

Battle Through the Heavens #Chapter 291: Advance to Seven Star, The Final Test - Read Battle Through the Heavens Chapter 291: Advance to Seven Star, The Final Test

Chapter 291: Advance to Seven Star, The Final Test

Xiao Yan was seated cross-legged on the bed. At this moment, the natural energy within the room was fluctuating somewhat intensely. Numerous energy ripples that were visible to the naked eye were surging and rolling out from within Xiao Yan's body. His clothes had swollen until they were bulging. On his grave face, a faint green glow was partially visible.

As the surrounding natural energy was poured into Xiao Yan's body, wave after wave, the green glow on his face also grew increasingly dense. In the end, the green colored glow almost covered his entire face. The force within his body was also gradually being raised.

When the rising force reached a certain level, the surrounding fluctuating energy suddenly came to an abrupt stop. The swollen clothes on Xiao Yan's body appeared to have stiffened and did not move anymore.

This strange, quiet pause continued for nearly ten seconds. Xiao Yan, who had his eyes tightly closed, suddenly opened them. The green colored flame instantly rolled and surged up before immediately and swiftly disappearing. A fierce glow suddenly shot out from within his dark eyes.

With his body maintaining its training mode, Xiao Yan opened his mouth. A somewhat black colored turbid air was spat out. The black air wreathed upward. Anything that touched it was completely corroded. It continued to rise until it corroded a small hole in the roof before it finally gradually turned into nothingness under the sunlight.

After exhaling the turbid breath. The fierce glow in Xiao Yan's eyes also quietly withdrew. The stiffened clothes once again became soft as they nestled close to Xiao Yan's skin. The imposing force that was lingering within the room was also withdrawn into his body.

“Seven star Dou Shi...”

As he gently tightened his fist, the feeling of his body being filled with strength caused Xiao Yan to be a little intoxicated. Although he knew that according to the pace at which he was advancing from before, he would sooner or later advance into the seven star level. However, he did not expect that by merely absorbing the 'Searing Poison' in Nalan Jie three times would be sufficient enough for him to raise a level.

“The energy within a Dou Wang’s body is really vast and surging. I have only absorbed it three times, but the energy was sufficient enough to let me raise a level...” Xiao Yan muttered softly. His body twisted strangely. Hearing the waves of clear bone cracking sound from within his body, he could not help but smile with satisfaction. “This transaction seems to be quite a good bargain.”

Xiao Yan placed both his palms on the bed and used a little energy. His body shot upward in a supple manner. After which, he somersaulted in the air and landed gently on the ground. He clapped his hand, looked around and mumbled with a frown, “Why is he still not back?”

Xiao Yan mused for a moment and could only helplessly shake his head at the futile effort. He then opened the door and walked out. Tomorrow was when the Grand Meeting would begin. He needed to go to the association to inquire about the different kinds of competitions in the Grand Meeting and the method in which the tests were conducted now or else he’d start on the wrong foot.

After exiting the inn, Xiao Yan stood on the street and took a look all around him. He then lifted his footsteps and walked toward the towering building of the Alchemist Association where one would at least be able to see a corner of it from afar.

During the walk there, Xiao Yan was stunned to realize that some of the main roads in the city already had completely armed knight units patrolling. Clearly, this was due to the Alchemist Grand Meeting which was about to begin. After all, if a commotion were to occur at such a large grand meeting, it would have many different large impacts to the empire. Therefore, the imperial family needed to prevent any such possibilities.

TL: Yes, knights. People with horses + armor + aren’t cavalry (army). Correct me if wrong but pretty sure the only word for them is knights

After slowly walking passed a few wide streets, the large Alchemist Association finally appeared in Xiao Yan’s sight. Eyeing the entrance which was even more packed compared to two days ago, he could not help but shake his head. It appeared that there were many alchemists who wished to reveal their brilliance at this Grand Meeting.

With both his hands behind his back, Xiao Yan slowly crossed his footsteps and entered the association. He turned his footsteps and squeezed through the human crowd. He had just followed the human flow and entered the association when a disturbance occurred not far behind him. The surrounding gazes were thrown over.

The human flow at the front had stopped entering and Xiao Yan was plugged up at the middle. He helplessly sighed, frowned slightly and turned his head around to watch the source of the commotion.

The source of the commotion was a horse carriage that had a great noble aura. In front of the horse carriage, there were two horses which had snow white hair without the

slightest impurities quietly pulling it. A strange beast which had a blue colored flame rising from its body was drawn on the golden yellow brocade surrounding the horse carriage. The strange beast was of a large size and it had a ferocious appearance, emitting a feeling that would faintly frighten the hearts of those who looked at it.

“The imperial crest...” Staring at the strange beast crest whose name eluded him, Xiao Yan softly muttered. As a citizen of the Jia Ma Empire, he was able to identify the Jia Ma Empire’s imperial crest.

Surrounding the horse carriage, there were over ten people wrapped entirely in black robe accompanying it. Xiao Yan’s gaze swept across these black robed people and his eyes shrunk. From his senses, these ten plus black robed people actually gave him a feeling of danger.

“It is really indeed worthy of being the Jia Ma Empire’s imperial family. Its strength really cannot be underestimated.” Xiao Yan exclaimed slightly in his heart as his gaze was thrown to where the carriage curtain was.

A black robed person stepped forward and respectfully lifted the carriage curtain. When the black robed person did this, Xiao Yan could clearly sense the other black robed people had already swiftly formed a steady circle during the slight movement, guarding the horse carriage in the middle of them. At the same time, numerous gazes that were as sharp as an eagle shot out from the black robed people as they swept back and forth in front of the surrounding packed human crowd.

Under the watch of the surrounding people, a snow white jade like delicate hand was extended out from the carriage. It gracefully held the handle of the carriage door. After which, a beautiful figure slowly walked out and appeared in everyone’s sight.

The person who appeared was wearing a purple colored dress that had silver colored lines embedded in it. Her exquisite appearance, under the influence of the imperial family, faintly seeped out a noble imposing presence that was her birthright. A purple colored belt was worn on her narrow and delicate waist, displaying the small waist vividly and incisively. Her age did not appear to be very old, appearing similar to Xiao Yan’s before he had changed his appearance. Her pretty face contained a smile, appearing elegant and serene. However, each time her gaze swept across the surroundings, Xiao Yan was able to discover that this young lady who looked very ladylike had some quirky and strange smile flashing across her watery eyes. Clearly, this was different from the surface she showed which seemed to like quietness.

“A woman really cannot be judged by her appearance...” Xiao Yan bitterly smiled and shook his head. He withdrew his gaze and no longer looked at this very extraordinary young lady.

“Tsk tsk, what a beautiful girl...” Watching the young lady which had appeared, a wave of cheers was immediately erupted from the surrounding human crowd. A number of

heated gazes were swiftly thrown over. Although the lady's status was extremely noble, it did not appear to be inappropriate to take advantage of the large crowd and allow their eyes to be a little impudent.

"Hee hee, this is the little princess within the Jia Ma Empire imperial family. I heard that her teacher is the deputy chairman Grandmaster Qie Mi Er. Since she has appeared here this time around, I think that she must have come because of the Alchemist Grand Meeting." There were quite a number of well informed individuals within the human crowd who managed to identify the young lady upon seeing her appearance.

"She doesn't seem to be that old, yet she is actually here to compete in the Grand Meeting?"

"Che, the little princess' refining talent is something that even the chairman had praised non-stop. Don't just look at her young age. I have heard that half a year ago, she had already stepped into a tier three alchemist..."

"Uh..." Hearing this, there was an immediate uproar in the surrounding crowd. Some of the older middle-aged alchemist lifted their hands with somewhat red faces and covered the tier badge on their chests in embarrassment.

Being squeezed in the human crowd, Xiao Yan heard the conversations of these people and a shock flashed across his face. He once again turned his gaze to the purple dressed young lady who was walking to the association with the support of the black robed person. He said quietly in his heart, "Indeed, there is always someone who is better. It is really unexpected that this young lady who appears so weak is actually a tier three alchemist..."

Although Xiao Yan was shocked in his heart, Xiao Yan did not feel that this was very unexpected. With the rich foundation of the Jia Ma Empire's royalty, as long as this little princess possessed the basic talent needed to become an alchemist, they could use those ingredients that could be piled into mountains to easily build her into a high tier alchemist. Moreover, from the looks of things, this little princess' talent for refining medicine was quite good. Therefore, having such an achievement was within expectations.

Under the protection of the group of black robed people whose bodies were shrouded by a dark and cold aura, that purple dress young lady passed through the packed human crowd without meeting any obstruction. After which, she swaggered into the Alchemist Association.

As the back of the young lady which appeared elegant disappeared from his sight, Xiao Yan shrugged his shoulders and twisted his body slightly. Like a loach, he squeezed passed the surrounding human crowd without leaving a trace as he swiftly leaped into the interior of the association.

After pushing aside the last layer of the human flow, the surrounding area finally became spacious. He eyed the vast hall and exhaled a long breath of air. Wiping off the perspiration on his forehead, Xiao Yan walked toward the western area of the hall as though he had walked there countless times.

The two guards from the last time were still present at the entrance to the western area. When they saw Xiao Yan arrive, they did not stop him like they did before. After bowing and greeting him, they did not bother him when he entered. Looking at this situation, it appeared that Ao Tuo had already gave them specific instructions for Xiao Yan.

Seeing that the guards did not stop him, Xiao Yan was happy to save some trouble. He walked into the corridor and slowly climbed up the stairs. Finally, he stopped outside Ao Tuo's room from the last time. He knocked softly on the door, waited for Ao Tuo's voice from inside before pushing it open and entering.

Only Ao Tuo was seated in the room. At that moment, he was watching Xiao Yan who had entered with a smile. "Little Fellow, you are quite punctual."

Xiao Yan smiled and sat on the chair beside Ao Tuo. He lifted a teacup and took a sip as he laughed, "Haha, I shall not say anything unnecessary. My purpose for coming here this time around is to inquire about the format of the competition. Is it done by drawing lots or by other means?"

TL: Drawing lots = having one random person go up at a time

"There are so many competitors who participate in the competition. If the competition were to rely on drawing lots one at a time, just how long would it take?" Ao Tuo shook his head with a smile. His finger drew a very large rectangle on the table's surface as he continued with a smile on his face, "All of the alchemists in the competition will be participating at the same time on a huge platform. There, you will have quite a few rounds and the requirements for the competition will gradually become harder. When that time comes, it would be like a sieve sieving away the sand particles, swiftly removing those that do not qualify. Those who are able to stay the longest are all the best among the participants. Whoever is able to stand out among the cream of the crop, will be the final victor."

"Oh..." Xiao Yan nodded his head slightly. The scene of hundreds or thousands of alchemists raising their flames and refining medicine on the same platform must be extremely spectacular.

"Hehe, you really want to see that kind of scene, don't you? Don't be frightened when that time comes. Back then, when I first participated, I was also shocked." Grandmaster Ao Tuo laughed, appearing to know what Xiao Yan was thinking.

"That's right. There is a namelist here. Why don't you take a look. These are all the competitors with great ability who will be participating in this Grand Meeting." Ao Tuo

picked up a paper scroll from the table and handed it to Xiao Yan. He immediately added, "This is an internal document. According to the rules, I cannot leak it to others."

Xiao Yan was somewhat curious as he received the paper scroll. He smiled and nodded as he slowly pulled it open. The long namelist had at least twenty to thirty people with abilities that were not bad. Xiao Yan swept his gaze over it and his eyebrows were suddenly raised. He realized that Liu Ling was actually on the namelist and it was very close to the top. Clearly, the name of the Pill-King successor was not simply something that was obtained from bragging about.

"This Little Princess should be the one from the imperial family right?" Xiao Yan pointed at the Little Princess who was ranked fifth and asked.

"Yes, have you seen her?"

"I have seen her for a moment at the entrance just now. I didn't expect that her name is so close to the front." Xiao Yan smiled, feeling a little surprised at the ranking.

"Don't look down on that girl. Under the support of the imperial family strength, she has so many hidden cards that would dazzle people." Ao Tuo smiled and reminded.

Xiao Yan nodded slightly. He looked through the information on the namelist carefully before returning it to Ao Tuo. "The competitors are indeed very strong. Just counting the tier three alchemists, there are already thirteen of them."

"It is indeed a little troublesome and you can only rely on yourself for this. I can only help you this much." Ao Tuo nodded his head and helplessly said.

Xiao Yan smiled and nodded his head. He asked, "Is the Grand Meeting starting tomorrow? Do I still need to do something now?"

"Haha, indeed, you still need to do something. Consider this the last test before the competition. Outsiders do not have this round of test but the competitors who are recommended by us, the branch heads, must pass this round... This can be considered a kind of test in advance where the association judges our ability to pick people. If one cannot pass this test, then our recommendation would lose effect." Ao Tuo stood up, smiled and said, "Follow me. At this place, you will be able to see some of the strong opponents on the namelist."

"Yes." Xiao Yan nodded his head, stood up and followed Ao Tuo. The two of them walked out of the room and walked along a quiet corridor for a short while. Once they were at the end, they pushed opened a door by the side and slowly entered.

A strong light suddenly shot over as they walked through the door, causing Xiao Yan to involuntarily narrow his eyes. He finally opened them once he adapted to the light.

Appearing in front of them was a spacious inner hall which was decorated in quite a classical manner. At the moment, the inner hall had some people standing in twos and threes. Xiao Yan's gaze swept across these people and was somewhat stunned to discover that many of these people, who appeared quite young, were actually at the level of a third tier alchemist. The empire's little princess whom he had saw at the main entrance some time ago was also among them. His gaze rotated once again and with raised eyebrows, finally stopped on a handsome looking young man who was conversing with a few tier three alchemists.

Liu Ling...

Hearing the sound of the door opening, everyone in the hall who was whispering privately ceased their conversations. Their gaze turned toward the door. When they saw Xiao Yan entered, they were all momentarily stunned. Their gazes then drifted toward the tier two alchemist badge on his chest and their expressions carried some ridicule.

The Little Princess, who was leaning on the wall, was surrounded by a few alchemists in a manner similar to stars arching around the moon, also glanced at Xiao Yan. However, after she saw the tier badge on the his chest, she completely lost interest. She lazily stretched and her curves hooked the gazes of the surrounding men.

Liu Ling's gaze lazily stared at Xiao Yan. The latter's entrance had also caused Liu Ling to be a little surprised. Quickly following this, however, a dark mild smile surfaced on his face, appearing to harbor malicious intentions.

Xiao Yan lowered his eyebrows slightly. The different gazes in the large hall did not affect him. His hands drooped in front of his sleeves. The indifferent face of his was like an old monk. However, a faint cold laughter quietly surfaced within his heart.

Chapter 292: Refining

"Hey, Old Ao, have you also brought someone over?" During the time that the atmosphere in the hall was very quiet, an old laugh rang out.

Xiao Yan followed the voice and shifted his gaze. He realized that there were some old people wearing alchemist robes standing with smiles on a high platform positioned on the left side of the hall. The voice from before came from one of the snow white haired old men.

"That is the deputy chairman of the association, Qie Mi Er. He is also the Little Princess's teacher." Ao Tuo smiled and waved to the old man before tilting his head and speaking to Xiao Yan.

"Ah." Xiao Yan nodded slightly.

“Just ignore these arrogant people’s eyes. Being able to become a tier three alchemist at such an age, their talents are naturally all very outstanding. It is expected that they would all be a little proud. They would not pay attention to those who have not reached their level. Most of the young people these days who have some ability are like this.” Ao Tuo glanced at those young people in the hall, patted Xiao Yan’s back and comforted him.

Xiao Yan smiled, but did not speak.

“Follow me to meet those old fellows. They are people who possess great capability within the Jia Ma Empire.” As Ao Tuo spoke, he led the way toward the towering platform at the side. Xiao Yan hesitated for a moment but could only follow.

Ao Tuo swiftly walked up the tall platform. He smiled and conversed with those old people around his age for some time. Xiao Yan quietly stood behind him and did not take any initiative to step forward and greet them.

“Old Ao. Is this the competitor representing your Black Rock City this time around?” After conversing with a smile for a while, The old man with snow white colored hair smiled as he looked at Xiao Yan standing to the side and asked.

Xiao Yan lifted his gaze slightly. He looked at this old man who clearly had quite a high position in the Alchemist Association. He wore an exquisitely made alchemist robe while his wrinkle filled face contained a smile and his slightly squinting turbid eyes were calm and gentle. At one glance, he appeared like an ordinary old man without any overly special aura, with the exception of the long robe that represented his status and the four silver colored ripples that were flashing a strange glow on his chest. However, this ordinary old man was in control of nearly half of the Alchemist Association’s strength.

As Xiao Yan was sizing up Qie Mi Er, the latter was also doing the same to him. Xiao Yan’s ordinary appearance also did not have any outstanding points. The only thing that caused Qie Mi Er to feel a little strange was the calm expression of the other party. Being able to maintain this unmoved manner when being watched by a tier four alchemist needed a mental strength that was quite rarely seen among young people.

“Ah. He is called Yan Xiao. His potential is quite great.” Ao Tuo smiled and nodded his head. After which, he turned to Xiao Yan and once again made the introduction, “This is the deputy chairman of the association, Grandmaster Qie Mi Er.”

“It’s nice to meet you, Deputy Chairman Qie Mi Er.” Xiao Yan smiled and bowed courteously at Qie Mi Er.

“Ke ke, Little Fellow, I hope that you won’t cause Ao Tuo’s recommendation to become invalid. Otherwise, it would really cause him to lose all of his old face.” Seeing the tier two badge on Xiao Yan’s chest, Qie Mi Er helplessly shook his head at Ao Tuo by the

side. In a competition at this level, a tier two alchemist would have difficulty even entering the top twenty.

“I believe that I will at least be able to pass this test.” Xiao Yan shrugged his shoulders and said.

“It is good that you have confidence. However, as all of the people recommended by the head of each branch have slightly stronger abilities, therefore, this internal test will also have some difficulty.” Qie Mi Er nodded his head and said with a smile.

“I will do my best.”

“Ke ke. It is about time to start. We should not say any more nonsense. You should go down first. The test is beginning soon.” Qie Mi Er smiled and said.

Xiao Yan nodded his head, turned around and walked down the platform. After which, in front of all the gazes of the young people in the hall, he walked toward a corner and stood with his hands dangled down.

“Ah, Old Ao. Your Black Rock City is also considered a large city, right? There’s no way that you cannot find a young tier three alchemist.” Eyeing Xiao Yan’s back, Qie Mi Er spoke helplessly toward Ao Tuo by the side.

“I believe in him.” With both his hands inserted into his spacious sleeves, Ao Tuo said with a mysterious smile.

“Ah, you old fellow... if no one from your side has an outstanding performance at the Grand Meeting, do not blame us for having a reduction in your funds next year. These things must be done according to the books. Having good relationships does not help.” Qie Mi Er shook his head and said.

Ao Tuo smiled and nodded. He did not continue to worry about this topic and said, “It is time. Let’s start the test.”

Hearing this, Qie Mi Er did not say anything more. He turned his gaze toward everyone below. His finger pointed at the front of the hall. There were many black colored curtains hanging on the wall there. “Behind each of the curtains, there is a small personal room. That is your examination room...”

“As everyone knows, refining the medicinal ingredients is an extremely important step in refining a medicinal pill. Our test this time around is to test your refinement of the medicinal ingredients...”

“On a platform in each of the small rooms, the medicinal ingredients needed for the test have already been prepared. What all of you need to do is to use the shortest time to refine the medicinal ingredients into the highest purity that you can achieve.”

“When the sand in the hourglass has completely fallen, those who have not completed the refinement will be considered to have failed this test. Moreover, even if you successfully refine the ingredients, we, these old fellows, will be the judges. If the medicinal ingredients that you have refined do not meet our standards you will also be considered to have failed this test. The result of failing is to lose the qualification to participate in the main competition.” Qie Mi Er pointed to an hourglass on the table. He glanced at the young people below and smiled faintly.

Hearing such a severe penalty for failing, the young people below faced each other. Other than a small number of people, their expressions each had a slight change.

Sweeping his gaze slowly below him, Qie Mi Er suddenly paused at Xiao Yan who was standing in a corner with his hands dangling. He looked at the calm face and could not help but be stunned as he quietly muttered in his heart, “Does this fellow actually have some real ability?”

“Alright, begin. Pay attention to the hourglass’ time.” After moving his gaze away from Xiao Yan Qie Mi Er clapped his hands as he smiled and said.

Hearing this, everyone in the hall began to move in small groups as they headed toward their left side. After which, each of them pulled aside a black curtain and walked in.

Xiao Yan also chose a remote black curtain and was about to walk in when laughter was transmitted from behind him. It caused him to stop his footsteps and turned his calm face over.

“Ke ke, I did not expect that brother Yan Xiao would also be able to participate in this kind of internal test. We seem to have some fate tying us together.” Liu Ling walked closer to Xiao Yan as he smiled and said. However, his feminine smile caused Xiao Yan to frown slightly.

Xiao Yan faintly glanced at him and said, “I was simply pulled over by someone to make up the numbers.”

“Brother Yan Xiao really knows how to joke. Although your tier cannot make it, you have a strange object like the ‘Heavenly Flame’. I think that your results would not be too low.” Liu Ling roamed his gaze over Xiao Yan’s face. Honestly speaking, he still maintained a great doubt as to whether Xiao Yan possessed a ‘Heavenly Flame’. After all, this was only his guess. Although he had privately asked Nalan Yanran, she did not give him a precise reply on such a secret matter.

Xiao Yan was non-committal as he shrugged his shoulders before pulling aside the black curtain and walking in. This left Liu Ling standing on the same spot with his eyebrows slightly knit together.

“Big Brother Liu, aren’t you going in?” A clear voice sounded behind Liu Ling. The pretty Little Princess walked over, eyed Xiao Yan who had disappeared behind the curtain and smiled sweetly.

“I just met someone I know. If Little Princess has an interest, I can introduce him to you.” Liu Ling said softly as he gave a warm smile to the Little Princess.

“Forget it, a tier two alchemist... I don’t have a mood as good as yours.” The Little Princess lazily shook her head. Clearly, her interest toward Xiao Yan was not as rich as Liu Ling’s. After all, regardless of identity, strength, appearance etc, Liu Ling far exceeded him.

“Haha, it’s up to you.” Liu Ling smiled. The Little Princess’ manner of ignoring Xiao Yan caused him to have some joy in his heart. In the Nalan clan, Grandfather Nalan valued Xiao Yan greatly, causing Liu Ling, who had always been given great respect as a genius, to feel displeased in his heart.

“I will go in first. Big Brother Liu Ling better not lose to me.” Little Princess saucily blinked at Liu Ling before entering a black curtained room in a light and agile manner.

Liu Ling smiled and nodded his head. He eyed the hall that had become empty and did not delay any longer. With a comfortable pace, he entered behind a black curtain. His leisurely manner caused Qie Mi Er and the others on the high platform to nod their heads.

“The test question this time around is quite good. Refining medicinal ingredients is not only an essential step in refining medicine but it also tests one’s ability to control the flame. This very small thing should be able to roughly test out some of the abilities of these little fellows.” Eyeing the empty large hall, Ao Tuo turned around and said with a smile toward Qie Mi Er.

Qie Mi Er smiled and nodded. He sat down on a chair by the side, lifted his teacup and took a sip. With a smile, he said, “Next, let us see just who will be able to bring out the refined medicinal ingredients with the highest purity.”

.....

Passing through the black curtain, a small room appeared in Xiao Yan’s sight. The room was not spacious, but it was quite elegant and tidy. Near the wall of the small room, there was a square green stone platform. An hourglass was placed on the rock platform along with a couple of neatly placed medicinal ingredients.

Walking to the side of the stone platform, Xiao Yan’s gaze drifted across a few pieces of black charcoal-like medicinal ingredients. Surprise clearly flash across his eyes. He muttered softly, “It is actually the ‘Black Iron Spiritual Leaf’ which is one of the most

resistant ingredients to heat. This thing really exhausts one's energy during the refinement. These old fellows really don't allow others to have peace of mind."

Xiao Yan shook his head and his finger rubbed gently over his storage ring. A dark red colored medicinal cauldron appeared on the table. Xiao Yan picked up a 'Black Iron Spiritual Leaf', placed it on his hand and kneaded it. After which, his eyebrows were pressed tightly together. He was troubled as to whether he should use the 'Green Lotus Core Flame'...

After musing for a moment, Xiao Yan shook his head. He did not want to use his hidden card during a test at such an early stage. If he used the 'Green Lotus Core Flame' at such an easy test, it was undoubtedly like using a sledgehammer to slaughter a chicken.

With a gentle flick of his finger, a purple colored pill appeared between his fingers. Xiao Yan threw it into his mouth and chewed slightly. After which, he blew out. A cluster of purple colored flame immediately surged out and was held in Xiao Yan's palm.

Holding this cluster of purple flame, Xiao Yan smiled gently. Since he had swallowed the 'Purple Flame' back then, he was still able to control the flame with greater familiarity now. Although it could not be compared with the high degree of control he had for the green flame, it should not be too big of a problem to refine the 'Black Iron Spiritual Leaf'.

Xiao Yan's Spiritual Strength was slowly extended out of his body and controlled this cluster of purple colored flame as it was slowly poured into the cauldron. Immediately, the icy cold cauldron's temperature began to rise. The purple colored flame soared and writhed within it.

Xiao Yan eyed the bright purple colored flame indifferently. He waved his hand and the 'Black Iron Spiritual Leaf' left his hand and was thrown into the medicinal cauldron. The purple flame leaped onto it turbulently, wrapping it and began an intense calcining.

Xiao Yan's ten fingers flexibly danced in front of him. A moment later, Xiao Yan, who had become even more smooth in his control, actually gradually closed his eyes. He completely relied on his feeling to control the burning of the flame.

During the time of refinement, the sand in the hourglass on the table was slowly descending.

Chapter 293: Put to The Test

In the quiet hall, Qie Mi Er, who was seated on the high platform, had his eyes closed as he rested. On the table in front of him stood an hourglass with sand falling in it...

After the quiet atmosphere persisted for an unknown amount of time, Qie Mi Er was the first to open his eyes. He glanced at the hourglass where half of its contents had fallen. He moved slightly as he coughed gently.

As Qie Mi Er's soft cough sounded, Ao Tuo and the others also opened their eyes. They lifted their eyes and inspected the room before saying with a laugh, "Looks like the test this time around is fairly difficult. Until now, no one has actually come out."

"People with ability want to raise the degree of purity as much as possible while people with poor ability are distressed with how to refine the ingredients during the time allocated, Therefore, it is natural that no one has come out within this short period of time." Qie Mi Er smiled and faintly replied.

"Who do you think will be able to obtain the best result?" Ao Tuo nodded his head, lifted the teacup in front of him and sipped before asking with a smile.

"It's difficult to say..."

Qie Mi Er's shrivelled hand gently tapped on the armrest of the chair. He mused a little before saying, "From how I see it, Liu Ling's chances should be the highest. He has quite good talent. During these many years, he has also learned nearly thirty to forty percent of Gu He's knowledge. It is sufficient for him to be among the best of his generation."

"Haha. Little Princess isn't bad either. The foundation of the imperial family is extremely solid. If someone were to say that they did not prepare some hidden cards for her this time around, none of us would believe that person." Ao Tuo said with a grin.

"Although that girl's talent is quite good, she is much weaker in terms of experience when compared to Liu Ling. If she does not use those hidden cards, she should be a little inferior to Liu Ling. This is only the first test, therefore, it is unlikely for her to use her hidden card. Therefore, Liu Ling has the highest chances of obtaining the best result..." When talking about his beloved disciple, Qie Mi Er had another smile on his face as he spoke.

Ao Tuo smiled. The corner of his eyes glanced at the small room covered by a black curtain where Xiao Yan was at. He sighed and said in his heart: "I wonder what kind of result Xiao Yan will be able to obtain. I hope it won't be too low. His talent is definitely not inferior to Liu Ling or the Little Princess."

"Why? Old Ao, are you still clinging on to hope?" Although Ao Tuo's action was subtle, it still did not fail to escape Qie Mi Er's notice. Immediately, the latter shook his head somewhat helplessly. Regardless of how great Yan Xiao's talent was, a tier two alchemist would have difficulty fighting for victory against these tier three alchemists.

“Ke ke.” Ao Tuo laughed, but did not argue with Qie Mi Er. He slotted both his hands together and placed them on his knee before shaking the tilted chair as he quietly waited for the results of the test.

Seeing Ao Tuo’s silence, Qie Mi Er also did not say anything else. He sighed softly before turning his gaze once again to the empty hall. His heart slowly counted the drops of sand marking the time.

.....

When the sand in the hourglass fell until only a quarter remained, a black curtain moved abruptly. Immediately, the few gazes on the high platform were instantly shot over and stared intently at that black curtain.

A hand was extended out of the black curtain and pulled it aside. With a feminine smile, a handsome young man slowly walked out...

“It is indeed him...” Eyeing the young man with a tall and straight figure, Ao Tuo and the others were momentarily blank. They exchanged glances with Qie Mi Er before sighing and shaking their heads immediately. The disciple taught by Gu He did indeed have some skills.

Liu Ling strode out from behind the black curtain. After which, he stopped at the middle of the hall and smiled at Qie Mi Er and the others on the high platform. He then bowed elegantly in an extremely gentlemanly fashion.

Not long after Liu Ling came out, an ethereal figure swiftly leaped out from behind a black curtain. When she saw Liu Ling who was already standing in the middle of the hall, a disappointment immediately appeared on her exquisite face. She slowly walked to the middle of the hall and tooted as she said, “Big Brother Liu, I didn’t expect that you would be so fast.”

“Hehe, Little Princess, you aren’t slow either.” Liu Ling smiled and said.

“Hmm. Although you are faster than me, your medicinal ingredients may not be as pure as mine!” Little Princess softly snorted and said as she waved her snow-white fist.

Liu Ling nodded his head and smiled without speaking.

A short two to three minutes after Little Princess came out, the quiet black curtain were immediately opened one after another, as though a chain reaction had occurred. Numerous human figures came out from within them and finally stood in the hall.

The first thirteen people who had came out from the black curtain all had a tier three alchemist badge on their chest. Clearly, in terms of refining, they far surpassed those tier two alchemists.

After these thirteen people appeared, the black curtain ceased moving. Only ten minutes later were there people who came out one after another from behind the black curtain. All of these people, without exception, were tier two alchemists.

When these tier two alchemist who came out saw those thirteen tier three alchemists who stood with their chests puffed out and their heads held high in the middle of the hall, they smiled bitterly and shook their heads. Immediately, they appeared somewhat dejected as they stood at the rear. Clearly, after this initial test, they roughly knew their distance from these seeded competitors.

As the black curtains repeatedly moved, the sand in the hourglass was pouring to the point where it was about to become empty. However, Ao Tuo's eyebrows were tightly pressed together. This was because until now, Xiao Yan had yet to appear...

"What is this little fellow doing? Don't tell me that he has not completed the refinement? Impossible. With his ability, even if he cannot catch up with the top competitors like Liu Ling, he shouldn't be left behind to such an extent." Ao Tuo's hand held the armrest as he muttered somewhat anxiously in his heart.

"Ah..." By one side, Qie Mi Er saw his anxious old friend and could not help but sigh. He patted his friend's back in consolation.

Standing at the first spot in the crowd, Liu Ling's face carried a faint smile as he looked around the hall. When he did not spot Xiao Yan's figure, a cold laughter and ridicule immediately surged from the deep regions of his eyes.

As time flowed by, the empty large hall once again became filled. However, everyone remained quiet. Numerous gazes spontaneously paused at the black curtain where Xiao Yan had entered. At this moment, of all the competitors, only Xiao Yan had yet to come out...

The sand in the hourglass came splashing downward. Ao Tuo's eyebrows were pressed together until it almost formed a line...

"Hei, Big Brother Liu, is that your friend? His appearance is quite poor." Eyeing the strange expression Ao Tuo on the high platform, Little Princess turned her head and laughed softly to Liu Ling.

"Haha, Little Princess is joking. He and I have only met a few times. We are far from what is considered as friends." Liu Ling laughed gently.

"That's true. With your ability and pride, it appears that you have never befriended those who don't have any potential." Little Princess smiled. Her words were extremely sharp. Having come from the imperial family where people schemed and fought each other, she thought that only those who had ability that she could treat seriously were qualified

to be viewed as a friend. An ordinary tier two alchemist did not have the ability for her to lower herself.

Liu Ling smiled and nodded his head. His gaze once again glanced at the black curtain which still did not have any moment. With a mocking laughter, he finally ceased continuing to pay attention and turned his gaze away.

On the high platform, the sand within the hourglass had already completely fallen. Therefore, Qie Mi Er helplessly shook his head. He did not expect that the competitor recommended by Ao Tuo was so incompetent that he would actually fail to pass the initial test. He sighed, stood up, wanting to announce that the refinement was over.

Ao Tuo by the side had also sensed Qie Mi Er's action. His expression became slightly bitter but he did not have any method to stop him. Shaking his head dispiritedly, he leaned back on the chair and let out a long breath.

"Alright everyone. I'll announce that the time..."

"I'm sorry that I'm late..."

Just as Qie Mi Er was about to announce the end of the refinement, a calm voice was suddenly emitted from behind that black curtain. Immediately, a black figure pulled aside the black curtain and slowly walked out with a calm face. He looked at the stunned face Qie Mi Er wore and bowed slightly.

"Hu..." Hearing this calm voice, Ao Tuo abruptly lowered his head. He stared intently at Xiao Yan who seemed somewhat hurried as he walked out from behind the black curtain. However, the large stone hanging in his heart finally fell.

"Tsk tsk, I did not expect that he could rush it out during this last bit of time. How lucky. But a medicinal ingredient that was hastily rushed would likely not be very good." Little Princess watched Xiao Yan who had just came out with interest and softly said.

"He will be eliminated if he isn't good. That's something very common. The Grand Meeting is short of almost everything but it is not short of competitors..." Liu Ling narrowed his eyes as he glanced at Xiao Yan and laughed faintly.

Standing on the high platform, Qie Mi Er eyed Xiao Yan who had finally appeared. He then tilted his head and watched Ao Tuo who had sighed in relief. In his heart, he quietly said, "Ah, although he managed to rush it out, but seeing that he barely made it, it is likely the result will not be too ideal. What a pity... Poor Old Ao..."

Turning his head around, Qie Mi Er clapped his hands and pulled back all the strange gazes that were staring at Xiao Yan. He softly coughed before saying in a deep voice, "Since everyone has punctually come out, then we shall begin preparing for the next section of the test."

As he said, Qie Mi Er took a few steps forward and lifted a black cloth that was located on the platform. Instantly, he revealed a precision machinery that had a flickering glow.

“This is a purity measuring instrument which was built by some famous blacksmith who our alchemist association had hired. It is able to accurately test the purity of the ingredients that you have refined.” Qie Mi Er rubbed the dark black machine, pointed at a groove and said, “This is the place for you to put the ingredients to be measured.” After saying this, he pointed to a screen. Some character were repeatedly flashing on it. “This spot will reveal the degree of purity. It is out of 10 points. Ten points is the highest, while one point is the lowest. You need four points to pass.”

“Alright. Now, all of you will put the ‘Black Iron Spiritual Leaf’ that you have refined into it. Remember, before you put it in, it would be best if you tell us how many times you refined it..”

Each time that a medicinal ingredient was refined, the difficulty of doing it would be a few times harder than the last time. For example, even with Qie Mi Er’s strength, he would at most be able to refine this ‘Black Iron Spiritual Leaf’ repeatedly for ten times. If he did any more than that he would be wasting his effort without gaining any benefits.

“Let’s begin!”

Qie Mi Er clapped his hand softly. The group of tier four alchemists stood up from their chairs and came to the front of the examination instrument. They appeared somewhat curious as they waited for the unveiling of the results.

As Qie Mi Er’s words fell, everyone in the hall glanced at each other. Finally, a tier three alchemist who was near the front of the queue walked forward and took out a jade bottle that stored the ‘Black Iron Spiritual Leaf’ from his storage ring. After which, he placed it into the groove. He faced Qie Mi Er and the others on top and said respectfully, “Deputy chairman sir, with my ability, I can only refine the ‘Black Iron Spiritual Leaf’ three times.”

Qie Mi Er nodded slightly. Being able to perform three effective refinements on the ‘Black Iron Spiritual Leaf’ could be considered a result that was not bad. According to his estimation, the purity that this young man’s refinement had reached should be around five points or so.

As Qie Mi Er had expected, after the machine flickered a couple of times, the monitor immediately revealed a large ‘Five’.

“Five points. You pass the test. Congratulations.” Seeing the blood red word, Qie Mi Er nodded and laughed.

“Next...”

“Four points... pass.”

A tier two alchemist was pushed forward and swiftly prepared everything. A moment later, the word 'four' that was flashed on the monitor caused him to rejoice as he exhaled. After which, he patted his chest and moved to one side.

"Next..."

"Five points, pass."

"Next..."

"Three points, fail."

After a few people who had passed, there was finally an unlucky tier two alchemist who stepped back with a defeated expression.

As the time for the examination flowed by, Liu Ling finally moved leisurely to the side of the examination machine under the focus of everyone. After which, he took out a jade bottle from his storage ring and carefully placed it into the groove. He lifted his head and said and smiled to Qie Mi Er. "I have limited ability. I can only refine it six times."

Once Liu Ling's words left his mouth, everyone in the room was immediately stunned. At that moment they were in an uproar. Not only the people below, but also Qie Mi Er and the others could not help but exchange astonished gazes. Being able to refine the 'Black Iron Spiritual Leaf' five times would at least require the ability of a peak level tier three alchemist.

TL: peak level tier three alchemist - the highest level within tier three. If one advanced further, one would reach tier four.

Qie Mi Er softly sighed. His gaze shifted to the monitor. There, the glow flickered for some time before a large 'Seven' slowly appeared...

"Seven points. Congratulations... you have passed." Qie Mi Er exhaled gently as he smiled and said.

Liu Ling smiled and moved his lofty body to one side. Off and on, his gaze would drift toward the furthest person in back where Xiao Yan rested with his eyes closed.

With the climax created by Liu Ling, the rest that followed behind undoubtedly appeared extremely ordinary. The people who were only able to refine it two or three times came one after another. They were unable to hook onto the heart of Qie Mi Er and the others.

The dullness carried on until it was Little Princess's turn where it was finally broken. This young lady who was quite young was actually able to refine the 'Black Iron Spiritual Leaf' five times. However, due to some issues as a result of her inexperience, the grade she obtained was worse than Liu Ling by 0.5 points.

After Little Princess, there were a few seeded competitors with abilities that were quite good and managed to achieve six points each. However, when these people were compared to Liu Ling, they undoubtedly fared a little poorer. Looking at this situation, the person with the best result would definitely be Liu Ling.

As the candidates went over one after another, the middle of the large hall once again began to gradually become empty. A moment later, only Xiao Yan was left standing alone in the middle.

“Yan Xiao, it’s your turn...” Seeing Xiao Yan, who had his eyes closed as though he was sleeping, Qie Mi Er helplessly opened his mouth and hastened him.

Hearing the urging voice, Xiao Yan slowly opened his eyes. He lazily scanned around him before finally stopping on Liu Ling who was smiling as he looked at him. Xiao Yan smiled faintly. After which, he threw a comforting gaze toward the anxious faced Ao Tuo.

Xiao Yan climbed up a few stairs with wide steps before stopping at the side of the examination machine. He took out the jade bottle that contained the powder refined from the ‘Black Iron Spiritual Leaf’. After which, he randomly threw it into the groove under Qie Mi Er and the others speechless gaze.

“Little Fellow. How many times did you refine this ingredient?” Seeing that Xiao Yan, who had his head lowered, did not have any intention of opening his mouth to speak, Qie Mi Er could only take the initiative to inquire.

“How many times?” Xiao Yan frowned slightly and hesitated for a moment. He then said uncertainly, “It seems like... eight times.”

Silence.

The large hall became as silent as death at this moment.

“Hmph. Foolish fellow. Does he think that such words can be randomly reported?” Being similarly violently choked by these words of Xiao Yan, Little Princess finally could not help but coldly mock. She did not believe that a tier two alchemist would actually have the ability to refine the ‘Black Iron Spiritual Leaf’ eight times.

However, before the cold smile on Little Princess’s pretty face could completely disappear, it abruptly stiffened at the next moment. This was because, a bright red large ‘Nine’ had slowly surfaced on the monitor of the examination machine.

“Nine points...”

As they saw the bright red large number, Qie Mi Er suddenly felt that his heart had instantly shrunk tightly...

Chapter 294: The Finish

Silence.

A silence like that of death. The originally lively hall had in an instant become totally quiet. The flickering bright red glow on the examination machine flashed on the faces of everyone, imprinting a comical dullness.

Ao Tuo watched the flickering monitor with a stunned expression. His heart, which felt a little helpless at Xiao Yan's earlier performance appeared to have undergone a drastic change. Having the ability to refine the 'Black Iron Spiritual Leaf' for eight times was something that could be comparable to some alchemists who had just entered tier four. It should be known that with Ao Tuo's flame controlling ability, he could only refine the ingredient nine times...

TL: Peak of tier three -> Start of tier four = large jump like Dou Shi to Da Dou Shi

However, Xiao Yan was actually able to achieve this stage at such an age. He was afraid that this training talent could only use one word to be described: Monstrous!

Ao Tuo had never underestimated Xiao Yan's talent for refining pills. However, Xiao Yan's performance had still let him understand that his high regard for Xiao Yan was still low...

"It appears that this fellow already possesses the ability to take the test for a tier three alchemist. Ah, he hides it really deep, causing my old self to be so alarmed..." Ao Tuo muttered in his heart. He eyed the calm face of the young man in front of him and shook his head with a bitter smile.

Within the large hall, the silent atmosphere persisted for a long time before it finally and gradually eased up. Numerous different gazes that contained respect, curiosity, envy, etc, were repeatedly shot at the skinny back. Currently, there was not a single person who dared to display the kind of eyes they used when Xiao Yan had entered some time ago.

The Little Princess bit her red lips while the shock in her eyes was slowly withdrawn. Her gaze swept over Xiao Yan. When she recalled her attitude from before, some helplessness and anger flashed across her eyes. "This fellow purposefully hid his strength to let people look down on him. Is he a masochist?"

Of course, with the ability that Xiao Yan had currently displayed, Little Princess could naturally only say these words in her heart. She clearly understood that with her earlier attitude, she had definitely caused Xiao Yan to feel some dislike for her in his heart. Therefore, she did not choose to immediately step forward to apologize and curry favor. Although Xiao Yan may be an outstanding seeded competitor who had strength, it was not sufficient for her, as the little princess of the imperial family, to humbly try to befriend

him... However, honestly speaking, losing the chance to cross arms with such an outstanding person caused Little Princess to feel a little bitter in her heart.

While Little Princess was quietly thinking to herself, the handsome face of Liu Ling by her side alternated between being dark and clear. His eyes stared at the flickering red colored score. Seeing his manner, it appeared that he was highly doubtful of the authenticity of the examination machine. Nine points. Heavens! That was higher than him by a full two points! This was something that the proud boned Liu Ling had some difficulty accepting.

Everyone in the hall had different expressions under this shocking results and they were all extremely interested now.

Qie Mi Er coughed gently and woke up everyone from their dull state. His eyes gave a complicated look as he eyed the young man with an ordinary appearance. A long while later, he sighed and said, "Ah, it looks like I am really old. I nearly... but young friend Yan Xiao hides his ability really deeply. With this ability of yours, the tier two badge on your chest is somewhat incomparable with your status."

After this somewhat terrifying grade of Xiao Yan, the manner in which Qie Mi Er used to address him also began to have some changes. Regardless of Xiao Yan's actual strength, just this display of ingredient refinement was something that an ordinary alchemist could not do. Moreover, Xiao Yan's current age and potential was the true reason for Qie Mi Er to really view him seriously. At around the age of twenty, he was able to refine the 'Black Iron Spiritual Leaf' eight times. It was likely that even Gu He back then could not do such a thing?

And... most importantly, just what kind of strength did the teacher behind Xiao Yan had if he was able to teach such an outstanding student?

Clearly sensing some faint attitude change in the other party's tone, Xiao Yan calmly smiled. "Deputy Chairman must be joking. I am only a little good at controlling flame. The others are not worth mentioning."

After this test which had shocked the entire place, Qie Mi Er would naturally no longer believe such words from Xiao Yan. He smiled with assent, merely thinking that Xiao Yan was just trying to continue hiding his ability.

"Old Ao, you have very good vision..." Qie Mi Er turned his head around and patted the shoulders of Ao Tuo who had recovered from his shock as he said with a smile.

"This has also far exceeded my expectation. I did not expect that in merely a year, this little fellow had improved to such a stage. Back then, when he was taking the test for a tier two alchemist in my association, he was very far from what he is now. This improvement speed really leaves one speechless." Although Ao Tuo felt very good

because of those old envious gazes around him, he still smiled bitterly and shook his head before sighing.

“Forget it. Let’s not bother about this now. We should first announce the results of the test.” Ao Tuo rubbed his white beard. He saw Xiao Yan’s calm face and did not continue to be entangled by this issue. Instead, he voiced a reminder.

“Do we still need to announce it? Yan Xiao’s grade is the best. Liu Ling is second, followed by Yue-er. Other than those people who did not meet the requirement, the rest can be considered to have passed.” Qie Mi Er smiled, immediately turned around and faced Xiao Yan and his competitors. He said seriously, “I would first like to congratulate those who have passed the association’s internal test. Tomorrow will be the time when the test starts... all of you should be clear that in such a grand meeting, there will be some outstanding alchemists from other countries beside the alchemists from our country participating. Similarly, their ability cannot be underestimated. All of you should do your utmost best to suppress them. Otherwise, if the alchemists from another country were to take the champion of our empire’s grand competition. It would really be embarrassing...”

“Yes!”

Being placed with this large hat of bringing honor to the country, some of the young men who had not yet seen the world immediately felt their blood boil. An excited orderly response echoed throughout the entire hall.

With both hands lazily inserted in his sleeves, Xiao Yan indifferently watched some of the young people around him whose emotions had soared. Other than Liu Ling and few others, most of the alchemists had varying degrees of excited redness on their faces.

The corner of Xiao Yan’s eyes glanced at Liu Ling’s somewhat gloomy face. The corner of his mouth was lifted. Clearly, this guy was still bearing a grudge over having lost to him in the test.

Xiao Yan’s finger randomly flicked in his sleeves. This passionate speech of Qie Mi Er did not have the slightest effect on Xiao Yan. Although his current age ought to be when young people were extremely frivolous, it appeared to be very difficult to find such a thing on Xiao Yan...

Were it not for him having some interest in the reward for the champion spot, it was likely that Xiao Yan would not participate in such a Grand Meeting. Rudely speaking, it was none of his concern whether it was a competitor from other countries or this empire became the champion.

Standing on the high platform, Qie Mi Er slowly swept over the competitors below whose enthusiasm had soared. When his gaze was shifted to Xiao Yan, he was

momentarily stunned. Immediately, his eyes narrowed. The value he attached to Xiao Yan in his heart had also become much greater.

“This little fellow is really not simple...”

If it was someone much older who possessed such a calm manner, Qie Mi Er would not feel anything inappropriate. However, a person around twenty years old ought to be at the stage where one was a wildly arrogant and an uncontrolled young man. However, Xiao Yan had a mental strength like an old man who had experienced worldly affairs for a long time. This could not help, but cause people to treat him with great attention.

From how Qie Mi Er saw it, Xiao Yan already possessed some ability and his character had far exceeded the basic requirement. He had already met the two most important conditions to become a strong person. Him growing stronger was only a matter of time.

“Once I return, I must definitely let Ao Tuo tell us more about Yan Xiao’s background. If things are done appropriately, this little fellow may well be another Pill-King Gu He. He might even... have the possibility to exceed him.” Qie Mi Er muttered softly in his heart.

“If he really does possess this potential, we must definitely not let such a talent fall into the Misty Cloud Sect or those other strength’s hands this time around...”

As he thought in this manner within his heart, Qie Mi Er no longer procrastinated. He waved his hand and smiled as he said to everyone, “Haha, alright. The test is over. Everyone please take your leave. Remember the starting time of the Grand Meeting tomorrow. Do not be late because of anything!”

Hearing this, everyone in the hall faced the group of association elders on the high platform. They bowed before scattering.

“Ke ke, Mister Yan Xiao. I did not expect that you would have your skills hidden so well. Liu Ling really admires you.” Just as Xiao Yan wanted to follow the large human crowd to leave the hall, a laughter caused him to knit his eyebrow together slightly and pause his footsteps.

He tilted his head to see that smiling Liu Ling and said faintly, “I was just lucky. There isn’t any hiding of skills.”

“Mister Yan Xiao still keeps such a low profile. Ke ke, I think that you should have used the ‘Heavenly Flame’ during the test, right?” Liu Ling laughed. Although the truth was in front of him, he still did not quite believe that Xiao Yan completely used his own strength to obtain such a result. Recalling the matter about the ‘Heavenly Flame’ back then, he became much more relieved. From how he saw it, Xiao Yan should have used the ‘Heavenly Flame’ during this test in order to obtain such an outstanding result. If it was like this, he should be about the same as Xiao Yan if he used his hidden card.

When a person who had always been called a genius all the time suddenly met a person of similar age who actually far surpassed him, he would find many different excuses in order to put up a facade that this new person was really just like anyone else. This was all in order to show that he was not weaker than the other person.

Xiao Yan glanced at this handsome young man who was naturally blessed with good looks. He naturally knew the meaning contained in the other person's words. Immediately, he smiled in a somewhat ridiculing manner as he said softly, "Mister Liu Ling. Just treat whatever you say as correct. I don't have any opinions..."

Xiao Yan did not have any intention to argue with Liu Ling. This was because he thought this was extremely silly. Since the other party was willing to believe his own wild imagination, he would just leave him be. The final truth would give him a few violent tight slaps. Saying anything to him now would only cause him to think that Xiao Yan was acting. Since it was so, what else could Xiao Yan say?

After saying the sentence, the corner of Xiao Yan's mouth contained a mocking smile as he directly walked out of the door under the presence of Liu Ling's cold gaze. After which, he disappeared from Liu Ling's sight.

With a gaze that contained a coldness, Liu Ling stared at Xiao Yan's disappearing back. He pursed up his lips into a thin line. Clenching his fist, he softly and coldly laughed, "What is there to be proud of? The competition in the Grand Meeting does not merely test how to refine the ingredients. Wait until the Grand Meeting. I will let you know that other than the 'Heavenly Flame', everything else about you is basically worthless!"

Chapter 295: Black Horse

As Xiao Yan walked out of the test ground, Ao Tuo caught up with him from behind and walked side by side with Xiao Yan. Occasionally, Ao Tuo would tilt his head and glance at the calm faced young man who was smiling. His gaze was somewhat strange.

"Why do you keep staring at me?" After walking for some distance, Xiao Yan could not endure Ao Tuo's gaze. Finally, he helplessly shook his head and asked.

"Ke ke, I am just trying to figure out how many things you, little fellow, are hiding. You are actually able to cause everyone to be so shocked..." Ao Tuo said with a smile.

Hearing this, Xiao Yan could only helplessly shrug his shoulders.

"With your performance being so eye catching this time around, I think that old fellow, Qi Mi Er, will definitely come to me to inquire about your background pretty soon. Although he does not know your actual ability, just being able to refine the 'Black Iron Spiritual Leaf' eight times when you are only around twenty years old is something that could be counted with one hand since the association was founded." Ao Tuo said.

"I know..." As Xiao Yan slowly walked, he nodded his head. During the refining of the 'Black Iron Spiritual Leaf', he had also considered all of this. However, the Grand Meeting was about to begin. Revealing his ability was something that had to be done sooner or later. Therefore, there was no necessity to purposefully perform poorly here. Although keeping a low profile was good, if it was overdone, the disdain and the mocking gazes really caused Xiao Yan to feel entangled and helpless.

"I will have to trouble Grandmaster Ao Tuo to help me keep anything related to my identity a secret." Xiao Yan pursed up his lips and softly said, "Due to some issues, if my identity is exposed, it is very likely that I would be unable to participate in this Grand Meeting. Therefore, I would like Grandmaster to try your best to help me."

Hearing the serious consequence that Xiao Yan had mentioned, Ao Tuo was at a loss. He immediately knit his eyebrows tightly together. If Xiao Yan were to withdraw from the competition, it would result in the Black Rock City's Alchemist Association losing a chance to obtain a good result. This threat had a very significant weight toward Ao Tuo who had not had any great contributions ever since he came into his position.

Ao Tuo frowned tightly and mused for a long while before nodding his head. He smiled bitterly and said, "Alright. I will try my best to help you keep it a secret. It is good that the member information has yet to be submitted. I can still change it."

"Ke ke, then thank you very much, Grandmaster Ao Tuo." Hearing his words, Xiao Yan sighed in relief and replied along with a smile.

"There's no choice. I don't want the competitor that I had a difficult time finding to just run away." Ao Tuo helplessly said.

Xiao Yan smiled. He was about to say something when Frank's clear laughter suddenly sounded in front of them, "Hey, Old Ao. How was it? Has the test ended? How did the little fellow do?"

Currently, Xiao Yan and Ao Tuo had already walked out of the corridor. Since this was an intersection, the human flow here was quite significant. When they heard Frank's laughter, there were quite a number of curious people who immediately slowed their footsteps and threw their gazes at Xiao Yan, who was walking together with Ao Tuo. As the test before was an internal one, these alchemists did not know the exact results of the competition. However, they were able to know that the people who were able to participate in that internal test were mostly seeded competitors in this Grand Meeting and their abilities were extraordinary.

Hearing the laughter, Xiao Yan raised his head and eyed Frank who was striding over with a smile. Following beside him was the icy looking Xue Mei, who was wearing a silver colored dress and Ling Fei. At the moment, their gazes were a little curious as they too, shot them toward Xiao Yan. Clearly, they were very curious as to what kind of result Xiao Yan was able to obtain at a test of this level.

"It's alright. I have barely managed to pass..." Seeing the three people who had arrived in front of him, Xiao Yan smiled and said.

Hearing this, Ao Tuo at the side rolled his eyes. If this kind of result was considered just passable, then wouldn't the rest of the people fail?

"Haha, you passed? That's good. I was originally still a little worried. After all, those fellows who participate in the internal test aren't ordinary people." Frank said with another smile.

"Hey, you. This time around, you are representing our Black Rock City. Although I don't expect you to surpass the geniuses around Liu Ling's level, you need to at least get into the top ten for this kind of internal test in order for you to gain the possibility of attaining a good result at the Grand Meeting. Just simply passable is inadequate..." Ling Fei muttered. Clearly, she thought the passable that Xiao Yan had mentioned would be the kind that barely met the grade needed to pass.

"Liu Ling may be a genius, but he is after all the disciple of the Pill-King. Moreover, he is a little older than Xiao... Yan Xiao. Having received such a result is already quite good. At the very least, we don't even have the qualification to obtain this kind of result." It appeared that because Xiao Yan helped put in some good words on her behalf on the matter of the 'Peach Blossom Flame' the last time around, Xue Mei glanced at Ling Fei and said faintly, "I know that you hero worship that Liu Ling, but Yan Xiao is someone from our side. If he loses, our Black Rock City's reputation will suffer."

"I have only said this because he is the representative from our Black Rock City... and did not say much about him... what does this have to do with Liu Ling?" Ling Fei said resentfully.

"Oh, alright. The both of you should quiet down." Seeing this pair of enemies, Ao Tuo helplessly shook his head. He faced Frank and said with a grin, "When you hear what happened, you will likely be shocked until your jaws drop."

"Oh? What happened?" Frank was stunned as he uncertainly asked.

Ao Tuo silently smiled. He was about to open his mouth when a commotion occurred in the corridor behind him. They turned around to take a look. It appeared that the commotion was caused by the competitors that were participating in the test who had successively come out. The two people right at the front were coincidentally the Little Princess and the somewhat gloomy faced Liu Ling.

"Is that Liu Ling? Pill-King Grandmaster Gu He's disciple? His presence is indeed extraordinary."

"He's a tier three alchemist at such a young age. Ah, he really causes people..."

“I think that the one with the best result for the test would undoubtedly be him.”

“He does have such a good teacher... There’s no point being envious over it.” Eyeing the group of people that had walked out from the corridor, the surrounding people immediately began to engage in their private conversations.

Xiao Yan tilted his head and eyed Liu Ling, who was walking over. He smiled.

Walking out of the corridor with a gloomy face, Liu Ling spotted the familiar back with one glance. The corner of his mouth twitched a little. He then inhaled a deep breath of air. Instantly, the emotions on his face swiftly disappeared. Replacing it was that feminine smile.

“Mister Yan Xiao congratulations.” Liu Ling walked forward. He first bowed and greeted Ao Tuo and Frank before turning his head to speak to Xiao Yan, with a smile plastered on his face.

Xiao Yan shook his head. “I was lucky.”

“I still have something to do and it is not convenient for me to converse any longer, Mister Yan Xiao, let us meet at the Grand Meeting tomorrow.” Liu Ling clearly was not in the mood to chat now. After he greeted them, he lifted his feet and quickly moved passed Xiao Yan’s group. After which, he passed through the crowd and disappeared from everyone’s sight.

“Mister Yan Xiao.” After following Liu Ling and taking a few steps forward, Little Princess suddenly paused. She hesitated a moment before turning around and said with a smile to Xiao Yan, “There is a gathering tonight where many alchemists will be attending, You...”

“Hehe, I’m sorry. I still have something to do tonight and I’m afraid I won’t have the time...” Xiao Yan was a little stunned at this olive branch that the Little Princess suddenly extended toward him. He immediately understood the true reasoning, shook his head and smiled as he replied.

Xiao Yan’s rejection was not beyond Little Princess’s expectations. Her lips moved a little. After staring at Xiao Yan for a moment, she finally said with another smile, “Since it’s like this, then I will not force you. In the future, if Mister Yan Xiao needs any help, you can come and look for me. Goodbye.”

Xiao Yan pursed up his lips as he eyed the Little Princess who slowly disappeared from the edge of his sight. He recalled her attitude toward him before the test and took a look at the situation again. He could not help but smile bitterly as he said in his heart, “She is indeed a person from the imperial family. In her eyes, the difference between someone useful and someone who is not actually makes such a big difference in treatment.

After watching Liu Ling disappear, Ling Fei, who still had stars in her pupils, finally turned around. She eyed Xiao Yan and asked doubtfully, "That's right? Why did he congratulate you just now?"

"It's nothing."

Xiao Yan smiled. He did not think that winning over Liu Ling was something very great. Although he was Gu He's disciple, but to Xiao Yan, who had once dared to treat Gu He and Queen Medusa as fish and pearl while he acted as a fisherman, this little fame did not cause him to feel the slightest awe.

TL: Take advantage of Gu He and Queen Medusa's fight to benefit

"Everyone, I also have some things to do. I will take my leave first. Let's meet again at tomorrow's Grand Meeting." Without giving Ling Fei a chance to continue to inquire further, Xiao Yan smiled at Ao Tuo and the others. He cupped his hands together before swiftly walking out of the association.

"The internal test just now was to refine the 'Black Iron Spiritual Leaf'." Watching Xiao Yan's hurrying back, Ao Tuo touched his white beard and suddenly said a moment later.

"Refining the 'Black Iron Spiritual Leaf'? That seems quite difficult. That thing is almost the hardest ingredient among the middle-grade ingredients to refine. With my current ability, I would at most be able to refine it eight or nine times." Hearing his words, Frank was surprised as he turned his head and replied.

"Haha, that's right." Ao Tuo smiled and nodded his head. He faced the spot where Liu Ling disappeared and fondled his chin. "That Little Fellow refined it six times."

"Six times?" Hearing Ao Tuo's words, Frank's face was immediately filled with shock. He clicked his tongue and praised, "How incredible. At such an age, he was actually able to achieve that many refinements. He really is worthy of being Gu He's disciple."

"That thing... I seem to be only able to refine two times. Ling Fei is around the same as me. That Liu Ling's talent is really extraordinary." Xue Mei at the side sighed gently as she said.

"Hee hee. That is only natural. The most outstanding person among the Jia Ma Empire's younger generation alchemists is undoubtedly no one but him." Ling Fei smiled and said. Seeing her manner, it appeared that she was really worshipped Liu Ling.

"Ke ke, that may not necessarily be true."

Ao Tuo smiled and shook his head. Seeing Ling Fei's angry eyes staring at him, he said with a grin, "Although Liu Ling is extremely outstanding, Yan Xiao is not any worse

compared to him. In the test just now, Liu Ling refined six times while Yan Xiao did it eight times!”

These words of Ao Tuo were undoubtedly like a thunderbolt, causing Frank’s expression to instantly stiffen. Eight times? That was an extent that required a tier four alchemist in order to achieve. Yet Xiao Yan, as a tier two alchemist, was actually able to achieve this? How was this possible?

“Teac... Teacher, you... you are joking right?” Ling Fei recovered from her shock as she awkwardly said. She had great difficulty believing that Xiao Yan was actually, ridiculously stronger than Liu Ling.

On one side, Xue Mei also widened her red lips. Her icy expression was at the moment, somewhat shocked. Although she had never underestimated Xiao Yan, she had never thought that he would be able to attain such an eye catching result.

“Old Ao. Is what you said true?” Fu Lan Ke stared at Ao Tuo intently. His face revealed an unrestrained joy. The more outstanding Xiao Yan’s performance was, the greater the benefit to the Black Rock City’s branch.

“This little fellow hides his ability absurdly deep. Suddenly, I have begun to anticipate the Grand Meeting this time around.” Ao Tuo smiled as he eyed the spot where Xiao Yan had disappeared from. He said, “During this Grand Meeting, Yan Xiao may well be the largest black horse!”

Chapter 296: Gathering

After walking out from the alchemist association, Xiao Yan returned directly to the inn where he was staying at. He rested a couple of hours in the inn until he had recovered to his peak before he left the inn. He then walked to the Nalan clan to begin today’s poison removing session.

Although he knew that the ‘Searing Poison’ within his body would become denser each time he helped Nalan Jie remove the poison, Xiao Yan could only continue in this manner in order to get the powerful energy contained in the ‘Searing Poison’ and the ‘Seven Magical Green Spirit Saliva’. However, regardless of how abnormal the ‘Searing Poison’ was, he was not extremely concerned. After all, with the ‘Green Lotus Core Flame’ protecting his body, Xiao Yan believed that he could contend with the ‘Searing Poison’ even if it erupted inside him.

After these few days where Nalan Jie and Nalan Su, personally saw him off, the entire Nalan clan had all come to know Xiao Yan as a young man with a cold expression. Therefore, when they saw his figure, not only did they not step forward to block him, they also respectfully bowed and greeted him when he passed by.

Currently, the sky had already turned dark. However, the Nalan clan remained brightly lit. The members of the clan came and went on the paths, much like a marketplace.

Xiao Yan walked past a couple of small paths with great familiarity and the spacious large hall of the Nalan clan once again appeared in his sight. He slowly walked closer. Waves of noisy laughter that were mixed with some melodies were emitted from the hall. This caused Xiao Yan, who liked serenity to frown slightly.

Slowly walking into the hall, Xiao Yan lifted his eyes and glanced around. He saw that there were quite a number of people sitting within. They were smiling and conversing with each other, as if it was a fun gathering.

Standing by the door, Xiao Yan's gaze swept through the interior of the hall and was somewhat surprised to find that not only Liu Ling and Little Princess were present, but even Ya Fei was among them. The current her was wearing a red colored tight dress. A snow white fur coat covered her shoulders, adding a little grace and luxury to her appearance. Her beautiful and enchanting curves caused quite a number of men's gazes to secretly shoot over to her.

"Looks like I came at an inappropriate time..."

Eyeing this lively hall, Xiao Yan helplessly shook his head. He was just about to turn around and return when a female's gentle voice suddenly sounded from his side, "Mister Yan Xiao, since you are here, why don't you come in and rest for a while."

Hearing the voice, Xiao Yan tilted his head and eyed the delicate beauty standing beside a pillar. His indifferent face involuntarily became a little warmer. However, following closely after that, his face once again recovered its indifferentness as he said, "There's no need. Nalan xiao-jie, I like silence and really don't enjoy these kinds of scenes."

The beauty that appeared beside the pillar was naturally the most precious person of the Nalan clan, Nalan Yanran. She was currently standing prettily by the pillar. Her exquisite and peerless face contained a gentle smile. The wide sleeves, moon colored clothes that only a member of the Misty Cloud Sect could wear, occasionally revealed the graceful curves underneath. When comparing her figure, she did not appear to be any worse than Ya Fei. However, their auras were completely different.

Seeing the current Nalan Yanran, Xiao Yan could not help but admit that during these three years, she had indeed changed from that spoiled youth back then to the current matured lady who had a refined presence. For such a lady, it would not be strange if one said that she was courted by all the men within thousands of kilometers.

However, regardless of how Nalan Yanran changed, the one that was imprinted in Xiao Yan's mind like a brand was always that spoiled girl who had forcefully broke the

engagement in the Xiao clan, making things difficult for his father back then. Therefore, it had been difficult for Xiao Yan to display any nice expressions toward her.

“Mister Yan Xiao, I heard that during the Alchemist Association’s internal test this time around your results were quite good.” Nalan Yanran had been seeing Xiao Yan’s icy face whenever they met during these couple of days. Therefore, Nalan Yanran did not withdraw because of his current expression. She slowly walked forward and said with a smile, “Congratulations.”

As he sniffed the fragrance that shrouded around him, Xiao Yan’s footsteps moved toward the other side without anyone noticing. Xiao Yan did not feel that it was strange for her to know about the result of the Alchemist Association’s internal test. With the Nalan clan’s strength in the Jia Ma Empire, it was not difficult to know about this little bit of information. Moreover, in order to please her, what would that Liu Ling not say...

“Luck” Xiao Yan said, shaking his head faintly. He spoke as if he cherished each word like precious gold, only spending a little at a time. His gaze did not even turn to Nalan Yanran as he spoke; he remained in silence.

This indifferentness of Xiao Yan that isolated people far away from him caused Nalan Yanran to feel a little headache. In so many years, the young man in front of her was the first male to treat her so coldly. She smiled bitterly and shook her head, intending to cease speaking. However, she was about to step away when a numb gentle laughter that could cause men to feel their legs grow weak suddenly sounded behind them.

“Hehe, Nalan xiao-jie, there are many people waiting for you inside. Yet you are leisurely chatting with someone here.”

Hearing this familiar laughter, Xiao Yan turned his head. He eyed the bewitching woman who was carrying a cup of red wine and lazily leaning against the door. His cold and indifferent face melted slightly.

“Hello Mister Yan Xiao. We meet again.” Ya Fei smiled and walked forward as she waved her transparent winecup at Xiao Yan. Her long pretty eyelashes emitted a fox demon like cunningness.

“Why? Is Mister Yan Xiao and Ya Fei close?” Hearing Ya Fei’s greeting, Nalan Yanran’s eyebrows twitched without leaving a trace as she asked with a smile.

“Yan Xiao and I have known each other for a few years and our relationship is quite good.” Ya Fei said and gave yet another smile. Her eyes rotated and swept toward Xiao Yan as she said with a smile still on her face, “Am I right, Mister Yan Xiao?”

Xiao Yan shrugged his shoulders and took the winecup from Ya Fei’s hand in an offhanded manner. After which, he emptied it into his mouth in front of the latter’s slightly red pretty face. He said with a smile, “Why are you here?”

Ya Fei grabbed the winecup from Xiao Yan' hand and angrily said with a slightly red face, "You really are too rude..."

Xiao Yan smiled as he stared at Ya Fei's red and sleek face. The latter's enchanting loveliness really moved people's hearts. No wonder back at Wu Tan City, there were countless of men who shoved until their heads were injured as they rushed to the auction house in order to see Ya Fei's appearance.

"Back then, father also appeared to have such symptoms. An old bull eating the tender glass is not a good act..." Xiao Yan's hand slowly fondled his chin as he suddenly thought mischievously in his heart.

TL: An old bull eating the tender glass = an old man having a woman much younger than him

Nalan Yanran stood on one side and eyed these two people who had some signs of flirting. Her exquisite face became a little unnatural. She had originally thought that Xiao Yan's coldness was caused by his character. However, when she saw the warmth in his smile between him and Ya Fei, she saw that it was completely void of the coldness that he had when treating her.

"Mister Yan Xiao, Ya Fei xiao-jie, you can continue to chat. I will go first. Sorry." Nalan Yanran bowed slightly to the two of them, turned around and walked into the large hall, leaving the moving figure of her back for them to see.

As he watched Nalan Yanran's back, which had left, Xiao Yan did not have any intention of staying any longer. He pursed up his lips and tasted the remaining taste of the red wine in his mouth.

"Little fellow. You got some guts to actually take advantage of elder sister..." After Nalan Yanran left, Ya Fei's eyebrows became vertical as she spoke to Xiao Yan with annoyance.

Xiao Yan's gaze swept passed Ya Fei's face and finally stopped on those seductive red lips. He recalled the fascinating thought of the two of them drinking from the same winecup a moment ago. A smile surfaced on the corner of his mouth.

As her mouth was being stared at by Xiao Yan, Ya Fei naturally knew what he was thinking. Immediately, an embarrassed redness flew onto her pretty face as she stomped her feet and scolded, "If you continue to act strangely, don't blame elder sister for shouting your real name."

Seeing her embarrassed expression, Xiao Yan smiled and appropriately withdrew his gaze. "Why are you here?"

“The matter of Grandfather Nalan gradually recovering is a big thing in the Nalan clan. As a business partner of the Nalan clan, us, the Primer clan was naturally among those invited.” Ya Fei faced the interior of the hall and fondled her snow white chin. She smiled and said, “Naturally, other than us the Primer clan, the people inside are mostly strengths which are quite well known in the Jia Ma Sacred City.”

“Che, they have begun celebrating when the ‘Searing Poison’ has not even been completely removed? Isn’t this a little too early?” Hearing the information, Xiao Yan could not help but shake his head and said with his lips curled.

“Ha ha. This is also because Grandfather Nalan trusts your ability. Although, even I did not expect that you would really be able to remove the ‘Searing Poison’ from Grandfather Nalan’s body. You should know that it is the ‘Searing Poison’ which even Pill-King Gu He had a headache over. Now, news about you is being spread between many different strengths in the empire.” Ya Fei’s pretty eyes stared at Xiao Yan as she said with some astonishment. Back then, when she recommended that he come to the Nalan clan, she had only adopted the thought of simply giving it a try. She had never thought that Xiao Yan would actually be able to cure Grandfather Nalan.

“If it were not for that ‘Seven Magical Green Spirit Saliva’, I would not be here...” Xiao Yan gaze swept over the large hall as he faintly replied.

“You have also seen Nalan Yanran, but you are much more calm than I had expected.” Ya Fei said and gave a mischievous smile.

“The one who saw her is Yan Xiao and not Xiao Yan...” Xiao Yan crossed his ten fingers. His gaze stared at the delicate woman who had become the center of attention the moment she walked into the hall. His dark black eyes contained an iciness.

Ya Fei sighed and shook her head. She did not continue to inquire about this issue. Instead, she said with yet another smile, “Let’s go. Go in and take a look. Our clan head really wants to meet you, the outstanding young man who could cause Old Hai to show fear.”

“Not interested.”

“Please. Little fellow, Elder Sister has helped you so much. You cannot cause Elder Sister to lose face...” Seeing that Xiao Yan intended to leave, Ya Fei’s delicate hands were put together and she continued to shake them...

“Ah, you are making people make stupid decisions...” Ya Fei was born with an enchanting aura. Adding this little girl like manner to it, Xiao Yan could only smile bitterly and shake his head at this visual assault. He waved his hand and helplessly said, “Alright. Let’s go and see.”

Seeing that Xiao Yan had agreed, a joy immediately surfaced on Ya Fei's pretty face. The little girl manner of her face instantly disappeared. She then turned around and elegantly led the way in front. Watching this swift change of hers, Xiao Yan bitterly smiled and sighed. He could only follow her.

They walked through the main door. The noisiness inside once again caused Xiao Yan to frown slightly. Ya Fei knew he liked quietness and hurriedly extended her delicate hand to pull him swiftly through the crowd.

With Ya Fei's appearance, it was natural that she would easily catch people's eyes. Immediately, numerous gazes were shot over. When these gazes saw that Ya Fei's and Xiao Yan's hands which were being held together, they became momentarily blank. They immediately stared at the ordinary looking Xiao Yan with strange gazes. The current Ya Fei could also be considered a famous person in the Jia Ma Sacred City. At such an age, she already controlled the huge Primer Auction House Headquarters. This was the first time this had happened in the Primer clan. Moreover, she managed the auction house until it was in perfect order. This caused many people who had called her a flower vase to become quite shocked.

TL: Flower vase - used to describe a beautiful woman who has no brains

Although Ya Fei was warm on the surface and appeared extremely easy to converse with, people who were familiar with her knew that this enchanting, stunning creature had some sort of resistance to men. It was easy to be an ordinary friend, but if one wanted to progress to the next stage, it was fraught with difficulty. Therefore, when they saw that Ya Fei was actually holding hands with a man whose appearance was not great, their gazes were naturally a little strange.

Of course, with Ya Fei's appearance and aura, there was no shortage of admirers in the hall. The gazes that these people used to watch Xiao Yan were filled with sourness and fury.

The various different kinds of gazes around him did not cause any changes on Xiao Yan's face. He allowed Ya Fei to pull him as she pleased as his expression calmly endured those heated gazes.

As they passed through the crowd, Ya Fei's footsteps suddenly came to a stop. Xiao Yan's gaze leaped over her and eyed the quiet seats in a corner. At that spot, a white haired old man was smiling as he conversed with those around him. His slightly strict old face faintly seeped out some dignity.

"He is the head of our Primer clan, Primer Tengshan." Ya Fei softly introduced. After which, she appeared to have sensed something and quickly released Xiao Yan's hand. Her delicate fingers pulled aside the black hair on her forehead. Standing behind her, Xiao Yan could notice that the tender tip of her ears had become much redder.

“Oh.” Xiao Yan randomly nodded his head. He followed Ya Fei and slowly walked onto the platform. After which, her footsteps came to a stop. Ya Fei then swiftly stepped forward, bent her body and softly said something to the old man’s ear.

A long while later, the old man smiled and nodded. He raised his head, eyed Xiao Yan and stood up. He smiled and said, “Young friend Yan Xiao. I have heard about you for a long time and am pleased to finally meet you. I am the head of the Primer clan, Primer Tengshan.”

“I am just a nameless person. How could I be worth anything for Clan Head Tengshan to care about?” Xiao Yan smiled and said.

“There aren’t many people in the Jia Ma Empire who are able to receive such treatment from Old Hai. How could you young friend be considered nameless?” Primer Tengshan said with another smile.

Xiao Yan smiled without speaking. He quietly muttered in his heart, “Looks like Hai Bo Dong relationship with the Primer clan is not an ordinary one. Don’t tell me that old fellow is also a member of the Primer clan?”

“Ke ke, young friend Yan Xiao, please take a seat.” Primer Tengshan smiled and gave the seat beside him to Xiao Yan. He stepped back a little, smiled and said after he saw Xiao Yan take his offer, “Young friend Xiao Yan, your result at the Alchemist Association test this time around was quite good. Congratulations.”

“Ah, I wonder if this Alchemist Association is purposefully letting leak the information or is their secret preservation skills extremely terrible. Why is it that everyone knows...” Hearing Primer Tengshan’s words, Xiao Yan helplessly shook his head. He could only adopt a pretence and be courteous.

“During this period of time that young friend Yan Xiao is in the Jia Ma Sacred City, you can directly go and look for Ya Fei if there is anything you need help with, especially since you and her are old friends.” Primer Tengshan said with a smile. Between his words, he described Xiao Yan and Ya Fei’s relationship in a very ambiguous way.

Hearing this, Xiao Yan tilted his head and watched Ya Fei who had lifted the red wine and tasting it elegantly. Perhaps she had understood the meaning between Primer Tengshan words. Under the reflection of the red wine, her enchanting pretty face became an increasingly attractive sleek red.

Xiao Yan helplessly shook his head. He could only give a vague response.

After Hai Bo Dong’s reminder, Primer Tengshan was currently thinking of all the different methods to become closer to Xiao Yan. The usual strict expression had already been withdrawn. Replacing it was a smile that was extremely warm. That gentle

manner caused those nearby who were on familiar terms with Primer Tengshan to be astonished. They began to quietly guess Xiao Yan's identity in their hearts.

Being the clan head, Primer Tengshan was naturally quite talkative. Moreover, there was still Ya Fei who would occasionally smile and gently interrupt the conversation. The atmosphere here appeared extremely harmonious.

Chapter 297: Mu Zhan

In another corner of the large hall, Nalan Jie and the guests who were here to celebrate the joyous occasion were conversing with smiles. By chance, his gaze which was drifting around suddenly stopped in the direction where Xiao Yan's group of three people sat. When he saw the warm, harmoniously laughing manner, his eyebrows frowned slightly. He smiled and dismissed the guests in front of him before taking a few steps back and arriving at Nalan Su's and Nalan Yanran's side.

"Yanran, is young friend Yan Xiao and Primer Tengshan very close?" Nalan Jie softly inquired.

Nalan Yanran rotated her bright eyes. She glanced at the corner where Xiao Yan was at. After gently sipping the red wine in her hand, she shook her head and said, "I don't think that he is close to Primer Tengshan. Instead he should be close to Ya Fei. Have you forgotten? Back then Yan Xiao came because of Ya Fei's recommendation letter."

"Uh..." Nalan Jie knit his eyebrows together and softly scolded, "That old fellow Tengshan actually wants to use a beauty to attract him? How shameless..."

"Ah, with Yan Xiao's potential, there would be no limit to his future. If such a person is pulled away by the Primer clan, it would really cause people to feel a heartache."

"Haha, they may use a beauty to attract him, but isn't there also a beauty on our side..." Nalan Su joked.

"Father, what nonsense are you spouting?" Nalan Yanran said angrily as she violently cut at Nalan Su with her eyes.

"Che, this girl? Forget it. When they met during these last few days, that Yan Xiao never showed her any any warm expressions. Ask her to go? Won't that chase him off at a faster rate?" Nalan Jie pursed his lips together and snorted.

"You... you old fellow acts disrespectful and unbecoming of your age! If you dare to say any more nonsense, don't blame me for being rude." Nalan Jie's words immediately caused Nalan Yanran, who had been maintaining a smile to lift her eyebrows vertically in anger that was caused by her humiliation. She waved her hand, appearing to really want to pluck his long beard.

“*Cough*...” By the side, Nalan Su coughed a couple of times, reminding this pair of grandfather and granddaughter to pay attention to the occasion. He waited for the two of them to quiet down before suddenly speaking, “Although, that girl Ya Fei has become increasingly pretty these few years. Her methods for social interactions are something that some of us in the older generation cannot compare with. On this point, Nalan Yanran is inferior to her.”

“Their clan is built upon commerce. It is natural that they are good at social interactions. How do you expect me to compare with her? Moreover, even if you are willing, Teacher would never agree.” Nalan Yanran swept her eyes toward that corner. When she saw Xiao Yan’s and Ya Fei’s smiling and chatting manner, she felt somewhat helpless. She believed that her appearance and presence would not be any worse than Ya Fei, but Yan Xiao, from the beginning, never showed her a kind expression. Although with her status, she did not need to purposefully try to please Yan Xiao, Nalan Yanran, whose heart was extremely haughty, was unwilling to see that man who was uninterested in her beauty to smile and chat in front of her with another woman. Perhaps this was a sort of emotion in every woman’s hearts, one that compared themselves with others.

“Ah, try your best to think of some way. Don’t allow Yan Xiao to really run to the Primer clan. Just think of all the many benefits that Pill-King Gu He has brought to the Misty Cloud Sect all these years. I believe that with Yan Xiao’s potential, his future achievements would not be any lower than Gu He.” Nalan Jie sighed.

“Okay.” Nalan Su nodded his head.

“Another thing, Yanran, pay a little attention to Liu Ling. He appears to harbor some enmity toward Yan Xiao because of you. This fellow’s talent may be quite good, but his heart is a little too narrow. If he were to use the strength behind him to become enemies with Yan Xiao, I will look down on him.” Nalan Jie glanced at a small circle of people grouped together in the hall. In the middle of the circle was Liu Ling and Little Princess.

“Okay, I will try my best.” Nalan Yanran frowned slightly and nodded. She and Liu Ling had gotten along for quite a few years. She naturally knew his character. This person’s desire to possess was far too strong.

“That’s right. Why have the members of the Mu clan not come? I remember having invited them.” Nalan Jie’s gaze swept once around the hall and asked with a frown.

The Mu clan. One of the three large clans in the Jia Ma Empire. Most of the members in the clan were people crazy over battles and they had quite a lot of power within the Jia Ma Empire’s military.

“Today, I heard that Mu Zhan from the Mu clan had returned from the north-western border.” Nalan Yanran suddenly said.

“Mu Zhan? That person who beats people up and kills people whenever he wants? The one who had also beat up those children of influential clans within the capital until they were docile. The one who has appeared to have become the leader of the crown prince’s clique?” Hearing the news, Nalan Jie was at a loss as he spoke.

“Ah, it’s that unreasonable fellow that causes many people headache...”

“Uh... I remember... that fellow appeared to have a very great interest in the Primer clan’s Ya Fei? Back then when he left the Jia Ma Sacred City, he had yelled some bold and derogatory words, telling everyone that he would kill whoever dared to touch Ya Fei.” Recalling the great uproar the issue caused back then, Nalan Su felt neither able to laugh nor cry.

“Ah, I wonder how much the unreasonable fellow has changed after experiencing two years at the empire’s border? He should have ceased being as unreasonable and barbaric as he was two years ago, right?” Nalan Yanran said with a smile.

“Uh... I sense that something will happen tonight.” Nalan Jie touched his white beard as his gaze looked at the spot where Ya Fei’s three people group was at. He shook his head and said.

Nalan Yanran narrowed her pretty eyes and softly laughed, “Evidently... it would be like this.”

“I hope that if any trouble arises, it will not escalate into a big mess. Yan Xiao isn’t like the aristocratic young master that Mu Zhan had crippled in the past. Although I haven’t been in contact with him for very long, I think that when the little fellow becomes crazy, he should be very terrifying.” Nalan Jie voiced his thoughts, “And to be able to teach such a disciple, Yan Xiao’s teacher should not be someone ordinary person. In front of a high tier alchemist that may be comparable to Gu He, the Mu clan would not dare to be too arrogant.”

“Yes.” Nalan Yanran nodded her head while sharing the same thought. After being in the Misty Cloud Sect for so many years, she was extremely clear just what kind of ability an alchemist similar to Gu He’s tier had.

“Ke ke, I will get someone to pay attention to that.” Nalan Su smiled. After which, he clinked his wine cup with a guest that had come forward before drowning its contents as he began to chat with a smile.

.....

“Big brother Liu Ling, is that the fellow who defeated you? He appears very ordinary.” In a circle within the hall, a young man wearing magnificent clothes glanced at the spot where Xiao Yan was at and said as he smacked his lips with disdain.

“Haha, There’s no choice since I am not as skilled as him.” Liu Ling lifted his wine cup and said with a smile.

“Hei, it may be that fellow used some methods that we don’t know to cheat. Big brother Liu Ling is Grandmaster Gu He’s disciple. How can he lose to this nameless fellow?” Another young man sided with Liu Ling and laughed.

Liu Ling smiled, but did not speak. He did not open his mouth to absolve Xiao Yan.

“It seems that fellow has quite good luck with women. He is actually able to be so close with the Primer clan’s Yan Fei xiao-jie.” A man who had once wanted to become close to Ya Fei could not help but say with an acidic mouth when he saw the smiling and chatting manner of the two of them.

The Little Princess took shallow sips of the red wine. Her delicate finger gently tapped on the surface of the glass cup, emitting a clear sound. She lazily glanced at Xiao Yan and laughed softly, “Tonight, there may be something interesting happening...”

“What do you mean?” Hearing this, Liu Ling was at a loss.

“Just wait and see...” Little Princess smiled mysteriously. She gulped down the red wine in her cup in one go.

.....

As time in the gathering slowly flew by, a large blood red horse suddenly rushed past from the other end of the brightly lit street outside the Nalan clan’s main entrance in a rude and arrogant manner. The passersby on the two sides along the way hurriedly dodged in panic.

The charging blood red, large horse suddenly came to a stop as it was about to reach the Nalan clan’s main entrance. A green colored human figure leapt down from the back of the horse. He lifted his head and eyed the main door. Under the illumination from the light, a young face was revealed. Dancing between his eyes was a fierceness and brutality like that of a tiger.

This young man that was around twenty five or twenty six years old did not look at the guards by the side of the main entrance. He randomly threw out a plate and strided into the Nalan clan.

.....

In the extremely lively large hall, the green clothed young man walked in from the opened front door. His arms held his neck as he smacked his lips and eyed the people inside. His mouth muttered something. Those who were near him were able to hear him say, “A group of idiots...”

At the moment when the young man walked into the hall, there were a few gazes which secretly brightened...

The young man's gaze swept across the hall, seemingly searching for something. A moment later, his sight solidified and the corner of his mouth cracked. Killing intent was instantly abundant on his face.

.....

On the quiet seats, Xiao Yan and Ya Fei were smiling and chatting. A moment later, Xiao Yan lifted a wine cup from the table and sipped it. As he did so, his smiling face suddenly stiffened and his quiet eyes suddenly narrowed.

Without any warning, a green colored Dou Qi suddenly surged out from within Xiao Yan's body. The wine cup in his hand cracked and burst apart with a bang. His body was forcefully twisted and his palm rotated slightly. It was then tightly clenched into a fist that carried a sharp explosive sound as it violently smashed at the force that had appeared behind him.

"Bang!"

With a muffled sound, the powerful energy force from Xiao Yan's fist violently shot out in all directions. The surrounding tables and chairs cracked apart with a terrifying sound under this destructive wind.

The ferocious force that was emitted from his fist caused Xiao Yan to take quite a few steps forward in order to completely be rid of it. His smiling face gradually became dark. Xiao Yan lifted his head and eyed the young man who was shaking his hand and viciously staring at him with a face that was filled with fierceness and brutality. A dark and cold killing intent swarmed out of Xiao Yan's dark, black eyes.

Chapter 298: A Brief Fight

The ferocious force that had suddenly burst forth in the large hall swiftly drew the gazes of those around. When these gazes saw the fierce and brutal faced young man, they were all momentarily stunned. Immediately, they turned their gloating faces toward Xiao Yan, whom the young man was facing. Clearly, they had all recognized this young man who possessed a very well known name in the capital.

"Have they finally started fighting...." In the large hall, Little Princess smiled and shook the red wine in her transparent cup as she laughed softly.

"Uh... that is... Mu Zhan?" Most of the people surrounding the Little Princess were children of aristocrats. Therefore, they could identify the young man with a face filled with fierceness and brutality. Immediately, their expressions changed as they let out an involuntary cry. Many of them had suffered under this fellow back then.

“No wonder you said that something interesting would happen tonight. I see that you are talking about this fellow...” Eyeing the green clothed Mu Zhan, Liu Ling was momentarily stunned before he immediately laughed softly with understanding.

“Many people in the capital know that Mu Zhan is extremely infatuated with Ya Fei from the Primer clan. Back then, before he left, he had even arrogantly expressed that he would kill whoever dared to touch Ya Fei...” A shallow smile surfaced on Little Princess’s face. Her gaze glanced at Xiao Yan who had become gloomy faced because he was caught off guard by the sneak attack. She said, “He is fairly unlucky to have met the returned Mu Zhan while he was being so intimate with Ya Fei...”

“Based on Mu Zhan’s character, Yan Xiao will most likely suffer tonight. Back then when Mu Zhan had left the capital, he was already a three star Dou Shi. After training for two years at the empire’s border military barracks, he has likely reached the peak of a Dou Shi...”

“If he is to suffer then let him suffer. He will naturally need to pay a certain price for getting involved with someone else’s woman. Otherwise, he would continue acting like a country bumpkin entering the city and look down on everyone.” Liu Ling smiled and said. He eagerly wished for someone to dampen Xiao Yan’s vigor.

“But this is the Nalan clan. Grandfather Nalan will definitely not allow Mu Zhan to be overly presumptuous. Therefore, if Mu Zhan wants to teach Yan Xiao a lesson, he needs to do it with the quickest speed possible. Otherwise, when Grandfather Nalan and Primer Tengshan, who have just left, return, he will no longer have a chance.” Little Princess said with a smile. By rejecting her invitation this afternoon, it was clear that Xiao Yan had caused this young lady of extraordinary status to be displeased. Therefore, she did not have any intention of stepping forward to mediate the matter.

Liu Ling laughed coldly and softly said, “But Mu Zhan is coincidentally the type of person who would not say anything unnecessary when he starts fighting. Just watch, they will soon begin fighting...” As he said these words, his gaze was already thrown to the spot in the hall where the disturbance had occurred.

.....

Xiao Yan relaxed his fist and immediately clenched it tightly again. Only after he repeated this a couple of times did the numb feeling gradually disappear. He glanced at the fierce and brutal young man who was like a vicious tiger deep in the mountains, inhaled a deep breath of air and coldly said, “Is there something wrong with your head?”

From the strike a moment ago, Xiao Yan clearly knew that the fellow in front of him definitely had no intention of holding anything back. If it was a person with slow reaction instead of him, that person would likely have been seriously wounded without even having the time to react. Therefore, Xiao Yan’s heart was filled with fury against this person who had inexplicably launched a killing blow.

The green clothed young man faced Xiao Yan and opened his mouth. His row of white colored teeth were quite savage looking. He did not reply. Instead, his heated gaze paused on Ya Fei by the side, whose pretty face contained great fury. With a gentle voice, he laughed, "Ya Fei, it has been a long time since we met. You have become even prettier and definitely worthy of being the wife I have reserved..."

"You... you lunatic!"

Ya Fei's face became a little flushed because of her anger. Her voluminous chest rose and fell slightly. Despite not having met for two years, this fellow was still as barbaric and unreasonable as before. Without saying a word, he directly gave someone a ruthless blow.

"Yan Xiao, are you alright?" Ya Fei swiftly walked over to Xiao Yan's side. She looked up and down, sizing him up as she hurriedly asked.

Xiao Yan shook his head. His gaze remained on the green clothed young man's body as he softly asked, "Who is he?"

"Mu Zhan. He is a member of the Mu clan from the three large clans, a lunatic that really gives one a headache. Back then, part of the reason I went out to gain experience was because I wanted to hide from him." Ya Fei smiled bitterly and said.

"His attack is really vicious, really vicious." Xiao Yan softly laughed. His smile contained a dark and cold killing intent but this caused the pretty face of Ya Fei beside him to change.

"Don't be reckless. Mu Zhan is the most outstanding person among the young generation of the Mu clan. Back then, when he left the capital, he was already a Dou Shi. After gaining experience from being in the border barracks for two years, his strength is fast catching up to the older generation. You..." Ya Fei, who was extremely familiar with Xiao Yan's character knew that he had really become furious at this moment. However, Mu Zhan was also no ordinary person. If they were to really fight, it was difficult to tell just who would win. Thus, she immediately hurriedly dissuaded him.

"Brat, are you new to the capital? No wonder you dare to be so close to Ya Fei." The concern Ya Fei showed to Xiao Yan caused the fierceness and brutality on Mu Zhan's face to be even more abundant than before. He twisted his neck and a bone cracking noise clearly sounded.

Xiao Yan lifted his eyes and glanced at this young man who did not even bother to cover the killing intent in his heart. He pursed up his lips and the corner of his eyes swiftly swept around the hall. A few members of the Nalan clan had already began to step back. From the looks of it, they wanted to go and inform Nalan Jie and the others about what happened here.

Perhaps Ya Fei was correct. The young man in front of him did indeed give Xiao Yan a feeling of danger. Even if this was so, however, he did not intend to hide behind Ya Fei until Nalan Jie and the others arrived... A moment ago, Mu Zhan's dangerous sneak attack, which nearly caused him to be seriously injured, had caused the desire for battle in Xiao Yan's heart to soar. It had been suppressed for a month with Xiao Yan not getting in a single fight during that time and was now accompanied by anger as it completely erupted. Therefore... this time around, he did not intend to continue to endure it.

Xiao Yan's dark black eyes stared at Mu Zhan as he brushed aside Ya Fei's dissuasion. He spread out his right hand and immediately curled it. A ferocious suction force immediately sucked a broken leg of a chair, around the thickness of one's thigh, into his hand from a short distance away. He held it tightly and his body descended into silence. An instant later, his green colored Dou Qi once again surged out. His body swiftly moved away from Ya Fei. With a step of his feet, an energy explosion sounded and Xiao Yan's figure turned into a black line as he shot at Mu Zhan in a lightning like manner.

"Brat. You got guts!"

As he gave a grim grin to Xiao Yan who had actually took the initiative to launch an attack, an emerald green Dou Qi swarmed out of Mu Zhan's body. His pair of fists actually turned faintly into the color of dead wood.

At this moment, the place where Xiao Yan and Mu Zhan were at, had undoubtedly become the focus of attention of the entire hall. When everyone saw Xiao Yan, who did not chose to withdraw in the face of Mu Zhan but instead took the initiative to attack, those who clearly knew Mu Zhan's strength quietly shook their heads. Within their hearts, this action of Xiao Yan appeared to be an attempt to appear in the limelight in front of Ya Fei.

"This fellow is really asking for it. Isn't it better to quietly stand in the same spot and wait for Grandfather Nalan and the others to arrive? Yet he wants to overestimate his ability and is going to get humiliated in front of others." Seeing Xiao Yan's action, Liu Ling shook his head as he smiled and said. He had known Mu Zhan since a long time ago. Therefore, he had a very clear idea of just how much of a headache one would have when fighting with this battle crazy person.

"Looks like even outstanding people cannot avoid having their heated blood flow upward in front of a beauty." The Little Princess shook her transparent cup. Her smile was like a little demon. This group of theirs, who had lived in the capital for many years, was not optimistic of Xiao Yan's chances in the fight between him and Mu Zhan.

During the time that the few people were conversing, Xiao Yan and Mu Zhan came into contact in a lightning like manner under everyone's sight.

With a face as deep as water, Xiao Yan icily watched the fierce and brutal faced Mu Zhan in front of him. Just as he was about to reach the front of Mu Zhan, his heel rotated and his body strangely appeared beside Mu Zhan's left hand. His fist tightened and a huge chair's leg that was covered by a green colored Dou Qi carried a ferocious wind as it ruthlessly smashed at Mu Zhan's head.

Sensing the force above his head, Mu Zhan coldly smiled. His fist was abruptly thrown upward and came into a hard collision with the tough chair's leg.

"Bang!"

Following a muffled sound, the chair's leg, which had the thickness of one's thigh, was blast apart in all directions by Mu Zhan. After breaking apart the chair's leg, Mu Zhan tightened his fist, which once again contained a strong force, and shot it through the wooden chips that were flying in all directions. It then violently smashed toward Xiao Yan behind.

Xiao Yan tilted his head slightly. That fist which had shot violently out from the wooden chips that had covered Xiao Yan's sight, moved along the side of Xiao Yan's shoulders and passed by it. The ferocious wind from the fist caused a burning sensation to appear on Xiao Yan's skin. However, this little pain did not slow Xiao Yan's attack by even the slightest bit. At the moment Mu Zhan's fist passed by his body, Xiao Yan's body strangely slid down and he simultaneously turned his body partially as he descended. His right palm supported him on the ground as he twisted his body, rotating it in half a circle. His feet whirled half a round in midair. It then carried a sharp force as they crossed one another and sheared at Mu Zhan's neck. The appearance of the attack was like a sharp scissors.

"Hei, not bad..." The somewhat strange scissors crossing killer legs caused a fanatic emotion to rise in Mu Zhan's eyes. His hands protected his neck. His skin, which was the color of flesh swiftly turned into a brown color. When one looked at it, it appeared like a tough dead wood.

"..."

Xiao Yan's legs violently smashed at Mu Zhan's hands but they emitted two strange sounds. The large force contained on the feet caused Mu Zhan to take a step back but Mu Zhan's combat experience had far exceeded Xiao Yan's expectations. Even while he was stepping back, he had already skillfully stabilized his body. His feet violently kicked toward Xiao Yan's head, which was near to the ground.

The other party's reaction, caused an astonishment to swiftly flash across Xiao Yan's eyes. The left hand that he had used to stabilize his body suddenly rotated. Without anyone else being aware, a wisp of green colored flame surfaced on the exterior of the fist. After which, it was thrown forward and violently smashed together with Mu Zhan's feet.

“Bang!” The ferocious forces collided together. Both the fists and legs of the two parties were thrown backward. At the place where Xiao Yan used his right hand to support himself on the ground, a few tiny crack lines swiftly began to spread.

“Hmph...”

The exchange this time around caused both of them to emit a muffled groan. Xiao Yan’s right hand gently tapped on the ground and the hard floor was cracked apart with a ‘bang’. His body, on the other hand, borrowed this pushing force and shot up before dexterously landing on the ground. He took a few small steps back. Once he had resolved his balance, his expression contained a seriousness as he eyed Mu Zhan, who had smashed a table into pieces while he was moving backward.

In just a short minute, the two of them had experienced a soul-stirring close quarters hand-to-hand combat. Regardless of who it was, if either one of them had become slightly absent minded in that clash a moment ago, that person would have ended up in a dire condition by the other party’s merciless attacks.

Chapter 299: Nalan Yanran Intervenes

Within the large all, everyone was eyeing Xiao Yan with astonished faces. They had never thought that this young man who appeared to specialize in refining medicine would not be any worse than Mu Zhan in terms of combat. The lightning like exchange from before may have lasted for only a short moment, but everyone knew the danger involved.

Among the younger generation within the capital, Mu Zhan’s combat talent could be described as being among the top. There was hardly anyone of the same age group within the Jia Ma Sacred Empire who could fight neck to neck with him. This was especially so after he had trained for two years at the military barracks. The current Mu Zhan had undoubtedly become much stronger and fiercer compared to before. However, in that fight earlier, he did not appear to have much of an advantage.

Although, it could be said that Mu Zhan had yet to use all his strength in this exchange. Not even a Dou Technique had been displayed but no one forgot that the young man who had an ordinary appearance had similarly relied entirely on his body’s ability to fight.

“It is really unexpected that Yan Xiao’s combat ability is actually this good...” The Little Princess watched Xiao Yan with a stunned expression as she said with surprise. She had very clear knowledge of Mu Zhan’s talent in terms of combat. However, in the fight just now, Mu Zhan did not end up beating Yan Xiao until the latter turned into a miserable state. Instead, the two of them ended up in a draw.

The corner of Liu Ling’s mouth twitched slightly. Having not seen the scene in his imagination where Xiao Yan was trounced by Mu Zhan, his heart currently did not feel

very well. When he heard the surprise in Little Princess's words, his heart became a little unhappy. He said faintly, "If Mu Zhan unleashed all his strength in the fight, I dare to say that Yan Xiao would definitely be no match for him."

"Ke ke, perhaps." Little Princess was non-committal as she smiled. As a female, her observation ability was naturally much more meticulous when compared to Liu Ling who was harboring a grudge. During the time that Mu Zhan was forced back, she had clearly seen that Mu Zhan's leg was a little unnatural when he was stepping back. It appeared that Mu Zhan had received a little hidden injury in the collision from before.

"Yan Xiao, are you alright?"

After seeing Xiao Yan stepping back, Ya Fei hurriedly came forward and asked anxiously. As she said those words, her delicate hand grabbed the sleeve in front of her. Evidently, she did not want him to continue the fight.

"I'm fine." Xiao Yan smiled. Under the sleeve, his fist, which had been inserted into it, trembled slightly as he tried to slowly remove the pain that radiated through it.

"This fellow's strength is indeed very great. From the looks of it, he should be around an eight star or even nine star Dou Shi..." Sensing the pain that was transmitted from his fist, Xiao Yan quietly guessed in his heart.

"But... I think that the current him should also be having a hard time... fire subdues wood. The burning of the 'Green Lotus Core Flame' from my fist would definitely have caused this fellow to suffer a hidden injury." Xiao Yan glanced at Mu Zhan's foot and the corner of his mouth was lifted into a cold smile.

Mu Zhan stared intently at Xiao Yan with a fierce face. The intense pain transmitted from his leg caused the corner of his mouth to twitch repeatedly. The Dou Qi in his body flowed swiftly and wrapped around his foot, turning it into a pale-green color.

Mu Zhan's Dou Qi belonged to the wood affinity. This kind of Dou Qi had some sort of healing properties. Therefore, as the Dou Qi shrouded his leg, which was not overly seriously injured, once again began to recover.

"Brat, not bad... I didn't expect that a pampered alchemist like you would actually know such an aggressive manner of combat." Mu Zhan parted his lips and smiled at Xiao Yan, much like a ferocious tiger which had opened its mouth and bared its fangs, possessing an abundance of a fierce aura. If this fellow was placed on the battlefield, he would definitely be a rarely seen ferocious general.

Xiao Yan smiled, but did not speak. The green colored Dou Qi still shrouded on the surface of his body without the slightest sign of relaxing.

"But... regardless of who you are. Do not touch the woman I like!"

The smile on his face suddenly disappeared. Mu Zhan let out a stern roar. A powerful Dou Qi swarmed out from within his body. As the Dou Qi churned, a somewhat vague Dou Qi Armor had actually, gradually appeared on his body.

Seeing the Dou Qi Armor on Mu Zhan's body, Xiao Yan's eyes narrowed. He did not expect that this fellow was able to summon the Dou Qi Armor that only a Da Dou Shi was able to possess. Although his armor now was merely an initial prototype, its defensive strength far exceeded the Dou Shi's Dou Qi Cloak.

"This fellow is about to become serious..." Xiao Yan muttered in his heart. His face gradually became grave. As his mind was racing, a wisp of 'Green Lotus Core Flame' was pulled out from the 'Acceptance Spirit' within the vortex. After which, it swiftly passed through the Qi Paths as Xiao Yan prepared to unleash the terrifying force that belonged to it at any time.

"Mu Zhan, you lunatic. Stop!" Seeing Mu Zhan, who refused to give up, Ya Fei was so angry that her pretty face had turned pale.

Mu Zhan ignored Ya Fei's angry cry. The Dou Qi on the surface of his body became increasingly dense. A strong force rose from within his body, suppressing those people with weaker strengths in the hall until their expressions changed slightly.

"I have said before. I will kill whoever dares to touch you!"

Mu Zhan's feet stomped on the floor with a bang. Numerous crack lines began to swiftly spread out from the spot where his feet pushed off just like a spider web. His body leaned forward slightly. With a cry, his body turned into a green colored shadow that shot toward Xiao Yan. Wherever he passed by, a gully that was one foot deep was being extended.

The entire hall had at this moment, turned into a complete mess.

Sensing the ferocious force that was shrouding around Mu Zhan's body, Xiao Yan's expression was serious as he pulled Ya Fei from in front of him to behind back. At the tip of his finger within his sleeves, a green colored flame began to dance around strangely...

Mu Zhan's speed was extremely swift and violent. In the blink of an eye, he appeared at a spot a short distance in front of Xiao Yan. He raised his fist high into the air. The fist was completely covered by sharp green colored thorns, appearing to possess a strong offensive strength.

"Green Wooden Thorn!"

With an oppressive low roar, that fist of Mu Zhan, which was covered in green colored thorns, was accompanied by a sharp force as it violently smashed down toward Xiao Yan.

A pair of dark, black eyes coldly watched the fist that was moving increasingly closer. The oppressive wind flattened the clothes on Xiao Yan's body until they were tightly pasted on Xiao Yan's skin.

Within Xiao Yan's sleeves, the green colored flame had also withered with increasing joy under this suppression. The hot energy was swiftly agglomerating...

Just as Xiao Yan was about to use the 'Green Lotus Core Flame' to counter attack, his eyebrows abruptly knit slightly together as he sensed something. He immediately stopped his body that was leaning forward. At the same time a clear cold tender shout sounded within the hall.

"Mu Zhan. Stop now!"

As the tender shout fell, a moon white shadow shot over from another corner of the hall in a lightning like manner. The body strangely floated in midair and appeared in front of Xiao Yan.

Xiao Yan glanced at Nalan Yanran's strange ability to move through midair from the corner of his eyes. His eyebrows twitched without being noticed. This woman had improved greatly in three years...

"Thousand Wind!"

After she swiftly appeared in front of Xiao Yan, Nalan Yanran coldly watched Mu Zhan, who did not cease his attack, with her pretty face. Her snow white delicate hand extended out of her spacious sleeve and she prepared to flick her long narrow finger. Five pale-green colored, tornadoes surfaced from the tip of her finger, much like five incomparably sharp green colored fingernails.

The five sharp spiraling winds actually appeared to have tore the space as they wildly rotated. She flicked her finger and the spiraling wind shot out. Immediately, they violently shot at Mu Zhan's fist which was covered with green colored thorns.

"Bang!"

Following the sound of an explosion, waves of wood fragments were shot out from Mu Zhan's fist. The ferocious force contained within the tornadoes directly caused Mu Zhan to take a few steps back. Each time his feet landed, he would leave a deep footprint on the ground.

When the last footstep landed, Mu Zhan's arm quivered fiercely. A shapeless force seeped out of his body and left a deep imprint on the pillar behind his body.

"Nalan Yanran? Hei, I didn't expect that you would actually have become so much stronger after having not met for only two years. Looks like Sect Leader Yun Yun really put in a lot of effort to teach you." Mu Zhan licked the fresh blood on his fist. He ignored this little bit of pain as he said with surprise.

"Mu Zhan, this is the Nalan clan, not your Mu clan. Mister Yan Xiao is a guest of our Nalan clan and should not be subjected to your unbridled behavior!" Nalan Yanran softly cried.

Mu Zhan's eyes narrowed. He tightened his fist as his gaze swept through the hall. After which, he paused on Nalan Jie and Nalan Su who were quickly striding over. Knowing that he had lost the opportunity to attack Xiao Yan today, he could only helplessly spread out his hand. He lifted his chin slightly and stared at Xiao Yan, "On account of Nalan Yanran, I will not cripple you today. But I would advise you to stay away from Ya Fei in the future. Otherwise..."

"I will take you on anytime..." Xiao Yan coldly smiled and said. After the exchange from before, he knew that Mu Zhan's level was slightly higher than his own. However, if he were to use his hidden cards, it was difficult to tell who would win or lose.

"You got some backbone. I didn't expect that the moment I returned to the capital, I would meet a person whom I can step on. I'm really excited..." Mu Zhan parted his mouth and grinned at Xiao Yan. The white teeth of his appeared to be quite dense.

"It requires strength in order to step on someone. Don't end up having your feet pierced before you can even step on the person..." Xiao Yan did not show the slightest weakness or cowering action against this young man who did not bother to hide his arrogance and domineering temperament. His giving a tit for tat manner caused everyone to be extremely surprised.

"Alright, the both of you should speak less. Today is the Nalan clan's gathering. Don't disturb everyone's mood." These two people who were fighting with each other caused Nalan Yanran to frown slightly as she helplessly scolded.

Xiao Yan shrugged his shoulders. His gaze turned from Mu Zhan's body onto the beauty who had her back facing him. His eyes narrowed as his finger gently flicked within his sleeves. Nalan Yanran's attack a moment ago was the first attack that Xiao Yan had seen her use ever since he had met her. It was like a piece of a jigsaw. For her to be able to force back Mu Zhan who was fighting equally with himself, this woman's strength had improved extremely quickly during the last three years. Although the Dou Technique that she had displayed just now was not of a low class, the high class Dou Techniques would not have much use if she did not have the support of a powerful Dou Qi in this kind of battle where both parties' levels were very close.

"The Misty Cloud Sect has spared no effort in grooming her. This Three Year Agreement will be fun..." Xiao Yan's gaze paused on the beautiful curves of Nalan Yanran's tender body as he muttered in his heart.

Chapter 300: The End

"Stop, I say!" Nalan Jie shouted with an ugly expression as he squeezed through the confused crowd and quickly arrived by Nalan Yanran's side.

His footsteps stopped beside Nalan Yanran. He first turned to Xiao Yan and asked, "Little friend Yan Xiao, are you alright?"

Xiao Yan shook his head, indicating that nothing was serious.

Nalan Jie sighed in relief once he saw that Xiao Yan was safe. If he had been injured, it might have been a disaster for himself.

As his eyes glanced over at the young tranquil face, Nalan Jie could not help but think even more highly of him. Although the battle lasted for a short time, with Nalan Jie's strength, he was naturally aware of it the instant the fight broke out. He had deliberately arrived late, obviously trying to observe Xiao Yan's fighting strength. After all, a lot of alchemists, though extremely proficient at refining, were a complete mess when it came to fighting. Nalan Jie had seen such people before.

"This little guy, I did not expect that besides having an extraordinary talent in alchemy, his fighting strength is not weak either. Looking at his aggressive attacks, he seems to be a person who has already killed before." Secretly admiring in his heart, Nalan Jie turned his eyes to Mu Zhan, his old face sank as he shouted, "Mu Zhan, I did not think that after two years of experience, not only did it not smother your unreasonable arrogance, but instead caused you to become increasingly arrogant. This is the Nalan Clan, not your Mu Clan. Even that old guy Mu Chen would not dare to not give me, Nalan Jie, any face if he came!"

"Hee hee, Grandfather Nalan, stop rebuking me. I just wanted to check out this friend's skill. I had not meant to cause trouble in the Nalan Clan. As for all the damaged property, I will call people at once to have it all completely replaced." Although Mu Zhan's nature was extremely arrogant, in front of Nalan Jie, whose seniority was comparable to his grandfather, he did not dare to quibble or be presumptuous. He immediately laughed while nodding his head.

"Hmph! These words of yours can go and deceive a ghost."

TL: These words of yours can go and deceive a ghost - Meaning no human would believe you

Nalan Jie snorted coldly as he stared directly at Mu Zhen and said in a deep voice, "Mu Zhan, I'm going to tell this clearly to you now, Yan Xiao is a distinguished guest of my Nalan family. I do not want him to be injured. Although, your Mu Clan has many madmen, my Nalan clan is not to be trifled with!"

Nalan Jie knew Mu Zhan's character only too well. After failing to attack Xiao Yan today, he might get his clan members to attack in the future. In order to ensure Xiao Yan's safety and to gain favorable impression toward the Nalan clan, Nalan Jie said these words, which caused many people to secretly change their expressions, in front of everyone.

Hearing Nalan Jie's words which did not sound like a joke, Mu Zhan's expression changed slightly. He did not expect that Nalan Jie would actually leave such hard words for only a tier two alchemist.

Mu Zhan's gaze was bizarre as he glanced up and down and weighed Xiao Yan who was behind Nalan Yanran. He secretly wondered in his heart, "What exactly is the identity of this brat? When I return home, I must get someone to investigate him properly."

"Why? What happened?" As Mu Zhan quietly mouthed to himself, another old voice sounded from outside the crowd. A thin figure flashed and shifted through the crowd and immediately appeared beside Xiao Yan just like a ghost. Everyone's gazes drifted over. It was Primer Tengshan who was called out by someone earlier.

"Mu Zhan?" Primer Tengshan's eyes swept onto the mess all over the place. When his gaze moved toward Mu Zhan, he was initially surprised. When he turned around and saw Ya Fei and Xiao Yan standing together, he instantly appeared to have understood the entire situation. Immediately, his old face, just like Nalan Jie, swiftly sank. His old eyes viciously stared at Mu Zhan and furiously said, "You start creating trouble the moment that you return. Do you believe that I won't get Mu Chen, that old guy who won't die, to once again expel you to the border to gain experience?"

"Uh... Clan Head Tengshan... you are also here."

Seeing the person who had arrived, Mu Zhan, who was fearless, immediately shivered. Back then, the greatest reason which resulted in him leaving the capital and going to the border was because the arrogant Mu Zhan had angered Primer Tengshan. It resulted in the Mu clan having no choice but to throw this scourge to the empire's borders. Therefore, when he saw Primer Tengshan at this moment, Mu Zhen showed some fear as he smiled awkwardly and humbled his speech.

Primer Tengshan snorted softly. He glance at Nalan Jie by his side as he slowly said, "I shall also give you a reminder. Once you leave this place, don't go and find trouble with young friend Yan Xiao. He is also a friend of the Primer clan. If you really cause any

trouble, then don't blame these old bones of mine when I become angry. When that time comes, even Mu Chen will not be able to protect you..."

Although Primer Tengshan was unclear about Xiao Yan's actual strength and his background, he did not have the slightest hesitation when he said these words. A Duo Huang class strong person who had a haughty character was actually willing to follow by Xiao Yan's side as a bodyguard. This was sufficient to see just how much ability this ordinary looking young man actually possessed.

In a two short minutes, Mu Zhan received serious warnings from two out of three of the large clans. This kind of situation had caused not only Mu Zhan himself to be somewhat stunned, but also the surrounding observers to feel shocked.

Since Xiao Yan was able to help Nalan Jie expel the poison, everyone was not overly surprised when the latter did his best to protect Xiao Yan. After all, his own life was in the hands of the other person. However, everyone felt that it was strange and inexplicable that Primer Tengshan was able to say such serious words without any hesitation despite only having known Xiao Yan for a short while.

It should be known that behind Mu Zhan was the entire Mu clan. This strength was not the slightest bit weaker than the Primer clan. By just comparing numbers, the Mu clan even exceeded the Primer clan greatly. After all, the Primer clan was a merchant clan and not a warrior clan like the Mu clan.

Of course, these strong people referred to those of the middle strength and not the peak strength like Primer Tengshan. After all, his kind of class was not something that could easily appear by simply relying on the clan having a combat atmosphere. The most important factor was one's training talent. On this point, both clans were on even ground.

"Che, lucky brat..." Within the crowd, Liu Ling saw the two people of extremely great weight protecting Xiao Yan. He frowned slightly, pursed his lips together and coldly laughed.

Beside him, Little Princess had her eyebrows knit slightly. Her eyes passed through the crowd as she looked at Xiao Yan. She softly muttered, "Looks like he should have something that both clans value greatly. Otherwise, Primer Tengshan and Grandfather Nalan would definitely not take the risk of offending the Mu clan and speak out for him without any hesitation."

"What a mysterious fellow... it's a pity." Little Princess regretfully shook her head. She recalled her attitude toward Yan Xiao and could only laugh bitterly. She did not expect that a failure on her part to identify a talented person would actually result in her losing a chance to befriend such an outstanding person. If her emperor father or elder sister were to know about this, she would likely be viciously reprimanded.

The corner of Mu Zhan's mouth twitched. The smile on his face was extremely ugly. A long while later, he helplessly spread out his hand in front of Nalan Jie and Primer Tengshan's gaze and said, "Two old sirs, I have already said that today's matter was only a misunderstanding. Alright, as long as this friend does not provoke me in the future, I will not go and make things difficult for him. Let's take this as giving both of you face."

Nalan Jie nodded faintly. He turned around, eyed the hall and clapped his hand. With a smile, he said, "Everyone, please continue. This is but mischief caused by the younger generation. Everyone can just treat it as having watched an interesting performance. Ha ha."

Hearing Nalan Jie's words, the surrounding observers knew what was good for them as they followed him and laughed. After which, they consciously scattered and began to search for people that were pleasing to their eyes as they continued to drink wine and chat.

"Hehe, old fellow, you really won't give up any chance to make a good impression..." Primer Tengshan smiled, leaned close to Nalan Jie and said softly.

"Humph. Old fellow, looks like you really intend to snatch this person from us?" Nalan Jie glanced at Primer Tengshan and said with a cold smile.

"If such a talented person was to run to someone else's home, that would be a matter that would give one a terrible headache..." Primer Tengshan laughed softly, "I seem to feel that Ya Fei and young friend Yan Xiao are able to converse very well. Don't you agree? But little niece Yanran does not appear to be able to lower herself and get closer to young friend Yan Xiao. Hee hee, after all their statuses are different. If it is like this, won't your side greatly lose out?"

Nalan Jie's shriveled face swept across Ya Fei from the corner of his eyes who was pulling Xiao Yan and checking all over his body to see if he was wounded in the fight. He then glanced at his granddaughter who was standing on one side with her cool pretty face that did not have the slightest activity. He could only shake his sleeves as he bitterly replied, "You are really willing to put in the capital..."

"Just so so." Primer Tengshan smiled in a very pleased manner. He drowned the red wine in his hand all in one go.

.....

"Alright, I am really alright. Although that fellow is troublesome to fight with, this little bit of warm up won't cause me any harm." Xiao Yan helplessly eyed Ya Fei who was repeatedly sizing him up. He shook his head and bitterly said.

Hearing that there was nothing different in Xiao Yan's voice, Ya Fei finally sighed in relief. Her long eyes were filled with shock as she sized Xiao Yan up. She softly said, "Little Fellow, I remember that when you left Wu Tan City back then, it had not been long since you had broke through to to a Dou Zhe. Just how long has it only been... you are actually able to fight equally with Mu Zhan?"

Xiao Yan smiled. After experiencing that kind of tough training, this kind of a return was something that he felt to be only normal.

"Nalan xiao-jie, thank you for taking action..." Ya Fei took two steps forward, came to Nalan Yanran's side and smiled as she helped Xiao Yan thank her.

"Mister Yan Xiao is our Nalan clan's guest. It is only natural for me to step forward. Actually, with Mister Yan Xiao's strength, it appeared that my action may have been unnecessary..." Nalan Yanran glanced at Xiao Yan. When this fellow saw her, his expression began to gradually become indifferent. This kind of treatment, which appeared to be on the two ends of a pole when compared with the one he used with Ya Fei, really caused Nalan Yanran to be somewhat speechless.

"Ya Fei, we have not seen each other for two years. You don't need to ignore me in this manner, do you?" Standing by the side, Mu Zhan, who saw that Ya Fei did not even spare him a glance, could not help but bitterly smile as he asked.

"Young Master Mu, I wouldn't dare to. It is just that temper of yours is something that Ya Fei is not blessed enough to endure. I hope that in the future, you will not say those things that damage Ya Fei's reputation. I have never made promises of any engagement, so when have I become your woman?" Ya Fei glanced at this fellow and said with a cold smile.

Once she said those words, she once again walked back to Xiao Yan's side. She pulled at his sleeve and gently said, "Let's go somewhere else..."

Xiao Yan glance at the gentle faced Ya Fei and then watched Mu Zhan, whose expression had become somewhat green in his fury. He nodded slightly and allowed Ya Fei to pull him toward the other side of the hall.

"That damn brat..." Mu Zhan's eyes angrily stared at Xiao Yan's back. He violently waved his hand and then shifted his gaze toward Nalan Yanran. He said, "Yanran, what exactly is this fellow's background? Don't just keep quiet. No matter how you put it, we have played and fought as children. Don't tell me that you are not even willing to reveal this little bit of information?"

Seeing the fierce and brutal faced Mu Zhan, Yanran helplessly shook her head. She said, "To be honest, I am really unsure about the exact background of Yan Xiao. But his medicine refining skills are extraordinary. My grandfather's 'Searing Poison' was something even Elder Gu He could do nothing about. However, he is able to expel it..."

“That is all that I know. In any case, you better not go to him and find trouble. Otherwise, you might find yourself faced with quite some trouble.” Nalan Yanran reminded him. She then turned around and slowly walked into the hall, leaving Mu Zhan standing alone on the same spot and clenching his teeth, unable to resign to the situation.

“I don’t care what your identity is... don’t give me the chance...” Mu Zhan clenched his teeth and ruthlessly said in a soft voice.