-off against Su Zimo on Elixir Peak.

At the thought of Feng Haoyu, Su Zimo could not help but recall how the former had stopped and threatened him after the Elixir Peak face-off.

At that moment, it seemed as though Feng Haoyu was just doing it out of spite.

But, after Su Zimo thought about it, things did not seem as simple.

After advancing to Foundation Establishment realm, Su Zimo would inevitably come across Feng Haoyu once more and he did not know what that guy would do next.

After all, Feng Haoyu had experienced that terrible defeat. If he made a comeback, he would not be easy to deal with.

With that thought in mind, Su Zimo swallowed the Foundation Establishment Elixir.

It melted instantly in his mouth, sending a warm stream down his throat into his dantian that emitted a powerful medicinal effect!

Under the influence of that medicinal effect, Su Zimo calmed himself down and gathered the sea of qi within his dantian. He was neither anxious nor hurried.

As the name suggested, Foundation Establishment was for one to lay down the foundation.

If one's foundation was lacking, their future cultivation path could be problematic!

The scarlet sea of qi shrank endlessly and reduced in size. However, the aura that was being emitted was increasingly powerful and terrifying!

Time began to slip away just like that.

Su Zimo was in no rush.

For normal cultivators to establish their foundations, the fast ones would take less than two hours and the slowest ones would take up to five days.

However, there was no one as slow as Su Zimo.

A full hundred days had passed by before Su Zimo opened his eyes that shone with a sharp glint. The sea of qi within his dantian had finally disappeared and turned into a scarlet spirit liquid!

There was a qualitative change in his spirit qi, transforming it into spirit energy!

A hundred days of Foundation Establishment!

Even though they were hundred ordinary days, Su Zimo had set up a foundation sturdier than anything else.

On this day, Su Zimo walked out of his cave abode and summoned his flying sword. He headed for the main peak.

Upon reaching Foundation Establishment realm, one could take part in the inner sect assessment at the main peak. As long as they passed, they would become inner sect disciples.

Chapter 152: Shock

The inner sect assessment was relatively simple. It merely tested the disciples on their control and insights towards sword kinesis as well as whether their foundations were stable.

When the testing elder saw that it was Su Zimo, he gave the latter an inner sect identity badge without conducting the assessment at all.

Under little fatty's lead, the two of them circled the main peak before looking for a suitable cave abode to settle down.

All that trouble took up half a day's time.

Before long, news of Su Zimo becoming an inner sect disciple spread out through the inner sect.

Right as Su Zimo was about to return to his cave abode and return to seclusion cultivation of Ethereal Foundation Establishment, a group of people walked over. They looked unfriendly and were sneering.

Leading the pack was a former disciple of Spirit Peak, Sun Tao, who was knocked unconscious by a single slap of Su Zimo.

After half a year, Sun Tao was already at early-stage Foundation Establishment as well.

The other people were unfamiliar and they had different cultivations; there were even late-stage Foundation Establishment Cultivators.

All of those people surrounded Su Zimo and little fatty before long.

With a smile, little fatty cupped his fists. "Senior brothers! What do you need?"

"Little fatty, make way! This is none of your business!"

Sun Tao snorted coldly and looked at Su Zimo. Raising his eyebrows, he said, "Su Zimo, you ambushed me while I was unprepared back in Spirit Peak! We haven't settled that debt yet! I'm not someone to take advantage of you. Since you're already at early-stage Foundation Establishment now, today is a good time! We'll fight it out in the spirit arena!"

In truth, even though they were both at early-stage Foundation Establishment, one had just advanced and the other was at a peak state.

Furthermore, Su Zimo had just become an inner sect disciple and had yet to learn any spirit arts. As for Sun Tao, he had already been in the inner sect for a few months now with a few spirit arts under his belt.

Everyone could tell whether or not it was fair but no one said anything.

Little fatty had a strange expression as he looked at Sun Tao with a hint of pity in his gaze. However, he did not say anything as well.

Su Zimo could not be bothered with Sun Tao and merely shook his head. "I'm not interested."

"Humph!"

Sun Tao's expression darkened as he yelled, "Su Zimo, that's not up to you!"

"Oh?"

Narrowing his gaze, Su Zimo looked at Sun Tao for a moment and suddenly laughed. "What do you mean?"

"Su Zimo, stop pretending!"

A disciple at the side shouted, "You must have been a burden to Senior Brothers Lu and Guan at the spirit mine of Linfeng City since you were just a Qi Refinement Warrior. How else would they have died?"

"What nonsense are you talking about?" Hearing that, little fatty could not help but berate them.

He was well aware of what happened at the spirit mine, but no one else knew.

One of them sneered, "Even though the three of you refuse to say anything about that incident, all of us can roughly guess everything. Su Zimo must have been a burden to our two senior brothers!"

Su Zimo was expressionless as he listened to their accusations.

It was a baseless rumor that came from an illogical conclusion. Despite being so ridiculous, there were many in the inner sect that bought it.

Repeated rumors turn into facts. Su Zimo did not believe that it wasn't intentionally spread by someone.

Sun Tao scoffed coldly, "Su Zimo, even if you reject my challenge today, there will be many other senior brothers coming to challenge you from this day forth in the name of our two dead senior brothers! Humph, you can dream about cultivating in peace from now on!"

With an unchanged expression, Su Zimo nodded. "Alright, let's head to the spirit arena."

For some reason, Sun Tao felt uneasy when he heard Su Zimo's carefree tone.

After all, Su Zimo had already defeated Feng Haoyu back when he was in Qi Condensation realm.

Now that he was at Foundation Establishment realm, Su Zimo must be even stronger!

However, Sun Tao thought again. How could Su Zimo be a match for him since the latter had just joined the inner sect and had yet to learn spirit arts.

By the time Sun Tao's imagination was done running wild, everyone had arrived at the spirit arena of the main peak.

Su Zimo entered it slowly, looking calm and composed.

Whipping out his flying sword, Sun Tao leapt into the spirit arena. He conjured hand seals with his left hand and spirit energy reverberated on his fingertips – the spirit art was taking shape.

"Haha, today is where I will reclaim my dignity!" Sun Tao conjured his spirit art and composed himself. He could not help but burst out in laughter smugly.

Su Zimo's expression was unchanged as he said nonchalantly, "Sun Tao, if I can knock you out the first time, I can knock you out a second time."

Boom!

Right after he said that, Su Zimo disappeared from sight.

Between the both of them, a flurry of afterimages appeared and in the blink of an eye, Su Zimo arrived before Sun Tao.

He had not made use of spirit weapons nor energy – this was purely a burst of his physical strength.

An intense and ferocious aura gushed out.

For a moment, Sun Tao felt that he was not facing a human, but an ancient beast.

He did not have time to think as he struck with the spirit art in his left hand. Controlling his flying sword with his right hand, he willed it to stab forward!

He almost did not have to aim at all since they were so close together.

Bang! Boom! Boom!

Suddenly, Sun Tao heard a horrifying sound of a tsunami surging in his ears.

Su Zimo's eyes lit up – his Power of Blood of bursting forth!

With a casual punch, Su Zimo destroyed Sun Tao's spirit art.

Right after, he sidestepped and dodged the incoming sword and with a flip of his hand, he struck Sun Tao's face ruthlessly.

This was the exact same move that he had done on Spirit Peak.

Sun Tao was alarmed as he felt his vision turn black. A torrential force descended upon him and he fell backwards uncontrollably.

Bang!

A flash of blood appeared as the back of his head landed on the ground. Sun Tao fainted on the spot.

It was too fast!

The inner sect disciples that were spectating below were not prepared for Sun Tao to collapse on the spirit arena after just a mere moment of contact!

Stunned on the spot, most of them had not registered the fact yet.

Suddenly, Su Zimo turned around and looked at the inner sect disciples. He said calmly, "Anyone else who is unconvinced can come up together. I'll take all of you guys at the same time."

Everyone was in an uproar!

The next moment, inner sect disciples below burned with instant rage and shouted, "Preposterous!"

"How arrogant!"

What did Su Zimo mean by that?

He was looking down at everyone as though they were nothing!

All the inner sect disciples present were at the peak of their youth. How could any of them tolerate such insolence from a disciple who had just entered the inner sect?

Little fatty secretly frowned, somewhat confused.

In reality, after what Sun Tao said, Su Zimo realized that this was actually a scheme of the enemy hiding in the depths.

No matter what, he had to accept this challenge.

As Sun Tao said, if he did not resolve it today, he would not be able to cultivate in peace in the future.

The simplest and most effective way of settling it was to shock!

It wasn't just to shock Sun Tao's group. More than that, it was to shock the enemy plotting against him in the dark.

Therefore, Su Zimo was not just going to take down Sun Tao's group today. He was going to reveal his true strength and crush everything completely!

Chapter 153: Sky Treasure Auction House

Although many disciples were infuriated, they were still able to remain rational and did not rush up together.

A mid-stage Foundation Establishment Cultivator was the first to enter the spirit arena as he remarked coldly, "Junior Brother Su, aren't you being too arrogant? I..."

Before that person could finish, Su Zimo took two steps and arrived before him. Without a second word, he raised his hands and drew an arc in the air.

His punch was filled with power, as though a gigantic stamp was crushing down.

"Ah!"

That person yelped and crushed a protection talisman right away.

Su Zimo's fist slammed heavily against the barrier of the protection talisman, causing it to shake violently. Right after, a series of terrifying sounds could be heard.

Crack! Crack! Crack!

Cracks appeared and extended on the surface of the light barrier.

A Grade 2 protection talisman was destroyed by a single punch from Su Zimo!

That person was scared out of his wits. Without waiting for Su Zimo to continue punching, he jumped down from the spirit arena with fear in his eyes. Retreating frantically, he was like a stray dog.

Another inner sect disciple grit his teeth and leaped into the spirit arena, summoning his flying sword instantly.

Two spirit lights shone dazzlingly on the sword – it was a middle-grade flying sword.

On the other side, that person conjured hand seals and pointed it at Su Zimo's feet.

Suddenly, thick vines grew out like snakes, climbing and wrapping themselves tightly around Su Zimo's ankles.

The flying sword and spirit art struck at the same time, complementing each other perfectly.

If it was anyone else, they would definitely not be able to dodge the flying sword's attack with their bodies restricted.

However, Su Zimo's bloodline was way too strong!

Unless it was a late-stage Foundation Establishment Cultivator, no one else could trap him!

Bang! Boom! Boom!

The blood within Su Zimo's body rumbled as lightning flashed. Striking the vines conjured by the spirit art, the power of thunder electrocuted it into nothingness.

Swash!

At the same time, the flying sword pierced towards Su Zimo's glabella.

Laughing gently, Su Zimo did not dodge at all. He extended his palm and caressed the incoming sword gently, soft as a tongue.

The flying sword fell into Su Zimo's palm obediently.

As for Su Zimo's palm, it was completely unharmed!

The inner sect disciple on the other end opened his mouth wide and his eyeballs nearly popped out.

Such methods were far beyond his knowledge!

Grabbing weapons barehanded was just a small trick among martial artists to deal with mortals.

But, no one had ever seen a cultivator who could deal with a Foundation Establishment Cultivator's flying sword using just his bare hands!

"Everyone, let's attack together!"

Someone suddenly shouted from the crowd.

The tens of disciples below leaped into the spirit arena hotheadedly.

"That's the way!"

Su Zimo burst out in laughter. He took a few steps and slammed into the crowd, exploding the power of his bloodline. Using his unparalleled might and ferocious fist techniques, he crushed his way through everyone!

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Accompanied by cries of pain, the sound of fists and flesh colliding rang out constantly as bodies fell one after another.

Many people had just entered the spirit arena. However, they were knocked down by Su Zimo before they could even stand firmly.

In the blink of an eye, bodies were strewn all over the spirit arena.

They were completely defeated!

Far away, three cultivators stood. From their identity badges, they were also inner sect disciples. However, their auras were extraordinary and they were clearly unlike everyone else.

"That's Su Zimo. The number one of four peaks last year."

"His melee combat strength is rather decent. However, it's of little use."

"Yes. Against us, he won't even have a chance to get close," Someone among them laughed.

"I heard that there were quite a number of disciples with decent endowment last year. Other than Su Zimo, there's Feng Haoyu and a beauty called Leng Rou."

"Yes. All three of them have a chance to become legacy disciples just like us."

"That's for the future. Let's continue our seclusion and prepare for the sect competition."

...

Feng Haoyu watched everything expressionlessly and turned around to head back to his cave abode.

As soon as he entered and closed the door, Feng Haoyu stopped in his tracks as if he sensed something.

“That lad’s methods are terrifying. At the spirit mine of Linfeng City, more than thirty Foundation Establishment Cultivators died in his hands. There was even a late-stage among them!”

A hoarse voice sounded suddenly – it came from a black figure standing in a corner of the cave abode.

Feng Haoyu was secretly shocked.

None of the sect disciples knew about what happened at Linfeng City. Only the five peak masters and some elders who went as reinforcements knew about it.

Feng Haoyu said, “According to what you said, senior, I’m unable to deal with him given my current abilities. Furthermore, I can’t kill Su Zimo inside the sect.”

“Have you learned all three major secret skills?” The hoarse voice sounded once more.

“Yes.”

Feng Haoyu nodded.

Obtaining the three major secret skills of Ethereal Peak was a large part of his mission!

“Record them for me.”

“No,” Feng Haoyu shook his head.

“Oh?”

The tone of the black figure changed. Instantly, the atmosphere within the cave abode turned tense and was filled with killing intent.

“Before I learned the secret skills, Ling Yun made me swear not to spread the secret skills externally,” Feng Haoyu explained. “I have no choice either.”

The cave abode fell silent.

After a moment, the black figure laughed sinisterly. “Hmph, hmph. Not to spread them? We shall see how long more Ethereal Peak can hang on for! When the time comes, I’ll come and snatch the three major secret skills personally!”

“What about Su Zimo and the three legacy disciples of Ethereal Peak?” Feng Haoyu asked again, “Su Zimo is manageable. However, those three legacy disciples are mostly in seclusion and rarely show their faces. There’s no chance to strike at all.”

The black figure ordered, “Don’t act rashly lest we alert the enemy. We’ll find a chance before the sect competition to take down the four of them in one fell swoop! Hmph, let’s see who else Ethereal Peak can send to the sect competition!”

A cold gust of wind blew past and the black figure disappeared from Feng Haoyu’s cave abode.

...

As Su Zimo had expected, no one in the inner sect sought trouble with him after that fight.

For the next two months, he locked himself in seclusion and absorbed spirit stones continuously, cultivating the Ethereal Foundation Establishment to raise his cultivation.

Two months later, it was almost the end of the year.

Su Zimo was now at the peak of early-stage Foundation Establishment. He thought about it deeply and decided to head out for a walk.

His main goal was to find a secret manual to hone one's weapon refinement skill. Without a manual like that, Su Zimo would not be able to improve on his weapon refinement technique.

No matter how high his cultivation was, he would be almost half as weak if he was unable to make use of sword formations.

Without letting anyone know, Su Zimo left quietly.

His destination was to a place called Chiyu City. It was an important city within the Great Zhou Dynasty and contained a Sky Treasure Auction House.

Typically, as long as there was a city where cultivators gathered, there would be a Sky Treasure Pavilion.

However, there weren't many Sky Treasure Auction Houses within the Great Zhou Dynasty. Chiyu City was the closest city to Ethereal Peak that had one.

Su Zimo intended to try his luck at Sky Treasure Auction House.

Ever since that fight outside of Linfeng City, he had quite a bit of spirit stones in his storage bag – it was just convenient for him.

Chapter 154: Authentic Badge

Chiyu City.

From afar, it looked like a terrifying behemoth lying on the ground. Even the capital of Yan Country paled in comparison.

But, this was only just a single major town of the dynasty. One could imagine how majestic and dominating the capital of the Great Zhou Dynasty was.

Along the way, the number of cultivators increased in number the closer it was to Chiyu City.

In the capital of Yan Country, there were only Qi Refinement Warriors mostly. It was difficult to even see a Foundation Establishment Cultivator.

However, Foundation Establishment Cultivators were extremely common in Chiyu City. Flying on their swords, there were people coming and going constantly. Occasionally, even Golden Cores who could travel through the air without the use of any objects would pass by.

Comparatively, Chiyu City was truly more like a city for cultivators.

Even though Su Zimo was a disciple of Ethereal Peak, he did not dare to behave flamboyantly in Chiyu City. In fact, he even put away his sect badge and looked for a random inn within the city.

Similar to Sky Treasure Pavilion, Sky Treasure Auction House was also backed by a royal family of the Great Zhou Dynasty.

Listening to the discussions of surrounding cultivators, Su Zimo's confidence in this trip increased.

It was said that the Sky Treasure Auction House was the largest trading market in the Great Zhou Dynasty. It was famous and many rare and unique treasures had been auctioned here, be it spirit weapons, elixirs, talismans and manuals et cetera.

Of course, the price of the items auctioned was also extremely high.

By the time Su Zimo entered the city, it was already evening. After listening for a while in the lobby of the inn, he went back to rest.

The next day, Su Zimo woke up early and rushed to the Sky Treasure Auction House.

The Sky Treasure Auction House was divided into outer and inner houses. Most items in the outer house were ordinary items where cultivators only needed spirit stones to purchase them or exchange items of equivalent value.

The inner house was where the real auction was!

All rare items would be auctioned officially in the inner house. The competition was fair and the highest bidders would get it.

As long as one were to enter the region of the Sky Treasure Auction House, be it the inner or outer houses, they were not allowed to fly through the air. Even Golden Cores were not permitted – that was the rule of the auction house.

The place was packed as people pushed against one another.

There were cultivators of all major and minor sects of different branches. In fact, Su Zimo even caught sight of a few cultivators from Iridescent Clouds Palace and Azure Frost Sect.

After taking a spin around the outer house, Su Zimo had an eye-opener. He had truly come across quite a few treasures but it was a pity that he hadn't seen a manual for the tempering technique of weapon refinement.

Without any hesitation, Su Zimo walked towards the entrance of the inner house.

On both sides of the entrance stood two late-stage Foundation Establishment Cultivators. Clad in armor, they surveyed the crowd constantly with sharp gazes.

Such guards could be seen everywhere in the Sky Treasure Auction House.

Even if a Golden Core were to cause trouble here, he would be ruthlessly suppressed!

Su Zimo had just walked up the stairs when he was stopped by the two guards.

"Show me your Sky Treasure Badge," One of them said coldly.

Su Zimo was stunned and asked, "I need a Sky Treasure Badge?"

The other guard explained patiently, "Different color badges represent the different parts of the inner house you'll be seated. Bronze is the worst and gold is the best."

Su Zimo truly did not know that he would have to display a Sky Treasure Badge to enter the inner house.

In fact, the inner house was not a place anyone could just enter.

The Sky Treasure Badge was proof that someone was qualified to take part in the auction. Otherwise, who could tell if anyone was there to fish in troubled waters.

Furthermore, most cultivators who were able to obtain a Sky Treasure Badge were those who had sold a certain number of items in the Sky Treasure Pavilion – it was also verifiable proof of the person's identity and strength.

At a moment like this, Ethereal Peak's sect badge was not as useful as a Sky Treasure Badge!

Su Zimo did have a Sky Treasure Badge indeed... and it was a gold one!

However, he had never used that gold badge ever since he found out about Ji Yaoxue's identity, afraid that it would attract unnecessary trouble.

But with the current situation, Su Zimo had no choice but to hand the Sky Treasure Gold Badge over.

When the guard saw that it was a gold badge, he could not help but frown.

Typically, someone of Su Zimo's cultivation – early-stage Foundation Establishment – would be hard pressed to even possess a silver badge.

Sky Treasure Gold Badges were almost only exclusive to Golden Cores!

Only Golden Cores were worthy of a gold badge!

The guard's first instinct was that the Sky Treasure Gold Badge was fake.

Without a change of expression, he pressed gently in the middle of the Sky Treasure Gold Badge. His expression softened and he nodded to the other guard.

The Sky Treasure Gold Badge was authentic.

Before this, there had been incidents of fake Sky Treasure Badges as well. However, no one had managed to bluff their way through.

The main reason was that in the center of every Sky Treasure Badge, there would be a unique mark that outsiders would not be able to replicate. A single touch by the guard was enough to tell of whether the gold badge was authentic.

"This green robed scholar's background is not simple. The elders in his family must dote on him to be willing to give a Sky Treasure Gold Badge to an early-stage Foundation Establishment."

One of the guards said secretly and nodded to Su Zimo. He then moved aside and handed the Sky Treasure Gold Badge back.

Su Zimo took the token and it slid through the guard's hand. Right as it was about to leave the guard's hand, a cold glint flashed in the guard's eyes as though he had realized something as he held onto the Sky Treasure Gold Badge tightly!

Something was not right!

When the Sky Treasure Gold Badge slid through his hand, he had clearly touched a word character!

The guard snatched back the Sky Treasure Gold Badge and waved his hand. Instantly, a few more Foundation Establishment Cultivators appeared beside him, looking malicious and unfriendly as they surrounded Su Zimo in a circle.

"What's wrong?" Su Zimo frowned and asked.

The guard looked at Su Zimo and grunted. Whisking the Sky Treasure Gold Badge up, he scrutinized it under his eyes.

At the right corner of the Sky Treasure Gold Badge, there was a character the size of a mosquito. As long as one focused on it, they would be able to recognize that it was the word 'Xue'.

The guard handed the Sky Treasure Gold Badge to another person with a darkened expression.

If not for that 'Xue' character, the Sky Treasure Gold Badge would be authentic. However, it was way too fake with it!

This was clearly the badge of the Great Zhou Dynasty's third princess! How could it be in the hands of an outsider?

"Hmph! How dare you forge a fake Sky Treasure Gold Badge! You really don't know the meaning of death! Take him down!" Another guard shouted after checking out the badge.

"Hold on!"

Su Zimo was extremely calm as he said in a deep voice, "Fellow daoist, what right do you have to say that my badge is fake? You have no proof at all. You have to give me some evidence."

There was no way the Sky Treasure Gold Badge could be fake and Su Zimo wanted to see what the guard had to say.

The guard sneered. "Alright, I'll make sure you die convinced."

Right as that person was about to speak, a commotion broke out not far away and the crowd was restless.

Looking from the corner of his eye, the guard trembled and he looked respectful right away. There was even a look of intoxication in his eyes.

It was the same for everyone else as they actually forgot about Su Zimo for the moment.

Out of curiosity, Su Zimo turned over.

Chapter 155: Chief Steward Gu

A group of maidservants surrounded two women as they walked over.

At the very front, the woman's skin was fair as snow. She had an exquisite appearance and her steps exuded a mature charm.

The woman had a smile on her face, and her every move exuded an air of gracefulness. Clearly, her status in the Sky Treasure Auction House was not low.

Beside her, there was a young girl in a long pink dress. Even though her face was covered with a veil, her beautiful eyes sparkled and made one's heart flutter!

Both women had their own merits and were rare beauties. They walked side by side like sisters. As soon as they appeared, they attracted everyone's attention, burning like fire.

Gulps could be heard in the surroundings in a spectacular manner.

"To think that Chief Steward Gu would actually grace our Chiyu City's Sky Treasure Auction House!"

"I'm willing to give up ten years of my life just to have some sort of relationship with Chief Steward Gu!"

"Someone like you will never be entertained by the likes of Chief Steward Gu. I heard that there was a Golden Core who had nefarious thoughts and was killed that very night with his head hung on display in the city for an entire month!"

After cultivating The Mystic Classic of the Twelve Demon Kings of the Great Wilderness, Su Zimo's hearing far exceeded others.

Even though the discussions were hushed, he could still hear them.

"So, it's her!"

Su Zimo muttered to himself.

When he arrived in Chiyu City yesterday, Su Zimo heard quite a number of people talking about this woman.

Her name was Gu Xi and she was the chief steward of the Sky Treasure Auction House. It was said that even the emperor of the Great Zhou Dynasty was very respectful to her.

She was a large part of the reason why Sky Treasure Auction House was so famous.

No one knew the cultivation of that woman. However, none of those who harbored evil intentions towards her through the years had lived to tell the tale!

Mysterious, elegant and beautiful. The combination of those words turned Gu Xi into the most famous woman in the Great Zhou Dynasty; someone who could only be seen from afar and not touched.

Since the Sky Treasure Auction House in Chiyu City was not the main branch, Su Zimo had not expected that he would come across the great Chief Steward Gu here.

"Who is the pink dressed girl beside Chief Steward Gu? She's very unfamiliar."

"Cut the crap. How can you recognize her through the veil?"

“Even with the veil, I feel like I’m going out of my mind. If I could see her face even once, I would die without regrets.”

In the crowd, many people shifted their attention to the girl in pink.

Su Zimo had tried to use his Spirit Peering Art to check out the two women. Gu Xi aside, he couldn’t even detect the cultivation of the girl in pink.

It was as if the girl was shrouded by a layer of fog that made it impossible to see her clearly.

Right then, Gu Xi’s gaze landed on Su Zimo. Pausing for a moment, she asked, “What’s wrong?”

“Chief steward! This punk tried to forge a Sky Treasure Gold Badge but was discovered by us!” One of the guards hurried forward and bowed down respectfully, holding up Su Zimo’s Sky Treasure Gold Badge with both hands.

Gu Xi smiled and took over the Sky Treasure Gold Badge casually. She then looked at Su Zimo with a faint smile. “You look decent but you’ve got quite the guts. There’s nothing more to say about this. According to the rules, kill this person...”

“Oh?”

Before Gu Xi could complete her sentence, her expression changed slightly. She raised her brow and brought the Sky Treasure Gold Badge closer to have a better look.

After a moment, Gu Xi raised her head and surveyed Su Zimo with scrutiny. She had a strange expression.

“Auntie Gu, what’s wrong?”

The girl in pink noticed the weird atmosphere and asked softly.

Her voice was gentle to the bones and really alluring.

Gu Xi glanced sideways and remained silent. However, a voice rang out in the girl in pink’s mind, “This badge should be real, but I don’t know why it’s with this person. Take a look.”

Only Nascent Souls could make use of techniques such as voice transmission.

The girl in pink took over the badge and was slightly taken aback when she saw the ‘Xue’ character at the bottom right.

In the blink of an eye, she seemed to have thought of something. The corners of her lips curled under the veil and her eyes sparkled.

She whispered into Gu Xi’s ears, “This badge is authentic. I know who this person is. Auntie Gu, call him over. I have something to discuss with him.”” Access ReadFreeWebNovel.live if you like watching manga,comics.

Gu Xi acknowledged and handed the Sky Treasure Gold Badge back, saying, “The badge is authentic.”

“Ah?”

“It’s real?”

The two guards were stumped on the spot.

This was clearly the badge of the Great Zhou Dynasty’s third princess! If it was authentic, what was this person’s relationship with the third princess?”

“Stop making wild guesses and don’t spout nonsense!”

As though she could read their minds, Gu Xi remarked coldly.

The two guards were rattled and hurriedly nodded in agreement.

Su Zimo heaved a sigh of relief. Just as he put away the Sky Treasure Gold Badge, he felt a burning gaze on him.

Gu Xi and that girl in pink were both watching him.

Even though the girl in pink was wearing a veil, Su Zimo could almost see a smile on her face.

“Follow me.”

Suddenly, an unquestionable voice rang in Su Zimo’s mind – it was Gu Xi’s!

Together with the girl in pink, Gu Xi walked towards a side door of the inner house. Su Zimo hesitated for a moment before following them.

The side door to the inner house was only accessible to the employees. Outsiders could only enter through the main door after displaying their Sky Treasure Badge.

Now that Su Zimo was following Gu Xi and the girl in pink through the side door, it caused a commotion outside!

“Who is that green robed scholar?”

“What rights does he have?”

Many people were green with envy.

Someone coughed gently and tried striding towards the side door as though nothing was wrong. However, he was stopped by the guard.

He tried to talk his way out of it but to no avail and could only leave in a huff.

Inside the inner house, things were much quieter and there was evidently less people.

Gu Xi and the girl in pink walked at the front while Su Zimo followed them. Calm and composed, he did not say anything and merely surveyed the surroundings.

The layout of the inner house was like a large funnel and guests were separated into three general regions based on their colors.

The seats at the bottom were for the bronze badge owners. It was a cramped place without much room for activity.

Above the bronzes were the silver seats and they were slightly more spacious.

Another few levels up and it was at the gold area. Here, the rooms were divided and partitioned. Beautiful gems decorated the rooms and even though no one from the outside could look in, those within could see everything perfectly clear.

Above the gold area was another circle of individual rooms. From the outside, they looked even more spacious and magnificent. Su Zimo wondered who they were made for.

On both sides of the entrances of the rooms at the top, beautiful and gorgeous young women stood waiting.

Chapter 156: Fiend Sects

Su Zimo followed Gu Xi and the girl in pink up a jade green staircase to the area where the most spacious rooms were!

“Follow me in,” Gu Xi looked at Su Zimo and said before entering a room.

Maidservants stood on both sides and bowed slightly with a smile. They looked at Su Zimo with respect and envy.

In the room, there was a row of seats and a table displaying various alluring fruits that emanated spirit qi.

“Sit anywhere you want.”

The girl in pink told Su Zimo and pointed at the table of fruits. “Even Golden Cores downstairs are not able to eat these.”

Su Zimo did not reply and merely nodded his head, remaining somewhat cautious.

He had realized early on that the Sky Treasure Gold Badge was the reason why their attitudes towards him were so strange.

Previously, Su Zimo had always thought that Ji Yaoxue had given him a very common gold badge. Now, it seemed like things were not so simple.

“Hey, what’s your name?”

The moment Su Zimo sat down, the girl in pink approached him. She asked in a coquettish tone and her eyes appeared watery with ripples in them.

Her body was almost plastered entirely onto Su Zimo as the scent of a young girl wafted over.

Su Zimo’s heart skipped a beat. He leaned back slightly and said in a low voice, “I’m Su Zimo...”

The moment he said that, he realized that something was amiss.

He had blurted out his answer without thinking at all after the girl in pink questioned him!

Su Zimo felt a lingering fear in his heart.

It felt as though he was not in control of himself and he would tell her anything she wanted to know!

What was even more frightening was that the girl exuded an alluring aura. Every frown and smile of hers seemed extremely charming.

Even though it was just a casual chat, Su Zimo could already feel himself getting restless and his body was heating up.

It was very sinister!

Su Zimo gripped his fists tightly as sweat formed on his palms.

If the girl was already so powerful with her veil on, what would happen if she were to remove it?

He could stay here no longer. Rising, he cupped his fists. "Chief Steward, if there's nothing else, I'll take my leave now."

Gu Xi did not say anything and merely looked at the both of them silently.

"What's the hurry? Aren't you here for the auction? Just sit here and bid then."

The girl in pink said. Suddenly, she rolled her eyes and moved in front of Su Zimo. Raising her head, she smiled and asked, "What's wrong? Are you scared?"

Su Zimo was indeed a little afraid but there was no way he could admit that.

"Miss, you must be joking."

With an indifferent expression, Su Zimo looked straight and replied calmly, "As a disciple of Ethereal Peak, I am upright and honest. There is nothing to be scared of."

Su Zimo mentioned the name of his sect in the hopes of frightening the other party.

At the end of the day, Ethereal Peak was one of the five major sects within the Great Zhou Dynasty.

"Wow!"

The girl in pink exclaimed and remarked with a look of awe, "Ethereal Peak! That's one of the five major sects! How impressive!"

The corner of Gu Xi's mouth twitched as if she wanted to laugh. But, she held it back.

Su Zimo could tell that the girl in pink was obviously being sarcastic. She sounded like she was joking, as if Ethereal Peak was nothing to her.

Even though he was embarrassed, it was not appropriate for him to get angry. As such, he could only ask, "How should I address you, miss? What sect are you from?"

"Me? I can't tell you that now, hehe," The girl in pink laughed and blinked intently. She looked extremely innocent and beautiful; no one could get angry at her expression.

"Do you know what's odd about that Sky Treasure Gold Badge?" The girl in pink suddenly asked.

"I don't," Su Zimo shook his head.

"Take it out and have a closer look," She continued.

Ever since he obtained the Sky Treasure Gold Badge, Su Zimo had truly not taken a good look at it. Now that he was scrutinizing it, he immediately found something unusual.

At the bottom right of the badge etched an exquisite 'Xue' character.

The girl in pink's voice rang out once more, "This is the gold badge of the Great Zhou Dynasty's third princess, also known as the Royal Family Gold Badge. There's less than ten of this in the entire Great Zhou Dynasty!"

"No wonder."

Su Zimo was shocked.

Back then, Ji Yaoxue mentioned that everything would be at least 50% cheaper if he were to shop at Sky Treasure Pavilion using this Sky Treasure Gold Badge.

At that time, Su Zimo was surprised and felt that things couldn't possibly be that cheap.

So, this badge was meant for the descendants of the Great Zhou Dynasty's royal family!

"Hey, what's your relationship with the Great Zhou Dynasty's third princess?" A cunning look flashed in the girl in pink's eyes as she asked with a bright smile.

Su Zimo shook his head. "Nothing much. We're just ordinary friends."

"Who would believe that?"

The girl in pink pouted her lips and teased, "Someone the likes of the third princess would give that badge to an ordinary friend?"

Su Zimo did not reply.

"Hey, Su Zimo. How about doing me a favor?" The girl in pink suddenly said as she rolled her eyes.

Su Zimo asked, "What?"

"Help me beat up bad guys!" The girl in pink raised her fists and said solemnly, "Yes... they are all evil devils. As a disciple of Ethereal Peak, you should take up the responsibility of protecting the way of the Dao by getting rid of the demons."

"Nopes," Su Zimo shook his head.

He did not care what sort of bad guys those were – he merely wanted to keep his distance from this girl.

Beside her, Gu Xi suddenly frowned. Releasing her spirit consciousness, she set up a barrier between her and the girl in pink. "What nonsense is this? Don't tell me you want this lad to accompany you to that?"

"Yes."

The girl in pink replied nonchalantly.

"Don't go."

Gu Xi persuaded, "I can't help you there. The fiend heirs of this generation's fiend sects are not kind souls. If you piss them off, they might really kill you!"

"Tsk."

The girl in pink replied disdainfully, "fiend heirs? So what! I'm a fiend heir too! Who's afraid of whom? If they piss me off, I'll kill them too! Besides, can't you see I'm getting a helper along?"

With that, the girl in pink looked at Su Zimo.

"Him?" Gu Xi shook her head and did not continue to speak. However, her tone was clearly filled with disdain.

The girl in pink smiled brightly. "I heard from my sister that this Su Zimo is rather decent in melee combat."

"That's useless."

Gu Xi shook her head. "This generation's geniuses in the fiend sects are too strong. Putting aside the successor of Overlord Palace, this Su Zimo is nothing compared to the other fiend heirs as well. If he goes there, he'll just be committing suicide. Your sister has a close relationship with him. If he were to die because of you, she's definitely going to blame you."

"Hmph, if he were to die, it'll be just nice to let everything end completely."

The girl in pink sneered, "At least, my sister won't have to worry about this person from time to time. She even argued with our father a couple of times over this guy. In my opinion, this Su Zimo is nothing much. He looks extremely ordinary. I don't even know what my sister sees in him."

"Are you decided?" Gu Xi asked.

The girl in pink nodded. However, she rolled her eyes and frowned. "But, if he doesn't want to go, I can't hold a knife to his throat and force him to go."

"There's always a way," Gu Xi said mysteriously.

Chapter 157: Faked Composure

"What are you intending to purchase this time?"

Removing the sound barrier, Gu Xi looked at Su Zimo and smiled.

"Nothing much. I'm just casually browsing."

Even though he did not know what they were talking about, Su Zimo gathered that it must have something to do with him. Naturally, he would not reveal his plans foolishly as well.

Gu Xi smiled and did not ask further. She changed the topic and said, "The auction will start very soon. Why don't you sit here? If you take a liking to anything, I might even be able to help."

Despite the disparity in their statuses, Gu Xi was extending invitations to him repeatedly. Su Zimo made up his mind and thought, 'Since I'm here, I'll just go along with the flow. It's not as though they will do anything to me either.'

With that, he sat down comfortably and started eating the fruits on the table as though there was no one else around.

Through the crystals in front of him, he could clearly see that the seats outside were already filled.

It was extremely lively and hyped.

Not long after, the auction officially began after the ring of a bell and the crowd gradually quietened down.

A middle-aged man dressed in luxurious clothes walked up to the round platform in the middle and surveyed the surroundings. Before saying anything, he smiled and cupped his fists. "I am the manager of Chiyu City's Sky Treasure Auction House. Welcome, fellow daoists. I hope that all of you will be able to return with your hands full today."

"Hurry and begin!"

Some of the cultivators were already growing impatient as they yelled.

The manager smiled and did not say another word. Waving behind him, a beautiful maidservant who was carrying a tray with both hands shook her hips and walked forward.

Unveiling the cloth covering the tray, the manager revealed a flying sword beneath. Its blade was sparkling like limpid autumn waters and there were three spirit patterns on it!

A superior-grade spirit weapon!

"This is the Autumn Water Sword and it was made by the most famous Advanced Weapon Refinement Master in our Great Zhou Dynasty, Mr. Lian. I'm sure everyone has heard of him so I shall not introduce further. The starting price of this sword will be at 2,000 spirit stones. Each bid must not be less than 100!"

Su Zimo was secretly speechless.

The auction started off right away with a superior-grade spirit weapon! He wondered what else would appear later on.

He also did not know who Mr. Lian was.

As if she could see the doubt in Su Zimo's mind, Gu Xi said, "His name is Lian Feng and he's from the True Fire Sect. He became famous after creating a supreme-grade spirit weapon. In the Great Zhou Dynasty, Advanced Weapon Refinement Masters are considered as rare talents. Out of respect, cultivators who are not familiar with him will refer to him as Mr. Lian."

Su Zimo nodded.

Many cultivators outside were already starting to bid. In just a short while, the price of the Autumn Water Sword had already increased to 3,000 spirit stones!

Su Zimo had not much interest towards spirit weapons.

Before long, the Autumn Water sword was sold at a price of 3,700 spirit stones to a perfected Foundation Establishment Cultivator.

The manager was all smiles, seemingly pleased, as he beckoned with his hand for the second item to be brought forth.

Unveiling the cloth, there was a jade bottle beneath that should contain some elixirs.

“This is an inferior-grade Grade 2 elixir. I’m sure everyone is well familiar with it. I present to you... the Meridian Unlocking Elixir! It will start at 5,000 spirit stones and each bid will be nothing less than 500!”

Su Zimo’s eyes lit up.

After Foundation Establishment Cultivators reach the perfected stage, they would have to unlock the eight meridians. The amazing thing about the Meridian Unlocking Elixir was that a Foundation Establishment Cultivator would have a high chance of unlocking a meridian after consuming it!”

Of course, the better the quality of the Meridian Unlocking Elixir, the better the chances of unlocking the meridian. Furthermore, the elixir was only effective during the first consumption.

Even then, it was quite a fearsome effect.

Once a cultivator unlocked seven meridians and consumed this elixir, they would have a high chance of unlocking all eight!

Back in the ancient era, the Meridian Unlocking Elixir was extremely famous. Unfortunately, there were not many left behind and even the recipe had been lost.

Su Zimo was a little moved and leaned forward slightly.

Gu Xi glanced sideways and noticed Su Zimo’s subtle action. “If you’re interested, you can bid for it from here. The maidservants outside will help you relay the message.”

That was a privilege unique to rooms of this level. [Read comics on our ReadFreeWebNovel.live](#)

All the rooms were marked. For example, Su Zimo was in Room 1 and there were ten of such rooms at the top.

The area below him where Golden Cores were at had 90 rooms – those were numbers 11 to 100.

In a short period of time, the Meridian Unlocking Elixir’s price was raised by many Golden Cores to 10,000 spirit stones. And... this was merely an inferior-grade Meridian Unlocking Elixir!

Naturally, those Golden Cores had no use for it themselves – most of them were getting it for their personal disciples.

Su Zimo took a deep breath and temporarily gave up the idea of bidding for it.

It wasn’t because he had insufficient spirit stones – the pill’s quality was too lousy for him.

In the spirit mine of Linfeng City, Su Zimo had managed to obtain quite a number of middle-grade spirit stones. By now, his storage bag had more than 100,000 spirit stones!

“Hey, are you feeling shy?” The girl in pink blinked and whispered, “If you like anything, I can help you! Hehe!”

“It’s fine, I have the ability to purchase it myself,” Su Zimo rejected her indifferently.

A look of shock flickered through the girl in pink’s eyes as she laughed and asked, “My, I couldn’t tell at all. To think that an early-stage Foundation Establishment Cultivator like yourself actually has the ability to purchase those items!”

Pausing for a moment, the girl in pink rolled her eyes and suddenly asked, “Do you know... what spirit stones they are using to bid?”

Su Zimo’s heart skipped a beat as he realized that he had miscalculated something.

There was no mention that the bidding in the inner house was done with inferior, middle or superior-grade spirit stones! However, he had subconsciously thought that the bids were done with middle-grade spirit stones!

The difference in price between spirit stones of different grades was immense.

Normally, a hundred inferior-grade spirit stones was equivalent to a single middle-grade spirit stone.

A hundred middle-grade spirit stones was equivalent to a superior-grade spirit stone.

Of course, there were supreme-grade spirit stones above superior-grades.

If the bids earlier were referring to superior-grade spirit stones, Su Zimo’s 100,000 odd middle-grade spirit stones would only be equivalent to around 1,000 or so superior-grade spirit stones! He couldn’t buy anything at all!

Gu Xi commented at the side, “Anyone who’s been to the Sky Treasure Auction House will know that bids in the inner house are made with superior-grade spirit stones. If supreme-grade spirit stones are to be used, they would be mentioned explicitly.”

Su Zimo nodded. He looked calm and composed, pretending that he had known about it all along. However, he complained secretly in his heart, ‘This is awkward now...’

To normal people, Su Zimo’s composure may have been able to fool them. However, he could not hide from Gu Xi and the girl in pink.

What sort of cultivation did Gu Xi have?

A single look was enough for her to read through Su Zimo’s lies as she smiled faintly.

The girl in pink looked at Su Zimo with narrowed eyes. However, she did not expose him as well and merely smiled foolishly.

Suddenly, the girl in pink felt that this green robed scholar was rather interesting.

Under the girl in pink’s watch, Su Zimo could barely hold it in anymore.

‘Even if I continue staying here, I can’t buy anything. I might as well leave earlier.’

At that thought, Su Zimo stood up. Right as he was about to bid farewell, an item was brought forth in the auction that attracted his attention.

Chapter 158: Ancient Tempering Book

“Next, this is a tempering technique for weapon refinement that was produced by an Advanced Weapon Refinement Master. A thousand years ago, this person was extremely famous in the cultivation world of the Great Zhou Dynasty. However, it was a pity that he had not managed to advance to Nascent Soul realm and died in the end. Although, it was quite a good ending for his life.”

The manager beat around the bust before saying slowly, “That person is none other than Mr. Xu Zhan.”

“It’s him!”

“That person is incredible!”

“I heard that at his peak, he created dozens of supreme-grade spirit weapons! It was said that he even created a perfect spirit weapon. He’s quite amazing and many Golden Cores wished that they could obtain a spirit weapon from him.”

Many of the Foundation Establishment Cultivators present have not heard of that person. However, there was a commotion from the Golden Core rooms.

Unveiling the cloth from the tray, the manager revealed a thin book that looked a little old with yellowed pages.

The manager said in a dark voice, “This is Mr. Xu’s handbook. The starting price is at 100,000 spirit stones and every single bid must be no less than 1,000!”

Su Zimo looked at that book. His gaze was burning hot but his heart was ice cold.

That ancient book was exactly what he needed and also the purpose of his trip.

However, he could not afford it at all.

That was not mentioning the fact that the starting price was at 100,000 superior-grade spirit stones. Even if it was at 100,000 middle-grade spirit stones, Su Zimo wouldn’t be able to afford it after a couple rounds of bidding.

Indeed, in just a short while, the price of that ancient book rose steadily and was close to 200,000!

There were only a couple of people bidding.

For ordinary cultivators, this ancient book could be worth nothing. However, it was a priceless treasure for Weapon Refinement Masters.

Even if the bidding was not a Weapon Refinement Master, they must definitely have tons of relationship with weapon refinement.

Right then, a voice sounded from Room 77, “250,000!”

Su Zimo’s eyes flickered and his heart skipped a beat.

That voice sounded a little familiar... it sounded like the disheveled old man!

Su Zimo was not absolutely certain since it was just a voice and he hadn't seen the other party.

However, it was indeed true that he hardly saw the disheveled old man around the sect these days too.

Gasps could be heard from the inner house.

Previously, it was at 200,000 but now, it suddenly rose to 250,000. A jump of 50,000 superior-grade spirit stones was no small sum!

The few rooms that had been bidding earlier instantly fell silent.

"Fufu."

The manager smiled. "The customer of Room 77 sure is generous. Of course, that's also proof of this ancient book's value. 250,000. Any higher bidders?"

As the manager of Sky Treasure Auction House, he naturally did not want the price to stay here. His statement was also casually reminding the other customers.

After a momentary silence, a voice rang out from one of the rooms that was bidding earlier, "251,000."

"300,000!"

Immediately after that, Room 77 raised the price to 300,000 before the manager even spoke!

This time round, the entire place was stunned!

"Could that person from Room 77 be part of the auction house's staff?"

"That's hard to say given how he just keeps raising the price."

There was a commotion in the seats.

After a long time, no one else raised the bid and the manager could only smile. "Are there no higher bidders?"

In reality, 300,000 superior-grade spirit stones was more than enough and was almost the limit of how much that ancient book was worth. It would be inappropriate to raise the price any higher.

The manager did not bear much hopes and merely declared loudly, "300,000 once."

"300,000 twice."

"300,000..."

"310,000!"

Suddenly, a dark voice sounded from Room 80.

When he heard that, the manager was delighted. "Room 80 has raised the bid to 310,000! Are there any further bids?"

Even though he said that, his gaze was fixated on Room 77.

A short silence later, Room 77 raised the price once more.

“320,000.”

This time round, the cultivator of Room 77 was clearly much more cautious, as though anything more than 300,000 was about his limit.

“330,000.”

The cultivator in Room 80 raised the price without hesitation.

Gradually, the cultivator of Room 77 became more hesitant. Each time, he would only raise the price after thinking for a long time.

In that period of time, the price of the ancient book was pushed up constantly by the two rooms and was now at 400,000!

In truth, the actual value of that ancient book was only around 300,000.

However, the value of that item was in how priceless it was. Tempering techniques were mostly kept secret and were difficult to purchase.

It was now time for the cultivator in Room 77 to speak.

After a long time, there was no sound.

“Hahahaha!”

Suddenly, an arrogant laughter burst forth from Room 80 as a Golden Core in red robes strode out. With a dark gaze, he looked at Room 77 and scoffed coldly, “Old man, stop holding on if you can’t. Even if this ancient book is given to Ethereal Peak, no one will be able to understand it!”

Upon hearing that, Su Zimo no longer had any doubts.

Indeed, the door of Room 77 was slammed open with a loud bang. An old man with long, white hair and unshaved sideburns came out in a huff. He glared at the red robed man and asked loudly, “Sima Zhi! Are you going against me on purpose? True Fire Sect has no lack of such tempering techniques, what are you fighting with me for?”

“Because I like it.”

Sima Zhi smiled smugly.

“You...!” The disheveled old man was at a loss for words.

Sima Zhi continued leisurely, “Old man, we’re talking about 400,000 spirit stones here. Can you afford it? Look at how poor you are. Fufu, you might have to sell everything you have, right?”

The disheveled old man’s face turned steely green.

It was as Sima Zhi had said. He only had slightly more than 300,000 superior-grade spirit stones in his storage bag and even that was pooled together with the other four peak masters.

It truly meant that he was placing all his net worth and valuables to call for that 400,000!

He was determined to get that ancient book. However, it was not for himself – it was for his disciple, Su Zimo!

Ever since the five peaks face-off, the disheveled old man had been adventuring outside. He wandered through various auction houses in hopes of purchasing a tempering technique.

Su Zimo had long been able to create inferior-grade spirit weapons. However, he was stuck at the step of tempering.

Even though the disheveled old man said nothing, he was anxious. He felt that he was letting down Su Zimo's talent in weapon refinement.

Therefore, the disheveled old man would naturally not give up on a rare opportunity to get this ancient book on weapon tempering.

However, he did not expect True Fire Sect's Sima Zhi to be here!

True Fire Sect was the strongest in the five major sects in terms of weapon and elixir refinement – they had no lack of weapon tempering techniques as such.

The reason why Sima Zhi was bidding relentlessly was because he did not want the disheveled old man to get his hands on that ancient book!

“Old man, am I right?”

Sima Zhi laughed. “Go on back and don't come out to embarrass yourself!”

Many cultivators in the inner house were watching and making gossips.

Even though the disheveled old man looked terrible and was trembling from head to toe, he could not refute.

In Room 1, Su Zimo suddenly stood up and looked at Gu Xi. “Chief steward, can you lend me some spirit stones?”

“What's there to lend? If you want that ancient book, just bid for it directly,” Gu Xi seemed to have expected this. She merely smiled faintly and crossed her arms, replying casually.

Chapter 159: Auction

“However...”

Gu Xi changed the topic and pointed to the girl in pink. “You've got to accompany her to a place and ensure her safety.”

By now, the price of the ancient tempering book was at 400,000 superior-grade spirit stones.

What Gu Xi said was equivalent to giving away 400,000 or more superior-grade spirit stones! The immensity of the favor was unimaginable!

At the same time, the place that Gu Xi referred to was definitely not a good place!

“I’m only an early-stage Foundation Establishment Cultivator. Why me? This lady’s strength is probably even above mine, right?” Su Zimo asked after pondering for a moment.

Gu Xi did not reply and asked instead, “I heard you are good in melee combat?”

Su Zimo frowned.

There were not many people who knew that he was strong in melee combat – he wondered how Gu Xi got wind of that information.

Su Zimo turned his gaze to the girl in pink.

Wearing a veil, she smiled through her eyes and he could not read her expression.

Hesitating for a moment, Su Zimo nodded. “I’m alright at it.”

Gu Xi smiled. “That place is a little special. You’ll know when you get there.”

Su Zimo did not agree to it and Gu Xi did not continue, evidently not willing to reveal more.

Actually, even if Gu Xi said nothing, Su Zimo had already realized that it was an extremely dangerous trip.

400,000 superior-grade spirit stones was more than enough to buy off the lives of 40 Foundation Establishment Cultivators.

After silent consideration, Su Zimo nodded. “Alright, I agree to it!”

“Bravo!” Gu Xi clapped gently and praised.

Glancing sideways, she transmitted her voice. A maidservant at the side came before Su Zimo with a smile. “Fellow daoist Su, if you wish to raise the price, just let me know. I’ll convey the message for you.”

This was a privilege only accorded to the ten rooms at the top. That way, the customer’s voice would not be revealed and would not attract unnecessary trouble.

One of the greatest worries in an auction house for cultivators was for their identities to be exposed, attracting the attention of others.

A person’s talents would arouse the envy of others – that was the logic behind it.

...

Within the inner house, many people were privately discussing the confrontation between Sima Zhi and the disheveled old man.

“Ethereal Peak’s really lost their pride now. Despite being mocked so badly by others, they have no way to fight back at all.”

“Ha. But, it’s strange as well. Ethereal Peak has always been lacking in terms of weapon and elixir refinement. Why are they suddenly trying to purchase a secret manual on weapon refinement?”

The manager was naturally delighted at the two Golden Cores fighting. He smiled and declared loudly, "Fellow daoist Sima from True Fire Sect has raised the bid to 400,000 spirit stones. I wonder if our fellow daoist from Ethereal Peak wishes to raise it further?"

"Old man, go ahead and raise it."

Sima Zhi burst out in laughter. "If you raise it to 410,000, I'll go to 420,000! Let's see who loses first!"

The disheveled old man's expression turned uglier as he tried to repress the anger in his chest. A moment later, he said slowly, "Sima Zhi, don't be smug! The road ahead is long!"

With that, the disheveled old man flicked his sleeves and left.

"410,000!"

Suddenly, a crisp sound rang out from the top of the inner house.

Everyone looked towards the voice only to see a maidservant standing in front of Room 1 right at the top. Smiling, she was the one who reported the figure.

All the seated cultivators were stunned.

They were not the only ones; even the manager froze on the spot in confusion.

Others may not know about it, but he knew who was in Room 1 today – that was the chief steward of their Sky Treasure Auction House!

"Why is that big shot involved as well?"

The manager was a little perplexed.

Stopping in his tracks, the disheveled old man turned back and looked at Sima Zhi with a mocking gaze.

Someone appeared to raise the price right after Sima Zhi made his grand announcement and bragged – it was clear that the other party was at odds with him.

Of course, neither Sima Zhi nor the disheveled old man knew who was inside Room 1.

After all, the maidservant was only a messenger.

The manager froze for a moment before coughing gently. "The customer of Room 1... has raised the bid to 410,000!"

Sima Zhi frowned and looked at Room 1 for a long time before saying slowly, "420,000!"

The maidservant in front of Room 1 turned slightly and listened for a moment. She turned around and shouted, "430,000!"

Sima Zhi looked hesitant.

Anyone who could enter the ten rooms above must either be extremely powerful or of high status. Otherwise, they would have to spend a lot of spirit stones.

Sima Zhi knew nothing about the other party's identity, strength or sect. Because of that, he felt a little worried.

Crossing his arms, the disheveled old man asked at the side, "Sima Zhi, what's wrong? Why aren't you raising the bid anymore?"

Suddenly, Sima Zhi laughed and shook his head. "I don't want it anymore. We have many of such ancient books in True Fire Sect anyways. I only raised the bid just so that you can't get your hands on it!"

"You sure are shameless!" The disheveled old man cursed coldly.

Sima Zhi chuckled. "Shameless? I just don't want to let a pearl be covered in dust. No one in Ethereal Peak can understand an ancient book as such anyways. Haha!"

After laughing, Sima Zhi cupped his fists in the direction of Room 1 and said loudly, "Since this fellow daoist has taken a liking to this ancient book, I can only give it up."

The manager wiped away his cold sweat secretly and declared, "Congratulations to the customer in Room 1 for obtaining this ancient book at 430,000."

Right then, the maidservant in front of Room 1 turned away once more.

Many cultivators realized that the person inside had more to say.

After a moment, the maidservant turned back and said, "Please give that ancient book as a gift for this fellow daoist of Room 77 from Ethereal Peak."

Gift!

The entire crowd fell silent.

Everyone was stunned and dumbfounded.

Sima Zhi was a little confused.

The disheveled old man was equally perplexed. He turned back and looked at his room – it was indeed Room 77.

Who was this person who had given him such a huge gift?

The first reaction of many cultivators was that the customer in Room 1 was joking.

However, the manager knew what sort of a person the chief steward of the Sky Treasure Auction House was. Even though she was a woman, she was not someone who would go back on her words and make a joke as such!

He wrapped the ancient book immediately and came towards the entrance of Room 77 personally. Under everyone's gaze, the manager passed the ancient book to the disheveled old man.

It was only then that everyone finally realized what was going on and their expressions changed.

Sima Zhi's expression darkened immediately.

It did not matter who the other party was – they were clearly pitting themselves against him!

However, Sima Zhi could not understand what kind of status the other party had. It was too much for them to give away a gift of more than 400,000 superior-grade spirit stones just like that!

“Fellow daoist, what’s the meaning of this? Are you pitting yourself against the True Fire Sect intentionally?”

Instantly, Sima Zhi brought out the name of his sect.

“Because I like it.”

The maidservant shook her head and pretended to be smug.

It was a familiar sentence – Sima Zhi had said that to the disheveled old man. Now, it was sent right back to him!

Actually, that maidservant was only around 13 years old. She wasn’t tall and looked charmingly naive. With a pair of big, clear eyes, her voice was crisp.

The fact that she mimicked Sima Zhi’s tone in saying that sentence was extremely interesting.

Instantly, the crowd burst into laughter.

Chapter 160: Seven Fiend Sects

Catharsis!

The disheveled old man’s first reaction was catharsis!

When he saw how Sima Zhi looked as though he had just been fed shit, the disheveled old man felt an indescribable joy and could not help but laugh along with the crowd.

With a darkened gaze, Sima Zhi glared at Room 1 with an icy stare. He grit his teeth in hatred and could only feel his cheeks burning from the surrounding laughter.

This act by the other party was no different from slapping him on the face!

“Fufu.”

A moment later, Sima Zhi suddenly laughed and asked with raised brow, “Fellow daoist, what sect are you from? I’m keen to befriend you. Could you be kind enough to show yourself?”

Even though Sima Zhi sounded polite, everyone could hear the resentment in his voice.

Once the both of them met, the feud would be formed.

“No.”

The maidservant heard the transmission from within and rejected decisively.

When Sima Zhi saw that the other party refused to appear, he no longer had any qualms. He guessed that the other party must be fearful of him or his backing from True Fire Sect.

His question earlier was merely to test the other party out.

If the other party showed themselves and they were of a reputable status, Sima Zhi would merely mock himself and admit defeat without losing anything.

If the other party showed themselves and they were of a common status, Sima Zhi would be able to remember who was the one who caused him to lose today.

But, if they didn't show themselves...

"Humph!"

He snorted coldly and said in a sinister manner, "Fellow daoist, you don't know what's good for you! Do you think that I won't be able to discover your identity just because you're hiding inside? If I find out who you are, I'll..."

"Sima Zhi, this inner house is not a place for you to act wildly!"

Before Sima Zhi could finish, he was interrupted by a loud shout.

Everyone turned to the direction of the voice. Not far away, the manager of the Sky Treasure Auction House was no longer smiling. He had a fierce expression and was clearly glaring at Sima Zhi with a warning look!

Zhou Rui, the manager of Sky Treasure Auction House, was always known to be smiling. However, he was also a Golden Core and was not to be underestimated.

Moreover, as a businessman, no one had seen Zhou Rui lose his temper all these years. Everyone was shocked by this scene.

"Manager Zhou, you...!" Sima Zhi was a little stunned.

"Sima Zhi, if you dare to create trouble at my Sky Treasure Auction House, even True Fire Sect won't be able to protect you!" Manager Zhou interrupted Sima Zhi and declared again.

Immediately, Sima Zhi shut up. However, he felt extremely terrible within.

In truth, Zhou Rui did not know that Su Zimo was in Room 1 nor did he know that it was the latter's idea to give away the ancient book as a gift.

He thought that everything was the intention of Chief Steward Gu Xi.

Now that Sima Zhi was acting so brazenly to even dare threaten Gu Xi, Zhou Rui saw it as a perfect opportunity to curry favor with the chief steward and would naturally not let it go. His attitude had changed so quickly that everyone was caught off guard.

Sima Zhi was at a loss for words and his face turned red. No longer able to stay at this place, he left in a huff.

Zhou Rui watched him leave before smiling once again. He bowed in a circle. "Let the auction continue, ha!"

The disheveled old man held onto the ancient book and looked up at Room 1 in confusion.

He decided to return to his room first and clarify things with them after the auction was over.

430,000 superior-grade spirit stones!

If he did not clarify things for such a grand gift, the disheveled old man would feel uneasy.

...

Room 1.

Gu Xi watched everything unfold from the sides and was amused.

Even though this green robed man looked to be pretty mature, he had a childish side to him. Just like that, he gave away something worth more than 400,000 superior-grade spirit stones!

Even if they were both from Ethereal Peak, that was still an extremely huge gift!

In truth, to Su Zimo, it made no difference whether that ancient book was given to him or the disheveled old man.

He was absolutely certain that the disheveled old man wanted to purchase that book because of him!

Furthermore, the choice to give away the book helped the disheveled old man vent his anger – that was more important to Su Zimo.

For the past two years, the disheveled old man had treated him well like family.

Su Zimo could not bear to see him get bullied.

“Aren’t we meeting him later?” Gu Xi asked.

“No.”

Su Zimo hesitated for a moment before shaking his head eventually.

It wasn’t a big deal to meet the disheveled old man, but things weren’t easy to explain. If so, it was better not to meet him.

“Alright, you can leave first. I’ll look for you in three days.”

Under the lead of a maidservant, Su Zimo left through the back door of Room 1. Downstairs, he was arranged to a relatively quiet room for the time being.

“Yaoyan, no one knows what’s going on in that place exactly. Furthermore, I heard that fiend heirs of the six sects have brought people over. Are you sure you want to get involved in such a complicated situation?”

After Su Zimo left, Gu Xi looked at the girl in pink sternly and asked.

“Hehe.”

The girl in pink laughed. “Auntie Gu, don’t worry. I’ll definitely be fine. Furthermore, how can I miss such a grand gathering with fiend heirs of the six sects gathered.”

“You’re different from them.”

Gu Xi shook her head. "Of the seven fiend sects, only the Pure Maiden Sect has a singular heir. Furthermore, you don't have a reliable helper. This trip is way too dangerous. Are you really counting on that Su Zimo?"

"It's fine."

The girl in pink waved it off. "Before this, I've already selected a couple of people carefully and they're all stronger than Su Zimo. He's just there to make up the numbers."

"Besides, I'm the pure maiden of this generation's fiend sects. If things go bad, I can stop in time and the fiend heirs of the other six sects won't dare to lay a hand on me," After pondering for a moment, the girl in pink added.

"Yes, that's true as well," Gu Xi nodded. She contemplated for a while. "But if that happens, the few people you take along with you might not survive."

"If they die, so be it."

The girl in pink scoffed coldly, "They are just hypocrites. Even though they seem righteous on the surface, their hearts are dirtier than anyone else."

"Is Su Zimo like that too?" Gu Xi asked with a fake smile.

"Him?"

The girl in pink hesitated before shaking her head. "Indeed... he's different from them. His gaze is clear and there's no malice in the way he looks at me."

The both of them continued chatting for a while and the auction ended.

There was a knock on the door outside. A maidservant pushed the door and entered. "Manager Zhou is here with Room 77's Golden Core from Ethereal Peak. He wants to express his thanks personally."

"Not meeting."

Gu Xi waved it off.

This was a favor for Su Zimo so naturally, she would not meet the disheveled old man.

Gu Xi left with the girl in pink from the back.

The disheveled old man was even more surprised when he did not manage to meet anyone. He thought for a long time to no avail before finally leaving the Sky Treasure Auction House filled with doubts.

Instantly, he headed straight back to Ethereal Peak, intending to pass the ancient book to Su Zimo right away.