

Chapter 81: I'm Innocent

At a towering ancient tree nearby, a burly man with a bare upper body stood hidden within the leaves, listening clearly to everything that Zhou Wei and the others said.

A cold glint flickered through the burly man's eyes.

A gust of wind blew by, rustling the wind as the burly man leapt off from the tree swiftly and landed silently. Laying low to the ground, he trawled through the grass on both hands and legs, heading in the direction of Zhou Wei and the rest.

He was perfectly hidden within the grass which was around half the height of an average man.

If one were to look down, they would merely feel like the grass was moving in a straight line due to the wind – no one would be able to tell that it was a person!

“Senior Brother Zhou, should we split up and search?”

“Sounds like a plan. That Su Zimo's only at Level 5 Qi Condensation. Any of us is enough to capture him.”

Zhou Wei nodded. “We'll do that then. Everyone, split up and look!”

“What are you guys looking for?”

The moment Zhou Wei said that, a hoarse and chilling voice rang out behind him.

When Qi Refinement Warriors travel on their flying swords, they would not be too high up from the ground at around 3 meters max unless necessary.

That was because the higher they were, the more spirit qi they would expend.

Right then, a burly man with a bare upper body stood up behind Zhou Wei. He was a full two meters tall with rock-like muscles on his body, looking as though they could explode at any moment. He was just like a god that had suddenly descended with a ferocious expression!

Instantly, Zhou Wei was so scared he could feel his blood curdle.

He did not manage to sense someone approaching so closely to him!

Suddenly, the burly man reached out and pulled Zhou Wei by the feet, yanking him down and smashing him into the ground right in front of the other four Spirit Peak disciples!

Bam!

There was a deafening sound.

A human shaped pit appeared in the ground.

In the hands of this burly man, a Level 9 Qi Condensation cultivator like Zhou Wei was rendered helpless like a baby!

Zhou Wei laid helplessly in the pit, foaming blood from his mouth with his eyes rolled back. Most of his bones were broken and his organs crushed as he fainted right then. His body was the only thing moving as it convulsed subconsciously.

After smashing Zhou Wei, the burly man moved and his gaze shifted to two Level 8 Qi Refinement Warriors.

The two of them felt the blood drain from their face and without hesitation, tried to soar into the skies.

However, the burly man was faster than them and with a lightning leap, he yanked the both of them down from midair!

Bang! Bang!

It was the exact same situation.

Both of the Spirit Peak disciples fainted on the spot after being smashed by the burly man.

“Yikes!”

The remaining two Spirit Peak disciples were pale as a sheet as they summoned a flying sword before pointing their fingers at the burly man. Instantly, the flying swords turned into streams of light that shot out.

One of them was aimed at the burly man’s glabella while the other targeted his chest – those were both fatal areas!

Giving off a malicious grin, the burly man did not try to dodge as he dashed towards them.

When the two Spirit Peak disciples saw that, they heaved a sigh of relief.

That mysterious man was an idiot with brute strength after all. This was someone that did not know how strong cultivators were such that he didn’t even know to dodge against flying swords.

Clang! Clang!

A clanging sound rang off when they met with the burly man’s glabella and chest!

The flying swords were sent flying instead!

Without the slightest bit of damage, the burly man continued rushing towards the two men.

“M-Monster!”

One of the Spirit Peak disciples yelled out in a quivering tone. His face was totally pale – he was so scared he forgot he had to run away anymore.

The other disciple controlled the flying sword beneath his feet and ran as far as he could.

With a casual punch, the burly man knocked the frozen disciple away. He then continued running on all fours, leaving nothing but shadows as he chased after the escaped disciple.

With a rapid leap, he hopped around a couple of towering ancient trees to close the height distance.

“Come on down!”

Laughing, the burly man gripped the disciple’s calf and yanked him down from midair.

Snap!

That single grip by the burly man snapped the disciple’s calf on the spot.

“Ah!” Ah! “Ah!”

Sweating pouring down his forehead, the disciple howled in pain.

Whisking that disciple, the burly man returned to their original place and grabbed the other four who had passed out. Carrying three on one hand and two on the other, he sped outside in huge steps.

“W-Who are you?”

“We are disciples of Ethereal Sect! How dare you attack us! Our sect will definitely not let you off if they know about it!”

Guo Chong, who was the only disciple awake, yelled at the burly man.

The burly man remained silent as he dashed through the forest.

Guo Chong found himself getting more fearful by the moment as he said in trembles, “W-Where are you taking us to?”

“Sir, please let us go.”

“Sir, I know I’m in the wrong now.”

Suddenly, the burly man halted in his tracks and looked down at Guo Chong icily, asking coolly, “What did you do wrong?”

“I-I... I...!”

Guo Chong was stumped by the question.

He had only mentioned it out of nervousness previously but he did not know what he had done wrong!

Guo Chong cursed internally as he did not know where this burly man had spouted out from! Without saying anything, the latter started striking at them and this person was unreasonably strong!

None of their cultivation methods had worked on this burly man at all!

After the burly man stopped in his tracks, he tossed all five of them on the ground and turned to leave without saying anything more.

A look of disbelief spread past Guo Chong’s face.

They were alive?

The burly man did not kill them!

Guo Chong looked around. They were outside the Great Rock Forest right now and he did not know why the burly man had brought them out and left them here before leaving himself.

“Sir, may I know your name and the sect you’re from?” Guo Chong shouted out indignantly.

Suddenly, the burly man stopped in his tracks and turned around before walking towards him once more.

Guo Chong broke into a shudder, wishing that he could slap himself on the mouth as he hurriedly said, “Sir! I really know where I’ve gone wrong this time round! I should not have asked for your name...!”

Arriving before the five of them, the burly man grabbed their storage bags and took away all their spirit stones and elixirs before keeping them in his own storage bag.

Looking at his robbed empty storage bag, Guo Chong wanted to break out in tears.

Snickering, the burly man turned towards Great Rock Forest and disappeared in the blink of an eye.

Guo Chong opened his storage bag with shaking hands and dug out a paper crane, writing on it with spirit qi. “We’ve been attacked at Great Rock Forest. The opponent is unknown and extremely strong. Please send reinforcements from the sect!”

Injecting spirit qi to it, the spirit crane spread its wings and transformed into a beam of light, disappearing into the skies.

Guo Chong was injured as well and was unable to carry the other four back, merely able to wait there for the sect’s reinforcements.

Looking at his fellow fainted disciples, he felt despair swallowing him from within.

The thought of his savings for the past few years being robbed completely by some unknown mysterious burly man had him howling out in sadness, “I’m innocent!”

Chapter 82: Pure Gold Crystal

The mysterious burly man was of course Su Zimo.

Upon returning to Great Rock Forest, he reverted to his appearance and wore his green robes, looking like a scholar once more as he sped towards the core region.

The decision to change his appearance was one Su Zimo made after a lengthy consideration.

Even though it was true that Zhou Wei’s gang was there to cause trouble for him, something like that was difficult to explain to the sect. If all five of them were to deny it, he could do nothing about it too.

Instead, he might even be the one punished for injuring them so badly.

At the same time, Su Zimo’s ace in the bag was his strength at melee combat and he did not wish to have it revealed so early.

Furthermore, all he had to do was change his appearance and identity and that would be reason enough for him to loot their spirit stones and elixirs entirely.

While they might feel wronged about it, they would have nowhere to complain.

After all, the mysterious burly man did not exist in this world.

As he approached the core of the forest, Su Zimo kept his flying sword and landed on the ground.

Danger lurked all around within the forest and Su Zimo was much more agile on the ground than the flying sword. If he met with any danger, he would be able to dodge it at the first instance.

Along the way, he could sense the auras of spirit beasts.

However, Su Zimo did not engage in battle and instead chose to avoid them, sprinting towards the core region of Great Rock Forest.

There was a forest of ores not too far away.

There, pure gold laid abundantly on the ground and shimmered brightly as Su Zimo tread over carefully.

He could sense a hint of danger within the forest.

There was definitely some extremely strong spirit beast or demon reigning over the area!

Within the middle of the forest beside a large pure gold ore, a spirit beast with a thick armor sprawled on the ground. Its armor shone with a luscious shade of gold, covering its neck and limbs while its tail was filled with spikes.

Goldeater Beast!

Surviving by devouring all sorts of spirit materials and ores, it possessed a cruel nature and an immense strength. Invulnerable to weapons, there was almost no weakness to it.

It was clear that the Goldeater before them was almost at the realm of a spirit demon!

This was troubling.

Su Zimo frowned.

If it was any other spirit beast, he had the confidence of killing it there and then. However, he had no way of dealing with this Goldeater at all.

Suddenly, the Goldeater which was initially fast asleep opened its eyes and glared at Su Zimo sharply with an immense killing intent!

“Roar!”

Rising in the blink of an eye, it hollered in the direction of Su Zimo and sprinted over.

Narrowing his gaze coldly, Su Zimo pushed his feet and activated the Plow Heaven Stride. Instantly, two deep ravines appeared beneath his feet on the ground as the mud flipped over.

Against the pounce of the Goldeater, Su Zimo held his ground firmly as his aura began to rise. Right after Plow Heaven Stride, he leaned forward with Mountain Reliance!

Bang!

The man and beast had collided into one another!

Su Zimo was knocked half a step back while the Goldeater was sent flying away, only stopping after crushing through a number of gold ores.

“Haha!”

Su Zimo burst out in laughter.

It was at that moment that he realized his physique had evolved to a terrifying degree after he tempered it using spirit qi with the foundation of The Mystic Classic of the Twelve Demon Kings of the Great Wilderness.

Even the Goldeater’s strength was not enough to withstand an impact against him!

A trace of fear flickered through the Goldeater’s eyes.

Activating Divine Steed Fleeting, Su Zimo appeared before the Goldeater in the blink of an eye as he retrieved the Cold Moon Saber from his storage bag and slashed towards its head.

Clang!

Sparks flew everywhere.

The Cold Moon Saber rebounded and the Goldeater was totally unharmed.

At the same time, it shook its spiked tail and swept through the air, landing squarely on Su Zimo’s chest.

With lightning speed, Su Zimo mentally cultivated his Body Petrification, causing his flesh to expand and his muscles to harden.

Bang!

Su Zimo fell over, slamming onto the biggest pure gold ore in the middle of the forest, causing cracks to form densely on it.

The Goldeater glared at the ore behind Su Zimo and looked a little unnerved.

Rubbing his chest, Su Zimo kept his Cold Moon Saber.

The Cold Moon Saber was no longer useful – Su Zimo could only use his own strength to fight against the Goldeater!

Once more, the man and beast fought to a corner.

Opening its mouth, the Goldeater chomped at Su Zimo, aiming for his neck.

Without fear, Su Zimo suddenly reached out with both hands and grabbed the upper and lower jaws of the Goldeater, yanking it with ferocious force!

Psst!

Heaving a deep breath of air, mighty as the Anaconda Eclipse, his chest puffed up robustly as he spun around mightily. It was a frightening sight as green veins popped up all over his arms like snakes coiling around it.

“Open up!”

With a holler, Su Zimo continued to tear.

Shing!

Blood filled the entire place as organs fell to the ground, creating a foul stench all around.

The Goldeater was torn into half by Su Zimo!

Breathing heavily, he tossed the corpse of the Goldeater away casually and began collecting the gold ores around.

“Mmm?”

Su Zimo’s eyes lit up.

Within a shattered pile of gold ores stood a large Pure Gold Crystal; it illuminated with a mysterious gleam and was almost transparent.

“Pure Gold Crystal!”

Su Zimo exclaimed.

A Pure Gold Crystal was an extremely rare item amongst gold ores and was hard to produce. At the same time, it was a crucial material for the refinement of middle or even superior-grade spirit weapons.

“I’m going to be rich!”

His head went into a frenzied excitement as he kept the Pure Gold Crystal that was around the height of an average man in his storage bag.

Su Zimo then shattered all the other gold ores around but he found no more Pure Gold Crystals.

Even then, his reward for this trip was far more than he had imagined.

After collecting all the gold ores around, he turned around to leave.

Before long, a green robed scholar carried a spirit tiger on his left arm and a spirit leopard on his right, walking out of the forest.

...

At the same time, the spirit crane that Guo Chong sent back to Spirit Peak caused quite a stir.

An elder of Spirit Peak headed towards Great Rock Forest personally with a group of disciples.

Weapon Peak.

Out of extreme boredom, the disheveled old man was out roaming around the top of the peak. Arriving at the mission stele, he raised his head and remarked in soft surprise, "The mission for Great Rock Forest's given out? Do we have such promising disciples that would head there?"

Elder Liu beside the mission stele opened his eyes lazily and harrumphed, "Some brazen lad at Level 5 Qi Condensation went there alone. I had to give him a spirit crane in case he gets into trouble."

"Level 5 Qi Condensation?"

The disheveled old man frowned. As though he recalled something, he suddenly yanked Elder Liu's wrist. "What's the name of that lad?"

"Su Zimo or something."

Piak!

The disheveled old man slapped on the desk heavily, scaring Elder Liu so badly that he woke up right away.

"Are you crazy?! What's with that?!" Elder Liu glared and scolded.

"You're the crazy one!"

The disheveled old man yelled back, "That lad's the only one in Weapon Peak that can cultivate a Level 3 Spirit Fire but you bloody let him go to Great Rock Forest alone?! I'll kill you!"

"He's the one that cultivated the Level 3 Spirit Fire?" Elder Liu was stumped too.

With a grim expression, the disheveled old man exclaimed, "Sleep, sleep and sleep! That's the only thing you know to do day and night! That lad's our only hope for Weapon Peak! If anything happens to you, I'll never let you off!"

Stunned for a moment, Elder Liu leapt to his feet and urged, "L-Let's not waste anymore time! Hurry to Great Rock Forest and save the lad!"

Chapter 83: The Mind of a Spirit Tiger

In order to avoid Zhou Wei's gang, Su Zimo made a detour intentionally and he somehow ended up avoiding the elder of Spirit Peak as well as the disheveled old man too.

When he returned to Weapon Peak and wanted to hand in the mission, he realized that Elder Liu had disappeared.

"Where's Elder Liu?" Su Zimo asked some of the Weapon Peak disciples passing by.

"I'm not sure either but I saw him quarreling with master before the both of them left in a hurry. I've got no idea where they went," The disciple shook his head.

Su Zimo did not think too much about it and returned to his cave abode with the spirit tiger and leopard.

Both beasts had already attained spirit intellect and had wisdom equivalent to that of a grown man. Their eyes revealed a deep fear as they were brought back to Su Zimo's cave abode.

The beasts knew that even for human cultivators, their bodies were weak.

Yet, this man before them was different!

His body was even stronger than theirs!

Neither the spirit tiger or leopard knew why this man wanted to take them back to his cave abode.

“Kill us? Eat us? Force us to a blood oath to enslave us?”

“Or...”

The spirit tiger shrugged its head as though it thought of something. When it saw the strange look in Su Zimo’s eyes, shivers broke down its spine. “Could this man have some sort of special fetish?”

“It’s over, it’s over! I’ve kept my chastity for so many years! Am I going to lose it to a human...”

Suddenly, the spirit tiger was terrified after being convinced that it knew what Su Zimo was up to.

Indignant, the spirit tiger looked at Su Zimo with a sad and begrudging gaze containing complex emotions.

That gaze sent goosebumps across Su Zimo’s back as well as he slapped casually. “What’s wrong with you.”

That slap merely made the spirit tiger feel even more aggrieved.

“It’s really over! Not only does this man want to do ‘that’ to me, he’s spanking me...”

An influx of emotions gushed into the spirit tiger’s heart as two hot streams of tears almost filled its face.

At the side, the spirit leopard stayed silently without budging. However, its eyes would flicker with a ferocious look every now and then.

Su Zimo came before the two spirit beasts and said gruffly, “Both of you, cry out.”

Spirit tiger: “...”

Spirit leopard: “...”

The spirit tiger lamented in his heart. “This man’s fetish is really kinky. He wants us to cry out before doing ‘that’ to us!”

The spirit leopard did not dare to wait as it cried out softly.

It was a sound as soft as a mosquito, unlike the earthshaking howls often made by spirit beasts in the forests.

The reason why Su Zimo had brought the spirit tiger and leopard back was because he wanted to unravel the secret behind their noises as required by the Marrow Cleansing section.

However, the spirit leopard was already terrified after being beaten up by Su Zimo. How would it dare to roar in his face? Wouldn’t that be courting death?

Su Zimo was stunned for a moment as he looked at the spirit tiger subconsciously.

It broke into a shudder and sighed internally. "Sigh, look how imposing he is. This is where my reputation ends. From now on, I'm his."

Sprawled on the ground, the spirit tiger leaned towards Su Zimo and winked its eyes. With slight embarrassment and shyness, it cried out.

"Meow!"

After crying out, it even looked at the spirit leopard with glee as though it was implying. "See that? That's the way you cry out!"

For some reason, Su Zimo felt all his goosebumps rising with that cry as he kicked out instinctively!

Bang!

Before the glee disappeared from the spirit tiger's eyes, it was sent flying by Su Zimo's kick.

The spirit leopard's mouth opened widely as it nearly burst out into laughter.

Leaping up, the spirit tiger was enraged and hollered internally. "Bloody hell! I'm not giving in anymore!"

However, when it met with Su Zimo's cold gaze, the spirit tiger's courage disappeared as it sprawled on the ground and purred out coyly once more.

At this point, it had none of the ferociousness and might a king of the forest should have. If he hadn't seen and heard it himself, Su Zimo might have thought that he had captured a large kitten instead of a tiger.

Even though the spirit tiger was indignant, Su Zimo was even more troubled.

He wanted to unravel the secrets of the Marrow Cleansing section through these two beasts but yet, he had caught two unusual beasts.

The spirit leopard was slightly more normal albeit cowardly.

But, the spirit tiger was just in heat right now...!

And the weirdest thing was that this spirit tiger was a male!

Looking at the two spirit beasts moodily, Su Zimo wondered if he should slay them for food instead.

The two spirit beasts had sharp senses. As though they could sense Su Zimo's killing intent, both sprawled onto the ground and cried pitifully in horror.

Sighing internally, Su Zimo knocked that thought out of his head for now.

...

Great Rock Forest.

Elder Pei Fu of Spirit Peak arrived at Great Rock Forest with 12 inner sect disciples and saw Zhou Wei's gang.

By now, all of them had already woken up. However, because they were injured severely, none of them could move and were moaning on the spot frailly.

After arriving, Pei Fu swept his gaze across them. He only relaxed after ascertaining that they were not in mortal danger as he asked grimly, "What happened? Who did this?"

"I don't know!"

Guo Chong was on the brink of tears as he cried indignantly, "The five of us merely came by Great Rock Forest's area for a stroll. However, a burly man with a bare upper body appeared out of nowhere and without saying anything, beat the five of us up!"

"What's his name?"

"I don't know!"

"Which sect is he from?"

"I don't know!"

Pei Fu barked, "What do you know then?!"

"I only know he's a burly man..."

Pei Fu went silent for a moment before asking again, "What's the cultivation of the other party?"

"Perfected Qi Condensation," Guo Chong replied instantly.

In reality, the five of them knew that the other party was only at Level 5 Qi Condensation. However, if word were to spread within the sect that five disciples of Spirit Peak were beaten up by a burly man of Level 5 Qi Condensation, they would turn into a laughing stock!

That was why the five of them had already decided beforehand that they would insist the other party was a Perfected Qi Condensation.

Frowning, Pei Fu asked, "But your injuries don't seem like they were inflicted by a cultivator?"

"Elder, you don't understand. That person must have cultivated some sort of body tempering technique such that he is extremely strong in melee combat! My flying sword couldn't even scratch him!" Guo Chong explained hurriedly.

"Why aren't you guys consuming any elixirs after being injured so badly then? You're waiting for death?"

"The burly man robbed out storage bags clean and we're only left with a couple of pseudo spirit weapons now..."

Sighing, Pei Fu gestured with his hand.

The inner sect disciples behind him rushed up right away and took out their jade bottles, pouring some elixirs to feed the five of them.

Right then, two figures appeared through the air and arrived before them with lightning speed.

They were Weapon Peak's master, the disheveled old man and Elder Liu.

The disheveled old man furrowed his brows. "Why are you guys here?"

Pei Fu sighed, "Our disciples met with an attack and we're here for reinforcements. Why are you guys here? Don't tell me a disciple of Weapon Peak met with danger too?"

The disheveled old man and Elder Liu exchanged glances as they cast a worried look at Guo Chong's gang before asking darkly, "Have you guys seen our trial disciple, Su Zimo?"

"Y-Yes!"

Slightly guilty, Guo Chong pointed towards Great Rock Forest. "I saw him entering Great Rock Forest and he hasn't come out yet."

"It's over!"

Both the disheveled old man and Elder Liu felt their hearts sinking.

Chapter 84: A Lump of...

When Pei Fu saw how terrible the disheveled old man and Elder Liu was, he could not help but ask, "Why? That trial disciple of yours..."

"He's the only one in Weapon Peak that can cultivate a Level 3 Spirit Fire," The disheveled old man's tone was grim.

"Level 3 Spirit Fire!"

Pei Fu exclaimed, "I've also heard the news that a weapon refinement prodigy appeared in Weapon Peak. So, that's Su Zimo."

Elder Liu replied darkly, "We're headed into Great Rock Forest. I won't believe it unless I see the lad's corpse for myself."

Pei Fu replied, "Let's go. I'll accompany you guys."

He had the inner sect disciples behind him escort Zhou Wei's gang back before heading into Great Rock Forest together with the disheveled old man and Elder Liu.

The three of them split up and looked around for an entire day to no avail. Finally, they arrived at the core region of Great Rock Forest to find the two halves of the Goldeater's corpse.

"This Goldeater's almost reaching a spirit demon realm, but it was killed here."

"Look at the tragic state of its body. It's almost as though it was torn apart entirely. What ferocious strength!"

"Mmm?"

Pei Fu murmured softly before saying apprehensively, "Could it be the burly man?"

"What burly man?" The disheveled old man asked.

Pei Fu related the assault of the five men before continuing grimly, "Based on what Guo Chong said, the burly man is extremely strong in melee combat with tremendous strength. Be it whether he's of another sect or some practitioner of the dark path, this matter is not to be taken lightly."

"It's clear that the burly man did not intend to kill or Guo Chong and the others would not have stayed alive."

Elder Liu analyzed, "Besides, the burly man brought the five of them out of Great Rock Forest before he left. It's clear that he's worried they might be injured by the spirit beasts within Great Rock Forest."

"That man's a mystery. We can't tell if he's a friend or foe just yet," The disheveled old man nodded in agreement.

At the thought of Su Zimo's current unknown status of life and death, Elder Liu could not help but feel guilt rise within him and sighed deeply.

"Forget it, let's head back," The disheveled old man gestured with his hand looking all worn out.

Even though neither of the three Perfected Golden Cores said anything, all of them had the same thoughts that Su Zimo must have perished so quickly within Great Rock Forest that he did not even have the time to send the spirit crane for reinforcements.

In truth, none of them had seen the way Su Zimo dueled with the crane on the cliff to join the sect.

If they had witnessed that, they would understand that Su Zimo wasn't going to die that easily.

...

Su Zimo did not obtain any insights through the spirit tiger and leopard for two days. Feeling frustrated and remembering that he had yet to hand in his mission for the gold ores, he left his cave abode and headed for the mission stele on his flying sword.

There were quite a number of disciples from Weapon Peak gathered around the stele with Xue Yi being one of them.

Su Zimo walked over and asked, "Elder Liu's not back yet?"

"Yes, he's been away for two days now and hasn't returned yet," Xue Yi nodded.

"Then what are you guys looking at?" Su Zimo saw that there were many disciples gathered around the mission stele discussing amongst themselves.

Xue Yi pointed to the stele. "Take a look at that first mission."

Su Zimo raised his head.

Five Peaks Mission: Search for the mysterious burly man.

Beside the mission was a drawing of the appearance Su Zimo had changed into previously.

"What's this all about?" Su Zimo asked, pretending to be none the wiser.

Xue Yi whispered, "I heard that some disciples of Spirit Peak were attacked near Great Rock Forest by this mysterious burly man. He's said to be extremely strong at a cultivation realm of Perfected Qi Condensation!"

Su Zimo snickered internally.

Even if they were to deploy the entire sect, they wouldn't be able to find this mysterious burly man!

Swish!

Suddenly, the sound of robes slicing the air could be heard.

Everyone turned over to see the disheveled old man and Elder Liu speeding through the air and landing on the peak.

"Mmm?"

Both of them swept through everyone with a casual gaze before stopping at Su Zimo fixedly.

Their gaze seemed as though they wanted to eat him up!

"You came back from Great Rock Forest alive, lad?" The disheveled old man grit his teeth and asked, saying each word with a punch.

He was pissed! They had spent tireless nights searching for Su Zimo in Great Rock Forest, worried and upset. Yet, unknowingly, the lad had already returned unharmed!

Elder Liu was even more pissed.

Because of Su Zimo, he was not only scolded badly by the disheveled old man, he was feeling guilty for the past two days.

But who knew... the lad was well and alive here without the slightest bit of remorse!

Su Zimo felt goosebumps rising from their stares as he coughed gently and nodded. "Yeah, I returned after completing the mission."

"Nonsense!"

The disheveled old man barked, "How did we not see you along the way to Great Rock Forest?"

"Ah?"

Pausing for a moment, Su Zimo replied, "I'm only at Level 5 Qi Condensation. In order to conserve spirit qi, I spent half of my journey running on the ground instead of traveling with my flying sword. You guys must have missed me?"

Unless there were obstructions, no one would pay attention to the people walking on the ground.

That made sense.

Both the disheveled old man and Elder Liu could not admit that they had spent all that time outside searching because they were worried for Su Zimo's safety.

It would be embarrassing to admit it!

However, that was still a pent up feeling that they had nowhere to vent!

Both those sly old foxes exchanged glances and understood the other's intent without saying anything.

"We've got to find an excuse to punish this stupid brat!"

Elder Liu's eyes shone with craftiness as he put on a stern expression. "Lad, you haven't completed the mission of Great Rock Forest, right? Do you know that there's a punishment for not completing missions?"

For both of them, the fact that Su Zimo could return alive from the forest was already a blessing – how could he possibly complete the mission?

Besides, both of them had been to Great Rock Forest before and knew that a Goldeater was guarding it. Also, the pure gold mine was already looted clean.

However, Su Zimo chuckled. "Out of sheer luck, I've managed to complete the mission and not let you guys down."

"Ah?"

This time round, both of them were the stumped ones.

Before they even realized what was going on, Su Zimo had retrieved a lump of pure gold ores from his storage bag which was enough to form a small mountain slightly taller than a man.

The disheveled old man and Elder Liu were not the only stumped ones – all the disciples around froze as well.

One had to understand that a single small piece of pure gold ore was sufficient to complete the mission.

However, Su Zimo had brought back a huge lump of it. A huge lump...!

What everyone did not know was that the lump they were witnessing was merely a third of what was within Su Zimo's storage bag.

Furthermore, he was hiding the precious Pure Gold Crystal as well!

"Err..."

Somewhat stumped, both old men were speechless for a moment.

After awhile, Elder Liu gulped and coughed gently. "Lad, the mission is... erm... pretty well done. Cough, cough."

Elder Liu wanted to nitpick at Su Zimo but he truly found himself incapable of doing so at the sight of the huge lump of gold ores.

The disheveled old man furrowed his brows and asked, "Lad, did you see the Goldeater beside the gold mine?"

"Yeah?"

Su Zimo nodded. "When I arrived there, I found the Goldeater killed already. Since there were still quite a number of gold ores left, I brought them all back.

"What the f*ck?"

Both old men rebutted internally, "That lad's luck is way too bloody good, isn't it...?!"

Chapter 85: Sound of Tigers and Leopards!

Su Zimo handed in the mission and received quite a number of contribution points for it. He then returned to his cave abode.

Watching Su Zimo leave, both old men could not help but lament in deep thoughts.

"There's no wonder why he's the man who could cultivate a Level 3 Spirit Fire. Even his luck is beyond others," The disheveled old man pouted his lips.

"Yes."

Elder Liu continued, "Those trial disciples of Spirit Peak that went to Great Rock Forest were not low in cultivation realms but yet they were injured badly. But this lad? Not only did he not bump into that mysterious burly man, he even managed to go through Great Rock Forest entirely while returning peacefully with all those pure gold ores with just a Level 5 Qi Condensation. What else do you call that if not luck?"

The disheveled old man remarked in pity, "Actually, given his gift for refining weapons, it'll be best for him to join True Fire Sect. Our sect isn't good at weapon and elixir refinement at all. I honestly feel a little bad that we may end up burdening his progress."

"Let's not think so much. He's only just started on weapon refinement and can't even create an inferior-grade spirit weapon. Even though our sect doesn't specialize in weapon refinement, we have the foundation of it too. Let's think about other stuff in the future," Elder Liu consoled.

Nodding, the disheveled old man lowered his head in deep thoughts.

...

It was still early when Su Zimo returned to his cave abode.

According to his plan, he would spend all his efforts on immortality cultivation during the day be it for raising his cultivation or learning more about weapon refinement. Come nighttime, he would cultivate The Mystic Classic of the Twelve Demon Kings of the Great Wilderness.

Before attaining a core, be it Qi Refinement Warriors or Foundation Establishment Cultivators, they were no different from mere mortals and would still have to rest through sleeping.

The common ground between Qi Refinement Warriors, Foundation Establishment Cultivators and mere mortals was still their lifespans.

Qi Refinement Warriors and Foundation Establishment Cultivators merely had a slightly longer lifespan than mere mortals who could only live to a hundred plus at best without ailments or accidents.

However, demonic cultivation was different.

During daytime, most demons would be in hiding and would only roam and hunt for food at night when their energy peaked.

In fact, Su Zimo would also be resting come nightfall. However, through the two years of demonic cultivation, he already had the habit of maintaining The Mystic Classic of the Twelve Demon Kings of the Great Wilderness's breathing and expiration method even in his sleep.

That way, Su Zimo's demonic cultivation was rising equally without taking up any of his immortality cultivation time.

It was just that the lack of progress in the Marrow Cleansing section had caused a bottleneck for his demonic cultivation path.

For the next few days, Su Zimo continued forcing the two spirit beasts to cry out continuously.

After those few days, the two spirit beasts were so exhausted that their voices were hoarse. However, Su Zimo still had no clue on how to proceed with the Marrow Cleansing section.

Even if they were spirit demons, they would be worn out howling like idiots without sleep or food for a couple of days.

The spirit tiger and leopard looked absolutely lethargic as they sprawled on the ground sleepily.

"Sigh, I've never met a master so hard to please."

The spirit tiger sighed. "If he wanted to kill or chop us up, at least that'd be a swift ending. But what's the point of torturing us like this?!"

The few days of struggle had Su Zimo tuckered out as well.

He wasn't idling while the two spirit beasts were howling – he listened intently with all his attention, afraid that he might miss the secret in a lapse.

However, the end result was merely complete exhaustion as his eyelids were so heavy that he wanted nothing more than to have a good sleep.

"Forget it, I'll kill these two tomorrow for food."

Lying down on his stone bed, that thought jolted through his mind as he fell into slumber.

He was simply way too tired.

The moment he closed his eyes, he entered dreamland and his breathing turned heavier, using the breathing and expiration method of the Body Tempering, Tendons Transformation and Body Tempering section subconsciously.

The two spirit beasts exchanged glances as though they were relieved of a burden.

“That human finally decided to stop!”

The spirit tiger was so touched that two warm streams of tears flowed down his cheeks as he almost howled out to the skies.

If they were to continue pushing on, he would have committed suicide by banging his head against the wall before Su Zimo even killed him!

Even though the spirit leopard was exhausted as well, a fierce look rose in its eyes at the sight of Su Zimo sleeping.

It was a good chance!

Even though both spirit beasts were mentally exhausted, they still had their physical strength. If they could bite through this human’s throat, they could escape from this place!

Looking at the spirit tiger, the spirit leopard growled softly.

The language between demons was naturally understood by the spirit tiger.

Even though the spirit leopard’s suggestion was rather tempting, the spirit tiger did not want to take the risk – who knew if this human was pretending to be asleep!

Furthermore, the only thought on the spirit tiger’s mind was to have a good night’s sleep.

Swaying its head, the spirit tiger sprawled on the ground and slept.

The spirit leopard looked apprehensive. After a moment, as though it had decided on something, its eyes gave off a feral look. Tiptoeing, it kept its killing intent and crept beside Su Zimo.

Looking at Su Zimo’s pale, succulent neck, the spirit leopard opened its mouth slowly.

It was certain that its bite would be able to crush even rocks!

All of a sudden!

As though it had realized something, the feral look in the spirit leopard’s eyes disappeared and was replaced with fear. Its opened jaws closed back slowly, as though it had just yawned instead.

Turning around, the spirit leopard’s eyes were filled with horror as it shivered terribly. Sprawling down on the ground, it turned to look at the sleeping Su Zimo quiveringly, not daring to attempt anything anymore.

‘He’s awake!’

Those were the two words in the spirit leopard’s mind.

As it was about to chomp down, it realized that unknowingly, the human’s breathing methods had changed.

That change caused the spirit leopard to break out in sweat.

It no longer dared to try anything funny as it laid there obediently, falling asleep after wild thoughts ran through its mind.

In truth, Su Zimo had woken up the moment the killing intent in the spirit leopard rose.

That was because Su Zimo's spirit perception was way too frighteningly keen – the cicada senses autumn coming before the wind even starts to blow. Even back in the Cang Lang Mountain Range, the spirit monkey could barely sneak an attack in, let alone this spirit leopard.

Since he was going to kill the two spirit beasts the next day anyways, Su Zimo couldn't be bothered to make a move and continued sleeping.

Come midnight, Su Zimo and the two spirit beasts were fast asleep.

As the spirit tiger slept, a weird noise came from its nose.

“Huff... huff... huff...”

After the spirit leopard fell asleep, a sound came from its nose as well, different from the spirit tiger's.

“Mmm... mmm... mmm...”

Both sounds were unique and were neither loud nor soft. Superposing, they reverberated through the cave abode.

Right then, a mysterious change happened in Su Zimo's body!

It was as though both sounds carried a strange energy that could penetrate through the flesh and tendons, permeating to the bones and moving the marrow within!

Gurgle, gurgle!

Through the vibrations of the two sounds, a rumble like the sound of running water rang out from his marrow, soothing to one's ears.

Su Zimo who was in deep sleep felt as though he had just been in a dream as he witnessed the marrow liquid within his bones flowing and gushing squeezing through it, forming blood that seeped into his blood and veins.

“Mmm?”

He bolted wide awake in shock with widened eyes – the sound of tigers and leopards!

Chapter 86: Power of Blood

Su Zimo laid on the stone bed motionlessly and listened intently to the weird sound that was reverberating through his cave abode. Feeling the sensation of the flow in his marrow, a series of realizations came through to him like seeds germinating.

This was the reason why The Mystic Classic of the Twelve Demon Kings of the Great Wilderness was getting more difficult to cultivate – it was a process of internalizing external qualities.

The skin was the first to be tempered, followed by the flesh, tendons, bones. After that sequence, the marrow would be refined – that was the Marrow Cleansing section.

External cultivation techniques were relatively easier to master.

That was because apart from sutra, breathing and expiration methods as foundation, there were other killing techniques used to refine one's skin, flesh, tendons and bones.

Take the Tri Bovine Style for example. Continuous cultivation of it would result in refinement of the skin while the three styles of the Divine Steed would help to refine the bones.

However, from the Marrow Cleansing section onwards, the mystic classic no longer had any killing techniques – everything would have to depend on Su Zimo's power of understanding to grasp the profoundness of the sutra.

It wasn't because the mystic classic was incomplete. Rather, it was because one would not be able to achieve cleansing of their marrow through the mere use of physical techniques!

The marrow was located within the bones. External techniques were able to refine one's bones at best and could not reach deeper.

That was why another method was required to make use of other forms of energy to refine the marrow.

And... that energy was none other than the sound of tigers and leopards!

Actually, Su Zimo was no stranger to such sounds. Back in Ping Yang Town, Su Xiaoning had once raised a kitten.

The kitten was expressionless and would never speak. However, a rumbling sound could be heard from within its body every now and then, similar to this sound of tigers and leopards.

But of course, be it spirit tigers or leopards, neither of them had the knowledge of the Marrow Cleansing section's sutra and hence, their marrows would never ever be stronger than Su Zimo's.

The sound of tigers and leopards was merely a turning point of the Marrow Cleansing section.

The true profoundness of it laid within the sutra.

Su Zimo recalled the sutra of the Marrow Cleansing section and started imitating the sound of tigers and leopards.

"Huff... huff... mmm... mmm..."

Through repeated imitations and attempts, Su Zimo's body started giving off a unique vibrating sound too.

The reverberation of the sound caused his marrow liquid within his bones to flow, churning at a rapid speed while producing blood that seeped into Su Zimo's blood and veins.

The true meaning of Marrow Cleansing was to swap blood.

Through vibration of the marrow, new blood that was stronger than Su Zimo's existing blood would be formed!

According to the Marrow Cleansing section, an initial success would be enough to kill off an early-stage Foundation Establishment Cultivator. At phenomenal success, one could kill off mid-stage Foundation

Establishment Cultivators with ease and could even match against late-stage Foundation Establishment Cultivators!

That was how frightening the blood swapping of Marrow Cleansing was!

Be it tempering of the body, tendons or bones, those were external strengths at the end of the day.

From the Marrow Cleansing section on, Su Zimo would be cultivating a strength that comes from within – the power of blood!

Back in the Cang Lang Mountain Range when he was being hunted by the Foundation Establishment Cultivators of Joyful Clan, he had only managed to escape at the brink of death with the Sanguine Ape Transformation.

The reason why the Sanguine Ape Transformation was able to receive such a tremendous amount of power within a short period of time was due to the Power of Blood.

That was also why Su Zimo turned weaker after the Sanguine Ape Transformation – he had yet to start on the Marrow Cleansing section back then and his body could not bear the immense burden at that time.

From now on, the same situation would not happen again.

After the Marrow Cleansing section, the Sanguine Ape Transformation would no longer be of any use to Su Zimo.

After all, with just an initial success of the Marrow Cleansing section, every channel of his blood would send forth a horrifying amount of power!

In the blink of an eye, the night had passed.

He had already gotten a rough grasp of the sound of tigers and leopards.

Standing up, Su Zimo's heart was filled with joy and his previous disappointment had cleared completely.

He had finally made progress on the Marrow Cleansing section after being stuck for so long.

Looking at the spirit tiger and leopard, Su Zimo smiled; the thought of killing them had disappeared too.

No matter what, both beasts had credit for his newfound understanding of the Marrow Cleansing section.

The two beasts had woken up long ago as well. When they saw Su Zimo smile, a shiver ran down their spines as they shuddered.

Neither of them had seen Su Zimo smile before.

But, now all of a sudden, he was smiling...

"It's over, it's over! That human is going to lay his hands on me now!" The spirit tiger cried internally.

For the spirit leopard, it was more of guilt.

It had nearly died on the spot for its killing intent the previous night. Right now, its head was lowered, not daring to look at Su Zimo.

Su Zimo walked forth, whisking the spirit tiger in his left arm and spirit leopard on his right before leaving his cave abode and heading to the front peak.

Crossing the thick fog, he arrived before the sect and placed the two spirit beasts down. "You guys can leave."

Spirit tiger: "..."

Spirit leopard: "..."

Both beasts were stunned and did not realize what was going on.

He was letting them off just like that?

Even after a while, both beasts laid sprawled on the ground, obediently still like little kittens.

Su Zimo smiled and waved his hand. "Go on and leave. You're not allowed to harm others from now on."

This time round, the beasts could tell of the casualness in Su Zimo's tone.

The human seemed as though he was truly sincere about letting them go?

The spirit leopard got up slowly and moved a little. Upon seeing no reaction from Su Zimo, it headed into the distance.

After taking a couple of steps, the spirit leopard turned around hurriedly and was only relieved after seeing that Su Zimo had not caught up to it.

Even so, the spirit leopard did not dare to run and merely trod further away in small steps, turning back from time to time.

The spirit tiger did not move and watched Su Zimo with slightly agape jaws.

Su Zimo asked, "Why aren't you leaving?"

The spirit tiger grinned widely in a seducing manner and even wagged its tail.

The moment it did that, the spirit tiger's heart skipped a beat as it scolded itself internally, "Bloody hell! I'm the king of the forest! Why am I wagging my tail like a dog!"

"If you're not leaving, I am."

With that, Su Zimo turned towards the fog.

Hesitating for a moment, the spirit tiger chased after him.

"Mmm?"

Looking at the spirit tiger behind him, Su Zimo smiled. "Why? You want to follow me?"

It nodded its head hurriedly.

The spirit tiger lamented internally, "What kind of a joke is this? This human is so perverted, asking me to cry out repeatedly. How would he let us go so easily? It's a trap! He's laying a trap! If we really run, he'll definitely kill us!"

The spirit tiger turned and looked at the spirit leopard that was walking away warily and mourned in his heart. "Brother leopard, good luck. You're probably about to die."

There's no way Su Zimo knew what the spirit tiger was thinking but since it was so resolute, he brought it with him through the fog formation.

Along the way, the spirit tiger waited for Su Zimo to turn back and kill the spirit leopard.

However, even by the time they crossed the fog formation, Su Zimo did not seem as though he had the intention of turning back.

It was then that the spirit tiger realized that Su Zimo had actually meant to let them off!

"F*ck my life!"

The spirit tiger cursed internally as he grit his teeth.

"Wait, so I was the one who dug a pit and jumped into it myself? I even covered myself in it...!"

"There's still a chance! Another chance!"

The spirit tiger encouraged itself, ready to run away the moment the opportunity arises.

Right then, a Perfected Golden Core streaked through the air. When he caught sight of Su Zimo below, he murmured a soft surprise and changed direction, descending before the man and beast duo.

Chapter 87: Crisis

"Greetings, master."

The person who had arrived was Weapon Peak's master, the disheveled old man. Su Zimo bowed and greeted.

Nodding slightly, the disheveled old man's gaze turned towards the spirit tiger behind Su Zimo and frowned.

Right now, the spirit tiger was in internal turmoil. It was actually looking for an opportunity to run away but an old man popped out of nowhere and by the sound of it, he was the perverted human's master!

Didn't that mean that he was even more perverted?!

"This pit is getting deeper by the moment. I'm screwed..."

Furrowing his brows, the disheveled old man asked, "Is this your spirit beast?"

In the cultivation world, there were many cultivators who kept spirit beasts and in a duel, these beasts played a part in their total fighting strength.

Hesitating slightly, Su Zimo nodded.

The disheveled old man looked at the spirit tiger and remarked gruffly, "This spirit tiger has quite an ordinary endowment and there's nothing special about it. But since you chose it, you'll have to make a blood oath with it."

Su Zimo remained silent.

The disheveled old man continued, "Lad, remember. You must be wary of anyone that isn't of our race. Furthermore, humans and demons take on different paths and it's hard to change a beast's nature. Cultivators have naturally weak bodies. If they were to be betrayed out of the blue by a spirit beast that's constantly around them, it's easy for them to die to it."

In the cultivation world, cultivators would always make a blood oath with spirit beasts to prevent any betrayals.

With a blood oath, the spirit beasts would die on the spot through a reflux of their own blood if they had any thoughts of betrayal.

The rise in strength for a cultivator with a strong, variant bloodline or ancient beast was always obvious.

But of course, the difference between both sides must not be overly huge while making the blood oath and neither must the spirit beast resist or it will fail.

That was why for some super large sects, they would provide various larvae or eggs of spirit beasts if they were grooming some paragon cultivators.

While the spirit beasts were cubs and foolish, the chances of creating a blood oath with them would improve tremendously.

Su Zimo had heard Ji Yaoxue mentioning blood oaths before but he was rather resistant towards the idea of it.

It wasn't just because of Die Yue or the fact that he was doing demonic cultivation as well. It was more of the fact that he did not like to be enslaved and neither did he want to do it to others.

That was equivalent to taking away the freedom of one's life.

It was even more cruel than killing them.

More than that, Su Zimo was willing to get along with spirit beasts in other manners, like the way he did with the spirit monkey.

He believed that even without a blood oath, the spirit monkey would not harm him.

The disheveled old man thought that Su Zimo's silence was due to the latter not knowing how to make a blood oath. Chuckling, he pulled out a blank piece of paper from his storage bag and scribbled a couple of incantations on it before handing it to Su Zimo. "Here, learn it. Take it as my gift to you as your master."

Incantations like the blood oath require contribution points to exchange for within the sect. The disheveled old man's act was equivalent to giving a benefit to Su Zimo in secret.

Receiving the paper, Su Zimo nodded in thanks.

“Alright, head back then and make a blood oath with this spirit tiger soon. Head to the old man guard and get a spirit beast badge from him too. Don’t drag too long,” The disheveled old man instructed before soaring into the skies and speeding out of the sect.

Within Ethereal Sect, even spirit beasts of cultivators had a badge for recognition and free entry and exit of the fog formation.

Watching everything unfold before his eyes, the spirit tiger’s blood curdled as it cried internally. “It’s really over now! I can’t run anymore! Once the blood oath is made, I’ll be HIS tiger from now on...!”

Su Zimo summoned his flying sword and the spirit tiger joined him. Before long, they arrived at his cave abode on Weapon Peak.

Through the journey, Su Zimo was silent and expressionless.

Arriving at his cave abode, Su Zimo gave a casual rub and the paper that contained the blood oath turned into dust, scattering through the air.

When the spirit tiger saw that, its jaw dropped slightly apart in shock.

It had been watching Su Zimo through the entire journey – the latter had not taken a look at the blood oath at all.

Now that he destroyed the paper, did that imply that he already knew the blood oath?

Su Zimo turned around and looked at the spirit tiger indifferently. “I’m not going to make a blood oath with you. If you choose to follow me, nod your head. If not, you can leave now.”

The spirit tiger was stunned.

A choice!

This human could have made a blood oath without it daring to resist at all. Yet, the human had chosen to give it a choice!

That gave the spirit tiger an unprecedented sense of respect and trust.

“Ow! Ow!”

Suddenly, blood rushed into the spirit tiger’s head as its mind went blank, causing it to nod furiously like a chicken pecking for rice on the ground.

Su Zimo chuckled. “Alright, since you chose to follow me, you can’t betray me. Of course, I’ll treat you the same way.”

Unknown to the man and beast, a pair of eyes were concealed within the depths of the clouds above them, watching everything that transpired between them as well as listening in on their conversation.

Su Zimo entered his cave abode with the spirit tiger tagging along.

Clouds rumbled as a gigantic pair of wings flapped, covering the skies as it flew towards Ethereal Peak.

When it returned to this cave abode that now felt familiar after multiple days of torture, the spirit tiger calmed down and was troubled. “Bloody hell, what happened to me just now? How did I agree to it so rashly? That guy was clearly just trying to bribe me!”

“Sigh, how illogical!”

The spirit tiger regretted its decision...

However, since it had made a promise, it felt bad to renege on it in the blink of an eye.

“As long as he doesn’t do ‘that’ to me, I can accept even those random cries every now and then. Alright... I’ll just stay here on that condition for now then. Since we didn’t make a blood oath, I’m free to come and go.”

At that thought, the spirit tiger felt no burden and stayed in Su Zimo’s cave abode for the time being.

An additional spirit beast did not affect Su Zimo’s life much.

The spirit tiger would head out to look for food every now and then, even bringing some back for Su Zimo.

Because Su Zimo had demonic cultivation, he required sustenance through meat as well. The spirit tiger’s actions saved him trouble and helped to conserve the essence of his Scarlet Flame Fruit as well.

Su Zimo spent the following period of time cultivating the Marrow Cleansing section while raising his cultivation realm and improving on weapon refinement.

After the disheveled old man’s hint, Su Zimo went to look for him at the Weapon Refinement Hall for all doubts and view projections left behind by seniors in the sect at the same time.

In this period of time, Su Zimo made tons of improvement for the first four steps of weapon refinement.

However, the most crucial step was the fifth one – spirit gathering.

For that, he was still stuck and had no success in creating inferior-grade spirit weapons yet. Instead, his storage bag was now filled with a whole bunch of pseudo spirit flying swords.

The disheveled old man had once said that Weapon Refinement Masters would develop a unique sense of spirit perception after a long time of refining weapons and that would help with spirit gathering.

For Advanced Weapon Refinement Masters, the chances of them gathering a single spirit pattern to create an inferior-grade spirit weapon was close to 100%.

Su Zimo had spirit perception as well, but it was different from the one Weapon Refinement Masters had.

He had tried to make use of his own spirit perception for spirit gathering but to no avail.

During that period of time, there was another month end test on Weapon Peak. Once again, Feng Haoyu came to Weapon Peak and even sent Qi Refinement Warriors to Su Zimo’s cave abode, challenging the latter.

However, Su Zimo refused to see them.

The reason why he had taken part in the previous test was because he wanted to observe the projections. But, now that he could view them at any time he wanted, there was no need to waste time on the test.

He couldn't care less about Feng Haoyu's challenge.

What Su Zimo did not realize was that his rejection of the challenge would indirectly lead to the greatest crisis in the history of Ethereal Peak!

Chapter 88: Challenge Between Two Peaks

In the blink of an eye, Su Zimo had joined the sect for more than two months.

It was already mid of the year by now.

This day, Su Zimo was pondering about the technique of spirit gathering in his cave abode when the spirit tiger's sharp ears heard the sound of Sword Kinesis Flight speeding towards their direction.

Before long, his door sounded with hurried knocks.

"Bro, open up! Are you there?" Little fatty's voice rang out.

Su Zimo sighed – he was about to make headway when his thought process was broken. Getting off his stone bed, he walked out of his cave abode with the spirit tiger behind him.

Because the spirit tiger was even taller than the little fatty and it looked feral, the latter was so scared that he almost fled from the spot on his flying sword.

It was only after he saw the spirit beast badge on the spirit tiger's neck that little fatty calmed down and chuckled. "Bro, you're amazing! You even have a spirit beast now!"

"What happened? What are you so flustered for?" Su Zimo saw that little fatty's nose was filled with beads of sweat as though he had rushed over because something had happened.

Slapping his forehead, little fatty replied hurriedly, "Bro, it's bad! Weapon Peak's disciples are fighting with Spirit Peak disciples in our peak's spirit arena!"

"Mmm?"

Su Zimo frowned. "Explain everything clearly. What's going on?"

"It's like this."

Little fatty organized his thoughts and related the entire event thoroughly.

Su Zimo's eyes turned colder by the moment.

So, he was the cause of the conflict between disciples of both peaks.

During this period of time, Su Zimo was always in his cave abode and had rarely appeared. Not only did he not take part in the month end test, he did not even reply to Feng Haoyu's challenge. However, that made Feng Haoyu feel as though he was being looked down on!

It was an absolute disgrace for him!

Naturally, disciples of Spirit Peak began to mock that Su Zimo was a coward who did not dare to accept the challenge and whatnot.

When disciples of Weapon Peak heard it, they naturally felt uncomfortable as well and because of that, both sides had been engaging in a verbal war for the past period of time.

Everything escalated to this day when the fight exploded, causing disciples of both peaks to engage in a challenge.

To be honest, other than Su Zimo, none of the Weapon Peak disciples had a heaven spirit root and neither were they well-versed in fighting techniques.

Most of the Weapon Peak disciples spent their time raising their cultivation states and refining weapons.

Even for Qi Refinement Warriors at the same cultivation realm, Weapon Peak disciples were far inferior compared to Spirit Peak disciples. In fact, even those that were merely a level higher may lose as well.

This was a challenge that Weapon Peak could not win!

Without saying anything more, Su Zimo summoned his flying sword and said grimly, "Go! To Spirit Peak!"

The spirit tiger leapt on the sword as well – as Su Zimo's spirit beast, it naturally had to follow suit.

During this period of time, Su Zimo's had gotten to Level 6 Qi Condensation. At full speed, his Sword Kinesis Flight was almost comparable to little fatty who was Level 7 Qi Condensation!

One had to understand that little fatty had a heaven spirit root as well.

However, the fact that they had a similar speed implied that Su Zimo's quality of spirit qi was even higher than little fatty's!

"This doesn't make sense."

Little fatty was puzzled.

"Bro, don't be rash later on," They were about to arrive at Spirit Peak and when little fatty saw the coldness in Su Zimo's eyes, he reminded out of fear that the latter might do anything inappropriate.

Su Zimo did not reply.

Cultivators were not allowed to fight one another casually within Ethereal Peak. If they had any grudges to settle, they would have to do it in the spirit arena.

Each peak had their own spirit arenas located in the westward direction respectively.

After all, the westward represented the metal element – it was a sign to kill!

However, even in the spirit arenas, cultivators were not allowed to kill or cripple the other party's cultivation – it was only a place to determine the winner.

But of course, duels – especially between cultivators who were evenly matched – were usually decided through a single crucial moment. It was difficult for anyone to properly hold back their power for those critical moments and the accidents have happened in the spirit arenas before as well.

Before long, Su Zimo and little fatty arrived above Spirit Peak. At the westward direction, a large group of people gathered with many disciples looking on.

Su Zimo and little fatty descended outside the spirit arena.

“Make way, make way!” With his fat body, little fatty paved a path forcefully.

Many Spirit Peak disciples were just about to scold him when they caught sight of the spirit tiger behind Su Zimo and got jolted in shock, swallowing their words.

In front of Su Zimo, the spirit tiger was tame as a kitten but out here, it was ferocious and mighty, even letting out a feral roar every now and then!

Soon, they arrived at the front of the crowd.

There were at least 2,000 trial disciples looking on around the spirit arena. It wasn't just Spirit and Weapon Peak, disciples of the other three peaks had arrived upon hearing the news as well.

The stir caused by this challenge had rattled all five peaks!

Those that stood at the front of the crowd were naturally the prodigies and talents of every sect. Leng Rou with the ice spirit root was amongst them as well, watching on with her usual coldness.

In the spirit arena, a Level 8 Qi Refinement Warrior of Spirit Peak was engaged in battle against Xue Yi.

Xue Yi was at Level 9 Qi Condensation, a realm higher than this person. However, he was being suppressed to a big disadvantage and it was only a matter of time before he lost.

A fight between Qi Refinement Warriors was limited where items such as spirit weapons and talismans were not used.

Even though they were both riding a single flying sword, the Level 8 Qi Refinement Warrior of Spirit Peak clearly had a much better mastery with it as his flying sword pressured Xue Yi endlessly.

Xue Yi's mastery of his flying sword was clearly much clumsier.

“That's Sun Tao, a heaven spirit root. He's nothing much in Spirit Peak and only listens to Feng Haoyu. Hmph, bro. Even though I'm only Level 7 Qi Condensation, I might even be able to take down this man too,” Little fatty whispered at the side.

Su Zimo nodded his head and looked around, spotting the haughty, purple robed Feng Haoyu standing nearby.

Right then, Feng Haoyu turned to look at Su Zimo too.

A taunting look flickered through Feng Haoyu's eyes.

“Fufu, you're finally willing to show yourself?”

Feng Haoyu scoffed coldly and suddenly declared loudly, "Sun Tao, don't drag this anymore and end it quickly. The 'genius' of Weapon Peak is here to watch."

Feng Haoyu placed particular emphasis on the word 'genius'. Right then, countless gazes turned towards Su Zimo.

Leng Rou turned slightly and glanced at Su Zimo indifferently before looking back.

Despite the intense fight, Sun Tao was still able to afford the distraction of looking out of the spirit arena.

After he saw Su Zimo, Sun Tao burst out into laughter and activated some hand seals. His flying sword shone brightly and burst forth with energy, hitting Xue Yi's flying sword away and piercing towards his heart!

Xue Yi's eyes were instantly panicked. He wanted to dodge but at the sight of the incoming flying sword, his body went slightly stiff instead.

Su Zimo narrowed his eyes.

Just as the flying sword was about to pierce Xue Yi's chest, Sun Tao chuckled and adjusted its trajectory upwards.

Poof!

The flying sword pierced through Xue Yi's shoulder blade and brought forth a stream of blood.

Groaning, Xue Yi was brought to a stagger from the force and fell from the spirit arena.

A couple of disciples from Weapon Peak rushed forth to support Xue Yi, applying ointment on the wound to slowly stop the bleeding.

The disciples of Weapon Peak watched angrily and shouted as Sun Tao walked slowly off the spirit arena, "The winner was already decided, why did you still injure him!"

"Hmph, no one is to blame for his lackluster skills."

Sun Tao scoffed coldly, "Weapon Peak is only good at talking. Level 9 Qi Condensation? So, what? Even if you're a realm above me, you're nothing in my eyes!"

Chapter 89: Sneak Attack

Su Zimo kept silent the entire time, looking frighteningly calm.

Standing beside him, little fatty naturally could feel the sharp aura that was exuding forth from within Su Zimo – it was horrifying!

"Bro, if you want to fight, please don't touch them out here. The sect's rules states that cultivators can only spar within the spirit arena."

Even though Su Zimo was only at Level 6 Qi Condensation, for some reason, little fatty always felt that he was extremely strong.

Terrifyingly strong.

Su Zimo headed up and checked out Xue Yi's wound.

The sword had pierced his shoulder blade and the wound would take at least a month to recover.

Xue Yi's face was pale. When he caught sight of Su Zimo, he forced out a smile. "Junior Brother Su, you're here too."

"Mmm."

Su Zimo nodded his head. "Senior brother, rest well. I'll make them pay for this."

"Don't!"

Xue Yi's expression changed as he tugged at Su Zimo's arm, shaking his head. "Junior brother, don't fall into their trap! The reason why they did this was to lure up into the spirit arena so that they can cripple you, rendering you incapable of taking part in the year end face-off."

"That's right, Junior Brother Su! You don't have to bother with our affairs. As long as you win Feng Haoyu in the year end face-off, that'll be as good as making them pay," The other Weapon Peak disciples chimed in.

Su Zimo shook his head.

When he saw that, Xue Yi was even more anxious. "Junior brother, you've only joined the sect for less than three months so you've probably never been to Spirit Peak to learn battling techniques between cultivators. How are you going to fight them? I'm at Level 9 Qi Condensation and I lost, let alone your Level 6. Don't be silly!"

Even though Xue Yi's words were unkind, he had actually said them out of concern.

"Humph..."

Sun Tao who had exited the spirit arena passed by Su Zimo and the others. When he heard that, he smirked and raised his brow. "If Junior Brother Su wants to have a fight, we've got other Level 6 Qi Condensation disciples in Spirit Peak. If that doesn't work, how about I get a Level 5 to go against you? How's that sound?"

"Haha!"

A series of laughter burst forth from the crowd.

"Junior Brother Su, I'm only at Level 5 Qi Condensation! I'm willing to spar you in the spirit arena, do you dare to?" A disciple from Spirit Peak stood up.

Another Spirit Peak disciple yelled, "Junior Brother Su, we joined the sect at the same time. Even though I'm only at Level 4 Qi Condensation now, I can still be your opponent too!"

Feng Haoyu looked at Su Zimo and remarked idly, "If you're thinking of finding a Level 3 Qi Refinement Warrior as an opponent, then I guess that's something Spirit Peak doesn't have."

"Hahaha!"

The laughter roared even louder.

"That's too much!" The disciples of Weapon Peak were so angry that their faces went green.

Little fatty sighed at the side.

Even though he sided with Su Zimo, he was still someone of Spirit Peak at the end of the day and could not say anything at the moment.

Xue Yi clutched his wound and said softly, "Junior Brother Su, let's head back. Don't fall for their trap."

"I was the cause of this to begin with so things should end with me."

Right after he said that, Su Zimo turned to look at Feng Haoyu before saying slowly, "Feng Haoyu, for the sake of that fake title of being top of three peaks, you've created so much trouble directly and indirectly. I had initially thought that you would be a somebody, but now..."

Su Zimo did not continue, merely shaking his head.

A gold glare flickered through Feng Haoyu's eyes as he asked icily, "What do you mean by that?"

"You've been wanting to challenge me, right?"

Su Zimo continued, "As you wish. Get to the spirit arena then!"

The voices in the crowd gradually vanished.

Everyone looked at Su Zimo in astonishment, unable to believe what they had just heard.

Su Zimo wanted to challenge Feng Haoyu?

One was at Level 6 Qi Condensation while the other was at Level 8.

One was a disciple of Weapon Peak, untrained in fighting techniques, while the other was the number one genius of Spirit Peak!

The difference between the two of them was like heaven and earth!

Even little fatty was stumped as well.

While he believed that Su Zimo was strong, it wasn't to the extent of Feng Haoyu's strength.

But, the sudden challenge declaration to Feng Haoyu sent little fatty into a fluster.

"Junior Brother Su, don't! Don't do that!" Xue Yi thought that Su Zimo had issued the challenge because he was young and impetuous.

"HAHAHA!"

After a momentary silence, an even louder roar of laughter burst out from the crowd.

Some of the Spirit Peak disciples clutched at their stomachs in laughter. "I can't do it! This Su Zimo is way too hilarious! He wants to challenge Junior Brother Feng!"

"That's what I call overestimating one's strength!"

"Isn't that right! How did he manage to even say it out? That guy is real thick, that's for sure."

Feng Haoyu merely smiled and watched Su Zimo silently.

He did not have to say anything. By now, Su Zimo was already a laughing stock of the entire place.

Sun Tao said with a stifled chuckle nearby, "Are you even fit to challenge Junior Brother Feng?"

Su Zimo eyed him and replied coldly, "Don't worry, once I'm done with him, you'll be next."

"Roar!"

Suddenly, the spirit tiger lowered its body and gave off an ear-piercing howl, silencing the clamor of the crowd instantly.

Many of the disciples that were onlooking were shocked as well, stumbling back instinctively as a stir broke out through the moving crowd.

Scouring around the place, the spirit tiger's aura was ferocious as it looked on with feral eyes and snarling teeth. Some of the female disciples were so rattled that they screamed endlessly.

This ended the spirit tiger's previous depression as it gloated internally.

The fact that it was subdued by Su Zimo did not mean that it was weak.

On the contrary, it was strong. In fact, a high leveled Qi Refinement Warrior might not even win it in a death bout.

Most of the Spirit Peak disciples head out often and have been in many battles including against spirit beasts. Right now, they were much more composed as they realized that this was Su Zimo's spirit beast from the badge on its neck.

Sun Tao narrowed his gaze and sneakily dodged away from the spirit tiger's line of view. Pulling out a flying sword stealthily, his eyes were filled with malicious intent.

Swoosh!

The flying sword left his hand and shot out towards the spirit tiger's head!

Sun Tao's attack was extremely sneaky without any warning at all.

Coupled with the fact that there were more than 2,000 people around, the entire place was noisy with auras mixed together. By the time the spirit tiger noticed, the flying sword was already near to it!

It was an extremely vicious move that was aimed on killing it without holding back at all.

With its life at stake, the spirit tiger leapt to the side and slanted its head as quickly as possible.

Shing!

A stream of blood flashed by.

A long, bloody wound appeared on the body of the spirit tiger as its skin peeled outwards with blood flowing endlessly.

“Roar!”

Crumbling to the ground, the spirit tiger’s body shivered repeatedly. It howled out miserably with pain in its eyes.

“Mmm?”

Su Zimo’s expression changed as he turned around sharply. Looking at the spirit tiger injured on the ground, his heart was filled with a strong killing intent!

The reason why Su Zimo did not realize the danger approaching was because Sun Tao’s attack was not aimed for him. By the time he heard the sound of the flying sword, it was too late.

Furthermore, Su Zimo’s attention was focused on Feng Haoyu with his back facing Sun Tao.

He had not expected that someone would ignore the rules of the sect and strike outside of the spirit arena!

When he saw Su Zimo’s eyes, little fatty’s heart skipped a beat. “Shit, something bad is about to happen!”

Chapter 90: Strike!

Failed to pierce the spirit tiger’s head, Sun Tao’s eyes filled with a trace of disappointment as he harrumphed coldly, “You got lucky, beast!”

“You. Are. Courting. Death!”

A demonic red light shimmered through the depths of Su Zimo’s eyes as he hollered. Suddenly, he arrived in front of Sun Tao within a single step that crossed twenty feet!

That was none other than the Plow Heaven Stride.

Even though it looked plain, it was intimidating as Sun Tao was so rattled that blood drained from his face. He suddenly felt as though the being before him was not a human, but an ancient beast!

Su Zimo’s killing intent was torrential. With a backhand slap, he whipped at Sun Tao’s cheek.

Bang!

Sun Tao could not fight back at all. The last thing he knew was his vision blackening – he was knocked down by Su Zimo! Crashing headfirst, a large pit formed around his head as he fainted on the spot with blood oozing from his eyes, nose, ears and mouth!

“Eh?”

Above the spirit arena somewhere beyond the clouds where the eyes could not reach, a surprised murmur sounded out. A gigantic pair of wings that was barely visible appeared with a pair of eyes observing everything beneath coldly.

“Weird. How come that lad’s blood has...”

A barely perceivable mutter could be heard from above the skies.

At the spirit arena...

The entire series of events caused an uproar.

It started with Sun Tao’s sneak attack that injured Su Zimo’s spirit tiger. That was something that everything could still accept as reality.

But what happened next had them all stunned.

By the time little fatty wanted to prevent it, it was already too late.

No one had expected that Su Zimo would lay a hand on Sun Tao. Not just that, Sun Tao was knocked out with a single slap and no one knew if he was even alive still!

“Careless! It must be out of carelessness!”

That was the first thought across everyone’s mind.

Sun Tao was a Level 8 Qi Refinement Warrior of Spirit Peak. The only possibility for him to be defeated by a Level 6 Qi Refinement Warrior of Weapon Peak in a single move must be because he was being careless.

“It’s over, it’s over! Bro totally ignored the sect’s rules and laid a hand on a fellow sect mate out of the spirit arena! Now, no one even knows if Sun Tao is still alive! This is bad!”

Little fatty scratched his ears and cheeks anxiously, trying to think of a way out of this.

“Insolent!”

“Audacious!”

“Su Zimo, how dare you break our sect’s rules and hurt a fellow sect mate! You’re the one courting death!”

Many disciples of Spirit Peak rushed out from the crowd and surrounded Su Zimo, barking at him angrily with unfriendly looks.

Watching everything nearby, Feng Haoyu’s eyes filled with a taunting look as he gloated internally.

“Seems like I don’t even have to do it personally anymore. What a witless fool, fufu.”

Su Zimo’s expression was unchanged as he looked at the surrounding Spirit Peak disciples coldly. Squatting down, he applied ointment to the spirit tiger’s wound.

The spirit tiger endured through the pain and looked at Su Zimo with blinking eyes, feeling a sense of warmth gush through its heart.

Leng Rou at the side nodded her head in acknowledgment as she saw that too.

Everything aside, the fact that Su Zimo could maintain his composure in front of more than a thousand Spirit Peak disciples was proof of his mental fortitude.

She acknowledged that she wouldn't even be able to match Su Zimo's calmness.

"Everyone, please don't be rash. Don't get hasty now, guys!"

Little fatty hopped out and bowed to everyone, giggling. "If you guys make a move, that means that everyone would have broken the sect's rules too, right?"

Upon hearing that, many of the Spirit Peak disciples looked apprehensive as they stood rooted momentarily, feeling embarrassed to strike out.

Feng Haoyu's gaze shimmered as he suddenly leaned and whispered to a Spirit Peak disciple beside him.

Nodding in acknowledgment, that disciple rode his flying sword and dashed towards Spirit Peak's palace.

A look of disgust flickered through Leng Rou's eyes when she saw that.

She need not guess further – Feng Haoyu must have asked that person to snitch so that they could get seniors of the sect to deal with Su Zimo.

"Su Zimo, how dare you hurt our people on our premises. Do you really think Spirit Peak is that weak?"

Just as both sides were in a stalemate, Feng Haoyu suddenly remarked.

When he heard that, little fatty's heart sank.

What a devious man!

That statement was clearly meant to stir everyone's emotions so that Su Zimo would end up fighting with the disciples of Spirit Peak!

The graver this matter became, the more severe Su Zimo's punishment would be!

Indeed, right after Feng Haoyu said that, some of the initially hesitant Spirit Peak disciples looked much more resolute. Placing their hands slowly on their storage bags, they were ready to strike at any moment.

Finally, one Spirit Peak disciple could hold it in no longer. Confident of his physical strength because he had cultivated a body tempering technique in the past, he harrumphed coldly and walked forth, reaching for Su Zimo's hair while barking, "Su Zimo! We're asking you a question! Don't act mute!"

"Get lost!"

Without even turning back, Su Zimo flung his arm. Even though it looked flimsy, a loud crack sound akin to that of a whip rang out!

Piak!

Before that Spirit Peak disciple's palm could even reach Su Zimo, he was sent flying into the crowd by that slap! His teeth cracked as he coughed out blood, knocking out cold on the ground.

Everyone was in an uproar!

Little fatty was almost on the brink of tears.

He was trying his best to stop the situation from escalating but now, everything he had done was in vain!

Su Zimo's strikes were so swift that no one could react to it at all!

Now, he had enraged all of Spirit Peak's disciples.

The many Spirit Peak disciples summoned their flying swords which hovered in the air, ready to strike at any moment!

Dozens of Weapon Peak disciples surrounded Su Zimo with their flying swords summoned as well. Both sides were pointing swords at one another as war was on the brink of breaking out!

Feng Haoyu's eyes gloated even merrier.

"Don't fight, don't fight!"

When little fatty saw that, he was even more troubled as he took out a huge axe from his storage bag. Pulling out a talisman with his left hand, he slapped it on Su Zimo's back.

Instantly, a barrier of light appeared around Su Zimo's body.

It was a protection talisman.

Instead of using it on himself, little fatty gave it to Su Zimo.

That act had Su Zimo feeling extremely touched.

What little fatty did would undoubtedly offend his fellow disciples of Spirit Peak.

"Damned fatty! Which side are you on!" A Spirit Peak disciple shouted.

Suddenly, little fatty's expression turned grim. His smile disappeared as he hollered, "F*ck you! It's none of your matter whose side I'm on!"

That shout from little fatty caused many Spirit Peak disciples to be stumped.

Ever since he had joined the sect, no one had seen little fatty get angry before. He was always smiling and friendly. In fact, he had even more friends than Feng Haoyu.

Realizing that he may have acted inappropriately, little fatty pouted his lips. "I'm a fatty and so be it, but I hate people calling me damned fatty..."

Suddenly, a shout boomed out from afar.

"Everyone, disperse!"

A beam of light shot over and appeared above everyone's head with an early-stage Foundation Establishment Cultivator standing on his flying sword. Behind him stood the Spirit Peak disciple that snitched.

“Greetings, Senior Brother Chen.”

“Good timing, Senior Brother Chen. Please redress our grievances. Su Zimo of Weapon Peak broke the sect’s rules by assaulting fellow sect mates!”

Many disciples of Spirit Peak cupped their fists and greeted, recognizing the man who had arrived.

Little fatty whispered hurriedly, “Bro, don’t offend this person. He’s an inner sect disciple of the Disciplinary Hall, Chen Yu. He must be here to cause trouble for you because he’s on friendly terms with Feng Haoyu. Please just bear with it.”

Pausing for a moment, little fatty continued, afraid that Su Zimo might not understand the severity of things, “We can’t afford to offend inner sect disciples. Otherwise, we’ll suffer after we get promoted to the inner sect. Besides, he’s someone of the Disciplinary Hall.”