

### Chapter 91: Acceptance

“Exhibition match?” Luo Guxue had just returned from the barren area. Su Ping’s answer reminded her that such an event had taken place that day. The feeling of satisfaction triggered by their encounter quickly vanished. She was disappointed. She had thought that Su Ping had accepted her invitation to become a teacher. After all, the Vice Principal was there to see him out in person, and they were talking happily.

At the same time, she was confused. Usually, no outsiders were invited to the exhibition match. Only students and their families could participate. What is Su Ping doing here?

Dong Mingsong asked with surprise, “Mrs. Luo, do you know him?”

Luo Guxue came back to her senses and nodded. “Mr. Su saved my life. Thanks to Mr. Su timely rescue I was able to come back from the barren area.”

“The uncultivated area?” Dong Mingsong was baffled and so were the others including Feng Baili. They looked at each other and then cast their glances at Su Ping. This guy had visited the barren area? What did it mean when Luo Guxue said he went to her rescue?

They weren’t familiar with Luo Guxue. That being said, Luo Guxue was the main member of Team Polaris, and they knew each other. If Luo Guxue, who was at the intermediate position of the seventh-rank, was in danger, then only a battle pet warrior at the peak of the seventh-rank or the eighth-rank could have helped her. How could Su Ping save her?

“Tell me. What is that about?” Dong Mingsong asked, curious.

The others darted glances of curiosity at her as well.

For all this time, Luo Guxue had been grateful to Su Ping for this matter. She told them about how they had been attacked by the Magical Corpse Beast. At the end of the story, she expressed her gratitude to Su Ping once more. “Mr. Su, I will gladly repay your kind help. You can come to me for anything you may need me for.”

Su Ping was speechless. He could have made a quick escape; he just wanted to go back home. However, when Luo Guxue told the story, he couldn’t just cut her off. Being under the heated and shocked gazes of those present, he felt he was a gorilla of a rare kind. He said with a bitter smile, “Well, you guys go on. When you’re free, come to my store but please remember to take enough money with you.”

The others came back to their senses but they were still stunned. Su Ping, who was most likely around the age of 20, could defeat a Magical Corpse Beast. Really? Not to mention that the Magical Corpse Beast was one that had learned ninth-rank pet skills.

Didn’t this practically imply that Su Ping was not weaker than them?

They didn’t doubt Luo Guxue’s words. After all, she had her pride and fame. She didn’t need to make up a story and lie to them. Simply put, this matter was astonishing, and unimaginably queer. Su Ping had the age of a student. It was rare to achieve what Ye Hao and Su Yanying had accomplished at this age. If

everything went on smoothly, in the future, those two could become advanced battle pet warriors; even becoming eighth-rank master battle pet warriors would be possible!

However, Su Ping had already reached that level when he was about their age. If Ye Hao was called a talent, then what was Su Ping? A freak?

While everyone was still numbed by shock, Su Yanying fixed her eyes on Su Ping. She couldn't reconcile the image of this young store owner who idled away in his store all day long with that powerful warrior, one that could kill a Magical Corpse Beast at the upper position of the eighth-rank. Su Yanying knew that Su Ping was mysterious and most likely there was a master trainer in his pet store. She was willing to believe when someone told her that he was a talent. That being said, with the strength to kill a Magical Corpse Beast of the upper position of the eighth-rank... he was more than a talent. He was a mature, powerful warrior that could take charge by himself!

To become such a strong man, in addition to talent, their efforts were also extremely important. Yet, the way Su Yanying saw Su Ping was that it seemed he just squandered time at the store, single-mindedly trying to make money.

How could someone like him be this strong?

Noticing that Su Ping was about to leave, Luo Guxue said in a hurry, "Mr. Su, last time, I mentioned about you coming here as a teacher. What do you think?"

Su Ping answered, "Well, I'm still thinking."

Dong Mingsong was stunned. Luo Guxue had invited Su Ping to come as a teacher. Given Luo Guxue's identity as an advanced teacher, she did have such a right. Dong Mingsong blushed as he remembered how he had invited Su Ping to become a student. Su Ping was someone that could kill an eighth-rank monster. If he were a student there, who would have the right to mentor him?

Secretly, he gave Luo Guxue a look of praise. She acted fast, a true testament that he was the one who trained her.

"Mr. Su, I'm sorry if I have offended you." Dong Mingsong put on a smile at once to help Luo Guxue. "I didn't know that you were so brave and heroic. We have been wrong about your strength. Please forgive us. Mr. Su, if you're interested in becoming one of our teachers, I'm more than happy to see that happen. Given your strength, you can become an advanced teacher in this academy, just like Mrs. Luo. I will make sure that the treatment is to your satisfaction."

"Honestly?" Su Ping was intrigued. He had been hesitating about this offer. So, he questioned, "What are the benefits?"

Dong Mingsong smiled. He had seen this young man through. He was just a punk that would be bent solely on profit. Talking business with a guy like this was easy as long as the benefits were enough. Someone self-conceited and insolent on account of talent would be troublesome to deal with considering personal quirks.

"Oh, there are quite many benefits. For example, the advanced training method for astral power in the collection of the academy, some advanced battle pet skills, and some potions with special effects. Besides, you will be qualified to join some of the auctions. The items sold at those auctions aren't even

found at the explorer's warehouses. There's no harm to have a few more identities," Dong Mingsong persuaded Su Ping with a kind smile.

After hearing this, Su Ping became interested. He had to admit that Dong Mingsong had gone straight to the point, as if he clearly knew what he desired.

Su Ping asked, "What do you need me to do?"

This was kind of a silly question. However, since Su Ping had put forward this question, there had to be a specific meaning. Dong Mingsong picked up the cue at once. "An advanced teacher has an easy job. You don't have to go to class to give lectures every day. You can just teach one class per week. The rest of the time will be up to you. It's very free. You can tell this from how Mrs. Luo handles herself. She is invested in exploring uncultivated lands. That should be regarded as her main responsibility."

Luo Guxue forced a smile and said, "Vice Principal, don't make fun of me."

Su Ping didn't know that the job would be this easy. He thought about it and nodded. "I see no problem, then."

Dong Mingsong was overjoyed. "Good. I will prepare the contract for you right away. From now on, Mr. Su, you will be an advanced teacher in our academy."

## **Chapter 92: Revealing the Truth**

Feng Baili and the others standing by the side were speechless. Inside, they called Dong Mingsong an old fox. What was done couldn't be undone. Nothing they could say could change that fact. They were jealous of how fortunate Dong Mingsong was. Given Su Ping's talents and abilities, his future achievements would be unlimited, provided he didn't die an early death. It was most likely that he could become a titled battle pet warrior. By then, the academy could boast about how they had a teacher with titles giving lectures there.

This alone could enable the Phoenix Peak Academy to rise by one or two ranks amongst the seven famous schools in the Base City. This was a long-term plan.

Luo Guxue was happy since Su Ping had agreed. This way, she and Su Ping would be coworkers and she could meet him in the future.

Su Yanying had become numb to this shocking news.

The information revealed by Su Ping was increasingly surprising. She had become immune to this. He had the strength to kill monsters of the eighth-rank, which made him more than capable to be an advanced teacher. She just didn't expect that Su Ping, who she had been dealing with as her equal, had become her teacher, and of the most advanced level no less. Ye Hao and the other students would be boiling with anger once they learned of this.

After all, Su Ping was too young. It would be logical for him to be a junior fellow student.

But now, he was going to teach her...

Su Yanying's mouth twitched at the thought. All of a sudden, she felt lucky that she was in grade three and about to graduate. Otherwise, if she would have to face such a young teacher every day; with such a daily reminder, all her confidence would be lost.

Feng Baili and the others bade farewell since they had nothing else to do there. He was once again invited by Dong Mingsong; Su Ping returned to his office with Luo Guxue with Su Yanying following them silently.

They sat down on the sofa. With quite the zeal, Dong Mingsong poured Su Ping a cup of tea and then handed him the contract his assistant had printed out.

Su Ping could feel Dong Mingsong's passion and sincerity. After a careful read of the contract and without finding any issues, Su Ping signed it.

Dong Mingsong put away the contract and said with a smile, "Mr. Su, you can begin your lessons next week."

"Of course." Su Ping nodded.

Dong Mingsong went on, "I will have someone register your information at once. But it will be a few days before you can have your ID."

Su Ping was in no rush. He had another question, "When and where can I have a look at the advanced cultivation methods and skills for battle pet warriors?"

"In the academy's second library." Dong Mingsong continued, smiling, "You can go there at any time, even right now. But since you don't have your teacher's ID yet, if you want to go, I will let those in charge know you'll go there."

It was getting darker. Su Ping didn't wish to visit at the moment. There was cultivation and other things he had to do. He could wait for a couple more days.

After they exchanged some pleasantries, Su Ping left the building. Not long afterward, he had reached the stadium. From the distance, he could already see the glaring and flickering colorful lights above the stadium. The paths on the campus were crowded with students. The matches had come to an end. People were exiting the stadium at the moment, therefore, every corner of the campus was filled with students.

Su Yanying followed him. She looked up at Su Ping from behind and asked, "Do you want to go to the stadium to advertise some more?"

Su Ping shook his head. "No. The Vice Principal's promotion is enough for me."

He was worried about being potentially unable to find enough time for training pets, if too many students approached him. After all, he was just one person. There was no one to help him. The only thing he could do was to train several pets at the same time but that would be too much pressure on his spirit.

Su Yanying walked Su Ping out of the campus. After Su Ping left, Su Yanying turned around quietly. However, her mind was unable to settle down.

It was late. Su Ping called a taxi and went home directly. He didn't want to bother going back to the store. There wasn't much of a business at the moment. No promotion could generate an effect that quickly.

He got out of the taxi and went inside. His mother was watching TV in the living room. That arrogant sister of his was nowhere to be seen. Most likely she was still at school. Li Qingru was surprised by Su Ping's early return. Li Qingru asked nervously, "How come you're home so early? Has anything happened to the store?"

"No. I went to watch her match, then I came back directly from her school," Su Ping answered. The truth would be revealed when his sister returned anyways.

"You went to see your sister's match?" Li Qingru was taken aback. She didn't think that Su Ping would care about this. Usually, he wouldn't go even if she asked.

Su Ping felt embarrassed, "What's with your tone?"

Li Qingru rolled her eyes at him grumpily and posed another question, "Why did you come back alone? Where's your sister?"

Su Ping found an excuse, "She wanted to hang out for a bit longer."

"You two..." Li Qingru was speechless. "Are you hungry? If not, wait for your sister to come back."

"Okay." Su Ping agreed. He was just about to go upstairs when he sensed that presence. Su Ping raised his eyebrows. He walked back from the staircase and then went to the living room to sit down. He began to watch TV with keen pleasure.

The door was opened. It was Su Lingyue that stepped in. Her eyes opened wide the moment she saw Su Ping sitting on the couch. "Why are you here? Did you come directly from the school?"

"What? Should I have taken a detour?"

Su Lingyue scolded him, "Why didn't you go to the store?"

Su Ping was surprised. "How did you know I wasn't there?"

"Because I waited for you there for a long time!" said Su Lingyue, fuming with rage. Her exhibition match had ended long before. After the conclusion of the exhibition match between the third year's first and second place, she wanted to find Su Ping at once to ask him about everything. However, Su Ping had been dragged away by the school leaders with Su Yanying. She couldn't find a chance to search for Su Ping so she had to leave school by herself. She called a taxi and headed to the store. She thought that since it was only after seven once the matches were over, Su Ping would have to go back to the store. There were some matters Su Lingyue wished to discuss with him in private. At home, their mom would be able to hear their conversation.

Only, she waited there for two hours.

She saw it was late and went home, only to see Su Ping was already there.

“You waited for me?” Su Ping asked while knowing the answer. He added with confusion on his face, “Why were you waiting for me?”

Su Lingyue ground her teeth with hatred. “What do you think?”

“How should I know?”

Su Lingyue stared at him. “Do you have astral power?”

There was no concealing the truth. So, Su Ping nodded and admitted it readily.

“Really?” Su Lingyue’s pupils contracted. She only realized this possibility when she saw how Su Ping was the first to be freed from the Frigid Brine. The likelihood of someone awakening later in life was slim but there would always be someone lucky and favored by heaven. It was just that God had been too blind and blessed her despicable brother by mistake.

Li Qingru was startled. She could not help but ask, “What did you just say? Do you have astral power? You, have you awakened?” Filled with nervousness and excitement, Li Qingru was shivering. Even though the achievement that came with acquired awakening was limited, he was a battle pet warrior nonetheless. He could support himself no matter how lousy his life may turn out to be.

Su Ping scratched his head. “It was by accident. It has been some time.”

Su Lingyue squinted her eyes. He had awakened some time before. So, did this guy play dumb all this time? Was he showing weakness to endure hardships so that he could accomplish some ambition?

“Good, this is good.” Li Qingru was so happy that her eyes reddened. She was shedding tears. She wiped her tears away quickly and said, “We have to tell your father about this piece of good news. Anyways, do you have a pet? You have awakened too late in life. You must buy a quality pet. I will go to the market myself tomorrow to pick a pet for you, one with good quality and power of understanding!”

### **Chapter 93: Playing with Fire**

Su Ping was once again touched by his mother’s kindness. He smiled. “You shouldn’t make long walks, mom, leave it to me. I have a pet anyway. We run a pet shop, remember? I can switch to a new one each day if I want.”

Li Qingru chuckled. “You’re kidding. What kind of pet warrior uses different pets everyday? What is your current pet? The shop doesn’t have any good ones in stock.”

Su Lingyue also pricked up her ears to listen. Since Su Ping had become a battle pet warrior, he was slowly catching up to her. She preferred to stay cautious, to prevent her miserable childhood from repeating.

“It’s an Undead-type. Decent aptitude, I’d say. Just a little below average.”

“Undead?” Li Qingru looked surprised, because not many people liked their horrible looks, even though they usually fought pretty well. “What exactly is it?”

Su Lingyue thought that his brother had developed a fondness for this kind of creature due to her constant “horror pranks.” This guy had even blown a kiss to a ghost the other day, giving her the creeps instead.

Sh\*t. Maybe I should use different ways to spook him each day, she thought. I can’t let him catch some odd fetish.

“It’s a small skeleton.” Su Ping had no choice but to say something under Li Qingru’s demand.

“A skeleton??” Li Qingru almost cried again. “Oh dear... You really should have told your mom earlier, about your awakening. I’d get you a better pet even if I need to get a loan. You can’t be a pet warrior using a skeleton!”

Su Lingyue felt her earlier anxiety gone all of a sudden. “Hey, mom, he can’t use a better pet at his current state anyway. You don’t find many advanced battle pet warriors out of late awakeners. If you ask me, I’d just let him find a random job at the guild. He’ll earn more money than common salarymen that way. He can’t get us any income at the shop anyway.”

Li Qingru didn’t look happy to hear that. “You can’t say that to your brother until he tries! Yes, it’s rare for such cases to be good. But awakening later in life is already a miracle! You know what? If you only consider late awakeners, they break through faster than normal awakeners!”

Su Lingyue couldn’t keep arguing; sulking was her only choice.

Li Qingru continued, “Your brother has earned such a great opportunity. We shouldn’t discourage him from it. Come, you should help him too.”

Su Lingyue didn’t answer.

Su Ping knew his mother cared about him, but not to such an extent. Their family wasn’t really rich. It would be for the best if they pooled all their resources on Su Lingyue, so they could aim at making her an advanced battle pet warrior.

It was clear that Li Qingru chose to be a better mother rather than a strategist.

“Sis is right, mom,” Su Ping spoke in a gentle voice, “Don’t waste money on me. We need it to treat your leg! Besides, I like my pet. I don’t want another anyway.”

Su Lingyue raised an eyebrow at that. She thought Su Ping would use this chance to blatantly request a good pet like her Phantom Flame Beast, since that was always how he acted since childhood. She didn’t expect him to be so considerate all of a sudden.

Either way, she found it necessary to judge his brother differently at this point.

She removed her unpleasant look and spoke to their mother, “If we must, find him a middle-rank one, mom. We’d be lucky if he becomes a middle-rank battle pet warrior. And if he can do better than that, I’ll support him with all I have. I’ll give him my Phantom Flame Beast if that’s what it takes.”

The Phantom Flame Beast had been her partner since she was young; of course she didn't want to hand it to anyone else. She said so because she didn't believe Su Ping could surpass her.

During her studies, she never fell out of the top three on the score list. Not once. She was confident.

Li Qingru looked between them and sighed. "I hope you two stay friendly like this. You need to help each other once I'm gone."

Su Lingyue frowned. "Don't be like that, mom. I talked to my professor. I'll go to the barrens as soon as I graduate, so I can earn merit points and buy medicines for you."

Su Ping smiled. "Take care of yourself for now, mom, and don't worry about us. I'll take care of my pet. My Little Skeleton is pretty good."

Li Qingru shook her head. Good? How good can a skeleton be?

She was both glad and sad to see Su Ping being so humble, for she thought that she was responsible for his situation. She could have easily gotten Su Ping another Phantom Flame Beast if she had kept their shop in good condition.

"\*Sigh\* I'll prepare dinner." She headed to the kitchen and left the children behind.

Su Lingyue glanced at his brother. "I never thought you could be a good boy like this. And no, I'm not being sarcastic. I appreciate it, really. Just don't do anything stupid, alright? Becoming a battle pet warrior means nothing. No matter how you work from now on, you won't be able to actually help me with anything. It should be the opposite. If you stay careful and don't act up, I'll find some time and teach you some pet warrior skills."

Su Ping felt it was extremely weird that his sister was playing the adult role. "I'm the bigger one here, remember?"

"Humph. Every man will stay childish. No exceptions."

"What the heck? You talk as if you've been through better."

Su Lingyue's expression turned colder. "Watch what you're saying."

Su Ping stood up, and under his sister's threatening stare, he put a hand on her head and rubbed.

"Be a good sister, will you? A soft and cute girl draws more love from people."

Su Lingyue was frozen for a moment.

Ever since she went to the academy at the age of 12, Su Ping, or any other male, had never managed to lay a hand on her, let alone touching her head.

She felt humiliated!

She tried slapping Su Ping's hand away by using a small portion of her astral power, so she could teach him a lesson. Such a hit would definitely leave Su Ping's hand swollen for a few days.

She failed. Su Ping pulled away in time.



“What the—” Su Lingyue clenched her teeth in rage. “You’re playing with fire, I’ll show you!”

“You don’t say? Who’s the ‘fire’?”

## **Chapter 94: Emergency Mission**

“WHY YOU—!”

He’s so shameless!!

Su Lingyue was beginning to find her brother was becoming cockier in her view. Previously, this guy knew how to quit after getting pummeled. He was starting to confront her! Just because he had awakened?

“You have no idea which rank I’m at, huh?! I’m an intermediate third-rank battle pet warrior, while you—”

She channeled more astral power to give Su Ping a beating and show him who was boss. But she was stopped by Li Qingru, who just returned while holding a plate of apples.

“What are you doing?”

Su Ping smiled. “It’s nothing. I’m checking how good Lingyue’s hair looks.”

Checking my WHAT?? Su Lingyue had barely managed to swallow her rage down her throat, but she felt how it was dangerously returning.

Li Qingru quickly realized what was going on because this happened quite often in the family. “Stop it. I just told you to be good to each other a second ago!”

“Sorry, mom.” Su Ping lowered his head as he found his mother was truly angry.

Li Qingru shook her head and turned away to continue cooking.

“Don’t you think this is over!” Su Lingyue shouted while taking the apples all to herself.

“Um-hmm.”

“Heh.”

“Ha?”

“Humph!”

They totally understood what they were talking about.

Su Ping retreated to his room after dinner, while Su Lingyue didn’t say anything else. Su Lingyue had planned to ask his brother about what he did at the vice president’s office earlier, but she no longer felt like it, since it would make her look bad.

As usual, Su Ping stayed on his bed to cultivate his astral power. The “Chaos Star Chart” method was such a domineering technique that he could easily pull all the astral power existing in the environment his way. He might even stop Su Lingyue from cultivating if he wanted to.

It was less than a week since he started cultivating, yet his Combat Strength had been improved by 0.2, reaching 3.7, which made him an upper third-rank already. If he kept on, he’d become a fourth-rank in the next week. Combining his Solar Bulwark, he was at the moment strong enough to fight off most fifth-rank monsters. Or sixth-rank ones, if he cast augmentation skills on himself.

“I need to get my Solar Bulwark to the second rank so that eighth-rank and ninth ones can’t kill me easily. Only then I’ll be able to survive better...”

As someone who had witnessed the perilous threats in the barren areas, he couldn’t let his guard down even if his life in the city looked peaceful.

A night quickly passed.

The next morning, Su Ping and Su Lingyue had breakfast while having a staring contest, before they both went on their ways without any verbal mishaps.

Su Ping saw a slim-bodied lady in a long, coffee-colored overcoat looking here and there in front of his shop. Without minding her, Su Ping locked his bike to a tree using a chain to deter thieves, and went to unlock the shop.

It was then that the seemingly apathetic woman suddenly gave him a surprised look.

Next, the woman followed him into the shop.

“Something you need?” asked Su Ping, after he gave the woman a glimpse. He found her face to be a little familiar but couldn’t remember her name. He wondered if she was a customer who saw his advertisement.

“You’re the shopkeeper here?” Jiang Hanbing looked at Su Ping up and down and found this man too young to run a shop. Then she remembered seeing him the day before.

Su Ping nodded. “That’s right. Do you need your pet cared for, trained, or are you looking for pet food?”

“... You were at the academy yesterday, right? Did you train that powerful Lightning Rat?”

Su Ping was glad that the flyers he printed didn’t totally go to waste. “Yeah, that’ll be me.”

Jiang Hanbing sighed in relief. She and Su Yanying used to be clear of each other’s way, but ever since their classmates tended to compare them in various matters, they slowly became rivals. As Jiang Hanbing observed recently, Su Yanying had the talent, but was far from being a good trainer. Also, Su Yanying was not someone who knew how to bide her time. If she had that powerful rat all along, she would have used it way before.

Using the flyer she found from a classmate, Jiang Hanbing went to that shop to see whether the rumor was true. She was expecting to see some kind of grand, beautifully-decorated boutique managed by an experienced dealer, not this... boy who seemed two years younger than herself.

“How long does it take to train a pet? Are you the trainer?” she asked.

“I am. I don’t have a fixed duration for training a pet; it depends on how many sessions you buy. Once all sessions are complete, I’ll send word so you can pick up your pet.”

“Sessions?” Jiang Hanbing had never heard of such a training methodology before. Though it wasn’t strange for reclusive masters with amazing skills to have odd protocols.

“Four pets. Ten sessions each,” she offered.

Su Ping raised an eyebrow. “You must pay independently for each session, I’m afraid. Do you have enough money on you?”

Jiang Hanbing was ready to hear an insane price from the shop that trained the exceptional Lightning Rat. “How much for each session?”

“Ten thousand for low-rank pets. A hundred thousand for middle-rank. As for advanced... sorry, I’m not accepting them for the time being.”

Getting the Lightning Rat in shape only unlocked such a level of service. If Su Ping wished to train advanced pets, he had to successfully train a middle-rank pet in the same way.

“That’s... pretty cheap,” said Jiang Hanbing. Such pricing would look like a scam in ordinary pet shops, but not so much if they were talking about who trained that special rat.

Su Ping’s lips twitched. He was always frustrated about not being able to determine prices freely.

Thankfully, the Lightning Rat was a special case, because the system demanded him to boost it higher. From then on, he could simply take the customer’s pets to a cultivation plane and hang out for a bit to get the job done. He might have to die a few times while at it, but that wasn’t a problem.

“I have three fourth-rank pets and a third-rank one. Can you get them all to a level equal to the Lightning Rat’s?” Jiang Hanbing was already paying because she didn’t want Su Ping to suddenly change his mind.

“Of course not. The Lightning Rat was an exception. I provide ‘normal’ training most of the time.”

Jiang Hanbing knew that getting four Lightning Rat-like pets in one go could only be a dream, but it still felt bad when Su Ping pointed it out.

Also, she wondered if the Lightning Rat was a unique case used for attracting customers, while the true trainer had already left the shop. Or, it could be worse, all of it being a lie. Su Yanying might have been a paid shill who helped the shop with false advertisement.

Su Ping didn’t know what Jiang Hanbing was thinking but it couldn’t be anything good to his business.

“Normal training still has decent effects, you know. Do you want to buy it or not?”

Really? Jiang Hanbing shook her head. If there used to be something good here, Su Yanying already took it. Damn it.

“I’ll... entrust you with one pet for now.”

She didn't want to leave empty-handed. Even if this "master trainer" was no longer there, this shop could still have some connection. Becoming a customer was a good choice.

As for Su Yanying being a scammer, Jiang Hanbing didn't believe that to be possible. Su Yanying would have cooperated with a bigger shop if that were the case.

"One, huh?" Su Ping felt bad that the sale was suddenly reduced to a quarter, though he couldn't force his customer. "Fine."

Ping—Pong!

"Emergency mission!" the system suddenly announced in his head. "A customer has withdrawn her order due to mistrust, resulting in decreased revenue. On this special occasion, the host shall be allowed to initiate a specialized training session."

"Price: a hundred times the usual price of a normal training session."

"Time limit: 30 days."

"Requirement: customer's pet must reach an aptitude of above average."

"Reward: one intermediate Force Pellet plus a mythical technique tutorial chosen at random."

"Penalty for failure: host rating reduced by 10."

## Chapter 95: A Handy Status

Improving a pet's aptitude from low to above average meant tripling its Combat Strength rating or more, which was also what happened to the Lightning Rat. However, the price for a specialized training session was only 10,000 when Su Ping trained Su Yanying's Lightning Rat back then. He could have gotten a million if this mission came up earlier.

*Sh\*t. All the money I missed...* Su Ping felt his heart bleed.

The time limit for this mission was acceptable, though. A month should be enough. Apparently, the system was aware that he could no longer enter cultivation planes for free or die without suffering any losses. He did need to take his time in an ordinary plane.

Seeing Jiang Hanbing already paying with her phone, he quickly told her to stop.

"What's the problem?" she asked.

"It's... possible for me to repeat what happened to the Lightning Rat, but it'll cost ya. A lot."

In fact, a million was usually enough to directly buy the egg of an upper seventh-rank pet. The owner of the pet still needed more money and resources to train it later, but the pet would grow up sooner or

later. Eventually, a full-fledged seventh-rank pet would have its price elevated to several million, which was enough to buy a house in the middle of a big city.

“Can you??” Jiang Hanbing brimmed with joy. “How much exactly?”

“Specialized training is worth a hundred times. That will be a million for low-rank pets, and ten million for middle-rankers.”

“A million??” Jiang Hanbing gave him a doubtful look. “If I pay that kind of money, can you really train a low-rank pet as powerful as Su Yanying’s Lightning Rat? You were there to watch the match. That thing knocked out a seventh-rank Silver-Winged Dragon!”

“Did you ever learn that the outcome of any battle is not only dependent on pet ranks? Why do we need battle pet warriors otherwise? The Lightning Rat was a lower seventh-rank who has gained a lot of combat experience, while that dragon is, well, not so experienced. It has a strong body but it’s still unable to put it to use. Your augmentation skills and your commands are all vital to your victory. What I’m saying is, I can teach the same things to your pets, but it relies on *you* whether they can defeat a Silver-Wings Dragon or something similar.”

Jiang Hanbing was taken aback as she didn’t think Su Ping could speak so wisely.

She came from a good family, yet ten million was no small number to her. Even one million was not something she could throw away lightly, because that was all she could save up in a year by working hard.

“Mister, are you absolutely sure that my pets will be able to beat up ordinary high-rank pets after being trained by you? If I don’t mess up as their master, that is.”

“That’s not a problem.”

Jiang Hanbing looked around the shop and widened her eyes slightly when she read some of the price tags.

“Um, do you own this shop or are you running it in someone else’s stead?”

Su Ping knew the woman was worried that he’d take her money and ditch the shop.

“It’s my shop.”

“Can—May I take a look at your house deed?”

That was an odd question, but Jiang Hanbing found it necessary to see the proof. The lower town was not a very secure area. She would have a hard time trying to catch a thief.

Su Ping chuckled. “If you mistrust me, you can check the website of your school. Apart from owning this shop, I’m also an honorary professor of the academy. They just hired me.”

He was glad he accepted the vice principal’s offer; such a status was quite handy.

“You’re a professor??” Jiang Hanbing stared at him. “That’s impossible. Only advanced battle pet warriors are allowed—”

“Just take a look at the web. You’ll see.”

Jiang Hanbing quickly checked her phone until she found the page showing the names of registered personnel. In the “advanced teacher” section, she found five entries instead of four as she remembered. The extra one was none other than Su Ping, with his picture.

“You... but... what...” Jiang Hanbing stuttered and almost dropped her phone on the floor. Then she looked up and down several times to make sure she was talking to the same person as shown in the portrait.

“You’re our professor? They accepted someone so young as a professor!”

“Come on. If you’re still unconvinced, you can phone your Vice Principal. He’ll tell you.”

Of course Jiang Hanbing couldn’t bother the Vice Principal for this. No one had the courage to sabotage the academy’s page so openly, and even if they did, the incorrect part would not stay there for long. She didn’t believe Su Ping had what it takes to temporarily manipulate the roster just to fool her.

*But... What kind of godly genius can be employed as an advanced teacher of the academy while barely reaching adult age??*

In the past few days, Jiang Hanbing had felt so terrible since her confidence had been mercilessly mauled over and over. Apart from losing in the quarter finals, she saw too many talented folk better than her. That Ye Hao even possessed a seventh-rank dragon-type pet.

And yet, all those were nothing compared to what she had just witnessed in this seemingly inconspicuous shop!

## **Chapter 96: Celestial Pig**

Jiang Hanbing felt embarrassed once she believed in Su Ping’s identity because she had been too impolite. After offering an apology, she paid for a specialized training session without a second thought.

A million for a pet as powerful as the famous Lightning Rat was a nice trade. She had no reason to think otherwise.

She wasn’t sure if this was enough for her to surpass Su Yanying since there wouldn’t be any competitions any time soon. However, she could use her trained pet to rapidly gain experience in Class C barren areas so she could become an official settler soon. This way, she would have something good to talk about during future reunion parties.

Her eyes brimmed with happiness when she thought her dream was almost within reach.

Su Ping nodded upon receiving the payment confirmation. The pay was good, but the responsibility that came with it was also pretty serious, so he didn’t feel too happy since he might fail the mission if he wasn’t careful enough.

“A month... I have time to make careful plans. Now, summon your pet,” he told Jiang Hanbing.

Jiang Hanbing nodded and used her astral power to open her pet space; a pink, round-bodied piglet stumbled out.

This was a third-rank, poison-type Celestial Pig. Just like ordinary Lightning Rats, they usually stayed at the same rank in their entire lives, with the exception of rare cases that might evolve into Venom Veilers, which were of the fifth rank.

This thing was almost useless in battles, though Jiang Hanbing kept it with her because they had spent years together. Besides, Jiang Hanbing loved its adorable look. Unlike actual pigs or most Astral Pets, this small creature didn't shed or leave odors all over the place. Instead, it always carried a mild and pleasant smell.

When threatened, however, the smell would turn into deadly poison.

\*Snort\*

The pig quickly stumbled on all fours and braced itself in front of the only potential enemy in the room, which was Su Ping.

As soon as it received Jiang Hanbing's order to stand back, it slumped back down, scratched its neck with a pointy toe, and looked around the shop curiously with a pair of black and beady eyes.

Su Ping briefly checked the pig and found his mission to be doable.

"The session will take a month." He looked at Jiang Hanbing again. "Come again by then."

"Only a month?"

As the pig's master, she knew its condition better than anyone. She had spent a lot of effort training it, which only allowed it to become slightly stronger compared to others of its kind. It was quite impossible for the pig to confront enemies of the same rank. In the worst cases, an enemy with poison resistance would easily destroy the creature.

As they agreed, Su Ping had to improve the pig until it could fight off seventh-rank Astral Pets within a month. This was conceivable!

There were other master trainers out there who might be able to succeed, but only by spending half a year or more. She wondered if Su Ping got the time wrong.

"I'll take it from here. Just remember the time," Su Ping reassured her.

She chose to believe in Su Ping's confident attitude, while trying not to show her excitement. It would be fine if Su Ping was being overly optimistic, and that she needed to wait a few more days. But that was acceptable as long as her pig became stronger.

"Thank you, Mister—I mean, Professor!"

"You can stick to 'Mister' while in this shop."

"Of course!"

If any of Jiang Hanbing's classmates would have seen her unusually obedient character, their jaws would have hit the floor indeed.

"Do you have more pets to train? Just a reminder, those below middle-rank only cost a hundred thousand." Su Ping still preferred to secure more income if he could manage.

Jiang Hanbing blushed. "I don't have enough money on me. Sorry..."

A million was what she could pay without affecting her lifestyle. Any more and she would have to survive on cheap bread and cup noodles.

Su Ping shook his head. Damn, another bankrupt. She's good though. You don't find many families who give their children so much pocket money.

"What about pet food?" Su Ping tried.

Jiang Hanbing flinched after checking the nearest shelf. "Uh, maybe next time."

Why does everyone act as if I'm trying to ransack them? Su Ping complained in his mind, before saying, "I'll leave you to your business then."

Jiang Hanbing found it strange that Su Ping was so impatient to an important customer who had just spent a million at the shop, although she wasn't going to say anything about it. After bidding farewell to her pet, she turned away and left.

Su Ping bought a temporary contract from the system store and used it on the Celestial Pig immediately, so the critter didn't do anything unnecessary when he wasn't looking.

"Come here. Ohh, you feel so soft!" He carried the pig to the pet room and placed it inside a nursing pen.

He might need some time to select a proper cultivation plane. He returned to the shop's counter to check through the list of planes. This way, he wouldn't overlook any customers. The others could not see his "system window" anyway.

"This is the place?" someone uttered while walking through the door.

Su Ping canceled the window and saw two girls with short bodies enter the store.

Upon reaching the counter, one of the girls with a round face spoke to him first, "Is this the Pixie Pet Store? That special Lightning Rat was raised here, right?"

Must be more students who saw the flyers, Su Ping thought.

"That's right. Both of you want your pets trained?"

The same girl seemed happy about the response but was interrupted by her partner, who was tugging at her sleeve while pointing at the shelves.

## Chapter 97: Pool Level Up



Yu Yuanyuan followed her friend's hint; she checked the goods on sale, rubbed her eyes, and looked again to make sure that she wasn't seeing more zeros than there actually were.

"Which pet do you have in mind?" Su Ping stood up and walked around the counter.

Yu Yuanyuan looked at the approaching man again. She would have run already if she wasn't born braver than her friends.

"Ahem, Mister! I want to get a really bad-ass pet trained here. But it's bad-tempered, I wonder if you can handle it. And for how much."

"Ten thousand for low-rank, and a hundred thousand for middle-rank." Su Ping offered a friendly smile.

That smile only made her think it was the cocky smirk of a scheming broker in Yu Yuanyuan's view, even though such a price wasn't too far from her comfort zone. When checking the goods on sale, she expected to hear more insane numbers than that.

"How much did you charge for training that Lightning Rat?"

Su Ping's smile disappeared. "One million."

The girls were surprised but soon recovered because a million was pretty cheap in exchange for such a deadly Lightning Rat.

She needed to make sure Su Ping was speaking the truth, though.

"You know which Lightning Rat I'm talking about, right?" asked Yu Yuanyuan. "Do you know who's its master?"

Su Ping gave her a side-glance. "I'm obliged to protect the privacy of my customers but... I can tell you this: she's from the Phoenix Peak Academy. Miss Su."

Yu Yuanyuan breathed a sigh of relief. "What can my pet gain if I pay ten thousand?"

"Ten thousand, huh? It's hard to say. There will be some sort of improvement, that I can assure you. Either a rank, half a rank, or battle experience. Either way, your pet will be better than before." Su Ping returned to his seat while speaking.

Woah, he lost interest already, the girls thought. Talk about businessmen...

They were curious to find out what the result of the training would be. They might not be able to raise a million even if they worked together, but paying ten thousand was not as problematic.

"I'll put a middle-rank plus a low-rank pet here," said Yu Yuanyuan.

Her partner, who seemed pretty timid, also spoke up, "I—I'll also leave a pet here. My Spider Queen."

Spider Queen?? Su Ping glanced at the second girl again. For such a cutie to use that kind of scary pet? Don't tell me this girl has a personality disorder or something.

He wasn't going to refuse the business, though. "That'll be two hundred 'n ten thousand for both of you."

“Sure.” Yu Yuanyuan nodded and paid as she asked. “How long do we need to wait?”

“Come tomorrow.”

Su Ping smiled brightly as he had just earned 2,100 energy points on his account. His advertisement tactic was paying off!

“Tomorrow?? That’s fast! Are you like—”

... tricking us? Is this guy even dependable?

Su Ping knew what they were thinking about but didn’t have anything to prove himself at the moment.

“If I don’t finish the request by tomorrow, I’ll refund you.”

“Okay...”

In fact, the girls had just planned to ask for a refund. But they both decided to see how things would turn out, after seeing Su Ping being so positive.

“I’m recording, mind you.” Yu Yuanyuan showed her phone. “Make sure you don’t go back on your word. It won’t work.”

Su Ping’s improved eyesight already allowed him to see that the girl was bluffing; her camera was not even on. Though he wasn’t going to point it out.

“I’m not going to damage my reputation just to earn such a small amount of money. Summon your pets and leave if you don’t have anything else to say.”

The girls knew Su Ping was getting angry and quickly did as told. They were unwilling to part with their pets, but being away for one day was no biggie.

When the girls left, Su Ping placed the three new pets into the pet room, filling up the vacant nursing pens.

He checked one of the pens in which the Managarm was still kept. According to their contract, the pick-up deadline for this creature was long overdue. Its master was either dead, or he decided to abandon the hound.

Either way, it was for the shop to decide how to deal with the hound at the moment.

Su Ping bit his finger and tried making a pet contract with it. Soon, a spiritual connection was established between them, which meant he guessed correctly.

“Oof. Poor guy.” He patted the hound on the head and returned to the front room.

The contract was only meant to check whether the hound’s master still wanted it. Though he wasn’t going to terminate it soon. A Managarm would not take away much of his spiritual power. He might try taking it with the other pets when training them and make it stronger, so he could rent it out to other customers. Or he could sell it, if the system allowed him to do so one day.

Soon, more students from the academy showed up. They were either famous ones on the ranking list or curious students who just wanted to check the shop out. Of course, most of them were scared away by Su Ping's prices, leaving only a few brave ones who purchased care or training services.

As for pet food... no sale at all.

This was to be expected, because the students were there because of Su Yanying's Lightning Rat. The food was too expensive to their liking.

Apart from what he had gained from Jiang Hanbing and the two girls that followed, Su Ping had earned a total of five thousand energy points during the day. He had broken his daily sales record.

Without a second thought, he spent ten thousand points to get the Chaotic Spirit Pool to level 3. Such a level would then have a small chance of directly giving birth to a Beast King.

## **Chapter 98: Inferno Dragon**

Su Ping intended to try the pool out straight away. Perhaps he could get lucky with it. Besides, he was still under the beginner's protection according to the system; each incubation would only cost him 10% its original price during this period. Afterwards, he would need to pay 10,000 energy points for each attempt.

He had an egg still kept inside a nursing pen which had yet to hatch. He still had no idea what kind of pet would be born out of it. Using the incubation pool to directly get a pet sounded like a good idea.

"My balance... After earning a million, which was converted to ten thousand energy points, I used it to level up the pool. Now I have seven thousand points remaining, which means seven incubation chances."

Of course, he couldn't use up all the points because he still needed some to get his mission done. That is, the specialized training session. To be safe, he would save up a few thousand energy points for this job.

A failed incubation means a thousand points thrown down the drain. Gosh, this is madness.

A thousand energy points were equal to 100,000 Yuan in cash. That was almost a year's worth of tuition for Su Lingyue. Average workers in the city usually needed two or three years to earn that much money.

Su Ping stood in front of the incubation pool, crossed his fingers, and offered prayers to a bunch of random gods and deities he could think of.

Then he took a deep breath and activated the pool.

[Energy points -1,000]

The incubation pool brightened up as soon as it received his "payment." The light was naturally stronger than the last time when the pool was still at level 2. When standing nearby, Su Ping could feel that the astral power radiating from it had grown at least ten times richer than before.

A while later, the light dimmed down and revealed a Rock Lion cub sitting at the bottom of the pool, curiously looking at Su Ping with its amber-like eyes.

This was a disappointment. The lion was a common fifth-rank pet easily found on the market. Selling as it was would get him roughly 100,000 Yuan. That was about it.

He gently carried the small feline in his hands and had his arm tickled as the creature happily nudged him. Looking at the cub's twinkling, puppy-doll eyes somewhat cured his frustration.

After giving it several playful head-rubs, he sent it to a nursing pen and returned to the incubation pool.

Another 1,000 points gone.

The astral power in the pool seemed to be lasting longer this time. Like a whirlpool, the energy swirled around for a while, before it condensed at the bottom of the pool and started shrinking.

The retreating light first gave way to a red, slim and pointy tail. For a moment, Su Ping thought he was expecting a snake or something similar.

He was proven wrong when he saw a pair of tiny wings stretching open.

It was a dragon, the "meta pet" in the current world. Su Ping went wide-eyed as he recognized this awesome species.

That's an Inferno Dragon... A ninth-rank dragon-type pet.

Compared to Beast Kings that were always a rare sight in this world, ninth-rank Astral Pets usually had a bigger population and variety. Even common civilians who had no business with Astral Pets would know some of the famous ones since they appeared in online advertisements on a daily basis. For instance, many titled battle pet warriors would take their ninth-rank pets and become brand ambassadors for certain products to get some quick money. As a result, the images of several ninth-rank pets could be seen everywhere, from random street posters to large advertising screens in the cities' downtown areas.

Having a powerful ninth-rank Astral Pet meant looking cool in battles. For this reason, film production companies and sponsors alike always sought to have them in their footage to attract more customers.

This Inferno Dragon was one of the best among all ninth-rank pets. The Silver-Winged Dragon and the Thunder Basilisk who made their appearance in the academy were both ninth-rank upon reaching maturity, yet they would all fall short when compared with an Inferno Dragon.

There was a group of experts who maintained a ranking list for ninth-rank pets and kept it updated. On the list, an Inferno Dragon was always within the top ten. Or the top three, if people only looked at dragon-type pets.

"Oh sh\*t oh sh\*t oh sh\*t. I hit the jackpot!"

Su Ping didn't know the exact value of an Inferno Dragon, as nobody could easily find it on sale. Not even in the black markets.

The small dragon was currently gazing at him warily, with a pair of bright red eyes that seemed to be on fire. It had its body covered in beautiful red scales that looked almost polished. The only thing ruining its

overall image was the pair of undeveloped wings that looked like plucked chicken wings. There was no way it could fly with them at the moment.

Su Ping couldn't persuade himself to look away now. A level-3 incubation pool should have a very low probability of creating a top-tier pet. It seemed that his luck was in full swing that day.

The Inferno Dragon whelp opened its mouth and yelled at Su Ping as a warning. Though it only sounded like a cat's purr.

Just like humans, newborn Astral Pets tended to have different characters from the beginning. Looking unfriendly was, in fact, a good perk, because the dragon might be more intelligent. Training it could be harder, yet the result was very likely to be sweeter.

Su Ping quickly made a pact with it. When this was done, Su Ping found a new consciousness full of anxiety and doubt connected to his mind.

It seemed that the dragon whelp would see everything in this world as a threat for the moment, except for its master.

Su Ping carefully picked it up and felt its warm and smooth scales, whereas the whelp kept edging away from his embrace. He then placed the small creature inside a nursing pen to let it take in some anima aura as soon as possible, so it could grow strong enough to fight.

Since he still had more points to spare, he decided to keep trying and see whether he could get an even better result.

His streak didn't keep up though. The third attempt ended up as a complete failure. He used an additional thousand points and got nothing in return.

Damn. 100,000 Yuan went down the gutter. This thing is the biggest money drain I've ever heard of.

The system spoke in his mind, "As aforementioned, the incubation pool may experience exceptional failure, causing fruitless results. The chances of such failures occurring will decrease as the level of the pool increases. A maxed-out incubation pool will no longer yield such failures."

"It failed once out of two last time, then it happened again on the third try today. Isn't it a little bit too high??"

"This is beyond the system's control."

"Ugh, forget it. Or, can you at least refund half of the wasted points to me?"

"Currently using a proper response as observed from the host to address such a question: 'piss off'."

"...You got me. Fine."

Su Ping was once again reminded of the saddening fact that he should never try to reason with this shameless system. The incubation pool was another of its many traps to burn his energy points away. He might find chances to get large amounts of energy points in the future, but the system would always force him to spend them!

He was left with a little above four thousand points. Using the points on the incubation pool during the “beginner’s protection period” was a good choice, but he couldn’t do that now, as he needed some points to ensure a successful outcome for his mission. Perhaps he could try again later, once the emergency mission was done.

## **Chapter 99: Shop Levels**

Su Ping sat down behind the counter to train his skills while waiting for more customers. Or in other words, more energy point batteries.

The shop was far from being crowded, but he could still see that his “propaganda” was working. Every now and then, a few students of Phoenix Peak Academy would come to visit and occasionally buy services.

Thanks to all the piled-up orders, he finally realized that there was a limit to how many nursing pens he could have in the shop. According to the system, the shop was currently level 1, which was allowed to hold 25 nursing pens in total.

Getting the shop to the next level would increase the upper limit to 50, as well as updating the “system shop”, which might allow him to buy better items and services.

A level-2 shop also came with two important functions: Nursing Space and Dummy Trainer.

The Nursing Space allowed him to keep customers’ pets inside, instead of occupying the available nursing pens, in case those customers didn’t come to retrieve their pets in time. Previously, he had to keep neglected pets inside nursing pens since the system wouldn’t allow him to randomly throw them here and there. With a Nursing Space, however, he could toss pets that didn’t need to receive any more services inside and forget about them.

“Dummy Trainer” was a very handy function that allowed him to order his “clones” to train pets in his stead. These clones, or dummies, would carry a portion of his character and skills, and could go on training sessions in different cultivation planes by themselves. While waiting, Su Ping could either give them more specific orders or leave them to commence ordinary training.

At this rate, he couldn’t possibly handle all customers by himself as the shop gained more fame. This new function would solve a major problem.

But to level up the shop, he needed 10,000 energy points. He didn’t have enough, even after all the subsequent sales of the day.

He already had 25 elementary nursing pens filled up. Thankfully, those were only 10 energy points each. As for intermediate ones, each one was worth 1,000 energy points to maintain. To go with the elevated price, an intermediate pen also had a “x100” nursing efficiency. A random pet that stayed inside for 24 hours could gain a visible improvement in strength.

A pet could get stronger both by staying inside an energy-rich nursing pen and undergoing training. The latter required Su Ping’s personal effort and was obviously optimal. Also, training was the way to go if he wished to finish the “specialized training mission.” Keeping a pet inside a nursing pen was not enough.

Before he could open up more nursing pens, he had to decline some orders, although he could still earn some energy points by selling pet food as there was no limit to that.

He felt a headache when looking at nearly twenty pets waiting to be nursed in the pet room.

At noon, he bought a cheap lunch box and closed the shop. He planned to get the first group of pets trained as quickly as possible so he could accept more and get enough energy points to level up the shop. That would free up a lot of his time.

With several quick moves, he purchased enough temporary pet contracts from the system, found four fire-type pets in the pet room, and used the contracts on them in one go.

He felt his head getting heavier the moment he finished the contracts. As an upper third-rank battle pet warrior, keeping seven pets under his control was almost his limit.

Luckily, dying multiple times in cultivation planes contributed to the growth of his spirit and endurance somewhat.

“Ugh, my head... That’s all of the fire-types? Good. I can train all four of them in one trip.”

He sat down and scrolled through the cultivation plane list to look for one suitable for fire-type pets. In the end, he chose a place called “Stellar Shard #9527,” which would cost him 5 energy points to enter. This looked like a pretty good one among all the elementary cultivation planes.

Like before, a dimensional vortex appeared in the pet room and drew him inside.

“The host has been connected to Stellar Shard #9527.”

“Time limit: 24 hours.”

“Under beginner’s protection, the host will receive 30 free death allowances.”

“Please begin your exploration, and good luck.”

Su Ping’s eyes were still closed when he felt a scorching heat assaulting his skin. When he opened them, he saw flames and burning lava everywhere. He was standing on a floating rock in the middle of a lava pool. His arrival caused the rock to dangerously sink several inches, bursting several giant bubbles of hot carbon dioxide.

Where the heck am I?

Su Ping scouted around while trying to find a better footing. He managed to see a higher landscape up ahead where there was less lava.

Fire-types were a popular choice among students, especially proud ones, because all the pets of this category knew some flashy moves, even though they might not be very useful.

People didn’t often find wild fire-type pets, however, because these creatures tended to make a big scene by burning things up. Predators could easily detect them from a distance and kill them.

None of the four pets Su Ping took with him could fly, so they had to proceed by jumping between the floating rocks. He feared that some of the rocks were not as sturdy as they appeared to be. Stepping on them might not be a good idea.

Man. Without Solar Bulwark, the air would be enough to roast me alive. Is there anything living around here at all?

The system did tell him that certain abandoned cultivation planes were inhabitable. He could have stumbled into one if he was unlucky.

“Hey, you four. Try jumping into the lava,” he ordered the pets.

The pets looked at each other with terrified looks. Despite being of the fire-type, they couldn’t actually survive in the lava. Powerful fire-based attacks could still hurt them, let alone such bright magma that looked at least a thousand Celsius hot.

However, they couldn’t oppose Su Ping’s order with their pet contracts in effect.

As carefully as possible, they moved to the edge of the platform and reached with their paws below.

Fizz!

It smelled like burnt fur.

As one, the creatures turned back and stared at Su Ping with watery eyes.

Su Ping didn’t care about them getting hurt though, since pets being trained in a cultivation plane could get revived countless times.

He walked to the pets, and without any forewarning, he booted one of them—a Pyro Canine—over the edge.

“Wuff?? AHROOOO—”

## **Chapter 100: Fast Training**

The Pyro Canine struggled in the hot lava and shrieked at the top of its lungs. Like most canine pets, this one had learned how to scare off its opponents by roaring at them. At this moment, however, it only sounded like a terrified puppy being bullied.

Its flame-red fur could not help it withstand the deadly heat as it was instantly ignited. In a few seconds, the dog turned into a scorching ball of fire and disappeared under the surface.

The other still living pets looked at the sad fate of their partner with widened eyes and opened jaws.

Their contract made it clear that Su Ping was their new master for the moment. As pets loved and cared for by their original owners, they felt as if they had been condemned to hell overnight. The man in front of them was a terrible pet abuser or something even worse. He had just killed one of them without the slightest bit of mercy.



Using the power of their contract, Su Ping called his next target over, which was a Blue Spark Cat. This one was another popular fire-type pet with proficiency for speed. It was currently at the fourth rank, while it had the potential of reaching the sixth rank with enough training.

The cat stared at Su Ping with its enlarged violet eyes and slowly walked his way.

Copying what he did a moment ago, he sent the creature down into the lava below.

“YOOOOWL—”

The poor creature puffed up into a fur ball and went inside the red substance of death with no way of fighting back. Its hysterical meowing soon came to a stop as the charred remains of its body vanished from view.

The remaining two pets huddled together and trembled.

“Come here.”

Su Ping intended for these pets to grow sturdier against fire and to have them experience what death felt like. It would be too late if they went into similar situations when exploring barren areas with their owners.

The third pet—an Obsidian Frog—crawled his way step by step as slowly as possible.

“Don’t waste time. It won’t help you.”

Another clean kick.

Croak!!

Splash.

The frog managed to hop above the heavy liquid several times like a skipping pebble before its limbs were burned off and it died.

The Flame Lion cub that stayed behind had wet itself in its own urine. This one had accepted the inescapable death with a look of true despair.

Kick, burn and death.

“Revive here.”

The four pets reappeared beside Su Ping, and he pushed them off the edge again before they realized what was happening.

The Flame Lion was a bit heavier than the others. As it “dove,” several drops of lava reached Su Ping’s body. He was quite surprised to find out that he wasn’t burned at all. The lava was unpleasantly hot, but he could endure it just fine.

He crouched down and also tested the lava with a finger.

There was no need to pull back; the temperature was bearable, unlike what he had imagined.

My Solar Bulwark is working, I guess.

He had achieved the first rank of the skill in the past few days, making his body as durable as someone of the fifth rank. Combined with the fact that Golden Crows loved fire, Su Ping's fire resistance had grown to quite an impressive degree.

He reached further down, until his entire hand was inside the lava.

It was... good. It felt like having a hot bath.

He removed his clothes and sat down at the edge of the platform to soak his feet in the lava.

A pleasing sense traveled along his legs and reached his body, causing him to shudder in delight. He felt how his body was absorbing fire elements from the lava, which in turn improved his Solar Bulwark. This was probably made possible by the Golden Crows' nature, who were known to consume fire to grow up.

"Revive."

The resurrected pets saw him naked and were briefly surprised, before they remembered what was going on.

Again, Su Ping forced them to continue "bathing."

The restraining power of the pet contracts was not completely infallible. There were occasional cases in which pets could harm their owners. The Pyro Canine seemed to be going down this path right then. Upon hearing Su Ping's order, it bared its teeth at him instead.

When Su Ping tried kicking it again, it bit his ankle and latched onto his leg.

Without minding the almost negligible pain, Su Ping moved his leg to hurl the dog away. The creature was easily shaken off because its teeth barely went inside his skin.

Su Ping's current body was completely invulnerable against anything at the fourth rank or below. Not to mention that the four pets he had brought were all of the fire type.

Unable to resist, the pets cycled through life and death repeatedly.

They died several hundred times or so in two hours. While at it, they tried to learn how to last longer in the lava pool, which eventually allowed them to paddle in the lava for a minute or two. Meanwhile, their resistance against fire also grew, which was just what Su Ping hoped to achieve.

His training didn't involve any complicated tactics or knowledge. By sending the pets to their deaths, they would naturally study how to do better. As simple as that. This way, even the slowest pet would be forced to come up with new properties or evolve accordingly.

To make his job faster, Su Ping simply jumped off and started swimming in the lava, so the pets directly "joined" him every time they came back to life.

None of them were attempting to resist now, after seeing the futility of it. Their only thought was to live longer after every attempt, hoping to satisfy the human who seemed to be more of a fire-type Astral Pet than themselves.

Five hours later, the pets were able to safely hold out in the lava for eight minutes. The lava could no longer kill them because eight minutes were enough for them to reach the nearest floating rock.

Seeing this, Su Ping told them to stop so he could check the other parts of this cultivation plane. The training was already done.

An ordinary training session required him to either improve a pet's Combat Strength rating by at least 0.33, or a new skill had to be taught. At the moment, the four pets had successfully grasped a skill called Flame Coat, which worked similarly to the Lightning Rat's "lightning coat." This skill could be further improved into "Flame Armor" in the future.

Also, the Pyro Canine was slightly smarter than its companions because it gained an extra skill, which was Flame Dragon's Roar.

Since the job was done, Su Ping could leave the cultivation plane and deal with the other pets, but this would be a waste since he still had about 17 hours to check out of this place. He planned to look around and perhaps gather some materials he could sell.

He failed to find anything worth taking, though. There was nothing apart from a few wild fire-type Astral Pets of various levels.

He was sent back to his shop when the timer ran out.

He died 12 times during the exploration, all of which were caused by high-rank pets and even Beast Kings. He could have taken Little Skeleton with him but didn't do so, because there was little benefit for it in a cultivation plane for fire-type pets.

Su Ping dressed himself again and phoned the owners of the trained pets before he collected and prepared another batch of pets.

A day in a cultivation plane was equal to an hour in reality. When he returned to the store, Su Ping saw a young man waiting in front of the shop with a worried look, probably because the shop was closed when he was still in a training session, and this man thought he had abandoned the job.

"You're the only one?" Su Ping looked around and didn't see anyone else. "But I called four of you to come."

The young man gave him an embarrassed smile. "They all came, but they headed to another street to hang out when they didn't find you. Should I call them over?"

"Yeah, do it."

Zhang Baoxing followed Su Ping inside while texting. "You already trained my Pyro Canine? But I just handed it to you this morning."

"Well, it's the afternoon now. Is there a problem?"

Zhang Baoxing frowned. Problem? Of course there's a problem! Did this man give my pet some dog food and think it's a proper training??

I bought my Pyro Canine for a hundred thousand, and he only spent a few hours training it?

Zhang Baoxing decided to wait for his friends to come before arguing with Su Ping.

Soon, the other three arrived.

Without wasting any time, Su Ping presented them with their pets.

“The training is... done?” The four people all looked unhappy because they all believed that Su Ping was tricking them. While they were too worried having wasted their money, they failed to notice that their pets were almost crying upon seeing them.

Su Ping simply ordered the Pyro Canine to use Flame Coat.

The temporary pet contract had already been terminated, yet the dog immediately heeded the order out of instinct, as if Su Ping had just pushed some kind of sensitive button planted deep inside its heart.

Followed by three more “poofs,” the other three pets also did the same and brightened up the interior of the shop with their new skill, while the customers who wanted to sue Su Ping watched the pets with widened eyes.

“That’s Flame Coat?” Zhang Baoxing recognized the skill first. “But that’s a middle-rank skill. They learned it in less than a day??”

“Your Pyro Canine also learned how to use Flame Dragon’s Roar, by the way. But I can’t show you here because it’ll mess up my shop. Find somewhere vacant and try it out yourself later.”

“What?? That’s two middle-rank skills!”

“What about us??” the other three men quickly asked. They no longer doubted Su Ping.

Su Ping glanced at them. “They went through the same training. But the rest of them were... let’s say, not as talented as the Pyro Canine. They all gained a higher resistance to fire, though. From now on, common fire-based attacks will no longer work against them.”

Three of them looked jealous, thinking of the skills learned by the Pyro Canine, though they weren’t going to complain. More defense sounded pretty useful in any case.

Zhang Baoxing affectionately shook Su Ping’s hand. “Mister Su, can—can I keep my dog here for longer? Let me see, I’ll pay you an extra 20,000 as a tip!”

Su Ping agreed right away. He couldn’t convert the “tip” into energy points, though he would be glad to give the money to his mother. It was high time he offered some sort of financial help to his family.

“A pet can only undergo one training session per day,” the system warned him.

Su Ping curled his lips.

“...This is to prevent the shop from being exclusively dominated by a rich customer. The ultimate goal of the pet shop is to serve people from all walks of life. Please broaden your vision, host.”

Well, I can understand the first part, but is it necessary to judge me like that?? Su Ping thought, before saying to Zhang Baoxing, “I can only train it once per day. Come back tomorrow.”

Zhang Baoxing stepped back in disappointment. If he could, he would even pay a visit every day from then on.

“We can all come again, right??” the other three asked.

“Of course.”

“Nice!”

The customers took their pets and left, after carefully remembering the address of the “treasure vault” they had just found. They finally knew how that particular Lightning Rat grew to be so strong. With such efficient training, their pets could do the same!

The only problem was that they couldn’t easily afford specialized training sessions.

While walking away, their pets took the lead and tried to urge their masters to move faster.

Su Ping closed the door and summoned more customers to pick up the second group of pets, while not forgetting to remind them that they should wait a bit should he go absent. He preferred to avoid wasting time while waiting for customers.

After answering questions from several prospective customers, he bought more temporary contracts and began training the third group.

The remaining pets were not necessarily of the same element, but close. Finding cultivation planes that befitted all of them would be a relatively easy task.

Spending a few days inside cultivation planes tired him out. He was eager to get the shop to level 2 as soon as possible, so the “Dummy Trainers” could help him.

The good thing was, training pets personally was rewarding to him as well. He learned a lot from all the confrontations and deaths he went through.