

Forty Millenniums of Cultivation

Chapter 9: Salted Fish and Shoes

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With the day's school session end came a rare moment of calmness over the campus. Along a small path above the shade of the trees flew cheerful laughter and conversation. Several luxury private shuttles slowly descended from the air as parents arrived to pick up their children. There were also several students like Li Yao, who dragged their weary bodies along, slowly walking towards the school gate.

Just as he was about to exit the school gate, Li Yao suddenly felt his body tighten up. A tall silhouette obstructed the path in front of him, "You're called Li Yao? Was it you who was with Si Jia Xue just a moment ago?"

Li Yao's eyes suddenly shrank back into their sockets. He felt like ten-thousand needles had stabbed into his entire body. His heart rate sped up in a flash. A chill spread from his tailbone and rushed up to the top of his skull. The pressure exuded by this person was too great. He was like a poisonous viper staring fixated at a mouse. Li Yao was absolutely unable to move a single step. Even swallowing some saliva became incomparably difficult.

"It's He Lianlie! Its Crimson Nimbus Second's number one expert, He Lianlie! This time I'm done for!" Li Yao shrieked in his heart. He intended to explain himself, but he was unable to speak even half a word.

He Lianlie stood casually and wantonly. A crystal processor was clasped in his right hand and was immersed in calculating through a set of applicable exam questions, not at all looking directly at Li Yao in the eyes. He said without much thought, "No need to be afraid. I obviously know that with your type of trash, it's impossible for you to have something with Small Xue. I'll forget it this one time. I don't feel like cleaning you up."

His finger tapped a hologram lightly, switching to the next question. He Lianlie continued speaking, "Nevertheless, right now it's the urgent and critical moment — the 'Hundred-day Sprint'. Small Xue and I are the people who will attack for first place in Floating Spear City's university entrance exams. I hope that during this time-frame, there won't be any sketchy garbage disturbing Small Xue, distracting her. Do you understand yet?"

Li Yao's eyes squinted into slits as he firmly bit down his teeth, "You're saying I'm trash?"

He Lianlie didn't even lift his head as he said indifferently, "Don't be mistaken, I'm not specifically targeting you. From my point of view, you bunch of mishmash Common Class students, each and every one of you — are trash!"

After he said his last word, he finally raised his head and swept a glance at Li Yao.

Just a single glance caused Li Yao to feel like the pits of his stomach were ferociously hit by massive hammer. It was unbearable. He fell back two steps and coughed violently.

He Lianlie snorted coldly. Disdain filled his face as he turned and left.

Li Yao was bending over coughing, looking like a giant shrimp, and even coughed up his tears. A long time passed before he was able to stand straight. He breathed heavily and glared unwaveringly towards the direction of He Lianlie's departure.

"DAMN IT!"

"Don't tell me that in these days, all one needs is to be tall and lofty, to be bold and powerful, to be handsome and stylish, to be confident and relaxed, to have thin eyebrows and starry eyes, to be born to a rich and powerful household with a net worth of 18 billion, to possess an exceedingly powerful talent for cultivation and unyielding strength of a tyrant — then one can be this arrogant?"

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Half an hour later.

"Lucky lucky, indeed this time luck has brought me to grandma's house. For the sake of repairing Si Jiaxue's crystal processor, I actually offended He Lianlie! If I had known things would turn out this way, I absolutely would have increased my price. Only a minimum of 200,000 credits would have been worth it!"

"Also, there's He Lianlie. This. Son. Of. A. B*tch. Armed with the power of money, he consumes heavenly materials and earthly treasures as if they were food. He drinks strengthening drugs as if they were tap water. He also has underground cultivator experts helping him strengthen his mind. Great martial arts masters help him forge his physique. Only then could he raise his Actualization Quotient to over 70 percent. Surprisingly, he is this arrogant! Trash? I am not trash! The day will come. I will become a true Master Artificer. I will beat you into a pig's head and stuff you in a trash can!"

A lone youth walked solitarily on the road home. His expression was just like a devil's as he gnashed his teeth in anger. Occasionally, when he happened onto a small rock by the road, he would ferociously kick it flying.

The appearance of He Lianlie caused him to clearly understand the distance between him and a cultivator genius, and sure enough, the gap was extremely large. It caused him to understand that the chance of success of his dream of "testing into the Nine Elite Universities, stepping onto the road of cultivation, and becoming a Master Artificer" were however uncertain.

A scene that he saw over and over in his uncanny dreams emerged in the sea of Li Yao's mind. It appeared to be a scene from a movie.

There was a youth wearing a red tank-top. With raised eyebrows and open-wide eyes, he spoke loudly, "If we don't have any dreams in life, how are we different from salted fish!?"

From the past until now, this scene would motivate Li Yao deeply. It let him advance bravely on the road of his dreams without any fear.

It was only at this time that he finally recalled the rest of his dream. What the other person's response was when the red-tank-top youth had finished his words was:

"You don't even have shoes. Doesn't that make you a salted fish?"

Li Yao stood fixed as he subconsciously looked down at his pair of feet.

What he wore was a pair of basic exercise shoes picked up from the garbage heap. Normally, he cultivated like mad, so his shoes had been overworn long ago. Not only was the sole's engraving worn away, even a hole was rubbed into the tip of the left shoe, exposing a big dirty toe.

He thought back to a moment ago when he saw the shoes He Lianlie wore. It was a pair of the newest model of the cultivating shoes, "SuperStar G-9". They were handcrafted and refined using the toughest and most durable hides of fiend beasts. Scales were attached to the exterior, increasing the wear resistance by a large degree.

It was said that the sole is made of two layers, and in between was a cushion of air refined from the swim bladder of the deep sea devil fish. Not only does it increase jumping power, it also protects one's leg joints. The price of this mere pair of shoes runs several tens of thousands of credits!

In this entrance exam battlefield where mighty forces were displayed and where only one can reign on top, there were still countless students of rich and powerful families just like He Lianlie, all wearing SuperStar G-9s and consuming endless resources!

For himself, a poor youth possessing nothing, how could he be capable of suppressing and rising above these people in the cruel blood-filled field of battle? How can he realize his dream?

Li Yao's heart was above all at a loss, and his steps turned particularly heavy as well. The road ahead seemed to be long — quite long.

Night fell and the evening lamps lit up. He had finally made it to the main district.

Ahead was a large crystal bridge. If he crossed over the high-speed crystal rail tracks and went through the culvert under the bridge, he would find himself in Morning Sun Village's residential area.

This was the suburbs; it was relatively barren with very few people coming and going.

Right when Li Yao was about to go through the culvert, he suddenly heard a piercing explosion from the side of his ear. All he could see was a radiating glow all around. A crystal train was crossing the bridge.

Li Yao suddenly stood fixed and rubbed his eyes, looking towards the bridge.

In the instant the flash of light shot out a moment ago, he made out an image. There was a person standing on top of the bridge!

This was probably the rail line bridge's expert railway passer-througher!

The "high speed crystal rail" was one of the Federation's 10 ginormous grand artifacts, praised to be a "national treasure". It's maximum velocity can exceed 1000 km/hour. Furthermore, every cut of car on the crystal rail train was outfitted with the best defensive military grade artifacts to defend against fiend beasts. The destructive capabilities of its high speed assaults were in no way inferior to a high stage cultivator striking with his all!

In order to prevent unexpected accidents, the high speed crystal train was normally levitating a dozen or so meters off the ground on its dedicated rail line. The rail line was sealed all around as a restriction— How did this idiot crawl inside?

That's right, Li Yao saw it clearly. An old man actually stood on the bridge's rail line.

This old man looked very odd; he was old and gray-haired, and his appearance was dull and ancient. He looked like he was unearthed tens of thousands of years ago, like having once been in a museum seen by Li Yao.

But, his body actually exuded an air that was extremely heavy. Even though they were over a hundred meters apart, it caused Li Yao to practically hear his own heartbeat beat violently.

Thump! Thump! Thump!

It was like a large hammer was continuously bombarding a metal sheet!

The old man's air was like a vast ocean. He Lianlie's oppressive strength was simply feeble and pitiful in comparison. The difference between the two was greater than the gap between the sun and a firefly. Li Yao also had a certain feeling. When compared to He Lianlie's created display of fame and power, this old man simply wasn't manifesting this air consciously. Although there were waves inadvertently overflowing from the old man, what Li Yao felt was just the tip of the iceberg!

The old man wore a simple and plain coarse robe, it was like he stepped out from the ancient world of cultivation 40,000 years ago!

"Hey—" It was a dangerous moment. Li Yao could not make out whether this old man was lunatic or some kind of eccentric. He saw that the train was arriving here at galloping speed. His hands and feet were gesticulating as he cried loudly.

The old man turned a deaf ear to Li Yao's shouts as he continued to size up the continuously expanding light in the front of him.

It appeared he was in a state of complete curiosity about everything in his surroundings. He was especially curious about the crystal rail line that lay on the bridge and the screaming crystal rail train that was about to arrive. Even more so was the expression that appeared on his face; it containing the joyful thoughts of a mischievous child who had discovered a brand new toy.

In the next second—