

## Refining 131

### Chapter 131 – Leon

The chief manager was sent into a thunderous rage. Sea Spirit Pavilion launched a massive internal investigation and soon locked onto the source of the news. But, the two middle level managers had clearly expected this earlier, and before the flames of retribution reached them they had already vanished without a trace. A bounty was soon placed on them, and unless they never made another public appearance in their lives, they wouldn't be able to escape the fate of eventually being hunted down.

But even if the culprits were caught and chopped into a thousand pieces, this wouldn't help fix the situation at all. Beneath the gloating gazes of many people, Chief Manager Wu boarded the carriage and hurried straight to Qin Yu. Since the news had already been exposed, there was no point in trying to further conceal things. However, even though Chief Manager Wu was prepared earlier, his heart still shrank when he got off the carriage and saw the sight before him.

The people of the capital city were renowned for being brazen and bold; they never feared any event, only that it wasn't lively enough. They wore their pride on their faces and always had an inexplicable sense of arrogance when facing outsiders. Their bones were filled with the desire for gossip. Now, with the three main sea spirit organizations fighting and Sea Spirit Pavilion caught up in such a scandal, how could they miss out on such an explosive scene? As soon as Chief Manager Wu appeared, it was unknown who started first, but the crowds were soon booing and jeering out loud.

With a glance around, the Sea Spirit Pavilion cultivators that were blocking the inn sent out several people. They pushed into the crowd without notice, and with a few pained grunts, the main troublemakers fell to the ground and were soon dragged out.

Chief Manager Wu had a calm expression. He lifted a hand. "Everyone!" His words contained his cultivation. They rung in everyone's ears, causing a curtain of silence to momentarily fall over the crowd.

"Concerning the rumors that are harming Sea Spirit Pavilion, we will surely investigate them and we will never forgive rumormongers. This matter isn't as everyone thinks. If you all have time, then wait here for a moment. I will soon give everyone an explanation." He turned, and through a path opened by his guards, he entered the inn.

After a moment, Chief Manager Wu spoke a few words and pushed open Qin Yu's door. He sat down at a table, a cup of tea before him, and said, "I have already waited a day, yet this is what has happened so far. Even if it has nothing to do with you, you should still give me an explanation."

Qin Yu took out a jade box and passed it over.

Chief Manager Wu picked it up and opened it. His eyebrows were tightly furrowed together. Although there weren't any changes in his expression, his eyes rapidly shrank, indicating his rapidly shifting state of mind.

After a long time, he took a deep breath and placed the jade box down. He quietly said, "And just what does mister intend with this?"

Qin Yu smiled. "I would like to find work with Sea Spirit Pavilion."

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An hour later, Chief Manger Wu stepped out of the inn, a bright and breezy smile on his face. He pulled the black-robed figure close to him in a familiar gesture and said, "Everyone, this person here is the owner of the red coral. I have asked him to personally announce the final results of this matter."

Qin Yu lightly said, "Everyone. The red coral has already recovered."

Chief Manager Wu clapped his hands. "As a leading figure of the industry, Sea Spirit Pavilion possesses the most powerful background and strength. I ask that you all believe us, and not be blinded or fooled by those with ulterior motives. From beginning to end, Sea Spirit Pavilion's Supreme Book has never failed. It was only that the treatment required a bit more time."

"Don't believe them everyone!" A crab monster leapt out from the crowd, his face full of contempt and ridicule. "With Sea Spirit Pavilion's methods, it is far too easy for them to find someone to masquerade as the original owner. I have a marking of the red coral in my hands. Since you said it has already been cured, do you dare to take it out to compare? And don't ask me how I obtained this mark. In this world, there are still some righteous sea race members who have the courage to stand up to evil!"

Chief Manager Wu coldly sneered. Since this fellow dared to jump out, he was likely already prepared to die. He didn't respond to the crab monster. He cupped his hands together and said, "Mister Ning, since this person wants to see the red coral, please take it out. This is a good chance to prove the good name of my Sea Spirit Pavilion in front of the great citizens of the capital city!"

The crab monster who leapt out was immediately stunned. This...the script didn't seem right...it was fine if he panicked, it was fine if he was angered out of shame, it was fine if he immediately tried to kill him...no matter what it was, the crab monster had a contingency plan ready. But, how could this fellow just directly agree like that? Such strength and calm...could it be that he was skilled at concealing his emotions so that no one could see through them? No, something was wrong. Someone as sharp as Chief Manager Wu wouldn't make such a suggestion unless he had full faith in the outcome.

Could it be that the red coral really was fine? Was this entire incident a plot from Sea Spirit Pavilion from beginning to end? A cold sweat began to drip down his head. It wasn't that he feared death, because the person behind him had already suggested a high enough price. But if his death was completely meaningless, then he feared all those promises would become nothing but a dream.

Qin Yu turned his hand. With a bright flash, the jade box appeared. He opened it to reveal a red coral lying peacefully within.

Chief Manager Wu coldly sneered. "Who has the mark? Take it out."

The crab monster paled. But with things having come to this point, he could no longer retreat. He clenched his teeth and crumbled a jade slip in his hands. A mark appeared above his head; it was the phantom of the red coral. This mark was a unique method utilized by sea spirit teachers. Its use was to verify the status of sea spirits in order to prevent fraudulent switches and replacements being made. The method of proof was simple: as long as the mark approached the true object, it would emit light.

Hum –

With a cry, light gushed out from the mark, sprinkling onto the crowd. The crab monster's expression was like dying embers.

The crowd was whipped up into an uproar. No one thought that the propagandized Sea Spirit Pavilion scandal was in actuality completely false from beginning to end. The crowd was suddenly angered from being deceived. At the same time, several dozen cultivators scattered all throughout the crowd had extremely ugly complexions. They lowered their heads as if listening to instructions and then turned to leave.

Chief Manager Wu cupped his hands together and loudly said, "Everyone, citizens of the capital city, in full public view today, the reputation of my Sea Spirit Pavilion has been cleansed of all lies. Everyone here can stand as witness. In the future, if someone dares to mention this matter again, I ask that you all speak up for my Sea Spirit Pavilion. I will be deeply grateful."

These words were well said. In particular, they lifted the audience so that they all had a better impression of Sea Spirit Pavilion. To gain the will of the people with just a few words, Chief Manager Wu truly kept up to his reputation as someone who was able to oversee the capital city's branch division.

But, his true strengths weren't limited to just this.

There was a sudden change in pace. In a lowered tone, he said, "Sea Spirit Pavilion has been established in the capital city for many years. While there is competition with our fellow colleagues, we have always held each other in high esteem, and have striven to improve our skills and services together in mutual harmony so that all sides can win. We have never had any thoughts of plotting against others. But this time, I have been left bitterly disappointed. Sea Spirit Pavilion will not stir up trouble on our own initiative, but this doesn't mean we are afraid of wading into the fray. I hope that all of our fellow colleagues that were involved will give us an explanation for this as soon as possible."

With a mere 'fellow colleagues involved', everyone knew that the ones being named were actually Bluesky Tower and Earthfault Spire. There was a faint demeaning tone applied to them. The crowd immediately began to applaud, and there were also many people that also cursed out loud. Anger spread out like an unstoppable tide, and soon, in a single day, the reputation that Bluesky Tower and Earthfault Spire had built up throughout the years was destroyed.

Of course, those that started cursing and cheering were all people that had been planted by Sea Spirit Pavilion. None of them forgot to do their job. Chief Manager Wu was clearly eager to give the other two sea spirit influences a taste of their own medicine.

The incident ended as soon as it occurred. Sea Spirit Pavilion came out without a single loss while Bluesky Tower and Earthfault Spire both suffered heavy losses. The future could be called endlessly beautiful. Chief Manager Wu's reputation rose to new heights and all the other managers bowed in congratulations even as they secretly lamented his luck.

In this situation, Chief Manager Wu informed them all that he had directly hired a new high level sea spirit teacher. Although this violated some rules, no one dared to step forwards to voice their opposition.

Thus, in Sea Spirit Pavilion, there was another person called Ning Qin.

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Yesterday had been a busy day, and he had even needed to work overtime. He was mentally worn out, but even when the coral began to turn dark blue, Leon still couldn't fall asleep. He rose up and rubbed his eyes, bitterly smiling as he stretched his sore back. Then, he pushed open the door and walked out. In the past several days, a scandal had struck Sea Spirit Pavilion. Although the danger had been resolved and a beautiful counterattack made, after an internal investigation, it was found that the reason the two middle level managers were able to smoothly obtain the red coral mark was also because they had the help of several assistant sea spirit teachers.

Perhaps these people didn't know why the two middle managers had asked for the red coral mark, but in the end the result was the same. These bad luck fellows hadn't appeared in a long time, and perhaps they might never appear again. At the same time, Sea Spirit Pavilion strengthened their management and oversight of assistant sea spirit teachers. This was because they discovered that even though these people only held small roles, they actually possessed a great potential for destruction.

Leon had lived a hard life these past days. He had worked himself to the bone in fear that his position would be eliminated. Becoming a genuine sea spirit teacher was his singular dream from childhood until now, as well as his dying father's greatest hopes. Moreover, his job at Sea Spirit Pavilion was his family's only source of income. With his mother sick and him also needing to take care of his little brother, he couldn't afford to lose his job.

He hoped that he could overcome this ordeal.

As he was lost in thought, he heard several coughs from the rear courtyard followed by low whispers. Leon frowned. His mother's condition had always been poor, and she still wasn't sleeping right now.

He hurried to the rear courtyard. Although he called this the rear courtyard, it was actually only a small space that had been split off from the main courtyard. Several low level sea monsters that weren't able to take human form were being kept here. Among them was Leon's little brother, a beautiful underwater koi. Right now, he was lying in his mother's arms, staring at him with large and pure eyes.

His mother was still young, but her hair had already gone gray. Her rough hands gently stroked the koi fish's scales. "Lyon, your big brother is working very hard, and he's already doing the best he can. But, he hasn't managed to gather the funds needed to bring you to the Manifestation Pond. I hid your age from him, and said that next year is the deadline, but in truth, it is tomorrow. Please, don't blame mama, mama cannot push your big brother too hard. He is still a child, so how can he withstand so much pressure? But if you want to blame someone, just blame mama. Mama is useless and has no skills. Don't blame your father either. For his entire life, he did the best he could for all of us..."

Leon didn't hear the words that followed. He covered his mouth so that he wouldn't make any sobbing sounds, and then returned to the front courtyard as tears started to flow down his eyes.

The Manifestation Pond was the only altar that had the qualifications to be established in the city. After paying a fee, it could help a sea monster complete their manifestation and obtain human form. This sort of manifestation would exhaust a considerable amount of monster strength within a sea monster, and for the rest of their life they could only be an ordinary sea monster, never able to leave the city.

But for many low level sea monsters, this was the only chance they had to ever take human form.

The reason Leon was able to take human form was all because of his father's life pension. And now it was Lyon's turn...but once one's age surpassed a certain limit, the Manifestation Pond would no longer work on them. Without accident, Lyon would only be able to keep his true form.

And, the capital city had a limit to the number of low level sea monsters that could stay. In other words, once Lyon wasn't able to manifest into human form, it wouldn't be long before he was forced out.

Lyon, his lovable little brother, was so young and small. He had lived in the capital city his entire life, so how could he possibly adapt to the terrifying conditions outside?

If he left the capital there was only a single path left to him – death.

Leon clenched his teeth, firming his heart. No matter what, he couldn't stare helplessly on and allow his little brother to die. There was still one day remaining. He definitely had to make something happen!

### **Chapter 132 – Dismissed**

As usual, Leon left an hour early. When he greeted his mother, he did so with a calm expression, not revealing anything at all. With the many arduous years he had lived before, it gave his sunny and youthful teenage smile a bit of strength and toughness too.

He walked to Sea Spirit Pavilion. As he looked up at the Nine Layer Building, a look of longing flashed in his eyes. With a deep breath, he entered and changed into his clothes. After carefully tidying up his appearance in front of a mirror, he started to sweep and clean the work room.

Out of Lord Grindstone's seven assistants, he was the one that most lacked a foundation. Ordinarily, he handled most miscellaneous matters in order to appear as if he were doing work. After the basic cleanup was finished, it was almost work time. His colleagues began to arrive one after another, nodding at him and taking their seats.

In these past years, they had already become accustomed to Leon's cleaning, even thinking that it was a habit. In any case, to them, he was just an urchin from a lowly background who lacked any great future, so there was no need to be cautious with him.

The final one to arrive was a petite young sea race girl. She had several fine patterns that decorated her face, indicating that her true form was that of a deep sea clam. She belonged to the upper level races of the capital city. With her beautiful looks as well as her exuberant aura, she was a beacon of dazzling youthfulness.

Several colleagues rose up together to chat and joke with her, clearly trying to get closer to her. The girl greeted them and then slapped Leon's shoulder. "Hey, what are you looking so distracted there for? If Lord Grindstone sees you like this, you won't be any happier."

Leon squeezed out a smile. "I'm fine, it's about time to start work. Qingqing, you should begin." As he spoke, he unconsciously looked towards the entrance.

Qingqing frowned. "Are you waiting for someone?"

"Mm." Leon nodded, a bit absent-minded.

The girl was suddenly worried. The low level sea races always liked to settle marriage early so that their children could breed the next generation.

Could it be that...this blockhead Leon...

Before she could think further, Leon suddenly stepped forwards. Qingqing subconsciously screamed, "Don't go!" Her voice was sharp and grating, shocking everyone in the workroom. They never imagined that the normally gentle and kind girl actually had such a side to her.

Grindstone coughed in reproof. "It's about time for work to begin, so what are you all shouting for? Hurry up and begin!"

As she discovered that Leon was waiting for Lord Grindstone, Qingqing spit out her tongue. She lowered her head and quickly returned to her work table. But as she did so, she pricked her ears up. Just what was that blockhead trying to do? Did he want to flatter Lord Grindstone and prove his loyalty? Haha, she had taught him so many times, but had her lectures had any effect?

Grindstone turned around. "What are you standing here for?" Although he was still speaking in reproof, the attitude was vastly different than when he was speaking to Qingqing, as if he were already sick of Leon's presence.

Leon subconsciously shrunk back. He braced himself and said, "Lord Grindstone, I have something to ask you. Is it possible that..."

Grindstone frowned. His eyes flashed. He said, "Come in with me." He pushed open the door. At the same time, the six other assistant sea spirit teachers outside were left surprised. Since when did Leon develop such courage? He actually dared to ask to speak alone? Really, even after a few days, one might have changed for the better.

Qingqing beamed with joy, thinking that this blockhead had finally begun to bloom. If he could obtain Lord Grindstone's recognition, and if she were to help him out, then perhaps he could become a middle level sea spirit teacher in around five more years. At that time, he would have the qualifications to discuss marriage with her father. Although there would still be a gap, as long as they insisted and her mother helped them, then her father would surely agree!

She blushed. Hah, perhaps she was thinking of things too far in advance.

This dumb blockhead, it had been almost two years yet he didn't seem to have noticed anything. As she thought of this, she cried in her heart. When it came to matters of the heart, did she really have to move things along all by herself? But as she was lost in thought, a loud roar suddenly awoke her from her trance. She looked up at Lord Grindstone's workroom.

The door was violently pushed open. Lord Grindstone's complexion was dark and dreary. He coldly said, "Do you want me to repeat myself? Leon, you are dismissed! Immediately leave these premises!"

Leon was left in a stunned haze. He opened his mouth to say something, but chose to turn and leave.

"What are you looking at? If you keep thinking about unrealistic things all day long, you'll end up just like him!" Lord Grindstone slammed the door shut. He sat back down in his comfortable chair. The scowl quickly faded from his face. He picked up a sea shell and said, "Connect me to number 177."

A connection was soon made. A woman's light and graceful voice responded on the other end. "Who is this?"

Lord Grindstone smiled brightly. "Madame Qing, how are you doing? I am Sea Spirit Pavilion's Grindstone. I have handled the matter we spoke about previously."

The woman on the other end chirped up in satisfaction. "I've troubled Lord Grindstone. If there is a chance in the future, then please come to my family's residence to have some tea."

"Of course, of course, if there is a chance I will definitely come pay a visit." After a few more words, he placed the sea shell back on the table. The smile on his face widened.

Leon was a good assistant; even the picky and discerning Lord Grindstone had to acknowledge this. Leon could even be called his most competent assistant. But, so what if he was? He was nothing but a low level sea spirit teacher with no background, so how could he possibly form relations with Noble Court Avenue's Qing Family? Sacrificing him wasn't a pity at all.

Moreover, it was Leon that had given him the opportunity to dismiss him, otherwise he would have found it hard to look for a reason. Lord Grindstone sighed comfortably. Everything had gone perfectly.

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Leon walked out through the staff hallway. With his grim, pale face and his assistant sea spirit teacher clothing, it was easy to imagine just what had happened to him. In these last several days, there were far too many people who had suffered the same fate as Leon. His colleagues swept their eyes over him, thinking he was another bad luck ghost caught in the friction.

There was the sound of running footsteps. Then, Qingqing blocked his way. She had an anxious expression as she said, "What did you say to Lord Grindstone? Why would he dismiss you like that!"

Leon bitterly smiled. "I asked Lord Grindstone if he could advance me half a year of wages ahead of time, but he refused. He said that my thoughts were too fanciful and that I was no longer able to continue working as a competent assistant with my attitude."

Qingqing's eyes widened. "Just because of that? Why would he do that!? Come back with me, we are going to talk to him and make sure that he gives you a good explanation!"

Leon grabbed her hand. "No, I don't want to drag you into this."

Qingqing vehemently said, "You blockhead, do you really think I'm scared? At the very worst I'll just look for a new place to work!"

Leon blushed. "Qingqing..."

"What is it that you want to say? Leon, you are my friend. If you are in trouble, just tell me; I will do everything in my power to help you."

Leon flushed red. He hesitated for a long time and then said in a small voice. "If possible, I would like to borrow some money from you. It's not a small amount, but I can promise you that I will write you a note and I will slowly repay you in the future."

Qingqing gave him a hard look. "I will help you. How much do you need?"

"Ah!" Leon's eyes widened a bit in disbelief. She hadn't even asked him any questions before agreeing to help him.

He knew that she had a good family background and perhaps money was just a trifling matter to her, but even so, his heart was filled with gratitude.

As he was about to speak, the gentle voice of a woman rang out, bringing with it a bit of scolding but also a bit of doting. "Qingqing, you need to earnestly work your job, so why are you playing outside here?"

Qingqing was surprised. "Mother, why are you here?" She didn't know why, but as she looked at the flustered Leon, her face blushed red.

The woman wore simple clothes and only had a few simple accessories on. Even so, her calm and steady demeanor exuded the charm of a noble woman. She smiled, "What about it? You work at Sea Spirit Pavilion, so your mother can't come and take a look?"

"No, that's not what I meant!"

"Alright, alright, you are working right now, so you shouldn't stay here too long, otherwise others will begin to question why our Qing Family's daughter has such a poor upbringing. Go back to work; I have already heard everything you said, so I will help finish it for you." She blinked at her daughter as she spoke, maintaining a kind expression. There was a bit of playfulness in her words.

Receiving her mother's hidden message, although Qingqing wasn't fully at ease, as she thought of the current situation she really couldn't just stand here awkwardly. She nodded and agreed. Before she left, she reminded Leon to not worry, and that things would definitely be resolved.

Seeing this, Madame Qing sighed inwardly, thought she didn't reveal her thoughts on her face. She smiled, "Leon, right? Qingqing has spoken of you. Come, have a meal with aunty."

Countless eyes of surprise and envy watched the two leave Sea Spirit Pavilion and mount the luxurious carriage waiting outside. The outside of the carriage appeared opulent and grand, but it was the inside that was truly magnificent. Leon has worked at Sea Spirit Pavilion so he had a certain degree of judgment. He casually looked around and even some of the small things swept away in a corner were so expensive that he would never be able to afford them if he worked his entire life.

Madame Qing bid him sit down. She poured a cup of tea and casually spoke some small talk. For instance, some noble madam she had eaten a meal with, or some high level banquets she had attended. Her tone was gentle and clear, and as Leon listened he felt as if he were fully immersed in her stories, making him feel even more awkward and out of his depth.

Because if they didn't speak about a common topic they both knew about, he had no idea how to contribute to the conversation. He could only sit back and smile.

Soon, the carriage stopped deep in an alley. There was a common-looking gate, but waiting at the gate was the manager in celebratory robes. As the manager saw Madame Qing, he respectfully bowed and greeted her, welcoming her with all smiles. As he swept his eyes over Leon, his sharp and ruthless eyes



immediately judged his level. But, he didn't show these thoughts and nodded and smiled at him just the same.

The outside seemed common but it was another world within. There was a vast connected area inside, and each place to eat at was a tall and beautiful mansion.

After leading them in, the manager apologized and excused himself. There were naturally others who led them into a great hall to drink tea. All sorts of delicate dishes were brought out, each one exuding a delicious aroma, carried in by beautiful maids. Leon unconsciously stared at the maids, curious how they managed to walk quietly in and out.

Madame Qing smiled. "Please, sit."

Leon vowed that never in his life had he eaten such delicious food before. On the large round table, it was just the two of them. Madame Qing didn't say anything, only quietly smiling at him as he wolfed down food. Even though he tried to hold himself back, he unconsciously ate his fill. He burped and immediately revealed an embarrassed look.

Madame Qing smiled and laid down her chopsticks. "Have you eaten your fill? There is still some soup coming in."

Leon waved his hand. "It's too much. I can't drink it."

"If you can't drink it then let's pack it up so you can bring it back and let your family have a taste. The bill has already been paid, so it's a waste to not eat it."

Leon hesitated for a moment and nodded.

Madame Qing smiled. She placed a card down on the table. The card was white and flashed with a pale luster. Leon recognized this card. It was an anonymous consumer spirit card. It was guaranteed by the royal family as well as various large financial institutes. One could bring this card in to any valid location and exchange it for 5000 spirit stones.

"Aunty heard your words with Qingqing. Accept this card. It should be able to resolve your troubles."

Leon was excited. "Thank you madame, thank you madame! I will write you a promise note and make sure I repay you as soon as possible!"

Madame Qing shook her head. "I don't need any promise note. Leon, I hope that you can calmly listen to what I'm about to say, and wait until I am finished."

### **Chapter 133 – Help Him A Little**

"Qingqing is our family's only daughter. Not only does she have to worry about her own happiness, but the entire fate of our family, our rise or our decline, all lies on her shoulders. The futures of several thousand people will be defined by her alone. So because of this reason, no matter how much her father and I love her and dote on her, there are some matters in which we cannot allow her to do as she wants.

"Leon, I didn't oppose you in the beginning, nor did I look down upon you. But, from the moment you were born, you haven't lived in the same world. For instance, everything that I spoke to you about as we ate here, that is something very normal for Qingqing, but it is something you have never experienced.

You and I share no common topics to speak of, and the same is true with Qingqing. Even if you really managed to come together in the end, that might not bring you two happiness.

“So, the reason that I came looking for you today is because I hope you will accept these spirit stones and leave Qingqing. Because although she might be puzzled and hurt at the start, believe me, she will soon recover, and she will have a glorious future awaiting her.”

Leon lowered his head. From the moment that Madame Qing first started speaking, his complexion began to turn increasingly pale, and now there wasn't the least bit of red. “Madame, you've misunderstood, me and Qingqing...miss is only a friend to me, there is nothing else between us.”

Madame Qing sincerely said, “Perhaps I misread the situation, but you can just consider me as a mother who spoils her child too much and has overreacted. Leon, can you promise aunty? That you will leave Qingqing?”

Leon was silent for a long time. He slowly stood up. “Madame, I will disappear, but I cannot receive this card.”

Madame Qing frowned. She thought that he still hadn't given up and her gentle voice took on a bit more indifference. “Leon, do you know how much it cost to eat this meal? The card I gave you is only enough for three of these meals. With three meals a day, do you really think Qingqing and you will be able to last a long time? Take it. It might be able to help you with your troubles and help those you need to help. After all, you need to live not just for your sake, but also the sake of your family.”

Leon stiffened. His eyes were red and his body trembled. He picked up the card.

Madame Qing warmly smiled. “Come, let's return to Sea Spirit Pavilion. As a good friend, you should bid your farewells before you leave. Of course, Leon, I believe you are a smart boy and won't hurt Qingqing, right?”

Leon's ears buzzed. He subconsciously nodded and followed behind Madame Qing like someone who had lost their soul. By the time he finally regained his senses, he could already see Sea Spirit Pavilion's Nine Layer Building in the distance. A beautiful figure was pacing back and forth in front of the building, occasionally kicking at the ground.

Madame Qing reclined in her seat. “Go, tell Qingqing that you must leave, and that once you become an outstanding person in the future, you will come back to look for her...consider this as leaving her one final beautiful memory.”

...

Sometime before –

When Madame Qing brought Leon away with her, Grindstone returned to his workshop. Leon was driven away and several sea race youths chuckled to each other, but in the next moment they revealed a bit of sorrow. Because they had lost their free cleaner, from now on they would have to divvy up the cleaning assignments.

Several people had just finished their current task and were crowding together, arguing about who would work with Qingqing. But suddenly, the doors to the workshop opened and a young man with meticulously combed hair appeared.

“Where is Grindstone? I cannot connect to his spirit shell. There is something important I must speak to him about.” The youth’s tone was calm and carried with it the standard haughtiness of the capital city. Although they didn’t know his status, the high tier identity card on his front and his powerful aura was more than enough to shock the several low level sea spirit teachers here.

“Please wait here a moment. We will immediately inform teacher.”

There was a knock on the door. Grindstone frowned and put on an appearance as if he were busy and couldn’t be bothered right now. He growled, “What is it?”

A young man nodded. “Grindstone, I am looking for you.”

As Grindstone saw who it was, a brilliant smile lit up his face. He never thought that today would be his lucky day. Not only had he managed to curry favor with Noble Court Avenue’s powerful Qing Family, but in the blink of an eye he now welcomed Chief Manager Wu’s first confidential secretary, the first director. If there was something so important that he would personally arrive, was it to announce that his application from last month to be a high level sea spirit teacher was approved?

Thinking of this, Grindstone’s fingers shivered!

“Director Jin, please enter, please enter. I just managed to obtain some good tea, so I ask Director Jin to try some with me.”

Director Jin remained expressionless. “There is no need to drink tea. I came here today on official business. In your workshop there is a sea spirit teacher named Leon. He’s been reassigned to work somewhere else. Tell him to come with me.” He swept his eyes around. As he saw their stunned faces, he frowned. “Did he not come to work today? Then, can you tell me where Leon’s registered address is?”

It seemed he wanted to go and search for him!

Grindstone began to sweat. “Director Jin, can I ask about Leon’s work reassignment...?”

Director Jin furrowed his eyebrows. “You don’t need to know the specifics. But, this reassignment was personally signed by the chief manager. You had best hurry up, because I need to go back to report.”

The chief manager personally signed an order? One didn’t need to be a genius to know that this was extremely unusual. Grindstone’s complexion paled and he squeezed out a smile. “Leon is my most favored assistant, but since this is the chief manager’s order, I will definitely release him. But, he was sent by me on a task. I ask that Director Jin first return, and once he returns, I will personally bring him over.”

Director Jin’s eyes flashed. He clearly realized that something was off. But, this other party was a middle level sea spirit teacher who had high chances of being promoted to a high level sea spirit teacher in the future, so he should still give him some degree of face. “I see. Then, I’ll have to bother Lord Grindstone with this. Please find him as soon as possible and don’t delay too long.”

Grindstone nodded again and again. It was only when Director Jin's figure disappeared that his smile instantly vanished. He grabbed onto the closest assistant and roared in panic, "Where is Leon!?"

"He...he...he left!"

"Who said he could leave!? You piece of trash, go out and look for him, all of you go and look for him! You have to find him no matter what!"

Rustle –

Five assistants immediately ran out.

Grindstone's complexion was grim and uncertain. After a moment, he stamped his feet and rushed out himself. But no matter how much he searched, he couldn't find Leon. Lord Grindstone personally raced towards the address that Leon was registered at, and while the address wasn't wrong, he wasn't there.

After scurrying about for an hour in a profuse sweat, Grindstone found Director Jin and shook as he told him the truth.

Director Jin coldly said, "You can personally explain this to the chief manager." He rose up and quickly walked several steps to the chief manager's studio, where he gently knocked on the door.

"Come in."

Director Jin lowered his head. He said in a soft voice, "Chief manager, Leon was dismissed this morning."

Chief Manager Wu's eyebrows leapt up. He glanced at a black-robed figure.

Qin Yu frowned. He thought for a moment and then slowly asked, "Do you know why he was dismissed?"

Director Jin replied, "I don't know the exact reasons, but Grindstone is waiting just outside the door. Do you want him to come in?"

Chief Manager Wu nodded. "Bring him in."

Director Jin turned and left. Soon, Grindstone entered. He was a bit startled to see another person in the studio. He respectfully bowed and said, "Greetings, chief manager."

Chief Manager Wu said, "Grindstone, what is the reason you dismissed Leon for?"

Grindstone was already prepared for this. "Reporting to chief manager, Leon is half-hearted, his work is sloppy, and on his best days he makes numerous confused mistakes. This morning, he asked me to pay him half a year's salary ahead of time. I refused him and his reply was extremely rude, so I dismissed him."

"You lie." A sharp gaze shot out from beneath the black robe.

Grindstone froze. He clenched his teeth. "Who are you? How dare you slander me like this!?"

Qin Yu didn't even glance at him. He said, "Chief manager, the personality of a person is something his colleagues would know best. Perhaps you might want to investigate this."

Grindstone was shocked and angered at the same time. Just who was this person that they dared to speak so casually to the chief manager!? And, just what sort of status did the chief manager possess that he would care so much for a low level sea spirit teacher? But in the next moment, Chief Manager Wu's words left him falling into an icy lake. "Grindstone, you should be aware that as long as I issue an order to investigate the situation, I will absolutely discover the truth."

Grindstone struggled inwardly, but he immediately breathed out a dejected breath. He knew that arguing obstinately would only make things worse for him. "It was Madame Qing's intent. She wanted me to look for a chance to drive out Leon..." Then, he stated the current circumstances around Leon, Qingqing, and Noble Court Avenue's Qing Family.

Chief Manager Wu had an ugly complexion. Of course, he tried to disguise it as indifference. If it weren't for Qin Yu, he simply wouldn't care about a low level sea spirit teacher.

"Leave. Concerning this matter, I will order others to continue investigating. You can wait for the final result!"

Grindstone opened his mouth but in the end he didn't say anything. He put on a long face and left.

Director Jin entered the studio. "Chief manager, Leon has been found."

"Where is he?"

Director Jing pushed open the window. The view from the ninth floor was amazing, and one could clearly see the entire Double Yang Main Street and even a corner of the distant royal palace.

Qin Yu rose up and walked to the window. He saw a young man and woman standing in front of Nine Layer Building. The girl was excitedly speaking, and Leon was slowly shaking his head, a bitter smile on his face. Qin Yu's eyes shifted. He could see a luxurious carriage close by.

He had just wanted to help Leon out, but he never thought he would come across such a sappy dog-blood and realistic story about star-crossed lovers.

Chief Manager Wu walked nearby. He looked down, a thoughtful look on his face.

Qin Yu helplessly muttered, "This kid Leon, I have no idea what sort of shock he's received that he would just bid his farewells like this. What a stupid boy."

Chief Manager Wu's eyes flashed. "From such a distance, mister can hear what they are saying?"

Qin Yu said, "It's not much. My senses are just a bit sharper than normal." His words were light and casual. Chief Manager Wu smiled and didn't press the matter, but his thoughts were racing.

Nine Layer Building was an extremely tall structure. If someone could hear two people whispering from such a distance, then one's senses couldn't be described as 'a bit sharper than normal'. Amongst the sea races, those that possessed heightened senses were all powerful bloodline clans. While he still didn't know Ning Qin's origins, this vastly narrowed the possibilities.

As for the surname Ning, this was rare in the sea region. It should be part of a disguise.

This Ning Qin was incomparably mysterious and unfathomably deep. But, this boy Leon should be a crack in his disguise. Perhaps he would be able to look up Ning Qin's background through this boy. Of course, this was something that had to be carried on in absolute secrecy so that no one would find out. Unconsciously, Chief Manager Wu became much more cautious in his heart.

Qin Yu suddenly said, "I just arrived in the capital city so I'm not too clear about how things work here. Chief manager, is there any way you can help him a little?"

Chief Manager Wu's thoughts changed. He laughed, "Mister Ning, please rest assured. Although Sea Spirit Pavilion doesn't dare say it's at the pinnacle of the capital, it isn't a problem to move several residences from Noble Court Avenue."

### **Chapter 134 – Save the World**

...

Leon was bidding his farewells to Qingqing. He wasn't a true blockhead; at the very least, he could sense the feelings coming from this girl in front of him and that she actually liked him a little. But, he was self-aware of his humble origins, and because of the gap that existed between them, he didn't dare to express his feelings. Instead he could only pretend to not know. However, today should be the last time that he saw her. His heart ached, but he resisted the urge to cry. He reached out and pulled her into his chest.

Not too far away, two slender sea mantis youths were watching with narrowed eyes. They frowned, and the air became slightly colder. They glanced towards the carriage.

Madame Qing was watching all of this with a calm expression. "It's understandable for the young to be a bit impulsive. Take this as their final farewell. But, remember to observe him for some time afterwards. If he makes any more moves after this, then handle him at your own discretion."

A steward was standing outside the carriage. He wore long robes that were clean and straight. He respectfully nodded.

Leon took a deep breath, as if trying to remember the scent of this girl forever. He let go and turned away, prepared to leave, but just as he did, a chaotic sound rose up from behind him.

Outside the main entrance of the Nine Layer Building, countless people poured out. The consultants and receptionists that were greeting guests were stunned for a moment before revealing an excited expression. Chief Manager Wu stepped out, nodding towards the guests, his face full of smiles.

He was the supervisor of Sea Spirit Pavilion's capital city branch division, and even though he was in the capital city where there were numerous high level figures, he was still a great and lofty figure. But at this time, the one who attracted even more looks was the fearless black-robed figure standing beside him. He stood on par with Chief Manager Wu, and although he was shrouded in his robes, his confident pose and demeanor indicated that he was undoubtedly a grand figure.

Leon had a dazed look. Looking at the crowds of people, he was left stunned. Qingqing quickly responded. She grabbed his hand and pulled him away. But before the two could leave, Director Jin had already arrived in front of him. He said in a soft voice, "Leon, right? Please wait a moment. The chief manager has an announcement he wants to make concerning your job."

These words directly knocked Leon to the floor. He had already been dismissed by Lord Grindstone, so what job could he possibly have? Moreover, it even alarmed someone like the chief manager?

Qingqing's mouth fell open. Pleasant surprise lit up her eyes. No matter how she looked at things, this commotion wasn't something bad at all. If it weren't for Leon's completely bewildered appearance, she would have asked just what this blockhead had done that he would cause such a stir.

Chief Manager Wu stopped. His smile became increasingly warm. "Leon, is it? I announce on behalf of the capital city branch division that everything that happened earlier today was merely a misunderstanding. If you want, you may join Mister Ning's work team." As he spoke, he looked around. "Here today, I will simultaneously announce an important new event. Sea Spirit Pavilion has obtained a new high level sea spirit teacher today, Mister Ning."

Although high level sea spirit teachers were distinguished individuals, that still wasn't enough qualifications to have someone like Chief Manager Wu announce their hiring. If so, then there was only one explanation: Mister Ning was incredibly strong, and only by doing this could his status and position be shown due deference.

Innumerable eyes revealed awe, and as they fell on Leon's body they turned to deep envy and even resentment. Countless windows opened in Nine Layer Building. Sea spirit teachers thrust out their heads and looked at Leon with utter astonishment. They roared out in their hearts – Why, why did Mister Ning take a liking towards this boy? Whether it is in strength or status, we all completely crush that damn boy!

Within Grindstone's workshop, the mouths of several assistants dropped open, so wide that they could plug a giant turtle egg into them.

Direction Jin appropriately reminded, "Leon, if you want, you can bow to your teacher." After a moment, he couldn't help but reveal a bit of envy. "In Mister Ning's workshop, you are his first assistant."

Whoosh –

At this time, the crowd truly erupted.

By convention, within every high level sea spirit teacher's workshop, the first assistant was a role of absolute trust and faith, a subordinate whose status was above all others' and was given the role of managing the other assistant sea spirit teachers. And, if the first assistant didn't have a teacher, they would automatically become the disciple of the high level sea spirit teacher. In other words, they would become a genuine disciple who was taught techniques.

If the eyes that were looking at Leon before were only burning hot, they now they were like blazing magma, wishing that they could burn him to ashes and bury him in the ground. This brat, could his ancestors have saved the world? Otherwise, when such a massive meat pie fell down from the heavens, why would it fall in between his lips?

What about us? There is still us!

As for whether or not you already have a teacher? Hey, if you left your brain at home, hurry up and get it! Even if you had a teacher, you had best make sure you don't have one now!

Qingqing tugged at the stunned Leon with some effort. "Leon, what are you standing here like an idiot for? Hurry up and bow to Mister Ning." The surprise had come too quickly for her to process and her mind was still in a haze. But, there was one thing she was sure of: Leon wouldn't have to leave anymore.

Leon's lips trembled. He fell to the floor. "Di...disciple greets teacher..."

A calm voice sounded out from beneath the black robe. "Rise."

Leon's head veered up. His face was filled with shock. But, the black-robed figure's expression left him swallowing his words.

Chief Manager Wu saw all of this in his eyes. It affirmed his earlier guess that there was definitely some previous connection between Leon and Mister Ning.

In the distance, Madame Qing let the curtains fall. She said, "Let's leave."

The steward drove the carriage away. The nearby guards quickly surrounded them.

Sitting within the carriage, Madame Qing had a calm expression. But, there were wild waves tumbling in the depths of her heart. She had already thoroughly investigated Leon and knew he didn't have any background at all, so what did the actions of Sea Spirit Pavilion mean today? Could they be reacting to the Qing Family's interference in Sea Spirit Pavilion?

She had already learned what had happened to Grindstone by now.

But something was wrong...with Chief Manager Wu's status and power, even if he wasn't satisfied with them, he still wouldn't use such a direct method to shame their Qing Family.

If so, then the reason most likely originated from that Mister Ning?

Madame Qing rubbed her temples. She didn't like this feeling of things suddenly spiraling out of her control. But no matter how unhappy she was, she could only suppress her thoughts for the time being. Since her Qing Family had the qualifications to move into Noble Court Avenue, they naturally had a tyrannical strength and they also had some inkling of information into Sea Spirit Pavilion's background.

So, she could only slowly investigate the situation before making further plans.

Later that night, the Qing Family held a family reunion banquet that only high level members were able to attend. An invitation was sent to Chief Manager Wu's office, but he refused on grounds of being too busy and sent someone in his place to deliver a message. The contents were simple. Concerning the matter of Leon, that was an internal job reassignment of Sea Spirit Pavilion. It was a normal business event that wasn't aimed at the Qing Family at all.

Madame Qing and her husband were left helpless. If they really believed these words then they would be fools.

But, this was something that happened later, not now.

At this time, Leon bid his farewells to an incomparably excited Qingqing and followed Mister Ning into Sea Spirit Pavilion. The normally proud and overly arrogant female staff members had all stepped to the



side and had lowered their heads in respect. Along the way, Leon actually received many heated gazes. But at this time, he was completely flustered and didn't notice them at all.

The newly built workshop was decorated with brand new appliances. The work table emitted the light scent of glue; it had clearly never been used before.

Closing the door and opening the isolating array formation, Qin Yu lifted the hood of his black robe. He smiled. "Hello, Leon."

Leon's eyes widened. "Big Brother Ning, it's really you! You...you...you...!" He looked as if he had seen a ghost.

"I said that we might see each other soon again, and we did." Qin Yu laughed. "What's there to be so surprised about? Sea spirits might grow in the sea, but they are still spiritual creations of the world. In essence, they are no different from spiritual plants of the land. In the world of humans I am an alchemist, so I also have some attainments in taking care of spiritual plants. It wasn't too difficult to change professions to being a sea spirit teacher."

If anyone else were to hear this explanation, they definitely would have snorted in derision. Yes, Qin Yu wasn't mistaken. In essence, sea spirits were no different from spiritual plants of the land, but if there really was no difference, how about they grab an alchemist and have them take care of a sea spirit?

However, Leon came from a low level sea race family background, and it was a lucky coincidence that he managed to become a sea spirit teacher. He was blinded by his own ignorance so he thought that what Qin Yu said was actually quite reasonable.

"So it's like that." Leon revealed a worried look. "Big Brother Ning, if they discover your identity, things will become really troublesome." One didn't need to be a genius to know what would happen if it were discovered that a human cultivator had camouflaged themselves as a sea race member, and a distinguished high level sea spirit teacher at that. Those sea race members that held extremely hostile thoughts towards humans would explode into a frenzy!

Qin Yu shook his head. "I know, but a problem has occurred in my cultivation. I need some treasures so I have no other choice but to do this." He earnestly asked. "Leon, are you willing to help me?"

Leon blurted out, "Of course I am willing to help Big Brother Ning. But..."

Qin Yu laughed. "Silly kid, do you really think that I might be plotting something in the sea race capital city? That is no different from seeking my own death. I'm not a fool."

Leon immediately relaxed. "That's good then. I was scared that Big Brother Ning might end up harming the capital city's citizens in the end." He had a relieved expression.

What a pure and naïve boy. He immediately trusted someone with just a few lies. If he continued on like this, wouldn't he be conned endlessly in the future? Qin Yu shook his head and smiled, breathing a sigh of relief.

It was too noticeable for a high level sea spirit teacher to walk around by themselves. He needed a sea race member on his side in order to not arouse suspicion. He originally only planned on helping Leon a

little and improving his current living conditions as repayment for his earlier kindness, but as he looked down from the top of Nine Layer Building and saw the scene before, he decided to change his plans.

Of course, helping Leon was still Qin Yu's goal. But as he saw the happily smiling sea race youth, he secretly thought to himself that it would be best if he didn't reveal his identity before leaving the capital city in order to not implicate him.

"Big Brother Ning, I really have to thank you today. If you hadn't helped me, I...in short, I'm really thankful!" Leon profusely thanked Qin Yu.

Qin Yu laughed, "That girl you were talking to, who is she?"

Leon blushed. "She...her name is Qingqing. She is the young miss of Noble Court Avenue's Qing Family. But she is very kind and good and doesn't have the arrogance of a noble." As he spoke of her, his eyes brightened. But as he thought of Madame Qing's words today, his complexion rapidly dimmed.

Qin Yu sat down. "Come, tell me everything that happened today."

Leon wavered for a moment. Then, with a bit of embarrassment, he reiterated everything that occurred. He smiled in self-ridicule. "Big Brother Ning, in truth I didn't need Madame Qing to remind me of anything. I am well aware of my own status, and I know that it is impossible for me and Qingqing to end up together. If I can stay here and watch her from afar sometimes, I will be more than satisfied."

Qin Yu thought for a moment. He took out a black card. "No matter what happens, first you go and return the Qing Family's spirit stones. If you have an urgent need for money, I will give it to you."

Leon's eyes shined. He had felt guilty about taking Madame Qing's card, so he would love to return it. He gratefully said, "Big Brother Ning, consider this as me borrowing from you. I will slowly pay you back with my work later. But I don't need this much. 3000...no, 2000 spirit stones is enough."

Qin Yu laughed. "Take it. If you can't spend it all then just take it as me giving you an advance on your salary ahead of time. I know that your mother isn't doing well and that courtyard you are renting isn't good for taking care of the elderly. Let's end things here today; you can go home from work early and come back tomorrow."

Leon's face was flushed red. His lips shivered. In the end, he deeply bowed and left.

Pulling his hood back down, he watched from the window as Leon left with a half-happy and half-dazed face, his heart at ease. It wasn't that he suspected Leon, but this place was simply too dangerous so he had no choice but to be careful.

From this day on, as long as he could play the role of a wonderful sea spirit teacher, he would be able to earn what he needed from the pockets of the wealthy sea races.

Thinking of this, Qin Yu smiled.

### **Chapter 135 – Skyspirit Sage**

With the arrival of every high level sea spirit teacher, that meant the founding of an all new independent workshop. To the drifting mid-level sea spirit teachers who hadn't attached themselves to anyone yet,

this represented a chance to soar into the heavens. Thus, on this day, within the entire Sea Spirit Pavilion, everyone was showing their peak skills and the entire place was jumping with enthusiasm.

One of the disciple spots had been taken away by some unknown boy, but according to rumors, Mister Ning hadn't brought any subordinates with him. In other words, all of his assistants would be chosen from Sea Spirit Pavilion. Not only did this mean that everyone had a higher chance of being selected, but they also had a chance of becoming a direct disciple of Mister Ning.

This was simply too wonderful!

The resource management department was suddenly jammed full of people. The supervisor was invited to multiple dinners and even the deputies with the smallest roles were coaxed and groveled to. For a time, everyone beamed with joy and drooled with greed, each one developing an extremely favorable impression towards Mister Ning.

Originally, they were thinking of using some subtle methods to draw out the selection process for a long time. In that way, they could maximize the benefits they could obtain. But when the first list of screened names was sent up, it was immediately sent back down. This caused the entire resource management department, from the supervisor to the lowliest staff member, to feel as if they had been slapped in the head.

If these people hadn't been chosen then that would be fine. After all, they could simply send over a new list and there was no end to the waves of middle level sea spirit teachers that were waving their spirit stone cards around. But, no matter what they did, Mister Ning's reply was that...he didn't need anyone!

The supervisor was left feeling ill to his stomach. He had already accepted all the bribes and offers, so now that this new sea spirit teacher was using this move, wouldn't this just completely ruin him? Moreover, which high level sea spirit teacher didn't have one or two dozen assistants on hand? Otherwise, they would be fully occupied dealing with the random trivial daily necessities.

So wouldn't it be best to just not make a fuss?

The supervisor hesitated over and over, and finally he drew up another list of names. He clenched his teeth and added a number of strong middle level sea spirit teachers. He was drawing back a little here and letting this matter cool down first. He sent someone over to deliver the new list, thinking that this time it would be satisfactory. However, before he could even finish his thoughts, his subordinate was sent scurrying back with a distressed look. It seemed that he hadn't even been able to get past the door.

With this, the news couldn't be suppressed any longer. All of the middle level sea spirit teachers that had been jumping with joy just now were suddenly frozen in shock, their eyes flying wide open. Did this mean that there was no need for assistants? If the new sea spirit teacher didn't recruit anyone, how would he get work done!? And, they had already handed so many benefits over to the supervisor! He had eaten his meal, taken what he wanted, and then he had wiped his mouth and treated it as if nothing had happened! What sort of joke was this!?

The resource management department was left shamefaced. All of those people who were just smiling and flattering them yesterday were suddenly glaring at them with grim faces, their eyes full of evil thoughts.

And seeing that no one could come up with an explanation, this matter wouldn't be considered over yet!

The supervisor had taken a great deal of benefits, but now an accident had occurred. He clenched his teeth, forcing himself to carefully draw up a third list of names, and then he went looking for Chief Manager Wu's secretary.

"Director Jin, this list has every outstanding middle level sea spirit teacher that we could find. If Mister Ning is still dissatisfied with this, then there is nothing I can do!"

Looking at the nearly crying supervisor, Director Jin took the name list and entered the chief manager's office. Soon, the door opened and the chief manager stepped out.

"You go back first. I will speak to Mister Ning about this matter."

The supervisor was overjoyed. He bowed repeatedly and excused himself. But, as he thought of having to return all the benefits he received, and even having to give back a little extra just in case, he felt his heart, liver, spleen, and the rest of his organs twist and ache.

A good number of people saw this occur and thought that Mister Ning had extremely fierce and magnificent methods. With just a few simple moves, he had caused the conceited and arrogant resource management department to flip over onto their backs. Of course, there were even more people that sneered in their heart, cursing at the overly greedy resource management department. They wanted to take sole possession of the massive amount of benefits, so it was no wonder that Mister Ning had grown angry with them.

Chief Manager Wu's thinking was similar to theirs. He thought that Qin Yu was taking this opportunity to establish his position, and once he did he would finally choose some assistants.

Along the way, he bumped into Clearwood. As she heard that he was headed to see Qin Yu, her eyes brightened and she joined him.

After the most recent scandal, Chief Manager Wu's attitude towards Clearwood had undergone a tremendous change. The two nodded and chatted with each other before arriving at the workshops on the seventh floor. As Chief Manager Wu saw the array formation shining at the entrance, he frowned. Thinking about it, he hadn't yet given Qin Yu any tasks. He knocked on the door.

Soon, the array formation's runes extinguished and the thick door swung open. Leon, dressed in brand new robes, opened the door in a flustered panic. He hastily bowed, saying, "Greetings, chief manager, Manager Clearwood."

Chief Manager Wu nodded. "What is Mister Ning doing?"

"Is that the chief manager? Please enter." A calm voice echoed out, followed by the faint fragrance of tea.

Chief Manager Wu's eyebrows shot up. As he stepped into the workshop, the sight he saw left him bitterly smiling. A black-robed figure was sitting with his back to him. Steam floated up and water boiled. The scent of tea filled the room. The work table that Sea Spirit Pavilion had spent an extravagant amount of money on hadn't even been used once, but was actually being used as a table to boil tea?

Clearwood frowned. A bit of cold flashed deep in her eyes. Just as she was about to say something, she was stopped by Chief Manager Wu. Chief Manager Wu walked over and took a seat. "Mister seems to be in high spirits."

Clearwood put on an icy face and didn't say anything.

Qin Yu waved his hand and produced another tea set. He raised his teacup high, as if signaling for everyone to taste it, and then said, "I was just a bit bored so my hands were slightly itchy for a moment. I hope no one minds."

"The work table is where sea spirits are worked with. To each and every sea spirit teacher, it is a sacred place of great dignity and solemnity. Doesn't Mister Ning think it is a bit too disrespectful to use it to make tea?" Clearwood's eyes were sharp and there wasn't any warmth to her voice.

Chief Manager Wu pretended as if he didn't hear anything.

Qin Yu took a sip of tea, his expression light. "In my eyes, a work table is nothing but a platform. Respect towards sea spirits should originate from the heart and not be something that is merely shown on the surface. If every sea spirit teacher could focus on what is in their hearts and not pay attention to only what is on the surface, then there wouldn't be such a shortage of high level sea spirit teachers."

These words seemed quite grand and pompous, and even seemed as if they were teaching a lesson. Clearwood's complexion became even colder. She was about to rebut him but Chief Manager Wu coughed and interrupted her. "Mister Ning's words contained a trace of truth. But, the reason we came here was for proper business."

He slyly smiled and laid down a folder. "The resource management department supervisor is about to cry because of you. If you wanted to establish your reputation, you've done more than enough. After this I will go back and give him a big red envelope, so just open this and choose some names from within. Rest assured, I have already looked through the list. All of these people are highly skilled and none of them will drag you down."

Qin Yu shook his head. "No need." Before Chief Manager Wu could respond, he continued, "Since you came here, I will also clarify some matters with you. My legacy of inheritance doesn't need help from anyone. Leon is only helping me deal with some miscellaneous matters, so I definitely do not need more people to come."

Chief Manager Wu's eyes flashed. "And I wonder where mister originates from...?"

Qin Yu lightly said. "It's difficult for me to say. If chief manager finds this unacceptable, then I would rather leave." Of course, these words were just a front. He had spent a great deal of effort to come here and was just about to arrive at the harvest, so why would he leave?

The key was that these words showed his attitude.

Chief Manager Wu was an understanding man. He immediately laughed and stated that Sea Spirit Pavilion wasn't in the habit of investigating the origins of their workers before changing the topic. Since Qin Yu really didn't need any more assistants, Chief Manager Wu merely spoke some more small talk, and after the atmosphere returned to normal, he rose up and bid his farewells.

Clearwood coldly squinted at Qin Yu before swiveling away. While she had skills, she also had a considerable temper.

Leon bowed and delivered them out. As they left, the door slammed shut and the array formation lit up once more.

Seeing Clearwood's ugly complexion, Chief Manager Wu put on a thoughtful expression. He said to her, "Manager Clearwood, perhaps our Sea Spirit Pavilion really dug up a treasure this time. I read through many ancient texts before, and in some records, I read about a line of sea spirit teachers that pursued the path of practicing everything, and everything must be done by their own hands."

He paused for a moment. As he saw Clearwood's puzzled expression, he smirked a little. "If I say things like that, you might not be able to think of it. But, if I tell you their name, you will know. These sea spirit teachers are called Skyspirit Sages, and they have always lived in seclusion, not caring for the outside world. In the records, it stated that even if they were to step into the outside world, they would still hide their status. Because of that, even now no one knows just who the Skyspirit Sages are, what their background is, or what race they originate from."

Clearwood was stunned. "Skyspirit Sage!"

Chief Manager Wu's eyes brightened. "Reviving that coral represents an extraordinary level of skill. Moreover, he appeared alone in the capital city, he hides his appearance, and he also doesn't need assistants. While these might be flukes, if you add them all up, it's far too much of a coincidence!"

Clearwood's eyes shook. She fell deep into thought and finally said, "Should we try to find some way to determine his identity?"

Chief Manager Wu turned and looked at her. "In the rumors it is said that Skyspirit Sages possess an unknown strength and are capable of healing all sea spirits. If Mister Ning is one, he will definitely have such an ability."

Clearwood's eyes brightened. "Bluesky Tower and Earthfault Spire will not sit idle as they suffer. I received some information that they will make some small movements to harm our reputation."

Chief Manager Wu smiled. "It looks like Mister Ning will be busy soon."

....

They had used the resources they had set up so many years ago, and just as they thought they had obtained the weakness of Sea Spirit Pavilion, in the end they fell into a trap and ruined themselves instead.

Things certainly wouldn't end here!

Whether it was to make up for their losses or to try and regain some face, the high level figures of Bluesky Tower and Earthfault Spire held a conference, and after preparing for several days, they finally made their move.

13 precious sea spirits flowed into Sea Spirit Pavilion through different channels, each one accompanied by a request to sign the Supreme Book. They all paid 100,000 spirit stones in advance. With two sea

spirit influences collaborating, the strength of their attack far surpassed the imagination. Even Sea Spirit Pavilion was unable to reject them. After a brief standoff, they could only accept the transaction.

For a time, all the high level sea spirit teachers were placed in a crisis, They busily inspected the sea spirits and then bitterly cursed out loud. These precious sea spirits had been tampered with. Searching for the problem wouldn't be easy, let alone finding a way to heal them.

The entirety of Sea Spirit Pavilion was armed for battle. All the high level sea spirit teachers laid down their current work and clenched their teeth as they focused on this critical mission. All three of the sea spirit influences were used to plots being hatched in secret, and many of these sea spirit teachers had experienced them. But, the attack that came this time was far too fierce.

Six high level sea spirit teachers held a meeting. They butted heads and quarreled until the entire group was left in a mess. As they diagnosed the 13 precious sea spirit plants, countless questions arose, and, the key problem was that none of their opinions were unified and some even clashed with each other. No one was able to convince the other parties, and thus no one could produce a treatment plan.

Goldrune violently argued with someone. Just as the other person was on the losing side, he suddenly rose up, his face red, and said, "You couldn't even cure the red coral, so what qualifications do you have to argue with me!?"

To Grandmaster Goldrune, these words were a fatal blow that struck at his wound 100,000 times over. He took a heavy breath and nearly fainted. Then, he clenched his teeth and stormed away!

### **Chapter 136 – Faint Again**

"Enough!" Clearwood had a cold expression. "Is there a grandmaster who is confident that they can rely on their own methods to cure the 13 sea spirits?"

The scene immediately fell quiet.

The grandmasters gazed at the ground, deep in thought, or perhaps they looked at the sky, wondering, but no matter what, they didn't make eye contact with her. How ridiculous. While they were fierce, none of them were fierce enough that they could guarantee absolute success. In particular, with Bluesky Tower and Earthfault Spire both conspiring together, who knew what sort of disgusting and dastardly methods they utilized!

Grandmaster Goldrune panted in indignation. "Why would you sign a contract that defines a limit of three days? This is just causing a mess! If we had enough time, we could slowly feel our way forwards and we would definitely be able to find the cure!"

The meeting room door was shoved open. Chief Manager Wu appeared, his face expressionless. "I was the one who signed the contract."

Grandmaster Goldrune was immediately left in an awkward position. He coughed and lowered his head, as if he weren't the one who had said those words just now.

The man he had been arguing with before revealed a disdainful look.

Chief Manager Wu moved to the side. He gestured, "Mister Ning, please."

Grandmaster Goldrune's ears pricked up. His head veered up and as he saw the black-robed figure, he clenched his jaws.

This bastard!

If it weren't for this man, then he would never have fallen to such a state where he was mocked by everyone!

That's right. You cured the red coral, but so what? That thing was his to begin with, so who knew what tricks he had used on it? Goldrune simply had no idea why Chief Manager Wu would invite this fellow into Sea Spirit Pavilion. Instead, it would have been better to hunt down and ruin this fellow!

Beneath the black robe, Qin Yu arched an eyebrow. He didn't know why this white-faced chubby man would have such a great grudge against him.

No, that wasn't right, this was simply overwhelming resentment!

Chief Manager Wu coughed. "This is Grandmaster Goldrune. He was the grandmaster who originally diagnosed the red coral and discovered there was an issue with it."

These words were absolutely to save face.

Even so, Goldrune's cheeks flushed red and his animosity boiled over!

It was intentional, it was definitely intentional! This fellow was taking advantage of the chief manager to publicly slap him!

Endure, I will endure this!

I cannot be fooled by him. If I really started a conflict here, I would become a complete laughingstock!

Qin Yu revealed an understanding look. So, this fellow was the original hapless bad-luck stepping stone. Well, perhaps that might be too unreasonable. After all, Grandmaster Goldrune had completely ruined his reputation in order to pave the road for him to enter Sea Spirit Pavilion.

But this seemed like...the truth!

If Grandmaster Goldrune were to know of Qin Yu's thoughts, he would definitely fall unconscious and foam at the mouth. Thus, sometimes one's good intentions should be to remain silent.

Qin Yu stepped in front of the table. He made a motion of looking around at the 13 sea spirit plants placed on it.

However, to Grandmaster Goldrune, his good intentions simply seemed like open and naked disregard!

If he didn't hold his breath, he would have already fainted or stormed away!

This surnamed Ning fellow, are you really so amazing? Then let me see just what you can do!

The 13 sea spirits are here. How many can you save?

Grandmaster Goldrune's heart itched. He saw the black-robed figure straighten himself and say, "No problem, just send everything to my workshop."



Everyone within the meeting room was left dumbfounded. Even the other grandmasters who had no grudges or gratitude with Qin Yu had ugly complexions. This person has casually lowered his head, and without even verifying what sort or species of sea spirits these were, had the confidence that he could treat them? Just what sort of joke was this? Moreover, doing this was too careless. To be more plain, did this new Ning fellow really think they were all useless side characters? This insult could not be endured!

Grandmaster Goldrune was the first to speak up. "Grandmaster Ning, do you know where these 13 sea spirits come from? Or what sort of contract was signed? With such an irresponsible attitude, if a problem occurs, who will take responsibility for it? Don't forget what your surname is just because you had a moment of glory!"

Qin Yu lightly said, "Although I don't know much, at the very least it should be more than Grandmaster Goldrune, so I ask that you don't worry about me. Moreover, my surname is Ning." He turned and walked out, "Chief manager, a great deal of time has been wasted already. If you want me to help, please hurry things up."

"Arrogant!"

"We were diagnosing!"

"Wasting time? You actually said we were wasting time!?"

"Surname Ning, don't be too rampant!"

Facing a common enemy, Goldrune completely forget his previous unhappiness and even the humiliating words. He huddled close to those near him and said, "Chief Manager Wu, you should think things over carefully. If you are dragged down by others, you might never recover!"

Qin Yu stopped. He turned and looked around. "Everyone, would you all like to make a bet with me?"

Goldrune smiled in anger. "If you can heal the 13 sea spirits within three days, then I will present you my own head in front of everyone!"

Qin Yu shook his head. "I have no interest in Grandmaster Goldrune's head. Let's change the bet into spirit stones instead. How does 500,000 sound?"

Speaking of spirit stones, Grandmaster Goldrune felt all his organs twitch. Due to the Red Coral Incident, he had been forced to pay an entire 600,000 spirit stones in damages!

600,000 spirit stones, just how many years of labor had it taken to save that many? As he thought of this black robed figure pocketing it all his eyes turned red with rage!

"I will bet a million spirit stones!" Grandmaster Goldrune roared.

"What daring heroic spirit Brother Goldrune! Chief Manager Wu, I am not deliberately trying to stir up trouble, but this Ning fellow is far too arrogant. I will bet 500,000 spirit stones!"

"Me too!"

"I will also join in!"

In the blink of an eye, six high level sea spirit teachers made a total bet of 3.5 million spirit stones.

Clearwood had an icy expression. Looking at this red-faced crowd of angry fellows, just where had their training gone and what kind of scum had they devolved into? She wished she could choke them all to death. But as she glanced at Qin Yu who had provoked all of this, she found him even more displeasing to the eyes. If looks could kill, he would have been cut into dozens of pieces already.

Qin Yu smiled. "Chief Manager Wu, please be a witness to this."

Chief Manager Wu bitterly smiled and nodded.

For some unknown reason, after the two walked far away, Grandmaster Goldrune suddenly trembled and felt an inexplicable sorrow towards his own money bags. But soon, he chased away these thoughts and told himself not to be frightened like this.

He took a deep breath. The anger in his eyes soon flashed with a ray of joy. The 600,000 spirit stones he had lost would soon return, and he would gain another 400,000. Thinking of this, his spirits were lifted.

.....

News of Mister Ning accepting the work of 13 sea spirits soon spread throughout the entire Sea Spirit Pavilion through unknown channels. Although it was unknown who did it, it was likely related to the six grandmasters. Of course, concerning those that spoke about this reckless and irresponsible gamble, all of them were well known characters. Even though they were banding together to cross this difficult moment, they still cared about their reputation.

One day passed. Then another day passed.

Everything was quiet and tranquil.

The door to the workshop didn't open even once. No one knew how far things had gotten.

Several spirit shell calls were received by Leon. As he faced tentative questions from all sides, he helplessly explained that he was also in the dark.

In the blink of an eye, the last day arrived.

On the seventh floor, in a corridor outside the workshops, Chief Manager Wu and Clearwood were sitting down, facing each other. The atmosphere was thick, so dense that it could be cut apart. This floor still had the workshops of two other high level sea spirit teachers. Their assistants would often pass by, but as they sensed the heavy atmosphere, they quickly bowed and scurried away. Many times they couldn't but turn around with anxious gazes.

Although they had suffered the angry scolding of their teachers these past two days, and also heard about the conceited arrogance of Mister Ning, none of them hoped that Sea Spirit Pavilion would fail.

In the silence, Clearwood couldn't help but ask, "Can he really do it?"

Chief Manager Wu said, "I don't know."

Clearwood had an anxious expression. "Do you think you might have taken too great a risk this time? If....even if we disregard Sea Spirit Pavilion's reputation, just the compensation is more than enough to bankrupt our capital city branch division."

Chief Manager Wu narrowed his eyes. "In three days, my Sea Spirit Pavilion is to heal 13 sea spirits, each one with a compensation guarantee of 20 times the initial cost. They bet that their methods are good enough, while I bet that my sight is sharp enough. If we win this battle, the three pillar situation within the capital city will be broken, and our Sea Spirit Pavilion will truly ascend to the top.

"I can back down, but I don't want to."

Clearwood revealed a look of admiration. She said in a low voice, "There's only an hour left."

Before she finished speaking, a spirit shell hanging on her chest suddenly rang out. Chief Manager Wu's eyes brightened.

On the other hand, a faintly weary voice said, "They're ready, come pick them up."

*Shua* –

The call hung up.

Chief Manager Wu lay down the spirit shell. All the pores on his body seemed to open up together as sweat poured down his body, drenching his robes and pasting his hair to his forehead. He looked incredibly distressed.

Clearwood smiled like a blooming flower. "Congratulations!"

Chief Manager Wu wiped the sweat from his forehead. "I originally wanted to collapse. It seems I really overestimated how long I could maintain my composure for just now. Manager Clearwood must have found it funny. But come, let's go and inspect them first."

The workshop's array formation runes faded away. Leon held one of the sea race's storage shell in his hands. "Teacher said that everything is inside. Please accept and verify it."

Chief Manager Wu received the storage shell and probed with his divine sense. After several breaths of time, he took a deep breath and passed it to Clearwood. He picked up a spirit shell. "Connect me to number 287."

A connection was made. The sound of breathing from the other end could be heard.

"They're ready, come pick them up."

These were Qin Yu's words just now repeated verbatim.

*Bang* –

There was a loud explosion. It could be imagined that the spirit shell on the other end had burst into pieces. Moreover, before the call ended, Chief Manager could hear something heavy falling to the ground on the other side. He couldn't suppress the joy in his heart anymore and heartily laughed towards the heavens.

"Hahahaha!"

Clearwood held the storage shell, her eyes smiling as if she had picked up a treasure trove.

Not too far away, several wandering assistant sea spirit teachers saw the ecstatic looks of the two. They were shocked as if a bolt of lightning struck their heads and came out from their feet. They turned and started to scream together.

“Success! Mister Ning succeeded!”

Waves of wild joy spread out, reverberating throughout the entire Sea Spirit Pavilion. But, the assistants were left puzzled; just why did their teachers have such constipated expressions, as if they were crying while smiling?

Soon after, an ambulance rushed towards Sea Spirit Pavilion, because Grandmaster Goldrune had fainted again.

....

In a residence within the capital city.

The crimson red coral crimson indicated that it was noontime, when the temperature was the highest. But right now, there was actually a cold chill percolating around two people.

They had taken this golden chance to make a move, and had almost completed their mission. But before they knew it, not only had they failed, but their identities had almost been exposed.

A sea race man in luxurious black clothes spoke in a cold tone, “Go. Look up everything you can about this Mister Ning!”

Another sea race man cupped his hands and quickly departed.

...

Some time afterwards, great, dark waves spread throughout the capital city. The ordinary citizens didn’t know why, but Bluesky Tower and Earthfault Spire suddenly suspended business as they were undergoing a restructuring. This became the most discussed topic throughout all the teatimes of the capital city, and countless rumors wildly spread out.

Sea Spirit Pavilion took this opportunity to launch a flurry of activity. There were promotions, rebates, discounts – all sorts of things that whipped everyone up into a frenzy, giving them vastly overwhelming momentum. Those that observed carefully saw that during this flurry of events, there were actually many high ranking citizens of the capital city that sent flower baskets to express their congratulations and as a vague way to apologize for what happened before.

### **Chapter 137 – Spotlight of One**

Compared with that, the minor internal changes occurring within Sea Spirit Pavilion weren’t able to arouse any interest. For instance, the two high level sea spirit teachers that had been forced out of the seventh floor. Although they vehemently objected initially, after entering Chief Manager Wu’s office, both of them suddenly quieted down and then publicly vowed to continue their work in earnest.

In the words of Chief Manager Wu, if any one of them could earn 10 million spirit stones at once, then they too would be given this treatment. No matter how thick their skin was, they still couldn’t stand up against such an attack!

From then on, Sea Spirit Pavilion's seventh floor gained a new and distinctive feature – Mister Ning. When sea spirit teachers looked at him, their gazes were filled with awe and respect.

At this time, Mister Ning's workroom was empty and the fragrance of fresh tea was overflowing from the table. Chief Manager Wu smiled and laid down a storage shell. "This is just a minor token of appreciation on my part, I ask that mister accept it."

Clearwood's expression was calm, as if there had never been anything that irritated her before.

Qin Yu didn't refuse. He probed it with his divine sense. Even though he knew Sea Spirit Pavilion had earned a ridiculous amount, he was still shocked by what he saw inside. He hesitated for several breaths of time and then said, "Chief manager is quite generous."

Chief Manager Wu's smile widened. After the previous matter, he now fully believed in the incident of the Skyspirit Sage. He sent a report to headquarters while simultaneously making a big decision to try and have Qin Yu stay. Since he made that decision, he certainly had to show just how much he valued Qin Yu.

Spirit stones...6 million!

With the 13 sea spirits, the Supreme Book had been signed for each of them. There was a total advance payment 1.3 million spirit stones, and if they were fully cured and treated within three days, there would be an additional payment made of 20 times the original advance, for a total of another 26 million. All in all, there was a gain of 27.3 million, and of that amount, 20% had been handed over to Qin Yu as a gift. To try and win someone over with such a heavy hand, even Clearwood had been shaken.

But, it was clear that she hadn't objected.

"This is what mister earned and deserves. After all, if you had failed, you would have to follow me in running away." The rarely humorous Chief Manager Wu joked. He stood up and cupped his hands together. "I would like to thank mister again for joining me in taking on such a great and dangerous endeavor. In the future, I'm sure that mister will hold the seat of honor within Sea Spirit Pavilion."

Qin Yu sighed inwardly. Chief Manger Wu indeed knew how to win over others. To gift someone 6 million spirit stones, how could anyone not be moved. Unfortunately, he himself was only a fake member of the sea race and he was destined to not stay too long at Sea Spirit Pavilion, so he could only say that the chief manager's efforts were doomed to fail.

Qin Yu nodded, not saying too much about it. He placed the storage shell back down and said, "Recently, there's been a hindrance to my cultivation and I need some treasures that can strengthen the soul. I'll have to bother chief manager with helping me complete the exchange. Moreover, if possible, instead of receiving this as payment in the future, it would be best if I could be paid with such treasures first."

Chief Manager Wu quietly praised Qin Yu's calm demeanor; he was truly worthy of being the lineage of the Skyspirit Sage! Even the gift he had carefully prepared hadn't been able to move him. But, he didn't worry because there would definitely be more chances in the future. As for treasures to strengthen the soul, all sea spirit teachers had high requirements in terms of the soul, so he didn't suspect anything about this request at all. He took back the storage shell and smiled, "No problem. My Sea Spirit Pavilion

purchases all sorts of things that can strengthen the soul throughout the year. We will exchange them at the base price for mister.”

Clearwood suddenly spoke up. “Mister Ning, in view of your particular situation, Sea Spirit Pavilion has produced a special edition of the Supreme Book. The lower amount that it can be signed at is at 100,000, and the earnings received will be split equally with you. Moreover, if there is an accident, you will only need to pay 30% of the losses. If mister is willing, then from today on, we can comprehensively offer this special edition Supreme Book to all 379 large cities within the sea region and to over 50 million customers.

“Of course, in order to ensure you can rest, we have set a maximum limit of 50 orders per month. Does mister have any objections?”

Qin Yu happily said, “As long as I can be paid in soul-strengthening treasures then I have no issues with it.”

Chief Manager Wu smiled and deep ambitions and dreams burst free in his heart. Perhaps he would be able to lead the capital city branch division to unimaginable heights.

“That’s right. It should be clear just who won the bet between me and the six other grandmasters. Is it about time they paid up?”

Chief Manager Wu’s smile stiffened. “3.5 million spirit stones is not a small amount. The several Grandmasters will need some time to raise that much. How about...”

Qin Yu interrupted, “It’s fine as long as they fulfill their debt. Then, I’ll have to ask chief manager to take care of this matter.”

Chief Manager Wu bitterly smiled. He knew that this fellow wouldn’t be gracious and forgive their debts. He could only mourn silently for the six grandmasters. Like this, everything they earned throughout the years with their blood and sweat would disappear. In particular, Grandmaster Goldrune. Chief Manager Wu prayed that he wouldn’t have to live out the rest of his life in debt.

...

As soon as Sea Spirit Pavilion’s special edition Supreme Book was released, it stirred up an immense wave within the world of sea spirits. The eyes of countless practitioners popped open. A minimum of 100,000 and a compensation rate twenty times over...this caused every one of them to waver. Even the top ten most respected Purple Card sea spirit teachers wouldn’t necessarily sign such an agreement. Had the capital city’s Sea Spirit Pavilion branch division gone insane? Or was there something they could rely on?

There were those who knew the truth, for instance, the higher ups of Bluesky Tower and Earthfault Spire who had closed down their business for restructuring. Right now, as they looked at Sea Spirit Pavilion their eyes were burning hot. If it wasn’t for Sea Spirit Pavilion’s deep background as well as the fact that they were an independently operated business, then they would have immediately brandished their spirit stone cards and recklessly bought up as many shares of Sea Spirit Pavilion that they could.

And soon, the special edition Supreme Book had its first customer – the mother of the royal palace’s chief guard captain.

She held a venerated status and was once said to have been the wet nurse of His Majesty. She was a respected old lady who had a reputation within the sea spirit world, and this was because she possessed a 3000 year old small-leaf wisteria. This sort of treasure gathered spiritual energy and grew increasingly strong with every year. It could create a tide of spiritual strength from thin air and it was greatly beneficial to one's cultivation. The best evidence of this was the several outstanding descendants that had been produced from the household of the chief guard captain.

Once, someone had put forth an offer of 10 million spirit stones but their offer had been rejected without any hesitation. One could see just how precious it was! However, around ten years ago, the small-leaf wisteria seemed to have encountered some troubles. Ever since then, it had been seen coming in and out of various sea spirit institutions, but its situation still hadn't been brought under control.

It was unknown whether she placed too many hopes within the small-leaf wisteria or whether it was because she was ruthless enough to want to use it to make a last bit of money, but after Sea Spirit Pavilion had determined that they would take this business transaction, the old lady put down an advance payment of a million spirit stones, with an insurance policy of 20 million if Sea Spirit Pavilion failed.

Perhaps it was because someone was secretly fanning the flames in the shadows, but in an extremely short period of time, news of this spread throughout the entire capital city. Countless eyes started to converge upon Sea Spirit Pavilion. All of them wanted to know what the final result would be, and whether Sea Spirit Pavilion would fly up into the skies or come crashing down to the ground!

Five days later, the small-leaf wisteria was returned to its owner. Everything proceeded in secret and no one knew the exact details of the situation. However, servants within the chief guard captain's manor said that the thin spiritual tides of the small-leaf wisteria had been restored to their peak, and it was even several degrees stronger than it had been previously. Afterwards, the chief guard captain personally visited to express his gratitude to Chief Manager Wu. News of the generous gifts caused an absolute explosion in the situation.

The second Supreme Book special edition, the third, the fourth...in a mere three days, the 50 order monthly limit had been reached. With numerous difficult and stubborn illnesses being cured one after another, Sea Spirit Pavilion's Mister Ning broke into the world of sea spirit teachers, with no one able to share the spotlight with him for some time.

No one could estimate how many spirit stones Sea Spirit Pavilion earned in this feeding frenzy, but from Chief Manager Wu's wide smile and his two shiny canines, one could imagine how astonishing those profits must have been. And, half of this terrifying profit was exchanged for soul strengthening treasures that were continuously being sent to the tightly shut workroom on the seventh floor.

The night was dark. Leon sat at a work table, carefully processing a coral in nutrient fluid. After a long time, he straightened up and looked at the coral that was slowly regaining its vitality. He stretched his arms and smiled. If he had never treated a sea spirit by himself, then even he would never know that he possessed such a formidable talent. Perhaps it wouldn't be much longer before he could apply to the middle level sea spirit teacher examination.

He turned around and glanced at the tightly closed workroom door, his face full of admiration. His teacher hadn't emerged for over a month, and the spiritual plants that had been treated were all sent out through a small array formation. Even his powerful teacher was diligently working inside, so what reasons did he have to slack off?

Leon rubbed his eyes and shook off the weariness. He took out an ancient shell manuscript and probed it with his divine sense. Although his teacher hadn't actually taught him anything, he had opened up the authority of a high level sea spirit teacher to him, allowing him to freely peruse through the ancient texts of Sea Spirit Pavilion and learn as much as he wanted. To Leon, this was an unimaginable stroke of luck, and when he had unwittingly revealed this to others, their looks of jealousy were sharp enough to kill.

There was also Lyon. He was already a handsome young fellow with a gentle grace and demeanor and he was currently learning to adapt to his human form. Under many envious eyes, they moved away from that small and cramped courtyard, and from that day on, his mother's sickness miraculously began to improve. She was now undergoing the best treatment possible, and perhaps it wouldn't be too long before she was fully healed.

And all of this was granted to him by his teacher.

Sometimes, Leon would quietly look up and thank the heavens that such a person had appeared in his life. Not only had his destiny changed, allowing him to pursue his dreams, but he was also given the chance to chase after the person he loved. Qinqing frequently met up with him but Madame Qing hadn't appeared again nor had any mysterious strangers tried to stop him on the road from work for a little chat. Could the explanation for this be because Madame Qing had tacitly, or at least temporarily, agreed to their relationship?

Leon didn't know what was happening. He could only try his best to improve himself and try to keep this dream-like illusion forever in his arms.

Within the workroom, Qin Yu was sitting cross-legged, absorbing a blue amber-like treasure in his hand. Faint traces of pale golden energy slowly seeped through his orifices and fused into his soul. He felt as if he were immersed in a hot spring as he slowly grew stronger at a steady speed.

Below his feet, above his head, and all around him, there were signs of the solid array formations built into the workroom. And above them, there were also the signs of a slightly messy array formation spinning.

On a work table not far away, the little blue lamp hung in midair. A foot of sea blue light bloomed from it, covering three sea spirits as well as the Soul Mushroom.

Refining the five-element spiritual objects allowed Qin Yu to realize just how necessary a powerful soul force was, and during this time as he was constantly refining these treasures and increasing his soul force, he also began to realize the advantages of a formidable soul. His senses became sharper and he was able to control his magic power with more fluid ease. It was as if he could thoroughly sense every inch of his mortal body.

Although there wasn't any overall change to his strength, if the current Qin Yu were to explode with all his power, he would be over 10% stronger than before! One couldn't underestimate this 10% either. If it



were layered atop Qin Yu's ninth level Golden Core cultivation as well as the physical strength of the Demon Body, this could be called an astonishing increase.

The use of the Soul Mushroom was made clear a long time ago. Qin Yu hoped it would soon mature and reach the level of a Partner Soul.

Kacha –

With a faint sound, Qin Yu absorbed the last several faint strands of pale golden energy. He opened his eyes and looked at the fragments in his hand, a helpless expression growing on his features.

### **Chapter 138 – Sea Spirit Baptism**

The soul was the most mysterious part of a cultivator. Even now, there was no one that was able to fully understand the secrets of it, and enhancing it was quite difficult.

This sea marrow crystal had a value surpassing 200,000 spirit stones and had been fully absorbed in less than half a day. Luckily, with this exorbitant usage of resources, the increase of his soul force was that much faster. He flipped his hand and produced a jade box. Taking out a palm-sized purple flower, he swallowed it up, closed his eyes, and began to refine it.

Perhaps if he continued at this speed, he might be able to refine the third of the five-element spiritual objects in several more days.

Five days later.

Qin Yu opened his eyes and a flash of divine light erupted from his pupils. With a flick of his sleeves, the Fleeting Flame Furnace appeared. Metal, water, wood, fire, earth – since he had started with refining the water-element spiritual object, then he should follow the path of mutual constraint and support recorded within the Five Element Sword Diagram. If so, the next thing he needed to refine was the fire element spiritual object.

The top of the furnace popped open and a sphere of red light flew out. It appeared as if it wanted to run away but then it seemed to sense something. It paused for a moment and hovered in front of Qin Yu. Its burning aura caused the surrounding temperature to rapidly increase, and this was only the natural emanations of its heat. If it were to blow up then the entire Sea Spirit Pavilion would be reduced to ashes!

Qin Yu lifted his hand. Magic power rushed out from his palm, quickly turning into a furnace. The red sphere of light let out a whistle and flew into it on its own initiative.

Qin Yu's eyes brightened.

The five elements all originated from the same source, thus they possessed an overwhelming instinct to fuse together as one. Perhaps the fusing of the five elements that was listed in the appendix of the Five Element Sword Diagram really did exist.

As soon as this thought appeared, Qin Yu pushed it away. He closed his eyes and refined with all his strength.

...

The world was blazing red and dreadfully high temperatures wreaked havoc all around. All that could be seen was churning magma and air distorted within the fiery heat. This was a world of fire and magma, a world buried beneath the earth that hadn't had any contact with the surface for billions and trillions of years. This stability lasted for countless years. Then, one day, there was a great change in the world. A massive impact struck the world and a horrifying strength pierced through the plates of the earth. Magma instantly flowed out through the gap, eventually terrifying through the ground and turning into a destructive plume that tore into the skies. In the blink of an eye, strength capable of destroying the heavens and earth erupted. Following the crack in the earth, a crystal wrapped in magma that had been still for endless years was sent tumbling through the horizon. Flames followed behind it, swallowing all forests. Wherever it went, all life was annihilated, with only death and destruction left behind.

Qin Yu's complexion turned red and steam rose up from all over his body. The reinforced ground that was able to withstand all sorts of extreme environments was suddenly scorched black. The furnace in Qin Yu's hand gently trembled and then magic power scattered outwards before fusing into his body.

His dantian sea suddenly became far brighter. A palm-sized crystal with sixteen sides appeared. Red light tumbled on its surface, making it seem like a small sun. It resonated with the lotus seed and willow branch, finally achieving a measure of synchronization with Qin Yu's aura.

He had completed refining the fire-element spiritual object.

Shua –

Qin Yu opened his eyes. After a brief moment of dizziness, brightness grew in his eyes. He carefully probed himself. A smile began to appear on the corners of his lips. Indeed, after his soul became stronger he could contain more memories and the effects they had on him were much smaller.

After refining the third spiritual object, he was now another step further on his road. Qin Yu swallowed a pill and began to restore his losses.

Originally, he wanted to continue refining treasures to strengthen his soul force, but he soon received two pieces of news and couldn't help but pause his cultivation.

The first – because Sea Spirit Pavilion had recently begun a massive purchase of soul strengthening treasures, the scarcity had led to a sharp increase in price. It seemed as if some force were meddling behind the scenes to cause the price to surge by over two times in a short period of time. If they were to continue purchasing in this environment, not only would it be a far higher cost, but those with dark intentions would continue to push up the price. After Chief Manager Wu investigated the situation, he recommended to suspend purchases for some time until the market stabilized. Or, they could use the network of Sea Spirit Pavilion to make purchases from other sea race cities.

Qin Yu nodded in understanding upon hearing this. He asked the chief manager to borrow the connections of Sea Spirit Pavilion to make more purchases. Of course, this required additional expenses and there was also a period of time needed for shipment to the capital city.

As for the second piece of news, it was neither good nor bad. Every ten years in the sea region, a large-scale sea spirit teacher competition would be held. The champion of this event would be given the opportunity to challenge the position of the ten great Purple Cards, and winning would allow the victor

to take up one of the ten positions and become one of the incomparably revered Purple Card sea spirit teachers.

If this was just a title and a bit of reputation, Qin Yu would have never considered this at all. But, the key point of the issue was that a new Purple Card sea spirit teacher would be given a chance to obtain a sea spirit baptism. This was an ancient ritual and the cost of activating it required a minimum of ten million spirit stones. But, one couldn't assume it was precious because of the monetary cost alone. There were countless sea spirit teachers willing to brandish their spirit stone cards, but no matter how much they paid, they would never be given the chance to obtain a sea spirit baptism.

This was an ancient ritual only opened for Purple Card sea spirit teachers. It could enhance the abilities of a sea spirit teacher, and according to the private investigation of Sea Spirit Pavilion, it was found that it had a particularly great effect in enhancing one's soul.

Looking at the satisfied smile plastered over Chief Manager Wu's face, Qin Yu thought that these final words were especially meant for him to hear. And, he was well aware that Chief Manager Wu definitely wouldn't joke around with something so serious. The sea spirit baptism definitely had the ability to strengthen his soul. Of course, there was a risk that he would be exposed. He silently glanced through the introductory rules of the competition.

"How about it? Has mister carefully considered whether or not you would like to attend this competition?" Chief Manager Wu smiled. "According to tradition, our Sea Spirit Pavilion has a single quota for someone to enter the finals directly."

Qin Yu's eyes brightened. "Directly enter the finals?"

Chief Manager Wu winningly smiled. "That's right. If mister decides to participate, then I will handle everything else. You will only need to attend the final competition, and if you win, you will be given the chance to challenge for the Purple Card. It won't take too long and there is also the reward of the sea spirit baptism to consider." He continued sincerely, "At the very least, I believe that mister shouldn't miss out on such a chance."

"Very well, I agree."

Chief Manager Wu's eyes lit up. "Then, mister should rest well. I will come a few days before the competition begins and inform you." He said and quickly departed.

Qin Yu leaned down on a sofa. He could guess why Chief Manager Wu was trying so hard to have him participate in this competition, but he also couldn't help but admit that to him, this sea spirit baptism was indeed incredibly tempting.

And, the most important reason was that Qin Yu had glanced through the general outline of the competition. Sea spirit teachers would compete in a sealed environment where outsiders wouldn't be able to observe.

If this weren't so, then even if the chance to undergo the sea spirit baptism was directly offered to him, he still wouldn't want to mess with it. He rubbed his forehead. When he competed he definitely needed to be more careful and not reveal his identity.

After refining the final soul strengthening treasure in his storage ring, Qin Yu suddenly thought of something. A quick memory flashed through his mind and he flipped over his hand, producing a transparent bead. Dark fog swirled within it. It contained a massive amount of absorbed soul force.

This was the soul bead that he had obtained in the Netherworld Realm after using the Skythunder Bamboo to kill a high level specter. Looking at it further, Qin Yu regretted that he hadn't been more patient. If he had, he could have lured several more high level specters to gather up and he wouldn't need to worry so much now.

Qin Yu had already carefully examined the soul force within the soul bead; he could directly absorb it. But just as he was about to begin, he suddenly discovered there was something else that was extremely interested in it.

It was currently daytime and the little blue lamp had been put away. The Soul Mushroom was put side by side with the two other sea spirit plants. At this moment, the gray mushroom gently shivered. This was an extremely minor vibration. If one didn't have sharp eyesight and also closely observed it, it would have been impossible to notice.

Qin Yu was surprised to discover this. He placed the soul bead near the mushroom, and once he did, the fog swirling within began to wildly tumble.

Pa –

The soul bead shattered. Qin Yu felt an instinctual pull in his soul, but he forcefully suppressed this desire and watched as the Soul Mushroom locked onto the soul force and completely absorbed it. After a moment, a trace of blue appeared on the surface of the Soul Mushroom. In several breaths of time, it rapidly spread over, turning the entire mushroom blue.

This faint blue color was like the first traces of spring after a deep and dark winter. It represented birth and the beginning of vitality.

Blue...one hundred years!

Qin Yu was overjoyed. He never thought that a single soul bead could actually help the Soul Mushroom overcome that key step in its transformation. Although the accumulated light from the little blue lamp had definitely played a role, it was impossible to deny just how amazing the effects of the soul bead were.

He regretted once again that he hadn't killed several more high level specters...and once he recalled the words that the old turtle had told him after leaving the Netherworld Sea Region, even if he knew about the use of the soul beads, he still didn't dare to return.

Whatever, whatever...since things had gotten to this point, fretting over it any more was meaningless. He comforted himself and put the Soul Mushroom away. Then, Qin Yu sat down and gathered his thoughts.

He took out some pills and swallowed them.

He couldn't continue refining treasures to strengthen his soul, but he could still cultivate. It would be a shame to waste any bit of time he had, and while the effects of Star Pills were much weaker in enhancing the soul, there would always be an effect in accumulating a little bit at a time.

As Leon continued admiring his teacher, Qin Yu also continued his seclusion. During this time, the sea spirit teacher competition swept throughout the entire world of the sea races, drawing in all their attention like a surging torrent. For a period of time, it was the uncontested topic to talk about. From the capital city to the most remote sea race tribes, from the high level figures to the commoners, everyone heatedly discussed this event.

The ten great Purple Card sea spirit teachers were the most mentioned figures. When people spoke of them, their eyes would be filled with awe and reverence.

There were only ten Purple Cards, and each one was said to be the embodiment of sea spirits in the world, divine travelers that walked amongst mortals. The 'sea spirits' mentioned here wasn't referring to spiritual plants and objects but to the invisible will that encompassed the entire sea region. It was the sea that gave birth to the sea races. It was the sea that gave them a place to reproduce and live, and it was the sea that gave them the right to survive and live in prosperity.

As incarnations of the sea spirits, it was natural that they would possess revered statuses. In some ancient and remote sea race tribes, these Purple Cards were respected even more than the ruler within the capital city's royal palace.

All sea spirit teachers, no matter how great their talent was, no matter if they were strong or weak, would attend the competition with pride. This was because attending the competition represented the dream that they all chased after, as well as being a way to express their hard work and struggle to the invisible sea spirits to gain their favor and perhaps obtain a greater strength.

A vast, large-scale preliminary competition was held. After ten days of consecutive competition and layers upon layers of elimination, each competition area was repeatedly reduced to the top ten participants. These ten participants were able to compete in the next intermediate stage. Public interest sharply rose during the intermediate stage. More and more sea spirit teachers rose up amongst the new generation, each one of them displaying their skills and abilities with zest.

Various sea spirit influences, tribes, noble families, and many others dispatched observers to watch the competition with wide eyes. Even if the participants failed, this didn't necessarily matter because there was always a chance that a rich contract would be delivered to them in the next moment. This great competition that swept through the sea region was designed to give sea spirit teachers a chance for them to show off and make a name for themselves. Of course, this didn't conflict with their reverent thoughts, because in the eyes of the sea spirit teachers, this chance was granted to them by the sea spirits.

## **Chapter 139 – The Finals**

Half a month later, the intermediate stage finished. 170 sea spirit teachers were chosen from the 17 great competition zones. They all obtained the qualifications to enter the capital city and participate in the finals. Out of these 170 people, almost every single one was a high level sea spirit teacher possessing

formidable strength, and even before they had stepped into the capital city they had already drawn a great deal of attention to themselves.

As they rode great seabed whales that had been especially arranged for this competition towards the capital city, Chief Manager Wu was currently knocking on the door to a workroom on the seventh floor. He smiled and informed Qin Yu that the competition would soon begin.

“Mister Ning, please follow me, there is an honored guest that has already been waiting for you for a long time.” Chief Manger Wu waved his hand.

Entering a studio within Nine Layer Building, Qin Yu could clearly see the purple robes that this person wore as well as the purple card hanging from their waist. He instantly understood their status. This was the highest and strongest existence amongst sea spirit teachers – a Purple Card sea spirit teacher! He had neatly combed silver-like hair and his warm eyes were deep and profound. Although this person was looking Qin Yu up and down, he didn’t feel annoyed at all.

Chief Manager Wu bowed, “Old Sea, this is Mister Ning.” He turned and said, “Mister Ning, Old Sea is ranked seventh amongst the ten great Purple Cards. He is the Exalted of my Sea Spirit Pavilion. He came especially to explain to you the specific process and details of the competition.”

This was obviously an excuse.

Qin Yu sensed that Old Sea’s inquisitive eyes looking over him seemed to hide a bit of excitement. He maintained his composure and cupped his hands together. “Greetings, Old Sea.”

Old Sea waved his hand. “Although I haven’t seen your strength, I have handled the small-leaf wisteria from the chief guard captain’s manor before. At the time the costs were too high and I had other important matters to handle, so I declined to treat it. Since you cured it, that proves you and I can treat each other as those from the same generation.” He switched the topic, his eyes suddenly lighting up. “I’ve heard that Mister Ning’s background is that of the Skyspirit Sage lineage. I’m wondering if there is any veracity to those claims?”

Qin Yu’s thoughts raced. He calmly said, “What if it is? And what if it isn’t? In the end aren’t we all sea spirit teachers, and isn’t our goal to treat and cure all sea spirit lives?”

Old Sea suddenly hopped up in excitement. “Yes, yes, it is exactly like this. You still uphold the most traditional beliefs.” His expression suddenly became much warmer and intimate. He laughed, “Mister Ning might not know, but the reason I can have my current achievements all originates from the Skyspirit Sage lineage.”

Qin Yu didn’t know what else to say. He had casually made up some stories, but he never thought that there would be such a situation. He decided to not say anything further at all. Since this old man had already decided on his status, then he would simply push him along the way.

And as Qin Yu thought, Old Sea suddenly slapped his forehead. “I forgot that you can never reveal your status in the outside world. Don’t worry, I vow that I won’t reveal anything about you at all.” He swept his eyes around.

Chief Manager Wu hurriedly bowed. “Old Sea, don’t worry, I am a very reliable person.”

Old Sea waved his hand. "It's fine as long as you understand. Don't continue being an eyesore and deal with your own business. I will personally entertain Mister Ning myself." With these words, Qin Yu was thoroughly placed as his equal.

In the eyes of the common sea race citizens, the ten great Purple Cards were the most powerful existences amongst sea spirit teachers. But, these powerful figures were well aware that there were always lineage inheritances much stronger than themselves. For instance, the Skyspirit Sages. These were legendary fables passed down amongst all sea spirit teachers!

They sat down in their seats and Old Sea began to jovially speak. "With Mister Ning's strength, I won't say too much. I will only caution you about some matters of the competition."

Loud and open, Old Sea continued speaking. The originally confusing sea spirit teacher competition began to turn crystal clear in Qin Yu's mind. The conversation continued for two hours. Qin Yu gained a favorable impression towards this gentle and smiling old man. He could only apologize inwardly for having to deceive him.

"Alright, if I speak any more I think you might begin to find me tiresome. I also have some matters I need to deal with, so I won't bother you much longer." Old Sea took out a jade box. "I heard Little Wu mention that you were looking for soul strengthening treasures. Some time ago, I obtained a 3000 year old sea blue bellvine flower. Consider this a meeting gift."

Qin Yu waved his hand. "This is far too precious. I cannot accept it."

Old Sea smiled. "Mister Ning shouldn't be too old. Even if we can speak like contemporaries, I can still be considered on the level of a big brother. If so, how could you reject my gift? If you feel like you are taking advantage of me, then after you win the competition just make sure you can reserve some time to chat with me. During these past years I've gained some new experiences, but I find it difficult to speak to anyone about them."

He patted Qin Yu's shoulder and turned to leave.

Qin Yu glanced at the jade box on the table and wryly smiled. If Old Sea really wanted to have a long discussion with him, then at that time he really might see through his disguise. However, this 3000 year old sea blue bellvine flower was indeed a rare item. He had previously refined one that was 1300 year old and worth 300,000 spirit stones.

This one...it was worth over 1 million spirit stones at least!

It was a generous gift.

Qin Yu placed it in his storage ring, thinking. He knit his eyebrows together, thinking about how he could dispel Old Sea's thoughts of looking for him for a talk.

...

In order to ensure an equal and fair competition, all of the sea spirit teachers coming from far away were given three full days to rest and recover so that the long trips to the capital city wouldn't affect their condition.

Three days passed in the blink of an eye. During this time period, 20 luxurious coral buildings were raised up in the grand Prosperity Square in front of the royal palace, an area normally used to hold ceremonies. Giant opulent pearls lit up the space, shining with brilliant splendor. In the competition, there were 170 people who had been selected from the preliminary and intermediate stage. Besides them there were also ten others recommended from various influences – Qin Yu was one of these individuals. Of course, this didn't leave others unhappy, because if one had the qualifications to be recommended, that meant they had to be at least a famous sea spirit teacher with absolute strength in their domain.

On the day of the competition, the entire capital city came out. The incredible number of sea race people gathered into a giant torrent that came from all round. The temporarily created grandstand viewing platforms were covered with people and the light of the array formations constantly twisted. The dozens of sea race people responsible for maintaining the array formations started to sweat as they barely managed to keep them running and avoid the fate of the grandstands coming crashing down.

And these were only the people that were capable of purchasing an admission ticket. There were far more people that couldn't find a ticket and could only gather outside the square. Luckily, the organizers were already experienced with these. Massive shells dozens of feet wide floated in the air. When the competition started, these shells would activate and broadcast the competition in real time.

The business-minded individuals had already taken up spots in advance. Various signs dotted the crowds and the merchants rubbed their hands together, ready to gather a tremendous profit today.

A long caravan of carriages came strolling out from Sea Spirit Pavilion. A massive amount of guards followed as they passed the empty streets towards Prosperity Square.

Within a luxuriously decorated carriage, Qin Yu sat down cross-legged. Chief Manager Wu sat across from him, a glum and hesitant expression crossing his face. He opened his mouth again and again, and finally said, "Mister Ning, I know that I shouldn't say anything to affect your condition right now, but if it is possible, I hope that you can gain the qualifications to obtain the Purple Card status."

Qin Yu opened his eyes. "What happened?"

Chief Manager Wu quietly said, "Old Sea went out for business yesterday, but he was ambushed outside the capital city. His injuries are quite heavy."

Qin Yu was startled. At the juncture of the finals, Old Sea suddenly suffered a sneak attack. This was clearly related to the competition and the Purple Card. It was no wonder that Chief Manager Wu was so worried. "With Old Sea's condition, can't he ask the organizers to refuse any challengers or at least delay them?"

Chief Manager Wu bitterly smiled. "It's impossible. The sea spirit baptism ceremony can only be activated at a specific time. After the selection is made, it cannot be changed. In the past, there have also been cases of Purple Card sea spirit teachers being ambushed and then challenged...Old Sea was cautious, but he must have never thought that..." Chief Manager Wu was angry. It was clear that there were more matters related to Old Sea being ambushed.

Qin Yu fell silent for several breaths of time. He nodded. "I will give my best."



Chief Manager Wu cupped his hands together and deeply bowed. "Then, I will have to leave everything to Mister Ning!"

They drove to the edge of Prosperity Square, and then following a reserved passageway, directly entered within. As a place used to conduct ceremonies, Prosperity Square was incredibly large. The 20 coral buildings only occupied less than half the available area. There were many carriages parked inside, but those that were able to do so were all high ranking people within the capital city.

For instance, Noble Court Avenue's Qing Family.

Three carriages were parked side by side. Although their number was a bit smaller than those around them, the luxuriousness of the carriages was still there, and in the eyes of the onlookers, they exuded a formidable presence. But, only the Qing Family knew that ever since their old ancestor died, their situation had worsened with every year. Those people that used to warmly welcome them now only gave them a light greeting before turning around and doing other things. With the Qing Family members assembled together, they seemed to be gathered by an invisible net of social status, isolated from the circle of top families in the capital city.

Madame Qing tightly gripped her husband's hand and maintained her graceful appearance, allowing him to feel a bit better. Even so, he kept his eyes lowered.

Qingqing stood to the side, seemingly not having yet sensed her family's troubles. She stood on her tiptoes, aimlessly looking for something.

Madame Qing's eyes flashed. She softly said, "Qingqing, is Leon also coming?"

Qingqing blushed. She looked up at her father and nodded, "Yes, he said that Mister Ning would bring him along today."

The Qing Family Patriarch coldly snorted. "Qingqing, you are already a young woman. You should handle your affairs with a bit more discretion. Don't be so close to those you shouldn't be near."

Madame Qing pulled her husband back. "That's enough. You know that Qingqing has grown up. She can make her own decisions and it's always good for her to make more friends." As she spoke, she patted her daughter, "I think I saw the carriages of Sea Spirit Pavilion entering. I know you are bored here, so why don't you go and look for Leon. Remember to return before the competition ends."

Qingqing cheerfully cried out in joy. Then, giving her father a dissatisfied glance, she turned and ran away.

The Qing Family Patriarch frowned. "Wife, how can you allow your daughter's temper to continue like this? Not just anyone can be my Qing Family's son in law."

Madame Qing smiled and patted his hand. "You can think of it like this instead. Leon is Mister Ning's disciple, and if he was brought to this event today, it is clear that he is held in high regard. During this grand competition, there are many people looking forwards to Mister Ning's performance. If he can pass through the dragon gate then in the future Leon might have a different status from what he is today."

The Qing Family Patriarch's expression changed. "Do you believe that Mister Ning has such a possibility?"

Madame Qing shook her head. "I'm just a little woman, so how could I understand these things? I just think that Mister Ning has a chance, so why don't we step back and watch for a while. If he does succeed, then Qingqing being together with Leon will be the same as our Qing Family having a powerful ally outside Noble Court Avenue."

Sea Spirit Pavilion's nine carriages drove into the square and moved into a neat formation. The organizing staff was already respectfully waiting for them and helping them park.

Leon was the first to leap down from the carriages. He swept his eyes around and was immediately shocked – there were so many people! It was true that there were many people in the capital city but he couldn't recall a time where so many of them had gathered in the same place. Even though he rode in the very last carriage, those sitting within were also high level sea spirit teachers. As these people stepped down from the carriage they began to identify themselves and chat amongst themselves. Leon scratched his head, a bit awkward and confused for the moment.

### **Chapter 140 – Compete for the Sea Spirit**

"Leon!"

Hearing this voice, Leon's face lit up with joy. He looked up to see a young sea race girl running towards him, a happy smile on her face.

"Qingqing, how come you're here?"

"Humph! Are you saying I can't come? Think about it yourself. Ever since you became Mister Ning's disciple, how many times have you met up with me? Fine, if you don't want to see me then I'll just leave and consider it over with!"

Leon quickly reached out to hold her back. He sputtered out many words of praise and only then was Miss Qingqing 'barely willing' to stay behind. Still, she couldn't help but smile a little.

The two of them were together, quietly chatting in whispers. At this time, a loud bell rang throughout Prosperity Square. Following the source of the sound, one could see that it had been caused by a dark mottled bell hanging at the entrance to the royal palace.

No one knew what sort of treasure the bell was or when it had been hung there. It seemed as if it had always been there for as long as the capital city had existed.

The sounds of the bell flooded out, deep and resonant. The entire capital city could clearly hear this; it represented that the finals were about to begin and the sea spirit teacher contestants were about to appear.

The doors of carriages opened up. Chief Manager Wu stepped out first, followed by Qin Yu. Then, a number of sea spirit teachers of other branch divisions came out from the other carriages who were also participating in the finals. Counting Qin Yu, there was a total of 11 people.

Out of 170 spots, Sea Spirit Pavilion had seized ten of them. From this it could be seen just how incredibly strong they were. Amongst them were many sea spirit teachers who had participated in the competition before, and because of their own snooty sense of seniority, they didn't have any good impressions of Qin Yu. If it was true that you could enter the finals based upon your own abilities, why

did you need a spot given to you? Each one of them walked to the center of the square, giving a small nod of acknowledgement towards Chief Manager Wu. As for Qin Yu, they ignored him.

Raucous and deafening shouts came hurtling in from all directions. The festive atmosphere left one's heart racing and their minds thrilled.

Qin Yu looked around. His gaze fell on Leon and Qingqing. After a moment of thought, he smiled and beckoned them over.

Leon trotted over. Qingqing hesitated for a moment and followed behind.

"Leon, this is Miss Qingqing?"

Qingqing bowed. "Greetings, Mister Ning."

Qin Yu smiled and nodded. He flipped his hand, producing a pair of Seasky Wings. This was a treasure that originated from a sea monster that lived in the lowest depths of the sea, places that were difficult to survive in. This sort of creature was born with low intelligence and it was extremely difficult for them to undergo metamorphosis and transform into an adult. But once they did, they could be hunted down and their wings could be refined into a powerful treasure like these Seasky Wings.

This was the last resort that Grandmaster Goldrune had taken out in order to settle his debt. It was said that he had helplessly taken it out, and when he did it he had fainted once more. Because of that, people gave him the new nickname of the Fainting Grandmaster.

"You are Leon's friend and can be considered my junior. Consider this a first meeting gift and accept it."

Qingqing's mouth fell open a little. As she looked at the palm-sized wings sparkling with a halo of light, she found that she really did like it. But, she knew it was too precious so she shook her head again and again. "Grandmaster Ning, this is far too precious. I cannot accept it."

Qin Yu passed it to Leon. "How can I possibly take back the things I gift away? Find a way to have Miss Qingqing accept it, otherwise you will not be forgiven."

He turned and left.

Although the Seasky Wings possessed strong defensive properties, only the sea races were capable of utilizing it. Moreover, no one would ever sell such a rare treasure unless they were forced to. Qin Yu figured that he might as well gift it away and consider it as helping this brat Leon a little. After all, Leon was his very first apprentice and he couldn't allow him to lose face in front of the Qing Family.

Chief Manager Wu wryly smiled. Just what was he thinking of right now that he still had the mind to help push his apprentice's relationship along? But as Chief Manager Wu thought about it some more, he relaxed. If Qin Yu was in such a casual mood, then this was definite proof of his confidence.

Leon lifted the Seasky Wings, his face shaking with excitement. He could approximately guess why his teacher had done this and was even more grateful.

Qingqing quietly said, "Is it really a gift for me?"

Leon hesitated for a bit and nodded. "Teacher would never go back on what he says. If you really don't want it then I will find a way to return it."

Qingqing grabbed it in her hands. She stroked it, liking it more and more. "Well, at least let me have a look first. So this is what the so-called most beautiful magic tool is like."

Looking at her ecstatic expression, Leon's smile became blinding.

In the distance, the Qing Family Patriarch's lips twitched. "Seasky Wings? Am I seeing things?"

Madame Qing nodded. "You aren't."

The Qing Family Patriarch gnashed his teeth as if he had a toothache. "This Mister Ning is really quite generous. Even I haven't been so good to my daughter."

Madame Qing widened her eyes at him. "We cannot accept this gift!"

The Qing Family Patriarch smiled. "It is disrespectful behavior to publicly reject the gift of a high level spirit teacher. We can accept it first, and...well, it won't be too late to return it in the future."

Madame Qing thought for a moment and found that this was the best way to not affect her daughter's reputation. She nodded and didn't speak much more.

"To all respected sea spirit teachers, you have all been given a number representing your identity. In a while, we will randomly assign locations, and please enter your assigned area according to the result."

A sound echoed through the square. The ground gently shivered as a pure white altar rose up from its depths. It was cut from jade and decorated with countless images and diagrams, full of thousands and millions of sea monsters. From outside and inside the square, countless sea race members fell to their knees, prostrating themselves before this altar. This was an altar to the sea spirits, and in the legends it was said to be able to communicate with them.

A sea race priest flew up to the altar. His feet were bare and he had a deeply pious and incomparably devoted look on his face. With a flick of his sleeves, 20 sea spirits appeared on the altar trays. As he flew back, there was a humming sound as each sea spirit tray rose up and hung above the altar.

Shua –

Shua –

Beams of light shot out from the altar, falling onto the void. The numerous beams formed air bubbles, each one with runes that flowed on their surface.

If one possessed the abilities to enter the finals, then besides the most outstanding individuals who had passed through layers of tests, there were also the candidates recommended from various influences. Each one of them was a master and there was no need to test their foundation.

Thus, the overall process of the finals could be called simple and even quite crude. There were 20 trays floating above the altar. Whoever could grab a tray would be able to attempt to open it. There was a time limit of a day, and if one failed, then the tray would automatically fly back to the altar where the

other sea spirit teachers could attempt to snatch it. Of course, 'grabbing' the trays didn't mean to fight and slaughter each other, but was a contest of soul force.

"To all respected sea spirit teachers, the competition begins now!"

As the voice fell, there was the sound of splitting air. If one could become a high level sea spirit teacher, that meant the strength of their soul had to be at least at the Golden Core realm. Thus, high level sea spirit teachers didn't possess a low cultivation.

The black-robed figure immediately locked onto the number in his hands. 67!

Shua –

Qin Yu stepped forth, his movements as fast as lightning as he left a series of afterimages in his wake. There was a series of cries from all around the square. It was clear that many people had noticed his astonishing speed. In the aftermath, the eyes of several sea spirit teachers changed and filled with fear.

To expose his strength – this was one of the small tips that Old Sea had given him a few days ago. It would cause his competitors to fear him so that they wouldn't dare to fight against him. And, now it seemed that Old Sea had been correct; the effect was quite good.

As he touched the air bubble, water flowed around him, allowing him to freely enter. The runes on the air bubble began to sparkle, shining with a brilliant light that shined down upon the snow-white altar where it was reflected, lighting up the entire area.

Qin Yu suddenly frowned. With a cold snort, his powerful divine sense howled out, piercing through the divine sense that raced towards his left side and ruthlessly crashing into it. There was a faint buzz in Qin Yu's ears. With how powerful his soul had grown recently, the impact still left his eyebrows arching up a little, followed by a slight tenseness. It could be seen from this just how powerful his opponent had been.

Someone coughed out in pain. It was clear that the person who tried to sneak attack him had suffered a loss in that collision of divine senses. Qin Yu took a deep breath and quickly stabilized his soul. Without further delay, his divine sense rushed out once more, turning into a giant invisible hand that grasped out towards the trays on the altar.

Currently, there were over a hundred divine senses interweaving all around the area of the altar. If one entered within they would feel oppression from all sides. If one's divine sense was a bit weak then they would be blown back before they could even hope to approach a tray.

Now and then, a pained cry would ring out, indicating that someone suffered disaster. When one's soul had been damaged too much, the air bubble wrapping around them would contract and isolate the sea spirit teacher to protect them. Of course, this was no different from losing the competition.

Qin Yu's divine sense had been hardened to an incredible degree. He forcefully pushed open a channel and locked onto a tray. The sea spirit on this tray was a purple flower with a jade-like appearance and lights that danced on its surface. Before he had arrived, two other formidable divine senses had chased off the other divine senses and were now engaged in an intense competition for control over the tray. The tray trembled, sometimes moving left, sometimes moving right. It was obvious that the two sea spirit teachers were evenly matched and neither one could take the advantage any time soon.

The arrival of Qin Yu's divine sense instantly drew the attention of the two sea spirit teachers.

"Out of the way!"

This was a roar of divine sense. It shook through the soul, and those that were weak would be directly shaken and wounded. Without a word, his divine sense swept out like a wave, forming a fist that smashed and thundered into the minds of the other two sea spirit teachers.

Bang –

His body shook a bit. As for the other divine sense, it burst apart like a piece of ice.

"Ahh!" A miserable cry sounded out from nearby. It was clear that this other sea spirit teacher wasn't too far away.

The other divine sense clearly didn't expect that Qin Yu would be so fierce. After a brief hesitation, they quickly retreated. He had seen what happened to his original opponent and didn't think he could fight against Qin Yu. If he retreated now, there would be more chances for him, and if he were to be seriously injured here, the finals would essentially be over for him.

Hu –

Boundless divine sense swept out, wrapping around the tray and rapidly pulling it back.

Chief Manager Wu smiled. Mister Ning had been buying soul strengthening treasures all this time, so it wasn't a surprise that his soul was extremely strong. Without an accident, he would soon be able to seize the tray.

As long as the tray reached his hands, then with Mister Ning's strength he could easily win.

But at this time, Chief Manager Wu could clearly see Mister Ning frown. The flying tray suddenly came to a stop as it swung above the altar. Chief Manager Wu's heart skipped a bit and he rose up in alert. As time passed and Mister Ning was unable to defeat his opponent, a gloomy expression started to appear on his face.

In competing for a tray, the most dreadful opponent was the type of sea spirit teacher who stood by the side and recklessly moved to grab onto a tray. They waited for an opening, causing the situation to become chaotic and dangerous. If someone were careless and if their soul wasn't strong enough, there was the chance that their attempt would fail or they would even be pushed away.

Leon gripped his fists, his face full of worry. What he worried over was his teacher's true identity. If Qin Yu were exposed in the competition, a great deal of trouble would soon follow behind.

Chief Manager Wu could sense Leon's anxiousness and his heart shrank. A foreboding feeling swelled up within him. Could Leon know something?

Mister Ning was recklessly purchasing soul treasures. These could be used to strengthen the soul, but there was also a chance that they could be used to...heal from a wound!

As soon as this thought appeared, Chief Manager Wu paled!

He had researched all the contestants in the competition. Out of the 11 people brought here by Sea Spirit Pavilion, only Mister Ning had a chance of taking first place and earning the qualifications to become a Purple Card challenger. If he failed, Old Sea would be in danger!

But with things having come this far, it was useless to be surprised or angry. He could only hope that his assumption was correct and that Mister Ning would be able to turn the tide.