

Overlord 271

Chapter 271: Chaos Manufacturing

Xiang Shaoyun was able to find the entrance to the tunnel. A pile of rocks had blocked the entrance. If Liang Zhuangmin hadn't left a mark nearby, he wouldn't have been able to locate the place again so easily. After all, the entire area had the same topography with stones everywhere.

Perhaps it was because some cannibals had already patrolled here not long ago, but there were currently no cannibals here even though it was very close to the lair of the cannibals. If he made too much noise, he might be discovered.

Left with no choice, Xiang Shaoyun transmitted a command to Xiong Bao to stop any cannibals from coming this way. No matter what, Xiong Bao was the son of the patriarch. Thus, he had a rather high status among the cannibals.

Xiang Shaoyun started moving the rocks away. Fortunately, the rocks only covered the entrance instead of the entire tunnel. Otherwise, he couldn't even begin to imagine the amount of time it would take to clear the tunnel. After clearing the entrance, the tunnel was revealed before his eyes. It was large enough for three or four adults to walk side by side.

After clearing the entrance, Xiang Shaoyun did not go back and inform Liang Zhuangmin immediately. It wasn't that he wanted to enter the lair of the cannibals alone, but he was planning to see if the other end of the tunnel was blocked as well. If it was also blocked, he had to think of a plan on how to deal with it.

Not long after, Xiang Shaoyun arrived at the other end of the tunnel. Sure enough, it was blocked as well. He released his Nether Soul Domain and started sensing the situation outside the entrance. A crude stone building was located beside the entrance. It was being guarded by a cannibal so old his fur was falling.

Xiang Shaoyun was about to extend his senses into the building when the old cannibal suddenly opened his eyes, seemingly having sensed something. It forced Xiang Shaoyun to cut short what he was doing and retreat. He could feel that the old cannibal was terrifyingly powerful and was at least a late-stage King Realm cannibal.

His strength was more than enough to mess up any humans stepping into the Land of Soul Springs. Xiang Shaoyun was not so conceited that he would believe himself a match for this old cannibal king. He traveled along the tunnel and exited at the other end before heading to where Liang Zhuangmin was at. But when he arrived, he found that Liang Zhuangmin was outside the cave.

"Brother Liang, you are recovering so fast!" Xiang Shaoyun exclaimed in shock.

Liang Zhuangmin revealed a simple smile and said, "After using some spirit medicines that I wasn't willing to use previously, it is only natural that I have recovered this fast."

It was a reasonable explanation, but Xiang Shaoyun wasn't naive enough to actually believe it. He did not expose the lie, though. After all, they had only just met each other. It was completely understandable that Liang Zhuangmin would be on guard against him.

An honest person may not necessarily be honest all the time, lamented Xiang Shaoyun inwardly. Instead of thinking too much into it, he told Liang Zhuangmin about the tunnel.

Liang Zhuangmin wanted to go right away, but Xiang Shaoyun stopped him, saying, "Now is not the best time to go."

"When do you think we should go, then?" Liang Zhuangmin asked.

"Wait until their lair is empty," said Xiang Shaoyun.

"Looks like you have a plan in mind, Brother Xiang?" Liang Zhuangmin said.

"Haha, just wait, Brother Liang. I promise we will get the earthstone heart smoothly," said Xiang Shaoyun with a hearty laugh.

If he hadn't saved Liang Zhuangmin, he wouldn't have known about the tunnel. With the tunnel, he had 70 percent confidence he would be able to obtain the earthstone heart successfully. Liang Zhuangmin couldn't understand why Xiang Shaoyun was so confident, but he was willing to believe in him.

Xiang Shaoyun then transmitted a command to Xiong Bao to start moving the experts of the cannibals away from the lair. The cannibals were simple-minded, and with Xiang Shaoyun controlling Xiong Bao remotely, Xiong Bao became one of the smartest cannibals around.

Xiang Shaoyun then got Xiong Bao to tell the cannibal kings that the spirit crystal mine had been plundered by the ghostrunes. The cannibals would always repay any grudge they had. Thus, they immediately gathered their army and headed toward the territory of the ghostrunes.

Just like that, a large number of cannibals were baited to the ghostrune territory. The lair of the cannibals became much emptier than before. It was now much easier to sneak inside, but it was still not enough for Xiang Shaoyun. He needed more chaos to reduce the risk. Thus, Xiang Shaoyun ordered Xiong Bao to start setting the surroundings of the lair on fire, causing the cannibals to panic.

One ought to know that the cannibals were akin to savages. With the long fur all over their body, they were extremely terrified of fire. The moment their fur caught on fire, it would be very hard to extinguish. That was also why they all resided in stone buildings instead of wooden buildings.

Of course, their lair was still surrounded by numerous plants. Thus, it wasn't a problem to create a fire. But of course, the timing of the fire needed to be right.

"Let's go, time for us to enter the tunnel," said Xiang Shaoyun.

Liang Zhuangmin was confused, but he did not ask anything and went along with Xiang Shaoyun. When they were about to reach the other end of the tunnel, Xiang Shaoyun ordered Xiong Bao to start the fire.

The cannibals had never expected that there would be a traitor among them. Thus, none of them suspected Xiong Bao. They merely roared and started putting out the fire. Fire sprung up everywhere around the lair, filling the lair with smoke and causing a great chaos among the cannibals. It was still not enough for Xiang Shaoyun. He gave Xiong Bao the final order to bait the old cannibal king away from the ancestral temple.

Thus, Xiong Bao appeared before the ancestral temple and greeted deferentially, "Ancestor, a great catastrophe is upon our clan. First, the ghostrunes plundered the spirit crystal mine we discovered. Next, they set our lair on fire. Ancestor, I beseech you to leave your seclusion and eliminate our enemies."

The old cannibal king opened his eyes and bellowed, "We and the ghostrunes have always stayed out of each other's business. Why are they suddenly attacking us?"

"I don't know either," answered Xiong Bao. "But they are setting fire around our lair, and a large number of them have arrived. Ancestor, I beg for your help."

"Why can't I sense their aura at all?" asked the old cannibal king. He had lived a long life; thus, it was natural that he was much smarter than the average cannibal.

"They have hidden themselves very well. If the ancestor does not lend a hand, our defeat is imminent," said Xiong Bao seriously.

Ultimately, the old cannibal king decided to follow Xiong Bao to check if the ghostrunes had really arrived outside their lair.

In the tunnel, Xiang Shaoyun suddenly said, "Move right now. This is our only chance."

Liang Zhuangmin did not know how Xiang Shaoyun had decided when to act, but since he could not give up on the earthstone heart, he played along. Xiang Shaoyun and Liang Zhuangmin charged toward the end of the tunnel before quickly removing the rocks blocking the exit.

Liang Zhuangmin was growing anxious, and he said, "Hopefully nobody notices us."

"Don't worry, no one will notice us," said Xiang Shaoyun confidently.

They then left the tunnel and emerged above ground.

Chapter 272: Earthstone Heart

After leaving the tunnel, Xiang Shaoyun and Liang Zhuangmin dashed straight toward the ancestral temple next to them. While charging, Liang Zhuangmin pushed his senses to the maximum, trying to sense any dangers around them.

He found with astonishment that there really wasn't anyone here at all. The only things he could hear were the sounds of chaos and the fire all around the place. Evidently, the cannibals were in internal disorder.

Is something big happening among the cannibals? But how did Xiang Shaoyun know about it? Wondered Liang Zhuangmin inwardly.

But since his current focus should be the earthstone heart, he did not bother wasting too much time thinking about his doubts. After entering the ancestral temple, they saw piles of bones on both sides of the temple.

There were beast bones and human bones, and crimson blood could be seen dripping to the ground. Right in front of them was an altar where numerous skulls were arranged, exhibiting a sinister sight. Both Xiang Shaoyun and Liang Zhuangmin were bold, but even they felt their legs go somewhat weak upon seeing this sight.

"The earthstone heart is on the altar!" Xiang Shaoyun quickly recovered and pointed at a fist-sized yellow rock on the altar.

The yellow rock was emanating a faint radiance that made the entire altar look yellow. As for the power of earth emanating from the yellow rock, it flooded the entire temple. The moment Xiang Shaoyun pointed at where the earthstone heart was, Liang Zhuangmin charged forth impatiently.

Right as Liang Zhuangmin's hand was about to reach the earthstone heart, Xiang Shaoyun's pupils shrunk as he cried out, "Brother Liang, retreat! There is danger!"

As he said that, he drew his saber and slashed. But he was still too slow as a few disgusting massive worms had charged out of a certain section of the altar. These worms, with thick brutal energy around them, opened their mouths and bit down at Liang Zhuangmin.

Fortunately, Liang Zhuangmin was able to react in time. A brown energy barrier immediately formed around him. The worms were only able to bite Liang Zhuangmin's barrier and failed to harm him. It was at this time that Xiang Shaoyun's saber energy arrived.

Cling! Clank!

These worms looked extremely disgusting, but they still had terrific defensive power. Xiang Shaoyun wasn't even holding back, yet he could only send them flying instead of killing them directly. As the worms were sent flying, Liang Zhuangmin reached out and grabbed the earthstone heart before stowing it away.

"Go!" Liang Zhuangmin shouted and dashed away.

But as he was fleeing, a yellow worm suddenly flew over and bit into his body. Although Liang Zhuangmin had a powerful energy barrier and a decent armor protecting his body, this yellow worm seemed to be different from the other worms. Its teeth were sharp enough to directly tear through Liang Zhuangmin's energy barrier and armor to reach his body.

"AHHHH!"

Liang Zhuangmin screamed from the pain, but he was still able to slam his hand at the worm. The worm seemed like it could read minds, as it was able to avoid the attack before biting at a different spot on Liang Zhuangmin's body. Xiang Shaoyun arrived again, with his saber that was now powered by innate purple lightning. An overbearing and boundless lightning power surrounded the worm.

Lightning Slash From The Clear Sky!

Xiang Shaoyun attacked with all his power, causing the entire temple to shake. He did not know if the slash was enough to kill the worm, but he had no time to check. He quickly dragged Liang Zhuangmin out of the temple.

Why was he in such a rush? Because he had found out from Xiong Bao that the old cannibal king was returning. Sure enough, right after Xiang Shaoyun and Liang Zhuangmin stepped out of the temple, they heard the old cannibal king roaring.

Shit! Xiang Shaoyun cursed inwardly and charged toward the tunnel as fast as he could. But he wasn't as fast as the old cannibal king's attack. A massive and powerful attack arrived and blasted the entrance to the tunnel.

Rumble!

With that, the entrance was destroyed, severing their escape path. Xiang Shaoyun had no choice but to drag Liang Zhuangmin toward a different direction. At this time, the old cannibal king landed on the ground and started raining attacks on Xiang Shaoyun and Liang Zhuangmin at a terrifying speed worthy of a late-stage King Realm individual.

"Xiong Bao, kill him!" No matter how fast Xiang Shaoyun was, he couldn't be faster than the old cannibal king. Thus, he had no choice but to reveal his trump card.

After commanding Xiong Bao to attack, he mustered all the strength available to him to try his very best to survive. The old cannibal king's attack arrived, and since Xiang Shaoyun had to protect the injured Liang Zhuangmin, his back was struck.

Bang!

Both Xiang Shaoyun and Liang Zhuangmin were hammered into the ground; a massive crater appeared around them. Just as the old cannibal king was about to press on, Xiong Bao mounted a sneak attack from his back.

The old cannibal king had never imagined that Xiong Bao would attack him. Thus, he was hit on his back, causing him to drop to the ground and cough blood. Even though he was stronger than Xiong Bao, he still sustained a serious injury because he was caught completely off guard.

Xiong Bao did not stop at only one attack. He pressed on with even more attacks. He could not afford to allow the old cannibal king any respite. It would be best if he could kill this old cannibal king while he was down. Unfortunately, the old cannibal king was too strong. The instant he was injured, he activated his defense. Thus, he was able to fully defend himself against Xiong Bao's follow up attacks.

"Xiong Bao, you bastard!" roared the old cannibal king after regaining his bearing. He then started his counterattack.

Meanwhile, Xiang Shaoyun and Liang Zhuangmin were crawling around underground. Xiang Shaoyun had survived the old cannibal king's attack thanks to the armor he had gotten from the Zither Empress. Even so, he was still badly injured with numerous internal organs bleeding.

Liang Zhuangmin was also in a bad condition. He was first bitten by the worm then hit by the shockwave of the old cannibal king's attack. Therefore, he was in an even worse shape than Xiang Shaoyun.

The two supported each other as they fled with all the strength they had left. While they fled, Liang Zhuangmin took out a spirit medicine and healing pill before swallowing them both. His priority right now was to stay alive.

Xiang Shaoyun also did the same as he directly dissolved some spirit medicines in his astral cosmos sea, trying to heal up as quickly as possible. He was very clear that Xiong Bao would not be able to defeat the old cannibal king. He had to flee with the fastest speed he could muster. The instant he

sensed Xiong Bao's death, he pushed out all the power left in him, causing white tiger wings to unfurl from his back.

"Let's go!" said Xiang Shaoyun as he grabbed Liang Zhuangmin and flew away.

Chapter 273: Ghost Rune Race

Xiang Shaoyun activated the white tiger essence within his second star and focused all his astral energy into the pair of wings, allowing himself to fly at a speed faster than even regular Kings.

If it wasn't for the injuries he had sustained, he would be even faster. There was a saying that one's potential was most easily triggered in the course of fleeing for one's life. That was very true.

Under such intense pressure, Xiang Shaoyun was able to dig out more of the hidden medicinal power in his body. Slowly, his internal organs healed, and with the spirit medicine he had dissolved from his astral cosmos sea working in tandem with his hidden medicinal power, he recovered considerably.

Behind him, roars of the old cannibal king rang out. After killing Xiong Bao, he was now chasing after the two escaping humans.

"Damn it! Why is he this fast?" Xiang Shaoyun cursed as he squeezed even more energy out to increase his speed.

The White Tiger Wings was worthy of being an innate ability of the white tigers. Xiang Shaoyun was only able to unleash a tiny part of its true prowess and was already flying at an incredibly astonishing speed. And since the old cannibal king had already sustained some injuries, he failed to catch up with Xiang Shaoyun immediately.

At this time, Liang Zhuangmin suddenly said, "Drop me. I can't drag you down!"

From how Liang Zhuangmin was saying these words in such a situation, one could see that he was a person of decent character. Xiang Shaoyun ignored him and continued flying at full speed, not daring to slow down for even an instant.

"Die, humans!" The old cannibal king had still managed to catch up. He slammed his scepter-like bone club forward, sending a ferocious cannibal head flying toward the two.

With his Nether Soul Domain, Xiang Shaoyun was able to sense the incoming attack. Even though he knew it was coming, he had no way of avoiding it. The only thing he could do was activate his Nether Dragon Soul Headband to protect the minds of both him and Liang Zhuangmin from the brutal energy.

Rumble!

Once again, Xiang Shaoyun and Liang Zhuangmin were hit. Both of them tumbled down from the sky. They crashed and coughed a copious amount of blood out. Just as the old cannibal king was about to follow up with more attacks, a phantom-like silhouette appeared and sent a massive boulder flying toward the old cannibal king.

The old cannibal king swung his bone club and smashed the boulder apart. But after destroying that one boulder, he found that even more boulders were flying toward him from all directions. A petite silhouette could be seen streaking amid the boulders. The silhouette was like a specter that one couldn't easily see.

But it was certain that this specter-like being was an enemy of the old cannibal king. Otherwise, this being wouldn't have attacked. Xiang Shaoyun and Liang Zhuangmin couldn't be bothered about who the newcomer was. They were more than happy to see someone slowing the old cannibal king down. They got back on their feet and started fleeing again.

After fleeing for an unknown amount of time, when they were nearly completely emptied of energy, they finally collapsed onto the ground. Fortunately, both of them were still clear-headed enough to remember that now was not the time to lose consciousness. Both of them started trying to recover from their exhaustion and injuries as quickly as possible.

Xiang Shaoyun was able to survive repeated attacks from the old cannibal king thanks to the armor he had received from the Zither Empress. The armor had resisted a large portion of the damage for him. Otherwise, he would have died by now.

By dissolving some spirit crystals and spirit medicines in his body, he circulated his energy through his nine stars and started recovering at a rapid speed. To the side, Liang Zhuangmin did not hold anything back and started using his own secret recovery techniques as well.

The two seemed to have completely forgotten where they were, fully focused on recovery. Only by recovering would they have more chance at survival. Meanwhile, a few specters were heading toward them from not far away.

These specters all had petite builds. They resemble humans, yet at the same time, they were completely different. They had large eyes, dark skin, long limbs, and a pair of butterfly-like wings. On their wings and faces, odd runes could be seen, causing them to look sinister and terrifying.

It was clear these were the ghostrunes. The ghostrunes were born with a uniquely powerful soul power that granted them telekinetic abilities. Their attacks were extremely hard to defend against, and their ghostrune wings similarly came with some odd abilities as well.

Those were what the ghostrunes had relied on to survive as a race. Naturally, their weakness was quite obvious as well. They were very weak in terms of defense and would almost always lose in close combat.

A short while ago, they had discovered Xiang Shaoyun and Liang Zhuangmin. That was why they were noiselessly approaching the two. This was not the territory of the ghostrunes. Rather, this was the border of the territories of the cannibals, demonic beasts, and ghostrunes.

Here, all three races could appear at any time. Thus, it was nothing weird for a group of ghostrunes to suddenly appear here. In any case, chaos had erupted in the Land of Soul Springs with the invasion of humans and the movement of the three native races.

When the ghostrunes got close, they started talking among themselves as they pointed at Xiang Shaoyun and Liang Zhuangmin. Not long after, one of them used his soul power and lifted two trunks before slamming them toward Xiang Shaoyun and Liang Zhuangmin.

The two trunks arrived before the two instantly. Just as the two were about to be hit, Xiang Shaoyun reacted. He jabbed with his finger, sending forth two finger beams.

Bang! Bang!

The two trunks exploded, and Xiang Shaoyun was able to clearly sense the ghostrunes around him with his Nether Soul Domain. Unfortunately, he still couldn't stand up and fight them as he was still in the midst of circulating his astral energy. If he did that, his injuries would worsen. Thus, he was forced to remain seated and be on the defensive.

The ghostrunes scattered in fear when the attack failed to hit, but when they found that both Xiang Shaoyun and Liang Zhuangmin were still not moving, they regained some of their courage.

Using their soul power, they started lifting numerous objects such as rocks, trunks, and soil and rained them down at Xiang Shaoyun and Liang Zhuangmin. It was obvious the cultivation realm of these ghostrunes were rather low as their attacks were quite weak and posed no threat to Xiang Shaoyun.

Still seated in the same place, Xiang Shaoyun lifted the Purple Lightning Saber with great difficulty before slashing at all the objects.

Liang Zhuangmin had also awakened, but when he wanted to help, Xiang Shaoyun stopped him, saying, "At least one of us has to recover his combat prowess."

Liang Zhuangmin gave Xiang Shaoyun a deep look before he swallowed another stalk of spirit medicine and resumed recovering. Xiang Shaoyun's injuries were worse than Liang Zhuangmin's. Thus, when he forced himself to defend against the attacks, his injuries worsened. Even so, he still persevered.

Just as he was about to fall, a roar suddenly rang out. The ghostrunes shivered when they heard the roar and fled far away. The ghostrunes feared the demonic beasts the most, as their innate talent wasn't too effective when fighting the demonic beasts. However, their soul power was the perfect weapon against the cannibals, whereas the cannibals' brute strength was the perfect weapon against the demonic beasts.

One could say that these three races were akin to a revolving circle countering each other.

Chapter 274: It Might Not Mean Us Harm

The ghostrunes left, and Xiang Shaoyun was just about to heave a sigh of relief when he noticed a massive silhouette slowly walking toward him from the woods. The newcomer was a demonic tiger. It was extremely fearsome with its fangs and crimson eyes. Its fur stood erect like needles, looking valiant and ferocious.

This was a bucktooth tiger, a species of demonic beast that was extremely vicious and had powerful offenses. This particular bucktooth tiger looked to be a late-stage Great Demon. It was currently eying Xiang Shaoyun and Liang Zhuangmin, evidently treating them as tasty food.

"Misfortune really does come in pairs," Xiang Shaoyun lamented helplessly.

With his combat prowess, he could barely battle ordinary Great Demons. Also, he had to be able to kill with one decisive hit or he would be disadvantaged if the fight dragged on. But it wouldn't be easy for him to face a late-stage Great Demon unless he was willing to fully exhaust his energy once again.

"Your turn to rest, Brother Xiang. Leave this tiger to me," said Liang Zhuangmin, who finally opened his eyes.

Xiang Shaoyun waved his hand and said, "Focus on recovering. I think I should be able to hang on, but it's better if you seal your hearing first."

Liang Zhuangmin sank into silence, feeling remorse over his incapability to provide any help. Inwardly, he said to himself, This is a friend worth making!

He gripped the earthstone heart tightly and absorbed a small part of its power. Instantly, his energy surged, allowing him to heal even faster. Without wasting any time, he focused on recovering again. He believed that Xiang Shaoyun would be able to deal with the tiger. He could still make a move if he later discovered that Xiang Shaoyun couldn't hang on anymore.

The bucktooth tiger finally attacked. With a roar, it charged at Xiang Shaoyun and Liang Zhuangmin. Xiang Shaoyun circulated his cultivation method in silence, fully activating the white tiger essence and white tiger energy within his second star, causing an apparition of a white tiger to appear behind him.

"Roar!"

He opened his mouth and sent a sound attack out of his mouth. That was the Tiger's Roar ability. It seemed to have shocked the world itself when it appeared, and even Liang Zhuangmin was given a massive fright by it. Fortunately, he had already sealed his ears. Otherwise, that roar would have injured him for sure. When the charging bucktooth tiger sensed the aura of a tiger king, it instantly stopped moving, and a timid look surfaced in its eyes.

"I am a friend of the Demon Emperor clan. I do not wish to harm my relationship with the tiger clan. Leave," said Xiang Shaoyun with a mild tone.

The only reason he was speaking with such a mild tone was because he had exhausted himself with the roar. He couldn't speak loudly right now even if he wanted to. The bucktooth tiger's eyes started flickering as it kept studying the white tiger apparition behind Xiang Shaoyun. Hesitation covered its face.

Xiang Shaoyun was incredibly nervous. He tightly gripped his Purple Lightning Saber and kept his internal energy circulating without stop, preparing to react the instant the bucktooth tiger attacked. Ultimately, the bucktooth tiger turned and left.

Xiang Shaoyun had not expected his plan to work at all. Without wasting any time, he entered a state of recovery once again. But before long, the bucktooth tiger returned again.

This time, Liang Zhuangmin opened his eyes and said, "Let me deal with it!"

After absorbing some power of the earthstone heart, Liang Zhuangmin had recovered about a third of his combat prowess. His wounds had healed slightly as well, and he was no longer as helpless as he was earlier.

"No, don't move rashly. It might not mean us harm," said Xiang Shaoyun.

He could see that the bucktooth tiger was carrying a five-colored antelope in its mouth and did not look like it was going to attack. The bucktooth tiger walked straight toward Xiang Shaoyun before putting the five-colored antelope down in front of him. The five-colored antelope was a species of demonic beast with almost non-existent offensive power yet possessed a flesh that was the optimal material for healing and recovery.

"Is this for me?" Xiang Shaoyun asked.

The bucktooth tiger started speaking in the human language, "Yes. You are a friend of the Demon Emperor clan. If that is the case, you are the friend of my clan as well."

"Thank you," Xiang Shaoyun thanked gratefully.

It was quite lucky of him to receive the care of a demonic tiger in his current condition. As for Liang Zhuangmin, he heaved a breath of relief while his curiosity toward Xiang Shaoyun grew.

Xiang Shaoyun had successfully led their raid on the ancestral temple of the cannibals and robbed them of the earthstone heart. He could also fly, and now, he could even build a friendly relationship with a demonic tiger. All those were feats ordinary people wouldn't be able to accomplish.

And Xiang Shaoyun had accomplished them all. Everything was so very inconceivable. Liang Zhuangmin also finally understood why the pavilion had given Xiang Shaoyun the first-class estate, and he realized that this wasn't a person only relying on his connections—Xiang Shaoyun was also sufficiently capable.

Since Xiang Shaoyun wasn't able to immediately start preparing the antelope for consumption, he had the bucktooth tiger stand guard as he and Liang Zhuangmin continued recovering. The bucktooth tiger did not reject the request and lay down not far from the two. With this new guard, both Xiang Shaoyun and Liang Zhuangmin were much more at ease.

They put all their focus on recovery, and after one day, they had recovered considerably. Although they had not returned to their peak condition, they were now strong enough to protect themselves.

The first thing Xiang Shaoyun did after waking up from his meditation was to roast the five-colored antelope. Soon, an aromatic fragrance started drifting about in the air. Both him and Liang Zhuangmin were starving. They each tore an antelope leg off and started gorging themselves.

Xiang Shaoyun did not forget the bucktooth tiger and tossed over half the roasted five-colored antelope. The bucktooth tiger did not hesitate. After taking a bite off the meat and tasting how delicious it was, he started gorging on the meat and finished half the antelope in no time.

As Xiang Shaoyun ate, he could sense his vitality being replenished. He circulated his cultivation method and sent the energy rushing in toward his injuries, further nourishing them and helping them recover faster.

The five-colored antelope was indeed an excellent food for the purpose of recovery. When Xiang Shaoyun and Liang Zhuangmin were finally done resting, they stood up.

Liang Zhuangmin looked at Xiang Shaoyun and said, "Brother Xiang, we survived because of you. The earthstone heart shall go to you."

As he said that, he handed the earthstone heart to Xiang Shaoyun with no hesitation. It was clear he was a person of outstanding character.

Looking at the earthstone heart, Xiang Shaoyun shook his head. "This earthstone heart is more important to you. Keep it for yourself."

"No. Without you, I wouldn't have been able to get this earthstone heart at all. I can't keep it," said Liang Zhuangmin stubbornly.

Xiang Shaoyun replied seriously, "I don't cultivate the power of earth. You know that as well, right? So I don't really care that much for this earthstone heart. If you feel guilty keeping it, just help me get a soul spring as a way of repaying me then."

Liang Zhuangmin was overjoyed to hear those words. He replied, "Fine, I will help you get a soul spring with all my power!"

Chapter 275: Hua Honglou's Might

The earthstone heart, a treasure that could help him enter the Skysoar Realm, was extremely important for Liang Zhuangmin. Since Xiang Shaoyun was willing to yield it to him, his opinion of Xiang Shaoyun rose greatly, and he even had the urge to make Xiang Shaoyun his sworn brother.

The moment that thought crossed his mind, he voiced it, "Brother Xiang, we feel like the best of friends even though we have only just met. I am also greatly indebted to you for saving my life so many times. Are you willing to be my sworn brother?"

Xiang Shaoyun had not expected it coming, but it was worth having Liang Zhuangmin as a sworn brother due to his outstanding character. He nodded, "Of course. I had the same thought as well."

"Haha, splendid. I, Liang Zhuangmin, hereby swear that Xiang Shaoyun is my sworn brother. From today onward, we will enjoy all blessings and endure all misfortunes together. If I go against this oath, may I die by having my heart pierced by a thousand arrows!" Liang Zhuangmin made a solemn oath.

With the same solemn tone, Xiang Shaoyun vowed, "I, Xiang Shaoyun, hereby swear that Liang Zhuangmin is my sworn brother. From today onward, we will enjoy all blessings and endure all misfortunes together. If I go against this oath, may the heavens strike me to death!"

"Hahaha! Since I am a few years older than you, you will have to call me big brother from now on," said Liang Zhuangmin joyously.

"Remember to take care of your little brother in the future, big brother," Xiang Shaoyun said with a smile.

"Of course I will. After this trip is over, I will charge straight into the Skysoar Realm. In the future when I become an Emperor, I will slaughter anyone who dares to bully my little brother," declared Liang Zhuangmin in a heroic manner.

Xiang Shaoyun could sense that Liang Zhuangmin was being sincere, and warmth covered his heart as a result. It had been a very long time since he had last felt something like this.

This was a true friendship between brothers.

Meanwhile, an intense battle was unfolding at a location not too far from Xiang Shaoyun and Liang Zhuangmin. If Xiang Shaoyun was there, he would have been able to recognize that Hua Honglou and about a dozen Red House members were there.

They were currently engaged in a battle with about a few dozen ghostrunes. Not long ago, the Red House had harvested a soul spring. After Hua Honglou kept the soul spring away, they were surrounded by a group of ghostrunes.

She was currently trying to fight a way out with her people, but the number of ghostrunes kept increasing. Their incorporeal attacks were extremely hard to defend against, and a lot of Red House members were either seriously injured or dead.

"All of you, leave! I will watch your rear!" shouted Hua Honglou in desperation.

She danced about with her sword, sending numerous fiery sword energies toward the ghostrunes around her. She was strong, but none of the ghostrunes approached her. They only relied on their soul power to lift numerous objects before throwing them at her. Also, the runes on their wings seemed to be capable of inducing hallucinations, allowing them to attack and take advantage of any opponents who fell victim to their wings.

"Big sister, ignore us and leave by yourself!" said the Red House members.

"No! All of you, leave! This is an order!" said Hua Honglou with a frown.

As she spoke, she danced around avoiding the numerous attacks the ghostrunes were sending her way. Her fiery sword fluttered about, slicing everything flying toward her. However, some of the ghostrunes had terrifying soul power. The objects they threw had a might no weaker than the attacks of a peak Transformation Realm expert.

That was why Hua Honglou was the only one who had a hope of surviving the onslaught, and not the other Red House members. While Hua Honglou was distracted trying to protect her people, she was nearly hit.

What was annoying about these opponents was the fact that when she tried to approach and kill the ghostrunes, they took to the sky, rendering her completely helpless against them. After being on the defensive for a long while, numerous wounds were left on her body. More and more of the Red House members had fallen as well.

Of course, it was not like Hua Honglou had no harvest of her own. A few of the weaker ghostrunes had been killed by her as well. Some of the Red House members started using bows and arrows, forcing the ghostrunes to stay away from them.

They fought while retreating, and only about seven or eight of them survived to reach the borders of the three territories. This was a place with demonic beasts, and because of that, the ghostrunes did not dare to give chase any farther. Just as Hua Honglou and her group was about to rest, a group of people arrived noiselessly.

"Haha, looks like the Cloud Margin Pavilion people have gotten something," a brash laughter rang out.

Then, a group of people on devil blood bats appeared above the Red House people. It was obvious these were the people from the Devil Blood Society. There were about 20 of them, each dressed in a black martial outfit while emanating a sinister aura.

Hua Honglou raised her head and snorted, "We have not gotten anything, but we did notice a soul spring not far ahead in the territory of the ghostrunes. If you are interested, you might still make it there in time."

"You are Hua Honglou from the Cloud Margin Pavilion?" asked the leader of the Devil Blood Society group.

He was wearing a half-mask that only revealed half his face. He was a peak Transformation Realm expert known as the Devil Face, and his status in the Devil Blood Society was second only to the Devil Fairy. Evidently, he wouldn't be much weaker than Hua Honglou.

"Yes," Hua Honglou nodded.

"People say that women with big tits are brainless, and it seems like you are no exception. Hand over the soul spring on you and have some fun with me. If you do that, I will spare you all. If not...hehe...don't blame us for being cruel," said Devil Face with a perverse laugh.

"Bastard! You dare insult our big sister? Come down here if you have the balls. I, Bei Renhua, shall personally cripple all of you!" shouted a man from the Red House.

This man was an eighth-stage Transformation Realm cultivator, and he was no weaker than the four great guardians of the Lightning Alliance. He was also an admirer of Hua Honglou.

"Since you want to die, I shall fulfill your wish," said Devil Face with a sneer. The Devil Blood Society people then started landing.

Two of them charged at Bei Renhua on their mounts. Attacking from the air, they held an advantage over Bei Renhua. The other Devil Blood Society members also started attacking. Hua Honglou wanted to protect her people, but Devil Face stopped her.

"Piss off!" Hua Honglou shouted as she slashed her sword at him.

And thus, a battle erupted between the two. They were evenly matched, but since Hua Honglou was rather exhausted from snatching the soul spring earlier and had even suffered some internal injuries, she was quickly forced into a disadvantaged position.

The wails of her companions rang out repeatedly, and she tried to help them when she heard their miserable screams. The distraction allowed Devil Face to heavily hit her and send her flying.

"I wanted to play nice, but you refused. Well, today, let this young master experience how rape tastes like," said Devil Face as he walked toward Hua Honglou one step at a time, lust covering the entirety of his face.

As Hua Honglou had torn some of his clothing from the fight, some of her snow-white skin was bared to the outside world. That coupled with her plentiful peaks were incredibly capable of filling one with lust.

"Even if I have to die, I won't allow you to prevail!" shouted Hua Honglou, bracing herself for death.

Just as Devil Face was about to continue pressing on, a lazy voice rang out in the air, "You are this young master's maid. Without my approval, who dares to kill you?"

Chapter 276: Why Should I Know a Dead Man?

The person speaking was none other than Xiang Shaoyun who had just arrived. When he and Liang Zhuangmin sensed the ongoing battle, they concealed their presence and came over silently. This was the scene they saw when they arrived.

Devil Face had not expected that someone would actually interrupt his fun. When he turned around and saw that the newcomers were merely two humans and one tiger, he heaved a breath of relief.

When Hua Honglou saw Xiang Shaoyun, she shouted, "Leave! They have more people!"

She knew Xiang Shaoyun was strong, but the Devil Blood Society group had more people and none of them was a weakling. She did not believe that Xiang Shaoyun's group of three would be a match, and she did not wish to see them die for nothing.

"Yes, yes, listen to her and f*ck off. This young master shall magnanimously spare your lives. Stop ruining my fun," said Devil Face with a look of contempt.

"I remember killing a lot of Devil Blood Society scums 10 years ago. Today, a new batch of scums are presenting themselves to me again. Watch how your granddaddy teaches you a lesson!" shouted Liang Zhuangmin as he charged out and attacked.

After some rest, he had recovered about 70 percent of his combat prowess. Just the 70 percent was enough for him to deal with any Transformation Realm cultivator. And with the earthstone heart on him, he did not even need to worry about energy exhaustion.

Liang Zhuangmin was worthy of being someone who had made his name a long time ago. Although he hadn't been able to enter the Skysoar Realm, his combat prowess should never be underestimated.

When he arrived before the two Devil Blood Society disciples nearest to him, he slammed his axes down at them. Not to be outdone, the two Devil Blood Society disciples moved to block the incoming attack.

But Liang Zhuangmin's physical strength was too strong, and he brutally suppressed them. He sent their weapons flying. One of the disciples was immediately hacked into a blood mist while the other lived but with heavy injuries. Before the survivor could even rejoice for surviving, Liang Zhuangmin's dreadful axe slammed down at him again, smashing both him and his mount into a pile of mincemeat.

Liang Zhuangmin attacked in an extremely crude manner, but there was a sense of boundlessness that had arisen from changing complexity into simplicity in his attacks. Ordinary cultivators couldn't even begin to compare with him.

After Liang Zhuangmin killed the two Devil Blood Society members in a row, the other Devil Blood Society members charged at him. Layers of energy barrier appeared around Liang Zhuangmin, protecting him like an impenetrable bastion. Instead of helping Liang Zhuangmin, Xiang Shaoyun walked toward Hua Honglou one step at a time.

"Kid, do you know who I am?" asked Devil Face. He did not seem to care at all that his companions were being killed. From this, it was obvious how cold-blooded the Devil Blood Society members were.

"Why should I know a dead man?" Xiang Shaoyun asked.

"Hahaha, well said. You Cloud Margin Pavilion folks are all arrogant as hell, but too bad none of you have the strength to back up your arrogance. Devil bat, eat him!" commanded Devil Face. He was sending his mount to probe his opponent's strength instead of attacking personally.

This devil blood bat was no weakling as it was already a peak eighth-stage Great Demon. Regular ninth-stage Transformation Realm cultivators would have a hard time fighting it. The bat shot straight toward Xiang Shaoyun, clawing at him with its sharp claws.

Before Xiang Shaoyun could do anything, the bucktooth tiger beside him roared and charged forth. The bucktooth tiger leaped into the sky, and in the blink of an eye, was already several meters away from the ground. He arrived before the bat and attacked.

The bat was greatly alarmed and released sinister wails from its mouth as it clawed at the bucktooth tiger, its claws shining with a sharp radiance. The devil blood bat still held the air superiority and was able to avoid being dragged down by the tiger, and it had instead left several bloody scars on the tiger.

The bucktooth tiger was only a seventh-stage Great Demon. On the ground, he would be able to easily rip the bat apart, but the bat was not stupid enough to abandon the sky. It flew everywhere, diving down at the tiger repeatedly while spitting an overbearingly corrosive energy—devil blood energy—from its mouth every now and then. The bucktooth tiger was having a hard time against this opponent, and it did not seem like he would last long.

"Haha, your demonic tiger is nothing much, huh?" Devil Face laughed cockily.

"Oh, is that so?" Xiang Shaoyun smiled nonchalantly.

"Are you blind? Can't you see that my bat is already killing your tiger?" said Devil Face.

"The only thing I see is your bat on the verge of being ripped apart by my mount," said Xiang Shaoyun before he abruptly roared in the direction of the bucktooth tiger and the devil blood bat.

"Roar!"

His murderous sound wave caused the entire area to start trembling, and being the main target of the roar, the bat was stunned and started falling from the sky. The bucktooth tiger seized this opportunity and threw himself at the bat with all his power. A vital part of the bat was bitten, causing it to wail in pain as it struggled. Unfortunately, the bite was extremely firm, and it was unlikely for the bat to be able to break free.

"Bastard!" Devil Face was finally furious. With a shout, he charged toward the two beasts with an exquisite footwork.

But Xiang Shaoyun appeared before him and said, "I am your opponent."

"Die, then," said Devil Face with a cold snort before clawing at Xiang Shaoyun.

Devil Blood Claws!

Laced with a layer of black and red energy, the sinister pair of claws shot at Xiang Shaoyun. Devil Face was a peak Transformation Realm expert, also a War King. His attacks were extremely terrifying and overbearing, and his claws could easily tear mountains apart.

"Claw technique? Sure, I'll play along," said Xiang Shaoyun with an indifferent smile as he countered with a claw technique of his own.

Numerous claws flew everywhere, ripping the air apart. Even the nearby trees and stones were all torn to smithereens by the massive amount of claw energies. Since Xiang Shaoyun was not at peak condition, he was unable to instantly defeat his opponent.

However, his Seven Scorching Sun Claws technique was superior to the Devil Blood Claws. Coupled with his rich combat experience and outstanding visual prowess, he was able to fight Devil Face to a standstill.

Meanwhile, Hua Honglou finally had the chance to swallow a stalk of spirit medicine to heal herself. She did not spend a lot of time healing. Rather, after a tiny bit of recovery, she leaped forth, trying to launch a sneak attack on Devil Face.

Xiang Shaoyun shouted at her, "If you still have strength left, help Big Brother Liang. Stop messing with my fight."

He wanted to have a proper battle with Devil Face and did not want any interruptions. Hua Honglou wasn't a hesitant person, and she immediately shifted her trajectory and started attacking the other Devil Blood Society members instead. No matter how strong Liang Zhuangmin was, he would still have a hard time facing so many opponents. Furthermore, he had yet to fully heal from his previous injuries.

During the short instant Xiang Shaoyun was distracted when talking to Hua Honglou, Devil Face was able to grab his shoulder and was about to tear it apart with his claw technique.

Chapter 277: You Brought That on Yourself

Blood spurted out of Xiang Shaoyun's shoulder, causing him to hiss in pain. Devil Face pressed on with another claw attack directed toward Xiang Shaoyun's back. But a raging tongue of flame appeared out of nowhere, setting his hand on fire.

"AHHHH!"

The might of this flame was completely outside Devil Face's expectation. His glove was completely destroyed, and his hand was seriously injured. If he hadn't pulled away in time, his entire arm would have been reduced to ash.

Now, it was Xiang Shaoyun's turn to attack. He turned around and grabbed at Devil Face as he shouted murderously, "Kill!" Even with only one good arm remaining, he was still able to fully unleash the might of his claw attack.

Seven Scorching Sun Claws, Silver Tearing Stance!

Devil Face's chest was clawed, revealing the inner armor he was wearing. It was actually a king-grade armor, and it successfully reduced half the damage Xiang Shaoyun dealt to him.

Devil Face took this chance to send a kick at Xiang Shaoyun before quickly withdrawing. Xiang Shaoyun twisted his body and avoided the kick before pushing on with his Overlord's Nine Nether Steps.

One Step to Cross the Nine Nether Realms!

Xiang Shaoyun was starting to grasp the true essence of this footwork. Devil Face was shocked to see Xiang Shaoyun moving so fast. And before he could even attack, Xiang Shaoyun's attack arrived.

Lightning Bolt Fist!

Xiang Shaoyun shifted his claw stance into a fist stance. As the innate purple lightning erupted from his body, his fist shot out like an unstoppable lightning bolt.

Bang!

The punch connected, causing Devil Face's entire body to go numb. Ordinary Transformation Realm experts would be dead by now, but Devil Face was able to survive relying on his own strength and his king-grade armor. Unfortunately, he was still unable to escape defeat.

The only reason Xiang Shaoyun used a different technique was so he could break Devil Face's defense with the power of lightning. At the same time, by numbing Devil Face's reflex with lightning, he could then press on and finish his opponent off.

He pressed on, assuming his claw stance again and attacked. This time, he utilized the power of Yun Flame and clawed at Devil Face's arm, repaying Devil Face for the earlier attack on his shoulder. Yun Flame was worthy of being the millennium earthcore fire with the overbearing might it was displaying.

"Ahhhh!"

First, Devil Face had his arm ripped open. Next, his arm was lit on fire. The pain assailed him, causing a heart-wrenching wail to come out of his mouth. He struggled to extinguish the flame, but his efforts were futile.

Xiang Shaoyun did not press on. He sneered and said, "If you can extinguish this flame, I will spare you."

The moment Devil Face heard those words, he chopped at his burning arm with his other hand.

"AHHHH!"

He cut his own arm off, his miserable wails reverberating through the air once again. A large amount of blood gushed out of his severed arm unendingly. Despite the suffering, Devil Face had saved his life with what he did. If he was even one second slower, the flame would have spread all

over him. At that time, death would be certain. One could say that Devil Face was quite the decisive person.

"I will remember this!" said Devil Face. Bracing the pain, he gave Xiang Shaoyun one last look before retreating.

Instead of giving chase himself, Xiang Shaoyun got the bucktooth tiger to do it.

Devil Face shouted in panic, "I thought you were sparing me?"

"Yes, I am sparing you, but I can't do anything if he isn't," said Xiang Shaoyun shamelessly.

Devil Face ran with all his might, but the bucktooth tiger was much faster. Due to Devil Face's excessive blood loss, his combat prowess had dropped significantly as well. Thus, he wasn't even the bucktooth tiger's match.

"Ah....I will have my revenge...even if I have to return as a ghost!" shouted Devil Face.

Although Devil Face still had some trump cards, he would not be able to use any of them in his condition with serious injuries. Ultimately, Devil Face ended up in the bucktooth tiger's stomach.

"You brought that on yourself," said Xiang Shaoyun coldly.

He had experienced a lot over the past two years. Being kind to the enemy was equivalent to being cruel to oneself. He would not be overly forgiving like he was in the past. Now, he would repay anyone who dared to offend him. Meanwhile, the other Devil Blood Society members were being beaten into retreat by Liang Zhuangmin and Hua Honglou.

Both Liang Zhuangmin and Hua Honglou were War Kings. As for the Devil Blood Society group, only Devil Face had similar combat prowess. Thus, nobody could contend against the two's onslaught. However, Liang Zhuangmin and Hua Honglou hadn't exactly remained unharmed.

Liang Zhuangmin had once again fully exhausted all his energy, and three deep wounds had appeared on his body. If it wasn't for the earthstone heart he had on him, he would have collapsed by now.

Hua Honglou wasn't any better off. Her back and thigh were laden with wounds, and her inner organs were badly injured as well. The moment the enemies retreated, she collapsed to the ground. Xiang Shaoyun quickly rushed over and stood guard for the two as they recovered.

If I have a good healing spring like the millennia stone milk, I will be able to greatly speed up this recovery, thought Xiang Shaoyun inwardly.

In their current environment or other environments similar to this, if one was injured and couldn't recover in time, things would become extremely dangerous. That was why Xiang Shaoyun longed for a spring capable of healing.

But a spring like that was extremely rare, and only those with extremely great fortune would be able to obtain one. While Liang Zhuangmin and Hua Honglou were recovering, Xiang Shaoyun was also recovering.

One of his arms was badly injured, but fortunately, his bones were still fine. Otherwise, that arm would most likely be crippled. He smashed some herb and bandaged his arm. He then took out a storage ring the bucktooth tiger had given him earlier.

"This guy actually has a storage ring. Looks like his identity is not simple," lamented Xiang Shaoyun before sending his consciousness into the ring.

Soon, the contents within the ring was bared before him. There were a lot of spirit crystals, healing pills, numerous pills, and a large number of dark elemental treasures. Of these items, a certain bottle of liquid caught Xiang Shaoyun's attention. He took the bottle out and opened it slightly. Instantly, strands of energy rich in vitality drifted out, giving him an urge to consume the entire bottle of liquid.

"Is this young master really so heaven-defyingly lucky, to the point anything I wish for will appear before me?" said Xiang Shaoyun with a gleeful laugh.

This was not a bottle of millennia stone milk liquid, but it was also an extremely rare spiritual liquid extremely helpful for healing. There were at least a dozen drops of this liquid in the bottle, and each drop had the medical efficacy equivalent to 10 spirit medicines. This much would be enough for him for now.

Without thinking about it, he consumed a drop of it. Instantly, a refreshing sensation spread throughout his body. Strands of energy rich in vitality nourished his wounds, giving him an incomparably comfortable feeling.

"This is great!" Xiang Shaoyun cried out in excitement. He then shouted at Liang Zhuangmin and Hua Honglou, "Big brother, Hua Honglou, wake up. I have some good stuff here."

Chapter 278: Hua Honglou's Thoughts

Both Liang Zhuangmin and Hua Honglou stopped meditating and looked at Xiang Shaoyun in confusion.

"I have some healing spring water here. Come take some. It will increase the speed of your recovery," said Xiang Shaoyun while handing them some of the liquid.

The two were overjoyed and consumed the liquid without hesitation. Xiang Shaoyun then went through the storage ring again, but nothing else caught his attention. One ought to admit that Xiang Shaoyun's standards were a tad bit too high. Some tier-3 or even tier-4 items couldn't even attract his attention.

As far as he was concerned, the most valuable item he had received was the ring itself. After all, even Skysoar Realm experts would rarely have something like this in the Cloud Margin Pavilion. But even so, this ring was in fact not really a significant gain.

Well, I can give this to big brother, thought Xiang Shaoyun.

In the blink of an eye, half a day passed. Both Liang Zhuangmin and Hua Honglou woke up from their meditation. They had healed significantly, but they would still need some time to recover their combat prowess.

Hua Honglou winked her eye and said, "Thank you, Xiang Shaoyun."

"You're welcome. You are my bed warming maid. How can I let others bully you?" Xiang Shaoyun said as he rubbed his nose.

"Yes, yes, when we leave this place, I will go warm your bed," said Hua Honglou while shooting Xiang Shaoyun a glare.

Facing the bold response, Xiang Shaoyun ended up feeling embarrassed. "Hehe, we'll talk about that after I give it more thought."

"Oh? Why the hesitation?" Hua Honglou asked in a provocative manner.

Earlier, she already had the thought of committing suicide when Devil Face was about to rape her. Xiang Shaoyun coming to her rescue had caused her to feel extremely grateful to him.

In any case, Xiang Shaoyun was a handsome young man with extraordinary temperament. He was a giant among men, and a person with his qualities would be able to easily attract the fairer sex.

Thus, it was natural for Hua Honglou to have a good opinion of him. And with him being an enemy of the Lightning Alliance, she felt even closer to him. Now that he had saved her, although that wasn't enough for her to offer her body as gratitude, her opinion of him had still soared considerably. Any man would find it hard to endure an attractive woman's teasing.

With a perverse smile, Xiang Shaoyun replied, "Remember your words. Don't regret it later."

"I, Hua Honglou, have never done anything I will regret," declared Hua Honglou firmly.

Xiang Shaoyun had no interest in sticking with this topic, so he started talking about something else, "Oh, by the way, where are the others? They're not all dead, right?"

Hua Honglou's expression dimmed, and she said, "I am the only survivor among the people who came with me. Yaxuan and Zilong were not with us, and with their strength, they should be fine."

"Anyone coming into this place has already prepared for the possibility of death. Don't blame yourself," said Xiang Shaoyun. "Have you heard of any soul springs?"

Hua Honglou's expression went stiff for a bit before she said, "Yes, and I have even gotten one!"

She was telling him the truth because he had saved her. If he requested for the soul spring as repayment, she would not refuse him, but from now onward, she would no longer have anything to

do with him. And if Xiang Shaoyun ended up not taking advantage of her while she was in her current predicament, she would be able to see clearly his real character.

"No wonder the Devil Blood Society people were attacking you so relentlessly," said Xiang Shaoyun in realization. "Do you know about any other soul springs?"

"Uh...don't you want the soul spring on me?" asked Hua Honglou, slightly stunned.

"Oh, sure, if you want to give it to me, I don't mind," said Xiang Shaoyun.

"Dream on," said Hua Honglou. "I had only encountered this soul spring by fluke. A lot of my people were killed, and if you want to find another soul spring, I'm afraid you have to go deeper into the territory of the ghostrunes."

Liang Zhuangmin cut in and said, "Unlike regular springs, soul springs won't be concentrated in the same general area. Like mist, they drift here and there. Generally, people can only rely on their luck to stumble upon one. But of course, the deeper one goes into the territory of the ghostrunes, the higher the chance is for one to stumble upon one."

"What? The soul springs can fly themselves? Is that even possible? Do you know where they come from, then?" Xiang Shaoyun asked.

Hua Honglou shook her head as she had no idea, but Liang Zhuangmin spoke after a short silence, "Is it possible that there is actually a large pool of soul spring water within a certain zone in the ghostrune territory? The soul springs we are finding outside are merely the ripples of that pool sent outside by a certain power?"

Hua Honglou gasped, "If that is true, then that means a big fortune is waiting inside the territory of the ghostrunes!"

If they could obtain an entire pool of soul spring water, they would be able to create a large number of Skysoar Realm experts! Unfortunately, this was a place only those at the Transformation Realm and below could enter. However, there were Kings among the ghostrunes, and with their ability to directly attack one's soul with their soul power, no Transformation Realm cultivator could stand a chance against them.

If one wanted to go deeper into the ghostrune territory, facing the soul attacks of ghostrune kings would be inevitable. And that was something no Transformation Realm cultivator could survive.

Xiang Shaoyun suddenly thought of the soul raising stone Hua Cheng had mentioned to him. He thought to himself, Perhaps the soul raising stone is also located at that same place.

After talking a little bit more about the ghostrunes with Hua Honglou, he decided to set off toward the territory of the ghostrunes with Liang Zhuangmin.

"Hua Honglou, you already have a soul spring. Are you still coming with us to the ghostrune territory? Or do you want to leave?" asked Xiang Shaoyun.

The Land of Soul Springs would remain open for a month. During this period, one could freely enter and leave. But after leaving, one could no longer re-enter and would need to wait for the next opening in 10 years to enter again.

Since Hua Honglou already had a soul spring, the smart choice would be to leave and break through into the Skysoar Realm in the outside world. That would be a much better choice compared to staying in here where danger might come anytime.

"I'll go with you guys. There are still a lot of brothers and sisters of the Red House here. I can't just leave them all behind," said Hua Honglou seriously.

"Sure, let's go together then," said Xiang Shaoyun.

Hua Honglou had impressive combat prowess, so it wasn't like she would be a drag to him.

As they set off, she grew curious about how Liang Zhuangmin and Xiang Shaoyun had come to travel together. Liang Zhuangmin was a genius from the generation before her, and not even the Young Lightning King and Young Eagle King could compare to him back in the days.

Unfortunately, his cultivation level was stuck for seven whole years, and he was eventually surpassed by his peers. But in this Land of Soul Springs, Liang Zhuangmin was definitely among the strongest in existence. Even the Lightning Kid would fear him.

After all, Liang Zhuangmin was once known as the number one Transformation Realm cultivator.

Chapter 279: Strongest Group of Three

Xiang Shaoyun, Liang Zhuangmin, and Hua Honglou were heading toward the place of the ghostrunes. Instead of rushing, they traveled at a slow pace as they recovered and discussed how to deal with the ghostrunes.

The ghostrunes were capable of flight. That alone would pose great trouble for many cultivators, placing many ghostrunes in an undefeated position when facing human cultivators.

Generally, only a bow or crossbow user would be able to pose them some threat. Xiang Shaoyun took out a crossbow from Devil Face's storage ring, and after some testing, he found that the crossbow was extremely powerful, capable of reaching a range of at least several hundred meters.

He was overjoyed at that discovery and gave the crossbow to Hua Honglou. "Here, this is your gift."

"Are you crazy? This is the best weapon to deal with the ghostrunes. After giving it to me, what are you going to do later?" said Hua Honglou in disbelief.

She might have coveted the crossbow when she saw how well it worked, but it had never crossed her mind that he would give it to her.

"Stupid girl. You are my bed warming maid. How can I leave you completely helpless?" said Xiang Shaoyun with a faint smile.

"If you put it that way, that's more reason I shouldn't accept it. How can a maid take the weapon the master relies on to defend himself?" rejected Hua Honglou even though she was very touched by the gift.

Xiang Shaoyun did not say anything and directly stuffed the crossbow into Hua Honglou's hand.

At this time, Liang Zhuangmin smiled and said, "Sister-in-law, just accept it. My brother is giving you that as a token of love."

Hua Honglou's body went stiff for a bit, and she blushed when she heard that. When she looked at Xiang Shaoyun again, a different emotion could be seen in her eyes.

"Big brother, what are you talking about?" Xiang Shaoyun grumbled. He then handed Liang Zhuangmin the storage ring and said, "This is for you."

Instantly, an exaggerated expression covered Liang Zhuangmin's face.

"Shaoyun, do you know what this is? Are you sure you're giving it to me?" Liang Zhuangmin cried out in alarm.

"Of course I know what it is. How would I have taken something out of it otherwise?" said Xiang Shaoyun with a smile. "You are my big brother. It's completely fine for me to give you something like this. It's not like I needed it anyway."

He had taken some of the dark elemental items from the ring. As for the other stuff like the spirit crystals, weapons, and so on, they were all left for Liang Zhuangmin. Although these things couldn't catch his eyes, that did not mean they were worthless. On the contrary, for other Transformation Realm cultivators, it was a considerable sum of wealth.

The more Hua Honglou listened, the more envious she got, but she also knew that she should be happy with what she had. If one day she really became Xiang Shaoyun's woman, he would be as generous to her as well.

More and more, she felt that Xiang Shaoyun was like a deep pond that could not be read. She couldn't begin to understand why he was showing these treasures such indifference. She had thought that she knew everything about Xiang Shaoyun from what Li Yaxuan had told her. She even knew how he had caught the favor of the Zither Empress.

But from how Xiang Shaoyun had been behaving, he was definitely not someone from a small town or city. In fact, he behaved more like a disciple or young master of some massive organization.

Liang Zhuangmin gave Xiang Shaoyun a deep look, and when he saw the sincerity on Xiang Shaoyun's face, he accepted the ring.

Liang Zhuangmin patted his chest and vowed solemnly, "I feel bad not having anything I can give you as a big brother, but just wait until I reach the Skysoar Realm. Nobody can bully you anymore."

Xiang Shaoyun laughed, "Haha, with us brothers working together, nobody can bully us!"

"Mighty heroes, don't forget to take care of a feeble woman like me then," teased Hua Honglou.

"Of course. Any who dares to bully my sister-in-law will have to face me," said Liang Zhuangmin, who was in an excellent mood.

At this time, they arrived near the place of the ghostrunes. They started seeing human corpses in the area. Looking at how the people were killed by having some object thrown at them, it was clear they were killed by ghostrunes.

"Big brother, Honglou, be careful. They're here," reminded Xiang Shaoyun.

"Let me kill them all!" Hua Honglou said. A lot of Red House members had been killed by the ghostrunes, and she had been holding a grudge against them.

"No, we won't waste any time with them. Just charge through. Our target is the soul spring, not killing them," said Xiang Shaoyun as he shook his head. He then led the way with the bucktooth tiger. Like magic, they avoided all the ghostrunes and went straight to the depths of the territory.

After traveling for a bit, they saw a group of humans being attacked by some ghostrunes. The humans seemed to be doing very badly at the moment. But since they weren't from the Cloud Margin Pavilion, Xiang Shaoyun's group did not get involved. The nearer they got to the place of the ghostrunes, the harder it was for Xiang Shaoyun to avoid the ghostrunes with his senses. Eventually, he could no longer avoid them.

After all, there were far more ghostrunes than humans here. It wouldn't be easy to keep hiding from them on their turf. A few dozen ghostrunes attacked, and a massive battle erupted.

"I'll defend against their attacks. You two will attack!" said Liang Zhuangmin, standing at the very front. He erected a yellow energy wall, protecting both Xiang Shaoyun and Hua Honglou.

Bang! Bang!

The numerous objects the ghostrunes threw were blocked by Liang Zhuangmin alone. Behind him, Hua Honglou attacked repeatedly with her crossbow.

Swish! Swish!

Instantly, numerous gostrunes dropped from the sky. Some gostrunes attacked from behind, sending numerous heavy boulders flying toward them. The boulders were met with a bombardment of Xiang Shaoyun's palm attacks and were instantly destroyed. This group of three was indeed the strongest group, capable of easily defeating the group of attacking gostrunes.

"This is refreshing! With the three of us working together, we will be able to advance straight into the gostrunes' place!" said Liang Zhuangmin in excitement.

"I don't think so. Don't forget about the gostrune kings. They are able to directly attack one's soul. Nobody can stop those odd attacks," said Hua Honglou.

"Haha, I nearly forgot about them," said Liang Zhuangmin awkwardly.

"What should we do next?" Xiang Shaoyun asked.

"We need to just wait. If we are lucky enough and a soul spring happens to fly over, we will be able to get it," said Hua Honglou.

"Wait? But isn't that too much reliance on luck? If no soul springs fly over, we would have waited for nothing!" said Xiang Shaoyun gloomily.

"You don't have to worry about that. Every two or three days, soul springs will fly out from different directions. At that time, everyone will do what they can to fight for the soul springs," said Liang Zhuangmin.

"I see," Xiang Shaoyun said in realization.

But he still did not like this feeling of just waiting around.

"Come with me. I know a place where there is a higher probability of encountering soul springs. But competition will be stiff there too," said Liang Zhuangmin. He had once been in the Land of Soul Springs 10 years ago. Thus, he could lead the way with his previous experience.

Chapter 280: Are You Thanking Me or Are You Taking Advantage of Me?

Within the ghostrune territory was a cliff, and on this cliff was a stone platform known as the Moon Gazing Platform. The reason it was named such was because on the fifteenth day of each month, one could get the best view of the full moon from the platform. Someone eventually carved the words "Moon Gazing Platform" onto it, and by extension, the cliff came to be known as the Moon Gazing Cliff.

The cliff directly faced the place where the ghostrunes resided, and occasionally, random soul springs could be seen drifting over. A lot of people had obtained soul springs here before, and because of that, a lot of people were here currently.

The Moon Gazing Platform was not infinitely large, and thus it signified that only a limited number of people could climb onto the platform. And to climb, strength was required. A lot of humans were currently fighting each other to get a spot on the platform.

Members of Myriad Sword Sect, Devil Blood Society, and the other organizations were all trying their best to climb to the platform. As of now, only a few people had managed to get on the platform, and each of them was a War King.

One of them was dressed in a hemp garment with a sword hanging on his back. He was resting with his eyes shut in an indifferent manner. This person was none other than Wu Longfei, the person known as the Flying Celestial Sword.

He was the current strongest swordsman of the younger generation in the Myriad Sword Sect. He had already comprehended sword intent, and his cultivation base was extremely powerful. If he could enter the Skysoar Realm, he would definitely be a king among kings.

As he sat on the best spot on the Moon Gazing Platform, his entire aura and presence were completely kept within him. He was like a veteran monk in deep meditation, looking proud and aloof. Just like that, he sat there silently. Not one person dared to approach and bother him.

Not far from him, a woman dressed in all black was seated. She had a black veil on her face, and only her pair of eyes capable of tugging at one's soul was visible. Anyone meeting her gaze would be completely pulled in uncontrollably. On top of that, she also had an hourglass figure that was extremely fatal to any man.

She stood there facing the wind with her long hair drifting about on her back, looking like a bewitching lone flower. A woman with such peerless magnificence was certainly none other than the Devil Fairy from the Devil Blood Society. Apart from the two, there were a few other young men and women who were similarly outstanding cultivators.

They included Fan Ren the Scarlet Broadsword and Chu Chunyu the Lithe Snake Sword from the Myriad Sword Sect, Zi Jingyun the Lightning Kid and Chen Zilong the Son of Qilin from the Cloud Margin Pavilion, Han Chen the Blackfrost Spear and Xue Yue the Ice Fairy from Black Ice Palace, Wu Chi the Moha Cicada and Zhi Yong the Little Honest Monk from the Buddha's Path Temple, and Lin Zihan the Playboy from Thousand Forest Academy.

One could say that the most talented youths of the various organizations were gathered here, and each of them had occupied a good spot for themselves. Nobody dared to fight them as that would be tantamount to suicide.

These people had been on the platform since three days ago. Some of them had already gotten their own soul spring but still remained and occupied the spot. Even so, nobody could do anything to them.

Near the Moon Gazing Platform was an empty space where some overseers from the previous generation were gathered. They did not fight for the spots on the platform, as they had decided to let the young take the stage. This space was enough for them to get the soul spring they needed.

A continuous stream of people was trying to get to the cliff. At the same time, many were trying to climb the platform. Anyone who managed to actually get on the platform would be subsequently left alone. That was an unwritten rule here.

Xiang Shaoyun, Liang Zhuangmin, and Hua Honglou had just arrived at the base of the cliff. The moment they arrived, they were approached by a group of Red House members.

"Big sister, you're finally here. Quickly get on the Moon Gazing Platform. The spots are getting filled up quick."

"Yeah, Chen Zilong is already on the platform, but the vice house leader, Li Yaxuan, is injured. We will have to rely on you."

"Big sister, the Lightning Alliance people are going overboard. They keep making trouble for us."

"Big sister, a lot of brothers and sisters have been killed. You need to avenge them!"

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The Red House members were all complaining incessantly. It would seem like they were having a hard time.

Behaving like the big sister that she was, Hua Honglou said, "I will teach those Lightning Alliance people a lesson. Nobody can look down on us of the Red House. Just wait and see. Oh, where's Yaxuan? How bad are her injuries?"

"Senior Sister Hua, I'm here," Li Yaxuan's voice rang out nearby.

She could be seen seated and healing up at the corner guarded by a few Red House members. From her pale face and the bloodstain on her body, it was clear she was in a rather bad state.

Hua Honglou dashed over and asked, "Who did this?"

She and Li Yaxuan were practically sisters, and she was naturally furious when she saw her sister in such a bad shape.

"Zilong already killed them, but I am no longer able to get onto the Moon Gazing Platform. Big sister, you need to get up there fast. If the spots are all taken, it will be hard for us to do anything," said Li Yaxuan weakly.

"Good! That person deserves death!" Hua Honglou praised. She looked at Xiang Shaoyun and asked, "Can you give me one more drop of the healing spiritual liquid?"

Xiang Shaoyun walked over and shot Li Yaxuan a glance. He then gave her a drop of the healing spiritual liquid without any hesitation while saying, "Senior Sister Li is also my friend. No way I will just watch without helping."

"This...this is a healing spiritual liquid?" Li Yaxuan asked in astonishment.

"Yes. Take it. It will help you heal faster," said Xiang Shaoyun.

"Thank you, Xiang Shaoyun," said Li Yaxuan gratefully.

"I will thank him on your behalf," said Hua Honglou before landing a quick peck on Xiang Shaoyun's cheek.

Right after doing that, she dashed straight toward the Moon Gazing Platform.

"Sister-in-law, why are you being all shy now? Wait, let your brother-in-law lend you a hand," said Liang Zhuangmin, who chased after Hua Honglou.

Xiang Shaoyun rubbed his still somewhat damp cheek and said helplessly, "Are you thanking me or are you taking advantage of me?"

After consuming the drop of liquid, Li Yaxuan smiled and said, "You say it like you were molested or something. If my big sister heard that, she would be infuriated to death. This is the first time I have ever seen her kiss a man."

She then shut her eyes and started focusing on recovering. Xiang Shaoyun did not linger on the same topic as he turned and looked at the massive number of people trying to get to the platform.

It was an extremely steep cliff, and there was only one rugged path leading to the top. This small path was filled with people. The weak would either be pushed off and fall to their death or be outright beaten to death. That was why only a small number of people had been able to actually get on the platform.

Everyone on the path was busy doing something, either fighting, climbing, or helping one's companion. In short, it was chaotic. Both Liang Zhuangmin and Hua Honglou shot straight to the top. With their top-tier strength, they were almost unstoppable.

Xiang Shaoyun waited no longer and started charging to the top as well. He would think of what to do after getting the soul spring. In any case, it would be helpful for him during his future breakthrough into the Skysoar Realm.

But just as he had started moving, a silhouette blocked his path and shouted, "Xiang Shaoyun, to get up there, you have to go through me."