

Martial 2531

Chapter 2531 , Guide

When Yang Kai activated the Mountains and Rivers Bell, its power surged forth and suppressed the Wild Force contained within the Wild Wine, which was indeed very similar but countless times weaker.

After figuring out the secret behind the Wild Wine, Yang Kai urged his Emperor Qi to dissolve its effects.

Pi San, who had returned to his end of the table, was already wolfing down the food like a starved ghost. He seemed to be aware that neither Yang Kai nor Zhang Ruo Xi were interested in the food, so he didn't say anything and simply focused on stuffing his face.

Normally, he would never be able to afford to eat at a restaurant like this, but since Yang Kai said that this table of food and wine was a reward, he would not be polite.

After some time, he finally sat back, rubbed his protruding stomach in satisfaction, and let out a sound burp.

Meanwhile, Yang Kai and Zhang Ruo Xi had only consumed half of the jar of Wild Wine. Yang Kai only drank one glass, while Zhang Ruo Xi drank the rest. At this point, her cheeks were already flushed, and her expression slightly dazed.

She was in the Third-Order Dao Source Realm, so the fact that a little under half a jar of Wild Wine could intoxicate her showed that the wine was indeed potent; however, part of the reason was probably also because she'd never drunk wine before.

"Since you've had your fill, I will ask you my questions," Yang Kai said indifferently, turning his gaze to the man lying relaxed in the chair.

Pi San shuddered and immediately sat up with a solemn expression on his face, "Please do, Sir! This lowly one will tell you everything he knows!"

"En," Yang Kai was quite satisfied with his attitude and continued, "I am here for the first time and know nothing about the Ancient Lands, so tell me everything you know."

Pi San fell silent as he organized his thoughts. After a while, he opened his mouth and said passionately, "Sir, since you've come to this city by word of mouth, this lowly one believes you are not absolutely ignorant about the Ancient Lands. It is a region that has never been occupied by man, for a legion of powerful Monster Beasts reside within it. There are countless natural dangers as well, so much that not even an Emperor Realm Master would be able to guarantee his own safety inside. In other words, cultivators who enter the Ancient Lands must be prepared to leave their lives there, for they may fall at any time. But of course, the greater the danger, the greater the benefits. All sorts of rare herbs grow inside, and there is no lack of other precious treasures. Thus, despite the dangers, countless Masters from across the entire Star Boundary are eager to explore this region. Countless people have met with

fortune in the Ancient Land, including the famous Yuan Ding Great Emperor. It is said that his signature Mountain and Rivers Bell was found within the Ancient Lands, and it was that very bell that allowed him to rise to seize the title of Great Emperor!”

Although everything Pi San had said so far was common knowledge that Yang Kai was already aware of, he didn't interrupt him and continued to listen attentively.

“The Ancient Lands is not a place that can be entered at will. The minimum cultivation level for those who wish to enter is the Dao Source Realm. Any lower, and they would lack the qualifications to even set foot inside.”

“There is only one path leading to the Ancient Lands, a colossal canyon that is shrouded in a thick and strange fog year-round. The fog is so thick that one would not be able to see their own five fingers stretched out before them, and it also interferes with one's Divine Sense. This alone doesn't pose much of a threat, but there's more... a deadly, invisible Astral Wind that blows from time to time. Any cultivator in the Dao Source Realm who encounters this wind... heh, heh... would be left on the verge of death. Yet, there is something even more dangerous than the gale, and that is... the Falling Thunder. It is as strong as an attack from an Emperor Realm Master and thus very difficult to resist. Several years ago, there was an Emperor Realm Master who ventured into the Ancient Lands for the first time. He was confident in his strength and didn't bother to gather information about the Ancient Lands, and as a result... he never returned. It was only three years ago that someone found his body just fifty kilometres from the entrance.”

“Masters from countless influential Sects have investigated the Ancient Lands and determined that the canyon entrance is filled with Natural Spirit Arrays. The mysterious fog, the Astral Wind, and the Falling Thunder are all produced by those very Natural Spirit Arrays. They appear sporadically, ungoverned by any discernible law. Therefore, in order to enter the Ancient Lands, luck is more important than strength. If you are lucky, you will be able to pass safely, but if you're not... only death awaits you.”

“But that's not all! ‘What other dangers could there be?’, you may ask. Of course, it's the danger of our own kind! There are people who lurk in the canyon and target lone cultivators, killing and then looting them. Such people are very familiar with the environment because it is essentially their home. Encountering them would prove more troublesome than any of the canyon's natural dangers. Therefore, you must never let your guard down while you're there, Sir.”

“Needless to say, beyond the canyon, the Ancient Lands themselves are also filled with danger at every turn. The entire region is covered in its natural aura, the Wild Force. No one knows exactly what this power is, but according to the people who returned alive, it can suppress your power by as little as less than a quarter percent to an entire half. Several Masters have fallen because of this.”

“That is also the reason I insisted that you and the Young Lady drink the Wild Wine, Sir. Although the Wild Force contained within it is much weaker than in the Ancient Lands, it will greatly familiarize you with the strange power.

“The most prevalent dangers are the ones you will face in the canyon, as well as the Wild Force. As for what dangers you may encounter once you enter the Ancient Land... Need I say more? Monster Beasts reign there amidst countless other Natural Restrictions and Spirit Arrays. It is even said that a number of

Divine Spirits reside within the Ancient Land. I believe that there is truly no place in the Star Boundary more dangerous than the Ancient Lands.”

As he listened to Pi San’s explanation, Yang Kai’s expression became slightly tense.

According to what he said, the entrance alone was already extremely dangerous, let alone the land inside.

He wasn’t worried about whether he would encounter any danger after entering, but rather about Xiao Xiao whose cultivation didn’t even reach the peak of the Origin King Realm when they separated. Could he have survived in such a perilous place?

As for the Wild Force, he didn’t pay it much heed as he was already very familiar with it.

After all, the Primitive Aura from his Mountains and Rivers Bell was far stronger than the so-called Wild Force. Moreover, as the owner of the bell, Yang Kai believed that the Wild Force would not affect him much.

Pi San, on the other hand, interpreted Yang Kai’s solemn expression as wariness.

This was the normal reaction. People would hear rumours and travel to this desolate city without knowing what dangers lay within the Ancient Lands and leave in dismay once they learned. Pi San had lived in this city for over thirty years and was no stranger to the occurrence.

He pondered for a while and then said, “Sir, although the Ancient Lands are filled with opportunities, if you wish to enter merely for the sake of treasures, you should leave. It would be better to take the Young Lady elsewhere.”

The table of food had cost Yang Kai 530,000 Low-Rank Source Crystals, yet he didn’t even bat an eye, thus Pi San was very grateful and couldn’t help warning him earnestly.

“I have other reasons for entering the Ancient Lands, ones that cannot be ignored,” Yang Kai responded.

He had to find Xiao Xiao.

“I see...” Seeing Yang Kai’s determination, it would be inappropriate for Pi San to continue dissuading him. Realizing this, he pondered some more, grit his teeth, and retrieved a jade slip from his own Space Ring. “In that case, Sir, I will give you this.”

“What is this?”

Pi San grinned meaningfully, “A map of the Ancient Lands.”

“There is such a thing? Yang Kai suddenly became interested and quickly accepted the jade slip. He poured his Divine Sense into it and saw that it was indeed something like a map, and it was very easy to read.

“This is just a map of the outskirts. No one knows how vast the Ancient Lands truly are, but after so many years of exploration, some information of the outskirts has naturally been revealed. Some have combined all of the information to produce this map which marks the known dangerous regions. You should try to avoid as many of these places as possible, Sir.”

“What do the black dots on this map represent?” Yang Kai asked after studying the map for a while.

“Natural Arrays. The darker the colour, the more formidable the restriction or array.”

“What about the red dots? Are they for Monster Beasts?” Yang Kai asked again.

“Indeed, the red dots signify Monster Beasts. Similarly, the brighter the colour, the stronger the Monster Beast.”

Yang Kai nodded slightly. He looked at the map again and saw areas with densely packed red dots, clearly symbolizing areas where Monster Beasts gathered. Those were the areas that even he would have to avoid.

Pi San laughed, “If it were anyone else, this lowly one would’ve sold them a simplified jade slip, but this one is the newest and most detailed, so you can use it with confidence, Sir!”

He’d finished an entire table of food and knew how to return a favour with a favour, making Yang Kai feel that he had not spent 530,000 Low-Rank Source Crystals in vain!

“Many thanks, then!” Yang Kai nodded.

“You are too polite, Sir,” Pi San can’t help being flattered, for he had never been treated so courteously by an Emperor Realm Master before. Despite his strength, normally, people would show a look of disgust at the sight of his face and try to stay far, far away.

Yet, Yang Kai brought him to the best restaurant in this desolate city and fed him an entire table of good food and wine.

“Sir, there is one more thing I would like to tell you.”

“Go ahead. “

“If you must enter the Ancient Lands, it would be best for Sir to find Old Ban!”

“Old Ban?” Yang Kai raised his brows.

Pi San nodded, “No one knows his true name, so everyone just calls him Old Ban. He’s lived in this place for far longer than me and is very familiar with the canyon. Sir, if you can get him to be your guide, your safe entry into the Ancient Lands will be guaranteed.”

Chapter 2532, Red-Clothed Girl

“A guide?” Yang Kai asked in surprise. To think that there was someone who could act as a guide for the Ancient Lands! It was quite relieving, actually, considering how dangerous this place was.

“You mustn’t look down on Old Ban, Sir. Although he is only a First-Order Dao Source Realm and is quite elderly, there is no better guide in this desolate city! This lowly one has lived here for thirty years and

heard others speak of him countless times. The most impressive thing is that he's actually entered and returned from the Ancient Lands over a hundred times already! Not even mentioning a hundred times, just being able to travel back and forth safely three to five times is already a big accomplishment. He is truly the most brilliant and experienced guide in the city!"

Yang Kai was visibly moved, "Over a hundred times? How is that possible?"

Pi San responded with a bitter smile, "I would also like to know, but it is a secret that Old Ban keeps to himself. However, this lowly one reckons that he must've established a safe route in and out."

"He is absolutely worth paying a visit to, then. Is he currently in this city?"

It was better to be safe than sorry. Although Yang Kai was a Master who didn't fear anything, the best option was undoubtedly to have a veteran guide him into the Ancient Lands.

"En, I saw him just yesterday; however, one must pay at least 300,000 Source Crystals for his service."

"That's not a problem," Yang Kai said with a slight smile.

300,000 Source Crystals was a drop in the bucket for him. The table of food Pi San had just eaten was worth over 500,000 Source Crystals already.

"Shall I take you to him, Sir?" Pi San offered politely.

Yang Kai nodded and thought for a moment before calling the waitress over once again. He asked her to prepare ten more bottles of Wild Wine for them to take away.

He didn't need to drink it, but it wouldn't hurt Zhang Ruo Xi to drink more.

Before long, the waitress returned with ten jars of Wild Wine. However, to Yang Kai's surprise, before he could take out his Space Ring to pay, the waitress smiled and told him, "Sir, the manager instructed me to give you these ten bottles of wine free of charge. Please kindly accept them."

"The manager?" He frowned.

Pi San, however, looked amazed.

"Why did your manager decide to gift me this wine?" Yang Kai asked, looking at the waitress.

"This servant does not know," she replied, shaking her head.

Yang Kai frowned again and waved his hand, withdrawing some Source Crystals from his Space Ring and leaving them on the table. Next, he threw the bottles of wine into his Space Ring and called out to Zhang Ruo Xi and Pi San, "Let's go!"

The waitress was somewhat stunned. It seemed that she had never seen someone refuse a free luxury, and before she could react, they were gone.

Outside of the restaurant, Pi San opened and closed his mouth several times before losing to his curiosity, "Sir, are you acquainted with the manager?"

"No, that was my first visit!" Yang Kai responded faintly.

“That’s strange. Why did they want to give you so much Wild Wine then?”

Yang Kai chuckled, “The shopkeeper gave them to me of their own accord. I neither stole nor swindled them, so there is no need to pay it any heed.” He paused and then asked, “What is the background of this restaurant?”

“This lowly one is unsure. It was established a long time ago, and the manager has always been mysterious and never appeared in public, so no one in this city knows the background of the restaurant. However, we believe that the shopkeeper has a great force supporting him from behind. They couldn’t have gained a foothold in this place and set up such a luxurious restaurant otherwise.”

For even a local scoundrel like Pi San to not know the restaurant’s background... it seemed that the restaurant really was supported from the shadows by a great force.

Yang Kai had refused the free Wild Wine precisely because he didn’t want to have any ties with the restaurant and regret it later on.

On the second floor of the restaurant, a pair of bright eyes followed Yang Kai’s departing figure. After a moment, this figure sighed and spoke, “Send a message to Young Master and inform him that the person he mentioned has arrived. It seems that he is about to enter the Ancient Lands, so tell everyone to be prepared.”

“Yes,” a reply came from the darkness.

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The city was quite vast, so Yang Kai and Zhou Ruo Xi had to follow Pi San for some time before reaching their destination in the western district.

Pi San pointed to a certain stone house in the distance and said, “That is Old Ban’s residence. It would be best for Sir to go alone, as Old Ban does not have a good impression of this lowly one. This lowly one is afraid he will be prejudiced against Sir if he sees me, so I will not be accompanying you further.”

Yang Kai nodded, “You’ve worked hard.”

“You flatter me, Sir. I wish you a smooth journey and a safe return. Farewell!” As soon as his words fell, he was gone.

“Let’s go,” Yang Kai said before walking directly towards the house Pi San had pointed to.

The houses here were all haphazard in appearance, but they were very sturdy and conformed with the overall look of the city.

Before long, they arrived in front of the house. It resembled a farmyard, fenced in by a wall made of layered thick stones, with a gate at the centre.

Presently, the door was open, and two black-clad cultivators were standing on either side of it.

They looked at Yang Kai and Zhou Rou Xi, their expressions cold.

“Hm?” Yang Kai made a sound of surprise. Did he come to the wrong place? Not only were there cultivators guarding the entrance, but they were also both in the Dao Source Realm. Judging from their auras, they were quite powerful.

However, according to Pi San, Old Ban was just an ordinary man without a noble status. Otherwise, he wouldn't be acting as a guide for a living.

“What is your purpose here?” One of the black-clad cultivators questioned.

“Excuse me, is this Old Ban's residence?” Zhang Ruo Xi asked.

“Don't know!” He replied coldly.

Zhang Ruo Xi frowned. She was annoyed by the man's flippant 'don't know,' as her question was just a simple yes-or-no question.

“What do you mean, you don't know? What are you doing here, then?”

The black-clad cultivator glanced at her, then he gave a slight sneer and didn't respond, greatly angering her.

Yang Kai glanced inside the house and then smiled, saying, “This should be the right place, but it seems that there is someone inside.” He turned his gaze to the black-clad cultivator, “Is it your Master?”

“You talk too much. You should hurry and scam out of here,” the cultivator on the right suddenly spoke up.

Yang Kai grinned, “Why?”

The cultivator on the left snorted coldly, “Are you looking for trouble? Didn't you hear me tell you to scam? “

“Isn't this the residence of Old Ban? What right do you have to tell us to leave?” Yang Kai wondered.

“Our Young Lady is inside. Scram if you don't want to die!”

Yang Kai was taken aback slightly by this situation. He didn't know which great force these two cultivators and their Young Lady belonged to, but it should be common knowledge that this desolate city was crawling with hidden experts. There was no telling when you might offend the wrong person.

However, seeing that these guards were completely fearless, the force behind them must be quite formidable.

Unfortunately for them, Yang Kai had killed a cultivator at the Third-Order Emperor Realm and even fought against a Great Emperor before. There were very few people in the world who could intimidate him.

He wasn't angered by these fierce-looking guards and instead said in a harmonious voice, “I've come to see Old Ban. Please make way.”

His eyes flashed as he spoke.

The two black-clad cultivators, who had looked so domineering and arrogant, suddenly groaned. As if they had been struck by lightning, they staggered back several steps, their faces pale.

A feeling of extreme pressure descended upon them, and they felt as if they had been pressed down by a mountain, making it difficult to breathe or even lift a finger. Cold sweat dripped from their foreheads, and they could only watch as Yang Kai and Zhang Ruo Xi walked past them.

Zhang Ruo Xi was still angered by their previous actions and even raised her fist to hit them.

Before they could step foot inside the house, however, there was a sudden yell, and then the sound of something breaking.

After a soft thump, a low groan sounded. At the same time, the shrill cry of a little girl entered Yang Kai's ears.

His expression sank and he immediately rushed into the house. He looked around and found an old man with grey hair kneeling down on the floor. His aura was First-Order Dao Source Realm; however, due to his old age, his vitality was weak, rendering his cultivation somewhat weaker than it should have been.

This person was most likely Old Ban.

His back was facing away from the entrance as he clutched a little girl in his arms. On his shoulder was a horrifying bloodstain, which seemed to have been caused by a whip, and there were even signs of flesh being cleaved from his form.

The little girl in his arms was crying loudly, seemingly extremely frightened.

Aside from the old man and the little girl, there were two other people inside the house.

One was a man who looked to be in his fifties, wearing a cold and indifferent expression on his face.

The other one was a young woman in a flaming red dress. She didn't look much older than Zhang Ruo Xi. She bore exquisite features and a voluptuous figure, which was further accentuated by her tight-fitting dress. Her appearance was like the embodiment of a blooming red rose.

However, at the moment, she was holding a whip in her hand and raising it high, ready to lash out. With a fierce expression on her face, she snarled, "Don't refuse a face-saving offer, you old thing. You should feel honoured that this Young Lady is asking you to guide her! If you dare to refuse, I'll kill you!"

The bloody wound on the old man's shoulder was caused by the red-clothed girl's whip, and it was also because of her that the little girl was crying.

"I'll ask you once more! Will you guide me or not?" The young woman asked as she looked down viciously at the old man.

The old man lowered his head and grit his teeth, "Young Lady, could you spare me a few days? Xiao Ling'er is ill and must be taken care of. If I leave now, she'll...!"

Chapter 2533, You Hit Me?

“What does this dirty brat being sick have to do with this Young Lady? This Young Lady’s time is very precious. Not even a moment of delay is acceptable, let alone a few days! I’ll ask you one last time, will you guide me or not?!” The red-robed girl coldly snorted, not the slightest bit moved.

Old Ban pleaded bitterly, “Two days, this old man only needs two days of time. After two days, this old man will guide you safely into the Ancient Land, Young Lady!”

“Since you’ve chosen to refuse a toast, you must drink a loss. You’re courting death, you old thing!” The red-clothed girl snarled. She was evidently incensed as she lashed out with her whip.

The young woman’s cultivation was not low. Like Zhang Ruo Xi, she was in the Third-Order Dao Source Realm. Yang Kai couldn’t tell what type of Secret Technique she was using, but as her rage increased, her attack also seemed to become more vicious, calling forth the peals of wind and lightning.

If this whip were to land, Old Ban, with his First-Order Dao Source Realm cultivation, would have no way of resisting and be left half dead. However, her whip was suddenly caught mid-air. The other party didn’t seem to be exerting much force, yet the red-clothed young woman found herself unable to budge one bit.

She was furious, and turning her head, she immediately caught sight of another young woman like herself who had appeared behind her without her realizing.

Zhang Ruo Xi was the one who grabbed the whip. Although she was ruthless and savage when fighting, her personality was still innocent and kind. She was naturally enraged by the atrocity occurring before them and intervened without needing Yang Kai to give the command.

“What’s wrong with you?!” she exclaimed.

The red-clothed girl frowned and snapped, “Who are you, little girl? How dare you meddle in this Young Lady’s affairs!”

Zhang Ruo Xi snorted coldly, “Who are you calling a little girl? Aren’t you one too? No matter what, it’s wrong to beat people. This elder said to give him two days. Can’t you see that the little girl is sick?!”

“You dare talk back to me?” The red-clothed girl was like an active volcano, always erupting in anger, “I’ll kill you!”

As she spoke, she tried to pull back her weapon, but no matter how hard she tried, she was unable to free it from Zhang Ruo Xi’s grasp.

Zhang Ruo Xi’s small, fair hand looked like it barely contained any strength, but her grip was like a vice.

The red-clothed girl’s face changed slightly as she realized Zhang Ruo Xi wasn’t as easy to deal with as she thought. Although they were both Third-Order Dao Source Realms, the red-clothed girl was clearly a spoiled, sheltered girl with no real combat experience.

She tried several times to get her whip back but always failed, causing her little face to turn red with embarrassment.

“Why haven’t you moved yet, Old Fu?” She stomped her feet angrily and grit her teeth, “This Young Lady has been bullied! If you don’t make a move now, I’ll go back and tell Lord Father to break your legs! And what are the two wastes outside doing? Their job was to stop people from intruding! When we get back, this Young Lady is going to take their Souls and turn them into slaves!”

However, even after she finished yelling, Old Fu didn’t move.

It wasn’t that he didn’t want to, but he couldn’t.

He’d noticed when Yang Kai and Zhang Ruo Xi broke in but he still didn’t pay them much heed; after all, they both looked young, so even if they had some skill, they wouldn’t be too much to handle.

When Zhang Ruo Xi moved to grab his Young Lady’s whip, Old Fu had wanted to stop her, but when his eyes suddenly met Yang Kai’s, his heart suddenly jumped, and then his mind fell into a momentary trance. As a result, he was unable to stop Zhang Ruo Xi.

Afterwards, he and Yang Kai just stared at each other silently.

In that moment, Old Fu was given a great shock, because he discovered that the young man in front of him was actually a genuine Emperor Realm Master!

[To think he is already an Emperor at such a young age. Does he belong to one of the great forces, or did he encounter a great opportunity in the Shattered Star Sea?]

Recently, many rising stars appeared in the Star Boundary, and it was no secret that there were many new Emperors. Old Fu believed that Yang Kai was one of those rising stars.

However, even though he was shocked, he still didn’t pay much attention to Yang Kai. Few people would dare to provoke his Young Lady, and compared to those few people, Yang Kai was nothing special.

Thus, under the repeated urging of his Young Lady, he finally took action.

A divine light suddenly shot out from his two eyes, and like a sharp sword, it pierced into Yang Kai’s mind.

“A Soul Technique!” Yang Kai raised his eyebrows in surprise.

Since they were both First-Order Emperors, Old Fu couldn’t unleash a Soul Attack as his first strike if he didn’t have absolute confidence in the power of his own Soul. Doing so was risky because if his opponent’s Soul was stronger than his, he would be dealt a strong backlash.

Judging from the strength of Old Fu’s attack, his Soul was indeed very strong, superior to most cultivators in the First-Order Emperor Realm, and almost on par with a Second-Order Emperor.

This was most likely the source of his confidence.

As soon as he unleashed the attack, Old Fu turned his attention from Yang Kai to Zhang Ruo Xi. He seemed to believe that even if the attack failed to hurt Yang Kai, it would at least force him back for a while.

When the red-clothed girl saw Old Fu moving to take action, she began to shout excitedly, "Good, good, good! Old Fu, grab this cheap slut for me. This Young Lady is going to ruin her face to show her the consequences of messing with me!"

Zhang Ruo Xi felt a strong pressure bearing down on her as Old Fu drew near, and it even became slightly difficult to breathe. When she heard the red-clothed girl's vicious words, her face turned pale.

She was only in her early twenties and hadn't seen much of the world. If her face really were to get ruined, she would have a hard time going out in public.

Although she was indifferent about her looks, who would want to experience such torture?

The visible panic on Zhang Ruo Xi's face gave the red-clothed girl a great sense of pride and satisfaction.

"Oh, now you're afraid? It's too late! This Young Lady will not only ruin your face, but will also strip you naked and throw you out so those dirty men outside can enjoy you!" She said, laughing happily.

Zhang Ruo Xi grew dizzy with fear, and her pale face became even more bloodless.

In her mind, she couldn't help but imagine herself naked and surrounded by countless men, and she almost started to cry.

If that kind of thing really were to happen, she was afraid she would be too ashamed to keep on living.

Suddenly, a cold snort sounded from the side, "Hmph! Which family's little girl is this? To be so vicious at such a young age!"

It was Yang Kai. Even as a man, he couldn't tolerate the red-clothed girl's words. Ruining Zhang Ruo Xi's face and tearing off her clothes? It was too cruel.

Old Fu, who had just grabbed towards Zhang Ruo Xi, suddenly began to shake from head to toe, as though he had seen a ghost in broad daylight. The powerful aura around his body suddenly weakened, and he staggered back several steps in shock.

Yang Kai had countered his Soul Technique. Fortunately, Old Fu was simply focused on protecting his Mistress and didn't use his full strength. Otherwise, the consequences would be unimaginable.

[This young man's Spiritual Energy... is actually stronger than mine?]

[How could this be?]

He knew very well how strong his Spiritual Energy was because in his early years, he came across the Waterfall Divine Grass, which allowed his Spiritual Energy to soar after it was refined. An ordinary First-Order Emperor Realm cultivator couldn't be stronger than him in this regard, yet this young man was not only able to protect himself, but also to deal a small injury to him in return. Was this young man actually a Second-Order Emperor?

He'd heard that there were many hidden dragons and crouching tigers in this desolate city, and apparently, that saying was true!

Old Fu turned towards Yang Kai with a gloomy expression.

He had thought that he would be able to run rampant in this city and protect himself with his status and strength, but now, it seemed that he was a little naive.

How many Monsters like this young man were hidden in this city?

Without Old Fu's aura oppressing her, Zhang Ruo Xi's spirit was immediately restored. Meanwhile, the red-clothed girl was still chattering away about how she was going to torture her.

Zhang Ruo Xi angrily let go of the whip and leapt forward, striking the red-clothed girl in the chest with a palm.

"Ah!" The red-clothed girl was still waiting for Old Fu to finish off her opponent and was caught off guard by Zhang Ruo Xi's palm. She screamed and flew backwards in the air.

Old Fu was startled and immediately stretched out a hand, his Emperor Qi sweeping forth to catch his Young Lady as he didn't even dare to touch her with his hands.

However, what bewildered Yang Kai was the fact that the red-clothed girl did nothing to counter Zhang Ruo Xi's palm. After she fell down, she simply stood back up, shook her head a few times and then stared at Zhang Ruo Xi blankly.

It wasn't until several moments later that she reacted, "You... hit me?"

She seemed to be in disbelief.

Then, all of a sudden, she became hysterical, as if Zhang Ruo Xi had done something absolutely unforgivable. Her beautiful eyes turned red, and her face twisted into a ferocious expression.

"How dare you hit me, you cheap slut!"

As soon as her words fell, the peals of wind and thunder sounded again and her whip sliced through the air, flying viciously toward Zhang Ruo Xi.

Zhang Ruo Xi was also stunned. She'd attacked the young woman in anger but didn't expect her to just stand there and get hit! Moreover, when her palm came into contact with this red-clothed girl, it felt as though she had struck not a human body made of flesh, but a mass of cotton.

It was her first time encountering something like this, so she couldn't help but become slightly distracted.

She returned to her senses just before the whip landed. Gritting her teeth, Zhang Ruo Xi flickered and reappeared again before the red-clothed girl. Her fair hands moved quickly, turning into countless afterimages as she pushed her Source Qi and sent a rush of fists towards the red-clothed girl.

Chapter 2534, You Have Something Else To Say

The red-clothed girl was clearly a pampered Young Lady from a great force. Although she was strong, she lacked actual combat experience. The state of rage she was in made her lose any semblance of control and she could now only lash her whip around haphazardly, completely unable to draw out her full strength.

Zhang Ruo Xi had not participated in many battles, but in the twenty-odd days she spent in Purple Mountain City, she'd fought countless life or death battles in the arena. As such, she had far more experience than the red-clothed girl.

Thus, their fight quickly became one-sided, with the red-clothed girl being completely suppressed.

Peng peng peng...

Zhang Ruo Xi landed blow after blow on the red-clothed girl, each one causing her to stagger and fall back, while none of her blows landed on Zhang Ruo Xi.

However, even after receiving several dozen blows in rapid succession, the red-clothed girl remained unhurt, and her fierce aura was not diminished at all. However, the fight did make her extremely angry and she was constantly yelling curses, her pretty face twisted into an expression that made her look like a man-eating monster.

"A defensive Emperor Artifact!" Yang Kai's eyes narrowed slightly, finally understanding why the red-clothed young woman was not injured.

With every blow that Zhang Ruoxi landed, the red-clothed girl's body would flash with a faint gleam of light, which absorbed the impact of the blows.

Such a powerful defensive ability could only be due to a defensive Emperor Artifact. In other words, she was definitely wearing a powerful Artifact Armour!

Emperor Treasures were rare, and defensive ones were even rarer. The fact that this girl possessed one proved that her status was by no means low.

Although the red-clothed girl was not injured, she was battered and exhausted by Zhang Ruo Xi. She was forced back repeatedly as she continued to scream fiercely, "I'll kill you, kill you, kill you...!"

After a while, she realized that she was not Zhang Ruo Xi's opponent at all though and shouted at Old Fu, "Why haven't you killed her yet, Old Fu?!"

However, Old Fu was also suffering. Yang Kai had just countered his Soul Technique, and although he wasn't seriously injured by the backlash, he could tell that Yang Kai was keeping an eye on him. Thus, he didn't dare to act rashly.

When he heard his Young Lady's call, he could only gnash his teeth and rush towards Zhang Ruo Xi. However, as soon as he moved, Yang Kai appeared in front of him like a ghost and unleashed a palm in his direction calmly as he stated, "You shouldn't interfere in the fight between the two young girls, Old Fu. An Elder shouldn't bully his Juniors."

Sii...

Old Fu drew a sharp breath of cold air and forced himself to draw back. Yang Kai's palm seemed absolutely ordinary and undistinguished, yet it brought him a sense of deadly danger.

He didn't doubt that if it had landed, he would've been left half-dead.

[Who is this little brat?! How is he so powerful?]

Even though he wanted to save his Mistress, his eyes were filled with anxiety and hesitation. There was nothing he could do now.

Meanwhile, Old Ban had long retreated to a corner of the house. He was still holding Xiao Ling'er tightly in his arms, protecting her as he watched the ongoing fight with a look of horror on his face.

Although he had lived in this desolated city all his life, he was only a First-Order Dao Source Realm cultivator in the end. Now that he had Xiao Ling'er to take care of, he was naturally afraid of provoking other people's anger.

But now, two young women and two Emperors Realm Masters were facing off inside his house, causing him to feel dazed.

Both groups of people seemed to come from great backgrounds, neither of which he could afford to provoke. Although he was grateful to Yang Kai and Zhang Ruo Xi for their help, he dared not say a single word and could only pray secretly for there to be no deaths.

Peng peng peng...

The red-clothed girl was forced to a corner by Zhang Ruo Xi's attacks. She was completely helpless, and all of the attacks she unleashed were easily avoided by Zhang Ruo Xi. It was as though she had become a sandbag, unable to do anything except passively accept the blows.

Fortunately, her defensive Emperor Artifact was extremely strong, and Zhang Ruo Xi was attacking without murderous intent. Therefore, although the red-clothed girl looked battered and exhausted, her life was not at any risk.

However, being beaten like this really made her lose all face, and her aggrieved eyes were red, either from anger or the urge to cry.

Old Fu was frightened by Yang Kai and couldn't help his Young Lady directly, so he gritted his teeth and shouted, "Junior, tell your little companion to stop and apologize to my Young Lady, otherwise the two of you will die!"

"You dare to threaten me?" Yang Kai coldly snorted, his chilly gaze sweeping over to Old Fu, causing the latter's heart to tremble and his throat to bob nervously.

Old Fu calmed himself down and continued, "I'm warning you now, my Young Lady's identity is..."

Without waiting for him to finish, Yang Kai turned his head and shouted to Zhang Ruo Xi, "She's wearing a defensive Emperor Artifact, Ruo Xi. It's pointless for you to keep attacking her like this."

Due to some unknown power, Old Fu felt a buzz in his head and became unable to finish his words.

“A defensive Emperor Artifact?” Zhang Ruo Xi was enlightened by his words. No wonder it felt like she had been hitting cotton the whole time. It turned out that, like her, this red-clothed girl was being protected by an Emperor Artifact!

“What should I do, then?” Zhang Ruo Xi stepped back and stopped attacking.

Although she was still angry, after being attacked so furiously for so long, the red-clothed girl also looked pale. Anyone who had been beaten so furiously without being able to hit back would be frightened, even if she was being protected by an Emperor Artifact.

Her eyes, as she looked at Zhang Ruo Xi, were now full of fear. No one had dared to defy her from when she was a child until now, and even if she had asked for the stars in the sky, many people would clamour to pick them for her!

She had never been hit by someone before, yet... today, in this dilapidated stone house, in this desolate city, she was hit by Zhang Ruo Xi over a hundred times.

Upon hearing Zhang Ruo Xi’s question, Yang Kai touched his chin and said leisurely, “That Emperor Artifact may be powerful, but it cannot protect every part of her body. Didn’t she say that she wanted to ruin your face?”

Zhang Ruo Xi immediately nodded and said, “Ruo Xi understands!”

As she spoke, she coldly looked at the red-clothed girl, her beautiful eyes sweeping up and down her face.

“You... What are you planning?!” As soon as she saw the malicious intention in Zhang Ruo Xi’s gaze, the red-clothed girl’s eyes filled with panic. She cried out and tried to step back, but how could she retreat when there was only a wall behind her? The whip in her hands had long fallen to the ground.

Old Fu’s face also turned pale with fright. According to Yang Kai’s words, the other young woman was going to hit his Young Lady’s face. With his Young Lady’s temper, he was afraid the whole Eastern Territory would be shaken by her rage, so he shouted loudly, “Listen carefully, little brat, my Young Lady is from...”

“I can’t hear you, I can’t hear you, I can’t hear you!!” Yang Kai shook his head back and forth like a rattle, and once again, Old Fu’s words came to an abrupt end as he was unable to finish. Old Fu immediately realized that Yang Kai knew that their background was extraordinary and thus didn’t want to know it, lest he regret his actions after knowing.

[How despicable and shameless!] Usually, even the strongest of opponents would retreat in fear after learning the identity and background of his Young Lady; however, because this brat was using some strange power to seal his mouth, he was unable to reveal their status!

Yang Kai then coldly snorted, “Ruo Xi, if anyone here other than me dares to say another word, slap that girl’s face!”

“Okay!” Naturally, Zhang Ruo Xi obeyed. Since it was Yang Kai’s order, even if the person standing before her was the Heavens’ Jade Emperor, she would still comply.

“You dare!” The red-clothed girl shouted.

Pa...

With a crisp sound, the girl's head whipped to the side, and a red palm imprint appeared on her left cheek.

Dumbfounded, she covered her cheek with her hand and stared dazedly at Zhang Ruo Xi. The burning pain on her cheek both terrified and amazed her. It wasn't until several moments later that she reacted, "You actually dared to..."

Pa...

This time, a red palm imprint appeared on her right cheek.

"Wa..." The red-clothed girl cried out as her tears streamed down like a trail of glistening pearls, looking completely heartbroken.

Seeing this, Zhang Ruo Xi frowned and threatened, "Shut up! If you keep crying, I'll slap you again!"

These words seemed to carry infinite intimidation, because the red-clothed girl abruptly stopped crying. However, her shoulders were still shaking with sobs.

She was really scared of being beaten.

Zhang Ruo Xi coldly snorted, "I only slapped you twice, yet you're already crying like it's the end of the world! Did you stop to think about your own actions when you were hitting the old man? He only asked you to wait two days! It's not like he refused to guide you! Do you even know how painful your whip is?!"

"Impudent little girl!" Old Fu couldn't help but shout. How could he possibly tolerate seeing his Young Lady be slapped and severely berated by this little girl?

In response, Zhang Ruo Xi raised her hand and slapped the red-clothed girl again.

"Sir said to hit you if anyone dares to speak. If you want to blame someone, blame the person who just spoke."

The red-clothed girl turned her head, her beautiful eyes erupting in rage as she glared murderously at Old Fu.

"Urk..." Old Fu shrunk back under her glare, knowing that his Young Lady would remember this and resent him for it.

Yang Kai laughed and looked at him, "Do you have something else to say, old man? If so, this Young Master is all ears!"

Old Fu's expression was frigid as he glared at Yang Kai, but he dared not say a word.

Who was he kidding? His Young Lady would be slapped if he said a single word. She already bore resentment against him for the first incident, so if it happened again, he was afraid she would make it so he wouldn't be able to see the next dawn.

However, he had already failed his duty as the Young Lady's guard, because he was completely helpless as she was being bullied. Who knew what kind of punishment would be awaiting him after they returned.

The predicament weighed down on his heart. He felt dizzy and sick, his stomach tossing and turning like wine in a shaking jar. He wanted nothing more than to faint right this instant. After all, what the eyes do not see, the heart does not grieve.

Chapter 2535, I Want Them Dead

"Do you really have nothing more to say, old man?" Yang Kai asked, smiling.

Old Fu's expression was calm as he stayed silent. He was old and experienced, so how could he fall for Yang Kai's trick? His Young Lady would be slapped if he spoke again.

Yang Kai turned back around and looked at the red-clothed girl, "What about you? Do you have anything to say?"

Tears were still streaming down her face, stinging her burning red cheeks. She didn't dare to say anything, so she quickly shook her head back and forth like a rattle.

"In that case..." Yang Kai's expression suddenly sank, and he coldly snorted, "Get out!"

To Old Fu, those words were like an amnesty. He didn't dare to say anything as he rushed to his Young Lady and enveloped her in his Emperor Qi, grabbed her fallen whip, and bolted for the door.

However, just as he reached it, he turned his head and shot Yang Kai a cold, hatred-filled glare.

He didn't dare to voice a blatant threat because he knew he wasn't Yang Kai's opponent, but he refused to leave in such a shameful manner. Thus, he chose to leave him with a meaningful glare.

Zhang Ruo Xi didn't stop them and only watched as they retreated.

After they disappeared, she made her way to the other side of the house, squatted down, and looked at the girl named Xiao Ling'er, "Don't be afraid, Little Sister, we've chased the bad people away!"

Xiao Ling'er's cheeks were stained with tears. Perhaps it was because Zhang Ruo Xi had saved her and her Grandpa, but at this moment, she wasn't frightened at all. She stared wide-eyed at Zhang Ruo Xi, seemingly curious about how this Elder Sister could be even more amazing than her Grandpa.

Old Ban stood up shakingly and cupped his fists, saying, "Many thanks to this Little Brother and Young Lady for your assistance. This old man will be forever indebted!"

If Yang Kai and Zhang Ruoxi hadn't come here today, he would undoubtedly have no choice but to leave with the red-clothed girl. He didn't care about entering the Ancient Land as he was confident he would

be able to return safely, but how could he rest assured knowing that Xiao Ling'er would be alone while sick?

"You are too polite, Elder. It was only natural for us to intervene," Zhang Ruo Xi smiled slightly, not taking credit.

Old Ban sighed and said, "This old man has implicated the two of you. May I know the names of my great benefactors?"

Having lived in this desolated city for so long, he'd naturally developed a keen eye for people. The red-clothed girl was undoubtedly of extraordinary status, and his benefactors had offended her for his sake. He was afraid the red-clothed girl would target them for revenge and felt extremely apologetic.

Yang Kai slightly smiled and didn't answer. Instead, he just said, "Elder, Xiao Ling'er's illness seems to be quite severe. It would be best to focus on her recovery and then leave this place as soon as possible. We won't bother you any longer."

As he spoke, he sent Zhang Ruo Xi a glance, signalling that it was time to leave.

Although his main purpose for coming here was to ask Old Ban to guide him into the Ancient Lands, he would have to abandon his original plan. He couldn't make the old man leave his sick granddaughter alone like this.

Furthermore, Yang Kai was confident that he would be able to enter the Ancient Lands even without Old Ban's guidance. There may just be some more twists and turns on the road.

He would only be making things hard for Old Ban if he asked him to guide them.

"Grandpa..." Xiao Ling'er suddenly called out in a weak voice.

Immediately afterwards, Old Ban shouted, "Please, wait!"

Yang Kai looked back at him.

"Little Brother, I presume you came to ask this old man to take you into the Ancient Lands?"

Old Ban had no other friends or family, so this was the only reason people visited him. It was what the red-clothed girl came for, and he had no doubt Yang Kai was the same.

There was nothing to hide, so Yang Kai nodded, "Yes."

"In that case, this old man shall ask the two of you to wait outside the entrance of the Ancient Lands tomorrow. This old man will meet you there and take you inside!"

Yang Kai raised his brows and said with a slight smile, "Many thanks for your kind offer, but... You should take care of Xiao Ling'er first."

Old Ban touched Ling'er's head and replied, "This is what Xiao Ling'er wants. I cannot disappoint her."

Yang Kai frowned, "But if you lead me into the Ancient Lands, where will Xiao Ling'er go?"

“I have lived here for many years and am not without connections. Naturally, I know a safe place that Xiao Ling’er can go to.” He paused and then continued, “This old man possesses nothing of value, and this is all I can do to thank my two benefactors. I hope you will accept this, Little Brother.”

At this point, it wouldn’t be appropriate for Yang Kai to keep refusing, so he nodded, “Very well. I will thank you in advance, Old Ban. Ruo Xi and I will be waiting for you tomorrow at the entrance.”

“Then it’s settled! Take care!” Old Ban cupped his fists and bowed slightly.

Just then, Xiao Ling’er suddenly called out to them, “Big Brother, Elder Sister, be careful! I’ve heard Grandpa say that it’s very dangerous there. You must come back alive!”

Zhang Ruo Xi smiled upon hearing her, “Okay! Xiao Ling’er also needs to take good care of herself and grow up quickly!”

Xiao Ling’er nodded enthusiastically. Her face, which was pale from her illness, blushing a little red.

After leaving Old Ban’s residence, Yang Kai took Zhang Ruo Xi and left the city, heading straight in the direction of the Ancient Lands. They found its entrance an hour later.

They searched for a quiet spot and sat down cross-legged, after which Yang Kai took out the jade slip given to him by Pi San and studied the map of the Ancient Lands carefully.

The Ancient Lands were filled with danger at every turn. There was no lack of Monster Beasts and natural arrays, and even an Emperor Realm Master could not guarantee their safety inside. Although Yang Kai was strong, he was not arrogant enough to enter without making the proper preparations.

Furthermore, he intended to use this map to see if he could find Xiao Xiao’s location.

Naturally, it would be best if he could find Xiao Xiao on the perimeter of the Ancient Lands, but if not, he would have to venture into deeper, more dangerous regions.

.....

“Kill, kill, kill, kill, kill them all!” A hundred kilometres away from the desolate city, on a deserted hillside, the red-clothed girl was seething. Her face was twisted with anger and hatred as she cursed incessantly.

She had never suffered a single loss from when she was a child till now, let alone get slapped in public.

Although she was terribly frightened at the time, so much that she lost the courage to even speak, when she got to a safe place, the humiliation and rage immediately surged forth. It was so suffocating that it almost made her vomit blood.

She had to get revenge, no matter what!

She grit her teeth and continued to curse as she held her whip and lashed at the two Third-Order Dao Source Realm guards over and over again.

These two cultivators were talented and had come from a powerful Sect. In the outside world, they could be considered top experts. However, facing the red-clothed girl’s whip, they didn’t dare to dodge or use their Source Qi to resist. They could only clench their teeth and stay rooted in place.

The whip fell once more. Fresh blood flowed, and flesh tore open. Their tattered clothes were already covered in blood.

There was also a burst of anger in their eyes. However, the anger was not directed at their own Young Lady, but Yang Kai.

In their minds, they believed that if it weren't for Yang Kai and Zhang Ruo Xi, their Young Lady wouldn't be beating them.

It was all Yang Kai's fault.

Old Fu stood beside them, terrified that his Young Lady would also beat him with a whip in her fury, and he didn't dare to speak up.

If he, an Emperor Realm Master, was whipped by his weak Young Lady, he would really lose all face.

Fortunately, his Young Lady seemed to be giving him some consideration. Although she was angry to the point of losing her mind, she didn't punish him openly. Instead, her whip only fell on the two Third-Order Dao Source Realm cultivators again and again, faster and harder with each lash. They were in so much pain that they couldn't help but look at Old Fu for help.

However, Old Fu turned a blind eye, leaving them to howl miserably in their hearts.

After venting for a long time, the girl finally seemed to be tired. Gasping for breath, she fell to the ground. Her clothes were damp with sweat, making her graceful body faintly visible.

However, no one dared to appreciate this beautiful scenery. Old Fu kept his gaze downward, while the two guards were practically on the verge of death. They stood there trembling and looked as though they could fall at any moment.

"Old Fu, send a message back to the palace and tell them to quickly send some people here!" The red-haired girl ordered suddenly.

Old Fu was startled, "What do you plan to do, Young Lady?"

The red-clothed girl sneered and responded, "What do I plan to do? What do you think? Of course, I'm going to capture those two dogs. I'm going to skin them, eat their meat, and drink their blood. I'm going to kill them!"

"You mustn't, Young Lady!"

"What? Am I supposed to expect you to avenge me? I know you're too scared!"

Her words were humiliating but true. He didn't dare to go up against Yang Kai.

Even so, he advised, "Young Lady, Sir said that he permitted you to leave this time so you can train your temperament. You cannot bully others again using your status. If Sir were to hear the whole story, Young Lady, you would never be let out of the palace again! Have you forgotten what happened three years ago?"

As soon as Old Fu mentioned 'what had happened three years ago', the red-clothed girl suddenly seemed to recall something and her face immediately turned pale and filled with fear.

Three years ago, she ventured out just like this and made a small mistake. She bullied several cultivators using her identity to get her way, and the next day, she was caught by her father and was put under house arrest for three years.

Three years, three whole years. It was truly torturous to be imprisoned for three years, so close yet so far to the noise and prosperity of the outside world.

Finally regaining her freedom wasn't easy. If her father caught her again, she was afraid three years of confinement would become thirty this time.

Chapter 2536, Limited Intelligence

After being reminded by Old Fu, the red-clothed girl dared not mention sending a message back to the palace again. She would be locked up while that dog couple would remain unscathed.

The red-clothed girl's eyes reddened with grievance, "Lord Father is biased! He lets Big Brother leave the palace whenever he wants, and he doesn't even have to take guards with him! Lord Father doesn't care if he slaughters people or sets fires to cities, but when it comes to me, I have to not only bring trash along but also abide by so many rules! Lord Father is so unfair!"

She was filled with resentment and kept on yelling incessantly, but Old Fu dared not agree to anything she said. His Sir possessed extraordinary strength and ability. It was acceptable for the Young Lady to say such things because she was his biological daughter, but if he were to agree and his Sir found out... he would lose his life!

"What should I do then?!" The red-clothed girl stomped her foot. Not being able to vent her anger made her feel uncomfortable all over.

It was impractical to ask the palace to send people over while relying on these three good-for-nothings was impossible, but she couldn't just let this go. If she did, she was afraid she would no longer be able to sleep at night! The humiliation would induce a lifelong nightmare, enough to leave a severe psychological shadow in her heart!

Old Fu didn't seem to have any ideas either as his expression twisted into one of bitterness.

"Waste, you're all a bunch of wastes!" The more she looked at Old Fu and the two guards, the angrier she became, until she burst out, "This Young Lady was bullied, yet you can't do anything! What use do I even have for you?!"

At this moment, Old Fu suddenly lit up as though he'd thought of something, "Please calm your anger, Young Lady! This Old Master may have thought of a good idea!"

"What? Hurry, let's hear it! If it succeeds in crushing that dog couple and helping this Young Lady get revenge, this Young Lady will reward you handsomely and even put in a few good words for you in front of Lord Father!"

Old Fu chuckled, "Being able to accompany the Young Lady is already the greatest honour this Old Master can have. There is no need for..."

"Stop dawdling and spit it out already!" The red-clothed girl interrupted him impatiently.

Old Fu lightly coughed and said, "The power of the palace cannot be mobilized, and this Old Master is not that little brat's opponent. If the Young Lady wants revenge, then we can only borrow the hands of outsiders."

"Outsiders?" The red-clothed girl's eyebrows wrinkled in confusion, "Who?"

"This Old Master will have to inquire about that first and see who in the vicinity can be of use to you, Young Lady."

Upon hearing this, the red-clothed girl's beautiful eyes suddenly brightened and she urged anxiously, "Then what are you still waiting for? When this Young Lady was still in the palace, those people were practically tripping over each other while trying to please me! Now that this Young Lady has a use for them, they definitely won't refuse."

"Yes, yes, it is an honour to be of use to the Young Lady! Who would refuse?" Old Fu smiled, spewing flattery as he withdrew a communication artifact from his Space Ring.

"Please allow this Old Master a few moments, Young Lady."

He poured his Divine Sense into the communication artifact, which emitted faint rays of light as it began to send out messages.

The red-clothed girl watched on eagerly with an expectant gaze. It seemed as though she could already see Yang Kai and Zhang Ruo Xi being surrounded by a group of people, kneeling down, and begging her for mercy... the thought of it made her incredibly happy.

Her heart was utterly ruthless. When the time came, she intended to make Yang Kai kneel down and lick the dirt off her shoes. Then, she would ruin the woman's face, strip her naked, and throw her onto the busiest street here.

[Anyone who dares to provoke this Young Lady will suffer the consequences!]

"I have found someone!" Old Fu exclaimed after some time.

"Who is it?" she asked excitedly.

"Some time ago, many people from the Netherworld Sect entered the Ancient Lands, including Elder Hua Fei Chen," Old Fu replied.

"Hua Fei Chen?" The red-clothed girl raised her eyebrows, "The Second-Order Emperor Realm Master who has a good relationship with you?"

"Yes, him!"

The red-clothed girl clapped her hands together, "Good! With Hua Fei Chen on our side, that dog couple won't be able to escape from my palm! Old Fu, quickly, send a message to those Netherworld Sect

people and tell them to get out of the Ancient Lands. Just say that this Young Lady has an order for him!”

“There is no need for that, Young Miss. We will be able to find him once we enter the Ancient Lands,” Old Fu said.

Upon hearing that, she frowned, “Find him? Why?”

Old Fu couldn’t help but think that this little girl’s intelligence was limited. How could she not even understand something so simple? If she were someone else, he would’ve slapped her already for her foolishness. However, since she was his Young Lady, he could only patiently explain, “Young Lady, what do you think that dog couple’s purpose for going to that old man is?”

The red-clothed girl looked at him blankly, “What?”

The corner of Old Fu’s mouth twitched. Still, he had to push down his frustration and explained, “What was our purpose for going to see that old man”?

“So he can guide us into the Ancient Lands!” The red-clothed girl exclaimed, “Didn’t the people here say that he’s the best guide in the entire city? Why else would this noble Young Lady go to that rundown shack of his.”

After she said this, she seemed to have been hit with a great realization, “That dog couple was also there to get the old man to take them into the Ancient Lands!”

Old Fu was relieved. [Oh, thank Heavens, you finally figured it out.]

It wasn’t easy on his conscience, but he had to praise her, “As expected, the Young Lady is bright and talented.”

The red-clothed girl coldly snorted, “Why did you have to make such a simple matter sound so complicated? You could’ve just said that they’re also going to enter the Ancient Lands!”

“Haha...” Old Fu forced a smile and then continued, “Since they are going to enter the Ancient Land, we should dispose of them there to avoid being found out.”

“Good!” The red-clothed girl nodded and waved a hand, “In that case, let’s also enter the Ancient Lands. Old Fu, send that Hua Fei Chen a message and tell him to cooperate with this Young Lady. After this is over, they will be rewarded.”

“This subordinate will obey!” Old Fu hurriedly cupped his fists in response.

Thus, the group of four rushed towards the Ancient Lands.

An hour later, they reached the entrance of the canyon. Not far away, Yang Kai, who was inspecting the jade slip, suddenly raised his head and glanced in that direction.

“What is it, Sir?” Zhang Ruo Xi looked at him questioningly.

“It’s nothing,” Yang Kai responded, “Just that the domineering Young Lady and her guards have entered the Ancient Lands.”

“Hmph!” An unhappy expression appeared on Zhang Ruo Xi’s face, “For people like her who don’t know the immensity of Heaven and Earth, entering the Ancient Lands is no different from courting death!”

Yang Kai smiled slightly, “Although she is spoiled and tyrannical, I believe she will survive the Ancient Lands.”

“Why are you defending her, Sir?” Zhang Ruo Xi couldn’t help but pout.

“It’s not that I’m defending her, but her background is certainly extraordinary. She must possess numerous treasures, so unless a great incident happens, her life should not be in any danger,” Yang Kai explained.

“An extraordinary background...” Zhang Ruoxi murmured, and she asked suddenly, “Is that why you let them go so easily, Sir?”

Yang Kai nodded, “She and that Old Fu are nothing to worry about, but if I really killed them, I’m afraid it would incur the wrath of some truly powerful figures. Moreover, she didn’t kill anyone, so hopefully, she’ll learn from this setback.”

“I doubt that’s possible, Sir,” Zhang Ruo Xi snorted.

Yang Kai glanced at her, then looked at the wine bottle in her hand, and said, “Wild Wine is good, but don’t drink too quickly. Focus on feeling the Wild Force, it’ll benefit you greatly once we enter the Ancient Lands.”

“Yes!” Zhang Ruo Xi replied softly. Perhaps it was due to the alcohol, but her face was flushed, her eyes slightly wet, and her breathing a little heavy.

Suddenly, Yang Kai thought of something and reached into his Space Ring, “By the way, this belongs to you.” He handed the item to her.

“The Space Spirit Jade!” Zhang Ruo Xi exclaimed softly.

“This is your family’s ancestral artifact, and it only reacts to you. Previously, since your cultivation level was too low, I didn’t dare to give it to you. Now, you have the ability to protect yourself. When you have the time, sit down and probe its secrets. You may be able to discover the secret behind your Bloodline Power.”

Zhang Ruo Xi accepted it solemnly. At that moment, the Space Spirit Jade began to give off peculiar fluctuations and images of a magnificent scenery appeared on its smooth surface.

Most of these images were of great rivers and spiritual mountains as beautiful as brocade, and among them, there were numerous glorious pavilions and towers. Countless rare Monster Beasts roamed the skies and land, emitting extremely powerful auras that startled the birds and insects.

Years ago, when Zhang Ruo Xi first touched the Space Spirit Jade, these images had also appeared.

Now, seeing them appear again, they were both at a loss. Neither of them knew what these images meant.

Yang Kai used to believe that this Space Spirit Jade was hiding a Space Divine Ability. After all, someone had once used it to cultivate the Dao of Space; however, he had probed into it many times and found nothing special about it.

It seemed that due to some mysterious mechanism, it would only react in Zhang Ruo Xi's hands.

Suddenly, she raised her head and stared intensely into the Ancient Lands.

Yang Kai looked at her sceptically and quickly asked, "What's wrong?"

It wasn't until several moments later that Zhang Ruo Xi snapped out of her daze and said, "Sir, something is calling out to me from there."

"Calling out to you?" Yang Kai was slightly surprised. The place Zhang Ruo Xi was looking at was the depths of the Ancient Lands, but what could possibly be calling her from there?

Moreover, it happened just after she received the Space Spirit Jade. Could the two be related?

"Are you sure?"

Zhang Ruo Xi frowned, then after a long silence, she shook her head, "No. It was there for a moment, and now it's gone."

"There may be a connection between the Space Spirit Jade and the Ancient Wild Lands. Maybe the jade originated from there. Inspect it carefully again once we enter, and you may discover something."

Chapter 2537, Shrouded in a Strange Fog

The next day, Yang Kai suddenly opened his eyes and said in a low voice, "He's here!"

Upon hearing this, Zhang Ruo Xi quickly put the Space Spirit Jade away, then she stood up and focused her gaze forward.

A figure was running in their direction, constantly looking around, as though looking for something.

Yang Kai sent out a sliver of Divine Sense to guide him, and the man immediately felt it and ran over, soon arriving in front of them.

"I apologize for the wait, Little Brother," Old Ban said.

"You are too polite, Old Ban," Yang Kai replied, "We'll be troubling you."

Old Ban smiled, "Rest assured. With me as your guide, entering the Ancient Lands safely is guaranteed!" When he said this, his face was filled with confidence. It was a stark contrast from the submissiveness he showed when he was beaten by the red-clothed girl the day before.

Yang Kai nodded to himself. Pi San was right to introduce Old Ban to him.

His cultivation level may be low, but Old Ban had undoubtedly mastered a safe passage to and from the Ancient Lands, or at least understood some of the patterns there. Otherwise, with his cultivation, he would not be so confident.

“The two of you should refine this before we enter the Ancient Lands,” Old Ban said, handing something to Yang Kai and Zhang Ruo Xi.

Yang Kai took it and found that it was something similar to a Sound Bead, but not exactly. Moreover, the workmanship was extremely rough. It didn’t look like it was made by a professional Artifact Refiner, but rather a random person with whatever materials they had.

“What is this?” Yang Kai looked at Old Ban questioningly.

“The Ancient Lands Passageway is shrouded in a strange fog that interferes with one’s Divine Sense. It is easy to get lost if you enter without guidance. This old man gathered some stones from the passageway and created these Communication Beads. They can be used to sense each other’s locations and will be unaffected by the strange fog; however, the detection range is only one hundred metres, so the two of you must follow me closely,” Old Ban explained.

Yang Kai nodded to express his understanding, “Good!”

Afterward, he and Zhang Ruo Xi began to refine the jade beads.

They weren’t difficult to refine, and after only a stick of incense’s worth of time, they both finished. As they held them in the palms of their hands, they could clearly sense the location of the other two jade beads. It was extremely convenient.

Old Ban was right. With the help of these jade beads, it would be very unlikely for him to lose Zhang Ruo Xi and Old Ban.

“Now that we’re ready, let’s go. Before we enter though, this old man must remind you again that you must stay close to me! Otherwise, if you get lost, it will be difficult to find your way out again.”

Old Ban solemnly warned Yang Kai to not be dependent on his cultivation, even giving a special example, “Over thirty years ago, an Emperor Realm Master got lost and remained in the strange fog for an entire decade.”

“Ten years!” Yang Kai exclaimed in shock.

Old Ban nodded solemnly, “Indeed.”

“How come you know such specific details about it, Old Ban?” Zhang Ruo Xi asked. She wasn’t doubting him, but just curious.

Even if an Emperor Realm Master was lost in the strange fog for ten years, how would an outsider like Old Ban know? Even if he knew the Ancient Lands Passageway like the palm of his hand, his cultivation level wasn’t high enough for him to be able to observe a person for ten years under the interference of the strange fog.

“Because in those ten years, I encountered that person many times in the passageway. Every time, I would see her wandering aimlessly like a ghost. I was almost injured by her multiple times, but thankfully, I was able to run away,” he replied.

“What happened to that person in the end?” She asked nervously.

Old Ban shook his head, “I don’t know. Maybe she died somewhere inside the passageway, or maybe she found an opportunity to escape twenty years ago. Nonetheless, I never saw her again. She seemed to have been trapped there for a long time, so her consciousness became a little muddled.”

“How pitiful!” Zhang Ruo Xi sighed.

A woman, no matter how strong, was still a woman. How did she spend those ten years, trapped and alone in the strange fog? Did she escape or die in the end?

[What would become of me if I were to be trapped for ten years in this strange fog?] Zhang Ruo Xi shuddered while thinking about it.

However, this was just an anecdote from the past that Old Ban mentioned with the intent of warning Yang Kai and Zhang Ruo Xi to be careful, nothing more.

“Rest assured, Old Ban. We’ll stay beside you at all times,” Yang Kai reassured.

“Alright, then. Let’s go,” Old Ban nodded, waved his hand, and headed towards the Ancient Lands Passageway.

Yang Kai and Zhang Ruo Xi followed closely.

While they were waiting for Old Ban, Yang Kai had taken some time to inspect the Ancient Lands Passageway. It appeared to be a large canyon spanning over a dozen kilometres in width and an untold distance in depth. Countless cultivators had entered, each one looking more confident and energetic than the last, eager to go inside and hunt for treasures. This included the red-clothed girl’s entourage.

For the first twenty kilometres or so, it was still relatively easy to see. Even if there was some fog, it didn’t affect their vision. However, the deeper they traveled, the thicker the fog became, and at around fifty kilometres, they would no longer be able to see their fingers.

When Yang Kai tried to use his Divine Sense to probe around him, he felt that he was trying to stretch an elastic piece of cotton. His Divine Sense bounced back, so he couldn’t see any deeper into the fog.

Of course, he wasn’t surprised as he’d long known about this strange fog that could turn many of the cultivators in the desolate city pale just at its mention.

Old Ban moved like he was flying, without rest, and before long, they reached the fifty-kilometre mark.

At this point, the strange fog took full effect.

Yang Kai and Zhang Ruo Xi suddenly felt like they had plunged into the bottomless deep sea. Their vision became dark, and even their Divine Senses could only extend about ten metres from their bodies.

Yang Kai was shocked. [Nature really is uncanny. A normal person would never be able to set up such a powerful restriction. If this strange fog was placed around a Sect, it would undoubtedly be comparable

to one of the greatest Sect Defending Arrays. Anyone who dared to invade would get completely lost in it.]

Although he was a First-Order Emperor Realm Master, his Divine Sense was no worse than a Second-Order Emperor Realm Master's. Yet, even he couldn't penetrate this strange fog.

How many people in the Star Boundary would be capable of prying into the dangers and secrets of this strange fog?

Perhaps only a Third-Order Emperor Realm Master would be able to do this.

After stepping into the area of strange fog, Old Ban suddenly slowed down his steps and quickly said, "Now, you must focus on the jade beads and follow my location closely, so we don't get separated."

"Yes!" Behind him, Zhang Ruo Xi nodded repeatedly.

In fact, there was no need for another reminder. Yang Kai and Zhang Ruo Xi had already grasped jade beads in their hands and poured their Divine Sense inside as soon as they entered the strange fog.

This way, even though they couldn't see in front of them and the range of their Divine Sense was limited, they could still follow Old Ban.

Kacha...

An odd, creepy crunch sounded beneath their feet, as though they had stepped on something and crushed it.

Curious, Yang Kai let out some Divine Sense to investigate. When he saw what was beneath his feet, he couldn't help but suck in a breath.

Because the ground here was covered with white bones from an untold number of skeletons. Having been weathered for so long, they were extremely brittle and immediately turned into dust when trodden upon.

Yang Kai quietly looked at Zhang Ruo Xi and saw that she didn't seem to be too scared. Although she looked a little nervous, it wasn't fear, so he was relieved.

She was quick to adapt.

Old Ban's voice came from the front, "Through the ages, countless heroes have died in the Ancient Lands Passageway. This place is almost entirely paved with white bones. Their flesh and blood withered away, but their skeletons remained here. Sometimes, their Souls find the opportunity to continue on, possibly as a result of the bizarre characteristics of this fog, making it easy for them to become Yin Souls."

"Yin Souls!" Zhang Ruo Xi shuddered, goosebumps raising all over her body.

She wasn't afraid of the bones on the ground, but the mention of the Yin Souls frightened her greatly.

Old Ban continued, "They hide in this strange fog and come out to attack people from time to time. As a matter of fact, they are one of the three fatal dangers of the Ancient Lands Passageway. Regular Yin Souls aside, it would be extremely troublesome if we encounter a Ghost General or Ghost Lord. Not only

that, but at the heart of the passageway, there is a powerful Ghost King! It is said to be transformed from the Soul of a dead Second-Order Emperor Realm Master. Anyone who has even the slightest understanding of the passageway knows this and would avoid the central region.”

As he was speaking, Zhang Ruo Xi suddenly cried out as though frightened by something.

Immediate after, she unleashed her Source Qi and sent a fierce blow in a certain direction.

The energy surged forth with terrifying momentum, and in that direction, there was suddenly a shrill cry as sharp as a baby’s wail at night.

The instant she made a move, Yang Kai had sent out his Divine Sense to investigate. He found at an unknown point in time, half a metre to her right, a strange energy hidden within the fog which gathered into a distorted face had approached her and was staring at her curiously.

But with Zhang Ruo Xi’s blow, the distorted face immediately became ferocious.

Old Ban’s face changed, and he whispered, “A Yin Soul?”

He was the weakest in their group, so even if he sent out his Divine Sense, he wouldn’t be able to tell what had happened to Zhang Ruo Xi, so he could only ask Yang Kai.

Chapter 2538, Falling Thunder

Upon hearing Old Ban’s question, Zhang Ruo Xi said in a trembling voice, “I don’t know if it’s a Yin Soul, but it has no physical body... and it seems to be very angry!”

“Ordinary attacks have no effect on them, so when it draws near, use a Soul Attack. Don’t be afraid, Young Lady, with your cultivation, an ordinary Yin Soul cannot harm you. Only the Ghosts with higher cultivation, like a Ghost General or Ghost Lord, could pose a threat, so you must remain calm and act accordingly!” Old Ban quickly told her. He seemed to be quite familiar with encounters like this and knew how to handle them.

Zhang Ruo Xi took a deep breath and spread out her Divine Sense, paying attention to the movement of the Yin Soul.

It appeared that the Yin Soul was indeed enraged after being attacked. Its distorted facial features became even more ferocious and twisted and its semi-transparent body retreated slightly into the strange fog, then rolled up into a chilling gust of wind and lunged at Zhang Ruo Xi.

Before it reached her, a sharp scream could be heard. It was not only harsh but also contained a kind of strange Spiritual Energy that threatened to tear through Zhang Ruo Xi’s Knowledge Sea defences.

However, after being warned by Old Ban, Zhang Ruo Xi was prepared. Although her face was still a little pale, she didn’t make a sound, waiting until the moment the Yin Soul was just a metre away from her before suddenly releasing a burst of pure Spiritual Energy.

The Yin Soul's semi-transparent body was like a water droplet that bumped into a hard surface, suddenly splitting and disappearing with a shrill scream.

"Ha..." Zhang Ruo Xi took a breath and slowly calmed down.

After killing a Yin Soul herself, she realized they weren't that scary after all.

At the front, Old Ban reminded, "The Yin Souls here can be dealt with by even this old man, so long as you can remain calm, Young Lady, they are no threat at all. However, you may have noticed that in this bizarre environment, the Yin Souls have cultivated a special ability which is quite overwhelming. If you have a Soul type defensive artifact, you should activate it for good measure."

He didn't tell Yang Kai such things because he knew that an Emperor Realm Master didn't need such precautions or warnings.

Zhang Ruo Xi stuck out her tongue, "I don't have a Soul type artifact."

She only had two artifacts on her body. One was the Pink Clouds Phoenix Robe given to her by Divine Spirit Qiong Qi, and the other was the Ten Thousand Beasts Seal from Yang Kai.

Hearing this, Old Ban didn't say any more and focused on leading the way.

As they went, Yin Souls would appear from time to time to disturb them; however, because Old Ban was familiar with the passageway, the paths he chose were all quite safe, and they didn't encounter any strong Yin Souls. Naturally, none of the ones that did get in their way met with good ends.

Rather than Yang Kai, it was Zhang Ruo Xi who handled all of them. After half an hour, she became so familiar with killing them that she didn't even blink when she did so anymore.

Due to the interference of the strange fog, Yang Kai couldn't tell where they were; however, judging from Old Ban's actions, they had taken a path with many torturous twists and turns.

From time to time, Old Ban would stop to observe the nearby terrain and then turn in a different direction entirely. Sometimes he would even stand in one spot for a long time, doing nothing, and then move again several moments later.

Yang Kai felt that his guess was right. The best guide in the entire city had figured out a way to safely enter the Ancient Lands every time.

However, since it was Old Ban's secret and also his only way to make a living, Yang Kai didn't probe into it.

Half a day later, Yang Kai had completely lost sense of where they were. After Zhang Ruo Xi dealt with a Yin Soul, the leading Old Ban suddenly halted. He lifted his nose and sniffed the air. Only the sound of light breathing could be heard.

Yang Kai raised his brow, realizing that Old Ban had discovered something, and released his Divine Sense so he could react quickly.

After sniffing the air for a while, Old Ban's expression suddenly changed and he shouted, "Follow me closely, and don't fall behind a single step!"

As soon as the words left his lips, he sprinted forward.

Old Ban had been extremely cautious the entire time, never daring to make any rash movements, but now, he was acting so frantically, so he must have noticed some approaching danger.

Although Yang Kai wasn't as experienced as Old Ban in this place, he also felt an approaching sense of crisis. It seemed that something dangerous was coming.

As an Emperor Realm Master, Yang Kai was extremely sensitive to danger. Furthermore, it was obvious from Old Ban's reaction that the situation had gone awry.

Yang Kai quickly released his Emperor Qi to cover Zhang Ruo Xi, stepped forward, and followed Old Ban closely.

Zhang Ruo Xi didn't say a word, but the look on her face revealed her nervousness.

The three quickly shuttled through the strange fog, and within ten breaths of time, Old Ban stopped again and took in a breath. His body, which was rushing forward, suddenly stopped. Then, with a slight shift of his feet, he leapt back and shouted simultaneously, "Retreat!"

Yang Kai's reaction was not slow. Although he had been right behind Old Ban, he'd stepped back as soon as Old Ban moved.

Simultaneously, he locked his Divine Sense on an area in front of him to scan for any changes.

Kacha...

Before Yang Kai could find out what was happening, explosive thunder entered his ears and a purple bolt of light came crashing to the ground, leaving a black pit about four metres wide. Everything in that region turned into ashes.

Yang Kai let out a choked cry as wariness flashed through his eyes and cold sweat poured down his forehead as he grit his teeth and muttered, "Soul Extinguishing Divine Thunder!"

He was only curious about what would happen but never expected this one bolt of falling thunder to completely cut off his thread of Divine Sense.

In the face of this falling thunder, his Divine Sense that was on par with a Second-Order Emperor Realm was as akin to a baby's fist. If it were an ordinary person, they would be holding their heads and howling miserably right now.

Although Yang Kai felt extremely uncomfortable, he had the Soul Warming Lotus protecting him. A sense of coolness emerged from the Soul Warming Lotus and infused into his mind, which greatly alleviated his pain; therefore, although he still looked pale, it was not a big problem.

The location of the bolt of thunder was where Old Ban had been standing. There was no doubt that if he hadn't moved away at the last moment, his Soul would've been extinguished.

It was truly curious how he was able to avoid dangerous situations at the most crucial moments.

"Follow me!" Old Ban continued shouting.

Yang Kai didn't dare to neglect his instructions and quickly followed.

After five breaths worth of time, there was another crackling sound behind him, and the earth under his feet began to shake, as if thousands of troops were trampling towards them.

Although Yang Kai couldn't see what had happened behind him, he could infer from the shocking movement that several bolts of purple lightning had just fallen.

In his heart, he was becoming more and more impressed with Old Ban.

When Pi San told him to seek out Old Ban, Yang Kai had agreed but regarded his advice casually. He'd believed that with his current strength, entering the Ancient Lands without a guide would be no problem.

However, after this incident, Yang Kai realized that he had been treating this place too lightly.

The strength of the thunderbolt just now was unimaginable, and if Old Ban hadn't helped him and Zhang Ruo Xi avoid it, Yang Kai was certain it would be difficult to get past even with his current cultivation.

The thunder was so terrifying and erratic, while the strange fog could entrap an Emperor Realm Master for over ten years.

Kacha...

The booms of purple lightning falling sounded from all directions, and although the strange fog was obstructing his sight, Yang Kai could still vaguely see the faint purple flashes in the mist, making for a truly shocking sight.

They suddenly seemed to have entered a sea of thunder, surrounded by crises. Zhang Ruo Xi didn't dare to move at will and simply allowed Yang Kai to envelop her with his Emperor Qi and carry her along.

In front of them, Old Ban's movements seemed entirely irregular, but he was able to somehow lead them to avoid all of the falling thunder.

He was like the most experienced sailor who could conquer the majestic sea and witness the mesmerizing scenery of its deepest depths while only operating a wooden boat.

All of a sudden, a scream came from nearby. It seemed that some cultivator had been hit by falling thunder and was crying out for help tragically.

However, the voice stopped after just a moment, as if it was strangled by the neck. One could imagine how that cultivator met their end.

The Yin Souls that used to be everywhere were all gone now.

Fortunately, with Old Ban guiding them, they were able to avoid every bolt of thunder and safely travel through the fog.

After an unknown amount of time, the falling thunder became weaker and weaker, until finally, it fell silent completely.

However, it wasn't until several paces later that Old Ban finally stopped and bent over, his face pale and bloodless as he gasped for air.

Yang Kai stood close behind him and used his Divine Sense to check their surroundings for potential threats.

"Sir, are you okay?" Zhang Ruo Xi looked at him nervously.

Yang Kai had obviously been injured by the first bolt of thunder. At the time, she didn't dare to disturb him and only decided to ask after determining that his condition had stabilized.

He motioned that he was alright, then he turned to Old Ban and asked, "Old Ban, are we safe now?"

The fear of the Soul Extinguishing Divine Thunder still lingered in his mind.

Chapter 2539, Kekeke

Upon hearing Yang Kai's question, Old Ban chuckled bitterly, "Safe? This is just the beginning!"

Yang Kai's face changed, "Could it be that the Soul Extinguishing Thunder..."

Old Ban shook his head, "We do not need to worry about it anymore. Now that the thunder tide has passed, it will not happen again within this one month. There will only be stray bolts here and there. What we need to guard against now is... the Astral Wind!"

Previously, Pi San had warned Yang Kai about the three deadly dangers of the Ancient Land Passageway, the strange fog, the thunder tide, and the Astral Wind.

The strange fog existed everywhere in the passageway, and anyone who wasn't familiar with the path would easily get lost in it. As for the thunder, Yang Kai had personally experienced its terrifying power when his Divine Sense was easily cut off by a single bolt.

Since the Astral Wind was mentioned alongside the Falling Thunder, it was undoubtedly something that couldn't be looked down upon.

Moreover, Old Ban's face was very grim at the moment, which only made Yang Kai feel more apprehensive.

"How powerful is the Astral Wind?" Yang Kai asked in a low voice.

Old Ban responded, "In terms of direct lethality, the falling thunder is much stronger; however, anyone who is familiar with this passageway will tell you that they would rather face the thunder tide than the Astral Wind."

"Why is that?" Zhang Ruo Xi's expression was blank with confusion.

“Because the Astral Wind does not stop. Although it is not instantaneously lethal like the falling thunder, it is continuous. Passing through it feels like your flesh is being shaved off by the sharpest of artifacts and it can not only tear away at a cultivator’s physique but also grind down their Soul. If one stays in the Astral Wind for a long time, they will die a miserable death.”

Upon hearing this, she immediately broke out in a cold sweat.

It sounded like being attacked by the Astral Wind was like being cut by a blunt knife over and over again, and the scariest thing was that it could even grind down the Soul!

Old Ban continued solemnly, “Now that the thunder tide has passed, a howling wind will sweep through the area. If we fail to find shelter within the time it takes for a stick of incense to burn, we will die.”

“Astral Wind!” Yang Kai’s face sank. Although he had never heard of it before, he could imagine what it was like, “Is there a shelter around here?”

Old Ban looked around at their surroundings before quickly stating, “In order to avoid the thunder tide earlier, this old man had to take some unplanned turns; thus, I am not very familiar with this area, but if my guess is right, this should be the heart of the passageway.”

“The heart...” Zhang Ruo Xi frowned, then suddenly, her expression shifted, “Old Ban, didn’t you say that the core region is where...”

Before she could finish speaking, two dots of glowing red light shone out from the distance. It was unobstructed by the strange fog, so they could see it very clearly.

An extreme chill filled the air as a frigid domain enveloped Zhang Ruo Xi and Old Ban, causing them to shiver.

“Ah...!” She cried out, as she had discovered that the glowing red dots were actually a pair of eyes.

They seemed to be filled with unimaginable anger and seemed to be pouring out blood. Just one glance at them was enough to petrify a person.

“The Ghost King!” Yang Kai murmured. Instead of looking away, he unleashed his vast Spiritual Energy, which turned into a pure Soul Attack and flew directly toward the Ghost King.

After the silent collision, his face slightly paled.

The red lights flashed with smugness as its power didn’t falter but increased instead, and it suddenly charged forth, seemingly intent on taking advantage of its victory to crush Yang Kai to dust.

Immediately, Yang Kai’s mind sank into chaos. He felt as though he had plunged into Hell’s purgatory, surrounded by horrifying, hostile Ghosts. Their strange calls filled their ears as they tried to bite and claw at him, to seize him and drink his blood and eat his flesh.

They were truly disgusting, hideous, and terrible.

“Demon Eye of Annihilation!” Yang Kai no longer dared to hold back. His right eye instantly turned golden in colour, shining with majestic brilliance. From his golden pupil, a strange force flowed out, dispelling the illusion and stabilizing his mind.

Not only that, but there was a strange attraction from his right eye, like a bottomless abyss, that sought to pull the Ghost King inside and trap it forever.

“Hmph!”

From the depths of the strange fog, a cold snort rang out. It seemed that the Ghost King was a little angry because of Yang Kai’s counterattack and a dark wind began to blow, causing the chill in the air to suddenly intensify, physically freezing the earth around them.

Amidst the wailing, translucent ghost claws erupted from the earth and grabbed at the three people’s ankles.

The changes happened almost instantaneously, and old Ban and Zhang Ruo Xi weren’t strong enough to resist them, so as soon as the Ghost King snorted, they fell into a state of confusion and seemed to lose consciousness, simply staring forward without any other reaction.

Yang Kai reached out and lifted them up while shouting to the Ghost King, “Ghost King, we are just escaping the thunder tide and passed here by accident. We don’t mean to disturb you. Please allow us to pass.”

“Keke...” The Ghost King’s grating laughter resounded from all directions, making it impossible to tell where it originated from. At the same time, the two red lights in the fog disappeared.

The Ghost King had erased its presence.

The Yin Souls that had disappeared, due to the falling thunder, emerged again and hid in the strange fog. They swarmed around Yang Kai’s group, waiting for an opportunity to strike. The ghost claws that had come out of the ground gradually solidified and continued to target Yang Kai, but they all retreated with a hiss after coming into contact with his Emperor Qi.

Yang Kai turned his head and stared in a certain direction and coldly snorted, “I suggest that you don’t get complacent, Ghost King!”

With this, the Ghost King was completely enraged, and a huge ghost claw suddenly emerged from the depths of the strange fog. It slashed down on Yang Kai like a tall mountain, the claw itself seemingly sharp enough to tear through space.

“You’re overestimating yourself!”

Yang Kai’s Spiritual Energy surged forth, and a column of light shot out from his forehead. Instead of going upwards to meet the ghost claw, it went in another direction, transforming into a long sabre that cut through the air.

Soul Splitting Sabre, Heaven Severing Slash!

As the attack landed, a shrill wail sounded from within the strange fog.

At the same time, the huge ghost claw above Yang Kai’s head flickered and disappeared, along with countless ghost hands rising up from under the ground.

The Yin Souls gathered around them were stunned for a moment, and then they screamed and scattered.

In the blink of an eye, their surroundings returned to peace, as though no fight had happened at all.

Yang Kai knew that if it weren't for this display of strength, the Ghost King wouldn't have retreated.

Moreover, the fact that his Secret Technique, Heaven Severing Slash, executed with an attack from his Soul Emperor Artifact, had only injured the Ghost King somewhat, was astounding.

As expected, this Ghost King hidden within the strange fog would be difficult to deal with.

If it weren't for their circumstances, Yang Kai wouldn't have bothered to waste so many words trying to negotiate; however, since they were amid the strange fog, he really didn't want to fight unless absolutely necessary.

As soon as the Ghost King retreated, Zhang Ruo Xi and Old Ban woke up. Evidently, they understood what just happened to them and their hearts pounded as cold sweat dripped down their foreheads.

"Time is running out. We must hurry!" Old Ban didn't ask why the Ghost King retreated and simply continued to lead the way.

The sound of the Astral Wind was approaching, and if they failed to find a shelter by the time it arrived, they would certainly die.

Old Ban observed the landscape from time to time, occasionally changing direction.

In the beginning, he seemed to be hesitant, unsure whether he was going in the right direction, but after a while, he suddenly began to go faster and no longer hesitated as much.

Seeing this, Yang Kai knew that he had found the right path again. After all, Old Ban was so familiar with this place that even if they went off-track for a while, it shouldn't be difficult for him to return to the right path.

As time went by, a gentle breeze began to blow. It wasn't strong, but it made one's skin sting, as though cut by a small knife.

But if this light breeze was already like this, one could only imagine how painful the Astral Wind would be once he truly began to blow.

Both Yang Kai and Zhang Ruo Xi could tell that Old Ban was right; the Astral Wind was definitely a more terrible disaster than the thunder tide.

Although the falling thunder was deadly, it fell sporadically and was easy to find a safe place to hide from. However, with the Astral Wind, the entire passageway was a danger zone.

The wind gradually picked up. For Yang Kai, who had tough skin and strong cultivation, it was still manageable; however, Zhang Ruo Xi and Old Ban had to push their Source Qi to protect themselves from the Astral Wind's effects.

"Over there!" Old Ban suddenly exclaimed with joy, pointing in a certain direction and immediately picking up his pace, "Hopefully, there is still room there!"

Before Yang Kai understood what he meant by ‘room,’ he saw Old Ban’s body flash and reappear where he had pointed.

Yang Kai quickly followed suit with Zhang Ruo Xi and found that the place Old Ban had pointed at was actually a cave.

Strangely enough, everything seemed to be restored to normal upon entering the cave. Their vision was perfectly restored, and even the strange fog was gone. Only a faint whistling sound of the wind could be heard.

Looking around, the cave was quite narrow and spanned about fifteen metres in depth and would become crowded with ten people inside.

Before the arrival of Yang Kai and his group, six cultivators had already taken shelter here. These people obviously knew about the Astral Wind, so they found a safe haven early and hid in it, waiting for the storm to pass.

Chapter 2540, Why Me

The cultivations of the people in the cave ranged from First-Order Dao Source Realm to the Third-Order. After determining that none of them were Emperor Realm Masters, Yang Kai stopped paying them much heed.

They also looked at Yang Kai when he entered and didn’t show much reaction other than some bright eyes when Zhang Ruo Xi followed him in.

“Little Brother, Young Lady, come over here! There’s space here!” Old Ban beckoned them over.

There was space in a corner where three people could sit down cross-legged and quietly wait for the howling wind to pass.

The other people in the cave seemed to be acting alone, each of them silent as a stone. The entire cave was quiet for some time as only the sound of the wind outside could be heard, making it feel as though they had plunged into the cold winter.

After a while, the wind grew louder and several more people rushed in from the outside, taking up the rest of the place.

The cave was truly small, barely able to accommodate over ten people, so the cultivators who came in later had no choice but to stand near the cave entrance. They were all extremely nervous, praying that the Astral Wind wouldn’t blow in, because they would be the first ones to suffer if it did.

“Old Ban, how long will the wind last?” Yang Kai observed for a while and asked upon noticing that the wind was only growing stronger.

“It’s difficult to say. It could be over in just half a day, or it could take up to six days to cease. The Astral Wind usually comes and goes without pattern, although it always rages right after a thunder tide. You must remember this for when you return from the Ancient Lands, Little Brother,” Old Ban replied.

Yang Kai nodded, “Many thanks for your reminder, Old Ban!”

“However, you don’t have to worry too much. Although the Astral Wind is fearsome, you can rest easy as long as you find a cave like this before it arrives,” Old Ban continued with a smile.

Yang Kai raised his eyebrows, “You mean... there are other caves like this in the passageway?”

“Naturally,” Old Ban nodded and continued, “The Ancient Lands Passageway is enclosed on both sides, and numerous caves exist along those cliff-faces. Don’t take this old man’s word for it, but I believe there are always around ten spots to take in each shelter. Moreover, the caves seem to have been formed naturally in this special environment, so they’re extremely sturdy and can’t be destroyed by ordinary attacks. You must find one before it’s too late, or there’ll be no more space left. We were lucky this time. Every year, countless cultivators die in this passageway because they can’t find shelter. Even if they do find one, getting here before the Astral Wind starts is a whole other matter.”

Upon hearing this, Zhang Ruo Xi couldn’t help but stick out her tongue, “No wonder when we got here, we saw so many bones at the entrance of the cave.”

Old Ban shook his head and sighed, “No, not all of those corpses are due to the Astral Wind. Most of them were caused by humans.”

She frowned, but before she could ask what he meant, he continued, “You will see what this old man means soon, Young Lady.”

Although sceptical, she didn’t ask anymore.

Just then, a figure suddenly approached from the outside and rushed fiercely towards the cave.

However, without waiting for the figure to draw near, a thin cultivator standing by the entrance suddenly raised his hand and unleashed an attack.

The figure didn’t show any weakness and returned the attack with his own.

A loud bang rang out in the next moment, and both cultivators remained unmoved. They seemed to be equally matched.

In the next moment, a sorry figure landed at the entrance of the cave, his eyes filled with hatred and impatience towards the man who was blocking him from entering the cave.

“There is no space left here. Please go elsewhere, friend,” the skinny cultivator coldly snorted and said with a displeased look.

“Where else can I go?” The newcomer gnashed his teeth. He had run all the way here and looked like he had suffered a lot from the Astral Wind. Evidently, his energy was rapidly depleting, as the protective halo around his body was flickering. Now, he was being denied entry after finally finding shelter, so naturally he was infuriated.

However, the thin cultivator wasn't an easy opponent. If they really were to start fighting, it would be impossible to tell who would win. The newcomer was in no mood to do that when his most pressing concern was finding shelter before the Astral Wind arrived with full force.

His gaze swept past the thin cultivator into the cave.

Since there were no spots, he just had to snatch one.

As a First-Order Dao Source Realm Master, Old Ban was one of the weakest cultivators inside and was undoubtedly the easiest target.

However, before the newcomer could open his mouth to drive Old Ban out, he suddenly noticed Yang Kai and frowned.

Although Yang Kai was just sitting cross-legged and didn't release his aura, he was still an Emperor Realm Master. The newcomer couldn't see through his cultivation, and Yang Kai and Old Ban were clearly companions. Regardless of what Yang Kai's cultivation really was, the newcomer didn't want to risk getting into more trouble.

With barely any hesitation, the newcomer's eyes moved away from Old Ban's body to a different corner of the cave. He stretched out a finger and shouted, "Boy, get out of here. I want your spot."

He was pointing at a young man who looked to be in his early thirties. The young man had been hiding in the dark and shrinking into himself the entire time, as if he didn't want anyone to notice his existence.

His cultivation, like Old Ban, was only First-Order Dao Source Realm.

Upon hearing the newcomer's demand, the young man shuddered and pretended that he didn't hear anything.

The newcomer sneered seeing this, "I'll give you three breaths of time to get out. If you don't, I'll have no choice but drag you out myself. Whether you live or die will be entirely up to you."

Seeing that he had no choice, the young man raised his head and wailed, "Why me? Why is it me?!"

He was the first to enter the cave after the thunder tide and had even hidden deep inside to avoid encountering a situation like this, yet he was still called out.

The Astral Wind was approaching, and there was no other place to take shelter. If he went out now, he would surely die. The newcomer was about two times stronger than him, so he wouldn't be able to resist if it turned into a fight. Therefore, despite his rage, the young man was also helpless.

The newcomer sneered, "A weakling like you shouldn't have tried to enter the Ancient Lands. However, since you did anyway, you should've been prepared to die here! Now, scram!"

"I won't! If I go out now, I'll die! Don't push me. If you do, I... I'll self-detonate and drag everyone here down with me!"

As soon as this threat came out, several people's faces darkened. They were evidently displeased with his threat; however, the stronger ones didn't mind at all. After all, even if this young man wanted to self-destruct, he would need to find an opportunity first.

Out of the many people present in the cave, at least half of them could subdue him if he actually tried to blow himself up.

“Hahaha!” The man burst out laughing and stared at the young man mockingly, “If you want to self-destruct, go ahead! Let’s see if you can!”

He appeared confident and fearless, which made the young man panic. The young man could only look around and plead, “Sirs, please help me! I don’t want to go out and die. Please, Sirs, stand and uphold justice here!”

As he spoke, he cupped his fists and held them against his chest, just one step away from kneeling down to beg.

However, everyone here was a stranger, so who would bother to help him in this type of situation? Thus, no one answered him.

Zhang Ruo Xi couldn’t bear it and glanced at Yang Kai, but seeing that he wasn’t going to respond either, she could only grit her teeth.

A look of impatience appeared on the newcomer’s face and he snapped, “I’ll give you one last chance to get out yourself, otherwise... Don’t blame me for using force!”

As the words fell, he reached out and grabbed the young man.

Although the cave was small and crowded, the newcomer was a Third-Order Dao Source Realm Master, so he was able to grab the young man without accidentally touching anyone else. Judging from his action, he planned to just grab the young man and throw him out to make room for himself.

The young man suddenly became dazed. Facing the attack of a Third-Order Dao Source Realm Master, he had no way to defend at all, nor did he really have the courage to detonate himself, so all he could do was stand there and wait for his demise... Until, just then, there was a gleam, and Source Qi burst forth.

With a slight grunt, the newcomer staggered back a few steps.

When he regained his balance, he was furious, “Who did that?! Who dares to interfere in my business?!”

It was obvious that someone had stopped his attack just now, and their cultivation was not low, otherwise, he wouldn’t have been pushed back.

His gaze swept over everyone in the cave before locking onto Zhang Ruo Xi, then his expression changed, “It was you!”

“Yes, it was me!” She readily admitted.

The newcomer’s expression was a little ugly as he glared at her.

It wouldn’t be an issue if she had been alone, but this young woman was together with Yang Kai. Once they began to fight, Yang Kai naturally wouldn’t stand by. The newcomer was bound to eat a loss if he went against the two of them with just himself.

Therefore, he pondered for a bit and then cupped his fists together, “The Astral Wind is approaching, Young Lady. This one just wants to find shelter from it and has no other choice. This one would be very grateful if you could make an exception in this one’s favour, but if you insist on meddling in this one’s business, then... this one will have to take necessary countermeasures. Even a rabbit will bite if forced into a corner.”

Although he said this to Zhang Ruo Xi, he was looking at Yang Kai’s face.

However, to his disappointment, Yang Kai continued to sit silently without showing any reaction, as if it had nothing to do with him. It made him really uncertain whether Zhang Ruo Xi and Yang Kai were together.

“There’s no problem with wanting to find shelter, but it’s first come first serve! There is no room left here. How could you try to drive someone away? Your life may be precious, but are not other people’s lives as well?” Zhang Ruo Xi looked at the man angrily.

In the past, the Zhang family was bullied because it was small and weak, so she couldn’t stand this kind of wanton oppression. She had tried to hold it in, but she just couldn’t.