

Chapter 111: Yinyin, Yinyin

Crack!

The pink bed shattered into pieces.

Rao Yinyin almost cracked her own teeth, she was gritting her teeth so hard as she turned to glare at the two at the door in fury.

Xu Xiaoshou hid behind Su Qianqian and pushed her in front of him as a human shield.

Su Qianqian was speechless.

“Calm down, Sis. I heard that if a couple has problems between them, the right thing to do is to communicate instead of fighting,” she commented, blinking her eyes.

Rao Yinyin was utterly baffled. “What do you mean couple? Where the h*ll did you learn that from?” she thought.

She pointed at the man behind the little girl. “Do you have any idea what he did?”

Su Qianqian then curiously craned her neck to look at him and asked, “What did he do?”

Whack!

Xu Xiaoshou immediately whacked Su Qianqian in the head, causing her head to bobble for a bit.

She looked at him, feeling vexed. “What was that for?”

“A little girl like you has no business asking stuff like that! Who taught you all this nonsense, eh? You get in with some bad crowd?”

Su Qianqian then pointed at Rao Yinyin, a bitter look on her face.

It was Rao Yinyin’s turn to be speechless.

“By the way, when did you two get together? Why didn’t I know...”

Su Qianqian saw their expressions change and immediately cradled her head.

“Woah, hold it. I at least need to know what happened before I can tell who’s right and who’s not, right?” She pouted for a bit and acted like a grown-up.

Xu Xiaoshou was baffled and said right away, “I saw that her room looked messy so I thought to tell her off, and now she wants to kill me!”

Rao Yinyin didn’t know what to say.

She was so angry her anger shot through the roof and could’ve flipped the roof off. Yet she saw Xu Xiaoshou sending signals at her with blinks and winks, and she was mouthing something, like he wanted to tell her something.

“What’s with the blinking, eh? Can’t just tell her that you peeked at me bathing, eh?”

Xu Xiaoshou was shocked.

“Didn’t we agree to keep this between us?” he thought. “Why say it out loud like that?”

“I’m telling you that I’m okay with the proposition. Can’t you tell what I’m mouthing here?”

“Gosh, you’re so stupid!”

Seeing that Su Qianqian was all shocked, he knew that he needed to say something to turn the tables.

“Didn’t you say that what I saw was but an illusion you cast?”

Rao Yinyin was stunned. She had nothing to say in response to that.

“Yeah, that’s what I said,” she thought. “But since you’re unwilling to get me the pill, let’s just end this right here, right now then!”

“You or me. Only one of us is going to live today!”

She fetched her sword and rushed at him at once.

Xu Xiaoshou saw her rushing at him and noted to himself that explanations were truly utterly useless to women. As such, he simply lifted Su Qianqian and put her right in front of him.

The little girl was baffled and immediately cradled her head. “Don’t chop me up!”

Rao Yinyin was extremely flustered, yet there was no way she could get to him. The man grabbed hold of the little girl and circled around and around so many times that he couldn’t even tell if Rao Yinyin was about to reverse direction.

For some reason, her illusion was also utterly useless against him.

Rao Yinyin stopped moving. “Put her down!”

“Put your sword down!” Xu Xiaoshou continued holding up his human shield, refusing to back off.

“I’m getting dizzy...”

Su Qianqian’s eyes were practically wobbling in their eye sockets. She was jostled around so much that she almost ended up throwing up on the spot. It was thanks to her training with the “Reverse Sword Subduing” that ironically allowed her to hold the urge in.

Clang!

Rao Yinyin threw the sword to the ground, and Xu Xiaoshou breathed a sigh of relief.

Yet, the woman started to perform seals the very next second.

It was then his turn to get flustered.

“Calm down! Don’t do anything rash!”

The entire place shuddered, and boundless spiritual energy whirled and coalesced between her hands.

Xu Xiaoshou panicked. “Stop it! I’ll get you the pill!”

“What pill?” Rao Yinyin just kept doing what she was doing.

“Sovereign Pill!” Xu Xiaoshou shouted.

Huff...

Spiritual energy dispersed between Rao Yinyin’s fingers, and the icy look on her face disappeared to be replaced with a flirty grin. “You gave your word, and I’ll definitely keep this in mind.”

Xu Xiaoshou was baffled.

“You set me up?” he thought. “All that was just a bluff?”

He felt like he’d just been duped. This woman knew her tricks, her mood changing faster than one could flip through the pages of a book.

Rao Yinyin then walked up to her dressing table and picked up a pearl. “This thing is called the void pearl. It recorded what you just said and everything you did after you got into my room.”

“I’ll take a look at it when I have the time.”

Su-Surveillance?

Xu Xiaoshou’s face was ashen, and he rummaged through his memory in fury to recall if he’d done anything he shouldn’t have after going inside.

“Hmm, doesn’t seem like I did anything bad,” he thought. “What a relief!

“Hold on!

“I seemed to have smelled that thing...

“Sh**, there goes my squeaky clean reputation, eh?”

He took a deep breath and said, “Hand that thing over and you can have two Sovereign Pills.”

Rao Yinyin took note of his expression and knew that the odds were with her. She then stuffed the pearl into her robe through the opening at her chest, then wiggled her finger at him. “Come take it, then!”

Seduced, Passive Points +1.

Seduced, Passive Points +1.

Seduced, Passive Points +1.

The three consecutive messages on his Information Bar baffled him. This was the first time someone had triggered three lines with just a single move.

“D*mn, that woman...” he mused inwardly. “She knows what she’s doing!”

“You whats-your-name. My patience really is wearing thin here...” Xu Xiaoshou sighed. “Burning bridges like this will do you no good.”

“Whats-your-name, huh... The name is Rao Yinyin. I’ve got a name too, you know?”

This was indeed his first time hearing her name. He then frowned and asked, "Rao what?"

"Yinyin!"

He cupped a hand behind his ear, pointed his ear at her, and gestured for her to speak louder. "Rao..."

"Are you deaf?" The woman was furious. "Yinyin!"

Pfftt

Su Qianqian couldn't help but burst out laughing. "Oh my goodness, Sister Rao, you're so cute!"

Rao Yinyin realized that she'd been tricked, and her fury shot to the heavens.

"Xu... Xiao... Shou!"

Xu Xiaoshou lifted Su Qianqian up again before Rao Yinyin could lift up her sword. "Woah, keep it down, will you? I'm here, and I'm not deaf!"

"You duped a Sovereign Pill off of me, and that trick back there was just calling it even!" he thought.

He narrowed his eyes and put on a harmless look.

Rao Yinyin changed the subject and berated the little girl. "Su Qianqian, you get over here at once!"

"Why does the brat keep siding with an outsider?" she mused. "So, you've forgotten all about your Sister Rao now that your Brother Xiaoshou has shown up, eh? You've forgotten all I've done for you for the past year?"

The banter between the two had already confused the little girl, and it took her quite a while to realize that Rao Yinyin was addressing her.

Why did they have to get her involved in their fight?

Xu Xiaoshou instinctually tightened his grip on her, not saying anything. "This thing..." he thought.

"Ptuih, the girl is my shield now. I might just end up dead without her in my hands.

"I just played that woman over there. There's no way I'd hand over my trump card!"

Rao Yinyin was irked, and she immediately glowered at Xu Xiaoshou. "We need to head out now. What are you doing by refusing to release her?"

Xu Xiaoshou then put the little girl down, still wondering if he should believe her or not.

Rao Yinyin then took a step forward, and that scared him enough to lift Su Qianqian up again.

Rao Yinyin chuckled, looking pleased with having scored one against him.

"Heh. Rookie."

"Heh. Childish."

Xu Xiaoshou wasn't going to just let her have it.

Su Qianqian kept looking confused while standing between them, having no idea what both her Sister Rao and Brother Xiaoshou were doing.

“Heh, hehehehe...”

She then giggled somehow, and her dumb laughter stopped the two from going at each other any further.

“...”

Everyone was speechless for quite a while.

Chapter 112: Don't Like It? Bear with It!

Council Hall, the Inner Yard.

Ye Xiaotian took a piece of paper in his hand and hovered in midair under the silver moonlight.

Over a dozen young disciples stood before him. They were divided into two groups. One had many, while the other only had four.

“Here is the list of people granted slots to enter Tianxuan Gate. The top four is as everyone expected—disciples who just recently joined the Inner Yard. Mo Mo, Mu Zixi, Zhao Qingteng, and Zhou Tianshen.” Ye Xiaotian looked at the four of them.

The four of them nodded, looking excited.

The secret realm of the Tianxuan Gate was the first opportunity given to new disciples by the Inner Yard. It was only opened once a year, and only 10 slots were given every year.

The amount of spirit energy found inside was almost 100 times that in the Outer Yard.

Taking just one breath of it would make one feel like they could reach the heavens.

Furthermore, it was a place where all manner of precious training grounds were found, and everyone could basically find one that suited them.

Ye Xiaotian turned his gaze to the other group, which had more people in it. All of them were the new Inner Yard 33.

“Fifth slot, Lei Lei.”

“...”

“Ninth slot, Yuan Tou.”

Yuan Tou was an extremely stout man with a square face and thick eyebrows. He held his Xuanming Overlord Spear in his hand, creating a frightening presence.

Even though he'd long expected his name to be on the list, he was still nonetheless overjoyed when he finally heard his name read aloud.

“Very well. This was well worth my time coming all the way here to listen to the dean babble,” he thought. “Now that that matter's settled, there's only one minor matter to attend to...”

“The head of Xu Xiaoshou!”

Ye Xiaotian folded the paper and said, “The 10th slot is taken, and the name shall not be announced here.”

“Wait, what?”

Everyone was dumbfounded. In all the previous years, the names of the top 10 had all been read aloud. At the moment, four of the 10 slots had already been taken by the new disciples of the Inner Yard. Given that the rules were such, they could only bear with it.

Yet, they’d found that one of the remaining six slots would not be announced.

“Who is it?” A good number of people in the group asked, yet Ye Xiaotian ignored them all and looked at Zhao Shu instead.

This was a man with an extremely glum face. He had bits of frost at his sideburns and wore a white jade at his waist.

His rank was right behind Yuan Tou’s, and, according to conventions, he should’ve been the one to take the tenth slot.

Ye Xiaotian wanted to make amends, but the voice of an old man was quickly heard. “There are only nine slots to be had for the Inner Yard, and one was given to the Outer Yard.”

Everyone turned around to find an old man wearing a conical hat leaning beside an old pagoda tree near the entrance of the hall.

“The vice dean?”

“Elder Sang?”

The man’s identity did nothing to quell the group’s indignant rage, and someone angrily shouted, “Is there no one else in the Inner Yard? Not only is it a waste to give a slot for the Tianxuan Gate to the Outer Yard, but it’s also against the rules, isn’t it?”

Elder Sang then calmly retorted, “The rules of the Tianxuan Gate have always pertained to the strong, not trash.”

“What the…”

This blatant, uncaring diss ignited the rage of all the disciples present, as this line meant that, other than the chosen nine, everyone else was less worthy than a disciple of the Outer Yard.

Zhao Shu took one step forward. He was obviously suppressing his anger as he asked, “I’d like to know who took my slot.”

“Xu Xiaoshou,” Elder Sang answered matter-of-factly.

Ye Xiaotian was baffled.

“Godd*mnit,” he thought. “Why did you just blurt out the name like that? What was the point of me keeping it a secret before, then?”

“Are you trying to make enemies for Xu Xiaoshou here? Isn’t he your disciple?”

“What the h*ll is wrong with you!?”

Elder Sang ignored all the signals that Ye Xiaotian was sending him from across the crowd.

Xu Xiaoshou was his disciple. He had his own way of teaching the kid and deemed that there was no need for external interference.

“That’s all? You’ve got nothing else to say?” Zhao Shu was shocked by what Elder Sang had said. “Any reason, then?”

“None.”

That uncaring, ambiguous tone that the elder had taken further ignited his anger. “I don’t agree to this!”

“That so? Bear with it, then.”

Elder Sang’s tone remained flat and calm. “Until the day your power is great enough to challenge the rules of the Tiansang Spirit Palace, you will learn to bear with such indignity.”

Who the h*ll was gonna bear with this?

This was the first time everyone present had seen the vice dean appear to take care of affairs, and, as such, it was also the first time they’d learned how weird the old man could be.

Ye Xiaotian was as benevolent as he could be in comparison.

Zhao Shu was unable to contain his rage anymore and emerged from the crowd with a heavy stomp. The air became cold all of a sudden.

Boom!

Before he was able to do anything else, Ye Xiaotian appeared right before him all of the sudden, flipping him to the ground with a single palm attack.

“Stop it!”

Everyone was baffled.

H*ll, the guy hadn’t even attacked yet, and he had the gall to tell the other guy to stop when he’d already made the first move?

By the way... what was going on here?

Elder Sang, the dean, had also changed and knew how to beat up others too.

D*mn, some rare news that was definitely going to make the headlines tomorrow!

Ye Xiaotian saw Zhao Shu get to his feet while fuming, anger blatantly written all over his face. Ye Xiaotian then sighed exasperatedly.

“I’m trying to save you here, kid!” he thought.

“You chicks have only been in the Inner Yard for two to three years on average and have no idea that the last one who burst out like this in front of this old man was crippled so badly that he couldn’t have been more crippled.

“Do these people really think I was willingly demoted to the position of vice dean?”

“Do these people really think that I was the exception and took the title of vice dean?”

“Even someone with a death wish wouldn’t have gone about executing it like this. Do you know that even if the Council of Elders were all assembled here, none would’ve dared to talk to him like you just did?”

Elder Sang was about to say something before Ye Xiaotian interjected right away, “Alright, you’re all dismissed. Get out, quick!”

He was afraid that didn’t get the situation contained, Elder Sang would end up getting two or three more hot-blooded young ones lying on the ground.

He then took the old man wearing a conical hat to the woods as soon as he was done taking care of the scene.

“The Council of Elders has agreed to let you, vice dean, go out and travel the world. You no longer need to take care of anything here, so why are you here now?”

“Are you here to stir up trouble?”

The voices became increasingly more and more indistinguishable until they could no longer be heard.

...

Zhao Shu was all frustrated. He wasn’t about to let the matter slide, no matter who was behind it.

“Xu Xiaoshou.”

“Who did this to me?”

Yuan Tou put his spear away and recalled the order from Lan Xinzi. Then, he had an idea.

“Shu, I...”

“Who permitted you to call me by my given name!” Zhao Shu then glowered at Yuan Tou. “I don’t remember being on that familiar terms with you.”

Yuan Tou grinned awkwardly. “Although I only barely won because you didn’t manage to pull off your last move on me, but still...”

“Shut up!”

“...”

“Alright, I’ll stop talking, then.” Yuan Tou spread his hands. “I guess I’ll just keep the info of Xu Xiaoshou all to myself.”

Zhao Shu was still fuming inside and had nowhere to vent his anger. “Stop beating around the bush!”

...

Zhou Tianshen had gotten all excited when he heard the name “Xu Xiaoshou” called.

He couldn’t have asked for a better road sign! That dude had actually been able to get himself a slot into the Tianxuan Gate despite still being in the Outer Yard. Boy, he really was something!

However, he noticed right away that something was off when he saw the reactions of those around him.

What Elder Sang said had almost made everyone present in the hall Xu Xiaoshou’s enemy, and he knew that things were taking a turn for the worse.

He then looked at Zhao Shu, knowing that the man would definitely not let the matter slide after having his slot snatched.

He wasn’t all that bright to begin with, yet he could still definitely tell that the man would most likely try to take revenge against Xu Xiaoshou.

“Can’t do,” he thought. “I have to warn him!”

Zhou Tianshen then casually walked past Yuan Tou and Zhao Shu and managed to hear Yuan Tou egging Zhou Shu on.

“If Xu Xiaoshou were to die three days after the Tianxuan Gate is opened, the slot would be back in your hands again, wouldn’t it?”

Zhou Tianshen ran right away.

“Xu Xiaoshou, someone’s here to kill you!” he thought.

“I can’t deal with these two as I am now, but you definitely won’t kick the bucket, because I, Zhou Tianshen, will make sure you’re prepared.”

He dashed as quickly as he could...

All the way to the Outer Yard.

Chapter 113: Life-Devouring Wood Physique

While heading back to her own new place, Mu Zixi silently watched as Zhou Tianshen ran for the Outer Yard.

Her only impression of Xu Xiaoshou...

Was hateful. He stunk!

“Hmph, whatever,” she thought. “None of my business.”

Her pigtails danced about as she hopped her way out of the group. The little girl, who was wearing a pale green dress, looked like a fairy, and she mouthed a song as she took out a pill and bit and chewed it like it was some kind of candy.

A thick fragrance emanated from her mouth and nose, which was inevitable, as none could actually perfectly absorb the power of the pills.

The fauna swayed in her direction, looking like they wanted to touch that mystical power they could only dream of.

“That’s a Life Generating Pill indeed.” A sigh was heard all of a sudden.

“Who goes there!” Mu Zixi kept her eyes peeled and dusted her hands. Dust was kicking up all around her. All the surrounding fauna was turned to her eyes and ears, allowing her to immediately sense everything in her surroundings.

She then turned to the side.

An old guy and a young guy...

Ptuh, two old guys!

“Dean, vice dean?” She suppressed the urge to make a move, her eyes full of curiosity. “It’s getting late. Can I be of service in any way?”

Elder Sang lifted his hat, letting the moon shine on the amicable smile on his face. “What kind of spiritual physique are you?”

Mu Zixi peered further around the fauna, a puzzled look on her face. “What do you mean?”

Elder Sang then appeared right before her and took her wrist. She tried to resist, yet quickly found herself unable to shake free.

“Huh?”

“This is weird. When did you become so average? You didn’t feel like this at the library.”

Elder Sang thought back to when he found her stealing books in the library and she’d been so shocked by his appearance that she’d passed out. Back then, there’d been an extremely massive life force inside her.

However, that wasn’t the terrifying thing here. What was more terrifying was how her wood elemental trait had allowed her to consume that lifeforce, allowing her to evolve further.

Throughout all the decades he’d lived, that was the first time he’d met with someone with a spiritual physique.

He’d let her be back then because he’d been worried about Xu Xiaoshou.

However, despite all the information he’d read afterward, he’d been unable to find any information regarding such a physique.

Yet, if a spiritual physique of any kind could keep evolving on its own, then, theoretically speaking, with the right conditions met such a physique would completely possess the potential to become a sacred physique.

Mu Zixi’s spiritual physique needed to consume lifeforce, which was why she was munching on a Life Generating Pill.

If her lifeforce wasn't kept at an adequately high level, her wood elemental powers would then gradually engage in autophagy, which would eventually lead to her powers' demise.

"You just consumed a Life Generating Pill, so your body should've seen an exponential spike in your lifeforce, but you ended up suppressing that lifeforce in you instead because you were so tense..."

"I'm right, am I not?" Elder Sang chuckled. The massive bags under his eyes made him look frightening under the moonlight. Seeing that Mu Zixi still looked confused, he slowly shook his head. "There's no need to lie to me, because your goal can never be reached."

"I have no idea what physique I actually am, but I know that if I were to not eat this thing, I'd die." Mu Zixi became rather panicked. "If it's lifeforce you're looking for, you can look elsewhere instead!"

"There's a guy whose lifeforce is over 100 times stronger than mine!" she thought.

But she kept this last sentence to herself.

"Oh? You mean Xu Xiaoshou?" Elder Sang said, looking as if he knew everything there was to know.

Mu Zixi was completely flustered. She didn't know what else to do.

"Life-devouring Wood Physique?" Ye Xiaotian later appeared, frowning as he pondered, "Such a physique is rare, and I vaguely remember that there is one such name."

Mu Zixi took hold of her pigtails and backed away several steps. "What are you two up to? I'm not just going to take it lying down."

Ye Xiaotian was stunned and realized that the old fart by his side was actually emanating quite a bit of pressure.

The conversation should've been a casual one, but the presence of the old man was giving it a different feel.

"No need to worry. You're a disciple of the spirit palace, which means you're a junior of ours. No need to overthink things." Ye Xiaotian, who was hovering in the air, patted her head to comfort her.

Elder Sang was about to say something when Ye Xiaotian shot him a look, signaling that he would do the talking.

"So, here's the deal. We have a massive opportunity here for you, but it might result in death. Are you willing to take it?"

Mu Zixi instinctually shook her head, yet she soon stopped herself and pondered this.

"What opportunity?"

Ye Xiaotian shook his head and said nothing.

There was no way he would just blurt it out like that. He'd seen that the juniors needed a bit of challenge, after all.

If one didn't have the courage to face death, then one need not even think of embarking on the true path of spiritual cultivation and go out on one's own adventure out of the spirit palace.

The Inner Yard itself would be enough to kill a person, after all.

Elder Sang frantically rubbed his hands together, figuring that Ye Xiaotian had too much time on his hands because the latter kept wanting to plan everything out in detail.

“Do you think that’s how everything in the world works, huh?” he thought.

“If it were me, I’d have gotten it done already!

“Plant the seed first, then give her the story. The opportunity is here for you, and it’s up to you to take it or not.

“There’re so many geniuses out there. You think we have time to wait for every one of them like that?

“D*mn it, the Tiansang Spirit Palace really is snuffing out the youngsters’ road to supremacy. Idleness breeds complacency and death indeed. Only Xiao Qixiu will still be of any use.”

Mu Zixi didn’t reply right away, and looked at Ye Xiaotian. “Could you give me some time to think about it?”

Elder Sang was just about to say something when Ye Xiaotian immediately interjected,

“You have one day to think about it.”

...

Huff!

Xu Xiaoshou breathed a sigh of relief after walking out of Rao Yinyin’s place.

With Su Qianqian standing between them, both of them had mostly just vented their frustrations and didn’t end up actually fighting.

When the time came, Su Qianqian had taken Rao Yinyin outside, and he’d left, not daring to stand around for long.

“Well, although that Yinyin witch did say she’d give me the entire mountain if I could get just one Sovereign Pill for her.

“But, the pill...

“Heh, I don’t even know if I could actually get one,” Xu Xiaoshou sighed.

The mountain back there was huge, and there were many vacant places to be found.

However, Xu Xiaoshou had later learned from Su Qianqian that the entire place had basically been taken up Rao Yinyin alone, as the others were either incapable of finding their way there or wouldn’t dare to show up.

That was because all of them would basically be blasted out of the place as soon as they reached there.

Su Qianqian had then learned that her Brother Xiaoshou was about to find a place in the Inner Yard and was naturally so overjoyed that she wouldn’t just let him go.

As such, Xu Xiaoshou had been forced to stay around instead.

He'd picked a place that was closer to Su Qianqian's place, which was quite a ways away from Rao Yinyin's.

He came to his new place and opened the door with the token in his hand.

The place was indeed vacant. With the exception of two huge houses, there was hardly anything else—even weeds—to be found around.

"Well, this does look like a house with no one staying in it," he thought.

Quite the opposite, Rao Yinyin's place had looked like a sea of red flowers when he'd entered, immediately looking out of place. How could he have been so stupid to just head inside like that?

D*mn it.

There was the main house and the guest house, as well as a small hill and a pond. He was left with the rest of the huge section of the field to mold to his liking.

He had no time to do so at the moment. He entered the main house, found an array, and put the plaque up before finally considering himself as settled down.

Crack.

He immediately slumped onto the bed. There was no mattress or blankets to be had, only a huge piece of wooden board.

He was utterly exhausted and slowly closed his eyes, figuring to get a good night's sleep.

"..."

He abruptly opened his eyes before shaking his head and closing his eyes again.

The scene played again.

"Sh**!"

"Looks like I won't be getting any sleep tonight..."

Chapter 114: Pills, Take It or Leave It

The moon was hanging high in the sky.

The weather seemed to be getting cooler. The wind was blowing through the woods, and the moonlight looked cold.

Few would choose to lock their doors and head to bed early on such an idyllic night like tonight, where there was wind but no rain. Most would step out into their compounds to admire the view.

A black and a white figure flew to the mountains behind the council hall, looking like they were in a hurry.

“Are you sure Xu Xiaoshou really trespassed into the Inner Yard?” Zhao Shu still couldn’t quite believe what Yuan Tou had told him. He zipped past a few leaves on the ground, and a slight layer of ice formed on the ones his feet touched.

Yuan Tou’s sleeves were billowing in the air as the winds blew. He glanced at Zhao Shu and added, “Even if he didn’t trespass inside, the point is that he’s most probably inside the Inner Yard right now. My intel can’t possibly be wrong.

“Even if he was summoned to the Inner Yard in secret, his presence has yet to be announced, and both you and I didn’t know about it. As such, that counts as trespassing.

“Members of the 33 acted on their own accord and killed the wrong guy... this is the only chance you’ll get in the next three days. Are you telling me you’re going to let this opportunity pass you by?”

Yuan Tou then chuckled dismissively. “Do you really think he’s going to head outside the spirit palace just so you can kill him, eh?”

Zhao Shu was silent as he leapt about in the woods without slowing down for one bit. “Why are you telling me all this? Is there something between you and Xu Xiaoshou?”

“There’s nothing between him and I... Do you really think I’d have told you all this if that was the case?” Yuan Tou paused and recalled the message from Lan Xinzi. He then sighed and added, “But I’m not going to kill him.”

“You’re using me!”

“Indeed.” Yuan Tou, surprisingly, didn’t deny it. “If I were to do it, he would suffer grave injuries and be sent to the Tribunal at most, and his slot to enter the Tianxuan Gate would still remain, and you... would still stand no chance.”

Zhao Shu clenched his fists. He knew that his once-in-a-lifetime chance was at stake. The Tianxuan Gate was something that he’d waited three years to get a shot at, and he couldn’t afford to miss the opportunity again.

But then again, even if the excuse for it was righteous, he’d still be killing someone in the Inner Yard...

“Are you sure Xu Xiaoshou has no one backing him?”

“He has none.”

“You know that for sure?”

“I know indeed.”

Just to put Zhao Shu at ease, Yuan Tou then added, “Don’t you think if he did have someone backing him he would’ve gotten into the Inner Yard after becoming champion instead of still being stuck in the Outer Yard?”

Zhao Shu stopped moving all of a sudden. He focused his killing intent, and the ice beneath his feet spread all over the canopy of the tree he was standing on.

Yuan Tou stopped and doubled back, slightly flustered as to why Zhao Shu had stopped all of a sudden.

“Hey, I thought we had a deal,” he thought. “Are you really going to keep your hands to yourself and let me do it? This is the perfect opportunity for you right there, man...”

“Alright, the most I could do is get you someone to lighten your sentence.” Yuan Tou tried harder to sound a little bit more sincere.

Zhao Shu ignored what Yuan Tou said and fished out a drawing, turning his gaze to somewhere down below where, not far away, a tall, lanky young man was curiously looking about.

“Is that him?”

Yuan Tou then followed Zhao Shu’s line of sight and was rather baffled by what he saw.

“Xu Xiaoshou?”

“Why is he here?”

...

Xu Xiaoshou had a serious case of insomnia.

He’d taken a cold bath and had still been unable to fall asleep.

He figured that his biological hardwire had gone haywire after burning the midnight oil too many times. While he did look rather exhausted from the outside, he was all vigorous and ready to roll as soon as he closed his eyes.

Yeah, that must be it.

He’d picked his own place and was at considerable ease. As such, he’d gone outside to take a stroll, taking in the scenes around him while plotting out his escape route, figuring that it might come in handy some time in the future.

“There are always people out there wanting to kill me,” he thought.

A figure wearing white clothes dropped before him, emanating intense killing intent.

Xu Xiaoshou was speechless. “Sh**, they’re here already?”

“It’s not raining right now, and this place isn’t some place like the woods out there in the Outer Yard where no one passes by it. I actually saw several Inner Yard disciples along the way!

“Someone actually dared to come here to do it?”

“So you’re Xu Xiaoshou?” Zhao Shu asked icily.

“I’m not.”

Doubted, Passive Points +1.

Xu Xiaoshou innocently blinked his eyes. “My name is Wen Ming, and I’m supposed to be meeting two friends of mine around here...” He then bowed. “Well met, brother.”

It was a very well-done ruse. Not only did he deny that he was the person the icy man was seeking, but he even mentioned that his friends were about to show up as a way to deter said icy man. And, to finish it up, he even added the bit of pleasantries in the end.

It would've made the other man look unreasonable if he'd made a move right then and there.

Zhao Shu was momentarily speechless.

If it wasn't for the fact that he had a drawing of the kid and that Yuan Tou was sending him messages telepathically, he would've actually bought what the kid said.

"Shut him up and kill him with a single hit. You won't have many chances after this." Zhao Shu then heard yet another voice say, "The longer you drag this out, the greater the chance for things to go wrong."

If Zhao Shu had yet to see the target, he might have hesitated for a while more, yet he seldom hesitated in anything that he made up his mind to do.

Xu Xiaoshou was about to walk, when he found a layer of ice beneath his feet, which completely glued his feet to the ground.

Ice type?

Zhao Qingteng's powers?

His pupils contracted. He very well remembered that "Formless Great Cold" move from the match. That move had inspired and led to the development of his "All Things are Swords" move.

"You..."

This place wasn't his compound, and there was no barrier to protect him. He could still call for help, yet, as soon as he opened his mouth, his face froze and the ice crackled.

Bone-chilling cold seeped into his body in an instant and began to spread all over him, freezing him inside-out. That other man's powers were far greater than Zhao Qingteng's.

The man hadn't even touched him yet, and no snow was falling. It seemed like the man could actually freeze someone to death with just one look.

Attacked, Passive Points +1.

Attacked, Passive Points +1.

"..."

Xu Xiaoshou was inwardly panicking. He was most afraid of these types of people, who got to fighting right away without bothering to say much, as it meant he had a chance of duping them.

An ice sculpture was silently finished in mere moments.

Zhao Shu was feeling rather doubtful. This man before him seemed a lot weaker than what Yuan Tou had described.

But then again, this guy was only at Spiritual Cultivation Level nine. How could he stand a chance against one of the Inner Yard Thirty-three?

He took out a short sword and cautiously looked up, not getting near the ice sculpture. He then threw the blade out.

The sword shot out like an arrow and hit the ice.

Clang!

The sword didn't manage to penetrate the ice as he'd expected. A clang was heard, and the short sword was sent flying by a massive force, resulting in the sword shooting back at him.

Zhao Shu lowered his head to evade it. He saw that the ice sculpture seemed to have kicked up massive ripples from the move, which then exploded and sent shards of ice flying everywhere.

"What's going on?" he thought. "My 'Ice-caster' shouldn't have reacted like that. How did he manage to break the ice?" Zhao Shu was shocked.

That spiritual technique at the peak of Innate Level could be immediately cast over thin air without the need for seals or close-contact with its target. He could hit everything within sight, and there was no way for someone to avoid it.

He wondered how was it possible for his technique to be pulverized with just a throw of the sword.

Xu Xiaoshou was burning in roaring Infernal Heavenly Flames. He dispelled the bone-chilling cold completely, enabling him to regain control of his body.

"This is something," he thought.

"This really is something.

"It took only an instant for that guy to freeze me over. D*mn it, I shouldn't have bowed to him in the first place.

"And man, isn't that spiritual technique a little too d*mn terrifying? If it hadn't been for the short sword shaking the ice, which then shook me, and me shaking the ice which then shook the blade, he would have gained complete control over me!"

"You're doing this in the Inner Yard?" Xu Xiaoshou asked coldly.

Zhao Shu stuck two fingers out, and ice patterns appeared beneath his feet. Cold light spread out from the ground and came into being in their surroundings, conjuring a small "Ice Crystal Barrier," which enveloped the two of them.

"You won't be making any noise," Zhao Shu said, his face deadpan.

"Why are you trying to kill me?" Xu Xiaoshou recalled Lan Xinzi. So, she'd sent someone instead of doing it herself. Was she trying to wash her hands clean of this, then?

Zhao Shu shook his head and said nothing.

"How much did she offer you? Whatever the price, I'll pay 10 times the amount."

Zhao Shu was puzzled about the mention of money. He was only doing it for a slot into the Tianxuan Gate, after all.

“100 times!”

“...”

“I have a lot of Origin Court Pills. I could give you 10 of them.”

“...”

“20.”

Zhao Shu’s expression had turned entirely glum, and the corners of his eye kept twitching.

“I’m here to take your life!” he thought. “What do you think this is? An audition or something?”

“You’re going too far.” Xu Xiaoshou took a deep breath.

“30 pills. Take it or leave it.”

Chapter 115: Let the Bullets Fly

One could only do so much with what one was given.

Xu Xiaoshou felt that he’d met his match. Regardless of how good he was at duping his opponents with words, there was only so much he could do to one who outright refused to talk.

His Sense had a hard time penetrating through the outside of the icy cage that enveloped the two of them, and he figured that the barrier could really isolate any sound made within.

“You are cautious. No wonder you dare to make a move in the Inner Yard.”

Xu Xiaoshou was getting ready to strike. After going through Feng Kong and Shao Yi’s assassination attempts, he’d erased all fear of the unknown when facing off against those from the Inner Yard, as he’d realized that those people might not actually be as powerful as he thought.

But, they were still definitely anything but ordinary.

Zhao Shu lifted his hand and twirled his fingers about, but he still didn’t attack yet.

Xu Xiaoshou thought of employing attrition warfare with Zhao Shu, as the longer he dragged the fight out, the greater his odds of winning, but then he recalled Zhao Qingteng’s snowing technique.

“Is this guy lowering the temperature within the barrier?” he thought.

“He’s creating his own terrain!”

Xu Xiaoshou shuddered as he came to realize what the other man was doing.

The other man had gone to establish control as soon as he’d made his move, and, after failing, he was still completely at ease and hadn’t gotten more extreme with his moves. That combat sense alone made him a lot stronger than most.

“Can’t afford to wait.”

Xu Xiaoshou narrowed his eyes and shot forward. With his passive skills at work, he threw a good old punch at the other man, without any unnecessary flare.

Zhao Shu actually didn't bother evading his punch, and looked like he was going to take the hit from where he was.

"Works for me, I guess."

Boom!

Xu Xiaoshou's punch landed squarely on Zhao Shu's chest, causing ice shards to explode.

He should have immediately been sent flying, but only his head and the lower half of his body snapped back for a bit before returning to their original position.

Xu Xiaoshou's hand then got stuck.

His fist was glued to the other man's chest.

"Sh**! What the f**k is happening here?" he thought.

He then launched a palm attack with his left hand, stabbing the other man with Sharpness on his hand.

Clang!

Ice shards were sent flying again, and Zhao Shu's chest bent over backward before returning to its original position.

Not a single drop of blood could be seen dripping.

Xu Xiaoshou was completely baffled.

"Are you malt sugar or sticky cards?" He couldn't help but diss the other man. "Why are you so d*mn sticky?"

Zhao Shu flashed a small smile. "Doesn't matter if you're attacking me or not. No one can make a move while under my control."

Xu Xiaoshou was silent for a bit before retorting, "Quit explaining and just admit that you're disgusting."

Zhao Shu was speechless.

Cursed, Passive Points +1.

Boom!

Xu Xiaoshou then launched a knee strike at the other man, thinking he'd caught Zhao Shu off-guard. As expected, his knee stuck.

Ice crept up him from their three points of contact, and a bone-chilling cold spread all over him yet again. He put all of his Infernal Spiritual Source to work, yet he was still unable to force the cold out of his body.

"Gosh, this is disgusting!" He'd had enough. This was the most disgusting fight he'd ever fought.

He was completely under the other man's control and was unable to do anything about it.

He wanted very badly to just launch his other leg at the man, but he knew that doing so would only render him completely stuck, and he'd be like meat on a cutting board.

"How should I go about defusing this..." he thought. His eyes flickered about him.

The corners of Zhao Shu's mouth twitched, as if this wasn't the first time he'd seen such a speechless and despairing expression on the face of his enemy.

He would develop a twisted sense of accomplishment whenever such a scene appeared.

"Can't do anything, can you? Like I said, under my control..."

Swoop!

A black sword shot out of Xu Xiaoshou's chest before Zhao Shu could finish his line, immediately piercing his chest up to the hilt.

Hmph! Zhao Shu's sentence was immediately cut short. His eyes widened, and red appeared as blood spilled from his chest.

"What the..." he thought. "Why the h*ll is a sword flying out of his chest?"

He took a closer look and found that there was a space ring in the chest area.

Cursed, Passive Points +1.

Xu Xiaoshou chuckled gleefully. "Well, well, an active skill, I see... Even being so close, you didn't manage to react in time."

Crackle, crackle.

The black sword at his chest was immediately encased in ice, causing Xu Xiaoshou to lose control of it.

A small piece of frozen blood dropped from Zhao Shu's mouth. He pulled the sword out and threw it to the ground, freezing his wound as he shot Xu Xiaoshou a threatening look.

"I have to admit, you do have some tricks. But what good are they?"

"Petty tricks that amount to nothing. You scored one with that ambush. Do you really think you can score another?"

Xu Xiaoshou grinned and said nothing. He opened his mouth, and inside was an extremely condensed fire seed. It was trembling violently and was emanating a terrifying, scorching heat.

Both of them were mere feet away from each other.

Zhao Shu was baffled.

"What the f**k is with this as**ole!?" he thought. "He can actually attack with his mouth!?"

Cursed, Passive Points +1.

There was an extremely compressed bit of energy within that was very terrifying. Zhao Shu wasn't confident that he could take the attack with his head. As such, he immediately severed all contact with Xu Xiaoshou and backed off in an instant.

Ptuh! Xu Xiaoshou sprung away and spitted without any hesitation.

The bit of flame tore a black line in the air as it shot at very high speeds. Zhao Shu only managed to somehow evade the attack after doing a backflip midair.

Yet, nonetheless, the bit of flames grazed his face, burning off quite a bit of his eyebrows, his eyelashes, and even the hair off his nose.

Arrgghhh!

He was struck by intense pain, and a huge block of ice immediately materialized on his face, managing to alleviate the pain somehow.

One shouldn't hit the face when fighting someone, and one shouldn't involve innocents while killing someone.

Such an attack had apparently infuriated him. Zhao Shu looked absolutely terrifying by the time the ice disappeared.

"Xu... Xiao... Shou!"

Called, Passive Points +1.

Xu Xiaoshou was already cuddling up at the very back end, almost sticking his back against the other side of the wall of the Ice Crystal Barrier. He simply lifted his chin a bit, signaling for Zhao Shu to look behind him.

"What?"

Zhao Shu scanned with his will, and his pupils immediately dilated.

Instead of immediately penetrating through his Ice Crystal Barrier, the compressed bit of flame violently exploded after flying to the end and coming into contact with the wall of the barrier.

Boom!

A heatwave swept across the place, and, despite the ice walls being three layers thick, the heat melted them in an instant.

The scorching heat washed all over Zhao Shu as it traveled in Xu Xiaoshou's direction.

All that cold that Zhao Shu had put in place in the air for a long time was swept away, replaced by that terrifying heat.

Xu Xiaoshou was sent ramming into the wall by the air pressure, and he sunk into the layers of ice.

Both of them immediately lost mobility.

"Sh** ..."

At that moment, Xu Xiaoshou realized why his compressed flame had alerted the enforcers and made them barricade the library back then. The explosion was indeed somewhat terrifying.

Zhao Shu, who was still in midair, scorched all over by the heat, reached out his hand as far as he could, trying his best to absolutely contain the explosion. There was no way he could carry on with the assassination if the enforcers were alerted.

The Ice Crystal Barrier was actually forcefully stabilized, preventing it from collapsing from the explosion.

Zhao Shu breathed a sigh of relief and discovered that Xu Xiaoshou had dislodged himself from the ice wall and was now squatting down.

Xu Xiaoshou aimed at his target like how one would with a gun.

A compressed fire seed appeared on the tips of his two fingers.

Zhao Shu was speechless.

“What the f**k!” he thought.

“How did you manage to move again so quickly?”

“This is f**king unfair!!”

Doubted, Passive Points +1.

Cursed, Passive Points +1.

Xu Xiaoshou was in glee. This guy was too arrogant.

“Even Elder Sang got a taste of my Lesser Fireball, and you dared to look elsewhere?” he thought.

“You actually thought to maintain the icy wall of yours?”

“You’re about to die, dude!”

Pew!

Let the bullets fly!

Chapter 116: Drugging Style, Blade-draw!

The second compressed flame drew a beautiful arc in the air as it fell toward Zhao Shu, who was charging at Xu Xiaoshou.

That was how things were with battles. The smallest of details could decide the outcome.

Xu Xiaoshou’s physical body was more resilient than Zhao Shu’s, and he was further away from the eye of the storm. As such, he was able to retaliate as soon as he regained control of his body.

That flame was like a reaper’s scythe as it shot straight at Zhao Shu’s face.

Zhao Shu’s body had been thoroughly scorched and mangled by the last explosion. Things would get really dire if he failed to deal with the incoming one.

Zhao Shu forced himself to turn in midair and performed a seal with his hand. Then, he bloated his cheeks with air like a balloon and blew hard.

Breath of the Ice Dragon!

Fuuuuu.

A flash of cold shot forth, a blizzard following it.

The specter of an ice dragon appeared in the air, spreading sparkling bits of ice all over the place like a shockwave, causing the entire place to freeze yet again.

That speeding bit of flame stopped right then and there, unable to move any further, looking like it'd just encountered the hands of a giant.

In addition to this, the layers from the burst of sparkling ice shaved down the flame's energy and actually managed to snuff it out altogether.

"D*mn!"

Xu Xiaoshou's eyes widened with disbelief. That man had actually managed to stop his "bullet."

Nope, it was normal that he'd managed to stop it. He was anything but an idiot, after all.

The sparkling bits of ice spread like waves in the ocean. Having his back against the Ice Crystal Barrier meant that Xu Xiaoshou had nowhere to run.

He wondered if he'd be able to survive being swept by that wave.

"Recoil" didn't seem to be working as well.

All four moves of his sword techniques—webbing, sticking, reversing, and drawing—flashed through his mind.

No way. None would be able to deal with a move dishing out such massive, indiscriminate AoE damage.

Lesser Fireball...

Couldn't do. Not enough time. Too close.

In the nick of time, just when frost was starting to cover his face, Xu Xiaoshou managed to come up with an idea. He took out that smaller bathtub that Elder Sang had given him earlier and hid inside it.

Good warriors know when to charge and when to back down.

Boooooooooom...

The frosty waves swept over him. He held up one hand to support the top of the bathtub and used his other hand to conjure a compressed fire seed to ward off the cold.

"Holy sh**. This is freezing!"

The cauldron, being made of conductive material, immediately transferred the cold it had taken into his body. It was an extremely frustrating situation.

While the frost couldn't hit him directly, the impact from the frost hitting the bathtub was nothing to sneer at.

This was the first time he'd ever felt pain from his passive skills.

His Recoil was making his hand shake so hard that he felt his hand start to go numb.

Worse still, he couldn't afford to just let go, as doing so would probably end up getting him pummeled underground.

Gagagagagagaga...

The rush from taking both heat and cold, as well as repeated shocks from Recoil, caused his entire body to shake like crazy and the color of his face to constantly change.

Attacked, Passive Points +1.

Attacked, Passive Points +1.

...

"It's all thanks to this turtle shell that Elder Sang got me that I'm not dead.

"That's something!"

He figured that he'd guessed right. The cauldrons of the Infernal lineage...

Was indeed meant for fights.

He struggled to keep his mind clear and alert but found doing so increasingly difficult.

"That guy's still not done with his attack?" he thought. "What the h*ll are his lungs made of!?" He gritted his teeth.

The cold seeping through the palm of his hand felt like it was about to freeze his mind over. He was only holding on through sheer willpower alone.

The "Breath of the Ice Dragon" attack kept going for over a dozen breaths and showed no signs of stopping. It felt like his entire body was turning into an ice sculpture. Only the part of his hand that conjured the fire seed still had a fleshy color to it.

Things were so dire that even his Eternal Vitality had been completely suppressed and was only able to regenerate at a very slow rate.

Worse still, this was just indirect cold.

"I'm so done."

He felt as if he was going to pass out soon, and struggled to keep himself awake.

...

Zhao Shu saw that half of his icy barrier had been filled by the cold ice, as he was no longer able to sense Xu Xiaoshou's vital signs or presence.

No one could survive the onslaught of a spiritual technique nearing Master Level, even if the one taking it had an Innate Level Physique!

Furthermore, in order to amplify the output, he'd even extended the period of the attack by 50 percent. Such a terrifying spiritual technique had almost drained his entire spiritual source reserve.

"There's no way Xu Xiaoshou could survive this!" he thought. "I never thought someone at mere Spiritual Cultivation Level nine would be so difficult..."

Zhao Shu finally had time to take out several pills and focused on healing the scorched flesh all over his body.

An intense pain hit him. He was dumbfounded.

That very instant, a bit of flame ignited within the ice, immediately spreading outward in all directions. Sword will shot to the heavens like an unbridled stallion, breaking the ice as it shot forth.

Flashes that resembled starlight leaked out as the surface of the ice cracked. Zhao Shu couldn't even clearly make out the sword aura before he sensed pain in his left shoulder. Half of his body was cut away, and blood sprayed into the air.

Arrggghhhh!

He shrieked at the top of his lungs. The sudden attack made him have a mental breakdown.

"Xu Xiaoshou is still alive!?" he thought.

"How did he survive that terrifying wave of attacks!? And, if he is still alive, how is he still able to fight like that?"

"Even if he is still very much capable of fighting, how is he able to pinpoint my location so accurately through all those layers of ice?"

A tinge of fear appeared in Zhao Shu's eyes. "That brat..."

Boom!

A rumble came from above him before he was able to mull it over more. After the sword aura tore through the ice, the Ice Crystal Barrier was unable to hold any longer, and cracks spread everywhere before the entire construction exploded.

Swoop!

Yuan Tou, who was anxiously waiting outside, looked on with astonishment as the barrier beneath him shattered and a white beam from a sword shot out.

He was the only one who could clearly see the attack, not because he was all that powerful, but because he was very close to the battlefield.

A shrill, deafening shriek was heard shortly afterwards.

"How is this possible!"

That voice was none other than Zhao Shu's.

"He's one of the Inner Yard 33 and he's actually shrieking from pain fighting someone at mere Spiritual Cultivation Level nine from the Outer Yard?" he thought to himself.

Yuan Tou's eyes widened.

With him keeping watch and with the Icy Crystal Barrier covering the battlefield, their battle hadn't attracted any kind of attention. However, after that deafening shriek, that wouldn't stay the case for long.

What was even more terrifying was how the outcome of the battle had gone completely south.

"What the..."

...

Xiao Qixiu was probably the only one throughout the entire Tiansang Spirit Palace out of the many who had seen Xu Xiaoshou's battles who'd realized something.

Despite looking like a fool and anything but serious, the kid could seize any opening during a battle, which he would then take full advantage of to win.

Zhao Shu would never know that Xu Xiaoshou had let his own lifeforce be snuffed down to the very last bit without resisting while locking onto Zhao Shu with his Sense the whole time.

He'd done all that just so when Zhao Shu finally lowered his guard, he could immediately suck the fire seed and 10 Spiritual Cultivation Pills, dispel the cold and regain control of his body at the same time, and suppress the rush through intense pain just so he could pull off that one move.

Drugging Style, Blade-draw!

That move had once severed an arm off of Feng Kong back in their match at the Windcloud Competition. At this moment, the move had worked yet again to break through the ice and slice through the air straight at Zhao Shu, slicing off his arm.

Other than Mo Mo, who'd been well-guarded back then, no one else had been able to react in time to his move's incredible speed.

He was the kind of guy who was hard on himself yet harder on his enemies.

He'd suppressed all the pain in his body just to replicate that move he'd pulled off back then, only to find that he was now unable to move his arm.

He looked down and saw that his legs were glued to the ground by the hard ice surrounding him.

The surrounding ice had only been cut open and not melted. Furthermore, it looked like they had a will of their own, as they immediately crept over and immobilized Xu Xiaoshou where he was standing.

"Sh**!"

"That control trick again?"

He looked up and saw a ferocious-looking man covered in blood and forcefully freezing half of his body as he performed seals with one hand.

“Go**damnit! Don’t you know when to give up?”

Xu Xiaoshou had initially been in high spirits, but as soon as he saw this scene, his face turned ashen.

Chapter 117: I’m Actually That Powerful?

Meanwhile, in some unknown remote woods within the Inner Yard...

“Honey, calm down, okay?”

“I really, really didn’t mean to stand you up. There really was a mission back at noon... Oh right. I was out to chase the enemy!”

“N-No, he got away...”

Zhao Xidong awkwardly rubbed his nose awkwardly, cursing that d*mned Xu Xiaoshou for getting him into trouble. If it weren’t for him, there wouldn’t have been such a big commotion.

He then hugged the pretty woman in front of him.

“See, I’m making amends now. Just look at how beautiful the night is. It’s so much better to come out on a date at night than in the afternoon.

“I really, really didn’t go looking for another woman. You’re the only one in my heart.

“Stop being angry, pretty please?”

He looked at the girl, and his affectionate eyes on that handsome face of his reflected a girl whose anger was slowly dissipating.

“Alright, I swear!”

She pressed a finger to his lips and said in a flirty voice, “Don’t!”

Zhao Xidong shook his head, lowered her finger, and looked at her affectionately. “But I want to—”

There was no way he could let this chance pass.

“Hmm, hmm!” The girl propped her chin on her fist, sounding embarrassing and seemingly knowing what he was going to say.

His eyes still on the girl, Zhao Xidong held up three fingers, put on an affectionate expression, and said affectionately, “I, Zhao Xidong, hereby swear that I shall only love my honey Mimi here for the rest of my life. If I be lying, then let me be struck by lightning!”

Boom!

A rumbling was heard in midair, followed by a flash.

Zhao Xidong was baffled.

“This... you...” The girl pointed at him in disbelief. She cradled her hand by her chest as she slowly backed away before covering her face and running.

“Honey, come back! That wasn’t lightning. That was sword aura!” Zhao Xidong shouted at the top of his lungs.

Yet the girl ran and didn’t look back.

“That was Innate Sword Will!”

Zhao Xidong felt like his heart was about to shatter. He pointed at the sky and shouted, “Su Qianqian, this is the sixth! You shall die a horrible death for getting in the way of my love!”

He then headed out as soon as he finished this, but instead of chasing after the girl, he headed toward the source of that sword aura.

The girl ran for a bit in the woods not far away. Despite having slowed down, there was still no one chasing after her. She seemed to realize something.

“At the end of the day, it’s me all alone again...”

...

The night sky was filled with stars that night, and many couples and minor nobles were going about their business in the Inner Yard.

Xu Xiaoshou’s move shot across the night sky, attracting everyone’s attention and causing quite a commotion.

There seemed to be people gathering around.

Yuan Tou’s eyes darted about. He was feeling rather nervous.

Seeing that the state of affairs wasn’t in his favor, he’d planned on interfering and ending Xu Xiaoshou himself. However, after seeing Zhao Shu, who’d just lost an arm, he quickly suppressed the urge and performed a seal.

The seal felt rather familiar...

“The ‘Icy Calamity’!?” He was utterly shocked.

That was among the handful of spiritual techniques that had accidentally killed someone in the tournaments to pick the top 33.

Yuan Tou had no idea what had happened within the icy barrier before, but he was rather awed seeing that Zhao Shu had gotten cornered by Xu Xiaoshou.

“Given time, this kid could really become someone. Such a pity...”

...

Crackle, crackle.

Xu Xiaoshou felt overwhelming disgust again.

“This dude really is as sticky as all h*ll,” he thought. “I can’t believe how he plays ice-type powers in such a disgusting manner. My moves are all sealed now.”

Towering blocks of ice were all around him. As the seal was quickly performed, the blocks became a spherical cage of ice about the height of a person, surrounding Xu Xiaoshou.

Zhao Shu’s expression was sinister. “Icy Calamity!” he shouted in a subdued tone.

The cage gradually rose into the air, suspending Xu Xiaoshou in midair, and tens of very pointy ice spears were conjured outside it.

Seeing this, Xu Xiaoshou panicked. The points of the spears were all directed at him. He’d have to be a moron not to know what was going to happen next.

“Let me out!”

That fire seed he’d boldly swallowed so as to cause him pain was now his life-saving straw. The thing was hovering over his energy reserve, warding off the cold outside somewhat.

However, although it was sufficient enough to ward off the cold, it did nothing to stop the frost from slowing his movements.

Despite the seed being something that he’d conjured, if it were to explode by accident, it would still definitely kill him.

“No time. That guy’s control powers are just too d*mn disgusting!”

He then clenched his fist and clad himself all over with Sharpness.

“Penetrate!” Zhao Shu shouted. He shot all 36 icy spears, which crisscrossed each other as they poked holes all over Xu Xiaoshou in an instant.

Pffftttttttt...

Yuan Tou felt his skin crawl as he watched the battle and saw blood spray into the air.

It was that very technique that had skewered the target to death during the tournaments to select the 33.

This entire process had happened so quickly that the unlucky target had been unable to even admit defeat, as they were instantly killed.

There was already a crowd gathering around. All of them, who’d initially thought that the fight was but a minor scuffle, were utterly shocked when they saw what just happened.

“Oh sh**, wh-wh-whaaa... hey, people, get over here! Something dope just happened!”

“Gosh, going all out indeed. This is really above Su Qianqian’s breaking Black Shark with a single slash back in the morning. This fight is a serious one, eh? That guy’s got guts.”

“Is that one-armed guy Zhao Shu? Goodness, who did he p*ss off to get beaten up like that?”

“Who did he p*ss off? Take a good look, dork. That’s ‘Icy Calamity.’ That dude in the cage is probably already dead and he’s just venting his anger on the poor dude.”

“Look away, Feifei. A girl shouldn’t watch something like this.”

“What? No way! This is dope! I’d be f**kin’ missing out not watching!”

“Huh??”

“No, umm... I’m saying that I’d be missing out if I didn’t watch—”

Attacked, Passive Points +108.

Attacked, Passive Points +108.

Worried, Passive Points +14.

Mourned, Passive Points +6.

“...”

Even though he looked like he’d been thoroughly skewered, the ice spears had dealt him far less damage than that done by the “ice dragon spit” he’d just endured.

His Innate Level Physique had afforded him his first layer of defense, reducing over half of the damage from the impact of the spears.

Sharpness had served as his second layer of defense, coating him with a layer of iron skin.

Recoil had served as his third layer of defense, preventing all of the ice spears from immediately skewering him and enabling him to dodge fate and not be killed in one single move.

Eternal Vitality was his fourth layer of defense. It allowed him to continuously recuperate from his injuries.

“I’m actually that powerful?”

Xu Xiaoshou realized that while the bone-chilling cold before had indeed dealt considerable damage to him, those seemingly powerful physical attacks were only able to do little more than scratches to him.

Such attacks were utterly useless against him.

His fifth layer of defense—“High Spirits”—silently worked to regenerate over half of his spiritual source. He then conjured two more compressed fire seeds and melted the ice shaft that had shackled his arm.

He held his crotch and uttered dismissively, “That’s all you got?”

Zhao Shu was shaking all over by this point and was unable to do anything else.

He had used up all of his spiritual source.

That Breath of the Ice Dragon, which should’ve won him the fight, had almost thoroughly drained him. Him being able to cast Icy Calamity after that was in itself a considerable feat.

Yet, his most powerful killing technique had proved utterly useless, and he wondered what was going on.

Was Xu Xiaoshou really someone just with Innate Level Physique?

“Yuan Tou, you’ve set me up!” he thought.

The power of the ice spears gradually weakened to where they no longer looked like they’d even be able to pierce his skin. Xu Xiaoshou then regained his mobility.

Crackle, crackle.

He stretched his neck a bit, and a beastly look appeared in his eyes. Then, he said in a subdued tone, “My turn!”

Everyone was shocked to see him whip out a massive bathtub taller than a person, which he then set onto the icy cage.

Boom!

Shards of ice flew everywhere with just one strike.

Xu Xiaoshou shot out of his cage.

Zhao Shu gulped frantically, sensing that danger was looming over him. He subconsciously looked at Yuan Tou. While he didn’t mouth it, his message was obvious—save me!

Swoop!

Xu Xiaoshou didn’t give anyone any time to react, and immediately threw the tub. Zhao Shu immediately turned his head after that and popped a pill into his mouth, wanting to evade it.

Swooop!

A blast of sword aura shot from Zhao Shu’s body. It only lasted for an instant, yet it served to hold him in place.

He’d stolen that move from the masked guy, who’d used it to keep the nine elders under control. He’d developed a good understanding of the “people are swords” part of “All Things are Swords,” so much so that he’d even used it on Mu Zixi, Mo Mo, and some other people, needing only an extra kick to complete his understanding.

That night, the masked person had enabled him to do just that.

The cauldron hit Zhao Shu and sent him flying. The crowd was astonished and then noted that underneath that tub, there was already a black sword that was traveling backward at high speed.

The sword pierced through Zhao Shu and brought him before Xu Xiaoshou.

Yuan Tou, who’d been watching the fight the whole time, watched this with contracted pupils, and was finally unable to just sit around.

“Stop it!”

“Stop it!”

The second “stop it” came from afar, and from the sound of it, someone was making their way over to them at fast speeds.

Zhao Shu was panicking. He’d already been so badly beaten that he couldn’t even care about the pain from the black sword punching through his body. He then yelled in horror, “No killing in the Inner Yard!”

Xu Xiaoshou chuckled.

That was his reply, being completely oblivious to the voices from outside the battlefield.

He lifted his hand into the air, and two fire seeds moved to his fingertips, and he carefully mobilized the other one out of his energy reserves.

He was about to burst forth with the most powerful technique in his arsenal at the moment—the Seeds on All Three Fingers.

He shifted to the side to avoid being pierced by Hiding Pain, then immediately made his move. He dispersed all of Sharpness on his right hand and pressed hard on Zhao Shu’s chest.

Swooop!

From inertia, the black sword punched through Zhao Shu’s abdomen, nailing him to the ground.

Boom!

Under the deliberate control of Xu Xiaoshou, all three fire seeds were embedded into Zhao Shu’s chest. Then, with the force from Recoil, he pushed and sent the man flying into the air.

Yuan Tou halted in his tracks on his way to save the man. He was completely shocked, unable to believe that Xu Xiaoshou actually dared to kill someone when there was already an enforcer coming.

Zhao Xidong, still being far away, was unable to actually do anything. He was unable to clearly see the face of the killer and only saw two people covered in blood.

The spectators looked up at the sky, and found Zhao Shu looking increasingly panicked.

Xu Xiaoshou lowered his head and took a deep breath, feeling extremely restless deep down.

He was very much against killing people.

Yet tonight...

He was gonna light up fireworks to mourn the guy who’d tried to kill him!

Boooooom!

A deafening explosion was heard in the air, sounding as if even the air itself had been snuffed out.

At that moment, even the Outer Yard disciples who were far away looked up at the night sky and saw an explosion that was every bit comparable to that which had appeared earlier in the afternoon.

Zhou Tianshen stood in a pockmarked compound. He'd been waiting for Xu Xiaoshou for a very long time, as he was planning to tell him as soon as he returned that someone was trying to kill him.

The rumbling in the air caught the attention of that tall, stout man. He held his blade as he looked up and mumbled, "Yet another blast went off. Seems like the third one now..."

"Someone is definitely celebrating something in the spirit palace today."

Back in the battlefield in the Inner Yard.

Xu Xiaoshou sorted out his inner turmoil and then looked at his blood-covered body. He frowned, then glanced at Yuan Tou, who was standing nearby.

He had no idea who the other man was, but he knew that the man was definitely of the same gang with the guy he'd turned into "fireworks."

While the man had kept himself well-hidden far away, Xu Xiaoshou's Sense was omnidirectional and, as such, had recorded that man's every move in his mind.

It was thanks to that man keeping watch the whole time that he hadn't chosen to run at the very start of the fight.

'High Spirit' had regenerated quite a bit of his Infernal Spiritual Source as well.

He stared at Yuan Tou and then shot him a condescending look while sounding mysterious and eerie.

"You wanna kill me? You can try."

Chapter 118: He Was the Killer, Not Me!

"Xu... Xu Xiaoshou?"

Zhao Xidong arrived at the scene of the murder and was flabbergasted when he saw the culprit.

When he saw the burst of Innate sword aura while flirting in the woods, he'd initially thought that it was Su Qianqian summoning him with sword aura. He totally didn't expect to find the one responsible to be Xu Xiaoshou instead.

He was shaking all over with fury.

"This guy cost me my date with Mimi in the afternoon. If things had gone how they were supposed to, I should've been able to..." His thoughts trailed off.

"It's bad enough that the kid screwed up my stuff. But why is it that every time something bad happens in the spirit palace, this guy is always present?"

"Once last night, once in the afternoon, and one more time right now..."

"Can't you stop stirring up trouble for just one day!?"

The crowd around was apparently getting increasingly larger. The fireworks in the night sky had attracted a lot of attention and caused everyone to become extremely frightened.

Zhao Xidong's call almost made everyone's jaw drop to the ground.

“Xu Xiaoshou? He’s Xu Xiaoshou?”

“Isn’t that guy a disciple of the Outer Yard? Did he come here all the way to the Inner Yard... to kill someone?”

“Boy, he really is something indeed!”

“I’d like to see what’s going to happen to him next, hehe...”

If there was a real-time rank of famous people in the Tiansang Spirit Palace, then Xu Xiaoshou would definitely be in top place, and the reason for this was simple—there were a lot of rumors about his strange exploits.

He was the champion who’d been denied entry into the Inner Yard, was suspected of being the focus of that barricade plan for the spirit palace back then, and was also suspected to be the man backing Su Qianqian, and so on.

Everyone looked at the man covered in blood on the battlefield and gulped, as there was yet another line to be added to that list.

“If I’m not mistaken, those fireworks up in the sky were Zhao Shu, right?”

“He was one of the newly appointed Inner Yard Thirty-three, man...”

This was the very first time someone had strong doubts as to if he was fit to become one of the ordinary disciples of the Inner Yard.

Xu Xiaoshou was just someone at Spiritual Cultivation Level nine and a disciple of the Outer Yard, after all.

“Oh gosh, this world is going crazy. I must be dreaming here!”

Whack!

Doubted, Passive Points +22.

“D*mn, what are you hitting me for?”

“Does it hurt? Doesn’t appear to be a dream, then...”

“The h*ll??”

...

Respected, Passive Points +33.

“...”

Xu Xiaoshou glanced at the Passive Points and found that the numbers had already shot over 2000 from just one fight.

The one thing that had contributed the most Passive Points was the high frequency at which the ice spear had attacked him, hardly doing any damage, as he’d earned up to 100 points from that every second.

Due to the workings of his passive skills, his condition had recovered by more than half. Even if he were to keep fighting, he was confident he'd still be able to pull through.

But then again, it soon became clear that it would be impossible to do so, as more and more enforcers were already starting to gather around.

Xu Xiaoshou turned his gaze away from Yuan Tou and looked at Zhao Xidong. He immediately looked rather frustrated.

"Lord judge, you have to help me in this! They're trying to kill me!" Xu Xiaoshou then pointed at Yuan Tou.

Everyone was speechless.

Hold on. Who the h*ell just killed someone here?

The bad guy was now playing the victim?

Doubted, Passive Points +52.

Zhao Xidong was in no mood for joking. Taking lives outside of the arena was a grave offense.

"Say no more. Come with us to the Spiritual Law Division. The Tribunal is waiting for you."

Yuan Tou's face immediately lit up with glee. Xu Xiaoshou would definitely be dead once he got to the Tribunal. Could his mission be considered completed?

But then again, Lan Xinzi had ordered him to take Xu Xiaoshou's head within a day...

He shook his head. Given the powers of that man, there was no way the mission could be accomplished in one day. Giving him a month to prepare would've been more reasonable.

Xu Xiaoshou never thought that Zhao Xidong would become so cold and merciless toward him after just one afternoon without seeing each other.

He took back his snickering look and said seriously, "I was out taking a stroll because I couldn't sleep. A disciple of the Inner Yard just came up trying to kill me. What was I supposed to do? Just roll over?"

"I did shout for you all to stop," Zhao Xidong said sternly.

"No one shall ruin the might and authority of the law enforcers, even that person has a small relationship with Elder Sang," he thought.

Xu Xiaoshou then smirked and said, "You were nowhere to be found when I almost got killed, and you asked me to stop when I'd just turned the tables in my favor?"

"That's cute!"

"If it'd been someone else other than me in that predicament, do you think you would've been able to see them? You only would've heard about the death of a disciple of the spirit palace the next day."

Zhao Xidong was silent. He knew very well that what Xu Xiaoshou said could probably be true.

However...

“This is standard procedure. You’ll explain yourself to the elder over at the Tribunal.”

“Sure.” Unexpectedly, Xu Xiaoshou didn’t retort back. He simply pointed at Yuan Tou. “But this guy has to come with me.”

Yuan Tou was baffled. “What does this have to do with me?” he thought. “Did you see me do anything? I was only watching the fight the whole time!”

Zhao Xidong looked at Yuan Tou and frowned. He seemed to recall something. “Zhang Xinxiong of the Zhang family?”

Xu Xiaoshou was baffled, then he wore a look that seemed to say “I knew it.” “Seems like they sent you here, eh?”

“Well, well, first there was Feng Kong, Shao Yi, and today... Zhao Shu, was it?”

“Why don’t you people just take me out on your own, then? Afraid of getting caught? Or are you afraid of me, Xu Xiaoshou?”

Everyone around was silent. Some things were better left unspoken, as there were things that just couldn’t see the light of day.

While matters like that would happen time and again in the Inner Yard, it would only happen in the Inner Yard.

Yet, at the moment, some of the veteran 33 were actually sending people to assassinate a disciple of the Outer Yard.

That was indeed something that couldn’t see the light of day.

More importantly, the assassination attempts had actually failed.

Which was akin to saying that the Inner Yard disciples paled in comparison to one from the Outer Yard.

Yuan Tou saw how the public opinion was against him and immediately became flustered.

“This has nothing to do with any of that. This was just a personal feud. Xu Xiaoshou took the slot to enter the Tianxuan Gate from Zhao Shu, so he chose to do such a thing out of desperation, yet...”

He was unable to bring himself to finish the sentence, as no one would expect a newly appointed member of the 33 to lose to one such insect.

However, what Yuan Tou said astonished everyone around.

“A slot to enter the Tianxuan Gate?”

“Xu Xiaoshou actually got a slot to enter the Tianxuan Gate? That’s why Zhao Shu decided to kill him?”

“D*mn, that really explains it... By the way, how did Xu Xiaoshou manage to get a slot to enter the Tianxuan Gate? Isn’t this a little too much? There’s so many in the Inner Yard who couldn’t get it, so why him?”

“Heh, can you kill Zhao Shu, then?”

“...”

“Oh, shut up!”

The list of those who would enter the Tianxuan Gate had only been announced that very night. Few were actually in the know.

But now everyone knew about it.

Xu Xiaoshou was completely stunned. He'd initially thought that it was very easy for Elder Sang to get him a slot.

He'd never expected that getting one such opportunity for himself meant that someone else had to lose theirs.

“That old fart. Why didn't he tell me that?”

“Hmm, it's not like him to tell me such things, though.”

It took him less than a second to completely process the situation, yet he felt compelled to ask the old fart what happened, nonetheless.

There were still things that were puzzling about the whole case.

If Elder Sang were to do such things again in the future, wouldn't that make enemies for him everywhere, then?

“I still wanna live for a few more years, man!” he thought.

Seeing that Zhao Xidong was about to shift his stance, Xu Xiaoshou immediately added, “Even if Zhao Shu was only here to kill me because of the slot to enter the Tianxuan Gate, this matter still has a lot to do with this guy here.” He glanced at Yuan Tou.

“The two of them were here together. One came down to kill me, and the other came to keep watch. Don't think you can fool me.”

Zhao Xidong was about to say something before Xu Xiaoshou further added, “Don't bother asking. I don't have proof.”

“But I didn't know that Zhao Shu was that weak back then. My first reaction after seeing that someone was trying to kill was to run.”

Xu Xiaoshou then pointed at Yuan Tou. “Yet, it was him!”

“He was the one who cut off my escape route. If I'd been able to run back then, Zhao Shu wouldn't have died.”

“He was the killer, not me!”

Chapter 119: I have Urgent Business. I'll Take My Leave, Then.

Xu Xiaoshou's words stunned everyone.

You'd have to completely lack all sense to take what he said at face value.

“What’s with the ‘If I’d managed to run, Zhao Shu wouldn’t have died’, eh? Is that something that someone with any sense at all would say?” Zhao Xidong thought, feeling frustrated and exasperated.

He’d known since the group matches that the kid was anything but normal, yet the kid still managed to catch him off-guard all the time.

“Alright, cut the chatter. You two, come with me!”

Yuan Tou started to panic. “I did nothing, man!” he cried inwardly. “What, so now I, a passer-by, has to be punished too just because Xu Xiaoshou said something?”

“Why!?” he asked.

Zhao Xidong gave Yuan Tou a cold look and said icily, “Don’t think for a second I didn’t know what you people have been scheming. You’d better pray that I don’t catch any of you in the act... You won’t like what will happen to you if I do.

“By the way, Xu Xiaoshou has a point. Even if you didn’t do anything, you were still the first witness to see what happened, and the Spiritual Law Division very much requires your presence.”

Yuan Tou was speechless. D*mn you, Xu Xiaoshou!

But then again, he was unable to make a rebuttal to this. Many had seen that he was the first person there when they arrived at the fight.

Even if he were able to weasel himself out of this, anyone with sense would be able to tell that he was lying if he said he’d been attracted by the sword aura like everyone else.

Everyone around looked at Xu Xiaoshou and realized that, despite being the killer, he was actually the victim instead.

Somehow, things felt really weird.

It was a weird feeling about things that one just couldn’t place somehow. It felt like a piece of bone was stuck in one’s throat, and the feeling was awful.

“Sh**.. My brain doesn’t feel up to the task right now. Why do I pity Xu Xiaoshou, man? He just killed someone...” Someone voiced their thoughts aloud in the midst of the crowd.

“Stop worrying and just enjoy the show.” Some who were familiar with Xu Xiaoshou’s antics laughed out loud. “You’re worried for Xu Xiaoshou? You really think your brain isn’t up to the task? How about you shake it and see, eh?”

“What about it?” That person shook their head.

“You hear that?”

“Hear what?”

“The sound of water swooshing...”

“What the...”

...

The law enforcers had surrounded the two of them.

Xu Xiaoshou glanced at Yuan Tou and said, "So he's gonna show up at the Spiritual Law Division, right?"

Zhao Xidong nodded, not knowing why he was asking him this.

"Not only him. You too," he thought. "And if Zhao Shu was still alive, all three of you would've been going together!"

"Are you sure?"

"Yeah."

"Very well..." Xu Xiaoshou then fished out a token and said in a hurry, "Elder Sang needs me for something urgent. Could I show up later instead?"

Zhao Xidong was speechless.

He looked at the reddish-black elder token in Xu Xiaoshou's hand and felt like his eyes were about to fall out and roll onto the ground.

"How do you have something like this? Did you steal it?"

"Steal it?" Xu Xiaoshou chuckled and recalled the old fart's weird personality. He then tsked and replied, "You really think I stole it? If I dumped it on the ground right now, would you dare to pick it up?"

Zhao Xidong was rendered speechless again.

"So you do know stuff like that too, eh?" he thought. "Then how come you have something like that with you?"

He recalled that Xu Xiaoshou had also held that token to tell him off back in the library in the afternoon. It was only when they searched for the four in that hut that he'd learned Elder Sang had simply dropped it at the library back then.

So why had this thing showed up again?

Zhao Xidong didn't believe the kid was daring enough to steal the elder's token, but then again...

If he didn't steal it, then what happened?

Su Qianqian and Xiao Qixiu came to mind.

Xu Xiaoshou and Elder Sang...

Impossible!

He whacked himself hard in the head, wondering what the h*ll had happened to him to make him think such absurd thoughts.

"I'm warning you, Xu Xiaoshou. You'd better put this thing back to where it belongs. You don't know what will happen to you otherwise."

Zhao Xidong then lowered his voice, looking stern. "I'm being very serious."

Warned, Passive Points +1.

Xu Xiaoshou took note of Zhao Xidong's good intentions, but that was all he was going to do about it.

"Elder Sang himself gave me this thing," he thought. "Why the h*ll should I return it, eh? This is one h*ll of a protective charm, man!

He'd only gone up to Zhao Xidong to let the other man take a look at it. He didn't want anyone else in the crowd to see it, so he quickly took the token back. He'd made that deal with Elder Sang, after all.

"Thank you, but I really am in a hurry.

"Elder Sang really is looking for me."

Xu Xiaoshou sounded very sincere.

Zhao Xidong's eyes turned cold. "I know that you're the victim here," he thought. "But you're also the killer at the same time. You really think you can just walk out of here just like that? In your dreams!

"Stop protesting. You're coming with me."

Xu Xiaoshou then clapped Zhao Xidong on the shoulder and lowered his voice. "Are the rules very strict in the spirit palace, like 'you'll also have to see the person in question if you see their token' kind of thing?"

Zhao Xidong didn't know what Xu Xiaoshou was up to and simply nodded numbly.

"Of course. No one can break the rules laid down by the Spiritual Law Division." He paused and added, "You dared to kill someone, so prepare to face the music."

"Huff, that should do it, then..."

Xu Xiaoshou then retreated several steps backward, keeping a safe distance. He adjusted his expression and shouted, "Back off! I have business to attend to!"

"Huh??"

Not only was Zhao Xidong dumbfounded by Xu Xiaoshou's shout, but Yuan Tou was very startled as well.

All the law enforcers around were shaken, and even the crowd around was shocked to the core by this display of might.

"D*mn. How can this guy be so fierce? He's really taking that attitude after he just killed someone?"

"Oh, this is something. This is my first time seeing someone dare to speak to Enforcer Zhao like that. Does he have a death wish or something!"

"Xu Xiaoshou... I bow to you!"

Revered, Passive Points +63.

Cursed, Passive Points +77. That one was probably from the shock.

Xu Xiaoshou noted that Zhao Xidong was still calm enough not to charge across that safe distance he'd put between them, and felt relieved.

"I can work this out!" he thought. "I should sound fiercer. I should display Elder Sang's might more..."

He put a hand to the corner of his mouth, lowered his tone, and said, "That's what he told me just now. Hold him up any longer, and he might just come for you..."

Zhao Xidong was so furious his eyelids started twitching. "Are you playing tricks on me?"

"I'm so gonna..."

"Get lost!" Xu Xiaoshou shouted again, immediately cutting Zhao Xidong off.

Everyone's heart skipped a beat, their eyes filled with nothing but shock.

He did it again?

Cursed, Passive Points +77.

Xu Xiaoshou lowered his voice, looking rather troubled. "He's at it again... I wasn't the one who said that..."

Zhao Xidong was completely stunned, not believing that Xu Xiaoshou would have the guts to talk to him like this. But he also sure didn't believe that Xu Xiaoshou would dare to make up things from Elder Sang like this either.

"But..."

"Why do I get the feeling I'm being played here?" he thought.

"I..." he started.

Xu Xiaoshou didn't wait for him to say more, and cut him off with an expression that seemed to say he needed to pee right away. "I can't stay here any longer. If I do, both you and I are gonna get it. I'd best be off, then."

He briefly flashed the token at Zhao Xidong again before running off, afraid that Zhao Xidong would stand in his way again.

"Take your time looking into that guy. He's got a h*ll of a lot to look into!" He then said, trying to steer attention away from him.

Yuan Tou couldn't help but feel frustrated when he saw Xu Xiaoshou run away just like that.

"What's the meaning of this?" he asked. "The killer gest to run off scot-free and I have to stay around?"

"Something is wrong with you!"

The other enforcers were also rather dumbfounded. "Umm, Zhao, this isn't..."

Zhao Xidong saw Xu Xiaoshou disappear from sight and felt like he was going to pass out.

"I go**amn know that isn't the way we do things!" he thought. "But what else could I've done?"

“Take him down right where he stood?”

“What if the kid was speaking truthfully and Elder Sang showed up? Who would’ve stood up to the elder then?”

“Me?”

“F**k you!”

He was so furious that his face was trembling. He kept taking deep breaths to calm himself down and lowered his tone. “This is something that involves the elders. We’ll head back and let Boss Xiao take care of it.”

He glanced at Yuan Tou, then walked away.

“Take the only witness with us. Get going.”

“Don’t let him escape.”

Yuan Tou was speechless.

He started cursing so hard deep down that he felt like he was about to burst.

Chapter 119: I have Urgent Business. I’ll Take My Leave, Then.

Xu Xiaoshou’s words stunned everyone.

You’d have to completely lack all sense to take what he said at face value.

“What’s with the ‘If I’d managed to run, Zhao Shu wouldn’t have died’, eh? Is that something that someone with any sense at all would say?” Zhao Xidong thought, feeling frustrated and exasperated.

He’d known since the group matches that the kid was anything but normal, yet the kid still managed to catch him off-guard all the time.

“Alright, cut the chatter. You two, come with me!”

Yuan Tou started to panic. “I did nothing, man!” he cried inwardly. “What, so now I, a passer-by, has to be punished too just because Xu Xiaoshou said something?”

“Why!?” he asked.

Zhao Xidong gave Yuan Tou a cold look and said icily, “Don’t think for a second I didn’t know what you people have been scheming. You’d better pray that I don’t catch any of you in the act... You won’t like what will happen to you if I do.”

“By the way, Xu Xiaoshou has a point. Even if you didn’t do anything, you were still the first witness to see what happened, and the Spiritual Law Division very much requires your presence.”

Yuan Tou was speechless. D*mn you, Xu Xiaoshou!

But then again, he was unable to make a rebuttal to this. Many had seen that he was the first person there when they arrived at the fight.

Even if he were able to weasel himself out of this, anyone with sense would be able to tell that he was lying if he said he'd been attracted by the sword aura like everyone else.

Everyone around looked at Xu Xiaoshou and realized that, despite being the killer, he was actually the victim instead.

Somehow, things felt really weird.

It was a weird feeling about things that one just couldn't place somehow. It felt like a piece of bone was stuck in one's throat, and the feeling was awful.

"Sh**. My brain doesn't feel up to the task right now. Why do I pity Xu Xiaoshou, man? He just killed someone..." Someone voiced their thoughts aloud in the midst of the crowd.

"Stop worrying and just enjoy the show." Some who were familiar with Xu Xiaoshou's antics laughed out loud. "You're worried for Xu Xiaoshou? You really think your brain isn't up to the task? How about you shake it and see, eh?"

"What about it?" That person shook their head.

"You hear that?"

"Hear what?"

"The sound of water swooshing..."

"What the..."

...

The law enforcers had surrounded the two of them.

Xu Xiaoshou glanced at Yuan Tou and said, "So he's gonna show up at the Spiritual Law Division, right?"

Zhao Xidong nodded, not knowing why he was asking him this.

"Not only him. You too," he thought. "And if Zhao Shu was still alive, all three of you would've been going together!"

"Are you sure?"

"Yeah."

"Very well..." Xu Xiaoshou then fished out a token and said in a hurry, "Elder Sang needs me for something urgent. Could I show up later instead?"

Zhao Xidong was speechless.

He looked at the reddish-black elder token in Xu Xiaoshou's hand and felt like his eyes were about to fall out and roll onto the ground.

"How do you have something like this? Did you steal it?"

“Steal it?” Xu Xiaoshou chuckled and recalled the old fart’s weird personality. He then tsked and replied, “You really think I stole it? If I dumped it on the ground right now, would you dare to pick it up?”

Zhao Xidong was rendered speechless again.

“So you do know stuff like that too, eh?” he thought. “Then how come you have something like that with you?”

He recalled that Xu Xiaoshou had also held that token to tell him off back in the library in the afternoon. It was only when they searched for the four in that hut that he’d learned Elder Sang had simply dropped it at the library back then.

So why had this thing showed up again?

Zhao Xidong didn’t believe the kid was daring enough to steal the elder’s token, but then again...

If he didn’t steal it, then what happened?

Su Qianqian and Xiao Qixiu came to mind.

Xu Xiaoshou and Elder Sang...

Impossible!

He whacked himself hard in the head, wondering what the h*ll had happened to him to make him think such absurd thoughts.

“I’m warning you, Xu Xiaoshou. You’d better put this thing back to where it belongs. You don’t know what will happen to you otherwise.”

Zhao Xidong then lowered his voice, looking stern. “I’m being very serious.”

Warned, Passive Points +1.

Xu Xiaoshou took note of Zhao Xidong’s good intentions, but that was all he was going to do about it.

“Elder Sang himself gave me this thing,” he thought. “Why the h*ll should I return it, eh? This is one h*ll of a protective charm, man!

He’d only gone up to Zhao Xidong to let the other man take a look at it. He didn’t want anyone else in the crowd to see it, so he quickly took the token back. He’d made that deal with Elder Sang, after all.

“Thank you, but I really am in a hurry.

“Elder Sang really is looking for me.”

Xu Xiaoshou sounded very sincere.

Zhao Xidong’s eyes turned cold. “I know that you’re the victim here,” he thought. “But you’re also the killer at the same time. You really think you can just walk out of here just like that? In your dreams!

“Stop protesting. You’re coming with me.”

Xu Xiaoshou then clapped Zhao Xidong on the shoulder and lowered his voice. "Are the rules very strict in the spirit palace, like 'you'll also have to see the person in question if you see their token' kind of thing?"

Zhao Xidong didn't know what Xu Xiaoshou was up to and simply nodded numbly.

"Of course. No one can break the rules laid down by the Spiritual Law Division." He paused and added, "You dared to kill someone, so prepare to face the music."

"Huff, that should do it, then..."

Xu Xiaoshou then retreated several steps backward, keeping a safe distance. He adjusted his expression and shouted, "Back off! I have business to attend to!"

"Huh??"

Not only was Zhao Xidong dumbfounded by Xu Xiaoshou's shout, but Yuan Tou was very startled as well.

All the law enforcers around were shaken, and even the crowd around was shocked to the core by this display of might.

"D*mn. How can this guy be so fierce? He's really taking that attitude after he just killed someone?"

"Oh, this is something. This is my first time seeing someone dare to speak to Enforcer Zhao like that. Does he have a death wish or something!"

"Xu Xiaoshou... I bow to you!"

Revered, Passive Points +63.

Cursed, Passive Points +77. That one was probably from the shock.

Xu Xiaoshou noted that Zhao Xidong was still calm enough not to charge across that safe distance he'd put between them, and felt relieved.

"I can work this out!" he thought. "I should sound fiercer. I should display Elder Sang's might more..."

He put a hand to the corner of his mouth, lowered his tone, and said, "That's what he told me just now. Hold him up any longer, and he might just come for you..."

Zhao Xidong was so furious his eyelids started twitching. "Are you playing tricks on me?"

"I'm so gonna..."

"Get lost!" Xu Xiaoshou shouted again, immediately cutting Zhao Xidong off.

Everyone's heart skipped a beat, their eyes filled with nothing but shock.

He did it again?

Cursed, Passive Points +77.

Xu Xiaoshou lowered his voice, looking rather troubled. "He's at it again... I wasn't the one who said that..."

Zhao Xidong was completely stunned, not believing that Xu Xiaoshou would have the guts to talk to him like this. But he also sure didn't believe that Xu Xiaoshou would dare to make up things from Elder Sang like this either.

"But..."

"Why do I get the feeling I'm being played here?" he thought.

"I..." he started.

Xu Xiaoshou didn't wait for him to say more, and cut him off with an expression that seemed to say he needed to pee right away. "I can't stay here any longer. If I do, both you and I are gonna get it. I'd best be off, then."

He briefly flashed the token at Zhao Xidong again before running off, afraid that Zhao Xidong would stand in his way again.

"Take your time looking into that guy. He's got a h*ll of a lot to look into!" He then said, trying to steer attention away from him.

Yuan Tou couldn't help but feel frustrated when he saw Xu Xiaoshou run away just like that.

"What's the meaning of this?" he asked. "The killer gest to run off scot-free and I have to stay around?"

"Something is wrong with you!"

The other enforcers were also rather dumbfounded. "Umm, Zhao, this isn't..."

Zhao Xidong saw Xu Xiaoshou disappear from sight and felt like he was going to pass out.

"I go**amn know that isn't the way we do things!" he thought. "But what else could I've done?"

"Take him down right where he stood?"

"What if the kid was speaking truthfully and Elder Sang showed up? Who would've stood up to the elder then?"

"Me?"

"F**k you!"

He was so furious that his face was trembling. He kept taking deep breaths to calm himself down and lowered his tone. "This is something that involves the elders. We'll head back and let Boss Xiao take care of it."

He glanced at Yuan Tou, then walked away.

"Take the only witness with us. Get going."

"Don't let him escape."

Yuan Tou was speechless.

He started cursing so hard deep down that he felt like he was about to burst.

Chapter 120: A True Genius

Xu Xiaoshou didn't return to his new place. He went to the library instead.

The token opened the barrier, and he was only able to feel secure after arriving on the third floor.

"Zhang Xinxiong..."

He'd thought those people would've called it quits for a while, yet they hadn't even bothered waiting an entire day before trying again after the assassination attempt last night failed.

As for whether Zhao Shu had indeed come to kill him just to get the slot to the Tianxuan Gate and ended up being used by Yuan Tou, that no longer mattered.

One way or another, he wasn't going to let those who were out to kill him walk away alive.

"It's a pity I can't go back to my own place.

"Looks like I'll be sleeping at the library for the next three days, then."

Xu Xiaoshou was feeling rather exasperated, as, after that fight, he'd basically learned where he stood in terms of power levels.

He knew that while he could probably do away with one of the 33 if he were to go all out, he also knew that things would get very difficult if he had to deal with those veterans.

That man called Zhao Shu had almost killed him with just his control abilities and cold attacks.

Xu Xiaoshou decided to hunker down for once and hide in the library for three days.

He knew that he had to make a breakthrough into Innate Level while being in the Tianxuan Gate.

And he also knew that he probably wouldn't stand a chance if they sent another assassin after him.

...

Noon the next day.

Elder Sang came to the third floor of the library and was startled to find a man covered in blood lying on the ground. It took him a moment to realize that the man was Xu Xiaoshou. He then went on to kick him up.

"Didn't I tell you to find your own place and get on with alchemy elsewhere?"

"What the h*ll are you doing here?"

He was rather startled to find that the kid had blood all over him, feeling rather lucky that the kid had gotten himself blown up rather than the library.

Xu Xiaoshou gradually woke up and immediately became furious when he saw the old man.

"So you snatched a slot to enter the Tianxuan Gate from someone else?" he asked.

Elder Sang immediately realized what had happened to the kid after hearing this. "So, all that blood resulted not from alchemy but from someone trying to kill you, eh?" he thought.

“There’s a limited number of slots to enter the Tianxuan Gate. You getting one naturally meant that someone had to lose theirs. It’s a given fact, and completely normal.

“This world has a limited number of resources. With every step you take toward further growth from here on out, you’ll end up walking over someone, either directly or indirectly. Better get used to it.”

Xu Xiaoshou took a deep breath. The old fart was making so much sense and the words were so deeply rooted in reality that he had no rebuttal.

“So, someone took revenge on you?” Elder Sang then chuckled.

“I’ll tell you the truth. When the slots to enter the Tianxuan Gate were announced last night, Ye Xiaotian initially had no intentions of dropping your name.

“But then I figured your involvement would be exposed sooner or later, and it’s not like you got the slot through some shady deals or whatever, so I just blurted it out in front of everyone.

“That guy came looking for you?”

Xu Xiaoshou flicked his bloodied clothing and rolled his eyes. “Duh!”

“Well, it’s a good thing you didn’t end up dead. Keep up the good work. If you get the chance, you could retaliat...”

“He’s dead.”

Elder Sang’s eyebrow twitched. He was somewhat surprised.

The way he saw it, just Xu Xiaoshou escaping unscathed from the ordeal without getting killed was a job well done, but he’d actually managed to kill the assailant?

“Are you sure you killed one of the Inner Yard Thirty-three?”

“Yeah.

“Two came. I killed one.”

Elder Sang felt like he had to put more pressure on the kid, as he wouldn’t be able to clearly understand this kid’s potential if he didn’t.

“How do you feel about that?”

“He shouldn’t have died...” Xu Xiaoshou shook his head, his face deadpan. “But those out to kill shall expect to get killed. I feel pity for him, but nothing more than that.”

The corners of Elder Sang’s mouth twitched. This kid had finally become immune to killing people.

“The kid might not show it, but he’s learned a lot and changed a lot with me being hard on him,” he thought.

“That’s not good enough,” he said. “You’ll have truly grown when you no longer feel pity for him.”

Xu Xiaoshou snickered. “But if I no longer pitied him, wouldn’t that mean I’d no longer have sentimentality?”

“Sentimentality...” he mused. “That’s a word I haven’t heard in a long time.”

Elder Sang’s expression was rather sad as he lifted his hat and rubbed the top of his head hard. He then put the hat back on his head and said, “After you’ve touched the Great Path, you’ll know just how fickle human nature can be.”

“Great Path?” Xu Xiaoshou was stunned.

“We’ll leave that for another day...”

Elder Sang waved his hand dismissively. He didn’t want to put too much pressure on the kid just yet. It was a good thing for young people to be passionate, and he knew when to just let the kid develop on his own without him meddling.

But there were times when pressure was necessary. He’d never thought the so-called 33 would be so unbearable. And the spirit palace seemed to have decayed more than he’d expected it to.

He turned his gaze to outside the window, and there was a reminiscing look on his face as he asked, “Do you know what makes a true genius?”

Xu Xiaoshou was stunned and answered doubtfully, “Xu Xiaoshou?”

Elder Sang’s reminiscing was immediately cut off right then and there. His eyelid started twitching, and veins looked like they were about to pop out of his forehead he was so irked.

“Very well,” he said. “Very confident. So, you think you’re a genius?”

Xu Xiaoshou recalled his past experiences. He was confident that he would be able to break into Innate Level in less than a month, yet a lot of the others were still stuck at level eight or nine and had been for two to three years.

Even if he didn’t compare to those from the spirit palace, his rate of progress had to be exceedingly rare, if not something that only happened once in a lifetime.

Xu Xiaoshou took to becoming a little more polite. “Half a genius, I guess.”

“What do you think of Su Qianqian, then?”

Xu Xiaoshou was stunned. He knew of the legend of the little girl. Breaking into Innate Level at the age of 13, acquiring Innate Sword Will at the age of 14. An exception was made for her and she was given entrance into the Inner Yard after just a little over a month. She was as formidable as they come.

“One-tenth of a genius, then... There’s no comparison here.” It was quite a blow.

“You once said that you’d set your sights on the five regions. Where do you think Su Qianqian’s potential would stand when compared to those from the rest of the five regions?”

Xu Xiaoshou didn’t know how to answer that. “I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have called myself a genius. I apologize.”

Elder Sang was rather pleased. He turned around and said, “Her potential would actually still be a cut above the rest when compared to the rest of the continent.”

Xu Xiaoshou was relieved that that was the case. He'd been afraid the old fart would say something like "she's a pile of sh**," "she's trash," and the likes. That really would've been a blow like no other.

"But then again, just a cut above the rest. There are still many others with the same level of potential." Elder Sang's words were startling.

He then continued, "The best among the geniuses acknowledged by all from the five regions weren't all that far from you. That person was around just 30 years ago."

"Acknowledged by all?"

Xu Xiaoshou was perceptive enough to catch these key words. His eyes were still filled with disbelief. "Acknowledged by all in the continent, you say?" he thought.

"What a joke!"

"Stronger than those others in history then, eh?" he asked.

Elder Sang's lips parted, and he actually nodded. "He was indeed stronger than those others in history.

"The most formidable of geniuses acknowledged by all throughout the five regions, who hailed from the eastern region's Holy Sword Land. He, too, was a swordsman like you.

"He wandered for many years and began his journey on cultivation when he was 18. He managed to shock the world when he first picked up the sword.

"It took mere moments for him to reach Innate Level, and he became sword deity in three years, reaching a height that others dedicate their entire lives to obtain and never reach when he was only 21.

"Go out and look for any swordsman out there. I'd guarantee you 100 percent that there's none who couldn't tell you stories about him."

He took back his sad expression and, noting the shocked look on Xu Xiaoshou's face, he rectified his words. "99 percent."

Xu Xiaoshou was truly shocked. "You call that a genius?" he thought. "That's a frickin' monster, alright!

"Mere moments to reach Innate Level? Became a sword deity in three years?"

"Aren't there only seven sword deities throughout the entire continent? How did he manage to do that?"

He glanced at the red interface in his mind, feeling rather shaky. "Just look at that guy, eh?" he told it. "And you call yourself a System?"

He suppressed the utter shock he was feeling deep down and asked, "Who is this person?"

"The eighth sword deity, Bazhun'an."