

Black Iron 281

Chapter 281: A Discovery

"Appointment? An appointment with Heller?" Zhang Tie racked his mind. After a short while, he patted his forehead and looked at Heller with a sorry expression, "I truly had forgotten about bringing basic energy into this space. But I didn't have a chance to bring things in. You know that once I'm found having such an ability, I might be abducted by others to be sliced up for tests. Therefore, I have to be careful about it."

"I know the environment you're in and your meticulous attitude. On increasing the basic energy storage of Castle of Black Iron, I have a suggestion."

"Just say it."

"I know that Castle Lord is here for the two new fruits on the Manjusaka Karma Fruit Tree," Heller revealed a smile, "So we can talk about this after you've had the fruits!"

Zhang Tie hadn't imagined that Heller could be that "considerate". Hearing Heller's words and watching the small tree in front of him, Zhang Tie nodded, "Fine, we'll talk about it after I eat the fruits."

At this time, the Castle of Black Iron had already completely changed. Previously, Zhang Tie had no time to assemble the 2-story log cabin that covered 210 sq meters which he ordered from Blackhot City, but now, the house had already been erected in front of Zhang Tie. The assembled houses had been surrounded by one-person high wooden boards. The small tree was in the courtyard surrounded by a barrier and the assembled houses.

The topography of the courtyard seemed to have been renovated by Heller. The location of the small tree was obviously 2 m higher than its surroundings. It was on a huge and tidy mortar-like mound. The small tree was even surrounded by white stone stages.

Zhang Tie admitted that after Heller's renovation, everything truly made him feel more comfortable and at ease.

"From now on, except Castle Lord, no other living beings are allowed to get close to the stages heading to the Manjusaka Karma Fruit Tree!" Walking together with Zhang Tie, Heller stopped in front of it and explained as he stood aside.

Zhang Tie delightfully nodded as he walked upwards.

The small tree was still growing. This time, Zhang Tie felt it was more verdant than last time. Each time he came here, the moment he saw those raw and ripe fruits on the small tree, Zhang Tie would be in a very good mood.

One leakless fruit had already been ripe and hanging over the tree while the second one would be ripe within three days. After knowing that the leakless fruit could work as alternative blood bags and save his life in an emergency, Zhang Tie kept all the leakless fruits on the tree these days.

Besides leakless fruits, there was an Iron-Body Fruit, a Trouble-Reappearance Fruit and a Fruit of Redemption.

Zhang Tie firstly cast his look on the pitch black hexagonal Trouble-Reappearance Fruit.

——Trouble-Reappearance Fruit has become ripe. Usage: Pick and directly consume. Notice: The fruit cannot be taken out of the Castle of Black Iron. After twelve hours of having been picked off the tree, its energy and vitality will gradually fade.

After injecting his spiritual energy into the Trouble-Reappearance Fruit, Zhang Tie saw three sea serpents and the sea around Iron Ore Beach.

Zhang Tie then burst out loud laughing. After killing three sea serpents, he saw the scene using Trouble-Reappearance Fruit as expected. This time, Zhang Tie had a place to practice diving.

In the middle of the twigs was a Fruit of Redemption which contained the strength of golden uangs which was still raw. On the side of that fruit was another heart-shaped fruit.

——Fruit of Redemption——coming from the gratitude of the sand-scale fish. It has become ripe. Usage: Pick and directly consume. Notice: The fruit cannot be taken out of the Castle of Black Iron. After twelve hours of having been picked off the tree, its energy and vitality will gradually fade.

——With this fruit, Castle Lord could increase resistance against cold environments by 1% and increase sensitivity to water flow by 1%.

Because fish breathe with gills while people breathe using their lungs, this Fruit of Redemption didn't bring Zhang Tie an abnormal underwater breathing ability. Due to physical constraints, Zhang Tie could not be a weird animal with gills. However, the two abilities provided by this fruit truly shocked Zhang Tie.

Many fish in the water had a powerful resistance to cold. Zhang Tie had read in a book that some fish, after being frozen for many days, once thawed, could still happily swim in the water. Zhang Tie had not imagined that the sand-scale fish was a type of the cold-resistant fish.

When in water, besides being unable to breathe, people were also largely limited on time by the low temperature, which made people rapidly lose body heat in the sea and become stiff while shivering. Finally, they would lose their consciousness and suffer from cardiopulmonary failure, etc.

1 silver coin for a 1% increase of cold-resistance and 1% increase of increase in water flow sensitivity. Zhang Tie had truly gained quite a bit.

Life was priceless! This ability brought by saving lives was priceless!

In a sophisticated manner, Zhang Tie picked off this Fruit of Redemption and engulfed it. The moment he bit into the fruit, its juice had already flown into his stomach and created a warm sensation which spread across Zhang Tie's skin and subcutaneous tissues. In only several minutes, Zhang Tie had absorbed it all.

After eating the Fruit of Redemption, Zhang Tie picked the Trouble-Reappearance Fruit and ate it. Closing his eyes, Zhang Tie then felt one more six-pointed star on the marvelous arch door in his mind.

This six-pointed star was already activated, which indicated that Zhang Tie could enter the Trouble-Reappearance Situation at any time.

Because Heller was still waiting to talk with him, Zhang Tie didn't go inside the Trouble-Reappearance Situation. After all, he had a lot of free time in the future.

When Zhang Tie was going to leave the small tree, he saw the Iron-Body Fruit on the small tree. However, this time, Zhang Tie felt the color of the Iron-Body Fruit became different from that last time. Therefore, Zhang Tie stretched out his hand to check.

"Yi? That's so strange!" Zhang Tie remembered that when he came here last time, this Iron-Body Fruit was only one-third ripe, how could it be almost half ripe this time?

"Did I make a mistake? It shouldn't be that ripe." Since his spiritual energy surged, Zhang Tie's memory had grown increasingly better. He didn't think that he would make any mistake remembering things. "I haven't been practicing the Bear-Shoulder Iron-Body Skill these days, neither have I been beaten up by others. How could this Iron-Body Fruit be developing further?"

"I will ask Heller."

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Heller was still waiting for Zhang Tie outside the stone stage under the small tree.

"Heller, what's your suggestion for increasing basic energy storage of the Castle of Black Iron?" Zhang Tie asked bluntly.

"I suggest Castle Lord seize the opportunities right around you. You could have seized many chances to increase the basic energy storage of Castle of Black Iron, but I haven't seen you taking any action!"

"You mean those iron ores in the sea? I'm practicing my diving skills. After a couple of days, when I can dive deeper, I will take action." After thinking for awhile, Zhang Tie had understood Heller's meaning. It was truly a nice environmental condition in the sea just like that in the mine. If he chose a place with few people and act in a secret way, he could bring something into the Castle of Black Iron using the direct-transportation function that he had just mastered without being noticed by others.

"I'm happy that Castle Lord could consider moving the iron ores in the sea. But I didn't mean that..."

"What is it then?"

"Have you thought about it, Castle Lord?" Heller became quite thrilled as he continued, "When you swim in the sea, you are surrounded by seawater, once you use the direct-transportation function that you have mastered and steadily open the space channels on your two hands, won't the seawater constantly be absorbed into the Pool of Chaos in the Castle of Black Iron? Is there any other easier method that could be used to increase the basic energy storage of Castle of Black Iron?"

Zhang Tie became stunned as he felt an explosion go off in his mind. "That's it, how could I have not have thought about that. Once I dive in the sea, who could notice that the seawater is decreasing? Additionally, now that I could use the direct-transportation function of Castle of Black Iron to absorb seawater into the Castle of Black Iron, won't I be able to transport air from the Castle of Black Iron to the outside through the arch door in my mind?"

"Of course you can. Castle Lord has tried to move water from the Castle of Black Iron into the cup outside. Once you lock any space in the Castle of Black Iron, you can move the air in that space! If you are in the water, once you try several times, you will be able to freely breathe underwater."

Zhang Tie covered his mouth using one hand as he asked in a low voice, "You mean that as long as I do this in the water, I can directly move the air from the Castle of Black Iron onto my hand and freely breathe through by hand?"

"It looks like you get it!" Heller nodded, "But this is one of the direct-transportation functions of Castle of Black Iron, there's a simpler method. If you want to take a breath in the water, you can try to directly send the air from the Castle of Black Iron into your mouth through the arch door in your mind!"

The moment he heard the words, Zhang Tie almost sprung up. "That direct-transportation function is simply marvelous. It's definitely a portable oxygen tank. However, compared to an oxygen tank, Castle of Black Iron is invisible. Additionally, the air in Castle of Black Iron is definitely much fresher than that in an oxygen tank.

Zhang Tie was so excited that he almost wanted to rush into the sea and have a try now. However, before he left, he had another question, "I've got another question. I remember that Iron-Body Fruit was only one-third ripe, how could it grow these days without being stimulated?"

"Castle Lord, when you are diving in the sea, the constantly changing water pressure would impose itself upon you. During this process, it was akin to be beaten or hit with something hard. The only difference between the two is that the force that you sustain in water is constant, which could be adjusted by the diving depth. As long as the force on you constantly changes, it will stimulate the Iron-Body Fruit to ripen. During this process, you could treat the sea as a still iron hammer, while you are..."

Before Heller finished, Zhang Tie had already disappeared...

Chapter 282: Test

On the second morning, on the way from the Hidden Dragon Palace to Iron Ore Beach...

"Zhang Tie, how did you manage to stir up all the girls in Zhixing Department? Why did I see all the girls show you the whites of their eyes at breakfast?" Wei Wu walked as he asked Zhang Tie who was walking in front of him.

Speaking of this, Zhang Tie was also a bit depressed, "Who knows, since I came to Hidden Dragon Palace, I've haven't talked with any girls. Damn, girls are really born to be narrow-minded and crazy!"

Zhang Keliang burst out laughing, "Brother, nobody in Hidden Dragon Palace dares to say that girls are born to be narrow-minded and crazy. According to your words, I don't think you'll have a girlfriend in the Palace anytime soon."

Zhang Keliang's laugh roused everybody's attention on Zhang Tie. Many people were surprised by Zhang Tie's boldness—"Born to be narrow-minded and crazy", "This guy is really a dead mouse that feels no cold. He's so careless that he dares to stir up all the girls in the Hidden Dragon Palace by saying this!"

Many people mumbled.

"When I was new here, I also heard from others that girls in Hidden Dragon Palace were tricky. Zhang Tie, you'd better watch your words. If the girls heard your words, they might come to find trouble for you." Zhang Yunfei reminded Zhang Tie.

"So what? You think I'm a kind man? Those girls are born crazy. This father has not stirred up them at all. Why would they show me the whites of their eyes? I admit that I said that, I want to see whether they can bite off my butt or not!" Zhang Tie said in a casual way. Zhang Tie finally understood the proverb that one can be austere if he has no selfish desires. As he didn't expect to establish any relationship with those girls, he didn't care about whether they were happy or not.

"Brother, based on your distant attitude towards girls, you might be alone for the rest of your life. No girls would like you!" Zhang Hongsheng controlled his laugh as pretended to tell Zhang Tie in a serious way.

"I will be alone?" Zhang Tie pointed at his own nose as he seemed having heard the most interesting joke. "If the girls of the Rose Association and Pandora, Alice and Beverly heard this, they would definitely not agree. Even if I want to be alone, I don't think that they would agree to that... cough...cough...but I don't have to show off in front of these guys, Heh...heh..." Zhang Tie smiled as he lowered his head and kept walking without saying anything else.

"Zhang Tie, try to recall what did you stir up those girls. You'd better spare some time to apologize to them. Otherwise, you might not be able to live well on the island in the future." Zhang Yunfei seriously suggested.

Zhang Tie patted Zhang Yunfei's shoulders, "Trust me, never think that you will leave a good impression on those girls by pretending to be a considerate gentleman. All those girls are crazy. When they lose their mind, you should never try to explain logic to them. You should ignore them. If they dare to stir up you, you should treat them as spinning tops in front of your feet and ferociously whip them. The more ferociously you whip them, the more docile they would be. Although men have 12 zodiacs, girls only have 1—spinning top!"

Hearing Zhang Tie's words, all the boys aside were stunned. This guy really dared to say anything. Hearing Zhang Tie's unusual talk, all the juveniles cast weird eyes on him. None of them made any response.

When they arrived at the Iron Ore Beach, the sun had just risen up. Everyone then started to undress by the sea. After putting their clothes by the rocks on the bank, they started to walk into the sea with wire sacks while gritting their teeth.

"Argh, it's too cold..." Only after walking several steps into the sea, before the seawater reached his knee, Wei Wu's teeth had already started to clatter. For all the juveniles, the most painstaking moment was when they entered the sea each morning. The icy seawater's test to people could even match that of the scorching sun.

"Ocean, I'm here..." Zhang Tie made a weird utterance as he rushed into the sea, splattering icy seawater onto Wei Wu and Zhang Hongsheng on his side, causing them to utter strange cries.

"Bastard!" The boys uttered as they chased after Zhang Tie's shadow and directly dived into the sea to end the stimulation.

After swimming 50 m away from the shoal area, he took a deep breath as he lowered his head and instantly dived into the seawater. Although still being stimulated by the icy seawater, Zhang Tie felt it wasn't as cold as yesterday. Zhang Tie knew that it was because of the 1% cold-resistance granted by that Fruit of Redemption that he had eaten last night.

Compared to yesterday, Zhang Tie could swim better today. After all, Zhang Tie had practiced swimming for 4-5 hours in the Trouble-Reappearance Situation last night before went to bed. Therefore, Zhang Tie realized rapid progress due to his sharper sensitivity towards water flow and constant practice.

When practicing swimming in the Trouble-Reappearance Situation, the only weakness that made him pitiful was that he could not simulate the direct-transportation function of the Castle of Black Iron. Therefore, the moment he arrived here today, Zhang Tie couldn't wait to have a try.

Zhang Tie didn't know whether he would make a loud noise when he used the special functions of Castle of Black Iron for the first time. Therefore, after diving into the sea, he didn't swim towards those oceanic trenches; instead, he silently changed his direction and swam to a hidden place that contained more reefs and fewer navy-blue iron ores over 300 m away to the east of the Iron Ore Beach.

Few people would usually come here.

Zhang Tie found a place deeper than 30 m between two reefs where he could hide well before he started to test his direct transportation ability.

Like several times before, when Zhang Tie focused his spiritual energy onto the arch door, the arch door started to radiate a strange, unsteady wave onto Zhang Tie's right palm. In a split second, Zhang Tie felt a great suction from inside his palm. At the same time, Zhang Tie's right hand felt like they were fastened by a rope and a force in the opposite of the suction force instantly pulled Zhang Tie 2 m forward in the seawater.

Zhang Tie was really stunned by such a great change. As a result, he was chocked by a mouthful of seawater. The moment the qi between his chest and his abdomen disappeared, Zhang Tie hurriedly swam upwards.

Behind a reef above the sea...

With a bustling sound, Zhang Tie showed his head above water, "Cough...cough...cough", he coughed out the seawater in his mouth. Zhang Tie was so surprised as his face slightly turned pale. He didn't know what was going just now. How could his body lose control the moment he opened the channel between his Castle of Black Iron and the seawater? How could he be pulled forward by a force which was opposite to the suction?

Zhang Tie carefully thought about that as he gradually understood it. Could it be the counter force of the suction?

After taking a deep breath, Zhang Tie dived to the same place and prepared to make a second attempt.

This time, Zhang Tie became more careful. He carefully controlled the size of the space transportation channel and fixed it as one-fifth of its original size before trying again.

As was expected, the moment he opened the channel, the counterforce reappeared, pulling Zhang Tie's body forward along the direction that his fingers pointed at. Zhang Tie immediately held a reef using his left hand to stop the movement.

As he had experienced this before, this time, Zhang Tie was not overly surprised; instead, he carefully felt the sense and the situation inside the Castle of Black Iron.

Above the Pool of Chaos in the Castle of Black Iron, a torrent shot down like a completely opened faucet. The moment it fell into the Pool of Chaos, it instantly disappeared like a drop of water falling into the sea.

When the torrent of seawater fell into the Pool of Chaos, Zhang Tie's hand was like a bottomless hole which was constantly sucking in seawater. The force that pulled his body forward was truly the counterforce of the suction. After he opened the invisible door on his hand to suck in seawater, he was also pulled forward by the counterforce.

Zhang Tie instantly understood what was going on.

At the bottom of the sea, Zhang Tie slowly observed his palm. After a short while, a small swirl with a diameter of 10 cm started to form. The swirl was like a funny twisting spirit in Zhang Tie's palm.

Zhang Tie then used his spiritual energy to adjust the size of the torrent in his space channel. When he enlarged the size of the space channel, more water would enter the Pool of Chaos and a greater counterforce would act on his body. Similarly, when he narrowed the size of the space channel, less water would enter the Pool of Chaos and a smaller force would act on his body.

After trying over 10 minutes underwater, Zhang Tie gradually discovered how things worked and became more adept at increasing his basic energy storage by transporting seawater into the Castle of Black Iron.

If he wanted to increase his basic energy storage in the Castle of Black Iron in a short period, Zhang Tie had to expand the "caliber" of the space channel; however, if he wanted to expand the "caliber" of the space channel, the counterforce acting on him would be very great. In such a case, it would be very difficult for him to maintain balance underwater. As he watched that small swirl on his palm, Zhang Tie started to rack his mind, "I have to find a way to maintain balance in the sea. If I kept doing like this, I'd have to hug a huge reef with my other hand to maintain balance."

When Zhang Tie was racking his mind, a colorful little fish flexibly swam across Zhang Tie 20 cm away from him. The moment he saw that flexible little fish, Zhang Tie was shocked as he came across an unprecedented thought.

"Why do I have to fix my body and stay still in the sea? Why not move in the seawater using the counterforce? Couldn't the size and the direction of that counterforce be casually adjusted by myself? Doesn't it mean that I could increase my movement speed in the sea to a horrible level that nobody else could imagine..."

The swirl on Zhang Tie's right hand disappeared. Zhang Tie then raised his two hands in front of him. After looking at his hands seriously and recovering his composure, Zhang Tie started to swim in the sea.

At the same time, he opened his space channel a bit on his hands. In a split second, his swimming speed increased by at least 30%...

Chapter 283: Being Eye-Catching

After one day of work, Zhang Tie had only gathered 150 kg of navy-blue iron ores, which seemed to be almost the same weight as that of Zhang Yunfei.

What made Zhang Tie so eye-catching was that there was a swollen bump on his forehead.

All the other guys were surprised about the bump on Zhang Tie's forehead. They had seen people being cramped, drowned, beaten by sea serpents, and being stung by sea urchins which caused their legs to be swollen to the size of their waists, but they had not seen a single person coming out of the sea with a bump on their forehead.

"What's up with that bump?" Wei Wu asked Zhang Tie out of curiosity when he saw Zhang Tie smirking from time to time although having a bump on his forehead.

"I swam too fast and hit a rock at the bottom of the sea." Zhang Tie answered honestly.

Hearing Zhang Tie's words, everybody else exchanged glances with each other and burst out laughing. Wei Wu laughed so heavily that his belly even cramped, "Aiyo[1], I wouldn't have imagined that you are that funny..."

How fast would a person have to swim to hit a rock in the sea? The reason was really awkward despite being very humorous.

Everybody thought that Zhang Tie didn't feel like telling the truth and therefore fabricated a reason. After laughing for a while, the other guys didn't ask him anymore.

Zhang Tie then also laughed as their responses were within his expectations.

After exchanging the navy-blue iron ores for 15 silver coins in the Hidden Dragon Palace, Zhang Tie immediately left the Palace without eating supper.

If he went to the fish market after supper, it would be too late for him to buy sand-scale fish as many booths would have been closed by then. Therefore, Zhang Tie directly went to the fish market.

Today, Zhang Tie came to the fish market in the wharf several hours earlier than that yesterday. The fish market was several dozens of times more boisterous than the day before.

All the booths were still in business in the fish market. Many people were trading near the places where the fishing boats were anchored on the wharf. There were so many passers-by over the wharf, making it very lively.

Dozens of sea products were sold in the fish market, such as marine fish, sea cucumbers, sea shrimps, sea crabs and sea snails. There were 7-8 kinds of shrimp in different shapes and sizes. Zhang Tie could only identify 5-6 kinds of sea products among them, even including sand-scale fish that he learned of yesterday.

For Zhang Tie who was born in Blackhot City and had been familiar with markets from a young age, of course, the boisterous atmosphere of the fish market brought him a sense of nostalgia.

Zhang Tie walked through the fish market in an agile manner as he glanced at the booths on both sides one after the other. After a rough circle around the fish market, he became thrilled as he found 10 more booths that sold sand-scale fish. Each booth would sell this kind of worthless fish more or less in barrel or basin.

At the sight of this scene, Zhang Tie didn't hesitate anymore as he rapidly walked to the booth where he bought the sand-scale fish yesterday.

"Boss Zhu, here are the stone-tiger fish today, I've prepared them all for your hotel...ha, as we're familiar with each other, I will just take 20 silver coins from you for 1.75 kg of them..."

The moment that booth owner fished a trade, he had found Zhang Tie standing in front of him.

"Argh, I've got fewer sand-scale fish today, you only need to pay me 85 copper coins for them!"

"No change, 1 silver coin is alright. If you can provide me more next time, I can pay you less." Zhang Tie smiled as he took out of 1 silver coin and passed it to him.

"Ha, little brother, you are so generous. Okay, If I get more, I'll only ask for 1 silver coin from you next time!" The booth owner took the money as he replied happily.

"Okay, as usual, I will use your barrel for awhile!" Saying this, Zhang Tie had already taken the barrel which contained sand-scale fish.

"No problem, just take it and bring it back to me before I leave."

Zhang Tie nodded as he lifted the barrel with sand-scale fish and ran towards the seaside in the distance. A short while later, after setting free those sand-scale fish, he returned to the booth with an empty barrel. He then bought all the sand-scale fish on the other booths and put them all in the barrel before running towards the seaside and once again set free the sand-scale fish.

Sand-scale fish were really cheap. It took Zhang Tie only 12 silver coins to buy all the sand-scale fish in the booths.

Today, he had set free almost 10 times more sand-scale fish than yesterday. Zhang Tie was filled with pleasure inside. He had not imagined that he could practice in such way.

As so many people were in the fish market, almost nobody noticed a juvenile who lifted a barrel of sand-scale fish and ran here and there. Therefore, Zhang Tie finished his job in public.

After sweeping all the sand-scale fish in the fish market, Zhang Tie sent the borrowed barrel back before heading back to Hidden Dragon Palace. It took him over 1 hour to finish the job. When he returned to the Hidden Dragon Palace, it was supper time in the Zhixing Department.

In the following days, Zhang Tie kept practicing the same way. In the daytime, he would go pick up navy-blue iron ores. After that, he would run to the fish market to buy sand-scale fish and set them free. Each day, he would improve. In the evening, he would practice the movements of Iron-Blood Fish Skill back in the Zhixing Department so as to prepare for forming Iron-Blood Battle Qi.

After setting free sand-scale fish, the Fruits of Redemption improved Zhang Tie's ability day by day as his cold-resistance and sensitivity towards water flow increased day by day...

1%—11%—18%—36%—45%—57%—65%—72%—81%—

When his physical abilities increased, Zhang Tie became more adept at using the direct transportation ability of the Castle of Black Iron in the sea. It was becoming increasingly simpler for Zhang Tie to take a breath in the sea. Additionally, he could better use the counterforce as a driving force to swiftly move in water. Especially the second skill, Zhang Tie had almost forgotten the original intention of this skill was to increase the basic energy storage of the Castle of Black Iron. He started to practice this skill purely by regarding it as one of his abilities.

When Zhang Tie swam through the deep sea every day, the Iron-Body Fruit on the small tree in the Castle of Black Iron ripened rapidly. After eating this Iron-Body Fruit, Zhang Tie obviously felt the effect of the Iron-Body Fruit—before eating it, Zhang Tie could already dive to a depth of almost 100 m; after eating it, Zhang Tie could easily break through 120 m in the sea on the second day.

The deeper he dived, the greater the pressure from the seawater he would have to endure, which increased the tempering of Zhang Tie's body and a faster growth speed of the Iron-Body Fruit. As a result, the newly growing Iron-Body Fruit could allow Zhang Tie to challenge deep seas.

Zhang Tie's cultivation then started to enter a benign circulation.

Taking the sea as a hammer and taking himself as iron. Zhang Tie formed a generous mood in his mind. Each night when he practiced in a Trouble-Reappearance Situation in his room, Zhang Tie would set a target for himself to challenge the life limit in the ocean by losing his life once. After Zhang Tie experienced the endless coldness, darkness, pressure and finally lost his mind due to "death" in the sea each day, he would feel as though he was being reborn the next day he woke up. By then, he would gain a wholly new self, who would have less fear about the ocean.

During these days, the news on his bet with the others had spread in the Hidden Dragon Palace. They were all wondering who dare to bet with 300 gold coins that he could definitely form the Iron-Blood Battle Qi, which was the secret fighting skill of the imperial households of Norman Empire.

Everybody, after hearing this news, would feel that Zhang Tie must be mad. But Zhang Tie was not mad; instead, he performed as normal as usual. Therefore, the eyes of the surrounding people became strange.

Along with the bet was Zhang Tie's two comments on girls in Hidden Dragon Palace. The first comment was—all the girls were born to be narrow-minded and crazy. The second comment was—boys had 12 zodiacs while girls only had 1, their zodiac is a spinning top. With the two comments and Zhang Tie's previous performance which was exaggerated among girls mouth by mouth, Zhang Tie had completely become the public enemy of the girls of the Hidden Dragon Palace in less than two weeks.

These days, when he ate in the canteen, Zhang Tie had already felt girls in the Zhixing Department were showing the whites of their eyes in a killing intent. When Zhang Tie poured out the two "famous comments", many boys who went to pick up navy-blue iron ores in the Iron Ores Beach had heard them. Therefore, Zhang Tie didn't know which bastard had spread his comments into the girls' ears to make the situation worse.

'F*ck!' Zhang Tie could only swear inside.

This morning, when Zhang Tie cleaned his mouth and washed his face and headed for eating breakfast, he was blocked by a great number of girls by the entrance of the canteen.

They looked so furious. The moment he saw them holding him back on the way and glaring at him with eyes as sharp as knives and arrows, Zhang Tie's heart instantly pounded as he knew that they must come here to find him trouble.

"Zhang Tie, we have something to you about. Are you brave to answer us!" A level 6 elder sister who looked 1-2 years elder than Zhang Tie walked towards Zhang Tie and put it straightly in a cold manner.

Zhang Tie carefully glanced over that plump girl and estimated that the size of his breasts was 34D. He then forcefully swallowed his saliva and showed a righteous expression.

"I'm sorry, I've not accepted so many girls' proposal for very long time. I've not imagined that although being that low-key, I am still that eye-catching. As I'm paying all my attention to cultivation and learning, I have no time to care about love affairs. Please bury your words in your mind like burying a beautiful and fragrant seed. Don't say it out loud. Please take it as a beautiful memory of your youth, how about that?"

In a split second, the girls became really dumbfounded by Zhang Tie's words. Soon after that, their cherry faces turned pale...

Chapter 284: Being Outstanding

"Sorry, give way please; I haven't eaten breakfast yet. Can you allow me in..." Zhang Tie wanted to detour from those girls like he hadn't seen their faces at all.

"Bastard, stop!" Those girls who were still blocking Zhang Tie's path directly surrounded him.

"What are you talking about just now? Who wants to propose to you?"

"That's it! Are you dreaming? This sister could fall in love with you?"

"This guy is really lecherous, narrow-minded and presumptuous!"

"He's more like a lunatic!"

...

Zhang Tie was instantly drowning in the girls' curses.

"Listen, now that you don't want to propose to me, why are you surrounding me?" Zhang Tie looked around at the girls who were condemning him on purpose while crossing his hands in front of the chest like being afraid of being violated, "If you dare to attack me in public, I will shout loudly to ask for help from others!"

The girls were so infuriated that they almost passed out.

The girl who initiated the interaction with Zhang Tie really wanted to smack his face which pretended to be in a panic. However, given her purpose here, she restrained her impulse.

"We are looking for you, not for any other reason than to bet with you!"

Bet? Zhang Tie suspiciously looked at those girls, "What will they bet with me?"

"I heard you have bet with a senior brother in Breaking-Heavens Department for 300 gold coins that you can form Iron-Blood Battle Qi. All the girls in Zhixing Department also want to bet with you for that. Dare you bet with us?"

"Ha, your zodiac is truly a spinning top. If I don't ferociously whip you, you might not be happy. Look, you're coming for me."

After thinking for awhile inside, Zhang Tie stopped to be cynic as he seriously looked at this girl, "I have nothing but boldness, go ahead, bet what?"

"Each of us girls will bet with you for 30 gold coins. We think you can't form Iron-Blood Battle Qi in 2 years. If you lose, you should pay each of us 30 gold coins, how about that?"

"These girls are here to rob me when I am in trouble. This must be the treatment as the public enemy of girls. Look at the 12 girls who were surrounding him, Zhang Tie smiled, "You are here to add 360 gold coins' debt to me. let's see it..."

"You are really good at scheming. The odds between others and I is always 1:3. I want 1080 gold coins if I win. Why do I have to make a concession to you by 3 times the odds? Are we familiar with each other?" Zhang Tie refused them at once.

"What do you want then?"

"It's very simple, the odds will be 1:3 as usual. Don't think that I will make a concession for you because you're female. I will not make a concession for you with even 1 copper coin!" Zhang Tie glared at them.

The girls gritted their teeth as they looked at Zhang Tie, "This bastard is really narrow-minded. Didn't his cousin bet with the other one for 1:1?"

After short whispers to each other, the girls instantly reached an agreement.

"Fine, we'll bet 1:3. Each of us will pay you 90 gold coins if you win. We don't think you can form Iron-Blood Battle Qi in 2 years!"

The girls then believed that Zhang Tie would definitely fail to form Iron-Blood Battle Qi. If they don't fear that the total amount would scare Zhang Tie away, they might pay more.

"As we have no money now, how will we deal with the wager then?" Zhang Tie pretended to be serious.

The girls seemed having long prepared for this question.

"We can sign an agreement at first. When the result comes out, if one doesn't have the money to pay it off, one could use an IOU, but one has to pay off the interest first!"

"Do we need to sign an agreement. I think it's needless as my words always count." Zhang Tie pretended to be serious.

"Humph...we'd better sign an agreement. What if you repudiate the debt at a critical moment?" The girl who was talking with Zhang Tie seriously looked at him.

"Fine, I will sign it." Although acting like he was helpless, Zhang Tie had actually long been very happy.

...

As Zhang Tie was surrounded by the girls of Zhixing Department, it arose the attention of many boys. When they heard that these girls were going to bet with Zhang Tie, they all cast their sympathetic eyes on Zhang Tie. When the girls mentioned signing the agreement, the sympathy in the boys' eyes almost turned into condolence.

Nobody felt that Zhang Tie could form Iron-Blood Battle Qi.

Ten minutes later, in the canteen of Zhixing Department, under the gaze of the onlookers, Zhang Tie signed an agreement with each of the 12 girls, each party had one copy, totaling 24 copies.

If the girls won, Zhang Tie had to pay 30 gold coins to each girl. If Zhang Tie couldn't afford that, he had to calculate the interest in terms of a compound interest of 10% monthly.

However, if Zhang Tie won, each girl would pay him 90 gold coins. If they weren't able to pay it off, they would also pay off the same compound interest.

At the end of each agreement was a paragraph—These wagers and the interests accrued from them could only be paid by the personal income gain on Hidden Dragon Island. If the losing party could not complete the payment, they could choose to reduce the debt by finishing tasks appointed by the creditor.

When he read the last paragraph of the agreement, Zhang Tie shook his head as he could almost imagine the group of girls' excited look when they were discussing the last item. In their opinions, he would definitely not win this bet and would finally be their slave. This was how those girls treated their public enemy. They really were narrow-minded!

After taking these signed agreements, those girls started to look at Zhang Tie pleasantly. They looked so high-spirited and seemed as though they had won a battle. It was like to they could see Zhang Tie's poor air when he lost the bet and begged for their forgiveness.

Zhang Tie also revealed a sinister smile as he carefully took the 12 copies of agreements, on which were the graceful names of the girls—Du Yuhan, Li Shasha, Zhang Shaoyun, Zhang Wanjun, Li Yurou, Zhang Caiwei, Zhang Ya, Guo Miaolu, Zhang Li, Zhao Shihua, Qu Liangying and Dong Yan.

Among those girls, there were only five coming from Zhang clan while the other seven came from other clans. That girl who looked like an elder sister called Guo Miaolu. It was also Zhang Tie's first time finding out the names of the girls who lived in the same department with him.

The first battle between Zhang Tie, the public enemy of all girls, and the other girls in Zhixing Department started to become the hot topic in Zhixing Department during breakfast.

...

"Zhang Tie, aren't we brothers?" While eating breakfast, Wei Wu righteously asked Zhang Tie.

"Of course!" Zhang Tie nodded.

"Shouldn't brothers should help each other?"

"Yea!"

"Shouldn't brothers share profits with each other?"

"Certainly!" Zhang Tie watched Wei Wu as he didn't understand what Wei Wu wanted to say, "Just say what you want."

"Okay, I will then put it straight..." After taking a deep breath, Wei Wu's righteous face instantly turned into a big obsequious smile as he rubbed his hand, "I also want to bet with you. Just like what's written on the agreement between you and the girls, but I'm not as greedy as those girls. I only bet for 10 gold coins. If you lose it, you can pay it for me at any time. I will not ask for interest from you. How about that?"

Zhang Tie...

...

When he left Zhixing Department and headed for Iron Ore Beach, Zhang Tie encountered Zhang Haige and his younger brother Zhang Haixin outside the memorial archway of the Hidden Dragon Palace.

"Zhang Tie, I heard you could only carry 100-200 kg of navy-blue iron ores a day. At your speed, you couldn't even pick up 300 tons in 2 years, let alone 300 gold coins. Young man, you know it's hard to make money in Hidden Dragon Island now. Remember that before you want to boast, you'd better acknowledge your own strength. You'd better not let me win too easily, otherwise, I will have no sense of achievement, hahaha..."

After teasing Zhang Tie for awhile, Zhang Haige burst out laughing loudly and walked away in front of Zhang Tie.

Zhang Tie then shook his head. As he was always being familiar with diving skills and the special ability of the Castle of Black Iron, he didn't pay too much attention to picking up navy-blue iron ores; however, he hadn't imagined that he was despised by others because of this. Fortunately, he had been familiar with diving and could move more flexibly underwater. Additionally, he just took an Iron-Body Fruit yesterday and could dive deeper than 150 m now. It was the right time for him to become outstanding in Hidden Dragon Palace...

"Zhang Tie, don't be concerned about his words. As you've only been the Palace for 10 days, you've done pretty well." Zhang Kelian comforted Zhang Tie.

"It doesn't matter, I won't care about his words." Zhang Tie revealed a sunny smile...

...

One hour later, after staying in the water for less than 20 minutes near Iron Ore Beach, Zhang Tie had shown his head above the seawater. After taking another breath, he took the wire, one end of which was fastened onto the reef, and dived into the water once again. After Zhang Tie dived for two minutes, Zhang Yunfei showed his head above the seawater. The moment he prepared to dive once again, Zhang Yunfei caught sight of that wire which was fastened onto the reef, "Who's that fast? How could he be that fast? It's only been 20 minutes since we came here, yet he's fully loaded a sack with navy-blue iron ores."

In the sea...

At this moment, Zhang Tie was no different than a fish. Being upside down, he was twisting his body with a wire in hand. Like a javelin that was thrown into the sea, he kept diving deep into the sea.

He passed by the first layer of the oceanic trench...

He passed by the second layer of the oceanic trench...

He passed by the third layer of the oceanic trench...

Zhang Tie kept diving deep into the sea until the sixth layer of the oceanic trench. With the exception of Zhang Tie, no one else could reach such a deep place. In this oceanic trench, there were iron ores whose sizes changed from as big as head to as big as a millstone. They radiated faint blue light in the seawater and irradiated the undersea world, making it very mysterious.

Zhang Tie found the wire sack that he had filled with navy-blue iron ores and buckled up the wire onto the sack. He then lifted it up in water. At this moment, he was already able to move rapidly upward while carrying a sack. But, it would be too amazing if he did that. Therefore, Zhang Tie still chose the old method to lift the sack out of the water.

Zhang Tie directly surged upward from the oceanic trench at a speed twice that of what he dived in with.

With a bustling sound, Zhang Tie showed his head above the seawater near the reef.

On the reef, Zhang Keliang and the other guys had stopped their work as they were waiting for someone to come out of the water.

"How could you be that fast? We just started, yet you've already got enough navy-blue iron ores?" Zhang Hongsheng watched Zhang Tie with an amazed expression.

"Hoho, it's truly faster than usual!" Zhang Tie smiled as he started to climb onto the reef.

"That's really him!" After exchanging glances with each other, the other guys started to move and help Zhang Tie pull the wire. They were excited to see how many navy-blue iron ores did Zhang Tie get today. They all didn't believe that Zhang Tie could find a sack of navy-blue iron ores at such a fast speed.

"Wow, it's too heavy..."

"Almost half of 300-m long wire has been put in the water. Zhang Tie, did you really dive deeper than 100 m? My god! How many days have you been here? How could you have such a great diving skill!" Wei Wu signed.

Zhang Tie smiled and kept silent. He kept forcefully pulling the items out of the sea.

2-3 minutes later, that wire sack that was buckled with the wire was pulled out of the seawater. Soon after Zhang Tie put the sack onto the reef, Zhang Yunfei and the other guys had already surrounded up and directly opened the sack.

There were only 2 smooth navy-blue iron ores in the sack which were radiating faint blue light.

"Wow, what huge navy-blue iron ores! Each of them will weigh 200-300 kg. This sack will at least weight 500-600 kg..." Zhang Yunfei exclaimed, "Zhang Tie, where have you got such huge iron ores?"

"You can see such iron ores everywhere in the sixth layer of the oceanic trench!" Zhang Tie revealed a smile as he said this.

"Sixth layer?" Everybody watched Zhang Tie like watching ghost, "You mean you got these iron ores in the sixth layer of the oceanic trench?"

"Of course. The deeper you reach, the easier it is to find larger navy-blue iron ores you will find. Don't you know about that?"

"Oh, my god, I'm going to go die now. Comparisons are just..." Wei Wu uttered a weird voice, "I could only reach the second layer of the oceanic trench to find some small navy-blue iron ores to survive myself. How could anybody reach the sixth layer?"

"People who could reach the sixth layer of oceanic trench have not been seen for many years!" Zhang Kelian slightly touched that huge navy-blue iron ore and let out a long sigh.

The sixth layer of the oceanic trench is deeper than 140 m, which was almost like an abyss for the other students of Zhixing Department. The most of the people in Zhixing Department could only reach the third layer of the oceanic trench. Only very few of them could reach the fourth layer of the oceanic trench. The fifth oceanic trench was already 100 m deep, which was like a natural chasm that could not be stridden over for the juveniles in Zhixing Department. However, this chasm was like a paper that could be easily broken through by Zhang Tie.

"You gain such abilities later on. I'm just lucky right now. Well, I have to carry them back. After that, I will come back to carry some more today..."

After carrying the navy-blue iron ores to the bank, Zhang Tie carried the entire 600 kg sack and started to head up on the mountainous path, which stunned all the other guys once again.

On that very day, Zhang Tie submitted 3.2 tons of navy-blue iron ores, which shocked the entire Zhixing Department. They hadn't seen such a great figure for many years in Zhixing Department...

After 10 days since his arrival on Hidden Dragon Island, Zhang Tie started to be outstanding on Hidden Dragon Island in such a manner that was unheard of at the age of 16...

...

Chapter 285: A New Year

After the catastrophe, the Chinese calendar became the universal calendar for human beings in the Black Iron Age. Each year, when the Faerie-Dragon Star rose up from the east, a new year would start which also symbolized the beginning of the spring festival.

Accordingly, the day before the Faerie-Dragon Star rose up, namely December 31st each year, it would be New Year's Eve, namely the Eve before Nian Pass Day.

"Nian" was a monster that could destroy human beings in the legends. It was said that on that very day, numerous brave Chinese forefathers pulled out of their swords with the exciting will to fight along drumbeats of war to face the "Nian" and finally killed it. Therefore, from that day on, beating a drum became a Chinese tradition.

Previously when he was in Blackhot City, Zhang Tie would always have a great fun in beating a drum on the Nian Pass Day. On that very day, the Zhang family would always set a beating drum in the house, allowing Zhang Tie great fun all day long.

Zhang Tie's father told him that people beat drums on that day was to remember the bravery and glory of the Chinese forefathers. Chinese people beat drums on the New Year's Eve in order to carry forward the bravery and glory of Chinese bloodline. In this way, the moment Chinese descendants heard the drumbeats, they would have the bravery to pull out of their swords to face any difficulty or enemy.

On the New Year's Eve, drumbeats could be heard across Hidden Dragon Island while the drumbeats of Hidden Dragon Palace drifted from the top of the mountain, which everybody in the Hidden Dragon Palace could hear.

"Bang bang bang bang", the drumbeats that drifted from the top of the mountain of Hidden Dragon Palace became as restful as a gentle breeze at one moment and as ferocious as lightning at another. All sorts of drumbeats on the island started to beat in accordance with the drumbeats that drifted from the top of the mountain of Hidden Dragon Palace. Under such rhythmized drumbeats, the entire Hidden Dragon island was like a distant ancient battlefield while a solemn and majestic momentum reverberated from the drumbeats.

When the drumbeats were restful, Zhang Tie didn't hear the drumbeats at all; instead, he heard the heavy and depressive footsteps of a giant. The giant's feet stomped on the land one step after another. It seemed that each step contained sadness, blood, and tears that had existed for a thousand years. When the drumbeats gradually sped up and became more and more exciting, Zhang Tie seemed to hear numerous ancient Chinese spirits' soars. The drumbeats resonated with the mountain, the sea, the sky and each heart on Hidden Dragon Island. It wasn't purely drumbeats anymore, but the roars of armored fighters and horses that spread everywhere.

Zhang Tie was really shocked, ever since he was born, he had not known that Chinese people celebrate their most important festival in this way. Comparatively, when in Blackhot City, the drumbeats from only from a few Chinese households were more like a program for kids; however, at this time, he understood that the drumbeats were more like the spirits of each Chinese descendent. What they woke up was the glory and bravery that slept in the bloodline of the Chinese people.

Zhang Tie didn't know how he passed New Year's Eve. He didn't sleep overnight due to his habit in Blackhot City as he needed to stay up to see the new year. Instead, he just quietly sat on his bed and immersed in the drumbeats one after the other both mentally and physically.

Zhang Tie forgot time and everything else. His mentality and spirituality kept rising and falling along with the drumbeats. In the end, when the drumbeats stopped, Zhang Tie left his room and appeared in the courtyard of the Zhixing Department. He faced the east and watched the Faerie-Dragon Star, the brightest star in the sky. Before sunrise, it had been slowly rising up from the sky in the east.

Not only Zhang Tie, all the others in Zhixing Department had walked out and appeared in the courtyard. Nobody talked; instead, they all stood there silently and gazed at the Faerie-Dragon Star rising from the east. At this moment, all the other people in the Palace had walked out of their rooms and stood on empty land or at high locations and watched the Faerie-Dragon Star rising from east.

The year 890 of Black Iron Calendar silently arrived along with the rising Faerie-Dragon Star...

From now on, Zhang Tie was 16 years old...

Seeing the Faerie-Dragon Star rising from the east, Zhang Tie sighed a lot inside. He really had experienced too much in the past half year. Comparatively, his earlier 15 years were as blank as white paper.

Zhang Tie didn't know what would happen in the year 890 of Black Iron Calendar. He only knew that if Donder was right, the 3rd holy war between human and demons would be closer.

Of course, the so-called holy war would have no omen at all and occur in one day. Holy war was just a general concept. Historically, the symbolic events at the beginning of the first two holy wars between human and demons were that a certain country was completely destroyed by demons, billions of the living were killed and most of the human countries were involved in the holy war between human and demons. Actually, before each holy war, the chaos of human society and increasingly frequent skirmishes between human and demons had arisen in number one after the other.

Therefore, Zhang Tie knew that he really didn't have much time left. He should make the most out of each day when he was in Hidden Dragon Palace. When the Waii Sub-continent was in turmoil, the greater ability he had, the more protection could he provide to the people he cared about.

It wasn't until the dawn arrived when the first light of sun appeared in the east and the Faerie-Dragon Star in the sky gradually disappeared did the boys and girls standing in the courtyard return to their own rooms.

On the way back to his own room, Zhang Tie won numerous eye rolls from the girls and cold harrumphs once again. Two weeks ago, on the same day when Zhang Tie signed the agreement with those girls, he had already exploded with unusual power and ability, becoming the most eye-catching person in the Zhixing Department.

Before this, nobody in the Hidden Dragon Palace thought that Zhang Tie could form Iron-Blood Battle Qi; however, after that, Zhang Tie became increasingly eye-catching. He started to pick up more and more navy-blue iron ores from the oceanic trench day by day. The weight of navy-blue iron ores also gradually

increased from over 3000 kg a day to over 5000 kg a day. Many people had changed their opinions on Zhang Tie and started to think that Zhang Tie might be able to form Iron-Blood Battle Qi.

Unusual people could do unusual things. There was no doubt about that.

In Hidden Dragon Palace, some senior brothers in Lingtian Department had also bet on whether Zhang Tie could form Iron-Blood Battle Qi. As a result, the odds had declined from 1:3 a week ago to 1:2.7 now. However, those stewards in the Hidden Dragon Palace seemed to not about this. By contrast, the face of the girls in Zhixing Department started to be increasingly gloomy when the odds of Zhang Tie's success were increased.

In those girls' eyes, Zhang Tie was not only narrow-minded, lecherous, and arrogant but also cunning and sinister. They thought that Zhang Tie being low-key before was to lure them into a trap. Soon after they were in the trap, Zhang Tie immediately showed his real strength.

Zhang Tie didn't care about the girls' opinions and glares at all. In his opinion, it was not the right moment to deal with the girls, not until he formed Iron-Blood Battle Qi. For a newbie, 90 gold coins could not be easily paid off, let alone interest.

As he didn't sleep last night, after dawn, Zhang Tie became a bit sleepy. However, soon after he returned to his own room and prepared to sit on the bed with his eyes closed, Zhang Tie heard knocks from the door.

The knocks were very light, which only sounded, "duo...duo...".

Zhang Tie opened the door and saw a girl rubbing her skirt corner and standing outside the door. This girl was Lv Shasha, the same one who was crying in the corridor of Zhixing Department that Zhang Tie had seen before.

"What's up?" Zhang Tie calmly asked as he was confused about the girl's intention here.

Lv Shasha was almost as old as him. She was a bit shorter, slightly fat while having breasts and bottoms that were sensual and appealing. She had a round delicate face, despite having a bit of baby fat. Besides being womanly, she was also naive, making her similar to Fiona's taste and flavor. When he asked her, Zhang Tie started to glance at this girl. Her skin was even better than that of Fiona's as it was white as snow. Although her breasts were a bit small, they also looked plump. The size must be a 'C' cup, which could already match that of some mature Chinese women. With the shoulder-length hair, she looked more energetic and more shameful.

Thinking of the little woman Fiona who was raising her snow-white butt in the air while on the bed and was f**ked so heavily by him that she even begged him to stop while wailing, Zhang Tie became slightly mind-absent.

"I...I have something to negotiate with you." Lv Shasha bit her lip.

"Negotiate what?" Zhang Tie's eyes fell onto her butt, which was as plump as Fiona's. "I wonder how it feels to f**k the butt." A thought flashed across Zhang Tie's mind.

"Can we...call off the bet...? Feeling Zhang Tie's eyes unscrupulously glancing over her body, Lv Shasha's face blushed as she said, "I...I don't want to bet anymore!"

"Cancel? It's okay since we haven't seen the result."

"What...that's great!" The girl was so happy that she almost jumped up from the ground with gleaming eyes.

"The odds are now is 1:2.7. When we signed the agreement, the odds were 1:3. As your wager is 90 gold coins. If you want to call off the bet, you only need to pay me 9 gold coins."

"Argh..." The girl's smile suddenly froze while she looked at Zhang Tie with a pair of widening eyes, "How could that be? Why do I need to pay you?"

Zhang Tie smiled as he crossed his arms and acted like dealing with an official business, "How couldn't it be? Based on the odds 1: 2.7, if anyone wants to win 30 gold coins from me, one only need to pay 81 gold coins. While your wager is 90 golds coins as it is written on the agreement. If I sign the agreement with another instead of you, I have already made 9 gold coins due to changing odds. If you want to tear off the agreement, of course, you have to compensate for my loss!"

"Nine gold coins..." Lv Shasha mumbled. It was definitely a huge amount of money for her. She could only make over 10 silver coins a day. Tears already filled her eyes. Therefore, she looked at Zhang Tie in a poor way, "Is there any alternative method?"

"Any alternative method?" Zhang Tie rubbed his jaw as he considered. He then glanced over that girl and thought about how to tease her. To tell the truth, Zhang Tie really didn't pay any attention to the gold coins at all. Especially when he noticed her poor look, Zhang Tie really didn't feel like asking for gold coins from her at all. After a short while, Zhang Tie then came up with an idea to tease her.

"Heh...heh..." Zhang Tie smiled like a douchebag, "Once you promise me one thing, I will not let you pay the 9 gold coins!"

"What thing?" Under Zhang Tie's gleaming eyes, the girl bashfully looked down.

"Nothing serious, you just need to move your mouth to..."

"Argh..." Before Zhang Tie finished talking, Lv Shasha had already exclaimed while covering her mouth with one hand and gazing at Zhang Tie with a fearful look. With a pale face, she moved several steps back, "No...no, I won't promise you that. You douchebag, you lady-killer, bastard..."

After saying this, Lv Shasha escaped like a flustered rabbit.

Standing outside the door for quite awhile, Zhang Tie became dumbfounded about what she had done as he only wanted her to call him "good brother" twice. How could she be scared that way? She even cried. Was there any relation between that and a douchebag? To call him "good brother" was equal to that he was a lady-killer?

Wait. When she moved back, she seemed to be fixing her eyes on his crotch. Zhang Tie then lowered his head and found a firm tent raising high there. His mummy had been so grim inside, which seemed to be the natural response when he thought of Fiona just now...

"Damn!" Zhang Tie instantly understood why Lv Shasha was scared off. When a virgin lowered her head and watched his grim mummy, he told her—"Nothing serious, you just need to move your mouth to..."

"F*ck, I didn't mean that. Listen to my explanation. Now, even if I had numerous mouths, I couldn't explain!"

"F*ck!"

"Girls are really sophisticated!"

Zhang Tie became extremely depressed.

...

In the next 2 months, no other "episodes" happened to Zhang Tie, nobody else came to disturb him either. Zhang Tie put all his efforts into cultivation. Each day it was like a gear for him as he was mechanically repeating the same thing between Iron Ore Beach and fish market on the wharf.

Pick up navy-blue iron ores—free fish—eating—cultivation—sleep—picking up navy-blue iron ores...

Zhang Tie was single-minded. He didn't know that his real strength had gradually improved through such boring exercises.

Over the two months, Zhang Tie had gradually ignited 3 surge points on his spine was coming close to level 6. After he formed Iron-Blood Battle Qi, he would officially become a fighter.

After setting free sand-scale fish for over two months, Zhang Tie's cold-resistance and sensitivity to water flow had improved by 612%. During the same period, Zhang Tie had also eaten 5 iron-body fruits. He didn't know exactly how his diving skills had been improved. One day, Zhang Tie wanted to see how deep could he dive near Iron Ore Beach; therefore, he kept diving. When he reached deeper than 300 m, he noticed several big words on a huge reef.

——Zhang Taixuan arrived here at 17!

When he saw this line, Zhang Tie also became excited as he focused his Iron-Blood Untouchable Strength onto his finger and left a similar line beside it on the same reef.

——Haha, Zhang Tie also arrived here at 16!>_>...v

However, the first line of words were all unusually robust and beautiful; comparatively, Zhang Tie's words were absolute chicken scratch.

The previous words carved on the huge reef were pretty magnificent; however, after Zhang Tie scrawled down his words, all the magnificence on the huge reef was destroyed. Besides, Zhang Tie also drew a funny 'smile' and a rustic 'v'. When the two lines of words were put together with Zhang Tie's 'drawing', it looked pretty weird.

In the past two months, four people in the Zhixing Department had formed their battle qi and entered the Lingtian Department. At the same time, five more newbies entered Zhixing Department. On February 24, when Zhang Tie submitted the navy-blue iron ores in the Item Department, Zhang Tie knew that it was the right time for him to form his Iron-Blood Battle Qi.

On that day, Zhang Tie had in total, submitted 317643 kg of navy-blue iron ores to the Hidden Dragon Palace. He not only had 300 gold coins but also had prepared to form his Iron-Blood Battle Qi. His mentality and physicality were at their best condition.

Coming out of the Item Department, Zhang Tie came to the Middle Castle of Hidden Dragon Palace and left an oral message to his cousin Zhang Su by telling him that he had prepared to form Iron-Blood Battle Qi in the Dragon Cave.

The Hidden Dragon Palace was built against the mountain. There were a few castles and adventurous locations. The Lingtian Department was behind the Middle Castle. As Zhang Tie was not qualified to enter the Middle Castle, he could only contact his cousin by leaving an oral message.

At supper, Zhang Tie's cousin Zhang Su truly appeared in the Zhixing Department.

"You've reached level 6?"

"Yes, I've ignited the eighth surge point a few days ago and reached level 6!"

"Have you prepared enough money?"

"I've prepared 300 gold coins!"

"Great, that's my brother, I will take you into the Dragon Cave tomorrow to form battle qi. You give me your 300 gold coins. I will show them to the two guys. After they saw your wager, the agreement between you and them would officially take effect. As long as you defeat them, they will have to pay you 900 gold coins!"

"Fine."

Zhang Tie returned to his own room and handed all the gold coins to Zhang Su. After negotiating the details on setting out tomorrow with Zhang Tie, Zhang Su took away the gold coins.

Zhang Tie then returned to his residence. On the way, he encountered some girls. Lv Shasha was saying something with some other girls. Once they caught sight of Zhang Tie walking towards them, they all stopped talking; instead, they glared at him. Only Lv Shasha looked weak and dared not to look at Zhang Tie.

In the past two months, Lv Shasha didn't seem to have told other girls about that she had come to Zhang Tie. Neither had she revealed Zhang Tie's weird request——letting her "use her mouth" to...It was estimated that she felt it too shameful to talk about. Thanks to this, Zhang Tie didn't become notorious among the girls of Hidden Dragon Palace.

Zhang Tie then slightly let out a sigh.

However, since that day, each time Zhang Tie saw Lv Shasha, he would feel a weird sense between them as an ambiguous atmosphere existed between them.

The moment Lv Shasha raised her head and glanced at Zhang Tie, she had already found Zhang Tie's eyes stealthily fixing on her. Zhang Tie was even gazing at her small mouth. The moment they moved

their eyes away, Lv Shasha's heart had raced while her face blushed. She then dared not to look at Zhang Tie anymore.

"This lady-killer, he wants me to do such a disgusting thing for him with my mouth. That's bastard. However, this lady-killer is really great. He could pick up so many navy-blue iron ores alone. He even dares to face the challenge of forming Iron-Blood Battle Qi which was hardest to practice. Additionally, after a careful look at him, I find this lady-killer and douchebag is really handsome..." Some ideas flew by Lv Shasha's mind. In the mind of the young lady, although Zhang Tie was dangerous, lecherous and disgusting, he was exceptionally attractive.

At the sight of Lv Shasha's bashful look, Zhang Tie felt very happy inside. He also had a special feeling about her. "That's the joy of teasing young ladies. It really feels great making her face blush and her heart pound with only a glance." Zhang Tie thought.

"What are you looking at? If you keep looking at me, I will dig out of your eyes!" Du Yuhan on the side of Lv Shasha ferociously waved her fist towards Zhang Tie.

"I'll give you some news. I'll be going to form Iron-Blood Battle Qi tomorrow. I want to know whether you have prepared your gold coins. Don't regret by then..." Crossing his arms, Zhang Tie "sneered".

Hearing this news, all the girls' faces slightly changed.

"Humph, don't be that arrogant; I don't believe that you can form Iron-Blood Battle Qi!" A girl called Dong Yan said.

"By now, actually I can tell you my secret." Zhang Tie lied in order to tease the girls.

"What secret?" Zhang Wanjun could wait but ask. Although the other girls didn't speak, they all looked very interested about it. Even Lv Shasha couldn't help but raise her head and look at Zhang Tie out of curiosity.

Zhang Tie then looked at Lv Shasha's small mouth once again, scaring her so much that she instantly lowered her head again.

"My secret is related to the Iron-Blood Fist that I'm practicing. I was struck by lightning bolts and suffered from the Post Lightning Strike Savant Syndrome. I know you haven't heard of it. But it doesn't matter. You only need to know that this syndrome could help me cultivate Iron-Blood Fist without any obstacles. So, go back and get the gold coins as soon as possible. Compound interest increase so fast...wa...ha...ha..."

Hearing Zhang Tie's fake sneer, the girls' faces turned slightly pale. After glaring at Zhang Tie's pleasant look, Du Yuhan instantly turned her head, "Humph, let's go..."

The girls then walked by Zhang Tie. Seeing Lv Shasha moving close to him and rubbing his shoulder, Zhang Tie's left fingers casually drew on Lv Shasha's palm.

Zhang Tie only felt the girl slightly quivering as her free-waving hand instantly shrunk back like touching a hot item. In a split second, Lv Shasha's ears turned pretty red.

"Hahahaha..." Zhang Tie burst out laughing loudly as he felt being like a douchebag playboy.

Zhang Tie felt really happy to tease those cute girls when he was free.

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Chapter 286: Dragon Cave

The famous Dragon Cave of Jinyun Country was at the center of Hidden Dragon Island. If one looked down from an airship, one would see the entrance of Dragon Cave was an underground cave that had an area of over 10 sq km.

Although there were already various pieces of evidence that there was nothing beyond the stars before the Catastrophe, humans during that age were basically under the rule of demons who masqueraded as humans. In order to better manage the people, the ruling demons influenced them to focus on mutual destruction. Therefore, people were forbidden to be too curious and explore this world. The ruling demons fabricated various lies about the world to firmly constrain people's thoughts and free will. Each person who entered school would be constantly brainwashed by all kinds of lies fabricated by the demons since they accepted education.

Among the lies that were beneficial for demon's rule, the most fundamental one was to answer a question that everybody was born with—Where are we? How's the world that we're in?

For the galaxy and the world that humans were living in, the ruling demons wanted to describe it as an isolated island in the universe and a cage on the ground. It was a wasteland among the beautiful and vast stars where no other sentient beings existed except for humans.

During the last several hundred years, this talk fabricated by demons firmly restrained people's thoughts. During the same period, mutual killing amongst humans escalated. In this lie, every resource in this world was scarce. In order to strive for these scarce and limited resources, in order to survive, humans constrained to the world started killing each other.

Among those lies was the basic composition of this world. The planet humans lived on was described as a large onion with a solid core and layers around it. Those layers were the crust and mantle with earth's core inside. Deep underground was magma that prevented all life from existing.

When the demons created these lies, they also started to use the huge resources that they controlled to stop those who didn't believe this theory from exploring the depths of their world. They blocked all facts and truths that could reveal their lies.

Based on the knowledge that Zhang Tie had learned at school, before the Catastrophe, many people had already realized the lies that demons fabricated about this world. Many people had already known that this world was actually not a large layered onion. Actually, the inside of this world was hollow. There were many independent and interconnected spaces inside this world. Even above the ground, there were many natural entrances that could lead to other worlds in their galaxy.

These natural entrances spread across the world. But the largest entrances were near the north and south poles. Almost 100 years before the catastrophe, because of advancements in science and technology, many people had expensive private airborne means of travel—planes. By plane, some brave private explorers investigated the north and south poles of this world. They had already

discovered the huge entrances to the underground world near the north and south poles. Looking down at them from the sky, they were so huge that they could not be covered at all.

Not only these explorers, actually most of the countries that could launch artificial satellites during that age had already discovered this secret as they could easily capture images of these underground entrances when the satellites flew across the south and north polar points. However, because of various reasons, people who had discovered them kept it a secret.

Not until the Catastrophe arrived, with the reversal of the magnetic poles of this world and its intense geological movements, many monsters and magical beasts poured out of the underground entrances did people know that there were many secrets hidden in their world.

Since the first holy war between humans and demons, people started putting more effort into exploring the mysteries hidden beneath the world's surface and the entrances leading to other worlds. Many more entrances then started to be discovered across the world. From then on, the vast underground world started to gradually reveal its secrets to humans.

The Dragon Cave on Hidden Dragon Island was also discovered as one of the entrances that led to the underground world after the first holy war. This entrance was actually a stream converging into the ocean. Although the entrance of the stream was here, nobody knew where it led to.

During the several hundred years since the Dragon Cave was discovered, each day, many people were ventured in. Among them, most were warriors who were here to form battle qi while others were adventurers who were here to look for opportunities, historical relics, and treasures in the underground worlds.

There were totally over 300,000 people in the 5 towns of Hidden Dragon Island, over 60% of them belonged to the above two kinds of people. They were all conceited and arrogant. Some had real strength, some had ambitions, and others had both. They came from all the human countries. Most of them were very experienced. Before they came to Hidden Dragon Island, they were not common figures. The lowest level among them would be like Zhang Tie who had just been promoted to level 6 and were preparing to form battle qi.

There were all sorts of powerful and talented people on Hidden Dragon Island.

With the exception of White Dragon Town which was close to the only wharf of the island, all the other 4 towns were located around Dragon Cave. Therefore, anyone willing to enter the Dragon Cave has to have permission from at least one of the four towns.

Early the next morning, Zhang Tie's cousin had brought Zhang Tie to Black Dragon Town.

After being on the island for almost three months, this was Zhang Tie's first time entering a town on the island. Previously, when he bought and set free fish every day, although he would pass by the mountainous path next to the White Dragon Town, Zhang Tie hadn't ventured into White Dragon Town even once.

Black Dragon Town was 10 times more prosperous than that in Zhang Tie had imagined. In the early morning, there were already so many people on the streets. On both sides of the street, there were all

sorts of hotels, restaurants, and stores. It was so boisterous that Zhang Tie even doubted he was still in a town on the island.

However, compared to cities, most people accessing the streets here were carrying weapons like sabers and swords. Most of their weapons were so weird that Zhang Tie hadn't even seen them before. Besides people, there were no vehicles or any carriages on the streets.

Most of them were Chinese with black hair and eyes, except for a few blond white men and black men. They were all going about their own business and felt nothing strange about the scene.

On the Waii Sub-continent, Chinese and white people shared the human corridor. They established their own countries. Among those countries, white people who spoke Hebrew were mainly in the west and the north of human corridor while Chinese countries were mainly in the east and the south of the human corridor. After the first holy war, although there were still some wars and conflicts between countries and regions, as a whole, there was no animosity and opposition between human races. Besides, large-scale wars between allied nations had been forbidden.

Being threatened by demons, human beings realized their first era spanning peace in history, which was definitely a large step forward.

Watching some black tough men who were carrying terrifying zigzag sabers bargaining with the shop owners in fluent Chinese, Zhang Tie was really shocked as he had never witnessed such a scene Blackhot City.

...

"Bang..." With a loud sound, the glass window on the second floor of a hotel more than 10 m ahead of them was broken when Zhang Tie and Zhang Su were walking on a street of Black Dragon Street. At the same time, a person flew out of the window with a miserable cry and heavily fell onto the street. Seeing this, all the passers-by kept away from him.

Less than 5 seconds after that person fell onto the ground, another person flew out of the same window with his butt coming out first and heavily fell on the ground.

When the first person flew out of the glass window, Zhang Tie had already stopped. When the second person flew out, Zhang Tie saw that the latter one was kicked out of the window.

Before the two people picked themselves up, a young man in the uniform of Hidden Dragon Palace had already walked out of the gate on the first floor while patting off dirt from his hands. He then came in front of the two people lying on the ground and lifted them up by seizing their necks like lifting two chickens.

"You are only level 7 fighters, how dare you dine and dash on Hidden Dragon Island..." The youth sneered as he turned back to ask, "Lad, how much should they pay?"

A 20-over agile lad had already run out of the gate of the hotel, "They consumed 2 gold coins and 36 silver coins worth of food. The expense of the broken windows, desks, and tables is 5 gold coins. They should pay 7 gold coins and 36 silver coins to the Treasure Gathering Building!"

"Do you have the money?" The young man asked the two tough men who had been beaten fiercely and been lifted in his hands.

"Yes, yes, we have..." A tough man pulled out of his money bag while gritting his mouth. Without even counting, he hurriedly threw the money bag to the lad. Taking the money bag, the lad counted 7 gold coins and 36 silver coins from it in the public before throwing it back.

"Can...can we leave now?" The other tough man who had recovered a bit lowered his voice.

"As you two dared to stir up trouble here on Hidden Dragon Island, although you've paid for your damages, you should still follow me..."

"To...to where?" The tough man's heart quivered as he asked.

"According to the regulations of Huaiyuan Prefecture, besides compensating for their damages, all the trouble-makers here should perform hard labor for two weeks. Follow me, after doing hard labor in the quarry for two weeks, you will be free."

"Ha, these two idiots really thought they could do whatever they want on Hidden Dragon Island..." A spectator on the roadside shook his head.

"These douchebags are definitely country bumpkins who have stayed in small places for too long. As only level 7 fighters, they dared be that presumptuous? Damn, if they dare to stir up trouble in my place, this father will definitely pinch their eggs into pieces and spread some salt on it before letting them swallow it. F*ck, this daddy is a level 8 fighter, yet I still dared not be rampant when I came to Hidden Dragon Island a half year ago..." A grim tough man who was hefting a big saber cast a contemptuous glance at the two guys and fiercely spat a mouth of saliva onto the ground before walked away. Judging from his look, he must be a robber or a hero who occupied a mountain to be a king in the past.

Seeing that the episode was over, the onlookers all left. They seemed to be used to such things.

After hearing the onlookers' discussions, the two people looked more depressed as they lowered their heads and were escorted away by the young man.

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"Brother Zhang..." When the young man was escorting the two tough men passed by Zhang Tie and Zhang Su, he caught sight of Zhang Su. Therefore, that young man hurriedly greeted Zhang Su with one clenched fist in another hand.

"Liu Xu? Are you here on duty in Black Dragon Town today?" Zhang Tie's cousin didn't even glance over the two bad-luck guys being escorted; he only slightly nodded towards the young man.

"Heh heh, I've got few family donation points left, so I come out to do some tasks..." The young man then moved his eyes onto Zhang Tie, "This must be your cousin?"

"Yes, this is Zhang Tie, my cousin. I'm going to take him to form battle qi!"

"Come on, junior brother, I've put 30 gold coins on you a couple of days ago. Hope you form Iron-Blood Battle Qi in 2 years..." That person then revealed a smile towards Zhang Tie to encourage him.

"Thanks, senior brother, if you lose the bet, I will invite you to drink alcohol!" Zhang Tie also smiled as he said, "If you win, how about inviting me to drink alcohol?"

"Hahahaha..." Liu Xi burst out laughing loudly. He felt that this junior brother was very interesting, "It's a deal!"

...

After departing from Liu Xi, Zhang Su kept talking about the warnings in Dragon Cave as he took Zhang Tie into a special medicament store in Black Dragon Town and bought 4 small vials of medicament for Zhang Tie at the cost of 4 gold coins.

"What's this, cousin?" Zhang Tie asked.

"This is night viewing medicament. After arriving at Dragon Cave, you can drip this medicament into your eyes. It could grant you with night vision and help you move underground." Saying this, Zhang Su looked a bit bashful, "I should have sent you more, but my money has been borrowed by a friend to invest in a processing workshop in Green Dragon Town, so..."

"So if we can't make 2 gold coins in the underground world, we will suffer a loss..." Zhang Tie smiled as he continued his cousin's words to make Zhang Su not that shameful. Whereas, with Zhang Su's words, Zhang Tie understood more about the rules in Hidden Dragon Palace, "Cousin, do many cousins in the Breaking Heaven Department make money this way on the Island?"

"Yes, when you enter the Breaking Heaven Department, you will know that it's not that easy to live for free in the Palace!" Zhang Tie signed, "In order to make money, those in the Breaking Heaven Department will have to exert their own talents. Besides some tasks through which they could gain payment, some able men even invest in industries in the towns of Hidden Dragon Island. Look at the hotels and shops in Black Dragon Town, 80% of them were invested in by the forefathers who had practiced on Hidden Dragon Island before. After they left the Hidden Dragon Island, their invested industries could be taken over by their family members. Hidden Dragon Palace was not a Shangri-La where you could practice fighting skills while ignoring everything else. If one wants to mature, one has to learn to make money. This is a very important lesson for people the Breaking Heaven Department! Previously, when I was at home, I didn't know how to make money at all. I only felt that I had lots of it. However, since I came here, I found out how hard it was for the forefathers to make money. It was really hard for our grandpas to develop such a great business..."

Zhang Tie nodded as he had a deep empathy for it. Previously when his mom sold rice brew, the price of each bowl of rice brew was only several copper coins. His family members even felt it pitiful to eat it themselves. It was really hard to live if one didn't know how to make money.

After leaving Black Dragon Town, it only took them several minutes to reach Dragon Cave.

Dragon Cave was in the cove of some mountains. When he stood on the hillside of Dragon Cave and looked at this huge underground abyss, the area of which was even more than that of a town, Zhang Tie was slightly shocked.

A small amount of sunlight was cast into such the huge cave, enabling the entrance of the cave to be slightly visible. However, even during the day, the inside of the cave was a place where light couldn't reach.

Many people's furious growls and some animals' jarring cries seemed to drift from deep inside of the cave, making this huge pitch-black cave more terrifying.

Zhang Su then brought out the night-viewing medicament and dripped a bit into his eyes. Zhang Tie then imitated from him. The moment the medicament entered his eyes, Zhang Tie had already felt an icy sense that was very comfortable. After squinting his eyes for a short amount of time, Zhang Tie opened his eyes and felt that whole world had changed. His vision of the surrounding scenes like looking through a layer of a yellow-green glass.

"Don't be surprised about it. That's the effect of the night vision medicament. Let's go inside. Those mutated huge black spiders are in the first layer of caves, which is over 1.5 km away from the entrance..."

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Chapter 287: Mamma Mia

After heading deeper than 300 m, Zhang Tie found that the whole cave became dimmer. The night vision medicament started to work. What Zhang Tie saw was a faint yellowish-green world, in which, everything became very clear. This made Zhang Tie let out a sigh.

Besides Zhang Tie and his cousin Zhang Su, there was a total of 20-30 people who entered the Dragon Cave together. The team lasted about 100 m. People who were familiar with each other would stay together while those who didn't know each other would keep their distance and be cautious of those around them. Those people who were experienced with the underground world clearly knew that besides those terrifying magical beasts and monsters that could kill people, many would be killed by others due to various reasons each year. What was more gloomy and dangerous than this underground world was a person's heart.

As Zhang Su entered the Dragon Cave in the uniform of the Breaking Heaven Department of Hidden Dragon Palace, soon after he and Zhang Tie entered the underground cave, three other teams of people had already joined them.

Hidden Dragon Palace was the law enforcer and peacekeeper of Hidden Dragon Island. During the past several hundred years, it had accumulated a very good reputation on the Island. Therefore, Zhang Su's uniform made him a reliable symbol for those on Hidden Dragon Island.

The cave was full of strange, jagged rocks. Stalactites could be seen everywhere. Some stalactites suspended from the top of the cave while others were erected from the ground. Besides footsteps, people could also hear the crisp sound of the water dripping from the top of the cave.

It was the paradise of swallows within several hundred meters from the entrance. There were numerous swallows flying in the cave. When those swallows flew into the sky and covered the sunlight, the whole cave would become bit dimmer.

When Zhang Tie noticed that there were many stands and ladders built of bamboo and ropes were located at critical positions on the walls, he became quite curious.

"Cousin, what are those? How could anyone build these things here?"

"Hoho, there are millions of golden swallows in various caves on the Island. Their nests are extremely expensive tonics, which are worth more than their weight in gold. When they need money, those in the Breaking Heaven Department would come here to dig out the nests of the golden swallows. When I entered the Breaking Heaven Department, I also needed money and came here to dig out the swallows' nests. One day, I dropped from a height of 30 m and almost died!" Zhang Su sighed, "Previously, I used to eat golden swallow nests at home. I always felt that everything was so easy. However, not until I almost lost my life for one swallow's nest did I know that nothing in this world was easy. When you enjoy it, someone is bleeding and perhaps even losing their life for you. Everything has a price. Why could you drink lotus congee with swallows' nests in the morning while others have to dig swallows' nests for you from dozens of meters high in a cave at the risk of their own lives? For what? Anyone who wanted to leave the Hidden Dragon Palace has to figure it out!"

When Zhang Su talked with Zhang Tie, he didn't lower his voice. Therefore, what Zhang Su said was not only heard by Zhang Tie, but also heard by those people who followed them in.

"I've long heard about the good reputation of the Zhang clan of Huaiyuan Palace. Hereditary clans are truly great!" After hearing Zhang Su's words, a 40-odd-year old man who was walking along with Zhang Tie and Zhang Su sincerely praised.

"Thanks, Hidden Dragon Island is the place where the Zhang clan's apprentices have to cultivate. If we don't endure hardships, how could it be called cultivation?" Zhang Su politely answered.

"Fucheng, Tianlin, have you heard that? Even the apprentices of Zhang clan, the hereditary clan of Huaiyuan Palace would prioritize enduring hardships and dangers during cultivation. Our Lu clan's apprentices have no qualification to be pleased with ourselves in the small Jun'an City as our clan is much weaker than the Zhang clan. You should not complain about hardships when you cultivate. After you form your battle qi and leave here, you have to tell what you have learned here with your juniors. Tell them how the Zhang clan of Huaiyuan Palace trains their clan apprentices to make them feel shameful!" That middle-aged man warned two 20-odd-year old young men next to him in a solemn expression.

"Yes, sir, uncle Qi!" The two 20-odd young men answered seriously.

Hearing those words, the other people who walked together with Zhang Su and Zhang Tie also hurriedly nodded as what they heard just now was truly a good example to educate the young apprentices in their own clans. It was fortunate for the Zhang clan of Huaiyuan Palace to gain such a great honor.

Everybody nodded, except for a juvenile who looked younger than Zhang Su yet older than Zhang Tie who made a cold harrumph. He seemed to disagree. Hearing the young man's cold harrumph, another middle-aged man who was walking together with him cast a stern gaze at him to make him quiet.

At this moment, Zhang Tie's cousin Zhang Su looked like he was unaffected by the honor or disgrace. He seemed not care about the others' praise or that faint cold harrumph. However, Zhang Tie noticed a

wisp of an ignorant smile flashing by his cousin's mouth corner. Zhang Su didn't even look back; instead, he directly ignored it.

"Besides being kind to him and talking with him, this cousin is really proud!" Zhang Tie gradually understood his cousin's personality.

Zhang Su kept silent. In contrast, Zhang Tie was different, he started to chat with the others. When they noticed that Zhang Tie was from Zhang clan of Huaiyuan Palace and a member of Hidden Dragon Palace, they didn't dare to freely talk with him before. However, when they chatted with Zhang Tie, they found that this juvenile was very humorous and honest. He neither placed himself above others nor made others embarrassed. They didn't feel the usual sense of arrogance the elites from hereditary clans at all. After a short while, Zhang Tie became familiar with some of the young men.

Zhang Su just listened to their talk on one side as he started to sigh over Zhang Tie's talent. He hadn't imagined that Zhang Tie could be so sociable. But after recalling the letter from home on Zhang Tie's previous life, Zhang Su finally figured it out. As Zhang Tie was living in the secular world since he was young, he usually worked in the grocery store after school, so he must have come in contact with people from all walks of life. Of course, Zhang Tie was good at interacting with others.

When they reached all the way to the underground, the scene in the cave also kept changing. Zhang Tie could see more and more lichens on the ground. At the same time, Zhang Tie could already smell the bloody flavor that drifted from ahead.

When Zhang Tie had estimated that they had already traveled several miles underground, all of a sudden, an unexpected scene appeared before his eyes. A huge underground karst cave which was dozens of kilometers wide and several hundred meters high. The topography inside the karst cave was strange—stones crisscrossed, while some huge lichens that Zhang Tie had never seen before grew amongst the stones. On the ground and among the surrounding massifs, there were various, weird caves of different sizes, making this place a strange maze.

The jarring howls of monsters and growls of people could be heard often. There was also the appearance of all sorts of battle qi in the darkness in this huge underground space.

Zhang Tie knew that they finally arrived at their destination. By then, they should also separate with each other.

"Brother, if you come to Jun'an City in Jiangtang Prefecture, remember to visit us at the Lu clan. We will definitely invite you to eat all the yummy food across the Jun'an City!" Lu Fucheng patted Zhang Tie's shoulders as he said.

"It's a shame that I can't bet on you in the Hidden Dragon Palace. Otherwise, I would withdraw my entire 100 gold coins savings in the bank to encourage you!" Lu Tianlin laughed out generously, "It usually takes commoners about 1-2 months to gather common battle qi. Firstly, Soul Fire enters one's body; secondly, one is washed by Soul Fire, seven strengths would combine into one to form battle qi. For some advanced battle qi, it requires anywhere from a few months to half a year for a person to form. As you have 2 years, don't worry, the gods always help those who help themselves. As long as you work hard, you will definitely make it!"

"Haha, thanks for your encouragement, brother Lu. When I arrive at Jun'an City, I will definitely come to Lujiabao for you!"

"Fine, that's a deal!"

After separating with Zhang Tie and Zhang Su, Lu's group firstly entered the huge underground space.

"Brother, come on, if you are free, come to Iron Saber Gate to discuss fighting skills with us!"

"Fine!"

Another group separated with Zhang Tie and Zhang Su.

Finally, the team that separated with Zhang Tie and Zhang Su was the one that contained the youth who had made a cold harrumph. Among them, an elder even cast two more glances at Zhang Tie before he left, seemingly wanting to keep Zhang Tie in mind.

"Let's go." Zhang Su headed for the other direction with Zhang Tie following behind.

...

The major attacking parts of level 6 Hell-black spiders were the two pairs of sharp teeth in front of their mouth and the pair of forelimbs. However, their attack range was limited. What you had to watch out for was the webs spat out from their mouths. Once the webs stuck to your body, it would restrict your movement!" After entering the karst cave, Zhang Su told Zhang Tie how to deal with those Hell-black spiders.

"What's the effective range of its web?"

"5-10 m. When it is going to spit out a web, its two pairs of teeth will completely open. Additionally, its abdomen will produce a sound of a "drumbeat". You can dodge its attack or keep your distance. Its two sides, abdomen and back were all weak points that can be attacked. Its weakest point is on its head. You can directly kill it by destroying its head!"

...

Less than 10 minutes after they entered the underground space, Zhang Tie saw the first Hell-black spider. It was a huge terrifying spider that was taller than 2 m and bigger than an ox. When Zhang Su and Zhang Tie passed by a weird dark-red umbrella-shaped lichen zone, this spider suddenly jumped out of the foot of the plants and bit at Zhang Tie.

Zhang Su didn't move. As it was his first time to see such a huge spider, Zhang Tie was so scared that he almost jumped up. When he realized that this ugly animal treated him as a target, Zhang Tie became furious.

The longer pair of teeth of the Hell-black spider was almost as long as Zhang Tie's arm. They were as wide as a javelin. Before the longer pair of teeth bit onto Zhang Tie, Zhang Tie had already firmly held them. With a sound of "kacha", he had broken them and torn them out of the Hell-black spider's mouth. Along with its jarring, painful howl, Zhang Tie inserted the two teeth onto the huge spider's head.

The terrifying spider's jarring sound immediately stopped.

After being so scared that he even screamed by such a level 6 insect in front of his cousin, Zhang Tie really felt that he had lost face.

"F*ck, who let you jump out and scare me, who let you jump out and scare me..." While swearing at it, Zhang Tie didn't stay still. After turning its head into a bloody mess out of fury, Zhang Tie directly kicked it and sent the several hundred kilogram body flying into the air. The corpse of the spider then rolled over 10 m away with its legs pointing to the sky.

After doing that, Zhang Tie even spat towards its corpse, "Pah...damn, who let you jump out to scare me; thankfully, I don't have heart problems. If not, I'd have been scared to death by you instead of being bitten to death..."

After killing the spider, Zhang Tie felt bashful as he smiled towards Zhang Su and scratched his head in an honest way, "Erm...As this is my first time to see such a huge spider, I was really scared by it, heh...heh...don't laugh at me, cousin..."

The corner of Zhang Su's eyes slightly twitched as he was inwardly startled. "A level 6 hell black spider was beaten by Zhang Tie in the same manner he beat and killed chickens and dogs. What insane strength!"

Zhang Su knew that Zhang Tie was abnormal, but he had never imagined that Zhang Tie was that abnormal. When the Hell-black spider jumped out of the plants to bite Zhang Tie, what Zhang Tie had performed in terms of speed, strength, and reflexes to catch that Hell-black spider was definitely akin to having experienced the same scene thousands of times. What mattered most was that at the critical moment, Zhang Tie could still act that easily. Only after experiencing numerous life and death situations could one gain such fast responsive instinct. Even for Zhang Su, he still could not deal with that Hell-black spider that easily and fluently as if drinking water.

Zhang Tie's strength was too terrifying. To tell the truth, Zhang Su hadn't seen anyone who had just reached level 6 explode with such strength.

After glancing at the corpse of the spider, Zhang Su took a deep breath, "Let's go. It's said that even the imperial households of Norman Empire had to spend half a month to one month to have Soul Fire enter their body when they were cultivating their Iron-Blood Battle Qi. After absorbing enough Soul Fire and combining seven strengths into one, one could finally form the unrivaled Iron-Blood Battle Qi!"

"Cousin, what's Soul Fire?" This was the weakness of poor cultural deposits. The common sense for many people was strange to Zhang Tie.

"You don't know what Soul Fire is?" Zhang Su was dumbfounded.

Good god, nobody had talked about Soul Fire with him——Zhang Tie made a bitter smile. Zhang Tie had heard this term twice today. As he felt it shameful to ask outsiders, he couldn't but ask Zhang Su.

"The so-called Soul Fire refers to the fire of the souls of the underground monsters killed by you. They are stimulated by your killing intent. Soul Fire is a mysterious strength that resonates with your killing intent and invisible qi field. This strength can purify your seven common strengths and aid in converting them to battle qi. Usually, only those whose level and conditions have reached the critical point form battle qi are able to produce Soul Fire inside magical beasts after killing them..."

"How does Soul Fire enter one's body?" Zhang Tie kept asking like a curious child.

"Soul Fire resonates with your killing intent and qi field. Therefore, it can automatically enter your body after being formed. This is called Soul Fire entering one's body. Iron-Blood Battle Qi is very amazing and the last step is the most difficult to form Iron-Blood Battle Qi. Besides the imperial households of Norman Empire, almost nobody can form it. Even the imperial households of Norman Empire are hardly able to break through the last step. Additionally, not every dead magical beast can form Soul Fire. Iron-Blood Battle Qi requires too much Soul Fire, at least five times that of common battle qi..."

Zhang Su walked as he explained. Only after walking a few steps forward, he had noticed that Zhang Tie suddenly stopped.

"Cousin..." Zhang Tie's voice faintly quivered, "Loo...look, what's that?"

Zhang Su turned back and was also dumbfounded by what he saw...

Not far away, in the place where the corpse of the Hell-black spider lay, a firefly-like golden light started to gradually appear above its dead body. In a short period, the golden light had gathered and formed into a ball of golden light as large as a fist. Soon after, the ball of gold light started to burn like a wildfire. Of course, it wasn't truly burning but had the appearance of doing so.

The burning ball of golden light then swiftly flew towards Zhang Tie. Zhang Su tried to grab it with hand, yet it directly penetrated his palm like a zero-weight ball of air and a shadow and fell onto Zhang Tie's lower abdomen and disappeared...

No matter how surprised he was, how unimaginable what happened was, Zhang Su still had to admit that—the ball of golden light was true Soul Fire. Because only true Soul Fire could have such strange properties. As long as it was not far from the person who caused it to form, within several hundred meters, that ball of Soul Fire could always penetrate through all the obstacles and fly into the qi ocean of that person's dantian elixir field[1]—This is Soul Fire entering one's body.

Golden Soul Fire can only be formed by the resonating of a few top grade battle qis with magical beasts in the entire Waii Sub-continent. Iron-Blood Battle Qi was one of them.

Even though the imperial households of Norman Empire could not form Soul Fire after they killed the first Hell-black spider. How could his cousin...

At this moment, Zhang Su was watching Zhang Tie like he had found gold.

"—Mamma Mia, wife, come out to see God!" [2] A joke that originated from the age before the Catastrophe flashed across Zhang Su's mind. Thankfully, he was not married. If he truly had a wife, Zhang Su would definitely shout out loudly.

After taking a deep breath, Zhang Su still felt his heart racing. He constrained his pounding heart and asked Zhang Tie in a calm voice, "How do you feel now?"

"I felt...felt a bit strange in my lower abdomen. But it soon disappeared!" Zhang Tie scratched his head as he said. Zhang Tie also saw how the Soul Fire penetrating through Zhang Su's palm and felt it pretty marvelous.

"That's because you haven't absorbed enough Soul Fire!" After taking another breath, Zhang Su stared at Zhang Tie in with an unprecedented look, "Do you know that you've broken a record today?"

"Is it that difficult?" Zhang Tie dubiously stared at Zhang Su with a blank expression, "I don't feel like I've done anything special! I just hastily killed a Hell-black spider..."

Hastily killed? Zhang Su was so shocked much that he almost spat out blood. He decided to not discuss this with Zhang Tie anymore. If he kept discussing this, his self-esteem would collapse.

...

"Argh, I just saw golden Soul Fire flying from here, was I imagining it? Where's it now?"

"I saw it too, is someone gathering battle qi here?"

"Let's take a look over there! Battle qis that can stimulate golden Soul Fire are all top grade battle qi. It's rare to have the chance to see it. I've been in the Dragon Cave many times, but I've never seen golden Soul Fire! If we take a look we might learn something..."

...

Hearing the voices not far from them, Zhang Su glanced at Zhang Tie, "If you don't want to be surrounded by country bumpkins hurry up and leave here!"

Saying this, Zhang Su paced up towards far, closely followed by Zhang Tie.

"Cousin, why are we rushing?"

"Golden Soul Fire is too obvious here. Since you can't hide it, it's better to display it in a more opening place. As you are from Hidden Dragon Palace, what you do represents the Zhang clan's apprentices of Huaiyuan Palace. The news that a level 6 apprentice of Zhang clan of Huaiyuan Palace can easily gather golden Soul Fire will definitely shock other clans and make our clan more majestic..." Zhang Su explained.

Zhang Tie nodded.

In the next several minutes, they didn't meet any Hell-black spiders.

Zhang Su directly brought Zhang Tie into a huge canyon in the karst cave. In the canyon, there were already 200-300 people. What was more amazing was that Hell-black spiders constantly climbed out of the crevices and the abyss of the canyon...

Guo Miaolu and some girls from Zhixing Department were also here...

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Chapter 288: Freak

After killing a Hell-black spider and gathering a green ball of Soul Fire, Guo Miaolu caught sight of some hell black spiders rushing towards her. She dared not to stay still; instead, she hurriedly ran upward from the foot of the canyon. When she arrived at a safer place, before this elder sister from Zhixing

Department gasped twice, she had already noticed that Zhang Tie, the common enemy of the girls in Zhixing Department was standing not far from her and was watching the fight between human and spiders in the 100-m deep canyon.

Last night, Guo Miaolu had already found out from other girls that Zhang Tie would go to the Dragon Cave to form Iron-Blood Battle Qi; however, she could never imagine she would see Zhang Tie here. This Dark Canyon was not like other places as it gathered most the Hell-black spiders and was much more dangerous than other places. Almost no newbie who had reached level 6 dared to gather battle qi here before being fully familiar with the fighting skills of these Hell-black spiders. The girls in Zhixing Department and the others had already fought the hell black spiders for over a month in other places. Many of them had already been able to feel Soul Fire entering their body. Therefore, they tried to challenge more Hell-black spiders in the Dark Canyon.

"Not bad. Soul Fire already entered your body." Having just found what was Soul Fire entering one's body, Zhang Tie instantly praised her like an experienced old man when he found Guo Miaolu was staring at him with enlarged eyes.

Guo Miaolu then slightly frowned. After glancing at Zhang Su at Zhang Tie's side, she immediately looked gloomy and asked in a bad mood, "What are you here for?"

"There are so many Hell-black spiders here, I'm here to form my battle qi!" Zhang Tie said bluntly.

"You are here to form battle qi?" Guo Miaolu became slightly dumbfounded, "You're going to die. How dare you come here? You are new here! Do you know how many level 6 newbies have been killed in the Dark Canyon? Over 100. Yesterday, one more died here. With so many Hell-black spiders here, once you enter the canyon, you might lose your life while being ambushed by them!"

"I didn't think that Miaolu cared about me so much!" Zhang Tie gave a bashful smile.

The moment Zhang Tie uttered her name, Guo Miaolu quivered all over, closely followed by a burning fury. With eyebrows raising up, she swore, "F*rt, I just don't want you to die here while owing a debt to the girls of Zhixing Department!"

"Trust me, I won't die. Besides being disgusting, these insects don't look like that sharp." Zhang Tie teased.

Before Guo Miaolu was able to say anything else, Zhang Tie had already jumped down onto the bulging rocks on the walls as swift as a goat and arrived at the bottom of the Dark Canyon in a short while.

"Senior brother!" Guo Miaolu looked at Zhang Su, "Is it...okay for Zhang Tie?" Although Zhang Tie was annoying, Guo Miaolu didn't want to see him die here.

"Don't worry, he'll be safe. He's a freak!" Zhang Su shook his head while added inside, "Hope you're not too shocked when you see for yourself."

Looking at the shadow of Zhang Tie at the foot of the canyon, Guo Miaolu became slightly curious, "What's his talent?" How could he make his cousin so reassured? He didn't even take a weapon.

There were huge bottomless seams on the ground of the Dark Canyon. It was bloody everywhere due to the bleeding corpses of the Hell-black spiders. Being stimulated by this bloody scene, more and more

Hell-black spiders constantly climbed out of the seams. Zhang Tie saw these disgusting Hell-black spiders didn't even spare their partner's bodies. Once they found that their partners were killed, some hell black spiders would soon drag the dead bodies into hidden and gloomy places. Soon after that, Zhang Tie would hear terrifying chewing sounds from there.

In comparison to Zhang Tie, the other people in the canyon were all in groups of 2-3. For many level 6 newbies who had not formed their battle qi, their partners could help them out while being attacked by a group of Hell-black spiders.

Of course, some people who had greater fighting skills could take advantage of the topography in the canyon to deal with the Hell-black spiders. As a result, those dead hell black spiders would produce colorful Soul Fire, which would then automatically float towards those people who killed the spiders.

"Haha...I got one more Soul Fire!"

Along with the growls of people were exclamations which could be heard every so often.

Zhang Tie took a careful look around and found that most Soul Fires were grey and white; with a few of them being green, cyan, faint blue and red. According to his cousin, these Soul Fires came from resonance between the mysterious energy from the spiders and each person. Different colors represented different ranks and kinds of battle qi.

What a marvelous thing!

As they were all busy fighting Hell-black spiders, nobody paid attention to Zhang Tie. With the exception of Guo Miaolu, the other boys and girls from Zhixing Department didn't know that Zhang Tie was there yet.

The first Hell-black spider had already appeared in front of Zhang Tie less than one minute after Zhang Tie arrived at the foot of the canyon. Seeing that spider piercing its sharp forelimbs towards him, Zhang Tie instantly hacked towards its forelimbs using "Sword-like Palm", which was one of the free movements of Iron-Blood Fist Skill.

The forelimbs of Hell-black spiders collided with Zhang Tie's "Sword-like Palm..."

Zhang Tie then cleanly cut off a forelimb of the Hell-black spider as if he had used a kitchen knife to slice bean curd. The moment the spider lost its balance and tilted towards him, Zhang Tie had kicked on the bottom of its head. After exploding his Iron-Blood Untouchable Strength, he instantly shocked its brain into a mess.

The fight ended in 2 seconds.

After killing this Hell-black spider, Zhang Tie continued to move forward. Soon after that, three hell black spiders appeared in front of Zhang Tie, one in the front, two in the back. This time, Zhang Tie suddenly paced up and surged forward before they attacked him, "Bang" "Bang" "Bang", with three sounds, their brains flew a second later...

Zhang Tie kept going.

Standing on top of the Dark Canyon, Guo Miaolu was shocked by Zhang Tie's swift movements. Those Hell-black spiders which frightened all the newbies didn't have the ability to even respond to Zhang Tie.

However, she didn't know that Zhang Tie had already been able to kill those level 6 military officers of Sun Dynasty who had formed battle qi like chopping melons and vegetables when he was only level 4, let alone these hell black spiders which were used to form battle qi.

Guo Miaolu was really surprised by Zhang Tie's movements. However, she had never imagined that there were more surprises to come. When he swiftly killed the fifth Hell-black spider, a golden light had already started to gather from the corpses of the previous spiders. They became balls of golden Soul Fire and floated towards Zhang Tie.

In that pitch-dark valley, the golden Soul Fires were unique as they were as dazzling as sunlight.

"Golden...Soul Fire? That must be an illusion!" Guo Miaolu rubbed her eyes as she didn't believe what happened at the foot of the canyon...

When the first ball of Soul Fire entered his body, Zhang Tie had already killed six Hell-black spiders. When the second ball of Soul Fire entered his body, Zhang Tie had already killed eight spiders while the third ball of Soul Fire entered his body, Zhang Tie had already killed 11 spiders.

Obviously, Zhang Tie killed those Hell-black spiders faster than the Soul Fires could form. Later, the scene was as follows—When Zhang Tie was swiftly eliminating the Hell-black spiders which were rushing towards him, the golden balls of Soul Fire started to gather, rise and float towards Zhang Tie like golden comets. As a result, the gloomy canyon was filled with brilliant golden flying lights of different lengths.

Standing at the top of the canyon and watching those traces of golden light constantly flying towards Zhang Tie, Guo Miaolu suddenly felt they were exceptionally beautiful. She felt the golden lights were as beautiful as the feathers on the tail of the legendary phoenix...

Guo Miaolu was confused about how such a mean, lecherous, greedy and sinister guy could create such a beautiful and shocking scene. Compared to the constantly rising Soul Fire behind Zhang Tie, all the other sparse Soul Fires behind other people became ornaments.

Gradually, Zhang Tie arouse the public's attention as more and more people in the canyon started to pay attention to him. After noticing the increasing number of golden Soul Fire behind Zhang Tie, the others all became dumbfounded. "Who's that guy? How can he gather golden Soul Fire? That only belongs to top grade battle qis!"

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When more and more golden Soul Fire automatically flew into Zhang Tie's dantian elixir field, Zhang Tie had already entered a wonderful state. He felt the Iron-Blood Untouchable Strength in his body had slowly changed in a strange way after integrating with the Soul Fire.

Being immersed in fighting Hell-black spiders, Zhang Tie completely forgot time...

Not knowing how long had passed, with a sound of "Paka...", Zhang Tie seemed to hear the sound of breaking eggs. At the same time, the golden swirl of spiritual energy in Zhang Tie's mind exploded, followed by a widespread golden brilliance. It started to completely integrate with the exceptional strength in his body. A wholly new strength then started to rise from the inside of Zhang Tie's body. Like a lion that suddenly broke out of its cage, he entered a new realm.

In a split second, Zhang Tie felt that each of his cells was filled with a huge strength.

Zhang Tie started to radiate a Soul Fire-like blurry shadow. An obscure, huge Hell-black spider started to grow bigger and clearer behind Zhang Tie which gradually turned into a real totem of a grim golden spider of 30-40 m in height. Behind this terrifying golden spider totem, bloody waves rolled in like banners...

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In the Dark Canyon, at the sight of that huge golden totem and the rolling banner-like bloody waves behind him, that "cold-harrumph" youth who came here together with Zhang Tie and Zhang Su had completely changed his face as he mumbled, "Iron-Blood Battle Qi...Bloody Banners...Iron-Blood Battle Qi...Bloody Banners, that's not possible, that's not possible..."

At this time, the "cold-harrumph" youth was also attempting to form his battle qi. However, compared to that 30-40 m oppressive totem behind Zhang Tie, the battle qi totem of that "cold-harrumph" youth was only 2-3 m in height. In front of Zhang Tie's battle qi totem, it was as funny as a toy at the foot of the giant...

"Sister Fu", "Junior brother Yu", "Junior brother Feng", "Senior brother An" and "Senior sister Fang" who came to Hidden Dragon Island together with Zhang Tie on the same passenger liner were also in the Dark Canyon. As they were 4-5 km away from Zhang Tie, they didn't see the shocking image when the golden Soul Fire entered Zhang Tie's body. However, at this moment, when that terrifying huge battle qi totem behind Zhang Tie appeared, the five people naturally noticed it.

"Senior sister Fang, what...what's that?" Junior brother Feng pointed at the battle qi totem behind Zhang Tie and stammered.

"It looks like the battle qi totem of Iron-Blood Battle Qi, Bloody Banner...but how could it be that huge, that terrifying. Is there any from the imperial household of Norman Empire forming battle-qi?" Seeing that unprecedented battle qi totem, senior sister Fang became stunned for quite awhile before replied in an unimaginable look.

"Let's go have a look..." Senior brother An responded as he too was excited. Therefore he suggested taking a look there to see who was forming such a terrifying battle qi totem to broaden their horizons.

The moment senior brother An finished, they then started to run towards where Zhang Tie's location.

Only after running several hundred meters, a thunder-like long wail had drifted from the place where the huge battle qi totem rose. Being affected, all the Hell-black spiders close to the howl started to wail as they lay on the ground like shaking lambs waiting to be slaughtered. At the same time, all the other Hell-black spiders hurriedly retreated into the seams...

The whole Dark Canyon then became quiet.

This was a side effect and the most remarkable symbol and name card of all the top battle qi—totem shock! Those who could form these top battle qi were naturally threatening to those magical beasts and monsters that appeared on the battle qi totems. At this moment, Zhang Tie's long howl was due to the energy contained the totem shock of Iron-Blood Battle Qi.

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"F*ck!" Even always being calm, Zhang Tie's cousin Zhang Su still couldn't help but swear...

All the people in the entire Dark Canyon started to run towards Zhang Tie. Looking at this boy who walked through those shaking Hell-black spiders towards her, Guo Miaolu almost couldn't connect this man with that guy in her mind.

The terrifying battle qi totem behind this person was as majestic as that of a God, which covered the entire Dark Canyon. However, in her memory, that bastard was a miser and lady-killer who didn't even spare 1 silver coin to support the girls' business. There was a great contrast...

"Am I dreaming?" Guo Miaolu couldn't help but ask herself...

"Ha...ha...Junior sister Miaolu, you have to call me senior brother from today on. Don't forget about our bet! You owe me 90 gold coins now. Erm. I'm always generous. Let's start calculating its interest from tomorrow!" Zhang Tie walked towards her with a smile!

Hearing Zhang Tie's words, Zhang Su's eye corner twitched once again, while Guo Miaolu started to grind her teeth. "I'm not dreaming! That's the douchebag..."

Chapter 289: Entering the Breaking Heaven Department

If you don't enter the Breaking Heaven Department, you can't say that you've cultivated in Hidden Dragon Palace——This was what Zhang Su told Zhang Tie when they left Dragon Cave last night.

After coming back yesterday, Zhang Tie couldn't clearly remember the chaotic scene at supper anymore. When he appeared in the canteen last night, all the boys and girls who knew that Zhang Tie had formed Iron-Blood Battle Qi in one day had become dumbfounded. What made it more chaotic were the many senior brothers who rushed in from the Breaking Heaven Department as they were exclaiming loudly — — "Where's Zhang Tie? Where's the Zhang Tie who formed Iron-Blood Battle Qi with a battle qi totem as high as dozens of meters in one day? Where's the Zhang Tie who shocked the entire Hidden Dragon Island?"

When so many people poured into the Zhixing Department, it instantly became as noisy as a vegetable market. However, this was not the end. Closely after, there was another group of guys from the Breaking Heaven Department who rushed down the mountain. The latter ones shouted loudly—— "Where's Zhang Tie? Where's that liar? How could he form Iron-Blood Battle Qi in one day? Is he trying to cheat us out of our money? No way! We have to confirm it..."

To end this farce, Zhang Tie released his battle qi totem in the Zhixing Department——Bloody Banner once again!

When the huge spider of the horrific battle qi totem that was 40-50 m tall emerged which was over 10 times larger than that of common battle qi totems appeared behind Zhang Tie, it covered the entire Zhixing Department and the whole world seemed to stand still...

Everybody then raised their heads and watched the battle qi totem behind Zhang Tie with obsessed, admiring, envious, fearful, shocked, and confused expressions——Damn, what a freak!

Although being suspected of showing off, Zhang Tie found it was beneficial to his physical and mental health by doing this occasionally, especially when he looked at the girls' expressions, Zhang Tie felt pretty comfortable inside. "Guess how this senior brother will deal with you little girls..."

This was the last night that Zhang Tie slept in the Zhixing Department.

The next morning, although being only a short distance from the Breaking Heaven Department, as Zhang Tie's friends in Zhixing Department, Zhang Keliang, Wei Wu and the other guys still insisted on accompanying Zhang Tie there.

"If we knew that you'd have done it so easily, we would have put more gold coins as the wager!" When they bid farewell to Zhang Tie, Wei Wu said regretfully, "Who could have imagined that you were such a freak! How could you form Iron-Blood Battle Qi as easily as drinking water!"

"I really want to know, how much did you put on me?" Zhang Tie asked Zhang Keliang.

"I put 28 gold coins. Yunfei put 2 gold coins and 36 silver coins. Hongsheng put 13 gold coins and 79 silver coins. Wei Wu only put 11 gold coins, hahaha..." Zhang Keliang laughed heartily. After winning money, everybody became very happy.

Hearing those words, Zhang Tie didn't say anything, but he felt a bit moved. After staying with them for several months, of course, Zhang Tie knew that this time, Zhang Keliang, Zhang Yunfei and Zhang Hongsheng had used all their savings to support him. Although being a bit slippery, Wei Wu could only put 13 or 14 gold coins by then. Thinking of how his brothers picked up navy-blue iron ores in the ocean together with him and their sincere support, Zhang Tie felt warm inside.

Zhang Tie didn't say nothing; instead, he just tightly embraced them, "I'm waiting for you in the Breaking Heaven Department!"

"I will reach level 6 in two months. Then I will go form battle qi..." Zhang Keliang smiled, "Hongsheng and Xiaowu are still level 5, Yunfei will soon be level 5 too. We will soon meet each other in the Breaking Heaven Department!"

"After entering the Breaking Heaven Department, I've already got a plan to help us make a lot of money. I'm sure that we'll have enough money every day without having to do hard work anymore..." Wei Wu stealthily said.

"Wuh, what's that?" Zhang Yunfei asked out of curiosity. Even Zhang Tie moved his eyes onto Wei Wu. "This guy always has eccentric ideas. He might really have a way to make money in the Breaking Heaven Department." After hearing Zhang Su's introduction about Breaking Heaven Department last night, Zhang Tie had already considered how to make money.

"This is a very simple plan. We can rent a big tent like that of a circus that could hold several hundred people. The ticket price is 10 silver coins a person. Only by performing three times a day will we earn enough money!"

"You want to perform? If you were there, I'm afraid that you have to reduce the ticket price to 1 copper coin!" Zhang Hongsheng mocked him aside.

"Of course not me, heh...heh...who has ever seen the battle qi totem of Iron-Blood Battle Qi of 40-50 m in height? Once we drag Zhang Tie out and parade him around in a circle while releasing his battle qi totem to broaden the crowd's horizons, would the people on Hidden Dragon Island care about 10 silver coins? No matter what, if it was me, I would definitely pay to have a look. This is would definitely be a travel program on Hidden Dragon Island..." Wei Wu giggled, "Last night, I even thought about advertisements. Cough... dear elders and brethren, as you pass by, don't miss it. You only need to pay 10 silver coins, with only 10 silver coins, you will see a battle qi totem 40-50 m in height of the top grade Iron-Blood Battle Qi up close. Come on and have a look..."

Watching Wei Wu's hilarious performance, Zhang Tie pretended to kick his butts while Wei Wu smirked and jumped off. In this way, they departed from each other.

Watching the shadows of his friends, Zhang Tie really started to consider the feasibility of Wei Wu's joke. He then revealed a smile and shook his head. If he would really do this, Zhang Tie was sure that in a short while, he would definitely be killed by the assassins dispatched by Norman Empire—if one dared to take the secret knowledge of Norman Empire's imperial household as a joke, he must want to die.

After taking a deep breath, Zhang Tie turned and walked towards the Middle Castle of Hidden Dragon Palace.

The Middle Castle of Hidden Dragon Palace was in the middle of the mountain. The whole castle was over 70 m high and was completely composed of hard black steel rocks. It was much larger than the Lower Castle. The Middle Castle looked more magnificent than Wild Wolf Castle. It was the entrance to the Breaking Heaven Department. Only after entering Middle Castle could he make it to his destination. Standing at the gate of the Middle Castle, Zhang Tie raised his head and looked at various powerful defense facilities that faintly revealed a grim killing intent.

Previously, Zhang Tie was not even qualified to enter the Middle Castle. Now, Zhang Tie finally gained this qualification. After taking a deep breath, Zhang Tie lifted his luggage and walked towards the gate of this huge castle.

After arriving at the gate of the Middle Castle, under the gaze of two rows of fully-armored soldiers, Zhang Tie pulled out of his clan plate and inserted it into a card slot in a one person high metal machine as was told by his cousin Zhang Su. After doing that, Zhang Tie heard the sound of moving gears drifting from the inside the machine. Only after several seconds was Zhang Tie's clan plate spat out of the machine. At the same time, an iron gate that held access to the inside of Middle Castle also automatically open. After that, the two rows of fully-armored soldiers moved their eyes away from Zhang Tie.

Ever since he was born, it was Zhang Tie's first time to contact such a hi-tech machine. According to Zhang Su, Middle Castle was not only the entrance to the Breaking Heaven Department but also to the management point. Under the ground of Middle Castle, there was a steam-driven machine that could identify the special metal grains on the clan plates of Zhang Tie's family. Once Zhang Tie gained access to the Breaking Heaven Department, the gate of Middle Castle would be open for him.

After entering the Castle, what Zhang Tie first saw was a magnificent hall, in which, there was a counter while some youths in the uniform of the Breaking Heaven Department were queuing up. Having been

told what to do by Zhang Su, Zhang Tie instantly joined them. Behind the counter were some scholars in rigorous uniforms.

Some in front of Zhang Tie were submitting gold coins over the counter while the others passed their paper tapes over the counter. Along with the gold coins and the paper tapes, were their clan plates. After receiving the gold coins and the paper tapes, the people behind the counter took a serious look at them before inserting each clan plate into a huge machine with more operating buttons and sophisticated keys which was similar to the machine outside the gate. After that, they pressed the buttons and the drawbars to withdraw the clan plate out of the machine.

"Ouyang Guang has submitted 30 gold coins as the monthly payment for March in the Breaking Heaven Department..."

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"Zhang Zhenyue has submitted 30 gold coins as the monthly payment for March in Breaking Heaven Department..."

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"Zhang Wei has finished clan task No. Z125 and gained 120 clan contribution points..."

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"Qi Fei has submitted 30 gold coins as the monthly payment for March in Breaking Heaven Department..."

...

"Zhang Guowei has finished clan task No. T14 and gained 50 clan contribution points."

The person in front of Zhang Tie who looked 2 years older was Zhang Guowei. After confirming that he had gained 50 clan contribution points, Zhang Tie heard him let out a sigh, "Can you check how many clan contribution points I have now please..."

After this person asked, Zhang Tie had noticed the people's movements behind the counter. After hearing Zhang Guowei's request, the people who operated that weird machine just pulled down a drawbar on that machine to run some gears. After that, a series of numbers showed up from an odometer-like visible window on the side of that person.

Of course, this machine was not a steam-based machine. Instead, it was a machine application terminal that was connected to the steam-based machine. Zhang Su said the steam-based machine that was underground was about three floors tall. With a steam turbine as the driving force, the perimeter of those gears in the machine, after being connected could circle around the Hidden Dragon Island several times.

"Along with the 50 clan contribution points by finishing this clan task, you have 176 clan donation points in total. Anything else do you want to know?"

"No, thanks!" Feeling a bit agonized, that one called Zhang Guowei shook his head.

After returning the clan plate from the machine, that operator gave it back to Zhang Guowei. When he left, Zhang Tie heard him mumbling while looking at the ceiling, "Alas, I still need 24 clan contribution points to learn Iron Elephant Skill..."

After he left, it was Zhang Tie's turn...

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Chapter 290: Dreaming of Becoming an Alchemist

When he came to the front of the counter, Zhang Tie handed in his clan plate and the 360 gold coins that he had long prepared.

"If you have enough money, you'd better hand in 1 year's worth of expenses in advance."

This was what Zhang Tie's cousin suggested to him when he handed Zhang Tie's principal of 300 gold coins and the 900 gold coins from Zhang Haige to him.

It was said that Zhang Haige and his cousin really suffered a great loss this time. They lost both face and money. After paying the wager, the two people went out to do tasks for money on the same day. What poor brothers.

Because of this, Zhang Tie carried over 1200 gold coins at this moment. Plus with the debts from the girls in Zhixing Department, Zhang Tie was definitely the richest newbie in Breaking-Heavens Department now.

"I'm new here, today I want to make 1 year's worth of payment in advance..."

"Are you Zhang Tie?" That old scholar behind the counter took Zhang Tie's item as he lowered his head down, lowered his glasses and took a serious look at Zhang Tie.

After what happened yesterday, Zhang Tie knew that he was not a trivial person in Hidden Dragon Palace any more. Many people should have heard about Zhang Tie. Therefore, Zhang Tie was not startled by that old scholar's response. Instead, he just calmly nodded.

"Wait a moment, I have to check the source of this money since you entered the Hidden Dragon Palace!"

Zhang Tie nodded as that old scholar stood up from behind the counter and moved into another room that Zhang Tie could not see. After 1 minute, he returned.

Zhang Tie thought that the managers of Hidden Dragon Palace could easily find the source of a large amount of money from certain students based on their acknowledgement about the intelligence of clan apprentices. If they could not even figure out whether their students were carrying illegal money in, the Hidden Dragon Palace would lose face.

"The source of your money is legal. 1 year's payment in advance, are you sure..."

"I'm sure!"

"Fine!" After counting the gold coins, the man inserted the clan plate into the slot of that machine and made some operations.

"Zhang Tie, submit a year's payment, 360 gold coins..." The old scholar returned the status plate and 2 keys to Zhang Tie, "Your room is No. 7, the room headed by Xuan in Songtao Pavilion. Here are the keys for Songtao Pavilion and your room!"

"Thanks!" Zhang Tie took these items and glanced at that machine out of curiosity, "I wonder if I could ask, since you don't give me a receipt after I've paid 360 gold coins, what do I do if you dispute me later on?"

The moment he heard Zhang Tie's words, the old scholar widened his eyes and glared at Zhang Tie, "Dispute you? Unless Hidden Dragon Palace was broken into by force and the difference machine system in the Middle Castle was completely destroyed, your information in the database of the difference machine in Hidden Dragon Palace would never be mistaken, don't you know?" Saying this, the old scholar turned his head and loudly shouted to the other staff members in the room behind the counter, "Listen, the brat is doubting our machine saying it could make a mistake, what the f*ck..."

In a split second, all the other old guys wearing oversleeves in the room started to glare at Zhang Tie just like some pious believers whose religion had just been insulted.

Noticing that he'd stirred up big trouble, Zhang Tie hurriedly apologized and escaped.

After leaving the Middle Castle from the back door, Zhang Tie had officially entered the Lingtian Department. Not until he entered did Zhang Tie realize the magnificence of this place which was set off by the mountain scenery. Compared to the Breaking-Heavens Department, that courtyard of Zhixing Department was more like a preschool and kindergarten.

The Breaking-Heavens Department occupied a wide area of valley and woods in the hillside. The architectural style combined both Chinese and western features. Zhang Tie could see pavilions, terraces and open halls everywhere. It was like a palace here. Twisting corridors and raised eaves spread over the terrain. There was a waterfall among the mountains, forming a silver, heavenly waterfall in the Breaking-Heavens Department. Gurgling water could be seen everywhere in the courtyard while fish were swimming leisurely in the water. Exotic flowers and grasses were evergreen all year round. It was really Zhang Tie's first time seeing such beautiful scenery.

After looking around, Zhang Tie realized that the scale of Breaking-Heavens Department was only a bit smaller than those towns on the Hidden Dragon Island.

Being different from Zhixing Department where it was quiet in the daytime, the Breaking-Heavens Department was full of people and pretty vigorous. Under the heavenly waterfall, a large number of people were practicing swordsmanship. On the top of a cliff, many people were sitting there with legs crossed and were practicing breathing skills. In contrast, a lot of people were reading books and talking by the sides of the stream and in the pavilions.

Everyone here was busy doing something, except for someone who was walking fast on their way.

Because the residential area of Breaking-Heavens Department was centralized, Zhang Tie could easily find the Songtao Pavilion. It was a huge traditional Chinese building of five floors being close to a pinewood forest.

After entering the Songtao Pavilion using the key, Zhang Tie found that each floor of Songtao Pavilion had 8 rooms, each of which occupied a corner of the pavilion. The No. 7 room headed by Xuan was on the 4th floor of Songtao Pavilion, which faced southwest. On that early morning, Zhang Tie didn't meet anybody in the Songtao Pavilion before he arrived in front of his room. He thought they all must have gone out.

After opening the door, Zhang Tie put down his luggage as he finally let out a sigh. 1 gold coin a day, with the exception of the hard, wooden board bed, which remained the toughest feature of Hidden Dragon Palace, the other things were much better than that in Zhixing Department.

Besides the bedroom, there was also a toilet, a study room, a metal processing workshop and a cultivation room that faced directly towards the balcony. There were some thick crystal pillars at the corners of the room, each of which weighed heavier than 10 kg. Once he entered the room, being influenced by the powerful qi field of the "crystal generator", Zhang Tie had already felt his battle qi becoming a bit flexible and energetic.

Only after spending several minutes roughly arranging his luggage, did Zhang Tie leave the Songtao Pavilion.

Over 10 minutes later, Zhang Tie finally found the right place after asking many people along the way here.

This was a small building, which was located in the pinewood forest. It looked pretty trivial among the numerous tall and magnificent buildings in the Breaking-Heavens Department. In front of the small building, there was a horizontal board, on which was written—"Juveniles should have breaking-heaven ambitions!"

When Zhang Tie arrived here, there was a juvenile who had just walked out of the small building full of ambitions. Outside the small building, that juvenile made a big bow towards it before he left.

It was a great person who lived in the Breaking-Heavens Department. Zhang Su's cousin called this man the Bamboo Woods Man. Each person who was new here in the Breaking-Heavens Department should visit the Bamboo Woods Man before officially starting their lives in the Breaking-Heavens Department.

There was a strange rule for visiting the Bamboo Woods Man. It was free for all the newbies who came to visit him the first time. However, they had to pay him 100 gold coins and 100 clan donation points for the second time, then 1000 gold coins and 1000 clan donation points for the 3rd time. Everybody could only visit him 3 times in total.

As Zhang Tie was new here today, it was free.

Zhang Su told Zhang Tie that each person who came to visit the Bamboo Woods Man would have a great achievement. Therefore, he emphasized that Zhang Tie had to respect him.

Zhang Su also let Zhang Tie carefully consider his ambitions and suggested that Zhang Tie don't go to visit the Bamboo Woods Man before figuring out what he wanted to do and what person he wanted to be, in case he wasted the first chance.

Of course, Zhang Tie wouldn't waste this chance. His cousin's suggestion was acceptable, but Zhang Tie had long found the orientation of his soul and the target he dreamed of for in the rest of his life.

With a very dubious attitude, Zhang Tie arranged his clothes outside the small building and cleaned the mud on his shoes before he entered the small building.

An old man with an infant-like red and smooth face and white-snow hair was inclining his body against a soft bed on one side of a desk. The moment he saw Zhang Tie, he mumbled, which really stunned Zhang Tie.

"Another nuisance surnamed Zhang, alas..."

"Sorry to trouble you!" According to his cousin's directions, Zhang Tie smiled as he bowed towards the Bamboo Woods Man before standing in front of the desk with hands crossed modestly.

After glancing at Zhang Tie, the Bamboo Woods Man closed his eyes for quite a while. When he opened his eyes, he let out another sigh, "The path for you is too difficult. I'm afraid that nobody in Hidden Dragon Palace and Zhang clan can help you, even though they are powerful in this region!"

Zhang Tie's heart raced, thinking, 'I've not even opened my mouth, how could he know that? That's impossible! I've not mentioned my ambition to anyone else. Nobody could know.'

"The 2 most exclusive top ancestral blood lines had been awakened in the Zhang clan of Huaiyuan Palace. Any of the two blood lines could lead to rune manufacturing, which was also the top profession among human beings. Most of the Zhang apprentices who come to Hidden Dragon Palace desire to be rune manufactures. The professional rune manufacturers from Zhang clan of Huaiyuan Palace could rank first in the entire Waii Sub-Continent. Do you know how many people in the entire Waii Sub-Continent want to learn how to manufacture rune products? However, you..." tilting against the soft bed, the Bamboo Woods Man glanced at Zhang Tie with a bitter smile, "As a direct descendant of the Zhang clan of Huaiyuan Palace, you obviously meet the top requirements needed to be a rune manufacturer, which the others could never dream of, how could you dream of becoming an alchemist? I don't know whether to swear at you for your stupidity or praise you for being ambitious?"

Zhang Tie was instantly shocked, 'F*ck, he really knows that...'