

## Chapter 161: Afterwards

The Gold Giant stood in the middle of Senluo Woods, and even the tallest tree in the forest was barely able to reach the giant's waist.

Ridden with craters, the area was a complete mess and a terrible sight to behold.

Xu Xiaoshou had ceased his frenzied attacks because the target of his attacks, the grey mist, had disappeared, and only Mo Mo's face remained in his line of sight.

His golden hands held onto the young woman as a flicker of humanity gradually returned to his fierce crimson eyes.

"What is..."

Xu Xiaoshou slowly came to his senses as he stared at the bloodied person in his arms.

He had no idea what had just happened. Something had changed after communicating with that insane being of consciousness.

Destruction, devastation, utter violence...

These primal and violent urges that had taken over his mind had taken control over his actions as well.

Xu Xiaoshou struggled to connect what he was seeing with the battle that had occurred, and came to the easy conclusion that he'd sustained a life-threatening injury from the grey mist figure, and that that had awakened the Raging Giant.

He'd entered a berserk rage state and had somehow pummeled the grey mist figure into sheer nothingness.

"... .."

This Awakened Effect seemed quite violent and quite a hazard!

And it made him temporarily lose all sense of reason too.

Xu Xiaoshou was slightly displeased. This Passive Skill was hardly useful if he couldn't remain in control of his mind and lost all reason. What if he were to hurt the wrong person...?

Well, but it wasn't completely useless...

He stared at a crater and fell into deep contemplation.

Suddenly, Xu Xiaoshou was seized by a wave of exhaustion, and he felt his body tremble. The golden light enveloping him shattered, and he regained his ordinary human form once again and, with Mo Mo in his arms, began to plummet from the sky.

The two collapsed into a heap on the ground—Xu Xiaoshou from sheer exhaustion, and Mo Mo because she was unconscious... Hold on. Was she still alive?

He remembered the frenzied attacks he'd unleashed...

A that moment, the terrifying rejuvenating quality of Master Level Eternal Vitality made itself known. Theoretically speaking, Xu Xiaoshou should've experienced a prolonged state of exhaustion after that violent rage, but with the Passive Skill working in the background, he regained mobility within moments, and seconds after, felt like he was ready for another fight.

Without thinking, Xu Xiaoshou stuck his finger out in front of Mo Mo's nose to check if she was still breathing. Sure enough, she was beyond his help...

Hold on a second.

He thought he heard the sound of a faint heartbeat.

He leaned in. Mo Mo's chest appeared to be rising and falling ever so slightly, and he waited for a long while before he finally sensed the near-indiscernible thud of a heartbeat.

"She shouldn't have survived those attacks..."

Now that Xu Xiaoshou had shrunk back to his former size and was now sitting in the crater he'd created with his punch, he was struck by how terrifying his blows must have been while he was a giant.

With the effects of Raging Giant coupled with his Master Physique, he could kill a man with just a punch!

The smallest crater on the ground looked like the aftermath of a meteorite crash. Xu Xiaoshou stared at one of the craters, which spanned the length of a dozen feet and the height of a few meters...

He couldn't imagine what the grey mist figure had had to suffer during his momentary loss of reason.

Maybe it'd tried to beg for its life...

It didn't matter. Xu Xiaoshou couldn't remember anything.

Having regained more of his strength back, he hurriedly activated his spiritual source and took a look at Mo Mo's condition.

There was nothing he could do if she were dead.

Even though Mo Mo's body had only been a vessel for the grey mist figure, when it came down to a fight, you didn't care whom you were hitting as long as it was your enemy. Honestly, Xu Xiaoshou believed that he'd held back during his initial round of blows.

He didn't blame himself for what he'd done.

But he still had to try and save Mo Mo. He didn't mind extending a helping hand if he could.

The grey mist figure's array of strange spiritual techniques had truly broadened his horizons. These weren't just your every-day spiritual techniques, which meant the grey mist figure must be someone incredibly important.

Was it... dead?

Xu Xiaoshou highly doubted it.

Mo Mo wasn't dead, which meant the grey mist figure couldn't have died that easily. Perhaps the thrashing that it'd gotten had pummeled it into its original form and sent it back into hiding.

From the looks of Mo Mo's condition, she wasn't alive because she'd survived the final onslaught of attacks. She was alive because her sealing power had seemingly seized what little vitality she had left and bound it to her body so that she might await rescue.

As for her heroic rescuer...

Realization instantly dawned on Xu Xiaoshou. "That guy definitely knew what he was doing!"

If the grey mist figure had, in fact, survived, then it must've known that Xu Xiaoshou wouldn't kill Mo Mo on account of their knowing each other. It must've been confident that he would save her!

Should he save her?

Xu Xiaoshou hesitated. He wasn't sure if he would be rewarded for saving someone who was going to be trouble. In fact, he might just earn himself an enemy's retribution.

But to not save her...

Through Sense, he caught the Spirit Mark of Life lying on the ground. After some thought, Xu Xiaoshou grabbed the artifact and placed it on Mo Mo's stomach.

He knew his debts and paid them to whom they were owed. Mo Mo was a gentle soul. He believed that she wasn't in the same faction as that grey mist figure.

Xu Xiaoshou couldn't bring himself to sacrifice a good person in order to rid the world of an evil one...

Besides...

Xu Xiaoshou pointed at Mo Mo's right arm and yelled, "If you dare show your face around me again, I'll beat up you and send you right back!"

He didn't receive a response.

Xu Xiaoshou burst into laughter.

Since he'd sent that thing back once, he could do it again. Besides, that fellow must be seriously injured and probably wouldn't be out wreaking havoc anytime soon.

Xu Xiaoshou had no idea if it would be more powerful the next time it emerged, but he was confident that he wouldn't be at his current level when that happened.

"Losers don't deserve to be feared!" Xu Xiaoshou muttered to himself, feeling that this line sounded rather cool and imposing.

When Mo Mo regained her consciousness, he could try finding out more from her!

He prayed that she wouldn't fall into a coma ...

Xu Xiaoshou sympathetically shook his head. An old geezer's harassment might be fate's golden ticket to greater cultivation heights, but oftentimes it was a disaster waiting to happen.

If the grey mist figure harbored any ill intentions, Mo Mo wouldn't be able to stop him. In fact, she might remain trapped under his thumb forever.

Xu Xiaoshou thought about the red interface in the recesses of his mind...

The red interface had mercilessly slain the Celestial Dragon when it entered his Origin Court. Perhaps it, too, possessed a mind of its own.

Was his mind currently being controlled by someone else?

Xu Xiaoshou froze at the thought.

He recalled the series of encounters he'd had. At the time, they'd seemed like the result of destiny at work, the natural fruition of some other event and yet also the consequence of nothing in particular.

He laughed at himself. He must've been brainwashed by the "infinite cage" conspiracy theory that Elder Sang had shared with him. Unexpected coincidences didn't happen all the time, and neither did mind control.

He shook his head to clear his mind of these strange thoughts, then downed some red gold liquid that he dug out, healing himself completely.

After some thought, he fed Mo Mo some red gold liquid as well.

"How can you be so weak? Falling to your feet after a battle. You're hardly powerful at all..." Xu Xiaoshou said teasingly.

He energetically jumped to his feet, then stretched his limbs, his joints letting out a series of cracking sounds.

Then he inspected his energy reserve. He'd regained most of his spiritual source and was steadily progressing to the next cultivation level following his last battle.

Xu Xiaoshou smiled happily. Now that was unlimited battery life for you!

If another grey mist figure appeared, he could take it on no problem, he had so much energy left. He wasn't afraid at all!

He was truly getting more powerful...

"That's right. We're missing another person."

Xu Xiaoshou remembered Mu Zixi then. He'd forcibly thrown the young woman away when the Celestial Dragon fell.

She was such a fragile little thing. Had she crashed and died upon impact?

His Sense currently had an incredible range. After a brief search, Xu Xiaoshou was surprised to discover Mu Zixi a mere hundred meters away from him.

The trees in the vicinity were bare of leaves, which Xu Xiaoshou was to blame for, and he effortlessly caught sight of the young woman hanging off a branch.

Her legs were straddling a forked tree branch, which had prevented her from falling to the ground.

Her back was bent over backward and her head was hanging down. Her ponytails drooped lifelessly while drool streamed from her parted lips down into her eyes...

Muack. Muack.

She appeared to be asleep and was munching on something in her dreams. Her hand haphazardly swiped across her drooling mouth before limply falling away to sway gently in the breeze...

Xu Xiaoshou froze in disbelief.

He'd been fighting for his life, and here she was, napping on a tree!

What a free spirit!

Look at how she was sleeping...

Was she trying to hang herself?

### **Chapter 162: I Thought You Were My Friend**

Crack!

Sword energy smoothly swept down Mu Zixi's green dress before splitting the branch beneath her with a surgical slash. Her perch destroyed, the young woman instantly plummeted earthward.

Xu Xiaoshou crossed his arms and watched with mild interest as the young woman fell.

Boom.

An enormous red flower blossomed from the ground right before she crashed, and Mu Zixi bounced heavily on the red floral cushion before landing on her feet.

"Xu Xiaoshou, you didn't help me up!" the young woman yelled angrily before noticing that her face was slightly wet. She swiped at her cheek, then sniffed at her fingers. It was drool...

Her lovely face instantly flushed, and she whirled around to hastily clean herself up.

"Of course not. You were awake, so why would I help you up?" Xu Xiaoshou flashed a bright smile at Mu Zixi as he watched, bewildered, as her hands quickly moved to wipe off her face.

"Hah!"

Mu Zixi scoffed, and she couldn't help but turn around. "You threw me out and nearly got me killed. Shouldn't you have at least helped me down the tree?"

"Are we settling our debts now?" Xu Xiaoshou was tickled, and his voice was calm when he spoke next. "You should be thankful that I didn't use you as a human shield."

Mu Zixi was speechless.

Cursed, Passive Points +1.

The man was absolutely infuriating!

“Fine, that doesn’t count. I forgive you... but what’s your explanation for lying to me earlier?” Mu Zixi sulkily retorted.

Xu Xiaoshou was curious. “When did I lie to you?”

“You said that you would let me have the Spirit Mark of Life, but you gave me a Spirit Crystal instead.”

“Did I say that?”

“You didn’t...” Mu Zixi suddenly froze in the midst of her tantrum.

He was right. When did he say that?

Xu Xiaoshou openly and loudly denied her accusation. “I didn’t promise you that! You were the one who assumed that. Besides, you were the one who asked for the Spirit Mark of Life. I never said I would let you have it.”

“But how come you gave me a Spirit Crystal?” Mu Zixi glared with her lovely wide eyes. She sounded incredulous. “What was the meaning of that?”

“Was I supposed to let you have the Spirit Mark of Life just because you asked for it?” Xu Xiaoshou murmured to himself, then suddenly burst into laughter.

“I gave you the Spirit Crystal as a reward for throwing the Spirit Mark of Life out. As for your misassumptions...”

“Well, you can’t blame your stupidity on someone else, can you?”

Mu Zixi was rendered speechless.

Cursed, Passive Points +1, +1, +1, +1...

“My dear junior ...”

Xu Xiaoshou placed his hand on the young woman’s head and gently ruffled her hair. “Your good senior is trying to teach you a valuable lesson. You can’t trust anyone in this world. The only person you can trust is yourself.

“Do you understand?”

Mu Zixi scrunched up her nose, slapped Xu Xiaoshou’s hand away, then turned around and marched off.

“Hah! Spoiled brat!” Xu Xiaoshou giggled before suddenly realizing that something was amiss. The young woman looked as if she were being led away by the sudden scent of prey, and from the looks of where she was headed...

Mo Mo?

No!

It was the Spirit Mark of Life!

Realizing that her intentions had been seen through, Mu Zixi dropped all pretense and leapt into flight, but Xu Xiaoshou wasn’t going to let her get what she wanted.

He extended his Master Level Agility and grabbed the spirit mark before she could reach it.

Cursed, Passive Points +1.

Xu Xiaoshou instinctively covered his ears when he caught the dangerous glint that flashed across the young woman's eyes.

As expected, a deafening roar erupted the next second.

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

"That's mine!"

Mu Zixi pouted and glared furiously at the spirit mark in his hands.

Xu Xiaoshou was the picture of innocence. "Didn't you throw it away just now? You didn't want it. It's not like I had it easy trying to get myself a second-hand artifact."

"... .."

Cursed, Passive Points +1, +1, +1, +1...

A sudden series of coughs interrupted their bickering.

Mu Zixi's thunderous roar had failed to intimidate Xu Xiaoshou, but it had successfully awoken Mo Mo, who was lying on the ground.

Xu Xiaoshou was slightly startled. The Spirit Mark of Life was an incredible artifact indeed!

It had dragged Mu Zixi back from the gates of hell after spending a few moments in her arms, and now it had saved Mo Mo after merely resting briefly on her stomach.

His fingers tightened around the artifact.

Well, he supposed if he wanted to be particular about this, he couldn't attribute everything to the spirit mark's efforts. There seemed to be something odd about both these young women...

He wasn't surprised about Mo Mo, but... a strange glint flickered in Xu Xiaoshou's eyes as he stared at his junior.

Mu Zixi had been ambushed by the grey mist figure. He'd inspected the condition of her injury as soon as he could've and found her body repairing itself.

Even without the Spirit Mark of Life, it would only be a matter of time before she awakened again...

Mu Zixi had no idea what Xu Xiaoshou was thinking. She watched as the bloodied figure on the ground gradually regained consciousness, then stuck her hand out at Xu Xiaoshou.

"Lend me your sword."

"What do you want to do with it?"

Xu Xiaoshou froze momentarily before pulling out Hiding Pain. He clutched his sword before the young woman could unsheathe the blade.

Was she trying to get payback?

For the slap just now?

“Calm down now!” Xu Xiaoshou hastily put his sword away. “She wasn’t the one who slapped you!”

“Who else could it have been?” Mu Zixi retorted furiously.

She’d trusted Mo Mo. The both of them had pursued Xu Xiaoshou together. She hadn’t expected Mo Mo to sneak up on her unawares while she was defenseless.

If there was one thing she hated most in this world, it was having her trust betrayed!

Mo Mo watched the two bicker, then turned to look at the craters around her marring the ground. Seeming to have come to a certain realization, she cast her gaze downward.

She sighed bitterly. “Junior Mu is right. I shouldn’t be allowed to live.”

Xu Xiaoshou seized Mu Zixi’s agitated hands in a single-handed vice, then slapped his other hand over her lips. He turned to look at Mo Mo and frowned. Then, after a slight pause, he said, “I agree.”

“... ..”

Mo Mo felt a sudden tug in her chest, and her heart started to race much faster than a normal person’s.

“If you don’t intend to explain yourself,” Xu Xiaoshou added.

Mo Mo froze momentarily before lowering her head. “There’s nothing to explain.”

“You didn’t survive because of me. You survived because it decided to let you live...”

Xu Xiaoshou frowned, and he hooked his foot around Mu Zixi’s restless legs. Forced to stand on one foot, the young woman didn’t interrupt him again when he spoke next.

He kept his eyes on Mo Mo. “It’s still alive, isn’t it?”

Mo Mo knew who the young man before her was talking about, but she remained silent.

Xu Xiaoshou didn’t save Mo Mo so she could play dumb with him.

He would be leaving himself a ticking timebomb if he didn’t figure this out, and it might blow up in his face at the most inopportune moment.

He might as well let Mu Zixi loose and have her kill Mo Mo for him. That would save him a lot of trouble.

“Is it some kind of seal that you’re supposed to keep a secret?” he asked solemnly. “If not, I think it should be perfectly fine for you to tell me.

“If I hadn’t discovered the grey mist figure, you wanting to continue keeping it a secret would be understandable. But I beat it up quite badly, and it should be severely injured now...it probably can’t hear us now, can it?”

Mo Mo trembled slightly. She didn’t refute what Xu Xiaoshou said.

Xu Xiaoshou fell silent., deliberating how he could convince Mo Mo to open up to them.



It wasn't an easy feat to pry a person's deepest and darkest secret from their lips, and an ancient secret like the grey mist figure no less.

Xu Xiaoshou believed that the vast majority of humankind on this world were kindhearted souls.

Sometimes, people kept secrets, not because of any ulterior motives but simply because they didn't want to get someone else dragged into their mess.

Xu Xiaoshou had a feeling that Mo Mo's reason belonged to the latter group, and he knew how to get people like her to open up.

That was because he'd been one of them in the past.

Coercion would only make them clam up more. If you truly wanted someone to open their hearts to you, you had to put yourself in their shoes and allow your sincerity and empathy to be the driving force.

Basically, you had to pretend that you were a sorry soul yourself!

"Perhaps you wish to shoulder the burden alone and that's why you're not telling us," Xu Xiaoshou said gently and slowly. "But I've seen the grey mist figure..."

"It's going to remain a threat to my life if I don't figure out where it came from. I won't be able to sleep!

"Have you considered my feelings?"

Mo Mo stared at him, her eyes rippling with emotion. Then, she tore her gaze away from him.

Xu Xiaoshou's heart leapt when he caught her reaction, and his voice brimmed with earnestness when he spoke next. "Tell me. What exactly... is that grey mist?"

Mo Mo clenched her jaw, and her fists clutched her bloodied dress. She seemed torn between silence and spilling the truth.

Xu Xiaoshou noted her reluctance and finally decided to go for broke.

He hooked his ankle around Mu Zixi's foot and sent the young woman, who'd been struggling tirelessly in his arms, to the ground while falling to his knees at the same time. With his arms still tightly wrapped around Mu Zixi, Xu Xiaoshou stared Mo Mo straight in the eye, and his piercing gaze seemed to stare straight into her soul.

"I thought you were my friend!" he said, his voice brimming with sincerity and emotion.

Mo Mo couldn't take it anymore. Her eyes instantly turned teary. She was going to tell him everything.

She was startled when pain filled the young man's earnest eyes. Xu Xiaoshou yowled. "Ah!

"Were you a dog in your past life?" The moment was shattered by a furious yell.

Xu Xiaoshou completely lost it. He yanked the hand he had over Mu Zixi's mouth away. It was stained with blood.

How had this young woman managed to sink her teeth into a Master Physique?

His eyes were filled with disbelief.

Mu Zixi snorted. "Xu Xiaoshou, you have a friend! What a surprise!"

Ridiculed, Passive Points +1.

Mo Mo was speechless.

Her lips parted, then moved soundlessly for a brief moment before falling shut again.

### **Chapter 163: The Demon Beasts**

"Don't butt in!"

Xu Xiaoshou pushed Mu Zixi's cheeks up like he would a dog. He really wanted to just throw the Spirit Mark of Life out there. The girl would definitely chase after it without a moment's hesitation.

However, there was the question of whether she'd bother returning the mark to him afterward.

Mu Zixi glowered at Xu Xiaoshou and kept quiet altogether.

After all, she had enough emotional intelligence to tell that Xu Xiaoshou's previous words meant something out of the ordinary.

And when she linked them to her battle with Mo Mo, she came to remember things.

She figured that Mo Mo's secret probably had something to do with that gap in her memories.

The two of them looked at Mo Mo after they stopped fighting. No longer able to stand the two of them staring at her, she gave in.

Mo Mo weighed her words before saying, "That thing has always been in my right arm. There's no way anyone would know about it."

She cradled her right arm and sensed that the thing was still there. Fortunately for all of them, it was currently dormant.

However, Mo Mo still didn't dare to say much else.

Xu Xiaoshou didn't pursue the matter further, as he would overstep his bounds if he did so. Fishing out secrets... umm, no. Counseling required proper guidance, after all.

He then tactfully repeated one of Mo Mo's words. "It?"

"Yes." Mo Mo was apparently led on to say more. Her eyes flickered with memories. "To this day, I still have no idea what its identity is, but my Innate Elemental Power was awakened because of it."

This shocked Xu Xiaoshou.

Something capable of guiding the awakening of Innate Elemental Powers, and in such a specific direction? Just how powerful did something need to be to do something like that?

Even the likes of Elder Sang could only take his chances when the elder had given him a fire elemental power to train with when he was still at Acquired Level. And that had only amplified his chances of awakening fire elemental traits after he stepped into the Innate Level.

“Beings that are masters of the sealing element and known by name are few and far between,” Mu Zixi interjected before Xu Xiaoshou could continue trying to prompt Mo Mo. “What does Holy Emperor Fengtian have to do with you?”

“Holy Emperor Fengtian?” Mo Mo’s eyes flickered with confusion. “I don’t know.”

“You’re lying!” Mu Zixi said decidedly.

Xu Xiaoshou turned around and glowered at Mu Zixi. “What the hell is wrong with this girl?” he thought. “Who the hell interrogates people like that? What could you hope to get out of asking her such a question?”

“Go slow and steady, get it?”

Mu Zixi rolled her eyes and said, “Xu Xiaoshou, what’s that look supposed to mean?”

Xu Xiaoshou was speechless.

“Signals, little sister!” he thought. “Do you know what signals are?”

“Doofus!”

Then, to tell her to shut up and let him do the talking, Xu Xiaoshou simply gestured for her to zip it.

He turned around and continued gently, “Don’t mind her. That kind of person... umm, thing, I guess even if it told you its identity, you couldn’t afford to believe it wholesale.

“But, I’m sure you’ve been curious about who it is, and given how there’s no way that thing could keep an eye on you all the time, are you... sure that you’ve never looked into it?”

Mo Mo hesitated and nodded slowly. “I have.”

“Hmm?” Xu Xiaoshou then leaned forward, all ears.

He remembered how in his past life those devils in white garb back in the hospital had asked him stuff just like this.

Mu Zixi then pulled at his collar and asked exasperatedly, “What are you trying to do sticking so close?”

Xu Xiaoshou was exasperated.

“Oh my sweet little sister, could you just shut the f\*\*k up!?” he thought. “Is it really so excruciating for you to keep quiet for just a single moment?”

Mo Mo was rather amused by these two’s interactions and replied slowly, “I’ve looked into it, and the conclusion was a rather simple one: The Demon beast.”

Demon beast?

The siblings-in-training were stunned. That was a new term that they had never heard of before.

“What’s a Demon beast?” Mu Zixi asked, feeling curious.

Xu Xiaoshou didn’t stop her from talking this time, as he’d been about to ask the same question.

Mo Mo probed the presence in her right arm and confirmed that the thing was really dormant before continuing uneasily, "You both know that the Tianxuan Gate is a small world unto itself, right?"

Both of them nodded their heads.

"The Tianxuan Gate is a training ground that was created by the Tiansang Spirit Palace's authorities specifically for the disciples of the Inner Yard to train in," she began.

"However, outside the spirit palace and throughout the entire continent, extradimensional spaces like that are actually abundant."

Mo Mo paused for a bit, then continued, saying, "Most of those spaces were born naturally."

Xu Xiaoshou raised an eyebrow. He already knew about those extradimensional spaces, but he wondered what any of that had to do with the grey mist figure.

She then continued, "Most extradimensional spaces produce things not found throughout the continent, and those places are seen as treasured places.

"But, there is one type that isn't, as not only does it produce things, it also produces extradimensional beings that are humanlike.

"Extradimensional beings of low intellect know nothing but destruction, but among those of high intellect, some are just as intelligent as humans."

"The Demon beast, then?" Xu Xiaoshou then asked.

Mo Mo nodded. "Indeed. Demon beasts are very hard to come by. Sometimes not even an entire extradimensional space can produce one, but when they do..." She then smiled bitterly.

Xu Xiaoshou more or less understood what she meant.

So, the demon beast wouldn't be satisfied just going about wrecking things, then. Who wouldn't want to have a look at the world out there, eh?

But then again, how would one get out of the extradimensional space, and could one get out? Would they be detected by the sentinels guarding such spaces when getting out?

All these questions needed answering.

There might even be demon beasts that were seen as common extradimensional beings and were just cut down by said sentinels, seeing them as nothing more but things out to wreck things.

Under such an extremely harsh living environment... any capable of making it out of the extradimensional spaces undetected and come to the continent...

Boy, just how powerful both their intelligence and combat capacity indeed!

It took mere seconds for him to finish analyzing the matter and realize that there were holes in Mo Mo's story.

"According to what you've just said, you were still weak when you caught the attention of that demon beast, so how did you get into one such space, then?"

Mu Zixi eyed Mo Mo with just as much curiosity as Xu Xiaoshou.

Mo Mo smiled bitterly and asked instead, "You think only extradimensional spaces produce demon beasts, then?"

Xu Xiaoshou was baffled.

"That's right!" he thought.

"The fact that demon beasts are found in extradimensional spaces doesn't mean they're not found in our world!"

Instead, those who'd been able to escape a long time ago and evade being hunted down by the spiritual cultivators would be even more unimaginably powerful!

That thought sent shivers down his spine.

Running into the grey mist figure while he was still in the Tianxuan Gate had been quite the coincidence, which meant it was bound by the rules of this small world, which prevented it from bringing about powers that were higher than Master Level.

If he'd run into it outside the Tianxuan Gate, he definitely wouldn't have shirked from fighting it and would've given that pompous attitude he'd taken on after making his breakthrough.

And that attitude would've brought about his downfall.

Xu Xiaoshou then added yet another line to his "Tactics against Enemies."

Grey mist figure: An enemy far more powerful than you can imagine. Only by hiding like a coward can you live long!

Right, hide like a coward.

He committed the words to memory like this was the only thing in the world important to remember. It was imperative that he never do anything rash before he was 100 percent sure of what he was doing.

He'd been lucky this time...

He let out a long sigh inwardly, and voiced his puzzlement. "Given how powerful the demon beast is, it could bring about mass destruction, eh?"

"So why would those huge forces out there just let these things do as they pleased, then? Shouldn't they have joined hands to take it down or something?"

Mo Mo sighed and answered, "The Holy Divine Palace had been pursuing it the whole time, taking a kill-on-sight policy with extreme prejudice.

"However, this caused any surviving ones to become even more careful, and when it comes to the art of hiding, do you think any are more capable than these beings?"

Xu Xiaoshou immediately realized what was going on. "So one of these remnants targeted you, then?"

She unexpectedly shook her head. "No."

“I was probably invaded by a demon beast from an extradimensional space, making me a first-generation ‘demon beast host.’”

“...”

Xu Xiaoshou didn’t know what to say. “So we’re now back to the very beginning after all of that?” he thought.

Mu Zixi couldn’t help but ask, “First generation? So you’re saying that you actually entered an interdimensional space when you were still weak? How is that possible?”

Such spaces weren’t opened to everyone. Only those who were sufficiently powerful could gain access.

Mo Mo shook her head again. “I didn’t.”

Xu Xiaoshou and Mu Zixi were puzzled.

She’d never entered an interdimensional space and yet she was a first generation demon beast host? Was she messing with them?

“Have both of you forgotten that extradimensional space incident in Tiansang Prefecture several years ago?”

Mu Zixi looked baffled as she rummaged her memories.

Xu Xiaoshou spaced out, doing his best to recall what had happened, yet he was still unable to find any relevant information in the fragments of his faded memories.

It was Mo Mo’s turn to be speechless as she looked at the two of them.

What was with these two? Had they been living under a rock or something?

Had they really been nowhere else but the Tiansang Spirit Palace their whole lives? That event had rocked over a dozen cities and prefectures out there, it was so huge, and yet they knew nothing of it?

She was unable to take it any longer and immediately blurted:

“The White Cave!”

## **Chapter 164: Sealing Stone**

The White Cave?

Xu Xiaoshou and Mu Zixi glanced at each other at the same time, seeing nothing but awkwardness on each other’s faces.

It was obvious they didn’t know this term as well.

Exasperated, Mo Mo went on to explain, “The ‘White Cave’ is a huge extradimensional space somewhere in the Tiansang Prefecture. It’s the only one with demon beast appearances throughout those found in the over a dozen cities around, thus making it even more renowned.

“A spatial explosion took place several years ago, and the Holy Divine Palace was unable to get to it in time. Many extradimensional beings emerged, and there were massive casualties.”

“The commotion was eventually gotten out of control, and all the extradimensional beings were eradicated. They claimed there were no loose ends, but...”

She smiled bitterly, and her meaning was obvious.

Xu Xiaoshou completely understood what she meant and asked, “So you were around when it happened?”

“I was there the whole time...” There was a somewhat sad look in her eyes as she reminisced and continued, “Not everyone is born rich. Some are...”

“Well, I guess you could call this fate eh.” She wore a smile on her face and said nothing more.

“No one should stay near such spaces, but some... they really don’t want to stay in cities.

“Somewhere in the wild with a hut and about half a hectare of farming land, just enough to sustain one’s living. Such is the life of those who are not rich.”

“I wasn’t nearby back then...” She looked unwaveringly at Xu Xiaoshou.

“That was my home.”

Xu Xiaoshou was silent.

It was only then that he realized that no matter which world one was in, some truly had to give it their all just to stay alive.

Such was the case, and it applied to all—common folks and spiritual cultivators alike.

The difference was merely in how it was specifically done.

Mu Zixi felt rather pained hearing that. She opened her mouth to say something, but Mo Mo looked at her and said instead, “It’s all in the past.”

Both of them knew that Mo Mo didn’t want to say more about her past.

The answer of what would happen to common folks who were attacked by extradimensional beings was more than obvious.

Xu Xiaoshou stood up and said solemnly, “I, Xu Xiaoshou, am a man of my word, and I do not go about telling lies.”

“What?”

Puzzled, Mo Mo looked up, confused at what he was trying to get at.

Mu Zixi also didn’t understand what he was talking about, and looked at him like he were an idiot.

“I consider you a friend,” Xu Xiaoshou explained, then paused before continuing, “Should you need any help, just say the word.

“Coincidentally, I’m getting rather interested in the demon beasts...”

There was a look of yearning in his eyes.

To put it more precisely, he was actually interested in that grey mist figure's sealing powers rather than demon beasts as a whole.

Throughout the whole time he'd been a spiritual cultivator, the only thing that had been a real threat to his own passive skills was the element known as "sealing."

Even the likes of Elder Sang and the masked man had fallen more or less to his own passive skills.

This gave him an idea. If he were to find a way to break sealing power and even learn it, he'd probably be invincible.

He then thought about that red wheel. While the odds of getting any prizes from draws were getting increasingly lower, everything he'd gotten so far had been very useful to him.

For instance, Eternal Vitality, Cooking Expert, Agility...

The order and time at which they'd appeared made it seem like the red wheel was out to answer his needs, giving him whatever he lacked at the time.

He then recalled how that red interface in his Origin Court had gone about killing that dragon, and he was able to further confirm that the System indeed had a measure of intelligence.

While the System hadn't been all that supportive, it nonetheless knew his needs.

"Given that I was held back by the power of sealing this time, maybe I'll get something like 'Sealing Expertise' on my next draw," he thought.

"Ohohohoho..."

Xu Xiaoshou laughed, a smug grin on his face, at the thought before remembering that there were people around him, and immediately covered his mouth.

The girls looked at him with shocked looks on their faces.

He immediately changed the subject and looked at Mo Mo, his eyes full of sincerity. "Trust me. Come to me if you have any needs in the future. We'll keep in touch..."

He then paused, figuring that keeping in touch with Mo Mo would mean getting around that grey mist figure more often.

"Do I have a death wish or something?" he thought.

"Well, maybe not in touch. Pigeon messages would do as well." Xu Xiaoshou nodded solemnly, figuring that to be quite a good idea.

Mu Zixi then chuckled derisively behind him. "Xu Xiaoshou, didn't you just tell me that you can't trust anyone in this world but yourself?"

Xu Xiaoshou was baffled.

"Do you really have to be so petty?" he thought. "What the h\*ll are you doing picking up all those useless phrases, eh?"



“That’s something that your master taught,” he said. “I was just reiterating it, and I didn’t say that I agreed with it.”

Xu Xiaoshou flapped his sleeve and continued, “The most important thing in the world is friendship. Like they say, ‘there wouldn’t be a world without friends around.’”

Mu Zixi was speechless. “Alright, you win,” she thought. “Good stuff or bad stuff, you know it all, and there’s no refuting anything, eh?”

Cursed, Passive Points +1.

Xu Xiaoshou then realized something. “By the way, when will it wake up?”

“I don’t know, but it shouldn’t take long.” Mo Mo frowned. “At least three to five days. Longest would be a week.”

A week? Longest?

Xu Xiaoshou was feeling quite a headache coming on. Why wouldn’t it take three to five years for that thing to awaken instead given how bad it’d been trashed before?

Mo Mo’s expression was bitter as she continued, “This thing recovers very quickly. Even if it can no longer move like it did before, it should regain consciousness faster than expected.

“It’s probably already awake as we speak...”

Xu Xiaoshou felt his skin crawl, and he immediately took a couple of steps back.

“What kind of a monster is this thing?” he thought. “How does something so d\*mn insane exist in the world...”

“Don’t try to scare me,” he said.

“I’m telling the truth,” Mo Mo chuckled, as she’d already gotten used to it.

Xu Xiaoshou looking frightened was quite a rare sight.

She hadn’t completely lost consciousness after the grey mist figure took over her body. She’d simply watched from the sidelines as Xu Xiaoshou and the grey mist figure fought.

The images had been blurred and intermittent.

Yet, she nonetheless knew more or less how Xu Xiaoshou had slowly lured his enemy into his trap, eventually retaliating and killing the enemy with a massive blow.

To her, that golden giant was nothing less than stunning.

After getting out of combat mode, it was unimaginable to her that this young man would look so scared.

“Is there any way to solve this?” Xu Xiaoshou felt rather desperate. “I mean, the type that prevents it from awakening?”

“There is.”

Xu Xiaoshou wasn't actually hoping to get anything useful by asking this, and he totally didn't expect such a firm answer. He then asked further, feeling surprised, "What is it, then?"

Mo Mo then took out a white stone the size of a fist from her ring. He didn't sense any spiritual energy fluctuations from it.

"This is the 'Sealing Stone,'" she said. "One of the two missions that thing gave me when it told me to come here.

"The other one was the 'Spirit Mark of Life' that's in your possession."

Xu Xiaoshou was stunned. He took the stone and looked at it intently, but he didn't find anything out of the ordinary about it.

However, when he infused it with spiritual energy, that familiar sealing aura appeared at once.

Xu Xiaoshou willed, and the grey mist immediately went to wrap around Mu Zixi. She wobbled and almost fell to the ground.

"Xu Xiaoshou! What are you doing?"

The sudden attack immediately infuriated Mu Zixi, prompting her to throw a punch at Mo Mo.

Xu Xiaoshou reacted quick enough to catch her punch right there and then. He casually pushed her hand back, sending the girl reeling.

Cursed, Passive Points +1.

"Hehe, just trying things out. No need for the temper."

Mu Zixi glared at him nonetheless.

Cursed, Passive Points +1.

Xu Xiaoshou didn't bother with her any further and turned his gaze back to the "Sealing Stone," his eyes ablaze.

This was a treasure!

He'd just been thinking about mastering sealing power mere moments ago, thinking that it would probably make him invincible, and such a treasured piece had immediately come right to his door.

Xu Xiaoshou turned around and clasped his hands together. "Thank you."

"..."

Mo Mo was unable to react to it in time.

## **Chapter 165: A Bangle**

"Hehe, just kidding."

Seeing how irked the two girls were, Xu Xiaoshou immediately shrank back.

He tossed the white stone into the air and caught it. He'd never expected such a plain-looking stone to actually be a treasure comparable to that scabbard he'd found at the Black Waterfalls.

Counting the "Spirit Mark of Life" in his possession, this stone was the third treasure he'd encountered.

He figured there were probably twelve of such treasures throughout the Tianxuan Gate, and he'd already gotten his hands on a quarter of them. Given that they still had a day to spare, he figured he might just be able to get himself one more.

"So what can this thing do?" Xu Xiaoshou then asked. "Since it has sealing attributes, could it seal the grey mist thing?"

"Can't do," Mo Mo answered. "At most, that would only delay its awakening. Furthermore, to truly put this thing to use, one has to smelt it first."

She sighed. Where could one find a smelting pot in the Tianxuan Gate?

Even if she was able to bring that thing out with her by the time they could exit Tianxuan Gate, it wasn't like she could ask the elders of the spirit palace for help.

It was something she'd stolen, after all, so there was no way she could just go about announcing to others about her find.

As such, using the "Sealing Stone" against the grey mist figure was simply impossible.

The reason why she'd chosen to hand the stone over was simply that she wanted to give it to Xu Xiaoshou while that thing was still dormant.

It would be nothing short of a source of disaster if it were to stay in her hands.

"Smelt?" Xu Xiaoshou's interest was piqued as he recalled his own Infernal Heavenly Flames. "How do you go about doing that?"

Mo Mo shook her head and said, "Not something one could do here. Not only would doing so require special means, but one would also require flames of extremely high temperatures..."

She then immediately recalled the woods that Xu Xiaoshou had ended up burning when he was fighting the grey mist figure.

Crackle.

Xu Xiaoshou reached out his hand and started burning the stone with his Infernal Heavenly Flames.

"I don't dare to make claims, but when it comes to flames of high temperatures, I dare say that, besides for two people, no one could claim they can ignite flames of higher temperatures than mine."

Mu Zixi stuck her head out and said, "Two others. Shouldn't it be one?"

Whack!

Xu Xiaoshou immediately whacked her across the head and retorted, exasperated, "You forgot about your own master, eh?"

Mu Zixi said nothing.

Cursed, Passive Point +1.

Mo Mo stared at Xu Xiaoshou's palm for quite a while before finally scanning it with her spiritual sense. The feedback "scorching" was sent back to her.

There was so much joy in her eyes that her voice rose a pitch. "So you could really smelt this 'Sealing Stone?'"

"Indeed."

Xu Xiaoshou then continued, "But that special means you mentioned..."

He was feeling rather troubled. Given his utter lack of talents, such means wasn't something he could easily pick up.

"No need to worry about that. I'll do it." Mo Mo grinned and continued, "Just smelt that thing, and when you get it into shape, I'll be the one to do the sealing."

"That should do it." Xu Xiaoshou was pleased to hear this. The longer he could keep that thing sealed the better, as he was really afraid the grey mist figure would wake up as soon as they got out of Tianxuan Gate and come after his head.

But, well, even after they left, Elder Sang and the others would still be around, so that thing probably wouldn't dare.

However, a thief setting their sights on someone was still more terrifying than said thief actually making a move.

"Is there any way to solve the problem once and for all, like completely removing it from your body?" Xu Xiaoshou asked.

"I wish that were possible..." Mo Mo turned rather glum.

"Heh, well, sealing it is better than nothing. We'll deal with it one step at a time." Xu Xiaoshou wasn't going to get his hopes up. If it were actually that easy to get rid of, it would've been gotten rid of a long time ago.

He held the stone in his hand and asked. "So how do you want the process done?"

"Melt it into liquid form as best you can. I'll just infuse the sealing means into it before it becomes solid again," Mo Mo answered.

"Need my help with anything?" Mu Zixi butted in, feeling that if she kept quiet any longer, the two would forget that she was still there.

Xu Xiaoshou stepped back for a bit and took out his bathtub. He put it on the ground and said to the girl in a serious tone of voice, "There is something."

"What's that?" Mu Zixi flipped her pigtails, pleased to find that she was needed.

Xu Xiaoshou pressed on her head and said, "Stand aside and don't get in my way."

Arrghhh!

The girl was p\*ssed and flailed about in frustration.

It was too bad that Xu Xiaoshou had a longer reach and had had the foresight to press down on her head beforehand, preventing her from being able to get to him.

Cursed, Passive Points +1.

“Alright, quit it already.”

Xu Xiaoshou pushed her backward and put the bathtub between the two of them. He glared at the girl and then pointed at the stone in his hand, signaling to her that he needed to get to work.

Mu Zixi pouted and continued to mumble to herself under her breath. Xu Xiaoshou saw his Information Bar continue to refresh and felt the scene was rather amusing.

“Can we begin?” He looked at Mo Mo, who then nodded.

He immediately lit up a fireball and had it burn under the cauldron. Then, he threw the white stone into the bathtub.

Mo Mo checked the temperatures and commented, “Not high enough.”

“Well, the stone isn’t some kind of ingredient, and it isn’t that fragile, then...” Xu Xiaoshou thought as he immediately pulled back the external layer of flames, causing the temperature to instantly spike.

Crackle, crackle.

The white tub turned red hot in an instant, causing the air above the tub to warp, but the stone still didn’t melt.

“Well, well, isn’t this something indeed.”

He then flicked a fire seed into the tub, which caused the stone to tremble.

Swoop!

He flicked another inside.

Unable to take the heat any longer, the Sealing Stone cracked from the high temperatures.

Mo Mo was utterly surprised. She hadn’t expected the smelting process to be so easy, and she wondered just how long it’d taken to burn the stone before it cracked.

She glanced at Xu Xiaoshou, who looked to be completely at ease. It was apparent that he hadn’t even reached his limit.

“He truly has become powerful...”

She sighed inwardly, knowing that if it wasn’t for that grey mist figure, she’d be drastically behind Xu Xiaoshou right now, unable to even begin to keep up with his progress.

No.

“If it wasn’t for that thing, I never would’ve been able to enter the spirit palace, and I never would’ve gotten the chance to know him in the first place,” she thought.

Mu Zixi’s expression turned increasingly strange as she looked at how Mo Mo was looking at Xu Xiaoshou.

Hold on a second.

Cough, cough.

She covered her mouth and coughed a little.

Xu Xiaoshou looked up at her. “Do you have a sore throat?”

“...”

Cursed, Passive Points +1.

Xu Xiaoshou was baffled. This girl cursed at just about everything! He was being nice! What did he do wrong?

“Are you like the queen of cursing?” he thought.

Mu Zixi’s cough immediately made Mo Mo snap back to her senses. She pulled her gaze away from Xu Xiaoshou and turned her attention back to the stone.

“Turn down the heat. Spiritual source is siphoning. It’s about to liquefy.”

“Sure,” Xu Xiaoshou acknowledged, and fluidly controlled the entire smelting process.

After all, melting down a stone was a lot easier than doing alchemy. There was no need for him to consider the fusion of medicinal effects, and he didn’t need to think about how to mold them into pills or anything. All he needed to do was simply boil the thing inside as he would a soup.

“It’s a pity this isn’t a rib or something,” he thought. “I’d have dumped some herbs in it otherwise.”

The stone cracked before long and melted into white liquid.

Mo Mo twirled her fingers about and performed several seals, which she then infused inside the liquefied stone.

“Quick, get it into shape.” She sounded rather desperate.

Xu Xiaoshou was baffled. “What shape then?”

Mo Mo looked at her right arm, considering the stone’s volume. It wouldn’t be possible to make a huge cast out of it for sealing the grey mist figure.

“A bangle?”

“Huh?” Mu Zixi’s eyes widened when she heard this, and she looked at Mo Mo in disbelief.

She realized it sounded wrong as soon as she said it, as she was basically asking Xu Xiaoshou to make her a bracelet.

Wait, wouldn't that mean...

She blushed and glanced at Mu Zixi. "That's not what I meant."

Mu Zixi blinked and eyed Mo Mo. "What do mean by that?" she asked.

"..."

The girl waved her hand dismissively at Mo Mo. "You're overthinking things."

Mo Mo then let out a sigh of relief.

Cursed, Passive Points +1.

Xu Xiaoshou was baffled. For a while, he didn't know which one of them had cursed him, but he knew who was behind it the next moment.

Envied, Passive Points +1.

"Boy, the girl sure knows how to pretend like she doesn't care," he thought.

"What are you thinking of?" He shot Mu Zixi an exasperated look. "The stone is just that big. What else other than a bangle could you make out of it?"

"I didn't say anything!" Mu Zixi stood with her arms akimbo and pouted.

"I said nothing, and yet you picked on me instead?" she thought.

Talked back at, Passive Points +1.

Begrudged, Passive Points +1.

"Yeah, sure." Xu Xiaoshou didn't say anything more. "Sure, you said nothing. Don't go about having weird thoughts in the first place, and you won't have to cover anything up," he thought. "Begrudged, eh? That doesn't seem like your first. I'd like to see your notes if you dare to show them."

"You sure think of weird stuff for someone your age," Xu Xiaoshou jokingly chastised her.

Mu Zixi lowered her head, finding that she'd actually run out of comebacks.

Cursed, Passive Points +1, +1, +1, +1...

## **Chapter 166: The Suave and Gentle Big Brother**

Xu Xiaoshou turned his attention back to the liquefied stone.

A ring began to form in the tub before long.

He kept his eyes still while he scanned with his Sense, enabling him to confirm the circumference of Mo Mo's wrist.

A rather thick bangle began to take shape. Xu Xiaoshou frowned, not believing that that thing was his work.

"Too much..."

Thinking so, he siphoned some of the white liquid out, slimming the bangle down considerably. It was only then that he nodded with satisfaction.

He dispelled the flames and flicked his hand, sending the bangle flying.

The bangle was freshly forged and was still hot.

“Well, that’s what I feel holding it,” he thought. “Anyone else’s hands would be burned to a crisp.”

He sucked and took out the excessive heat from the bangle before looking at Mo Mo.

“Your hand, please.”

Mo Mo was stunned, and she was blushing hard, thinking that Xu Xiaoshou was about to put the bangle on her.

“I’ll just do it myself...”

“I’ll do it.”

An obtrusive noise caused Xu Xiaoshou to slowly turn his head around. Mu Zixi again...

“None of your business, girl.”

Mu Zixi puffed out her chest and said adamantly, “Man and woman aren’t supposed to just touch each other, get it?”

“Umm, well, that kind of makes sense...” It was only then that Xu Xiaoshou understood what was happening. He held the bangle in his hand, not knowing who he should hand the bangle to. His eyes darted between the two of them.

“I’ll just do it myself.” With a grin, Mo Mo took the bangle and put it on her wrist. “Thank you,” she said.

“Don’t mention it.”

Xu Xiaoshou narrowed his eyes and grinned, asking, “How’s it feel?”

Mo Mo was impressed. “Very good. The sealing was such a success that my powers are suppressed now.”

“Umm, I meant how’s the size...”

“...”

Her smile froze, and she turned the bangle on her wrist about a little before saying, “It fits nicely, thank you.”

“That’s what friends are for.”

Xu Xiaoshou was pleased to find that she liked the bangle. He’d even gone out of his way to use his spiritual source as a sword to carve some patterns into it.

With the carvings on it, the milky white bangle looked rather nice.

“I kept a little bit of liquefied stone for myself. I hope you don’t mind.”



Xu Xiaoshou looked at the remaining liquefied stone in the tub and explained, "If I'd dumped all of it into the bangle, it would've made it look super thick and ugly."

"It's fine."

Mo Mo didn't mind at all. In the beginning, she'd simply thought of giving the stone away, so just getting a bangle out of it in return was quite a bargain.

Furthermore, that bangle had some other significance to it...

Mu Zixi pouted as she watched Mo Mo play with the bangle around her wrist, feeling very jealous deep down.

"Xu Xiaoshou, I want a bangle too!"

Xu Xiaoshou rolled his eyes. "What do you want a bangle for? It's not like you're possessed by a demon beast," he said without turning around, going about shaping the remaining liquid in the tub.

The remaining liquefied stone wasn't much, but it was enough to make a ring nonetheless.

He'd been able to invoke the sealing energies from that white stone by siphoning spiritual source into it, and he figured that he might still be able to do the same after making a ring out of it.

So long as he was still able to invoke the sealing energies, be it in stone form or ring form, the item would definitely come in handy.

Mu Zixi thought for a bit and figured that she really had no reason to ask for anything, but that couldn't do. That brother of hers had no reason to give Mo Mo a bangle and give her—the sister—nothing.

"I don't care. I want it."

She glared at him and took note of the remaining white liquid in the tub. She then said, "By the way, you owe me a greeting gift."

Xu Xiaoshou remained unfazed and focused his attention in the tub. The ring started to take shape before long.

He then went about meticulously carving and finally polished it to the point where he considered it perfect.

"No bangle, but there's a ring. You want it?" Xu Xiaoshou said in jest and flicked the ring up, finding it light. It would make a good accessory.

Mu Zixi's ears burned. A ring? Well...

"Isn't this above a bangle?" she thought.

"I want it!"

Xu Xiaoshou was speechless.

"Man, you actually dared to ask, then?" he thought. "In your dreams!"

Xu Xiaoshou suppressed his twitching brow and asked in a very gentle manner, "How about I put it on your finger, then?"

"P-Put it on my finger?" Mu Zixi thought.

Seeing that Xu Xiaoshou was looking very, very gentle, she felt her chest start to pound very, very hard.

She figured that if this young man were to just behave himself, just that face of his alone would make him extremely attractive.

And he'd look just like the big brother-in-training she'd dreamt of meeting when she first became that elder's disciple.

Suave, gentle... someone who would just come and pat her head, even if she'd done something wrong, and just tell her in a doting manner that everything would be alright, as he was still around.

"Arrrgggghhhh. I'm gonna die!" she thought.

Mu Zixi slowly closed her eyes, her face still head, and answered almost inaudibly, "Okay."

Xu Xiaoshou struggled to keep his eyelids from twitching. How dare you!

He lowered his voice, and, trying to sound as gentle as possible, mimicked Mu Zixi's tone, saying, "Gimme your little hand, then."

"Huh?" she thought. "Gimme your little hand?"

Mu Zixi felt like she were about to pass out. She extended her trembling hand and heard the man before her say, somewhat hesitatingly, "Hmm, which finger should I put it on?"

"No, not this right now..." she thought, resisting the impulse. Finally, rationality prevailed over her emotions, and she put her ring finger down.

"An-Any finger would do..."

Before she finished speaking, she felt something warm come over her fingertips, and she shuddered like she'd been electrocuted as she felt something being put on her index finger.

The seconds felt like years.

Time passed, and the ring was finally put on her finger. Unable to take the embarrassment anymore, she turned around, covering her face.

"Thank you," she said in a nearly inaudible voice.

"So hot!" she thought. "It's scorching!"

"Why is my face so hot? Cool down, quick!"

"You're welcome," she heard Xu Xiaoshou say behind her, but...

He sounded rather far away.

Dumbfounded, Mu Zixi turned to find her brother-in-training actually hovering high above.

Xu Xiaoshou nodded at her and flashed a beaming smile. "Take a look at how it fits."

Her heart thumped again, and she pulled her gaze away from her senior brother and looked at the ring on her finger.

Such a beautiful ring. The carving, the color...

"Huh?" she thought. "Why is it gold?"

Mu Zixi was stunned, her eyes filled with disbelief. Her pupils gradually dilated.

She probed with her spiritual sense and found that there was quite a space inside the ring, and that there was a can of honey in it.

"A-A space ring?"

Feeling like the world had collapsed on top of her, she immediately started fuming.

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

Her roar seemed to pierce the heavens, and caused the entire Senluo Woods to echo and tremble.

Cursed, Passive Points +1, +1, +1, +1...

Xu Xiaoshou continued looking suave and gentle while hovering midair. He was sure that Mu Zixi wouldn't be able to hit him from such a distance, which was why he maintained his demeanor.

"Do you like your present? I picked it specifically for you. That was my reward for becoming the champion of the Wind and Cloud contest back then!"

Mu Zixi took a deep breath. She was so angry she felt like she could puke blood.

Seeming to recall something, Xu Xiaoshou snapped his fingers. "Oh, right. There's a story to the ring."

"What story?" Mu Zixi was baffled.

"A champion's ring... does that mean it has some special sentimental value to Xu Xiaoshou?" she thought.

She started to feel somewhat better.

Xu Xiaoshou flapped his sleeve and turned to look at the sky in the distance before beginning his story.

"Back in my hometown, there's a type of pigeon called the pink pigeon..."

Mo Mo was immediately baffled. Why was he bringing up pink pigeons all of a sudden?

Mu Zixi was starting to get a bad feeling about things.

Xu Xiaoshou then continued with his story. "A lot of people like them, but when people who keep pink pigeons become more and more common, you start to see them everywhere.

"Sometimes, back in my hometown, some people would mistake someone else's pigeon for their own and end up feeding the wrong pigeon..."

He then looked at that sister of his on the ground and paused for a bit before continuing. "In order to prevent such mistakes, owners started putting rings on their pink pigeons to prevent them from mistaking someone else's pet for their own.

"So you get it now?"

He fixed his eyes on the little girl.

Mu Zixi lowered her head, her pigtails drooping. She was actually keeping quiet.

Xu Xiaoshou checked his Information Bar.

"Weird," he thought. "Why isn't there like a torrent of curses flooding the information bar?"

He turned around to find that little sister squatting on the ground. What was she doing?

Xu Xiaoshou started shaking with fury at what he saw.

Mu Zixi looked up abruptly, her eyes completely bloodshot.

She lifted her hands from the ground, and tightly packed seeds shot out of the earth, immediately turning into towering ancient trees, and rushed at him.

Every single tree seemed to be crimson and was swelling as if they were about to explode soon enough.

Tens of thousands of them were all over the place.

Holy sh\*\*!

Xu Xiaoshou's face turned ashen.

"You go this far over a story? Can't you just play nice?" he thought.

"Just kidding..." he said.

"Don't do anything rash!"

## **Chapter 167: They're Here**

Back at Tiansang Spirit Palace.

The entrance of the Council Hall in the Inner Yard.

The pagoda tree, as always, was saying leisurely in the breeze, but right underneath it was a densely packed group of people dressed in black. All wore serious expressions on their faces.

Zhao Xidong stood next to the elders as he held the "Spirit Curtain Wheel of the 12 Pearls" in his hand.

The evening sunlight shone on all of them, and that piece of treasure looked rather dilapidated at the moment. Three pearls were dimmed, and there was a massive gash on the bottom piece.

For everyone, this confirmed that the incident in the Tianxuan Gate had actually happened and that there were probably some extraordinary people in there, as the wheel wouldn't have such a gash on it otherwise.

It was a sign that the world was about to collapse.

A man in black stepped forward and bowed. "Sir, the personnel are all accounted for."

Ye Xiaotian hovered midair, yet he was gazing at something far away in the distance.

After hearing the report, he simply nodded, looking completely unfazed.

Zhao Xidong was all flustered, and he wondered why the elders still weren't opening the gate. Then he wondered if they would only do so when the world in there finally collapsed.

He then nudged Elder Qiao with his elbow.

He was a nobody, so it would obviously be better for Elder Qiao to say something instead.

Exasperated, Qiao Qianzhi tilted his head and asked, "Should we open the place up?"

Ye Xiaotian slowly shook his head.

"We wait."

The wind blew, and the tree swayed again. None of the men in black below dared to even make a noise.

Paying no mind to the rules, Qiao Qianzhi blurted out, "We wait? Three treasures were taken away in just two days. If we wait any longer, the Tianxuan Gate will really collapse."

If four of the 12 treasures stabilizing the world were lost, the Tianxuan Gate would become extremely unstable, and if the place collapsed, the Inner Yard would be the first to take the brunt, and the incident would probably bring about massive casualties.

Ye Xiaotian's eyes never left the sky as he said, "How are the preparations on the other side?"

"All done," Qiao Qianzhi answered. "Xiao is keeping watch now. If they dare to show up again, we'll absolutely give them their money's worth this time."

"Yeah."

The place fell silent again.

The wait...

Seemed like it would never end.

Crack!

Under everyone's gaze, the protective barrier of the fourth pearl on that Spirit Curtain Wheel of the 12 Pearls broke, causing the pearl to flicker.

Zhao Xidong immediately almost cursed.

This...

Someone found the seal of the fourth treasure stabilizing the world?

He shot a look at Elder Qiao, and his meaning was obvious: are we going to wait any longer?

Qiao Qianzhi didn't ask a question this time. He merely frowned as he looked at the silver-haired figure nearby.

Ye Xiaotian definitely knew how urgent the situation currently was, yet he was still gazing at the sky...

What was he looking at?

The Holy Servant?

"They're here," Ye Xiaotian said all of a sudden, causing all of the law enforcers before the hall to straighten up and wonder if it was time for action.

Zhao Xidong was rather baffled. Why had these people shown before the spy had yet to come out?

These people must not be afraid of death if they dared to come all the way here just to pick up one of their own.

While this was the elders' judgment, Zhao Xidong actually refused to believe any of it. He refused to believe that the one they called the "Holy Servant" would show up.

They were all massively prepared for it, after all, and were just waiting for those people to fall into the trap.

"I'll head out for a bit," Ye Xiaotian quipped, and disappeared from the front of the hall.

Everyone was stunned and then felt relieved.

So, it wasn't the Holy Servant that had shown up, but some kind of reinforcements, then?

...

Compared to the situation in the Inner Yard, where everyone was on edge and things were tense, the Outer Yard looked very lively under the setting sun.

The newly recruited disciples of the spirit palace had apparently gotten used to the place over the past several days. Be it Goose Lake, the woods, the pavilions... everywhere was filled with training future spiritual cultivators.

"Hey, look, someone's flying!"

A shout alerted everyone around, tugging the heartstrings of many. All of them stopped in the middle of their training and curiously looked up.

Any from the Outer Yard capable of flight was considered rare—a handful among thousands—so much so that such people could be counted with just one hand.

"Flying huh... that should be someone at Innate Level, then. Boy, I'm envious. I have yet to even get to level one, man."

"Hehe, shows that you really know nothing. Those at level 10 are actually already capable of flight."

"You kidding me? I've been in class for the past two days, you know."

“Heh, you’ve been living under a rock, then. Don’t you know anything about the legend of the Outer Yard?”

“Huh?”

“Rumor has it that Big Brother Xu of the Outer Yard was able to fly by riding a sword while still at the Acquired Level. He cut someone at Innate Level down and even killed several people with just a sneeze.”

“Oh, Big Brother Xu? I’ve heard of him but... umm, can he still be considered a human?”

“Oh? What do you mean?”

“Well, rumor has it that he has like three heads and six arms... or is it four pairs of wings and two heads?”

“...”

“For real?”

“Sure as h\*ll more real than gold.”

...

The person who was flying in the air was getting increasingly closer. They soon stopped above the spirit palace, seemingly having trouble getting inside.

Everyone started to feel restless when they saw that there were three people on that cloud instead of just one.

With the exception of that middle-aged man with silver hair who was taking the lead, the man and woman behind him looked as though they were merely several years older than the disciples below.

“Wait, are those two at Innate Level as well?”

“How could that be? Definitely just someone following the elder. How could someone so young already be able to fly?”

“Yeah, if they could fly, what would that make us? Trash?”

Everyone checked their energy reserves, most of them discovering that they didn’t even have such a thing to check on yet.

The very next second, they all saw the cloud split into three as the group remained hovering in midair.

Everyone below was speechless.

This was a blow to all of them.

The young man and woman up there were actually already at Innate Level despite being around the same age as those below.

All of them wondered who those three were, given how terrifying their powers seemed to be.

At that moment, a fissure was seen in midair, and a young man with silver hair slowly emerged from it.

“Holy sh\*\*, splitting space?”

“Who is that young man from? Did he like begin training when he was still in the womb?”

“Shut up. That’s the dean from the Inner Yard!”

“...”

Ye Xiaotian glanced at the noisy crowd below, then extended his hand to open up the great array of the spirit palace and let the visitors in.

“Well, this is rather awkward, Hallmaster Jiang.”

Jiang Bianyan touched his silver hair and said with a beaming smile, “Oh, you’re being polite. The spirit palace truly is full of talented people and is very lively. This is a sign of prosperity.”

Ye Xiaotian then looked at the young man and woman behind him and said quietly, “As far as capable people are concerned, which cultivation force throughout the continent could compare with the Holy Divine Palace indeed?”

“Hahaha, Palace Lord Ye, you really do flatter us. We’re but of the side hall. We’re nothing worth mentioning.”

“You’re being too humble, Hallmaster Jiang. Even those from the side hall are somewhat more powerful than the other forces.”

The continuous straightforward compliments caused the young man standing at the back to feel rather proud, and his eyes showed a touch of pride.

It was indeed true that someone the Holy Divine Palace, even just from the side hall, was considerably stronger than those of the other forces found throughout the Shengshen Continent.

The woman was wearing a veil over her face, obscuring her expression, yet one could tell that she was unfazed from the look in her eyes.

Ye Xiaotian nodded inwardly. One was trash, but the other wasn’t that bad. The side hall was...

Not bad indeed.

But...

What was he doing bringing two disciples with him?

Did they have a death wish or something?

He looked further behind Hallmaster Jiang, but saw no one else.

“Palace Lord Ye, are we going to talk more inside?” Jiang Bianyan smiled and asked. If anyone else had stayed talking to him at their doorstep, he would have just left a long time ago.

Ye Xiaotian raised his eyebrows and figured that the line meant that no one else would be coming.

“So there are only the three of you, then?”



## Chapter 168: Cheng Xingchu and Yu Zhiwen

Jiang Bianyan knew what Ye Xiaotian met, but he still asked in return, without making it obvious that he knew, "Yes, is there anything wrong?"

If they hadn't requested assistance from the spirit palace, and if they hadn't witnessed the rise of the Tiansang Spirit Palace over the last several decades, Jiang Bianyan might not have decided to show up personally.

No matter how well-written the letter for assistance, having several elders show up to help was quite the turnout.

Wasn't it enough for him to come to her personally to keep things in check?

Ye Xiaotian narrowed his eyes. He was really getting somewhat angry.

Holy Servant!

It was the Holy Servant they were talking about here!

Did the people at the Holy Divine Palace lose their minds? Was this situation something they could afford to take lightly?

He'd made it very, very clear in the letter that it might very possibly be the leader of the "Holy Servant" that they were dealing with here, and that more than one of them might possibly show up the next time.

But those people weren't idiots. They most likely wouldn't expect to just walk right in without running into a trap. They would definitely come prepared.

But...

Just a hall master of a side hall had come? And two kids who knew nothing?

"You people really think that those people are here to play?" he thought. "You people really think that this is all fun and games, huh?"

Ye Xiaotian clenched his fists. This would've been a great opportunity to apprehend those people once and for all, which was something the Holy Divine Palace had been looking forward to as well, as that letter wouldn't have reached them otherwise.

But now...

Ye Xiaotian's heart sank to rock bottom, and, as he recalled what Elder Sang had said, he wondered if the Holy Divine Palace had really been leaving the "Holy Servant" to their devices.

He wondered if what Elder Sang said had been true all along.

He fell silent for a while and, as he hardly bothered to conceal his feelings, everyone could see that he was in a bad mood.

That young man standing behind the hall master was so furious that his eyes were ablaze with anger. He had never seen anyone dare to treat those from the Holy Divine Palace like that, even if that someone was the silver-haired young man before him who was palace lord of a spirit palace.

“Palace Lord Ye, looks like you’re thinking that the Holy Divine Palace isn’t sending people important enough, then?” His voice sounded rather cold.

Jiang Bianyan’s heart sank quite a bit.

“Is this brat really getting too comfortable in the Holy Divine Palace? How dare he say something like that here?”

That guy isn’t just some ordinary person at the Sovereign level here. Even if he truly is at the Sovereign level, do you really think that you, someone at Innate level, could talk back to someone so formidable and who had truly touched the Great Path?”

After what the young man said, the situation became tense.

Jiang Bianyan was about to say something when Ye Xiaotian raised his hand to stop the hall master. He then looked at him interestedly.

“What’s your name?”

A terrifying pressure washed all over the young man, causing him to shudder and almost fall off of the cloud. He felt himself break out in a cold sweat.

However, he managed to steady himself and realized that it might be some kind of trial from a senior. After all, he had experienced such situations quite a lot of times back in the Holy Divine Palace.

“Cheng Xingchu.” There was a determined look in the young man’s eyes.

“Cheng Xingchu...”

Ye Xiaotian tilted his head as he mulled over the name. He then looked at the young man again and focused.

Booom!

The space around them collapsed, and the cloud dispersed.

Cheng Xingchu’s body went limp, and he immediately lost mobility and fell from the sky, flailing like a dog.

Arrgghhh!

His terrified shouts could be heard throughout the heavens.

“No!” Shocked, Jiang Bianyan made his move right away. It was only when he extended his hand that he found himself someplace hundreds of meters away.

The power of space...

His pupils contracted, as he seemed to have realized something.

Ye Xiaotian's power was an elemental power that could almost make him invincible among his peers of the same level, and Ye Xiaotian already had a record of killing enemies at a higher level than him.

That young man with silver hair wasn't at Sovereign level for nothing. He had truly built up a reputation for himself through his winning track record in combat.

Cheng Xingchu felt as if there was a black hole sucking at him from below. He was utterly unable to control his movements.

He lowered his head.

He found that there was really a black hole underneath him...

"Sh\*\*!" he thought. "What kind of f\*\*king test is this? You're out to kill me!"

"Are you nuts? You dare to kill me? Do you know who I am?" Cheng Xingchu shouted in panic, yet to his despair, he discovered that he just kept falling.

Voom!

Darkness swallowed everything before his eyes.

I'm dead?

His eyelids twitched as opened his eyes.

Everything was light again, and the sky remained yellowish, but there was a beauty to it all.

His vision came into focus, he saw that Jiang Bianyan was right before him. That young woman with a deadpan look was still standing beside him. Ye Xiaotian, who looked like he was about to kill someone, remained looking at him.

"..."

Is this a dream?

Cheng Xingchu wanted nothing more at the moment than for everything to be nothing more than a dream. However, the jeers and laughter beneath him reminded him that his image was ruined...

"Hahahaha, look at that, you guys. He's about to pee himself, eh?"

"Oh please, he's still a guest and someone at Innate... Hahahahaha, d\*mn it, I can't hold it any longer. That guy is at Innate level?"

"Where did that young master come from? Has he got to his weaning stage already? Oh gosh, he was scary!"

"Hey, you dare to kill me? Do you know who I am?"

"..."

Cheng Xingchu looked down and saw faint marks on his pants. It was too bad he didn't have a blade in his hand. If he did, he would have rushed below and killed all those ants at Acquired Level.

His spiritual source dried up the liquids without making it obvious. He then took a deep breath. "I..."

"The grown-ups are talking here, so you kids better just keep to yourselves," Ye Xiaotian said causally.

He saw that the eyes that seemed to have harbored a blackhole focused again, and he almost passed out. He felt that he might have nightmares from here on out.

"D\*mn you, Tiansang Spirit Palace," he thought. "Just you wait!

"When I got more powerful, I shall..."

"What an embarrassment."

A dismissive, cold female voice rang out, and Cheng Xingchu's mouth twitched. His throat quivered, and yet he found that he was still unable to say anything.

Ye Xiaotian turned his attention to the young woman.

Her veil covered her face, and her eyes were mesmerizing. Her powers... were nothing to shout about.

He then smiled at Jiang Bianyan and commented, "The disciples of the Holy Divine Palace really are something else indeed, daring to shout out loud even when caught in a pinch and even remaining calm and collected when facing something out of their league. Disciples like that are indeed hard to come by."

"The way I see it, Cheng Xingchu has what it takes to become the holy emperor. Best to foster him to the best of your ability, Hallmaster Jiang."

The corner of Jiang Bianyan's mouth twitched.

Ye Xiaotian then extended his hand and then uttered a single word:

"Please."

Even though Ye Xiaotian was simply pointing with his finger, judging by his words, he was clearly telling Jiang Bianyan to get lost. Jiang Bianyan was able to tell that much.

He was indeed fuming deep down as well.

"Ye Xiaotian really is too much," he thought. "I'm still a hall master of a side hall of the Holy Divine Palace. Couldn't he just give me face for a bit?"

"Scaring Cheng Xingchu until he peed in front of everyone. That's an insult to me, Jiang Bianyan, all the same. I was the one who brought the kid out, after all!"

He really wanted to just ignore the request for help and leave the spirit palace to their devices.

However, Jiang Bianyan hesitated when he realized that he still had an important job to do...

"Please."

He wore a pleasant expression on his face as he moved in the direction in which Ye Xiaotian was pointing.

Ye Xiaotian was dumbfounded. He wondered if he hadn't been going far enough, or that the other party was just so good at putting up pretenses.

Please?

"Well then, let's go..." He shot a glance at the young man and woman behind Jiang Bianyan before heading off to the front to lead the way.

Cheng Xingchu was dumbfounded. He didn't understand why they were heading inside despite the fact that the host was almost literally telling them to get lost.

He wondered if the hall master has lost his mind.

The young woman at his side flew past him. He then looked at the noisy crowd below and felt disgusted.

He didn't want to stay in such a disgusting place for a moment longer.

"Ms. Zhiwen, wait for me!"

...

The Outer Yard was quiet again. The arrival of the three guests dressed in white became gossip material, and it also boosted the morale of those who had just joined the spirit palace.

It was the veterans who had been in the spirit palace for some time who ended up spacing out while looking at the sky.

"The Holy Divine Palace, eh?"

"What are those people doing here in the spirit palace? Is something serious about to happen?"

...

Duk duk!

The broken willow next to Goose Lake grew anew, and a young man in plain clothes walked under its shadows. The man was holding a stick, and his eyes were closed, making him look like a blind man.

His head was slightly lowered. A goose in the lake flapped its wings and struck the water with its beak.

The fish glided about, evading the fatal strike.

The blind young man reached out his hand, seemingly wanting to touch the water, yet he only managed to touch the white jade fence... If he'd managed to touch the water, he would have dropped into the lake altogether.

The last sliver of the setting sun was gone, and the night wind came.

"Summer has ended, and the breeze of early autumn is here... Yu Zhiwen..."

"You're here, eh?..."

"Yo!" A woman dressed in skimpy clothing walked over to him from not too far away and immediately rested her hand on his shoulder.

“So, you’re from the same batch as us, then? How come I’ve never seen you before?”

The blind young man turned his eyes to the side, seemingly looking at the hand on his shoulder.

He then turned his head around. A face full of ugly scars appeared right before the young woman who had walked over to talk to him.

Thump!

The young woman was frightened enough to drop to the ground. Her eyes were filled with terror.

“Y-Y-You...”

“Excuse me!”

She then bolted.

### **Chapter 169: The Nightmare has Come True?**

[The Council Hall, Inner Yard]

As Jiang Bianyan sipped his cup of hot tea, his thoughts were somewhere else.

It wasn’t until he had gotten into the Inner Yard that he’d discovered the tense atmosphere of the place, where everyone was ready to strike out at anything. It differed totally from the Outer Yard, and the two locations felt like two different worlds to him.

He frowned as he shot a glance at the men-in-black under the tree by the old pagoda next to the entrance. “Palace Lord Ye, is there a need to have such a conspicuous presence?” he asked.

Jiang Bianyan simply didn’t believe that they positioned there those people for him. There was only one possibility—the “Holy Servant” mentioned in the letter had requested help.

“Is there such a need, you ask?”

Ye Xiaotian put his cup of tea down and replied, “The three of you have come a long way, so I’ve arranged for your lodging for the duration of your time here.”

He didn’t even bother explaining.

“Conspicuous presence, you say?”

“I wish we could have a more prominent presence!”

Jiang Bianyan touched his grey sideburns and wore a rather irked expression.

He had not seen Ye Xiaotian bear any semblance of a pleasant disposition ever since he entered the spirit palace. He cursed to himself—God damn it!

Qiao Qianzhi noted the prevailing tension and elaborated. “Hall Master Jiang, there are some minor incidents in there that need to be attended to. I beg your forgiveness for not being a good enough host.”

Despite his more amicable tone and choice of words, his persuasions were identical to that of Ye Xiaotian.

“The Tianxuan Gate is in great peril, and it would have been better if they had sent us a more formidable force.”

Yet there was only one who was considered formidable enough in their group.

But it didn't matter—it would not do them any good getting on their bad side. He only hoped they would stay out of their way, at least.

Jiang Bianyan could tell that the two officials were desperate. Curious to find out more, he asked, “minor accidents?”

Qiao Qianzhi looked at the spirit wheel in Zhao Xidong's hand. Four pearls were flickering, and they looked like they would be snuffed out at any moment.

“Just some private matter.”

Cheng Xingchu was already fuming by then, on account of how these officials were being evasive with them, although it was they who asked for help to begin with. In his view, this was nothing less than an act of contempt to the three of them.

He was just about to speak when he caught sight of a silver-haired young man on the main seat, and it caused him to swallow what he was about to say.

“If I'm not mistaken, that would be the ‘Spirit Curtain Wheel of the 12 Pearls,’ am I correct?” An icy, calm female voice filtered from his side.

Qiao Qianzhi looked at her and answered, “That is correct.”

“The wheel is spiritually tied to the Tianxuan Gate, a treasured realm of the spirit palace. Judging from what I see, I suppose there have been some incidents at the Tianxuan Gate?”

The three of them were quite taken aback, noting how perceptive the girl was. Such a measure of knowledge and judgment was not something common among most folk.

Zhao Xidong cast his eyes upon the girl's veil. He was instantly enraptured by the mere sight of her eyes and wondered how he would react if the veil was removed.

“May I...”

“Yu Zhiwen,” she replied, and there was a slight crease seen on the veil as she smiled.

“Good name, indeed.”

Those alluring eyes of hers enraptured Zhao Xidong right away. Having just broken up with his girl recently, he simply could not resist her charm and stuttered.

“M-My name is Zhao Don...”

“Umm, no, Zhao Xidong.”

He puffed his chest, holding his head high, and said, “A pleasure to meet you.”

He put the spirit wheel aside and rubbed his hand on his clothes nervously before extending his hand.

However, the girl had no intentions of shaking hands with him at all.

Zhao Xidong quickly directed his hand to Cheng Xingchu. His movement was so fluid that it took no more than half a second and barely appeared awkward.

“Cheng Xingchu.”

The young man hesitated briefly before deciding to give them all face. He felt a great sense of anxiety after what he had just been through.

As soon as their hands touched, Zhao Xidong pulled his hand back as if it had electrocuted him. He then discreetly rubbed his hand on his clothes and returned to where he stood.

“Well met,” he said, but he kept his eyes on Yu Zhiwen instead.

Cheng Xingchu’s mood had just gotten even worse.

Is there anyone in this spirit palace with any sense at all? Why is it that there only seemed to be lunatics around here? Gosh, this place is sickening!

He then ambled awkwardly and returned to where he stood.

“It is said that the Tianxuan Gate is very similar to the ‘Shengxuan Gate’ of the Central Region Holy Palace. I wonder if I’d one day have the pleasure of visiting it,” Yu Zhiwen said.

Haha, haha, haha...

Qiao Qianzhi laughed for a bit and then noted that everyone was wearing a peculiar expression. He covered his mouth right away and said, “you seem to know your stuff, girl. It’s something that you know of that holy palace.”

“It’s a pity that the Tianxuan Gate only opens once a year, and the opening for this year was already used up two days ago.”

“It would be near impossible to get inside, but if you all were to stay around, you will be able to see the gate opened again.”

There was a tinge of disappointment in her eyes. “That would be a pity.”

Qiao Qianzhi then shifted his focus back to the wheel and said, “the reason we have requested your aid has something to do with the matter of the Tianxuan Gate, anyway.”

“However, it remains to be seen if we would eventually need you, Hall master Jiang, to assist us.”

“If what happens in the Tianxuan Gate is indeed just minor accidents...”

The hallmaster shifted the topic back to the minor accidents, and Elder Qiao interjected right away. “It is getting late, and truth to be told, something has happened inside the Tianxuan Gate that needs our immediate attention. I hope you would understand.”

He rose right away and cupped his hands at Jiang Bianyan, before turning to Ye Xiaotian and said, “we can’t afford to wait any longer.”



Ye Xiaotian nodded and appeared at the entrance of the Council Hall with both Zhao Xidong and Qiao Qianzhi.

Cheng Xingchu raised his eyebrows, baffled at what he just saw.

He had finally seen how the Tiansang Spirit Palace treated their guests.

The persons-in-charge first humiliated one of the guests, then simply left them hanging without bothering to do much with them. He wondered if said persons-in-charge would just kick the three of them out if they weren't in the mood.

"Hallmaster Jiang, I don't see why we should stay back in this place. How about we just leave? This is humiliating!"

Jiang Bianyan simply sipped his tea nonchalantly and truth to be told, he had become curious about what happened in the spirit palace, wondering if they had to deal with problems both inside and out.

He was still a hall master and yet, that was the treatment he received, which made things even more peculiar.

He had his business to attend to with the spirit palace, yet judging from the situation, it was yet time to do so.

"Doesn't matter. If you're tired, just head out and rest at the place they've prepared for us. I'll stay and look around.

Cheng Xingchu rolled his eyes deep down and said nothing more. He rose and left right away.

"Ms. Zhiwen, let's go out and take a break."

He began walking and noticed that no one was moving behind him. He turned around and saw that there was no longer anyone around.

Cheng Xingchu went outside the hall and saw the two of them looked at the men-in-black curiously.

"..."

Damn it!

He stomped furiously for a bit before leaving where he stood right away.

...

Qiao Qianzhi took out a purple array wheel without saying much.

He had initially thought that the reinforcements from the Holy Divine Palace would have been worth waiting a little longer, yet those three were all who came. It made him feel like the time he had spent chatting with them had been an utter waste.

"Tianxuan Gate, open."

He shouted, and spirit energy churned all around them. Array patterns shimmered in midair and a rustic gate flickered into existence.

The red patterns materialized and the door rings bearing the motif of a ferocious beast were visible again—and the Tianxuan Gate appeared before their eyes.

All the law enforcers that were gathered there became anxious. It was the first time in history that the Tianxuan Gate had been opened before the three stipulated days.

Training inside it for a single day would have been equivalent to having trained outside for months. Therefore, to Qiao Qianzhi, the time lost was extreme.

Yu Zhiwen's eyes lit up. "This is the Tianxuan Gate?" he asked.

"Indeed."

Jiang Bianyan nodded slowly, and said, "This treasured place alone has allowed the Tiansang Spirit Palace to stay afloat, among all the spirit palaces with longer histories in the surrounding cities." One could imagine just how valuable the Tianxuan Gate truly was.

Yu Zhiwen looked at that huge black gate that was over 10 meters tall and thought differently about it.

If even the Tianxuan Gate, located in a place like Tiansang Spirit Palace, was already something this grand, she wondered just how magnificent the Shengxuan Gate of the holy palace would be.

"Get ready!"

Ye Xiaotian gave his order and all men-in-black readied themselves.

BOOM!

Qiao Qianzhi put his hand on the gate and pushed hard.

Raging spirit energy gushed from the crack that was gradually widening. Instantly, everyone looked sharp.

CREAK! THUD!

The gate, only half-opened, suddenly got stuck and trembled.

"What is happening?"

Everyone panicked, wondering why the Tianxuan Gate would get stuck.

It was something unheard of and had never happened before.

Qiao Qianzhi's pupils dilated when he realized something amiss. He immediately turned around to look at Zhao Xidong.

CRACK!

The fourth white pearl above the Spirit Curtain Wheel of the 12 Pearls finally gave in and cracked.

Zhao Xidong was so shaken that his eyes looked dead.

The fourth pearl cracked. So, this means...

The prophecy has come true?

## Chapter 170: A Massive Egg

[The Ice Dragon Lair, Tianxuan Gate]

Beyond the gate, they found an icy world with temperatures that were freezing. It was so cold it could easily freeze any low-level spirit cultivator to death.

And even Zhao Qingteng shivered as he entered the enclosed space.

He explored the place as soon as he walked through the Tianxuan Gate, but he did not find any unusual concentration of spirit energy anywhere within. He settled down, trained for just one day, and noticed his powers had been considerably boosted.

Despite the considerable result he gained, he didn't linger on but went about searching for the lead that he had paid a lot of money for. And he finally found the Ice Dragon Lair.

The lair was a cavernous one, and except for icy stalactites hanging from above, there was nothing else but cold springs in front of him.

The place was frigid and the "Ice Dragon Spring" turned out to be that spring before him.

He tried to waddle into the spring but felt as if his soul was about to be frozen solid. He could only stay at the outer fringes to train.

Despite this, the progress he made was still several times greater than the other common areas found in the Tianxuan Gate.

That was utterly unimaginable.

Zhao Qingteng withdrew from his training state after finally having stabilized his foundation at the middle stages of Origin Court.

"The Ice Dragon Spring..."

He looked out at that blue spring water as he caressed his Ice Stream Sword, and muttered, "Is she dead?"

A girl garbed in purple robes forced her way into the Ice Dragon Lair about half a day ago.

She dived into the Ice Dragon Spring right away after entering the lair, seemingly not having noticed his presence at all. The memory of that scene made Zhao Qingteng's skin crawl.

If his memories served him correctly, that girl was probably the most powerful among the newly appointed batch of 33 of the Inner Yard.

"Luo Leilei..."

"Isn't she of the lightning element? Why would she come to the Ice Dragon Lair then?"

He felt what she did was puzzling.

He lowered his head above the surface of the Ice Dragon Spring and looked in. He touched the spring water and instantly pulled his hand away, for it was freezing!

Crack, crack.

The ice on his hand fell off, and he was still reeling from the experience.

“Probably dead, then. No one could have survived such low temperatures, even if she was at Upper Spiritual Level.”

Boom!

The Tianxuan Gate suddenly shook violently, catching Zhao Qingteng off-guard and causing him to fall into the spring.

He was frightened.

Holy sh\*\*!

Shocked, he instinctively tried to escape but was frozen into an ice sculpture in less than half a second. Even his soul seemed to be suspended in animation.

“Move!”

Zhao Qingteng panicked when he discovered that even his energy reserve had been frozen solid, preventing him from using his spiritual source.

Crack, crack.

The cold seeped into his skin and he tried his best to internalize the cold, but his efforts proved futile.

Such feats were not something that someone at the middle stages of Origin Court Level could accomplish.

That was why the elders of the spirit palace did not allow the Inner Yard disciples who entered the Tianxuan Gate for the first time to head to the training grounds.

Something similar had happened a very long time ago.

He gradually lost consciousness. He had never imagined, even in his wildest dreams, that his life would be so short.

He found it even more ridiculous that a cultivator at the Innate level like him would end up dying in a treasure site of ice element.

Damn it...

“No, I couldn’t die here! I have yet to defeat Xu Xiaoshou! I can’t just die like this!”

“You have yet to avenge your cousin, Zhao Shu. Zhao Qingteng, how could you just die like this?”

“Get up! Xu Xiaoshou is laughing at you!”

Arrggghhh!

His soul was screaming in anguish as he gradually lost consciousness.

His eyes looked dazed and his vision blurred as he saw the icy stalactites at the top of the cave turn from blue to pitch-black.

“Damn it...”

When he was about to be swallowed by the darkness altogether, he seemed to sense something ramming into him, but he lost consciousness all the same.

“Ouch!”

Luo Leilei doubled over atop an Ice Dragon Egg, cradling her head with her other hand. She looked at the ice sculpture that she just rammed into in disbelief.

Isn't this Brother Zhao? What the hell is wrong with him? Why would he want to come inside the Ice Dragon Spring?

She frowned and put her hand on the sculpture.

Hmm, he's still alive...

Whatever, I'm about to leave, anyway. I'd just take it as a chance of dumping all the sentiments I have for the spirit palace for the past several years onto you then.

Lightning flashed, and the ice broke.

Luo Leilei looked at Zhao Qingteng, who was already frozen to the core and laid one hand on his chest.

**BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!**

Three shocks and she yanked Zhao Qingteng back from the clutches of death.

Cough, cough!

Zhao Qingteng began to regain consciousness.

**BOOM!**

The Tianxuan Gate trembled violently again. The young man, still covered with a layer of smooth, slippery ice on his back, almost slipped back inside the spring again. Luo Leilei caught him in time.

“Th-Thank you.”

Zhao Qingteng looked at the girl before him again and sensed that she was no longer a mortal.

He saw that the girl emanated golden light and had white wings behind her. She also carried an egg...

Well, forget about that.

She's an angel. An angel who emerged and saved me twice!

Luo Leilei left the young man behind and looked at that massive egg that she was cradling, and mumbled, “what is happening? Even if that kid had taken that scabbard, there should only have been two treasures taken...”

“The intensity of the quake. Is someone attacking the place from outside?”

Her eyes lit up. "Brother Shuangxing and the others are here?"

BOOM!

Yet another massive rumble was heard. Luo Leilei realized that something wasn't right and ran outside the cave to look. She saw massive black gashes in the sky.

"What? Is the sky falling apart?"

Luo Leilei's heart sank, looking at that massive egg in her hand in disbelief. "Does it mean that this is the fourth treasure stabilizing the realm?"

"So does it mean there have been two others already taken away then?"

She thought of Xu Xiaoshou but quickly dismissed the possibility.

Even if Xu Xiaoshou were to have unusual means, his speed wouldn't have been able to match hers, which meant that he could have only taken one more treasure other than the scabbard. He couldn't have obtained two so quickly.

Is there someone else out there seeking these things?

Luo Leilei was flustered, thinking that how a puny Tiansang Spirit Palace could have so many spies lurking about.

"Sh\*\*. It is over. I can never get out of here..."

She wanted to put the Ice Dragon Egg back into the spring, but that wouldn't repair the damage.

Zhao Qingteng walked out of the cave from behind and was stunned by the massive holes in the sky as well.

"This is..."

"Shut up!"

Luo Leilei was flustered, pacing about back and forth.

How do I get out?

Xu Xiaoshou!

She thought of Xu Xiaoshou again. If that world were to crumble and someone were to make their way out through the spatial turbulence, only someone with the Master Physique like Xu Xiaoshou among those of the entire Tianxuan Gate would stand a chance to do so.

Still, the likelihood was that they would all die inside.

Suddenly, she saw yet another gash opening up in the sky far away, and a rustic-looking but majestic gate stood within the gash.

"The Tianxuan Gate!"

Their eyes lit up, and they took flight in an instant.

The gate was their only hope.

However, as they made their way there, the half-opened gate stopped opening and got stuck, leaving only a small gap to the outside, and turbulence formed around it.

“...”

Luo Leilei despaired right away, convinced that she had gotten herself into big trouble.

She wondered who had the audacity to yank the other two treasures out.

Why did being a spy have to be so difficult? Couldn't people at least have some common sense? Didn't you know the place would blow up?

At that moment, a voice could be heard reverberating throughout the domain inside the Tianxuan Gate.

“Everyone, gather at the gate!”

Luo Leilei's eyes lit up right away.

Ye Xiaotian!

The dean!

Yes, he has spatial elemental powers. There's probably still a chance for us...

Let's go!

Zhao Qingteng saw the girl before his eyes turned into a bolt of lightning and suddenly vanish into the sky. His eyes became dull right away.

She had never so much as looked him in the eye even once throughout the whole time they were outside.

He clutched his heart and felt a sense of hollowness. An indescribable feeling welled up in him, and that was something that he had never experienced before.

Maybe I'm just not good enough...

“Hurry up! I can only hold on for a quarter-hour!” Ye Xiaotian's voice was heard again.

A quarter-hour?

Zhao Qingteng's eyes lit up, recalling he had taken almost half a day to get from the gate to the lair.

Holy sh\*\*, hang in there!

He instantly vanished into the air in a boom.