

## **Martial 2241**

### **Chapter 2241, Return**

Three days later, in a stone cavern inside Azure Sun Temple's Restricted Area, Yang Kai slowly opened his eyes in one of the stone rooms.

His Soul Avatar had returned to his physical body, and this moment felt so amazing that he could not help but have the illusion that he was being reborn.

After moving his arms and legs a little, he fully adapted. Even though he spent nearly a month in this stone room, Yang Kai's cultivation did not suffer any damage, of course. On the contrary, due to his experiences in the Divine Ascension World, his Soul had grown significantly stronger.

He did not hurry to leave and instead checked on his own situation.

Looking inside himself, his Knowledge Sea was calm, but the waters had become much stronger than a month ago.

Before entering the Divine Ascension Mirror World, Yang Kai's Divine Sense was strong enough to compete with a Third-Order Dao Source Realm cultivator's. After absorbing so many Soul Sources in the Divine Ascension Mirror World though, it had grown noticeably.

What's more, he also received a fine piece of Soul Jade, only that Soul Jade's power was unable to be manifested in such a short amount of time. He would have to slowly absorb the benefits as his Soul Warming Lotus fed them to his Soul over time.

Right now, it was not too much to say that his Soul was only slightly weaker than an Emperor's. He only had to wait for his physical body's cultivation to catch up and then he could smoothly make a breakthrough.

The ball of light inside the Soul Warming Lotus with the sealed Soul Devouring Insects was still peaceful, without any abnormalities.

But Yang Kai knew he had to deal with it as soon as possible because this thing in his Knowledge Sea was a hidden danger that may suddenly explode.

There was also a Soul-type artifact in his Knowledge Sea that was dim and dull at this moment. It was the Purple Sun Profound Light Shield gifted to him by Gao Xue Ting. This Soul-type artifact could no longer be used after being wrecked by Ban Qing during their fight.

Yang Kai sorted out what he needed to do in his mind. With his plans set, he took out the seal token given to him by Gao Xue Ting and opened the stone room before walking out.

Looking around, the other stone rooms were empty just as he expected.

Obviously, during the time when he was with Tian Yan, Xia Sheng and the others had already been led back by Wen Zi Shan and should have been brought away to recover.

The Divine Ascension Mirror, however, was still erected at the centre of the stone cavern, rotating slowly as it emitted a faint light.

Yang Kai's brow twitched as he stared at this unique treasure.

At this moment, he was able to feel a slight connection between himself and the Divine Ascension Mirror.

This type of connection came from the seal inside the Soul Warming Lotus as it was formed with the power of the Mirror Soul.

"You're out!" A voice suddenly sounded in the darkness.

Yang Kai was stunned for a moment before he cupped his fists at the source of the sound, "Elder Gao!"

Gao Xue Ting was undoubtedly waiting here for Yang Kai and nodded lightly upon seeing him return safely, "There was a slight mishap during this training, and it was this Queen failing to take care of you all that almost led you to disaster."

As an Emperor Realm Master, her frankly admitting her mistake in front of Yang Kai without the slightest intention of shirking her responsibility touched him greatly.

Yang Kai asked, "This is not Elder Gao's fault, but Grandma You's trickery. By the way, how is Grandma You now?"

Gao Xue Ting responded, "Temple Master has his own ways of dealing with Grandma, so you don't need to worry."

"What about Brother Xia and the others?" Yang Kai asked.

"Xia Sheng and the others have suffered some damage to their Souls, but it is nothing major. They only need to rest and recover for several months."

"That's good then!" Yang Kai let out a small sigh of relief. Even though he figured that Xia Sheng and the others would be fine, and that Grandma You hadn't done anything fatal to them during her search for the Soul Warming Lotus, he couldn't really put his mind at ease until now.

"Now that this matter is over, come with me. The Temple Master wishes to see you." As she said that, Gao Xue Ting led Yang Kai out, but she did not forget to advise him before leaving, "The Divine Ascension Mirror is the greatest secret of the temple. It is already bending the rules to allow an outsider like you to enter it. You must never disclose its existence to the public."

"Yes!" Yang Kai answered seriously.

Gao Xue Ting was silent on the way and only rushed over towards Myriad Saints Peak with Yang Kai in tow.

But Yang Kai noticed that there were several times where she seemed to want to ask something, but she never did so in the end.

Yang Kai figured that she probably wanted to ask about Tian Yan.

The reason Wen Zi Shan wanted to see him as soon as he returned was also because of Tian Yan.

The existence of a Great Emperor in the Divine Ascension World was simply too shocking. Even Wen Zi Shan may not have expected such a thing.

After a while, the two of them arrived at Myriad Saints Peak where Gao Xue Ting stopped outside the temple and said to Yang Kai, "You should go in by yourself, the Temple Master is right inside."

Yang Kai nodded lightly and walked into the main hall.

Inside the main hall, Wen Zi Shan sat alone with his legs crossed and a heavy look on his face.

When he saw Yang Kai enter, he couldn't help but brighten up and smile, "Boy, you're finally back."

Yang Kai went forward and cupped his fists, "Greeting Temple Master Wen. Some things happened and delayed my return for a few days."

"En, it's good that you're back safely!" Wen Zi Shan beckoned Yang Kai over, "Come, have a cup of wine to settle down."

As he spoke, he waved his hand, and a chair and wine bottle appeared in front of him.

Yang Kai was stunned but he did not refuse him. He strode forward and took a seat in front of Wen Zi Shan.

"This King has a few things to ask you." Wen Zi Shan poured himself a cup of wine before pouring one for Yang Kai, not being punctilious at all while he said, "If you think you can answer this King, then speak freely. If it is not possible, then this King will not force you to do so. Just pretend I never asked, all right?"

He showed a very friendly attitude, so Yang Kai responded with, "Many thanks for your consideration, Temple Master Wen."

"En!" Wen Zi Shan nodded and did not say anything else, as if he was thinking about what to ask first.

Yang Kai picked up his cup of wine and took a sip, but after waiting for a while, yet still seeing Wen Zi Shan hesitate to speak, he couldn't help commenting, "Temple Master Wen, this wine can't be compared to Monkey God Wine."

Upon hearing this, Wen Zi Shan stared at Yang Kai in surprise, "You met with Yi Quan?"

Yang Kai nodded and said, "Yes, Senior Yi Quan also told Junior some interesting stories about you back then."

"Did that old thing tell you how many jars of Monkey God Wine he used to get me drunk?" Wen Zi Shan said while curling his lip.

Yang Kai laughed, "Of course."

"Hmph!" Wen Zi Shan coldly snorted, "If this King had not acted like I was unable to take alcohol, then how would that old thing be willing to give me so much to drink? Everything is within this King's plans!"

Yang Kai was stunned, unable to tell just which of these two Third-Order Emperor Realm Masters living in two different worlds won in that battle of wits.

“Senior Yi Quan still fondly remembers Temple Master Wen and even told Junior that you never showing up again to visit after several hundred years saddened him. He had also prepared a lot of Monkey God Wine in anticipation of Temple Master Wen’s next visit.”

“Hahaha!” Wen Zi Shan laughed, “At least he still has some conscience! En... This King did not return after all these years because this King was worried that the old granny would overthink it and try to lock this King up inside. The Divine Ascension Mirror is not something that this King can just enter as he pleases. However, this King really wonders whether Yi Quan has enough Monkey God Wine for him to drink to his fill.”

After he said that, he suddenly turned solemn and quickly said, “This King heard Little Xue Ting say that a Great Emperor suddenly appeared outside the Divine Movement Country and took you away. Is that true?”

“Yes!” Yang Kai nodded with a straight face.

“Are you sure that the other party was a Great Emperor?” Wen Zi Shan looked extremely serious.

Yang Kai pondered for a moment and said, “Though Junior’s cultivation is low and is unable to judge the other party’s true realm and strength, please excuse this Junior for saying something that may offend Temple Master Wen...”

“Go ahead!”

“That person is much, much stronger than you, Temple Master Wen!”

Wen Zi Shan’s expression turned serious.

“Temple Master Wen has entered the Divine Ascension Mirror and also knows Senior Yi Quan, so naturally Temple Master Wen should also know Zhou Dian. Grandma You’s Soul Avatar had also reached the Third-Order Emperor Realm. But in comparison, that Senior greatly surpassed any and all of you.”

“Then there is no doubt he is a Great Emperor!” Wen Zi Shan took a deep breath and said with a look of disbelief, “It’s unbelievable that a Great Emperor could be born in that place! If word spreads, it would probably shake the entire Star Boundary. By the way, what is the name of that Senior?”

“He calls himself Tian Yan!” Yang Kai replied.

“Great Emperor Tian Yan!” Wen Zi Shan murmured before turning back to Yang Kai and asking, “So, what did Sir Tian Yan take you away for?”

In this world, all Great Emperors were recognized and respected by the world, so even though Wen Zi Shan had never met Tian Yan, he still addressed him as Sir.

This was not only respect for a Master’s strength, but also for that Master’s achievements in the Heavenly Way and Martial Dao.

“For the Soul Devouring Insects,” Yang Kai answered, feeling he had no need to hide this matter. Of course, it was only limited to Wen Zi Shan. Despite this Temple Master Wen’s unusual character and usual lack of decorum, Yang Kai could sense that he was a very reliable and just Senior when it mattered.

Otherwise, he would not have taken the initiative to reveal information about the Divine Ascension Mirror to Yang Kai and arranged for him to enter it for training.

As a reward for the Star Seals, Wen Zi Shan even offered Yang Kai the chance to enter the Sect Treasury to pick out three treasures.

Just from Wen Zi Shan revealing the Sect’s top secret, the Divine Ascension Mirror, Yang Kai felt that there was no need to hide this from him.

“Soul Devouring Insects?” Wen Zi Shan raised his brows, but soon seemed to think of something and said, “I heard from Yi Quan in the past that a battle called the Holy War once broke out in that world, and the source of that conflict was a swarm of ‘Demon Insects’. Could it be...”

“En, it was none other than a swarm of Soul Devouring Insects. Senior Tian Yan asked Junior to bring the group of Soul Devouring Insects out of that world, which resulted in the slight delay in my return.”

“Soul Devouring Insects are the nemesis of all Souls! Even though I have no idea what sort of amazing methods you have used to restrain them, or what methods Sir Tian Yan used to help you, even if you have a precious treasure like the Soul Warming Lotus, you cannot act carelessly!” Wen Zi Shan warned him with a grave expression.

Hearing him say this, Yang Kai instantly understood that he must have had a detailed talk with Grandma You and learned from her about the existence of the Soul Warming Lotus.

Chapter 2242, Refining the Insect Enslavement Bracelet

“Junior has his own plans for the Soul Devouring Insects,” Yang Kai told him with a serious face.

“Alright then,” Wen Zi Shan looked at him and said. “You don’t look like the type of person who would play around with his life. If there is anything you need, then just tell this King.”

“Many thanks, Temple Master Wen.”

For the next four hours, Wen Zi Shan asked him in detail about the many things that happened in the Divine Ascension Mirror World. Yang Kai told him everything without hiding too much either.

After four hours, Yang Kai stepped out of the main hall.

Gao Xue Ting seemed to have been waiting outside the whole time. When she saw him walk out, she glanced at him and said, “The Temple Master informed me that you require a secret room?”

Yang Kai nodded and said, “Yes.”

Before coming out from Wen Zi Shan's place, Yang Kai did in fact request this from him. That is because he wanted to refine the Insect Enslavement Bracelet, so he needed a safe cultivation room to do so.

Wen Zi Shan naturally agreed to such a trifling request and told him to just ask Gao Xue Ting about it.

"Come with me." As she said that, Gao Xue Ting turned around and flew out.

Yang Kai followed closely behind her.

After an hour, Gao Xue Ting landed on top of a mountain peak that was neither too tall nor too short. It wasn't a very imposing mountain in the whole Azure Sun Mountain Range and looked rather ordinary, but this peak was obviously enriched by some Spirit Arrays, so the World Energy aura was much denser here than in other places.

There were no traces of any buildings on this peak, but there was a large forest of purple bamboo, adding a touch of exuberant colour that made the place look extremely elegant.

Gao Xue Ting led Yang Kai directly to a secluded cave mansion halfway up the mountain and opened the seal there with both hands, saying, "This Purple Bamboo Peak is where I live. I usually stay in the cave mansion at the top, so if there's anything you need, just call me and I'll be able to rush over in just a moment."

Hearing her say so, Yang Kai felt a little flattered and cupped his fists, "Many thanks, Elder Gao."

He had originally just wanted to ask Wen Zi Shan for a quiet, safe, and secluded place, but he didn't expect Gao Xue Ting to bring him to the Purple Bamboo Peak where she lived and even arrange for him to live in the cave mansion next door.

This was obviously to take care of him.

Gao Xue Ting nodded lightly and tossed Yang Kai an access token, saying, "Head in by yourself."

Yang Kai accepted the token and scanned it over with his Divine Sense before thanking Gao Xue Ting once more and heading into the cave mansion.

Looking around, this cave mansion was neither big nor small and had several secret rooms available. Even though no one had lived in it for a long time, it looked neat as if it were new. Obviously, this cave mansion must be where Gao Xue Ting used to live, but he had no idea why she moved.

Naturally, Yang Kai felt at ease with a Master like Gao Xue Ting nearby, so he didn't have to worry about anything while refining the Insect Enslavement Bracelet.

Time was tight and Yang Kai did not delay. First, he familiarized himself with the token before opening all the barriers around the cave mansion. Only then did he sit cross-legged in a secret room and adjust his mind.

Refining an Emperor Artifact was not a simple task.

Emperor Artifacts were different from ordinary artifacts. Each Emperor Artifact contained Emperor Intent and Emperor Aura. If one's cultivation was not high enough during the refinement process, then there was a chance that they may suffer a backlash from the Emperor Artifact.

So, when a cultivator without high enough cultivation tried to refine an Emperor Artifact, they needed to adjust their condition to the best they could.

After three days, Yang Kai felt that his Spiritual Essence had reached its peak state, so he heaved a small breath and took out the Insect Enslavement Bracelet which had been left in a corner of the Sealed World Bead and forgotten for a long time.

This thing had worked wonders during two dangerous incidents.

Once, when he and Xue Yue encountered a group of strange butterflies in the Severed World, the Insect Enslavement Bracelet managed to suppress them and allow them to escape. The other time was when Yang Kai encountered the Monster Insect Queen under the ice cliff in Blue Feather Sect. During that time, if not for the Insect Enslavement Bracelet stunning the Monster Insect Queen, Yang Kai would not have been able to subdue it.

Both times, Yang Kai's life was saved thanks to the Insect Enslavement Bracelet.

Right now, even though his cultivation was only at the First-Order Dao Source Realm, his Soul had taken a half-step into the Emperor Realm, so it shouldn't be a big problem for him to refine this Insect Enslavement Bracelet.

With that in mind, he placed the Emperor Artifact that looked similar to a palm-sized bracelet on his hand and covered it with his free palm before he began circulating his Spiritual Energy and Source Qi at the same time, pouring them into the bracelet.

There was no response. The Insect Enslavement Bracelet was just like a block of wood that did not accept any of his power.

But Yang Kai was in no hurry. This was only to be expected.

He slowly released his power, constantly pouring it into the Insect Enslavement Bracelet, trying to get the Emperor Artifact to open up a gap so that he could carve his Soul Imprint into it.

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At a dark underground chamber several dozen kilometres away from Myriad Saints Peak, Grandma You was currently acting like a madwoman inside. Even though an invisible power was imprisoning her cultivation, she was still yelling curses incessantly.

"Wen Zi Shan, you bastard! You'll die a dog's death! I won't forgive you even if you turn into an evil spirit!"

She seemed to have been cursing for a while as her voice had become extremely hoarse, making her already unpleasant sound even more terrible.

A person's voice suddenly sounded in this dark space.

"Grandma, you've been cursing the same thing over and over again, no creativity at all. I'm already sick of hearing the same insult again and again."

Grandma You's cursing voice suddenly stopped for a moment, but soon, she roared hysterically, "Wen Zi Shan!"

"Hah!" Temple Master Wen let out a laugh and snapped his fingers. Suddenly a light appeared in the space, illuminating the darkness with its dim glow. Grandma You's hair was a mess and she looked like an evil ghost. It was a terrible sight.

But it was as if Wen Zi Shan didn't see that at all as he just stared at Grandma You lightly and said, "Grandma, why don't you take a rest if you're tired from cursing? I'll bring you something to eat and drink to moisten your throat with!"

While speaking, he actually took out a plate of delicious and fragrant spirit fruits from his Space Ring. With a slight flick from his wrist, the plate of spirit fruit flew right in front of Grandma You.

The latter was glaring fiercely at him, her eyes bloodshot and filled with endless hatred.

Perhaps she really needed to moisten her throat though, so after a moment of silence, Grandma You reached out to the spirit fruit and began eating it in big bites.

But her poisonous gaze never left Wen Zi Shan for a moment during the process. From her loud chewing and actions, it almost seemed as if what she was eating was not spirit fruit, but rather Wen Zi Shan's heart.

In just a quarter of an hour, the plate of spirit fruit had been cleaned off by Grandma You.

"You actually didn't poison the fruit, you little bastard?" Grandma You wiped the corners of her mouth and said to Wen Zi Shan with a mocking look on her face.

Temple Master Wen looked hurt and replied, "Grandma You, we've known each other for hundreds of years, do you still have to judge me with such malice?"

"Hmph! It is because we have known each other for hundreds of years that I can see through your heart, liver, spleen, lungs, and kidneys!" Grandma You said coldly.

Wen Zi Shan laughed bitterly, "It seems that you still harbour a lot of ill feelings for me, Grandma."

"Ill feelings?" Grandma You laughed coldly, "That is the greatest understatement I have ever heard! You think it's just ill feelings between you and me? I would want nothing more than to drink your blood, eat your flesh, and gnaw on your bones!"

"I can see that." Wen Zi Shan looked helpless, "No need to put it so bluntly..."

Grandma You suddenly changed the topic and sneered, "How is that Yang Boy doing right now?"

Wen Zi Shan looked at her in amazement and said, "Grandma, you're in a difficult position to protect yourself right now, yet you still have the effort to spare to care about someone else? I didn't know you had such a caring heart."

"Of course!" Grandma You raised her voice, "I'm sure you've already killed that boy, have you not?"

"Why would I kill him?" Wen Zi Shan sneered.



“For the Soul Warming Lotus, of course!” Grandma You said, “If you could obtain the Soul Warming Lotus...”

“So what if I obtain the Soul Warming Lotus?” This time, Wen Zi Shan interrupted her before she could finish, “I am already a Third-Order Emperor. Above that, there is only the Great Emperor realm. Do you think you can rely on the Soul Warming Lotus alone to achieve that realm? Or do you think I should take his Soul Warming Lotus and do the same thing you plan to do?”

Grandma You looked coldly at Wen Zi Shan and said, “Seems you’ve already talked to Yang Boy and found out what I need the Soul Warming Lotus for.”

Wen Zi Shan nodded and said bluntly, “I hate to admit it, but I have to say, you had come up with an excellent idea, Grandma. The Soul Warming Lotus is a precious treasure and is indeed capable of carrying the Divine Ascension Mirror’s Mirror Soul. If you use it as a foundation, it may really be possible to refine that world!”

“Hmph!”

“But Grandma...” Wen Zi Shan’s expression suddenly became serious and he said, “Have you ever wondered what would happen if the Mirror Soul does not respond to you once you obtain the Soul Warming Lotus? How would you refine it then?”

“Why would the Mirror Soul not respond to me?” Grandma You screamed. “I have been guarding the Divine Ascension Mirror for two thousand years! I understand it more than any of you do. As long as I can get my hands on the Soul Warming Lotus, then I have full confidence that I can fuse the Mirror Soul into it!”

“Are you sure?” Wen Zi Shan gazed at her meaningfully, “Are you sure it’s going to be that simple?” He paused for a moment and his tone became sharp, “Or are you just deceiving yourself, Grandma? Isn’t this just part of your obsession to defeat me?”

Grandma You suddenly froze.

Wen Zi Shan continued, “Grandma, do you know why your cultivation has stagnated at the First-Order Emperor Realm for two thousand years? What have you done in the past two thousand years? And what have you seen?”

Grandma You’s face gradually changed, her bloodshot eyes that were filled with hatred gradually became shaken, hollow, then confused.

Wen Zi Shan’s words seemed to have touched something buried deep inside her heart.

“You know very well that you may not be able to subdue the Mirror Soul even if you obtained the Soul Warming Lotus,” Wen Zi Shan sighed faintly.

“Bullshit!” Grandma You cursed.

“Then let me ask you. If it was so easy to subdue the Mirror Soul, then why didn’t that Great Emperor who took Yang Boy away do it? He should have that power.”

When he said this, Grandma You became speechless.

“Let go of your obsession, Grandma. If you don’t let go, then you’ll be stuck where you are for the rest of your life,” Wen Zi Shan advised her earnestly. “Cultivators like us, we can only forge ahead when our goals are clear. Grandma, you are still immersed in the defeat of a past battle and blinded by hatred. How can you rise up to a higher Martial Dao if you are so intent on wanting me dead?”

“Are you lecturing me, brat?” Grandma You glared at Wen Zi Shan.

The latter shrugged his shoulders and said, “I’m just speaking the truth, and it’s not like you don’t understand it either, Grandma. You just don’t want to admit it.”

He sighed and went on, “Yang Boy and Little Xue Ting may think that this face of yours is your true appearance, and that the beautiful woman you appeared as inside the Divine Ascension Mirror is just an illusion you created, but only you and I know that... your appearance inside the Divine Ascension Mirror is your true appearance. The current you is just a twisted form brought about by your hatred. Grandma is also a woman, so why make things so difficult for yourself?”

“What are you saying all this for?” Grandma You’s tone of voice had calmed down a lot for some reason.

“I just want to say, Grandma, that your aptitude may not be lower than mine. If you can overcome your Heart Demon, then you may be able to become a Great Emperor one day.”

At these words, Grandma You shuddered and looked sharply at Wen Zi Shan, growling, “Are you speaking from your heart?”

Wen Zi Shan smiled and said, “To be honest, I’m not the one who said this.”

“Then who said it?”

“Just a casual and carefree old man,” Wen Zi Shan seemed extremely reluctant to mention that person’s name.

Even though he did not say the person’s name, Grandma You’s eyes were brightly lit as if she understood something.

“I can’t hold up Azure Sun Temple alone, Grandma. Would you be willing to help me?” Wen Zi Shan looked earnestly at Grandma You and asked.

Grandma You stared at him for a moment and suddenly burst out laughing, sneering as she did, “This Old Lady killed so many of your elite disciples already, do you not hold any grudges towards this Old Lady at all?”

“The Heavenly Way is constant, but destiny is impermanent. If they could not cross that hurdle, then that means their cultivation was not enough!”

Grandma You's face changed and she went silent. After a while, she suddenly bellowed, "Scram! Get out of here!"

Wen Zi Shan smiled and said, "Think about it, Grandma."

With these words, he gradually disappeared from the space as if he had never appeared there before.

Grandma You was left alone with a cold and fluctuating expression.

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Since Yang Kai arrived at the cave mansion in Gao Xue Ting's Purple Bamboo Peak, a month had passed.

During this time, he had remained indoors, refining the Insect Enslavement Bracelet.

In the beginning, the Insect Enslavement Bracelet was unresponsive, but Yang Kai was patient and kept using his power to attack the Insect Enslavement Bracelet's barrier. And, as time passed, the Emperor Artifact gradually changed.

It slowly began to accept Yang Kai's Spiritual Energy and Source Qi.

The refinement process was like reeling silk from cocoons. Yang Kai put in a lot of hard work, but only when all the obstructing forces were eliminated would Yang Kai have a chance to refine the Insect Enslavement Bracelet and engrave his own Soul Imprint inside.

On this day, Yang Kai continued as usual.

At a certain moment, a strange buzzing sound came, followed by a slight burst of air in the room. At the same time, Yang Kai felt heat from his hands, as if the Insect Enslavement Bracelet was burning.

Yang Kai was not shocked when he felt this, but happy. He knew that this was a sign that his refining had successfully broken the protective barrier. Immediately, he spared no effort to circulate his energy, pouring it madly into the Insect Enslavement Bracelet.

The burning sensation on his hands grew clearer and clearer as the Insect Enslavement bracelet seemed to have come to life again, constantly bouncing around in Yang Kai's grasp, wanting to escape from his control.

But Yang Kai was not about to let it achieve this, grabbing hold of it for dear life.

Slowly, the burning sensation changed, and it now felt like Yang Kai's palm was being gnawed on by a million ants. The tingling sensation spread from his palm down into each part of his body before reaching deep into his Soul, making him feel extremely uncomfortable.

The tingling gradually turned into pain, not only on his body but his Soul as well, like it was being sheared by thousands of dull knives.

Yang Kai could not help but hiss in agony.

Gritting his teeth, he endured the unimaginable torment as he pushed his Spiritual Energy and Source Qi even more ferociously.

After two days of this, Yang Kai's body suddenly felt lighter, and all the abnormal sensations disappeared in a flash.

At the same time, a light suddenly burst forth from the Insect Enslavement Bracelet. Tiny flickering runes appeared on the small bracelet's surface like fireflies, lighting up the entire room in a beautiful display.

The runes were extremely complicated and mysterious, seemingly having a life of their own, constantly evolving and changing.

The ordinary-looking Insect Enslavement Bracelet was also releasing an obvious Emperor Aura and Emperor Intent now.

Yang Kai was not the least bit pleased with this situation, however, and instead, his face turned grave.

A short while later, the complicated runes converged into the Insect Enslavement Bracelet and Yang Kai could hear a crack, as if something had broken. Then, his Spiritual Energy and Source Qi drove straight in, pouring into the Insect Enslavement Bracelet without obstruction.

That sound from his mind was undoubtedly the sound of him breaking through the final barrier of the Insect Enslavement Bracelet.

This also meant that the refinement process was mostly complete.

However... Since the Insect Enslavement Bracelet was not a new artifact and had a previous owner, the biggest test began now.

As he poured his Spiritual Energy in, Yang Kai soon sensed a pure force from inside the Insect Enslavement Bracelet fighting back against him.

This force was not powerful per se, but it was extremely pure and intense.

This was the Soul Imprint left inside the Insect Enslavement Bracelet by the Insect Emperor!

Only when this Imprint was completely erased would Yang Kai be able to leave his own Imprint.

The true cultivation of the Insect Emperor was at least Third-Order Emperor Realm, but unfortunately, he was defeated and killed during his fight with Yang Yan and had no choice but to preserve his Soul through some special method, then rely on seizing another's body to be reborn.

As for his past glory and cultivation, almost all of it had been lost.

After some ten thousand years, the Soul Imprint in the Insect Enslavement Bracelet had long weakened beyond recognition.

If not for this, Yang Kai would never have had the chance to refine the Insect Enslavement Bracelet, that is, unless Wen Zi Shan helped him remove this Imprint.

But now, despite its purity, this Imprint was only barely as strong as a First-Order Emperor's, which was basically the same strength as Yang Kai's Soul.

This Imprint was fighting him head-on, wanting to stop Yang Kai's next move, but Yang Kai would not back down. He was undaunted and mobilized his Spiritual Energy to meet it directly.

\*Hong...\*

A noise erupted as Yang Kai's body swayed slightly and he felt a little dizzy.

This was a direct clash of Souls, one where only strength and endurance mattered.

During this clash, neither Yang Kai nor the original Imprint had the upper hand. They were on par with each other.

After taking a moment to catch his breath, Yang Kai mobilized his Spiritual Energy once more and crashed into the Insect Enslavement Bracelet.

With another bang, Yang Kai's face turned slightly pale as blood spilled from his nose and mouth.

However, during this collision, Yang Kai's Spiritual Energy clearly gained the upper hand while the Insect Emperor's Imprint had been weakened considerably.

Yang Kai did not stop there, however, mobilizing his Spiritual Energy for a third assault.

\*Hong...\*

There was a flash of light from the Insect Enslavement Bracelet, as if something had been broken and opened up.

Yang Kai's Spiritual Energy passed into it now without any obstruction.

At this point, the Insect Emperor's Imprint had been completely destroyed.

Yang Kai poured his Spiritual Energy into it, enduring the discomfort in his head to quickly engrave his own Soul Imprint into the Insect Enslavement Bracelet.

Only after he was done did he grin and collapse to the ground, not even wanting to move another inch.

Right now, the Insect Enslavement Bracelet was an Emperor Artifact under his possession. Only, the uses of the Insect Enslavement Bracelet were still something that he had to test and develop later.

This silent fight drained a lot of Yang Kai's mental and physical strength. He also had to give credit to his Soul Warming Lotus, since he would never have dared to use such a violent and direct method to erase the Insect Emperor's Imprint without it.

But with the Soul Warming Lotus's nourishment and protection, Yang Kai was not worried about having any fundamental damage done to his Soul. He had the capital to use such brute force methods in this regard.

After resting for half a day, Yang Kai sat up again, feeling much better than before, and began taking a closer look at this Insect Enslavement Bracelet in front of him.

After being refined, the Insect Enslavement Bracelet did not change, other than the fact that it could be put away and taken out of his body at will now.

Yang Kai's Divine Sense surged and poured into the Insect Enslavement Bracelet, trying to find out what wonders lay inside this artifact and how he could use it to restrain the Soul Devouring Insects.

But something unexpected occurred.

As soon as he poured his Divine Sense into the Insect Enslavement Bracelet, Yang Kai actually discovered that there was a strange space inside the bracelet.

This space was unlike the Sealed World Bead's internal space, which was not freely accessible.

Instead, it was similar to the spaces inside Space Rings, but with a few subtle differences.

Yang Kai could feel a strange energy surging inside this space that was neither beneficial nor harmful to the Soul. He had no idea what it was for.

Yang Kai's eyes were soon drawn to the differently-sized and shaped jars inside the space.

Under his curiosity, Yang Kai swept his Divine Sense over them to inspect them.

But soon, he paled and he forcefully withdrew his Divine Sense from these jars.

Because he perceived that many of these jars were full. Only a few were empty. As for what things were inside there, he had no idea. He could only hear some writhing and buzzing noises from inside, though some were silent.

But each of the things contained in these jars gave off a dangerous feeling to Yang Kai.

Even though he was now the owner of the Insect Enslavement Bracelet, he did not dare to open the jars casually to find out what lay inside.

Amidst his uncertainty, he discovered that words had suddenly appeared on the surface of those jars, and he quickly adjusted his eyes to see them.

### **Chapter 2244, Exotic Insect Record**

Blood Aphids, Two-Legged Silkworm, Steel Ants, Silver-Striped Six Horn Spider, Tyrant Bee...

Names of Exotic Insects were written on each of the jars, practically all of which Yang Kai had never heard of, save for a few.

But the few he heard of were all terrifying creatures that caused cultivators to shiver in fear at their mention.

Yang Kai was shaken and vaguely had a bold guess.

At that moment, a flash of light suddenly appeared in the Insect Enslavement Bracelet's space. In that flash of light, something that looked like an ancient book slowly emerged in Yang Kai's Divine Sense.

Curious, he investigated it with his Divine Sense.

There he saw on the cover of the ancient book, the characters for 'Exotic Insect Record'!

[A Divine Sense Book!] Yang Kai exclaimed in his mind.

There were some extremely special Secret Arts and Secret Techniques in this world that did not exist in physical form, but instead existed in ways that could not be observed by the naked eye. They were recorded in hidden places.

Recording information this way could prevent some precious secrets from being easily accessed, so it was a common tactic used by many Masters in the past.

This Divine Sense Book was one of them.

This Divine Sense Book inside of the Insect Enslavement Bracelet was probably written by the Insect Emperor, because Yang Kai was able to detect his aura from the Exotic Insect Record. Even though it was so many years ago, Yang Kai could still remember this familiar aura.

Yang Kai moved his Divine Sense once more and opened the Exotic Insect Record, reading it carefully.

This Exotic Insect Record was in fact written by the Insect Emperor, because a preface written by the Insect Emperor in first person was written on the first page of this book. Yang Kai was not so interested in this and just skimmed through it before flipping to the next page.

[Exotic Insect List!]

Yang Kai saw the three large words in an instant, which made it so he could not help but look carefully at it.

This Exotic Insect List was divided by the Insect Emperor into two parts. Any Exotic Insects that could enter this list were extremely rare and difficult to deal with.

There were 36 in the Heaven List and 72 from the Earth List, making up a total of 108 species of Exotic Insects, each with a detailed description and ranking.

Very soon, Yang Kai found the descriptions of the Exotic Ancient Insects inside the jars.

Blood Aphids, Earth List No.13: Moves towards the smell of blood. Weak and immaterial creatures that are very difficult to detect, but victims will have all their blood sucked dry from their bodies.

Two-Legged Silkworm, Earth List No.27: All-white bipedal creatures, have unparalleled Ice Attribute venom with no cure.

Steel Ants, Earth List No. 36: Colonial insects. Devour steel, nemesis of all artifacts.

Silver-Striped Six Horn Spider, Heaven List No. 19: Has a silver pattern on its back, intensely strong venom, even Emperor Realm Masters cannot ward them off.

Tyrant Bee, Heaven List No. 21: Extremely strong venom in its tail stinger, ranked highest among the world's top ten poisonous insects, extinct.

...

The lists went on and on.

On the Heaven List, Yang Kai saw the description and introduction of Soul Devouring Insects.

Soul Devouring Insects, Heaven List No.11: Specializes in devouring Spiritual Energy, the bane of all Souls. When young and weak, can be exterminated with Conflagrated Spiritual Energy or suppressed by extraordinarily powerful Divine Sense, but as they grow, they become extremely difficult to subdue, even for Emperor Realm cultivators.

In this Exotic Insect List, Soul Devouring Insects were ranked eleventh in the Heaven List, which was already very high up. Yang Kai had never even heard of the ten Exotic Ancient Insects ranked above Soul Devouring Insects.

In the Insect Emperor's notes, the ten strongest Exotic Ancient Insects had already become extinct and no longer existed in this world.

Of course, this was only his personal opinion. Whether they were truly extinct or not, no one knew.

Yang Kai had the vague thought that the reason why these Soul Devouring Insects were able to rank so high up was related to their immense ability for growth.

As the Insect Emperor noted, Soul Devouring Insects were actually not difficult to deal with when they were still weak. They could be killed with Conflagrated Spiritual Energy or subdued with a strong Divine Sense; however, they would become an immense problem when they matured.

Yang Kai could not help but get excited when he suddenly got his hands on a book like this and read it with great interest. Since the Insect Emperor dared give himself such a title, it must mean that his research on the Dao of Exotic Insects was unparalleled; practically no one could surpass him. He was likely to be the only person with this knowledge in the entire Star Boundary. Once Yang Kai mastered this information, if he ever encountered any of the Exotic Ancient Insects in this book in the future, he would be able to apply the right countermeasures to deal with them.

After the Heaven and Earth Lists in the Exotic Insect Record, the habits, breeding methods, and restraining methods of each of the Exotic Ancient Insects were written in detail.

Most of the Exotic Insects had their particular restraining methods. For example, Earth List No.13, Blood Aphids. Even though they moved towards the smell of blood and were extremely small, even invisible to the naked eye and undetectable with Divine Sense, they were incredibly weak to fire. Any Fire Attribute Secret Technique would be enough to force them to retreat.

And also, there was Earth List No.36, Steel Ants. Even though they were the nemesis of artifacts, they were afraid of a strange type of stone called Moonstone. If the Steel Ants ingest this Moonstone, then they would melt into a thick puddle of water in a few moments, dying a clean death.

The key point is that Moonstones weren't a precious material. They were mostly used for illumination and did not have much use as an artifact refining material, so it was quite easy to acquire in the Star Boundary.

Yang Kai deliberately searched for a method to restrain the Soul Devouring Insects.

The Insect Emperor only provided two methods. One was to kill them using Conflagrated Spiritual Energy when they were very weak, and the second was to suppress them. Since they will no longer be



afraid of Conflagrated Knowledge Seas after they grew to a certain extent, they were basically unkillable. Besides suppressing them, there was no other way to deal with them.

After going through the book, Yang Kai gained a lot of information and now had some ideas on how he was going to deal with the Soul Devouring Insects he had.

Half a day later, Yang Kai closed the Exotic Insect Record.

Just like when it first appeared, it disappeared without warning. In a flash of light, it was no longer in this space.

But Yang Kai was now the owner of the Insect Enslavement Bracelet, so whenever he wanted to read the Exotic Insect Record again, he could call it out at any time.

Then, Yang Kai withdrew his Divine Sense and focused his mind. While unleashing the power of the Insect Enslavement Bracelet, he dragged out the Soul Devouring Insects inside the Soul Warming Lotus in an attempt to transfer them into the Insect Enslavement Bracelet.

The Soul Devouring Insects he had before were not a problem for him. Even though they were unruly in the Divine Ascension World, these Soul Devouring Insects were now obedient under the suppression of the Insect Enslavement Bracelet's aura and were quite easily transferred into the space of the Insect Enslavement Bracelet by Yang Kai.

It was the sealed Soul Devouring Insects that worried Yang Kai.

Even though the sealed light ball had the double insurance of a Great Emperor's power as well as the World Force of the Divine Ascension Mirror's Mirror Soul, Yang Kai still didn't dare to take this task lightly.

It took a lot of effort for him to safely transfer them to the space inside the Insect Enslavement Bracelet.

Only then did he let out a sigh of relief.

Now that there were no more Soul Devouring Insects inside his body, he didn't have anything to worry about anymore.

The two batches of Soul Devouring Insects were transferred in by Yang Kai and placed into an unused jar.

These jars were vessels made by the Insect Emperor from some extremely precious materials and were specifically designed to rear Exotic Insects.

The dangerous aura that Yang Kai perceived from the other jars were all from the Exotic Insects left behind by the Insect Emperor back then. Even though ten thousand years had passed, being nurtured by the special power present inside the bracelet, these Exotic Insects did not get weaker and instead grew even more powerful than before.

Yang Kai did not dare to release them.

These Exotic Insects were not raised by him, so Yang Kai did not have the confidence that he could control them. If they did not obey his orders after they were released, it would be like dropping a stone he tried to move on his foot.

He could only wait for his strength to improve in the future before gradually giving it a try.

Right now, the most critical matter was to deal with the Soul Devouring Insects.

The two batches of Soul Devouring Insects were placed into one jar, and Yang Kai sealed the jar properly before circulating his Divine Sense. Forming seals with both hands, Yang Kai unlocked the seal on these insects using the technique Tian Yan taught him.

The next moment, a buzzing sound came out from the jar.

Yang Kai listened to it for a moment and he could not help but pale slightly.

He could clearly sense the two groups of Soul Devouring Insects were like two armies at this moment, slaughtering each other in a world-shaking fight.

However, since the difference in strength between the two groups was not very big, the fight was particularly fierce and bloody. There seemed to be a reign of terror inside this jar.

But Yang Kai was not worried about this.

The Exotic Insect Record also stated that this was one method the Soul Devouring Insects used to survive and evolve.

They do not think, but move based on their instincts.

Just like Poison Arts, the Poison Refiner will place some venomous creatures in one space and have them kill each other. The one that survives at the end would be the most powerful one.

The evolutionary growth of the Soul Devouring Insects was exactly the same. They were driven by instincts and could not be restrained by any means.

However, this evolutionary process could also be stimulated by an external force.

Considering all this, Yang Kai withdrew his Divine Sense from the Insect Enslavement Bracelet and opened the barriers around the cave mansion with a wave of the token in his hand, flying out.

A short while later, he arrived at the peak of Purple Bamboo Peak. Looking around, he quickly found Gao Xue Ting's cave mansion.

Flying over, Yang Kai stood outside the cave mansion and just as he was about to shout for her, Gao Xue Ting's voice suddenly came from inside. "Come in!"

Yang Kai was stunned, but a slightly touched expression emerged on his face.

Gao Xue Ting was able to detect his presence so quickly, firstly because of how powerful her cultivation was, and secondly because she must have been monitoring his movements all this time.

This wasn't surveillance, however, but a form of protection.

She likely heard some news from Wen Zi Shan, and that was why her attention never slacked during this time.

Yang Kai did not say anything and flew straight into her cave mansion.

After going through several turns in the cave, Yang Kai soon arrived at a stone room.

This was likely the place where Gao Xue Ting lived and rested.

Looking around, Yang Kai was surprised to find that the cave mansion's interior was very simple with hardly any furnishings. There was only a cultivation mat and a bamboo bed. Nothing else could be seen besides that.

Gao Xue Ting was currently sitting atop her bamboo bed, looking indifferently at him.

### **Chapter 2245, You Can Pay With Your Body**

"Elder Gao!" Yang Kai cupped his fists in salute.

Gao Xue Ting gently nodded, and said with concern, "How did your retreat go?"

"Thanks to Elder Gao's blessings, it was successful."

"Glib-tongued flattery!" Gao Xue Ting glared at him, "Your retreat had nothing to do with me."

"Uh..." Yang Kai did not expect Gao Xue Ting to be so blunt about his thoughtless flattery, and could not help feeling a little embarrassed.

"Tell me, why are you looking for me?" Gao Xue Ting restored her look of indifference.

"Oh, it's like this," moving on to the main reason he was there, Yang Kai quickly got up and continued. "I want to ask Elder Gao if there is any Facetless Profound Grass in Azure Sun Temple?"

"Facetless Profound Grass?" Gao Xue Ting's brow wrinkled.

"It's a kind of Dao Source Grade Mid-Rank spirit grass, it's not a rare thing." Yang Kai was an Alchemist himself, and he was deeply knowledgeable with spiritual flowers and exotic herbs.

"What do you want this for?" Gao Xue Ting asked curiously.

"Alchemy," Yang Kai said insincerely, looking away, and continued. "Elder Gao, you know that I am an Alchemist, and I obviously want spirit grass for Alchemy..."

The corners of Gao Xue Ting's lips raised slightly, her smile barely noticeable, but did not further question Yang Kai's clumsy denial. She took out her communication artifact, transmitted Divine Sense into it, and said indifferently, "Let me ask. We should have it in the storehouse if this spirit grass is not a rare thing."

“Many thanks, Elder Gao.” Yang Kai quickly thanked her.

There was a long period of silence.

Yang Kai felt extremely ill at ease standing in the secluded cave mansion. He wanted to break the silence by starting a topic with Gao Xue Ting, but worried that she might prefer him keeping his mouth shut, therefore decided to continue the awkward silence.

Gao Xue Ting did not engage in a conversation. She just closed her eyes and meditated, completely unaffected by Yang Kai’s presence, as if he did not exist.

After a while, the communication artifact in Gao Xue Ting’s hand started to hum.

She opened her beautiful eyes, transmitted information with the communication artifact, and said to Yang Kai, “There is Facetless Profound Grass in the storehouse, a lot of it. How much do you want?”

“The more, the better!” Yang Kai was pleased.

“It looks like you’re planning to refine a lot of pills,” Gao Xue Ting snorted.

Yang Kai laughed shyly.

“What are you going to exchange for them?”

“Huh?” Yang Kai was stunned.

Gao Xue Ting said, “The Facetless Profound Grass belongs to the temple, it can’t be given to you for free, can it? What are you going to exchange for them?”

“Is Elder Gao doing business with me?” Yang Kai was surprised. He had never thought Gao Xue Ting had such a side of her.

“You can say so.” Gao Xue Ting nodded, “Were you planning to take them for free?”

Yang Kai said quickly, “How is that possible?! I was planning to buy them.” After a pause, he asked timidly, “Will you accept Source Crystals?”

“We’re not short of Source Crystals.” Gao Xue Ting replied without expression.

Speechless, Yang Kai said, “What do you use, if not Source Crystals, in business deals?”

“Hmph!” Gao Xue Ting sneered, giving him a thoughtful look before saying, “Forget it, I’ll ask Junior Sister Chen for their price.”

“Many thanks...” Yang Kai wiped the sweat on his forehead.

For some reason, he was always under great pressure whenever he was with Gao Xue Ting, a phenomenon that never happened even when he was with Wen Zi Shan, and he had no idea why.

A moment later, Gao Xue Ting looked at Yang Kai again, “Junior Sister Chen informed me that the Facetless Profound Grass cost a thousand Source Crystals a piece.”

“It’s a reasonable price,” Yang Kai was overjoyed.

“High-Rank Source Crystals!” Gao Xue Ting added.

Yang Kai was stunned for a moment, then jumped up and said, “Are you trying to rob me?”

Gao Xue Ting was indifferent, “Junior Sister Chen is responsible for the temple storehouse, and she decides everything for the storehouse. If she said it’s a thousand High-Rank Source Crystals, then a thousand High-Rank Source Crystals it is.”

Then she said, “What’s wrong? Are you too poor?”

“Not really,” sweat was beading and dripping down Yang Kai’s forehead as his face twitched slightly, “It’s just that... the price is not right. Elder Gao, have you made it clear to Elder Chen that Facetless Profound Grass is a Mid-rank Dao Source Grade spirit grass, and it’s not some rare spirit grass? It can be easily cultivated by any big Sect, so how could it cost so many Source Crystals?”

“Who do you think this Queen is? Your messenger? If you want to know, ask her yourself,” Gao Xue Ting’s already cold face became colder.

Yang Kai was embarrassed by her sudden outburst, he did not know what she was angry about, and was helpless.

“But...” Gao Xue Ting changed her tone. She kept her eyes on Yang Kai, making him shiver. He thought to himself, [Elder Gao looks cold as ice on the surface, but in fact, could she be as hot as fire on the inside?]

That idea scared him, making him anxious.

“Junior Sister Chen said that if you don’t have the money to buy it, you can... pay with your body,” Gao Xue Ting said meaningfully.

\*Gudong... \*

Yang Kai could not help gulping as cold sweat dripped down his cheeks.

“Don’t misunderstand,” Gao Xue Ting explained. “Junior Sister Chen meant that if you join the temple and become a disciple, you can enjoy a big discount, you can even have those Facetless Profound Grass for free, and you can refine as many pills as you wish”

“Become a disciple of the temple?” Yang Kai looked at her in amazement.

“Are you not willing?” Gao Xue Ting looked over coldly, her voice dropping a few degrees, “Are you looking down on the temple? Is it not good enough for you?”

“No, absolutely not,” Yang Kai waved his hands frantically. “It’s just that Azure Sun Temple is such a big Sect. Is it really okay to recruit someone without any procedures?”

Gao Xue Ting snorted, “Normally you’d have to pass all kinds of examinations and tests to become a disciple. To put it bluntly, the temple only recruits new disciples once every ten years. At that time, several hundred thousand people participate in the trials in Azure Sun Mountain Range and no more than three hundred are ever accepted. Even among these three hundred disciples, only half will become

true disciples while the others will remain outer disciples who never have an opportunity to enter the Inner Sect, but you..." she slanted her eyes towards Yang Kai, "We might be able to make an exception."

She looked at Yang Kai as if she just offered him a great deal, and it would be a great loss if he were to refuse.

"Hehe..." Yang Kai laughed dryly. "Then many thanks to Elder Gao and Elder Chen for their good intentions."

"So, what is your decision?" Gao Xue Ting questioned further, not giving Yang Kai time to think at all.

Yang Kai cleared his throat, fully aware of the seriousness of this question. He appeared to be calm, but his mind was spinning.

Soon, he replied, "Elder Gao should know that Junior is used to wandering freely and has never joined any Sect before..."

"What about the Blue Feather Sect?" Gao Xue Ting interrupted him directly.

Yang Kai stared at Gao Xue Ting and asked, "Elder Gao, did you secretly investigate me?"

Gao Xue Ting said lightly, "We performed a casual check, and this information wasn't hard to obtain. As you said, our Sect is a great Sect and has many connections, it's not a difficult task at all to investigate a few people."

The corners of Yang Kai's mouth twitched and said, "Then how much does Elder Gao know about this Junior?"

Gao Xue Ting said, "Apart from the colour of your underwear, this Queen knows everything, including that you're not a native of the Star Boundary."

Yang Kai was sweating profusely as he wiped his forehead, "Elder Gao is really well-informed."

On the inside, he was cursing out Bian Yu Qing. If he was not mistaken, Gao Xue Ting's source of information was definitely her.

Bian Yu Qing was just a Third-Order Dao Source Realm cultivator. If Gao Xue Ting really wanted information from her, there was no way Bian Yu Qing could refuse.

Yang Kai just wondered when Gao Xue Ting had done this.

"Since Elder Gao knows about Junior's past with Blue Feather Sect, Elder Gao must also know why I joined and what happened after," Yang Kai knew he could not hide it any longer and could only tell the truth.

"En," Gao Xue Ting nodded.

"I was quite unhappy during those months in Blue Feather Sect!" Yang Kai said seriously.

"Oh, don't worry, the temple is different from those small Sects like Blue Feather Sect. You will feel at home here. If you want, this Queen can even take you as her Disciple and teach you how to cultivate," Hearing this, Yang Kai gaped at Gao Xue Ting in surprise.

Her making such a proposal showed that Gao Xue Ting really wanted to recruit him into Azure Sun Temple.

However, even from an objective standpoint, Yang Kai did have such potential.

He was young and had good cultivation, an obvious target for all major Sects to compete for.

Moreover, he was a Dao Source Grade Alchemist and also a cultivator from the Lower Star Fields. He was strong and had a strong foundation, having also taken an Extraordinary Treasure Pill. In other words, it was only a matter of time before he broke through to the Emperor Realm.

Azure Sun Temple did not want to let go of a potential Emperor. His qualifications were enough for Gao Xue Ting to want to recruit him.

Of course, with Gao Xue Ting's aloof personality, this was not a task she would normally take up unless someone had directed her, and who other than Wen Zi Shan could be the person behind that?

Yang Kai figured everything out very quickly and was honestly quite tempted.

Gao Xue Ting's proposal was not very shrewd, but it was very sincere. During this period, Yang Kai also felt the sincerity and concern of the few Azure Sun Temple Elders and he got along well with Xia Sheng and the other disciples.

It was not a bad idea to be a disciple of Azure Sun Temple.

There would be all kinds of advantages to joining a great force like Azure Sun Temple and few would ever dare to challenge such a disciple.

However, Yang Kai had his own concerns.

His biggest concern was the Demon Spirit sealed in his body.

When he was possessed by the Demon Spirit and was reduced to a Demon that day, he had battled against Gao Xue Ting. If he really joined the temple, in the case that this information was disclosed, he was unsure what Gao Xue Ting would do to him.

The Demon Spirit of the Ancient Great Demon was not something that could be ignored.

Chapter 2246, Heaven Severing Slash

Yang Kai hesitated for a moment, unable to decide if he should join Azure Sun Temple and enjoy the cool shade under this big tree, or if he should continue to stay independent and free.

"Go back and consider it for a few days, then give me an answer once you have made your mind," Gao Xue Ting seemed to notice his dilemma, and instead of pushing him, she took the initiative to step back.

Yang Kai immediately breathed out a sigh of relief, "Many thanks, Elder Gao, regarding the matter of Facetless Profound Grass..."

"The price remains the same and we'll keep an account of it. I've ordered someone to send you a thousand pieces for now," Gao Xue Ting said lightly, "This account will be settled when you decide to become a disciple of our temple."

"Al... right." The corner of Yang Kai's mouth twitched, thinking that the Azure Sun Temple really valued him if they were willing to use such a method to keep him with them.

Then, there was a long period of silence again.

At a certain moment, Gao Xue Ting opened her beautiful eyes once again, "You may go. The person who will deliver the Facetless Profound Grass is already waiting outside, just talk to him yourself."

"Many thanks, Elder Gao!" Yang Kai turned and left after giving thanks to Gao Xue Ting.

When he was outside of the secluded cave mansion, Yang Kai saw a middle-aged man waiting for him.

This man looked about forty years old, but his cultivation was only at the First-Order Dao Source Realm. This level of cultivation may be satisfying in some places such as Maplewood City, since all the Old Ancestors in the various major families were just at this level.

However, this was quite lacking in Azure Sun Temple, so obviously this middle-aged man's aptitude wasn't the best.

Ever since Yang Kai came out from Maplewood City and stepped into this journey of his, he had seen countless rising stars and young talents, so his vision and experience were much broader than before.

As soon as the middle-aged man saw Yang Kai walking out of Gao Xue Ting's cave mansion, he hurriedly put a smiley face on and cupped his fists, "This one has brought a thousand pieces of Facetless Profound Grass by the order of Elder Chen. I wonder if your excellency is Senior Brother Yang Kai?"

"En!" Yang Kai nodded.

The man's eyes lit up and he praised, "I've heard about Brother Yang for a long time. Seeing you today, you really live up to your name."

"What? Am I famous in Azure Sun Temple?" Yang Kai touched his nose.

The middle-aged man said with a smile, "I'm afraid Brother Yang has been training hard in isolation these days, so he has yet to hear the news from outside. The name of Brother Yang is not just widely spread in Azure Sun Temple, but also across the entire Southern Territory."

"Is there such a thing?" Yang Kai's face turned solemn as he suddenly had a bad premonition...

The man did not realize the change in Yang Kai's expression as he continued to bootlick, "The news about Brother Yang refining the Extraordinary Treasure Pill in the Four Seasons Realm and overwhelming Wu Chang from the Heavenly Martial Holy Land has shocked the whole world. Brother Yang is extremely famous now..."



When he got to this point, he suddenly found that Yang Kai's face had turned ugly, and immediately figured out the problem. With a smile, he stopped his flattery and spoke after giving out a cough, "Brother Yang, these are the Facetless Profound Grass that Elder Chen asked me to deliver. Would you like to count them?"

"It's fine," Yang Kai reached for the Space Ring that was passed to him and thanked that man with his fist cupped before turning around to leave.

Although Yang Kai had predicted that some of his secrets could no longer be hidden after his involvement in the incident in the Four Seasons Realm, he did not expect that the news would spread so fast and so wide. It was outside of his predictions.

If so, he should seriously consider Gao Xue Ting's proposal to join Azure Sun Temple.

With the umbrella of protection of Azure Sun Temple, he could certainly avoid a lot of troubles in the future while without it, he would probably be hunted when he travelled around Star Boundary.

The cultivators in the Four Seasons Realm already knew that the Extraordinary Treasure Pills were all gone; however, matters related to the Extraordinary Treasure Pill were quite sensational. Some would still come and demand Yang Kai hand over the Extraordinary Treasure Pills he had...

The more he thought about it, the more frustrated he got. When he returned to the secluded cave mansion on Purple Bamboo Peak's mountainside, his mood gradually stabilized.

There was no need to be worried about this for now. If such a thing really happened, he would just have to deal with it then.

Moreover, he was not someone to be trifled with. Despite his cultivation apparently not having progressed since the Four Seasons Realm closed, his Soul had grown significantly inside the Divine Ascension Mirror World. Any average cultivator would not be his match.

Yang Kai would only have troubles if an Emperor came to seek him out.

But even if it was a First-Order Emperor Realm Master, couldn't he just run away if he couldn't defeat them?

When he thought of this, his mood brightened up and a feeling of pride kicked in. Yang Kai overflowed with indescribable self-confidence, which made him feel a lot more relaxed.

After he sat down cross-legged again, he took out the Insect Enslavement Bracelet and threw the thousand Facetless Profound Grass into it before stuffing them all into the jar which contained the Soul Devouring Insects.

According to the Exotic Insect Record, due to its medicinal scent that had extremely stimulating effects on the Soul Devouring Insects, Facetless Profound Grass was the best herb to promote their evolution.

This spirit grass was also very effective in helping the growth of the Soul Devouring Insects.

All of a sudden, a mad burst of cracking sounds came from within the jar, like the galloping noises of a golden-armoured horse.

After listening for a while, Yang Kai ignored it.

There was no way for him to interfere with the evolution of the Soul Devouring Insects. Only time would tell the final results of their evolution.

Withdrawing his Divine Sense, Yang Kai took out another object and placed it in his hand to study attentively.

It was another Emperor Artifact of the Insect Emperor, the Soul Splitting Saber!

Before entering the Divine Ascension Mirror World, Yang Kai never thought that the Soul Splitting Saber was actually a Soul-type Emperor Artifact. If it had not been brought into the Divine Ascension Mirror World with him, Yang Kai would not have realized this until a long time later.

Yang Kai would not consider refining it if it was just an ordinary Emperor Artifact.

These days, he had numerous tricks to handle his enemies. Without even mentioning all of the abilities he had personally created for himself, Yang Kai also possessed two Emperor Artifacts, the Annihilation Thunder Bead and the Myriads Swords. Unfortunately, the Myriads Sword had to be returned to the Qin Family when he went back to Maplewood City.

However, one could not digest well when being stuffed with too much good food. This was one of Yang Kai's concerns before, so he had not planned to refine the Soul Splitting Saber previously. On top of that, he had not been strong enough to do this anyways.

But everything changed since he now knew this was a Soul-type Emperor Artifact. Yang Kai needed to refine it now.

Having made up his mind a while ago, after he settled matters regarding the Soul Devouring Insects, Yang Kai began to refine the Soul Splitting Saber.

He thought that refining such an Emperor Artifact would certainly take up a lot of effort and energy, since even the Insect Enslavement Bracelet had taken him a full whole month to refine.

But, contrary to what Yang Kai originally thought, refining the Soul Splitting Saber was easier than the Insect Enslavement Bracelet.

In less than half a month, Yang Kai has broken the seal on the Soul Splitting Saber, erased the Soul Imprint of the Insect Emperor, and left his own Soul Imprint in its place.

After thinking it over, Yang Kai felt that there were probably two reasons for this situation. First, his Spiritual Energy was strong enough to shorten the refining time, second, the Soul Splitting Saber was once fused with his own Soul Avatar and fought together with him against enemies in the Divine Ascension Mirror World. This experience had strengthened the connection between the Soul Splitting Saber and himself, allowing him to refine it in just half a month.

However... Like with all artifacts, Yang Kai was unable to exert this Soul Splitting Saber's maximum power even if he had successfully refined it. In order to do that, a long period of nourishing and adapting was necessary.

Yang Kai sent the Soul Splitting Saber into his Knowledge Sea and then appeared before it in his Soul Avatar form. Next, he spared no energy to cultivate a certain Secret Technique with it.

This Secret Technique was learned from Tian Yan.

During his last days in the Divine Ascension World, Yang Kai learned a lot from Senior Tian Yan.

Tian Yan was a Great Emperor after all, and although he did not have a physical body, it was still a simple matter for him to teach Yang Kai some things at his level.

Tian Yan was extremely generous with Yang Kai and passed him almost all of his accumulated knowledge and experiences in the cultivation of the Soul.

However, in terms of Secret Techniques, Yang Kai only learnt one from Tian Yan.

Tian Yan once said to him that the quality of the Secret Techniques one possessed was more important than the quantity. If Yang Kai mastered just one extraordinary Secret Technique to an incredible height, he could still be invincible. On the other hand, learning many Secret Techniques to a sub-par level would only prove useless. All roads lead to one path, the same was true for Secret Arts and Secret Techniques.

As such, he only taught one Secret Technique to Yang Kai.

This Secret Technique was called the 'Heaven Severing Slash'!

During normal times, Yang Kai would cultivate this Secret Technique by nourishing his weapon with his Spiritual Energy; then, when he needed to use this Secret Technique, Yang Kai could unleash all of the accumulated energy in his weapon in a single strike, resulting in an almost certain-kill technique.

Tian Yan did not have a Soul-type artifact, so he only used this Secret Technique to nourish a weapon he had formed from his own Spiritual Energy.

On top of that, it was ten thousand years ago, when he was just an ordinary Emperor Realm Master, that he created this Secret Technique.

Tian Yan today did not need this kind of Secret Technique. He was a Great Emperor and could control Principle Strength to a high degree. No one in that world could stand against him in a fight, so why would he still need special Secret Techniques?

Therefore, he passed this skill down to Yang Kai.

Although the Heaven Severing Slash would only have a miraculous effect on the first strike delivered by the Soul-type artifact it was cultivated with, and subsequent attacks could only exert the original power of that artifact, the Soul Splitting Saber itself was an Emperor Artifact, so even if Yang Kai could not release its maximum power, few would be able to withstand such a strike given his current strength.

With the support of this Secret Technique, the Heaven Severing Slash, even an Emperor Realm Master could be severely injured if they were taken off guard.

This was a life-saving, certain-kill trump card, therefore Yang Kai spared no effort to cultivate it.

Inside his Knowledge Sea, Yang Kai's Soul Avatar revealed itself and continuously sent Spiritual Energy towards the Soul Splitting Saber, causing the flames around him to dance about madly.

With every crash of the flaming waves, the Soul Splitting Saber seemed to glow faintly and its aura would increase ever so slightly. This increase was almost unnoticeable, but if it continued to build like this, it would reach an astonishing intensity in time.

The first strike from this technique would definitely be Earth-shaking!

From time to time, Yang Kai opened his mouth to blow out a pure breath from his Soul towards the Soul Splitting Saber, tempering the strength within.

As the days passed, Yang Kai stayed in the cave mansion on Purple Bamboo Peak and cultivated the Heaven Severing Slash with his Soul Splitting Saber.

But he also spent some time checking in on Hua Qing Si and Zhang Ruo Xi in the Small Sealed World.

Ever since he gave the last Extraordinary Treasure Pill to Hua Qing Si and she consumed it unceremoniously, this woman's attitude towards Yang Kai had turned around completely. Although she did not act at Yang Kai's beck and call, she no longer rejected him directly as she used to and was much more accommodating.

Chapter 2247, It Only Brings Tears To One's Eyes

The Principles of the Small Sealed World weren't perfect... Although the Small Sealed World had absorbed a lot of Shattered Principles from the third layer of the Five Coloured Treasure Pagoda, its inner World Principles still lacked something and could never be compared to the Principles of the Star Boundary.

It was not a problem for a Master like Hua Qing Si, with her level of cultivation, to normally cultivate and comprehend in the Small Sealed World.

However, if she wanted to break through, the Small Sealed World was not suitable for her due to the imperfection of the Principles here. The Heavenly Way and Martial Dao that she could sense and comprehend from this place were insufficient to support her next breakthrough.

But when that time came, Yang Kai would definitely let her out and find a safe and proper place for her to break through peacefully. By then, Yang Kai would have a subordinate Emperor who could fight for him...

He was so excited just thinking about it.

Zhang Ruo Xi had also made rapid progress these days, and now her Second-Order Returning Realm cultivation had been fully consolidated.

The cultivating speed of those Favoured Sons and Daughters of Heaven paled in comparison to Zhang Ruo Xi's.

Something in Zhang Ruo Xi seemed to be awakening gradually, and as it did so, her cultivation speed only grew faster and faster. There was a gradual change in her character as well, as she became less timid and instead was imbued with strength and confidence.

This naturally pleased Yang Kai.

It had been two months since Yang Kai came back from the Divine Ascension Mirror World, and today, like the day before, he was nourishing his Soul Splitting Saber in order to cultivate the Heaven Severing Slash in his cave mansion. Suddenly, he sensed the barrier outside being slightly disturbed.

He immediately stopped his cultivation and returned his consciousness to his body. Taking out the control token, he then disabled the barriers.

A voice was heard from outside, "Young Master Yang, Young Master Yang!"

The voice was familiar and Yang Kai realized who the person was after a while.

He replied, "Please enter, Deacon Tao."

Outside the cave mansion, Tao Ming, who originally had a small grudge with Yang Kai a few months ago, heard his invitation and stepped into the cave mansion with a solemn face.

After a short while, he came to the secret room. However, Tao Ming at this moment had long lost his past arrogance and greeted Yang Kai with a flattering smile, "Pardon me for interrupting Young Master Yang's rest. This Tao feels deeply guilty about this."

Yang Kai glanced at him and said lightly, "Who sent you here? What news do you bring?"

Tao Ming's face turned solemn again after hearing this, "By the order of Sir Temple Master, this Tao is here to inform Young Master Yang that the item you need... has been found."

Yang Kai got up hastily as his eyes lit up and he called out, "Really?"

Tao Ming smiled, "Temple Master gave his word personally for this matter."

"Great, it's been found!" Yang Kai brightened up.

Although Tao Ming did not tell him what 'it' was, what else could it be other than the Tribulation Fruit?

Even though Yang Kai had been busy with the Insect Enslavement Bracelet, raising his Soul Devouring Insects, and nourishing his Soul Splitting Saber, he never stopped thinking about the matter of the Tribulation Fruit. It was just that the appointed time had not arrived, so he did not become impatient either.

Now, he finally received the good news.

He could not help releasing a sigh of relief, and his whole body relaxed, as if the burden he had been carrying for a long time was finally lifted.

After all, the Tribulation Fruit was a matter of life or death for Qin Yu.

All the opportunities that he received during these past few months were only possible because of the Bustling World Token owned by Qin Zhao Yang.

If he failed to obtain the Tribulation Fruit, Yang Kai would not have been able to give a proper confession to Qin Zhao Yang and the Qin Family.

This matter would definitely become a stain on his conscience and may even develop into a Heart Demon.

But now, he no longer needed to worry. Since Wen Zi Shan had ordered Tao Ming to send a message to him, it meant that the Tribulation Fruit had been found.

In this way, he could bring the spirit fruit back to Maplewood City, hand it over to the Qin Family, and finally untie this knot in his heart.

Tao Ming rejoiced with him, although he had no idea what Yang Kai was looking forward to. He just needed to flatter him.

“Right, Deacon Tao, did the Temple Master say where that thing is now?” Yang Kai asked after composing himself again.

Tao Ming replied, “Temple Master said that the thing is already en route and will be here within three days. Young Master Yang may rest assured that there will not be any accidents.”

“Good good good, thank Temple Master Wen on my behalf,” Yang Kai cupped his fists formally.

“If Young Master Yang has no other orders, this Tao will take his leave,” Tao Ming smiled.

“En, many thanks, Deacon Tao!”

Yang Kai sent Tao Ming off, but he did not feel like cultivating again after. He guessed that Wen Zi Shan had sent a message to him just now in order to let him feel at ease, but he also probably did not expect that Yang Kai would value the Tribulation Fruit so much...

Yang Kai felt like he was sitting on pins and needles in his cave mansion for the next three days, and early in the morning of the last day, Yang Kai left Purple Bamboo Peak and rushed towards Myriad Saints Peak.

When Yang Kai reached the temple’s main peak, before he could even announce his arrival, Wen Zi Shan’s voice called out from inside, “Come in.”

Yang Kai was startled... but quickly straightened up his clothes and stepped in.

There was no one else in the temple except for Wen Zi Shan, who was sitting cross-legged, seemingly cultivating some kind of mysterious art.

Yang Kai waited quietly and did not interrupt him after entering the temple.

Secretly, Yang Kai was impressed.

Wen Zi Shan was already so powerful with his Third-Order Emperor Realm cultivation, yet he was still so diligent and did not slack at all in his efforts.

For a cultivator, being untalented was not scary. What made a cultivator formidable was not their aptitude, but their will.

No doubt, Wen Zi Shan was a man of incredible will. It was not a fluke that he was able to reach the Third-Order Emperor Realm ...

After a short while, Wen Zi Shan ceased his work and opened his eyes. He looked at Yang Kai and teased, "What's wrong? Can't wait for it anymore?"

Yang Kai said shyly, "The earlier I see it, the earlier I will be at ease."

"En, a loyal and righteous spirit!" Wen Zi Shan nodded, "The Bustling World Token from the Qin Family was not wasted."

"It's only natural for a man to fulfil his promises," Yang Kai replied.

Wen Zi Shan nodded lightly, pondered for a short while before saying, "Have you given the matter mentioned by Little Xue Ting any thoughts?"

Yang Kai gave a wry smile after hearing this, "So, it was Temple Master Wen who asked Elder Gao to persuade me?"

"Yes, it was my idea, but Little Xue Ting also has great expectations of you," Wen Zi Shan admitted bluntly. "Besides, you have entered the Divine Ascension Mirror World, so you can already be considered half a disciple of the temple, yes? This is a secret that even ordinary disciples do not know about".

Yang Kai looked solemn and pondered for a long while. He seemed to be considering the words that he was about to say for a long time before finally opening his mouth, "Many thanks to the kindness of Temple Master Wen and Elder Gao, but Junior does not have any thoughts about joining any Sect for now. It is not because I despise or even dislike your noble temple, but... Junior has his own reasons."

Of course, what he meant was the Demon Spirit.

Wen Zi Shan gazed at him intently and nodded, "Fine, this King won't force you. However... if one day you grow tired of wandering outside, just come to our temple. Our gates will always be open for you!"

Yang Kai was slightly moved and bowed deeply, "Many thanks for your kindness, Temple Master Wen. If such a day does come, it will be this Junior's honour to accept!"

Wen Zi Shan grinned, "This King was like you back then, in love with the idea of wandering freely and enjoying life, but then..." The corner of his mouth twitched before he continued, "I picked up a little girl who fought like a wild cat for food in the wild."

The appearance of Gao Xue Ting floated before Yang Kai's eyes.

"So, bear in mind that you can pick up any treasure during your travels across the Star Boundary, but be sure not to pick up a little girl!" Wen Zi Shan said in a sincere and serious tone, "These little girls are cute, gentle, and obedient when they are young, but when they grow up, they will show absolutely no respect for you and become utterly heartless. Just speaking of this now... it brings tears to one's eyes!"

He looked extremely hurt, making Yang Kai feel speechless.

“Only brings tears to your eyes, is it?” A cold, emotionless voice suddenly came from outside the hall, causing the temperature inside the plummet rapidly. It was as if the weather had suddenly turned and winter rolled in, causing one to feel a chill deep in their bones...

Wen Zi Shan froze solid and his face twisted up, as if he had been hit by some kind of paralyzing technique.

A moment later, a beautiful figure slowly walked inside.

Gao Xue Ting, her face cold as ice, swept her beautiful eyes, which seemed to be filled with thunder and lightning, across the room.

Wen Zi Shan seemed to shrink to half his original height at that moment, and even Yang Kai could not help shivering.

A murderous intent and hostility filled the air.

“Show absolutely no respect, right?” Gao Xue Ting said flatly as the corners of her mouth curled upwards ever so slightly.

“Th... this is... tha... that...” Wen Zi Shan’s sweat was dripping down like a waterfall and his words cracked like he was stuttering incoherently. At the same time, his eyes kept swirling about as he forced himself to put on a flattering smile, “Little Xue Ting, wha... what are you doing here? Wh, wh, why didn’t you send a notification before coming in? I... i... isn’t this a little impolite?”

Gao Xue Ting answered coldly, “I’m here to deliver the Tribulation Fruit.”

Saying so, she tossed a jade box to Yang Kai.

Yang Kai’s eyes lit up as he caught the jade box and opened it with a flick.

The box was full of cold mist, and a crystal-like spirit fruit was lying quietly inside it.

[The Tribulation Fruit!]

Even though Yang Kai had never seen the real thing before, he could still identify it at a glance. By looking at the appearance of the Tribulation Fruit, it seemed that it was freshly harvested not long ago. If he wasn’t mistaken, this Tribulation Fruit was the very one that had been picked in the Realm of Winter in the Four Seasons Realm.

Yang Kai didn’t know which great force Azure Sun Temple obtained this spirit fruit from, but given the time consumed, it seemed that the Azure Sun Temple had put in a lot of effort for this.

“Utterly heartless, you say?” Gao Xue Ting did not intend to give up, however, and continued to stare at Wen Zi Shan coldly after handing over the spirit fruit, her eyes flashing like sharp swords.

Wen Zi Shan grit his teeth before putting on a strong expression and bellowing to Yang Kai, “Disaster has come, so this Temple Master will take his leave first. Take care of yourself! If you ever encounter troubles in the future, come to the temple!”

Yang Kai did not even have time to give his thanks before Wen Zi Shan’s figure flickered and disappeared.



“You want to run?” A cold light flashed across Gao Xue Ting’s beautiful eyes as she summoned her Radiant Sun Mirror Emperor Artifact. An intense beam of blazing sunlight shot out towards the void, and a moment later, Wen Zi Shan’s figure reappeared in that direction. Although Gao Xue Ting found his whereabouts, Temple Master Wen was still able to escape the Radiant Sun Mirror’s suppression with his extraordinary strength and disappeared in a blink of an eye.

“Old thing, don’t you dare run! Today I will show you what it really means to have no respect and become utterly heartless!” Gao Xue Ting ground her teeth as she stomped her foot and chased after Wen Zi Shan.

The disciples who were guarding outside watched this scene with their jaws dropped.

Yang Kai, who was holding the jade box, looked at the farce with a smile on his face. He kept smiling and smiling until he suddenly could not smile anymore, slapping his thigh in regret, “I forgot to ask about the Shattered Star Sea again!”

Chapter 2248, High-Grade Earth Vein

Maplewood City, Qin Family.

On the sickbed in Qin Yu’s boudoir, laid Qin Yu looking as pale as a ghost. She coughed gently from time to time and occasionally so violently that she could not even breathe.

An inexplicable Death Qi lingered around Qin Yu, one that even ordinary mortals who had never cultivated before could vaguely feel. Someone with a bit of cultivation could clearly see Qin Yu was enveloped by a faint black Qi with just a scan of their Divine Sense.

As time went by, the black Qi became denser.

No one knew what kind of energy the black Qi was, but since it appeared two months ago, it had been devouring Qin Yu’s vitality, making her condition worse day by day.

It was her World Tribulation Body Special Constitution, which was not allowed by the Heavens and Earth. Anyone with Qin Yu’s Special Constitution could not live beyond eighteen years of age, because the World Principles would cut off their vitality.

Beside the sickbed, a maidservant who served Qin Yu, gently wiped away the tears from her red and swollen eyes.

Qin Yu was kind and polite to both her Seniors and Juniors. Everyone in the Qin Family respected her, including this maidservant. The maidservant was in extreme distress that the Young Lady of the family was suffering from a serious illness and had weakened this much in just two months.

“What are you crying for?! Get out of here, you useless thing!” Qin Zhao Yang shouted in fury from the side.

He was extremely anxious these days, and the sight of this maidservant crying in front of him aggravated his worries and fury, so he could not stop himself from venting at her.

The maidservant fell to her knees in terror, but she did not leave, "Forgive me, Old Ancestor! Please show mercy! This servant will stop crying, but this servant will not go! This servant wants to stay and take care of the Young Lady..."

She begged repeatedly with utter sincerity.

Qin Zhao Yang opened his mouth to say something but could only sigh deeply, raised his hand to use an invisible force to lift the maidservant up. Restraining his anger, he muttered, "Forget it..."

He was too depressed and lonely to argue.

"It is this servant's fault. This servant did not take good care of the Young Lady," as the maidservant spoke, she silently wiped the newly shed tears from her eyes.

"Old Ancestor..." On the sickbed, Qin Yu gently called out suddenly. With another fierce cough, the maidservant quickly went forward to pat her back.

After Qin Yu had stopped coughing, Qin Zhao Yang said in a soft voice, "Yu'er, take a good rest. Don't say anything."

Qin Yu shook her head slowly and asked, "Big Brother Yang... Is he back yet?"

Hearing this, Qin Zhao Yang's face changed slightly, at a loss for words.

As Qin Yu approached her eighteenth birthday, Yang Kai was her only hope for survival, but there was still no sign of him.

Qin Zhao Yang could not help but begin to wonder if he had trusted the wrong person.

He had already investigated what happened in the Four Seasons Realm.

In the Four Seasons Realm, Yang Kai had performed an incredible feat of refining a legendary Spirit Pill before outwitting and overpowering the elite disciples of various great forces all on his own. The news had spread widely across the entire Southern Territory.

Maplewood City was a small city, but it was not difficult to catch the news with Qin Zhao Yang's effort.

However, the Four Seasons Realm had closed nearly three months ago, so if Yang Kai had really gotten the Tribulation Fruit, he should have come back to Maplewood City long ago. Why then had he not appeared yet?

Qin Zhao Yang did not want to be overly suspicious and pessimistic, but he just could not be at ease for even a day without seeing Yang Kai.

He did not know whether Yang Kai was too embarrassed to see him because he failed to obtain the Tribulation Fruit, or Yang Kai did not take the matter of the Tribulation Fruit seriously and had completely forgotten the matter.

The world was too big, so even if he planned to look for Yang Kai, he would not know where to start. What was more, he did not have enough time.

“Old Ancestor, are you suspecting Big Brother Yang?” Although Qin Yu was extremely ill, she was still as beautiful and intelligent as before and immediately knew what was on his mind as soon as she saw the look on Qin Zhao Yang’s face.

“Old Ancestor does not want to overthink things either, he just hopes Little Brother Yang can bring that item back as soon as possible, but... even if he didn’t manage to obtain the item, he should still return to explain. He is not omnipotent, this Old Ancestor can understand, but now he...!”

“Perhaps Big Brother Yang was delayed by some important matter,” Qin Yu said softly, but just as she had just finished speaking, she coughed again.

“Old Ancestor hopes so,” Qin Zhao Yang gave a wry smile, but he disapproved in his heart.

[Even if he was delayed, he could always send someone to deliver a message, right?] Deep down in his heart, he felt that Yang Kai probably took the Myriads Sword from the Qin Family and did not want to come back.

It would be fine even if he lost an Emperor Artifact like the Myriads Sword as, although it was extremely valuable, the Qin Family had declined so far that no one in the family could use its power anymore. Also, an ordinary man is innocent but his treasures make him guilty, so having such a precious treasure around might bring them more harm than good down the line.

But the cost of trusting the wrong person made Qin Zhao Yang feel extremely heartbroken and he secretly regretted that he had given such an important task to a person he barely knew.

If he had gone to the Four Seasons Realm on his own at that time, there might be a glimmer of hope that Qin Yu could be saved.

The deep sense of guilt and self-blame was the cause of Qin Zhao Yang’s sleepless nights and lack of appetite.

“Big Brother Yang will be back,” Qin Yu said with a determined voice, “He is not the kind of person who would take advantage of others and leave without saying goodbye.”

“Young Lady, at this point of time, why are you still defending that person?” The maidservant watched in distress, tears struggling to leak out again.

“You don’t know anything,” Qin Yu reprimanded her gently and continued, “Although I haven’t known Big Brother Yang for a long time, Old Ancestor, you should know that I have the Fated Fortune Heavenly Pupil, and my judgement about people is never wrong.”

Hearing this, Qin Zhao Yang’s eyes lit up, and he felt a little hopeful again.

It was true. Although Qin Yu did not have a very high cultivation, because she had the Fated Fortune Heavenly Pupil, her ability to assess others’ characters was incredibly accurate. With just a glance, she could sense if a person was good or evil, and if a person was trustworthy or not.

Without Qin Yu's advice, Qin Zhao Yang would never have given the Four Seasons Realm entry quota to Yang Kai.

"So Big Brother Yang must be delayed by something," Qin Yu ended the discussion before changing the topic, "Old Ancestor, don't worry about me and attend to your own affairs. I will get better sooner or later. In fact, I heard from Hui'er that quite a few important characters have recently arrived here in Maplewood City... and some are even residing in our Qin Residence?"

"En!" Qin Zhao Yang nodded, "Old Ancestor did not tell you about it because you were so ill lately, but it seems this little girl has been gossiping behind my back."

While talking, he glared at the maidservant called Hui'er.

The maidservant gulped, "This servant just told the Young Lady some recent news to uplift her mood. This servant dares not repeat it next time."

"I'll chop off your legs if this happens again!" Qin Zhao Yang snorted coldly.

"Don't be afraid, Old Ancestor is just scaring you," Qin Yu smiled and patted the back of Hui'er's hand.

Qin Zhao Yang sighed deeply, "The people in the family are all spoiled by you."

"Old Ancestor, what is happening in the city recently, why have so many people suddenly come?" Qin Yu asked, turning her head.

In the past two years, the peace of Maplewood City was consistently disturbed. First was the appearance of the Divine Spirit Luan Feng, attracting Masters sent by great forces like Star Soul Palace to investigate. Then, there was a Demon Qi explosion which besieged the city, causing a great deal of trouble.

The nearby Forest City was wiped out in the latter incident, but fortunately, the Demon Qi had retreated voluntarily in the end, restoring peace and calm once more.

If that wasn't the case, Maplewood City would likely be a desolated ruin by now.

After that event, a few Emperor Realm Masters worked tirelessly to investigate the situation.

The reason for the arrivals of these Masters this time was still unknown to Qin Yu, so she was quite curious. Although Qin Yu heard some rumours from Hui'er, she did not know any details.

"The source of this recent incident actually has something to do with the appearance of that Demon Qi last time," Qin Zhao Yang sighed, with a sad look on his face.

Qin Yu's delicate face slightly changed upon hearing this and she exclaimed, "Is it possible the Demon Qi that disappeared inexplicably has appeared again?"

Hui'er, who was standing next to her, trembled, with her face filled with terror.

"That's not it," Qin Zhao Yang replied, "The Demon Qi retreated inexplicably and has never appeared again. The reason for what is happening now is because a High-Grade Earth Vein has appeared beneath the seal that we visited last time."

“A High-Grade Earth Vein?” Qin Yu’s eyes lit up, “Has a High-Grade Earth Vein really appeared in our Maplewood City?”

Qin Zhao Yang laughed, “We, the old folk of the city, were surprised too. You know, the reason why Maplewood City has not attracted any great forces is that it is too small and the World Energy aura of this region is not very rich. There are also no special products produced here, so the City Lord’s Mansion has been able to take responsibility for all things all this time. However, when this High-Grade Earth Vein appeared, the situation changed...”

“A single High-Grade Earth Vein would not be enough to cause such a stir... could there be other reasons these great forces have decided to act?”

“Indeed!” Qin Zhao Yang looked solemn, “Near that High-Grade Earth Vein, it seems that many branches of Mid-Grade and Low-Grade Earth Veins have also been found. In addition, towards the direction of Clear Jade Mountain, a Source Crystal lode was discovered, but the grade of this mine is still to be determined!”

Qin Yu could not help feeling shocked this time.

She finally understood why Maplewood City had attracted so many outsiders.

A Source Crystals lode was enough to start a war over, not to mention that there were many Earth Veins of different qualities in this place too.

“Of course, great forces like Star Soul Palace would not pay any attention to these Earth Veins or a single Source Crystal lode, but the second and third-tier forces are all very interested in these things,” Qin Zhao Yang continued.

“Maplewood City is not the same anymore, there are already several dozen Third-Order Dao Source Realm Masters here, and if the benefits seem to be large enough, it probably won’t be long until Emperors begin to appear as well.”

Qin Yu listened intently, then said seriously, “Old Ancestor, during this critical situation, I don’t think we, the Qin Family, should get ourselves involved. Let us just wait and observe. We are no match to those giants.”

Chapter 2249, Ning Yuan Shu

“Old Ancestor naturally understands this,” Qin Zhao Yang forced a smile, “It’s just that the Qin Family has rooted in Maplewood City and we can’t stay out entirely... the Masters from the second and third class Sects were not willing to settle down in the various inns in the city and instead chose to stay in the residences of the few large families here. The Zhou Family, Du Family, Liang Family, and Xin Family have shown hospitality to a number of such forces each, and even the City Lord’s Mansion was wrested away by Flying Saint Palace!”

“Even the City Lord’s Mansion...” Qin Yu covered her mouth.

Qin Zhao Yang continued, “Flying Saint Palace is helmed by an Emperor Realm Master, while Sir City Lord is just a Second-Order Dao Source Realm cultivator. How could he raise any objections? We, the Qin Family, are already considered to be lucky by comparison as we only need to deal with one great force, but the City Lord’s Mansion... Haa... they are in dire straits.”

“What happened?” Qin Yu questioned.

Qin Zhao Yang’s face darkened, he said, “Zhuang Pan returned!”

“What?” Qin Yu’s face turned black after hearing this and she couldn’t help gritting her teeth, “That shameless coward still dares to return?”

Back when the city was besieged by the Demon Qi wave, the few Masters available had united and used the Black Tortoise Seven Points Array to forge their way towards the sealing place of the Demon Qi in order to stem its tide. However, before they could complete their task, Zhuang Pan had lost his nerve and, caring for nothing but saving his own skin, deserted the others and ran off at the crucial moment, leading to the destruction of the Black Tortoise Seven Points Array.

Although Duan Yuan Shan managed to escape at the last moment and bring Qin Zhao Yang and Qin Yu back to Maplewood City, they had failed to reinforce the Demon Qi seal. No one knew what happened next, only that three Emperor Realm Masters showed up right after and then the Demon Qi disappeared.

Zhuang Pan had not been seen since then.

He used to be a Vice City Lord of Maplewood City, similar to Drunkard. He assisted Duan Yuan Shan in managing Maplewood City and the surrounding ten-thousand-kilometre region. After he disappeared, the position of Vice City Lord was naturally left unfilled.

Duan Yuan Shan had tried to persuade Yang Kai to fill that position, but he kindly refused.

After that incident, everyone, including the Qin Family and Duan Yuan Shan, hated Zhuang Pan deeply. Duan Yuan Shan even announced in public that he would execute this cowardly traitor if he ever saw him again.

Who could have expected that this same snake would return just a few months later? How could Qin Yu not be surprised?

Qin Zhao Yang coldly snorted, “He didn’t just shamelessly return, he actually came back even more arrogant than before!”

“What happened?” Qin Yu frowned, vaguely feeling that there must be more to the story.

“What else could have happened? He sought refuge in the Flying Saint Palace!” Qin Zhao Yang sneered, “He was also the one who led the delegation from Flying Saint Palace into the City Lord’s Mansion. I bet City Lord Duan... must be suffering.”

Qin Yu was silent for a while after listening to him, seemingly imagining the helplessness Duan Yuan Shan must be experiencing.

With the backing of Flying Saint Palace, Zhuang Pan could parade around wantonly while Duan Yuan Shan could do nothing against him. Their situation had totally reversed from before, so Duan Yuan Shan must be incomparably frustrated.

'City Lord's Mansion' today was only an empty title.

"Every family is not having a good time now. The Zhou Family, Du Family, Liang Family, and Xin Family are all quite irritated by this foul atmosphere. Xin Gao Jie has come to me and complained about the bitterness his family is suffering several times already..." Qin Zhao Yang sighed with his head shaking slowly.

"Then our Qin Family..." Qin Yu stopped, swallowing back the words on the tip of her tongue.

"It's still fine so far," Qin Zhao Yang said in a heavy tone, "The Sect that came to stay in our Qin Residence is called 'Eight Paths Sect', a second-class Sect, and the young man who leads them prefers solitude so he can focus entirely on his cultivation, so our Qin Family has not been given any serious trouble from him. The same goes for this young man's subordinates, so we have been able to co-exist peacefully until now."

"That's good then," Qin Yu felt relieved after hearing this.

"Our Qin Family has it comparatively good," Qin Zhao Yang smiled faintly.

While they were still speaking, a sudden rush of footsteps was heard from the outside. It seemed that someone was running in their direction.

Qin Zhao Yang couldn't help but frown.

After a while, the voice of the maidservant rang out, "Old Ancestor..."

The voice quivered with uncontrolled emotions.

"Have a good rest, Yu'er. Old Ancestor will be back soon," Qin Zhao Yang did not want to disturb Qin Yu's mood with some trivial matters, so he turned to leave after comforting her.

"Old Ancestor..." Qin Yu called out from behind, "Be careful."

Qin Zhao Yang gently nodded and walked out. After closing the door, he flashed his eyes like lightning and glared at the maidservant.

The eyes of the maidservant were filled with tears as she began to speak but then hesitated when she noticed Qin Zhao Yang's stare.

Qin Zhao Yang walked out of the boudoir and the maidservant followed closely behind him.

After taking some distance from Qin Yu's room, Qin Zhao Yang asked, "What's the matter? Speak."

"Old Ancestor..." The maidservant hurriedly explained what happened just now.

Qin Zhao Yang's face darkened after hearing her explanation and rushed out to the rear courtyard.

Inside her room, Qin Yu spoke to Hui'er, "Help me up."

Hui'er asked in shock, "Young Lady, what do you want to do?"

"To see what is happening, I have a bad feeling," Qin Yu answered with worry.

"We have Old Ancestor with us, what could happen? In fact, Young Lady is the one who is not feeling well now, so it's better not to get up."

"Are you going to help me or not?" Qin Yu stared at her Hui'er with her sharp but beautiful eyes.

Hui'er panicked seeing this and desperately tried to dissuade, "Young Lady, this servant dares not without Old Ancestor's consent..."

"Then I will get up by myself..." Qin Yu grit her teeth and slowly straightened her body. It was just a simple movement but it already caused her to groan in pain and cold sweat to bead on her forehead.

Hui'er, watching from the side, was anxious like a cat on a hot brick and kept trying to persuade Qin Yu to stop, but her Young Lady turned a deaf ear to her pleas. In the end, Hui'er had no choice but to choke down her tears and assist Qin Yu.

...

City Lord's Mansion.

Inside the main hall of the City Lord's Mansion, a man who appeared to be in his twenties sat at the head seat. Although this man had an impressive appearance, there was a sinister feeling about him, as if he was always plotting some wicked scheme.

His cultivation was not high, just First-Order Dao Source Realm, but the air about him made it apparent he had a strong background.

This man was the current Young Palace Master of Flying Saint Palace, Ning Yuan Shu.

Ever since the last Young Palace Master of Flying Saint Palace, Ning Yuan Cheng, suffered from a sudden death, his younger brother, Ning Yuan Shu, had assumed the role of Young Palace Master.

Two Third-Order Dao Source Realm Masters were standing separately on either side of Ning Yuan Shu. One of them was expressionless and seemed to be resting his mind with his eyes closed, while the other one appeared like an old man but radiated a strong vitality.

They were the Left and Right Protectors of Flying Saint Palace, Gao Shan and Liu Shui.

Gao Shan was Left Protector while Liu Shui was Right Protector. Both of them were proficient in sound-based techniques and had mysterious combination skills that were incredibly powerful.

At this moment, Ning Yuan Shu was savouring the spirit fruits on the table with a smile on his face.

Below him, the former Maplewood City Vice City Lord, Zhuang Pan was staring coldly at a man, his facial expression filled with contempt and arrogance.

The person that he was staring at was Duan Yuan Shan.

Beside Duan Yuan Shan was Drunkard, who developed a red flush in his face and was most likely drunk. His eyes seemed glossy and drifted around the hall as his gaze floated about his surroundings.



“Is there some reason Young Palace Master has summoned both of us here?” Duan Yuan Shan cupped his fists and asked unhappily.

Anyone would be pissed if their home was suddenly intruded on by outsiders and taken over. However, considering that both Protector Gao Shan and Protector Liu Shui were present, and represented Flying Saint Palace, Duan Yuan Shan did not dare to resist and could only allow them to occupy the City Lord’s Mansion, which was supposed to symbolize the pride of a City Lord.

These days, he and Drunkard had tried their best to live in simplicity and stay out of worldly affairs.

But Ning Yuan Shu had asked for them today.

“Obviously there is a reason for you to be summoned! However, don’t you see that Young Palace Master is currently enjoying his spirit fruit? Just stand there and wait quietly!” Zhuang Pan rebuked sharply.

Just a few months ago, he had a conflict with Yang Kai during which the spirituality of his precious artifact was all but destroyed and he had personally been injured. At the time though, Duan Yuan Shan did not help him and instead took Yang Kai’s side to reprimand him.

Zhuang Pan loathed Duan Yuan Shan, so now that he had the chance to repay the humiliation from back then, he took full advantage of it.

“Ge...” Drunkard gave out a loud burp without any warning, filling the air with a strong smell of alcohol.

Ning Yuan Shu, who was seated at the head of the hall, frowned as he lost the mood to savour his food and unpleasantly dropped them.

“Sir City Lord... ge, why does this old man... wu... hear a dog barking... uhh...” He could only finish his one sentence in a few divided sections, looking so sloppy that it was embarrassing just looking at him.

“You...” His words and actions enraged Zhuang Pan. It was impossible for him to not understand that Drunkard was insulting him.

But Ning Yuan Shu waved his hand to stop his clamour.

Seeing this, Zhuang Pan did not dare to continue his sentence and instead just glared at Drunkard with hatred.

“City Lord Duan!” Ning Yuan Shu greeted Duan Yuan Shan with a slight smile.

Duan Yuan Shan frowned.

Although Ning Yuan Shu was smiling, Duan Yuan Shan could not help feeling a chill down his back, like some kind of venomous snake was eyeing him.

“What is your command, Young Palace Master?” Duan Yuan Shan asked solemnly.

“Father specially arranged the two Protectors, Gao Shan and Liu Shui, to keep this Young Master company for this trip out of the palace. Given that they are the strongest masters aside from my Lord Father in our palace, they actually shouldn’t be dispatched for such a simple errand. So, City Lord Duan, do you know why they are here?” He grinned lightly.

Duan Yuan Shan thought to himself, [What does that have to do with me? It was your old man who sent some men to protect you. Also, don't Young Masters like you always have some bodyguards with them when they are out for a trip?]

Even though he thought so, he simply replied, "I don't know."

"Heh heh..." Ning Yuan Shu laughed softly, "Of course they are here to keep me safe..."

Duan Yuan Shan's face darkened and he showed an expression that seemed to scream 'Are you messing with me'. [If this question was that simple, why did you even ask in the first place?]

As expected, Ning Yuan Shu suddenly continued, "Lord Father said that the public order in Maplewood City... is quite bad!"

Duan Yuan Shan frowned and asked, "Where did such a rumour spawn from? This Duan has governed Maplewood City for many years now and although the cultivators in the city might not be the kindest or easiest to get along with, killing and robbing rarely happen here. Regarding the statement about the public order here being bad, please forgive this Duan for not being able to agree."

Chapter 2250, Little Brat Surnamed Yang

"Really?" Ning Yuan Shu smiled slightly, but sinisterly stared at Duan Yuan Shan, "Then, may I ask, how did my Elder Brother die?"

Duan Yuan Shan shivered and frowned, "What does Young Palace Master mean?"

"Heh heh..." Ning Yuan Shu laughed and said, "My Eldest Brother, Ning Yuan Cheng. City Lord Duan, don't you know him?"

Duan Yuan Shan was silent. Of course, he knew Ning Yuan Cheng. When the Divine Spirit appeared last time, Ning Yuan Cheng had brought an entourage to Maplewood City. Duan Yuan Shan also knew that Ning Yuan Cheng participated in an auction fair that he had organized.

Ning Yuan Shu said, "As far as I know, my Eldest Brother went missing after he participated in your auction fair in Maplewood City. Although no corpse was found, his Life Lamp, which was placed in the palace, shattered, so obviously, something tragic happened to him. Even if the location of his disappearance was not in Maplewood City, it should not be far from here. Should City Lord Duan not give me an explanation?"

Duan Yuan Shan looked uncertain.

He thought that the other party was about to settle accounts with him.

Although Ning Yuan Cheng's death had nothing to do with him and he didn't even know anything about it, the last time he showed up in Maplewood City, he had a bad encounter. In any case, Maplewood City

should at least be a bit responsible. If Flying Saint Palace was really trying to hold him accountable, Duan Yuan Shan would have no way out.

Seeing his ugly face, Ning Yuan Shu laughed, "City Lord Duan, don't panic. Speaking of this, this Young Master wants to thank you..."

"Is the Young Palace Master telling this Duan a joke?" Duan Yuan Shan looked up with a gloomy expression.

Ning Yuan Shu shook his head, "Of course not. If my Eldest Brother had not encountered an accident in your Maplewood City, I would never have been appointed as Young Palace Master in his place. City Lord Duan, this Young Master should be thanking you."

Instead of feeling any joy, Duan Yuan Shan felt chills all over.

He rejoiced instead of mourning for the death of his own Elder Brother, excited to replace him as Young Palace Master, and even admitted it in public.

Ning Yuan Shu's repulsive personality was evident. Duan Yuan Shan would not dare to take people like him lightly.

From above, Ning Yuan Shu continued, "Although that trash died, his death caused the Sect to lose a lot of face, which is really heartbreaking. In addition... Elder Fu, who came to investigate the cause of my Elder Brother's death, also died in Maplewood City. Elder Fu was a Third-Order Dao Source Realm Master, a highly valuable asset to the Sect. His death can't be left uninvestigated. Shouldn't City Lord Duan give me an explanation for this as well?"

His face gradually turned cold as he spoke the last line, and he looked at Duan Yuan Shan aggressively.

"Elder Fu?" Duan Yuan Shan was startled. His face changed slightly as he thought of someone and whispered, "Is this the person the Young Palace Master is referring to?"

As he spoke, he stretched out his hand and waved forward, using his Source Qi to form the image of a person.

Ning Yuan Shu took a look, and nodded, "Exactly! He is Fu Si Tong from my Sect!"

Duan Yuan Shan's face changed drastically, and he murmured, "It turns out that he was your noble Sect's Elder, no wonder he had such a high cultivation."

He had just suddenly recalled this person and had not really expected him to be the Elder Fu that Ning Yuan Shu mentioned.

Duan Yuan Shan was not familiar with this Elder Fu, but when the Demon Qi wave enveloped the city, Duan Yuan Shan had recruited him as a candidate to form the Black Tortoise Seven Points Array that the Qin Family contributed. There was also another young woman with a Third-Order Dao Source Realm cultivation who was present at the time. Although Duan Yuan Shan knew that both of them were extraordinary, he did not investigate their backgrounds.

He only learned that one of them was an Elder of Flying Saint Palace today.

He pondered for a while, cupped his fists, and continued, "If Young Palace Master wishes to know how your Elder Fu died, this Duan can say a thing or two."

"Oh? Let's hear it," Ning Yuan Shu frowned.

"Young Palace Master must have heard about the revival of an Ancient Great Demon and an eruption of Demon Qi which occurred near Maplewood City a few months ago." He explained what had happened, including Zhuang Pan's cowardice at the last moment, abandoning everyone and fleeing.

Zhuang Pan's expression turned from red to green as he was unable to refute.

Gao Shan and Liu Shui both turned even more contemptuous looks towards Zhuang Pan, making the latter want to find a place to bury his head and never to show himself again.

"When the array broke, Demon Qi spread rapidly, and this Duan was unable to resist so he escaped back to the city with the Qin Family members, somehow managing to survive in the end. Elder Fu did not leave immediately but chose to stay behind. There is no way for this Duan to know what happened exactly, but since Elder Fu died, it was most likely because he was injured by the Demon Qi."

"I see..." Ning Yuan Shu did not show any doubt. He just pondered for a moment before positing, "In that case, it's not City Lord Duan's fault, but Deacon Zhuang's?"

He suddenly turned his gaze to Zhuang Pan.

Zhuang Pan cultivation was not low, at any rate, he had reached the Dao Source Realm, allowing him to obtain the position of Deacon even though he only joined Flying Saint Palace recently. He thought he would be making his way in the world but he did not expect that a few words from Duan Yuan Shan would cause tragedy to suddenly approach.

Zhuang Pan cursed Duan Yuan Shan viciously in his heart.

Sensing the coldness of Ning Yuan Shu's gaze, however, Zhuang Pan dropped to his knees with a thud in fright, causing Duan Yuan Shan and Drunkard to also look at him with contempt.

"Please understand, Young Palace Master, the situation that day was definitely not what Duan Yuan Shan had described. The reason why this subordinate did that was actually... actually..." He ran out of words and cold sweat dripped from his forehead.

"Actually what?" Ning Yuan Shu sneered, his eyes flickering as he questioned, "You'd best give me a satisfactory explanation today".

At that critical moment, like a light went off in his brain, Zhuang Pan said, "This subordinate realised that nothing could be done and so rapidly retreated in order to make himself useful and serve the Young Palace Master!"

After he finished speaking, he looked at Ning Yuan Shu with a flattering smile.

"He is really good at bootlicking!" Duan Yuan Shan whispered to Drunkard who was next to him, "I never knew that he was such a smooth talker before."

Although his voice was lowered, everyone in the room was a Dao Source Realm Master, so how could they not have heard him?

“Ge...” Drunkard’s eyes were barely open as he was totally drunk at the moment, so all he did was burp loudly.

Zhuang Pan couldn’t help glaring at them fiercely, his face blotched with patches of redness, feeling humiliated.

“Yes, it’s good that Deacon Zhuang has such loyalty. Here, have a reward!” Ning Yuan Shu, who was taken aback for a moment, suddenly smiled pleasantly and threw a spirit fruit to Zhuang Pan. The spirit fruit rolled along the ground and stopped right in front of Zhuang Pan.

Instead of feeling humiliated, however, Zhuang Pan laughed and cupped his fists. “Many thanks, Young Palace Master, for the reward!”

He bent down, bowed his head, held the spirit fruit in his mouth like a dog, and ate it.

Duan Yuan Shan could not stand it anymore and turned his gaze away, feeling disgusted as he remembered that he had once worked with this person before.

“City Lord Duan...” Ning Yuan Shu turned his gaze to Duan Yuan Shan again and said, “This Young Master has a request.”

“Please state it, Young Palace Master.”

Ning Yuan Shu began, “This Young Master is an outsider, and as the saying goes, ‘Strong foreign dragons do not test local snakes’. Since City Lord Duan still holds authority in this place, this Young Master hopes that City Lord Duan can help to find out the cause of the death of my Eldest Brother. If someone harmed him, the murderer must be found!”

When Duan Yuan Shan was about to open his mouth to speak, Zhuang Pan stood up with an eager expression on his face and said, “If Young Palace Master wants to trace the cause of death of Young Master Cheng, this subordinate does have a suspicious candidate.”

“Oh?” Ning Yuan Shu looked at him in surprise, “What do you know? Let’s hear it...”

“There is a little brat surnamed Yang, who had once used a certain flying ship artifact!” Zhuang Pan said, “And this subordinate had seen Young Master Cheng use the same ship artifact before. If this subordinate is not mistaken, that little bastard surnamed Yang must know something. He could even be the one who killed Young Master Cheng and stolen his wealth.”

“Is that the case?” A cold light flashed across the eyes of Ning Yuan Shu’s eyes.

“Indeed!”

As soon as Zhuang Pan finished speaking, Ning Yuan Shu suddenly struck a palm at him, releasing a surge of Source Qi. Obviously, this was a powerful Secret Technique. Zhuang Pan was shocked and just as he was about to react instinctively, Elder Gao Shan, who had been closing his eyes and concentrating the whole time, suddenly opened them and sent a flash of light over to envelop Zhuang Pan.

Zhuang Pan suddenly stiffened in place, and the next moment, there was a muffled sound resounding from his chest. Accompanied by a scream, Zhuang Pan was sent flying and slammed heavily onto the rear wall, coughing up a mouthful of blood as he became dazed and dishevelled.

“Young Palace Master...” Regaining control of his body, Zhuang Pan asked in a flustered tone, “Why?”

Ning Yuan Shu coldly snorted, “Why didn’t you report such important news earlier?”

Zhuang Pan, who was dumbfounded with his jaw dropped, muttered, “This subordinate thought...”

“You thought?” Ning Yuan Shu looked at him coldly, “Do you think this Young Master didn’t want to find out how that trash died? Hmph, although this Young Master despised him, he was still a member of the Sect. It is highly improper for a member of the Sect to have died unknowingly. The circumstances must be investigated and the murderer must be severely punished!”

“Yes yes yes, it was inconsiderate of this subordinate!” Zhuang Pan replied repeatedly.

“Where is that boy surnamed Yang now?” Ning Yuan Shu asked in a deep voice.

“I’m afraid Young Master will have to ask City Lord Duan about this person’s whereabouts,” Zhuang Pan wiped the blood from the corner of his mouth and looked at Duan Yuan Shan coldly, taking pleasure in his coming misfortune.

Ning Yuan Shu also shifted his gaze, looking aggressively at Duan Yuan Shan.

Duan Yuan Shan frowned and said, “He left Maplewood City several months ago, and this Duan doesn’t know where he is now.”

“Which Sect does he belong to? And is there anyone he was close with in Maplewood City?” Ning Yuan Shu asked again.

“This Duan doesn’t know which Sect he was from. He came to Maplewood City two years ago, and he does not seem to have any relatives in the city.”