

Chapter 401 - The Legend is About to Begin

Qiu Haitang was pale-white, still shaken from the recent events. She truly seemed pitiful. Everyone around her probably became deeply convinced by her story immediately.

However, both Fu Qingjin and Hua Chengzan were among the sharpest people out there. Both of their eyes flashed with a hint of doubt, but they did not ask any further questions.

Qiu Haitang and Hua Chengzan bade farewell and left first. The remaining disciples of the Green Vine mountain were all Qi Practitioners towards the lower end of the spectrum, and the Foundation Establishment cultivators were in no mood to pay any attention to them either. The disciples were afraid of bothering them, so they all left by themselves.

Diao Fei and Yu Shukuang exchanged glances. Alright, let's just go to Clear River city together!

After that, there was no such thing as the Green Vine mountain anymore, or so-called disciples of the Green Vine mountain. As the first senior brother, Diao Fei was slightly saddened, but Yu Shukuang was very positive. Now, the sky was open for him to fly freely. Perhaps this was good news. He had stepped onto the path of cultivation after so much difficulty, yet he did not even feel as liberated as when he was the lord of the Proud Sword manor.

Without any eyesores around, the Foundation Establishment cultivators all voiced their fury. "The wretched daemon has been so conceited. Fellow Fu, we can't just let this matter be." "Yeah, the Daemon Suppression alliance is of the same breath and branch. We should be working together against our common enemy."

"But even the Duality Formation of Disintegration couldn't stop him. If he comes knocking..."

Within the noisy discussion, someone murmured that, and all of them shut up. They could not help but look into the deep crater beside them. It was a shocking sight.

"I will report this to the Sword Collection palace. Don't worry, everyone. Fellow Green Vine's debt of blood definitely won't just end here. There will be a day when I personally cut down this daemon with my sword."

Fu Qingjin waved his hand, and all the sect masters bid farewell, only leaving him alone, standing with his arms behind his back and gazing at the crater. The moonlight was like liquid silver, while his long hair was like ink. His fringe covered his face, and his expression was gloomy, but the corner of his lips gradually curled up.

"No glory can avoid the fate of being reduced to ruins. Northmoon. I've remembered this name."

.....

Above the Parlour of Clouds and Rain, Qiu Haitang and Hua Chengzan passed through the rain, landing softly. They were like a pair of immortals.

“Rest up well. I still need to go back. There’s a lot I need to do tonight.” Before Hua Chengzan had even finished talking, fragrance filled his nose. Qiu Haitang had embraced him firmly. He hesitated for a moment before gently patting her back. His smile was rather powerless.

After who knew how long, Qiu Haitang let go of him and stared into his eyes.

Hua Chengzan’s heart skipped a beat. Through the rain, her face became slightly blurred, startlingly beautiful. However, it soon returned to normal.

“Just as I thought. No reaction.” Qiu Haitang smiled. Hua Chengzan opened his mouth, but he faltered. Qiu Haitang suddenly grew stern. “Tell me seriously. Are you using Gu Yanying to hide the truth that you like men?”

“Of course not. Who did you hear that from?” Hua Chengzan had no idea on how to respond.

“A person that’s not a person. It makes sense. How’s that even possible?” Qiu Haitang smiled. When that guy told her about it, he was so serious that he actually convinced her slightly.

“You mean?” Hua Chengzan immediately responded.

“We’re still good friends, right?”

“Of course.”

“That’s good then. Go handle what you need to handle!” With that, Qiu Haitang turned around without the slightest hesitance.

“Haitang...” Hua Chengzan extended his hand. Wasn’t this what he had been wishing for the entire time? So, why did he feel melancholic now?

Finally, Hua Chengzan vanished into the rainy night, while Qiu Haitang remained there. She took in a deep breath and raised her head. Tears had already strewn across her face, mixing with the rain and flowing down her cheeks.

She thought about back then, how her master had once said, “Throughout the ages, most of those who possess the Aspect of Peach Blossom Beauty were women who suffered from love-sickness, but they’re also fated to never have their love reciprocated, dying in melancholy.” Back then, she was still a young girl, so she did not believe it at all. Afterwards, she became convinced, but she refused to accept her fate. She had persevered with her struggle until now, but it was all for nothing.

She wiped away her tears and revealed a smile. She could not decide how others felt, but did that mean she was unable to control how she felt herself? Dying in melancholy? I’ll live happily and show you.

Chengzan, I hope one day you also meet a person or daemon who can make you let go.

Removing her makeup and changing into a night dress, she sat in front of the window, listening to the rain quietly.

She lost track of time. A familiar, scarlet figure descended from the sky.

Qiu Haitang beamed inside. She was just about to tell him about what she had done, wanting to hear his opinion.

“Tell me what the hell goes on in the minds of women!” Li Qingshan was gloomy and spoke first.

Qiu Haitang was speechless.

.....

Hua Chengzan returned to the Hua estate. The sect masters and elders skilled with flight had already returned before him.

The disciples of the Daemon Suppression alliance were all uneasy as they exchanged glances, while the disciples of the academy were perplexed, having absolutely no idea about what had happened to the Green Vine mountain.

“Chengzan, was the daemon caught or not? And, what about the Green Vine Elder?”

As soon as Hua Chengzan returned, he was surrounded. Wang Pushi asked him a barrage of questions too.

“Here’s not a place to speak. Please come with me, school leaders.” Hua Chengzan clasped his hands. Then, he noticed the concerned Juechenzi and everyone else, so he added, “And the primary disciples!”

In a quiet room, Hua Chengzan told them everything he had seen, as well as heard from Qiu Haitang. The atmosphere was heavy. Even though the Daemon Suppression alliance was their opponent, they were still human cultivators after all. The Green Vine Elder’s fate had unsettled everyone.

In particular, the primary disciples were all entranced. The daemon had flattened the Green Vine mountain along with the Green Vine Elder. Just how terrifying was that? Let alone them, mere Qi Practitioners, even if they reached Foundation Establishment successfully, all they could do was flee for their lives if they ran into the daemon.

Li Qingshan was “heavy-hearted” too, quietly observing their expressions. He was completely fascinated by it all. Only when he saw Han Qiongzhi’s sorrow did he frown. She had only lost a friend of the past. Did she have to be like this?

“In other words, both Jiang Shancheng and the Green Vine Elder died at his hands.” Wang Pushi disturbed the silence.

“Yes. The Sword Collection palace and the Daemon Suppression alliance definitely won’t remain silent any longer. They’ll ask the daemons to hand over the culprit.”

“Will the daemons hand him over?” asked the leader of the school of Music in worry.

“Definitely not,” Han Anjun said firmly.

“The Daemon Suppression alliance will definitely be out for revenge. Negotiations and diplomacy are useless now. We need to prepare ourselves.”

Li Qingshan shivered inside, no longer in the state to care about Han Qiongzhi’s feelings. Hua Chengzan was right. Once the Daemon Suppression alliance decided to pursue revenge, Milliped’s territory would definitely bear the brunt of it all. He had to return underground and make preparations. He could run

amok above ground like no one was around, but if Fu Qingjin ventured underground with just his sword, who could stop him?

This was the principle of the world of cultivation. The strong played decisive roles. As long as they were slightly stronger, it would be a one-sided massacre. This principle would completely manifest in war. The strong would shine with the glory that belonged to them in the first place.

If night never descended, how could the stars shine?

Tonight, the brightest star was called "Northmoon".

The legend was about to begin.

Chapter 402 - Secret

The school leaders remained behind to discuss, while the disciples all left the Hua estate.

Li Qingshan and Han Qiongzhi traveled together on a cloud. Han Qiongzhi's brows were firmly furrowed, while Li Qingshan seemed to be in thought, but he maintained a faint smile the entire time.

"Qiongzhi, cheer up. This isn't worth it for a person as sh*tty as him." Li Qingshan could not help but try and comfort her.

"What would you know?"

"I know he takes advantage of people and abandons his friends."

"Shancheng just wanted to comfort her. Even if he was planning that, what's wrong with it? It's not like they're children, so how can you call that taking advantage of her? You're just angry that he looked down on you." Han Qiongzhi had never liked how gorgeously dressed Qiu Haitang was and how she always got what she wanted. And, after hearing Qiu Haitang's "story", she even found that while Jiang Shancheng was quite a bad presence, his behaviour still made him a man in the very end. He did not deserve to be spoken ill of like this.

"So you're saying that I should be happy he looks down on me? Then it looks like your wish has come true. I am indeed rather happy right now."

"I'm not joking around with you. No matter what the two of you had going on between each other, he's already dead. I hope you can respect him a little. Do you know how ugly you are right now?"

"I'm not kidding with you either. I only respect those who respect me. I've never been someone who goes out of my way to please others." Li Qingshan smiled with ease.

"Y- you're beyond reason!" Han Qiongzhi leapt off the cloud in anger and flew away, disappearing into the rain and leaving Li Qingshan alone, sighing gently to himself. "I'm not exactly beyond reason."

It was not like he was actually eighteen years old. He knew what he should have done earlier, brushing past the matter without caring. Throughout all the time they spent together, they did not actually go without the slightest conflict at all. However, he was a man, so he obviously would not bicker and argue with a woman.

However, Li Qingshan had been constantly considering something seriously, which was telling her everything. Tonight, the humans and daemons were on the brink of war, so this urge of his became very intense. At the same time, he understood it would not be that simple. When the time really arrived, he required her absolute acceptance. If he handled it badly, the consequences would be unthinkable. It was even possible for his lover to become his enemy.

As a result, he said what he said just then, but the end result was not positive. If she could not even accept his flaws, how could she accept the fact that he was a daemon? If she could not even accept his criticism of Jiang Shancheng, how was she supposed to accept the fact that he had personally killed Jiang Shancheng?

Li Qingshan smiled in a self-deprecating manner. Perhaps he was asking for too much in the first place!

He had already considered this possibility. Han Qiongzhi had her own standpoint and principles. They would not change so easily over a single word of "love". If it were Han Qiongzhi, it might have been slightly more possible. Whatever, even his friends and lover probably had their own small "secrets". He could not ask for too much!

On the Lake of Dragons and Snakes, the autumn rain kicked up countless ripples. Li Qingshan sat with his legs crossed, slowly absorbing the spiritual qi of the world and recovering his daemon qi. After quite a while, he stood up, and all of his daemon qi was drained once again.

His original body returned to Cloudwisp island, while his clone flew towards the Parlour of Clouds and Rain. He still had a lot of items in Qiu Haitang's possession. However, no matter what, he still felt rather depressed. As a result, he could not help himself but vent the moment he saw Qiu Haitang.

"What's wrong?" Qiu Haitang was very surprised and even slightly happy.

"It's got nothing to do with you. Where are my things?" Li Qingshan entered her room and looked around before returning his gaze to Qiu Haitang. The silken, silver-white sleep dress was as thin as cicada's wings, flowing down her body like water and making her seem graceful.

Qiu Haitang's eyes rippled, and she opened her mouth slightly, but she could not even say anything before Li Qingshan interrupted her.

"Let me tell you, I'm in quite a bad mood right now. If you threaten me again, I'll strip you naked and hang you outside." Li Qingshan pushed her aside and sat down on the deck chair by himself.

Qiu Haitang hesitated before taking out two hundred treasures pouches. She was no longer a girl who had lost her will to live anymore. Just stripping her naked was something she could never accept. The guy before her really was capable of something like that.

Li Qingshan accepted the two hundred treasures pouches and inspected them before shoving them into his clothes. Out of the two hundred treasures pouches, one was in perfect shape, obviously from Jiang Shancheng, while the other was slightly damaged, having come from the Green Vine Elder.

The moment the Duality Formation of Disintegration vanished, Li Qingshan flew down as quickly as he could, snatching the Green Vine Elder's hundred treasures pouch from his waist. He used the Spirit Turtle's Profound Shell to protect himself for a split second before vanishing in the explosion.

However, that was already enough to throw the hundred treasures pouch out. Hundred treasures pouches had always been rather light items, and they were extremely tough. As long as they were not directly targeted, they could not be destroyed so easily. However, if it had not been his mirror clone, Li Qingshan would probably have never been bold enough to take such a risk. It was exactly because he possessed a clone that he was bold enough to ask for it back from Qiu Haitang.

“For a smooth cooperation.” Li Qingshan cheered up drastically, patting Qiu Haitang before preparing to leave.

“There's something I want to tell you. I used the method you told me to test him again...” Qiu Haitang grabbed him by the wrist and began speaking by herself.

“That’s very good!” After listening to it all, Li Qingshan sighed slightly. Little Hua is really stubborn, isn’t he? So much for helping him so much. But since destiny forbids it, ending it soon is not necessarily a bad thing.

“Thank you for listening to me so much. I’d like to pay you back, so if there’s something that perplexes you, I might be able to resolve it for you.” Qiu Haitang placed her hand on her chest and smiled slightly, both noble and reserved.

“Hah, don’t worry about it.”

“If it’s understanding the thoughts of a woman, I believe there are few who surpass me.”

Li Qingshan stopped in front of the window and turned around. “Fine!” He hid all of the details, only telling her that he had a great secret he wanted to share with his lover, but after testing her, he found it unlikely for her to accept it. “What do you think I should do? Oi, I’m asking you a question!” He waved his hand around in front of her.

“You don’t need to do anything at all.”

Only then did Qiu Haitang return to her senses. She never thought he would have such delicate thoughts despite how unruly he was. His feelings for that woman had even touched her slightly, and his distressed behaviour actually made her pity him. If you can obtain someone’s heart, what kind of secret can’t you accept?

“Can you even call that a recommendation? At least tell me how I should repair my relationship with her!”

“If I’ve guessed correctly, she’ll come looking for you very soon.”

“What?”

“Her standpoint isn’t as firm as you believe it to be. Unlike stubborn men, women will always take a step back, again and again, for who they love. I hope you can treat her well, without letting her down.”

Qiu Haitang was extremely serious, suddenly seeming extremely mature, almost melancholic. As a Foundation Establishment cultivator, the master of the Sect of Clouds and Rain, was she really lacking in perseverance? However, only she understood that no matter how many steps she took back, all she would be left with was a wall against her back, unable to take any steps anymore back.

On the Cloudwisp island, within the shimmering bamboo forest, Li Qingshan sat below the porch. Suddenly, he felt a familiar aura pass through the rainy night.

"If this secret will damage your relationship, it will only cause her pain. You have the responsibility to protect this secret forever. That's also a form of love," said Qiu Haitang in a distant manner. She had once hoped he would accept her, even if he feigned his love for her.

Li Qingshan raised his head and saw a familiar figure passing through the forest, throwing herself into his arms. Her voice was hoarse as she said, "You bastard. Why didn't you chase after me? Do you know how sad I was?"

"Qiongzhi?"

She was soaking, and her cheeks were moist, perhaps from the rain or from tears. She was so delicate that Li Qingshan basically doubted whether he had mistaken her for someone else. Qiu Haitang had been right. She was not as firm or adamant as he thought. Just like how she could easily influence his mood, he could hurt her heart just as easily. This was the cost of being in love.

Li Qingshan lowered his head and kissed her.

"I understand. Thank you for your suggestion. I will cherish my relationship with her." Li Qingshan stepped on the window sill and looked back at Qiu Haitang with a smile before leaping off and unfurling his wings, vanishing into the rainy night.

The night rain pattered against the bamboo forest. It was a particularly dreary sound.

The two of them embraced each other firmly, each finding the other like a scorching fire. Li Qingshan touched her body fearlessly. Unable to put up with the obstruction of her clothes, he directly tore apart her dress with a rip, exposing her perfectly-round, snow-white legs.

"Ah!" Han Qiongzhi cried out before stifling her voice. "Let's go inside."

"Here will do!" Li Qingshan pressed his forehead against hers, his gaze gentle yet ruthless. It was not like there was anyone else on the island. It was just them.

Han Qiongzhi was powerless to resist. In the blink of an eye, she had been stripped naked like a shorn sheep, no longer clad in anything. The autumn wind was slightly chilly, and she shivered. Cold and heat had ceased to affect her a long time ago, but she was still embarrassed as she was below the porch, despite knowing there was no one else on the island. However, she was unable to think too much about it before long, as she was soon taken away by pleasure.

After who knew how long, the rain stopped, and the clouds dispersed. Han Qiongzhi had almost forgotten how she had ended up in the room. All she saw was Li Qingshan staring at the dark ceiling in a daze. She shifted to her side and placed her hand on his chest. "Are you still angry?"

"I'm not." Li Qingshan looked over and gave her a toothy grin.

"Actually, I wasn't angry because of Shancheng, but for your sake. You aren't so stingy normally." Han Qiongzhi drew circles on his chest with her finger.

"I understand. I understand it all. However, if it weren't for you, I wouldn't have been so stingy." Li Qingshan grabbed her hand.

The two of them smiled at each other. Han Qiongzhi rested her head on his chest. "You're not allowed to make me so angry again, okay?"

"That's not something I can promise."

"I've already given you so much freedom, yet you can't even agree to something so small!" Han Qiongzhi dug her chin into his chest in irritation.

"I'm clearly the one who's working my ass off. You just lie on your back comfortably and enjoy yourself." Li Qingshan sniggered, but when he saw how she was about to become irritated again, he added, "Fine, fine, fine. I promise you. If I make you run off from anger again, I'll definitely chase after you."

"What kind of promise is that?! Sigh, that's just my luck. I've fallen in love with a man like you. If you don't chase after me, all I can do is return by myself obediently. I really am making myself suffer!"

"That doesn't sound like something first young miss Han would say." Li Qingshan's heart softened, and he stroked her hair gently.

.....

In the Parlour of Clouds and Rain, Qiu Haitang pondered for a moment before smiling and standing up, closing the window. There was a flash of green on a distant building, but when she looked over properly, there was nothing there.

Chapter 403: Ambitious

The wind whistled, and the drizzle assaulted his face.

Li Qingshan flapped his wings, flying through the dark sky. The half-transparent wings loosened and tightened. He was like a red fish, sometimes leaping into the sea of clouds and sometimes falling into the rain. Through his process, he rapidly familiarised himself with the usage of the wings.

At this moment, the spirit turtle's daemon core flashed and gave him an omen of warning.

Li Qingshan turned around, hovering in the air. All he could see was a sky filled with rain and clouds, unable to sense anything wrong at all, but the feeling of being spied on only became clearer.

A green light shot through the clouds. Fu Qingjin's expression was bleak as his gaze was like a bolt of lightning. The moment Li Qingshan stopped, he stopped too, carefully hiding in the clouds.

The rain continued to fall. All was silent.

Li Qingshan basically identified him immediately. As it turned out, he had still given himself away with this visit to the Parlour of Clouds and Rain. He was tempted to use his clone to probe his strength, but upon considering the three hundred treasures pouches on him, he turned around and flew downwards, entering underground through a cave.

"What vigilant prey." Fu Qingjin appeared. If he had prey like this, then his mission as a liaison would not be too boring. However, now was not the time for him to reel in his net.

.....

Moving underground, Li Qingshan took out his underground mental map and found his way, returning to his territory. The sight earlier truly made him understand what being stared right in the face meant. He was forced to respond immediately.

Returning to the cavern, he found Milliped cultivating silently by lying on the stone bed, recovering his strength bit by bit.

A shadow appeared behind him, consolidating and lunging towards him. Li Qingshan had already been prepared. He suddenly turned around and extended his right hand before placing it down again. A soft body threw herself into his embrace.

“Master, you’re back!” Ye Liubo was filled with surprise and delight.

“You’ve already undergone the heavenly tribulation.” Li Qingshan raised an eyebrow.

“Yeah! It’s all thanks to the pill master bestowed upon me!” Ye Liubo said gratefully. After ingesting the True Spirit pill, she immediately felt the energy in her body change qualitatively, finally breaking through and going through the heavenly tribulation. This was not due to the True Spirit pill alone, but also because of the lengthy time she had spent at the bottleneck.

“Liubo is willing to do anything to repay master’s kindness.” Ye Liubo licked her lips.

“That’s fantastic. Keep managing the trade. I need even more spiritual herbs.”

“That’s not what I mean. Master, look at what this is.” Ye Liubo grumbled before taking out many spiritual herbs from her hundred treasures pouch.

Before Li Qingshan left, he gave her many of the spiritual artifacts and talismans he had no use for. After undergoing the heavenly tribulation, she went back to show off and successfully completed a few transactions, earning Li Qingshan a lot of spiritual herbs yet again. None of them were less than a century old.

“Nicely done.” Li Qingshan accepted the spiritual herbs and smiled.

Right now, he had two choices. One was abandoning this place to avoid any potential attacks from Fu Qingjin, venturing deeper underground and temporarily taking up residence in Blacklustre city. The other option was to fortify this place and turn it into a fortress that opposed the Daemon Suppression alliance.

In the past, he would have leaned towards the former. After all, his subordinates were limited, and it was not like he cultivated for the sake of the Daemon race’s prosperity. There was no need for him to throw himself at the Daemon Suppression alliance. But now, he had another idea in mind. He needed to see the Spider Queen before that.

“Let’s go and visit Ye Mingzhu first.”

“Please allow me to come with you... master!” Ye Liusu emerged silently from the darkness.

“Alright. Bring Milliped with us.”

.....

“Sir Northmoon, it really has been quite a while. Have you brought more good news back for me?”

In Blacklustre city, Ye Mingzhu immediately rushed back after hearing about Northmoon’s arrival, showing great respect towards him. Having received the support of his weapons, the Spider Shadow clan was gradually turning the tides of the war underground.

“Matriarch Ye is riding the crest of success!” Li Qingshan sat on a high-back chair with his legs crossed while Ye Liubo and Ye Liusu stood beside him.

“How can you call me matriarch, sir Northmoon? You can just refer to me as Mingzhu. This is all thanks to sir Northmoon’s efforts. Please accept this measly gift as a small tribute.” Ye Mingzhu offered up a brocade box with both hands.

“Nothing comes for free! You must have a request in mind, don’t you, Mingzhu?” Li Qingshan opened the box. Inside lay a thousand-year Dark Blood Ginseng. It was completely pitch-black, oozing with spiritual qi. It had already become slightly humanoid. Unlike other spiritual herbs, it was one that could be directly consumed. Even underground, the value of Dark Blood Ginsengs was extremely high.

“May I ask if sir Northmoon has any more of the pill that Liubo consumed? If you do, I am willing to exchange for them with even more and even better spiritual herbs.” Ye Mingzhu’s eyes shone. There were many night roamers in the clan who had reached the bottleneck but were unable to break through. If she could obtain a few of these pills, they would gain several powerful members who had undergone the heavenly tribulation in the blink of an eye, forming a crushing force.

“Mingzhu, you really are ambitious, aren’t you?” Li Qingshan fiddled around with the Dark Blood Ginseng with a smile.

“I don’t have any other choice either. If sir Northmoon is willing to assist me, I swear that any future requests from sir Northmoon will be completely fulfilled as long as it is within this territory, which can include me too.” Ye Mingzhu smiled charmingly.

“I do have a few requests, but before that, I need to see the Spider Queen first! Normally, I’ll always personally fetch what I want.”

Li Qingshan smiled. If he wanted to protect the territory and fend off Fu Qingjin, the night roamers would be an extremely important component in his plan. However, he had never planned on maintaining such a fragile relationship of treating them as equals and dealing with them through trade. He wanted to grasp this power in his very own hands, consolidating his cornerstone of authority in the underground world.

It’s just a few dozen subordinates, that’s all. I’ll definitely possess what Fu Qingjin has too.

In Cobweb city, the bright, red carpet extended from the throne. Spider Queen Lolth leaned on her hand with her scarlet dress, studying Li Qingshan.

“Northmoon, you’ve finally bothered to come see me.”

“Ma’am Spider Queen has summoned you multiple times, but you never came, not even once. What are you planning?” Bloodshadow’s pale face was filled with undisguised animosity.

“I’ve been constantly thinking about ma’am Spider Queen too, but for the ma’am’s request, I’ve been busying myself outside the entire time. I’m not like certain people who just idle around in their own territories all day.” Li Qingshan chuckled and glanced at Bloodshadow.

“So you’re saying you’ve brought me the Green Vine Elder’s head?” The Spider Queen’s expression changed, becoming interested.

“Unfortunately, I haven’t.” Li Qingshan laid out his hands.

“Are you toying around with ma’am Spider Queen? Ma’am, I’ll venture to the surface right now and bring you the head of the Green Vine Elder.” Bloodshadow rebuked loudly before volunteering himself. The Spider Queen’s expression coldened slightly too.

Li Qingshan laughed aloud. His laughter echoed through the huge chamber.

“What are you laughing about?”

“From today onwards, no one will be able to bring back even a hair of his, as he has already vanished with the Green Vine mountain.”

“Vanished?” Spider Queen Lolth was doubtful.

“What are you blabbering about?” Bloodshadow frowned.

“I couldn’t help it. I went a little too hard,” Li Qingshan said with his hands laid out.

The Spider Queen curled her finger, and an oval mirror in the corner of the room glowed brightly.

That’s an arcane artifact! Li Qingshan was surprised inside. An image appeared on the surface of the mirror, passing through the rock and soil until it arrived above ground, reflecting the Green Vine mountain that had already been reduced to a crater.

In that moment, even Bloodshadow was unable to say anything more. Only now did he understand what Li Qingshan meant by “vanished”. His first response was that this was impossible. Even if he used his full strength, it was impossible for him to reduce an entire mountain to something like that unless he blew up his daemon core!

The Spider Queen’s smile slowly widened, gorgeous yet cruel. Laughter that could make people shudder rang out in their heads like threads of spider silk. Waiting outside, Ye Mingzhu’s heart lurched, and she lowered her head. She gained a deeper understanding of Li Qingshan’s strength yet again.

At this moment, Dragonsnail and Strongboulder rushed over too. They heard the Spider Queens’ laughter and were both shocked.

“What is this crater?”

After paying his respects to the Spider Queen, Strongboulder saw the image in the mirror and asked with furrowed brows.

“Green Vine mountain,” Dragonsnail said slowly. His voice was even slower than before, also doubting the conclusion he had reached. He gazed at Li Qingshan deeply.

“Did you do this?” Strongboulder’s voice boomed like thunder, filled with surprise.

“You’ve done very well. From today onwards, you are permitted to see me directly. You do not have to notify me.” Spider Queen Lolth’s voice became much more friendly. No one would dislike a powerful subordinate that conformed to their tastes.

Ye Mingzhu’s expression changed. This was a special right only Dragonsnail, Strongboulder, and Bloodshadow possessed. Did this mean the three great Daemon Generals under the Spider Queen’s command would increase today?

“Let’s fight!” Strongboulder licked his lips as scorching battle intent rose from his body, but he did not object. If he were truly responsible for this, he was indeed worthy of this right.

Bloodshadow said, “Ma’am, he’s lying! Northmoon, I don’t believe this is something you can do. Are you bold enough to clash with me? This time, I won’t spare you so easily.”

Bloodshadow was confident he was strong enough to expose Northmoon’s true power as long as the Spider Queen permitted him to fight. He wanted to prove to the Spider Queen that Northmoon was completely unworthy of standing with them.

“You better stop!” Spider Queen Lolth shut them up. “So you want to fight against a clone?”

A clone!?

Aside from Dragonsnail, everyone was surprised.

Ye Mingzhu suddenly understood why he was so composed and fearless when he faced the entire Spider Shadow clan the other day. She became even more glad about her decision.

“You’ve been using a clone to face us this entire time?” Bloodshadow’s expression became even more sunken. He remembered how he had vanished from the cave in an unbelievable fashion during the pursuit that had ended inconclusively last time. As it turned out, it was just his clone. He had been led around like a fool.

“Safety comes first. I think ma’am Spider Queen can understand my worries, right? If you hear me out, maybe even brother Dragonsnail and brother Strongboulder can understand. Actually, I wouldn’t have been surprised at all if ma’am Spider Queen placed the blame on me and handed me over.”

“Tell me, what you’ve done that needs me to place the blame on you. I’m very curious too. Just how did you do it?” Spider Queen Lolth was intrigued as she asked in interest.

Chapter 404: King

“After I met with the Spider Queen, I immediately ventured to Green Vine mountain to kill that old man. However, I ended up falling into Fu Qingjin of the Sword Collection palace’s trap, costing me my clone. After that, the Green Vine mountain became enveloped by the Duality Formation of Disintegration, preventing me from setting foot in there again.”

“The Duality Formation of Disintegration! You got through the Duality Formation of Disintegration?” Dragonsnail’s calm expression finally became slightly perturbed, and his speech sped up by quite a lot.

“You know about it, brother Dragonsnail? Honestly, I couldn’t get through the formation. I don’t think anyone present can get through it apart from ma’am Spider Queen. As a result, I bided my time and spent it scheming. I waited until last night when the members of the Daemon Suppression alliance gathered in an estate outside Clear River city.”

“Daemon Suppression alliance?” Strongboulder’s eyebrows became firmly furrowed. This name was nothing but a mockery of daemons.

“That’s right. The Daemon Suppression alliance is the same Daemon Suppression alliance composed of a combination of sects, led by the Sword Collection palace in the Clear River prefecture. Fu Qingjin seemed to be the one in charge.”

“Continue.” Spider Queen Lolth mulled over it.

“I followed them there and discovered a Foundation Establishment cultivator descending from the sky with a huge ship before leaving in front of everyone else. Afterwards, I learnt the ship was called the Soaring Dragon ship, a powerful mechanism created by humans. I followed it secretly. There were two Foundation Establishment cultivators on there...”

Li Qingshan told the entire story in a single breath, and the room fell silent. Alone, he hijacked a powerful warship of the humans, destroyed the formation around the Green Vine mountain, and killed the Green Vine Elder. Just how soul-stirring was this entire process? He had to possess both intelligence and courage to be able to achieve something like this.

“You’ve got something in you! What I admire the most are the powerful. You’re powerful enough and vicious enough!” Strongboulder laughed aloud, violently smacking Li Qingshan’s shoulder. Daemon qi suddenly surged out from his hand, slamming down with a weight of several thousand tonnes.

Boom! A huge pit appeared where Li Qingshan stood.

“I want to fight you even more now.” Strongboulder raised his head and laughed violently as his eyes shone.

“You’ll have the chance.” Li Qingshan dodged to one side, exercising his arm.

“You’re afraid that I’ll sell you out?” Spider Queen Lolth stood up and stared at Li Qingshan.

“Isn’t that exactly what you like?” Li Qingshan smiled. Betrayal, envy, chaos, pain. The Spider Queen had already unleashed everything in her nature, exhibiting it without any restraint. She showed off her wickedness just like how regular people showed off their kindness. The conflict between the night roamers would be better explained as a delight for her rather than for balance.

“Do you have any objections to that?”

“No. That’s exactly what makes you charming.”

“You’re very charming too, such that I almost want to have some fun with you, and then eat you mouthful by mouthful.” The Spider Queen made her way down from her throne slowly, touching Li Qingshan’s cheek. She licked her bright-red lips and said those words in a husky voice. She was terrifyingly enchanting.

A sliver of shock flashed across Ye Mingzhu's eyes.

Li Qingshan shivered inside. He had heard about some common practices underground from Ye Liubo. One of them included every clan offering male night roamers to the Spider Queen every year. The Spider Queen would eat every single partner she slept with. There were no exceptions.

If someone was bold enough to become interested in her, then she would be the deadliest lover. However, the principle that daemons could not kill one another fortunately existed, so she would not touch daemons.

Li Qingshan raised his head slightly, inches away from hers. "You might have that chance in the future!"

"Oh? When?"

"When you can't eat me."

"You're very daring!"

"This is just a clone after all. If my main body were here, I might have pissed myself already." Li Qingshan shrugged.

"What reward do you want? State it!" The Spider Queen returned to her throne with a flash.

"I want to be the king of the night roamers!" Li Qingshan answered without the slightest hesitation.

"Aren't you a little too bold?" The Spider Queen's face suddenly changed, radiating with murderousness and sweetness. The night roamers were the toys most important to her, yet there was actually someone bold enough to ask for them from her.

Ye Mingzhu's expression changed too, suddenly understanding what Li Qingshan meant when he said, "I'll always personally fetch what I want." She was teeming with ambition, but all she wanted was the Spider Shadow clan to become the strongest clan among the night roamers. Compared to his ambitions, it only seemed insignificant.

"If you won't agree to it, then all I can do is abandon the territory and flee elsewhere."

"Are you threatening me?" Spider Queen Lolth's eyes squinted dangerously.

"Of course not. Since you're reluctant to hand me over, the Daemon Suppression alliance will arrive very soon for revenge. My territory will definitely bear the brunt of the blow. The Daemon Suppression alliance is filled with powerful people, so only by gathering sufficient strength can I take them on in a battle to the death. Or should I say you're satisfied with everything on a smaller scale?"

"We are on the brink of war. The night roamers are an extremely important force under your command, but right now, they're still in a state of disunity. They will be of no use in times of crisis, defeated one by one in the end. I will unite them into a true sword within your grasp to fight the Daemon Suppression alliance. Isn't this more interesting than just killing one another?"

Li Qingshan took a step forward, and his voice rang out clearly. This was his intention. As long as he could combine the power of the night roamers, they would become a powerful force no weaker than the Daemon Suppression alliance of the Clear River prefecture. He would also possess something he

could rely on when he confronted Fu Qingjin. There would be no need for him to carry out any trade at all. The night roamers would have to offer various spiritual herbs to him.

The Spider Queen sank into her thoughts, as Li Qingshan's words were reasonable. On the brink of war, gathering and consolidating strength was very important.

"Ma'am Spider Queen, you mustn't!" Bloodshadow said in a hurry. If he ended up succeeding with this, his influence underground would completely surpass the three of them, becoming the most powerful Daemon General under the Spider Queen's command.

"The three of them are all your seniors. They surpass you in both age and wisdom. If two of them support you, then I'll agree to it. Right now, you already have someone objecting." Spider Queen Lolth smiled.

"I'll support him! I'll support whatever you oppose!" Strongboulder said immediately, glancing at Bloodshadow scornfully.

"Strongboulder!" Bloodshadow's voice became as cold as ice.

"However, I do have a condition. You must fight me with your main body. If you lose, then this position will go to me. How's that?" Strongboulder pointed at Li Qingshan.

"No problem!" Li Qingshan smiled confidently. Daemons always spoke with one another using strength.

Now, only Dragonsnail remained. His back was hunched, and his head was lowered. He seemed like he was asleep. He was the wisest and the most mysterious Daemon General under the Spider Queen's command. No one could guess his decision.

"Strongboulder, you may be powerful, but you lack the ability to lead," Dragonsnail said slowly.

"If you want the position, then you can have it," Strongboulder droned.

"I don't have that energy. Bloodshadow, what do you think?"

"I support this motion, but my condition will be the same as Strongboulder's." Bloodshadow immediately changed his mind. If Dragonsnail supported him too, then the situation would be extremely disadvantageous to him. Perhaps this might have been a heaven-sent opportunity instead.

"I object," said Dragonsnail slowly as he took a step back with his eyes shining.

Chapter 405 - A Soldier or a General?

What a crafty old bag of bones! Li Qingshan cursed inside. With that, he would have to defeat two powerful Daemon Generals consecutively if he wanted the position, while Dragonsnail could remain uninvolved. Bloodshadow and Strongboulder were clearly rivals, so their strength were probably equal. By then, perhaps Dragonsnail would end up being the one in charge.

"Alright, then that's decided. Northmoon, when do you plan on going ahead with this?" Spider Queen Lolth curled her lips. When it came to conflict, she would always be brimming with interest.

"I will definitely come and see ma'am Spider Queen again in three days time and battle it out with these two 'seniors'!" Li Qingshan clasped his hands. After an initial probing, he had basically confirmed that

Spider Queen Lolth was towards the warlike end of the spectrum within the daemons. She would never hand him over due to some Treaty of Kings.

Of course, the person who had the final say over this was still the Dragon King of Ink Sea who reigned over the world of daemons in the Green province. However, basically everyone could tell that war was unavoidable. The probability of the Dragon King of Ink Sea killing one of his subordinates on the spot was so low that it was basically zero.

Strongboulder was excited, Bloodshadow's gaze was vicious, and Li Qingshan's lips were slightly curled. The gazes of the three Daemon Generals clashed before they all turned around and took their leave.

Leaving the chamber of the throne and returning to the region of the Spider Shadow clan, Li Qingshan gazed over the entire city from a terrace.

"Sir Northmoon, how much of a chance do you think you have?" Ye Mingzhu probed him.

"Fifty percent." Li Qingshan was neither conceited, nor did he underestimate himself. He only showed off extraordinary confidence. "If you're willing to assist me, perhaps that might increase by ten or twenty percent."

"I'll definitely leave you satisfied, sir Northmoon!" Ye Mingzhu lowered her head. His chances at success were already startlingly high.

"If my ambition can come true, then how difficult can your ambition be?"

.....

"Uncle, that little brother of mine really is very troublesome! There's nothing I can do this time." In the commandery city of Ruyi, Gu Yanying clutched the Ink Dragon talisman and said helplessly.

After receiving the news from the Green Vine mountain, she was tempted to capture Li Qingshan immediately and choke him until he told her just what was going on. Was he really going to ignore her previous words?

The ink dragon coiled around a few times before spitting out a sentence, "Then let them fight!"

Gu Yanying shuddered. A single word from the Dragon King of Ink Sea could overrule ten thousand from regular people. He would decide the general situation of the entire Green province with a single word, or he could even change the direction that the entire world moved towards.

"Will the peace of several millennia finally be broken?"

"Limited to the Clear River prefecture, those whose cultivation is below two heavenly tribulations."

"What! Why?" In Cobweb city, a similar small, black dragon danced and coiled about like a black wisp, passing on the Dragon King of Ink Sea's order. The Spider Queen beamed at first before becoming furious. The war she had thirsted for all this time was finally about to begin, but she could not be directly involved.

"Learn to use your subordinates!" said the tiny dragon before dispersing completely.

At the same time, Fu Qingjin received orders from the Sword Collection palace. From this point on, he would be completely in charge of the Daemon Suppression alliance in the Clear River prefecture. He would be able to do whatever he wanted within the Clear River prefecture. As long as he did not venture too deeply underground and reached that place called Cobweb city, the Spider Queen would not touch him. But at the same time, he would not receive the assistance of any Golden Core cultivators either.

Both of them sighed as they experienced the same thought, Are you planning on turning the fifteen hundred kilometers of the Clear River prefecture into a chessboard?

The Clear River prefecture was like a miniature version of the Green province, where the complications between the three organisations were almost identical.

No one knew how alike the thoughts of those above ground were. Had they allowed this to happen as training for the war in the future? Or, was it to use the brutal reality of war to warn those who liked fighting? Or, perhaps this was just a game within their lengthy lives! A mere gamble!

Gu Yanying stowed the Ink Dragon talisman away. Is my job just to prevent others from interrupting this game? Most of them are easy to deal with, except that the old man from Pine Sough academy. He's very stubborn. There's only one person who can stop him.

.....

The heavy gales of wind whistled through the air, making the pine trees sigh and ripple.

Together with the wind came the misty rain, rolling over the sighing pine trees like fog. It drifted through the mountains before colliding with a large mountain and scattering over it. Lofty structures peppered the mountain, and the doors were labeled with three powerful and charming words. It was the renowned Pine Sough academy.

The sounds of studying rang out everywhere, piercing through the autumn rain and rising into the sky.

A streak of light descended from above, arriving outside a thatched hut on the back of the mountain. A dark-skinned scholar sheathed his sword; he was a Foundation Establishment cultivator who had already gone through a heavenly tribulation. The thatched hut before him was so simple that even regular people would have found it to be overly run-down.

However, the dark-skinned scholar became cautious. He tidied his clothes and gave a great bow.

"Master."

The wooden door opened, revealing the back of someone currently bent over a table, writing. His small, skinny body held up his large robes, which seemed especially big on him. Many bottles and containers were scattered around the ground behind him. They were actually for catching the rain that ran down the hut.

"Junior brother Jiang is dead." The dark-skinned scholar was furious. He went off to help him the moment he received Jiang Shancheng's distress signal, but he never thought it would turn out like this. Not only was he dead, but they had even lost an extremely important Soaring Dragon ship.

When the old man finished listening to everything, he just happened to have finished writing a word. With a sweep of his arm, the sword hanging on the wall flew into his hand. The sheathe was very old, but it was simple and uncomplicated, just like him.

He strode towards the door as his aura grew, lifting up his large robes, lifting up the simple room, and lifting up the Pine Sough academy, filling the entire world.

His wrinkled face was so solemn that it was almost rigid, and his wispy, white beard drifted about gently. In the eyes of regular people, he was just a small, skinny old man, but he gave off a bearing that no regular person could imagine. It was boundless and dauntless.

He was the head scholar of Pine Sough academy, Wen Zhengming.

“I’ll be right back.”

“Please hold on, brother Wen.”

At this moment, a man emerged from the rain. He only seemed to be in his twenties, but he gave off the same, somber feeling that came from a hundred-year-old man. He wore a fancy hat and was dressed in violet. His delicate face seemed rather chilly, as if he was forcing a smile.

Sure enough, Wen Zhengming stopped. He furrowed his brows. “What has brought sir governor to my thatched hut in the mountains?”

“Originally, I had no interest in coming to your thatched hut in the mountains to speak to an old coot like you.” He was the governor of the Ruyi commandery, the Marquis of Ruyi.

“Did ma’am Gu send you to persuade me?”

“If you want revenge for your disciple, you’ll get your opportunity some day, but not right now. This is not an attempt at persuasion, but an order!”

Confucians were firm and unyielding, unfazed by poverty, incorruptible by wealth. Even if Gu Yanying had personally come, she would struggle to stop Wen Zhengming from avenging his disciple. However, the Marquis of Ruyi was the legitimate lord of the Ruyi commandery. No confucian could defy his decrees unless they decided to commit treason against confucianism; it was not because they could not, but because they were reluctant to.

In just a few words, Wen Zhengming returned to his hut and wrote away once again, but the sword continued to hang on his waist. He refused to take it off.

In the sky, Gu Yanying said to the Marquis of Ruyi, “Thank you.”

“I’ve done everything I can to fulfil your request.” The Marquis of Ruyi was no longer as chilly as before. He smiled gently, staring at her face.

Gu Yanying ignored this familiar sight. She thought with a smile,

The board has been assembled. Where be the pieces?

Li Qingshan, oh Li Qingshan. Are you going to be a soldier who won’t emerge alive, or a general who leads the army?

.....

On the slow, rippling lake, Li Qingshan only infiltrated the Lake of Dragons and Snakes after confirming and checking multiple times that the spirit turtle's daemon core gave off no warning, handing the Green Vine Elder and Jiang Shancheng's hundred treasures pouches to his real body.

Passing through the Formation of Dragons and Snakes and returning to Cloudwisp island, Han Qiongzhi had already left, leaving a message behind for him.

"Old Wang wants me to return and formally become the primary disciple of the school of Legalism."

Li Qingshan placed the message down and turned around. All he saw was a petite figure in black monk robes, leaning against the bamboo and staring at him from afar.

Li Qingshan beamed in joy. "Xiao An, get over here. I have something good to show you."

However, Xiao An did not lunge over like before. Li Qingshan's heart softened as a result, making his way over and squatting down. He rubbed her head. "What, are you angry?"

"Yep." Xiao An nodded obediently.

"It's all my fault. Please forgive me, great ma'am Xiao An!" Li Qingshan scooped her up with a smile, both apologetic and lovingly.

"You don't want me anymore, do you?" Xiao An wrapped her arms around his neck and said gently.

"What're you saying? I can give up on anyone, just not you!" Her tender voice made Li Qingshan's heart ache.

"Then why didn't you come find me at all? I was afraid of disturbing you too." Xiao An furrowed her brows as her eyes rippled slightly like limpid water.

"I swear that it won't happen again!" Li Qingshan stared at Xiao An's clear, dark eyes. Whenever he spent time with her, there might not have been the entangling passion he felt with Han Qiongzhi, but he would be filled with indescribable peace and quiet, a sense of belonging.

He had once said home would be wherever he was, but that was not actually true. Only where she was was home. Perhaps he could not think about it constantly, but he would never forget it.

"Come, let me give you a kiss!"

Xiao An pecked his face heavily, and Li Qingshan smiled so resplendently that even the rainy weather was unable to hide it. Xiao An was infected by it too, revealing a shy smile of happiness.

"Let me tell you, I did something huge recently..." Li Qingshan made his way towards the loft as he showed off. He was not blazing with an imposing bearing, and he was without a sense of valiance or dauntlessness. Sometimes, he would even seem extremely petty, greedy, and lustful, riddled with problems. However, as long as it was her, he would hide nothing at all.

Their conversation after being separated for all this time actually came with an indescribable feeling of satisfaction and liberation, no less than when he piloted the ship and destroyed the Green Vine

mountain. Although Xiao An only smiled and listened, just how many people in the world were such good listeners?

Qiu Haitang had said that if he loved her, then he had to protect the secret forever. She was not wrong, but she missed the most important point, which was what Li Qingshan felt. This had nothing to do with a lack of understanding. She had been imagining the perfect lover, but she never imagined a daemon would have a concept of home.

When he decided to properly cherish this relationship, to relieve Han Qiongzhi of the pain that came with his secret, even Li Qingshan himself had failed to notice the change in his mental state. He just felt like he had been neglecting Xiao An lately, which was completely wrong of him.

Chapter 406 - Seizing Every Moment

As for Xiao An, she showed Li Qingshan the Skull Prayer Beads she had refined. A string of fourteen prayer beads hung from her slender wrist, pure-white like they were brand new.

“So does anything special happen when you assemble fourteen beads?” Li Qingshan asked curiously.

Xiao An smiled. With a wave of her hand, the prayer beads scattered and fell onto the ground. They bounced around a few times before standing up.

Yes, standing up. Every single prayer bead turned into a complete skeleton. They were only the size of a thumb, but their bones were bulky, their claws were sharp, and their teeth were protruding. They seemed both vicious and powerful.

“What’s this?” Li Qingshan bent down and studied them carefully. Suddenly, he became shocked. He could sense that every single skeleton possessed the strength of a regular Daemon General. It was just withdrawn right now. They had not released their true strength.

“Skeleton Demons.” Xiao An opened her right hand, and the fourteen skeleton monsters leapt into her palm, baring their fangs at Li Qingshan. Xiao An flicked their heads, and only then did they settle down.

But in that instant, Li Qingshan truly experienced a sense of danger. If they actually began fighting, the Skeleton Demons would definitely pose a huge issue.

The fourteen prayer beads symbolised the fourteen dauntlessnesses of buddhism. They were the first complete artifact from the artifact forging section of the Path of White Bone and Great Beauty, the weakest version of the Skull Prayer Beads.

Note: The fourteen dauntlessnesses of buddhism refer to

Li Qingshan could not help but sigh over the power of the supernatural ability. Even when ignoring personal cultivation, they would possess the might of fourteen regular cultivators by undergoing a heavenly tribulation. Just how powerful was that?

This was not exactly unique. For example, the Lone Grave Elder among the three elders could achieve this through refining Corpse Generals, and mohist masters could achieve this with powerful puppets and mechanisms. However, the difficulty of the refinement and the demand in the quality of the materials would well surpass Skull Prayer Beads.

Most importantly, the Skull Prayer Beads were connected with Xiao An, basically akin to her clones. She could wield them like an extra limb, and when it mattered, she could even merge them with her body, repairing her white bones and healing her wounds.

This was a supernatural ability that originated from beyond the Nine Heavens and was rumored that it could be practised to the realm of bodhisattvas. The further she progressed with it, the more it would manifest with its power.

With a white bone sword and a string of Skull Prayer Beads, Xiao An was basically undefeatable among the Foundation Establishment realm unless she went up against someone like Fu Qingjin, who wielded a powerful arcane treasure. Perhaps she would only encounter some difficulty when she was pitted against cultivators at peak Foundation Establishment.

“Are you trying to pressure me?” Li Qingshan rubbed Xiao An’s head forcefully. He had felt unstoppable after reaching Daemon General, riding on the crest of success and feeling like he could look down on everyone else. Only now did he jerk to his senses all of a sudden—he could not be so careless.

“Do you want to enter secluded cultivation?” Xiao An smiled bashfully as her eyes shone eagerly.

“Alright, alright, alright. Once we get through this, we’ll cultivate in seclusion for a while. I need to properly raise my cultivation as a Qi Practitioner and reach Foundation Establishment as quickly as possible. That will allow me to find out what brother ox left behind. I’ll be able to obtain the wealth of a Golden Core cultivator at the very least. I can’t let you get too far ahead. Let’s check out my spoils first!”

Opening Jiang Shancheng and the Green Vine Elder’s hundred treasures pouches, Li Qingshan was disappointed at first before becoming overcome by joy.

Jiang Shancheng had only established a foundation recently, and he was just a disciple, so his wealth was extremely limited. Only the supreme grade spiritual artifact sword he wielded had some worth. He did not have much else, such as pills or spiritual stones.

However, the Green Vine Elder’s hundred treasures pouch was so plentiful that it surpassed Li Qingshan’s expectations. Even if the possessions of the two other elders were combined, it probably would still not be enough to rival his. The tremendous amounts of pills and spiritual herbs completely filled his eyes, and a few supreme grade spiritual artifacts glowed brightly.

Among the various pills, pills as rare as True Spirit pills and Virtue Accumulation pills amounted to over a dozen, but what interested Li Qingshan the most were not them. Instead, it was a dark-golden pill sealed within a bottle.

“This is... an Origin Spirit pill!” Li Qingshan’s eyes narrowed. Having spent so much time with Ru Xin, he had basically gained a general grasp over the common knowledge regarding various pills. Among them included this renowned Origin Spirit pill.

It had a similar use to True Spirit pills, also for breaking through, but the realm it broke through to was Golden Core. It was a hundred times rarer than True Spirit pills, not something that regular Foundation Establishment cultivators possessed. Just what kind of luck did the Green Vine Elder possess to obtain one? Perhaps it had been bestowed upon him by the Sword Collection palace.

After inspecting it, Li Qingshan stowed it away carefully before drawing a long blade from the many spiritual artifacts. The edge of the blade was a purply-green, varying in tone. Combined with the distinct, layered pattern of feathers, it stood out very much. As he held it in his hand, it was light, as if he was holding nothing at all.

Its overall design resembled a strange bird. The hilt was curved and pointy, like the sharp beak of a bird, while the blade was large and wide like wings. The edge was circular, resembling a strange bird's head. Its two eyes were rounded, giving off a sense of twisted strangeness and a sense of mysterious magnificence.

Li Qingshan felt like he had seen something similar before. Suddenly, he remembered Ru Xin's Crystal Resin cauldron. Although their patterns and designs were completely different, their overall style definitely came from the same origins. Did this supreme grade spiritual artifact come from the Mist province too?

It was the only weapon that suited him out of the many supreme grade spiritual artifacts—he could easily give himself away if he used a sword—but the blade did not seem to be suited for killing. The edge was very blunt. When he brushed past the edge with the tips of his fingers, he suddenly felt a hint of numbness spread up through his fingers, leaving behind a streak of bright green as distinct as a verdant, venomous snake.

This is a blade of poison!

Li Qingshan was alarmed. He used the spirit turtle's daemon core to suppress it in a hurry before forcing the poison out with his daemon qi. The poison was so potent that even he could not underestimate it.

Li Qingshan had guessed correctly. The Green Vine Elder's blade did indeed come from the Mist province. As the hilt could absorb poison, and the blade could unleash poison, it was called the Blade of the Drinking Poisonfeather.

Poisonfeather birds were strange birds among legends because they were fond of ingesting poison. Their feathers were known for their poison, and dipping the feathers into alcohol could poison people to death. This was also where the saying of "quenching thirst with poison" originated from. The design of the blade originated from there.

After the Green Vine Elder obtained it, he had refined it with various poisons, which was why it had achieved its current toxicity. However, he never had the opportunity to use it, and he eventually obtained a more suitable weapon, the Green Vine staff. After that, it just sat in his hundred treasures pouch, gathering dust.

The Ox Demon Forges its Hide could block direct blows, but it could not stop poison. However, basically all other people or daemons suffered from this problem. If it were not for a cultivation method like the Spirit Turtle's Method of Sea Suppression, he would have been forced to resist the poison with his full strength. Otherwise, the damage the poison would cause would grow even more severe as it invaded his body.

However, who would give their opponent this kind of opportunity in actual battle?

Li Qingshan lifted up the blade and smiled resplendently. He had finally found a weapon that could increase his chances at victory.

Aside from that, the most important spoils he had obtained were a few formation banners and discs for setting up formations. After being replaced by the Duality Formation of Disintegration, the original formation around the Green Vine mountain had been stowed away by the Green Vine Elder.

Li Qingshan had obtained quite a lot of formation scrolls and discs in the past, but they were all on the level of Qi Practitioners and not worth a lot. These formations were truly formations that guarded an entire sect.

From a certain perspective, they were even more important than spiritual artifacts or pills. Formations were crucial for establishing a stable base. Otherwise, no matter how many powerful cultivators you could gather, as long as the enemy was slightly stronger in cultivation and knew a concealment technique, they would be able to come and go as they pleased. Even if formations could not stop the enemy, they could still serve as an alert for danger.

Li Qingshan thanked the late Green Vine Elder. With these items, he could begin his plan.

“Xiao An, get ready to accompany me on an expedition to crush the enemy!”

.....

In the blink of an eye, three days had passed. Word of the battle between the three great Daemon Generals had already spread throughout the underground world.

Basically everyone sat on the edge of their seats in Cobweb city. This was a battle that controlled the fate of the entire race of night roamers.

“Is he still not here?” Ye Mingzhu leaned on a window sill and gazed at the tall terrace. The Spider Queen seemed like a god with her bright-red figure, also waiting.

“Don’t tell me he’s afraid!” Ye Liuxing said coldly.

“He’s going to be challenging the two of them consecutively. It only makes sense if he’s afraid.” “He actually said he wants to become the king of the night roamers. His boasts are simply absurd!” The elders discussed softly, sneering at him in disdain.

“Master is omnipotent. Why would he be afraid of them?” Ye Liubo rebuked loudly as her gaze shone fervently. To her, this person was no longer her master in name only. Instead, he had become her pillar of support that upheld all of her hopes and feelings.

The elders glanced at this traitor furiously, but Ye Liubo refused to back down. Ye Mingzhu and Ye Liusu managed to calm her down.

As for the other clans, their sneers of disdain and displeasure only rang out louder. A Daemon General who had appeared out of nowhere wanted to challenge the order of the underground and rule over them. He was over his head!

“He’s here!” Ye Mingzhu’s eyes flashed.

A scarlet-red figure pierced through the air, arriving on the terrace in the blink of an eye. Just his startling speed only made the mouths of many night roamers drop!

Li Qingshan was bare-chested, exposing his body that was so perfect that it seemed like a sculpture. He had his hands in his sleeves, and the Blade of the Drinking Poisonfeather was thickly bundled, stretching over his back. He was extremely relaxed.

“Ma’am Spider Queen, I’ve made you wait.”

“So this is your main body.” Spider Queen Lolth studied him up and down, licking her lips that were a dazzling red.

“You can say so!” Li Qingshan scanned the cavern from the corner of his eye. He could not sense any aura at all, but he knew Xiao An was watching over there quietly, preparing for the worst-case scenario. However, he could tell that the Spider Queen had no plan on turning against him, at least for now.

“Let’s begin!”

Strongboulder and Bloodshadow unleashed their daemon qi simultaneously. Li Qingshan smiled and no longer held back anymore. His daemon qi rushed into the air too.

The three daemon qi scattered the black clouds that constantly lingered over the city. Among them, Strongboulder was the strongest, Bloodshadow was slightly weaker, and Li Qingshan was much weaker. Although it was already extremely rare of him to possess such strength as a Daemon General who had broken through recently, just the quantity of daemon qi was enough to decide the outcome of the battle.

“And I had been wondering just how impressive your main body would be. Looks like this is all you have.” Bloodshadow mocked.

“You better cultivate for ten more millennia before you fight me!” Strongboulder was rather disappointed. It was impossible for Li Qingshan to stand against him with such measly daemon qi.

Li Qingshan raised boths of his hands, pointing at the two of them and smiling.

“Ten millennia is too long. All I can do is seize every moment!”

Chapter 407 - Strongboulder’s Power

“He’s clearly so weak, yet he still provokes them without a second thought. Is there something wrong with this daemon’s head?” The night roamers either discussed quietly or mocked loudly. They believed the outcome of the battle was already predetermined.

“Is it really just arrogance?” Ye Liusu suddenly thought of everything that had happened after meeting him. His figure of roaring at the entire Spider Shadow clan recklessly still lingered before her.

No, it definitely isn’t!

All of his arrogance was built off his confidence. He was bold enough to bellow out, “Who dares to kill me!” because he was just a clone. If they really ended up fighting, only the Spider Shadow clan would suffer losses in the end.

Looking back, all she saw were Ye Liubo's eyes shining, without the slightest doubt. Ye Liusu opened her mouth before closing it again, smiling bitterly and silently. Was this still the crafty and resourceful Ye Liubo she once knew? She had found someone she could depend on, and she chose to place complete faith in him. Was this not a form of happiness?

What about herself? And the fate of the entire Night Roaming folk? Where were they supposed to go? Suddenly, she began to hope from the bottom of her heart that Northmoon could emerge victorious, as he was a daemon unlike those daemons. If he led the night roamers, he could definitely bring about something completely new!

Dragonsnail said slowly, "I've arranged a suitable battlefield for you!"

The space suddenly opened up upstream from the rivers of lava on the other side of Cobweb city. Li Qingshan raised his head and gazed over.

A huge rift pierced the underground terrain, several hundred meters deep. Looking down from above, he could see a thin river of fire flowing at the bottom, like a long, winding snake. In comparison, Li Qingshan seemed tiny.

Li Qingshan lowered his head and focused on the surging lava. The scorching light made his eyes shine.

To the other side of the river of fire, Strongboulder rubbed his fist menacingly and snickered.

"Don't worry, I won't kill you. All I'll do is crush every single bone in your body and make you understand the cost that comes with challenging the strong!"

"Then try it!" Li Qingshan strode forward. His iron hooves landed heavily in the lava, kicking up a few splashes and sparks. Among a series of gasps, he rapidly changed in shape. His scarlet hair blazed like fire as his horns curved like hooks. He radiated with valiance and viciousness, like the brutal aura of a primordial daemon.

But at the same time, blue inscriptions flashed on his skin that was as dark as ink. He had obtained this after reaching the third layer of the spirit turtle. They were no different from the inscriptions of the turtle's shell, giving off a profound aura that could see through the truths of the world. It was filled with a sense of intelligence and divinity.

Doing whatever they wanted, those who defied the heavens were demons. Abiding to the heavens, those who shared their lives with the world were gods. These two opposing, conflicting concepts appeared on his body at the same time. Even he himself failed to sense the strangeness of this.

However, Spider Queen Lolth was slightly fazed. So this was his original form!

Ye Mingzhu thought to herself, Oh no. So he was not going to heed her advice.

Two days ago, Ye Mingzhu delivered all the information she had summarised to Li Qingshan, and she discussed the tactics for the two battles with him.

"Strongboulder is transformed from a strange rock. He's a stone daemon that you rarely ever see, almost indestructible and filled with endless physical might. Against him, all you can do is make use of your advantage in speed and search for openings."

“That’s reasonable!” Li Qingshan smiled.

“As for Bloodshadow, his original form is a bat, but there are no regular bats as powerful as him even if they reach Daemon General. He should be some kind of exotic beast, but very few know about his actual origins. It’s rumored that he’s not a creature of this realm and comes from the Hell of Blood Pools instead. If he pushes his speed to his limit, probably the only one who can catch him would be Spider Queen Lolth. As a result, if you want to defeat him, all you can do is bide your time and block all of his attacks. You can deal a killing blow once he tires out.”

“Is this how Strongboulder and Bloodshadow try to defeat one another? What’s the outcome of it?”

“A tie. However, according to this plan, you’ll be undefeatable at the very least.”

“What’s the point of being undefeatable? I want to win!”

Win? Although Li Qingshan had personally claimed he had a fifty percent chance at victory, Ye Mingzhu had heavy doubts about that. As long as he could achieve a tie in these two matches, he would be able to consolidate his status underground and stand beside them at equal footing. He could slowly work on defeating them in the future.

However, Li Qingshan’s earlier words seemed to be his answer to her—Ten millennia is too long. All I can do is seize every moment!

“Interesting, interesting. Let’s see how many punches you can take!” Strongboulder laughed aloud. He admired and mocked Li Qingshan for being bold enough to take him on in a direct confrontation. His body also swelled up, becoming a huge rock giant. He strode over and threw a punch at Li Qingshan’s chest.

It was simple, carrying the weight of a mountain, just like his body. However, in his eyes on his vicious face—no, in what remained of his eyes after being squeezed together by the vicious rock—a mysterious, cunning light flickered.

Scorching battle intent suddenly rose up in Li Qingshan’s heart. Without any hesitation, or should you say, without any thought, his body reacted naturally, also throwing a punch at Strongboulder’s chest. He completely abandoned defence, acting as if he had just met the murderer of his entire family. It was like he was tempted to reduce Strongboulder to a pulp on the spot, even willing to go as far as to drag Strongboulder down with him.

With a great boom, wind whistled through the air violently, sweeping up pebbles. Everyone felt the ground beneath them shake violently. Despite being so far away, they could still clearly sense the direct confrontation between the terrifying forces.

The great river of fire halted momentarily!

Strongboulder only swayed slightly, while Li Qingshan was sent flying. He collided heavily against the rock face and became deeply embedded, covered in a messy pile of rubble. In that moment earlier, he felt like he had been struck by a mountain. Not only was it tough, but it was even heavy too!

“Master!” Ye Liubo cried out.

Bloodshadow hung upside down from a stalactite like a bat. A sunken smile was plastered over his pale-white face. This guy doesn't understand Strongboulder's true ability at all. No matter how much strength he possessed, no matter how tough his body was, it was useless if he could not land a strike. Yet, Strongboulder was able to force him into an open confrontation, a battle to the death whenever they fought.

"Is this your innate ability? Now that's interesting." Strongboulder glanced at his fist before looking at the pile of rubble.

With a bang, the rubble exploded, and Li Qingshan stood up. The faint blue Spirit Turtle's Profound Shell flickered before him, but it was cracked and slightly dented.

That's just a punch! Li Qingshan was shocked. This was the power of the three great Daemon Generals. With their bizarre original forms and thousands of years of cultivation, they had become truly powerful and terrifying existences. If it were not for the Spirit Turtle's Profound Shell, he would have been injured from that punch.

The cracks on the Spirit Turtle's Profound Shell repaired themselves in an instant, but the situation did not improve at all, as he had still depleted a large amount of daemon qi. Li Qingshan's daemon qi was nowhere close to Strongboulder's. Defeat would be certain if this became a battle of endurance.

Li Qingshan was rather puzzled. Why had he been so rash earlier? He was a genius in actual combat. Whenever he struck, it might seem crude and conceited in the eyes of others, but it would always be the best decision he could make. He would have never engaged in a direct confrontation like a ruffian.

"Again!" Strongboulder advanced with a smile. His heavy footsteps boomed like war drums.

The battle and killing intent within Li Qingshan surged uncontrollably again. His eyes reddened. All he saw was a punch fly over, filling his vision.

Chapter 408 - The Third Layer of the Tiger Demon

"You!"

The stone punch pierced through the air, producing a thunderous roar and kicking up a violent gust of wind. Strongboulder was taken aback. The punch he was completely confident in had actually missed.

"Is this your innate ability? It can actually influence my mind!" Li Qingshan grabbed Strongboulder's wrist firmly with a tiger's claw. His eyes were calm and clear as his gruff voice hummed like metal. He raised his hand and caught the other punch that Strongboulder threw.

With a clang, there was a metallic screech, and the two pairs of eyes met. As the two surging forces clashed, neither of them roared or shouted. Only the ground beneath them groaned painfully, constantly cracking and collapsing.

"What might! He can actually rival Strongboulder's physical strength! 'He might actually be able to win!' 'He can't win. Strongboulder hasn't even used his full strength yet.'"

"You're actually unaffected? But it's already too late. Watch as I crush you to pieces!" Strongboulder gritted his teeth and smiled viciously. His muscles swelled rapidly. Huge boulders suddenly rose up from

his shoulders and covered his entire body. Jagged rock enveloped his face as well. He seemed like he had equipped some kind of strange, rugged armour, only leaving his shining eyes exposed.

Li Qingshan felt an unstoppable force rise up. It was incredibly heavy, like an immovable mountain crushing down on him. Even with the Strength of the Earth, he was unable to do anything about it. He could only watch as Strongboulder broke free from his grip bit by bit.

“Shatter!” Strongboulder lifted his arms and broke free from Li Qingshan’s grasp. With tremendous weight, he reached towards Li Qingshan’s shoulders.

Li Qingshan’s shoulders slumped down. He leaned forward and lowered his head, making Strongboulder miss.

“Are you admitting defeat by lowering your head?” Strongboulder laughed madly. Suddenly, he felt his body tighten, having been lifted up by Li Qingshan. A pair of sharp ox horns glistened menacingly, targeting Strongboulder’s abdomen. With a deep, furious roar, Li Qingshan swung his iron hooves about and ran violently.

Boom! Li Qingshan’s horns pushed Strongboulder against a wall. Countless cracks covered the wall instantly as huge pieces of rock fell down with a rumble, kicking up a cloud of dust.

“Interesting. Interesting. It’s been a very long time since someone’s made me feel pain. Let’s have some proper fun!” Mad laughter rang out from the rubble. Strongboulder pushed aside the rock casually. Li Qingshan’s sharp horns had only left behind two dents in his abdomen, which vanished in the blink of an eye.

“Hold on!” Just when Strongboulder was about to strike, Li Qingshan raised his hand.

“Is he going to admit defeat?” “Now that’s the correct decision to make.” The night roamers discussed quietly. Anyone facing a situation like this would become despaired and doubt whether they had a chance at victory at all.

“I don’t accept forfeits!” Strongboulder roared. Meanwhile, the Spider Queen’s gaze became icy. This was not the level of battle she had wanted to witness.

“Forfeit? That was just a warm up. Let’s play a game!” Li Qingshan returned to the severed flow of lava and turned around, standing still.

“Oh? What game?” Strongboulder asked in interest.

“Whoever leaves this river loses!” Li Qingshan pointed at the two shores, designating them as the boundaries.

“What?” Ye Mingzhu cried out. The river was very wide, but it seemed extremely narrow compared to their figures. If that were the case, they would reach the shores from taking a single step back. He would have absolutely no room to pivot around in. Was he trying to put his life on the line against Strongboulder?

This was no game. This was clearly suicide!

“I just knew you wouldn’t disappoint me!” The Spider Queen licked her lips in excitement.

“Alright, alright, alright!” Strongboulder was taken aback before agreeing to it happily. He had never seen such an interesting opponent before! He arrived before Li Qingshan and stopped.

“Why aren’t you using your power from before?” Li Qingshan asked.

“Rock of Slaughter!” Strongboulder was slightly surprised before smiling viciously.

“What?”

“That was my original name! When I was still a rock, I already possessed this power. Whether it’s man or beast, as long as they approach me, they will be infected by battle and killing intent. If they have any companions, they will try to kill one another, and if they don’t, they’ll throw themselves against the rock until they’re dead. That’s why I was called a Rock of Slaughter! It’s all thanks to them that I could develop a spirit and become a daemon.”

“Why are you telling me this?” Li Qingshan came to an understanding. This had already surpassed innate abilities. Instead, it was a power he was born with. If it were not for the Spirit Turtle’s Method of Sea Suppression, even he would not have been able to resist this hysterical battle intent of madness!

“Because I’m about to cover myself in your blood soon!” Strongboulder roared at the sky. He unleashed his terrifying power, causing even the spectating night roamers to become red-eyed. When they looked at the people around them again, they found them despicable, tempted to kill them on the spot. They used their final bit of clarity to back off. They only let out a sigh of relief after they moved extremely far away.

“Then come!” Li Qingshan no longer controlled himself with the Spirit Turtle’s Method of Sea Suppression. His blood blazed like fire as his battle intent roared. Producing layers of blurs, he threw a hundred punches in a single instant, overwhelming Strongboulder like a tremendous wave.

Strongboulder ignored the attacks. He raised his right fist and twisted his body. Only when he pulled his fist back to the limit did he throw it at Li Qingshan.

The Spirit Turtle’s Profound Shell sank in deeply the moment they collided, covered in cracks and closed to shattering. At the same time, Li Qingshan’s punches landed on Strongboulder. Countless collisions merged together in a single boom.

“What have you done?” Strongboulder’s vicious smile suddenly stiffened. He gazed at his body in disbelief. It was riddled with cracks, like the fissured ground during a drought. Shockwaves penetrated his skin and filled his entire body.

“Beat you up, obviously!” Li Qingshan sneered. “My innate ability is most effective against a rock like you. But as it seems, you won’t shatter so easily, but that’s perfect. If there’s no danger at all, what’s the point of fighting?”

“That’s reasonable! Nice! Come, come, come!” Strongboulder threw a punch as he roared out, and the Spirit Turtle’s Profound Shell shattered. The punch landed heavily on Li Qingshan’s face. “Let’s see who falls first!”

Li Qingshan leaned backwards, but he immediately straightened himself again. His iron hooves had already sunken into the ground, pinning him to the spot. He fought back without the slightest hesitation.

Booms roared thunderously as the ground rumbled. The spectators were all dumbfounded. Blurs filled the narrow space between the two of them. They had completely abandoned their defences to strengthen their attacks as much as possible, unleashing all of it on their opponent in an attempt to crush them.

The fists kicked up a whirlwind, which turned into a tornado and swept out in all directions. The entire underground shook and trembled. Only the two of them remained still. Both of their legs sank into the river bed, reaching up to their knees and locking them in place. It had devolved into a battle of immobility.

There was no room for tricks. It was just a clash of power in the most primitive and barbarous way possible.

Rock chips sprayed everywhere as blood danced about.

Strongboulder was like a jagged rock in the ocean, exposed to the billows and the erosion of storms but remaining unshakeable. Cracks covered his body as rock chips shattered and scattered. The strange power constantly invaded his body, but he ignored all of it. He was as excited as he could get. This strange rock that created conflict had always liked killing and fighting more than any other creature!

Even Li Qingshan himself had no idea just how many heavy punches he had received. Even the Ox Demon Forges its Hide was unable to nullify the terrifying force. He became covered in fist prints as his bones twisted and groaned, cracking and fracturing. However, all of the pain turned into indescribable delight.

Within his surging heart and his blood-red eyes, anger, killing intent, and hatred all merged together into battle intent as violent as the turbulent sea. He no longer cared about his fate. Only a single word remained, constantly repeating and echoing, Kill! Kill! Kill! Kill! Kill...

The Rock of Slaughter infecting him was not all of it. This process released something in his very nature. That was a bloodthirsty, belligerent tiger, roaring furiously as it broke out of the cage!

The third layer of the tiger demon!

Hmm? Spider Queen Lolth was slightly surprised. She could clearly sense Li Qingshan undergoing an overwhelming, startling change.

Li Qingshan's eyes were blood-red as his canines protruded. His surging daemon qi became even more valiant and violent, while his colossal body seemed to become "slender". In reality, his piled muscles had become better allocated. His great tendons twisted like steel wire, gathering the disorderly power. Within his flesh and blood, his fractured bones recovered, becoming even tougher than before.

Roar! Li Qingshan suddenly raised his head and let out a tiger's roar, shaking up the entire rift. His wings of wind unfolded on his back, and with a stomp of his feet, he pulled himself up from the ground, smashing Strongboulder's head violently with a headbutt. The rock armour shattered, exposing his original appearance. His face was plastered with surprise.

Li Qingshan did not become very powerful all of a sudden. As a matter of fact, he was still disadvantaged in terms of daemon qi, but his bearing had overwhelmed Strongboulder's, making him slightly frantic.

“How is this possible!? How can his battle intent and killing intent surpass mine!?” Strongboulder roared furiously as he landed a punch on Li Qingshan’s abdomen. Li Qingshan only keeled over slightly before recovering.

Through this fierce battle, Strongboulder had sustained rather heavy injuries too from the destructive shockwaves. Now that his bearing weakened, it became even more difficult for him to unleash his full strength.

“Cover yourself in my blood? Then I’ll skin you alive!” Li Qingshan growled. With a hook and flick of his curved tiger claws, he ripped off the cracked rock armour within a series of sparks.

Strongboulder grabbed Li Qingshan’s shoulder and flung him hard in an attempt to throw him out. As long as Li Qingshan left the river bed, then he would have lost. However, did Strongboulder even care about the outcome of the battle a moment before?

Li Qingshan unfurled his arms, and with a flap of his wings, he stabilised himself, arriving above the river bed. Afterwards, he swooped down as hard as he could.

Boom! Like a black meteor, he struck the ground.

The iron hooves landed heavily on Strongboulder’s head, pushing him deep into the river bed. The circular shockwaves spread out in all directions, kicking up waves in the soil that reached several meters in height. Before it had even settled down, Li Qingshan rose up into the air once again.

Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom! No one knew just how many consecutive attacks he had launched.

The river bed was reduced to a huge crater, while Strongboulder had already vanished from sight a long time ago. Li Qingshan landed in the crater and reached down, grabbing Strongboulder by the head and plucking him out. He raised his arm and threw him far away. With a boom, Strongboulder crashed into the wall, becoming embedded in there.

Chapter 409 - Master Tactician

This twist had stunned everyone. They were dumbstruck, almost forgetting to breath.

If Li Qingshan had used some kind of trick to defeat Strongboulder, everyone would have found it much easier to accept. However, he had taken Strongboulder on in his greatest aspect, defeating him with sheer strength and force. Not only had he endured the terrifying attacks, but he had even forcefully destroyed Strongboulder’s so-called indestructible defence.

All of the night roamers shut their mouths firmly, no longer uttering a single word of nonsense anymore. Suddenly, they realised that this daemon might actually become their ruler in the future. If they wanted to continue living underground, they had to be modest and courteous to the powerful.

Ye Mingzhu’s eyes glowed. If she swore loyalty to him, could he really make her ambition come true?

“Hehehehe!”

The Spider Queen’s laughter broke the silence. This brutal battle at close quarters suited her tastes perfectly. Ever since he had come underground, it had been a lot more delightful. And, he would definitely be one of the most important Daemon Generals under her command in the upcoming conflict.

Bloodshadow became more and more uneasy. If he allowed him to continue developing like this, he would definitely become a huge issue, stealing the Spider Queen's favour away from him. He could not allow this to happen!

"Master's invincible!" Ye Liubo was crazed, and her face had become pink. Her impressive chest heaved up and down as she felt utmost glory.

Li Qingshan sucked in a deep breath and transformed back into humanoid form. He twisted his neck and produced a series of cracks. It was not obvious, but his body was close to collapsing. If it were not for the constant support of the Strength of the Earth, he would have given way a long time ago. And, if it were not for the power of shockwaves, he had no chance at defeating Strongboulder.

However, all of this was within his plans. He was not a ruffian who would put his life on the line once he became carried away. Instead, he was a true warrior, a natural warrior. With just a single thought, all of his movements would be imbued with all the battle tactics and strategies available.

"You- you- you!"

With a great rumble, Strongboulder descended from above, landing in front of Li Qingshan. He radiated with a furious aura, becoming even larger than before. He was like a volcano on the brink of eruption. Li Qingshan happened to be standing before the volcano, such that he could be swallowed by it at any time. However, as the violent wind swept up his scarlet long hair, he remained unfazed.

"You've lost," Li Qingshan said. He glanced at Strongboulder with his scarlet eyes. "Are you discontent?"

As if he had just been punched, Strongboulder took a step back and rapidly shrank until he returned to humanoid form. He collapsed on his bottom, "Yep, I've lost. I've lost fair and square."

Li Qingshan did not use any despicable tricks or crafty schemes. He used strength to defeat him and aura to overwhelm him. Only when he said that did he feel the shattering pain of his body, which had also culminated.

"How satisfying! It's been a very long while since I've been so satisfied! I have lost this time. I recognise your strength, but I'll definitely defeat you in the future!"

"You won't have that opportunity." Li Qingshan raised his head with a smile, staring straight at Bloodshadow, who perched upside down from a stalactite. Then he said, "Ma'am Spider Queen, please give me a moment to rest and recover daemon qi. I'll fight Bloodshadow after that."

"Be quick!" Spider Queen Lolth urged. With a flick of her finger, an item landed in Li Qingshan's hand.

"What's this?" Li Qingshan stared at the item in his hand. It was only palm-sized, and it was crystalline, like a mushroom sculpted from white jade. The mushroom was small, but it was filled with spiritual qi greater than any spiritual herb Li Qingshan had seen before. He had no idea just how old it was.

"That's a Spiritual Jade mushroom. It can heal your wounds and recover your daemon qi."

Bloodshadow's face became even more warped. His plan to take advantage of him while he was weakened fell through, but he was unable to resent anyone at all.

Clearly, the Spider Queen did not want to see a suspenseless battle. It was basically a bestowment to Li Qingshan for all the delight he had brought her.

“Thank you for bestowing me with this, ma’am Spider Queen.”

Li Qingshan immediately crossed his legs and sat down, ingesting the Spiritual Jade mushroom. Immediately, a clear, cool aura pervaded his body. He was refreshed wherever it passed by, such that even his body felt slightly lighter.

In just a while, Li Qingshan leapt to his feet, brimming with energy. He felt like he had slept for three days and three nights. His mind was clear, and not only had all of his daemon qi recovered, but there was even more than before.

“Bloodshadow, are you bold enough to face me in the air?” Li Qingshan flapped his wings of wind and rose up, pointing straight at Bloodshadow.

Everyone was surprised by that. Just earlier, he had used strength alone to defeat Strongboulder on the ground, and now, he wanted to challenge Bloodshadow—someone as swift as lightning—to a battle in the air?

The Spider Queen became even more interested. She felt like her Spiritual Jade mushroom had not gone to waste.

“This guy!” Strongboulder was taken aback before grinning and laughing aloud.

Dragonsnail, who had watched on silently the entire time, frowned. What was he trying to prove?

Li Qingshan was not trying to prove anything. He just wanted to win!

Defending tenaciously on the ground would make him undefeatable, but he would be unable to defeat Bloodshadow either. It would definitely be his loss when it came to a prolonged battle, as he would probably be the one to run out first due to their difference in daemon qi.

Once he depleted his daemon qi, he would not be able to use his innate abilities either, so being so-called “undefeatable” would turn into a joke. It would only become “unwinnable”.

Li Qingshan’s body was tough, but he was unable to rival Strongboulder. Strongboulder had transformed from a strange rock in the first place, so “toughness” was his very nature. He lacked the power to incite battle intent like the Rock of Slaughter, so Bloodshadow could treat him cautiously and avoid becoming entangled with him. If he replicated Strongboulder’s tactic blindly, he would be reduced to a plaything of the opponent.

By then, he would be getting ahead of himself even if he wanted a tie. Many of the times, tactics that seemed clever were actually dangerous traps. This was not a lack of understanding on Ye Mingzhu’s part either. Normally speaking, this was already the battle tactic that could make him last the longest.

There was a saying from his past life, “Among all the martial arts in the world, only speed is indomitable.” This was no different in the cultivation world. Even without his innate abilities, Bloodshadow’s speed was already a huge problem. Combined with his reactions, this problem became completely irresolvable. Weak mongooses were able to toy with or even prey on venomous cobras because their reactions and speed were slightly faster.

In actual battle, being just slightly faster could make all the difference in the world. To Li Qingshan, this battle was destined to be much more difficult.

In order to overcome this obstacle, Li Qingshan had chosen to take on Strongboulder in a direct confrontation. Originally, victory should have come much more easily if he used his advantages of speed and being able to ignore the Rock of Slaughter's influence.

It was exactly with this difficult battle that he roused his fighting spirit and made the tiger demon break through to the third layer. He did this to increase his speed and reactions and make his two abilities even stronger. Only then did he have a chance at winning.

From this perspective, Strongboulder's power from the Rock of Slaughter had instead assisted him. That was why Li Qingshan had specially reminded Strongboulder to activate this power before the "game" began.

Everything was going according to plan.

Chapter 410 - Fighting Bloodshadow

However, there was another saying in the world, "Man proposes, God disposes." Li Qingshan was not absolutely confident he would emerge victorious. Once the situation took a turn for the worst, he would still have to rely a little on luck.

The wings of wind suddenly expanded to thirty meters across. Li Qingshan whistled through the air as a confident smile appeared on his face. As a man, he would fight even if he only had thirty percent confidence, let alone when he had a seventy percent chance at victory.

Bloodshadow sneered. With a flap of his cloak, he turned into a streak of red and shot off rapidly.

In the blink of an eye, the two of them had become tiny, almost merging with the darkness.

Li Qingshan felt like he had become a part of the wind. The scenery around him rapidly changed. If it were not for his faster reflexes, he would feel like he was close to losing control. Sure enough, his innate abilities had become much stronger after reaching the third layer of the tiger demon. He reached a gorge in the blink of an eye.

However, before he could even appreciate his changes, a bloody daemon qi wafted over. Li Qingshan turned around suddenly. Bloodshadow's pale-white, sunken face lunged over, his pale-white claws arriving first.

Li Qingshan's eyes lit up, and with a flap of his wings, he sped up towards Bloodshadow with the might of the Tiger Demon Descends from the Mountain. At the same time, he formed a claw with his right hand, unleashing the Tiger Demon Digs out the Heart. As for his left hand, it constantly varied in different ways to try and capture Bloodshadow. As long as he caught Bloodshadow and pulled him into close combat, the outcome would be determined.

When he struck, it was like he was dealing a final blow against the opponent.

Bloodshadow sneered scornfully. His figure flashed like a ghost. The Tiger Demon Digs out the Heart landed on his chest, but only a blur remained behind. Li Qingshan had already lost all trace of him before his left hand could even reach over.

With a clang, the Spirit Turtle's Profound Shell flashed and four, deep scratch marks appeared.

Two figures, one red and one blue, brushed past one another. The blue figure struck the wall loudly, while the red figure made a turn gracefully, landing on a piece of rock that traversed the gorge.

From this clash, their disparity was evident. Although Li Qingshan possessed the innate ability of Like Giving Wings to a Tiger, he was still not an exotic beast that was born to fly like Bloodshadow. The air was not his primary battlefield.

Li Qingshan did not seem defeated at all. Turning around and pushing off the wall, he flapped his wings and lunged towards Bloodshadow like a flying tiger.

With a flash, Bloodshadow brushed past Li Qingshan.

There was a boom, and before the dust even settled, Li Qingshan had already pushed off the wall and lunged towards Bloodshadow again.

Booms constantly rang out above. Ye Mingzhu raised her head and gazed over. Li Qingshan was like a humanoid tiger, leaping about between the gorge like it was no different from flat ground.

However, Bloodshadow was better than him. He paced around the rock like he was on an idle stroll, except he was actually extremely fast. There seemed to be several Bloodshadows walking around, dodging the attack each time with great ease. He even had the time to say,

"And I had thought you were hiding something. Looks like this is all you can do."

"But can you even touch a hair on me?" Li Qingshan stopped his useless attacks, resting on a wall and huffing slightly. He used the Strength of the Earth to recover. The string of rapid attacks had exhausted him by quite a lot.

Before Li Qingshan had even finished speaking, Bloodshadow vanished from his sight. Suddenly, he raised his head and saw Bloodshadow only inches away, hanging upside down and saying sinisterly, "Really?"

His pale-white hand pressed against the Spirit Turtle's Profound Shell gently.

Thump! Thump, thump! Thump, thump, thump, thump!

Li Qingshan felt his heart thump like a drum. A mysterious power pierced through the Spirit Turtle's Profound Shell and directly grabbed his heart—no, more accurately, his blood. All of his blood flowed backwards into his heart, as if it could explode at any time.

Daemons at their level already possessed extremely tenacious life force, such that even if their hearts were ripped apart, their daemon cores could replace its function, and it would be fine as long as they circulated their daemon qi and repaired it. Many fatal weaknesses were no longer fatal weaknesses. However, as a vital component to life, if it were heavily damaged, it would be akin to a heavy wound. You would never have the opportunity to recover in the midst of battle.

"What? Don't you feel feeble? Do you really think I earned my current position through speed alone? Do you really think I'm afraid of close combat? I'm only helpless against a piece of rock like Strongboulder. Your vitality is very powerful. I can't wait to see what it tastes like!" Bloodshadow extended his bright-

red tongue and licked his lips. The opponent he had treated like an archenemy the moment he appeared was now powerless within his grasp. He was filled with indescribable delight.

“How does this taste?” Li Qingshan threw a punch at Bloodshadow’s chest.

“That’s a very special power. No wonder even Strongboulder couldn’t withstand it.” As the shockwave wreaked havoc, Bloodshadow began to vibrate, but nothing changed once the shockwave passed. Even the scornful sneer on his face lingered. The attack that even Strongboulder was unable to resist was actually completely useless against him.

Strongboulder stood with his arms crossed and his brows firmly furrowed. No one had a better understanding of just how troublesome Bloodshadow was than him. Bloodshadow’s greatest advantage was not speed, but his strange ability to recover, except very few people had witnessed it. Strongboulder had managed to corner Bloodshadow in the countless battles they had, but even when he smashed him to a pulp, he would make a full recovery in the blink of an eye. This was not an innate ability. Instead, it was the same as Strongboulder’s “toughness”, something that they were simply born with.

The blood in Li Qingshan’s body surged even more violently, as if the entire world was thrown into disorder. It flowed rapidly at times and halted at others. As a matter of fact, it would even transform into sharp blades. If it were not for the toughness of his body, he probably would have been reduced to a mess by his own blood already.

Although the Spirit Turtle’s Method of Sea Suppression could suppress the sea of qi and sea of consciousness, it was unable to suppress tangible things like flesh and blood. Moreover, it was not like his body had been invaded by something foreign. Instead, Bloodshadow was making use of his strange inborn ability to turn Li Qingshan’s own body against him.

Forced into dire straits, Li Qingshan was not flustered at all. Instead, he reached behind his waist, and the sharp, curved hilt of the Blade of the Drinking Poisonfeather emitted a purply-green flash, which vanished into Bloodshadow’s waist.

Bloodshadow had absolutely no intentions to dodge. Even the shockwaves that could shake him to pieces were unable to harm him, so what was a measly cut supposed to do? He just needed a while longer, and he would be able to rip Li Qingshan’s heart to pieces and subsequently taste his blood. Just as he thought like that, Bloodshadow’s expression changed, and his pale-white face became enveloped with a layer of purply-green.

Li Qingshan powered the Blade of the Drinking Poisonfeather, pouring the toxins and poisons that the blade had accumulated over many years into Bloodshadow’s body, eating him away, contaminating his body, and wreaking havoc. He had been taken away by his viciousness. Even if you crush my heart, I’ll kill you with poison first.

The stalemate lasted for only an instant before Bloodshadow gave in. Slapping the weapon aside, he broke free.

Li Qingshan settled down his blood in a hurry and urged his daemon qi to repair his damaged blood vessels and his heart that was close to exploding. Although the information Ye Mingzhu had provided him had mentioned this, he only gained a proper understanding for himself after clashing with him. This

power was so terrifying that it could basically ignore all defences and launch an attack from within. If he had been a human cultivator, he probably would have been ripped apart in a single moment.

Li Qingshan recovered slightly and immediately swung the Blade of the Drinking Poisonfeather, lunging after Bloodshadow.

Bloodshadow swung his cloak, and a few foul-smelling arrows of blood shot over.

Li Qingshan danced with the wings, twisting his body and brushing past the arrows of blood. They landed on the rock behind him, producing a hiss and a cloud of white smoke. They produced a few large holes in the blink of an eye.

As for Bloodshadow, the purply-green had already dispersed from his face. He actually used blood to surround and force out the toxins, making his face even paler and more sunken. As he gazed at the incoming Blade of the Drinking Poisonfeather, fear flashed across his eyes. He was now afraid it would reach him.

Li Qingshan pursued relentlessly. He grasped the usage of the wings bit by bit through the battle, becoming even more agile. He beamed slightly inside and felt like Bloodshadow had slowed down by a lot. Although Bloodshadow had managed to purge the poison, he had lost so much blood as a result, which was quite a wound to him. His confidence in his strength had ended up as his greatest downfall.

The scales of victory slowly tipped in Li Qingshan's direction.

Only a handful of spectators on the ground could see this. Ye Mingzhu happened to be one of them. "Is this a weapon created by human cultivators? It can actually suppress Bloodshadow using potent poison. He's clearly much weaker in terms of daemon qi, yet he can match him evenly. This Northmoon really is something else."

However, the others only felt a fierce gust of wind sweep down from above. They saw two figures constantly flickering in the air, sometimes clashing and sometimes parting. Their eyes were glued to them, and after staring for such a long time, they actually felt dizzy.

The booms from moving through the air rapidly were like claps of thunder, kicking up violent winds that evolved into a black storm, filling the gorge. The sound of the wind grew more and more intense.

At this moment, a sharp, tapered sound pierced through the wind and reached everyone's ears clearly.

Ye Mingzhu's expression changed. "Block your ears!"

In the sky, Li Qingshan swung down with his blade, but Bloodshadow's head pivoted around all of a sudden, facing Li Qingshan. His mouth had widened to an unbelievable angle, which made his handsome appearance twisted and vicious. Terrifying sound waves emerged from his nose and mouth.

Li Qingshan felt his mind ring. His wings of wind shattered, and an invisible force pushed him into the rocks.

Bloodshadow rapidly drew closer as the sound waves constantly rang out. The rocks around Li Qingshan all trembled and shattered, sinking into a large crater. Li Qingshan was constantly pressed into the rock.

His head seemed to be reduced to a pulp, but Li Qingshan smiled viciously and let out a deafening tiger's roar.

The two sound waves met in the gorge, confronting and overlapping one another. They surged about, passing through the rocks that traversed the gorge, making them slowly collapse and fall down.

The daemon qi in Li Qingshan's body was rapidly depleted. He could not even maintain the Spirit Turtle's Profound Shell. Bloodshadow saw this and made a sharp turn, transforming into a blood-red tornado and flying over through the air with the tips of his claws. The battle had gone on for so long already. Although he still had sufficient daemon qi, he was running out of physical strength. He wanted to take Li Qingshan's life in a single move.

Faced with an attack like that, all Li Qingshan did was sink down and wield the Blade of the Drinking Poisonfeather in a reverse grip, leaping up.

The blade landed on the tornado and was actually deflected, while Bloodshadow's revolving claws pierced Li Qingshan's skin.

"Die!" Bloodshadow's shrill roar rang out from the blood-red tornado.

"Poisonfeather Dance." The Blade of the Drinking Poisonfeather suddenly lit up in Li Qingshan's hand, like a Poisonfeather bird unfurling its wings, dancing in the darkness. Its purply-green feathers were splendid.

There was a splash of blood!