THE ALCHEMIST GOD

BOOK 01

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EPUB CREATION BY LISA HAYES

The Alchemist God

(炼神领域)

by

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Synopsis

Lin Mu Yu is one of the top players in Conquest the game before Destiny.

He decides to delete his account due to a promise with his father.

Before he deletes his account he sells of all of his equipment and deletes all of his skills.

After deleting his account he suddenly gets his deletion overwritten by a mysterious source and ends up getting trapped in the game itself.

Without anything except for 3 of his skill how will he survive?

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First Edition: October 2016

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Prologue

On a sunny morning, Silvermoon City bathed in a warm sunlight, creating a lazy atmosphere inside the only main city within the China servers of <<Conquest>>. As the morning slowly rolled over, more and more players started to come online. Everyone, both male and female, were chattering about bosses and equipments, everyone seemed abnormally busy.

At the center of the city, a majestic hall echoed the sweet rings of bells throughout the city.

Holy Cathedral, the location where only players with the title of God could come online. All of the members of the Holy Cathedral were a source of pride and respect for all players. However, the daunting obstacles barred most, almost all players from joining the Holy Cathedral. In fact, only 7 players in the China servers were a member of the Holy Cathedral. All of the members had the title of God!

Sha sha...

FalLi Leaves, under the influence of wind, slowly rolled onto the stairs of Holy Cathedral. Not far from the steps, a young man dressed in full armor walked leisurely towards the hall. Traces of loneliness were seeping out from under the charming face of the man, his eyes revealed an elusive sorrow, with light flame surrounding his armor, a large cloak swaying in the wind, and an ID which everyone was familiar with—:

[Ling Mu Yu] LV-255

Title: War God

Affiliation: Silvermoon City

Guild : Heroes Guild

Position: Guild Leader

World ranking: 1

……

“It’s still as quiet like before?”

Ling Mu Yu raised his head and looked at the World Tree, located in the middle of Holy Cathedral. He had brought this World Tree from the North a long time ago, and with the years, the tree had finally blossomed. In fact, his title of War God, which allowed him to stand side by side with the Magic God, Fang Ge Xue at the apex of <Conquest>, was due to this tree.

“It’s about time to end.”

Evidently he had something gnawing at him, and walked out of the Holy Cathedral.

Outside of the Holy Cathedral, there were countless players running around. Alone, Ling Mu Yu slowly walked next to the city’s walls.

While walking, suddenly he felt a pat on his shoulders, which was followed by an affectionate hug around his shoulders. Without any doubt, there was only a person who dared to do this in Silver City : Li Le, Ling Mu Yu’s best friend who grew up with him since childhood. Unfortunately, due to circumstances, Li Le traveled abroad and couldn’t stay with Ling Mu Yu. But as luck would have it, they played the game together all the time, and he was the Guild’s deputy chief.

“Ah Le?”. [1]

Ling Mu Yu turned his head and smiled, saying, “Why are you such a sneaky bastard?”

Li Le laughed, “Ah Yu, I saw that you’re unhappy. What’s wrong? Why do you as if your dad just died? But I thought I saw him healthy and well last time and shouldn’t you be happy if he’s

dead?.”

Li Le had always been living life relaxed, as if he had no worries at all. Ling Mu Yu envied him for his freedom.

“I’ve made my decision. I think it’s time for me to leave.” Ling Mu Yu softly said as if he wasn’t sure of his words.

“What?”

Li Le was taken aback by this, “Ah Yu, you’re not joking right? You just obtained the title War God, and you’re planning to leave already? Or…. Is it because of your father?”

Ling Mu Yu could only smile helpless, “Yup, my father gave me an ultimatum, I must leave the game, and help him in family matters. I promised him earlier, that I would reach the top in this game within 2 years. Now that I’ve done it, it’s about time to fulfill my promise, and start to do things that I’m supposed to be doing. Honestly….. I’m ready to stop playing yet!”

Li Le laughed loudly, as if there was nothing funnier than this situation, and patted on Ling Mu Yu’s shoulders, said, “The War God, Ling Mu Yu, also the second son of the president of Long Kan Company, can’t believe you have such a tough life when your worth over 100 Billion. Seems like not everything is good for rich people, but…… Have you really decided?”

“Yup.”

Ling Mu Yu nodded his head heavily, his determination flashed in his clear eyes, “This is my responsibility. I can’t escape it anymore. Come with me, I want to sell all my equipments, and from now on the future of the Heroes Guild will fall upon your shoulders. I will ask the others to help you succeed.”

“Are you also selling Fire God set and Seven-Wonder sword?”

“Yup, once and for all, otherwise I would not be able to fall asleep because I’ll be thinking about them constantly.”

“Haha, that’s fine that’s fine, let’s go. Before leaving you can still earn money from clearing your account. Your equipments are known as the best among the servers. Oh yeah, are you not going to play the game that is soon to be released, <<Destiny>>? According to rumors, Fang Ge Xue, Wen Jian, Yan Zhao Wu Shuang are all going to join this game, are you really not playing ?!”

“Nope.”

……..

Arriving at the auction house in Silver City, which is known as the largest auction house in the game, Ling Mu Yu took off his equipments one by one, and placed them into the auction house ——

Fire God set: a five Super God equipment set, starting bid at: 22000 thousand RMB.

Seven-Jue Sword: Super God equipment, starting bid at: 10000 thousand RMB.

God-Killing Chain: Super God accessory, starting bid at: 7000 thousand RMB.

Consonance Ring: Five Stars God equipment, starting bid at: 4000 thousand RMB.

……..

In the blink of an eye, Ling Mu Yu sold all his equipments, leaving him with a set of clothes from Beginner Village. However, his title War God was still shining, marking his irreplaceable mark on the history in this game.

“Lulu, come out!”

Ling Mu Yu called softly and suddenly a flood of light was in the air in front of him. Then a cute spirit lady appeared there. She was Ling Mu Yu’s personal spirit. Every player was given a spirit like

her when they entered the game, in reality she's an advanced help system given by the system, guiding every player in completing all kinds of movement in game.

"Brother!"

Lulu hugged Ling Mu Yu's neck happily. Even though she's just a bunch of data, she had a delicate stature. The body, which was nearly 30 cm tall, sat on Ling Mu Yu's shoulders, smiling and said, "What do you need Lulu to help with?"

Ling Mu Yu smiled, "Lulu, please delete all my skills."

"Ah? Brother, really?" The female spirit looked at him with shock.

Ling Mu Yu nodded, "Iris scan, after confirming my identity again, delete them!"

"Yes."

The female spirit used a machine voice and reported the result of each deletion—:

God-Drinking slash, SSS ranked skill, Grand Master level, deleted successfully!

Blazing Fire slash, SSS ranked skill, Grand Master level, deleted successfully!

Ice Shield, SSS ranked skill, Grand Master level, deleted successfully!

Stars Tactics, SSS ranked skill, Grand Master level, deleted successfully!

.....

Dragon-Hold Spear Technique, SS ranked skill, given by the title War God, unable to be deleted!

Falling Star Footsteps, SS ranked skill, given by the title War God, unable to be deleted!

Refining Skill, SSS ranked skill, Grand Master level, exclusive professional skill, unable to be deleted!

.....

In a short moment, of the 24 main skills all that were left were the 3 that couldn't be deleted, the others had been erased successfully.

Ling Mu Yu frowned, Falling Star footsteps, Refining Skill, were obtained with much difficulty. Oh well, there's no need to delete profession, might as well delete the account with these skills!

"Lulu."

Ling Mu Yu called out again, and said, "Activate self-destruction command, I'm leaving."

The little spirit lady looked at Ling Mu Yu silently, her eyes became watery, "Brother is going to leave? Does brother not want Lulu anymore?"

Ling Mu Yu wasn't sure to cry or laugh, since he never saw the spirit cry before, so he decided to smile and said, "No, maybe..... We could find each other when we turn at an intersection. Lulu, help me to activate the self-destruction command. I've already made my decision!"

"Alright, brother."

Lulu had to do her duty in the end, in the next moment, Ling Mu Yu passed his Guild Leader title to Li Le, then his body was slowly vanished into piles of data. It's not a good feeling looking at his own body vanishing slowly.

But Ling Mu Yu had to withstand this. He understood, a man must know how to take responsibilities, and must do what he's supposed to do. Escaping is only for cowards.

.....

Shua!

As the light disappeared, replaced with darkness, Ling Mu Yu appeared in a closed space, without a body. Calling out the system, and said “Offline!”

1 second, 2 seconds, 3 seconds.

Half a minute had passed, but nothing had happened. Ling Mu Yu had a bad feeling “Offline, what’s happening?”

Nobody answered his question, it was empty around him.

Ling Mu Yu couldn’t stay calm anymore, and shouted, “System spirit? Lulu? Let me go offline!”

There was no notice of offline, but he felt a strong dizzy feeling, in front of him it felt like it turned into a spiral force field, sweeping Ling Mu Yu’s consciousness into it.

System Notification: The codes for exiting were edited, system is now installing program!

System Notification: Installation completed. You will now be disconnected from the internet forcefully!

....

“Ah?”

Ling Mu Yu was at loss. A stronger dizziness was felt, pulling him into the darkness in front of him, and he could only feel he’s falling non stop, falling further and further.

“Who’s the bastard that removed my internet wire?”

Before fainting, these were the last words by a person.

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1. Ah Blank is a common name for people close to each other, it’s the equivalent of a nickname.

Chapter 1 : Seven Luminary Demon King

A body was falling downwards into a tunnel of darkness at full speed. After God knows how long, with a brilliant flash of light, Lin Mu Yu no longer suffered from the splitting pain in his body, instead, he was engulfed by a burning sensation.

P-tongg!

He fell onto a relatively soft surface. But when he extended his hand, he could feel nothing but heat.

“Eh? What is this place? It’s so d*mn hot, I feel like I’m a roasted duck in an oven!”

When he opened his eyes, Lin Mu Yu was greeted with a terrifying sight. Surrounded by streams of boiling lava, he sat amidst a sea of fire. He was fortunate that he had landed on a rock protruding from the lava.

Didn’t I just disconnect from <Conquest>? But where the hell is this…This is definitely doesn’t seem like my living room…

…

He sat there, stunned. Suddenly, he was engulfed in a suffocating atmosphere. From above him came an insidious voice. “Hehe, Seven Luminaries Demon King, you call yourself a demon emperor, but you’ve never thought you’d fall to where you are today, no?”

An old man wearing a long green robe stood on a horoscope of stars in the air above him. He was flying! With every step he took, a spectrum of rainbow stars manifested beneath his feet. It was an incredibly beautiful sight. There was no mistake that he was a Master!

The Master looked smugly at the sea of lava before his expression

suddenly changed to one of extreme hatred.

“When you single-handedly murdered more than a thousand of us, you never thought this day would come, did you? You would never have expected that I would gather twenty four God Masters and a hundred Sacred Masters to spend a century hunting you down!”

Against the raven-black sky, lights flashed one after another. Within a blink of an eye, almost two hundred Masters appeared in the sky, forming an iron wall. Each of them had a suffocating killing intent in their faces. Even the atmosphere they emitted was enough to choke Lin Mu Yu. Perhaps because of their overwhelming strength, they completely overlooked Lin Mu Yu. Or perhaps...it was because Lin Mu Yu did not even amount to a speck of dust compared to them so that they did not bother paying attention to him.

Lin Mu Yu was completely dumbfounded. Was this a movie? It has got to be a dream. A dream! I won’t be fooled. As long as I pinch myself, I’ll definitely wake up.

Without reservation, he pinches himself. Aiyo, the pain! But when he lifted his head, the Masters were still there.

Was this not a dream?

...

It was at that moment that the sea of lava started seething, forming countless huge waves. Suddenly, the lava culminated into a titanic wave! At the crest of the wave, a person stood proudly. It was a man who wore a jet-black robe. He appeared around thirty and was unbelievably handsome. With a contemptuous yet furious expression, he yells, “Qin Yi, you despicable villain! You slaughtered your way into the seventeenth level of hell when I was sleeping. Even if you destroyed my Magic Veins, do you really think these mere hundreds of people before me can resist the power of my Seven Luminaries?”

He raised his palm slowly with a war-like expression on his face. The surrounding seas of fire surged violently.

With a face of concentration, Qin Yi bellows, “Righteous friends, the opportunity to walk the right path has appeared! Let us combine our power and destroy the Seven Luminaries Demon King to restore peace to all the lands!”

“Yes!”

The surrounding people yelled as one as they burst into action one after another, each brandishing their swords. Immediately, the sky lit up with streaks of colour, enough to dazzle Lin Mu Yu.

But even as the Masters’ killing intent exploded, it was not fast enough to match that of the Seven Luminaries Demon King.

Whooosh!

As the demon king raises his palm to the heavens, numerous pillars of lava shoot upwards. With a resolute expression, he roars:

<First Luminary: Turmoil of the Mortal Plane!>

The great waves of Hellfire ascended like sharp blades, frightening Lin Mu Yu to the extent that he could only cower against the rock and watch while the airborne Masters gathered their energy and whirled their swords to block the demon king’s attack. As the fiery blades collided with the Masters’ swords, a loud boom filled the sky and shook the entire area. With only one strike, the bodies of weaker Masters had already exploded, showering the surface below with fresh blood.

<Second Luminary: Dance of the Devils!>

The Seven Luminaries Demon King swiftly followed up with a second attack. The waves immediately formed the shapes of various demons who rushed towards the Masters. But the swords of the Masters also pierced the waves, creating countless explosions of fire and light around the demon king. It was the light emanating from the bisection of Chi energy.

<Third Luminary: Adversary of all Living Beings!>

The third strike! Numerous spirits appear in the empty air, shrieking furiously before dissolving into waves, sweeping all the people away. With the exception of the front line God Masters, more than a hundred Masters who had been standing at the back were killed in the blink of an eye. As the demon king's energy attacked them, their armour shattered into pieces, until only their skeletons were left. And even then, the bones were swiftly ground into dust and scattered like smoke.

<Fourth Luminary: Cry of the Ghost Gods!>

With the fourth strike, the space twisted under the strength of the demon king. Three God Masters let out rage-filled roars as they used the split second before their bodies exploded to deal death blows to the demon king.

"Uuuuh..."The demon king's howl of pain was like the cry of a ghost. But he still spread his arms. The blood-soaked energy from all around rushed towards him as he bellowed:

<Fifth Luminary: Destruction of the Whole World!>

Pengpengpeng!

The energy exploded, once again shattering the bodies of several Masters who were unable to withstand such power.

But Qin Yi had already tossed his sharp sword at the demon king.

Pshh—

It pierced his chest as blood spurted wildly from the wound. While the demon king slaughtered his opponents, his injuries had also been worsening.

<Sixth Luminary: Separation of Heaven and Earth!>

The Seven Luminaries Demon King's roar shook the whole of the purgatory as heaven and earth reversed and the universe spun. Another roar split the air. With the exception of Qin Yi, all

nineteen of the remaining Masters melted into flesh and blood. But before they perished, they used the last of their spiritual energy to surround their swords with life essence and unleash them as arrows towards the demon king.

“Puff, puff…”

Instantaneously, the demon king’s body was riddled with numerous holes. He seemed to be on the brink of collapse as blood flowed from his mouth. And yet he still let loose a loud burst of laughter. “Qin Yi, you despicable villain. To steal my power, you’ve even sacrificed the lives of countless heroes…But I will definitely not let you succeed. The power of the Seven Luminaries will definitely not fall into your dirty hands!”

Qin Yi’s face was rapidly distorting into a wild visage. He raised his left hand, creating a giant sphere of blood-red light energy.

Suaaashuashua!

Golden chains started to form around his body as he bellowed, “The Seventeenth Level of God-Binding Chains, Demon-Vanquishing Technique! With the addition of the spiritual energy I’ve put my life force into this; I refuse to believe that this will not kill a foul demon like you!”

As he spoke, he suddenly leapt forward, pushing all energy towards the opponent.

But the Seven Luminaries Demon King only laughed loudly before angrily shouting, “Don’t forget! My Seven Luminaries grants me a total of seven techniques. In all my years, I have never used the seventh technique. But today, consider yourself lucky! I will allow you to witness it!”

As he spoke, The Seven Luminaries Demon King’s body suddenly trembled wildly. The space above him created starlight which shone upon his body. Instantaneously, his body and his surroundings were covered by glittering starlight. He raised his

palms and roared:

<Seventh Luminary: Transformation of the Galaxies!>

…

Peenggg!

Numerous rays of starlight coalesced into a sharp blade before it shot towards the opponent. The God-Binding Chains which were simultaneously Qin Yi's weapon and shield shattered one by one as they came into contact with the Seventh Luminary's power. Qin Yi's body started to disintegrate as strips of flesh and bone were broken into tiny pieces but he continued to push the energy sphere in his hands forwards until it reached the chest of the Seven Luminaries Demon King.

Just before Qin Yi died, there was a surprising smug look on his face. "Seven Luminaries Demon King, you may have killed me but your body has been irreparably damaged. You will die!"

As he spoke, Qin Yi disintegrated entirely, becoming specks of dust buffeted by the wild howling winds.

"Uwaah…"

The Seven Luminaries Demon King spat out another mouthful of blood. As he killed the last of the powerful Masters, he was already unsteady but his pride kept him from collapsing to the dusty ground. He started to laugh loudly. "Qin Yi, all you've ever thought about was stealing the power of my Seven Luminaries. You were simply dreaming and now you're dead. It was a great death! Ahahahaha…This emperor transcends all, defeats all… Cough cough…"

He coughed harshly as fresh blood spread around his body.

It was at this moment that the demon king suddenly noticed Lin Mu Yu on the large rock not far away. He couldn't hold back a grin. "Brat, you look so weak and yet you've managed to reach the seventeenth level of hell. You must be seeking death."

Lin Mu Yu was horrified but his body refused to move. He was already under the immense pressure of the Seven Luminaries Demon King. He felt as though his body was going to be ground into powder at any moment, an incomparably uncomfortable feeling.

Although there was a fierce expression on the Seven Luminaries Demon King's face, his body continued to disintegrate. He looked at Lin Mu Yu as if he was looking at prey before he said, "Good boy! It's a lucky thing you're here. This emperor's godly body has been badly damaged so there is no way for me to manifest my spiritual power. Heh! Count yourself lucky. Your body...This emperor requires it!"

As he spoke, the Seven Luminaries Demon King suddenly roared. A ray of spiritual light shot towards Lin Mu Yu's body.

"What?!"

Lin Mu Yu was terrified. Just then, his whole being felt like it had crashed straight into hell as his soul burned away. Or rather, his soul was burning away because the Seven Luminaries Demon King was cleansing it for he wanted the body!

"Haha! You don't need to waste your energy defending yourself!" The Seventh Luminary Demon King laughed wildly. "To become this emperor's body, this is a great honor for you! Disappear now, for your insignificant soul does not deserve to persist on this Earth!"

Heat assaulted his consciousness as Lin Mu Yu felt like he was being plunged into tens of thousands of needles. It was a kind of pain that no normal human would be able to endure. He howled uncontrollably as he kneeled on the rock, his whole body trembling. His soul was being corroded!

After half a minute, the process still had not ended.

"Hmmm?" The Seven Luminaries Demon King hummed in

doubt. “What’s wrong?”

It was at this moment that Lin Mu Yu slowly raised his head. Although his whole body was immobilized by the power of the Seven Luminaries Demon King, his eyes were still clear. He ground his teeth as he refused to back down. He yelled loudly, “By what right?! What right do you have to murder me?! What kind of bullsh*t Seven Luminaries Demon King! What gives you the right to be so high and mighty to think of destroying my soul? I also walk the path of a King!”

With a roar, Lin Mu Yu endured the soul-splitting pain and stood up on the rock.

A few seconds later, the horrified one became the Seven Luminaries Demon King. His body was already disintegrating and his soul had also been hurt badly. But what surprised him most was the crazy youth before him, yelling into thin air. His will to live had already caused his spirit to go out of control. The demon king was greatly shocked and at a loss of what to do. The power of his Seven Luminaries had already entered the youth’s body but the demon king’s soul had been chased out by the youth’s will to live.

“No…”

The Seven Luminaries Demon King bellowed angrily.

Puuunnngg!

With a loud crash, his body disintegrated into blood, flesh and dust and even his soul was scattered to the wind.

Plop…

Lin Mu Yu knelt heavily against the floor, his senses burning. The damage his soul had taken caused him to grip his head in his hands and howl with grief. Suddenly, a wave of energy erupted from behind him, sweeping his body from the surface. As he passed from surface to surface, Lin Mu Yu once again fell into a state of deep unconsciousness.

…

When he woke up, he already had no idea where he was and what time it was. As he slowly opened his eyes, he could hear the cheerful voice of a young lady. “Grandpa! Grandpa! He’s awake!”

What entered his sight was a slightly swaying candle and a plain bed.

The door opened and an old man with a white moustache entered the room. He wore a grey robe and reeked medicine yet his complexion was rosy. The old man smiled. “Young boy, you’ve finally woken up. I was beginning to think that you never would!”

Chapter 2 : The Beauty Chu Yao

Was this a bad dream?

Lin Mu Yu had already decided that this was not a dream but the fact that he had passed into a completely unknown world that was even more bizarre than any dream.

Behind the old man stood a young lady who wore a flowery green skirt and looked at him happily. She seemed to be around twenty years old and had a slender and graceful figure. A pair of long white legs extended from her extremely short green skirt. Standing tall and straight, she was wearing a tank top which barely covered an ideal pair of supple breasts. If this was a dream…isn't it a bit too scandalous?

Lin Mu Yu quickly came to his senses and asks, "Was…was it you who saved me?"

The old man smiles slightly. "No, my granddaughter, Chu Yao, was the one who saved you!"

Ah, so the beauty was named Chu Yao; it's a really good name. Lin Mu Yu praises her silently before he says, "Grandfather, thank you…Where is this place?"

"This is Cathaya City," The old one smiles kindly. "You don't even know where you are? You're very brave to have ventured into the Seven Stars Forest where many wild beasts roam. If it wasn't for Chu Yao who found you while she was picking herbs there, I'm afraid you would have become a good meal for a wolf.

(TL: Cathaya is a species of pine)

"Thank you…" Lin Mu Yu looks at Chu Yao.

Chu Yao's cheeks were dusted red as she says in a melodious

voice, “There’s no need for thanks. I’m a doctor so saving people is part of my nature.”

The old man then asks, “Young man, what is your name? Why did you wander alone into the Seven Stars Forest? I have measured your pulse and you don’t have any power within your body so you don’t seem like a practitioner?”

How should I answer this? I can’t possibly say I failed to disconnect from a game and ended up here, right? And I even saw a monster called the Seven Luminaries Demon King fight hundreds of Masters before my eyes…that doesn’t seem very persuasive at all.

Hence, he says, “My name is Lin Mu Yu; I lost my way and wandered into the Seven Stars Forest before I fainted…”

“Oh? Then where are you from? When you are healed, I’ll accompany you back.”

Now how should he answer that? Once again, Lin Mu Yu was brought into a difficult situation. If he said that he came from the ravine, the old man would definitely ask which mountain it was, or even which city. He did not know a thing about this place so his lies would surely be exposed. The only way out of this was…

“Ah…”

He suddenly clutched his head and let out a pained cry. He says, “I….I can’t seem to think of anything. I…where am I?”

Faking amnesia. Dayum, I’m too smart!

He felt extremely smug about his quick wits.

…

The old man gawks and says, “I did some checks earlier and it seems like your head had suffered some trauma. That might be the cause of the short term memory loss you are experiencing now. However, there is no need to worry. For the time being, you can

stay in our Bai Ling Medicine Shop. When you've recovered your memories, I'll ask Chu Yao to send you back. Should you need anything while staying here, please let Chu Yao know."

"Thank you, grandfather! That's right, I don't know your name yet."

"Oh, my name is Chu Feng. You can just call me Grandpa Chu."

"Alright, thank you Grandpa Chu!"

"No worries, you just focus on resting!"

"Ok."

...

Chu Feng exited the room while Chu Yao turns around to look at Ling Mu Yu before playfully sticking her tongue out at him and exiting the room, leaving Lin Mu Yu with a view of her gorgeous figure. No matter what world this was, the women here were really outstandingly beautiful.

A sudden wave of fatigue strikes him and Lin Mu Yu felt as though his head was about to explode. Like a nightmare, he could not get the image of the Seven Luminaries Demon King trying to possess his body out of his mind.

By now, he had already accepted this reality. He had indeed entered another dimension but he had no clue as to why he was here.

He closed his eyes and a series of familiar symbols appeared in his mind. These are...<Refining Techniques>? But if this was reality, then why would he <Refining Techniques> be floating in his mind?

"System spirit!" Lin Mu Yu silently called, but there was no reply.

"Refining Techniques!"

This time, there was a response. Before his eyes, the <Refining Techniques> menu appeared. There were two kinds, one for

refining medicine and another for smithing equipment. The symbols were holograms which he could only see but not interact with. Lin Mu Yu could only exclaim in wonder...perhaps he had brought his in-game skills with him to this reality?

As he thought about that, Lin Mu Yu immediately felt intense regret. Why had he deleted powerful skills like Stars Tactics and God-slicing Slash? If he had been able to bring them into this world, they would had all been godlike techniques! As he called for his skills again, he discovered that only <Refining Techniques> responded. Falling Stars Footsteps and Dragon-Hold Spear Technique appeared to be wrapped in chains. They had been locked!

Whilst he was in the midst of contemplation, the door was suddenly pushed open and a smiling Chu Yao enters the room holding a bowl. “Lin Mu Yu, Grandpa says that your body is still weak as if all the energy has been sucked from you, so you can only drink porridge now to restore some strength.”

His stomach was indeed already empty so Lin Mu Yu immediately smiles, “Thank you so much, Chu Yao!”

Chu Yao laughed lightly. “How old are you?”

“23 years old.”

“Oh?” Chu Yao smirks deviously. “I’m 24 years old so you should call me Chu Yao Jie. Before you leave Bai Ling Medicine Shop you’ll have to call me that.”

(TL: Jie is older sister)

Lin Mu Yu could feel a slight headache but nevertheless smiles, “Alright, Chu Yao Jie.”

“Do you need me to feed you porridge?” Chu Yao bends her body towards him and looks at him cheerfully. As a result, Lin Mu Yu had a clear view of her cleavage. He instantaneously felt like he had been electrocuted.

“N-no…no need.” Embarrassed, he shakes his head. His face was turning red.

Chu Yao places the bowl on the bedside table and says, “Then, take your time and eat. I need to go out to look for herbs now.”

“Yeah. Thank you Chu Yao Jie.”

After he ate the bowl of porridge, he regained plenty of energy but Lin Mu Yu still felt that there was something wrong with his body. He punched the air with his fist. The strength his body did not match what he had in his previous world. Although Lin Mu Yu wasn’t an expert, he still had a certain degree of mastery of martial arts back then, thus he should not be feeling as powerless as he is now. There must have been something that affected his body… could it be linked to the death of the Seven Luminaries Demon King?

No matter how much he thought about it, he couldn’t get a clear conclusion. Therefore, he simply walked out of the house where a cool breeze caresses his face, making him feel at ease.

It was the backyard of the medicine shop and was rather large. A pine tree stood tall and around it were more than ten tables. These tables were covered with various kinds of herbs, including the leaves and roots of various plants. Chu Yao, together with another ten Alchemist Apprentices were concentrating on the extraction of useful segments in the herbs.

On the side, Lin Mu Yu was watched silently but deep down he was stunned. There were many different kinds of herbs here but to think that he actually recognized a majority of them! Eagle Eye grass, Seven Star flower, Frost Leaf grass, Cauldron root, Steel-tipped flower, Saint Heart fruit and so on… These were all herbs from <Conquest>! Moreover, Lin Mu Yu was one of two Refining Grandmasters in the game and Alchemy was a sub-branch of Refining Techniques. He scanned through the herbs one by one. They were all Level 1 and Level 2 herbs!

Chu Yao's hands moved daintily like a butterfly as she plucked the second layer of leaves from the Eagle Eye grass and the bulging root of the Cauldron roots. It was a sight to be admired.

After a long while, Chu Yao finally spotted Lin Mu Yu. She laughs. "What happened, do you recognize these herbs?"

Lin Mu Yu didn't know how he should answer her so he points to a stalk of grass and says, "This is Frost Leaf grass. Its element is the bitter cold, right?"

"Eh?"

Chu Yao's mouth fell open as she looks at Lin Mu Yu with admiration. Smiling, she even changed the way she addressed him. "Ah Yu, do you recognize any other herbs?"

(TL: Ah is a custom familiar name used in place of one's first name, or last name in English standards.)

"Yeah. I sometimes collect herbs to create Healing Potions."

"Oh, so it's like that…" Chu Yao purses her lips before she laughs. "Actually…since you temporarily can't remember anything about yourself and your hometown, you should just stay here. Our medicine shop may not compare to the hundreds of other medicine shops in Cathaya City but we're definitely capable of providing for one more person. You could learn Alchemy with me and help out in the shop. Grandpa's old and needs our help, how does that sound?"

Evidently, Chu Yao wanted him to stay and since Lin Mu Yu had only just come to this world, he naturally wanted somewhere where he could acclimate himself. So he gladly nods and smiles. "If it's alright with Chu Yao Jie, I'll stay here!"

When Lin Mu Yu first arrived here, he was only wearing the Newbie outfit that was in tatters, but despite that, he was handsome and his eyes were clear and lively which appealed to Chu Yao, which was the reason as to why she wanted him to stay.

When Lin Mu Yu agreed, she happily claps her hands and says, “It’s great that you want to stay here! All of us apprentices are studying Alchemy under Grandpa so you can call me Senior!”

Lin Mu Yu couldn’t help but smile. “Can I still call you Chu Yao Jie?”

“Yes, whichever one you prefer!”

Chu Yao was ecstatic but there was a youth beside her who was approximately twenty-five years old and appeared rather unhappy. Frowning, he says, “Ah Yao, you haven’t even asked Master for his permission. How can you randomly let someone join the medicine shop?”

This person’s name was Wang Ying. He was the oldest Apprentice of the medicine shop and one of the official Alchemists of the shop.

Chu Yao’s happiness was dampened as she replies, “Senior, Ah Yu is all alone in his difficult circumstance. It was by luck that I rescued him so I definitely cannot abandon him in Cathaya City. Moreover, Ah Yu recognises these herbs, meaning that he’s fated to be a Alchemist. I’m sure Grandpa would agree with me as well.”

“Hnn.” Wang Ying says coldly, “Lin Mu Yu. I know Chu Yao found you in the Seven Stars Forest. I don’t care who you are but if you want to join this medicine shop you had better display your talent. Although our shop may not be famous, we definitely don’t tolerate any freeloaders.”

Lin Mu Yu tries hard not to display his annoyance towards Wang Ling and says: “Do you want to test me?”

“Exactly!”

Wang Ling smiles coldly as he says, “If you can’t even pass my test, then there’s no need for you to be in the medicine shop. Use your common sense and scram!”

As he said that, he holds up a stalk of purple grass. “What is

this?”

Chu Yao hurriedly retorts, “Senior, that’s a Level 3 herb! Ah Yu hasn’t been introduced to Alchemy yet. Isn’t this too difficult for him?”

As Chu Yao expressed her worry, Lin Mu Yu blandly replies, “Dream Leaf grass.”

“That…”

Wang Ying did not expect that someone like Lin Mu Yu to recognize the herb so he holds up another gold coloured plant and asks, “Then what about this?”

Evidently, the herbs here and those in <Conquest> were the same. Lin Mu Yu quickly gathered his self-confidence and replies, “Gold Silk grass. It’s a Level 3 herb. By your left hand is the Level 3 herb Purple Snake Vine and by your right hand is the Level 3 herb Blood Sage. I’m right, aren’t I?”

It was Wang Ying’s turn to be dumbfounded.

Chu Yao steps forward, simultaneously happy and angry at the same time. She grabs Lin Mu Yu’s hand and says to Wang Ying, “Senior, Ah Yu just arrived at Bai Ling Medicine Shop so why did you try to embarrass him? When Grandpa comes home, there will be consequences!”

……

Wang Ying remained silent and stares at Chu Yao and Mu Yu’s linked hands before glaring harshly at Mu Yu.

Chapter 3 : Peeling Off A Virgin's Clothes Is Easier Than Peeling Steel-Tipped Grass

At dusk, Chu Feng, the grandpa that saved me, returned home looking rather weary. The basket he carried behind his back was filled to the brim with herbs.

Chu Yao immediately told him what had transpired with me. Chu Feng was naturally happy and agreed to take me in as a disciple. Any further actions that Wang Ying would take to stop Lin Mu Yu from staying was useless. From Lin Mu Yu's point of view, Wang Ying must secretly harbor a crush on Chu Yao. But how could a person like him be suited for the innocent Chu Yao?

I silently promised to protect Chu Yao. I wouldn't go out of my way but whenever I can, I'll show Chu Yao how Wang Ying isn't suited for her.

……

Starlight scattered across the backyard. Numerous stalks of Calming Spirit Flowers shine brilliantly amidst the black baked grass. The unique characteristic of these flowers was that they would only bloom at night and emit a pleasant scent. The whole backyard was filled with the scent of Calming Spirit flowers, soothing the spirit of nearby people.

A group of apprentices including Lin Mu Yu and Chu Yao sat in the yard memorising the characteristics of herbs.

A young apprentice Luo Kai suddenly asked, "In another three days, the Alchemy Conference will be held. Master, since our Bai Ling Medicine Shop does not offer high level medicine, we're not going to participate right?"

Chu Feng released a sigh. "Yes, we are probably not going…"

Wang Ying replied, “Master, Shen Yu Medicine Hall’s star apprentice, Hua Wan has already mastered Level 5 Alchemy techniques and has officially been promoted to Expert Alchemist…”

Chu Feng was shocked. “This fast? That kid is only twenty-four years old. To become an expert alchemist at such a young age…”

Chu Yao indignantly said, “Shen Yu Medicine Hall is overly wealthy and has the entire city’s government in their backpocket. They have easy access to even Level 7 and Level 8 herbs. Our Bai Ling Medicine Shop can only use up to Level 5 herbs so naturally, there’s no comparison. If we had their resources, I…I could also…”

She seemed to have lost confidence to continue speaking but she nevertheless pursed her lips, appearing rather angry.

Lin Mu Yu thought she looked rather adorable. He asked, “Chu Yao Jie, what does being an expert Alchemist entail?”

“You don’t even know this?” Wang Ying mocked Lin Mu Yu. He probably felt that such a person did not deserve to stay in the medicine shop.

Chu Yao glared at Wang Ying before she patiently explained, “Ah Yu, the profession of Alchemist is split into several levels which are determined by the Capital’s Alchemism division. All Alchemists are categorised into one of six levels. The first is Apprentice, followed by Alchemist, Expert Alchemist, Master Alchemist, King of Alchemists and finally, God of Alchemists. As such, Apprentices can only use Level 1 and 2 herbs, Alchemists can use Level 3 and 4 herbs, Expert Alchemists can use Level 5 and 6, Master Alchemists 7 and 8, King of Alchemists 9 and God of Alchemists 10. Understand?”

“Yeah, thanks Chu Yao Jie!” Lin Mu Yu nodded before he looked at Chu Feng and asked, “So which level is Grandfather at?”

Chu Feng appeared slightly embarrassed as he said, “This old

man was born in poverty so I am only considered an Expert Alchemist."

Chu Yao replied, "At Bai Ling Medicine Shop, Grandpa is an Expert Alchemist and can handle up to a maximum of Level 5 herbs while Senior Wang Ying and I are Alchemists. The others are considered Apprentices."

Wang Ying laughed coldly. "Some people haven't mastered even Level 1 Herbs. I'm afraid we can't even consider them Apprentices."

Chu Yao glared at Wang Ying before she pressed her lips together and said angrily, "Ah Yu, come with me to the herb storage. I'll teach you Alchemism right now."

Chu Feng worried asked, "Ah Yao, can you do it?"

Chu Yao turned around and puffed out her chest, full of confidence. Under the moonlight, her snowy white skin was extraordinarily beautiful. "Of course I can!"

The storage room was filled with various kinds of herbs.

Chu Yao lightly said, "The most important technique of Alchemism is extracting the useful sections of a herb. For example, a stalk of Silver Line grass only has a tiny portion : a few grams that can be used in making medicine. Alchemists call this Essence. The first thing we must do is to improve the extraction of Essence. As the level of herbs increases, extraction becomes more difficult and hence the skill that an alchemist requires increases."

As she spoke, Chu Yao extended a pale hand and took a deep breath. Her palm was surrounded by a softly shining green light. She said softly, "Refining hand. Using the inner energy of your body to extract the Essence of various herbs. This is the first step of your study."

Refining hand, this was the most fundamental technique of Alchemism. Lin Mu Yu didn't know this technique but he knew

that he had mastered another kind of technique, the Sublimation Hand. That was the reward he received when he became a Alchemism Grandmaster. Sublimation Hand was able to more thoroughly absorb the essence of a herb, destroy impurities and hence improve the quality of the resulting medicine.

Chu Yao saw Lin Mu Yu's doubt and shook her head. She said, "Then first look at what Senior is doing!"

As she spoke, Chu Yao opened her palm. She softly exclaimed as the stalk of Silver Line grass started to tremble. Under the Refining Hand's guidance, the leaves and silver roots of the Silver Line grass started to peel off. Under the naked eye, it was nearly impossible to see the green-coloured Essence that was slowly beginning to flow as it was absorbed by Chu Yao. Approximately a few minutes later, a small lump of green powder appeared on the center of Chu Yao's palm, the so-called Essence of the Silver Line herb.

Chu Yao turned around and smiled slightly. "This is probably is little difficult. But as long as you focus all your inner energy onto your palm before concentrating on understanding the origins of a herb, then the moment you capture its essence you can extract it!"

Lin Mu Yu stood silently by the side, staring at a stalk of Silver Line grass. Indeed, as he examined it for about half a minute, the main components of the herb was slowly unveiled before his eyes. Small particles appeared on the leaves and the silver roots. This was Essence!

He cheered silently and slowly extended his hand towards the Silver Line grass as he started up his Sublimation Hand.

But when nothing happened, he began to be somewhat worried,

At his side, Chu Yao gently said, "Ah Yu, no worries. Take your time. Inner energy is something everyone should have since energy is a mystical power the Heavens granted to us people."

Lin Mu Yu didn't speak. Instead he continued to propel the

energy within his body. Finally, a trickle of energy appeared within his being, flowing slowly towards his fingertips. Immediately afterwards, his body emitted a pale green light. This feeling was familiar. It was the Sublimation Hand!

Shhaashaa……

The Silver Line grass started to tremble under the guidance of his Sublimation Hand before the components began to peel off. Speck by speck of Essence began to congregate on Lin Mu Yu's palm. After about two minutes, a small lump of Essence silently lay on the center of his palm!

"Eh?"

Chu Yao's mouth dropped open as she stood, dumbfounded. Every Alchemist would eventually be able to master the Refining Hand. But she had never met a person who succeeded on his first try. She herself had practiced for almost a month and failed over a thousand times before she had finally mastered the technique!

"Ah Yu……" Chu Yao shook his shoulder, blinking her big eyes repeatedly. "You…Is this really your first time practising Alchemism?"

Lin Mu Yu wasn't sure how to answer her. It was certainly his first time in this world but he had done it countless times back in the game. He had even constructed Level 10 herbs, much less this kind of pathetic Level 1 herb. So he answered, "It's definitely my first time here…"

Chu Yao was overjoyed as she hurriedly yelled, "Grandpa! Grandpa! Quick, come here and look at this!"

Chu Feng thought that something had gone wrong so he quickly entered the room only to find Lin Mu Yu and Chu Yao standing there. He worriedly asked, "What has happened, Ah Yao?"

Chu Yao pointed at a lump of Essence in a plate and said, "Look, look! Ah Yu learnt to use Refining Hand and attempted it once!"

“Is that so?”

Chu Feng was still in doubt. He naturally could not believe that a person could master Refining Hand successfully on his first try. It had simply never been done in this kingdom. Even those who were respected as God of Alchemists needed at least one to three days to master it. Chu Yao was already fairly proficient to be able to master it within a month whereas other less accomplished apprentices usually took three months. As for the even less accomplished people, they would never master it within their lifetime.

But looking at the Essence in the plate, reality was right before his eyes. What shocked him more was that Lin Mu Yu’s extracted Essence was a lot smaller than Chu Yao’s. Chu Feng was also an expert at Alchemy and naturally understood that the reason for a smaller amount of Essence was due to the absence of impurities. The Silver Line grass that Lin Mu Yu used was similar in size to the one Chu Yao used but the size of Lin Mu Yu’s extracted essence was only one third that of Chu Yao’s. This was simply unbelievable!

……

Looking at Lin Mu Yu’s appearance, it was undeniable that he was only in his early twenties. But to show such talent at the Refining Hand! This was at least on the level of Master Alchemists!

“The Kingdom’s youngest Master Alchemist is already 52 years old…” Chu Feng simply could not understand. Could the youth standing before him be a prince from one of those wealthy noble families who had wandered into Cathaya City?

“Grandpa, Ah Yu’s really good, isn’t he?” Chu Yao happily asked.

Chu Feng smiled and nodded. Chu Yao was too innocent to understand just how groundbreaking this was. Chu Feng looked at Lin Mu Yu again and asked, “Ah Yu, could you perhaps attempt on other kinds of herbs? For example…this stalk of Steel-tipped flower?”

Steel-tipped flower was only a Level 2 herb but it had intense medicinal properties. The outer layer was impenetrable like steel. When collecting this herb, the roots must be dug up because ordinary herb-collection shovels are unable to break them off. This herb has made many an Alchemists give up in resignation. Using the Refining Hand to break off the first layer of the flower was definitely a nightmare!

Hence, in the Alchemy world, there is a proverb which goes "Peeling off a virgin's clothes is as difficult as peeling a Steel-tipped flower." This sufficiently displays just how difficult extracting the Essence of a Steel-tipped flower was, to the extent that even Expert Alchemists are reluctant to tackle this Level 2 Steel-tipped flower!

It was definitely a difficult task that Chu Feng had set for Lin Mu Yu. Even Chu Yao knew that only Expert Alchemists have the ability to refine Steel-tipped flowers.

"Grandpa, this..." She pursed her lips.

Chu Feng sternly said, "Ah Yao, be silent. Look at what Ah Yu is doing."

Lin Mu Yu was a smart person and naturally could see through what Chu Feng was thinking. Actually, he also knew that to remain undercover, he would have to downplay himself. Hiding his potential would be the only way to avoid a later disaster. But it was in Lin Mu Yu's nature to be a bit wild. He was neither accustomed to nor did he enjoy downplaying himself!

He walked towards the Steel-tipped flower and shouted softly. Once again, he concentrated his energy on his palm to create the Sublimation Hand. Upon opening his palm, streams of energy instantaneously dissolved into thin lines to guide the Steel-tipped flower. Lin Mu Yu was completely focused on this stalk of plant. He used his spiritual power to unveil the Steel-tipped flower's major components. Actually he already knew that the Steel-tipped flower has a total of three layers. The first layer is steel, the second

is rock and the third is wood. Underneath that was the real Essence. But it was impossible to use brute force to cut open the outer layers since once the outer layers are broken, the Essence inside would quickly disperse.

Close to a minute later, under the guidance of the Sublimation Hand, the Steel-tipped flower's outer layer slowly cracked and fell to the ground. This was followed by the second layer. It took nearly two minutes to find the miniscule cracks on the stone layer and slowly remove it and lastly, it took three minutes to peel off the wooden layer. Finally, layer after layer fell onto the ground. The black-coloured Steel-tipped flower transformed into a green-coloured root. Using the Sublimation Hand, the Essence slowly gathered on Lin Mu Yu's palm. After about ten minutes, the entire stalk of a rather large Steel-tipped flower was reduced to an sphere of Essence about the size of a quail's egg which lay on Lin Mu Yu's palm.

"Grandfather, is this it?" Lin Mu Yu raised the Essence of the Steel-tipped flower and smiled.

"....."

Chu Feng was completely dumbfounded and unable to speak. He knew that he had definitely acquired a treasure!

Chapter 4 : I Only Do First Tier Medicine

"Ah Yu, have you really never learnt the Refining Hand before?" Chu Feng couldn't help but ask.

Lin Mu Yu extended his palm and said, "No but I'm very familiar with the structure of herbs. Maybe it's because of that..."

This excuse definitely could not be counted as an explanation still passed in this situation.

Chu Feng could not suppress his glee and said, "Then...since you've learnt the Refining Hand... Ah Yao, you can start teaching Ah Yu medicine recipes. First teach him Level 1 Medicine, then Level 2. In this year's Alchemy Conference, our Bai Ling Medicine Shop will be represented by Ah Yu's Wang Ying's and your medicine."

"What?"

Wang Ying was shocked. "Master, you're not displaying your own medicine but letting us three juniors participate?"

Chu Feng smiled slightly. "Master is already old. It'll be a good experience for the three of you."

Wang Ying had fallen silent, but Lin Mu Yu perfectly understood. Grandfather Chu Feng wanted him to improve quickly and win a prize for Bai Ling Medicine Shop.

……

Very soon, only Lin Mu Yu and Chu Yao were left in the storage room.

“Chu Yao Jie, is the Alchemy Conference really that important?” Lin Mu Yu had held back the question for very long, but finally couldn’t resist asking.

Chu Yao nodded her head. “Yes. Cathaya City has a total of around a hundred Medicine Shops, providing the supply of medicine for the surrounding cities. But the government funds the ten medicine shops of the Alchemy Conference. Last time, our Bai Ling Medicine Shop was placed seventy-ninth. We probably don’t stand a chance this time as well. Come Ah Yu, I will teach you the recipes!”

Unknowingly, Chu Yao already felt natural when holding Lin Mu Yu’s hand. She probably felt that her good-looking junior had a relaxed personality and constantly brought her lots of pleasant surprises!

Flipping through a very thick encyclopedia, Chu Yao pointed to the top and softly said, “Let us… first try to create Level 1 medicine. Yup! Let’s try the Incision Medicine! Look at the recipe: Silver Line Grass and Long Night Flowers at the ratio 8:2. After mixing, we must refine it at a high temperature. This is the weighing scale. How about you try it yourself?”

“Alright.”

As Chu Yao lit up the kerosene burner to the side, Lin Mu Yu swiftly used his Sublimation Hand to extract the right amount of Essence from Silver Line Grass and Long Night Flowers. However, when he weighed the ingredients, he didn’t use a ratio of 8:2. Instead he used 7.7:2.3, because he had experimented it in game so that this would produce optimum results. Then, according to his ratio, he added a sprinkle of powdered Steel-tipped flower for no other than the reason that Steel-tipped flower could speed up the healing of incisions. It seems that the people in this world have yet to discover this unique method. Even on the encyclopedia, there was no mention of using Steel-tipped flowers to heal cuts and incisions!

After mixing the ingredients, he placed the mixture onto the plate on top of the kerosene burner. At the same time, Lin Mu Yu opened his right hand and used Sublimation Hand to guide the mixing of the herbs with a cyclone, hence speeding up their fusion. All of this caused Chu Yao to be extremely shocked. She had never known that the Refining Hand could be used in such a way.

……

“Done!”

After the powdered medicine was completed, it was dissolved in a small amount of warm water to become a paste and completed its fusion.

Chu Yao took the small plate and inhaled deeply. She smiled, “It smells really nice! Ah Yu, I’ve never smelt such a fragrance in Incision Medicine!”

Lin Mu Yu smiled slightly, “When Silver Line Grass and Long Night Flowers are mixed, fumes are emitted. It was originally already very fragrant.”

Chu Yao laughed lightly and said, “Ah Yu, make a few more kinds of medicine. Tomorrow, we’ll take them to the market to sell. They should sell for a good amount of money! Alright, let’s create medicine together.”

“Yeah, ok!”

They continued to make Incision Medicine until early morning. Finally, a strange sense of sleepiness took over Lin Mu Yu as he had spent too much of his body’s energy. He fell into a deep sleep hunched over the medicine table.

When he woke up, he found that he was accompanied by a gorgeous young lady. It was Chu Yao.

As sunlight streamed in through the gaps in the door, Chu Yao extended her hands and stretched lazily. She looked at Lin Mu Yu and couldn’t hold back a blush. “Ah Yu, how did we fall asleep?”

Lin Mu Yu rubbed his eyes, “We were probably too tired from all that Alchemy. Chu Yao Jie, how many Incision Medicine did we

make?”

“We made a total of 51 bottles. We spent somewhat 20 Silvers on the ingredients!”

“Oh. Then how much can a bottle of Incision Medicine be sold for?”

“Normally, it’s 1 Silver per bottle. But there are some veteran hunters and soldiers who are more discerning so high quality Incision Medicine will sell at a higher price. Since they are constantly fighting wild beasts, high quality medicine can save lives. Our Bai Ling Medicine Shop is only a small business so we don’t have too much money to purchase ingredients above Level 4. Our main source of income is through Incision Medicine.”

“I see. So we’ll quickly eat, then proceed to the market to sell?”

“Yes.”

……

Under the bright sunlight, the four apprentices Wang Ying, Chu Yao, Lin Mu Yu and Luo Kai carried their medicine boxes to the market. The market was located at the cross junction of Cathaya City, right beside the Government House so a lot of people passed by the area.

Bai Ling Medicine Shop’s location was remote so waiting for

customers to buy Medicine would definitely lead them to starve. Hence the apprentices brought the medicine to the market to sell as their main means of survival.

After sitting down, Lin Mu Yu put the 51 bottles of Incision Medicine on display. By his side, Wang Ying arranged the Level 2 Concentration Medicine and Strength Medicine. Concentration Medicine was able to alleviate faintness after suffering an injury and increase a person's energy while Strength Medicine was made through refining the blood of fierce tigers. It could increase a person's potential and heighten the user's strength and aggressiveness.

Usually, customers were all martial artists, mercenaries, soldiers or hunters : the more dangerous jobs. This especially applied to mercenaries. In order to slay evil monsters or powerful enemies, they needed Strength Medicine, Concentration Medicine and other battle-related medicines to increase their chances of winning and surviving.

Beside him, Wang Ying started to yell at the top of his lungs, "Top quality Strength, Concentration and Incision Medicine! Masters who need them, please buy! Products from Bai Ling Medicine Shop! Quality is guaranteed!"

When his voice fell, a group of youths at the opposite stall laughed. One of them, a young man who wore a green cotton shirt couldn't help but mock, "Bai Ling Medicine Shop? How can you guarantee quality when you can only sell Level 3 and below medicine? This is really laughable!"

Wang Ying was furious. “Li Qin, what did you say?!”

The youth wearing the cotton shirt raised his eyebrows and replied, “I said, that Bai Ling Medicine Shop is trash. SO what? Wang Ying you’re a mere Level 3 Alchemist yet you disagree with me? Hmph, I have already refined Level 4 Medicine. How about you? Trash like you should stick to creating Level 2 Medicine!”

After he spoke, the cotton-shirt-wearing youth yelled loudly, “Shen Yu Medicine Hall’s Level 4 Medicine is on sale. Stone Skin Medicine! It can increase your defense, allow you to use your inner energy to protect your body. Paralysis Potion! When smeared on an arrowhead, you can even teach thousand-year evil monsters and powerful enemies a lesson! Come and buy!”

“Shen Yu Medicine Hall is going too far!” Luo Kai angrily said.

Lin Mu Yu already knew that Shen Yu Medicine Hall was Cathaya City’s top medicine hall. The man behind the hall was Cathaya City’s Lord Hua Tian. He was relatively famous worldwide and was extremely wealthy. The boy wearing the cotton shirt was young, not even 20 years old, and already could refine Level 4 medicine. This was not something that Bai Ling Medicine Shop could have competed with. But Lin Mu Yu also realised, that Bai Ling Medicine Shop’s history of being mocked would be overturned by himself!

……

At this moment, from afar came a group of people.

“It’s Eagle Eye!” Chu Yao whispered to Lin Mu Yu: “He a famous mercenary that has the power of a Battle Zun, he’s strong… very strong! He controls at least a hundred mercenaries so we should try to sell our medicine to him!”

At this time, Eagle Eye stood at the opposite stall and looked at Li Qin’s medicine. He grabs a bottle and opens it up to smell. He quickly sneers: “This Numbing Medicine is a failure and you Shen Yu Medicine Hall would dare to sell it? Hmph, you can’t even numb a normal person with this and you say that it can numb a Battle Sheng? Stop dreaming!”

As his voice grew louder, Eagle Eye dropped the bottle of Numbing Medicine and it shattered on the street.

Li Qin stared with his mouth wide open, but had no courage to speak up in front of a Battle Zun level warrior. His entire body shook slightly, as if he was a cold chicken.

……

“Do medicine have different tiers?” Lin Mu Yu asked.

Chu Yao whispered back: “Yeah, medicine goes from tier 1 to 9. The first tier being the best and ninth being the worst. The Incision Medicine that I make are usually between 3-7 tier. But only the veteran Mercenaries and other Alchemists can use their smell to determine the tier of the medicine, normally, we have to go the the Medicine Division to find out the tier of the medicine.”

“Oh, I see…”

While they were talking, Eagle Eye brang his group of mercenaries to Bai Ling’s stall and smelled the Energy Medicine of Wang Ying. He smiled: “Fifth tier Energy Medicine, worthless.”

Like before, he dropped the bottle and let it shatter on the road. Wang Ying said instinctively: “You… You pay me for that!”

“Pay you?”

Eagle Eye laughed and suddenly swung his arm so that his battle axe was right next to Wang Jing’s neck. The invisible pressure that he exerted quickened the breath of the three people behind the stall: “Your medicine wasn’t higher than the fourth tier, not going to the state government to sue you is already a mercy and you want me to pay? Brat, are you looking to die?”

Ling Mu Yu endured the every increasing pressure and stood up, saying: “You… if you have a problem then just talk it out… Don’t bully others!”

“Bully others?”

Eagle Eye let go of Wang Jing and looked at the medicine in front of Ling Mu Yu: “Brat, you’re also selling fake medicine. Do you want to die?”

As he was talking, he picked up a bottle of Incision Medicine and threw it to the ground: “Fifth Tier trash!”

The medicine was refined by Chu Yao.

Afterwards, he angrily held up another bottle of Incision Medicine and smelled it. Right when he was about to throw it down, his body trembled and he looked up towards Ling Mu Yu: “You made this Incision Medicine?”

“Yes!” Ling Mu Yu calmly answered.

“Weird, how could a brat like you create tier one Incision Medicine? You need to be an Medicin King to be able to do that. You’re not lying are you?”

“I made it myself, why would I lie to you?” Ling Mu Yu was still very calm.

“Impossible…”

Eagle Eye picked up another bottle of Incision Medicine and smelled it: “Another first tier medicine. How is this possible? Brat, how many of these do you have?”

“29 Bottles.” Minusing the ones made by Chu Yao, Ling Mu Yu had made 29 bottles of medicine.

Eagle Eye lowered his head to look at Ling Mu Yu. Suddenly his mouth cracked open and he placed his hand in his pocket. When his hand came out again, he had three gold coins in his hand. On top of them carved Purple Yin Flowers, it was the standard currency within the empire : Gold Yin Coins!

Author Note: The standard currency of Qin Empire are 1 Diamond Coin = 1000 Gold Yin Coins, 1 Gold Yin Coin = 100 Silver Yin Coins, 1 Silver Yin Coin = 100 Copper Yin Coins. The Copper Yin Coins are the most basic currency and have the carvings of a bow and plow, symbolizing the two main sources of income for most citizens. A blacksmith can earn 30 Copper Yin Coins a day while 1 Copper Yin Coin could buy a steamed bun or 20 Copper Yin Coins could buy a cooked chicken.)

……

“Brat, your luck is pretty good. I’ll take all of your Incision Medicine, 10 Silver Yin Coins per bottle!” Eagle Eye showed his first smile and his already scarred face became even more frightening with the smile.

Chapter 5 : A 121-Year-Old Black Steel Tree

“Wow 3 Gold Yin coins!” Said Chu Yao, her beautiful eyes sparkling, god knows how long it had been since she last saw Gold Yin coins!

“Gold Yin coins?” Ling Mu Yu was stunned.

The concept of money was still vague to Ling Mu Yu, after all he had just arrived in this world.

Eagle Eye sneered and said: “Incision Medicine normally sells for a Silver Yin coin a bottle at the market; your product is extremely good so I’ll give you 10 times the normal price. Do you want it or not?

“Ah Yu, this is a lot of money. You’ve made in 3 days what would have taken us 3 months to make. Tonight we can buy a chicken and make stew,” whispered Chu Yao.

Bai Ling Medicine Shop was not doing well from a sales point of view and so it was rather hard to get any fresh food for them these days. Usually every meal consisted of some steamed buns and rice gruel. So it didn’t take much prodding for Lin Mu Yu to accept the 3 Gold Yin coins from Eagle Eye’s hand. ”Thank you heroes’ for your patronage!” said Lin Mu Yu smiling.

”Hero?”

Eagle Eye could not help but smile. Carrying an Axe stained with dried blood, he said: “I’m no hero. I just kill for money. I’m a Mercenary, nothing more.”

Whilst saying that, he pointed his Axe at Ling Mu Yu’s shoulder. “Do you know how I lost my right eye? This eagle took it out. After that, I caught this beast but I didn’t kill it. Instead, I tamed it so

that it now kills for me. Boy, I tell you, there are no heroes in this world, only these three things: money, women, and killing!”

Ling Mu did not bother listening to Eagle Eye’s brainwashing; he only stared at the Gold Yin Coins and happily sat down.

……

“Boss, let’s go!” Urged several mercenaries behind Eagle Eye.

Eagle Eye nodded. Looking at Ling Mu Yu, he put his tattered boot on the table and asked: “Boy, I ask you, are these bottles of Incision Medicine really personally refined by you?”

“Yes.” Answered Ling Mu Yu.

“Really?”

Eagle Eye suddenly took up his Axe and sliced down towards Ling Mu Yu’s neck. With the amount of strength he displayed in that move, Eagle Eye looked like some sort of crazed General. All of a sudden, Ling Mu Yu felt the skin of his neck burning, yet he did not move an inch. Eagle eye’s Axe had chopped an approaching fly and stopped right before Ling Mu Yu’s neck. Looking at at Ling Mu Yu who kept his calm, he could not help but be impressed and said: ”Boy … You have good character, it has been many years since I have last seen someone like you!”

Ling Mu Yu seemed calm but he was truly terrified, so much so that he couldn’t even take a single step. The attack had simply been too fast and even after the Axe had been taken away he still couldn’t move, his legs weren’t responding at all.

“Well ……”

”Boy, I need 10 bottles of Stone Skin and 20 bottles of Paralysis Medicine, but they must be of grade 2 or better. If you can do the refining, I will reward you generously. Do you dare accept?”

Lin Mu Yu was dumbfounded. Both of these were level 4 medicines, which he had never made before. Although he wasn’t

sure whether he could make them he nevertheless agreed, “It’s possible but I will need 20% as a down payment.”

”Deal!”

Eagle Eye, carrying his Axe, smiled said: “According to the current market price, the Paralysis bottles go for 10 Silver Yin coins each. So for the 10 bottles I will pay 5 times the market price: 5 Gold Yin Coins total. As for the stone skin bottles, at market price, should sell for a total of 20 Gold Yin Coins. The grand total of what I owe should be 25 Gold Yin Coins. I’ll give you a 20% down payment, so take these 5 Gold Yin Coins. Lastly, tell me your name and the name of the Pharmacy you are from.”

”Ling Mu Yu from the Bai Ling Medicine Shop.”

”Oh, I’ve never heard of that pharmacy. Well, it doesn’t matter. Bring those bottles of medicine tomorrow and make sure they get to me.”

“Got it.”

Eagle Eye looked down at Ling Mu Yu, a grin showing on his face, “If by the same time tomorrow I do not get the 30 bottles of medicines, I will unscrew your head. And whatever I, Eagle Eye, say, I will do.”

Ling Mu Yu nodded gently, “I know.”

Ling Mu Yu did not like the thought of his head being unscrewed.

Ed: Nope nope nope. Most definitely not!

……..

Watching Eagle Eye and his mercenaries leave, Li Qin from Shen Yu Medicine Hall walked over and sneered at Ling Mu Yu: ”Seems like you brats have a death wish! Don’t you know how many people he’s killed already? You already took Eagle Eye’s gold and unless you are a Medicine King, there is no way you can refine 2 other medicines to Tier 1; be obedient and just die tomorrow!

The group of young apprentices behind Li qin started to laugh and joke about Bai Ling Medicine Shop.

Ling Mu Yu didn't say much, neither did he stay to sell the remaining Incision Medicine. Instead, he simply said: "Chu Yao Jie, let's go and gather the ingredients needed now since it's near closing time."

Wang Ying and Luo Kai were still stunned and did not recover from the shock until Chu Yao and Ling Mu Yu had disappeared into the alley .

But Lin Mu Yu did not head back. Instead, he leisurely brought Chu Yao along with him to a nearby herb shop. Unlike the calm Lin Mu Yu, Chu Yao became anxious and said: "Ah Yu, in the end I still don't know what hidden talents you possess but those two Tier 1 medicines, Paralysis and Stone Skin, aren't easy to make and failure will not only harm you but also the Bai Ling Medicine Shop. Eagle Eye is nothing but a brutal mercenary!"

"Chu Yao Jie, help me hold onto the medicine box!"

Lin Mu Yu did not respond to Chu Yao's concerns. Passing the medicine box to her, he took 10 Gold Yin coins and walked into the herb store. Upon seeing the boy and the girl enter, the boss of the herb store walked to the front counter and asked: "Do you want to buy anything?"

"Boss, a pound of Magic Snake Flower."

"Hmm? Magic Snake Flower?" The boss stared blankly at the young man. "That's a level 4 herb, what do you want to do with it?"

"I'm buying on behalf of my teacher."

"Ohh, so that's the case...."

Chu Yao, who was standing in the corner, secretly admired Lin Mu Yu's cleverness. Being too provocative might not have been a good thing since expert alchemists with the ability to refine level 4

herbs were far and few between, and the both of them seemed too young to be at such a level.

……

A pound of Magic Snake Flower cost 1 Gold Yin Coin.

Lin Mu Yu continued walking further into the herb store and looked around at the many herbs. His eyes landed on a huge black colored tree that was roughly 2 meters in height and filled with thorns near the top of its trunk.

“You recognize that tree?” the boss asked, staring at the two of them.

Lin Mu Yu raised the corner of his mouth and replied: “A 121 year old Black Steel Tree.”

“What?” the boss was shocked, staring at Lin Mu Yu with his mouth gaping open “You…. knowing the name is understandable, but how could you also figure out the age of the tree?”

Lin Mu Yu pointed towards the thorns on the Black Steel Tree and said: “Black Steel Trees grow a new thorn every year. This tree has a total of 121 thorns, so it’s a 121 year old Black Steel Tree, right?”

The boss laughed: “Indeed that’s the case! But you wouldn’t be able to afford this tree. I’ve already spent quite a hefty sum obtaining this from the mountain.”

“I’ll buy it for 7 Gold Yin Gold Coins.” Lin Mu Yu Said.

The boss was dumbfounded again, this youngster in front of him actually had 7 Yin Gold Coin. Seeing the poor manner in which he was dressed, being able to fork out 7 Yin Copper Coins would already be considered quite a feat.

“What? Are you not selling it?” Lin Mu Yu laughed: “I know Black Steel Trees only grow on cliffs and its body is harder than

steel. Their roots penetrate deep into the rocks to absorb rain water and nutrients to grow. And to uproot a Black Steel Tree, one must also remove the surrounding rocks of the cliff. Even with all that, this Black Steel Tree can be sold for 7 Yin Gold Coin at most."

The boss' eyes narrowed in interest at the youth. "A Black Steel Tree's body is comparable to metal and is even more sturdy than the Iron Pear Flower. Any alchemist below the level of Alchemist Sheng would not be able to extract the essence. Young man, whose disciple are you to have the need to buy this Black Steel Tree?"

"This does not concern you, are you selling it or not?"

"Of course I'm selling, if there's business how could I not!"

The boss sold the Black Steel Tree without a second thought. The Black Steel Tree is a level 4 herb and one of the main ingredients for Stone Skin. Lin Mu Yi did not know how that youngster named Li Qin was able to refine the essence of the Black Steel Tree. However, he was certain the youngster definitely lacked the ability to do so on his own, therefore it should have been done with the assistance from an expert within his family.

Obtaining the essence from a Black Steel Tree would be almost ten times more difficult than from a Steel Tipped flower. A 121 year old black steel tree would have 121 layers of iron shell which must be completely removed before reaching the essence and to achieve that would require the use of Sublimation Hand.

After that he bought a bunch of black colored fungus, also a level 4 herb, known as Swallow's Ear which was another key ingredient for Stone Skin medicine.

Chu Yao felt a tinge of heartache. Lin Mu Yu had nearly spent all of the 10 Gold Yin Coins in the blink of an eye. However, she did not stop him as she could instinctively feel that Lin Mu Yu was up to something big.

……

After returning to Bai Ling Medicine Shop, Lin Mu Yu tied the Black Steel Tree onto a wooden shelf. He stood in front of the sturdy tree and opened his hands. On his palms was the distinct mark of the Sublimation Hands: a green aura.

To strip the 121 layers of Black Steel Tree was easier said than done. However, there was no alternative since he knew that Stone Skin Medicine better than Tier 2 can only be made with Black Steel Trees that are over 100 years of age, otherwise the product is doomed to fail. That youngster Li Qin's Stone Skin Medicine is only of 9th grade, so the Black Steel Tree that he used was only a few years old.

……

Working until evening, only 47 out of the 121 layers on the Black Steel Tree had been removed. Sweat profusely ran down Lin Mu Yu's forehead. In fact, his whole body was already drenched in sweat. He had constantly released his aura till the point where he felt like collapsing from sheer exhaustion but he could not afford to stop. The Sublimation Hand's 'peeling' process was really just expanding the fine grains of the Black Steel Tree's trunk and would not literally peel the layers off. If Lin Mu Yu had paused for even a moment, the process would certainly fail.

Knock Knock!

From the door came Chu Yao's voice: "Ah Yu, I brought you some food!"

A faint scent of fragrance penetrated his nose. Tonight's dinner was chicken mushroom stew, but Lin Mu Yu could not halt the peeling process of the 121 layers of Black Steel Tree. He simply smiled and replied: "Chu Yao Jie, you can eat first. I need to finish this before I can eat."

"Then I'll wait for you!"

Chu Yao stood stubbornly in a corner and just like that, she accompanied Lin Mu Yu.

……

Much later in the night, the last layer of the Black Steel Tree was finally removed. From the tree's body appeared small fine lines that released faint light from it. Despite being about to collapse from utter exhaustion, Lin Mu Yu instead took a heavy breath and increased the strength of his Sublimation Hands. The whole Black Steel Tree began trembling and multiple miniscule beads of essence started to fly out from it.

"Ah? They are flying away, what now?" Chu Yao looked at the sky, both excited and anxious.

Lin Mu Yu smiled slightly. "It's fine, they won't fly away."

As he spoke, he uncovered a nearby bucket filled to the brim with Swallow's Ear which was soaking in water. The moment he did so, the cloud of Black Steel Tree essence in the room was immediately drawn towards the bucket and entered the Swallow's Ear!

This was the secret to creating Stone Skin Medicine. Swallow Fungus, once soaked, would suck the essences of the Black Steel Tree towards it, as Black Steel Tree's essence and Swallow Fungus were already originally attracted to each other.

……

"Success!"

Lin Mu Yu smiled and said: "Chu Yao Jie, take this Swallow's Ear and grind it to powder, afterwards use some water to dissolve it and it will become Stone Skin Medicine!"

"Okay!"

Chu Yao was unable to hold her excitement, as though she herself was the one who had made the Stone Skin Medicine.

Chapter 6 : Seven Star Forest

“Shasha.....”

The ground Stone Skin Medicine was placed into small bottles and mixed with water along with a few extra medicinal ingredients. Slowly, the powder began to dissolve, letting out “siii..sii..” sounds. A total of 25 bottles were filled to make sure Eagle Eye got his money’s worth, Lin Mu Wu was not greedy with the medicine . Otherwise, it wouldn’t have been a problem to fill 40 bottles with the amount of medicine he normally used.

Chu Yao rested her head by placing her hands under her chin and looked at the small bottles with curiosity. She was also an alchemist, but the highest tier medicine she could produce was tier 3 medicine. As for Stone Skin Medicine, she had only heard about it; never actually attempted to make it.

They say that earnest men are the most attractive ones and passionate women are the most charming. Although Chu Yao Jie’s clothes were plain and simple, they could not conceal the charm of a grown women.

Lin Mu Yu found her curiosity interesting and asked “Chu Yao Jie, do you want to give it a try?”

“What? How?”

“Apply a small amount on your skin, or drink an entire bottle to make all the skin of your body as hard as stone. How long it lasts

depends on an individual's build" Lin Mu Yu was well aware of the method of application.

Chu Yao, faint fragrance diffusing from her body, raised her eyebrows and sat beside Lin Mu Yu and, after leaning in, asked"Really, can I?"

"Sure!" Lin Mu Yu panicked seeing the look in her eyes. This senior of his, not only was she very beautiful, but her figure was also fabulous with D sized breasts... On top of that, she was showing great affection to Lin Mu Yu, making it hard for Lin Mu Yu to concentrate.

.....

Chu Yao then leaned against the chair and, scooping with a spoon a little bit of leftover Stone Skin medicine from the bowl and applied a thin film on her hands. "Shasha" sounds babbled and a pale blue light appeared on the skin of her wrist. The light instantly formed a tortoise-shell-like layer. Though her wrist was a little numb, she felt that her arm's defensive strength had been increased.

"This....." Her mouth dropped in amazement "Will the added defense be really strong?"

Lin Mu Yu began eating. Since the chicken mushroom stew had been reheated by Chu Yao not too long ago it was still extremely fragrant. This was his first time eating such delicious food after coming to this world and he was thinking that even though he was

the young master of Long Kan Company, with a net worth over billions, ever since he came to this world he's been living too pitifully. He looked at Chu Yao while eating and said, laughing "Try knocking your arm with the stick?"

"Okay"

Chu Yao took a stick and gave a few gentle knocks to her arm. "Pa" sounds vibrated off, but she didn't feel any pain and so she used more strength to knock on her arm and still she didn't feel anything. Ultimately, using her full strength, it got to the point where the stick broke in two: she felt only a slight pain. It seemed the the Stone Skin didn't mean that there will be no pain, if it was hit to a certain degree then pain would still be felt.

……

After quickly finishing his food, Lin Mu Yu began making the Paralysis Medicine.

Serpent's Flower and Gold Silk Grass, individually were not considered difficult to refine, however together, it became a challenge. The two herbs, when mixed together, would conflict. Great effort and skill were required if one desired to mix the two. However, Li Mu Yu was unlike the rest, he possessed the Sublimation Hand which offered precision in the art of refining medicine such that it could be considered as top in this world. Furthermore, he had his own secret knowledge of how to face the problem: Serpent's Flower and Gold Silk Grass required high temperature in order to meld the two. Low ranked pharmacists' refinement made use of iron cooking pots to heat medicinal herbs,

which was a poor method. It was destined to introduce impurities into the medicine, thus affecting the potency of the potion.

Lin Mu Yu's method was to rise a pile of flame and then to cook the herbs above the burning flame with his Sublimation Hand. The herbs would evaporate immediately and land inside an iron pot with a bit water inside that was above the fire. Afterwards the vaporized substance dissolved within the water and with Lin Mu Yu's Sublimation Hand to guide the medicine, there wouldn't be many losses. Soon 10 bottles of top grade paralytic medicine were successfully compounded.

It was late into the night, so Chu Yao and Lin Mu Yu returned to their rooms.

Covered with sweat, Lin Mu Yu's qi had been drawn thin and almost gone. But Lin Mu Yu could clearly feel the qi flow inside his veins get stronger. Practicing the Sublimation Hand was a way to increase one's qi. It could let his inner forces be more and more powerful and his body's power also slowly recovered. He could obviously feel that the power of his fists should not be underestimated.

However, if compared to the ones of strong man like Eagle Eye, there was still a wide gap.

……

The next morning, they woke up early to fill the medicine box. This time, however Lin Mu Yu and Chu Yao went alone to deliver

the medicine at the market. In about an hour, Eagle Eye appeared with no fewer than a hundred men each mounted fully armored and equipped with weapons: a large mercenary group.

"Where are the goods kid?" Eagle Eye stopped in front of the both of us.

Lin Mu Yu handed over altogether 30 bottles of medicine and said "You owe me 20 gold Yin coins."

Eagle Eye raised one eyebrow and dismounted. Then he grabbed a bottle stone skin medicine and gave it a smell. With a complex look he said: "Boy, you……you really don't have an alchemist master at home, right? As far as I know, Cathaya city only have Hua Tian as the only alchemist master. You……you would not know Hua tian, right?

"No."

Lin Mu Yu shook his head: "These medicines were wholly refined by myself."

At this time, a horse's hoof clattering could be heard. A youth in a robe urged his a horse to them. His robes were adorned with many patterns on it and had a purple Yin crest on them. One could see how wealthy he was. He glared at Lin Mu Yu. Then took a look at the medicine and sneered: "From ancient times till now, you need to be at least 35 years old to be able to refine a black steel tree. This boy's tale is too much. With one look you could see that he is an imposter. Commander Eagle Eye, don't you need someone

important to catch the bloodthirsty tiger? I think he is fit for it!”

“Thanks a lot for the reminder master!”

Eagle Eye took the 30 bottles medicine with a bloodthirsty smile looming over his features. He then spoke to Lin Mu Yun: “Your 2 medicines are first-rate products. However……I am not sure whether these will be as effective as they should be. Why don’t you come with us? If we can successfully complete our task, I will pay you 20 Gold Yin. How about it?”

“Take a trip? To where?”

“To Seven Star Forest. This time our mission given to us by our master is to kill a 3000 years old spirit beast : Bloodthirsty Tiger!”

Lin Mu Yu did not know how terrible the beast was, but Chu Yao was stunned. Hastily she stood in front of Lin Mu Yu and spoke: “No…..Lin Mu Yu will not go with you to kill the Bloodthirsty Tiger. Go on your own!”

Eagle Eye smiled: “Oh, little beauty. You don’t want to see your little man die? Rest assure, we Flaming Eagle mercenary regiment will not let him perish!”

Biting a silver fang Chu Yao firmly said: “That will not do! A 3000 years old Bloodthirsty Tiger has at least the strength of a level 60 spirit warrior. You……you are a level 42 spirit warrior. There is a two realm gap. Even with so many people, it is not granted that

you could kill off the Bloodthirsty Tiger!”

Eagle Eye raised one eyebrow and pointed behind him and said: “You should not look down on us. You did not see it, but we took arrows coated with Paralysis Medicine and even brought along a large arrow balistar. The Bloodthirsty Tiger is only a stupid creature. How could it rival us?”

With that, Eagle Eye opened his hand and grabbed Lin Mu Yu’s arm: “Come on, kid!”

Lin Mu Yu flustered and abruptly a right fist unexpectedly crossed over making the surrounding freezed. “Bang” an explosion could be heard over Eagle Eye’s arm. The surrounding became quiet and everyone stared at them. Eagle Eye was stunned and a faint pain came from his arm. Sneering he began to speak: “Kid, you are a spirit warrior?”

“I am not a warrior; you will not take me with you……” Naturally Lin Mu Yu did not want to die.

“You won’t follow us right now?”

“No!”

“Really?”

Eagle Eye reached out his finger and said: “Duyanlong, go and grab the girl. I think this kid is willing to join us in catching the

Bloodthirsty Tiger!”

“Yes, commander!”

An one-eyed mercenary stepped forward to grab Chu Yao. However, Chu Yao abruptly lowered her body, following that she struck out with a palm wrapped in four qi blades. “Bang” her palm hit the mercenary’s stomach. Unexpectedly the palm hit and the man vomited blood.

“Ah!”

Eagle Eye was shocked: “Both of them are spirit warriors? This little beauty has the strength of a level 19 warrior. Hahaha. Interesting!”

Suddenly Eagle Eye cried out. With one hand he forced Lin Mu Yu to the side and with the other he opened it to grab Chu Yao. An astonishing display! Between his palm raging flames appeared. A blaze wrapped around the five fingers, clawing at Chu Yao. Chu Yao did not know how to resist and the blades that cloaked her palm collapsed in a flash. Both blade and wielder had fallen into Eagle Eye’s hands.

“Bind them and put them on a horse. Take both of them with us!”

Eagle Eye shouted and after a few minutes Lin Mu Yu, with bound hands, was thrown onto a horse. Chu Yao also got her little

hands constrained and was thrown behind Lin Mu Yu. A mercenary led the horse, and with this both youths were taken out of the city. This all happened so quickly that no one in the surroundings could've stopped them.

Or perhaps no one dared to interfere. In Cathaya city, Eagle Eye was infamous. Who did not know this?

……

Outside of the city they soon left the main road and entered a lush jungle.

Chu Yao was held behind Lin Yu Mu and did not speak.

"Chu Yao Jie, I'm sorry. Please blame me……" Lin Mu Yu endured it for a while and he had to apologize.

Chu Yao smiled: "It does not matter. I hope that after confirming the medicine's efficacy the mercenary will release us……"

"How can you be so at ease?"

Lin Mu Yu smiled wryly. Although he is one year younger than Chu Yao, he had more experience and knew the danger. This mercenary who took them both had another use for them. He could only hope that it was not for that sinister purpose.

Chu Yao was sitting behind him and he could feel the two big thing which were the pride of a young woman. But he was not in the mood for such pleasures. All he could think about was how both of them could escape.

.....

They moved for a day and the night came in a flash. However, it seemed like the Flaming Eagle mercenaries did not want to stay. They just ate some dry food and continued moving deeper into the forest. The area became more and more overgrown. The group even encountered some ferocious beasts, but all were killed by Eagle Eye.

They waited until midnight to stop for food.

“Chu Yao Jie, what are level 19 and 42 spirit warrior that Eagles Eye mention earlier?” Lin Mu Yu asked while eating the dry food.

Chu Yao let out a sigh and began to explain: “The empire promote martial spirit. Almost anyone can practice martial arts. But only a few people can have a high achievement, but there are also people with low achievements. Based on strength, all cultivation are divided into 15 levels and 5 big realm. The 5 big realms are the Human Realm, Earth Realm, Heaven realm, Sacred Realm and God Realm. Each realm are divided in 3 stages. Human Stage, Earth Stage and Heaven Stage and are concretely classified as: Martial Artist, Battle General, Battle Spirit, Battle Strategist, Battle Elder, Battle Saint, Heaven Elder, Heaven King, Heaven God. Each stages are divided into 10 levels. For example me : my power is about level 19 so I am at the second tier of Human Stage : a

Battle General. As for Eagle Eye, he is at level 42 a second tier of Earth Stage : a Battle Elder.

Lin Mu Yu was stunned. There were too much ranks and he mostly was a level 1 noob. He did not want to ask too much and began to speak: “For what do they want to kill a 3000 years old spirit beast?”

“Perhaps the beast is for a quick spiritual cultivation?”

“……” Looking like a newbie he did not understand completely.

……

At this moment the youth wearing luxury clothes appeared again. With a jug in his hand and a sarcastic smile on his face, he spoke to them, “You two baits are conversing very optimistically. You do not know that you are going to die soon?”

Chu Yao looked angry: “Who are you?”

“You don’t even know me, the city’s master Hua Wan and yet you still dare to…….” he was about to nag, but this girl turned out to be a pretty beauty!

He was the youngster who became a big alchemist, Hua Wan?

Chu Yao inwardly feared him. However with Hua Wan’s evil

smile pointing at her chest, she was speechless for a moment.

Chapter 7 : The Ultimate Escape

“Heh heh. It’s a shame that we’re using you as bait.”

Bearing a trace of lust on his face Cathaya city’s master Hua Wan turned around and asked smilingly: “Eagle Eye commander, this little beauty.....is it possible for me to have her before the bait.....”

Eagle Eye was cleaning his battle-axe could not help but to sneer. Cursing this city’s master who was a womanizer. But he still maintained a respectful tone and said: “We are deep in the Seven Star Forest and a thousand year level spirit beast could appear anytime. Master should think about it and avoid getting into trouble.”

Hua wan was displeased: “Eagle Eye, my dad paid you 3000 Yin coins. Don’t tell me about the worth of a mere ordinary woman!”

Eagle Eye was very impatient and said: “Continue to departure! We need to arrive at Blue Dragon mountain range before dawn!”

.....

“What does they want you to do?” Chu Yao was confused.

Lin Mu Yu shook his head: “Nothing.”

He knew he had to keep calm, otherwise Chu Yao’s state would

be ruined.

……

Seven Star Forest's night was unspeakable cold. Along the way, Eagle Eye and the other mercenaries cooperated to kill a 400 years old spirit beast. It was a Wolf King level of the gray wolfs. Indeed, it has already began to refine qi and could be considered as a boss in this forest. Yet it was splitted into four meat pieces, roasted entirely. There was not even a trace of bloodstain left. The four parts were hanged at the rear of the mercenary's horse.

As before Hua Wan seemed to have evil intention. He could not give Chu Yao. However Lin Mu Yu guarded at the side not letting him his way.

At the time the east was blanched in white, a winding mountain ridge appeared ahead of the group. It was the legendary Blue Dragon mountain range.

"Boss, at last we've arrived." one mercenary said.

Eagle Eye unload his battle-axe from his shoulder. With eyes filling with fighting spirits he spoke: "4 days ago, a hunting family at the Blue Dragon mountain range found a Bloodthirsty Tiger with four golden line patterns. As everyone here know, each golden line represents 1000 year of ages. This remnant Bloodthirsty Tiger is at least 4000 years old and has already condensed a spirit stone. And the moment the beast is killed its spirit can be obtained. That is also what our master want.

Hua Wan also pulled out a double-edged sword from the horseback. “Keng” The double-edged sword was unsheath. It shined chilly. A truly good saber. laughing faintly he stated: “Commander Eagle Eye, how do you plan to kill this 4000 years old Bloodthirsty Tiger remnant?”

Eagle Eye said: “Each spirit beast has its own domain. It has unlikely moved far away. This place should already be its territory. The Bloodthirsty Tiger is sensitive to blood scent. Within 10 Li it can smell a person’s blood scent among the wind. Therefore we need a bleeding bait. Naturally, the Bloodthirsty Tiger will be attracted to come.”

Hua Wan could not help but to laugh heartily and spoke: “Tie this fellow up. Xiao Ye come and let him bled!”

“No need.”

Eagle Eye said indifferently: “I’ll do just as good..”

.....

Soon, Lin Mu Yu and Chu Yao were both tied up at a huge tree. When Eagle Eye walked forward with the battle-axe, Chu Yao completely filled with fear cursed: “Eagle Eye, you beast. We did not injustice you to have enmity. Why do you want to harm us!?”

Lin Mu Yu wearing a chilly expression in his eyes said: “Eagle Eye, if I survive this, you surely will die!”

“Really?”

Eagle Eye laughed mockingly: “This girl named Yu Chao have surely strength, but you? Boy, you are a useless person without strength. You don’t even have the strength of the human realm’s first stage. You kind of trash should forget about it and just die.”

Lin Mu Yu was silent.

Eagle Eye raised abruptly his battle-axe. “ka” a sound on Lin Yu Mu’s shoulder came out with blood. Blood flew out. Chu Yao was instantly really frightened. Looking at the wound on Lin Mu Yu, she cried and began to speak: “Yu-e, blame senior jie. If I haven’t taught you how to refine medicine, you would have unlikely meet this great catastrophe. Yu-e, blame senior jie……”

Lin Mu Yu bearing the sharp pain turned around and faintly smiled: “Chu Yao jie, what are you speaking about……I don’t regret it, so nevermind……nevermind……”

Although he said to never mind, his heart was beating fast. Will that Bloodthirsty Tiger smell my blood scent and come here? If the Bloodthirsty Tiger, a 4000 years old spirit beast, really came, I myself will not have enough strength. How should we escape then?

Looking up to Eagle Eye’s back he hated unspeakably this evil. These mercenaries are some bastards, regarding human life as worthless. A chilliness raised from the bottom of Lin Mu Yu’s heart. This world was rather too ruthless.

At this time, Hua wan came over. With a cold look he glanced at Lin Mu Yu and spoke: “It does not matter if you made these Stone Skin medicine by yourself or not. However……today, you will die here. Cathaya city’s number one Alchemist will always be me and not you!”

Originally, Hua Wan’s intention was to kill me to preserve his position as Cathaya city’s number one Alchemist?

Then Hua Wan walked to Chu Yao. Holding Chu Yao’s chin he smiled devilish: “Little beauty, I can truly not let you die. So let the little gentleman enjoy you.”

Then he bowed down to kiss Chu Yao. But Chu Yao tried her best to struggle free of him. However Hua Wan’s palm appeared to be like an eagle claw holding her firm. Unable to struggle free, Hua Wan’s strength almost surpassed Chu Yao many times. Apparently there was a Legend that the city’s master Hua Wan was not only an Alchemist, he was also a level 29 Battle Spirit. It’s a pity that the Legend was no fake.

As Hua Wan was about to succeed, Eagle Eye suddenly sneered from afar: “Young master, stop enjoying this kind of thing. If the Bloodthirsty Tiger is nearby, I’m afraid that before you could put on your clothes, you would be already dead. I and my brothers need to lay traps and and arrange the machine. I ask you to leave immediately.”

Hua Wan turned bitterly around, his face unwilling, grinded his

teeth and looked at Chu Yao: “Little beauty, you must survive as long as possible. The little gentleman must show you the tricks on the bed!”

While crying Chu Yao spit saliva from her mouth: “Bastard, you scum!”

Hua Wan did not agree and turned laughingly around to leave.

……

At the distance, Eagle Eye was commanding the mercenary to arrange the ambush. Two ballista hidden in the Bushes were pointing at Lin Mu Yu and Chu Yao. In order to kill this remnant Bloodthirsty Tiger, they simply went mad. If the ballista shot, Lin Mu Yu and Chu Yao would mostly die together. In addition another group of mercenaries were holding bow and arrow ready to ambush inside the bushes, waiting for the order at any time.

Eagle Eye’s conduct was Flaming Eagle mercenary as the strongest group. Holding the battle-axe in his hand Eagle Eye sat aside branches of a tree. He watched coldly the surrounding. Finishing the preparation he began to speak: “Everyone be ready for the ambush when the Bloodthirsty Tiger appears. Not even one is allowed to give a fart. The one daring to act rashly will be behead by my own axe!”

Cold wind blew, only Lin Mu Yu and Chu Yao remained helplessly tied up at the huge tree.

“Yu-er, your wound……” Looking at Yu’s wound Chu yao asked.

Lin Mu Yu pretended to look relaxed, smiled and said: “I’m okay. Chu Yao jie does not need to be anxious. My bleeding wound has started to condense clot. I’m fine.”

Actually, the Blood was still flowing, so much that he had a dizziness feeling. Eagle Eye was a mercenary who is specialized in killing. Naturally he knew the places which would let to bleeding incessantly. In a flash Lin Mu Yu’s arm was already dyed red with blood.

……

More than an hour later, the Bloodthirsty Tiger still did not appear.

“Chu Yao jie?”

Lin Mu Yu shook the rope and spoke: “Chu Yao jie, do not sleep. Listen to me and do not give up.”

Chu Yao almost cried out tears: “En, senior jie will listen, Yu-er just speak.”

Lin Mu Yu said: “In a moment when the Bloodthirsty come, you must not panic. Listen to my command. When I say down, you will immediately lower your upper body down and then jump up with me at the same time. This is our only chance. You got it?”

Chu Yao was stunned: “This……this kind of action is useful?”

“Will you listen to me?”

“En……” Chu Yao nodded slightly.

“Then do as I said.”

“Okay……”

Lin Mu Yu did not explain why they must do this. In fact there was no way to explain it, because Bloodthirsty Tiger was a species that Lin Mu Yu knew. <> this game’s level 100 BOSS : the forest’s overlord the fierce tiger. That year many players lost their lives because of him. Hanging countless time to kill the Bloodthirsty Tiger. Since in this world Silver Line Grass, steel-tipped flower and other herbs appeared to the same like in the game, maybe the monster would also be the same?

The Bloodthirsty Tiger’s movement speed and its attack power were widely known. But it also had a characteristic movement. Bloodthirsty Tiger first attack was certainly a sweep with its sharp claw. Moreover it would sweep right at the target’s head. Therefore it had the name “Headshot King”.

If the Bloodthirsty Tiger’s first hit could be dodged, then the power of the 4000 years old spirit beast remnant could be used to divide the tree into two parts. The string was tied at the waist and

was not too tight. Both people needed to jump vertically at the same time to stand over the surface of the cut off tree. This was the only method. Although it was dangerous, however Lin Mu Yu had also no other plan to get out of the danger.

……

“Hou……”

Sure enough, it did not let the people wait for long. The tiger’s roar came from afar. The entire mountain forest seemed to tremble. The tiger was the king of the jungle. And at the moment this one was a 4000 years old super spirit beast. This power could let a person more than tremble.

“It finally came……”

Lin Mu Yu said quietly: “Chu Yao jie, be ready!”

“Yeah!”

Chu Yao stopped to cry. Under the law of the jungle, she understood clearly that, you have to be strong, otherwise it was unlikely that someone would help you to get stronger.

Eagle Eye stood up abruptly. Holding his battle-axe in his hand he shouted lowly: “All men be prepared!”

……

“Hou!”

Again the sound of a tiger’s roar could be heard. A burst of burning qi wave engulfed the forest. At the distant, a fierce tiger covered with red hair appeared at the mountain ridge. On top of his head four golden line dazzled brightly under the sunlight. The beast king showed completely its imposing manner. The ruthless eyes stared at the tied up at the tree Lin Mu Yu.

Lin Mu Yu determined the speed of the Bloodthirsty Tiger and said suddenly with a low voice: “Chu Yao jie, bow down!”

“Hua!”

The two stooped momentary together. The Bloodthirsty Tiger swept through. “Kacha” a sound came out as the huge tree was broke apart at the middle. The scattered pieces of the tree flew momentary. Lin Mu Yu shouted: “Jump!”

They leaped softly. The rope was already over the cut across surface. At this moment, afar, a “Sousou” sound came over. The ballistars started to attack!

……

In spite of the pain in the arm, Lin Mu Yu pounced over Chu Yao’s body. Holding her as they rolled over the grass. Behind the body was the pengpengpeng sound. The almost one meter long

shooted ballista arrow at the Bloodthirsty Tiger was repelled. The Bloodthirsty Tiger's hair resembled iron needle. The defense power could not be compared to common beasts.

"Throw a net!"

Eagle Eye rushed out anxiously with his battle-axe.

Chapter 8 :The Swift Youth Who Ran A Tiger King To Death

“Haste!”

Quickly downing the potion he picked up, Hawkeye planted his feet firmly on the ground. That was the 1st tier potion Haste potion. With the great increase in speed, he arrived behind the Bloodlust Tiger with a single leap. Firmly gripping his battle axe, he took a heavy downward swing at the beast.

But who would have thought, without even turning its head, the Bloodlust Tiger simply swung its tail with force. With a heavy bang, Hawkeye was instantly sent flying as blood seeped out of his mouth. He was a Level 42 Battle Adept, but this 4000 year old Bloodlust Tiger had the power of a Level 60 Sky Master. The difference in strength is monumental.

The tail swung right before Hawkeye’s chest and instantly shattered his breastplate into powder as faint lines of stone skin appeared on Hawkeye’s chest. That was the effect of the Stone Skin potion. In all honesty, if not for the Stone Skin, Hawkeye would have been one-hit-killed by the Bloodlust Tiger.

Taking a few steps back with his axe sliding across the ground, Hawkeye spat out a mouthful of blood as he loudly commanded, “Don’t let this bastard regenerate his strength, attack now! Archers, use Paralysis poison!”

Twenty or so archers jumped out of the bushes and sent arrows wildly at the beast. However they can't seem to pierce the skin of the Bloodlust Tiger. A 4000 years-old spirit beast's skin is really too unyielding.

"Roar!"

With a leap, the Bloodlust Tiger killed its way into the crowd. Swinging its sharp claws wildly as blood splattered around it, a mercenary's head was forcefully smashed into pieces.

With a crunch, the Bloodlust Tiger snidely munched on another mercenary's head. Behind it, a spear-holding mercenary rushed forward with a low growl. Lifting up his spear, he struck it right at the tiger's rump. With a low scraping sound, only the tip of the spear managed to pierce the skin and was unable to go any further. Instead, with a single swing of its tail, the Bloodlust Tiger smacked the mercenary's back in half.

The scene of fresh blood spilled everywhere is just too cruel!

……

Hua Wan gripped his sword as his face became green and panically asked, "Commander Hawkeye, wha-what should we do? This.. This Bloodlust Tiger is basically unaffected by the paralysis poison!"

Hawkeye took out a bottle of paralysis poison and smeared it on the blade of his axe; the poison emitted it's unique glow as it was applied on the weapon. With this much, the poison could probably

last about 10 minutes. Hawkeye softly instructed, “Don’t be frightened. Attack, my brothers. If we can kill this Bloodlust Tiger, the bounty will be enough to for us to live for the rest of our lives. You can probably live in a mansion and build a harem if you wanted!”

For the riches that can only be obtained from perilous means, the group of mercenaries rushed towards the beast with their weapons in hand. Even the archers dropped their bows and ran forward with long spears.

“Roar!”

The Bloodlust Tiger furiously roared once more as red fiery energy started forming around its neck.

Lin Mu Yu cursed under his breath and immediately picked up Chu Yao, then jumped into the nearby pond.

“What’s wrong?” Chu Yao asked in shock.

Lin Mu Yu silently pressed himself on top of her and did not let her speak another word.

The next moment, the surrounding temperature quickly rose with a loud blast as flames enveloped the surrounding grass floor. Chu Yao looked at Lin Mu Yu with widened eyes as a wave of fire passed over his head, even burning a few strands of his hair.

“Ah Yu…”

Chu Yao was shocked speechless.

Lin Mu Yu calmly flipped himself over and laid down on the ground. Enduring the numbing pain on the back of his head, he took a deep breath and pressed down onto the floor to squash out the remaining flames. In his head he quickly noted that the strength of the Bloodlust Tiger is definitely stronger than the one in-game, how frightening a thought!

Chu Yao carefully leaned against the edge of the pond and raised her head to look around, only to be stunned by what she saw. On the open grounds, two dozen Flamehawk Mercenaries were turned into charcoal by the tiger’s fire breath. All of them had their weapons in hand as they stood; their bodies were burnt black while the pungent smell of burnt flesh wafted through the air.

“Ah…”

Chu Yao knelt on the ground in shock. She had never seen even a corpse in the past, and now in front of her were so many bodies that had died right before her eyes.

……

“Steady!”

Still holding his battle axe, Hawkeye bellowed, “A 4000 years-old Bloodlust Tiger will need at least another 3 minutes before it can

spit flames again. This is our best chance. One of you, use iron net formation to trap this bastard!”

Following the command, a dozen mercenaries mounted their horses and charged forward, each holding a corner of the iron net. They casted the net right as they reached the Bloodlust Tiger. With a whoosh, the near 10 meter long net was spread out above the tiger and immediately began to cover the tiger’s immense body.

“Roar!”

The iron net was sturdy yet flexible, so although the Bloodlust Tiger furiously tried to break free, the net just tightened up the more it struggled. Slowly but surely, the tiger ceased its movements.

“Heh. That’s just what I expected from this bastard, it’s a stupid beast after all!” A mercenary loudly laughed, “Boss, it’s time. Let’s all go at it together and slaughter this 4000 year old spirit beast. It’s been a long time since anyone from Silver Fir City, perhaps even the whole Seven Star Forest, could kill a 4000 year old spirit beast. We’ll be the first ones! Hahahaha...”

Wordlessly, Hawkeye channeled the zen energy surrounding his body into wild flames enveloping his battle axe. With a sudden charge, he jumped into the air and slammed down with his full strength onto the Bloodlust Tiger’s head.

BAM!

Cut apart by the slash, the iron net began to break open. At the same time, a layer of blood covered the flame colored hide of the Bloodlust Tiger. It finally received direct damage as a long gash could be seen on its head.

However, although it was injured, the beast did not show any signs of anger. Only a mocking gaze could be seen in the tiger's cold brown eyes... Everyone, Hawkeye included, froze upon realizing that the tiger in front of them was not merely a wild beast, it is as if this 4000 year old spirit beast had the intelligence of a human. It even purposely allowed Hawkeye to attack it to borrow his strength in order to break the iron net.

"Whuaa!"

Swiftly leaping out of the iron net, the Bloodlust Tiger opened its bloody jaws and chomped down onto Hawkeye. Only a brutal cry could be heard as fresh blood spilled out while the beast pushed Hawkeye down to the ground as he struggled. Seconds later, his whole right arm along with the axe in hand was ripped from his body.

"Commander!"

The group of mercenaries yelled in shock and anger. Each of them rushed forward holding their bladed weapon and stabbed their swords and spears into the Bloodlust Tiger's body. Once it was injured, the defensive strength of the tiger's skin greatly fell, it couldn't continue to defend against the mercenaries' attacks. Additionally, these mercenaries were not at all lacking in skill. Lin Mu Yu and Chu Yao stared wide-eyed at the few using martial

skills!

That's right, martial skills were not things easily learned by the average person. At the very least, they would have had to break through the first tier of human realm to earn the rights to learn such skills!

……

"Roar!"

The Bloodlust Tiger roared in fury as it sweeped everyone around it. In the blink of an eye, of the dozen mercenaries left, only a few survived the slaughter.

"Game over man… game over…"

Hua Wan gripped his sword but it was as if all strength had dissipated from his body. Shaking his head in disbelief, he cried, "This 4000 year old spirit beast is way too strong, the Flamehawk Mercenaries are no more… Retreat… Retreat now!"

The four guards wearing a purple Yin Flower brooch nodded simultaneously and guarded their young master as he mounted his horse. Following behind, they took off without sparing a single thought for the heavily injured mercenary commander.

A rush of pain struck Lin Mu Yu's arm so he quickly helped Chu Yao to her feet and said, "Big sis Chu Yao, let's leave quickly… or else the Bloodlust Tiger definitely won't leave us alive."

The two limply stood and were about to leave as Hawkeye roared, “Mother fuckers. So many of my men died today and the two of you still want to run? Kill these two because they will accompany us to our graves!”

A mercenary with an injured arm dashed forward with his sword, but he barely took two steps before getting ripped in half by the Bloodlust Tiger’s tail.

“Roar!”

The tiger roared loudly and charged at the remaining few mercenaries. However, its speed seemed to be slowing down, it’s movement couldn’t even catch up to the speed of a war horse. Finally, the paralysis poison started to take effect!

……

Chu Yao’s face is ghastly white as she whimpered, “Ah Yu… We should go…”

“No.”

Lin Mu Yu pointed behind them and calmly said, “Big sis Chu Yao, you run towards that direction. I’ll catch up to you when I can. Quickly!”

Chu Yao didn’t argue with the command and started walk, but it seemed like her leg was hurt, thus she was unable to walk very

fast.

“Sheeen!”

Walking pass the corpse of a mercenary, Lin Mu Yu pulled out the sword on the dead man’s back. It was a well made sword with a fuller that lightened the weight. These exquisitely made weapons were not commonly seen. Holding the sword in hand, he slowly walked towards Hawkeye.

Having lost an arm as well as taking a huge bone-shattering hit to the chest, not even a Battle Adept could sustain that much damage. Hawkeye had already lost a large part of his strength, thus he could only look at Lin Mu Yu with his lone eye and growled in anger, “Bastard, what are you thinking of doing?”

“Taking care of the loose ends!”

Lin Mu Yu coldly answered, he knew that if he didn’t kill Hawkeye now, were Hawkeye to survive and return to Silver Fir City, not only himself, but everyone at Bai Ling drugstore would be in danger. Hawkeye will never forgive him, especially since he suffered a brutal loss like this. He would definitely not want anyone to speak of it.

“You dare?! I’m the fuc…”

Without even letting Hawkeye finish his words, Lin Mu Yu’s sword already slashed at Hawkeye’s neck. Fresh blood squirted out

of his slashed artery, this mercenary commander that once freely roamed the lands met his end as his eyes widened with resentment.

……

Looking up, the Bloodlust Tiger had already killed the few remaining mercenaries. Although it was clearly affected by the paralysis poison, the poison seemed to only affect its movement speed. Right now the beast wasn't merely hunting for food anymore. It wanted to kill every last person around..

Picking up a nearby bow and a bag of arrows, as well as a sword to wear on his back, Lin Mu Yu turned and tried to run. But it's already too late, the Bloodlust Tiger roared and charged towards him. It wanted to kill Lin Mu Yu!

"Shit! I'm dead meat..."

Lin Mu Yu cursed under his breath and anxiously looked in Chu Yao's direction. Behind him, the Bloodlust Tiger is breaking rocks and smashing trees as it chased. It was almost caught up with his speed!

A short distance ahead, Chu Yao slowly limped away and became ghastly white when she turned her head to look. "Ah Yu, what should we do?"

"Run!"

How could Lin Mu Yu even think about that much when it's a matter of life or death at hand. Picking up Chu Yao by the waist, he ran away as if he was flying. In his legs were zen energy that seemed to regenerate his strength, thus his mind became much steadier. Using all his strength, he kept running wildly down the path.

……

In the forest, unending roars were heard as the Bloodlust Tiger chased with Frenzy while Lin Mu Yu sprinted with life on the line. This frantic running lasted near an hour, yet Lin Mu Yu didn't feel a single hint of fatigue even while carrying another person in his arms. Conversely, it was as if a strange power instantly entered his legs as each of his steps became like meteors hitting ground. Suddenly, a shattering tone resounded in his thought as an image flowed outward. It was the image of a running man. This signified the first new ability that Lin Mu Yu had unlocked in this world: Starfall Step!

Starfall Step, SS Rank Skill, the signature ability of the War God. The best skill for both chasing and running away. It could probably be considered a peerless ability in this world now!

"Ah…"

Chu Yao looked at Lin Mu Yu with a shocked expression and was unable to say anything. She had never seen another person who could run like this!

As he ran, the Bloodlust Tiger chasing him couldn't catch up any longer, so Lin Mu Yu stopped to wait for it.

Not long after, with a single tragic cry, the Bloodlust Tiger fell on its belly and laid silently on the ground.

"Is it dead?" Lin Mu Yu turned around and carefully observed the carcass of the Bloodlust Tiger.

Only to see the large tiger lain down on the ground without a single hint of movement while faint streams of fiery red energy slowly emerged from the tiger's body and gathered in the air.

……

"It's dead!" Chu Yao assured, "Spirit beasts will release their beast spirit upon dying. Ah Yu, you ran a 4000 year old Bloodlust Tiger to death…"

Yet Lin Mu Yu could only gasp for breath as a heavy sensation overcame his legs. The aftereffect of using Starfall Step had came! Even though the pain was excruciating, he was still overjoyed on the inside. He barely escaped from death's grasp when he had already given up all hope, thinking that both him and Chu Yao were going to die right there and then. That would have been such a shame. A beautiful senor like Chu Yao, if nothing ever got to happen between them before they died, then it really would have been such a shame!

Chapter 9 : A Double Whammy Of Disasters When The Swift Wolf Appears

Looking at the longbow hanging on his back, Lin Mu Yu thought it was quite a shame that he didn't get a chance to use it.

However, Lin Mu Yu had no regrets because having a few weapons meant he was no longer defenseless in a dangerous place like the Seven Star Forest.

……

Chu Yao excitedly pulled at Lin Mu Yu's hand as she said, "Ah Yu, a wild beast's spirit is a valuable asset to a martial artist. Quickly, go refine that Bloodlust Tiger's beast spirit. That's not something easy to come by. If you don't refine it in an hour, it is going to dissipate by itself!"

Lin Mu Yu stared with a stupefied look, "How do you refine it?"

"You…you haven't awakened your martial spirit yet?" Chu Yao asked questioningly in return.

"I haven't…" Lin Mu Yu continued to be befuddled by her questions, "martial spirit…what's a martial spirit?"

Chu Yao could barely comprehend how a person who could torture a Bloodlust Tiger to death would not know able martial

spirits. Originally she had thought Lin Mu Yu to be a warrior of the second stage of Human realm, but now...he looks to be just an average guy with a slightly strong physique.

"Then, Ah Yu you stay here to guard me while I refine it."

"Okay!"

Lin Mu Yu stood guard on one side with his sword in hand while Chu Yao sat down. She shut her eyes as energy began to envelope her body. Slowly, the beast spirit of the dead Bloodlust Tiger started to drift towards her and little by little was absorbed into her body. However it seemed like she was only able to take in a very small portion and the small amount that she did take in seemed to be very difficult to absorb. Not long after, her clothes were soaked by the overwhelming amount of sweat.

"Big sis Chu Yao, are you alright?" To Chu Yao, Lin Mu Yu was a newbie that lacked an understand of what was going on.

Chu Yao continued to clench her brows as she silently concentrated.

After a whopping two whole hours, Chu Yao finally exhaled a deep breath and opened her eyes. Almost instantly, her spirit seemed to have renewed itself so much that even Lin Mu Yu could tell of the difference as he smilingly asked, "Big sis Chu Yao, could it be... that you have become stronger?"

Chu Yao answered with a smile, “Yep, I’ve broken pass the Human realm’s second state and stepped into the third state now!”

Seeing the confused look on Lin Mu Yu’s face, Chu Yao couldn’t help but laugh, “On the continent, martial artists use numbers to measure against one another. An hour ago, my power level was about that of Level 19. Frankly, I had been stuck on Level 19 for the last two years because I never found the chance to advance. This time I was only able to ascend with the Bloodlust Tiger’s spirit aiding me. Now that we’re talking about it, when I first ascended the first state to Level 9, it was with the spirit of a 50 years-old mountain boar that Grandpa had slain. It’s just a shame that…”

She looked at the quickly dissipating beast spirit above the tiger’s carcass and regretfully said, “It’s a shame that I am too weak and can only absorb not even close to 1% of this 4000 year old beast spirit. It’s such a waste. Anyhow, Ah Yu, come and cut open this Bloodlust Tiger’s head, there should be a spirit stone inside!”

“Oh…”

Lin Mu Yu stepped forward and slashed at the wound Hawkeye had inflicted earlier. Finally, after several cuts, the Bloodlust Tiger’s head was sliced opened and the brain matter squirmed out with a scent of blood wafting through the air. At the same time, a lustrous flame-colored stone was embedded on the inside of the skull. Chu Yao happily rejoiced, “As expected, there is a spirit stone inside. Quickly take it out!”

With a bang, the spirit stone fell into Lin Mu Yu’s hand and a faint heat could be felt coming from the stone.

Chu Yao said with a slight smile on her face, “A 4000 year old spirit stone. This is quite a treasure. Ah Yu, be sure to keep it safe and never let anyone else know of it aside from me.”

“Aye.”

Lin Mu Yu slipped the spirit stone into a hidden pocket then sliced off a piece of the tiger’s thigh. Stuffing it into a cloth sack, that was going to be their food stock until they manage to get out of Seven Star Forest. Maybe if they could find a fire source, they might even get to eat it cooked.

……

“Ah Yu, let’s go?” Chu Yao pulled at Lin Mu Yu’s hand and chuckled, “ What are you still looking at? It’s too dangerous to stay here since it’s filled with all kinds of thousand years old spirit beasts. If we run into one, we’ll never leave this forest again.”

“Wait, we can’t just leave like this…” Lin Mu Yu frowned, “Sister Chu Yao, I think… I want to go look for the Bloodlust Tiger’s cave. You can go back first!”

“Cave?”

Chu Yao asked, “What’s so good about a tiger’s den?”

Lin Mu Yu answered with a smile, “As far as I know, one of Bloodlust Tigers’ favorite hobby is to collect rare treasures. The more powerful the tiger, the better the treasure. This Bloodlust Tiger is already a seasoned monster at 4000 years old; we can’t possibly let this chance go by.”

Chu Yao once again found herself laughing, “You little runt, not even the slightest bit afraid of death? Alright then, but how do you know where the tiger’s den is at?”

“Bloodlust Tigers always hate to part with their caves as they die, so they will run in the direction of their cave. That Bloodlust Tiger turned around when it was dying of blood loss. The direction the head was facing should be the direction of the cave.”

“Really?”

“Yep.” Lin Mu Yu nodded with steadfastness; in the game , it was certainly set as such. From herbs to Bloodlust Tiger, the game’s settings were all realized in this world, thus Lin Mu Yu never hesitated to believe in his prior knowledge.

Chu Yao quietly nodded, “Okay then, since Ah Yu helped me advance to a Level 20 Battle Spirit, as your senior, I’ll go along with you on this detour.”

“Are Level 20 Battle Spirits really strong? Big sis Chu Yao, why are you so happy…”

“Of course, even though there are countless martial artists above Level 20 in Silver Fir City, there is... there is a law in the War Temple that granted Level 20 to 29 Battle Spirits a monthly allowance of one gold Yin from the local War Temple branch. It’s not a lot but it’s still something. Grandpa is definitely going to be very happy now that I can get this one gold Yin.”

Seeing Chu Yao smiling blissfully like a small child, Lin Mu Yu couldn’t help but smile as well as he walked toward the tiger’s den with his sword in hand.

……

After running in Starfall Step for an hour, his legs were still worn out so he began walking in a humorously shaky posture, so much so that Chu Yao let out a small chuckle at the sight.

Yet Lin Mu Yu did not mind it and continued to walk in this funny manner. Feeling a bit sorry about laughing at him, Chu Yao walked over to support Lin Mu Yu with her arm and quietly said, “Spirit beasts usually come out at night, so we’ll have to find the tiger’s den before sundown and stay there overnight. We’ll need to wait until sunrise of the next morning to leave for Silver Fir City, which we’ll have to rush once again to arrive home before sundown.”

“Aye.”

Chu Yao was a smart girl; knowing that this area was the Bloodlust Tiger’s territory and that weaker spirit beasts would be

reluctant to challenge the den, spending a night in a Bloodlust Tiger's den was an exceptionally safe choice.

Good thing the two of them were quite lucky as it took but two hours to find the tiger's den within a mountain cave. Using a few sticks and resin to make a torch, they entered the cave with a lid torch. A scent of blood wafted through the air and bones could be seen littered everywhere. There were beast skeletons as well as human skeletons. Some of the corpses were even wearing heavy armor, with the flesh gorged out from inside the armor.

"Urgh..."

A look of horror appeared on Chu Yao's face. Lin Mu Yu gave her hand a tight grip, motioning her to not be afraid.

Once they entered deep within the cave, the environment became much drier and warmer. The Bloodlust Tiger's bed was made with dried grass, but the treasures all seemed to be useless rocks with a few pieces of gold Yin and silver Yin coins sprinkled in between, most probably "left behind" by hunters. Aside from those trifles, there was a single crystal clear dagger. One could tell it wasn't an average item from a single glance.

Lin Mu Yu picked up the dagger and swung it a few times before smiling, "Not bad. Big sis Chu Yao, this is yours now!"

Chu Yao was pleasantly surprised, "You're really going to give it to me?"

“Yeah, I’m not too fond of weapons that are too short.”

“Alright!”

Holding the dagger in hand, Chu Yao was so happy that she could not express it in words. This dagger looked to be an exquisite item. When held, one could feel the spirit within the weapon. Clearly this was a weapon that had been spirit forged, as there was a beast spirit within the blade. Although Chu Yao was not familiar with the Empire’s weapon classification, she knew that spirit forged weapons are definitely not average items. At the very least, none of Hawkeye or Hua Wan’s weapons could match this dagger. Considering Hua Wan’s status, the fact that not even Silver Fir City’s young master could own this kind of weapon was a clear sign of this dagger’s value.

As her heart started to feel uneasy, Chu Yao took a quick side glance at Lin Mu Yu’s handsome face and quickly looked down, afraid of taking another look.

Aside from the dagger, in a corner of the cave laid a metal casket. Prying open the lid with the dagger, a dust-covered book was seen sitting on the bottom of the box. As Chu Yao lightly blew at the book, the name as well as the nearly rotten pages became exposed. In the center, 3 ancient words were written: «Medicine God’s Index»!

……

“Medicine God’s Index?” Lin Mu Yu laughed, “Looks like we

really found a treasure this time. Chu Yao, since Grandpa has been unable to advance to the level of Medicine Master, he must really need a book like this right?”

Chu Yao nodded, “Yeah, I can’t quite understand it at my level of alchemy so let’s bring it back for Grandpa!”

“Sounds good!”

Chu Yao flipped open the battered remnant of the book and as expected, she was unable to understand most of the text on the page. The use of herbal cores and recipes were extremely esoteric topics, thus she stuffed the book into her shirt to bring home for Chu Feng to study later. As for Lin Mu Yu, as a Master tier Alchemist in the game, he already knew all the recipes from tier one potions to god tier alchemy. With a glance, he saw that many of the words were foreign to him, and thought to himself that perhaps it was time to study a little.

……

As the night fell, they could no longer continue traveling on the road. After talking with Chu Yao, the two decided to set up camp outside the cave, for there were simply too many corpses inside the den. Chu Yao was worried that she might not even be able to fall asleep.

After last night’s restless traveling, there was finally a chance to rest.

Lin Mu Yu built a small fire outside the den and somehow found a steel helmet. Filling the helmet with water, he cooked the Bloodlust Tiger's meat in the boiling water. A 4000 year old spirit beast's flesh was very hard to come by, and consequently it was also very difficult to fully cook. After two whole hours, a scent of cooked meat swelled forth from the helmet. The two had been starving for so long that they would have eaten anything, as such they split the meat and took turns drinking the soup. After filling themselves up for the night, they simply laid dry grass on the lowlying ground beneath a tree to use as beds.

As a result, the severely fatigued Chu Yao quickly fell asleep.

Lin Mu Yu applied another layer of his self-made Gold Sore cream on his wounds, which basically had begun healing, and laid on the ground to watch the night sky. Thinking back to all the things that had happened since he had been transported to this world, if not for Grandpa Chu Feng and Chu Yao giving him a shelter, he would have never survived so long in a world so based around survival of the fittest.

But right now, Lin Mu You realized that he didn't only have Alchemy, but even Starfall Step had awakened. With his internal energy growing by the day, he had the confidence to become strong. He knew that what he needed to do now was to constantly strengthen himself to protect Grandpa Chu Feng and Chu Yao. It was possible that he could no longer return, thus they were the only ones he could rely on in this world.

At that thought, suddenly Chu Yao gave a soft cry and stuffed her face onto Lin Mu Yu's embrace, probably feeling a bit chilly in her

sleep. A surge of fragrance swept onto his chest while Chu Yao's warm breathing blew at Lin Mu Yu's neck, so that he couldn't help but fantasize about the beauty in his embrace. Looking down, Chu Yao was hugging him as her pair of snow-white prides pressed onto his chest. Under the light of the fire, they rose and sank with her breathing, as if they were a pair of delicately carved jade rabbits.

Drowsily, Lin Mu Yu also fell asleep. Not knowing how long after, he suddenly felt Chu Yao stir in his embrace. He opened his eyes and was about to speak before the other person covered his mouth with her hand. Looking at Lin Mu Yu with her beautiful eyes, she slightly motioned the space above them. When Lin Mu Yu looked up, he was almost scared to death by what he saw: a large green-furred wolf was staring at the two of them with its emotionless gaze as it stood atop the rocks above the camp.

Those were the eyes of a predator observing its prey!

Swift Wolf!

Lin Mu Yu's heart thumped as he had an ominous premonition. Swift Wolves were a type of very agile beasts that were as fast as lightning when they attack. If they were to hunt as a pack, then the scene would be even more frightening.

Chapter 10 : First Star Mortal Turmoil

Although there was only a single Swift Wolf ahead, it did not mean the situation was easy to handle.

Lin Mu Yu and Chu Yao slowly sat up and confronted the wolf with their gaze. Quietly standing up, Chu Yao held her dagger in hand while Lin Mu Yu gently pulled out the steel sword at his side. Fitting for its nature, the Swift Wolf remained still as it waited for the best opportunity to strike. Fortunately Chu Yao woke up early, or else the two of them would have been the wolf's meal by now.

……

Quietly moving in front of Lin Mu Yu, Chu Yao guarded him with her dagger in a reverse grip while energy quickly gathered around her body. As a newly advanced Level 20 Battle Spirit, Chu Yao's energy was able to shape a bowl-sized armor plate. Gently revolving around her body, that was the War Spirit's signature martial skill: Spirit Armor. War Spirits could shape a Spirit Armor to help improve their defenses. A Level 29 Battle Spirit can have a maximum of 5 pieces of Spirit Armor, commonly known as a 5-Plate War Spirit, thus right now Chu Yao was a genuine 1-Plate War Spirit.

Comparing martial art experience, Lin Mu Yu was far weaker compared to Chu Yao, and as such, he did not dare to be careless. Firmly holding his sword, he locked his eyes onto the Swift Wolf. Since he did not have any tricks to deal with the wolf, he would have to rely on brute force to kill the beast.

Chu Yao calmly looked at the Swift Wolf's tail and could not help but complain, "Eight-tailed Swift Wolf...Damn it, that's an 800-year-old Swift Wolf..."

"Is it really strong?" Lin Mu Yu asked.

Chu Yao responded, "An 800-year-old spirit beast has about the same strength as a level 45 Battle Master. It's even stronger than Hawkeye. Ah Yu, we have to be careful. We survived the chase of a Bloodlust Tiger, we can't just die in the jaws of a 800-year-old Swift Wolf."

"Alright."

Lin Mu Yu silently nodded and took out a bottle of Stone Skin potion, "Big sis Chu Yao, right now you're stronger than me and those dagger should be quite sharp, so I'll attract the wolf's attention while you try to surprise it. Whether we could kill this bastard or not will depend on how well we can work together."

Slightly surprised, Chu Yao said, "Ah Yu, you.... You have to be careful!"

"Don't worry!" Lin Mu Yu chugged down the bottle of Stone Skin potion and felt his body becoming increasingly tough. Streams of energy appeared on top of his skin as an effect of the increase in defensive power.

Following that, he poured a whole bottle of paralysis poison onto

the arrows in his quiver and slowly walked away from Chu Yao. When Lin Mu Yu arrived at about a 5 meter distance away from her, he raised his bow and channeled energy into his arm. Unexpectedly, the firm bow was pulled fully back into the shape of a crescent moon!

"Voosh!"

The arrow flew straight at the Swift Wolf, but the wolf was even quicker to act. With an angry roar, it pounced towards Lin Mu Yu at a blinding speed!

As the arrow missed its target, the wolf was already atop Lin Mu Yu's body. That single leap covered at least 10 meters of distance; it was indeed worthy of being a 800-year-old spirit beast, as it's almost about to transcend into a Spirited Fiend!

[TL Note: In Chinese legends, Spirited Fiends or 妖精 were originally animals that obtained the power of transforming into human form. In most stories, they were portrayed as beautiful women who preyed on men and women alike after luring them into lowering their guards.]

Seeing the wolf ferociously biting down at him, Lin Mu Yu knew that he couldn't allow his neck to be bitten or else it would spell death for him.

Quickly raising his left arm to block the bite, Lin Mu Yu felt a sharp pain from his arm as he heard a slight tearing sound. The Swift Wolf's bite surprisingly left a few rows of imprints on his

Stone-Skin-fortified arm. What kind of jaw strength was this? If he did not have those first tier Stone Skin potions, that bite would have probably torn his arm in half!

The Swift Wolf ferociously tore at his arm as it violently swung its head. Feeling the immense pain, Lin Mu Yu pulled out his sword and took a heavy horizontal swing at the wolf. With a sound of tearing through flesh, the sword stabbed into the wolf's hind leg, but it wasn't a fatal strike. Hastily, Lin Mu Yu pulled it out of the wound and stabbed once more while Chu Yao came around on the other side and also swung fiercely with her twin dagger.

"Shhhahhh!"

Having a sharpness like no other, the dagger easily sliced two large lumps of flesh off of the wolf's rump!

"Huuhuuu..."

The Swift Wolf screeched in pain and immediately loosened its bite on Lin Mu Yu's arm. Taking a few steps back, it raised its head and howled towards the sky. Quickly, rounds after rounds of biting whirlwinds formed in the surrounding area. Chu Yao worryingly yelled, "Be careful Ah Yu, those are Wind Blades, the special ability of Swift Wolves!"

Before she could even finish, several wind blades had already sliced down at the two. Immediately, the Lin Mu Yu's clothes were quickly torn to pieces while Chu Yao was quicker on her feet and dodged the wind blades with a back step.

“Roar!”

The Swift Wolf roared in anger. It was quite intelligent; knowing that Chu Yao was more threatening to itself, it pounced towards Chu Yao following a single roar. However, Chu Yao did not have the protection of Stone Skin and could definitely not take the hit, so she quickly opened her palm and yelled, “Violet!”

Accompanying a piercing screech, a purple mink-like pet materialized from Chu Yao’s body. That was Chu Yao’s beast-type martial spirit!

“Keeeekee!”

The purple mink leaped towards the opponent but a Level 20 Battle Spirit’s martial spirit was nowhere near the strength of a Swift Wolf. With a single swipe by the wolf, it was flung away towards the bushes. Chu Yao fell onto floor with a meek cry and raised her dagger to guard her neck as the Swift Wolf opened its jaws to chomp down at the girl!

“HUNNN!”

Right as the wolf’s teeth landed on the dagger, suddenly the dagger shook as a shadow of a wolf leaped out from within and crashed into the Swift Wolf.

With a loud blast, the Swift Wolf was forced to take a step back.

Chu Yao looked at the dagger in shock and saw that its luster dimmed slightly after that attack. She couldn't believe that the beast spirit infused in the dagger would save her life.

.....

The Swift Wolf was wounded but not dead. With a flip, it turned towards Lin Mu Yu, who was behind it.

Seeing this, Lin Mu Yu quickly wielded his sword with both hands and used all the strength in his body to stab at the wolf. With a tearing sound, the steel sword pierced the Swift Wolf's body but seemingly was unable to kill it. The wolf ferociously swung its claws in front of Lin Mu Yu's chest , and in a blink of an eye, left behind rows of heart-wrenching wounds. Struggling to fend off the Swift Wolf as it inflicted immense pain onto him, Lin Mu Yu grabbed a fallen arrow and stabbed towards the wolf's belly.

"Huuuuhuu!"

The arrow covered in paralysis poison pierced through the wolf's skin; at the same time, although the wolf was whimpering in pain, it was still ferociously trying to bite at Lin Mu Yu with its mouth opened wide. Lin Mu Yu did not dare to even show his head, because if the wolf was able to bite down on his neck, this life of his was going to end there and then.

Just like this, the stalemate lasted for half a minute until the Swift Wolf's moments began to slow down, as the paralysis poison

finally took effect. But right as Lin Mu Yu lowered his guard, the wolf quickly went at his neck with a bite.

In the blink of an eye, Lin Mu Yu faced the threat of death. Not knowing where he suddenly obtained the strength, he hastily put up his fist and struck at the wolf.

“Booom!”

In the split second his punch made contact with the wolf, a mysterious energy danced around his fist as if it was bending the space around it. At the same time, a chime sounded in Lin Mu Yu’s head:

First Star: Mortal Turmoil!

[TL: This was originally called “First Luminary: Turmoil of The Mortal Plane” in the GT translation.]

This was… the Mystical Strength of Seven Stars?

The Swift Wolf cried out painfully as it flew back from the strike. Its internal organs were shattered into powder with a single punch. Lin Mu Yu knew that not even a sharp sword could pierce the wolf’s tough skin with ease, yet his single punch had blasted the wolf’s skin to pieces!

If I can actually use the Mystical Strength of Seven Stars, won’t that be horrifying?

“Kaacha…”

Swinging down with his sword, a wolf’s head dropped ground. This 800-year-old Swift Wolf was finally killed by him and Chu Yao. Yet before Lin Mu Yu was able to rejoice, a wave of pain rushed forward from his chest. Looking down, he could only see a mess of flesh and blood; the wounds inflicted by the wolf was really too much!

“Ah Yu…”

Chu Yao was stunned at the sight of Lin Mu Yu’s powerful punch, but when she looked at the wounds on his body, she cried worryingly, “What do I do… what do I do….Ah Yu, you…”

Conversely, Lin Mu Yu was much calmer and took out a bottle of Gold Sore ointment to apply on his wounds to stop the bleeding. Slumped on the floor as if all his strength had dissipated, he said, “This hurts….if only I had tier 4 healing potions, then this wouldn’t be a big deal…”

Chu Yao wiped the tears on her face and laid next to him, “I’m so sorry….Ah Yu, it’s all my fault that I’m useless.”

Seeing this senior upperclassman crying at his side, Lin Mu Yu was speechless but felt warm in his heart. Gently stroking Chu Yao’s long hair, he comforted her smilingly, “I’m okay, I won’t die. Don’t worry too much, big sis Chu Yao.”

Chu Yao could only continue to blame herself. She was a Level 20 Battle Spirit, and in terms of martial training, she was far above Lin Mu Yu. Yet when they confronted the Swift Wolf, her own display couldn't even match half of his. For some reason this untrained kid was cruel and fierce with his attacks when they started fighting. Truthfully, it wasn't as if Chu Yao didn't know that everything he did was clearly to protect her.

……

Nearby, the Swift Wolf's beast spirit had gathered in the air.

Lin Mu Yu asked, "Big sis Chu Yao, why don't you refine that beast spirit?"

"That was your kill… I can't…" Chu Yao replied.

"It's alright." Lin Mu Yu faintly smiled, "Haven't you told me before? Only those with martial spirits can absorb beast spirit to use for refining their own martial spirits. I don't even have one, so how would I absorb it anyway?"

Chu Yao sat on one side as her eyes began to tear up, "Ah Yu, you don't have to be so great to me…."

"No. This is what I'm willing to do."

Chu Yao was deeply moved but due to her shyness as a young girl, she didn't know how to voice her feelings. So she just sat on one side and began to absorb the beast spirit. Truthfully, a 800-year-old beast spirit should be refined by an equally powerful Level 45 Battle Master, and in that case could be 100% absorbed. For a Level 20 Battle Spirit, she could probably absorb no more than 5% of the power, which is quite a waste.

……

Waiting for Chu Yao to finish refining the beast spirit, sunrise had already came. Lin Mu Yu's first tier Gold Sore medicine is indeed magical, as the wounds had closed and the pain had lessened quite a bit.

Picking up his sword, he quickly cut open the wolf's head, and the spirit stone was removed.

Chu Yao was rejoicing excitedly, "An 800-year-old spirit beast's chance to form a spirit stone is less than 20%. Our luck isn't half bad. When you start training in the future, this stone should come in handy for you."

"Aye."

Chu Yao stuffed the spirit stone into Lin Mu Yu's pouch and supported him by his arm, "We should go home now. It's been two days and two nights. Grandpa is definitely worried about us."

“You’re right.”

Lin Mu Yu stood up but surprisingly, his strength was surging within him. Is a heavily wounded person supposed to feel this lively?

As he walked, he kept repeating a notion in his mind:

Oh Seven Star Emperor, has you spirit already taken root in my heart? Why was it that when I was killing that wolf, the murderous intent in my heart was so heavy?

……

“Hua Wan and his guards escaped and have probably gone back to Silver Fir City.” Lin Mu Yu said.

Chu Yao nodded, “Yeah, what about it?”

“Hua Wan didn’t die, but Hawkeye’s crew had all died. Do you think Hua Wan will let us be?”

“This…” Chu Yao only came across this though now, and a chill passed through her heart, “Hua Wan is Lord Hua Tian’s son, if he knew we are still alive, he probably won’t let us live. We simply know too much of their dirty business.”

“Yeah.”

Lin Mu Yu frowned and said, “Maybe, Silver Fir City is no longer safe for us to live in.”

Chu Yao bit her lips, “But...for generations our family had lived in Silver Fir City. Bai Ling Pharmacy is Grandpa’s everything. Especially now that we have the Medicine God’s Index, we’ll be able to revive the family business. I don’t think Grandpa will be willing to leave Silver Fir City behind...”

“Then... let us go home first to discuss this with Grandpa.”

“Sounds good!”

Chapter 11 : Heaven Sealed Physique

Silver Fir City. Night had fallen but the city was lit up by lantern lights.

At this moment, a young man and a young woman both wearing tattered clothes walked up to the city gate. If not for Chu Yao's beautiful appearance, the two would have probably been mistaken as beggars.

Lin Mu Yu held a cane made from a branch in one hand while the other covered the wound on his chest. Although his face and clothes were covered in blood, not a bit of embarrassment can be seen on his handsome face. The longbow and the quiver on his back, in addition to the two wild rabbits in his hand, made him out to look no different from a regular hunter. Thus the city guards didn't give the two travellers too much trouble, thinking they were just a pair of wounded hunters, and let them into the city.

……

It was quite late when they finally returned to Bai Ling Pharmacy, but when Chu Yao simply called for Grandpa at the door, the main doors immediately shot open. Chu Feng appeared in the yard with a worried look on his face with both of his eyes bloodshot and his body stiff. When he finally saw that Chu Yao was safe and sound, he was finally able to loosen up and asked, "Ah Yao…. Where have you two been? You two had been missing for two days and two nights, I had almost looked through the whole Silver Fir City for you two…"

Feeling unsteady, Chu Yao weakly said, “Grandpa, Ah Yu and I are both hurt. Could you ask Luo Kai to make food and send it to Ah Yu’s room? We can talk inside about those small details.”

Chu Feng nodded, “Okay.”

Luo Kai was the youngest disciple at Bai Ling Pharmacy. He was only 17 years old, but he was also very sharp. Straightaway, he went to prepare something for them to eat. Chu Feng supported Chu Yao, and looked at Lin Mu Yu. He couldn’t hold himself back from asking, “Ah Yu, how are your wounds?”

Lin Mu Yu simply responded, “Let’s talk inside.”

Arriving at his room, Lin Mu Yu and Chu Yao sat side by side on the edge of the bed. Chu Feng also slowly sat down in a wicker chair and asked frantically, “What happened exactly? Why were the two of you gone for so long?”

Chu Yao immediately explained the events of the last two days.

Upon hearing the recollection, Chu Feng was grinding his teeth in hatred, “I never would have thought… To think young lord Hua Wan would have such a disregard for the law… and that those blasted mercenaries would treat human life-like grass. It’s as if the empire’s laws are just fun and games for them. They are disgusting!”

Lin Mu Yu pulled out the Medicine God’s Index from his shirt

and carefully held the tattered book in his hand, “Grandpa, see if you can understand any of this.”

Chu Feng accepted the book, but with just a glance at the first page, his body shuddered in reaction. His face blushing with a wild excitement, he exclaimed, “Medicine God’s Index... the real Medicine God’s Index... the acclaimed treasure of the past Medicine God Wang Yi. By the gods, there are countless others dreaming about obtaining this index, and you two actually found it!”

Chu Yao frowned, “Grandpa, I couldn’t understand much of the words inside. The recipes also seemed to be too deep for me.”

Chu Feng smiled, “That is to be expected, much of the recipes inside the Medicine God’s Index are at least Rank 5 and above. It would be more surprising had you been able to understand it.”

As he spoke, Chu Feng leaned close while holding the oil lamp, and spoke to Lin Mu Yu in a caring manner, “Ah Yu, remove your clothes and let grandpa see your wounds.”

Lin Mu Yu obediently removed his shirt and the crisscross of a dozen wolf claw slashes appeared on his bare chest. Chu Feng looked at his pityingly and asked, “Poor child, you definitely felt an immense level of pain at that time, am I right?”

“It was ok.... I just didn’t want to become the dinner for that Swift Wolf.”

“You really killed an 800-year-old Swift Wolf?”

“Yeah…” Chu Yao followed, “I remember, at that time Ah Yu was covered in blood and was able to execute this horrifying punch. I almost couldn’t believe it when it blasted the Swift Wolf’s internal organs out of its body. Grandpa, I feel like Ah Yu’s potential is far greater than mine. Perhaps… He is actually someone fit to train in martial arts.”

“Really?”

Chu Feng’s muddled eyes suddenly lit up and asked in joy, “Ah Yu, do you want to learn martial arts? If you want, I can bring you to Silver Fir City’s Holy Temple to identify your power level. It doesn’t matter how much it is going to cost, Grandpa is definitely going hire the best mentor at the temple to train you in martial arts. How does that sound?”

“Grandpa, I’m willing to try.” Lin Mu Yu seriously nodded. He already knew that those without strength in this dog-eat-dog world are only going to be trampled upon by the strong.

“Good, we’ll leave at the crack of dawn so we’ll be able to come back at noon to enter the Pharmacopoeia General Assembly!”

“We’re still going to enter the Pharmacopoeia General Assembly?”

Lin Mu Yu furrowed his brows and stated, “If Hua Wan

recognizes Chu Yao and I, he will definitely not let us go in peace."

"We MUST enter!" Chu Feng was very decisive in his response, "But Ah Yu, you don't have to worry. No one is going to hurt you two tomorrow, plus if our medicine can receive a good ranking and be picked as one of the chosen pharmacies of the Emperor's Representative, then we'll be even more protected."

"The Emperor's Representative?"

"Yes." Looking at the dumbfounded youngster, Chu Feng faintly smiled and explained, "This news has already been spread throughout Silver Fir City. The Capital is going to send a special representative to this year's Pharmacopoeia General Assembly and will be promoting the top 3 ranked pharmacies to royal pharmacies. If we can obtain that title, then no one will be able to touch us. Hua Wan won't be able to, neither will his father Hua Tian. Plus, my good friend is also going to come to Silver Fir City with the special representative!"

"Alright then, we'll listen to Grandpa's plan."

Not long after, Luo Kai brought in their dinner. Chu Yao and Lin Mu Yu had been starving, thus they quickly ate everything and went to sleep back in their own rooms.

It was midnight, but Chu Feng had yet to close his eyes. Instead, he held the Medicine God's Index as if intoxicated by the book.

After a long time, he looked at the small bottle of beast blood on his desk. That was a bottle of Bloodlust Tiger's blood, intense and never settling, the blood bubbled as if boiling. It was collected by Lin Mu Yu after the tiger had died, for a total of a dozen bottles of an excellent rank 5 medicinal ingredient. Right then, Chu Feng decided to refine a bottle of Super Strength potion.

Super Strength potion, the more powerful version of the Strength potion, was able to release even great amount of the user's potential. It allowed the user to make use of unprecedented amounts of power for a short time.

Following the recipe in the Medicine God's Index, Chu Feng studied the production process for the whole night.

Lastly, at the crack of dawn, two bottles of completed Super Strength potions were set on one side of the desk.

……

"Ah Yu, we're going!"

Knocking on the door to Lin Mu Yu's room, Chu Feng was like a child as he pulled Lin Mu Yu out into the yard when the youngster's door finally opened. Today was like a rebirth for Chu Feng. He has not been this happy for a long time.

There was only one Holy Temple in Silver Fir City, commonly referred to as the Temple. It was a martial artist's most holy place.

Almost all of the most powerful warriors came from the Temple.

When Chu Feng brought Lin Mu Yu to the Temple, there was only an instructor on guarding duty. He was a man of about 30 years old with a pair of rat-like eyes. No matter how you look at him, he did not seem like a good person. Striking the table, he said, “You want to test your power level? One silver Yin.”

Chu Feng immediately placed down a silver Yin coin and turned to Lin Mu Yu, “Quickly!”

The instructor looked at Lin Mu Yu but found that there was barely any power surrounding him; even more so, he could not feel the power of a martial spirit fluctuate inside. It was very strange, unless the youngster basically had no power of any kind. He pushed a crystal ball forward and said, “Put your hand on top of this, and then focus the greatest amount of power that you have onto the testing crystal.”

Lin Mu Yu obediently placed his hand atop the crystal ball and channeled the energy within him into his palm. It was similar to using Sublimation Hands, and momentarily the crystal glowed with a bright light as the measuring device next to it was frantically reacting to the energy.

“No way... A power fluctuation that powerful?” The instructor was shocked by the situation.

But the good times did not last long, a few seconds later, the measuring crystal dimmed out while not even one mark was left on

the recording device.

“Hahahahahaha… What a joke, this is too funny. What a huge trick by the gods, hahahahaha…” The instructor suddenly started laughing wildly.

Surprised, Chu Feng asked with confused eyes, “Excuse me, but what happened exactly?”

The instructor glanced at Lin Mu Yu and said, “This kid’s inner strength is super intense. You could say it’s the most impressive one that I’ve seen in all my life. But it’s a shame, because his physique is the ‘Heaven Sealed’ kind told in legends.

“Heaven Sealed?” Chu Feng was stunned once more.

The instructor continued to laugh, “Heaven Sealed simply means that one is naturally disabled in martial arts. His arteries and veins were naturally sealed, thus is unable to quickly refine energy. He would also be unable to learn or use battle skills. It’s really quite a shame. Old fellow, why don’t you just bring him home. The kid is naturally not fit to learn martial arts.”

Within a second, Lin Mu Yu felt as if he had fallen to the bottom of a pit. To be a ‘Heaven Sealed’, wasn’t this a bit too harsh to be a god’s joke?

“Ah Yu… I’m sorry…”

On the returning walk, Chu Feng restlessly tried to comfort Lin Mu Yu, only for Lin Mu Yu to comfort him in return, “Grandpa, it’s alright. Even if I can’t train in martial arts, at least I can still do alchemy. It’s the same.”

……

In side the Temple, a man wearing a suit of flame-red leather armor looked out the window. Eyes filled with a naked light, he removed his gloves and placed them onto his desk. With a smile, he chuckled to himself, “Heaven Sealed? Heh…It’s been at least a thousand years since the last appearance of this rare strain. Heaven Sealed…hahaha…”

At his side, a soldier stood waiting with a new set of clothes and said, “General Ning, the Pharmacopoeia General Assembly is about to begin. Please change as the lord is already waiting at the Lord’s Manor to receive the Emperor’s representative together with you, sir.”

“Alright then!”

……

Pharmacopoeia General Assembly, commonly known as the Festival of Silver Fir City. This year’s assembly even received the Capital’s attention, since the Emperor personally sent his representative to visit the city. It was easy to see how much the assembly is valued by the empire.

Bai Ling Pharmacy's disciples were all full of joy. They prepared a total of 4 units of medicine for the competition: Chu Feng's Super Strength potion, Lin Mu Yu's Stone Skin potion, Chu Yao and Wang Ying's healing potions. The focus was on Chu Feng's Super Strength potion since it was a Rank 5 potion, they should have a shot at placing into the top ranks.

The General Assembly was taking place on the open field in front of the Lord's Manor. When Lin Mu Yu and the group arrived, hundreds of other pharmacies' people have arrived, as well as countless civilians viewing the event. Although Silver Fir City was a small-sized city, it became extraordinarily busy because of today's event.

……

"I heard an emperor's representative is going to come watch the event today. I don't know who it is, but it has to be an important official, right?" The civilians all chimed in on the debate.

"Yeah, or how else could they possibly be the emperor's representative?"

Following the crowd's expectant eyes, a convoy of troops slowly arrived. Leading the front were the heavily armored cavalry troops, following close behind were light-armored sword-wielding guards, and at the end, was a 6-drive carriage. At that sight, Chu Yao was surprised, "It's a 6-horse drive? When the Emperor tours the country, his carriage is but a 9-horse drive, who could this be?"

But Lin Mu Yu was able to see the flag raised on the side of the carriage and the large “Tang” character on the flag.

“Tang?” Wang Ying was also shocked, “A 6-drive eminence, and is from the Tang family, it can’t possibly be Tang Cang, the Duke of Azure Tide?”

TL note: Azure Tide is a translation of the title 沧澜.

Chu Feng quickly scolded him, “Wang Ying quit spitting nonsense. Is the name of the Duke of Azure Tide something you can directly call?”

Wang Ying lowered his head in apology, “I’m sorry, master.”

……

Right then, the carriage slowly came to a stop in front of the Lord’s Manor. With the lift of the curtain, a dress wearing young girl appeared in everyone’s view. The dress was very peculiar and an exquisite pattern was sown on it. With a single look, everyone could tell it was a carefully made dress. And beneath the dress were a pair of white-jade-like slender legs without any hints of imperfection. It was as if a goddess had descended, this young girl had the countenance of a heavenly beauty, one that was enough to make people short of breath.

And just as everyone was stunned at the sight, she had already jumped off the carriage with a single turn. A pair of dainty small

boots stepped on the brick floor as she smilingly chuckled, “We’re finally here. I thought my butt was going to blossom like a flower from sitting for so long…”

Everyone almost simultaneously fell over. Who would have thought that a graceful beauty with such a heavenly countenance could speak so playfully and vulgarly.

……

Silver Fir City’s Lord Hua Tian walked up with a group of officials following behind him and knelt down on the ground holding his fist in a bow.

“Subject Hua Tian. Paying respect to Princess Xi!”

Chapter 12 : Getting First Place

“I… I can’t believe it’s Tang Xiao Xi! By the gods…”

On one side, Zhao Xin’s face was flushed with excitement. Staring at the beautiful maiden from far away, it was as if he had lost control of his body.

Lin Mu Yu asked with a puzzled face, “Tang Xiao Xi? Who’s that?”

Zhao Xin gave him a questioning look and responded, “Ah Yu, you don’t know who Tang Xiao Xi is? She was ranked second of the Capital’s Top Ten Beauty Ranking and you don’t even recognize her?”

“Top Ten Beauty Rankings….” Lin Mu Yu seemed to have understood something: So this kind of ranking also exist in this world…

Zhao Xin looked from afar with a infatuated look on his face and remarked, “Tang Xiao Xi’s beauty… There is probably no one in Silver Fir City that can be compared to her…”

This point was something Lin Mu Yu also agreed on. Tang Xiao Xi was definitely a national treasure in terms of her alluring appearance, plus she also seemed to be quite a spirited young girl. Frankly, Chu Yao, who was standing next to him, was slightly

inferior in comparison.

……

“Lower your heads!”

Chu Feng softly scolded, “Stop staring, you nimwits. Desecrating the appearance of the princess is a punishable offense!”

One after another, the apprentices lowered their heads. Two meter away, Tang Xiao Xi walked by as a pair of cute little boots could be seen, as well as the 20cm “absolute domain” between the boots and her skirt. Her smooth toned flesh was as white as snow. With just one glance, Lin Mu Yu was already in a slight daze. This is bad! It’s too enchanting!

Tang Xiao Xi walked in front, and following behind was a white-robed, lightly-armored old man who seemed to be around 60 years of age. His face was one that seemed to have weathered the vicissitudes of life while an aura, powerful but restrained, could be felt emanating from him. With one look, anyone could tell he was an expert. Hand lightly resting on the sword on his side, he followed closely behind Tang Xiao Xi.

Hua Tian saluted him with respect and smiled, “Elder Qu, Been a while!”

The old man smiled in return, “Lord Hua Tian is managing Silver Fir City quite well. For the emperor to send Princess Xi to inspect

the event, it is easy to see how much the Majesty trusts you. I suppose we should say it's a joyous occasion for both of us."

Hua Tian was smiling from ear to ear and said, "Please come this way, Elder Qu. The assembly is about to begin."

……

Right as this "Elder Qu" walked past the crowd, his eyes landed on Chu Feng. Immediate stopping to salute in respect, he laughed, "Old buddy, don't remember me anymore?"

Chu Feng similarly laughed, "Old Qu, what is that supposed to mean? I was afraid you weren't going to remember me!"

The two saluted each other once more and said:

"The assembly is about to begin. Let's talk after the event. I still have to discuss with you about a few things related to medicinal alchemy."

"Sounds good, I'll prepare dinner at my humble abode."

"Very good. Drink until we drop!"

……

Only after Elder Qu left, had Lin Mu Yu asked, “Grandpa, who was that? With that powerful aura, he must be very strong, right?”

Chu Feng responded, “Elder Qu, Sacred realm Level 94. Of course he is strong.”

“So that’s Qu Chu from the White-Robe Imperial Forest Guard…” Zhao Xin uttered in surprise, “I heard he was an ordinary peasant without any support from any financial groups. To train himself to this level is truly amazing. Even within the whole empire, there is only a few Sacred Realm warriors. This Qu Chu can presumably be considered one of the few!”

Chu Feng looked at Lin Mu Yu with pity in his eyes and sighed, “Ah Yu… Originally I had thought that you would be able to further your martial arts training, so I planned to ask Qu Chu to bring you along to train you and to enlighten you in martial arts. But it’s a shame that you have a heaven sealed physique…”

A long sigh alluded to the old man’s newly gained hope was shattered once more. Chu Feng always thought that although his granddaughter Chu Yao was naturally talented, she was still a girl. No matter how hard she trained, she would still never reach the level of a man. That’s why he had recently placed his hopes on Lin Mu Yu, but no one could have anticipated that Lin Mu Yu’s physique is totally incapable of training in martial arts.

Standing besides him, Chu Yao also comforted, “Ah Yu, it’s okay. If we train hard enough, we’ll definitely break through one day. I’m not going to believe in some legend!”

Lin Mu Yu faintly smiled back, “Mhm, I know.”

Although he didn’t show it on his face, the revelation did strike him quite hard deep down. But Lin Mu Yu had an air of haughtiness in his bones. Never willing to admit defeat, he had never took to believe that he can’t train in martial arts because of his heaven sealed physique. If he just stayed motivated and worked hard, there was nothing in the world that can’t be done, right?

……

Following the announcement of an officer, the Pharmacopeia General Assembly officially commenced. Each pharmacy had a tiny “display stand” to place their concoctions on top of it. They were really just rows of tables set up in wait of the arbitrating officers.

A few robed men walked down the stage and past the rows of tables. Each held a strange device in their hand which looked like a glass stick. They stabbed the device into each bottle of medicine and loudly shouted the corresponding level and tier of the medicine.

(TL note: Level signifies the difficulty while tier denotes the quality.)

“Ping Nan Pharmacy, Level 4 Healing Potion, 6th Tier!”

“Cang Hu Pharmacy, Level 4 Stoneskin Potion, 5th Tier!”

“Tian Qing Pharmacy, Level 5 Godly Recovery Potion, 4th Tier!”

……

After the grading of many pharmacies, the officer finally arrived at God Wing Pharmacy’s table. That was the young lord’s pharmacy. The arbitrator saluted before examining the potion in front of him and loudly yelled out, “God Wing Pharmacy, Level 5 Godly Recovery Potion, 2nd Tier! Level 6 Force Potion, 4th Tier! Level 7 Slumber Potion, 4th Tier!”

Those were probably the potions of the highest level and quality at this event.

Immediately, cheers and congratulations were sent around. Even Qu Chu had congratulated while stroking his white beard, “What a surprise. For Lord Hua Tian to have alchemized a 4th Tier Level 7 potion, this is great news. I’m afraid in a few years, Lord, you will probably be promoted to Medicine King! Haha.”

Hua Tian humbly smiled, “I wouldn’t say that. I only alchemized a 4th Tier Level 7 potion by chance.”

Right then, the arbitrating officers continued down the rows.

Finally, one arbitrator arrived at Bai Ling Pharmacy’s table. Using the glass stick to examine Chu Feng’s potion, an expression of disbelief washed over his face. Without a pause, he examined

Lin Mu Yu's Stoneskin Potion, and the look of shock was even greater this time. Loudly, he announced, "Bai Ling Pharmacy, Level 5 Super Strength Potion, 3rd Tier! Level 4 Stoneskin Potion, 1st Tier!"

"WHAT!?"

Qu Chu sat up from his chair as his eyes glowed with excitement, "Who... Who made the 1st Tier Level 4 potion?"

Tang Xiao Xi was even more excited as she immediately jumped up and dashed down the viewing stage. Running straight at Lin Mu Yu's table, Qu Chu and a few guards hurriedly followed behind the spirited young princess.

"Slow down, Princess Xi!" Qu Chu yelled.

Tang Xiao Xi was really fast, so fast that it was a bit shocking. With just two arrow steps, she had already arrived in front of Bai Ling Pharmacy's table. Holding up the bottle of Stoneskin potion, she exclaimed, "It's a first tier Stoneskin Potion... I couldn't possibly let a rarity like this slip past my fingers."

Qu Chu grunted, "I know, but that was too rash of you, Princess. If something were to happen to you, how would I explain it to your grandfather? I had promised your safety with my own honor."

Tang Xiao Xi paid no attention to Qu Chu as she focused on the Stoneskin potion. Looking up, she looked at Lin Mu Yu with her

starry eyes and asked, “This Stoneskin potion, did you make this?”

Lin Mu Yu was panicking a little because of her gaze and nodded, “Ye-yeah…”

“Hee…”

A brilliant smile blossomed on Tang Xiao Xi’s face as she spoke, “You don’t look very old, yet you’re able to refine 1st Tier medicine. That’s really awesome. Can I try this bottle of Stoneskin potion?”

“Sure…” There was no way Lin Mu Yu would have dared to refuse, as the tough-looking guards standing behind her were glaring at him the whole time. Each one’s strength was probably a hundred times that of Hawkeye. He didn’t want to die young.

Tang Xiao Xi splashed a portion of the potion on her wrist, and a few seconds later the potion took effect to greatly boost defense. She smacked her hand a few times and noted, “Wow, I really can’t feel it anymore…”

Opening her palm, a stream of flames rose up as an illusory firefox wrapped around her arm. This girl actually had a martial spirit! It didn’t look like a low level one either. Aiming at the Stoneskin-affected left wrist, she punched down with her martial spirit!

Bang!

She clenched her teeth in pain and joked, “Wow, amazing… That only hurt a little, if…if I take a bath with this kind of Stoneskin potion, won’t I become invincible?”

Lin Mu Yu awkwardly looked at the girl’s cute bust thinking that if it became permanently stiff after the bath, it would be quite a shame. But these were not words that he dared to say aloud, so he responded, “Princess, the duration of potion effects are determined by the user’s physique. The stronger one’s physique, the longer the duration. But there is definitely a time limit.”

“Oh…Is that so?”

Tang Xiao Xi disappointedly lamented, “Grandfather always scold me about hurting myself during training. I thought this first tier Stoneskin potion could save me! Heehee, but it’s still fine. I’m going to test its defensive capabilities again!”

As she spoke, she pulled out the sword of a nearby guard, and lightly swung at her left wrist.

“Ah…”

She frowned, “Oh, I’m bleeding…”

Lin Mu Yu wanted to go dig a hole to die in, “Princess, you…”

Qu Chu frantically petitioned, “Princess, let’s quickly go back to our seats. This isn’t a place for you to be.”

……

When Tang Xiao Xi and Qu Chu returned to their seats, Lin Mu Yu looked in front of him only to see Hua Wan staring at him with a ruthless gaze that would have killed him if looks could kill. Crap, looks like I stole the young lord’s moment.

After nearly two hours, the examination period was finally over.

Hua Tian asked, “Princess Xi, who do you think… the first three places should go to?”

Tang Xiao Xi’s mouth lifted into a smile, “That 1st Tier Stoneskin potion was pretty interesting. That person was called Lin Mu Yu right? I think… he should be first place. What do you think?”

Naturally, Hua Tian didn’t want to agree, but still bowed, “Princess Xi is the special representative, so your wish is my command. We’ll award Bai Ling pharmacy first place in this year’s Pharmacopeia General Assembly!”

“Good.”

As such, Hua Tian stood up as he channeled energy into his voice, and loudly announced, “The majesty sent Princess Xi as the special envoy to visit Silver Fir City and allowed us to be in her grace.

Today's results have been finalized! First place is Bai Ling Pharmacy's Lin Mu Yu, second place is God Wing Pharmacy's Hua Wan, third place is Tian Qing Pharmacy's Liu Ge!"

Continuing on, Hua Tian smilingly announced, "This year's subsidies are as followed: Special approval, Bai Ling Pharmacy will receive 100 gold Yin as operation funds, as well as permitting the sales of their potions at the auction house. Also, this year's Discount Token is still being awarded to the winner of the martial art competition between the younger generation.

……

"This is great!" Zhao Xin, Luo Kai, and the rest were rejoicing in glee.

Yet Lin Mu Yu was silently brooding: this really isn't a good thing.

Chapter 13 : Challenging A Stronger Opponent

“Grandpa, what’s a Discount Token?” Lin Mu Yu asked.

Chu Feng spoke with flushed cheeks, “The Discount Token is the real treasure of this event. The Empire’s Panacea Division sent out a total of 10 Discount Tokens and there is only one of these tokens in the whole Silver Fir City. Whoever has the Discount Token can get at least a 50% discount at any herbal shop, which is pretty much the special benefit only those in the Panacea Division can enjoy. Of course, only the best of the best can get their hands on these Exemption Tokens.”

Next to him, Chu Yao showed a sliver of displeasure as she complained, “It’s a shame because the rules in Silver Fir City is that only the best alchemists younger than 30 years old can enter the martial arts competition. It’s quite fitting of the phrase, “only the best are skillful in both alchemy and martial arts.’ The only problem is that of all the younger generation of alchemists in Silver Fir City, Hua Wan’s martial training is the highest. As a Level 29 Battle Spirit, there is no one else capable of matching him.”

Surprised, Lin Mu Yu asked, “As a Level 20 Battle Spirit, how are your chances in a fight with him?”

Chu Yao clenched her teeth and grimaced, “My martial spirit is far weaker than his, plus Lord Hua Tian invited many powerful mentors to train this dear son of his. And I...I have never learned any fighting techniques...”

“Never learned…Wait, why is that?”

Chu Feng sighed, “You can blame this useless grandfather. Books for fighting techniques are too expensive. A slightly good copy costs at least 10 gold Yin, but where could our Bai Ling Pharmacy find that kind of money… And because Ah Yao is a girl, I didn’t have many plans for her to train in martial arts.”

Looking at Hua Tian stand on the stage, Luo Kai expressed his discontent as he raised his fist and declared, “No matter what happens we’ll have to at least go for it. If Bai Ling Pharmacy can really win the Discount Token, then things might really start turning around for us.”

Chu Feng was silent and lost in deep thought.

……

It was evening when Bai Ling Pharmacy welcomed their guests.

The White-Robed Qu Chu arrived and was invited to the guest room by Grandpa Chu Feng. Following behind him was an even more prominent guest. Unbelievably, that picturesque beauty of a young girl also came to visit. The legendary 2nd beauty of the Empire, Tang Xiao Xi, was only 19 years old and already an absolute beauty. Something like this is really too rare.

The apprentices were all organizing herbs, Lin Mu Yu included,

while Chu Yao went to prepare tea.

Luo Kai looked at the guest room and stuck out his tongue, jokingly he laughed, “Zhao Xin, that’s Qu Chu? The legendary White-Robed Qu Chu? He looks like a regular old man. He isn’t as awesome as the legends make him out to be!”

Zhao Xin immediately smacked him on the head and laughed, “You dimwit, don’t make irresponsible remarks. Flame Cauldron Qu Chu; there is no one on this earth that’s never heard of him. Especially now that he is a member of the White-Robed Imperial Guards and is responsible for protecting the safety of the emperor. There is only a handful of people who can wear those white robes in the whole empire.”

“Why is he called Flame Cauldron Qu Chu?” Lin Mu Yu asked.

“It’s because his martial spirit is called the Flame Cauldron, 3rd class martial spirit. According to some stories, he once defeated two Sacred realm enemies with that Flame Cauldron.” Wang Ying spoke as he mockingly looked at Lin Mu Yu, “Ah Yu, you have a heaven sealed physique; unable to train in martial arts, it’s probably better if you don’t think too much about it. Especially since your body is about as good as garbage, you probably can’t have a martial spirit either. Isn’t that right?”

His eyes could not conceal his contempt, but Lin Mu Yu didn’t pay him any mind and continued to organize medicine.

……

Inside the guest room, Chu Feng smiled as he poured tea into a cup, “Old Qu, come try this Clear Dew Tea, it’s a type of herbal tea. Its taste is fresh upon drinking, and the water was condensed from dew. Princess Xi, won’t you try some as well?”

Tang Xiao Xi took a small sip and stuck out her tongue, “I don’t really know how to drink tea. Grandfather would always waste a lot of time when he prepares tea, and the resulting tea would often be too bitter and tart.”

Qu Chu couldn’t hold back his smile as he wore a doting expression on his face, “Heh, that’s because you don’t understand how to properly enjoy tea. Do you think that tea made by the Duke of Azure Tide is something an average person can have a chance to taste?”

As he spoke, he took a sip of the dew tea, and couldn’t help but praise, “Nice tea, truly refreshing. Ah, that’s right. This…is Chu Yao right? I can’t believe in the blink of an eye you’ve grown so big. The last time I was here at Silver Fir City, you were still a little baby!”

Chu Yao softly chuckled, “Elder Qu and Grandpa are acquaintances of twenty years. Of course I would be so young at that time.”

Qu Chu laughed aloud, and asked, “Brother Chu Feng, after all these years, how have you been? Looks like you are still a medicine adept and still as impoverished as in the past. There is really not

much you could do to change how things are."

Chu Feng awkwardly chuckled, "Sigh, my old bones only know to pick herbs in the mountains and to collect dew in the twilight. My body is too weak, so I can't personally collect much of the higher grade herbs, nor do I have the money to buy them from someone else. Thus here I am, in the same place as always."

"Today, that apprentice of yours, called Lin Mu Yu. Did he really alchemize that bottle of first tier potion?"

"Yeah, Ah Yu is a natural talent, it's just a pity that..."

"What's wrong?" Qu Chu asked in surprise.

Chu Feng continued, "It's a pity that although he is talented, he has a heaven sealed physique. His energy channels are naturally sealed, so he is unable to channel energy at all. That's why the mentor at the Temple said he can never learn martial arts."

"Really?" Qu Chu looked outside at the group of apprentices and couldn't help but laugh, "I don't quite see it."

Chu Feng immediately stood up and bowed in respect at Qu Chu.

"Brother Chu Feng, what are you doing!?" Qu Chu immediately stood up and scolded.

Chu Feng took a deep breath and pleaded, “Old Qu, I won’t hide it from you. I’m already an old sack of bones, so shouldering this kind of humiliation isn’t a big deal. But for Ah Yao and Ah Yu, their lives should not be buried by the hands of bad people. The reason I asked you to come this time was all for this one favor. I beg of you to take in Ah Yao and Ah Yu as disciples!”

“This…” Qu Chu had a difficult expression on his face, “This time…this time I had been asked by the Duke of Azure Tide to protect Princess Xi. Our next stop is the Capital Lanyan City, so I’m afraid we can’t stay in Silver Fir City for too long. To advise them seems plausible, but to take them in as disciples… I’m afraid I…”

As if noticing something, Tang Xiao Xi jokingly teased, “Grandpa Qu Chu, you have never taken in a disciple for your whole life, unless… you just want to be a grumpy old man forever?”

Qu Chu couldn’t keep up his countenance and complained, “Now you’re just making fun of me…”

Looking at Lin Mu Yu from a distance, Qu Chu could see a shadow of his own past on the young man. To be honest, he was really interested. For a youngster like Lin Mu Yu to be able to alchemize a first tier Stoneskin potion, he definitely wasn’t an average boy. It interested Qu Chu all the more when he was told that Lin Mu Yu had a heaven sealed physique. He had been challenging difficulties all through his life, and this time he really wanted to see if he can train a heaven sealed person into a strong warrior.

……

Right at that moment, loud chatter could be heard outside, followed by the front door being kicked open. A group of armor-wearing men walked inside the yard, with the young lord Hua Wan leading the way wearing his suit of traditional clothing.

“Bai Ling Pharmacy chief, Chu Feng. Come out to receive your award!”

Chu Feng hurried over. Tang Xiao Xi also wanted to go, but Qu Chu motioned for her to wait. He wanted to see what would happen in the meantime.

“Young lord!” Chu Feng bowed down in respect.

Hua Wan took a heavy purse from a servant and faintly smiled, “This is Bai Ling Pharmacy’s award: 100 gold Yin coins. Congratulations, but...”

He took out a black plate from his waistband, and mockingly laughed, “But this Discount Token is probably still mine this year. After all, Bai Ling Pharmacy’s apprentices are all trash. I doubt any of you can put up a fight.”

“What did you say?”

Zhao Xin was a bit hot-blooded, and growled, “Hua Wan. Watch what you’re saying!”

Hua Wan coldly chuckled, and threw the purse onto the floor. Crossing his fist, lines of energy wrapped around him and condensed into plates of spirit armor. His smile turned into a smirk as he taunted them, “What? You want to witness my strength firsthand? Fine with me, I’ll take all of you to the dumpster where you belong. This is better than having to waste time in the ring with your annoying faces at the tournament in three days.”

Zhao Xin howled in anger, “One versus one, you dare?”

“Why wouldn’t I?”

Hua Wan turned to the lackeys behind him and shouted, “All of you. Don’t move a finger. Even if I was to be beaten to death, none of you shall lend a hand!”

The group of martial arts saluted in respect, “Yes, young master!”

……

Hua Wan quickly laid out the ring and stood inside. With an air of an expert, without even pulling a weapon, he stood there with his bare fists and tauntingly laughed, “Come at me, trash!”

With a roar, Zhao Xin pulled an iron sword from his side and dashed out. Two layers of energy waves enveloped the blade, a characteristic trait of a Level 15 Human realm warrior. That was a little surprising for Hua Wan, but it only made Hua Wan more

certain that this person was definitely not a match for himself. The difference in power was too great!

Right when Zhao Xin's sword was about the make contact with Hua Wan, he quickly sidestepped and ruthlessly kicked at Zhao Xin's leg!

"Kaacha!"

With a cracking sound reverberating in the air, Zhao Xin fell on his knees and cried out in pain. Just like that, his tibia was shattered by one kick.

"Young lord!" Chu Feng yelled in anger, "What is the meaning of this? To attack so viciously, are you trying to kill him?"

Hua Wan raised an eyebrow and cheekily smirked, "Old fellow, if I really wanted to kill him, I would have gave him one good kick to the brain. It's your disciple who challenged so, so shut the hell up!"

Continuing on, he glanced at the group of Bai Ling Pharmacy's apprentices with an arrogant look and tauntingly asked, "Who else?"

Wang Ying clenched his teeth but didn't speak up. He was only a Level 17 Human realm practitioner, if he went up, he would probably end up the same way as Zhao Xin.

Just then, Lin Mu Yu slowly walked out and sternly looked at

Hua Wan. “You came here for me, what’s the point of hurting the unrelated?”

“I’m happy to. What? To cripple you bunch of trash is just dirtying my hand. What about it? You got a problem with that?”

Hua Wan had a ridiculing smile on his face as he continued, “Lin Mu Yu, I recently heard that you were identified as a heaven sealed physique at the temple. Hahaha. As expected, you are trash. So what if you know alchemy, trash is trash, fated to never go any further in life.”.

Lin Mu Yu did not respond, only to step forward to take the form of Starfall Step while raising his right palm. Although he had zero martial arts training, somehow he gave off the feeling of an expert. Calmly staring at Hua Wan, he said, “Come at me!”

……

Almost everyone thought Lin Mu Yu had gone crazy. He was level 0 but his opponent was level 29!

Chapter 14 : Silver Needle Technique

“Ah Yu!”

Chu Yao gasped and called out worryingly, “You have to be careful…”

……

In one corner of the guest room…

Tang Xiao Xi was peeking at the yard from a window slit while her smooth bottom perked up in the air. She excitedly commented, “Wow, that alchemist called Lin Mu Yu is gonna fight with Hua Wan. Qu Chu grandpa, who do you think is going to win?”

Qu Chu crossed his arms and didn’t bother to look at all. Although his eyes were shut, he was still monitoring the moments of the people in the yard. Faintly smiling, he said, “Hua Wan is emitting an air of arrogance whereas Lin Mu Yu is showing his unyielding character. Hua Wan’s true strength isn’t low, and in comparison, there is not a single ounce of fighting energy enveloping Lin Mu Yu. If I am to give my prediction, while Lin Mu Yu might have won in terms of his display, but in a real fight, he will definitely lose!”

Tang Xiao Xi stuck out her tongue without saying anything else.

……

“Hyah!”

Hua Wan initiated with a single fierce punch. Scorching-hot flame energy wrapped around his fist as he attacked. The display of power shocked the crowd. If this punch was to land on Lin Mu Yu, then he would be at least disabled if not outright killed by it..

But to everyone’s surprise, the punch struck air as it missed its target. That’s right, although he was a Human realm 3rd stage, Hua Wan’s punch actually failed to hit Lin Mu Yu. Furthermore, no one was able to see how Lin Mu Yu avoided it. All that they saw was a single flash as Lin Mu Yu landing firmly in an adjacent spot as if he was a meteor crashing upon earth.

“Huh?”

Having missed his attack, Hua Wan was momentarily confused at Lin Mu Yu’s movements. Without giving it another thought, he lashed out in anger and gave another punch.

Lin Mu Yu speedily lowered his body and bend backwards into a bridge. Skillfully avoiding the second attack, he made a quick turn followed by a heavy kick at Hua Wan’s ankle.

“Boom!”

Energy reverberated as Hua Wan staggered back yet Lin Mu Yu was the one who felt an excruciating pain coming from his feet.

Although the opponent is no match in terms of speed, in a match of physical strength, Lin Mu Yu was far too weak in comparison. The three stages of Human realm are simply direct strengthening of the body. First stage toughens the skin, second the flesh, and third the bones. Having trained to level 29, Hua Wan had arrived at the peak of bone strengthening. His body from the inside and out had already toughened to the likeness of steel. As such, there was no reason for Hua Wan to fear Lin Mu Yu's attacks.

This was the true display of the disparity in strength. Perhaps in other words, Lin Mu Yu's attack was not able to break through Hua Wan's natural defense at all.

"Heh!"

Hua Wan had also arrived at the same conclusion. He suddenly barked, "Are you done playing around?"

Hua Wan's body shook as energy moved around his body and a large hammer made up of lightning energy materialized into his hand.

"Lightning Hammer!" Chu Feng shouted in shock..

Chu Yao was about to cry as she bawled out, "Hua Wan, you are a shameless person. How can you use your martial spirit on someone that doesn't have a martial spirit. Stop this!"

Hua Wan did not care the slightest bit about what she said. He

couldn’t wait to kill Lin Mu Yu right away because if Lin Mu Yu was to die, there would be no one else in Silver Fir City who could fight for the title of the young generation’s number one alchemist.

“Vroom!”

Because Hua Wan had made up his mind to kill Lin Mu Yu, he continued to fight without stopping. Although he was using his bare fist to attack, his martial spirit also shot out at Lin Mu Yu with a fierce electric flow. Lin Mu Yu quickly used Starfall Steps to dodge but was just a bit too slow as the attack grazed his back. Immediately a patch of burning sensation washed over his back as his body was slightly numbed by the electricity. The lightning hammer is definitely something fierce!

With a quick side step, Lin Mu Yu soundlessly picked up a dry stick from the ground. It was a cutting of an iron pear flower branch. Although it was drained of all of its medicine cores, the branch was still tough and covered in sharp spikes. One thing was for certain, since the iron skin of the iron pear flower had been peeled off, the branch definitely would not conduct electricity.

“Bam!”

Unable to shift his momentum to dodge the parry, Hua Wan forcefully slammed down his fist onto the iron pear flower branch with murderous intent. The tremendous force of the attack pushed down on Lin Mu Yu. He felt a slight crunch in his chest as blood

rushed up his throat. Unwilling to show weakness, he swallowed the mouthful of blood. Shifting his feet, Lin Mu Yu used the Starfall Steps' rotation technique and magically hover in the air for split second. Turning around, he bashed the iron pear flower branch onto Hua Wan's face!

"Bang!"

Hua Wan instinctively reached for his cheeks as he felt an intense burning pain coming from his face. The needles on the iron pear flower was so sharp that it actually drew blood from a Human realm's third stage like Hua Wan. Although it was only a minor scratch, for someone like Hua Wan, that attack was like great humiliation. He became furious as he thought of how a piece of trash damaged his handsome face.

"I'm going to kill you!"

Hua Wan shouted a battle cry and spun in a rotary fashion. Waves of fire spouted out of his martial spirit Lightning Hammer as Hua Wan struck at Lin Mu Yu.

This time, not only did he use a martial spirit, he even used a fighting technique!

"It's Sweeping Flames!" Luo Kai yelled out in astonishment, "He's using a fight technique! Watch out!"

……

Hua Wan’s attack pressure was so fierce that not even Starfall Steps could be used to dodge it. But Lin Mu Yu didn’t want to dodge anyways. One cannot win simply by running away, he thought. Putting strength into his feet, he leapt off the ground and used the iron pear branch to parry the opponent’s attack..

A loud blast resounded while his clothes were quickly torn to pieces. The yet-to-heal wounds on his body once again started bleeding wildly. Hua Wan’s martial spirit was able to throw Lin Mu Yu into a tumble with just a single hit..

However, Hua Wan did not have time to congratulate himself when a red hot sensation grazed his left cheek!

“Paaah!”

The moment Lin Mu Yu fell backwards, he took one more swing at Hua Wan. Had he been holding a sword instead of a branch, Hua Wan would have been dead from that counter.

“You bastard! I’m going to slaughter you!”

Hua Wan furiously charged forward. Holding the lightning hammer high in the air, he was ready and poised to instantly launch an attack.

……

“Stop your hands!”

Right at that moment, Qu Chu walked out and stood in front of Lin Mu Yu.

But what kind of a person was Hua Wan? He had been pampered from a young age, so when would he have suffered this kind of humiliation? At this moment, he did not care who was standing before him, as he was willing to cut anyone down in order to get to Lin Mu Yu.

“Hun!”

A hint of anger appeared in Qu Chu’s eyes. Without moving his body, Qu Chu stood as fierce wind began to rise around him. It was his Winds of Raging Flames. The next moment, a gigantic transparent Flame Cauldron materialized around his body. That was the namesake of his legend as Qu Chu of the Flame Cauldron.

“Peng!”

Sparks flew. Hua Wan’s martial spirit dissipated the second it made contact with the cauldron. The difference in power was too great. His body was thrown back along with his martial spirit like a kite that had been unstrung.

……

Fallen heavily onto the floor, Hua Wan spat out a mouthful of blood as he looked up at Qu Chu, “Elder Qu, why are you helping this brat? What is the meaning of this?”

Qu Chu calmly declared, “Lin Mu Yu is a disciple of my old friend Chu Feng. I can’t stand around as you try to kill him. Young lord, there is a limit to how much one can go. If you really want to kill Lin Mu Yu, then you’ll need to come at me. If... perhaps your father doesn’t want to be the lord of this city any longer, I only need to put in a few words with the emperor. Getting rid of the lord of a tiny Silver Fir City is no different from stomping out an ant.”

Hua Wan fully understood the meaning beneath Qu Chu’s words. Following that, he then saw the beautiful Tang Xiao Xi appear out of the guest room. Instantly, his face became pale as a ghost and staggered to his feet. Gripping his fist and bowing in respect, he apologized, “I’m sorry Elder Qu. I was too excited in the moment of the fight when I was sparring with Lin Mu Yu. I hope Elder Qu will forgive my blunder.”

Qu Chu smiled as he exclaimed, “Being courageous and lively is a normal thing for youngsters. If young lord really wants to have a showdown with Lin Mu Yu, why not wait three days? At that time, if you really want to kill him, I won’t try to stop you. That is, if you can even kill him!”

Hua Wan turned away bitterly and left with his posse of city guards.

.....

Lin Mu Yu awkwardly stood up from the corner and asked, “Elder Qu, when you said to wait three days, what did you mean?”

Qu Chu smiled faintly, “Princess Xi has already trained to the stage of a Level 29 Battle Spirit. I am planning to bring her into the depths of the Seven Star Forest to further her training. Hopefully to find some applicable beast spirits for her to break through level 30. If you don’t mind it, I can bring you along and maybe give you some pointers toward your martial arts training. How does that sound?”

Chu Feng quickly responded in joy, “Ah Yu, why aren’t you immediately nodding your head?”

Thus Lin Mu Yu nodded to Qu Chu, “Thank you Elder Qu!”

Chu Yao looked at the young girl who was standing next to her as she thought to herself: This young girl is 6 years younger than me, at only 19 years old, yet she has already trained to the 29th level. Who knows how much stronger she will be in another 6 years? As if that wasn’t enough, she is also drop-dead gorgeous. She is already so… well endowed at this young age. For a perfect girl like her to exist, life really wants some people to die of self-pity.

Tang Xiao Xi was gleefully looking at Lin Mu Yu while thinking that if this dorky boy was going to join her on the trip into the Seven Star Forest, then at least the journey would not be boring as before. Flame Cauldron Qu Chu was a quiet person who mostly took care of himself. With Lin Mu Yu on the journey together,

maybe he could even alchemize a few potions on the way for her to play with. If nothing else, she could even get him to do tricks to entertain her, but this heartless girl would never openly exclaim that out loud.

Qu Chu's idea was even simpler. Lin Mu Yu looked to have unshaped potential. Both his attitude and his guts were quite appealing to Qu Chu's taste. Not to mention that this youngster seemingly had his unique outlook on the alchemy of medicines, so for an alchemy "newbie" like Qu Chu, perhaps he might even learn a thing or two from Lin Mu Yu in the next three days.

Lin Mu Yu's thought process was even simpler than Qu Chu's. With one attack, Qu Chu was able to overwhelmingly defeat Hua Wan, so this old fellow's strength is definitely admirable. There were no negatives to following Qu Chu to train. I want to become stronger! Become stronger! Become the strongest person in this world! Only I will have the right to bully others and none will bully me! It will only be days of bullying scum like Hua Wan from now on. This is the true freedom of life!

……

That night, after finishing dinner, Chu Yao was helping Lin Mu Yu pack his bags. It was quite simple: one set of clothing and a bit of dried food. In addition, she set aside Lin Mu Yu's steel sword and longbow as the Seven Star Forest wasn't a walk in the park. It was better to be safe than sorry.

Before leaving, Qu Chu hastily gave some pointers to Chu Yao and gave her a set of silver needles along with two book

respectively containing a map of pressure points and an index of medical techniques.

Chu Yao looked at the set of needles with a puzzled face and asked, “Grandpa Qu Chu, are these needles for sewing?”

Qu Chu shook his head, “No, those needles are for stabbing pressure points to save lives. Of course, if you can train the skill of needle technique to the extreme, you can probably use them as a hidden weapon for murderous intentions. I’ll explain the needle throwing technique tonight, so train well and refer to the body chart and medical index. It can save lives, and at the same time, can take them. I’ll leave it to you to figure out how you’ll use it.”

“Thank you, Grandpa!” Chu Yao rejoiced in happiness.

Chapter 15 : Violet Essence

“It’s time, Lin Mu Yu. Time to set off!”

Woken from his dream by Qu Chu’s heavy knocking, Lin Mu Yu immediately sat up and looked out the window. The stars were still shining in the night sky; at most this was three or four in the morning!

Not knowing why they were in such a hurry, Lin Mu Yu still obediently got off the bed and quickly dressed himself before hurrying out the door. He was yearning for greater strength and Qu Chu was someone who could give him great strength.

“Teacher, we’re setting off before the crack of dawn? I’ll greet grandpa and Chu Yao before leaving.”

“Don’t bother. Let’s go!”

In the dark of night, the white-robed Qu Chu unhesitantly said, “The day starts counting at the first light, so how long did you plan to sleep? On our return in three days, you can sleep all you want. Also, I am not your teacher; I’m just guiding you for three days. I, Qu Chu, will never take in a disciple in my life, so why don’t you continue calling me Elder Qu?”

“Okay.”

Lin Mu Yu followed him out to the yard. On his side, the noble

Tang Xiao Xi was also following Qu Chu. In her hand was a small sword, she handed Lin Mu Yu the reins of one of the two horses she was leading and said, “This horse is yours.”

“Oh?”

“A high-grade plains horse. Lucky you.” Tang Xiao Xi chuckled.

Lin Mu Yu turned to look at the mare. It wasn’t half bad; its body looked strong, the hairs were straight, and the eyes were spirited. With one look, anyone could tell it was a tough and sturdy horse. In comparison, Tang Xiao Xi’s mount was a pony with flame red hairs. Fittingly, it was petite and delicate like its rider.

Tang Xiao Xi seemingly read his mind, and couldn’t help but laugh, “Do you think my Thousand Mile Flame is really weak? How about we mount and try that out? I guarantee that I’ll be able to shake you off in 15 minutes!”

Lin Mu Yu was left speechless but he did not try to challenge this princess. So this flame-red pony was called Thousand Mile Flame. The name was quite fitting but whether it could realistically go a thousand mile was another question.

Qu Chu was leading his black horse in front. The hoofs were nailed with horseshoes and there was a brand of a purple Yin flower on its rump. That was a warhorse!

“We’ll leave Silver Fir City before dawn. I heard there is a buns

shop in the southern district, so we'll eat and set out." Qu Chu commanded.

"Alright." Lin Mu Yu cautiously conducted himself.

Whereas Tang Xiao Xi chuckled, "Old Qu, there is something else that is more delicious than the beef buns from the Capital?"

Qu Chu couldn't help but laugh as well, "Princess, now you're just joking around. The Capital's Yin flower beef is the best in the world. Even the emperor himself had personally tasted it. There is definitely no other who can match its taste."

"Yeah!" Tang Xiao Xi pursed her lips and said, "I'm missing Xiao Yin all of the sudden, now that we are talking about how everything is delicious in the Capital..."

Qu Chu responded, "We'll train inside the Seven Star Forest for 3 days so you can break through to level 30. After that, naturally we'll be returning to the Capital so you'll be able to see her highness then."

"Aye!"

.....

Leaving the city, the sky still had yet to brighten up. There was only a glimmer of light shining in the east. Keeping to his word, Qu Chu found a buns shop in the forest outside of the city. This area

was already nearing the entrance of the Seven Star Forest, so wild beasts often roamed about. A buns shop like this was probably opened to provide food for travelers or merchants. Although the sky was still dark, the employees inside had already been hurrying about and steaming buns.

"We'll have one serving for each of us. Also, pack three days' worth of provisions for three to go." Qu Chu readily called out his order.

The waiter was quite fast with the delivery. Soon, baskets of buns were laid out on the table and they were even meat filled! The last time Lin Mu Yu had meat was three days ago, so naturally he had quite the appetite for these meat buns. Sweeping up every last bit of food off of his basket, Lin Mu Yu's speed left Tang Xiao Xi stunned. She muttered, "Wow, Mu Mu, you look like a Funi that just came back to life!"

"Ha? What is a Funi?" Lin Mu Yu was befuddled both by what she said and why this little princess was calling him Mu Mu all of the sudden. It was quite a strange feeling, as Lin Mu Yu felt more familiarity from Tang Xiao Xi than the condescending air of an average noble. Were Tang Xiao Xi to be that kind of nobility, she would have been treating him like a servant, and probably would not have been willing to speak to him at all.

Qu Chu faintly smiled, "In legends, the Funi was a race of ancient creatures that was gluttonous and super strong. However, due to eating too much and becoming unable to move, they were all hunted by the King of Light and their pelts were used to make the king's robe."

Tang Xiao Xi grinned and stuck out her tongue before continuing to eat with tiny bites.

Finishing breakfast, Qu Chu stored the packed provisions into a bag on Lin Mu Yu's mount and said, "Let's quickly set off before dawn arrives!"

Unable to hold back his question, Lin Mu Yu asked, "Elder Qu, why are we hurrying in this manner?"

Qu Chu smiled and explained, "Because today, at the moment of sunrise, will be an unbearable time for you."

"Why is that?"

"In the half hour after sunrise, I have to awaken the martial spirit that is dormant deep within you!" Qu Chu's eyes lit up as he confidently boasted, "A martial artist without a martial spirit is no different from a piece of garbage. The old me had awoken mine at the age of 14 and Princess Xi had awoken her clan's bloodline spirit at the age of 9."

"What's a bloodline spirit?"

"Ah, I forgot you are a total newbie and will probably not understand anything." Qu Chu took a deep breath and began to explain, "The strength of a martial spirit largely depends on the ancestry. Xiao Xi was born from the Tang clan of Seven Seas and

awakened the Firefox martial spirit at the age of 9. Firefox, a second rank martial spirit, is the signature martial spirit of those in the bloodline of the Tang clan. The types of bloodline martial spirits are scarce; aside from the Firefox, there is the royal Qin family's bloodline spirit-the God Binding Lock, first rank martial spirit. A newly awakened God Binding Lock will already be able to enhance a person's training abilities by half fold. That is something an average person can't even dream of."

As he spoke, Qu Chu sighed as his eyes looked at Lin Mu Yu with sympathy, "You and I are both average people without that kind of ancestral bloodline, so we can only count on our own blood and sweat to train our martial spirits."

"Right."

Lin Mu Yu nodded. Qin family's martial spirit was as strong as he had expected. He thought back to the fight between the group of god realm warriors and the Seven Star Emperor, where the leader Qin Yi had used a God Binding Lock. However, although it was extremely powerful, it was still no match for the Seven Star Emperor.

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The three mounted riders quickly sped toward their destination. Before the crack of dawn, they had already entered the Seven Star Forest and arrived at the base of a small mountain. Hitching his warhorse next to him, Qu Chu led Lin Mu Yu and Tang Xiao Xi up the mountain. When they finally reached the small peak, they could already see the glowing whiteness rising from the horizon.

“Lin Mu Yu!” Qu Chu yelled.

“Here.”

“Manipulate the energy in your body and gather all that you can control in front of your chest. Quickly!”

“Yes!”

Lin Mu Yu took a deep breath and started to gather as much energy as he could. Countless particles pooled at his chest but like what the instructor in the Temple had said, his heaven sealed physique will not allow energy to run smoothly once they exited his energy center. The pressure started to build up as a suffocating feeling revolved around his chest. It felt like the pool of condensed energy was going to crush his ribs.

“Aghh…” He forcefully endured the excruciating pain as sweat rained down from his face.

“Now, release the power and relax your body. Release the energy buildup out of your chest!” Qu Chu’s voice was stern as usual.

Lin Mu Yu huffed as energy seeped out of his chest while his shirt flapped around wildly.

Tang Xiao Xi sat on a nearby rock and smilingly watched Lin Mu

Yu train. She also released her martial spirit, and a delicate flame fox wrapped itself around the girl's arm. It was like a live creature, occasionally squeaking in a cute way, making the young girl giggle endearingly like a flower in bloom.

……

"This is still not enough…" Qu Chu looked at the energy buildup spilling out of Lin Mu Yu's chest and wondered, "Martial spirits are born from one's life essence. Any person should have his or her own martial spirit, but you… why won't your martial spirit appear?"

Continuing on, he looked to the east and advised, "You have to look towards the sunrise. Look at the sunlight without blinking or shutting your eyes."

"Yes."

Lin Mu Yu obediently looked in the direction of the sunrise. The red glow of the sun had pierced the clouds and it was slowly rising.

Qu Chu calmly continued, "The rising sun is of seven colors. You must use your eyes to differentiate the violet ray from its seven colors. When you see the violet light, it will mean that you have captured the most essential part of the sunlight: violet energy. That is a martial artist's most basic energy. By collecting the essence of the violet energy, you will be able to form your martial spirit more quickly."

Lin Mu Yu stared hard at the sun in response. A miraculous scene happened a few minutes later, the light inside his eyes began to slowly separate as his gaze captured the small smudge of violet light. His body began to rapidly absorb the violet energy as if he was a dried lake that was graced with rain. Slowly, his body began to glow in a dim violet luster.

“Eh?” Tang Xiao Xi opened her mouth in surprise. She would have never expected Lin Mu Yu to be able to find the violet essence so quickly.

……

An expression of praise appeared on Qu Chu’s face as he watched, “Continue. Gather the violet energy into your chest and try to push your martial spirit once more!”

“Yes!”

The pool of violet energy moved restlessly inside Lin Mu Yu. When he tried to force it out of his body, the energy reacted violently. His chest was in pain as if he had just taken a heavy hit, while his body shuddered as his legs lost strength. With a crash, he fell onto the floor and went into a spasm. His whole body was in pain as a fierce energy in his body was killing the violet energy!

“What…what happened to him?” A hint of worry and anxiety appeared on Tang Xiao Xi’s beautiful cheeks.

Qu Chu clenched his teeth and slapped his palm onto Lin Mu Yu's back, only to feel an outrageously strong energy ferociously biting back at his energy. This wave of energy was enough to threaten him and was actively attacking his energy in protest. It was as if the energy was saying that Lin Mu Yu's body was its own, and would not allow Qu Chu to step in.

"As if!"

Qu Chu was not one to sit idly while being ordered around. Naturally unwilling to yield to the energy, he roared and released his Saint realm energy. Instantly it was able to forcefully push down the wave of energy inside Lin Mu Yu's body.

He quickly took a step back and called out, "Flame Cauldron! To me!"

"Voom!"

The gigantic martial spirit wrapped in layers of raging flames materialized from thin air and enveloped Lin Mu Yu within itself.

Having his body covered in a nearly lethal scorching energy, Lin Mu Yu forced open his eyes and asked in astonishment, "Elder Qu, what are you doing? Are you trying to kill me?"

Qu Chu calmly stated, "No, don't misunderstand. You are the disciple of my old friend Chu Feng, so I definitely will not try to kill you. This trick is called "Boiler Pig". Since your martial spirit is

unwilling to come out, then I'll personally force it out! Now that I think about it... many experts had refined martial spirits this way in the past."

Chapter 16 : Relics Of A Champion

The scorching sensation became increasingly intense. Lin Mu Yu tightly clenched his teeth and tried his hardest to not scream out in pain. In reality, from the moment he had started the training up until now, he had not voiced a single sound of pain. He had been born a proud person, so there was no way he could not withstand this little bit of pain!

……

Under the high temperature of the cauldron, even the outer layers of Lin Mu Yu's clothing were slowly falling apart and were about to burst out in flames. Similarly, Lin Mu Yu felt like every cell in his body was evaporating into nothingness. This kind of pain was definitely something that an average person would not be able to endure.

Nearby, Tang Xiao Xi was covering her mouth, unable to look. She had seen Qu Chu use the Flame Cauldron on other people, but those were all bandits. They were killed with the cauldron's fire, leaving nothing but ashes in the end. Lin Mu Yu would not suffer the same fate as those bandits, right?

Lin Mu Yu knelt on one knee with both arms planted on the ground. Although he had not fallen to the ground under the Flame Cauldron's intense roasting, the high temperature had nearly robbed him of his will and thought. And it was right at this moment that an electronic tone sounded in his mind as an illusory gate was unlocked. Following that, a delicate voice called out, "Uwa. Too hot, too hot…"

Turning to look, he saw a tiny fairy flying back and forth in his mind, and even crossing over into the real world. Fluttering behind him, she called out, “Big bro, what are you doing? Quickly ask that old man to stop! He is going to burn both of us to death!”

This fairy was about 20cm tall and wore a set of green pixie attire. Although she only had a 20cm tall body, she still had her share of long slender legs and well-endowed bosom. Her face had a delicate and familiar look. Lin Mu Yu took another look and his jaw was about to drop to the floor. Isn’t this the system fairy Lulu? Why was Lulu from the game in this world?

“Lulu!”

Lin Mu Yu realized that he could telepathically communicate with the system fairy, while Qu Chu and Tang Xiao Xi were seemingly unable to see Lulu. Could it be that Lulu only existed in his mind? But now was not the time to think about such things as he was about to be roasted alive. He quickly asked, “Lulu, Elder Qu wants to force my martial spirit out of my body. What is my martial spirit? Can you randomly take something out to at least hold him off for a short while?”

Flapping her wings, Lulu frowned at Lin Mu Yu as she endured the scorching heat. As if scolding him, she complained, “Big bro, you sold everything that you could sell and deleted everything that you could delete. What else could I possibly pull out? Wait... it seems like there was still something in your alchemy cauldron... erm, it’s a junk gourd. It was the leftovers from when you alchemized the Seven Heart Lotus. It that ok?”

“Whatever is fine!” Lin Mu Yu didn’t have the mind to care at all since he was going to die otherwise.

The next moment, a cool energy rushed out from his body. With a shout, Lin Mu Yu forcefully released this “martial spirit” from his body, only to see an adorably tiny green gourd revolving in front of his chest. Wrapped in a faint green luster, the gourd looked pretty…but no matter how hard he tried, it didn’t look the least bit intimidating…

Lin Mu Yu finally understood what the martial spirits of this world were. Basically they were just items born from the user’s life force that helped the user with attack and defense.

……

“Oh, it appeared!” Tang Xiao Xi chuckled.

Qu Chu also nodded with satisfaction, “So it was just a green gourd spirit; that’s why this kid was so skilled in medicinal alchemy.”

The Flame Cauldron dissipated, leaving behind a patch of scorched earth around Lin Mu Yu. The system fairy Lulu had once more fallen into a deep slumber and he did not know when she was going to awaken again. Reaching out to touch his martial spirit, the green gourd slowly rotated in his palm. Having a connection with his soul, it was as if Lin Mu Yu could feel liveliness from the spirit gourd as it pulsed with life energy.

Qu Chu calmly stated, “Although it is a 10th rank martial spirit, with enough additional training, it should be of some use to you. At least it will be enough to take care of a superfluous show-off like Hua Wan.”

“10th rank martial spirit, is that strong?” Lin Mu Yu carefully asked.

Tang Xiao Xi covered her mouth but could not hide her giggle. Qu Chu also smiled, “Martial spirits are split into ten ranks. My Flame Cauldron is a 4th rank. Princess Xi’s Firefox is a 2nd rank. Your Green Gourd is a 10th rank, so what do you think?”

“In other words, this Green Gourd is the worst?” Lin Mu Yu asked with a petrified expression.

“That’s right!”

“Ha…” Lin Mu Yu was crying deep inside. This gourd was the leftover waste from alchemy. If he didn’t sell off all of his saint tier items like the Seven Star Lamp, Mystic Spirit Staff, or the Nine Day Demonic Lotus, probably any one of those items would have been a first rank or second rank martial spirit in this world. There were no words to describe the amount of regret he felt at that moment.

Tang Xiao Xi was a kind-hearted girl. Thinking that Lin Mu Yu had to be quite sad at that moment, she comforted him, “Mu Mu, don’t be sad. Even a 10th rank spirit can have the chance to evolve

into a 9th rank, or even an 8th or 7th rank spirit. You shouldn't be so depressed, you'll have a chance."

"Is it possible to evolve into a first rank martial spirit?"

This time Tang Xiao Xi was unable to hold back her laughter, "Stop daydreaming..."

Looks like her comforting skill wasn't that great, but Lin Mu Yu didn't bother to retort back. Right now, his mind was thinking of another method of progression. He was someone who had the mastery of alchemy techniques under his belt. If he had sufficient materials, he could definitely refine this green gourd into a top-notch magic tool. If nothing else, he still had confidence in his alchemical skills.

.....

Qu Chu stoically stood by his side and mused, "A martial artist's life revolves around bettering his or her martial spirit. The stronger one's spirit becomes, the greater one's strength in both offensive and defensive power. This is because a martial spirit will give you the pool of energy from which to utilize battle techniques. Do you understand?"

"Yeah. I understand. Thank you, Elder Qu." The shadow of doubt in Lin Mu Yu's heart was gone in a sweep.

Qu Chu nodded with satisfaction and continued with a smile,

“The green gourd is a plant type martial spirit, excelling in healing, binding, and defense. Thusly, this should be your direction of development. In the future, you could be a support type warrior, so you should never be at the front line in a battle. You should be fine just by knowing this much.”

“Okay!”

Let us continue on our way since your power is still in its chaotic state. We’ll hunt for a spirit beast of at least 200 years of age for you to absorb. Let’s see how much it can improve your personal strength.”

“Yeah.” Lin Mu Yu smilingly nodded, “Thank you Elder Qu.”

Qu Chu stroked his beard and laughed, “Don’t thank me. It’s not that easy. Every martial artist will need to experience the hardship of life. Once we find an appropriate spirit beast, I won’t offer my aid. You will have to kill it with your own hands, or else you won’t be fit to absorb that beast’s spirit. Do you understand?”

Lin Mu Yu was taken slightly aback. He could not help but feel like this old fellow had no regards for his life. Isn’t that just outright inhumane? A 200-year-old spirit beast is about the same strength as a level 20 Battle Spirit. Whether or not he could even kill it would have to depend on his good fortune.

……

Suddenly the sky darkened as a slight rain fell upon the land. After descending the mountain and finding their horses, the three riders sped through the forest. Wearing a suit of light green attire, Lin Mu Yu was matchless in his handsomeness. By his side, as the rain fell onto Tang Xiao Xi's cheeks, her flame red dress with her exquisite cloak was reminiscent of a spring shower splattering onto pear flowers. It was a mysteriously intriguing feeling.

Lin Mu Yu could not help but secretly praise this little princess. Having that kind of mindset at her young age was definitely quite a feat. If it were any other nobles' daughters, they would have been busy looking for a shelter from the rain, rather than continuing to speed through it.

Not long after, dark clouds completely covered the sky. The Seven Star Forest was as dark as night. Flashes of lightning slashed down in the air like blades of sharp knives falling into this patch of ancient forest.

Lin Mu Yu was calming down his mount so as to help it not be scared by the lightning. Qu Chu also steadily lowered his speed for he had to take care of Tang Xiao Xi, especially since training Princess Xi was this journey's most important goal.

Looking at the sword and longbow on Lin Mu Yu's back, Qu Chu couldn't help but laugh, "Youngster, what are you carrying around a bow for?"

"This is my stealth weapon."

“Stealth weapon?” Qu Chu laughed aloud once more and asked, “And what’s the use of this stealth weapon?”

Lin Mu Yu responded seriously, “Although I am far weaker in terms of martial arts training, I also know that different weapons will be effective at different ranges. If an enemy is meters away, I will use a bow and arrows. If he is at close range, I’ll use the sword. If I didn’t have a bow, the time during which he is approaching will be wasted. If I can kill the target from many meters away, then there would be no need for him to come close, isn’t that right?”

Qu Chu was stunned for a moment and couldn’t help but nod in praise, “That was definitely sound logic. However…that longbow is too eye-catching, so it can’t be considered a true stealth weapon. If you really want a weapon like that, I actually have just the right gift for you.”

“Oh? A gift?” Lin Mu Yu unable to hide his euphoria as he was overcome with curiosity.

Qu Chu reached down at the bag mounted on the horse’s rump and took out a cloth pouch. Catching Qu Chu’s toss, Lin Mu Yu opened up the pouch to find a set of 4 exquisite throwing knives. The curved outlines of the blades were sharp and reflective. Even in this darkness, he could clearly see the blades’ sparkling edges.

“This is the weapon that Feng Yi Cheng had left behind. He was a skilled user of throwing knives, capable of taking lives from a distance of over a hundred meters. These 4 blades can be thrown separately, or be combined into a single boomerang blade. However, you’ll need to work hard if you want to become an

expert at using this stealth weapon."

"Right, thank you Elder Qu!" Lin Mu Yu smiled.

The nearby Tang Xiao Xi blinked her sparkling eyes as she asked, "Feng Yi Cheng? You mean the famous general who safeguarded the southern plains for nearly twenty years?"

"Right, that's him. It's a shame that in the end he died at the hands of bandits." Qu Chu spoke with a hint of regret and continued, "Although he was not born of a royal bloodline, he was a worldly talent and one of the twelve commanders of the Empire. It was truly a shame."

Tang Xiao Xi muttered, "It has been at least a decade since Feng Yi Cheng died in combat, for Old Qu to have his relic is quite interesting."

Qu Chu responded, "He was an old friend of mine. He had entrusted someone to send the blade to me before he died."

Lin Mu Yu was taken aback and the value of this set of 4 throwing knives suddenly became much greater. He raised his head and looked at Qu Chu with thankful eyes, "Thank you so much, Elder Qu..."

This time he had thanked him from the bottom of his heart, but Qu Chu only faintly smiled, "Luckily for you, I'm not very apt at using hidden weapons, or else it would have never been your turn

to use a master class weapon like this.”

Frankly, the craft of this blade was definitely greatly refined. Each blade had its own ventilation slots as well as a rotary design. This meant that each knife would return every time it was thrown. If Lin Mu Yu wanted to use this kind of stealth weapon effectively, he would have to practice the skill of throwing and catching the blade. That was quite a big hurdle since if he was to miss the catch, perhaps it might even end up costing him his hand. The throwing blade was simply too sharp.

Putting the throwing knives back into the pouch, Lin Mu Yu thought to himself: Let’s slowly practice with these later.

Chapter 17 : Flesh Eater And Stranglethorn

The forest became quiet as spirit beasts hid away in their nests to take shelter from the rain. The three travelers continued on their search as they could not find a good target to take down.

Although Qu Chu had neither a cloak nor an umbrella, his clothes were not at all soaked by the rain. Droplets rolled down the surface and gave off an otherworldly sight of a man that seemed to be cloaked in rain droplets. With this observation, Lin Mu Yu seemingly had a better understanding of a Saint realm expert's powers and was quite amazed at the sight. Conversely, Qu Chu only turned to the amazed youngster and laughed, "Any person who achieves the Heaven realm can convert energy into Force. Force is an even stronger power, so using force to guard the body can easily shield one from the elements."

Looking like he barely understood what was said, Lin Mu Yu nodded his head. At the same time, Tang Xiao Xi lifted up the hood of her cloak and asked with the beautiful face that appeared below, "Old Qu, what kind of beast spirit do you think will help the growth of my Firefox the most?"

Qu Chu knowledgeably responded, "Firefox is of the fire element. thus absorbing a fire beast spirit is naturally the best option. The only problem with that plan is that the current weather is too wet and humid, causing those fire beast spirits to all hide in their dry nests. We will probably never be able to find one even if we wanted to. In addition, Princess Xi is about to approach Earth realm, so a spirit of at least 2000 years of age will be needed. That will be even more difficult to find. Interestingly enough, Lin Mu Yu should have more luck finding a beast spirit for his green gourd."

“Is that because the green gourd is a plant type spirit, and a rainy day is the best opportunity for plant growth?”

“That’s right.”

Qu Chu looked at the dense forest ahead and continued, “Get ready to dismount and continue on foot. Let’s enter deeper into the forest and see if we can find a plant type spirit beast or two.”

“Sounds good!”

……

The three neatly dismounted and walked into the dense forest with their horses. At this time, the rain seemingly became heavier as the forest became filled with the sound of droplets splashing onto leaves. Lin Mu Yu frowned as he looked down at his soaked clothing. He did not have Qu Chu’s level of power nor did he have Tang Xiao Xi’s waterproof cloak, so it was getting a little difficult for him to retain any semblance of dryness.

“Careful!”

Qu Chu suddenly reached out to stop the two youngsters and pointed to the dark-colored plant ahead, “We need to go around that area, that is a Flesh Eater currently feeding on a corpse.”

“Flesh Eater?” Lin Mu Yu asked, “What is that?”

Tang Xiao Xi stuck out her tongue and explained, “Mu Mu, a Flesh Eater is a plant type spirit beast. Well, technically it is a wild beast already as it only eats rotten corpses. Although its attack strength isn’t very high, it has a strong poison, so we should avoid it to be safe. Old Qu, how old is this Flesh Eater?”

Qu Chu noted, “There is a total of 7 black circles on its hood, so it should be a 70-year-old Flesh Eater. Let’s move on, a spirit of this level is not worth our time.”

Lin Mu Yu steadily looked over the creature. Is this millstone-sized plant really capable of eating meat?”

At the next second, as if able to sense the gaze of an observer, the Flesh Eater slowly lifted its disc-shaped head. Underneath, a horrifying and disgusting sight came into view. On its “face” were multitudes of spikes covered in layers of sticky mucus. There was a mouth below the face, which was chewing on the corpse of a young boar. Instantly, a rotten smell rushed forth into the travelers’ noses.

“Agh, disgusting…” Tang Xiao Xi pinched her nose and quickly led her horse around the creature.

Qu Chu commanded, “Kid, stop looking. Let’s go!”

“Okay.”

Lin Mu Yu hurriedly followed but another thought lingered in his mind. Seven Star Forest is definitely not a place for picnics, especially with monsters like the Flesh Eater. The mushroom-shaped creature was something he had never seen before. Looks like not everything in this world is completely the same as that of the game world.

After a while, the three were unable to find a passable road, and had to hack their way past the dense wildlife. Lin Mu Yu took out the sword on his back and walked in front of Tang Xiao Xi to cut apart the thorns in their way. As they continued, they were suddenly faced with several vines that had rooted itself into the ground. The jade green vines were surprisingly tough seeing as not even a steel sword could hack them apart. Lin Mu Yu couldn't help but utter, "What kind of vines are these? Why are they so tough?"

Qu Chu took a glance and alarmingly commanded, "Stop. Don't try to cut them, or else you'll die!"

"Huh?" Lin Mu Yu quickly stopped his hands.

Qu Chu looked around with excitement in his eyes and smiled, "Looks like we've encountered the troublesome Stranglethorn of legends. Hehe, looks like our luck isn't half bad!"

"Stranglethorn?" Tang Xiao Xi smiled brightly as a hint of excitement appeared on her face, "I've read about this kind of spirit in the Hundred Beast Codex, but I've never seen one in real life. Where is it?"

“Princess Xi, you have to be careful. This Stranglethorn has, at the very least, the power of a 500-year-old spirit!”

“Ah?” Tang Xiao Xi asked in surprise, “Then it should be pretty strong right?”

“Right.”

Qu Chu pointed to the front and said, “Kid, your spirit beast has appeared. Do you see that patch of grass with the bright red crown? That is the head of the Stranglethorn. Go and kill this spirit beast, but remember to be careful of its vines. If you get caught by them, then not even a god can save you. Remember, I won’t help you, so if you can’t kill this vine demon then you’ll just become its next meal. This demon eats vegetation, but also eats human!”

Qu Chu spoke in matter-of-fact manner which suggested that he will not allow Lin Mu Yu to question his stance.

Lin Mu Yu naturally understood the danger of the command and took a deep breath. However, instead of rashly going on the offense, he carefully applied paralysis poison onto the arrows in his quiver and drank a bottle of stoneskin potion. If his defensive power is enough, he shouldn’t be killed too easily.

Tang Xiao Xi stood nearby and summoned her martial spirit. As if preparing to face a great enemy, the Firefox appeared on her shoulder, looking like it was ready to pounce at any second. She

chuckled and whispered, “Mu Mu you have to be careful in combat, okay? But don’t worry, if you really can’t beat this Stranglethorn, I’ll secretly help you even if Old Qu won’t.”

Lin Mu Yu smiled in gratitude, “Thank you, Princess Xi.”

Following that, he stepped forward while drawing his bow. Naturally, because the Stranglethorn is a plant type spirit, it was dormant when the arrow stabbed into its head. A splash of green juices squirted out of the puncture, but it was definitely not lethal. No plant would die from a single arrow.

“Ssshhshhh…”

Slithering sounds came from the surrounding ground as tendrils of green vines bursted out. Whipping up soil and leaves into the air, the vines from the surrounding area gathered into one spot as the head suddenly rose up. Instantly, the gigantic body of the Stranglethorn lifted itself off the ground and stood at the surprising height of 3 meters! Hundreds of vines squirmed around as if they were snakes as one suddenly shot out at Lin Mu Yu. This 500-year-old spirit beast’s first attack was already bursting with killing intent!

“Shhua!”

The green vine grazed past at lightning speed, as if intent on piercing Lin Mu Yu’s chest. This looked like the Stranglethorn’s practiced skill. One could not imagine how many martial art practitioners had died to this single attack.

But Lin Mu Yu was not like the others, he had been watching closely as the plant launched the attack. With a slide of his feet, Lin Mu Yu was able to dodge out of the way as if he was an illusory image. Even Qu Chu surprised , “What a beautiful execution!”

That was Starfall Steps’ Butterfly Step. Starfall Steps was split into three types of foot techniques: Butterfly Step, Stellar Step, and Flash Step. Butterfly Step was a must-have skill for combat as it was a skill that focused on moving the user in a curved line to allow evades and parries. Meanwhile, Stellar Step was focused on greatly increasing the user’s movement speed. Flash Step was an even more profound skill based around creating an instantaneous movement similar to a magician’s blink. It can instantly increase the user’s movement speed to the extremes but as a cost, lasts only a short amount of time.

After Butterfly-Stepping out of the attack, Lin Mu Yu pulled out his steel sword and swung it at the vine demon before him.

“Boom!”

The sword was still unable to cut it down, but green juices were already spilling fiercely out of the plant.

“So tough…” Lin Mu Yu muttered in awe.

Qu Chu observed from far away and sonorously advised, “Kid, learn to use the power of your martial spirit. Your Green Gourd should be able to supply a decent source of energy, so channel it’s

spirit power into your arms and sword. If you can do that, you should naturally be able to cut apart the vines of this mere 500-years-old spirit beast!”

“Sshh Sshhh Sshhh…”

However, Lin Mu Yu’s situation was not hopeful. The Stranglethorn had already sent out a dozen of green vines to attack and constrict his movement. If not for Starfall Steps’ excellence, perhaps he would have already been a corpse under the vines.

As Lin Mu Yu simultaneously dodged the vines’ attacks and channeled his internal energy, the Green Gourd awakened and its verdant color steadily appeared on Lin Mu Yu’s arms and subsequently into his weapon. With a single dive, he swung the spirit-infused sword down on the vines. A single tearing sound was heard as one of the Stranglethorn’s tendrils was slashed apart and bright green liquid splattered everywhere.

“Beautiful!” Tang Xiao Xi cheered happily.

But at the same time, Lin Mu Yu felt an impact on his back as another tendril had lashed him on the back. He frantically bent his back, only to be struck in the chest instead. He rolled out across the floor as a burning hot pain scarred his back. Fresh blood was seeping out of his thin shirt as he was quite visibly wounded by the double attack.

“Ahh?!”

Tang Xiao Xi yelled in surprise and quickly summoned her Firefox. The light of its flames danced wildly as the spirit growled in anticipation. She was going to join in the fight!

Qu Chu reacted quickly and shouted, “Princess Xi, don’t! He will have to break through this obstacle by himself, otherwise he will never be able to improve his own abilities or know his own limits. If you really care about him, then you will have to trust him!”

“But…” Tang Xiao Xi debated for a moment but did not continue. She could only keep watching as the Stranglethorn hunt down Lin Mu Yu.

……

Using Starfall Steps’ Steller Step to run, Lin Mu Yu did not forget to turn around once in a while to shoot back with his bow. Channeling the martial spirit’s power into his arms, Lin Mu Yu was able to pierce the plant demon’s wooden body with his arrows. However, none of them seemed to be lethal damage.

“Shha Shha Shha…”

Suddenly the surrounding ground shook as the topsoil was whipped up by thousands of tendrils. Lin Mu Yu ended up caught right in the middle of the Stranglethorn’s trap!

“Idiot Mu Mu!”

Tang Xiao Xi looked with anxiety at the faraway Lin Mu Yu.

Conversely, Qu Chu had closed his eye to sense Lin Mu Yu's energy fluctuations. Corners of his mouth lifted into a smile as he declared, "Don't worry, Princess Xi. This kid's life is tough as nails. He won't die this easily."

As expected, with a single roar, a steel sword pierced out of the vine cocoon and sliced several tendrils in half. Walking out of the cocoon, Lin Mu Yu was an embarrassing sight, but at least he wasn't killed inside the cocoon.

Qu Chu loudly shouted, "A Stranglethorn's weakness is its head. If you can cut off its head, you'll be able to kill it!"

Stupid old man, why didn't he say it earlier!

While enduring the excruciating pain from all over his body, Lin Mu Yu leapt up using Starfall Step and jumped onto the plant demon's tendril arms. Skipping atop the tough vines, he dashed forth with a speed that could rival lightning.

Qu Chu couldn't help but wonder: This kid is surely a strange one. Where did he get that kind of speed? Normally, a martial artist of his level of ability wouldn't be able to reach that kind of speed even with a tier one Haste potion!

Chapter 18 : It Also Tastes Great

“Kaa!”

After being infused with the power of a martial spirit, the steel sword became as sharp as a god-tier weapon. A flash of light sliced through the air as the Stranglethorn screamed in anger and little by little collapsed onto the ground. Lin Mu Yu was standing right before its head and in the next second, the Stranglethorn’s beast spirit collected into a green ball hovering above its head.

“Right now!”

Qu Chu lowered his voice and said, “Sit down and use your Green Gourd to absorb this Stranglethorn’s spirit. Even if this can’t improve the strength of your martial spirit, it should be able to increase your physical strength. Right now, your body has just entered the chaotic state so you lack clear measure of power. But after the martial spirit’s first evolution, it will surely confirm the true measure of your strength!”

Lin Mu Yu rejoiced happily and sat down cross-legged next to the Stranglethorn’s corpse to summon the Green Gourd. When the martial spirit made contact with the beast spirit, the gourd had already begun to ferociously engulf the Stranglethorn’s spirit energy. Because they were both plant type spirits, their compatibility ratio was higher than average.

The Green Gourd’s glow thickened little by little while Lin Mu Yu simultaneously felt that his energy level was increasing as well.

Standing nearby, Qu Chu joked, “If this kid is lucky enough, perhaps he might even obtain one of the beast spirit’s innate abilities.”

Tang Xiao Xi blinked her eyes and retorted, “But Grandpa told me before that when one is refining a beast spirit, the chance to successfully obtain a special skill is no more than a fifth. My Firefox has advanced twice, but I was only able to gain a Flame Wolf’s Fire Spitter…”

Qu Chu looked away and said, “These matters are all out of our hands. My Flame Cauldron has a total of 9 stages right now, meaning that it had advanced 9 times, I still only have but three skills. Whatever happens will depend on this kid’s luck.”

……

Although Lin Mu Yu was focusing on refining the beast spirit, he was still able to hear their conversation.

Unexpectedly, a sultry voice appeared in his mind. Lulu the system fairy had actually woken up once again with great timing! Her form materialized before Lin Mu Yu and she stretched lazily as she utter with a smile, “Hehe, that was a great nap…”

“Lulu!”

Lin Mu Yu couldn’t be happier to hear her, “I’m refining the

spirit of a wild beast right now. Help me bring up the Alchemy Cauldron, quickly!”

“Aye.”

When Lulu summoned the alchemy cauldron, a barrier of light enveloped Lin Mu Yu within. Qu Chu and Tang Xiao Xi could not clearly see what Lin Mu Yu was doing and only knew that he was still absorbing the beast spirit. However, an illusory cauldron appeared before Lin Mu Yu’s eyes with the Green Gourd rotating rapidly inside.

Since Lulu was a system fairy, she was seemingly able to see through everything. Smilingly, she explained, “The skill contained in this beast spirit is called Binding Roots. It can provide your Green Gourd with an ability to use constricting vines, but the cauldron will need a bit of materials as well.”

“What kind of materials?”

“A liter of water, two gold coins, and a bit of soil to nourish the green gourd vines.”

“That sounds easy enough!”

Lin Mu Yu couldn’t help but laugh. There was a pond nearby for water, while he himself had a few gold Yin coins in his pocket. Aside from those, he was already surrounded by soil. Accordingly, he took a few handfuls of water along with a bit of soil and poured

both into the alchemy cauldron. Following that, he carefully took out two precious gold coins and tossed them in as well. Immediately, Lulu closed her eyes as a satisfied look appeared on her face.

Mixing the ingredients together, the cauldron glowed even more brilliantly and quickly smelted down the two gold coins. Turning into streams of fine powder, the gold dust along with the water and soil were all absorbed into the Green Gourd.

After continuing this process for about 10 minutes, the refinement was finally completed!

……

“Buzzz!”

The green gourd was frantically shaking as rows of green entwining vines grew out of the gourd’s crown. It looked like something that belonged in a garden. Yet the nearby Qu Chu and Tang Xiao Xi were both stunned.

“Idiot Mu Mu actually awakened a spirit ability…” Tang Xiao Xi mumbled under her breath.

Qu Chu laughed aloud, “This kid… I suppose it is true indeed that even a simpleton gets lucky sometimes!”

Lin Mu Yu retorted in his mind: Wait, I’m not a simpleton! I’m

an alchemy master for god's sake!

If he was to boast about taking only 10 minutes to refine all of a 500-year-old Stranglethorn's beast spirit, he would have probably been labeled a madman. Lin Mu Yu stood up with glowing spirits as if the whole quality about him had changed significantly. Qu Chu smiled, "Kid, why don't you show us your new spirit ability?"

"Yes, Elder Qu."

Focusing his thoughts, Lin Mu Yu materialized the green gourd spirit in front of his chest. Tendrils of green vines shot out and wrapped themselves around a small tree. It was so tightly constricted that with a single thought, Lin Mu Yu was able to forcefully snap the small tree in half.

"Wow, that looks fun!" Tang Xiao Xi cheerfully said, "Mu Mu's spirit ability looks really interesting!"

"Princess, you're praising me too much..." Lin Mu Yu responded shyly.

Tang Xiao Xi immediately shattered his feigned humbleness with her heartless statement, "I didn't praise you. I just thought it was really interesting. This kind of ability is just a child's play, so it is basically useless in actual combat."

Lin Mu Yu was petrified, "..."

“It’s better than nothing.” Qu Chu comforted.

Lin Mu Yu nodded in agreement.

“Alright, let’s use the measuring crystal to see your current power level!”

……

After taking out the measuring crystal from the horse’s pack, Lin Mu Yu pressed his palm onto the ball. With a shout, he increased his power to the maximum as his martial spirit also simultaneously glowed in bright light. The reading inside the measuring crystal rapidly increased and after several jumps, one long line and 7 short lines appeared on the crystal.

Qu Chu faintly smiled, “Level 17 Battle Warrior. Not too shabby. In any case, you’ve already stepped into Human realm’s second stage. If you train well for the next few days, you should probably have a chance against Hua Wan.”

“Aye. Much appreciated, Elder Qu!”

……

The evening came as the heavy rain finally stopped. The whole Seven Star Forest became a mess of mud and dirt. There was probably no one living or hunting so deep into the mountain, as no one wants to wake up to a thousand year spirit beast munching on

their head. As such, the three travelers could only camp out in the mountain for the night.

After gathering a bunch of dry firewood, the three decided to stop at a small cave in the side of the mountain. Using Tang Xiao Xi's Firefox to ignite the fire, the three roasted some buns for dinner. Bathing in the light of the fire, Tang Xiao Xi sat cross-legged to meditate while hints of fire energy enveloped her. This girl not only trained in the usage of hot flames, but her figure was also quite alluringly hot.

Watching her, Lin Mu Yu decided to meditate for a bit as well. He was already able to perfectly circulate energy throughout his meridians, so it could be said that he broke the legend of the heaven sealed physique. However, the intensity of his energy was not able to rapidly increase. Standing up, he took out the throwing knives from Qu Chu and decided that it was time to practice some knife throwing techniques. Bows can neither be considered a hidden weapon nor be easily carried, so it was difficult to catch an enemy off guard with it.

Afraid of accidentally hurting Tang Xiao Xi, he walked away from camp and climbed up a small hill. Using the moonlight to inspect these 4 throwing knives, he noted that they were exquisitely made and shone with a glowing radiance under the moonlight.

Let's throw it!

Sshha!

The blade flew to into the distance as a shrill whistle sounded in the wind. In the blink of an eye, the blade had returned but Lin Mu Yu did not try to catch it. He simply did not want to die.

With a bang, the throwing knife stabbed itself into the nearby tree. Lin Mu Yu pulled it out and threw it again, while continuing to observe the movement for the next hour.

In the darkness, another had been watching him intently for a long time. Unable to hold back his question, the shadow asked, “Why don’t you try to catch it?”

Lin Mu Yu turned to look and smiled, “Oh, it’s you, Elder Qu. It’s not that I don’t want to catch them, it’s just that I need more experience with the knives. I have to know how the knives perform with different variations of power and the angle of its returning path. Otherwise, perhaps I will have to bid farewell to these hands.”

Qu Chu couldn’t help but laugh, “Smart kid. I certainly didn’t make a mistake in choosing to train you. This set of throwing knives will definitely be of great use in your hands. But perhaps you’ve been observing for too long. Give catching a little try. As a martial artist, it is near impossible for one to practice a lost skill to perfection without getting a little hurt.”

“Right.”

However, this is going to put Lin Mu Yu’s sight to the test, especially with only the moonlight to guide his eyes.

But Lin Mu Yu still obediently attempted the catch. Abruptly throwing out the knife, he quickly calculated its return angle as well as the trajectory of the handle and the blade. What he needed to catch was the handle, and not the sharp blade.

Pah!

Suddenly reaching out, he was able to catch it. However, he did not have a firm grip on the handle with his fingers; rather, his hand had been swept by the blade before he was able to catch it. Instantly, a searing pain shot through his hand while fresh blood spilled ferociously out from the long gash in his index finger.

“Luckily, you’re an alchemist so we have an endless supply of Gold Sore ointment.” Qu Chu jokingly laughed at the boy’s misfortune.

Lin Mu Yu wasn’t in the mood to retort to this inhumane teacher and applied some Gold Sore cream onto his wound. Following that, he attempted several more catches. He had to quickly dodge out of the way the second time when he failed the catch, but the rest were all successful attempts. In doing so, he had grasped the basics of receiving the knife, so the next step was to test his ability to determine the trajectory when the knife returned after hitting a target.

At midnight, Lin Mu Yu’s hands were covered in wounds from his practice. But it was a good thing that he knew the appropriate procedure so as to not injure his bones and tendons, or else it

would have definitely impeded his training. Still, even though he was careful, he was running out of Gold Sore ointments, which is slightly remedied by the fact that he could alchemize some more on the spot.

Silver String grass and Long Night flower were both common herbs so they were easy to find. After looking around some more, he finally found an Iron Pear flower plant.

Hua!

The light of Lin Mu Yu's Essence Purification Technique appeared over his open palm as he began removing the Iron Pear flower's medicine cores.

TL Note: Sublimation Hands=confirmed MTL. Changed to Essence Purification Technique.

Qu Chu rested on the stone wall while pretending to be dozing off. Secretly, he was watching Lin Mu Yu alchemize medicine. And right as Lin Mu Yu was about to pour the Iron Pear flower powder into the Gold Sore ointment, Qu Chu finally could not hold it any longer. Sitting up in a swift motion, he asked with his eyebrows raised, "Kid, in the medicine index's records, a Gold Sore ointment only requires Silver String grass and Long Night flower, so why exactly are you adding Iron Pear flower?"

The corner of Lin Mu Yu's mouth lifted into a smirk and he puffed up his chest in pride, "Although the core powder of the Iron Pear flower can't heal wounds, it can actually increase the healing

speed of wounds. Furthermore, Silver String grass and Long Night flower are both warm natured, whereas Iron Pear flower is cool natured. The product of a balanced nature is a lot more potent."

Qu Chu's eyes widened greatly and asked, "You...you're not lying to me, are you?"

"What would be the point of that? I guarantee that my Gold Sore ointment will definitely be first tier. Would you believe it?"

Qu Chu took a sniff of the newly alchemized Gold Sore and his face grew pale, "It really is a first tier spirit medicine..."

Lin Mu Yu continued minding his own business and finished up the rest of the potions. Taking out an apple from his bag, he crushed it to get a bit of apple juice. Following that, he submerged a small portion of Swift Wolf blood and some soft Blue Silver grass cores in apple juice.

Qu Chu was surprised once more, "Why are you adding in apple juice now?"

Lin Mu Yu smiled, "Swift Wolf's blood is extraordinarily violent and has an intense nature. Adding a bit of apple juice can help soften its intensity, which will make the Haste potion's speed boost even stronger. It's also..."

"It's also what?" The Saint realm expert's eyes were as wide as copper bells.

Lin Mu Yu faintly smiled, “A Haste potion with the addition of some apple juice also tastes really great!”

“Tastes…great…”

Qu Chu’s eyes were about to burst out of their sockets. His whole understanding of the workings of the alchemy world was instantly changed by this youngster before him. Qu Chu had been an expert in the field of martial arts, but he was a mere newbie in alchemy. Thus, after meeting an alchemy master like Lin Mu Yu, he felt as if he had never learned alchemy in the first place!

Chapter 19 : Lightning Chop

Qu Chu crouched down on the floor and watched Lin Mu Yu with eyes like those of an eager child looking to learn from a master. He was especially in awe at Lin Mu Yu's skillful removal of the iron and rock layers from the Iron Pear flower. This was breathtaking for Qu Chu, as he had seen many alchemy experts in his lifetime, but never one who could use such skillful techniques in handling medicine cores like Lin Mu Yu. Not even the Medicine King level alchemist whom he met in the past had the same fantastic hand techniques as this young alchemist.

……

Seeing the restless Qu Chu sitting next to him, Lin Mu Yu couldn't help but chuckle in his heart. Qu Chu was a strong warrior of the Saint realm and his position in this world was quite obvious. However, everyone must have a weakness. In Qu Chu's case, his weakness was obviously his affection towards the alchemy arts. Thus, Lin Mu Yu smilingly said, "This technique is called the Essence Purification Technique. Hmm, do you want to learn?"

Qu Chu immediately nodded like an obedient puppy and replied, "Want!"

"Alright then, I'll teach you."

Lin Mu Yu frankly dusted off his hands and added, "But, there are some conditions."

Qu Chu immediately shrugged and said, “Kid, whatever you want, just say it. As long as you will teach me alchemy techniques, I’ll do anything.”

Lin Mu Yu already had an idea. Slowly and deliberately, he demanded, “I’ll teach you the Essence Purification, but you’ll have to teach me your best fighting techniques. What do you think?”

“Teach you fighting techniques?”

“That’s right.” Lin Mu Yu scratched his head and said, “Elder Qu, honestly speaking, there are many bookstores in Silver Fir City that sell books about fighting techniques, but most of them are too expensive. To become someone’s apprentice would also be similarly expensive. I don’t even have close to that amount of money. Although you said you were going to train me, you’ve only helped me awaken my martial spirit and have yet to teach me any real fighting techniques. You can see as well, this Green Gourd spirit is suitable for defense but is lacking in offense. That’s why I want to learn some kind of offense type fighting techniques.”

Qu Chu muttered a sound and profoundly looked at Lin Mu Yu to say, “But I had long vowed to never take in an apprentice in this lifetime, or else I must die under my own sword!”

Lin Mu Yu faintly smiled, “I’m not hoping to be an apprentice. I just want to learn fighting techniques. Moreover, this is merely a single transaction. I teach you alchemy, you teach me fighting techniques. How does that sound?”

“Then…alright!”

Qu Chu really could not resist the temptation of the Essence Purification Technique, but he cautiously said, “But you must promise me that whatever skills I’m teaching you will never be taught to another person. Over half of the techniques that I have accumulated over the years have been my own creations. The world is chaotic and disturbances will never end, so I don’t want my skills to be used as murderous techniques. How about it, can you promise me?”

Lin Mu Yu immediately nodded, “I promise. I definitely won’t pass off your techniques onto anyone else!”

“Then, good!”

As he spoke, Qu Chu leapt back several meters and smiled, “I’ll show you three kinds of fighting skills. Just observe for now, then pick one to learn after.”

“Okay!”

……

Qu Chu planted his feet solidly in the ground and gave off a feeling that not even the crash of sky and earth could shake his form. His gaze was calm and unflustered as he let out a shout. Suddenly, purple lightning gathered within his slightly open palm.

Piercing through the air, the lightning energy shot out as if it was a cannon and directly shattered the large slab of rock to the right of Qu Chu.

“That was Lightning Chop. By condensing the lightning energy in the nature, you can instantaneously attack a target from range. You can use it bare handed or in conjunction with a weapon. Come, again!”

Qu Chu was once again composed and let out another shout as his robe shook slightly. Suddenly, the surrounding earth trembled faintly as energy rushed out into the air. Rows of verdant green stone shields appeared all around Qu Chu. In another blink of an eye, the shields fragmented back into rubble.

“That was Verdant Shell, which gathers force energy to create a stone wall for protection. This is a skill I created that is most suitable for defense. You can also use basic energy to create the Verdant Shell, but the ones created from force energy are even more indestructible. One more!”

As he spoke, Qu Chu clenched his hands into fists and let out another shout. Aiming at the tree in the distance, he threw a single punch. Momentary, a ripple swept through the air and smashed into the tree trunk.

“Boom!”

It shook the branches wildly, but Lin Mu Yu did not see the tree receive any heavy damage, so he laughed, “Looks like that wasn’t

able to do any in particular. Is that really it?

"Is that so?" Qu Chu smirked, "Why don't you carefully look again?"

When Lin Mu Yu took a closer look, only to realize that the bark of the tree was cracked into pieces. Even the trunk was struck with such force that it had turned as soft as cotton. As the tree abruptly toppled down on itself, the noise startled the sleeping Tang Xiao Xi. Rubbing her eyes cutely, she sat up and asked, "What happened?"

Qu Chu laughed from afar, "Nothing is wrong, Princess. It's still early so you can sleep a bit more."

Tang Xiao Xi was just sleeping soundly, so she didn't pay too much attention and once again fell back asleep.

……

"That skill is called Sonic Punch. Using the force energy's meridian pathways, the skill creates an extremely strong ripple effect in the air. This creates a sonic boom to attack the target from afar. If your training is sufficient, it is enough to injure an opponent's vital organs."

Qu Chu smiled with pride and asked, "These are all my creations. What is it going to be? Are you going to choose Lightning Chop, Verdant Shell, or Sonic Punch?

“Sonic Punch!” Lin Mu Yu unhesitantly yelled out. That move was too cool to pass up.

TL Note: Was tempted to call it Sonic Knuckles.

Qu Chu knowingly laughed, “You surely can recognize what is good. It’s a shame though, because you will need a robust amount of energy before you can use Sonic Punch. In your case, perhaps in seven or eight years, you’ll be able to accumulate at least a little more.”

Lin Mu Yu was slightly disappointed, “Then…then I’ll just learn Lightning Chop. If I’m using my sword, the power output should be decent right?”

“That’s right. I also approve of you learning Lightning Chop.”

……

Thus, Qu Chu sat cross-legged on top of a giant rock and began to dictate the principles behind the utilization of Lightning Chop: First, one must learn how to meditate and learn to feel for the lightning essence in the air. If he or she could not even complete those two steps, then there would be no way for him or her to learn this skill.

Lin Mu Yu was naturally gifted and intelligent, only needing an hour of meditation before he was able to sense the irritable

lightning essences in the air. As if they were living creatures, the essences swiftly avoided Lin Mu Yu as he tried to touch them.

Qu Chu smiled at the sight and imparted on the next step: The most crucial principle behind gathering lightning essences involves the word “attract”. The user must attract the lightning essences with the body’s energy. Lin Mu Yu practiced for a whole two hours before he finally learned how to release energy to attract the free lightning essences. The moment he was able to gather a dense cluster of these lively lightning particles into his hand, he was so excited that his heart was about to leap out of his chest.

The last step was comparatively simpler. He had to infuse the lightning particles into his weapon while identifying the best angle to slash down in the air. This strike must be both quick and accurate, and it must not be done sloppily. When the lightning essences create a shockwave as they pass through the air, this technique is considered complete.

……

Lin Mu Yu took out his steel sword and channeled the lightning essence from his arms into the weapon. The edge of the blade was wrapped in strips of electric energy. Although it did not look at intense as Qu Chu’s version, it still looked as if it had quite a formidable power behind it. Heavily slashing down with the sword, the lightning essences rubbed against the air to create sparking sounds.

“Too slow.”

Qu Chu frowned and noted, “That didn’t sound right. If the speed of your swing is too slow, the damage of the attack will naturally decrease. The lower the sound of friction between the lightning essences and the air, the greater the potency of this technique!”

As he spoke, he raised his arm and lightly swiped in the air. It was near silent but a nearby small tree was bent over and snapped in half.

“Do you see? You’ll have to reach this kind of speed for it to be considered a real Lightning Chop.”

Lin Mu Yu had originally thought that he gotten at least a small achievement, but compared to power of what Qu Chu just used, he couldn’t even say he had accomplished the beginner level of that technique.

As a result, Lin Mu Yu continued to practice swing by swing and disregarded everything else.

Similarly, Qu Chu pulled out a branch of Iron Pear flower and sat down to practice using Essence Purification Technique to extract medicine cores. However, he was applying the technique so fiercely that the outer iron layer of the Iron Pear flower split open with muffled explosive sounds. This meant that the extraction was a failure, since the Iron Pear flower’s medicine core had been contaminated and destroyed.

Lin Mu Yu watched from a distance and shook his head as if saying: Why can't you even do this little thing? Qu Chu lowered his head in shame. His mastery over energy was far from Lin Mu Yu's level, at least in terms of the utilization of the Essence Purification Technique. Extracting medicine cores require a balanced spread of power, where a little more power or a little less power would both result in failures.

……

It was at the wee hours of the morning when Lin Mu Yu was finally unable to continue. Lying down a short distance away from Tang Xiao Xi, he quickly fell asleep, only to be woken up by Qu Chu a little more than 3 hours later. Qu Chu was seemingly a person who never required sleep. He stayed up the whole night yet he looked brimming with vitality. Holding a pile of medicine cores, he excitedly asked Lin Mu Yu, "Look, look. What do you think about the purity of these medicine cores?"

Lin Mu Yu simply glanced over the pile and said, "They are much better than those from last night. Practice a little more and your Essence Purification Technique could be considered complete."

"That's right, how is your progress on Lightning Chop?" Qu Chu asked smilingly.

Without answering, Lin Mu Yu reached to pull out his sword. The second the sword had left its sheath, the blade was already coated in a layer of lightning essence. With a quiet friction noise, the sword slashed through the air and split a palm-sized rock cleanly in half.

Qu Chu nodded in satisfaction. “Not bad. At least it has a bit more presence now. If you practice more, the potency will naturally increase.”

Tang Xiao Xi gasped in shock, “To think that Mu Mu would be so unexpectedly awesome…”

……

Hastily finishing breakfast, the three continued into the deeper parts of the Seven Star Forest.

They only had one goal: To find a fire element spirit beast of at least 2000 years of age. Using a spirit beast like that as an offering for Tang Xiao Xi’s advancement into level 30 was probably high class enough for her.

It’s only a shame that life seemingly did not wish for them to come across the suitable beast spirit any time soon. In the morning, they had found 3 spirit beasts: a 1200-year-old green serpent that had scared Tang Xiao Xi to tears, a 2400-year-old bobcat that was unfortunately of the wood element, and the only fire element spirit was an Ardent Bear. Sadly, it was only 700 years of age, so they let that go as well.

“Elder Qu, I heard that these aged spirit beasts can all produce a spirit stone in their bodies. Since spirit stones can be sold for money, and you can easily hunt those beasts down with your level of prowess, so why is it that you are avoiding them?” Lin Mu Yu

asked.

Qu Chu calmly responded as he sat on horseback, “Everything in nature has intelligence. They are also living beings that have the same rights to live as the rest of us. Unless it is necessary, I will never slaughter spirit beasts to obtain their spirit stones. Besides, gold Yin coins are but simple materialistic objects.”

Chapter 20 : A Level 17 Misfit Heroically Saves The Fair Maiden

Lin Mu Yu was secretly dumbstruck by Qu Chu's perspective on life. Compared to himself, Qu Chu seemed to be a more capable and worldly person. Could it be that all the Saint realm experts were like this?

At any rate, the strongest person that Lin Mu Yu had seen so far was this level 94 Saint realm master, and the second was Hawkeye, whom he killed. It was a pity that Hawkeye treated human life as dirt, thus he was simply an unforgivable villain compared to Qu Chu.

……

In the afternoon, the three travelers had entered the true depths of the Seven Star Forest. All kinds of spirit beasts roam freely and many of them are murderous carnivores. Luckily, Qu Chu's knowledge and prowess was great enough to safely guide two youngsters around the hunting paths of spirit beasts.

Finally, they arrived at a piece of wasteland as the night fell. Qu Chu was excited and smilingly voiced, "Princess Xi, we shouldn't be too far from an appropriate beast spirit now!"

"Oh?" A blank expression appeared on Tang Xiao Xi's pretty face.

Qu Chu explained, "Obviously we are in the autumn season right

now, but the grass in this field had all dried out. However, this is a sight that you would normally see in the winter, so there has to be a fire element spirit beast around here. Furthermore, for it to affect the environment to this extent, it must be at least 2000 years old!”

Tang Xiao cheerfully said, “Sounds good. Let’s hurry over.”

“Aye!”

Chu urged his horse forward as Lin Mu Yu and Tang Xiao Xi followed behind him.

As they moved closer and closer, even the wind that was blowing in their face had a burning feeling. A little bit further, the forest was left barren and brown, leaving only dried up trees all around. Qu Chu dismounted and picked up a twig, only for it slowly crumble to bits. He noted, “These trees has been dead for at least 3 years, so this beast must have nested here for at least the same amount of time. As such, it must be quite familiar with the terrain and smell around this area. You two have to be careful, because we might have run into an extremely strong spirit beast. If this beast is more than ten thousand years of age, then you two will have to run away as fast as possible!”

“Run away?” Lin Mu Yu cautiously asked: “Elder Qu won’t lose to a ten-thousand-years-old spirit beast, right?”

Tang Xiao Xi giggled and replied, “Silly Mu Mu. Old Qu is a level 94 Saint Elder, while a ten-thousand-years-old spirit beast is about

equivalent to a Saint Elder's strength. If this beast is more than thirty thousand years of age, then its strength is equivalent to a level 100 Saint King. Basically, running won't help us at that point."

Qu Chu turned to smile at Lin Mu Yu and joked, "Hey, are you afraid yet?"

Lin Mu Yu lazily sat on his horse and retorted, "It's alright. Having a princess and a Saint Elder accompany me to be eaten isn't much of a loss for a level 17 weakling like me..."

Tang Xiao Xi glanced at him and laughed with feigned displeasure, "You're taking it well!"

Qu Chu also subconsciously smiled. He could not see the normal arrogance and hatred for the world that one would normally expect from a youngster. What he saw more was his gentle nature and his motivated spirit. This was one of the reason why he took a liking to Lin Mu Yu. Perhaps another reason was this kid's praiseworthy alchemy skills.

.....

Continuing on, Qu Chu tied his horse to a nearby tree and carefully pulled out the sword on his waist. It was a scarlet red sword that somewhat fitted his personality. Although Qu Chu had entered the Saint realm, he still had a blazing temper. Furthermore, his martial spirit is the Flame Cauldron. The fact that he was so naturally connected to the element of fire was the

main reason why Tang Xiao Xi's grandfather allowed her to train under Qu Chu.

The three travelers slowly arrived at the base of the mountain and found a big cave between the rocks. The surrounding rock surfaces had been scorched black. Qu Chu bent down to take a sample of the muddy ground and sniffed. He remarked, "The last time it passed here was about two days and two nights ago. Could it be inside the den?"

Tang Xiao Xi asked, "Old Qu, do you know what kind of spirit beast lies inside this cave?"

Qu Chu looked at the flame track on the ground and noted, "A crawling creature, but it seems that... a part of its body is slithering like a snake... What in heavens is this?"

As he spoke, Qu Chu looked at Lin Mu Yu and Tang Xiao Xi, "You two wait outside while I go in alone. The beast seems to be sleeping and is definitely more than 5000 years of age. Not to mention that with your strength, you two won't be able to help anyways."

Lin Mu Yu nodded, Tang Xiao Xi was not unruly either and stood guard outside along with Lin Mu Yu.

.....

Qu Chu wielded his sword and entered the cave alone.

After about five minutes, nothing seemed to have happened. Tang Xiao Xi pouted: “Grandpa Qu Chu couldn’t have been… eaten by the spirit beast, right? It’s been so long…”

Lin Mu Yu could not help but laugh: “Probably not, He is a Saint level expert after all.”

Just after those words left Lin Mu Yu’s mouth, a loud rumbling came out of the cave as Qu Chu’s voice was heard coming from inside, “Run. It’s a 9000-year-old Fire Jiao!”

“Fire Jiao?” Tang Xiao Xi opened her mouth in confusion. She had never heard of a creature called Fire Jiao.

However, Lin Mu Yu knew to not underestimate any opponent. He hurriedly pulled Tang Xiao Xi by her hand and dashed towards the hillside using Starfall Steps. For a second, he felt a scorching hot sensation behind him before he quickly got out of range.

“Roar!”

A deafening roar sounded in the air as a mammoth-size creature chased Qu Chu out of the cave. It was indeed a Fire Jiao, a horse-headed creature with a snake’s body. It had five claws, but its body was slithering on the ground. Not only was it covered in thick scales, its scales were also wrapped in raging flames. It roared and spit out a breath of fierce flames at Qu Chu.

“Good graces… Flaming Jiaolong…” Lin Mu Yu Cursed under his

breath.

The 9000-years-old Fire Jiao had roughly the power of level 87. It was slightly lower level than Qu Chu, but the difference in real strength was probably not too great. Furthermore, this was a near-ten-thousand-years-old spirit beast, so its bestial nature was probably enough to increase its strength even more, Qu Chu did not dare to grandstand, so he suddenly stopped his movement and shouted a cry. The Flame Cauldron materialized from his body and condensed into a giant shield in front of Qu Chu.

The surrounding plant life quickly ignited as flames were scattered around. This place was quickly becoming a sea of fire. The Fire Jiao ferociously roared then suddenly leapt forward. Slapping its claws wildly onto the Flame Cauldron, the dragon was intent on attacking Qu Chu.

“Bang! Bang! Bang…”

After sustaining several continuous attacks, Qu Chu was struggling to continue warding off the dragon. His face was beginning to become pale as he started profusely sweating cold sweats. Clenching his teeth, he staked it all in one attack!

“Zing!”

Lightning appeared on the sword blade while Qu Chu activated Verdant Shell. Speeding past the front of the Fire Jiao, he sent out a Lightning Chop with a clashing sound. Immediately, the dragon’s front leg was torn apart by the Lightning Chop’s

incredible cutting power. In reality, Qu Chu had used Lightning Chop because he wanted to show Lin Mu Yu how this simple technique could be extremely strong in battle.

Lin Mu Yu was naturally dumbfounded. He understood the ability of a 9000-years-old spirit beast. The scales of the Fire Jiao had to be especially tough, so for Qu Chu to cut off its leg with a single slash, he could not even begin to comprehend Qu Chu's power.

"Roar!"

The Fire Jiao was no longer able to stand solidly after suffering the immense pain. Opening its blood mouth, the dragon tried to take a bite of Qu Chu.

Of course, Qu Chu would not allow that to happen. Violently calling out to his martial spirit, the Flame Cauldron magically expanded and began to rapidly rotate. With a bang, the rapidly spinning spirit blew open the Jiaolong's cranium. Qu Chu followed up with a swing of his left fist as a Sonic Punch rippled through the air!

"Boom!"

The fire dragon howled in anguish and fell to the ground, but it was still not dead. Its gigantic whip-like tail swept across the air.

Qu Chu crossed his right arm in front of him as the Flame

Cauldron materialized once again. Using the cauldron wall to block the Fire Jiao's attack, a long blast sounded as the two objects made contact. Small cracks appeared on the cauldron, but the dragon was more miserable since its whole tail had been badly mutilated.

"Agh..."

Qu Chu miserably groaned. Martial spirit and the body are one and the same, so any damage the Flame Cauldron sustained was basically equal to damage that he had taken as well. Blood was seeping out of the corner of his mouth. In order to kill this Fire Jiao, he had sustained quite a bit of damage.

The fire dragon angrily roared. Its strong vitality supported its attempts as it continually tried to swing its sharp claws at Qu Chu.

Qu Chu took several steps back. He wants to use Sonic Punch's range to strike at this spirit beast's weakness, or else he might even have to sacrifice half of his life to kill this Fire Jiao.

At that moment, Lin Mu Yu could not sit idly any longer. Giving a light shout, the Green Gourd spirit materialized out of his body and swiftly flew out. Tendrils of gourd vine burst out of the ground and wrapped about the Fire Jiao's injured leg. It was the newly learned Binding Roots ability, but it was no match for the Fire Jiao's strength. The dragon ferociously roared and exerted its full strength to tear apart the vines.

"Agh..."

Pain shot through Lin Mu Yu's body as his martial spirit was injured. Although the gourd vines' toughness was said to be very strong, it was still nothing compared to the strength of a 9000-years-old spirit beast.

But it was not for naught, he was able to distract it off of Qu Chu for a few seconds. When the Fire Jiao turned its head, Qu Chu had released another Sonic Punch. Rippling through the air with a screech, a loud explosion sounded as the Fire Jiao's eye was directly blown to pieces. Qu Chu continued without giving the beast a moment to rest and sent out three consecutive Lightning Chops!

"Zzzzt zzzt zzt..."

Flesh and blood splashed forth. At the next moment, the Fire Jiao gigantic head dropped to the ground as blood spurted out indiscriminately. The 9000-years-old spirit beast was killed!

.....

"Awesome!" Tang Xiao Xi cheers happily.

Qu Chu to wipe a sweat on his forehead and nodded towards Lin Mu Yu in thanks, then said, "Princess Xi, hurry and absorb the beast spirit of Fire Jiao. Absorb it until you've accumulated a suitable amount and stop, or else the body won't be able to handle it!"

“Okay!”

Tang Xiao Xi nodded and sat cross-legged beside the corpse of Fire Jiao. Her Firefox loudly squeaked as it materialized before her and began to greedily absorb the Fire Jiao’s spirit. Rounds of dense flame aura enveloped Tang Xiao Xi and her Firefox.

This process lasted for nearly an hour when Tang Xiao Xi suddenly groaned miserably and fainted on the ground. Traces of fierce flames flew out of her open mouth.

“What happened?” Lin Mu Yu shouted alarmingly.

Qu Chu had a ghastly look on his face as his trembled. If Tang Xiao Xi were to have an unexpected accident, then it would be no small problem. Tang Xiao Xi was the sole granddaughter of Tang Lan, the Duke of Azure Tides, If anything happens to her, then Qu Chu’s life will be in jeopardy!

“The Fire Jiao’s spirit is too strong and Xiao Xi absorbed too much. Her body can’t possibly carry this much. We have to use cold water to cool her off. Quickly!”

Qu Chu suddenly laid his head on the ground and listened to the pulsing in the earth. Standing up, he order, “Lin Mu Yu, use your foot technique and carry Princess Xi 500 meters to the south. There is a lake at that location, so hurry!”

Lin Mu Yu hastily bent down to pick up Tang Xiao Xi, but right as

he held her in his arms, he felt as if he was carrying a ball of scorching fire.

"Use your martial spirit to withstand the heat. Go quickly!"

Lin Mu Yu hurriedly called forth the Green Gourd. Sure enough, the little gourd was able to lessen the heat, but the situation was still hard to bear. Using Stellar Step, he dashed towards the lake in the south. Qu Chu's speed was slightly inferior, so he shouted, "When you get to the lake, jump into it with her in your arm and remove her clothing. Quickly, there's no time to hesitate!"

Lin Mu Yu's mind had blanked out. Could it be that I was lucky enough to come across this kind of good stuff?

But he did not have time to daydream as the young girl in his arms was still at death's door. It didn't matter what will happen with her in the future, but the most important goal right now is to save her life.

……

Very quickly, the lake appeared before his eyes. Lin Mu Yu brought the blazing Tang Xiao Xi with him as he immediately jumped into the lake.

"Ssssst!"

As if a fireball had fallen into the water, steam rose from the

surrounding and blurred the sight within. Lin Mu Yu quickly removed Tang Xiao Xi's clothes. Not long after, this beautiful princess was nearly naked within Lin Mu Yu's arms. She subconsciously reached out and hugged Lin Mu Yu's neck as she suffered through an especially unendurable pain. Perhaps she felt the pulsing coolness from Lin Mu Yu's martial spirit and decided that it was what she needed.

Compared to Tang Xiao Xi, Lin Mu Yu was facing an even greater trial. This beautiful princess was holding onto him so closely that at that very moment, he was even able to feel her proud soft bosom pressing onto his chest. That kind of feeling could not be represented in words.

Oh boy… I'm losing myself!

Chapter 21: The Six Millennial Ebony Turtle

Surging waves of flame energy gushed forth from Tang Xiao Xi while Lin Mu Yu could only rely on his martial spirit to lessen the heat. However, a ten-thousand-years-old Fire Jiao's fire energy was vigorously unyielding, and was not something a lowly Green Gourd could ward off. The heat quickly devastated the lake as unending sizzling pools of lake water evaporated into the air. In the blink of an eye, the lake looked as if it was about to boil.

……

"Woo……"

Tang Xiao Xi had awoken with a whimper, only to feel as if her organs were ablaze. It was as though every cell in her body was on fire. She didn't think that the Fire Jiao's beast spirit would be this violent, nor could she imagine that by not listening to Qu Chu and absorbing just a little bit more of the beast spirit would cause her to be in this situation. At that moment, she opened her eyes only to see Lin Mu Yu hugging her closely and tightly closing his eyes. The shirt on his chest had been burnt black while a layer of faint green luster enveloped him. If not for the Green Gourd, perhaps this guy would have been burnt to death.

Looking down on herself, Tang Xiao Xi realized that she was stark naked. Instantly her cheeks flushed red in embarrassment as her heart fluttered confusedly. But when she looked up to see Lin Mu Yu focusing on warding off the heat while tightly shutting his eyes, she couldn't help but be slightly moved. Right as she was about to say something, a wave of heat rushed up to her temples

and she fainted once more into Lin Mu Yu's embrace.

No one knew when he had arrived, but Qu Chu was already at the lakeside. Looking at the pair of young man and woman embracing in the water, he did not try to stop them, but instead sighed in his heart, "This kind of fate...Would it have been better if they had never met?"

After a while, Qu Chu shouted from a distance, "Lin Mu Yu, you must persevere. The life of the princess is in your hands. No matter what, you must hold on! You could say that this is also training, as it should be able to greatly enhance your martial spirit's power. Do you understand?"

Lin Mu Yu did not respond. Right now, he can't refuse even if he wanted to anyway. He had already been bound to Tang Xiao Xi like a rope.

.....

The Fire Jiao's heat was truly too vicious. In the blink of an eye, it had surged forth several times, and had gradually burnt the tip of the Green Gourd spirit until it was black. Because the martial spirit and the practitioner is one and the same, a sweet taste rushed up Lin Mu Yu's throat as mouthful of fresh blood seeped out the corner of his mouth and dripped down onto his chest. His mind had blanked out and his consciousness was also on the verge of collapse.

No, I must not give up like this!

He clenched his teeth as his unyielding pride would never allow him to give up so easily. Enduring the martial spirit's wounds, he continued removing the excess Fire Jiao spirit power from Tang Xiao Xi.

Nearly two hours passed while half of the lake water had seemingly evaporated into steam. The lake water was only able to reach Lin Mu Yu and Tang Xiao Xi's ankles, but this did not affect their ability to remove the heat with the water.

Finally, Tang Xiao Xi let out a small whimper and woke up once more. This time she was finally able to feel the heat in her body becoming calmer. The Firefox had also awoken from its deep sleep and was lying down on her shoulder while grumbling.

On the contrary, Lin Mu Yu stuffily groaned and fell onto his knees. He let out a whimper as another mouthful of blood was spat out into the water and colored originally clear lake water in a shade of red.

Tang Xiao Xi was both embarrassed and anxious. When Lin Mu Yu had fallen to his knees, his body had almost been sliding down on hers. His face had slid past her twin peaks and that was a feeling that she had never experienced before. Momentarily, her cheeks had become flushed red as she stood there and blankly stared at Lin Mu Yu as his face rested on her lower abdomen. The more she looked, the redder her cheeks flushed. She did not know what to do at that point, and could only anxiously ask, "Mu Mu...Are you alright? Mu Mu..."

In the distance, Qu Chu removed a backpack from the horseback and threw a suit of clothing at Tang Xiao Xi, “Princess Xi, put on some clean clothes and pull Lin Mu Yu ashore. His martial spirit has been heavily injured.”

“Okay!”

Tang Xiao Xi speedily put on a delicate cyan cloak, then picked up Lin Mu Yu. Using spirit power, she was on the dry shore with a single leap.

……

Lin Mu Yu was not waking up from his unconsciousness. After Tang Xiao Xi put on a new set of clothes, she anxiously asked, “Old Qu…He is ok right? It’s all my fault… If not for me, he wouldn’t be like this…”

She was so worried that tears were building up in her eyes.

Qu Chu looked at Tang Xiao Xi and secretly bickered in his heart. Tang Xiao Xi’s status was truly too prominent. The granddaughter of Tang Lan, the Duke of Azure Tide, one of the two founding fathers of the Empire. Truly deserving to be called a priceless treasure. It is reasonable to say that Lin Mu Yu was just a civilian, so it’s naturally normal for a civilian to die for a noble like Tang Xiao Xi, right? But right now, Tang Xiao Xi looked as if she was going to break down in tears, could it be that she…

Qu Chu did not dare to continue his train of thought. A pampered noble girl falling in love with a peasant boy. These things usually end in tragedy. Qu Chu did not want these two to also suffer that kind of ending. As such, might as well cut their ties now before they become even more entangled.

“Princess Xi.”

Qu Chu gently said, “We’ve been out for long enough. Lin Mu Yu is also gravely injured as too much of the Fire Jiao’s heat is in his martial spirit. He would never be able to expel that energy, so his future could be considered to be wasted. Let us bring him back to Silver Fir City and leave him some gold coins as remuneration. How does that sound?”

Tang Xiao Xi froze and looked at Qu Chu in shock. Biting her lips, she snapped, “Qu Chu!”

“Princess…” Qu Chu hurriedly knelt down on one knee. He understood the difference in his status compared to the princess.

“I command you. You must save Lin Mu Yu, or else I will definitely not go back to the Capital with you!”

“Yes…” Qu Chu sighed in his heart. He knew that he shouldn’t have tried to be the villain and to try cutting their ties. Oh well, if she wants me to save him, then I’ll save him since his injuries are connected to me anyway.

……

“Lin Mu Yu’s Green Gourd only has one layer, so its strength is naturally limited. It’s almost been crippled by the searing flames, thus even if we save his life, he will never be able to use his martial spirit again. I will have no way to fix that, unless…” Qu Chu said somewhat helplessly.

Tang Xiao Xi bit her lips as her eyes were covered in a layer of mist and asked, “Unless what?”

Qu Chu continued, “Unless we have a water element beast spirit with an age of at least 5000 years old and use its water to control the fire. In this way we’ll be able to heal his Green Gourd spirit, but you can’t find a 5000-years-old water spirit running around everywhere. Can you imagine how difficult it would be to find one right now? If we were still in Lanyan City, we could easily find one of these spirits in Dragon Seeker Forest. However, this is Seven Star Forest, and its beast variety is far from that of Dragon Seeker Forest…”

“Then…Then what do we do….” Tang Xiao Xi slowly knelt beside Lin Mu Yu. Remembering the sight of him hugging her to help her lessen the raging flames, she couldn’t help but burst into tears.

But right at that moment, the sun had set, and high tides unexpectedly rose out of the lake.

“Huh?”

Qu Chu suddenly looked at the lake with a stunned face.

“Old Qu, what’s the matter with you?” Tang Xiao Xi asked.

Qu Chu clapped his hand together and exclaimed, “Princess, youngster Lin is saved!”

“Ah?” Tang Xiao Xi abruptly stood up with a face of joy and asked with a smile that looked to have survived desperate straits, “Tell me, Old Qu. What’s going on? Did you think of a way to save him?”

Qu Chu nodded and pointed at the rising water level, “A lake will generally never refill this quickly. There is also a whiff of the strong medicinal smell of Rainbow Lotus in the water. If I am correct, there should be a giant ancient beast within these waters: The Ebony Turtle!”

“Ebony Turtle?”

“That’s right. The Ebony Turtle is a magical underwater creature. It can swallow clouds and spit out mists. It is said that an Ebony Turtle of 2000 years old had already consumed huge amounts of water and compressed them in its body. Since this lake’s water is increasing so rapidly, there must be something going on under the water, especially with this smell of Rainbow Lotus. As far as I know, the Ebony Turtles’ favorite food is the Rainbow Lotus, so this smell must have originated from the turtle’s feces.

Tang Xiao Xi was flabbergasted.

At this time, Lin Mu Yu's body twitched a little as he woke up. Sniffing the air, he muttered, "What is this...Rainbow Lotus? I haven't smelled this in a long time..."

Qu Chu chuckled, "Kid, you're quite lucky. Don't move and wait here. I'm feeling nice enough today to pull the Ebony Turtle out for you. You and princess Xi will stay here while I kill this Ebony Turtle."

Lin Mu Yu quickly thanked Qu Chu, although he didn't know why he was going to kill an Ebony Turtle.

.....

At the next moment, Qu Chu awakened his martial spirit and the Flame Cauldron materialized before him. After a single dash forward, he dove deeper into the lake. Over ten minutes had passed without a single hint of movement. Lin Mu Yu stood and channeled the basic energy in his body, only to find that he was able to smoothly manipulate energy. However, the Green Gourd was seemingly still gravely damaged and his own meridian network was also injured. A murderous wave of scorching heat chaotically rampaged in his meridians, but there was also another wave of energy pressing down on the Fire Jiao's energy. Otherwise, his fragile body would have long been burnt to ashes.

"Why is he taking so long..." Tang Xiao Xi anxiously muttered.

Just then, a stream of water shot up through the air. No, that is a water arrow!

Qu Chu flew out of the water with the Flame Cauldron in his hand. He gave a harsh shout before sending a heavy punch through the air and into the water. The gigantic beast in the lake followed Qu Chu out of the water and it really was a giant turtle. It was an especially sinister looking turtle, having a sturdy-looking body covered in a giant shell with a radius of about 20 meters. Its movement created high waves in the water, so much so that it left observers in awe.

“One…two…three…four…five…six…” Tang Xiao Xi’s mouth widened as she counted. “Six pieces of golden turtle shell! This Ebony Turtle is at least 6000 years old. Wow, Mu Mu, you are really lucky! After Qu Chu kills this Ebony Turtle, you can go and refine its beast spirit!”

Lin Mu Yu nodded: “Alright!”

Soon enough, Qu Chu had lured the giant turtle onto solid ground. It was like a gigantic tank whose deafening roars sounded like cannon fire. However, compared to its fierce appearance, its water arrow attacks were all warded off by the Flame Cauldron. After all, the difference in strength was too great. In the blink of an eye, it was already worn down to its last breath, and finally died to one last Lightning attack from Qu Chu!

“Quickly, Lin Mu Yu. Use your martial spirit to absorb this Ebony Turtle’s beast spirit!”

.....

Lin Mu Yu dashed forth using Starfall Steps, only to feel faint because his body was too weak. He arrived next to the Ebony Turtle and sat down cross-legged to begin refining the rare beast spirit of this Ebony Turtle.

Chapter 22 : Rainbow Lotus

The Ebony Turtle was naturally a tyrant of the water, not to mention that this turtle had trained itself for 6200 years in the depths of the lake and had long ago awakened to a higher intelligence. It was only because a Saint realm expert like Qu Chu had descended upon this place that it was subdued. Perhaps the turtle had really bad luck, because if not for the excess amount of heat energy in Tang Xiao Xi evaporating half of the lake, Qu Chu probably would not have found the Ebony Turtle.

……

Barely touching the turtle's cold yet soft beast spirit, the Green Gourd had immediately begun to frantically suck up the spirit energy as if it had finally found rain after a heavy drought. Lin Mu Yu sat with closed eyes, but his body was trembling. Although his eyes were shut, bursts of air waves rose out of his heart. He was even able to look at his energy center, only to notice that it had dried up due to the Fire Jiao's heat and the green vines from the gourd had been burnt black. As the gourd frantically absorbed the Ebony Turtle's spirit energy, the black patches of burnt vines gradually returned to their original shades of green. It looked like the refinement process was also rapidly healing his body.

Lin Mu Yu clicked his tongue in wonder. To be able to see the green gourd even with his eyes closed, it was truly mystifying.

After about 20 minutes, the burns on the green gourd had basically healed while its leaves grew more lush and flourished. Lin Mu Yu felt as if the injuries to his meridians and muscles had

completely healed. A formless energy rumbled within the Green Gourd, as if it was about to burst out.

Lin Mu Yu secretly rejoiced, then called out in his head, “Lulu, are you still here?”

“Big bro, I’m here!”

In the sea of his mind, the system fairy appeared before him. Her transparent wings fluttering behind her as she smilingly inquired, “Big bro, are you refining this gourd?”

“Yeah. Can you help me find out what kinds of materials will be needed for the next level?”

Lulu opened her mouth in surprise as she looked at the giant turtle outside, “Wow, this is a thousands years old Ebony Turtle. Big bro, this is an alchemy material of the highest quality! There is a piece of scarlet red shell in the middle of the turtle’s back. That is the “Fire Scale”, the most precious piece of material on this turtle’s body. Although that scale isn’t very big, it still contains the power that this Ebony Turtle condensed over thousands of years. If you remove that scale and smelt it inside the alchemy cauldron, there is a good chance that you will be able to completely refine the scale!”

“Alright!”

Lin Mu Yu slowly opened his eyes and asked the nearby Tang

Xiao Xi, “Princess Xi, Would you help me with a favor?”

Tang Xiao Xi was a little ill at ease. She was afraid to look him in the eye and turned her back to him. Perhaps she found it a little difficult to face him after the whole fiasco with Lin Mu Yu having seen her naked body. Quietly, she mumbled, “Okay. What is it?”

“In the middle of the Ebony Turtle’s shell is a scarlet red scale. Can you use a knife to cut it out for me?”

“Oh, okay!” Although Tang Xiao Xi did not know what Lin Mu Yu wanted to do, but since he had saved her life not too long ago, she had to help with this favor no matter the reason.

Qu Chu nodded his head secretly. The Fire Scale was the most precious part of the Ebony Turtle. The turtle was of the water element and was naturally cold, but the worldly energy that it absorbed would contain both fire and water. That is why the Ebony Turtle would condense all of its fire energy into the shell, forming the fire scale. This was the reason why the Fire Scale was extremely precious, as its spiritual nature was far greater than the rest of the shell. Originally, Qu Chu had planned to remove it himself to later refine, but he didn’t think this kid would have such a good eye for these things. He did not bother with it any further since he had already stepped into Saint realm, so he shouldn’t fight with youngsters for these things.

A few minutes later, Tang Xiao Xi held onto the meter wide scale plate and leapt off the Ebony Turtle’s back. Dripping with fragrant sweat, she handed the scale over to Lin Mu Yu and asked, “Mu Mu, what are you using this for?”

Lin Mu Yu smiled mysteriously and said, “Refinement! I will be troubling you and Elder Qu to guard me for a short while.”

“Okay.”

……

Qu Chu and Tang Xiao Xi could not see the alchemy cauldron. What they saw was a patch of energy glowing with dim light as Lin Mu Yu threw the Fire Scale inside of it. Immediately, that pool of energy began to fluctuate. He had started the smelting process. This time, he did not need to gather any other materials because the power of the Fire Scale alone should be able to allow the Green Gourd to advance.

The Fire Scale gradually decreased in size inside the alchemy cauldron and turned into slivers of delicate flame energy. These tiny streams of energy slowly seeped into the Green Gourd over the next 30 minutes.

When Lin Mu Yu finally stood up, it was as if the air about him had experienced a drastic change. Even Tang Xiao Xi couldn’t help but exclaim in awe, “You… You seem quite different…”

Qu Chu could naturally tell the difference. Faintly smiling, he explained, “He has broken through the second stage of Human realm and has stepped into the third stage. Right now, his strength should be around level 27, so naturally he would be different.”

“What! That fast?” Tang Xiao Xi was shocked, “This… When I’m barely…”

Qu Chu comforted, “Princess, because you absorbed too much spirit energy from the Fire Jiao, you were able to profit from a disaster. Your strength has reached the tier of a War Elder of the 36th level, so congratulations. To reach the first stage of Earth realm before twenty years of age is a rare feat in the whole Empire.”

Tang Xiao Xi secretly rejoiced.

Lin Mu Yu then asked, “Elder Qu, I was able to see the Green Gourd with my eyes closed a moment ago. How did that happen?”

Qu Chu couldn’t help but laugh, “That is because you have broken into the third stage of Human realm. The most notable aspect of a practitioner of that level is the ability to use inner sight. How could you not know such a simple fact? Oh, that’s right. Princess Xi, when you were absorbing the Fire Jiao’s spirit energy, did you learn any of the dragon’s abilities?”

“No…” Tang Xiao Xi shook her head with a slight disappointment.

“And you?” Qu Chu asked.

“Seems like it.” Lin Mu Yu humbly smiled.

“Huh?” Qu Chu and Tang Xiao Xi were both astonished, “Quickly show us what it is.”

“Okay.”

Lin Mu Yu felt as if his whole body was overflowing with a vigorous power that was ready to burst out. The Green Gourd materialized out of his body while he looked to the front and opened his palm. Instantaneously, a gigantic gourd ladle appeared before him in a curved defensive formation. Activating the skill, a wave of scorching flames spurted out and formed into a piece of flame red turtle scale in front of the gourd.

“Ebony Scale…”

Qu Chu was secretly apprehensive as he commented, “Your Green Gourd is but a rank 10 martial spirit, but was able to learn two skills from two advancements… This is certainly a rare sight! Xiao Xi, use your Firefox to see how strong Lin Mu Yu’s Ebony Scale is.”

“Is that ok, Mu Mu?” Tang Xiao Xi cautiously asked, for she was already at the first stage of Earth realm. Not only was she one tier higher, but her Firefox was also a 2nd rank martial spirit. With such a great difference in strength, it would not be good if she accidentally hurt Lin Mu Yu.

However, Lin Mu Yu was excited to try out the Ebony Scale’s defensive power and gladly nodded, “Let’s do it, Princess!”

Tang Xiao Xi was a little excited as well. She clenched her fist, then a ball of fire quickly wrapped around it. Her Firefox materialized from her body and charged towards Lin Mu Yu's scale bulwark.

"Boom!"

Sparks flew as the two spirits made contact. The Firefox was a fire element spirit, but the Ebony Scale was also made of the element of fire. After the single strike, Lin Mu Yu had to quickly take several steps back as the blood in his chest boiled. Nice attack... Although Tang Xiao Xi looked like a fragile beauty, she was actually quite strong. That strike had left Lin Mu Yu's arms numb and powerless. Furthermore, it looked like she did not even use her full power, or else he definitely would be in more pain.

Tang Xiao Xi was surprised as well. She had used at least eight tenths of her power, thinking that the attack would be able to break through the Ebony Scale. She had planned to quickly withdraw her power so as to not hurt Lin Mu Yu, but Tang Xiao Xi could not imagine that after receiving the Roaring Strike from the Firefox, the Ebony Scale was basically undamaged. Although Lin Mu Yu had been forced back, that was just her advantage in fire energy, and did not mean that the Firefox had truly defeated the Green Gourd.

This distressed her a little, for she was born of the famous Tang clan from Seven Sea City. She had awakened her Firefox spirit at a young age while none of her older siblings had awakened the Firefox. It was the reason why her grandfather had adored her so

much, because the Firefox was the symbol of the family and also the symbol of power. Yet right now, her 2nd rank martial spirit unexpectedly only evenly matched Lin Mu Yu's 10th rank martial spirit. This was a huge blow to the headstrong Tang Xiao Xi.

But looking at Lin Mu Yu's expression as he contemplated, Tang Xiao Xi could not bring out any cruel thoughts. On the contrary, she was worried that she might have accidentally hurt him and began to feel ashamed of herself. Withdrawing the Firefox, she asked, "Mu Mu, are you alright?"

Her question ended up making Lin Mu Yu feel embarrassed. He shook his head and explained, "I'm alright. It was just that the Firefox's attack was too stunning, so now my arm is slightly numb..."

Tang Xiao Xi happily smiled, "Thank goodness. I was so afraid that I had hurt you!"

Qu Chu noted, "This kid's strength is no longer like before. Moreover, the Green Gourd obtained the Ebony Scale ability so he has completely moved towards the direction of a defense type martial spirit. Even if you wanted to hurt him, doing so probably won't be easy."

Tang Xiao Xi stuck out her tongue in protest, "I didn't want to hurt him!"

Lin Mu Yu could only snicker at the conversation.

……

It was already late in the evening as Qu Chu looked at the sky and observed, “We probably won’t be able to leave tonight. Since Princess Xi has broken into the first stage of Earth realm, my mission is complete. We will camp out one more night and we will rush back to Silver Fir City tomorrow morning.”

“Okay.”

Lighting up the bonfire, they had originally planned to roast another batch of buns, but Tang Xiao Xi was tired of eating buns for the last few days. Instead, they took out a pan from a bag on the horse and decided to boil some meat soup. Due to the dark of the night, they could not hunt for rabbits so they fetched meat locally. Cutting off a large chunk of meat from the Ebony Turtle and the Fire Jiao, they cooked the two completely incompatible meats together. Furthermore, Qu Chu had often camped out in the wilderness, so he had brought along some salt and spices. After Lin Mu Yu went and gathered some wild herbs, they threw everything into the big pan to stew. Not long after, a savory smell wafted out from the pan.

Ever since entering Seven Star Forest, Tang Xiao Xi had not been able to eat anything good, so she happily feasted on this meal. Lin Mu Yu also ate a lot as he needed to replenish the strength that he spent in absorbing spirit energy.

After nightfall, Tang Xiao Xi once more fell into a slumber. She laid on the ground with her back to Lin Mu Yu. This beautiful princess seemingly could fall asleep better than Lin Mu Yu and Qu

Chu. It was no wonder why she was so slender and elegant. If she stayed up all night like Qu Chu, she would probably look just like him with the skin on the face rough and uneven like a piece of tree bark.

……

Lin Mu Yu did not sleep. Yet after practicing Lightning Chop and the throwing knives for a few hours, he went towards the depths of the lake.

“This kid…”

Qu Chu squinted his eyes and spread out his sensory field. Sensing that the surrounding was safe from threats, he followed behind the young boy only to find Lin Mu Yu diving into the deep parts of the lake. After a few minutes, he floated back to the surface, carrying a cluster of fragrant lotus flowers in his arms. Under the moonlight, these lotus flowers were brimming with an exceptionally enchanting complexion.

Chapter 23 : Peak Of Dreams

When the dripping wet Lin Mu Yu arrived back at the bonfire and dropped off the lotus flowers in his arms, Qu Chu couldn't help but ask, "Aren't those Rainbow Lotuses? What are you planning to do with those?"

"Making medicine." Lin Mu Yu said with indifference.

"Lin Mu Yu, do you truly not understand or are you pretending to be dumb?" Qu Chu continued.

"What do you mean?" This time Lin Mu Yu was confused.

Qu Chu sat up and explained, "The Rainbow Lotus is a level 7 herb that emits a delicate fragrance, but it's slightly toxic and will cause hallucinations if ingested. Due to the rarity of Rainbow Lotuses,, some nobles like to use a powdered form of these lotuses in a herbal concoction and consume them in search for a quick euphoria. This herb has long since been banned by the Imperial Panacea Division from civilian use. As only the army medics are allowed to use Rainbow Lotuses for producing painkillers, do you still dare to use them to make medicine?"

"Something like that happened?" Lin Mu Yu mused for a second, then shook his head, "It's alright. If you won't tell anyone, no one else will accuse me of it."

As he spoke, he looked towards the sleeping Tang Xiao Xi. This beautiful little princess probably won't report him.

Qu Chu stared at the youngster and asked, “What are you planning to make with those Rainbow Lotuses? As far as I know, the Rainbow Lotus can’t be alchemized in conjunction with any other herbs to create potions. Most of the recipes involving Rainbow Lotuses have been lost for thousands of years.”

“Peak of Dreams.”

With just three simple words, Qu Chu had been stunned.

Peak of Dreams. This was a name that no one had heard for a long time, because the recipe for this elixir had been long forgotten by the world. The last person who could create the Peak of Dreams was a Medicine God, but he had passed away thousands of years ago! Peak of Dreams is a rare and unusual elixir that was ranked as a level 7 potion by the Panacea Division. According to legends, this elixir could greatly awaken the hidden potential in humans. After drinking the elixir, the user would fall into a deep slumber for 3 days and 3 nights. Upon awaking on the 4th day, they will have a high chance of enhancing their ability, so much so that legends told of a Heaven Sealed fellow awakening a martial spirit after drinking the Peak of Dreams!

……

For martial arts practitioners, Peak of Dreams was something they would dream about obtaining.

“You truly know the recipe for Peak of Dreams?” Qu Chu found it

hard to believe the youngster before him.

Lin Mu Yu faintly smiled, “What do you think? Or did you think that I’d risk drowning by gathering these lotuses just to tease you?”

Continuing on, he looked around and asked, “Are there any Bone Trees nearby?”

The Bone Tree is a level 6 herb said to only grow on the bones of animals. Because of its cold nature, it is usually added to medicines for removing excess heat energy from the body.

Qu Chu nodded, “When we came, I saw some Bone Trees about 5 Li from here. But with your shabby martial prowess, you might not even survive the journey. You have to understand, any creature older than 1000 years can easily kill you.”

TL Note: Li (unit)

Lin Mu Yu chuckled shamelessly, “That’s why I…”

“You’re not planning on asking me to help gather Bone Trees for you, are you?”

“What would you say?”

“Keep dreaming!” Qu Chu coolly folded his arms and sat on a

rock. The character and ego of a Saint realm expert were truly awe-inspiring.

“I am probably the only one in this world who knows the recipe for the Peak of Dreams. Do you want to become the other person who shares that knowledge? Perhaps even the Medicine Kings in the royal palace would see you in a different light.” Lin Mu Yu softly teased.

Qu Chu’s body shuddered for a second as his conscience combatted the temptation. A second later, he dashed out into the distance and shouted, “Protect Princess Xi, I’ll be right back!”

……

Less than 10 minutes later, Qu Chu returned with a small, ghastly-white tree. An earnest look was on his face as he smilingly said, “I bought it back. You need to teach me how to alchemize Peak of Dreams now!”

Lin Mu Yu snickered inside but sternly said, “The recipe for Peak of Dreams is a first class top secret. I won’t normally teach it to anyone else, so there are some conditions if you want to learn it.”

“What conditions?”

“Teach me Verdant Shell and Sonic Punch!”

“You little rascal. You want to learn both? You’re asking for

more than you can swallow!” Qu Chu retorted in bewilderment.

Lin Mu Yu showed a slightly distressed face as he said with a lack of enthusiasm, “But alchemizing the Peak of Dreams is a long lost skill...”

“Forget it, deal!”

Qu Chu really could not resist the temptation. Of course, it was only in regards of alchemy. If he wasn’t so deeply engrossed with alchemy, perhaps he would never have been good friends with Chu Feng.

.....

Thus, Lin Mu Yu began to explain the method of using the Essence Purification Technique to remove medicine cores from Bone Trees. The whole process was exceptionally delicate and complex, so after a dozen times, Qu Chu finally understood the basics. In comparison, extracting medicine cores from the Rainbow Lotus was a whole lot simpler. Finally, when it came to the alchemy step, the process became very complicated as flames must be continuously fed to the two types of medicine cores to remove impurities before they would need to use Essence Purification to fuse the two types of medicine cores.

After nearly 3 hours, Lin Mu Yu alchemized a total of 5 bottles of Peak of Dreams, while Qu Chu created 2 bottles.

Picking up one of Lin Mu Yu's bottles and sniffing the contents, Qu Chu uttered in amazement, "A 2nd tier Peak of Dream? Good heavens..."

"Let's smell yours." Lin Mu Yu smiled.

Qu Chu was a veteran like Hawkeye and was able to identify the quality of potions by smell. He sniffed the two bottles he made and disappointingly said, "9th tier..."

"That's not too bad. You have to remember that these are genuine Peak of Dreams."

Lin Mu Yu stuffed his 5 bottles into his backpack.

"Wait wait..."

Qu Chu looked at the bottles of Peak of Dreams and asked, "Could... Could you leave a bottle for Princess Xi? She is in the golden period of training so a bottle of Peak of Dreams will be very important to her. You can ask for as much money as you want, just give me a price."

Lin Mu Yu couldn't help but laugh, "Princess Xi... Forget it, I'll just give her a bottle as a present."

"Ah, many thanks!"

“Alright then!”

Lin Mu Yu dusted off his hands and said, “The preparation technique, alchemy method, and recipe for Peak of Dreams have all been taught to you. Thus, you should keep to your promise of teaching me Verdant Shell and Sonic Punch!”

“Alright.”

……

Qu Chu was a man who kept his words. Under the moonlight, he explained the secrets behind Verdant Shell and its channeling methods. In truth, the technique was not difficult to understand, one simply needed to turn the basic energy inside their body into dense stone energy. It could be considered an advanced version of the energy barrier. Although the Verdant Shell was just a defensive barrier for Qu Chu, it wasn’t that simple for Lin Mu Yu. If he were to use Verdant Shell in conjunction with Ebony Scale, the resulting defensive strength would not be a simple 1+1=2 and would be closer to an exponential growth. With it, Lin Mu Yu will be able to challenge foes much stronger than him by using this extraordinary defensive power..

After practicing for an hour, Lin Mu Yu was able to condense his energy into dim plates of green rock energy, but they were still far from the thickness of those created by Qu Chu. The next step would just be learning to better control the energy input. As such, his results could be considered a small achievement.

After learning Verdant Shell, Lin Mu Yu asked for the next skill.

In all honesty, Sonic Punch was the skill that Lin Mu Yu was most interested in. Lin Mu Yu had been intrigued since the first time that Qu Chu had used the technique. The skill used energy to create ripples in the air and subsequently used the sonic boom to attack from long distance. It was an awesome-looking finishing move that was capable of shattering the victim's internal organs!

……

However, the stronger the technique, the harder the learning process.

The essence of Sonic Punch is a skill called "Wind Blow": Sending out a punch that would cause a slight fluctuation in the air. The speed of the punch must be close to the speed of sound while simultaneously using energy to create the moving force that will create a ripple in the air. Lin Mu Yu had to practice just that step for 3 hours before finally understanding the technique before daybreak.

Qu Chu watched Lin Mu Yu practice only to feel a surging excitement inside his heart. He had seen many geniuses in his lifetime, but none were able to be as perceptive as Lin Mu Yu. This kid only needed 3 hours before understanding the Wind Blow technique, when Qu Chu himself had to practice diligently for 7 days and 7 nights!

Could it be that this kid's perception was ten times as sharp as Qu

Chu's?

Qu Chu momentarily became indecisive as he realized that he didn't know what kind of frightful person he was teaching. But from the moment they met, Qu Chu felt that, although Lin Mu Yu was hiding something, he was definitely not a bad person. Otherwise, he would have never risked his own life to save Tang Xiao Xi.

Admittedly, Tang Xiao Xi was a devastatingly beautiful girl and many young nobles in the Capital would proclaim that they would give their life for Tang Xiao Xi. But when such a situation truly arose, perhaps they would all cower back like turtles. After all, for things like beautiful girls, skirt-chasers would simply want to own them and not protect them.

……

After teaching Wind Blow, Qu Chu once again began chanting his endless poem of instruction for Sonic Punch. Lin Mu Yu merely listened three times before he memorized it all in his head!

Seeing Qu Chu's dumbstruck face, Lin Mu Yu secretly snickered. It was just reciting a thousand word mnemonic, which was nothing compared to the time when he first started learning speed memorization techniques. Furthermore, the fact that he had won first prize in all kinds of competitions wasn't a lie. Ace student + gaming expert + super silver-spooned kid was his identity. Now that I think about it, that Lamborghini I bought should have shipped by now. I wonder if my older brother or my dad will receive it for me. Now that I've come to this foreign world, I don't

even know of a way to return.

The only thing I can do now is to keep living on.

……

Lin Mu Yu felt a sense of loss as he looked up at the starry skies of this world. However, when he looked down and saw the faint morning rays spilling onto Tang Xiao Xi's peaceful sleeping face, he felt as if he could find something to live for in this world.

Everything will eventually turn to dust, so who would know how tomorrow will turn out?

……

When the light of dawn finally appeared, Lin Mu Yu was finally able to grasp the fundamentals behind Sonic Punch. He was able to attack a log from 10 meters away and make it tremble slightly. Although the result didn't look like much, the power of Sonic Punch should improve as his martial capacities improve.

From Lin Mu Yu's observations, most fighting techniques taught in Silver Fir City cost at least several gold Yin, and there was no lack of fake and inferior techniques to be found. In comparison, Qu Chu's Lightning Chop, Verdant Shell, and Sonic Punch were all genuine high level battle techniques. Not to mention the most important part of all: They were all free!

Chapter 24 : The Young Lord's Flaunting Of Power

Although they set out at dawn, the three were still walking in Seven Star Forest at sunset. However, since they were within a hundred Li from Silver Fir City, they decided to continue trekking in the night. With Lin Mu Yu and Tang Xiao Xi's growth in the last two days, Qu Chu was not worried about wild beasts at all. Even if he stayed his hands, the two youngsters could probably handle most of the spirit beasts from the outer regions of Seven Star Forest.

……

On the journey back, Lin Mu Yu did not waste any time. He was either silently practicing Sonic Punch, energy channeling, breathing techniques, or using Wind Blow to practice striking distant trees. The speed and force of his Sonic Punch became stronger with each practice strike, so the power had naturally increased as well. Seeing the progress, Qu Chu couldn't help but secretly praise his aptitude: This kid truly is a genius of once in a millennium. To be able to master the three big techniques Lightning Chop, Verdant Shell, and Sonic Punch in such a short amount of time… I can't even begin to imagine how much he will grow in the future.

When the three rider finally arrived at the gate of Silver Fir City, clocks had already struck midnight. A guard in a scarlet red gown walked forth and began to help lead the way for Tang Xiao Xi's horse. He respectfully smiled, "Congratulations Princess Xi, for finally breaking into the first stage of Earth realm!"

Tang Xiao Xi humbly smiled back, “Thank you. Let’s enter the city. We will rest at an inn tonight and set up tomorrow morning for the Capital. It’s been too long since I’ve left.”

“Yes!”

The guard looked up and glanced at Lin Mu Yu. Startled, he mumbled, “This kid looks familiar…”

Lin Mu Yu responded, “I am an assistant at Bai Ling Pharmacy.”

“Oh I see. You’re the Lin Mu Yu who alchemized the first tier potion, right?”

“Yeah.”

“Haha.” The guard unknowingly started laughing. Following a hollow laughter, he said, “Tomorrow is the date for the Discount Token tournament between the youngsters of Silver Fir City’s alchemy world. Young Lord Hua Wan is sure to win, but since you hurried back tonight, presumably there will be an interesting fight to watch tomorrow. Princess Xi, are you going to watch as well?”

TL Note: Pardon Token changed to Discount Token…Because that’s what they are.

Tang Xiao Xi was not one who could handle this kind of

temptation, so she turned to look at Qu Chu with her puppy eyes. Qu Chu had no choice but to laugh and say, “Oh well, we’ll watch the tournament before setting out. Besides, Princess Xi is the special representative so she should be personally awarding the Discount Token anyway.”

“Yeah yeah. Thank you Old Qu.”

……

Since, Tang Xiao Xi seemed to be deliberately avoiding him, Lin Mu Yu immediately went back to Bai Ling Pharmacy after walking Qu Chu and Tang Xiao Xi to the inn. When he pushed open the large doors to the yard, he saw Chu Yao in the distance. Sitting under a tree, she was surrounded in a shining aura while she trained her martial spirit, the Violet Mink. The Violet Mink was adorable and looked similar to Tang Xiao Xi’s Firefox, only its strength was much inferior. The Firefox was a 2nd rank martial spirit while the Violet Mink was a 5th rank spirit. It was basically the difference between a noble martial spirit and a peasant martial spirit.

“Chu Yao!” Lin Mu Yu softly called.

Immediately, Chu Yao opened her eyes and hugged Lin Mu Yu with incessant happiness, “Ah Yu, you’ve returned safely! Heh, Senior Wang Ying was saying that you would never return alive. Let me see quickly!”

She intimately held Lin Mu Yu’s arm and saw that he had

seemingly become much stronger while his energy circulation felt more vigorous than before. The greatest change was the look of confidence and spirit in his eyes, both hinting at his advancement.

"Chu Yao, I have a martial spirit now." Lin Mu Yu faintly smiled.

Chu Yao excitedly asked, "Oh? What kind of spirit?"

Lin Mu Yu softly muttered a sound and materialized the Green Gourd. Slightly embarrassed, he presented, "Green Gourd, 10th rank martial spirit, but it's handy once I strengthen it a bit."

"Oh..." Chu Yao quickly rushed to comfort him, "It's alright. Even a 10th rank martial spirit is still a martial spirit, so it will still help you in training. If anything, I'll represent Bai Ling Pharmacy tomorrow for the tournament tomorrow, at least I've already trained to level 21 now."

"Wow, Chu Yao, you're rising pretty quickly. Last I remember, you had only break past level 19 into level 20."

"Yeah!" Chu Yao lifted her plump chest proudly and confidently smiled, "I am the strongest practitioner in Bai Ling Pharmacy right now. Ah Yu, do you think I can beat Hua Wan?"

"That's a little difficult." Lin Mu Yu rubbed his nose and answered truthfully.

Chu Yao chuckled and gave him a light slap on the shoulder,

“Heh, can’t you have just a little bit more faith in your senior? Alright, you must be super hungry since you came back so late. I’ll go make you something to eat. I caught two hares today when I was out gathering herbs and I specially saved half a hare for you. Hehe, that glutton Luo Kai, if I wasn’t watching, he would definitely have ate your half!”

Lin Mu Yu couldn’t help but smile as a warm feeling was forming in his heart. Not knowing when it first started, but there was a feeling of home-coming when he returned to this place.

That night passed away very quickly. When Chu Feng, Wang Ying, Luo Kai, and the rest heard that Lin Mu Yu had returned, they had all came to visit him. Chu Yao was the last person to leave his room. Once Chu Yao had left, Lin Mu Yu immediately sat cross-legged on his bed and began to meditate.

……

On the next day, Chu Yao woke him up early with loud knocks. After eating breakfast, all the apprentices from Bai Ling Pharmacy went together to the Discount Token tournament. Chu Feng followed closely behind the group. Ever since Chu Yao had broken into the 2nd stage of Human realm, Chu Feng had placed great expectations on his cute granddaughter. Perhaps Chu Yao will be able to obtain victory in this competition?

As the Empire’s Alchemy Capital, Silver Fir City had given rise to two Medicine God tier alchemist, but those were all events several thousand years ago. However, that history had caused the citizens of Silver Fir City to continue seeking greater alchemy arts. Even

the younger generation wanted to practice diligently in order to win back the city's former fame.

The tournament grounds was set inside the military drilling ground within the lord's manor. According to Empire law, each lord has the right to train a limited government army to combat bandits in peacetime, while the same army must enlist into the Empire's royal army in the onset of war. Silver Fir's Lord Hua Tian had trained army totaling 2000 soldiers, which was the limit for this small city with a population of only fifty thousand.

The drilling ground was not very wide, so it was already crowded with masses of spectating civilians. As for the nobles of the city, they had all been arranged a viewing area on the spectating terrace.

Lin Mu Yu looked in the distance, and as expected, Tang Xiao Xi and Qu Chu were both sitting at the host's seats along with Hua Tian.

……

The tournament style was very simple: Challenge the holder until challengers stop coming forth!

Furthermore, only the pharmacies that placed in the top ten in the General Assembly could have challenging rights. Young Lord Hua Wan was clothed in a white robe as he stood in the area with a slender sword in his hand. He was the holder of the Discount Token from last year so he was the defender this year. His face was

full of arrogance as he looked at the crowd below the stage and smirked, “I, Hua Wan, had been lucky enough to become the holder of the Discount Token of the last tournament. I shall await the challenge of all of you fellow young alchemists. Whoever defeats me will be able to take this Discount Token from my hand. Who wants to have a go?”

He had barely finished his sentence before a green-cloaked young man jumped onto the stage with sword in hand. His nimble figure told of his martial prowess as he saluted and smiled, “Young Master Hua Wan, I am Dong Lun of Tian Qing Pharmacy. I hope the young master will grace me with a match!”

Hua Wan faintly smiled, “So it was Dong Lun. Let’s go!”

He turned his hand and placed his sword behind his back. Lightly moving his right palm, energy gathered into a plate of silver energy shield in the middle of his palm. He would dare to meet his opponent head-on without using a weapon?

Luo Kai said alarmingly, “Isn’t the young lord being too arrogant? Facing Dong Lun with bare hands. I heard Dong Lu is already a level 24 War Spirit.”

Wang Ying sneered, “Did you not see the energy shield in Hua Wan’s right palm? He can already condense an energy shield, which means he has broken past level 29 and into the first stage of Earth realm!”

“What?”

Luo Kai was speechless, “What a terrifying Hua Wan. Who else of the younger generation in Silver Fir will even be well-matched for him?”

……

In the arena, Dong Lun had started his advance. As he shouted a cry, a golden arrow materialized around his sword and shot out with Dong Lun’s quick movements. Immediately Wang Ying cried out in surprise, “8th rank martial spirit, Cloud Piercing Arrow!”

Cloud Piercing Arrow was very fast, but Hua Wan was even faster. He lifted his right palm and shattered the arrow with the place of energy shield. Hua Wan’s mastery over Flesh Palm had almost reached the level where it was impenetrable by simple weapons. Just using his bare hands to block the opponent’s iron sword, sparks flew as he gripped the sword with his index and middle finger. A sharp cracking sound was heard as he forcefully snapped the blade in half.

“Agh!”

After being struck by the forceful air stream, Dong Lun’s martial ability was too outmatched by his opponent and had to take several steps back. In contrast, Hua Wan mercilessly stabbed the broken blade into Dong Lun’s shoulder.

Blood spilled everywhere as Dong Lun took several more steps back. Kneeling down on one knee as he breathed heavily, he

mumbled, “I… I lost!”

It was only one confrontation and Dong Lun had lost right away!

……

Hua Wan’s overpowering air left the spectators speechless to the extent that the apprentices of Bai Ling Pharmacy were all stunned. None of them dared to say anything, because to them, Hua Wan was an unchallengeable force that they did not dare to look straight in the eye.

Chu Yao bit on her red lips as her shoulders trembled slightly. Perhaps it was because of Hua Wan’s strength, or maybe it was because of Hua Wan’s mercilessness.

“Chu Yao, are you alright?” Lin Mu Yu asked caringly.

“I’m alright. Hua Wan is too cruel.”

“Ah, yeah…”

……

As a result, none of the subsequent challengers were able to succeed. One’s arm was pierced by Hua Wan’s sword while another’s leg was shattered by Hua Wan’s Lightning Hammer. In any case, none of the challengers left in one piece, which left Hua

Wan immensely pleased with himself. He had begun to treat the tournament as a stage for pleasure.

On one side, a mercenary in tattered armor smirked and sneered, “I heard Lord Hua Tian had spent a high sum to buy a 3000 year old Lightning type spirit stone from a traveling merchant two days ago. Looks like the young lord has already refined that stone’s power, or why else would he have broken into Level 33, the first stage of Earth realm!”

When he said level 33, Lin Mu Yu saw a sliver of fear flit across Chu Yao’s face.

The difference was too great. Chu Yao was level 21, but Hua Wan was already level 33.

Chapter 25 : Prepare To Pay The Price If You Dare To Agitate A Dragon's Weak Point!

"Princess Xi, what do you think of the young lord's fighting ability?" Qu Chu asked with a smile as he took a sip of tea.

Tang Xiao Xi laid on the table with a bored expression on her face. Looking at the arena in the distance, she said, "The power of the martial spirit isn't half bad. To be able to train a mere 6th rank Lightning Hammer to this level is pretty decent, but he is just too vicious with his attacks."

On the other side, Hua Tian's face twitched slightly.

Tang Xiao Xi did not care about the Lord's feeling at all. Hua Tian, like his son, also had the 6th rank Lightning Hammer spirit. Tang Xiao Xi's words were humiliations to the Lightning Hammer, but since Tang Xiao Xi had a 2nd rank Firefox spirit, there wasn't anything Hua Wan could say.

Moreover, the other party's status is too prominent and he did not dare to offend her.

The Duke of Azure Tides, Tang Lan, reigned over Seven Seas City, one of the Empire's seven most famous cities. Seven Sea's population of near 1 million was far superior to a small city like Silver Fir. Aside from Seven Seas, Tang Lan also controlled a dozen other cities, so he was far above Hua Tian in all regards.

……

After defeating 12 successive challengers, Hua Wan's face glowed with pride as he became more and more pleased with himself. Suddenly turning to the edge of the area, he pointed at Lin Mu Yu and taunted, "Lin Mu Yu, you vile peasant. After three day's training, it's about time for you to challenge me right?"

Lin Mu Yu clenched his teeth and responded, "Sounds good!"

But at the same time, Chu Yao held onto his shoulder and said, "Ah Yu, you're no match for him. Let me go out first and have a look."

"Wait, hold on a sec…"

Without waiting for Lin Mu Yu to finish, Chu Yao suddenly leapt onto the stage. Clutching her daggers, she looked at Hua Wan with hostility and indifference as she said, "Come!"

Hua Wan couldn't help but laugh as his eyes swept back and forth over Chu Yao's supple figure. He teased, "I was wondering who it was. So it's Chu Yao. What, you already can't wait to be my seventh concubine?"

"Shameless!"

Chu Yao let out a delicate shout and summoned the Violet Mink. Infusing the daggers with spirit energy, she swung the dagger

three times in quick succession as she charged at Hua Wan. However, Hua Wan's calmness was far beyond Chu Yao's imagination. His slender sword was like a willow branch trembling in the spring breeze as he quickly warded off the three attacks. He shouted a cry and materialized his Lightning Hammer onto the blade of his sword

"Bang!"

Sparks flew in all directions as weapons made contact. Chu Yao crossed her daggers in front of her chest to blow the opponent's attack, only to be shaken back and had to take several steps back. The power difference was too great. The Lightning Hammer's violent power raged on her skin until she was finally unable to resist. A mouthful of blood shot out as she gasped for air.

"Little beauty, I really don't want to hurt you so why don't you just help yourself out? You're no match for me. Let that piece of trash, Lin Mu Yu come on stage. I want to teach him a lesson!" Hua Wan thought back to the grudge he kept from when Lin Mu Yu smacked him in the face with the needle branch.

Chu Yao staggered to her feet as the Violet Mink continued to infuse her dagger with spirit energy. Her eyes welled in hate as she looked at Hua Wan.

"Chu Yao, get down!" Lin Mu Yu loudly commanded.

Chu Feng also shouted, "Ah Yao, come down quickly! You're no match for him!"

However, Chu Yao was a headstrong and persistent girl. Enduring the excruciating pain, she abruptly dashed towards her opponent with a sliding step. When the daggers clashed with a loud crash, the Violet Mink unexpectedly exerted all its strength and bounced onto Hua Wan's arm. With a chirping sound, it bit down onto the skin and caused blood to seep out from the wound.

"Ah..."

Hua Wan's face deformed as he clenched his teeth in pain. Bursting with anger, he shouted, "I gave you a chance but you won't take it!"

As he spoke, the fully charged Lightning Hammer crashed down onto Chu Yao's chest. With a bang, the Violet Mink scattered into light while Chu Yao fell back a few meters.

"Die!"

Hua Wan groaned and put all of his power into his sword. The blade vibrated with a buzzing sound as energy surged wildly. This blow will definitely cut a large hole out of Chu Yao's chest if it lands.

.....

"Whoosh!"

Chu Yao almost closed her eyes in reflex when a figure suddenly appeared before her. He had a familiar looking back and a familiar sounding voice, “Hua Wan. Come at me if you have a problem with me!”

Lin Mu Yu opened his palm as the Green Gourd heeded his call and materialized before him. He did not waste time and quickly invoked the Ebony Scale’s power!

Hua Wan didn’t have the mind to care. After fulling charging the sword with lightning energy, he mercilessly stabbed down at the two before him!

“Krrring!”

A loud noise sounded as the the force of the clash whipped up a cloud of dust in the arena. Lin Mu Yu took three steps back and lightly crashed into Chu Yao’s arms. Hua Wan was in a worse shape. Arms were numb from the shock, Hua Wan looked at his sword in disbelief, “How… how can this be?”

He was unable to believe that Lin Mu Yu was able to block his fully-charged attack. Could it be that he used some kind of black magic?

“Ah Yu…” Chu Yao looked in awe at Lin Mu Yu’s back. At that moment, she couldn’t help but feel that the figure of the man before her was becoming increasingly bigger in her eyes. So much so that she felt a sense of security in his shadow.

Lin Mu Yu turned around and smiled, “Chu Yao, quickly get out of the arena. You’ve lost already, so I will take care of the rest.

“Okay.” She obediently leapt off the ring as Chu Feng quickly rushed to her side to look after her injuries.

……

There were only two men left in the arena.

Hua Wan’s suit of embroidered clothes and Lin Mu Yu’s plain clothes created an intense contrast. Similarly, Hua Wan’s face of ruthless anger and hatred contrasted greatly with Lin Mu Yu’s calm and laxness.

“You lowly peasant!”

Hua Wan’s hatred seeped out in his tone of voice. Quickly infusing energy into the sword in his hand, Hua Wan raised three fingers in his left hand and taunted, “Three moves! I’ll make you kneel down and call me grandfather in three moves!”

“If I haven’t lost by then?” Lin Mu Yu asked.

“Then I’ll call you Grandpa!” Wan Hua replied angrily.

“I’ll pass. Why would I want a bastard like you as my grandson?” Lin Mu Yu’s elicited laughter from the surrounding civilians. Most

of the spectators were commoners, but they could only hide their anger towards people like Hua Wan. No one had ever dared to so openly provoke noblemen like Lin Mu Yu had.

"Then what do you want?"

"If you can't kill me in three moves, then give me 300 gold Yin. How about it?" Lin Mu Yu smilingly offered.

"300 gold Yin?" Hua Wan frowned. Although he was a young lord, the sum of 300 gold Yin was no small number. However, since his words had left his mouth, there was no way for him to refuse. Thusly, he forced himself to accept, "Fine, if I lose, I'll give you 300 gold Yin coins. If I win, then I'm taking your life!"

Lin Mu Yu clapped his hands together and smilingly said, "Deal!"

……

Hua Wan was truly furious this time. Fully summoning the Lightning Hammer, he enveloped his body with the spirit's power while his sword glowed with fierce flickers of lightning pulses. He was trained in the Lightning-based battle technique passed onto him by his father, called "Rolling Thunder Arts". Used in conjunction with the Lightning Hammer, this technique would fully enhance the body's ability to the highest level. It was also the reason why the Hua family was able to have a firm control over Silver Fir City for many generations.

“Lightning Draw!”

Hua Wan flickered forward as his sword left a trail of lightning in its wake.

Lin Mu Yu was watching intently. Hua Wan was indeed stronger than him, but probably not by much. Going head-on would not be disadvantageous, but risking it would be a little unwise.

In a flash, Lin Mu Yu dodged to the side with a Starfall Step, causing Hua Wan to cut nothing but air. After some fancy footwork, Lin Mu Yu attacked from the side as similar looking lightning energy appeared on his sword. However, Lin Mu Yu’s slash was faster and deadlier. A silent Lightning Chop directly slashed onto Hua Wan’s right leg.

“Poof!”

Hua Wan’s energy barrier instantly collapsed as a bloody 10 cm long gash appeared on his leg.

“Bastard!”

He swore in a rage and loudly shouted, “Thunder Dance!”

Rays of lightning scattered out. Hua Wan was going all-in on this attack! He already understood his weak point: being too focused on power and ignored the factor of speed. Furthermore, Lin Mu Yu’s strange foot technique was the bane of his tactic. His originally

sure-kill attack was easily dodged by Lin Mu Yu, so if he had continued like that, the next hit would have been dodged the same way.

Fortunately, Thunder Dance was an offensive technique that creates a net out of lightning energy. It was also a proud skill that he had spent 6 years practicing. There were only three people in this world who could perfectly execute Thunder Dance, and he was one of the three.

Rays of lightning continued to revolve around Hua Wan's body while his sword vibrated faintly as if energy was going to burst out at any second. Abruptly jumping up, Hua Wan swung his sword with overwhelming force and slashed straight down at Lin Mu Yu's head. With Thunder Dance's range, Lin Mu Yu would not be able to dodge even if he wanted to.

However, Lin Mu Yu did not intend to dodge either, since he wouldn't be able to dodge forever anyway.

Crossing his sword in front of his chest, he quickly called out the Green Gourd. The martial spirit transformed into a giant gourd before Lin Mu Yu and protected him from the Thunder Dance. At the same time, he violently called out, "Ebony Scale!"

Patches of flames ignited in the air and condensed into flame red scales on the Gourd Wall. Ebony Scale was made purely out of flame energy, thus it would not conduct electricity and was naturally the best defense against the opponent's attack.

When Hua Wan saw the flame red scale, he couldn't help but tremble in his heart. However, he still violently chopped down with his sword. He hated the kid too much. He hated the fact that this kid had embarrassed him in front of all these commoners. He hated Lin Mu Yu for shaming him in front of his father, because his father was extremely strict. If he were to lose this fight, he was afraid that he would never have an easy time again.

"Boom!"

A loud crash shot through the air as Hua Wan's Thunder Dance was completely dispersed on top of the Gourd Wall. The slash was completely blocked by the Ebony Scale's defense!

At the split second when the Thunder Dance wore off, Lin Mu Yu immediately dashed forward and rammed his elbow into Hua Wan's chin. At the same time, he lifted his right leg and gave Hua Wan a hard knee in the gut.

Suffering the heavy hits, the young lord drifted out like a unstrung kite. It was not enough to defeat him, but Lin Mu Yu did not want to bother getting into an argument later. Thus, stomping his legs firmly into the ground, Lin Mu Yu swept his left fist in an arc. Soon after, a sharp whistling sound was heard as a half-powered punch shot out at Hua Wan.

Sonic Punch!

"Bang!"

A stuffy grunt was heard as the heavy punch landed on Hua Wan's chest. He slowly fell over and crash onto the ground without a word. The punch had forcefully knocked him out!

.....

Prepare to pay the price if you dare to agitate a dragon's weak point!

And that's what he deserved after hurting Chu Yao.

Chapter 26 : Iron Badge Of Tang

The young lord Hua Wan was easily defeated within 3 moves!

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Silence spread across the arena while Lord Hua Tian stood in awe and stared at his fainted son in dismay.

“He really won!”

Tang Xiao Xi stood excitedly. The corners of her mouth raised into a smile as she said, “Old Qu, your teaching can really change a person.”

Qu Chu could not retort, because he knew deep down that the reason why this kid improved so much was all because of himself. As such, he just said, “That’s because he practiced hard.”

.....

After nearly two whole minutes, the crowd finally erupted into a sea of cheers. Everyone knew that Lin Mu Yu was a commoner. Nobody could believe that a mentor-less commoner had defeated the young lord Hua Wan. However, when they remembered the proud and arrogant antics of the young lord, they were truly happy with this outcome.

“Lord Hua Tian, it’s about time to announce the winner.” Qu Chu urged. If he had not spoken up, perhaps Hua Tian would have been reluctant to hand over the Discount Token over to the winner, Lin Mu Yu.

“Don’t worry. Let’s wait and see if there are anymore challengers.”

“Well, alright!”

As a result, they waited another hour, but still no one was willing to come on-stage and challenge Lin Mu Yu.

Tang Xiao Xi also urged, “Lord Hua Tian, let’s announce the results soon. I still have to rush back to Lanyan City!”

“Yes, Princess.”

Hua Tian leapt off the viewing terrace and removed the Discount Token from Hua Wan’s waistband. Respectfully walking on-stage with the token in hand, he announced in a clear voice, “Lin Mu Yu, the Discount Token is the Imperial Panacea Division’s holy item and a prized treasure of the medicinal-alchemy world. I hope you will promote spirit of alchemy to the world, and make full use of this Discount Token.”

“Thank you, my lord.” Lin Mu Yu thanked as he accepted the Discount Token.

Hua Tian had an appreciative gaze in his eye as he patted Lin Mu Yu's shoulder and praised, "To be so capable at such a young age is definitely quite something. I hope you will continue to work hard and become a great Medicine King, or even a Medicine God, and let Silver Fir and the whole Empire to be proud of you!""Thank you!"

.....

After a few courtesy exchanges of thanks, Hua Tian commanded the guards to carry out the unconscious Hua Wan and to awake him with some Mind Cleansing Flowers.

Lin Mu Yu walked downstage to the crowd where Chu Feng, Chu Yao, and the rest of the Bai Ling apprentices all gleefully congratulated him. Chu Yao, in particular, was happier than if she had won the Discount Token herself.

When he looked up once more at the viewing terrace, he was disappointed to find that Qu Chu and Tang Xiao Xi had both disappeared.

After receiving a congratulation from the crowd, Lin Mu Yu left the Lord's manor. However, because he did not see Tang Xiao Xi anywhere else, he asked a nearby guard, "Where are Princess and Elder Qu?"

"They've already left." The guard smilingly answered, "Congratulations kiddo. To beat the young lord like that, the young generation are truly promising!"

“Oh, they’ve already left…”

Lin Mu Yu looked at the empty streets before him and felt a little lonely. Tang Xiao Xi was seemingly intent on hiding from him, going so far to not even say a farewell. Right at that moment, the sound of hoof-beats came from the distance. He turned to see a guard with an Imperial Purple Yin Flower emblem rushing to him with a white handkerchief in his hand. The guard called out, “Lin Mu Yu!”

“Here, and you are?”

“I’m Princess Xi’s Imperial guard, did you forget me already?” He respectfully held the handkerchief in his palm and explained, “Princess Xi was in a hurry to leave but she ordered me to give you this.”

“This is?”

Opening up the silk bundle, he saw a fiery-red iron badge. In the center, the character “Tang” was carved with a rustic style.

“The Iron Badge of Tang!” The bodyguard shuddered in shock, “I can’t believe that Princess Xi would actually give you her own Iron Badge. There are only 3 in this world!”

Lin Mu Yu held the hefty token in his hand and could not help but feel guilty. Tang Xiao Xi must have gone through great pains in order to give this badge to him.

“She… Did she say anything else?”

“Yeah.”

The bodyguard lowered his voice and whispered, “She said, if you ever run into trouble one day, you can bring the Iron Badge to Lanyan City to find her. If she is not at the Capital, then she must be at Seven Seas City, so you can find her there if so.

“Thanks a lot!” Lin Mu Yu bowed.

The bodyguard executed a military salute with his right hand splayed before his chest. He was a soldier!

At that moment, Luo Kai’s voice came from behind, “Ah Yu, why did you run outside? The Lord is looking for you. He said he is going to be hosting a dinner for the city’s top alchemists. You and Ah Yao are both invited!”

“Oh, I’ll be right there.”

When he slipped the iron badge into his shirt, a feeling of warmth seeped out of the rustic metal piece, as if Tang Xiao Xi’s body was embedded onto the token. This made Lin Mu Yu think back to the event at the lake but he retorted in his mind, Couldn’t it have just been the soldier’s body heat instead?He quickly became flustered.

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Outside the city, Tang Xiao Xi looked back at Silver Fir City with longing eyes.

On her side, Qu Chu sternly said, “Princess, if possible, just forget about him.”

Tang Xiao Xi’s cheeks flushed red. She mumbled, “Why did you say that, Old Qu?”

“There is a demon sleeping within that kid’s body.”

“……”

Tang Xiao Xi stood there stunned and did not know what to say in response.

.....

After sunset, the Lord’s manor was still ablaze with lights.

There were about 40 or so people who attended the dinner. Lin Mu Yu, Chu Yao, and Chu Feng were all invited, but Wang Ying and the others were not. Hua Wan’s arms were bandaged in two places but it did not stop him from sending death gazes at Lin Mu Yu. In contrast, Lord Hua Tian was more generous and gave a toast, “I will be announcing a great news today.”

“What new would that be, Lord?” Everyone asked.

Hua Tian cleared his throat and explained, “One hour ago, I received a flight message from the Capital’s Panacea Department. We will be selecting one well-respected alchemist from Silver Fir to send to the Capital to serve the position of an alchemy elder.”

“Heavens!” An old alchemist was startled, “Taking up a position at the Imperial Panacea Department? This... This is an extraordinary honor! Which alchemy master will be having this kind of special honor?”

Hua Tian responded, “Everyone can suggest candidate. Anyone can be a candidate as long as he meets the sole requirement. He must be someone of Medicine Elder level and must be capable of alchemizing level 6 potions.”

The elderly medicine man nodded, “So it’s like that. It’s a shame that I’m too old and weak, so I’m afraid I can’t even go that far.”

Hua Tian smiled, “Elder Wang, do you have a candidate to recommend?”

The old alchemist couldn’t help but laugh and say, “I believe Bai Ling Pharmacy’s Elder Chu is a suitable candidate. He had researched alchemy all his life and had also recently alchemized some level 6 potions. Furthermore, his apprentice Lin Mu Yu won the Discount Token against all odds. That’s why I believe Elder Chu would be the one most fit to go to the Capital. What do you

think, my Lord?”

Hua Tian pondered for a second, then asked, “What is your opinion on this, Elder Chu?”

“This…”

Chu Feng hesitated, “My granddaughter Chu Yao along with my other disciples are all in Silver Fir City… Although the old me wants to go, I… I can’t leave these disciples behind!”

Hua Tian let out a chuckle and explained, “Eld Chu is worrying too much. Lin Mu Yu and Chu Yao are both outstanding alchemists in Silver Fir. I was already planning to send them to the city’s Panacea Department for them to continue their studies. Everything is paid for with Silver Fir City’s treasury, so Elder Chu won’t have to worry. As long as I, Hua Tian, am here in Silver Fir, they will never suffer any mishaps.”

Chu Feng had specialized in alchemy for all his life, so when presented with the chance to enter the famed Imperial Panacea Department, there was no way he would not be happy. He hesitated for a moment as it was an extremely difficult choice to make.

“Grandpa, don’t worry. I’ll take good care of Ah Yu!” Chu Yao assured smilingly.

Lin Mu Yu smiled, “Grandpa, rest assured that I will take good

care of Chu Yao as well. So just be at ease and go to the Capital. That is the place where you belong!”

Finally, Chu Feng made the decision. Hands clasped, he answered, “Thank you very much for the nomination, my Lord!”

Hua Tian nodded, “Well then. When you return home today, be sure to ready your luggage. I will send Silver Fir City’s General Ning and a hundred cavalry to accompany you to the Capital. They will guarantee your safety along the way!”

Chu Feng bowed, “Thank you, Lord!”

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Back home, Chu Yao was helping Grandpa pack his luggage while reciting, “Grandpa’s old pipe... Hm, let’s not pack it for him. Smoking too much at his age won’t be good for his health. His cough has not improved at all because he smokes so much! This... is Grandpa’s Meridian map, so he’ll need this one. Grandpa will need his leg guard as well, since he broke his leg that time when he hiked and fell. He will need this or else it will ache when the weather is humid. Then he will need this...”

Lin Mu Yu was also helping by her side.

After a while, Chu Feng appeared from the bedroom with a heavy iron chest in his arms. He whispered, “Ah Yao, Ah Yu. Come here, the two of you.”

The two juniors sat opposed to Chu Feng with stern expressions on their faces.

Chu Feng couldn't help but laugh, "Grandpa will be leaving for the Capital tomorrow and I don't know when I'll be able to come back. Bai Ling Pharmacy is the Chu family's legacy, so from now on, it is in the hands of you two. This is the money the pharmacy managed to save up all these years, so you should try to save money where you can and spend the rest wisely."

He continued, "Originally... I was planning to set this money aside for Ah Yao's dowry, but now I'm going along to Lanyan City..."

Chu Yao's heart ached as the corners of her eye welled up, "Grandpa, stop saying that. I don't want to marry anyone..."

"What kind of crazy talk is that?" Chu Feng laughed, "How can you not get married? Your parents are both watching you from heaven. Ever since we lost contact with your brother, our family's hopes are all on you now."

Chu Yao's face flushed as she pleaded self-consciously, "Grandpa! Stop talking about it..."

Lin Mu Yu snickered as he pretended to not hear anything.

.....

Late at night, Chu Feng had already gone to bed. Lin Mu Yu and Chu Yao were still picking herbs in the yard.

“Ah Yu, Grandpa will be leaving for the Capital soon. What should we do for the future? Have you made any plans?” Chu Yao suddenly asked.

“Chu Yao, you want to enter Silver Fir’s Panacea Department for training? As far as I know, the department is located inside the Lord’s manor. Even the guards are the Lord’s men.” Lin Mu Yu’s eyes glowed with wariness, “Although the Lord seems to have a trustworthy character, his son Hua Wan definitely won’t leave us alone.”

Chapter 27 : Xiang Xiang And Sonic Blade

"Even so, I still want to enter Silver Fir's Panacea Division!"

Chu Yao bit on her lip, but a look of determination remained on her face, "If I don't go to study at the Panacea Division, then Bai Ling Pharmacy's business will remain as stale as before. Now that Grandpa is even going to the Capital, I don't want to disappoint Grandpa."

"Alright then, I'll protect you."

"Aye."

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The next morning, the two came to the Panacea Division office and was received by a man in his 50s. He wore a black robe and held a bottle of potion in his hand. Smilingly, he greeted, "Lin Mu Yu, Chu Yao, we've been expecting you two! My name is Lu Bin and I'll be guiding the two of you today."

Lin Mu Yu had become greatly prominent in Silver Fir, and was invited to join the Panacea Division along with Chu Yao. This was a rare privilege for young alchemists.

Lu Bin took a glance at Chu Yao as he walked, he exclaimed, "It's been so long since we've last had such young alchemists here at the Panacea Division office. Such young talents are much too rare. The

Division's workshop is split into 3 different branches: Gathering, Selection, and Alchemy. You two will be placed into the Alchemy sector and will be responsible for extracting medicine cores and alchemizing potions. The workload isn't too much, just 40 bottles of potions at level 3 or above."

Chu Yao nodded in acknowledgment, "I see, thank you Mister Lu Bin!"

"No problem. I'll show you two your rooms and the Alchemy workshop."

"Okay!"

.....

Entering the alchemy workshop, there were around 30 or so alchemists already hard at work. Some of them were as high ranked as Medicine Masters. The main potions in production were gold sore potions, healing potions, stoneskin potions, and similar battle oriented potions. When Lin Mu Yu and Chu Yao entered the workshop, their noise caused the alchemists to hiss out in displeasure. These fellows focus all their time on researching and refining medicine, and basically had unconcerned themselves with the outside world. None of them really knew of Lin Mu Yu or his skill.

"Lin Mu Yu!"

An alchemist pointed to a work station nearby and asked, “You’re an alchemist right? Here is some Earth Dragon Grass and Blood Ginseng, why don’t you help me extract some medicine cores? I need to alchemize some level 4 healing potions.”

Lin Mu Yu smiled gently, “I’ll pass. I think I’ll just finish up 40 bottles of stoneskin potions and call it a day.”

“What? Stoneskin potion?” The alchemist frowned, “You know how to extract medicine cores from Black Iron wood?”

Lin Mu Yu did not bother explaining. Instead, he walked over and picked up a Black Iron tree of about a meter tall. Splaying out his palm, pure energy surged as Lin Mu Yu skillfully removed the outer shell of the Black Iron tree. Not long after, small black grains of Black Iron medicine cores slowly rose into the air and dropped onto a medicine pan.

The whole process took no more than 10 minutes, which even surprised Lin Mu Yu. He conjectured that it must have been due to his ability growth that caused Essence Purification Technique to be more efficient. The surrounding alchemists were all awe-struck, because none of them could believe that a youngster would be able to extract Black Iron trees’ medicine cores.

Not long after, 40 bottles of stoneskin potions were laid out on the table.

“Elder Lu!” One of the alchemist standing in front pointed at Lin Mu Yu with indignation and said, “This Lin Mu Yu kid only used a

hour to alchemize 40 bottles of stoneskin potion. He is clearly skimping on the job. I suspect that his potion won't even be 7th tier. This is going to harm our Panacea Division's reputation! If these substandard potions were sent to the army, then it might even be directly harming people!"

Lu Bin naturally knew that the alchemy sect's alchemists were all secretly infighting, but he also knew of Lin Mu Yu's capability. Raising his eyebrows, he mused, "Is that so? Alchemist Wang, why don't you go examine the quality of those stoneskin potions for us?"

"Yes!"

Alchemist Wang poked the examination stick into a bottle of stoneskin potion only to be stunned at the result. His jaws dropped as he muttered in shock, "How... How can this be a first tier medicine?"

Lu Bin snorted, "It stands to reason that the young generation will surpass us in time. Alchemist Wang, you should learn from Lin Mu Yu."

"Yes... Yes, Elder Lu..."

.....

Since Lin Mu Yu finished his job, he walked over to Chu Yao's workstation, and saw that she was working hard to alchemize level

4 healing potions. Clearly Chu Yao had benefited a little from the knowledge in the Medicine God Index, as she looked more adept at extracting medicine cores and formulation of the ingredient ratios. About one hour later, she made a total of 47 bottles of healing potions. The examiner identified them to be between 3rd and 6th tier. This left Lin Mu Yu slightly surprised.

Looked like he had underestimated Chu Yao after all!

The two's accommodations were very close to the main house, and was even directly linked to the Lord's manor. After a 10 minute walk, the two had arrived in front of a house.

"We're here." Lu Bin said.

Chu Yao was surprised. Stucking out her tongue, she joked, "Did we go the wrong way? We're just mere alchemists and this... this is part of the Lord's manor, right?"

Lu Bin smiled, "Lord Hua Tian is not only the lord of the city, but also the Head Elder of our Panacea Division. It is because Lin Mu Yu is recognized as a great talent of the alchemy world, that he would assign you two a special house like this. Please don't be too modest, or you'll waste the lord's intention."

Chu Yao was about to say something, but Lin Mu Yu knew it would have done no good. As such, he interjected, "Chu Yao. We are but guests, so staying at this place is also good."

“Well, alright then…”

…..

When night fell, servants delivered a sumptuous dinner.

After the meal, Chu Yao went back to practicing needle techniques. Her room was separated from Lin Mu Yu’s by courtyard, so it was neither too far nor too close.

In contrast, Lin Mu Yu stood in the courtyard and began to practice Lightning Chop and Sonic Punch. At the same time, he continued to strengthen his Green Gourd martial spirit. When the night darkened a bit more, he took out the 4 throwing knives and practiced with the assassination weapon. He knew that he was still not strong enough. If he were to face stronger opponents, he must take extreme measures. Using an assassination weapon would definitely be one of those measures.

Who would know what awaited him in the lord’s manor?

“Woosh!”

A knife flew out with a fierce sound and impaled itself into the a rock in the rock garden. It pierced deeply and looked like it would not be able to return by itself.

Lin Mu Yu frowned as he noted the throwing knives’ greatest weakness. It was not the return trajectory but the fact that if the

knives were to hit their targets, they would require retrieval. How could one freely control their flight path?

After theory-crafting for a while, an idea suddenly sparked into his mind. The throwing knives' trajectory was dependent on power and air movements, and was his Sonic Punch not an ability that can change air movements?Perhaps, Sonic Punch may be a useful tool when used with the throwing knives.

Thinking to this point, he immediately tried it in practice.

When the combined blade flew out, Lin Mu Yu's Sonic Punch exploded the air in the distance. It seemed like the effect was not very distinct. It shot down the flying blade, but that was because the angle and power were not enough.

He repeatedly attempted the technique, and was finally able to succeed after hundreds of tries. After sending out the Sonic Punch, the trajectory of the flying blade shifted and flew in a different direction. This small success was enough to make Lin Mu Yu incessantly happy. The combination of Sonic Punch and the hidden throwing blade was confirmed to be a feasible technique.

Proudly standing in the deserted courtyard, Lin Mu Yu looked even more handsome. His eyes were shut as he focused his mind and felt for the flying blade's movements. Only relying on his ear to locate the blade, he abruptly sent out Sonic Punches. The flying blade continued to change direction as it was hit by the air ripples. Lin Mu Yu had seemingly mastered the relationship between flying trajectory, Sonic Punch's power, angle ,and the timing of the technique.

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Right as he was immersed in self cultivation, he suddenly heard soft clapping in the distance. A girl's voice sounded from the gate, "What a handsome skill. I suppose it's to be expected of someone who defeated young lord Hua Wan in three moves!"

Lin Mu Yu looked with his eyebrow raised, and found a woman dressed in red standing a short distance away. Her clothes were simple and thin as yarn. It outlined her exquisitely figure as she leaned on the door. She looked especially charming and alluring.

"And you are?"

"My name is Xiang Xiang!" (Name is a pun on fragrant.)

She smilingly walked closer, each step light as a cat's, as her beautiful eyes stared straight at Lin Mu Yu, She greeted, "I am a maid of the Lord's manor. I was told by the young master to serve you, young sir."

Lin Mu Yu fumbled his brows. An unreasonable disdain arised in his heart, he simply said, "You can go back and tell Hua Wan that I don't need anything."

"Is that so?"

Xiang Xiang's beautiful eyes seemed to have read his mind. She asked, "The night is long and it would be hard to sleep alone. Do you really not need a bedside lady? Oh, it must be that girl called Chu Yao, am I right? It's a shame that she is your senior, so she probably won't be serving you at night, right?"

As she spoke, Xiang Xiang walked to door and entered Lin Mu Yu's room. She indifferently said, "No matter what you think, I must sleep on your bed tonight."

She looked back with a subtle shadow on her face, and hinted, "Or else, the consequence will be more than I can imagine."

What was that supposed to mean?

Lin Mu Yu was startled. Could this be the legendary "Tyrant's Forceful Violation"?

This... Isn't this flipped around? At least I should be on the initiative right?

Truthfully, Xiang Xiang's figure and appearance were both of the highest quality. Hua Wan was a true master in the selection of woman, Lin Mu Yu had to admit that much.

Xiang Xiang leaned against the door and smiled sweetly, "Sir, what is that throwing knife called?"

"It has no name. It's just a stealth weapon."

“Oh? Then what is your telekinetic explosive punch called?”

“Sonic Punch.”

“Heehee.” Xiang Xiang pursed her lips and giggled, “Although I’m not a martial arts practitioner, but I can at least see that you’re using Sonic Punch to change the knife’s flying path. This is so you can kill formlessly, right?”

“That’s right.” Lin Mu Yu laughed outright, “Xiang Xiang, Hua Wan sent you to spy on me, right? Even if you learn what my martial arts are called, I can still easily defeat Hua Wan.”

Xiang Xiang lifted her slender white leg and touched her knee. She smiled, “You’re worrying too much. I’m just here to serve you for the night. As for training, I’m not interested. Anyhow…”

She gave a nod and lamented, “If I practiced martial arts, I probably wouldn’t have let myself be trampled upon like this. Don’t you agree?

Lin Mu Yu of course didn’t believe her. He coldly snorted and continued to practice the combination of Sonic Punch and throwing knife.

Xiang Xiang watched for a while, and suddenly yawned, “Sir, it’s getting late. Xiang Xiang will be waiting in bed for you. I definitely won’t be wearing anything, so when you’re tired, just come back to

rest. I'll take good care of you!"

Lin Mu Yu did not answer. This Xiang Xiang certainly was a stunner, but she also happened to be the best way to hone his mind.

Xiang Xiang yawned cutely again and waved, "Sir, your servant will be going to bed. Remember to wake me when you return. Also, your throwing knife lacks a name, so why don't I help you with one? Since it is driven by the force of your Sonic Punch, why not call it Sonic Blade?"

Sonic Blade?

Lin Mu Yu was startled. What a good name!

.....

When he looked again, Xiang Xiang had already meandered onto the bed.

Chapter 28 : Wind Sword Style

Up until midnight, Lin Mu Yu was coming up with the Sonic Blade's first set of assassination technique. It was quite simple: using the power from Sonic Punch to redirect the Sonic Blade's direction. The four knives were combined into a single spiral shaped disk blade so that it only made a low hissing sound as it zipped through the air. He was certainly an intelligent fellow for quickly mastering the technique. Now he was just lacking actual combat practice. Afterall, the Sonic Blade was an assassination tool, so there would be no point if there was no one to kill, no matter how pretty the skill might look.

"Huuu..."

He took a deep breath and restlessly continued to use Sonic Punch while consuming most of his body's energy. The Green Gourd was like a spring that quickly absorbed spirit essence from the surrounding, and using it to replenish the body's energy. This was probably what Qu Chu had meant when he said that people without martial spirits were not fit to train in martial arts, as martial spirits greatly enhances the body's energy recovery. If the recovery speed of Lin Mu Yu's 10th rank Green Gourd was already this fast, what about Tang Xiao Xi's Firefox? Could it recover fully within a mere two hours?

Anyhow, Lin Mu Yu's biggest headache right now was the woman in his room. This Xiang Xiang was definitely attractive and alluring, but she was sent by Hua Wan or Hua Tian. This kind of special treatment was fit for a noble guest at the Lord's manor, but he could not bear it. If Xiang Xiang stays here, then his every move will be observed by Hua Wan. That was not a result he would

want.

He braced himself and entered the room. Splitting apart the Sonic Blade and placing then 4 knives back in the pouch, Lin Mu Yu stretched and looked towards his bed. Sure enough, Xiang Xiang was lying on her side with only a thin sheet covering her body. The moonlight phased through the window and casted itself onto her body, making her look especially beautiful.

“Oh well, guess I’m sleeping on the bench tonight…”

He sighed and walked towards the nearby narrow bench.

“Sir!”

Xiang Xiang was surprisingly not asleep. She looked up at him and said, “I remember explaining that if you won’t touch me today, then I will surely be beaten tomorrow. Taking a beating is the easy part, but I might even be subjected to a servant’s humiliation.”

“Servant’s humiliation?”

“Xiang Xiang is but a maid.” A fleeting smirk flashed across her face as she looked as if she was happy her trick had succeeded. She faintly smiled, “The master has many ways of punishing a maid. One is a beating, the other is allowing servants to use maids for pleasure. It is so that those lowly servants can wantonly disrespect and play with a maid’s body. Do you want Xiang Xiang to be

reduced to that level?”

Lin Mu Yu naturally did not believe her. He couldn’t help but snicker, “What would you have me do then?”

“Just allow Xiang Xiang to serve you as you sleep. This is my sole duty.”

“No thanks. I’m used to sleeping alone.”

Lin Mu Yu knew that this Xiang Xiang was a beautiful rose. If he touched her, he would definitely be pricked by the rose’s thorns. Furthermore, this was the Lord’s manor, and not some brothel. Chu Yao was no more than 50 meters away as well, so he did not even dare to think about this kind of thing.

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However, the more that he wanted to stop thinking about it, the worse the situation became.

Xiang Xiang suddenly stood up. She had taken off her dress, so there was only a thin sheet draped over her body. Her twin peaks faintly trembled as her slender white legs dragged themselves over the carpet step by step. Sitting down next to Lin Mu Yu, she pressed her body against him and a wave of mysterious fragrance wafted into his nose, causing him to stifle.

How could a 20 year old guy resist this kind of temptation?

“Sir.” Xiang Xiang’s words carried a bitter tone, “Xiang Xiang understands. The only woman that your heart misses is your fellow apprentice Chu Yao. I am not hoping that you will do anything for me, I just wish for you to give me pleasure. Is this not ok? If you don’t say anything, I won’t either, so it will be fine. I know that you despise my unclean body, but… I have no choice in the matter. I had been sold into the Lord’s manor at 16 years old. That night, the young lord had taken my first time. My life is not my own, so I have no other choice but to submit to whatever it is asked of me.”

Lin Mu Yu slipped away and looked at her under the moonlight. This girl was really as beautiful as water and as bright as the moon. He dimly said, “No one’s life is not their own, so you as well.”

Xiang Xiang had originally planned to hold him in her arms, and as a result, she grabbed empty air. With her soft arms lifted in the air, she couldn’t help but sneer, “Lin Mu Yu, you’re looking down on me, aren’t you?”

“No, I’m not.”

“Then why do you humiliate me so?” Her face flushed in slight anger, “Yes. I, Xiang Xiang, am a shameless whore, but everything I’ve done was to keep surviving. What about you? You shame me like so. Do you really want me to become the plaything of those lowly servants?”

“That’s not it at all.”

Li Mu Yu looked at her and explained meticulously, “I don’t care what your purpose was when you came here, but the humiliation that you’ve suffered was already too much. Hua Wan can willfully own your body and wantonly humiliate you, but I can’t. If I were to wrong you right now, then what would be the difference between me and Hua Wan? Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. That is the reason I refuse you. Not only that, Xiang Xiang, do you really want to live like this? You have to understand that dignity is worth using your life to fight for.”

“.....”

Xiang Xiang raised her head and looked at Lin Mu Yu. She was unable to respond. It took her a long time to finally whisper to herself, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you... Do unto others as you would have them do unto you...”

About two minutes later, Xiang Xiang smiled and curtsied at Lin Mu Yu, “Sir, why don’t you take the bed and Xiang Xiang will sleep on the bench? If anyone asks tomorrow, please help me say some good things. Perhaps say that I successfully served you today, is that okay?”

Lin Mu Yu nodded with a smile, “That’s no effort at all. But I think I’ll just sleep on the bench. My bones are quite hard, so I can’t sleep on too soft of a bed.”

Xiang Xiang’s cheeks faintly warmed as she returned to bed. However, her heart was fumbling like a surging storm. She could

not sleep, so she turned around and saw Lin Mu Yu sound asleep on the bench. Although he was asleep, there was a faint loftiness about him.

What kind of a man is he?

Xiang Xiang repeated asked in her mind, but there was no answer. The humiliation that she faced after her 16th birthday had already turned her heart into stone. However, a single sentence from this man had seemingly softened the depths of her heart. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. What kind of person would be able to think of such a profound statement?

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The next morning, Lin Mu Yu had woke up early and started practicing Sonic Punch and Lightning Chop. He held a steel sword, but his swordsmanship was very lackluster. Even then, he only knew one sword technique, and that was Lightning Chop. This was obviously not enough. Good swordsmanship was simply too important in actual combat, so he must find a way to learn it.

“Ah Yu!”

Chu Yao walked out of her room and greeted with a smile, “You’re up!”

“Yeah.”

Lin Mu Yu put away the Sonic Blade into his waist pouch and asked, “Did you sleep well last night?”

“Was pretty good.”

“Ah, that’s good.”

At that same moment, Xiang Xiang armorously walked out of Lin Mu Yu’s room while putting on her clothes. She chuckled and asked, “Sir, why are you up so early?”

Chu Yao was instantly petrified, “Who… Who are you?”

Xiang Xiang lifted her proud chest and smiled, “The one who served him in bed.”

Chu Yao bit down on her lips as her gaze turned into one of anger.

Lin Mu Yu anxiously explained, “Chu Yao, don’t misunderstand. I’m not that kind of person. I absolutely did not touch her! Xiang Xiang, I promised I would keep a secret for you, so don’t try to cause trouble for me!”

Xiang Xiang giggled, “Okay, I shall make my leave. I will come again tonight.”

“Ah… see you again…”

“Goodbye.” Xiang Xiang then turned to look at Chu Yao and teased, “Good sir’s bed skills are very good. You should find a chance to try it. You really shouldn’t waste such a good man!”

“I’m dead…”

Lin Mu Yu meticulously explained for half an hour before finally convincing Chu Yao that nothing had happened between him and that woman.

…..

Before long, servants brought breakfast to them along with a heavy purse with 300 gold Yin coins. That was the money that Hua Wan had lost in the bet with Lin Mu Yu. Lin Mu Yu didn’t think the young lord would actually keep his promise.

They did not intend to go to work in the morning, mostly because the daily work was too simple and easy to complete. As such, Lin Mu Yu brought Chu Yao to the market with his purse of money in hand.

The market was bustling with people. Chu Yao was in a good mood as she speedily walked while pulling Lin Mu Yu along. She asked, “Ah Yu, are we going to buy something?”

“Where are skill books sold?”

“Well, there are some at the bookstore, but those are all bargain goods. If you want to learn the best fighting techniques, you’ll probably need to pick some at the auction houses.”

“Let’s go to the auction houses then.”

“Okay.”

There was a total of 4 auction houses in the city, and Chu Yao picked the biggest one, called “Hundred War Firm”. In actuality, most of the items sold at this auction house were related to martial artists. Things like weapons, technique books, cultivation pills, and cultivation potions were all commonly seen. Lin Mu Yu could not help but become slightly excited when he walked through the door. To him, this place was practically heaven!

“There, there...” Chu Yao led him by the hand, “Ah Yu, skill books are sold there.”

Walking over, Lin Mu Yu saw a middle-aged man of about 40 years old selling fighting skill books. The man looked shady at first sight. Smiling creepily, the man asked, “What would you two youngsters be looking for? My shop has all kinds of skill books. Skills of Wind, Fire, Lightning, and Thunder are all available here. Furthermore, our shops specialty treasure is a skill book passed down by a Saint realm expert. Would you like to see? It only costs 5000 gold Yin!”

“A single skill book sells for 5000 gold Yin?”Chu Yao yelped in surprise, “You might as well be committing highway robbery!”

The hawker greedily smiled, “This young miss simply does not understand. A profound skill book can allowed a martial arts practitioner to undergo exceptional changes. Otherwise why would so many powerful practitioners be reluctant to hand over their secret techniques?”Lin Mu Yu asked with a smile, “Boss, do you have any sword technique related books?”

“Of course!”

The hawker speedily took out three books and said, “No bargaining. This book is Basic Swordsmanship, priced at 1 gold Yin. This is High Class Swordsmanship, priced at 500 gold Yin. And the last one is the long lost Wind Sword Style, priced at 1200 gold Yin. Just one set price. I can see that you are a handsome and well-spoken fellow, but don’t try to bargain with me, or else you’ll just be raising the price.”

Chapter 29 : Level 30 Battle Adept

A family of four would likely only require just 10 gold Yin to sustain themselves, but this skill book would cost as much as 1200 gold Yin. Clearly this world doesn't want anyone to become powerful. Prices like these probably gated many from ever becoming a strong practitioner, even if they tried their hardest.

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"Give me a Basic Swordmanship then!"

Lin Mu Yu readily took out a gold Yin coin. The only skill he had in terms of swords was Lightning Chop, so buying a copy of Basic Swordsmanship instruction book was a decent option. When the book was passed into his hand, he was reminded of an old video game called

. If he remembered correctly, the first skill that a warrior learned in that game was Basic Swordsmanship, which raised accuracy. Now that he was holding an actual Basic Swordsmanship instruction in his hand, Lin Mu Yu was filled with regretful emotions and sighed.

Chu Yao naturally did not know why Lin Mu Yu was sighing. The hawker then held up a pale cyan book and opened the first page, "Wind Sword Style. This is sword fighting skill book about using the element of wind to control the fight. Young warrior, do you really not want to get a copy?"

Lin Mu Yu only took a glance. A verse was written on the page:

Comes as thunder, returns as lightning. He was almost unable to hold himself back, but he really lacked the money for it!

"What, you don't want it?" The hawker grinned.

Lin Mu Yu shook his head, "Not enough money."

"Oh, so you're poor. Goodbye then." His change of tone was certainly fast.

Lin Mu Yu didn't pay him any mind, and smiled, "Chu Yao, let's go look around for a place to sell medicine. I have two potions that I want to sell."

"Mm-kay."

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Hundred War Firm's medicine auction house was located in the east. A few minutes of walking later, the two young alchemists arrived at the shop. A shop assistant looked up and asked, "How may I help you?"

"I want to sell two bottles of medicine."

"Oh?" The assistant looked stunned at the emblem on Lin Mu Yu's chest, "Kid, you're from the Panacea Division right? An alchemist from the Panacea Division selling medicine at an auction

house... Do you not have any of the dignity of a Division member?"

"You guys accept medicine. I sell medicine. There is nothing wrong with this matter." Lin Mu Yu spoke with indifference, "If you won't accept, I guess I could just go chat with your boss."

"I'll accept it, I'll accept it. Take out your medicine."

Lin Mu Yu reached into his waist pouch and pulled out two bottles of Peak of Dreams. Placing them onto the table, he said, "Go ahead and identify them."

The clerk picked up a bottle and took a sniff. He mumbled in amazement, "What kind of potion is this? Why can't I... recognize this smell?"

"Peak of Dreams, Level 7."

"What?" The clerk shuddered as if he had seen a ghost, "How is that possible, wasn't the Peak of Dreams long lost?"

At this point, an old pharmacist asked from a distance, "Xiao San, what are you so surprised about?"

"Master, come look at this!"

When the old pharmacist also took a sniff of the Peak of Dreams, his face instantly changed color, "The olfactory stimulation is

really that of the Peak of Dreams... Heavens, how did this drug appear once again on this continent?”

As he spoke, he turned to look at Lin Mu Yu, “Youngster, did you alchemize this potion?”

“Yes, I found the formula in a tattered manual, and then I alchemized it.”

“Wait a second!”

The old pharmacist gave him a deep look, and said, “If this is really the Peak of Dreams, you’ll really become famous! How about this, come with me to the back and I’ll call over the auction house’s manager!”

“Okay!”

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Chu Yao was a little nervous, while Lin Mu Yu confidently walked as he held onto her hand. He was really confident in the Peak of Dreams. Once the potions were sold, then he could probably expect a large payout of gold Yin.

A few minutes later, a man in his 40s quickly entered the back hall. He was dressed in a full suit of merchant outfit, his thick eyebrows and big eyes accentuated his astute appearance. He looked with awe at Lin Mu Yu and Chu Yao, “Hello young friends, I

am Hundred War Firm's owner, Lei Baizhan. You say that these two bottles of Peak of Dreams were alchemized by you? What is your name?"

"Lin Mu Yu!"

"Oh?" Lei Baizhan's eyes shined with interest. He chuckled, "So you're the Lin Mu Yu who defeated young lord Hua Wan. Hahaha, what a coincidence. This... Peak of Dreams' recipe, how did you obtain it?"

Lin Mu Yu casually made up a story, "I found it in a beast den in Seven Star Forest. After I learned it, the book was soaked in the rain on the way back to Silver Fir, and is now just a pile of scrap."

"So that's it." Lei Bai Zhan was smart. He knew that Lin Mu Yu would not be willing to share the truth, so he just smiled, "With Hundred War Firm's financial backing and popularity, we can totally help you push the price of the Peak of Dreams up to at least 2000 gold Yin a bottle, but I only have one condition. Youngster Lin, you must make an agreement with us that states if you were to make any Peak of Dreams in the future, you must sell it here at Hundred War Firm. How does that sound?"

"What kind of benefits will that give me?" Lin Mu Yu asked with a smile.

Lei Bai Zhan readily took out a jade-white badge from his robe, and explained, "This is Hundred War Firm's VIP Jade Badge. With this badge, you'll be able to buy anything in this firm for only

seven tenths of the original price. Also, you can overdraft a maximum of 2000 gold Yin from the firm's treasury. How about it? I don't have much more to say since I've shown you my sincerity."

Lin Mu Yu smiled, "Deal!"

"Great!"

Lei Baizhan was exceptionally joyful, "I'll release news today that we will auction off two bottles of Peak of Dreams at tomorrow's public auction. We'll take 2 shares of the profit, while you will receive the other 8 shares. How does that sound?"

"Then you'll have to promise me one thing as well. You must keep this a secret for me and not disclose the origins of these two bottles of Peak of Dreams."

"Sure. Business dealings should be like this anyhow. Rest assured that I will take care of it."

"Thank you."

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Lin Mu Yu went downstairs and took out 1000 gold Yin with the new VIP badge. Soon after, he went back and brought the copy of Wind Sword Style and lunched with Chu Yao at a nearby restaurant. The two returned to Bai Ling Pharmacy in the afternoon to visit Zhao Xin, Luo Kai, and the rest. After leaving

behind 10 gold Yin coins for the pharmacy, the two returned to finish work at the Division office and then back to their residence to train.

After several sets of Sonic Punch, Lin Mu Yu began to practice swordsmanship. Basic Swordsmanship was fairly easy to learn, taking no more than 1 hour for Lin Mu Yu to master with his great perception. It was basically instructions to simple attacking, defending, and dodging. After that, he began to imitate the Sword Wind Style. Sword Wind Style was a sword art based around controlling the element of wind, and turning it into sword energy to be infused into the sword. If one was skillful enough, the power of this sword skill would be able to cut apart a mountain.

He practiced all the way to the evening, when his heart suddenly surged with a power that pushed against his chest.

Lin Mu Yu clearly understood that it mean he was going to have a breakthrough soon. He had unconsciously trained himself from level 27 to 29 and was soon to break into the first stage of Earth realm. This kind of advancement speed would have scared someone else to death. In fact, Lin Mu Yu had also secretly felt suspicious of why he was able to advance so quickly.

Frankly, according to Qu Chu's words, this was all because of the demon sleeping inside of him.

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Since he had to advance, then he must use a beast spirit of good

enough value. To leave the city and hunt for one would be a little unrealistic, but luckily enough, Lin Mu Yu had the spirit stone of a 3000-years-old Bloodlust Tiger in his bag. Refining a spirit stone was the same as refining the beast's spirit, but this really saved him a lot of trouble. So after letting Chu Yao know that he was going to be busy, he shut the door behind him.

Taking out the spirit stone and placing it on the side of the bed, Lin Mu Yu sat cross-legged on the bed. Manipulating energy around his body, the Green Gourd materialized from his body along with the system fairy Lulu. The petite fairy fluttered in the air as she circled around Lin Mu Yu. She grinned and cheerfully said, "Congratulations big bro, you're about to rise in level!"

Lin Mu Yu asked, "Where have you been, Lulu? I haven't been able to sense your presence for the last two days."

Lulu smiled, "Big bro, I'm just an energy body. I've been flying around this continent for the last few days, and was collecting all kinds of informations, or how else could I better help you!"

"Can you take a look for me? What kind of materials will be necessary to refine this Bloodlust Tiger spirit stone?"

Lulu looked at the stone and said, "You can directly refine it. It looks like it doesn't need any other materials. This spirit stone contains a fierce Bloodlust power, so it should probably give the Green Gourd an absorption-type ability. I don't really know specifically what it will be though."

“Ah, alright.”

Lin Mu Yu closed his eyes and concentrated energy to summon forth the alchemy cauldron. The Bloodlust Tiger spirit stone began violently shaking as it was dropped into the cauldron. The Green Gourd ferociously absorbed the power within the spirit stone, while the spirit stone also slowly broke apart into countless streams of energy essences. These essences were then absorbed into Lin Mu Yu’s body, and turned into usable energy.

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The process continued for nearly an hour. When Lin Mu Yu opened his eyes again, his view became clearer and a pool of energy was pent up in his body. Released from Lin Mu Yu’s raised hand, the energy formed into an energy shield. It was the signature ability of an Earth realm practitioner: Shield Energy. It was a skill capable of greatly improving the user’s defensive capability.

Looking at the Green Gourd again, Lin Mu Yu was able to see thorns growing out of the gourd’s green vines. Lulu flew to the side and said, “This skill can roughly be called Thorns. It would be disastrous if the thorn pierces your skin.”

“What’s the big deal?” Lin Mu Yu was a little disappointed.

Lu Lu explained, “Because the thorns contain the Bloodlust Tiger’s Bloodlust power, once it pierces the skin, it can make a person’s energy leak out wildly.”

“So it’s like that!” That was a bit more satisfying.

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Standing up, Lin Mu Yu clenched his fist. Instantly, a surge of energy welled into the fist and began to hover around it. This energy was definitely stronger than before. He had seemingly reached the tier of level 30 Battle Adept, but he just wasn’t certified at the Temple. Otherwise, he could probably obtain a monthly subsidy for domestic expenditures.

At that moment, someone had suddenly knocked on the door. The grinning pixie of a girl, Xiang Xiang, appeared again, “Sir, Xiang Xiang brought dinner for you and Miss Chu Yao.”

Chapter 30 : Chu Feng's Death

Xiang Xiang's arrival gave Lin Mu Yu a headache. The fact that she was staying behind to eat made it even worse.

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Behind Xiang Xiang were two maidservants, each carrying a tray with dishes of exquisite food. The vessel was made of pure silver and called the Silver Gui. There were a total of 5 dishes of meat and vegetables, along with two pots of fine wine.

Chu Yao was dumbstruck. The Silver Gui was something that only nobles would use. Commoners often only had bronze guis, while the imperial family would only use Gold Guis.

There was a dining method in the Empire called the "Bell-Chime Cauldron Feast" that only aristocrats would use. Aristocratic families were always accompanied by music as they ate, and they would line up a row of Dings with food inside. Dings were a type of food container that were actually quite similar to Guis. Of course, Chu Yao had naturally never seen the Cauldron Feast formation before, and even the 5-Gui formation before her was rare seen. The Lord's treatment of her and Lin Mu Yu was rather extravagant.

"Sir, this is the manor's best wine. It is only served to important guests of the house, so don't miss this chance to try it."

At the dining table, Xiang Xiang knelt down on the carpet and enthusiastically poured out the wine for Lin Mu Yu. After offering

him several cups of wine, she suddenly asked, “Sir, I heard that you’re an emerging legend who is capable of synthesizing level 5 and even level 6 drugs at your young age. There is a rumor going around that your alchemy skills came from an old book called the Medicine God Index. Is that true?”

Lin Mu Yu couldn’t help but feel a chill go down his spine. There was no explanation as to why the Lord had to support both him and Chu Yao, unless Hua Tian and Hua Wan really wanted to obtain something from him after all.

“What Medicine God Index? I don’t know what you’re talking about.” He replied with indifference. Although Lin Mu Yu was as proud as a noble steed, he also knew that it was better to keep some secrets. An ignorant man would be blameless and a person’s treasure would arouse the envy of others.

Xiang Xiang chuckled, “That was a funny joke. The rumor was that Bai Ling Pharmacy’s head apprentice Wang Ying had drunkenly said that Bai Ling Pharmacy had obtained a copy of Medicine God Index, or else you and your master Chu Feng’s alchemy proficiency would not have improved so quickly.”

Lin Mu Yu faintly smiled, “Perhaps it is so, but I don’t know.”

Xiang Xiang nodded, “So it’s like this.”

Chu Yao furrowed her brows and asked, “Xiang Xiang, did the Young Lord tell you to spy on us?”

“No way, what is Miss Chu Yao saying!”

Xiang Xiang still had that pleasant smile on her face as she said, “Xiang Xiang was only curious because legends about Mister Lin Mu Yu were circulating about in the streets. Since he doesn’t know anything about a Medicine God Index, then I’ll just stop asking. Come again, Xiang Xiang will give you a toast again.”

……

After eating and drinking to their hearts’ content, Lin Mu Yu continued to practice his swordsmanship, Sonic Punch and Sonic Blade. At the same time, he was also training his energy shield. It was the special ability of an Earth realm practitioner that could protect him at all times, so it was a must-have survival technique. In the meantime, Chu Yao also did not go to bed early, instead opting to accompany Lin Mu Yu and practiced the Silver Needle Technique.

“Pew pew pew!”

Three silver needles soundlessly shot into the wooden board. Chu Yao smiled with satisfaction and walked up to remove the needles.

Lin Mu Yu watched from the side and noted, “This amount of power would be enough for acupuncture, but it’s clearly not enough if it’s used to kill. It might not even break through an Earth realm practitioner’s energy shield.”

Chu Yao nodded, “Yeah, I know.”

As she spoke, she took out her daggers and channeled energy into the daggers’ blades. She challenged with a smile, “Ah Yu, come and fight with me? I know you’re really strong right now, but I don’t know exactly how strong!”

“Alright!”

Lin Mu Yu pulled out his steel sword and said. “Chu Yao, just focus on attacking then.”

Chu Yao smirked and speedily closed the distance. She started out with two consecutive strikes with her daggers and followed up with a pincer attack. Although her initial attacks were very quick, Lin Mu Yu’s attack was even faster. After two quick swings of his sword, the two daggers were swept away. He did not stop there, and countered with a Lightning Chop. It was about four tenths of the normal power because he didn’t want to go all-in.

“Ah?”

Chu Yao did not expect Lin Mu Yu’s speed to be this fast. Hastily putting up the daggers in defense, she only heard a loud crash before a numbing sensation came from her arms. She groaned as she was forced to take several steps back. She opened her eyes wide and exclaimed, “Wow, Ah Yu... You are so strong now, I couldn’t even block that hit!”

Lin Mu Yu humbly smiled, “Sister Chu Yao, your base strength was already lacking and your Violet Mink isn’t helping much with its frail growth. The most important thing to know is that you’re not fast enough. Before you could even strike at your opponent’s weakness, you would have already shown your own weaknesses. I might actually have a way for you to raise your speed.”

“What, What? Teach me!” Chu Yao excitedly said.

Lin Mu Yu explained, “Try to feel for the lightning essence in the air. Then, infuse it into your weapon and use it to execute high speed attacks. This should greatly improve the effect of your attacks.”

“This is…” Chu Yao’s eyes brightened, “Could this be Flame Cauldron Qu Chu’s Lightning Chop?”

“Oh, no…” Lin Mu Yu shook his head, “Lightning Chop’s speed requirement is too much for your current ability, so I won’t teach you the ‘soundless’ Lightning technique. I’m just teaching you how to make use of lightning essences. Furthermore, I promised Elder Qu that I will never teach anyone the techniques that he had taught me.”

“Mm-okay!”

Chu Yao was a fair and considerate girl, so she began to earnestly learn the lightning gathering technique.

Xiang Xiang leaned against a tree and mused with mirth, “It’s quite surprising that Flame Cauldron Qu Chu had taught you so many fighting skills. How strange, I’ve already heard that Flame Cauldron Qu Chu had always been haughty and proud, and never imparted anyone with fighting knowledge.”

Lin Mu Yu snickered. If it wasn’t for him using high class alchemy techniques as a collateral, that old fellow would have never taught him Sonic Punch or Verdant Shell!

……

Lin Mu Yu had actually wanted to use the alchemy cauldron to refine a new martial spirit for Chu Yao, but he did not know if it was even possible. If it didn’t work, he might even hurt Chu Yao’s ability. Her Violet Mink’s growth was truly too lacking as it only contained about three tenths that of Lin Mu Yu’s spirit power. This was the main reason as to why Chu Yao’s strength was so weak.

We will just take it slowly. When the time comes, I should be able to help Chu Yao greatly improve her ability.

They practiced all the way until midnight, and then went to their rooms.

Xiang Xiang insisted on staying behind to attend on Lin Mu Yu. There was no way for him to refuse, so she was allowed to stay. As before, she slept on the bed while Lin Mu Yu slept on the bench. After training for a whole day, he dizzily fell asleep.

Right as he was sleeping soundly, someone loudly knocked on his door, “Mister Lin, Miss Chu, something bad has happened!”

“What’s going on?”

Lin Mu Yu quickly got dressed and ran out the door. A guard stood panting as he said, “Quick…Go to the manor’s lobby. Something terrible has happened. The team that we sent to the Capital was ambushed by vagrant mercenaries. Many had died and all the merchandise onboard were lost. Your Bai Ling Pharmacy’s master… Elder Chu Feng had died after being gravely wounded…”

Chu Feng… died…

Lin Mu Yu’s mind blanked out while Chu Yao’s face turned ghastly white. She mumbled in confusion, “How can that be… You’re lying, Grandpa isn’t dead! Grandpa isn’t dead…”

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The lobby was lit up with torches while at least a thousand soldiers had surrounded the Lord’s manor. Hua Tian had summoned the city’s militia. With this many soldiers around, something had definitely happened.

Several horse carriages were covered in bloodstains. Lin Mu Yu recognized it as the carriage that Chu Feng had rode in for the journey to the Capital. They were originally carrying gifts and

Silver Fir's specialties to be presented to the Imperial family in Lanyan City, but now it was filled with blood-covered corpses. Many of the corpses were caked with blood.

Lifting up the gray cloth, Chu Feng's peaceful face was exposed. Some kind of sharp weapon had bored through his chest and pierced his heart, so he had probably died a long while ago from such a wound.

Seeing Chu Feng's face, Chu Yao broke down into forlorn sobs and leaned over Chu Feng's body as she cried. Grandpa Chu Feng had raised her from when she was a toddler, so seeing her sole relative passing away like this, Chu Yao felt as if the world was about to collapse down on her.

Lin Mu Yu stood nearby but did not try to comfort Chu Yao. It was better for her to mourn now, or else she might crumble down completely.

Looking around, Lin Mu Yu saw that many of the surrounding soldiers were covered in wounds.

Lord Hua Tian shouted angrily as he grasped his iron sword, "Chu Feng is an elder of the Panacea Department, so why is it that this trip would end up with him dead? What happened exactly?"

General Zhu Dao Rong clenched his spear tighter. His face was ashen while his chest was reddened by the blood that was dripping from two arrows sticking out in his chest plate. He abruptly knelt down and said, "Lord... We tried everything we could, but we were

ambushed by a pack of mercenaries when we passed Dagger Gorge. There was a Saint Realm warrior amongst them so I was no match for him as I was seriously injured. I could only look on helplessly as Elder Chu Feng was killed and as the goods were robbed… I beg for your highness to punish me!”

“You!”

Hua Tian clenched his teeth and abruptly placed his sword at Zhu Dao Rong’s neck. He exclaimed angrily, “General Zhu, don’t think that I don’t dare to kill you. It is your failure that lead to the tragic death of one of the Empire’s pillars of alchemy!”

Zhu Dao Rong mumbled, “Lord, I will have no regrets if I were to die at your hands. I have failed the Empire and failed Silver Fir City!”

Right at that moment, a crowd of wounded soldiers knelt down one after another and begged forgiveness for the general. Hua Tian sighed, “Cease! This won’t bring anyone back. Zhu Dao Rong, I’ll be deducting two years of grain pay and dropping you by one rank to moral officer. Do you have any objections?”

“I have no objections!”

Hua Tian walked over and placed his hand onto Lin Mu Yu’s shoulder. Looking deeply into his eyes, Hua Tian sternly said, “Boy… Elder Chu Feng’s death is ultimately Silver Fir’s responsibility. Don’t be too distressed, I will definitely try and satisfy all of yours and Chu Yao’s needs. Rest assured, Silver Fir

and the Panacea Division will never abandon you guys.”

Lin Mu Yu’s eyes were slightly bloodshot as he answered, “I understand. Thank you, my lord!”

He turned around and hugged Chu Yao’s shoulders. He then opened up Chu Feng’s shirt and looked at the wound. The hole was in the shape of a triangular-pyramid. This heart piercing blow was definitely from some kind of unusual weapon.

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“Don’t be too sad, Chu Yao. Let’s quickly lay Grandpa Chu Feng to rest so he can sleep in peace.”

Chapter 31 : The Past Turns Into Ash

That night, Chu Yao stayed at Chu Feng's mourning hall and cried all night.

Wang Ying, Luo Kai, and the other disciples had readied the coffin, and prepared for burial.

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Chu Yao's eyes were swollen and bloodshot. Lin Mu Yu wanted to comfort her, but did not know what to say. Chu Yao didn't look like she needed the comfort of others either. When the first ray of light shined into the hall, Chu Yao took out her dagger and abruptly chopped off a lock of long hair.

"What are you doing, Chu Yao?" Lin Mu Yu asked in surprise.

Without another word, Chu Yao looked at Lin Mu Yu with teary eyes and began to cut off her long locks. At last, she was left with a head of short hair as she spoke with tears running down her face, "Ah Yu, Grandpa's gone. This is the only way I know to stay strong."

Lin Mu Yu did not know what to say back to her.

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After a whole morning of labor, Chu Feng was buried on the outskirts of Seven Star Forest.

In the afternoon, Lin Mu Yu went directly to Hundred War firm after bringing Chu Yao back to the Division office.

Lei Baizhan was not aware that Chu Feng was killed, so he faced Lin Mu Yu with an excited smile and laughed, “Young warrior Lin! You would have never imagined it, but those two bottles of Peak of Dreams were sold for 4400 and 4700 gold, respectively. What a profit! Come on, let’s go settle the accounts in the back!”

“Boss Lei.”

Lin Mu Yu said in the calm voice, “I need a person from you.”

“Oh? What kind of person are you looking for?”

“Who from Hundred War firm is the most ‘in the know’?”

“This...” Lei Baizhan immersed in thought as he mumbled, “The one with the most abundant information and the broadest networking... Oh, it’s probably that kid Situ Hao, what do you need someone like that anyway?”

“Just get him here.”

“Alright then!” To Lei Baizhan, Lin Mu Yu was a delicious money

tree, so he naturally acceded to his pleas.

Not long after, a 20-years-old lad appeared in the back hall. Situ Hao asked with a smile, “Mister Lin, what might you be needing me for?”

“Just follow me.”

“Great!”

Walking out of the firm, Lin Mu Yu turned around and stuffed 20 gold Yin into Hao’s pocket. He asked, “You should know the man by the name of Zhu Dao Rong, right?”

“Oh General Zhu!” Situ Hao laughed out loud, “Of course I know him well. Aside from the Lord himself, General Zhu is the one with the most military power in Silver Fir. He has 2000 men of the Imperial army in his hand!”

“What kind of habits does Zhu Dao Rong have?”

“Habits... For a military man, aside from drinking... it would probably be visiting the brothel or something. Oh that’s right, General Zhu liked this one woman from the west district’s Spring Brothel. One of the prettiest lass in this city, oh boy. I think her name is Ruan Ruyu. Usually, if nothing is happening, General Zhu would spend his nights in Ruan Ruyu’s bed.”

“Where is Ruan Ruyu’s room?”

“The top floor of Spring Brothel only has one room, and that would be Ruan Ruyu’s bedroom.”

“Okay.”

Lin Mu Yu patted Hao’s shoulder and said, “Thank you, Hao. Here is another 30 gold Yin, so perhaps I will ask you to handle some other affairs for me. Rest assured, follow me and I definitely will treat you right.”

Situ Hao was a man drawn to money, so he quickly nodded, “Yes yes yes, you can trust me to handle anything perfectly!”

“Alright, then can you find a few strong hands and help me protect Chu Yao of the Panacea Division?”

“I can probably find a few mercenaries. There are two level 30 Earth realm mercs that has a 20 gold Yin commission per day, is that ok?”

“That’s fine. Maybe even get a few more and tell them to guard the courtyard from afar. Just make sure that no one will be able to hurt Chu Yao.”

“Alright!”

……

As midnight came, sounds of love were abound in the rooms of Spring Brothel. While the inhabitants were enjoying themselves, a shadow dashed from pavilion and landed softly onto the building's roof. Lin Mu Yu hugged his steel sword and closed his eyes. He could make out Ruan Ruyu's faint pampered gasps as well as Zhu Dao Rong's heavy panting.

How could someone who recently received arrow wounds have the stamina for this?

In a flash, Lin Mu Yu's hypothesis was verified once more. Springing into a soft jump, he soundlessly entered the building. His footsteps were extremely light, which can be attributed to the mysterious power of Starfall Steps.

Looking from afar, there were 4 guards outside the room as the starlight casted their shadows on the window. At the same time, Zhu Dao Rong was bent over on top of the girl and enjoying himself. Ruan Ruyu tenderly moaned as she catered sweetly to the ordeal. By their side, Zhu Dao Rong's three-pronged spear stood in the corner. As a martial artist, his weapon would always stay by his side.

Lin Mu Yu unhurriedly walked over and drew his sword. The sound of the sword scraping against the sheath was very soft, but Zhu Dao Rong still heard it. He hastily turned and shouted, "Who is it?"

"It is I." Lin Mu Yu said with indifference.

While Ruan Ruyu shrieked in fear, Lin Mu Yu hacked down with his sword. The speed of Lightning Chop in conjunction with Starfall Steps was too fast for Zhu Dao Rong. Before he could even put up defenses, his right arm was chopped off. Blood streamed out like a waterfall and white bones eerily stuck out of the stump. He took it like a man and roared, “Lin Mu Yu, are you crazy? Why did you mount a sneak attack on me!? I’m a general!”

Lin Mu Yu said coldly, “My master Chu Feng was slain by your spear, right? Too bad you did not mess up the wound, and just stabbed a few arrows into your chest instead. The blood on the other corpses had dried for nearly a day, yet those arrows were still not removed. Now that I think about it, you’re truly a narcissistic moron! Anyhow, look at your chest. Where is the wound? You pig, did you think you can really keep everything in the dark after you killed Grandpa Chu Feng? Tonight, I will make you pay it all back in blood!”

Zhu Dao Rong roared in anger, “I am the overwatching general of Silver Fir and you dare to kill me? Guards, come take care of this assassin!”

Several guards crashed through the door on his command.

However, Lin Mu Yu was even faster. Pushing his left palm out with force, the Green Gourd materialized and countless vines erupted from the floor to bind the guards. At the same time, Sonic Blade flew out and sliced through 4 necks. The four guards were all instantly killed.

Zhu Dao Rong turned pale with fright. These bodyguards were all practitioners of the second stage of Human realm, and this young brat had killed them all in a flash. How scary was his martial capacity?

But after all, Zhu Dao Rong was still a level 44 Battle Master, so he quickly stood and grabbed his spear with his remaining hand. A fierce tiger spirit visualized as the spear ignited in flames. He dauntingly growled as unleashed all his power into one strike and the spear leapt forth as if it was a fiery snake.

Lin Mu Yu appeared even more cool-headed as the green gourd condensed before his chest. A layer of flame red Ebony Scales appeared on top of the gourd wall and forcefully shook back Zhu Dao Rong. Although the martial spirit sent back a fierce aftershock, Lin Mu Yu had noticed that Zhu Dao Rong's strength had decreased after he lost an arm and was definitely not a match anymore.

Activating Starfall Steps, he arrived to the left of Zhu Dao Rong and gripped his sword in both hands. The wind sparked as Lin Mu Yu forcibly shattered Zhu Dao Rong's energy shield with another Lightning Chop. The blade fell onto the general's left arm and coincidentally sliced off a big chunk of flesh. While the older man howled in pain, Lin Mu Yu followed up with a full strength Sonic Punch!

"Boom!"

The Sonic Punch rippled through the air and Zhu Dao Rong stuffily groaned. His internal organs were instantly shattered and

he died on the spot.

Ruan Ruyu looked at the man's corpse as she stood naked. She shook her head frantically as she begged, "Don't kill me, don't kill me. I don't know anything, don't kill me…"

Lin Mu Yu fumbled his brows and said, "If I don't kill you, you will definitely sell me out. Come, drink this."

"What is it?"

Without explaining anything else, Lin Mu Yu immediately forced a bottle of Peak of Dreams down her throat. This could at least make her fall unconscious for three days and should technically save her life.

……

Grabbing onto Zhu Dao Rong's three-pronged spear, Lin Mu Yu climbed out the window and sprinted towards the lord's manor.

He entered the courtyard as the sun broke past the horizon. There were indeed several mercenaries guarding outside the door. Looks like gold coins are quite useful in this case. Lin Mu Yu quickly rushed into the yard and pushed open the door to Chu Yao's room. Her eyes were swollen red as her mind was already at its weakest point. She faintly asked, "Ah Yu, why are you…"

"Let's go quickly!"

Lin Mu Yu grabbed her hand and pulled her out the door.

“Where are we going?”

“Bai Ling Pharmacy!”

“What for?”

“We need to get everyone together and leave the city. We can’t stay here any longer.”

“Why?”

“Grandpa was killed by Zhu Dao Rong.”

“What?!” Chu Yao was shocked by the sudden revelation, “How… How can that be? Zhu Dao Rong is the overwatch general of the city, so why would he kill Grandpa? He… why would he do this?”

Lin Mu Yu calmly explained, “It’s because Lord Hua Tian wants the Medicine God Index, so he killed Grandpa. Last night Zhu Dao Rong looked seriously injured, but there was not a single wound on his chest today. Grandpa’s three-pronged wound corresponds to this spear, which was Zhu Dao Rong’s weapon.”

Chu Yao was a smart girl and instantly understood everything.

Clenching her teeth, she swore, “I need to kill Zhu Dao Rong!”

“I’ve killed him already. We need to leave.”

……

When the pair arrived at the pharmacy, what greeted them was a sea of flames!

Lin Mu Yu called forth the gourd spirit and rushed into the flames, only to find the corpses of everyone splayed out on the ground. Wang Ying, Zhao Xin, Luo Kai, and the rest were all lain in the bloodbath. This place had been massacred!

Griping pain shot through Lin Mu Yu’s chest as he punched the wall. He blamed himself for not anticipating the destruction of Bai Ling Pharmacy. Hua Tian had definitely let Xiang Xiang ask about the index because they could not find it on Chu Feng’s body. He would have definitely searched through the pharmacy and would silence all who were related.

“Senior Wang Ying…”

“Junior Luo Kai…”

Chu Yao looked at the pile of corpses as tears began to roll off her face once again.

.....

Right at that moment, sounds of hooves were heard from outside. Someone loudly shouted, “Lin Mu Yu killed General Zhu. He is a fugitive of the Empire, we can’t allow him to run freely. Lin Mu Yu and Chu Yao, we can’t let either of them go!”

Chapter 32 : Xiang Xiang's Determination

"To the back door!"

Kicking open the blood soaked door, Lin Mu Yu fled with Chu Yao. The streets were already filled with mounted soldiers, clearly Hua Tian had mobilized fairly quickly. Soldiers had surrounded nearly the whole city, so if the two did not make use of the chaos to escape, Silver Fir would be their burial ground.

……

The two hastily rushed past the confused civilians as they went from alley to alley.

However, when they came to the city gate, they found that a group of guards were closing the large gates. Luckily, an ox-drawn cart had fallen over on a broken wheel in the middle, with bags of heavy grains weighing down on the cart. The only problem now was that the top of the walls were filled with armed soldiers, many of them with arrows readied on their bows.

"We can't leave now!" Chu Yao grimaced.

"No, we have to go!"

Lin Mu Yu tightly held onto Chu Yao's hand and said, "Follow me. Don't hesitate or retreat."

“Alright.”

Two people dashed out of the crowd. They were so fast that the guards did not even have time to react to them as they passed the gates with lightning speed.

“Those two are the Empire’s serious felons Lin Mu Yu and Chu Yao. Shoot and kill them immediately!” A familiar shout was heard from the top of the city walls. It was Lord Hua Tian, with Hua Wan standing nearby with an ice-cold smile.

Arrows rained from the walls on command. Lin Mu Yu ran with Chu Yao as he simultaneously called forth the Green Gourd. The spirit formed a two meter tall Ebony Scale behind him and shook off all the incoming arrows.

“Renegade, you still want to run!?”

Hua Wan pulled out his sword and jumped down upon a war-horse. Pointing his sword directly before him, he commanded, “Armored Cavalry Battalion, follow my attack and cut down Lin Mu Yu!”

However, Hua Tian shouted, “Son, stand where you are. Why would you need to personally go if you want to keep them here? Bring that lowly slave girl up here!”

Two cavalrymen carried a girl onto the city wall. Lin Mu Yu recognized her as Xiang Xiang. At the moment, her face was

covered in bruises; rows of bloody lash marks scarred her chest and arms.

Lin Mu Yu subconsciously heated up and pointed at Hua Tian as he bellowed in rage, “Hua Tian, you dog. Come at me if you have a problem, why are you torturing a maid for no reason!”

Hua Tian faintly smiled, “Lin Mu Yu, I know that Xiang Xiang had given her body to you, so she is your woman. If you are a man, then obediently turn yourself in. Or else this twenty-meters-high wall will be where Xiang Xiang fall to her death!”

Lin Mu Yu tightly grasped Chu Yao’s hand. There was no way he would give up Chu Yao to save Xiang Xiang.

……

Looking at the hesitant Lin Mu Yu, tears rolled down Xiang Xiang’s face as her body trembled weakly. She whimpered, “Sir, do you still not trust Xiang Xiang to this day? You still don’t believe that Xiang Xiang is willing to do anything for you, right?”

Lin Mu Yu clenched his teeth, “Xiang Xiang!”

Xiang Xiang laugh a miserable laugh, “Sir, Xiang Xiang’s body isn’t clean anymore, so she is not fit for you. Perhaps it is like you had said before, Xiang Xiang’s life should be chosen by herself.”

Hua Tian was enraged, “You cheap whore, what kind of crazy

was that? You're a maid of the manor, so when did it become your turn to decide how your life should go? Guards, rip off her clothes. Show me how she is going to choose her own life!"

A guard walked forward and ferociously grabbed Xiang Xiang. With a loud tearing sound, he tore the clothes off her back.

Xiang Xiang was surprisingly taciturn. When the clothes were fully ripped and she stood bare, she slowly bent down to pick up the strips of cloth and covered her chest. Although she moved slowly, those last few strips of cloth were like her last bits of dignity. She was willing to give up everything, but she would never give up her dignity.

"My body was born free." Xiang Xiang looked at Hua Tian. Her eyes did not hold respect as she calmly stated.

She gradually walked near the edge of the wall and chuckled. Her voice was exceedingly gentle as she said to Lin Mu Yu, "You have once said, dignity was something worth using life to fight for... Since you sir don't believe Xiang Xiang, then Xiang Xiang will prove it to you!"

Hua Tian's ice-cold gaze fell onto her body. He knew that women like her were all afraid of death. They would sell their body just to scrape a living. The fact that this girl gave her virginity to him was a solid testimonial to his belief.

But right before his eyes, this weak woman leapt forward. Just like a fleeting rainbow, this young life passed away in the blink of

an eye.

Looking at the body that laid in the blood pool, Hua Tian was blown away but the awe quickly turned into anger. He shouted, “Take this woman’s corpse and feed it to the dogs!”

On the ground, Hua Wan lead the cavalry as they charged towards Lin Mu Yu..

……

Lin Mu Yu looked at Xiang Xiang from afar as he stood in shock. It was as if millions of arrows had pierced his heart. He slowly turned towards Chu Yao, and said, “Chu Yao, run into Seven Star Forest. I’ll catch up in a short while. I can definitely catch up with Starfall Steps. You’re just going to be baggage to me if you stay.”

Chu Yao knew that he spoke the truth. Her strength was too greatly lacking compared to him.

“Alright, try and catch up quickly.”

Drops of rain began to fall from the sky as Chu Yao sprinted towards Seven Star Forest. She did not know whether it was rain or tears running down her face. Although she knew that Lin Mu Yu wanted to take revenge for Xiang Xiang, she could not try to stop him. The only thing she could do now was to pray for him in her heart and hope that he could make it out alive.

……

The charging power of cavalry was extremely frightening, especially Silver Fir's plate-covered armored-cavalry. The increased impact strength was even more scary than normal.

Lin Mu Yu stood his ground and waited. When Hua Wan's horse was only ten metres away, he raised his fist and created a loud explosion in the air. Hua Wan's war-horse was immediately frightened and kicked its rider off as it knelt down on the ground. Hua Wan flipped off the horse skillfully with a spirit-charged sword in hand and struck out at Lin Mu Yu.

Crash!

Hua Wan's attack landed heavily onto the ground as Lin Mu Yu dodged in a flash with Starfall Step. Hua Wan's straightforward attack was truly too clumsy for Lin Mu Yu. Although they were both practitioners of the first stage of Earth realm, the actual disparity in battle strength was greatly alarming.

Poof!

Slamming his elbow onto his opponent's back, Lin Mu Yu swiped his sword swiftly. The attack shattered Hua Wan's energy shield and slashed over a bloody gash on Hua Wan's abdomen.

"Ah Ah AH…"

Hua Wan swung his sword in anger but was not able to hit anything. He breathed heavily as the rain trickled down his face. Just as he was about to move, Hua Wan found an ice-cold blade placed on his neck.

"Kneel."

Lin Mu Yu's cold voice greeted Hua Wan as his knee was hit from the back. He involuntarily fell onto his knees as he looked up with disbelief at his father on the city wall, "Father..."

Hua Tian was greatly shocked. He had never thought that his son would be so helpless.

"Release the young lord and I will let you live!"

Hua Tian leapt down the wall with a roar. He was already at the stage of a level 47 Battle Master. With a long spear in his hand, Hua Tian's face carried anger as he bellowed, "Lin Mu Yu, you're just a lowly peasant. If you kill a noble, you will involve your whole family. Release my son. I will pardon everything that's happened and let both you and Chu Yao go!"

The rain became heavier. Lin Mu Yu's eyelashes were covered in rain drops, but his eyes were cold as ice. Abruptly breaking into a hearty laughter, Lin Mu Yu retorted, "Let us go? Hua Tian, you will die here today, do you understand?"

Hua Tian roared, "Who do you think you are? You want to kill

me? You're too brazen, you little bastard!"

Lin Mu Yu lightly pulled on his sword and sliced the carotid artery on Hua Wan's neck. Blood squirted out wildly as Hua Wan immediately limped onto the ground and frantically tried to cover his wound with his hands. Blood and rain mixed together as his life quickly seeped away. In the blink of an eye, he turned into a cold corpse and splayed out across the wet ground.

"Ahhhhhh AHHHHH AHHHHHH..."

It was as if Hua Tian had transformed into a wild beast as he coated himself in lightning and charged at Lin Mu Yu, "You brazen little bastard, I'm going to kill you!"

Brazen!

Lin Mu Yu's bones were seething with brass, but his arrogance was definitely not recklessness. Looking at Hua Tian's imposing manner, he knew that he definitely could not compete head-on. Taking several steps back, he used Wind Sword Style's Windward Art and attacked with a wave of shapeless gale in conjunction with a Lightning Chop.

However, Hua Tian's speed was not much inferior. He swung his spear and swept away the Lightning Chop. Hua Tian sent out a speedy kick as he sprung into the air. His Lightning Hammer shot out of his feet and crashed onto Lin Mu Yu's Ebony Scale. It was only one hit, but small cracks had appeared on top of the scale. Hua Tian snorted with scorn as he continued with his spear

attacks. The long spear was like a vicious serpent as it stabbed into Lin Mu Yu's shoulder.

A swing and a kick were able to make Lin Mu Yu roll around in the mud. This defeat was too tragically fast!

"Break!"

Hua Tian landed on one feet and a formless energy instantly erupted from the ground. Lin Mu Yu did not dare to receive the attack directly. He hastily ducked to the side, but the scorching hot lightning still burnt him as blood ran down his shoulder wound.

Hua Tian did not stop once he got the upperhand, and followed attacks with attacks. After a few minutes, at least seven or eight wounds had appeared on Lin Mu Yu's body.

Whoosh!

A green vine broke out from the soil and bound Hua Tian's right leg. The sharp thorns on the green vine directly pierced the skin.

"What is this?!"

Hua Tian easily cut apart the vine, but he didn't know that energy was quickly seeping out of his wound.

Lin Mu Yu remained defensive and utilized Verdant Shell and

Ebony Scale to defend against Hua Tian's relentless attacks.

Conversely, since Hua Tian had the upperhand, the hundreds of armored cavalrymen all watched silently as the lord personally obtained revenge for the young lord.

……

Finally, after a long while, Hua Tian's vitals became disorderly. Although Lin Mu Yu was covered in wounds, he still remained focused enough to hold on. Throwing out his left fist, he used Sonic Punch. It was time for the counter attack!

Bang!

The punch struck Hua Tian's chest, but it only hit the energy shield. Hua Tian's force energy was much greater than his son's, so his internal organs would naturally not be so easily attacked by Sonic Punch.

"Humph, insignificant skill, not even worth a mention!"

Right as Hua Tian belittled and scorned him, Lin Mu Yu suddenly gave a little push behind his back and combined the four throwing knives into a bladed wheel. The blade sweep across the air as he used it for a sneak attack!

Keng!

Hua Tian immediately used his spear to sweep the thrown blade aside, and cursed, “Assassination weapon? You despicable little bastard. You think you can defeat me with a mere hidden weapon?”

Without a word, Lin Mu Yu attacked with Lightning Chop and send out two Sonic Punches with his left hand!

Bang! Bang!

Hua Tian’s blood surged inside as he received the continuous attacks, but a single Lightning Hammer attack was still able to blow Lin Mu Yu several meters back. Holding onto his spear, Hua Tian coldly chuckled, “To fight with me? Who do you think you are? You killed my son, so I will cut you up and serve you to the dogs!”

But then, Lin Mu Yu’s mouth curved into a smile.

“Huh?”

Hua Tian felt that something was wrong. Without giving him any time to react, a whistling sound came from behind him. With a snapping sound, the Sonic Blade sliced across the air. Lin Mu Yu leapt up to catch the blade, disassembled it back into four knives, then stored them back in his pouch.

……

Hua Tian silently stood there as the crowd of guards stood speechless. Reflecting through their pupils was the the sight of the Lord’s head gradually sliding off its base.

Chapter 33 : Formless Net

“Arrow formation!”

In mounted combat, the arrow formation was the best formation to simply outman the enemy. Not even gods would be able to escape once they fall within an arrow formation charge.

……

Lin Mu Yu walked several steps forward and rummaged through Hua Tian’s clothes. As expected, a book was hidden within. It was the Medicine God Index, covered in blood stains. He didn’t know whether it was Hua Tian’s blood or his own. Anyhow, he quickly stuffed the book into his breast pocket and grabbed Hua Tian’s pike. Arching back like a longbow, Lin Mu Yu took up a throwing position, as energy swarmed around him.

“Aim true!”

Following an angry shout, the pike shot out like an arrow and impaled the chest of the frontmost horseman. The force threw both the rider and his horse several feet away, leaving behind rows of muddy trails.

But right at that moment, the two cavalry wings began to close their formation. Two cavalrymen, one from each side, came over, and they swung their long swords ferociously at Lin Mu Yu. With the hasty attack, Lin Mu Yu saw that their sinister looking faces had the looks of arrogance and extreme confidence. With the

combined strength of the horsemen's charging power and the speed of their sword attacks, this charge was obviously going to be quite strong.

At the split second before contact, Lin Mu Yu raised his arm and called forth his spirit ability: Ebony Scale!

Boom!

The great impact ravaged Lin Mu Yu's arms as he was thrown into the air along with his sword. Falling into the mud, he could not gather strength into his numbed arms. Those two armored riders weren't much better off. They were shaken off their horses by the Ebony Scale, then trampled upon by the riders behind them. Their wretched cries of agony tore through the air.

Right as Lin Mu Yu stumbled back on his feet, a patch of searing pain shot through his shoulder, as a cavalryman's spear pierced through his arm.

He immediately chopped down onto the wooden shaft and snapped it forcefully. Lin Mu Yu huffed and summoned his martial spirit once more. Several vines erupted from the ground, and bound this soldier where he stood. Following up with a fierce left hook through the air, Sonic Punch completely shattered the man's internal organs!

Papapapa...

Treading through the mud, the rain created several patches of muddy depressions in the ground. Lin Mu Yu's arm had become completely red with his blood. As the rain seeped into the wounds, they burnt with a scorching pain. He quickly used Stellar Step to leave in haste, as he retreated several steps back. He had to leave now, since now that he was injured, he would die if he was caught in the armored cavalry's charge.

Excluding the fact that he was a new level 30 Battle Master, even if he was a level 90 Saint realm expert, he would not be able to directly face off against the hundreds of horsemen before him. After all, there was a limit to a single man's strength, while the cavalry troop's killing potential was endless.

Luckily, Starfall Step was extremely fast, thus Lin Mu Yu was able to escape out of the soldier's attack range after several dashes.

……

"Don't let him get away. Catch up to him and kill him. Take revenge for the lord and young lord!" A group of cavalrymen shouted loudly.

Lin Mu Yu ran madly through the rain, as blood ceaselessly flowed out from his wounds. He really wanted to go back and retrieve Xiang Xiang's corpse, because he was not willing to let her corpse be subjected to anything else. But that was impossible now, since once he turned back, what awaited him would most definitely be death.

Shuup!

Suddenly, another burning sensation pierced his back and shook him slightly. A mounted archer's arrow had pierced through his Verdant Shell, and dug itself several centimeters into his back. Although it wasn't much, it simply made his bad situation worse.

"I can't stop here, Chu Yao is still waiting for me..."

The rain had blurred his sight, but Lin Mu Yu still continued running. Leaping into the shrubbery, he felt the pain of thorns stabbing into his flesh. But as he recalled Xiang Xiang's tragic death, this amount of pain was nothing compared to the heart wrenching guilt that he felt.

"I had caused her death."

He blamed himself inwardly for what happened with Xiang Xiang:

I should never have told her that one liner about how "honor is worth using life to fight for." I wasn't able to help her, and instead caused her to fall to her death. What kind of hero am I?

.....

His strength continually dissipated and his inward guilt pushed him little by little to the edge, but every time he fell down on the ground, he remembered Chu Yao. If he were to die, what would

Chu Yao do? How would she face everything that was going to happen by her lonesome? As such, he could not not fall now.

Perhaps this belief was what saved him.

After running madly for near 20 minutes with his body full of wounds, Lin Mu Yu turned around, only to see that there was no one following behind. It was a several kilometer long mountain road, so it was not suitable for horses. If the Silver Fir armored cavalry were to dismount and continue their chase, their walking speeds would be far too slow compared to Starfall Step.

“Ah Yu!”

In his blurred line of sight, Chu Yao’s voice appeared before him.

His knees bent softly as he lost strength and he fell into Chu Yao’s embrace. His face rested upon her shoulder as a familiar fragrance entered his nose. He cried out in a brittle voice, “I’m sorry… Chu Yao, it’s all my fault. It was this Medicine God Index that had caused Grandpa to die so miserably. It’s all my fault!””

“Your injuries are too great, don’t speak anymore!”

Chu Yao looked at the spear wound on his arm as well as the arrow in his back, and tears rolled off her cheeks along with the rain.

……

Late at night, scant firewood lit up a tiny cave. It was a feral bear's den, but its original owner was already reclined in a pool of its blood. A new wound adorned Chu Yao's shoulder from when she had killed the bear, but it was still nothing compared to the injury of the one lying on the makeshift grass bed.

Lin Mu Yu gradually opened his heavy eyes and saw the side of Chu Yao's face before him. He lifted his head and saw that his shoulder wound had been bandaged up. Faint throbbing pain came from his back, but it was definitely not as much as before.

"Awake?"

Chu Yao turned to look at him with a warm smile on her face, then turned back to stir the "pot" on the campfire. Frankly, calling it a pot would be too lenient; perhaps it would be more accurate to call it a pot-shaped rock. There was a pile of broken stones lying about from when Chu Yao was trying to make a pot like this. Within the rock pot was a boiling soup with bear meat as its stock. Furthermore, in order to help Lin Mu Yu quickly recover his stamina, Chu Yao had even dug out the bear heart and tossed it into the stew.

"You're probably hungry now right? Give me a second, the meat soup will be done soon." Chu Yao gently spoke, like a sister who was tenderly taking care of her brother.

However, Lin Mu Yu noticed her shoulder wound at first sight, "Sorry..."

“Dummy. What are you saying sorry for?”

“Nothing. Thanks a lot.”

“What are you being so polite for?” Chu Yao laughed, but her smile quickly faded away. Pursing her lips, she mumbled, “It’s all because I’m so useless. I couldn’t even help you, and instead became your baggage. Grandpa and the other apprentices are dead, even that Xiang Xiang is dead. We…”

Lin Mu Yu struggled to an upright position. As he held onto Chu Yao’s arm for support, he said with a dry chuckle, “Chu Yao, don’t blame yourself anymore. I’ve already gotten revenge for them.”

“Huh?” Chu Yao gasped in surprise.

Lin Mu Yu looked at the dancing flames and faintly smiled, “Hua Wan had died at my hand. Hua Tian as well. They were the masterminds behind it all, so I’ve avenged Grandpa and everyone else.”

Chu Yao looked at his with disbelief, “Ah Yu, you’re not kidding, are you? Hua Tian is… He is near the power level of a Battle Saint expert. He is Silver Fir’s strongest practitioner, so how could you have killed him?”

“Because of these guys…” Lin Mu Yu caressed the four throwing knives at his side, “Sonic Blade. It originated from master Qu Chu’s

specialty skill. Without Sonic Blade, I'm afraid I would have been long dead under Hua Tian's pike.".

Chu Yao sighed, "Yeah, it's good that you were able to avenge everyone, but... perhaps we will have to wander about to a faraway place from now on. Hua Tian is Silver Fir's lord after all. Although Silver Fir isn't a big city, Hua Tian is a genuinely important figure in the empire. The Empire will most definitely send out troops to hunt us down for what we did to Hua Tian..."

"It's alright, I'll protect you." Lin Mu Yu smiled cockily, but had stirred his wounds, so he could not help but groan out loud.

Chu Yao couldn't help but smile, "Oh you. You're just as headstrong as always. Lie down and rest. I'll take care of you before you completely heal up."

"Alright."

After lying back down onto the floor, Lin Mu Yu began to quietly tune his energy pathways and unblock the flows that were clogged up from his combat injuries, or else they would leave him impaired. A long while after, Chu Yao held before him a stone "bowl" with steaming hot meat soup. Although he didn't know what time it was, since he had not eaten for so long, he immediately began to gulp down the soup. This left Chu Yao chuckling softly, "Slow down, don't burn yourself..."

.....

When he finished eating, Lin Mu Yu went back to repairing his body. He knew deep down that countless dangers would be coming their way, so he had to quickly return to a combat-ready form. Otherwise, Chu Yao would definitely not be able to hold them down on her own.

“Chu Yao, what kind of plans do you have for our next move?”

“Let’s just put survival first.” Chu Yao gloomily stated, “I’ve seen the map of Silver Fir’s surrounding areas. If we follow along Seven Star Forest’s edge and evade the our persuaders’ path by going north, we should be able to reach the the territory of the Imperial Capital, Lanyan City, within half a month. We’ll decide on the next step when we get there. Anyhow, let’s first survive through this before we plan any further…”

“Alright.”

When Chu Yao mentioned Lanyan City, Lin Mu Yu couldn’t help but recall the image of a beautiful girl. Tang Xiao Xi should be in Lanyan City, right? Perhaps, the two of them should go find her?

No, the situation doesn’t seem very suitable. I killed an important figure of the Empire, so if Tang Xiao Xi was to protect me, she would most definitely get in trouble herself. Furthermore, our friendship… are we even close enough for her to help me?

That night, Lin Mu Yu restlessly manipulated energy for self recovery in conjunction with healing medicines to heal his injuries. The arrow wound in his back quickly formed a scab and

began to close. His shoulder wound was slightly more serious, so it needed a bit more time before it could completely heal. Luckily, it would not affect the continuous growth of his strength.

……

At the peak of dawn.

At the Cangnan Province Governor's mansion in Wugu (Five Grains) City…

Provincial Governor Hu Tiezhu looked at the flight mail under the dim light of his lamp and couldn't help but furrow his brows. He exclaimed, "Silver Fir City's Executive Guardian, Hua Tian was killed by an unknown fellow called Lin Mu Yu? How did this happen?"

By his side, his counsel general grabbed cupped his fist and asked, "Governor, the problem is urgent, what should we do?"

Murderous intent dashed through Hu Tiezhu's eyes as he said, "Silver Fir is a subordinate city under Cangnan Province. I've been the Provincial Governor for more than 11 years, and something like this has never happened before. We must deal with this quickly. Assassinating a minister of the court is an unpardonable crime! Immediately put down the order for General Wang and his cavalry division to head over to SIlver Fir. He must capture Lin Mu Yu. If he lives, want to see him. If he dies, I want to see the corpse!"

“Yes, sir!”

The counsel general narrowed his eyes and said, “I heard that Lin Mu Yu escaped into Seven Star Forest. Our army might not be able to reach there in time, should we sent a flight mail to Silver Fir and offer a bounty? Maybe mercenaries can help us get rid of Lin Mu Yu and Chu Yao?”

Hu Tiezhu’s voice was very soft as he spoke, “Do as you suggested. Put up a 100 thousand gold Yin bounty for Lin Mu Yu’s head.”

“Yes, sir!”

Chapter 34 : Fire Fox's Sneak Attack

After three days and three nights of heavy rain, the sky finally cleared up on the fourth day.

Deep within the mountains of Seven Star Forest, a boy and a girl were slowly making their way through the trees.

……

Lin Mu Yu had basically healed from his injuries, but he still could not use too much strength, or else he would risk opening up the wounds again. Carrying a slightly large backpack, he asked with a smile, "So heavy, Chu Yao, what did you buy?"

Chu Yao made a face and laughed, "I could only take advantage of the dark of night to shop for supplies at nearby villages, so I couldn't buy much. One pan, two bowls, a bit of salt and oils, and a slightly crude tent. I also bought you a cloak, since the nights in Seven Star Forest are going to be colder now that it's about to be autumn."

"Okay."

Lin Mu Yu nodded and said, "That is good enough. Did you see any bounty for our heads?"

"Yeah!"

Chu Yao nodded heavily and laughed, “One hundred thousand gold Yin. I didn’t think our lives would be worth so much. I heard that even hunters are considering tracking us down. Luckily for us, the portraits on the bounties don’t even look like us. Furthermore, it’s a good thing that I have short hair now, or else I would have been immediately recognized. Oh, and I heard from those hunters that a lot of mercenaries have entered the forest as well. Even the legendary Seven Martial Saints agreed to join up with the hunting party. I don’t even know if we can make it to the Capital’s border at this rate.”

“Seven Martial Saints? What’s that?”

“They are well-known figures in the mercenary community who were given the title of Seven Martial Saints by the other mercs. Those 7 are all among Seven Star Forest region’s strongest. Even the weakest one is many times stronger than Hawkeye.”

“So it’s like that…”

Lin Mu Yu silently clenched his fist, but returned with a smile, “If they are actually coming at us for the money, then they can’t complain about the methods I’m going to use.”

Chu Yao nodded, “Yeah.” She had gone through so much recently that she’d already gotten used to the bloodshed.

……

Approaching noon, the two finally crossed three mountains and had seemingly gotten much deeper into Seven Star Forest. This was not a good thing at any rate, since thousand-years-old spirit beasts roam the deep forest. Those were not things that Lin Mu Yu could handle.

Along the side of the road, Lin Mu Yu kept on plucking leaves from the roadside trees. After taking a light sniff, he would frown without saying anything.

“Ah Yu, what in the world are you looking for?” Chu Yao finally could not resist and asked.

“Fire Fox. A 600-years-old Fire Fox is stalking us.”

“Ah?” Chu Yao gasped in surprise.

Lin Mu Yu continued explaining, “I was collecting leaves from a type of tree called the palm tree. Those leaves are the favorite food of Fire Foxes. The older the palm, the more the fox is fond of it. Furthermore, if a Fire Fox is nearby, the palm leaves would release a refreshing fragrance that would penetrate deeply into the heart. Logically, this Fire Fox is no more than two Li (1km) away from here.”

“No wonder there is a sweet aroma in the air!”

“Yeah. We probably walked into this Fire Fox’s territory, so it wants to hunt us down. Luckily, we have some use for it since a

Fire Fox's spirit melds pretty well with your Violet Mink spirit. Refining it should be enough to greatly boost your ability, so the hunter is going to become the hunted today."

"But..." Chu Yao blinked nervously, "The instructor from Silver Fir's Temple said that if one absorbs beast spirits too frequently, the body and spirit would not be able to handle that much exertion."

"Don't worry." Lin Mu Yu smiled, "Believe me. Chu Yao, you still have a lot of room for improvement."

"Oh, okay then..."

.....

At noon, the two had lunch under a rocky overhang. The meal was two pieces of roast beef with some fresh water in their water gourds. It wasn't much, but for Lin Mu Yu and Chu Yao, this was already a pretty good change of palate. In the last few days of heavy rain, they were able to eat one meal a day at most. The meals weren't even good either, since all they had were cold and dry buns.

Though he was munching on the beef, Lin Mu Yu's gaze fell in another direction. "Chu Yao, be careful. That Fire Fox is here. It can attack us at any time, and it's most definitely going to be a sneak attack."

“Aye.”

Chu Yao nodded in acknowledgment and a single silver needle appeared in her hand. Her needle throw had quite a bit of effectiveness within 20 meters, but she was a little lacking in strength if she wanted to throw any further.

“Chii chii…”

Suddenly, a ball of fire appeared in the distance. It was a fox covered in blazing flames. This 600-years-old Fire Fox screeched loudly and spat out a huge ball of flames.

Lin Mu Yu reacted quickly and leapt off the rock. Calling forth the Green Gourd, a piece of Ebony Scale instantly formed before him and nullified the Fire Fox’s fireball. At the same time, Lin Mu Yu threw out the Sonic Blade, and watched as it sped along with a hiss at the Fire Fox’s head.

This little fellow had survived for a few hundred years after all, so it had long awakened its higher intelligence. It dodged smartly into the bushes to avoid the Sonic Blade, but Lin Mu Yu had already accounted for that, and countless thorny vines bursted out from the ground. The Thorn-empowered Binding Roots quickly bound the Fire Fox in the blink of an eye.

“Chiii Chii…”

Its cries became louder as its flames incessantly burned the gourd

vines. Chu Yao yelled anxiously, “Ah Yu, be careful of its Flame Charge!”

“Not happening!”

Lin Mu Yu threw a punch through the air and created a ripple in the air. The returning Sonic Blade quickly changed direction after it was hit and sliced down the Fire Fox’s back. Fresh blood instantly splattered around, as the fox whimpered in pain.

“Stab it in the eye with your needle!” Lin Mu Yu shouted..

Chu Yao quickly flicked her wrist and the silver needle flew out from her hand. In the next second, the Fire Fox cried out miserably. Lin Mu Yu dashed behind it and raised Starfall Steps to its highest speed. Lightning sparked on his sword as he swung down swiftly, and was greeted with a tearing sound as the fox head flew off like a bobble-head. At the same time, a huge wave of raging flames surged out..

Boom!

Luckily, Ebony Scale had formed in time, or else burns would have been inevitable. Lin Mu Yu stood where he was and looked at the surrounding patches of darkened earth. He could not help but be speechless at the aftermath.

Sure enough, I can’t underestimate even a 600-years-old spirit beast, or else I’m going to fall head first before it.

“Chu Yao, quickly refine the beast spirit.”

“Aye!”

Chu Yao quickly sat down beside the fox’s corpse and evoked her Violet Mink. The mink voraciously devoured the Fire Fox’s spirit energy, as Lin Mu Yu posed himself to look like he was standing guard.

His actual intention was to call out Lulu and summon the Refining Cauldron to help Chu Yao absorb spirit energy. With Chu Yao’s current capacity, she would not be able to completely take in this Fire Fox’s spirit energy. However, the Refining Cauldron was like a giant container that first smelt the beast energy, then filtered out the purest essence for her to absorb. Furthermore, it shielded Chu Yao from the beast spirit’s backlash.

Chu Yao’s body trembled slightly as she refined, because this Fire Fox was a great challenge for her current ability. However, she could feel a wave of powerful energy helping her through the ordeal. Although she could not see its origins, she had a good guess of who it was.

Lin Mu Yu closed his eyes and controlled his strength as he searched the Fire Fox’s beast spirit. Suddenly, a wave of scorching heat raged frantically within. Exactly what he was looking for! Using the strength of his mind, he grabbed hold of this ball of energy that was the Fire Fox’s essence. Dream on if you think you can leave this Refining Cauldron, silly fox!

Lin Mu Yu's Refining Cauldron snugly held onto the Fire Fox essence as if it was a giant invisible hand, and gradually supplied Chu Yao with this precious essence for her to slowly absorb.

After nearly two hours of cultivation, the ordeal was finally completed.

The moment that Chu Yao opened her eyes, she was ecstatic, "Ah Yu, I successfully refined the Fire Fox spirit! Oh my, Violet has actually learned a new skill. Flame Charge!"

Lin Mu Yu chuckled inwardly. Didn't Tang Xiao Xi's Firefox also know this skill?

"Congratulations Chu Yao. What is your actual power level now?"

Chu Yao opened her palm and allowed her energy to freely flow out, "I'm at least a level 27 Battle Spirit now, so perhaps it won't be long before I step into Earth realm!"

"Great!"

Lin Mu Yu smiled happily, "You still have to practice your needle throwing technique to the point that you can accurately shoot dead a target within 50 meters. This way, our cooperation will be even more successful. Let's move, we can't stay here for too long."

“Alright!”

……

As for Lin Mu Yu himself, he didn’t know what level of Battle Elder he was, due to the lack of a measuring crystal. But with the amount of spirit beasts he had killed and absorbed in the last few days, his strength had increased a lot. He should have at least reached level 36 at this point, right? Moreover, surviving multiple encounters by a thread was greatly beneficial to his martial growth.

As such, the two continued hiking through the mountain, without any idea of the danger that was closing in on them.

……

An hour later, deep within Seven Star Forest,

In the overgrown woodlands, a 40-years-old warrior walked over with his longsword in hand. He had a face covered with a scruffy beard, but his eyes were radiating with energy. Looking at the ash pile in the distance, he quickly dashed over and saw the Fire Fox’s corpse on the ground. Bending down to sniff for a scent, a crude smile appeared on the man’s face, “Heh, it’s been dead for no more than 3 hours. This wound looks like a sword wound too. I, Guan Yang, have finally found you, Lin Mu Yu!”

As he spoke, he dashed towards the distance as his sword

whistled in the air.

……

The Whispering Rain was a building located between Green Mountain and Lake Water, and was the most classy establishment in the whole Capital. However, it was not a place that normal people could enter. Those with the qualifications were either rich or of noble lineage.

On the pavilion, there stood a beautiful young girl dressed in a flaming red gown. She was staring at a pool of clear spring water, when she suddenly swished her red sleeves into motion and asked with knit brows, “Still no information on Lin Mu Yu?”

A lightly-armored man knelt down on one knee and bowed, “Nothing for the time being. Princess Xi, rumor has it that the Seven Martial Saints of the mercenaries have left to hunt down that kid called Lin Mu Yu.”

Tang Xiao Xi bit on her red lips. “How many horsemen did Gramps send to protect me?”

“800 men, Princess.”

“Send them all out and find Lin Mu Yu even if they have to look through the whole Seven Star Forest!”

“But… Then there is no one else left to protect you, Princess…”

Tang Xiao Xi struck her fist down abruptly and smashed a piece of the railing into bits. Her charming face was full of anger, “Send them all. Do I have to repeat myself? Do I have to ask her Highness Yin for an order before you will go?”

“No, Princess. I will go immediately!”

……

Tang Xiao Xi stood alone in the hallway and looked to the far south. Suddenly she shook as she mumbled, “Old Qu, it would be great if you were here right now. Do you know that your proudest disciple is in the clutches of great enemies right now?”

Chapter 35 : A Weakling's Counterattack

A bold green pine stood proudly in the loose mountainous soil between plates of giant rocks. The seemingly endless mountain range rested like a coiling dragon within the Seven Star Forest. Because of the recent heavy downpour, small buds of violet tree fungus grew out of dry tree trunks and emitted an unusual aroma through the air.

Under the rock cliff, two mercenaries in tattered armor spared no effort as they paced excitedly with their weapons in hand. Wang Bao and Lu Shun were mercenaries who worked in the Silver Fir area. They often accepted assassination missions from the tavern, but would also rob and kill on duller days. These guys were characteristic of typical mercenaries: a bunch of crazies unbound by the Empire's laws.

Ever since the establishment of the Empire by the First Emperor, he allowed anyone to become wandering mercenaries giving up their martial attire and donning grey robes. In order to preserve the Empire's militaristic mentality, these wandering mercenaries were not bound by the Empire's regulations. The mercenaries would not be punished by the Empire for their misdeeds, but the Empire allowed others to kill or place bounties on mercenaries as they wish. As such, the Empire became this world that followed the laws of the jungle: a world where the strong preys upon the weak. But because of this, citizens of the Empire all became revering of military skills, thus allowing the Temple to always have any battle-ready warriors ready to join their ranks.

To the north of the Empire was the vast Northern Desert inhabited by uncivilized herdsmen. To the south was the

Wilderness Thicket inhabited by the Barbarian race. They were both opponents that one should not trifle with, so it stood to prove that the only reason these tribes would bow before the Empire was because of the militaristic fascination of the Empire. A strong army was something those nomadic tribes could never deal with.

……

Wang Bao squeezed his long dao under his armpits as he fished out a piece of paper from his breast pocket. Looking at the bounty, he said with a frown, “Did we lose track of them? How could it be that it’s been three days but we’ve still not been able to find that Lin Mu Yu kid?”

Lun Shun shook his head, “There’s no way we lost him. My Firewood Hound’s sense of smell is peerless so we will definitely catch up soon.”

Wang Bao couldn’t help but sneer, “Your stupid Firewood Hound is just a 10th rank stray and you dare to call yourself peerless? You ain’t afraid of being made a laughingstock? Let’s go. If we can really find Lin Mu Yu and cut him down with one chop, then the two of us will never have to worry about anything for the rest of our lives. One hundred gold Yin! It’s enough to buy us a huge mansion in the Capital and even buy something like 20 mistresses. We’ll be able to drink until we drop!”

Lun Shuan laughed grimly, but did not say anything in return.

Right at this moment, heavy footsteps were heard from behind

them. A man with a long dao caught up with them and shouted, “Hey! The two of you, stand where you are!”

Wang Bao and Lun Shuan immediately stopped moving and looked warily at the newcomer. They’ve already lost in terms of pressure when they saw that the other person was holding a long dao that must have weighed at least a hundred catty (about 50kg). This man’s strength was complete above the level of the two mercenaries.

“Have you guys seen this kid?” The newcomer took out an exact copy of the bounty that the two had in their pocket.

Wang Bao squinted his eyes and smiled, “I haven’t see him. This… this older brother’s blade is quite big. Could you be the legendary Guan Yang of the Seven Martial Saints?”

Guan Yan laughed, “You guys recognized me huh? You two are both here to hunt Lin Mu Yu aren’t you?”

“Yeah!” Wang Bao laughed out loud, “It won’t be too long now. Lin Mu Yu is just ahead. He might be able to use a crappy sword to kill Hua Wan and Hua Tian, so you can imagine how great his strength is. Since we’re all here to kill him, why don’t we… work together? How about it?”

Guan Yang nodded, “That sounds good too. One more person is one more teammate.”

Wang Bao's face lit up with a smile, but did not noticed the hint of murderous intent that flashed through the corner of Guan Yang's mouth.

"Then I'll be in your care. Perhaps you two could lead the way."

"Ah, alright!"

When Wang Bao turned around, a burning heat passed through his back and he felt an excruciating pain in his chest. Looking down, he saw a stream of flames slowly prying through his armor, then a part of the sharp blade pierced through his heart. Wang Bao did not even have a chance to cry out in pain before he fell down in a limp.

"Bastard, you dare to back stab us!?"

Lun Shuan growled in anger. His sword dashed like a snake towards Guan Yang's underarms.

"Looking to die aren't you!"

Guan Yang's speed was more than fast. Swinging the long blade along with Wang Bao's impaled corpse, he shook off Lun Shuan's sword with a loud clash. His abrupt kick made Lun Shuan take several steps back. Following up with the attack, Guan Yang dragged his sword behind him while throwing out a flame-covered punch onto Lun Shuan's chest!

Puurrgh!

Blood splattered on the floor as the blaze-coated fist punched through Lun Shuan and instantly burnt his internal organs charcoal black.

Pulling his forearm out, Guan Yang did not even spare another look at Lun Shuan's falling corpse and muttered, "You think I would have to split the bounty with you bunch of trash for a mere Lin Mu Yu?"

Carrying his long blade, he quickly left the scene.

……

"Finally found it!"

Lin Mu Yu gleefully climbed onto a thousand-year snag.

"Ah Yu, what did you find?" Chu Yao asked with a puzzled look as she stood under the tree.

Lin Mu Yu pulled out his sword and carefully dug out the reddish purple tree fungi on the tree. Following that, those fungi pieces fell one by one to the ground. He quickly alerted, "Chu Yao, don't use your hand to touch those things!"

"This is?"

Chu Yao tilted her head to look at these strange looking fungi and had a sudden realization, “Good heavens, is this a kind of medicinal ingredient? I’ve seen it in the Medicine God Index before. I think it was… a poison. Dragon Tongue, isn’t it?”

Lin Mu Yu leapt off the tree and smiled, “That’s right. This is Dragon Tongue. It’s an extremely poisonous medicinal herb.”

“What are you using these Dragon Tongue fungi for?”

“Brewing poison.”

“Brewing poison?” Chu Yao gasped and spoke in a scolding tone, “Ah Yu, Grandpa had taught us that we are medicinemen. We must practice medicine for the good of the world, so how could you use your skills for making poisons?”

Lin Mu Yu faintly smiled as he placed his hand on Chu Yao’s shoulder, “Older sister, I don’t know how many people are after our heads right now. If we don’t arm ourselves with some poisons, I’m afraid we won’t even have a chance to do good with our medicine knowledge.”

“Then what kind of poison are you going to make?”

“Intoxicating Breeze. Level 7 potion. Scattering with the wind, it can cause delirium and slow down the subject’s movement speed. It is colorless and odorless, so normally no one would be able to

discover it. However, I still need to find a dose of Heartbreak Orchid before I can complete the Intoxicating Breeze recipe."

Chu Yao recalled with difficulty, "The Medicine Index had a record of Heartbreak Orchid. This kind of orchid seemingly only bloom at night. Its aroma is very strange, almost a little foul."

"It's about to be night soon." Lin Mu Yu looked up at the sky and said. "Dragon Tongue and Heartbreak Orchid are both poisonous things. If there are Dragon Tongues here, then there must also be some Heartbreak Orchid around here. We should be able to find some soon.

"Aye."

As he spoke, Lin Mu Yu wrapped the Dragon Tongue fungi in leaves and stored them in his pouch.

Just as he finished this process, he suddenly noticed a wave of strong murderous intent behind him.

"Careful!"

Quickly pushing Chu Yao aside, Lin Mu Yu didn't even waste time to think before turning around and calling out his martial spirit. The Ebony Scale appeared on the gourd and the gourd wall transformed into a defensive barrier with the defensive capability of an iron wall!

Bang!

Sparks flew as a heavy blade struck forcefully onto the Ebony Scale and split open several cracks on the shell. One could tell with just this hit that the attacker was much stronger than Hua Tian!

After the flames dissipated, the blade-wielding Guan Yang coldly stood before Lin Mu Yu. He had a faint smile on his face as he said, “As expected of the one who killed Hua Tian. You have some real skill, but with just this much capability, you probably couldn’t kill Hua Tian right? Heh, looks like you must have gotten lucky.”

“Who are you?”

Lin Mu Yu pulled out his steel sword and calmly asked.

“I am Guan Yang, one of the Seven. I’ve come to get both you and that little girl’s heads!” Guan Yang took out a sheet of paper. Looking down at the portrait on the bounty, then looking up at Lin Mu Yu, Guan Yan laughed after comparing a few more times, “Looks like it’s you. Take this time to say anything you might want to say before you die, or else you won’t have another chance later.”

“That’s what I wanted to say to you.”

Lin Mu Yu proudly stood on his ground as rows of lightning appeared on his steel sword.

“Brazen!”

Guan Yang had seen through the facade. He knew that Lin Mu Yu's power was only at that of a level 38 Battle Elder, whereas he was a genuine level 48 Battle Saint. He was able to completely suppress his opponent's power and immediately summoned his martial spirit. A wolf-like spirit appeared on Guan Yang's blade, making it look extra sinister.

"Die, you punk!"

Guan Yang roared in anger, then manipulated his energy before him and stabbed with his blade.

Lin Mu Yu had been practicing Wind Sword Style for several days, so he was already somewhat familiar with this kind of impromptu combat. Utilizing the art of Wind Sword, he retreated like a flash of lightning and warded off the enemy's blade attack. However, Guan Yang continued his relentless assault and attacked with countless raging flames after his wolf spirit growled fiercely.

Thump!

Lin Mu Yu had completely entered a defensive position. After being shaken back several steps, his arms were numb from Guan Yang's overwhelming strength. He silently gathered his energy as three vines erupted from the ground.

Guan Yang laughed heartily as he stomped the ground with his long boots. Flames spread out from the impact and burnt off all of the vines. He sneered, "You can only do this much? I guess we really have to say good bye now."

Lin Mu Yu softly huffed as gourd vines appeared from every direction.

“Wolf Strength!”

Guan Yang similarly growled and spewed flames all around as his beast spirit roared angrily. The strength of a level 48 Battle Saint was truly exceptional. The dark night sky was lit brightly by the raging flames while Lin Mu Yu’s gourd vines had mostly been turned into ashes. Only a few strands were still slithering like poisonous snakes.

Bang!

In the energy ripple, Lin Mu Yu had activated Starfall Steps and dashed towards Guan Yang. Swinging his sword out before him, he used Lightning Chop!

“Dream on!”

Guan Yang lifted his palm and forcibly smacked aside the Lightning Chop. However, that was not Lin Mu Yu’s only skill. By slightly shifting his sword, Lin Mu Yu made it so that Guan Yang’s blade lost its aim. At the same time, he used Flash Step. When he appeared behind Guan Yang, there was already a longsword striking down onto the Martial Saint’s back!

Embers danced wildly in the subsequent crash. The steel sword

was not able to pierce Guan Yang's energy barrier. The man was much too strong compared to Lin Mu Yu.

"Chu Yao, Yang Gate Point!"

Right as he took an attack to his back, Lin Mu Yu created a perfect opportunity as Guan Yang had let his guard down. Yang Gate point was the acupuncture weak point on the back, so this was the exact once-in-a-blue-moon opportunity that Lin Mu Yu was looking for.

Shhhhu!

A silver needle quickly buried itself into the Yang Gate point. Guan Yang shook in surprise. At the next moment, a green vine burst out of the ground and coiled around him. The thorns on the vine used the Yang Gate point as the breakthrough point and began to embed itself into Guan Yang's skin.

"You bastard!"

Guan Yang fell into a frenzy.

Chapter 36 : Noxious Cockscomb

For Guan Yang, one of the Seven Martial Saints, to suffer such a disgrace at the hands of two brats... This had to be the greatest humiliation of his entire life.

Guan Yang's blade trembled as it slashed down in a raging blaze at Lin Mu Yu.

However, Lin Mu Yu simply avoided taking the attack head-on. With an backstep, he hopped out of its attack range.

"See ya!"

Lin Mu Yu grabbed Chu Yao by the waist and slipped away using Starfall Steps.

"Don't even think of getting away, you shameless brat!"

Guan Yang was furious. Rousing his energy, he dashed after them with his long blade in hand. Little did he know that energy had begun to steadily leak from the wound on his back.

...

After running for nearly twenty li, Lin Mu Yu finally stopped. Putting Chu Yao down, he turned back to look at the panting Guan Yang. Unhurriedly, he unsheathed his steel sword.

“Had enough running?” Guan Yang sneered as he raised his cutlass. “Since you’re done running, then it’s time for you to die!”

Lin Mu Yu’s face lit up with an jubilant smile

Trampling wild grass underfoot, Lin Mu Yu leapt up with his lightning-charged sword. Electricity sparked through the air. This was his strongest attack skill, the secret art he had received from Qu Chu : Lightning Chop!

Clang!

Lightning surged forth from the sword and passed through the handle of the blade. Guan Yang’s arms were shocked numb while his blade flew out of his hand. He was speechless at the situation’s complete reversal. Somehow, this youngster’s energy levels were greatly above his own.

“How is this be possible?!” he fumed.

Lin Mu Yu sneered. His left hand swiped through the air. Accompanied by a sharp whistling sound, the Sonic Blade flew straight at Guan Yang.

Guan Yang frantically rushed for his his cutlass. Picking it up, he turned to parry the incoming blade.

Sparks flew as the cutlass clashed with the whirling blade and knocked it off course.

Lin Mu Yu speedily lifted his left fist, and subsequently two Sonic Punches blasted through the air. The first forced Guan Yang to raise his energy to protect his body. Had he failed to do so, this attack would have pulverized his insides. In contrast, the second sonic knuckle landed precisely on the Sonic Blade!

Chaa!

The Sonic Blade swept past like the God of Death to claim what it was owed, and sliced open Guan Yang's neck in the process. Blood squirted out of his cut artery like a blood fountain. Though he tried desperately to cover the wound with his hand in hopes to staunch the flow, it was naturally pointless. Just before his consciousness faded, he heard Lin Mu Yu state with indifferent, "This was how Hua Tian died as well."

Rage filled Guan Yang's face. Collapsing to his knees, he fell limply to the floor. Yet another powerful soul died under the cold steel of the Sonic Blade.

...

Catching the returning blade, Lin Mu Yu broke it down into four flying knives before storing back in his pouch. Walking up to the corpse, he rummaged through Guan Yang's personal bag. There he found a dozen or so gold Yin coins and two gold Yin notes worth 100 gold Yin and 150 gold Yin respectively. He would never have

guessed that one of the Seven Martial Saints was this poor. Nevertheless, wasting nothing, Lin Mu Yu stuffed it all into his bag.

Chu Yao looked at Guan Yang's corpse. "To risk one's life for the pursuit of money... Is that truly worth it?"

A faint smile appeared on Lin Mu Yu's face. "That's only because we won. Otherwise, he would have turned in our heads for the one hundred thousand golden Yin bounty. In that case, he would have been the real winner."

"Mm. Let's not waste any more time here!"

"Right."

Before they had walked too far, Lin Mu Yu suddenly came to a stop. Sniffing the air repeatedly, he laughed, "Chu Yao, I think I've found what I've been looking for!"

"Heartbreak Orchid!" she cried happily.

Tracing the scent to the foot of an ancient, thousand-year old tree, they found an orchid. Heartbreak Orchid, similar to Dragon Tongue fungi, was incredibly poisonous. When synthesized into the poison known as Intoxicating Breeze, the result was actually not a noxious poison. Instead, Intoxicating Breeze was a sedative that numbed the senses, slowed movement, and was overall far less lethal.

Lin Mu Yu didn't rush to brewing the concoction, instead choosing to continue searching the forest with Chu Yao.

Later that night, they found another medicinal ingredient: Focus Flower, a 6th-rank ingredient. These past few days, Chu Yao had thoroughly memorized the contents of the Medicine God's Index. The Focus Flower was used to create a rare solid-form drug called Focus Powder. In an instant, Chu Yao understood Lin Mu Yu's intention: Using the Focus Powder, one was capable of nullifying the effects of Intoxicating Breeze. As such, it was necessary to first take Focus Powder before attempting to produce Intoxicating Breeze, lest they be poisoned in the process.

...

The two found a mountain cave and proceeded to cushion the ground with dry grass. Lin Mu Yu secretly rejoiced that it was still only autumn, for if it was winter, he wouldn't know how he and Chu Yao would survive in this desolate locale.

Having hunted a wild boar during the day, they set down a slab of its plump meat into a pot to cook. Of late, the two had come to a mutual understanding: Chu Yao would take care of the cooking while Lin Mu Yu was responsible for keeping guard and potion-making.

Slowly, Lin Mu Yu extracted the medicine cores from a pile of Focus Flowers, which in turn were mixed with spring water. The creation of Focus Powder was extraordinarily simple: one just had

to ferment Focus Flower cores in spring water. However, the required level of purity from Focus Flower core was extremely high, a level that normal alchemists would not be able to produce. In comparison, Lin Mu Yu had the Essence Purification Technique, and had long since attained completely mastery over refining medicine cores. As a result, crafting Focus Powder was a simple task in his eyes.

Having filled two bottles with Focus Powder, Lin Mu Yu and Chu Yao each drank one, then began to concoct the poison.

With extreme caution, he extracted cores from both plants. Placing the two different medicine cores in a small bottle, he carefully ground them into a fine powder. Since Intoxicating Breeze was both colorless and odorless as well as the fact that the two of them had already ingested the Focus Powder, he didn't feel much of a difference. After refining several bottles' worth, he handed them to Chu Yao with a warning, "If we run into a strong enemy, sprinkle this onto the ground. The antidote effects of Focus Powder will be effective for 48 hours, so the two of us will be fine since we had a bottle each."

Chu Yao followed his directions. Without her realizing it, this junior of hers had become her pillar of strength. She knew that this little junior was definitely hiding some secrets, but she was not about to ask if he wasn't going to tell her.

...

The night passed quickly. The next morning, Lin Mu Yu awoke early to find that his power had mostly recovered. He had reached

level 39's strength. With a little luck, he'd be able to step into the realm of a level 40 Battle Master! All it would take was an encounter with an appropriately strong spirit beast. By killing it and absorbing its spirit, he would be able to break through!

If there was one thing that the Seven Star Forest did not lack, that was undoubtedly spirit beasts!

Right now, there was something he needed to verify: whether or not Intoxicating Breeze would work on spirit beasts. In <Conquest>, Intoxicating Breeze was a top-tier poison, and was incredibly effective against other players. It was capable of weakening its target considerably, allowing a weaker player to overcome a stronger one. Would it work on spirit beasts, though? Heaven knows! There was only one way to find out: trying it first hand.

Guan Yang was bad enough alone, but what kind of person would be next? Perhaps they'd be even stronger. Lin Mu Yu was certain of one thing: he needed to get stronger or he still wouldn't be able to take Chu Yao out of this forest.

Sphhhlt!

Stepping out of the cave, an arrow suddenly sped towards his head.

Lin Mu Yu dodged backward with the Butterfly Step, and the arrow pierced into a boulder. The force behind this shot was frightening. He quickly pulled out his steel sword and, his voice

low, said, “Wait here, Chu Yao!”

In the next instant, he dashed out like a fully-strung arrow. Hidden within the forest growth was a hunter, who was most likely another mercenary.

“Show yourself!”

As he raised a palm, green vines rose. Unable to hide any longer, the mercenary discarded his bow and pulled out his sword and began to swing wildly at the surrounding vines. However, there were too many and the count increased with each passing moment. The vines’ thorns pierced his body as his defense gave way.

“Aah aah aah…”

As tragic cry sounded in the air, this wandering mercenary, a 32nd level Battle Adept, pleaded for his life, “Young warrior Lin, please spare my life! I won’t attack you again! Have mercy! I was just in it for the money, I meant no ill!”

“To kill for a monetary reward is not an ill meaning?”

Lin Mu Yu raised his sword. With an calm expression on his face, he pointed at Chu Yao who was behind him. “If you had successfully killed me with your ambush, would you not have cut off her lovely head?”

“I… I might have…”

“That’s all the answer I need.”

A faint smile appeared on Lin Mu Yu’s face. Stabbed his sword forward, the cold steel pierced straight through the mercenary’s heart.

He didn’t dare to be merciful. If he had let this man go, then he might have returned with many more mercenaries at his side. Anyway, it’s not like these wandering mercenary types were good people. More importantly still, he had to eliminate all who hunted them in order to instill fear in those who were still chasing them. Accordingly, if the worst came to the worst, he’d kill. He couldn’t afford to be too soft-hearted.

…

Holding his bloody blade aloft, Lin Mu Yu turned and walked to Chu Yao’s side. With a weak laugh, he said, “Chu Yao, do you think I’m cruel?”

Chu Yao looked at his trembling hand, and could not help but feel her heart twist. Her eyes red, she replied, “Never. Ah Yu, I know that you when you kill, it’s on my behalf.”

He didn’t reply. How could he possibly want to kill? With every person that he’s killed, his fear grew that much stronger. With every death, his guilty conscience grew that much greater. Every night, in his dreams, he saw people who came to demand his life. From the first moment they’d set foot in this Seven Star Forest, he

had not had a good night's rest. Rest was but a extravagant wish. At this moment, thinking back to Qu Chu's inability to sleep at night, he seemed to have understood something. Perhaps it was truth that behind every person's back was an unspeakable secret that hangs on their conscience.

...

They continued northward. After some dozens of li, he suddenly noticed that the scene around them looked as though it had been transformed. A field of decadent vegetation lay before them. Breathing deeply, he warned, "Be careful. There's something extraordinarily poisonous around here."

"What could it be?" Chu Yao asked, frightened.

Lin Mu Yu laughed and comforted her. "There's no need to be so worried. We've already taken the Focus Powder so we should be relatively impervious to poisons for now. Relax."

"Okay."

Continuing ahead, the plants in their immediate surroundings had all withered in corruption. They were closing in on the poisonous plant.

"Careful, we're here."

He pointed far ahead at a dark red plant and asked with a laugh,

“Can you guess what that is?”

Chu Yao’s mouth opened wide, “I, I don’t know…”

“Noxious Cockscomb, a plant-type spirit beast, and one that’s lived for at least 2000 years!”

Chapter 37 : Venomous Spray

“A Noxious Cockscomb…”

Since she had never seen a spirit of this species before, Chu Yao cautiously observed the strange flower from a distance.

On the other hand, Lin Mu Yu knew a little bit about this type of plant. Back in <Conquest>, he had once raided this golden tier boss with his party. There wasn’t much to Cockscomb, but its nasty ability of acid spitting was something that he would have to watch out for. The special traits of beast-spirits of this world seemed to parallel that of their <Conquest> counterparts, so perhaps this knowledge could be of use.

“Stay back for now, Chu Yao. I’ll go.”

Very carefully, Lin Mu Yu strode forward with his sword in hand. A 2000-year old spirit beast boasted a strength on par with a level 50 Battle Saint, so it would be best to avoid getting splashed by its venom.

“Ah Yu, be careful!”

Chu Yao pursed her lips. She watched him warily, but knew that she couldn’t be of any help. After all, his speed far surpassed her own, and the evasion ability of the Starfall Steps was something that even many other strong fighters could not compete with.

…

“Hissss…”

Although the Cockscomb was a plant, its maneuverability was nothing to look down on. It’s one-meter wide, flower-disc shaped “head” slowly rose up. Having already sensed the encroaching danger, it hissed like a venomous serpent. At the same time, the surrounding grass rustled as though something were squirming its way underground.

Naturally, those must be vines.

Lin Mu Yu was more than clear on this. He knew that the Cockscomb would hide their vines underground, and could break through the surface at any moment and entangle or pierce its victim. However, its flower disc would “shudder” in advance, perhaps because the strength powering its vines originated in the main body?

He fixed his gaze on the flower disc to watch for signs of movement as he walked steadily toward it. Several moments later, the Cockscomb shook and a noise came from below ground! Now!

Instantly activating the Starfall Steps, he dodged to the side as a vine covered with poisonous thorns emerged from below. He didn’t pause and continued moving at great speeds. Stretching out a hand, he pulled out the Sonic Blade from his back and hurled it. With a piercing whistle the Sonic Blade flew toward the Cockscomb’s flower disc, which was its command center, and thus

also its weak point.

Bang Bang Bang

Having lived for two thousand years, the Cockscomb naturally knew to protect itself. A row of vines emerged from the ground to form a green bulwark, but the Sonic Blade pierced through, straight toward the Cockscomb's flower disc, greenish fluid spraying through the air as it went.

"Skreeee!"

Surprisingly, the Cockscomb howled like a small beast. Its flower disc suddenly opened wide and flame-red venom spurted forth, bombarding the Sonic Blade at lightning speed.

Sssssss...

Green smoke rose from the Sonic Blade, as though it were being corroded.

Watching, Lin Mu Yu felt pained. This was a treasure given him by Qu Chu, the famed weapon of the distinguished General Feng Yi Cheng!

He unleashed a Sonic Punch which was blocked by countless vines. There was no helping it. Swinging around to the other side, he unleashed another Sonic Punch, this one landing on the Sonic Blade, sending it flying back to the right side. Holding his longsword aloft, he swiftly charged forward. Launching the "Cleave" technique of the Wind Sword style, his blade danced as it

broke through the vine barrier!

Kakaka...

Piece after piece, the vines flew into the air. As Lin Mu Yu broke through the third consecutive vine barrier, his steel sword had already begun to shine. Charged with lightning, it screeched as the sword tore through the air towards the flower disc. Lightning Chop!

Without giving him a chance to close the distance, the Cockscomb once more opened its ferocious mouth agape. Its flame-red venom spat forth with such incredible speed that it looked as if it was a sharp arrow!

Luckily, Lin Mu Yu was prepared for this. His left arm horizontal, his martial spirit emerged from his body, the Ebony Scale forming a wall before it!

Shuuusaaa...

The venom splashed against the wall created by his Gourd, instantly wounding the martial spirit. This liquid was far more than simple venom : it seemed to also possess a corrosive ability, so the Ebony Scale was melted in a flash. His martial spirit's body wounded, Lin Mu Yu's heart was thrown into disarray. Thankfully, at this moment, he heard something: the Sonic Blade was drawing close!

“Chu Yao, have your Violet Mink burn the vines with its fire breath!”

Immediately following his shout, a patch of flames came roaring in from outside. Chu Yao, from far off, had spread her arms and called forth her Violet Mink. The tiny beast had howled madly, spouting fire : this was also one of the Fire Fox’s handy techniques. Burned in this manner, the Cockscomb was unable to withstand the flames and shrieked in pain as its vines convulsed wildly.

An opening!

The Sonic Blade whistled over from behind, severing a part of its stalk. Lin Mu Yu seized this heaven-bestowed opportunity. With a burst of acceleration, he unleashed a Lightning Chop on the wounded part of its stalk. The cockscomb’s stalk’s toughness was every bit the equal of the Iron Pear Blossom, and thus one blow was unable to cut through. After three successive Lightning Chops, at last it was cut straight through the middle!

A storm of venomous fluid splashed outward. Lin Mu Yu hastily raised his arm and called forth his Green Gourd for protection. Hiding his entire frame behind the Gourd’s protective wall, he didn’t count himself safe until the venomous spray finally ceased. The Noxious Cockscomb had already collapsed to the ground in a heap of vegetation. It finally died as its beast-spirit floated out above it.

Chu Yao crept cautiously over. Seeing that Lin Mu Yu’s martial spirit was covered in venom, she couldn’t help but cry out, “Ah Yu, are you okay?”

“I’m fine.”

Lin Mu Yu frowned before breaking out into laughter, “Thank goodness we took that Focusing Powder beforehand, or else with all this venom around, we’d be vomiting non-stop!”

“Yeah. Anyway, hurry up and refine its spirit!”

“Got it!”

Not bothering to sit, he called forth his martial spirit as he stood. His Green Gourd began to frenziedly drink in the spirit of the Cockscomb, which was also a plant-type. At the same time, he summoned the Refining Cauldron. In the blink of an eye, radiant golden light filled their surroundings, enveloping even Chu Yao within its scope. She blinked and stared at the Refining Cauldron, dumbstruck.

“W…What is this?”

“It’s a vessel,” he answered briefly. Witnessing her blank look, he couldn’t help but laugh. “This is a vessel unique to me. It allows me to better refine a beast spirit to the extent that you could say it gives me a 100% chance to absorb the spirit’s special ability.”

“Eh?” Chu Yao’s jaw dropped. “S-so that’s why… No wonder every time your martial spirit has a breakthrough it gets an ability! Actually, the fact that I was able to get the Fire Fox’s ability is also

because of your help, right?”

“Yep, that’s correct.” He didn’t bother hiding it. By this point, he and Chu Yao were life-and-death partners, and so there was no need for him to hide anything from her. That said, he, of course, did not explain that he had come here from a game world. He had no way to explain it, and even if he did, no way to explain it in a way that she’d understand. After all, he didn’t know how it had happened himself.

The refining process continued for nearly an hour by which point Lin Mu Yu had nearly refined the most violent part of this crazed beast’s essence : its venomous ability. As it slowly broke down, his Green Gourd suddenly began to change color. No longer was it a Green Gourd, but rather a carmine-colored Red Gourd.

Looking within his mental field, he noticed that the Red Gourd now contained an irritable venomous power : the root of its ability.

“Congratulations, big bro! Your Green Gourd has broken through to the fourth level and obtained the Cockscomb’s ability : Venomous Spray!”

Without his realizing it, the system fairy Lulu had appeared, though only Lin Mu Yu could see her. Laughing happily, she snuggled up against his shoulder and said, “Big bro, you’re getting stronger and stronger! I’m really happy for you, but having to camp out in the forest for so long is really too harsh on you. Those bad guys, chasing you down just for money… How despicable!”

Lin Mu Yu laughed, but didn't comment. Lulu played for a while before once again returning back to his consciousness to rest. It was hard for her to manifest in this world, since it would consume a big chunk of energy every time.

...

Standing up, he struck out with his fist and his energy shot out as streams of raging flames. Unhurriedly, he drew in a deep breath. Never before had he felt this at ease. It was as though his bones, flesh, and circulatory system had been tempered.

By his side, Chu Yao smiled and said, "Congratulations, Ah Yu: you've reached the Earth Realm Second Stage. You're now a level 40 Battle Master!"

"Level 40, huh..."

A faint smile touched his lips. Thinking back, he'd once seen level 42 Hawkeye as an absolute existence, and yet now, before he'd realized it, he was level 40 himself. Moreover, his martial spirit's power was far more pure. Adding in the Sonic Blade, Sonic Punch, and other unique skills, perhaps even two Hawkeyes at once would not be his match.

"Chu Yao, let's go. There's nothing left for us here."

Lin Mu Yu lifted his sword and picked up his Sonic Blade. As he held it up, he noticed that it was still covered with venom. As such,

he washed it in a nearby stream until it was completely clean. It shined brightly as if it hadn't been harmed in the least by the venom! What a treasure indeed! No wonder it is called the famed weapon of Feng Yi Cheng.

Returning the Sonic Blade to his pouch, he and Chu Yao continued forward.

Not long after, a hawk suddenly called out from above them. Looking up, a goshawk was circling far above. Instantly, Lin Mu Yu's heart sank and he couldn't help but frown, though he said not a word.

Seeing this, Chu Yao smiled. "That goshawk is probably looking for food, right? It's pretty common in the forest!"

"It's just that..."

Nodding, Lin Mu Yu continued, "This isn't the first time we've seen that goshawk."

"Ah Yu, you mean...?"

"That's right. Someone else has his eyes on us. We need to move!"

"Okay."

Looking up once again at the goshawk, he gritted his teeth. You damn bird. Better thank the heavens I don't have a bow on me, or else... Actually, never mind. My archery's nothing special; there's no way I'd be able to hit something that high up. Forget it. We'll cross that bridge when we come to it. If someone really does come after us, then it'll be a fight to the death!

Chapter 38 : This World Is Filled With Secret Plots

With a sharp hawk-cry, a black goshawk dove from the sky and descended upon an aged oak. Waiting below was a man riding on his red-maned horse. A golden engraved-bow hung limp on the horse and a slight shimmer could be seen coming from the inlaid gemstone. The rider lifted his arm to serve as a rest for the goshawk. After listening to the goshawk's short cries, a faint smile appeared on the man's face. "Looks like we're not too far away. This Lin Mu Yu sure is something. To think he was able to kill Broadsword Guan Yang... Perhaps I, Ye Liang, did not come here for nothing!"

As he spoke, Ye Liang struck his whip and immediately set off to the neigh of his horse.

The fact that this fine steed was able to pace between shrubbery and rocky cliffs as if it was flat ground was a testament to its magnificent lineage.

.....

In the blink of an eye, night had fallen upon the forest. Lin Mu Yu had been the most wary of this period of time for the last few days. He had to find a suitable location for setting up camp. It had to provide adequate cover for the campfire, as to not attract attention with the light. As such, he had to find places like swamps or caves. However, most caves are usually occupied with their "owners". A beast's nocturnal vision had always been far better than that of humans. Lin Mu Yu knew the extent of his ability and

his limitations, so unless there was no other option, he would never be willing to challenge spirit beasts in the night.

"Let's stop here. We won't be able to go much further."

He looked towards the distance, where howls were frequently sounded. He didn't dare to attract a pack of wolves. Most of the Swift Wolves in Seven Star Forest were less than 1000 years of age, so Lin Mu Yu would have no problem taking them on one at a time. But if a pack were to come, then he and Chu Yao could very well become a swell meal for the wolves.

Tonight's dwelling was a small cave of about 3 meters deep. In actuality, it was no more than a little sunken depression in the cliff, so it could not even be considered a cave.

Chu Yao scavenged around for a bit of firewood, while Lin Mu Yu used the water in his waterskin to clean the venison they had carved off a buck. The buck did not produce a beast spirit as it was no more than 5 years of age, so it was used outright as a meat supply. Luckily, the venison was very tender, so at least this meal would be quite nourishing.

Everytime he kills wild beast, Lin Mu Yu did not dare to harvest too much meat, as it will become a burden on the road. In this hunted state, he and Chu Yao must always reserve enough stamina to react to an attack at any moment.

……

A short while after, a pot of appetizing venison soup was boiling before the two. Chu Yao used her cleaned dagger to stir the meat as a hint of hope danced on her pretty cheeks. It was quite something that she could retain a speck of innocence with how life had been treating her.

“We’ll be eating soon, Ah Yu!”

“Got it. I’m coming.”

Lin Mu Yu walked back with a armful of firewood. They had to prepare some extra firewood for the night, or else spirit beasts will be able to approach to easily.

Right then, Lin Mu Yu heard a familiar bird-cry in the air. He couldn’t help but look up with a frown. It sounded too familiar, as it was shrill and cold. It must be that goshawk from before.

“What’s wrong?” Chu Yao walked out.

“It’s that hawk again. It is tracking us.”

Chu Yao looked up at the starry sky and pouted, “It can’t be right…Don’t tell me that someone is using the hawk’s tracking ability to follow us?”

“Can’t rule out that possibility.”

Lin Mu Yu set aside the firewood and asked, “Chu Yao, do you have any information on traveling mercenaries? In the Seven Martial Saints, is there one that is good at training tracker hawks?”

“I don’t know much about the Seven Martial Saints, but…” Chu Yao pondered for a second and suddenly said, “I know one. Ye Liang the Hawk Tamer, one of the Seven. He has an old tracking hawk, but…it should be quite unlikely. I heard that Ye Liang’s family background is very good. His father is the master of a villa, so he probably won’t haplessly give his life for the 100 thousand gold bounty.”

“That’s not always the case. Everyone is after different goals.”

……

Sitting down, Lin Mu Yu wrinkled the corner of his mouth, “Big sis, let’s eat quickly. We’ll leave this place after we finish.”

“Ah?”

Chu Yao asked blankly, “Do we have to depart at night?”

“Yep. We have to shake off that hawk, or else I would feel as if we are sitting on pins and needles.”

“Alright then…”

Chu Yao poured a bowl of soup with a large serving of meat for Lin Mu Yu. He didn't care too much for the hot soup and quickly gorged it down. After waiting for Chu Yao to finish her soup, the two packed up and left after extinguishing the flame.

However, before they walked too far, the sound of hooves were heard from behind them.

"Not good. He's here!"

Lin Mu Yu quickly thrown off his luggage and pulled out his sword. But right at that second, a whistling sound torn through the air. Lin Mu Yu tried to turn around immediately, but it was too late. With a flesh-ripping sound, an iron arrow pierced through his chest and out his back.

"Ah Yu!"

Chu Yao's cry was especially miserable. She had just watched helplessly as an arrow pierced through Lin Mu Yu's chest, while blood flowed out ceaselessly out from the arrowhead.

"Don't move. Lie down."

Lin Mu Yu endured the sharp pain, but was extraordinarily calm. Pressing onto Chu Yao's shoulder, he pushed her down into the shrubbery.

The sound of hooves approached closer and closer. Two more arrows flew out, but neither landed into the thicket.

Lin Mu Yu had made the correct decision. The attacker was using the target's movement to place the arrows. If he didn't move, then the attacker basically would have no idea where he was.

……

Pa!

The attacker flipped off his horse and unsheathed his sword. The flaming glow of the blade shined onto his face. It was Ye Liang of the Seven Martial Saints.

"Just come out, Lin Mu Yu!" Ye Liang laughed heartily and suddenly swiped at the trees. Flames swelled and glowed from his sword as the shrubbery was lit ablaze. The fire illuminated the whole area, so much so that there was no where to hide.

Lin Mu Yu grabbed hold of the arrow shaft and slowly pulled it out. The pain almost caused him to crumble mentally. Chu Yao teared up at the sight and immediately applied a bottle of healing potion on both front and back wounds. However, Lin Mu Yu had already realized through inner-sight that his lung had been pierced, so even his breathing was becoming increasingly difficult. He had to finish this one quickly.

Clenching Chu Yao's hand, he lowered his voice and said, "Use

Intoxicating Breeze, I'll go distract him for a bit."

"Don't!"

Chu Yao was just about to continue, but Lin Mu Yu had already stood up.

Looking from afar, Ye Liang was a youth of no more than 30 years old. An engraved bow hung on his steed, but the quiver was not out. Lin Mu Yu was a little relieved at the sight. Behind him, Chu Yao had already opened a bottle of Intoxicating Breeze. Immediately, the colorless, odorless poison began to diffuse through the air.

.....

"You're Lin Mu Yu?"

Illuminated by the light of the flames, Ye Liang had a face of arrogance and unabashed cruelness. He laughed, "Looks like you can't even withstand a single blow. With someone like you, how could you have killed Broadsword Guan Yang?"

Lin Mu Yu inwardly fumed. If it was you squirt that attacked me with a cold arrow, then I will kill you as well.

But he didn't have this kind of confidence now. The opponent was a level 51 Battle Saint, so Ye Liang's strength was already much above his own. Furthermore, he had been gravely injured, so his

only winning chance was to wait for Intoxicating Breeze to take effect!

"Who are you? To go as far as to shoot from hiding to injure me, how shameless." He tries to stall for as long as possible.

Ye Liang sneered, "I, Ye Liang, am the third ranked of the Seven Martial Saints. Let me tell you something. I, the young master, had only casually launched the shot. It was just your bad luck. Moreover, even if I didn't sneak attack you, I can still kill you! For someone like you, you can probably only kill a trash like Guan Yang who couldn't even break into Earth realm's 3rd stage."

Ye Liang's sword trembled steadily as a flame snake slowly coiled up the blade. This was his rank 6 martial spirit: Flame Serpent, which could greatly enhance the owner's flame control and power. It was with the might of the Flame Serpent that Ye Liang could place into the Seven Martial Saints at his young age.

Lin Mu Yu could only feel his gasps for breath becoming increasing difficult, and each breath became heavier than the last. With his right hand tightly gripping his steel sword, he looked up at Ye Liang and said, "Even if you kill me today, it will still be a one-sided battle. You will be the laughing stock of practitioners everywhere."

"You're funny."

Ye Liang laughed grimly, "Dead men can't talk."

As he spoke, he couldn't hold back any longer. With a single leap, a flurry of sword swings came flying at Lin Mu Yu. Lin Mu Yu couldn't even see Ye Liang, but could already feel the flaming sword auras running through the air.

Must not attack, this hit must be defended!

Suddenly spreading out his left palm, the Green Gourd materialized and began to condense energy into an Ebony Scale!

Clang! Clang! Clang!

Ye Liang's sword continuously slashed at the Ebony Scale, and was able to cut out three cracks. However, the strong shock-reduction startled him as he was dumbstruck, "What an incredible defense. Do you really only have the strength of a Earth realm first stage?"

Lin Mu Yu did not respond. At the second when the Ebony Scale faded, his steel sword struck with fire and lightning at Ye Liang's abdomen!

Bang!

Taking the heavy strike, Ye Liang was unexpectedly not harmed in the slightest. On the contrary, pieces of energy armor slowly crumbled off his abdomen. That was the special ability of the third stage of Earth realm: Energy Armor : condensing energy into armor to shield the body.

Looking at the flame red energy on Lin Mu Yu's body, Ye Liang couldn't help but laugh, "So you've actually stepped into the second stage of Earth realm. No wonder, hahahaha. Good! Good!"

He took several steps back while his flame snake quickly transformed. The snake became longer and wider, and the true Flame Serpent began to dash at Lin Mu Yu.

Lin Mu Yu had no other choice but to defend. Forcefully calling forth energy, the Ebony Scale formed once again!

Boom!

Under the frenzied attacks, he was forced back several steps as the clothes in his shoulder had been charred. The situation was all the more grim. How could he be a match for Ye Liang under the significant difference in power?

"Accept your death!"

Ye Liang approached once more. Right as he was planning to end Lin Mu Yu with a swing, a vine suddenly bursted out of the ground and wrapped around his feet. It was the Green Gourd's Coiling Roots ability.

"Fuck, what is this?" He bellowed in anger and immediately started to channel flame energy to burn the vines.

But how could Lin Mu Yu give up a chance like this? With a muffled call, energy turned into a poisonous acid and was spat out through the flower on the gourd vine!

……

This world is filled with plots.

Ye Liang taught Lin Mu Yu once, so this is now Lin Mu Yu’s turn to teach him a lesson.

Chapter 39 : Lei Bai Zhan's Feather Mail

Schua!

The poisonous acid fell upon Ye Liang in the form of rain and began to corrode his body. In the blink of an eye, Ye Liang had became a horrific mess of flesh and blood.

Ye Liang was wrong to be so overconfident. He thought that he was certain to take on Lin Mu Yu's counterattack with his sword skill, so he did not allocate any energy into reforming his energy armor. He could have never imagined that Lin Mu Yu's martial spirit would have a skill like Toxic Spray. In the split second after being covered in the acid, his skin began to rapidly deteriorate. His once handsome countenance was now horrifically deformed.

"I'm going to kill you!"

He shouted in anger as his voice turned hoarse. Using sound to orientate himself, flames collected onto his sword. Even though the acid did a number on him, Ye Liang's strength was still that of a Battle Saint. In comparison, Lin Mu Yu's breathing had already become extremely weak. He was quickly approaching his body's limit with the hole in his chest. His feet felt heavy as if they were filled with lead as he could not even use Starfall Steps anymore. As such, Lin Mu Yu could do nothing more than lifting his sword to block Ye Liang's imposing attack.

Dong!

With a brittle crack, the steel sword was snapped in half. In Ye Liang's hand was a rare sword, while Lin Mu Yu just had a mercenary's high-quality steel sword. Without a pause, the flame red sword quickly continued to cut down onto Lin Mu Yu. With a flesh-tearing sound, the blade cut straight into Lin Mu Yu's shoulder. Flesh and blood parted from the wound as Lin Mu Yu fell on one knee. Clenching his teeth, he grabbed the blade with his bare hands and tried his hardest as to stop the sword from cutting down any further. Otherwise, the injury might end up affecting the ligaments and bones.

"Still not dead!?"

Ye Liang laughed maliciously and channeled energy to push down on his sword. Right at that moment, a dizzy spell suddenly drifted into his head.

Finally, Intoxicating Breeze took effect!

"What's happening?"

Ye Liang frantically shook his head, but the fainting feeling only became stronger. He aimed his feet at Lin Mu Yu's chest, and kicked Lin Mu Yu into the bushes.

"I want you to die!"

Ye Liang limped towards the bushes where Lin Mu Yu was at. At the same time, he kept shaking his head. His line of sight was

affected by the poison, so he no longer able to see.

In that split second, two silver needles shot into the acupuncture points in Ye Liang's chest. Immediately, he was not able to move even a slight bit.

In the light of flames, Chu Yao sprinted out and grabbed Ye Liang's sword. With a single turn, she slashed out with a returning strike!

Kacha!

Blood splattered forth as Ye Liang of the Seven Martial Saints...

Fell alongside his separated head!

.....

"Ah Yu... Ah Yu..."

Chu Yao speedily rushed to the bloodsoaked Lin Mu Yu. Tears fell like the rain onto Lin Mu Yu as Chu Yao hugged him, "Ah Yu, are you ok?"

Lin Mu Yu slowly opened his eyes and asked weakly, "Ye Liang..."

“He’s dead.”

“Good!” He spoke with difficulty as a hint of a smile appeared on his face. “Chu Yao, I can’t hold on any longer. Quickly… Use your needle to seal my acupuncture points and staunch my bleeding. Then…use the my healing potion to heal my internal injuries, or else I might really die like this…”

“Aye!”

Chu Yao immediately placed him on the ground and took out her needles. In accordance with the Staunching technique from medical charts that Qu Chu gave her, Chu Yao sealed one point after another and quickly stopped the bleeding. Afterward, she took out Lin Mu Yu’s tier one healing potion and poured it over his injuries. However, the chest wound left by the arrow was truly too severe, so whether he could survive was still up in the air.

Chu Yao’s thoughts were in a whirl as she hugged Lin Mu Yu and drank her tears in the dark of the night.

The starlight fell upon the hills. This young pair had continuously been experiencing life and death, almost as if there was no end in sight. The devil’s claws continued to dance in the dark of the night, while this world’s justice had seemingly fell into a deep slumber.

……

For the whole night, Chu Yao did not sleep at all, and continued to restlessly treat the wounded Lin Mu Yu.

In the wee hours of morning, Lin Mu Yu finally fell asleep as the bleeding from his wounds had finally stopped. He had made many tier one healing potions not long ago, but he would have never imagined that those potions would save his own life.

At noon of the next day, he finally woke up and opened his eyes.

“Ah Yu…”

Seeing that he had opened his eyes, Chu Yao immediately began to bawl her eyes out. The fact that he woke up means that he had survived.

Lin Mu Yu lay powerlessly in the bushes and used inner-sight to observe his injuries. Under the effect of the healing potion, the punctured lung had basically began to heal. This whole process took an entire night, but it only took so long because he had been unconscious. Now that he was awake, he aroused the energy in his body and started to self-heal.

After drinking some meat stew, he finally recovered some strength. The green gourd was also unceasingly generating energy for his use. Seeing more color on Lin Mu Yu’s face, Chu Yao finally turned her tears into laughter.

When night finally fell several hours later, Lin Mu Yu was able to

stand and walk. After all, he was someone of Earth realm's 2nd stage, so he should have this kind of powerful recovery capability.

A sword lay between the bushes. It was glowing with a faint fire aura, as it was Ye Liang's sword.

"Heh, it's all this thing's fault!"

Chu Yao spoke angrily, "If not for this sword, then Ah Yu would have never been this gravely wounded!"

As she spoke, she grabbed hold of the sword and was about to smash it onto a large rock.

Oh boy, this senior of mine is seriously too willful.

Lin Mu Yu was between laughter and tears as he quickly said, "Hold on, Chu Yao. Leave the sword for me, since my sword had been broken by it anyway. This sword is probably of some value, or else it couldn't possibly have broken my sword in one strike."

"Aye." Chu Yao handed the sword over.

As Lin Mu Yu lightly touched the blade, a faint warmth crept into his finger. The blade was shaped very simply, but two words were carved near the handle: Prairie Fire. It must be the sword's name. Thinking back to the flames that appeared when the sword was swung, it was quite fitting. He couldn't help but chuckle, "Prairie Fire, good name... I guess this sword will be mine?"

Chu Yao giggled, “All yours. You can have whatever you want!”

Lin Mu Yu smiled and continued, “I recall that Ye Liang came on horseback. Where did that steed go?”

“I caught it and tied it to a tree in the thicket.”

“Good, we’ll have a mount. That horse looked to be quite vigorous, so it is probably strong enough to carry the two of us, right?”

Chu Yao cheeks flushed red as she thought about sharing a ride with him. She couldn’t help but fantasize a little more, but still nodded, “Yeah, it should be able to. Do we have to go on horseback?”

“Yeah, or else I really don’t know when we’ll be able to reach Lanyan City.”

“Alright, sounds good too.”

……

Lin Mu Yu continued to heal himself until the dawn of the next day. A wandering mercenary came at midnight, but he was only a level 27 Battle Spirit. Chu Yao wounded him with her needles while Lin Mu Yu killed him with a Sonic Punch. The two did not

leave any attacker alive, as they did not dare to be careless.

After eating breakfast, they hung their luggage on top of the horse. Chu Yao rode the horse while Lin Mu Yu sat behind her with Prairie Fire on his back. They only had this much valuables after everything. He even kept that rare engraved-bow. Sonic Blade's range was just several tens of meters, but the bow could shoot at a range of hundreds of meters if one had strong enough arm strength!

In this world, riding and archery were both skills that a martial artist must excel at. This had already inspired Lin Mu Yu to start training in archery. Luckily, he was naturally gifted at learning, so he could probably obtain good results even if he were to be self-taught.

After obtaining a mount, their operations certainly sped up quite a bit, so much so that they could spur the horse into sprinting over flat plains. With this kind of speed, they should be able to reach the Imperial Capital Lanyan City's territory in the next 3 to 5 days.

……

The two did not forget to keep training themselves on the road, even killing a spirit beast to help Chu Yao break into stage of a level 34 Battle Elder. In comparison, Lin Mu Yu's progress was even faster, as he was almost at the stage of a level 45 Battle Master. On the whole, most opponents below that of a level 50 Battle Saint could easily be handled, for his multi-layered gourd spirit had 4 abilities, a feat rarely seen on this continent. Many opponents had suffered losses because of these spirit abilities. They

had practically been toyed with in Lin Mu Yu's palm.

Ca Ca...

A bird-call was heard in the air.

Lin Mu Yu looked up and saw that goshawk again. After its master died, this goshawk had been continued to follow the two.

Reaching for the engraved bow, Lin Mu Yu leapt off the horse and took out an arrow, "Foul fowl. It's your fault for following us!"

Whoosh!

As the bowstring sounded, the goshawk was punctured by the arrow and fell onto the distant bushes. Lin Mu Yu took a walk and found the poor bird. Smiling, he said, "Chu Yao, unfeather it and cook it for lunch. Hawk meat should taste pretty swell."

Chu Yao covered her mouth as she chuckled, "Okay okay!"

.....

Right then, another shrill bird call sounded in the air. A dark gray shape flew closer and closer.

Chu Yao squinted and said, "That's a falcon. A carnivorous

predator.”

Lin Mu Yu readied an arrow once more, “I’ll shoot it down. We can make two pots of soup!”

“Don’t be so hasty.”

Chu Yao chuckled, “This falcon doesn’t look like it is hostile. It is probably here to look for us. I’ve seen some people tame falcons as mail birds in Silver Fir, so perhaps this could be one?”

“Oh, is that right?”

While Lin Mu Yu looked with disbelief, this falcon sure enough landed on Chu Yao’s arm. A tiny bamboo tube was tied to its leg. After Chu Yao removed it, she took out a tiny slip of paper. “Ah Yu, this is for you!”

Someone actually sent a feather mail to me? This is quite strange. Who could it be?

……

Several rows of words were written cleanly on the slip of paper:

Young hero, treat this as if a meeting. I am Lei Bai Zhan of Hundred War Firm. I just learned of the young master’s disaster. Pity I have trouble freeing myself from my obligations, so I’m

unable to lend the young master any help. However, if the young master would trust my words, you should be able to find a mercenary troop in Seven Star Forest's Burning Wind Mountain. They named themselves the "Burning Wind Mercenaries" after the mountain. Their captain is a man by the name of Lei Qian Hai, my brother. When Qian Hai sees this letter, he will naturally understand my intentions, and will protect the young master on your journey.

Sincerely, take care.

……

Looking at the slip, Lin Mu Yu was a little moved. He and Chu Yao had fled into Seven Star Forest for so many days, but have not met a single true "human". Lei Bai Zhan had really only met him once, but had already sent a feather mail for help. This was quite unexpected.

So merchants could also be this humane and righteous!

Chapter 40 : Mercenaries Are But Wolves

“Ah Yu, should we look for the Scorching Wind brigade?” Chu Yao asked hesitantly.

“What do you think, Chu Yao?”

Chu Yao spoke as she furrowed her brows, “According to the original plan, it would be the best case scenario if the two of us can get to Lanyan City quietly. Now that the amount of bounty hunters after us has been steadily increasing for the last few days, in addition to the fact that you’re so gravely hurt, I’m worried that we won’t even be able to fight back if we run into a group of mercenaries. Scorching Wind Mountain is less than one hundred li away, so it might be best to go there.”

“Alright.”

Lin Mu Yu nodded. His injuries had not healed completely, so he could only bring out less than 70% of his strength. If he were to run into a strong practitioner the likes of Ye Liang and Guan Yang, perhaps everything might truly point to an ill omen.

……

Only half a day later, the two arrived at the base of Scorching Wind Mountain on horseback. This mountain was in an active volcanic belt, and one could even see the majestic volcanic eruptions in the distance. When the two were finally met by a pair of bandits, the two were quickly led up the mountain after Lin Mu

Yu took out Lei Bai Zhan's letter.

Rather than calling them a mercenary brigade, calling them a bandit gang hiding was probably more accurate. The mercenaries did not look like soldiers, instead their shady countenance made Lin Mu Yu and Chu Yao feel slightly uneasy.

"The commander is in the hall. Please wait." A bandit said respectfully.

Lin Mu Yu unstrapped Prairie Fire from its sheath and firmly gripped onto the hilt. The two cautiously entered the hall, only to see two rows of chairs lined up on either side. Every unit leader was present, while a middle aged mercenary of about 35 years old sat on the commander's seat and looked sharply at the two guests.

"You are Lin Mu Yu?" He smirked.

"That is correct. And you are Scorching Wind Brigade's commander, Lei Qian Hai?"

"Yes, This is I."

Lei Qian Hai walked from his seat as he laughed, "To have slaughtered that pair of tyrannical father and son, Hua Tian and Hua Wan, you are truly a young hero. Come here, please sit. You're both tired, correct? Tell the kitchen to start preparing dinner!"

Lin Mu Yu instead cupped his hand in salute and respectfully

declined, “My senior and I had been hunted the whole way, so I dare not to bother you too much, commander. This meal will have to be at another time. We plan to immediately set off, so if possible, I hope you could dispatch some men to accompany and protect us, sir. We can pay a sufficient remuneration for the effort.”

“What kind of talk is that?”

Lei Qian Hai slapped his chest and said, “If older brother said to protect you, then if I, Lei Qian Hai, were to take your reward, what kind of a man would I be? If you do not wish to stay, that is fine as well, young warrior. I’ll pick out one hundred of the strongest men I have and have them accompany you.”

“One hundred men?”

Lin Mu Yu stumbled in shock for a second, “Don’t need that many men, 20 is enough.”

“Haha, you’re too modest, young warrior. Someone, pick out twenty elite soldiers and have them prepare to set off. Also set aside enough food, water, and horses. You guys must safely protect young braver Lin to his destination.”

As he spoke, Lei Qian Hai suddenly bent down and looked at Lin Mu Yu and Chu Yao with a burning gaze. “I heard that Hua Tian had lost his life because of a book called the <Medicine God’s Index>. I’m guessing that you have already obtained it, young braver?”

Chu Yao was caught off guard by the question as she stared blankly, not knowing what to do.

Lin Mu Yu indifferently replied, “It had been raining heavily when we escaped, and the rain had mixed together with the blood from my injuries. When I finally remembered, the book had been turned into a soggy mess and was no different than a pile of grass paste. As such… there is no such thing as a Medicine God’s Index in this world anymore.”

“Oh, like that…”

Lei Qian Hai smiled faintly, but the disappointment in his gaze did not escape Lin Mu Yu’s eyes. He then looked at the sword in Lin Mu Yu’s hand and his eyes lit up. “This sword… looks like it’s a rare weapon that had been spirit refined. Does it have a name?”

Lin Mu Yu inwardly swore in his heart. This Lei Qian Hai was clearly no saint, and was so obviously a brigand.

“This sword is called Prairie Fire. It’s a gift I had received from Ye Liang of the Seven Martial Saints.”

“Oh? Ye Liang’s gift?”

Lei Qian Hai squinted his eyes, “I don’t think Ye Liang is that magnanimous with his character. To gift someone else his personal treasure sword… Is there possibly some kind of

misunderstanding?”

Lin Mu Yu smiled, “Then I’ll explain it more accurately. This is a legacy of the deceased.”

“What? Ye Liang’s dead!?” Lei Qian Hai was shocked as he muttered, “The third ranker of the Seven Martial Saints died... Good heavens. Could it be that he died in your hands, young braver?”

Lin Mu Yu nodded, “He wanted to kill me, so I had no choice but to take his life.”

A hint of alarm dashed past Lei Qian Hai’s eyes. He looked at the highest ranked mercenary captain and said in a clear voice, “This mountainous area is far too dangerous. Xing Lan, why don’t you accompany the young braver to the north?”

In the crowd, a spear-wielding general stood and saluted, “Yes, commander!”

Lei Qian Hai smiled humbly, “Braver Lin, Xing Lan is the best spear wielder in our Scorching Wind Brigade and is also one of the best at mounted combat. He is a level 46 Battle Master, so I believe that he should be good enough to help you and Miss Chu get through your troubles!”

Lin Mu Yu took a deep breath, “Thank you Commander Lei!”

Chu Yao looked at him. A hint of wariness dashed past her eyes, but how could Lin Mu Yu not be worried as well. The greed in Lei Qian Hai's eyes was too obvious. The more men he dispatched, the clearer his intentions of obtaining Lin Mu Yu's treasures. Lei Qian Hai was even looking at Chu Yao with a strong rapaciousness. This mercenary commander was seemingly already confident in obtaining the beautiful Chu Yao.

The reason why he didn't act on the mountain was probably because he still had to take care of the reputation of the Scorching Flame mercenaries. Making the move down mountain would allow him to push the blame onto someone else.

This was Lin Mu Yu's only chance. After getting down the mountain, perhaps he might still have a chance to live against these 21 strong warriors. Compared to the 2000 or so mercenaries in the stronghold, the chance of winning was far greater.

……

Lei Qian Hai also prepared a horse for Chu Yao, but it looked sickly and crooked. The 21 accompanying mercenaries also mounted their horses, but did not looked to have brought much food or water. They clearly had no plans to leave for too long; perhaps they planned to act right away once they got down Scorching Wind Mountain.

"Forgive me for not sending you off too far!" Lei Qian Hai cupped his fist in salute and laughed aloud.

Lin Mu Yu returned the salute as he tightly clutched Prairie Fire and whipped his horse into action. The 21 mercenaries immediately followed like hunters tracking prey. Hooves sounded as the group descended the mountain.

Not far from the base of the mountain, Chu Yao's sickly horse was quickly unable to move anymore. Lin Mu Yu had thought of Lei Qian Hai's vicious intent. If Chu Yao couldn't escape, then he would not run either. In addition, if the two were to share a horse, then they most definitely won't be able to outrun the mercenaries.

Glancing past each of the mercenaries, the strongest one was the level 46 Xing Lan. Other than that, a few were level 30 Battle Adept, while the rest were Battle Spirits or Battle Warriors. That alone was nothing to be afraid of, but the thing that made Lin Mu Yu secretly grumble was that every single one had a bow hanging on their saddle. This was enough to dissuade him of running away. He had to kill this group of mercenaries, otherwise he would have to leave behind Chu Yao, Prairie Fire, and his life.

……

"Young braver Lin, what sorts of things were recorded on the Medicine God Index?" Xing Lan suddenly asked.

"I don't know. It's master's book, I've never looked through it."

"Oh, so it's like that."

Xing Lan looked at the distance and said, “On the Fierce Wind Ridge before us lives quite a number of Swift Wolves. These wolves are run wild at night, so maybe we should make camp under Fierce Wind Ridge, then set off tomorrow morning?”

“Below the ridge?”

Lin Mu Yu frowned, “Not necessary. I think we should just stay on track and make it over Fierce Wind Ridge tonight, or else the bounty hunters behind us would only increase in number. I’m also worried for you guys in case accidents happen.”

“Ah…” A sliver of killing intent slipped past Xing Lan’s gaze. Smiling, he said, “Alright then, let’s just cross over Fierce Wind Ridge then. We have a large party so those Swift Wolves probably won’t dare to attack, or else we’ll just have to beat them until their teeth break, hahahaha… Oh right, young braver. Are you sure that the Medicine God Index is completely ruined? It ought to have left at least a few legible fragments, right?”

“All ruined, can’t read a single word. It’s also covered in blood stains.”

“Oh…”

Xing Lan was able to continue asking, but Lin Mu Yu had already whipped his horse into action. Reaching out, he grabbed hold of Chu Yao’s lean waist and carried her in his embrace before speeding on ahead.

Chu Yao's heart warmed but she alerted softly, "Ah Yu, they're about to make their move."

"Aye, I know."

Lin Mu Yu lowered his voice and said, "Once they attack, immediately sprinkle a bottle of Intoxicating Breeze and I'll hold them off. They are nothing compared to Ye Liang, so the drug should take effect quite swiftly. But before they act, we can't be the first to strike, because we don't really know if they will actually attack us. We can't be accidentally killing good people."

"Okay."

……

The two were quite slow because they shared a horse, so they were quickly caught up by the mercenaries. 5 men on the right, 5 in the front, 5 on the left, and once more 5 in the back. The mercenaries immediately surrounded the two in a circle. This kind of indicator was quickly becoming very apparent.

"Young braver, we're almost at the Swift Wolves' gathering spot!" Xing Lan laughed.

"What about it?" Lin Mu Yu asked coldly.

"They've been hungry for a long time." Xing Lan's smiling expression became even more sinister as he said, "Young braver

punishes the strong and helps the weak, so you should know what <Cut Meat Feed Wolf>[1] means, right? Hahahaha, they really are hungry…”

The surrounding mercenaries one by one drew their weapons, a few of them even had their arrows ready and pointed at Lin Mu Yu. Xing Lan raised his iron spear in the air and laughed heartily, “Lin Mu Yu, your head is worth 100 thousand gold Yin, so don’t blame us for this!”

“Now!”

Lin Mu Yu insipidly said. Chu Yao quickly sprinkled a bottle of Intoxicating Breeze onto the ground.

At the same time, the Green Gourd materialized through Lin Mu Yu’s body and transformed into a complete gourd-shape encasing the two riders and their horse. Ebony Scales also formed around it, blocking off the streams of arrows.

Xing Lan leapt up into the air with both hands gripping his spear. His martial spirit appeared through his body as rows of icicles formed on the iron spear. Xing Lan stabbed the spear down with his full strength onto the Ebony Scales!

Boom!

The icy crystals shattered into pieces as Xing Lan was thrown back by the rebounding force. However, Lin Mu Yu was not much

better off, as the attack had his blood boiling vigorously within. Flicking his hand, Sonic Blade shot out with a shrill whistling sound. In the next second, two mercenaries let of a blood-curdling scream as they were quickly killed.

Chapter 41 : Wolves' Pursuit

"Fucker!"

Seeing that two of his men had been killed, Xing Lan flew out in rage. A flowing ice aura spiraled onto the tip of his spear as his entire body entered the extreme chill domain. His martial spirit was an Ice Beast, which in conjunction with his ice elemental training, caused his temperament to become cold as ice. Right now, it was as if he himself had turned into an icy spear as he charged straight at Lin Mu Yu.

"Break!"

His spear turned rapidly in his hands, creating an overwhelmingly strong spiraling force. The attack collided with a loud bang onto the Ebony Scale, and Lin Mu Yu couldn't help but shudder at the powerful penetrating force. In the next second, the Ebony Scale had been directly punctured and a long spear stabbed into Lin Mu Yu's shoulder. The blood became frozen before it even had a chance to spill out.

The ice's binding strength was too much, causing Lin Mu Yu to lose all mobility in his left arm.

"Poison spray!"

Responding to their master's call, rows of green ivy shot out of the ground and encaged Xing Lan along with his horse. Having never seen anything like this, Xing Lan lifted his spear to shield his

front. But how could a single spear protect him from the acidic poison? Corrosive liquid squirted out from various gourd flowers on the vines and covered Xing Lan from head to toe. This level 46 Battle Master's face and chest subsequently began to fester and corrode away while the man fell off his horse screaming in agony.

Lin Mu Yu suddenly tugged on the reins and turned his horse around. Taking advantage of the situation, a sword flash sliced through the air as Prairie Fire slashed open Xing Lan's neck. Fresh blood gushed out from the gaping wound and after a few struggles, the man lay still as a rock.

Xing Lan, dead.

The other mercenaries stared dumbstruck at the sight before them. They whipped out their weapons as if they wanted to continue attacking, however the Sonic Blade took out two more mercs before they could do anything. Lin Mu Yu did not dare to move his left arm as he carefully manipulated true energy to dissolve the icy energy from Xing Lan's attack. Chu Yao leapt onto a nearby warhorse and immediately threw out several silver needles, all of which made a shill piercing sound as they blinded several mercenaries' eyes.

"This kid... killed Captain Xing Lan, bastard!"

An axe-wielding mercenary charged forward in rage, but what met him was a Sonic Punch in the face. Under the rippling clash of the sound waves, blood came spraying out of the brute's mouth as he died. The surrounding mercenaries didn't even understand what had happened before them. Only an old soldier of about 50

years of age muttered with a pale complexion:

“That is... Sonic Punch! Oh god, this kid knows Flame Cauldron Qu Chu’s secret technique!”

Perhaps most of the men had no clue who Lin Mu Yu was, but everyone knew of Flame Cauldron Qu Chu. That name was already outstandingly famous on this continent. Of all the practitioners in the Empire, there was no one who did not know of Qu Chu, and even less would not know of the matchless power of Qu Chu’s Flame Cauldron spirit.

“We can’t kill him anymore. Retreat!”

A bow-carrying mercenary quickly retreated while others soon followed behind. However, in the retreating process, one after another, the mercenaries began to fall off their horses. Intoxicating Breeze finally took effect!

Lin Mu Yu had originally planned to kill a few of the mercs with his bow, but the chill in his arm had yet to fade. Being unable to draw the bow with his arm, he had to give up on his plans. Looking at the corpses lying around, he didn’t say much more but tug on the reins and said, “Chu Yao, let’s leave quickly. They will be able to catch up again when the drug wears off, so we can’t stay here for too long.”

“Okay. Ah Yu, your arm?”

Chu Yao spurred her horse closer and anxiously took out two needles to seal off two points in Lin Mu Yu's arm. "You just have to ward off the chill with your energy now."

"Alright."

The two hastily prepared to leave the grounds as starlight fell upon Fierce Wind Ridge. However, right at that moment, a scarlet flicker dashed through the darkness. Chu Yao asked in surprise, "What is that?"

Lin Mu Yu couldn't help but feel a chill in his heart, "Not good. Swift Wolves, let's go!"

Sure enough, an uncountable amount of Swift Wolves pranced down the the mountain. Leading the pack was a Giant Wolf with a speck of white on its head. With one look, Lin Mu Yu could already tell that this wolf had at least 1000 years of cultivation. The other wolves were mostly around one hundred year or so. However, the wolves were too great in numbers, so only a narrow escape might be possible if they were to be surrounded.

Whipping their horses to speedily ride away, they looked behind them with wariness. The wolf pack had already begun to bite and tear away at the corpses of the dead mercenaries. Who would have known that an expert like Xing Lan would serve as the wolves' dinner after death. Perhaps it was really karma in the works.

.....

Howl!

About half a minute after the two had set off on their horses, the alpha suddenly let out a sharp howl. The other wolves also let out resonating cries as the pack began to move.

“Shit! They don’t want to let us go!” Chu Yao gritted her teeth.

Lin Mu Yu immediately manipulated most of his energy into dissolving the remaining chill strength while commanding, “Don’t worry about anything else. You head off first, I’ll cover you. As long as I’m able to ward off Xing Lan’s chill strength, then these wolves definitely won’t be able to harm us.”

“Aye!”

Chu Yao spurred her horse on forward, but was only willing to remain shoulder to shoulder with Lin Mu Yu.

The sound of swift wolves became increasingly closer, so much so that it was possible to hear their gasps for air. Swift Wolves were one of the fastest forest-running spirit beasts, so how could the speed of a warhorse be on the same level. After several minutes, the figures of countless Swift Wolves appeared under the starry sky.

Chu Yao glanced back and fished out two silver needles from her pocket. In the next moment, two Swift Wolves howled out in pain as they tumbled into the weeds. After being blinded by silver

needles, they were no longer able to continue their chase.

However, killing two wolves only served to enrage the others. The alpha became especially ruthless and caught up so fast that it was no more than 10 meters away.

Lin Mu Yu was still unable to maneuver his left arm. Begrudgingly, he sheathed his sword and threw out a Sonic Punch!

Boom!

The whirlwind of the punch blew fiercely onto the alpha wolf's face. However, since it was a spirit beast with more than 1000 years of cultivation, the attack was not enough to kill it. Having only been slightly wounded, the alpha continued its chase while its face was covered in blood stains. Lin Mu Yu didn't let up either, and continued striking with several more Sonic Punches which left the alpha's face covered in fresh blood and a slightly shattered skull.

Right then, two giant wolves suddenly leapt out from the thickets on both sides!

"Watch out!" Lin Mu Yu yelled out frantically. He didn't think that these wolves could be sly enough to know how to use pincer attacks.

Chu Yao looked clearly at the situation and charged forward on her horse. Shifting over to Lin Mu Yu's front, she called out her

Violet Mink spirit and charged at a giant wolf in a ball of fire. At the same time, however, the other wolf had already leapt onto the horse and started tearing away at the horse's rump. Its mouth opened agape as it bit towards Chu Yao's back. After all that's said and done, Chu Yao was already at the first stage of Earth realm, so she reacted very swiftly. At the same time that the wolf's teeth bit down on her, the dagger in her right hand had also stabbed into the wolf's neck.

Whimper

Another wolf corpse dropped lifelessly onto the ground.

Lin Mu Yu asked with a frown, "How's the wound?"

Chu Yao shook her head, "I'm alright, let's be on our way."

Right then, the alpha wolf jumped up and pounced towards Lin Mu Yu's back like a spark of lightning.

"Ebony Scale!"

The maroon colored gourd immediately materialized out of his body while the Ebony Scale's flame energy quickly condensed into a shield. The alpha wolf was bounced back with a bang. Lin Mu Yu took this opportunity to slash down with Lightning Chop onto the alpha's head.

Snap Break

The sword almost cleaved open the wolf's skull as its flesh scattered around. Yet this alpha's vitality was seemingly so tenacious and stubborn that it continued to chase and roar.

As a hint of warmth swept into his left arm, Lin Mu Yu became exhilarated. The chilling strength from Xing Lan's attack had been completely expelled from his body.

Grabbing his bow, Lin Mu Yu turned and immediately unleashed an arrow at the wolf. Having been infused with true energy, the whole arrow shaft pierced through the alpha's eye like a meteor striking ground.

"Aooo aooo...."

The alpha was no longer able to continue now that the arrow had embedded itself into the wolf's brain. It writhed in pain as it tumbled around in the dirt. It was surely unlikely to survive.

Once the alpha had died, the other wolves did not dare to continue. They looked as if they realized that the two people before them were very dangerous, and that a continued pursuit could only mean death.

Not daring to stop, the two riders sped off towards the north.

Without stopping at all, the two hurried frantically for the whole night. They didn't know how far they were from Scorching Wind

Mountain, but at least they were sure that the Scorching Wind Mercenaries would not be able to catch up to them.

As faint pains arrived from his shoulder, Lin Mu Yu whipped on his horse while he checked on his wound. Xing Lan's spear had almost pierced through his shoulder.

The more that Chu Yao looked at him, the more sorry she felt. Thereupon, she ripped off a strip of cloth from her skirt and used it to bandage his wound. After that, she bit on one end of another strip while she bandaged her own wounds: the bloody holes left by the wolf bite. Lin Mu Yu couldn't help but blush with shame at this sight. From the last few days, Chu Yao had really transformed from that weak herb-gathering girl into a true martial artist.

As she finished up binding her wounds, Chu Yao looked up at him and smiled, "What's up?"

"Nothing." He hastily looked away.

Chu Yao chuckled, "Idiot."

Although he felt as if he was just insulted, a faint warmth appeared in Lin Mu Yu's heart.

.....

Several hundreds of Li away from Seven Star Forest.

Dragon Seeker Forest, the deep forest surrounding the Capital, Lanyan City.

The spirit beasts within Dragon Seeker Forest made it a place of dreams for cultivators. However, this forest was heavily guarded by the Empire's army, allowing only selected practitioners or nobles to enter the forest in search of the spirit beasts they need.

Du du du

The sound of hooves broke the silence in the forest as a row of several hundred cavalry troops sped down the narrow path. Leading the way was a beautiful girl dressed in a scarlet mantle. Her face was covered in anxiousness as she looked ahead.

"Princess, please slow down!"

A knight guard caught up to her and said, "The mountain road is too rugged and there are too many spirit beasts in Dragon Seeker Forest. Please don't rush on so rashly, or else you won't be able to save that kid called Lin Mu Yu and even throw your own life away as well!"

Tang Xiao Xi's heart was in disarray. She couldn't help but close her eyes, not wanting to imagine what would happen if Lin Mu Yu could not escape the pursuit of the Seven Martial Saints.

Right at that moment, suddenly a bird cry sounded in the air as a

white dove speedily descended from the sky.

The guard hurriedly raised his hands and removed the letter from the bird's foot.

"It's a feather mail from Silver Fir City."

"New information?"

Without waiting for the knight to respond, Tang Xiao Xi snatched away the letter, only to see three rows of text before her.

One of Seven Saints, Guan Yang. Died in pursuit of Lin Mu Yu.

One of Seven Saints, Ye Liang. Also died in pursuit of Lin Mu Yu.

Don't fret Princess, he still lives.

Chapter 42 : Brothers

Bam!

A heavy slap struck down on a dark wooden work desk. Tea cup and papers scattered onto the floor. Cangnan Province's viceroy, Hu Tie Ning (Beard-Iron-Peaceful) yelled out with agitation, "What did you say!? Say that again?!"

The kneeling messenger trembled with fear as he said, "Viceroy... Pegasus Battalion's cavalry found the bodies of the Seven Martial Saints Guan Yang and Ye Liang in Seven Star Forest. Guan Yang's death state looked extremely similar to that of Hua Tian's. Ye Liang had been poisoned, and then had his throat slit. His horse and weapons had all been snatched away."

"Useless. A bunch of useless trash!"

Hu Tie Ning's complexion turned sinister as he huffed in the cold air. After a short pause, he asked, "Is Pegasus Battalion still in pursuit?"

"Yes, but they had been attacked several times by spirit beasts on the way, so they lost a few men."

"Exactly how many?"

"Three hundred men... They came across a 4000 year old giant python."

“Bastards!”

Hu Tie Ning ferociously slapped his desk again, “If I don’t kill Lin Mu Yu, then I, Hu Tie Ning, don’t deserve to be the provincial viceroy! Immediately send a letter to General Xiang Yu. Tell him that he must lay out an inescapable net around the outskirts of Lanyan City. If he catches Lin Mu Yu, he is permitted to execute him on the spot!”

“Understood…”

…..

Ninth day of exile, Seven Star Forest.

At the edge of a clear stream, Chu Yao was busy washing their change of clothes. Meanwhile, Lin Mu Yu was feeding their horses while looking at the legend on his map. Frowning, he muttered, “This map… I really can’t make heads or tails out of it, but we shouldn’t be too far from Lanyan City’s territory now. We should be able to enter the Dragon Seeker Forest in about one more day’s travel. Chu Yao, do we need to enter Dragon Seeker Forest?”

“Yep!”

Chu Yao wiped away the sweat on her forehead and laughed, “Our arrest warrant is from Cangnan Province, so most of our pursuers should be from Cangnan as well. Lanyan City is the

Empire's capital, and does not belong to any province. If we enter the region of Dragon Seeker Forest, the pursuing mercenaries would surely be quite wary of the consequences, at least to the point of not so brazenly trying to kill us."

"Alright then, we'll set out after we eat."

"Aye!"

In order to minimize the amount of killing, the escape route that Lin Mu Yu picked went along places with the least signs of human habitation. Like this, they had not met any others for the last two days, so naturally they didn't run into any other mercenaries.

Their lunch was quite simple, but it was still a meat soup. However, Chu Yao looked at the stream with a sullen look.

"What's wrong?" Lin Mu Yu asked with a laugh.

Chu Yao lightly knitted her brows, "Ah Yu, after running for so long, I still haven't gotten the chance to bathe once..."

"Oh..." Lin Mu Yu was between laughter and tears. Being a man, he didn't even think once about whether his body smells during the whole escape. In contrast, Chu Yao was a girl after all, so she was not as unconcerned as he.

"Then Chu Yao, you can go wash yourself. I'll wait here for you." He said.

Chu Yao nodded, “I’ll bathe over at the mountain head, I’ll be back soon.”

“Okay. Just yell out if you come across any kind of danger.”

“Aye.”

.....

Lin Mu Yu continued boiling the meat soup in the pot while Chu Yao walked away with her change of clothes.

The meat soup’s aroma became stronger and stronger, but the meat is still venison like the day before.

Not long after, Lin Mu Yu’s stomach had already begun to rumble. Right as he was debating whether or not to secretly eat a piece of meat, Chu Yao’s screech was heard from over the hill.

Something’s wrong!

Picking up his sword, Lin Mu Yu dashed ahead using Starfall Steps. Looking over the hilltop, Chu Yao’s snow white figure was right before his eyes. She faced away from Lin Mu Yu, splashing at the water as she backed away frantically, screaming, “Go away! Go away!”

There’s something in the water!

Lin Mu Yu charged down with a single arrow step and jumped into the stream. The light reflecting from his sword bounced around as it slashed through the water. Immediately a stream of blood squirted out from below the water. In the next moment, two halves of a water snake floated to the surface. Lin Mu Yu was immediately confused. Although this water snake was a little bigger than normal water snakes, but… it’s still harmless, no?

Chu Yao hugged him tightly as she trembled, “Is… is it dead?”

“It’s dead…” Lin Mu Yu wanted to cry, “Chu Yao, this was just a regular snake. It’s not even strong enough to be considered a spirit beast. You… you’re a practitioner of the Earth realm’s first stage, so how could a snake scare you like this?”

Chu Yao pursed her red lips, feeling as if she had been wronged, “I… I’ve always been afraid of wriggling things, especially snakes. So… once I’m panicking, I even forget about my cultivation level…”

As she spoke, her cheeks flushed red, “Ah Yu, I’m not wearing clothes…”

“I know, I saw…”

“What, you saw?” Chu Yao’s little heart seemingly betrayed her and started to flutter and pulse rapidly.

Lin Mu Yu couldn't help but snicker, "Elder sister Chu Yao's back is truly beautiful. I won't look at the front now. Just submerge yourself back in the water, and I'll go back now. Hurry back soon to eat."

"Aye."

Chu Yao slowly lowered her body while Lin Mu Yu jumped ashore and went back over the hill without turning back at all.

"Dummy..."

Chu Yao looked at his back, but did not know whether to feel happy or disappointed.

.....

Not long after, Chu Yao had changed into a new set of clothes and returned to camp. Looking at the dew-like droplets of water in her hair, Lin Mu Yu immediately laughed, "Chu Yao is most definitely a genuine beauty!"

Chu Yao's cheeks flushed red, "Obviously!"

"Hurry up and eat, or else the beauty might starve into an old grandma."

“You want to fight? You rascal...” Chu Yao said in embarrassment.

The two quickly shared the food, then proceeded to clean up the grounds. Setting off immediately, their movement speed was quite fast, given the fact they now had two horses.

One day later, the two arrived at the edge of Seven Star Forest.

An ancient-looking stone tablet marked with the words “Dragon Seeker Forest” stood before them. Lin Mu Yu rode past it and smiled, “We’ve finally arrived at the Capital of legends: Lanyan City!”

Chu Yao couldn’t help but laugh at him, “You wish. Dragon Seeker Forest surrounds almost the whole Lanyan City, and it covers quite a large area. We’ve only arrived at Dragon Seeker Forest, and it will be at least another 3 days before we’ll reach Lanyan City. Furthermore, we won’t be going there anyway. Don’t forget that we are fugitives of the state, so there must be drawings of us in the Capital.”

“Alright, we won’t go in. I guess we’ll just stay inside the Dragon Seeker Forest. We can wait for some time to pass, then we’ll be able to leave.”

“Sounds good.”

Night fell upon the forest, so it looked like the two didn’t have to

continue so hurriedly. As a result, the two set up camp in a small hollowed depression on the mountain range bordering Cangnan Province and the Capital territory. Lin Mu Yu opened up the simple tent and cleared out enough space for Chu Yao to lie down, then went to collect firewood to boil a pot of meat soup again.

The night breeze was extraordinarily tranquil, so Lin Mu Yu made use of the night to first practice a set of Sonic Punches, then the hand methods for throwing the Sonic Blade, finally ending the session with some Wind Sword Style practice. Chu Yao sat on a nearby rock and happily watched Lin Mu Yu. She was quite pleasantly surprised by this hardworking junior, so much so that watching him train had become something of an enjoyment for Chu Yao.

Grumble Grumble

The meat soup's aroma wafted through the air while Chu Yao smilingly called, "Ah Yu, come eat!"

"Okay."

Lin Mu Yu returned a faint smile and stopped his sword style practice. But right at that moment, his spirit sense suddenly kicked in. Two strong auras had entered into the surrounding area.

He immediately rushed over to Chu Yao and covered her mouth, "Someone's here!"

As he spoke, he picked up Chu Yao by the waist and dashed off to the bushes a short distance away. Hiding inside the thicket, Lin Mu Yu looked towards the distance while whispering, “Reduce your breathing and energy. Don’t channel energy and it would be best if you can hold your breath. Try not to emit any hints of your energy…”

Chu Yao did as she was told. It wasn’t difficult for someone as meticulous as she was.

Lin Mu Yu also calmed his breathing while lowering his energy emission to the lowest state, to that of a normal person. This way, others would have a hard time detecting him by his aura.

A few minutes later, two shadows galloped down the mountain at shocking speeds. Their speed was comparable to that of horses. Furthermore, the two actually looked exactly the same, with the only difference being their weapons. One had a long bow, while the other had a serpent spear. Both had looks of ruthlessness and killing intent.

“We found them!” The spear-wielder softly said, “Older brother, don’t act rashly. They should be in the tent.”

The bow-wielder snickered, “Rentou, let me give them a few transparent holes first. Take my four-arrow chain-shooting!”

“Okay.”

The bow-wielder pulled out an arrow from his quiver, which was immediately shot at the tent. With lightning speed, he pulled out three more arrows and shot each one in rapid succession, punching four holes in the tent. This man's cultivation and training was definitely quite astonishing, and he could easily be considered an outstanding archer.

The spear-wielder charged forward while striking down with a flaming spear.

Boom!

The tent immediately disintegrated into a pile of ashes.

"They're not here?" The bow-wielder looked blankly, "They can't have already left, right?"

"After them!"

"Sounds good!"

The two dashed out with the speed of lightning.

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When the two disappeared from view, Lin Mu Yu let out a breath, "Who in the world were those two?"

Chu Yao took a deep breath, “Ah... A pair of twin cultivators. They are probably the Gemini Saints of the Seven Martial Saints. Ah Yu, get our horses quickly. We can’t stay here tonight.”

“Got it.”

The two immediately rushed over to get their horses. This time, Lin Mu Yu was prepared as he kept his spirit sense active on the surroundings. Suddenly, he realized that balls of energy from the distance had increased in speed, he exclaimed, “Chu Yao, careful. They’re back.”

As he spoke, something whistled through the air.

Immediately creating an Ebony Scale in front of him, Lin Mu Yu blocked off three successive arrows. All three arrows had been blown away.

In the dark of the night, two figures slowly walked into the light. The bow-wielder laughed coldly, “I guess the rumored Lin Mu Yu definitely knows a trick or two. To be able to avoid my triple chain-shot, not bad.”

Schiing

Lin Mu Yu pulled out Prairie Fire, and asked insipidly, “Who are you?”

The bow-wielder sneered, “One of Seven Martial Saints, Song

Bafu!”

The spear-wielder chuckled, “One of Seven Martial Saints, Song Rentou!”

Chapter 43 : One Against Two

“Use Intoxicating Breeze, I’ll stall for time.”

Lin Mu Yu softly whispered to Chu Yao, then walked out.

Chu Yao obediently sprinkled a bottle of Intoxicating Breeze onto the ground. Luckily, she was upwind on the hill. The poison wafted with the wind towards the two attackers, but neither seemed to have noticed.

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“Seven Martial Saints again?”

Lin Mu Yu stood calmly and frowned, but did not go on the offensive. “Ever since I left Silver Fir City, I haven’t offended anyone else. You guys don’t have to hunt me down like this. If there is anything valuable currently on me, I would gladly hand it over in exchange for my life.”

Saying this much was for nothing else but stalling time. After all, he still had several injuries right now. The arrow wound in his chest had not completely healed before a Scorching Wind Mercenary’s team captain had stabbed him again, adding injury to injury.

Right now, the two opponents before him were both powerful enemies. Rentou and Bafu were both covered in the faint gloss of

energy shields. This identified them as experts of around level 50 Battle Saints. One was already tricky; now that there were two, Lin Mu Yu would not even have a chance in hell if he was to face off with them directly. As such, he had to wait until Intoxicating Breeze took effect, and that process would need at least another 5 minutes.

"Is that so?"

Song Bafu slowly pulled back the bowstring of his bow and readied two arrows. Laughing cockily, he asked, "You mean to tell me that there are other things on you more valuable than your head?"

"Of course!"

Lin Mu Yu's heart almost jumped up into his throat. Taking out the four throwing knives from his waist pouch, he combined them into a four-pronged throwing star, "Look here, this is a weapon presented to me by Flame Cauldron Qu Chu. It's called the Sonic Blade, a famed weapon of General Feng Yi Cheng. You guys have probably heard of his name, right?"

"Quit it with your delusions, brat. You think you can fool us?"

Rentou tugged on his spear and calmly stated, "You're just trying to stall for time. Feng Yi Cheng was a famous general of the last generation. A pillar of the Empire, so how could his weapon be in the hands of a nameless squirt like you?"

“You can decide whether or not to believe me. In any case, this was given to me by Flame Cauldron Qu Chu, and he was Feng Yi Cheng’s close friend.” Lin Mu Yu’s voice went up a decibel and sounded particularly powerful.

Song Bafu began to waver, “Is it truly Feng Yi Cheng’s weapon?”

“How could it be fake?” Lin Mu Yu faintly smiled, then raised the sword in his right hand, “This sword’s name is Prairie Fire. It came from Ye Liang of the Seven Martial Saints. You guys have probably heard of this as well, correct?”

Song Rentou’s gaze grew cold, “You little brat actually killed Ye Liang and seized his horse and weapon!”

Although these brothers were also two of the Seven Martial Saints, their family background was still nothing compared to that of Ye Liang’s. Ye Liang was said to be very wealthy, so getting his hands on a spirit-forged weapon like Prairie Fire was not a problem at all. However, Rentou and Bafu were both of commoner descent; they could only wish to have a spirit-forged weapon in their dreams. Their weapons right now were at best only high quality versions of normal weapons.

“It really is the Prairie Fire!” Song Bafu’s eyes were already overflowing with greed. Licking his lips, he smiled greedily, “It is truly ‘You can wear down a pair of iron shoes and find jack squat when you try, but then a free meal will fall on your lap when you don’t try at all’. Prairie Fire is said to be a 3rd Tier Spirit level weapon, but to think it would be in this brat’s hands. Younger brother, we’ve hit the jackpot this time. This Prairie Fire can

probably sell for over ten thousand gold Yin... HAHAHAHA..."

"Don't be so quick to count the money!"

Lin Mu Yu laughed and returned Prairie Fire back to its sheath, "I didn't say I was going to present it to you guys yet!"

Song Rentou's eyes flickered with a ruthless fierceness as he smiled, "Did you think that you would have the right to say what you want? After we cut off the head of you and that little girl, these treasures will naturally be ours!"

Lin Mu Yu couldn't help but laugh, "Do you really think you guys can beat me?"

At the next second, the gourd martial spirit emerged from his body at its master's call.

It was Song Rentou's turn to laugh, "Ouh, so you have a 10th rank Green Gourd. You only have an auxiliary martial spirit yet you are so cocky. Heh, brat, your martial spirit scared little old me to death!"

"Is that so?"

Lin Mu Yu's smile turned into a smirk. Channeling true energy into his martial spirit, the green gourd's color rapidly changed into silver, then blue, and finally red. This was an alternation between 4 layers of power, signifying that this spirit had obtained 4 skills!

“What… how it that possible?” Song Bafu blurted out with his mouth wide open, “This… this brat’s spirit only has four layers, but it has absorbed four spirit abilities? One for each layer? How is that possible? Even the strongest martial gods of the Empire couldn’t possibly have this kind of luck, right?”

Indeed, there was probability involved in the absorption of martial spirit abilities. Absolute power was not the sole factor in the making of a strong practitioner, the element of luck could also play an important role. The few extremely lucky people who had continuously obtained new skills could very easily improve their cultivation level by a great amount from that alone. This was the reason for Song Bafu’s astonishment.

“I’m not done yet!”

As if purposefully playing around, Lin Mu Yu suddenly lifted his left hand and tossed a punch into the air. With a loud bang, a huge rock in the distance exploded into pieces. Lin Mu Yu’s cultivation was already far from how it was in the beginning.

Song Rentou was overwhelmed by awe. He had never seen a martial arts technique as mysterious as this!

“That is…?” Song Bafu was a bit more knowledgable. His gaze turned colder as he asked, “Sonic Punch… It’s Flame Cauldron Qu Chu’s secret technique, Sonic Punch! Goddamn brat, did you become an apprentice to Flame Cauldron Qu Chu? Did that old fellow not put about a warning that he would never take in any

disciples? To think that he would pass on his secret technique to you… Who are you to Flame Cauldron Qu Chu?”

“I’m Qu Chu’s student!” Lin Mu Yu calmly replied, “If you two know what’s best for you, then hurry up and leave while I don’t want to take your lives. Or else, you won’t only have offended me, but also Flame Cauldron Qu Chu. Were he to catch wind of this, do you think he would simply let the matter go with you two?”

Song Rentou grew slightly wary at the exclamation.

However, Song Bafu’s face had nothing but greed and determination. He coldly sneered, “Not a problem. Dead men can’t talk. Little brother, let’s go!”

“Yes!”

…..

Both men called out their martial spirits. They were undeniably of the same blood, as both of their martial spirit were big black bears, beast-type spirits with great amounts of raw strength!

“Ah Yu, be careful!” Chu Yao softly said.

Lin Mu Yu waved his hand, signaling to her that he would be fine by himself.

Gradually raising his energy level, the Green Gourd's scarlet luster became more and more concentrated. At the same time, rows of gourd vines wrapped around the outer gourd rampart. Finally, the outermost layer was covered in the flame-red Ebony Scale. This time, Lin Mu Yu didn't have a choice. He had to stay on the defensive in a 1v2 situation because the Gourd was originally not an offensive martial spirit. The fact that he had the Ebony Scale, however, meant that his defensive strength was enough to ward off attacks.

He was in too great a need for time. Once Intoxicating Breeze took effect, he'd be able to defeat the two men before him. However, he would still need to wait another minute or two.

"Kill him!"

Song Bafu bellowed and three arrows flew out like shooting stars. The arrowheads tore through the air with clear tracks. Furthermore, rows of Black Bear spirit energy coiled around the arrow shafts, making them look like undefendable missiles of doom.

Boom Boom

Two loud explosions marked the collisions as Lin Mu Yu trembled on impact. Tiny cracks appeared on the Ebony Scale, but luckily its defense was strong enough to not break immediately. He quickly tossed out the four throwing blades, all of which began to quickly swirl in the air with murderous intent. Song Bafu could only carry his bow along as he dodged the attacks, since he had no way of shooting safely anymore.

The flame-red Ebony Scale encircled Lin Mu Yu, while he condensed most of his true energy into pieces of Verdant Shell that attached to his skin. It was a shame that he did not come across any Iron Pear Flowers on the way, or else he would have topped it all off with a bit of Stoneskin potion.

“Die!”

Song Rentou yelled out as he stabbed forward with his serpent spear. With the spear tip enveloped in blazing crimson flames, he struck at the sides and instantly broke open a gap in the Ebony Scale. This Song Rentou’s strength was much stronger than his older brother’s!

The sweet taste of blood rushed up his throat, and Lin Mu Yu couldn’t help but grumble. The enemy was already able to make his blood boil in a single attack. This kind of opponent was most definitely the most problematic!

In the blink of an eye, the Gourd Rampart had been punctured several times, and had become riddled with gaping holes!

Woosh!

Song Rentou used his crafty attack once more, and instantly broke through the Ebony Scale’s defense. The long spear tip pierced through the rampart created from two layers of gourd vines. It slashed with a whistling sound at Lin Mu Yu’s neck, and left a bloody trail behind. Luckily, Lin Mu Yu was quick to avoid

the attack, or else he would have been impaled through the throat!

A chill crept into his heart as a feeling of strengthlessness could be felt from his energy center. He was about to run out of usable energy.

Right at that moment, Chu Yao's silver needles whistled through the air as they punctured into Song Rentou's energy shield one after another, resulting in blazing sparks splashing off the barrier.

"Not dead yet?!"

Song Rentou broke out into laughter while the flames on his spear surged out violently. He didn't even pay attention to Chu Yao's attacks; instead, he stabbed with confidence at Lin Mu Yu's chest.

Agh

A hand grabbed onto the spear tip while blood instantly began to spill from the fleshy gashes. Lin Mu Yu endured the pain in his hand as he tried his best to prevent his opponent's spear from stabbing into his chest. At the same time, he swung his sword at the spear shaft, but couldn't do much more than leave a centimeter deep groove in the shaft. Prairie Fire's sharpness was not enough to chop a purely metallic spear like this.

"Die!"

Song Rentou's face was covered in viciousness. With a violent cry, he slowly thrusted his spear into Lin Mu Yu's shirt, digging in about 3 centimeters.

In the moment between life and death, Lin Mu Yu could only feel a wave of flame energy surging within the Prairie Fire. It was the sword's spirit-forged effect. At the moment when its owner was about to die, the beast spirit within the sword had finally attempted to save its master!

Along with a loud beast roar, the energy form of a flaming tiger emerged from Prairie Fire, then proceeded to pierce through Song Rentou's chest plate!

"Ough!"

Song Rentou's eyes opened wide as he slowly fell on his back. A giant bloody hole appeared in the middle of his chest. This was a 3rd Tier Spirit Level weapon's power!

....

"Little bro!"

Song Bafu yelled out in alarm and immediately drew his bow. Yet before he could do anything, he suddenly felt as if his surroundings were becoming blurrier. At the same time, the true energy in his arms quickly dissipated, so much so that he was no longer able to even draw his bow.

“What’s happening!?” His mind fell into confusion.

Chapter 44 : The Conflicted Tang Xiao Xi

Crash!

Song Bafu crashed onto the floor like a pile of tofu. The talks of treasures and gold were all things of the past, because all that was on his mind was the thought of staying alive. In his blurry vision, he saw that his twin brother was already lying dead still on the ground with a bloody hole in his chest.

Song Rentou, dead!

Song Bafu could only try to run. Using all the strength he could muster, he crawled along the grass without even bothering to pick up his long bow. However, his true energy and strength were quickly dissipating due to Intoxicating Breeze to the point that he didn't even have the strength to crawl anymore.

....

"Ah..."

Lin Mu Yu took a deep breath as he collapsed onto the ground. He had used up almost half of his energy in defending against the two strong warriors' attacks. His martial spirit was heavily wounded while his internal organs suffered the heavy backlash of overexertion, so much so that his breathing became abnormally irregular.

Chu Yao stood up and felt for Song Rentou's breath. "He's dead. What about the other one?"

Lin Mu Yu sat silently as he remarked, "We've killed a lot of people, but... if we allow Song Rentou to escape, he will definitely come back for revenge. I'll leave the choice to you, Chu Yao. I'm too tired right now. I can't even feel the strength in my body anymore."

"Alright."

Chu Yao's look became increasingly stern as she picked up the bloodstained spear lying by Lin Mu Yu's side. Standing up, she stabbed the long spear right through the crawling Song Rentou's back. Fresh blood instantly erupted from the spear wound while Song Rentou ferociously convulsed in pain. Though the man was wildly swinging his limbs around, Chu Yao clenched her teeth and pushed harder. The spear pierced through Song Rentou's body and stabbed solidly into the ground, leaving Song Rentou to die as he stayed pinned down.

She gradually turned around to face Lin Mu Yu. Her short hair fluttered in the night breeze, but there was no longer any hints of the innocence and naivety of a young girl. Instead, there was a look of determination and tenacity.

Lin Mu Yu looked at her in silence, but deep down, it was as if a knife was cutting straight through his heart. What kind of world could transform Chu Yao so much? Were it not for those gold-seeking mercenaries and their relentless pursuit, perhaps Chu Yao would not be the way she was right now. Of course, Grandpa Chu

Feng's death had a great impact on Chu Yao, so that was probably the biggest reason for her change.

Looking at the pot of soup nearby, Chu Yao turned and smiled at Lin Mu Yu, "Ah Yu, luckily our dinner wasn't ruined by the battle. Let's eat first. You're wounded, so we'll set off tomorrow, alright?"

"Sounds good!"

After having his fill of dinner, Lin Mu Yu sat stoically as he focused his energy into self recovery. Due to the injuries he's suffered, he had to carefully nurture his body back to good health. Otherwise, he might end up with unseen injuries or even disabilities. For a martial artist, there was nothing more important than a healthy body.

As such, he didn't spend too much time training at night, instead focusing mainly on healing his injuries and exhaustion.

As he leaned against the cold rock wall, his mind wandered back to the events of the last few days. Ever since he had arrived at this world, killing and being hunted both seemed to have become a natural occurrence. He was conflicted with how he felt towards things like killing a human being. However, now that there were two corpses lying a short distance away, he was surprised at how he had grown accustomed to it all.

The meandering then lead to Tang Xiao Xi. What was that beautiful yet kind-hearted princess doing now? If she knew of him becoming a fugitive of the Empire, how would she react?

In the next second, he recalled the look on Tang Xiao Xi's face as she slept peacefully under the moonlight. Her beautiful countenance and tranquil character... She was probably the most amazing girl he's ever met in his whole life.

The scorching pain of his wounds shook him out of his thoughts, so he gave up and decided to go to sleep. Due to his energy reserve having been mostly drained in the fight, he needed to quickly rest up to recover his energy. Who knows what kind of enemies would be waiting for him on the road?

In the blink of an eye, daylight had arrived at dawn, accompanied by the howls of Swift Wolves in the distance.

Suddenly, Lin Mu Yu was startled awake from his dream. An aching pain was felt in his chest, but he didn't know what had happened. He could only clench down on his teeth and force himself to sleep, although he was unable to fall asleep in any way.

....

At the same moment elsewhere deep in Dragon Seeker Forest...

Clusters of bonfires burnt restlessly around a camp within a small valley. Almost everyone had fallen asleep. A few guards remained on guarding duty with weapons in hand, but most of them could be seen dozing off as they leaned against trees for support. They had entered Dragon Seeker Forest for quite a few days already, but they had yet to find any news on Lin Mu Yu.

Honestly, most of the men wanted to return home to the Capital, but the willful little princess was unwilling to give up.

The light of the bonfire danced and shined on the beautiful girl's face.

Wrapped in a fur blanket was the beautiful figure of Tang Xiao Xi. Her body trembled slightly. A blanket was simply unable to ward off the autumn chill.

She slowly opened her eyes, her dark pupils looking as if they were gemstones. Looking up at the starry sky, her body suddenly grew cold. Her heart felt as if it was being pricked by countless knives. She let out a silent sob as the tears collected in her starry eyes and called out softly, "Mu Mu... Where are you? Please don't die. You have to wait for me..."

....

Shu Shu

Two soft sounds came through the night sky, followed by the sound of two guards crashing down onto the ground. On both of their chests was a single black arrow. The uniform steel arrows signified that the attacker was a close-range archery expert!

"Assassins!"

It was unknown who shouted loudly, but the voice was

interrupted quickly in the chilly night. It sounded as if his throat had been torn apart.

A sliver of cold light swept past Tang Xiao Xi while she jumped up on alert. The Firefox spirit appeared in a ball of fire while she immediately grabbed a sheathed sword next to her and immediately guarded. With a metallic clash, she saw clearly that the enemy was using a long sword. Only a pair of emotionless eyes appeared above the attacker's mask. Having failed the attack, the attacker immediately performed a sweep kick.

Tang Xiao Xi clenched on her teeth and asked angrily, "Who are you all? You dare to attack people from the Duke's Manor of Seven Sea City?"

At the same time, she lifted her slender leg and stepped down with a flame enveloped foot. The extraordinary power immediately interrupted the attacker's kick and directly shattered the attacker's lower leg. The attacker did not respond, instead swinging his sword back around for a fast slice. However, Tang Xiao Xi reacted even faster. With a single turn of her hand, the blade left the sheath and immediately torn open the attacker's throat.

Wretched cries sounded throughout the camp. A dozen guards quickly approached and roared, "Protect the princess! Protect the princess!"

Guards kept falling left and right as the attackers' cold arrows continued firing. The near hundred guards was quickly wounded and killed off. However, those arrows seemingly had eyes, looking

as if they were purposefully avoiding Tang Xiao Xi.

These people want to capture me. Tang Xiao Xi understood the enemy's intention quite clearly. With a sudden movement, the light of the Firefox rose from the sky and transformed into a wave of raging flames. The wave crashed down onto the area, immediately killing 4 assassins.

"Charge out with me!"

Tang Xiao Xi led the way as she was the strongest one of the group.

.....

"Don't let them escape. You have to capture Seven Sea City's princess alive!"

A cold voice was heard from the hill on the right. Tang Xiao Xi couldn't help but feel a chill down her spine.

Behind her, a guard lifted a heavy shield to continuously block the incoming arrows. Manipulating his energy into his voice, he shouted, "Who are you? Why are you attacking us?"

In the incoming crowd, a masked figure laughed aloud, "Someone who is about to die won't need to know that much!"

Tang Xiao Xi replied coldly, “You guys are Warrior Company’s men, aren’t you?”

“Ou, as expected of the 2nd most beautiful girl of Lanyan City, Tang Xiao Xi. To be so exceptionally intelligent, us coming all this way was not in vain, hahahaha!” In the darkness, a sharp-sounded voice laughed cruelly, “Capture Tang Xiao Xi alive for the five hundred thousand gold Yin reward. As for those unnecessary personnel, send them on their way. They don’t have any value anymore!”

At least a few hundred black-clothed figures rushed out from all directions, all with a sword in hand.

Tang Xiao Xi’s heart grew colder. She looked with regret at the guards as her voice trembled, “I’m sorry. It’s my fault that you all might die here tonight. It’s all my fault. I shouldn’t have acted so rashly. I’m sorry…”

A guard spoke with determination in his eyes, “Princess Xi, it’s not your fault. It’s just that this Warrior Company actually dared to attack you. How outrageously audacious and proud. We’ll just have to kill a way out and the duke will definitely call upon the army to trample down every Warrior Company on this continent! These bastards. This is practically treason! We…”

Before he could finish, his throat was already punctured by a sharp arrow. Unable to speak another word, he crashed stiffly onto the ground.

The strongest of the guards were at most practitioners of Earth realm's first stage, so they basically had no way of fending off the countless men of the Warrior's Company.

"Princess, we'll watch your back and cover your charge. You can use your Firefox to raise your mobility, so you should be able to get away in a forest like this. Leave quickly!" A guard rushed over with his shield raised high. He hid his head below the shield, but his legs were continuously hit with arrows. Time and time again, he looked as if he was about to fall, but continued charging forward.

The other dozen of guards also rushed forward. They knew that it meant death, but there was already no other way out.

....

Tang Xiao Xi looked with bloodshot eyes. Regret and hate boiled deep within her chest. The Firefox chirped softly on her shoulder as if trying to console its master.

In the next moment, Tang Xiao Xi unleashed another flame charge. She grabbed her sword and leapt into the air. The Firefox cried out wildly as rows of fierce flames appeared under Tang Xiao Xi's feet. Although it was no where close to the speed of Starfall Steps, this was probably enough to shake off those wandering warriors of the Warrior Company.

Tragic cries came from behind as the guards fell one by one to the hands of the warriors.

Tang Xiao Xi felt as if thousands of arrows had pierced her heart. Her tears sparkled and scattered in the night breeze, but she ran towards Lanyan City's direction without turning her head. She knew that she wouldn't be able to save Lin Mu Yu anymore. Even the question of whether she could survive this situation was an unknown.

Thorns and thistles torn apart the luxurious clothing and left scratches on her skin, but it was as if Tang Xiao Xi couldn't feel pain anymore as she paced unceasingly towards the distance with the Firefox ability.

The sound of the pursuers continued unceasingly as well. When the warriors realized the Firefox's increase mobility, they were already regretting letting her run. As such, they even began to shoot out arrows in hopes of hunting Tang Xiao Xi down.

Pu

A scorching sensation suddenly came from Tang Xiao Xi's back while she staggered onto the ground. An excruciating pain was then felt coming from her back.

She had been struck!

Chapter 45 : Fantastic Kill Steal

Dragon Seeker Forest : a patch of dense woods surrounding the whole Capital Lanyan City. Spirit beasts of all shapes and sizes roam freely within it. According to legends, someone had once found a spirit beast of one hundred thousand years old, an existence that only a God realm practitioner could possibly handle, but this was still just a legend. To this day, the Imperial army continue to patrol and protect the surrounding area, preventing civilian entry. One reason was to protect the safety of civilians, the other was that the rich resources and spirit beasts would all belong to royal or noble use.

....

Within Dragon Smelting Valley, a river valley in the southwest of Dragon Seeker Forest, was home to a number of spirit beasts with age ranging from hundreds to thousands of years old. Fenced off by the royal family, this place became the “Emperor’s Hunting Ground” of legends.

It was very exciting in Dragon Smelting Valley today. Iconic flags waved proudly, almost covering the sunlight. Countless armored soldiers gathered in the area. As the sound of hooves sounded throughout the valley, the army surrounded a group of finely dressed people. In the center was a luxurious horse carriage painted in gold. The wheels of the carriage were decorated with figures of a dragon and a Purple Yin flower pieced together with only rare gemstones. The dragon symbolized the epitome of power, while the Purple Yin flower was the clan insignia of the Qin bloodline. As such, the flower was also the symbol of the whole Empire.

Ssh ssh...

The carriage's golden curtain lifted to reveal the face of a middle-aged man of around 50 years old. His face appeared extra anxious, but the golden crown and his powerful gaze identified him as the Qin Empire's supreme ruler : Light Emperor Qin Jin!

"Where is Xiao Yin?" Qin Jin asked.

Next to the carriage, a general on a black warhorse answered respectfully, "Your majesty, Her Highness Yin brought along a group of guard to hunt down a 3000 years old fan dragon!"

"Oh? A fan dragon?" Qin Jin furrowed his brows, "Was there enough guards with her? There are quite a number of dangers in Dragon Seeker Forest, so tell Xiao Yin to be careful and don't run outside of the hunting grounds."

"Yes, your majesty! The Forbidden Army's General Feng Ji Xing (Wind Strider) had already personally brought his men along, so please rest assured Your Majesty."

"Hm, good."

...

In the woods, a fan dragon ran wildly as it breathed in short

breaths. It was bleeding from the countless arrows embedded into its back. Fan dragon was one of the lower grade dragons in addition to being an earth dragon, so it was considered a kind of pseudo-dragon. Although it could not be considered a true dragon, this fan dragon had the cultivation age of 3000 years. Its umbrella-shaped head had three golden veins branching from the center.

Pu!

Having taken another arrow in the rump, the fan dragon became even more agitated and its gaze began to turn vicious. Immediately turning around, it spat out a wave of fierce flames at the attackers.

Parting from the thickets was a white stallion with an extremely stunning girl on its back. Her navy blue cloak with golden dragon patterns wrapped around her delicate and alluring figure. When the hood of the cloak fell back with the wind, a head of dark black hair appeared below. Exquisite cheeks flushed with color, while her lips carried a smile that was brighter than all the stars in the sky. The whole person seemed like a piece of perfect jade that fell into this patch of dangerous forest.

“Be careful, Your Highness Yin. You’re going too fast!” The guard behind her yelled out loudly.

But why would Qin Yin care about all that? She spurred her horse on and charged towards the wounded fan dragon. Smiling, she called, “Little fan dragon. Come here like a good boy. I can help you die faster!”

The fan dragon roared out softly and suddenly leapt into the air, bringing its flaming claws down towards this Imperial princess.

Qin Yin looked surprised but relaxed as she pushed with her palm, “You still won’t give up? God Binding Chains!”

Boom

Accompanying a loud bang, a several meter-long chains broke out of the ground and struck directly to the fan dragon’s belly. The golden chains beamed with glaring brightness while the attack seemingly caused penetrating damage on the spirit beast. The golden shapes of ancient characters floated around the golden chains. This martial spirit’s power was so shocking that it was far beyond an average practitioner’s understanding.

“Uwe uwe…”

Under the heavy attacks of the God Binding Chains, the fan dragon cried out in pain. It did not dare to continue fighting any longer, instead choosing to turn around immediately and scrambled towards the dense thickets. Unfortunately, it dove into a field of thorny flowers. The fan dragon’s wounded scales were immediately marked with rows of bloody scratches.

Seeing that the fan dragon ran away again, Qin Yin perched her little mouth and was about to immediately set off to chase it while shouting, “Don’t you leave now. If you’re a good man, then stay and fight me for 300 rounds!”

Right at that moment, a man rode closer from the distance. He wore a suit of golden armor and carried a pristine scimitar in his hand. Laughing heartily, he said, “Your Highness Yin, I finally found you!”

The man’s sharp brows and starry eyes added to his handsome face, and extruded a lively and energetic aura.

“Oh, it’s General Feng!” Qin Yin smiled, “That fan dragon ran away again. I have to catch it today, or else I won’t even have the mind to eat dinner tonight…”

Feng Ji Xing didn’t know if he should laugh or cry. Bowing with his fist, he said, “Your Highness, if you won’t eat dinner, wouldn’t His Majesty worry about you? We’re about to reach the edge of the hunting grounds, so it’s definitely a little dangerous now. Don’t worry, Your Highness, why not allow me to capture that fan dragon for you?”

Qin Yin’s starry eyes glanced over his face and hesitated for a second, “I don’t believe you. Let’s do it this way: We’ll split into two groups. You’ll go from the north, I’ll go from the south. Let’s see which one of us will catch this fan dragon first!”

Feng Ji Xing didn’t dare to continue facing this royal princess who was beautiful beyond belief. Quickly grabbing his blade, he handsomely performed the Imperial salute and answered, “Yes, your highness!”

….

Seeing that a dense forest of thorn flowers blocked off his path, Lin Mu Yu was a little anxious. The sky was getting darker, perhaps it would be dusk in the blink of an eye. He walked on ahead and began to clear out a path with Prairie Fire . Turning around, he said, “Chu Yao, we must past through this area before dusk and find a suitable camp. According to the markings on the map, perhaps we might be able to arrive at Lanyan City by tonight!”

Chu Yao rode calmly on the stallion, while a faint aura revolved around her body. Opening her pain of pretty eyes, she laughed, “Don’t worry, Ah Yu. If we don’t really have to, we basically don’t need to enter the Capital. After all, our bounties might still be hanging on the Capital’s gates!”

Lin Mu Yu touched the stubble on his chin and laughed, “Probably not. I haven’t shaved at all for so many days that I’m afraid I probably look nothing like the person on the bounty. Whereas you have cut your hair short, so I don’t think anyone would recognize us if we enter the city. Furthermore, if anyone does recognize us, we could just deny it all together.”

Chu Yao couldn’t help but be speechless, “Wow, Ah Yu, you’re becoming more brazen by the day!”

Lin Mu Yu continued cutting down the thorny bushes before them, “This is our 11th day of exile, so the one thing that I want to do the most now is to take a hot bath. Then I want to sleep on a warm bed for a night. Don’t you want to live a normal life too?”

“I do, but seeing our current situation, I’m afraid that it would be something of a luxury…” Chu Yao answered quietly.

Suddenly, she lifted her head and smiled, “Ah Yu, your cultivation speed has always been 10 times faster than an average person, but you haven’t gotten any change after you broke into Earth realm’s second stage. How about it? Does it feel like you’re about to breakthrough yet?”

Lin Mu Yu shook his head, “Hm, ever since yesterday, every time I meditate for energy regeneration, I couldn’t feel the growth of true energy at all. I’m thinking that I’ve reached a bottleneck; but since we have still yet to find a suitable spirit beast, I’ll just have to go with the flow. If a 3000 or 4000 years old spirit beast of suitable nature comes our way, then it will be perfect. However… My wounds haven’t completely healed yet, so if we were to really run into a 3000 years or older spirit beast, I don’t think we’ll even be able to handle it. I’m afraid that we might even throw our lives away in that case!”

Chu Yao chuckled, “Then let’s train slowly. Many people who struggled for their whole life might not even break through level 50, yet you had trained for not even a month and you’ve already reached level 49. In the eyes of a normal person, you’re already like a genius that comes once a hundred thousand years.

Lin Mu Yu smirked, but did not respond. He actually never told Chu Yao that he had technically cheated the system. Furthermore, there was still a part of the Seven Star Mystic power that Seven Star Emperor left inside his body. Otherwise, his progress would definitely not be this fast.

....

Not long after, they had passed through this patch of thorn flower thicket. When Lin Mu Yu flipped on the horse, he suddenly heard a loud roar from afar. A spirit beast with a umbrella-like head was coming his way!

“That is...” He asked with slight consternation.

Chu Yao suddenly recalled, “I’ve seen this kind of spirit beast mentioned in books in the Silver Fir City’s library. It’s a fan dragon. Good heavens... There are three golden stripes and two dark stripes. It’s a 3200 years old fan dragon, and it also looks like it’s wounded. Ah Yu, your opportunity is here. Prepare to attack!”

“Right!”

Lin Mu Yu did not care whether this fan dragon was wounded or not. Raising his palm to call out his martial spirit, instantly rows of gourd vines slid across the ground and quickly coiled around the fan dragon. In the next moment, Sonic Blade had already flew out from his hand. With two slashing sounds, the large throwing star left three deep gashes on the fan dragon’s neck.

This spirit beast had already neared its death, so what kind of regrets could it have? It had first been wounded by the Imperial Princess, then killed by some no-name brat from out of nowhere.

At this moment, the fan dragon was full of regret. If it had known this earlier, it would have never ran away. Dying at the hands of that peerless beauty would have been good as well!

Drawing Prairie Fire out of its sheath, Lin Mu Yu dashed over using Starfall Steps and dodged the fan dragon's flame spitters with an exquisite use of butterfly step. The lightning on the sword sparked fiercely as it collided with the flame and chopped down cruelly towards the side.

Kacha

This time half of the fan dragon's head had tilted to one side, looking like it was going to be decapitated in the next second.

Lin Mu Yu pulled out his sword then stabbed once more. The power stab punctured through to the spirit beast's heart, causing flame energy to continuously seep out and ignite the surrounding bushes. Crying out one last wail, the fan dragon knelt before this no-name brat's sword, bringing along all of its unwillingness and regret.

Chapter 46 : Feng Ji Xing (Wind)

Steaming flames arose from the corpse of the fan dragon and collected into a pool of energy in the air. This 3200 years old beast spirit was the most valuable essence of the fan dragon.

“Ah Yu, now!”

“Alright!”

Lin Mu Yu quickly called out his gourd. The scarlet gourd quickly grew in size as it began to furiously absorb the fan dragon’s spirit. At the same time, Lin Mu Yu summoned the Refining Cauldron, which materialized in an energy form and enveloped both man and martial spirit within it. The system fairy Lulu also appeared, flapping her transparent wings, she laughed, “Big bro, it won’t be easy if you want to completely refine this beast spirit. You still need sufficient water to cool down the fan dragon’s wild flames.”

“Oh.” Lin Mu Yu turned to his side and called out to Chu Yao, “Sis, could you get me a bit of water?”

“Got it!”

Chu Yao immediately grabbed the waterskin and left for the stream that they passed a short while ago. Ten minutes later, she returned and poured out the contents of the waterskin into the energy cauldron that was floating in the air. Surprisingly, she saw that the water seemingly moved with the wind, and was slowly being evaporated by an unknown heat source. Chu Yao was quite

curious and intrigued, because though she's seen people refine beast spirits before, none had ever used Lin Mu Yu's method.

As the water continued to the cool the raging heat within the beast spirit, Lin Mu Yu opened his arm and manipulated his true energy into a large energy hand. The large hand sifted through the beast spirit as he tried to find the purest essence that could possibly give him and new spirit beast technique.

After about 20 minutes, he finally arrived at an especially pure and dense beast spirit. Lin Mu Yu faced an extremely strong retaliation when he attempted to catch the spirit, so not long after, his forehead was already drenched in sweat. However, he still didn't give up. After near 5 minutes of wrestling with the spirit, that surge of power finally flew into the cauldron as obediently as a dog.

"Huuu..."

Taking in a deep breath, Lin Mu Yu finally opened his eyes. The Refining Cauldron dissipated into puffs of smoke. This fan dragon's spirit had already been completely refined by him, and had also given him a new ability.

"Congratulations, big bro. This ability is transforming dragon scales into a shield wall. What do you plan on calling this skill?" Lulu asked with a bright smile.

"Let's call it Dragon's Rampart then!"

“Alright.”

At this moment, the gourd had turned into a bright orange color. When Lin Mu Yu gave a low call, a wave of dense dragon power quickly filled the gourd wall, and began to form a layer of orange scales onto the wall. This was Dragon’s Rampart at work. This signified that Lin Mu Yu’s defensive power increased another fold. His enemies will now have to first shatter the Ebony Scale, then break through the Dragon’s Rampart before they could actually hurt Lin Mu Yu’s body. Furthermore, this dragon power seemed quite dense and sturdy, so much so that its defense was clearly much stronger than that of Ebony Scale!

At the same time, he took another deep breath. After raising his energy, he clenched his fist and felt a strangely power slowly collecting on his arm. That energy then formed into a patch of energy shield that protected his right arm.

Chu Yao yelled happily in surprise, “It’s an energy shield! Congratulations, Ah Yu. You’ve just broken into Earth realm’s third stage. You should be a level 50 Battle Saint now!”

Lin Mu Yu was also smiling happily. This luck came too suddenly. If this fan dragon was not wounded ahead of time, perhaps he would never have had a chance to defeat it. The more probable outcome would have been him becoming the dragon’s meal!

....

Right at that moment, the sound of hooves arrived from the distance. He could only see a general in golden armor charging at his location with a claymore in hand. The man's eyes remained on the corpse of the fan dragon.

Feng Ji Xing jumped off his horse. His expression was grave and serious, while his blade-gripping hand gripped even tighter on the handle.

"This fan dragon... was killed by you?" He looked coldly at Lin Mu Yu.

Lin Mu Yu's gaze also became stern. He knew that the man before him definitely did not come in peace. The energy signature on the man seemed impossible to measure, as if this person's energy was at a level that he could not observe. Walking up in front of Chu Yao, he said, "That's right. I killed it. I refined the beast spirit as well."

"Completely refined the spirit of a 3200 years old fan dragon?" Feng Ji Xing looked up at him and gave a cold laugh, "Not bad. Looks like you're pretty lucky."

"Yeah..."

"But, do you know who this spirit beast belongs to?" Feng Ji Xing's expression changed as he continued, "To dare to poach her highness Yin's prey, brat, you are truly not afraid of death!"

Lin Mu Yu had already pulled out Prairie Fire, “I’m sorry. I didn’t know that this spirit beast was wounded because of someone hunting it. However, if you want to kill me, it won’t be that easy.”

“Oh? Is that so?”

Feng Ji Xing smiled faintly. Milky-white energy slowly revolved around his claymore. The white cape behind him also began to move on its own. This type of white cape was made very skillfully. It looked familiar to Lin Mu Yu, but he couldn’t recall where he had seen it before.

It was Chu Yao who noticed the problem. She spoke with hints of fear, “White true energy… it’s fighting energy! Heavens, this person can use fighting energy. He’s a Heaven realm practitioner!”

White fighting energy was a symbol of strength. All practitioners must breakthrough into Heaven realm before they transform true energy into the stronger fighting energy. In the Qin Empire, those who could call about fighting energy were already able to place themselves among the strong.

Feng Ji Xing smirked as he calmly introduced himself, “Heaven realm level 64. Feng Ji Xing. Glad to experience your ability!”

Lin Mu Yu had already called out the gourd bulwark as he spoke, “Earth realm level 50. Lin Mu Yu. Hope to learn from the match!”

The difference was too great.

But he had no choice but to fight, because it was for himself and also for Chu Yao.

....

Ebony Scales began to gather inch by inch over the layers of Dragon's Rampart. Lin Mu Yu sectioned off 80% of his true energy into defensive power. He didn't plan on defeating the opponent before him at all. This person's power rose so quickly that it was already starting to suffocate him. This was the first extremely powerful warrior that he's met so far aside from Qu Chu!

After Feng Ji Xing infused his claymore with his intense fighting energy, he immediately slashed down as he dashed forward with movements that looked like shifting sands.

What he did not expect was that this kid before him would easily avoid him with a sidestep. That one movement looked like a meteor striking ground, so fast and accurate without any hints of hesitation.

Seeing this, he quickly turned around and swiped out with a horizontal slash.

Boom

The energy collision dissipated while Lin Mu Yu's body shook from the force. Outer layers of Ebony Scales had instantly

shattered, a result that sent a chill down his spine. This person's strikes were seriously too fast, so fast that Starfall Steps couldn't even completely avoid them. Furthermore, the attacks carried so much power that only a single hit was able to break the Ebony Scales!

Boom Boom

Following up with two more attacks, Feng Ji Xing's unblockable blade fell right onto the Dragon's Rampart. Lin Mu Yu felt as if his guts had been upturned by the attack, while the dragon scale rampart was slowly cracking apart piece by piece. He knew that his opponent's next attack will definitely crush him, so he couldn't continue without retaliation anymore!

"Binding Coils!"

Stomping his foot on the ground, rows of gourd vines speedily appeared and wrapped tightly around Feng Ji Xing's legs.

"What's this?"

Feng Ji Xing wondered in surprise, then a smile immediately crept onto his face. Channeling energy into his legs, he pulled his legs up off the ground as his fierce fighting energy quickly destroyed the gourd vines. However, right as he looked down, he saw a gourd flower pointed straight at him. A sense of foreboding appeared within him as he quickly swung his sword in a dance-like maneuver.

“Sword Dance!”

The blade danced with his movement, creating streams of violent wind that completely shook off the corrosive poison spray.

Before he could finish, Feng Ji Xing’s felt another chill in his heart when he heard a sharp whistling sound from his side, “How many secret techniques does this kid have?”

Quickly turning around, Feng Ji Xing fiercely swung his claymore to knock down the approaching Sonic Blade. With a metallic clang, he was able to deflect the throwing star away, but he felt a surprising numbness in his arm. His body fell with the force of gravity as he chopped down heavily at Lin Mu Yu’s shoulder.

Lin Mu Yu took a deep breath before immediately lifting his hand and performed a ranged Sonic Punch!

Boom

Sonic Punch’s energy scatter in the air, but Feng Ji Xing only felt a slight bit of discomfort over his chest. An attack of this strength was not enough to harm his well-trained body!

Clang!

The claymore collided with Prairie Fire, and instantly Lin Mu Yu lost composure of his energy. Fresh blood spilled out of his mouth

as he was forced to take several steps back!

He had lost this time, and it was a complete defeat!

Feng Ji Xing's strength completely overwhelmed him to the point that he didn't have a chance at all. In truth, Lin Mu Yu also realized that from the start to the end, Feng Ji Xing did not call out his martial spirit even once. If Feng Ji Xing had summoned his spirit to aid him in combat, Lin Mu Yu imagined that he would probably have lost in a single attack!

Whoosh

Chu Yao quickly dashed forward and stood in front of Lin Mu Yu. Opening her arms to block Feng Ji Xing's way, there was not a hint of fear in her eyes as she said, "Feng Ji Xing, if you want to kill Ah Yu, then you'll have to kill me first!"

.....

Then a surprising scene happened before them.

Feng Ji Xing cooly sheathed his weapon while a bright smile appeared on his face, "I, Feng Ji Xing, am the Commanding General of the Imperial Forbidden Army, and one of the seven White-Robed Royal Guards. I am a man known to uphold justice to the death, so how could I kill the innocent? Furthermore... Chu Yao, you're Chu Huai Dian's sister. If I really were to kill you, then that kid would definitely be at my doorstep!"

Chu Yao stared with astonished eyes, “How… how do you know my big brother?”

Feng Ji Xing laughed, “Chu Huai Dian is now one of the 200 Royal Guards, as well as one of the top practitioners of the bunch, so how could I not know him? He is too focused in training and cultivation that he did not remember to keep in contact with his family. Now that he is serving in the Royal Palace, perhaps he did not even know of your misfortunes. Otherwise, with his personality, he would be worried sick right now.”

As he spoke, Feng Ji Xing looked at Lin Mu Yu and continued, “Ah Yu, your skills are definitely not too shabby. To have this level of cultivation at your age is almost miraculous. It’s also thanks to you that Chu Yao could live to arrive at Lanyan City!”

Lin Mu Yu took a deep breath as he gratefully replied, “Thank you, big brother Feng for the kindness of sparing my life!”

Feng Ji Xing smiled heartily, “I can’t just go and kill someone who called me ‘big bro’ now, especially not someone who could be a future talent of the Empire, right?”

Lin Mu Yu was about to speak again, but it was as if Feng Ji Xing had already known everything. He comforted, “Don’t worry about it. I’ll send my men to bring you two into the Capital and will prepare everything for you. As for the matters in Silver Fir, I’d already sent a friend to investigate the situation three days ago. The truth will emerge when the fog clears, so we’ll be able to clear

you two of any false crimes placed on your heads!”

This time Lin Mu Yu was truly moved. He nodded energetically, “Thank you so much, big brother Feng!”

Feng Ji Xing looked around and said, “We must not stay in this place for long. Bring these two back to the Capital and have them lodge at White Cloud Inn. Treat them well and don’t let them suffer any more! Naturally I’ll go look for them when I get back to the Capital.”

“Yes sir!”

Of the men who accompanied Feng Ji Xing, a general nodded and said to Lin Mu Yu, “Young warrior, please follow me. We’ll head back to the Capital via small paths!”

“Okay!”

.....

When Lin Mu Yu and the group left, Feng Ji Xing finally took out his combat knife and slashed open the fan dragon’s head. Pulling out the bloody spirit stone from within, he laughed, “At least I’ll have something to hand back to her majesty Yin... sigh That idiot Ah Yu. Of all people to steal a spirit beast from, he just had to go and kill steal Princess Yin’s prey. If her majesty finds out the truth, then she will most definitely make his life hell...”

He shook his head frustratingly and slipped the spirit stone into his pocket as he mumbled, “Chu Huai Dian, kid you owe me another favor now. It’s about time that you treat me to some drinks again. This time I’m going to order only the most expensive kinds. Hmph, I’m going to think of it as payback for last time, when you ran away from the bill by pretending to be drunk!”

Chapter 47 : Chu Huai Dian (Lightning)

The clear breeze shook the leaves on the tree branches as Feng Ji Xing sped along on his horse. Behind his white-robed figure was a troop of the Forbidden Army's cavalry. The claymore in his hand shone with the faint luster of battle aura. Although the war horse was moving at a high speed, the sound of its hooves was not very loud. In terms of horsemanship, Feng Ji Xing was already able to become one with his horse, to the point where his skill could be called the best in the Empire.

In the dense woods, a thousand year oak stood stalwartly amidst the canopy. Below the tree's shade stood the Imperial Princess Qin Yin. Holding onto the reins of her horse, she kicked around the pebbles on the ground impatiently. The faces of the guards did not look very happy either. Ever since they had lost track of that fan dragon, the princess had been fuming. No one dared to bother her when she was like that.

Feng Ji Xing leapt off his horse and knelt down on one knee, "Your Highness, I have returned."

Qin Xin asked with a smile, "General Feng, did you catch the fan dragon?"

"I caught it."

Feng Ji Xing nodded, but continued, "Unfortunately, it was too badly wounded. By the time I came across it, it had already lost consciousness. Its beast spirit had already faded, so I had no choice

but to retrieve just its spirit stone. I hope this spirit stone may be of use to you, Your Highness."

Qin Yin looked at the spirit stone in Feng Ji Xing's hand. Her sharp eyes swept across Feng Ji Xing's clothes, and she smiled, "Okay then. Thank you for the hard work, General Feng. I'll keep that spirit stone then."

Feng Ji Xing smiled bitterly, "It is my greatest honor to please Your Highness. The day is late, so we should return soon. His Majesty must already be worried sick. We'll need to get back to Lanyan City before dusk."

"Aye, sounds good!"

.....

This continent had long since been known to its people as "Shattered Cauldron Realm", a name that signified the efforts of the first Saint King Qin Yi. After many hundred years of conquest and governance, the Saint King was finally able to built up this unprecedented great nation that is the Qin Empire much in the way of piecing up shattered fragments of a cauldron.

Shattered Realm's map is separated into two halves horizontally. Colloquially known as the "Qin Ridge", the long stretch of a mountain chain separates the continent into a north and a south half. To the south is a land rich, fertile, and abundant in natural resources. In comparison, the north is slighter cooler. Continuous mountain ranges are common. Countless wealthy cities are

positioned between those frozen ridges.

Dragon Seeker Forest is the most expansive plot of land in all of Ridge North. Within those thousand miles of Dragon Seeker Forest, a magnificent fortress represents the imperial power: Lanyan City!

The wealthy and flourishing Lanyan City ranks at the top of the seven famous cities in the Empire. Reaching heights of 50 meters, its light-green walls stand stalwartly against attackers. With the city's bustling commerce in conjunction with the rich resources within its grounds, Lanyan City represents the economic and political center of the Empire. It houses the Temple revered by martial artists throughout the continent, as well as the headquarter of the Imperial Panacea Division. It is easy to see the importance this city plays in regards to the whole Empire.

.....

Before the sun set, Lin Mu Yu and Chu Yao finally arrived at Lanyan City. Lin Mu Yu's chin had already become covered in a mess of stubble, while Chu Yao's hair was still cut short. Neither of them resembled the wanted posters plastered all over the city gates. Not to mention that they were now accompanied by a Forbidden Army commander, Luolet, a trusted aide of Feng Ji Xing.

Luolet was dressed in a full suit of Imperial armor, with a single golden Purple Yin flower adorning his breast. Aside from the flower, he also wore a single star, identifying him as a thousand-men commander of the Empire.

“Commander!”

The security officer in charge of the gate greeted Luolet with a military salute, then turned to look at Lin Mu Yu and Chu Yao. “Those two do not look like soldiers of the Forbidden Army. Who are they, Commander?”

Luolet responded mildly, with a manner that imposed power but not anger, “These two are General Feng’s friends. They just arrived from Seven Sea City as guests to the Capital. Do they need to be examined further?”

“Ah, no. Of course not. Since they are General Feng’s esteemed guests, then that won’t be necessary.”

The officer at the security station was a mere hundred-men officer, so he naturally didn’t dare to challenge a thousand-men officer like Luolet.

Lin Mu Yu was a little surprised at how the whole process went without a hitch. The two of them unexpectedly snuck into Lanyan City with the group. All along the wide avenues before them were a multitude of shops. The savory smell of meat buns wafted through the air. Lin Mu Yu’s stomach grumbled softly, causing Chu Yao to chuckle, “Hungry?”

“Yeah.” He nodded in embarrassment, “Those buns smell really good!”

Chu Yao laughed, “Don’t worry. Let’s wait until we get to White Cloud Inn.”

Luolet laughed as well, “If you’re talking about buns, then the best buns in Lanyan City will have to be those Yin flower beef-buns from White Cloud Inn. You two will probably get to taste some later. The General will probably come around to see you guys later tonight, so I’ll just help you settle down first.”

“Oh, okay. Thank you, Commander Luolet.”

“No problem. You guys are the General’s friends, so you are my friends too.”

.....

A short while later, the entourage arrived at White Cloud Inn. This was a three-floor guest house. Although it did not look very luxurious, it was probably good enough. At the very least, the savory smell of meat was enough to attract Lin Mu Yu’s attention.

Luolet arranged two adjacent rooms for them. He then fished out a gold coin and invited the two to eat heartily.

Not long after, two bamboo baskets of buns arrived, along with various complementary seasonings.

When Lin Mu Yu opened the bamboo cage, the savory smell of the buns nearly sent him to heaven. Picking up one of the pure white buns, he was able to see the faint purple petals that emitted their special aroma. The smell of the delicious looking beef did not clash with the flower's aroma. Instead, the two smells complemented one another spectacularly.

Luolet smiled as he explained, "The purple petals are the Purple Yin flower, the Imperial flower. This kind of flower can be used in herbology, but can also be used in cooking to serve a relaxation effect. All of the beef here are first-rate loathe beef, so it is fresh and tender. Give it a try!"

Lin Mu Yu bit down without any hints of hesitation. Almost instantly, he felt as if he had reached paradise. He fell in love with those buns after a single bite, so much so that he immediately gobbled down a single basket by himself. In contrast, Chu Yao was far more reserved in her eating manner. She wasn't going to pig out like Lin Mu Yu, but it was true that Lin Mu Yu definitely exhausted more of his stamina in the last few days.

.....

After stuffing themselves to the brim, they waited with Luolet for Feng Ji Xing's arrival.

The problem was that they waited until the sun had set, but he still didn't show. The sky was already completely dark before a single man arrived energetically. He was an extremely handsome youth dressed in a suit of black clothes. He easily leapt onto the second floor with a single jump. Looking around anxiously, he

called out, “Ah Yao… Ah Yao…”

Chu Yao shook when she hear this voice. Immediately turning around to look the intruder in the face, tears streamed out of her eyes, “Older brother…”

The intruder was Chu Yao’s older brother, Chu Huai Dian!

With tears raining down her face, Chu Yao threw herself into Chu Huai Dian’s embrace as she unceasingly struck his shoulder with her fists. Her cultivation was not very low at this point, so the strength of her punches was extra powerful because of her anger. However, Chu Huai Dian did not channel his energy to defend himself, instead choosing to let his sister beat down on him.

“Why didn’t you go back to Silver Fir City?”

When Chu Yao finally tired herself out, she looked at her brother with tear-filled eyes and asked. “Did you know grandpa had died from bad people’s schemes? To think you hid here instead of going back home… What kind of brother are you?”

Chu Huai Dian’s eyes were bloodshot, but he didn’t cry. He clenched his fist and supported Chu Yao with his hand, “Ah Yao, I’m sorry… I had lost myself in cultivation and self-training here at the Capital. I couldn’t have imagined that so much would happen in Silver Fir, and I never would have thought that grandpa would die like this… I have no right to face you guys… Ah Yao, don’t cry. Don’t cry because I will always be by your side from now on…”

Instead of stopping, Chu Yao's sobbing became more intense.

It wasn't until later that Chu Yao finally calmed down and brushed away the tears on her face. Grabbing Lin Mu Yu's hand, she turned to Chu Huai Dian, "Older brother, let me introduce you to someone. This is Ah Yu, a disciple that grandpa had taken in recently, but he is really talented. Were it not for Ah Yu, I probably wouldn't be alive here and talking to you."

Chu Huai Dian looked at Lin Mu Yu with hints of gratitude in his eyes. With slight suspicion in his tone, he asked, "Ah Yu, it must have been hard on you for the whole journey from Silver Fir to Lanyan City... But, it is really true that Ye Liang, Guan Yang, and the other Seven Martial Saints died at your hands? You don't look like..."

Lin Mu Yu knew what he wanted to say, "I don't look very strong, am I right?"

"Yeah..." An embarrassed expression appeared on Chu Huai Dian's face, as if he knew that he was being rude with a question like that.

Though Lin Mu Yu didn't seem to mind, "I had been using stealth weapons and poisons on the whole way. I used whatever I can to survive up to this point, so you can understand now, right?"

Chu Huai Dian nodded and patted Lin Mu Yu's shoulder, "That's enough, I understand. Thank you for giving your all."

“It’s nothing.” Thinking back to the time when his lung was pierced by an arrow and the subsequent near-death experiences, Lin Mu Yu couldn’t help but secretly feel scared. Living is truly great.

At that moment, footsteps were heard ascending the stairs. The especially sturdy steps were accompanied by a flurry of white. Dressed in his white robe, Feng Ji Xing had finally arrived!

Chu Huai Dian grabbed his fist and saluted. Smiling, he said, “Brother Feng, thank you. Your favor is not one I can return with mere words!”

“Oh, you finally realized it?”

Feng Ji Xing had a teasing look on his face, “Brother Chu, you’re truly a heartless bastard. How could you leave such a fresh and pretty sister alone in a faraway place like Silver Fir? If I was in your shoes, I would have brought her to the Capital a long time ago. Since I did you such a huge favor this time, you can at least treat me to a good time over at Rain Listener’s bar.”

Chu Huai Dian’s face showed slight discomfort, “I heard that just drinking there will cost at least 20 gold Yin... That’s too luxurious. Let’s just eat here at White Cloud Inn...”

“You cheapskate.”

“Hey, I only have a monthly salary of 10 gold Yin, so how can I

compare to you, the Chief Commander of the Forbidden Army and a true second level General of the National Guard?”

“Haha, what are you saying all that for! Let’s go downstair and have a good drink!”

“Right!”

.....

With Chu Huai Dian as the host, the group arranged a table down at the eatery. Feng Ji Xing, Lin Mu Yu, and everyone else crowded around a single table. Chu Yao’s mood finally turned for the better and she finally started eating. After the last few days in Dragon Seeker Forest and Seven Star Forest, Lin Mu Yu didn’t have a chance to eat well, so he naturally ate heartily.

When the alcohol had been passed around for the third round, Chu Huai Dian turned to look at Lin Mu Yu. Lin Mu Yu instantly knew something was up, but there was no way around it.

“Ah Yu, I heard that your cultivation isn’t too shabby. How about we spar for a bit after we’re done drinking?”

“Alright.”

Lin Mu Yu’s chest tightened. Those who could become the Emperor’s bodyguards definitely would not be weak. Since Chu Huai Dian could stand among the 200 Imperial Guards, this could

be a good chance to learn directly from a bit of sparring.

....

Chu Huai Dian was a martial art fanatic, so he naturally couldn't let a good opponent like Lin Mu Yu go. This was the reason why he could become such good friends with Feng Ji Xing in the first place.

Chapter 48 : Sparring Trainer

Under the starry sky, Feng Ji Xing stood on the side of the courtyard and watched with excitement. Standing by his side, Luolet laughed, “We’ll get to see Imperial Guard Chu Huai Dian’s magnificent secret art again!”

“Magnificent?” Lin Mu Yu asked in surprise. Martial art is martial art, what’s so magnificent about martial arts?

However, seeing Feng Ji Xing’s serious look, Lin Mu Yu understood that this brother of Chu Yao’s must be quite strong.

Instead, Chu Yao had a worried expression. “Older brother, Ah Yu was heavily wounded a few days ago, so you really have to watch yourself. Not to mention the fact that he is only a level 50 Battle Saint, and you’ve already stepped into Heaven realm.”

Chu Huai Dian gave her a faint a smile, “Don’t worry Ah Yao, I won’t use battle energy then.”

“Okay…”

…..

Starlight fell upon Lin Mu Yu’s new suit of white garment and reflected the burning look in his clear eyes. The journey through Seven Star Forest seemed to have changed his temperament completely, so much that he became more calm and steady. Adding

on to his already handsome appearance, perhaps already so in the eyes of young love-yearning girls, he now looked like a young hero of indomitable spirit.

Looking at the other side, Chu Huai Dian was also an extremely handsome youth. Wearing a vividly-green jacket, he adjusted the special white scarf characteristic of the Imperial Guards. Grabbing his fist, Chu Huai Dian bowed and smiled, “Chu Huai Dian. Heaven realm, level 68, Sky Master. Please to spar with you, Ah Yu!”

Lin Mu Yu frowned in his mind. This guy is level 68, stronger than Feng Ji Xing. This sparring match seems a little pointless now...

However, he returned the salute and said, “Lin Mu Yu. Level 50, Battle Saint. I hope brother Chu will be a little softer with the punches...”

Chu Huai Dian couldn’t help but let out a laugh, “Then Ah Yu, you’ll have to be careful!”

As he spoke, he opened his hand and swirled his energy between his fingers. Suddenly, the wave gushed out of his finger tips and formed an energy formation on his finger tips. The energy collected but did not scatter. The slowly revolving energy field looked as beautiful as the starry sky!

No wonder why Luolet would say that Chu Huai Dian’s secret art is magnificent!

“Star Plucking Finger, transforming true energy into finger strength for attack. Here I come!”

Chu Huai Dian dashed forward with a leap. The index and middle finger of his hand stood straight as an energy blast shot out from his fingertips.

Lin Mu Yu instantly used Butterfly Step in the same moment he formed his Dragon Scale Rampart. Dodging the Star Plucking Finger strike with a fancy flicker step, he immediately threw a punch at Chu Huai Dian’s back before Chu Huai Dian could attack again.

Star Plucking Finger was an attack method that forced energy to be released from the fingertips, so preparing an attack would need some time. Lin Mu Yu gambled on the possibility that because Chu Huai Dian was extremely strong in long range attacks, his weak point could be in close quarters combat.

But he was clearly too hopeful. Chu Huai Dian avoided the punch with a side step, then followed up with a punch of his own towards the Ebony Scale wall.

Boom!

Residual energy scattered when the Ebony Scales trembled. Lin Mu Yu felt his energy reserve and blood rolling over and over from the impact. As expected, Chu Huai Dian was already holding back. This punch was at most carrying not even fifty percent of its power.

“What a strong defense!”

Chu Huai Dian couldn’t help but be amazed. With a laugh, he suddenly lifted both hands. Suddenly, he unleashed a barrage of Star Plucking Finger strikes. Three continuous blasts of energy landed onto the Ebony Scale and quickly shattered the first layer. Those blast crashed onto the Ebony Scale like blinking stars. How could Lin Mu Yu defend against such a strong level of power.

He could only depend on Dragon Scale Rampart now.

Stomping down with his feet, Lin Mu Yu called forth multiple gourd vines from underground. The vines lashed out and coiled around the opponent’s ankles.

Chu Huai Dian did not even bat an eye as he summoned his Purple Sable spirit. With a high pitched cry, it unleashed a sonic boom attack and shattered the gourd vines into pieces. Right when the vines broke, a sudden gust of strong energy came flying through the air. Sonic Punch!

Boom!

Chu Huai Dian did not get a chance to raise his defenses and took the hit directly. Scrunching up and dashing several steps back, his expression seemed to have changed slightly. Ignoring the heavy feeling over his chest, he quickly collected energy on top of his finger. A single stellar energy orb revolved on his fingertip, but this time it was at seventy percent power. He smiled, “Ah Yu, be

careful now!”

Zoom!

This attack was certainly impressive, seeing as it passed directly through the Dragon Scale Rampart. Luckily, the energy strength had nearly dissipated when it reached Lin Mu Yu’s chest. However, Lin Mu Yu was unbelievably shocked. What he thought to be the ultimate defense was like a fragile paper against Chu Huai Dian’s Star Plucking Finger.

Lifting his hand, he collected lightning onto his palm. Turning his hand into a blade of lightning, he dashed forth with Starfall Steps and struck out with his barehanded Lightning Chop!

Bam!

Hot air exploded as an energy shield shattered before Chu Huai Dian’s chest. He took several steps back, while energy still gathering fiercely at his fingertip. However, a few seconds later, he waved his hand and dissipated the energy strength. He laughed, “Let’s stop here. Ah Yu, your cultivation is certainly surprising. To be this strong at your young age, no wonder those mercenaries from Silver Fir were beaten black and blue!”

Lin Mu Yu panted loudly as he gasped for air. In truth, he understood that if Chu Huai Dian were to attack now, he would have no way to defend against it!

Feng Ji Xing was smiling heartily, “That was as entertaining as I expected, but brother Chu, you didn’t get to experience Ah Yu’s swordsmanship. That is quite a shame, you know. Hahaha…”

Chu Huai Dian chuckled, “There will be opportunities to spar again in the future.”

He looked at Feng Ji Xing and continued, “Brother Feng, there is something that I need your help with.”

“I know.”

Being as smart as he was, Feng Ji Xing waved, “I still have some connections within the Capital, so it shouldn’t be too much trouble to send Ah Yao to the Panacea Division to train in medicine refining. Ah Yu, do you want to go there as well?”

“No.”

Lin Mu Yu shook his head, “Big brother Feng, if it is possible, I would like you to write me a recommendation letter for the Temple. I want to refine my martial arts at the Temple.”

“Oh? You want to work at the Temple?”

“Yeah.”

“It’s not impossible, but…” Feng Ji Xing paused for a thought,

“The Temple is a place where your strength determines everything. There are quite a number of Heaven realm practitioners in there. I’m just worried that you’ll be bullied after joining the Temple.”

“Don’t worry. I will become stronger and bully them back!”

“Well said!”

Feng Ji Xing immediately wrote two recommendation letters on the spot. One was to arrange for Lin Mu Yu to join the Temple, while the other one was for Chu Yao to join the Panacea Division. Luckily, since neither of the two had a place to live in Lanyan City yet, joining the Temple and the Panacea Division would at least give them a place to call home. However, in order to not attract attention, Lin Mu Yu used an alias, “Lin Zhi”. What Feng Ji Xing didn’t know was that Lin Zhi was his real name back in the old world.

.....

On the morning of the next day, Lin Mu Yu woke up early and freshened up. Looking at his savings, he found that he only had 51 gold Yin coins left. After all the fighting and running away, he expected that he would have lost quite a bit of money. Since Chu Yao would probably need to spend more money as an alchemist, he put aside 40 gold Yin coins for her and left 11 coins for himself. After all, he reasoned that he wouldn’t need to spend as much in terms of food and clothes anyway.

Because the Panacea Division headquarter was only one street away from the Temple, Chu Yao said while pulling on Lin Mu Yu's arm, "Ah Yu, you have to come see me often, okay? If I'm free, I'll go see you at the Temple as well."

"Yeah, I will."

Lin Mu Yu nodded. Holding the recommendation letter in his hand, he lead his horse towards the towering but stately building in the distance. The Warring Saint Temple called the Empire's cradle of the strong was his destination. The moment he took his first step into the Temple, Lin Mu Yu had walked onto a path of no return, but it was also the path of the strong. Without enough power, he would have to bow down to others. Only by grasping his own strength will he be able to control his own life.

.....

Standing in front of the Temple were two scale-mail-wearing soldiers. In truth, the Empire was the backing behind the Temple, so the talents from the Temple naturally would enter into the Imperial Army to serve the Empire. That's why it was no surprise to see two soldiers guarding the Temple.

"Young man, what is the purpose of your visit?" A soldier asked.

Lin Mu Yu gave them the recommendation letter and replied, "This is a recommendation letter from Commander Feng Ji Xing, Commanding General of the Forbidden Army. I want to join the Temple."

“Oh? General Feng’s recommendation?” The soldier took the letter and skimmed through the contents, then smile, “Ah, since you’re General Feng’s friend, I’ll bring you to see the headmaster.”

.....

The adjacent to the large, heavy main doors of the Temple was a single side door. Light pierced through from outside like a sharp knife cutting through the darkness. The interior of the Temple relied on the countless torches hanging on each side of pillars. Lin Mu Yu looked up towards the ceiling, but was surprised to see that the pillars were actually twelve gigantic bronze statues standing stalwartly over the path. The statues were masterfully made and looked extremely lifelike. They were probably the twelve heroes of the Empire mentioned often in legends, but Lin Mu Yu had no idea who they were exactly.

Walking out of the long hallway, he was outside once more. They had arrived at the opening training grounds, but there were only twenty or so people silently training. Some were practicing their swordsmanship, while others were calmly meditating. By the energy swirling around their bodies, he could tell that these were all strong practitioners.

A short distance away was a domed temple. This was the true center of the Temple.

Dong Dong

The soldier knocked on the door and said, “The boy who General Feng recommended is here.”

“Let him in.”

“Yes, sir.”

The doors slowly opened. Lin Mu Yu walked in after he asked the soldier to lead Ye Liang’s horse to the stable. It was a horse of good stamina and speed, so he naturally would not toss it away.

.....

There were twelve steel seats inside the main temple, but there were only three filled seats. Two elders and a single young man of around thirty years old. The Temple’s greatest power lies within the hands of the twelve deacons, and three out of twelve were in the room.

“Youngster, what is your name?” The white-haired elder asked.

“Lin Zi”

“Stand at the center of the circular platform, then raise your energy to the maximum.”

“Yes, sir.”

Lin Mu Yu walked towards the platform. There was a gigantic crystal under platform. When he started channeling the energy in his body, the crystal began to flicker brightly. The more his mustered his energy, the more energetic the flickering became. Finally, when he reached the peak of his energy level, the elder smiled and said, “Not bad. A new level 50 Battle Saint of Earth realm. Could probably hold the job of a copper-star instructor. How old are you now?”

“24. What’s a copper-star instructor?” Lin Mu Yu asked with a confused face.

The other elder laughed, “Reaching Earth realm’s third stage at 24 years old… This kind of level progression seems to be above that of Deacon Zenfang, haha!”

Right then, the young deacon stood up from his seat in the corner. A smile was on his face as he said, “Deacon Zai Yang, I don’t think someone as young as he could this easily hold the position of an instructor. I don’t think everyone will agree with the decision.”

Zai Yang paused, and asked, “Master Zenfang, what do you have in mind instead?”

Zenfang give him a faint smile, “Why don’t we let him be a trainer first?”

“That would be ok too, I suppose…” Zai Yang did not oppose the suggestion.

....

Lin Mu Yu asked apologetically, “Excuse me, master, what is the difference between an instructor and a trainer?”

The look of disdain and pride dashed through Zenfang’s eyes. He slowly explained with a voice full of undisguised contempt, “There are only two kinds of people in the Temple. One is hits, while the other is there to take hits. Instructors are the ones who hit, and their main job is to handle teaching the various students in battle and fighting techniques. On the other hand, trainers are the ones who will be the training dummy for the instructors. Do you understand now?”

Lin Mu Yu’s heart sunk in an instant, but he still clenched his fist and answered, “I got it!”

.....

Even if a dragon is made to swim forever, one day it will still have the chance to take flight!

Chapter 49 : Silver Star Instructor

“Alright. Follow me, Lin Zhi!”

A middle-age-looking man walked in through the door. He had a fierce beard that looked like it had never been shaved. Raising his sharp brows, the man said with an annoyed tone, “What are you still standing around for? Hurry up. I’m going to show you where you’ll sleep and you’ll start working tomorrow. Hmph, don’t blame me for not warning you now, but working as a trainer is not a job normal people can handle!”

Lin Mu Yu nodded and followed behind the man.

As they kept walking, Lin Mu Yu finally couldn’t help but ask, “Old man, what’s your name?”

After being called an old man, this bearded guy immediately shouted, “My name is Zhang Wei, a level 58 Battle Saint and a silver star instructor. I’m only 23 years old, so if you call me ‘old man’ again, I’m going to snap your little neck!”

Lin Mu Yu nodded, “Instructor Zhang, are silver star instructors very strong?”

“Hmph, you’ll know soon enough.”

Zhang Wei pointed to the silver star on his chest and laughed coldly, “The instructors in the Temple are categorized into 4 tiers:

gold, silver, bronze, and iron. Don't think because I'm not in Heaven realm yet, that I won't be able to teach you a lesson! Off with you, we'll soon be at your room."

"Yes, sir."

.....

Although there weren't very many residences inside the Temple, at least everyone had a single room to themselves. Lin Mu Yu's room was a little worse for wear. A large crack lined the wall and allowed the cold wind to sweep right in. The brick-hard cotton quilt clearly had not been washed in heaven knows how long. Zhang Wei brought Lin Mu Yu to the room, then left immediately after telling him the direction to the cafeteria and where he will need to work tomorrow.

Since he lives here now, Lin Mu Yu felt like he might as well make it more comfortable. Dropping down Prairie Fire in his room, he headed down to the stable to feed his horse before returning back to his room. Given the bright sun outside, he took out the quilt and sheet for a wash. As he was hanging up the bed sheet to dry, he heard strange moaning from the neighboring room, sounding as if someone was relieving himself.

Lin Mu Yu didn't want to be too nosy since he just got here, but after tolerating it for quite a while, the voice was still going at it. Finally, unable to bear it for any longer, he walked to the door and knocked, "Are you alright?"

“I’m okay… who are you?” The person inside asked.

“My name is Lin Zhi, the new trainer.”

“Oh? A new trainer? Then you’ll be in for some pain.” The voice hesitated, but continued, “Lin Zhi, come in.”

Pushing open the door, Lin Mu Yu saw that a person lay stiffly on the bed. He was moaning in pain, probably due to the countless bruises covering his arms and face. His eyes were swollen black and blue. Perhaps this person originally looked handsome, but now he was incomparably sorry looking. Frankly, he almost looked like he had been beaten into a human meat bun!

“What happened to you?” Lin Mu Yu wanted to laugh, but did his best to hold it back. Remembering that he was at least a somewhat-decent human being, so he shouldn’t be laughing at someone else’s misfortune.

The “wounded” grimaced painfully as he complained, “Of course it’s that bastard Zhang Wei. He keeps using his position of instructor to pummel us trainers without holding back. There isn’t a single trainer here that Zhang Wei had not beaten with his fist!”

Lin Mu Yu asked with a grim expression, “Do you mean trainers can only be sandbags for instructors?”

“Why else do you think I’m like this? The Temple’s rule is that trainers absolutely can’t fight back, or either they can’t be

trainers.”

“Huh…”

Lin Mu Yu looked at the fellow’s swollen head and nearly broke into laughter again. Pulling out a bottle of healing balm, he said, “I’ll help you apply some medicine, so don’t start screaming now.”

“Okay, I won’t… AH, ow, ow ow! You bastard, go lightly!”

“…..”

The quality of a first tier medicinal balm was as good as it sounds. After several minutes, the wounded person’s pain lessened significantly. Finally able to talk clearly, he introduced himself as Qin Ziling. Because his family name was Qin, it was said that he was of the Qin empire’s royal bloodline, but of a branch that had fallen long ago. His father was waiting to see him awaken the God Binding Chain martial spirit, but…

“What did you end up awakening?” Lin Mu Yu asked.

Qin Ziling opened his hand and a small plant appeared in the middle of his palm. Recognizing it, Lin Mu Yu immediately blurted out, “My, my… A dogtail flower?”

“Would you have died if you didn’t blurt it out?” Qin Ziling looked grudgingly at him.

“Don’t worry about it. Even the most worthless martial spirit can be strong if trained well.” Lin Mu Yu opened his hand and cradled his orange gourd comfortably in his palm. Smiling, he continued, “Look at my Green Gourd. It’s a rank 10 spirit, but look at how much I’ve been able to improve it.”

Qin Ziling was speechless when he felt the power emanating from the gourd spirit.

……

When the day neared noon time, Lin Mu Yu helped Qin Ziling out of bed and walked together towards the cafeteria. Still worried about his situation, he was like a startled fletchling and looked around anxiously. He said to Lin Mu Yu, “Lin Zhi, the right half of the cafeteria is where the instructors eat. We trainers have to stand near the short wall on the left to eat.”

Lin Mu Yu was dumbfounded. It seemed like a strict class difference existed between instructors and trainers, but perhaps that motivated people to work harder in order to move up in ranks.

More and more people came in to eat. There were instructors and trainers among the crowd, but the difference in stance distinguished the two types. The instructors seemed to always have their heads up high and backs straight, especially the silver and gold star instructors. They looked like they just wanted to rub their shiny emblems on everyone’s faces..

“Oh, look who’s here. The sandbag prince looks like he’s all better today, huh?” A silver star instructor looked at Qin Ziling and ridiculed.

Qin Ziling grudgingly chewed on his food. A trainer’s lunch consisted of three rations of grain, a piece of large flatbread, and a bowl of meat soup. Although it was called meat soup, in reality, it was nothing more than a thin soup with some cabbage stalks and the occasional hint of oil. Lin Mu Yu didn’t mind it since he was not a picky eater anyway.

However, the silver star instructor continued, “Oh sandbag prince, I heard you’re a royal descendant. You should have awaken the God Binding Chains, right? Hahahaha. Why don’t you call out your dogtail flower to give us a good laugh now! Hahahaha!”

Everyone broke into a laughter. Embarrassed, the red-faced Qin Ziling couldn’t do anything but poke at the mushy flatbread in his bowl with his chopsticks.

Lin Mu Yu couldn’t endure it anymore, so he stood up and faced the silver star instructor, “He is a worker of the Temple, so he is no different from you. Stop humiliating him like this, since it’s like humiliating yourself.”

This instructor immediately became furious. Gazing at Lin Mu Yu, “Who do you think you are? A mere trainer. Do you think this is your place to speak?”

As he spoke, his body bent forward slightly. At the next moment, he came crashing down towards Lin Mu Yu with the image of a bear spirit on his shoulder. This was a cultivator trained in power, so no wonder he was so contemptuous. It's a wonder how many people had been put to a disadvantage by that attack!

"Watch out!" Qin Ziling shouted in horror.

But Lin Mu Yu was unusually calm. With a whirl, he took several steps back and called out his gourd spirit. With the double layer of Dragonscale Rampart and Ebony Shell, he raised his defensive power to the maximum and pumped himself full of true energy!

Boom!

A loud noise sounded on impact and created waves of air that surged out chaotically.

Qin Ziling didn't even dare to look. When he opened his eyes again, he was surprised to see that the silver star instructor had been thrown back several meters away. He landed on the floor in a sorry state, whereas Lin Mu Yu looked like nothing had happened.

"Ahahahahaha... Instructor Lei, what happened to you?" The group of instructors began to mock the instructor named Lei Ying.

His face flushed red in embarrassment, Lei Ying let out a hmph and walked out of the cafeteria. He wanted to get revenge immediately, but he had realized with the short encounter that Lin

Mu Yu was actually very strong.

....

On the way back to the residence, Qin Ziling was so happy that he was about to dance and gesticulate for joy.

“Lin Zhi, that was amazing. Did you see Lei Ying’s face when they started mocking him? Hahaha. Many of us trainers had been heavily wounded by his bear spirit shoulder tackle before, so you’ve done a great favor to all of us today by beating him like that!”

Lin Mu Yu smiled, “Ziling, you should try to become stronger too, or else you’ll still be a sandbag to them.”

Qin Ziling’s expression darkened, “Do you think I don’t want to become strong? My father had placed his hopes on me at a very young age, but there is a great difference between people’s talent and I know myself well enough. I’m almost 30, but I still haven’t been able to break into Earth realm, plus I awakened a garbage tier martial spirit. I think this is as far as I can get...”

Lin Mu Yu didn’t know how to comfort him, so he just patted Ziling’s shoulder and said, “It’s alright. Everyone’s born to do something in life...”

Qin Ziling didn’t get what he was referencing, but it did sound somewhat reasonable.

When evening arrived, Lin Mu Yu left the temple and went to see Chu Yao at the pharmacy. Of course, with the knowledge from the Medicine God Index, Chu Yao was already greatly valued at the panacea division. On the first day, she was already invited to the second alchemist division. To say it plainly, Chu Yao definitely had a better day at the panacea division than Lin Mu Yu did at the temple.

“Ah Yu!”

Chu Yao was ecstatic when she saw Lin Mu Yu. She hurried along and gave him a tour of the whole division, but there wasn’t much to see aside from alchemists at work.

When the sky was already pitch black, Lin Mu Yu returned to the temple.

Staying inside his room, he began train. There was not enough room inside for him to practice Sonic Blade, so he began to meditate. Slowly, he began to filter and refine his true energy. In truth, cultivation is an unending process of refining and purifying one’s true energy, which enables one to become stronger through this process.

……

At this moment, in Dragonseeker Forest…

Under the moonlight, a row of rock walls stood like sharp knives in the forest night. Hints of light emanated from a sunken depression beneath the rock overhang.

The night's dew dripped from a tall pine down onto the snowy-white back of a young girl. She loosened her robe and applied the freshly made balm onto the wound on her back. A wave of fiery hot sensation made her clench her teeth in pain. Small threads of sparkling tears trailed down the side of her lashes and drew a path on her face.

Ignoring the growling pangs of her stomach, she looked at the pitch black forest around her and sniffled. Her finely crafted nose hung high as she sorrily blurted out, "Did I mess up somewhere? Why does the goldsore balm hurt this much... It probably wouldn't hurt like this if Mu Mu made it instead..."

She looked up at the starry sky and mumbled, "Mu Mu, you're still alive, right?"

Chapter 50 : Rank Placement

At dawn, the temple was quiet and peaceful. To Lin Mu Yu, today marked the important first step into his new life. It was both his first day of work in the temple and also the day that would ultimately determine his rank within the temple.

....

Knock knock knock

The knocking awoke Lin Mu Yu from his meditation. Hurrying to open the door, he was surprised to see an elderly man at his door. Dressed in a snow-white robe, the old man greeted Lin Mu Yu with a gentle smile.

“Lin Zhi, today is your first test. Eat something quick and come with me!”

“Yes, sir.”

Lin Mu Yu did not ask for the elder’s name, knowing that his place in the temple was much lower than the elder. It was not until Ziling caught up with him that he whispered to Lin Mu Yu, “Why are you with the grandmaster?”

“Grandmaster?”

“Yeah!” Ziling pointed to the old man in front of them, “Of the twelve headmasters of the temple are two grandmasters. They represent the highest authority of the temple. This is one of the grandmasters, Grandmaster Lei Hong (Lightning Flood). How could you not know him?”

Lin Mu Yu looked at Ziling with a surprised expression.

Before he could say anything, Lei Hong interrupted his thought.

“Don’t talk, just follow me.” He did not turn around, but his deep voice was strangely fitting for his name.

Ziling made a face before whispering one last time, “Master Lei Hong is 71 years old this year, but he has the cultivation of Saint realm’s first stage. He is known as one of the two pillars of the Empire alongside Flame Cauldron Qu Chu, but his cultivation level is said to be above that of Qu Chu’s. It’s no wonder that he is one of the six White-Robed Imperial Guards!”

Lin Mu Yu nodded with much respect to the old man. Afterall, it was not an easy task to be placed on the same level as Qu Chu, so he must be more than meets the eye. His saint realm power only adds to his reputation.

.....

Not long after, he followed Lei Hong down the hallway to the open palace hall. Looking up, he saw the large words “Refinement

Hall” carved into the blue limestone ceiling. Obviously, this was the true training ground for the experts of the temple.

Lining the spacious main hall are dozens of small training rooms. Although the temple is at the center of the capital, its spaciousness is solid proof of the temple’s value in the empire.

There were already many people waiting in the training hall. Instructors and trainers stood gazing at Lin Mu Yu.

Lei Hong rose from the headmaster’s seat and announced, “Today we, the Temple, welcome another new member. His name is Lin Zhi, a new trainer. But since his trainer rank has not yet been determined, let us begin the examination now!”

“Trainer rank?” Lin Mu Yu whispered with surprise.

Ziling whispered back, “Like with instructors, trainers are differentiated by rank as well from iron star to gold star. As such, trainers and instructors of similar ranks will then be placed against one another. To advance in rank, you’ll have to keep beating your way up. By beating three iron star instructors, you’ll advance to bronze star, etc. The higher your trainer rank, the better your pay becomes. Of course, the amount of beating you’ll receive will similarly increase. I’m only an iron star trainer, so I can’t give much advice aside from this, if you know what I mean.”

Lin Mu Yu couldn’t help but chuckle in his heart. The meaning behind Ziling’s words couldn’t be more clear: Don’t overreach or else there will be suffering ahead if you are ranked as a silver or

even gold star trainer. However, Lin Mu Yu had different thought of his own. In order to become stronger, he will have to face off against stronger opponents. Because of this, he definitely needed to become a gold star trainer!

"Alright then, let the examination begin!" Lei Hong waved the long sleeves of his robe and continued, "The examination for trainers is quite simple. You'll have guard against the attacks of an instructor for one whole minute without retaliation. After three successful defenses against instructors of one rank, you'll advance to the next rank. Let us start from iron star! Are you ready, Lin Zhi?"

Lin Mu Yu nodded, "I am ready, Headmaster!".

As he spoke, he walked over to the middle of the hall and stood stalwartly like a towering mountain. Although he did not say anything further, an invisible yet imposing aura slowly enveloped Lin Mu Yu's surrounding. Even headmaster Lei Hong casted a look of praise at him.

In the instructor crowd, the iron star instructors looked at one another as if none of them wanted to go first.

Finally, one voice emerged from the crowd, "Sir Wang Xing, why don't you start us off?"

The rough and boorish-looking Wang Xing nodded, "Guess I'll kick this off then!"

He charged off with a big stride towards Lin Mu Yu with his fist encased in a ball of fire. With his martial spirit out, it was apparent that this iron star instructor had the cultivation of about level 45, so he wasn't anything to be feared.

Lin Mu Yu casted his hand before him and summoned the orange-colored gourd spirit. The appearance of his martial spirit brought about a wave of laughter among the instructors. Several bronze star instructors even had tears in their eyes as they guffawed. "He actually came to be a trainer with a mere rank 10 gourd spirit? Hahahaha. Is this kid just here to be a laughing stock like that dogtail flower Ziling?"

Lei Hong kept his brows furrowed and did not comment. Several other instructors also did not laugh at Lin Mu Yu. After all, true experts know to observe first and comment after.

Streams of flame-red energy pulsed around the outer ring of the gourd and formed Ebony Scales. Lin Mu Yu didn't even bother using Dragon Rampart, because just Ebony Scales was enough to hold off the attacks for a minute.

Boom!

Fire and embers splashed against the pitch black scales as the first attack was forcefully guarded by Lin Mu Yu. No, wait. Perhaps it's more accurate to say it was shaken off.

Wang Xing feel faint as he took several steps back. His face was pale as ash. The opponent's defensive power was far above his

attack power. A ravaging surge power backfired onto his arm, numbing and paralyzing it for a short while.

Because he was still a member of the temple, Wang Xing couldn't allow himself to endure this level of humiliation. Immediately, he lifted his left arm and casted a powerful punch.

Boom!

The attack met with the same result as before, but this time Wang Xing was left with two numbed arms. Unable to pour strength into either arm, nor risk using his legs and becoming unable to stand, he clenched his teeth and grunted, "I admit defeat!"

Victory under a minute!

Lin Mu Yu bowed with a smile, "Thank you for the match!"

Unable to lift his hands to bow, Wang Xing nodded his head and left the ring.

.....

"Impressive!"

Another iron star instructor came forth. He was slim like a monkey and his hands spread open into the form of claws. The

threads of green energy enveloped his hands, telling of his specialization into fighting with claw arts. As if explaining the origin of his martial arts, a hawk martial spirit appeared on his forearm.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Receiving multiple continuous attacks, the pitch black Ebony Scales resounded loudly. Lin Mu Yu continued pouring energy in his spirit ability to strengthen the thick scales. Since the iron star instructor was already weaker than Lin Mu Yu, with his blind and pure offense, he became increasingly weaker.

After one whole minute, his hands were already stained with his own blood. On the other hand, Lin Mu Yu looked as if nothing had happened at all.

The crowd of iron star instructors were all stunned silent. No one expected this unremarkable kid could defeat two iron star instructors in a row, but no one could have imagined both to be crushing victories! All of them gritted their teeth as they looked to see who else will go up to humiliate themselves.

Right then, Lei Hong suddenly lifted his hand and announced, “The third challenge won’t be necessary. Lin Zhi will directly advance to the bronze rank. Let us continue, which three bronze star instructors are willing to face off against him?”

Very quickly, a man in silver-colored armor walked out of the crowd. With a sword in his hand, he smiled, “Hey kid, not too

shabby of a show. Allow me, Zhou Tu to experience your gourd's defense!"

As he spoke, Zhou Tu encased his sword in layers of ice and frost. Wrapped around his arm was the shape of an ice snake spirit. To even have a martial spirit of this type, this world was definitely filled with all kinds of existence.

Lin Mu Yu took a deep breath and continued gathering his energy. This Zhou Tu was probably already at the third stage of Earth realm, about equally matched with himself, so he couldn't afford to underestimate Zhou Tu.

Buzz

The sword spiraled out of Zhou Tu's hand with an imposing penetrating-force. There are definitely no weaklings in the temple, as evident from Zhou Tu's attack!

Lin Mu Yu naturally didn't dare to be careless. Immediately, he brought forth his Dragon Rampart to form two layers of defense.

Ping!

The collision between the sword and the gourd wall sounded like a clash of metals. The double layer of Ebony Scales with Dragon Rampart raised the defense to a new level as expected. On the other side, a patch of energy shield appeared on Zhou Tu's arm. Alas, he was at least level 50 or above. Taking several steps back,

Zhou Tu steadied his mind but he was still shaken up inside.

In actuality, Lin Mu Yu's defenses originally could not hold against Zhou Tu. However, his gourd spirit evolved 5 times and received an ability each time, and 2 of the 5 were defensive abilities from beast spirit thousand years in age. In this scenario, one plus one was far more than the sum of the two. Under the double protection of Ebony Scales and Dragon Rampart, Lin Mu Yu did not have to fear Zhou Tu's attacks at all!

Right now, Zhou Tu wasn't the only one surprised. Lin Mu Yu was astonished by the power of his double defensive abilities. If he had killed the fan dragon for Dragon Rampart earlier, he would have had a much easier time against people like Guan Yang and Ye Liang!

Zhou Tu tried again with another wave of attacks, but his sword left little more than mere scratches on the Ebony scales. After the minute finally passed, he bowed with a sad face, "Good fight, Lin Zhi. You win this one!"

"Thanks for the match." Lin Mu Yu replied humbly.

At this moment, headmaster Lei Hong nodded with a smile as he watched from his seat. He couldn't help but become more and more impressed with this young trainer before him.

.....

Another two bronze star instructor failed to break through Lin Mu Yu's defenses, bringing the group of trainers into an uproar. They cheered loudly for Lin Mu Yu, with Ziling being the most excited of them all. Lin Mu Yu finally showed the instructors that trainers weren't just weakling and human sandbags.

"Lin Zhi, it's time to challenge silver star instructors!" Lei Hong laughed, "Not bad, youngster!"

Master Ge Yang smiled as well, "The temple is in lack of trainers at the moment, and we don't even have a gold star trainer at this time. There are only two silver star trainers now, so if you are able to win, this will be a great contribution to the future of the temple."

Lin Mu Yu snickered on the inside. After all, who in their right mind would actually want to be a sandbag for someone else? That's probably why there is a lack of gold star trainers in the first place. The amount of beating is probably why the dozens of trainers cries out with complaints.

"You can do it! Lin Zhi!" A trainer with a bruised face shouted out.

With his cheer, the other trainers followed along to cheer Lin Mu Yu on. Very quickly, the crowd erupted into an uproar of "Lin Zhi! Lin Zhi!"

Headmaster Lei Hong looked at the group of trainers and smiled, "It's been quite a long time since the temple has been this lively, ha

ha…”

Chapter 51 : A Powerful Challenger Approaches

“What are these idiots so excited about?”

With a look of disdain, the bearded Zhang Wei clenched his fists and shouted, “Since none of you Silver instructors want to take up the challenge, then let me be the first!”

His challenge took everyone by surprise.

Seeing this, Lin Mu Yu was wondering what exactly was so special about this Zhang Wei.

From afar, Ziling shouted to him, “Be careful Lin Zhi. Zhang Wei hits really hard and his personality is a bit cruel. He almost broke several of my ribs last time we sparred!”

Zhang Wei barked loudly, “Shut your trap, you trash. Next time I’ll break your teeth. Let’s see how you’ll eat then!”

That threat immediately shut Ziling up. The whole temple knew that Mustache Zhang always keeps his promise.

……

Zhang Wei slowly walked with a deep smile on his face onto the center of the stage, every step leaving behind a flaming footprint.

No one knew when exactly he called forth his spirit, but flaming energy wrapped tightly around his body while the shape of a flaming bear appeared atop his head.

With a smirk, he declared, “Name is Zhang Wei, Level 58 Battle Saint, Tier 4 spirit Flame Bear. Prepare yourself, kid!”

Lin Mu Yu didn’t dare to be careless. Ebony Scale and Dragon’s Rampart quickly gathered before him. He knew that he could only rely on static defense to hold off against Zhang Wei, because using Starfall Steps to evade attacks would betray the meaning of this test.

“Hah!”

With a shout, Zhang Wei threw out a straight punch coated in roaring flames!

Boom

The gourd wall shook on impact, while Lin Mu Yu couldn’t help but take several steps back. With a hint of alarm on his face, he was quite surprised that despite Mustache Zhang looking like a dumb brute, Zhang’s strength was nothing to joke about. Small cracks had already appeared on the Ebony Scale, so he quickly repaired it with energy. At the same time, he readied himself for the next attack.

Without stopping, Zhang Wei continued with another punch.

After the second hit, Lin Mu Yu couldn't help but gripe in his mind: What a powerful punch strength!

As he thought to himself, Lin Mu Yu immediately shifted his weight so that he could use another side of the gourd wall to deflect the attack.

However, Zhang Wei was quick on his punches as well. With refined skill, he threw out a wider punch and still hit dead center on the gourd wall!

Boom!

The punch left Lin Mu Yu's chest flushed with violent, rampaging energy. Lin Mu Yu had to channeled his own energy in order to calm the rising pressure, and quickly followed up by forming two plates of Verdant Shell on top on himself.

By stacking together both energy plates in front of his chest, along with the Ebony Scale and Dragon's Rampart from before, Lin Mu Yu created a quadruple layer of defense against the next strike!

"Oh?"

The observant Lei Hong couldn't help but be startled at the sight. Grasping his white beard, he chuckled, "How interesting... Is that not one of Qu Chu's little tricks... Verdant Shell?"

.....

Booom Boom Boooom…

Zhang Wei's unrelenting strikes continued without a miss. However, of the dozen or so punches he tossed out, most had been completely blocked by the gourd wall.

Instead, the counter bite from the gourd wall left his arms trembling with numbness, thus greatly reducing the speed at which his punches are thrown.

On the other hand, Lin Mu Yu clenched his teeth as he endured the pain enveloping his body and continued supplying energy into the four layers of defense.

Just like this, he was able to stall for one whole minute!

Lei Hong put up his hand and announced, "Enough. You can withdraw now, Zhang Wei. Lin Mu Yu has already passed the first silver challenge. Rest for ten minutes and we shall continue with the second."

"Thank you, Headmaster…"

With heavy breaths and a flushed-red face, Lin Mu Yu thought to himself that Mustache Zhang's punches were seriously too savage, so much so that he was not sure how much longer he would be able to withstand more of it.

But Zhang Wei's view of this kid had changed completely. Walking up to Lin Mu Yu and giving him a light pat on the back, Zhang Wei laughed, "Haha, nice job, kid. I can't wait to fight you some more if we get a chance in the future!"

Lin Mu Yu nodded immediately, "Of course, I want to learn more about your punching style too!"

"Haha, no problem at all!"

……

Once Zhang Wei lost, another silver instructor was ready to leap on the stage.

"It's my turn!" Lei Ying announced as he picked up the saber at his side. In his head, he plotted to use this chance to get rid of Lin Mu Yu, who humiliated him in the cafeteria a day before.

Lin Mu Yu naturally understood his intentions, but responded with a sneer. This Lei Ying was but a level 52 Battle Saint, whose strengths are far below that of Zhang Wei. With all four layers of defense ready, Lin Mu Yu hoped to quickly deal with the pest at hand.

With a loud cry, Lei Ying leapt up into the air before he slashed down with a titanic force.

Not wanting to waste too much energy or stamina on this guy,

Lin Mu Yu put both of his hands to use. With his right, he materialized the four layers of defense. At the same time, he portioned out twenty percent of his strength into a single Sonic Punch.

Boom!

As expected, the four layers of defense instantly shook off the opponent's attack. Meanwhile, the Sonic Punch struck down with a silent impact onto Lei Ying's abdomen.

No one could have imagined that, instead of keeping his balance in the air, Lei Ying fell down to the ground like a dead pig. Holding his abdomen, he cried out in distress.

"Instructor Lei Ying is defeated! Trainer Lin Zhi is victorious!"

As Lei Hong stood to announce the victor, a faint smile flashed on his face. There was no way Lin Mu Yu's little trick had escaped his eyes, but Lei Hong was actually quite pleased with the choice. One must not be too naive, or else one might suffer at the hands of the vile in this cruel and complicated world.

As such, Lei Hong continued, "After two straight wins against silver instructors, Lin Zhi is allowed to directly challenge gold instructors. We'll begin the next challenge after ten minutes!"

"Thank you, Headmaster!"

Lin Mu Yu turned to give him a grateful smile. After all, he needed all the time he can get to regain his energy.

……

Then, a finely-dressed young man stepped out of the crowd. Zeng Fan bowed at Lei Hong before asking, “Headmaster, there are only two gold instructors remaining at the temple. One is currently resting from his wounds, so the only one who can fight is Zheng Sanghe. I, Zeng Fan, request permission to challenge Lin Mu Yu as a gold instructor.”

Startled, Lei Hong replied, “Zeng Fan, you are one of the twelve masters and not a gold instructor anymore. Moreover, since Zheng Sanghe is still here, then it would be just fine to have him fight.”

“But…” Zeng Fan hesitated as if he wanted to say something.

“But what?” Lei Hong retorted.

Zeng Fan didn’t dare to contradict the decision of the headmaster. He glared at Lin Mu Yu and shut himself up.

……

On the other side, Lin Mu Yu was confused at why this Zeng Fan hates him so much, ever since the first day up to now.

Unaware, Ziling congratulated Lin Mu Yu with glee, “Congratulation Lin Zhi. You’ll probably have the seat of the gold trainer in the palm of your hand now!”

“Oh? how so?”

“Zheng Sanghe is the only gold instructor that stayed in the temple today. A level 61 Sky Master, but worry not. He is trained in the style of heavy defense, even his spirit is a black tortoise. Even though he is quite skilled at defense, his offensive strength is mediocre. With your strength, you’ll definitely be able to hold off Zheng Sanghe’s attacks. Good luck!”

“Oh… good….” Lin Mu Yu became more at ease upon hearing the good news.

A short while later, the only gold instructor walked out onto the stage. Zheng Sanghe was a middle-aged fellow whose face was as black as coal. Holding a broad-bladed cutlass on one hand and a pitch-black iron shield on the other, he sneered, “Kid, ready yourself and let me experience your defense!”

Lin Zhi nodded.

But Zheng Sanghe gave a carefree wave with his hand, “If I’m using a weapon while you don’t, wouldn’t this look too much like bullying? How about this, we can both attack each other. As long as you can hold on for one whole minute, then it is your win. How does that sound?”

“Thank you then!”

Lin Mu Yu immediately walked to the side of the stage and pulled out Prairie Fire from his bag. The sight of the sword startled Zheng Sanghe, “Oh? That’s a… spirited weapon?”

“Yes. If you are feeling regret now, then I won’t use it.”

“Hahaha…” He laughed heartily, “What kind of man do you think I am? Try your best!”

……

“Ha!”

With a shout, Zheng Sanghe activated his martial spirit. Faint energy wrapped around his body before finally shaping into turtle shell plates. The faint shape of a tortoise head slowly wrapped around his shoulders, giving him an aura of an unmovable mountain. His shield shrone with the luster of force energy while his cutlass struck down at Lin Mu Yu.

Boom!

As expected, the four layered defense blocked Zheng Sanghe’s attack, but Lin Mu Yu only needed sixty percent of its usual strength. Immediately stepping to Zheng Sanghe’s side, he slashed down with a Lightning Chop.

SFX!

Lightning crossed the iron shield and left a centimeter deep scratch. Zheng Sanghe couldn't help but be surprised. In his head, he thought to himself: what in heaven is that sword? How is it this sharp?

But Lin Mu Yu's assault clearly couldn't break through the defense. Furthermore, Zheng Sanghe's perfect defense was air-tight, so no matter how he attacked, he was unable to hit a vital.

Almost every sword swing was deflected by the iron shield. This made Lin Mu Yu look on with amazement as well: With such a defense power, it's quite a shame that he isn't a gold trainer instead!

One minute quickly passed. Lei Hong opened his arms and laughed, "Passed. Lin Zhi successfully promoted to Gold trainer!"

But then, Zeng Fan appealed, "Headmaster, Lin Zhi only defeated one gold instructor. Isn't this too hasty of a decision? Moreover, with Headmaster acting in his favor this way, I can't help but worry that it will create suspicion in others' eyes. I hope Headmaster will act with more fairness!"

With an annoyed look on his face, Lei Hong asked, "Master Zeng Fan, what is your point?"

“I want to challenge Lin Zhi as a gold instructor. If he is able to win, only then is he truly worthy of the title Gold Trainer!”

“Alright then.”

Lei Hong’s eyes shined with a cold light as he answered, “One minute. If you are unable to defeat him, then Lin Zhi shall be the temple’s chief trainer.”

“Understood!”

……

Strolling onto the training arena, Zeng Fan gracefully held his jian at his side. His martial spirit appeared faintly around his body, slowly materializing into the shape of a towering pagoda. An especially stern and sincere aura steadily filled the arena.

Looking straight at Zeng Fan, Lin Mu Yu asked, “When did I ever offend you?”

Zeng Fan laughed heartlessly while his expression changed to one of sinisterness. Walking closer to Lin Mu Yu, he whispered,

“Gourd spirit, Lightning Chop, Sonic Punch, along with that Prairie Fire sword in your hand…

Did you think that, because these idiots can’t figure it out, I

wouldn’t notice that you are the imperial fugitive, Lin Mu Yu?

You killed my older brother Hua Wan, but still dares to give up your life by coming to the Capital?

But none of this matters, because I won’t give you up to the authorities.

Instead, I will slaughter you with my own hands!

Because to me, killing you is as easy as crushing an ant under my feet!”

Chapter 52 : The Great Imperial General

“Because to me, killing you is as easy as crushing an ant.”

…

Zeng Fan’s words repeated inside Lin Mu Yu’s head like the reverbing strikes of a clock. That’s right. When your power is nowhere near another’s, crushing you really is as easy as that.

But a smirk curled up on his face as he replied, “Why don’t we test that theory?”

Without any hints or warnings, Zeng Fan suddenly attacked with his sword.

Whooosh

The sharp sound of metal cutting through air was heard as Zeng Fan unleashed four consecutive thrusts onto the Ebony Scale/Dragon’s Rampart wall. Each strike left a considerable and visible dent on the sturdy gourd wall.

Lin Mu Yu was forced aback by the momentum of the attack, while his chest felt heavy with pressure. The Ebony Scale and Dragon’s Rampart shields shattered near instantly as Lin Mu Yu looked on with great surprise.

The hedonistic opponent before him was far, far stronger than Hua Wan. Moreover, Zeng Fan's Pagoda spirit definitely increased his attack power, going so far as to give his attacks a "penetration" attribute.

Feeling the stinging pain on his skin, Lin Mu Yu was surprised that the opponent's sword energy could damage him through the double protection of Ebony Shell and Dragon's Rampart.

Utilizing the core mantra of the Wind-wielding Sword Art, Prairie Fire slashed along with the tailwind and grazed Zeng Fan on the tip of his hair.

"Huh?"

With a jolt, Zeng Fan quickly side-stepped the attack. However, the fast blade still left a small cut when it nicked him on the cheek. Feeling the hot blood slowly seeping out of the wound, Zeng Fan yelled out in anger.

"Die!"

With both feet planted on the ground, he shouted, "Golden Barrier!"

Streams of golden light rose in accordance with his call and surrounded him entirely. The golden energy quickly condensed into the shape of a protection barrier. Without a pause, Zeng Fan followed up with his ultimate attack. After jumping several steps backwards, he lifted his hand while his sword flew up into the air.

Closing his eyes, Zeng Fan channeled the energy within his veins. While he trembled with the overflowing energy, a dozen swords materialized from thin air and simultaneously stabbed at Lin Mu Yu.

“Ten Thousand Sword Mantra!”

Scrambling frantically to create a wall of defense, Lin Mu Yu speedily swung Prairie Fire with both hands to create a barrier out of sword energy.

Sfx [sword strikes] sfx

The deafening sound of metal clashing was so unending that almost all of the trainers had to cover their ears. When they looked up once more, Lin Mu Yu’s Ebony Scale had already shattered into pieces while his Dragon’s Rampart looked like a block of swiss cheese.

The worst part were the holes that appeared on his green tunic, because everyone could see the slight streams of fresh blood dripping from his chest and arms. Zeng Fan’s attack was one that he had no feasible way of defending head-on.

If defense is no longer an option, then the only thing I can do is attack!

Pushing his thoughts aside, Lin Mu Yu threw out the four daggers

hidden in his sleeves. The four daggers of the Sonic Blade sliced through the air covered in sparking lightning energy. At the same time, lightning energy gathered within Prairie Fire like moths to a flame.

Growing bright with a verdant green light, the gourd shone above Lin Mu Yu as countless vines erupted from the ground, quickly rolling towards Zeng Fan's feet.

On the other side, Zeng Fan chuckled and gave a careless wave with his hand. It was nothing to laugh at however, when the energy in his palm turned into a fierce wind, instantly tearing apart the hardy vines.

As if his cultivation level was not high enough, the fact that Zeng Fan tore through Lin Mu Yu's spirit attack with a mere wave of his hand was more than terrifying to those who witnessed it.

But he had yet to celebrate before a sudden warm feeling came from behind! Toxic Spray!

"Hah?"

With a fright, Zeng Fan quickly stepped off to the side to avoid the spray of corrosive toxin.

But Lin Mu Yu had another trick up his sleeve. Just as Zeng Fan stepped to the side, Lin Mu Yu came behind with a fully charged Lightning Chop.

Seeing the sword cut at his lower back, Zeng Fan knew that he had no way to dodge this attack like before. Quickly deciding on a plan, he gathered the three pieces of energy shields all onto his lower back.

Along with the loud sound of an explosion, lightning could be seen dissipating in the air.

What Lin Mu Yu thought to be a certain hit still missed its target.

Instead, Zeng Fan borrowed the momentum and swung around for a roundhouse kick. The steel-tip of his boots dug repeatedly into the Lin Mu Yu's chest.

Sfx [shoes sliding on sand] sfx

Sliding along the floor several meters back, Lin Mu Yu pressed one hand against the floor to reduce the impact, but his fingers still left five frighteningly bloody trails on the floor.

"Lin Zhi...." Ziling could barely get the words out of his mouth as he looked with shock.

Lei Hong's mouth also twitched slightly as he watched on. This youngster's willpower and perseverance had already far exceeded his expectations.

In the face of an overwhelming opponent like Zeng Fan, he was still able to defend and counter. That much was, quite honestly, not easy to do.

....

Although he tasted the sweetness in his throat, he forced himself to not spit out this mouthful of blood. His chest felt heavy as blood made waves within his body and boiled like hell fire, but he refused to surrender.

He knew that were he to surrender in this fight, there would be no place for him to call home in Lanyan City anymore.

Sfx [sound of blades cutting through the air] sfx

Sharp hissing in the air was heard as four flying daggers quickly boomeranged back towards Zeng Fan.

In reply, Zeng Fan turned for several swings of his sword and effortlessly deflected the four daggers. But what he did not expect was that, as if they had a mind of their own, the daggers flew towards one another and combined into a quad-bladed shuriken.

With a soundless boost in movement, the Sonic Shuriken quickly cycled around for another attack.

“How annoying!”

Yelling out in anger, Zeng Fan reached out with open hands. Each finger was protected by the light energy of the Golden Barrier. He dares to attempt catching the Sonic Blade with bare hands?

Lin Mu Yu remained where he stood, but silently motioned with his hand. The vibrations of this Sonic Punch quickly exploded below the spinning blade and suddenly changed the path of the shuriken. As a result, it spun away alongside Zeng Fan's shoulder.

"Agh!"

Another contact of skin to iron left Zeng Fan with his second injury.

"Dirty little shit!"

The flushed-red and embarrassed Zeng Fan dashed towards Lin Mu Yu, his sword glowing brightly with a golden light. Meanwhile, the spirit pagoda expanded and enveloped Lin Mu Yu, caging him in like a prison cell.

Lin Mu Yu's heart grew cold in wariness. But no matter how much he struggled, his body would not budge.

"You want to escape out of my Spirit Lock Tower?" Zeng Fan's handsome face had contorted into an ugly shape.

This Lin Mu Yu kid had embarrassed him far too much. He could not bear with the fact that a heaven-realm like him had been wounded by a mere earth-realm.

Locked within the Spirit Lock Tower and seeing Zeng Fan's impending killing blow, Lin Mu Yu bellowed out furiously. Even though he had spent nearly all of the energy in his body, he was still unable to get out in the end.

At the decision moment before the end, a sudden spell of pressure pressed down onto everyone!

"Stay your hands!"

The energy aura of the Spirit Lock Tower quickly dissipated. This energy pressure far exceeded that of Zeng Fan. As a result, but he and Lin Mu Yu looked up to find an answer.

To their surprise, Lei Hong stood proudly in the air as he wielded his saint-realm power in hand.

Exuding irresistible dignity through his eyes, Lei Hong calmly announced, "This contest is over. Lin Zhi resisted death for one minute, and will officially become a Gold trainer of the Temple!"

....

Finally letting out a breath of relief, Lin Mu Yu thought back to the feeling of dread that had overcome him in the last instance. He

remarked that Zeng Fan had indeed decided on killing him, so he would have definitely died if not for Lei Hong's interruption.

While Lei Hong returned to his seat, the nearby Master Ge Yang walked down to the arena and came next to Lin Mu Yu.

Taking out a golden crest, he adorned Lin Mu Yu's chest with the shining insignia of a golden star like that of a gold instructor. The only difference was that a gold instructor's star had a sword before it, while his insignia had a shield, very accurately reflecting the whole point of a trainer: defense!

"Alright. Lin Zhi, you were quite skillful in all that you showed. Young Marquis Zeng Fan, you were as bold and powerful as ever. Thusly, this rank placing contest will end on this note!"

Ge Yang was a jolly old man who tried to never offend anybody.

Speaking with his trembling and faltering voice, Ge Yang smiled as he said,

"Congratulations Lin Zhi. From today onward you will be one of the gold star trainers of the Temple. Your pay will be 100 gold yin coins from the treasury. Heh, your luck isn't too shabby. This kind of salary is the same as that of a gold instructor, you know. Work hard, young man!"

Lin Mu Yu nodded. Looking down at his tattered shirt, he counted eleven holes in his tunic and eight open wounds. Although

none were deep enough to be life threatening, Zeng Fan's strength was truly quite terrifying.

Looking from afar, a cruel smile crossed Zeng Fan's face as he said, "Just you wait. I'll be back to taste your blood another time!"

Lei Hong had already stood and announced, "The examination is now over. Next, Master Ge Yang will arrange for the morning drills of today.

....

By the time Headmaster Lei Hong had gone out of sight, Master Ge Yang had already took out a long scroll. Speaking in his old, but willful voice, he announced,

"The morning drills pairings will be: Zheng Shan He against Lu Fang, Zhang Wei against Lin Zhi, Lei Ying against Liu Kai...Sun Wei against Qin Ziling..."

After going down the long list of pairs, Ge Yang finally got down to Ziling's name. His partner was Sun Wei, which allowed him a breath of relief.

"Thank goodness, it's just iron instructor Sun Wei." Ziling then asked, "Oh right! Lin Zhi, are your injuries okay? Will you be able to continue with today's training?"

"Yeah, I'll be fine."

After manipulating his energy around his body, he was able to staunch the bleeding, although his clothes still looks terrifying with all the bloody holes on them. The only problem he had was that his energy reserve had greatly diminished. As such, he could muster up no more than 60 percent of his normal amount.

“Lin Zhi, let’s go this way!”

Zhang Wei was a frank and straightforward man. Holding Lin Mu Yu by the shoulder, together he and Lin Mu Yu walked towards a nearby training room.

After a servant opened the heavy steel door, the two quickly stepped in and shut the door behind them, as if worried that the fighting inside will disturb the others.

“You probably don’t have that much energy in reserve after that war of attrition in the morning. Am I right?” Zhang Wei asked with a laugh. Although he looked rough and brutish, he was still quite caring as a person.

Replying with a grateful smile, Lin Mu Yu answered, “About 60 percent.”

“Alright then, that’s probably enough. I’ll use 60 percent of my strength then.”

Calling out his flame bear spirit to cover his fists in flames, Zhang

Wei said with a smile, “I am trained in a fist technique called Fierce Soul Fist. Fists in all directions, eyes to see all sides, power behind all punches, thus way of the fists remain straight and stalwart. This is the mantra that I hold true. It is a technique that evolved from God General Xiang Wen Tian’s Fierce Fire Fist, and it is just right for killing on the battlefield!”

Lin Mu Yu already had the privilege of experiencing Zhang Wei’s punches, so Zhang Wei definitely wasn’t talking out of his behind. They were powerful but hardy punches, all were as well balanced as the force of nature.

When Lin Mu Yu learned Sonic Punch from Qu Chu, he understood that it was a technique focusing mainly on ranged attacks. This meant that he was neglecting a set of skills for close-quarters brawling.

Fortunate for him, Zhang Wei’s Fierce Soul Fist perfectly rounded out the main flaw in Sonic Punch’s kit. If there was nothing else to gain from sparring with Zhang Wei, then learning a new technique would definitely be a gain.

“Mister Zhang Wei, may I spar with you using fist techniques?” Lin Mu Yu asked.

Zhang Wei was happy to oblige, “Why not. There is just the two of us in this room, so we can fight in whatever way we wish to.”

“Thanks a lot, then!”

Very quickly, flashes of light were seen from within the room. The two were seemingly enjoying themselves in their training.

....

But Lin Mu Yu's close-quarter fist technique was truly trash tier. Unable to return hits at all, he was forced to rely on the spirit gourd's defense to carry on.

Boom!

Under the impact of the punch, energy reverbed along the shielded gourd wall, but Lin Mu Yu had predicted Zhang Wei's final punch and defended against it with accurate timing.

Zhang Wei couldn't help but laugh heartily, "Not bad! Definitely got a kick out of that!"

He smiled and continued, "Lin Zhi, how did you get in trouble with one of the twelve masters, Zeng Fan?"

"I don't know either..." Lin Mu Yu told him a white lie, then asked, "What is Zeng Fan's background anyway? He is quite a strong practitioner, plus he's also one of the twelve masters at such a young age, so he probably has some background right?"

"Now that's an understatement."

Zhang Wei laughed,

“In order for the Empire to have what it does today, credit must be given to the famous general Zheng Yi Fan.

Many years ago, while leading the Imperial army of fifty thousand in a battle at the northern frontier, he defeated the enemy cavalry force of one hundred seventy thousand.

One hundred thousand of the enemy were killed and forty thousand were enslaved.

With this victory, he single handedly resolved the danger of the north. After this, he was appointed the Imperial Strategist, given the title of God Marquis, and renowned by all as the great imperial general

This Zeng Yi Fan is young Zeng Fan’s father!”

Chapter 53 : Refining Skin

Lin Mu Yu was silent for a moment, he never thought that Zeng Fan would have such a background. He never thought that he would accidentally provoke such a formidable adversary.

Zhang Wei pat him on the shoulder: “Be careful brother, one false move could end your life!”

With that he said with a smile: “Lei Hong seems to appreciate you quite a lot, this is your opportunity, ask Lei Hong for advice. As you said, this is your great advantage.”

“En, Thank you!”

In the blink of an eye, a morning had passed. Although Zhang Wei said that he was going to restrain his strength to an appropriate amount, Lin Mu Yu was still covered in cuts and bruises; however, it was certain that his Sonic Punch was getting ever stronger. Zhang Wei’s face had traces of several bruises, and in the afternoon he had to act as a training partner for a military instructor until the evening. He felt that his entire body, skin and flesh, would be ready to collapse and break down.

After dinner, Lin Mu Yu was sitting in the room wiping his bruises and wounds with a towel. He was shivering and felt the jittering of his teeth. He was like a wounded animal licking its wounds alone.

There was a creaking sound that couldn’t have been produced by

itself because it wasn't a windy night. Out of nowhere, there stood Lei Hong dressed in his white robe at the door.

"Master Lei Hong, you have arrived?" It seemed that Lin Mu Yu anticipated that he would arrive, it couldn't have been through coincidence alone that they met each other.

Lei Hong seemed gentle, his face seemed lovely as it creased in the moonlight. He kindly said: "You are Lin Mu Yu, correct?"

"I...." he was quite alarmed, for a moment he seemed like he was falling into a cave of ice.

"Rest assured, if you really are Lin Mu Yu, the student of Qu Chu, then it's good." Lei Hong with a smile said: "Child, Do you believe me, Lei Hong?"

"En, I believe"

"That's good, come with me. Qu Chu... that old guy is too lazy to teach his students and only teaches them half. Ah, so many years it seems this is his natural temper....."

Lei Hong arranges his white robe then turns away.

Lin Mu Yu hurriedly put on his coat, then followed while carrying his fire sword.

.....

Starlight fell inside the courtyard of the temple. On the stone paved trail were mottled shadows. Lei Hong urgently forcing Lin Mu Yu to unleash the Starfall Steps in order to catch up with him. As he moved with ghostly swiftness, Lei Hong was aware that Lin Mu Yu was able to keep up with him. He couldn't help but feel pleased; this youngster was indeed truly talented.

After a few minutes, they stopped in an old house at the backyard of the temple.

Lei Hong slowly came in front of a pond and said: "I came here to practice every single day."

"Oh, here?"

Lin Mu Yu stepped forward and reached inside the pond to fish up the water, but only to discover that there wasn't water; moreover, it was evidently a pile of broken stones.

"Master Lei Hong, what is the use of this stone?"

"Don't call me that, call me grandfather Lei Hong!"

Lei Hong amiably smiled and said:" I am around the same age as Qu Chu, it isn't too much to call me grandfather?"

“It isn't too much, Grandpa Long Hei.”

“Hahaha...” This old man called Lei Hong, his heart is completely at ease, : These precious stone were picked up by me in the deep mountains. It is often said that the heaven and earth energy, the tens of thousands of years of experience, regardless of whether it is the morning dew or the sunshine, is contained in this ordinary stone. People will say that for them, ginseng and dragons are what is considered as treasure; however, for us cultivators, this stone, more than anything else is precious.”

Lin Mu Yu not really understanding the words, nodded.

Lei Hong said: ”Do you know why are you going to be injured many times today?”

“Why?” Lin Mu Yu asked in his head.

“Because your skin is not thick enough.” Lei Hong mysteriously smiled

Lin Mu Yu confused: ”Grandpa Lei Hong, do you mean that I have to be like the bear who rubs on the tree everyday, managing the sap of the tree to slowly condense a protective layer on its skin.

“HA HA.....,” Lei Hong laughed: “While you have some understanding, you deviate from the true meaning, but what you say isn’t too far off. You need to use these stones everyday and rub them on your skin. Your skin will then absorb the aura of the

stone, it is such a simple method of cultivation that makes you stronger by giving you bones like iron and skin like copper.

" I see....." Lin Mu Yu went silent.

Lei Hong, stroking his beard, said "This process of cultivation is called "Refining". Although other people have passed this realm already, those ordinary talents rushed to finish this phase without a solid foundation. You will repeatedly train in this so as to build up a proper foundation for yourself."

"En, Thank you, Grandpa!"

"En, I will go back to sleep, practice well."

"Yes!"

.....

Lei Hong quietly left Lin Mu Yu sitting down on the top of the mountain with a pile of broken stones.

Throwing oneself into the rubble, his arms were soon cut by the sharp stones, and this left his arms bleeding. He couldn't help but doubt whether this was really an effective form of cultivation.

Suddenly, a bright light appeared and a beautiful fairy girl flew out from the sea, this was precisely the system fairy Guan Lu Lu.

“Big Brother!”

Lu Lu flapped her wings, it excitedly flew around Lin Mu Yu in circles and said with a smile: “I just heard your conversation Big Brother, there is no need to use such a ‘clumsy’ way to train. Don’t tell me you forgot Big Brother, you are the greatest alchemist and you refined various precious objects in your ancient cauldron before, so of course you can refine these odd stones. Afterwards you can use them to refine your skin!”

“Oh, really?”

Lin Mu Yu realised that he was unknowingly sitting at the centre of a mountain of treasure, how could he forget about his alchemy cauldron, it can be said that the cauldron was precious and close to him; however, it didn’t occur to him to use the cauldron to assist in refining and cultivating his own body.

“Thinking about it, there should be no other people here.

“Crash!”

Rays of light flickered, the ancient cauldron started to appear and it shrouded him with a circle of light with about two meters in radius. Lin Mu Yu urged the smoke surrounding his cauldron to disappear so he could immediately use the cauldron to refine the spirit stones. Lin Mu Yu used his naked eye to check his surrounding, and then he went silent and said:”But which amongst those stones have more heavenly energy contained inside.”

Lu Lu narrowed her pair of pretty eyes checking her surroundings, then laughed: “Ai, Those stupid old fools don’t even know where the stone with the most spirit force is. They are merely guessing. Actually Big Brother, you see that large stone at the top there is a red stone with a lot of spirit force inside, but they only use it as decoration. Try using your sword to cut a piece, then you can test it first?”

“En.”

Lin Mu Yu leaps from the top of a rock. With his sword in his hand, he strikes downwards. He cuts a rock the size of a basin and catches it with his open hand. Then he holds the stone while slowly stepping near his cauldron. He gently drops the stone inside the cauldron and gas slowly pours out from inside. The flames begin to extend to the four walls of the ancient cauldron and quickly surround the stone.

Closing his eyes, he began to focus his consciousness into the stone, analysing the layer of the stone and its composition. It was as Lei Hong had said, the stones accumulated the Ling Qi over time. Each layer of the stone contained a rich amount of spirit force. This mysterious Ling Qi contained inside had been sleeping for tens of thousands of years, and inside the cauldron, the heat was slowly breaking down each layer of stone. However, Lin Mu Yu could not quickly break each layer, or he would risk losing small pieces of the stones in the process.

The process was lengthy indeed, and it took nearly an hour before the analysis was finished. Visibly, it can be seen that the

stone was peeling layer by layer, inside it was shown the spirit force contained at each layer; moreover, each layer was suffused with the brilliant shining moonlight. It was fascinating. Lin Mu Yu was covered in sweat while Lu Lu nearby was clapping her hands and smiling: “Big Brother that was amazing, look the spirit force is continuously increasing.”

Bits of spirits force floated near the top of the cauldron as others seemed to be randomly flying throughout the cauldron itself. It seemed as though these had the same consciousness as fairies. Some were calm, some were wild, but all could not seem to fly out of the cauldron. After two hours, all the spirit force within the the rock was finally released. Inside the cauldron was the remaining crushed stone deteriorated. What was left were tiny dots of fluorescent lights flying within the cauldron.

“Let’s begin!”

Lin Mu Yu stretches his arms and fully stretches his body to calm down his body. Soon after gas started to form around, and he then urged the cauldron to manage the spirit force inside to fly near his body to refine his skin.

For a moment, an intense burning sensation spread through his skin, almost making him faint; moreover, it made Lin Mu Yu suspect that this was such an insane technique, would such an outrageous method even work?

“Come on, Big Brother…” Lu Lu staring with her two big watery eyes in order to encourage him.

Lu Lu and him were like one, Lin Mu Yu knew that she would never harm him, so he continued to pushed on. Soon after the agonising pain, small dots of spirit force slowly seeped into his skin. Slowly his skin was being reborn until the spirit force completely integrated with him.

Inch by inch, new skin was quickly emerging.

This is refining one's skin?

Lin Mu Yu was stunned, this was simply a devastating process for the body and soul. To destroy the skin, then later on use the fusion of the spirit force and skin to reconstruct it: this way of cultivation was simply too inhumane!

.....

However, nearly one hour later, the refinement of the stone was complete, his skin was lustrous as if he was reborn; moreover, those cuts he received during the day were already completely recovered.

Lightly making a fist, there was a dense mist surrounding his clenched fist showing a faint power. Testing seemed pointless. Lin Mu Yu already knew that his skin had already shed its mortal body and was being reborn. It was pointless to even mention the comparison of the capabilities of his skin's defence from now and before the process.

Suddenly he threw a blow, “bang”, then broke a piece of blue stone. Lin Mu Yu’s wrist and fist felt like they were pulsating from the impact, but he didn’t feel much pain. In other words, he could still feel the sensations from his skin, but it was much tougher; moreover, even if he were to bombard the stones with his fist for some time, it didn’t feel like there would be much pain.

Trying again, no longer using Qi in the attack.

“Peng!”

The stones slowly shivered, leaving an imprint of a fist above it. His fist only felt a bit of pain. His skin was now entirely different from before.

Excited, he wielded his sword to cut another piece of the red stone and continued to practice.

.....

Under the stars, at the top of the distant pavilions, stood two people, one of them was Lei Hong.

“This kid has chosen the red stone to practice.” Lei Hong said.

Another elderly man, a good person named Ge Yang, and one of the 12 ministers, stroked his beard. He smiled and said: “ The red

stone was named as the most solid stone, absorbing the spirit force contained in the red stone is too difficult."

"But he seems to have done it, what were those rays of light in the end?"

"I don't know, but this youngster gets more and more interesting." Ge Yang said slightly laughing.

"Yes, but for Qu Chu to be interested in a person, it was inevitable that he would be an extraordinary talent. How do we deal with Zeng Fan, if he demands for Lin Mu Yu to receive punishment and Shen Hou appears to request for the same, I am afraid that speaking with them has no use." Lei Hong said anxiously.

Ge Yang shook his : "You don't have to worry about this, Zeng Fan is a crazed disciple that considers everyone beneath him, he must want to kill Lin Mu Yu himself. We just need to make Lin Mu Yu become strong enough to not be killed, so naturally this good seed can be preserved.

"En!"

Chapter 54 : Heavenly Sword

Lin Mu Yu spent his next two days alternately in sparring in the Temple and training in the rock garden. This resulted in a significant increase of his cultivation. At least a few meters high of red essence stones were refined into a pile of powder, and these contained a spirit force inside of it, which was then all absorbed into his skin; moreover, its effects were distinct, and he could almost be called to have copper skin.

There was no need for any further evidence, Zhang Wei, Lei Ying and the other instructors have seen the staggering changes of Lin Mu Yu. While sparring over the past few days, he had not received any injuries, and this was absolutely unprecedented in the history of the temple.

Since his identity has already been exposed, Lin Mu Yu hasn't gone to visit Chu Yao for these past few days. Zeng Fan has been attentively watching, so there was no need to bring any trouble to Chu Yao by visiting her. In addition, Chu Yao was under the protection of her brother Chu Huai Sheng, so there weren't many other people who dared to offend Chu Yao, after all her brother was one of the 200 imperial bodyguards; therefore, his status was quite special.

.....

After his evening dinner, Lin Mu Yu got permission to leave the the temple, it was a day to purchase the daily needed goods, and Qin Zi Ling was at his side. Qin Zi Ling truly admired Lin Mu Yu's in regards to his cultivation. Qin Zi Ling's attitude was one of

hoping to be a little brother to him; however, Lin Mu Yu had no plans to treat him in such a way, and so held him in regards as a friend instead.

At night, the streets of the imperial capital were bustling with noise and excitement, Lin Mu Yu, with his Prarie Sword positioned behind him, lightly treaded on the stone road. Qin Zi Ling following behind him. With his forehead covered in sweat, he smiled: “Lin Zhi, don’t go so fast, tell me where you do you want to go?

“A weapon shop. Where is the best weapon shop in the imperial capital, can you bring me there Zi Ling?”

“Oh” Qin Zi Ling pondered and then said: “Sales is best in the North City, but the South City without a doubt has superior quality. At Wan Sheng’s weapons shop, there is said to be even be spiritual level weapons for sale as well.

“Good, we will go then”

“En!”

After nearly half an hour of running, they arrived at the South City, seeing from afar the signboards of Wan Sheng's weapons shop, they noticed a brothel was noticeably beside it.

After entering the place, the shop assistant saw both teenagers arrive, but did not seem to mind them; however, Lin Mu Yu took

his attentioned and asked: “Excuse me, can you point me to the best weapon here?”

The shop assistant was taken by surprise. He took a look at Lin Mu Yu and wondered whether this man even had money on him, he raised his eyebrows: “Can you even afford the best weapon?”

Lin Mu Yu smiled: “Oh I’m sorry, I actually wanted to sell weapons first, take a look at this.”

He took out his Ling Yuan sword then handed it over, as the shop assistant drew it half-way “Keng”, there was a sound that emanated and reverberated from the sheath; moreover, the shop assistant couldn’t help but show an expression of pure joy, “It’s a third level spirit weapon….great stuff… how did you get this, young man?

Li Mu Yu raised his eyebrows with a smile: “You don’t have to know. Tell me, do you have a better a sword than this?”

“Naturally, there is one. Come with me!”

The shop assistant brought the two and detoured into a corridor, he respectfully said: “Shopkeeper, there is a young mercenary who wants to see the treasures of Wan Sheng’s weapon shop.”

A door in the hall burst open, and there appeared a hearty old man in the hallway, his eyes pierced alertly into the surroundings. Seeing the Prarie Sword on the back of Lin Mu Yu’s shoulder, his

eyes glanced and a saw a trace of peculiarity of the sword. He was an expert, and naturally could see that this sword is not ordinary, smiling: “Young mercenary, please come in!”

Lin Mu Yu stepped into the shop and discovered that beautiful weapons in the anteroom were indeed of the best quality, and that the blades arranged in this room were apparently rare. Just approaching the blades would make one conscious of its sharpness, and it made one nervously tremble because of this.

On the first blade he stopped by, the elderly shopkeeper bellowed laughter: “Azure Lion Blade, mystic first rank, the Saint of War Lu Xuan Ying used this blade. It is the foundation of this shop’s collections, and it cost 400,000 golden yin coins, but none have been able to buy it so far.

Lin Mu Yu was speechless, extremely expensive, his own salary each month was a mere 100 yin coins. Even making that number annual made it only 1200 coins each year. Counting pensively with his fingers, he figured he would only be able to afford it if he skipped eating and drinking for 333 years. Moreover, he was already considered highly paid within the imperial capital and was called “Mr Perfect (Mr. Lucky and Handsome)”. Now it felt like he was this poor loser who would have to grind at work for 10,000 years just to be able to afford this!

He quickly moved on until he stopped by a fiery coloured long bow. He also had his own treasured carved bow, but no matter how you look at it, his own bow could not even compare because the string of this bow seemed suffused in crystal light, glowing gently like the moon. One glance would have been enough to make

a person realise that this was a treasured object!

The shopkeeper said with a smile, “This is the Jade Snow Moon Bow, holy fifth rank. It is said that 3000 years ago, this was the weapon of a nymph that had stepped into the edge of heaven. After she ascended, she left this bow. It passed through many hands until it finally reached this old man. The selling price is 80,000 gold.

Lin Mu Yu was silent once again, this was a truly a great bow, but he definitely could not afford to buy it.

“Shopkeeper, can’t the imperial blacksmith create spirits weapons? How are these weapons so expensive?” He asked in disbelief.

The Shopkeeper laughed: “Blacksmiths do not practice these cultivation arts, their only have a 100 year life span. Also, weaponsmiths are rare people, it takes many years until another can become one. A lot of people are poor all their lives, so they can only produce one or two representative works, so there are very little spirit and mystic weapons.

He smiled: “Young mercenary, do you know what all the people from the imperial capital call me?”

“En, what do they call you?”

TL: En can mean yes or no in a way depending on your tone in

China

“Old Jian”

“For what reason?” Qin Zi ling curiously asked.

“Because this old man has been for his whole life infatuated with sword art!” Old Jian laughed, he suddenly raised his hand, the Prarie Sword on Lin Mu Yu’s back was immediately unsheathed. An invisible force made levitate into the air where it flipped several times and whistled across the air. Lin Mu Yu looked upward, his face clearly in shock. Without waiting for him to respond, the palm of an old hand motioned, and the fire sword voluntarily returned to the sheath, leaving Lin Mu Yu had no opportunity to even react.

“Senior…as expected, truly outstanding swordplay. Unequaled!” Lin Mu Yu’s heart filled with utter respect.

Old Jian, proudly stroked his beard with a smile: “I cannot say that it is unrivaled, but in my collection, there is one treasure considered to be unequaled, young mercenary do you want to take a peak?”

“En”

Old Jian walked next to a wall and lightly pressed a mechanism. The wall shook, and all by itself extended a drawer-like container. Within Old Jian’s hands was a black small box which he gentled

place on a table. He smiled: "Please check it out!”

In front of Lin Mu Yu, he opened a box to reveal a simple and unadorned long sword, which he then held up in his hands. Pulling out the edge of the sword, a dim feeling of intangible Qi wave surged throughout the surrounding. It glowed with cold distinct rays, and the edge of the sword appeared to be possessed by an unnatural beauty. The body of the sword was transparent and bright, as if it were densely covered with layers of extremely precious art. Most importantly, the blade of the sword had layer upon layer of folds compounded into the edge of the blade. The naked eye could hardly capture its design, which put Lin Mu Yu in a state of shocked awe. His refining included the art of casting weapons, but this sword in his hand was surely rarely seen within this world.

“Senior, what is this sword called? It’s a truly unique sword!” He said admiringly.

Old Jian was satisfied with his admiration, and then smilingly said: “The sword is called “Star”, 3rd rank holy item, its degree of sharpness surpasses the Azure Lion Dagger and the Jade Snow Moon bow. It is the true treasure of this town’s shop, even this old man can be certain of this. Throughout the whole empire there is not even a handful of blades in the imperial palace that is on par with this sword. What do you think of it?

Lin Mu Yu holding the sword put it down steadily, then said: “Truly exceptional, how much does this sword cost?”

“Priceless.....” Old Jian shook his head, sighed, then laughed:

“Actually nobody can afford to buy this priceless God’s weapon, even me, the Old Man, is not willing to sell. I am just waiting for the day I die so that the sword will be buried alongside me beneath the earth, but I hope that it will not be stolen by gravediggers without conscience.

Lin Mu Yu, who could not help but joke, says: “I’ll just wait for you die then, don’t forget to tell me where your tomb will be.”

Old Jian smiled unconcernedly because this is certainly the best sword.

“Young mercenary, do you want to buy or sell a sword?” Old Jian asked.

Lin Mu Yu shook his head: ”No, Wan Sheng’s weapon shop has opened my eyes, Old Jian allowed us to see your treasures. Thank you…”

“Haha, you are most welcome, godspeed as I won’t be seeing you out. “

…….

In fact, Jian was always a person who loved swords, and his name serves to reinforces this reputation. People appreciating and admiring his collection was his greatest pleasure.

TL: Jian means in Chinese a type of sword, so his name is

practically sword.

Lin Mu Yu at the bottom of his heart was thinking about how in the refining arts there was the metal refining arts. Within this world, what kind of almighty and impossible heights would this reach? Could I even possibly creating something that can match the God's weapon, "Star". This will be difficult, but if I do not even try, how would I know my limits?

Passing through a corridor, he noticed a group of soldiers at the backyard were training themselves. The weapon store had the most valuable treasures within it, and it would have been a surprise if there wasn't an ample military force on guard and protecting it. This protection was on top of the imperial guards that patrolled at night all throughout the city.

.....

On the way home, Qin Zi Ling had been very surprised of the reason for Lin Mu Yu's checking the weapons shop. Lin Mu Yu had not yet said a word about his universal refining technique; however, keeping it a secret seemed to be for the best. After all, for a common man, treasuring a jade becomes a crime. If other people were to find out that he had a treasured alchemy cauldron then the city would consider mobilizing to eliminate him.

(TL: Treasuring a jade becomes a crime, means that they will get into trouble because of a precious item.)

As they were walking, the sound of hooves coming from fierce

horses came from ahead, hundreds of cavalry charged onwards relentlessly.

“Watch out!” (be careful kind of feeling)

Lin Mu Yu swiftly dodged the cavalry clash with Qin Zi Ling who, pale with fear, said: ”What the hell? Whose army is that?”

Their eyes followed the direction of the armored horses as they passed by. From the rear there was a seemingly unending supply of cavalry. Written on the banners of the horsemen in large, golden letters -- The House of the Seven Seas!

Qin Zi Ling was stunned: “Ah……. Is this the army of the Seven Seas City’s Azure Tide. What’s happening?

Lin Mu Yu’s heart trembled, then said: “Azure Tides……Isn’t this Tang Xiao Xi’s grandfather?

“Oh yes, did you know of this Lin Zhi?”

“En.”

Lin Mu Yu said no further words and he rapidly squeezed through the crowd of people to grab a middle aged uncle’s neck collar, impatiently asking: “Uncle, What’s happening with the Tang family.

This Uncle, being quite friendly despite seeing Lin Mu Yu carrying a sword on his shoulder politely said: “ Seven days ago, the eldest young lady Tang Xi rode out of the city with her guards into the forest to look for a youngster named Lin Mu Yu. Who would have known that they would be followed by a band of mercenaries? Whether Tang Xing Xi is alive or dead is unknown. That night her surviving guards returned without her. So now a whole legion has been dispatched into the forest to search of her.”

“Xiao Xi, she came to find me?

Lin Mu Yu’s mind became momentarily blank.

Chapter 55 : You Dont Have Any Tact

Soft moonlight spilled onto the forest floor. The Dragon Seeker Forest was as peaceful as ever.

The sound of horse hooves thundered beneath the trees as a large party of cavalry passed through. It was the Imperial Army, 2000 men strong. Feng Ji Xing himself was personally leading the imperial guard. Their mission was the find Princess Tang Xiao Xi of the Seven Seas, and they were not to return until she was found. This was the emperor's command.

Feng Ji Xing was very worried.

Following behind him was delicate figure with a exquisite sword strapped across her back. Her mantle was blown open by the night's wind, revealing a beautiful face. It was none other than her Imperial Highness, Princess Qin Yin. "If Xiao Xi comes to harm, I will seek out all the sellswords in the kingdom and eliminate them!" "There will be blood!"

Feng Ji Xing kept silent. He knew that Qin Yin meant every word. If it were not for her deep affection for Tang Xiao Xi she would not have snuck out of the palace.

...

Lan Yan City, the Imperial Capital.

Lin Mu Yu hurriedly returned to the temple. He picked out a horse from the stable and was about to leave, when, from a distance, a person wearing gold star called out to him “Lin Zhi! What are you doing out so late? Don’t you know it is forbidden to leave the temple at night?”

Lin Mu Yu did not answer him, but turned the horse about and urged it go onwards.

“Stop where you are!”

The figure swooped in and grabbed the reins: “You arrogant boy, I told you stop, did you not hear?”

Lin Mu Yu could now see the man’s face clearly under the moonlight. It was the one and only Ou Yang Qiu, an instructor with a gold star. He was an extraordinary swordsman with the reputation of being the number 1 sword hand of the temple. It was too bad that he was Zeng Fan’s subordinate so they often met on opposing sides. If Lei Hong had not covered him, Ou Yang Qu could have cut open his neck.

“What’s going on over there.” The deacon Ge Yang’s called out as he approached them: “Master Ou Yang, Lin Zhi, what are you two doing?”

“This kid, Lin Zhi, took a horse and was about to ride off. He has broken the rules of the temple. Please, deacon, you must punish him!”

Ge Yang wrinkled his brows. “Now, now Master Ou Yang, we must not be hasty. I’m sure Lin Zhi has a perfectly good explanation for leaving in hurry. Let us give him a chance to explain.” He said placatingly.

Ou Yang nodded gruffly.

Lin Mu Yu, still atop the horse, pleaded anxiously: “Please, Deacon Ge Yang, my friends are in the Dragon Seeker Forest and must be in danger. It could be a matter of life and death, I can’t not go, I have to go. Please, let me leave!”

“Who is your friend?” Ge Yang asked.

“Tang Xiao Xi.”

“The Princess Xi?” Ge Yang was stunned. “Lin Zhi, you actually know the River Princess?”

“Yes.”

Ge Yang smiled. “The River Princess is in the Dragon Seeker Forest because of an assassination attempt. It is not clear right now if she is alive or dead. The people in the capital are very worried. But don’t fret, the Imperial Guard has already been sent out to search for her. Even though she is your friend it may not be necessary for you to go.”

“But she is in danger because of me....” Lin Mu Yu suddenly

stopped himself before he revealed too much.

"Because of you?" Ou Yang scoffed. "What do you mean?"

Lin Mu Yu remained silent.

"Well," Ge Yang said with a smile. "I suppose I can give you three days. I give you my permission to leave these walls, but you must return within three days. Do you understand?"

"I thank you Master Deacon!"

With a flick of his whip, Lin Mu Yu charged headlong into the night.

Ou Yang turned to Ge Yang with a look of astonishment. "Deacon Ge Yang, why did you allow that?"

"Come now, brother, aren't we all people of the temple with our own matters to attend to." Ge Yang cheerfully patted Ou Yang on the shoulders. "We shouldn't concern ourselves too much with that boy. Come, come, come, I have just brought back some venison from the market, I guarantee it is very very fresh! It would be a shame for you not to try it!"

"Yes, very well…" After all, Ou Yang Qiu is just an instructor. His rank does not compare to Ge Yang's so he could not oppose.

...

The mountain was pale and ghostlike as the moonlight stretched across the forest. Armed horsemen rushed through the trees. The peace of the Forest was broken.

Feng Ji Xing sniffed the air and a dark expression came across his face. He raised his sword, “Slow down! Careful, I can smell blood.”

“What is going on, Feng Ji Xing?” Qin Yin asked.

Feng Ji Xing gritted his teeth. “Your highness, we are now deep in the Dragon Seeker Forest, where no man has ever been. This is a forbidden place. Not even the Imperial maps have accounts for it. The beasts here are very strong. At any moment we could be ambushed by a wild pack. So it would we wise for us to slow down and not cause too much noise.”

“Ah.” Even though Qin Yin was very worried about Tang Xi, she knew that some things could just not be rushed.

Suddenly, a deafening howl cried out from the trees in front of them. It was a beast of the forest! The peace of the Forest was broken!

“Commander!” A soldier cried as he ran toward them. “A fire breathing snake has appeared ahead of here! Nobody saw it in time. The frontlines... the frontlines have lost hundreds of brothers!”

“What?” Feng Ji Xing brandished his sword in fury. “Follow me!”

Qin Yin quickly whipped her horse to follow.

Moonlight spilled onto the forest, flames lit up the sky. The gigantic body of a snake slithered through the trees. Men and horses were wrapped in it coils. Presently, it opened its mouth wide and swallowed a person whole, and he did not even have time to cry.

Feng Ji Xing took in the scene and hardened his heart. “Men, on me! Protect the princess. We are retreating. There is nothing we can do here.”

“Commander,” Luo Lie said urgently. “This snake is still young. If we attack together we can kill him!”

“No!”

Feng Ji Xing said through gritted teeth. “Do you not see the two raised marks on the snake’s head? That is a Ten Thousand Year Dragon Snake. It has just entered its shedding phase. It will soon ascend into a Dragon. Its strength will be too much for us. Now, quickly, protect Her Highness!”

“Yes, sir!”

At that moment, the snake seemed to understand their speech. It released the person it was about to swallow and released a mass of flames directly into the army.

“Protect Her Highness!”

Hundreds of horsemen charged forth with sword and spear, hacking and piercing at the snake’s tough hide. But try as they might, none of their attacks were very effective.

This Giant snake knew it must kill the most important person among the soldiers, that is, the girl in the gold cloak! She is the heart of these people!

Weng!

A dense stream of Qi burst forth from Feng Ji Xing’s sword. With a loud battle cry, he raised the sword into the air and the shape of a wolf formed around his body. This was his Martial Spirit, 2nd level Beast Spirit, The Violet Wolf!

The blade cleaved into the snake’s head!

Peng!

The snake recoiled with a terrible hiss. Feng Ji Xing’s sword had cut through the hard scales of creature’s head, leaving a fissure that exposed a white bone underneath. But Feng Ji Xing knew that wasn’t the beast’s skull, it was the snake’s horn, evidently on the

verge of breaking through the head anyway. This snake would soon become a dragon!

Screeech!

The snake let out a piercing shriek. Feng Ji Xing took a direct hit from the sonic wave, causing him to spit out blood. How could he have known a giant snake could grow so strong in such conditions!

After the snake defeated Feng Ji Xing, it slithered across the forest floor. Its powerful, muscular tail swept through horse and horseman alike, smashing them into a bloody pulp with each powerful undulation. The smell of blood filled the air.

Ohh...

Qin Yin knew she was no match for the creature, but she could not outrun it either. With no other alternative she turned to face the beast and quickly thrust her palms forward. A dazzling gold chain appeared in the air. It shot through the air towards the snake and wove itself tightly around the creature's mouth. The snake's mouth was wrapped shut! Who knew the Princess possessed such a cultivation? But it was no time to celebrate. In an instant the snake tore the Spirit Binding apart! It was free!

"Ah..."

Qin Yin suppressed a groan. Blood spilled out of the corners of the snake's mouth. With a great roar, its great maw charged

towards her.

“Puu!”

Its venomous fangs sank into the princess’ chest. Feng Ji Xing blade suddenly appeared. It cleaved 7 inches into the body of the snake.

“Aoo, aooo” (wailing)

For the first time, the great beast’s body twisted in pain. It abandoned its attack on Qin Yin to make his counterattack on Feng Ji Xing.

…

“Boo hoo”

Qin Yin sobbed, her body slumped on her back of her horse. She felt a burning sensation in her chest. The color of her skin also started to turn purple. Her horse agitatedly dug its hooves into the forest floor. Then, like a bullet, her swift horse shot into the forest, leaving her distant from the cavalry that could not keep up with her own horse’s speed.

Presently, a shadow galloping across the mountain road burst through the bushes and bumped into maiden and horse.

“Eh? What is this?”

Lin Mu Yu had no chance to react. A soft and delicate body suddenly thumped onto his chest. The pair thrown off their horses and rolled down the rocky cliffside, through the bramble and thorns.

With a quick glance Lin Mu Yu could tell that the figure in his arms was a beautiful young woman. He quickly used his own body to protect her from the rocks and thorns. Fortunately, his “Refining Skin” turned out really well. They rolled down several meters until they reached the valley.

Qin Yin, with a pale face, raised her head to see a handsome young man holding her in his arms. She reflexively removed herself from him. “Don’t touch me!”

The dignified princess has never been intimately held by a man before.

“Well who wants to anyway…” Li Mu Yu took one look at her and understood everything. “You’ve been poisoned. Let me treat that or you will die!”

“It’s none of your business.” Qi Yin was still suspicious of him.

Lin Mu Yi’s heart was panging for Tang Xi’s safety and also didn’t feel like meddling. He staggered up and walked away to pick up his sword, which had fallen a short distance away.

Qin Yin noticed that his body was scratched up by stones and thorns and her heart softened. She realized now that this person was protecting her as they were falling into the ravine. She felt her body getting weaker little by little. If this person doesn't save her then she will really die.

"Can you.. Can you really heal it?" She murmured. "This is the venom of a 10,000 Year snake..."

Lin Mu Yu sneered discreetly. I am a master of the medicine refinement, what poison can I not cure?

He extended his hand, said "1000 gold coins and I will save you. This is non-negotiable."

Qin Yin stared at him blankly, her face turning green. "You... You! You! Do you really think I am carrying around that much money right now?"

Lin Mu Yu inspected her fine silk Jade clothes. "How about we make that your IOU? You want me to save your life and yet you act too rudely. Tsk, tsk. You don't have any tact..."

Qin Yin was so furious she wished she could just die from the poison at that moment. Suddenly a feeling of faintness came over her and her body started to convulse.

Lin Mu Yu quickly rushed to her side, talk of money completely

forgotten. The venom was indeed very serious. His fingers gently probed her shoulders, injecting strong Qi into her body. “I stopped the venom from spreading through your veins. But now I have to leave you to look for ingredients for the antidote. Please prop yourself up here and wait for me. Is that alright?”

Qin Yin was on the verge of collapse. She blinked a pair of beautiful eyes and looked at the handsome face of the young man in the moonlight. She nodded a little distractedly. “Yes, please hurry.”

Chapter 56 : Saving The Beautiful Girl

Dragon Seeker Forest was pitch black at night. A patch of clouds floated overhead so that even starlight could not penetrate the darkness. Lin Mu Yu channeled Qi into Prairie Sword which promptly ignited in flames. The flaming sword worked as a torch as he proceeded into the night.

“Antidote.. antidote”

He repeated absent-mindedly as he carefully considered the three possible recipes he could make. One was a level 1 potion that could only alleviate the simpler symptoms of the poison, the second was a 5th level potion, also insignificant, and the third was a level 9 potion. The level 9 potion was called Heart Defense Potion, probably nobody in the world knew how to make it, but it was the only medicine that could save the beautiful girl, after all, it was the venom of a Dragon Snake. There was no other alternative. Other antidotes would not be as effective. Focus Powder could only provide immunity. Now that she had already been bitten, only the Heart Defense Potion can work!

“Lu Lu!”

He called out softly. Immediately, green light flitted out of his consciousness. The system fairly Lu Lu rubbed her eyes drowsily. “Big Brother, what’s the matter? I was sleeping to recover spirit energy from last time.”

“Help me out. Does this area have any Heart Defense Grass and

Dragon Slaver Grass?”

(TL: “Slaver” as in “saliva” because it was the coolest sounding word for saliva)

“Dragon Slaver Grass, Ah… Let me think.” Lulu was now now wide awake and scanning their surroundings. “Just a few days ago I was looking around for materials here. Oh! Big Brother, there is Heart Defense Grass not far from here, go in that direction for couple of li and you will find some for sure. Now, Dragon Slaver Grass is farther. It’s about ten li away. Do you really have to go? It’s so far and it’s so dark. Dragon Slaver Grass grows in a deep pit inhabited by a ferocious Dragon Snake!

Lin Mu Yu gritted his teeth. Could it be the same Dragon Snake that attacked the beautiful girl?

So let it be! Saving a life is like building a seven-storey pagoda.

He set out once, using Starfall Steps to cover the great distance faster. Every minute he would stop on a cliff to sniff the air. Eventually a familiar smell assailed him, it was the Heart Defense Grass!

He inspected the rocks beneath him and saw a faint glow, like the pulsing light of stars, come out between the cracks. Excitedly, he reached into a crevice and gently grasped for the precious herbs. It didn’t take long for him to get a hold of some and he decided to harvest a little extra as well. Afterwards he stuffed them into his bosom and then stood up to call out, “Lulu, let’s get the Dragon

Slaver Grass!”

“Okay!”

The system fairy flapped her little and wings and flew in the direction of the Dragon Slaver Grass. She was almost as fast as Starfall Steps. But while 10 li is not particularly far, it is also not a short distance. When they arrived at their destination Lulu was a little out of breath.

On high cliff stood an ancient tree that reached up towards the sky. Gnarled roots crowned a large pit and penetrated deeply into the darkness.

Lin Mu Yu guessed that the Dragon Snake was still out hunting and hadn’t been back yet so there was no real danger at the moment. He held Prairie Fire in his hands and entered the pit.

"Oh...”

A strong stench of rot assailed him and made him dizzy. He surveyed his surroundings and spotted the skeletal remains of various beasts, and even some human skulls. He searched the cave for about 5 minutes until he finally found what he was looking for. On a rock wall grew a clump of fluorescent Dragon Slaver Grass. Dragon Slaver Grass is a level nine herb, so rare it was nearly extinct in the mainland. This Dragon Snake was about to ascend into a Dragon so it produced a lot of Dragon gas which helped the Dragon Slaver Grass flourish. It was almost destiny!

He quickly proceeded to collect all the Dragon Slaver Grass into his pouch. He felt a sense of satisfaction.

While he was harvesting the Dragon Slaver Grass, a thought suddenly occurred to him. When they entered the Bloodlust Tiger's cave they were able to find some treasure. Dragons are known for their desire to collect treasure, and this particular one lived for 10,000 years. Wasn't it possible for it to have a giant collection of treasure in here?

Step by step he walked a little further into the cave, but was only met with disappointment. In the inner part of the cave he found seven or eight snake eggs arranged on a pile of straw. As for treasure, there was none to be found!

"Pa-cha…."

One of the eggs started to crack open. A small snake head poked out of the shell with little screeching sounds. It blinked around in a little daze until it spotted Lin Mu Yu and, thinking he was its mother, struggled out the shell to slink towards him.

Without a word, Lin Mu Yu kicked the baby snake away and said "Go away, Big Bro isn't your Mama. In fact, Big Bro wouldn't mind chopping off your Mama's head."

At this moment a piercing shriek could be heard from outside, it sounded half like a dragon and half like snake. Lin Mu Yu shuddered. Oops, I think Mommy's home. He might be the one losing his head soon. Time to run!

Lin Mu Yu quickly jumped out of the cave and sped away.

……

The clouds dispersed and allowed the stars to shower the forest with soft twinkling lights. Qin Yin had long since fainted. Her face was purple. The venom was very strong.

“Please wake up, miss!”

Lin Mu Yu violently shook her shoulders to wake her. Slowly, Qin Yin opened her eyes and saw Lin Mu Yu in her sleepy stupor, “Did you find the antidote?”

“Yes, but I only have the herbs. I still have to Refine the medicine. Please don’t fall asleep, you may never wake up again if you do.”

Lin Mu Yu observed her face and felt very sorry. It would be such a waste for this beautiful young lady to die this way. Saving her life would indeed be a significant contribution to the populace. After all, women of her beauty were rare to see in a lifetime. Even Xiao Xi’s beauty was a little inferior to hers.

He sat on the ground and began making the medicine. He raised his hand over the Heart Defense Grass and began to refine it. While he was extracting the Heart Defense Grass, he raised his hand over the Dragon Slaver Grass and also began to refine it. The Essence

Purification Technique allowed him to simultaneously extract the herbs at the same time. Lin Mu Yu lives up to his reputation of being a master of alchemy secrets.

Qin Yin leaned against a rock fighting to stay conscious. She wouldn't be able to keep it up much longer. She watched the youth refine the herbs through drooping lids.

The Essence Purification Hands emitted a soft glow, barely discernible under the starlight. It shone on Lin Mu Yu's resolute and handsome face. Beads of sweat started to form on this forehead, perhaps from the exertion of refining. It felt like he breathed out more than he breathed in, and he purely used his Qi to Refine the medicine.

"Who...is this person?"

Qin Yin asked herself over and over again. She had seen many Refining pharmacists in the palace before, even a King level alchemist. But she had never seen anything like this young man who could refine two herbs at once. The process of extraction for each herb is different. Each type of herb has a unique refinement method!

After about ten minutes Lin Mu Yu completed the extraction. He placed the purified powders on a white piece of cloth.

Lin Mu Yu reached into a pouch on his waist and produced a few small glass bottles filled with clean water. This he had already prepared beforehand, as would any respectable master alchemist

do.

He carefully transferred the medicine into a bottle then capped it. He shook the bottle vigorously for a moment and then stopped and grasped it firmly in his palm. Slowly he released Qi from the center of his palm and guided it in swirls around the bottle. This was the most important part of refining Heart Defense Potion. The introduction of Qi allows the essence of the two herbs to merge harmoniously. Perhaps there were some people in the world who knew the proper ratios of essences that go into the Heart Defense Potion, but those with the knowledge of this particular technique were very rare. Could he possibly be the only person who knows?

……

Not long after, the first bottle of Heart Defense Potion was complete.

“Done!” He cheerfully exclaimed as he wiped off a bit of sweat.

Qin Yin stared blankly, not knowing what to say, she nodded and said softly: “Oh.”

“Oh? What Oh? Quickly, take off your clothes.”

“Huh?”

Qin Yin’s heart started beating faster. Her feminine modesty made her cheeks flush red. “Why do I have to take off my clothes…

are you one of those quack doctors that practice bloodletting?”

“Bloodletting?” Lin Mu Yu couldn’t help but laugh. “That kind of inferior method never crossed my mind. Besides, strength is contained in blood vessels, bloodletting to remove poison would be a big waste. Don’t worry, my antidote will break up the venom in your blood, it won’t cause you any harm.”

“But why do I have to remove my clothes…” Qin Yin asked in a low voice.

“Ah, that…” Lin Mu Yu’s thoughts swirled madly in his head. He couldn’t say what he had to say, which was so he could see her chest. The statement was too brazen, after all, they were still strangers.

“This medicine has to go on your wound, and your wound is on your chest.” He explained.

Qin Yin nodded, her cheeks flushed red, she felt like she wanted to die. “Then… I have no strength left , you… you have to help me remove it. But you… you have to close your eyes!”

“I understand!”

Lin Mu Yu carefully reached out to undo the buttons of her collar. Only now did he notice that the buttons were embossed with a Yin Flower, the very same flower in gold Yin coins. He realized that this girl must be from some very high-born family.

Her buttons were even made of pure gold.

Qin Yin shut her eyes, her delicate shoulders trembling. This was torture for her.

Actually, for Lin Mu Yu, it was difficult to resist because such a beautiful girl was just in front of him, closing her eyes. Fortunately his self control was strong, else who could know what would have happened.

Slowly the rich purple garments were removed, exposing a beautiful white chest. Lin Mu Yu's eyes drank in the sight felt his nose almost start to bleed. This woman's figure was very beautiful. A delicate nape with snow white skin molded with two twin peaks with a valley so deep 10,000 heroes could die in it. But underneath ripped bandaged was the wound. The blood had coagulated into purple crystals. The poison was very serious.

"Does it hurt?" Lin Mu Yu felt very sorry for her.

Qin Yin's brows wrinkled in indignation, "Yes, it was very painful at first... now I don't feel anything. But you... What are you looking at!"

Lin Mu Yu hastily went back to work. He turned his head away and proceeded to feel for the for the edge of the bandage with gentle fingers. He grabbed the edge and peeled it upwards, as carefully as he could, even though he couldn't see.

Qin Yin suddenly cried out for he had disturbed the wound. She opened her eyes and saw Lin Mu Yu with his head facing away. She found it a little funny but it also increased her bashfulness.

Lin Mu Yu brought out the bottle of Heart Defense Potion and tried to guess out the location of the wound. “Is it here?”

“A little to the left…”

Qin Yin watched his hands and guided him: “A little to the right, a little forward, ah! get your hands off of there! A little to the back, there, it’s there…”

Lin Mu Yu slowly poured out the medicine and commented: “You have such a bad temper you are lucky you found a saintly person such as I who won’t just say ‘Hmph’ at you.”

Qin Yin laughed, “Yes, thank you…”

“You’re welcome. You will give me 1000 yin gold. You won’t go back on your word?”

“Of course…”

Chapter 57 : A Freak Combination Of Accidents

Lin Mu Yu kept his eyes shut as Qin Yin leaned her bare body on his chest so he could help her put her clothes back on. His arms were wrapped around her as his hands pulled cloak up her back. Qin Yin's cheeks flushed. They were so close that they were filled with each other's scent. The situation was getting exceedingly delicate.

……

After she was clothed again, Qin Yin could feel soft warmth pulsating in her chest as if the antidote was melting away the effects of the venom. The Heart Defense Potion acted very fast. This young man was very skilled, even the venom of a Dragon Snake was no match for him!

She gradually regained feeling in her shoulders and quickly gathered her clothes about her, and said "Thank you…"

"You're welcome. Now, about the payment…" Lin Mu Yu said as he busily Refined the remaining bottles of antidote.

"Why you… Why do you care so much about money?" Qin Yin sat upright, her demeanor returning to that of an Emperor's daughter.

Lin Mu Yu couldn't reveal that he wanted to study weaponsmithing and that he needed the money to buy materials,

said “How can someone like you who came from a rich family understand the struggles of a peasant? To say I care so much about money… being poor is very difficult.”

With that, he stuffed the last of the antidote bottles into a fold of garment on his chest, picked up Prarie Fire, and stood up. “Now I have some urgent matters to attend to. Tell me where you live so I can go and collect when the time comes!”

Qin Yin couldn’t help smiling. “Alright, I live in the Capital. Tong Tian Street, Number 1…”

“Tong Tian Street!”

Lin Mu Yu thought for second. “You live beside the Warring Saint Temple. That’s convenient!”

“You are from the Warring Saint Temple?” Qin Yin was stunned.

“Yup…” Lin Mu Yu scratched his head, smiled. “I have something I really have to do now. I’m going ahead!”

“Yes, very well.”

Lin Mu Yu disappeared before Qin Yin’s eyes in an instant. In a flash she was alone in the darkness.

Back in the depths of the forest Lin Mu Yu searched for his

precious warhorse. There was no trace of it, he did, however, have many near encounters with torch-bearing horsemen.

"These must be the soldiers looking for Xiao Xi." This was not a good time to look for his horse. He turned about and entered into the forest.

Lin Mu Yu felt a tingling sensation in his spine. Suddenly he had a nagging feeling that he was forgetting something. Right! He forgot to ask for the girl's name! Stupid! He didn't even know the address. One Thousand gold Yin down the drain!

.....

"Your Highness! Your Highness!"

The soldiers called into the forest.

Nights in Dragon Seeker forest were very cold in late autumn. Qin Yin clutched her cloak about her tightly, shivering violently. Because her injury was very serious she could not muster up Qi. She couldn't even call out for help.

Step by step she inched towards the forest path. Using up her remaining strength she called out as loud as she could, "I'm here!"

A soldier with sharp hearing heard the sound of her voice and quickly turned around. Under the starlight before him was her Royal Highness, the Imperial Princess! He was so ecstatic he felt

like a newborn baby. He wildly called out “Feng Ji Xing! Her highness is over here!”

Feng Ji Xing rushed towards them and quickly dismounted from his horse. One of his arms was wrapped in bandages and his white cloak was red with blood. He kneeled on the ground and pounded his fist to his palm in salute, performing the Imperial Salute. “Rescue arrives at the last minute, are you alright, Your Highness?”

“I’m alright.”

Qin Yin nodded her head and smiled. “Feng Ji Xing, you’re hurt!”

Feng Ji Xing shook his head and laughed, “Just a scratch. However, many Brothers were killed pushing back that Ten Thousand Year Dragon Snake. It’s a great loss. But if you are safe then everything is alright, this is the best thing…”

He noticed the bandage on Qin Yin’s chest, and couldn’t help but ask. “Your Highness, weren’t you bitten by the venomous snake? That venom… are you really alright?”

“I’m alright. Really, I am. The poison has been removed”

“How is that possible? That was the venom of a 10,000 year Dragon Snake!” Feng Ji Xing was very alarmed. “How could it have been removed?”

“I met a stranger, he helped me and removed the poison.”

“Who? What is his name?”

“It’s…” Lin Mu Yu felt a tingling sensation in his spine. Her beautiful face held a blank expression. She had completely forgotten to ask his name! How careless!

Feng Ji Xing seemed to have guess what happened and smiled. He saluted once again: “So it is like that. Your Highness, I am sending a party to escort you back to the Capital. Your mission to search for Princess Xi ends here.”

“No, I want to go with you!”

“Then… very well…”

……

Dawn broke through the horizon and sunlight poured into Dragon Seeker Forest.

It was late autumn and the maple leaves had rusted over into red and gold. A young girl clutching a tree branch leaned her weight against every step she took as she trudged along the mountain path. Her boots had long been cut up among the sharp rocks, exposing little white feet. She squinted at the sun and pouted in thought, “That way is east, then… then this way is west, no no. I think it’s the other way…”

At this, she stomped her feet in frustration. “Tang Xiao Xi, why didn’t you pay attention in geography class! I’m lost, and I’m hungry…”

She continued to limp into the distance. She must keep walking because the only other choice was to wait for death.

What Xiao Xi didn’t know was that a black panther was waiting for her on the bend of the mountain path ahead. To the cold, steely eyes of the panther she wasn’t a splendid beauty, just breakfast.

This was a 3000 Year Panther and it was mating season so it required a big meal to gain a lot of energy. It’s paws stepped soundlessly on the fallen leaves as it stealthily approached Tang Xiao Xi.

Finally, when they were less than twenty meters apart, the Panther initiated the attack with a loud roar and charged forward! Whipped chords of powerful muscle released into the air as the the 3000 Year Panther sprung out of hiding, teeth bared in a fearsome snarl.

“Huh?”

Tang Xiao Xi released her Firefox spirit and channeled her energy into the makeshift staff. She raised her arms and made soft strokes in the air, creating a bright cross-shaped energy beam.

“Peng!”

The Panther emitted an energy shield on the surface of its body and charged through the attack, breaking it in an instant. Tang Xiao Xi had no time to react as a massive claws swung down towards her and ripped flesh off her shoulders.

If Tang Xiao Xi weren’t already injured and weak from hunger she could have stood a chance. As it was, she was in no condition to fight. She hastily retrieved the Firefox Spirit and turned away to run.

Roooooar!

The black panther snarled and continued the chase. It would not let its meal escape so easily.

Just as the Panther’s claws was about to reach her again a familiar sound called out from in front of her “It’s Princess Xi! Hurry, come with me!”

A white figure on horseback charged forward from the maple leaves. It was a young man in a white cloak wielding a sword. He jumped off the horse while it was still moving and cried in midair “Evil creature, go away!”

Weeeeeng!

A gold chain suddenly appeared in the air and plunged directly

into the belly of the Panther. Guts and blood poured out. It was the same attack as Qin Yin's Gold Binding Chains!

Quick as lightning the sword fell down on the Panther's neck, Ka-cha, and the black head rolled onto the grass. He performed the Imperial Salute with the bloody sword in his hands "Xiao Xi, are you alright? I've brought the Imperial Army to come save you!"

Xiao Yi trembled, all her woes poured forth and tears fell down her face "Big Brother Qin Lei, you've finally come. I almost died!"

TL: "Lei" means "Thunder"

Qin Lei's face was filled with compassion, "You little fool. Rest a while and we'll head back to Lanyan City. Don't worry, no beast can harm you while I'm around."

"Alright." Tang Xiao Xi nodded, "Is there anything to eat?"

"Oh, yes!"

Qin Lei quickly had some meat and water brought up to Xiao Xi. Tang Xiao Xi let go of all decorum and ravenously wolfed down the food. After she finished eating she regained her composure and her dignity as a Duke's daughter, said "Big Brother Thunder, what's happening in the capital?"

"Same old same old." Qin Lei replied while cleaning his sword beside his horse. "When we heard about your misadventure in the

Dragon Seeker Forest even the emperor was extremely worried. In fact, a whole army was sent out to search for you. Even I was dispatched. Everybody was worried to death. I heard that Qin Yin even snuck out of the palace to look for you!”

“Xiao Yin she…” Tang Xiao Xi pursed her little red lips. “She didn’t get into any trouble, did she?”

“Haha! Don’t worry. She’s with Feng Ji Xing and 5000 men of the army. Look at me, I only came out with 2000 men.”

Tang Xiao Xi looked on the army of soldiers behind Qin Lei and felt a little chagrinned. “I’m really very sorry to have caused all this trouble for everybody.”

Qin Lei laughed heartily, asked: “Xiao Xi, what sort of person is that Lin Mu Yu anyway? I heard that he was a criminal, an enemy of the empire. What is it about him that made you put yourself at such a huge risk?”

“No! Lin Mu Yu isn’t a criminal! He isn’t that sort of person!” Tang Xiao Xi firmly declared. “He saved my life, so I went into Dragon Seeker Forest to look for him. But we were ambushed, so many soldiers died…”

Qin Lei soothed her: “Those soldiers died in the line of duty. It was their duty to protect you and they performed that duty

admirably. Xiao Xi, stop blaming yourself. I will send out Feather Mail to inform the Yin Palace and Feng Ji Xing that you have been found. Lest they remain here flitting about aimlessly like flies searching for nothing!”

“Mm, okay!”

……

A small white bird flew up into to the air, sweeping in a gush of air with its wings. It was carrying Xiao Xi’s little bit of news.

Lin Mu Yu trekked through the vast lands of the forest, sword in hand. He avoided all sorts of beasts so he could find Xiao Xi as fast as possible. Unfortunately, he was going the wrong way. No matter how far he travelled in that direction he would never find Xiao Xi. He raised his head to look up at the sky and spotted the white bird. But he didn’t know whose bird it was.

Through meandering veins of mountain paths the bird flew until it finally alighted on the shoulder of Feng Ji Xing. He opened the letter and announced jubilantly, “Your Highness, General Qin Lei has found Princess Xi!”

Qin Yin cheered happily, “Very good! Where is Xiao Xi now?”

“I don’t know, let’s all rendezvous back at the palace!”

“Okay, then let’s hurry back!”

Chapter 58 : Luster Of Heaven

Lan Yan City. This great city that was revered to be the pearl of the Qin Dynasty had a population of over five million people. It had always been the capital of the empire.

As the sun slowly slid down the sky, a group of armoured horses thundered down the main road.

...

Huah!

Qin Yin abruptly stretched her body forward, dragging her mantle up, as she peered into the distance. “It’s Xiao Xi! She’s back!”

“Yes,” Feng Ji Xing nodded good-naturedly while rewrapping the bandages on his arm, “Princess Xi is back. Your Highness, you can stop fretting over her now.”

Qin Yin spurred her horse forward so she could welcome the returning party. Her black hair flowed in streams behind her as the wind of early evening blew through it. A pendant with a Yin flower dangled from her pretty neck. She looked like a lovely butterfly.

Tang Xiao Xi let go of her horse’s reins and flew off its back. The moment her feet touched the ground she was running towards Qin Yin’s arms. The two girls embraced each other while sobbing in

relief.

“Xiao Xi, are you alright?” Qin Yin looked at her with emotion.

Tan Xiao Xi gazed at Qin Yin briefly before sinking back into her bosom, her face flushing red, “Xiao Yin, did you get hurt?”

Qin Yin shook her head and laughed: “Only a small wound, nothing serious.”

Feng Ji Xing sauntered over, sword in hand, and sat down beside the girls. He said to himself in a very audible voice: “Getting bitten by a 10,000 year Dragon Snake and living to tell the tale, I’d say that’s not too bad. After all it is only a small wound. Ah, the youth these days don’t cherish their lives…”

“Huh!” Xiao Xi gasped in shock.

Qin Yin glared at Feng Ji Xing: “You’ve said too much!” She said rebukingly. “Hmph! Wait for me to return to the palace and tell my Imperial Father to withhold your two months salary!”

“Your Highness, I’m a just an ordinary soldier, if you take away my salary you take away my life. And I tried my hardest to protect your life too. Look, look at this wound on my arm…”

Tang Xiao Xi laughed: “Alright, alright stop arguing. Commander Feng Ji Xing you really are too much! Don’t forget that Xiao Yin is the only daughter of the Emperor, if she gets upset with you then

you really won't be able to set your table!"

Feng Ji Xing saluted formally: "Your Highness, please forgive me, this humble soldier wholeheartedly loyal to you. Please forgive Feng Ji Xing and his big mouth!"

Giggle…

"Just don't expose me anymore okay." Qin Yin smiled dismissively and turned back to her friend. "So Xiao Xi, you put yourself in danger and took hundreds of soldiers with you into Dragon Seeker Forest. Who is this Lin Mu Yu anyway? Why did you risk your life to try to find him?"

"Lin Mu Yu is…"

Tang Xiao Xi pursed her little red lips, her eyes started to tear up, "He's an apprentice alchemist… He is very kind and his alchemy technique is outstanding. Back in the Seven Stars Forest I was refining a Fire Jao beast spirit when I… got into an accident. If he didn't risk his life to save me I would have died then and there."

"So it's like that…" Qin Yin couldn't help but be reminded of the young stranger she met in the forest. He was also a very talented alchemist. He could refine two different kinds of herbs with both hands at the same time. But she didn't say any of this aloud. But it wasn't necessary. She still did not know what that money-hungry youth's purpose in the forest was.

“Let’s return to the Dukedom.” Qin Yin said.

“Okay! You’re also hurt so you need a lot of rest.”

“And you’ve gotten thin so you need to eat more.”

“Huhu, Xiao Yin you don’t how how I’ve suffered these past few days. I was so hungry because I only got to eat fruits from the mountain, horrid skimpy things. I could only drink water from the stream when I got thirsty. Don’t the forest beasts drink and pee in those streams…”

“Alright alright, I’ll treat you to a delicious meal.”

“Hooray!”

……

The next day.

Dragon Seeker Forest descended into dusk, faint sounds of wolves howling and tigers roaring could be heard. This place was full of many dangers, each mountaintop was occupied by a beast of at least 2000 years. In the wake of the setting sun, a youth carried a freshly-slaughtered rabbit, looking about the area as if he were lost.

“I think I’m going the wrong way…. Xiao Xi can’t be here.”

Lin Mu Yu counted the days with his fingers. The three days Deacon Ge Yang allotted to him were almost up. He had to be back in Lan Yan city by dawn tomorrow. They would certainly punish him if he didn't. After all he just arrived at the Temple. It was also no good to try to avoid punishment.

His horse was still missing and mostly likely he would never find it again. Lin Mu Yu felt regret, he was really unlucky, he lost his horse and couldn't even find Tang Xiao Xi.

He sighed heavily as he made his decision. With feet as lithe as a swallow, he ran off into the distance. By dawn he must arrive at Lan Yan City!

At dawn a weary figure arrived at the gates of Lan Yan city.

"Halt! Who goes there?" A sentry yelled at him as he approached. "Do you not know that it is forbidden to leave the city after dark?"

Lin Mu Yu continued to shuffle forward, the Golden Star of the Temple glinted on his chest as it caught the light of rising sun. The sentry's expression immediately became respectful. He straightened his back and gave a salute, "You're a Master of the Temple. Please enter!"

"Thank you very much."

The whole continent regarded the Temple as the most sacred

temple of martial arts. Lin Mu Yu was just a trainer, but even so his rank was already revered by common soldiers. This sentry was a centurion, a soldier of rank with some hundred soldiers under his command, but he still regarded Lin Mu Yu with awe.

The moment Lin Mu Yu stepped into the city walls his legs felt like lead, his Qi nearly completely exhausted. He ran madly for a while night, his two legs taking the place of a horse's four hooves. That escapade took toll on his physical stamina and Qi.

As he was making his way through the main avenue of the city he noticed the street name was Tong Tian Street. Right. This was the street of the residence of the girl in the violet mantle. Lin Mu Yu proceeded to look at the door numbers of each building.

"#4 Tong Tian Street" Lan Yan City Ministry of Justice. The foundation of the Empire's justice.

"#3 Tong Tian Street" Ministry of War, office of the Minister of War.

"#2 Tong Tian Street" Career Halls, if the emperor personally has a command, it can be satisfied

"#1 Tong Tian Street" Luster of Heaven, the complex of the Lan Yan city Palace, also the heart of the world

.....

In the distance, a group of soldiers were patrolling through the compound with shining blades reflecting the warm rays of the rising sun. There were thousands buildings inside the palace grounds, as it was not the usual class of luxury, so a lot of guards were needed to ensure peace and order.

Lin Mu Yu peered and could just make out the number on the large golden plate on the Palace door. He suddenly gave start!

That girl! That swindler!

A high-ranking Imperial Guard spotted the figure in the gates whipped his horse forward to approach. “Oh, it’s a person from the Temple. Young man, do you have any business in the Palace?”

It turned out that even Imperial guards treated Temple people with respect as well.

“May I please ask, #1 Tong Tian Street, is it really the address of the Luster of Heaven?”

“Hahaha, of course it is. Only the Emperor’s residence is worthy of #1 Tong Tian Street!”

“Oh!” Lin Mu Yu replied blankly. “That’s all. Many thanks…”

He turned around to leave with a feeling of disappointment. One thousand Yin gone! That girl was a little cheat. How could she really be a resident of the Palace. There is really no justice in the

world!

……

That morning, Lin Mu Yu was paired up with Silver Star Instructor Zhang Wei for sparring. Zhang Wei's Fierce Soul Fist was already fearsome under normal circumstances, other sparring partners always dreaded to face it, Lin Mu Yu was in no condition to train with him. Luckily, Zhang We had a soft spot for him and, upon seeing his pitiful condition, let him take a nap in the training room while he spent the time boxing alone.

Thus, after resting for half the day, Lin Mu Yu recovered 70% of his stamina and 80% of his Qi.

At noon, Deacon Ge Yang reappeared with a piece of parchment to read aloud the afternoon pairings. By chance he was paired with Gold Star instructor Zheng Shan He, who was also known for strong defense.

At this moment, a Gold Star instructor carrying a longsword stepped forward and said: "Lin Zhi is the only Gold Star trainer in the Temple, he cannot just always be paired up with Zheng He and Zhang Wei. Master Deacon, by your leave, I, Ou Yang Qiu wishes to spar with Lin Zhi this afternoon. Please grant me this request!"

Ge Yang was reluctant to allow this but there was no reason for him to deny Ou Yang Qiu. He relented: "Alright, this afternoon Lin Zhi will be paired with Ou Yang Qiu."

“Many thanks, Master!”

Ou Yang eyes gazed at Lin Mu Yi with enmity. Killing intent flitted on the corner of his smiling mouth.

Lin Mu Yu shuddered. Ou Yang was Young Marquis Zeng Fan’s man. Zeng Fang was unsuccessful at killing him the last time and instead, was beaten and humiliated. If Ou Yang also had intentions to kill him, then he had no choice. The rule of the Temple was iron, if a trainer is accidentally killed by an instructor, there will only be a small financial penalty, the offender’s punishment is only solitary confinement for a few months and forfeiture of salary for two years, Zeng Fang is is the son of God Marquis Zeng Yi Fan, they were not short on money.

At this time, Lin Mu Yu had many things to consider, the only thing he could do was to be strong and survive.

……

After lunch, Lin Mu Yu had completely recovered his strength. He could feel the Qi flowing along his skin and it soothed him. He attributed this comforting flow of Qi to Refining Skin. If it were the old days, Lin Mu Yu would have been worried about whether he would be alive or not that afternoon, but now he was feeling confident.

Doong…

The bell for the afternoon drills reverberated through the hall.

Prairie Fire hung on Lin Mu Yu's back. With both hands balled into tight fists, he went through the door. His face showed confidence. Next, Ou Yang entered, his appearance made him worried but also made him excited at the same time. Facing that level of strength was the fastest way for him to gain combat experience! In this world, strength was undoubtedly most important, but it did not guarantee victory. With ample experience, a level 50 Battle Saint could stand a chance against a level 61 Sky Master!

Inside the training room, a group of instructors and trainers stood in rows facing each other. This was the customary greeting that started off training.

Lin Mu Yu's stood erect. Beside him was Qin Qi Ling and other accompanying trainers. He suddenly clenched his right fist in front of his chest, and his left hand shot downwards like the thrust of a sword. It was also an inevitable lesson taught when you entered the Temple. The full name of the temple is "Warring Saints Temple". It's main function was to provide the Empire with outstanding martial artists. So whether an instructor or a trainer, during a war everybody must serve in the military of the Empire. Perhaps from the moment of entering the temple, they were already soldiers of the Empire.

"Please enlighten me!"

Everybody said in unison.

As they raised their heads, Ou Yang Qiu gave hima contemptuous sneer that made him feel uneasy.

Chapter 59 : It's Been A While, Xiao Xi!

Seven Seas Mansion. The lounge was filled with the fragrance of perfume.

The arrival of Princess Qin Yin agitated the servants of the mansion. The Emperor was known to dote on the princess and constantly worry about her safety. To have her come all this way to visit their own Tang Xiao Xi caused them to be overwhelmed by her royal favor.

Tang Xiao Xi was engrossed in her venison, her left hand daintily held chopsticks while her right skillfully cut into the meat. Her pretty face showed contentment. "Venison with a dash of sweet soy sauce tastes so goood, Xiao Yin, please try some too!"

Qin Yin giggled, and dotingly looked at her best friend, "Oh you, up to now you're still at the third rank of Earth realm. You must work harder!"

Tang Xiao Xi pouted her small lips in indignation: "How can you say that! Not everybody was born with your natural gifts and talents! Xiao Yin, your martial spirit is the level 1 Gold Binding Lock. Mine is only the Level 2 Firefox! Oh yeah, what is your rank now?

Feng Ji Xing who was sitting beside them replied, "Her Highness has reached level 57 Battle Saint."

"Ah?"

Tang Xiao Xi gaped with her little lips wide open, she balled her hand into a little fist, “I didn’t know Xiao Yin left me in the dust by so far already! I will also work hard... But I must eat first, or I won’t have any energy to train.”

Qin Yin and Feng Ji Xing smiled.

“But I don’t know how he is, or whether he is alive or dead I don’t know...” Tang Xiao Xio said suddenly, her eyes starting to brim with tears.

Feng Ji Xing kept a straight face and remained silent.

Then Qin Yin said: “Xiao Xi, if Lin Mu Yu is so important to you, I will go to Emperor Father, and have him pardon Lin Mu Yu. He only killed a minor official in a border town anyway.”

Tang Xiao Xi excitedly looked at her: “Can you really?”

Qin Yin vigorously nodded. “Yes!”

On the other side, Qin Lei who was eating as well raised his head, said, “Your Highness, His Highness has already spoken, in the face of the law nobody can be pardoned. These were his very words when he ascended the throne. It’s not proper for you to promise such things...”

Qin Yin glared at him, “Brother Qin Lei doesn’t have any tact!”

Tang Xiao Xi nodded. “Yeah!”

Qin Lei is the son of a Prince. He is Qin Yin’s cousin. He laughed heartily, “Then…Then think about it, you can’t say for sure if His Highness will really pardon that kid!”

Feng Ji Xing watched the events from the side, still keeping silent.

After the meal, Qin Yin went to the gardens to admire the flowers. Qin Lei accompanied her as a bodyguard, keeping his saber close beside him. Protecting Her Highness was a mission given to him by the Emperor.

“Princess Xi.”

Feng Ji Xing called out while carrying his sword.

Tang Xiao Xi, who was walking at the corridor, glanced back “Feng Ji Xing, is something the matter?”

Feng Ji Xing sighed, “Princess Xi, it’s… Lin Mu Yu is very important to you isn’t he?”

Tang Xiao Xi stared back blankly, her face flushing a little red, “I… I consider him to be my best friend. Was that all you wanted

say?”

“Is that so…”

Feng Ji Xing smiled: “Then, Feng Ji Xing will now say a few words here. After I say these words they will disappear forever into the wind. Princess Xi will also continue on as if she had never heard these words.”

Tang Xiao Xi was surprised, “Okay, what is it?”

Feng Ji Xing pondered aloud, “A few days ago, a young man from Silver Fir City arrived after a long journey. He had been through a lot in two weeks. With great suffering he travelled from Seven Stars Forest to Dragon Seeker Forest, and finally arrived at Lan Yan City. As a result of my humble recommendation, he was able to enter the Warring Saints Temple, with a new name, “Lin Zhi”. Perhaps the answer the Princess is seeking is in the Warring Saints Temple.”

“Ah…”

Tang Xiao Xi’s delicate frame trembled, her silver scarf flew off her neck and into the lotus pond. She slowly raised her head and a pair of beautiful eyes looked at Feng Ji Xing, “Is it true?”

“Yes!” Feng Ji Xing nodded. “Princess Xi please don’t fret. Feng Ji Jing never deceives. Princess Xi, your scarf…”

……

Inside the training room, Ou Yang Qiu brandished his longsword. This was no ordinary sword. From the blade trickled slivers of ice crystal energy. It was also a precious Spirit Refined weapon, not inferior at all to Lin Mu Yu's Prairie Fire.

"Swords don't have eyes, be careful Lin Zhi, pardon me if I hurt you."

Ou Yang Qiu said, not coldly, not warmly. He already began to release his Martial Spirit. His longsword also began to emit a brilliance of Force Energy. This was his advantage over Lin Mu Yu. Force Energy compared to basic Qi, the difference in power was too great.

Lin Mu Yu did not speak, he only quickly summoned his Gourd Wall and added the Dragon Rampart, Ebony Scale and Verdant Shell to increase the power. Even though it was just training, he fully aware this battle was also a fight to the death. The moment Ou Yang Qiu pulled out his sword he was hardly concealing his killing intent. In this room there were only two people.

"Begin!"

With a quick turn of his wrists, fast as lightning, Ou Yang Qiu's sword swung, releasing the shadow of a rainbow. This is the number one swordsman of the Temple, his grandeur was not common. His sword raged with Force Energy. The air was filled with piercing cries from the sword.

Lin Mu Yu's sword skills consisted of the Wind Sword technique and Lightning Chop. Lightning Chop was a deadly technique used for killing, so it he decided to stick to the Wind Sword Technique. The Wind Sword technique required a lot of speed so he activated Starfall Steps, and, all pretense of the sparring within the rules of the Temples aside, rushed forward with Prairie Fire blazing dramatically. Ting. Their swords clashed with a sharp ringing sound but Lin Mu Yu gathered himself back and quickly made three fast strokes on Ou Yang Qiu's chest.

Shua shua shua.

They were three direct hits!

"Good swordplay!"

Ou Yang Qiu couldn't help praising his opponent. Even though he disliked Lin Mu Yu he had a deep appreciation of martial arts.

Ting Ting Ting.

Lin Mu Yu continued striking with three more blows but Ou Yang Qiu was very fast and easily swept the attacks aside. Ou Yang Qiu made his move, with his blade brimming with Force Energy he struck the Ebony Scale.

Hong!

At the same time his martial spirit emerged, and spat poison, a mouthful of poison spray shot towards Lin Mu Yu.

“Ah?”

Lin Mu Yu took a few steps back and raised his Gourd Wall and used his Qi to sweep the poison away, shuddered a little, Ou Yang Qiu’s footwork was very nimble, his longsword “shua shua shua-ed” three times onto his back.

But he turned too late, the first layer of Ebony Scale was already broken!

Ou Yang Qiu swelled up his whole body with Force Energy and laughed wildly. He rushed forward, his knees heavily striking the second level Dragon Wall, his Force Energy shocking his opponent. At that moment, Lin Mu Yu felt his body shaken by the aftershock of the blow, which pushed him back a few steps. Raising his head, Ou Yang Qiu lunged with his sword becoming a blur of ten thousand strikes; this was the Ten Thousand Sword Technique, which was a technique Yin Fang also used the very same style.

His Qi penetration is too strong, even Dragon Rampart has been defeated!

He quickly used his next skill, Poison Spray!

Qi concentrated on the Gourd and a flower appeared that spat out poison spray.

Ou Yang Qiu was unfamiliar so naturally he didn't dare use brute force.

Ou Yang Qiu wasn't familiar, so naturally he didn't force anything. Urgently, he stopped the Thousand Sword Technique, and flipped towards the sky to dodge and saw the poison spray fall towards the ground, which gave an acidic sizzle.

"Impressive poison!" He smiled coldly.

"It's alright"

Lin Mu Yu raised his sword and both were entangled in an attack again.

After fifty bouts, both sides had cuts and bruises. The difference was that Ou Yang Qiu had 2 cuts on his arm, with fresh blood flowing, while Lin Mu Yu had two cuts on his chest, but it was only scratches, and there was not as much blood. Fresh blood just happened to permeate through his shirt so he looked badly injured but he was not. Ou Yang Qiu's wounds were a little more serious. This was the effect of Refining Skin!

Ou Yang Qiu was more and more agitated. He knew Lin Mu Yu was only a level 50 Battle Saint. But right now as he was battling the number one swordsman in the Temple he was holding his own. He didn't have too much advantage.

Thus, with new rage, he called forth his inexhaustible Force Energy, Force Energy is continuous, he could use it to regain strength, this was the advantage of Force Energy over baic Qi. After more than 10 rallies, Lin Mu Yu's face already started to turn pale, his strength was waning. His shirt had many holes from sword cuts.

Pupupupu....

The more Ou Yang Qiu attacked the more agitated he became. Like a venomous snake, the longsword repeatedly lashed at Lin Mu Yu's heart. His neck was almost in a precarious position. Ou Yang Qiu's killing intent was exposing.

"You wish to kill me!?"

He attacked with a Sonic Punch, afterward, blood dripped down from the corner of his mouth. He lifted his head and looked at this opponent, coldly said, "Zeng Fang wants me dead that that much?"

Ou Yang Qiu smiled coldly, "It's not the Yang Marquis that wants you dead, it's that you have to die. You little bastard, you are a wanted criminal. Why would I allow you to continue training in the Warring Saints Temple? Just die quickly!"

The long sword lifted to the sky, and slashed 10 + times in attack.

Lin Mu Yu did his best to focus his Qi on the Dragon Rampart but in a moment it started to crack again. The difference in strength

was too great. At this time he felt himself losing strength.

“Peng!”

His back rammed against the wall. The wall of the training room was about a meter thick, but the strength of the attack shattered the surface of the wall, Lin Mu Yu’s body sunk into the wall by 20 centimeters.

Hua!

Ou Yang Qiu threw his sword aside, he extending his iron-claw like hand and grasped Lin Mu Yu’s neck, cackled: “What’s wrong? Isn’t your Gourd revered as the Temple’s number 1 defense? How come it is not magical/miraculous now? Hasn’t your body been through Refining Skin? Hahaha! Lei Hong that old fool taught you this rubbish but did not pass it on to us, it’s too biased!

Saying this, he put the tip of the longsword on Lin Mu Yu’s chest, and slowly pushed it in, when the point of the sword entered into flesh, and he saw the suffering of the person before him, he laughed, “How is it? Your Refining Skin is not effective? Lin Zhi, you don’t want to die like this do you? Hahaha! You piece of trash can only die this way ah!”

……

“Resist! Resist!”

His heart suddenly bursted with a rage sound, Lin Mu Yu's body shuddered, both arms emerged a kind of mysterious vast strength, it was a little familiar, right, it was the Seven Luminaries! At this time, this life saving strength has emerged once again!"

He raised his left arm and shook of Ou Yang Qiu's longsword. Lin Mu Yu's body emitted a black aura of power, both eyes had a faint red light, he also didn't know where this strength came from, suddenly twisted his body and pressed Ou Yang Qiu to the wall, his right hand balled into a fist, cried: "Who did you say was trash?"

His fist shined bright, First Luminary - Chaos Fist!

.....

Bang!

The iron fist pounded into Ou Yang Qiu's abdomen, Lin Mu Yu's strength was violent, he carried Lin Mu Yu and rushed forward, the two people penetrated deeper through the thick wall!

After the power of the Seven Luminaries ran out, his body immediately fell into a state of extreme tiredness, along with Ou Yang Qiu's the weakly lied on the floor.

"Mu Mu!"

His ears heard a sweet sound.

He raised his head and saw two snowy, soft, long legs wrapped in a skirt. Upon his second glance, Tang Xiao Xi's beautiful cheeks appeared before him.

...

It's been a while, Xiao Xi!

Chapter 60 : Dragonforged Bone

“Mu Mu!”

Without warning, Tang Xiao Xi suddenly threw herself onto Lin Mu Yi’s chest.

While it was very pleasant to have two soft, mounds press onto him, he was wounded on his chest. Lin Mu Yu immediately moaned in pain as color left his face.

“Ah, are you alright? Mu Mu…”

Only then did Xiao Xi notice the stab wounds on Lin Mu Yu’s chest. Her pretty face exploded in fury and she turned around to face Ou Yang Qiu who still lay wounded on the floor. “Who is this Gold Star instructor?”

From the side, Master Lei Hong respectfully replied, “Princess Tang Xiao Xi, his name is Ou Yang Qiu”.

Ou Yang Qiu also realized that the pretty young girl before him was the granddaughter of the the Duke Cang Lang. He hastily staggered up and knelt before her, “I am your humble servant, Princess Xiao Xi.”

(TL: Cang Lang was formerly called “Azure Tides”.)

Hua…

A trail of fire wove through Princess Xi's white fingers. Suddenly, she was in front of Ou Yang Qiu with her hand raised. Pa! With a brilliant light and a sharp sound she struck Ou Yang Qiu on the face and sent him sailing into the air. He landed sprawled on the floor a few feet away, his face bore a mark of 5 fingers. Tang Xiao Xi had added the power of her martial spirit into the slap.

Lei Hong was petrified: "Princess, why did you hit a Gold Star instructor?"

Tang Xiao Xi helped Lin Mu Yu up and coldly replied, "Because he bullied my man!"

TL: The way Xiao Xi says man here is man like "subordinate" or "servant", or a person under her protection. Not, like, "my boyfriend."

Deacon Zeng Fang from the side of the room stepped up to denounce the happenings before him. "Princess, Ou Yang Qiu is gravely injured. Lin Mu Yu was a trainer in this exercise but he went ahead and attacked the instructor anyway. He broke the rules of this Temple. We should expel him from here!"

Tang Xiao Xi turned to face him, slowly said: "Lin Zhi is Tang Xiao Xi's man, Young Marquis Zeng Fan. Do you want to repeat what you just said?"

Zeng Fan resisted a little but ended up not saying more.

Even though he was the only son of God Marquis Zeng Yi Fan, God Marquis Zeng Yi Fan had practically no influence in times of peace. Tang Xiao Xi had her Grandfather Cang Lan, who had a million soldiers under him in the Seven Seas City as a vassal of the Empire. Their current power was worlds apart.

...

“Mu Mu, are you alright?” Tan Xiao Xi’s cold expression disappeared from her face and was replaced by a cheerful girlish smile. She nuzzled up fondly against his chest.

Lin Mu Yu had several emotions welling up in his heart. In Seven Fir City he knew that his position was worlds apart from Tang Xiao Xi, she couldn’t likely have been thinking of him. But it turned out he was wrong. Luck was very sudden. It turned out that Tang Xiao Xi cared this much about his safety. He replied , “Xiao Xi, I spent two days in Dragon Seeker Forest looking for you, but I couldn’t find you...”

A smiled fluttered across Tang Xiao Xi’s face. “Silly Mu Mu, Dragon Seeker Forest is so huge, how could you have found me? It’s good that I finally found you! Does this mean that I beat you?”

Lin Mu Yu couldn’t help smiling: “Yes, Princess Tang Xiao is the best, number one under the heavens!”

Tang Xiao Xi laughed in a very carefree way: “Yes! That sounds about right.”

At this, she turned around and pointed at Ou Yang Qiu, “Lin Zhi is a trainer, but remember this, Lin Zhi is an honored guest of the Seven Seas Dukedom. Nobody may harm him, or they will become an enemy of Seven Seas City!”

Then she turned to face Lei Hong, Tang Xiao Xi flashed him a brilliant smile: “Grandpa Lei Hong, why didn’t you restrain your Gold Star instructor? Look, this trainer was about to be killed, this is a serious injury, this person was planning to kill him!”

Lei Hong clenched his fists: “This foolish old man will perform his duty of overseeing better in the future.”

Zeng Fang said through clenched teeth: “Master, we at the Temple have our own rules. Why must we go out of our way to bend them for Seven Seas City?”

Tang Xiao Xi’s face became cold.

At this moment, one of the guards that had accompanied her stepped forward. It was Feng Ji Xing. Feng Ji Xing held his sword in his hand and smiled coldly: “Young Marquis Sir, isn’t Ou Yang Qiu your fencing teacher? He wished to kill Lin Zhi, are you not taking responsibility for this?”

Zeng Fang stared blankly, “Feng Ji Xing, why did you come

here?”

“Oh, it’s not just me.”

Feng Ji Xing stepped out of the way and a Chu Huai Sheng* stepped forward. His face held a casual smile, his hand grasping his sword. “Young Marquis, we are all friends of Lin Zhi. If he has wronged Young Marquis in some way, please forgive him.”

“Chu Huai Sheng?!”

(TL: Chu Huai Sheng was mistranslated to Chu Huai Dian in his previous appearance. This is Chu Yao’s brother.)

Zeng Fan replied through clenched teeth: “Princess Tang is very extravagant, to bring the Commander of the Imperial Guard and the Imperial Soldier Chu Huai Sheng on such an errand, one a White-Robed Royal Guard, the other a member of the Imperial Army, huh, all this to make me not able to say anything, right? But don’t you all forget, the Emperor’s laws are strict, to flout the law. The generation of those who commit crimes never end well. You should all shape up!”

“There’s no need for you to be concerned.”

Tang Xiao Xi said softly: “I will personally solve my friend’s situation. But the next time Young Marquis does something, no matter how small, as long as Lin Zhi is harmed, Tang Xiao Xi will not settle.”

“Humph!”

Zeng Fang turned around and exited the room, Ou Yang Qiu then angrily, wiped off blood from his lips and followed after him.

.....

When he saw that they left, Chu Huai Sheng walked forward and carried Lin Mu Yu onto his shoulder. Laughingly said, “Ah Yu, you’re really something. You were able to defeat Ou Yang Qiu of the heaven realm!”

Lin Mu Yu was currently in great pain, he was also almost killed, how could say such an embarrassing thing out loud, he only said: “Hey, it was all luck, I was really worried I would be cut to pieces back there.”

Lei Hong walked forward, “Ah Yu, how is your wound?”

Lin Mu Yu shook his head: “It’s alright. Thank you very much for your concern Grandpa Lei Hong.”

Lei Hong nodded. He turned the the group of soldiers and instructors: “Very well, the excitement is over. Let’s all return to our respective training. No more trouble please.”

The group dispersed, but one thing was for sure, everybody had

seen Gold Star instructor Ou Yang Qiu defeated by Lin Mu Yu. Ou Yan Qiu was the number one swordsman of the Temple!

…

Tang Xiao Xi and Lin Mu Yu were finally reunited again, but now that they were face to face they didn't know what to say. The gutsy Princess Xi had unexpectedly started to blush, looking at Lin Mu Yu she was now unable to speak.

Lin Mu Yu watched her adorable expression and couldn't help but smile: "Xiao Xi, your face looks like red clouds…"

Xiao Xi was suddenly embarrased, and hit him with her fist: "Oh stop it, I thought you were dead…"

"I can't die! Apparently, I'm incredibly lucky!"

Feng Ji Xing couldn't stand listening to their flirtations anymore, saluted: "This matter has been resolved, Princess, I must return the Palace, Her Highness must be back by now. I shouldn't be out here so long."

"Yes, thank you so much, Brother Feng!" Lin Mu Yu said.

Chu Huai Sheng also made his farewells. Lin Mu Yu and Tang Xiao Xi saw them off together.

.....

Tang Xiao Xi sent most of the Imperial soldiers back, leaving behind the necessary few to accompany her. She wanted to take Lin Mu Yu to a stroll through the capital and then to take him to the capital's most famous restaurant for dinner -- In the Ting Yu Restaurant. There were only two people, they poured a little rice wide, the table was laid with a variety of rich dishes. The meal was Tang Xiao Xi's treat. For Princess Xi, money was never an issue.

Lin Mu Yu had suffered hungry for days inside Dragon Seeker Forest, and it seemed his swept up the food into his mouth in one breath. Tang Xiao Xi had already eaten a lot for lunch and was quite full. She just sat beside him and enjoyed watching him devour the feast like wolf.

Finally, Lin Mu Yu had eaten so much his belly was round, Lin Mu Yu let out a satisfied belch: "Free food is really great ah.."

Tang Xiao Xi daintily covered her mouth as giggled bubbled up: "Stupid! Right.. let me tell you a piece of news.., I received some feather mail at noon, tomorrow at the latest, Master Qu will be returning to Lan Yan City."

"Oh! Master Qu Chu is coming?"

"Yes." Tang Xiao Xi nodded, said: "When we see him, I will naturally bring him to the Temple to see you, without much effort he can impart more martial lessons on you, hey... Mu Mu you have advances so much, but you are still not strong enough. The Temple

is a place that eats people and does not spit out their bones, if don't have enough strength you can only be slaughtered."

Lin Mu Yu felt the same: "Yeah, I've already experienced as much."

Tang Xiao Xi cocked her head to the said and looked at him: "Mu Mu, can I visit you often in the Temple?"

"Sure! But.. don't make such a scene next time." Lin Mu Yu shook his head, helplessly said: "Now I'm afraid that I'm infamous in the Temple already..."

Tang Xiao Xi covered her mouth to giggle: "Big Silly! You are already more than famous, nobody will rashly challenge you, if you were just a nameless kid, huh, then Zeng Fan would have silenced you quitely long ago."

"I guess that's true."

Lin Mu Yu looked at his fist, after exerting some effort the surrounding skin was covered in Qi, he smiled: "I should still make my fist harder, or else all these words would mean nothing."

"Yeah!"

...

That night, after watching some colored lanterns he walked Xiao Xi home. He watched the Princess' escorts follow her into the Duke's residence and then returned the to Temple. Back to training!

Very late at night, under the bright moon, he continued Refining Skin.

But the effects of tonight weren't very good, apparently Refining Skin had reached it's limit, his skin was absorbing less spirit energy, to Refine more by force would do more harm than good.

From afar, two teachers stood under the moonlight, one was Lei Hong, one was Ge Yang. The two of them assessed the head and discussed the feed - nitpicked, criticized.

While they were talking, suddenly the southern wind passed through, Ge Yang said: "What is going on?"

Lei Hong rubbed his beard, smiled and said, "Qu Chu, if he's coming just come, why does he have to be so sneaky about it."

In the small trees, Qu Chu slowly walked through, laughing: "Lei Hong, you old man you're still so sharp. So how are things? My student's gifts aren't too bad right?"

"His gifts aren't bad, it's just that he hasn't advanced." Lei Hong eye's twinkled mirthfully.

“Hasn’t advanced? What do you mean? How is it possible?” Qu Chu asked.

“He entered the Temple as a level 50 Battles Saint, to this day he is still a Level 50 Battle Saint. He only gained combat experience, his strength hasn’t advanced at all. His bones... have already reached their growth limit, just like other generations before him he is stranded as a second rate practitioner.” Leh Hong said with regret.

Qu Chu’s expression turned cold, then he laughed, “Don’t worry, I have prepared.”

“Oh?” Lei Hong’s was a little shocked.

...

Qu Chu took off and landed a small distance away from Lin Mu Yu. Guffawed, “Lin Mu Yu! It’s been a while! Look at the gift I have brought you!”

Shua!

An object wrapped in black silk sailed into the air. Lin Mu Yu smiled and laughed upon seeing Qu Chu, “Master Chu, you’ve come!”

“Just look at the gift first!” Qu Chu smiled faintly.

Lin Mu Yu bowed and opened the silk wrapper, he discovered that inside was an already half rotten book, the words were not discernible anymore. It was a pile of rotten bamboo sheets that Qu Chu had apparently collated and bound together. On the cover the words were still clear and said -- Dragonforged Bone

“Dragonforged bone?” His face was blank.

Qu Chu laughed lightly: “Strictly speaking, it’s just the surviving remains of Dragonforged Bone Tome, I was only able to find those pieces. Just do your best and practice it!”

Chapter 61 : True Dragon Bone

“Dragonforged Bone…”

Lin Mu Yu held the relic of a book and flipped it open. On the first page was the secret of martial arts first words: “Purge the bone marrow, like the peeling of dragon scales, four doors open, blood vessels reconstruct.”

He stared blankly: “Grandpa Qu Chu, what is Dragonforged Bone supposed to do?”

Qu Chu beard twisted into a smile: “Just look at the name and you will understand. It’s a method of purging the bone marrow. This method of tempering bone is similar to what dragons do, so it is called the Dragonforged Bone Tome.”

After speaking, Qu Chu looked as if he sensed something. He plucked off a leaf from a nearby palm tree and launched it into the air as if it were a throwing knife.

Xu!

It flew into the air at great speed and plunged deeply into a mossy rock face nearby. He guffawed: “I’ve said what I had to say to the the kid, you two old farts still listening in eh? Why don’t we all go for a drink! Wait for me!”

Lei Hong smiled brightly: “Deacon Ge Yang, let’s go have a drink

[of alcohol].”

Ge Yang cheerfully replied: “Sounds good!”

……

After the two people left, Qu Chu continued, “Kid, you’re lucky, I found this relic in a faraway ruined city. In this tome is written the very important method of refining bone marrow.”

Saying this, he looked at the lost face of the youth and smiled in spite of himself: “It looks like you still don’t understand. Let me tell you as simply as I can, it looks like you aren’t making any more progress in your cultivation. You are still a level 50 Battle Saint. While it’s very easy, it looks like your strength has reached its limit, that is to say, your blood vessels cannot sustain even stronger cultivation. People of can keep on cultivating, but the cultivation of each person is different. It has something to do with the genes. The Imperial Family, the Qin clan, possesses the highest quality blood vessels, the legendary dragon blood vessels. So cultivation comes very easy to them, however you…”

He said a little regretfully: “Frankly speaking kid, you are just the product of rigorous training. You don’t have the best genes. Your blood vessels… are, generously speaking, about middle class…”

Lin Mu Yu remained silent. So my Lin clan’s genes are bad… I never thought about that!

Qu Chu continued: “This Dragonforged Bone Relic will temper you bone... in the world of Refining, tempering bone is very important, but the overwhelming majority of people only Refine the strength of the skeleton, they don’t pay heed to the bone marrow. This Dragonforged Bone is a kind of legendary method of cultivation, it is reported to be able to reconstruct the core of the bone, blood vessels. When the time comes, perhaps you will be able to use the blood vessels of the strength of dragons, then there will be no cultivation you cannot do!

“Eh? Is that so...”

Lin Mu Yu heard this and felt very excited. He held the Dragonforged Bone tome, and suddenly raised his and and looked at Qu Chu: “Grandpa Qu Chu, this Dragonforged Bone Tome must be very valuable, I can’t accept it! You should use it for your own cultivation!”

Qu Chu looked at the humble youth and guffawed, “Foolish child, do you think Qu Chu is that type of unselfish person? If I could Refine this I would! I wouldn’t be giving it you HAHAHA!”

“What?”

Something glimmered in Qu Chu’s eyes: “Dragonforged Bone, as the name implies, is technique for forging the skeleton of dragonkind. Purging bone marrows is very painful, it is not something that normal people can endure. Your Grandpa Chu is very old, do you think my aged body can still handle this type of pain? Tell me honestly. I have already tried to Refine that tome, but the pain was so great I passed out. So I gave it to you instead.

Your ambition will carry you through the pain."

Lin Mu Yu recalled the pain of Refining Skin, and couldn't help feeling a apprehensive. But when he thought of how the secretes of Dragonforged bone could give him even greater strength, and he needed that strength, he nodded and said: "I'm very grateful, Grandpa Chu. I will work hard and Refine, I won't fail to live up to your expectations!"

Qu Chu smiled: "I don't really have that high hopes for you. I just don't want Princess Xi to cry over you. Xiao Xi as a good and kind-hearted girl, you should not fail to live up to her expectations."

Lin Mu Yu was expressionless, nodded his head. "Understood."

"Alright. Now go off by yourself and Refine according to that Tome. With your quick wit it shouldn't be too difficult."

"Yes, sir!"

Qu Chu sprung into the air and was gone from the garden. Most likely he want to join Lei Hong and Ge Yang in their drinking.

.....

Lin Mu Yu held the Dragonforged Bone Tome in his hands, as if gaining the greatest treasure. His own cultivation had already reached its limit. Refining Skin was also useless now. He should now immediately begin Dragonforged Bone Refinement!

The Tome was divided into three parts. The first part was washing the marrow, it discussed purging the bone marrow. The second part was about assimilation, to find a real dragon bone, and combine it with one's own skeleton. The third part was rebirth, after assimilating with the dragon bone, begin reconstructing the blood vessels. The most difficult of the three was definitely Assimilation because he had to find a piece of dragon bone. Where could he find that sort of plaything?

First, begin purging the bone marrow!

The so called Purging of Bone marrow, according to the process of Refinement recorded in the book, convert basic Qi into pure energy, run the pure energy through the all the bones of the body in one cycle. For Purging of Bone Marrow, 72 cycles were required, afterwards the skeleton of the body wouldbe transformed.

It was going to be an endless course of events.

He sat on on the grass legs akimbo, and slowly closed his eyes. First step, convert basic Qi into pure energy, this was the first instruction of the Tome, known as transmigration. The penetrating power of pure energy is stronger, hence the essence of it was stronger than basic Qi! Just this part will demand a lot of Lin Mu Yu's life. From night until daybreak he continued to cultivate. Finally, the pure energy within his body slowly began to make a subtle transformation, alternately hot and cold. He raised his palm and a red fire of pure energy blazed on it, real Qi had been refined!

Continuing, he began to course the real qi into this bones. It would take about 20 minutes to complete a cycle. The pain felt like it was ripping him apart. It felt like each of his bones was being burned in flames. His whole body was covered in sweat. No wonder Qu Chu couldn't bear this pain! But Lin Mu Yu continued to endure the pain, forcing himself to complete the first cycle.

In the morning, a servant brought breakfast over and set it down beside him and respectfully said "Master Lin Zhi, Deacon Ge Yang ordered be to bring you breakfast. Please use it. He said, these few days you don't have to participate in training, just continue to cultivate like this and it would be fine!"

Lin Mu Yu felt very grateful. This was most certainly Qu Chu's doing. Knowing the Temple's rules, how else would they let a mere gold star trainer occupy his time this way.

.....

A whole day passed that way. After 72 cycles were finish, the cultivation made progress. Each process became faster and faster. A person was sent to deliver all three of his meals. So he spent all day cultivating. It seemed like the pain from cultivation was going away.

After three days, he completely finished six of the 72 cycles. His whole body's skeletal frame seemed new.

He slowly opened his eyes, a drop of morning dew dripped onto his shoulder. Lin Mu Yu let out a smile. He felt as if his perception

of the things around him became much sharper. Even his hearing seemed sharper. Even the steps of the servant from away didn't escape his ears. This bone refinement was really wonderful.

He stood up, he only took three days but he had already finished the first part of the Dragonforged Bone Tome. It was now time for the second step - Assimilation!

But, a dragonbone was required, this type of object was hard to find.

That morning, learned that Qu Chu had already departed Lan Yan city to continue his wanderings. And Lei Hong and Ge Yang both did not know where to start looking for dragonbone. There were lots of imitation dragonbone, in pharmacies there were Fan Dragon skulls. But obviously those type of fake dragons could not be used.

At noon, a servant came to him and said: "Master Lin Zhi, there is somebody at the door looking for you. It's Princess Xi from Seven Seas City."

"Oh! I'll go there at once!"

He quickly put on his boots and rushed out the door. Outside the Temple, Tang Xiao Xi was standing alone under the brilliant sun, her long hair fell in long waves behind her back, she was wearing a fiery red skirt and was all smiles when she saw him: "Mu Mu! It's been a while!"

“Xiao Xi why are free today?” He smilingly asked.

“I’m free everyday! Today I am going to the Palace, so I just stopped by to say hi since I was passing through!” She replied with a sweet smile.

Lin Mu Yu muttered: “But if you came from the Seven Seas Mansion, the Temple isn’t on the way to the Palace.”

After he said these words he immediately regretted it, and hatefully slapped his leg to rebuke himself: You idiot! Now do you understand why you’re still single?

Tang Xiao Xi face had turned red and she glared at him: “Well, I am just following the road! Get off my back! Anyway, let’s go have lunch at Ting Yu Restaurant, I already made a reservation.”

“Okay, but that place is very expensive. One meal sets you back 70 Yin gold.”

“Don’t worry, it’s on me.” Tang Xiao Xi said while patting her very ample chest.

“Okay. But before we go, I want to go to the biggest pharmacy in the capital to find something first.”

“Okay!”

……

The two people walked into the pharmacy, the people inside recognized Xiao Xi immediately. Each person respectfully greeted her “Good day Princess Xi, we hope the day finds you well.” The greetings were endless.

After looking around for a while, Lin Mu Yu couldn’t find what he was looking for and looked extremely disappointed.

“Silly Mu Mu, what are you looking for anyway?” Tang Xiao Xi asked a little a surprised.

“A type of bone.” Lin Mu Yu replied.

“Oh, what kind of bone?”

“It’s…” Lin Mu Yu felt a little embarrassed, “Xiao Xi ,how long has it been since a real dragon was last seen in the continent?”

“A real dragon…” Tang Xiao Xi blinked in thought and smiled, “Around three thousand years, the legends of real dragons have been around for a very long time. People haven’t seen any real dragons for thousands of years.”

“Oh, then it just became harder…” he said in despair.

“Just what are you looking for?”

“A piece of real dragon bone.”

“Eh?” Tang Xiao Xi’s beautiful eyes widened in surprise. Then her face changed as if she just thought of something. She smiled and cheekily stuck out her tongue: “Alright. That kind of object is really hard to find, so I’m going to help you! So stop worrying!”

“Okay.”

Tang Xiao Xi knew that Lin Mu Yu was some sort of alchemist demon, his search for the real dragon bone has to be related to alchemy so she didn’t ask any further questions. She could easily guess that Lin Mu Yu needed the real dragon bone for cultivating Dragonforged Bone.

Chapter 62 : Refining Disaster

Luster of Heaven Palace. Several maids were flying kites in the private gardens behind the palace.

Qin Yin was wearing a violet robe, a golden crest with the Yin flower fastened on her chest. She lay with a guqin against her body as she watched the fluttering kites in the sky with a serene smile.

“Princess Yin!” A female servant respectfully greeted her.

Qin Yin smiled gently: “I don’t need anything, you may retire.”

“Yes, Your Highness!”

Then Qin Yin turned around and saw Tang Xiao Xi walking over to her with a greedy glint in her eye, as if she was looking at a delicious dish before her. She laughed and said: “Xiao Xi, why are you looking at me like that? I’m not food.”

Tang Xiao Xi rubber her delicate hands together, and said a little shyly: “Xiao Yin ah, I have a favor to ask of you…”

“Oh…”

Qin Yin couldn’t help smiling: “When did our Xiao Xi become so polite? Hmph! Last time in the palace you were a lion opening its mouth so widely that you got five rods of golden thread wood,

where has that gutsiness gone?”

TL: Lion opening its mouth widely is like wanting something a lot

Tang Xiao Xi’s face blushed red: “Well this time I will be taking advantage your generosity…”

“Oh? Tell me, what is it!” Qin Yin set the guqin down, and opened her arms wide to take Xiao Xi into her embrace, smiled and said: “I don’t have anything I want myself, tell me what you want and I will do my best to help you.”

“Xiao Yin, do you still have the present you got from the empress when you were seven?”

“Ah?” Qin Yin thought blankly, said: “Mother… the last gift she ever gave me…”

“Yes…”

Qin Yin bowed her head, and slowly opened the lapel of her robe. A gold piece of thread glinted between two buxom breasts. At the end of it hung a piece of bone, about the size of a toe. It was the bone of a young dragon, a true Five Claw Dragon, passed on from generation to generation in her mother’s family.

“This is the last present my mother ever gave to me. It’s all I have left of her…”

Qin Yin's eyes turned red. Her mother had passed away while she was young. The things she left behind for her were not many.

When she saw Qin Yin's eyes turning red, Tang Xiao Xi panicked, "Xiao Yin don't cry, I don't want it it's just that..."

Qin Yin pursed her red lips and said: "This true dragonbone is very valuable, but... but if Xiao Xi wants it, then I will give it to you. After all, it is merely a present for me?"

"Really?"

Tang Xiao Xi blinked her pretty eyes, and felt that she was being excessive, shook her head "Forget it, I won't take it..."

Qin Yin smiled and lifted her hair, and removed the pendant from her neck "It's fine, I'm giving it to you. You are like a sister to me, a sister for a lifetime. I still have this guqin left to me from my mother. My mother's spirit would feel gratified to see Xiao Xi happy, right? Heehee..."

Tang Xiao Xi held the dragon bone that was still warm from Qin Yin's body, her heart felt a little regretful but also very grateful. She stuck out her little tongue: "Xiao Yin, I will be good to you for a lifetime! Let's never leave each other!"

"Yes!"

……

That afternoon, a white horse stopped in front of the Temple. Tang Xiao Xi carried the precious gift from Qin Yin into the Temple and found Lin Mu Yu in the middle of training. He immediately respectfully withdrew from sparring with the Gold Star instructor. The instructor understood that Lin Mu Yu had some business to attend to with Xiao Xi and did not feel like being a third wheel. Xiao Xi was considered to be the second most beautiful girl in the empire, the pearl of Seven Seas City, and also very temperamental, he did not dare cross her.

“This…. Is it really true dragonbone?”

Lin Mu Yu held the pendant in his hands and couldn’t believe it. The bone looked very ordinary, it did not look much like what one would expect dragonbone to look like.

At this time, Tang Xiao Xi’s eyes were red, she said in an injured tone: “To get this dragonbone for you, I… I really pushed my luck. You ungrateful guy, why are you suspecting it’s fake!”

Lin Mu Yu hastily apologized: “Ha, thank you Xiao Xi… really, I thank you. Where on earth did you find this dragonbone? It must have been very expensive. I heard Grandpa Lei Hong say that the dragons in the continent have long been extinct, so the true dragon bones have also become scarce over time. So it’s practically impossible to find a whole dragonbone now.”

“You don’t have to know where I got it from.” Tang Xiao Xi replied with a wink. “Mu Mu, what are you going to do with this

dragonbone? Is it for refining medicine?”

“Hey!” Lin Mu Yu had accidentally left the Dragonforged Bone Tome open. “It’s a secret, I will tell you next time!”

Tang Xiao Xi was suddenly worried, and pouted: “How stingy! Fine, don’t tell me! I’m going home to train!”

“Okay! When I’m free, I’ll go visit you!”

“When will that be?” Xiao Xi was suddenly excited.

“When I’m free I said!”

“Stupid....”

...

After he walked Xiao Xi out, he passed by some instructors and trainers that looked at him with envy. After all, it was very rare to see as kind and as beautiful a girl as Tang Xiao Xi under the heavens, and she was showing so much favor to this small Temple trainer. How would it not make people jealous and hateful? These instructors and felt that the gods were unjust, and doted too much on this little bastard, Lin Zhi.

Lin Mu Yu held the dragonbone in his hand and happily considered when the best time would be to refine it.

At this moment, Lei Hong entered the training hall and rushed to the training room Lin Mu Yu was in. While smiling calmly, he said: “Lin Zhi, I came to visit you, how is your refining going?”

“Thank you for your concern, everything is going well!” He replied realistically.

“Oh?”

Lei Hong lowered his voice and smiled: “You have no trouble understanding the Dragonforged Bone Tome?”

“Oh… well half of it I can’t make out…”

“So it’s like that…” Lei Hong nodded and muttered irresolutely. He pulled out a black key from his sleeves and handed it to him: “Then, you can have this.”

“Oh? What is it for?”

“For the secret door in the back garden. The gold star instructors all have their own rooms for cultivation so that they are not disturbed. You need a quiet environment to be able to cultivate effectively with the Dragonforged Bone Tome, so you can have this private room temporarily. Use it well. Don’t waste the resources of the Temple.”

Lin Mu Yu was very grateful: “Thank you very much Grandpa Lei Hong!”

“Ha! It’s nothing. If it weren’t for Qu Chu I wouldn’t be bending the Temple’s rules and giving a trainer a private room!”

…

His afternoon sparring exercises were cancelled so Lin Mu Yu headed over to the private room. But when he opened that door and saw what it was it gave him start. It was called a private room but it was actually a very luxurious hall. It was also fully furnished and each room had servant ready to provide what was necessary. Furthermore, each private room has a servant taking care of all your day to day needs for cultivation practice.

Once he was inside he immediately locked the door.

He sat with his legs crossed on a flat bed of stone. This kind of design has a path to trace, many practitioners of fire refining do not refine on ordinary beds, or else they would burn the bed. The direction of Lin Mu Yu’s cultivation was not all yet determined, Lightning Chop was a lightning type, Verdant Shell was a rock type, but the intesity of true qi gives rise to flames, so doing this on a rock bed was probably a good idea.

Weng…

With a small burst of energy the true bone floated in front of his chest. He carefully cut the gold chain attached to the bone and slipped it into a fold in his robe, then he channeled true qi to search for the power hidden inside the dragonbone.

While he was fully concentrated on the dragonbone, suddenly a crack of pain split across his skull. Immediately from his ears came a roar of a dragon sound came and a vast mass of dragon qi swirled around his body. It seemed as if his whole body was engulfed in dragonfire. He felt pain as if his heart and lungs were being rent to pieces. Lin Mu Yu yelled in pain, but he forcefully endured it, and continued to pry into the mysterious power of the bone.

Even though right now his eyes were shut he could see a scene appear before him. In the chaos raging flames burned fiercely, he could see a young dragon struggling in lava, crying out in distress. This was most likely the dragon's scene of death. The young dragon's calls became became despairing as its body slowly sank into the magma, blood dispersing into the lava, only leaving behind a claw on a piece of rock.

After a long time, the claw slowly eroded, and in the end left only a small chunk of bone, which was the very piece of bone on him right now.

Lin Mu Yu let out a long breath, finally understanding the origin of the piece of bone, and also understood the memories and power contained in the bone. The young dragon had transferred its power into the bone at the very end of its life.

If he could successfully refine the bone, then it would be equivalent to refining the spirit of the Five Claw Dragon!

...

He took in a deep breath and began to use true qi to peel off the essence of the dragonbone, releasing the dragon's spirit.

But his true qi was like running water crashing into hard rocks. It surrounded the dragonbone and ceaselessly pounded against it, but to no avail. After several hours there was still no progress.

Perhaps he should use the Alchemy Cauldron?

He shook his head slowly and raised his fist, the light of fire enveloped his body and the dragonbone, a large cauldron appeared before him. What true qi couldn't do the alchemy cauldron must be able to do.

"Fire!"

With the sound of the command, the alchemy cauldron whistled in response, a stream of fire surrounded the dragonbone. The raging flames burned for less than ten minutes but the dragonbone already started to peel. With a sound of a dragon's roar, threads of golden light surrounded Lin Mu Yu's body and continued to ooze out, as the dragon's essence was released.

"Ah..."

When the dragon's power entered into this flesh and blood vessels, Lin Mu Yu felt an intense burning pain, but it was still not the end of it. The piercing pain was intolerable for Lin Mu Yu, his

whole body was covered in sweat, soaking his clothes.

The pain didn't end, after the process of fusing the dragon spirit into his bones, the pain kept getting worse, Lin Mu Yu's consciousness started to get fuzzy, and he fainted.

"Big brother, please stop!"

A voice entered his ears, it was the fairy Lulu, flying in the air, shouting in a panic.

Lin Mu Yu suddenly came back to his senses and realized his whole body was in flames.

"Ah?!"

He immediately let go of the true qi and the alchemy cauldron and rolled around the floor to extinguish the flames. Then he stood up completely exhausted. If Lu Lu hadn't woken him up, the alchemy cauldron would have continued refining and his whole body could have been ruined!

...

Great suffering can make a person stimulated, but it can also let a person pass out into a deep sleep. It was really too dangerous!

Chapter 63 : True Dragon Fire

Lin Mu Yu regarded the charred piece of bone in his with a lingering fear. His head still felt numb from his ordeal. Turning to Lu Lu he said: “Thank you, Lu Lu, if you didn’t stop me, Big Brother could have died…”

Lu Lu looked rebukingly at him: “Big Brother, you really put yourself in danger back there. The pain was so great it woke me up from my deep slumber. Don’t continue cultivating after this. Please give up on that Dragonforged Bone Tome!”

“No…”

Lin Mu Yu said decidedly: “Tang Xiao Xi went through a lot to get me this dragonbone, I can’t waste her efforts. I must use the Dragonforged Bone Tome to reconstruct my blood vessels. It’s no use trying to stop me Lu Lu. I mean to keep going.”

Lu Lu replied helplessly: “But how does Big Brother plan to do it? This evil book is going to be the death of you.”

“Actually…”

An idea suddenly flashed across his mind: “It’s not that by body can’t endure it, it’s that my consciousness can’t handle absorbing this unyielding dragon spirit and that’s what is causing me to break down. As long as I don’t pass out, there’s a good chance I can finish refining this dragonbone.”

Lu Lu was dumbstruck: “Big Brother, you plan to use…hyperfocus powder？

“Yes!”

Hyperfocus powder is a level nine medicine. It can cause man’s will to crystalize for a very long time without dissolving. It has the ability to grant users the power to resist drowsiness or fainting. However, it has a very strong, negative side effect: after using the hyperfocus powder, don’t even think about sleeping for the next three to five days.

……

At dusk, Lin Mu Yu arrived at the capital’s pharmacy alone, looking for the hyperfocus powder’s three herbal ingredients: heart-guarding grass (better save some for myself), peaceful-spirit grass (this one is a bit common, not even that expensive)… And finally, the most important herb: the cryogenic flower, the plant that absorbs the frost in the atmosphere and produces a frozen bloom, and can even maintain its frozen state under the most scorching suns. Miraculous, this level nine herb, and quite rare.

“What, you want the cryogenic flower?”

The shopkeeper at the pharmacy stared at him with an incredulous expression. “Cryogenic flowers are illegal, Your Honor. Even though you’re a person of the royal court… the cryogenic flowers have been banned as an illegal drug for three

hundred years now by empire.

"Oh? Why?"

The shopkeeper laughed. "Because cryogenic flowers are a powerful aphrodisiac for users. Not even ten girls a night can lessen the strong surge... but the side-effects are detrimental. Many high officials perished, and so the empire proclaimed the drug off-limits for consumption."

Lin Mu Yu frowned. "But I'm not using the cryogenic flower for that reason. Shopkeeper, look. I'm the Royal Court's premium employee. The empire law has some provisions for my case, does it not? Surely I can be granted a special pardon for such restrictions. Please sell me just a little bit of this flower?"

The shopkeeper's expression became strained. "Ah... that... ay, since Your Honor persists. I'll give you one plant, since we only have two in the shop anyway. But, the cryogenic flower is extremely rare, so the price is also exorbitant. 100 gold Yin for one plant, is this fine with you?"

Lin Mu Yu felt his pouch. He had yet to retrieve this month's salary, but fortunately, he had 100 gold Yin, so he nodded. "Fine, 100 it is then. I'll take it!"

"Alrighty then!"

In no time, a pot containing a cryogenic flower was brought out.

It was still the deep autumn season, so the flower had not yet congealed into frost, but there were already traces of ice on the flower bud. Lin Mu Yu grabbed the pot and headed straight back to the Royal Court, ignoring the greetings of the trainer and instructor on the way, out of fear that they might recognize the illegal plant in his arms, which could spell out big trouble.

After entering the secret chamber, he immediately began blending the elixir. After which he began smelting the ingredients using a 1:1:8 ratio, making use of the fire training method to use true energy to evaporate the last traces of impurity within the medicine, leaving only the purest essence to train the medicament. This technique has long disappeared from this continent, has it not?

After an hour or so, the hyperfocus powder was finally completed.

Because the hyperfocus powder has a longer lasting effect time-wise, it doesn't matter when you drink it. Lin Mu Yu used to drink the focus powder only within the game before, but now that he had to drink it in real life, he realized that the taste was awful. It had a bitter aftertaste, but within moments of consumption, he felt an upsurge of energy, his entire being shaken up and energized.

The side-effect that would come with this is a warm current that flows from the pubic region, splitting into two streams: one that would soar to the brain and one that would flow to the underpart of the body. Yes, this is the effect of the cryogenic flower.

The dragonbone, being newly refined again, caused the jewelled

smelting cauldron to shine bright beams of light on all four corners of the secret chamber. With the lingering flame, the dragonbone once again began to tremble, and wave after wave of dragon chanting sounds reverberated across the chamber.

Lin Mu Yu fluttered both lids close, slowly controlling his true essence to refine the dragonbone, the continuous, undying dragon power once again seeping into the body, feeling the reconstruction of slender bones as the bone was being tempered. Suddenly, a forceful pang hit him, causing him to howl in grief within seconds. Though the impact was painful, the euphoria brought on by the hyperfocus powder allowed Lin Mu Yu to recover as time trickled by and save himself from fainting.

Every inch of his skeletal system was plagued by an interchanging rush of heat and cold. It was unbearable, enough to drive anyone to take his own life. Without the hyperfocus powder, Lin Mu Yu would probably have fainted again. He clenched his teeth, his countenance remaining steely and his entire body drenched with sweat. The dragonforce was causing dense and raging flames to subsume his body... and yet, the flames weren't injuring him, only slowly refining his bones.

The moment the dragon spirit soaked into the bone marrow, that was when the true pain came.

"Ah... hu..."

He was unable to bite back this groan. This was an indescribable pain. He felt like he would rather be thrown in a pit of fire, to dance barefoot on top of the sharpest blades... anything but this

pain! This process stretched out unbearably long, seven or eight hours at least. Again and again, whenever Lin Mu Yu felt like passing out from agony, the hyperfocus powder yanked him back to the land of the living.

The hyperfocus powder was his own refined creation, but was also his savior.

……

It felt like eternity had passed, before the pain began to subside. The dragonbone inside the jewelled smelting cauldron had completely changed… into a derelict pile of dust that could leave at any trace of a breeze. But it was also at this moment that Lin Mu Yu felt in his bloodstream a spiritual tingling scuttling among his blood vessels, giving rise to a wave of nausea.

He slowly turned a palm upward, and felt a surge of power. It was a light purple flame!

“This is…”

He was shocked into stillness.

Lei Hong answered him from outside the door. “This is true power, boy. It comes from the bloodstream of true dragons, called true dragon fire. This will allow you to become the strongest there ever was. It has been a few hundred years since anyone on this continent has been able to use true dragon fire.”

“What, Grandpa Lei Hong?” Lin Mu Yu stared at the door in amazement, never had he thought that Lei Hong would be eavesdropping. The truth of the matter was that Lei Hong was the one who had prepared the secret chamber for him. If Lin Mu Yu’s life had been cut short while he was refining, Qu Chu would never have forgiven Lei Hong.

Lei Hong chuckled. “Ah, Ah Yu. Even though true dragon fire is powerful, you must take great care not to display it in front of others... or you’ll be facing a lot of problems. Okay, Grandpa has been watching over you for an entire day, even these old bones are about to dissolve. I’m going to get something to eat. As for you, boy, it’d be best to find a place to release tension... There’s a place called Flowery Spring Hall in the imperial capital’s eastern district, the women there are not bad. You should pop in. Oh, and if you need money, just put it on the King’s tab. I’ll be going now.”

“I’ve been cultivating for a whole day now?”

Lin Mu Yu muttered to himself. He felt the atmosphere with his spiritual sense. Lei Hong’s formidable aura was at a distance, looks like he really left.

Lin Mu Yu felt like he was given a new lease on life. While refining the bone and cleansing the marrow, the dragonbone had finished refining, plus he had accidentally garnered the secret true dragon fire power... but then, what had Lei Hong been talking about when he mentioned popping in for a visit at Flowery Spring Hall to find women?

He was utterly baffled at the entire thing.

At this moment, a nefarious heat began spreading from his lower body straight to his pubic region. His whole body began heating up. His mind became completely blank and free from rationality and he could feel the heat emanating from his face.

Could this be the after effects of the hyperfocus powder?

Oh God, this was more effective than any X-rated drug, even Lin Mu Yu, who had the self-control of an ascetic, felt something rising that he couldn't stop. Now what does he do with this?

The whole situation was about to get worse.

Dong, dong, dong. Someone was knocking at the rock door from outside. And Tang Xiao Xi's voice wavered in: "Mu Mu, are you there?"

"I..."

As he opened his mouth, he immediately regretted it, but it was too late.

"Oh you're there, I'm coming in then..."

Tang Xiao Xi pushed the door open, and the door actually gave way. Damn it! He forgot to lock it from the inside!

……

Lin Mu Yu felt like time began to move in slow motion. Tang Xiao Xi's slender body moved into the secret chamber. She beamed at him. "Mu Mu, why is your face so red? Are you sick?"

"I…" He was unable to finish his sentence. His heart swelled with a thousand, a million desires… but in front of him… was Tang Xiao Xi, who he absolutely could not touch!

Tang Xiao Xi was clad in a body-hugging dress, showing off her enchanting figure. She slowly walked over and sat beside him, asking in a soft voice, "What's wrong?"

Her intoxicating scent wafted up to his nose. This was even more deadly. Lin Mu Yu's breathing took on a ragged and heavy rhythm. With every ounce of willpower he had left, he fought against his primal instincts and managed to say, "Xiao Xi, get out. Hurry. I won't be able to hold it in for much longer…"

"Are you… all right?"

Tang Xiao Xi leaned in even closer, stretching out a hand to touch his forehead. "Oh! Why is it so hot?"

Lin Mu Yu kept his head down. But it was at that moment that he

caught a glimpse of the Night Princess' treasure, a firm and youthful pair, as pure and delectable as could be.

His mind went blank. He could no longer control himself.

"Xiao Xi…"

He reached out and cupped Tang Xiao Xi, his left hand fondled her sacred summit, lowering his head to assault her lips. Tang Xiao Xi froze, not knowing what to do. Her eyes widened, her eyelashes fluttered… Lin Mu Yu's kiss lingering on her lips, a fiery passion. Who could turn away from this feeling?

But her chest was not supposed to be touched, and a swell of indignation overcame Tang Xiao Xi. She pushed him away.

"Mu Mu, what are you doing?!"

She saw that his eyes were filled with bewildered desire and had a glassy, far-away look. She guessed as much what was happening. She turned up a palm, calling forth true power, and directly struck his chest. "Clear-mind spell!"

The faint traces of green light seeped through the palm towards Lin Mu Yu's heart, and a few beats later, he began to regain a semblance of consciousness.

……

“Ah…”

……”

He had completely recovered from the effects of the hyperfocus powder. He suddenly realized his actions and the situation he was in. With a look of shameful regret, he looked up at the blushing Tang Xiao Xi. If only he could disappear into a hole right now… “Xiao Xi… I… I… I’m sorry, I really… I was really…”

Stumbling over his words, he was unable to form a complete sentence. Tang Xiao Xi looked at him coldly, buttoning her blouse and standing up. She patted him on the shoulder reassuringly. “You idiot, you dare take even the cryogenic flower? Do you even want to live? If I had not learned clear-mind spell… o-ho, you might not even be able to preserve that little head of yours.”

Of course, Lin Mu Yu knew what she was talking about. Had he taken the virginity of the granddaughter of the Duke Cang Lan, the hundred thousand military officials of the City of Seven Seas would see to it that he would suffer a horrible and painful death.

“Thank you, Xiao Xi.” He was still humiliated with himself, keeping his gaze on the ground.

Tang Xiao Xi suddenly giggled. “It’s not like you meant to do it. I forgive you! I came here to tell you that it’s almost time for the Upper Sunset Festival! Do you have any plans? If not, let’s celebrate it together!”

His face was the picture of confusion. “Upper Sunset Festival? What is that…”

Tang Xiao Xi raised an eyebrow at him. “You don’t even know what the Upper Sunset Festival is? You poor thing, you’re really messed up, aren’t you? Fine, the Upper Sunset Festival is a very important holiday in tradition. This is a time for everyone to gather together, with good friends or family. I’m guessing you don’t have a lot of friends, so… just spend it with me, what do you think?”

“Okay!”

Lin Mu Yu was ecstatically relieved. Tang Xiao Xi was truly a lovable girl. If she hadn’t forgiven him for what happened today, that would have been a major punishable offense. Good thing she was willing to be so forgiving…

Being with someone was better than being alone anyway.

Chapter 64 : Emissary Of The Flower Protector

The venison restaurant sat inconspicuously by the side of the road. Inside, there was a lavishly-dressed woman. Indeed, it was Tang Xiao Xi, fork in hand, eagerly facing the overflowing dish of deer meat.

Lin Mu Yu sat across her, fidgeting with his hands, his expression bashful. “Xiao Xi, can I ask you something?”

“Yeah, what is it?”

“Can you lend me some money?”

“Pfft, borrowing money?” Tang Xiao Xi grinned, cocking her head at him with a mischievous, teasing glint. “Mu Mu, how poor are you, that you have to ask, of all people, me for money?”

Lin Mu Yu cleared his throat, abashed. “You know how it is... Most of the trainers at the Temple are poor. And... I really need the money, it’s an emergency. I swear to you, I’ll return it as soon as possible, no need to worry about that point. I’ll return it within seven days!”

“Fine...”

Tang Xiao Xi pouted. “Say it, how much?”

He held up two fingers. “This much.”

“Wah! You’re really pushing it-- twenty thousand golden yin? Are you crazy?” Tang Xiao Xi stared at him.

“No, no, only two thousand…” Lin Mu Yu briefly considered digging a hole and disappearing into it.

“Ah, well… that sounds more reasonable.”

Tang Xiao Xi reached into her bosom and produced two heavy coins, throwing it to Lin Mu Yu. She laughed and said, “Here you go”

Pa-ta!

Two clear, shiny coins landed on the table, spinning for a few moments before landing face-down. It looked like it was made of crystal, its luster made it clear that the engraving work was very particular. On one side, the insignia of the empire, the purple Yin flower, gleamed brightly. Lin Mu Yu stared at it. These two coins are… worth two thousand golden yin?

He took one up to inspect, weighing it in his hand and considering it. He laughed. “Xiao Xi, stop joking around with me. What is this? How could they be worth two thousand golden yin? Impossible…”

Tang Xiao Xi drew her eyebrows together, looking at him with a familiar contemptuous expression. “Mu Mu, you truly are a rural bumpkin. You don’t even know what diamond currency is! One diamond coin is equal to one thousand golden yin, everyone in God Country knows this!”

One of the servers at the venison restaurant was observing them from afar, shock splashed across his countenance. “That maiden actually has diamond currency... My first time to see a real diamond coin. Isn’t it that... common people can’t even use this coin? Only those from high official families can use them...”

Lin Mu Yu had a light bulb moment, quickly stashing the two coins into the pouch strapped around his waist. He gave a merry laugh. “Thank you Xiao Xi. I promise to pay you back by next Monday. I’ll even give back three thousand golden yin, how about that?”

Tang Xiao Xi gave a surprised laugh. “Wow, I can even make money? Okay, okay, I’ve been wanting to have some extra money to spend anyway.”

“Okay, it’s a deal then!”

.....

That afternoon, Lin Mu Yu went to the pharmaceutical center in the chamber of commerce within the empire, bringing his two diamond coins. He went inside the largest one, and without niceties, said, “I want to see your shopkeeper.”

The shop assistant hurried to the back of the room after glimpsing the golden star insignia granted by the royal court.

Before long, a portly and thick-set middle-aged man ambled over, his body clad in a golden brocade outfit. He made a show of respect by cupping his hand over a fist and beamed. “Your Honor, I am but a humble owner of this small pharmacy, kindly call my Jin Xan Pang. My surname is Gold, and as you can see, I’m quite fat. In my family business, I’m the third, so everyone in the medicinal refinery world calls me Jin (gold) Xan (three) Pang (fat). Your Honor, to what do I owe the pleasure of your visit?”

Lin Mu Yu gazed at him. “What is your refinery master level?”

Jin Xan Pang cupped his hands again in a humble manner. “Ah, Your Honor, you will excuse my bragging, but I am a level nine medicine king. Friends from all over the professional world pushed me to it, but I have become the league king of the empire’s pharmacy.”

No wonder this fatty had a hidden gleam of superiority in his gaze, it was because he was a Alechemist King. This type of medicinal refining level was considered supreme in the empire.

It wasn’t like Lin Mu Yu had any particular reverence for him after the fact... after all, he himself was able to completely refine medicine up to level ten, and could be rated as the one and only, and number one, Alchemist God worldwide. Speaking of techniques for refining medicine... a simple Alchemist King was no

one for him to admire.

“I was thinking of buying some raw materials from your pharmacy. Could I have some rainbow lotus?”

Jin Xiao Pang’s face drained upon hearing the words “rainbow lotus.” “Ah.. ah… your Honor, what do you want the rainbow lotus for?”

“Refining medicine.”

Lin Mu Yu’s answer was simple and concise. He added, “People from the empire have special pardon to purchase small amounts of rainbow lotus. Give me a price, Boss Jin.”

Jin Xan Pang muttered. “Rainbow Lotuses are extremely uncommon, and even more difficult to procure. It is also an illegal drug in the empire. All right, how about this? Two hundred golden yin for a few rainbow lotuses, what do you think? This is already an extremely favorable price.”

“Fine. Give me a kilogram. Oh, and throw in some bone trees in there, as well.”

“Bone Tree?” Jin Xan Pang stared at him. “Rainbow Lotus with Bone Tree… could it be possible that you’re…”

His heart constricted with fear. “Unless you’re planning on concocting the legendary peak of dreams?”

“That’s none of your concern. You sell the ingredients, I refine the elixir.”

“Okay, okay.”

Jin Xan Pang ordered someone to get a kilo of the Rainbow Lotus, and to add three Bone Trees as well. But he remained conflicted, because the Peak of Dreams had remained an elusive goal for thousands of years for many people. None of them had been able to uncover the true prescription and method of training. Unless... this boy could...?

With this thought in mind, Jin Xan Pang hurriedly said, “Your Honor... should you be able to successfully refine the peak of dreams... it would be a great honor if I were able to take a look at it... or otherwise, even if you wanted to sell it, I, Jin Xan Pang, will definitely be able to offer my services and help you sell it at the highest price!”

“Okay, we’ll see.”

“Okay!”

.....

Hugging a heap of ingredients back to the Temple, Lin Mu Yu headed straight for the secret chamber without even stopping by his own room. This time, for sure, he’d be able to fully complete

refining a bottle of level 12 Peak of Dreams elixir!

During the refining process, the dragon fire seeped into the concentrated area of the palm. The speed of extracting medicine is unusually fast, and so training was also of a godly speed.

Lin Mu Yu considered the problem at hand from all sides. Since he was still reeling from the excitement caused by the hyperfocus powder. Sleep didn't even occur to him. This was a big problem for his body's health. And yet, the Peak of Dreams was considered to be the at the peak of all soporific drugs. One dose of peak of dreams would quell any form of excitement, no matter how strong, and induce a sleep so deep that it would last for three days. Additionally, it seemed as though he should send a bottle of peak of dreams to Chu Yao to help her training, so that even though he'll be asleep for three days, Chu Yao could also elevate her strength.

And so he brought six bottles of peak of dreams, five to sell at the pharmacy at the empire. Jin Xan Pang, upon hearing that there were genuine bottles of peak of dreams elixir, almost had a heart attack. Lin Mu Yu asked him to silently auction and sell everything off at two parts for trading companies. Jin Xan Pang got lucky.

After this was taken care of, he headed straight to the legendary potions department.

At the empire's legendary potions department, all the doctors' and refining masters' hall, because of his position as the premium Royal Court's training instructor, were all easily accessible to him. Lin Mu Yu had been to Chu Yao's refining hall's third division. Pungent, concentrated smells of medicine attacked his nasal cavities as he walked. When he reached the third division, he

spotted Chu Yao with her snow white fingers spread wide open, her face scrunched in concentration as she attempted to extract an iron pear flower. Her technique had improved considerably, it was now elegantly adept, and apparently, she took on iron pear flowers now!

"Chu Yao Jie!"

Lin Mu Yu's voice reverberated across the room, momentarily interrupting Chu Yao's refinery work. Chu Yao reabsorbed her energy and without missing a beat, turned around and threw herself into his arms. She giggled. "Ah Yu, you've come to see me?"

"Yes, I've even brought you a gift!"

"What is it?"

Lin Mu Yu took out the bottles. "Peak of Dreams, the legendary elixir that is said to be a great developer of hidden potential. Choose a time, drink it, and fall asleep for three days. Your power will definitely increase by leaps and bounds!"

"Really?" Chu Yao accepted the gift, beaming from ear to ear.

A voice interrupted them. "Where did this little brat come from? How dare you trespass in our legendary potions department's refinery hall? Hmph, you'd better get lost!"

“Huh?”

Lin Mu Yu’s temper began to flare. He turned around, discovering the owner of the voice to be someone around twenty-five years old. He was quite young, with a golden herb insignia on his breastplate. Chu Yao’s was silver, so that must mean that this arrogant youth was above Chu Yao in position. And from his gaze, it was easily deducible that there was a glimmer of jealousy. Could it be that this person… had feelings for Chu Yao?

“Deacon Luo Bin, he’s my friend, he came to visit me, he didn’t trespass in the refinery hall…” Chu Yao said.

Luo Bin raised an eyebrow. “The refinery hall is the entire legendary potions department’s most classified area. Is this a place where people can just waltz in? Chu Yao, you know the legendary potions department rules, don’t you?”

Chu Yao looked like she was about to say something when Lin Mu Yu made a movement to stand in front of her. With an impassive gaze, he chuckled without really laughing. “I’m a trainer from the Temple. The name’s Lin Zhi, Deacon Luo Bin. Is there a problem?”

“A person from the Temple?”

Luo Bin gave a derisive snort of laughter. “Oh-ho, so it’s a stray from the Temple. No wonder it’s so savage. A mere trainer, and you dare come behave so atrociously in the legendary potions department? What do you take this place for? What do you take us

for, a bunch of useless fowls? All of you, step aside, I'm going to put this egotistical brat in his place!"

A group of refiners moved away from the line of attack. Luo Bin lightly raised his hand and a spiral of blood red energy materialized, lingering in a spiral around his palm, faster and faster until it congregated into a long blood red double-edged sword. He actually turned out to have a military-type martial spirit. Usually the users of this type of martial spirit were adept at offense... Lin Mu Yu turned attentive.

A young refiner nearby called out with a word of kind warning. "Lin Zhi, please be careful... Deacon Luo Bin is the son of the High Official.

Lin Mu Yu snorted. No wonder this youngster was so arrogant and condescending. But then again, it came as no surprised, what with his holy fighting strength nearing level 50. Normally, no one in the Royal Court could even properly be considered his opponent, but today, he must have a bout of bad luck.

.....

Here he comes!

Luo Bin strode forward with the martial spirit sword in hand and aimed for the opponent's shoulder.

Lin Mu Yu had already decided by this time to put him in his

place, or else who knew what this Luo Bin fellow would do in the department against Chu Yao based on his power and position...

Starfall Steps' real energy began to pulsate and glow. Under the engaged gazes of the audience, Lin Mu Yu deftly stepped out of the way, around two meters out of reach, just so that he could avoid Luo Bin's attack. As he swivelled around, he simultaneously raised his left arm, his true energy already forming and amassing rays of lightning. In one fluid movement, he swept it across Luo Bin's back.

Pang!

Luo Bin staggered, before coughing up a mouthful of blood that splattered across the floor.

"Damn it!"

To be humiliated and injured like this in front of Chu Yao... how could he stand it? He turned around like a savage beast and threw himself at Lin Mu Yu.

Lin Mu Yu stood his ground, but the martial spirit gourd appeared, Verdant Shell and Dragon Rampart flew out together and pang! threw Luo Bin flying backwards, already covered in a new spurt of fresh blood.

.....

“You… you…”

Luo Bin collapsed to the ground. One of his teeth had been knocked out. His face was clouded with fury as he yelled, “You scoundrel!”

Lin Mu Yu stepped forward, resting one foot on top of Luo Bin. “Chu Yao is my older sister. Visiting her here is a very normal thing to do. You were the one who insulted the Temple first, so don’t go around saying I beat you up for no reason.”

Chapter 65 : Body Reborn

“You vulgar peasant! Bastard!”

Luo Bin struggled to crawl to an upright position from the floor, his baleful eyes practically emitting toxic hatred. He spat, “You wait. The high officials department will never forget! The legendary potions department will never forgive you! You just wait!”

As Luo Bin turned around to leave, the spectating group of refiners slowly trickled off as well.

……

“Ah Yu! You’re in big trouble!” Chu Yao said. “We’re new here in God City, how could you make someone like Luo Bin your enemy? His father is the head of the government officials, he’s in full control of the various imperial courts. Now that we’ve offended him, how are you planning on staying here in God City any longer?”

“……”

“…”

Lin Mu Yu looked a little guilty, rubbing his nose. “Look, I just can’t stand his overbearing, arrogant attitude. Much less his inappropriate way of looking at you!”

Chu Yao, upon hearing the last phrase, felt her heart flutter. It felt as if there was a little deer running amok in her mind. She couldn't help but bite back a giggle, her laughter as gentle and melodious as a springtime pond. "Okay, okay, I know this is for my sake. But really, you should return to the Temple, don't stay here anymore. At least the people in the Temple can protect you, go on..."

"Chu Yao jie, are you really fine?" Lin Mu Yu asked. He was worried that Luo Bin would take advantage of his absence to get to Chu Yao.

Chu Yao laughed and shook her head. "Relax, I'm only a weak little girl. Besides, I'm also the legendary potions department's silver needle refinery master. Someone whose name's already on the register, they won't even think about messing with me. Then again, the last time the imperial guard commander Feng Ji Xing and older brother came to see me, the deacon met with them, so I think Luo Bin will at least be respectful to me on behalf of Feng Ji Xing.

"Oh, that's good! You should hurry and take some of those Peak of Dreams. Find somewhere safe to sleep for three days, you will definitely have a lot of improvement. I'm also going back to train now!"

"Okay, go ahead."

Gazing at Lin Mu Yu's youthful and sculpted back, this youth that has ascended along with training, his entire being surrounded by confidence and a charismatic aura... it was no surprise that

someone like youthful Chu Yao would be moved, and much less taking into consideration their history together, feelings were inevitably bound to develop.

Chu Yao gently sighed, and silently turned matters over in her mind. And yet, what came to the forefront of her thoughts was the relationship of Tang Xiao Xi and Lin Mu Yu. Tang Xiao Xi entering the Temple to protect Lin Mu Yu was already common knowledge. Everyone knew that the Temple Deacon Lei Hong and the Azure Water Duke Tang Lan were best friends. Some people even speculated that Lei Hong was the subordinate of the Azure Water Duke, and so if there were something between Tang Xiao Xi and Lin Mu Yu, Lei Hong would naturally protect Lin Mu Yu.

Ah, never mind. Chu Yao decided to continue working.

……

Lin Mu Yu hurriedly returned to the Temple, and for once, instead of holing himself up in the secret chamber, he went to the Temple's Main Hall. He was stopped by two guards holding up military blades. "Trainer, what business do you have here?"

"I'm here to visit Grandpa Lei Hong."

"I will announce your presence first."

"Okay."

Not long after, Lei Hong appeared, strolling leisurely out of the hall with sleep-leaden eyes. He chuckled. “What’s up, boy?”

“I want to train by way of deep-sleeping for three days. I hope Grandpa Lei Hong can send guards to protect my secret chamber... I’m afraid that there’ll be enemies coming to seek revenge otherwise.”

“Oh?” Lei Hong screwed up his eyes. “Didn’t you just take the focus powder? The focus powder’s medicinal properties I’m aware of. How can you even think about sleep?”

“Don’t worry about me, I can fall asleep no problem!” Looked like Qu Chu hadn’t mentioned the Peak of Dreams to Lei Hong yet. Not a problem.

Lei Hong nodded. “Alright then, let me ask Deacon Ge Yang guard you while you train. Relax, no one in the Temple will wish to do you harm.”

“Thank you Grandpa Lei Hong!”

.....

As soon as he returned to the secret chamber, he relaxed, taking out one bottle of Peak of Dreams. He opened the lid and gave it a few furtive whiffs. The smell of rainbow lotus... with traces of sweetness. He threw his head back and swallowed the contents of the vial. Within moments, he felt his head growing leaden and a

sudden lethargy overcoming him. The Peak of Dreams was indeed a miraculous drug with miraculous medicinal properties! It was even stronger than the focus powder to be able to force sleep upon him.

It felt like forever. It was not a peaceful sleep. In his unconscious state, he felt like he was experiencing surge after surge of catastrophic calamity. His body ached with a burning pain, and it felt like his bones were being subsumed by flames. The heat enveloping his body, every inch of his skin, every nook and cranny of his insides... and then, a flash of golden light shooting across his gaze. Lin Mu Yu saw several five-clawed dragons with golden scales dancing wildly in mid-air. One of the bearded heads turned, pegging him with a pair of ice cold pupils, as if it were the ruler of a great land.

“Ah!”

He jerked awake from the dream. It was early morning, and the trumpet signifying breakfast time came through from outside the door.

Lin Mu Yu clenched his fist and took a deep breath, feeling his inner power swirling within him. Even without a measurement apparatus, he knew that his inner power had improved a great deal. He waved his fist and felt his true energy denser than before. The corner of his lips curled up into a smile, emitting a faintly pulsating strength. It immediately turned into a light purple raging flame. This is true dragon fire!

This kind of firepower was a massive destructive force. It

shouldn't be used whenever he felt like it. Lin Mu Yu suspected that this true dragon fire had so great an extinguishing power that he could easily defeat his opponents of the same level, maybe even kill them!

When he stepped outside the doors of the secret chamber, Ge Yang was in the process of doing his morning breath routine. This was Ge Yang's way of training, inhaling and exhaling the clear morning air. This only came by once a day, Ge Yang would never miss it.

Ge Yang opened one eyes and peeked at Lin Mu Yu. He chuckled. "Lin Zhi, your aura's gotten stronger! I'm not going to accompany you anymore, go have some breakfast before the morning meeting!"

"Thank you Your Honor Ge Yang for the protection!" Lin Mu Yu cupped his fist to his hand and bowed down respectfully in gratitude.

Ge Yang laughed gently, but did not respond. The fact of the matter was that this boy's training was completely unconventional and uncommon, but that fact that he could maintain humble, cautious, and completely unarrogant made him special among youthful refiners. It was not uncommon to have many youthful refiners who banked on their high background and abused their powers for their own benefit. Zhao Jin and Ou Yang Qiu possessed dubious morality and were far too wild. Lin Mu Yu began as a mere training instructor, and seemed to possess a mindframe that triumphed over theirs.

All rivers run into the same sea, after all. Different means may achieve the same purpose, but whoever has a generous and large heart inevitably end up refining to a higher level.

……

“Your Honor Lin Zhi!” An obeisance of servants called out to him from afar, merrily greeting him. “Deacon Lei Hong is inviting you to go to the Holy Hall!”

“Oh, all right!”

Lin Mu Yu forwent breakfast and hurried instead to the Holy Hall. From a distance, Lei Hong sat on the Deacon’s throne, greeting with the boy with a smile. “Lin Zhi, you’re here. Go, take a look on the measuring apparatus to see how much you’ve improved?”

“Yes, sir.”

He leapt into the middle of the resplendently transparent disk, emitting a low shout to unleash his true energy. The energy poured into the device below him, and a spirit stone beside it began shaking at an alarming speed, jittering and emitting column after column of spiritual light beams. There were five long beams and seven short ones.

“Level 57 Battle Saint, not bad, not bad.” Lei Hong stroked his beard, looking extremely pleased with him. “Good. You may go

now. The morning training is about to begin soon. Has your body recovered?”

“Completely recovered. Thank you Grandpa Lei Hong!”

“Go!”

“Yes sir!”

……

After he finished eating, he came just in time for the morning attendance check. He hurried towards the refinery training hall. A group of trainers greeted him with cheerful expressions. “Your Honor Lin Zhi has come! Wonderful!”

After having reconstructed blood vessels using the refined remnants of dragonbone, Lin Mu Yu had a different aura to him. There was a deadliness about him even if his countenance was friendly. The group of instructors felt a swell of respect for him.

“Lin Zhi, you’re free from quarantine now?” A younger copper-star refining master joked.

Lin Mu Yu knew him, but didn’t know his real name. Everyone called him Little Beansprout. His energy was not bad, but it felt like there was something off today. His face was splashed with greenish bruises, his nose was crooked… as if the bridge of his nose had been broken by someone. Lin Mu Yu’s eyebrows knitted

together before he knew it. “Little Beansprout, what happened to your nose?”

“Ah, nothing…” Little Beansprout turned his face away.

Qin Zi Ling, who had been standing to one side, frowned. “Lin Zhi, Little Beansprout was sparring with silver-star instructor Deng Zi Ling yesterday. This was because of Deng Zi Ling! No sign of mercy, that guy.”

Little Beansprout winced and clenched his teeth. “Zi Ling! Shut up!”

Just at this moment, a robust silver-star instructor sauntered over clad in a metal armor, wearing a lofty smirk on his face. Speak of the devil. It was Deng Zi Ling. After a cursory glance around the room, he said, “Deacon Your Honor, I would like to spar with Little Beansprout today. He’s my best sandbag.”

The deacon on duty for that day was unsympathetic. “As you wish.”

Little Beansprout began shuddering. He lowered his head.

This was the fate of trainers within the Temple. Debasing life.

Because most of the trainer were common people, they would do anything for a handful of golden yin coins, even going so far as staking their lives and taking a beating. Deng Zi Ling’s background

came from a good family-- the young master of the Dragon Heat Conglomerate-- but he had an irrational soft spot for people like Little Beansprout. As Confucius said in the Three Character Classic, people were virtuous at birth. For Lin Mu Yu, this was almost an instinct.

With a wave of his arm, Lin Mu Yu chuckled. “Your Honor Deng Zi Ling is a silver-star training instructor... it would rather be a waste of his talent training with a copper-star instructor, would it not? How about if today, I train with you?”

Deng Zi Ling glared at Lin Mu Yu. “Lin Zhi, you’re going out of the way to help someone out? Ha, don’t think just because the High Deacon is on your side, you can do whatever you like!”

Lin Mu Yu raised an eyebrow. “What, scared?”

“Why would I be?!”

His furious expression hardened and he looked at the deacon on duty. “Who’s scared of who? Deacon, please arrange for me and Lin Zhi to spar.”

Zeng Fang Xin nodded his head. “As you wish.”

.....

After a few minutes inside the training chamber, Deng Zi Ling peeled off his armor, revealing a robust body rippling with

sculpted muscles. With a shout, he summoned his fierce tiger spirit energy. “Come at me Lin Zhi! Let this master see if you’re truly powerful!”

Without waiting for a response, he flew over as fast as lightning to aim a punch at Lin Mu Yu’s chest.

Lin Mu Yu stood passively, without even recalling his fighting spirit. He raised an arm brazenly to block the attack-- using only Refining Skin + Tempering Bone’s bare bodily strength to defend himself!

Pang!

Having been hit directly, Lin Mu Yu remained as still as a statue. And yet, Deng Zi Ling was the one forcefully thrown several steps backwards. Deng Zi Ling’s face was drained of color… he knew that Lin Mu Yu was strong, but… not this strong. He could actually defend himself against his attack without even calling his special fighting spirit!

Deng Zi Ling’s pride, as well as his authority, went down the drain after this one attack. He could only internally cry out in pain.

Chapter 66 : The Absurd Laws Of The Empire

“Someone died… someone died!”

There was a flurry of commotion from outside the training hall and there was clamorous shouting.

Deng Zi Lin’s breath was already ragged and uneven. There were traces of blood flowing from his arms to his fists. Lin Mu Yu had not even begun his attack, and yet Deng Zi Lin was reeling terribly from the aftershock of Lin Mu Yu’s Iron Rampart Defense. He had to begrudgingly admit respect for the Temple’s top trainer. He was also quite thankful that the commotion outside could allow him to take a breather.

“What happened, who died?” Deng Zi Lin held up his hands.

Lin Mu Yu frowned and reabsorbed his fighting spirit. “I don’t know, should we go take a look?”

“Okay.”

……

There was a body on the floor, resting silently in the middle of the training hall. It was one of the trainers. There was a sword wound on his chest, fresh blood gushing from the open cavity.

There was no sign of life in him. Lin Mu Yu staggered at the astonishing sight. It was someone he knew... someone he had just attempted to help not so long ago. Little Beansprout!

"What..."

Lin Mu Yu pushed the people standing in front of him to the side and forced his way through the crowd. He genuflected beside Little Beansprout's body. With a shaky hand, he unbuttoned his clothes to inspect the chest. It didn't look like a normal sword wound... it looked as if the blade of the sword had been thrust in, and then made to cause further damage once it was already inside. It had created a hole the size of a fist. It seemed as if Little Beansprout's heart had been mangled and twisted.

"Who was it?!"

Lin Mu Yu leapt up, his roar filling the room. His hand was already grasping at the burning sword hilt.

Ou Yang Qiu, with a slender sword in hand, still marred with traces of fresh blood slowly trickling down the side of the blade. He looked insipidly at Lin Mu Yu. "It was me. I was too into the moment during training, and I accidentally killed him. If there's to be any punishment, I'll gladly accept it."

"You killed him on purpose!" Lin Mu Yu said, hitting the nail on the head.

“Really? Do you have proof?” Ou Yang Qiu gave a short laugh. He walked towards the corpse and stood by the head of Little Beansprout, eyeing the lifeless body with the detachment of a medical professional.

The deacon on duty Zeng Fang stepped in. “Cease your arguing. The High Deacon is on his way, he will decide on a course of action.”

Everyone nodded.

After a few minutes, Lei Hong strode into the training hall, his gaze sweeping across Lin Mu Yu, Ou Yang Qiu, and Zeng Fang, before finally landing on the body of Little Beansprout.

“What happened here?”

Ou Yang Qiu genuflected. “High Deacon, during training, I made the mistake of killing one of the copper-star trainers. I’m willing to accept any punishment, I only beg for the forgiveness of the High Deacon for my mistake!”

Lei Hong frowned. “Deacon Ge Yang, how should we resolve this?”

Ge Yang retrieved a thick scroll and unfurled it, quietly reading a part to himself before saying, “Little Beansprout was a copper trainer, was of common descent, yearly salary was 50 golden yin. Ou Yang Qiu is of military rank from the Prefecture of Hou Jue,

belongs to Rank 3 Nobility. According to the laws of the empire, manslaughter of a commoner by a noble results in the penalty of paying a fine in the amount of what the commoner could earn in ten years. So according to the law, Ou Yang Qiu, having accidentally killed Little Beansprout, needs to pay the family members an amount of five hundred golden yin.

TLN: Manslaughter - accidental killing ; Homicide - intentional killing)

“What?”

Lin Mu Yu was rendered temporarily speechless. He shook himself awake. “Wait, Deacon Ge Yang, Ou Yang Qiu obviously committed homicide. You haven’t even inspected the body yet, how can you be so certain that it’s manslaughter?”

Ge Yang said, “Lin Zhi, watch your words. Remember your place. The empire’s law decrees that the death of a commoner by a noble is already of a lesser degree. Don’t tell me that you’re not aware of this?”

Lin Mu Yu clenched his fist, his expression barely containing his smouldering anger. “Killing someone should not go unpunished! Nobles? Commoners? What kind of bullshit law is this?”

Lei Hong fixed him with a steely gaze. “Lin Zhi, shut it. You’re forgetting your place. Go back and train.”

Ge Yang nodded. “Lin Zhi, go back to your room. Say no more!”

Lin Mu Yu’s whole body trembled. In a shaky voice, he said, “Is there even justice left on this world? Are you all blind?! Ou Yang Qiu intentionally killed Little Beansprout. Don’t you understand?”

“Lin Zhi!”

Lei Hong’s thundering bellow filled the room, striking fear into the hearts of everyone there. A mountainous force descended on Lin Mu Yu without warning, crushing his entire body and forcing him to kneel on the ground. Clenching his teeth through the pain, his entire body pulsing with true energy, Lin Mu Yu stared at Lei Hong with furious defiance as he hissed through his teeth. “Little Beansprout’s death… will be avenged!”

Pa! Pa! Pa!

The bricks under his feet began to crack open from the immense pressure, but Lin Mu Yu held on with a bitter desperation. He felt like his veins and tendons were about to explode, and even the arteries behind his eyes began to burst, under the powerful sphere Lei Hong had placed above him. His left eye began to pool with blood, but he continued to stare at Lei Hong through the red fluid to show his determination and unyielding passion.

“Go back and rest.”

Lei Hong suddenly ceased the pressure. “Remember: there are

some matters you have no hand in. There are some rules you cannot question. The empire's laws are not something you can question."

Lin Mu Yu's body trembled, his breath jagged and irregular.

Silver-star trainer Zhang Wei clapped his shoulder. "Foolish boy, hurry and go, before the High Deacon changes his mind."

Qin Zi Ling chimed in. "Lin Zhi, just go. Little Beansprout's situation... there will be justice in the end."

Ou Yang Qiu knelt down, bringing his sword by his side. "High Deacon, I'm willing to assume all responsibility to right my wrongs. I will personally bring five hundred golden yin to Little Beansprout's parents."

"All right."

Lei Hong said, "Instructor Ou Yang, be careful next time during training. I do not wish to encounter this kind of situation again."

"Yes, sir!"

Ou Yang Qiu lifted his head and met Lin Mu Yu's gaze, and for a split second, Lin Mu Yu spotted a glint in his eye, as if he was feeling very pleased with himself. Evidently, Ou Yang Qiu had killed Little Beansprout to take down Lin Mu Yu a peg or two. How dare he step out of his way to protect Little Beansprout. Ou Yang

Qiu had killed him to show who was the person who had the final say in the Temple.

Lin Mu Yu's insides turmoiled like a ship at stormy sea, anger and unwillingness to admit defeat tumbling together, crashing and clashing as he understood Ou Yang Qiu's intent. He felt completely powerless, having unintentionally endangering Little Beansprout whom he had meant to protect.

Lin Mu Yu turned on his heels without another word, heading straight to the Secret Chamber to train some more.

Lei Hong looked after the retreating figure and sighed.

……

At dusk, at the God Marquis Mansion:

Zeng Fang toyed with a slender dagger cast completely from pure gold. The stiffness was not very high. It was definitely not high enough to be used in the battlefield against opponents, so its fate remained as solely something to be admired.

Zhi-ya…

The door creaked open, and a counselor official walked in with a respectful greeting. "Young Marquis, the person has been brought."

“Bring him in.”

“Yes, sir!”

The counselor turned back and called for the person outside. Within seconds, a willowy man with deep-set eyes and high cheekbones walked inside. His eyes were imbued with a shine that inspired terror, and the moment he stepped inside the room, he cupped one hand to a fist. “Zhong Li San greets the Young Marquis!”

“You’re Zhong Li San?” Zeng Fang said. “Rumors say you are the deadliest assassin in the territory of Lanyan City, are these rumors true?”

Zhong Li San lifted his head and laughed, a deadly glint in his gaze. “Shall the Young Master test me?”

“Why not?”

Zeng Fang opened a fist, summoning a double-edged sword flying out from the sword rack with a “keng!” into his waiting hand. He gripped the handle and leapt up. “Zhong Li San! Come! Let me see if you are worthy of the privilege of being used by me!”

“Heh.”

Zhong Li San chuckled. In a flash, he rushed upwards and from out of nowhere, a sharp sword appeared in his hand. With an elegant flick of his wrist, he aimed a deadly Tri-Flower Sword Attack at Zeng Fang's neck, chest, and abdomen.

Zeng Fang jolted in surprise, his fighting spirit pouring out. The sword in his hand went flying and he was able to successfully block two of Zhong Li San's attacks, but the third attack had too swift a speed, and was completely unable to be defended against. He had to quickly condense two gas armor layers to block it.

Pu!

Zhong Li San's long blade was encircled by a ring of strong gale, and was actually powerful enough to blow away the gas armor defense of Zeng Fang, allowing the blade to penetrate through the clothing and stopping short of piercing through his abdomen.

The sliver of cold metal that made contact with his skin forced an involuntary shiver up Zeng Fang's spine and rendered him stationary.

"How dare you, Zhong Li San! You audacious creature! How dare you try to harm even one strand of hair on the Young Marquis' head!" The counselor barked, "Come, men!"

Zhong Li San calmly retrieved his long blade. "I, Zhong Li San, would never do such a pointless thing. What would I get for killing the Young Master?"

Zeng Fang had already been shook to his core. After finally calming down, with traces of lingering fear, he said, “Zhong Li San, your sword skills are indeed extraordinary. I have never seen a faster sword.”

Zhong Li San chuckled darkly, cupping his fist. “The Young Marquis is too kind. It is not my sword that is swift, it is that the Young Marquis has qualms, and I have none. Zhong Li San is nothing more than a level 62 Sky Master, I am certainly unworthy of comparison to the Young Marquis. If you would be so kind, divulge the reason for summoning me. Is there someone you would like removed?”

“Yes.”

Zeng Fang nodded. “I need you to go into the Temple and target a specific person.”

“What? Killing someone within the battlezone that is the Temple?” Despite himself, Zhong Li San was not too happy with the prospect.

“What, scared?” Zeng Fang sneered.

“No,” he replied. “But the remuneration would have to be higher of course. The risks of killing someone inside the Temple is too high. After all, it’s the territory of that old devil Lei Hong. When I’m at ease, it won’t be difficult with my skills. Should I be caught in a tangle, I’m afraid I’m giving my life away the moment I enter the Temple. Who is it that you wish for me to kill?”

“Lin Zhi.”

“Oh? The recently popular golden-star trainer?”

“Huh. Golden-star aside, he’s Lin Mu Yu, Silver Fir City’s escaped convict.”

“So he’s the Lin Mu Yu who killed four of the Seven Martial Saints!” Zhong Li San roared with laughter. He held up three fingers. “If Young Master can grant me this amount, I guarantee you I’ll have his head in front of you by the next morning.”

“Thirty thousand golden yin?” Zeng Fang asked.

Zhong Li San’s guffaw resonated throughout the room. “The Young Marquis really has a sense of humor. It is not thirty thousand that I’m asking for, rather, I’m asking for three hundred thousand.”

“What?!” Zeng Fang was taken aback. “A mere Lin Mu Yu… how could he be worth that much money?”

Zhong Li San chuckled darkly. “Cangnan Province’s viceroy Hu Tei Ning is willing to pay the bounty of one hundred thousand, and yet no one has been successful in an attempt to capture him. More than half of the Seven Martial Saints are dead, and Lin Mu Yu’s power is ever-rising while he’s training in the Temple. He also has the protection of that old devil Lei Hong. Embarking on this

assignment is tantamount to giving up my own life. My request of three hundred thousand is only because I'm uncertain the Young Marquis will be able to provide more than that."

.....

Zeng Fang stared at him. "Fine. It's settled."

Chapter 67 : Killing Blow On The Assassin

Within the secret chamber, raging flames embraced the body of the youth. Lin Mu Yu's Dragonforged Bone Tome was already refined up to the third boundary: rebirth. This meant that, even after tempered bones, his bone marrow was already restoring itself, and with the newly restored bone marrow, his blood vessels would also remould themselves to health. Truthfully, his blood stream had already begun changing, even he himself could feel it.

His current training allowed true essence to flow through his bloodstream faster than was even imaginably possible before. It was astounding to note the difference in speed. Even the momentary bursts of power could allow him to increase his strength at a surprising rate. After reconstructing the blood stream, whether it was speed or strength, he was definitely brand new and improved.

……

He slowly opened his eyes and lazily waved an arm. With much gusto, he finished the dinner left by the door by one of the servants, and then proceeded with his training.

Keng!

Smelted sword out of the sheath, his true essence concentrated, the blade began showing signs of dancing blazes of fire. This longsword was indeed a precious object!

With his god-given talent and perceptive wits, he had already mastered this sword technique: the Wind Sword Style. Lin Mu Yu had already refined his sword skills to the level of middle to first class. Unless his opponent was an extraordinarily fine master, he was still able to hold his own while sparring.

Pa-tss...

Thunder danced across the sharp blade. With a low shout, a lightning strike chopped through the air, his blade and thunder light cleaving the atmosphere in half. The speed was too quick to follow, that as the blade went down, it created a momentary vacuum in the orbit's form, squeezing out undulating waves in the atmosphere.

The image of Ou Yang Chiu's malevolent smile surfaced in his mind. Thinking about his master skill, the Secret of the Infinite Sword, a kind of Defensive/Imperial Sword ability, is considered to be of the top level in sword skills... it was unfortunate that Lin Mu Yu was unable to comprehend it.

He suddenly laughed, thinking about the secretive boss of the Infinite Victory Weaponry Shop: The Sword Master. He was obviously of extraordinary caliber, he must be on the level of Ou Yang Chiu and Zeng Fang... maybe even above their level. If that was truly so, maybe he could ask for training from the Sword Master. Although, the Sword Master was a professed hermit and misanthrope, preferring to be immersed among precious swords rather than people. It would not be easy to convince him to share his own imperial sword techniques.

In the art of the sword, there are millions of variations. And yet, without mastering the imperial sword technique would definitely be a regrettable weakness. After all, being able to use the imperial sword skill in battle would serve more good than bad.

Eh, what's the worst that could happen? He thought. He'd be better off trying his luck with the Sword Master.

……

He attempted to practice the Imperial Wind Sword Skill five times, let out a long breath, and returned to the stone bed to continue practicing his true energy. He knew his own energy was still lacking in strength.

The moon shone brightly from outside the window and in the blink of an eye, midnight approached.

"Sha Sha…"

A soft voice roused him. He opened his eyes and turned to the stone door. It seemed to him there was a flash of breath pulsing from outside the door. Could it be Grandpa Lei Hong coming to silently monitor his training?

At the thought of Lei Hong, Lin Mu Yu felt like laughing. Lei Hong was actually like a natural child at heart. He took pleasure in making bets with his fellows, Qu Chu and Ge Yang, and was also especially caring to Lin Mu Yu himself. Even though he had

suffered because of him the other day, Lin Mu Yu held no grudges against Lei Hong. After all, Lei Hong was the High Deacon of the Royal Court, as well as one of the six Empire White Robe Imperial Guards. It was natural for him to be strict and severe when it came to the upholding of the Empire's laws.

The environment one grew up in naturally affected the point of view one has. Lin Mu Yu, hailing from a civilized society, would rightfully feel fury, whereas Zhang Wei, Qin Zi Ling, Lei Hong, and the others would view an instructor killing a trainer, a noble killing a commoner, as something that was as normal as predator killing prey. Lin Mu Yu understood where Grandpa Lei Hong was coming from, once he considered this point.

He closed his eyes and resumed training.

True energy ebbed and flowed within his blood streams, and even to the naked eye, one could see that his body was surrounded by a glowing image of a maroon dragon. Without him knowing it, his bloodstream was being tempered and reconstructed again and again. Lin Mu Yu himself was unconscious of the fact that his body was changing.

Relaxing the spirit completely, allowing the true energy to take hold of the body at its own will, refining dragonbone remnants has another major advantage, which is that there was no limit to the training. True energy could circulate throughout his body for a week and his strength would improve considerably. If he were to do it again and again, with this training mindset, his strength would obviously increase multifold over time!

Just as he was about to enter into deep sleep state, the voice of the spirit lady Lulu whispered into his ear: “Brother, watch out!”

He suddenly felt a chill above his head.

Jolting awake in the middle of training, he was suddenly aware of the lethal energy emanating from above him. He instinctively rolled off the stone bed-- just in time!

Keng!

A bright blaze shone from behind him as the intruder brought down his sword and directly Weng weng...

Lin Mu Yu summoned his fighting spirit. Against a strong opponent like this, he unleashed the Dragon Rampart and Ebony Scale spirits, drawing a Prairie Fire Sword out from the air with his open palm. With a nudge from his true essence, the Prarie Fire Sword began to dazzle brilliantly with dancing flames, casting the whole room in light. Without a word, the intruder rushed towards him, sword raised for another attack!

“Ho!!!”

The fighting spirit was a fox, but it was not Tang Xiao Xi’s fire fox... it was a furry, leathery, black fox, extremely cunning and deadly, able to slip in and out without commotion, which explained why he was able to sneak in without alarming Lin Mu Yu, without even letting him become aware of his presence. So

he’s one of the first heaven martial spirit superiors. This person’s spirit could hide his very bodily presence!

Five flower blossom sword slashes in quick succession, five sword attacks from out of nowhere-- this person’s sword was too fast!

But Lin Mu Yu had tempered his bones and reconstructed his marrow, so his vision had improved considerably too. He could pick apart the flurry of movements, and spot the exact location of the sword. He cocked his sword Prairie Fire, “Keng! Keng! Keng!” to openly sweep away the three attacks, but the remaining two fully hit the Ebony Scale spirit.

Pu... pu...

The Ebony Scale was pierced with two holes, and Lin Mu Yu felt sharp stabs in his chest. Even with bare contact, the spirit was already suffering from injury.

“Coil!”

With a deep shout, numerous gourd vines sprung up from between the cracks of the rock, shooting towards the opponent.

The intruder was no novice. He stood his ground, his long sword beaming with offensive spirit. With a loud shout and blinding light emanating from his sword, he wildly attacked all around him with an alarming alacrity, reducing the gourd vines to ash.

Keng!

Lin Mu Yu struck again, but the opponent recognized the attack of Lightning Chop and directly blocked it.

“Heh!”

The intruder sneered, swept his sword downwards, and the blade actually began to generate a gravitational force field, drawing in the Prairie Fire sword. He sailed into the sky swept the edge of his blade forwards.

Lin Mu Yu quickly lowered his head, a chill flitting across the top of his head, even bringing a bit of hair. This guy was... his sword was fast and severe, leaving no room for mistake.

Lin Mu Yu gripped the Prairie Fire sword in retreat, using Starfall Steps to dodge the attack. But he felt an ice-cold presence behind him as the intruder violently slashed at the Ebony Scale spirit, forcing it to finally shatter into fragments.

“Sword Domain!”

As the intruder shouted, Lin Mu Yu felt the ground he was stepping on suddenly turn into something of a purgatory pool, hundreds of thousands of sword energy waiting for one wrong step, one wrong move, before they could finally decimate him into a million pieces... this must be one of the higher levels of Imperial Sword Energy?

At this critical moment, Lin Mu Yu simply jumped up, elevating his body up into the air to avoid the lethal sword attack and at the same time, hurled a throwing knife at his opponent.

“Concealed weapons? That’s low!” The intruder stepped aside to avoid the Sonic Blade, but Sword Domain form also disappeared.

“Sword Spirit Vanishing Traces!”

The intruder let go of his sword, and the blade flew towards him, bringing parallel streaks of sword spirit.

The secret chamber was too small, Lin Mu Yu had absolutely no chance of dodging. With a quick wave of his hand, innumerable green vines rose to create a barrier and he used his remaining true essence to form a Dragon Rampart.

Peng, peng, peng!

Dragon Rampart cracked under the intensity of the opponent’s firing consistency.

Pu-chi! The long sword ran through his shoulder.

Lin Mu Yu staggered back several steps, fresh blood pouring from his wound. He had been at a disadvantage from the start. His own Prairie Fire word had not even been able to touch a single hair on

top of the opponent's head. This was the beauty of higher level Imperial Sword Style, killing people from as far as ten meters, without even giving the chance to the opponent.

……

"Haha!"

The intruder roared loudly, tearing off his mask and revealing a skeletal face wearing a jeering expression. "And I thought Lin Mu Yu to be some holy god who's all that… now I think he's nothing more than someone who will die from my, Zhong Li San's, sword! You can rest in peace now!"

Saying so, he opened his hand, an invisible force propelled the sword forward.

Pa!

Lin Mu Yu abruptly opened his hand, his fingers forming with Dragon Rampart's true essential capacity, and grabbed onto Zhong Li San's sword with his bare hand; Refining Skin, Tempering Bone, and Hardening Bone performing their magic. It wasn't too painful. He suddenly absorbed it. "Do you want your weapon back?"

Zhong Li San's gaze hardened. "This guy's a lunatic!"

He flew forward to grab the sword, ready to unleash his attack. The sword whirled around, and with the incorporeal sword spirit

devastation move, began to slice at Lin Mu Yu's left hand mercilessly. It was impossible to draw a line between blood and flesh.

But Lin Mu Yu only needed this chance!

Hua-la!

A blazing purple flame subsumed the blade of the Prairie Fire Sword, true dragonfire!

As Lin Mu Yu exposed the blade, Zhong Li San's lip curled with disdain. Lin Mu Yu's sword in his eyes was nothing more than a skill-less toy, something that even a ten year-old could conjure.

"He!"

With a decisive shout, three layers of armor condensed in front of him. Zhong Li San sneered. "Come at me, boy!"

"Hou!"

The Prairie Fire Sword blazing with true dragonfire came to nearly less than ten meters within Zhong Li San's chest when he suddenly felt uneasy. It was his first time experiencing this degree of power, a tyrannical force!

Pu!

The blade directly penetrated through the Spirit Armor. The dragonfire incinerated an opening in his defense and the blade struck his chest until it emerged from the other side.

……

One hit knock out!

Zhong Li San had his back pinned to the rock wall by Lin Mu Yu, his eyes filled with shock and defiant resistance. Even with death looming, he spat out, “Who… who the heck are you?”

Lin Mu Yu asked, “Did Zeng Fang send you?”

“Yes…”

“Now you can go die!”

True dragonfire blazed up, turning Zhong Li San’s heart to dust.

Chapter 68 : Mastering The Sword

It was unfortunate that Zhong Li San's expert sword skills and fighting spirit met a demise under the hand of Lin Mu Yu, but it was his arrogance and underestimation of Lin Mu Yu's ability that led to his death by dragonfire.

Collapsing onto the bed and leaning against the wall, Lin Mu Yu retrieved a vial of healing potion, lightly sprinkling doses on wounds. Without even calling for someone, he began healing his injuries. Time was of the essence in healing his wounds... there would be trouble if any internal wounds remained.

……

By morning, the cat was out of the bag and the Temple exploded with gossip. An elite assassin had managed to infiltrate the Temple in an unsuccessful attempt to take a golden-star trainer's life, and even more surprisingly, the assassin had been killed by the trainer. This was no small matter indeed. What sort of place was the Temple? It was the strongest, most heavily guarded place in the Empire... and someone actually attempted to assassinate someone inside... the audacity!

Peng!

Lei Hong brought his hand down on the face of the sea-green desk, his face smouldering with fury as he faced an assembly of deacons, trainers, and instructors. "The Temple's defense system is infallible. Who was it that let the assassin in?"

Zeng Fang stood there, his face an unreadable slate.

Ge Yang spoke up. “High Deacon, after much investigation, we found out that the assassin’s name is Zhong Li San. He is Lan Yan City’s deadliest bounty hunter who will do anything for the right price. He even went so far as to say that… with an exorbitant price, he would be willing to infiltrate the Luster of Heaven Palace to replace the current emperor… the Guang Ming Wang’s head…”

“The sheer insolence!” Lei Hong expression was ashen. How dare this Zhong Li San even consider killing someone within the Temple-- it was a direct assault and challenge to his position as master of the place. This could not be forgiven.

“I want a thorough investigation. The Temple’s walls are extremely high, and there are guards patrolling even at the dead of night. To scale the wall would be impossible. Zhong Li San was obviously brought in by someone from the inside… one of us… Find out who brought people in yesterday, I demand an answer.”

“Yes, sir!” Ge Yang cupped his fist.

Zhang Wei swivelled around to face Zeng Fang with a smile. “Oh, last night at around… dusk? I did spot the Young Master bringing in some servants from outside. Did my eyes deceive me?”

Zeng Fang pegged him with a steely gaze. “What’s the meaning of this, Zhang Wei? Are you suspecting me?”

“I don’t dare!” Zhang Wei cupped his fist. “I merely recalled this matter, but I have no intentions lying behind it. The Young Marquis is open and honest, with a righteousness and justice as vast as the open heavens above us! No one knows more than I, Zhang Wei, that the Young Master’s character is golden, even indubitably perfect! It is impossible, nay, blasphemous, to even suggest that the Young Marquis would want to kill Lin Zhi.”

Zeng Fang’s complexion assumed a deathlike pallor. Everyone in the Temple knew that Zeng Fang was out to get Lin Zhi. He was the most obvious suspect. Besides, Zhong Li San, as a renowned highly-paid assassin... who else but this kind of high-ranking official could afford to pay the piper?

Zhang Wei, having been born of common descent, was naturally more sympathetic to Lin Zhi and Little Beansprout. In a moment of rousing valor, he forewent even the safety of his own life. What is life, if you don’t use it to live fully!

.....

Lei Hong interrupted the scene. “Cease your squabbles. I will personally investigate the case. Once I find the culprit responsible for this matter, he will not be let off so lightly. The Temple is the emblem of strength in the Empire, I will not allow vulgar people to profane it!”

The assembly present cupped their fists. “Yes, High Deacon Your Honor!”

“Leave.”

Everyone trickled out of the room, but Lei Hong called out to Lin Mu Yu to retain him. “Lin Zhi, hold on.”

“Grandpa Lei Hong, is there something wrong?” He asked, stopping in his tracks.

“How is the progress of your Dragonforged Bone Tome coming along? Your injuries are not too serious, I hope?” Lei Hong asked.

At his concern, Lin Mu Yu felt a warm twinge in his chest. He laughed good-naturedly, a bit embarrassed. “I’m not sure about the exact progress of the training, but I would say there has been some progress? Otherwise, I’m afraid I wouldn’t have been able to take on that Zhong Li San.”

“Hm. I inspected Zhong Li San’s wound. Killed after one hit. I reckon you used your own body as a bait? For highly trained and professional assassins like this person, it’s extremely difficult for them to even be touched.”

“Yes, Grandpa Lei Hong.”

“It’s my own fault. I was negligent. I was doing pure training last night… so I wasn’t able to check up on you.”

“It’s no problem, I can protect myself,” Lin Mu Yu gave him a reassuring, confident smile.

“All right then. You may go.”

“Yes, sir.”

……

Due to his injuries, Ge Yang granted a three-day intermission. Lin Mu Yu was finally able to take a breather, like a fish returning to a pond after having borne the excruciating experience on land.

He left immediately, heading straight for the Infinite Victory Weaponry Shop. Time to ask for the Sword Master’s help!

However, before he could travel further, a speeding horse hurried towards his direction. It was easy to spot the nymph perched on top of the horse even from afar. She looked to be around eighteen from her stature and build, and was draped in a beautiful green gown. Her natural beauty did not go unnoticed. From a distance, she called out, “Excuse me, could you be the Great Master Lin Zhi?”

“Hmm?”

Lin Zhi stopped in his tracks. “Who are you?”

The young lady leapt off the horse in an elegant motion, her hands lightly clasped to her abdomen. She beamed and bowed the standard bow all Empire ladies adhered to. “My name is Jin Xiao Tang, I’m the Empire Capital Pharmacy’s Jin San Pang--ah-pei! I am the daughter of Jin Zai Zhu. At the same time, I am the Empire Capital Trading Company’s Assistant League Master.”

(TLN: ah-pei - “spitting” to signify a mistake just said / taking back what has just been said)

“Oh, it’s Miss Jin!”

Lin Mu Yu flashed a dazzling beam at Jin Xiao Tang. In his eyes, she had already become a shining, golden goddess-- here to deliver money to him!

Jin Xiao Tang remained courteous, still smiling as she took another bow. “Great Master Lin, the five vials of Peak of Dreams you entrusted us to sell sold for, respectively, 4,500, 5,200, 5,400, 5,500, and 5,700 golden yin. After deducting the 20% seller’s fee, you have earned 21,040 golden yin coins. My dad says that since it’s our first time working together, he’ll give you a whole figure--22,000 golden yin. Here are 22 diamond coins, please count them over, Great Master.”

She raised a golden pouch, practically sagging from the weight of 22 diamond coins. Lin Mu Yu’s heart skipped a beat in excitement, feeling like a member of the nouveau riche.

This feeling was magnificent!

After tucking away the pouch, Lin Mu Yu grinned at her. “Thank you, Miss Jin!”

Jin Xiao Tang merely smiled, retrieving and displaying a lucently transparent card. “Due to our transaction exceeding the amount of twenty thousand golden yin, according to the regulations of our trading company, you are entitled to this diamond card. Those who have diamond cards are able to enjoy 30% off on all future purchases in any trading company within the Empire Capital. An additional benefit is that trading companies will only charge you a 10% seller’s fee. Moreover, this diamond card currently contains a balance of 10,000 golden yin and an overdraft line of credit of 50,000 golden yin. These amounts are monitored by special spirits and this card is acknowledged and may be used in any major trading center. Kindly receive it, Great Master.”

Lin Mu Yu received the card, but with a smile, said, “I’m afraid a measly amount of twenty thousand isn’t enough for me to have received this card… am I mistaken?”

Jin Xiao Tang gave a startled chortle. She looked at him and acquiesced, “Indeed nothing can get past the wisdom of the Great Master. Truthfully, the diamond card is only for those who have completed transactions of 500,000 or above, but yours is a special case, Great Master.”

“Why am I special?”

“It is because you are the only one who has successfully refined

the Peak of Dreams. Currently, in the entire Alchemy world, you are the only one who possesses the capability to do so. Should you consider refining another batch of the Peak of Dreams in the future, kindly consider taking your business to our trading company. I, Xiao Tang, assure you that you will not regret your decision."

"So that's why." Lin Mu Yu smiled. "All right, I will. Thank you, Miss Xiao Tang!"

"You're welcome, I shall take my leave now."

"Goodbye."

.....

As Jin Xiao Tang raced away, Lin Mu Yu weighed the pouch containing 22 diamond coins. He was filled with extreme satisfaction and gratuity towards the intersectional trading system-- ah! the feeling of becoming rich! But then poor Little Beansprout popped up in his mind. As a copper-star trainer, his life was only worth 500 golden yin? In his hand he had 22 diamond coins, did this mean he could buy the 44 lives of Little Beansprout?

He was suddenly plagued with an intense melancholy. He stashed the pouch for safety and headed straight to the Infinite Victory Weaponry Shop.

When he entered the weaponry shop, it came as a surprise when

the shop assistant greeted him in a familiar fashion. “Oh, young hero, you’re here… our shopkeeper was right in his prediction… the young hero was bound to return.”

“Oh? How does the Sword Master know that I’d come back?”

“First of, the young hero is someone who loves swords… second of, the young hero is someone who uses swords. Kindly follow me, young hero, the shopkeeper is in the rear courtyard.”

“Thank you!”

The Sword Master was as robust as ever. He was standing alone in the center of the rear courtyard, his arms spread out like an eagle, wave after wave of incorporeal spirit undulating around him. It was precisely that spirit that allowed him to master the Imperial Sword Technique.

“Master!”

Lin Mu Yu showed respect by bowing as a military man would, almost debasing his status as a member of the Temple.

The Sword Master turned around with twinkling eyes. “Young hero, we meet again. The last time we saw each other was because you wanted to gain knowledge and experience. I wonder about the purpose for your visit now?”

“I wish to learn the Master’s Imperial Sword Technique,” Lin Mu

Yu said.

"Learning sword skills?"

The Sword Master chortled. "This old man has no longer been accepting disciples for decades now. Young hero, I advise you to return."

Lin Mu Yu remained determined. "There must be a reason the Master is no longer accepting disciples. If I have the privilege of saying so, I would like to know more about it."

The Sword Master's feeling of novelty was piqued. He laughed and acquiesced. "All right, then."

Saying so, he clasped his hands behind his back, the sword spirit essences glowing around his body as an aura, his long green gown slightly quivering. "This old man has declined to train disciples for three reasons. Firstly, I do not take on mediocre students. Secondly, I do not take on competitively aggressive students. Lastly, I do not take on students who are not skilled in the art of the sword. Young hero, first see to it that you do not fall under these three restrictions, then shall I consider taking you on as my disciple.

Lin Mu Yu was momentarily taken aback. What an odd old codger. His standards on accepting discipleship were actually quite high!

After some thought, he slowly said, “For the first point... I don’t think it would be presumptuous for me to say that I’m not mediocre in any way.”

“How is that?”

“As they say, what nature has given, must be good for something, and by the end of a life, it must have accomplished something. What with my innate talent, I will definitely be able to accomplish some deeds. Were I to be an ordinary person, I would not be asking the Sword Master to teach me the art of the Imperial Sword.”

“Well said!” The old man crowed with laughter, pleased at the response. “What a well said phrase: what nature has given, must be good for something. All right, you have passed the first obstacle. How will you prove that you are not competitive?”

Lin Mu Yu took a deep breath. “The reason I want to become strong is because I’m no longer willing to sit idly by as the world continues to wreak injustice. I want to become strong so that I can change this world.”

“Changing the world...?” The Sword Master burst out laughing. “Do you have the ability, boy?”

“I will try. I will try with every last drop of stamina and strength in my body.” Lin Mu Yu balled his fist, his gaze remaining steady and limpid.

“Very good!”

The Sword Master laughed again. “Let’s say you passed the second point as well. And what about the final point? Are you one who is deeply skilled in the art of the sword?”

“This…”

Lin Mu Yu hesitated, looking at the Sword Master uneasily. “Truth be told, my sword skills are shallow and unrefined.”

“Let’s see it!”

“Yes, sir!”

Chapter 69 : The Three Conditions

Using the Imperial Wind Sword Skill, Lin Mu Yu displayed an eddy of natural and elegant movements. Following his sword dance, he looked over to see the old Master laughing. “Ah... This Three-Flow Sword Skill indeed looks to be absolutely worthless.”

Lin Mu Yu turned bright red. “Master, I purchased this second hand sword skill from the commerce chamber.”

“Second hand? No wonder it looks so unrefined.”

The Sword Master was not in the least bit generous with his critique. “Young hero, do you not have any other sword skills?”

“I have one more.”

Lin Mu Yu released a shout, true energy bubbling forth from his arm and transforming into lightning that gathered as a swirling mass on the blade. With a slash as ferocious as a typhoon--ka! electricity crackled through the air, slashing a poetically perfect aperture into the atmosphere--Lightning Chop!

The Sword Master was taken aback this time. He blinked a few times, before laughing. “This is interesting... but this is only one move. It’s not exactly a sword technique. Moreover, this is merely a second-rate sword move.”

Lin Mu Yu flushed with indignation. “Master, this technique was

passed on to me by the Great Master Fire Cauldron Qu Chu."

"The Fire Cauldron Qu Chu's sword technique, eh?"

The Sword Master guffawed until there seemed to be tears forming in his eyes. "That old geezer knows sword skills? I only know that Fire Cauldron Qu Chu is number one in his fighting technique and palm method, but I never knew he had it in him for sword-dancing! Hahaha, no wonder it's such a second-rate move..."

"Master knows Grandpa Qu Chu?"

"Huh, not at all."

The Sword Master's smile vanished. "Young hero, you have satisfied the first two conditions, but, sadly, you do not qualify under the third condition. You have a poor understanding of sword skills... poor is an understatement. I think it would serve you better for you to go back and train. Should you improve, this old codger gladly welcomes you back to show off your improvement, what say you?"

Lin Mu Yu was unconvinced. "If I'm really able to reach the next level of sword art, there would probably be no need for me to come here and be treated with such a cold shoulder."

The Sword Master laughed heartily. "Ah, young hero, you are quite the honest person, aren't you? How about this... your

foundation seems to be not bad, indeed. But to learn this old geezer's Imperial Sword Skill... there is a condition."

"Yes, what is it?"

"Bring me something I can consider a favorable legendary weapon!"

Lin Mu Yu was at a loss. "My Prairie Fire Sword... does this count?"

"The Prairie Fire Sword can only be considered Rank 3 in terms of Spirit Martial Blades. It is not truly a legendary weapon. The young hero must at least bring a spirit-refined mysterious-grade blade, what say you?"

With a deep breath, Lin Mu Yu nodded. "Then I shall re-refine the Prairie Fire Sword, will this suffice?"

"Recasting the Prairie Fire Sword?"

The Sword Master was momentarily stunned. "Don't tell me you're also a Blacksmith?"

"You could put it that way."

"Haha, excellent. If you are truly able to recast a mysterious-grade sword, this old geezer is willing to share with you all the

knowledge he has about Imperial Sword Skills, what say you?”

The Sword Master was indeed obsessed with swords!

Lin Mu Yu grinned cheerfully. “Just wait for my good news then!”

“All right!”

……

After returning to the Temple, he found out that the secret chamber had been restored and arranged, with the stone bed replaced. It was suitable for living in again, and even though there had been a death inside, Lin Mu Yu was past caring. In this messed-up world, what was one more death?

Hua!

The Alchemy Cauldron, a large mass occupying a lot of space in front of him, emitted a droning high-pitched squeal. The Alchemy Cauldron was an energy body, not truly an alchemic implement, but Lin Mu Yu believed that there was no alchemic implement more precious than the Alchemy Cauldron.

Prairie Fire Sword in hand and summoning his true energy, he caused the sword to fly to the middle of the Alchemy Cauldron.

Lin Mu Yu fluttered his eyelids shut, feeling the Prairie Fire Sword's breath and residual beast spirit. After all, alchemy is a process of extracting essences, but prior to extraction, there must always be a thorough understanding of the alchemic target's structure and composition. This stage took around ten minutes, with the Prairie Fire Sword slowly unravelling to its distillation in Lin Mu Yu's mind's eye. The blade itself had some definite impurities lingering within it... especially by the tip of the blade, largely affecting the accuracy and sharpness of the sword. No wonder this was only a spirit's weapon.

There are three factors that affect the quality of a martial blade. Firstly, it's the raw material: common metal is destined to be inferior to mythical metal and mysterious metal... and of course, far, far less superior than the precious holy metal. Secondly, it's the degree of purification: the more impurities there are, the farther it will be from attaining the ideal resilience or pliability. Finally, it's the refining spirit itself. The beast spirit residing within the sword determines the strength of the blade.

Hua-la...

There was a soft burst of light and the spirit lady Lulu materialized beside Lin Mu Yu. In this world, Lulu acted a spirit guide for Lin Mu Yu. Without Lulu, he probably wouldn't even have been able to access the Alchemy Cauldron.

"Brother!"

Lulu giggled, her wings fluttering in the air. "This Prairie Fire Sword's raw material is the mysterious metal, a most favorable

choice. However, there are too many impurities, and the beast spirit is too weak. Brother can refine this until most of the impurities are removed, but at most, the Prairie Fire Sword will only upgrade one level higher as a spirit blade. If you want it to reach the rank of mysterious blade, you must replace it with a stronger beast spirit!"

Lin Mu Yu nodded, considering this. "What should I do?"

"Hmm, you'll need around two to three kilograms of mysterious metal, and also a spirit stone of a spiritual beast, at least 5,000 years old. It has to be a flame-type spirit stone, or there's no chance you can upgrade this to mysterious-rank."

"Is that so? Okay, then!"

There was no rush in refining. After all, preparation was half the battle when one wanted to do a good job. It would serve him better to fully prepare all the materials before he began. As for alchemy, well... that was his special area of skill, there would be no problem at all.

.....

He hurried towards the Empire Capital Trading Company. These things could all be procured from the Auction Hall. If he went to the Dragon Seeking Forest to look for beast spirits, it would take too much time. And besides, there was no certain chance that he would beat beast spirits that were 5,000 years and above. It would be far more efficient for him to spend the 22 diamond coins in his

pockets.

The minute he took out his diamond card inside the Empire Capital Trading Company, the shopkeeper plastered a wide beam on his face. “A VIP is here! Is there anything I can help you with, sir?”

“I want to see Miss Jin Xiao Tang.”

“Oh, I will go and call for the Young Miss immediately.”

“Okay, thanks!”

Not before long, a Jin Xiao Tang clad in a long green gown glided out from the rear hall. “Lin Zhi!” she called out in a soft voice. “I never thought we’d meet again so soon. To what do I owe the pleasure of your visit? Do you require anything?”

“I want to buy a few ingredients.”

“Oh, what is it that you need? Come, let us walk.”

“Okay.”

The two walked shoulder to shoulder down the trading company’s crowded bypath. “I want three kilograms of mysterious metal.”

“Oh?” Jin San Tang blinked before smiling. “It looks like the Great Master is about to cast blades?”

“Indeed.”

“Then I will do my best to help Great Master pick only the purest mysterious metal.”

“No, it’s okay. I can purify them myself,” Lin Mu Yu said. He knew that purified metal sold in trading companies sold for a much higher price… after all, this was the hubbub of ruthless capitalism.

Jin Xiao Tang raised a surprised eyebrow, but acquiesced. “As you wish. If Great Master does not mind the complicated process of purifying metals, then… is there anything else you require?”

“Spirit stone.”

“Oh, what kind of spirit stone?” Jin San Tang whirled around to face him, her hands clasped behind her back and a beatific smile on her face. “Here at Empire Capital Trading Company, we don’t boast of anything else, but spirit stones are indeed our specialty. We have more stones here than one can imagine!”

Lin Mu Yu cleared his throat. “I need a 5,000 year old flame-type beast spirit stone. Is it possible?”

“Five thousand…?”

Jin Xiao Tang stared at him blankly. “To tell you the truth, anything past 3,000 is already a rarity. 5,000… Well… we can go check. Maybe something will turn up.”

“Okay.”

The two followed the winding road until they reached the spirit stone shop. Spirit stones are the crystallization of beast spirit’s souls, and they are also called Taoist internal alchemy or the beast’s nucleus. After killing the beast spirit, there is not a very high possibility to obtaining the beast’s nucleus, and so thousand year-old spirit stones are rather hard to come by.

“Young Miss!”

Jin Xiao Tang nodded in acknowledgment. “Shopkeeper Zhou, do you have any 5,000 year-old flame-type spirit stones?”

“Five thousand…?” The shopkeeper wore the same expression as Jin Xiao Tang awhile ago. He glanced at the person standing next to her. “Well, there is this one stone… but it absolutely does not come cheap. We have here a 9,000 flame dragon spirit stone. It’s been in the store for half a year already. Is the young hero willing to purchase it?”

“Nine thousand…?” Lin Mu Yu was temporarily stunned. “It must be quite expensive… ”

“Not too bad!”

“How much?”

“19,000 golden yin is all.”

“Oh god…” Lin Mu Yu considered it. He only had 22,000 golden yin… This one moment would undo all his hard work!

Jin San Tang understood Lin Mu Yu’s hesitation. She giggled. “Lin Zhi, have you forgotten that you are now the trading company’s diamond VIP member? You have the benefit of enjoying 30% off on all purchases, so it would amount to… approximately 13,000 golden yin. Ah, let me decide, I’ll help you remove the latter digits. 13,000 golden yin flat, okay?”

Lin Mu Yu gave it some thought before nodding. “All right, 13,000, then.”

He begrudgingly presented 13 diamond coins, wincing as he placed them on the counter. He wouldn’t have much occasion to buy the illegal rainbow lotus either, even if he did have the ability to use a sort of “personal overdraft,” banking on the fact that he was from the Temple, it wouldn’t be too smart to have someone recognize him as a familiar face constantly purchasing this particular ingredient, and having to be sent for by the Military High Official to have tea. And so he had no idea when the next time would come for him to be able to refine the Peak of Dreams.

TLN: have tea = to be “spoken to”

In a flash, the shopkeeper deposited the heated spherical stone in his hand.

The mysterious metal was less painful on the drawstrings. Even though they were uncommon, they were not exactly rare, and so one kilogram only cost ten golden yin. After some thought, he bought another hundred kilos for future experiments. He hadn’t yet had experience with casting weapons in this world yet, and he needed some experience. He didn’t want to destroy the Prairie Fire Sword on his first try…

Additionally, he purchased a few more hundred year-old stones, as cheap as it could get.

……

His longing to begin casting weaponry was akin to a young girl yearning for love. The sun had already set by the time he returned to the Temple. After wolfing down whatever he could find, he disappeared inside the secret chamber to begin forging.

Chapter 70 : Light Blades Cause No Pain

“Grandpa Lei Hong, stop spying already…”

There came a few muffled shuffling noises from outside the rock door, and without even looking, Lin Mu Yu knew it was Lei Hong “protecting” him.

Lei Hong was not the least bit embarrassed. He chuckled heartily. “I see you have so many mysterious metals there… forging, I presume? It’s too bad you don’t even have a furnace, should I have someone get one for you?”

“No need, but I would appreciate it if you didn’t peek on me, sir.”

“All right, concentrate on training then.”

The sound of his footsteps grew fainter and fainter as he walked away.

……

Lin Mu Yu set down the mysterious metal, and with one hand, summoned the Alchemy Cauldron. The gold oracle bone script characters etched around and inside the cauldron signified that the cauldron was also refined to its peak. It rightfully qualified as a priceless treasure in this world.

Considering the weight of the mysterious metal was crucial. Weapons in the Empire were usually heavy, and swords usually weighed around ten to twenty kilograms. Using Zhang Wei and the others' favorite phrase, "light blades cause no pain." With Zhang Wei's personality, it was not unlikely that he'd go around with a watermelon knife hacking at people as an elevated and avenging master.

He selected a 20 kilogram piece, and confidently tossed it into the cauldron, where it was suspended, floating in the center. After removing impurities, it would probably be around 15 kilograms. But then again, it was not some long-stemmed lance or war sword... any of which would easily be a whopping hundred or so kilos.

At the summon of true energy, the Alchemy Cauldron filled with dancing flames, rapidly devouring the mysterious metal with a boiling heat. The smelting process was surprisingly fast, it only took five minutes for the piece of metal to heat into a pile of fiery red metal serum. The serum swirled around peacefully inside the cauldron, controlled by an incorporeal source of power, that was, of course, Lin Mu Yu.

Encouraged by a swell of true energy, flakes of stardust floated up from the metal serum, the sublimated product of the combustion of the impurities within it. The refining process took around ten minutes, and the purity of the mysterious metal was able to reach a little past 99.5%. This was an amazing feat in itself, as Lin Mu Yu had took care to check as he was in the weaponry shop that the mysterious metals had purity rates not exceeding 90%.

Now that the metal serum was refined... time for the spirit stone.

Lin Mu Yu took out the 700 year-old Bluestone beast spirit stone. With a wave of his hand, the stone flew to the core of the Alchemy Cauldron, and within a moment, was consumed by blazing fire. Refining spirit stones are extremely easy when you're strong. The stronger you are, the faster you refine. Lin Mu Yu's strength was already top-notch, and far exceeded that of a 700 year-old beast spirit.

As the spirit stone was about to completely finish refining-- hong! a radiating green beast leapt out and sprung at Lin Mu Yu with sharp talons.

"O--"

Lin Mu Yu, startled, rapidly summoned his fighting spirit. Verdant Shell materialized, blocking the talons from Lin Mu Yu's body. His chest thumped with radiating heat, but there was no injury. Lin Mu Yu gave a low shout, releasing his true energy, and immediately banished the creature back inside the cauldron.

Hong! Hong!

The Bluestone Beast's howls of fury could be heard, but they seemed to get softer and softer, until the spirit was completely extinguished within the serum. The beast spirit was officially refined. But Lin Mu Yu was left in a cold sweat. With a shaky sigh, he leaned back, never thinking that he would be put in danger while refining. How frightening that beast spirits would think to

counter-attack the alchemist.

With the task that faced him in mind, he was unable to help feeling worried. A 9000 year-old fire dragon… if it were to counter-attack, what would he do?

He burst out laughing at the thought. No wonder the holy craftsmen of this world had so much difficulty producing top-tier martial weapons. Aside from the actual act of forging, there was also the matter of personal strength to consider. There must have been more than a few holy craftsmen who perished under the counter-attacks of beast spirits.

“Brother, what sword form do you need?” Lulu asked, already embodying the role of Lin Mu Yu’s blacksmith assistant.

An array of double-edged sword forms surfaced above the cauldron, all of which were custom-planned by Lulu. Lin Mu Yu’s gaze swept across them, and he ended up choosing an average-shaped sword. The Alchemy Cauldron began shaking with an invisible force, incorporeal energy condensing into the shape of a sword. The metal serum containing the beast began flowing into this incorporeal sword form.

Lin Mu Yu slowly stopped the flow of his true energy, and within moments, the cauldron cooled down as well.

Pu-chi!

This averagely-shaped sword floated up and submerged itself gently into a pond of water by the cauldron's side, all the while emitting thin columns of steam. After waiting a few beats, he reached into the ice-cold water and retrieved his sword. The only judgment he could make on the sword was that it was bright, cold, and raw. He laughed. "I haven't yet figured out how to categorize the workmanship of martial blades. Do you know how, Lulu?"

"Brother, this is a rank 7 spirit martial blade! Your first creation is already spirit-level, that's not bad!"

"Okay, that's all I needed to know!"

Lin Mu Yu allowed himself a relieved smile that lighted up his entire face. It looked like as long as he tried his best, becoming a first-class holy blacksmith in this world wasn't an impossible feat after all. Even though he probably wouldn't be able to complete a weapon like Stars, he was fairly confident that he would be able to create mysterious-level weapons.

……

In succession, he crafted four more swords, three of which were rank 7 spirit blades, and one of which was a rank 6 spirit blade. Not bad for the quality of his materials. After all, they were all at the hundred year mark and not particularly precious. Rank 6 and 7 were probably the highest level that the blades could attain.

Finally… it came the time to recast the Prairie Fire Sword!

He carefully placed the Prairie Fire Sword within the cauldron, but because it was already a fully formed sword, it took longer to completely refine it. After half an hour, the sword finally melted into a pool of metal serum, and unsurprisingly, the beast spirit leapt out of the cauldron.

Lin Mu Yu calmly aimed Sonic Punch at it, scattering it with an explosion.

The Prairie Fire Sword thus became an unrefined martial blade, but no worries, the fire dragon spirit stone was all ready.

Closing his eyes, he summoned his true energy, directing it within the cauldron to refine the metal serum's impurities. Flecks of vermillion stardust begun rising from within, floating and filling the cauldron, before falling lightly to the ground.

He added the new mysterious metal and tempered it. After an hour or so, the vermillion metal serum had condensed within the cauldron into a stream, resembling a boiling and swirling girdle. The impurities had already been thoroughly removed, the purity was at around 99.8%, which was the best Lin Mu Yu could do with his current ability.

With a deep breath, he took out the fire dragon spirit stone. The true danger was about to begin.

The fire dragon spirit stone was unusually stubborn. The refining process alone took nearly two hours, and when the surface layer began to peel off and show signs of melting, Lin Mu Yu

summoned his fighting spirits, Dragon Rampart and Verdant Scale.

Hong!

And indeed it came! A giant fire dragon beast spirit leapt out from the cauldron, its wide jaws angled at the alchemist. With a burning flash of light, it crashed into the Ebony Scale and Dragon Rampart. Sparks flew. Lin Mu Yu, with a guttural roar, started punching and throwing kicks randomly. He reached for a newly crafted martial blade and slashed at the beast spirit with little attention on form. The Alchemy Cauldron began shaking with a ferocious intensity, filling the chamber with piercing, blood-curdling shrieks.

It felt like the longest half-minute of his life, but the fire dragon beast spirit slowly began to wane, leaving Lin Mu Yu with ragged breathing standing in front of the cauldron. He felt red-hot sears of pain across his chest, additional injury on top of his existing wounds. The fire dragon beast spirit was definitely no joke. If he could incur that much damage while he was inside the cauldron... it was a horrifying prospect.

But no matter how you looked at it, Lin Mu Yu was ecstatically relieved that he was still alive. It looked like this sword wouldn't be turning out too shabby after all.

.....

As the fire dragon beast spirit melting within the metal serum, its

faint whines could still be heard.

Lin Mu Yu released his true energy, continuing the refining process. He chose a particularly intimidating double-edged sword form among Lulu's blade plans. The metal serum poured into the incorporeal form and the reconstruction merely took a few minutes. With the Alchemy Cauldron dismissed, a vermillion sword was left suspended in mid-air. Lin Mu Yu held out a palm and pushed, his energy releasing a strong gale that forced the sword into the pond of water.

Pu!

The moment the blade was submerged, steam billowed up from the pond, practically polishing off most of the water in the pond.

Carefully fishing the sword out the pond, he suddenly realized he had forgotten to christen the sword. For lack of a better option, he produced a solitary dragonflame from his finger, and etched the two words "Prairie Fire" on to it. The vigorous calligraphic style was a tribute to the style of Wang Xi, otherwise known as the Calligraphy Sage. Lin Mu Yu had practiced calligraphy since a young age with his father, and at his age, he was practically legendary... now he was finally able to put the skill to good use.

"Brother, congratulations! What you have made is a rank 5 mysterious blade!" Lulu clapped her hands in glee.

Lin Mu Yu shot her a gratified smile.

The new Prairie Fire Sword was heavier than the original one, and no longer fit the sheath as well. He would have to make another one.

Hugging the Prairie Fire Sword, he leaned against the headboard of his bed and descended into a fitful slumber.

The energy needed for crafting martial blades far exceeded that of alchemy. Having crafted so many swords in succession, he felt like his body's energy was utterly drained.

……

When he awoke, it was already morning. Dong, dong, someone knocked from outside the door.

"Lin Zhi, time to wake up," Deacon Ge Yang's voice drifted in from outside.

Lin Mu Yu rolled out of bed, vigorous and replenished after an entire night of sleep. He rushed to open the door and greet Ge Yang. "Grandpa Ge Yang, isn't this my intermission? Is there something wrong?"

Ge Yang's eyes crinkled in a smile. "Yes, the High Deacon is looking for you. He asked you to bring your newest creations to the Holy Hall."

"Eh… okay, then."

Though he had no idea what was happening, he doubted that Lei Hong would harm him.

After freshening up, he hugged the six swords to his chest and followed Ge Yang to the Holy Hall.

……

Early in the morning, the trainers and instructors had all finished breakfast and left for training, leaving the Holy Hall in a deafening silence.

“Ah Yu, you’re here!” Lei Hong’s voice was injected with a meaningful tone.

TLN: Ah is commonly added to a name to make it a more familiar way of calling, something like a nickname.

Lin Mu Yu could spot from a mile away that lurking underneath the sincere expression was a request. He laughed. “Grandpa Lei Hong, if anything’s the matter, kindly just say so.”

“Okay…”

Lei Hong chuckled sheepishly. “So last night… your Grandpa I was actually guarding your door. I see that you’ve made some excellent blades, and so… ehem… maybe Deacon Ge Yang should

continue on with the rest…”

……

Ge Yang’s assumed a helpless expression. “Ah Yu, what the High Deacon is trying to say is that… even though the Temple has the full financial support of the Empire, our weaponry storehouse is sorely limited, and are mostly third-rate goods. You’ve seen it yourself: the martial blades constantly break and are damaged. These are all common blades, and we don’t have even a single spirit blade, and so… when we found out that you can craft spirit blades, the High Deacon was extremely relieved.”

It dawned on Lin Mu Yu. He laughed. “Oh, so my two Grandpas want to purchase the blades I forged in the name of the Temple, yes?”

“Yes!”

Ge Yang fiddled with his fingers, looking every bit the part of a conniving salesman. “But we’re a family, are we not? You will give us an insider price, won’t you…”

“…”

Chapter 71 : Heartfelt Mastery Of The Imperial Sword

“All right, then, the patronage and protection granted to me by the Temple is something I can’t afford not to repay.”

Lin Mu Yu set down the weapons in his hold. “These are all spirit blades. How much should they be worth in the market?”

Ge Yang looked into the distance. “Trainer Liu, you were a supervisor for the Empire’s Weapon division. Could you come and appraise the rank and value of these blades?”

Trainer Liu was a huge robust man with thick sideburns and a beard outlining his face. He walked up to a sword-- keng-- as his hand touched the sword and his eyes scanned the blade. “Good sword... this is a rank 7 spirit sword made from mysterious metal. The market price for this would probably be around 700 to 1,200 golden yin. A lot of noblemen would want to get their hands on this piece of work.”

Lin Mu Yu turned around and flashed Lei Hong a smile. “Then let’s say, half-price for the Temple. I’ll sell every single sword here for 500 golden yin. What do you think Grandpa Lei Hong?”

Lei Hong nodded gratefully. “It's a deal. Deacon Ge Yang, kindly retrieve 2,500 golden yin from the treasury for Lin Zhi. Remember to put these swords at the topmost strata in the weaponry storage. Only silver-star and golden-star instructors can use these weapons.”

Ge Yang cupped his fist. “Yes, sir, High Deacon!”

……

Lin Mu Yu left to buy a new sword sheath after receiving the money, his heart practically bursting at the seams with excitement at the thought of his deal with the Sword Master. He had successfully recast the Prairie Fire Sword into a rank 5 mysterious semi-holy weapon. Now the Sword Master would have to accept him as a disciple, right?

At the crack of dawn, the Infinite Victory Weaponry Shop had just opened its doors. When Lin Mu Yu stepped inside, he could spot the Sword Master standing on top of a branch, his body clad in a pure white robe, looking for all to be a celestial being descended from above. Circling him was a long sword as he performed deep-breathing exercises, absorbing the spiritual energy in the morning air. As he inhaled and exhaled, he had the elegant manner of a master scholar.

Heaven knew what deity the Sword Master was or which corner of the earth he hailed from… but Lin Mu Yu could at least ascertain that the Sword Master would not fall under the likes of Lei Hong or Qu Chu, or any of the innumerable powerful warriors in the Empire… it was only that he chose to hide out here where no one could bother him.

Lin Mu Yu did not rush up towards him to interrupt him. He stood there on the rocky bypass, hugging the Prairie Fire Sword to

his chest as he observed the Sword Master's training from afar.

The sun had already ascended to a higher point after an hour or so, and the spiritual essence in the atmosphere slowly began to dissolve in the baking heat. The Sword Master slowly opened his eyes, looking over approvingly at the young man standing some few feet away. "Young hero, you are back? Have you held up your end of the deal?"

"Yes, sir."

Lin Mu Yu strode up to him and genuflecting, presented the Prairie Fire Sword. "Master, kindly receive the sword."

"Oh?"

The Sword Master held out a hand and grasped the sword. Keng-- he inspected the sword, feeling the surge of fire within the blade and even hearing the distant whines of a fire dragon. He admired the slim and elegant arc of the sword's body, it had the charm of a master refiner. Wiping a finger across the blade, he felt the vigor and energy poured into its creation. "Rank 5 mysterious blade, truly a good sword. You used the 9000 year-old fire dragon, I presume?"

Lin Mu Yu gaped at him. "Master, even this you can tell?"

The Sword Master chuckled. "If I can't know such a simple thing, how can I rightfully be your master?"

“Ha, I guess so.”

“You may rise. I accept you as my disciple.”

“Thank you Master!”

Lin Mu Yu straightened, his face glowing with a winsome smile.

……

The Sword Master looked at his new student. “The art of the sword is as boundless and vast as the horizon. If you truly want to learn the genuine art of the imperial sword, you must cultivate a heart for the sword. Without a sword heart, you cannot connect with the sword, understand?”

Lin Mu Yu stared at him blankly, shaking his head.

The Sword Master laughed gently. “That’s not surprising. After all, your sword skills before were barely adequate. To put it in plainer terms, most swordmasters wield the Imperial Sword Skill with their energy, using it to control the movement of the sword. But the skill I have refined uses the heart to wield the technique. Simply put, the swordmaster and the sword become one at heart, connected in spirit. And so, even though the sword may not be in your hand, the sword will still listen to your will.”

“What’s the difference between using energy and using heart to wield the Imperial Sword Skill?” Lin Mu Yu asked.

The Sword Master laughed, answering with a question. “During the heat of battle, which changes faster? Your will or your energy?”

Lin Mu Yu’s face lighted up. “I understand now, Master. Using the heart to wield the sword is the highest form for mastering sword skills.”

The Sword Master gently stroked his beard, his gaze glazed with a proud aloofness. “Indeed. When you have mastered the Heartfelt Mastery of the Imperial Sword, you will wonder why people continue to want to learn the foolish way of wielding the sword by energy.”

“I see. Thank you, Master. When shall we start?”

“Haven’t we already started?”

“A-ha. Forgive your disciple for his ignorance--”

“Oh, that’s right,” the Sword Master interrupted him.

“What’s wrong, Master?”

The Sword Master coughed. “You may learn as my disciple in the

art of the Imperial Sword, but nothing comes for free. Before you complete your training under me, you need to supply the Infinite Victory Weaponry Shop with a mysterious-rank sword and two spiritual-rank swords."

Lin Mu Yu cupped his hands. "One should expect nothing less!"

"Okay. Let's start then. The first step is that you must enter the domain of the sword's heart. The sword was initially of common metal, but because the swordmaster has a soul, the sword moves with it. Without a sword in the hand, but with a heart within the sword."

The Sword Master rolled out a set of sword teachings for Lin Mu Yu to commit to memory, after which he imparted a set of methods to mobilize true energy. After he finished saying everything, he brushed at his sleeve. "I'm heading inside to train. You should train out here in the courtyard. Within three days, you must already be able to feel the sword heart, otherwise, you have no right to continue your training."

Lin Mu Yu nodded, looking as if he understood and was confused at the same time. He sat down on the rock steps of the courtyard, silently absorbing the wisdom of the sword skill teachings.

……

The Sword Master turned around and headed within. The butler, who was already of some 60 years, hugging a fragrance pot to his chest, witnessed this and chuckled softly, "Sword Master,

wouldn’t it be too harsh to expect this child to learn the sword skill teachings within three days? After all, even you yourself took five days and five nights to learn it!”

The Sword Master laughed without really laughing. “Mother Nature determines all. I’m used to enjoying nature and being at peace. I do not really want a disciple. This child seems to have some wits about him, we’ll see if he’s able to embody the teachings of the sword heart secrets. You only have to give him three meals, is all.”

“Yes, sir.”

……

He had been sitting there for two days. Within two days, he had only eaten three meals, but he didn’t feel completely famished.

The Sword Master’s single utterance: “A sword of common metal, imbued with spirit by the wielder” was enough to preoccupy his thoughts for two whole days and nights. What does it mean for a sword to have heart?

With the Prairie Fire Sword across his legs, silently trying to feel the sword’s thoughts, he remained silent with closed eyes as the deep autumnal night breeze blew breaths of cold air that caressed his skin. His body was surrounded by azure columns of true energy, transforming into incorporeal shapes of sword blades, entering and exiting his body at a slow rhythmic pace-- and leaving the butler with his jaw on the floor.

Slowly, without opening his eyes, he began to see in the chaos of his mind a red light shining through... a long double-edged sword shining its vermillion aura-- it was indeed the image of the Prairie Fire Sword!

“Wha--” His eyes flew open. Why was the Prairie Fire Sword able to enter his thoughts? Could this be what the Sword Master was referring to when he said that there was a sword within the heart?

Weng, weng, weng...

The sword began emitting a low whining noise. Lin Mu Yu jumped upright, newly holding the Prairie Fire Sword, suddenly feeling a sense of connectedness flowing from the sword’s center to his own.

Cha!

The door leading to the rear court flew open and the Sword Master strolled out, his face with a smile of approval. “Lin Mu Yu, you do not disappoint. It only took you two days and two nights to master the sword heart, very impressive.”

Lin Mu Yu blanched. “I’ve realized the domain of the sword heart? Wait, Master... how do you know my real name?”

“Would I accept someone without knowing who he really was?”

“Now you must learn the skill of communicating with spirits. You must send your consciousness within the sword to connect with the sword’s spirit. But be careful, this training process is a hazard. Should you not be on your guard, you could be swallowed by the sword spirit… after all, sword spirits are vicious creatures. Truly taming them is no easy task.”

“Understood.”

……

The Sword Master returned to his room and hugging the sword close to him, Lin Mu Yu resumed his seat and closed his eyes, slowly extending his consciousness, and at a trickling pace, permeated the inside of the sword.

The inner realm of the sword was a different world altogether. It was pitch black, nothing beyond darkness. Lin Mu Yu’s consciousness took on the form of a human body as it looked around wildly, floating in mid-air.

Hong!

A vermillion creature jumped in front of it, jaws and sharp teeth aimed at the consciousness as it lunged to kill. The sword spirit: fire dragon!

“Ah?!”

Lin Mu Yu held out his arms and used his bare strength to hold up the fire dragon's jaws from devouring him, but the dragon's strength exceeded his, and with a ferocious snap--pu-chi!--, bit off Lin Mu Yu's left arm. Reeling from the pain, Lin Mu Yu could only look on as the fire dragon chewed on this satisfying meal. It swallowed, and with another roar, brandished its sharp talons and got ready for a second lunging attack.

Pu!

Lin Mu Yu's consciousness was ripped apart at the chest, condensing his form into stardust that floated off. The fire dragon's roars were unceasing, and with another big bite, it chomped off Lin Mu Yu's other arm.

"Brute!"

With a low roar, Lin Mu Yu glared at the dragon with an indescribable fury bubbling forth from within. Before he knew what was happening, a ray of golden light shone through his person, illuminating the darkness. A true dragon surrounded by flames emerged from his consciousness and encircled him protectively. Rearing its head and lunging forward, the true dragon snapped at the fire dragon--pu-chi!--clamping on to his forehead. With a vicious shaking, it attempted to wrench off the fire dragon's head.

Pa!

With a swipe of its long talons, the true dragon encircled the fire

dragon’s throat. It opened its mouth and with a fiery surge, looked like the fire was about to swallow the fire dragon whole.

“Aw… aww…”

The fire dragon actually sounded like it was crying… with a lowered head and emitting sounds of whining.

Was he begging for mercy?

In front of a true dragon, a mere fire dragon could of course not act as savage as it pleased.

Lin Mu Yu laughed, his energy slowly dissolving. The true dragon form encircling his consciousness slowly disappeared, leaving the fire dragon lying submissively by Lin Mu Yu’s foot, as if a loyal pet.

……

“That’s more like it.”

He laughed softly, slowly regaining his consciousness. Fluttering his eyes open, he looked down at the sword, feeling waves of joy from the sword. Indeed, the sword heart was connected with the sword spirit. Truly, there are such wonders on this world!

Chapter 72 : Messenger Bird

“Master, I’ve succeeded!”

Lin Mu Yu jumped out, practically bursting with a bewildered joy.

The Sword Master ventured out from his room once more. “Good, you are truly one of the talented in this world.”

“Master, what are we learning next? Shouldn’t you pass on some sword technique?” Lin Mu Yu gazed at him with a hopeful expression.

“Sword technique?”

The Sword Master laughed. “Ah Yu, Heartfelt Mastery of the Imperial Sword does not have any sword techniques. It is as you wish. As long as you can damage the opponent, any move is your technique! I myself don’t have any sword techniques, the only thing I can teach you is… ah, there are only bits and pieces.”

“Master, please enlighten me!”

“Look well now!”

Slowly turning around surrounded by beams of aura, the energy in the atmosphere suddenly converged into an incorporeal sword

form. “Chi-he!” With a powerful thrust, the Sword Master attacked the limestone board in front of him.

Peng!

With a loud bang, the limestone board turned into dust.

Lin Mu Yu stared in astonishment. The limestone board was a meter thick, and yet the Emerald Tip Sword was only a common long sword. The art of the Imperial Sword Technique was truly frightening.

The Sword Master smiled. “The art that I am refining can be categorized into two. One is Assembling, it is as you see, a normal attack, using all of the concentrated energy into one single point in time and space to attack the opponent. The other one is Dissolving. It dissolves energy, turning it into a giant mass that attacks, leaving no room for the opponent to turn to. The Imperial Sword Technique may have a thousand variations, but these thousand variations will never stray from the source, and the source is this, Assembling and Dissolving.”

Saying this, the Sword Master gently swept his arm in front of him and the Emerald Tip Sword flew upwards, spinning in the sky until it emerged as countless blades. Only one blade was a real sword, but the Sword Master’s fighting spirit was able to conjure the rest of the incorporeal blades, which all had the same amount of offensive power as the real sword. Metal rained down from the sky, and in a flash, the limestone boards of the courtyard were pierced with holes.

“…”

Lin Mu Yu stood there with his jaw on the ground. “H-how would I go about learning this, Master?”

The Sword Master chuckled. “Learn Assembling first. Without holding the sword in hand, turn a stone board into rubble, and that is when you know you are successful.”

“Yes, Master!”

The sword placed at a distance, Lin Mu Yu raised his arms, feeling the blade’s spirit. The fire dragon within was quick to respond, its fiery enthusiasm distinguishable even from afar, and yet… the Prairie Fire Sword trembled, without any indication of flying.

“Concentrate your energy,” the Sword Master instructed from the side. “Your heart must be pure in order to attain the highest dimension of the Imperial Sword!”

“Yes, Master!”

Lin Mu Yu continued his attempts, speedily calming his state of mind. His forefinger and middle finger were formed like a sword, his thoughts and the sword spirit’s resonating with each other. It felt like the fire dragon felt happiness at this.

“Up!”

He gave a low shout, and this time, “weng... weng...” the Prairie Fire Sword slowly lifted itself off the ground. Lin Mu Yu’s heart jumped for joy. Controlling the direction of the blade of the sword toward a piece of limestone board, and with an amassing of his energy, he released it. “Go!”

Shwa!

The long sword flew through the air-- pa! It pierced the board, but did not go through it.

The Sword Master laughed. “Ah Yu, your attention is not concentrated enough. You must pay all your thoughts and attention to be one with the sword spirit, then shall you be able to command the greatest strength. You see in front of you, you have not even reached a quarter of linking with your sword. Continue practicing.”

“Yes, teacher!”

.....

After a thousand failed trials, as the sun began to rise, Lin Mu Yu opened his palm and the Imperial Sword rose up, geared back, and struck the limestone board-- shattering it completely. The large board already had thousands of piercings and inflictions, so Lin Mu Yu had done his fair share of hard work over the night.

“Not bad.”

The Sword Master headed out from behind his diligent student. “Ah Yu, it seems you have made some small progress in the Imperial Sword technique.”

“Thank you, Master!”

“Do not get ahead of yourself. It is only a small inch forward. You have much to learn!”

The Sword Master twirled his beard. “Speed and strength are crucial to the Imperial Sword Technique. But this is only a basic imperial sword skill. Let this old geezer teach you a higher method for an Assembling attack.”

“Yes?”

The Sword Master pushed up his sleeve. From a distance, a wooden training sword flew up into the air, and faced a rock board. The Master laughed. “Ah Yu, do you think a wooden sword can make a hole through a stone?”

Lin Mu Yu stammered, “Wood to pierce through a stone… that’s a bit of an exaggeration?”

“Is it?”

The Sword Master laughed, shaking his arm. The wooden sword flew up, started spinning faster and faster until it bounded with a vicious force towards the stone-- breaking through it with sheer force.

“Oh my God-”

Lin Mu Yu forgot to retrieve his jaw again, his eyes wide with disbelief.

The Sword Master smiled. “This is Helix Force. The revolving power can increase its strength in its ability to pierce. Many are skilled in the art of the Imperial Sword Technique, but few understand the true power of the Helix Force. The next thing you learn shall be this, then.”

“Yes, Teacher.”

……

In the blink of an eye, a whole day had passed, and Lin Mu Yu’s speed of training and levelling up caused even the Sword Master to sigh with emotion. This boy was truly a sword prodigy!

Weng, weng, weng…

Lines of aura revolved around the Prairie Fire Sword, the fire

dragon within was happily humming, and the sword blade itself was rapidly spinning in mid-air. Lines of helix traces materialized in mid-air. Peng! And a limerock dissolved within contact of the Helix Force.

Not bad!

The Sword Master stroked his beard, his face beaming with satisfaction. “Next, you have to use the wooden sword to finish this blow!”

“Ah?”

Kill me now, he thought, how strong would I have to be to use a wooden sword to finish this task? But he didn’t give up, quickly retrieving a wooden sword. Without the resonance of a sword spirit, Lin Mu Yu had to use his true energy to control the sword. The small sword floated to mid-air. Lin Mu Yu spread both of his arms out, his true energy lifting the sword, causing it to spin faster and faster.

Peng!

The wooden sword splintered into a thousand pieces, and the limestone sat pretty without a single scratch.

The Sword Master looked to the butler without emotion. “Butler, buy a hundred more training wooden swords... no, wait, buy two hundred.”

“Yes, Sword Master!”

……

Another two days passed.

Weng, weng, weng…

The wooden sword in front of Lin Mu Yu speedily began rotating with the blade as the axis. With two spread arms, his true energy metamorphosed into columns of lightning. This was his revelation in these two days, that he could turn true energy into lightning energy to control the wooden sword. This was the first time the Sword Master was left speechless. For all his life dedicated to swords, he had gotten used to people using energy to wield Imperial Swords, but he had never seen someone use lightning to do so. Lin Mu Yu was the first.

Peng!

With a loud crash, the wooden sword surrounded by electricity cleanly cut a hole through the limestone, before the stone dissolved completely into rubble.

Lin Mu Yu turned to his master with a delighted expression. “Teacher, how did I do? Have I completed it?”

The Sword Master began having pangs of anxiety. What powerful, fearsome creature was he helping develop? A little voice in the back of his head told him to stop from imparting higher sword skills.

“Yes, that will do.”

The Sword Master scratched his chin. “Ah Yu, you have learned the philosophy behind both Assembling and Dissolving. You can already be considered as a top-tier swordsman in the art of the Imperial Sword Technique. I have nothing left to teach you. You should return to the Temple. You have already stayed too long here.”

“Ah?”

Lin Mu Yu’s eyes widened, suddenly remembering Lei Hong had only given him a three-day break… and he had already been out for a week.

Hugging his Prairie Fire Sword, he stepped back several steps, dropped both knees to the ground, and bowed his forehead to the floor. “My deepest and utmost gratitude to the Master for imparting his wisdom. I, Lin Mu Yu, has this kindness forever etched on my heart. Please, worry not, Master. When I get back I shall work my fastest to send over some good martial blades.”

The Sword Master laughed. “Good boy. Come, get up. You should get going, the sky is turning dark.”

“Yes, sir!”

……

On the way back to the Temple, he passed by the Empire’s Trading Company to purchase some mysterious metal and spirit stones. When he reached the gate of the Temple, the guard recognized him and greeted him heartily, “Your Honor Lin Zhi, you’ve finally come back!”

“Yes, is something the matter?”

“Yes. The other day and this morning, someone from the legendary potions department came by, a female alchemist. But you weren’t here, so she went back, but she asked us to tell you when you returned to look for her.”

It must be Chu Yao. Lin Mu Yu’s heart warmed and he grinned. “Thanks, then!”

What he hadn’t expected was that Ge Yang and Lei Hong failed to punish him. After all, the two deacons wanted to cultivate such a good seedling like him, especially after seeing Lin Mu Yu’s vigorous gaze. They both knew at once that this boy had enhanced his strength again for the few days that he was out. Today, he was close to level 59 Battle Saint He could be competing with the elite of this world anytime.

After placing the mysterious metal inside his room, he hurried

towards the legendary potions department.

The legendary potions department was still redolent of the rich smell of potions. Chu Yao was clad in a snow-white female alchemist uniform, outlining her slender figure to a mesmerizing degree. The moment she spotted Lin Mu Yu, she hurried to him and grabbed his hand. “Ah Yu, you’ve been out for so many days, what have you been up to?”

“Learning sword skills with a master!”

“Oh? So your sword skills have improved now, then?” Chu Yao tilted her head with a smile.

Lin Mu Yu balled his fist, and gave a measured laugh. “It’s not bad, I suppose.”

Rather humble…

Chu Yao suddenly suddenly gave a surprised laugh, dragging him further inside. “Ah Yu, I have a new friend I want to introduce you to!”

“Oh? Chu Yao jie has made a new friend at the legendary potions department?”

“What are you saying!”

Chu Yao grumbled in a flirtatious manner, and fished out a cage from behind some herbs. There was a white bird inside, and an empty bamboo container tied to its slender leg. She hugged the bird to her chest. “This is a personally trained messenger bird, as well as the Empire’s most important channel for communication. This messenger bird is a spirit bird, it’s attracted by the breath and the bloodstream, and they say it can locate people from anywhere.”

“Oh?”

“Yes, but it’s only on a one-on-one basis. I’ve already fed it some of my fresh blood. You should let it drink some of your blood, too, so that I can find you no matter where you are.”

“Amazing,” he spluttered.

“Hand…”

“Oh, okay.”

Holding his palm Chu Yao retrieved a silver needle and quickly touched it to his skin. She frowned. “This… Ah Yu, your skin is becoming thicker. Even needles can’t pierce through it.”

“Chu Yao jie, are you insulting me…”

“I didn’t say your face was thick…”

Finally, Chu Yao pricked his finger, squeezing out a drop of blood for the spirit bird to drink. The bird immediately flapped its wings and began flying in between the two people, extremely affectionate.

Chu Yao gently rubbed the bird's wing. "I call it Little White. Ah Yu, it belongs to the two of us now. I'll be responsible for feeding it. When I'm unable to find you, I'll send Little White to find you."

"Okay then!"

……

It was at this moment someone from the Temple barged in. It was Zhang Wei. His body was clad in armor and his intimidating physique looked like it belonged to someone of a high power. The guards of the legendary potions department had let him in without a second word.

"Your Honor Zhang Wei, what's the matter?" Lin Mu Yu asked.

Zhang Wei's mouth curled up. "A good thing, of course. Your Honor Lin Zhi, the princess Tang Xiao Xi is at the Temple, asking to see you immediately."

"Oh, Xiao Xi's here…"

Lin Mu Yu smiled, before turning to Chu Yao. “The Princess must have something important to discuss. Older Sister, I’ll be going now, I’ll come to visit you next time.”

“Okay!”

Chapter 73 : Four-Way Imperial Sword

In the southeast corner of the Lan Yan City Ze Tian Palace, there sat an averagely sized military camp. Body after body clad in the cobalt blue military uniform of the Empire were currently in training, each one with a long rifle in hand for thrusting training. A rapid galloping introduced a member of the cavalry rushing through the camp, his hand clutching a blood-red flag that marked the defense of the city wall patrols. Other than the shouts of the training soldiers, there was no noise outside, an eerie spectral aftermath of the war scene that had ensued.

Military police barracks, the entire Empire's ruling force and enforcement center of power.

Rushing along on the limestone brick-lined road, a patrolling officer with a feather letter genuflected. "Your Honor Commander, there's a letter from the Cangnan Province!"

Two lines of military officials were standing to either side of the room, all facing the table. Behind the desk, there was a sharp looking youth intently studying the map on the scroll. He was wearing a high-rank military uniform, three golden stars affixed on to his collar. It was the Empire Military's Lead Commander.

It was no other than the Empire Military's Lead Commander: Xiang Yu. At a tender age, he had already wrangled the position of lead commander, with the entire military under his fingertips. His background was also an impressive one, the descendant of the Military God Xiang Wen Tian. It was precisely because of this point that almost everyone in the military was terrified of him to some

degree. Of course, what was truly terrifying about Xiang Yu was his mastery of the Bloodbath Spear Technique. Xiang Yu's mastery of it had allowed him to possess an extinct art that was renowned worldwide.

"Another letter from the Cangnan Province?" Xiang Yu smiled. "Does Uncle still want me to arrest that Lin Mu Yu?"

The patrolling officer shook his head. "Sir, I am not aware, sir!"

Xiang Yu accepted the feather letter, unwrapped it, and scanned the contents. His eyebrows knitted together. "Cangnan Province sent out tens of thousands of soldiers, and were still unable to find him. They suspect that Lin Mu Yu has already managed to infiltrate the Empire. What do those at present think?"

A military official cupped his fist. "Lead Commander, what if we perform a blanket search of the entire Empire?"

TN: blanket search: broad authorization that allows the police to search multiple areas for evidence without specifying what exactly they are looking for.

"Out of the question."

Xiang Yu waved his hand. "First of, this is an unnecessary use of manpower, as well as causing unnecessary alarm. Were we to alert the Highness of our actions, you can be sure there will be something unpleasant waiting for us. Secondly, even though our

military camp has command over the three armed services, we are nonetheless limited to around 2,000 people at most, completely inadequate for a blanket search. Not only will this cause unnecessary alarm, it will also come to nothing.”

TN: three armed services: army, navy, and air force

“Then… what high strategy does the Lead Commander have in mind?”

Xiang Yu’s lips curled up. “Well, whether it’s a high strategy or not I can’t say… come with me, we shall go pay a visit to the Imperial Guard camp… it’s been a while since I’ve seen Lead Commander Feng Ji Xing, heh…. What a coincidence that I’ve been meaning to compare notes with him anyway. Perfect, this matter should be submitted into the hands of the Feng Ji Xing who can command thirty thousand Imperial Guards. We must arrest that Lin Mu Yu as soon as possible, or we’ll never hear the end of it from Uncle.”

All the officials smiled. “Your Honor Lead Commander is truly superior and worthy of our respect!”

……

At the Temple, the sunset cast a glow at the architectural formations, giving the Xiang Wen Tian statue an especially huge shadow that towered over the rest of the entire Temple’s formations.

Lin Mu Yu strode through the Great Hall, heading straight for the side chamber. From a distance, he could easily spot the red flame that was Tang Xiao Xi. Tang Xiao Xi's martial spirit was a fire fox, and she was rather partial to the color red, and so, even when she was wearing a snow-white robe, she always had a few buds of red-colored violets as accessories. The Princess had no trouble with money, and so she seemed to don a different dress everyday, inflaming the wealthy ladies of the entire Empire with envy.

"Mu Mu!"

Tang Xiao Xi lithely loped over to Lin Mu Yu, her face radiating with a joyful smile. "Why are you only back now? Your Honor Zhang Wei has been out for ages!"

Lin Mu Yu smiled awkwardly. "I had some things I had to take care of. You should have told me you were coming."

Zhang Wei scratched the back of his head, laughing ruefully. "Princess, I've been to the Trading Centers, and even to the weaponry shop, but I was unable to find Your Honor Lin Zhi. I finally found him in the legendary potions department!"

Tang Xiao Xi giggled. "Thank you for your hard work, Your Honor Zhang Wei. You can go and rest now, I'll take care of him."

Zhang Wei shot a sly grin at Lin Mu Yu, gently punching him on the chest. "Your Honor Lin Zhi better be on his best behavior for the Princess, or you'll lose face on behalf of the entire Temple."

Lin Mu Yu shot him a look as he retreated, laughing merrily.

……

“Xiao Xi, is something the matter?” Lin Mu Yu asked.

Tang Xiao Xi snorted. “You forgot already? Today’s already the third day of the Upper Sunset Festival, one of the most important festival in the Empire. Didn’t we make plans to spend Upper Sunset Festival together? Don’t tell me you really forgot…”

“Oh, of course not, really I didn’t.”

“Hmph,” Tang Xiao Xi snorted, knowing better than to believe him. “Anyway, you have to go, I already reserved the top floor of the Rain Hall, and I invited a few good friends too, like Imperial Guard Lead Commander Feng Ji Xing, Imperial Defense Chu Huai Sheng, and even Imperial Military Lead Commander Qin Leige. You have to go!”

“Yes, yes, of course,” Lin Mu Yu said.

Tang Xiao Xi pouted. “Why don’t you look excited? Hmph, I knew it, you’re worried that the pretty alchemist from the legendary potions department Chu Yao won’t get an invite, is it? You don’t have to worry, I gave Chu Huai Sheng two invites, he’ll pass one along to Chu Yao. This guy… you only have a Chu Yao in your heart, is that it?”

Lin Mu Yu took one look at her, feeling like she was some neighbor girl striving for affection and favor, and couldn't help but burst out laughing. "Xiao Xi, you're a princess. Chu Yao jie is an alchemist. How can you bother splitting hairs about such details."

"Fine, fine, whatever you say makes sense, etcetera," Tang Xiao Xi said, crossing her arms across her chest, making her already bountiful cleavage appear even more luxuriously endowed. "Mumu, what have you been so busy with these days? It looks like your training has gone up again. Let me see the fruits of your hard work, what do you say?"

Lin Mu Yu stared at her. "Do you really want to see?"

"Of course!"

"Okay, if Xiao Xi wants to watch, I'll let you watch. I have a few moves that I haven't named yet, just in time, you can help me name them."

"Okay, I bought some food. Let's eat first before you perform," Tang Xiao Xi chirped.

"Okay!"

……

Tang Xiao Xi bought some fine food and a bottle of good wine. After eating, they headed towards the secret chamber, with Tang

Xiao Xi being followed by a group of bodyguards, all muscular warriors around 20-35 years old, everyone of them shooting daggers at Lin Mu Yu as if to say, dare you take away our Princess and we'll have your life.

At the door of the chamber's courtyard, Tang Xiao Xi turned around. "Okay, I'm going in with Mu Mu now, you can stay out here and guard the premises.

The bodyguards looked uneasy. "Princess... we're afraid that would be rather unwise..."

Tang Xiao Xi frowned. "Unwise? Why, it's not as if Mu Mu will eat me."

The bodyguards tried hard to keep their expressions neutral, thinking that indeed, they were afraid that this brat would gobble up such a fine dish. But of course, they kept their silence. "Yes, madam. We will wait outside as you wish. If the Princess does not come out, we will not leave."

"Okay!"

Tang Xiao Xi followed Lin Mu Yu into the courtyard, closing the big door behind her shut. In the Empire, it was taboo to secretly observe other people's training, because of the possibility of plagiarism, but of course, Lei Hong's secret watching didn't count. After all, at his age, he was shameless.

……

The courtyard was vast, with a few manmade mountains and a lotus flower pond.

“Come on, come on, show me!” Tang Xiao Xi was giddily awaiting.

Lin Mu Yu nodded.

A sword appeared in his consciousness. Waving one hand, the Prairie Fire Sword floated up with a Keng!, suspended in mid-air, calmly emitting metallic sounds. This is the basic foundational ability of controlling the Imperial Sword by Heart.

Tang Xiao Xi stared at him. “Imperial Sword Skills? This guy…”

Lin Mu Yu smiled to himself. Who said his ability was limited to Imperial Sword Skills?

At this moment, he let out a low shout, releasing his energy, along with a millions shards of lightning forming a spectral circle between the Prairie Fire Sword and his two palms. Controlling the energy and speed, he commanded the sword to fly through the lightning, bringing it with the blade flying to a distant point.

Peng!

A huge rock pillar cracked into halves. With a simple jab, Lin Mu Yu could utilize his lightning chop and lightning imperial sword skills to create a thousand, a million sword combinations. The specialty was speed and strength, able to attack within a second, without letting others notice until it was too late. This was a move he'd secretly learned, not even the Sword Master was aware of it.

The Sword Master had been afraid the young one would surpass him, but was unaware that on some certain level, the young boy had already far surpassed him!

"Wo-ow..."

Tang Xiao Xi's mouth was wide open. "Mu Mu, is this Grandpa Qu Chu's technique?"

"Yes, goes well with Lightning Imperial's abilities. Xiao Xi, you should give it a name."

"How about Thunderstorm Rage?" Tang Xiao Xi laughed.

"Great name! Very apt description."

"Anything else?"

"Yes."

Lin Mu Yu gently opened a hand, a light breeze circling on his

open palm. In a gentle movement, purple streams of energy began burning around the Prairie Fire Sword, turning into small forms of cyclones. “Ha,” he grunted and pushed out his palm. Peng! The cyclone whirled around the sword as its eye and directly caused a huge rock to disintegrate with a crash.

“God!”

Tang Xiao Xi had inadvertently jumped off where she was sitting, her face wrenched in surprise and a little fear. “That’s a massive destructive force.”

Lin Mu Yu was still surrounded by flowing energy. “After realizing the secret of the sword blade, I’ve tried to harmonize the laws of the wind with the atmosphere, but I didn’t think it would turn out with such a strong force. I call this the Wind Imperial Sword, and it’s truly strong, but the only downside is that the time used to collect wind is a bit long. So if I were to use it in a real decisive match in the battlefield, that would be difficult.”

Tang Xiao Xi nodded. “M-hmm, okay let’s call this The Destroying Gale?”

“Okay, good name!”

“Anything else?”

“Yes, I haven’t even shown you the power of the pressure axis yet.”

……

Facing the pond, Lin Mu Yu gathered all his mental focus and silently opened his arms. Incorporeal sword forms floated up behind him, and pointing outwards, moved from behind him. Even Tang Xiao Xi could see his energy swords!

Su… su…

The pond water began shaking, creating ripples across the surface. Droplets began rising, as if being absorbed by the air above it, congealing as the temperature surrounding the pond began dropping at a rapid speed, forming ice spears that gleamed an icy blue. If the Sword Master had taught him the extroversion of heart and sword, this was his way of upgrading it!

“Up!”

Raising an arm, a hundred thousand ice spears shot up towards the sky-Pi! Pi! Pa! Pa!- loudly shooting down towards the ground not far away, turning the entire ground into a complete mess.

Chapter 74 : Xiang Yu's Challenge

"Using water with the sword, this is the 'Dispersion' of the sword heart skill."

Lin Mu Yu's breath had quickened, faster than usual, because of his true energy flowing at a rapid pace through his bloodstream. "Xiao Xi, what do you think of that? Beautiful enough?"

Tang Xiao Xi was nearly a statue. She took a moment, before blinking her eyes. "Wow... that's... that's amazing."

This caused Lin Mu Yu's head to swell, as if about to explode with pride. "Of course! What name would be good for this one?"

Tang Xiao Xi considered it. "I've seen the experts use the Ten Thousand Sword Art, it's quite similar to this. However, yours involves the whole water cycle... how about Ten Thousand Frozen Sword?"

"Good name!"

"Anything else?" Tang Xiao Xi asked weakly.

"One more. And this is the strongest."

"Okay, let me see!"

“Okay!”

……

Lin Mu Yu made a low noise. The Prairie Fire Sword flew up with a brushing sound, standing in front of him. He opened his arms, a column of true dragonfire burst forth, creating a fiery chasm between his palm and the sword blade. When the helix force started to gain momentum, the sword slowly began revolving on its axis. Lin Mu Yu’s fingers were extended by what looked to be dragonfire, the helix surrounding and embodying the surroundings of the sword blade, emitting a few dragon howls. Lin Mu Yu gave a low shout: “Go!”

Sou!

The sword whizzed through the air, bringing the magnanimous force of the helix with it. With a heated energy, it sprung straight for the black rock that was at least five meters in thickness.

Peng!

In the midst of crashing sounds as the rock crumbled into ash, Lin Mu Yu opened a hand, releasing gourd wall to protect Tang Xiao Xi and him. A wave of stormy offense washed over the entire courtyard, ravaging the ground until the bodyguards outside felt compelled to knock on the door. “Princess, there is a lot of commotion from within. Is everything alright?”

“I’m fine, don’t come in!” Tang Xiao Xi said.

“Yes, Princess.”

……

“Using fire to wield the sword,” Lin Mu Yu said, striving to calm himself down. “The fire is an energy source. In addition to the piercing ability of helix force, one attack has the power to pass through anything with the force that is far beyond what I have shown you so far. The weakness is just like Destroying Gale, the time to amass energy for it takes too long. They say that the transformative power of battle energy is much faster . Maybe when I reach Heaven Realm and understand how to harness battle energy I will be able to improve it. Xiao Xi, what do you think of this move? What should I name it?”

Tang Xiao Xi looked at him uneasily, her face a shade of red from being so close to raging fire. “I thought I heard the howling of a dragon a while ago. Mu Mu, how can your technique have dragonforce? Is this… the skill you refined from the true dragonbone I gave you last time?”

“Yes, Xiao Xi! How’d you guess, you’re so smart!”

“I see. Then call it Destructive Dragonfire Helix. This move is really beautiful to watch!”

“Yeah.”

Lin Mu Yu stood with a straight proud back in the middle of the courtyard. The Sword Master had, after all, passed onto him the knowledge of the sword heart and swordsmanship. While hea had learned from the master’s instructions, the student’s own revelations shown by these four sword techniques were far beyond the master’s capabilities, or to put it in another way, he already had the makings of a great master.

In one corner, Tang Xiao Xi sat with a dejected expression on her face.

“What's wrong?” he asked.

Tang Xiao Xi raised her head staring at him with the sparkling eyes. “Back in Silverfir City, you were so weak and you needed my protection, but now that we're in Lanyan City, Mu Mu has far surpassed me. My abilities suck compared to yours.”

“No worries, now I can protect you.” Lin Mu Yu flashed her a winning smile.

Tang Xiao Xi’s heart fluttered, nodding her head joyfully. but then she remembered to restrain her expressions and pouted. “Mu Mu, are you about to reach Heave Realm?”

“As of now I'm a level 59 Battle Saint, it's close but not quite. I was never able to break through” He shook his head. “I probably need another opportunity I was looking forward to a day to go to the driving force to train a bit and if I'm lucky enough to meet a

suitable beast spirit then maybe it can help me break into Heaven Realm."

"Oh, oh! I want to go with you! Also don't forget our arrangement: the upper Sunset Festival 3 days later, this is an invitation--you have to come!"

"Okay!"

After seeing Tang Xiao Xi to the door, Lin Mu Yu let out a silent breath of relief. Tang Xiao Xi was friendly and easy to get along with extremely smart and cute. She was obviously a good girl, but their positions in life were too far apart. Most importantly, he was a wanted man. He had a deep feeling of inadequacy as if he were the toad trying to get a bite of swan. He didn't want to be known as someone who leeched off someone. Whatever position he had in this world he wanted it to be created by himself."

(TL: toad trying to eat swan meat is a chinese proverb meaning aiming at the impossible without taking your own position into consideration)

He pushed these thoughts away from his head and went to refine new swords in accordance with his promise to the swordmaster.

After all the Sword Master was a businessman first swordsman second, he would never take a loss like that.

.....

In the middle of the night, with the stars shining brightly.

The lamps by the military camp were burning tirelessly. Generals flew past, ten or so of them headed off to different directions to patrol their respective areas.

In the center of the camp, Feng Ji Xing held the oil lamp in one hand, end of bamboo scroll in the other. At the bottom of the page written in bold strokes with four characters: “Seven Scrolls of Victor”. This was from Da Qin Empire’s outstanding founding minister 开国功臣, with the legendary title of Military God bestowed upon him. Every military man worth his salt would study the Seven Scrolls of Victory but few actually truly learned the secrets beneath the words.

Sha, sha...

The tent flap opened, and someone came in cupping his fist to his hand. “Honored Commander, the people from the military police are here.”

“Military police?” Feng Ji Xing glanced up. The light of the flickering flame danced around, showing his handsome face in the glow of attractive light. “Why would the military police people come here? Who brought them?”

“It's the military police Commander, Xiang Yu.”

“Xiang Yu?”

Feng Ji Xing knit his eyebrows together. He stood up and straightened his armor. “Come, let us go to receive him.”

“Yes sir!”

From outside, Xiang Yu, followed by ten or more soldiers walked towards him. He cupped a fist even from afar. “Elder Brother Feng, long time no see! You are still as devastatingly handsome as ever.”

Feng Ji Xing smiled, cupping his fist in return. “Feng Ji Xing welcomes Honored Xiang Yu!”

Xiang Yu laughed. “We are both in service as commanders in the Empire, no need for such niceties!”

Even so, Feng Ji Xing bowed a military bow. Albeit only having 2000 men under his command, the man was still the most powerful among the military in the Empire. Someone with even thirty thousand imperial men under his command had to show respect to Xiang Yu!

“To what do I owe the pleasure of your visit?” Feng Ji Xing asked.

Xiang Yu gave a dismissive laugh. “Nothing much. Let’s go inside first.”

“Yes, sir.”

Inside the tent, Xiang Yu nonchalantly sat his ass on the seat of the Commander. Several higher-ranked Imperial guards instinctively shot him looks of fury. Luo Lie already had his hand on his sword hilt. Feng Ji Xing shot them a restricting look. Xiang Yu was arrogant, but he had the power to be so.

Xiang Yu pressed down on the table, looking at the Seven Scrolls of Victory by the oil lamp, and burst out laughing. “Commander Feng is currently studying my ancestor’s military strategies?”

“Indeed,” Feng Ji Xing said. “However, I can only understand one or two of them. I don’t have the adequate intelligence to fully understand the essentials of the Military God.”

“Commander Feng is too humble.”

Xiang Yu smirked before getting to the reason of his visit. “Cathaya City’s City Guard Hua Tian being killed… I’m sure Commander Feng has heard of this news?”

“Yes.”

“It seems that the culprit Lin Mu Yu has been able to infiltrate Lan Yan City.”

“Oh? What does Your Honor intend to do?”

Xiang Yu waved his hand. “We at the military police camp do not have adequate people. There is no way we can blanket search the entire city, so I’ve come specially to request Commander Feng’s help with this matter. With an impressive thirty thousand guards, it’ll be enough to flip over the entire Empire to search for Lin Mu Yu.”

Feng Ji Xing’s heart skipped a beat. He cupped his fist. “Your Honor, please forgive me, but I do not have this ability.”

“Why so?”

“Lan Yan is the Empire, the city of the true dragon. To search the entire city for Lin Mu Yu would require the express permission of the Emperor, otherwise, I am truly sorry to report that this would be against the law. The duty of the Imperial guards is to protect the safety of the Emperor’s city, not to catch criminals.”

Feng Ji Xing’s words were rational and firm, without a trace or indication of letting Xiang Yu have his way.

Xiang Yu slowly stood up, shooting daggers at him. “Lead Commander Feng reminded me. I have to go to Ze Tian Palace to see His Highness first before I can search for vile criminals.”

Feng Ji Xing gave a polite smile. “Yes, Your Honor. I’m sorry to say your visit has been for naught.”

Xiang Yu's expression was extremely sour. He walked down from the commander platform, stepped across the light blue carpet of the tent. He fixed an icy gaze on Feng Ji Xing. "How has my visit been for naught? I've heard that the Commander Feng has been studying the legendary Wind Sword from my ancestor Xiang Wen Tian for many years. You can even be rightfully called the Empire's strongest wielder of the Wind Sword technique. I'm free today, as luck would have it. Perhaps you could show me?"

Feng Ji Xing looked uneasy. "I dare not get violent with Your Honor."

"No matter, this is just swapping pointers!"

Xiang Yu raised an arm. Keng-he unsheathed a long battle sword from the waist of his subordinate. "I am not familiar with swords, I shall use my subordinate's. Hopefully, the Commander has no problems with this?"

Feng Ji Xing gave an internal sigh laced with anxiety. He received a battle sword from his subordinate, cupping his fist. "Your Honor, let us not overdo this."

"All right."

……

Battle energy slowly warmed, Xiang Yu's battle robe flew out

from behind him. His sword was glowing brightly. He was in the second level of the Heaven Realm. Naturally, he was much stronger than this Feng Ji Xing, who was only on the first level. The sword began to tremble and already initiated a strong offensive power, freezing the air around it before breaking the molecules in the atmosphere. He brought down his sword five times in quick succession, his entire body wrapped in flames that were burning brightly. The first-rank martial spirit fire tiger had been released. This was the Military God Xiang Wen Tian's legendary martial spirit, the battle energy was vast and mighty!

Dang, dang, dang!

Feng Ji Xing continued blocking for several motions. Then he swung his foot from below as a counterattack.

Xiang Yu twisted his body to avoid the attack, his body in mid-air, his fighting spirit, the fire tiger, had its claws entwined with the battle sword as one, a large forceful motion brought the blade close to Feng Ji Xing's neck.

Feng Ji Xing's close-combat skills were outstanding. His sword handle grazed the ground as he used the momentum to slide smoothly for half a meter. His boots radiated with battle energy as it rocketed to the air.

Peng!

With a loud clang, Xiang Yu's fist landed on Feng Ji Xing's boot. Battle energy flared up creating a shockwave that caused the

surrounding soldiers to draw back a few steps.

Feng Ji Xing looked up towards the sky, his entire body glowing with a purple battle energy. His second-rank fighting spirit, the purple electric flame wolf had already been released, his eyes glistened with the hard determination of someone unwilling to give up.

“Again!”

Xiang Yu was suspended in the air for a few moments, once more raising the sword in an attempt to strike him down. This was the same technique of Wind Sword.

Dang, dang, dang!

It was yet again another series of clashes. Feng Ji Xing seemed to be forced to take steps back continually. Suddenly, an ice cold presence appeared by his neck, and behind him was a large pillar. There was no way out.

Xiang Yu’s sword was within millimeters of Feng Ji xing’s neck, his face gleaming with proud arrogance. “Looks like Commander Feng’s Wind Sword technique hasn’t reached its peak yet!”

Saying so, he retrieved his sword. “Since the Imperial guards are unwilling to mobilize in search of Lin Mu Yu, we, the military police, will have to take care of it.”

……

Watching Xiang Yu's figure retreating into the distance, Feng Ji Xing breathed out the long and relieved sigh he had been holding in for quite a while.

On one side, Luo Lie said, "Lead Commander, with your sword skills, it seems impossible that clumsy shot by Xiang Yu could win over you!"

Feng Ji Xing's expression was conflicted. He slowly shook his head. "A loss is a loss… there is no need for more words. Xiang Yu… he is someone we cannot afford to offend. Now that Xiang Yu has begun participating in this matter, Ah Yu is in more and more danger. Quickly now, send a feather letter to Cathaya City, have the officials work faster, else there will be no way to return innocence to Ah Yu's name."

"Yes, sir!"

Chapter 75 : Battle Armor

Three days passed by in a flash. The evening feast of the Upper Sunset Festival was designated for tonight. Lin Mu Yu didn't go over at once, he stayed at the courtyard of the Temple refining his swordsmanship.

The Prairie Fire Sword's fire glow was visible one moment and invisible the next. The sword's body was as straight as a pencil, suspended in mid-air as it was being held up by incorporeal forces.

Lin Mu Yu stood in front of the long sword, his eyes shut. His left arm slowly extended, feeling the lightning elements in the atmosphere. Those small but palpable elements gathered together to become strands of purple electric energy crackling as they wove through his five fingers like an energetic child, causing Lin Mu Yu to laugh in spite of himself.

His connection with the lightning energy was becoming more and more perfect. Of the four types of sword styles, it seemed that he was most adept at using the lightning one. One strike of lightning was already typically impossible for most people to avoid. However, within the Temple, during training, he never displayed his sword skills or the power of his true dragonfire, as Lei Hong had said, it is important in this world to learn to hide the tip of the spear. The tallest trees in the forest are the first to fall in a storm.

And yet, his progress was obvious in its leaps and bounds. His gourd martial spirit's defense was already enough to attract the respect and admiration of people within the Temple, and could

even allow him to stand toe-to-toe with the golden-star trainer Ouyang Qiu. It was also because of him, that the trainers within the Temple were slowly improving their position. From the way the servants and the guards treated them alone, it was enough to see that there was great improvement.

After all, before this, the position of the trainers within the Temple was as “punching bag.” It was the appearance of Lin Mu Yu that covered the punching bags with a layer of steel and iron thorns, making the instructors thinks twice before bullying the trainers, even so far as having them regard Lin Mu Yu as an equal.

……

Dong, dong…

The sound of knocking came from outside the door. The servant said politely, “Your Honor Lin Zhi. It is time. According to the orders of the Princess, you should be heading to the Rain Hall. The stable men have already prepared a handsome steed for you.”

“Alright, thanks.”

Lin Mu Yu opened his eyes and smiled, his entire being relaxed and childlike, as if he had gone back to being the innocently simple boy he was.

He slung the Prairie Fire sword behind his back and headed out the door. Indeed, the Temple’s riding courts were filled with a

hundred or so steeds, usually available only to the trainers and instructors practicing their horsemanship and riding techniques. And today, because of his relationship with Tang Xiao Xi, he was able to use one for himself. It imbued within him a feeling of being a VIP for the first time in his stay during the Temple, as well as a feeling of embezzling Temple property for his own use.

He swung himself up the horse, then saluted to the stable boy in the fashion of Imperial soldiers. “Thank you very much. I will return this war horse right on time, please don’t worry.”

The stable hand was shocked and flattered, quickly rushing to say, “Your Honor, please don’t say so. You may use it as you like. Deacon Ge Yang has already passed on orders, all golden-star trainers and golden-star instructors can use whatever horse they like. There is no need to be so polite.”

“Oh, but I still have to thank you.”

Lin Mu Yu smiled, slowly guiding the horse out of the stable. The stable hand stood there watching even after he left. He was unable to comprehend, or even imagine, that a golden-star trainer from the Temple would treat a person like himself with such respect, considering the difference in positions.

Lin Mu Yu had already bred this into a good habit. He was from a high background, the son of the executive chairman Lin Shun of the Dragon Heat Conglomerate. It could be said that he was born with a golden spoon in his mouth. but he was humble and peace loving and treated others well. In other people's eyes he was the rich son but people who really knew him knew him to have

extremely good breeding well mannered and had a positive attitude towards life and other people. As they say to know someone's true personality you should look at the way he treats waiters and indeed this saying seems to embody Lin Mu Yu’s good.

However this stable hand was from another world and from a young age had been mistreated and abused. For him, Lin Mu Yu, being an esteemed golden-star trainer the legendary “your honor” -- his humility only invoked fear within this stable hand.

……

As he went past the side hall, someone called out to him. “Lin Zhi, wait, don’t go yet!”

He turned around to see with Zhang Wei with a beaming face, holding a full suit of white battle armor in his hands. “ You're the temples golden star trainer. For heaven's sake, how can you wear something like that to the Princess’ banquet? Come, come, the High Deacon let me give this armor to you so that our trainer will not lose face.”

“Oh?”

Lin Mu Yu stopped, and jumped off the horse, looking at the set of white battle armor in Zhang Wei’s hands. It was in actuality, a silver chain armor atop a white cape. He looked down at his light green shirt, tattered in comparison. He hadn’t paid much attention to his appearance since coming to the Temple.

“Thanks then, Master Zhang Wei.”

“There's no need for that. Quickly, get changed.”

“Okay.”

He went inside the side Palace, change his attire and when he walked out, Zhang Wei’s were gleaming. He was unable to resist clapping. “This is... absolutely... Your Honor Lin Zhi, I, Zhang Wei, have never seen anyone more suited to wear this battle armor than you. I'm sure that when the Princess stands by your side, she will see you in a whole different light.”

He lowered his head indeed the guy on him displayed liveliness and attractiveness in him, and with the insignia of the Temple's golden star trainer in front of his chest, it was simply perfect.

“I'm headed off to the banquet now, see you later, Master Zhang Wei.”

“Go then and don't forget your helmet.”

.....

The armor had a matching silver-gray battle helmet. Lin Mu Yu wedged it under his arm, it seemed superfluous to wear it. Moreover, this armor was what the people from the Temple wore to war. His whole body already clad in armor, in addition to a helmet, would have added to his discomfort, of feeling like he was

going to war.

His armor weighed around 20 kilos, it was a good thing Lin Mu Yu was well-trained. He barely felt the weight. From a way off, he could see the Imperial Guard, Chu Huai Sheng, standing with two horses' reins in his hands by the gate of the legendary potions department. It was obvious he was here for Chu Yao.

"Elder Brother Chu Huai Sheng!"

Lin Mu Yu rushed over with his horse, and swung his body down to the ground in a seamless movement. "You're here!"

Chu Huai Sheng smiled. "Ah Yu is also here. You have to wait a second, Ah Yao is almost out."

As he was saying so, he noticed his attire. "The Temple's uniforms for this golden-star armor is admirably well-made. I wouldn't get tired of seeing this outfit. You wear it exceptionally well, Ah Yu!"

At this moment, Chu Yao strolled out, wearing her female alchemist outfit, looking elegant and graceful.

"Thank you, Chu Yao jie. Let's go?"

"Okay!"

The three of them mounted their horses, with Chu Huai Sheng leading the way and Lin Mu Yu and Chu Yao trotting behind. The people, spotting the two men in full armor, quickly scattered out of their way, even though the pace of the horses' trots were not fast at all.

After a while they arrived at a secluded park, it was the Rainsong Manor. A few servers walked up to them. "Your Honors, may we see an invitation?"

"Here it is," Lin Mu Yu displayed Xiao Xi's invitation card.

"You are guests of the Princess! Kindly proceed to the seventh floor. We shall take good care of your steeds."

At this time, the sun was already dipping over the horizon. All around the Rainsong Manor were soft red glowing lanterns. A young looking, nymph-like girl servant floated up towards the seventh floor, with a tray of elegant delicacies and fruits in her hands. The seventh floor was the most expensive private room in the entire Rainsong Manor, especially during holidays such as the Upper Sunset Festival. The cost of reserving the entire floor was definitely not your normal sort of expensive.

"I heard that renting penthouse of the Rainsong Manor during the Upper Sunset Festival for one night costs 700 golden yin!" Chu Yao made a silly face, laughing.

Chu Huai Sheng smiled slightly. "No worries, we don't have to pay."

Lin Mu Yu said, “Xiao Xi has money, this won’t matter to her.”

……

When the three arrived at the upper floor, they found a group of defense guards outside the door. Imperial Guard Commander Qin Lei was also in battle armor, his hand on his sword hilt. “And everyone’s finally here.”

He didn’t recognize Lin Mu Yu, however. “And this is…?”

Chu Huai Sheng smiled. “Reporting to Commander, this is the Princess’ guest, Lin Mu Yu!”

“Ah, I see, let’s go in then,” Qin Lei grinned, without saying anything else.

After heading inside, they saw that Tang Xiao Xi and Feng Ji Xing were already inside. Tang Xiao Xi stood up. “Great, you’re all here. Let’s go inside and have them serve dinner?”

“Yes, as the Princess wishes!”

“Mu Mu, come sit beside me?” Tang Xiao Xi beamed at him.

Lin Mu Yu felt awkward, until Chu Huai Sheng shot him a meaningful glance. He could only obey orders, his armor making a

clunking sound as he sat down beside Tang Xiao Xi.

Tang Xiao Xi cocked her head to the side, her gaze attaining a far-off glaze. She beamed. “Mu Mu, this Empire’s battle armor is absolutely stunning on you. I have never seen any high ranking officer more suited to wear this armor than you.”

Feng Ji Xing rubbed his nose, sounding a bit snubbed. “Ah so it seems for the Princess that Commander Qin Lei’s and my own armor are not as attractive then…”

Qin Lei sat down. “Imperial Guard Commander is jealous. Look at this little guy, you’re the commander of thirty thousand imperial guards!”

Lin Mu Yu chuckled, a shade of red. “Please, don’t ridicule me. I am but a mere trainer at the Temple. I don’t deserve to be discussed at the same level with high ranking generals and military men such as yourselves.”

Qin Lei chuckled, shaking his head. “Ay, Ah Yu, there’s no need to be so overly humble. You’re one of the strongest trainers in the Temple, this is a fact we all know. Besides, the Temple has always been the cradle for the Empire’s most prominent generals. A lot of first-rate fighters come from the Temple. Myself, Feng Ji Xing, Chu Huai Sheng… we were all people of the Temple. So there’s no need for you to be so humble.”

“Oh, thank you… I’m sorry, what’s your name?”

Qin Lei was startled, before bursting into good-natured laughter. “I’m Qin Lei, the son of Lord Jin Ning, Commander of the Imperial Defense Army.”

Lin Mu Yu’s heart fell to his stomach. Looked like tonight’s banquet was not just any shabby affair. Tang Xiao Xi’s guests were each more powerful than the other. This Qin Lei character was even the son of a lord... definitely one of the Empire’s more prominent figures.

Chapter 76 : White-Robed Imperial Guard

“Come, this is Lan Yan City’s sweetest jade flower wine. Try some.”

As the servant poured out a whole cup, the fragrance of wine dissolved into the air and floated into everyone’s olfactory systems. Feng Ji Xing held up his chalice, grinning. “Let us all drink three cups each, and then it shall be time to watch the performance of the Upper Sunset Festival.”

Lin Mu Yu was surprised, a performance?

He raised his chalice and downed it in one gulp. It was as if a sweetness sliding down his throat, without the usual heady heat of liquor.

Tang Xiao Xi downed hers as well. “I’m going to go prepare now, then.”

“Prepare what?” Lin Mu Yu stared at her.

Tang Xiao Xi pushed herself up to a standing with the support of his shoulder. She smiled coyly. “You’ll know in a while.”

……

Feng Ji Xing, Lin Mu Yu, Chu Huai Sheng, Qin Lei, and Chu Yao

sat in the banquet hall. After finishing two more cups each, a few servants carried a bass drum out before them. Lin Mu Yu grinned, “Is this to be a Sun Dance?”

Feng Ji Xing snickered. “No, it’s a Long Sleeve Dance.”

“Oh?”

“Ah Yu, look to your right and you’ll know.” Feng Ji Xing said.

Ah Yu turned his head, just in time to catch Tang Xiao Xi walking out in a new outfit, a bright vermillion as always, but with long and flowing wide sleeves, and a skin-tight body, showing off Tang Xiao Xi’s miniscule waist and outstanding outline. There was an indescribable beauty to it.

She gently released her fire fox fighting spirit, leaping gracefully up on the brum. Her body was already extremely light, and with the support of the fire fox, she was almost floating. Lin Mu Yu was riveted, and couldn’t help saying, “The Lithe Body Dancing on the Palm… must be something like this, right?”

Chu Huai Sheng laughed. “Lithe Body Dancing on the Palm? Ah Yu, you are quite brilliant. This line encapsulates it perfectly.”

“I only borrowed it,” he said.

(TL: “Lithe Body Dancing on the Palm”: is a line made famous by an erotic novel starring a character named Zhao Yan Fei called Fei

Yan Wai Chuan)

……

At this moment, Tang Xiao Xi stepped out in long her long sleeved gown. “This is my newly learned Long Sleeve Dance. It’s not perfect yet, and I’m not sure if Xiao Yin’s Autumn Goose ballad will go with it. Xiao Yin, let’s begin?”

From behind the pearl screen, a delicate voice responded, “Okay, let’s start.”

A harmonious tone began playing. With the delicate grace of a fairy, Tang Xiao Xi began swaying and dancing atop the drum, as if she were a nymph. The zither’s music was melodious and mellifluent, diving and flowing perfectly with Tang Xiao Xi’s every motion, her swan-like grace. The rhythm suddenly picked up the pace, there was a sound of horses and armies from all four corners of the room. The audience’s heartbeats hastened in synchronicity, and Tang Xiao Xi’s feet blazed atop the drum, making it sound as if a war drum was being played.

The zither abruptly stopped, bringing the music to a halt.

Tang Xiao Xi was already kneeling on top of the drum, her two hands held in front of her, looking pleased with herself.

……

Lin Mu Yu, Feng Ji Xing, and the others were all speechlessly staring, and so Qin Lei hurriedly clapped his hands in thunderous applause and cheered. “Her Highness and the Princess’ zither dance was a match made in heaven!”

Tang Xiao Xi chuckled, lightly hopping down from the drum. She lifted the pearl curtain. “Xiao Yin, come out and eat!”

Lin Mu Yu awaited to see who would come out. Who in the world could play such a shockingly delicate yet heart-wrenching verse? It had to be someone from outside?

At this moment, a young girl wearing a deep blue cloak stepped out hugging her jade zither. Lin Mu Yu’s mouth dropped. This beautiful face… he had seen it somewhere else before… but where?

Qin Yin walked out with Tang Xiao Xi’s support, and set down her zither. She noticed the young man looking at her and then-
“You? How is it you…”

“You two know each other?” Tang Xiao Xi’s eyes widened.

Lin Mu Yu had the same expression as Xiao Xi, but then he suddenly remembered the thousand golden yin coins. “Pretty lady, you still owe me a diamond coin. I couldn’t find you anywhere.”

Everyone was shocked into silence. No one knew that the two had seen each other before.

“What’s going on here?” Tang Xiao Xi asked.

Qin Yin remembered that night when she had been bitten by the venomous dragon snake, it had been Lin Mu Yu who saved her, but he had also seen her naked while saving her. At the memory, her face flushed a deep scarlet. She stuttered, “So… so… the person who saved me that day in the Dragon Seeker Forest was you…”

The penny dropped for Feng Ji Xing, and he burst out guffawing. “What a coincidence! This world is too small. So that night was Ah Yu who saved Your Highness. I should have guessed!”

Tang Xiao Xi’s eyes widened. “Ah? Xiao Yin, was it really Mu Mu who saved you from the venom that night?”

Lin Mu Yu realized that Xiao Yin wasn’t just anyone. He weakly asked, “Can I ask… just who is Miss Xiao Yin?”

Tang Xiao Xi laughed, enunciating clearly, “Qin Yin… is the current and great Guang Ming Wang Emperor’s daughter, Her Highness the Empire’s Elder Princess.”

Weng…

Lin Mu Yu’s mind was blank, his face flashing green and purple, squirming and uncomfortable. “No… no wonder I couldn’t find her that day I went to 1 Tong Tian Street.”

Qin Yin giggled. “I do live in 1 Tong Tian Street’s Ze Tian Palace.

It’s your fault you couldn’t find it, and I couldn’t give you the thousand golden yin.”

Qin Lei was more naive. “Ah Yu, what is this business with the thousand golden yin?”

Lin Mu Yu wanted to die. Asking for a thousand golden yin from the Empire’s princess as a fee for rescuing her life; unless he wanted to die…. He raised his chalice, grinning shamelessly. “Nothing. Let’s drink this cup and then we’ll be even, let the past stay in the past!”

Feng Ji Xing already figured it out, his face a combination of shock and disgust. “Ah Yu, you’re really… you really follow through to your word, don’t you?”

Lin Mu Yu wanted nothing more than to throw himself into a pit and disappear.

Qin Yin noticed Lin Mu Yu’s awkward expression. She stood up, and walked round to their table with her cup. She sat down in a kneeling position, raised her chalice, and flashed a winning, sweet smile. “No matter what, you saved my life that night. This cup is my gratitude for you, thank you.”

The beautiful princess suddenly sitting there caused Lin Mu Yu momentary bewilderment. He quickly raised his cup. “I’m only an alchemist, saving people is what I ought to do. Meeting Your Highness that day was also fate. Your Highness doesn’t need to thank me, this embarasses me.”

Qin Yin giggled, looking radiantly young. “Then since Commander Feng calls you Ah Yu, can I can I can you Ah Yu as well?”

“Certainly, Your Highness.”

“Okay.”

Qin Yin downed her cup in one fell swoop, showing off her extremely attractive elongated snow white neck.

Lin Mu Yu raised his cup as well, downing his. His emotions were jumbled. He didn’t think that he would ever be so near to the master of this world. The Empire’s princess was sitting right in front of him. He could literally smell her fragrance. The feeling was curious. The dream of so many for so long... and he was the one who was living it!

Tang Xiao Xi cocked her head, examining Lin Mu Yu’s flushed face. “Mu Mu, you must be nervous. Don’t worry, Xiao Yin won’t bite.”

“R-right,” he said.

Qin Yin stood up, and with light steps, floated back to her own seat. “Today’s Upper Sunset Festival, I should have been at Ze Tian Palace with my Emperor Father. And yet, Xiao Xi has been so convincing, so I came. And I’m glad I did, because I was able to see

Xiao Xi's Long Sleeve Dance, as well as my savior Lin Mu Yu. This joy is ineffable."

Chu Yao stood up, bowing the Empire's lady bow. "Your Highness, being able to meet you today is the work of destiny. I would like to be so bold as to ask Your Highness to do Ah Yu and myself justice."

"Oh?" Qin Yin looked at her. "Chu Yao jie jie, what's the matter?"

Chu Yao described everything that happened in Silver Fir City.

Qin Yin was reeling after she finished listening. She had grown up in the depths of Ze Tian Palace, and had no idea of the cruelty of the outside world. Her pretty face was splashed with surprise, but it slowly colored with fury. She hit the table with a fist, the God Binding Lock martial spirit materializing behind her. "That's disgusting! Killing people for a Medicine God Index. How could a bastard like Hua Tian become Silver Fir City' protector?"

Feng Ji Xing cupped his fist. "Your Highness, I have already sent people to investigate this matter. Not before long, I will have collected sufficient evidence to prove Ah Yu and Ah Yao's innocence."

Qin Yin nodded, finally smiling. "Chu Yao jie jie," she said, "Commander Feng will definitely be able to help you with this. And even if he can't, I will personally make sure to clear your good names."

“My utmost gratitude to Your Highness!” Chu Yao beamed.

……

After three rounds, Feng Ji Xing, Chu Huai Sheng, Qin Lei, and the others were already tipsy. Even the gorgeous ladies Qin Yin, Tang Xiao Xi, and Chu Yao had flushed cheeks.

Feng Ji Xing used the opportunity to cup his fist and say, “Your Highness Yin, I have something that I’m not sure if I can say or not say.”

“Commander Feng, say away,” Qin Yin beamed winsomely at the bowl of grapes in front of her.

Feng Ji Xing said, “Ah Yu is currently Holy Level 59. He’s on the verge of breaking through into Heaven Realm, and is also considered one of the top fighters today. He’s currently a trainer at the Temple. I would like to recommend Ah Yu for a position inside the Imperial Defense Army, to be an imperial guard. Would this be okay with Your Highness?”

“An Imperial guard?”

Qin Yin opened her mouth, then stopped. It was a few seconds before she said, “Commander Feng, members of the imperial guard are personally selected by my Emperor Father. I don’t usually have a say in these matters.”

“If so, then forget I said anything!” Feng Ji Xing laughed merrily.

Lin Mu Yu asked, “Imperial guard... are the assignments better than at the Temple?”

Chu Huai Sheng burst out laughing. He looked over at the naive boy. “Ah Yu, the entire Ze Tian Palace is the very core center of where security should be highest, and it’s up to the Imperial guards to do so. The Imperial guards also have a chance of being promoted to White-Robed Imperial Guards, to take on the immeasurable honor of personally being an imperial bodyguard of the Emperor himself. As of now, there are only six White-Robed Imperial Guards: Qu Chu, Lei Hong, Du Hai, Qin Lei, Yao Yuan, and Feng Ji Xing. Every single one is a legendary figure. If you’d be able to join the imperial army, that’d be great!”

Lin Mu Yu had a lightbulb moment. So sitting at this table were two White-Robed Imperial Guards! Feng Ji Xing and Qin Lei... were of the same rank as Qu Chu and Lei Hong!

Chapter 77 : Drunken Swordfight

“Hai! Just drinking is so boring…”

Qin Lei stood up, cupping a fist. “What if we remove the tables in the center, and have a few friendly matches… how about it? Elder Brother Feng, we haven’t crossed swords in a long time, haven’t we?”

“Here?” Feng Ji Xing was taken aback. “That’s probably not the best idea… Today is Upper Sunset Festival, everything should be in harmony.”

Qin Lei had a rasher personality. “We are all students of the martial arts. Who said anything about disharmony, right Xiao Yin?”

Qin Yin curled her lips up in a smile. “Since you’re going to compete, don’t make too big of a mess. I have a suggestion. Calling martial spirits is off-limits. Once you call yours out, it’s considered your loss. Besides, martial competition is too dangerous. A swordfight would be better.”

“A swordfight?”

Qin Yin nodded. “How about it?”

Feng Ji Xing agreed. “Of the six martial arts, sword art is the chief. Might as well, so as not to break the harmony. Hehe, besides,

my sword skill is only third-rate, so everyone, please go easy on me.”

Qin Lei, Feng Ji Xing, Chu Huai Sheng, and the other high ranking military officials were mostly pike and longsword users. But every one of them had a sabre sword as a rule.

The servants moved quietly and quickly around the room to move the tables, leaving an empty space in the middle.

Feng Ji Xing leapt up, his long sword already at the ready, drawing a flower in the air with light turns of his wrist. He laughed. “Come, come, who will first receive Commander’s obscure sword technique?”

Chu Huai Sheng burst out laughing, walking over to him and taking out his sword. “Elder Brother Feng, I’ll gladly take you up on that!”

“Hei!”

Feng Ji Xing was quick on the attack, his long sword quivering with intense energy. The sword blade flashed by in three consecutive swipes. Chu Huai Sheng’s sword techniques were more gentle and smooth. He calmly blocked Commander Feng’s attacks before striking. Feng Ji Xing rushed to block it. The two crossed swords in a flurry of ding, ding, dang, dang sounds at least seven or more times.

Both were restraining their fighting spirits, because their sword energies alone were turning the entire place into complete disarray.

Chu Yao looked at the two, clapping and laughing. “Fight, big brother!”

Feng Ji Xing laughed. “Your big brother’s sword skills are so clumsy, how can he fight?”

“Ding!”

At the crossing of the sword, Chu Huai Sheng retreated with his long sword, taking several steps back until he backed up against the wall, his face colored with surprise. He looked up. “Elder Brother Feng, you win again.”

Feng Ji Xing had a gentle movement in his sword, and it was this tenderness that defeated Chu Huai Sheng.

“It’s my turn!”

Qin Lei was a martial arts lover. In two or three steps, his sword skills display showed clearly the difference between himself and Feng Ji Xing. There was a clarity in his movements that had Feng Ji Xing frantically dodging and ducking in three to five rounds, and accidentally moving outside the designated area. He cupped his fist. “Commander Qin is unbeatable... this little general surrenders.”

“Ah, so soon?” Qin Lei was stumped, looking as if he hadn’t even begun to warm up. He scratched his head. “I thought you two would have improved your sword skills… but it seems like you’ve been slacking off during training.”

Feng Ji Xing laughed. “My specialty is the wind sword, not the sword play.”

Qin Lei swept a glance around the room, and spotted Lin Mu Yu. “Ah Yu, you have a sword with you, I’m guessing you must also practice the art of the sword. Come, come, how about a few rounds?”

“Ah?”

Lin Mu Yu looked up with a start, not predicting that he would have to participate at all. He quickly shook his head. “I’m sure there’s no need, I’m just a trainer at the Temple, and I’m just training at the Earth level… I can’t compete with you people who are at the Heaven rankings.”

“Ah Yu!”

Qin Lei stared at him with wide, steely eyes. “Are you not giving me, Qin Lei, face?”

On one side, Tang Xiao Xi reached out a hand and slightly pushed Lin Mu Yu’s shoulder. “Mu Mu is a wonderful swordsman. Big

Brother Qin Lei, you better be careful. If you lose, you'll lose the entire Imperial Defense Army's face..."

Qin Lei stared harder. "Ah Yu!" he boomed.

Lin Mu Yu felt like a duck being pushed onto a perch. He stood up helplessly and entered the designated sparring area. He clarified, "No using of fighting spirits, right?"

"Right. Now, unsheath your sword!"

"Okay!"

Lin Mu Yu towered over where he stood, his right hand held straight in front of his chest, columns of dense energy rising from him. The Prairie Fire sword on his back made a keng! sound as it withdrew itself from the sheath and flew gracefully into his outstretched hand, before glowing with a fiery red energy.

"Good sword! Remarkable sword skills!"

Qin Lei was intrigued. He had seen many sword experts but no one had Lin Mu Yu's aura. Even Qin Yin had her eyes wide open. She had no idea that this shameless guy, who seemed to love money more than life itself, could have such unusual and powerful sword techniques.

"I'm coming!"

Qin Lei roared, before easing his body into a fluid leap into the air. The sword light flashed like a roulette, continuously striking four times. Lin Mu Yu couldn't retreat, all he could do was hold up his two hands firmly clutched on the sword hilt to block the attack. It felt like the bones on his two arms were about to shatter from the force, four times over. He hadn't yet recovered from the attack when he was jolted by Qin Lei's sudden shout. He reared his leg...

Must defend against it, or else he'd lose!

Crackling lightning and fire began brimming within Lin Mu Yu. Peng! He matched Qin Lei, kick for kick. But it was obvious that the opponent was stronger. He was forced back several steps, but during the split second of retreat, a crackle of lightning shot out from his right hand. Pa-tss! The Prairie Sword was already in the air away from his hand and he had used Lightning sword to evoke Thunderstorm Rage!

Shwa!

Dark blue lightning rays surrounded the Prairie Fire Sword, shooting directly towards Qin Lei. Lin Mu Yu didn't use all the energy he could, maybe only about five percent of the strength, because he didn't want to harm Qin Lei.

"Ha??"

Qin Lei, stumped, rapidly fumbled to block the attack with his iron fist, and had to generate a Spirit Armor gas armor to block

against the attack.

“Peng!”

Lightning spilled everywhere. Qin Lei had underestimated the strength of Lin Mu Yu, and had been propelled several steps backwards. His face flushed a ruddy red, and with a low shout, he concentrated his energy into his sword blade. He leapt up and from this high position, he geared for another attack. With a look of condescension, he charged forward like wild bull, determined to use his strength to make his opponent submit.

This blow was too heavy, Lin Mu Yu was struggling to keep his eyes peeled open.

Columns of light wind silently gave rise on his open palm. This was the prelude to Wind Sword Style.

He!

When Lin Mu Yu flicked his hand, the Prairie Fire sword swept along in perfect synchronicity, engulfing the small-scale area with violently cold winds. Qin Lei was only holding a military blade of common metal, which was a far cry from the level-five mysterious metal spirit sword. And with the sword spirit’s strength and shriek, the gale rushed into Qin Lei’s offensive hurricane.

Peng!

It was another loud explosion, with a highly destructive power. Qin Yin, Feng Ji Xing, Tang Xiao Xi, Chu Yao, and the others were left speechless.

Qin Lei's face was colored with astonishment. He never thought, he never imagined, even, that this little boy could have such an advanced sword skill set. It was completely different from all the other weak attacks of other swordsmen.

Lin Mu Yu was pumped. He really wanted to see his four new sword techniques against this level 72 Sky King Qin Lei. This was a unique opportunity indeed!

Weng!

The sword responded and began revolving. Lin Mu Yu spread his two arms open. Columns of blazing fire held the Prairie Fire sword, but he forewent the true dragonfire. He chose to go with normal fire. With a tiny shriek, the fiery long sword wailed as it shot like an arrow at Qin Lei.

Qin Lei started, already filled with a sinking feeling that he couldn't block it.

He!

His boots stamped heavily on the floor, and with a violent shudder, columns of golden light rose to surround him like a shield. It was his martial spirit!

……

“Big Brother Qin Lei!”

Qin Yin suddenly stood up, her eyes filled with a fervid urgency. The God Binding Lock was the the most destructive martial spirit in the world. It was no joke. If he made the tiniest error or miscalculation, it could take his opponent’s life. Lin Mu Yu had saved her own life, she could never let herself watch him die in front of her.

Peng!

The fire increased sharply, the sword had broken through the God Binding Lock. Qin Lei retreated several steps, his blood and energy rushing, his concentration solely on fighting. Qin Yin’s warning fell on deaf ears. With a wave of his sword, he rushed towards him.

With two steady legs, he energized his true energy. Lin Mu Yu’s fastest reaction was to call out Dragon Rampart and Ebony Scale. At the same time, his two hands shot out to control the Prairie Fire sword by flame. True dragonfire spewed out and encircled the sword blade. Since the true dragonfire could easily wreak injury on someone, it would be better for him to use it as defense, right?

PENG!

With a blast, it felt like the entire seventh floor of the Rainsong Manor was about to overturn.

Ga-ga-ga…

Lin Mu Yu was already on his knees on the floor, his face slack-jawed and struggling to heave breaths. Dragon Rampart and Ebony Scale were already shattered. The Prairie Fire Sword was lying on the floor. If not for the protection of the true dragonfire, he would probably already be dead.

Qin Lei withdrew his long sword, his face pallid. His martial spirit had, upon the second of contact, burst and shattered. His martial spirit injured, he couldn't help but become injured as well. He spat out a mouthful of fresh blood before looking up at Lin Mu Yu, his mouth split into a wide grin. "Ah Yu, amazing sword skills, handsome blocking techniques! Haha! Brilliant! Brilliant! I want another round!"

Lin Mu Yu didn't even raise his head. He waved his left hand. "Elder Brother Qin Lei, I lose, I surrender."

He coughed up blood, he was truly drained.

…….

Tang Xiao Xi shot towards him, helping him up. "Are you okay?"

Chu Yao followed over, feeling Lin Mu Yu's pulse. She smiled.

“It’s okay, his martial spirit is just a little worn out.”

Qin Yin stared down Qin Lei with a reproachful look. “Big Brother Qin Lei, you’re too reckless. I can’t believe you used your martial spirit to fight with Ah Yu. If it weren’t for his high level of training, he could be…”

Qin Lei’s face shone with apologetic guilt. “I… I’m sorry. Xiao Yin please don’t get mad, I…”

“Never mind. You should rest now.”

“Okay.”

……

Feng Ji Xing raised a chalice. “Ah Yu, who is your master?”

“A secretive old man…”

“Oh?” Feng Ji Xing could see that he didn’t want to expound, so he laughed instead. “Since Ah Yu has such handsome sword skills, it would be a tragic shame if you don’t join the sword fight tournament that happens only once every three years.”

“Sword fight tournament?”

“Oh right. The Empire holds a sword fight tournament every three years. The first person to win champion can become one of the members of the Imperial Defense army, and can garner the special glory of having an audience with His Royal Highness!”

Feng Ji Xing patted his chest. “I’m nothing. I was champion at the sword fight tournament three years ago. And to think I was the Tiger of the Tong Tian Street back in the day!”

“Tiger of Tong Tian Street?”

Chu Huai Sheng was laughing on one side. “That means that the other year, he brought his rotten sword hacking his way through from east to west. He picked fights with the worst of them from the streets. No one could win… ay… life is unfair, to think that even this kind of people can become Commander of the Imperial Defense.”

Feng Ji Xing glared at him. “Ugly people like you should just shut up.”

Chu Huai Sheng: “….”

Chapter 78 : Upright And Unyielding

The banquet came to a close at the hour of the pig (9-11PM in the 12 earthly branches system). Qin Lei lead more than thirty Imperial Guards to escort Qin Yin and Tang Xiao Xi back to their estates. Feng Ji Xing drunkenly picked up his sword then hauled himself up his warhorse. He turned around to look at Lin Mu Yu, smiled and asked, " Ah Yu, you had so much to drink, can you still ride a horse?"

Lin Mu Yu was holding the reins in his hands, his helmet tucked snugly against his armpit. He smiled as he replied. "I can manage. Elder Brother Feng, you should worry about yourself, can you really ride home like that?"

Feng Ji Xing could not help but laugh. "This is fine, Lanyan City is Feng Ji Xing's home. If one were to get lost in his own house, it is fine. If I really pass out, my brothers will find me and carry me back home."

Qi Lei burped, his hand still held a wine jug. He called out, "Imperial Guards, to your horses!"

.....

The lantern lights underneath the Rainsong Manor were very dim. Lin Mu Yu could not make out Qin Yin and Tang Xiao Xi's faces and could only see two beautiful figures mount their horses. He asked, "Your Highness, Xiao Xi, should I escort you back before returning to the Temple? Elder Brother Qin Lei has had so much to

drink...”

Qin Yin smiled faintly under the dim starlight. "Ah Yu, you’ve also had too much to drink. Go home and rest. Don’t worry, Lanyan City is the Imperial Capital and there are dozens of fine Imperial Guards behind me. Nobody can harm me and Xiao Xi will also be under my protection. Quickly return to the Temple. It's already dark. Watch out for wolves hiding in the shadows."

“Alright.” Lin Mu Yu knew that Qin Yin was referring to Zeng Fang, who was itching to dismember him. He whipped his horse forward and smiled in reply, “Then, until we meet again!”

Tang Xiao Xi replied with drooping eyes, "Bye, Mu Mu!"

Qin Yin suddenly thought of something as she watched Lin Mu Yu’s retreating back. She loudly called out, “Ah Yu, remember to join the Swordsmanship Tournament! If you win, my Emperor Father and I will attend your award ceremony!”

The dark night was tranquil and cold. She didn't know whether or not she was heard.

An Imperial Guard holding onto the reins of Qin Yin’s horse said, "Your Highness, shall we return to Ze Tian Palace? That man has already gone far....."

Qin Yin’s eyes were looking far into the distance. She took her eyes away blinking then smiled. “Alright. But let us first escort

Xiao Xi to the Seven Seas Duke’s estate before returning to Ze Tian Palace. Let’s go!”

“Yes!”

……

After Lin Mu Yu and Chu Huai Sheng escorted Chu Yao back to the Alchemist Division he made his way back to the temple. The two guards on duty were in awe upon seeing him in his imposing attire, riding atop the horse like a proper Imperial soldier. They immediately greeted him with the military salute. “Honored Lin Zhi, you are back!?”

"Yes."

Lin Mu Yu nodded and leisurely entered the Temple grounds.

He was walking through the long corridor, and as he approached the entrance to the stables, a figure suddenly ran towards him. Lin Mu Yu could barely make out his face under the torchlight, it was Zhang Wei.

"Master Zhang Wei, what is it?" Lin Mu Yu asked.

Zhang Wei looked pensively towards the guards in the surrounding area, said in a low voice, "Master Lin Zhi, there is something I must tell you, but....here is not a place to talk, come with me!"

“Yes.”

Lin Mu Yu dismounted to walk side by side with Zhang Wei to the training hall, he then said, "Now you can tell me what is it about?"

Zhang Wei spoke while gnashing his teeth. "Brother, do you still remember Little Beansprout?"

"Yes, of course I remember. Little Beansprout died by the sword of Ou Yang Qiu. I'Il remember it for the rest of my life!"

"The death of Little Beansprout only exchanged for 500 gold coins, but these 500 gold coins still have not reached the hands of his parents."

"What? "Lin Mu Yu trembled, eyes opened wide and stared at Zhang Wei. "What happened?"

Zhang Wei took a deep breath, looked quite angry and said, "The home of Little Beansprout is in Sunset Village just outside of Lanyan city. Both his parents are healthy and alive, but....This morning, I was ordered along with other Temple horsemen to travel to buy winter coats. When we passed Sunset Village, we saw the parents of Little Beansprout die at the hands of someone, and the 500 gold coins were nowhere to be found."

"Oh, shit!"

Lin Mu Yu had a shortness of breath since his drunken nausea had yet to pass, his face reddened as he said, "Was it the work of Zeng Fang and Ou Yang Qiu?"

Zhang Wei sighed. "It is likely....we have already offended Shen Hou Fu, Zeng Fang killing the parents of Little Beansprout to vent his anger was a possibility. If not for my negligence, the old couple could have escaped.

"No, I am to blame." Lin Mu Yu clenched his fist while in pain.

Zhang Wei looked thoughtfully into his eyes. "Master Lin Zhi, the parents of Little Beansprout were unjustly killed, right? Even if we cannot avenge the death of Little Beansprout, we can still avenge his parents' murders."

Lin Mu Yu gently nodded. "Who is investigating the case?"

"The Firebird Division“

Zhang Wei said lightly, “The Firebird Division manages all the murders within the scope of Lanyan city, but the The Firebird Division belongs to the Ministry of Justice, and the current minister is a frequent visitor of the God Marquis' estate. If the marquisate presses hard enough, the Firebird Division cannot do anything about the trial. I have also received information that Firebird Division investigators have already confirmed that the parents of Little Beansprout died at the hands of bandits, and that refusing to hand over the 500 gold coins cost them their lives."

Zhang Wei punched the wall in before continuing, "They died by a sword piercing through their throat, most likely the throat was already shattered by the sword. Only a few people in Lanyan City have such a sword technique, if it was not Ou Yang Qiu then who else?!"

Lin Mu Yu nodded . "I understand. Let's go meet with Grandmaster Lei Hong!"

“Ok!”

……

The two of them lead their horses straight to residence of Lei Hong. After hearing the knocking from his door, Lei Hong moved to quickly open it with a smile. "Ah Yu, Zhang Wei, you two...Oh dear...you should not meddle in things that don’t concern you. This world has so many injustices, are you intending to right them all?"

Obviously, Lei Hong knew the truth of what happened to Little Beansprout, he would understand this case better than anyone else.

Lin Mu Yu said with respect, "Grandpa Lei Hong, this is the Temple of the Empire. If even the Temple tolerates indiscriminate killings, then what is the meaning of this Temple, do we still consider ourselves as martial spirit cultivators of the Empire? Do we not learn martial arts to protect the Empire and fight for the

weak?”

Lei Hong was too shocked for words. "Ah Yu, these words.... no one would dare speak to that way."

Lin Mu Yu’s gaze was unyielding. "Grandpa Lei Hong, you are the grandmaster of the Temple, whether you like it or not, you carry this burden else you are not worthy of being the Grandmaster!"

"You....."

Lei Hong’s eyes widened to the size of beads and eventually shook his head in defeat. "You little brat, I really can’t deal with you. Why did that old Qu Chu accept such a stubborn disciple? Fine, in honor of Qu Chu, mount your horses, we are going to the Firebird Division!"

"Thank you Grandpa Lei Hong!"

Zhang Wei also said with joy, "Thank you, Grandmaster!"

.....

Located to the right of the Ministry of Justice, lies a building entirely for the Empires Firebird Division. In the gathering hall of Firebird Division, there is likeness of a soaring fire finch from the heavens, it’s head postured proudly, vivid and life-like. Eight armed guards were stationed outside the hall, their shadows danced imposingly in the torch light.

Several hoofbeats sound as Lei Hong, Lin Mu Yu, Zhang Wei come to a stop in front of Huo Qiao Si.

"Who goes there?" a guard challenged.

Lei Hong pulled back the hood covering his face.

"The Grandmaster of the Temple!" the guards knelt respectfully. The difference in their ranks were too great. Lei Hong is not only the Grandmaster, he is also one of the six White-Robed Imperial Guards, and one who has the qualifications to request an audience with the Emperor. He is a man whom mere guards cannot afford to offend.

"What troubles the Grandmaster that he needs to rush to the Firebird Division so late at night?"

"I want to see the head of Firebird Division, Lord Zheng Gu!"

"Lord Zheng Gu is already asleep."

"Please inform him that I want to see him."

"Yes!"

Not much time passed before the guards returned. "Grandmaster, please come in!"

"Many thanks!"

The guards led the group to the main hall of the Firebird Division. Attendants lit lanterns that illuminated the hall, a man dressed in civilian clothing rushed to greet the party, bowing lowly he said, "Your subordinate Zheng Gu greets Grandmaster Lei Hong! "

Lei Hong bid him to stand and jovially said, "Lord Zheng Gu, you needn’t be that polite, get up get up."

"For the Grandmaster to visit, what noble errand brings you here?"

"Ah Yu, do you wish to be the one to say it?"

"Yes!" Lin Mu Yu cupped a fist in his other hand as he told of his suspicions about the deaths of of Little Beansprout’s parents.

After listening, Zheng Gu’s face looked grim. "This case has already been settled. If we were to re-open it, won’t it be offensive? Grandmaster, I...."

Lei Hong lightly said, "Lord Zeng Gu, the Firebird Division is in charge enforcing the law in the Empire. If you were witness and injustice, would you let it be?"

Zheng Gu took a deep breath. "This matter has some significant connections.... I'm afraid I....."

Lei Hong waved a hand to interrupt. "Don't say anymore. Write an order, now, granting Lin Zhi and Zhang Wei the power to thoroughly investigate the case. This case implicates someone in the Temple and is a matter we must clear up, I am compelled to interfere."

Zheng Gu nodded before replying with clenched teeth. "Yes....but if the God Marquis were to look into it....."

Lei Hong laughed, patting him on the shoulder. "Do not worry, if the God Marquis looks into it, I Lei Hong will bear full responsibility."

"Many thanks. I'll do as you say!"

.....

Deep into the night, wearing Temple robes, Lin Mu Yu and Zhang Wei rode their horses towards the outskirts of the city, neither of them spoke. They only had one purpose, to punish and purge the evil from the Temple and Lanyan City, not allowing Zeng Fang to hide the sky in one hand.

TL: Hide the sky on one hand means to hide the truth from the masses.

Lei Hong looked at their retreating figures, thinking that he himself might be called into question for supporting them. Being a grandmaster for so many years, he had kept a low profile and played it safe. But now, something like this happened, Lei Hong himself was surprised by his own actions. But he was in high spirits. He saw in Lin Mu Yu the unbending and unyielding drive he had in his earlier years, but as time passed, his edge had dulled. Now, looking at Lin Mu Yu, he couldn’t help but reminisce.

"Ah Yu....."

He sighed heavily, suddenly at peace. Thinking that this child is like a dawn that will light up darkness hovering over the Empire.

Chapter 79 : For Justice

Sunset Village, in the silence of the night the villagers lay sleeping as they remained deaf to the sound of hoof falls.

Lin Mu Yu and Zhang Wei traveled northwest towards Sunset Village's Firebird Division branch. Rather than calling it a branch, it would be more apt to call it an outpost—consisting of a small courtyard with only two government officials supervising the entire village. The corpse of Little Beansprout's parents should be located there.

"Who is it?"

A man, eyes still hazy, answered the door. Seeing Lin Mu Yu and Zhang Wei wearing armor possessing the gold and silver stars from the Temple surprised the official. He quickly paid his respects. "Masters from the Temple, may I ask why you have come at such an hour to the Firebird Division. Is something the matter?"

Lin Mu Yu nodded and presented a document stating their business. "We are here to collect the bodies of the parents of Little Beansprout."

"Yes....."

When Lin Mu Yu and Zhang Wei saw the bodies, their hearts clenched in agony. There was a bloody hole right through both necks, it was difficult to distinguish bone from flesh. The heads lolled to the side, almost completely severed from the rest of the

body.

“This is indeed the killing technique Ou Yang Qiu favors.”

Zhang Wei gently covered the corpses with a white cloth. “Ou Yang Qiu has the ability to shatter the body. The damage is exactly the same as Little Beansprout’s death.”

“We have material evidence, but no one to testify.” Lin Mu Yu said at length, ”We must find a witness to fully condemn Ou Yang Qiu. Otherwise, we cannot prove that he killed the old couple. Let’s wait for morning and ask the villagers.”

“Alright.”

……

Early next day, they began interrogating the villagers one by one. In the end, they came upon a mute girl. She immediately went into hysterics the moment she laid eyes on Lin Mu Yu and Zhang Wei. Lin Mu Yu quickly approached and gripped her shoulder saying, “Lady, don’t be scared. We are not bad people, don’t be scared….”

The girl stared frightfully at the gold star on Lin Mu Yu’s collar, shaking her head in alarm and The Firebird Division official who accompanied them said, “Sir, this girl is deaf and mute, a lunatic. You will not get any answers from her.

“Is that so?”

Lin Mu Yu smiled coldly when he saw what was clutched in the girl's outstretched hand. The image of a sword over a gold star from the temple!

Zhang Wei snatched it from her. "Lady, did this come from the killer?"

She nodded, but dared not look at Lin Mu Yu and Zhang Wei.

"It was definitely Ou Yang Qiu!"

Zhang Wei flipped the emblem over. "Lin Zhi look, the name Ou Yang Qiu is carved at the back. He must have dropped it unintentionally. That son of a bitch, it was indeed him who killed the parents of Little Beansprout!"

Lin Mu Yu gnashed his teeth together. "We will head back to Lanyan City together with the bodies of Little Beansprout's parents as well as this girl. There is no saving Ou Yang Qiu this time!"

"Yes!"

……

It was noon when they reached the Temple to present all the evidence to master Ge Yang.

As morning training had just come to a close, the trainers and instructors left the hall in order to gather for a meeting, among them were Zeng Fang and Ou Yang Qiu.

Lei Hong gave a cold stare to each individual. “If an instructor were to mistakenly kill their sparring partner, they need not compensate the death with their own life. But.... What if an instructor were to intentionally murder multiple innocents, isn’t it a given that we should act according to the law?”

“Grandmaster, where are you going with this?” Zeng Fang asked.

Lei Hong’s tone lacked anger but was full of authority. “Ou Yang Qiu, kneel down!”

Ou Yang Qiu immediately complied saying, “Grandmaster, what sin did I commit?”

Lin Mu Yu pulled out a gold star emblem from his pocket and turned to Ou Yang Qiu, “When you killed the parents of Little Beansprout, you left this in the underbrush.”

“What?”

Ou Yang Qiu face suddenly paled. “Lin Zhi, don’t accuse something I didn’t do!”

Lei Hong interjected firmly. “The people from the Firebird Division will arrive shortly. They will handle this case accordingly.

Do not worry, if you are guilty, I will deal with you myself in order for the Temple to keep face. If you didn't kill them, then you will not be judged unfairly."

"Lin Zhi, darn you, you just want me dead!" Ou Yang Qiu was filled with nothing but resentment.

Lin Mu Yu did not speak and just gave him a cold stare.

Zeng Fang was staring at Lin Mu Yu and Zhang Wei coldly, unable to contain an outburst. "It must be great to be so important, interfering in even the Firebird Division's business. Is our Temple so overpopulated that we slate someone for death after hearing unjust accusations? Ou Yang Qiu is one of God Marquis' men, I'd like to see the Firebird Division try anything !"

Lei Hong answered coldly: "Young Marquis Zeng Fang, if you continue on this course, it will be your own undoing!"

Zeng Fang raised his eyebrows in arrogance. "Lei Hong, don't think that being a member of the White-Robed Imperial Guard makes you invincible. If you dare to touch Ou Yang Qiu, I will make sure you all will regret it!"

"Is that so? Then let us wait and see." Lei Hong laughed.

.....

Not long after, the Firebird Division arrived, bringing ten people,

Zheng Gu included. In a matter of time, they confirmed the crime and collected the witness testimony. Zheng Gu gave the sentence. ”According to law, Ou Yang Qiu is to be executed.”

Ou Yang Qiu shivered and immediately turned to Zeng Fang, “Young Marquis, help me……”

Zeng Fang stepped forward, he held out a gold medal saying, “Wait, Ou Yang Qiu is a member of God Marquisate, one of the noble families. I will guarantee his life using the God Marquis family crest, no one dare harm Ou Yang Qiu!”

Zheng Gu startled and looked to Lei Hong for assistance.

Lei Hong only stroked his beard, revealing a small smile. “Using the marquisate to secure his life is indisputable, but the Temple has its rules. Ou Yang Qiu committed a sin, and so he must face a trial. What say you, young marquis? I bear witness myself.”

“Trial…” Zeng Fang contemplated.

A trial would entail a duel; a fight to the death. If one is wronged, he has the right to challenge the one who caused it to a duel to settle the argument. This is an unwritten rule implemented by the Empire in order to prevent vendettas.

Ou Yang Qiu clung to that sliver of hope and still had it in him to sneer. “Little Beansprout is already dead. Who will challenge me on his behalf?”

In the entire Temple, the sword technique of Ou Yang Qiu had little competition and those who are able to match him number in few. As Little Beansprout was only a copper rank trainer, he did not have to influence to merit a fight to the death with Ou Yang Qiu.

This was when Lin Mu Yu chose to step up. “If there is to be a duel, then I will challenge master Ou Yang Qiu. Little Beansprout is my friend, in this battle, I will earn back the Temple’s respect on his behalf!”

“Lin Zhi?!”

Ou Yang Qiu could not contain his laughter. “You are just third rate trainer from the outskirts, a budding talent with no name for himself. Do you actually think you can beat me?”

Lin Mu Yu smiled confidently. “We’ll need to fight first before we know the outcome.”

“Hmph!”

Ou Yang Qiu’s eyes only bore coldness. “If you lose, I will not hesitate to gouge your heart out and feed it to dogs. And I always keep my word.”

Lin Mu Yu responded in kind. “I will not hesitate to kill you also, to honor Little Beansprout and his parents, else I’m not worthy to

be called his friend!”

Lei Hong smiled faintly at the exchange. “In ten minutes, the duel will commence in the main hall. I and the Firebird Division head, Zheng Gu will act as witnesses!”

Zeng Gu nodded. “I am at your disposal!”

……

Lin Zhi, you’ve gone mad!”

Qin Zi Ling gnashed his teeth together. “Ou Yang Qiu has already perfected his sword technique. Even if your defense is remarkable, you are still no match for him. And Ou Yang Qiu already desires your death, if you are defeated, there is no saving you. The rules of this does not allow anyone to interfere, even the grandmaster cannot help you.”

“Don’t worry Zi Ling.”

Lin Mu Yu clapped his shoulder reassuringly. “If I didn’t have the confidence to win, I would not have challenged him.”

“Okay. I hope you can avenge Little Beansprout!”

When people started to gather, a group of trainers became indignant upon finding out the truth. Little Beansprout’s situation

was much the same as theirs; the strong devouring the weak. They feared for their own sakes, and so one by one they cheered for Lin Mu Yu.

“Lin Zhi, go and defeat him! Kill that scum of an instructor!”

“Lin Zhi, take revenge for our fellow trainer!”

“Don’t lose, Lin Zhi!”

……

Lin Mu Yu had unknowingly become the beacon of hope for the trainers in the Temple. Lei Hong sighed at the spectacle. For the Temple to need hope was because there was power imbalance between the instructors and trainers. How was the Temple to prosper this way?

Ou Yang Qiu was busy preparing, sharpening his sword on a red whetstone which are known to be the best grindstones in the entire empire. The sharp sound of blade against stone is like provocation to the rival but with Lin Mu Yu’s willpower he was unaffected.

“Duel start! “ master Ge Yang announced.

Ou Yang Qiu stood at the center of the hall, boots stomping loudly on the brick floor. As he was psyching himself up, he threw a contemptuous smile towards his opponent. “Lin Zhi, you asked

for this, now die!”

Lin Mu Yu walked to the center of the hall with deliberate steps. About 10 meters from the center, he took in air as his body filled with energy yet he did not summon any protective shells, his signature Verdant Shell technique.

“Has Lin Zhi given up on defense, is he crazy?” one of the instructors commented.

Zhang Wei’s brows furrowed.

……

“You are inviting death!”

Full of vindication, Ou Yang Qiu gathered up battle energy, palms spread out to guide the force towards Lin Mu Yu. Moving towards it’s target, the force energy sped forward with devastating force, ensuring a crushing blow the moment it hit.

Lin Mu Yu used the opportunity to raise his left palm and unleashed the wind element energy he had been storing. this was the power of wind sword style, The Destructive Gale. Although this could not defeat the attack of Ou Yang Qiu, it can greatly slow down the blow.

With his right palm, purple thunder and lightning surged out, and he slashed Prairie Fire at Ou Yang Qiu. The attack came so fast

that the entire audience was stunned, no one has ever seen an attack with such speed and momentum!

“Thunderstorm Rage!”

Thunder and lightning shot out from the sword with an overwhelming force. This had been the reason why Lin Mu Yu had forsaken his defense; he had concentrated all his power on offense to deliver a decisive blow! Prairie Fire ripped through Ou Yang Qiu’s armor, just in time for the lightning to wreak havoc.

“Dang!”

Ouyang Qiu tried to repel it, but his long sword was shattered by the sharp blades of Prairie Fire, piercing through it, driving the opponent to the walls of the makeshift arena.

……

Ou Yang Qiu froze in disbelief, looking down at his chest where the armor was shattered and the heart burned to a crisp. His mind came up blank.

Chapter 80 : Cang Bai He

Clang.

Dust flew in the air, Ou Yang Qiu's shattered armor fell to the ground in a useless heap, his eyes were vacant as his breathing finally stopped.

Everyone who came to watch stood there stunned. Silence reigned in the main hall.

Not even Lei Hong could have anticipated these chain of events.

Gold star instructor Ou Yang Qiu was killed by Lin Mu Yu with a single blow!

.....

"How...How is this possible? Ge Yang rubbed his eyes in disbelief. "Ou Yang Qiu is the number one sword master in the Temple, how can he be killed with just one blow from Lin Zhi...."

Zeng Fang stood agape, his body would not stop shaking, unable to believe the reality in front of him, But Ou Yang Qiu lay dead, his defeat unmistakable.

The outcome had been decided the moment Ou Yang Qiu underestimated Lin Mu Yu, he never thought that Lin Mu Yu had

also mastered sword skills. Though, had he the prior knowledge, Lin Mu Yu’s thunder sword technique was still absurdly fast and impossible to dodge.

Zhang Wei kept a steady pace as he walked towards Ou Yang Qiu. He had a hand on his waist to pulled out the dagger he kept there as he knelt on one knee in front of the corpse. Grabbing it by the hair, he began sever the head from the rest of the body.

"Zhang Wei, what are you doing!?" Zeng Fang shouted indignantly.

Zhang Wei did not stop what he was doing, and was soon able to separate the head of Ou Yang Qiu. He held it aloft, smiling. "He is a sinner who was killed in a duel. I want to take his head to pay homage to the souls of the parents of Xiao Dou Ya. What? Does the young marquis intend to stop me?"

"You!"

Zeng Fang face filled with anger. " Well, Zhang Wei, it seems you have some courage after all.

Zhang Wei was not intimidated in the least and smiled. "I just did what must be done. Master Lin Zhi, you won spectacularly!"

Lin Zhi stayed silent, he hadn't killed someone in a long time, but there was no helping it. If he did not kill Ou Yang Qiu today, his heart would not be at peace.

Lei Hong smiled dimly at the corner, speaking clearly, "There is no need for quarrel now, the outcome of the duel is clear, Lin Zhi has won. Ou Yang Qiu was a gold star instructor of the Temple yet he committed a crime, so his punishment was due. I will strip him of his rank and salary that is owed him. His name will no longer be associated with the Temple. Let him be a warning to those who wish to harm the innocent, and to remind us all not to be merciless and ruthless."

The crowd of instructors and trainers cupped their fists in the other hand and replied in unison, “Yes, grandmaster!"

Lei Hong gave a satisfied smile. "Guards, bury the corpse of Ou Yang Qiu as you would a normal civilian. Everyone is dismissed. After lunch, training will continue as usual. Lin Zhi, stay behind."

"Yes!"

The group soon dispersed, leaving only Lin Mu Yu in the main hall, he asked, "Grandpa Lei Hong, what is it?"

Lei Hong sighed. You boy, are talented but reckless in handling things. Your actions today have already offended the God Marquisate. You will have to watch your back from now on for they have many allies in Lanyan city. I'm afraid that if you leave this be you will suffer at their hands, so how about...."

Lei Hong thought for a while."From now on, you will only train in the secret room. Aside from participating in daily sparring, you

are not to set foot outside the Temple. I will tighten security in the Temple grounds and no one is to enter the Temple without my approval."

Lin Mu Yu knew that Lei Hong is just protecting himself, he himself does not know the reach of the God Marquis. He cup his fist in the other hand to respond. "Yes, I'll do everything in accordance to your wished Grandpa Lei Hong!"

"Alright, good."

Lei Hong was slightly relieved. Even though this boy was unpredictable, as long as he can listen to reason, there shouldn't be any problems.

...

Nightfall in the brightly lit walls of the marquis' estate.

Crash!

A tea cup flew from the table, spilling tea everywhere and filled the room with its sweet fragrance.

Zeng Yi Fan, the imperial God Marquis, was known for his Army of God. But the Zeng Yi Fan now did not possess the charisma he had in his young days, his thin face was marked with wrinkles as the years passed, only the radiant gleam in his eyes remained unchanged. He held his fist out and spoke lowly. "This is

ridiculous, killing someone in the Temple is tolerable, but he even went and killed people in Sunset village. Ou Yang Qiu has no one but himself to blame!"

Zeng Fang has not seen his father this angry before, so he kept his head to the ground, body trembling as he spoke, "Father... Ou Yang Qiu is still a vassal of our God Marquisate. No matter what, we can't just let him die like that!"

"What else can be done?"

Zeng Yi Fan eyed Zeng Fang through a dim chillness. "Son, you have disappointed me much. The reason why I sent you to the Temple was for you to learn unique martial arts as well as extraordinary loyalty and courageousness, but all you have to show for it is your uselessness. Don't say anything anymore, or else I will have you live in the Temple of Ascetism for three years!"

Zeng Fang's face grew ashen, too scared to even utter a word.

It was at this moment that a beautiful girl leisurely stepped forward carrying a tea tray in her arms, she wore a snow white dress that drew out more of her beauty. As she put down the tray to massage Zeng Yi Fan, she smiled and said, "Dad, don't be mad at little brother. He is only in the prime of his youth, if you really put him in the Tower of Ascetism, I'm afraid he will become ignorant and waste away after three years."

The anger in Zeng Yi Fan's face slowly diminished. "Xiang Xiang, you spoil your little brother too much. Look at him, does he look

like a young lord of the God Marquisate? He only cares to make friends with useless bums!"

This young lady would be the daughter of Zeng Yi Fan, Zheng Xiang, the sister of Zeng Fang.

Zeng Xiang smiled placatingly. "Dad, don't think about this too much. Ou Yang Qiu was the first to killed someone, this is unmistakable, and now he died from his duel. This is not the fault of anyone."

Zeng Yi Fan nodded. Yes, I know, Xiang Xiang you go and rest, father has some thinking to do."

"Okay, very well."

Zheng Xiang took her leave.

.....

As soon as Zeng Xiang was far enough away, Zeng Yi Fan’s eye flashed."That boy, Lin Mu Yu killed Ou Yang Qiu, a move that tantamount to declaring war against the God Marquisate. Even if he is under Lei Hong’s protection, Hmph.... aren’t they looking down on us? Since that old fool Lei Hong does not fear the God Marquisate, then he won’t mind our warm reception."

After collecting his thoughts, Zeng Yi Fan took a deep breath and was pleased with himself. "I'm afraid old Cang will have to make a

personal appearance this time."

"As the Marquis commands, this old man will do everything in my power."

An air of comprehension finally hit Zeng Fang as he raised his head, surprised and eager. "Grandpa Cang is in the imperial capital?"

"Why not go and welcome him in?" Zeng Yi Fan smiled.

Zeng Fang quickly turned to go open the door, he saw an old man under the moonlight, a metal staff in his hand, a grin on his face. "Young'un, look how you've grown!"

"Grandpa Cang, what brings you to Lanyan city?"

"I came see how you and Xiang Xiang were doing."

The old man moved into the hall. He had an air of sagely power around him increasing in intensity with every step.

Zeng Yi Fan was ecstatic. "Congratulations, Elder Cang, for finally entering the Saint Realm!"

The old man lifted his head and smiled, "Cang Bai He has come to pay his respects to the marquis."

"No need to be polite, sit."

"Yes!"

Cang Bai He, one of the strongest warriors in the empire, previously served as a general under the marquis, following Zeng Yi Fan to war. But at the time Lord Guang Ming was bestowing rewards to the officials, he disappeared. Now that he has returned to Lanyan city, it will surely bring about a reign of terror.

"Elder Cang, did you hear about how the Temple has openly provoked the God Marquisate?" Zeng Yi Fan personally prepared the tea as he asked nonchalantly.

Cang Bai He nodded. "I have heard rumors, but the Temple is not to be underestimated. Even though many strong warriors have retired in the bygone years, Lei Hong, that old dog is still there. The God Marquisate has many outstanding talents, but dealing with Lei Hong directly is not advisable. After all, aside from Lei Hong, they have Ge Yang and those old farts still. I believe the marquis does not intend to attack Lei Hong head on?"

Zeng Yi Fan could not stop the laughter that erupted. "You know me well, Elder Cang!"

With a devious glint in his eyes, he said, "Lei Hong commanded Lin Mu Yu to do his dirty work and kill Ou Yang Qiu. A deliberate show of strength if there ever was one, so we must pay him back in kind. Lin Mu Yu and Zhang Wei are Lei Hong’s trusted aides. Within three days, I want those two crippled!"

"Yes!"

Cang Bai He smiled as his eyes flashed with killing intent.

……

Two days had passed in the blink of an eye. Lin Mu Yu trained within the Temple, already becoming increasingly proficient in his Four-Way Sword Skill while training with the Dragonforged Bone Tome at the same time. The more he trained with the Tome the more he could feel its mysteries. Once he finished the required 72 cycles, he would feel an increase of his power within, this relic indeed had endless mysteries.

Lin Mu Yu continued to train, oblivious to the dangers around him.

……

Deep into the night, along Tong Tian street, a tavern stood shrouded in complete darkness.

"Baby, baby, my heart is trembling. Swing left, swing right, let this fellow see..."

Messy vulgar songs came from the mouth of a drunken Zhang Wei. He held onto the railing with one hand, a tankard in from the

tavern in the other. Dead drunk yet again, this was actually a daily occurrence in the life of Zhang Wei. He loved wine as much as he loved life, this being his one greatest weakness.

In the hour of the pig (9pm-11pm), the streets were devoid of life.

Suddenly, an aura of bloodlust came to him from above.

"Who's there?"

The approaching threat caused Zhang Wei to immediately sober up. His martial spirit materialized, causing raging flames to erupt around his body. He brandished his fist, waving it in the air, the image of a fist made of flames to lingered in the empty space. "Come out and show yourself to this daddy!"

Zhang Wei's secret technique—Fierce Soul Fist!

Laughter came from above. "Zhang Wei's Fierce Soul Fist has indeed some likeness to Xiang Wen Tian's Fierce Fire Fist, but it lacks refinement. Now, you will kneel before me."

A strong, invisible force bore itself downwards, the building's bricks crumbled piece by piece. Zhang Wei's fist made contact and the sound of the bones cracking could be heard. His knees gave and he knelt under the pressure. In the presence of absolute strength, he did not even get the chance to fight back.

He lifted his head to look, an old man appeared before him,

someone he did not know.

"Who are you"?

"The one who will lay waste to you!"

The figure suddenly appeared behind Zhang Wei, unsheathing a sword.

.....

"Ah....."

In the deep of the night, a miserable howl echoed throughout Tong Tian street.

Chapter 81 : Looking For Medicine

“Master Lin Zhi, wake up!”

The shouting came from outside the room.

Lin Mu Yu was roused from his dream, he inhaled deeply before asking, “What is it?”

“Master Zhang Wei has met with misfortune!”

“Huh?”

Losing all drowsiness after being startled awake, Lin Mu Yu dressed himself and quickly left his room. Torches lit the hall, flickering all throughout the Temple, he approached the main gathering area where he was met with the bloody body of Zhang Wei laid out on a slab. Lei Hong, Ge Yang and the other deacons were already there.

"What happened to Zhang Wei?"

Lin Mu Yu rushed forward, shaking the arm of Zhang Wei who was motionless but was still breathing. He could not help but lifted his head to ask, "What happened, Grandpa Lei Hong?"

Lei Hong’s face was ashen. “Zhang Wei was attacked in Tong Tian Street. Ah Yu, just look at the wounds on his back and you

will understand.”

Two silver star instructors shifted Zhang Wei, revealing the damage to his spine. It looked to be done by a sword, cutting down to the bone and mutilating the surrounding flesh. Lin Mu Yu could not bear the sight and looked away. "Who would do something so heartless?"

Ge Yang’s voice trembled. "Ah Yu, the best way to ruin a man is not to kill him, but to make him a cripple. His Dragon Tendons along the spine are already irreparably damaged."

"Dragon tendon?" He was stunned.

Lei Hong’s reply held no warmth. "The Dragon Tendon is the source of power located on either side of the backbone, just like the strings of a bow, once the tendon is destroyed, the trainer is no longer able to use his battle energy. The culprit did not kill Zhang Wei, but made him effectively useless, unable to perform martial arts again."

"What!?"

Lin Mu Yu’s eyes widened further. "Who was it?"

What are your thoughts?” Lei Hong said: "Zhang Wei was about to reach the Heaven Realm. To be able to subdue Zhang Wei with one strike... I'm afraid such a person would have to have already entered the Saint Realm. After the winters began to change a

hundred years back, the strong warriors left within empire can be counted with one hand. Hmph....I more or less have a guess at who it was."

Ge Yang spoke up next to him. ”To this measure, the most important thing we must do is find a way to treat Zhang Wei. He is one of our silver star instructors in line to be promoted to a gold star rank, if he remains as he is, his life will come to an end."

"Okay, quickly call for people from the Panacea Division."

.....

Not long after, a group of medics wearing white robes entered the Temple. They quickly staunch the bleeding and began the treatment, but progress seem slow and it stretched until dawn.

The deacon of the Panacea Division had an apologetic look when he spoke to Lei Hong. "Master Lei Hong, the wounds of Zhang Wei are too deep, the dragon tendons have already been damaged to the point that cannot be healed. He cannot perform martial arts anymore."

Lei Hong had prepared himself for this outcome. Sighing, he said, “My thanks to all of you, saving his life is no easy task."

The deacon of the Panacea Division paid his respects and the entire division departed.

When Zhang Wei woke up, he found himself in bed and unable to move. He look to Lei Hong who was near his bedside. "Grandmaster...."

"Zhang Wei!"

Lei Hong's body shook. "It's going to be fine, you're going to be cured."

Zhang Wei was surprisingly calm, yet his eyes hinted desperation. "Grandmaster, you don't need to comfort me, I know I'm already crippled. The Dragon Tendon is already cut, and the medicine was ineffective; even the Gods will have trouble saving me."

While speaking, Zhang Wei's eyes shifted to Lin Mu Yu, smiling he said, "Lin Zhi...."

Lin Mu Yu approached the edge of the bed. "Don't speak, you need to recuperate."

Zhang Wei slightly smiled. "I want to remind you that of the two people who offended the God Marquisate, one was me, who was already been dealt with. The other, is you....Lin Zhi, don't belittle the enemy, the one who attacked me was very strong. His power seems at par with the grandmaster. You must be careful, I....I no longer have a purpose, it is fine for me to die!"

"No!"

Lin Mu Yu said in a calm but firm voice, "I will cure you!"

"Ah Yu, don’t give false hope." Lei Hong said from the corner, "the Dragon Tendon is the foundation of a trainer’s martial arts. Once it is cut even the Gods can't help. And not only has Zhang Wei’s Dragon Tendon been cut, it is in pieces!"

"No, grandpa Lei Hong, believe in me." Lin Mu Yu said with clear eyes, "Zhang Wei you need to trust me too, don't give up. I can cure your Dragon Tendon, return it to the way it once was."

"Oh?" Zhang Wei nodded without thinking and smiled. "Then....thank you for the trouble Master Lin Zhi!"

.....

After leaving the room together, Lei Hong said in a rebuking manner, "Ah Yu, even if you just wanted to comfort Zhang Wei, was there a need to lie?"

"No, I'm telling the truth."

Lei Hong turned around, showing his suspicion, "How can you cure Zhang Wei’s severe injuries?"

"Has grandpa Lei Hong heard of something called Muscle Replenishing Powder?” Lin Mu Yu seriously asked.

Lei Hong stared blankly this time. It was Ge Yang, while stroking his beard in the corner, who spoke up, "I've heard that among Ze Tian Palace's vast collection of books there was such a writing. It had the details of a level 10 medicine called Muscle Replenishing Powder which could regrow muscles and bones , but.... but it is just a myth. Those records stating that such medicine existed were over a hundred years old, and no one has the ability to refine Muscle Replenishing Powder."

Lin Mu Yu remained vague. "Give me a little time!"

"Ok!"

Lei Hong nodded. "I will grant you half a month's leave, is this acceptable?"

"Thank you Grandpa Lei Hong!"

"Go!"

.....

He picked a sturdy warhorse from the stables, turned towards the center of Lanyan city, while his mind desperately tried to remember the details of the recipe: dragon tendon vine and night bright grass, both were rare and hard to come by. He would have to go to the Imperial Pharmacy to try his luck!

Whipping the horse into a gallop, he called out to his side. "Lulu?"

"Shua!"

A beautiful fairy emerged wearing a delicate green skirt in the middle of a cold winter night. She smiled at him. "What is it, big bro?"

"Did you see any dragon tendon vine and night bright grass when you were looking through the map of Dragon Seeker Forest? If yes, mark them on the map for me, ok? " Lin Mu Yu said hurriedly.

Lulu sat on his shoulder shaking her head. "Didn't see any. These two herbs are very uncommon and my spiritual force is not strong enough for me to fly very far."

"Oh, all right. I'll go ahead and ask myself!"

Not long after he arrived at the capital’s pharmacy, he went straight for Jin San Pang. Upon seeing the arrival of Lin Mu Yu, Jin San Pang smiled and said, "Master, are you going to buy some Rainbow Lotus again? I can have some prepared for you!"

"No need."

Lin Mu Yu shook his head and asked, "MIss Jin, do you sell dragon tendon vine and night bright grass here?"

Jin San Pang was surprised, "These are level 10 herbs...."

"Correct, so do you have it?"

Jin San Pang felt embarrassed. "Even though we have all kinds of medicine in the pharmacy, we don't have the two herbs that master is looking for. According to the legends the dragon tendon vine only grows in between the cracks of a dragon's spine, the secretion that collects there is the dragon tendon. Night bright grass a simple weed, the only difference is that it releases rays of light at night. Both of these herbs...we don't have it."

"Thank you very much then....."

Lin Mu Yu became desolate, remembering how miserable Zhang Wei was, he was partly to blame for Zhang Wei's predicament. Even if he needs to exhaust all his efforts he still wants to cure his friend's body. This is what a real man would do.

Upon seeing the lonely face of Lin Mu Yu, Jin San Pang smiled comfortingly. "I have heard that there are lots of precious herbs in the Seven Seas Duke's mansion. Many were gathered by the Seven Seas Azure Tide Army. Master can go to see the Seven Seas Duke to try your luck. If this still doesn't work... with your qualifications as a gold star of the Temple, you can go to the medicine storehouse of Ze Tian Palace and maybe find some there."

"Okay, thank you very much!"

Lin Mu Yu nodded, turned around and left the pharmacy.

……

In less than 10 minutes, the horse comes to a stop by the Seven Seas Mansion. Lin Mu Yu dismounts, carrying Prairie Fire close, he turned to the guards. "Lin Zhi of the Temple would like to meet with Princess Xi, please inform him of my request."

One of the guards nodded and entered the residence, he soon came back and gave a salute, “Master Lin Zhi, the princess welcomes you. She awaits you in the anteroom!"

"Many thanks!”

The interior of the Seven Seas Mansion is like a large garden. It also gave Lin Mu Yu the impression of entering the tiger's den. Guards were stationed all around, a testament to the military strength of Seven Seas City. Not far from the entrance, Tang Xiao Xi already came out wearing a beautiful red skirt, stepping through the fallen leaves with a slight crunch with every step of her boots. “Mu Mu, you finally came to see me?"

……”

Looking at the beauty and grace of Tang Xiao Xi, he was a little embarrassed, he scratched his head and to say, "Xiao Xi, I actually came here to look for something…."

"Hmph! I know you well enough. What is it?” Tang Xiao Xi said without fanfare.

"I've heard that the Seven Seas Dukedom has many precious herbs, I am in need of two particular plants. I don't know if Xiao Xi can help..." he said a little ashamedly.

Tang Xiao Xi blinked her beautiful eyes. "I'm really not aware of what is stored here, but if you need it, then why not have a look?"

"Yeah!"

Tang Xiao Xi reach out her hand and pulled him into the depths of the mansion to find the one responsible for safeguarding the medicine storage. Once they were able to locate the record books, they both looked through it for a long time. Unfortunately, they were unable to find what Lin Mu Yu needed. He became disappointed with tightened his brows.

"Are you in a hurry for these herbs?” Tang Xiao Xi asked with concern.

"Yes, it's for saving a friend's life,” Lin Mu Yu murmured. "Dragon tendon vine, night bright grass, plus blood of the bird called the Needlebeak. The purpose of Muscle Replenishing Powder is for the regeneration of muscles and bones, similar to rising from the dead."

Tang Xiao Xi had her eyes widened. "You.... You are doing this for Zhang Wei, is that right?"

"Yes." Lin Mu Yu did not bother to deny it, "Zhang Wei is my friend, he went to investigate the deaths of Little Beansprout's parents with me, that was the reason why he was harmed. Zhang Wei was injured fighting an unknown expert, I can't just do nothing!"

Tang Xiao Xi suddenly smiled. "You weren't able to find the herbs you needed here in the Seven Seas mansion, but... but we still have one more place to try our luck, it might just be there!"

"Where?"

"The medicine storehouse of Ze Tian Palace." Tang Xiao Xi said with a pensive gaze towards the autumn wind, the bow on her head looked look a red butterfly.

Chapter 82 : Return To Dragon Seeker Forest

Around midday, a pair of warhorses stopped outside Ze Tian Palace. Tang Xiao Xi got down from her horse to follow Lin Mu Yu to where a group of Imperial Guards were ready to welcome them.

"Princess Xi!" one of the Imperial Guards respectfully addressed her.

"Please send word to Her Highness Yin that Tang Xiao Xi wants to see her.”

"Yes!"

At this, a guard mounted his horse and left, only to return not ten minutes later. He cupped his fist in his other hand in respect. "Her Highness Yin is practicing archery in the Phoenix Perch Pavilion. She bade me to lead you there.

"Alright, thank you!"

.....

They rode their horses further into imperial palace.

This would be the first time Lin Mu Yu has entered Ze Tian Palace and he was pleasantly surprised. The palace interior was a

stretch of white jade, shining with an exquisitely with the luster of gems. Further ahead was shrouded in mist, and jade roof tiles were suspended in front of the green lattice windows reflected light rays with a guard sentry was posted every ten steps. The palace did not lack in extravagance nor security.

Passing through the halls, they eventually arrived at the Phoenix Perch Pavilion where Qin Yin resided. Lin Mu Yu was speechless upon seeing the lavish structure occupied by a single person. He originally thought that the villa he lived in was already luxurious, but next to Qin Yin's residence, it was nothing but a shanty.

The courtyard seemed to be designated for martial arts, a persistent thumping of horse hooves could be heard. Imperial Princess Qin Yin wore a golden cloak while sitting atop a horse with an exquisite bow in one hand hand. She was enshrouded in her golden God Binding Lock martial spirit as she released the reins and nocked an arrow, aiming at a target in the distance.

Thunk.

With a small echo, the arrow hit the center mark and the maids clustered nearby smiled and praised, "Excellent shot, Your Highness!"

But Qin Yin was looking elsewhere. She came down from her horse and walked towards Tang Xiao Xi and Lin Mu Yu, her gold embroidered boots treaded along the sandstone ground. "Xiao Xi, you have come!"

Tang Xiao Xi pulled the reins and smiled. "Xiao Yin, Mu Mu and I came here for a favor. Can you take us to the medicine storehouse? Mu Mu urgently needs two level 10 herbs, you must help us...."

Qin Yin startled, her eyes fell upon Lin Mu Yu. "If that's the case, then let's go. I know the steward there, he will let me pass."

"Yeah!"

When they arrived at the storehouse, they were indeed allowed to enter. Aside from her beauty, Qin Yin holds the favor of Light Emperor Qin Jin. She had already awakened her God Binding Lock martial spirit at a young age that not even the Emperor Qin Jin or the previous emperor were able to do; thus cementing her position as the successor of the empire. The younger generation of Qin family, Qin Yin and Qin Lei have already awakened their martial spirits, establishing themselves as the generation of hope.

Unfortunately, despite the three of them combing over the inventory records, they were still unable to find any dragon tendon vine or night bright grass. The steward cautiously spoke up. "Your Highness, these two herbs have not been seen for many years, let alone here in the storehouse. I have heard tales of a place deep in Dragon Seeker Forest called "Dragon Tomb" that is said to be the graveyard of the dragon race. If you can find it, then you can as many dragon tendon vines as you want. But the deeper you go into the forest, the more dangerous it is, that is why the alchemists are unable to reach that place."

"Is that so?"

Qin Yin’s gaze grew distant as the heavens. "Then..."

Lin Mu Yu suddenly had an unpleasant premonition .

In the end, it was Tang Xiao Xi who broke the silence. "Why don’t we take the opportunity to go to Dragon Seeker Forest?"

From the corner, The Forbidden Army’s Commander Feng Ji Xing was adamant. "It's foolish. Even I don’t know the location of this Dragon Tomb. Knowing the dangers of Dragon Seeker Forest, going as the heir of the Qin family and the princess of the Seven Seas Dukedom is foolhardy. You must not enter the Dragon Seeker Forest!"

While speaking, Feng Ji Xing glared ferociously at the steward. "You incited them to go to such a dangerous forest. I will not report it this time, but if there is a repeat, I will lop off your head!"

The steward hurriedly knelt down and pleaded. " Commander, please spare me, I didn't do it on purpose."

"Don't kneel, I am younger. This is unacceptable...quickly get up, or else my sword will taste blood...."

"Yes!"

Lin Mu Yu smiled. "Elder Brother Feng, don’t threaten him like

that."

Feng Ji Xing could not help but laugh. "I am trying to be strict but you can still see through it..."

By now, Qin Yin had already taken Tang Xiao Xi outside and both of them already getting on their horses. Feng Ji Xing immediately ran after them, calling loudly, "Your Highness, what do you mean to do?"

"I will go meet with father. I remain stuck at level 59, I want to go to Dragon Seeker Forest for a breakthrough!"

“……”

Feng Ji Xing complained incessantly, having long since reached his breaking point, as this stubborn Imperial Princess insisted on going back to Dragon Seeker Forest. Bad things happened every time they went, this time would surely be no exception!

At Ze Tian Palace, in all its glorious gold and jade splendor.

At high noon, Emperor Qin Jin is in the middle of entertaining a group of officials: high officials, the minister of war, minister of justice, as well as various army generals-all in their designated seats. Qin Jin held a jade cup in his hand, smiled and said, "Come, come. Let's all have a drink!"

Everyone held their drinks with great care. Cautious not to spill a

single drop of wine bestowed by the emperor, for fear of losing their heads.

In the middle of it, a loud announcement came from the outside. "Announcing the presence of Her Imperial Highness, Qin Yin, Commander Feng Ji Xing, Tang Xiao Xi, and...this kid. Who are you? You are not permitted to enter. Guards, take him away..."

"Stand down, this is my friend!" Qin Yin's voice came through the commotion.

Qin Jin can't help but put down his cup with a helpless face. He loved and hated his daughter, loved her outstanding and beauty, but hated her stubbornness and craftiness. But his hate only equated to the smallest degree. He loved her very much like a father would his daughter. "Let them come in. Servants, a seat for Princess Yin."

Qin Yin, wearing the Qin family cloak, had already entered. “Father!"Her clear and sweet voice immediately dissipated his angry mood. Qin Jun, laughable and a little irate said, "Xiao Yin, what is it now? You are already a 20 year old lady, learn to be less brash. You are the heir of the family! Feng Ji Xing, speak, what does she want now?"

Feng Ji Xing cupped his fist in his hand in salute, “Your Majesty, Her Highness...she said she wishes to return to Dragon Seeker Forest so that she can break through Heaven Realm. I felt that this is inappropriate as Dragon Seeker Forest is too dangerous."

Qin Yin glanced at Feng Ji Xing. The intention of her stare conveying that, if he still had a conscience, he should refrain from mentioning the Dragon Tomb, lest father not allow it.

"Hmm...Dragon Seeker Forest?" Qin Jin can't help but laugh, "It hasn't been long since you've been there last, Xiao Yin, why would you go again?"

Qin Yin pursed her lips. Raising her palm, a strip of golden rope emerged, just like the spiral dragon surrounding her body. "Father, look. The God Binding Lock of mine had already reached level 5, if not refined further in a fight, I'm afraid it will become useless."

"Nonsense, how can the God Binding Lock become useless?!" the sound of Qin Jin's voice echoed. Yet upon seeing Qin Yin eyes flash with hurt, his heart softened and said, "Go, then. But only within the family hunting grounds."

"How can that be?" Qin Yin lifted her head to look at her father who sat on the throne, "the beasts in the hunting grounds are too weak, I cannot ascend even if I killed them. Father, please allow me to go deep into Dragon Seeker Forest to train?"

"You....."

Qin Jin helplessly sighed, "Your princess wants to go into the Dragon Seeker Forest, which of you is fit to protect her?"

One of the officials stood. "Your Majesty, the son of Prince Jin

Ning, master Qin Lei, commander of the Imperial Guards is formidable. Since he grew up with Her Highness and are childhood sweethearts, it is most prudent to send him with a group of soldiers to accompany Her Highness for her training."

Qin Jin nodded. "Okay. Any other suggestions?"

Another stood. “Your majesty, I suggest Commander Feng Ji Xing lead a thousand of the most elite of the Imperial Guards on horseback to go with them. After all Her Highness Yin is the crown princess, the successor of family and must be protected at all costs. Among the six White-Robed Royal Guards, only two may be dispatched at a given time. Lei Hong manages the Temple, so he is unable to attend to other matters. While Qu Chu is finding inner peace through nature, otherwise, it would be preferable if Master Qu Chu is the one protecting Her Highness."

Qin Jin ecstatically smiled. "Then it's set, Commander Feng Ji Xing, you will lead two thousand of the Imperial Army to protect the princess; Qin Lei, you will lead a hundred of the Imperial Guard. You must protect Her Highness at all times, do you understand?"

Feng Ji Xing and Qin Lei both knelt with one knee and with their fists cupped in the other hand. "Yes, Your Majesty!"

.....

Late in the afternoon, shouting and horses neighing could be heard from Ze Tian Palace, an army of more than two thousand

traveled towards Dragon Seeker Forest.

Qin Yin sat helpless, she originally planned to go with only Tang Xiao Xi and Lin Mu Yu, hot expecting an entire legion to go with them. She is the heir of the imperial family, maybe this was the price she had to pay for being above other people.

Qin Lei and Feng Ji Xing wear White-Robe Imperial Guard armor, consciously protecting Qin Yin from her flanks with Tang Xiao Xi and Lin Mu Yu followed from behind, a squad of cavalry lead the front. With much grandiose, they exited the city. Lin Mu Yu had not had enough time to go back to the Temple to arrange his luggage, but as long as he had Prairie Fire, he doesn't need anything else.

After sunset, they entered Dragon Seeker Forest.

Because they were still on the edge of the forest, everyone was still complacent. With only stars to light their path and the eerie calls of the nocturnal creatures, the company gradually grew anxious.

White tents flapped along the edge of the camp. Detaching from the party, Lin Mu Yu held Prairie Fire and stepped onto the grass. He looked over the surroundings but was still unable to spot any shining plants. They were probably too close to Lanyan City, still a ways away from finding any night bright grass.

Chapter 83 : Four-Man Company

In the middle of the night, a clap of thunder broke the silence of the forest. Then it was followed by a heavy downpour of rain. Such an occurrence was rare in autumn.

Lin Mu Yu put on his armor and grabbed a black umbrella before exiting his tent, Prairie Fire in hand. In the distance, the tents of Tang Xiao Xi and Qin Yin were both being guarded by Qin Lei and Feng Ji Xing.

Rain drops buffeted the umbrella and the stars were no longer visible in the sky. The bonfire flickered in the rain as several imperial soldiers tried to maintain the flames. The camp was suddenly in chaos, the patrolling horsemen quickly rushed to camp to find shade.

"Master Lin Zhi!"

Not far away, a member of the imperial army laughed. "Why are you holding up an umbrella in the midst of the rain? Quickly come inside the tent where it is dry, otherwise you might get sick!"

Lin Zhi shook his head and smiled. "No need, thank you, I want to look around."

Because he carried the gold star from the Temple he held a lofty position among the imperial soldiers. Also, Feng Ji Xing and Qin Lei were familiar with him, so Lin Mu Yu has a lot of freedom inside the camp.

Eventually, the rain extinguished the bonfire, so they were now in complete darkness inside the forest.

Shink.

Lin Mu Yu unsheathed Prairie Fire and released a little bit of energy from his palm, passing it through the long sword, suddenly a raging inferno enveloped the sword. It’s heat remained unaffected by the rain and radiated light in all directions. He walked step by step around the camp, ensuring that no enemy laid in wait in the surroundings. It had been because of him that Tang Xiao Xi and Qin Yin came to Dragon Seeker Forest, if two of the empire’s treasures were to meet some accident, he would surely regret it for the rest of his life.

“Rain is leaking into the tents, go and find some wide leaves!" Said and unknown voice. Several imperial soldiers went into the forest and started cutting trees.

It was then that there was a slight rustling sound coming from the right side, Lin Mu Yu went on alert and turned Prairie Fire to illuminate the darkness. "Who’s there?"

"It’s me, don't say a word!"

In darkness, a beautiful face peered out from the hood of a cloak. It was Qin Yin, clad in the armor of an imperial soldier. She smiled and said, "What's wrong Ah Yu, do I look weird?"

"Why is Your Highness dressed like that?"

"If I didn't dress like this, how am I supposed to slip away?" She giggled.

"Slip away?"

"Hurry! Xiao Xi is already waiting for us up ahead." Qin Yin pulled the hood back up to cover her face then wrapped her cloak tightly around her body to shield against the rain.

Lin Mu Yu was confused but he held the umbrella for her. His other hand held Prairie Fire up to light their path.

Qin Yin looked up to realize that Lin Mu Yu was soaked, so she nudged the umbrella to cover his head, unable to hold back a smile. She didn't say anything, as princess of the empire, it would be unbecoming to comment.

"You’re both too slow!"

In front of them, Tang Xiao Xi’s voice came through the shrubbery. She was also wearing the garb of an imperial soldier, it looked ridiculous in her delicate frame. She was holding onto three fine horses, a wide grin on her face. "You are too slow. Hmph! Next time, I don't want to be the one stealing horses. I was almost kicked by these violent beasts!.

Lin Mu Yu already knew what they intended to do and tried to talk them out of it. "Isn't slipping away like this a bad idea? Elder Brother Feng Ji Xing and Elder Brother Qin Lei will go crazy looking for you!"

"It’s fine. I left them a letter inside my tent” Qin Yin said with a dimpled smile.

"It’s dark out, where are we even going?" Lin Mu Yu asked.

Qin Yin muttered to herself, pondering. Fog from the rain collected on her lashes and formed into small dewdrops. It shimmered and shined as it dripped in succession, increasing the beauty of this woman. She eventually lifted her head. "Let's go south to avoid the rest of the army and go deeper into the Dragon Seeker Forest from there. Enough talking, let’s get on the horses, and find somewhere to rest before dawn!"

"Okay!"

Lin Mu Yu could only nod in resignation.

The three of them rode their horses southward. Not half an hour had passed when suddenly a gold light shot through the darkness. It looked like.....the God Binding Lock?

"Your Highness!"

Qin Lei’s voice rang through. It was indeed him, he had been able

to catch up to them.

"Don't run anymore!"

Qin Lei called loudly, abruptly raising his martial spirit as his God Binding Lock tore through the ground, creating a barrier in front of Qin Yin. Qin Yin, however, was not easy to deal with. She gently spread out her palms, the same God Binding Lock emerged from her body, thrashing Qin Lei's martial spirit. She smiled and said, "Elder Brother Qin Lei, don't follow us. Go home, we will be back after a few days!"

"Out of the question!"

Qin Lei continued persuading them, "His Majesty sent me to protect you, I cannot leave my mission half-finished!"

Qin Yin gnashed her teeth together. "Hmph! You're always following me. Do you have any idea how annoying it is? I don't even have the least bit of freedom, why can't you understand? You blockhead!"

Qin Lei was a very simple and straightforward person. He continued to urged his horse forward, his body unprotected from the rain. He scratched his head and smiled, "I understand how you feel, but Xiao Yin, you are much too important to the empire. We cannot allow anything to happen to you. I can indulge you in anything you want except for this."

Qin Lei then turned to raise his brow at Lin Mu Yu. "Ah Yu, kid, help me convince her!"

Lin Mu Yu looked at Qin Yin, but didn't say a word. Qin Yin was the one who replied. "Ah Yu, if you are my friend, you won’t try to convince me. I hate it when people watch me all day.

Tang Xiao Xi was smiling, enjoying the scene as one enjoying in the misfortune of others.

Lin Mu Yu rubbed the bridge of his nose. "Your Highness, why not allow Elder Brother Qin Lei to come with us. Going deep into Dragon Seeker Forest is a lot safer with the four of us."

"Right, right! What Ah Yu said!" Qin Lei looked at Lin Mu Yu with gratitude, "I will go with you, myself. No need to bring other people. Is this acceptable, Your Highness?"

Qin Yin rubbed at her nose and groaned in frustration. "Come on then. But you will listen to me, if you use father to pressure me, you go back immediately!"

Qin Lei nodded agreeably. "Sure, sure! Whatever you say!"

Lin Mu Yu and Tang Xiao Xi looked at one another and smiled. Their party now consisted of four people to face the dangers ahead. Qin Lei was the strongest among the four of them, it would be much safer with him along.

……

While walking through the night, they met several spirit beasts below a thousand years, all of which were easily defeated by Lin Mu Yu and Qin Lei. Qin Lei had already seen Lin Mu Yu's Four-Way Sword Skills during the Upper Sunset Festival banquet. He genuinely admired this guy's talents, even though there was a huge disparity between their positions he was still very polite the entire way.

The rain stopped at daybreak.

The early sunlight shined on them. Qin Yin sat atop her horse as her body produced thin wisps of smoke, unconsciously drying her clothes with the God Binding Lock martial spirit. And Tang Xiao Xi's martial spirit being a fire fox, was able to do the same. As for Lin Mu Yu and Qin Lei, the body heat from their male bodies was sufficient to dry their clothes.

As the three of them had deviated southward, it took an entire day to reach the deeper part of Dragon Seeker Forest.

……

At noon, lazy sunlight sprinkled through the forest canopy.

Qin Lei consulted his map, reading it carefully. "According to the map, we must go south approximately three days to reach this legendary Dragon Tomb. But it is a restricted area and the spirit

beasts are strong. It has been reported that it's been a long time since someone came out alive."

Tang Xiao Xi’s martial spirit leaped to her shoulders, she happily said "It's okay, we have four people this time. Elder Brother Qin Lei has reached Heaven Realm and the rest of us are in the Earth Realm. Once we find a suitable spirit beast, Xiao Yin and Mu Mu can reach Heaven Realm as well. The entire party’s strength will go up. Encountering spirits beasts is no problem."

"Alright then!" Qin Lei nodded and carried on forward with his sword flickering with lightning energy.

His sword was of interest. Thunder Cleaver was said to have mysterious origins that Prince Jin Ning spent a considerable amount of effort to acquire. He eventually gave it to his son, Qin Lei, allowing Qin Lei to become one the empire’s best warriors. In the capital, Thunder Cleaver was synonymous to Qin Lei, and vice versa!

……

Qin Yin watched Lin Mu Yu silently travelling on. Her head cocked to the side as she asked gently, "What kind of spirit does Ah Yu need?"

Lin Mu Yu stared blankly, a little overwhelmed by her attention. He had already met a lot of beautiful women in his world, but none of them could be compared to Qin Yin. Whether in personality or appearance, Qin Yin far surpassed them. She had the kind of

immortal beauty that could not be compared to beauty gained from the use of cosmetic powders.

"Any plant type spirit beast will do. It’s also fine if it’s not. My martial spirit isn’t picky. Thank you for your concern, Your Highness."

Qin Yin could not stop a laugh from coming out. "A martial spirit that is not picky? Ah Yu is quite interesting...."

Qin Lei immediately raised his hand all of a sudden to interject. "I believe such a spirit beast is in ahead of us. Be careful everyone, three hundred meters north from here is a spirit beast at least 5000 years old!"

"5000 years?" Qin Yin was both worried and excited. She unsheathed the sword at her waist and smiled. "Then let's prepare to attack!"

"Wait." Qin Lei's look became contemplative as he spoke, "It’s a stone beast. As hard as stone, and very powerful. We must not look down on a 5000 year old stone beast. Ah Yu, follow my lead, your martial spirit is a master of defense, much more convenient in dealing with these types of beasts."

Lin Mu Yu pulled out his long sword, cheerfully said, "Okay!"

Chapter 84 : Zero Injuries Incurred In The Battlefield - Part 1

Roaaar!

A large grayish rock occupied the center of the valley. Upon a closer look it's surface was actually composed of thick scales. Several rock beasts were huddled together from end to end, and as one they seemed to have detected the smell of their prey. Their lumbering bodies slowly ascended, grinding against each other and producing a deep rumbling sound.

Qin Lei held on tightly to his Thunder Cleaver, facing Lin Mu Yu, "Ah Yu, I have seen a stone beast before, during my wild life training, but it was only a 1800 year old. Don't look down on these stone beasts, their movements are very agile and with sharp claws, they can even break open heavy shields. They have thick hides so normal attacks don’t work. If you can distract the beasts, I can get them from behind. What do you think?"

Lin Mu Yu gently waved a hand and released his gourd martial spirit. He condensed it to form his Ebony Scale and Dragon Rampart. "Okay, I'll go first. Elder Brother Qin Lei, be careful."

“Yeah, you too!”

……

Lin Mu Yu felt exhilarated. They came on this trip partly to gain

experience. Since his defense was far superior to the others, he would assume the role of a main tank. The responsibility of taunting and attracting the attention of the opponent fell to him all the while enduring their attacks. This was no game though, death would be permanent with no hope of resurrection or second chances.

Roar!

The Boulder moved slowly, it's large segmented body was separated into the head, body, and tail. A head suddenly appeared from what had assumed was the back, a ferocious mouth extended Lin Mu Yu. The stone beast's body could not have weighed less than ten tons, as the land and the mountains shook as it walked, but it's speed was no joke.

Lin Mu Yu had a clear shot, his left hand pulled out the Sonic Blade from his waist and he gathered some energy to throw it to a distance. With a sharp twang it whistled straight for the beast's weak spot—the eyes!

Roar!

He underestimated how agile such a large beast could be. It avoided the weapon aimed at its eyes by using its head to parry the Sonic Blade. Clanging ineffectual against the thick forehead, flames shot out in all directions as the Sonic Blade fell uselessly.

Lin Mu Yu quickly threw a Sonic Punch to control the trajectory of the Sonic Blade, while his right hand grasped his sword tightly,

flashes of thunder and lightning surrounded his arm. As the stone beast made to pounce, he suddenly threw Prairie Fire—Thunderstorm Rage!

Clang!

At the heavy blow, the sword lodged itself halfway through the lower jaw of the stone beast, but it did bleed. The rocky scales were at least one meter thick, his strike had failed to inflict any lasting damage.

At that moment, the Boulder brandished its arm with three pointed claws in an arc to deliver a heavy swipe that collided against Lin My Yu's shields. With a loud bang, the impact echoed all over and Lin Mu Yu staggered back a few steps, his face a little pale. It had only been one strike, but the Ebony Scales already showed signs of breaking down.

"Ah Yu, hold your ground!"

Qin Lei wielded Thunder Cleaver and with a loud cry, immediately struck the body of the Boulder. He kept both hands holding fast as God Binding Lock revolved around the sword, splendid light split open the beast with a heavy strike. Stone fragments flew everywhere in a loud crash of explosion. Meanwhile, the stone beast let out an angry snarl at the gaping hole in its back where fresh blood burst forth.

"Grrr..."

The stone beast suddenly opened its mouth wide as if to swallow Lin Mu Yu.

Hiss.

Lin Mu Yu was shocked and stumbled back. Flexing his right hand, thunder and lightning engulfed Prairie Fire as he brought forth another Thunderstorm Rage to bombard the jaw of the stone beast, swallowing everything into mouth, the explosion caused it to close shut as the whole head struck at gourd wall.

Whine.

Lin Mu Yu groaned loudly, the outermost layer of his walls was broken. Energy and blood surged wildly in his body, he wasn't able to concentrate enough to reform his Ebony Scale. He spread his palm to let out some energy, the orange rays of his martial spirit blossomed. It squirted out a poisoned dart-like projectile and directed it to the forehead of the stone beast. It spread rapidly and corroded anything that came into contact, but the cortex of the stone beast was too thick so not much damage was inflicted in such a short time.

"You did good, Ah Yu!" Qin Lei waved the Thunder Cleaver, it’s rays of thunder and lightning burst in a ferocious explosion on the back of the stone beast, causing a great deal of damage.

At the same time, Tang Xiao Xi clenched on her Fire Fox martial spirit and said loudly, "Brother Qin Lei, be careful!"

"What!?"

Qin Lei turned and saw a shadow before he quickly dodged. It was the oncoming tail of stone beast, whipping around from the violent explosions. The resulting force of its landing sent the Imperial Guard Commander flying into the forest. But Qin Lei's training had already attained him the reach of the Heaven Realm, so a voice came from the direction he flew. "I'm fine .... Ah Yu, you mustn't falter!"

.....

"Haa haa haa...."

The Boulder snorted exhaustedly, eyes seeping blood, it had one bloody eye directed at Lin Mu Yu. The beast's muscles contracted briefly before it launched itself once more at Lin Mu Yu, charging at him violently and repeatedly. The impacts almost broke the Dragon Rampart as well but Lin Mu Yu was not able to do much else. His martial spirit was mainly for defense, even his Four-Way Sword Skill paled in comparison to Qin Lei's God Binding Lock.

"Mu Mu, be careful!" Tang Xiao Xi started attacking the Boulder's flanks, her Fire Fox growling menacingly. Yet her attacks were too weak and was not able to penetrate the stone beast's hide, and it naturally paid her no mind. Her martial spirit let out a defeated howl, the proud Princess Xi couldn't handle being useless.

When his ability to release more energy was waning, Lin Mu Yu grew anxious until gold lights emerged from his body and the

sound of Qin Yin's voice came from behind him. "God Binding Power!"

This was also one of the abilities of Qin Yin's martial spirit, it can function as a supporting skill, boosting its target's firepower.

"Attack, Ah Yu!" she said urgently. She had probably used up a lot of power using this technique.

When the power rushed into his body, Lin Mu Yu felt like his blood vessels were ready to burst. Being one who leaped before he looked, he raised his arm to from Ebony Scale again. Energy burst forth from his whole body as he turned around and grabbed the Sonic Blade to throw it again. At the same time his right hand loosened and Prairie Fire flared, his palm spat out raging flames that encircled Prairie Fire, as sword spun rapidly—Fire Sword Skill!

He had used true dragonfire, bright dazzling purple flames encircled the sword. Qin Yin and Tang Xiao Xi were startled as they watched, they hadn't seen a blaze like that.

"Destructive Dragonfire Helix!"

He unleashed everything he had, the high speed whirling of Prairie Fire could not be stopped as the column of fire tore through the skull of the stone beast, the true dragonfire ate through the hard shell. The attack left a big hole in the place of the stone beast's face, graymatter clearly visible. Oh man, what an attack!

Lin Mu Yu was amazed at beast’s vitality, even their combined efforts weren’t enough to defeat it. Its skull cracked open yet it roared and pounced like before, claws slashed right for his Ebony Scale.

"Huh?"

Lin Mu Yu quickly raised his hand to grab Prairie Fire to parry the beast’s attack.

But a beautiful figure appeared beside him and beat him to it. Qin Yin held a long sword, her body covered in her martial spirit. With a cry, the God Binding Lock struck simultaneously with her sword!

Clang!

Qin Yin, with the overwhelming strength of God Binding Lock, split the stone beast’s claws!

At that moment, Qin Lei bore down the Thunder Cleaver in another strike from high up in the sky and into the neck of the stone beast, more rock fragments burst forth,"Xiao Yin, Ah Yu, Xiao Xi, withdraw! I will do it!"

The Boulder snarled, but the sound grew weaker as Qin Lei’s barrage continued. At the sound of bones cracking, its head and body finally separated. No matter how strong, it cannot continue to battle without a head. It’s a stone beast not Xing Tian.

"Hah, hah..."

The head of the stone beast was still breathing despite everything, but the body already fell to the ground, ceaselessly twitching.

.....

Lin Mu Yu still held Prairie Fire with vigil, he turned to look at Qin Yin and asked in concern, "Are you okay?"

Qin Yin had asked the same question, the two of them spoke in unison. The princess' face turned red and she quickly lowered her head, embarrassed.

In comparison, Qin Lei was more candid, he was smiling as he leaped from the body of stone beast. "How fortunate that Ah Yu's defense was held or we would have been in deep trouble. We were able to kill a five thousand year old stone beast unscathed, no problem! Your Highness, why are you still hesitating? I remember your martial spirit only has three skills and none of them are defensive. This stone beast was incredibly strong, if you can absorb its defensive skill, it will surely add to your strength!"

Tang Xiao Xi also smiled. "Right Xiao Yin, quickly refine the spirit beast. Who knows, you might be able to reach Heaven Realm!"

"Alright!"

.....

Qin Yin, no longer blushing, took a step forward, easily calling out the God Binding Lock. Its gold chains were like real dragons curling around her waist. The twin ropes guarded her yet still poised to attack. They greedily absorbed the stone beast

He could have also refined the stone beast, but Lin Mu Yu did not care either way. Dragon Seeker Forest had many spirit beasts and he was in no hurry. Qin Yin getting stronger will certainly benefit this impulsive group.

Qin Yin closed her beautiful eyes, controlling the God Binding Lock as it enjoyed its meal.

But the stone beast, even in defeat, resisted. No matter how hard Qin Yin tried, she could not capture the essence the spirit beast. Qin Yin was aware that it held most of the spirit beast's power as well as the special ability, which is why she should absorb this part of the spirit beast, but it was proving too difficult.

After a while, the princess started to perspire.

.....

"I....I cannot do it anymore...." She suddenly said.

Chapter 85 : Zero Injuries Incurred In The Battlefield - Part 2

“Do you need help?”

Lin Mu Yu asked with a relaxed voice as he sheathed his sword.

Qin Lei said surprised, “Ah Yu can help? Based on what I know….The progress of refining the spirit beast cannot be interfered by others. Xiao Yin…If you really cannot refine the skill then don’t force it or you might hurt yourself.”

Tang Xiao Xi crossed her arms in her chest. “If Mu Mu can help, then don’t dally!”

“Alright!”

……

Lin Mu Yu stood beside Qin Yin, the faint sweet fragrance of a lady assailed his nose, causing his heart to beat faster, but he quickly mentally chided himself, ‘What are you thinking, indulging in fantasies? This isn’t the time to be doing anything unscrupulous, we must conduct ourselves in a honest and just manner; separate yourself those insatiable lot! Lin Zhi, you must remember, you are an upright youth.’

The more he thought about it the more his face reddened.

He splayed his fingers out to let energy rush forth and his alchemy cauldron took form, quickly enveloping himself and Qin Yin. Qin Lei and Tang Xiao Xi were much occupied by the rare ability exhibited by Lin Mu Yu of forming his energy into an object although they were not able to make out the exact form of the cauldron.

Eyes closed, the alchemy cauldron fired up and began to refine the last strands of the stone beast. Qin Yin was able to feel all the minute changes, her long eyelashes fluttered but she would not dare allow any distractions from the crucial process of refining the beast's spirit.

Lin Mu Yu's tone was gentle. "Your Highness need not to give attention to my task, concentrate in absorbing and leave the rest to me."

Within the alchemy cauldron, the last vestiges of the stone howled miserably. Roiling in the turgid heat, it still would not go down even in death, they had been refining it well past five minutes already.

Lin Mu Yu heart hardened and abruptly let out a sigh. He unleashed the alchemy cauldron's next tier flame - Extreme Fire.

Extreme Fire belongs to the heavens and thus incredibly potent, though ranked only second among the 18 fires of his alchemy cauldron; a relatively low rank it may be, it is still considered powerful. Because Lin Mu Yu presently only knows up to the third

level, if even that cannot refine the spirit beast, then there is nothing more that can be done about it.

"Aooo..."

In the midst of the miserable whine, the Extreme Fire swallowed up the spirit of the stone beast, refining it into star shaped dots, seeping one by one into the body of Qin Yin and was eventually fully absorbed.

Lin Mu Yu let out a sound of relief and cancelled his alchemy cauldron, only to see himself and Qin Yin emit steam. It would seem that the temperatures inside the cauldron transmitted into reality.

.....

"Ah..."

Qin Yin softly exhaled, when she opened both her eyes, both Lin Mu Yu and Qin Lei staggered. The shine in Qin Yin eyes were more charming than ever, her gaze held depth. Her new expression was as beautiful as the luminous stars shining and her temperament seemed different as well. She gave the impression of great prestige, exuding the aura of someone in a totally different league.

"Has Xiao Yin reached the Heaven Realm?" Tang Xiao Xi asked with a gentle smile.

"Yes..."

Qin Yin smiled, lifting a hand to gently spit out energy. Yet it was not the usual color, but the pure white of battle energy. Once you entered the Heaven Realm, the conversion of energy into battle energy was as easy as breathing, this was a tremendous advancement!

In that instant, Qin Yin was extraordinarily happy, her beautiful eyes looked deeply into Lin Mu Yu's, "Ah Yu, thank you!"

Lin Mu Yu cupped a fist in his other hand and smiled. "It is my duty to serve Your Highness."

After all, members of the Temple were meant to serve the royal family. Even though the princess held him in her favor, Lin Mu Yu still kept the appropriate behavior, maintaining the difference in their positions. If he were to become so arrogant and become full of himself, he might incur the disaster of horrible execution. This was one of Lin Mu Yu's better traits, able to be calm, wise, and farsighted at any given time. How else might he climb the steps to the the top of the martial arts world.

"Your Highness, you were successful in refining the skill of the stone beast?" Qin Lei asked from beside her

"Yes."

Qin Yin nodded as she summoned her God Binding Lock martial

spirit, gently churning out more Force. There were now stone scales surrounding the golden chains of her martial spirit doubling as a defensive skill to protect oneself from being harmed.

"That's good...."

Qin Lei clapped his hands together and smiled, "We have not come to Dragon Seeker Forest in vain this time! Your Highness Yin, since you have already completed your training, why don't we go back early to Lanyan City. It's too dangerous here in Dragon Seeker Forest and Commander Feng Ji Xing will be looking for us at the borders of the forest. It's been a while since we disappeared from camp..."

Qin Yin wrinkled her elegant eyebrows and shook her head. "No, the real purpose of coming to Dragon Seeker Forest was to help Ah Yu find the Dragon Tomb. If Elder Brother Qin Lei is anxious then you can go back first!"

Meeting with unexpected resistance, Qin Lei couldn't help but to stare blankly yet not being contradictory either. "Okay, since I promised, I'll listen to your wishes. We will go together and find the Dragon Tomb."

"Okay, that's great!" Qin Yin's annoyance turned into happiness.

The group rested for a while to recover their energy and physical strength before continuing on their journey.

.....

Before nightfall, they were able to find a suitable resting place within the forest—a parched cave, the weeds inside had been dry and brittle. The owner of the cave was a 1200 year old spirit bear that was cut down by Qin Lei. Lin Mu Yu had asked for the spirit stone as ones that were more than a 1000 years old are good for blacksmiths, one must not be wasteful .

Jin Xiao Tang of the capital's trading company was still not aware that she was a good blacksmith otherwise it would have caused a sensation. There is no lack of them in trading companies, they were in need of a good high level sword. Those high officials and wealthy heirs waited everyday for the someone to sell them a good sword and they were willing to pay any price. In fact, spirit blades are in high demand, mysterious blades even more so. If someone were able to make holy items, then the entire trading company will surely go crazy.

Qin Lei grabbed a blanket from the back of the horse and spread it out. "Your Highness, the outskirts are quite rough, we will have to make do. You and Princess Xi can sleep here at night, it will be fine for me and Ah Yu to sleep on the foliage outside.

Qin Yin smiled, "I appreciate the trouble Elder Brother Qin Lei. Uh, where is Ah Yu?"

"He is outside. I don't know what he is doing."

Qin Yin held up her skirt and gracefully exited the cave only to

see Lin Mu Yu holding up Prairie Fire, silently observing their surroundings. With tight eyebrows and his white robe swaying in the wind, he looked completely handsome. All of a sudden, Qin Yin’s heart sped up, beating wildly. Even though Feng Ji Xing and Chu Huai Sheng are good looking men, the Lin Mu Yu in front of her seems to have an extra something they did not have.

"Aaa.... what am I thinking? " Qin Yin stomped on her boots, ashamed and angry at herself, this imperial princess was much to proud to admit anything.

Lin Mu Yu lifted his head in time to see the blushing face of Qin Yin standing by the rocks. He couldn’t help a smile and asked, "Is something wrong, Your Highness?"

Qin Yin stared back blankly, her face turning red all the more. "Ah, no... nothing? Ah Yu, you have been patrolling in the outside for a long time, are you looking for something?"

"Yeah, I suspect that there is an older spirit beast nearby, fire based."

"Why do you say so?"

"When Old Qu, Xiao Xi, and I were training in the Seven Star Forest before, we encountered similar terrain. Grass doesn't grow and withered plants indicate that there is a fire spirit beast nearby, and it’s seems quite old."

"Oh?" Qin Yin stared blankly, "then why could the bear we killed a while a go still live here? If it were a danger, it is reasonable to say that the fire spirit beast would have swallowed the spirit bear already!"

"It is hard to say," Lin Mu Yu mouth twitched upwards, "maybe this beast was fattening up the spirit bear?"

"If that is so, then what do we do?"

"No worries, I will take precautions. In the event that this fire beast really comes after us, then we might as well use the opportunity to kill it. Xiao Xi is just to step into the third level of the Earth Realm and will be in need of a fire beast. If it dares to come, then it's exactly what I'm waiting for!"

"Alright then..."

.....

In the middle of the night, Qin Yin and Tang Xiao Xi huddled close together in their sleep. The two were very tired after all the events of the day. Qin Lei held onto Thunder Cleaver, vigilantly guarding the rocks of the cave opening, watchful of anything within a three meter radius. Being the Commander of the Imperial Guard, Qin Lei’s biggest responsibility was to protect the heir to the throne. When Qin Lei turned around to look, his sight fell onto the serene face of Qin Yin, his gaze held a myriad of complicated feelings.

He sighed and tightened his hold on Thunder Cleaver.

Outside the cave, a small fire swayed in wind. It was already cold in the late autumn night, especially after rain. Winter was fast approaching.

Lin Mu Yu kept Prairie Fire close to his chest, watching the fire dance distractedly.

I wonder how my father is doing. Is the old man still in good health?

When he lingered on the topic, his eyes would grow moist for an instant. He lifted his head to the sky and murmured, “Dad, brother, are you still okay? I miss you already, but I can't go home now. Brother, please take good care of dad; don't let him work too hard. Now that I'm not around... Brother, you need to carry the entire Long Xin Group...."

.....

At that moment, a hissing sound came from a distance, it carried through the air hotly.

It finally came!

The master of the area has finally come to kill Lin Mu Yu, Qin Yin, Tang Xiao Xi, and what other uninvited guests.

Lin Mu Yu quietly called out, “Brother Qin Lei, wake up Her Highness and Xiao Xi, we have a guest."

Qin Lei was alarmed and quickly turned, but Qin Yin and Tang Xiao Xi were already awake, and two sets of beautiful eyes stared back at him.

"That fire spirit beast came?"

Tang Xiao Xi was growing excited.

Chapter 86 : Zero Injuries Incurred In The Battlefield - Part 3

Hisss.

Flames encircled the giant creature's head. It was like a giant lizard, red eyes greedily stared at the crackling fire. Beasts were naturally wary of another fire and was somewhat hesitant towards the campfire, but the beast yearned for armored young flesh that stood before it. The beast would be more than happy to swallow that guy whole.

Qin Lei raised his sword as he walked out of the cave, looking towards the spirit beast hidden in the shrubs and smiled "There are three gold lines of fire and four silver lines of fire on its head, a 3400 year old Salamander. This kind of spirit beast is quite common in Dragon Seeker Forest, but a 3400 year old spirit beast is suitable for Xiao Xi’s ascension."

Qin Yin wrapped a cloak around her before walking out of the cave, her beautiful face under the moonlight was all the more stunning. "Xiao Xi and I need not intervene for a 3400 year old spirit beast, Ah Yu and Elder Brother Qin Lei can deal with it. Once Xiao Xi is finished refining the spirit beast we can all rest easy. Faster, faster...."

Qin Lei stepped forward with Thunder Cleaver, his eyes lit up as if he has already caught his prey. "Ah Yu, if we move away from the fire it will not move to attack us. Let's go, the two of us can finish it, nice and quick."

"Yeah!"

Lin Mu Yu did not think much of the Salamander either. When he and Chu Yao were hiding in the Seven Star Forest, they had also killed a Salamander, even though it was a 1700 year old one, their training had also been rudimentary. Now is a different matter altogether, he had the Four-Way Sword Skill and the True Dragonfire technique, more than a match for this 3400 year old spirit beast.

Sword in hand he rushed towards it, smiling as he said, "Elder Brother Qin Lei, let's see who can kill this Salamander first!"

Qin Lei charged fearlessly after him. "You had a head start, you rotten kid. How do you expect me to catch up!?"

.....

Hiss.

Seeing the two men come running, the Salamander immediately spat with aplomb and pounced rapidly. It's movements were fast, but it looked down too much on its opponents.

Slash!

Prairie Fire jabbed forward wrapped in lightning as Lin Mu Yu

unleashed Thunderstorm Rage in greeting.

Crash!

Flames flared all around as Prairie Fire cut through the Salamander’s fire breath, the sword pierced all the way through the lizard’s maw that drew a bloody stream. It was not able to lodge itself clean though the head, or else this Salamander would have died instantly. Lin Mu Yu lifted his palm and thunder charged from above, steering Prairie Fire for another attack mid-air!

Roaaaaar!

The Salamander let out an angry snarl, attempting to strike back but was caught in the eye by Lin Mu Yu's Sonic Punch. It retreated, wailing. Its tail quivered as Prairie Fire struck, piercing through the Salamander’s tail, nailing it to the rocks. There was no way for it to run anymore.

Qi Lei roared in laughter, his body leapt forward and raised Thunder Cleaver in the air. Sparks of lightning surrounded Thunder Cleaver, this move must be Qin Lei's famous skill.

"Fierce Thunder Edge"

As it pealed down, fresh blood burst forth. Qin Lei’s oppressive technique severed the Salamander’s head in one strike, not only that, they were now surrounded by biting cold wind as he swept

his sword towards the beast, crying, "Dragon Rush!"

Blood splattered everywhere. This scene was not suitable for very young audiences. The Salamander was cut to pieces by the sweeping strike that hissed faintly. Qin Lei must have Dragon Force, otherwise the destruction would not have been that exaggerated.

Klang!

Lin Mu Yu caught Prairie Fire mid-revolution. "Elder Brother Qin Lei, don't randomly cut it anymore. If the flesh of this Salamander is too badly mutilated, Xiao Xi might have trouble refining the spirit beast."

"Ah, you're right.... " The muscle brain quickly put away his sword, smiling. "Princess Xi, you can begin absorbing the essence of this beast. This 3400 year old spirit beast will surely be enough for your ascension!"

Tang Xiao Xi looked at the bloodstains all over and remained silent. She stepped into the gore and summoned out the Fire Fox to begin to refining the spirit beast.

Lin Mu Yu leaned against his sword in the back, but during the most important part of the the refining, he wordlessly pulled out his alchemy cauldron. Roaring to life it wrapped around the two of them. Qin Yin and Qin Lei did not protest, knowing that Lin Mu Yu was assisting in Xiao Xi's progress at refining the most important aspect of the spirit beast.

"Hah...."

Lin Mu Yue exhaled heavily as he dematerialized the alchemy cauldron. His eyes glinted bright while he surveyed the surrounding overgrowth. “Xiao Xi had already refined the skill of this fire beast!"

Qin Yin lightly smiled, "Really?"

"Yes."

Tang Xiao Xi also opened her beautiful eyes, clever and dazzling. "Thanks to the help of Mu Mu, I felt his power helping me control the fire beast, my power would have been insufficient to suppress it...."

Qin Lei was surprised at this, "Ah Yu, what method did you use to help them refine the main essence of the spirit beast? From what I know, the success rate of skill absorption is not greater than 30 percent, how did you do it?"

Lin Mu Yu scratched his nose and smiled. "I have my secrets. Elder Brother Qin Lei shouldn’t ask anymore, not knowing won’t kill you!"

Qin Yin could not resist a smile. "Alright then, if Ah Yu doesn't want to share then we won't ask anymore. Let's go back and rest, we might reach the Dragon Tomb after another day. We have

begun to encounter more and more spirit beasts, we should move with caution."

“Okay.”

Lin Mu Yu nodded. While they slept, he kept Prairie Fire by his side staring blankly at the sky, an ocean of stars glittered back. People say that one star belonging to you, but which among them is his? People referred to this land as the Shattered Cauldron Realm and its imperial family as the Qin Empire, whose veins carried the true dragon blood of Qin tribe. But what was his purpose here?

After everything, has he really found nothing?

On the night he woke up from a nightmare, what was that for?

He remembered Xiang Xiang, that girl who willingly died to protecting him, was she weak? No, she was very brave.

He remembered Chu Feng who swore to protect Chu Yao for as long as he lived, but died at the hands of the wicked, was he stupid? No, he was very devoted.

He remembered Little Beansprout and Qin Zi Ling, both weak and scrambled for life, are they sad? No, they did their best.

Zhang Wei, with his ironclad resolve, has now become crippled.

Tang Xiao Xi, pure, good, and honest Xiao Xi cared for him with no regard for danger.

Qin Yin, this beautiful princess who trusted and depended on him.

Feng Ji Xing, Qin Lei, and Chu Huai Sheng these friends.

Without his knowledge, he seemed to have found reasons to live in this world.

……

The first rays of the morning fell onto Lin Mu Yu's face. There was no indication of when he fell asleep, but he still held tight onto Prairie Fire. His head lolled to the outside, maintaining caution but he had fallen asleep in the end.

Qin Yin held a hand at her sword beside Lin Mu Yu. She moved her head too engrossed at his sleeping face, but did not have the heart to wake him. She knew he had not been asleep that long, he was awake the entire time before dawn, even as Qin Lei snored, he kept himself awake the whole night.

It was very cold in the late autumn mornings, Tang Xiao Xi bound the cloak tightly against herself as she lifted her head and smiled.

Qin Yin gestured for her to keep quiet and spoke softly, "Keep quiet, let him sleep more!"

"Okay."

Tang Xiao Xi smiled wider, opening her bag to find some cooked meat, then used her Fire Fox to light a new fire. Boiling the water in the iron cooking pot at the same time as throwing the meat inside. They could not have luxuries living in the wild, but warm soup was already a pleasure.

As the water simmered, the aroma of the meat permeated the air.

Lin Mu Yu’s nose sniffed the air, his stomach already hungry. When he opened his eyes he saw Qin Yin smiling at him, his face turned red immediately."Your Highness, is there a bug on my face?"

"No..." Qin Yin's face turned reddened in response, "Ah Yu, get up and eat."

"Sure."

.....

Even though his sleep was short, Lin Mu Yu felt his energy re-charged, already at peak capacity and ready to welcome any kind of challenge.

Tang Xiao Xi held out a bowl of soup over to him. He asked for seconds, flustering Tang Xiao Xi and Qin Yin a little, as they gave him more to eat. Lin Mu Yu and Qin Lei both had big appetites, resulting in only half bowl each for the two ladies.

"Why not have more?" Lin Mu Yu asked, "Are you on a diet?"

Qin Yin did not quite understand the meaning of "diet", she then said, "Women in empire generally eat only half their fill in order to maintain a beautiful form. That is what I was taught by the girls in the palace when I was younger."

Lin Mu Yu sniffed, thinking to himself that Qin Yin's words would cause damage to modern society's foodies.

Qin Lei, full from his meal, held Thunder Cleaver and smiled. "We'll reach Dragon Tomb today, at least according to the map. Ah Yu, the next spirit beast is yours!"

Lin Mu Yu retorted, "If Elder Brother Qin Lei doesn't cut randomly like a crazy lunatic and the spirit stone remains intact. Or else it would be like the Salamander's the spirit stone that was almost destroyed."

"Ha! You'll be there to remind me!"

Spirit stones can be easily bought with money, that is why, Qin Yin, Qin Lei, and Tang Xiao Xi—people from royalty—do not care

much about the spirit stone. After all spirit stones can only contain up to half of the beast's power, while the beast itself would retain everything. Qin Yin and Tang Xiao Xi grew up adhering to the mindset.

Lin Mu Yu is different. For him, spirit stones were weapons that contained a beast's essence, as well as money! He is just an ordinary person in this world, poor as a beggar, needing to economize on food and clothing. He needed to be strong in his determination, to see the bigger picture by being humble and prudent, be strict, a visionary, not taking advantage of other poor, a trainer from the Temple.

Chapter 87 : Forbidden Mother Tree

On the fourth day after entering Dragon Seeker Forest, the terrain was becoming more and more rugged that they could no longer continue on horseback and went on foot to lead their mounts step by step up the zigzagging mountain. The path had long since broken off and they had to rely on Lin Mu Yu and Qin Lei to cut a path with their swords. Just this day alone they met 3 spirit beasts more than 2000 years old. All three were easily dispatched as they had yet to meet a spirit beast that could best Lin Mu Yu. Since he intended to enter the Heaven Realm, he would need a considerably older spirit beast.

.....

The surrounding plants became more scarce as they went and in the blink of an eye, the forest had become bald, with the smell of death looming in the air. Qin Lei wrinkled his brow. "We seem to be close to the Dragon Tomb. The smell of death is quite strong here... enough to incapacitate an ordinary person...."

"Everyone, wait a moment."

Lin Mu Yu suddenly halted, he took out small vial of medicine from his chest. "One person drinks one bottle."

"What is this?" Qin Yin reached for one and asked curiously.

"Focus Powder." Lin Mu Yu smiled, "Specifically, a first-rate Focus Powder, a level 6 medicine that help maintain a clear mind.

It must be taken before being poisoned. The effects of the medicine can last 3 days. Take it or not, is your choice."

After speaking, he downed one vial of the Focus Powder.

Tang Xiao Xi smiled and took one as well. Qin Yin pulled off the cork and sniffed, finding a fresh and clean scent, swallowed it as well. Qin Lei was the only one left. As Commander of the Imperial Guard, he should always maintain caution, even though he and Lin Mu Yu are already familiar with each, he still kept up his guard, only taking it after he was sure Lin Mu Yu was alright after consuming it.

Focus Powder turned out to be a refreshing sensation flowing inside the body, Qin Yin was surprised and let out a laugh. “It was indeed first-rate, this kind of feeling is definitely something...."

Tang Xiao Xi lightly smiled, "Let's go."

"Yeah!"

.....

Qin Lei clung onto Thunder Cleaver and asked, "Ah Yu, you go ahead and clear the way. I'll protect our rear. Be careful everyone, we are about to enter the Dragon Tomb.”

Lin Mu Yu nodded. He knew that Qin Lei did not yet trust him completely, but you cannot blame anyone for that.

Dang!

He unsheathed Prairie Fire and slowly spitted out energy until the sword was heated enough to glow red. He urged the horse forward, following the canyon path and crossed into what looked to be the edge of |the Dragon Tomb. He lifted his head to see across from them lay a mounds of high rock walls, high enough to form a skyline above their heads. The sound of the crows echoed throughout, causing unease.

Sections of bone jutted from the ground, not a dragon bone, but human. Those who had come before them still laid here.

Qin Yin held on tighter to sword, very carefully looking at the surroundings, her eyes were alert for anything as cold wind blew, causing her golden cloak to flap wildly. Tang Xiao Xi followed closely, Fire Fox atop her shoulder, ready to attack. Qin Lei brought up the rear, golden chains twisting around Thunder Cleaver, his God Binding Lock ready to appear at a moment’s notice.

……

Smoke curled in front and soon, the whinnying of the warhorses weakened, their nervousness apparent. "There’s no way now, the foul atmosphere here is too strong, the horses don't want to go in. Let's tie them here and enter by ourselves."

Qin Yin and others nodded, one by one they tied down their

horses and proceeded walking.

After reaching a canyon cliff, they see a completely different scene. The smell of death did not continue inside the Dragon Tomb, instead it was filled with the abundance of spring. Hundreds of flowers bloomed, a clear river flowed the canyon cracks, beast howling can be heard in the distance. The scene was a clear contrast from the outer rim where death and skeletal remains littered the road.

"What made all these skeletons?" Tang Xiao Xi was a little shocked. She opened her right hand to make a fiery colored ropes tangle around her wrist one by one, turning into a long whip with fire encircling it. This was Tang Xiao Xi’s weapon—Flame Whip, Grandpa Cang Lan’s treasure.

Lin Mu Yu silently surveyed the area for a while, then pointing at the skull in the heap of bones. “His skull has been pierced, but it doesn't look like a sword. Lanced clean through, the wound is too small, even not as thick as a finger.

"What could it be?" Qin Lei asked in hushed tones.

"Let’s continue on. Be vigilant everyone."

……

A droning sound filled the air and Lin Mu Yu brought out his gourd martial spirit, erecting Ebony Scale and Dragon Rampart is

quick succession. He held out Prairie Fire and took the vanguard.

Suddenly, the ground shifted. A black tree vine jutted out and retreated, winking out of sight like it never appeared.

"What was that?" Lin Mu Yu quickly rushed at it, remotely activating a sword technique. His sword crashed into the spot, exploding in the ground, the mud and detritus scattered everywhere but no sign of the vine.

"The right! Careful!" Qin Lei shouted.

All the warning they had was a sharp rustle, like a speeding arrow, just before a vine stabbed upward narrowly missing Qin Yin’s face. Indeed there was something, and that something was plants!

Crash!

Qin Lei hurried to it, lightning surged from Thunder Cleaver, severing the vine. He lifted his hand and pointed south. "The main body of this spirit beast is there. Ah Yu, go!"

Lin Mu Yu did not care much for the situation. The enemy knew where they were while he was still in the dark about their attacker. It was the the worst of situations.

Tang Xiao Xi thought on her feet, without any prompting she launched her Fire Fox to attack. It lunged at the enemy’s direction,

flames burning through all the shrubbery to ashes. Lin Mu Yu threw himself at greats speeds and drove the long sword deep into the ground, the impact sent energy that decimated all within its radius.

With the shrubbery gone, it gave way to the sight of their attacker, an awe-inspiringly large black tree. The trunk and branches twisted and each branch was like an arm. Its writhing branches would inspire fear in lesser men but Qin Yin only narrowed her beautiful eyes in reaction before she said, "What is this thing?"

Qin Lei in his experience, knew the answer, his voice came out cold, “It's the Forbidden Mother Tree! And a 7000 year old one. The limbs are extendable and it's strength should not be taken lightly. They only appear where men's footprints are rare; its name came from the ‘Mother Tree’ folklore. Its countless arms make it formidable, everybody must be very careful. Ah Yu, with me!”

Lin Mu Yu was already charging ahead fearlessly, the gourd walls formed into a beautiful circle protecting him from the oncoming thorned vines striking against Ebony Scale. It whittled away his defenses inch by inch, causing his blood and energy to roil. When an attack was just going to hit him, he thrust both hands wreathed in flames, preparing for a fire technique by channeling his Force into Prairie Fire to counter the onslaught.

Snap! Snap!

The arms of the Forbidden Mother Tree were cut down one by one, and green liquid burst forth from the severed limbs.

Qin Lei also launched an attack, Thunder Cleaver churned into lightning storm, wreaking havoc all around, cutting down the vines. At the same time, God Binding Lock protected his whole body, preventing the thorns from reaching him.

Qin Yin gnashed her teeth and let out a shout as she launched her attack, God Binding Lock spurted from the ground, gold chains blasted through the trunk. Yet who could have expected that the tree did not remain stationary, the branches shifted and dodged, cleverly evaded the martial spirit attack of Qin Yin. Tang Xiao Xi launched her Fire Fox and shouted, "Burn it!"

Lin Mu Yu had been cutting non stop, but there seemed to be no end to it, he was still surrounded by vines. "What's happening? The more I cut the more vines there are!"

"Ah Yu be careful, the vines can regrow!"

"What?!"

He saw it now, the places where the branches had been cut continually bubbled green liquid, quickly sprouting new vines. That is why there was no end to it!

Crash!

The countless vines around him abruptly coalesced, encasing Lin Mu Yu. He could not get free no matter how he struggled and Tang

Xiao Xi’s flames didn't do much damage to it.

Groaan.

The Forbidden Mother Tree let out a sound, like it's mocking him. It directed numerous vines at him in a piercing attack.

"Ah Yu!"

Qin Lei shouted urgently, frantically raised Thunder Cleaver as countless bolts of lightning surged, he ruthlessly struck the trunk and the tree exploded!

Crash!

Green liquid oozed out, the Forbidden Mother Tree was still regenerating, the life of this measly wretch was not so hard to defeat.

……

Lin Mu Yu was surrounded by tens of thousands of vines, unable to break free. He can only punch and throw kicks randomly to keep the vines at bay. Eventually, his gourd wall gave out, Ebony Scale and Dragon Rampart both fell!

Crash!

Golden light shone as Qin Yin’s sword along with her God Binding Lock gorged through the tree trunk, she took to the air. There, where the gaping hole her attack left, was a blood red heart beating rhythmically. She was completely caught off guard. "What is that?"

Qin Lei loudly said: "It's the tree’s spirit. If you destroy it you can defeat the Forbidden Mother Tree!"

Qin Yin was about to pierce it, but a vine suddenly came at her from the right, smashing into her and launching her back.

Qin Lei rushed to save her, but was pierced by a vine through his leg and blood gushed out, momentarily losing consciousness. Tang Xiao Xi was being held back by hundreds of vines and all she could do was defend herself.

……

Lin Mu Yu, still a prisoner in the wooden cage, had a clear view of what happened. True dragon fire bubbled from his palms, gearing up for another mid air sword technique, Prairie Fire spun rapidly - Destructive Dragonfire Helix!

Crash!

The spiral columns went straight for the vines encasing him. He leaped took hold of his sword, with one long shout, he snarled, "Seven Luminaries, come out!"

This is the first time he summoned the Seven Luminaries by his own will, there was a heavy force flooding his senses. There seemed to be another power restraining the Seven Luminaries, resisting him, but it was not enough to stop him. Lin Mu Yu quickly summoned his alchemy cauldron and igniting it mid air. The force returned, trying to resist his control, said in a low voice, "Do you still want to struggle? You shameful thing!"

At length the struggling ceased and he was able to fire up the alchemy cauldron with the first rank flame. Throwing his arms out, concentrating on his sword, suddenly everything erupted in colors around the tree’s exposed spirit and fire swallowed everything in that moment—

True Dragon Fire Chaos Fist!

Chapter 88 : Entering Heaven Realm

Boom!

Raging flames engulfed the entire tree and it exploded into piles of burning cinder, the destructive force of the First Luminary along with true dragon fire were indeed unimaginable. Even Lin Mu Yu was shocked by the power of his own attack. He was only on the third rank of the Earth Realm, but the power of his attack far exceeded those of Qin Yin and Qin Lei who were already in the Heaven Realm!

……

The Forbidden Mother Tree died the moment the tree spirit was burned to ashes. The leafy canopy collapsed; turning a piles of brittle wood as its green life blood seeped out.

“Ah…”

Qin Yin let out a miserable groan from somewhere in the underbrush.

Lin Mu Yu hurriedly rushed to her and helped her up. “Your Highness, are you okay?”

Her shoulder had been struck and fresh blood soaked her clothes. The tree’s attack had been too strong and Qin Yin had not been able to defend properly.

He quickly took out a bottle medicine and handed it over to Tang Xiao Xi, instructing her, “Heal the princess. I’ll go check on Elder Brother Qin Lei.”

“Okay!”

When he approached, Qin Lei was sitting on a rock to lay his leg horizontally, all the while gnashing his teeth. Qin Lei was trying to take out the thorn still lodged in his leg, causing fresh blood to flow, but he continued. Qin Lei was indeed a man with nerves of steel. Lin Mu Yu handed over a bottle of medicine. ”Elder Brother Qin Lei, heal yourself with this. This kind of medicine helps with wounds, speeding up your recovery.”

“Okay. Thank you, Ah Yu!”

Qin Lei tore the cloth around his injured leg, pouring the medicine into the wound. At the same time, he curled his lips and smiled. “Ah Yu, this Forbidden Mother Tree is a 7000 year old spirit beast. You should take it. I haven’t advanced my training enough to make use of it, this spirit beast is a waste on me.

Lin Mu Yu smiled and said, “Then it will be impolite for me to refuse, right?”

“Yes, go ahead!”

……

Coming beside the corpse of the tree, he quickly summoned his gourd martial spirit. The gourd immediately felt the abundance in spirit power and greedily absorbed it. Once Lin Mu Yu used the alchemy cauldron on himself, the refining went fast.

Creak.

After refining for nearly half an hour, the Forbidden Mother Tree started crying, it struggled, unwilling to be absorbed. Its resistance was for naught as Lin Mu Yu promptly used the third level refining fire—Hell Fire, quickly refining the beast without further interruptions

Sizzle.

The gourd brightened momentarily once the refining was complete. After absorbing the spirit of the Forbidden Mother Tree, his martial spirit changed from orange to an indigo color, and was extremely good looking. He was able to absorb the skill of the Forbidden Mother Tree—Recovery, capable of increasing one's regeneration by a large margin. Even Lin Mu Yu felt the energy course through his blood vessels as the wounds in his shoulder were feeling much better, already beginning to heal!

"Ah Yu, have you refined the skill?" Qin Lei asked.

"Yes," he nodded, "it seems like the skill of Forbidden Mother Tree was ability to heal. It seems that my wounds in the future will heal at an extraordinary speed."

“Congratulations to you!” Qin Lei lifted Thunder Cleaver, smiled and said, “I was surprised that this Forbidden Mother Tree wounded the three of us, only Xiao Xi came out unharmed.”

Tang Xiao Xi turned red. “Maybe because I was farther from it than the rest of you?”

Lin Mu Yu spoke genially. “This is good thing, Xiao Xi. Your Battle Spirit is the lowest among us, you should let us concentrate on fighting. It is fine this way.”

Tang Xiao Xi pouted, “But I haven’t reached my dream of becoming a strong warrior. Being with group of strong warriors like you is a big strike to my self-confidence!”

Qin Yin stood up and smiled. “Let’s look for a place to rest before we go find the dragon bones.”

Qin Lei agreed, “Since we already reached Dragon Tomb there is no hurry. We are all wounded, I suggest that we rest for the night to heal our wounds. Let’s go into the deeps of the Dragon Tomb tomorrow, okay?”

“Agreed.”

“Okay. “ the two ladies nodded in unison.

……

They camped next to a creek. Lin Mu Yu found some dry wood then some grass to arrange into a makeshift bed. Tang Xiao Xi fetched the water to make rice. While Qin Yin was bandaging her wounds, she asked, “Ah Yu, your energy is already different. Have you reached Heaven Realm after refining the spirit beast?”

“Yes.”

Lin Mu Yu repressed the overwhelming joy he was feeling. He opened his palm and released milky white energy. Not the usual energy but Force along with thunder element energy. He merged them together as they sparked and crackled in the air forming Electric Thunder Force, even greater than his power before. After entering into Heaven Realm, the characteristics of his power would transform, the resulting change would mean that the power his Four-Way Sword Skill and the already destructive True Dragon Fire would have increased exponentially!

“How are you feeling right now?” Qin Yin was happy for him.

Lin Mu Yu took a deep breath and stared at the sky. “There is a feeling of confidence, like I can now be considered an expert. Your Highness Yin, please don’t laugh at me…”

Qin Yin cannot contain herself and laughed with arms flailing. “You were already an expert before, in addition to being a gold star trainer of the Temple. Your position was already considered outstanding in the empire. Did you not think so yourself?”

Lin Mu Yu sat beside Qin Yin, his ears catching the gurgling stream. “Your Highness, how many experts do you think there are in this world? They far surpass us.”

Qin Yin contemplated on this thought while looking at the endless thicket in the distance. “I am not certain, but based to my knowledge, the strong warriors of the Saint Realm can be counted with one's fingers. And even less of the God Realm. There’s only two people in the entire mainland, and they have been living a secret life for so many years now. There were used to be many strong warriors from the Saint and God Realm before, but after the winter confrontation in the mountain range a hundred years ago, they seemed to have vanished.”

“Oh?“ this surprised him, “Your Highness, can you tell me more about it?”

“I really don’t know the specifics of that time. These things can only be known from the ancient books and it is difficult to confirm the truth, but originally there were indeed numerous God Realm warriors in the mainland. Like my late grandfather, Qin Yi, the emperor who founded the Qin Empire. He was someone who trained himself to the pinnacle of the God Realm, but they all disappeared suddenly a hundred years ago and nobody knows where they went. The rumors say they flew to the heavens, to go somewhere else.”

While talking, Qin Yin’s lips turned into a smile. “In reality, I am also waiting for the time that I can fly into the heavens and be free.”

Lin Mu Yu did not dare to say that Qin Yi had died horribly, at the same time he was completely stunned. Was it really that Qin Yi who lead numerous strong warriors to kill the Seven Star Emperor, resulting in him passing through the 18 layers of purgatory unexpectedly, where neither side won?

Looking at the pretty face Qin Yin under the moonlight, Lin Mu Yu did not have the heart to tell her that all these God Realm warriors already died, so he grinned instead. “Yes, I also yearn for the free and unfettered heavens.”

“Haha, yeah!”

Qin Yin continued, “But we must live in the present. I want to succeed the Empire while you strive hard to train and become a great strong warrior defending the Empire, right?”

“Yeah, that’s right.”

After eating dinner and training for a bit, Qin Yin and Tang Xiao Xi slept early. Lin Mu Yu and Qin Lei agreed that he would guard the first and Qin Lei would take second watch.

At midnight, he laid down, finally able to rest. When he closed his eyes, he quickly entered into dream world.

……

However long he slept was interrupted by a ruthless sound coming through his ears—

“Hey kid!”

In his dream, a black shadow loomed in front of him even though Lin Mu Yu stood in daylight. He reached for Prairie Fire, but realizes he doesn’t have anything.

The shadow approached him, face unrecognizable, but Lin Mu Yu knew who he was—The Seven Star Emperor!

“You are a ghost now, what do you want?”

“Ha Ha Ha Ha…” the look on the Seven Star Emperor’s face was extremely malevolent as he spat, “Brat, you continue to live thinking you can use my Seven Star Mystic Power freely? Dream on!”

In the middle of talking, the Seven Star Emperor pounced madly, countless stars in his palm as he loudly yelled, “Die – Seven Star Shift!”

……

“Ah!”

Lin Mu Yu suddenly woke, realizing it was only a dream, but not

all of it. It had been too real and he could still feel the sharp sting of the Seven Star Shift!

“Good morning, Mu Mu…” Tang Xiao Xi was cooking breakfast to the side and said, “You’ll be able to eat in a little bit and we’ll look for the dragon tendon vine in the later!”

“Okay…”

Qin Yin asked in a more caring manner, “You had a bad dream?”

“Eh? …Kind of!“ he smiled and slightly shook his head, “maybe I was just too tired.”

“Alright then.”

……

After breakfast, the four of them continued deeper into the forest.

The beautiful Fire Fox shuffled in Tang Xiao Xi’s arms and restlessly looked around, frequently letting out small whimpering sounds. Tang Xiao Xi was a bit astounded, “What is wrong?”

As the Fire Fox could not speak, it continued whining while staring at a direction.

Tang Xiao Xi narrowed her eyes. “I guess the dragon bones we are looking for is in that direction. Let’s go!”

Since no one had an inkling where the dragon bones were, they had nothing to go by other than the Fire Fox’s reactions, hence the group decided to follow it.

After walking for several hours, they walked past a hillside when Tang Xiao Xi was startled, “Woah…”

Lin Mu Yu quickly advanced and also saw what started her. Within the valley lay a large body, seemingly belonging to the dragon race. It was not a five-clawed dragon, but a drake, yet both were classified as dragons.

“Found it!”

He happily rushed to the hillside, leapt to the skeleton of the drake to find clusters of dark green vines growing from the vertebrae exuding faint dragon energy. “Dragon tendon vine. We found dragon tendon vine!”

But in that moment, a breath huffed from behind him.

Tang Xiao Xi’s face looked panicked as she quickly shouted, “Mu Mu, be careful!”

……

Crash!

A biting cold stream of air blew, disturbing the dragon tendon vine. Lin Mu Yu was unable to move at the moment, his whole body was being hindered by some spherical force. He couldn’t move anything!

At last, that person has finally arrived!

Chapter 89 : War In The Sanctuary

In the sky was an old man in gray robes holding a shaft of steel staff. With an ominous glint in his eyes looking straight at Lin Mu Yu. Layers of invisible energy emanated from him, making him the cause of Lin Mu Yu’s constrictions. This old man had the power to lay his feet in the winds enabling him to stop in the air for long periods of time, just like a celestial being.

.....

Lin Mu Yu pushed against the restraining force with all his might, invigorating the Force in his body, rousing his white battle robe to flutter high in the sky. His left palm suddenly opened, thunder and lightning emerged, pushing out Prairie Fire from its scabbard, streams of air surged the moment he unsheathed Prairie Fire, causing a crack in the sphere.

Rustle.

He leapt nearly ten meters away from where he was, Lin Mu Yu felt like the bones of his body were being torn apart. He turned to look at the old man in the air, his vision trembled with fear. "Are you the one who shattered Zhang Wei’s dragon tendon?"

The man slightly smiled, calm like the one before him could do him no harm and did not pose a threat. "Correct, it was me, old Cang Bai He. My respects to Her Highness Qin Yin, little prince, and Princess Xi!"

Qin Lei lifted his eyes to look in the sky, he held Thunder Cleaver tight all the more and said, "I have heard of your name, Elder Cang Bai He. You are one of the esteemed elders of the empire, why would you hurt Zhang Wei? He is a military instructor from the Temple, an officer of the Empire!"

Cang Bai He let out a cold laugh. "Marquis Shen has faithfully served the Empire, with countless heroic contributions during the war in the north. If not for those matchless achievements of the Marquis, will there even be a Qin Empire? Now that there is peace, a small military instructor from the Temple dares to offend and oppress Marquis Shenate. Do you think that no one will fight for them? The Marquis has employed me in his kindness. If you are an enemy to the Marquis Shen, then you are an enemy of Cang Bai He!"

Minutes had passed before Qin Yin recovered from blanking out and she leapt to stand on the dragon bones alongside Lin Mu Yu. Cold wind continued to blow as her cloak lightly fluttered, she said, "Then what is the purpose of your coming here, Elder?"

"Ha Ha Ha..."

Cang Bai He raised his head and laughed heartily. "There were two people who offended Marquis Shen. One is Zhang Wei and the other is this criminal, Lin Mu Yu, who changed his name to Lin Zhi. I wish to display my loyalty to the Empire by killing this criminal and bring his head to Lan Yan City! Your Highness, please step aside. Don't hinder me from capturing and killing this presumptuous boy."

Qin Yin abruptly opened her arms, her beautiful face filled with determination. "Elder, Ah Yu was accused wrongly of killing someone in Silver Fir City. I have already informed my father who is willing to pardon him. Elder, you need not take the trouble."

"Is that so?"

The face of Cang Bai He become cold under the moon. "Your Highness, you are the only legitimate successor of the Empire and is the future and hope of your family. If Princess Qin Yin were to somehow die in an accident here in Dragon Seeker Forest, do you think anyone will know that it was me who did it?

Lin Mu Yu burst with bitter hate, holding Prairie Fire defensively in front of Qin Yin. He growled lowly, "Cang Bai He, your target is me, not Her Highness Qin Yin!"

Qin Yin's voice was soft, almost a whisper. "Ah Yu, can't you see? Cang Bai He does not intend to let any of us to walk out alive...."

Qin Lei gripped Thunder Cleaver with anger in his eyes, "Cang Bai He, you despicable low-life. Do you know what you are doing now? You are betraying the Empire!"

"And yet how have I betrayed the Empire?" Cang Bai He let out a cold laugh, "if the Qin Family can own the world, then other people can as well. What is the use of all this talk? Don't think that anyone of you will live past today!"

.....

Bzzt!

While the everyone was talking, Lin Mu Yu's martial spirit had already mobilized, Prairie Fire flashed into thunder in an instant, attacking Cang Bai He. The technique had streaked through so fast, it was astonishing!

But the opponent was somehow stronger. Cang Bai He raised the steel staff fearlessly, and the attack dispersed. He easily repelled the violent thunder attack and the revolving Prairie Fire flung far away.

"Attack!"

Lin Mu Yu let out a snarl, opening his left hand to give rise to more thunder in order to call back Prairie Fire while his right grabbed four throwing knives from his waist in an instant. He threw one after the other and the knives turned into glitter like frost. At the same time, Qin Lei held the flickering Thunder Cleaver to engage an attack, a few gold God Binding Lock chains twisted around him.

Cang Bai He descended to the dragon carcass with taunting laughter. Suddenly, flames covered his body, the source of it was his martial spirit: Inferno Rod, a second rank martial spirit. Holding the steel staff with one hand, Inferno Rod in the other, Cang Bai He laughed louder still.

"Interesting, interesting. The God Binding Lock of the Qin

family, plus a useless gourd martial spirit. Let’s see how long you can struggle!"

Crash!

The Inferno Rod exploded against his gourd wall, at the same time, Ebony Scale shattered while Dragon Rampart was shaky at best. Lin Mu Yu leapt with Prairie Fire leaped, heedless of everything, man and sword united to cut down the enemy!

In the midst of his guffaw, the Inferno Rod turned in his hand and strong Force burst out, causing Lin Mu Yu to bounce back along with his sword. Spraying fresh blood in the air as well as suffering internal injuries. At the same time, the steel staff flew across in an arc, and a heavy explosion struck Thunder Cleaver. With Cang Bai He bloodthirsty, he abruptly advanced!

Pop!

When Qin Lei looked down, he saw the sharp pointed end of the steel staff piercing his abdomen, spurting blood.

"Little prince, don't think badly of this old man!"

The Force of Cang Bai He abruptly surged. The pointed end of the staff immediately shifted, producing biting cold Force intending to break Qin Lei’s internal organs. A burst of cold wind slammed against the back of the head as Qin Yin charged with her sword. Cang Bai He quickly moved sideways to dodge but unexpectedly,

Qin Yin moved like a slithering dragon. Bypassing his arm, she opened her palm and the golden God Binding Lock assailed Cang Bai He!

Bang.

Gold light radiated all around, but the attack failed to inflict serious damage as Cang Bai He had a thick layer of Force protecting him. There is a large disparity between their strengths, no matter how strong the God Binding Lock was, it could not harm him.

"You court death!"

Cang Bai He waved the Inferno Rod in his left hand, aiming for the God Binding Lock defending Qin Yin's chest; it broke down in an instant and Qin Yin retreated. Her face was pale as she fell into a kneel on the dragon remains. Behind, the Fire Fox was raging flames upon Cang Bai He but he quickly wielded his steel staff to disperse the flames. The martial spirit flame of the Seven Seas Tang men is not easy to deal with and neither is it a small matter to be burned by it.

Sizzle.

The Fire Fox on Tang Xiao Xi’s shoulder began to crazily shout, like it was preparing to face a large enemy.

"Xiao Yin!"

When Tang Xiao Xi was about to charge, she saw Qin Yin abruptly waved a hand back towards her and Force surged, forcing Tang Xiao Xi to retreat. It was clear Qin Yin didn’t want her help.

……

Above, Qin Lei was still suffering from a severe wound to his abdomen, but clung onto Thunder Cleaver still. Rousing the Force from his whole body, streaking thunder and lightning to skim the ground, fully intending to do his utmost. In the middle of his attack, a dark shadow swept past, the steel staff pierced through Qin Lei’s chest. The crushing force nailed him onto a huge dragon bone.

"Quietly wait for death, little prince. This is best ending for you."

Cang Bai He made a cold laugh, holding Inferno Rod and he walked towards Qin Yin, his eyes were already gloating as he laughed loudly before he said, "Your Highness, if you didn't leave the city, or the protection of hundreds of Imperial Guards, who would have been able to kill you? You came here to seek death of your own volition, don't blame this old man."

The Force within Qin Yin’s body was already disrupted by the Inferno Rod, she was still kneeling when she lifted her head and looked at Cang Bai He, but did not show any fear.

Crash!

When Cang Bai He raised the Inferno Rod, a flickering streak of lightning suddenly came from the side. It was Prairie Fire

surrounded by electrical energy.

"You still come?"

Cang Bai He once again batted away the long sword, but when Prairie Fire had momentarily connected with his hand, Lin Mu Yu let out a loud cry and rays of the indigo colored martial spirit coalesced, the entire dragon trembled and gourd vines came out from the beneath the bones, madly rushing toward Cang Bai He in a way that roots found purchase and clung to the earth.

The image of a man mixed in with the light of the sword, the attack of the Saint Realm warrior caused his battle robe to fluttered. Lin Mu Yu seemed to put all his strength into the sword, True Dragon Fire settled along the blade of the sword as his body towered in the air for an attack. The sword turned in the air, preparing for his strongest attack—

Destructive Dragonfire Helix!

Cang Bai He narrowed his eyes, feeling the power of this attack. He clucked his tongue in wonder and said, "Not bad kid, you indeed have skill. No wonder Lei Hong, that old ghost, regards you so highly!"

Cang Bai He suddenly willed Inferno Rod to create fireballs, continuing just as haughtily, "Can your sword technique cut through my Inferno Shield?"

Clang!

The power gathered within Lin Mu Yu’s body exploded in the form of the martial spirits attack on the opponent. Flames bursting in all directions, the colliding impact formed an extremely intense shock wave, strong enough to pull up the roots of small trees while splitting larger ones apart. Qin Yin held onto a dragon bone for better footing watching the figure of Lin Mu Yu swaying gently in the air, blood still flowing onto the pure white Temple cloak.

"Ah Yu...."

Tear filled her eyes.

Destructive Dragonfire Helix continued to burn, but Prairie Fire fell into the grass some ways away, Lin Mu Yu does not have the strength to muster any more thunder energy to call back his sword.

"Is that your limit?"

Cang Bai He laughed some more, slowly pressing forward and lifting his palm. Five fingers gathered together like arrows and pierced Lin Mu Yu’s chest. Bellowing he said, "I will let you die more miserably than Zhang Wei. Ha Ha Ha, you loathsome brat...."

Drip, drip.

Cang Bai He shoved his fingers deeper into Lin Mu Yu, inch by

inch forcing more blood out, spilling onto the deathly pale dragon bones beneath, but Lin Mu Yu did not move and only stood there.

"Why didn't you evade it?" Cang Bai He asked with a cold smile.

Lin Mu Yu eyes were clear, his voice shook slightly from the pain, "Her Highness came to dragon tomb for me. If you really want to kill her, then you will have to kill me first. She will not die before me!”

Chapter 90 : Second Luminaries, Demon Dance

“Where are you… appear before me!”

The pain in his chest seemed to have disappeared, however Lin Mu Yu was still shouting and beckoning within his conscious. At this moment, the only thing that could salvage the situation was immense power, and he cannot accomplish that without the Seven Luminaries.

Suddenly, a strong burst of strength entered his left arm, faintly feeling the pain and suffering of all living creatures. He grit his teeth, mustering his strength, thrust his fist toward Cang Bai He!

Chaos Fist!

“PA!”

With just one attack the protective qi on Cang Bai He dissipated, though visibly weakened he was still conscious and he glared at Lin Mu Yu. “What.. What is that power?!”

Lin Mu Yu remained silent as he struggle to endure the pain. Still, he continued shouting into his consciousness, “Give the Second Luminaries to me! Hurry!! I need it NOW!

“HAHAHAHA, You want me strength? Dream on you brat!” , the

black soul loudly jeered.

“Alchemy cauldron!”

Flames spill out from the cauldron and rapidly enclosed the emperor’s soul. “NOW!” he howled.

Miserable screams rang out, the demon emperor seemingly in greater pain than Lin Mu Yu, half screaming half mocking: “You want to borrow my strength? Do you even have the capacity to do so? With such a pathetic physique, mastering the power of the seven luminaries is just an empty dream!”

However, the strength from before continued to leak out from the depth of his soul permeating his physical body. His left arm gaining more and more of this mysterious energy, bringing along the anguished cries trapped within him. Without hesitation, he let out his second strike - Second luminaries Demon Dance!

Cang Bai Ge hastily raised his left palm and channeled qi to block the blow, but upon impact, he realised that the fist is way too strong!

The fist struck Cang Bai Ge’s chest, the sound of bones breaking could be heard. Cang Bai Ge was forced back by the impact and slid back several metres. Unable to stand anymore, he had a hand on his chest while the other was on the ground, supporting him as he kneeled in front of Lin Mu Yu. Fresh blood spill out from his mouth as he began speaking: “ You.. You have a demon in you!”

Lin Mu Yu only smirked , as he kneeled above the dragon bones; his hair turned white, visibly aged. This is the backlash from using power far above his capabilities, continuously using the power of the seven luminaries twice has significantly shorten his lifespan.

“Ah Yu..” (T/N: Ah Yu is a more familiar way of calling Lin Mu Yu, the Yu is the last character of his name)

Qin Yin saw Lin Mu Yu pained expression while crouching on the floor; shivering uncontrollably from the pain. Qin Yu’s heart tightened and tears rolled down her cheeks.. “Ah Yu... Please dont.. You cannot die....”

Tang Xiao Xi used her whip to hook onto the dragon bone, pulling herself up.

“Xiao Xi...”

Lin Mu Yu was still crouching on the ground, he did not raise his head but he raised his right palm, gently waving it indicating to Xiao Xi not to provoke Cang Bai Ge. Even though he is injured Cang Bai Ge is still stronger than all 4 of them.

.....

“You!! You little bastard!”

Cang Bai Ge stood up, his aura visibly disturbing the dust on the ground. He raised his left arm, calling his inferno rod back to his

palm; slowly creeping towards Lin Mu Yu, he laughed: “One year from now.. Will be your death anniversary!”

However at this moment, a shrill bird cry rang through the air, furthermore, a faint voice could be heard saying: “Your highness, your subordinate Qu Chu has arrived!”

“What?!” Tang Xiao Xi cried out: “Why are you so late....”

Cang Bai Ge was also equally shocked, and began to panic. This is because although Qu Chu was also in the saint realm, however compared to the years of experience Qu Chu has Cang Bai Ge will not be able to put up a fight. Once Qu Chu figures out what has happen he will definitely eradiate him! Once he thought of this, he immediately charged into the dense forest, not daring to turn his head.

.....

“Ah.... Ah...”

Pluses of pain spread through his chest, Lin Mu Yu leaned on the dragon bone and vomited blood, the once pure white temple rode has already became blood red...

Tang Xiao Xi rushed forward to support him, Witnessing his distressed state, tear that were held back for so long finally escaped. “Mumu.. mumu, please don't die! Grandpa Qu Chu is almost here..”

Lin Mu Yu remained motionless throughout the entire commotion, his head leaning on Tang Xiao Xi's lap.

"Ah Yu.... Ah Yu...."

Qin Yin slowly crawled towards the dragonbone, teardrops dripping onto the ground: "Ah Yu, you must survive.."

Suddenly, they witnessed a miracle, Lin Mu Yu's white hair is slowly turning black, the sagging skin is becoming firm even his breathing has became calm. He once again cough out blood, however this time he opened his eyes: " I am fine... quickly save Qin Lei..."

Qin Lei is still nailed onto the dragonbone, two holes on his chest and abdomen, however seeing that Lin Mu Yu is fine, a smile still appeared on his face. "Ah... as long as you're fine..as long as you're fine....."

Qin Yin leaped off the dragonbone, gently extracting the steel stick from Qin lei and immediately applied medicine on their wounds as well as letting them consume recovery potion. Unfortunately, their wounds are too strong and cannot be healed in a short amount of time.

"Why has elder Qu Chu not arrived?" Qin Yin asked.

"I commanded my firefox to let out a shout to attract grandpa Qu

Chu's attention, however he is simply too far away..."

"If grandpa Qu Chu was near, he wouldn't have needed to use his qi to send out a voice message, neither would Cang Bai Ge see tomorrow's sunrise..." Lin Mu Yu said.

"However, that voice message from him saved all four of our lives.." Qin Yin said while attending to his wounds.

"Indeed..."

Qu Chu finally appeared after 20 minutes, traveling at an extremely fast speed, leaped off the dragonbone. Seeing the injured Lin Mu Yu and Qin Lei he cannot help but knit his eyebrows, "What happened here?"

"Exactly what happened here? Your Highness....." Qu Chu ask as he drop to a knee, saluting Qin Yin.

Qin Yin nodded her head, signifying to him to rise, "Do you remember who is the number 1 fighter of Marquis Shen residence?" (T/N note: The ranks for nobility are as follows in decreasing order - gong 公 "duke", hou 侯 "marquis", bo 伯 "earl", zi 子 "viscount", nan 男 "baron")

"Cang Bai He? He is a Heaven realm practitioner... what about him?" Qu Chu asked, clearly puzzled.

"He had already advanced to the Spirit realm and it was him who

tried to kill us just now!”

“What?! Why... Does he not know who you are?” Qu Chu trembled, shocked at this revelation.

Qin Yin, however, remain perfectly calm : “ He does know, which is the reason why he tried to silence me.

Qu Chu kneeled down and cupped his fist, “Your subordinate was late, i beg Your Highness for forgiveness!”

“You don't have to blame yourself, if not for your voice message, i'm afraid we would already have died by his hands... Can you help look at their injuries?” Qin Yin said as she gestured towards Lin Mu Yu and Qin Lei.

“Yes, your highness.”

After Qu Chu examined the wounds he said: “ Lin Mu Yu’s willpower is very strong... even though he has 3 broken ribs and a punctured heart he is still alive. Prince’s injury is significantly lighter, even though the wound is deep none of his vital organs are harmed.

Tang Xiao Xi said: “ That is because he just absorb the spirit of the forbidden mother tree, acquiring its ability of regeneration”

“That explains it... It seems your cultivation level has also risen greatly!:

Tang Xiao Xi wiped away the tears on her face and puff out her chest, smiling proudly.

“Ah, elder Qu Chu, why were you in the dragonseeker forest? And how did Xiao Xi knew you were here...”

Tang Xiao Xi replied: “ I gambled on the chance he was here... thankfully i won that bet”

“Actually, this old man has been guarding this place for many years..” Qu Chu said looking pensive.

“Ah? Why?” Qin Yin exclaimed, face filled with shock.

Qu Chu faintly smiled : ”Your Highness, this is the deepest part within the dragonseeker forest, normal people would not enter, those who do usual come to obtain treasures. Unfortunately, this place only have dragon bones, moveover, they are not true dragon bones. Generations after generations there has always been someone guarding this location, when this old man was 27, i took over this duty from my master, accepting the role of the dragon tomb guardian. Apart from the time when im carrying out official duties, i will always be here.”

“So it turns out grandpa Qu Chu you are the guardian of the dragon tomb....” Lin Mu Yu cheekily smiled: “ In that case... can i borrow some of the dragon tendon?”

“Sure go ahead, there’s more than enough.” Qu Chu exclaimed in a magnanimous manner.

Lin Mu Yu continued: “ Grandpa Qu Chu, we are being targeted by Cang Bai Ge, after i have collected some herb come back with us to the imperial capital. Brother Qin Lei and i are injured and will need you to help protect Her Highness and Xiao Xi.”

“En!” Qu Chu readily agreed

……

After resting for a couple of hours, Lin Mu Yu is finally able to move about by himself. Carrying the Prairie Fire sword, he slash through the tendons on the dragonbone. (T/N: For those who doesnt know, Ligaments join one bone to another bone, while tendons connect muscle to bone.) Starlight brightened the dragon tomb as the clouds moved away, revealing the glimmering interior! This sight truly shocked Lin Mu Yu, this light belongs to the Night Bright grass! Surprisingly the two ingredients he needed actually grew together, in this deserted location! (T/N: anyone got a better name to suggest?... The original is 夜明草)

Chapter 91 : Another Assassin Encounter

After frantically collecting a large pile of dragon tendons and night bright grass, Lin Mu Yu once again fell into a predicament. “I still need the needle bird, what do i do...” Lin Mu Yu said unhappily.

“Needle bird?” Qin Yin asked: “I’ve heard of it before, it is an extremely small bird, what do you want to do with it?”

“To repair the scattered tendon we cannot use any liquid as a medium to mix the medicine, we need to use blood, and the most suitable blood belongs to the needle bird.” Lin Mu Yu raised his head and said: “Grandpa Qu Chu, do you know where to find the needle bird?”

Qu Chu immediately replied: “The needle bird is a nocturnal creature and its main diet consist of the fireflies, hence only near water bodies can we find the needle bird. There is a small lake within the dragon tomb, we will set up camp by the lakeside; You guys rest up, i’ll catch it for you, how many do you need?”

Lin Mu Yu pondered for a while and said, “If we kill them ill only need 20, however, if we want to preserve the lives of the bird i'll need at least 50. Grandpa Qu Chu sorry to bother you, help me capture 50 needle birds.”

“En.”

By the side, Qin Yin was smiling brightly, her dimples sinking

into her cheeks. She said:” Ah Yu doesn't wish to kill unnecessarily, that is a good thing.”

“Ha, Your highness is only saying that because the needle bird is small, or else after collecting the blood we can barbecue it...” Lin Mu Yu laughed while rubbing his stomach: “ After saying so much i'm starting to feel very hungry....”

Qin yin raised an eyebrow, slightly sticking out her delicate nose, beautiful proud eyes looking at him, as if she were once again sizing him up.

.....

As the night fell, the group set up camp by the lakeside, Qu Chu was able to return with the needle birds required. Qu Chu then proceeded to take a seat at the side, quietly observing Lin Mu Yu concocting the medicine. Actually, the main reason Qu Chu was so willing to help was because he wished to learn the level 10 pill formula, Lin Mu Yu was also willing to allow him to observe as Qu Chu’s aptitude of alchemy was rather poor and would probably not be able to understand it.

Although he was still injured, Lin Mu Yu diligently refined the dragon tendon and night bright grass into pearl sized lumps. Tang Xiao Xi and Qin Yin were also helping out by obtaining a few drops of blood from each bird, gently and letting them go after that. The two of them actually fought to handle this chore, else this job would have fallen into the hands of Qu Chu. When Qu Chu handle a blade, even an elephant would die from his strength... not to mention these delicate birds.. Oh those poor bird...

Lin Mu Yu gently lowered the mixed balls into the bowl filled with the blood. Very quickly, a sweet fragrance flowed through the air, no one would have thought that mixing these two items together would create such a pleasant smell.

After refining more than 20 bottles of the muscle replenishing powder, Lin Mu Yu hand a bottle over to Qin Lei. “Brother Qin Lei, how about you drink a bottle too” Lin Mu Yu said, holding the bottle in front of him.

“My dragon tendon is not injured, why do you want me to drink it?” Qin Lie ask with a puzzled expression.

Lin Mu Yu can’t help but smile as he replied, “The full name of the muscle replenishing powder is actually ‘physique replenishing powder’ and it is able to cure severe injuries not just limited to the muscles. Qin Lei, your injuries seems quite deep, just drink a bottle to avoid long term injury.

“Alright then.” Qin Lei took the bottle from Lin Mu Yu’s hand and finished it in one gulp.

Lin Mu Yu also drank a bottle, his ribs were only recently fixed. Originally it would have taken up to half a month of rest to recover, however with the effect of the medicine, probably another 3-5 days would be sufficient for him to recover to his peak.

(T/N: Fixing of broken bones is a legitimate process, I have had this procedure done to me twice! Basically, the doctor would take

an X-ray and move the broken piece of bones to the original spot and place a cast on it while it heal. IRL it would take 2-3 months to recover not half a month.)

Lin Mu Yu gently packed the bottles of muscle replenishing powder and looked at them with gentle eyes, after all, this medicine was going to save Zhang Wei. Zhang Wei has been a martial practitioner his whole life, and based on his character he would rather die than be a cripple.

With Qu Chu guarding them tonight, he finally was able to sleep properly. He closed his heavy eyes, slowing his breathing allowing himself to fall into a deep sleep. When he finally opened his eyes, he saw the faint rays of the sun as it emerge from the horizon - it was a brand new day.

Facing the sun, Lin Mu Yu took in a deep breath, absorbing the purple essence, focusing solely on feeling the energy flowing into his body. He felt that he had recover about 80% of his energy, however due to his injuries it is best for him not to exert any force. He glanced at his chest, a white cloth wrapped around his ribs, on it are golden hibiscuses meticulously embroidered on it. This piece of cloth was torn by Qin Yin from her dress to dress his wounds, her delicate fragrance could still be felt from it. Perhaps the only one in this whole world who can receive such treatment from Qin Yin would be Lin Mu Yu...

(T/N: Oh is this a flag?!)

.....

The group started moving off after the sun rose, after leaving the dragon tomb they found the warhorses they left. They offered Qu Chu his own horse while the Tang Xiao Xi and Qin Yin rode on the same horse. The 5 of them slowly moved towards the capital through the winding mountain trail.

After two days, they were finally in the dragon seeker forest within the region controlled by the capital and it will only take 1 more day before arriving at the capital.

In the afternoon, they stopped by the stream to allow the horses to drink and eat.

Lin Mu Yu took off his blood soaked war robe, and washed them in the stream. After kneading it for a while, it is finally clean. He attached a twig to his saddle and hung his robe on it. Tang Xiao Xi opened her palms and used the heat to “roast” the robe, quickly drying it. However, only it is only his appearance that looks clean, his undergarment and armor is still soaked in blood. The main reason he cleaned his outer robe was because he needed to uphold the prestige of the princess as they entered LanYan city.

(T/N: Author, bloodstains are very hard to wash off… if you want to wash off bloodstains, ammonia would do the trick.)

Qu Chu and Qin Lei belong to the White-Robe Imperial Guard and their robes naturally have an exquisite workmanship. Furthermore, on the chest area was the insignia of the imperial family, the hibiscus. People who look at them will feel that they

exude a dignified and scholarly aura. The armor that Lin Mu Yu was wearing paled in comparison to the white robe, thankfully he was born handsome and does not look out of place.

(T/N: Handsome people can do anything...)

In the night, they entered the royal family hunting ground.

Qin Lei with his saber on his shoulder said while laughing, “In a short while we would be able to see the camp that belongs to general Feng Ji Xing, probably only 15 kilometres from there, should we rush in the night?”

Qu Chu nodded his head, “That sounds like a good idea.”

Qin Lei moved his horse forward and lead the way to the camp, now the formation is Qin Lei in front with Qu Chu, Qin Yin and Tang Xiao Xi in the middle while Lin Mu Yu remained at the back protecting the two beauties.

Tonight was once again a windy night, the clouds covering the moon causing the forest to remain in darkness. Howling sounds could also be heard in a distance, Qin Lei held his thunder saber in one hand and a torch in the other. He gently reminded them, “Be careful, this mountain trail is extremely rugged, don’t let the horses slip.”

(T/N: Changed from cleaver to saber, google image cleaver/saber for the lolz both was not what i expected.)

“Okay,” Qin Yin replied.

At this moment, a sudden gust of wind attacked them!

“Souuuuu!”

(fx: something flying through the air. Imagine an f15)

That's the sound of an arrow! Lin Mu Yu was extremely sensitive to such a sounds, this was because it reminded him of the multiple fatal injuries he received from it, causing this sound to be deeply engraved in his memory.

“Dodge!”

At the same time as he shouted, Qu Chu leaped off his horse, extending his arms. “Pa!” the swift arrow was firmly caught within Qu Chu’s palm. Qu Chu shouted, “Bastard, come out now!”

However what answered him was more arrows!

“Protect her highness!” Qu Chu bellowed.

Lin Mu Yu immediately rushed to Tang Xiao Xi and Qin Yin, he raised his hands and summoned his gourd, radiating a gorgeous indigo ray. A giant tortoise shell could be seen rotating slowly above the gourd, deflecting every arrow that comes. Qin Lei roared

and charged into the forest, explosions can be seen from a distance, killing a bunch of archer who were hiding within.

“Whoever manage to capture Qin Yin, you will be awarded 1 million gold coins!” Upon hearing that unknown voice, numerous masked man carrying sword exited from the forest. Everyone of them had a silver insignia on their chest, carved in the figure of a sword.

“People from a warrior company...?” Qu Chu muttered to himself.

Tang Xiao Xi bit down on her teeth, angrily shouted, ”Grandpa Qu Chu! They were the ones who tried to kill me last time, now they have changed their target to Qin Yin! This warrior company is too evil!”

Qu Chu smiled, “Princess Tang and Your Highness please do not worry, with me around, no one will ever harm you.”

Qu Chu abruptly spread his arms, his aura growing brighter as he howled. Taking up a stance, he thrust his palm towards to forest. This palm transformed into a giant flaming palm, charging unhindered into the forest, causing numerous explosions!

(T/N: very hard to explain this scene.. Just watch this)

“Peng!”

Dozens of men from the warrior company was slain from just one attack, Lin Mu Yu's mouth was also open from shock. No wonder people claimed that Qu Chu's palm technique is legendary, seems like that information is true!

After Qu Chu attacked, the group from warrior company was shaken, immediately someone cursed, "Damnit! Which bastard sent this fake information! It's not just Qin Yin and Tang Xiao Xi alone, even the white-robed Qin lei and Qu Chu is here. This operation is cancelled, retreat if you care for your lives! RETREAT! "

Unfortunately for them, Qin Lei rushed towards them with his saber, slaughtering them from within the crowd.

"Keep one alive!" Qin Yin said.

"Yes, Your highness!" Qin Lei said as he burst into laughter.

Three masked men him flanked from the side, carefully avoiding Qu Chu. Once they were not able to use the cover of the forest, they charged straight at Qin Yin. One of the masked man said, "If we can't capture her, we can just kill her!"

"These fearless scoundrels...." Qin Yin cursed as she prepared to defend herself.

"Your highness, leave this matter to me."

Lin Mu Yu smiled at her before nonchalantly raising his right arm, lightning danced on his palm as he unsheathed his sword. Grabbing the hilt of the sword, the lightning flowed towards the edge of the blade. He pointed the sword at them and at this instant...

“Shua!”

Just like marshmallows on a stick, the lightning penetrated all three of their bodies! The attack was simply too fast, giving them no room to dodge. Perhaps even before they heard the thunder... they have already died.

Lin Mu Yu swung his sword in a circle and returned the sword to its sheath, as if nothing has happened.

(T/N: Like this! Please watch it!)

Tang Xiao Xi chuckled, “This imperial sword skill is so graceful...”

Qin Yin nodded her head in agreement.

.....

After a while, both Qu Chu and Qin Lei returned. Qin Lei was gasping for breath after killing dozens, in his hand was one of the assassins, knocked unconscious. Qin Lei glanced at the unconscious assassin and said, “Let’s return to Lanyan City first,

then we can properly interrogate this assassin. Lets see what made them have the courage to lay a hand on Your Highness and Princess Tang.”

Qin Yin nodded in agreement, “Alright let's not waste anymore time, we should rush to General Feng’s camp site.”

Around dawn, in the distance, the imperial flag could be seen, they have finally arrived.

A warhorse sped over, on it was Feng Ji Xing carrying his saber. He gracefully leaped off his horse and cupped his fist and lowered his head, “Your Highness, Princess Tang, you have finally arrived! Your subordinate has been worried sick!”

“Oh? Sir Qu Chu, you have came too?” Feng Ji Xing said as he smiled.

“Yes. Sorry to bother you, General.”

Chapter 92 : Avoiding War

Around noon, over 2000 imperial guards escorted the group of them to Lanyan City. As they were approaching, armored horsemen rushed out. On their wrist guards laid an insignia of a majestic golden eagle, with its talons extended out. In the entire of Lanyan City the only military division that has this insignia is the military police!

.....

Leading the group was Xiang Yu, holding his signature blood-coloured pike. Still on his horse, he cupped his hands and greeted Qin Yin. “Your Highness, this Xiang Yu is here on His Majesty’s orders to welcome you.”

Qin Yin smiled and replied, “Commander Xiang, please be at ease, let's enter the city!”

“Yes, Your Highness!”

Xiang Yu gently nudged on the horse rein, turning his horse around, escorting the princess into the city. Xiang Yu glanced back to Qu Chu, Feng Ji Xing and the rest who were following closely behind, finally resting his eyes on Lin Mu Yu. Xiang Yu could not help but chuckle, “You are the Temple’s only gold star trainer, Lin Zhi?”

Lin Mu Yu on the other hand does not recognise this Xiang Yu, nonetheless he replied with a nonchalant, “Yes sir.”

“Ha….” Xiang Yu carefully observed Lin Mu Yu for a short while and smiled, “You are blessed with such an handsome features, no wonder people say youth is where heroes are born[1]. Seems like the future of Lanyan City will depend on how people from your generation conduct themselves.”

Lin Mu Yu wrinkled his eyebrows, he felt that Xiang Yu’s words have a hidden meaning to it but he does not know what is it. Instead, he cupped his hands and smiled, “Sir, I do not deserve such praises.”

“Ha, you are too humble.”

After saying all the formalities, Xiang Yun stopped speaking. At this time, another group of men was riding towards them. These men were wearing the Temple’s war robes and in the leading them is the gold star instructor Zheng San He. Upon seeing Lin Mu Yu, Zheng San He gave sigh of relief and smiled. “Sir Lin Zhi, you are finally back…. Did you manage to find the medical ingredients? The grandmaster sent me out to receive you!”

Lin Mu Yu urged his horse out of the formation, moving to the front of Zhang San He. He said, “ Sir Zheng, I’ve found the ingredients, let us head back to the Temple now.”

“Okay!”

Lin Mu Yu galloped back and cupped a fist towards Feng Ji Xing

and Qin Lei, “There is something I've to settle in the temple, I shall make a move first. Brother Feng, Brother Qin Lei, I'll leave the safety of Xiao Xi and Qin Yin to you.”

Feng Ji Xing also cupped his fist, smiling at him, “Ah Yu don't worry, hurry and get your issues settled. When I am free I'll go to the temple to find you, it has already been a long time since I compared notes with you!”

“Alright...”

Qin Lei also cupped his fist, joyfully said, “ Ah Yu, you better not slack off in training, don't worry about anything else. This older brother here will settle it for you.”

“Thank you both, I shall take my leave first. Please help me to convey my regards to Princess Tang and Princess Qin.”

“Okay!”

He tugged on the reins, turning the horse towards Zheng San He, following him back to the Temple. Turning his head, all he could see were the banners and weapons carried by the contingent, blocking the silhouettes of Qin Yin and Tang Xiao Xi. However, when they entered the city they would definitely be safe, not even experts of the God Realm could do anything to them.

.....

After a few days of leaving the Temple, Lin Mu Yu felt a sense of familiarity and anticipation as he nears the Temple. When Lin Mu Yu and Zheng San He were nearing the Temple, the door automatically opened up, revealing Ge Yang leading a group of men to welcome them. All at once, his face was an expression of eagerness and anxiousness. “Ah Yu, did you find it?”

“Yes!”

Lin Mu Yu nodded his head repeatedly, within his eyes an aura of confidence. He said, “Grandpa Ge Yang do not worry, please bring me to where Sir Zhang Wei is, i want to begin treatment immediately.”

“Okay!” Ge Yang replied as he finally smiled.

The sound of horse galloping sound out, Zhang Wei was located within the center of the temple, right beside was the dwelling place of Lei Hong. Lei Hong was worried that Zhang Wei would once again be assaulted, hence he personally protected this honest and steadfast silver star instructor.

“Ah Yu!”

Lei Hong welcomed them, at the same time he notice the changes within Lin Mu Yu, smiling he said, “Ah Yu, you broke through to the Heaven Realm?”

“Yes, Grandpa Lei Hong!”

Lin Mu Yu dismounted the horse, kneeled down on a knee he said, “Many thanks for your guidance and protection, else I will not be able to achieve all of this.”

“What is wrong with you?....”

Lei Hong was surprised by this sudden action, he went forward to help Lin Mu Yu up. “Ah Yu, what happened? I know you are not someone who is effeminate...”

Lei Hong’s sight focused on Lin Mu Yu’s chest and found that the undershirt is thoroughly soaked in fresh blood! Using his spiritual awareness, Lei Hong realised that Lin Mu Yu was indeed severely injured, this injury almost cost him his life! At this moment Lei Hong’s thoughts were very conflicted, this child evidently barely escaped from the death’s door.

To Lin Mu Yu, the care that Lei Hong has shown was meticulous in every way, like that of a real grandfather. In this world where the strong prey on the weak, Lei Hong held a very important place in his heart.

“Ah Yu, you have suffered so much...” Lei Hong grabbed his arms, helping him up, he continued, ”You did not disappoint me... Tell me, who hurt you like this!”

“This man... His name is Cang Bai He.” Lin Mu Yu said as he briefly described his appearance.

However as he spoke, Lei Hong and Ge Yang's expression grew more and more of shocked. Lei Hong narrowed his eyes and said, "This old thing... has he already entered into the Saint Realm? Seems like he is the one responsible for Zhang Wei's injury."

"Sir Zhang Wei was injured by him." Lin Mu Yu said, "This Cang Bai He even wanted to kill Princess Tang and Princess Qin!"

"What?!"

"This Cang Bai He is too presumptuous! Even trying to assassinate Princess Qin.... What does the God Marquis Faction plan on doing, did Zeng Yi Fan go crazy?!" Lei Hong angrily shouted.

At the side, Ge Yang said in a low and solemn voice, "These past years, the military power that Zeng Yi Fan has has been greatly weakened, rumours says that he has long resented the Emperor for weakening him... Based on what had just conspired the rumours seem to be true, we should set up precautionary measures, grandmaster."

"I understand." Lei Hong nodded his head, "I will seek an audience with the Emperor to explain this to him, both of you shouldn't worry unnecessarily. Ah Yu, hurry to the inner chamber, Zhang Wei can barely manage to hold on."

"Yes!"

……

Entering the inner chamber, Zhang Wei was lying on the bed, unable to move his limbs.. Only his face seem alive at that moment, still carrying an aura of pride and resolve. Upon seeing Lin Mu Yu entering, Zhang Wei's eye glistened with hope, "Sir Lin Zhi, you have come back."

"Yes."

Lin Mu Yu walked forward and said with a laugh, "Sir Zhang Wei, I found a cure for your injuries."

"A cure?" Zhang Wei laughed mockingly at himself, "I am already a cripple...."

"No need to worry."

Lin Mu Yu reached into his baggage, fishing out 3 bottles of muscle replenishing powder. Lin Mu Yu gently raised Zhang Wei's head and poured the medicine down his throat, after which he said, "The muscle replenishing powder will repair your dragon tendon in 2-3 days, this recovery process is very obvious. In a while, you will start to regain your feeling from your spine, that is where the dragon tendon is located. That feeling is of your dragon tendon converging and fusing."

"Are you telling the truth?" Zhang Wei asked, clearly agitated.

“Sir Lin Wei, you are saying... I will be able to continue cultivating?”

Lin Mu Yu cheerfully smiled and said,” Of course, furthermore your cultivation level would not decrease.”

“That's great!”

Zhang Wei was emotionally stirred, initially he wanted to sit up however he still was unable to put strength into his back. After struggling for a while, he awkwardly smiled at Zhang Wei, “I am not good with words and cannot express my thanks to you properly, however from now, my life belongs to you!”

“That is not necessary, we are friends and furthermore we are both working under the Temple, this is what i am suppose to do.”

Lei Hong could not help but feel a sense of warmth as he watched this scene from the side. He smiled and said, “ Zhang Wei, Lin Zhi just returned to the Temple, furthermore he was ambushed outside while searching for your medicinal ingredients, we should let him rest.”

“Ah?” Zhang Wei gasped in shock, exerting all his strength he cupped his fist, “In that case... Sir Lin Zhi please go rest.”

“Alright.”

Exiting the chamber, Lei Hong and Lin Mu Yu walked side by side

as they made their way to Lin Mu Yu's residence. Lei Hong looked at Lin Mu Yu several times as they walked through the Temple, finally he could not resist and asked, "Ah Yu, logically even if you are in the Heaven Realm you still not be able to stop Cang Bai He, who is an expert of Saint Realm, from killing you. Tell me, how did you escape from this calamity?"

Of course Lin Mu Yu cannot divulge about the power of the Seven Luminaries, instead he said," There were 4 of us at that moment, other than me there is still Qin Yin, Tang Xiao Xi and Qin Lei. Qin Lei is a Commander of the White-Robe Imperial Guard, his combat strength is astonishing, furthermore he possessed a God Binding Lock from a True Dragon Bloodline. Hence we were able to hinder Cang Bai He, and at the last instance... Grandpa Qu Chu arrived."

"Oh?" Lei Hong could not help but laugh,"Ha, seems like that old man still has some use, if he did not appear at that moment, I'm afraid the colour of the sky would change...

Lin Mu Yu was stunned at Lei Hong reply, he asked,"Grandpa Lei Hong, lets say if... if Qin Yin was really assassinate by Cang Bai He, what would happen to this country?"

"What do you think will happen?" Lei Hong smiled at Lin Mu Yu as he continued, "His Majesty is a very sentimental man, in his whole life, he has only loved one woman and that woman is Princess Qin's mother—Queen Su Yi. After her passing, His Majesty has not wed again hence he has no son and based on the Imperial Family customs, Qin Yin is the sole successor to the throne! Your majesty has 2 brothers, Prince Ji Ning and Prince Qin Yi. Prince Ji Ning has 2 sons, the older son Qin Lei and the younger

son Qin Yan. The other Prince Qin Yi, however, is situated in the far south. Hence if both Qin Lei and Qin Yin is dead, the new successor would probably be Prince Ji Ning second son - Qin Yan."

Lei Hong shook his head and said, "But no matter who becomes the new successor, they will not escape a war. Hence it would be best if Qin Yin lived, this is the best for the people. Ah Yu you did great, willing to put your life out to protect Qin Yin's. You must remember her life is tied to the lives of the millions of citizens.

"Yes, Grandpa Lei Hong."

.....

He returned to his secret chamber and continued concentrating on cultivating using the Dragonforged Bone Tome, relentlessly increasing the strength of his cultivation. He yearns for power, however... towards the power of Seven Luminaries, he no longer had any desire for it. After feeling its backlash once, that torturous pain, he rather not use that kind of sinister power.

Hence, a few days went past as he remained cultivating in the temple, only leaving one to see Chu Yao, teaching her some trick of cultivation and giving her a mysterious grade sword. He began to teach her the Imperial Sword Technique, Chu Yao was a rather intelligent person, within a few days she was able to make a breakthrough.

Notes:

1] “Youth is where heroes are born” is directly translated from “英雄出少年”. This phrase have multiple meanings. Firstly, it could be said heroes usually have great accomplishments when they are younger. Secondly, you can't become a hero just because you want to but rather, inheritance and innate talent from heredity plays an important role. Hence, whether one will become a hero in the future could be seen during their youth. Lastly, in the context of this novel youth is when you look the best and heroes usually have handsome features.

Chapter 93 : Training The Soldiers

In a blink of an eye, four days had passed peacefully. After Cang Bai He's defeat in the Dragonseeker Forest, he had not been seen since. Presumably, he was afraid of being chased after by Qu Chu and Lei Hong when he entered Lanyan City. Also, his ribs were broken by Lin Mu Yu, before recovering, he would not try anything that would bring upon his own death.

.....

In the morning, even before the mist had cleared, sounds of fist striking through the air could already be heard from the Temple. Although not completely healed, Zhang Wei had recovered enough for him to strike out his Ardent Soul Fist with strength and vigour.

[T/N: Fierce Soul Fist -> Ardent Soul fist. Why? Because it sounds cooler :)]

Wearing his new war robe, Lin Mu Yu smiled and said, "Congratulations on your recovery, looks like there aren't any major problems anymore.

Zhang Wei immediately stopped his training, and faced Lin Mu Yu, executing a pencil straight military salute. "Sir Lin Zhi, I will never be able to repay your benevolence and kindness. I will forever engrave this debt into my heart."

"You are welcome." Lin Mu Yu said as he patted his shoulder, "The God Marquis Faction will not let us off so easily, so Zhang

Wei you have to recover quickly else we will lose out once again.”

“Yes!”

At this time, Ge Yang walked over and said, “Tomorrow is the day of the soldier training, both of you should prepare yourselves. Lin Zhi, as this is your first time participating, ask Zhang Wei if there is anything you are unsure of.”

“Soldier training day? What is that?” Lin Mu Yu asked.

Zhang Wei gave a small smile and patiently explained, ”Lin Zhi it has been awhile since you have entered the Temple, as you know the Temple is a sacred ground for cultivators within the Empire. We mainly have two roles to fulfil: firstly is to scout and cultivate talents, secondly we have to train outstanding soldiers from the military school. The most reputable school in this Empire is situated in this Imperial Capital, War God School! Many of our distinguished soldiers were from that school, and our role is to send an instructor and trainer to the school monthly. They will spar in front of these students to allow them to gain insights to martial techniques and combat experience.”

“I see… I have to go as well?”

“Of course, you are the Temple’s most capable trainer! If you don’t go, I'm afraid the other trainers would be whacked till they can’t move.”

[T/N: Using whack because in this context although the raw is written as ‘beat up’ but its actually said in a joking manner.]

Lin Mu Yu immediately knit his brows and said, “Zhang Wei, you should change your explosive temper… when sparring, you shouldn’t always beat up your partners, understand?’

Zhang Wei guilty rubbed the back of his head and said, “Heh, I’ll do my best to take note, Sir Lin Zhi. Don’t worry about it!”

Ge Yang was laughing from the side, “This soldier training day is more special, it seems many battalion commanders will be personally attending and they will select the best graduate to join the military as an officer! Both of you must display your best abilities… another thing, take care of yourselves.”

[T/N: Group > Section > Platoon > Company > Battalion. Each battalion in Singapore has around 500-800 men]

Zhang Wei cupped his fist, “I understand, Deacon Ge Yang.”

Zhang Wei’s eyes trembled as he suddenly recalled something, “Other than Zeng Fang and Ouyang Qiu there are still some lackeys from the God Marquis remaining within the Temple… these are the people we have to guard against.”

“Who else is left?”

“Silver star instructor Deng Zi Lin, gold star instructor Xu Fang,

but the scariest one is someone else…”

[T/N: Who the hell does a cliff hanger mid conversation?!?]

“Who?”

Zhang Wei glowed with hostility and said, “This person rarely participates in sparring sessions, but he is the strongest instructor in this temple. He is known as the Temple’s best spear user—Zhao Jin. Rumours say he has already broken through to the 70th level, reaching Sky King realm!”

[T/N: After sky realm, the levels are divided into master > King > emperor]

Ge Yang added, “Zhao Jin is the second generation general-in-training of the God Marquis Faction. He is also a noble, paired with his excellent spearmanship, you must be careful of him. Try to avoid him as much as possible, understand?”

“Yes, Deacon Ge Yang.”

“Okay, both of you can leave and cultivate.”

“Yes!”

……

Deep into the night, the stars shone brightly onto the God Marquis residence.

Zeng Yi Fan tilted his head upwards, gazing upon the countless stars in the night sky. He gently sighed, his face showed a hint of lost and he said, “ I can't believe elder Cang lost, never would have thought it was possible...”

Zeng Fang carried a small cup of tea over, “Father, drink some tea! Grandpa Cang only lost because Qu Chu was in the Dragonseeker Forest, else that punk Lin Mu Yu would not have a whole body now.”

“Hai.....”

Zeng Yi Fan’s gaze turned cold and said, “Elder Cang’s mistake has caused us to alert the enemy, the Emperor knows that he tried to kill Qin Yin and now the God Marquis Faction has entered a predicament. We can't stay idle now, we must take the preemptive strike!”

“How?”

Zeng Yi Fan coldly said, “Send elder Cang a letter, ask him to cultivate in Qinling for a while! Tomorrow, send out an arrest warrant from our camp for him, those who can obtain his head will be awarded one million gold.”

“Yes, father!”

Zeng Fang nodded his head and continued, “It is reported that Lin Mu Yu obtained a kind of medicine called muscle replenishing powder, and he has cured Zhang Wei’s shattered dragon tendon. These two men are still alive, father do we not take any action against them?”

“No, Lin Mu Yu must die!”

Zhang Fang heavily struck his fist on the pillar, eyes filled with killing intent, laughed, “Tomorrow is the day of soldier training, I’ve already ordered General Zhao Jin. Tomorrow will be Lin Mu Yu’s death day!”

“Good job.”

……

In the Temple, within the side palace hall room

“Sha…Sha…”

Zhao Jin unhurriedly sharpened his spearhead on a grindstone, this Pear Flower spear had accompanied him for many year and through countless battlefields, assisting him in many ways. Tomorrow is another day for this Pear Flower spear to taste blood.

“Weng!”

He gently twisted his wrist causing the spear to slice through the air, the spearhead vibrated and emitted a clear sound.

Seemingly unsatisfied, Zhao Jin continued to grind and polish his spearhead with emotionless eyes. People who deserved to die would eventually die, no matter how brilliant and talented they are, under absolute power, they would still crumble.

“Thud thud”

A servant knocked on the door, “Master Zhao Jin, your night snack has arrived, do you want it now?”

“No need, I do not wish to eat meat tonight.”

Zhao Jin sinisterly chucked. After the servant left, he muttered to himself, “Tomorrow I’ll be able to eat meat.”

……

In the morning, the sound of horns reverberated through the Temple. The day of soldier training had finally arrived.

After a quick breakfast, Lin Mu Yu and Zhang Wei donned a new set of war robes. Lin Mu Yu also noticed that his robe was more lavish compared to Zhang Wei’s. The white cape was embroidered with a silver hibiscus design, the only difference from Feng Ji Xing

and Qin Lei was that theirs was gold in colour.

Several horses were led out of the Temple, Lin Mu Yu his allocated horse and flipped himself up the horse. Once mounted, he saw Lei Hong, Ge Yang, Zeng Fang and other high ranking deacons in the front, after which is Lin Mu Yu, Zhang San He and other gold star instructors and trainers, followed by silver star, copper star and iron star. From this, it can be seen that the hierarchy in the Temple is very strict.

“Move off!”

After Lei Hong’s command, the convoy started to move. The horses were in a neat, single file, swiftly moving out of the city.

War God School was built outside the city because of the space constraints within the city. After an hour, they could hear horses galloping from a distance. After they got closer, they could see where the sound was from—a group of students, wearing deep blue Imperial Army uniforms, training their archery skills on horseback.

When the Temple instructors and trainers rode past them, the group of students hurriedly stopped their training and saluted them from a distance. In the eyes of the students, these temple instructors and trainers were a sacred existence.

In actuality, War God School is more like a city. With walls over ten meters high and barbed wooden barricades surrounded the city, giving it an impression of a war zone. That was not too far

from the truth, the War God School was built here with the intent to protect Lanyan City. As the convoy approach the school, the gate slowly creaked open. A group of horsemen rode out of the school and welcomed them. In the front, was an old man with a mustache, wearing armor, giving of the impression of a veteran.

“Sir Lei Hong, you finally arrived. Our war god teachers and students have been waiting for you.”

Lei Hong smiled and said, “Greetings President Qin Hao. Let's enter now, time is too precious!”

“Yes!”

……

The interior of the school was surprisingly spacious. Every student here wore the Empire military uniform looking very lively. Unfortunately, most of the students were males, based on Lin Mu Yu’s understanding of Conquest, in this world the social status of women is rather low, perhaps even worse than ancient China. However, women like Qin Yin and Tang Xiao Xi were exceptions due to their birth. Even so, they won't be able to hold any important positions.

Very soon, a large sparring stadium appeared. Judging by its size, it could fit about ten thousand people. Looking around one would realise that many people were already seated by the side. Lin Mu Yu focused his eyes and gazed around the stadium. Most of the people had a gold star emblem on their necks, this means that most

of them are at least thousand-man commanders.

After they were seated, Ge Yang proceeded to take the attendance of every trainer and instructor, calling out their names one by one.

Finally, Ge Yang announced, “First public exhibition match, copper star instructor, Zhou Fei versus copper star trainer, Jiang Yan!”

Both of them proceeded up the stage, after exchanging a couple of blows, the instructor’s chain stuck the trainer on his chest, causing him to tumble to the floor. The surrounding students cheered excitedly, the trainer forced himself up from the ground and saluted the instructor. However, the instructor did not even spare him a glance, as if he did not deserve any respect, and walked off the stage.

Lin Mu Yu knitted his brows, these instructors were still so arrogant.

……

The exhibition matches went on for the entire morning. Another stage was used by the students for their matches, and those high ranking officers were already scouting for talents. Unfortunately, the gold star matches are set in the afternoon, hence, Lin Mu Yu could only watch.

Chapter 94 : I Do Not Believe In Demons!

The exhibition matches carried on till late afternoon.

The principal of War God School, Qin Hao, was wearing a set of Imperial Military armor. He pointed at the group of 200 students in front of him and said, “These students are the most outstanding ones that were selected from a batch of students. They will be the primary focus for this training session. Once the scheduled training is completed, these students may personally request for more guidance from the instructors.”

Lei Hong nodded his head and smiled, “I understand.”

……

Lin Mu Yu was watching from afar and said, ”Is President Qin Hao part of the Qin Imperial Family?”

Qin Zi Ling softly replied, “Lin Zhi, President Qin Hao is from a branch house of the Qin Imperial Family, however, he had extreme talents in cultivating and is currently a level 87 Sky Emperor! Hence, despite being born as a low ranking noble, he was anointed by the Emperor as the president of War God School and bestowed a rank of general.

“Wow.” Lin Mu Yu replied, feeling a greater sense of respect for Qin Hao.

At this time, Ge Yang held up a scroll and loudly announced, ”Gold Star exhibition match, first match, fist technique, Gold Star Instructor Zhang Wei vs Gold Star Trainer Lin Zhi!”

Zhang Wei who was mounted on his horse said in alarm, ”Eh? Since when was I a Gold Star Instructor?”

Lei Hong faintly smiled and threw out a small object to him, “Since now.”

Zhang Wei looked at the object he caught, it is a Gold Star Instructor badge! He happily swapped out his Silver Star badge for the new badge, after dismounting his horse, he leaped off the ground and landed in the middle of the sparring ring.

Lin Mu Yu also dismounted with the prairie sword on his back, he strode confidently to Zhang Wei. He cupped his fist and said, “Sir Zhang Wei, please.”

“Haha. Brother Lin Zhi, in that case, I won't be courteous. Here I come!”

Zhang Wei let out a low growl, the image of his bear martial spirit overlapped with his arms, and he rapidly threw out an Ardent Soul Fist, whizzing through the air. The strength behind each strike could be felt clearly by the students who were seated nearby, each revealing a shocked expression. With Lin Mu Yu blocking every strike, the Ardent Soul Fist dissipated into flames which flew close to the crowd, forcing them to retreat.

Lin Mu Yu softly swung his arms and summoned his Ebony shell and Dragon Rampart defensive combo to surround himself, a white luster surrounded his arm, that is his Qi!

“Ah? That Gold Star trainer is a Heaven Realm cultivator?”

The students were awe-shocked from the sudden revelation. One of them shouted, “I know! Recently, the Temple has an outstanding Gold Star Trainer called Lin Zhi, at that time he was only a level 50 Earth Realm expert, but he actually manage to enter Heaven Realm. Such a fast advancement speed!”

“Peng!”

The Ardent Fist relentlessly struck on the Ebony Shell forcing Lin Mu Yu to retreat, however he remained firmly within the sparring ring. Zhang Wei swept through the ground with a kick, leaving burnt marks while Lin Mu Yu leaped into the air, dodging the kick. Looking down, Lin Mu Yu found a slight grin on Zhang Wei’s face.

“Soaring Dragon!” This was Zhang Wei’s most proficient leg technique and was also suited to attacking an airborne enemy. Zhang Wei stamped his feet on the ground, propelling himself upwards with his leg surrounded by raging flames. ‘This fellow really isn’t holding back,’ Lin Mu Yu thought to himself. However, Zhang Wei knew that with his cultivation level, he will not be able to hurt Lin Mu Yu, hence he decided to give it his all to ensure that the exhibition match will look exciting.

[T/N: And also the first and last time this technique was ever

mentioned in the novel...]

With both palms opened wide, Lin Mu Yu maintained his defensive stance. Protective Qi rushed forth from his palm as he accurately intercepted the path of the kick. Lin Mu Yu flipped through the air and landed softly on the ground. The fissures that appeared on the Ebony Shell rapidly healed due to the Forbidden Mother Tree's natural regenerative property. Even the defences that surrounded his body had started to heal. This battle was where his 6th ability truly stood out.

[T/N: Just imagine a cat falling through the air. Sorry for the lack of better description. Not entirely sure what defenses he is talking about... probably the verdant shell taught to him by Qu Chu as the verdant shell is an armor-type technique. Verdant Shell -> Jade Armor]

After a couple more blows, Zhang Wei retreated while Lin Mu Yu still remained where he was standing. Zhang Wei cupped his fist and said, "Master Lin Zhi's cultivation level is too frightening, I, Zhang Wei am not a worthy opponent!"

Lin Mu Yu also cupped his fist and smiled, "You let me win."

[T/N: Said politely after winning a match]

Ge Yang loudly announced, "DRAW! Zhang Wei's fist technique originated from the military lengend Xiang Wen Tian's Adrent Flame Fist. Any student who is learning or wishes to learn this Ardent Flame Fist in the future can seek guidance from Zhang

Wei.”

Almost immediately, students flooded near Zhang Wei, however he did not feel that it was troublesome, rather he let out a brillant smile.

Lin Mu Yu returned to his horse within the trainer’s group.

[T/N: Why horses though? No chairs in their time?]

……

Ge Yang continued speaking, “Gold Star exhibition second match, Sword and Saber Instructor Zhang San Hai vs Silver Star Trainer Ma Lin!”

Ma Lin had a huge frame, was around 30 years old, and face was filled with countless scars. Rumours say that he was once a merciless mercenary who would do anything for money. However, he repented and joined the Temple, due to his commoner background he was assigned to be a trainer. Although he was not proficient in any techniques, his tough defenses made him well-known within the Temple.

Qin Zi Ling cautioned, ”Master Ma Lin, be careful. Zheng San He recently began to fuirously attack his cultivation, I believe he has became much stronger than before …”

Ma Lin replied with a smile, “Thanks for your concern, I'll be

fine, don't worry."

Zheng San He grabbed his shield and saber as he strode into the sparring ring. Within the group of Gold Star Instructors, he was one of the more honest and considerate ones. After the match started, Zheng San He merely displayed his attack and defense techniques but did not harm Ma Lin. Actually, Zheng San He displayed both types of techniques most suited for the military students to learn. After all, in a real war, one had to strike well and also defend well to win.

After exchanging blows for another five minutes, the exhibition match was declared a draw, and the student all loudly cheered at the insightful match. Numerous students charged towards Zheng San He, and he gladly displayed some more of his saber techniques to them at the side of the ring. In all honesty, this is very unfair as only the instructor was sought after while the trainer seemed to be just a calefare.

"Third match, spear techniques, Gold Star Instructor Zhao Jin vs Silver Star Trainer Shi Zhong Hai!"

Shi Zhong Hai was one of the rarer experts who was proficient in horseback amongst the trainers. Carrying his steel spear, he urged the horse into the sparring ring, "Master Zhao Jin, please don't be too harsh on me…"

Zhao Jin did not reply but a sinister smile flashed across his face.

“Go!”

Shi Zhong Hai shouted as he hit the back of his horse, with increasing speed he charged at Zhao Jin. Seemingly at the same time, both parties thrusted their spears out, and Zhao Jin’s pear flower spear appeared to have dissipated into flower petals! Then, the pear flower spear was covered in fresh blood, followed by a pitiful shout from Shi Zhong Hai… impaled on the spear.

[T/N: Not mentioned in the raws but Zhao Jin is also on a horse.]

Blood rapidly flowed out through the wound, Zhao Jin smirked at the sight and shook him off the spear.

“Ah…. Ah……”

Shi Zhong Hai could only let out a heart wrenching moan as fresh blood flowing out incessantly. Thankfully, the wound does not seem fatal.

Lei Hong furrowed his eyebrows and said, “Medic!”

Multiple medics rushed on site to treat him. Lei Hong faced Qin Hao and cupped his fist, “ Sorry for letting you see this scene…”

Qin Hao said rather indifferently, “Blood and war are two inseparable things. How is this an unsightly matter? Also, these students will eventually be sent to war, exposing them to the cruelty of war early is good.”

At this time, Zhao Jin directed the horse towards them, “Elder Lei Hong, sorry for mistakenly harming Master Shi Zhong Hai. However, the lethality of horseback spearmanship was displayed. It would be better if... Elder sent out a stronger trainer for one more match!”

At the podium, a group of commanders with flame shoulder crests stood up and shouted, “Yes, send out a stronger trainer. Let us see what the best spearman in the Temple can do!”

“This.....”

Discomfort could be seen on Lei Hong’s face. He sighed, “ ... this Zhao Jin”

Zhao Jin raised his spear and continued, “Elder, the best trainer within the Temple is Master Lin Zhi. I have long wished to find out who is stronger between the two of us. Please concent to my request!”

The already noisy crowd became more rowdy. There were even students chanting Lin Mu Yu’s name.

Lei Hong had wanted to protect Lin Mu Yu and not let him face Zhao Jin. However, with the current situation, it seemed impossible.

“Lin Zhi.”

Lei Hong said from afar, “Do you agree to this match? If you don’t, I will not force you as you had already had a match before this. Based on the rules, no one can force you to enter a second match.”

Lin Mu Yu’s vision remained on the tragic state of Shi Zhong Hai. ‘Another trainer has been humiliated..’ He thought. Lin Mu Yu’s eye glowed with resolved and he replied, ”Elder, I am willing but I have a request. I want to be on the attacking side!”

“What??” Lei Hong said, somewhat stunned at that request.

Qin Hao smiled and stood up, ”Interesting. Never would have thought that the Temple had such a young talent. Master Lei Hong, in my opinion... you should agree to it. Let Lin Zhi attack, even if he hurts his opponent, he will not be punished. How does that sound?”

Lei Hong grit his teeth. “Alright, but both of you better watch yourself and not harm one another, else I’ll not let you off so easily!”

”Yes!”

.....

Lin Mu Yu slowly pulled on the reins and directed the horse into the ring. He unsheathed his Prairie sword, Qi gradually entering it

causing the sword to glow in a brilliant red. This caused many spectators to be dumbstruck, “Such strong Qi! This trainer is really very talented…”

Zhao Jin held his spear in front of his chest and said, “Master Lin Zhi, please give your guidance.”

His eyes carried a strong killing intent. Lin Mu Yu knew that Zhao Jin was from God Marquis Faction; the same with those commanders who wanted Lin Mu Yu to participate. Even though he knew this was a trap, his conscience told him to jump into this trap and avenge the fallen Shi Hai Zhong and regain the pride of the trainers. With a cultivation difference of 10 levels, the people from God Marquis fraction does not think that Lin Mu Yu has any chance of winning.

“Here I come!”

Zhao Jin took the initiative. Firmly grasping his spear, he charged.

Chapter 95 : Becoming Famous With A Single Battle

“Woosh!”

Cutting through the air, the pear flower spear emitted a cold air as it shot directly for the chest. Seeing this, Lin Mu Yu dodges and raised the prairie sword to block and used his legs to signal the horse to dodge to the side.

However, before the pear flower spear made contact with the sword’s blade, Zhao Jin suddenly shook the spear and Qi started to gather on the spear head, surging right for the prairie sword. It was the same move Zhao Jin had just used to injure Shi Zhonghai.

“Bang!”

His arms felt numb. Entwined on Zhao Jin’s pear flower spear was a green flood dragon. That was his martial spirit. It could greatly increase his impact strength, but Lin Mu Yu’s strength was already inferior, so it did not have that much of an advantage. As the horses rushed at each other, his body trembled, as Zhao Jin’s strike unexpectedly hit the the Verdant Shell.

“Peng!”

His inner energy swelled, Zhao Jin’s martial strength was too strong and his equestrian skills were above Lin Mu Yu’s, quickly turning the horse around, he delivered a second attack with the

spear.

With a “Pu” sound, a hole was punctured in the Black Turtle Shell, Zhao Jin’s eyes flashed with killing intent. The flood dragon entwined around the spear suddenly opened its mouth and began to shoot frost out.

Lin Mu Yu anxiously withdrew, but it was already too late, he could only raise his left hand and form five energy armors to try and block the frost. Who would have thought that the frost would penetrate through the Black Turtle Shell and the energy armours and in the next minute, his left hand was numb and completely covered in frost, unable to exert force for a short time.

The prairie sword in his right hand shot out, he had to attack Zhao Jin to stop him from attacking otherwise it would be dangerous.

But Lin Mu Yu would never have thought that Zhao Jin would be so skilled in equestrianism, he lied down face up on the horse to avoid the sword and shot out with the pear flower spear!

“Pu!”

It hit Lin Mu Yu’s left shoulder, penetrating through to make a bloody hole, Zhao Jin quickly pulled out the spear that had harmed Lin Mu Yu and Shi Zhong Hai, without saying anything, the spear once again shot out cutting through the wind, his strength was too powerful, the Black Turtle Shell and Dragon Scale Wall could not block the pear flower spear, Lin Mu Yu was at a great

disadvantage.

Controlling his horse to avoid this spear that wanted his life, the price he paid was Zhao Jin suddenly using the pear flower spear to knock away the prairie sword.

“Pa!”

The prairie sword spun in the air for a bit, before falling down into the soil a few meters away.

On Zhao Jin’s face was a cold smile, “Both arms have been disabled, also lost your weapon, what can you do now?”

Seeing the scene on the stage, Lei Hong suddenly stood up and loudly said, “Zhao Jin, you’ve already won, stop now!”

Zhao Jin didn’t care about that, the pear flower spear went in for the kill, the flood dragon martial spirit was already shooting out frost at his body, he had already planned to kill from the beginning.

The students around the stage were shocked, when had they ever seen such an intense fixation on killing?!

“Over, that gold star teacher is dead!” Every one of the students were thinking this way, some people were worried for Lin Mu Yu, some people were just waiting for the blood to be spilled.

……

At this moment, Lin Mu Yu suddenly shot out a palm, his blood flowed down his fingers, at the same time his battle qi turned into lightning moving across the ground. The lightning rays twined around the distant sword hilt and with a “shua” sound, the prairie sword on the ground was pulled out, but he did not grab the sword and the sword flew towards Zhao Jin’s back.

Zhao Jin was right about to kill him, but he felt a killing intent behind him, and raised his guard!

Quickly turning around, he saw the lightning covered prairie sword flying in for the kill.

“Not good!”

He quickly swung the pear flower spear to block, but he didn’t have enough time. Lin Mu Yu’s move was too fast and gave him no time to react at all. He didn’t even have a firm grip on his spear as the lightning covered sword hit him and unexpectedly sent him flying!

“Ah?!”

Zhao Jin’s face filled with astonishment, the surrounding students were also shocked, a person even stepped back a few steps, on his face was panicked expression, “It’s…..It’s the imperial

sword technique, god, this gold star teacher unexpectedly knows the imperial sword technique?!”

……

“Courting death!”

Zhao Jin became angry from the shame, he took out the sabre at his waist and heavily knocked away the prairie sword, turning around to rush at Lin Mu Yu, if he didn’t kill Lin Mu Yu, he would not have the face to live on.

When he turned around, he saw that Lin Mu Yu’s injured palm was open, the battle qi turned to flames, a flame spiral remotely controlled the prairie sword and the sword flew through the air, a sound was heard showing how sharp it was!

Lin Mu Yu’s complexion was somewhat pale, he slightly opened his palm, the prairie sword flew at Zhao Xin - Flaming Spiral Split!

He only used his battle qi flames, he had not used true dragon flames, in fear that Qin Hao or the other high cultivation experts would see through him, exposing too much of his strength was not a good thing.

Zhao Jin risked it all, with his sabre in front, the flood dragon martial spirit lingering around forming a defensive barrier, his eyes were full of anger as he said, “Lin Zhi, you commoner, isn’t your defense the strongest in the temple? Come, have a taste of

your grandfather Zhao Jin's defense!"

He moved right into Lin Mu Yu's intent, his palm pushes a bit, and tornado moved forward!

"Dang!"

A crisp sound rang, Zhao Jin's long sword was shattered, but Zhao Jin was a Heavenly King expert, his reaction time was not normal, he jumped back in defense and the flaming prairie sword flew over his nose, just barely missing to take his life.

But before Zhao Jin could stand up, he saw Lin Mu Yu angry glare very close to him, with a "pa" sound, Lin Mu Yu held the sword with his injured arm, stabbed it under Zhao Jin's right armpit and with a gentle rising motion!

"Kacha!"

Zhao Jin let out a resounding scream, and an entire arm flew across the air.

Lin Mu Yu with his sword, battle qi flame and flame sword qi covering it, "crash" he broke Zhao Jin's arm, turned around and picked up the pear flower spear from the ground and moved straight off the stage.

.....

“Ah Yu, you!”

Lei Hong was dumbfounded, he wasn’t in time to prevent any accidents, but he arrived beside the stage and saw that Lin Mu Yu’s injured arm was hanging down, battle qi flames was melting the frost afflicted arm, his other hand was holding the pear flower spear, with difficulty he cupped his hands and said, “Sorry, great deacon, my slip of hand has injured sir Zhao Jin, whatever punishment I receive I’ll accept, but since Sir Zhao Jin was trying to kill me and I defeated him, then by the empire’s laws on violence, his pear flower spear now belongs to me isn’t that right?

“You……”

Lei Hong sighed, enmity between the temples and the Marquis Shen’s office would deepen because of this.

Qin Hao stood up, looking at Lin Mu Yu, with a slight smile he said, “This little brat is kind….and is bold, I like it! Sir Lei Hong, how about you give the War God Academy Lin Mu Yu this gold star teacher, we were just lacking someone like him!”

How could Lei Hong be willing to give away this treasure, Lin Mu Yu could defeat Zhao Jin, he was the first teacher that was able to do so. Moreover he was a unique talent, how could he be given to the War God Academy.

“Dean must be kidding with me….”

Lei Hong said with a smile, “Lin Mu Yu is a troublemaker, how could I let him go cause trouble for your students!”

After saying this, he cleared his voice and loudly said, “Trial results, Lin Zhi wins! But since Lin Zhi was out of lined, he will be subject to seven days in isolation. Come, someone help treat Sir Zhao Jin!”

Zhao Jin had already fainted on the spot.

Qin Hao looked at Zhao Jin from the distance, he couldn’t help but smile and say, “A person of Marquis Shen’s palace had his right arm cut off and had that cut off arm broken to pieces by Lin Zhi, this brat is fierce and bold, hei…….I fear the temple has bitten off more than they can chew, Marquis Shen Zeng Yi Fan is not a soft person!”

Lei Hong looking at his old friend in schadenfreude, he said, “Don’t be so happy yet, after all this all happened in the War God Academy, our temple has lost a gold star teacher, this account must be settled by you. According to the law, War God Academy must compensate our temple with 240000 gold yin coins, but since we’re old friends, I’ll remove the odd change and just charge you 200000 gold coins.”

Qin Hao was stunned, “You…..you charging me money unexpectedly, the two of us are old friends and you still want money from me…… Moreover, our War God Academy is but a small government office, where would we have that kind of

money.”

“Don’t try that, every year the kingdom subsidizes 2000000 gold yin coins to the War God Academy, don’t think I don’t know, how else could you buy weapons and warhorses for 3000 heavy cavalry, stop trying to fool me, just give me my money!”

“Good, good, hai, hai, you’ve grown up, your temperament has become so big.....”

After returning from the sparring array, Lin Mu Yu pulled out recovery medicine to apply to his wounds and speed up his healing. His face was pale, after all his wounds were heavy, the strength of the pear flower spear was not simple, the wound tear was very serious.

Congratulations, Lin Zhi, you’ve defeated Zhao Jin.....” Qin Zi Ling said with a smile.

“What is there to congratulate.” Lin Mu Yu said with a bitter smile, “I only provokes the hornet’s nest.”

Ma Lin said with a smile, “Lin Zhi, you’ve helped us sparring instructors all vent a bit, don’t be modest, from today onwards, you’re the number one person for our temple!”

“Oh.....”Lin Mu Yu didn’t know whether to be happy or sad, looking up, he found that Divine Battalion officers were all emitting killing intent, it truly felt like provoking a hornet’s nest.”

“Zi Ling, what the background behind the Divine Battalion?” He said in a low voice.

Qi Zi Ling said, “Divine Battalion? Oh.....That is Marquis Shen’s private army, out of all the kingdom’s ministers, only Marquis Shen is allowed to have his own army because of his military merits. The Divine Battalion only has 5000 soldiers, but they are all soldiers that have seen hundreds of battles, I’ve heard that there are several Heaven Realm soldiers in the battalion. It is said the Divine Battalion is the world’s strongest army, it was also said that the 5000 members of the Divine Battalion had defeated the Feng Ji Xing 30000 member army. No one knows how strong the Divine Battalion really is.

Lin Mu Yu was stunned, “Brother Feng’s imperial army of 30,000 isn’t their match? Isn’t that over exaggerated.....”

Qin Zi Ling lightly smiled, “I’m also unclear on this, all of it is what I’ve heard, but in the imperial capital, there are two cavalry that are unmatched. One is the Divine Battalion, the other is the imperial army. The imperial army is in charge of protecting the sovereign, the Divine Battalion is in charge of protecting Zeng Yi Fan. The two armies rub against each other, fighting is a common thing, basically everyone understands, they can’t stand each other.”

“So it was like this.....”

The imperial capital’s waters truly ran deep!

Chapter 96 : Seven Luminary Demon King's Counterattack

"Sir Lin Zhi, your dinner has been prepared for you."

……

Hearing the sound of the servant outside, Lin Mu Yu slowly opened his eyes. He gradually adapted to the light and slowly returned to normal. Today was the third day since he entered into seclusion, in these three days of seclusion he had not wasted his time doing nothing, he kept practicing the Dragon-forged Bone Tome. This ancient tome was very mysterious, the more it was practiced, the more clearly Lin Mu Yu felt his qi being enhanced.

But he didn't dare to relax. the fact was he barely escaped death in that fight three days ago. Zhao Jin had lost because he underestimated his opponent too much, after deflecting the thunderstorm rage with his pear flower spear, he underestimated the opponent's ability to pierce through his defenses, so he challenged Lin Mu Yu to a contest in penetrative power. If he was facing Zhao Jin in a straight battle, the one who would have died would be Lin Mu Yu, he was inferior to Zhao Jin in equestrian skills and spearmanship.

Equestrianism and spearmanship he could learn from the temple's teachers, so there was no need to rush. Right now, he needed to increase his strength to deal with his hidden enemies. The fight in the dragon tomb already allowed Lin Mu Yu to clearly understand the difference between himself and a Saint Realm expert. This kind of disparity, short term practice could not fix, so

he could only try to gain more power from the mysterious soul in his body to become stronger.

After finishing his dinner, he went back into the secret room and entered the depths of his mind.

……

His spiritual sense slowly condensed as he entered into a mindless state, his spiritual sense streamed into his sea of consciousness. In his chaotic sea of consciousness, from time to time monstrous waves raged, from time to time there were far rolling range of hills, and from time to time it was simply a black void. Looking down, the darkness turned into a thousand layers of wave raging ocean.

“Shua!”

Lin Mu Yu’s spiritual sense quickly formed a body, it was wearing a temple battle uniform when it appeared in his consciousness, this was his first time attempting to form a body, unexpectedly he had succeeded. As if he was in a dream, his body was flying, wind whistling past him as his clothes flapped in the wind. He closed his eyes and felt the tyrannical strength below him, jumping forward and pulling out the prairie sword, he dove down into the dark sea below.

“Peng!”

Under the stimulation of the cold water, he opened his eyes and in that moment, it turned into hills underneath him. Without slowing down, his arms gently flicked and the prairie sword was covered with a spiral of battle qi flames drilling into the ground, the ground of the beautiful hill began to distort, as it split apart under the guidance of the prairie sword.

It suddenly turned to black, this was a dark chaotic space, light shined from through the top to the bottom, outlining a person's fuzzy shadow. Lin Mu Yu slowly fell down, standing on the soft ground as he stared at the person, this person's body was just like fire, flames slowly scorched his body as sparks flew, a single spark soared into the sky.

Seven Luminary Demon King!

This wound was the result of the being ignited by the Alchemy Cauldron, it seemed to have caused substantial damage to the Seven Luminary Demon King, Lin Mu Yu gripped his prairie sword and said, "Seven Luminary Demon King, does this feel good? Initially, you tried to take over my body, but in the end, you became a captured soul stuck in my body, how pitiful."

Seven Luminary Demon King slowly looked up, his face was half burnt by the cauldron, the flesh and blood kept popping out, he truly looked frightening. A third of his mouth was burnt but it suddenly said, "Brat, what are you here for? You think you've already won? Well keep dreaming, it hasn't happened yet! I truly misread you, it turned out you had such a powerful refining flame, but……As long as you do not kill me, I have the chance to take over, at that time……I'll teach you that death is better than

living!”

Lin Mu Yu raised his eyebrows, “You’re under my imprisonment, if you want to suffer a little less then honestly answer my question.”

“Ha, ha, ha, ha……”

The Seven Luminary Demon King raised his head to wildly laugh, then looked back at him and said, “Talk, what you do want to learn from me?”

“Why can’t I draw strength from the Seven Luminary Mystic Arts?” Lin Mu Yu asked.

“You? Just depending only on you?” The Seven Luminary Demon King loudly laughed again, his laugh shook the entire plane of consciousness then he said, “Father here spent his whole life understanding the Seven Luminary Mystic Arts. That power is unprecedented, no one could stop it, even Qin Yi that old ghost died to my Seven Luminary Mystic Arts. Just depending on your abilities, you want to control my Seven Luminary Mystic Arts?”

Lin Mu Yu lightly opened his palm, slowly built up a fire inside of it and threw it onto the Seven Luminary Demon King’s body.

“Answer my question, stop trying to insult me, it has no meaning.” He lightly said.

“Ah, ah, ah……”

Seven Luminary Demon King, this unrivalled demon king unceasingly and pitifully screamed, his body covered in sweat as he leisurely said, “You…..You stinking brat, I’ll tell you so stop. The Seven Luminary Mystic Arts is a power from my soul, to control the Seven Luminary Mystic Arts you need a tyrannical enough soul, with your weak little soul, you can at most handle the first Mystic Art. That is also the reason you experience backlash when you used the second Mystic Art, Demonic Dance.

“Is my soul that small and weak?”

“Small and weak like a chicken……”

“Shut up!” Lin Mu Yu’s body trembled, afraid that he would think of the title of “weak forest chicken”, suppressing his anger, he continued to ask, “Then how do I increase the strength of my soul?”

The Seven Luminary Demon King was silent for a minute before saying, “Let me go free and this Emperor will consider receiving you as one of his students and teach you the entire set of Seven Luminary Mystic Arts.”

“Stop dreaming.”

Lin Mu Yu’s voice was light, “Although I need strength, I won’t ask a tiger for its skin. Don’t even think of leaving even half a step

from my sea of consciousness your whole life, just relax. I have ways of making you obey me."

After saying this, he lightly stomped his foot and the entire sea of consciousness turned into a giant Alchemy Cauldron, flames poured out from all around to burn the Seven Luminary Demon King's body.

"Ah. ah, ah, ah……"

With a miserable howl, the Seven Luminary Demon King's body was being burned to ashes, but he had long ago refined a Demon Emperor Immortal Body, so his flesh and blood kept growing back. Continuing to grow back and being burned again, it was truly a horrible sight.

"Now, give me the complete Seven Luminary Mystic Arts!" Lin Mu Yu said with cold eyes.

The Seven Luminary Demon King kneeled on the ground and said in a weak voice, "You……You treating me like this, you're too inhumane….."

"What a joke, a homicidal maniac like you discussing morality with me, this simply is a just trial." Lin Mu Yu shamefully boasted, held his sword as he walked forward step by step and lightly said, "Not to mention all the times you've tried to kill me, so whatever I do to you can't be considered excessive, this is just the way I act."

“Is that so?”

The Seven Luminary Demon King slowly raised his head, in his eyes burned a raging flame, the earth slowly shook and the ground underneath him split open, several blue stars appeared. The Seven Luminary King laughed and suddenly raised his palms, a bright star condensed as he laughed out loud, “What kind of thing are you, you actually dared to enter the sea of consciousness to talk terms with me? You are death-seeking idiot!”

Lin Mu Yu silently cursed and quickly withdrew. He never thought that the Seven Luminary Demon King could fight back in his Alchemy Cauldron.

“Weng……”

The strength of the heaven and earth surged forward, it was the unparalleled strength of the Seventh Mystic Art, Star Shift!

Lin Mu Yu hurriedly shouted to summon his martial spirit, Black Turtle Shell and Dragon Scale Wall. His palm summoned five energy armours to protect himself, but suddenly light burst forth as the Seventh Mystic Art, Star Shift, surged forward. As if countless stars exploded instantly, the strength burst forth, unexpectedly and instantly destroying the Black Turtle Shell, Dragon Scale Wall, and energy armour.

“I’m done for, my body is about to be taken over……” Lin Mu Yu’s heart was cold.

At this moment, a voice sounded in his ear, “Big Brother, you are too wilful!”

“Shua!”

His body felt like it was being dragged by someone as he left the lowest level of the sea of consciousness, after feeling the cold impact of the water and leaving the Star Shift attack range, Lin Mu Yu turned his head to see, the beautiful fairy Lulu flapping her wings to fly forward.

“Lulu, ha, ha, Lulu……” The narrow escape from death made him shout with joy.

Lulu turned to look at him, her small mouth pouted, “The Seven Luminary Demon King’s soul strength was too strong. He could snatch your soul whenever he wants, yet you still dared to use your spiritual sense to enter your sea of consciousness to meet him, Big Brother you truly do not know your limits…..”

“Alright, I didn’t know before.”

“Un, hurry and exit, if a spiritual sense stays in the sea of consciousness for too long it’ll suffer injury.”

“Un.”

Lin Mu Yu’s body leaped forward and broke through the sky, his spiritual sense returned into his body as he slowly opened his eyes,

his whole body was covered in cold sweat. Those short few minutes felt like several centuries had passed by.

……

Soul power, but how could he practice soul power?

Lin Mu Yu also knew that since the Seven Luminary Demon King was in his body, he could use the Seven Luminary Mystic Arts with his cauldron refining. He needed to increase the strength of his soul power, or else he coudn't use the Seven Luminary Mystic Arts yet he didn’t want to trade his life just to use the Seven Luminary Mystic Arts.

“Lulu, do you know anyway to practice soul power?” He asked.

Lulu flew out his body, shaking her head she said, “I don’t know….But Big Brother can ask Lei Hong, that old man is well read, he should know a thing or two.”

“Un.’

Lin Mu Yu stood up and looked to the side, Zhao Jin’s pear flower spear was placed there, in the darkness there was still a glint to it. This pear flower spear was a profound weapon, its handle and blade were all made from rare metals, but the soul refining done on it was not good, it only contained the beast soul not passing 4000 years. It was simply a waste of good metal, he had to wait until he found a better beast soul to perform the soul refining

again, then this pear flower spear would be a godly weapon.

Opening the secret room's door, several temple guards were defending around it, one of them politely said, "Sir Lin Zhi, you haven't finished your seven days of isolation, you can't leave yet."

"I know, I wanted to ask you guys to bring Deacon Lei Hong over for a bit, I have some things I want to consult with him."

"Yes, sir!"

The temple guards were very respectful, they also knew about the matter of Lin Mu Yu beating Zhao Jin at the War God Academy. In this world martial strength was respected, Lin Mu Yu was already an expert worth respecting in their minds.

.....

Before long, Lei Hong walked in through the door, smiling while saying, "Ah Yu, has your time here been fine?"

Chapter 97 : Qin Yan

“It isn’t bad, only it’s a little empty in there……” Lin Mu Yu replied, “It’s a good place to practice, in the end I can get past it, relax Grandpa Lei Hong!”

Lei Hong laughed, “Little brat, you broke Zhao Jin’s arm making him unable to wield a spear again and our temple’s number one spear is wasting away in your hands, you still have the nerve to complain to me. Say it, what did you call me for?”

“It’s like this.”

Lin Mu Yu thought for a bit and said, “Grandpa Lei Hong do you know about soul power?”

“Soul power?”

Lei Hong was slightly startled as he said, “I know, soul power is something that increases with a warrior’s cultivation as they become stronger, but it is something that comes naturally, what’s wrong Ah Yu?”

“I want to practice soul power by itself, do you have any methods?”

“Training soul power by itself?”

Lei Hong couldn't help laughing, "This……I've never heard of someone training soul power by itself, the strength of your soul power usually complements your cultivation."

"Then…..is there method to practice if by itself?"

"There actually is." Lei Hong frowned and said, "I've that several hundred years ago there was a miraculous person, who created a set of skills that allowed to him to increase the strength of his soul power, but practicing made his soul power too strong, his sense of smell and hearing was several hundred times sharper than a normal person. Finally it caused him to go insane and kill himself by jumping into a river, because of that no one has tried to learn his technique."

"I'll go……"

Lin Mu Yu was startled, but carefully thought, once he mastered the Seven Luminary Mystic Arts, he would consume a lot of his soul power, so he should be able to avoid going insane, therefore he asked, "Can you give me the technique?"

"I should be able to, there are thousands of ancient books in the Ze Tian Palace library, finding this third class martial art should not be a problem." Saying this, Lei Hong stared seriously at Lin Mu Yu, "Ah Yu, are you sure you'll be able to study this technique without going insane?"

"I should be fine, Grandpa please relax!"

“Alright then!”

Before dusk, Lei Hong sent someone over to deliver a withered yellow book with paper that was about to fall out, faintly written on the book were three small characters - Spiritual Pulse Technique!

Holding the Spiritual Pulse Technique, Lin Mu Yu read through the night, thoroughly reading through the 20000 characters.

The Spiritual Pulse Technique, integrated your spiritual sense into your surrounding and draw in energy from the grass and trees, the air and the heat in the air to help cultivate the strength of your spiritual sense. It was like Lei Hong had said, the Spiritual Pulse Technique was a third class cultivation technique, without practicing properly the Spiritual Pulse Technique could drive someone insane.

But Lin Mu Yu was different, he had already stepped into the Heaven Realm and soul power was already very strong. Plus he had refined skin, tempered bones, and washed bone marrow, and his body contained the true dragon bloodline. So even if his spiritual sense was strengthened, it would be fine.

At night, while lying on the bed, his spiritual sense was spread in all directions. From it, he could feel pulses of sound, from around 500 meters away he could hear the sound of people walking, there were two of them, one heavy and one light, without speaking. It should have been Qin Zi Ling and Zhang Wei because the aura they emitted was also one strong and one weak, the strong aura was violent and the weak aura was gently, there was no doubt it was

the two of them.

“Dong, dong……”

After several minutes, a knock was heard and Zhang Wei’s laughter was heard,”Sir Lin Zhi, Zi Ling and I have brought some meat and wine for you!”

Lin Mu Yu stood up and opened the door for the two of them to enter, once he saw it was really the two of them with meat and wine, he immediately smiled and said, “Come in you two, come sit down, no need to be polite.”

Zhang Wei naturally was not polite, he brought a roast chicken and a deer leg, and Qin Zhi Ling had brought some cooked food and two bottle of good wine for the three of them to drink while talking.

“That brat Zhao Jin, he actually threatened that he would practice the sword with his one hand and come settle his grudge with you one day…..” Zhang Wei sprayed his spit as he shouted red faced, his red face made him look furious.

Lin Mu Yu could not help but smile, “Let him, Zhao Jin is already a cripple.”

Qin Zhi Ling said, “Lin Zhi, be careful when you leave here, I’ve heard people saying, if the Divine Battalion get the opportunity, they’ll definitely dismember you!”

“Divine Battalion?” Lin Mu Yu knit his brow and said, “Forget it, I knew I would have offended the Divine Battalion, then again……..Zeng Fang would not have let me off.”

Zhang Wei slapped his chest and said, “Relax, as long as you’re in the temple, they can’t do anything to you, isn’t that right?”

“Un.”

Zhang Wei mysteriously smiled as he said, “Sir Lin Zhi, after you defeated Zhao Jin, the entire Orchid Goose City has been talking about you. They are saying that you’re the number one in the younger generation of the temple, comparable to imperial guard commander Feng Ji Xing and Qin Lei!”

“How can that be?” Lin Mu Yu could not help laughing, “Feng Ji Xing and Qin Lei are god given talents, I was only lucky enough to defeat Zhao Jin, and they are both in charge of a thousand man cavalry, what am I compared to them?”

Zhang Wei lightly smiled, “Military authority? Actually if you want military authority, as long as you leave the temple, I believe many empires and many armies will all want you, with your cultivation…..even becoming a junior officer of the eagle brigade is not a problem.”

“Let’s not talk about this, let’s drink!” Lin Mu Yu was worried without any reason, even if he could become a commander, he still had to face all these enemies, constantly sleepless, as if sleeping on

pins.”

“Good, let’s drink!”

In an instant several days passed and the seven days in confinement was over. When Lin Mu Yu stepped out of the secret room, he had already achieved small success with the Spiritual Pulse Technique, he stood there in the courtyard feeling refreshed.

“Hua!”

He grasped his fist and cream white battle qi covered his fist, the power of the first mystic art, Mortal Turmoil appeared in his palm. A blood red palm, chaos for the populace, that was war, this type of strength was truly dangerous, it was the strength of the Seven Luminary Mystic Arts. Taking a deep breath, he increased his battle qi and Lin Mu Yu slowly said, “Second mystic art, Demonic Dance!”

“Weng!”

The surrounding air suddenly surged, line after line of black demonic qi appeared in the middle of his palm, this was the strength of the second mystic art, Demonic Dance. Practicing the Spiritual Pulse Technique was truly helpful, it was no longer strenuous for him to use the second mystic art. As for the third mystic art, after seven days of refining in the Alchemy Cauldron, the refinement had extracted information on the third mystic art from the Seven Luminary Demon King’s soul. When Lin Mu Yu activated his battle qi to unleash the third mystic art, his body

began to break out in severe pain, blue veins popped out of both his arms, his dantian felt as if it was about to explode, in the end his soul was not strong enough to withstand the third mystic art yet.

Breathing a deep sigh of relief, he stopped trying to activate the third mystic art, Disaster of All. Anyway as long as he kept practicing the Spiritual Pulse Technique, eventually his soul would be strong enough to easily handle the third mystic art. His cultivation right now was very shocking, Lin Mu Yu was absolutely confident, as long as he didn't meet a level 70 or higher cultivator, he could not lose!

"Ah Yu!"

Ge Yang came into the courtyard holding temple documents, smiling from afar he said, "Your confinement is over, this morning is the temple's recruitment day, you should participate since you are a Gold Star sparring master."

"Yes, Grandpa Ge Yang."

He quickly moved a few steps and reorganized his armour, the armour he wore suited him perfectly and it looked very good. Ge Yang could not help but look a few more times, as he silently thought to himself that even when he was younger he wasn't as qualified to wear this armour as he was.

On the two sides of the temple hall were a group of teachers and a group of sparring masters. Lei Hong was personally presiding over

as the group of newcomers walked in.

"Sir Lin Zhi, you came?" Zhang Wei smiled as he gave his greeting.

Lin Mu Yu slightly smiled, stood across from Zhang Wei. Behind them were silver star, bronze star and iron star teacher and sparring masters staring on in awe. Lin Mu Yu and Zhang Wei were both Gold Stars, their status could not even be compared with those newcomers.

"Let the ceremony begin!" Lei Hong casually said.

Ge Yang began to speak, a rough vibrato voice was heard, stuffed up he said, "Today, a total of 14 people will be entering our temple, first place in the trials, Qin Yan, descendant of the emperor's clan, level 62 Heavenly Senior, dragon scale martial spirit, he will be entering as a Gold Star Teacher, monthly salary will be 200 gold yin coin! Second place in the trials, Li Ming Kai, commoner, level 59 Battle Saint, he will be entering as a Gold Star teacher, monthly salary will be 80 gold yin coin. Third place in the trials, Lei Man Jiang, commoner, level 55 Battle Saint, he will be entering as a Gold Star sparring master, monthly salary will be 50 gold yin coins....."

While Ge Yang was moving down the list of the 14 newcomers, Lin Mu Yu was taking note of the young man standing in the front, sharp eyebrows, quite handsome, but looking at his face one could feel a sense of pride. This brat looked exactly like Qin Lei, he thought it should be Qin Lei's little brother, the legendary second son of Ji Ning Wang - Qin Yan!

Qin Yan was also looking at Lin Mu Yu, holding a fiery red spear as he walked over, the corner of his lips turned and he smiled as he asked, “Are you Lin Zhi?”

“That’s me.”

“I’ve heard Elder Brother mention you, he said you were quite powerful, but now that I’ve had a look at you, you seem quite mediocre.” He raised his sharp eyebrows, coldly provoking him just like this.

Lin Mu Yu could not help but smile, Qin Yan truly was Qin Lei’s little brother, he was too lazy to care so he cupped his hands and said, “We’ll have to compare notes later young prince.”

“Oh, I know.”

“It’s quite peaceful now.”

Lei Hong said with deep veneration, “You 14 are now members of our temple, remember that the temple is the holy land of warriors, when you practice with others in the temple you cannot kill, this is the most basic rule we have. Alright, Deacon Ge Yang, recite the 74 law articles of our temple for them!”

“Yes, Great Deacon!”

When Ge Yang was reading the 74 articles, many people began to fall asleep. After Lei Hong dismissed everyone and announced that the official trial and sparring will begin after lunch.

As Lin Mu Yu was leaving to eat lunch, he suddenly felt Qin Yan's palm upon his shoulder who smiled as he said, "Lin Zhi, don't leave yet, we won't be late for lunch if we have a match first!"

Chapter 98 : Ji Ning Wang's Second Son

"Young prince?"

Lin Mu Yu turned around, smiling while he said, "Your brother Qin Lei and I know each other, we both belong to the temple, let's compare notes later, we aren't in a hurry don't you think?"

On Qin Yan's handsome face appeared a smile, "I know that you are my Elder Brother's friend, relax, I will not hurt you at all, I was just wondering, who had the strongest defensive abilities in the temple."

"Strongest defensive abilities?"

"That's right." Qin Yan and Qin Lei's appearance were not the same, he was a bit more handsome, holding a spear in his hands, after letting a low shout, a golden dragon shaped energy covered his body, condensing over his battle uniform, smiling as he said, "You can also see, I am a member of the Qin family, but instead of inheriting the true dragon God Binding Lock bloodline, instead I've inherited my mother's family's dragon scales. The dragon scales is a third class martial spirit, it is known as the number one defensive martial spirit, this is the reason why I've asked you to compare notes."

"Then how does young prince wish to compare notes?" Lin Mu Yu smiled and asked.

Qin Yan's face showed his immatureness, scratching his head, he

smiled and said, “How about hits, in an incense’s time, we’ll attack each other, whoever can break through the other’s martial spirit will be considered the winner, how about that?”

Lin Mu Yu thought for a bit, he already had a plan in his heart, “Un, that’s fine!”

Qin Yan immediately raised his arm and said, “Deacon Ge Yang, can you please bear witness for us, also there is……Sir Zhang Wei, can you be the referee for me and Elder Brother Lin Zhi.”

Ge Yang had a resigned look, “Young Prince Qin Yan, this……this goes against the customs of the temple, we forbid personal fights.”

“We are only competing, not fighting to the death, please relax Deacon Ge Yang!”

Zhang Wei cupped his hand as he stood at the side, smiling as he said, “Sir Lin Zhi, you have to win for us temple sparring masters!”

At this time, there were quite a few people coming over, in an instant more than twenty people gathered around, and Ge Yang had just lit an incense, then said, “No matter the results, once the incense burns out you must stop.”

“Yes!”

Lin Mu Yu and Qin Zhi cupped hands to salute each other, in the next moment, Qin Yan suddenly flicked the fire snake spear in his

hand and immediately roaring flames covered the spear. He was Qin Lei's little brother, towards Qin Lei's strength, Lin Mu Yu had the greatest respect, this Qin Yan should not be that different from his older brother, otherwise he would not challenge him.

"Dang!"

Drawing his prairie sword, his battle qi spilled out, the long sword was covered in flames. Without holding back, he launched out, with the Imperial Wind sword technique his three cuts fell like lightning.

"Peng peng peng……"

Deadly sounds rang out, the dragon scales on Qin Yan's body responded, the prairie sword's three cuts could not hurt it at all, on the contrary it made Lin Mu Yu's arms numb. Moreover each cut felt as if it was it was landing on a ten thousand year stone, this dragon scales martial spirit truly deserved its title as the number one defense martial spirit.

"No problem, I'm still good, no need to hold back!"

Qin Yan loudly laughed, the iron spear in his hand flicked and a flame serpent shot out to collide with Lin Mu Yu's gourd wall, the outer layer shook and the black turtle shell cracked a little, but under his recovery effect, it quickly patched itself. Qin Yan truly had a strong defense and his attack was just as strong, but it still couldn't compare with Zhao Jin's full attack strength.

“Good gourd, this is interesting!”

Qin Yan’s face turned red, this little brat was truly obsessed with martial arts.

With a “Dang” sound, the flame serpent strike became even heavier as it pushed Lin Mu Yu back, the long sword in his hand took the opportunity to fly out, but Qin Yan took advantage of this opening, his spear shot out and hit the hilt of the prairie sword, knocking the prairie sword flying. However lightning appeared in the sky as an invisible hand grabbed onto the prairie sword, the prairie sword shot forward with with the lightning.

“Ah?”

Qin Yan did not know that Lin Mu Yu had learned the four way imperial sword, he quickly retreated a step, both feet in the ground like iron pillars, his dragon scales shined, with rock and shield defensive abilities was added onto his dragon scales. Hearing a “peng” sound, the prairie sword flew away, but on the dragon scale armor was a small gap.

“Very good Sir Lin Zhi!” Qin Zi Ling and the other sparring masters clapped and cheered.

Qin Yan was also surprised, shame and anger climbed into his face, his hand flicked, a set of fire serpent attacks shot out. Lin Mu Yu controlled the prairie sword to fend it off, “Ting ting ting” was heard as sparks flew, this set of attacks Lin Mu Yu completely blocked with the gourd wall, Qin Yan’s offensive abilities were

strong and fast, it was easy to get hurt if he didn't parry.

But Qin Yan was also Qin Lei's little brother so he could count as one of their own, it was necessary he wasn't injured.

The incense was about to be burnt out, Lin Mu Yu's black turtle shell was battered, the dragon scale wall also had a hole in it, but the forbidden mother tree was unceasingly providing battle qi for the black turtle shell. With the dragon scale wall's defensive power and Qin Yan's limited offensive power, it was impossible for him to beat Lin Mu Yu.

Lin Mu Yu had only used the thunderbolt slash, thunderstorm rage, imperial wind sword play, and other sword techniques. He had not used the true dragon flames, fire imperial sword and his other lethal techniques, that's why Qin Yan's shield had not been broken.

"Come on Sir Qin Yan!" Many new recruits began to cheer for Qin Yan, they had entered together with Qin Yan, they had already regarded themselves as members of the Ji Ning Wang palace, so they could not stand on the same side as Lin Mu Yu.

Rather Ge Yang, Zhang Wei and the others who were familiar with Lin Mu Yu were smiling because they could see that although Lin Mu Yu seemed to struggle, he was actually going easy on Qin Yan because the killing technique he used on Zhao Jin, the fire imperial sword had not been used yet. What they didn't know was, Lin Mu Yu had already learned an even stronger attack, the Seven Luminary Mystic Arts!

Of course, Lin Mu Yu did not dare use the Seven Luminary Mystic Arts in front of others, after all the strength of the Seven Luminary Mystic Arts was very shocking. Plus the Seven Luminary Demon King had a “shining history” he still didn’t fully know about, if the Seven Luminary Mystic Arts were revealed, he could draw some unwanted attention.

“The incense stick has been burnt, the fight is over!”

Ge Yang announced with a shaky voice, the he said, “Sir Lin Zhi’s defense was more overwhelmed by Sir Qin Yan’s attack, therefore Sir Qin Yan has a slight lead in this competition, but overall…….it is a tie!

Lin Mu Yu raised his finger and the prairie sword returned to its sheath, cupping his hands he sad, “Young prince, thanks for being lenient.”

Qin Yan’s face turned red, no one would think to know that he was only 18 years old, he was younger Qin Yin and Tang Xiao Xi. An 18 year old Heaven Realm warrior, how frightening was that?

“Big Brother Lin Zhi, actually you let me win, I know that!”

Qin Yan’s personality was very straightforward, cupping his hands and saying, “Qin Yan depended on his bloodline, beating your tenth class gourd martial spirit with my third class dragon scale martial spirit, this is not something to be proud of. In the future when Qin Yan is practicing in the temple, I will have to

come seek Big Brother Lin Zhi to teach me a thing or two!”

Lin Mu Yu secretly praised him, smiling as he said, “No need to be polite Young Prince, you are still young, if you were the same age as me, after practicing for 3-5 years, I’m afraid I won’t be your match anymore.”

Receiving this praise, Qin Yan could not help but joyfully smiling, scratching his head he said, “Big Brother Lin Zhi doesn’t need to call me young prince, since you are friends with my elder brother, then you are also my Qin Yan’s friend. You can just call me Qin Yan, saying our names, people of the temple are like this.”

“Alright then……”

Lin Mu Yu was not a stubborn person, he immediately said, “Then I’ll call you Qin Yan from now one, let’s go eat. The meals of the temple do not wait for people, if we go late we won’t be able to eat.”

“Alright!”

Qin Yan quickly ran over to Lin Mu Yu’s side, smiling he said, “Big Brother Lin Zhi, your sword technique is so strong, where did you learn it?”

Seeing his longing look, Lin Mu Yu knew exactly what he wanted, then he said, “you want to study swordsmanship? This is very hard, then again your specialty is defense, isn’t it better for

you to focus on improving the defense of your dragon scales?”

“No, I want to learn.”

Qin Yan clenched his fist and said, “The six martial arts, sword, horse riding, spear, blade, axe, and shooting, actually the sword is the strongest. I really want to study a sword technique, but the teachers that my father got for me are all fakes, their swords have no strength, as long is it is hit once they can no longer control it. What I saw earlier was, Big Brother Lin Zhi’s sword was forceful, please teach it to me.....”

“This.....” Lin Mu Yu was hesitant, he had already taught Chu Yao the sword technique, if he also taught Qin Yan, it would be as if he was opening a sect and teaching people, if the Old Sword found out that wouldn’t be good.

Seeing Lin Mu Yu hesitate, Qin Yan anxiously said, “How about this, I can prepare a generous gift to learn swordsmanship from you, 400000 gold yin coins, how about that? Also.....Also a piece of beautiful jade.....a hundred year one from the tribute of the north desert, how about that?”

Lin Mu Yu could not help but laugh, he said, “Qin Yan, you are Big Brother Qin Lei’s little brother, stop taking me for someone who is greedy for money, alright, I can teach you the basic sword techniques, but I can only teach you the basics, the others I can’t teach you, that you have to comprehend yourself.”

Qin Yan was wild with happiness, nodding his head, immediately

cupping his hand and saying, “Many thanks Big Brother Lin Zhi!”

As a result of Qin Yan calling Big Brother, the people of the temple were dumbfounded, the Ji Ning Wang young prince was calling a member of the temple big brother, this just strengthened everyone’s believe in Lin Mu Yu being the number one in the temple’s younger generation.

In the afternoon, after normal training, after teaching the imperial sword heart mnemonics to Qin Yan, he let him practice alone. Qin Yan was obsessed with martial arts just like his brother, after getting the heart chant he immediately went of into a side room to practice, with his status, there was no one that dared to bother him.

Lin Mu Yu was left alone, he directly left the temple and decided to go to the Spirit Medicine Department to see Chu Yao, he had not seen elder sister in a while, his heart was feeling a little lonely.

Chapter 99 : Forging Master

A black horse drawn carriage was bringing ingredients into the Spirit Medicine Department, as dusk was the Spirit Medicine Department “warehousing” time, large quantities of ingredients bought from the city were shipped over to the Spirit Medicine Department. Chu Yao and the other alchemist’s job were to turn these into high grade medicines like the Gold Sore Medicine, Stone Skin Medicine, etc. for the use of the kingdom’s troops.

“Temple’s Lin Zhi, seeks a meeting with Chu Yao of the refining hall. “Lin Mu Yu well mannered said at the Spirit Medicine Department registration office.

The two guards both know him, one of them said with a smile, “It’s Sir Lin Zhi, are you looking for miss Chu Yao? Come in, no need for ceremony, I’ve heard that a few days ago you defeated the gold ranked teacher Zhao Jin at the War God Academy’s trial, you’re really too fierce, now the Imperial Capital is filled with legends about you!”

“Is that so?” Lin Mu Yu was somewhat unconsciously ashamed, cupping his hands and smiling as he said, “I was just lucky, thanks you two, then can I go in?”

“Go, go! Take good care of miss Chu Yao, she is the most beautiful woman in our Spirit Medicine Department, many high level alchemists and rich noble young masters all want to meet her, but she’s only willing to see you….”

Lin Mu Yu walked step by step into the Spirit Medicine Department, his heart had a warm feeling.

In the well lit refining hall, alchemists were busy as they bustled about refining medicine essence, far away he saw Chu Yao's slender shape, today she was wearing a light blue gown, she gave off a sense of seeming like an immortal.

"Chu Yao jie!

Lin Mu Yu's shout made Chu Yao jump, turning her body to see Lin Mu Yu, a delighted smile appeared on her face, "Ah Yu, how do you have time to see me, I heard that you were still in confinement, last time I went to visit you, the temple guards turned me away, they said no one was allowed to see you, they were truly coldhearted!"

Lin Mu Yu knew it was Lei Hong trying to protect him, he walked up and sat down beside Chu Yao's refining stage, tilted his legs and said while smiling, "What level of medicine refining have you reached?"

At the side, an around 60 year old alchemy master said, "Miss Chu Yao is the youngest Alchemy Saint here!"

"Ah? Alchemy Saint?"

Lin Mu Yu couldn't help but be stunned, smiling as he said, "Chu Yao jie, you can refine level 7 medicine now?"

Chu Yao bashfully smiled as she nodded her head, “Un!”

“That’s great!”

Lin Mu Yu was excited, he jumped off the refining platform to hug Chu Yao, but Chu Yao with a pretty blushing face said in a soft voice, “Ah Yu, there are many people watching us……”

“Oh, sorry, I was too excited.” Lin Mu Yu hurriedly put her down while apologizing.

“It’s fine…..” Chu Yao’s voice was a little small, a pair of beautiful eyes did not dare look at Lin Mu Yu, she said in a small voice, “I thought once Ah Yu was friends with Princess Xi and Her Highness Yin, he would forget about his elder sister…..”

“How could I?”

Even if Lin Mu Yu’s head was made of wood he would still know Chu Yao was jealous, he still did not know the positions of each girl in his heart, but he still tried to comfort them, he then said, “Chu Yao jie will always be my elder sister, no matter what I will never forget about you, that’s right, how did you advance so fast, is it because of……”

Chu Yao nodded her head and said in a soft voice, “Un, it’s the Medicine God Index, I’ve already repaired some of the damaged parts in the Medicine God Index, that was how I managed to

advance to Alchemy Saint so fast hmm.....Grandpa tried for a lifetime to become an Alchemy Saint, I never thought that I would be the one to achieve his desire."

Lin Mu Yu was holding her fragrant shoulder, he earnestly said, "If Grandpa knew about your current cultivation, his soul in heaven would be happy for you, then again, his enmity has already been settled, Grandpa will be smiling in his grave."

"Un, un."

"That's right, how has Chu Yao jie's sword practice been coming along?" After Lin Mu Yu asked this, he said, "Only studying medicine refining techniques is not good, after all.....to live well in this world, your fist must be hard."

Chu Yao giggled and said, "The Imperial Sword Technique.....I can only remotely control swords, but.....but I still haven't formed my sword heart yet. Ah Yu, tell you elder sister, how did you form your sword heart in only two days, I've practiced for more than ten days and still haven't succeeded!"

"This....." Lin Mu Yu couldn't say that it was because of his martial talent, he scratched the back of his head as he said, "Probably because the place isn't suitable? Well, continue working hard and you'll get it, once Chu Yao jie forms her sword heart then I can teach you the Four Way Imperial Sword to you....."

Saying this, he thought for a bit and then said, "The Four Way Imperial Sword will bring your cultivation to a sufficient level,

then you can at least defend yourself.”

Chu Yao held his hand, her eyes held a trace of joy, her beautiful eyes swept across Lin Mu Yu’s handsome appearance in his battle dress, “Our Ah yu has already became an expert of the temple.....even Zhao Jin that level 70 Heavenly King was defeated by you, Ah Yu you really surprised me, has your strength caught up to elder brother and elder brother Feng Ji Xing yet?

“Uh.....”

Lin Mu Yu could not help but be a little afraid, If he was to say he could win against Chu Huai Sheng and Feng Ji Xing, he was not confident in saying this. Feng Ji Xing’s wind sword was elegant and strong, Chu Huai Sheng’s picking the stars was not weak and the two of them had never fought with their full strength, so the outcome was unpredictable. Plus Feng Ji Xing was the commander of the Imperial Guards, he had much more fighting experience compared to Lin Mu Yu.

Therefore he said with a smile, “I don’t know, Feng Ji Xing is a big brother I’ll respect my entire life, Chu Huai Sheng is Chu Yao jie’s older brother, no matter who’s stronger, I won’t have a chance in this lifetime to find out.”

“Un, un.”

Chu Yao smiled and said, “You haven’t eaten yet right? How about you eat with me tonight?”

“Alright, it’s my treat.”

“Alright!”

Chu Yao was now an Alchemy Saint of the Spirit Medicine Department, her wages wouldn’t be small, but Lin Mu Yu’s income was still higher. As long as he wanted, he could quickly become a rich person in Orchid Goose City with his alchemy and refining skills. But to him, money was just a number, it didn’t matter if he had it or not, what mattered was his personal strength.

He brought Chu Yao to the nearby Tian Street which had some delicious food, after they went to the Imperial Capital store with her, the Imperial Capital store was lively at night. Outside there were gem stores, selling a variety of beautiful gems, the kind of things madames and little misses loved the most.

Although Chu Yao was beautiful, she was not interested in these kinds of things, the things she was interested in were long swords.

Lin Mu Yu watched her, then said, “Chu Yao jie there’s no need to be jealous of those weapons, I’ll quickly craft an even better spirit weapon, relax, we just need to buy materials first.”

“Un, un!”

The owner of the diamond card was well respected, they quickly found the deputy chief Jin Xiao Tang, once this extremely attractive lady noticed Lin Mu Yu approaching, her face beamed

with joy, “Sir Lin Zhi, what do you require this time?”

Her eyes fell on Chu Yao, showing a surprised face as she said, “Oh, this time sir has brought a female companion with him!”

“Hai, hai……”

Lin Mu Yu coughed to help solve the awkwardness for Chu Yao, he then said, “Miss Jin, this time I came to get some high level spirit stone and iron, if you have any, can you please show them to me?”

“Alright, any specific requests?”

“I need a high level ice spirit stone, the rest is optional.”

“Alright.” Jin Xiao Tang turned around to walk in front, smiling as she said, “Sir Lin Zhi’s luck is truly good, we just had a batch of high quality spirit stones come in from Southern Ridge, I’ve heard that there is an 11000 year old Frost Qilin spirit stone, I don’t know whether Sir Lin Zhi is willing to pay a high price for it?”

“Oh? How much?”

Jin Xiao Tang raised three fingers, smiling as she said, “I’ll give you a discount, 30000 gold yin coins, how about it?”

“Ah?”

Lin Mu Yu looked at his money and said, “I don’t have enough, I only have 20000 gold yin coins, can I buy it on credit?”

Jin Xiao Tang giggled, a pair of knowing eyes showed, “You have to first tell me, what use do you have for the spirit stones?”

“Forging.”

“Forging?” Jin Xiao Tang blinked, her face filled with astonishment, “What grade of spirit weapons can Sir Lin Zhi craft?”

“Profound……very low, don’t you think?”

“No!” Jin Xiao Tan quickly shook her head and said, “If profound is considered low grade products, then most of the forging masters in the Imperial City would be ashamed, this is also good, I can give you credit, but when Sir Lin Zhi finishes forging the spirit weapons be sure to give me a share, let me sell it in our auction house, this helps promote the fame of our auction house, what does sir think?”

“Alright, no problem.”

An equal trade, there is nothing better than this. Jin Xiao Tang beamed with a smile, this was business, she had materials that Lin Zhi needed, but she also needed Lin Zhi’s forging skills.

Immediately finishing this transaction, when this 11000 year spirit stone fell into his hands, he felt a light chill in his palm, Lin Mu Yu clicked his tongue in wonder, “Although it was expensive, but this truly is a mysterious spirit stong.”

Jin Xiao Tang also gave a smile, “Of course, it is said one of Southern Ridge’s mercenary groups sent 2000+ people to go kill it, for this one Frost Qilin, 300 people had died, including a well known heaven realm master, to be honest, to sell it for 30000 is too cheap!”

“You can’t start changing the price now.” Lin Mu Yu anxiously said.

Jin Xiao Tang couldn’t help smile, “Xiao Tang is a business person, based on credit, Sir Lin Zhi please relax!”

After, besides from buying this spirit stone, Lin Mu Yu also bought on credit an 8000 year old ice spirit stone, in addition to some mysterious iron and a few below 5000 year old spirit stones. After buying all these things, Jin Xiao Tang gave him a horse carriage to help him carry everything back to the temple. After first sending Chu Yao home, he quickly rushed back to the temple to become one of the forging masters that everyone respected!

Chapter 100 : Recasting The Pear Flower Spear

Late at night, flame light came out of the secret room, partly hidden partly visible, the Alchemy Cauldron was in the open, Lin Mu Yu closed his eyes, the strength Spirit Pulse Technique surged, sensing a presence without any strength, it seemed to be the servant, this time Lei Hong had not come to “peep” on his training.

He opened his palm, and strengths slowly flowed out, the pear flower spear made a hum sound, this seemed like an unusual weapon, Lin Mu Yu felt a slight chill coming from the handle.

Lulu’s body suddenly flew out, smiling as she said, “Wa, its thousand frozen wrought iron.....”

“Thousand frozen wrought iron?” Lin Mu Yu was astonished.

Lulu nodded and flapped her transparent wings as she continued saying, “Thousand frozen wrought iron is an iron ore that condenses at the bottom of a deep cold pool after a thousand years, it is rare to find, but this strange metal actually has its own spirit power, big brother, this spear is a treasure, although the refining is done poorly, but the iron it is made of is a rarity!”

“As expected.”

Lin Mu Yu secretly praised, the pear flower spear in Zhao Jin’s hand was truly a deadly weapon, only he did not know this pear

flower spear's true value, with master level forging technique and reforging with a strong spirit stone, the grade of the pear flower spear can receive a large promotion and tonight would be the night the pear flower spear was recast!

His hands gently moved it, the pear flower spear entered into the alchemy cauldron's flame, even with the third level refining flame, the flames rise into the sky, but it still wasn't able to quickly heat up the spear, the fire burned for an hour and finally the pear flower spear turned fire red. Chu Tian did not dare smelt it any further, otherwise the cold energy of the thousand frozen wrought iron would be exposed, he urged the fire and melted the the spear, the minute the iron melted, a flood dragon's beast soul flew out!

"Roar!"

Lin Mu Yu could not help but smile, this was a 3000+ year old flood dragon, its strength was limited, it wasn't his opponent, he didn't even have to make a move. With a low grunt, his battle qi surged, just relying on the power of the battle qi to refine, the beast soul was destroyed, thus, the pear flower spear turned into a mass of iron, without a soul.

"Hua, Hua……"

Flame red iron liquid was flowing in the alchemy cauldron, it was continually tempered, flame red sparks flew out, purifying the iron of the long spear. At the same time, Lin Mu Yu also took out the 11000 year old Frost Qilin spirit stone, putting it in the alchemy cauldron, he started to refine the spirit stone, two processes progressing simultaneously, perfectly controlling both.

The spirit stone refining process took longer, it took around 3 hours, the spirit stone of the Frost Qilin slowly shivered, a faint ferocious beast roar was heard and the spirit strength filled the air. A dense cold strength filled the room, even the nearby stone bed began to frost over, the half full bottle of wine on the table, with a “bang” it shattered into ice pieces.

“Roar!”

Beast soul backlash!

This was a mighty frost qilin and it was an adult spirit beast, its body was covered in dark blue scales, a pair of ice cold pupils without emotions. It suddenly opened its mouth to fire at Lin Mu Yu, although it was a beast soul, the power and prestige of a king undoubtedly could be felt coming from it!

“I’ve been waiting for you!”

Lin Mu Yu lightly smiled, confidently lifting his hand, the prairie sword was already prepared, with a fast rotation, the true dragon flames turned into a spiral, heavily bombarding the body of the Frost Qilin. The true dragon flame spiral had a strong penetrating power, the Frost Qilin’s scales could not block it, it was instantly pierced by the strong spirit power, but it still roared and rushed over.

Lin Mu Yu clenched his teeth, he never thought that the will of a 11000 spirit stone would be so strong, he quickly withdrew a step,

his left fist came forward, activating the Seven Luminary Mystic Arts, he called out, “First Luminary, Mortal Turmoil!”

“Peng!”

The spirit power sent the Frost Qilin flying, but it could not stop it before it could bring its claw down on Lin Mu Yu’s left arm, it left behind terrible scratches and frost condensed above it. Lin Mu Yu knit his brows, NND, an 11000 year old spirit stone was just as abnormal as the monster!

[TL note - I have no idea what the NND is either, it was like that in the raw….I checked multiple sources just to make sure]

His right fist slightly trembled, a blood coloured demonic strength wrapped around his fist, right before the Frost Qilin’s second killing strike could hit his chest, “Second Luminary, Demonic Dance!”

“Hong!”

A strong force shot out from his fist, directly creating a large hole in the Frost Qilin’s chest, the remaining waves slammed against the alchemy cauldron’s inner walls. It was a good thing there was the protection of the alchemy cauldron, otherwise this one strike of Lin Mu Yu’s would have turned the secret room into a pile of rubble.

“Ao, ao…….”

The Frost Qilin roared, but it did not have any strength left to resist, the dragon refining flame enveloped around it, refining its spiritual power inch by inch, bit by bit it was slowly entered the iron liquid that was once the pear flower spear, the iron liquid seemed to slowly cool, that was the ice of the Frost Qilin, this kind of cold could not be fake.

His left arm felt a little numb, Lin Mu Yu knit his brows, from the Frost Qilin's one ruthless strike, the cold qi had already entered into his body. He quickly circulated his battle qi to deal with it, it was a good thing the flame in the alchemy cauldron was strong or else he would have lost consciousness of that half of his body.

Half healing himself, half working on the pear flower spear, Lulu was redesigning the shape of the pear flower spear, the head of spear used to have a triangular blade edge, it looked very warlike, but Lin Mu Yu very carefully seeped his spiritual sense into the alchemy cauldron and tempered the spear head, causing the spear head to form a layered "keen edge". Although it did not look any different, there were over 100 stacked blade edges, each layer of the blade worked together, this weakened the impact and the strength of the spear tip, but it made the tip tougher and sharper.

After recasting for half an hour, the pear flower spear had finally taken shape, it was much more formidable than it previously was and it contained a hidden endless chill. The light in the alchemy cauldron disappeared and the fire red pear flower spear was allowed to cool, the Frost Qilin's spirit unexpectedly appeared above the spear blade and roared, its spirit energy turned into snowflakes and with a "Pa" sound, the heavy pear flower spear fell into Lin Mu Yu's hands.

A chill seeped into his palm, Lin Mu Yu could feel the Frost Qilin echo his own feelings, because this pear flower spear was personally recast by him, so it will be stronger when he uses it compare to others. With his strength combined with the Frost Qilin's, it would be very mysterious.

Wiping the sweat off his forehead, Lin Mu Yu said with a smile, "I guess I'm done, Lulu, take a look at what grade this pear flower spear is at now?"

Lulu was flapping her wing, circling around his shoulder, smiling as she said, "According the ranks of the kingdom, after soul refining this pear flower spear, its cold iron purity, toughness, and sharpness would rank it as a level six saint level!"

"Level six saint level?" Lin Mu Yu asked with a smile, "Is this strong?"

Lulu giggled, "Saint level weapons are scarce on the continent, there are less than 100 in total, big brother, you tell me if this pear flower spear is strong?"

"Then I guess it's pretty strong." Lin Mu Yu secretly praised it, if he were to sell this spear, the estimated price would easily reach 100000 gold yin coins, but money could easily come and there was no need for that much money. Moreover, ordinary men were innocent, but talent could invoke jealousy, he understood he should not use the pear flower spear in front of other experts.

So he wrapped up the pear flower spear and placed it in a corner, then he started to work on Chu Yao's spirit weapon.

8000 year old frost spirit stone, add in the thousand year old mysterious iron, they were both rare and mysterious material. It took two hours of refining to finish, the design turned out similar to the pear flower spear, the hilt had a budding pear flower design to it, the blade was like blood, complete with three grooves, lightly flicking it caused a delightful sword sound to ring out.

"Chu Yao jie will definitely love this pear flower sword!" He said, feeling quite please.

Lulu was flying to the side, smiling as she said, "Fourth level profound, it's on the same level as big brother's prairie sword!"

"Un."

Placing the pear flower sword to the side, looking at the materials, there was still quite a bit of thousand year mysterious iron left and various 3000-5000 year old spirit stones, so he created designs for them one by one, because swords used less materials, so he used them to cast swords. And since swords were the most popular weapons in the kingdom, he could sell them for a high price, if he used the materials to create any other kind of weapon, it would have felt like waste.

He worked all the way to daybreak, all together he made 5 different swords, each one was named based on their shape, spirit stone, and attribute.

Jade Light, level 1 spirit, light attributed.

Frost Goose, level 2 spirit, ice attributed.

Heavenly Sound, level 2 spirit, ice attributed.

Thunder Slash, level 2 spirit, lightning attributed.

Swift Wind, level 3 spirit, wind attributed.

He wrapped the swords in a black cloth since he had not prepared scabbards, Lin Mu Yu had already decided, he would give these to Jin Xiao Tang to sell in the auction house, but more importantly he also needed money. If he sold them cheaply to the temple, then he wouldn't have enough money to repay the 30000 gold yin coin credit back to Jin Xiao Tang.

Quickly eating his breakfast, he placed the five swords into a bag on his war horse, then he mounted the horse. Using the white temple cloak to cover the swords, he set forth full of hope to the Imperial Capital store. Although these five swords were not rare and valuable, but they were still excellent weapons that were better than the inferior weapons circulating on the market, they could definitely sell for a good price!