

Battle Through the Heavens #Chapter 381: Mysterious Faction, Hall of Souls? - Read Battle Through the Heavens Chapter 381: Mysterious Faction, Hall of Souls?

Chapter 381: Mysterious Faction, Hall of Souls?

A grey-robed young man slowly walked out from the western city gate of the 'Zhen Gui Pass'. He stood outside the moat and lifted his eyes to gaze at the mountain ranges in the distance. After which, he turned his head and took a final look at this border city of the Jia Ma Empire. Once he walked away from here, he would truly be able to roam freely throughout the high skies and vast seas. The world outside would definitely be even more interesting than this empire.

Xiao Yan inhaled a deep breath of air. Finally, he ceased feeling nostalgic and strode into the distance. His skinny back slowly faded away at the edge of the main road.

Around half an hour after the grey-robed young man disappeared, some black air strangely and suddenly appeared in the sky above the 'Zhen Gui Pass'. The black air lingered in the sky as if it was possessed by a spirit, much like a ghost.

For some time, the black air moved back and forth in the sky above the 'Zhen Gui Pass' where Xiao Yan had fought earlier. Suddenly, it was swept up by the wind as it headed in the same direction that Xiao Yan had walked. Along the way, it left a black trace that was partially visible.

It was completely silent on the main road which was situated between lush green woods. There was only the soft chirping of the birds sitting on the tree branches, adding some life to this empty road.

"Teacher, earlier you...?" After quietly walking for a long time, Xiao Yan finally could not resist the doubt within his heart as he asked softly.

Two minutes after Xiao Yan spoke a soft sigh could be heard. Yao Lao bitterly laughed as he muttered, "Ah, it is really unexpected that these fellows are present near the Jia Ma Empire. They seldom come here. Why is it that this time..."

Yao Lao softly muttering to himself resulted in Xiao Yan becoming totally confused. He immediately asked carefully, "Teacher, who are those people that you are referring to as 'those fellows'?"

Upon hearing Xiao Yan's question, Yao Lao fell into silence. Xiao Yan was startled when he saw the manner in which Yao Lao behaved and did not continue pursuing the matter. His brows furrowed slightly as he continued to follow the direction of the map, walking along this road that led to the 'Black-Corner Region'. However, he began to feel somewhat uneasy in his heart.

“Little fellow, I had originally planned to tell you about these things once you had become stronger. Now, however, my trace has unexpectedly been discovered by them. My original plan is also ruined. If you want to know about this matter, I can only tell you now earlier than I anticipated.” Yao Lao, who had been silent for a long time suddenly opened his mouth and said, “However, I have to warn you beforehand that the faction involved in this matter is really too strong. It is far from what a sect like the Misty Cloud Sect can compare with. Even I feel that the matter is very difficult. Are you currently certain that you want to know?”

Xiao Yan’s hand trembled involuntarily. His throat rolled slowly as he swallowed a mouthful of saliva. His moving footsteps also paused as he quietly stood in the same spot. He had a premonition that the matter which Yao Lao would soon mention would likely cause the steady and peaceful days that he had experienced in the past to instantly disappear.

Following Xiao Yan’s silence, Yao Lao also ceased to speak. However, Xiao Yan faintly sensed a disappointment being emitted from the ring on his finger.

After being silent for nearly five to six minutes, Xiao Yan suddenly exhaled a long breath of air. He lifted his head and he gazed past the gaps between the tree leaves and eyed the deep blue sky. His finger rubbed the black colored ring as he said in a soft gentle voice, “Tell me, teacher. Although I do not know just how strong the faction involved in this matter is, I just want to say one thing. I am your disciple. All these abilities of mine were given to me by you.”

“Ha ha, good, good! These eyes of mine, Yao Chen, have not been blinded for the second time! Ha ha!”

After Xiao Yan’s voice fell, Yao Lao descended into silence. A while later, he repeatedly said the word ‘good’ twice. A voice which was trembling intensely sounded in his heart. As his mood was agitated, he had spoken the name which had once shaken the entire Dou Qi continent in front of Xiao Yan for the first time!

Xiao Yan’s words were calm and unexcited, the same words that had come from his heart had caused the usually calm and indifferent Yao Lao to become so emotional that his old tears were allowed to roam. He had experienced being betrayed by the person whom he had trusted the most. That kind of pain was basically a kind that seeped into one’s bones. However, it was fortunate that this time around, his eyes, which had miscalculated once, did not repeat the same mistake!

“Yao Chen. Was this once teacher’s name?” Xiao Yan repeated the foreign name within his mind. His focus, however, was paused on another sentence. “Has not been blind for a second time. In other words, he was blind once. Ah, looks like teacher’s past was quite rough.”

“Little fellow, I have told you in the past that the Dou Qi continent was very big. Within it, strong people are as numerous as the clouds. Even the the person who is considered the strongest within the Jia Ma Empire, Yun Shan, would have no choice but to rid himself of his haughtiness when he enters the continent. This is because, there are many people within it who are many times stronger than him.” Yao Lao’s slow tone contained some desolation, attracting Xiao Yan’s attention until the latter did not dare to be the slightest bit distracted.

“Due to this enormous area, there were many strange factions that had been formed. Among them, there was a mysterious faction named the ‘Hall of Souls’. Although this faction nearly covers half of the continent, they seldom appear in countries that are far from the center of the continent like the Jia Ma Empire. There are not many people on this continent who know of their existence.”

“Hall of Souls?” Xiao Yan muttered this name before he spoke softly, “Earlier, teacher must have sensed traces of them at the ‘Zhen Gui Pass’ right?”

“Ah.” Yao Lao smiled bitterly and nodded as he said, “This ‘Hall of Souls’ is extremely powerful and mysterious. Moreover, the methods they employ in their operations are extremely strange. Even I do not have a deep understanding of them. However, they usually do not attack ordinary people. Their targets are the ‘Living Spirits’, whose bodies have died, but whose spirits are unusually strong. As an alchemist, you should also know that when the spirit’s strength has reached a certain limit, the spirit will still be able to survive even if the body is destroyed in order to find any opportunity to be revived. For these kind of spirits, we call them: ‘Living Spirits!’”

“That is something like what Teacher is in, right?” Xiao Yan pursed his lips and asked softly.

“Yes.” Yao Lao gave a positive response. His voice immediately and suddenly had some additional fury and gloominess within it, “They are like this continent’s spirit scavengers. Any strong spirit which has left their bodies will be sensed by them. After which, they will send someone to mysteriously finish it off. I don’t know why they specialize in attacking spiritual bodies but they appear to have some special restraining tactics toward spirit. Back then, not long after my physical body was destroyed, I was surrounded and attacked by them. Although I did finally successfully kill my way out, I was also seriously wounded because of it. It was fortunate, however, that I had luckily obtained an extremely rare ‘Warm Soul Spirit Ring’ when I was helping other people refine medicinal pills back then. In the end, I got someone to help me create the black-colored ring on your finger. It was because of this that I managed to escape being killed by them. Finally, the ring went in circles and landed in your mother’s hands before finally being passed on to you.”

Xiao Yan inhaled a deep breath of cool air. Even with Yao Lao’s strength, he was chased until he had to flee in all directions. Just how strong was that mysterious ‘Hall of Souls’?

“The ‘Hall of Souls’ has a special tactic to deal with spirits. Therefore, even I had difficulty just relying on my spirit to fight with them.” Yao Lao said in a soft deep voice, “The reason why I want to quickly revive is actually because I am afraid of them. Moreover, I also have some matters and grudges that I must investigate fully and settle!”

Xiao Yan quietly nodded his head.

“Little fellow, you need not think of how to help me. The current you is far too weak. What I am optimistic about is your potential. As long as you are given enough time, you will definitely become a true strong person at the peak. It is just that you must become stronger now! Otherwise, once those fellows come searching, I’m afraid that even your life will be in danger!” Yao Lao slowly said.

Xiao Yan’s face gradually became serious. He tightened his fist and replied in a deep voice, “Teacher, I will obtain the ‘Fallen Heart Flame’ as soon as possible. After which, I will help you refine a body so that you are no longer threatened by the ‘Hall of Souls’.”

“Ah, I can only rely on you.” Yao Lao sighed and immediately voiced his thoughts, “It is fortunate that I had withdrawn into the ring very quickly earlier. Otherwise, I’m afraid that they would have locked onto our position. However, now that they have sensed something, I think that this place will gradually have an increase in members from the ‘Hall of Souls’. Therefore, there may be many problems in the future in which you will have to rely on yourself. Otherwise, once I appear once and they lock onto me, our lives will both be in danger.”

“Ah.” Xiao Yan nodded his head heavily. His relaxed heart from having left the Jia Ma Empire earlier had abruptly tightened. Although there was currently no threat from the Misty Cloud Sect, an even more terrifying large being had appeared. He had no choice but to handle it with caution. Moreover, it was just as Yao Lao had said. The current him was really too weak. With his little bit of strength, forget about protecting Yao Lao from being captured by the ‘Hall of Souls’, even the Misty Cloud Sect was able to expel him like a dog which had lost its home.

“Without strength, one will end up being powerless and unable to do anything.” Xiao Yan sighed gently as he tightened his fist. At this moment, he once again felt the same powerlessness and yearning for strength, like he had when facing Nalan Yanran in the hall of the Xiao clan’s home three years ago!

“Strength! I need strength!”

Xiao Yan roared violently in his heart. Under the pressure of the mysterious ‘Hall of Souls’, Xiao Yan told himself that his current most pressing need was strength.

“Since it is like this, let’s directly fly to the Jia Nan Academy. We cannot continue to make short stops along the way.” A map was pulled out from within the storage ring.

Xiao Yan carefully observed it for a moment as his finger traced the red line on it. Finally, it stopped at a large, dark patch on the map. Finally, his finger passed through the black region and stopped at a blue-colored star in the center of it.

Xiao Yan's shoulders trembled slightly and the Purple Cloud Wings rose slowly from his back. He flapped the wings, and his body rose into the air. After he found his bearings, he finally turned into a ray of light and disappeared into the western horizon.

Following Xiao Yan's disappearance, the region once again descended into silence. Around two to three hours later, a wisp of black-colored fog suddenly flew over from the distant sky. Finally, it lingered over the region where Xiao Yan had stopped. A low, doubtful sound was emitted from the black fog. It hesitated for a moment before finally flying in the direction Xiao Yan had headed in.

Chapter 382: Jia Nan Academy, the Xiao clan has a Female Maturing Early

The Jia Nan Academy was an ancient academy that was seated in the middle of the continent. In the past thousands of years, the strongest people who walked out of here were all people who were extremely well known on the continent, and just their names could shake an entire region.

The most terrifying thing of an academy was not how great the strength of its teachers were, but the tens of thousands of strong people that had walked out of this academy. If the Jia Nan Academy was in danger of being destroyed one day, all the academy had to do was gather all those strong people who had graduated from the academy. It would be difficult to imagine just how terrifying this strength would be.

Although the number of different academies on the continent was difficult to count, the reputation of Jia Nan Academy was something that had never been surpassed even now. From this, one could see just how solid the heritage of this academy, which was shrouded by an age-tested aura, was.

On the continent, countless numbers of people, regardless of race, would be proud of being able to enter this ancient academy. Unfortunately, the extremely harsh requirements the academy had when recruiting new students caused many to bemoan their inadequacy.

On the peak of the mountain behind the academy, where the trees were lush, a young lady wearing a pale-green dress was standing prettily. There was a purple belt tied around her small, pretty waist, outlining the waist until it was extremely alluring.

She was facing the vast, white fog at the back of the peak of the mountain. Her long, soft, black hair moved along her shoulders as it fell to her narrow waist. Only then did it cease to extend further.

The young lady stood with her hands together. Her tall figure was like a green lotus blooming in the mortal world against a background of faint white fog slowly surrounding her, where it appeared otherworldly with a unique aura.

This kind of lady was like someone being bred by the aura of the land and the sky, appearing so outstanding that it caused people to be put into a trance.

“Ding Ling.”

A clear and ethereal chime suddenly sounded on this quiet mountain peak. If one were to examine closely, they would realize that there were two, tiny green-colored bells hanging on that white waist of the green clad young lady.

Following the chiming of the bells, a shadow suddenly appeared at a certain spot behind the young lady. Immediately, an old figure surfaced. The old man bowed respectfully toward the young lady and smiled as he said, “Young Miss (xiao-jie).”

“Old Ling, you have finally returned.” The young lady slowly turned around. Her elegant and exquisite ethereal face suddenly smiled. Immediately, the flowers paled. All the colors within the forest had drained away and completely gathered on her body, causing people’s sight to have difficulty moving away.

“Ke ke, I have no choice. Since Young Miss (xiao-jie) has given me an assignment, won’t I be blamed by Young Miss (xiao-jie) until I die if the old me ran back without completing my assignment?” The old man lifted his head and smiled as he replied. That old man’s face was shockingly the Ling Ying who had taken action to help Xiao Yan escape from the Misty Cloud Sect!

The young lady smiled with her mouth closed. In her mind, she recalled the young man who had caused her so much worry. Her clear, cold voice slowly became much softer. She glanced at Ling Ying, and an embarrassed red glow, which would have caused the entire Jia Nan Academy to go crazy over, immediately surfaced on her face. She said gently, “Old Ling, how is he?”

“Young Miss is talking about Young Master Xiao Yan, right?” Ling Ying replied by asking a rhetorical question. When he saw the bright redness on the young lady’s face becoming increasingly dense, he could not resist laughing out loud. It appeared that only that little fellow called Xiao Yan had the blessing and charm to cause the otherworldly temperament of the Young Miss, who was usually as indifferent as a lotus, to change into an ordinary girl.

“Before I left, Young Master Xiao Yan did not have any problems. The Three Year Agreement between him and Nalan Yanran ended with his victory as expected. It’s just that...” Ling Ying hesitated for a moment, but he still told her all of the events that had happened when Xiao Yan went up to the Misty Cloud Sect for the Three Year

Agreement with great detail. Among them, it naturally included Yun Shan taking action, and the soul-stirring escape that Xiao Yan had experienced.

“Ke ke, but it is fortunate that Young Master Xiao Yan’s tactics far exceeded my expectations. Although Yun Shan’s appearance shattered his plan, that Queen Medusa of his, which was his final hand also shook Yun Shan until he dared not attack. Finally, we left the Misty Cloud Sect in one piece.” Ling Ying quickly supplemented.

“Queen Medusa? Tsk tsk, Xiao Yan ge-ge is quite good. He is actually even able to gather this kind of strong person... Yun Shan huh... a strong Dou Zong...” Her delicate fingers pulled aside her black hair, which was drawn down in front of her forehead. Surprise flashed across the young lady’s eyes. Immediately, she laughed faintly as she softly said, “The Misty Cloud Sect has remained affixed and sealed itself, sticking only within the Jia Ma Empire. Ever since Yun

Po Tian back then, there are no longer any shocking or outstanding people coming from there. If this continues, it is only a matter of time before it will be replaced.”

TL: ge-ge - elder brother or refer to a close male who is slightly older (sometimes intimately)

“Is Xiao Yan ge-ge well?” The bright eyes of the young lady were lifted gently as she asked once again. When she said that name, her exquisite white face had an alluring but embarrassed sleek redness,

“Ke ke, yes.” Ling Ying smiled and nodded. He raised his head and said something which appeared to have deeper meaning, “In the past, the old me didn’t really understand why Young Miss (xiao-jie) was protecting him in this manner. However, after teaming up with him this time around, I understand some of it. Young Miss’ foresight is quite good. I think that if that little fellow were given enough time, I’m afraid that even the Clan Head would not dare to easily deny him.

When she heard Ling Ying’s praise, an arc which was difficult to notice was lifted on the young lady’s face. She did not know how many praises she had heard. However, each time she heard someone praise Xiao Yan, her heart would involuntarily leap like some little girl.

“However, you should also know that this is under the precondition that he is given enough time. Our clan is spread all over the continent. They have seen quite a lot of shockingly talented and outstanding people. Unfortunately, the people who can finally and truly step toward the peak are so few that can be counted easily. Therefore, those people in the clan only look at the present and are not willing to bother with what your potential is worth. This was because such things are fleeting and who knows how things will be?”

“Yes.” Ling Ying nodded slightly. What she said was indeed true. This world had never lacked geniuses.

“Therefore, the current Xiao Yan ge-ge still has a long path to walk.” The young lady was slightly quiet. She immediately smiled saucily as she softly said, “However, no matter how long, I am also willing to wait until he becomes a true strong person at the peak.”

“Ah, that Xiao Yan little fellow. Even if Young Miss is willing to wait, if you are not able to become very strong, the road for you and Young Miss will face countless number of ups and downs. You should know that with Young Miss’s talent and beauty as well as the faction she represents, your competitors will be so strong that you would be stunned. Even if Young Miss were to protect you when that time comes, will that proud bone of yours be willing to endure the shame and hide behind Young Miss’s back?” Ling Ying maintained his silence as he eyed the young lady, who was as ethereal as a fairy, under the shine of the morning glow. However, he was muttering softly within his heart.

Back then, the young man was able to clench his teeth and train bitterly for three years and endured an endless amount of suffering, just because of an engagement that was canceled. All that he was aiming for was to appear with the stance of a strong person in front of the lady who had stepped on his pride. If this kind of person were asked to hide behind a woman’s back, and then let him watch his own woman help him block all the rain and wind, it would be likely that he would feel even worse than being killed.

“That’s right, Old Ling, what level is Xiao Yan ge-ge’s strength currently at?” The young lady appeared to have suddenly recalled something and asked somewhat curiously.

“When I left, Young Master Xiao Yan’s strength was around that of a one star Da Dou Shi.” Ling Ying smiled as he answered.

“A one star Da Dou Shi huh.” The young lady’s bright eyes were bent into a shallow crescent shapes as she smiled and said, “In two year’s time, he became a Da Dou Shi from an ordinary Dou Shi. Advancing one class each year. This speed could nearly be ranked among the top five within the Jia Nan Academy. Looks like the training that Xiao Yan ge-ge underwent during these past two years was quite tough.”

“How will one grow if one is not honed? Young Master Xiao Yan is like a good jade which had yet to be polished. Back then, that Nalan Yanran polished away the laziness of this piece of jade. The bitter training in the following years later hid that cutting edge of his. An excellent sword must be concealed in a box and the cutting edge must be hidden. Only by carrying on like this will one achieve great things.” Ling Ying fondled his beard and smiled as he replied.

“Old Ling, why have you praised Xiao Yan ge-ge to this extent after making a trip to the Jia Ma Empire? In the past, I have seldom seen you say such things about others.” The young lady covered her mouth and laughed. Her eyes were filled with a smile.

"It is just that the little fellow is worth this evaluation. None of my personal feelings are mixed into it." Ling Ying smiled before immediately saying, "I think that perhaps in one or two months' time, Young Master Xiao Yan will arrive at Jia Nan Academy. When that time comes, Young Miss' pain from longing will be eased."

The corner of the young lady's mouth contained a warm and gentle smile. She slowly lifted her head and the skinny figure of the young man slowly surfaced in her mind. It has been over two years. Finally, they could meet each other again.

A warmth surfaced in her heart. It was a long time later before the young lady lowered her head, and eyed Ling Ying in front of her. She took a few small continuous steps and walked toward the foot of the mountain.

"Old Ling, for this period of time, you should first find a place to rest outside of Jia Nan Academy. You need not sneak into the academy if there are no urgent matters. Otherwise, if those old fellows were to know about it, I'm afraid that we'll get into all sorts of trouble again. Those old lunatics may give our clan face but they are still very firm when it comes to some of the rules. On the point of the rules of the academy, there are only a few people in this continent who can be counted that can cause them to give in." The figure of the young woman was gradually hidden between the tree leaves. Her voice, however, still lingered in the original spot.

"Ke ke, alright. If there is anything, Young Miss only needs to blow that pipe and the old me will immediately hurry over." Ling Ying smiled and nodded. He twisted his body, turned into a shadow once again and merged with the shadow of a large tree. Finally, he gradually disappeared.

The young lady slowly walked down the mountain. Her faint, green-colored figure formed an alluring silhouette under the sunlight.

"Ke ke, Xun Er mei, what a coincidence. You have also just descended from your training in the mountains?" As the young lady walked quietly, a warm voice suddenly sounded from her side. The young lady halted her footsteps, lifted her head and took a look. She saw a handsome young man wearing a white-colored outfit not far from the foot of the mountain who was standing with a smile. The smile was elegant with a compliment of warmth. This impressive face accompanied by the warm smile would cause even a girl who was a stranger seeing him for the first time to involuntarily lower their guard a little.

TL: mei - younger sister or a younger close female friend (intimate)

"Yes." Seeing the white-clothed young man, whose body was tall and straight, Xun Er's face did not appear too gentle because of the outstanding appearance of the other person. She also knew that this young man was not a man who relied on his looks to survive and that his strength was at the very forefront of Jia Nan Academy. He was able

to stand out among the outstanding people chosen from all over the land and was even a person who stood at the top among the younger generation at Jia Nan Academy.

Xun Er's indifferent greeting did not cause the face of the white-robed young man to have any change. He laughed softly, took two steps forward and was about to come closer to have a chat when the former took the lead to open her mouth, and stifled his words, "Senior Bai Shan, Xun Er temporarily has some matters to attend to, and cannot accompany you to chat. Goodbye."

The young lady smiled and immediately turned around, and walked to another small path. However, she had yet to take a few steps when another voice sounded.

"Xun Er, you have indeed come here again." When Xun Er heard this voice, which was as gentle as water, she finally revealed a warm smile. She turned her head and saw a mature woman, who had walked over from a small path by the side. With a smile, she said, "Instructor Ruo Ling, were you looking for me?"

Hearing this name, it was clear that the person who arrived was actually Instructor Ruo Ling, who had gone to Wu Tan City to recruit new students two years ago. The two years did not leave any traces on that gentle and beautiful face of the current her. Instead, after being brewed, it appeared to have an even greater, more mature charm compared to two years ago.

Instructor Ruo Ling walked closer to Xun Er and helplessly patted the latter's head. She said, "In another half a month's time, it will be the Promotion Competition of the Academy. You should know that as long as you pass the matches in the competition, you will have the qualification to enter the Inner Academy to train. Each year, the academy only have fifty vacancies. Originally, you could already participate in it last year, but you passed up the opportunity."

"Last year, Xun Er had just arrived. How could I dare compete with all the Seniors?" Xun Er gave a saucy smile as she spoke.

"Please don't give me that. Do you think that I don't know what you were thinking in your heart? Aren't you simply waiting for that fellow to go together with you?" When she said up to this point, Instructor Ruo Ling suddenly gritted her white teeth. A resentful fury surfaced on her gentle face and a few rare vulgarities even erupted from her mouth, "Xiao Yan that bastard. He actually dared to fool around with old me. His one year leave was something that I settled after bearing a lot of pressure. However, one year has already passed, but I have yet to see him! He really infuriates me! If it were not for you who pestered me for the entire day, I would have simply crossed out his name and forgotten about it!"

"Instructor Ruo Ling, be rest assured that Xiao Yan ge-ge will definitely hurry over this year." Xun Er quickly replied when she heard this outburst.

“What’s the use even if he managed to come? He was absent for training in the academy for two years. Don’t tell me that his training speed outside will be even faster than the training method that has gone through all kinds of assessment by various predecessors?” Instructor Ruo Ling helplessly said, “If he wants to successfully obtain a spot, he would at least need to reach the strength of a Da Dou Shi. Moreover, this would only be if his luck was good and did not meet certain monsters in the early rounds.”

“Instructor Ruo Ling, you should not underestimate Xiao Yan ge-ge. Back then he used his Dou Zhe’s strength to endure twenty exchanges with your hands.” Xun Er’s bright eyes were curled slightly with a smile as she replied.

“I hope so. The Promotion Competition this time around is not as easy as the last time. There are over three hundred people in the entire academy who have the right to fight for it. If he wants to break through them, it will really be quite difficult if he did not have a couple of skills.” Instructor Ruo Ling pursed her lips and said. She still bore a grudge toward this delinquent who had actually dared to not show up as agreed.

“Then can instructor please write Xiao Yan ge-ge name in this time around.” Xun Er pulled Instructor Ruo Ling’s hand, and gave a lovely smile as she acted in a spoiled manner.

“Ah, I really have no way to deal with you. It has been two years but your mouth has been talking about that fellow over and over again. There are quite a lot of outstanding males in this Jia Nan Academy who are more outstanding than him. For example...” The corner of Instructor Ruo Ling’s eyes suddenly glance at Bai Shan, who was standing with a smile off to the side.

Xun Er smiled, but acted as though she did not hear anything.

“I just knew that you would ignore me.” Instructor Ruo Ling appeared to be aware of this effect as she withdrew her joke. She softly said, “Let’s go, it is about time for morning class. Return with me. I think that you are also unwilling to be entangled with Bai Shan here, right?”

Xun Er smiled and nodded. She pulled Instructor Ruo Ling, and the two of them appeared to be discussing something softly with one another as they slowly walked toward the other side of the small path.

The white-clothed young man continued to quietly stand by the side of the small path. His face carried a smile as he eyed the two people who had gradually become distant. A long while later, the smile on his face finally paled slightly. His long finger carelessly clamped a wilted yellow leaf that was falling down from a tree. He said blandly, “Xiao Yan? Is it that new student who took an entire two years of leave? Ke, alright. You can show me just what qualification you actually have to cause Junior Xun Er to care so

much about you? This kind of outstanding girl is not something that a mediocre person has the right to possess.”

Once he said this, Bai Shan slowly turned around. His hands, which were held behind his back abruptly flicked gently against the leaf from the tree. Immediately, a yellow shadow shot out explosively and was inserted into a huge rock far away in a lightning-like manner. Half of this seemingly weak leaf had actually penetrated into the tough rock.

Chapter 383: Great Plains of the Black Region

The ‘Black-Corner Region’, a special region that had been agglomerated and built up outside of the Jia Nan Academy due to chaos. There were many people who possessed doubts over why just outside the Jia Nan Academy, an ancient and long established academy, would possess such a chaotic region that was totally different from the atmosphere within the academy. Regardless of the reason, it was the truth that it existed. Despite numerous suppressions over the many years, the ‘Black-Corner Region’ was still expanding exponentially at a rate that caused many people to be stunned. The special property of this region’s extreme resilience caused the opposing factions, who had the intention of suppressing the expansion of this region, to feel powerless.

The boundary of the ‘Black-Corner Region’ was extremely long. Moreover, after these few years of expansion, it had almost become a small country with clear borders. The only difference between it and other empires was that other empires had a leader standing right at the top, while this region was one where everyone fought for themselves. Various factions repeatedly fought and killed for their own benefit. It was so chaotic within the ‘Black-Corner Region’ that it was like a plate of loose sand. However, it was also because of this that the ‘Black-Corner Region’ was able to become increasingly stronger and larger in such a place as the middle of the continent. Otherwise it was likely that no faction would sit back and watch this special area, with shocking destructive strength, swiftly become stronger and soon pose a threat toward them.

Although the ‘Black-Corner Region’ was renowned throughout the continent for its chaos, the various kinds of high class Qi Methods, Dou Techniques, Medicinal Pills, and other unique goods that flowed through here also attracted many strong people from all over the continent. After all, regardless of what happened, these few things were necessary to the point that even they were envious of. Being able to obtain an even higher class Qi Methods than the one they had been practicing would mean that they could take another step forward on the journey to becoming a strong person. This kind of temptation was undoubtedly fatal toward many strong people.

Therefore, the ‘Black-Corner Region’ was like an extremely dark bottomless pit. A countless number of unique treasures flowed into that place from various channels.

After that, they would be auctioned off and sold for sky high prices, causing countless people to fight for them.

Due to the mysterious organization that had suddenly appeared, Xiao Yan's originally somewhat relaxed heart had once again tensed up. Although a clear trace of him had yet to be discovered by that mysterious organization, Xiao Yan felt a coldness that prickled his back as long as he thought of how a strong person like Yao Lao had been constrained by them until he dared not randomly appear.

Being spurred on by this faint coldness that had faintly shrouded his heart and spirit, Xiao Yan finally understood that the kind of laid-back, ordinary life he had been living was far too much of a luxury. Currently, there were far too many of things which he carried on his back. His father's disappearance and the mysterious organization chasing after Yao Lao. All of these mysteries were like a fog of darkness that was hounding him, causing Xiao Yan to be afraid of sparing even a little thought about resting.

If he wanted to solve the mystery, he would need very great strength. Xiao Yan was also clear that the source of his strength was not ordinary training, but was instead those mysterious 'Heavenly Flames' that existed between the heavens and the earth. Although this kind of action was dangerous and crazy, for Xiao Yan who possessed the 'Flame Mantra', it was undoubtedly the fastest shortcut for him to become a strong person.

In order to quickly increase his strength and allow himself to possess the strength needed to contend with the mysterious organization when they came to look for him, he would need to obtain the 'Fallen Heart Flame' within the Jia Nan Academy with the greatest speed.

"I am once again pressed for time. Ah." A human figure flew past the somewhat drowsy sky in a lightning-like manner. Xiao Yan lowered his head and glanced at the trees, which were swiftly flying past below him as he muttered with a bitter smile.

Ever since Yao Lao had told him about the goals and tendencies of the mysterious organization, Xiao Yan had abandoned his thought of touring all the way toward Jia Nan Academy. Instead, he directly activated his Purple Cloud Wings, and travelled with great hardship, both day and night, as he moved along the route on the map, and flew toward the 'Black-Corner Region'.

The distance between the Jia Ma Empire and the 'Black-Corner Region' was extremely vast. Xiao Yan needed to pass through quite a number of small countries along the way before he could even reach the border of the 'Black-Corner Region'. If he were to cover this great distance by walking or by riding carriages, he was afraid that he really could not reach his destination without at least three to five months, or even half a year's time. Moreover, this was on the precondition that his journey was unobstructed. After all, it was impossible for territories within these small countries to be as peaceful as they were within the Jia Ma Empire. Due to the terrain, the country's' strength or for many

other reasons, battles would usually occur in these places daily. Various mercenaries engaged in huge chaotic battles for profits. Moreover, when there came a day when they really did not have any money to spend, these mercenary companies would turn into notorious bandit troops. As long as the defensive strength of any merchants whom they met was not very strong, it was likely that their fortune, along with their women, would all be snatched away and end up in a miserable state.

By using the Purple Cloud Wings in lieu of walking, Xiao Yan may have ended up exhausting a great amount of Dou Qi, were it not for the support of the 'Energy Recovery Pills' which he had refined earlier. Adding to that, his 'Flame Mantra' Qi Method had already evolved to the Middle Level Xuan Class. With the cooperation of the two, Xiao Yan barely managed to support his long distance flight. However, every two days, he needed to land on the ground, and begin an in depth training session that lasted for at least a day in order to recover his nearly numb muscles and spirit after flying for such a long time.

With him rushing through the journey with all of his strength in this manner, the 'Black-Corner Region', which would have required at least half a year or more to reach if he were to travel at a laid back pace, was forcefully reduced by Xiao Yan by more than ten times.

After flying for nearly ten days using the Purple Cloud Wings, the monotonous mountain range below Xiao Yan suddenly became much closer. He was slightly startled, and immediately lifted his head to sweep his gaze over the distant area, only to see dark, black-colored plains at the edge of his sight. It was like a black line that completely isolated the world within from the world outside.

"This is the Great Plains of the 'Black Region'?" Xiao Yan watched the black line, which was gradually becoming larger in his eyes. His face, which had been filled with fatigue and dust, suddenly become very alert. A smile like he had put down a heavy burden spread from the corner of his mouth. According to the indication of the map, this 'Great Plains of the Black Region' was the gateway to the 'Black-Corner Region'. As long as one stepped into here, one would have entered that chaotic world which was out of tune with the outside world.

"We have finally arrived." Xiao Yan used great force to rub his large, black eyes. His body slowly descended. Although the 'Black-Corner Region' was just a short distance in front of him, he did not choose to enter it immediately. Since even Yao Lao had repeatedly emphasized to him about the chaos of this place, he felt that it would not be wise if he entered this place, where danger lurked around every corner in his exhausted condition.

"You should recover first. Although it has been extremely tough rushing this journey these past ten days, you have also received a lot of benefits. The Dou Qi in your body is only becoming stronger under this kind of repeated exhaustion." Yao Lao's voice sounded from his heart at this moment.

“Ah.” Xiao Yan nodded. He slowly landed in a mountainous forest and swiftly scouted around. When he did not discover the presence of any humans or beasts, he finally relaxed and searched for a covert place. He sat cross-legged, took out an ‘Energy Recovery Pill’, and popped it into his mouth. The seal was formed by his hands and he shut his eyes.

As Xiao Yan entered his training mode, faint energy ripples began to seep out from within his body. A suction force, which was partially visible, swiftly sucked all the energy around his body into it. After which, it was refined and poured into the somewhat-dim Dou Crystal within the vortex. Its appearance was caused by his overdrawn Dou Qi.

The quiet training lasted for nearly half the afternoon. Only then did the faint energy ripple around Xiao Yan’s body gradually weakened until it completely disappeared.

Xiao Yan’s tightly shut eyelashes gently twitched. He immediately opened his eyes and a green-colored flame flashed across those dark eyes. He opened his mouth slightly, and a mouthful of turbid air contained some black color as it was being exhaled. The black, turbid air gradually curled upward. Any leaves which came into contact with it instantly corroded until nothing was left.

The fatigue which covered Xiao Yan’s face had completely disappeared the moment he exhaled that mouthful of somewhat strange black air, Replacing it was a faint, warm, jade-like radiance.

Xiao Yan lifted his head and knit his eyebrows as he watched the faint amount of rising black air. His eyes narrowed and he suddenly lowered his head to look at his middle finger. He could see that the originally long and pale finger had actually once again become as black as ink, appearing extremely strange.

“Is this the ‘Searing Poison’? I thought that it had disappeared by itself. It had actually been hiding this whole time.” Seeing the black finger, which had not appeared for a long time, Xiao Yan could not help but laugh bitterly.

“If this thing is resolved properly, it might be a unique attack of yours against an enemy. On the other hand, if it is not resolved properly, it will cause many problems. After all, this kind of toxin has undergone mutations and has developed a resistance to many different types of antidotes. Its destructive power is also quite shocking.” Yao Lao’s voice was somewhat serious as he spoke.

Xiao Yan nodded his head helplessly. He flicked his finger. The black color swiftly paled, and a moment later, it had completely vanished. That appearance was as though it had hidden into some secret place that Xiao Yan could not detect.

“If it were not because I wanted to obtain the ‘Seven Magical Green Spirit Saliva’ to help teacher’s spirit awaken, I would also not have helped that old fellow. The promises that he had made were as though he had farted. Hee hee, he is indeed a crafty person.”

Xiao Yan stood up and suddenly let out a cold laughter. After he helped Nalan Jie completely expel the poison, that old fellow had an extremely grateful appearance, but what happened after that? He saw with his own eyes that Xiao Yan was being chased by the Misty Cloud Sect, who wanted to kill him, yet Nalan Jie did not make even the slightest move.

“Hu, there is no need to talk about that disappointing old fellow. Teacher, should we enter the ‘Black-Corner Region’ now?” Xiao Yan shook his head. He stood at the peak of the mountain as he gazed at the black colored plain in the distance and asked.

“Ah.” Yao Lao nodded his head. He immediately reminded, “Try to use your ‘Purple Cloud Wings’ as little as possible within the ‘Black-Corner Region’. A flying Dou Technique is an extremely rare item and it could be forcefully snatched by others. If you were to meet some strong person, they might become greedy and end up killing you just to steal them.”

“Uh?” Xiao Yan was startled. A long while later, he smiled bitterly and said, “Looks like this damn place really is chaotic without boundaries. At the very least, the strong people within the Jia Ma Empire still have some pride. It is extremely rare for someone to attack and rob another. However, in this place, something like this is considered as routine and careless as eating at home.”

“Ha ha, if this were not the case, how can the ‘Black-Corner Region’ have the qualification to be called the most chaotic region in the entire continent?” Yao Lao laughed out loud, “Alright, little fellow, let’s go. Although the inside of this place is dangerous and chaotic, the number of good things will cause one to be dazzled. Aren’t you planning to help that Hai Bodong gather the medicinal ingredients needed to refine the ‘Spiritual Recovery Purple Pill’? You can definitely find all of them here.”

“It will naturally be good if that is the case.” Xiao Yan rejoiced a little upon hearing this. Xiao Yan had been bearing in mind the favor that Hai Bodong had given him in the Jia Ma Empire by using all of his strength to help him escape twice. The ‘Spiritual Recovery Purple Pill’, which Xiao Yan owed Hai Bodong, caused a knot in his heart. Currently being able to obtain the medicinal ingredients caused him to sigh in relief.

After arranging everything properly, with the enormous Heavy Xuan Ruler strapped to his back, Xiao Yan twisted his neck and stomped his feet on the ground. As an explosion of energy was released from under his feet, Xiao Yan’s body shot forward like an arrow which had left a bow, turning into a black shadow which dashed toward the dark black grassland.

“Hei, the ‘Black-Corner Region’. I want to see just how chaotic you actually are.”

Chapter 384: A Chaotic Region Where Compassion is Unnecessary

As one glanced over the endless plain as far as the eye could see, there was only a monotonous black color. Against the background of the somewhat dark sky, a depressive atmosphere that caused one to feel fretful shrouded the plain. In this somewhat strange place, it was little wonder why those chaotic rules were born.

A black shadow suddenly shot out from the distance on this quiet plain. The speed of the black shadow was extremely quick. As it flashed, it appeared to be teleporting. However, each time a foot landed on the ground, it would bring about a muffled thunder explosion. The explosive sound formed a ripple shape that spread on the plain, and gradually became distant.

While the human figure ran at his maximum speed, he suddenly lifted his head slightly and revealed a delicate and handsome young face. He was Xiao Yan who had shuttled from thousands of kilometers away. The current him was frowning as he watched the vast plain. He softly muttered, "This damn place really causes people to feel constrained, but why is it that I have yet to see anyone after having entered into this plain for such a long time?"

"Continue heading forward. I think that it is likely that Hai Bodong has never come here before. Therefore, the map which he gave you does not have the exact route on the Great Plain of the Black Region. Now, we can only enter some small town on the plain and then purchase a map of this place." Yao Lao said somewhat uncertainly. He was similarly unfamiliar with this place, having only heard some information about it.

"Yes." Xiao Yan helplessly nodded and could only continue burying his head and hurrying along bitterly.

"That's right, little fellow. I will remind you once again. In this 'Black-Corner Region', don't have too much compassion. In here, that thing is something which is thrown into the smelly gutters. If you have it, there won't be even the slightest bit of benefit for you. Instead, it will drag you into a quagmire." Yao Lao suddenly reminded him once again.

"Killing a chicken to warn the monkeys is the best tactic here."

TL: Killing a chicken to warn the monkeys - Hurting someone to set the example so that others are warned.

Xiao Yan smiled faintly and said, "I am not some excessively good person, neither am I a saint who is full of compassion. It is not my turn to perform those great things like rescuing the suffering of the world. I am only thinking of letting myself become stronger and then go and protect the people whom I should protect. I am in no mood nor am I qualified to bother about others."

"That is the best attitude to survive within the 'Black-Corner Region.'" Yao Lao smiled upon hearing this as he sighed in relief. He similarly did not hope that his student was

that kind of soft hearted saint. This was because he knew that these kinds of people were those that would most likely not live for long.

Instead of becoming a saint with a short life, he would rather Xiao Yan be an evil person who would choose to use vicious, and all sorts of underhanded means in order to protect the people whom he should protect.

Xiao Yan sighed. He continued to lower his head and charge forward. After continuing to run for nearly half an hour, a small black dot faintly appeared within his sight. As he moved closer, this black dot also gradually expanded. Bits and pieces of white colored tents appeared within Xiao Yan's sight. The place was actually a small sized tribal camp.

As he heard those sound of people faintly being transmitted from the tents, Xiao Yan sighed in relief within his heart. His feet pressed gently on the ground and his body was like a black shadow which ran over toward that small tribal camp.

After running for nearly two to three minutes, the tribal camp finally completely appeared in Xiao Yan's eyes. He gradually slowed his body down and slowly walked toward the outside of the main entrance of the tribal camp.

Xiao Yan's gaze swept all around him when he came into such close contact. He realized that this tribal camp was actually not very small. There were nearly one hundred large and small tents placed one after another. Hearing the noise that repeatedly sounded from within it, the human traffic here appears quite good.

Xiao Yan walked closer to the main entrance of the tribal camp when his expression suddenly changed. His feet abruptly took one step back as a long arrow abruptly broke through the air and shot over. It was violently inserted into the grass in front of him. From the tail of the arrow which was swaying repeatedly, one could see that the person who released the arrow definitely did not have any intention of leaving anyone alive.

After Xiao Yan dodged the long arrow, a soft surprised 'hey' sounded from the fences of the tribal camp not far away.

"I am only passing through here and planning only to restock my supply. What do you mean by this?" Xiao Yan coldly glanced at a certain spot at the fences and coldly cried out.

"Chi, don't tell me you are a novice who has just entered the 'Black-Corner Region'? You actually don't even know the rule that you must hand over the road fees one hundred meters away before you enter the tribal camp?" A human figure leaped onto the top of the fences. When he heard these words of Xiao Yan, he was initially startled before he immediately appeared to have understood something. He raised his eyebrows and a strange expression swiftly flashed across his eyes.

Xiao Yan frowned, road fees?

“Five hundred gold coins. Hurry up. Don’t act so slowly and waste my time. Don’t tell me that you cannot even afford to pay for the road fees?” Seeing Xiao Yan’s hesitating manner, the strange expression in that man’s eyes grew even more magnificent. His voice was instead a little slower as he urged.

“What a strange rule.” Xiao Yan sighed in his heart. He flicked his hand and a bag of gold coins appeared in his hand. After which, he threw it over to the man. The latter hurriedly received it. He carefully counted once before waving his hand and cried out in a dry voice, “Open the gate.”

Upon hearing this voice, the broken wooden door of the tribal camp immediately began creaking as it was opened. It revealed the road within it and the human flow coming and going.

“Come in, novice fellow.” That skinny man parted his mouth and laughed as he spoke with a smile.

Xiao Yan frowned slightly. It was really as Yao Lao had said. This ‘Black-Corner Region’ did not have many ordinary people. His hand held the hilt of the ruler on his shoulders and he raised the caution in his heart as he slowly walked toward the main entrance and before striding in.

Once he entered the tribal camp, the roads which were formed by the tents appeared in his eyes. There were various different kinds of booths that were displayed outside of the tents with many strange and unique items placed on them. At this moment, there were also quite a number of people carrying weapons in their hands as they walked around the place.

“I should first go and find if there are any maps being sold.” Xiao Yan repeated in his heart. He had just entered the street when a human figure flashed in front of him. Immediately, three men carrying shining knives in their hands blocked him while wearing a thick dark smile on their faces.

“Hei, I will tell you, novice who has just arrived at the ‘Black-Corner Region’. Today, let me teach you the first rule within the ‘Black-Corner Region’. That is don’t let others easily see that you are a novice who has just arrived.” An awful trumpet like laughter sounded from behind him. Xiao Yan turned around to take a look. The skinny man who had shot the arrow from earlier was holding a bow and arrow in his hand. The sharp arrow on the bow was aimed at Xiao Yan from a distance.

“Hand over all the things on you. Your money, weapons or any other things. Hand over everything you have. If my mood is good, I may only keep one arm of yours as a price for you making a mistake.” The skinny man parted his mouth and laughed.

“It is indeed worthy of being the ‘Black-Corner Region’. It is just unfortunate that no matter how a group of grasshopper jumped, they are at the end of the day still grasshoppers.” Xiao Yan’s gaze swept over the street in front of him and spoke. At the moment, the group of people on the street has also discovered the situation here. However, there was not a single person who stepped forward to help Xiao Yan ease out of the situation. Instead, each and everyone hugged their arms. Their faces were mocking as though they were watching a performance.

“Little fellow, you have finally understood after experiencing it personally, right? What that fellow said is correct. Don’t let anyone see your background or bottomline within the ‘Black-Corner Region’. In this place there are no so called good people so don’t hope that those in the audience would step forward to help. It is already very unexpected that they didn’t add insult to injury by coming over and hacking at you a couple of times.” Yao Lao’s voice sounded in Xiao Yan’s heart.

Xiao Yan nodded slightly. His hand slowly gripped the hilt of the Heavy Xuan Ruler.

When they saw Xiao Yan’s action, the faces of the three people blocking in front of Xiao Yan immediately turned cold. They did not say any unnecessary words. The knives in their hands directly hacked ferociously toward Xiao Yan’s neck in front of them. Their attacks were extremely vicious.

“Bang, bang, bang.”

The sharp blades had yet to reach their targets when a black shadow suddenly flashed passed. The dark and cold expressions of the three people instantly became pale. Their bodies appeared to have been smashed by a huge hammer as they were suddenly smashed into a tent behind them. Fresh blood dyed the white-colored tent until it was extremely eye-piercing.

“Bastard!”

In a split second, three of his companions were struck heavily. An appalled and ruthless feeling flashed across the eyes of that skinny man. The bow in his hand was about to move when a black shadow suddenly appeared behind him. A thick low voice softly sounded, “In the future, before you strike, you better clearly distinguish the gap between both parties. However, I think that you may not have a next time.”

“Glug!” As the words fell, the black ruler heavily smashed into the back of that man. Immediately, a mouthful of fresh blood mingled with internal organs which had been shattered by the enormous force was vomited out.

Xiao Yan’s expression was indifferent as he eyed the person who fell down softly. He flipped his hand and inserted the Heavy Xuan Ruler onto his back. After which, he slowly walked on the street. The faces of those people in the human crowd which were originally filled with ridicule suddenly became dull for an instant when they saw him

enter. They then hurriedly hid their expressions, and allowed the human figure carrying some scent of blood to float past in front of them.

Only when Xiao Yan slowly disappeared around the corner of the street did the crowd here recover the liveliness from before. They smiled as they eyed the corpses which were plummeted at the main entrance. There was no pity within their eyes. They simply praised, "Hei, this young man is really ruthless enough. He acted decisively, and actually did not have the slightest hesitation when he killed people. He's man enough. Looks like he will be able to live quite comfortably within the 'Black-Corner Region'."

At this moment, Xiao Yan naturally did not know that due to his ruthless means, he had won such high praise. It looks like the flowery words that Yao Lao had mentioned were indeed true.

After Xiao Yan walked along a few streets which were not considered to be too long for a couple of times, he was disappointed to realize that this small tribal camp actually did not have any maps being sold.

Xiao Yan shook his head, feeling depressed. Just as he planned to find someone to ask for a rough route, a somewhat fat human figure suddenly appeared in front of him. The man's face was full of smiles.

"Mister, you are intending to buy maps, right? Earlier, I saw you inquiring all the way here." The fatty smiled and spoke in front of Xiao Yan.

"You have one?" Xiao Yan glanced at this fat stranger and asked blandly.

"I am a merchant who walks on this Great Plains of the Black Region. Naturally, I must carry the most precise map." The fat man smiled again as he replied.

"What's the price?" There was still not the slightest fluctuation in Xiao Yan's voice. In this 'Black-Corner Region', there was no free lunch.

"Ke ke, I will tell Mister something honest. In this Great Plains of the Black Region', even if you possessed a map, you would also have difficulty finding your exact destination. This is because there will occasionally be a Black Storm that covers the sky and blots out the sun occurring on the plains. During such times, a map is useless. Only those people who have great experience can successfully walk out of the Black Storm. However, I think that Mister, being a newcomer, should not have such experience, right?"

The fatty shook his head and said with another smile, "I shall not beat around the bush with you. Earlier, at the entrance to the tribal camp, I notice that your strength is not bad. Therefore, I want to hire you to be a guard of my mercenary group. If your aim is to pass through this Great Plains of the Black Region, and enter into the inner 'Black-Corner Region', you can accompany me on the journey. However, as the compensation

for leading you out of the Great Plains, you must help out a little when my mercenary group meets some trouble. What do you think?”

Xiao Yan knit his eyebrows slightly together when he heard this. In his heart, he cautiously asked, “Teacher, is it really as he has said?”

“Uh. The Great Plains of the Black Region is indeed known for its Black Storm. People without great experience will really lose their direction. It is said that an unlucky fellow back then was hurrying on with his journey within a Black Storm. In the end, he moved over half a circle around the Great Plains and ended up dying of fatigue.” Yao Lao hesitated for a moment before continuing, “If you want to pass through the Great Plains of the Dark Region, you can really save a lot of trouble if you travel with an experienced merchant group.”

“Ke ke, the destination of our mercenary company is the ‘Black Mark City’ within the inner part of the ‘Black-Corner Region’. The annual Great Auction Fair will be held the day after tomorrow at that place. Therefore, I need to increase the strength of my defense and seize the time to hurry over. Otherwise, I will also not find an unfamiliar person.” The fatty smiled and explained the somewhat presumptuous action of his.

“Great Auction Fair?” Xiao Yan’s heart moved slightly when he heard this name. The most attractive thing within the ‘Black-Corner Region’ were those mysterious items that left people speechless. Each time the auction was held, it would attract a countless number of people to bid for the items.

Xiao Yan once again mused for a moment in his heart. He then ceased hesitating and nodded.

“Let’s have a pleasant collaboration. You can call me Duo Ma.” Seeing that Xiao Yan nodded his head, the fatty immediately sigh in relief. He smiled extended his hand toward Xiao Yan.

“Yao Yan.” Xiao Yan careless shook the other person’s fat hand as he said indifferently.

Chapter 385: Black Ranking, Black Storm

A fleet of carts quickly moved past on this black plain, lifting wisps of faint yellow dust before finally disappearing at the edge of one’s sight.

Xiao Yan was seated cross-legged within a somewhat bumpy horse carriage. The person in front of him was the person in charge of the merchant convoy called Duo Ma. This merchant group was indeed not very strong, as he had mentioned. Among them, the strongest person appeared to have the strength of a five star Dou Shi. Of course, as the leader of the guards hired by Duo Ma, that fellow naturally felt somewhat unhappy at Xiao Yan who had suddenly joined them. However, after Xiao Yan had ‘accidentally’ knocked him off the horse carriage with a palm while they were rushing through the

journey, he had become much more honest. It was also because of this palm that Duo Ma's warmth toward Xiao Yan had become much more fervent. It even resulted in him even directly inviting Xiao Yan to sit in his carriage to properly receive him. After all, under the danger of them being robbed anywhere, one would feel much more reassured if there was a strong person sitting among the convoy.

The current Duo Ma had taken out a map, which was somewhat old and yellowed, from his chest pocket. He placed it on the table in front of him and slowly pulled it open. His finger pointed at a red dot and he smiled as he said, "This is our destination, the 'Black Mark City'. According to our speed, we should be able to arrive by tomorrow afternoon."

Xiao Yan's gaze stared intently at the yellowing map. His gaze paused on the dot for 'Black Mark City' for a moment before slowly moving along a route upward and finally saw a blue-colored star right in the middle.

"That should be the Jia Nan Academy, right?" Xiao Yan's gaze glanced at the blue-colored star. His face did not have even the slightest change as he carelessly asked.

"Ah, that is the Jia Nan Academy which is renowned throughout the whole Dou Qi Continent. My daughter is within it. Ke ke." Duo Ma nodded his head. When he mentioned his daughter, that face of his swelled with pride.

Xiao Yan quietly nodded. He imprinted the route firmly into his heart. After which, his gaze once again swept toward the black-colored region surrounding the exterior of Jia Nan Academy. The black-colored region was divided into quite a number of areas, all of which were different sizes.

"The current 'Black-Corner Region' has basically been completely divided by some big factions. Although they still repeatedly fight with and kill one another for territories, there should not be any major changes within a short period of time." When he saw Xiao Yan's gaze, Duo Ma, who was a merchant, could naturally understand some of Xiao Yan's uncertainty. Although he could guess that Xiao Yan should be a new person who had just arrived at the 'Black-Corner Region' for the first time, the shrewd him did not mention even a little of this. Instead, he smiling explained the situation.

"The 'Black Mark City', which we are currently heading toward, is controlled by the 'Eight Gates'. The 'Eight Gates' is an old faction within the 'Black-Corner Region' and its strength is extremely great. It is said that the strength of their leader, Yuan Yi, can be ranked within the top ten of the 'Black Ranking' in the 'Black-Corner Region'. The Great Auction Fair in the 'Black Mark City' is also conducted by their 'Eight Gates' this time." Duo Ma's finger pointed at a small circle surrounding 'Black Mark City', which had been carved out as he smiled again while he spoke.

"Black Ranking?" The foreign term caused Xiao Yan to confused as he muttered softly to himself.

“Ke ke, this ‘Black Ranking’ is not very different from the ranking of the strong people in some countries. It is just that the competition for the ‘Black Ranking’ here far exceeds that of other competitions of other empires. This is because, in merely less than two years, the last three positions on the ‘Black Ranking’ were directly taken over. It is said that the three who were replaced them were all strong people at the Dou Wang class.” Duo Ma shook his head and sighed.

“Oh?” Xiao Yan’s face visibly moved when he heard this. It should be known that the Ten Strong of the Jia Ma Empire would have at least a decade before there was a rotation or a change. Yet, in this place, even a strong Dou Wang was eliminated this quickly. It was difficult to imagine just how brutal the competition was.

“Who are those who are ranked among the top few of the ‘Black Ranking’? What is their strength like?” Xiao Yan softly asked. His voice was somewhat curious.

“Not many people have seen the two who are ranked first and second due to them being excessively mysterious. Therefore, I don’t have much knowledge of them. However, the one ranked third is an extraordinary strong person. It is said that his strength is already at the peak of the Dou Huang class. Moreover, he is extremely proficient in his medicinal refining skills and could be called the best in the ‘Black-Corner Region’ when it comes to refining medicine. Therefore, many people have addressed him as ‘Medicine Emperor’.” Duo Ma voiced his thoughts.

TL: Medicine in pinyin is Yao.

“Medicine Emperor? Such a name carries quite some weight.” Xiao Yan smiled faintly and said, “What is his real name?”

“Ah, let me think. I think he is called Han Feng.” Duo Ma rubbed his head and spoke with a smile.

“Chi!”

Just as the words came from Duo Fa’s mouth, Xiao Yan’s finger, which was hidden in his sleeve suddenly trembled intensely. Some thick white flame involuntarily erupted from the black-colored ring on his finger. Finally, it resulted in his finger landing on a board of the carriage and the high temperature directly burned a small hole through it.

The sudden change of the ring also caused Xiao Yan’s expression to change slightly. It was however, fortunate that with the cover of the sleeves, Duo Ma in front of him did not discover this unexpected change.

“Teacher, what happened to you?” Xiao Yan’s finger gently rubbed the black ring as he softly asked in his heart. The change within the ring earlier was clearly because of a sudden violent surge of Yao Lao’s emotion within it.

Xiao Yan did not receive a response to his question. The current Yao Lao appeared to have become completely silent.

When he sensed Yao Lao's complete silence, Xiao Yan also wisely did not continue to ask. However, he had firmly remembered the name of 'Han Feng' within his heart. This person appeared to have a huge relationship with Yao Lao in the past.

"Mister Yao Yan, are you alright?" Seeing that Xiao Yan's expression had suddenly changed, Duo Ma opposite him could not help but ask somewhat uncertainly.

"I'm fine." Xiao Yan smiled. He was about to say something when he suddenly realized that there was some disturbance outside of the horse carriage. Numerous exclamations were transmitted into the horse carriage, "Everyone take note, the 'Black Storm' is about to approach. Hurry up and prepare to stop the carriages! Do not wander so you do not lose your way."

"Black Storm? We are really unlucky to meet it once again." Hearing the exclamation from outside, Duo Ma's expression changed slightly. However, he did not show extreme panic. He faced Xiao Yan and said, "Mister Yao Yan, let's get off the carriage first. As long as we properly take necessary steps for protection, this Black Storm, which isn't considered very big, is unlikely to cause too much danger."

Xiao Yan nodded his head, pulled aside the curtain of the carriage and leaped down. He lifted his head and took a look only to discover that the sky that had been clear just ten minutes ago was now strangely covered by a black fog. His gaze was drawn to his front but his sight was seriously hindered. Only then did he realize why Duo Ma would say that if one were to meet a Black Storm, it was useless, even if one had a map.

"Ke ke, Mister Yao Yan, you need not worry. I have sensed the wind and the storm isn't very strong. This can be considered a great fortune in an unfortunate situation." Duo Ma stood by Xiao Yan's side and smiled as he said, "Although the Black Storm is a weather phenomenon in the Great Plains of the Black Region, which causes people to feel despondent over, it is much better compared to those brutal, dark bandits. At the very least, if one's luck is a little good when meeting Black Storms, one can still preserve one's life. However, if one were to meet the large army of bandits numbering in the tens of thousands, it is likely that one can only surrender and pray that their death will be quick."

Xiao Yan nodded slightly. He was just about to say something when he discovered that the originally dusky sky had instantly become completely dark without any forewarning. Not long later, the screaming wild wind suddenly came sweeping down. Immediately, some of the people with weaker bodies were blown by the wild wind until their bodies began to sway. It frightened them until they hurriedly grabbed onto some of the things beside them.

The black-colored wind came sweeping down from the sky which was a dark mass. It was like a demon that seemed to open its huge mouth, ready to swallow anything that it met.

The convoy, which was connected to one another, was arranged such that it formed a circular shape, where the head and tail were connected; everyone hid within the circle. The weapons in their hands were firmly inserted into ground, firmly fixing their bodies just like nails.

A darkness, in which no one could not even see his fingers, shrouded everyone. Within the screaming wind, no one could sense whether there was anyone present beside them.

Xiao Yan half knelt on the ground. He violently inserted his Heavy Xuan Ruler into the ground and hid his body behind the enormous ruler's body. He heard the crackling sound as the wind blew against the ruler's body. His expression also changed a little. It was unexpected that the so called Black Storm was actually strong to this extent. Moreover, this was a small scale storm which Duo Ma had mentioned. If they were to meet something a little bigger, would it not directly sweep an entire person away?

The darkness and wild wind persisted for an unknowingly long time. During this time, Xiao Yan, who was within the darkness, suddenly knit his eyebrows slightly. He turned his head and turned his gaze toward a spot in a certain direction that he was not aware of. At that place, there seemed to be a strange red glow flashing. Moreover, there was a vague and fuzzy sound being transmitted from that spot.

Xiao Yan blinked his eyes and sensed the surrounding wild winds which appeared to display a trend of weakening. He hesitated for a moment and suddenly half-bent his body and quietly moved toward the fuzzy red glow.

The movement appeared to have persisted for a few minutes within the darkness before the strange red glow finally appeared in Xiao Yan's sight. He borrowed that slightly weak red glow and was somewhat stunned to realize that the body releasing the red-colored glow appeared to be a blurry human's form. Didn't the drifting appearance of it seemed to be similar to when Yao Lao appeared?

"Huh? This fellow actually has a spirit body? It is just that he seemed to be quite weak. A Dou Ling class. No! There seems to something hiding in the darkness. Little fellow, Do Not Move!" Suddenly, Yao Lao who had been caught in his silence seemed to have discovered something and hurriedly shouted.

Xiao Yan was stunned when he heard this. His body lay on the ground with a 'crack' and he dared not even release his breath.

"Who exactly are all of you? Why are you chasing after me? I don't seem to have formed a grudge with any of you!" The red-colored spiritual body swayed and moved

within the wild wind. The current him was now facing the darkness of the storm. His face was somewhat distorted and afraid.

“Jie Jie (ha ha)”

A laughter that gave people the creeps suddenly sounded from within the darkness. Immediately, a black-colored chain abruptly shot out from within the darkness. It was like a black serpent and was extremely agile as it wrapped around the red-colored spirit body.

“Jie Jie.” That energy chain, which appeared to be agglomerated from an extremely strange energy, had just touched the red-colored spirit body when waves of white smoke began to seep out of the latter’s body. A sharp, miserable cry immediately sounded. However, regardless of how the spirit body struggled, he even summoned a kind of red-colored flame in the end, he still had no solution to deal with that black-colored chain. In the end, he could only see his own spirit becoming increasingly weaker with his own eyes before finally being wrapped by a black light that was spat out from the chain.

“Jie Jie, no matter how great or strong you were when you were alive, as long as you have become a spirit body, you are a hunting target for our ‘Hall of Souls’.”

The awful laughter gradually became distant in the darkness until it completely disappeared.

On the grass in the darkness, Xiao Yan had nearly completely shielded his breathing. Cold sweat drenched his clothes. He did not expect that he would meet the mysterious organization that was chasing after Yao Lao within this Black Storm. Moreover, the thing that caused Xiao Yan to feel shock was that the mysterious person earlier did not even need to reveal his body when he captured a Dou Ling class spirit body with the latter unable to put up any resistance. Was this kind of strength not too terrifying?

Chapter 386: Black Mark City

Xiao Yan laid on the grass as the wild wind screamed all around him. He did not dare to move his body even a little, fearing that the mysterious thing hidden within the darkness had yet to leave, and instead would suddenly become violent and kill people.

There was no concept of time within the darkness. Just when a thread of impatience rose within Xiao Yan’s heart, a wisp of sunlight suddenly shone into the darkness. That scene was like an egg without even the slightest gaps being gently cracked open. Warm sunlight expelled the darkness within.

Following the appearance of the first thread of sunlight, numerous rays of sunlight began pouring in. That howling wild wind also gradually weakened until it finally disappeared.

Xiao Yan eyed the sky, which had become slightly brighter, before sighing in relief within his heart. He carefully climbed up and glanced all around him. He immediately saw the merchant group, which was already beginning to get everything in order, just a few hundred meters away. Immediately, he hurriedly opened his stride and hurried over.

When Xiao Yan was about to approach the merchant group, he was able to see that joyful plum face of Duo Ma.

“Mister Yao Yan, are you alright? I was really anxious when I could not find you earlier.” Duo Ma took a few steps forward and said with a relieved sigh.

“I’m fine. Just now, I was a little careless and was blown some distance away.” Seeing the joy on Duo Ma’s face, Xiao Yan smiled and shook his head. Although the reason for this fatty being so anxious was because of his strength, he was considered somewhat more normal compared to some of the people in the ‘Black-Corner Region’.

“You were blown away? Then Mister Yao Yan is really lucky. If it was someone who was unlucky, he would definitely lose his way within these great plains.” Duo Ma rejoiced and spoke with a grin when he heard this, “Mister Yao Yan, please board the carriage first. I need to arrange the goods here that have been disbursed by the wind before we can continue the journey.”

Xiao Yan nodded his head. He eyed the mercenary group, which had already begun packing, and did not say anything. He once again got into the horse carriage and sat cross-legged. His heart, however, let out a long sigh. A shock still remained in his lowered eyes. He muttered in his heart: “Is that the strength of the ‘Hall of Souls? They are indeed terrifying.”

“Ah, but it isn’t completely as you have seen. I already told you last time that the ‘Hall of Souls’ has techniques that are specially used to deal with spiritual bodies. Moreover, spiritual bodies are unable to use Dou Qi. Some of those spirits who possesses unique flames and have refined them into ‘Life Flame’ are a little better off. Back then, when I met with the people from the ‘Hall of Souls’, I relied on the ‘Bone Chilling Flame’ in order to successfully escape. Otherwise, my ending might have well been quite similar to the fellow whom you just happened to meet.” Yao Lao’s voice slowly sounded.

“I think that the attacking techniques that was used seems to be detached from the boundary of Dou Techniques and Dou Qi.” Xiao Yan said somewhat hesitantly as he recalled the bizarre black-colored chain. This was because he knew that while spiritual bodies may not be able to use Dou Qi, the damage Dou Qi can cause them is also similarly weakened. However, when that chain wrapped around that red-colored spiritual body, it was like fire meeting a piece of ice. The reaction was so intense that it left people speechless.

“Ah, when I came into contact with them back then, I also had this kind of feeling. However, I didn’t have the opportunity to observe it in greater detail. Now that I think

about it, their attacking methods are really somewhat different from an ordinary person's. I'm afraid that this is also ultimately why the spiritual bodies are like babies in their hands, without much ability to resist." Yao Lao voiced his thoughts.

"However, you also need not worry about this now. As long as I appear as little as possible, they should not be able to find our position within such a short period of time. What you currently need to do is to try to raise your strength before they discover us! Otherwise, that person from earlier will be a predecessor whose fate we will share." Yao Lao said gravely.

"Ah." After this encounter within the Black Storm, the urgency that Xiao Yan felt had become much more intense. Moreover, seeing that fellow's peculiar attacking method also caused him to be a little worried. After all, the things which he did not know were the most frightening.

"However, we can perhaps stop over at the 'Black Mark City' for one day. The auction fair there should have the things that you need. Moreover, the auction fair of the 'Black-Corner Region' is not something that those in the Jia Ma Empire could compare with. Taking a look would be an eye-opener. However, do you have sufficient money with you? In the 'Black-Corner Region' one would have difficulty moving even an inch if they did not have any money." Yao Lao smiled as he spoke.

"Ah, it seems that I still have over a hundred thousand gold coins. These are the dividends from the sale of the healing medicine in Wu Tan City back then." Xiao Yan was at a loss when he heard this before replying.

"Over a hundred thousand?" Yao Lao was somewhat speechless as he helplessly said, "It is just sufficient to allow you to continue living within the 'Black-Corner Region'. However, you can forget about going to auction for anything if you are thinking of doing so."

Xiao Yan rubbed his head with embarrassment as he bitterly laughed, "If that is really not possible, we can go and buy some medicinal ingredients to refine some medicinal pills to auction off. I have never heard of an alchemist being short on money to spend."

"We can also auction out some 'Amethyst Lion Birth Essence' or perhaps that 'Fire Lotus Seeds'. If these things were placed in the 'Black-Corner Region', they can also cause quite the sensation. When that time comes, I'm afraid that there would be countless number of strong people who practice fire affinity Qi Methods to fight for them." Yao Lao spoke with a smile.

"That's not possible. The 'Amethyst Lion Birth Essence' is the food which the 'Heaven Swallowing Python' loves the most. If I don't have it, that small thing will definitely not listen to me. What will become of me then? There are also only eleven 'Fire Lotus Seeds'. Moreover, I have consumed one of them during this period of time. Even I

myself resent the fact that there isn't enough of them, what's more taking it out to sell." Xiao Yan rolled his eyes and muttered.

"I think I will refine some medicinal pills to auction off. Currently, I am, at any rate, also an alchemist who can refine a tier four medicinal pill. I think that even in this 'Black-Corner Region', a tier four alchemist will not be like cabbage, where one can grab a bundle in one go." Xiao Yan curled his lips and said.

"Cabbage? To think that you can even think of that? With your status as a tier four alchemist, you would be treated as a VIP if you randomly joined any faction. Moreover, your treatment would definitely not be poorer than that of a Dou Wang." Yao Lao ridiculed.

"Hee hee, that's even better." Xiao Yan snickered. When he heard the sound of footsteps appearing outside the carriage door, he ceased conversing with Yao Lao and closed his eyes and hung his head, much like an old monk meditating.

Ever since they had experienced that Black Storm, this convoy of Duo Ma did not experience any more trouble. Around noon on the second day, some lush green color finally began to appear at the edge of the monotonous black-colored plain. When they saw the dispersed green color, the experienced guards could not resist heaving a sigh of relief. As long as they exited the great plain, they would be much safer. After all, the cities were dominated by different, powerful factions. As long as they handed these factions sufficient wealth, they would at least not end up in a miserable state where their goods were stolen and their entire group being killed. These factions were not foolish enough to do something like killing a chicken to get its egg.

TL: Taking a lot of profit at one time instead of slowly getting it.

Of course, nothing was for certain. Otherwise, the 'Black-Corner Region' would not conform with its reputation of being the most chaotic region within the Dou Qi continent.

Xiao Yan pulled aside the curtain of the horse carriage from within and eyed the merchant group which was slowly exiting the black-colored plains. He also sighed in relief.

"Ke ke, it is fortunate that we did not meet those brutal dark bandits this time around. I have managed to preserve my goods and there was no one wounded or killed. I can really save a lot of compensation money this trip." A smile, as though he had released a heavy weight, surfaced on Duo Ma's plump face. Transporting goods on the Great Plains of the Dark Region was no different from hanging one's head on one's belt. If one was unlucky, one would end up losing his life. After all, it was not easy to earn money in this 'Black-Corner Region'.

“That’s right, Mister Yao Yan, this is your reward. Although it does not match your value as a Da Dou Shi...” Duo Ma took out a bag of gold coins from his chest pocket and handed it over to Xiao Yan while he said with a bitter smile.

“Without Mister Duo Ma leading the way, I’m afraid that even if I walked for another ten days, it would be difficult for me to find my way out of the Great Plain of the Dark Region. This money is already more than enough.” Xiao Yan did not arrogantly reject the other party’s reward. He received the gold coins and weighed it in his hand. From its weight, it appeared to be around five thousand gold coins or so.

“Mister Yao Yan, thank you very much.” Duo Ma nodded his head in thanks. He immediately handed over the detailed map from his chest pocket over. In a soft voice, he said, “I think that for a new person who has just entered the ‘Black-Corner Region’, this is the most valuable reward.”

Xiao Yan’s eyes narrowed and slowly nodded, but he did not reject it.

“Ke ke, Mister Yao Yan , I see that you are quite young and your strength is already this strong. I think that your training talent is not bad. However, you must always be careful when walking in the ‘Black-Corner Region’. It would be best if you do not allow others to easily see that you are a new person who has just entered the ‘Black-Corner Region’. Otherwise, you will end up attracting a lot of unnecessary trouble.” Duo Ma laughed softly.

“I will heed your warnings.”

After the convoy walked out of of Great Plains of the Dark Region, they gradually reduced their speed. They hurried through a mountain road for another two hours before they finally passed by a mountain in the afternoon. At the foot of the mountain, the vague outline of an enormous city, that was formed by piling large black rocks, partially appeared. At the four city gates, one could vaguely see tiny black dots which were like ants being gathered together and swarming the city’s huge, dark entrance.

“Ke ke, Mister Yao Yan, this is the ‘Black Mark City’. Due to the auction fair that will be held within these two days, many factions and strong people from nearby will hurry over. After all, there will always be a unique object as a main attraction in each year’s auction fair. It is rumored that the object which dominated the auction fair last year was a scroll containing a Di class Dou Technique. Back then, various factions from all over had nearly started a fight at this auction fair in order to obtain it. If it were not for the great strength backing the organizer, it would most likely have directly turned into a comedy.” Duo Ma stood on the horse carriage and eyed the city at the foot of the mountain while speaking smile to Xiao Yan off to the side.

“Di class Dou Technique.” The corner of Xiao Yan’s mouth twitched involuntarily when he heard this. The place was indeed one where stolen goods and unique treasures

flowed through this lawless region. It would basically be impossible to see a Dou Technique of this class within the Jia Ma Empire.

“Let’s go.” Duo Ma waved his hand and the convoy began whizzing downward. All throughout the way, they carried wisps of yellow dust as they dashed toward the enormous city at the foot of the mountain.

“Hopefully, it will not disappoint me.” Xiao Yan watched the city which was gradually being enlarged in his sight as he softly muttered. His heart was curious and held some expectations.

Chapter 387: Xiao Yan in Financial Distress

The convoy whizzed down from the mountain peak. Ten minutes later, they approached the dark, black city gate. Their speed gradually slowed before they finally queued behind the long line of people and quietly waited for their turn to enter the city.

Standing in front of the horse carriage, Xiao Yan lifted his head and studied the dark mass that was the enormous city wall. His gaze swept across the three large words ‘Black Mark City’ which had been placed right in the middle of the city gate. Moving his sight slowly downward, he finally paused on the ten plus darkly-dressed men at the city gate. They appeared to be the guards of a city in the outside world. However, in this place, anyone who wanted to enter had to hand over quite a large amount of city entrance fees. It should be known that if this kind of city entrance fees were placed in the environment like the Jia Ma Empire, it would likely directly cause a commotion. However, in the ‘Black-Corner Region’, something like this was commonplace.

“Get lost, stop leaping around in front of me.” Just as Xiao Yan was observing the city which had a special serving of the ‘Black-Corner Region’, a curse, which was filled with irritation, suddenly sounded at a spot not far in front of him. Xiao Yan shifted his gaze. It was actually a bald, large man. Perhaps it was because he was impatient from all the waiting, but he lifted a skinny, weak-looking man in front of him with a grab of his palm.

“Ah.” The words of the bald headed large man had just fell when the skinny, weak-looking man who had been lifted by him abruptly turned around. A dagger was swiftly pulled out from his sleeve. The dagger drew out a cold glint and violently stabbed toward the throat of the bald headed large man. However, it was fortunate that the latter’s reaction was nimble. His neck hurriedly pulled back and the the dagger was misaligned and pierced at a spot half an inch below the throat. Immediately, fresh blood soared wildly and a sharp, horrible shriek sounded from the mouth of the bald, large man.

After seriously wounding the bald, large man with one strike, the skinny weak looking young man swayed his body and he was like a loach as his body contracted and withdrew out of his clothes. After which, he rolled into some bushes by the side and disappeared.

“Bastard. I will kill you!” The bald headed large man’s eyes were crimson as he pulled out the dagger. He lost his sense of reasoning as he also charged into the bushes. A long while later, a scream that was similar to the horrifying shriek from earlier was transmitted out from the bushes. It was a long while later before it gradually disappeared.

Xiao Yan stood on the frame of the carriage and was somewhat stunned as he watched the bushes. When he heard that final blood-curling scream, he knew that the bald headed large man would have difficulty keeping his life. However, what caused him to be stunned was that bald head large man’s strength should be around that of a two star Dou Shi while that skinny weak looking man was only at the Dou Zhe class. The gap between the two was this great, yet that skinny, weak-looking man’s murderous blow was actually so crisp and there was not even the slightest bit of hesitation. This kind of vicious scheming really left one speechless. People who could survive within the ‘Black-Corner Region’ were indeed no ordinary characters. It was only now did Xiao Yan truly understand this saying.

“Ke ke, Mister Yao Yan, do not judge a book by its cover in this ‘Black-Corner Region’. This is because the corpses of those who have died in the ‘Black-Corner Region’ because of underestimation could nearly fill an entire city.” Duo Ma smiled as he spoke.

“Ah.” Xiao Yan nodded slightly. The scene which he had witnessed with his own eyes allowed him to completely understand the rules of the ‘Black-Corner Region’.

The fight between the two people earlier was like a short interlude and merely gave the people who were queuing up some entertainment. However, there was hardly anyone who wasted any emotion over this.

The queue slowly moved forward. After waiting for nearly half an hour, it was finally the convoy’s turn. When the convoy reached the city gate, Duo Ma handed over a large bag of gold coins in an extremely swift manner. Xiao Yan’s eyes were sharp. He could clearly see that there was a small bag hidden in Duo Ma’s hand when the latter handed over the large bag of gold coins.

That indifferent black-clothed man received the gold coins and carelessly weighed it in his hands. His expression was a little gentler, but he did not say anything unnecessary. He waved his hand and allowed Duo Ma’s merchant group into the city.

“Ke ke, Mister Yao Yan, where do you plan to go next?” After entering the city, Duo Ma’s convoy stopped and he inquired along with a smile.

“I plan to walk around the city. Oh right, may I know where I can find the largest number of medicinal ingredients in ‘Black Mark City’?” Xiao Yan leaped down from the horse carriage, lifted his head, and asked.

“Medicinal ingredients huh? That will naturally be the ‘Thousand Medicine Place’. As long as you have a sufficient amount of money, you will be able to purchase rare medicinal ingredients that one would have difficulty finding outside of this place.” Duo Ma smiled as he replied.

“Ah, thank you very much. Since it’s like this, let’s part ways here. We will chat in the future if we have the chance.” Xiao Yan cupped his hands toward Duo Ma. He did not wait for the latter to say any courteous words he turned his body and squeezed into the human flow. After which he disappeared.

“Yes, hopefully we can really meet again. However, among the people who die in the ‘Black-Corner Region’ every year, the number of deaths among the new people is the highest. This is especially so for those young people who have some strength. They are filled with youthful energy and do not know how to hide their edge, clearly looking like they will have a short life. However, this little fellow is much better. If his methods were even more vicious, he might really be able to adapt to this kind of place and make a name for himself.” As he eyed Xiao Yan’s back which had disappeared, Duo Ma laughed bitterly before waving his hand and led the convoy toward another street.

Xiao Yan slowly walked along the street. His gaze repeatedly swept across the shops on the two sides of the street. However, what really caused Xiao Yan to be speechless was that before he had finished walking this short street, which was not even a hundred meters long, he had seen no less than ten brawls. There were even situations like drawing one’s knife to have a bloody fight. With regards to this kind of city, there was only one word to appropriately describe it. That was : Chaotic!

Xiao Yan avoided some bloody all out fights, and passed through two street corners. He walked for nearly twenty minutes before his scanning gaze finally stopped on the signboard of a shop which occupied a wide space. Written on that pale-red signboard were three large, ancient-looking words, ‘Thousand Medicine Place’.

“This should be the place, right?” Xiao Yan softly muttered in his heart. He increased his speed and walked into this medicinal shop with an extraordinary atmosphere. Immediately, the mixture of over a hundred different medicinal scents pounced over, causing him to involuntarily have an impulse to sneeze.

The size within the medicinal shop was big. Crystal counters were placed vertically and horizontally within the shop. There were different kinds of medicinal ingredients being placed within the transparent counters. At this moment, there were quite a number of people who had paused their footsteps in front of these counters. The noisy chattering sound repeatedly reverberated within the shop.

Xiao Yan’s footsteps slowly ferried him toward the crystal counters. His gaze swept across its interior and surprise flashed across his eyes. It was just as Duo Ma had said. The medicinal ingredients within this ‘Thousand Medicine Place’ were indeed difficult to

find in the outside world. He really did not know how they managed to get such a large amount of unique medicinal ingredients.

Xiao Yan sighed in surprise as he shook his head. His gaze swept across the prices indicated below the medicinal ingredients and involuntarily became stunned. A high ranked 'Wood Spirit Three-Pin Flower' may be rare in the outside world, but its selling price was at most around fifty thousand gold coins. However, the price here was raised by nearly three times that amount.

"One hundred and seventy thousand for one. These fellows might as well go and rob others directly." Xiao Yan was speechless as he shook his head. With his current fortune, it appeared that he could not even afford to buy one 'Wood Spirit Three-Pin Flower'.

Xiao Yan laughed bitterly. His gaze once again slowly swept over the crystal counter. A long while later, he stood at the final counter with a somewhat numb expression. From his observation earlier, he had indeed found all the medicinal ingredients to refine one 'Spiritual Recovery Purple Pill'. However, after his calculations, if he were to purchase all of these medicinal ingredients, he would need at least one hundred and seventy thousand gold coins.

"Unscrupulous shop ah, unscrupulous shop. It would be good if Old Hai were here. With him being the great-Elder of the Primer clan, it would definitely not be a problem taking out this amount of money." Xiao Yan softly muttered in his mouth. Xiao Yan suddenly felt a little distressed. In the past, he had never bothered about matters related to money. Now, he actually began to be vexed over money when he had just entered the 'Black-Corner Region'.

"Teacher, what do we do now?" In his helpless state, Xiao Yan could only smile bitterly and ask in his heart.

"Hee hee, I have already told you that you will have difficulty moving even an inch within the 'Black-Corner Region' if you don't have money." Yao Lao teased, "What else can you do? If you don't want to exchange items, then you should first forget about that 'Spiritual Recovery Purple Pill'. Use your remaining money to buy two sets of medicinal ingredients to refine 'Three-Lines Green Spirit Pill'. After which, go to the auction house and auction off the medicinal pills which you have refined. Otherwise, you will definitely be unable to obtain those medicinal ingredients."

"Ah, we can only do this." Xiao Yan sighed and began to turn around to search for the medicinal ingredients to refine the 'Three-Lines Green Spirit Pill'. It was fortunate that the 'Three-Lines Green Spirit Pill' was a tier four medicinal pill. Therefore, the medicinal ingredients that it required were far less costly than what was needed to refine the 'Spiritual Recovery Purple Pill'.

“Oh that’s right, I have almost forgotten to tell you an important matter. Although this matter will compound the problem that you have on your already poor finances.” Yao Lao gloatingly said with a smile, causing Xiao Yan to feel a little uneasy.

“Since you plan on getting your hands on that ‘Fallen Heart Flame’, you will need to complete all the necessary preparation work just like when you swallowed the ‘Green Lotus Core Flame’ back then.” Yao Lao smiled before continuing, “When you swallowed the ‘Green Lotus Core Flame’, you relied on the protection of the ‘Blood Lotus Pill’ in order to greatly increase your chances of success. However, that ‘Fallen Heart Flame’ is ranked fourteenth on the ‘Heavenly Flame Ranking’. That is far stronger than the ‘Green Lotus Core Flame’ which is ranked nineteenth. Therefore, your preparation this time around must be even more complete.”

“Ugh, I had almost nearly forgotten about that.” Xiao Yan was startled before he immediately came to a sudden comprehension. If it was not for the assistance of the ‘Blood Lotus Pill’ the last time he swallowed the ‘Green Lotus Core Flame’, there would have been no certainty in whether or not he would finally succeed.

“Then what do we need to prepare this time around?” Xiao Yan asked uncertainly.

“A tier six medicinal pill, Ground Spirit Pill. Not many medicinal ingredients are needed to refine it. There are only four of them. Flame Core Ganoderma, Asparagus Ice Fire Fruit, Green Wood Celestial Vine, and a rank 6 water type Monster Core.”

The faint words caused Xiao Yan’s moving footsteps to suddenly falter. The corner of his mouth twitched slightly. Even not mentioning the three medicinal ingredients’ name, which he had never even heard of, just the very last one was sufficient to give him an impulse to act in a flustered and exasperated manner. A rank 6 monster core? Did he need to go and kill a rank 6 super powerful Magical Beast which could contend with a Dou Huang? Even if he wanted to seek death, he need not use such a method, no?

Chapter 388: Alleviating Poverty Through Refining Pills

After walking out from the ‘Thousand Medicine Place’, Xiao Yan lifted his head and eyed the somewhat dusky sky. He let out a long sigh. From this moment on, he had formally become a member of the impoverished clan. Four sets of medicinal ingredients to refine the ‘Three-Lined Green Spirit Pill’ not only completely exhausted all of his one hundred and thirty thousand gold coins, but also got him to take out a total of three bottles or twenty-seven ‘Energy Recovery Pills’ in order to successfully receive the medicinal ingredients from an astonished attendant. One should clearly know that according to its market value, the ‘Energy Recovery Pill’ could be sold for over five thousand gold coins apiece. If these twenty seven pieces were sold together, it would cost at least more than a hundred thousand gold coins.

“I am so poor that I’m practically a beggar... hopefully I will not destroy them when refining. Otherwise, I am afraid that I will really have to take out the ‘Amethyst Lion Birth

Essence' to sell." Xiao Yan laughed bitterly. Although he purchased four sets of the medicinal ingredients needed to refine the 'Three-Lined Green Spirit Pill', it was impossible to achieve a one hundred percent success rate with his current ability. Moreover, if he succeeded in two out of the four chances, he would be able to make a profit in this transaction. The problem, however, was that he did not dare be certain that he could maintain such a high success rate. Back then, in the Alchemist Grand Meeting within the Jia Ma Empire, it was likely that he could not refine the highest grade 'Three-Lined Green Spirit Pill' if he had not relied on some luck. However, who could guarantee that this kind of good luck would always accompany him?

Xiao Yan turned around and eyed the horizontal signboard of the 'Thousand Medicine Place'. He gritted his teeth and cursed 'unscrupulous shop' before brushing his sleeves and storming off into the street to begin searching for a quiet place where he could to refine pills.

He slowly walked along the street for over ten minutes before stopping outside of an inn. He hesitated briefly before walking into it.

Within a small, quiet room, Xiao Yan first took out the medicinal ingredients he had bought earlier and placed them on the table one at a time. As he took them out, he softly said, "It is fortunate that I did not reject the compensation that Duo Ma had given me earlier. Otherwise, I wouldn't even have enough money to stay at an inn. This life that I am living... tsk tsk... is really too shabby."

After Xiao Yan took out all of the medicinal ingredients, he finally took out a medicinal cauldron, which was not of a very high tier. Once he completed this action, he clapped his hands and smiled bitterly as he said, "Looks like there is going to be a big fight... forget it, just treat it as a warmup."

Xiao Yan flicked his finger gently and a wisp of green-colored flame surfaced on the tip of his finger. It immediately shot into the flame outlet of the medicinal cauldron. Immediately, the green-colored flame seedling transformed into a raging flame which rose and burned within the medicinal cauldron.

Xiao Yan eyed the rising green-colored flame, and inhaled a deep breath. He suppressed the various emotions within his heart and his long finger appeared to be twisting the flowers and picked a leaf as it flashed past the table's surface. One by one, the medicinal ingredients drew an arc as they were thrown into the medicinal cauldron. In an instant, they turned into powder.

Within the quiet room, the green-colored flame danced around within the medicinal cauldron like a fairy. The sparks reflected from the walls made threatening gestures and appeared very imposing.

The medicinal ingredients were thrown into the medicinal cauldron one at a time. Various different colored medicinal powders slowly agglomerated, and finally began to show a trend of merging under the grilling of the flame.

One hour later.

Xiao Yan eyes stared intently at the embryonic form of the medicinal pill that was partially visible within the medicinal cauldron. He took out a purple-colored Danwan from within the storage ring and swiftly squeezed it into his mouth. He chewed slightly and the seal on his hand suddenly changed. Within the medicinal cauldron, one could see that the green-colored flame instantly retreated. At the same time, Xiao Yan opened his mouth, and spat out a purple-colored flame which swarmed into the medicinal cauldron.

TL: Danwan/Yaowan - a sort of pill that has no medicinal properties and can be potentially harmful if consumed

“Bang.” The Purple Flame had just entered the medicinal cauldron when Xiao Yan’s expression changed slightly. A soft, muffled sound immediately sounded and a pile of black-colored soot slid out from the bottom of the medicinal cauldron.

“Che, failed.” Xiao Yan helplessly shook his head as he observed the pile of black-colored ashes.

“You were too anxious when the medicinal pill was merging. You were also impatient during the changing of the flame. If you refine the medicine in such a manner, your chances of success will not even be twenty or thirty percent.” Yao Lao faint voice sounded within Xiao Yan’s heart. He was direct and to the point when he pointed out the mistakes that Xiao Yan made when refining earlier.

Xiao Yan quietly nodded his head. He did not find any words to explain himself. Instead, he quietly stood in front of the medicinal cauldron for two minutes and inhaled a deep breath of air. The emotion from his failure earlier was instantly and completely expelled from his mind. His face contained no joy or sorrow. He waved his hand and another wisp of green-colored flame shot into the medicinal cauldron.

Xiao Yan’s mind was tranquil. A green-colored flame was dancing within his dark black eyes. His long hand slowly moved away from the surface of the table before making a sudden motion. Instantly, the medicinal ingredients were once again swept into the medicinal cauldron.

The refining continued quietly within the silent, small room. After nearly another hour had passed, Xiao Yan’s somewhat squinted eyes suddenly widened. The seal in his hand was like a dancing butterfly, which was bright and beautiful. He widened his mouth abruptly and the Purple Flame shot into the cauldron while the green flame quietly dissipated.

A pale-green-colored spherical sleek medicinal pill rolled and rotated above the Purple Flame within the medicinal cauldron. The beautiful purple and green-colored Pill-Lines slowly appeared on the surface of the medicinal pill.

“Hu.”

Xiao Yan wiped the cold sweat from his forehead and gave a long sigh. He did not take another risk, and summon the ‘Bone Chilling Flame’, which belonged to Yao Lao. Although he would be able to cause the Green Spirit Pill to truly possess three lines if he was to succeed and raise its value greatly, the current him did not dare to guarantee that the addition of the last line would succeed in one attempt just like it had at the Alchemist Grand Meeting. The fortunes of the current him relied on this two lined ‘Green Spirit Pill’. If he was not cautious and damaged it, that would really leave one speechless.

“With the value of the ‘Two-Lined Green Spirit Pill’, it might be able to be auctioned off for around four hundred thousand. A ‘Three-Line Green Spirit Pill’, on the other hand, can reach a high price of about six hundred thousand. The difference between them is nearly double.” Yao Lao’s smiling voice, which carried some temptation, sounded.

TL: Yes, the author’s math is kinda off.... Only kinda...

“Four hundred thousand can help to recuperate my capital.” The corner of Xiao Yan’s eyes twitched as he forcefully controlled the temptation. He stored the medicinal pill into a jade bottle and sat cross-legged on the bed, which was off to the side, to rest for half an hour. After which, he stood up once again, moved to the side of the table and began to continue refining.

Xiao Yan was reduced to the small room for the entire afternoon as he refined the remaining medicinal ingredients. When the sky gradually became dark, the medicinal ingredients on the table were finally completely refined. On the table, there were two small bottles, each storing a spherical pale-green medicinal pill. A faint medicinal fragrance was faintly seeping out of them, causing people to feel extremely relaxed.

The purple-colored flame was raging and burning within the medicinal cauldron. A pale-purple line had already appeared on the final Green Spirit Pill while it was being kept warm within the purple flame. Out of four sets of medicinal ingredients, he could possibly successfully refine three ‘Two-Lined Green Spirit Pill’. This success rate was already so high that it would be somewhat shocking. Of course, if it were not for the extremely experienced Yao Lao instructing from behind and the effect of the ‘Heavenly Flame’, it was likely that Xiao Yan would not be able to achieve this success rate that would cause people to envious of regardless of how much talent they had in refining medicine.

The purple-colored flame slowly leaped within Xiao Yan’s dark, black eyes. His pupils stared directly at the Green Spirit Pill, which was gradually finishing its warm and

nourishing stage. He licked his lips gently as the corner of his eyes glanced at the two 'Two-Lined Green Spirit Pills' on the table. Suddenly, his dark, black pupils became a little hotter.

"Hei, I knew that in the end, you would still lose patience and plan to refine a 'Three-Lined Green Spirit Pill'." Yao Lao appeared to clearly know what Xiao Yan was thinking as his mocking laughter resounded within Xiao Yan's heart.

"Hee hee. In any case, I have already refined two 'Two-Lined Green Spirit Pills'. Even if this one were to fail, I will still have made a profit. A person should take some risks to make their life more exciting, no?" Xiao Yan parted his mouth and smiled. His finger gently tapped the black ring and a wisp of thick, white-colored flame seedling slowly rose.

When the thick, white-colored flame appeared, the temperature of the originally warm, small room fell greatly. Xiao Yan's expression slowly became grave. His Spiritual Strength wrapped around the white-colored flame and carefully tossed it into the medicinal cauldron. The purple-colored flame within it was driven away by another Spiritual Strength, and withdrawn from the medicinal cauldron before quietly disappearing.

The white-colored flame entered just as the purple-colored flame was withdrawn. The control needed to operate the two at the same time was grasped by Xiao Yan, whose Spiritual Strength was completely focused, without any mistake. Even Yao Lao let out a soft 'ah' sound.

When the white-colored flame entered the medicinal cauldron, the medicinal cauldron actually gently trembled a couple of times under the sudden decline in temperature. A tiny crack line quietly expanded.

"Changing between cold and hot really does cause massive damage to a cauldron's durability. Next time I need to get a better medicinal cauldron if I have the time. Otherwise, I will be on tenterhooks every time I refine medicine in the future." The corner of Xiao Yan's eyes glanced at the tiny crack lines as he sighed and shook his head. However, his expression did not really pale at this moment. Under the precondition of controlling the flame properly, this medicinal cauldron was still able to support him until the medicinal pill was completely refined.

The thick, white flame was like a tiny, white snake within the medicinal cauldron as it shrouded the medicinal pill. Wisps of strange temperature separated by a gap slowly seeped into the medicinal pill. After which, a tiny white-colored Pill-Line began to gradually surface on the medicinal pill.

"Well, the control of the flame this time around was much better than last time." Yao Lao nodded and praised somewhat when he saw the tiny actions of the white-colored flame.

Xiao Yan's face was completely serious at the moment. Cold sweat repeatedly dripped down from his forehead. No matter how one put it, the 'Bone Chilling Flame' was a flame that did not belong to him. Therefore, it was extremely exhausting to try to control it. This resulted in the current him not daring to carelessly reply to Yao Lao. He was afraid that if he was even slightly distracted, the temperature of the flame would suddenly rise by a little and cause this 'Green Spirit Pill' to be completely ruined.

The final warming and nourishing stage continued for nearly half an hour. When he saw that the white-colored Pill-Line on the pale-green medicinal pill had crept until it finished a full circle, Xiao Yan finally sighed in relief. A thought passed through his mind and the white-colored flame, which was wrapped by the Spiritual Strength, was swiftly withdrawn out of the flame outlet. He beckoned with his hand and the flame once again shrunk back into the dark, black ring.

Xiao Yan flipped his hand and a jade bottle appeared. An emerald-green medicinal pill shot out from the medicinal cauldron and finally stopped, suspended in front of Xiao Yan, before he stored it in the jade bottle with a smile.

"Two 'Two-Lined Green Spirit Pill' and one 'Three-Lined Green Spirit Pill'. This is my seed money to get rich." Xiao Yan wiped away the cold sweat that had accumulated on his forehead. He eyed the three jade bottles. The abundant gains pushed away most of the fatigue which filled his mind. After entering the 'Black-Corner Region', he finally knew just how short he was on money. Refining the 'Spiritual Recovery Purple Pill' required a large sum of money. Refining that so called 'Ground Spirit Pill' also required a lot of money. The sum of all these obligations really caused Xiao Yan to feel his head swell.

"Crack." As Xiao Yan stored the jade bottles into his storage ring, a soft noise suddenly sounded from in front of him. Xiao Yan lifted his head to take a look. The crack line on the medicinal cauldron had gradually become bigger until the cauldron finally crumbled apart with a clear sound, turning into fragments which scattered all over the table.

Xiao Yan was somewhat speechless as he eyed the broken medicinal cauldron. He smiled bitterly and said, "There is also the money needed to buy another medicinal cauldron."

"Ah, for now, I should first go to the auction house."

Chapter 389: Black Mark Auction House

Xiao Yan stood at the end of the street where the human traffic was turbulent. He lifted his head, and watched the auction house in front of him, which was incomparably huge. His mouth could not resist releasing a shocked sigh. Back then, when he saw the auction house headquarters of the Primer clan in the Jia Ma Empire, he had felt somewhat shocked by its size. It was, however, unexpected that he would realize that

the Primer Auction house was undoubtedly trivial when compared to this auction house, which was also called 'Black Mark', now that he had arrived at Black Mark City.

There were over ten indifferent-faced, black-clothed powerful men, who carried sharp weapons on their waist, outside the Black Mark Auction House. Their gazes, which were as sharp as eagles, repeatedly swept across the human flow coming and going. From the faint presence that was seeping out from the bodies of these men, five of them were actually of the Dou Shi class, while the rest were around the peak of the Dou Zhe level.

There were already people at the Dou Shi class among those they had carelessly ordered to guard the entrance. It appeared that the strength of this 'Eight Gates' was really strong. At the very least, the Primer clan would be reluctant to use Dou Shi practitioners to guard the doors.

A large black robe was tightly wrapped around Xiao Yan's body as he slowly lowered his head. The shadow of the Doupeng completely covered his face. In the 'Black-Corner Region', this utterly chaotic place, he did not think that carelessly exposing his appearance was a wise decision.

TL: Doupeng - a conical bamboo hat with a cloth hanging down from its tip, covering one's face

Xiao Yan followed the flow of humans and slowly walked into the auction house. The vast space within it caused him to once again become momentarily absent minded. He immediately recovered and his footsteps ferried him to the middle of the hall.

An enormous screen was hung on the surroundings within this auction house, scrolling through a countless number of items, which were being sold in this auction. Xiao Yan roughly glanced over it, but did not discover anything excessively rare. It was likely that these special items were used as things which would dominate the auction and were not displayed in order to maintain their secrecy. Of course, some of the factions, which were quite strong, would naturally be able to use other channels to inquire about the treasures which would dominate the auction.

Xiao Yan's gaze swept across his surroundings before finally stopping on a door leading to a room to inspect treasures. He hesitated a little before slowly walking into it.

As Xiao Yan's body entered the door into this so called 'Treasure Inspecting Room', he was somewhat stunned to realize that this somewhat big room was neatly divided into over a hundred smaller secret rooms. It was likely a preventive measure designed to prevent the treasures from being exposed.

Xiao Yan had just walked into this 'Treasure Inspecting Room' when a sexily clad female servant walked forward. Her feminine voice released an enchanting feeling, "This sir, are you here to inspect a treasure or are you here to perform a price evaluation to facilitate the auction?"

“The latter.” Xiao Yan’s purposefully suppressed his voice until it sounded somewhat hoarse.

“Please follow me.” The female servant smiled enchantingly and turned around. Her water snake-like waist swayed and formed an extremely alluring arc. If one looked at it for too long, it would actually cause a nefarious flame to rise within one’s lower abdomen. It appeared that the female servants here had undergone special training on how to increase their attractiveness to its limit in men’s eyes.

Xiao Yan’s gaze dangled within the shadows of the Doupeng. He ignored the female servant’s seductive body. In the ‘Black-Corner Region’, which was an extremely chaotic place, even a woman who did not have the strength to tie a chicken could also cause a person to receive a great shock. Therefore, Xiao Yan did not dare to think of having any interaction with the women here.

Xiao Yan followed behind the woman and walked dozens of meters before the latter finally stopped in front of a small secret room. She respectfully bowed to Xiao Yan and smiled as she said, “Mister, you can hand over the things you want to auction off to the grandmaster inside to evaluate and verify. After which, you will obtain a seat of a differing grade at the auction fair depending on how valuable the items you are trying to auction off are.”

Xiao Yan nodded. He gently pushed open the black-colored wooden door and walked in. After which, he smoothly closed the door.

The light in the small room was bright. An old man, whose hair was somewhat white, was using his sharp gaze to inspect Xiao Yan. As the latter was entirely covered in a black robe, he had difficulty spotting anything eye-catching.

“Please have a seat.” The old man carelessly pointed at a chair in front of him. He finished arranging some of the tools needed to inspect the items to be auctioned off before lowering his head and said faintly, “Take out the things that you want to auction out.”

Xiao Yan remained silent. He did not speak as he waved his hand and three small jade bottles appeared on the table.

“Medicinal Pills?”

The old man was a little stunned when he heard the sound of the jade bottles colliding with the surface of the table. His gaze stopped on each of the three small jade bottles and a bizarre glint flashed across his eyes. He wore a pair of thin, transparent gloves and carefully picked up a jade bottle and tipped the jade bottle until the pale-green-colored spherical medicinal pill rolled out onto his palm. He placed it under his nose and sniffed, while his gaze paused on the green and purple Pill-Lines on the pill. He mused

for a moment before his expression changed slightly. With a shocked voice, he said, "This is a 'Two-Lined Green Spirit Pill?'"

"Ah." Xiao Yan nodded slightly. His voice was still hoarse: "Since you have heard of the 'Two-Lined Green Spirit Pill', I think that you should also know of its effect. Help me estimate the listing price."

"I need to examine it first." The old man shook his head. He then took out those strange and unique tools and began fiddling with the medicinal pill. After continuing like this for a long while, he finally stopped. His gaze had an additional bizarreness when he lifted his head back up to look at Xiao Yan. With a deeper meaning in his words, he said, "This is indeed a 'Two-Lined Green Spirit Pill. Moreover, its quality is quite high. Even an ordinary tier four alchemist would have difficulty creating a pill with this kind of quality."

"According to the method the 'Black-Corner Region' uses to estimate, the base price for this 'Two-Lined Green Spirit Pill' should be around three hundred thousand gold. If you take it out to auction and meet some rich and powerful factions competing with each other, it would not be difficult for you to auction it off for over five hundred thousand gold."

"Then take a look at this." Xiao Yan nodded slightly. This price was already higher than what he had estimated. Immediately, he pushed over the bottle which contained the 'Three-Lined Green Spirit Pill'.

"Oh?" The old man was slightly startled. He took the bottle and allowed the emerald-like spherical medicinal pill within to roll out. However, when his gaze swept across the three circular Pill-Lines on the pill's body, a seriousness finally appeared on his calm face. The difference between a 'Two-Lined Green Spirit Pill' and a 'Three-Lined Green Spirit Pill' may merely be only one line, but their prices were like two different worlds.

A 'Two-Lined Green Spirit Pill' may have the effect of helping a Dou Shi break through the final barrier and advance, but it could only help one's strength increase by one or two stars. Moreover, the chances of receiving backlash was quite great. On the other hand, once one successfully consumed a 'Three-Lined Green Spirit Pill', not only could one break through the barrier, but one could also have one's strength suddenly rise by three stars. Of course, this was with the exception that the person taking the pill had purposely not been restricted their strength from rising. Back then, when Xiao Yan had consumed the 'Three-Lined Green Spirit Pill', he purposefully deposited the medicinal effect within his body because he was afraid that his strength would rise too quickly, which would result in him losing precise control over his body. When the medicinal strength was activated later on, it once again caused his strength to soar. From this, one could see the clear difference between the 'Three-Lined' and 'Two-Lined' pills!

On this point, the old man who had seen countless treasures knew it very well. Thus, his face held an extra trace of curiosity and seriousness.

“Three-Lined Green Spirit Pill?” The old man scrupulously examined the emerald medicinal pill as he spoke in a stunned soft voice.

“Yes.” Xiao Yan nodded his head faintly.

“Excellent stuff.” The old man smacked his mouth. Even though he was used to seeing treasures, he also gave such an evaluation. He hesitated a little before saying: “The base auction price of this ‘Three-Lined Green Spirit Pill’ can be set at around seven hundred thousand. After undergoing competing bids, I think that it can be sold for about nine hundred thousand or so.”

Xiao Yan quietly nodded his head. In his heart, he could not resist heaving a long sigh of relief. The sum of the values of these three ‘Green Spirit Pills’ would be nearly two million. This amount of money had really come in a frightening manner. No wonder being an alchemist was an occupation which did not lack money to spend. This kind of lucrative thing would really cause the other occupations to collapse from envy.

Of course, Xiao Yan also clearly knew that this kind of lucrative trade was built upon having sufficiently high chances of success. After all, when most alchemists refined medicinal pills, they would sometimes only succeed once every ten attempts. The ingredients needed to refine the ‘Three-Lined Green Spirit Pill’ would add up to nearly sixty or seventy thousand gold coins. When that time came, even if they were successful once out of ten times, it was likely they would only manage to break even. After all, not all the alchemists in this world had the help of an extremely experienced Yao Lao, as well as a ‘Heavenly Flame’, both of which were extremely great helps.

“Two ‘Two-Lined Green Spirit Pill’ and one ‘Three-Lined Green Spirit Pill’. Mister, the value of the things you want to sell in our auction has already reached a second class VIP grade of our ‘Black Mark Auction House’. This is your seat number. The auction fair will officially open this afternoon. When that time comes, please sit in your designated seat.” The old man carefully put the medicinal pills away and took out a card which was made of green-colored emerald from the counter, which he then handed over to Xiao Yan.

Xiao Yan nodded his head as he received the emerald card. He inquired, “Can I leave now?”

“Ke ke, mister, please do as you wish.” The old man smiled as he replied after he had carefully returned the three ‘Green Spirit Pill’. Perhaps it was because of these pills, but his current attitude toward Xiao Yan was a little better.

Xiao Yan did not say any more nonsense after hearing this. He stood up and slowly walked toward the door, opened it, and walked out.

The old man eyed the door, which was slowly closing, and heard the footsteps gradually becoming distant. His finger gently knocked on the surface of the table. A long while

later, he lowered his head, and eyed the three 'Green Spirit Pills', which had been stored properly. A strange expression flashed across his muddled old eyes.

"I have not seen this person before. To be able to take out three 'Green Spirit Pill' so easily, it is likely that he should be an alchemist. Moreover, his tier should not be low..." His hand tapped at a certain part of the table, and the wall of the secret room was suddenly and slowly pulled open, revealing a small, dark hole. The old man picked up the three 'Green Spirit Pills', turned around and walked into the hole. His soft voice muttering words that resounded quietly within the secret room.

"An alchemist who can refine a medicinal pill of a tier like the 'Three-Lined Green Spirit Pill' is also not commonly seen in the 'Black-Corner Region'. I think that the Leader will be interested in such a person."

Chapter 390: The Start of the Auction

Once he exited the Black Mark Auction House, Xiao Yan walked directly back to the inn he was staying at. He rested in his small room until it was about time for the auction to begin. Only then did he exit his training mode and put his large, black robe on, completely invigorated. He then left the inn at a steady pace, once again walking over to the auction ground.

When Xiao Yan arrived at the entrance of the auction house, the huge, nearly-packed, racketing crowd with noises that shot towards the sky, caused him to become slightly dull. He did not expect that the Great Auction Fair would actually attract so many people. It was indeed worthy of being called a grand event in the 'Black-Corner Region'.

Xiao Yan tried to squeeze through the human traffic before he withdrew somewhat helplessly. This 'Black-Corner Region' could not be compared with the Jia Ma Empire. If one cut the queue here, there would immediately be dozens of fist violently thrown over. After all, the temper of the people within the 'Black-Corner Region' was not as meek as those of the outside world. If they had any disagreement, drawing their knives and hacking at others was something that was a common sight.

Xiao Yan withdrew from the human flow, which was shouting non-stop. His gaze swept around him and immediately stopped on another pathway, other than the main entrance of the auction house. Compared to this place, the entrance was an entirely different scene. The spacious pathway was covered by a red-colored carpet and there were over ten black-clothed men with cold expressions stationed around the place. The domineeringly thick, dark presence faintly emitting from their bodies frightened the human crowd beside them until they dared not squeeze over. Therefore, this resulted in an empty area being formed on the pathway there.

When Xiao Yan's gaze swept over, he coincidentally saw a group of people walking onto the red-colored carpeted pathway. His gaze swept over this group of people, and finally stopped at a somewhat overly pale-looking, handsome, young man in the middle.

From his outer appearance, his age seemed to be around twenty four or twenty five. However, from the tiny undulation caused wisps of energy to be occasionally emitted from within his body, his strength was likely at least around the Dou Ling class!

“This person... his strength is quite good. Moreover, he is actually this young? Looks like this ‘Black-Corner Region’ is really a place where tigers and dragons are hidden.” Xiao Yan was somewhat surprised as he eyed the young man with a pale expression, while he muttered in his heart.

“Hei, look over there. It seems to be people from the Blood Sect?”

“They are indeed a group of overpowered fellows. That person in the middle should be the Junior Sect Leader, Fan Ling, right? Hee hee, it is said that the disappearance of an Elder of the ‘Eight Gates’ not long ago had something to do with him.”

“The blood of his entire body was dried, it seemed like his blood had been completely and forcefully drained by someone. Only the Blood Sect would be interested in such things. It is just that it was really unexpected that he actually still dares to come to the old nest of the ‘Eight Gates’.”

“What does he not dare to do? His father is a strong person ranked fifth on the ‘Black Ranking’. Yuan Yu is a great distance away from him. Moreover, the Blood Sect’s strength is greater than the ‘Eight Gates’. Would they dare touch Fan Ling here? Would they not be afraid that his father would bring people, and wash ‘Black Mark City’ away with blood in his anger?”

Xiao Yan came to a sudden realization as he heard the private conversations transmitted from the human flow. His gaze once again settled on the face of the young man, and remembered the faction called the ‘Blood Sect’ deep within his heart.

Seemingly having sensed a somewhat different gaze, the young man, who was about to enter the auction house, suddenly paused his footsteps. He tilted his head slightly and his extremely cold eyes, which were void of even the slightest emotion, glanced directly at Xiao Yan, whose entire body was hidden in a black robe, standing a short distance away. Immediately, he raised his eyebrows slightly, hesitated for a moment before entering the auction house while carrying some doubt between his brows.

“This ‘Black-Corner Region’ does not seem to have many normal people.” The young man’s thick, cold gaze caused Xiao Yan to have a certain feeling of being stared at by a blood sucking bat from within the darkness. He spread out his hands while laughing bitterly in his heart.

Not long after that group of people from the ‘Blood Sect’ entered the auction house, there were a few groups of people entering it soon after them. These people were, without exception, people from strong factions within the ‘Black-Corner Region’, judging by the private whispers around. This was really an eye-opener for Xiao Yan.

Xiao Yan eyed the empty and quiet carpeted pathway. He then eyed the main entrance, which was packed with people, and could not help feeling speechless.

“All they have is some broken VIP card. What’s there to be proud off. This ‘Eight Gates’ only has eyes for money. The old me at the very least auctioned things worth over fifty over thousand, but I don’t see them giving me one.” Just as Xiao Yan’s gaze was sweeping across the carpeted pathway, a skinny man by his side, who was similarly pushed out by the human flow, also looked at the carpeted pathway and involuntarily cursed softly. However, from his eyes, it appeared that he was clearly very jealous.

“VIP card?” Xiao Yan’s heart moved when he heard this. He also recalled that those people earlier seemed to have taken a card out from within their sleeves when entering the pathway. He rubbed his storage ring and an emerald card leaped out. Xiao Yan remembered that the old man at the ‘Treasure Inspection Room’ had said that this thing was a second grade VIP card, no?

“What are you looking at? Are you courting death?” Seemingly having sensed the gaze of Xiao Yan, who was wrapped in a black robe, thrown over, the skinny man immediately displayed a fierce expression and spoke ferociously.

Xiao Yan ignored this crazy fellow and directly walked toward the carpeted pathway under the latter’s stunned gaze.

“Chi, this fellow...” The skinny man curled his lips when he saw the action of Xiao Yan. Earlier, he had also seen Xiao Yan squeezed out from the human flow. Therefore, he would naturally not think that this fellow, who was dressed so shabbily, would actually be able to possess a VIP card of this ‘Black Mark Auction House’. After all, those who possessed the card were either from some faction that was quite strong, or those who had auctioned off over two million gold coins worth of goods to only barely obtain a third grade VIP card.

TL: VIP card grade - the lower the number the better e.g. first is better than second

Two million. For most people within the ‘Black-Corner Region’, this price was an enormous sum which one could hope for, but could never obtain. This point could be seen from how Xiao Yan had only obtained a five thousand gold coin reward for protecting Duo Ma all the way. Xiao Yan was a Da Dou Shi, yet his compensation was still so low. It should be known that a Da Dou Shi was worthy of starting a Clan in the Jia Ma Empire. In this world, it was not so easy to earn money. Otherwise, some Da Dou Shi, Dou Ling, or even Dou Wang within the ‘Black-Corner Region’ would not be able to swoop so low that had to become killers.

Of course, this was naturally excluding the alchemist, which was an occupation which caused people to be incomparably envious of. After all, the harsh inborn requirements of an alchemist had eliminated nearly ninety percent of the people to a point where they could only dream about it.

It was due to the reasons mentioned above that the skinny man quietly ridiculed Xiao Yan when he saw Xiao Yan's action. Of course, his ridicule did not persist for very long and his ferocious expression on his face descended into stiffness. This was because Xiao Yan had merely stopped for a short while on the carpeted pathway before he swaggered onto that incomparably soft red carpet.

"He has a VIP card and yet he is also here to squeeze? Does he have some problem?" The skinny man's eyes were somewhat red due to envy. This was especially when Xiao Yan turned his head around and looked in his direction after entering the auction ground. That skinny man was so furious that he clawed at his head. He clearly sensed that there was a mocking gaze glaring at him under the black robe.

The lighting was a little dark when Xiao Yan entered the tunnel. He moved along the corridor until the end before he took a turn. Immediately, an incomparably large auction area appeared in Xiao Yan's sight, causing him to inhale a breath of cool air.

This auction ground was larger than any auction ground that Xiao Yan had seen in his life. The packed seats and that auction platform, which seemed to be made completely out of bright crystals, caused people to be dazzled.

"Mister, may I inquire what is your seat number?" Just as Xiao Yan was taking in the view, a beautiful female servant walked over quickly and asked respectfully.

Xiao Yan did not reply. He directly handed over the emerald card. When that female servant saw the color of the card, a bizarre glint flashed across her eyes. Her attitude became much more respectful. With a slight bow, she gently said, "Mister, you have a second grade VIP card. Please follow me."

Once she finished saying this, the female servant hurriedly led the way, while Xiao Yan swayed leisurely close behind.

The female servant shuttled within the enormous auction ground for nearly ten minutes before she stopped at an area close to the crystal auction platform. She pointed at a seat and smiled at Xiao Yan before bowing and then withdrawing.

Xiao Yan walked up to the spacious and exquisitely plush seat before sitting down. The soft feeling nearly caused his body to have the impulse to curl up within it. Xiao Yan turned around and eyed the ordinary chairs behind. He involuntarily inhaled a breath of air once again. This was a privilege, a privilege that was born of money.

As he sat on the chair, Xiao Yan's eyebrow suddenly twitched. He lifted his head and his gaze swept to a row of seats not far in front of him. He could see that the Junior Sect Leader of the 'Blood Sect', Fan Ling, who had appeared at the entrance earlier, was looking at him with a somewhat strange gaze.

Xiao Yan's brows, under the shadows, were slightly knit together. He ignored him and directly closed his eyes, quietly waiting for the auction to begin.

"Junior Sect Leader, what is it?" The pale-faced, handsome young man slowly withdrew his gaze. On his side, a similarly pale-faced old man asked softly.

"Nothing, it is just that I feel that fellow is somewhat strange. Moreover, when I see him, I actually feel a strange fear within my heart." When he spoke to this point, Fan Ling laughed mockingly as he shook his head.

"Ke ke, Junior Sect Leader should have sensed wrongly. Although our Blood Sect's Qi Technique is extremely dark and cold and is naturally fearful of some extreme flames, there are not many people in the entire 'Black-Corner Region' who are in possession of a flame of that kind of class." The old man said with a laugh.

"Perhaps." The young man nodded. The few people who possessed that kind of flame were strong people at the peak within the 'Black-Corner Region'. This black-robed person, on the other hand, was clearly not among them. Immediately, he ceased having wild thoughts and his gaze was thrown toward the crystal platform. With a soft voice, he muttered, "I wonder if the news is really true. If it is really so, father has said that we must obtain it at all cost."

"Hee hee, Junior Sect Leader, you can be rest assured that the Sect Leader has already quietly made all the preparations. Even if that thing were to fall into someone else's hands, he would not be able to walk more than five kilometers from the 'Black Mark City'!" The old man laughed darkly.

"That would be good." A dark, cold arc formed on the young man's face. He also gradually closed his eyes and quietly waited for the auction to begin.

While Fan Ling had his eyes closed, a few factions not far away from them were quietly whispering among themselves. If one could hear their conversations, one would discover something in common, which was that all their conversations involved a certain mysterious object. Moreover, this object appeared to be the final item to be auctioned off at the auction fair!

Around half an hour after Xiao Yan had closed his eyes, a clear 'gong' slowly resounded within the auction ground. Upon hearing this 'gong' sound, Xiao Yan withdrew from his training mode, and the noisiness swept over like some magical sound pouring into his mind, causing him to violently shake his head. Only then did he maintain his calm. He lifted his head and eyed the bright, crystal platform. At this moment, there was a white-haired old man who appeared to be an auctioneer already standing with a smile on it.

"It is finally about to begin." Xiao Yan softly muttered as he eyed the enormous ground, which appeared to be so crowded that it was completely packed. His dark, black eyes contained an obvious anticipation.

