

THE PRODIGIES WAR

Chapter 1: Youngster Lin Xun

The Ziyao Empire's southwest border.

Mountains grew from the ground like weeds with their peaks packed together like trees in a forest. This land had been known as the 'three thousand great mountains at heaven's border' since ancient times.

The setting sun bathed the land with a gentle, rosy afterglow.

In the far distance, trails of smoke rose in the air.

Lin Xun's eyes brightened. He wiped the sweat on his forehead and released a long, drawn out breath, "Finally found a place with people..."

He had been trekking through this inhospitable land for seven days, camping out in the open and foraging fruits for food. He had experienced numerous dangers and challenges along the way, even nearly losing his life to wild beasts several times.

When Lin Xun finally discovered a sign of life, his heart shook and he felt a surge of energy through his exhausted body.

He continued to advance.

Before long, a neat and orderly Aeth field appeared, further adding to Lin Xun's hopes. Since a field was being cultivated here, there was most likely a village nearby.

The Aeth grains in the field were clearly about to ripen, each kernel round and heavy. A gust of wind blew past, making the green field ripple like water as the light scent of vegetation spread.

“Judging from their condition, the grains should be ready for harvest in about ten days...eh? What’s this?”

Lin Xun seemed to have discovered something. He walked towards a stalk by the roadside and took a closer look. Sure enough, he found that although the plant was growing well, there was a problem.

The ground was moist, fertile, and not lacking in Aeth power. However, the Aeth grain stems showed faint signs of wilting that were not easy to observe unless one looked carefully.

Lin Xun pulled out a stalk and inspected it up close in his hand. His fingertip gently peeled open the tender green surface, only for his pupils to shrink a moment later at what he saw.

Numerous luminescent white worms could be seen inside the stalk, each as large as a grain of sand. They wiggled in the plant, feeding on its life force.

Grain worms!

This field was plagued by worms.

If these grain worms weren’t eliminated in time, the about to ripen field would begin to wilt and lose its Aeth power. When that happened, the harvest would be a disaster. In a worst case scenario, not a single grain would be reaped.

“It seems that there is no rune master in the village. If not, such a disaster would not have been allowed to befall the nearly ripe Aeth grains.”

Lin Xun pondered before silently shaking his head. There was likely no rune master who would willingly live in such a godforsaken place.

After all, from what Lin Xun understood, a rune master was a very honorable profession in this world.

Lin Xun suddenly heard a loud sigh.

He turned his head to the source and saw a tall, well-built, middle-aged man nearby dressed in clothes made from animal skins. He was currently sitting by the edge of the field, dazedly staring at it as he sighed.

The middle-aged tanned man had a worried frown on his face, and he was clearly distressed.

Something clicked in Lin Xun's head. He walked forward and asked, "Uncle, are you fretting over this field?"

It seemed that the man had been stressing over this matter for a long time. As such, he immediately complained, "Argh, yeah. The wretched heavens! It's been a month since the last rainfall. If this weather continues, the twenty ares of Aeth grains I planted will be finished."

However, when he turned around to look at Lin Xun, he blurted out in shock, "Little fellow, where did you come from?"

The middle-aged man looked at the boy in front of him. Lin Xun was wearing a coarse hemp garment that had been washed until it had turned a faded-white, while his face had a slightly pale and sickly complexion.

There was an old and worn wooden box on his back. The middle-aged man did not know what was in the box, but its load seemed to place a considerable burden on the boy.

The youth looked like he was somewhere between twelve and thirteen years of age.

It was honestly quite strange for a boy like this to suddenly arrive in Feiyun Village.

After all, there was nothing but wilderness in a thousand miles radius around Feiyun Village. Everywhere else was rugged mountains with zero signs of human inhabitation.

From what the middle-aged man could remember, not a single stranger had come to the village in more than ten years.

As such, how could he not be baffled by the appearance of such a young and frail boy in his field?

Lin Xun smiled, "Uncle, who I am isn't important. What's important is that I can help you solve your problem."

He knew that introducing himself would only draw more questions from the other party, wasting far too much time. Moreover, he was so hungry that he could barely walk.

The middle-aged man jumped to his feet and said, "What did you say?"

Lin Xun smiled again and repeated himself, "I said that I could help you solve this problem and make your subsequent harvest successful."

The middle-aged man in beast-skin-clothes frowned. He carefully observed Lin Xun's young, pale and gaunt face as he suspiciously asked, "Young man, you're bragging, right?"

The words from the frail and thin youngster were far too absurd.

Lin Xun chuckled and pointed towards the stalk in his hand that had been peeled open earlier. "Take a look, uncle, your Aeth grains do not lack water but have been infected by worms. These worms are called grain worms and feed on the stalk of Aeth grains. If they are not exterminated in time, your field will be ruined."

These words alarmed and frightened the middle-aged man. He stared hard at the faintly glowing white worms and ground his teeth in anger. "Damn it, no wonder nothing changed after using so much river water. These darn worms were the culprit! But..."

His expression turned distressed as he tore his hair in frustration. “These pests are hiding inside the stem. I don’t have any method to kill them.”

Lin Xun’s eyes narrowed as he revealed a smile that was as bright as sunlight.

The middle-aged man bitterly sighed for a long time. Suddenly, his eyes widened as he seemed to realize something and called out, “Young brother, since you recognize these pests, you must know a method to get rid of them, right?”

Lin Xun nodded, his eyes gleaming with a sliver of confidence.

“That’s great!” The middle-aged man’s face flushed red with excitement. His initial suspicions towards Lin Xun had faded substantially.

Upon seeing that the middle-aged man was now onboard, Lin Xun took his chance. “Uncle, if I help you with this problem, could you promise me one thing?” *novelNext.cOm*

The middle-aged man immediately replied without any hesitation, “As long as you help me with this matter, I can make you ten promises, let alone one!” However, he abruptly realized his words were too boastful and hurriedly corrected himself in a slightly embarrassed manner, “Of course, I’ll only be able to help if it is within my means. There’s nothing I can do if the request is beyond me.”

Lin Xun grinned, “My condition is simple. I wish to find a place to stay in the village.”

Tie Shan was startled. “You wish to live in Feiyun Village?”

Lin Xun nodded; his clear gaze indicating that he was not joking. His expression was completely serious when he needed to be, which was a habit he had acquired since he was young.

Tie Shan hesitated as he awkwardly scratched his head. "Wait here, I'll go find the village chief and ask him. This matter is not something I can decide on but I feel that it should not be an issue."

He turned around and dashed towards the village without even waiting for a reply, giving off an aura of bubbling energy, swiftness and decisiveness.

Lin Xun was speechless. He soon thought of another problem and hurriedly yelled, "Uncle, remember to bring back some food as well. I can't help if I have no energy!"

"Sure!" Tie Shan's voice boomed from far away.

"What a simple and honest man." Lin Xun chuckled. He placed the tattered wooden box on the ground and massaged his aching shoulders.

Subsequently, he turned around, walked into the field and began a careful inspection.

Aeth grain contained wisps of Aeth power and was a necessary food for cultivation. However, it was not an easy task to grow them.

From the moment they were planted, one needed to constantly check for insect infestations and weeds, while also being on guard for potential weather issues. Once any problems occurred, the grain's quality would drop and might even result in a complete loss of Aeth power.

This field, for example, had been infected by worms. If the worms were not exterminated, the outcome would be quite bleak.

However, this was not a difficult problem for Lin Xun.

Before long, Tie Shan returned from the village. However, he was now accompanied by a large group of villagers.

The final rays of the setting sun dyed the mountains red as Tie Shan and the villagers arrived amidst a cloud of dust.

Lin Xun was taken aback. He shrugged, knowing that the situation had changed.