

Pet Store 261

Chapter 261 Employee Never Dies

Was the family head a part of this? There was something funny about the matter.

At first, Liu Jianxin didn't plan on wasting much time talking to this Liu Yuan.

Liu Yuan and Liu Jianxin only enjoyed a superficial relationship. Theoretically speaking, they were related somehow or other when in fact the two of them had never been close.

When Liu Yuan mentioned something about some fierce competition between the stores and guaranteed admission to the Elite League, Liu Jianxin regarded it as nonsense. He didn't even bother to think about what Liu Yuan was describing. To Liu Jianxin, none of this mattered; he would rather spend time talking with Liu Yuan about cultivating and training.

After all, strength reigned supreme. Everything else was rubbish.

And yet, there was a twist.

The twist being the family head's involvement.

As such, the competition concerned not only Liu Yuan but the entire family.

What Liu Jianxin found intriguing was the family head's level of involvement, to actually having loaned his strongest pet to Liu Yuan's store.

This Eight Hell Beast was the family head's most cherished pet. Usually, even for the most talented of the family's younger generation, merely catching a glimpse of the Eight Hell Beast was extremely difficult. Why would the family head allow the Eight Hell Beast to stay at Liu Yuan's crappy store and put it on display?

That was unbelievable.

On the other hand, Liu Jianxin didn't think that Liu Yuan was boasting. He would never have the courage to do that.

A moment later, Liu Yuan said, "I will think about it."

"Of course. Thank you, Jianxin. I appreciated it."

"Okay."

Liu Jianxin hung up immediately without wasting another second.

If he could achieve a good result in the Elite League, he would have to claim that it had been all thanks to Liu Yuan's store. Seriously?

Liu Jianxin sneered in contempt. Even if he were to agree to this proposal, he doubted whether people would trust the story or not when he claimed such things. However, since the family head was involved, this competition had become a serious matter for the entire family. Being a family member, Liu Jianxin couldn't sit around and do nothing.

Mu Chen, it's been three years. Do not let me down...

Liu Jianxin focused his mind back on his training. As he looked at the sharp sword in his hand, a glint of fierceness flashed past his eyes. He jumped into the yard and resumed his practice.

"That will do."

Liu Yuan breathed in relief. He could hear it in Liu Jianxin's tone.

Liu Jianxin did not give a definite answer. Still, Liu Yuan knew it was unlikely that Liu Jianxin would turn him down when he mentioned the family head's Eight Hell Beast. To displease the family head over such a trivial matter would not be worth the candle and Liu Jianxin understood that.

That was right. Liu Yuan had applied the tried and true "moral kidnapping."

That was why he went to the family head first to ask for his pet. Liu Yuan wasn't merely borrowing a pet. He was borrowing the family head's authority.

From then on, his store's business became the family's business. When other family members considered whether they should help out or not, they would have to take the family head's influence into account.

Besides, the store was a major matter for Liu Yuan, but it was insignificant in the eyes of people like Liu Jianxin. Liu Jianxin wouldn't lose anything if he helped out; on the other hand, it would be a chance for others to sow discord if he didn't help Liu Yuan. The choice to be made was obvious.

Liu Yuan grinned as he called another person.

Pixie Pet Store.

Su Ping called back his Inferno Dragon and closed the door.

Once the Inferno Dragon had returned, Su Ping pulled up the system shop and bought a set of temporary contracts, twenty in total.

He had been taking orders nonstop and it was the time for him to actually do some work.

Su Ping unfolded the painting and said to Tang Ruyan, "You, back to the scroll."

Tang Ruyan had no idea what Su Ping was going to do next. After a day in the store, she had found something queer about it: up until then, she had not seen any master trainer.

Besides, there were several places in the store she could not access. Those places appeared to be protected with powerful seals.

Why would anyone establish seals in this shabby place?

Since she could not figure it out, she wanted to stay in the store to probe into the many secrets.

"Why do I have to go back? I have to work tomorrow, right? I can sleep here. I am fine with that." Tang Ruyan acted as if she were cool with that arrangement and she headed toward the sofa, lying on it at once.

Su Ping darted her a glance. "Cut the crap. Do not make me throw you back in."

"You!"

Tang Ruyan sat up. "Can't you act more like a gentleman?" she shouted out in anger.

"Miss Tang, please."

"No!"

"In you go!"

Su Ping used his mental power; he grabbed her and threw her into the scroll.

He rolled up the scroll to cut off the continuous bellow. Ah, quietness at last.

"All right then. Let's go and train pets."

Su Ping turned around and grinned at Joanna who was by the door of the pet room.

Joanna raised her eyebrows. "Us?"

"Yes, us."

Su Ping walked into the pet room. All the nursing pens were occupied and the storing space was fully packed with pets as well. "How about we revisit your hometown?" He said to Joanna.

Surprised, Joanna stared at Su Ping. "You mean now?"

"Of course."

Su Ping adopted a quite courteous attitude. "Can you contact your true self?"

"What for?"

"Ask her to find a place where pets can develop quickly. Even risky places will be fine. We're not afraid of death. You know what I mean."

III

Joanna had managed to gain some understanding about that store.

Su Ping made money from training pets for other people.

That was the general business model of other pet stores as well. Only, Su Ping's way of training pets was "special."

Joanna cast a meaningful look at Su Ping. She wondered what the point of him doing those things was.

He should have saved the strength to train himself.

Pets?

He should have trained pets of his own. Pets were merely tools. Training other people's pets was a fool's business.

That being said, since Joanna had been bonded with the store, despite the questions, she had to work with the store and Su Ping. Besides, she did miss the Divinity. She wanted to find out if Su Ping's way of visiting the Divinity was the same as when he visited other worlds.

After all, being guarded by Superior Gods, the Divinity was different from the other discarded worlds.

"Okay."

A moment of silence later, Joanna replied, "I will send people to find you a place most suitable for cultivation after we arrive at the Divinity. Your goal is to double the strength of some of the pets, right?"

"More or less. Places either with harsh environments or rich energy will do," Su Ping added.

"Sure."

Joanna nodded.

Su Ping was relieved to see her agreeing so readily. Again, he chose to go to the Divinity for this round of professional training.

He would have to spend many energy points but given the amount he had recently earned, he could afford this trip.

Besides, training in the Divinity would not only save him time but also earn him divine energy.

All of his pets currently possessed divine energy but in a small amount, which could only sustain one or two skill releases. He planned on collecting more during that trip. He was also eager to see if the divine energy would transform when accumulated to a certain amount.

Su Ping picked up his notebook to select the pets he was bringing with him.

He categorized all the pets into three groups. First, pets signed up for simple professional training without the customers buying the package for guaranteed admission of a good ranking.

The second group was for customers who had bought the package for guaranteed admission to the Top 100.

The third group was for customers who had ordered the package for the Top 10.

The third group was the top priority for Su Ping and he had just gotten one customer for that very package. But, if he could open up his store at night, he assumed all the remaining spots would have been taken up. After all, a fair share of people were wealthy.

Su Ping planned on training pets of the first group. For the other two groups, there were other services involved other than training. He could take his time.

He chose some pets and built contracts with the pets with the temporary contracts. Then, he pulled up the list of cultivation sites.

Before he entered, he thought of a question. "System, can employees be revived?" "No."

III

“If employees die in the cultivation sites, they will revive in the store directly. They will not die for real. The employees’ souls are bonded with the store. The employees need not worry about their lives unless their contracts are canceled or if they violate the employee’s code of conduct,” the system added.

That answer stunned Su Ping.

After the system said the first sentence, Su Ping began to wonder if he should let Joanna stay in the store. Unexpectedly, there was a big twist in the system’s following sentences.

The twist came so abruptly that Su Ping remained confused for a moment.

If he understood it correctly, the system was implying that... Joanna would never die, right?

How incredible that was!

Not even he, the store owner, could enjoy this benefit. It sounded like Joanna was the store owner whereas he was the employee!

“What?”

Joanna saw how Su Ping stood rooted on the spot, with expressions constantly changing on his face. Nervous, her heart skipped a beat.

Su Ping came back to his senses. He looked at her and heaved a sigh with troubled feelings. “How lucky you are.” “??!”

“Cherish it.”

Su Ping shook his head but offered no further explanation lest Joanna would grow smug because of it.

“Let’s go.”

He darted a look at the charge and sighed again. Joanna was along for the ride without having to worry about losing her life. He hoped one day she could understand how fortunate she was.

A swirl was generated in the air.

The strong force sucked both Su Ping and Joanna in.

Looking at the familiar spatial swirl with wide-open eyes, Joanna felt the way of access was identical to the one when she went to that low-level, desolate world with Su Ping.

The next moment, the familiar air that was full of divine energy she had been craving for overwhelmed her.

Chapter 262 The World Tree

Joanna opened her eyes. The first thing that leaped into her eyes was a flourishing forest.

At the same time, in the depths of her mind, the connection between her and her original self tightened.

In a remote place far, far away, someone opened her crystal-clear eyes all of a sudden.

“Is she here...?” she murmured.

At the same time, in this boundless, thriving forest, the beautiful girl's eyes were kindling in excitement. Having returned to this familiar environment, she felt all of her bodily cells had been activated and the energy inside of her was surging.

It was as if she could finally drink water after enduring thirst for a long time.

She felt better than ever before. That was the world she belonged to.

The air in that crappy store was terrible, awful!

"I am back..." Joanna mumbled. In a blink, she had transferred to the world she belonged to from Su Ping's store. She had yet to give a thorough observation to her surroundings, yet she was sure that she was in the Divinity.

She remembered the swirl. A glint of doubt rose in her eyes.

She had thought that she would go back to the Divinity in some particular way, generating quite a stir. However, it was just like what she had experienced when they had teleported to that low-rank world.

Could it be that for the mysterious being hiding behind Su Ping, entering the Divinity was no different from entering other remote worlds?

Joanna could not bring herself to believe this.

This was the Divinity.

This was where many other races of other small worlds went to worship.

This was the center of the universe, not a place to be held as equal to the other common worlds.

"Can you let your true self come and pick us up?" She heard Su Ping's voice.

Joanna turned around, only to see Su Ping as calm as ever. Grumpily, she sneered. "My true self cannot leave the place where she is. Besides, it is this body that has signed the contract with you, My true self is not obligated to work for you!"

Su Ping was surprised to see that she knew

this.

He decided that he would have to work extra hard to deceive her if needs be in the future.

"Wait here. My true self has informed a Major God who will arrive in no time." Joanna found a rock and sat down.

"A Major God?"

Su Ping curled his lips.

The name sounded awesome. No wonder Joanna was powerful, even her minions were Major Gods.

"Anyways, how do you categorize the different realms in the Divinity? Is your true self at a rank higher than the Major Gods? Higher than that is the Superior God?" Su Ping was curious.

Joanna frowned but she worked up the patience to answer, "We are born to be gods. Usually, adult gods with pure blood are at the True God Realm, which is where I am now. Higher than that are the Celestial Gods, God Warriors, Major Gods, Gods of Rules, and the Superior Gods!"

Su Ping counted it. In total, from the True God Realm to Superior God Realm, there were six realms.

Joanna had exhibited powers of the legendary level. That was to say, there were at least five realms higher than the legendary level.

Besides, Joanna only mentioned the situation in the Demigod Burial. In the Archean Divinity, it was likely that not even Superior Gods could be considered powerful. There could be other, mightier beings.

That is to say, I have just begun my journey.

Pure-blood gods are in the True God Realm upon reaching adulthood. Then, I have worked so hard till now and I am still weaker than an adult god with pure blood that has done nothing?

Wait a minute...

Su Ping was in deep thought.

He suddenly asked Joanna, "Your true self is formidable. According to you, this reincarnated version of you should not be this vulnerable. You are about to reach adulthood. Shouldn't you be as good as a pure-blood god?"

Joanna was annoyed to feel Su Ping's odd and inquisitive look. "I am cultivating my mind. Get it? Mind! If I were training my combat strength, I would have breached the Major God Realm!"

Su Ping stared at her as she panted in anger. "No, I do not understand." He shook his head.

He honestly did not understand. "Hmm, you foolish mortal being. It is only natural that you do not understand." Joanna looked away.

Su Ping no longer badgered her about her combat strength. He had other questions. "Have you prepared the training grounds?"

"Hmm."

"기"

The silence did not last long; the air around them felt strange.

Su Ping felt chills and a sense of danger rising from nowhere. The next second, he witnessed as space collapsed in front of him. From inside walked out a tall and slender young man. He looked as handsome as if he were a statue.

Su Ping squinted.

He picked a sense of strength From this golden-haired young man, more powerful than any beast king.

That being said, Su Ping did not hurry to kill himself.

The golden-hair young man cast a gentle look at Joanna. He bowed, with one arm across his chest, and saluted her, "Your highness. I am here to pick you up." Joanna stood up. "Mmm," she said. She glanced at Su Ping who remained composed. Displeased, Joanna snorted.

She wanted to see Su Ping scared out of his wits but failed to attain her wishes.

Taking advantage of the fact that he would not die for real, he indeed was not afraid of anything

"He is my guest. Bring him along," Joanna said, coldly.

The golden-hair young man turned around and looked at Su Ping in surprise. He didn't expect that this low-life mortal human being was Joanna's guest. How odd.

Stunned as he was, the young man did not ask questions. He just said yes politely. Su Ping felt some force envelop him, pulling him to this golden-hair young man. Next thing he knew, he smelled some flowery fragrance that came from this godly youth.

This Major God was not a boy toy, was he?

Su Ping stared at the young man weirdly.

The world of green shifted. By the time Su Ping opened his eyes again, he found himself in the vast blue sky. The next second, the view changed again and Su Ping found himself on a mountain.

"Is this flash teleportation? The distance is far..." Su Ping was astonished. Flash teleportation was considered as one of the secret skills. Relying on this skill, the Lightning Rat was able to battle against seventh-rank beasts. However, flash teleportation was used as a means of traveling by this golden-hair young man. The distance each flash teleportation could take them was further than Su Ping's wildest imagination.

A few minutes later.

They arrived in a luxurious castle.

Some maids and guards stood in a row outside the castle that was towering and magnificent.

"This is not your residence, is it?" Su Ping took a look and asked Joanna.

Joanna answered readily, "Of course, it is."

"Aren't we going to a place to train the pets?" Su Ping frowned. He didn't have time to rest and waste time there.

"This is the place," Joanna answered as she made her way into the castle. "I have a spring here. Once the humble pets you brought bathe in it, their bloodlines will be changed and bettered, as well as their intelligence and power of understanding.

"To double their combat strength is easy. First, let the pets better their constitution here. Then, I will have someone send them to the cruelest arena here. In the arena, even a chicken can evolve to have sharp claws and fangs. The only outcome of not evolving and growing will be death!"

Su Ping was dumbstruck.

He had a delightful realization.

Well, if he went to other cultivation planes, he would have to train the pets by himself.

But here, with Joanna as the mole... no, the partner, given her elevated status, he wouldn't have to train the pets in person.

Besides, he could make the best of the resources here aside from having the pets trained.

"Well, considering your identity here, I suppose getting some divine crystals from the Void Bugs should not be a problem for you, right?" Su Ping's eyes glowed as he asked Joanna.

Joanna's expressions changed.

The golden-hair young man pulled a long face and glared at Su Ping as well.

Su Ping was baffled to sense the killing intent from this Major God. He noticed there was something off with Joanna as well. All of a sudden, Su Ping understood that he might have said the wrong things.

"Divine crystals are taboo!"

Joanna went on in a somber tone, "The Void Bugs eat gods and that is how divine crystals come into being. Do you even know that?"

"Eh..." Su Ping wanted to say 'yes, I do'.

But judging by the looks on her face, he knew that she would fly into a rage if he had actually said so.

"Well then, when you kill the Void Bugs... how, how do you deal with the divine crystals inside of them?" Su Ping cleared his throat. He tried to get his answer from another angle.

Coldly, Joanna replied, "Those divine crystals will be delivered to the world tree which is the foundation of the Divinity. It is all thanks to the roots of the world tree that the Divinity has not been torn apart by the void and collapsed after countless years. The roots of the world tree united all the earth in the Divinity. The divine crystals can nurture the world tree and slow down its decay."

World tree?

In his mind, Su Ping pictured a giant tree that stood in the Divinity.

Here was something he was curious about. The world tree needed divine crystals. Wouldn't that mean that for the Divinity, the Void Bugs could help transform divine crystals?

But since it was a sensitive subject, Su Ping decided to ask her about this after they went back to the store.

"Augu, you may leave now," Joanna said to the golden-hair young man.

He nodded and darted yet another look at Su Ping, only this time, displeased. However, since Su Ping was Joanna's guest, the young man turned around and left without saying anything.

Joanna waved her servants away and said to Su Ping, "Divine crystals represent pain in the Divinity."

"I didn't know that. Besides, people die in every world. It is just you are gods. But it's the same thing. Now that death is inevitable you might just as well make the best of it. You are doing so by feeding the divine crystals to the world tree as nutrients, aren't you?" Su Ping stated.

Joanna frowned.

"The world tree is significant to the Divinity. Feeding the world tree is our obligation." "The world tree must need a huge amount of divine crystals, right? I don't need that many. Just give me some. I got my hands on some divine crystals when I hunted down the Void Bugs. My pets consumed the divine crystals. Don't tell me you haven't sensed any divine energy in my pets." Su Ping curled his lips. Previously, he should not have talked about the taboo divine crystals in front of the Major God. But at the moment, Joanna and he were alone. He would never believe that the Divinity would die just because he wanted some divine crystals.

Chapter 263 Golden Vortex

"How many do you need?"

Joanna gazed fixedly at Su Ping. Since Joanna had made it sound serious, Su Ping felt he couldn't demand an exorbitant amount. After all, each divine crystal represented a fallen god. At the Divinity, Joanna was somewhat of a ruler. Eating her subjects... her fallen people, right in front of her, was not that proper.

"How about ten thousand pieces?" Su Ping

proposed.

Joanna pulled a long face and turned him down right away. "Not possible!"

"How about nine thousand and nine hundred?"

"... No!"

Su Ping bit his teeth. "Then, nine thousand and eight hundred?"

Joanna was speechless. Who would bargain like this?

"One hundred at most." Joanna kept a straight face.

Su Ping was practically hopping. "One hundred? You are so cheap. I can collect more than one hundred pieces even if I go and kill the Void Bugs by myself. At least five thousand! Do not forget that you are my employee. Do you want to visit the Archean Divinity or not? Those divine crystals are from already deceased gods. I am not asking you to kill someone, am I?"

Joanna made up her mind. "You can threaten to lower my grades but I can only give you two thousand pieces and that is final!"

"Okay!"

Su Ping agreed. Joanna was furious to see Su Ping accepting so readily. "You!" Su Ping interrupted her calmly. "Don't 'you' me. This amount is within your expectations. You must be gloating inside!"

Hmm!

Joanna snorted.

Of course, Su Ping was right to some extent. She made it appear that she was full of wrath but inside, she was happy.

The amount she had predicted was much more than two thousand!

Here was the detailed train of thought she had for this trade war

Back to the second Su Ping mentioned divine crystals. Freeze-frame. Right there. Joanna used 0.01 seconds before she understood what Su Ping was up to.

During that time, she recalled how she had been controlled by Su Ping. He had strict rules for grading her and it was difficult for her to fight him back.

Therefore, the first look she had to put on was surprise with some anger mixed in!

She had to let Su Ping know that this was a serious matter and it was a huge violation to them to talk about this.

As for that Major God who was their driver here, his reaction was perfectly authentic. She gave him a thumbs-up inside and remembered his contribution.

Then, for the following discussion, Joanna stuck to her serious, determined attitude!

Hence, the negotiation began.

Su Ping asked for the divine crystals, dead to shame, which was within her expectation. She had to make counteroffers.

She knew the charm and importance of divine crystals and was fully aware that Su Ping would take advantage of her identity. But, Su Ping's need was bottomless. Greedy as humans were, no amount of treasure could fill that pit.

Here was when her former work came into effect.

Eventually, they struck a deal and she would give him two thousand pieces.

Without the previous efforts, Su Ping would threaten her with her grades. No matter how wealthy she was, Su Ping would milk her dry.

Besides, she had not seen the Archean Divinity yet. Naturally, she wasn't willing to give up all her wealth to Su Ping for nothing.

Hmm, good for me. This guy might have asked for hundreds of thousands, even a million pieces or more. Where would I get him those? Joanna was happy about herself.

Trying to mess with her?

When she was born, Su Ping's great, great, great, great, great... great-grandpa had yet to be born!

What was her focus on cultivation? Mind games!

I will take the two thousand divine crystals this time and will come back later to ask for more. She surely forced the numbers down. I think I have to give her some hope of visiting the Archeon Divinity some time. Only then will she will fully identify with her status as my 'employee' and completely fulfill her obligations... Su Ping said to himself.

To win over and control through conciliation was his strategy with Joanna.

The carrot and stick strategy could come in handy as well.

He couldn't spend all of his time scheming against her. He would be exhausted and truth be told, he wasn't confident that he could win every time.

After all, Joanna had lived long years. She was more sophisticated than he could imagine.

He had to show her the tangible benefits of being an employee and view her identity as his employee as the most important thing of all. Only by then could he truly control her. By then, it would be her turn to exhaust her ways to please him. He wouldn't have to beg her like he did just then.

"I will take my time..."

Su Ping was in no rush. He considered how to divide up the two thousand divine crystals and decided to give them all to the Little Skeleton.

Helping the Little Skeleton develop would be more assurance for him.

Last time, in the Divinity, Su Ping had worn himself out and merely collected hundreds of divine crystals which were shared among all of his pets. This time, Su Ping wanted to use all of the two thousand divine crystals on the Little Skeleton to see if it would transform.

"That is the spring."

Joanna showed Su Ping to a pond behind the building

It was more like a lake with some golden liquid that was emitting divine energy.

Su Ping smelled a lovely scent. He sensed as if he were breathing through every pore. He thought of an idea. If the spring could help refine the pets' bloodlines, then... Wouldn't it better his as well?

Joanna glared at him. She must have guessed what was on his mind. "You can bathe in here as well. At least, wash the foolish stink off of

you."

"I will lower your grades if you continue to talk to me like this!"

"Hmm. I have other things to attend to. Stay here. I will send over a Celestial God. You can tell him if you need anything."

"A Celestial God?"

Su Ping was surprised that a being more powerful than the legendary battle pet warriors would come to serve him. It was too good to be true.

But this was indeed the truth.

Also, he had hired Joanna the goddess as his employee. He had encountered that mysterious being in the Chaotic Realm of the Undead. While he remained weak, his mind had opened up. A Celestial God could no longer stun him.

After Joanna left, Su Ping called out the pets and he hopped into the spring as well. Feeling the warmth and enjoying the sweet scent, Su Ping felt he was more comfortable than ever before.

He sat in the spring with his legs crossed, bathing himself in the water as he cultivated.

Just as he started cultivating, the divine energy in the spring flowed into him through his pores.

The overwhelming power of the Chaotic Star Char once again demonstrated its strength. Su Ping was immersed in his cultivation, wildly sucking in the divine energy from the spring. He realized that the star vortexes inside of his cells had turned from blue into a soft gold color.

He cultivated for a day.

When he opened his eyes again, he felt full of strength.

He examined himself closely. His realm stayed at the intermediate position of the sixth rank. However, he could tell that the energy within him was much richer and condensed.

It was hard to describe but he was sure that the force he could muster would surpass that of the intermediate position of the sixth rank.

"I always hear people say that aptitudes vary from person to person. I wonder how mine is now." Su Ping's eyes flickered. How many people could enjoy a chance to bathe in a Divinity spring?

He checked the pets. They had not changed much. Their ranks remained the same as before. Probably the pets had merely become more intelligent.

That would only be demonstrated in real-life combats.

Su Ping planned on having the pets train in the arena. As for how to get there and how to train, that was not his problem. He could have Joanna take care of that. In the meantime, he could make the best of his time in the spring and cultivate.

Soon, three days had passed.

All the pets' training had completed and they had progressed by leaps and bounds.

Joanna had bought out the arena in the city just for the pets to train. Those pets dying and reviving repeatedly alerted some people, but since Joanna booked the entire venue, few people were aware of this. Those were all of Joanna's trusted subordinates and she had ordered them to keep quiet about it.

During rounds after rounds of life-risking battles, all of the pets had learned new skills and they were different from before. Every pet carried a ruthless feeling they had picked up from the senior pets that lived their whole lives in the arena.

Chapter 264 Breakthrough

“Well, not bad, not bad at all.”

Su Ping checked the pets one by one. All of them were rated as above average, up to the standard of professional training.

As for their combat strength.

Since those pets had low-rank bloodlines, even though they weren't above average, their combat strength had just reached seven in rating, similar to the Lightning Rat, or even a bit inferior to the Lightning Rat.

The Lightning Rat had been regarded as above average as well but it had been trained multiple times. Of all the pets of the same level, the Lightning Rat had excelled. But then again, it was still hard for the Lightning Rat to progress further than that.

Having trained pets many times, Su Ping had discovered some patterns.

Generally speaking, to be rated as above average, pets with low-rank bloodlines would have to have a combat strength of around seven.

For pets with middle-rank bloodlines, they would have to reach nine points in combat strength.

As for pets with advanced-rank bloodlines, up until then, Su Ping had not trained such pets yet. He assumed it was highly likely that those pets would have to have at least a combat strength of 10 to be rated as above average in aptitude.

For the moment, only the Little Skeleton had a combat strength beyond 10. And yet, the Little Skeleton was merely at the sixth rank and was considered below average. It was because its bloodline was formidable, which had brought down its overall rating.

On the other hand, it was thanks to the Skeleton King bloodline that the Little Skeleton could grow up so fast and smoothly.

“Having someone on the inside is good.”

Su Ping exclaimed to himself.

In the old days, he would have to train the pets by himself, which was life-threatening. He had spent seven days, ending in complete exhaustion, just to train the Celestial Pig. Look at him now. The training went along swimmingly while he was lying around, and it even took less time than before!

The more he thought of it, the more he believed that hiring Joanna as his employee had been a wise decision.

The admission fee to this Demigod Burial was expensive but it was money well spent. From then on, he could look at this place as his dedicated professional training ground and Joanna would be the person in charge.

“Let's go. We'll come back later,” Su Ping said to Joanna. He was ready to go back. “Coming back?” “Of course. We have more pets to be trained Besides, I want to enjoy that spring a bit more,” Su Ping said cheerfully.

Joanna rolled her eyes at him. What a greedy man.

Of course, she said nothing. The spring was precious but Su Ping was her boss. For the great cause of revisiting the Archean Divinity, she had to give up on those trivial benefits for the time being.

Since she said nothing to oppose him, Su Ping summoned the system to take them back to the store.

Soon, the swirl in the air emerged and sucked in Su Ping, Joanna, as well as all the pets.

By the time they opened their eyes again, they were in the familiar environment within the store.

Su Ping found places for the pets that had completed their training and then looked through his notebook to select the second batch of pets to be trained.

Too bad that Joanna is just an employee and her pets cannot be brought back to life when they die. Otherwise, I could ask her to help me carry some pets, which could save me some trips and admission fees.

How vexing.

In the cultivation sites, when Joanna died, she would be sent back to the store directly.

However, the pets she carried would die for real and could no longer be revived. As such, Su Ping had to give up on the idea of having Joanna carry some pets for him.

“Let’s go.”

After he got ready, Su Ping bought a ticket to the Demigod Burial again. Joanna remained poker-faced.

Soon, the two of them arrived.

Their “driver” this time was still the Major God named Augu.

This Major God didn’t seem happy to see Su Ping. But since Joanna was with him, the Major God didn’t show his anger. That being said, that warm smile on his face did disappear.

Time flew. Soon, a night had passed.

Dawn broke and twilight cast its beautiful hue to the countless households in the Longjiang Base City.

One night had passed in the base city, but Su Ping had been working for 10 days in the cultivation site.

He had spent all of his time cultivating in the spring during those 10 days. He had stayed in the water for so long that his skin had become wrinkled.

As for the pets?

He had let Joanna take care of the pets. Su Ping, the hands-off boss, had been busy with his own cultivation.

Joanna did not let Su Ping down. All the pets they had brought were different from before. At the moment, every pet was rated as above average.

During this time, Su Ping had progressed markedly. He had reached the intermediate position of the sixth rank.

All of the star vortexes inside him had changed into a golden color with a stronger pulling force, which had a direct impact on his strength.

In battles, the level of strength released in an instant was critical. In a fight of life and death, the instant outburst of strength could enable Su Ping to react faster than his opponent because the time he needed to build up his strength would be shorter.

The “Fist of Exorcist” he had picked up was a skill that relied heavily on the instant outburst of strength. The golden star vortexes began to spin around as Su Ping started to practice the “Fist of Exorcist.” He was feeling better and stronger. When he built up his strength to the extreme, his punch could even cause some sonic booms!

The sonic boom was of a minimal level and it still took him too long to unleash the “Fist of Exorcist,” which implied that he couldn’t put this skill in practice just yet. He had a long way to go before he could just punch out and generate a sonic boom without extra effort.

Su Ping had a feeling that by the time he reached the upper position of the sixth rank or the seventh rank, he could attain the first rank of the “Fist of Exorcist.” By then, with one punch, he could kill a ninth-rank beast!

Su Ping supposed that if he were to compare himself to a pet, according to the system’s criteria, he would be regarded as average or above average by then.

I must learn the first level of the ‘Fist of Exorcist’ before I reach the seventh rank!

Su Ping set himself a goal.

He was the owner of a pet store and he had trained so many pets that had been rated as above average while he himself had not reached this rating when he had practiced the “Fist of Exorcist.” That would reflect poorly on him.

At this moment, Su Ping didn’t see himself as a battle pet warrior, nor did he count the pet’s strength as his own.

“Let’s go.”

Having checked all the pets, Su Ping told Joanna it was time to go back.

Joanna nodded. She excused the servants, gave several orders, and went back to the store with Su Ping.

“Come on, little guy.”

Su Ping summoned the Little Skeleton to see how many Divine Crystals it had consumed.

The Little Skeleton had consumed over one thousand of the two thousand pieces. The Divine Charge in the Little Skeleton had exceeded one hundred. Those Divine Crystals Joanna had provided were of high quality. Each Divine Crystal could add about 10 points of Divine Value.

Ten Divine Crystals could generate one Divine Charge. Because of the storage of over one hundred Divine Charges, Su Ping could see a divine enhancement cost listed behind all of the Little Skeleton's skills.

Su Ping had witnessed the power of divinely enhanced skills. As such, he had high expectations of the Little Skeleton's combat strength.

Combat strength: 10.7

The one hundred Divine Charges had increased the Little Skeleton's combat strength. Su Ping could see some faint, dark golden glow in the Little Skeleton's bones. The special aroma unique to divine energy was refreshing.

I assume the Little Skeleton's combat strength will reach 11 points when it's done consuming all of the two thousand Divine Crystals.

But the Divine Charge has not seen any qualitative change. A one hundred Divine Value will transform into one Divine Charge. But even with one hundred points, the Divine Charge has not transformed into anything. Is this it? Or, is more Divine Charge needed to transform to another level?"

Su Ping couldn't arrive at any conclusion. He decided to drop the matter.

Anyways, an increase in combat strength was good.

Su Ping told the Little Skeleton to continue to consume the Divine Crystals. He looked at his watch. It was nine in the morning; still early. He rested for a bit and then cleaned his store.

"Get ready for business."

After everything was ready, Su Ping unfolded the scroll and shook Tang Ruyan out from it.

"You, you, you... Can you not tell me before you get me out?"

Tang Ruyan fell to the ground. Caught off guard, she landed in an embarrassing position, which left her blue faced. "It's okay. I don't mind."

"I do mind!!"

"Sure. Open the door and look refreshed. Time for work."

Tang Ruyan stomped on the ground, furious; she refrained to reply to Su Ping. After she tidied up her clothes and found out that her hair was in a mess, she asked, "Hey, is there a bathroom anywhere?"

"Yes."

After the upgrade, the system added a user-friendly feature in the store, i.e. the bathroom. Of course, there was nothing special about the bathroom except that the faucet looked kind of fancy...

Fuming with rage, Tang Ruyan went to the bathroom to tidy up her clothes and hair.

Joanna, on the other hand, had bathed and changed in the Demigod Burial. Su Ping went to open the door without waiting for Tang Ruyan.

Outside, a few people were present.

Su Ping looked around. Fewer people than expected were waiting outside.

Based on the previous night's situation, he should have seen a huge crowd gathered there in the morning. Did I hurt people's feelings by closing the store early?

Not likely.

Su Ping raised his eyebrows. He summoned the Inferno Dragon. "Rise and shine. Get in position."

The Inferno Dragon snorted. The Inferno Dragon wasn't happy about this arrangement. It was a dragon, with dignity. "En?" Su Ping darted a glance at the dawdling Inferno Dragon. Wishing for a round of training?

No one knew a man better than his own father. No one knew a pet better than his own master. Su Ping had raised the Inferno Dragon by himself. The Inferno Dragon trembled at Su Ping's glance. Its sluggish steps turned into a scoot. The Inferno Dragon went to its spot by the door, adjusted its position, and crawled down.

Oh, how bright the sun is and how beautiful the flowers are.

Well, lying around seems to be nice, right?

The Inferno Dragon shot a look at the people checking it out from across the street and then closed its eyes to continue its nap. Su Ping went back to the store, sat behind the counter, and waited for customers. He picked up his phone to browse through the news. He didn't forget that a store was competing against him since the previous day.

A night had gone by. What kind of lousy plan did Primo cook up this time?

Immediately, Su Ping was intrigued by a piece of news.

The first pop-out advertisement on a website that Su Ping frequented was Primo's.

Chapter 265 Zhou Family

"Brand-new offering!"

"Rule the Elite League!"

"First come first served. Guaranteed admission to the Top 5 with limited availability. Only two spots open!!"

The dazzling advertisement flickered on the page. Primo didn't have a spokesperson, but three. The positions of those three people spoke volumes as well. In the middle was an old man about seventy years old with gray hair on the temples. He was a refined and friendly-looking elderly. One look and people would regard him as a master, with a lofty virtue worthy of respect. Standing next to him was a man and a lady. The way they were presented in the advertisement was specially designed as well.

The man was youthful with bright eyes and thick eyebrows. He was Mu Yunfei, champion of the last Elite League.

The girl standing on the other side was well-dressed up. She had golden hair and blue eyes, a foreigner. She was Avril, an international star with a high reputation.

Su Ping found this interesting.

Master trainer, the last champion and an international star...

Three major celebrities!

Any one of the three going to any one of the Primo's branch stores would drastically drive up visitor count to that store!

Not to mention that the three of them were promoting the Primo stores together. It would be hard for Primo not to become popular!

What's with this Mu Yunfei? Isn't he from the Mu Family? Why would he go and advertise for the Liu Family...

Su Ping was confused.

Mu Yunfei had started to advertise for Primo a long time before. His appearance in the advertisement was nothing personal against Su Ping.

Su Ping didn't understand the many complicated relationships between the big families. But he had to admit that this combo of three was powerful. No wonder things were different after merely one night. "The Top 5?" Looking at the ad, Su Ping frowned.

Primo doesn't give up, huh? Su Ping had just advertised a guaranteed admission to the Top 100 and Primo immediately claimed that they could promise the Top 50. Su Ping changed it to the Top 10 and Primo had launched a package for the Top 5. Top 5?

Su Ping read through some information about past Elite Leagues. Even at the base city levels, making it to the Top 5 was no easy matter. The participants would have to at least have a pet with a combat strength of around the eighth rank.

Also, the pets were not the only important players.

During a match, conditions would change quickly. A battle pet warrior's own reaction and combat strength mattered as well.

This had to be taken into account. Therefore, to guarantee a Top 10 to someone, their pets would have to display a combat strength of the ninth rank. Only with such pets could Su Ping be confident that his customers could make it to the Top 10!

It wouldn't be a problem with such pets, even if their masters were losers. They could just stand on the stage and let their pets do the rest.

Usually, a master trainer can't train a pet to reach such a rank within such a short period of time, unless the pets they receive are at the upper position of the eighth rank, to begin with. Only with such pets can Primo claim they can propel people up to the Top 5!

Is Primo willing to risk their reputation just to compete with me? Or, have they thought of other plans? For example... bribing contestants after the competition?

Su Ping raised his eyebrows.

If it were the latter option, there was nothing he could do.

After all, the Primo stores had been in business for years and it was the Liu Family who was backing them, a family with a history of over a century. The store was resourceful and could afford to bribe the contestants.

Once Primo stole away all of Su Ping's business, the money Primo could make would be enough for them to bribe many Top 10 contestants.

Su Ping fell silent.

Tang Ruyan had just refreshed herself and exited the bathroom. She darted a look at Su Ping but did not engage him in a conversation. She went to the door to continue her work as a greeter like the day before.

She secretly gave herself a pep talk, promising herself that someone would recognize her this day.

As time went on, gradually, some people came over. Afraid to get closer, they stood across the street and took pictures of the sleeping Inferno Dragon.

Tang Ruyan waited eagerly.

A moment later, she realized that those people were just taking pictures of the Inferno Dragon, not showing any intention to enter the store.

What is going on?

The store was crowded yesterday. How come no one came in today?

"Is there something wrong with your store?" Tang Ruyan shouted to Su Ping in dismay.

Her voice dragged Su Ping out of his ruminations. He looked at her and grinned. "I didn't know you cared about the store's business."

"Hmm."

I do not care about the store's business. I care that no one's coming, so no one can tip my family off about me!!

"I wonder how you can laugh when no one is coming," Tang Ruyan sulked.

Su Ping replied with a smile.

He heard someone coming. Several young men stepped into the store.

"Do you have any spots left for the Top 10 package?" a young man asked Tang Ruyan as soon as he came in.

This young man didn't seem to be surprised to see her. Tang Ruyan knew that he had failed to recognize her. What a waste of time. Pulling a long face, Tang Ruyan said, "Yes. Just get to the counter."

Those young men found it strange that the greeter would be so distant. But they didn't mind that on account of her charming looks. They nodded and headed to the counter.

The store appeared to be deserted with no other customers present, which took those young men by surprise. However, they didn't think too much of it.

"Are you the boss? I want the Top 10 package. Money is not an issue. Are you sure that you can guarantee I can make it to the Top 10?" A young man stood by the counter and gazed at Su Ping solemnly.

"Naturally," Su Ping answered.

The young man kept his eyes fixed on Su Ping for three more seconds before he extended his hand to another person standing next to him, who gave him a thin, metal card at once.

It would cost dozens of coins just to make that one name card.

"I am Zhou Chuan. This is my card. What should I call you, sir?"

"My surname is Su."

Su Ping took over the card and read it. This person was a board director of some company. He was young and surnamed Zhou. Su Ping understood who his customer was.

But Su Ping remained composed. Zhou Chuan was surprised by that, because he was sure that Su Ping could guess his identity. Su Ping had invested heavily in his promotion and hired Mu Shuangwan to advertise for him. He had to have an idea of who the big shots in the base city were.

"What do I need to provide for the training?" Zhou Chuan asked.

"A sixth-rank pet and money."

"A sixth-rank pet? Are you sure?" Zhou Chuan looked at Su Ping, wondering if he had misspoken. Zhou Chuan was aiming for the Top 10, which required pets of the eighth-rank at the very least. What was the meaning of training... a sixth-rank pet?

"Yes, I am sure. I have written it in the details. Have you not read it?" Su Ping answered with a question.

Zhou Chuan had read it for sure. It was just that he merely regarded it as a stunt to generate some social buzz. He didn't think Su Ping would ask anyone to give him a sixth-rank pet and money and say for sure that said person could make it to the Top 10.

It was the Elite League. Over a million in a base city would participate in the qualification trials.

A sixth-rank pet... Even reaching the Top 1000 would be barking at the moon, not to mention the Top 10!

“How can you be sure?” Zhou Chuan fixed his eyes on Su Ping. He was serious. He could not afford to make a joke there. He was practically gambling by choosing Su Ping’s store. This Elite League was important to him!

“Can I swear on my moral quality?” Su Ping asked.

Zhou Chuan curled his lips.

I am not joking!

Your moral quality? Why are you talking about your moral quality when I am talking about business!!

All businessmen are unethical. Do you even have moral quality?

“I will train your pet for the first round tomorrow. You can come back and see the results. If you are unhappy, I can refund you for the following procedure.” Su Ping did not bother to waste his time explaining. He would convince Zhou Chuan with facts.

Zhou Chuan frowned in deep thought.

The young man next to him asked, “Then, what about the money for the first round of training? Won’t you refund that?”

“No,” Su Ping replied, “What if you’re happy about the results? If you just insist that you’re not happy, then I will stand to lose. Right?”

“Of course not. We are not here to mess up your store. Who do you think we are? Mr. Zhou is the Zhou Family’s...”

Before he could finish his words, Zhou Chuan had made his decision. He stopped the young man.

“Okay.”

Zhou Chuan accepted the terms.

Su Ping took out the contract. “Take a look. Sign and make the transfer if you don’t have any questions.”

Zhou Chuan read through the contract and didn’t find any traps. He transferred the money to Su Ping right away.

Chapter 266 Champion!!

Zhou Chuan put away the contract and asked Su Ping, “What kind of sixth-rank pet do you need?”

“Whatever works for you.”

Zhou Chuan would have left right away if he had anywhere else to go.

He wondered who boosted the confidence of this store. Su Ping made it like he could train any sixth-rank pet and turn it into a super pet. Was he serious?

Even master trainers had their specialties.

Some master trainers were more skilled at training flying pets, some were better with dragons, and others were proficient in studying pets of the element families.

Any category had a wide variety of pets. The knowledge to be mastered was extensive and profound. Even master trainers would have to be assiduous in their studies for their entire lives.

Look at Su Ping. He didn't have a preference.

Zhou Chuan would rather see a person that had high standards and requirements so strict that he would find bothersome than deal with a person that seemed to be careless.

You can be careless. But what should I do if the results turn out to be an utter failure?

Zhou Chuan was not worried about his money. But he was no longer that young. If he missed this year's Elite League, he would never have another chance!

Su Ping remained as calm as before. Zhou Chuan felt he couldn't have a normal conversation with this person.

Besides, things should not work out this way. Usually, it was the store owners that urged the customers to give a pet that was easy to be trained. Why was Zhou Chuan the one coaxing the store owner?! Zhou Chuan heaved a sigh. He didn't know what to say about this store. The store was doing business in the shantytown area and it closed last night, against the avid hopes of the customers. Added to that, Su Ping had no preference for pets... It just so happened that this strange store could use an Inferno Dragon to keep up appearances.

The Inferno Dragon was not picked up by Su Ping from some wildness, was it?

Zhou Chuan was exhausted. A moment later, he opened up his contract space and summoned the best sixth-rank pet he had.

It was a Ghost Face, of the demon family with a sixth rank bloodline.

This wasn't the most powerful pet he had. His major pet was a Storm Spirit with an eighth-rank bloodline that had reached the upper position of the seventh-rank. Storm Spirit was an advanced pet of the thunder family, very aggressive and skilled in a mass battle.

But the store would not take it.

(O'A')o

"Ghost Face?"

Su Ping looked at it and nodded. He told Tang Ruyan to take the pet away.

"Remember to come back tomorrow," Su Ping reminded Zhou Chuan.

Zhou Chuan left without saying anything. He had already suffered from a mental breakdown. He just thought of this as an effort he had to make.

Not long after Zhou Chuan left, more customers came but they were all there to pick up their pets.

Su Ping told Joanna to take the pets out one by one and show the customers to the test room to check the results of their training.

“Eh?”

With no customers in the store, Tang Ruyan was unoccupied and had nothing to do, which allowed her to notice that the pets she had just seen the day before turned out to be completely different that day. She wouldn't believe those were the same pets as yesterday if it weren't for the fact that they still carried the same smell and were still at the same rank.

Only one night had passed. What happened?

Inside the test room, the advanced equipment blew the minds of the customers. The environments that could be constructed in the room astonished them.

They had never heard of such a technology. For a moment, they felt they were all cut off from the world.

Joanna guided them through how to change the environments in the test room so that the customers could see the effects of the training

Soon, everyone began to exclaim in amazement.

“Awesome!”

“Is it honestly my dog?!” “I cannot believe this. How bada**. What kind of skill is that? Good god, my pet has learned a middle-rank skill!!”

The customers who came to pick up their pets could not believe the drastic changes in their pets as proven in the tests.

If it weren't for the power of the contract and the familiar emotional bond, they would even claim that their pets had been switched.

Only one night and their pets had progressed by leaps and bounds. How incredible!

Most of the customers had chosen the general training. After their tests, they realized that their pets either had grown stronger, rising by one rank at the very least or had learned new skills.

Some of the pets learned one middle-rank skill, and some had picked up two to three elementary skills.

This was a remarkable success considering those customers had merely spent one hundred thousand coins. The result had utterly disrupted their assumptions!

Every customer that came out from the test room bowed to Su Ping when they walked past the counter to express their gratitude.

Their pets were their closest friends. They marveled at the level of change and development that Su Ping could help their pets achieve, and as such, they were very grateful.

Sure, they paid for the service. Yet, somehow, having seen the changes in their pets, the customers felt that Su Ping had done them a great favor. This was no longer a mere business deal!

“Sir, those negative comments about you on the internet are mean. I will go back and defend your name right away!”

“Right. Those people never came to your store and they threw dirt at you. I have to say that I was even a bit worried before I came today.”

“I think everyone knows those are just online trolls that other stores hired to defame this place.”

“People are jealous that this store is becoming popular and making good money.”

“Sir, from now on, your store is the only store I will turn to for pet training!”

“Me, too!”

“Pixie Pet Store rules!”

All the customers gave positive feedback!

The effect achieved at such a low price was much better than all the other stores that they had visited in the past. Even some of the more fastidious customers had a hard time finding faults.

After all, they had only spent one hundred thousand but their pets had experienced such amazing changes within such a short time. It was impossible for any other store!

Su Ping believed in the training effects of his store, and naturally because the training method could never be copied by other stores.

Those positive reviews would boost up the reputation of the store, which would in turn give people more confidence in the store. By then, Su Ping would no longer have to do any more promotion and he would still have stable customers every day; his store would be loaded to full capacity.

However, compared to the slandering online, the few customer’s positive words would be just a drop in the bucket. Them defending Su Ping would be an utterly inadequate measure.

Beep, beep! Su Ping received a call.

It was from the Mu’s Agency.

“Mr. Su, is your store... doing okay?”

The call was from Song Lu. She sounded overly cautious.

Su Ping smiled. “Yes.”

Song Lu was surprised that Su Ping could remain emotionally stable at this time. Relieved, she said, “Good. Primo is doing their promotion. I think things are looking a bit bad for you. Is there anything we can do for you?”

Since Mu Shuangwan was representing Su Ping’s store, if something were to happen to the store, it would bring down Mu Shuangwan’s reputation as well.

“Yes, indeed.”

Su Ping was about to call her before his phone rang.

“Do tell.”

“Keep the advertisement going but replace the text. My store is launching a new offering as well... I will make someone the champion!”

Chapter 267 Crazy Announcement

“Okay...”

Song Lu said one word after the first half of Su Ping’s sentence. As the second half of his sentence reached her ears, Song Lu was stunned still

The... championship?

She was in such a big shock that she almost dropped her phone.

She held tighter to her phone and came back to her senses. “Mr. Su, are you sure you are saying the right words? Or, did I hear it wrong? How many spots for what?” She felt she had to make sure she heard right.

“No more multiple spots. I said the champion!”

Su Ping had to reiterate so that she would not remember it wrong.

Song Lu kept her eyes wide open. This time, she was sure that she heard that word. Su Ping was not mentioning a number. He said... the champion!

He wanted to make someone the champion?!

Was he in his sane mind!!

Wasn’t this implying that Su Ping would pre-determine the champion for the Elite League’s qualification trials in the Longjiang Base City?

Song Lu could not think straight.

He was talking about the championship... No one in the top 10 or top 5, not even the people who came in second and third could compare with the champion. There was only one champion and the champion was the focus of attention!

The competition in every year’s Elite League was fierce. Not even the several local ruling families could claim that their people would win the championship, not to mention a small store like Su Ping’s! As it had always been, it was the young talents of the major families that were fighting for the championship. No one else ever was included in this fight.

At the very beginning of this call, hearing Su Ping’s calm voice, Song Lu thought that he was unaffected by the news Primo had released the night before. At the moment, she understood that not only was Su Ping affected, he had been driven out of his mind!

In the state of extreme craziness, he sure sounded sane. Nevertheless, his composed tone did not change the fact that he had become a lunatic. Why else would he boast such a wild statement?

“Sir... Sir, please think this through. Becoming the champion is not easy. Fighting for the Top 10 is already a risky game. The champion is always someone from the big families. The entire base city will be in an uproar if we spread out this message!” Song Lu’s voice was trembling.

She was nervous, afraid that Su Ping would be hell-bent on having his own way after he had gone “insane”.

If Su Ping insisted, she would be unable to stop him. Her only option would be to go down with this madman.

“I know. Since this is a competition, then let us compete. I am using legitimate ways. It is not like I am breaking the law or something.” Su Ping stayed calm. He had considered the risk of his decision. Otherwise, he would not have informed her when Primo’s advertisement had been online for so long.

He had to take more concerns into account than Song Lu could imagine.

That being said.

Since he had the ability and he was not committing a crime, why would he step away from the competition?

Besides, even a legendary battle pet warrior had to flee his store. When people came to bully him, he would show people that he wasn’t a pushover.

“Sir...” Song Lu could hear that Su Ping was never going to change his mind. All hope was lost for her.

She felt that the phone in her hand was a bomb that could blow her up at any second.

From their previous interaction, Song Lu had become aware that she would never be able to persuade Su Ping. Besides, when Su Ping was dead set on his ideas, they could not stop him. They could refuse to advertise for him but he had money. He could ask for another company to do the promotions for him while Song Lu and Mu’s Agency would have to deal with the huge liquidated damages.

Song Lu regretted ever taking this job and in the meantime, she regretted having listened to Vice Principal Dong.

What kind of a lunatic did he refer to her!

He was not doing her a favor!

“What?!”

In the office, after hearing Song Lu’s briefing, the Mu Agency’s president practically shot up from his chair. He stared at her in disbelief with his jaw dropped.

Sitting on the side, Mu Shuangwan was just like a deer caught in the headlights. She could have never imagined that Su Ping would be capable of such crazy decisions when the Primo stores pushed him to the edge!

The champion?

How terrifying this sounded! He was saying that he was going to appoint a person and that person was going to be the champion!

What would the major families think of this?

“Did you try to talk him out of it?” he asked Song Lu. Song Lu produced a smile of desperation. “I did everything short of dropping to my knees to beg him. People like him are usually determined and cannot be persuaded.”

The president curled his lips.

He knew better than anyone that those who met the most success in life were usually resolute and unlikely to be swayed.

But... Su Ping was a wacko!

He would never come back until he reached a dead end. He was on a suicide mission!

“No. I cannot allow this to happen. Cancel our contract with the store. We’ll deal with the huge liquidated damages!” Taking a deep breath, he announced his decision.

He understood fully that paying the huge liquidated damages would mean they would lose money.

Still, furthering their cooperation with the store would cost them more money. Even their entire company would be destroyed because of this!

This time, Su Ping wasn’t merely upsetting Primo, a store.

He was going against the entire base city!

He was targeting the championship!

How frantic was he!

“Cancel the contract?” Mu Shuangwan frowned. She was the one who had decided to go along with the job. She had second ideas about canceling the contract. She had met Venerable the Blade in Su Ping’s store. Canceling the contract would mean that Venerable the Blade would have an unfavorable impression of her and the Mu Family.

Also, she had not quite figured out the relationship between Venerable the Blade and Su Ping.

If Venerable the Blade and Su Ping were close, then canceling the contract would make a deep impact on the Mu Family.

The president of the company darted her a look and could understand her concern from the expressions on her face. He waved his hand. “I will take responsibility. The Mu Family cannot spiral down to hell with this crazy man. He said the championship. We could have worked something out if he had said second place. Champion? Does he even know what he is talking about? Who, of the million participants, would be willing to accept this result?!”

Mu Shuangwan heaved a sigh. “I understand.”

“End of discussion.”

“What should we do about... his advertisement?” Song Lu asked cautiously.

“We will cancel the contract and then publish his statement. Since doom is what he is seeking, then let us give him that. We are canceling Mu Shuangwan’s contract as his spokesperson, not the one for publishing his announcement. Anyways, we are just connecting him with some of the advertisement platforms. It is not our fault that he says those words.”

Song Lu smiled bitterly. When Su Ping placed the Inferno Dragon outside his store, they were happy that they had found the right partner.

However, soon, the Primo store exhibited another advanced pet and they provided more appealing packages. Those actions had cornered Su Ping.

Mu Shuangwan could sympathize with Su Ping. Primo had gone too far. The night before, when Primo’s advertisement went online, ninety percent of the customers outside Su Ping’s store left. The ones who stayed were either her fans or the Inferno Dragon’s fans.

“You will be held accountable for this matter. This is going into your year-end review.” The president of the company glared at Song Lu.

Song Lu was the one who had made the contact. She couldn’t escape from it.

Song Lu forced a smile. She knew this was coming.

Back to the store.

“Champion?”

Tang Ruyan overheard Su Ping’s conversation. She stared at him in disbelief.

She was aware of the Elite League. It was an international competition. Currently, they were at the stage of qualification trials at the base city level. She had once been a participant, having won first place in the qualification trials in the base city she came from.

However, later on, she failed in the regional competition.

Since she was a seventh-rank battle pet warrior at the moment, though she was still eligible, age-wise, her rank had exceeded the upper limit...

“Are you planning on participating in person? Not everyone can become the champion,” Tang Ruyan asked curiously. She remembered that when she won first place, she had to rely on her ninth-rank pet.

Also, back then, she was powerful enough herself. She could defeat the most advanced battle pet warriors without having to rely on her pets.

Her strength and her pet combined were what made her the champion.

Su Ping put away his phone. “Of course not.”

This was just a qualification trial at the base city level. He couldn’t have entered the competition himself. He would be bullying other participants if he did.

“You’re not?”

Tang Ruyan did not expect this answer. If Su Ping were to participate, she was sure that he could win first place. After all, he could defeat her.

But if he was not going, then she wouldn't be so sure whether he could deliver this promise.

"Then what will you do if someone comes with money and asks for this service? You can give that person a ninth-rank pet. But it can backfire if the person is too weak. Or, in the competition, if someone kills the battle pet warrior, no matter how powerful the pet is, it will still be of no use!" Tang Ruyan stated. She couldn't understand what this man was thinking at all.

"Why would I make an outsider the champion?" Su Ping said, "I have a person in mind."

"Who?"

"Brother!"

Right then, someone dashed into the store. It was Su Lingyue. She saw the store was devoid of customers, just like she had imagined.

The night before, she had been worried sick when the Primo stores launched one advertisement after another. She came to knock on the door at the dead of night.

But the door was closed and she couldn't push it open. She wondered if the soundproofing of the door was too perfect because no matter how hard she banged the door, Su Ping didn't react.

"Have you seen the news? The business is slow today, right?" Su Lingyue asked in haste.

"No. The store is packed."

"What is packed? No one is here." "Right, you saw no one and you asked me that question. Do you need to repair your brain damage?"

"You!"

Su Lingyue was furious.

How could he be in the mood to taunt her at this time?

"Primo is also putting an advanced pet on display. Many people are there to check it out. They are promising that they can send people to the Top 5. I heard some people have bought that service and the name list is out." Su Lingyue was too anxious to diss Su Ping.

Su Ping nodded. "I saw that. Since they are aiming for the Top 5, then we will get the championship. That will make us better than them."

"The championship?" Su Lingyue glared at Su Ping. "Are you serious?"

"Dead serious."

Su Lingyue touched Su Ping's forehead. "You're not burning up. How come your brain is not working?" Su Ping rolled his eyes and slapped away her hand.

Su Lingyue realized that he wasn't joking. She was taken aback. "Do you mean it?"

“Of course.”

“I”

Su Lingyue said nothing for a while. After a moment, she asked, “Are you going to participate?”

Su Ping rubbed her head. “You will be participating. Get me that championship. I will publish your name, so don’t let me down.”

Chapter 268 Determined to Win

“Me?”

Su Lingyue pointed to herself, pop-eyed, wondering if her ears were acting up.

She, participating in the Elite League?

Was he horsing around? She was still in school, nowhere near graduation.

She was confident, often flattering herself as one of the more outstanding (the most outstanding) students in her grade. However, those that could stand out in the Elite League were either experienced hunters that had honed themselves in the barren areas or former students that had graduated years before.

When those students were still in school, they were the stars.

Su Lingyue believed she could try her chances if she had six more years.

But, for the moment... it would be basically a day trip for her.

With any luck, she might be able to last a couple of rounds. She wouldn’t even dare to dream about making it to the top 100, let alone the championship. She would consider herself extremely fortunate if she could be among the Top 1000!

“I wonder how you’re able to make jokes at times like this.” Su Lingyue was angry. She thought Su Ping was deliberately making fun of her.

Naturally, Su Ping was being serious. He waved to Joanna and told her to get the dragon that he had blackmailed from the titled battle pet warrior surnamed Xiong.

Joanna went to the pet room. When she came back out, a horse-sized dragon was following her.

The Moonfrost Dragon!

It was one of the best dragons.

Although the Moonfrost Dragon could not compare with any one of the three rarest dragons like the Inferno Dragon, the Moonfrost Dragon wasn’t easy to come by on the market. At the very least, in the dozens of base cities on the continent, the total number of Moonfrost Dragons was likely to be less than twenty.

That was to say, Moonfrost Dragons could be hardly seen in most of the base cities.

When Su Ping asked for the Moonfrost Dragon, he had already planned to give it to Su Lingyue. Since he had the Inferno Dragon already, he didn't need to have another dragon. He would rather concentrate his efforts on making the Inferno Dragon stronger, instead of splitting up his efforts in training the Moonfrost Dragon.

Besides, he would worry less if Su Lingyue grew stronger. After all, they were family.

"What is that??"

Su Lingyue's eyes opened wider and wider.

Another rare dragon?!

There was an Inferno Dragon by the door. How could there be another dragon hidden inside Su Ping's store?

Did it belong to one of their customers?

"This is a Moonfrost Dragon. It'll be a good companion for you. Here you go. Take good care of her. It just so happens that the Moonfrost Dragon is reaching the end of its infancy and is at around the third-rank. It won't take you too much effort to sign a contract with it," Su Ping explained.

Su Lingyue couldn't say a single word.

After a moment, she turned around and gazed at Su Ping intently. "Did you, you... just say that this, this dragon is for me?"

"Yes." For once, Su Ping did not diss her. He replied with a gentle smile.

Su Lingyue felt there was a buzzing noise in her suddenly blank brain.

She had never imagined that she could have a dragon.

The common families would never afford the dragons on the market, not to mention a rare Moonfrost Dragon. Even the average dragons at the ninth-rank would be sold at a whopping price!

This grand gift had exceeded her imagination. Tang Ruyan was sizing up the Moonfrost Dragon as well. Hearing Su Ping's words, she became a bit envious. Even with her status in the family, it would be extremely difficult for her to obtain such an uncommon dragon. The Tang Family was wealthy. Nevertheless, countless members were after the family's resources. Everyone had to earn resources with effort. No one in the Tang Family could be as fortunate as Su Lingyue. All she needed to do was to have a good big brother. "Go ahead and sign the contract."

Su Ping patted Su Lingyue's shoulders to wake her up from her astonishment.

Su Lingyue looked at Su Ping and then at the Moonfrost Dragon. "Why would you give me this pet?" She bit her lips.

Her underlying meaning was: I've been treating you poorly and I've argued with you every day. Why would you help me? She already considered it unusual when Su Ping surprised her with petty favors. But this was not another petty favor. He was giving her a dragon, a top-level kind!

Generally speaking, siblings would fight over a million-coin house when it came to family matters, let alone a dragon. Also, she and Su Ping were never on good terms. They found each other disagreeable to the eye. Just during the past few months, Su Ping had changed greatly, which had bettered their relationship a bit.

Before this, they had been as incompatible as fire and water.

“It’s just a gift for you. If you think the gift is too valuable, then you can be more obedient from now on. After all, adorable girls are more lovable.” Su Ping smiled. He pinched her cheeks so hard that they ended out of shape. Well, it felt comfortable.

Su Lingyue was almost moved to tears but Su Ping pinching her cheeks ruined that. She slapped away his hand. “You haven’t washed your hands. Don’t touch me with your dirty hand!”

Su Ping was speechless. Given her genes and her temper, she could never be adorable in this lifetime, could she?

“All right. Go and sign the contract.” Su Ping waved his hand.

All jokes aside, Su Lingyue was still touched. At the mention of the dragon, her expressions changed. She glanced at Su Ping and fell silent for a moment. “I will remember your kindness,” she murmured.

Her voice was barely audible but Su Ping did hear it. A faint smile climbed to his face.

Su Lingyue no longer held back. She strutted toward the Moonfrost Dragon and crouched down in front of it. The more she looked at its scales with the silvery sparkles, the more she liked them. The dragon was breathtaking.

The Moonfrost Dragon was mild. The girl was absorbed by its silvery eyes.

The dragon seemed to know that the girl would become the most important person in its world.

Soon, a pattern was engraved on the Moonfrost Dragon’s forehead. Su Lingyue laid down her hand. Her astral and spiritual powers poured out and combined with that mysterious contract. At the same time, her consciousness was linked to another feeble consciousness.

The latter grew deeper in her mind, tightly connecting with her consciousness.

That was because of the contract. The contract was firmer than the bond formed by blood.

With the link between their consciousnesses, she could sense her pet’s emotions at all times and could pass on her instructions to her pet instantly.

The moment the contract was established, Su Lingyue felt her blood had merged with the blood of the dragon’s. It had become her family.

The connection touched her heart. She loved this little dragon even more.

“Moo~”

The Moonfrost Dragon chanted joyfully.

Su Lingyue patted its head, smiling from ear to ear.

Su Ping turned around. The view of his sister and her dragon's intimate interaction leaped into his sight. "From today on, the Moonfrost Dragon will be yours. Remember to come to my store to train the dragon every day. I will count on this little guy to carry you to the championship!"

Su Lingyue couldn't believe this. "The dragon? How are you going to make that work? The dragon is still an infant. To win the championship, the pet would have to be at least at the ninth-rank. This... It..."

"That is why I said you need to come here for training every day. Professional training is limited to once a week for each pet but there is no such limit for the general training. We must make the dragon reach adulthood before the Elite League," Su Ping stressed.

Su Lingyue stared tongue-tied at him. "The Elite League is about to begin. Do you want to make my dragon an adult before it can go through the adolescent years?! No way. No. You are pulling up seedlings to help them grow. I won't allow it!" Though it was Su Ping who had given her the dragon, she still wanted to protect it against him.

"The dragon will train here. You don't have to worry about anything. Pulling up seedlings to help them grow? I am caring about the seedlings. Enough said." "But..." Since Su Ping never intended to discuss with her, she was aware that she could not persuade him. "But I cannot afford all this money. You won't give me a discount."

"Give me your bank card and I will transfer you some money. Consider it a loan," Su Ping said.

He had thought about this. He was somehow taking advantage of a loophole he had found. He could give Su Lingyue the money for her to consume in the store. Therefore, that sum of money could be converted into energy points.

If it weren't for the fact that professional training was only allowed once per week, Su Ping would have paid Su Lingyue to come for professional training every day.

She would just be a go-between tool.

A real businessman was someone who would make his own money!

"What..." Su Lingyue was speechless. Lending her money so she could spend it? What a waste of time. He should just put it on her tab.

Anyways, Su Lingyue was not in the mood to complain about this. Su Ping was always peculiar and she could never figure him out.

There were too many things she wanted to complain about him.

"Are you sure this will not hurt it?" Su Lingyue had to double-check. She felt sorry for the pet she had just obtained. The bond established via the contract would not only affect the pets, but also the masters.

However, most of the humans could make decisions based on reasons. Hence, some people were able to abandon their pets. On the other hand, most of the pets, apart from those pets born to be violent and heartless, would easily succumb to the impacts of the emotional bond.

“Of course. Think about it. This is a dragon we are talking about. Why would I hurt it?” Su Ping was bored of her incessant rambling.

Su Lingyue was speechless.

On second thought, his words did make sense.

If he could train the dragon well, it would be of greater significance than winning the championship. In no way would Su Ping want to mess up the dragon.

“Fine. But are you sure you can do this? We have very little time. The championship...” Su Lingyue had no confidence that she could become the champion. She had the Moonfrost Dragon but it was still a baby!

How could the dragon grow from the third-rank to the ninth-rank within such a short time?

“You just need to come at a set time every day. You don’t have to worry about anything else.” Su Ping was not in the mood to explain. Whether the dragon was at the third-rank or the sixth-rank made no difference for him. It would just be a matter of time.

Since this was a familiar matter, he would go to great lengths. He could devote extra effort to each training.

After all, the system didn’t say that he couldn’t conduct extra training every time.

As such, he would even have time left before the Elite League after he trained the Moonfrost Dragon. It was just that he would have to go through some tiring days.

But it would be worthwhile. He was determined about his sister winning the championship. Since Primo was not giving up, he would fight them to the very end!

Chapter 269 Strong Reaction

Primo, headquarters.

In front of the spacious and clean garden-like store, a dense crowd of at least a few thousands had gathered. The customers stood in several lines. Some were looking at their phones and some were standing on their tiptoes to check out the ferocious beast by the door.

The beast had a heinous look. It was one of the best pets of the demon family.

It was hard for them to see such a pet in real life. Usually, people could only search for some images online or to watch some CG-generated clips in movies to satisfy their curiosity. But that day, they could stand there and see this pet with their own eyes at a close range.

Eight Hell Beast!

It was just as rare as the Inferno Dragon!

“Have you heard this? The Pixie Pet Store never issued another announcement.” “Tell me about it. They only claimed guaranteed admission to the Top 10 but Primo is aiming for the Top 5. No way can Pixie compete against Primo now.”

“True. The Pixie Pet Store is reaching its limit to say that they can take people to the Top 10. Compared to Primo, the Pixie Pet Store is still too weak. After all is said and done, Primo is a time-honored store. I have come here several times. The price is higher than other stores but the service is top-notch.”

“If you ask me, the Pixie Pet Store had it coming. They closed so early yesterday. They even took the dragon back so that people could not see it. How ridiculous.”

“Right. I went there specifically for the Inferno Dragon. Only my trip was in vain. I heard that nothing about them is posted online. My guess is that they’re going down.” Customers were discussing in a low voice.

During the past couple of days, the competition between “Pixie” and “Primo” was a trending topic online.

If it involved other pet stores, people might have paid less attention. But there was something different about the two stores. Primo was an old and famed store in the base city, always at the center of attention.

The Pixie Pet Store was an emerging store with less fame but they did hire a popular star to advertise them. Also, there was a rare dragon, the Inferno Dragon. The Pixie store had built up its name quickly.

The competition between the two stores amused the onlookers. They were curious to know who would win

But based on the current status, Primo was winning and that was certain.

After all, being an old store chain, Primo was resourceful. Someone broke the news that Primo’s backer was the Liu family.

Anyone who had been born in the Longjiang Base City would have heard of or used the products of the groups and companies affiliated to the Liu family. None of the citizens were strangers to the Liu family’s products.

Primo alone was well-known to all.

Some nosy people were educating the public about the wealth of the Liu family. Only then did people become fully aware of Primo’s strength.

Primo was relying on a formidable giant!

No wonder the night Pixie placed the Inferno Dragon on display, Primo was able to invite a top-level pet of the demon family, the Eight Hell Beast, to keep up a strong front. That was because of the Liu family’s power!

Hence, many people were viewing the Pixie Pet Store unfavorably at the moment.

“Sir, nothing is happening there.”

“Well, I suppose he’s still asleep.”

“I think they didn’t see it coming. Last night was the last highlight of their business. They were so full of themselves and closed the door early. So funny!”

“All glory to our boss. He goes there and he gets the Eight Hell Beast and he wins over someone like Liu Jainxin. We can take this chance and teach the other pet stores a lesson. We must let them know that, when it comes to pet stores in the Longjiang Base City, Primo makes the rules!”

“Hear, hear!”

“All hail the boss!”

In the meeting room, many executives were worked up.

Previously, all of them had turned desperate when Pixie placed the Inferno Dragon on exhibition. However, good fortune came after a long spell of bad luck. Soon, things changed. At the moment, they had gained the upper hand and victory was within their grasp. They just needed to sit here and watch Pixie perish on its own. Liu Yuan smiled at those buttering up to him. The fact that he could ask the family head to lend him the Eight Hell Beast did save the day. That was the benefit that came with a powerful patron. If Liu Yuan had to deal with the competition by himself, he would have already lost to that small store.

“Listen, we need to strike the iron while it’s hot. Contact all the channels and get the word out. We must leverage this change and show Primo’s actual strength to the public. Our family head lent us the Eight Hell Beast. This is a once in a blue moon chance. We won’t have this opportunity again in the future.” Liu Yuan tapped the table. He was serious.

The executives put away their smiles and nodded.

“Also, keep an eye on Pixie. Do not ignore them. They should be open for business. Even a rabbit will bite when cornered. I am eager to see how they’re going to fight me back this time.” Liu Yuan sneered.

“Yes, sir.” His assistant nodded.

All of a sudden, his assistant heard a ring.

He lowered his head to check and looked up in shock.

“Well?” Liu Yuan noticed the change of his assistant’s expression. “What is it?” Liu Yuan frowned.

His assistant had to reply honestly, “Sir, those who are monitoring Pixie told me something is up and asked me to get online right now.”

While saying so, the assistant was wondering what else had happened when Pixie’s doom was inevitable.

Liu Yuan raised his eyebrows.

The other executives looked at each other speechlessly. Someone laughed out loud and some went online to check the news immediately.

The Longjiang intranet crashed!

Just a minute ago, before the release of a piece of news, the intranet was running smoothly and many netizens were still keeping a beady eye on the competition between Pixie and Primo. Many discussions were related to Primo.

People were dwelling upon, with great relish, Primo's package for the Top 5, the Eight Hell Beast, and their master trainer.

The Pixie store, which had recently built up a name, seemed to have dropped off the internet. Only some "residual" fame of the store was still worthy of discussion. After all, Pixie had the Inferno Dragon. Some dragon fans felt sorry that they could no longer find Pixie on the news.

But, on a major platform, a piece of advertisement popped out abruptly. It was Pixie's advertisement.

-We will make the champion of Longjiang's competition!

The simple words had the effect of a nuclear bomb that turned the lively Longjiang intranet into a place of dead silence.

Countless people that saw this advertisement were stunned still.

No one had read it wrong. Soon, the website was on the verge of collapsing!

Chapter 270 Multiple Enemies

While the platform server was almost brought down, the other popular websites posted the same advertisement as well. For a time, the advertisement was visible to anyone who was surfing the internet.

As people were reading the advertisement, all the netizens across the Longjiang intranet were seething with excitement!

The championship?!!

This was the Elite League that was held once every three years. The countless participants would be like a school of silver carps moving down a stream.

Of the entire Longjiang Base City, at least one million would be joining!

The Elite League was a great event that could attract universal attention!

Numerous participants were counting on the Elite League to best others and make their names known!

How could anyone declare that a person could simply pay to become the champion?

To make a simple analogy, many people were waiting for a peach to grow up. However, even before the flower bore fruit, someone had already claimed that the peach would be his!

It was unacceptable!

More importantly, this was the Elite League. Winning the championship would be more difficult than anyone could imagine. Not even the superfamilies could boast that their young talents were able to claim the championship with certainty!

The one that said those words had an exaggerated opinion of his abilities, just like being oblivious about the immensity of heaven and earth!

"Is Pixie going crazy?"

“Dear God, the championship. He made it sound as if winning the championship was child’s play.” “Is he losing his mind because they’re competing with Primo?” “I heard that Primo stole all of Pixie’s business. The boss must be desperate.”

“He’s such a bada** . What does it say in the advertisement? One hundred million and he can make me a champion? Let me see... I think I can buy one hundred champions with my assets!”

“Hey, dude, wake up, or I will pee on you.”

“One hundred million and he can make a champion. I would trust it more if he had said one billion. What could one hundred million do?”

“Drop it. Can’t you see? Pixie is cornered and trying to steal the spotlight. But they made a bad joke. I’m here to see if they have the courage to post the list of people who bought the package, just like Primo did. When the competition begins, I will watch them throughout the process.”

There were clamors of comments on the internet. After the initial shock, most people were expressing their doubts. After all, winning a championship contained too many uncertainties. Ensuring that someone would become the champion sounded more like a publicity stunt than a genuine business deal.

Because of the competition between the Pixie Pet Store and Primo, many people were of the conviction that Pixie was making ill-informed decisions since they were desperate.

And yet, some believed that they could visit Pixie and give it a try since the store was so confident. After all, the Inferno Dragon was a real deal. At the very least, they could try the Top 10 and Top 100 packages.

Once again, the name Pixie Pet Store became a repeated topic in discussion.

Uptown. In a huge mansion.

The Qin family.

The largest family in the Longjiang Base City. The Qin family had always been trying to keep a low profile while housing many titled battle pet warriors. Only those of society’s upper crust were fully aware of the Qin family’s might.

Naturally, the news online reached the Qin family. Being the largest family, they had always been well-informed. Of course, a piece of news that everyone knew would not escape them.

“Champion?”

“What kind of store is this? How dare they say this? How arrogant of them!”

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“Just some contemptible scoundrel trying to gain attention. That is one of the deep-rooted bad habits of those despicable businessmen. Do not pay any mind.”

“Anyways, that store has the Inferno Dragon. What is the store’s background?”

“Hmm, we can go and find out. We will most certainly win first place. How dare a store claim they can make someone the champion? I cannot wait to see who is behind all this!”

“Hey, settle down. Actually... I know the boss.”

“Eh?”

In one of the older houses, several aged men were gathered together. All of them were pissed off by the Pixie Pet Store’s advertisement.

They wouldn’t have paid any attention to any generic commercial that would spout a lot of nonsense. It just so happened that, as small as the store was, the Pixie Pet Store had a rare pet, the Inferno Dragon. Judging by the promotional campaigns and the spokesperson the store hired, they could tell that the store was not in want of budget, which indicated that the store came from a very influential background. A person with such a background had thrown those big words. This was like a slap on the Qin Family’s face.

Championship? Then where did it ever stray from the Qin Family’s hands?!

“Shuhai? What do you mean? Tell us.” One of the old men frowned.

Sitting at the center was a learned and refined middle-aged man named Qin Shuhai, who had returned home for a short time. Usually, he would travel around in other base cities and he would hardly stay in Longjiang Base City. He had never expected that he would happen to learn such a sensational piece of news this time he was back.

“Uncle Three, I met the store owner back in the Mysterious Realm. As a matter of fact, I did forge some sort of friendship with him. He is quite powerful, at least a titled battle pet warrior, a rare talent,” Qin Shuhai answered with a forced smile.

His answer took the others by surprise. The old man who posed the question before was confused.

“Titled battle pet warrior? Are you talking about the kid minding the store? He’s quite young, isn’t he?”

“Yes. I suppose he is not yet twenty. If he were to participate, I believe he would win first place in Longjiang.” Qin Shuhai’s forced smile lingered on his face.

As soon as he uttered those words, the other older men suddenly became stunned.

They were aware that Qin Shuhai was considered a talent in the Qin family, more powerful than his titled battle pet warrior peers. He would never be wrong about others. Wouldn’t his comments mean that this young store owner was potentially more of a genius than their current future family head?

Qin Shuhai inwardly heaved a sigh. He had met Su Ping several times when the latter exited and entered the Mysterious Realm repeatedly. Su Ping always acted alone but when he went through the checkpoint, Qin Shuhai had found cores of various ninth-rank beasts in his backpack.

If Su Ping merely had one or two such cores, then he might be seen as lucky. But since he had harvested many ninth-rank beasts’ cores, the only explanation was that he was a capable man.

“Of all the people I met, this young man is one of the best. I wouldn’t believe it if he told me that he had no teacher.” Qin Shuhai glanced over the others in the room.

"I have a suggestion. I hope you won't intervene in the competition between the two stores. I heard that Fengyuan and this young man teach in the same academy and they know each other well. I believe that being on friendly terms with the young man is better.

"As for the championship? Sure, his store did post this advertisement. But he's not saying that we cannot fight for the first place. Winning is dependent on the participants' strength. He can advertise all he wants and we can strive to win all we want. There's no need to find us an enemy over a contention of mouth and tongue."

He rested his case. The others looked at one another blankly.

One of them frowned. "Since when was the Qin Family afraid of troubles? Considering how arrogant this young man is, teaching him a lesson is necessary. We need to show him who is making decisions in the Longjiang Base City!"

The others kept silent in deep thoughts.

A moment later, the current family head broke the silence. "We will follow Shuhai's advice on this matter. It's better to save us the trouble, as the store is not targeting the Qin family. Besides, the teacher of this talent cannot be a simple character. We do not need to find ourselves a new enemy because of some argument."

The others nodded. They favored the more conservative way.

The old man who held different ideas was unhappy since no one had seconded his suggestion.

"Go back and have your people behave. Young people can be impulsive. Tell them to focus on their cultivation and ignore those trivial matters."

"Yes, sir."

At the same time, the other major families in the city had learned the news as well. All of them had been irked by this simple advertisement.

The Mu family chose not to pay any heed, regarding Su Ping as some insane clown.

The Ye family and Zhou family flew into a rage. They wanted to create some trouble for the store.

At the Liu family estate

News had spread to every corner of the Liu family domain. This store was going against the Liu family specifically. Every Liu family member hated Su Ping's guts.

"He is losing hope. Hmm, he is bringing his own ruin."

When Liu Tianzong received the news, he grinned with sarcasm. Su Ping had offended many other families by issuing this advertisement. Liu Tianzong believed that, in addition to the Liu Family, the other major families would not be able to swallow the humiliation, either.

The Qin Family Head was an old, sly fox that could keep calm. The cocky one in the Mu family might not pay attention. However, Liu Tianzong was convinced that he could egg the Zhou family and the Ye family to act. To make a third party the instrument of a crime was a true pleasure.

“Tell Liu Yuan to publish the list and try something to force Su Ping to post their list. Once the list is out there, after the Elite League begins, everyone on the list will become the target of public criticism, especially the one going for the championship. Hmm, the day that person fails before the end game will be the day that the store perishes!” Liu Tianzong said to a servant.

“Yes, sir.” the servant answered with great respect.

Sitting across the chessboard, an old man in a purple robe darted Liu Tanzong a glance. “Oh, how heartless of you. You draw blood with one prick.”

Liu Tianzong smiled. “If I cannot, why do I bother to make the move?”