

Chapter 241: Taking the Blame

The roar did not last long before it disappeared.

However, an even more terrifying pressure enveloped the surroundings of the godly mountain!

“Boom!”

There was a deafening sound.

It was as though a huge life form had descended at the top of the mountain, causing it to tremble with the risk of collapsing at any moment!

Any thoughts of escaping by now would simply be a fool’s dream.

Su Zimo looked at the gray robed cultivator. He believed that even if the latter was a Golden Core, he would not be able to escape!

Unhurriedly, the gray robed cultivator pulled out a dark rag from his storage bag.

His entire figure flickered as he walked to a corner and covered himself with the rag.

Right in front of Su Zimo’s eyes, the gray robed cultivator’s figure disappeared entirely along with his aura, as though he was one with the wall – there was no trace left at all!

If he had not seen it personally, Su Zimo would not have believed it.

It was as if the gray robed cultivator had disappeared into thin air!

However, Su Zimo knew that the gray robed cultivator was still there hiding in the corner.

While the rag may have looked inconspicuous, it could hide its tracks and even conceal its aura such that one couldn’t be discovered!

That was what the gray robed cultivator relied on.

In the blink of an eye, Su Zimo was the only one left in the cave. He was all alone with eggshells that were licked cleanly scattered all over the floor.

Anyone who saw this would instantly guess the truth.

Su Zimo did not have much time to think – the powerful life form on top of the godly mountain could descend at any moment!

With a swift motion, Su Zimo headed to the corner where the gray robed cultivator was hiding and stood by the side expressionlessly.

The well hidden gray robed cultivator was initially waiting to see Su Zimo make a fool out of himself but when he saw this, he was shocked.

Even though the treasure he had could hide his body and conceal his aura, it was unable to withstand the impact of any attacks.

If the life form outside were to see everything within the cave, it would definitely lose its mind and be enraged.

By then, if the life form were to launch an apocalyptic attack in Su Zimo's direction, he would definitely be implicated as well!

Instantly, the gray robed cultivator understood Su Zimo's intentions.

"Fuc... what a schemer!"

The gray robed cultivator cursed internally.

Even if he attacked Su Zimo, it was already too late and he would expose himself.

The gray robed cultivator wanted nothing more than to send Su Zimo flying with a kick. However, he had no choice but to spread the rag and pull Su Zimo under it as well.

Instantly, the figures and aura of both men disappeared.

Right after he did that, the godly mountain was met with a tremendous force that sent the peak of the mountain flying, exposing the cave entirely.

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When the Blood Crow Palace's Lord sensed the arrival of the terrifying aura, he realized that it was already too late to leave – doing so would only cause misunderstandings.

Fortunately, he had not entered the cave and would not have offended the life forms here.

Furthermore, according to the blood curse's guidance, Su Zimo was hidden in this cave.

Once the life form of this primordial ruin arrived, that lad would have nowhere to run from the cave and would die for sure!

If everything went well, he would reveal his identity and the other party shouldn't make things difficult for him.

He could then leave this place safely despite the dangerous journey it was.

Roar! Roar! Roar!

As the Palace Lord expected, a series of powerful roars could be heard right after the arrival of the terrifying aura. The deafening howls shot into the clouds and cracked all the rocks around.

A few seconds after, the primordial life form descended on the godly mountain!

Although he was mentally prepared, the pupils of the Palace Lord could not help but constrict while his heart palpitated upon seeing the primordial life form with his very eyes.

The primordial life form had yet to reveal its full appearance.

However, merely half of its body that circled the godly mountain was more than enough to envelop it almost completely!

The massive body circled around the godly mountain, hundreds of meters long and covered with green scales that shone with a cold gleam.

Clang! Clang!

Beneath that body, a pair of gigantic claws popped out. Their joints protruded and they were extremely sharp, almost piercing through the entire godly mountain when they dug into it!

The primordial life form's horns were towering as he looked down with eyes that emitted a cold light filled with killing intent.

There was a beard on the chin of the primordial life form. When it opened its huge mouth, terrifyingly sharp teeth were revealed as thick saliva drooled from the side of the mouth of that ferocious face.

Dragon!

This was a true dragon!

The Palace Lord had read about the form of a dragon in the ancient records of the clan. But now that he was seeing it in real life, he was still extremely shocked.

The descriptions in the ancient records were less than one percent of what it actually was!

At best, the ancient records could only describe the appearance. However, the unique aura and dominance of a dragon was something that could not be penned down.

If Su Zimo could see this divine dragon right now, he would definitely recall something.

Before entering the primordial ruin, the gray robed cultivator had once said, "I've seen a True Dragon before. Even though it was just a scale and half a claw, it was shocking enough! That single scale was bigger than our entire bodies and that claw was longer and sharper than our flying swords!"

No one took those words for real.

However, looking at it now, the divine dragon's appearance was even superior to what the gray robed cultivator had described!

Without using much strength, the divine dragon sent half of the godly mountain flying, exposing everything within the cave instantly.

The Palace Lord took a single look and blood drained from his face immediately.

Nobody!

The depths of the cave was in a huge mess with a gigantic dragon egg that was smashed into pieces. The liquid within disappeared and even the eggshells were licked cleanly.

But, there was nobody at all!

To be precise, there was only a single person – him.

A dragon egg was eaten by someone.

Other than the divine dragon who had just arrived, the only person left in the scene was him.

There was no way of explaining himself!

The Palace Lord was a little stunned – this was completely different from what he had imagined.

When the divine dragon caught sight of the eggshells on the floor, an endless fury and wrath surged in its eyes, almost spewing out with fire.

Instantly, the Palace Lord felt a chilling killing intent gushing towards him!

“N-no, it’s not me!”

The Palace Lord was completely flustered.

As someone at Void Reversion realm with the title of Dao Being, there was almost no one in the Great Zhou Dynasty who could be a match for him. Even so, against an adult dragon, the odds were completely stacked against him!

The gray robed cultivator hidden in a corner was a little stunned as well.

How was there someone else as well?

“That person is quite skillful. He must be a professional at taking the blame. To think that he would rush over at a time like this with such an accurate timing...” The gray robed cultivator lamented internally.

The two of them hid in the corner motionlessly, not even daring to lift the rag to check out the situation outside.

However, when he heard the commotion outside, Su Zimo could roughly guess what was going on.

The person who spoke earlier was probably the pursuer hunting him down!

Su Zimo truly wanted to lift the rag up and check out that person’s appearance; he was also curious about what the primordial life form that had appeared was.

But, he remained rational and endured it.

At a time as such, any slight movement could expose the both of them!

Chapter 242: Dragon Race

“Swoosh!”

The divine dragon let out a breath in the direction of the Blood Crow Palace’s Lord and a faint green mist spewed out from its mouth.

The surrounding air instantly burned!

As the green mist streaked through the void, the surrounding space went into a state of chaos while light distorted!

“Dragon Flame!”

The Palace Lord’s expression changed starkly as he exclaimed.

Dragon Flame was an innate ability unique to the dragon race. After every dragon was born, they would naturally be able to master this ability after growing to a certain state.

Furthermore, the older they grew, the deeper their cultivations would become. In turn, the might of Dragon Flame would grow as well, even till the point of being able to incinerate the heavens and seas!

That was the divine power of the legends.

While the Dragon Flame in front of him was far from the level of being a divine power, it was far beyond what the Palace Lord could withstand as well.

Slapping on his storage bag, the Palace Lord took out a talisman and crushed it on the spot.

Right after, he whipped out a blood-colored bone staff. At the very top, there was a skull that emitted an eerie aura embedded on it.

“Blood Pattern Curse!”

The Palace Lord waved his bone staff and two beams of bloody light shot out from the sockets of the skull!

As if alive, the skull suddenly opened its mouth and shot out a green beam of light.

The blood and green lights fused together to form a drop of blood.

Instantly, the blood exploded and formed a series of ripples in the air that flew towards the Dragon Flame.

Poof! Poof! Poof!

The two completely different forces clashed, collided, corroded and fought in midair, letting out a series of sounds as three different colored lights spewed in all directions in an extremely dazzling manner!

While Su Zimo and the gray robed cultivator who were hidden in a corner could not see what was going on, they could sense the terrifying fluctuations of that energy!

Not to mention Su Zimo, even the Golden Core gray robed cultivator would lose his life on the spot if he was struck by the feedback of the fight between those two powerful beings.

Both Su Zimo and the gray robed cultivator looked terrible as they held their breaths, not daring to make a single sound.

The power of the Dragon Flame was clearly superior to the Blood Pattern Curse.

The two energies were locked in a stalemate for a moment before the Dragon Flame burned the series of blood patterns into a crisp and descended before the Palace Lord.

Having crushed the protection talisman earlier on, the Palace Lord was surrounded by a defensive barrier.

Crack! Crack! Crack!

This was the most advanced protection talisman amongst Grade 5 Talismans!

However, it was still incapable of withstanding the corrosion of the Dragon Flame as cracks appeared before long – it was about to disperse at any moment.

Naturally, the Dragon Flame’s might was also reduced after being mowed down by the defense of the Blood Pattern Curse and the Grade 5 Talisman.

“Dissipate!”

The Palace Lord waved his blood-colored bone staff once more, his eyes flashing a faint green as he hollered.

Bang!

Finally, the Dragon Flame dissipated into the air after three consecutive strikes from the Palace Lord.

At this moment, the divine dragon swayed in the air with its massive body completely expanded and exposed in front of the Palace Lord, radiating with an aura that could make one tremble!

The appearance of a divine dragon caused the weather to change!

By resisting, the Palace Lord made the divine dragon even more furious.

“Fellow Daoist of the dragon race, we’re both from the nine races. I barged into this treasure ground by accident, please show mercy,” The Palace Lord yelled immediately with a pale face.

In the corner, Su Zimo was shocked when he heard that.

Dragon race!

Could the primordial life form outside actually be from the dragon race?

Did dragons really exist in this world?

At that moment, an impulse surged in Su Zimo’s heart – he wanted to tear off the rag to see the appearance of one from the dragon race.

However, Su Zimo endured it still.

Back when he was studying in Ping Yang Town, he had already heard many legends about dragons.

Vague and without basis, those legends were merely folk tales that spread among the mortal realm.

Su Zimo had never taken them seriously before.

In fact, before he encountered Perfected Being Cang Lang, he did not believe that immortals existed as well.

Later on, Su Zimo stepped on the path of cultivation and joined Ethereal Peak.

In Ethereal Peak, Su Zimo read through some ancient books.

None of them had any records about dragons.

Even if there were, they were extremely short and vague.

By reading many ancient books, one could piece together some limited information.

Dragons were terrifying existences of the primordial era. They were not part of the demon race and were a unique race of their own, known as the dragon race.

Legend has it that the dragon race was extremely strong and they were incomparably glorious in the primordial era, reigning through the ancient times!

However, for some unknown reason, the dragon race disappeared from the sands of time and became extinct, turning into mere legends.

Su Zimo bore a sense of doubt towards those records.

From his point of view, since the dragon race possessed such a majestic history, there would definitely be some traces of them left in Tianhuang Mainland.

Before this, Su Zimo had never seen anything about it before.

Instantly, an image of the massive skeleton that nearly penetrated the entire sea of bones appeared in Su Zimo's mind.

Could that have been... a dragon's corpse?!

The thought of that possibility gave Su Zimo a shock.

Frowning, he recalled what was said earlier on and a thought flashed through his mind, "Nine races? What is that?"

On the other end, a glint flickered through the gray robed cultivator's eyes momentarily upon hearing that.

"He's someone of the nine races?"

"Blood Pattern Curse. Could it be..."

The gray robed cultivator's eyes flashed as he guessed the identity of the Palace Lord.

"So what if you're someone of the nine races? Notwithstanding the fact that your bloodline is impure making you a bastard child, even if you were pure-blooded, coming here to eat a descendant of the dragon race is just asking to die!"

Within the void, a deep and powerful voice boomed out. Every single word that came out was like a clap of thunder that shook one's mind.

Swoosh!

The divine dragon swayed its tail.

Filled with green scales, the dragon's tail that was thick like a divine whip slammed down at the Palace Lord with a destructive force!

"Ah!"

The Palace Lord's expression changed starkly as he exclaimed.

Before the dragon's tail even arrived, a suffocating aura of death had already approached.

The Palace Lord bit his tongue gently and spat out a drop of blood essence.

After spitting out the blood essence, the Palace Lord seemed to have weakened massively as his eyes dimmed in a dispirited manner.

By sacrificing that essence blood, he would have to take more than ten years of recuperation to recover even if he could survive that dragon's tail.

“Go!”

The Palace Lord chanted a chain of obscure incantations and waved his blood-colored bone staff, pointing it forward.

The blood light transformed into a gigantic skeleton which gnawed towards the dragon's tail!

At the same time, the Palace Lord took out a handful of talismans from his storage bag and crushed them all!

His eyes revealed a pained expression.

He had gathered those talismans through the course of many years, but he did not expect that they would all be used up in this one round.

He was painfully aggrieved for this battle!

He was originally chasing a mere Foundation Establishment Cultivator that was bound to be killed.

But for some reason, he was the one being put in a passive position for the entire situation, as if someone was leading him by the nose.

After a round of torture, he arrived at this place by some freak accident and took on the blame of being targeted by a divine dragon without even seeing anyone at all...!

Chapter 243: Minor Transference Talisman

“Bang!”

The dragon's tail collided heavily with the head of the skeleton and let out a earth-shattering sound in the air.

Almost instantly, the skull was crushed into power and dispersed in the surroundings.

Swoosh!

The dragon tail's momentum did not stop and whipped the Blood Crow Palace's Lord's body viciously.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Even the stacked talismans were unable to withstand the ferocity of the divine dragon's tail!

The Palace Lord's glabella lit up as a tyrannical spirit consciousness surged forth, resisting it with all its might.

Bang!

Like a kite that was snapped, the Palace Lord was sent flying from half of the mountain and landed heavily on the ground, creating a massive dust cloud.

“Pfft!”

He coughed out a mouthful of blood as color drained from his face. His eyes dimmed as his bones were all broken; even his organs were shattered!

If not for his final attempt to fight back, that tail would have whipped him into a mist of blood!

The difference was too great.

They were on completely different levels.

“It’s really... not me! I’ve only just arrived and didn’t even enter.”

Enduring the massive pain, the Palace Lord gasped with a trembling voice.

“Who else could it be if it wasn’t you!”

The divine dragon hovered in midair and looked down at the Palace Lord as it questioned him loudly. Its eyes were filled with a frosty killing intent.

The Palace Lord took a deep breath and said, “Fellow Daoist of the dragon race, please listen to me. The reason why I came here was because I was trying to kill someone. Your descendant must have been eaten by that person. He’s the true murderer!”

“I believe that he is still around here! He must have used some kind of trick to conceal himself and must not have gone far!”

Upon hearing that, Su Zimo and the gray robed cultivator who were hiding in the corner felt their hearts clench – they were so scared that they did not even dare to take deep breaths.

The gray robed cultivator lamented internally.

While it was true that his rag had the ability to deceive one’s vision, it was also based on the circumstances.

Be it whether the dragon’s egg was stolen or eaten, the divine dragon would definitely be heavily affected by that blow. In that troubled state, it would go crazy and lose its mind, rushing out to hunt for the murderer immediately.

With the rag to conceal their bodies and hide their auras, it would be easy to escape at that moment.

Furthermore, the divine dragon would not have expected that instead of leaving right away, they would be hiding within the cave.

That was the psychological blind spot.

However, the gray robed cultivator did not expect that this Palace Lord would appear out of nowhere in the chaos.

Hunting Su Zimo to this place, he deduced that Su Zimo was in the cave with the guidance of the blood curse's power!

That was the reason why the Palace Lord said what he said.

If the dragon turned around and searched the cave, the gray robed cultivator's rag turn into a complete ornament!

The rag could hide them from the detection of Golden Cores or even Nascent Souls with extreme ease.

However, it was a fool's dream to think that it could hide them from the detection of an adult dragon.

Right after the Palace Lord said that, silence descended outside.

The atmosphere turned extremely strange.

The world seemed to have stopped!

A look of determination flashed through the gray robed cultivator's eyes as he reached for his storage bag while putting away the rag at the same time.

At this moment, if they continued hiding, it would just be deceiving themselves.

A talisman appeared in the palms of the gray robed cultivator.

Minor Transference Talisman!

This was a type of talisman in the ancient era which had been lost through the times.

Even in the ancient era, the Minor Transference Talisman was famous and was extremely rare.

Crushing a Minor Transference Talisman could bring someone away from their current location instantly, teleporting them thousands of kilometers away!

While the end point was uncertain, an ability like that was enough to move every cultivator.

After all, it meant that any cultivators in possession of the Minor Transference Talisman could instantly escape from danger and ensure that they would not die!

The value of a Minor Transference Talisman was self-evident.

Using one meant that there was one less available.

In the current cultivation world, the Minor Transference Talisman was something considered to be priceless. No amount of spirit stones could buy one.

To be fair, the gray robed cultivator had not expected to make use of the Minor Transference Talisman in his original plans.

However, given the pressing circumstances, he was going to die if he did not use it!

The moment the gray robed cultivator pulled away the rag, two men appeared, standing in the deepest corner of the cave.

The Palace Lord blinked his green eyes – this was the first time he caught sight of Su Zimo.

As for Su Zimo, this was also the first time he saw his pursuer.

Even though it was a short moment, the two of them memorized each other immediately.

The next moment, Su Zimo caught sight of the primordial life form spiraled in the skies.

Psst!

His heart skipped a beat as his pupils constricted right away, gasping for a breath of cold air.

It was too shocking!

If he had not seen it himself, Su Zimo would not have been able to imagine that a life form could grow to such an extent while radiating such a terrifying and intimidating presence!

In front of this primordial life form, Su Zimo actually felt a sense of insignificance and an urge to prostrate himself in worship.

It was as if the other party was incomparably noble and supreme!

The thought gushed into his mind, as though it was deeply embedded in the foundation of his bloodline.

Su Zimo frowned.

This feeling made him feel extremely disgusted.

Unless he was willing, Su Zimo would not bow down or kneel to anyone!

He narrowed his eyes with a burning gaze. Against the might of the divine dragon, he puffed up his chest instead while a trace of sharp killing intent was revealed in his eyes!

The moment that humble feeling emerged, Su Zimo crushed it into nothingness!

While the change that happened in Su Zimo was extremely short, almost instantaneous, the gray robed cultivator sensed it.

He looked at Su Zimo deeply.

This was the first time he felt that this green-robed cultivator was not simple.

He was the only one who knew clearly how difficult it would be to break free from the authoritative might and aura of someone from the dragon race.

Not only did it require an indestructible willpower, it also required a confidence that bordered towards arrogance and a type of dominance that would have one look down upon the entire world and fear nothing!

There might be cultivators out there who could fulfill some of those requirements.

However, there were only a few who could meet all three.

Su Zimo in front of him was one of them.

If Su Zimo had already given the gray robed cultivator a newfound respect, the black and unassuming little dog in Su Zimo's robes was even more incredible!

“How is that possible?”

The gray robed cultivator’s eyes were filled with disbelief.

Against the divine dragon that was spiraling in the skies with a holy light shimmering around it and menacing horns on its head, there was no trace of fear to be found in Night Spirit’s eyes!

Most of its body was hidden in Su Zimo’s embrace, revealing only a pair of pitch black eyes. With a calm expression, it glared at the divine dragon in the skies coldly.

Night Spirit’s gaze was a little strange such that the gray robed cultivator could not put it to words.

However, he would always remember that gaze.

Many years later, when the gray robed cultivator finally found out about Night Spirit’s origin, he would be enlightened upon recalling this gaze...

Chapter 244: Escape

Towards Su Zimo, the gray robed cultivator bore extreme resentment the entire time.

If not for this person, he would have long escaped unscathed after stealing the dragon’s egg. In the future, he would have nurtured a divine dragon – how glorious would that be?

But now, not only was the dragon’s egg gone, even the most precious and rarest treasure in his possession, the Minor Transference Talisman, was taken out!

‘This is a huge loss!’

The gray robed cultivator cursed internally. After crushing the Minor Transference Talisman, his first instinct was to send Su Zimo flying with a kick!

He was vengeful!

Why else would he have landed in such a sorry state if not for that green-robed cultivator?

However, when he sensed the change in Su Zimo alongside Night Spirit’s gaze, the gray robed cultivator changed his mind at the last minute.

He decided to take the green-robed cultivator and that black dog along with him!

“That’s.... a Minor Transference Talisman?”

The Blood Crow Palace’s Lord’s gaze narrowed as he instantly recognized that talisman.

The Minor Transference Talisman was crushed.

An extremely strange energy fluctuation burst forth from the gray robed cultivator’s palm.

A sudden violent tremble broke out in the space!

Right after, a humongous vortex appeared behind the gray robed cultivator; its core was dark and bottomless like a black hole!

An extremely powerful suction force worked itself on the gray robed cultivator.

Before he was dragged into the black hole, the gray robed cultivator reached out and grabbed Su Zimo's arm, yanking the latter along.

The entire process seemed very slow upon narration but in fact, it occurred in the split of a moment.

Swoosh!

The two figures were swallowed whole by the black hole and disappeared.

Almost instantly, the divine dragon that was still in the skies transformed into a massive beam of green light and descended upon the middle of the mountain, causing the godly mountain to crack and collapse on the spot!

Even though the divine dragon's speed was fast enough, it was still a step slower.

"Roar!"

Enraged, it opened its blood red mouth and saliva dripped down, howling with an earth-shattering dragon's roar that reverberated through the world!

Around the head of the divine dragon, the sound seemed to be corporeal and formed ripples that spread in all directions, sweeping through the entire primordial ruin such that the countless corpses in the sea of bones were sent jumping!

Countless white boned beasts were awakened, seemingly summoned.

Even the skeleton of a dragon that permeated through the entire sea of bones was vibrating as if it wanted to soar into the heavens!

The moment the dragon's roar ended, a faint dragon's roar could be heard from a valley made up of a mountain range behind the godly mountain.

The dragon's roar from the valley was neither loud nor clear, but it carried the weight of time – it was dignified and majestic!

"Ugh!"

The Palace Lord grunted in pain, looking even more terrible.

The dragon roar from the valley seemed insignificant, but it almost shattered his Essence Spirit!

The white boned beasts that were formed in the sea of bones collapsed into many bones and fell to the ground once more.

Intersecting in the air, the two dragon roars seemed to be communicating something.

The divine dragon in the air above was extremely furious, howling in a frenzied manner.

However, the dragon roar from the valley seemed to be trying to stop it.

The argument between both parties grew more intense and could not sustain any longer. Finally, the divine dragon let out a final roar and turned into a green beam of light, disappearing from the skies above the godly mountain as it sped towards the outside of the sea of bones.

...

There were many cultivators pacing around the perimeter of the primordial forest still.

These were extremely cautious cultivators who did not dare to step foot into the primordial forest casually.

However, they were indignant about leaving just like that as well.

Not long later, a loud roar burst forth from the direction of the primordial ruin.

Some of the cultivators frowned. Vaguely sensing that something was amiss, fear flickered in their eyes as they turned and left.

But for most of the cultivators, they were excited as they discussed fervently. Flying into the skies, they kept looking towards the ruin.

“That voice is so strange. I wonder what sort of beast that is.”

“By the sounds of it, that beast is not weak. It might be a beast from the primordial era that’s already extinct in Tianhuang Mainland.”

“Hmph, if that beast dares to show itself, I’ll definitely take it down personally and force it into a blood oath with me!”

Before long, a towering divine dragon with a head of horns crossed the sea of bones, the primordial forest, and arrived in the air with an imposing aura. Looking down at the vast land, it emitted a terrifying pressure with a murderous look in its eyes.

Everyone was aghast!

The cultivators that were in midair felt their limbs go cold and limp as they fell to the ground one after another.

Thud! Thud!

The cultivators that were standing all knelt down.

Under the boundless might of the dragon, the thousands of cultivators trembled with pale faces in silence.

The cultivator who said that he was going to take down the beast was already scared out of his wits, peeing and shitting on the spot. Kneeling on the ground, he kowtowed profusely.

“Roar!”

The divine dragon roared into the sky.

Poof! Poof! Poof!

Outside the primordial forest, thousands of cultivators exploded, turning into a bloody mist of flesh and sludge as they died on the spot!

The cultivators who left earlier were shocked when they saw the scene from afar.

It was too tragic!

Several thousand cultivators, including Golden Cores, could not even withstand the howl of a divine dragon!

In the blink of an eye, the area outside the primordial forest turned into an Asura hell with corpses strewn all over and rivers of blood.

The divine dragon hated those cultivators to the core.

To it, those people were no different from the two who had escaped.

After taking a closer look, the divine dragon soared into the skies and flew above the nine heavens with a murderous killing intent. Speeding into the distance, it disappeared into the skies above the primordial ruin before long.

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It was only until then that the Palace Lord let out a heave of relief.

He had survived?

Lying on the ground, everything felt surreal and the Palace Lord had a dazed expression.

Fortunately, the divine dragon chose to leave in the end. Otherwise, he was dead for sure!

Standing up with much difficulty, the Palace Lord clutched his blood-colored bone staff and trawled his immensely injured body to cross the sea of bones, arriving before the primordial forest once more.

“Master!”

The Blood Crow King had been waiting for a long time. When he saw the terrible state the Palace Lord was in, his expression changed as he hurriedly rushed up to support the latter.

“What’s going on? How did this happen?” The Blood Crow King was a little lost.

Gritting his teeth, the Palace Lord clenched his teeth, revealing an endless amount of hatred in his eyes as he trembled in rage.

At this moment, he was finally regaining his senses.

Right from the beginning, this chase was already part of Su Zimo’s trap.

Not only did he fail to kill that lad personally, he nearly died – it was a complete failure!

The injuries on his body were immense and he would require several decades of recuperation to recover.

“Su Zimo, fufufu... you must live well. Don’t let anything happen to you. The moment I reappear, that will be the time for you to die!”

The Palace Lord’s expression was grim as he let out a series of laughter with a vicious gaze.

The Blood Crow King stood at the side, not daring to say anything.

A long while later, the Palace Lord took a deep breath of air and said in a low voice, "Let's go! Back to Black Crow Mountain!"

"Master, it's going to be hard for us to cross this primordial forest given your serious injuries."

"Call all of your clansmen here! Even if those blood crows have to die here, they have to make a path for me to get out!"

After a moment of silence, the Blood Crow King nodded. "Understood."

Chapter 245: Targeting Night Spirit

In the void thousands of kilometers away from the primordial ruin, a gigantic black hole appeared and two figures tumbled out of it, landing heavily onto the ground with a massive dust cloud.

Su Zimo's body was strong and he felt nothing much.

"Ouch!"

On the other hand, the gray robed cultivator was crying out in pain.

While he was a Golden Core, his physique was not as strong as Su Zimo's. The fall had him baring his teeth and hissing in pain.

Looking around, Su Zimo realized that they had left the primordial ruin and arrived at a completely foreign place.

Minor Transference Talisman."

His eyes shimmered as he murmured.

He knew nothing about talismans and that was the first time he had heard of that talisman as well.

However, the ability of the Minor Transference Talisman was an eye-opener for Su Zimo.

Space teleportation!

In Tianhuang Mainland, most cultivators who wanted to teleport had to set up teleportation formations in advance.

The higher the level of the teleportation formation, the further they could be teleported.

Su Zimo had never expected that a seemingly simple talisman could actually activate the effect of space teleportation!

To be fair, given those circumstances, it would be impossible for him and the gray robed cultivator to escape if not for the Minor Transference Talisman.

His mind flashed as he recalled that shocking final glimpse he had before leaving the primordial ruin.

That massively slender body that was covered in scales as though it was flowing with water of steel. Its head was hideous and it had sharp claws, letting out an explosive power of might from head to toe!

That loud and clear roar that could pierce gold and crack rocks could only be perfectly described as a dragon's roar.

"Was... that really a dragon?"

Looking at the gray robed cultivator, Su Zimo could not help but ask.

The many things that Su Zimo experienced today had completely exceeded his understanding of the world, the cultivation world and Tianhuang Mainland.

Until now, Su Zimo could not believe that an actual living, breathing dragon had appeared before him!

Furthermore, he was nearly killed by that dragon!

When he heard Su Zimo's question, the gray robed cultivator rolled his eyes and scoffed coldly, "What else do you think?"

It was really a dragon!

In the distant primordial era, there was an incomparably strong race known as the dragon race.

Right after, Su Zimo thought of something.

Since that green life form was a dragon, that meant that the gigantic egg inside the cave... was a dragon's egg!

"I actually ate a dragon!"

Su Zimo was shocked.

Or rather, to be accurate, it was half a dragon.

Night Spirit ate the other half.

The gray robed cultivator who was still seated on the ground got more frustrated the more he thought about it.

When he heard Su Zimo mumbling to himself at the side, he was even more furious and could not help but stand up. Advancing forward, he glared at Su Zimo and gritted his teeth. "You also know that you ate a dragon?!"

"Of all things, why did you have to eat a dragon's egg?"

"If you didn't eat that egg, it'll definitely give birth to a divine dragon in the future after I steal it! And now? I got nothing at all!"

Before Su Zimo could react, Night Spirit, who was hiding in his robes, suddenly extended its sharp claws with a cold gaze.

It was as if it would attack without hesitation if the gray robed cultivator had any strange movements!

The moment Night Spirit extended its claws, the gray robed cultivator felt a cold air blow past his back.

Sensing something, he lowered his head and glared at Night Spirit, hollering, "Why? You want to bite me, black dog? You arrogant little... eh?"

Looking at Night Spirit's claws, the gray robed cultivator narrowed his gaze and remarked softly.

The thickness of Night Spirit's claw was almost identical to the hole on the dragon's egg!

"Oh!"

Realization dawned on the gray robed cultivator as he said, "That whole mess... this black dog was actually the one that started it!"

Seeing the crazy manner of the gray robed cultivator, Night Spirit did not sense any hostility from him and was no longer bothered. It half-closed its eyes and sprawled on Su Zimo's chest again.

The gray robed cultivator sized Night Spirit up and pondered deeply.

Initially, he thought that Night Spirit was nothing but a mere dog.

He even mocked Su Zimo for raising a dog as a spirit beast.

However, from the looks of it, Night Spirit was not so simple!

A mere dog aside, even ancient remnant beasts or pure-blooded ferocious beasts might hesitate to eat if a dragon's egg was placed in front of them.

However, no matter how the gray robed cultivator thought about it, he could not find any demon beasts that could match with Night Spirit.

Rubbing his chin, the gray robed cultivator rolled his eyes as a thought slowly arose in his mind.

Right then, Su Zimo asked at the side, "I'm Su Zimo of Ethereal Peak. Fellow Daoist, may I know your name?"

"Lin Xuanji."

The gray robed cultivator's attention was mostly on Night Spirit as he replied without much thought.

Nodding his head, Su Zimo cupped his fists solemnly. "Thank you for saving me this time. If I have a chance, I'll definitely repay you in the future."

"There's no need for a future. You can do it now."

Lin Xuanji let out a smile and pointed to Night Spirit in Su Zimo's embrace. "Daoist, we'll consider your debt repaid if you give me that dog. How about it?"

Even though Lin Xuanji could not tell Night Spirit's background, he could tell that it had a great potential!

Even if it was truly a dog, it could definitely transform into a ferocious and terrifying spirit beast after eating half a dragon's egg!

Lin Xuanji could vaguely sense that if he could take Night Spirit away, it would definitely make up for his loss this time.

“Night Spirit?”

Su Zimo froze for a moment.

He had not expected that Lin Xuanji would target Night Spirit.

Chuckling, Su Zimo replied, “It’s not a problem for me to agree. However, Night Spirit will definitely not leave with you.”

“Hehe!”

Lin Xuanji let out a strange chuckle and asked, “So, you’re agreeable to that? If you are, then we are even and no one owes anyone anything. How about that?”

“Sure.”

Su Zimo nodded, smiling internally.

He knew Night Spirit’s temperament best – the gray robed cultivator would definitely be at a loss for wanting to target Night Spirit!

“Great!”

Lin Xuanji patted Su Zimo on the shoulder. “As long as you’re agreeable, leave the rest to me. I’ll show you my capabilities too!”

Su Zimo smiled without replying.

Coming before Night Spirit, Lin Xuanji asked with a smile, “Little black dog, come with me?”

Night Spirit ignored him and closed its eyes, seemingly asleep.

Lin Xuanji lifted the folding fan in his hands and tapped towards Night Spirit’s head, chiding softly, “This little fellow is quite good at pretending.”

Just as the folding fan was about to land on Night Spirit’s head, it suddenly woke up!

It raised its head and bit Lin Xuanji’s folding fan, letting out a threatening growl from its throat.

“Hey!”

Lin Xuanji panicked and withdrew his folding fan hurriedly.

However, Night Spirit bit on tightly and refused to relent.

“Don’t!”

Lin Xuanji waved the folding fan in his hands so frantically that his arm was almost dislocated. Only then did he manage to throw Night Spirit off.

Su Zimo swept his gaze over Lin Xuanji’s folding fan with a calm expression.

That folding fan was a treasure!

Night Spirit's bite was strong enough to snap even the Demon Suppressing Rope. However, the folding fan was not even scratched at all!

Chapter 246: Concealing the Heavenly Secrets

"Mad dog!"

Lin Xuanji almost broke out in cold sweat.

This little thing did not look very big and seemed like it was just born recently. However, it was quite strong and nearly pulled the folding fan away from his hand!

The folding fan in Lin Xuanji's hand was quite powerful – it was a symbol of his lineage.

If he really lost the fan, he would probably lose his life.

Furthermore, he could not afford to lose it!

The more Lin Xuanji thought about it, the more afraid he got.

If Night Spirit had really snatched his folding fan away, how would he tell the old man upon returning?

That his folding fan was lost and taken away by a dog...?

The old man would definitely whip him to death!

At that thought, Lin Xuanji glared at Night Spirit angrily.

Naturally, Night Spirit was unabashed and glared back as well.

The man and beast glared at one another. After a while, Lin Xuanji gave up and revealed a friendly smile.

"Mad dog... Ahem, Night Spirit. What do you think this is?"

With that said, Lin Xuanji took out a small bottle from his storage bag and removed the bottle stopper. Instantly, a strong herbal fragrance wafted out.

There was even a faint smell of blood mixed with the herbal fragrance.

Blood Flesh Elixir!

The Blood Flesh Elixir was refined using the blood and flesh essence of demon beasts. Coupled with many other herbs and an arduous process, the final product was a favorite of many demon beasts.

The grade of Blood Flesh Elixir required depended on the level of demon beast one was trying to suppress.

The Blood Flesh Elixir before them was of quite a high level. It could be a Grade 2 or even 3 elixir!

Even though Su Zimo had dabbled in elixir refinement, in all fairness, he could only refine Grade 1 elixirs.

Furthermore, ever since the five peaks face-off, he had no intention of spending any more effort and time on elixir refinement.

He had to give it up!

As the grade of elixirs increased, the demands of the elixir refinement techniques would be higher and the recipes would get more complex as well.

Su Zimo was not a god and did not have that much time and energy.

The path he wanted to take was one fraught with difficulties. On the basis of both immortality and demonic cultivation, he could only choose between weapon or elixir refinement and Su Zimo chose the former.

If it was spirit tiger or little crane, both would have lunged for this Blood Flesh Elixir in a frenzied manner the moment they saw it!

No matter the consequences, they would just eat it first.

However, Night Spirit was extremely calm. It eyed the Blood Flesh Elixir in disdain and pouted its lips.

“Fu*k!”

Lin Xuanji was provoked.

He could sense his pride being insulted and trampled on by that gaze!

“I’m actually being despised by a dog!”

Lin Xuanji was so angry that his entire body was trembling and his eyes were red.

Su Zimo smiled and patted Lin Xuanji on the shoulder, saying earnestly, “You’ll get used to it.”

Lin Xuanji: “...”

Indignant, Lin Xuanji took out another bunch of treasures from his storage bag. There were countless pills and elixirs that shone brightly and emanated with fragrance; there were even Inner Cores of demon beasts within.

Night Spirit narrowed its gaze and leaned against Su Zimo’s chest lazily, ignoring Lin Xuanji.

Lin Xuanji was upset.

A moment later, he could not take it anymore. Inching furtively over to Su Zimo, he whispered, “Fellow Daoist, what does that mad dog like? Tell me.”

Su Zimo had an idea and nodded. “I can tell you, but you’ve got to exchange something for it.”

“What?”

Lin Xuanji took a half-step back, his face filled with vigilance.

“That Minor Transference Talisman... Do you have any more? Sell me some of them,” Su Zimo said.

Lin Xuanji nearly spat out blood.

His face was grim and his body trembled, seemingly angry to the verge of collapsing. Seeing that, Su Zimo hurriedly added, “I’m going to buy them with spirit stones, not taking it away from you. Fellow Daoist, you’re getting too worked up.”

Su Zimo did not know the preciousness of the Minor Transference Talisman and merely took it as a talisman that had a price tagged to it.

Lin Xuanji's mouth cramped up as he glared at Su Zimo angrily, gritting his teeth and saying word by word, "I only had one f*cking piece and you're asking for a few pieces... do you think that the Minor Transference Talisman is some cabbage you can purchase off the streets?!"

That last sentence was almost entirely shouted by Lin Xuanji...

After shouting, he panted heavily. Still indignant, he said to Night Spirit, "Night Spirit, your master is way too ignorant. There's no potential to grow by sticking with him!"

Shrugging his shoulders, Lin Xuanji was high-spirited as he declared proudly, "Let me tell you, if you were to follow me, I guarantee that you'll definitely have anything you want to eat in the future..."

"Heeya!"

Upon hearing that, Night Spirit's eyes suddenly lit up as it cried softly, seemingly moved.

Lin Xuanji's voice came to a halt.

"Ow?"

"There's a reaction?"

Elated, he looked at Su Zimo excitedly, "Fellow Daoist, what did Night Spirit just say?"

Suppressing his laughter, Su Zimo replied, "Night Spirit said that it wants to eat dragon eggs. It's asking if you can get any?"

Lin Xuanji: "..."

"Y-Y-You...! You guys...!"

Lin Xuanji pointed at Su Zimo and Night Spirit. His nose was crooked from anger and his voice was quivering.

He felt that if he continued to stay with this man and beast, he would definitely break down.

"Hmph, good luck to you guys!"

With a furious flick of his sleeves, Lin Xuanji soared into the air and flew off into the distance.

"No matter what, thank you, fellow Daoist!"

Seeing that Lin Xuanji was about to disappear, Su Zimo hurriedly shouted.

Those words were truly from the bottom of his heart.

If not for Lin Xuanji, he would have died inside the primordial ruin.

When he heard that, Lin Xuanji who was speeding in the skies felt his legs give way and almost fell.

Su Zimo had reaped quite a lot from this trip. Not only did he manage to remove the power of the Blood Slave Art remaining in his body, he even managed to eat a dragon's egg.

However, Lin Xuanji got nothing at all.

All he got was a little bit of leftover juice...

Lin Xuanji continued speeding through the wind, feeling more upset the more he thought about it.

He had cultivated for dozens of years. As the successor of one of the top factions of Tianhuang Mainland, when had he ever suffered such a loss?

“That person must be the reincarnation of a jinx! Why else would my luck be so bad when I’m around him? Disciple of Ethereal Peak? Hmph, hmph! I’ve got to divine who he is and his background alongside the secrets he’s hiding!”

With that said, Lin Xuanji took a deep breath of air and a gray, gentle light appeared in his pupils. It spread out slowly, turning into a thin layer of haze that veiled his eyes.

Opening his palm, Lin Xuanji’s thumb made repeated contact with his other four fingers, tapping in a furious speed.

A mysterious, profound power swirled around Lin Xuanji’s fingertips.

“Oh?”

After a long time, Lin Xuanji’s body trembled and the gray fog in his eyes dispersed. Stunned, he muttered to himself, “How is this possible? I’m unable to divine it?”

His face was grim as he frowned.

“That person is only a Foundation Establishment Cultivator, why can’t I divine it?”

“It doesn’t make sense.”

“Could... someone be concealing the heavenly secrets?”

Lin Xuanji’s gaze narrowed as he murmured softly, “There’s a supreme expert backing this lad?”

Chapter 247: Great Zhou Capital

After Lin Xuanji left, Su Zimo took out the map and compared against it carefully.

A moment later, he discovered to his shock that his current location was less than five kilometers away from the capital of the Great Zhou Dynasty!

The Minor Transference Talisman that was used in the primordial ruin had actually teleported them nearby the Great Zhou’s capital!

After the battle at Dongling Valley, Su Zimo’s rampant escape had brought him a long way away from Ethereal Peak.

Without any other means, given his cultivation realm, if he were to leave from this place, it would take him several months to reach back to Ethereal Peak even if he were to rush day and night without any rest or sleep.

Worried about the safety of everyone from Ethereal Peak, Su Zimo pondered for a moment and decided to check out the capital first and see if he could find out any news.

Putting away the map, he soared into the skies on his flying sword with Night Spirit and sped in the direction of the capital.

An hour later, at the border between the sky and the ground ahead, a towering black walled city came into view.

The city wall extended from the ground left and right, but there was no end to it!

One could feel the grandeur of the city merely by looking from afar!

It was as if a primordial divine dragon was lying on the horizon.

“That’s the Great Zhou’s capital?”

The closer he approached the city, the more he could feel its magnificence.

Compared to the city before him, the Yan Country’s capital was like a mansion in a real city – it was a world of a difference.

At a close distance, one could clearly see signs of the surface of the city walls being weathered by the elements. While it was old and mottled, the city stood upright and indestructible over countless years!

That was because this was the core of the Great Zhou Dynasty.

The Emperor’s territory, the capital of the dynasty!

There were three tall city gates in the direction of Su Zimo’s city wall where many guards of the capital stood on both sides. The traffic was endless and more than half of them were cultivators!

“Hey, that cultivator up there! Anyone that’s beneath Golden Core is forbidden from flying in the capital. Come down quickly!”

Right then, a shout from the city gate interrupted Su Zimo’s thoughts.

Unknowingly, he had already arrived at the city gate of the capital on his flying sword and the guard below was referring to him.

Even a vassal state like Yan Country had various rules in its capital, let alone this majestic city that was the capital of the Great Zhou Dynasty!

Putting away his flying sword, Su Zimo descended in front of the city gate and headed into the capital with the crowd.

He looked around carefully and noticed that the guards would collect ten spirit stones as entrance fee each time they encountered cultivators.

Qi Refinement Warriors paid ten inferior-grade spirit stones while Foundation Establishment Cultivators paid ten middle-grade spirit stones.

As for Golden Cores, they could enter directly.

Su Zimo was not bothered by the rules and did not want any trouble, so he handed ten middle-grade spirit stones casually to a guard.

One of the guards could tell that it was Su Zimo's first time in the capital and reminded him out of kindness that there were many rules in the capital and he should watch out for them.

If he broke any, he could be kicked out of the capital for minor offenses. As for major offenses, he could be dealt with severely!

Expressing his thanks, Su Zimo entered the capital.

Upon entering, he nodded silently.

The spirit qi in the capital was clearly thicker than outside.

There should be an array formation master who set up a massive Spirit Gathering Formation in and out of the Great Zhou's capital to achieve such an effect.

Su Zimo walked through the long street paved with bluestone and fell into deep thought.

Even Golden Cores would not be able to attain true inedia and had to eat.

Only Nascent Souls would possess supreme Dharmic powers and were able to consume rain dews and absorb the essences of the universe. Nourishing their bodies with the qi of day and night, they could attain inedia.

Therefore, the best place to obtain information in the Great Zhou's capital was a restaurant.

Raising his head, Su Zimo caught sight of a two storied restaurant not far away on his left.

Noon had yet to arrive but there were already plenty of customers within, mostly cultivators.

Entering the restaurant, Su Zimo did not head up to the private rooms on the second floor. Instead, he looked for a seat nearby the windows on the first floor and sat down, casually ordering some food.

Before long, more people gathered on the first floor.

Many cultivators were gathered in small groups as they discussed the recent happenings of the cultivation world.

Su Zimo listened in while sipping his drink in no hurry.

A long time later, someone in the crowd suddenly remarked, "There's two more years till the sect competition. I think Ethereal Peak is doomed this time round."

"That's right. Because of such a huge change in Ethereal Peak, there will be plenty of empty spots on the four ranking lists. Let's see who's able to clinch the top seat this time round."

"Yes, I think many sects and cultivators have their sights set on the primordial ruin and are thinking of finding some treasure there. By that time, they will definitely shine in the sect competition."

Just as everyone was discussing, a green-robed cultivator popped out of nowhere and asked suddenly, "I heard that many Foundation Establishment Cultivators of Ethereal Peak were killed at Dongling Valley. What happened thereafter? How many disciples of Ethereal Peak managed to escape?"

Everyone turned to look at Su Zimo with weird gazes.

He gave an embarrassed smile. "I've been out adventuring for a long time and have just returned. This is the first time I'm hearing of this."

"Oh."

The cultivators nodded in realization.

Someone said, "That massacre was a huge blow for Ethereal Peak! From what I know, only a dozen or so out of the many Foundation Establishment disciples managed to escape. Of the three great legacy disciples, two of them died in that battle."

Su Zimo felt slightly better that it wasn't a complete annihilation.

However, he was still worried about little fatty and Leng Rou's safety.

"What about the Golden Cores of Ethereal Peak? What happened to them?" Su Zimo pondered for a moment and asked.

"It's even worse!"

A cultivator at the side shook his head and replied, "I heard that of Ethereal Peak's five Golden Cores, only one managed to escape and he was seriously injured. No one knows if he's dead or alive."

Su Zimo sighed internally.

As they had mentioned, the blow for Ethereal Peak was huge!

Almost all of their top Foundation Establishment Cultivators had perished in Dongling Valley.

Only, he did not know whether Peak Master Wen Xuan or Elder Yu was the Golden Core who had escaped.

Right then, another cultivator added, "I heard news that initially, none of the Ethereal Peak disciples could escape at all. However, a change happened to the situation. In order to save his sect mates, one of the disciples decided to sacrifice himself and lure away more than half of the enemies..."

"Yes, I've heard about that as well. It's truly a pity that someone like that is dead," Another person shook his head with a regrettable expression.

Su Zimo realized that the disciple of Ethereal Peak they were talking about should be referring to him. However, what they knew was far from the actual truth.

"Actually, that person might not be dead, right?" Su Zimo continued casually.

"Heh!"

Someone scoffed coldly, “He was being hunted down by a few Golden Cores and countless Foundation Establishment Cultivators. How could he have survived?”

Another cultivator chimed in, “If he’s not dead, I’ll pluck my head off right now and let you guys kick it around like a ball...”

Chapter 248: Storyteller

In the northwestern corner of the Great Zhou Dynasty, there was a prefecture city called Yongxing City. There were all sorts of people gathered there and it was bustling with life.

In a corner of Yongxing City, a group of people were huddled together.

In the middle of the crowd, there was an empty space with a table and an old man. Wearing a white crown and long robes, he had a tall beard and rosy cheeks as he leaned back against a chair.

The old man’s left hand was resting on a wooden block on the table while he waved a paper fan with his right. As he spoke with a smooth eloquence, everyone around him was mesmerized.

Looking at his attire, alongside the wooden block on the table and the folding fan in his hand, it was obvious that this was a storyteller. Traveling among common folk, this was somebody that was specialized in the tales of the supernatural.

The stories told by storytellers were magnificent and bewildering – they were most attractive to mortals.

“That battle was so intense that the skies went dark and the earth shattered. Corpses were strewn all over the ground as fresh blood flowed in an extremely tragic manner!”

Waving his paper fan, the elderly man said in a clear voice, “This powerful being of the human race took a step forth, causing the voids to tremble. A shout of his could fell the stars; a back flip of his palm could summon the clouds and a front flip could summon the rain. While that divine dragon was strong with the ability to topple mountains and oceans while overturning the heavens and moon, it could not defeat that man.”

Everyone listened intently.

“A massive battle continued for two days and nights and finally, the divine dragon was slain by that man! Fresh blood splattered from the divine dragon’s body endlessly. Many living beings that could not dodge in time and were splashed by the blood exploded to the death on the spot, unable to withstand the divine dragon’s power of bloodline with their bodies...”

Many people were secretly shocked and gasped.

Seeing everyone’s reactions, the old man was very pleased. He waved his fan gently and stroked his beard with a smile.

“Fufu...”

Right then, a sneer could be heard from outside the crowd.

“These illusory untruths are merely enough to fool mortals. What a joke. Who would have the stamina to fight for two days and nights? Divine dragons? You were speaking as though you’ve seen one before.”

The person who spoke was a Foundation Establishment Cultivator.

When this person happened to pass by this place, he paused to listen for a while and could not help but sneer.

In truth, true cultivators did not care about listening to such stories as they could easily differentiate between truth and fiction.

Seeing that he was exposed, the old man’s face turned red, seemingly from embarrassment. He straightened his neck and asked, “How do you know I’ve never seen one before?”

“Oh?”

The Foundation Establishment Cultivator glanced askance at the old man and sneered, “You don’t have any spirit qi in your body so you can’t be a cultivator. If so, I want to ask you. Where did you see the divine dragon, huh?”

Using the Spirit Peering Art, it was easy to detect that this old man was a mere mortal.

The moment the old man heard that the other party was a cultivator, his aura weakened. Avoiding eye contact and retracting his neck, he muttered softly, “In any case, I’ve seen it before.”

The Foundation Establishment Cultivator pouted his lips and scoffed coldly before leaving.

Not far away, there was a man dressed in gray robes. Slightly rotund with a beardless face, he was holding a folding fan as well as he walked towards them.

“Storyteller, why don’t you continue?”

Someone at the side urged impatiently.

The old man swept his gaze around. When he saw who it was, the wooden block in his hand landed, ringing with a resounding slap.

“If you want to know what happened, wait for the next session!”

Keeping the wooden block, the old man closed his paper fan and waved. “Alright, let’s disperse. We’ll continue another day.”

“Tsk!”

The crowd booed.

Seeing that the old man was standing to leave, the crowd no longer lingered and dispersed as well.

Entering the crowd, the old man disappeared within a couple of steps.

In an empty corner, the old man and a gray robed cultivator met.

“Old man, I failed. I didn’t get it.”

The gray robed cultivator with the dispirited expression was Lin Xuanji who had just escaped from the primordial ruin.

Stroking his long beard, the old man looked unfathomable as he replied with a smile, "I expected that."

"Fu*k!"

When Lin Xuanji heard that, he hopped in anger. "You're vicious, old man! If you've already divined it from the start, why did you still want me to head to that place? I nearly lost my life!"

"What do you know?"

The old man said with a calm expression, "The divination that I divined showed that this was a dangerous journey. Although you're destined to fail, this journey will be worth it for you!"

"Is... it?" Lin Xuanji ground his teeth and asked.

"Of course. My divination is never wrong," The old man was confident.

Lin Xuanji could not hold it in any longer and yelled, "I didn't manage to get any sh*t! I only got a little bit of egg juice and it was left behind by a dog!"

"What egg juice? What dog?" The old man was a little confused after being sprayed with a facial of saliva.

Lin Xuanji recounted the events in the dragon lair of the primordial ruin in detail.

"You ate the dragon's egg? You're twisted!" The old man was so angry that he was trembling. He raised his hand and ruthlessly slapped Lin Xuanji's face.

"Hey, don't hit me! Stop! It wasn't me...! It was that Su Zimo and a dog...!"

Lin Xuanji kept dodging but it was useless. With a resounding slap, a red palm print appeared on his cheek.

"Old man, I've also used the Minor Transference Talisman."

Piak!

Without another word, the old man sent another slap flying.

Another palm print appeared on Lin Xuanji's right cheek that could not fade away.

Stroking his beard, the old man frowned. "This doesn't make any sense. The divination can't be wrong and you should have gained from this journey. Could it be that... this divination was referring to that Su Zimo?"

"Right, old man. That guy has some sort of skill such that I can't divine his background and fortune," Lin Xuanji said.

"There's such a thing?"

A subtle ripple emanated from the old man's glabella that shrouded the entire capital in an instant. Before long, it located Su Zimo within a restaurant.

Gentle threads appeared in the old man's eyes that spread out swiftly into a hazy fog.

Opening his palm, the old man began to divine.

As time passed, the old man frowned deeper while his expression turned grimmer and paler.

Given the old man's cultivation realm, he should be able to divine a Foundation Establishment Cultivator almost instantly.

But now, two hours have passed.

Next to him, Lin Xuanji waited with bated breath silently, afraid that he would disturb the old man.

Another hour passed and the old man's body shuddered. With a grunt, the gentle threads dispersed and blood vessels appeared in a terrifying manner!

"Old man, how are you?"

Lin Xuanji knew that this was the result of a forced divination session.

Some people had special destinies. If one were to force a divination and did not stop in time, turning blind would be a normal occurrence. If it was more serious, some people could even have bad luck befall them!

"I'm fine."

The old man waved it off and let out a long breath, pondering. "That lad has a normal destiny. It was initially ordinary but an expert helped him to change his fate, weaving his destiny entirely. I can't divine him either."

"Huh?" Lin Xuanji's eyes widened as he asked in disbelief, "Changed his fate?"

He knew the immensity of those words – that was something that even the old man could not do!

"Oh?"

Right then, the old man's expression changed and his eyes shone with a strange glint!

Chapter 249: Chase

Seeing the strange look on the old man's face, Lin Xuanji could not help but ask, "What happened, old man?"

"You said that the three of you ate that dragon's egg?" The old man was expressionless as he asked instead.

Stunned for a moment, Lin Xuanji shook his head hurriedly. "I only ate a little bit of egg juice. It was almost entirely eaten by that man and beast. Both of them ate so much that their mouths spewed with light and they could barely hold it in!"

"Eat a little?"

The old man sneered, "Even if you only ate a single drop of it, you can dream about getting away scot-free! Do you think that it's so easy to eat a dragon's egg? That you can just wipe your ass and leave after eating it?"

"Old man, what do you mean? Don't scare me."

"A dragon has come knocking."

"Ah?"

"Stay here and don't leave the city!"

Right after saying that, the old man transformed into a beam of light and disappeared from where he was.

...

Outside the city, a woman clad in green armor headed for the city gate. She was tall and exuded a cold aura, bearing a frosty expression with killing intent hidden in her eyes.

Her armor was extremely unique, as if green fish scales were pieced together seamlessly.

The closer to the city gate, the more people there were.

Even as she approached, the woman did not show any signs of slowing down as she squeezed through the crowd straight towards the city gate.

"Why are you squeezing? Do you want to die?"

A Foundation Establishment Cultivator ahead spun around suddenly and glared at the green armored woman. He placed his hand on his storage bag in a threatening manner.

Other than some special areas, fighting within the capital was forbidden.

However, since this was outside the capital after all, the guards would not care even if a fight truly broke out here.

Against the threat of the Foundation Establishment Cultivator, the green armored woman was expressionless as she continued walking forth. In fact, she did not even pause in her footsteps at all.

The Foundation Establishment Cultivator frowned. Using the Spirit Peering Art, he sized the green armored woman up and realized that there were no traces of spirit qi at all.

Most importantly, the green armored woman did not carry a storage bag with her – this implied that she was a mere mortal!

"You're asking for death!"

Confident, the Foundation Establishment Cultivator cursed and withdrew a flying sword from his storage bag, injecting spirit energy into it.

Whoosh!

Two spirit patterns shone on the sword.

A middle-grade flying sword!

“Go!”

The Foundation Establishment Cultivator hollered as the flying sword stabbed towards the glabella of the green armored woman.

The crowd had long dispersed, afraid that they would be implicated.

Ignoring the incoming flying sword, the green armored woman continued forward.

The Foundation Establishment Cultivator opposite sneered internally as a vicious look flashed in his eyes.

Clang!

When the flying sword stabbed the green armored woman’s glabella, it was repelled and the sound of metal clashing was produced!

The expression of the Foundation Establishment Cultivator changed.

The crowd was also dumbfounded.

A middle-grade flying sword could not even scratch that person’s body?

What was that person’s cultivation realm exactly?

By now, the green armored woman already came close. Suddenly, she stretched her arm and extended a slender finger, tapping gently on the head of the Foundation Establishment Cultivator.

Even though he could see the green armored woman’s finger coming for him, the Foundation Establishment Cultivator felt like he could not move or dodge no matter what.

Poof!

There was a crisp sound.

The green armored woman retracted her hand and a hole appeared on the Foundation Establishment Cultivator’s head as blood gushed out.

With his gaze dimming, the person fell to the ground with a thud and died on the spot!

When they saw that, the crowd fell into an uproar.

The guards standing at the city gate merely intended to watch the fun. But now, they were extremely tense as though they were facing a formidable enemy.

While the guards did not have high cultivation realms, they had come across all sorts of people standing guard all year round.

They could sense an extremely dangerous aura coming from that green armored woman!

“Visitor, stop and report your name. What sect and country are you from?” A guard yelled.

The green armored woman was expressionless and continued walking ahead.

It was as though nothing and nobody in this world could stop her from proceeding.

“Oh?”

The expressions of the guards changed as they withdrew their flying swords from their storage bags, prepared to fight.

“Fellow Daoist, you’ve crossed the line.”

Suddenly, a voice rang out.

The guards felt their vision blur as an old man in long robes suddenly appeared in front of them.

Strange enough, after the old man appeared, the green armored woman stopped in her tracks and a hint of cautiousness flashed through her eyes.

The old man said calmly, “Go back.”

“You want to stop me?” The green armored woman spoke and narrowed her eyes, emitting an ancient and vicissitude aura like a mighty god that could not be defied.

Under the presence of that aura, everyone, be it mortals or cultivators, felt like they had to kneel on the ground and kowtow in reverence!

“Roar!”

The green armored woman suddenly opened her mouth, letting out a shrieking roar that could pierce gold and crack rocks from the depths of her throat!

Dragon’s roar!

Poof! Poof! Poof!

The people closest to the green armored woman instantly exploded into a bloody mist.

Clang! Clang!

The flying swords in the hands of the guards fell to the ground as they clutched their heads with both hands. Looking pained, their ears were starting to seep with blood!

“Bastard, how dare you behave so brazenly before me!”

The old man bellowed – his voice was clear and loud, like a great bell. It contained a mighty power that instantly broke that earth-shattering dragon’s roar.

If not for the old man’s shout, the hundreds of people outside the city would all have to die!

Everyone snapped back to their senses as they panted heavily. They felt as if they had just barely escaped death and had a lingering fear.

Unknowingly, a folding fan appeared in the hand of the old man.

With a swift movement, the old man closed in on the green armored woman and raised his folding fan, slamming it down on her head.

“Bang!”

The green armored woman stamped on the ground, causing mud to flew as she sped backwards, avoiding the old man’s folding fan.

Remaining in midair, the green armored woman’s figure began to expand!

Right in front of everyone, a ferocious and intimidating divine dragon soared into the skies. Floating above everyone, it coiled in the skies and possessed a destructive aura.

“That’s a d-d-dragon?!”

“Heavens! Dragons really do exist!”

The many cultivators were terrified as they collapsed to the ground, speaking with trembling voices and pale faces.

Even the guards of the capital felt powerless at the moment. Against the might of the divine dragon, they could not bring themselves to resist at all!

The scales that seemed like steel had melted on them, those sharp claws and that indestructible body... every single part of the divine dragon’s body exuded danger and power!

The old man’s expression remained the same as he soared into the sky. Even though he was facing off against a divine dragon, he radiated an aura that even surpassed it!

On the surface, the old man’s body was so small that it could not even compare to a single piece of the dragon’s scale. However, he possessed an apocalyptic power that was gushing out furiously!

“If you refuse to back down, don’t blame me for being merciless and slaying you today!”

Staring coldly at the divine dragon opposite him, the old man warned.

“Roar!”

The divine dragon opened its gigantic mouth and spewed a stream of green dragon flame, incinerating the surrounding air instantly as it charged towards the old man.

Chapter 250: Gloom

“Humph!”

Faced with the incoming scorching dragon flame, the old man remained composed and snorted coldly. With a flick of his wrist, his folding fan opened up and released an incomparably golden glow!

The old man’s folding fan seemed to have transformed into a blazing sun, emitting golden rays that were bedazzling.

In that instant, everyone watching the battle from the capital, be it cultivators or mortals, felt a sharp pain in their eyes. Their vision was drowned by the endless light and they lost their sight temporarily.

Those outside the capital that were closest to the battlefield shrieked in pain and turned their heads subconsciously. Shutting their eyes tightly, tears streamed down their faces.

“Roar!”

The divine dragon seemed to recognize the folding fan in the old man’s hands as it let out a deep growl while looking on with a hint of caution.

Swash!

The old man waved his folding fan and swiped forward.

The green dragon flame that gushed in was like a piece of silk and parted in the middle against the folding fan, dissipating to both sides!

Almost instantly, the old man arrived before the divine dragon.

The divine dragon raised its head and straightened its body, extending a pair of gigantic claws that swiped at the old man ferociously!

The old man was expressionless and he did not dodge nor avoid – he simply stretched out his arm and clenched his fist, punching towards the incoming heavenly-encompassing dragon claws.

Bang!

With a deafening boom, many cultivators outside the capital could not take it and fainted on the spot.

The entire capital trembled under the might of that boom!

At the center of impact, cracks appeared in the void. Pitch black, they exuded a cold and sinister aura that was absolutely shocking!

Even the void was shattered!

The old man’s seemingly tiny body remained motionless in midair. Instead, the divine dragon was forced back a little.

After that punch, the old man’s folding fan swept forward. A piercing sound could be heard as it slashed past the divine dragon’s body like a metal against a mirror, causing one to wince.

Flashes of blood appeared.

A wisp of dragon’s blood splattered and dyed the skies red!

On the side of the dragon’s body, a huge gaping hole appeared where the dragon scales were shaved off, revealing the blood and flesh within.

The divine dragon let out a miserable cry and soared into the air, swooping above the heavens.

Holding the folding fan in one hand and his other hand placed behind his back, the old man looked at the divine dragon in the clouds calmly and did not chase after it.

It turned around and glared at the old man filled with killing intent and indignance.

However, it was clear that if it continued fighting with this old man, it could very well die here!

“Roar!”

The divine dragon howled into the sky and soared through the clouds, speeding into the distance before disappearing into the horizon in the blink of an eye.

After the divine dragon fled, the old man closed his folding fan but did not leave immediately.

His gaze lingered on a nearby void.

Even though there was nothing there, the old man continued staring with a hint of warning in his eyes.

A long time later, he retracted his gaze and heaved a sigh of relief. Waving his sleeves, he vanished.

...

Within the capital, the many cultivators only realized what was going on a long time after the old man disappeared and a commotion broke out.

“Did you guys see that? That was an actual divine dragon!”

“So, an ancient life form like that really does exist in the world. I’ve lived this life with no regrets being able to see it today.”

“The aura of that divine dragon was truly way too terrifying. Even though we were so far away from it, I felt my heart palpitating like I could die at any moment!”

Many cultivators gathered excitedly and discussed.

Those cultivators, be it Foundation Establishment Cultivators or Golden Cores, may have never been able to see the appearance of a True Dragon in their entire lives.

In fact, for most of them, like Su Zimo, divine dragons were merely illusory legends that were thought up by people.

How could there be such a terrifying life form in Tianhuang Mainland?

Now that everyone saw it with their own eyes, they truly understood that the divine dragon outside the capital was far stronger than they had imagined; far more frightening than the legends had described!

“Just who was it that blocked off such a terrifying existence?”

The divine dragon was already so powerful, what sort of cultivation realm did the cultivator who blocked off the divine dragon have?

“I don’t know.”

“I couldn’t see clearly.”

Everyone shook their heads.

All of them had witnessed the massive battle clearly.

The sight of the divine dragon spiraling in midair was remembered by everyone.

However, no one had a clear recollection of the person who fought against the divine dragon.

A Golden Core said hesitantly, "That person was shrouded by a layer of fog and couldn't be seen clearly at all. He looked like a middle-aged man."

"Where did that divine dragon come from? Why is it here?"

"I'm not sure."

"I've got a feeling that something bad is about to happen in the North Region of Tianhuang Mainland."

Even though Su Zimo was calm on the surface when he heard the discussions, his heart was thumping wildly!

No one knew better than him about the origin of that divine dragon.

That was the same dragon that he had seen in the primordial ruin!

The purpose of its visit was self-evident.

It was to kill them!

Su Zimo long knew that the moment they ate the dragon egg, he would have an irreconcilable feud with this divine dragon and the entire dragon race.

That was why he said that Night Spirit had caused big trouble.

However, Su Zimo did not expect that the divine dragon would be able to find its way here despite them making use of the Minor Transference Talisman to escape from the primordial ruin!

If not for that mysterious expert today, he and Night Spirit would most likely be dead by now.

How did it manage to find them here?

The Minor Transference Talisman made use of spatial teleportation. While a divine dragon's power might have been able to give it a rough gauge of the direction, how did it determine with such accuracy that he and Night Spirit were within the Great Zhou's capital?

This time round, the divine dragon was pushed back by a mysterious expert.

However, it was impossible for mysterious experts to appear around Su Zimo all the time. Heaven knew where this person came from and what he looked like or his background.

If the divine dragon were to come knocking the next time round, who was going to save him and Night Spirit?

A layer of gloom enveloped Su Zimo's heart.

...

At the very center of the capital stood a majestic and grand palace. It was extremely huge and was none other than the imperial palace.

Outside the main hall stood a dense group of black-armored soldiers. Each of them was a Foundation Establishment Cultivator and there were ten thousand of them, all kneeling on one knee in a neat formation with clear discipline.

At the entrance of the main hall stood a middle-aged man in a yellow robe. His face was sharp as a knife and his eyes shone with a fiery light, emanating a stern sense of authority with his expression.

The yellow-robed man's bronze skin added an iron and murderous look to his face!

This man was the emperor of the Great Zhou Dynasty. In charge of thousands of kilometers of territory, the man who ruled over all vassal states under his thumb!

The yellow-robed man asked, "What do you think?"

"Emperor, that person's methods are unparalleled. He should be one of the top existences in Tianhuang Mainland, not someone from the Great Zhou Dynasty."

A Golden Core behind the yellow-robed man said slowly.

"Perfected Lord Ming Ze, did you manage to catch the appearance of that expert?" The yellow-robed man glanced sideways and asked, nodding.

Being referred to as a Perfected Lord meant that this person was already in a Nascent Soul realm!

"I didn't manage to catch it either."

Perfected Lord Ming Ze shook his head. "Since he refuses to expose his identity, it's best for us to not investigate it further lest we provoke him and get ourselves killed."

"Oh?"

The yellow-robed man nodded, gazing into the distance as he murmured, "The appearance of the dragon race. Does it mean that the world is truly about to descend into chaos?"

Chapter 251: Decision

In a quiet corner of the capital, the old man appeared.

Lin Xuanji moved forward and raised his thumb in praise. "Old man, you've got some skills. In just a few moves, you've managed to chase a divine dragon away."

The old man rolled his eyes. "There are strong and weak dragons out there. That dragon was from the Azure Dragon lineage of the dragon race. Even though it's an adult dragon, it has yet to reach its peak. Furthermore, it just gave birth to a dragon egg, damaging its essence qi greatly resulting in a significant decrease in its strength."

"Then why didn't you kill that Azure Dragon just now?"

Lin Xuanji rubbed his hands together. "Since we've already become enemies, why don't we kill it to eliminate all future troubles?"

"That's easy for you to say, lad."

The old man sneered, "Do you know the consequences of slaying that Azure Dragon? The Great Zhou's capital turning into rivers of blood would be the least of them! If it's serious, the entire Northern Region would be strewn with enough corpses to form mountains!"

“Don’t scare me, old man!” Lin Xuanji was startled.

“Scare you? Back then, that...”

The old man stopped mid-sentence and shook his head. “Forget it, let’s not mention that.”

“Fu*k!”

Lin Xuanji’s ears were perked up to listen in focus when the old man decided to not continue...

The old man waved it off. “Furthermore, did you think that the Azure Dragon came alone? In the dark, there’s another dragon that did not show itself. That dragon is the true expert!”

Lin Xuanji frowned and asked, “Old man, I used a Minor Transference Talisman! How did that Azure Dragon find me here?”

“The three of you ate a dragon’s egg, that’s equivalent to eating an entire dragon! Even though that dragon hasn’t been formed yet, how much energy do you think it possessed?”

The old man continued, “The only way to avoid that Azure Dragon’s detection is by absorbing that energy completely!”

“That’s easy for me. I only ate a little bit of that egg juice so it’ll probably take me a month to absorb it all.”

Lin Xuanji gloated. “That Su Zimo and that dog are doomed! It’s their own fault for eating so much, haha!”

Pondering for a moment, the old man said, “Go and remind him that he should not leave the capital before he refines the essence energy of that dragon’s egg in his body completely.”

“Ah?”

Lin Xuanji was stunned for a moment. “Old man, are you planning on staying here still?”

“Of course not.”

The old man shook his head. “After you refine the essence energy of the dragon’s egg, we’ll return to the Middle Continent. In another two years, the ancient battlefield will be opened up. We’ve got to prepare for it.”

Tianhuang Mainland consisted of four regions, three oceans and one continent.

The four regions referred to the North, South, East and West regions.

The Great Zhou Dynasty was located in the North Region of Tianhuang Mainland.

The continent referred to the Middle Continent. Located at the center of Tianhuang Mainland, it was extremely huge and its territory was larger than all four regions combined!

If a Foundation Establishment Cultivator were to travel on his flying sword at full speed, he would not be able to travel through the entire North Region by the end of his lifetime, let alone enter the Middle Continent.

Golden Cores were faster and had a longer lifespan. However, no one would waste most of their precious time on the road just to get to the Middle Continent.

Furthermore, the journey was fraught with dangers and demon beasts lurked through the mountains and rivers. They would probably die before even reaching the Middle Continent.

It was only by reaching Nascent Soul realm that one would have the ability to protect themselves and could attempt to cross the four regions and continent.

...

In the restaurant, Su Zimo ate his food as he listened to everyone's discussions.

Suddenly, someone sat down opposite his table.

When Su Zimo looked up, he was slightly stunned.

Lin Xuanji.

Both of them parted ways after escaping from the primordial ruin.

He had not expected to encounter this person once more in the capital.

Su Zimo poured a cup of wine for Lin Xuanji and smiled. "It's probably fate that we're both able to meet again so soon."

Lin Xuanji's lips cramped up at the mention of 'fate'.

It was because they were fated that he was almost done in because of Su Zimo and that dog!

The dragon's egg was gone.

His tracks were exposed and he was hunted down by a dragon.

His Minor Transference Talisman was gone.

He was even slapped twice by the old man and the handprints had just faded.

At the thought of those things, Lin Xuanji was furious.

He said coldly, "It's not fate. I came to find you."

"Oh?"

Su Zimo exclaimed softly, "What can I do for you, fellow Daoist?"

"Don't leave the Great Zhou's capital before you're done refining the essence energy in your body."

Lin Xuanji said, "I'm sure you witnessed that battle outside the capital earlier on as well. The dragon came because it could sense the energy within your body."

Su Zimo frowned – that was exactly what he was worried about.

After a moment of silence, Su Zimo continued, "I can't stay in the capital and refine all that essence energy as well. What if the dragon comes knocking again during this period of time? The only way is if that mysterious expert continues guarding this place and can step forward to stop the divine dragon."

"Even if the old man isn't guarding here, it's also relatively safer for you to stay in the capital."

Lin Xuanji said, "After today's battle, the dragon race must have some reservations. After all, they might not dare to come knocking once more after suffering a loss. However, if you were to leave the capital before refining the essence energy of the dragon's egg, they'll definitely sense it and hunt you down. By then, you'll be dead for sure!"

Su Zimo remained silent.

His original plan was to return to Ethereal Peak as quickly as possible.

He missed little fatty, monkey, spirit tiger, little crane and everyone else dearly.

However, upon hearing Lin Xuanji's analysis, Su Zimo realized that he had no other choice but to stay in the capital!

Of course, staying in the capital was not entirely a bad thing either.

First, it could ensure his safety.

Second, he could save a lot of time on the road and use it to raise his cultivation as well as refine the essence energy of the dragon egg.

Right now, what Su Zimo needed the most was time to cultivate.

In the past year, he had reaped a lot of complex benefits. However, he did not have the time to settle down and convert them into his actual strength.

Third, the sect competition would occur two years later. Every single major and minor sect of the Great Zhou Dynasty would arrive at the capital eventually – Ethereal Peak included.

That way, Su Zimo could just meet everyone from Ethereal Peak in the capital and save the trouble of heading back and forth.

At that thought, Su Zimo was decided.

For some reason, Su Zimo had a vague sense that there was something amiss with what Lin Xuanji said earlier on.

"Alright, that's all I have to say," Lin Xuanji rose to leave.

Su Zimo looked at Lin Xuanji's cheeks and said with a fake smile, "Fellow Daoist, you seem to have gotten a little chubbier after half a day."

Lin Xuanji's expression froze as he said with gritted teeth, "None of your business!"

With that, Lin Xuanji flicked his sleeves and left while murmuring, "Damned old man, you struck me so harshly..."

When he heard that, Su Zimo's heart skipped a beat and finally realized what was amiss with Lin Xuanji's words.

"Even if the old man isn't guarding here, it's also relatively safer for you to stay in the capital."

That was what Lin Xuanji had just said.

How did Lin Xuanji know that the mysterious expert was an old man?

None of the cultivators in and out of the capital saw the appearance of the mysterious expert clearly!

"Was it a coincidence? Did he mention that on a whim? Or...?"

Su Zimo's eyes flickered as he pondered.

Chapter 252: Two Birds With One Stone

The streets of the capital were lively and bustling. The shocking battle outside the capital did little to affect the people inside. Instead, it made room for much gossip to take place.

After leaving the restaurant, Su Zimo was sandwiched in the bustling crowd as he strolled aimlessly, contemplating about his future plans.

Since he had decided to stay on in the capital, the first thing to do was to find a place he could settle down.

He had to stay in this place for at least two to three years and he couldn't make do with just any place; it had to be quiet and comfortable enough to be conducive for his cultivation.

After asking around, Su Zimo headed straight for the Sky Treasure Pavilion.

To find a place he liked in the capital, the fastest way to go about it was to head to the Sky Treasure Pavilion's mission area.

In the Sky Treasure Pavilion of Yan Country's capital, most people heading in and out were Qi Refinement Warriors.

It was rare for even a Foundation Establishment Cultivator to appear within a year.

As for the Sky Treasure Pavilion in the Great Zhou Dynasty's capital, Foundation Establishment Cultivators could be seen everywhere. In fact, there were even Golden Cores around. Even though Su Zimo was a mid-stage Foundation Establishment Cultivator, he was inconspicuous in the crowd.

Entering the main hall, Su Zimo walked to a counter where a beautiful maidservant headed up. Wearing a veil, her exquisite figure and curves were barely hidden from plain view.

The beautiful maidservant let out a sweet smile and asked, "Fellow Daoist, what can I do for you?"

Su Zimo asked, "I want to buy a residence in the city. Do you have any recommendations?"

"Fellow Daoist, most of the best residences in the capital are located on either shores of Jishui River. When you're tired from cultivating, you can look right out the windows at the clear river to rejuvenate your mind."

The beautiful maidservant took out a map and pointed to residences on both sides of the river while recommending with a smile.

Su Zimo nodded and chose a residence by the shore. "This one then."

"Do you have a Sky Treasure Badge?" The beautiful maidservant asked.

Hesitating slightly, Su Zimo shook his head.

While he had a Sky Treasure Gold Badge in his storage bag, it was extraordinary. Each time he took it out, it would attract quite a bit of trouble.

Now that he was in the capital, Su Zimo did not want to have anything to do with Ji Yaoxue lest he incurred the hostility of the Emperor of Great Zhou.

The scene of Dai Xu escorting Ji Yaoxue out of Ping Yang Town back then was still etched deeply in his mind.

Su Zimo could sense the concrete killing intent Dai Xu had towards him!

The beautiful maidservant said with a smile, "Without a Sky Treasure Badge, this residence's price is 100,000 superior-grade spirit stones."

"Yes, 100,000..."

Su Zimo nodded and was just about to agree to it when his expression changed starkly. He looked at the beautiful maidservant in disbelief and asked in seriousness, "100,000 superior-grade spirit stones?"

"That's right," The smile on the beautiful maidservant's face did not fade.

"So expensive?"

Su Zimo was secretly shocked.

If it was 100,000 middle-grade spirit stones, he could still afford it.

However, 100,000 superior-grade spirit stones was equivalent to 10,000,000 middle-grade spirit stones! The 200,000 odd middle-grade spirit stones he had left in his storage bag was far from enough!

The beautiful maidservant explained, "The spirit qi in the capital is much thicker than outside the city, so it'll take you half the effort to cultivate."

Pausing for a moment, the beautiful maidservant continued, "Furthermore, in the capital, other than some special areas, fighting is forbidden. If anyone dares make a move, they will be killed by the Imperial Army! Even Golden Cores are no exception to that rule! Therefore, you don't have to worry about safety while cultivating within the capital."

Su Zimo remained silent.

Even with the benefits, he could not afford it.

"How about changing a location? It'll be cheaper in a remote area," After a while, the beautiful maidservant noticed Su Zimo's dilemma and suggested.

“Forget it.”

Su Zimo waved it off and asked in a deep voice, “I’ll just take this residence. How much does it cost for me to rent for three years.”

The beautiful maidservant smiled. “The rental for a year costs 3,000 superior-grade spirit stones, that’s 300,000 middle-grade spirit stones.”

Su Zimo furrowed his brows slightly.

Prior to this, he truly had not expected a residence in the capital to cost this much.

“I’ll rent it for a year first.”

Su Zimo took out all the middle-grade spirit stones in his storage bag. He sold off some of the spirit weapons and elixirs from the blood-robed youth’s storage bag on the spot and barely managed to gather 300,000 middle-grade spirit stones.

After handing in the spirit stones, the Sky Treasure Pavilion’s efficiency was extremely high as they quickly registered and sent someone to take Su Zimo to the residence.

Su Zimo circled the residence, looking satisfied.

Even though he no longer had any spirit stones and that was a problem for his future cultivation, he was not flustered.

Su Zimo intended to open up a weapon workshop at this place which would kill two birds with one stone.

On the one hand, he could earn spirit stones by refining weapons to fulfill his daily cultivation and expenditure needs.

On the other hand, Su Zimo had already learned the weapon tempering technique. Along with the projection image left behind by Dao Lord Extreme Fire, he could make use of the weapon workshop to continuously train and improve on his skills!

Not only was he a Weapon Refinement Master, he was also a Sword Formation Master.

This meant that the deeper his proficiency in weapon refinement, the greater his combat strength would be!

After all, if Su Zimo could create higher grades of flying swords, the power of his sword formations would naturally increase.

Furthermore, he obtained a secret array skill from Dao Lord Extreme Fire known as Candlelight Sword Formation which he hadn’t had the chance to try yet.

With the remaining two and a half years left, Su Zimo intended to raise his weapon refinement level and create a new set of high-grade flying swords!

Two and a half years was also sufficient for him to refine the essence energy of the dragon egg completely.

Su Zimo would be able to undergo a complete transformation and increase his strength tremendously before the sect competition!

Taking Night Spirit along with him, Su Zimo left the place for the time being and headed for the northwestern corner of the Great Zhou Dynasty.

That was Yongxing City, a place where people of all sorts gathered. There were many elixir and weapon workshops as well and Su Zimo decided to take a look around so as to find out more about the market.

While Su Zimo believed that his weapon refinement technique was not inferior to others, if he did not understand the market along with the fact that his area was not in the downtown area, his weapon workshop may not be able to succeed.

Before long, Su Zimo arrived at Yongxing City.

Yongxing City was divided into many streets; some specialized in dealing with elixirs while others specialized in weapons.

Su Zimo watched as he walked.

The weapon workshops on both sides of the streets were connected one after another.

Some were opened by individuals such as Liu Clan Weapon Workshop and Chen Qi Weapon Workshop.

Majority were weapon workshops that had logos of sects on them such as Flying Swallow Weapon Workshop, Scarlet Rainbow Weapon Workshop, Golden Tide Weapon Workshop and True Fire Weapon Workshop.

True Fire Weapon Workshop was opened by one of the five major sects, True Fire Sect. At the same time, it had the best business and largest workshop in Yongxing City.

Other weapon workshops could merely have a couple of people waiting in front of them but True Fire Weapon Workshop had long queues in front of it.

As one of the five major sects to begin with, True Fire Sect had the highest achievements in terms of elixir and weapon refinement in the Great Zhou Dynasty.

For each sect competition, True Fire Sect would occupy at least half of the top ten spots on the ranking lists for elixir and weapon.

It was only logical why the business of True Fire Weapon Workshop was booming in the capital.

Su Zimo walked over as well and joined the queue with others.

Chapter 253: Pity

Ordinary flying swords could be purchased in the Sky Treasure Pavilion.

However, if one wanted a flying sword that was the most suited for themselves where the measurements, weight and materials used were according to their specifications, they would have to come to custom weapon workshops.

It was even more so for defensive spirit weapons such as vests and inner armors.

Everyone had different figures so they naturally had to customize their cuttings.

Su Zimo spent his time queuing to observe many things.

Typically, middle-grade spirit weapons would require three to five thousand middle-grade spirit stones to customize. Furthermore, the clients would have to provide at least three sets of materials!

Superior-grade spirit weapons would require three to five thousand superior-grade spirit stones and ten sets of materials!

After a long time, it was finally Su Zimo's turn.

He pondered for a moment before asking, "Fellow Daoist, I can understand why I need to provide my own materials to order a customized spirit weapon. However, why do I need three sets or even ten sets for superior-grade spirit weapons?"

When he heard that, a disciple of True Fire Sect scoffed, "Are you acting stupid with me? Which Weapon Refinement Master would dare guarantee that he would be able to produce a graded spirit weapon with 100% certainty? Do you think that spirit gathering works with a 100% success rate?"

"The higher the grade of the spirit weapon, the lower the chances of success for the spirit gathering. As such, there's naturally a need for more sets of materials. Even then, we're still taking on a risk."

Everyone from True Fire Sect in the weapon workshop looked at Su Zimo with obvious sarcasm.

"This guy wants to custom order spirit weapons without knowing anything at all?"

"I wonder where this country bumpkin came from. He's truly ignorant."

"I reckon that this lad's poor and useless. He's probably here to join the crowd."

When he heard those comments, Su Zimo chuckled without refuting and continued asking, "What's the price of customizing a supreme-grade spirit weapon?"

"Haha!"

A series of laughter broke out both inside and outside True Fire Weapon Workshop.

"I told you, this guy's here to join the crowd! He's even acting like he knows everything!"

"Customizing supreme-grade spirit weapons. To think he could say something like that. I'm dying of laughter here!"

Someone lamented, "Truly ignorant."

Su Zimo looked at the snickering disciples of True Fire Sect with a faint smile on his lips.

A cultivator standing behind Su Zimo could not bear to see how things were and explained softly, "Fellow Daoist, supreme-grade spirit weapons can't be customized. Even if someone prepares 100 sets of materials, no Weapon Refinement Master would dare take on the job. Refinement of a supreme-grade spirit weapon requires fate and luck and the chances of failure are way too high."

"I see," Su Zimo nodded.

That person continued, "If a Weapon Refinement Master can refine a single supreme-grade spirit weapon in his lifetime, that's enough for him to make a name for himself! Furthermore, the prices of supreme-grade spirit weapons are not fixed. In the auction house, the cheapest ones are sold at 500,000 superior-grade spirit stones at least. If there's competition for it, the price can even go up to millions!"

Superior-grade spirit weapons with three spirit patterns could be sold for 5,000 superior-grade spirit stones at most.

However, supreme-grade spirit weapons that merely had an additional spirit pattern could be sold for a hundred times more!

The gap between them was obvious.

"Stop wasting time here, get lost!"

The shopkeeper of the True Fire Weapon Workshop walked over and waved off Su Zimo, not hiding the disgust in his eyes.

Su Zimo was not angered as well, merely smiling. "Shopkeeper, I think you will regret this one day."

With that said, Su Zimo turned to leave.

...

After checking out the market price, Su Zimo already made his plans.

Furthermore, Su Zimo was confident that his weapon workshop would definitely become the biggest one in the capital, crushing even True Fire Weapon Workshop under his foot!

Su Zimo had not walked far when he felt his heart stir as he looked to a corner not far away.

There was a girl around 15 years old curled up and sitting on the ground. Dirty all over with tattered clothes, her yellowed hair was disheveled and her face was covered in dirt – only her eyes were clear and bright.

A cold gust of wind blew and the little girl shirked her neck, pursing her lips and breaking out into shivers.

For some reason, Su Zimo was reminded of Xiaoning when he saw that girl.

Back when Xiaoning left, she was around the age of that girl.

Su Zimo sighed to himself and bought a few buns nearby. Wrapping them in oilpaper, he handed them to the girl and said gently, "Have some food."

A trace of fear flashed across the little girl's eyes as she hesitated and did not take the oilpaper.

Su Zimo did not insist further and placed the oilpaper beside the little girl. He took a set of green robes out from his storage bag and draped it gently around the little girl before standing up.

This action caused the little girl to be less wary of Su Zimo.

She extended her dirty hands and tried to pick up a bun.

Su Zimo was about to leave when Night Spirit suddenly moved, popping its black little head out of his robes to look at the girl.

Before Su Zimo could say anything, Night Spirit leaped out and ran to the little girl, sniffing something on her body.

“Ah!”

The little girl was startled and dropped the bun she had just picked up.

Frowning, Su Zimo pulled Night Spirit back hurriedly and stuffed it into his robes.

Unlike normally, Night Spirit did not hide and instead looked at the little girl constantly with its head popped out.

Su Zimo whispered apologetically, “Don’t be afraid, it won’t hurt you.”

The little girl did not say anything, merely watching Su Zimo warily with widened eyes.

Chuckling bitterly, Su Zimo shook his head and turned to leave.

The two of them did not know each other and merely met by chance. It was already benevolent and kind enough of Su Zimo to give her a meal and a set of clothes on account of his feelings for Xiaoning.

He continued walking towards his residence.

Before he walked far, Su Zimo felt his heart stir and glanced slightly sideways.

From the corner of his eyes, he caught sight of the little girl draped in his green robes wolfing down the buns. She was following behind him, maintaining a fixed distance.

Smiling, Su Zimo was not bothered by it.

Before long, he arrived at the entrance of Yongxing City.

On one side of Yongxing City’s entrance gate, a large group of people gathered. Despite their numbers, they were extremely quiet and the only sound came from the middle of the crowd.

“And it was said that the massive battle continued for two days and nights and finally, the divine dragon was slain by that man! That battle was so intense that the skies went dark and the earth shattered. Corpses were strewn all over the ground as fresh blood flowed in an extremely tragic manner!”

In the middle of the crowd, a Confucian-looking old man with long robes was telling a story.

This was a storyteller, someone that traveled among common folk and specialized in fictional stories of the supernatural – Su Zimo had heard many of them.

However, for some reason, when he heard those words of the old man, an image of the terrible sea of bones in the perimeter of the primordial ruin flashed in front of Su Zimo’s eyes uncontrollably!

Su Zimo shrugged his head and did not think too much about it, merely lamenting internally, “A divine dragon has just appeared and someone’s already making up tales of divine dragons as though it’s real.”

Right then, someone raised his voice and said, "Storyteller, you've already told us this part in the afternoon!"

"I did, but some people didn't get to hear it," The old man chuckled.

Su Zimo paused and turned around slowly, looking at the old man in the crowd.

Did that old man say that on a whim... or was he implying something?

Chapter 254: Extremely Strong

The crowd dispersed gradually as the old man slowly closed his folding fan and hid the wooden block in his sleeves.

As everyone intersected, Su Zimo blinked and the old man disappeared by the time he looked back!

He frowned and pondered for a while before heading back to his residence.

Right after Su Zimo left Yongxing City, the storyteller popped out of nowhere and wobbled towards a deserted corner.

Lin Xuanji stood there, bored.

When he saw the old man approaching, Lin Xuanji hurried forth and whispered expectantly, "How was it, old man? Did you manage to see anything?"

"No. The fate of that lad has been changed and the trajectory is completely messed up," The old man shook his head.

Lin Xuanji asked again, "What about that black dog? Can you tell what race it is?"

"That shouldn't be a dog," The old man frowned.

"No shit! I know it isn't a dog too!"

Lin Xuanji rolled his eyes. "Old man, even with your experience, you can't tell its origins?"

The old man narrowed his eyes in deep thought before shaking his head. "I can't think of anything, but that black dog is truly not simple. I can sense a unique and pure aura emanating from it."

"What kind of aura?"

"The aura of slaughter!"

The old man said, "Although you lost the chance to nurture a divine dragon this time round, if you manage to get your hands on that black dog, you will probably not do too badly in the future."

Lin Xuanji rubbed his chin, his eyes darting around as he made up his mind.

The old man seemed to have thought of something. Frowning in thought, he murmured, "That girl..."

...

Along the way, Su Zimo could sense the little girl following him.

After a long time, when he arrived at his rented residence, Su Zimo suddenly stopped in his tracks and turned back.

The little girl was caught off guard as a look of panic flashed in her eyes.

Su Zimo strode towards the little girl.

She seemed a little fearful and wanted to retreat, but held strong.

“Why are you following me?” Su Zimo approached and asked softly.

“It’s the first time someone gave me clothes to wear,” The little girl blinked her big, bright eyes and said timidly.

Su Zimo’s heart softened. “You have no place to go?”

The little girl nodded.

“Alright. From today onwards, you can stay here.”

Pointing to the residence behind him, Su Zimo smiled and said, “However, I’ve only rented it for a year so I can only guarantee a year of accommodation for you.”

“Thank you,” A smile finally appeared on the little girl’s face.

Su Zimo led the little girl inside and asked casually, “I’m Su Zimo. What’s your name?”

“Nian Qi,” Less guarded towards Su Zimo, the little girl’s voice sounded livelier as well.

The house was located in the south and faced the north with its back towards Jishui River. Quite large, it had many rooms and Nian Qi chose a random one to stay in.

Su Zimo left the house to buy some clothes for Nian Qi before bringing some food and placing it in front of her room.

After that was done, he came to the courtyard and took out a wooden block from his storage bag.

Since he wanted to open a weapon workshop, he had to give it a name.

Looking at Night Spirit patrolling the courtyard, Su Zimo smiled and muttered to himself, “Mo Spirit Weapon Workshop then.”

Using his finger like a sword, he inscribed the four words on the wooden block.

Right then, with a creak, the door to the room behind him opened.

Turning back, Su Zimo saw a fair-skinned young girl standing at the entrance. Slim and elegant, her features were exquisite and her eyes were clear as water. Although she was still young, she was already extremely pretty.

Su Zimo was momentarily stunned as well.

After washing the dirt away from her face, Nian Qi seemed to have changed into another person.

However, for some reason, her hair was still yellowed and curled up like withered grass and tree branches. There was no luster and it seemed out of place against her smooth skin.

Su Zimo did not think too much about it, merely assuming that it was because Nian Qi's body was weak after suffering for years outside.

It should return to normal after she recuperated for a year or so.

"Sir, what are you doing?"

Nian Qi walked over and looked at the wooden block in Su Zimo's hand, asking softly, "Mo Spirit Weapon Workshop... are you planning on opening a weapon workshop here, sir?"

"That's right," Su Zimo nodded.

Nian Qi moved her lips, as if wanting to say something.

"Speak your mind," Su Zimo chuckled.

"Even though I don't know how to forge weapons, I've been wandering around the city all these years. The place you're at now is suitable for living but it's not suitable for opening a weapon workshop. Nobody is going to come here at all."

Cultivators familiar with the capital would definitely head to Yongxing City for spirit weapon customization. After all, all the weapon workshops of the capital were located there.

As for cultivators who were not familiar with the capital, they would also head to Yongxing City if they asked around.

From Nian Qi's point of view, Su Zimo would have no customers at all if he were to open a weapon workshop here.

Unworried, Su Zimo smiled and said, "My weapon workshop is different from the rest, don't worry."

Nian Qi nodded, not fully understanding.

Su Zimo pointed to a chair nearby. "Take a seat and hold this stone. Let me have a look."

On the table was a stone the size of a baby's fist – it was a spirit testing stone that Su Zimo had just purchased.

Nian Qi reached out and held the spirit testing stone.

After a moment, the spirit testing stone remained unchanged.

Su Zimo sighed internally.

He had initially held hope that Nian Qi might have a spirit root and could enter cultivation.

However, he knew that the possibility of that was low.

There were many Golden Cores and even Nascent Souls in the capital. If Nian Qi had a spirit root, they would have long taken her away under their wings.

Now that there were no changes to the spirit testing stone, Su Zimo knew that Nian Qi was just like him – an ordinary person without a spirit root.

Seemingly realized something, Nian Qi said hurriedly, “Sir, even though I don’t have a spirit root, I am extremely strong and I can help you do many things. P-Please don’t chase me away.”

“It’s alright.”

Su Zimo shook his head and changed the topic, afraid that Nian Qi might overthink things. “You said that you are extremely strong? How strong?”

“Super, duper, strong.”

Nian Qi blinked her eyes and said, “I didn’t dare show it earlier because I was afraid others might lock me up like they do to monsters.”

Su Zimo could not help but laugh.

To him, Nian Qi was just trying to boast so that she would not be chased away.

How strong could a little girl with such a slender body be?

Su Zimo’s heart stirred and he wanted to tease Nian Qi. As such, he took out the Mystic Gold Silk Armor from his storage bag and placed it on the table gently. “This is a silk armor. Can you pick it up?”

“Of course!”

Nian Qi nodded confidently and tugged on the edge of the Mystic Gold Silk Armor with one hand, lifting it up.

It did not budge an inch at all!

“Eh?”

Nian Qi was stunned.

Su Zimo chuckled internally but remained expressionless on the surface.

Standing up, Nian Qi frowned and looked at the Mystic Gold Silk Armor in disbelief before using her other hand as well.

Sensing that Nian Qi was going to continue trying, Su Zimo waved it off, afraid that the joke would go too far. “It’s alright. This Mystic Gold Silk Armor actually weighs...”

Su Zimo’s voice stopped abruptly as he jolted from his seat and watched with widened eyes in disbelief.

Nian Qi’s arms trembled and her cheeks were slightly flushed, clearly at the limits of her strength. However, the Mystic Gold Silk Armor was truly lifted from the table!

Chapter 255: Abnormal

While Su Zimo took out the Mystic Gold Silk Armor with a single hand in a relaxed manner such that it seemed light, that inner vest weighed a full 5 tons!

Back then, Su Zimo could only lift the Mystic Gold Silk Armor after he was at lesser mastery of the Marrow Cleansing section.

But now, a little girl around 15 years old was able to do it?

The way Su Zimo looked at Nian Qi changed gradually.

This was no longer mere strength.

Based on the way Nian Qi exerted her strength, if she were to learn some fighting techniques, she could even kill early-stage Foundation Establishment Cultivators!

Su Zimo's first thought was that Nian Qi must have cultivated some sort of powerful body tempering technique.

But right after, he denied that guess.

All the body tempering techniques of the human race were built on the foundation of one possessing a spirit root and cultivating spirit qi.

However, there was no trace of spirit qi in Nian Qi's body at all.

"Strange. Could there truly be people born with such godly strength?"

Su Zimo was puzzled.

After some thought, Su Zimo took out a thin book from his storage bag and passed it over to Nian Qi. "This is a Qi Condensation Manual. Try to cultivate with it. If you have anything you're unsure of, feel free to ask me at any time."

Even though Nian Qi did not have a spirit root, Su Zimo wanted her to give it a shot still.

Nian Qi nodded.

Rising, Su Zimo hung the wooden board with the words 'Mo Spirit Weapon Workshop' above the beam of his entrance.

"Sir, if you need anything, just instruct me."

Nian Qi was very sensible and did not want to stay for free like a leech – she wanted to contribute as well.

Noticing Nian Qi's intentions, Su Zimo pondered for a moment. "Greet any customers that come and let me know about their demands."

"What about the price?" Nian Qi asked.

"For now, we're only taking orders for customized spirit weapons. The price is 3,000 middle-grade spirit stones and one set of materials."

"Ah?"

Nian Qi's eyes widened.

After staying in the capital for so long, she was very familiar with Yongxing City.

The price that Su Zimo set was the lowest for middle-grade spirit weapons.

Most importantly, he only required one set of materials.

Normally, one would have to prepare three sets of materials for middle-grade spirit weapons; some weapon workshops even asked for four!

Just as the disciples of True Fire Sect mentioned, no Qi Refinement Warrior could guarantee a 100% success rate of spirit gathering. That was why True Fire Weapon Workshop required three sets of materials from the customers themselves just in case.

For superior-grade spirit weapons, the failure rate was even higher so customers would have to prepare ten sets.

However, Su Zimo did not have to worry about those things.

That was because the most difficult step of weapon refinement, spirit gathering, was nothing to him at all.

With his spirit perception, Su Zimo could achieve a 100% success rate in spirit gathering!

Right now, the only obstacle Su Zimo had was in terms of weapon tempering.

How to purge away more impurities such that the spirit weapons could be sturdier and withstand more spirit patterns – that was what Su Zimo needed to practice.

“Sir, even though I don’t know about weapon refinement, I’ve heard that it’s impossible to achieve a 100% success rate. If you only collect one set of materials and you fail, we’ll have to purchase the materials on our own thereafter. That’s a waste of time and effort and a loss for us.”

Nian Qi persuaded Su Zimo warily.

“It’s fine, just do as I say,” Su Zimo smiled.

...

In the following month, everything about Su Zimo began to get on track.

From morning till noon, Su Zimo cultivated Ethereal Foundation Establishment to raise his cultivation realm.

After that battle at Dongling Valley and a long journey to escape, Su Zimo’s cultivation realm had started to shift and within half a year, he would be able to reach late-stage Foundation Establishment!

In the afternoon, his entire focus was on weapon refinement.

Recalling the projection image of Dao Lord Extreme Fire, he would look through the ancient tempering manual while refining weapons to try and apply his learning.

Su Zimo was already able to refine inferior-grade spirit weapons to begin with. After a month, he made swift breakthroughs at the step of tempering and he was able to refine middle-grade spirit weapons!

However, he still required more practice to remove further impurities if he wanted to forge superior-grade spirit weapons with three spirit patterns.

That was completely based on hard work and repeated practice – there were no shortcuts available.

At night, Su Zimo cultivated The Mystic Classic of the Twelve Demon Kings of the Great Wilderness, trying his best to absorb the essence energy of the dragon egg into his body completely.

It was the same for Night Spirit.

Even though it seemed like it was lying on Su Zimo's feet motionlessly, it was actually trying its best to absorb the essence energy of the dragon egg.

Night Spirit's body was growing rapidly at a pace clearly faster than before!

A month later, Su Zimo could no longer contain it in his embrace.

The surface of Night Spirit's body became rougher and black, tough protective armor began to grow on its body like the scales of the divine dragon!

An extremely sharp spike grew out of the tip of Night Spirit's tail that was not weaker than its claws!

Night Spirit seemed to turn even more extraordinary, emitting a ferocious glint in its eyes from time to time such that even Su Zimo would feel a chill from it.

During this period of time, Nian Qi was the one who experienced the greatest changes!

After cultivating the Qi Condensation Manual, she could truly sense spirit qi!

In less than two hours, Nian Qi was already at Level 1 Qi Condensation!

That speed was even comparable to Su Zimo in the past.

Innate godly strength and the ability to sense spirit qi without a spirit root... everything about Nian Qi was mysterious and inexplicable.

For the month since the weapon workshop opened, no cultivators visited at all and Nian Qi was extremely worried.

However, Su Zimo was nonchalant about it, continuing with his weapon refinement, immortality and demonic cultivation on a daily basis.

This day, there was a knock on the entrance of the residence for the first time.

Su Zimo opened his eyes and heaved a sigh of relief.

While he appeared calm on the surface for the past month, he was a little anxious internally.

There weren't many spirit stones left in his storage bag. If there were still no customers, he would not be able to sustain his expenditure of spirit stones for his daily cultivation.

Nian Qi had already dashed out excitedly. Opening the door, she smiled. "Welcome to Mo Spirit Weapon Workshop. Fellow Daoist, please enter."

To begin with, Nian Qi was already extremely beautiful. Now that she was smiling sweetly, it was even more captivating.

The person at the door was dumbfounded for a moment.

Blinking her eyes, Nian Qi probed, "Fellow Daoist, are you here to customize a spirit weapon?"

"Ah?"

The person at the door regained his senses gradually. He lowered his head and frowned, opening his palm to divine while muttering, "Could I have gone to the wrong place? Why is it a girl?"

Right then, Su Zimo came out of his room. When he saw the person at the entrance, he could not help but feel disappointed.

The visitor was dressed in gray robes and was slightly rotund. With a pale, beardless face and a folding fan in his hands, the visitor was not a customer for customizing spirit weapons – it was Lin Xuanji.

"Nian Qi, come on back."

Su Zimo said.

Upon hearing Su Zimo's voice, Lin Xuanji's eyes lit up as he strode into the house while greeting warmly, "Brother Zimo, it's been a long time!"

Su Zimo felt a chill run down his spine.

Prior to this, Lin Xuanji wanted to tear him apart – since when did he become so friendly?!

There must be something going on when things occur out of the ordinary!

Chapter 256: Bitten to Death

After Lin Xuanji entered the courtyard, a black shadow flashed behind him.

A menacing-looking demon beast stood at the entrance of the residence. With bloodshot eyes, its entire body was covered in long, black fur and its limbs were strong. Tall and mighty, it exuded a savage and ferocious aura!

A Foundation Establishment spirit demon, an ancient remnant beast, Bane Spirit Hound!

The Bane Spirit Hound was extremely vicious and anyone targeted by it would mostly be hunted to a life and death situation.

Even in the ancient era, there were few demon beasts and cultivators who were willing to provoke it.

The sudden sight of such a demon beast had Nian Qi exclaiming as she stumbled back instinctively.

"Roar!"

Her reaction attracted the attention of the Bane Spirit Hound.

It stuck its head out and glared at Nian Qi with its bloodshot eyes, opening its mouth slightly as it snarled deeply.

Su Zimo furrowed his brows slightly.

Night Spirit, who was initially lying by Su Zimo's feet, opened its eyes and took a cold glance at the Bane Spirit Hound before closing its eyes to rest.

Lin Xuanji turned his head and hollered.

The Bane Spirit Hound calmed down gradually.

With a light cough, Lin Xuanji said, "This is a spirit demon I just found. Not bad, huh?"

Su Zimo smiled but did not say anything.

"This girl is not bad either. Your name is Nian Qi, right?" Lin Xuanji pointed at Nian Qi who was behind Su Zimo and continued.

Su Zimo remained silent, looking at Lin Xuanji with a faint smile.

Lin Xuanji clearly wanted something but was beating around the bush.

A while later, Lin Xuanji finally couldn't take it anymore and revealed his intentions, looking at Night Spirit and saying under a pretense of surprise, "My, Night Spirit has grown so much! I almost couldn't recognize it!"

Su Zimo smiled. "Brother Lin, if you have anything, you can get right to the point."

"It's nothing much as well. Look at how much Night Spirit has grown. I'm just here to find a playmate for him," Lin Xuanji beckoned to the Bane Spirit Hound behind him. "See, my spirit demon has quite an extraordinary demeanor. It's a female as well, what a good fit for Night Spirit!"

When Nian Qi heard that, she blushed and spat softly.

Su Zimo finally understood what Lin Xuanji was up to.

He was trying to get Night Spirit by making use of lust this time round...

Lin Xuanji brought the Bane Spirit Hound in front of him and pointed in Night Spirit's direction. "Go, get along with it."

When Su Zimo saw this, he did not stop them.

Night Spirit's body was much smaller than the Bane Spirit Hound.

The Bane Spirit Hound walked before Night Spirit and looked down, surveying Night Spirit from above. It let out a deep growl, warning Night Spirit to not behave rashly!

Following that, the Bane Spirit Hound lowered its head and sniffed Night Spirit's body.

Right then, Night Spirit suddenly opened its eyes!

A cold light flashed.

Night Spirit stuck out a pair of sharp claws and dug it into the Bane Spirit Hound's body. At the same time, it opened its mouth and bit the Bane Spirit Hound on the throat with lightning speed!

The courtyard suddenly fell silent.

Snap!

The sound of bones cracking could be heard.

The Bane Spirit Hound's throat was snapped by Night Spirit's bite as fresh blood gushed out, dyeing the ground red.

The entire process happened too quickly.

It wasn't just the Bane Spirit Hound – even Su Zimo and Lin Xuanji could not react in time.

The Bane Spirit Hound's body twitched but it was powerless to react. Its eyes dimmed as its life drained away rapidly – it clearly had no chance of surviving.

This was a flawless hunt!

Night Spirit's attack did not contain any extra movements. Clean and precise, even the timing to strike was immaculate to the dot!

That was an ancient remnant beast!

However, it was bitten to death just like that. Who could believe it unless they witnessed it personally?

“Fu*k!”

Lin Xuanji jumped up.

In order to get his hands on Night Spirit, Lin Xuanji racked his brains and spent a lot of effort to get his hands on that Bane Spirit Hound.

Who would have thought that it would be bitten to death by Night Spirit the moment it entered...

At that moment, Lin Xuanji even had suicidal thoughts.

“You evil dog! I... I-I...!”

Lin Xuanji was so angry that he was shivering from head to toe, waving that folding fan as he pointed at Night Spirit's nose and was about to curse.

Night Spirit raised its head and bit Lin Xuanji's folding fan once more, pulling it towards the back.

Caught off guard, the folding fan nearly slipped out of Lin Xuanji's hand.

“Hey! Y-You evil dog! Let go!”

Lin Xuanji was extremely furious.

Of all things, Night Spirit was always biting that folding fan, trying to tug it away.

Lin Xuanji could lose everything except that folding fan.

Right then, a voice sounded from the entrance of the residence.

“Excuse me, can we order customized middle-grade spirit weapons here?”

A Foundation Establishment Cultivator stood at the entrance, peeking in with his head and asking with a trace of doubt.

“Of course.”

Nian Qi reacted instantly and hurried forward. She smiled and said, “Fellow Daoist, please enter.”

Su Zimo patted Night Spirit.

It released its grip and turned to leave, no longer bothered with Lin Xuanji. Sprawling on the ground nearby, it closed its eyes lazily and cultivated.

Lin Xuanji heaved a sigh of relief.

“I couldn’t tell at all, but you even know how to refine weapons?”

Lin Xuanji glanced askance at Su Zimo.

Su Zimo smiled without replying.

Nian Qi asked, “How do we address you, fellow Daoist?”

“Tan Fei.”

“What sort of a middle-grade spirit weapon are you looking to order?” Nian Qi asked again.

Tan Fei looked a little uneasy and replied, “I don’t have much materials and I only have two sets. I wonder if...”

“It’s fine, we just need one set,” Nian Qi said with a smile.

“Huh?”

“Ah?”

Both Tan Fei and Lin Xuanji were stunned with agape mouths, unable to react for a moment.

“A set... a single set of materials?” Tan Fei looked at Nian Qi and asked once more, seemingly in disbelief.

Nian Qi hesitated as well, glancing over at Su Zimo.

When she saw Su Zimo nodding, she nodded her head with confidence. “That’s right, we only require one set of materials!”

“Hey, do you really know how to refine weapons?” Lin Xuanji leaned in and asked in a low voice.

Su Zimo chuckled. “Somewhat.”

“Somewhat your ass!”

Lin Xuanji pursed his lips. “From the ancient times till now, I’ve never heard of any Weapon Refinement Master who would dare to customize spirit weapons for others with just one set of materials!”

Su Zimo replied, "You'll see it soon."

Lin Xuanji: "..."

Tan Fei asked cautiously, "What about the price? If it's too expensive, I can't afford it."

"It isn't, it's just 3,000 middle-grade spirit stones," Nian Qi stated the price as Su Zimo had originally set.

"Just 3,000? No variations?" Tan Fei could not believe it.

Coughing gently, he continued, "I better state my specifications first. I want to customize a saber without a handle. The blade should be two feet long with a width two fingers wide. It should weigh around 100 kilograms..."

After saying a lot, Tan Fei took a deep breath and asked embarrassedly, "Does that still cost 3,000 middle-grade spirit stones only?"

To be fair, he had already gone to all the weapon workshops in the capital before coming here.

When they heard that he only had two sets of materials prepared, none of the weapon workshops were prepared to take his business.

Furthermore, according to his specifications, that middle-grade spirit weapon should cost at least 4,000 middle-grade spirit stones!

If not for that, Tan Fei would not have found this place otherwise.

"Just 3,000."

Nian Qi was certain this time round, but Tan Fei was the one who was hesitant.

With just a single set of materials and at such a low price, he could not feel at ease for a deal that seemed so good.

Lin Xuanji grinned as he watched the fun, waiting for Su Zimo to make a fool of himself.

Chapter 257: Gaining Reputation

Tan Fei was undecided for a long time.

"I know that you have your concerns."

Right then, Su Zimo spoke, "How about this? Give me your materials first. If I manage to refine the spirit weapon successfully, you can pay me the 3,000 middle-grade spirit stones. If I fail, tell me how much spirit stones your materials cost and I'll compensate you."

When he heard that, Tan Fei's eyes lit up.

He asked hurriedly, "How many days do I have to wait?"

Su Zimo replied calmly, "There's no need. Just wait here. That middle-grade spirit weapon will be ready soon."

"Ah?"

Tan Fei was stunned.

Lin Xuanji was stunned as well.

How much confidence did Su Zimo have to say something like that?

“Alright then. The materials required for the spirit weapon are all in this storage bag,” Tan Fei decided to give this place a shot.

Su Zimo took over the storage bag and looked inside. Instantly, he knew what needed to be done.

He did not return to his room and instead moved out his Weapon Tripod. He was going to refine that middle-grade spirit weapon in front of the three of them right in that courtyard!

For this first deal of business, he had to resort to extreme methods to deal with the situation so that he could attract more cultivators to patronize!

Swoosh!

A Level 3 Spirit Fire floated in his palm as he began to warm the Weapon Tripod.

When he saw the scarlet color of the Level 3 Spirit Fire, Tan Fei’s confidence grew.

Warming, smelting, forging...

Even though the three of them were not Weapon Refinement Masters, they could tell that Su Zimo’s technique was not rusty at all, as though he had practiced countless times.

When they saw Su Zimo refining the weapon, they could not help but feel a sense of amazement!

“He’s got some skills,” Lin Xuanji mumbled.

Nian Qi clenched her fists subconsciously – she was even more nervous than Su Zimo was!

Fourth step, tempering.

A series of clanging sounds came from the Weapon Tripod, crisp and clean.

Su Zimo did not follow the technique of the ancient tempering manual entirely. Instead, he combined it with the projection image left by Dao Lord Extreme Fire and formulated a Thousand Tempered Finger technique unique to him.

Su Zimo was still in the midst of exploring and mastering this Thousand Tempered Finger technique.

While the current state of purging impurities was still not ideal, it was much better than before and he could create a weapon that could withstand two spirit patterns.

Before long, smelting was over.

Fifth step, spirit gathering.

Even though Lin Xuanji and the other two did not know how to refine weapons, they knew that spirit gathering was the most critical step.

Whether a middle-grade spirit weapon could be forged depended on whether two spirit patterns could be condensed.

The three of them watched intently with bated breaths.

But the next moment, Su Zimo did something that gave them a fright.

Suddenly, Su Zimo put away the Weapon Tripod and began to condense spirit patterns without the protection of a Weapon Tripod!

“Fu*k!”

Lin Xuanji was the first to react as he retreated violently.

In truth, given his cultivation realm, even if the spirit gathering failed and the weapon exploded, it wouldn't harm him.

However, it would be embarrassing to be left in a sorry state covered in dirt.

Tan Fei was stunned for a moment and fled right after as well.

He ran to the front door before turning back and watched the situation from afar as he hid behind the door.

Nian Qi's feet moved a little.

She wanted to escape as well, but she was embarrassed that Su Zimo might look bad. As such, she had no choice but to stay where she was.

Whoosh!

Right then, a bright light shone in front of Su Zimo!

A spirit pattern formed on the blade of the weapon!

“The first spirit pattern was condensed successfully?”

Lin Xuanji stared with widened eyes and his jaws were almost dropping to the ground. He thought to himself, “That works?”

Time passed slowly, as if it was trawling.

Su Zimo was attempting to condense the second spirit pattern the entire time. Sometimes, he would stop all of a sudden before repeating the condensation process.

Even though the second spirit pattern had yet to be condensed, the situation that the three of them were worried about did not happen either.

All of a sudden!

Just as the three of them were letting their imaginations run wild, another flash of light appeared in the courtyard.

The second spirit pattern was condensed!

Tan Fei was overjoyed and leaped over.

Letting out a breath of turbid air, Su Zimo soaked the saber in cold water to quench it into shape!

Accepting the saber with both hands, Tan Fei loved it more the more he looked at it.

It was exactly as he had specified. With a dark blade that was streamlined, it was sharp and could slice metal like mud.

“Fellow Daoist, this is the payment. Please accept it.”

Tan Fei took out a storage bag and handed it to Su Zimo.

Opening it, Su Zimo was stunned for a moment. “3,000 middle-grade spirit stones is fine. You’ve given me too much.”

“It’s only right.”

Tan Fei replied hurriedly, “You’ve only taken a single set of materials to create this middle-grade spirit weapon. Indirectly, that saved me quite a bit of spirit stones for the materials. This is what you deserve.”

Su Zimo did not decline further and accepted it.

Patting his chest, Tan Fei declared, “Fellow Daoist, don’t worry. Someone with your skills shouldn’t be buried. I’ll definitely help to promote you upon returning.”

Su Zimo smiled in acknowledgment. “Thank you for that.”

Tan Fei left in high spirits, mumbling before he left, “Godly skills! What godly skills!”

Lin Xuanji remarked with lingering fear, “No matter what, you’re the first person who dares to remove the Weapon Tripod while attempting spirit gathering. What an eye-opener.”

Su Zimo turned to Nian Qi. “Let’s set another rule for the weapon workshop. All weapon refinements are to be done in the afternoon. Anyone who comes at any other time will not be entertained!”

“I don’t think that’s very suitable.”

Nian Qi hesitated. “After all, most cultivators will be visiting for the first time. They won’t know of such rules.”

“It’s fine, they’ll know after a few times.”

Su Zimo smiled and continued, “We’re going to have many more rules in the future...”

In truth, be it in terms of price or materials required, Su Zimo’s weapon workshop was far superior than any other out there!

The only thing he lacked was an opportunity.

However, the opportunity had arrived – Tan Fei.

Su Zimo believed that it wouldn’t be long before word of Mo Spirit Weapon Workshop spread to every corner of the capital. Many cultivators will know about them and their reputation would skyrocket!

In the capital, there were people refining weapons daily.

In the weapon refinement scene of the capital, things were stagnant as well.

Su Zimo's performance today was like a stone tossed into a lake, causing a series of ripples to spread out on the calm surface waters of the capital.

"Have you heard? There's a new weapon workshop beside Jishui River that has many strange rules."

"Mo Spirit Weapon Workshop? Yeah, I heard of it."

"It's said that the Weapon Refinement Master is called Mo Ling^[1] has a weird temperament and he only forges weapons in the afternoon. Furthermore, you can get your hands on your weapon the same day you order it."

"Most importantly, Mo Spirit Weapon Workshop only requires a single set of materials and it only costs 3,000 middle-grade spirit stones! That's truly a weapon workshop of conscience."

"I plan on checking it out tomorrow."

"Why don't we go together? Count me in."

It was as if Mo Spirit Weapon Workshop had popped up overnight and its influence was spreading rapidly, turning into a hot topic of discussion between cultivators.

[1] As you can guess, Spirit is pronounced as Ling. However, it's inconvenient to name the weapon workshop as Mo Ling because Su Zimo named it using his and Night Spirit's name

Chapter 258: Too Willful

News of Mo Spirit Weapon Workshop spread quickly and arrived in Yongxing City before long, creating quite a stir.

No cultivator wouldn't be tempted at the low price and single set of materials required.

Initially, there were still cultivators who did not believe in it and were used to customizing their spirit weapons in Yongxing City.

However, as time passed, the reputation of Mo Spirit Weapon Workshop grew and so did its influence.

Some cultivators would rather queue and wait at Mo Spirit Weapon Workshop rather than spend additional materials and money at Yongxing City.

"What? A single set of materials? And at such a low price?"

"Hmph! Isn't he afraid of losing money?"

"What sect is this Mo Ling guy from? How old is he?"

All the cultivators in the capital thought that the Weapon Refinement Master of Mo Spirit Weapon Workshop's name was Mo Ling.

"I'm not sure. I heard that the cultivator receiving everyone is a little girl around 15 years old. I haven't heard of anyone who has seen how Mo Ling looks like."

“Yes, there are different rumors about Mo Ling’s appearance and age. Some say that he’s a weak scholar, some say that he has the demeanor of a sage and there are even those that say he’s a venerable old man. I don’t think any of them are accurate. However, they say that the little girl’s extremely pretty and there’s also a fierce black dog in the residence.”

The various weapon workshops were discussing it as well.

Back hall of True Fire Weapon Workshop.

An old man in red robes sat on a chair, listening to the shopkeeper explain the situation about Mo Spirit Weapon Workshop as he sipped tea with a calm expression.

“Elder Zhang, because of that Mo Ling, the number of orders for customized middle-grade spirit weapons from our weapon workshop has clearly decreased. What do you think...” Ge Yong asked in a testing manner.

Even though Ge Yong was the shopkeeper of True Fire Weapon Workshop, he was only a Foundation Establishment Cultivator who was proficient in the way of the merchants.

Elder Zhang was the true pillar of support for True Fire Weapon Workshop.

He was an Advanced Weapon Refinement Master who was renowned in True Fire Sect as well.

Most of the cultivators who ordered superior-grade spirit weapons at True Fire Weapon Workshop came because of Elder Zhang’s reputation as well.

“A single set of materials and 3,000 middle-grade spirit stones?”

Elder Zhang shook his head and chuckled. “He’s asking for trouble. Even Advanced Weapon Refinement Masters would not dare to guarantee a 100% success rate for spirit gathering. Anyone who has a 50% success rate would already be considered as the top of Weapon Refinement Masters.”

“In order words, they would require at least two sets of materials if they want to earn that 3,000 middle-grade spirit stones. That person is acting so arrogantly. I dare guarantee that within half a year, this Mo Spirit Weapon Workshop will not be able to sustain and will close down.”

Ge Yong asked, “Should we just ignore him then?”

“Yes.”

Elder Zhang nodded. “The main stream of income for True Fire Weapon Workshop is through customizing superior-grade spirit weapons. Since that Mo Ling guy is only able to refine middle-grade spirit weapons, his impact on us is not considered too great.”

Pausing for a moment, a look of mockery flashed in Elder Zhang’s eyes as he sneered, “Let him perish on his own. I want to see how that guy ends up!”

...

Mo Spirit Weapon Workshop’s business was improving by the day and there was an endless stream of cultivators daily.

Every day, Nian Qi would be the one greeting the cultivators.

Su Zimo did not show himself and merely stayed in his room, making use of the materials sent over to perfect his tempering techniques and enhance his skills.

As time passed, Su Zimo's standard of weapon refinement improved steadily and intricately.

His tempering technique was also being perfected slowly.

The problem of Su Zimo and Nian Qi's cultivating resources was also resolved with the considerable income of spirit stones daily.

Half a year passed by quickly.

The two men and one beast of Mo Spirit Weapon Workshop gained a considerable amount of benefits.

With sufficient spirit stones, Su Zimo had successfully reached late-stage Foundation Establishment two months ago.

As for Nian Qi, she was at Level 7 Qi Condensation after just half a year's worth of cultivation!

This cultivation speed was comparable to Su Zimo's back then.

Night Spirit had grown a little more as well.

It was clear that the essence energy of the dragon egg had a significant impact on Night Spirit's growth.

During this period of time, Lin Xuanji tried dozens of methods to try and get his hands on Night Spirit only to be covered in dirt and end up in failure each time.

After half a year, Lin Xuanji could finally take it no longer, bidding farewell and leaving.

This day, Su Zimo called Nian Qi over.

"Yes... I want to make some changes to Mo Spirit Weapon Workshop's rules."

"What rules?"

Nian Qi was not surprised.

She was long used to it after half a year.

She dared to guarantee that Mo Spirit Weapon Workshop had the most and oddest rules in the entire capital.

However, its business was the best...

Su Zimo continued, "From tomorrow onwards, Mo Spirit Weapon Workshop will no longer customize middle-grade spirit weapons. We'll only take orders for superior-grade spirit weapons."

"Ah?"

Nian Qi's little mouth opened slightly, her face full of shock and disbelief.

"W-We're not customizing middle-grade spirit weapons anymore?"

“Only superior-grade spirit weapons?”

After saying, even Nian Qi was shocked herself.

Su Zimo nodded. “That’s right. It’s still a single set of materials, but it’ll cost 3,000 superior-grade spirit stones.”

When she saw that Su Zimo was not joking about it, Nian Qi nodded instinctively.

By the time she reacted, Su Zimo had already turned to leave.

...

In the past half a year, every cultivator in the capital knew that the Weapon Refinement Master known as Mo Ling had an odd temperament and only forged weapons in the afternoon.

After six hours, no matter how many people were queuing outside, Mo Spirit Weapon Workshop would close its doors...

This afternoon, a huge crowd of cultivators gathered in front of Mo Spirit Weapon Workshop expectantly as usual.

Before long, with a creak, the door opened, revealing a beautiful face.

The cultivators who had been waiting for a long time outside were in high spirits, bouncing up from the spot one faster than the other.

However, when they arrived at the entrance, everyone stopped in their tracks and did not dare step past it!

There were too many rules for Mo Spirit Weapon Workshop.

Without the permission of the owner of the place, anyone who dared cross the entrance would be disqualified from ordering customized spirit weapons from Mo Spirit Weapon Workshop!

Initially, there were some cultivators who were discontented. Even though they did not dare to fight within the capital, they barged into the residence and created a fuss only to find themselves bitten half to death by a big, black dog...

“Miss Nian Qi, look, look! It’s me! I’m Yu Yingjun!”

“Miss Nian Qi, I’ve already been here for three consecutive days. It’s my turn this time, right?”

“Get lost! I’ve already camped here for an entire month!”

The crowd pushed around noisily, squeezing into a tight pack in front of the entrance. However, no one dared take a single step past it.

With a hesitant expression, Nian Qi paused for a moment before saying slowly, “Fellow Daoists, from today on, Mo Spirit Weapon Workshop will no longer customize middle-grade spirit weapons...”

“Ow?”

“What?”

“No more customization?”

The crowd gradually calmed down and everyone was confused.

Nian Qi continued, “From now on, we’ll only customize superior-grade spirit weapons here. Yes... it’s still a single set of materials but the price will be at 3,000 superior-grade spirit stones.”

“Why?!”

“Miss Nian Qi, that’s not right! Why is he not customizing anymore? We’re already here!”

“That’s right! We want to see fellow Daoist Mo Ling and ask him about it in person!”

Many cultivators were indignant and protested loudly.

Nian Qi stuck out her tongue. “I forgot to tell you guys. Our young master is in a bad mood today and won’t be refining any weapons... you guys won’t be able to see him too. Please head back.”

With that, Nian Qi closed the door, leaving behind the rowdy crowd who did not recover for a long time.

A moment later, a cultivator trembled while pointing at the door and gritting his teeth. “This guy is way too willful!”

Chapter 259: Assassination

True Fire Weapon Workshop.

Elder Zhang sat in the back hall, frowning as he looked at the accounts book.

Ge Yong bowed his head and stood below with a fearful expression, not saying a word.

“Why are we getting more orders for middle-grade spirit weapons recently while the orders for superior-grade spirit weapons have dipped instead?” Elder Zhang asked in a deep voice.

Hesitating for a moment, Ge Yong replied, “It’s Mo Spirit Weapon Workshop...”

“Fufu.”

Before Ge Yong could finish, Elder Zhang scoffed lightly, “I told you, in less than half a year, Mo Spirit Weapon Workshop is bound to close down. Seems like I was right.”

To Elder Zhang, the reason why True Fire Weapon Workshop gained more orders for middle-grade spirit weapons must be because Mo Spirit Weapon Workshop had closed down.

“Err...”

Ge Yong looked awkward.

“Why? What’s wrong?” Elder Zhang could not help but frown and ask when he saw the odd expression on Ge Yong’s face.

Ge Yong answered honestly, “Mo Spirit Weapon Workshop did not close down. They merely changed to customizing superior-grade spirit weapons instead of middle-grade spirit weapons.”

“Hmm?”

Elder Zhang's expression changed slightly as he asked, "Wasn't Mo Spirit Weapon Workshop unable to customize superior-grade spirit weapons? Why are they suddenly able to do it?"

"I have no idea as well," Ge Yong shook his head.

Pondering for a moment, Elder Zhang asked again, "What's their asking price?"

Ge Yong replied, "3,000 superior-grade spirit stones."

Enlightened, Elder Zhang scoffed coldly, "No wonder all our business has been stolen! They pushed the price so low! Pass down orders that from today on, the price for customizing superior-grade spirit weapons at True Fire Weapon Workshop will be at 3,000 superior-grade spirit stones as well!"

"This..."

Ge Yong hesitated.

"Why are you stuttering?"

Elder Zhang berated, "Just say whatever you want to say!"

Ge Yong cupped his fists. "Elder Zhang, pardon me for being blunt. Even if we lower our price to 3,000 superior-grade spirit stones, we won't be able to compete against Mo Spirit Weapon Workshop."

"Why? You don't believe in my weapon refinement skills?" Elder Zhang's gaze turned fierce with a tinge of anger.

Ge Yong said softly, "Mo Spirit Weapon Workshop only requires a single set of materials to customize superior-grade spirit weapons as well."

"What!"

Elder Zhang slammed the table and stood up. His expression changed drastically as disbelief filled his eyes.

"That's impossible!" Elder Zhang kept shaking his head.

Even if he were to do it personally, he would need at least ten sets of materials to guarantee the refinement of a superior-grade spirit weapon.

However, Mo Spirit Weapon Workshop only required a single set of materials?

While the difference between middle-grade and superior-grade spirit weapons was a single spirit pattern, that one pattern stumped most Weapon Refinement Masters.

An additional spirit pattern meant that the chances of failure for spirit gathering would increase immensely. How could someone guarantee a 100% success rate of refining superior-grade spirit weapons with just a single set of materials?

Ge Yong said with a bitter smile, "Elder Zhang, we can't continue like this. The impact on our weapon workshop is too great."

"What's the background of this person? Have you investigated him?" Elder Zhang suddenly asked.

Ge Yong replied, "I've been investigating, but there's no accurate news."

"Shadow, come out!"

Elder Zhang ordered suddenly.

"Squeak, squeak!"

In the shadows behind him, a rat that was the height of half a man ran out. It was pitch-black and had cunningly cold eyes. As it squeaked, it bared its sharp teeth that were like knives!

Ge Yong was shocked.

This was a Foundation Establishment spirit demon, an ancient remnant beast, Shadow Rat. Elusive and mysterious, it was best at sneaking and specialized in assassinations!

"Shadow, infiltrate Mo Spirit Weapon Workshop tonight and don't expose your tracks! I want to find out who this Mo Ling is."

A vicious glint shone in Elder Zhang's eyes as he said slowly, "If you get a chance, kill that person to eliminate our future worries!"

The Shadow Rat answered and turned around before disappearing.

In the capital, ordinary cultivators were forbidden from Sword Kinesis Flight as well as fighting.

However, it wasn't an absolute without loopholes.

As long as there was no massive fluctuation in spirit energy, one could naturally evade the detection of the capital's guards.

...

Nighttime.

Su Zimo sat in his room silently as usual, refining the essence energy of the dragon egg.

Night Spirit was sprawled beside him.

At midnight, Su Zimo felt something and frowned, opening his eyes.

Almost at the same time, Night Spirit moved and listened intently.

After a while, a cold glint flashed in Night Spirit's eyes. Walking out of the room silently, it headed to a corner at the edge of the wall and hid itself inside a shadow.

Su Zimo could see everything clearly. Even though Night Spirit's eyes were opened, its eyes, body and surroundings were integrated with the darkness of the night completely without a single flaw.

If Su Zimo had not seen Night Spirit heading over personally, he would not have believed it.

Before long, a small head popped out of the top of the wall, surveying the surroundings and the courtyard with a pair of shifty eyes.

The Shadow Rat felt a sense of uneasiness but it could not discover anything unusual.

After a moment of hesitation, it retreated from the wall.

Night Spirit was still hidden in the shadow of the night at the corner of the wall motionlessly with a cold gaze, seemingly waiting for something.

True enough!

After a long time, the Shadow Rat appeared at the top of the wall again!

It had not left and was merely being cautious by probing the situation within the wall.

When it discovered that there were no dangers, the Shadow Rat relaxed and slid down the wall slowly.

The moment it landed on the ground, Night Spirit darted out and appeared in front of the Shadow Rat in the blink of an eye.

A cold, sharp claw appeared silently, piercing the Shadow Rat's flesh.

The Shadow Rat panicked and wanted to shout.

A black light flashed through the skies.

Poof!

There was a crisp sound.

The head of the Shadow Rat was pierced by a sharp spike and its eyes dimmed!

That spike was Night Spirit's tail.

It was still a flawless hunt!

The Shadow Rat could not resist at all!

Throughout the entire process, Night Spirit was filled with a strong killing aura that was pure and cold.

Picking up the Shadow Rat with its mouth, Night Spirit passed through the courtyard to Jishui River. It swayed its head gently and tossed the corpse of the Shadow Rat into the river, causing a ripple to spring up before disappearing.

The flesh of an ancient remnant beast was not attractive to Night Spirit at all!

Su Zimo narrowed his eyes, seemingly in thought as he smirked.

That Shadow Rat was clearly sent by someone.

"Can't take it anymore huh?"

...

True Fire Weapon Workshop.

Elder Zhang and Ge Yong did not sleep for the entire night.

Until daybreak, the Shadow Rat did not appear.

There was a hint of fatigue on Elder Yu's face, as if he had aged ten years overnight.

He took a deep breath, closed his eyes and waved. "Go back and rest. Shadow is dead."

"This..."

Ge Yong also realized that if Shadow had not returned by now, it was most likely dead.

Elder Zhang walked out of the room and looked in the direction of Mo Spirit Weapon Workshop. The coldness in his eyes intensified as he muttered, "Mo Ling, a tall tree attracts the wind. Let's see how long more you can survive!"

Chapter 260: Breaking the Peace

In the past half a year, even though the reputation of Mo Spirit Weapon Workshop had skyrocketed, it was mostly targeted towards Qi Refinement Warriors and Foundation Establishment Cultivators since one could only customize middle-grade spirit weapons. As such, its influence was limited.

However, Mo Spirit Weapon Workshop's reputation only truly grew after news of it accepting orders for customized superior-grade spirit weapons spread!

Superior-grade spirit weapons were symbols of many Golden Cores.

Usually the first thing that a Foundation Establishment Cultivator would do after forming a core would be to raise the grade of their spirit weapons.

However, even the cheapest superior-grade spirit weapon required at least 3,000 superior-grade spirit stones.

If they wanted a customized superior-grade spirit weapon, the price would be even higher and they would have to prepare ten sets of materials!

Most cultivators who just attained Golden Core cultivation realm would not have the purchasing ability.

As such, many Golden Cores would only possess a superior-grade spirit weapon that was truly theirs when they were at mid or late-stage.

With the appearance of Mo Spirit Weapon Workshop, many Golden Cores who had just formed a core saw hope.

From that day on, every afternoon, instead of Qi Refinement Warriors and Foundation Establishment Cultivators, Golden Cores were the ones gathered in front of Mo Spirit Weapon Workshop!

This was quite a spectacular scene.

In the capital, other than the Emperor of Great Zhou, there was no one else who could have such a great influence!

Furthermore, even these Golden Cores did not dare to violate the rules of Mo Spirit Weapon Workshop lest they were disqualified from being able to customize superior-grade spirit weapons.

"What's the background of this Mo Ling? How arrogant of him to let us Golden Cores wait outside."

“Can’t you see that even Perfected Being Liu has been coming here for seven days straight? If a late-stage Golden Core like him is obeying the rules, we had better wait as well.”

“True geniuses often have weird temperaments. This person must be inordinately proud of his abilities.”

...

Spring came and autumn passed.

In the blink of an eye, Su Zimo had already stayed in the capital for a year and a half.

There was only one year left before the sect competition.

To cultivators, a year and a half passed extremely swiftly.

However, for Su Zimo, he was transforming at every moment of the year and a half!

It was a transformation in all aspects!

In terms of weapon refinement, Su Zimo was becoming more skilled and his understanding of it deepened as well.

His unique Thousand Tempered Finger technique was also being trained to absolute perfection through continuous practicing.

After the Thousand Tempered Finger was perfected, Su Zimo had confidence of refining supreme-grade spirit weapons with 100% certainty!

With sufficient resources of spirit stones, Su Zimo’s cultivation was also increasing steadily as he approached perfected Foundation Establishment.

Of course, what delighted Su Zimo the most was that the essence energy of the dragon egg in his body was half gone!

With another year, Su Zimo could refine all the essence energy of the dragon egg completely. Given the way things were going, he would be able to attain greater mastery of the Organs Refinement section by then as well!

At greater mastery of his Organs Refinement section and if Su Zimo no longer concealed the existence of his demonic qi, a complete release of his power of bloodline would be able to crush all Foundation Establishment Cultivators!

Of course, that was not realistic unless Su Zimo wanted to be the butt of all criticism.

In the year and a half, Night Spirit had already absorbed the essence energy of the dragon egg completely – it was much faster than Su Zimo.

Its body grew even bigger and it was half as tall as a human, covered with black scales that were incomparably tough.

Without a bit of luster, the scales allowed Night Spirit to meld into night completely without being discovered!

Looking at Night Spirit's body, a thought would flash through Su Zimo's mind from time to time.

That body was completely made to kill!

In terms of nimbleness, strength, burst, defensive capabilities, speed and various other attributes, they were fused to perfection on Night Spirit's body.

Ever since the assassination attempt of the Shadow Rat, there had been a few similar situations in the residence.

However, before Su Zimo could make a move, the cultivators and spirit demons that probed were buried under the claws of Night Spirit without being able to make a single peep!

As Mo Spirit Weapon Workshop's business grew, the number of Golden Cores that visited daily to customize superior-grade spirit weapons increased.

The influence of Mo Spirit Weapon Workshop within the capital grew as well.

From dukes and officials down to the merchants and common folk, everyone knew of Mo Spirit Weapon Workshop.

Among them, True Fire Weapon Workshop suffered the greatest.

Previously, they were the number one in the capital.

Now, Mo Spirit Weapon Workshop was showing signs of replacing them!

Even though both weapon workshops were peaceful on the surface, everyone knew that it was a mere facade.

Sooner or later, that peace would be broken!

...

This morning, a series of sudden knocks rang outside Mo Spirit Weapon Workshop.

Nian Qi's figure flashed as she walked to the main door. When she opened it, she saw a rotund cultivator dressed as a merchant, looking somewhat nervous.

"Fellow Daoist, spirit weapon customization only begins at noon. You're too early," Nian Qi said.

"N-No, I'm not."

The merchant waved hurriedly and coughed. "I-I'm the owner of this residence."

"Ah?"

Nian Qi was stunned.

"Let him in."

Right then, Su Zimo's voice sounded.

Nian Qi turned to the side and the merchant hurriedly bowed and expressed his thanks. He walked carefully into Mo Spirit Weapon Workshop, as if the land belonged to someone else, not him.

“Here’s the rent for the remaining two years. Have a look.”

Su Zimo placed a storage bag on the table and pushed it in front of the merchant.

Flustered, the merchant waved his hands hurriedly, “No, how can I accept your rent. I don’t deserve it, fellow Daoist.”

Su Zimo smiled and asked, “Is there anything else other than the rental?”

“Yes.”

The merchant’s face was uneasy as he rubbed his hands and said with a trace of pleading in his eyes, “I hope that you can help me forge a superior-grade spirit weapon, fellow Daoist.”

Su Zimo wanted to reject him on the spot.

However, he thought about how he might not have had a place to stay in the capital if not for this person’s residence.

Furthermore, a superior-grade spirit weapon was nothing much for him.

After pondering for a while, Su Zimo nodded and agreed to it.

Returning to his secret chamber for weapon refinement, Su Zimo took out the Weapon Tripod and began refining the weapon.

The merchant requested for a flying sword, the most common and simplest of customized spirit weapons.

Even so, Su Zimo was not sloppy about it and completed every single step with utmost seriousness.

At the tempering stage, a flash of inspiration appeared in Su Zimo’s mind, unraveling every single doubt he had repressed for the past half a year in his mind!

The Thousand Tempered Finger technique was perfected!

Accompanied by tinkling sounds, Su Zimo’s fingers were as light as elves, striking the body of the sword as the impurities within were purged bit by bit.

After tempering was over, Su Zimo realized that he might be able to create his first supreme-grade spirit weapon!

Spirit gathering began.

One spirit pattern.

Two spirit patterns.

It was almost effortless for Su Zimo for the first two spirit patterns.

At the third spirit pattern, Su Zimo encountered some obstacles. However, he still managed to complete it successfully after a couple of attempts with his spirit perception.

Taking a deep breath of air, Su Zimo did not stop there and chose to attempt condensing the fourth spirit pattern!