

A Sword 81

Chapter 81: Destiny

The fatty stared at Ye Guan. "Are you poor?"

Ye Guan nodded. The fatty was confused. "You're such a talented swordsman. Why are you poor? Are you not a student of the Guanxuan Academy?"

"Are you going to bribe me or not?" said Ye Guan. "If not, then I'm leaving."

The fatty stared at him without saying anything.

Ye Guan added, "I actually think that you're strong. I'm just too fast. I think I won't be able to withstand your ultimate move."

The fatty nodded.

"You're ruthless," he said before sending a storage ring toward Ye Guan.

Five hundred thousand gold spiritual crystals! Ye Guan quickly put it away. It seemed that some people in this world truly had too much money.

Ye Guan's poverty had turned him similar to a frog in a well.

The fatty stared at Ye Guan. "Remember, you have to let me finish casting."

Ye Guan nodded. "Okay."

The fatty nodded as well and soared into the air. He stretched his hands out and spoke words that Ye Guan couldn't quite understand.

Crackle!

A bolt of lightning struck the ground. Ye Guan was shocked, but another bolt of lightning struck the battlefield before he could even recover. Ye Guan's expression turned serious as more lightning bolts struck the ground. He actually felt threatened.

This fatty has the real deal! The fatty suddenly quivered, and the fat on his face trembled violently.

The fatty eventually put his palms together.

"Lightning God! Smite this bastard!" he shouted, rendering Ye Guan speechless.

Moments later, Ye Guan's expression changed as dozens of lightning bolts flew toward Ye Guan. They were extremely fast, and they were much faster than Ye Guan's previous sword moves.

Ye Guan's eyes narrowed, and he abruptly vanished. He didn't attempt to confront the lightning bolts head-on.

Instead, Ye Guan turned around and ran.

A strange scene unfolded.

Dozens of lightning bolts chased after the fleeing Ye Guan, creating a strange scene reminiscent of fireworks in the starry skies. The fatty was in disbelief, and his jaw fell to the ground. How is he faster than lightning bolts?

Ye Guan abruptly appeared in front of him, and the former's sword was inches away from the fatty's glabella.

"Stop!" shouted the fatty. The lightning bolts chasing after Ye Guan dissipated at once.

The fatty looked at Ye Guan and said, "I admit defeat."

Ye Guan put his sword away and said, "Thank you for letting me win."

He then turned around to leave.

"Swordsman!" the fatty shouted and asked, "What's your name?"

Ye Guan came to a halt and replied, "Yang Guan!"

The fatty stared at Ye Guan. "I've never heard of that name. Is it a fake name?"

Ye Guan nodded without any hesitation.

The fatty asked, "What's your real name, then?"

Ye Guan shook his head. "I can't tell you."

The fatty thought about it before asking, "My name is Xu Qin, have you heard of me?"

Ye Guan shook his head. "No."

Xu Qin chuckled and asked, "How about we become friends?"

Ye Guan nodded. "Sure!"

Xu Qin chortled and praised. "I really admire swordsmen. They're so cool and stylish!"

“Not really.” Ye Guan smiled and said, “Anyway, I’m a bit busy, so I’ll see you next time, Brother Xu.”

With that, Ye Guan turned around and finally left.

Left all alone, Xu Qin muttered, “I heard that the young talent who killed the True Dragon Clan’s Clan Leader is called Ye Guan, and he’s a swordsman as well...”

...

Ye Guan sat cross-legged on the fourth floor.

The fatty he had fought just now was actually really strong. If it hadn’t been for his speed, the fatty’s lightning bolts would have incapacitated him.

A rift in space appeared, and a man emerged from it. The man was wearing a black robe, and he had an aloof and arrogant demeanor.

Ye Guan stood up.

The man assessed Ye Guan and frowned. “Who are you?”

Ye Guan responded, “Yang Guan.”

The man shook his head and said, “I’ve never heard of that name.”

Swoosh!

Ye Guan abruptly disappeared instead of replying. The man’s pupils constricted. He clenched his fist, but a sword appeared a few inches away from his forehead before he could even do anything.

The man glared at Ye Guan.

Ye Guan calmly said, "You've lost."

With that, he put his sword away and turned around to leave.

A sinister light flashed in the man's eyes.

"You ambushed me!" he shouted and sent a fist flying toward Ye Guan's nape.

Boom!

A loud explosion echoed. The power behind the man's fist was strong enough to kill, so he obviously wanted to kill Ye Guan.

Ye Guan turned sharply and dodged the terrifying fist. He avoided the attack and vanished before reappearing behind the man with his sword against the man's throat.

The man went beyond pallid. "I—"

Slash!

Ye Guan swung his sword and interrupted the man. The man's head flew away, and blood wantonly spurted into the air as if the headless stump were a geyser.

Ye Guan picked up the man's storage ring and left.

The man's eyes were unwittingly transfixed on Ye Guan.

"Why did you kill him?" asked Little Pagoda.

Ye Guan remained calm as he replied, "I've always let my opponents here live, but he tried to kill me with a sneak attack earlier. If people are nice to me, I'll be nice to them. If people are hostile to me, why should I be nice to them?"

Little Pagoda didn't know what to say.

Ye Guan soon arrived on the third floor. Ye Guan sat cross-legged and took out a storage ring. The storage ring belonged to the man on the fourth floor, and it contained two million gold spiritual crystals.

Ye Guan calculated and realized that he had around twelve million gold spiritual crystals on hand. It was a massive fortune in his eyes, but it was still not enough.

Rumble!

A man emerged in a rift in space in front of Ye Guan.

Ye Guan was about to attack, but the man cried out. "Wait!"

Ye Guan stared at the man with a frown.

The man was wearing a white robe, and he seemed quite wary of Ye Guan.

The man sounded solemn as he asked, "Are you the swordsman who cleared seven floors in one go?"

Ye Guan was slightly surprised as he asked, "Do you know me?"

The man smiled and explained, "I received information that you're extremely fast and that I have to be careful of your speed."

Ye Guan was silent.

The man smiled. "There are very few swordsmen in the Zhongtu Divine Continent, and it's going to be my first time fighting a powerful swordsman like you. I'm probably not your match, but I would still like to see how fast you really are."

"Let's fight, then," said Ye Guan with a nod.

The man nodded as well. "Please."

Swoosh!

Ye Guan abruptly vanished. A throwing dagger appeared in the man's hands, and he hurled it at where he thought Ye Guan would appear.

Clang!

Sparks flew as Ye Guan deflected the throwing dagger and thrust his sword forward. Of course, he stopped a few inches away from the man's forehead. It all happened in a flash; the throwing dagger was still in mid-air, but Ye Guan had already ended the fight.

Clang!

A clear and crisp sound echoed as the throwing dagger finally landed on the ground.

The man's expression was complex as he stared at Ye Guan.

"I admit defeat," he said with a sigh.

It took a literal blink of an eye for Ye Guan to deflect the sword into the air and thrust his sword a few inches away from the man's forehead. In other words, the former was too fast for the latter to beat.

Ye Guan put his sword away and said, "Thanks for letting me win."

With that, he turned around to leave.

"Pardon me for asking, but..." the man trailed off before asking, "How did you become so fast?"

Ye Guan calmly replied, "I cultivated under spacetime gravity."

The man was surprised. "How many layers did you manage to endure?"

"The maximum," replied Ye Guan before disappearing from the man's eyes.

The man solemnly pondered over something.

Rumble!

A rift in space was torn open, and someone emerged from the rift.

The visitor was none other than the fatty—Xu Qin.

Xu Qin smiled and said, "Li Qian, didn't I tell you that you're not strong enough to keep up with him? I told you I wasn't looking down on you."

Li Qian shook his head and said, "He's a monster. I finally understand how he killed those dragons."

Xu Qin sounded solemn as he said, "His personality is decent, so how about we pull him into our Boundless Mercenary?"

Li Qian thought about it before responding, "Sounds great, but we have to tell our boss first before anything else."

"All right," said Xu Qin with a nod.

Li Qian suddenly asked, "What do you think? Can he defeat him?"

Xu Qin was silent for quite a while before he responded, "It depends on his trump cards. If he has no trump cards and he has already shown us his true power, I don't think he can beat that guy. However, I'm sure that he's still hiding his true strength."

"I think his goal is the Great Dao Destiny Contest," said Li Qian.

Xu Qin's expression turned solemn. The Great Dao Destiny Contest! Those daring enough to fight in that contest are the true monsters...

...

Ye Guan soon arrived on the second floor.

A man soon emerged from a rift in space in front of Ye Guan, and he was stupefied to find that the man was none other than Nanling Yiyi's brother, Nanling Ren.

Nanling Ren was also surprised to see Ye Guan. "It's you?"

Ye Guan nodded.

Nanling Ren's gaze turned complicated. "I should have known that it could only be you! A swordsman strong enough to wipe the floor with eight rankers at once. I think you're the only one capable of such an abnormal feat."

Ye Guan didn't reply. He gazed deeply at Nanling Ren and said, "I'll let you make the first move."

Nanling Ren chuckled. "I can't beat you."

Most people had no idea that Ao Tian died at the hands of Ye Guan and he died while he was under the effects of the Gift of the Dragon God. It was a well-guarded secret that only a handful of people knew, and Nanling Ren was one of those few people.

"All right." Ye Guan nodded and turned around to leave.

Nanling Ren suddenly asked, "How's Yiyi?"

Ye Guan came to a halt and said, "She's doing great."

Nanling Ren asked, "Can you convince her to go home..."

Ye Guan shook his head and said. "Young Lord Nanling, you're a nice person, so allow me to tell you this. You should convince your father rather than Yiyi. Does she even have anything to gain even if she were to return other than the clan members' disdain?"

Nanling Ren nodded. "You're right. I didn't think it through."

Ye Guan nodded and added, "She's happy with the status quo."

He then turned around and walked toward the first floor.

Nanling Ren stood rooted in silence for quite a while before he shook his head and let out a sigh.

...

Ye Guan soon found himself on the first floor. He took a deep breath and sat cross-legged, waiting patiently for his opponent.

Ye Guan waited for quite a while, but the first floor's defender still hadn't appeared.

Ye Guan frowned. Does this floor not have a defender?

He decided to wait, and he waited for a long time for his opponent. However, his opponent never appeared. He waited and waited some more, patiently, but rather than his opponent, an old man appeared in front of him. The old man was familiar, and it was all because he was the Martial Tower's attendant carrying an opium pipe with him.

The old man stared deeply at Ye Guan before throwing a command token toward him.

"The defender of this floor has failed to appear within the required time period. You've won because he has forfeited his opportunity to defend his floor. You're now at the top of the martial list," explained the old man.

Ye Guan was silent. He didn't expect that the first-floor defender would forfeit.

The old man continued. "You should go up to the final floor and test your luck. Remember, you can only stay there for two hours."

The final floor! Ye Guan picked up the command token and headed up the stairs.

The old man stared at Ye Guan's departing figure with a thought gaze.

...

Ye Guan soon arrived on the final floor and found that it was a vast hall that contained nothing but a portrait.

It was the portrait of the Sword Master.

Ye Guan sat cross-legged in front of the portrait and spoke, "Master Pagoda, will the Sword Master come out to meet me?"

Little Pagoda didn't respond.

Ye Guan was surprised.

"Master Pagoda?" he called out but was met with silence.

Ye Guan sounded solemn as he spoke once more, "Master Pagoda, say something."

However, he still didn't receive any response.

Ye Guan's expression darkened.

Ye Guan sat for two hours, but nothing really happened. In the end, he sighed and got up to leave.

However, he suddenly stopped just before he reached out for the door.

He turned around and examined the portrait.

"Hmm, the Sword Master and I look a bit similar..." he muttered. Moments later, he let out a chuckle and shook his head. He was disappointed that the Sword Master didn't come out to meet him, but he didn't cling to the chance of meeting the latter and left.

A light breeze blew past the Hall of Enlightenment upon Ye Guan's departure, and a man's figure slowly manifested. The man was wearing a long robe, and his hands were behind his back. He had a head full of white hair, and his face looked weathered.

A woman manifested next to him. The woman held the man's hand as tears spilled out of her eyes.

"He's really talented..." she muttered

The man smiled and nodded. The light in his eyes revealed that he was pleased.

The woman leaned on the man's shoulder and gripped his hand tightly.

"My heart... it hurts..."

The man hugged the woman and whispered, "I thought that I could handle everything back then..."

The man then shook his head and continued. "I never thought that he would have to go through the same hardships as me. Is this the destiny of our Yang Family? I hope he won't hate me..."

The couple shared a tight embrace, and they soon disappeared into the wind. The Sword Master's portrait also vanished with them, and it seemed that the Sword Master would never come back here.

Chapter 82: Can You Let Me Finish

After leaving the Martial Tower, Ye Guan sat on the steps and sighed. He was disappointed. He had hoped to see the Sword Master, but things didn't go as he wished.

Little Pagoda shattered the lengthy silence and said, "It's fine."

"Master Pagoda, why were you silent?" asked Ye Guan.

Little Pagoda was silent for quite a while before he responded, "An extremely powerful cultivator was around, so I couldn't speak."

Ye Guan was stunned. "An extremely powerful cultivator?"

Little Pagoda replied, "Yes."

Ye Guan wanted to ask something, but the fatty Xu Qin and Li Qian suddenly appeared at the bottom of the steps. They walked up the steps and arrived in front of Ye Guan.

Xu Qin chuckled and put his hands together. "Brother Yang, congratulations on becoming the first placer of the martial list."

Ye Guan shook his head with a smile. "I got lucky because the defender didn't appear."

Xu Qin was confused. "The defender didn't appear?"

"That's right." Ye Guan nodded. "I waited for two hours, but no one came. I just got lucky."

Xu Qin and Li Qian exchanged confused looks.

Li Qian composed himself and smiled. "Brother Yang, we're here to invite you to join our Boundless Mercenary."

Ye Guan was puzzled. "Boundless Mercenary?"

Li Qian nodded and explained, "Yes. The Zhongtu Divine Continent has over ten thousand mercenaries alone, and our Boundless Mercenary is the second best among the many mercenary groups. In other words, we're strong!"

Ye Guan thought about it before asking, "What are the benefits?"

Xu Qin and Li Qian froze before grinning. Li Qian laughed and said, "Brother Yang, you're very straightforward. I like that. Anyway, there are definitely benefits. For example, we can go on money missions."

Ye Guan's curiosity was piqued. "Money missions?"

Li Qian nodded and explained, "The Mercenary Union has money missions available for mercenary groups, and each mission pays a lot of money."

Ye Guan hurriedly asked, "How much?"

Li Qian stared deeply at Ye Guan and said, "The highest reward I've seen so far is thirty million gold spiritual crystals."

"Thirty million!" Ye Guan was thrilled. He slapped his leg and said, "All right, let's take that!"

Li Qian rolled his eyes at him and retorted, "What do you mean, let's take that? You haven't even heard of the mission details yet!"

Ye Guan chuckled sheepishly. "Sorry, I just got a bit excited."

Li Qian smiled and explained, "This mission is to go to Sin Abyss to catch the greatest talent of the Zhongtu Divine Continent's previous generation. Her name is Ji Xuan."

Ji Xuan! Ye Guan froze. He would never forget that name. Ji Xuan was the fastest cultivator to have cleared the trial tower of the Lower Realm's Guanxuan Academy.

"In addition to being the greatest talent of the Zhongtu Divine Continent's previous generation, she was also the Student Representative of the Zhongtu Divine Continent's Guanxuan Academy as well as one of the top beauties of the continent..."

“However, she suddenly murdered her tutor as well as the powerhouses and elders of the Zhongtu Divine Continent’s Guanxuan Academy. No one is aware of her motives, and the Guanxuan Academy has placed a bounty on her head,” said Li Qian.

Ye Guan frowned. “She betrayed the academy?”

Li Qian nodded. “Yes.”

Ye Guan was confused.

“How come the academy didn’t manage to suppress her?” he asked.

Li Qian replied, “She killed over ten elders, including her tutor. In other words, she was extremely powerful.”

“Did the Main Academy not send any representative to deal with her?” Ye Guan asked.

Li Qian sounded solemn as he said, “The Main Academy made a move, but she was already in the Sin Abyss. The waters of Sin Abyss are murky. The Main Academy looked for her there, but they couldn’t find any traces of her. They eventually had to return empty-handed.

“However, the strangest part here was that the Main Academy decided to drop the matter for some unknown reason. The Zhongtu Divine Continent’s Guanxuan Academy couldn’t do anything other than put a bounty on her head for the mercenaries to claim.”

Ji Xuan! Ye Guan fell into deep contemplation. There’s something strange about this.

Li Qian smiled at him and said, “Anyway, you’re interested in joining our Boundless Mercenary, right? We actually have a mission. The mission is to kill an Imperial-rank demonic beast. The compensation is ten million gold spiritual crystals and twenty Sky-grade demonic beast internal pills.”

Ten million gold spiritual crystals and twenty Sky-grade demonic beast internal pills were enough to attract Ye Guan's attention. He quickly made up his mind and said, "All right, I'll join your group."

Li Qian was delighted, and he hurriedly handed over a badge to Ye Guan. "Brother Yang, you're now a member of our Boundless Mercenary. You're the fourth member, so we'll call you Fourth Brother!"

Fourth Brother... Ye Guan smiled.

Fatty Xu Qin was thrilled.

His fats jiggled as he boisterously laughed in joy at the outcome.

"All right, let's go!"

Li Qian took out a scroll and activated it. A flash of light whisked them away from the Martial Tower's steps. Not long after they disappeared, a middle-aged man wearing a clean robe appeared. The attendant of the Martial Tower stood next to him.

The middle-aged man muttered, "No wonder Representative Ye looks so highly upon him... he actually reached first place in just a single attempt. He's incredible!"

The attendant of the Martial Tower—the old man holding an opium pipe—nodded and said, "His sword is extremely fast. He easily overwhelmed the defenders of the 10th and 9th floors. The most shocking part is that he has never used his full power."

"The previous two academy chiefs of the Zhongtu Divine Continent were fools. They lost Ji Xuan, and they almost lost Ye Guan!" jeered the middle-aged man.

The old man made a sidelong glance at the middle-aged man and asked, "Academy Chief Gu, are you going to rope him in?"

Academy Chief Gu Chaoyuan was the newly appointed Academy Chief of the Zhongtu Divine Continent's Guanxuan Academy.

Gu Chaoyuan shook his head and smiled. "Do you know why the Main Academy sent me here to replace Academy Chief Lu?"

The old man shook his head.

Gu Chaoyuan responded, "It's all because I represent the grand clans of the Main Academy!"

The old man was stunned.

Gu Chaoyuan's smile deepened as he asked. "Did Representative Ye visit Ye Guan before she left?"

The old man nodded. "Yes."

Gu Chaoyuan shook his head. "She warned me about conspiring with the An Clan or with the Ancient Heavenly Dragon Clan. I'm sure she won't forgive me if I dare to conspire with those two clans against Ye Guan."

The old man sighed. It seemed that even the Main Academy was rife with internal strife.

"Representative Ye is currently under a lot of pressure, but I still can't afford to offend her. In other words, I'm going to remain neutral and hope that nothing will happen. I'll avoid offending either the great clans or Representative Ye. I'm just going to do my job."

The old man sounded solemn as he said, "For the upcoming Destiny Contest, will our academy—"

"Tsk!" Gu Chaoyuan clicked his tongue and stretched out. "The previous academy chiefs had thoroughly offended the capable and qualified great talents. They left me an academy in a state of disrepair. How are we supposed to fight?"

The old man was silent.

Gu Chaoyuan sighed and remarked, “Ye Guan was an ideal candidate, but... honestly, I represent the grand clans, but I think the An Clan went overboard. It was a fair competition, so I think they should just admit defeat.

”I didn’t expect them to create such a mess and destroy their reputation.”

Gu Chaoyuan shook his head and added, “The True Dragon Clan was filled with nothing but a bunch of fools. They didn’t have to risk their lives just to lick the An Clan’s boots, but they got greedy and ended up with nothing.”

Gu Chaoyuan fell silent and left after a while.

...

Ye Guan soon found himself on the plains with Li Qian and Xu Qin.

A woman had been waiting for them on the plains. The woman was tall and was wearing a tight-fitting dress. Two short daggers hung by her waist, and there was a scar on her neck. Her eyes were sharp as knives and as cold as ice.

Xu Qin ran over to the woman with a grin.

“Fourth Brother, let me introduce you to our boss—Big Sister!”

Ye Guan cupped his fist and said, “Greetings, my lady.”

Xu Qin froze, and he hurriedly said, “Fourth Brother, call her Big Sister.”

The woman stared at Ye Guan without saying anything.

Ye Guan thought about it for a moment before saying, "She looks too young! It sounds weird for me to call her Big Sister."

Xu Qin's expression changed, but the woman smiled at Ye Guan, "Young?"

Ye Guan nodded. "Yes, you look really young!"

The woman smiled and pointed out. "You sure know how to sweet talk."

Xu Qin was dumbfounded as he looked at Ye Guan. Damn it! Whose boots are you trying to lick?!

Meanwhile, the woman asked, "You're a swordsman?"

Ye Guan nodded.

The woman nodded as well and said, "You've already become a member of the Boundless Mercenary, so we're considered family."

She then handed a storage ring over to Ye Guan. The storage ring contained two Sky-grade demonic beast internal pills.

Ye Guan was confused. "What is this?"

The woman smiled and replied, "Take it as a welcome gift."

"Huh?!" Xu Qin jumped up and grumbled, "Big Sister, why did we not get any welcome gifts? This is unfair!"

Big Sister said blandly, "He's handsome and a sweet talker. What about you?"

Xu Qin's expression darkened, "You should not judge a book by its cover."

Big Sister smiled and said, "You can be salvaged if you lose some weight."

Xu Qin didn't know what to say.

Li Qian smiled and chimed in, "I think we should go."

Big Sister nodded and said, "Follow me."

Ye Guan watched as she walked away. In the end, she put the storage ring away and followed closely behind her. Soon, the group stumbled upon a teleportation array.

Ye Guan was curious. "Where are we going?"

Big Sister smiled and replied, "Sin Abyss!"

Sin Abyss. Ye Guan was startled.

"I was just told that Sin Abyss is a dangerous place with murky waters..." he muttered.

Big Sister nodded and said, "It's a very dangerous and chaotic place, but we're not pushovers."

Xu Qin smiled. "Yeap, we're not pushovers."

Ye Guan nodded, but he still had a burning question he had to ask, "Our mission is to kill an Imperial-rank demonic beast, but aren't demons and humans living in harmony for the longest time now?"

Big Sister replied, “A few demon clans in the Demon Realm also placed a bounty on the demonic beast’s head aside from the Guanxuan Academy. The Imperial-rank demonic beast in question devoured an entire city with a population of a hundred thousand people to cultivate.

“The Guanxuan Academy was furious, and they demanded an explanation from the demon clans. The demon clans of the Demon Realm wanted to appease the Guanxuan Academy, so they also put a bounty on the Imperial-rank demonic beast’s head.”

“However...” Big Sister shook her head and added, “No one from either side really chased after the Imperial-rank demonic beast.”

Ye Guan was confused. “Why?”

Big Sister smiled and replied, “It’s all because it’s an arduous and thankless task! The academy has powerhouses, but an Imperial-rank demonic beast cannot be underestimated at all.

“The powerhouses of the academy are drunk in the current peace, so why would they go out of their way to hunt an Imperial-rank demonic beast with all the risks without the rewards?”

“The massacre happened in the Demon Realm, but the Imperial-rank demonic beast killed a city of humans rather than a city of demons. There’s no bad blood between the two parties, so why would they chase after their own kind?”

“But the Guanxuan Academy is the peacekeeper of the universe...” muttered Ye Guan.

Big Sister chuckled and said, “I’m sure the powerhouses of the Guanxuan Academy couldn’t care less even if a million people were to die as long as their positions and profits were guaranteed...”

“But believe me—the Imperial-rank demonic beast will die within an hour and without a shadow of a doubt if it touches the vested interests of the Guanxuan Academy’s elders and powerhouses.”

Ye Guan nodded. “I see...”

Big Sister turned around and walked into the teleportation array.

Ye Guan and the others walked into the teleportation array.

Moments later, the teleportation array whisked them away.

Fifteen minutes later, Ye Guan opened his eyes and saw nothing but darkness. He looked up and saw the silhouette of an ancient city in the distance.

“That’s Sin City,” said Big Sister. “It is the only safe zone in Sin City, but you have to pay a hundred thousand gold spiritual crystals just to stay there for a day.”

Ye Guan’s heart cramped up from the exorbitant amount.

The operators of Sin City truly had a horrifying way to earn money.

Big Sister looked around and muttered, “Where is he?”

Swoosh!

Moments later, a man appeared in front of them in the blink of an eye.

The man looked at Big Sister and said, “Follow me!”

He then turned around and started walking away, prompting the four to follow him.

Big Sister explained, “He’s our guide, and he knows where the Imperial-rank demonic beast is recuperating.”

Ye Guan nodded and wordlessly followed.

Soon, the man brought the four of them to a mountain. The group walked through a dense forest before the man stopped and pointed at a valley. "It's in there, and it's heavily injured."

Big Sister said to the man, "I'll pay you once I've confirmed that it's there."

The man frowned and demanded, "You have to pay me now."

Big Sister remained calm as she retorted, "What if it's not there? Doesn't that mean that we paid for nothing?"

"I—" the man started.

However, Ye Guan abruptly pulled Big Sister behind him and pointed his sword at the man's forehead, "How dare you lie to us!"

"How did you..." the man unconsciously retorted.

"Ah!" He stopped himself, but it was too late.

Big Sister, Li Qian, and Xu Qin instantly understood what was going on.

"I was just testing you," said Ye Guan.

However, the man wasn't angry upon realizing that he had been duped. He laughed and said, "You're smart, but your fate was sealed the moment we met up. Do you even know who you're talking to? I'm—"

Shwik!

Ye Guan thrust his sword into the man's forehead.

Drip!

Blood dripped down Ye Guan's sword.

"My apologies, but I'm not interested in knowing who you are."

Ye Guan deftly snatched the man's storage ring from the man's waist before turning to look at the others.

"Let's run!" he said.

They immediately turned around and started running away.

Ye Guan was astonished. Damn, did he actually think that I was interested to know him?

The man collapsed to the ground in disbelief. Can you let me finish?!

Chapter 83: Bury Them

The four of them instantly realized that they were in a trap and fled as quickly as they could. However, a powerful aura suddenly bore down on them, causing even the ground to tremble.

Ye Guan's eyes narrowed. He turned around to look and saw a figure clad in black.

Big Sister was also staring at the figure.

"An Earth Law Realm cultivator!" she shouted.

An Earth Law Realm cultivator? Xu Qin and Li Qian frowned. Why would someone like that be here?

The figure clad in black stared at Ye Guan and said, “You would have had a peaceful death if you had let him finish—”

Shwik!

The figure clad in black couldn't finish their sentence because a sword suddenly pierced their forehead.

Big Sister, Li Qian, and Xu Qin were shocked. They didn't even notice that Ye Guan had made a move.

Ye Guan suddenly appeared in front of the figure clad in black.

Ye Guan frowned. “You're an Earth Law Realm cultivator? Why are you so weak?”

Big Sister, Li Qian, and Xu Qin were speechless.

The figure clad in black stared at Ye Guan in disbelief. “What a fast sword...”

Ye Guan was somber. “I only used thirty percent of my strength. I had no idea that Earth Law Realm cultivators were so weak.”

The figure clad in black's expression froze. They wanted to say something, but...

Slice!

Their head flew into the air.

Ye Guan snatched a storage ring out of mid-air and said, "Let's go."

"Wait!" Big Sister rushed up to Ye Guan. She took a command token off the figure's corpse, and her expression instantly soured upon seeing the words written on it.

Ye Guan also froze upon seeing a certain word emblazoned on the command token—Guanxuan!

The man was from the Guanxuan Academy.

Xu Qin and Li Qian's expressions turned ugly.

Li Qian made a sidelong glance at the corpse and said, "I recognize him now. He's the grandson of the academy's Sixth Elder."

Ye Guan looked at Li Qian. "Sixth Elder?"

Li Qian nodded. "The sixth elder of the academy's Elder Circle. He's influential."

Ye Guan sounded solemn as he said, "We have to bury him!"

Big Sister, Xu Qin, and Li Qian stared at Ye Guan in shock.

"What do you suggest we do, then?" Ye Guan questioned.

Big Sister, Xu Qin, and Li Qian exchanged glances before nodding.

However, a peal of boisterous laughter interrupted them before they could even make a mood. "Great! You people are great! How dare you murder someone and bury them to hide the evidence?!"

The four turned around and saw a scholarly-looking young man wearing a robe, but the young man's sinister smile betrayed his scholarly looks.

Big Sister, Xu Qin, and Li Qian glared murderously at the young man.

Xu Qin even growled and spat coldly, "Zhang Jin!"

Ye Guan looked at Xu Qin, "Does he have a strong background as well?"

Xu Qin nodded and said, "He's the grandson of Grand Elder Zhang Lu. Grand Elder Zhang Lu is the most powerful elder of the Elder Circle. He's as influential as the Academy Chief of the Zhongtu Divine Continent's Guanxuan Academy."

Ye Guan silently pondered over something.

Big Sister smiled at Zhang Jin and said, "I couldn't have expected that the grandson of Grand Elder Zhang would do something like this."

Even a child could deduce that Zhang Jin had orchestrated all this.

After all, the easiest way to earn money was to kill someone and rob them clean.

Zhang Jin smiled at Big Sister as well and said, "Watch your words. I only saw you people kill the Sixth Elder's grandson. I even overheard all of you agreeing to bury him."

He pointed at the corpse and added, "Look, the evidence is there."

Big Sister's expression turned incomparably cold.

Zhang Jin smiled at that. "Who do you think the academy will believe? Will it be you or me? I think—"

Swoosh!

Zhang Jin's expression abruptly changed.

Shwik!

However, it was too late for Zhang Jin to run away because his fate was sealed the moment he saw the dazzling flash of Ye Guan's sword.

Ye Guan pierced Zhang Jin's forehead with his sword. Afterward, he took Zhang Jin's storage ring and snatched the voice transmission talisman in Zhang Jin's hand before turning to look at Big Sister.

"Let's bury them," he said.

Big Sister, Xu Qin, and Li Qian were dumbstruck.

Zhang Jin was still alive, and he glared resentfully at Ye Guan. "Do you have any idea what you have done?! How dare you stab me! My grandfather is the Grand Elder of the Guanxuan Academy!"

"Yes, I know." Ye Guan nodded and said, "Brother Li told me."

"Then, why did you stab me?!" Zhang Jin bellowed.

Ye Guan remained calm as he explained, "I was afraid that you'd ask your grandfather to come after me."

Zhang Jin couldn't speak anymore, and his eyes glazed over as he took his last breath.

Big Sister, Xu Qin, and Li Qian walked over to Ye Guan.

Li Qian looked at Zhang Jin's corpse and said, "You're in trouble, Brother Yang!"

Big Sister glared at Li Qian.

"What do you mean he's in trouble? Aren't we all in trouble?" she said.

"Ah, yes, yes, yes. We're in trouble," Li Qian hurriedly said, "It was a slip of the tongue. An honest mistake!"

Ye Guan smiled and said, "What do you think could have happened if I hadn't killed him?"

The three fell silent.

Ye Guan continued. "He would have reported us to his grandfather, and we will be royally screwed by then. I'm sure his grandfather is the type of person who doesn't care about who was right or who was wrong. You guys could have been in immediate trouble if I hadn't killed him, and I'm sure your families would have been implicated as well."

"I didn't kill them because I like to kill people. It was for the sake of damage control."

Damage control... Big Sister, Xu Qin, and Li Qian smiled and shook their heads.

Ye Guan was right.

If they had allowed Zhang Jin to leave unscathed, they would have been in immediate trouble.

"Brother Yang," Xu Qin said, "I think we should use Ji Xuan as our scapegoat."

Li Qian nodded. "I agree. Ji Xuan and the academy are already on bad terms. I think the academy won't suspect anything if we use her as our scapegoat."

However, Ye Guan shook his head and said, "I don't think we should do that."

Xu Qin and Li Qian made a sidelong glance at Ye Guan.

Ye Guan explained, "There's no enmity between us and Ji Xuan. What you've suggested isn't right..."

Xu Qin and Li Qian fell silent. Eventually, they composed themselves and turned to look at Ye Guan once more. They looked like they wanted to say something, but something strange happened.

Swoosh!

Two dazzling rays of light made a beeline for them.

Ye Guan was shocked. How fast!

He swung his sword without any hesitation.

Clang!

The sound of metal clashing against metal echoed, and the outcome of the collision was Ye Guan's defeat. He was sent flying a few meters away. Upon recovering, he looked down at his hand and saw that his sword had vanished.

It had shattered upon impact, and his right arm had also gone numb.

"Aaaaargh!" A miserable cry echoed next to him. Ye Guan looked over and saw that Li Qian had failed to defend himself, and he ended up losing an arm. Li Qian looked beyond pallid and was crouched while holding his bleeding stump.

He was beyond terrified.

Ye Guan turned and saw a woman sitting on a tree branch.

The woman was wearing a sleeveless, snow-white padded jacket. Under the moonlight, her skin was as dazzling as pearls, and she was mesmerizing overall. Her long legs were covered by snow velvet pants as she sat on the tree branch.

However, the woman's most eye-catching trait was her long hair. Her hair was silver-colored, and it gave off a beautiful sheen beneath the moonlight.

A dagger was between her fingers, and she was playing with it as if it were a pen.

Big Sister was dumbstruck as she called out, "Silver hair, a pair of daggers... Ji Xuan?!"

Ye Guan froze. Ji Xuan? Student Representative Ji Xuan?

Ye Guan was surprised. He didn't expect to meet such a legendary figure here. She was extremely strong, and she was one of the most powerful cultivators Ye Guan had seen so far.

Xu Qin turned ashen. He could have died if Ye Guan hadn't helped him deflect the incoming attack earlier.

Meanwhile, Ji Xuan examined Ye Guan with a smile. "I didn't expect that the academy would give birth to such a powerful swordsman. Indeed, you're quite strong."

"You're quite strong as well," said Ye Guan.

Ji Xuan stared deeply at Ye Guan before saying, "Your looks are decent. I don't want to kill you, but you'll have to die here today because you're from the academy. Really, it's a shame."

Once her words fell, Ye Guan sensed a mysterious aura locking him down. The aura didn't belong to Ji Xuan, but Ye Guan couldn't quite track it down. It felt like it was coming from all cardinal directions.

"Lady Ji Xuan!" Big Sister hurriedly shouted, "He's not from the academy."

Ji Xuan hesitated before turning to look at Ye Guan.

"He's not from the academy?" she asked.

Big Sister nodded and explained, "Yes! He's like you. He used to be a student of the academy, and he even won the martial contest of the Upper Realm below us, but the An Clan and the True Dragon Clan intervened and hunted him down.

"The academy turning a blind eye to the incident made him lose all trust in the academy."

Ye Guan stared at Big Sister in surprise. "You knew who I was all this while?"

Big Sister rolled her eyes at Ye Guan and said, "Please... do you really think that we're idiots? You're an extremely powerful swordsman, and there have only been a handful of swordsmen in recent years, you know?"

"The recent rising star among the swordsmen is named Ye Guan, and you introduced yourself to us as Yang Guan. You were basically not even trying to hide your identity by using such a name."

Ye Guan grimaced. He felt awkward.

Ji Xuan smiled at Ye Guan and said, "Interesting. I didn't expect the academy to overlook such a talent."

Ye Guan sounded somber as he said, "Lady Ji Xuan, there's no enmity between us. If my friends offended you..."

Ji Xuan jumped down and chuckled. "I know what you're trying to say. Fight me, and I'll let your friends go."

Ye Guan nodded. "Okay."

Xu Qin's voice trembled as he shouted, "Brother Ye!"

Li Qian also shouted, "Brother Ye, don't do it!"

"No." Ye Guan stared deeply at Li Qian and said, "I have to go."

Li Qian's expression froze.

Ye Guan smiled at him and reassured him. "Don't worry."

Li Qian's face turned ugly. "Brother Ye..."

Ye Guan turned to look at Ji Xuan. "Miss, please make your move."

The corners of Ji Xuan's mouth twitched.

"You better be careful!" she warned.

Moments later, a dagger appeared in front of Ye Guan. Indeed, she was extremely fast.

Clang!

The sound of metal clashing against metal echoed as Ji Xuan's dagger was sent flying before burying itself into a tree trunk. The dagger still contained enough power to split the tree in half.

Boom!

The tree collapsed with a loud noise.

Big Sister was dumbstruck. She turned to look at Ye Guan and saw that he was still alive.

Ye Guan was still standing, but a bloody line had appeared on his forehead.

Big Sister breathed a sigh of relief.

Ye Guan wordlessly pondered over what had happened just now. He had no intention of facing her dagger head-on. Ji Xuan's dagger was powerful enough to shatter Ye Guan's sword energy, so he decisively decided to avoid Ji Xuan's attack.

Unfortunately, he underestimated Ji Xuan's speed. Ye Guan had caught a whiff of the smell of death just now. Of course, he was more than delighted to be in danger. After all, he had to fight stronger cultivators if he wanted to improve.

Ji Xuan wordlessly stared at Ye Guan. After a while, she gave him a thumbs up. "If we were in the same realm, I would have lost. You're really strong!"

Ye Guan nodded at Ji Xuan and said, "Your dagger was super impressive as well."

Ji Xuan smiled. "I'm overjoyed to hear that the academy has suffered a great loss of talent. Anyway, I'm off."

She turned around to leave.

“Miss, wait!” Ye Guan called out.

Ji Xuan turned to look at him. “Hmm?”

Ye Guan hesitated before asking, “Can I ask you a question?”

Ji Xuan smiled. “Of course, you can. But I cannot promise you an answer.”

Ye Guan nodded and said, “You don’t feel like an evil person.”

Ji Xuan smiled. “What do you mean?”

Ye Guan gazed deeply at her and explained, “I was just curious. Just what did the academy do to you?”

Big Sister, Li Qian, and Xu Qin looked at Ji Xuan. They were curious as well.

Ji Xuan smiled and asked. “Why do you want to know? Is it just out of curiosity?”

Ye Guan sounded solemn as he said, “You held back earlier, and I couldn’t feel any murderous intent from you as well. Anyway, I’m acquainted with Representative Ye. She’s a kind person, and she’s from the Main Academy.

“Tell me that injustice that you suffered at the academy’s hands, and I’ll tell Representative Ye about it once I meet her again.”

Ji Xuan stared at Ye Guan for quite a while before asking. “Do you know why I’m here?”

Ye Guan shook his head.

Ji Xuan opened her palm, revealing a command token.

Two were emblazoned on the command token—Ye Guan!

“A kill order!” Big Sister was shocked and appalled. She turned to look at Ye Guan and said, “Someone placed a kill order on you!”

Ye Guan wordlessly clenched his fists and asked inwardly, “Master Pagoda, is it my father’s clan?”

After a few moments, Little Pagoda answered, “I don’t think so.”

Ye Guan hesitated. “Why?”

Little Pagoda went silent. Damn it! How do I keep fooling you? It’s getting harder as time goes on...

Meanwhile, Ji Xuan asked, “Young Master Ye, do you have any idea about who wants to kill you?”

Ye Guan shook his head.

Ji Xuan added, “The reward is thirty million gold spiritual crystals.”

Ye Guan went silent in shock. It seemed that his head was a bit expensive.

Ji Xuan smiled before continuing. “I was tempted, but I changed my mind after seeing you. You’re ruthless, but you’re not a monster. You still have a moral compass. I appreciate what you said earlier, so I won’t kill you.”

Ye Guan looked at Ji Xuan and asked, “Do you happen to know who placed the kill order on me?”

Ji Xuan shook her head and said, “I don’t know. The employer made sure to hide their identity, but that’s not important to you right now. Right now, your priority is leaving Sin Abyss. It’s only a matter of time

until the murderers and powerhouses of Sin City chase after you—no, they should be on their way here as we speak.”

Ye Guan hesitated before asking, “How powerful are they compared to you?”

“They’re not as strong as me. Don’t be ridiculous. I was once the strongest member of the Zhongtu Divine Continent’s younger generation,” said Ji Xuan.

Ye Guan nodded. “I should be fine as long as they’re not as strong as you.”

“I think this is my chance to fish, Master Pagoda,” he said inwardly.

Little Pagoda was speechless.

Ye Guan asked, “Lady Ji, are you short of money?”

Ji Xuan nodded and admitted. “I’m a bit short.”

Ye Guan sounded serious as he said, “I’m sure the people who are coming after me have some money in their storage rings. They’re chasing after me for money, so they’re all evil bastards who only care about money. Anyway, what do you think of a collaboration? I’ll be the bait, and we’ll kill them. We’ll split everything fifty-fifty.”

Ji Xuan stared at Ye Guan for quite a while before saying, “That sounds great.”

Big Sister, Li Qian, and Xu Qin had no idea what to say.

Chapter 84: Look Strong

Big Sister, Li Qian, and Xu Qin grimaced. They teamed up just like that?

Ye Guan smiled. "Great!"

Ji Xuan smiled and asked, "Do you know what could happen to you if you start working with me?"

"Are you saying that the Guanxuan Academy will target me?"

"Are you not afraid of the Guanxuan Academy?" Ji Xuan asked.

Ye Guan retorted, "Are you not afraid of the An Clan and the Ancient Heavenly Dragon Clan?"

Ji Xuan blinked a few times before she guffawed. "I'm not afraid! I've already offended them, anyway, so why would I be afraid of offending them again?"

Ye Guan nodded and agreed. "We're on the same boat, then!"

Ji Xuan grinned. "You're a pretty interesting swordsman!"

Ye Guan smirked and looked at Big Sister, Li Qian, and Xu Qin.

"I'm afraid I will have to withdraw from the Mercenary! Otherwise, all of you will be implicated," he said. He was aware that the Ancient Heavenly Dragon Clan was the one targeting him this time rather than the An Clan. If he were to stay with them, he would only end up bringing harm to them.

Big Sister was silent for quite a while before she said, "Be careful!"

Ye Guan nodded and replied, "I will! Anyway, you guys should hurry up and leave!"

Big Sister's expression was complex as she looked at him. "Take care!"

With that, she turned around and walked away with Li Qian.

Xu Qin walked over to Ye Guan. He took out a storage ring and placed it in Ye Guan's hands. "There are three talismans in there containing Immortal-grade spells. I'm hoping that you'll find them useful. Brother Ye, you have to be safe!"

"Thank you," Ye Guan said with a smile.

"It should be me who should thank you," Xu Qin shook his head and said, "All right, farewell, then! Take care!"

With that, Big Sister, Li Qian, and Xu Qin disappeared into the darkness of the night.

Ji Xuan suddenly asked, "What are your plans?"

"I have no plans," Ye Guan replied, "I'll just wait for them to come here, and then, I'll bury them!"

"You're that confident?"

"I expect things to progress in three stages. The first stage is that they'll underestimate me because of my cultivation realm. We should be able to relax during the first stage," said Ye Guan.

"What about the second stage?"

"They'll realize that I'm stronger than expected, so they'll start taking me seriously. I'm sure that those who are only trying their luck would have already retreated at that point. In other words, we would start seeing powerhouses during the second stage."

"And the third stage?"

“The ordinary among the experts would have already abandoned the idea of taking my head at that point, and even the cream of the crop experts will start analyzing my prowess.

“If the mastermind behind the kill order wants progress during the third stage, they’ll have to do either of these two: increase the bounty or give up.”

“Wait, a third choice exists.” Ji Xuan laughed and pointed out. “They can come down here and chop your head off personally.”

“That’s right!” Ye Guan agreed with a nod.

“You’re too strong. I think there are only ten people who are strong enough to kill you throughout Sin Abyss,” said Ji Xuan.

Ten? Ye Guan frowned and asked, “Are the cultivators here that weak?”

Ji Xuan rolled her eyes at him and said, “Can’t it be because you’re too strong?”

Ye Guan was taken aback, but he soon chuckled sheepishly.

Ji Xuan shook her head and said, “You bastard, you’re fishing for praise by pretending to be humble, are you?”

Ye Guan quickly shook his head and said, “It hasn’t been that long since I arrived on the Zhongtu Divine Continent. I’m still not familiar with the powerhouses here, and I actually haven’t killed that many people yet!”

As he spoke, he couldn’t help but shake his head and laugh. This was Master Pagoda’s fault!

Master Pagoda had been reminding him every day about just how he was just a frog in the well, and he kept on comparing Ye Guan to the truly great clans of the Guanxuan Universe.

In the end, Ye Guan had gotten so wary of every cultivator who had a higher cultivation base than him that he started thinking that each and every one of them was as strong as Ye Guanzhi.

Ji Xuan chuckled and said, “The people I mentioned are ancient fogeys. It’s difficult to move their hearts with money alone, but it depends on the amount!”

“What if we’re working together?” Ye Guan asked.

Ji Xuan blinked.

She waved her hand in dismissal and casually said, “It’ll be a piece of cake!”

“I guess we won’t be in any danger as long as the mastermind doesn’t come down here to intervene, but if they do...” Ye Guan trailed off before saying, “Our collaboration will end by then!”

Ye Guan wasn’t shameless enough to ask a stranger to take on the burden of facing the An Clan and the Ancient Heavenly Dragon Clan with him. The two of them didn’t owe each other anything, after all.

A human being had to abide by some basic principles in life. They had to be less scheming and live a good life. In addition, it wasn’t like Ji Xuan was dumb enough to take on Ye Guan’s burdens.

Ji Xuan was bewildered to hear Ye Guan’s words, but she eventually revealed a smile.

However, she didn’t say a word in response. Ye Guan’s character was great, but she wasn’t dumb enough to put herself in a life-or-death situation for his sake. She wasn’t a love-struck fool!

They were adults, so it was only right for them to be pragmatic.

Ji Xuan seemed to have recalled something. “You’ll be in trouble because you killed those two Guanxuan students.”

Ye Guan was slightly confused and asked, "Why would I be in trouble?"

"You shouldn't underestimate the Guanxuan Academy's intelligence network. It's pretty impressive. You guys didn't cover up your tracks when that young man lured you guys over here.

"I'm sure the academy will easily pinpoint you guys down as the young man's killer the moment they decide to launch an investigation," Ji Xuan explained.

After a few moments of silence, she continued. "I'm afraid your friends will end up betraying you. They're probably going to use you as their scapegoat."

Ye Guan was silent.

"Are you going to get mad if they betray you?" she asked.

Ye Guan nodded. "Of course, I would get mad, I'm not a monk, after all!"

"Does that mean that you'll regret saving them if they betray you?"

"No," said Ye Guan.

"Why not?" Ji Xuan asked, seemingly confused.

Ye Guan made a sidelong glance at Ji Xuan and said, "I saved them because I can as well as because of my principles. I'll get mad if they betray me, but I'll never regret saving them. Self-preservation is humanity's nature, so I won't blame them for using me as a scapegoat. After all, we're in a hostile and pragmatic world."

"However..." Ye Guan trailed off. "Just like how I saved them, I can also take their lives. I will bury those who dare to bring harm to me!"

Ji Xuan boisterously laughed.

Ye Guan was baffled. Did I say something funny?

“You’re indeed an interesting swordsman! You know how to express gratitude and hold grudges, you have a bottom line, and you have the sincere heart of a child...”

“Unfortunately, I’m not sure how long you can keep that up!”

Ye Guan was about to say something, but the two of them looked up and stared at the horizon.

A black shadow was making a beeline for them.

Ye Guan’s eyes narrowed, and he hurriedly said, “They’re coming! Lady Ji, hide!”

Ji Xuan nodded. Her figure blurred, and she vanished from sight.

The black shadow suddenly melted into the darkness.

Swoosh!

The black shadow crept up silently behind Ye Guan.

It was an ambush! As a seasoned veteran, the assassin was aware that ambushes had the highest chance of success. The assassin was also the type of assassin who would kill their targets first before spouting a bunch of nonsense.

After all, he was aware that assassins whose mouths would move first before their daggers wouldn’t last a long time in the industry.

The assassin was fast, but he was still too slow in Ye Guan's eyes.

Ye Guan turned around and thrust his sword forward.

Clang!

Ye Guan managed to block the assassin's dagger, which was just a few inches away from his forehead.

The black shadow was no more and was replaced by a black-robed figure.

A ray of sword energy was sticking out of the black-robed figure's glabella!

"What a fast sword..." muttered the black-robed figure.

"I only used thirty percent of my power!" Ye Guan replied.

The black-robed figure was at a loss for words.

Ye Guan didn't drag it out any further and slashed out with his sword.

Slice!

The black-robed figure's skull exploded, causing brain matter to fly everywhere.

Ye Guan took the black-robed figure's storage ring. He waved his hand, causing a pile of soil to swallow and bury the black-robed figure's corpse.

He was serious when he said that he would bury his enemies.

Ji Xuan reappeared in front of Ye Guan.

Ye Guan examined the storage ring and discovered 1.2 million gold spiritual crystals inside of it!

He took out six hundred thousand gold spiritual crystals and handed them over to Ji Xuan. However, Ji Xuan shook her head and said, "You killed him without me, so you should keep everything."

Ye Guan shook his head and insisted. "We had an agreement."

"You'll be just fine without me," Ji Xuan said.

Ye Guan smiled and said, "It's only a matter of time before we reach the third stage. The true powerhouses will turn up, and I will need your help by then. I also have something big!"

"You have something big?" Ji Xuan asked.

Ye Guan nodded, "Yes!"

"W-what's big?" Ji Xuan stammered and froze. Her cheeks turned red as well, but she made sure to look calm on the outside. He seems to be a gentleman. I don't think he meant something weird!

Ye Guan was truly not thinking of anything weird.

He smiled at her and said, "Just sit tight and watch my performance!"

"I—" Ji Xuan was about to say something, but she abruptly turned to her right with narrowed eyes. "Someone's coming!"

"Hide!" Ye Guan exclaimed.

Ji Xuan's figure blurred, and she vanished once more.

Ye Guan saw a young man strolling toward him. A broadsword was on the young man's back, and he was holding a cucumber in his left hand. The young man casually walked toward Ye Guan while munching on his cucumber.

The young man's chest was exposed, and the figure of a dragon and a tiger was tattooed on his chest, which made him appear intimidating.

Tattoos? Ye Guan frowned.

It seemed that he was about to face an adventurous young man.

The young man looked at Ye Guan and asked, "Are you Ye Guan?"

Ye Guan nodded.

The young man smirked and said, "Someone wants your head, and they're offering thirty million gold spiritual crystals. I happen to be short of money recently, so I would like to borrow your head!"

Ye Guan peeked over the young man's shoulder and asked, "You're alone?"

"Why? Am I not enough?" jeered the young man.

Ye Guan glanced at the young man's storage ring.

"Are you sure you don't want any backup?"

The young man guffawed. "I'm more than enough for the likes of you!"

Swoosh!

The young man's figure blurred, and he reappeared in front of Ye Guan with his sword raised up high.

Rumble!

The young man's broadsword shattered space itself as it drew an arc toward Ye Guan's head.

The young man was a Space Shattering Realm cultivator, and his attack was particularly vicious and speedy. One could easily deduce that the young man had participated in many life-or-death battles before.

Ye Guan sidestepped to avoid the broadsword, astonishing the young man. The young man was about to launch another attack, but Ye Guan's sword had already pierced his forehead just as he had made the decision to move.

The young man's expression stiffened. He stared at Ye Guan in disbelief.

"You're... this strong?" he asked.

"You look so fierce, but to think that you'd be so weak..." Ye Guan trailed off. His gaze landed on the young man's chest. "What's up with that tattoo?"

The young man's voice trembled. "Tattoos... they make me look strong!"

"Tattoos make you look strong?" Ye Guan frowned.

The young man nodded and explained, "Yes, I'm sure of it! I've tested it with commoners, and they would always get scared at the sight of me alone, so..."

Ye Guan didn't know what to say.

Chapter 85: Invincible Master Pagoda!

Ye Guan was at a complete loss for words. Getting tattoos to intimidate people? He's a genius!

The young man's voice trembled. "So you're this strong, Young Lord Ye..."

"I'm just alright," replied Ye Guan.

After a few moments of hesitation, the young man asked, "Can you let me live?"

"You want me to spare your life?" Ye Guan asked.

The young man nodded vigorously.

"I'll let you live if you promise to help me with something," Ye Guan said.

"Pray tell!" said the young man.

Ye Guan stared intently at the young man and said, "I want you to return to Sin City and let people know that I'm heavily injured after repelling Ji Xuan."

The young man froze, and then he exclaimed in astonishment, "Ah! Are you perhaps trying to trick—"

He abruptly stopped talking.

"You have a problem with that?" Ye Guan threatened.

The young man quickly shook his head and replied, "No!"

“Go ahead, then!” Ye Guan said. Fortunately, the wound wasn’t that deep.

The young man hesitated. “Aren’t you worried that I’d run away rather than fulfilling my promise?”

“You wouldn’t do that.”

“Why?”

“Do you really think that I wouldn’t take revenge on you if you ran away?”

The young man’s expression stiffened. He smiled sheepishly and said, “I will do as you say!”

Then, he turned around to leave.

“Wait!” Ye Guan called out.

The young man instantly got worried. “Young Lord Ye, I swear that I’ll do what you say. I won’t betray you!”

Ye Guan shook his head and said calmly, “I’ll give you ten percent of the gold spiritual crystals that I’ll harvest from those daring enough to try and assassinate me.”

The young man froze and asked, “Are you serious?”

Ye Guan nodded and replied, “I’m a swordsman. I would never lie to anyone.”

Little Pagoda was rendered speechless.

The young man hurriedly said, "Young Lord Ye, don't worry. Once I get back, I'll quickly spread the rumor that you want me to spread."

Ye Guan nodded slightly and said, "Go on, then!"

The young man cupped his fists and said seriously, "Young Lord Ye, I was rash and impudent. Please forgive my transgressions. Let me bow to you."

The young man gave Ye Guan a deep bow.

Ye Guan asked, "What's your name?"

"My name is Rao Xiu. The people of Sin Abyss know me as the Tattooed Sword God!"

"Sword God?" Ye Guan asked with a frown.

The young man chuckled sheepishly and said, "I made it up for myself!"

Ye Guan was speechless. This guy's so full of himself.

Rao Xiu cupped his fists and said, "Young Lord Ye, I'm leaving, then!"

With that, he turned around and ran away.

His figure soon disappeared into the night.

Ji Xuan appeared in front of Ye Guan. She laughed and said, "You did great. You made sure to beat him up with the stick first before tempting him with the carrot. I saw it. That bastard had no choice."

“I had to give him a carrot. Otherwise, he’d most likely renege on his promise, but it’s a different story if he stood to gain something,” said Ye Guan.

“Is it really because you want to lure more people here? Is that really why you gave him such a task?” asked Ji Xuan.

“No, my target is the mastermind behind the kill order,” Ye Guan replied.

Ji Xuan’s eyes narrowed. “You’re trying to lure the mastermind out?”

Ye Guan nodded. “The mastermind is my primary target. There’s no enmity between me and the other assassins, but if they do come for me, I would have no choice but to reluctantly make a fortune off of their corpses!”

Ji Xuan was stunned at the unique remark.

She soon laughed heartily and said, “Hahaha, Young Lord Ye! I really think that the Guanxuan Academy has suffered a massive loss this time by failing to recruit you as a student.”

“It was also their loss that you left them!” Ye Guan pointed out.

The two paused and smiled at each other.

“Let’s not lick each other’s boots anymore. Let’s talk business—who do you think is the mastermind?”

“They’re definitely either from the An Clan or the Ancient Heavenly Dragon Clan!”

“Indeed, those two clans are extraordinary, and they’re definitely capable of placing such a kill order on me,” said Ye Guan with a nod.

“You’re still alive after offending those titans, so I’m sure you’re extraordinary as well,” Ji Xuan said.

“I have a powerful Master Pagoda!” Ye Guan told her.

Little Pagoda was at a loss for words.

“Master Pagoda?” Ji Xuan asked.

Ye Guan nodded and explained, “Master Pagoda is very low-profile, and he’s definitely hiding something from me. I’m sure he was an extremely strong powerhouse while he was still active!”

“Hahaha!” Little Pagoda chuckled. “Bastard, flattering me won’t work. I won’t buy it... hahaha.”

Ye Guan sounded serious as he inwardly replied, “Master Pagoda, I wasn’t flattering you. You’re not even afraid of the Ancient Heavenly Dragon Clan, so you must have been an unrivaled expert while you were still active.”

“Yeah, I guess...” Little Pagoda muttered with a smile. After a few moments of silence, he said, “Anyway, you still need to work even harder. Your enemies are too strong! Do you understand?”

“I do!” Ye Guan replied.

After a few moments of hesitation, Little Pagoda added, “I’ll help you improve your sword intent later, and I’ll give you a new cultivation method as well. The world inside of me has recovered considerably.”

Ye Guan hurriedly nodded. “All right! I’ll listen to everything you say, Master Pagoda!”

Meanwhile, Little Pagoda suddenly got a bit emotional. “I’ve been with the Yang Family for three generations now. While I was with my first master, I was scared and worried every day. Whenever we weren’t killing people, we were on our way to kill people. Old Master’s tendencies are violent, so I was always on edge.

“As for my second master, he was always just playing around. It was hilarious but borderline absurd to see him mess with people.”

Little Pagoda took a moment to compose himself before saying, “It seems that my third master from the Yang Family is a normal person! I guess hard work and patience will eventually pay off!”

The mysterious voice chimed in, “He was just kissing your ass!”

Little Pagoda laughed heartily and said, “I know, so what? I’d like him to kiss my ass more!”

The mysterious voice went silent. It was not going to retort this time!

Meanwhile, Ji Xuan was about to say something, but they were interrupted by roughly a hundred auras flying toward them.

Ye Guan froze at the sight. Why are there so many of them?

Ji Xuan was stunned as well.

Ye Guan saw a familiar young man at the helm.

The young man was none other than Rao Xiu. He charged forward and roared, “Ye Guan is just up ahead! Everyone, don’t be scared. His legs are broken, and he’s severely injured! Kill!”

Rao Xiu was shouting at the top of his lungs, but he was discreetly slowing down.

Ye Guan’s face darkened upon hearing what Rao Xiu said. You really are a genius!

Ji Xuan made a sidelong glance at Ye Guan.

Ye Guan said, "Hide. Keep an eye out for me. I'm afraid that we'll get ambushed while we're busy with these guys."

Ji Xuan nodded slightly and said, "Be careful."

Her figure trembled slightly before disappearing into the darkness.

Ye Guan calmly stared at the people rushing toward him, and they were shocked to find Ye Guan waiting for them.

I thought his legs were broken? Why does he look unscathed? Oh no, we've been tricked!

Unfortunately, the arrows had already left their bowstrings. They could no longer turn back.

The man at the helm shouted, "Kill Ye Guan, and the thirty million gold spiritual crystals will be ours. Kill!"

The cultivators charged at Ye Guan.

Damn it, we're already here! It seems that your legs aren't broken yet, so we're going to break them for you!

Meanwhile, Rao Xiu had already retreated.

Ye Guan swept his gaze across the charging cultivators before closing his eyes.

These cultivators were at least in the same realm as him, and they were as ruthless—no, perhaps even more ruthless than him.

Did that mean he was afraid? Of course, not! He wasn't afraid at all.

Ye Guan's eyes shot wide open, and a sword made out of energy flew toward the man at the helm of the group and pierced his forehead.

Thud!

A dull thud echoed as he crumpled to the ground.

Ye Guan took the dull thud as his signal to make a move. He reappeared like a ghost in front of another cultivator, and his figure flashed once more.

Thud!

There was another dull thud as someone else collapsed to the ground.

Ye Guan reappeared in front of another man, and the latter immediately collapsed after his brain was obliterated by Ye Guan's sword thrust.

Thud!

Ye Guan vanished and reappeared thirty meters away.

Thud!

The cultivators collapsed one after another as Ye Guan's quick but destructive sword thrusts obliterated their brains.

Ye Guan killed at least ten people in just a few seconds, and most of the cultivators in the group couldn't even see his shadow.

He was too fast for them to track!

Ji Xuan stood on a tree branch and watched the unfolding massacre.

“This bastard is too quick...” Ji Xuan suddenly recalled something, and she blushed profusely as she said, “I’ve read from some books that men who are too quick are bad people!”

Chapter 86: Ulterior Motive

Ye Guan shifted and moved about like a ghost amidst the crowd of cultivators. Wails echoed one after another as Ye Guan reaped the lives of every cultivator in the crowd.

Ye Guan only chased after one thing—speed. His movements were simple, and each cultivator he killed died in just a single sword move.

A hundred corpses were strewn across the floor in no time. The morale of the remaining cultivators shattered, and they scattered in all directions.

Unfortunately, Ye Guan’s sword was faster than them. He stretched his hand out and sent a sword light flying toward the escaping cultivators. The sword light flickered and jumped about, decapitating ten cultivators in the blink of an eye.

A few cultivators were still alive, and they ran frantically toward Sin City.

Ye Guan had no plans to let them go, and he chased after them with his sword.

Rao Xiu went beyond pallid at the scene that had unfolded in front of him. He was aware that Ye Guan was strong, but he didn’t expect the latter to be strong enough to one-sidedly massacre a crowd of cultivators.

In other words, Ye Guan was ridiculously strong.

Ji Xuan was slightly taken aback as well. He looks gentle and refined, so I didn't expect that he would be such a ruthless bastard when he fights.

Ji Xuan turned her head. Her eyes narrowed as she stared at somewhere.

Swoosh!

Ji Xuan hurled her dagger.

Shwik!

A faint but grotesque noise echoed from afar. Ji Xuan squinted and saw that her dagger was sticking out of a man's forehead. The man was holding a bow, and his eyes soon glazed over before he fell off the tree he was standing on.

Swoosh!

Ji Xuan's figure blurred, and she disappeared far into the distance.

...

Ten cultivators were frantically running toward the city gates of Sin City. The cultivators were ashen with fear, and their eyes quivered violently. A trail of corpses followed behind them.

Swoosh!

A sword light flew and caught up to them.

Slice!

The heads of two cultivators flew into the air.

The remaining eight cultivators squeezed as much strength as they could from their legs to run even faster.

Swoosh!

A sword light swept past them.

Slice!

A cultivator was decapitated, and his corpse crashed to the floor.

Meanwhile, the remaining seven cultivators were relieved upon realizing that they had already entered the city.

Swoosh!

A sword light chased after them, but a cold light burst out of the city gates, repelling the sword light.

Boom!

Ye Guan opened his palm, and the sword made out of sword energy returned to his hand. An old man was standing on top of the city walls. The old man stared at Ye Guan and said, "Violence is not allowed in Sin City."

Ye Guan nodded. "All right."

He turned around and collected his spoils of war from the corpses on the ground.

The old man was astonished by Ye Guan's response. Why is he so obedient?

The old man expected the young man to rush into Sin City and murder those whom he had been chasing earlier. Ye Guan had suddenly become a law-abiding individual, catching him off guard.

Ye Guan collected his spoils of war—the storage rings of the corpses before turning around to leave.

The old man called out. "Wait!"

Ye Guan turned to look at him.

"Are you Ye Guan?" asked the old man.

Ye Guan nodded in response. "Yes!"

"Someone has offered thirty million gold spiritual crystals for your head!"

"Yes, I know." Ye Guan nodded.

The old man was about to speak, but a voice echoed throughout the city. "The reward has changed! A hundred million! Ye Guan's head is now worth a hundred million gold spiritual crystals!"

A hundred million gold spiritual crystals!

The eyes of a few powerhouses on the city walls went ablaze with desire.

The old man frowned. A hundred million...

Ye Guan chuckled and remarked, "I had no idea that I'm that valuable!"

He swept his gaze across the powerhouses cultivators on the city walls.

“Is there anyone here who wants my head? If no one is daring enough to step up, I’m leaving!” he shouted.

“I’ll do it!” a young man exclaimed and charged at Ye Guan.

Swoosh!

A ray of sword light flew toward him.

Royal Sword Art!

Shwik!

The young man’s head burst open in mid-air. It happened so fast that the young man’s headless corpse was still running toward Ye Guan, seemingly unaware that it had died.

The corpse eventually fell to the ground with a dull thud.

Ye Guan bent over to pick up the young man’s storage ring.

“Thank you for your patronage,” he said.

The faces of the powerhouses on the city walls turned ugly.

An instant kill! Ye Guan had just instantly killed a Space Annihilation Realm cultivator! How did he do it?

The scene that had unfolded was so intimidating that some powerhouses gave up on chasing after Ye Guan. The reward was tempting, but their lives were far more important than money.

Ye Guan looked up at the powerhouses on the city walls and asked, "Anyone else?"

A deafening silence blanketed Sin City.

Ye Guan turned around to leave.

"Cough!" Ye Guan suddenly coughed violently. He hurriedly covered his mouth with his hand, but he failed to stop his blood from seeping out of his fingers.

He's injured?

The powerhouses on the city walls were dumbfounded.

"Fuck this!" a large-framed man shouted before jumping off the city walls. He gripped his broadsword tightly and glared at Ye Guan. "We should work together to kill him and share the reward once he's dead!"

The cultivators were moved by his suggestion, but none of them made a move.

The large-framed man was stunned to see everyone's inaction. He growled and shouted, "Fortune favors the brave and punishes the timid! Why are you afraid of an injured man? Come down here and kill him with me!"

The cultivators still didn't make a move.

A man holding a folding fan chuckled and suggested, "Geng Dahan, why don't you exchange a few moves with him to see if he can still fight? If he can still fight, we'll come down and help you kill him."

The cultivators nodded in agreement.

Geng Dahan's face turned extremely ugly. He glared at the man holding a folding fan and bellowed, "Zhang Huahua! Do I look like an idiot to you?"

Zhang Huahua chuckled and replied, "Yes, you are! You're an idiot!"

Geng Dahan was so angry that his veins bulged all over him, making him look like he was about to explode.

Zhang Huahua chuckled once more and added, "Big Idiot Geng, you shouldn't get mad at me! I'm trying to save you here. Young Lord Ye has already killed a hundred cultivators by himself, and each and every one of them had a higher cultivation base than him or at least in the same realm as him.

"What do you think that means? It means that not only is he a powerful cultivator in his own right, but his backer is definitely powerful as well!"

Zhang Huahua glanced at Ye Guan before saying, "Do you really think that we can afford to offend his backer when they were capable of raising such a monstrous talent?"

Geng Dahan went silent. He carefully pondered over Zhang Huahua's words.

"I suggest you practice using your brain as well, not just your lousy sword techniques," Zhang Huahua added.

Geng Dahan wordlessly glared at Zhang Huahua before turning to look at Ye Guan.

Ye Guan calmly asked, "So what is it? Do you want to fight me?"

"No... I don't want to fight you." Geng Dahan shook his head.

“All right, but you have to leave your storage ring behind!” said Ye Guan.

Geng Dahan was furious, but his fury was immediately assuaged upon seeing the sword in Ye Guan’s hand.

Fuck! Was he just pretending that he was injured to lure us out of the city?

Geng Dahan couldn’t help but glance at the city gates.

Ye Guan saw that and said, “You can go ahead and try if you want to know if you’re faster than my sword.”

Geng Dahan didn’t know what to say.

“Just hurry up and hand over your storage ring to him!” Zhang Huahua shouted, “It’s better to lose a fortune than to lose your life!”

Geng Dahan glared at Ye Guan for a few seconds before opening his palm.

His storage ring flew over to Ye Guan.

Ye Guan examined the storage ring and saw that it contained only about five hundred thousand gold spiritual crystals. He frowned, looking a bit unhappy as he asked, “Why are you so poor?”

Geng Dahan’s face twitched, but he didn’t say anything in response.

He turned around and walked into the city.

He was furious. He initially thought that he could get everyone on the city walls to attack Ye Guan with him, so he was truly caught off guard upon realizing that he was alone. I’m such a dumbass...

Meanwhile, Zhang Huahua turned to look at Ye Guan and chuckled before saying, “Young Lord Ye, I heard that two Guanxuan Academy students had recently died outside. Did you kill them?”

Zhang Huahua’s malicious words echoed loudly throughout the city.

Ye Guan made a sidelong glance at Zhang Huahua before sending over Geng Dahan’s storage ring to the latter.

Zhang Huahua was taken aback, and so was everyone on the city walls.

“Take it, Brother Zhang. You deserve it!” said Ye Guan before leaving. The cultivators thought that Ye Guan was injured, but it seemed that he wasn’t actually injured because he disappeared into the horizon in just a blink of an eye.

However, the cultivators didn’t find such detail important anymore. Their hostile gazes turned to Zhang Huahua. Zhang Huahua was flustered, and he yelled, “Damn it, you bastard! Come back here and clear up this misunderstanding!”

Zhang Huahua didn’t sound convincing at all, and the cultivators’ eyes shone murderously as they stared at the former. Damn it, so you have conspired with him to put on such a show!

Zhang Huahua’s expression turned ugly. He couldn’t stay here any longer, so he immediately jumped off the city walls and disappeared into the distance.

...

Ye Guan entered a dense forest, and Rao Xiu appeared right in front of him.

Rao Xiu was holding a pile of storage rings.

While Ye Guan was busy killing those cultivators earlier, Rao Xiu was busy picking up their storage rings. He initially wanted to hide a few storage rings from Ye Guan, but he ended up changing his mind.

He believed that one could be excessively ambitious but not excessively greedy.

The storage rings also didn't even belong to him.

Ye Guan accepted the storage rings and examined them. He discovered a total of around thirty million gold spiritual crystals in them. He divided the spoils and handed over a storage ring to Rao Xiu.

The storage ring had three million gold spiritual crystals.

Rao Xiu hesitated.

"It's yours!" said Ye Guan.

Rao Xiu stared at Ye Guan for quite a while until he was sure that Ye Guan wasn't planning on killing him to take everything for himself. Reassured, Rao Xiu let out a sigh and accepted the storage ring before saying, "Many thanks, Young Lord Ye!"

"You may leave," Ye Guan said.

Rao Xiu nodded and said, "Young Lord Ye, I'm staying in a broken temple somewhere on the southern outskirts of Sin City.

"I have a band of brothers with me. They're not particularly strong, but they know the ins and outs of the city. If you need anything, don't hesitate to let us know."

Ye Guan pondered over it and said, "Go to the Immortal Treasures Pavilion and look for Manager Qin Feng. Tell him to investigate the mastermind behind the kill order on my head."

Ye Guan had decided to make such a decision because he was aware that he would eventually have to ask for the Immortal Treasures Pavilion's help if he wanted to know the mastermind behind the kill order.

Staying still and doing nothing had never been his style as well.

Rao Xiu nodded and said, "Understood!"

Then, he cupped his fists and left.

Ye Guan closed his eyes, and his brows knitted.

Ji Xuan was still missing. Is she not here? Wait, is there someone else—

Swoosh!

A figure abruptly appeared in front of Ye Guan, and they slashed out with their dagger.

A cold beam of light rushed toward Ye Guan's throat.

Swoosh!

A ray of light flew toward the figure from somewhere.

Shwik!

The cold beam of light stopped just an inch away from Ye Guan's throat.

Ye Guan saw a throwing dagger sticking out of the figure's nape.

Swoosh!

Ji Xuan finally appeared in front of Ye Guan. She chuckled and said, "This guy's name is Ghost, and he's a renowned assassin in Sin City. I noticed him lurking around here, waiting for your return."

Ye Guan opened his palm, and a storage ring flew into Ji Xuan's hands.

The storage ring contained about fourteen million gold spiritual crystals!

"Is this for me?" Ji Xuan asked.

Ye Guan nodded.

Ji Xuan chortled and said, "I feel a bit guilty accepting this. I didn't really help you, so I don't think I deserve so much money, but I guess let's just say that this is an unexpected boon!"

Ji Xuan hurriedly put the storage ring away.

"Lady Ji," said Ye Guan, "I would like to ask you a favor."

"What is it?" Ji Xuan asked.

Ye Guan explained, "I'm confident that the mastermind behind the kill order is the Ancient Heavenly Dragon Clan rather than the An Clan.

"Once I've confirmed my suspicions with the help of the Immortal Treasures Pavilion, I'll charge into Sin City. I'll definitely suffer if I were to go in there by myself, so I want you to come with me. Is it okay?"

Ji Xuan's smile abruptly vanished, and the storage ring in her hand suddenly turned scorching hot. Damn it, so this is what he wanted all along? He actually dared to trick me!

Chapter 87: A Worthless Wretched Bastard

Ye Guan noticed Ji Xuan's silence, and he smiled bitterly. "Lady Ji, I don't have any ulterior motives, and I'm not trying to trick you as well.

"You're really strong, so if you're willing to help me, I'm confident of killing the mastermind behind the kill order and escaping unscathed."

Ji Xuan went silent.

The Ancient Heavenly Dragon Clan and the An Clans were great, powerful clans, so one had to be prepared to face a disaster if one were to offend the two clans.

In fact, even the Zhongtu Divine Continent's Guanxuan Academy couldn't afford to offend the two clans.

"The mastermind offered a hundred million gold spiritual crystals, so it means that they have that much money on hand. Once I kill him, we'll split the money evenly. What do you think?" asked Ye Guan.

Ji Xuan remained silent. Right as Ye Guan was about to say something, the space beside him quivered violently. A rift appeared in space, and Rao Xiu emerged from it, surprising both Ye Guan and Ji Xuan.

Rao Xiu hurriedly approached Ye Guan.

"Young Lord Qin used a special teleportation array to send me here," he said before handing over a scroll to Ye Guan. "He told me to give this to you."

Ye Guan opened the scroll, and his pupils constricted. The scroll only had one sentence written in the middle of it—Major Tribulation Realm; leave immediately!

Ye Guan looked at Rao Xiu and said, "Leave."

Rao Xiu flinched, but he nodded and said, "All right."

Rao Xiu was aware that he had no right to interfere in the upcoming battle between Ye Guan and the mastermind behind the kill order on Ye Guan's head.

Ye Guan fell silent. It seemed that he still underestimated the An Clan and the Ancient Heavenly Dragon Clan. He initially thought that the two clans would only send someone to teach him a lesson. He didn't expect that they would send a Major Tribulation Realm cultivator to hunt him down.

Ye Guan's shock was understandable, as he was only a Space Shattering Realm cultivator. How could he expect them to go the extra mile and send a Major Tribulation Realm cultivator to hunt him down?

The realms above the Space Shattering Realm were as such—the Space Annihilation Realm, the Earth Law Realm, the Heaven Law Realm, the Minor Tribulation Realm and finally, the Major Tribulation Realm.

A Major Tribulation Realm cultivator was five cultivation realms higher than Ye Guan!

Ye Guan's expression fell. They're really treating me seriously!

Ji Xuan peeked over his shoulder and was appalled upon seeing the words written on the scroll.

"You..." she muttered in disbelief.

Ye Guan made a sidelong glance at Ji Xuan and said, "Lady Ji, there's no way we can kill the mastermind. You should hurry up and leave!"

After saying that, Ye Guan took flight.

"Go to Sin City!" Ji Xuan shouted at him.

Ye Guan turned to look at her, prompting Ji Xuan to explain, "Violence is prohibited in Sin City, and no one has ever broken that rule for almost a thousand years since Sin City was born."

Ye Guan nodded. "All right."

Ye Guan turned into a ray of light that disappeared into the horizon.

.....

Ye Guan's expression was solemn as he made his way to Sin City. He had truly never expected that his enemies would send such a powerful cultivator to snuff him out. They clearly had no plans of giving Ye Guan a chance to retaliate.

The city gates of Sin City were soon just a few hundred meters away from Ye Guan, but a horrifying aura suddenly locked onto him.

Rumble!

The space around Ye Guan quivered violently.

Ye Guan's eyes narrowed, and he decisively slashed out with his sword.

Boom!

A loud explosion echoed as Ye Guan split space itself, carving a path to the city gates.

Crackle!

A lightning bolt struck Ye Guan's head. The electric shock was so powerful that Ye Guan trembled violently upon being hit. He was just about to retreat and dodge another lightning bolt, but another powerful aura locked onto him.

The powerful aura was like a cage, and it cut him off from any escape routes.

Ye Guan swung his sword once again, tearing the cage apart, but the lightning bolt was already a few inches away from his head. Left with no choice, Ye Guan thrust his sword toward the lightning bolt.

Boom!

Ye Guan's sword shattered upon impact, and he was sent flying a few meters away.

He stood up with great difficulty and noticed that his clothes were on fire.

Ye Guan's eyes shone coldly. He opened his palm, wantonly unleashing his sword intent. The fire on his clothes was extinguished by the surging sword intent.

Ye Guan looked up and saw a gray-robed old man holding a staff. A middle-aged man holding a long spear was standing next to the gray-robed old man.

The middle-aged man wasn't a Major Tribulation Realm cultivator, and Ye Guan also didn't expect to see two people chasing after him.

The cultivators of Sin City had gathered on the city walls and just behind the city gates to watch the upcoming battle.

The gray-robed old man stared at Ye Guan and said, "I didn't expect to see such a young Sword Immortal. It seems that we were right."

Ye Guan glared at the gray-robed old man.

“Were you trying to test my strength? Was that why you put a bounty on my head?”

The gray-robed old man calmly replied, “Well, there’s no harm in making sure.”

Ye Guan’s figure blurred, and he turned into a ray of light that flew toward Sin City. He was incredibly fast, and he reached the city in the blink of an eye.

However, the gray-robed old man only chuckled sinisterly. He didn’t even attempt to stop Ye Guan.

Ye Guan frowned. He felt that something was wrong.

Rumble!

A horrifying aura locked onto him. The space around Ye Guan shattered as if they were brittle glass, revealing numerous rifts. A black-robed old man appeared in the distance, and the horrifying aura clearly belonged to him.

The black-robed old man stared at Ye Guan and said, “Please leave! Sin City does not welcome you.”

He’s not welcome here? The cultivators in Sin City directed a strange look at the black-robed old man. The black-robed old man was the City Governor of Sin City, Zhang Yuan.

Ye Guan wordlessly stared at Zhang Yuan for quite a while before he turned around and left the city.

The gray-robed old man walked up to Ye Guan and jeered, “Ye Guan, do you have any idea why you’re still alive? Representative Ye is the only reason you’re still alive.

“We have been waiting for her to return to the Main Guanxuan Academy, and now that she’s gone, you no longer have a backer. Without her protection, even the Great Sword Immortal standing behind you will meet a miserable end at our hands!”

Ye Guan's cold eyes narrowed. He was about to make a move, but the Path Sword within him flew out and beat him to the chase.

Shwik!

The gray-robed old man couldn't even react as the Path Sword pierced through him.

The cultivators of Sin City were dumbstruck.

Ye Guan was also in disbelief. He hadn't told it to move, so why did it move?

Little Pagoda was calm in the tiny pagoda.

"Say whatever you want to say, but you should have never mocked Sister Destiny!"

"He can only blame his big mouth for his death," said the mysterious voice. You can bully him, but bullying his backer is a no-go!

Meanwhile, the cultivators of Sin City were still stewing in their shock. He mortally wounded a Major Tribulation Realm cultivator? And what was that attack? How was it so fast?

All eyes landed on Ye Guan. Has he been hiding his strength all this while?

The gray-robed old man was still alive, and he stared at Ye Guan in disbelief. His pupils quivered in fear as he cried out, "You are not just a Sword Immortal! You... you're a Great Sword Immortal!"

The gray-robed old man's words were like lightning bolts out of the blue, stupefying everyone.

It had to be known that there was a distinct difference between a Sword Immortal and a Great Sword Immortal.

Sword Immortals were brave existences, unafraid of death. They were powerful beings in their own right, and their heart belonged solely to their swords.

Meanwhile, Great Sword Immortals were beings that could exist without fleshly bodies, and the sword was not their only obsession anymore. In other words, Great Sword Immortals were truly immortals in every sense of the word.

There had been Sword Immortals on the Zhongtu Divine Continent over the past few hundred years, but it had been almost a thousand years since the Zhongtu Divine Continent saw a Great Sword Immortal.

Great Sword Immortals only existed in the vast Guanxuan Universe, and Great Sword Immortals were considered elites there.

Was Ye Guan really a Great Sword Immortal?

The cultivators were convinced that Ye Guan was a Great Sword Immortal because they saw with their own two eyes how he had mortally wounded a Major Tribulation Realm cultivator in the blink of an eye.

There was no way a Sword Immortal could do what Ye Guan had just done. The cultivators started seeing Ye Guan in a new light. However, Ye Guan himself was silent.

He was dumbfounded because he hadn't made a move.

"Master Pagoda, was it you?"

Little Pagoda replied, "No!"

Ye Guan frowned. "Does the Path Sword have a spirit of its own?"

Little Pagoda replied, "No!"

“Pinky swear?”

Both Little Pagoda and Ye Guan fell silent.

It was clear that Little Pagoda hadn't made a move. The Path Sword had moved on its own, but... a sword that could move by itself?

It was such an absurd idea that Ye Guan couldn't quite wrap his head around it.

Brrr!

The Path Sword vibrated and split the gray-robed old man.

The middle-aged man next to the gray-robed old man went beyond pallid.

“A Great Sword Immortal! You're actually—” The middle-aged man cut himself off to turn around and run using the full extent of his cultivation base. It didn't take him that long to disappear into the horizon.

The Path Sword returned to Ye Guan.

Ye Guan looked down at it in silence.

The cultivators stared fearfully at Ye Guan, but one could also see a glint of respect in their eyes. He's actually a Great Sword Immortal! And he's such a young Great Sword Immortal at that!

They watched as Ye Guan turned toward Zhang Yuan, who was staring at him in horror.

However, Ye Guan didn't do anything against Zhang Yuan.

He simply turned around and left.

...

A middle-aged man was kneeling in front of a woman seated on a chair. The middle-aged man was none other than the middle-aged man who had fled Sin City in a hurry, while the woman was the newly appointed clan leader of the An Clan.

“He’s a Great Sword Immortal?” asked Clan Leader An Ya.

The middle-aged man’s voice was trembling as he said, “Y-yes!”

An Ya chuckled and remarked, “It seems that I underestimated him once again. He’s full of surprises!”

The middle-aged man lowered his head. He didn’t dare to speak.

An Ya closed her eyes and said, “Send An Wujun!”

An Wujun! The middle-aged man’s expression fell.

An Wujun was an infamous elite of the An Clan stationed in the Guanxuan Universe.

A woman’s voice echoed from somewhere. “We don’t have to do that, Clan Leader!”

The middle-aged man turned and saw a woman dressed in a white robe. Her long hair reached her waist, and her gaze was icy. The middle-aged man immediately lowered his head upon recognizing her.

An Daoxin! She was the young miss of the An Clan. Many people thought that An Mu was the most talented individual in the An Clan, but they had no idea that the An Clan’s greatest talent among the younger generation was An Daoxin.

An Mu had grown up in the An Clan, but An Daoxin had grown up in the Main Guanxuan Academy. She was the true genius of the An Clan's younger generation.

The An Clan had high expectations of her. They expected her to become a Martial Goddess along with the two Martial Goddesses of the An Clan.

An Ya stared deeply at An Daoxin.

An Daoxin calmly added, "I don't think we have to bother Uncle for a mere Ye Guan. I should be able to handle him by myself, Clan Leader."

An Ya sounded hesitant as she asked, "Are you confident?"

An Daoxin chuckled and said, "I think he's also interested in the Great Dao Contest, and I think that's the reason he has been flaunting his prowess.

"I will snuff him out and put an end to his arrogance. I'll let the world know that the An Clan isn't so easy to bully."

An Ya went silent. An Daoxin was right. There were indeed some rumors about how the An Clan had fallen because a mere Ye Guan was bullying them.

An Daoxin suddenly added, "I've already met that man from Milky Way, and we're already friends."

An Ya jumped up from her seat, and she asked incredulously, "Are you serious?"

An Daoxin nodded.

An Ya boisterously laughed. An Daoxin was talking about the man that Great Daoist Brush Master had chosen, and he was also the so-called Chosen One of the current generation, similar to how the Sword Master was the Chosen One of his generation.

How did An Clan reach its current status?

There were two reasons behind it. The An Clan's Martial Goddesses, and the fact that the two Martial Goddesses of the An Clan were once the followers of a certain Chosen One.

And that was how the An Clan reached its current heights...

Now, what were the implications of An Daoxin befriending the Chosen One of the current generation? It meant that the An Clan would surely give birth to another Martial Goddess, which would extend the prosperity of the An Clan for a few thousand years at the very least.

As for Ye Guan... An Ya scoffed. He was simply a worthless wretched bastard with some talent.

In other words, he was worth nothing.

Chapter 88: How Exciting!

Ye Guan was sitting down cross-legged in a dense forest. He stared silently at the Path Sword in his hand.

"What's wrong?" asked Little Pagoda.

"Master Pagoda, it killed a Major Tribulation Realm cultivator by itself..."

Little Pagoda acknowledged. "Oh, that?"

Ye Guan jumped in surprise. He was in disbelief as he exclaimed, "Master Pagoda, are you not shaken by what it did?"

A few moments of silence later, Little Pagoda replied, "I'm quite shaken!"

Ye Guan was at a loss for words. Really?

It took quite a while before Ye Guan composed himself.

“Master Pagoda, I have one question.”

“Go ahead,” said Little Pagoda.

Ye Guan sounded serious as he asked, “Is Plain-Skirt Sister a Sword Sovereign?”

“Yes!”

So she’s a Sword Sovereign?! Ye Guan muttered, “I knew it! You were hiding something from me, Master Pagoda! And you were hiding Plain-Skirt Sister’s true strength from me!”

Little Pagoda didn’t reply. It’s a good thing that this guy still hasn’t seen much of the world. Otherwise, I would have been in trouble.

“Master Pagoda, why did you hide her true strength from me? Was it because you’re afraid that I would get arrogant and start slacking off once I learn of her true strength?” asked Ye Guan.

Little Pagoda replied, “That’s right!”

Ye Guan shook his head and chuckled. “How could I slack off? She’s strong, but her strength does not belong to me. I also know that people can only rely on themselves in the bigger picture!”

Little Pagoda chuckled and said, “I’m glad that you think that way.”

Ye Guan said, “Master Pagoda, the An Clan and the Ancient Heavenly Dragon Clan are strong. Especially the An Clan, as they are related to the Sword Master. Will I bring trouble to Plain-Skirt Sister if I fight them?”

“No,” said Little Pagoda.

“I know this is the worst-case scenario, but...” Ye Guan trailed off. He hesitated for quite a while before asking, “What can we do if the An Clan asks the Sword Master to come down and fight both Plain Skirt Sister and me?”

Little Pagoda went silent.

“Master Pagoda?”

“No...” Little Pagoda said, “That won’t happen!”

Confused, Ye Guan asked, “Why?”

Little Pagoda was silent as he thought. You foolish child, why would your father help others beat you up? And Sister Destiny... The entire An Clan will be massacred the moment they dare to even think about doing such a thing.

Little Pagoda was aware of his young master’s temper.

He was always playing around, but he had a distinct bottom line—he had never tolerated any disrespect to Sister Destiny. Young Master likes that girl from the An Clan, but it doesn’t mean that he likes everyone from the An Clan!

However, Little Pagoda didn’t tell Ye Guan his thoughts. He wanted to ensure that Ye Guan wouldn’t go down the wrong path.

Little Pagoda chuckled and finally replied, “Think about it. The Sword Master founded the Guanxuan Academy, and he’s a once in a million years talent.

"Why did he establish the Guanxuan Academy? It was to establish a new order! The An Clan has gone blind due to fury, so why would the Sword Master help them?"

Ye Guan pondered over it and nodded. "I see."

Little Pagoda's voice sounded mirthful as he added, "Your job is to cultivate properly and become a Great Sword Immortal!"

Great Sword Immortal! Little Pagoda's voice echoed throughout Ye Guan's mind.

He closed his eyes to cultivate.

Looking back, he found it a pity that he couldn't fight that Major Tribulation Realm cultivator. However, Ye Guan had realized through that brief encounter that Major Tribulation Realm cultivators weren't that terrifying.

Ye Guan only chose to retreat because he was afraid of a lurker ambushing him once he had let his guard down.

He was also not afraid even if the middle-aged man decided to jump into the fray.

After all, he still hadn't used the ultimate move he had mastered after breaking the rules of spacetime under Ye Guanzhi's advice. However, Ye Guan didn't think that he could handle three cultivators at once with higher cultivation bases than him.

It was great to be courageous and brave, but one had to be smart if one wanted to keep on living. Nonetheless, Ye Guan was dying to have a good fight with someone capable of lasting more than just a few exchanges against him.

Ye Guan soon decided to visit a branch of the Immortal Treasures Pavilion. The Immortal Treasures Pavilion had cultivation grounds suitable for most cultivators, after all.

Ye Guan got up and left. Moments later, Ji Xuan appeared in front of him. Her gaze was strange, and she seemed hesitant as she asked, "Are you really a Great Sword Immortal?"

Ye Guan shook his head and smiled. "No."

Ji Xuan's gaze deepened.

"Your sword..." she asked, but she trailed off.

Ye Guan shook his head once again, but he didn't answer her.

Ji Xuan stared deeply at him before smiling. "All the best!"

Ye Guan smiled as well and nodded. "I wish you all the best as well, Lady Ji!"

With that, he turned around and left.

"Are we friends?" asked Ji Xuan out of the blue.

Ye Guan was taken aback, but he didn't answer her.

Ji Xuan chuckled hollowly. "Are we not?"

"If Major Tribulation Realm cultivators were to come here and surround me, would you help me without any hesitation?" he asked.

Ji Xuan asked back, "Would you help me if I were in that situation?"

“I do want to be your friend, Lady Ji. However, it seems that we’re not really friends because we’re working together while calculating the gains and losses. Real friends would help each other unconditionally.

“I think we’re only collaborators. Am I wrong?” asked Ye Guan.

“No, you’re right!” said Ji Xuan.

Ye Guan nodded.

“I hope to see you again, Lady Ji,” said Ye Guan before turning around and flying into the distant horizon.

Ji Xuan stared into the horizon and chuckled to herself. “What an interesting man!”

Moments later, she turned around and vanished without leaving any traces.

It turned out that Ji Xuan was a Major Tribulation Realm cultivator all this while!

Ji Xuan had been secretly following Ye Guan, and as for her answer to Ye Guan’s question. Ji Xuan’s answer was a resounding yes. She would help him because she didn’t hate him!

...

Ye Guan soon arrived at Yue City’s Immortal Treasures Pavilion.

Qin Feng came out to greet him.

“Hahaha!” Qin Feng boisterously laughed. “It’s great to see you here, Brother Ye!”

Ye Guan smiled. "It's great to see you as well, Brother Qin!"

Qin Feng stared at Ye Guan and asked, "Are you really a Great Sword Immortal?"

Ye Guan shook his head with a smile, but he didn't explain because he knew that Qin Feng wouldn't believe him. Who would believe that there existed a sword capable of killing a Major Tribulation Realm cultivator by itself?

Even Ye Guan could barely believe it, even though the sword belonged to him.

Qin Feng didn't probe any further.

"How may I help you today, Brother Ye?" asked Qin Feng.

"I've heard of arenas before, and I want to fight in an arena."

Qin Feng pondered over it before answering, "I will make the arrangements for you."

Ye Guan cupped his fists together and said, "Many thanks, Brother Qin!"

Qin Feng chuckled. "You don't have to be so polite, let's go!"

He took out a teleportation scroll and tore it into two..

A dazzling light enveloped the two and whisked them away.

Qin Feng and Ye Guan soon found themselves staring at an ancient city.

"What are those, Brother Qin?" asked Ye Guan upon discovering something odd.

Qin Feng explained, "Those are the teleportation arrays of this teleportation hub. We're in the biggest teleportation hub of the Zhongtu Divine Continent, and this teleportation hub is connected to the nodes of other universes."

Qin Feng led Ye Guan into the ancient city.

The ancient city had about a hundred thousand teleportation arrays.

Ye Guan's curiosity was piqued. "Where are we going?"

"We're going to the Profound Tower!"

Ye Guan frowned. "The Profound Tower?"

Qin Feng nodded and explained, "The Profound Tower is in the Profound World. The Profound World is a massive cultivation ground. It is frequented by talents across the great clans and sects of many worlds. It won't be an exaggeration to say that the Profound World is the best cultivation ground of the Xiaoguan Continent!"

Ye Guan made a sidelong glance at Qin Feng and asked, "Xiaoguan Continent?"

Qin Feng chuckled and explained, "The Main Guanxuan Academy is in Xiaoguan Continent, and the Xiaoguan Continent is in the Guanxuan Universe. The Guanxuan Universe itself is vast, containing a myriad of worlds. Xiaoguan Continent is at its core, and the Main Guanxuan Academy is located there."

Ye Guan nodded. "I see."

"Brother Ye." Qin Feng sounded serious as he asked, "Are you going to join the Destiny Contest?"

Ye Guan wordlessly nodded.

Qin Feng continued. “The participants of the Great Dao Destiny Contest are terrifying talents. I’ve heard that quite a few of them are students of the Main Guanxuan Academy.

“In addition to a vast amount of resources, they have been enjoying the guidance of great tutors, so their knowledge and strength must be greater than their peers.”

Ye Guan nodded. “I understand, but my Master Pagoda is extremely powerful. I’ve been under his tutelage all this while, so I don’t think I’ll lose to anyone when it comes to that department.”

Little Pagoda was overjoyed. This brat has a way with words!

Qin Feng smiled. Ye Guan’s words didn’t surprise him at all.

“Brother Ye, you should immediately go to the Profound Tower upon arriving at the Profound World. The Profound Tower has seventy-two floors, and each floor is an entire world in itself. You can cultivate whatever aspect you want to cultivate there, but access is expensive—very, very expensive!”

Ye Guan’s face fell. He had twenty-six million gold spiritual crystals, but he was aware that his twenty-six million gold spiritual crystals weren’t enough for him to cultivate to the apex.

After all, cultivation was like burning money to become even stronger.

Qin Feng continued. “There’s another thing—everyone will have to sign a death liability waiver to access the Profound World. In other words, every cultivator in the Profound World is there to sharpen their claws. It’s a really dangerous place.

“Every cultivator there is prepared to die and kill at any time, and those who end up dying there can only blame themselves for being too weak.”

“Everyone is prepared to die and kill at any time... how exciting is that?!” exclaimed Ye Guan.

Qin Feng froze upon hearing Ye Guan.

However, Ye Guan beat him to the chase before he could even speak.

“Let’s go, Brother Qin!”

Qin Feng could only shake his head and laugh.

“Give me a moment, Brother Ye. I still have something to say. I don’t want you to get in trouble,” said Qin Feng.

Ye Guan chuckled and said, “Sure, I don’t want to get in trouble as well, Brother Qin.”

Qin Feng nodded.

“You have to avoid the talents of the Xiaoguan Continent!” he asked.

Ye Guan was confused. “Why are they in the Profound World? Does the Xiaoguan Continent not have a better cultivation ground?”

Qin Feng chuckled bitterly and said, “They frequent the Profound World to show off!”

Ye Guan’s expression fell. He shook his head and said, “To show off? How boring. I really want to know what is going on inside the heads of those who like to show off.”

Little Pagoda didn’t know what to say.

Qin Feng smiled and continued. “Not every talent from the Xiaoguan Continent likes to show off, but there are bound to be some vain people out there. Regardless, you should try to avoid them, Brother Ye. Those talents have great family backgrounds, and they’re extremely rich as well, which incentivizes them to show off.”

Qin Feng paused for a bit before adding, "Brother Ye, you're an extreme talent even throughout the vast Guanxuan Universe, but no man is an island. What will you do if they fight you using their family backgrounds, superpowers, and allies?"

Ye Guan went silent. Family backgrounds, superpowers, and allies?

Ye Guan shook his head bitterly and said, "I don't have any of that stuff! Master Pagoda told me that my dad mooches off of women..."

Little Pagoda panicked. "Goddamn it, can you not bring that up?!"

Chapter 89: Who Dares?

Ye Guan blinked his eyes and wondered, "Why?"

Little Pagoda remained silent. Please stop talking about it. I'm afraid I'll be reduced to ashes in the future!

He couldn't allow Ye Guan to continue speaking ill of his father.

I'm done! Little Pagoda sighed to himself. He felt like he had dug his own grave.

Ye Guan could sense Little Pagoda's dejection. Master Pagoda must still be hiding something from me!

Meanwhile, Qin Feng smiled and said, "That's the teleportation array, Brother Ye!"

He pointed at a teleportation array not too far away from them.

Ye Guan erased his thoughts and cupped his fists together. "Many thanks, Brother Qin!"

Qin Feng smiled. "It's nothing!"

Ye Guan nodded, but he didn't say anything. He headed to the teleportation array, and he was soon whisked away.

Left all alone, Qin Feng muttered, "It seems that I had made the right decision licking his boots."

Qin Feng chuckled. "He's already treating me as his brother, and when that fellow becomes a Sword Sovereign, I really want to see the looks on the faces of those bastards in the headquarters by then!"

...

There were about a hundred thousand teleportation arrays in a valley somewhere in the Profound World. One of the teleportation arrays gave off a dazzling light before dimming down to reveal a figure clad in black.

The figure was none other than Ye Guan. He tidied his clothes and walked out of the teleportation array. He looked up and saw a tall tower. It was none other than the Profound Tower.

Rumble!

Ye Guan was about to make a move, but a teleportation array not too far away from him trembled. It gave off a burst of dazzling light before dimming down to reveal a man.

The man was dressed in a luxurious robe, and a jade pendant that was as large as a hand was hanging from his waist. The man had a ring on every finger, and it seemed like he was trying hard to flaunt his wealth.

Noble and grand! The man gave off that impression in Ye Guan's eyes.

The man found Ye Guan and smiled. "What's your name?"

Ye Guan calmly said, "Ye Guan!"

The man nodded and continued. "I just arrived here, so I'm not familiar with the surroundings. I need a few bodyguards. Are you interested in becoming one of my bodyguards?"

Ye Guan was stunned. "Bodyguards?"

The man smiled and said, "The remuneration will be ten thousand gold spiritual crystals per day!"

Ye Guan stared deeply at the man. "Aren't you here to cultivate?"

The man burst out laughing. "Yes, I'm here to cultivate!"

Puzzled, Ye Guan asked, "Why would you need bodyguards, then?"

The man chuckled and admitted. "I don't want to get hurt."

Ye Guan fell silent. I think he's from the Guanxuan Universe. Is he here to show off?

"Are you interested?" the man asked.

"No thanks." Ye Guan shook his head and said, "I'm off to cultivate. I'll see you later!"

With that, he hopped onto his sword and flew toward the Profound Tower.

The man was astonished by Ye Guan's Sword Travel. "Damn, so he was a Sword Immortal? What a loss!"

...

Ye Guan marveled at the sheer size of the Profound Tower. It seemed to be around three thousand meters tall, and its highest floor pierced the clouds. It was wide as well, seemingly a few dozen meters wide.

Ye Guan arrived at the entrance and saw an old man by the door. The old man wordlessly stared at Ye Guan.

“I would like to enter the combat trial,” said Ye Guan.

The old man calmly explained, “The combat trial is split into six ranks, Human-rank Trial, Earth-rank Trial, Sky-rank Trial, Royal-rank Trial, Immortal-rank Trial, and Emperor-rank Trial.”

Ye Guan thought for a while before asking, “Which trial do you think is suitable for me?”

The old man snapped. “Why are you asking me?”

Ye Guan scoffed and said, “I’ll just start on the Sky-rank Trial, then.”

“The Sky-rank Trial costs fifty thousand gold spiritual crystals per day.”

Ye Guan’s expression fell. “Fifty thousand gold spiritual crystals per day?”

The old man wordlessly nodded.

Ye Guan was dumbstruck. “Goodness! Master Pagoda, the Profound Tower must be rich! I feel like robbing them!”

Little Pagoda didn’t know what to say.

The old man calmly asked, “Is it expensive?”

Ye Guan nodded.

The old man remarked, "You must be a rogue cultivator!"

Ye Guan was slightly confused. "A rogue cultivator?"

The old man nonchalantly explained, "Rogue cultivators have no family backgrounds, and they can only rely on themselves."

Ye Guan stared at the old man for a moment before giving him a storage ring.

The storage ring contained exactly fifty thousand gold spiritual crystals.

The old man asked, "Are you only going to stay there for a day?"

Ye Guan nodded without saying anything.

The old man shook his head and sighed. "Young man, this sounds harsh, but I want you to listen to me. You shouldn't spend your money here. This tower was created for the rich. It's a waste of money to those who can't really afford it."

"I'm afraid your parents will treat you as a good-for-nothing son and disown you. This tower isn't worthy of such a huge headache!"

Ye Guan smiled amicably and said, "I appreciate your advice, Senior, but I came here with my savings."

The old man stared deeply at Ye Guan before giving him a piece of paper.

It was the death liability waiver.

The old man explained, "You are responsible for anything that happens in the trial once you've signed this document. Do you understand?"

Ye Guan nodded. "Understood!"

"Give it a drop of your blood." Ye Guan nodded slightly and stretched his finger toward the piece of paper. His skin split and a drop of his blood landed on the death liability waiver.

However, the death liability waiver abruptly vanished upon consuming his blood.

The two were stunned. What just happened?

They exchanged looks.

Ye Guan asked, "Is there something wrong with your paper?"

The old man explained, "The paper contains a trace of the Heavenly Dao. Signing it is equivalent to being bound by the Heavenly Dao. How could there be something wrong with the paper?"

Ye Guan asked, "Why don't we try it again?"

The old man's gaze deepened as he stared at Ye Guan. He took out another piece of paper, but the same phenomenon occurred. The old man's frown deepened.

Meanwhile, Ye Guan was staring innocently at the old man.

The old man took out another death liability waiver and snapped, "Here, another one!"

Ye Guan nodded and gave the piece of paper a drop of his blood.

The old man stared intently at the blood as it landed on the piece of paper. The piece of paper disappeared right in front of his eyes upon making contact with Ye Guan's blood!

The old man's face turned solemn, and his lips were pressed into a firm line. Why is the Heavenly Dao in the death liability waiver rejecting his blood?

The old man looked at Ye Guan and asked, "Who are you?"

Ye Guan calmly replied, "I'm just an ordinary person!"

The old man snapped, "How can an ordinary person's blood reject the Heavenly Dao?"

Ye Guan insisted and said, "I really am just an ordinary person!"

The old man glared at Ye Guan for a long time.

"What about your father? What was your father's name?" he asked.

Ye Guan shook his head. "I don't know!"

The old man's frown deepened, and he questioned, "You don't know your father's name?"

Ye Guan nodded.

"What does your father do, then?" asked the old man.

Ye Guan hesitated before saying, "Master Pagoda told me that he's a womanizer..."

“Shit!” Little Pagoda’s voice echoed in his head. “Brat! Your father is a good man; I’m not kidding!”

Ye Guan blinked his eyes innocently and asked, “Really?”

Little Pagoda was about to speak, but the mysterious voice interrupted him.

“You fool! He’s trying to trick you into answering!”

Little Pagoda came to his senses. Damn it, I almost fell for this kid’s scheme!

Ye Guan urgently asked, “Master Pagoda?”

Little Pagoda fell silent, leaving Ye Guan at a loss.

He wanted to pry some information out of Master Pagoda, but Master Pagoda saw through his scheme. Nonetheless, Ye Guan managed to confirm one thing—Master Pagoda was hiding a lot of things about his father from him.

Meanwhile, the old man asked, “So what does your father do?”

Ye Guan snapped back to reality and calmly answered, “Since my blood is being rejected by the Heavenly Dao, how do I sign the death liability waiver?”

He had answered the old man’s questions just now because he wanted to trick Master Pagoda into defending his father. Unfortunately, Master Pagoda had already seen through his scheme, so Ye Guan no longer had to waste time.

The old man frowned. He obviously still wanted to ask more questions.

Ye Guan noticed that and said, “Senior, I really don’t know what my father does, but I know one thing for sure. He left me with some words while I was still young.”

The old man grew curious and asked, "What did he say?"

Ye Guan's expression turned grim, and he sounded serious as he said, "He told me to cultivate properly because the Guanyuan Universe will rely on me in the future!"

The old man was stunned, while Little Pagoda was at a loss for words.

Ye Guan sighed to himself and said, "I finally understood what he meant now that I have grown up. My father isn't just my father, he's the father of the Guanyuan Universe!"

Ye Guan signed the death liability waiver with a pen before walking into the Profound Tower, leaving the old man speechless and rooted where he stood.

The old man recovered moments later, and he stared at the Profound Tower before shouting, "You imbecile! How shameless you are for lying to an old man! To think that you would claim the Sword Master as your father... young people these days really like to brag, goddamn it!"

"Y-y-you... what did you just say?" Little Pagoda stuttered.

Ye Guan chuckled and said, "I was just bragging, Master Pagoda! I had to brag, or he would have continued interrogating me."

Little Pagoda fell silent at that. You're even better than your father. Your father always lies whenever he brags, but you only brag about the truth! Yes, the truth!

Little Pagoda was at a loss for words. He finally realized that Ye Guan was capable of springing up traps in his seemingly thoughtless words. It was troublesome, and Little Pagoda felt troubled. Why were the members of the Yang Family so smart?

Little Pagoda sighed helplessly. It was becoming harder and harder to fool Ye Guan, but Little Pagoda couldn't allow Ye Guan to learn of his true identity just yet.

If he were to learn of his true identity so early, Ye Guan could become complacent and start going down the wrong path.

Complacency was the very reason the Young Master encountered difficulties making that certain breakthrough, and why was the Old Master invincible back then? It was all because he had tasted despair and had resolved to face his destiny.

That was the difference between the Old Master and the Young Master.

The Old Master had witnessed the Freedom Swordsman's helplessness against destiny, and it was a bottomless abyss of despair.

Despair could stimulate enough power to allow a cultivator to make certain breakthroughs, and the Old Master had done it.

The Old Master had fought until the end of his life. His Dao was stable as a boulder, and even destiny couldn't shake his Dao.

The Young Master didn't have the same experiences as the Old Master, but it was a good thing that he was enlightened about how complacency could bring a cultivator to ruin.

Little Pagoda wasn't trying to bully Ye Guan by hiding so much information. He wanted Ye Guan to roam the world first and visit every corner of it, and it was his father—the Sword Master's wish.

He had to start at the bottom of the ladder and climb his way up to the top. If he didn't do that, he wouldn't be able to see the issues plaguing the Guanxuan Academy and the Immortal Treasures Pavilion.

If he were to directly become the Academy Chief of the Guanxuan Academy, the elders and everyone else in the Guanxuan Academy would hide their corruption from him.

The Guanxuan Academy and the Immortal Treasures Pavilion needed to change.

This time, Ye Guan would stand at the helm of that change.

Just then, the mysterious voice suddenly asked, "Little Pagoda, are you not worried that someone has already taken that seat?"

"Who would dare take that seat?" Little Pagoda coldly snorted. "I know that it has already been thirty million years, but who would be daring enough to take that seat?"

The mysterious voice fell silent.

Little Pagoda continued. "I don't think even those geniuses would dare to even think about taking that seat for themselves."

The mysterious voice muttered, "What if... what if the academy itself gives that seat to someone else?"

"Then the academy no longer has any reason to exist," said Little Pagoda.

The mysterious voice went silent.

Chapter 90: Unconventional Fighting Style

Ye Guan walked over to the teleportation array that would bring him to the Sky-rank combat trial. Ye Guan walked into the teleportation array, and he was whisked to a desolate wilderness.

He looked around and frowned. The wilderness was too quiet. Why is it so quiet here?

Ye Guan's guard was up. He had to sign a death liability waiver before he could access the Profound Tower, so he wouldn't be dumb enough to think that he was in a safe place.

Ye Guan noticed something, and his expression changed. He noticed that the spiritual energy here was extremely thick and pure. It was at least five times better than the spiritual energy in the outside world.

He finally understood why he had to pay such a high price just to enter the tower.

“Are you not going to attempt a breakthrough?” asked Little Pagoda. “You’ve been a Space Shattering Realm cultivator for so long.”

“It’s fine!” Ye Guan replied with a smile.

Little Pagoda asked, “What do you mean?”

Ye Guan thought about it for a moment before answering, “Master Pagoda, I can kill cultivators whose cultivation bases are higher than me. Do you know what that means?”

“What does that mean?”

Ye Guan answered, “It means that one’s cultivation base isn’t enough to define one’s power.”

“What? Elaborate!” Little Pagoda exclaimed.

Ye Guan chuckled and said, “I think there’s a difference between people in the same cultivation realm. Let’s use swords as an example. There are two swords: one was crafted normally, while the other was hammered a thousand times in the forging process.

“They’re swords on the same level, but the latter is definitely of much higher quality than the former.”

Ye Guan paused before continuing. “Cultivation is like a building. An unstable foundation will cause it to collapse, unable to withstand even a gust of wind. In other words, a cultivator’s foundation is like the true strength of a cultivator.

“My plan is to reach the limits of my cultivation realm first, and I think I’ll make a breakthrough from there.”

Little Pagoda went silent.

The mysterious voice shouted, "Impressive!"

Ye Guan hesitated before asking, "Master Pagoda, what do you think? Is there something wrong with what I said?"

Little Pagoda was silent for a while before he replied, "You're somewhat right!"

Ye Guan blinked. Somewhat right? I'm neither right nor wrong?

However, he didn't retort. Master Pagoda owned the tiny pagoda, so Ye Guan couldn't afford to offend him.

"So you're waiting for a natural breakthrough?" Little Pagoda asked.

Ye Guan chuckled and said, "I just feel that I still haven't reached my limits. I feel I'll naturally make a breakthrough once I've reached the limits of my cultivation base."

"Okay," said Little Pagoda.

Ye Guan nodded.

He was about to say something, but a teleportation array suddenly appeared in the distance.

A dazzling light briefly illuminated the wilderness as a man walked out of the teleportation array.

The man's frame was huge, and he was tall. His eyebrows were thick, and his eyes were big. He was clad in clothes made out of animal hide, and his hair was parted in the middle, which made him look funny.

The man was holding what seemed like a metal whip with a large metal ball at the end of it.

The man frowned upon seeing Ye Guan.

“A Space Shattering cultivator?” he muttered, seemingly astonished.

Ye Guan nodded and raised his guard up.

That man stared deeply at Ye Guan and asked, “You decided to come here even though you’re only a Space Shattering Realm cultivator?”

Ye Guan hesitated before asking, “Which rank should I have gone in?”

The man frowned and asked, “Do you know what realm I am in?”

Ye Guan shook his head.

The man calmly replied, “I’m an Imperial-rank demonic beast!”

He’s a demonic beast? Ye Guan froze. He didn’t expect to meet a demonic beast here and an Imperial-rank demonic beast to boot!

The man shook his head and said, “I think you ended up here because you’re new here. Anyway, just give me fifty thousand gold spiritual crystals, and I’ll let you off.”

“Before that, why don’t we exchange two moves?” Ye Guan said.

He wasn’t willing to leave just like this, as he had already paid the old man to access the Sky-rank combat trial. If he were to leave just like this, it would be a waste of money.

“You want to exchange two moves with me?” asked the man.

Ye Guan nodded. He wasn't afraid of an Imperial-rank demonic beast. Actually, the Imperial-rank demonic beast in front of him seemed much weaker than the Imperial-rank demonic beast he had stumbled upon in Nanzhou.

The man boisterously laughed and said, “Let's do it then!”

Ye Guan nodded slightly. “I have an unconventional fighting style, so I hope you'll forgive me if I end up offending you!”

The man was pretty kind to him, which prompted Ye Guan to return the gesture in kind.

The man guffawed and said, “It's fine, just come at me!”

Swoosh!

Ye Guan abruptly vanished. The man's eyes narrowed. He wanted to make a move, but Ye Guan's attack was making a beeline for his crotch.

“Fuck!” The man cursed. Ye Guan's extreme speed caught him off guard, but it was too late. He could only desperately push his legs together.

Boom!

The man managed to suppress Ye Guan's sword, but Ye Guan let go of his sword and lashed out with his leg toward the man's neck.

Boom!

A loud noise echoed, and a figure was sent flying away.

However, the flying figure was Ye Guan rather than the man.

Ye Guan was sent flying a few meters away. He dampened his fall by rolling on the ground. He recovered and stood up, but he noticed a dull pain coming from his leg, which astonished him.

An Imperial-rank demonic beast's defenses were indeed amazing.

The man stared at Ye Guan. He opened his mouth to say something, but Ye Guan abruptly vanished once more.

The man's eyes narrowed, and he punched out.

Boom!

The man's space caused the collapse of the spacetime in front of him, but his punch didn't land on Ye Guan.

Swoosh!

He abruptly turned around and saw a ray of cold light flying toward his crotch.

He wouldn't be able to dodge in time!

Boom!

The ray of sword light shattered upon hitting his crotch. The man's eyes widened in sheer horror and pain, but before he could even do anything, another ray of cold light flew toward him. This time, it was flying toward his head at breakneck speeds.

The man glared at the cold light.

Shwaaa!

Ye Guan's sword energy was abruptly engulfed in flames.

"Ah!" A sharp pain erupted from his nether region. The man was furious. He roared, and a terrifying aura burst out of him.

Boom!

The burst of aura shattered spacetime and split the ground open.

Ye Guan was already thirty meters away from the man, and he used his profound energy to send a sword light flying toward the man's crotch while keeping a safe distance from the latter.

The man's expression turned ugly from fury. The man's defenses were sturdy, but Ye Guan possessed remarkable strength as well. In addition, Ye Guan seemed obsessed with attacking his crotch, which was a delicate place.

The man's family jewels were still sending him waves of dull pain, prompting him to roar in fury.

Boom!

A terrifying soundwave made a beeline for Ye Guan.

Ye Guan's figure blurred, and he reappeared thirty meters away.

The man was astonished to see Ye Guan dodge a soundwave attack.

Swoosh!

Ye Guan took advantage of the lull to appear in front of the man. The man hurriedly pushed his legs together, but Ye Guan's sword was aimed at his eyes rather than his crotch.

The man closed his eyes tightly.

Shwik! Shwik! Shwik!

Ye Guan sent sword thrusts after sword thrusts. The man attempted to retaliate to no avail; Ye Guan's attacks were simply too fast for him to make a move. In addition, Ye Guan was taking full advantage of his sword's length and was keeping him at bay.

The man was indeed much stronger than Ye Guan, but Ye Guan was much faster than the former. Moreover, strength was meaningless if one couldn't hit their opponent.

The only way to stop Ye Guan was to slow him down by shattering the space around Ye Guan.

"Argh!" the man cried out, and the illusory figure of a demonic beast erupted from him. Space distorted and ultimately shattered as multiple waves of demonic beast aura swept across the wilderness.

Ye Guan retreated a few dozen meters away.

He looked up at the man and saw that the illusory figure of a demonic beast hovering above the man resembled a giant shark with a gaping mouth full of blood. Its teeth were razor-sharp, and it was terrifying to behold.

Ye Guan frowned. What demonic beast is that?

The man's legs were still clamped together.

He glared at Ye Guan and asked, "Unconventional? I think it's fucking unethical!"

Ye Guan chuckled sheepishly and said, "Brother Beast, I agree that it's a bit unethical, but I have no choice. The defenses of demonic beasts are just too incredible. I can only attack your weak spots to win. I'm sorry for the offense!"

Ye Guan's courteousness rendered the man speechless.

Now that he thought about it, Ye Guan had a point. If he were in Ye Guan's shoes, he would have done the same. After all, those who were here had signed the death liability waiver. In other words, they were willing to do anything to win and survive.

The man asked, "Can you change your fighting style?"

Ye Guan shook his head. I admit that my fighting style is a bit unethical, but it does not go against my conscience.

The man said in a low voice, "If you're not willing to compromise, I can only use my true body to fight you!"

"All right," Ye Guan said with a nod.

"Are you sure about that?"

Ye Guan hesitated for a bit before saying, "Won't that part become bigger if you fight me with your true body?"

The man's face twitched. "Human, you're crossing the line here! You are a swordsman and a Sword Immortal at that! Can't you fight me in an upright manner? You've made me view swordsmen in a brand-new light!"

Ye Guan's curiosity was piqued. "Have you met other swordsmen before?"

“Of course!”

Ye Guan hurriedly asked, “What are they like?”

The man stared deeply at Ye Guan before saying, “They’re decent people, and most of them were cool and reserved. They’re not like you! You look decent, and you’re courteous as well, but your fighting style is too unethical for a swordsman!”

Ye Guan was at a loss for words.

“Are you from the Guanxuan Universe?”

Ye Guan shook his head and replied, “No! I’m from Nanzhou!”

The man frowned and asked, “Nanzhou?”

Ye Guan nodded.

“I’ve never heard of that place before.”

“It’s a small state that exists in a realm just below the Zhongtu Divine Continent.”

“I see,” said the man. “I’m not going to fight you anymore! I’m going somewhere else. I suggest you go to the Royal-rank combat trial.”

With that, the man turned around to leave.

However, he stopped after a few steps and turned to look at Ye Guan.

“A heaven-defying talent arrived here not too long ago, and he has the same surname as you. He’s also from the Zhongtu Divine Continent, and his name is Ye Qing. Do you know him?” asked the man.

Ye Guan was taken aback. “Yes, he’s my brother!”

“He offended a talent of the Hantian Clan. The Hantian Clan is from the Guanxuan Universe. The talent of the Hantian Clan is working together with someone else, and they’re chasing after Ye Qing to kill him.”

Ye Guan’s face darkened.