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Book 4: Underwater Estate Chapter 7: Painting Serpentwing Lake with Blood

Serpentwing's giant bloody maw spat out a watery arrow of liquid. Swish! Swish! Swish! Gleaming with black light, the venomous liquid spread out towards Ji Ning, who didn't dodge at all. The Darknorth sword in his left hand immediately executed the 'Watertight' technique, deflecting the venomous liquid to one side, and it landed on Serpentwing's own body.

"Crackle..." Serpentwing's scales were immediately set alight, but then afterwards the venomous liquid sank into Serpentwing's body, absorbed by him.

Ning's left hand had pushed aside the venomous liquid. His right hand was stabbing straight for Serpentwing's head!

His sword flashed like a ray of light!

Hua!

This sword contained the power of the True Meaning of the Waterdrop, and was so fast that it caused even Serpentwing to be shocked. He hurriedly tried to twist his head away.

"Raindrop!" Ning's eyes were filled with a cold, flashing light. "PIERCES ROCKS!!!"

The sword light flashed straight through the side of Serpentwing's head, piercing straight through those scales and then burrowing straight through the side of his head. Beneath the injury, one could faintly even see the white skull bone, and an enormous amount of green blood sprayed out from the wound.

"He actually injured me?" The old monster, Serpentwing, went completely berserk. He wildly swung his head, his enormous scaled wings quickly sweeping towards Ning as well, and even his serpentine tail struck out, seeking to constrict Ning. For a moment it seemed as though he had been possessed, and the waters of the lake around them began to bubble and froth.

Ning, wielding his two swords, moved like a shadow. "Not only will I injure you, I will kill you!"

Although Serpentwing was stunned at the power of the swordplay Ning had displayed, he refused to believe that he, an old monster who had been training for a thousand years, would be defeated by this little human child. What's more, Ning was the one who killed his most beloved child, Redtip...in this moment, Serpentwing had only one thought – kill Ji Ning!

Huahuahua...

The waters of the lake swirled about, and the enormous scaled wings as well as that unpredictable serpentine tail attacked wildly. The waters of the lake was the domain of the aquatic monsters, and here, Serpentwing was like a tiger who had been given wings.

Using the principles of 'using generals against soldiers, using earth to block floods', Ning continued to use appropriate, matching techniques to deal with the attacks. His sword techniques flashed out, leaving behind one wound after another on the serpentine tail and scaled wings of Serpentwing.

“How is this possible!”

“How can he possibly defeat me!”

“Die! Die! Die! I will make you die!” The old monster Serpentwing was now completely berserk.

Ning continued to battle against him, and occasionally, with but a glance, he would create a fire lotus petal or a water lotus petal. The fire lotus petal and water lotus petal would appear directly above and below Serpentwing, boxing him within. As the fire lotus petal and water lotus petal slowly swiveled in opposite directions, Serpentwing began to howl as his scales began to crack. “FORM!”

Above his head, a layer of frost rapidly appeared, while at the same time, his serpentine head shook violently, dispersing the Waterflame Lotus.

They battled wildly within the lake, causing utter chaos. None of the lesser aquatic monsters dared to draw near.

Serpentwing’s body was covered with multiple gaping wounds, and green blood oozed everywhere, staining the surrounding lake water green.

Above the lake.

Ji Yichuan, dressed in white fur, stood there with Yuchi Snow. The entire surface of the lake was shaking wildly, as though deep within the lake, an enormous aquatic monster was shaking.

“Such a large commotion.” Yichuan’s eyes lit up.

Snow nodded as well. “It seems Ning is giving that old monster Serpentwing a great deal of pressure. Otherwise, there wouldn’t be such a large commotion. Look, the water of the lake is turning green, and there are corpses of fishes and prawns.” The nearby undulating waters of the lake were beginning to have corpses of fish and prawns float on the surface. Clearly, they had been poisoned.

Yichuan took a sniff with his nose. “This is the blood of Serpentwing. His blood is highly venomous. Even after having been diluted by the lake water, most fish and prawns will be poisoned to death by it.”

“He has lost so much blood.” Snow’s amusement became even more pronounced. “Ning’s power has improved greatly.”

“Right. To let a peak Xiantian-level old monster like Serpentwing lose so much blood is indeed very impressive.” Yichuan was very eager as well.

Serpentwing had already used all the power available to him, but he still had yet to even injure Ning. Instead, his body was now covered with wounds, all inflicted by the sharp Darknorth swords in Ning’s hands.

“After I reached the peak Xiantian stage, in this area controlled by the Ji clan, there’s only a few people more powerful than me! All of them are extremely famous...how could this punk Ji Ning be so powerful?”

Most likely, not even that Ji Lee is a match for him.” Serpentwing, after going berserk for a time, had calmed down, and had begun to plan for a retreat.

The power Ning had displayed truly was astonishing.

As an old monster, Serpentwing’s body was naturally powerful...the sword attacks of most Xiantian-level Ki Refiners probably wouldn’t even break through his scales. But Ning’s swords were incomparably sharp! They sliced right through, leaving massive wounds, or pierced right through, gouging great holes.

“In a few more years, won’t this Ji Ning be even more powerful than his father?” The rage in Serpentwing’s heart was quickly dissipating, leaving behind only terror and alarm. “There’s no way I’ll be able to outfight a freak like him. I’d best flee!”

Swoosh!

With a shake of his serpentine tail and a turn of his serpentine head, the two scaled wings began to tremble...and Serpentwing began to attempt to flee at high speed.

“Old monster Serpentwing, don’t even think about fleeing!” Ning, currently standing on Serpentwing’s body, simultaneously controlled the corridor of water while utilizing the Windwing Evasion technique rapidly.

“If I want to leave, I’ll leave.” Serpentwing bellowed. With a shake of his tail, the waters of the lake immediately grew turbulent, and a surge of water immediately drenched Ning.

Immediately afterwards, Serpentwing felt extremely delighted.

A corridor formed by controlling water? Serpentwing was an aquatic monster who could also control water. To destroy it would naturally be extremely easy. If he wasn’t able to beat Ning, could it be that he also wouldn’t be able to flee?

“Huh?” Serpentwing suddenly, vaguely felt a terrifying threat appear. He couldn’t help but to turn his head and look.

In the lake waters behind him, Ning was currently standing upright and floating, surrounded by countless sword-type magic treasures. Every single one of them was covered with a faintly glowing light. A glowing sword of light formed from Xiantian ki that had been passed through and transformed by over three hundred flying sword magic treasures was currently hovering next to Ning, flickering.

“Magic treasures? So many magic treasures?” Serpentwing was stunned.

Swish!

The glowing sword of light flashed, instantly traversing hundreds of meters. Serpentwing could sense that this glowing sword of light contained boundless power. He wanted to turn his head to dodge it, but the glowing sword of light only curved slightly when arcing, and thus still pierced with great precision straight through the center of Serpentwing’s serpentine head.

Bang!

The sword of light pierced straight through Serpentwing's skull, carrying with it green blood as well as some brain tissue.

"Aaaaah!" Serpentwing stared at Ning in astonishment. "This formation, formation..."

"You should feel honored that you died beneath this sword formation." Ning slowly walked over, and the waters of the lake parted before him. Serpentwing's eyes grew dim, and then his enormous body began to slowly drift downwards...

This old monster of Serpentwing Lake, who had been treated as a local tyrant for thousands of years, had died!

Watching the corpse of Serpentwing slowly drift down, Ning had very complicated feelings in his heart. It was this old monster who had gone to Western Prefecture City to attack him...resulting in this chain of events. When he had gone out adventuring and exploring, he had treated Serpentwing as his ultimate goal. Although Serpentwing had broken through to the peak Xiantian level in power, Ning had still executed him!

"Collect." Ning grabbed Serpentwing's enormous corpse. With but a thought, he stored it into an empty storage-type magic treasure. Although Serpentwing's corpse was massive, when rolled up, it could still fit into one of the storage-type magic treasures. Although Ning didn't have many other things, he had nearly a thousand storage-type magic treasures.

"Time to go back up." With but a thought, the waters parted above him, and Ning began to walk upwards.

Yichuan and Snow were standing atop the lake, waiting.

"No more movement?" Snow looked at the slowly calming waters. "There's nothing going on down there any longer."

"Serpentwing was most likely unable to do anything to Ning." Yichuan said. "Thus, he probably retreated. This battle has come to an end."

Snow looked at her man. "Can't it be that Ning executed that old monster?"

"Executed? In the water, that old monster can battle when he wants and flee when he wants. Beating him is easy, but executing him? Hard, hard, hard." Yichuan had personally fought with Serpentwing a few times. He couldn't help but shake his head. But then his eyes lit up, and he stared into the distance. "Look. Ji Ning is coming out."

Snow turned to look as well.

From afar was the island in the center of Serpentwing Lake. A white wave was rising up next to the island, and the wave then parted, creating a corridor. A youth dressed in beast furs was walking through the waves, heading straight for the island.

"Ning!" Snow immediately called out.

Ning had been walking on the waves and heading for the island, but in his ears, he suddenly heard that familiar call. "Ning!"

"Mother?" Ning was stunned, and he hurriedly turned to look.

From afar, he saw Ji Yichuan, dressed in white furs, and Yuchi Snow. They were rapidly running towards him on water. This sight caused Ning to be both astonished and delighted.

Yichuan and Snow landed on the island.

"Ning." As soon as she had arrived, Snow immediately grabbed her son by the hand, carefully inspecting him.

"Don't worry. Even if Ji Ning was wounded, given the strength of his Fiendgod body, he will quickly recover." Yichuan looked towards Ning, his eyes filled with satisfaction. "To be able to battle with a peak Xiantian-level Diremonster and cause him, Serpentwing, to flee helplessly...Ning, you have improved even more than I predicted."

Ning was startled, and then he quickly said, "Father, I executed the Diremonster, Serpentwing."

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Book 4: Underwater Estate Chapter 8: Ji Ning's Gains

"You executed Serpentwing?" Ji Yichuan looked at his son, and by his side, Yuchi Snow stared in disbelief as well. The two of them knew that their son wasn't the type of person to tell lies, but this was simply too...when the experts of the Five Prefectures of the Ji clan had battled Serpentwing numerous times, they hadn't been able to execute Serpentwing.

Ji Ning said hurriedly, "Father, please look." With a wave of his hand, out of nowhere, an enormous thing covered in wounds appeared in the pool next to them. Those enormous scaled wings, that viscous green blood...they all testified to this creature's identity.

"Serpentwing?"

"Serpentwing?"

Yichuan and Snow looked at the enormous corpse. They couldn't help but exchange a glance.

"It seems my son's strength...his strength is quite extraordinary." Yichuan said. "Not only did he kill Serpentwing, he also was able to store Serpentwing's corpse within storage-type magic treasures."

"Father. Mother." Ning didn't hide anything. "When I was adventuring at Eastmount Marsh, I encountered the Ironwood clan's Ironwood Zhan."

Yichuan and Snow were both startled.

Ironwood Zhan?

That was a dangerous foe.

“He probably was there to deal with the Azure Skysnake to try and force it to become his slave.” Ning said. At this point, he began to sigh a bit as he thought back to how he and the Azure Skysnake had battled repeatedly with each other, with the two being unable to harm each other, and how slowly, they began to build respect for each other as opponents. In the end, as he did not find the Azure Skysnake’s corpse within Ironwood Zhan’s storage treasures, nor did he see the Azure Skysnake become a tamed slave, Ning understood that the Azure Skysnake, at that critical juncture, had probably developed its natural ability, ‘Void Blink’.

An Azure Skysnake who had developed the Void Blink technique was like a carp who had transformed into a dragon! It had definitely left the Swallow Mountain area to roam the world in search of natural treasures...

It was hard to say if they would ever meet again.

Ning quickly returned to his senses. “When Ironwood Zhan battled the Azure Skysnake, I took the chance to flee, and I fled over a thousand kilometers out of the mountain forests...and by the side of a pool, as I rested, I was lucky enough to suddenly gain an understanding of the Dao.”

“An understanding of the Dao?” Yichuan and his wife exchanged glances. They held their breaths.

“I spent an entire night comprehending the Dao, but I didn’t expect that in the end, I was disrupted by the pursuing Ironwood Zhan.” Ning shook his head. “However, in my fury, I immediately utilized the Yin and Yang power, fusing it into the Crimsonbright divine power. Heavenly water and fire descended upon me, transforming me into a Xiantian Fiendgod’s body as I became a Xiantian lifeform. At that time, my power dramatically increased, and I then first killed Ironwood Zhan’s spirit-beast, that Bi’An Tiger, and then Ironwood Zhan himself!”

Yichuan said in surprise, “You killed Ironwood Zhan?”

“Right.” Ning waved his hand, and within it appeared a black rattan whip. “This is Ironwood Zhan’s personal weapon.”

Upon seeing the Blackwood Vinewhip, Yichuan nodded and sighed in approval. “This is indeed his Blackwood Vinewhip. As soon as you reached the Xiantian level, you defeated and slayed Ironwood Zhan. It seems as though that night you spent comprehending the Dao helped you improve quite substantially.”

Ning nodded. “That night, as I comprehended the Dao, I gained insight into a hint of the True Meaning of the Dao.”

“The True Meaning of the Dao?” Even Snow called out in shock.

“Was it truly the True Meaning of the Dao?” Yichuan didn’t dare to believe it either.

In raising one’s level of enlightenment, the higher one went, the harder it became.

Above the level of ‘one with the world’ was the ‘True Meaning of the Dao’! Even most Zifu Disciples hadn’t reached the ‘True Meaning of the Dao’ level! Yichuan, in the past, had only managed to reach this level thanks to special circumstances, and in addition, this was something which the Ji clan had held as a secret and never made public. Others only believed Yichuan to be at the ‘one with the world’ level.

“My son is only eleven.” Snow’s eyes were shining. “But he’s actually reached the level of the ‘True Meaning of the Dao’, and is training in what is acknowledged as the number one Fiendgod Body Refining technique, the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens]. With this sort of talent, it would be exceptionally easy for him to be accepted for tutelage by some of the major powers.”

“No rush, no rush.” Yichuan looked at his son. “Are you able to actually utilize the True Meaning of the Dao that you comprehended?”

Comprehension was one thing, but being able to utilize it was another thing altogether.

At the ancient aquatic estate, Ning had been in a near-lethal situation when he finally managed to execute the ‘True Meaning of the Raindrop’.

“Father, please watch.” The Darknorth swords appeared in Ning’s hands, and he shot a sword into the air. Hua! The tip of the sword seemed like a drop of rain, causing the air around it to ripple violently.

“True Meaning of the Raindrop!” Yichuan nodded repeatedly. “This is the True Meaning of the Raindrop. That night you spent comprehending the Dao allowed you to be able to put the True Meaning of the Dao on display through your swordplay? This is...this is...” Yichuan didn’t even know what to say. Swallow Mountain, at least, had never seen such a monstrous talent.

Most likely, only in those distant, super-massive tribes would an equivalent talent exist.

“I was only able to comprehend the True Meaning of the Raindrop in a hidden area.” Ning said. “I imagine, Father and Mother, that you both knew that I was trapped within a hidden area.”

The couple hurriedly nodded.

“Your son suddenly disappeared, and caused you such worry, Father, Mother...” Ning, after seeing his parents, quickly understood this. His father had no doubt been unable to sense the jade sword, and thus had frantically rushed over. After all, the aquatic palace was in a completely different dimension. How could his father sense the jade sword there? At that time, most likely his father was worried that he was dead. Ning could completely guess at how his father and mother had felt, having been worried for so long. He couldn’t help but feel rather ashamed.

“This isn’t your fault.” Yichuan sighed. “When I was adventuring back in the day, I saw multiple relic sites, but never entered them. Although relic sites offer great opportunities, perhaps not even one out of a hundred will come out of a site alive. Your mother and I are very happy that you came out of it alive.”

Snow gently rubbed her son’s hair as well.

Over this past month, she truly had been very worried.

“But I imagine in that hidden area, your gains were quite substantial. You were actually able to execute Serpentwing in one encounter.” Yichuan said. He didn’t believe that his son would be able to kill Serpentwing solely after having comprehended the True Meaning of the Raindrop. After all, Yichuan himself had long ago gained insight into the True Meaning of the Raindrop. In addition, Yichuan had merged every single one of the nine sword techniques of the [Raindrop Sutra] with the True Meaning of the Raindrop, and yet was still unable to kill Serpentwing.

“Right. I received the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation].” With a wave of his hand, Ning retrieved those multiple pieces of fur parchment, offering them to his parents.

Although the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] was a secret, there was no need for Ning to hide anything from his parents.

“[Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]?” Yichuan and his wife both took a look, but as soon as they did, their faces changed.

“This, this...” Yichuan and his wife were completely stunned. They were quite experienced, especially Snow, whose lineage was extraordinary. They were quickly able to tell how special this [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] was.

Yichuan couldn’t refrain from saying, “This [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] is even more powerful than any of the ‘ultimate techniques’ of our Ji clan. Snow, this [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] is most likely comparable to your tribe’s [Windwing Evasion] technique.”

Off to one side, Ning couldn’t help but sigh.

That which Fiendgod Body Refiners needed most was divine abilities! But every single divine ability, even in the Fiendgod era, was not permitted to be taught to outsiders. Not even the old black bull in that ancient aquatic estate had known any. It was only because the Yuchi clan had helped that Celestial Immortal and saved his life that they had gained a ‘divine ability’. The value of a divine ability was perhaps even greater than that of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]! Fortunately, his mother had given this ‘divine ability’ to him, as otherwise, who knows how long it would have taken before he would have had a chance to learn his first divine ability?

“This [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] possesses extraordinary power. It is a peerless formation technique that can allow a person to battle at a higher level of power.” Yuchi Snow said. “Only, the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] has very high requirements for magic treasures as well as the soul. This is its weakness.”

“Right. Several hundred magic treasures. Who can acquire so many?” Yichuan nodded as well.

But Ning said, “Father, Mother, in the hidden area, I acquired many unranked magic treasures. Simply too many.” As he spoke, he brought out the storage armguard and gave it to his parents, while at the same time, Ning withdrew all of his personal ki from within the magic treasures, so as to allow others to more easily bind them.”

“Too many?” Yichuan accepted the armguard, puzzled. He quickly bound the armguard, and as soon as he investigated it, he couldn’t help but reveal a look of shock.

“What is it?” Snow immediately asked.

“The number of magic treasures...is most likely in the thousands.” Yichuan sighed.

“So many!” Snow was shocked as well. Although they didn’t care about unranked magic treasures, there were ‘thousands’ of them within. Even the Five Prefectures of the Ji clan would be envious of such a fortune.

Ning added, "Those magic treasures are useless to me. I'll hand them to Father and Mother for you to dispose." He had dozens of storage treasures and over a thousand sword-type magic treasures, as well as various other scattered magic treasures, such as wing-type magic treasures...which was very suited for him to train in the [Windwing Evasion] technique. The scattered treasures also included some Dao-seals, formations, and others items.

As for the thousands of storage treasures, blades, whips, staffs, spears, and axes, he might as well give all of those to his father.

Ning had first acquired the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation], then shown off so many magic treasures. His parents had yet to fully recover, before Ning spoke once more. "This time, in the hidden area, I acquired a treasure. This will be of true benefit to our Ji clan."

"What is it?" Yichuan and Snow immediately looked over.

With a wave of Ning's hand, a beast fur scroll appeared. Atop the beast fur scroll, a sun and a moon hung high in the sky, sparkling with boundless light down upon a Buddha.

"A visualization technique!" Yichuan and Snow simultaneously spoke out.

Ning said with surprise, "Father, Mother, you know already?"

"How could we not know?" Snow stared at the painting of the Buddha. "In the past, my Yuchi clan also had a Visualization painting, but afterwards, the Visualization painting was lost in a struggle with another tribe. But Ning, this visualization technique is a technique which can allow one to strengthen the soul. The soul is a person's foundation. While normally it is hard to see the benefits of a strong soul, the benefits are invisible and tremendous. You should leave this with you and use it at all times."

Ning hurriedly said, "In the hidden area, I was fortunate enough to have a Visualization painting imprinted directly into my memory! It is even clearer than this!"

Snow, understanding the situation, said joyfully, "My son's karmic luck is extraordinary. According to legends, the ancestor of my Yuchi clan met a Celestial Immortal, who with but a single finger point imprinted the Visualization painting directly into his soul. It was even clearer than the painting, and it could be visualized at all times. I didn't expect that in this hidden area, my son would also have such a stroke of fortune."

Ning thought back to how, while he was being reincarnated, he had run into the Lord of Cui Palace in the Netherworld Kingdom, and how the Lord of Cui Palace had also used a single finger to imprint the [Nuwa Painting] into his soul's memory.

"Father, Mother, the name of this visualization technique is the [Inner Visualization of the Sun-Moon Buddha]." Ning added.

"Ji Ning."

Yichuan's heart was pounding as he looked at his son. "This [Inner Visualization of the Sun-Moon Buddha] will have a long-lasting impact on the Ji clan. I will immediately take it back. However, this [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] should not be publicized for now. It is too hard to train in, and

aside from you, no one in the Ji clan is capable of bringing forth the power of this [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]. After your own strength improves in the future, you yourself can decide whether or not you want to publicize it. As for those unranked magic treasures, I will help you dispose of them.”

“Let it all be as you decide, Father.” Ning replied.

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Book 4: Underwater Estate Chapter 9: The Marquis of Stillwater

Ji Yichuan looked at his wife. “Snow, Ji Ning’s strength can be considered at the absolute top for all below the Zifu Disciple level. The Swallow Mountain region is unable to contain him any further.”

Snow nodded as well. She understood what her man was saying.

“Huh?” Ji Ning looked at his parents, somewhat puzzled.

Yichuan said, “Ji Ning, you should know about the six great powers here at Swallow Mountain.”

“I know.” Ning nodded. “Swallow Mountain has six local hegemonies. They are our Ji clan, the Riverbank clan, the Kou clan, the Blackfire Cult, the Ironwood clan, and Snowdragon Mountain. Of the six hegemonies, our Ji clan, the Riverbank clan, the Kou clan, and the Blackfire Cult are allies, while the Ironwood clan and the Snowdragon Mountain are allied!”

The six major hegemonies of Swallow Mountain were arrayed into two alliances, and the battles between them were very fierce, with Xiantian lifeforms often dying.

Yichuan continued, “But are you aware of the reason as to why the alliance between the Ironwood clan and Snowdragon Mountain is capable of forcing us other four hegemonies to ally together?”

“I am not.” Ning shook his head.

These secrets were not recorded in any books.

“The six great powers are all guarded by Zifu Disciples.” Yichuan looked at his son. “Your power is most likely already invincible against anyone below the Zifu Disciple level. In a few more years, you will most likely become a Zifu Disciple, so I must tell you these things now!”

“That Ironwood clan is not worth mentioning!” Yichuan said seriously, his eyes filled with a murderous light. “But the Snowdragon Mountain is a truly formidable enemy. They are truly frightening. In our Swallow Mountain region, Snowdragon Mountain is merely a single branch of the true Snowdragon Mountain Sect.”

“A branch?” Ning was stunned.

Of the six hegemonies, Snowdragon Mountain was the most powerful force. But this Snowdragon Mountain was merely a branch?

Yichuan looked at his son and said solemnly, “The power of the Snowdragon Mountain Sect is thousands of times greater than that of Swallow Mountain’s Snowdragon Mountain Branch, and thousands of times greater than our Ji clan! This is a colossal, top-tier clan which is not inferior than your mother’s Yuchi clan!”

Yuchi Snow looked at her son as well. “The [Windwing Evasion] includes the history of my Yuchi clan. My Yuchi clan is an extremely ancient, top-tier large clan. Clans like the Ji clan...are completely incomparable to the likes of my Yuchi clan. But of course, that was all in the past.

Ning, hearing his parents speak of these things, instantly had a desire to learn more about this boundless world. The Yuchi clan, Snowdragon Mountain, and those legendary, distant top-tier clans. They were all so far away from Swallow Mountain.

“Ning, do you know how large the Grand Xia Dynasty is, exactly?” Snow looked at her son.

“I do not.” Ning shook his head.

The Grand Xia Dynasty had been founded in the Fiendgod Era, and had destroyed other ancient dynasties to unify this vast world. It had existed for trillions of years! The books which described the territory of the Grand Xia Dynasty all used the same word: Boundless!

How enormous would such a dynasty be? How deep would its roots be?

“When the Grand Xia Dynasty unified the world, it divided the world into 3600 commanderies, and also assigned 800 Marquises!” Snow said slowly. “Because the world is simply too vast, even Immortals and Fiends found it difficult to govern it. Thus, they divided it into 3600 commanderies. Amongst these 3600 commanderies, there are large ones and small ones, but even the smallest are extremely vast.”

“Swallow Mountain is under the governance of the Stillwater Commandery, which is the territory ruled over by the Marquis of Stillwater.” Snow said. “The commandery city of Stillwater is nearly a million kilometers away from us.”

“The commandery city of Stillwater? A million kilometers away from us?” Ning could completely imagine how in that distant, distant region, there was an incomparably ancient, vast, and bustling city. In that place, Immortals and Fiends congregated, their decisions impacting this entire enormous region.

Snow continued, “The commandery city of Stillwater is the seat of power for the entire Stillwater Commandery, a place where Immortals and Fiends reside. However, Stillwater Commandery is simply too vast, and there are tens of thousands of regions within it like our Swallow Mountain...thus, some of the most top tier clans, schools, and sects are all scattered throughout the area!”

“As large as that?” Ning held his breath.

“As the saying goes, the heavens are high and the ruler is far away. With the world divided into 3600 commanderies, the power of those Marquises in the territory they rule is absolutely monstrous.” Snow sighed. “The imperial city of the Grand Xia Dynasty is simply too far away. In history, there have even been some Marquises who rebelled. Those wars truly are wars where Immortals and Fiends slaughter each other and countless experts fall. Truly terrifying.”

Ning nodded.

The flaw of having an enormous territory was the difficulty one would have in governing it. Even the high and mighty Marquis of Stillwater was unable to completely govern his vast territory, and so he allowed the various tribes to slaughter and battle each other.

“After some of the Marquises revolted, the Grand Xia Dynasty, so as to better govern the various regions, began to frantically build one commandery city after another in the various commanderies, and even Swallow Mountain has over ten of these commandery cities.” Snow looked at her son. “Every single city has a matching ‘official writ’!”

“Official writ?” Ning listened carefully.

“Right. Official writ!” Snow continued. “By binding an official writ, that means you are in control of one of those commandery cities, and are in name one of the officials of the Grand Xia Dynasty. However, these official writs are ranked magic treasures, and thus only Zifu Disciples and above can bind them.”

“Swallow Mountain has ten of these commanderies within it.” Yichuan spoke out as well.

“Of the ten commandery cities, one is Swallow Mountain City, where the armies of the Grand Xia Dynasty are stationed! Of the other nine cities, our Five Prefectures of the Ji clan is in control of one, the ‘Thousand Swords City’ of our Central Prefecture.” Yichuan explained. “The Riverbank clan, Kou clan, and Ironwood clan all have one as well.”

“The Blackfire Cult has two commandery cities. Snowdragon Mountain has three commandery cities.”

“Actually, long ago, the Ji clan, the Riverbank clan, the Kou clan, the Blackfire Cult, and the Ironwood clan all were considered part of the local tribes of Swallow Mountain.” Yichuan sighed. “Afterwards, when Snowdragon Mountain acquired one of the official writs for one of the cities and got involved in this region, the Ironwood clan, the weakest of the clans, quickly threw themselves in with Snowdragon Mountain. However, we other four powers continue to resist.”

“We are all officials of the Grand Xia Dynasty, and within our own commandery cities, it is forbidden for Immortal practitioners to battle each other. To disobey this rule is to challenge the Grand Xia Dynasty, punishable by death!”

Ning, hearing his father’s explanation, couldn’t help but frown. “Father, Mother, based on what you are saying, if Immortal practitioners are forbidden from battling within the commandery cities on pain of death, would it be very hard for one tribe to try and destroy another one?”

“Hard?”

Snow laughed coldly. “Easy! For example, Zifu Disciples have a limited lifespan. Upon death, the official writ becomes an ownerless object, at which point, the tribe will quickly collapse.”

“Also, Zifu Disciples can’t always stay within their commanderies. As long as they come out and are killed, then their official writs can be seized and their tribe will be finished.”

“And then of course, there are some utterly lawless, large, powerful clans!” Snow said. “They will send people over to your commandery to assassinate the Zifu Disciples of your clan and take away your official writ. What can you do about it?”

Ning was stunned. “This...”

“Without any proof, what will you do?” Snow laughed. “But of course, the mightier a power, the more cautious they will be. Challenging the laws of the Grand Xia Dynasty is a capital offense. They wouldn’t casually do such a thing, and even if they decide to, they would use some very secretive methods. All I

am trying to tell you is that there are many possible ways to destroy a tribe. You might not make trouble for others, but they might for you. In the end, the most important thing is strengthening one's self!"

"The Marquis of Stillwater controls this vast region, but aside from the armies of the Grand Xia Dynasty stationed here, there is another squad of Immortal practitioners, known as the 'Raindragon Guards'. According to legend, only Wanxiang Adepts are allowed to join the Raindragon Guards! By relying on the Raindragon Guards, the Grand Xia Dynasty is able to better control its vast territory. Remember. The Raindragon Guards cannot be trifled with."

"Ning, given your talent and comprehension, you would find it very easy to request tutelage under a major power. After you go out adventuring, it would be best for you to find a major school or power to take shelter under."

Yichuan and Snow told their son many things. They knew that Ning would definitely advance onto a far greater stage, and perhaps even become a major figure in the entire Stillwater Commandery...naturally, they carefully instructed and warned him, telling him everything which they knew.

Only now did Ning truly understand how vast the world was. Only now did he know about the Raindragon Guards of the Grand Xia Dynasty, all formed from Immortal practitioners. Of the great army controlled by the Marquis of Stillwater. Of some of the top tier clans, schools, sects...and of course, many other clans that were powerful in their own localities, that had been able to control official writs for a long period of time. Below them, of course, were countless, innumerable minor tribes.

"Whew." Ning's heart was beginning to fill with ardor.

"Ji Ning, I will take away the corpse of Serpentwing. To outsiders, we shall simply say that I was the one to kill him." Yichuan said. "After all, you are very young. If we were to publicize that you were the one who killed him, it will only cause endless difficulties."

"I'll let Father handle all of these things." Ning said hurriedly. "Right, Father, I want to build a residence here at Serpentwing Lake. In the future, I will often live here."

"Live here?"

Yichuan and Snow looked around them. This area was very peaceful.

"Right. This is a good place." Yichuan nodded. "I will arrange for some people to help you build a residence here. Your mother and I will go back now. While adventuring, come back and visit us often."

"I will. I will go back to West Prefecture City in a few days." Ning nodded. He was going to take a trip to the Blacktooth Tribe to bring Spring Grass' younger brother to West Prefecture City. This was the promise he had made to Spring Grass.

"Hurry back." Snow gently stroked her son's head.

“Right.” Ning nodded. He understood that this trip he had made into the Aquatic Manor had caused his parents great worry.

That day, Ning led Autumn Leaf and Mowu back to the Blacktooth Tribe, mounted on their black beasts.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 4: Underwater Estate Chapter 10: [Nine Scrolls On Formations]

The journey from Serpentwing Lake to the Blacktooth Tribe was a long one. Even with the black beasts travelling all day and only resting at night, three days time was needed.

Night time.

The campfire was blazing. Ji Ning and Autumn Leaf were by the side of the campfire, while Mowu was on watch, so as to not allow any impudent wild beasts to interrupt his young master.

“I haven’t had the chance to take a good look at the miscellaneous items I acquired in the Aquatic Manor.” Ning suddenly remembered that although he had gone through all those magic treasures he had acquired during the first and second trials, of the thousands of magic treasures and miscellaneous items he had acquired at the third trial, he had bound them then immediately battled that black-furred golem, then met with that old black bull. He hadn’t had any time to flip through them at all.

“One of the miscellaneous items I found in the first or second trial was a secret manual that is nearly as good as the [Raindrop Sutra]. The number of miscellaneous items in the third trial was several times greater than in the first two.” With a wave of his hand, Ning brought out one item after another, which he then made disappear afterwards.

Autumn Leaf just watched to the side, curious.

A long time later...

“Yet another secret manual, the [Clearwind Manual]?” Ning flipped through it, and was instantly delighted. “It’s actually a swordplay manual, and it directly instructs one in how to utilize the True Meaning of the Dao. It is comparable to the [Raindrop Sutra].”

Ning’s judgment and vision was much keener than before. After all, he had gained insights into the True Meaning of the Dao, and as he carefully read the contents, he quickly could vaguely sense that the ultimate goal of this type of swordplay was to develop the ‘True Meaning of the Clearwind’.

Actually, the deceased people in the corridor were all only at the Xiantian level, so how powerful or profound could the manuals they were carrying on them possibly be? Actually, a consummate skill such as the [Clearwind Manual], logically speaking, shouldn’t even be in there. For example, Ning hadn’t brought the [Raindrop Sutra] or the [Thunderflame Sword] with him. From this, one could tell that the previous master of this manual most likely came from an even more powerful, top-tier clan who didn’t restrict manuals on this level too tightly.

There really were many miscellaneous items in the third trials, and plenty of treasures as well. Ning found as many as three powerful techniques! After flipping through these manuals, Ning began to carefully inspect the other miscellaneous items, the ones that didn't look like manuals.

"Huh?" Ning suddenly flipped out a jade carving!

This was two foot long square piece of jade, and on the jade there was carved an image of an old man with a long beard.

"Wait!" Ning's eyes lit up, and he carefully inspected it. At first glance, he had thought that this was just a carving, but as he took a closer look...he felt as though the square jade piece was actually covered with countless small characters that formed some small images. These characters were the characters used in the Grand Xia Dynasty.

The characters were tiny! If an ordinary person saw it, they probably wouldn't even notice it, but Ning was no ordinary person. His visual acuity was astonishing, and he could see a housefly from a distance of ten kilometers! With such visual acuity, naturally he could read the dense, tiny characters on the jade carving.

"How marvelous."

"This piece of jade has hundreds of thousands of words carved onto it, and the countless works actually formed the image of a long-bearded elder." Ning first exhaled in amazement, and then he began to search for the place where these characters originated. Soon, he found that in the leftmost upper corner, there were four prominent characters...

[Nine Scrolls on Formations]!

Ning's eyes lit up as he carefully continued to read.

"I, Wu Daoyan, have focused exclusively on formation techniques for over eighty thousand years. I was lucky enough to survive the last tribulation, but I think that the next great tribulation in nine hundred years time, I will not be able to survive. I am unwilling for the essence of my formation techniques to be lost, and so I have recorded down the knowledge of my formation techniques within these nine scrolls! I hope that someone with the right karmic fortune will carefully learn and comprehend it!" The opening words caused Ning to feel delighted. Anyone who was capable of living eighty thousand years and yet still be subject to the Three Calamities and Nine Tribulations was almost certainly a Loose Immortal.

Immortal Juhua was able to live for millions of years, but most Loose Immortals weren't able to live that long. Three Calamities, Nine Tribulations; the calamities were easy to avoid, but the tribulations were hard to escape. A great tribulation every nine hundred years! Each tribulation more powerful than the last, continuously accumulating until even a Loose Immortal like of Immortal Juhua, on par with a Celestial Immortal, would not be able to withstand it.

"The knowledge of a Loose Immortal regarding formation techniques. This is something that is no less valuable than the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] or the [Windwing Evasion]." Ning immediately understood how valuable this was. "With this knowledge regarding formations, someone actually went to enter the trials of the underground estate's corridors. Jeeze..."

The person who acquired this knowledge on formations was most likely someone who was unskilled in formations. After all, the abstruse mysteries of formations were very hard to comprehend. Generally speaking, Immortal practitioners only knew how to set up formations; they didn't understand the principles behind the formations. For example, Ning only knew how to set up and control the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]. Immortal practitioners would generally prefer to spend their time in binding more powerful magic treasures, or more powerful magic techniques. Those who would lower their heads and study formations were indeed very rare!

And what's more, formations were extremely abstruse and hard to understand, making researchers in formations even rarer!

Most likely, the person who received this didn't understand it. Even up until the point of his death, he still hadn't had any accomplishments, and thus he had gone to attempt the underground estate.

There was another possibility as well, that it was someone like Ning...someone who accidentally entered Serpentwing Lake and thus was forcibly teleported into the Aquatic Manor, then died within.

"No matter what happened, this [Nine Scrolls on Formations] is now mine. And here I was, wondering how it could be possible that, given there were thousands of storage treasures, signifying thousands of people, how could not a single one of them been carrying something truly valuable?" Ning said to himself joyfully. "I finally acquired a valuable treasure. Time to take a good look."

He immediately lowered his head and began to read this [Nine Scrolls on Formations].

Formations could be set up using all sorts of things, and some truly miraculous, large-scale formations could even make the world itself part of the formation!

"Interesting." Many people felt that the [Nine Scrolls on Formations] were dry and boring, but Ning began to smile as he read them. Formations required a high ability to compute and understand. One had to be able to calculate! Ning, in his previous life, was exceedingly smart. Because of his illness, he was unable to go to school, so he had to teach himself everything! He had taught himself through reading books online, and his knowledge had far outstripped those of the same age as him, especially in the sciences. Despite his young age, he had earned a vast fortune!

In this life, he had acquired the [Nuwa Painting] and was able to divide his mind, thus making his mental computational abilities even nimbler!

In the previous life, on Earth, the education system had taught Ning how to think. Although Earth was just one of trillions of little worlds, its educational system was far superior to this world's, where, for example, Swallow Mountain was still at a tribal era of development...even the descendants of the Ji clan would generally only be able to read, while the members of lesser tribes wouldn't even be able to recognize any characters.

Given this sort of level of education, it was only natural for everyone here to find it incredibly hard to analyze formations.

It can be said that although perhaps the skilled scientists of Earth wouldn't necessarily all become formation experts, they would at least be very promising prospects in this regard.

The education Ning had received in his past life was like 'software'. In this life, Ning had an extremely powerful soul, which was like 'hardware'!

Naturally, he was very well suited for training in formations!

"So that's how it is." Ning revealed a smile while reading. "That Yin Yang Twin Energy Formation and other formations like it truly are crude. They completely rely on activating the power of the world. There's no skill at all in them."

The more he read, the more Ning appreciated it.

But slowly, the smile on Ning's face disappeared, and it was replaced by a frowning concentration, mixed with occasional stupefaction.

"Formation techniques really can't be underestimated." Ning nodded. "The way of formations is as vast and boundless as the seas. I'm only able to understand the most basic principles, but as soon as I see some slightly more abstruse, complex parts, I am completely lost. It makes sense. Although in this boundless world, most people are a bit stupid, there are still many geniuses as well. Upon focusing on something for hundreds or thousands of years, they will of course vastly exceed those of us on Earth."

"Young master, the sun is up. We should head out." Autumn Leaf suddenly called.

"Ah?" Ning suddenly discovered that it was already day.

Formation techniques were as boundless as the seas. Upon understanding the first scroll of the [Nine Scrolls on Formations], one could be considered a formations expert. Unfortunately, Ning wasn't able to completely understand even that first scroll. This caused him to become more humble and not feel so self-delighted.

"Through analyzing formations, I will have more options and more tactics available to me."

"Also, when I use the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation], I can make it more nimble and won't have to use it in such a static manner." Although Ning was just a basic student of this field, he now had a basic understanding of the way of formations, with the essence of it being 'guidance'! For example, at first, when he stupidly just simultaneously controlled hundreds of flying swords, he had to spend effort controlling every one minutely, which was simply too mentally exhausting.

Fortunately, his soul was very powerful, and so he was easily able to execute the fourth level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation].

But if he were an expert on formations, he would be able to have some of the critical swords 'guide' the other swords, which would greatly reduce the amount of load on his soul, and allow him to easily execute more powerful levels of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation].

"Young master, the Blacktooth Tribe is up ahead." Autumn Leaf called out.

Only now did Ning halt his pondering on formations. Raising his head, he saw that in the distance, the sentries of the Blacktooth Tribe had noticed them.

“It is young master Ji.”

“Quick, hurry and report this to the leader.”

The tribesmen of the Blacktooth Tribe had seen Ji Ning last time. This time, the three of them were once again travelling together, mounted on the three black beasts. They were quickly recognized.

As Ning and the other two arrived at the gates to the tribe, Blacktooth was there to personally welcome them.

“My respects to you, young master.” Blacktooth had a large group of tribesmen behind him, all of them kneeling in unison.

“Mm.” Ning nodded. “Take me to Spring Grass’ place.”

“Alright.” Blacktooth said hurriedly. The only person in the Blacktooth Tribe who had any sort of a connection to Ji Ning was Spring Grass.

Ning suddenly looked sideways, glancing a skinny toddler standing behind Blacktooth whose face was rather sickly, yet seemed similar to Spring Grass. Ning remembered seeing this toddler last time, and thus he spoke out. “What is your name?”

The toddler was stunned.

Blacktooth, following Ning’s gaze, turned to look at his son. He hurriedly said, “Quick, response to the young master’s words.”

Only now did the toddler stutter out, “My name is Bluestone!”

“Bluestone, Bluestone...” Ning gently murmured to himself.

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Book 4: Underwater Estate Chapter 11: Ji Ning is Here!

The toddler nervously looked at the youth riding on the black beast. He only felt that this youth was a very powerful figure. The entire tribe seemed to be afraid of him.

“Bluestone.” The youth dismounted from the black beast, then walked over and held his hand.

“Come with me. Let’s go to your big sister’s tomb and kowtow to your sister.” Ji Ning took Bluestone’s tiny hand, and Bluestone, stupefied, just let himself be led away, not daring to resist. By his side, Blacktooth and the other tribesmen naturally didn’t dare to argue.

And so, just like that, they made their way through the tribe before arriving at a large graveyard behind the tribe.

Once again, they came before that tomb.

“Spring Grass. I came.” Ji Ning had prepared some sacrificial items which he had prepared when passing through some of the nearby tribes along the way. He placed all of them in front of the tomb carefully,

while at the same time saying gently, "That Riverside He of the Riverside tribe is dead now. Serpentwing of Serpentwing Lake is dead as well. Your enemies are all dead."

As soon as these words were uttered, Blacktooth and the others next to him were startled. What? The Diremonster, Serpentwing, was dead as well?

"Bluestone should be your only remaining little brother." Ning reached his hand out, pulling the dumbstruck Bluestone forward. "I swear before your tomb that I will definitely provide good tutelage to Bluestone"

Bluestone was somewhat stunned, but his father, Blacktooth, was incomparably delighted. He hurriedly said, "Thank you, young master." He himself was just the leader of a small tribe. What sort of a future would he be able to offer his son? But if someone as exalted as the young master of the Ji clan were to help out, then his son's future would be very different."

"As long as you don't oppose it." Ning glanced at Blacktooth. "In the future, I will be spending quite a long period of time by Serpentwing Lake. If you want to see your son, come to Serpentwing Lake and find me there."

"Yes." Blacktooth said respectfully.

"Bluestone, kowtow to your big sister." Ning looked towards Bluestone by his side.

"Okay." The toddler hurriedly knelt down and kowtowed three times.

Ning waved towards the side. "All of you can leave now."

"Yes, young master." Autumn Leaf included, everyone withdrew. Even Bluestone was led away by Blacktooth. In this wild, desolate graveyard, the only one remaining was Ji Ning.

"Just the two of us now." Ning withdrew a bamboo reed, beginning to drink wine. "Today, your young master will spend some time chatting with you. In the future, I'm afraid I won't be able to come visit you too often."

Ning drank fruit wine in front of the tomb while chatting with 'Spring Grass'. In the blink of an eye, an hour passed.

"Huh?" Ning suddenly frowned. As a Fiendgod-like entity, his senses were extremely acute. He easily detected minute trembles in the ground. "Thousands of warriors! And the distance should only be twenty kilometers. Thousands of warriors, gathering twenty kilometers away? Can it be that a tribe is about to attack the Blacktooth Tribe?"

With regards to the struggles between the various tribes, the Ji clan usually pretended not to notice them.

"Blacktooth was originally a travelling merchant, and thus should be smooth and slick in establishing relationships." Ning was puzzled. "Ever since founding this Blacktooth Tribe, no other tribes have ever attacked. Why has a tribe come to attack this time? And with thousands of warriors at that?"

“Let’s take a look.” Ning immediately rose.

Regardless of whether it was for Spring Grass or for Bluestone, he couldn’t just stand and watch with arms folded.

Although the Ji clan usually pretended to not notice these intertribal struggles, once they did interfere, the tribes they controlled naturally didn’t dare to disobey.

Ning walked within the tribe, heading straight for the gates.

“Young master.” Mowu and Autumn Leaf hurriedly followed him.

“Young master.” Blacktooth led his tribesmen to follow him as well. Ning just barked, “Twenty kilometers outside of here, thousands of warriors are gathering and advancing towards us. Right. There should be two to three thousand of them. Your Blacktooth Tribe needs to immediately prepare.”

Blacktooth was shocked. “Two or three thousand warriors? Impossible. Only an enormous tribe would be able to mobilize two to three thousand warriors. A tribe of that size wouldn’t bother with our Blacktooth Tribe. Our entire population, including women, children, and the elderly only number one thousand or so. We aren’t worth such a large military mobilization!”

“If I say it is so, then it is so!” Ning glanced at him sideways, saying nothing more.

“Right.” Blacktooth naturally didn’t dare to say anything else, and he hurriedly began to shout. “Quick quick quick, enemies are coming to attack! Quickly, gather around!”

“Rumble...” A low beast horn sound quickly rang out, filling the entire tribe. The muscular warriors of the tribe, the elderly and the womenfolk, all grabbed their sabres, swords, spears, and bucklers, while all of the children hid themselves.

Ning was staring into the distance at the gates, while all of the tribesmen of the Blacktooth Tribe were holding their weapons with bated breath in preparation. All of them were staring towards the distant mountain forests.

Slowly...

They began to clearly sense footsteps coming. After all, how could two or three thousand warriors on the march make no sound at all? This caused Blacktooth and the others to be all the more amazed. It must be understood that Ning had already informed them long ago of the rough number of people coming.

“So many.”

“So many warriors.”

The tribesmen of the Blacktooth tribe were all stunned. From afar, a densely packed swarm of human figures were emerging from the forests, with the ones in front armored. It was like a flood of metal coming their way at high speed, causing the Blacktooth Tribe’s members to feel their hearts turn cold.

“Halt!” The order came, and the three thousand warriors immediately formed ranks roughly half a kilometer in front of the Blacktooth Tribe’s gates.

“Blacktooth Tribe, listen up!” In front of the enemy troops, a powerfully built bald man was bellowing. “We are from the Firewing Tribe. Quickly open your gates and surrender to us, and you have a chance at life. If you resist, those who resist shall all be killed, while the rest of the tribesmen shall be sold as slaves.”

The voice echoed in the air.

The Blacktooth Tribe was in a state of panic.

“What to do?”

“So many warriors. There’s thousands of them.”

“We’re finished.”

“Isn’t young master Ji here?” The Blacktooth Tribe had no fighting spirit at all now. First of all, their tribe was newly founded to begin with, as many of the tribesmen were gathered from those who had fled from other tribes. They didn’t have too strong a sense of loyalty to the Blacktooth Tribe yet. And secondly, the Blacktooth Tribe had less than five hundred tribal warriors, but in front of them there were three thousand!

Once battle began, they would quickly be defeated!

“Everyone in the Firewing Tribe!” Blacktooth hurriedly went forward and said loudly, “I don’t know why you have come to my Blacktooth Tribe. If you have any demands, our Blacktooth Tribe will naturally work hard to meet them.”

“Enough chitchat!” The bald man in front of the enemy lines bellowed back. “Surrender or battle!”

Ning frowned, glancing at Mowu by his side. Mowu nodded, then immediately walked forward while shouting, “Our young master Ji Ning is here. Leaders of the Firewing Tribe, why haven’t you come to pay your respects yet!”

“Why haven’t you come to pay your respects yet!” “Why haven’t you come to pay your respects yet!” “Why haven’t you come to pay your respects yet!” The voice echoed within the forests, causing a commotion amidst the Firewing Tribe as well.

In the center of the enemy formation, there was a group of men who were riding mounts.

“Young master Ji Ning?”

“The Ji Ning who was at the Riverside Tribe?”

“Aside from that Ji Ning, who would dare order the leaders to go pay their respects to him?” The high-level figures of the Firewing Tribe were all immediately stunned. The Firewing Tribe was also a large tribe with more than twenty thousand tribesmen, but because their tribe didn’t have any Xiantian

lifeforms, thus they had already reached their limits and didn't dare to expand any further. Compared to the Riverside Tribe, the Firewing Tribe was on a lower level.

The Riverside Tribe wasn't too far away from them. With over a month having passed, these higher level members of the Firewing Tribe naturally all knew of what had happened, and had learned of Ji Ning's name.

"Chief."

"Chief." All of them looked at black-bearded man whom was escorted in front of them.

By the side of the black-bearded man, a youth whose hair fell down his shoulders said in a low voice, "Nothing more than a descendant of the Ji clan. There's no need to pay any attention to a descendant of the Ji clan in this sort of tribal war. Let's do it."

"Attack!" The black-bearded man immediately shouted loudly.

"What?"

"What? Attack?"

"Chief!"

The high level figures of the tribe who were around the black-bearded man were all stupefied. They didn't expect that their chief, who was both valorous and wise, would act so stupidly. Given the chief's status, he should clearly be aware of what the name 'Ji Ning' represented. If it was an ordinary member of the Ji clan, that was one thing, but this was Ji Ning, who had forced even the Riverside Tribe to lower their heads before him!

"Kill!" Those three thousand warriors were all ordinary tribesmen. How could they know what this name 'Ji Ning' represented? Hearing their chief's orders, they immediately bellowed and charged forward.

"Kill!"

"Charge!"

Like an steel flood, the armored warriors in front charged forward, while the beast-fur clad men were behind them. The earth shook, and it seemed as though even the skies grew dark. The tribesmen of the Blacktooth Tribe were all stupefied, and some even began to cry out, "Surrender, we surrender!" "We're finished." "Quick, run."

Ji Ning, standing at the gates, watched as the dark, dense mass of people charged forward. Immediately, he was suspicious. "My name should be known to all of the slightly larger tribes, especially after I acted against the Riverside Tribe. It should have spread throughout the area under the control of the Ji clan. Why is the black-bearded leader still ordering an attack?"

Ning was puzzled.

The Blacktooth Tribe was a small tribe. It didn't have much wealth. Mobilizing three thousand warriors to attack it was quite bizarre, in and of itself. After hearing his, the enemy still decided to attack? That was all the odder.

However, just based on the fact that this Firewing Tribe dared to ignore his name, and just for the sake of the prestige of the Ji clan alone, he naturally had to act now.

"Hmph."

In front of the gates of the Blacktooth Tribe, Ning suddenly leapt forward like a giant Roc in flight, instantly flashing through the air. At the same time he leapt up, enormous waves suddenly appeared out of nowhere in the area around him, and the incomparably turgid waves instantly formed like the waters of a flood. Huahuahua...the boundless waves rolled forth, smashing directly towards those three thousand tribal warriors.

"Waves."

"Where did all this water suddenly come from?"

"Xiantian lifeform, a Xiantian lifeform." The three thousand warriors were instantly terrified. They previously had high morale, but upon those rolling waves crashing upon them, all of them began to collapse and everything fell to chaos. These warriors all understood that only Xiantian lifeforms and Diremonsters were able to accomplish the ability to control fire, water, poisonous gases, and the like. If a Xiantian lifeform wished to do so, slaughtering three thousand men was simplicity itself.

Indeed, Ning didn't actually wanted to slaughter them. He only controlled the waves to smash down upon them. If he used fire or ice to freeze or burn them to death, the scene would have been completely different.

"Hua!" With a single bound, Ning travelled over a kilometer, landing directly in front of that black-bearded figure, grabbing him by the neck.

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Book 4: Underwater Estate Chapter 12: Pursuit

Ji Ning instantly landed a kilometer away and grabbed the black-bearded leader, instantly terrifying the high level members of the Firewing Tribe. All of them hurriedly knelt down on wobbling knees and called out repeatedly, "Young master Ji Ning, spare us!" "Young master Ji Ning, don't be angry!" "Young master Ji Ning, don't be angry!"

The tribal warriors behind them who had not been hit by the waves, seeing the high level members of the tribe all kneel down, naturally all knelt down as well. At this time, the waves disappeared, and those knocked down tribesmen all knelt in terror as well.

Instantly, the black mass of men were all on their knees, aside from the black-bearded man Ning had seized.

"Pa!" With a toss of the hand, the black-bearded man was sent rolling twice on the ground.

"Young master Ji Ning." The black-bearded man was shuddering.

“You don’t recognize me?” Ning looked at him.

The black-bearded man shook his man hurriedly. “No, no, I heard of young master Ji Ning’s fame long ago.”

“Then you still ordered an attack?” Ning frowned.

“I...I...” The black-bearded man didn’t know what to say for the moment. This caused Ning to be even more puzzled. The leader in front of him clearly knew his name, and was frightened of him. So why, then, had he dared to issue that order?

Ning shouted, “I ask you, why do you attack the Blacktooth Tribe?”

The black-bearded man immediately hesitated.

The high level members next to him said hurriedly, “Young master Ji Ning, the Blacktooth Tribe is only a small tribe. Our Firewing Tribe didn’t want to attack them at all! Only, the chief insisted on coming. We didn’t oppose him, as it was just a small tribe and thus not worth it.”

“This was the decision of the chief and the chief alone.”

“We all opposed it.”

“Half a year ago, the chief ignored our opposition and forcibly led the warriors out and destroyed a small tribe with only a few hundred people, and sold off everyone, man, woman, child, and elder alike as slaves to his good friend, Zig! Look, that one right next to the chief is Zig! The chief trusts him very much!” A silver-haired fur-clad elder pointed to the long haired youth next to Ji Ning.

Swoosh!

The kneeling long haired youth suddenly shot out a black light from his sleeves towards the nearby Ning.

“Clang!” Ji Ning’s body was covered by beast furs, and underneath them he had magic treasures protecting him. Naturally, this attack was blocked.

“Hmph.” Ning looked at the long haired youth, but discovered that the youth’s face had already begin to turn black. At this moment, the other high level members of the Firewing Tribe were angrily howling and reaching out with their hands to seize the youth, planning to subdue him. “He dares to ambush the young master. He deserves death.”

“Don’t touch him!” Ning immediately barked.

But a muscular man of the Firewing Tribe who had charged in front had already touched the arm of the long haired youth. The pitch-black color on the arm of the youth instantly transmitted to the right arm of the muscular man.

“Swish!” Ning pointed out with a fingernail, and a ray of sword energy swung out, chopping the left arm of the muscular man off.

The long haired youth slumped to the ground, his entire body pitch black, and his seven orifices bleeding with black blood. That man whose arm had been chopped off by Ning had black blood flowing out of his severed arm as well.

“Poison!”

The surrounding Firewing tribesmen all retreated in surprise.

Ning’s expression was grave. “Such fierce poison.”

“Aaaaah!” The chief of the Firewing Tribe, that black-bearded man, suddenly called out, then hurriedly pointed at the corpse on the ground. “It was him! It was him! Young master Ji Ning, it was all him. He originally spat a mouthful of smoke at me, and I lost my faculties. Although I knew what was going on, I treated this Zig as my master and obeyed him from my heart. Whatever he wanted me to do, I would do. Even if he wanted me to die, I wouldn’t resist at all. When I heard your name, young master, it was he who ordered me to attack. I clearly didn’t want to offend you, young master, but as soon as he instructed me, I immediately gave the order.”

The black-bearded man stared in shock and fury at the corpse on the ground. “It was that mouthful of smoke.”

The high level members of the tribe, upon hearing this, were all awestruck.

“What?” Ning was surprised as well.

In the entire Swallow Mountain area, only the ‘Blackfire Cult’ was in possession of drugs that could control a person, but the most famous medicine which the Blackfire Cult had was the ‘Holy Fire Pill’. Upon eating the Holy Fire Pill, a person would become unswervingly loyal to the Blackfire Cult and not even fear death! Only, the ‘Holy Fire Pill’ of the Blackfire Cult wasn’t a breath of smoke.

“Anyone capable of creating this thing is definitely a very powerful warlock or alchemist.” Ning was secretly startled, and he turned to look at the leader. “Speak. What did this Zig want from you?”

“To buy slaves!” The black-bearded man said hurriedly. “He first bought slaves from us twice, over two thousand slaves! Afterwards, he controlled me and ordered me to swallow up some smaller tribes and have all the members of those tribes be sold as slaves to him. He would arrange for those people to be taken away.”

Ning was puzzled. What was the point of buying so many slaves? Generally speaking, tribes would buy slaves to use them for manual labor or as servants. Slaves had to eat as well, and providing enough food for so many wouldn’t be easy.

“His subordinates?” Ning asked. “Didn’t you say that he sent subordinates to take the slaves away? So many slaves, including women, children, and elderly, would have travelled very slowly. You should be able to find traces of them.”

“I can. I can.” The black-bearded man nodded hurriedly. “Ten days ago, his subordinates took a group of slaves away. They were headed towards the east. Two days ago, a hunting squad of our tribe saw that slaver squad. Most likely, in two days they couldn’t have gone too far. We should be able to find them quickly.”

Ning nodded.

“Mowu. Autumn Leaf.” Ning turned to look into the distance.

Mowu and Autumn Leaf immediately ran over.

“Young master.” The two looked at Ning.

“I have something to take care of.” Ning said. “The two of you, immediately send word to the nearest station of black armored guards, and have the hundred closest black armored guards to escort you and Bluestone to Serpentwing Lake. My father will arrange for a dwelling to be built at Serpentwing Lake, and you will temporarily live on the island in the center of it.”

“Yes.” Mowu and Autumn Leaf assented.

“As for you.” Ning looked at the black-bearded man. “You will immediately arrange for your hunter squads to provide me with two guides. I want to find that slaving squad.”

“Yes, young master.” The black-bearded man hurriedly said, and then roared backwards behind himself, “Threeknife, Cardcloth, come over here.”

Ning led the two guides on the backs of the black beasts, traveling by day while resting at night in hot pursuit. That squad, guiding hundreds of elderly and infants, naturally travelled much more slowly. They would at most be able to advance a hundred kilometers a day.

“Young master, there clearly are footsteps here.” A swarthy man with braided hair said hurriedly. “The tracks are very clear. They should have been made less than a day ago. We will soon catch up to them.”

“Alright.” Ning nodded.

They continued the chase.

Soon, they saw a large cluster of figures. All of them, male and female, were fettered by the hands, with the rope being attached to a tree trunk. A group of men and women were bound all together, carrying a tree trunk. By doing so, anyone who attempted to flee would pull others with him, and once the movement became apparent enough, the slaver escorts would easily notice.

“Hurry, hurry up.” The slaver escorts were soldiers wielding whips, and they would occasionally lash out with the whips. As for some of the toddlers, they were tied up and seated on horses, with eight or ten toddlers tied up on each horse, allowing them to move more quickly.

The looks on the faces of the men and women were full of grief, and their eyes were filled with despair.

Half a month ago, they were in their own tribes, living peaceful, happy lives with their families. But now, they had become slaves and were being escorted to an unknown area.

“You two, take these three black beasts and return. Have your tribesmen arrange for them to be sent to Serpentwing Lake.” With a flip of his hand, Ning withdrew two beastheads of gold. “You made a trip with me. I won’t mistreat you.”

“Thank you, young master.” The two tribesmen hurriedly thanked him.

Ning nodded, then patted his black beast. He had ridden this black beast while adventuring. After having spent so much time with it, he was rather reluctant to part with it.

“You can go now.” Ning immediately dismounted, then began to travel by himself. After all, this squad was moving very slowly. There was no need for him to ride the black beast.

The slaver squad continued to advance through the mountain forests. On the road, although they encountered some monstrous beasts, the slaver escorts were powerful experts, almost all of them peak Houtian level, with three of them being Fiendgod Houtian experts. They easily killed the monstrous beast.

“It is indeed odd.” Ning said to himself. “Large-scale purchasing of slaves, and using medicines to control the leader of a tribe to engage in the large-scale capture of slaves. Even the slaver escorts have peak Houtian Fiendgod practitioners.”

“Hurry up!”

“Hurry up.”

“We’re almost there.” The slaver escorts seemed to be rather happy.

Ning secretly followed from behind. This place was already at what was considered the border between the Ji clan and the Ironwood clan, while up ahead was a chain of mountains.

This group of slavers were heading towards the mountain range.

“Enter the mountains.” The squad continued forward.

Ning moved from behind, but just as they arrived at the base of the mountain, the sun which been bright in the sky suddenly changed as soon as Ning followed them into the mountains. It was as though day had suddenly transformed into night. The area around them had turned pitch black, and only some faint details of the surrounding area could be made out. The entire area seemed to be covered with black fog.

The black fog was everywhere, and it was filled with a cold aura.

“A formation.” Ning immediately understood that he had entered a formation.

“Someone actually came to die. Hahaha!” An evil, ear-piercing laugh suddenly rang out. “Little human child, your flesh will definitely be very delicious. I will slowly devour you bite by bite.”

Ning stood there, staring into the endless black fog surrounding him. He could just barely see to a distance of ten meters. Beyond that, he couldn’t see anything. In his hands, the two Darknorth swords had already appeared.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 4: Underwater Estate Chapter 13: Zifu Disciple

“Go ahead and kill me.”

“Even as a ghost, I won’t forgive you.”

“Aaargh!”

“No, no, no!”

Standing in the middle of the boundless darkness of the great formation, sounds could vaguely be heard from everywhere, as though many people were suffering terrifying torments. Ji Ning was secretly startled. "They wildly purchased so many slaves, and even controlled the leaders of some tribes to snatch up some slaves through battling other tribes. What are they doing!"

"No matter what, first I have to leave." Ning stared seriously at his surroundings. With a 'swoosh', he charged forward, moving more than a kilometer. And then, he once more turned and began to sprint, retreat, leap forward...within the pitch black, foggy formation, Ning moved around at high speed for a long time, but no matter where he moved, he remained within the formation filled with the dark fog and cold air.

"Not good." Ning's face changed slightly. "This is no ordinary maze formation. I moved at such high speed and constantly changed directions, but the formation remained utterly stable. The person controlling this formation is most likely not a Xiantian lifeform."

During this past month of pursuit, Ning had focused on training in the [Nine Scrolls on Formations] and had made some accomplishments. Although he was unable to easily defeat the formation in front of him, he was able to tell...this was far above the likes of simple formations such as the Yin Yang Twin Energy Formation. It was an extremely intricate formation, and a magic treasure capable of setting up this sort of formation would have to be considered a ranked magic treasure.

There was no way for a Xiantian lifeform to bind a ranked magic treasure.

"A person on the level of a Wanxiang Adept wouldn't deign to act in such a manner in a place like Swallow Mountain. Nine out of ten...the person who set up this formation should be a Zifu Disciple, and one specialized in using poisons." Ning quickly came to this conclusion based on what he had encountered previously.

"Human child, I'm coming for you." The ear-piercing laugh reverberated within the endless black mist.

Ning just stood there, completely unmoving, while at the same time, around him appeared three fire lotus petals and three water lotus petals. The two layers of lotus petals slowly swiveled around Ning in opposite directions...

"Hahaha!" A sinister laughter echoed.

Shua!

A shadow suddenly leapt forth from the dark mist, pouncing towards Ning. But when that shadow saw Ning being protected by the Waterflame Lotus, it paused slightly.

"Hmph." Ning's eyes had a fierce look flash past them, and he immediately charged forward, his Darknorth sword in his hand transforming into a ray of firelight as he executed the 'Thunderflash Flint', chopping the shadow in half.

Hua....

The shadow instantly split into mist, then glided backwards before reforming into a mutant beast. Hidden in the darkness, there was no way to clearly see the mutant beast at all.

“This isn’t a human child, this is a human Xiantian lifeform who has been training for who-knows how many years!” The ear-piercing sound emanated out from the mist, travelling a long distance. “This human most likely broke through to become a Xiantian when very young, and so his features remain so very young. In addition, he has a protective lotus surrounding his body. The lotus flower around his body should be a magic treasure.”

From far off in the distance, another clear, cold voice echoed forth. “If he isn’t a Zifu Disciple, he doesn’t matter. Just kill him.”

“I’ll handle it.” The mutant beast in front of Ning, hidden in the mist, said directly.

Hearing this, Ning’s face changed slightly.

If he isn’t a Zifu Disciple, he doesn’t matter. For someone to dare say something like this most likely meant that the person who set up this formation really was a Zifu Disciple! In addition, the one who had attacked just now was nothing more than a monstrous beast, most likely a spirit beast under the command of that Zifu Disciple.

“My Master said.” The mutant beast in the mist slowly began to change positions, occasionally appearing here, and then over there. “When adventuring in the outside world, the younger a human you encounter, the harder they are to deal with. It looks like his words weren’t wrong...but unfortunately, you ran into me!”

Ning just stood there calmly.

After a person reached the Xiantian lifeform stage, that person would no longer be a mortal, and his appearance would remain virtually unchanged. Only when he began to reach the limits of his life would he slowly age. Thus, elderly looking Xiantian lifeforms were virtually all over a century old. Ji Yichuan, who had first made his name echo in Swallow Mountain, and then had gone out adventuring for many years before bringing his wife back, was now nearly fifty, but he still looked exactly as he had when he was a youngster. If a Xiantian lifeform looked like a child, then that meant that he became a Xiantian lifeform when he was a child.

Thus, the younger one appeared, the harder they were to deal with.

Even some Immortals might have the appearance of a child.

“Swish!” “Swish!” “Swish!”

Suddenly, three black rays shot towards Ning, but when they hit those swiveling lotus petals of fire and water which were protecting Ning, they just barely broke through the first layer of lotus petals, but the second layer successfully blocked them.

The enormous black shadow emerged from the mist, and an enormous claw grabbed towards Ning!

“Dang!” Ning’s sword light flashed, and the grab attempt was blocked while Ning himself dodged to the side.

“Eh?” Ning frowned as he looked. This was a mutant beast which looked like a panther. Ning was actually momentarily unable to recognize what sort of mutant beast this was, primarily because many mutant beasts had mixed lineages, which would often result in mutant beasts. The mutant beast in

front of him could only be said to look similar to a Bi'an Tiger. Its body was extremely long. The mutant beast stared at Ning, its tail swaying. Its tail had circles of black bony spikes which, if struck onto a person's body, would definitely be no weaker than a whip-type magic treasure striking a person.

Ning's pupils contracted, and he transformed into a blur.

Windwing Evasion!

Swoosh!

Moving as fast as lightning, he pounced towards the mutant beast, and the mutant Diremonster's twin claws snatched towards Ning as well.

"Raindrop Pierces Rocks!" A water-like sword light flashed past, seeming like a drop of water falling down, and with a thundering sound, that mutant Diremonster collapsed to the ground, rolling a few times before coming to a halt, no longer moving. Its head had a large hole in it, with blood and brain matter flowing outside.

Ning quietly landed on the ground, still holding his twin swords as he cautiously stared around himself. He only glanced sideways at the mutant beast. "Nothing more than a late-stage Xiantian level Diremonster!"

"Black Needle!"

"Black Needle!" From afar came the call of that cold voice. "Is that human dead yet? Black Needle! Black--"

Quickly, that clear, cold voice went silent.

"I killed the mutant, but he didn't know about it. It seems that mutant beast wasn't his spirit-beast." Ning understood that there wasn't necessarily only a single Zifu Disciple here in this mountain. It was very possible that a hidden power was here! But the person capable of setting up this sort of formation had to at least be a Zifu Disciple.

"This is big trouble." Ning hadn't imagined that in the Swallow Mountain area, at the borders of the Ji clan and the Ironwood clan, such a powerful force was hidden.

Ning was trapped within the great formation. The protective Waterflame Lotus swirled around him, and in his mind, he was constantly pondering formations. The [Nine Scrolls on Formations] were abstruse, especially those extremely hard to memorize diagrams, but Ning had still been able to forcibly commit the contents of the first scroll to memory. He was currently using the greater part of his mental power to analyze them.

"I have to break this formation. While trapped here, all I can do is allow them to use whatever techniques they have against me." Ning focused on analyzing the formation, while constantly hearing miserably cries, fierce curses. It seemed as though a true hell was hidden within this mountain.

Ji clan of the West Prefecture. Snowfall Palace.

Ji Young was seated at the throne of the palace, while Ji Yichuan, Ji Lee, and others were all seated below him, their faces all solemn.

“In the past ten days.” Ji Lee’s voice was rather hoarse, and his eyes were rather red. “The Five Prefectures of our Ji clan has already had multiple Xiantian lifeforms disappear! We have neither found them alive nor found their corpses!”

“Prefecture Lord, who has come to the territory of our Ji clan to cause trouble?”

“Find them and destroy them.”

“I’ve almost gone crazy in the past few days. My close friend! I must find him and rescue him.”

The members of the Ji clan seated below couldn’t help but howl.

Ji Lee, glaring, let out a hiss, “My son has gone missing as well. I must find him, I must!” And then, he looked at the Prefecture Lord, seated in the throne. “Elder brother, up till now, how many Xiantian lifeforms have gone missing? Also, who exactly is acting against our Ji clan? Have we found the culprit?”

“Based on the news which the Central Prefecture just sent over, up till now, already twenty three Xiantian lifeforms have gone missing.” Ji Young shook his head. “And most of them are fairly powerful and quite famous Xiantian lifeforms! The Five Prefectures of the Ji clan have lost five of our Commanders who were outside. As for where they have gone, there’s no trace of them at all.”

“This is provoking our Ji clan. They show no regard for the Ji clan at all.” Lee bellowed.

Young’s eyes were red. “All the ones who went missing were quite powerful and were at least mid-stage Xiantian lifeforms. There were even late-stage Xiantian lifeforms, and even peak Xiantian lifeforms! They are running roughshod over our Ji clan, then pissing on our faces! We have to find the culprits! No matter how great the price, we must destroy them!”

Yichuan, seated to one side, spoke out. “They must be destroyed indeed. However, based on my experience, this power should have a Zifu Disciple guarding it.”

“Oh?” Everyone looked towards Yichuan.

Yichuan, after all, had gone adventuring outside. He had even gone to the Darknorth Seas. His experience was greater than theirs.

Yichuan continued, “There are two possibilities which have the greatest likelihood. The first is that it should be some sort of fleeing tribe, who lost their city and no longer have a base and were sent wandering...but the remnants of this tribe are still very powerful. Thus, they want to cause a battle here in Swallow Mountain and conquer a commandery city through it.”

With a commandery city, they would have their own territory. Only then would a tribe have a base!

“The second possibility is that it is a fleeing Immortal practitioner. The Immortal practitioners of some evil sects will use souls and corpses to train in some evil magic spells. Snatching Xiantian lifeforms is

done because Xiantian lifeforms have more powerful souls, and can be better used to train in some magic spells.” Yichuan said.

“And the disappearance of Xiantian lifeforms,” Yichuan continued, “Based on the intelligence of our Ji clan, is not just limited to the Ji clan, but also the nearby Ironwood clan! The Riverbank clan has Xiantian lifeforms missing as well. Only, we don’t know how many Xiantian lifeforms they have lost. For them to act so wildly means that the power which has come to our Swallow Mountain is not weak. We absolutely must get revenge, and we must rescue the missing Xiantian lifeforms, but we cannot be rash. We need to first discover the true situation regarding the opponents, and then set a strategy to destroy them at one blow!”

Everyone in the palace went silent.

The Desolate Era

Book 4: Underwater Estate Chapter 14: Revered Master

Ji Yichuan walked by himself on the stone brick road, his forehead furrowed in thought. He knew that this affair would be a tough trial for the Ji clan, but any organization which wanted to survive in this world would have to be able to endure repeatedly trials! After passing them, the roots of the clan would naturally grow deeper and grow more powerful. But if they weren’t able to pass them, then the clan would be exterminated! It would be lucky if even a few survivors managed to flee and pass down the bloodline.

“Master.

“Master.” Some of the servants knelt down on the side to welcome him.

Yichuan walked into his residence, then headed back to the place where he normally stayed. Suddenly, a female servant hurriedly rushed over. Upon seeing Yichuan, she was so frightened, she immediately knelt down.

“Why are you in such a rush? Consider your image!” Yichuan frowned and barked.

“Master.” The female servant’s face was white with tension. “Madame, Madame, she...”

Yichuan’s face instantly changed. “What’s wrong with Snow?”

“Madame fainted!” The female servant said frantically.

“Fainted?” Yichuan’s face instantly turned white. As an expert Ki Refiner, how could she faint? If his wife fainted, there could only be one reason.

“Snow!” Yichuan instantly turned into a gust of wind, disappearing from that area.

Within the room.

Yuchi Snow was quietly lying on the bed. Her face was rather pale, but her features were still so beautiful, so calm.

“Snow.” Yichuan instantly appeared within the room. Seeing his wife lying there, he hurriedly walked forward and carefully inspected her. He couldn’t help but glance at the female servant. “What exactly happened?”

The female servant was shaking in terror, and had knelt down long ago. “Master, the Madame had been drinking tea and was perfectly fine. Nobody touched the Madame, and nobody spoke with the Madame. But suddenly, the Madame’s body turned weak and she just collapsed. All of us panicked. I carefully lifted the Madame back into the room, while Keepleaf went to call you, Master.”

“How could this happen.” A look of agony was on Yichuan’s face. “How could this happen! Quick, quick, go have Shaman Cao immediately come over!”

“Yes.” The female servant immediately retreated, leaving behind only Yichuan and his wife in the room.

Yichuan sat at the side of the bed, looking at his wife. He stretched his hand out to stroke her face, murmuring, “Is this day truly here? When you gave birth to Ning, I feared that this day would come. I don’t believe it. I don’t believe it. You will definitely survive. I will accompany you and we will both watch our son become into an incredible hero.”

Moments later.

A big-bearded old man dressed in filthy animal skins walked in. His body naturally carried an herbal fragrance. Shamans and apothecaries were a group of people who had a great deal of experience in natural herbs and remedies. The boundless world was a very miraculous place, and it had all sorts of curious types of things living within it. Even the most seemingly ordinary herbs, once combined in a certain manner, could have some unique effects.

This Shaman Cao was one of the most skilled in herbs in the Ji clan of the West Prefecture.

“Shaman Cao.” Yichuan looked towards the big-bearded elder. “My wife just fainted for no reason. You take a look.”

“Commander, please step back.” Shaman Cao said in his hoarse voice, and Yichuan hurriedly moved to the side, stepping back to make way for him. Shaman Cao stretched out his dry hand, as skinny as a chicken claw, placing it against Snow’s forehead. Instantly, a spot of green light was birthed from Shaman Cao’s palm, and it began to slowly seep into Snow’s body.

A very strong herbal odor began to fill the area.

Shaman Cao closed his eyes. After a long time, Shaman Cao took his hand back. As for Snow, who had previously been in a state of unconsciousness, her eyebrows trembled, and then she opened her eyes.

“Snow.” Yichuan, shocked and overjoyed, hurriedly went forward while at the same time looking at Shaman Cao. “How is my wife?”

“Please forgive me for my inability.” Shaman Cao shook his head. “Commander, you’d best go invite the clan leader.”

“The clan leader?” Yichuan’s heart clenched.

The clan leader was the clan leader for the entire Five Prefectures of the Ji clan. His name was Ji Ninefire. An old fellow who had lived for nearly four hundred years, a true ancestor of the Ji clan. Of course, he was also a Zifu Disciple! Ji Ninefire loved to research, and had significant accomplishments in both formations, medicines, and poisons. In terms of medical treatment, he was naturally incomparably superior to Shaman Cao.

"I'll immediately take Snow over to him." Yichuan said hurriedly.

"No." Shaman Cao said hurriedly. "Commander, you cannot be rash. The Madame currently can't withstand any shaking or bumping. She needs to quietly recuperate. If you can invite the clan leader to come, that would be for the best." Shaman Cao came to a halt. He knew that inviting the clan leader to come would be very difficult.

Yichuan nodded, then immediately instructed a nearby maidservant, "Immediately go invite Commander Ji Redflower over."

Moments later.

Redflower, dressed in red clothing, walked in. "Yichuan, what do you need me for?"

"Aunty Flower." Yichuan, upon seeing this person, hurriedly said, "I want to ask you to ride on your Azure Firebird and immediately head to the Central Prefecture. Invite the clan leader to pay a visit to our Western Prefecture."

"Invite the clan leader?" Redflower was startled. The clan leader had stopped managing the clan's affairs long ago, and spent all of his time in research and training...even if Ji Young, the Prefecture Lord of the Western Prefecture went to invite him, the clan leader still probably wouldn't come. "If I go invite him, would he come?"

Yichuan said hurriedly, "Just tell him that I, Ji Yichuan, have a life-and-death matter and that I am asking the clan leader to come to the Western Prefecture City. The clan leader will definitely come."

Although Redflower was still puzzled at why Yichuan was so confident that the clan leader would definitely come, she still nodded. "Fine. I'll go make a visit to the 'City of Ten Thousand Swords'."

The Grand Xia Dynasty had erected countless commandery cities throughout the world. The Ji clan was only in control of a single one, the 'City of Ten Thousand Swords'. This was the 'Central Prefecture' of the Five Prefectures of the Ji clan! As for the Eastern Prefecture, Western Prefecture, Southern Prefecture, and Northern Prefecture, they had all been built by the Ji clan, and had nothing special about them.

"Sorry to trouble you." Yichuan said in thanks.

Redflower immediately left, then quickly mounted her Azure Firebird and left the Western Prefecture City, heading towards the City of Ten Thousand Swords!

The maidservants in the room had left as well, leaving behind only Yichuan and his wife, Snow.

"Yichuan." Snow smiled, lifting her head up to look at her man.

“Snow.” Yichuan sat by the side of the bed, holding his wife’s hand.

Snow shook her head gently. “I know it. You know it too. When we returned from the Darknorth Sea and suffered that attack on the way back, we were very lucky to be able to survive and return. The past ten years have been very calm and very happy. I am already content.”

“If, if that year, you hadn’t given birth to Ning...” Yichuan’s voice was somewhat hoarse.

Snow gently shook her head. “This is our child. I had to give birth to him. Even though using the secret technique resulted in me losing some years of my life, it was worth it! I had been heavily injured. If I hadn’t given birth to Ning then, who knows if I would have been able to give birth later on. Ning has the blood of both of us in his veins. And what’s more, his life was bought using the life of my elder brother.”

“Elder brother.” Yichuan still remembered that great battle they had fought on the way back.

That great battle had changed the fate of three people.

The Yuchi siblings, and himself, Ji Yichuan.

“Quick, take my little sister and go! Quick, go!”

The image of that tall, powerful back. That furious roar. Yichuan had never forgotten it.

“If we gave up Ning, perhaps I would have been able to live for a few more years, but I wouldn’t have been able to have a child with you. I would have regretted it my entire life. He has the bloodline of the Ji clan, and he also has the bloodline of my Yuchi clan.” Yuchi Snow said gently, “I’ve had ten years by your side, and I also have an incomparably clever son...I am incomparably happy and incomparably satisfied. These past ten years, I have felt very blessed and very happy.”

Yichuan gently held his wife’s hand.

“Ning is my pride and joy.” Snow said slowly. “I don’t regret giving birth to Ning.”

“Right.” Yichuan nodded gently. “I understand. Understand. In less than two hours, the clan leader will be here. Let the clan leader take a look. Perhaps it isn’t too terrible.”

Snow nodded. “If I can live for another year or two, let’s not tell Ning about this for now. If I won’t be able to live for much longer, then let Ning return.” And then, Snow looked towards her man, her eyes shining. “Yichuan, I am so blessed to have had you and Ning.”

“Alright.” Yichuan looked at his wife and said gently, “I feel the same way.”

But neither Yichuan nor Snow knew that right now, their son Ning was in dire straits. He was in the great mountain between the borders of the Ji clan and the Ironwood clan, which from afar seemed ordinary and unremarkable. Upon entering this mountain, however, one would fall into a pit of endless dark fog and never come out again.

The protective lotus petals swiveled around him. Ning sat there in the lotus position, currently focusing on the [Nine Scrolls on Formations], constantly hypothesizing and thinking about how to break this formation as soon as possible.

At the midpoint of the mountain.

One miserable scream after another emanated from places throughout the midway point of the mountain. All sorts of furious, hateful curses, wild pleas, and sobs all constantly assaulted the ears, while in the center of the mountain, there were multiple pillars with men and women bound to them. At a glance, one could see over a hundred men and women, their bodies covered in scars.

Beaten, humiliated, tormented...all sorts of cruel methods had been used on them.

“Xiantian lifeforms? You still think you are Xiantian lifeforms? Hahaha, drink it all, drink some of this wonderful urine to quench your thirst!” The muscular servants were wildly tormenting them.

Standing in the center of the mountain, there were six beautiful dressed men and women. They calmly watched all of this.

“We’ve purchased more than a million ordinary slaves in this Swallow Mountain region, and seized nearly a hundred Xiantian lifeforms. However, we are still quite a ways off from the requirements of Master.” A black-clothed woman who had a scorpion on her shoulders said slowly.

“Senior apprentice-brother is currently outside capturing Xiantian lifeforms. We’ll quickly be at the necessary numbers.” A handsome youth smiled. “However, one of Master’s spirit-beasts, Blackneedle, went to kill an enemy within the formation, but was instead killed. My fellow apprentice-brothers and apprentice-sisters, how do you think we should deal with this?”

“Younger apprentice-brother, you are naturally talented. It’s best if you go.”

“Younger apprentice-brother...”

The nearby men and women all looked at the handsome youth. Seeing the situation, his face darkened. None of these fellow martial apprentices were fools. Although all of them has extraordinary abilities, since they knew that the person within the formation could easily kill the spirit-beast ‘Blackneedle’, none of them were willing to go. After all, going meant encountering some risk.

Suddenly...

Kakaka...

From within the mountain, a location began to turn and swivel. One metal plate after another began to move open, revealing a corridor. Within the dark corridor, there was a hint of green light, and an icy cold aura swept out from within.

“Master.” The six men and women all called out respectfully in unison.

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Book 4: Underwater Estate Chapter 15: Wraith

From the dark abyss below came a sharp yet calm voice. “Little Seven, you are the most clever. You can go handle this matter. Get rid of this intruder.”

“Yes, revered Master.” The handsome youth didn’t hesitate at all as he replied with respect.

“Go, then.”

Just as the words ended...

Kakaka.....

The metal board immediately rose up from the floor, once more tightly sealing away that corridor. Only now did those six men and women let out sighs of relief. Although they were their master’s closest disciples, whenever they faced their master, they still felt terrified. This was because those disciples who had dared to offend their master had all been tortured to death, and would never even have the chance to be reborn.

“Who knows what sort of magic treasure Master is currently refining.” A violet-clothed young man said softly. “All together, from start to finish, including the people we tortured to death in other places, we’ve killed hundreds of Xiantian lifeforms, and an uncountable number of ordinary people. Master even said that once he finishes with this magic treasure, even if he encounters a Wanxiang Adept, he won’t be afraid. Who knows what sort of magic treasure this is?”

“It definitely is a terrifyingly powerful one.”

“Right now, Master’s magic treasure is only half completed, but he already pays no attention to those Zifu Disciples located in the tribes of Swallow Mountain. When he truly completes it...” The six men and women chatted softly. They were very curious about this mysterious magic treasure which their master was busy creating, but unfortunately, their master had remained deep within his study this entire time and had forbidden anyone from entering.

As for that tunnel, as soon as it shut, not a single sound would come from outside.

“Whoosh!”

A blurry, savage ghost suddenly came out from the body of one of the Xiantian lifeforms bound to the pillar. It let out a soundless scream, and then that blurry ghost sank down into the stones, being gathered to the depths of the mountain, towards that hidden room. This scene caused those six men and women to feel nervous. Only a true dread wraith would be visible to the naked eye.

“Yet another wraith!”

The six men and women thought back to their second apprentice-brother, who had offended their master. He had been tortured to death, and then he had been transformed into a dread wraith, then been absorbed in. Even wraiths were being drawn down...clearly, whoever died there would never have the chance for rebirth.

“Little Seven, go deal with the enemy in the formation.” His fellow apprentices exhorted.

“Stop rushing me.” The handsome youth immediately walked outside.

The dark fog was everywhere. The handsome youth quietly moved forwards, and everywhere he went, that black fog automatically opened a pathway for him.

A Dao-seal appeared out of nowhere in the handsome youth's left hand. On the surface of the Dao-seal, there was a blood vessel like pattern of strange characters. On his right hand, a horsetail whisk appeared.

"Let's go." With a flip of the horsetail whisk, hundreds of white strands of light immediately transformed to a size of dozens of meters, swirling around towards the lotus-position seated Ji Ning.

Ji Ning was seated in the lotus position. Suddenly, he sensed something, and he raised his head to look.

The entire area around him was filled with those white strands.

"Break." Ning barked softly, and the Waterflame Lotus that had been swiveling around him instantly increased greatly in size. The two enormous layers of lotus petals swiveled, and those invading white strands that had sought to entangle him were all snapped, completely unable to draw near Ning.

"Controlling fire and water?" The pupils of the distant, handsome youth immediately contracted. "It seems he is a Fiendgod Body Refiner at the Xiantian level. This will be troublesome. I had wanted to rely on my horsetail whisk to directly seize him, but it seems that won't be possible." The hundreds of white strands quickly returned, then disappeared. In his right hand, a long whip appeared.

"You've invaded our formation. Immediately report your name!" The handsome youth shouted.

Ning was already on his feet, and he glanced at the handsome youth. "This is the border between the Ironwood clan and the Ji clan, but you seem to neither be of the Ji clan nor of the Ironwood clan. Who are you, exactly?"

"If I told you, you'd be frightened to death." The handsome youth sneered.

"Why don't you give it a try and see if I'll be frightened to death." Ning wielded a sword in each hand.

"The only thing you need to see is my whip." The handsome youth didn't continue the conversation. Clearly, he didn't want to explain where he was from. He immediately struck out with his whip, and the black whip slashed through the air, elongating at high speed. By the time it reached Ning, the whip had already transformed into a black serpent head which bit straight at Ning.

Ning just looked at it. As soon as the long black whip broke through the first layer of the fire lotus, it was blocked by the second later of the water lotus.

"What sort of technique is that lotus of fire and water?" The handsome youth wasn't like that spirit-beast from earlier; he could immediately tell that Ning was a Fiendgod Body Refiner who could control fire and water, but he didn't understand how Ning's technique worked.

Swoosh!

Ning, who had previously been just calmly looking at the whip, suddenly without any warning began to use the Windwing Evasion technique. He instantly leapt over towards that handsome youth at an astonishing speed. At the same instant he leapt forward like a gust of smoke, the Darknorth swords in his hands executed Raindrop Pierces Rocks, stabbing straight towards the head of the handsome youth.

“Hard to deal with. Flee!” This entire time, the handsome youth had been clutching that Dao-seal in his left hand. He suddenly activated it and it transformed into a blurry shadow and entered his body...and then the handsome youth suddenly disappeared into thin air.

Swoosh. Ning appeared in front of where that handsome youth had been. He began to frown. “An escape technique? He should have relied on that Dao-seal to use this technique. A Xiantian Ki Refiner actually has an escape-type Dao-seal. The Zifu Disciple behind him definitely dotes on him.”

Dao-seals were divided by class as well.

The Divine Speed Seal, Light Body Seal, Diamond Seal, Giant Strength Seal, and other Dao-seals were all the lowest class seals, which escape seals were clearly on a higher level. For example, the ‘Traceless Talisman’ was a type of Dao-seal that was so precious you couldn’t even buy it with money. Only, unfortunately, he wasn’t carrying the ‘Traceless Talisman’ on him. Even if he was, because Ning was trapped within this formation, he was unable to tell which direction he was in, there was no way that Ning could use it to go directly into the insides of the mountain. Of course, he could still rely on the Traceless Talisman to immediately flee, but unfortunately, he didn’t have it on him.

“Although I have Escape Seals on me, this trapping formation has activated the five elements. I’m completely unable to ‘escape’.” Ning was certain about this. He had pondered for a long time, and he could be considered to have a good level of attainment in formations.

He had some understanding regarding the formation he was trapped in as well.

When the five elements were activated, there was no way to ‘escape’, unless the master of the formation voluntarily helped out. Unfortunately, the master of this formation only wanted his death. How could he help out?

The handsome youth quickly charged back to the midway point of the mountain.

“Little Seven’s back.”

“Younger apprentice brother, have you executed the enemy?”

“With our younger apprentice brother having personally intervened, he definitely captured the trespasser with ease.” Those fellow apprentices, seeing the look on the handsome youth’s face, immediately knew that he had definitely failed, so they immediately began to ridicule him.

The handsome youth barked back, “Fellow apprentices, you have no idea as to how powerful this enemy is. If I had just been a bit slower in fleeing, I probably would have lost my life to him.”

“He’s that formidable?”

“Does he have some sort of powerful magic treasure?” The other five men and women were all astonished. They knew how powerful this younger apprentice-brother of theirs was.

The handsome youth said hurriedly, “He is just like our senior apprentice-brother. He trains in both ki and Body! He is a Xiantian level practitioner as a Fiendgod Refiner as well, and he was able to reach me in an instant. Fortunately, I had been holding the Escape Seal from the very beginning, and so I was lucky

enough to escape. His speed alone indicates that he is probably a peak Xiantian-level Fiendgod Body Refiner.”

“Ah?”

“A peak Xiantian Fiendgod Body Refiner?”

“Where did such a powerful figure suddenly come from?” The other five fellow apprentices were all shocked.

The handsome youth sighed, “It seems we’ll have to wait for our senior apprentice-brother. Senior apprentice-brother has already reached the peak Xiantian level in both ki and Body, and he also has all sorts of magic treasures and poisons...the large majority of the hundred Xiantian lifeforms we have caught in the Swallow Mountain area were all captured by senior apprentice-brother.”

“Who is speaking about me?” A low voice rang out.

The six men and women hurriedly turned to look. At the halfway point of the mountain, near that enormous cave entrance, a man dressed in a black cloak with unbound hair walked in. That icy, sinister aura was just the same as their revered master’s. The man was currently carrying a large sack. As he walked into the mountain estate, he tossed the bag to the floor. At the opening of the bag, some feet could be seen.

“Senior apprentice-brother.” The six men and women immediately called out respectfully. They all knew exactly how formidable their senior apprentice-brother was. They had all fled secretly with their master, and on the way, their senior apprentice-brother had even battled once against a Zifu Disciple and lived to tell the tale.

“I went to the Kou clan’s territory and seized these three Xiantian lifeforms. I’ve already destroyed their dantian’s. Go tie them up.” The black cloaked man instructed.

Immediately, servants charged forward and dragged out the three people in the sack. One woman, two men. The woman was incomparably charming, but in a dazed state.

“So even the bewitching beauty, ‘Kou Hua’, was captured.”

“Three more.”

“All of the Kou clan.”

The captured Ji clan, Ironwood clan, and Riverbank clan Xiantian level members of the Swallow Mountain region all glanced over. Immediately, the black-cloaked man’s face turned savage, and his eyes emanated a green light. “I ordered you to torment them, torment them until they go insane, torment them until they died. But look at them; they actually have the presence of mind to look at these three. If you aren’t able to torment to death, if a single one of them doesn’t become a dread wraith, then I will make sure all of you become dread wraiths!”

“Yesyesyes.” Those servants were absolutely terrified, and then all of them threw themselves forward, using all methods at their disposal to torment these Xiantian lifeforms with destroyed dantians.

Seeing their senior apprentice-brother angry, the other six men and women were all frightened as well.

The black-robed man turned his head to look at his fellow apprentices. “Just now, you were speaking of me?”

The Desolate Era

Book 4: Underwater Estate Chapter 16: Clansmen

“Senior apprentice-brother, within the formation with our revered master set up, an enemy who secretly entered has been trapped. He looks just like a youth.” That handsome youth addressed as ‘Little Seven’ immediately said. “But his power is astonishingly great. Even one of Master’s spirit-beasts, ‘Blackneedle’, was killed, and I almost lost my life as well.”

The black-clothed man frowned. “Oh? He’s that powerful?”

“Very powerful. That enemy is also both a Ki Refiner and a Body Refiner. He should be a peak Xiantian expert. Only you, senior apprentice-brother, will be able to kill him.”

“Once senior apprentice-brother uses his ‘Intoxicating Dragonspit’ technique, no matter how powerful he is, he will definitely faint and be easily captured.”

All of them were boasting and praising him.

The black-clothed man looked at the fellow disciples. “Just a single intruder causes all of you to feel helpless! Hmph, Master is currently busy forging his magic treasure and cannot spare any attention. Since the six of you aren’t able to do anything else competently, then you can go personally torment those Xiantian lifeforms. At least you’ll be helping Master with his magic treasure.”

“Yes, senior apprentice-brother.” The six men and women all responded in unison, and then all of them picked up the various tools on the floor and began to walk towards those Xiantian lifeforms.

Those bound Xiantian lifeforms who had their dantians destroyed were virtually all from the Swallow Mountain region. As for the other Xiantian lifeforms, they were extremely rare, because most had been tortured to death long ago. Even the few dozen who didn’t die yet were at the verge of death.

“Both a ki and a Body Refiner? Peak Xiantian? Let’s take a look.” The black-clothed man snorted, then walked out.

“The Three Powers [Heaven, Earth, Man] as the foundation.” Ji Ning, surrounded and protected by his Waterflame Lotus, was seated in the lotus position, quietly chanting while looking at the formation around himself. “The Five Elements, with water and earth making up the majority...the variables lie in these areas.”

In his mind, a model of this enormous formation naturally came into being. He was currently thoroughly investigating the secrets of this formation.

Ning suddenly rose to his feet.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Instantly, he transformed into blur and repeatedly changed directions several times. The faster he moved, the greater the amount of pressure he would place on the formation, giving him a chance to test where the strengths and weaknesses of the formation lay.

“It is even more profound and intricate than the formation I just envisioned.” Ning shook his head. “If I had a chance to see the formation flags or formation marks, I would quickly understand the secrets of this formation.” He knew that this was a formation controlled by a Zifu Disciple. Perhaps because the Zifu Disciple, for some special reasons, was busy, he had been unable to come and deal with Ning personally.

But Ning knew that this was just a temporary situation. Once the Zifu Disciple attacked, given how powerful a Zifu Disciple naturally was, given that Ning was trapped within this confusing formation, he would definitely die.

“I must break this formation.”

Time was of the essence. Under this invisible pressure, Ning whole-heartedly was analyzing this formation, and his understanding of formations was constantly increasing. Fortunately, his previous life had given him a good foundation, while in this life, his soul was incredibly powerful, and he also had the guide to formations left behind by that Loose Immortal. Only because he had these three aspects combined did he have such an astonishing rate of improvement. However, to break this formation by this Zifu Disciple...he was still quite a ways off.

The great formation of this Zifu Disciple, if one wanted to destroy it through strength, would have to use tremendous force! Power at the same level naturally wouldn't be enough. Perhaps even a Wanxiang Adept would find it difficult to destroy it forcibly. As for Ning, without question, he had to defeat the formation through understanding its secrets. Only then would he be able to easily defeat it. Break through it by raw force? He was far from being able to.

“Wu!” The black fog in front of him seemed to grow slightly dimmer. A dark figure could faintly be seen in the distance, which was currently looking at Ning, seated in the lotus position, with curiosity. “Control over water and fire? That protective lotus seems to be rather extraordinary.”

Pu!

The black-clothed man was currently holding a bottle in his hand. He pulled the stopper out, and the bottle began to release gusts of a mind-intoxicating scent. This bottle contained within it ‘Intoxicating Dragonspit’. If one directly drank this thing, perhaps even a Wanxiang Adept would immediately faint. But of course, it would be quite hard to get a Wanxiang Adept to drink it. After all, as soon as he smelled it, he would know not to drink it.

The scent of Intoxicating Dragonspit alone, when smelled, was enough to cause virtually all Xiantian lifeforms to faint and collapse. As the senior apprentice, he had been bestowed this Intoxicating Dragonspit by his revered master, which was why he was able to stealthily capture so many Xiantian lifeforms.

“Fall, fall, fall!” The black-clothed figure looked expectantly at Ning.

“Hm?”

The lotus-position seated Ning felt a fragrance assault his nostrils. Immediately, his body went soft and his head grew dizzy. However, by relying on the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens] and the Fiendgod body it had given him, which was incomparably stronger than that of normal Fiendgods, although Ning felt slightly dizzy, the divine power in his body, when activated, quickly blocked this feeling.

“Which scoundrel is using tricks from hiding!” Ning hurriedly stood up and shouted loudly!

“Hahaha. You are indeed a Xiantian-level Fiendgod, and thus very hard to make faint.” The distant black-clothed man walked over. “A Xiantian-level Fiendgod Body Refiner whose body is akin to a Fiendgod’s. To make you faint is as hard as making a Zifu-level Ki Refiner faint. This is why all of the people I have been capturing in Swallow Mountain have been Xiantian Ki Refiners.”

“Xiantian Ki Refiners, upon smelling this, will immediately collapse. After destroying their dantian, they won’t be able to resist at all. Fiendgod practitioners, however, will be able to regrow their dantian after it is destroyed. They are quite hard to control. In addition, torturing a Xiantian Body Refiner to death is too hard.” The black-clothed man mumbled to himself.

Ning stared at the distant, black-clothed figure. His swords were in his hands, and he was incomparably cautious, because the distant man, when walking over, gave off an invisible pressure...the tyrannical aura which only a Xiantian Fiendgod gave off. Clearly, the man had already activated the divine power in his body. Once his power was fully activated, he would attack.

“You said you captured Xiantian lifeforms?” Ning stared at him.

The black-clothed man didn’t answer the question. A look on his face that seemed like a smile and yet wasn’t, he said to Ning, “If my guess is correct, you should be young master ‘Ji Ning’ of the Ji clan.”

“Eh?” Ji Ning was startled.

In this era, communication was only possible through shouting to others, while distant communication was through running between tribes. Thus, only the high level members of some tribes knew of Ji Ning’s name. Even if they knew his name, however, they wouldn’t be able to recognize him...

“It seems I didn’t guess wrongly.” The black-clothed man sighed. “In the entire Swallow Mountain area, there can only be one person who is so young in appearance, and yet is a Xiantian lifeform who is even capable of making my fellow apprentices think he is a peak Xiantian expert. The only person capable of this must be the one who kicked down the city walls with three kicks and sent River Sansi flying with one kick. Young master Ji Ning.”

“You know quite a lot.” Ning looked at him.

The black-clothed man sighed. “Of course. I have to. In accordance with the orders from my master, I had to go capture a large number of Xiantian lifeforms throughout the Swallow Mountain region. Naturally, I need a good understanding of the intelligence reports regarding the various Xiantian experts of the Swallow Mountain area. If I didn’t prepare in advance and ended up accidentally ‘kicking an iron board’, I would be in trouble! For example, your father, Ji Yichuan...he had become a peak Xiantian long ago, and I even suspect that he is already a Zifu Disciple. I definitely wouldn’t go capture a person like him.”

“Only after getting a good understanding of a person would I go capture him. That is why so many Xiantian lifeforms went missing in the Swallow Mountain area, and yet no one knows who did it.” The black-clothed man looked at Ning. “So young, and yet so astonishingly strong. In the entire Swallow Mountain area, only you fit the criteria. In addition, this is the territory of the Ji clan of the West Prefecture, and you yourself are of the Ji clan of the West Prefecture.”

Ning was stunned.

Many Xiantian lifeforms had gone missing in the Swallow Mountain area? Why was it that he hadn't heard of this?

Actually, this was something which had only recently occurred. The capture of Xiantian lifeforms had to be done quickly. By the time the disappearance was noticed, perhaps days would have passed, and it also took time for the entire tribe to make a decision on what to do. Thus, he had to frantically seize the opportunity to capture as many as he could. He couldn't capture them slowly. Once the major powers of the various forces of Swallow Mountain reacted and began to set traps, it would be dangerous.

“Nearly a hundred Xiantian experts have ‘gone missing’ in Swallow Mountain.” The black-robed man looked at Ning. “Because this place is near the Ji clan, many of the Ji clan have gone missing, twenty four in total. There are some who directly belong to your Ji clan, while others belong to the tribes of your Ji clan. The Ji clan controls so much territory that I imagine up till now, your Ji clan still hasn't gotten a full picture of how many Xiantian lifeforms have gone missing.”

Ning was astonished.

The Ji clan...had actually...had actually lost many Xiantian lifeforms?

“Some have gone ‘missing’ from your Ji clan of the West Prefecture as well. Let me report a few names. I imagine you recognize them.” The black-clothed man said. “Ji Jadewich. Ji Shan. Poortile. Earthshaker. Blindfish. These five all directly belong to your Ji clan of the West Prefecture. You should know them, right?”

“Ah!”

Ning's face instantly turned white.

Ji Jadewich...that was the son of Ji Lee, his most talented son. In the past, during the fierce struggle between Ji Lee's lineage and the current line in control of the Prefecture Lord position, Jadewich had been one of the most fiercest in the struggle. Ning had once deeply disliked this man.

Ji Shan was a Xiantian lifeform of a younger generation of the Ji clan. Although he wasn't a Commander, the Ji clan of the West Prefecture had very great expectations for him. After all, his surname was 'Ji', and he also belonged to the primary line of descent.

Poortile was a newly promoted Xiantian lifeform which had been trained and recruited by the Ji clan of the West Prefecture. In Western Prefecture City, Ning had seen him quite a few times. Each time when Poortile saw him, he would bow slightly and call out, “Young master Ji Ning!”

Earthshaker was one of the twelve Commanders of the Ji clan!

Blindfish...Blindfish....Blindfish!!!

“Master Blindfish!” Ning’s heart was trembling.

Master Blindfish had taught him archery. To Ning, he was the closest, most familiar figure of the five.

All of them were familiar figures. After all, ever since he was young, he had grown up in Western Prefecture City. He had met with all of the Xiantian lifeforms of Western Prefecture City. Each year, at the gathering at Snowfall Palace, he would see this group of people. He was very familiar with them all. These people were his clansmen! Some of them had grudges against him, some of them were of the same lineage as him, while some were friends of him. One of them as the master archer who had taught him archery!

“You...” Ning’s face turned pale.

“You know them all, right? Haha.” The black-clothed man suddenly shouted loudly, “Ji Jadewich, Ji Shan, Poortile, Earthshaker, Blindfish, your young master Ji Ning of the Ji clan of the West Prefecture is within the formation. Your young master Ji Ning will soon accompany you! Hahaha...”

The voice was very loud, and it transmitted directly into the distant tunnel midway up the mountain.